

The Other 'I': The New Narcissism of Postmodernism

First Person Non-Protagonist Narrators in Novels by José Donoso, Elena Garro,
Gabriel García Márquez and Mario Vargas Llosa

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the role of the first-person non-protagonist narrator in José Donoso's El jardín de al lado; Elena Garro's Testimonios sobre Mariana; Gabriel García Márquez's Crónica de una muerte anunciada and Mario Vargas Llosa's El hablador. The observer narrator in each of these texts revitalizes the ability to communicate with the reader, by making him or her an accomplice in the observation of the protagonist of each novel. Through this new bond each non-protagonist narrator rejects the notion of bearing absolute truth through fiction by becoming a new postmodern storyteller who enables the reader to individualize his or her experience with the novel's protagonist, thereby counteracting the loss of the ability to narrate experience in contemporary society lamented by Walter Benjamin.

Through his or her perspective, the observer narrator underscores the subjective nature of knowledge and representation by rejecting the first-person narrative, by undermining his or her own authority in the text, by questioning the roles of truth and fiction and by parodying more traditional genres including the realist, *testimonio*, chronicle and ethnography studies, respectively.

This new storyteller can be considered a response to postmodern society in which the reader may suffer from various degrees of identity crises. The contemporary individual is often classified as de-centered and fragmented and unable to grasp a complete view of his or her un-fragmented self. Indeed, just as the infant in Lacan's mirror stage is theorized to suffer from feelings of fragmentation when he or she lacks a physical mirror in which to see his or her whole body, the readers of these texts may also feel a similar desire to conceptualize the whole Self, yet lack the perspective of the

mirror. This inability can be called a *narcissistic deficiency*. As the reader observes the protagonist of each novel, this central character becomes a mirror in which the narrator and reader can begin a process of rebuilding and reaffirming an image of the whole Self.

I have termed this pathway to self-affirmation, through the observation of the Other, the *new narcissism of postmodernism*. The observer narrator should not be considered a coincidental pattern but rather is a complex rebuttal to the problems of living and writing in a postmodern society.

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Introduction: The Problem With the Traditional First-Person Narrator

“Let me look so that you, reader, may also see” —

Silviano Santiago

“Y pensábamos en esa cosa increíble que habíamos leído, que un pez solo en su pecera se entristece y entonces basta ponerle un espejo y el pez vuelve a estar contento...”

—Julio Cortázar

First-person narrative is quite common in everyday life, in literature and in film. In contemporary culture for example, the Internet phenomenon of the blog gives everyone an opportunity to tell his or her story. The likelihood is high that if you have never written your own blog you perhaps have read someone else's blog. The same could be said of other Internet sharing services such as MySpace and FaceBook. Various types of self-focused books such as the memoir, the autobiography, and the self-help or success books (such as those which help you achieve your financial goals, loose weight, manage your time better, etc.) each indicate the use of the first-person narrative in popular culture with increased frequency. Historically, in literature, the first and third person narrative are the most frequent choices of the author before literature becomes exploratory and experimental. In our current consumer/industrial society, technologies such as the Internet, television and radio give a broader scope of people the opportunity for their “I” to be heard by a larger audience. It can be asserted, that this increased level of *access* may lead to a shift in *value*. In other words, as more people gain the ability to

narrate their own story, the readership shifts causing subsequent changes in trends of narrative and criticism.

While the first-person narrative lends itself to introspection, there are many possible subjects of first-person narration. Imagine, for example a man in a bar, sitting down with a group of friends, who begins to tell a story of the couple he met yesterday at such and such a location. The onlookers listen to the speaker's story—his authority is his eye-witness account; his goal is to communicate information and to engage his listeners to the end of his tale; his reason(s) for narrating can be numerous—pure entertainment, to demonstrate a specific point, to persuade his readers or to serve a particular self-interest, among other reasons. Indeed, the first person narrator as William Riggan affirms “is one of the most natural and pervasive modes in which to cast a story of any sort” (18). The first-person narrator can tell an account of the self or can focus on the actions of others.

This dissertation, “The Other ‘I’”, explores four first-person narrators who use their own voice to tell the story of another protagonist. This narrative point-of-view links four novels published after 1980, which include, by José Donoso, El jardín de al lado (1981), by Elena Garro, Testimonios sobre Mariana (1981), by Gabriel García Márquez Crónica de una muerte anunciada (1981) and by Mario Vargas Llosa El hablador (1987).¹ Each narrator offers a different level of authority of the observed and various problems arise in the process of narrating an external subject, which is the focus of each chapter. Furthermore, the observer narrator in each of these novels allows for the advantage of a distanced and objective perspective, while at the same time the disadvantage of increased

¹ I would like to offer a special acknowledgement of appreciation to María Inés Lagos for her course, “Self-Reflective Writing in Latin American Fiction” which I took during the Spring of 2003. In this course, Professor Lagos introduced me to El jardín and Crónica, which prompted my interest in issues of the relationship between author, narrator, and reader that later evolved into this study.

subjectivity. “The Other ‘I’” studies the various possibilities, including the benefits, negative repercussions and other implications of a narrator who writes from his own perspective to depict another character. Therefore, “The Other ‘I’” investigates the ways in which this fresh perspective allows for new messages to be shared in different ways and renewed relationships to be forged between the narrator, the characters and the readers.

In this introductory chapter, I present a broad framework within which to undertake a close textual analysis of each novel in the subsequent chapters. First, I contextualize the novels of this study within Latin American literature after 1980, as each of the primary texts was published in the 1980s. I also analyze the period preceding the 1980s as each of the novels of this study relate and react to other texts written in the same time period and the period prior. Secondly, I discuss the article that had the most significant impact in formulating the ideas for this investigation, by Silviano Santiago, called “The Postmodern Narrator” included in an anthology of his articles, The Space In-Between. In his article, Santiago discusses the implications of the first-person non-protagonist narrator in short fiction by the Brazilian author Edilberto Coutinho. Santiago’s concept of the observer narrator as a postmodern storyteller is unique and I have been informed by his thoughts on the issue as I began to study the storytellers of “The Other ‘I’”. In this section I also discuss the emergence of a reader-accomplice, similar to the active *lector macho* reader that Julio Cortázar deals with in Rayuela. Indeed, there are two ways to read each text, an active way and a passive way.

My third objective is to link narcissism and self-introspection to postmodernism and the first-person non-protagonist narrator. In this section, I show that although the

non-protagonist narrator of the novels included in this study looks to the Other, his observation is actually a form of narcissism—the only kind attainable in postmodern society. Indeed, the non-protagonist narrator uses his subject as a means by which he or she can validate the Self. I identify this as the *new narcissism of postmodernism*. In the following section of this chapter, I also link the reader’s desire for self-affirmation by voyeurism to the narrator’s narcissistic tendencies. I then contextualize this new storyteller figure within the framework of Jean Franco’s article “Narrator, Author, Superstar.” I consider the observer narrator/postmodern storyteller as continuing into a fourth category of Franco’s taxonomy. Subsequently, I show that Cortázar’s “El perseguidor” marks the threshold between the observer narrator of modernism, and the postmodern observer narrator. In dissecting Bruno’s (the narrator’s) relationship with Johnny (the narrated) I am able to establish a starting point from which “The Other ‘I’” begins. Finally, in the last section of the introduction, I determine particular traits of non-protagonist narrators that aid my study of each novel in a more generalized way.

CONTEXTUALIZATION OF PRIMARY TEXTS

As I begin, I shall look towards a chronological model of Latin American fiction to best ascertain how the novels of this study fit into the trajectory of modern Spanish fiction. In other words, I will postulate why many veteran writers experiment with the observer narrator at this moment in the history of Latin American literature. Gerald Martin’s “Spanish American Narrative since 1970” testifies to the difficulty in classifying literature in Latin America after the Boom. In contrast, during the period of the Boom “a plausible division could be established between a social realist or even Americanist narrative line... and a developing ‘magical realist’ or ‘transcultural’ line which dealt in a

more mythical and metaphorical way with the question of Latin American identity....” (108). Traditionally, the writers of the latter line are the literary figures most internationally known and are identified as having launched Latin American literature into the world scene.² Martin shows that up until a certain point (around 1970) Latin American literature is broadly classifiable in these terms, with recognizable limitations. In contrast, Spanish American narrative after the Boom, escapes facile categorization. Taking this limitation into account, Martin does propose a new system to differentiate two types of literature in Spanish America after 1970. He suggests: “instead of such a division between a Latin Americanist and an internationalist mode it might be possible to suggest a newly accented division between those who continue to write, in a more or less traditional way, about the “Other/s” and those who indulge in one of the many possible forms of what we could call ‘Self-Writing’ (Martin 108).³

Martin further describes the implications of the popularization of “self-writing” in Latin America also frequently called testimonial, a genre that peaks in Spanish-speaking America after the Boom:

² Martin includes Miguel Angel Asturias, Jorge Luis Borges and Alejo Carpentier as Boom predecessors of the later category who continued to write into the Boom years, while he figures Carlos Fuentes, Vargas Llosa, Cortázar, and García Márquez as the main protagonists of the Boom. Various critics, including Martin agree that Donoso is the figure that arises at the transition between the Boom and the post-Boom. Gerald Martin, "Spanish American Narrative Since 1970," The Cambridge Companion to Modern Latin American Culture, ed. John King (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003) 105. Similarly, Elena Garro is often considered a figure of the Boom who is left out of the canon because she is a woman. See for example Patricia Rosas Lopátegú, Testimonios sobre Elena Garro (Monterrey: Castillo, 2002) 250. Furthermore, just as the Boom predecessors continue to write into later decades most of the figures of the Boom continue to produce literature into the 21st century with the exception of Julio Cortázar who died in 1983. All of the authors included in this study began publishing novels in the 1960s or before. Thus, I do not focus on writers new to the Latin American scene, but rather later novels by more seasoned writers.

³ Martin cites the beginning of this duality was actually as early as the 1920s with Asturias's Leyendas de Guatemala as an example of self-writing and Borges' protagonist double in his short-fiction, as an example of the Other. Martin, "Spanish," 108.

But such self-reflexive forms have proliferated irresistibly since the 1960s and even the old forms of social realism have transmuted into so-called *testimonio*, in which the old ‘subaltern protagonists—indigenous peoples, gauchos, blacks, proletarians, homosexuals, women—now speak with their own voices, even if the tape recorder and the questions are still being put to them by academics and other intellectuals. Although writers take up widely different positions in relation to this twin problematic, awareness of it is central to almost all writing currently appearing in the subcontinent. (Martin 108-9).

Thus, according to Martin the new overarching duality in Latin America sets the Self against the Other. The Self can be defined as the subaltern exploring his or her own identity as Martin concludes, while the Other, is often the intellectual exploring the subaltern or a darker and more obscure side of the Self, an “Other within” as Amy Fass Emery terms the inner self (19). This binary between Self and Other, developed by Martin, can also be understood by the individual writer’s belief in the truth-telling function of fiction. The Self frequently assumes to be able to narrate accurately and to portray reality about him or herself, while the Other is aware of both the impossibility of portraying or ascertaining reality as well as the difficulties in exploring the Other or the Other within.

Indeed, Donald Shaw’s classification of the initial surge of *testimonio* writing concurs with Martin’s timeframe as occurring in the late 1970s and early 1980s.⁴ Shaw

⁴ Among Shaw’s examples of the most famous *testimonios* are *Biografía de un cimarrón* (1969) by Miguel Barnet, *Hasta no verte, Jesús mío* (1969) by Elena Poniatowska, *Si me permiten hablar* (1978) by Domitila

describes testimonial in these terms: “Mainstream testimonial writing springs from first-hand experience and normally takes the form of eye-witness accounts of events involving real people and the actual participation in them of an individual who represents people caught up in a significant historical situation” (Companion 167).⁵ In Shaw’s definition, we can see various elements of the *testimonio*, which support Martin’s post-1970 binary of Self and Other, such as the *testimonio*’s relationship to history, its belief in the truth-telling role of literature, as well as the beginning of an opportunity for the traditionally marginalized voice to speak. In light of these classifications, I argue that the observer-narrator-Self in the novel under consideration, by looking at the Other, reacts against both the possibility of conveying truth as well as against the subaltern’s right to speak. By choosing the first-person non-protagonist narrator, each author of this study creates an opposite to the *testimonio*. Instead of truth, history and personal experience, the observer narrator is confronted with fleeting glimpses of subjective truth, an unattainable grasp of history as well as feeble attempts to narrate the Other. These differences demarcate the narrator-observer’s writings as reactionary to *testimonio*. To add another layer of difference between the *testimonio* and the observer narrator: for the latter, his compelling

Chúngara and Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú (1983) by Rigoberta Menchú, among many others. Donald L. Shaw, A Companion to Modern Spanish-American Fiction (Rochester, N.Y.: Tamesis, 2002) 168.

⁵ It is important to mention that the definitions of *testimonio* vary greatly. Among the first critics of the *testimonio* are John Beverly and Elzbieta Sklowdowska, both of whom are explored further in the chapter on Elena Garro’s Testimonios sobre Mariana. Other critics like Francesca Denegri limit the definition of the *testimonio* to the illiterate protagonist working with an interlocutor. She concludes: “A *testimonio* is an oral narrative told in the first person by a narrator who is also the real protagonist of the story. As the narrator is by definition illiterate, the narrative is recorded, transcribed and edited by an interlocutor who is normally a university-trained intellectual, or *letrado* (lettered)” Francesca Denegri, “Testimonial and its discontents,” Contemporary Latin American Cultural Studies, eds. Stephen M. Hart and Richard A. Young (New York: Oxford UP, 2003) 228.

drive to narrate that which he sees is based on the realization of the impossibility to objectively narrate the Self, as well as an implied desire to understand the Other.

While the surge of testimonial shows an increase in the use of first-person narration in Latin America, there has traditionally been a significant body of texts employing a first-person narrator. These narrators are often on a quest to understand themselves in society around them. For example, among the most canonical Latin American pieces with first-person narrators figure Ernesto Sábato's El túnel (1948) in which Castel, a mad narrator, seeks to explain why he killed María Iribarne, or the introspective preoccupation of self and identity in Alejo Carpentier's Los pasos perdidos (1953), in which the unnamed bourgeois narrator seeks his own essence in the Latin American jungle. Even Horacio Oliveira in Cortázar's Rayuela (1963) is sometimes a first-person narrator as he tries to make sense of his life in the search for and in the absence of La Maga. However, I should clarify that the first-person non-protagonist narrator does not seem to be reacting to these types of novels, in which a first-person narrator explores his or her own identity in a fictional environment. On the other hand, I assert that the observer narrator in the novels of this study reacts against the first-person narrative of the *testimonio* genre, and against the idea that the power of the word to express truth is still attainable. I do not think it is happenstance that the writers included in this study do not react to literary explorations of the self and identity, written by fellow members of the elite class who are considered career authors, but rather react to the *testimonio* form, which has the ability to give a voice to the voiceless, the subaltern, the marginalized and the proletariat. In point of fact, by writing against the *testimonio* genre, the role of author/narrator attains a protected status by bourgeois authors in order that the

right to narrate does not fall into the powers of the masses, but rather, remains a protected position. This can be most clearly seen by the fact that each fictional observer narrator in each of the novels I analyze is also a writer by trade.⁶ Finally, the observer narrator does not speak out intentionally against the *testimonio*, but rather alludes to his or her theoretical disaccord with the genre by drawing of attention to the lack of objectivity and difficulties in his or her own narrating. For the non-protagonist narrator, language cannot communicate objective messages only subjective ones. The postmodern narrator, then, represents a cultural reaction to the difficulty of ascertaining truth while favoring the role of the bourgeois author.

THE POSTMODERN STORYTELLER

The first-person non-protagonist narrator is not a new figure to literature. Some of the most well known examples include Nick Carraway in F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, Ishmael in Herman Melville's Moby Dick, Watson in Arthur Conan Doyle's The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, and Rodolphe in Flaubert's Madame Bovary. I propose, however, in light of Santiago's article "The Postmodern Narrator" that more recent examples of observer narrators, such as the ones that are included in "The Other 'I'" can be considered postmodern, in contrast with the earlier observing narrators.

To classify the first-person non-protagonist narrator, Santiago discusses, in depth, Walter Benjamin's view of the narrator. Although Santiago does not cite a specific piece by Benjamin, his discussion is founded, at least in part, upon Benjamin's essay: "The

⁶ This is only partially true for Elena Garro's novel, Testimonios sobre Mariana that has three distinct narrators. The narrator I focus on most, Gabrielle is not a career author although she draws attention to her own writing on several occasions, while the other two narrators of the novel do not draw attention to writing in the same way.

Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov.” Santiago synthesizes Benjamin’s conceptualization of three different types of narrators, including: the “classic narrator” (essayist); the “narrator of the novel” or the narrator who intends to be impersonal; and finally the “narrator who is a journalist”.⁷ This last type of narrator/journalist, in Santiago’s analysis, becomes postmodern, through a process of “discarding and distancing” (134). By distancing the Self from the Other and through the implementation of the narrative perspective of the first-person, the postmodern storyteller is able to communicate a strong message directly to the reader, just as Santiago demonstrates citing stories by Coutinho.

Benjamin’s focus in “The Storyteller” is on demonstrating that experience has “fallen in value”, meaning that it becomes nearly impossible for the individual to communicate experience or to tell a story effectively within a typical oral storytelling setting (83-84). Furthermore, Santiago underscores Benjamin’s conclusion that in the past, storytelling had a unique “utilitarian dimension” as the storyteller was able to address his or her listener from a superior narrative position as a way to offer “wisdom” to him or her (Santiago 135). Benjamin writes: “In every case the storyteller is a man who has counsel for his readers. But if today ‘having counsel’ is beginning to have an old-fashioned ring, this is because the communicability of experience is decreasing” (86).

⁷ Santiago uses Benjamin’s argument in great extent in order to identify the figure that he considers to be the postmodern narrator; thus, it is necessary to look at Santiago and Benjamin simultaneously as Santiago formulates his argument in terms of Benjamin’s. Santiago summarizes what he sees as Benjamin’s history of the narrator that begins with “The first stage: the classic narrator (the one valued in the essay), whose function is to give to his listener the opportunity of an exchange of experience; second stage: the narrator of the novel, whose function becomes that of no longer being able to speak in an exemplary way to his reader; third stage: the narrator who is a journalist, that is, he who only transmits the information through narrating, since he writes not to narrate the action of his own experience, but what happened to X or Y in such and such a place at such and such a time” Silviano Santiago, The Space In-Between: Essays on Latin American Culture, trans. Tom Burns, Ana Lúcia Gazzola and Gareth Williams, ed. Ana Lúcia Gazzola (Durham: Duke UP, 2001) 134.

Benjamin sees this decrease in the communicability of lived experience as a product of the times—although this change should not be considered completely negative, as there is beauty to be seen in the disappearance of the ability to tell a story (87).

However, in light of this new inability to offer counsel through storytelling, Santiago asserts that the postmodern observer narrator offers that which other types of narrations cannot offer—a new kind of wisdom. Although the postmodern storyteller cannot re-appropriate experience or insight into his stories, he offers a new type of knowledge, albeit not exactly in the same terms of didactic utilitarianism:

The postmodern narrator is he who transmits a ‘wisdom’ that results from the observation of a lived experience outside of himself, since the action that he narrates was not interwoven in the living substance of his existence. In this sense, he is the pure fictionist, for he has to give ‘authenticity’ to an action that, since it is not backed up by lived experience, would be deprived of authenticity. The latter emerges from the verisimilitude that is the product of the internal logic of the narration. The postmodern narrator knows that the ‘real’ and the ‘authentic’ are constructions of language. (Santiago 135)

It is clear that the postmodern narrator cannot regain the communicability of experience of the past, as this ability is forever lost to contemporary society. However, as Santiago concludes, the postmodern storyteller that he postulates does have a heightened ability to express a new kind of external knowledge concerning the nature of observed experience, language and narration itself.

Furthermore, Santiago characterizes the postmodern narrator in an applicable way to this study. He forms this hypothesis: “the one who extracts himself from the narrated action in a manner similar to a reporter or a spectator. He narrates the action as spectacle that he watches (literally or not) from the audience, from the grandstands, or from a chair in his living room or in the library. He does not narrate as an ‘actant’” (134). This description fits the non-protagonist narrator of each of the novels analyzed in this study: each narrator is involved with his or her subject yet removes him or herself from the subject and reports these observations to the reader. In this study, I track the development of each non-protagonist’s narrative, as he or she reports from the outside of his or her central focal point, looking inward to the ruptured center of his or her subject.

In “The Postmodern Narrator,” Santiago also postulates various reasons why a narrator chooses not to narrate his own self as subject or why an author would choose a narrator to narrate someone else’s story and not simply choose the subject as the narrator. Santiago’s conclusion on this artistic decision is two-fold. First, through the non-protagonist narrator, the author “creates a space for the fiction to dramatize the experience of someone who is observed and often deprived of the word” and secondly, in removing himself “the narrator identifies with a second observer—the reader . . . it is as if the narrator were demanding: let me look so that you, reader, may also see” (Santiago 139-40). Thus, if Benjamin is accurate in asserting that communication is missing from contemporary storytelling, the postmodern observer narrator forges a new relationship with the reader in order to reinstate a communicative relationship—the reader is able to

see through the narrator's gaze.⁸ The postmodern narrator constructs a bridge of interactive communication between the Self, the Other and the reader which allows him or her to "speak of the incommunicability of experiences" once again (139). In essence, Santiago asserts that the postmodern narrator overcomes the impossibility to communicate using fiction and language by allowing his reader to observe exactly what he sees. The new storyteller can once again narrate what would otherwise be theoretically impossible to express, in his own words and based on his own experiences and perspective. Thereby, he leads the reader, to appropriate his own viewpoint from which the subject can be understood.

Benjamin also sees the reader of a novel as more isolated than other listeners or readers, while in an oral storytelling relationship, the listener is "in the company" of the story teller (100). Santiago expresses that another benefit of the postmodern storyteller is putting the reader back into the writer's company (140). As the postmodern narrator facilitates reader involvement, a new type of reader-accomplice relationship begins with the narrator. Cortázar originally develops this relationship in Rayuela. In Cortázar's novel, Morelli theorizes a new connection between, author, narrator, subject and reader:

la de hacer del lector un cómplice, un camarada de camino.

Simultaneizarlo, puesto que la lectura abolirá el tiempo del lector y lo trasladará al del autor. Así el lector podría llegar a ser copartícipe y

⁸ I use the term *gaze* to refer to both definitions of the word. The common definition is to look outward with longing. The word is also frequently used in film criticism with a different meaning that Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright analyze, "the gaze is not the act of looking itself, but the viewing relationship characteristic of a particular set of social circumstances." One example of this usage in criticism is Laura Mulvey's term "the male gaze" to explore gendered behaviors between the viewer and viewed. Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001) 76.

copadeciente de la experiencia por la que pasa el novelista, *en el mismo momento y en la misma forma*. (Rayuela 442)

The simultaneity forces the reader not only to identify with the narrator but also to experience the same trajectory of emotions—pain, suffering, joy, etc. In addition, the postmodern storyteller uses his new role and relationship with the reader in order to make direct commentary on conventional exposition and on the intrinsic difficulty of creating definitive meaning in narrative. In this way, each novel that I discuss herein is less about any specific message and more about the experience of the reader in the process of observing the Other through the new storyteller’s eyes.⁹

Raymond Williams also discusses Morelli’s theory of the reader-accomplice in relationship to postmodernism. Williams concludes that while Morelli’s theories are postmodern, Cortázar’s novel Rayuela is not (Postmodern 14). Williams says the following of Morelli’s contribution to Latin American postmodernism: “But one of his most radical proposals was for an entirely new role for the reader, for the active (macho) reader. The postmodern reader of much of the innovative fiction that has been published in Latin America since Hopscotch is fundamentally this active reader of Morelli” (Postmodern 79). As Williams shows, there are various ways that the reader is expected to take on his or her new functional role. For example, in Manuel Puig’s La traición de

⁹ While Cortázar/Morelli speaks of exploratory fiction, he expresses himself in what can be considered a postmodern sense, in which the power of words or the ability to express certain messages are impossible. Cortázar writes/Morelli theorizes: “Tomar de la literatura eso que es puente vivo de hombre a hombre, y que el tratado o el ensayo sólo permite entre especialistas. Una narrativa que no sea pretexto para la transmisión de un “mensaje” (no hay mensaje, hay mensajeros y eso es el mensaje, así como el amor es el que ama); una narrativa que actúe como coagulante de vivencias, como catalizadora de nociones confusas y mal entendidas, y que incida en primer término en el que escribe, para lo cual hay que escribirla como antinovela porque todo orden cerrado dejará sistemáticamente afuera esos anuncios que pueden volvernos mensajeros, acercarnos a nuestros propios límites de los que tan lejos estamos cara a cara” Julio Cortázar, Rayuela (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1963) 441.

Rita Hayworth, Puig “established a postmodern reader who necessarily had an active and unstable role to play, for there is no controlling narrator to organize the anecdotal material that is related by a multiplicity of voices that appear in the text as monologues or dialogues” (Williams Postmodern 80).¹⁰ In this way, Williams shows that the relationship of the narrator to the reader is just one of the many ways in which a text can demonstrate traits of postmodernism. Although there are no absolutes in postmodernism, one link in the texts that Williams classifies as postmodern is the renewed relationship between reader, narrator, and subject although any possibility for authoritative communication to take place is completely overturned. The only message in the postmodern novel is that there is no single message.

As language and definitive meaning are both undermined in postmodernism, Benjamin’s claim of incommunicability is only exacerbated further. By considering Agnes Heller’s definition of postmodernism the reader can see precisely the way in which the expression of specific messages is undermined. First, Heller differentiates postmodernism as a social movement, and postmodernism as an artistic or cultural movement. The former, as she concludes, is a product of the disillusion of the “alienation generation” in 1968 that lead to an end of social moments and the start of new “psychological and interpersonal” movements (7). In other words, postmodernism overturns social cohesion and results in fragmented, individualistic thought-centered movements, which I will explore at a later point in this introduction in the terms of voyeurism and narcissism. On the other hand, as a cultural movement, according to Heller, postmodernism is characterized by pluralism, it “has a simple enough message:

¹⁰ Similar conclusions are drawn about Ricardo Piglia’s Respiración artificial and other works without authoritative narrators.

anything goes...a cultural movement which makes distinctions...irrelevant” (8).

Clearly, under these circumstances, the experience of another individual becomes impenetrable, indecipherable and incommunicable.

Under these new conditions, the postmodern storyteller/observer narrator of each novel analyzed in this study challenges the reader to join him or her and to forge his or her own experiences with the narrative subject, basing individual understanding on subjective perspective—the only attainable means of communication in a society now described as postmodernist. Paradoxically, the postmodern storyteller denies the communicative social role of storytelling, yet allows for the open pluralism of the individual perspective. Furthermore, the postmodern storyteller demonstrates that even if experiences were not individualistic and actually were capable of bearing singular meanings, language proves to be an inadequate means through which to express experience. Just as the narrator/storyteller cannot depend on language to articulate specified meanings to the reader, the subject’s story is told by the narrator because of his or her implied inability to speak in the first place. Thus, the observer narrator demonstrates several layers of separation between the word and meaning—on the part of the author, narrator, reader and the narrated subject.

In the same way that Martin has demonstrated the development of two trends, Self and Other, in modern Spanish American fiction after the 1970s, Santiago also confirms a similar binary, by referring to the memorialist narrator. In memorialist fiction the Other tells the story of his or her own trajectory in the position of a superior narrator looking back towards his or her own inferior past, with the hope of imparting wisdom through the narration by relaying his or her own experiences or through history in general (Santiago

142).¹¹ Indeed, just as the first-person narrator of the testimonio believes, the memorialist narrator also believes in the truth-telling function of words and literature. On the other hand, the postmodern observer narrator focuses on the present, embodied by the subject of his or her narration. In point of fact, the postmodern narrator in the novels that I discuss uses the subject as an instrument of self-reflection to explore the recesses of him or herself that have become even more difficult to understand as a result of the postmodern condition of the fragmentation of the individual that Fredric Jameson explores in Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism 14). As the reader is present in the postmodern storyteller's narration, he or she too can use the protagonist of the novel as a mirror of self-exploration and reflection in which to reconstruct the pieces of the fragmented self. In this sense, postmodernism is both the ailment and the cure of the fragmentation of contemporary society.

This new relationship between narrator, narrated and reader in the novels of this study is one of entanglement. While the observer narrator may imagine that he or she is an innocent bystander, escaping responsibility for the protagonist's actions, his very decision to observe and report implicates him in the act of looking (Santiago 142). The 'reader-accomplice' is equally guilty as his 'looking' by reading or consuming the text implicates him, as well, in a level of responsibility for the text and for the subjection of the observed. In essence, through the narrator's inability to communicate with mere words, and through the observed's parallel inability to narrate, the reader is thrust into a

¹¹ Indeed, Santiago sets up the postmodern narrator vs. the memorialist narrative in much the same way that Martin talks about a two-fold division in Latin American literature since the 1970s. It is for this reason that we can view this new narrator of postmodernism as a reaction against the truth-telling function of the testimonial.

position in which he or she becomes responsible or guilty for reading words that cannot be written about a narrative subject who cannot be narrated.

I am sensitive to the negative connotations that often accompany the term *postmodernism* in criticism. For example, I agree with Williams's sentiment in his examination of the issue in The Postmodern Novel in Latin America. He states: "My study has been written with full awareness of the irritation many scholars feel about the term postmodernism" (Postmodern v). I will say the same for my study. Williams views postmodernism as a helpful tool in understanding trends, although he concedes that postmodernism in Latin America exists simultaneously with facets of the pre-modern and modern, and he rejects the chronological trajectory implied by the prefix "post" (Postmodern vi). Williams offers several terms often used in understanding postmodernism in a North American sense: "discontinuity, disruption, dislocation, decentering, indeterminacy, and antitotalization" (Postmodern 10). In Latin America, as he indicates, postmodernism is often identified with the following terms: "*lo indeterminado* (the indeterminate) *la problematización del centro* (the problematization of the center), *la marginalidad* (marginality), *la discontinuidad* (discontinuity), *la simulación* (simulation) and the like" (Postmodern 14). Williams offers a comparison of the discourse of postmodernism between North and Latin America in order to assert that Latin America is faced with a similar "crisis of truth" as North America, despite the questioning of some critics who analyze postmodernism of North America as distinct from Latin American postmodernism (Postmodern 14).

Williams' attempt to apply North American ideas of postmodernism to Latin American examples cannot be achieved without some difficulty, as Shaw's discussion

illuminates. Shaw argues “that we need to distinguish between writers whose work shows more possible conformity to canons of postmodernism in Europe and North America, and writers... whose work tends to illustrate the notion of ‘specificity’ to Spanish America” (Companion 211). As Shaw adds, “the critical question” in Latin America is “whether we can stretch the definition of postmodernism to include writers like Puig, Allende, Luis Rafael Sánchez, Sainz and del Paso, to say nothing of Boom writers like Cortázar, without risking a formulation which critics in the ‘metropolitan’ countries might hesitate to accept” (Companion 211). For example, Shaw concludes that Ricardo Piglia’s writing shows the effect of mass-culture in literature, a clear aspect of postmodernism on the one hand, while on the other, Piglia also believes “that it is writers who impose meaning on the raw data of experience to produce a form of ‘truth,’” an idea that is not “easily compatible with mainstream Postmodernism” (Companion 222).

Shaw’s chapter on postmodernism references Salvador Elizondo, Néstor Sánchez, Severo Sarduy, Diamela Eltit, Ricardo Piglia, and Carmen Boullosa, as a group of writers that seemed to be moving in a different direction than writers such as Manuel Puig, Antonio Skármeta, Isabel Allende or Gustavo Sainz, whom Shaw classifies as postboom authors. In any case, even among the six authors that Shaw examines as the clearest examples of postmodernism in Latin America, each author has an essential element to their work that puts a classification of postmodern into question. For example, Piglia’s sustained belief in the author’s task that I referenced above (Companion 222); Sánchez’s search for order and intelligibility in life (Companion 213); Sarduy’s, Elizondo’s and Boullosa’s eventual abandonment of their anti-representation style (Companion 215, 225); as well as the internal paradox in Eltit’s work which brings Shaw to question “how

a novel which seems to question both mimetic reality and language as an instrument of communication can include protest at all” (Companion 219). For every critique of postmodernism, it becomes apparent that there will be another critic to counteract the possible shortcomings of classification. For example, in contrast with Shaw, Judith Butler suggests that the deconstruction of feminism in postmodernism actually allows for increased communication between form and message. Butler concludes “To deconstruct the subject of feminism is not, then, to censure its usage, but, on the contrary, to release the term into a future of multiple significations, to emancipate it from the maternal or racialist ontologies to which it has been restricted” (16).

Thus, although I have mentioned only a few theories on postmodernism, for the purposes of my own study, I must qualify that the narrators who I classify as postmodern storytellers are not simply propagating a postmodern style, nor do I assert that any of the authors of “The Other ‘I’” are exclusively postmodern, neither in the particular novel I analyze nor in his or her corpus of writing. Rather, my study intends to show the emergence of a new type of storyteller in contemporary Latin American fiction. Indeed, my uses of the term postmodern are more similar to Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright’s classifications that postmodernism is a “cultural trend that is integral to changes in culture, the economy and politics” (240). I would also like to conclude this section on postmodernism by qualifying that my use of the term throughout “The Other ‘I’” is not arbitrary. I recognize that decidedly there are elements of the postmodern in many contemporary texts. So why then do I choose to use the term? For me, the classification of postmodern is useful in the identification of a new figure in Latin American literature, a new storyteller who is distinct from the traditional storyteller, which is a point that I

develop further in a later section of this introduction. Indeed, the postmodern storyteller embodies the difficulty in expressing meaning or absolute truth—this is his or her essential postmodern quality. Furthermore, the postmodern storyteller speaks to the postmodern individual. In other words, the observer narrator directly addresses himself to a fragmented individual who is a product of the cultural crisis of mass society. By reinstating the communication of experience in a new way, the new storyteller can speak once again to the postmodern individual. Knowing full well that postmodernism necessarily problematizes communication, by looking, simultaneously with the narrator, the reader sees the Self again—and absolute communication becomes obsolete. I term this solution—the gaze of the reader/narrator of the observed—the new narcissism of postmodernism.

THE NEW NARCISSISM OF POSTMODERNISM

Upon initial evaluation it seems that the first-person narrator is extensively narcissistic, while the first-person observer narrator is not. A narrator interested in his or her own experiences and feelings is easily transfixed by his own reflection. He is mesmerized with his story and convinced that the reader will be just as interested in hearing what he or she has to say. Thus, his narcissism is manifested in his exhibitionism to the reader, or in Vargas Llosa's words through a "reverse strip tease" in which the author begins naked and writes in order to cover his exhibited self (Letters 16). "The Other 'I'" shows a new form of narcissism implicit in the observer-narrators of the novels that I analyze. As the narrator of each text can no longer express the truth of the Self to the reader, he or she begins to look outward towards another individual as a way to begin once again to see the Self more clearly. The narrator's gaze of the Other is a means of

self-affirmation for both the narrator and the reader. Furthermore, it becomes apparent that simply by accepting his or her role as narrator, the postmodern storyteller accepts control of the word, which is a narcissistic action. As Santiago writes:

What matters is to give the word to the look cast on the other... so that what the word does not say can be narrated. There is an air of wounded superiority, of narcissism drawn and quartered in the postmodern narrator, dauntless because he is still the carrier of the word in a world where it counts for little, anachronistic because he knows that what the word can narrate as a trajectory of life is of little use. It is for this reason that the look and the word are cast on those who have been deprived of them.

(143)

If, according to Santiago, the observer narrator is narcissistic simply for 'carrying' the word in spite of its limitations, then I conclude that the reader, too, is guilty of a similar narcissism, for partaking of the word by reading the narrator's text and also for observing those who are deprived of the word and are spoken for by the narrator. Thus, both the narrator and the reader-accomplice are implicated in the gaze of the Other, and both are guilty of a form of self-love and narcissism simply by writing and reading the word. In this way, we see that narcissism is not limited to the traditional narrator. In the novels under consideration, the individual can no longer simply look upon his or her own reflection in the pool as a means of narcissistic self-affirmation but rather must look outward to the Other in order to be able to see the Self. This type of narcissism, that comes to the fore in the novels that I discuss, can be termed *voyeuristic narcissism*, looking from the perspective of reader/narrator Self to the protagonist Other.

According to Sturken and Cartwright in Practices of Looking, voyeurism is the act of looking from an unseen position (76). Voyeurism has a solid place in film theory, as those who go to the cinema are physically looking at visual images from the seats of the darkened theatre. In this situation, the viewer is unseen to the individuals on the screen and to those around him or her (Sturken and Cartwright 76). Similarly, the reader too is a voyeur, however, the images of the novel must all come from the reader's mind and experience. For example, a beautiful character in a novel will provoke various images in the mind of the reader voyeur, who gazes upon her image without actually ever seeing her at all.

Clay Calvert's study Voyeur Nation is one important work that confirms the phenomenon of voyeurism in contemporary society, which I will also link to the concepts of postmodernism that I underscore in this study. For Calvert, mass media and the Internet are the most common means of mediated voyeurism. Calvert classifies different means and motivations of voyeuristic looking. For example, people are often drawn towards watching deviant behaviors. The benefit of looking without being seen is the distance between the onlooker and the observed, who becomes an Other with whom dialogue will never occur and who can be easily dismissed with a click of the remote (20). The watching of deviant behavior as well as other types of watching allow the viewers to "escape from our own problems and revel in others' predicaments" (57). Some viewers watch for entertainment, others for information, while yet others watch in order to share socially with others, such as to participate in lunchtime discussions with coworkers (56-57). Another cited reason for the tendency towards voyeurism is a search for truth, that is itself a result of "mass-produced, technologized images that flood the

modern mind” (58). These images make the discernment of reality increasingly more difficult, leaving the onlooker questioning whether or not an image is a simulacrum of reality or true. This phenomenon has further lead many viewers to the recognition that journalists “construct or create a particular version of the truth with the words they choose to use and the sources they choose to quote” (61). This subsequently leads many viewers to television programs and/or webpages that appear to show actual footage; do not have professional actors; and have hidden cameras or other devices to lead the viewer to perceive the thing viewed as real and/or authentic (61-63). However, even this type of viewing often edits reality in spite of the fact that the viewer does not easily see this.

These motivations to looking for and questioning truth implicit in voyeurism indicate the same root problem found in the lack of center of postmodernism—the individual’s search for truth and absolutes which have become increasingly more unattainable. Indeed, Calvert’s voyeur looks to gain knowledge and to be empowered as the onlooker is always in a position of more power than the observed (69).

Similarly, the observer narrators/reader voyeurs of the novels by Donoso, Garro, García Márquez and Vargas Llosa also look to find affirmation in the character that is being observed, claiming power by narrating and reading the Other. This self-affirmation can lead to a sense of superiority in which the individual feels better about him or herself by watching someone else’s misfortune (Calvert 71). Indeed, Calvert discusses Phil Davis’ conclusion that the human desire to look at accidents and other tragedies is a deeply self-motivated action. Davis concludes: “People know they are vulnerable in life—illness, sickness, accidents or whatever—so when they run across situations like this, there is another unconscious psychological need to see something worse has

happened to someone else. In a funny way, it gives us a lift” (cited in Calvert 72). To conclude, Calvert links increased patterns in voyeuristic behavior to a decrease in community values and hedonism:

One of the social forces fueling voyeurism is that we are an increasingly hedonistic, self-absorbed society in which we get our pleasure from watching others’ lives without having to interact with them. A sense of community obligation rather than the individual gratification might promote active involvement with others rather than passively watching them as a spectator sport. (75)

In these ways, voyeuristic narcissism, or narcissism by looking at the other, has a clear link to postmodernism. Calvert even mentions postmodernism briefly in passing, by citing Jean Baudrillard’s claim that the “image has come to replace the real” (73). In light of this heightened hedonism I suspect and attempt to demonstrate that the two are, in fact, simultaneously causes and effects of one another, relating specifically to the concept of narcissism that I develop in relation to the novels of this investigation.

Therefore, this voyeuristic act of looking at the Other is important in understanding the postmodern storyteller. The gaze of the narrator and his accomplice, the reader, reaches the observed Other—that which is echoed back towards each of them is a view of themselves reflected in the observed. This view is shaped by both the experiences and perspective that the onlooker brings with him or her. As postmodernism undermines the notion of absolutes, the answer, meaning or message of each text by a postmodern storyteller is as unique as each reader’s own perspective and experience. Ultimately, in postmodernism neither the narrator nor the reader can communicate these

experiences, whereas they exist in a space outside of the narrative, in a place denominated as *Thirdspace* by Edward Soja, who asserts that Thirdspace allows for a more encompassing viewpoint than other types of criticism that require absolute classification. Soja describes Thirdspace as being a:

Space of extraordinary openness, a place of critical exchange where the geographical imagination can be expanded to encompass a multiplicity of perspectives that have heretofore been considered by the epistemological referees to be incompatible, uncombinable. It is a space where issues of race, class, and gender can be addressed simultaneously without privileging one over the other; where one can be Marxist and post-Marxist, materialist and idealist, structuralist and humanist, disciplined and transdisciplinary at the same time. (5)

The postmodern storyteller leads the reader to this undefined and imaginary space in between the covers of his novel. He or she can no longer present absolutes or make value judgments. Each reader or critic of the text can make meaning or conclusions based only upon his or her simultaneous observation of the Other in the text. Therefore, the message that reaches each observer reader is individualistic. While a particular postmodern storytelling novel may represent a Marxist class struggle for one reader, another reader's perspective may dictate that the central issue is gender bias. Neither reader's perspective is more valid as the text has an unlimited quantity of permissible readings. In this very plurality lies the opportunity for each reader to find his or her own form of self-affirmation. Thus, in postmodernism, which de-centers the concept of the Self, the self-love of narcissism is achieved by looking at the Other. Finally, by looking at the Other,

who is also deprived of the word, the reader finds him or herself in a similar dilemma of having a *narcissistic deficiency*. I use this term throughout this study in reference to the general sense of de-centered fragmentation that is at the core of each individual in contemporary society. This term indicates an unbalanced lack of a healthy narcissistic view of the self.

Peter Brooks in Psychoanalysis and Storytelling writes of the relationship between reading and voyeurism in Flaubert's Madame Bovary. He theorizes that the narrator's longing gaze for the subject offers the reader only the beginning of a true understanding. This same sentiment surges in the novels of this study. Brooks writes of Madame Bovary:

Rodolphe's voyeuristic forepleasure here figures the reading process in the novel itself, which always presents Emma Bovary as the fascinated object of gazes and consciousnesses that never take her in as a whole, but rather by way of fetishized accessories and features. We never see Emma in her entirety, which may suggest that she is not whole, that she is an incoherent bundle of desires—as her lovers and observers are inadequate registers of desire—but also may allegorize the status of the realist novel as a whole, which sets itself the task of knowing by way of phenomenal presence in the word, and thus limits its capacity to summarize and totalize. The novel offers an approach *to* much more than an arrival *at*. (32)

Several elements of Brooks' conclusions relate to "The Other 'I'". First, as Brooks indicates, the reading, writing and observing of another is often a voyeuristic fulfillment of individual desire. Secondly, Brooks draws attention to the difficult nature of

representation by indicating the impossibility of capturing the subject of the gaze in its entirety. Although the realist novel sets out to capture a complete image, and the novels of “The Other ‘I’” seem to be written with this impossibility in mind, neither the realist nor postmodern novel can do much more than approach the Other. As Brooks asserts, the written word can never totalize. Furthermore, for any observed character, the critic should consider that the subject is necessarily an incomplete and fragmented entirety as a creation of fiction. Brooks also indicates in the above citation, that the written word cannot totalize, even in realist and modernist fiction, which aims to present reality as directly and as thoroughly as possible. In the end, just as each novel of this study indicates, both the reader and narrator’s gaze is diverted from the Other and fixated on the Self.

Narcissism, or self-love, is certainly not a new focus of study in most fields of the humanities, and it has become an important part of contemporary cultural studies. The myth of Narcissus has various different versions in both the Greek and Roman traditions. One of the most popular versions is in Ovid’s Metamorphoses, based on Greek mythology that dates around 8 AD. Ovid’s retelling of the myth of Narcissus in epic form centers on a youth who shuns the goddess Echo and other nymphs. Nemesis hears the plea of one of the scorned thereby condemning Narcissus: “So may he himself love, and so may he fail to command what he loves” (III.402-436).¹² Narcissus does fall in love—with his own reflection in a fountain. The narrative voice of the poem declares him

¹² All citations from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* come from Anthony Kline’s online translation of the epic poem. The online version is divided into numbered paragraphs; therefore the verse denominations include all of the lines of the paragraph and are not just the individual line number. A.S. Kline, Ovid’s Metamorphoses: A Complete English Translation and Mythological Index, 2000, Available: <http://etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/trans/Ovhome.htm>, 15, July 2008.

foolish for his self-love: “Fool, why try to catch a fleeting image, in vain? What you search for is nowhere: turn away, what you love is lost! What you perceive is the shadow of reflected form: nothing of you is in it. It comes and stays with you, and leaves with you, if you can leave!” (III.402-436). Narcissus eventually realizes that it is his own reflection with which he is in love. In spite of his insight, he is unable to escape the object of his desire, his own beauty, an entity completely unattainable to him. He laments his misery: “I am allowed to gaze at what I cannot touch, and so provide food for my miserable passion!” (III.474-510). Narcissus cannot abandon his own reflection and he eventually dies leaving a flower in the spot where he stood admiring himself. Contemporary theory believes that Ovid’s Narcissus has pre-Oedipal tendencies and that Narcissus “suffers from a tenuous identity, compelling him to search for maternal mirroring and confirmation from external objects” (6) as Jeffrey Berman indicates. This concept of “tenuous identity” can be likened to my term narcissistic deficiency. As Berman adds, “Ovid’s myth illustrates the main reason for people now entering psychotherapy: problems of self-esteem and self-fragmentation” (8). In other words, the contemporary individual wants to see a whole and not simply a fragmented self as a reflection and affirmation of a sense of identity and self-love. In this way, Ovid’s myth is timeless in that it relates even to postmodern man.

During the past century there has been an emergence of much discussion of narcissism in the context of the philosophical, the psychological and the literary. The most pertinent concept of narcissism as it relates to my study is Lacan’s mirror stage. Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy discuss the way in which Lacan’s mirror stage finds

its starting point in Sigmund Freud's conceptualization that narcissism is a stage in the normal development of the child. According to Freud:

There comes a time in the development of the individual at which he unifies his sexual drives (which have hitherto been engaged in auto-erotic activities) in order to obtain a love-object; and he begins by taking his own body as his love-object, and only subsequently proceeds from this to the choice of some person other than himself. (Freud "Psychoanalytic" 60-61)¹³

For Freud, the ego is formed at this stage in narcissism, although Freud does not explain how the ego is formed. Lacan's "mirror stage", originally presented in a 1936 Psychoanalytical Congress, offers a theory as to how the ego is formed, as both Freud and Lacan agree that the ego is not present from birth but rather develops sometime in an infant's early life (Benvenuto and Kennedy 50-52). One important distinction between Lacan and Freud, however, is Lacan's view that the ego is a "destructive illusion," which "calls into question the existence and autonomy of the self" (Berman 28), while other theorists do not consider the ego as a destructive entity.

According to Lacan, the mirror stage is the moment in the life of an infant (between 6-18 months) when he or she recognizes the image of him or herself in the mirror. This recognition passes through three phases: at first, the infant believes the image is reality, then the infant understands that the image has its own properties and finally the infant realizes that the image is of him or herself. His or her true understanding is in the recognition that the mirror holds a reflection of the Self

¹³ This passage is quoted in Benvenuto and Kennedy although I cite Freud's original essay, which I investigate beyond the point of Benvenuto and Kennedy's citation.

(Benvenuto and Kennedy 53). It is at this final stage, when the infant is able to capture his entire body in the mirror, that the ego is formed in Lacan's view: "He falls in love with his image and, in contrast to the auto-erotic stage, in which he has an erotic relationship to his fragmented body, he now takes the image of his whole body as his love-object" (Benvenuto and Kennedy 54-55). Thus, for Lacan, the ego is formed as the infant realizes that he or she is constituted of more than just the fragments that can be seen without a mirror. In the mirror stage, the infant realizes that he or she is a whole, although the reflection is an unattainable Other, forever alienated from the Self. This realization is the primary foundation of one's narcissistic sense of self.

There are a few elements to Lacan's mirror stage that are particularly relevant to "The Other 'I'". For one, the mirror is necessary for the infant to conceptualize him or herself with his own gaze outside of his mother's gaze:

Of course an infant may never actually see a real mirror reflecting himself.

In this case he may not have an image of himself that is distinct from the mother's gaze. Lacan's mirror stage refers to a particular moment of recognition and jubilation, when the infant is moving away from the simple reflection of the mother's gaze. (Benvenuto and Kennedy 54)

Two essential parallels in this passage relate to the observer narrator, narrated and reader of the novels analyzed in "The Other 'I'". First, the narrated/observed inhabits a space in which he or she cannot move away from the simple reflection of the narrator's gaze (for Lacan, the mother's gaze). Thus, the observed is forced to remain in the autoerotic stage in which his erotic relationship is with his fragmented body, instead of with a complete image of him or herself—this is his or her narcissistic deficiency, in other words a

lacking or underdeveloped sense of self. Secondly, as Lacan theorizes, in order for the infant's ego to be formed a mirror is necessary. In "The Other 'I'" the narrator and the reader-accomplice find themselves in this stage of autoerotic love with the Self before the ego is formed. Both reader and narrator are able to overcome this stage of fragmentation to attain the formulation of the ego by using the experience with the observed as a mirror. In this way, the narrator and reader are able to appropriate the gaze of the Other, in order to reflect a complete image of his or her whole body. Just as the infant is at first alienated from his own *Gestalt* (total form), the narrator and reader begin the text with the same alienation which is: "this lack of being by which his realization lies in another actual or imaginary space" (Benvenuto and Kennedy 55). Therefore, the gaze of the Other in the novels of this study offers a mirror as a solution to the sense of fragmentation caused by postmodernism—and helps the reader to form an ego in order to begin to constitute a narcissistic sense of Self. Indeed, in Lacan's view the Self "escapes its own self-fragmentation only by entering the symbolic world of language" (Berman 28). Thus, the metaphysical world of the novel joins the symbolic meaning of language with a mirror recovered by observing a fictional character, allowing a solution to the narrator and reader's narcissistic deficiencies. Indeed, by observing the narrated, the reader sees a personalized image in the mirror—a reflection of him or herself on a backdrop of his or her own perspective that allows the individual an illusion of completeness. In this way, literature serves as a metaphysical mirror that permits the reader to benefit from the reading relationship.

Furthermore, the myth of Narcissus can be considered a perfect parallel to the observer and observed relationship in this study, which is exemplified by "the interplay

between self and other” in Ovid’s timeless narrative (Berman 8). The role of the postmodern storyteller is to reinstate the communicability of experience, not as a narrated absolute, but rather as an individual endeavor undertaken by each reader. Indeed, viewing the novels of this study through a lens of narcissism functions also to increase the communicability of Ovid’s myth in this study itself. Indeed, this communication of Ovid’s story lies not in the narration of the parallel between Self and Other but rather in the act of the Self’s observation of the Other. Lacan’s mirror stage implies a disjunction and alienation between the Self (the body) and the Other (the one seen in the mirror) (Sturken and Cartwright 81). However, in the new narcissism of postmodernism this disjunction is rejoined.

Psychoanalysis, most frequently by way of Freud and/or Lacan, is certainly not the only application for studies on narcissism. Another major trend in narcissism studies is to link narcissistic, self-pleasing behaviors to contemporary society. Christopher Lasch’s landmark study, The Culture of Narcissism (1979), attempts to show that modern capitalistic society is responsible for the decadence of mankind as a whole into self-absorbed and materialistic individuality. While Lasch’s analysis is harsh and at times even extreme it is useful to take into account some of his viewpoints on common modern-day narcissistic behaviors. In point of fact, Calvert’s study on the voyeur underscores many of the individualistic and hedonistic points that Lasch made in his analysis over two decades prior. In describing psychosocial narcissism Lasch uses the following terms among others that ring eerily of negative connotations of postmodernism, including:

dependence on the vicarious warmth provided by others combined with a fear of dependence, a sense of inner emptiness, boundless repressed rage and unsatisfied oral cravings...pseudo self-insight, calculating seductiveness, nervous, self-deprecatory humor...intense fear of old age and death, altered sense of time, fascination with celebrity, fear of competition, decline of the play spirit, deteriorating relations between men and women. (33)

Lasch's study presents these traits as commonplace in contemporary North American society, although they were once markers of pathological narcissism (32).

Indeed, Lasch berates practically every facet of society as manifesting an increased level of self-interest.¹⁴ Among the most critical of his observations regards contemporary literature. For example, Lasch writes of meta-fiction in the sixties and launches immediately into a critique of (literary) cultural criticism:

The fiction of the period, in which the writer made no effort to conceal his presence or point of view demonstrated how the act of writing could become a subject for fiction in its own right. Cultural criticism took on a personal and autobiographical character, which at its worst degenerated into self-display but at its best showed that the attempt to understand culture has to include analysis of the way it shapes the critic's own consciousness. (16)

¹⁴ As Boris Frankel affirms, Lasch's criticism of narcissism seems to reach all aspects of society relating in this way to postmodernism. Frankel sees Lasch's focus as "the contemporary preoccupation with self-discovery and liberation of the inner self, the transformation of social problems into problems of personality, the inability to 'feel', and so forth." Boris Frankel, "Cultural Contradictions of Postmodernity," Postmodern Conditions, eds. Andrew Milner, Philip Thomson and Chris Worth (New York: Berg, 1990) 105.

Lasch proceeds to disparage the confessional novel, which can be likened to the *testimonio* that I have already discussed. Lasch asserts that the author of this type of novel no longer even takes the time to ‘digest’ and ‘interpret’ his or her own experiences, but rather the author feeds a first-person narrative to a reader eager for ‘disclosure’ and in order to satiate his “salacious curiosity about the private lives of famous people” (17). Indeed, Lasch shows that reading confessionals, testimonials or memorials are merely self-focused acts of voyeuristic hedonism.

Although Lasch may be *overly* critical of nearly every aspect of society, the tragedy of self-serving narcissistic behaviors seems to coincide with the rise of postmodern theory. This is the critical junction of this study, to explore these simultaneous and interconnected dilemmas. In the texts that I examine, I attempt to show that the protagonists and the narrators seem to reveal a narcissistic deficiency, a sense of fragmentation and an underdeveloped ego. Postmodernism and narcissism seem to be an impasse for the contemporary Self, as he or she may sense the fragmentation explained by Lacan’s mirror stage. The non-protagonist narrator is one possible solution to the reader’s need for self-affirmation often associated with contemporary humankind.

As Lasch postulates, contemporary society is responsible for dissolution of social values and for the surge in pathological narcissistic behaviors. He concludes “Self-preservation has replaced self-improvement as the goal of earthly existence. In a lawless, violent, and unpredictable society, in which the normal conditions of everyday life come to resemble those formerly confined to the underworld, men live by their wits” (53). By comparing contemporary society to socially minded Puritans of the past, Lasch indicates that he views contemporary culture in a state of decadence. He concludes of the Puritans:

“they saw personal aggrandizement as incidental to social labor—the collective transformation of nature and the progress of useful arts and useful knowledge” (54). Although Lasch’s analysis is admittedly focused on a North American phenomenon, other critics such as José Luíz Trechera, writes of similar narcissistic patterns in Europe, indicating a broader condition of epidemic proportions, one that reaches all of contemporary society (221-23). Perhaps the need for self-affirmation is a mechanism of survival and self-preservation that transcends cultures and communities. This individual in contemporary society perhaps feels a stronger sense of completeness through self-love, necessitating narcissism.

For example, Freud discusses the way in which the choice of a love-object also reflects latent self-interest. Freud concludes of a child’s choice of object-love: “what we first noticed was that they derived their sexual objects from their experiences with satisfaction. The first auto-erotic sexual satisfactions are experienced in connection with vital functions which serve the purpose of self-preservation” (“On Narcissism” 87). In this passage, Freud determines that the object-choice of the child is based on the fulfillment of his needs for survival. Freud also concludes in his essay on Narcissism that “We say that a human being has originally two sexual objects—himself and the woman who nurses him—and in doing so we are postulating a primary narcissism in everyone, which may in some cases manifest itself in a dominating fashion in his object-choice” (“On Narcissism” 88). This passage also indicates that in Freud’s conceptualization, the child’s object-choice serves a particular self-interest to him or her. I argue throughout “The Other ‘I’” that the object-choice of humankind in postmodernism is the Self, which fulfills his very need for self-preservation. Consequently, the reader’s/narrator’s object-

choice of the Self is more fulfilling than Narcissus' who discovers that the Self in the reflective pool "is emotionally unresponsive" (Berman 32). By looking towards another for mirroring the individual can find fulfillment. Indeed, Heinz Kohut proposes in How Does Analysis Cure? that through empathy, the psychoanalyst can be a mirror replacement to aid the stalled or underdeveloped ego of his or her patient. According to Kohut, this mirroring relationship leads to positive results in individuals who have suffered narcissistic injuries (cited in Berman 31-32).¹⁵ While the therapeutic effect of reading is debatable, the benefit of the mirroring relationship in the novels of this study can have similar results as those to which Kohut refers.

Lasch's study seems to have opened a floodgate to numerous studies amalgamating the psychoanalytic and literature. Even as Lasch depicted narcissism as a North American cultural problem, it unavoidably became a problem of socio-cultural literary criticism, which reaches beyond Lasch's critique of North America. Several recent studies merge the psychoanalytical with the literary. One particularly noteworthy study is Linda Hutcheon's Narcissistic Narrative (1980), which focuses on self-referential texts as narcissistic. Although the study of narcissism in literature has been significant for over three decades, the uniqueness of this present study is the unification of the postmodern storyteller as developed by Santiago with the ramifications of individual narcissism as a product of postmodernism itself. By viewing narcissism as a necessity of survival in mass society, the reader of this study can begin to understand the solution presented by the observer narrators. Unlike much criticism written about narcissism, I

¹⁵ Heinz Kohut has done extensive work on psychological narcissism. The original citation for the above-mentioned book is as follows: Heinz Kohut, How Does Analysis Cure?, ed. Arnold Goldberg (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984) 91.

am not looking for traces or parallels with the myth of Narcissus, but rather, a broader context of individual self-love in the novels of this analysis. Postmodernism describes a society which can be considered an open wound causing a narcissistic deficiency, while voyeuristic narcissism is a small bandage. Above all, “The Other ‘I’” shows that even in postmodernism, literature offers power, gratification and even healing to the active reader.

MASS CULTURE AND THE OBSERVER NARRATOR

In this section I demonstrate the way in which the postmodern storyteller/observer narrator continues Jean Franco’s taxonomy elaborated in “Narrator, Author, Superstar: Latin American Narrative in the Age of Mass Culture” (1981). I will also show the way in which Cortázar’s “El perseguidor” marks the hinge between “Superstar” and the postmodern storyteller. According to Franco’s classifications, the “narrator” is a storyteller—an “unofficial historian” of the oral tradition. Franco cites García Márquez’s “Los Funerales de la Mamá Grande” as an example. As she concludes, “the chronicler who undertakes to describe Big Mama’s funeral before the historians can take over is dedicated to the task of rescuing what he knows the audience would wish to remember, not causes or public speeches but the sheer magnificence of the ceremonial” (“Narrator” 151)¹⁶. This type of oral storyteller can be assimilated to the storyteller of modernism to which Benjamin refers. The storyteller seamlessly weaves together his or her own and other’s experiences into a cohesive unity, one that communicates a specific message.

¹⁶ Additionally, Franco sees *Cien años de soledad* as a hinge novel between the “narrator” and the “author” categories. She states, “For the story is not only told but chronicled, and the chronicler stands between the stage of oral transmission and authorship” (152).

Secondly, Franco talks of a transition to the “author”, another figure in Latin American literature of the fifties and sixties. Franco sees this figure as a “remedy” to the anachronism in the disparity between history/culture and literature. According to Franco, outsiders have often perceived Latin America as “dependent” and as “culturally inferior”, meanwhile Spanish American writers with universalistic ideals and bourgeois training manage to force their way onto the international scene ("Narrator" 149). For Franco, the “author” is a founder of a new society that endeavors to eradicate the disparities in Latin America. Franco concludes of this stage: “We discover a persistent *topos*, that of the foundation of a society... that appears to its founder to be unprecedented—outside the system of exchange, hierarchy and power which condemned Latin American countries to anachronism and to the status of dependency” ("Narrator" 153). Franco cites Carlos Fuentes’s La muerte de Artemio Cruz, García Márquez’s Cien años de soledad, Cortázar’s Rayuela, Juan Carlos Onetti’s Juntacadáveres, and Vargas Llosa’s La casa verde as some of the texts that demonstrate this *topos*. The unifying factor linking these novels is that the founding of a new society can be attributed to one individual. For example, Macondo in Cien años or the island in La casa verde: “is ‘fathered’ of an individual male enterprise with the female and the older communal ways of life of the Indians being undervalued” ("Narrator" 157). Thus, as Franco determines, “marginalized by history, the “author” challenges the universality of metropolitan ideology by showing where it breaks down. Characters take hold of their destinies only on death beds, amid ruins, or in the comparatively empty space of the jungle” ("Narrator" 158). As Franco

postulates, the “author” believes that his or her art and authorship itself can offer a cure for the anachronism of Latin America (“Narrator” 157).¹⁷

The last phase that Franco identifies is a transition from “author” to superstar”. She demonstrates that the public is affected by mass culture, and that novelists take to using mass culture as a theme and as a form of expression to parody but also to attract readers in a consumer society. Franco views the “superstar” as a threat to the “author”. Vargas Llosa demonstrates this well in La tía Julia y el escribidor as the serious writer narrates the famous script-writer of a radio show (“Narrator” 161). Citing another example, Carlos Fuentes’s Zona sagrada, Franco shows the way in which the novel is an “allegory of the distorting effect of stardom on authorship” (161), as the relationship between the narrator, Mito, and his mother, Claudia, a film star demonstrates. In Zona sagrada Fuentes expresses the enduring nature of the film star and the desire of the narrator Mito to narrate the “superstar”. However, Franco acknowledges, “the problem is that Fuentes remains locked within the sphere of the star, in opposition to whom the narrator can only fall into attitudes of contemplation, narcissism, and self-immolation” (“Narrator” 161-62).

In the same way as Martin’s generalizations offer a framework leading up to the 1980s in which the novels of this study can better be understood, Franco’s map is also important to “The Other ‘I’” and to the classification of the postmodern narrator. In light of Franco’s study, I propose that the non-protagonist narrator is also as an authorial response to mass culture, just as the “superstar” category is. Embedded in the figure of

¹⁷ Franco sees Roa Bastos’ Yo el Supremo as the ending of the novels that focus on authorship. This novel uses the “I” to comment on Latin American history. Franco writes: “Francia, though a ‘Supreme I,’ is never able to found a discourse and the dictator’s ‘I’ never coincided with the ‘he’ of historical record” (158).

the postmodern storyteller is a continued authorial desire to reclaim the task of the writer as an important one. However, since each author writes with the foresight of postmodernism, each also revives the narrator figure as a pastiche. In reincarnating the “narrator” category, the postmodern storyteller both imitates and idealizes a past that he or she knows is unrecoverable. However in his or her emulation of the traditional storyteller the author is able to revive his role as communicator to a public, in spite of the incommunicability implicit to postmodernism.

Fredric Jameson’s definition of pastiche from his article “The Shining” (cited in J. Franco "Pastiche" 393) is applicable to the postmodern storyteller. Jameson indicates a “moment of pastiche in which energetic artists who now lack both forms and content cannibalize the museum and wear the masks of extinct mannerisms” (“The Shining” 114). However, even in executing his pastiche the observer narrator in the novels of this study is different from his or her predecessor as he or she does not take on a revisionist role with respect to history, but rather is fully aware of the impossibility of capturing history and/or expressing it in words. Nonetheless, the renewed relationship to the reader allows for a mask or simulacra of communication to occur.

“El perseguidor” is an excellent example to identify the transition from “superstar” to postmodern storyteller. Cortázar, in contrast with earlier texts, in “El perseguidor” attempts to “transfer creativity from the narrator to the performer” (J. Franco "Narrator" 165). I consider this transfer to be, at least partially, a failure. In “El perseguidor”, Bruno, the music critic, narrates Johnny, a “superstar” jazz saxophonist. One of the initial differences between Bruno and the narrators that I analyze in this study

is that Bruno's focus is on Johnny, the "superstar", while the subjects of the texts analyzed in this study are ordinary, if not marginalized individuals.

There are various other ways in which "El perseguidor" differs from the novels analyzed in this study. First, the discourse of the novel as well as the narrator's attention to his own writing both indicate a higher degree of self-consciousness in the writing process in "El perseguidor" than in the novels of "The Other 'I'". Bruno admits that he does not care about his protagonist's life, albeit in an ironic fashion: "Honestamente, ¿qué me importa su vida?" (La autopista 144). Also, he draws attention to his own attempt to portray Johnny correctly by writing: "Vaya si lo he oído; vaya si he tratado de escribirlo bien y verídicamente en mi biografía de Johnny" (La autopista 105). In various other moments of the story, Bruno draws attention to his role as a writer/critic and his desire to narrate Johnny:

Soy un crítico de jazz lo bastante sensible como para comprender mis limitaciones y me doy cuenta de que lo que estoy pensando está por debajo del plano donde el pobre Johnny trata de avanzar con sus frases trancadas, sus suspiros, sus súbitas rabias y sus llantos... Él es la boca y yo la oreja, por no decir que él es la boca y yo... Todo crítico, ay, es el triste final de algo que empezó como sabor, como delicia de morder y mascar. (La autopista 106)

In this passage as well as in the former, we can see Bruno's intense preoccupation with himself as a critic. Although Bruno claims that Johnny is the mouth and he is just the receiver of what Johnny says, we know by the end of the story that this is simply not the case.

This relationship between the Narrator and the difficult-to-narrate Other in “El perseguidor” has been aptly developed in María Inés Lagos’ article “Sujeto y representación: viaje al mundo del Otro en narraciones de Julio Cortázar, Luisa Valenzuela y Clarice Lispector.” Regarding both “El perseguidor” and Valenzuela’s “Cuarta versión”, Lagos indicates that the narrator of each respective text creates “una interferencia, casi una resistencia, pues no se identifican con su personaje, transformándose también en foco de la narración” (69). In this way, the narrators of these two texts directly refuse to faithfully represent their protagonists, resulting in a shift of power to the narrator who then can manipulate his or her text from his or her own central perspective (70).

As Bruno maintains control over his text and centralizes his own position, he also serves the reader as a filter to what he or she receives regarding Johnny. For example, even when Johnny draws attention to the inconsistencies in Bruno’s narration he refuses to alter them—Bruno always chooses what to write—and what not to write—because he believes that without him, the jazz critic, Johnny would have no voice at all. Indeed, Bruno also demonstrates that he is quite conscious of his inability (and lack of desire) to present Johnny as he truly is. However, by focusing more on his role as a critic he deconstructs and downplays the importance of the ‘truth’ that he cannot narrate. In this way, Bruno demonstrates that the power relationship of his text is skewed to give himself precedence over his subject, in spite of the fact that Johnny is the supposedly the star musician. The end result is little true communication between the characters. In fact, the two “no hablan el mismo lenguaje” (Lagos 70). However, the reader must consider that

he or she receives Bruno's words while Johnny's music is withheld from him or her, solidifying the source of narrative power in the end to be Bruno.

In contrast to "El perseguidor", in the novels of "The Other 'I'", the chronicler and the narration itself both take a secondary level of importance. While each non-protagonist narrator is also a writer focused on the difficult task of narrating an Other, none has the overt directness that Bruno has in declaring almost obnoxiously that he has, in point of fact, succeeded in narrating Johnny. Furthermore, each narrator in this study does not attempt to diminish the reader's perception of the narrator's own limitations. In "El perseguidor" Bruno declares that he is merely the ear and Johnny is the mouth; while in contrast each of the writer-narrators of "The Other 'I'" know full well that he or she is the only individual who transmits information to the reader. The narrators of the novels of this study do not share Bruno's false modesty. Each non-protagonist observer in this study also seems to accept that his or her role as an observer is to relinquish control to the central protagonist and he or she focuses on the limitation to see, understand and narrate.

Another example of Bruno's feelings of superiority can be analyzed when his book on Johnny comes out in English. Bruno admits that he was, at first, interested, in Johnny's opinion of his biography. But then he reveals, again, his feeling of superiority as music critic. He admits his doubts in Johnny's discourse about *his* book: "como si su opinión fuera a revelarme—a mí, el autor—la verdad sobre mi libro"(La autopista 140). This is only one example of many contradictions in Bruno's narration. By the end the reader is certain that Bruno sees his role as more important than Johnny's, and this is only further solidified by the *denouement* of "El perseguidor" when Johnny is dead and Bruno

has the last word. In fact, Johnny's death gives Bruno even more free reign to narrate what he wishes as Johnny's favored music critic (Lagos 75).

This point leads me to another difference between "El perseguidor" and the novels of this study: the importance that is given to dialogue. In the novella there are sections of dialogue between the musician and the critic in which Johnny has long monologue-like quotes and Bruno listens and judges Johnny. These monologues only occur in bad moments of Johnny's life, such as when Johnny is sick, has lost his saxophone and speaks of the metro in his home, or of the urns when he is in the hospital, and near the end of the narration when he speaks nostalgically of music. The contradiction here is that Bruno includes these long ranting passages only to admit later that he dismisses everything that Johnny says: "Todo lo que Johnny me dice en momentos así ...no se puede escuchar prometiéndose volver a pensarlo más tarde. Apenas se está en la calle, apenas es el recuerdo y no Johnny quien repite las palabras, todo se vuelve un fantaseo de marihuana, un manotear monótono" (La autopista 111). These are rather egregious claims from Bruno who only a few moments earlier in his text asserted that Johnny is the mouth, and he only the ear.

Thus, the dialogue and long monologues are actually just another way for Bruno to discount Johnny and manipulate that which he narrates. Instead of presenting the reader with the most accurate portrayal possible of Johnny, the music critic actually leads the reader further away from him, so that the reader can re-direct his or her focus on the exhibitionism of Bruno. Clearly, it is not a coincidence that the inclusion of Johnny's dialogue peaks when he is at his worst. This is completely the manipulation of the narrator, Bruno. With the power of the written word, Bruno discounts Johnny, who has

the power of the spoken word revoked from him by Bruno's writing. Bruno uses Johnny's ranting as ammunition to alienate the reader from him, by maneuvering the narration, and presenting Johnny as a mad, ranting drug addict. Bruno even goes so far as to discount Johnny's music by calling his genius a "façade" or that it makes him want to "vomit". Therefore, the reader can deduce that Bruno considers that his writing and role as a critic is more important than Johnny's musical genius, which he describes as fake.

There is also a second text implicit in "El perseguidor". Bruno writes about Johnny in a different way in the reader's version, than in his official biography of Johnny. In this way, Bruno demonstrates that ultimately, he sees the task of the critic as expressing *selected* truths about the subject. Bruno is in a position of power to favor certain elements in his biography of Johnny—he intentionally leaves the rest out. However, in "El perseguidor" the reader is able to see a different side of Johnny than the one Bruno offers in the biography, but also through a manipulated lens. Bruno never comes to terms with the fact that he manipulates Johnny in either of the texts that he has written. Indeed, the reader imagines, combining both the story we read and the extratextual biography that we cannot read could potentially offer a more complete portrait of Johnny, although Bruno never seems to purport the belief that he has already written a "complete" biography of Johnny. In contrast, the postmodern storytellers do not write with the same suppositions. Each postmodern observer narrator included in this study admits to trying to portray his or her subjects as honestly as possible, knowing with every word written, that he or she is unable to narrate objectively and or completely.

Bruno, in “El perseguidor” never once admits that he does not really understand Johnny—just that he must manipulate what he does know about Johnny depending on the reason that he is writing, and the expected audience. Bruno writes two separate works in order to accomplish communication—a task that he still sees as conceivable and feasible. Therefore, we can deduce that Bruno still writes under the supposition of communication, and assumes that he possesses the ability to narrate Johnny, while the later observing narrators are cognizant of the impossible task of the narrator. Bruno chooses to neglect a more accurate portrayal of Johnny in the biography. Furthermore, after hearing Johnny’s reaction to his biography, Bruno concludes: “Pobre Johnny, después se queja que uno no ponga esas cosas en un libro” (*La autopista* 148). By writing “El perseguidor”, however, Bruno is putting “esas cosas” on paper, which demonstrates an internal conflict in his narration.

We can also look at Bruno’s narcissism and self-interest as different from the other first-person non-protagonist narrators of this study. Bruno does not see a reflection of himself in his observations of Johnny—because his gaze does not focus on Johnny. His narcissism is more traditional and focuses directly upon himself. It is upon his own job as music critic that Bruno is fixated, and just as Narcissus can never be satisfied in his gaze of himself, neither will Bruno be satisfied. As he watches Johnny’s concert on one occasion he states: “Como es natural mañana escribiré para *Jazz Hot* una crónica del concierto esta noche” (*La autopista* 120). When he thinks that Johnny may have died he immediately begins to think of his role as critic: “y en ese caso, mi deber profesional...” (*La autopista* 124). Furthermore, his concern with Johnny’s possible failure (relapse into drugs, mental shutdown, loss of saxophone, etc.) is based only on the

harm it could cause to the launching of the forthcoming translation of his book on Johnny. He states, fearful of Johnny's instability: "El fracaso de Johnny sería malo para mi libro (de un momento a otro saldrá la traducción al inglés y al italiano), y probablemente de cosas así esta hecha una parte de mi cuidado por Johnny" (La autopista 119). Bruno shows that he consistently favors himself and his own role as critic (he thinks his English translation will "sell like Coca-Cola") and he is convinced that he is more important than Johnny is. Thus, his narcissistic reflection comes from his own image and self-love for his role as a music critic. Bruno does not suffer from the same narcissistic deficiencies that characterize the narrators of the novels of this study nor does he reap a narcissistic benefit by gazing upon and narrating the Other. Although he allows himself to admire Johnny for brief moments, he is quick to retract positive thoughts about Johnny before "writing" them. He makes sure not to lose his own self-focus in narrating the "superstar".

On one occasion, as Bruno elaborates on Johnny's pathological behavior he admits, "Lo malo es que si sigo así voy a acabar escribiendo más sobre mí mismo que sobre Johnny" (La autopista 133), which is precisely what happens in the text. This is evidenced by his augmented focus on himself and on his own relationship with Johnny (Lagos 70). In comparison to the observer narrators of this study Bruno is too intensely focused on himself to be classified in the same way. He glorifies his ability to narrate privileged information about Johnny; he demonstrates a direct form of narcissism, evidenced by his self-confidence. In this way, as I have stated Bruno's narcissism is direct and he focuses on his writing as a clear mirror in which to capture his whole unfragmented Self. Although he attempts to convince the reader that he does not need

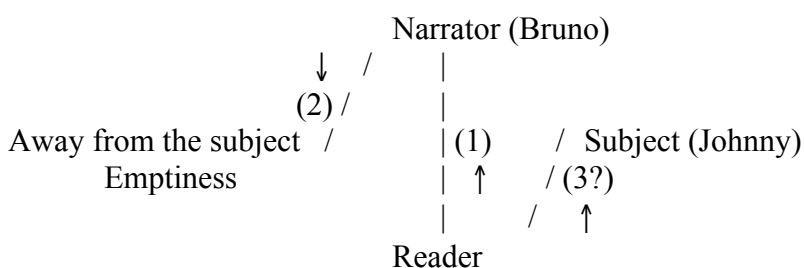
Johnny, he presents Johnny as needing him, the writer. Indeed, Johnny is seen to suffer from the narcissistic deficiency that characterizes the subject of the novels I analyze in this study. Johnny even verbally expresses his hope to find his true reflection by reading what Bruno writes about him, unlike the reflection that he sees in the mirror that leaves everything in reverse. However, after reading Bruno's text, Johnny is disappointed, as the music critic was unable to serve his needs for self-affirmation. Johnny is unable to "see" himself in Bruno's inexact portrayal of him.

There are several other minor differences between the observing narrators studied in "The Other 'I'" and Bruno in "El perseguidor", however, there is one other major issue that I wish to deal with before continuing, which is the role of the reader. In "El perseguidor" the reader is not yet invited as an accomplice to discover the observed from a similar vantage point as the narrator. Bruno maintains a superior view to his narrated subject and of the reader by withholding the other text. The reader never feels he is at the same level as the narrator. I have discussed elsewhere that Bruno is able to sympathize with the reader's difficulty in understanding Johnny's true character.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the reader will recognize that Bruno does not look at Johnny so as to guide the reader to a greater understanding of him, instead he leads the reader to look at him, the narrator. This is perhaps among the many reasons why Bruno attempts to portray Johnny as illogical, so that the reader can relate to and value him more than Johnny. The willing reader, however, is invited by Cortázar of his or her own accord to begin a metaphysical search for him or herself within this space of illogical and irrational thought that

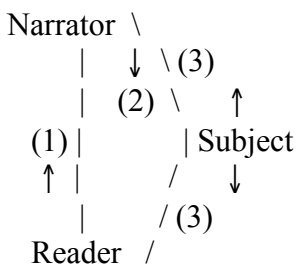
¹⁸ See Patricia Reagan, "Going Under: The Metro and the Search for Oneself in Julio Cortázar's "The Pursuer", "Studies in 20th & 21st Century Literature 30.2 (2006).

characterizes Johnny (Reagan 394). This does not happen as a result of the observer narrator, Bruno, but rather against his rhetoric.

For the reader, Bruno is not a way to get to Johnny but rather an impediment to understanding him—thus the relationship between the narrator, the reader and the narrated forms two different shapes when considering “El perseguidor” compared with the postmodern first-person non-protagonist narrators of this study.



In “El perseguidor” the Reader looks towards the narrator Bruno (1). Bruno leads the reader away from Johnny to an abyss of emptiness, or to focus on Bruno himself (2). The reader is then faced with the necessity to choose whether he will attempt to understand Johnny on his own and move closer to Johnny outside of the text, in the metaphysical space (3) or whether he will remain unengaged with Johnny by focusing on Bruno.



The postmodern observer narrator in the four novels that I analyze in this study forges a very different looking relationship. The reader looks towards the narrator (1). The narrator, instead of looking away from the narrated looks towards the subject (2).

Although the reader’s initial gaze is on the narrator, the subject reflects back to the

narrator and to the reader initializing a personalized reflection of both reader and narrator (3). It is in this stage, that the reader may hope to evaluate and resolve his own narcissistic deficiencies. The subject or protagonist of each text offers a full reflection to the reader, who finds fulfillment as a direct result of his voyeurism of the novel's subject.

Accordingly, I view "El perseguidor" as a precursor of difference to the novels in question in this study. In contrast to the observing narrators of "The Other 'I'", Bruno focuses on himself, his own struggle with Johnny, and his own narration as a music critic. Johnny's amazing creativity manages to show through in glimpses to the readers, notwithstanding Bruno's narration of his story. Johnny's monologues (embedded in his dialogues with Bruno) play an important role in Bruno's discounting of Johnny's credibility. Bruno feels that he is still in a position to be able to narrate a more or less complete picture of Johnny between the two texts that he writes about Johnny, the novella that makes up "El perseguidor" and the biography that exists extra-textually. However, Bruno's narcissistic gaze of himself actually leads the reader away from Bruno, preventing a reader-accomplice relationship from forming. The reader cannot begin to satisfy his or her narcissistic deficiencies in the narration. When compared with "El perseguidor," "The Other 'I'" shows the way in which the postmodern first-person non-protagonist narrator that I have defined in this introduction is different from his observing narrator predecessor.

TYPIFYING THE FIRST-PERSON NARRATOR

Finally, in this section I evaluate the typifying of the first-person non-protagonist narrator by various critics in order to contextualize my analysis in useful terminology and theory of the observer narrators in the upcoming chapters. James Phelan's epilogue of

Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration classifies

several types of observer narrators in relationship to the other characters in the novel.

Phelen claims that first-person non-protagonist narrators occupy one or more of the following roles:

These observers can play a wide variety of roles in the narrative action, ranging from that of protagonist's sidekick... to peripheral agent ... from that of a participant who affects and is affected by the action ... to that of reporter who is affected by but does not affect the actions of the main characters... It is even possible for the observer to be someone who neither affects nor is affected by the main action beyond being moved to pass on the tale. (198-99)

In addition to the exploring each narrator's relationship with the other characters of the novel, I also evaluate the relationship that each observing narrator has with the reader.

Phelen uses the term *narrator function* (the narrator's relationship to other characters, such as his limitations in entering another character's mind) and the *disclosure function* (the narrator's relationship with his authorial audience in which he discloses information to them) to analyze the narrator's relationship with the narrated and with the reader.

Indeed, the role of the reader is a particularly important facet of observer narration as Phelen indicates: "An observer narrator's quest for the story that he or she tells can itself become part of the represented action, something that significantly affects the authorial audience's response to the narrative" (199), which holds true for all of the novels of this study. In each novel I analyze, the observer narrator is on a quest to arrive at an understanding of the protagonist and desires that the reader accompany him or her

on this quest. In the end, an understanding of the protagonist, in the act of narrating itself, leads the narrator and a reader-accomplice to him or herself, thereby demonstrating that in the voyeuristic narcissism of postmodernism the observer narrator and reader are really on a quest for the Self by way of the Other.

Additionally, I quantify other technical aspects of observer narration. First is the protagonist's level of autonomy. For example, I analyze the narrator's relationship to the protagonist in order to determine to what extent the narrator controls him or her. As one example, the dialogue in "El perseguidor" shows Johnny's manipulation of Bruno. I also analyze the strategies that each author employs to lead the narrator to find out information that is beyond his or her own point-of-view. Finally, I evaluate the degree to which the reader is an active partaker of the rhetorical advantages of observer narration.

THE PROBLEM WITH THE FIRST-PERSON NARRATOR AND THE SOLUTION OF "THE OTHER 'I'"

Lagos' article presents a small group of non-protagonist narrators, and the assertion that criticism now has "la conciencia de que no es posible hablar por el Otro con autoridad [que] es una de las premisas de la época posmoderna" (77). The novels of "The Other 'I'", attempt to explore this consciousness directly. This study, which builds upon Benjamin, Franco, Lacan, Lagos and Santiago, so far as I am aware, is the first book-length cultural study of fiction with first-person non-protagonist narrators of Spanish America. While I assert that the first-person non-protagonist narrator is just one of the many ways that an author can narrate the Other, it is clear that the solution of the observing narrator is a cultural response to the first-person narrator who has assumed the role as knowledgeable truth-teller. The problem with the first-person narrative lies in this

relationship of power and truth. While the *testimonio* and other forms of first-person protagonist narrations attempt to share a truth with language, the observing narrator underscores his own lack of power over narrative objectivity and language. In the *testimonio*, the Self narrates as if he or she has the capacity to accurately interpret him or herself. The observer narrator, however, establishes a more difficult task in two ways. In relating the other, this narrator sets out on an impossible mission, for as Riggan affirms “such a narrator can only report to the best of his ability and recollection the overt words and actions in his protagonist’s life and draw from these his interpretations concerning the inner nature of that protagonist” (22). Secondly, the “dramatized chronicler” as Riggan calls the observer narrator, is still up against the dissipating power of the word itself. Thus, the observer narrator embodies the postmodern dilemma by attempting to attain truth by using language. Thus, the loss is double—The postmodern storyteller’s knowledge of the protagonist is limited, while the word itself has lost power.

Therefore, the problem of the first-person protagonist narrator is the simplicity of his or her mission in telling his or her own story. The first-person narrative confessional mode is readily abused, while the self-focus contributes to an overt narcissism. In this case it is a narcissistic surplus and not a deficiency. However, the reader cannot benefit by observing the protagonist’s narcissism; he or she sees this protagonist outside of him or herself, with no relationship to his or her own experiences. As we have already witnessed, the ability to communicate experiences has diminished. By telling the story as an observer, as the narrators of this study do, each novel becomes more complex, and more demanding, yet more rewarding and applicable to the reader Self, who may otherwise lack communication with a first-person narrative. Neither the postmodern

storyteller nor the reader is alone as they accompany one another in the attempt to grasp the subject of their narration. In their observation of the Other, the narrator and the reader are lead to a greater understanding of the self and each is ultimately confronted with a solution to his own narcissistic deficiencies that have resulted from contemporary mass culture itself.

In the following chapters I approach the four texts of focus chronologically, but I also begin with José Donoso's El jardín de al lado (1981) as this particular novel addresses writing after the Boom—which facilitates a comparison of the postmodern narrator with previous narrators. The first five chapters of Donoso's novel seem to be narrated by Julio, an exiled *escritor fracasado*. However, in the sixth chapter the reader discovers that the real narrator is Gloria, Julio's spouse, and her or she is called to readdress everything that has been narrated by Gloria when believing Julio to be the narrator. This novel is also an apt starting point as the writer-figure Julio is struggling to write a first-person novel based on his experience of the 1973 *golpe militar* in Chile, which seems to be written under the premise of expressing truth. Gloria's narration rejects all notions of truth and overpowers this traditional narrative. The two texts of El jardín draw an immediate point of comparison between the two types of first-person narrators.

Elena Garro's Testimonios sobre Mariana (1981) is remarkable in that it offers the perspective of three different narrators who all focus on the very elusive Mariana. The first narrator is Vicente, a long-term love affair of Mariana, the second is a good but not entirely faithful female friend of Mariana's, Gabrielle, while the last narrator is André, a man who has very limited contact with Mariana over a very long time span, yet his love

for her acts as a catalyst of his entire life. In this chapter, I emphasize the role of the traditional *testimonio* in comparison with Garro's inverted use of the genre. I also use the special role of the sole female narrator Gabrielle to emphasize the way in which Garro's novel establishes and subsequently subverts male authority.

In Gabriel García Márquez's Crónica de una muerte anunciada (1981) the first-person unnamed narrator seeks to piece together the happenings surrounding the murder of Santiago Nasar in a journalistic style, with the interesting twist of an already deceased narrative subject. In this chapter I analyze the narrator's various use of anti-rhetoric or parodied rhetoric in order to manipulate Santiago and to show that fiction as a manipulation cannot possibly express truth. The use of anti-rhetoric also emphasizes the role of the reader in understanding the message of the text, which is as plural and individualistic as the reader. In this novel, the role of Ángela, a deflowered young victim becomes an important part in augmenting the reader's increased importance.

Finally, the fourth novel I evaluate is Mario Vargas Llosa's El hablador (1987). There are actually two narrators in this novel. The first is the unnamed narrator who focuses on understanding the *hablador*, storyteller, of the Machiguenga Indian tribe in the Peruvian jungle, who is eventually suggested to be the narrator's friend, Saúl Zuratas; and the *hablador* himself who takes the role of an Benjaminian style oral storyteller to narrate for the entire Machiguenga tribe. This novel is structured on a pattern of dichotomies, established by the narrator, which are used to separate the Self and Other and the roles of oral versus written storytelling within a broad scope of anthropology. The stringent dividing lines of these pre-established dichotomies are undermined throughout

El hablador. The relationship between the narrator and his or her observed subject eventually merges, allowing for the reader reconciliation and self-affirmation.

Through this investigation, then, I offer some explanations for critical considerations of the first-person non-protagonist narrator in four contemporary Latin American novels, that I attempt to show as applicable more generally to other observer narrators. Some of the questions I have aimed to answer include: What does an observer narrator offer rhetorically to a novel that a traditional first-person protagonist narrator cannot provide? What is the role of the narrator, author and reader in fiction by a first-person, non-protagonist narrator? What are the ethical considerations of a first-person non-protagonist narrator? What role does narcissism play in narration that is not self-reflective on the part of the narrator? What role does this narcissism play in a contemporary understanding of culture? What is the link between postmodernism and narcissism? To what extent do the texts in question attend to narcissistic deficiencies of individual readers? Are observer narrators necessarily postmodern? What elements are the postmodern narrators incapable of narrating? What techniques are employed by a non-protagonist narrator to get into the minds of his characters? Are there narrative inconsistencies in the novels of this study? If there are, why are the novels still functional and such licenses permissible by the readers? Finally, how does the use of an observer narrator fit into modern day Latin American and contemporary literature?

In closing, “The Other ‘I’” examines the first-person non-protagonist narrator in a small group of Latin American texts published after 1980, as a way to contribute to further study of the observer narrator in Spanish America and abroad. The narrator of each novel analyzed in this study will take the willing reader as an accomplice on his or

her quest to understand the Other. As both reader and narrator may suffer narcissistic deficiencies he or she reads and writes to capture a glimpse of his or her reflection through the gaze of the Other. I, too, in this study, quest to understand the observer narrator with the hope that the reader will use his or her perspective and experience to understand the postmodern storyteller in the novels in question and his or her possible benefits to the reader accomplice. Can postmodern criticism also reinstate the lost ability to communicate lamented by Benjamin?

Chapter 1: Lost and Found: Self-Exile as a means of Self-Affirmation in

José Donoso's El jardín de al lado

“Writing is always exilic by virtue of necessity...writing invariably encounters the greatest necessity of all... the impossibility of decisively and decidably breaching otherness, of comprehending and being comprehended”

—Djelel Kadir

“La realidad existe o no existe, en todo caso es incomprendible en su esencia, así como las esencias son incomprendibles en la realidad, y la comprensión es otro espejo para alondras”

--Julio Cortázar

I begin with José Donoso's El jardín de al lado (1981), which is useful in exploring the relationship between the Boom novel of the mid-twentieth century and the struggle of Latin American authors afterwards to write a different kind of novel, yet still maintain the universal appeal enjoyed for the first time in Latin America. Donoso's novel illustrates the elements of my introduction quite clearly, thereby providing an excellent baseline of comparison with the remaining novels of “The Other ‘I’”. Donoso's corpus of writing includes collections of short stories, essays and various novels. Some of his most well known novels include Coronación (1950), El lugar sin límites (1967), El obscuro pájaro de la noche (1970) and El jardín de al lado. Also, Historia personal del “boom” (1972), an analysis of the Boom as a literary and political moment in Latin America

intermixed with Donoso's autobiography is considered to be one of Donoso's most important contributions.

In El jardín de al lado the first-person non-protagonist narrator is not revealed until the end of the novel. The reader is initially led to believe that the narrator is Julio, a failed political writer exploring his own crisis of identity through a traditional self-reflective narrative. The complexity of the narrative perspective is exposed when Gloria, Julio's wife, is revealed to have narrated the entire text. The development of the plot is relatively straightforward and can be summarized by mapping the trajectory of the chapters. In chapter one, the reader discovers that Julio and Gloria are Chilean exiles living in Sitges. They are invited to spend the summer in Pancho Salvatierra's apartment in Madrid. Chapter two through the first half of chapter five take place in Madrid in Salvatierra's apartment which overlooks the garden of the Duque de Andina. In the second half of chapter five the pair travels to Marrakech in a false-celebration of the victory of the acceptance for publication of Julio's novel (he lies to Gloria) and also with the purpose of visiting their son, Patrick. The sixth and final chapter of the novel calls for immediate reevaluation of the novel when Gloria unmask herself as the true narrator of the entire novel. As Gloria confesses her technique and gains the momentum to finish the novel on her own terms, the reader comes to the realization that Gloria's novel develops from the distancing of herself from that which is her own; her gender, her experiences, and her husband's sense of failure in writing. Gloria has done that which her husband does not or cannot do in order to be able to write a novel that is worthy of publication. It is therefore possible to assert that Julio's failure in writing a print-worthy novel is a direct result of his inability to detach himself from his own identity and artistic work. In other

words, the true narrator, Gloria, shows that Julio's first-person protagonist novel is unwriteable, while her own novel, written from the hidden perspective of a non-protagonist narrator is the essential element in the acceptance of her own novel for publication by the same super-power editor, Núria Monclús, that rejects Julio's novel.¹⁹

In this chapter, I first link the concepts of exile and alienation to various issues in the novel, including political exile, Gloria's writing of the Other, and the individual's feelings of lack and disconnection in modern society, as well as other types of exilic distancing. I then undertake an in-depth analysis of the reason for which Julio's text fails while Gloria's text is a success. Finally, I connect Gloria's victorious novel to the reader. Her observation of Julio leads the reader to the affirmation of the Self by observing the Other, in other words to the new narcissism of postmodernism.

THE ROLE OF EXILE AND ALIENATION

There are varying degrees of distance between the first-person Self and his or her writing that can be found in El jardín. The novel can be described as having three separate texts. The first text, the one that Julio, the career writer, attempts to write seems to belong to the genre of *testimonio*, as the reader is told that it is a political, historical and personal novel of the *dictadura*. Both the original and edited versions of this "novel" exist only extra-textually, or beyond the pages of the text that we read. However, Julio's failed *testimonio*/confessional becomes important to the actual text of El jardín because it seems to be the exact opposite of Gloria's novel. The second text of the novel is the one that the reader consumes for the first time when reading chapters one through five under

¹⁹ Oscar Montero describes Núria as a "quasi-expressionistic version of editor Carmen Balcells from *Historia [Personal del 'boom']* of Barcelona's Seix Barral. Oscar Montero, "El jardín de al lado: Rewriting the Boom," Studies on the Works of José Donoso, ed. Miriam Adelstein (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen P, 1990) 27-29.

the supposition that the narrator is Julio. In this text, the supposed narrator-protagonist, Julio, searches for a sense of deeper meaning within himself by exploring his identity; his relationship with Gloria; his own writing; and his observation of the beautiful neighbors frolicking in the garden next-door that can be seen from the windows of Salvatierra's apartment. Julio's text, as Gloria portrays it, is predominately self-centered as he fixates the majority of his attention on his own writing and on himself. Julio's self-absorbed interest reflects a direct form of narcissism. Finally, the third text of the novel entails a rereading of the entire novel after reading the sixth chapter in which Gloria reveals that she has written the whole text. Gloria's text necessarily should be considered a separate text as it necessitates a reanalysis of the novel from a distinct perspective once the reader discovers that Gloria has narrated the first five chapters as well. In this final text, the reader understands that a first-person protagonist has not narrated the novel, but rather, a first-person *non*-protagonist narrator of the type established in the introduction is the true narrator.

As a storyteller sharing his own experiences, Julio, the writer of the first and second texts can be considered a traditional storyteller, one who intends to communicate a message in his narration directly to the reader. The incommunicability of experience in contemporary society as lamented by Walter Benjamin, is perhaps one of the reasons for the failure of his texts (83-87). Julio simply cannot express well what he wishes to communicate to the reader. On the other hand, Gloria's final chapter, and the subsequent rereading of the entire novel establish her as a postmodern storyteller, following Santiago's concept. Gloria becomes one who can communicate an individual message to each reader.

One particularly complicated aspect of Gloria's text is her own self-critique as she imagines and subsequently narrates Julio's perception of her. In other words, at various moments in the novel, Gloria imagines Julio's thoughts as if he were the observer narrator and as if she were his subject. In this way, although the third text has the true observer narrator, the second text also demonstrates some elements of observation, including Julio's supposed observation of Gloria as the Other, as well as his voyeurism of Monika Pinell de Bray, the beautiful neighbor. However, the reader should remember that anything that Julio narrates about Gloria is actually indicative of Gloria's self-reflection. Indeed, in order to perceive this complicated element and other unique considerations of the novel, the reader must accept an active role and reread the text a second time in order to gain the benefits of the new perspective of the postmodern storyteller, Gloria. I will discuss these benefits at length in a later point in my analysis of El jardín.

Certainly, as I elaborate in my introduction, contemporary man suffers from a narcissistic deficiency, which can loosely be defined as a sense of fragmentation simultaneous to the lack of center in postmodernism. In El jardín, the concept of exile both provokes and explains the sense of estrangement that leads to the narcissistic deficiency of the novel's characters. In point of fact, the concept of exile is manifested in three specific ways in El jardín. First, Gloria and Julio are living in Spain as a result of a political exile from their native Chile. Secondly, exile becomes a broader metaphor in the novel to represent the condition of contemporary man as suffering from feelings of lack, disconnection and dissatisfaction with the Self. Suffering from an *existential exile* is not at all unlike having a narcissistic deficiency. Finally, the third implementation of

the concept of exile is in Gloria's mode of narrating, which can be defined as an estranged or exiled perspective, one of *self-exile*. Gloria willingly gives up her own perspective in order to narrate Julio, knowing that she will never really attain an understanding of him from his point of view. She becomes a writer-Self estranged from a narrated-Other. However, through her very style of narrative, Gloria presents a tentative solution to the existential exile felt by both her own persona and also possibly by the reader. Gloria brings the reader to accompany her in the observation of Julio as a way to establish a reflection of the Self through the gaze of the Other. In other words, Gloria's Self-exile as a narrative strategy allows for the affirmation of her own Self and of the reader's Self as a psychological strategy.

María-Inés Lagos-Pope's compilation of essays regarding exile and literature indicates two traditions in the role of exile in recent literature. On the one hand, are works that use exile "metaphorically" that can be distinguished "between the Christian concept that sees exile as the condition of the soul longing for rest in God and the representation of spiritual alienation" (10-11). On the other hand, there are groups of texts that "deal with the representation of exile as a consequence of concrete banishment" (11). However, Lagos-Pope establishes that such a method of evaluation has obvious limitations: "Yet such a clear-cut division would not reflect the complex realities and experiences that the term exile encompasses" (11). Clearly, the various applications of the concept of exile is equally complicated in Donoso's text, which demonstrates a metaphorical, although non-spiritual application; the element of expatriation from one's country; as well as the exploration of two distinct styles of writing, one of which can be characterized as self-exile. These two styles are set up as opposing dichotomies. One

entails the exploration of the Self and the other an exploration of the Other. The narrator writing the Other undergoes a self-exile in order to accomplish this task, while the narrator writing the Self does not self-exile. The latter style of writer cannot bring the reader to share in or benefit from his or her experiences as they reflect only the Self. Thus, in this chapter, the three forms of exile and estrangement are the crises around which the novel is organized.

Indeed, as Augusto Sarrochi describes, the characters of the novel are fragmented and broken individuals, just as the reader of contemporary society is fragmented. Sarrochi concludes that both Gloria and Julio are “seres quebrados, movidos por el *engaño*. Viven engañados en torno a su verdadera situación política, moral y económica, e insisten en justificar y mantener una actitud que consideran auténtica pero que es solo el encubrimiento del fracaso personal y colectivo” (205). As Sarrochi indicates, the feeling of individual failure is undoubtedly linked to a collective failure of society, emphasizing feelings of alienation and the incompleteness of the Self. In this way, Donoso’s novel universalizes the symbolic commentary to all individuals of contemporary society while also making the novel very personal in its application to the reader-accomplice. Donoso himself emphasizes that the Boom of Latin American can best be understood in its universalizing of many themes (*Historia* 17). In other words, Julio emphasizes a desire to write in the mode of the Boom, to universalize without individualizing. His true personal desire is to write a master narrative that would find its place among other great works by Latin American authors. Contrarily, Gloria’s writing and her text intentionally pertain to a *tono menor* (*El jardín* 263). Gloria knows and accepts the fact that the master narrative that Julio dreams of writing is no longer possible to attain in postmodern society. Her

strategy instead is to appeal to the postmodern individual. As Jean-François Lyotard concludes in The Postmodern Condition, the “grand” or master narrative which has shaped our society “has lost its credibility” (37). In other words, there is no longer a possibility to write a canonical text in this so-called postmodern society as the canon itself has been eradicated.

Although El jardín focuses on alienation, the novel is not nearly as pessimistic as El lugar sin límites and El obscuro pájaro de la noche, as Philip Swanson has indicated. Unlike Donoso’s earlier novels, in El jardín, “the fundamental futility of life is not denied, but it is counterbalanced by a bold determination to make the best of it” (José Donoso 152). The feeling of hope underlying the entire novel is rooted in the role of the creative act of writing, and in the reincarnation of the traditional storyteller into the figure of the postmodern storyteller. In spite of the fragmentation of postmodernism, Gloria’s very act of writing in a *tono menor* purports a solution to the reader’s feelings of incompleteness in contemporary society. As the reader and Gloria observe Julio, a complete and un-fragmented reflection of the Self is found by looking at the Other.

Gloria admits that the possibilities of writing from the perspective of self-exile are endless. She states, (through Julio before revealing herself) “Todo es posible en un jardín solitario al que uno no tiene acceso” (El jardín 164). For Gloria’s text, these words hold true. In fact, everything does become possible when she slips into the garden next-door. In other words, when Gloria puts herself into Julio’s perspective in order to narrate him, new possibilities of self-affirmation and identity formation are achieved for her and for the reader simply through “entering” the inaccessible garden of the Other.

Undeniably, the very concept of self-affirmation is a problematic consideration in the context of postmodern theory. Fredric Jameson suggests that “concepts such as anxiety and alienation...are no longer appropriate to the world of the postmodern...This shift in the dynamics of cultural pathology can be characterized as one in which the alienation of the subject is displaced by the latter’s fragmentation” (Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism 14). As Jameson asserts, alienation does not form part of postmodernism because there is neither a Self nor a society from which to be alienated. He adds that postmodernism is “not merely a liberation from anxiety but a liberation from every other kind of feeling as well, since there is no self present to do the feeling” (Jameson Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism 15). However, in spite of Jameson’s declaration, the postmodern Self, who is now characterized by fragmentation, cannot actually be liberated from feeling. Instead, the Self must fight constantly and consciously in order to reconstruct the fragments which now constitute his body. The fragmented individual suffers general feelings of malaise that stem from his perception of his own narcissistic deficiency. This overall feeling of unhappiness is a source of motivation fomenting the individual’s search for him or herself. Surely, an individual who actively fights against his or her own fragmentation cannot be described as “liberated from all feelings”.

Jameson seems to fail to acknowledge that the living and breathing human being still unquestionably experiences feelings of alienation and de-centeredness. However, understanding or expressing these feelings is now perceived to be more difficult as they pertain to an invented world of discourse that cannot be communicated. Yet, these feelings still exist. In reality, it is this very pessimism of postmodernism that has been a

major contributor to the individual's self-perpetuating crisis of fragmentation. What is most useful of Jameson's theory is the emphasis on the difficulty for the individual to ascertain a sense of or describe the Self, which is dramatized by the failed first-person narration of Julio. In Julio's narration, he cannot effectively express the Self to the reader Other. On the other hand, Gloria's observer narration both emphasizes the difficulty in narrating the individual as a member of postmodern society while also emphasizing her own and the reader's own fragmentation.

Even within postmodernism, it would be impossible to negate the alienation that Julio and Gloria (even within fiction) and other first-generation exiles feel. In the novel the exiled are described as "desplazados... fracasados" (El jardín 54) and as "perdido, atrapado" (El jardín 258). The novel's characters are often cited as suffering from an identity crisis, as a result of their political exile. A. Alejandro Bernal describes the sentiment of Donoso's novel as reflecting: "la pérdida de identidad, la desesperanza y los problemas personales y sociales marcados por la circunstancia; y, por otra parte, la lucha por la supervivencia que está muy lejos de la alienación" (57). Although Bernal also suggests that Donoso's novel appeals to any individual who is exiled from a Latin American dictatorship, I suggest that the novel's appeal is even broader than he postulates, as the narration may have the ability to explore the lack of belonging of many individuals.

In spite of Jameson's claim that alienation is absent in postmodernism, there are many different ways in which the sense of alienation is manifested in the text, which I consider to be synonymous to the concepts of estrangement and exile. For example, the very title of the novel reveals that estrangement is a central force. Several studies focus

on the parallels between the Duke of Andina's garden observed from Salvatierra's apartment and Chile, which is now estranged from Gloria and Julio.²⁰ Bernal, for example affirms that as the next-door garden is the only contact that Julio has with Chile, it becomes a representation of the lost space of his own country. Similarly, Fernando Aínsa portrays the neighbor's garden as a paradise lost: "el espacio ideal no es propio, sino ajeno, pertenece a otros y su acceso, por lo tanto, está limitado, cuando no vedado"(5).

Aínsa describes the feelings accompanying exile and alienation as an existential orphanhood:

Julio Méndez pretende detener el futuro que se le impone: asumir cabalmente su destino de orfandad, huérfano de madre, pero también huérfano de país, aterido soledad del hombre contemporáneo que se descubre inmaduro, sin techo propio y sin la red sutil de dependencias y compromiso de quién vive inserto en una comunidad. Un futuro amenazante... (17-18)

Thus, for Julio, being separated from Chile exposes him to the same harsh world as that of the reader-accomplice. Living apart from any sense of community in Chile on the other side of an inaccessible "garden" is a grief-provoking situation for Julio. Chile is assimilated to the mother's womb, an infinite place of protection: "ese útero pequeñito, aislado, protector, que es Chile...protector en comparación con la inclemencia de esta inmensidad que es el afuera..." (El jardín 73-74). In a similar way to Julio's suffering, every human being has the potential to suffer the feelings of orphanhood, by being

²⁰ For another example, see Laura A. Chesak, "José Donoso, escritura y subversión del significado," (Madrid: Verbum, 1997).

expelled to the world from the safe haven of the mother's protection. Julio indicates his underlying fantasy to return to the womb, which Freud classifies as the fantasy of "intra-uterine existence" which is "filled with a certain lustful pleasure" (Collected 4:397). Diane Jonte-Pace also explores Freud's theory on the desire to return to the womb and its link to man's fear of death, which she applies to Julio's existential fears: "the fear of death is transformed into maternal/erotic love; death is transformed into sex; tomb transformed into womb" (20). Life and death, beginning with the separation from mother at birth, and then separated again, by political exile from Chile, brings Julio the existential feeling that he is a wandering and motherless orphan. This exile of separation is the ultimate metaphor for Julio's own narcissistic deficiency.

Other critics also write of the estrangement implicit in the dedication and the two epigraphs of the novel. For example, Eduardo Barraza Jara analyzes the alienation and despair contained in Constantino Cavafis' poem included as an epigraph of the novel (143).²¹ Another source of feelings of alienation and exile in the novel can be found in Gloria's feeling of estrangement from the *machista* system. As Lidia Neghme Echeverría

²¹ Dices: "Iré a otra tierra, hacía otro mar
y una ciudad mejor con certeza hallaré.
Pues cada esfuerzo mío está aquí condenado,
y muere mi corazón
lo mismo que mis pensamientos en esta desolada languidez.
Donde vuelvo mis ojos sólo veo
las oscuras ruinas de mi vida
y los muchos años que aquí pasé o destruí".
No hallarás otra tierra ni otro mar.
La ciudad irá en ti siempre. Volverás
a las mismas calles. Y
en los mismos suburbios llegará tu vejez;
en la misma casa encanecerás.
Pues la ciudad es siempre la misma. Otra no busques—no la hay—,
ni caminos ni barco para ti.
La vida que aquí perdiste
la has destruido en toda la tierra.

writes: “El rencor de Gloria se proyecta hacia el sistema machista que la alienó, pues ella deseaba estudiar en la Universidad y su padre prefirió entrenarla para ser señorita de sociedad, es decir una mujer de acuerdo con su clase” (72). Thus, when Gloria does finally write her text, she not only overcomes her alienation from the *machista* system, by being more than just a “señorita de sociedad”, but also paradoxically by dominating in her text, the male voice, which had played a significant role in silencing her. Although she manipulates Julio’s and not her father’s voice in her text, she is able to break her silence and feeling of alienation from the *machista* system. Indeed, by usurping Julio’s perspective, Gloria upsets the delicate balance of male-female relationships. She also overturns the limitation of her own role in society.

Another way in which Julio and Gloria feel alienated from a community is in their family relationships. Neghme Echeverría also sees as recurrent theme in Donoso novels “la dismembración de la familia burguesa” (72), which is also present in this text. In El jardín, Gloria and Julio have little contact with their son, Patrick. Similarly, this failure of family can also be seen in Julio and Gloria’s marriage. Mónica Flori indicates the nature of Julio’s feeling toward his marriage: “Julio se siente fracasado en su matrimonio... percibe su matrimonio de veinticinco años con Gloria... como corroído por la rutina” (105-6).

Furthermore, both Gloria and Julio demonstrate anxiety in the aging process; in changes of their appearance; because of poverty; and they both anticipate death with a fearful attitude. Julio, as Gloria presents him, is so unhappy with himself that he desires to escape his own skin to enter Bijou’s body, a friend of their son Patrick. Gloria also perceives and narrates Julio’s desire to become the street bum in Tangier or of any of the

rich neighbors spied through the window of Salvatierra's apartment. Gloria writes through Julio's voice: "Quiero ser ellos: no yo" (El jardín 110). Gloria also leads Julio's character to confess his fear concerning his mother's death and his apprehension of returning to Chile: "Temo no ser capaz de despedirme de ella, de vender la casa, de rematar los muebles. Temo que día a día se anuncie su muerte para el día siguiente, y yo espere, y día a día vaya quedando atrapado en Chile" (El jardín 76).

In the final chapter, Gloria, now in her own voice, also confesses that she was afraid that Julio was cheating on her with Monika, demonstrating her own insecurities in her marriage and in her age and appearance. She explains her distrust of Julio to Núria: "Levanté el fono del dormitorio...sospechaba otras cosas, percibía fantasmas, fantasías que tomaban el lugar completo de la realidad, un llamado de Monika Pinell de Bray... para citarse con él e invitarlo como a un Baco panzudo a participar en una orgía de jóvenes al agua, que a mí me excluiría" (El jardín 264-65). Gloria's fear of being excluded from Julio's sexual activities with younger females echoes an earlier sentiment in the text that is originally attributed to Julio's text. He observes of Monika: "su sensualidad está cifrada en un código que yo no sé romper y por lo tanto me excluye" (El jardín 108). Thus, for Gloria and Julio, numerous examples of failure and decay abound, in Julio's writing, in political exile, in the lack of a solid family system, in the absence of a fulfilling marriage, in poverty, in societal forms of repression, in dissatisfaction with the Self, in feeling excluded because of age or beauty, etc. In nearly every issue addressed in the novel, there is a strong sense of discontent and lack. These strong feelings of discontent may also be felt in some readers' own similar crises, forging a bond of empathy between Julio, Gloria and the reader of the novel.

Even the novel's structure reinforces this despondency, as Swanson indicates. Each individual chapter "repeatedly hammers home the theme of frustration" as the third section of each chapter, with the exception of the last, demonstrates. Equally, the fourth section of the fourth and fifth chapter demonstrate episodes of "hopelessness" (José Donoso 162). For this reason, almost all criticism dealing with El jardín illustrates in one way or another these feelings of disintegration felt by both Julio and Gloria. Undoubtedly, these various manifestations of feelings of exile and alienation relate to the reader. In the words of Swanson, "*all* the various motifs reinforce the general theme of frustration, of modern man's sense of existential unease" (José Donoso 156).

Although El jardín is less pessimistic than Donoso's previous novels, the suicide of Monika Pinell de Bray, the beautiful neighbor who seems to have it all, serves to solidify the underlying tragic view of humanity in El jardín. Monika's suicide indicates that even those who appear to have the advantages of wealth, fame or youth are not exempt from desperation and feelings of alienation and malaise. Jean-Marie Lemogodeuc concludes that Monika's death, "rompe el sueño de Julio con el suicidio. Esta clave de la novela subraya claramente la visión trágica y desesperanzada de Donoso" (63).

Monika appears to her observers/voyeurs to be well adjusted, from an outsider's view. However, on the inside, her reality is very different. She is merely an external simulacrum, in search of perfection on the outside while suffering on the inside. As Christopher Lasch concludes, this search for external affirmation is a symptom of modern society, that certainly can be seen in the upper class of European society. Lasch concludes: "All of us, actors and spectators alike, live surrounded by mirrors. In them, we seek reassurance of our capacity to captivate or impress others, anxiously searching

out blemishes that might detract from the appearances we intend to project” (92).

Monika’s fame serves to attract the attention of others but at some point she collapses under the pressure of trying to control the perception of her observers. Indeed as Lasch has analyzed, in modern culture the constant struggle for perfection and to control self-representation, leads to disastrous consequences (92).

In Monika’s case, the consequences of her search for self-affirmation in her exhibitionism is deadly, in spite of the image of serenity and beauty that she projects to the voyeuristic world. Another character in the novel sharing Monika’s predicament is Bijou, who belongs to the same generation as Monika. Such are the similarities between the two, that Oscar Montero refers to Monika as, “Bijou’s female double” (“Rewriting” 29). Montero’s criticism of Monika is indirectly harsh as he concludes that Bijou stands for the “values of a rootless world, a brave new world where he feels at home with none of the existential anxieties, none of the nostalgia, which pain Julio and Gloria and which drive them to mix their drinks with valium” (“Rewriting” 30). Montero’s prognosis of Bijou and Monika is accurate in that neither character suffers in the same way as the members of Julio and Gloria’s generation suffer. This phenomenon can be understood best by considering Jameson’s conclusion that in the transition to postmodernism the subject moves from feeling alienated to feeling fragmented. The reader observes that Julio and Gloria feel both alienated and fragmented, while Bijou and Monika never feel a sense of belonging to a system from which to feel alienated. Indeed, both Julio and Gloria remember belonging to a society, family and system that they loved and understood. Their nostalgia can be witnessed by Julio’s intention to “rescue that lost world” with his writing (Montero “Rewriting” 31). Bijou and Monika’s crises are

different as they feel an insecure sense of self that contributes to a feeling of fragmentation, however neither has a connection to a system from to feel alienated. Both characters give the impression to their observers that they are at peace with themselves, although, in actuality they suffer internally in inexpressible ways. Indeed, neither Julio's nor Gloria's texts could be written by Bijou or by Monika, who are even further removed from the possibilities of communication. As Montero asserts, Julio perceives Bijou's world as "an amorphous world, a world without writing" ("Rewriting" 34). In addition to alienation, Julio and Gloria are also victims of fragmentation and suffer the same failing sense of Self. Julio's failed texts, which I will analyze in the next section show his fragmentation from Gloria's perspective.

JULIO'S FAILURE

As fictional characters are constructions of their authors it seems awkward to talk of the success or the failure of one of the characters in writing the novel that is being read. Nonetheless, the core of El jardín is concerned with the dichotomy separating success from failure and the Self from the Other by two character-writers. Julio's extra-textual novel is denied publication because of the fact that his introspective perspective prevents him from being able to write beyond his own personal experience. Specifically, the reader can conclude that Julio writes a failed novel of exile because of his inability to distinguish between his own persona and his task as a writer; he is unable to conceive of themes outside of himself. As Núria relays to him, his novel lacks "una dimensión más amplia y, sobre todo, la habilidad para proyectar, más que para describir o analizar tanto situaciones como personajes de manera que se transformen en metáfora, metáfora válida en sí" (El jardín 29).

In comparison, Gloria portrays herself as the more successful narrator because of her ability to write in the way that N ria suggests to Julio, which she achieves by getting inside “the skin” of someone so different than herself, namely her husband (El jard n 257). Julio finds that he is consistently disappointed with his attempts to ascertain a sense of his true Self through his own reflection. Julio seems to be trapped at Lacan’s pre-mirror stage. He is stuck at a mirror-less moment, like an infant who has never seen his own image in the mirror. Because Julio chooses his own body as his object-choice, he cannot overcome his feelings of fragmentation. He cannot perceive his body in entirety nor can he ever view the shape of his own face. It is this paralyzing sense of incompleteness that impedes Julio from writing the kind of novel that he desires to write. Therefore, he remains in a precarious position trying to piece together his life, but lacking the faculty to see more than just parts of the whole or to write a novel that will help him overcome this inability. Gloria’s situation as an observer narrator is quite different. She is able to come to terms with her whole Self by looking beyond her fragmented Self and using Julio as a looking glass. Unlike Ovid’s Narcissus who looks upon his own gaze, Gloria comes face to face with the Other in a new kind of narcissism. Looking at the other to affirm herself is on way for Gloria to combat her own feelings of discontent.

Undeniably, this contrast is seen so clearly because of the fact that Gloria spends such a great deal of time focusing on Julio’s failed manuscript in the first five chapters of the novel. Julio sends his extra-textual manuscript to N ria on two occasions. The first novel is written before the action of the novel that we read begins and is narrated in the past tense in several different sections of chapters 1-5, while the second version is sent to N ria near the novel’s end. While Julio spends much of the novel *thinking* about

reworking the manuscript (from version 1 to version 2), he frequently finds himself to be distracted, oftentimes by the view from Salvatierra's apartment into the garden of the house next door. Ironically, Julio is distracted by the Other, even obsessed by the Other, yet he finds himself unable to implement his observation of the Other in his writing. When the Andina family leaves for vacation, Julio's gaze of the Other is interrupted. Thus, he returns to contemplation of the Self and the reworking the second draft of his novel. Another liberating moment, which allows Julio to return to the reconfiguration of his novel, is the death of his mother in Chile. Julio admits that his novel can finally progress once these distractions are gone. Julio acknowledges, or rather it is Gloria as the narrator of the whole novel who concludes that Julio's novel, "Avanza un poco a medida que avanza este agosto en que ha muerto mi madre después de que esa heráldica presencia dorada deja vacío el jardín..." (El jardín 173). The departure of Bijou occurs simultaneously with Monika's departure, which also helps Julio rewrite the second version of his novel.

Monika and Bijou both distract Julio from focusing on himself as they are younger, more free-spirited, and more attractive Others. Julio is tormented by their very existence and by the fact that they are so distinct from his unsatisfied Self. Another issue in the novel that helps Julio to finish his failed manuscript is Gloria's withdrawal into silence and depression. Julio (Gloria, actually) questions: ¿Hubiera podido terminarla sin el silencio de su enfermedad, sin la paz que me han proporcionado su dolor y su encarcelamiento?" (El jardín 220). Although Gloria's silence allows Julio to finish his novel, it does not prevent his novel from failure. In response to Julio's/Gloria's question, Lucille Kerr indicates that Gloria's symbolic and literal refusal to speak is an important

element that seals Julio's fate of failure, in spite of the fact that it allowed him to finish writing. Kerr indicates, "in abandoning the right to speak to and engage in dialogue with her husband—that is, in asserting her right not to speak—Gloria helps to make him into the subject who therefore must speak only to himself, a writer" (49).

Furthermore, Gloria's refusal to interact with her husband as a storyteller isolates Julio. Gloria's silence underscores the very incommunicability which Benjamin postulates (100). Julio's failure actually fuels Gloria's own narrative, contrasting her silence in relationship to Julio's work with her ability to communicate with the reader by focusing on the Other. In point of fact, throughout the novel, Gloria only feigns the giving of the voice to Julio, so that she can strongly interject herself into the sixth chapter, dramatizing a narrative take-over. Thus, Gloria's silence during her illness works on two levels; first, it is a major factor leading to Julio's failure, and secondly, it contributes to the production of a first and successful novel by Gloria. Her silence, both during her depression and in the first five chapters of the novel, is therefore ironic, considering her later seizure of the narrative voice. Her confession in the sixth chapter ends her silence, leading to an inversion of the power structure of the novel. To write a successful novel Gloria relinquishes her control of the word only to repossess it more strongly later. She both surrenders and claims power by refusing to speak, showing that she ultimately manipulates the text. On the other hand, Gloria portrays Julio's loss of power to speak between chapters five and six in a metaphorical way. As Laura Chesak explores, Julio's voice is lost in a unique space: "entre las calles de Tánger en un exilio voluntario o un suicidio simbólico" (93). In other words, the transition from Julio's to

Gloria's voice occurs in an un-narrated space. Somewhere in the pages of the novel, in the spaces between words and chapters, the power to speak is passed from Julio to Gloria.

In the contrast between Julio's failed novel and Gloria's successful novel, Donoso demonstrates critical preoccupation with the author's ability to separate himself from his writing, in the text, the characters, the perspective and voice. The author himself posits in an interview:

They [authors] tend to confuse themselves with that voice, as something almost biological, sociological, never a device, a disguise, a willful limitation. The confusion of personal self with literary voice gives the impression that the frightened author wants to jump right back into his created persona, into the literary work which he had separated from himself, giving it a life its own. When taking that voice apart for the benefit of his public, he is compelled to justify it, doesn't want it out there, as a metaphor with a life its own and possessing its own uncontrollable energy and luminosity. Because like all metaphors, and chief among them, the literary voice is uncontrollable. ("A Small" 20)

While there is no indication here that Donoso refers specifically to El jardín, it is clear that the dilemmas he mentions in this passage including the difficulties of author and voice, the creation of the literary metaphor, the writer's inability to separate from the Self, and a consideration of the reader are several of the issues dramatized by the choice of narrator and eventual power inversion that takes place in El jardín.²² In other words,

²² Donoso originally presents this argument in a lecture given the same year as the publication of El jardín. It would be justifiable to assume that this issue was one of his most pressing concerns of fiction at the time

Donoso projects many of his critical considerations of the author onto the contrasting writer-figures of Julio and Gloria. As Donoso has indicated, Gloria's willingness to let her own narrative live freely as a metaphor perpetuates her success. Indeed, Ricardo Gutiérrez Mouat affirms not only that Donoso's novel focuses primarily on this feature but also identifies what for him, is the essence of the novel itself. He indicates that Donoso reveals the "attendant challenge of literary intellectuals to choose between representing their individual self-contained subjectivities and representing a collective subject repressed by dictatorship" (60). In other words, Julio's "individual self-contained" narrative of subjectivity fails, while Gloria's novel with a "collective subject repressed by dictatorship", is triumphant. Gloria is able to speak to a collective readership, as her text is a literary metaphor for exile in two ways: both in her self-exile in order to write the Other, as well as in her ability to address the collective subject's sense of estrangement in contemporary society.

The inability to distance his voice from the self is not Julio's only problem in his novel's failure. As Montero describes, another principal reason for Julio's failure in writing is the lack of parallelism between the political liberalism that he wishes to treat in his writing and his refusal to live the same way in his life. In other words, Julio is a political hypocrite. While Julio may have been politically involved in Chile, he is not involved in politics in Europe. Instead, Julio writes for personal recognition, as Montero underscores: "Su verdadero deseo es la fama, y su posición política se hace a cada paso más ambigua, hasta que se desintegra totalmente" ("La escritura" 456). Julio even shows that he is cognizant of the fact that he must change the focus of his writing from the Self

and that he uses Gloria and Julio in the novel to demonstrate his conceptualization of author, character/narrator, and reader.

to focus on a different subject. For example, he realizes that his lengthy account of six days of imprisonment in Chile does not hold the same meaning for anyone other than himself. However, regardless of this realization, Julio is unable to convert his memories and past into a literary metaphor to replace the first person narration that does not work well for him: “A pesar del valor de sus recuerdos, reconoce que difícilmente pasan a la literatura...” (Montero "La escritura" 456). Julio shows that he cannot let go of his desire to be validated and to achieve fame and acclaim as a writer. He specifically expresses his desire to become a “Vargas Llosa chileno” (El jardín 36), although he also acknowledges that literature has changed at its core and becoming a superstar of the Boom is no longer feasible. He concludes, “El boom, corroído por la historia del gusto literario y por las exigencias estéticas de los jóvenes y la nuevas posturas políticas, era ya sin duda alguna cosa del pasado” (El jardín 36-37). Swanson also affirms Julio’s latent hope to gain this acclaim by creating a grand narrative in the style of an existing narrative, and as such Julio remains obsessed with “imitating from other contemporary sources” ("Simplicity" 525). Throughout the novel, Julio’s desire to achieve fame shows his tendency towards exhibitionism. He wants his own suffering to gain for him a sense of importance. However, his suffering is incommunicable to the reader.

According to Chesak’s analysis, both Julio and Gloria write in order to face the fragmentation of their daily existence. Regarding Julio, Chesak concurs with Montero and Swanson in that Julio hopes to combat his identity crisis with fame, “El único recurso de Julio para confrontar toda la fragmentación que lo escinde en distintos roles es lograr rescribir ‘la novela del golpe’ que lo concederá un sentido de identidad y poder, que lo incluirá entre los grades del ‘boom’ literario latinoamericano” (92). Although he himself

recognizes the futility of his quest, Julio is trapped in a cycle of self-contemplation as the only solution for his fragmentation. Similarly, Gloria also recognizes that her task as a writer is to assuage her own feelings of alienation and fragmentation. Chesak concludes, regarding Gloria, “su propia escritura ha sido un enfrentarse con su fragmentación entre hija, esposa y ‘creadora’, y con su propia crisis y el intento de suicidarse en el apartamento en Madrid” (93). Starting with these similar crises of fragmentation, Chesak’s article attempts to link Julio and Gloria together. For example, she asserts of both narrators, “La auto-contemplación en el espejo del jardín produce una novela igualmente compleja por parte de los dos narradores” (96). While I agree that both narrators may write for the very same reason, namely because they both feel fragmented, my own analysis separates their writing styles and their distinct outcomes.

In contrast with Chesak, Gutiérrez Mouat analyzes El jardín as having two very different narrators, concurring with many of the same critical considerations that my study explores. Gutiérrez Mouat regards Gloria and Julio as undertaking two very different literary projects. For example, he concludes that Julio’s writing is characterized by “mimesis and the testimonial mode of authority” which turns “into the (self-) representation of a distorted mirror—a mode in which perspective is refracted and the referent oscillates” (65). Here, Gutiérrez Mouat shows that Julio’s attempt at self-representation, in looking directly at himself, reflects the image of a distorted mirror. Although I postulate that Julio lacks a mirror altogether, preventing him from seeing any reflection at all, the end result of both Gutiérrez Mouat’s and my own analysis is the underlying crisis of Julio’s fragmentation. Another possible reason that Julio feels fragmented and incomplete is for that which Lasch calls the *cult of celebrity*, a dilemma

in modern society contributing to fragmentation. Julio feels empty and in a mode of crisis as he is forced to accept his fate as a normal, unrenowned writer. Lasch indicates: “The media give substance to and thus intensify narcissistic dreams of fame and glory, encourage the common man to identify himself with the stars and to hate the ‘herd,’ and make it more and more difficult for him to accept the banality of everyday existence” (21). Julio’s embodies these same narcissistic delusions of grandeur as a writer, lauding as stars the figures of the Boom, and rejecting his feelings of being part of the “herd”. Sharon Magnarelli concurs that Julio attempts to achieve fame through his own ability to “centralize and empower himself, with his novel: he would write a testimonial novel in which he would be both observer and observed, subject and object, and by doing so, incorporate himself into the “Boom,” make himself visible...both inside and outside his work of fiction, as the *I/eye* in it and as the celebrity outside it” (25). Julio’s focal point, the Self, is the location of his failure in writing a successful and noteworthy novel. Gloria’s ‘I’ on the other hand, is successful because at the center of her project is the Other. Gloria seeks neither fame nor glory. She gladly accepts the *tono menor* in her writing, in other words her place among the “herd”, which allows her novel to make a significant contribution to Latin American literature.

IMPLICATIONS OF ACCEPTING GLORIA AS THE TRUE NARRATOR

If the general theme of the novel is that man’s uncertainty of the Self is analogous to political exile, Gloria’s narration draws her reader into a collective sense of displacement, upon which her very writing offers a solution for the reader’s feelings of estrangement and alienation. Many critics talk of Julio as the narrator of the first five chapters and Gloria as a fictional author-figure who interjects herself at the end of the

narration. Based on these terms, M.I. Millington even warns the reader not to complicate the narration. He writes, “This switch in level of representation complicates the ending and renders it very difficult to draw conclusions about the whole novel, unless one succumbs to the lure of taking representation itself as a transparent process” (“Out” 76). I agree that the ending unquestionably complicates the rest of the novel, but to what end has the information about the real narrator been withheld until the last chapter, if not for this very reason? If the reader refuses to accept the novel as a product of Gloria’s representation of Julio, he or she misses all of the rhetorical advantages provided by Donoso’s true narrator. Taking Gloria’s role as narrator of all six chapters for granted leads the reader to fail to consider the nature and implications of the observer narrator of the novel. Millington claims that the last chapter is problematic in that it attempts to “tie up the ends left at the close of chapter five” and to validate “literary writing” (“Out” 77). However, I assert that Gloria neither attempts to resolve all of the issues of the novel in her final chapter nor to validate literary writing. Rather, Gloria reveals how she came to have knowledge of *some* of the circumstances surrounding her account of Julio. Furthermore, her confessional chapter six, far from validating literary writing brings representation and authority into question. Contrary to Millington’s assumptions, Gloria’s very confession undermines the reader’s faith in his or her own ability to discern truth in fiction. The reader finds him or herself to be a victim to the text’s deceitful nature, leading him or her to question literary writing altogether. Indeed, after discovering that Gloria deceives the reader he or she might be led to ask whether or not N ria could be the real narrator, who in a hypothetical chapter seven presents a second shock. Is it not N ria, after all, who suggests the possible contents of Gloria’s chapter six

once she has read Gloria's manuscript, originally containing only chapters one through five, without the confessional chapter six?

I should clarify that I do not actually think there is much of case supporting the theory that Núria writes any part of text. A third reading of the novel in these terms is not necessary. But rather, my aim is to demonstrate the implications of the manipulation of the novel's authority. Donoso, in waiting until the end of the novel to reveal the true narrator, undermines the reader's sense of control over the novel. If the reader is to accept Donoso's deception, he or she also implicitly accepts the nature of writing and reading as deceptive acts, subverting any notion of trust or pact of reliability between writer and reader. Undeniably, by reading, the reader implicitly agrees to be manipulated by the narrator and by the author. In fact, by revealing the nature of the observer narrator, Donoso also indicates that the role of the author is to write the Other. Even if the author wishes to write about himself, and attempts to do so under the pretense that truth in discourse can be attained and expressed, he or she is also deceived, as the Self, through the representation of writing is necessarily destined to be an Other.

Swanson makes a similar point concerning the deception of the reader in his article, "Donoso and the Post-Boom: Simplicity and Subversion". Swanson indicates that Donoso views the Boom as having been a "reaction against a perceived staleness in conventional realism" resulting in a replacement of realist techniques with innovation ("Simplicity" 521). As a result, in El jardín, Swanson indicates, Donoso provides a counter-reaction to the Boom: "Donoso therefore posits the idea of a return to more simple forms, formulating the paradoxical notion of innovation through traditionalism. In this sense the return to simple structures can be seen as innovative in the modern

context” (“Simplicity” 521). Perhaps the novel’s apparent simplicity is part of Millington’s issue with the novel’s ending, as he seems to be misled into rejecting the “complication” of what seems to be a rather straightforward text. Indeed, without undertaking a second reading of the text, it potentially remains as simplistic as Millington originally claims. Similarly, for Swanson, it is the apparent “psychological realism” of the first five chapters of the novel that gives it a sense of straightforwardness. Yet Gloria’s revelation results in the overturning of this very element of realism, which becomes the most complicated aspect of the novel (José Donoso 158). In other words, Gloria’s novel achieves innovation through traditionalism.

This apparent but eventually overturned simplicity can be considered a pastiche, one of the trademarks of postmodernism. Barry Lewis describes the pastiche as a return to older and previously used styles: “Pastiche, then arose from the frustration that everything has been done before... This explains why many novels between 1960 and 1990 borrow the clothes of different forms (for example: the Western, the sci-fi yarn and the detective tale)” (115). Similarly, the observer narrator is a pastiche of the traditional storyteller, one who revives the old form of storytelling to communicate a new message. For the postmodern storyteller, this renewed message is the reinstatement itself of the ability to communicate. However, this communication is limited to individualized messages based on each reader’s perspective. Gloria as the postmodern storyteller revives the lost ability to communicate to each individual.

Peter Brooks also connects Benjamin’s “The Storyteller” to a revived relationship between narrator and reader. He concludes:

What Benjamin would wish to restore, or to create, is perhaps most of all a certain attitude of reading that would more closely resemble listening, which would elicit the suspension of mediation rather than the suspense of consumption, and which would foreground the exchange, the transaction, even the transference—in a fully psychoanalytic sense—that can take place in the offer and the reception of a narrative. (87)

Thus, for Benjamin, the power of the traditional storyteller is to provoke a change in the reader, quantifiable in psychoanalytic terms through the reading experience and exchange. Although Benjamin announces the loss of communication for the storyteller of modernism, I suggest that the postmodern narrator reinstates this ability. In this way, both texts of El jardín, including Julio's five chapters, and the re-reading of the novel considering all six chapters, with Gloria as narrator, dramatize the difference between the two storytellers. On the one hand, Julio's first-person traditional storyteller has a decreased ability to communicate his experiences to the readers in an effective or useful way, while on the other; Gloria's focus on the Other establishes her communication to each reader's sense of fragmentation. Thus, the individualized message of the postmodern storyteller speaks to contemporary man's dilemma.

In addition to being considered a pastiche, Swanson also identifies El jardín as a parody of first person-fiction. The parody of the apparently simple or realist novel that the reader thinks that he or she is reading in the first five chapters is subverted to question "the validity of our assumptions about the nature of reality" once the reader gets to the sixth chapter (Swanson José Donoso 158). Linda Hutcheon describes the nature of parody in postmodernism: "it paradoxically both incorporates and challenges that which

it parodies” (11). In Hutcheon’s terms, El jardín questions the nature of first-person narration by using this very mode in the novel, the novel’s essential parody. For Hutcheon, parody in postmodernism has an underlying power that is overlooked by critics such as Fredric Jameson and Terry Eagleton. Hutcheon writes: “What Eagleton (like Jameson... before him) seems to ignore is the subversive potential of irony, parody, and humor in contesting the universalizing pretensions of ‘serious’ art” (19). Thus, as Hutcheon indicates, parody in postmodernism has a communicative function with endless potential.

Another important implication of considering Gloria to be the real narrator is the novel is the role of Ingres’ *Odalisque* painting. Julio refers to the *Odalisque* as a point of comparison with Gloria: “—deleitosa cadera plena, largo arco de la espalda para acariciar y pierna larga, largo cuello, y ojo alargado bajo el turbante envuelto en la cabeza volteada—se dibujaba más allá de esa puerta, pero sobre todo más allá del tiempo” (El jardín 25). Although these words are attributed to Julio before the reader knows that Gloria is the narrator, Gloria also admits in her confessional sixth chapter that part of her admiration for Julio is that he is the only one who perceives her as the *Odalisque*. She becomes the *Odalisque* for his eyes only: “La *Odalisca*, que tan orgullosa me hace, no existe fuera del recuerdo y la fantasía de Julio, que es su morada; a veces logra, aun ahora, hacer resucitar esa *Odalisca* de otros tiempos con su abrazo que evoca ese talle...” (El jardín 268). Gloria’s last chapter validates Julio’s comments in the earlier chapter, while simultaneously putting Gloria’s objectivity in question.

This painting also has a central role in exploring the function of the gaze in the novel. The *Odalisque*, looking over her shoulder, dramatizes the gaze that is central to

Gloria's observation of Julio and that in turn implicates the reader's participation in the contemplation of Julio through Gloria. The role of the reader-accomplice becomes even more significant, as he or she must undertake a second reading of the novel in order to understand the implications of attributing every word in the novel to Gloria and in becoming part of the directed gazes in relationship to the *Odalisque*. Magnarelli also discusses the *Odalisque's* gaze in the painting, which "simultaneously focuses on and centralizes the artist/spectator" (28). Magnarelli maintains:

It cannot be irrelevant that Ingres's *Odalisque* looks back at the spectator in a way that foregrounds the act of looking and thus the spectator himself... Let us add that the "he" who is the principal protagonist, the privileged spectator to whom everything is addressed, is the artist (Julio when he casts Gloria as the *Odalisque*) who has created and framed that nude (Gloria or Gloria as the *Odalisque*) in such a way that she centers her gaze on him. (24)

In other words, when Julio views Gloria/the *Odalisque*, from the perspective of the centralized spectator he becomes the central object of her gaze. However, when Gloria as the privileged observer places Julio in front of the *Odalisque* to see herself through his eyes, Gloria once again becomes the center of Julio's gaze. Undeniably, as the reader undertakes the first reading of the novel, he or she perceives that Gloria is frequently the subject of Julio's gaze. The reader, at first will assume that Julio, in his observation of Gloria, writes himself into center stage with Gloria focusing her gaze on him, as the painting of the *Odalisque* dramatizes. However, when Gloria reveals herself as the true narrator, and the reader reevaluates the implications of Gloria's control over the narrative,

he or she comes to the realization that the use of the painting of the Odalisque actually prefigures Julio's move into the center of the Odalisque's (Gloria's) gaze as the subject of the novel. Similarly, the reader also sees the Odalisque's gaze of Julio in the painting. Finally, the reader as spectator gets mixed up in the middle of crossing gazes, however ends with that Gloria is seeing Julio. Gloria's revelation in chapter reveals the significance of "The Other 'I'"

As Daniel Frank Chamberlain concludes, regarding the relationship between narrator and reader, the creation of the 'I' simultaneously makes a 'you' of the reader: "From the empty core at the centre of 'I' emerge the figuration of the narrator's voice and the reader's questioning and answering voice" (134-35). This relationship of voice is seen in Gloria's 'I' which brings the external world of the reader into the painting itself in order to look out from the Odalisque's eyes at Julio. Gloria's alienated perspective of Julio gives her narration an increased communicability with the reader. As Chamberlain concludes, the alienated perspective gives the narrator "a greater freedom to speak... [and] a greater capacity to know", thereby inviting "a participatory act on the part of the reader" (Chamberlain 139). Thus, as we can conclude, the Odalisque's backward gaze upon the spectator dramatizes Gloria, Julio and the reader's roles in the novel.

Few critics undertake a close reading of El jardín that actually considers Gloria to be the real narrator. Rosemary Geisdorfer Feal, Lucille Kerr, and Ramón García-Castro are among those critics who have effectively conceptualized and analyzed the novel under the pretenses that it has been written by Gloria using Julio's voice. That is to say, in spite of the fact that the rest of the criticism makes the distinction that Gloria is the narrator of the whole novel, very few efforts are made to actually analyze the text from

this perspective. This consideration may seem negligible, but it is anything but inconsequential when considering the novel's commentary. Gloria's completely convincing narration of Julio leads many critics, myself included at times, to write decisive phrases such as "Julio thinks..." and "Julio sees Gloria as..." instead of "Gloria imagines that Julio thinks" or "Gloria knows that Julio sees her as..." Besides, it would become increasingly complicated to write about the novel in this "she said that he said" fashion, which I have tried to avoid as frequently as possible.

For example, one of many complicated semantic phrases that can result from attempting to narrate this aspect of the novel, is by Geisdorfer Feal, who writes: "the *I* of Julio's text fails to be self-referential and really stands for another: thus, the masculine *I* harbors a latent *she*, who eventually dislocates the unstable *I* to subordinate it as a third person, *he*" (400). We can imply from Geisdorfer Feal's statement that Gloria's *I*, at the most simple level is a manipulation of a vague pronouns—a dislocation that Gloria dominates. Kerr also considers the importance of the pronoun 'I' in Gloria's subversion of traditional discourse. Kerr explains that the transition from one to the other 'I' between chapters five and six happens smoothly, and extra-textually, because of the ambiguity implicit in the pronoun itself. Indeed, the reader is not immediately aware of the switch. Kerr concludes: "Because of the strategic cover provided by the pronoun 'I'—this pronoun, as we know, belongs to no one, because it is the 'property' of any discursive subject and would therefore virtually here equalize, by covering up the distance between, its two principal referents" (43). For Gloria, then, using Julio's 'I' serves ironically both as a "disguise" and as the very means of her success (Kerr 43).

In a unique way, García-Castro's analysis also takes the issue of narrative voice into question as his analysis focuses on the homosexual desires implicit in the text, which are infinitely problematized by not taking the sixth chapter into consideration. García-Castro writes of Julio's homosexual urges, but also with the deliberation that Gloria is the actual narrator: "Sin embargo su homosexualidad puede deberse a la mala intención de Gloria porque ella, como narradora, hace lo que quiere con los personajes" (33). On the other hand, García-Castro also questions Gloria's motivation in the erotic narration of Julio's interest in the *condesita* of the next-door garden—could this perhaps indicate a homosexual interest on Gloria's part of the *condesa*? (36). In other words, is the homoerotic subtext present only because of Gloria? Or perhaps Gloria's interest in the *condesa* is simply just a supposition of what Julio's desire for other women might look like? Therefore, with just a few examples from the criticism, the reader can see that an analysis of the novel that is inclusive of the true identification of the narrator leads to the most important and complex critical questions of representation and perspective.

In addition, Gloria's role as hidden narrator during the majority of the novel provides an interesting forum for considerations regarding the nature of the narrator in literature in general. Geisdorfer Feal writes the following of Gloria as narrator that raises questions regarding other narrators: "Omnipotent and omniscient: what better words to characterize the hidden Gloria, who has managed to pass off a convincing first-person narration in her husband's voice? She then becomes the all-seeing eye, the spy whose gaze penetrates into the most remote corners of Julio's being" (400). Obviously Gloria is not an omniscient narrator in the traditional sense, such as is evidenced by John Morreall's definition: "And when, as is common in exclusively third-person fiction,

there seems to be no detail about the characters and events which cannot appear in the story, critics speak of an ‘omniscient narrator’” (429). Gloria does have limitations, yet her gaze is powerful. In the small space opened by the novel’s unique narrative perspective, Gloria pushes the limitations of her narration of Julio to the maximum. In spite of her limitations, Gloria’s knowledge never seems to cross from the conceivably believable to the inconceivable, in large part because of the information that she presents in the sixth chapter.

Morreall’s emphasis on the innate paradox of the “omniscient narrator” helps us to conceive the way in which Gloria has formed her own writing from Julio’s perspective. Morreall writes:

A character like Huck Finn, for instance, is male rather than female, young rather than old, etc. He therefore knows only a certain amount about the world, even about his immediate surroundings and his limited knowledge will guide his selection of what he talks about. The events in the story are ‘filtered through’ the consciousness of this character... Notice how everything changes, however if we start talking about point of view with an omniscient narrator. If our original motivation for discussing point of view was to explain the selection of details in the story, then that motivation disappears here...’ (432).

In this citation, Morreall establishes the fact that internal character narrators are limited by their point of view, while omniscient narrators, in the traditional sense, have no conceivable point of view. Undeniably, the voice that Gloria adopts in the novel indicates that she can be classified somewhere in between these two modes. Obviously

her point of view is her own, although she must imagine Julio's point of view to narrate from his perspective and "filter" it through her own perspective. While her narration certainly has a sense of omniscience, indicating a mastery of this deceit, her ability to escape her limited point of view is precisely the reason for which N ria lauds Gloria's novel. In point of fact, Gloria's real accomplishment in her narration of Julio is overcoming her own point of view, to achieve a more omniscient point of view, although as the criticism suggests, the very concepts of omniscient and point of view are paradoxical. However, Gloria is able to adopt a perspective completely different from her own, putting into question the nature of point of view in fiction, in a way that would be inconceivable without the revelation in the sixth chapter.

Richard Walsh also discusses the problematic omniscient narrator, which helps to conceptualize the interesting implications of Gloria's position. Walsh writes of omniscience: "The function of the narrator is to allow the narrative to be read as something known rather than something told as fiction. But this view of the matter suffers the embarrassment that some of the things such a narrator is required to 'know' are clear indices of the narrative's fictional status" (499). In the first five chapters, of the first reading, the reader assumes that Julio knows what he is narrating, as he focuses predominately on himself. His text in general is portrayed as "known" information. On the other hand Gloria's narration presents a problematic point of view that might bring the reader to question whether or not Gloria's narration is "known" or manipulated information. However, because of the novel's deceit of the reader, he or she is more likely to believe Gloria's portrayal of Julio than if he or she had known all along that Gloria is narrating Julio. This is another special consideration of the second reading.

Armed with new information of the true narrator, the reader may be more doubtful of that which is narrated about Julio; however, the believability and validity of the first reading will undoubtedly affect subsequent readings of the text. This happens because of the reader's perception. Indeed, as Walsh concludes, omniscience "is not a faculty possessed by a certain class of narrators but, precisely, a quality of imagination. Even when authors self-consciously dwell upon their own omniscience with regard to their creations, the power itself is fanciful" (499).

Thus, Donoso's decision not to reveal the truth about Gloria until chapter six raises critical questions concerning the imaginary nature of omniscience. Furthermore, Gloria's text demonstrates the importance of creating a believable simulacrum within fiction. Because of its very structure El jardín is more easily believed and the narrative technique leaves the reader with little doubt concerning Gloria's portrayal of Julio. On the one hand, Gloria is omniscient because she gets into Julio's mind, while on the other, she is limited and attempts in the sixth chapter to justify how she "knows" what she knows throughout the novel. In this sixth chapter, Gloria abruptly thrusts the reader into her representation in order to validate her knowledge of Julio—intending to make her narration of Julio less of a fiction. While it may seem that the sixth chapter attempts to offer too many easy answers to the readers, this final chapter helps also to maintain the status of the novel as a Gloria-controlled simulacrum. As she begins to divulge her sources the reader is enveloped into her fiction. He or she begins to believe Gloria's narrative decisions, thus making the novel seem to be truth rather than fiction. This offers another possible explanation for the fact that criticism of El jardín often casts Gloria into the role of fictional author, for she has successfully created a believable representation of

reality, paralleling the role of the author in fiction. Upon further consideration, this is yet another element of the supposed simplicity of the novel that is eventually overturned. While Gloria offers apparently easy solutions to fiction, the inquisitive reader will be able to see beyond these constructs.

If the reader is to believe Gloria's narration, and not simply discard the contents of chapter 1-5, Gloria must carefully and skillfully validate her own narrative. Gloria's confession of her sources in the final chapter serves that purpose when, for example, she reveals that she heard Nria's rejection of Julio's novel on the phone before Julio lied to her. Similarly, she reveals that she was scheming with Julio's brother Sebastin in an attempt to convince Julio to sell his deceased mother's house in Chile, which explains to the reader how Gloria knows about the photocopies of bills that Julio hides from her earlier in her narration of him. This explanation gives the reader the impression that Gloria's knowledge of Julio is comfortably limited to her discovery of some of his secrets. Using James Phelan's terminology, it is possible to conclude that Gloria's *disclosure function*, in other words, that which she shares with the reader about Julio, does not override her *narrator function*, meaning that she knows only that which seems conceivably possible and that she attempts to offer explanation for any suspect knowledge (198-99). In addition, in her confessional chapter Gloria's reference to secrets also reveals limitations to her knowledge and the deliberate decision not to share everything with the reader and Nria. By keeping secrets from the readers, Gloria makes a contrast between the known, the unknown, and the disclosed. For example, she claims to have no knowledge of Julio's whereabouts the night he disappeared in Tangier, Morocco. Also, she denies access to her private journal to Nria, saying "Todos tenemos

derecho a nuestros secretos y los míos allí están” (El jardín 273). In other words by keeping some secrets and presenting some truths Gloria maintains the simulacra of reality. Indeed, by drawing attention to her own *disclosure function* in the last chapter Gloria counters the reader’s incredulity with regards to her knowledge of Julio, while at the same time validating her narration.

Furthermore, Gloria as narrator adds rhetorical richness to the novel. Not only is Gloria the one who places Julio at the window looking into the garden next door, but also all the emotions that Julio is said to experience, as well as all of the conversations he is said to have in private, belong to Gloria. Everything that Julio “says” about Gloria is really only what Gloria has to say about herself. Gloria alone chooses which of Julio’s supposed thoughts she will narrate. She includes details of Julio’s feelings but presents negative and positive aspects of herself as seen through Julio’s perspective. Geisdorfer Feal concludes, “It would be she who has Julio engage in ruthless self-examination, she who authors the devastatingly ironic remarks about herself...” (400). Some of what we think to be Julio’s harsh comments portray Gloria in such a negative and critical way that, when the revelation finally comes in chapter six, the reader, who undertakes the second reading, is astonished that Gloria should portray herself so negatively. In fact, Gloria seems to engage, albeit indirectly through Julio, in the same self-scrutiny that Lasch has called the performing *self* or the *new Narcissus*. The new Narcissus gazes upon him or herself not with admiration but rather with a critical observant eye:

To the performing self, the only reality is the identity he can construct out of materials furnished by advertising and mass culture, themes of popular film and fiction, and fragments torn from a vast range of cultural

traditions...In order to polish and perfect the part he has devised for himself, the new Narcissus gazes at his own reflection, not so much in admiration as in unremitting search of flaws, signs of fatigue, decay. (91)

In this passage, Lasch specifically attributes the fragmentation of the individual in contemporary society to mass culture and media images that have led to a heightened level of self-consciousness and unprecedented levels of self-critique. In this situation the individual feels as if he or she must behave as a performer under the scrutiny of others (90), which ultimately explains Gloria's self-criticism, that once again only surfaces by analyzing the implications of her confession.

Gloria, through Julio, comments on her own weight "sí, dijera lo que dijera sobre su dieta, había engordado" (El jardín 12), her beautiful yet aging body, and her alcoholism "Gloria no es una alcohólica, pese a que yo la he acusado de lo mismo (El jardín 104). These comments come across as even more critical or self-revealing when the reader discovers that they are Gloria's comments on how she imagines Julio perceives her or on the way that she perceives herself. On the other hand, the reader may imagine that if Julio's chapters offered only admiration for Gloria, they may be less convincing. Gloria narrates a mixture of positive and negative, thereby augmenting the believability of her narration once the reader is enlightened and analyzes the novel as a whole.

CLUES TO THE NOVEL'S ENDING

In spite of the initial shock of discovering that Gloria is the true narrator, there are textual clues that prefigure Gloria as narrator of the whole text, that also become apparent in the process of a second reading of the novel. These elements serve as rhetorical strategies that augment the credibility of Gloria's narration and the level of believability

in the accomplishment of her text. First, and most obviously, there is a sense of collectivity throughout the whole narration in which the first person plural is frequently used. In both subjective and objective matters, there is a higher frequency of first-person plural verbs than in other first-person introspective narrations. Some of the many examples include, “Como si Gloria y yo perteneciéramos a la clase de latinoamericanos...” (El jardín 11) or “cargándonos de rencor...preferíamos el encierro de nuestro piso...” (El jardín 12), or “Para Gloria y para mí se hace urgente eliminar esta pintada, salvarnos...” (El jardín 195). Also, it seems as if the pair are frequently engaged in the same endeavors, more so than other couples. For example, during the majority of the novel neither leaves the house to go to work. Finally, near the end of the novel, Julio returns to the university as a professor. According to Gloria, this change is ideal, as she feels she can finally gains the personal space she desires. Once Julio begins work she admits, “Sí, cada día era un regalo otoñal, una pequeña dádiva manejable y mía como una joya, un espacio corto y claro entre el amanecer tardío y el atardecer temprano, cuando me pongo algo cómodo y largo y abrigado y leo y escribo hasta que llega Julio...” (El jardín 260-61). In actual fact, the majority of the events in chapters one through five of the text occur while the couple is together, which augments the possibility that Gloria could conceivably narrate Julio. For example, they both attend Cacho Moyano’s Argentine-style barbecue; they both go on several outings in Madrid together; they both spend long afternoons in Salvatierra’s apartment with Katy, Gloria’s friend and Bijou; Julio accompanies Gloria at every minute during her illness; and the pair go on the trip to Morocco together. Sometimes Gloria leaves Julio alone to spend time with Katy by herself, however Julio infrequently leaves Salvatierra’s apartment by himself, and when

he does leave he recounts to Gloria what happened during his outing, which allows her potentially to narrate experiences from which she was absent. Perhaps Julio leaves Gloria's company on other unmentioned outings that Gloria simply excludes from her narration.

Other events and conversations that both Julio and Gloria partake of simultaneously, explain Gloria's knowledge, such as the moment when the couple first sees the garden next-door from Salvatierra's apartment. In this example, Gloria attains knowledge concerning her husband's private thoughts connecting Chile to the next-door garden. Julio says "Roma" which provokes Gloria to question "La casa de la calle Roma, ¿no?" (*El jardín* 68). Although, Julio may never express more details connecting the garden next door with Chile to Gloria, this two-line conversation is revealing enough to Gloria that she can create an entire psychological trajectory, albeit partially invented, of her husband's thoughts and feelings regarding the garden and Chile.

The reader has an infinitely difficult time in making any decisive conclusions about the novel if he or she does not take it at face value. However, the reader should at least consider the possibility of Gloria's manipulation of the text. Perhaps Gloria invents the earlier episodes to strengthen her own position after her confession. The reader might ask, for example, did this earlier moment really happen? Or, did Gloria later invent this episode to validate her revelation in the last chapter? The reader may even ask if any of these questions matter at all because Gloria and Julio are both narrative constructs of Donoso and none of the events of the novel really occurred anyway. Indeed, maybe Julio's one word comment "Roma" is part of a conversation that never actually happened, as the reader is completely at Gloria's disposal. Gloria chooses which details to narrate,

for what purpose and to what end. In any case, if the reader chooses to take that which is narrated at face value, Gloria effectively links her description of Julio's feelings about the garden in Chile with the fact that he shared the single word "Roma" with her. This is just one example of Gloria's validation of her role as narrator.

There are other moments in the text that are more charged with meaning after Gloria reveals herself. For example, Julio says that after rereading his novel (Or Gloria says, that Julio says, after rereading his novel): "me dejó incapacitado para cualquier actividad, salvo la de espiar –cuando Gloria no me vigila: porque me vigila, me interroga pretendiendo interesarse por el progreso de mi trabajo—" (El jardín 118). In light of the new knowledge of the last chapter the reader may be faced with some of the following questions: Does Gloria actually watch Julio, knowing that Julio notices that Gloria is watching him? Or does Gloria imagine that Julio feels that he is being watched? Or does Gloria herself view Julio's voyeurism in a negative way? Is this simply just another rhetorical strategy on Gloria's part to try to convince the reader that she knows precisely what is going through Julio's head? Or maybe Gloria wants to portray Julio as paranoid, so that the reader does not trust him; or perhaps so that the reader will be comforted by the discovery that she is the narrator when she confesses it at the end of the novel? Then again, maybe Gloria writes this comment simply to justify her own paranoia; because of her later confession to Núria that she fears that Julio is obsessed with Monika, thereby creating a problem for Julio that serves her own interest? Is Gloria simply jealous of Julio or just lacking in self-confidence? Is she not the one who is obsessed by Monika or perhaps by the guapo-feo instead? While I will not attempt to answer these questions, it suffices to add that these and other underlying considerations become important when

Gloria is revealed as the true narrator. Similar critical questions arise when considering other issues in the novel. Donoso novel specifically calls attention to these issues with his selection of the first-person non-protagonist narrator in El jardín. While the ending may give the reader a feeling of closure, a more careful critique of the novel reveals that the ending leaves many more unanswered questions than an initial reading might suggest. Again because Gloria is a carefully hidden narrator, who never crosses the boundaries of her *disclosure function*, her conclusion seems to provide closure. Gloria could have been tempted to reveal herself or trapped into doing so, by slipping some private or seemingly off limits information into Julio's narration of her in the first five chapters. But, she refrains and is effectively hidden until the end, allowing Julio's integrity as a narrator to remain intact.

In addition to the first-person plural verbs, and the close physical proximity of the pair during the entire novel, there are other elements that give subtle clues to the revelation in the final chapter. Early in the novel, Julio recounts a conversation that he had with Gloria (i.e. Gloria recounts) from outside the bathroom, drawing attention to the Inside/Outside Self/Other dichotomies. He writes "Puedo, o puedo no haber dicho estas cosas—me inclino a creer más bien que no—. . . Quizás haya dicho algunas, pero no expuestas como aquí, sino fragmentadas, interjecciones apenas emblemáticas de mi zozobra" (El jardín 27-28). These statements draw attention to the subjective nature of narrative itself. In the context of the tone of the novel as a whole, though, this comment seems to be out of character for Gloria or for Julio. In fact, this is the only overt comment in the entire novel that intentionally draws attention to the fact that the reader may not be receiving the whole truth from the novel, or the narrator. This also indicates a

lapse in *disclosure function*—deeming Julio less than reliable as a narrator, before the reader has to reconsider the implications of the fact that Gloria is the true narrator.

Because of the absolute singularity of this comment, I am inclined to believe that it is meant to be a textual clue to the novel's ending, or a demonstration of the slow process of Gloria's possession of Julio's voice—in other words, a moment of self-doubt in her writing of him. This comment is made as Gloria is working to gain momentum and beginning to have faith in her own ability to narrate as Julio. In any case, Gloria plants the first seed of doubt in the reader's mind concerning the nature of the narrator and fiction. Once again, the second reading makes this comment all the more significant.

Another interesting element of the novel that serves as a clue to the overturning of authority is the existence of several references to *collons* (Catalan for the Spanish *cojones* or the English balls/testicles), which is one of the more ironically humorous references in the text that prefigures the novel's end. Gloria tells Julio “Te faltan *collons* para comprender una realidad que te trasciende” (El jardín 39). A bit later, Julio thinks about Núria and the fact that she is capable of breaking “para siempre los nervios y los *collons* a escritores o a editores demasiado sensibles para resistir su omnipotencia” (El jardín 46). In yet another instance, when Bijou and the couple meet the famous writer, Marcelo Chiriboga, Bijou pretends that he has never heard of him before. Later, Bijou admits that he does this so that the famous author might remember him. Julio tells Gloria in reflection of this episode: “Me gustaría a mí haber tenido los *collons* para atreverme a hacerlo” (El jardín 148). Julio, before Gloria is revealed as the narrator, also uses an image of castration to talk about his own writing: “Soy inerte, castrado, mal escritor, sí, lo sé, lo sabe ella porque en secreto ha leído lo que he escrito en esta temporada en

Madrid, y es como escrito en el limbo” (El jardín 181). In other words, it is Gloria who portrays Julio as lacking the balls and being a castrated writer. These numerous references to *collons* have two possible symbolic explanations in the novel. First, Gloria indicates an overturning of the belief that Julio considers art and writing to be male dominated activities. Gloria shows that being a man with a penis and testicles is often considered important in writing and publishing. In other words, that masculine strength and unbreakable *collons* are necessary qualities of character to be a writer. However, she also undermines this idea. Secondly, Gloria reveals her own insecurities regarding writing and *machismo* as Neghme Echeverría has indicated. These ironic references to lacking balls and the image of castration demonstrate that the true narrator of the text we read is literally and symbolically lacking a penis. Thus, in spite of the fact that Gloria also recounts a conversation with Julio in which he sarcastically comments that she must suffering from the “clásica envidia del pene” (El jardín 122), her lack of male genitalia actually enables her to write. She lacks the *collons*, and the penis, but accomplishes that which Julio is unable to accomplish. In this way, Gloria shows that Julio own self-contemplation and penis-measuring exhibitionism is the biggest impediment to his success as a writer.

Especially because of, and not in spite of the fact that Gloria does not have a penis, she is the more capable narrator. Gloria makes this point even more ironic as she narrates Julio’s realizations. For example, Julio narrates (but actually Gloria writes of herself): “Gloria que hace tan bien todo lo que se propone—sus artículos feministas por ejemplo—, podría escribir la crónica de todo esto mejor que yo” (El jardín 249). In the end, Gloria ironically demonstrates not only that she can, but actually does write the

novel better than Julio. Her active role as a writer of a novel contrasts with the role that she assigns herself in the first five chapters as article writer and translator, both passive forms of writing calling special attention to her later transformation. Similarly, Sharon Magnarelli indicates:

Indeed, throughout the work Gloria is frequently imaged as reading or writing. Although what she writes is generally perceived as frivolous, insignificant, or uncreative (translations)—the low key or style as the text phrases it—the topics she addresses in her ‘literary’ endeavors are the crux of the text we read: sexism (power plays between the genders) in chiromancy (the ability to read and write the future in one's palm, an ability or a power that evokes the slip of the hand and the inversion of power that characterize the final chapter), and translation (the ability, the power, to convert oneself and one's word into another...) (28).

Although Gloria portrays Julio as being dismissive of her writing in the first five chapters, she, as narrator shows that she *measures up* to Julio in spite of the fact that she does not have a penis.

One of the most important means of information that Gloria gets from Julio in order to be able to incorporate him into her text is his own (failed) novel, part of which Gloria reads silently and part of which Julio reads aloud to her. Gloria suggests that Julio thinks the novel is revealing of his true person: “Sin novela, Gloria no conocía mi historia completa, y permanecía, como motor de nuestra unión, mi promesa pendiente” (El jardín 35). However, Gloria uses Julio’s own narration to better manipulate her own power and control of him in the novel, and as a reliable source for some of her conclusions regarding

him. As Kerr demonstrates, the various layers of the struggle for power and authority are essential to understanding the novel. For example, Julio can only write when Gloria is silenced in her illness and Gloria can only write when Julio's novel is a failure. In the problematic ending, Gloria's real control is called into question, when the only chapter that she controls in her own voice is added to the novel based upon the suggestion of the "superreader" Núria (Kerr 55-57). It is actually Núria who has the last word(s) of the novel: "—Bueno, ¿no es éste el capítulo que falta, el que no has escrito...? — preguntó Núria Monclús?" (*El jardín* 274). As Magnarelli has also demonstrated, Donoso's manipulations of power in his novels are often multi-layered. In *El jardín* power is overturned only to be overturned once again: "In this respect, Donoso's texts are games (power plays) that tantalize the reader with what appear to be stable positions of mastery and vision (we think we are in a position to see), only to undermine that stability and mark it as a site of misrecognition (we have not seen what we thought we were seeing" (Magnarelli 18). This idea of playful deception with regard to what we think we see is clearly related to other central issues of mirroring, reflection and observation in the novel, centralizing the role of the gaze itself.

THE REFLECTION OF NARCISSISM

Julio makes the claim that all narrative is a mirror, offering a reflection of the writer. This comment itself becomes ironic by taking into account that Gloria is the true narrator of the novel. There are several *mirror moments* in *El jardín* that solidify the ironic nature of this thought on the part of Julio and the prefigure the novel's ending. In one instance, before leaving the house, Gloria comments to Julio that she is going to go

put on makeup. She says: “—Voy a ponerme la cara en un minuto—dice—y nos vamos” (El jardín 121). Julio (Gloria) writes in response:

Como si fuera fácil. Ella que no tiene el inclemente espejo de una novela que refleje hasta sus más insignificantes patas de gallo, sí, ella puede darse el lujo de «ponerse la cara» que quiera, distinta cada día si se le antoja, con potingues y coloretos... Yo, en cambio, cada día debo enfrentarme con mi cara permanente: espejito, espejito, dime quién es la más bella..., no, el espejito, espejito, responde invariablemente que mi pensamiento es confuso, mi sentir endeble, y que mi estilo envarado sirve solo para exponer: mi novela, en suma es pésima. (El jardín 121)

In actuality this passage containing Gloria's conclusion regarding Julio's novel, bears the weight of El jardín. First, it becomes clear that in Gloria's opinion, Julio believes that the purpose of the novel is to serve as a mirror in which the Self is reflected. Secondly, Gloria expresses her belief that Julio recognizes that his novel does not accomplish this task, as it achieves little more than exposition. Finally, the reader can deduce that Gloria views Julio's novel as a failure for not achieving self-reflection, while at the same time contrasting his style with her own, making her own observer-narration a more efficient manner to reflect the Self.

The conversation that ensues after Gloria puts on her makeup becomes perhaps one of the most important of the novel, especially during the second reading. Gloria suggests to Julio that he continue to work on his novel in order that it should not continue to haunt him. She predicts that an un-written novel could be “pudriéndose y envenenándote” (El jardín 121). Julio responds to Gloria in anger, questioning her

assertion, as she is not a frustrated writer, like he is. Gloria emphatically counters his criticism with: “¡Si supieras cuántas novelas no escritas tengo encerradas dentro de mí, como gatos locos en un saco, que pelean y se destrozan...!” (El jardín 121-22). Thus, Gloria’s observer narration of Julio that constitutes her text is a symbolic letting of her first “cat out of the bag”. In other words, the novel that we read is Gloria’s first attempt to fight the “rot” and “poison” that damage the writer of unwritten novels. This conversation also demonstrates that Gloria believes that the novel serves a psychological purpose for the writer and by extension for the reader.

Clearly, after reading the sixth chapter, this passage becomes much more pertinent, as the reader is able to recognize Gloria’s intentional prefiguring of her own mode of narrating. In the last chapter, when she discusses her novel, she connects these criticisms of Julio’s writing with her own better mode of narrating. She considers the fact that in order to write, “era necesario que yo construyera algo fuera de mí misma, pero que me contuviera, para «verme»: un espejo en el cual también se pudieran «ver» otros, un objeto que yo y otros pudiéramos contemplar afuera de nosotros mismos, aunque todo lo mío sea, ahora en tono menor” (El jardín 263). By contrasting her observer narration with Julio’s self-focused narration, Gloria depicts the task of the postmodern storyteller. Her narration, outside of herself becomes a mirror in which she and the reader can find him or herself reflected. Gloria comes to the conclusion that “Todos...son solo reflejos en mí, en nuestras subjetividades cambiantes” (El jardín 269), making the precise point that this chapter intends to make: that the observation of the Other is more revealing of the Self than observation of the Self is. It is true that the details of the experience of Julio and Gloria’s exile may be incommunicable in postmodernism, but the observation of Julio by

Gloria communicates a new message to the reader, a personalized reflection with which the reader can reconcile his own feelings of alienation, estrangement and fragmentation.

This personalized reader-benefit leads me to a tender subject in criticism, not only of El jardín, but also of literature in general, which is the correlation between the critic and his or her criticism. A quick perusal of titles and the critics of articles of El jardín, most of which appear in my list of works cited, indicates that much of the criticism concerning the novel deals with a specific issue of political exile, while many of the critics writing these articles are from Latin American countries faced with dictatorships and situations of political exile. Similarly, many women critics focus on Gloria's re-possession or subversion of the male voice. I do not wish to be misunderstood—it is quite common for an individual who has never been faced with exile to write of exile, or for a man to write about women's issues, or for a heterosexual individual to write of homosexual desire etc. However, there is often an undeniable correlation between many critics and their choice of topics on which to focus. I certainly do not attempt to establish an absolute, but rather to call attention to a trend in recent criticism, because I find that this issue supports the thesis of this chapter and the idea of the postmodern storyteller of the novels under consideration. That is to say, the observer narrator, Gloria of El jardín has the ability to provide a benefit for the narcissistic injury or deficiency of the novel's reader. In order to benefit from Gloria's narration, it is not necessary that the reader be a female living in exile, although the similarity of experience may make the novel speak even louder to this individual. The most significant aspect of the postmodern storyteller is that he brings every reader, from every reader's individual

perspective to find narcissistic reaffirmation, no matter the nature of his narcissistic injury. It can be concluded that the writer writes, the reader reads and the critic critiques in order to combat his or her narcissistic injury. Indeed as Marshall W. Alcorn Jr. and Mark Bracher conclude: “literature not only pleases but also edifies—in the root sense of the term. Critics of our own age have advanced similar claims, including, most recently, certain philosophical critics who argue that reading literature can influence if not actually mold the structure of the reader’s self” (342). In this sense, the postmodern storyteller solidifies the way in which literature can affirm the reader’s sense of Self.

While on the one hand, I have argued against the impossibility of Julio’s experience-driven novel of exile, on the other, I assert that the reader and the writer of criticism re-appropriate the experience of the Self. The important distinction is the realization that experience cannot be communicated through discourse. As I have concluded, through Gloria’s observations, the text reinstates the power of experience on an individual basis, each reader can make his or her own conclusions. Indeed, in consideration of postmodern theory, Shari Stone-Mediatore concludes that no message is expressible as an absolute: “Once considered a radical alternative to master narrative, stories that present the experiences of women, workers, and racial and sexual minorities are now suspect, even among progressive scholars” (97). However, the postmodern storyteller of El jardín, Gloria still has the power to lead the reader to an understanding of him or herself based on the reader’s own application of the text to his or her own experiences.

Therefore, although it is no longer possible to write or communicate a narrative of experience, it becomes possible for the reader to use his or her own perspective in order

to receive an individualized message from a text. Indeed, Stone-Mediatore argues in favor of the experience narrative in spite of the post structural negation of it. She affirms, that experience narratives have the ability to “challenge and transform the discourses that have organized experience” (120). Gloria’s observer narration accomplishes this same transition by transforming the novel into an individualized experience narrative.

CONCLUSION

Jean Franco’s paradigm, used to classify Contemporary Literature, which I have discussed in my introduction, discusses a trajectory from ‘Narrator’, to ‘Author’ to ‘Superstar’. As I have posited in my introduction, the postmodern storyteller reincarnates the first figure of Franco’s typology, that of the “oral storyteller” (“Narrator” 151). Gutiérrez Mouat also contemplates El jardín’s placement in Franco’s paradigm, although he situates the novel differently, based on the fact that he focuses on Julio’s narration instead of Gloria’s, concluding, “There is no doubt according to this typology Donoso’s failed author is located in the problematic transition between cultural hero and media star” (68).²³ I agree with Gutiérrez Mouat’s placement of Julio’s failed *testimonio*, because of the fact that he continues to write in a way that is questionable to postmodernist criticism. However, Gutiérrez Mouat fails to address the placement of Gloria’s text that I have centralized in my own analysis. Upon considering the sixth chapter of El jardín, it becomes clear that the novel escapes categorization into one of Franco’s three categories. However, as I have demonstrated in this chapter expounding

²³ Gutiérrez Mouat elaborates: “The author as cultural hero is concerned with the life of the individual in society (and particularly of the artist in the historical moment known as modernism), while for the author as media star (at least for the consumer of mass culture) individualism and even the sense of history have become inoperative.” Ricardo Gutiérrez Mouat, “Aesthetics, Ethics, and Politics in Donoso’s El jardín de al lado,” PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America 106.1 (1991): 68.

upon the proposition of my introduction, Gloria becomes a reincarnated storyteller, reviving the possibility of communication between narrator and reader. Gloria avoids telling a story of personal experience as the traditional oral storyteller may have done. However, her way of narrating is the only way for Julio and Gloria's own story of exile to become valuable to the reader once again. Gloria changed the focus of her novel from political exile to fictional exile in order to achieve this.

Finally, I would like to analyze the duality between the traditional storyteller of orality and the postmodern storyteller that occurs in two different scenes of the novel. The first of these moments is when Julio reads part of his novel aloud to Gloria. This oral narrative is never expressed to the reader; in other words, the reader is literally excluded from hearing Julio's story. The only recipient of Julio's oral storytelling is Gloria, who is in a position to value his text, as it has the ability to communicate meaning to her. Julio's experiences are interwoven into the fabric of her own experiences. Indeed, Julio's personal experiences in Chile; the important people involved in the *golpe*, general politics of the situation; and Julio's own political persecution, specifically relate to Gloria, his wife. She admits to Julio, "Para mí lo haces vivir todo porque reconozco los signos cifrados, y puedo romper el código" (El jardín 224). Indeed, Julio can serve the role of the oral storyteller to communicate his experience to Gloria because his experience relates to her experience. However, his novel is not communicable to the reader. As Gloria herself tells Julio "Tu novela tiene todos los elementos, pero no puedo juzgarla porque es tan mía como tuya y te quiero" (El jardín 225).

The second oral transmission that reiterates the point of this chapter is a portion of the final chapter of El jardín. Gloria recounts the end of the story to Núria over lunch,

which she later transcribes and adds as the sixth chapter of the novel. In contrast to Julio's oral narration, Gloria's narration does not have a singular, individually coded meaning. But rather, through listening to a narration of the Self, the reader becomes a voyeur, sitting in on Núria and Gloria's conversation. In this case, the reader can, in turn, create his or her truths, based on the information that Gloria presents. The relationship of communication is thus renewed through Gloria as the postmodern storyteller, as the reader can now symbolically 'hear' the communication between Gloria and Núria.

Finally, as I have already suggested, postmodernism is characterized by the view that reality is often plural, multiple or individual. Similarly, in the novel, the view of the garden next-door, through Salvatierra's various apartment windows parallels this same multiple perspective that never shows the total reality. In the same way, each reader of *El jardín* will look into the novel from a different window. As Magnarelli has indicated, regarding the windows of Salvatierra's apartment, different results of looking occur, depending on the perspective of the garden that is sought and observed. She indicates:

Julio sometimes observes the garden from the living room windows, sometimes from the dining room window, sometimes from the kitchen window, and sometimes from the bedroom window, depending on which part of the garden he would have framed, centralized, or where he would focus his gaze. (26)

In this way the narrative also dramatizes the inquiry into the very nature of subjectivity that postmodernism problematizes. Undeniably, postmodernism challenges "traditional notions of perspective" (Hutcheon 11).

On many levels El jardín attempts to push narrative boundaries to the limits, another common characteristic of postmodernism. As Hutcheon concludes, the narrator in postmodern fiction is no longer a: “coherent, meaning-generating entity...” and narrators are “disconcertingly multiple and hard to locate... or resolutely provisional and limited” (11). The narrator in Donoso’s novel is neither difficult to understand nor to follow or locate, as is the case with some texts that are postmodern in form. In fact, Donoso’s novel may seem simplistic at first, which explains a critical resistance to label the novel postmodern, as most criticism avoids. Yet, at the very center of the text’s inquiry is the most postmodern trait, the individual who suffers a narcissistic deficiency and a narrator who overturns authority and representation itself to reinstate communication to storytelling. As Hutcheon concludes, “simultaneous with a general dethroning of suspect authority and of centered and totalized thought, we are witnessing a renewed aesthetic and theoretical interest in the interactive powers involved in the production and reception of texts” (77), which explains perfectly El jardín’s renewed role of interaction with the reader.

As Gutiérrez Mouat concludes of Gloria’s narration, she “assumes the authorial position only after she has managed to evict the narrative material out of her interiority, to a space where the novel becomes a mirror of the crises that she and others undergo” (63). Gloria’s purging of her first novel, allows for the reader to benefit from her decision to self-exile as she focuses on Julio as her narrative subject. Thus, Gloria’s narration provides a postmodern space where the disease of postmodernism is the same from which the cure of the postmodern storyteller is derived. With the reader’s acceptance of the “complication” in the sixth chapter, the deep benefits of a second

reading are undeniable in all three layers of exile that I have expounded on in this chapter. As Chesak writes, in El jardín, exile “es tanto el tema como la metáfora de la escritura misma” (El jardín 102). Indeed, Gloria’s willingness and ability to self-exile, in order to narrate gives the reader an opportunity for self-affirmation. In the next novel of study, Elena Garro’s Testimonios sobre Mariana, the focal point of observation is Mariana who is observed by three narrators. Only one of these narrators, Gabrielle, can actually see her clearly. Thus, it Gabrielle who reveals the benefits of the new narcissism of postmodernism to the reader of Garro’s text.

Chapter 2: Testimonial Fictions: Authority and Subversion

in Elena Garro's Testimonios sobre Mariana

“The I form compels unity, owing to the structural importance of the narrator. The fact that everything passes through the mind of the I-narrator creates inevitably a certain unity of structure”

—Katharine Merrill

“Te prohíbo que hables—le ordenó su marido” –

Elena Garro

“Se prohíbe que hable la mujer”

–Elena Garro

Elena Garro is one of Mexico's most lauded female authors. In spite of the fact that Garro's most well known novel, Los recuerdos del porvenir (1963), was published at the height of the Boom, her work has not achieved a high level of acclaim.²⁴ In fact, it took Garro 10 years to even find a publisher for Testimonios sobre Mariana (1981), which was written decades before it was published. However, a fragment of the novel appeared in the magazine Espejo in 1967 (Rosas Lopátegui 250)²⁵. In the novel, three

²⁴ Patricia Rosas Lopátegui indicates that Garro's critical reception is directly related to her gender. She concludes: “Carlos Fuentes se perfila como el prototipo del nuevo escritor mexicano, la literatura del *boom* latinoamericano ignora completamente la escritura de las mujeres y margina precisamente la obra que revoluciona la literatura en Hispanoamérica en los sesenta: Los recuerdos del porvenir” Rosas Lopátegui, Testimonios sobre Elena Garro 250. Although this may be only one of various reasons, including also her problematic relationship with Octavio Paz, suffice to say that her novels are not as well read as her male contemporaries.

²⁵ Similarly in Emmanuel Carballo's prologue to the 2006 Porrúa edition of the novel Carballo includes a letter from Elena Garro, which reveals more background information about the novel. Elena writes “La novela la escribí en México en 1964...Años después la hallé en un baúl en Madrid. Necesitaba dinero y corregí los finales de los testimonios de Gabrielle y de Vicente. Pero no se pudo publicar. Siempre me

distinct narrators focus on Mariana as the subject of their accounts. Testimonios takes place in Paris, where a couple, Mariana and Augusto and their daughter Natalia have emigrated from South America. Mariana, “era la hija de un oficial zarista y de una señora de San Petersburgo que huyeron al Extremo Oriente después de la derrota sufrida por el Ejército Blanco” (278) as the second narrator shares with the reader. Mariana marries Augusto with his promise that he will allow her continue in her ballet career. She is instead forced to abandon her career, to care for her daughter Natalia, and to live under the subjection of Augusto’s manipulation and cruelty. The three narrators of Mariana’s story comprise Vicente, a wealthy married South American who pursues a love affair with Mariana; Gabrielle, a long-time French friend of Mariana’s who shows a questionable level of dedication as she is also Augusto’s secretary; and André, a gentleman who claims that Mariana has defined his life, although he has as few as six total encounters with Mariana in his life, as he only narrates this number. As the existing criticism suggests, the narrative plurality and the Rashomon style, deriving from the perspective of three non-protagonist narrators is central to the understanding of all the critical questions raised by the novel.²⁶ My analysis aims to add a deeper understanding

cuesta mucho encontrar editor. Y mis novelas, cuentos y obras de teatro se deshojan, envejecen y se pudren en alguna maleta...” Emmanuel Carballo, ed., Testimonios sobre Mariana (México DF: Porrúa, 2006) xii.

²⁶ Indeed, James Casey Reed and Patricia Rosa Lopátegui compare the novel to the Japanese movie *Rashomon* by Akira Kurosawa. In the movie, four different perspectives of the happenings of a rape/murder are narrated and the film is frequently cited not only as having introduced Japanese film to a Western audience but also bringing critical questions of the subjectivity of truth and uncertainty of narrative events to the cinema for the first time. James Casey Reed and Patricia Rosas Lopátegui, “Valores tradicionales y tragedia en Testimonios sobre Mariana de Elena Garro,” Alba de América: Revista Literaria 16.30-31 (1998): 165. This landmark movie has subsequently led psychologists to the term the “Rashomon Effect” which is commonly used to explain how different observers have various but believable perceptions after viewing the same event. The “Rashomon Effect” can be seen in Testimonios in the three narrator’s disparities in narrating Mariana. This multi-perspective plurality becomes even more important as I analyze the role of the reader in the narration. In fact, because of the reader’s active role as a reader-accomplice, he

to the existing criticism of the novel, but will also undermine various studies that undertake more superficial investigation. I will begin my examination of Testimonios first by exploring the role of the traditional *testimonio* genre and Garro's novel's parodic relationship to it. Then, I will consider the novel in terms of the postmodern as Garro's text subverts authority on two levels, both the authority of male centered discourse and narrative authority. I will also look at the importance of silence and the representation of the woman, as well as the roles of truth, lies and fantasy in the novel.

THE TRADITIONAL TESTIMONIO

First, in order to begin to understand how Testimonios functions I would like to establish the novel's parodic relationship with the *testimonio* genre. As Joanna Bartow indicates, the *testimonio* is officially recognized as a new genre to Latin America in 1970 by Casa de las Américas in Cuba (12). In this section I will further explore the genre's nuances in a context that will bring us to understand the way in which Garro's novel both utilizes and parodies the genre. This comparison becomes more problematic upon the consideration of differences between the *testimonio*, and the *novela-testimonial*, however my comments are broader and I consider them to be applicable to both categories.²⁷ By comparing Testimonios to Rigoberta Menchú's Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia, I will explore the ways in which Menchú's more traditional example

becomes a fourth witness to the events of Mariana's life. Just as each narrator has a subjective view the reader's perception is affected by his subjectivity. Even as the reader has the advantage of viewing Mariana through the filter of the three witnesses, he or she must also piece together on his or her own conclusion of Mariana's fate.

²⁷ Indeed, Joanna R. Bartow indicates that many critics do not differentiate sufficiently between the fictional levels of the two different types of *testimonios*. This differentiation will not be a focus of this study. Joanna R. Bartow, Subject to Change: The Lessons of Latin American Women's Testimonio for Truth, Fiction and Theory, North Carolina Studies in Romance Languages and Literatures, vol. 280 (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2005) 24.

of the *testimonio* differs from Garro's coupling of the traditional genre with other non-traditional elements. Although, Rigoberta Menchú was written after Testimonios a simultaneous analysis is advantageous in order to analyze the ways in which the two are distinct from one another.²⁸ John Beverley defines the *testimonio* genre in this way: "By *testimonio* I understand a novel or novella-length narrative told in the first person by a narrator who is also the real-life protagonist or witness of the events he or she recounts. In recent years it has become an important, perhaps the dominant, form of literary narrative in Latin America" (1-2). Indeed, Testimonios has first-person narrators/witnesses as Beverley defines; yet Garro's novel diverges from his secondary qualification that the *testimonio* genre focuses on "actual social struggles" of real political situations. In spite of the fact that Testimonios does not focus on a specific social struggle, it does concentrate on the universal struggle of oppression. Furthermore, Beverley's notion that the *testimonio* typically gives the "subaltern or 'popular' social class" a chance to give their account of historical events does not hold true for Garro's novel either (3).²⁹ In Testimonios, the subaltern, Mariana, lacks a voice and those entrusted with sharing her story are not fully dependable. Garro uses Mariana's silence itself to make the novel's symbolic commentary, implicitly encompassing issues of

²⁸ In a similar way that I undertake my analysis of Testimonios by comparing Garro's novel with Rigoberta Menchú, Adriana Méndez-Rodenas claims that Garro's novel offers an inverted vision of Elena Poniatowska's La noche de Tlatelolco (1971), another example of the *testimonio* genre. La noche has "una colectividad de testigos cuyo coro de voces denuncia el atropello de la historia." while Garro's novel evidences alienation and fragmentation, in comparison to the sense of collectivity. In addition, Garro's novel was written before both Poniatowska's and Menchú's texts were written, although a comparison between Garro's novel and any other more traditional examples of *testimonio* is helpful in seeing the ways in which her novel both uses and subverts the genre. Adriana Méndez-Rodenas, "Magia y pasión," Torre de papel 10.2 (2000): 18.

²⁹ Beverley acknowledges that in some *testimonios* the subaltern speaks through an interlocutor of a different class, such as is the case of Rigoberta Menchú, which is narrated to Elizabeth Burgos.

gender, representation and patriarchal discourse in her very silence. Just as the key to understanding José Donoso's El jardín de al lado is the concept of exile, the means to understanding Garro's novel is in the subversion of the first-person voice resulting from Mariana's very silence. With Mariana's silence the voices of three individuals emerge. Each narrator shares information about Mariana with the reader, but also shares important information about him or herself.

Garro's text is representative of a resistance to oppression in a universal way. Mariana is not from a specific Latin American country; she has been displaced from her country of origin twice and is now living in postwar Paris. In fact, in the novel, there are no references to specific Latin American countries. In this way, the novel takes a universal stance against authority and oppression between the ruling class and the popular class throughout the world, centralizing the important issue of oppression without the specificity of one general region.³⁰ For Miguel Barnet, in spite of the fact that the *testimonio* is oftentimes considered to be a genre of the margin, he asserts that more frequently than not, the *testimonio* deals with the issues central to society: "Y no son hechos marginales, aislados, sino conmociones sociales, hechos colectivos, épicos, que sólo pueden ser reconstruidos en base a la memoria histórica. Y para eso nada mejor que un protagonista representativo, un actor legítimo" ("La novela" 288). In this sense, Testimonios is an excellent example of the dilemma of oppression and authority in Latin America.

³⁰ This lack of geographical specificity is one of many non-traditional elements of Garro's *testimonio* supporting the novel's universal message. As Rebecca Biron writes: "el grupo central de personajes está compuesto por intelectuales ricos sudamericanos (de países no especificados) quienes declaran apoyar una revolución socialista (en países no especificados)..." Rebecca Biron, "Testimonios sobre Mariana: Representación y la otra mujer," Sin imágenes falsas, sin falsos espejos: narrados mexicanos del siglo XX, ed. Aralia López González (México, D.F.: Colegio de México, 1995) 170.

Mariana's silence itself, in that she does not narrate her own *testimonio* universalizes her subjection to authority and oppression in a much more powerful way than if Mariana herself narrated her account. In other words, through her silence Mariana becomes the representative victimized individual that can relate to all people. As Delia Galván suggests, Mariana's silence, and the use of three narrators who attempt to share Mariana's story, are much more objective than a first-person perspective (La ficción 38). Undoubtedly, if Mariana narrated her own story, the novel may have the appeal of reading a diary, which would potentially undermine the various layers of Garro's subversion that emerge as a result of Mariana's silence. Thus, Mariana's silence is the most central element to the novel's rhetorical ingenuity, through which Mariana's powerlessness in her personal struggle attains a universal aspect. Mariana herself represents the political and social power struggle that is usually the subject of a *testimonio*.

This transformative aspect of Mariana's silence into a more universal sense can be understood by the following analogy: Mariana is to Testimonios what Guatemala is to Rigoberta Menchú. In Garro's novel, Mariana becomes a metonymic representation for entire societies of voice-less individuals. Mariana is converted from being the simple subject of each narrator's gaze *into* the subject of oppression with which the *testimonio* genre typically deals. Just as the traditional *testimonio* reflects directly upon a system of oppression, the three narrators of Testimonios contemplate Mariana. As each narrator tells Mariana's story, each moves into a space in which he or she reflects Mariana's oppression, becoming a victim vicariously through Mariana's suffering. If the traditional *testimonio* is considered to be empowering to the narrator, so too, is the narrating of

Mariana's story a source of empowerment to Vicente, Gabrielle and André and the reader-accomplice.

A comparison of the first few lines of Menchú's *testimonio* with the first sentences of Gabrielle's narration show the similarities and differences between the *testimonio* genre and Garro's narration.³¹

<u>Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia</u>	<u>Testimonios sobre Mariana</u>
Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú. Tengo veintitrés años. Quisiera dar este testimonio vivo que no he aprendido en un libro y que tampoco he aprendido sola ya que todo esto lo he aprendido con mi pueblo y es algo que yo quisiera enfocar. Me cuesta mucho recordarme toda una vida que he vivido... y es la vida de todos. La vida de todos los guatemaltecos pobres y trataré de dar un poco mi historia. Mi situación personal engloba toda la realidad de un pueblo" (Burgos 21).	Prefiero olvidar a Mariana. ¿Qué puedo decir de ella? Todo sucedió hace muchos años y a nadie excepto a mí que fui su cómplice y su confidente le puede interesar la vida equivocada de mi amiga... La mano que borró la imagen de Mariana guardada en la memoria de su amigos como una imagen reflejada en el agua, fue la mano de Augusto su marido, que implacable revolvió el agua, desfiguró su rostro, su figura, hasta volverla grotesca y distorsionada" (123).

In these opening sentences, several similarities emerge; such as the fact that both texts use the first-person, both texts mention the difficulty of testifying, and in both texts the narrators choose verbs that indicate orality, which include *dar* and *decir* respectively. Among the differences, Menchú desires to tell the story of all poor Guatemalans, while Gabrielle resists telling Mariana's story. Furthermore, Menchú calls attention to her own ability to remember, while Gabrielle admits that Augusto has distorted her memory of Mariana. In this way, Menchú shows confidence in her own authority, while Gabrielle undermines her own authority. Finally, in contrast, Menchú takes on the responsibility of

³¹ Garro's novel was written almost 20 years before Menchú's *testimonio*, although the publication of Garro's novel was only 4 years before Menchú's *testimonio*. As I have said, I am not suggesting any sort of influence or relationship between the two. Yet, I do think that Menchú's *testimonio* gives a clear example of the genre and is a good starting point in which to begin to analyze subversion in Testimonios.

telling the story of her whole *pueblo*, because she feels confident that she has a listening audience while Gabrielle immediately questions whether anyone will even be interested in the life of her friend. As I develop the central importance of Gabrielle's character at a later point in this chapter, I will show that Gabrielle's undermining of her own authority, and questioning of the reader's interest in her narration, demonstrates false modesty, as an example of the rhetorical strategy, *litotes*, with which Gabrielle intentionally understates the importance of her testimony. In her self-doubt Gabrielle attempts to gain favor with the reader of her *testimonio*, making her narration appealing to all readers, even male readers, which allows her to bear witness to and communicate the novel's subverted commentary.

There are other differences between Menchú's and Garro's texts that establish Garro's non-traditional use of the *testimonio* genre. These differences can be seen in the following chart:

	<u>Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia</u>	<u>Testimonios sobre Mariana</u>
Narrated By:	Rigoberta Menchú (indigenous/woman, subaltern speaks, first-person narrator, focused on self and Guatemala and others in similar situation. Menchú speaks for her village.)	Vicente, Gabrielle & André, (each narrator is not a subaltern, each first-person narrator focuses on Mariana, but also on themselves in relationship to Mariana. ³² Mariana, the true subaltern of the novel is silenced. There is no immediate sense that any narrator speaks for any greater group—although I will later develop the way in which Gabrielle has that

³² It would be possible to argue that Gabrielle is a subaltern because of her gender and socio-economic status. However, I view Mariana as the one true subaltern of the novel. On the other hand, Gabrielle's gender and economic status changes her testimony and gives it a unique importance in comparison to the testimonies of Vicente and André, which as I have already mentioned, I will elaborate further in a different section of this chapter.

		subverted role, and achieves that end for the active reader.)
Story Of:	Oppression in Guatemala (again Menchú is the voice of the voiceless—she speaks for her people against the political situation. Her goal is to tell her own story and indicate how her story encompasses the lives of many.)	Mariana’s personal situation as metonymy of universal situations of oppression (Mariana, however, cannot speak for her people/political situation, she represents the lack of voice which the <i>testimonio</i> itself embodies. However, Mariana as subject brings the three non-protagonist narrators to feel her victimization, just as the first-person account in the <i>testimonio</i> is typically from a victimized perspective.)
Told To:	Elizabeth Burgos (not subaltern, not victimized, interlocutor, an intellectual, has the opportunity to change or alter Rigoberta’s story before it gets to the reader.)	There is no interlocutor (the three narrators have a direct line of communication between themselves and the reader. Each narrator seems to be telling/narrating his story to an unnamed audience. The lack of interlocutor with a different social class increases the connection between narrator and reader. This allows for an individual benefit for the reader.)
Received By:	Academics/University Non-Fiction Readership reading for history and for Menchú’s powerful testimony (the reader becomes a participant of Menchú’s history without leaving his/her comfort zone. ³³) The <i>testimonio</i> was mass published in Spanish and translated into numerous languages.	Fiction Readership (most likely the readership is constituted of a similar group of academics who might read Menchú’s <i>testimonio</i> , although the reader will not be reading for truth or history. Garro’s novel actually undermines the possibility of ascertaining truth. Additionally, the novel has reached a much smaller readership than Menchú’s.

³³ As Beverley concludes “Testimonios are in a sense made for people like us, in that they allow us to participate as academics and yuppies, without leaving our studies and classrooms, in the concreteness and relativity of actual social struggles”. John Beverley, ““Through All Things Modern”: Second Thoughts on Testimonio,” *Boundary 2: An International Journal of Literature and Culture* 18.2 (1991): 3.

End Result:	Action (as Beverley says, “the use of <i>testimonio</i> has to do concretely with the possibility of interpellating our students [and all readers are or were at one time students] in a relation of solidarity with liberation movements and human rights struggles, both here in the United States and abroad” (3). Both from the original text [Menchú’s narration] and in Burgos’ selection of information, this end result is a driving force of <u>Rigoberta Menchú</u> , and as Beverley proposes the <i>testimonio</i> genre in general.)	Personal benefit (by the connection that each narrator makes between the reader and Mariana as a mirror, as Mariana is the object of the gaze of the narrator and reader. Each narrator forges a solution for his or her own and the reader’s fragmentation, by looking at Mariana, although as I will show, it is Gabrielle’s narration that brings the reader to the novel’s central message. In this way, Mariana’s story and the specific events of her life appeal to each reader’s sense of incompleteness and inability to express him or herself. Thus, the novel has the rhetorical power for each reader to relate to the sense of fragmentation, but also to better understand the self. In this way, the novel may provoke individual action in place of social action, making the benefit of Garro’s narration a personal and not a collective one.
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In this comparison of Garro’s Testimonios with a more traditional model of the *testimonio* genre, it becomes apparent that Garro’s novel makes commentary on universal issues of oppression instead of specific social realities, while at the same time relates specifically to the situation of Mariana, and thereby to each reader’s personal experiences.

Similarly, Garro’s novel adheres to most of traits of the traditional *testimonio* identified by Jorge Narváez, which include among other elements:

- uso de fuentes directas
- inmediatez

- alta calidad estética
- presentación de situación global que se narrará
- presencia de un “narrador-autor” al modo de la novela antigua
- tipos de narración variantes según la combinatoria de relación y participación del narrador-autor y el o los personajes como relatores y testigos
- personaje típico, pero no excepcional de una experiencia, puede poseer información única, o puede ser un participante anónimo (239-40).

The way in which Garro’s novel most significantly differs from Narváez’s definition is in the two-fold function of the *testimonio* to reflect and transform reality. Narváez indicates:

Por un lado –en cuanto narración—, un recurso de reproducción completa imaginaria de la realidad mediante elementos histórico-verdaderos... por otro lado—desde el punto de vista de su ‘productividad’ social histórica—, el testimonio es un género para si transformador de la realidad, con una fuerza apelativa superior a la de otras obras de arte. (240)

Thus, in Narváez’s conceptualization, the traditional *testimonio* foments social action, just as Beverley suggests, while Garro’s novel foments individual and not social benefit.

Another significant difference is that the traditional *testimonio* is written under the pretense of bearing truth, even as a representation of fiction, while Testimonios emphasizes the impossibility of attaining truth and even undermines the search for truth as a consequence of postmodernism.³⁴ While the *testimonio* is written to share truth, the

³⁴ Doris Sommer’s discussion of Rigoberta Menchú’s claim to keeping secrets is enlightening in order to conceptualize the role of fiction in the *testimonio* genre. Sommer’s analysis of the *testimonio* undermines its pretense to be able to narrate and portray truth accurately. As Sommer indicates: “If we happen not to be anthropologists or historians, how passionately interested in secrets does she imagine the reader to be? Yet the narrator performs this very assumption and therefore piques a curiosity that may have preexisted

plural narration of Mariana's life is written to undermine any sense of truth. As Elzbieta Sklodowska indicates, the possibility of sharing truth in writing is an innate paradox of the genre: "Resulta evidentemente paradójico que el testimonio mediato hispanoamericano que, en teoría, da prioridad a la palabra ante el discurso escrito, al mismo tiempo sea capaz de cumplir su misión ideológica de rescatar y denunciar a través de la forma escrita" (86). Indeed, the traditional *testimonio* is not without its difficulties in classification.

One of the major ways that Garro's novel becomes difficult to classify in comparison to the traditional *testimonio* is in the active role of the reader. Galván writes of the importance of what each reader and narrator brings from his or her past as they approach the novel: "Detrás de cada contradicción y diferencia, existe otra historia, la de cada narrador que tiene su propio sentido de la vida, tan diferente al de los demás; y aun más, la experiencia de cada lector que también entra en juego" ("Multiplicidad" 90). The narration of three different witnesses, combined with the reader's role in making ultimate sense of the whole text, in conjunction with Mariana's silence, contribute to making the novel a postmodern *testimonio*. Ana Bundgard concurs with the assertion that the role of indeterminacy in the novel is also a factor in the novel's non-*testimonio* nature: "la técnica testimonial no conduce a un resultado satisfactorio, nada se aclara, porque la verdad no existe, ella es lo que de ella se dice" (132).³⁵ Thus, Garro's subversion of the

the resistance" Doris Sommer, "Taking a Life: Hot Pursuit and Cold Rewards in a Mexican Testimonial Novel," *Signs* 20.4 (1995): 932.

³⁵ As Bundgard writes, Garro is a master of the parody: "El realismo mágico, lo real-maravilloso, lo testimonial, lo fantástico clásico y moderno, lo gótico, éstos son algunos de los géneros o posiciones discursivas que Garro ha seguido con el único fin de parodiarlos o superarlos para crear algo nuevo" Ana Bundgard, "La semiótica de la culpa," *Sin imágenes falsas, sin falsos espejos: narrados mexicanas del siglo XX*, ed. Aralia López González (México, D.F.: Colegio de México, 1995) 131.

testimonio genre begins with the overturning of the traditional subaltern narrator, but gains force in making a broader and more universal commentary of truth and fiction, which is depicted in the novel to be multi-faceted and unattainable. Furthermore, the perspective of each narrator and reader are combined to formulate a different “truth” for each reader. In this way, Garro’s novel, in its classification as postmodern can be considered an anti-*testimonio*.

Isabel Dulfano concludes that a change occurs in fiction in the last decade or so, in which, “the old *testimonio* is no longer sustainable” (93). Garro’s firm grasp of the fleeting nature of truth and reality in fiction seems to have given her the foresight to avoid the genre that would later be faced with problems of academics who desire to undermine the genre. For example, Dulfano explores academics like David Stoll who questions the eyewitness testimony of none other than Rigoberta Menchú (84-88). Stoll reclaims the *testimonio* genre by making it academic and “retrenched in white, upper class, male, empirical (anthropologist) hands,” as a self-assumed and pretentious way to protect “truth and authenticity” (Dulfano 88). As Dulfano predicts, the future of the *testimonio* is being and will be morphed into different forms. For example, she cites Julia Álvarez’s novel *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1998) as an example of the new type of *testimonio*. Álvarez’s novel shares some affinities with Garro’s novel. *In the Time* has four narrators, the four Mirabal sisters who focus on the regime of the oppressive regime of Rafael Trujillo, the Dominican dictator. The novel is also similar to *Testimonios* in that: “It is not a first-person account in traditional testimonial form but is designed as a collective narrative... [it] overtly displays a desire to be global” (Dulfano 93). However, the fact that the novel’s author is an academic questions the very nature and genre of

testimonio. In a similar way, nearly three decades prior to Álvarez's novel, Garro's novel challenges the very premise on which the *testimonio* is founded and will later be challenged. Garro's novel proves itself to be an innovative forerunner.

THE ROLE OF THE READER

Not only are the reader's experiences and point of view before approaching the text important in considering the role of the reader, but also as Rebecca Biron establishes, by the very nature of reading the fragmented text and attempting to reconstruct Mariana's life the reader becomes an accomplice, guilty of the same violent act of attempted representation as the narrators are:

Asimismo, los lectores que intentan construir sus propios (de segunda o tercera mano) testimonios sobre Mariana o testimonios sobre los narradores, están implicados como narradores acusados de ser violentos contra los 'otros' a quienes pretenden representar, y como narradores cuya 'autoridad' es tan vulnerable a las acusaciones de interés propio y de engaño como la de los testimonios 'originales'" (174).

The lack of resolution in the novel only exacerbates the reader's urge to make sense of Mariana's story, subjecting him or her not only to a violent attempt at representation but also victimizing him or her to the text's limitations, through the mere act of reading the various accounts of Mariana. The reader who searches for answers and truth in the narration will dismay at the lack of attainability of the same.

Indeed, the reader of fiction is often unwittingly persuaded to think or believe a certain thing about a particular text. However, he or she is victimized by the text's authority and is often completely unaware of his or her submissive position. In many

cases, critics and readers themselves fail to notice the way in which the reader becomes “a sustained object of aggression... [to] books that manifestly cultivate a defiant or elusive attitude” (“Taking” 922) as Doris Sommer’s analysis of aggressive texts suggests. This is precisely the case for the reader of Garro’s novel, he or she becomes a victim to her defiant text. Similarly, Cynthia Duncan discusses the inherent violence and manipulation of the reader in certain works of fiction, including an analysis of Garro’s short stories, in these terms:

If our gaze as readers is directed and manipulated by a gaze inside the text which focuses our eyes on certain images and away from others, we can scarcely call our perceptions our own; yet, as the stories we have set out to examine here show us, we seldom pause to reflect on the fact that we are looking through someone else’s eyes rather than through our own once we are caught up in the thread of a narrative. (235)

Therefore, one of the reasons that the use of three different narrators in Testimonios is so important and effective is in the simple fact that the narrative style subjugates the reader to authority in the same way as the novel treats oppression. Even though the reader may wish for a more neutral position, he or she is forced into an active role, much like a jury member who is responsible for deciding a verdict based on eyewitness testimony. The reader gets to the end of the novel without having known along the way that the truth of Mariana’s disappearance would never be believably explained to him or her, therefore, the reader is faced with the decision of what parts of which testimonies appear to be true. He or she is certain only that nothing at all is certain.

As a result of the inconclusiveness of the witnesses and the novel as a whole, the reader is invited to solve an unsolvable mystery—the enigma of Mariana—a task with which all three narrators have already failed, condemning the reader’s search before he or she even begins the novel. The reader must continue “elaborando en el misterio de Mariana hasta darle su propia solución” (Galván La ficción 57), although the end result may be unsatisfactorily inconclusive. Similarly, Biron concludes that the novel gives the appearance of being a mystery: “A pesar de que la autoabsorción de los narradores y de las contradicciones entre sus relatos parecen invitar a los lectores a resolver un misterio, el efecto de los testimonios combinados y superimpuestos es el de rehusar la posibilidad de cualquier reconstrucción de Mariana” (169). Instead of leading to the conclusion of the mystery of Mariana, the combination of the three narrators overturns the reader’s expectations and his or her sense of confidence, leading each reader to an abyss, the inconclusiveness of Mariana’s fate, and by extension; an oppressive sense of reality.

However, the reader’s predicament makes him an active participant in the text. The importance of the role of the reader of Garro’s Testimonios coincides with Barnett’s conceptualization of the role of the reader of the traditional *testimonio*: “El lector debe hallarse dentro de los libros como si fuera un personaje más, moviéndose, gesticulando, imaginando, escribiendo, enjuiciando” (“La novela” 260). However, Testimonios conflicts with Barnett’s notion that, “conocimiento de la realidad implica conocimiento de sí mismo” (“La novela” 290). Contrarily, the readers of Garro’s novel will neither see reality reflected in her novel, nor will he or she immediately receive an understanding of the Self by reading. Barnett’s assertion is based on the fact that the *testimonio* is written to

express truth. Indeed, truth does potentially aid the reader's perception of reality and of the Self.

Garro's novel, on the other hand, through plurality and uncertainty, undermines the reader's grasp of reality to parallel the reader's feelings of fragmentation and uncertainty of the Self. Garro's novel draws attention to the reader's feelings of postmodern incompleteness. Beyond the analysis of the inner-workings of the three narrators, is the rhetorical benefit that the reader seeks through the act of reading. He or she will observe Mariana through the accounts of the narrators in order to find narcissistic self-affirmation. In this way, the reader can look upon the mirror of Mariana in order to see a reflection of the Self. This reflection is his or her first line of defense in combating the fragmentation of postmodernism, as I have also developed in the introduction.

While the reader is presented with the seeming advantage of multiple accounts of Mariana's life, he or she is not provided with sufficient conclusive information about Mariana. Just as each narrator lacks information, so too does the reader, even as he or she analyzes the entirety of the novel. As María Silvina Persino asserts "Hay sutiles coincidencias y superposiciones entre los relatos de Vicente, Gabrielle y André, suficientes como para dejar en evidencia o apenas sugerir ciertas incongruencias, y demasiado pocas como para aclarar o confirmar alguna información; a cada narrador le falta una pieza para completar la historia de la protagonista" (110). Many of the pieces missing from each narrator's text are also missing from the novel as a whole and from the reader's understanding of Mariana's life. As a result, as Bundgard indicates, the pact of trust between narrator and reader is overturned, as is frequent in Garro's fiction: "Cada texto escrito por E. Garro expresa la burla de una convención literaria y el primero en

salir burlado es el lector, cuyas expectativas convencionales no son satisfechas”

(132). Thus, through Garro’s use of “multiple” and “limited” narrators (postmodern traits according to Linda Hutcheon (11)), in Testimonios, Garro breaks with the reader’s expectations. Certainly, although the reader is manipulated both from inside and outside of the text, his or her victimization puts him or her into a position to struggle against narrative authority, thereby converting the reader into an active participant who can metaphorically join in the struggle against the universalized oppression focused on in the novel. However, the reader is likened to Mariana in that he or she is unable to speak against his or her victimization, as reading is a silent act.

In Garro’s anti-testimonial, she uses the postmodern storyteller(s) to comment directly on the *testimonio*, in a way that is completely contrary to the traditional *testimonio*. Before proceeding, I should make mention of the existing debate on the issue of whether or not the traditional *testimonio* should be considered postmodern. Beverley originally links postmodernism and the *testimonio* in a problematic essay “The Margin at the Center.” Later Beverley realizes that by classifying the *testimonio* genre as postmodern, there exists an underlying danger of losing the genre’s element of social justice and action. For this reason, Beverley reevaluates his thoughts in a later article, “Through All Things Modern”: Second Thoughts on Testimonio”. Beverley concludes:

I suggested in ‘The Margin at the Center’ a complementarity between Latin American testimonio and First World postmodernism... Some second thoughts are perhaps in order on this score. Clearly there is a problem in applying a term that is generally conceived in relation to the narcissism and anomie of ‘post-Fordist’ capitalist societies to those

represented in much of Latin American and Third World testimonio, which have not gone through the stage of 'modernity' (in the Weberian sense) yet, or display an 'uneven' modernity (what society does not, however?). (18)³⁶

In this quote, Beverley reveals his concern that the *testimonio* can lose its drive toward social action if capitalistic societies begin to consider the genre a commodity of consumption. Furthermore, he fears that a classification as postmodern can “[attenuate] the urgency for radical social change and [displace] it onto cultural dilettantism and quietism” (18). Beverley also draws attention to some of the ways in which the postmodern classification does not really work for the Latin American Testimonio. Indeed, based on my own definitions of postmodernism in the introduction of “The Other ‘I’”, the traditional *testimonio*, which functions on the assumptions of perceiving, recording and presenting truth; with a desire to provoke social change; and with an authoritative narrator is very much not postmodern, according to my understanding of postmodernism. However, as I indicate in my own introduction, characteristics of postmodernism can be found in nearly every contemporary text. Linda S. Maier, convincingly argues that certain traits do demonstrate an affinity between the *testimonio* and postmodernism, including a “collapse of the distinction between elite and mass cultures, collapse of master narratives, fragmentation and decentering of the subject, and affirmation of alterity”(7). Again, I am not concerned with classifying one work or

³⁶ Beverley writes against a quote from “The Margin at the Center” in the later essay. He cites the original quote: “The reception of testimonio thus has something to do with a revulsion for fiction and the fictive as such, with its ‘postmodern’ estrangement. Testimonio if you want to look at it that way (and you certainly are not obliged to), could be seen as a form of postmodernist narrative closely related to established U.S. forms like drug or gay narratives...” Beverley clearly indicates in the second essay that the relationship of the postmodern to first-world capitalism negates any possibility that the *testimonio* in Latin America should actually be considered postmodern. Beverley, "Through," 18.

another as postmodern or not postmodern, although I do want to draw attention to the fact that the reasons that I consider Garro's novel to be postmodern are not applicable to the traditional *testimonio*. However, Maier's characteristics are applicable to both Garro's novel (alterity, fragmentation, undermining the master narrative) and the traditional *testimonio*.

In fact, it is through all the ways in which Garro's novel is unlike the traditional *testimonio*, that it is possible to assert that Garro's text can be found at the nexus between the *testimonio* and the postmodern. Indeed, Testimonios demonstrates an individualistic project that perfectly accompanies the postmodern capitalistic value system of "narcissism and anomie" which Beverley speaks against. The very innovation of Garro's novel is in converting the traits of the traditional *testimonio* that are not postmodern, into subverted versions. Garro both criticizes and utilizes the postmodern and capitalistic motives contradicting the traditional *testimonio*, as her novel is an agent of change for the self-centered, fragmented individual of postmodernism. In the novel, bourgeois, capitalistic intellectuals in a morality-lacking post-war Paris demonstrate this sense of individualistic narcissism produced by postmodernism, even in the sense that Lasch discusses in relationship to North Americans. Garro's criticism of this type of Latin American becomes apparent in a letter she writes to Emmanuel Carballo concerning Testimonios:

Escogí a una familia típicamente intelectual sudamericana que no había pasado a la literatura. Es una pareja moderna, nihilista, arribista, *snob*, perdida en los laberintos culturales de París de la post-guerra. He conocido a muchos sudamericanos parecidos en Europa y sobre todo en

París, cuna de todos los vicios, libertades y tendencias sexuales y culturales. (Carballo xv)

Thus, even in Garro's choice of bourgeois intellectuals to be the protagonists of her novel, Garro undermines the inspiration of any sort of mass social action. Instead, Garro adapts her novel to the very narcissistic value system she criticizes.³⁷ In a similar way to other novels studied in "The Other 'I'", Garro criticizes by parody. The multiplicity of narrators is used as the vehicle by which absolute truth is undermined in order to emphasize individual truth through the role of the reader.

In my introduction to this study, I also suggest that the four authors of the novels being analyzed may be reacting against the truth-bearing *testimonio*, and other forms of first-person narrative, written by a marginalized individual rather than by a career author.³⁸ I also postulate that perhaps these career authors, especially in the cases of the male authors, Donoso, García Márquez and Vargas Llosa, utilize the observer narrator as a way in which to protect their position as an elite Latin American author. In more specific terms, if, as Beverley declares, the *testimonio* has become the "dominant form of

³⁷ This same anti-bourgeois sentiment also surges textually in several occasions. In one instance Gabrielle, of the lower class, is screamed at with the phrase, "¡Cochinos burgueses!" Elena Garro, *Testimonios sobre Mariana* (México: Grijalbo, 1981) 182. This phrase is directed towards her from the street one evening when she has the opportunity to ride in a Rolls Royce. In response to this harsh criticism Gabrielle writes: "Yo siempre me había colocado entre los de abajo y por ellos había luchado. Esa noche supe que entre el poderoso y el pueblo había una distancia infranqueable, una línea divisoria que igualaba al pueblo y singularizaba a aquel que ejercía el mando. Pero debía haber algo más, mis conclusiones eran simplistas, no era nada fácil descubrir el por qué de que unos pocos se hallaran colocados del otro lado de la línea divisoria. En este momento decidí olvidar mi condición de masa..." Garro, *Testimonios* 183. Gabrielle's communist affiliation gives her the opportunity throughout her narration to make direct commentary of this sort against bourgeois values, although she finds herself conflicted by whether or not to reject or accept this system of values.

³⁸ As Bartow indicates, truth-bearing in *testimonio* also has its problematic considerations: "In other words, to maintain its authority and authenticity, testimonial texts must not 'allude to' the truth through lies, even when the creation of those lies in fact leads us to a more profound truth about marginalized narrators' necessary manipulation of their story to negotiate for a public who will listen to them" Bartow, *Subject* 21.

literary narrative” in Latin America, these male career authors, all of whom find their precedence in the Boom, must take to the task of overturning this popularizing genre by speaking out against the possibility to represent truth and by replacing the subaltern narrator with the subaltern subject in their own texts. In this way, the use of the first-person non-protagonist narrator may be seen as a means for the bourgeois author to maintain his or her authority as a writer. The case of Garro’s novel in this context is doubly important as she is the only female author included in this study, and she is the only of the four authors not popularly considered an important figure of the Boom. Garro’s novel is also unique in that it is the only of the four novels of my study that actually uses a parodied version of the marginalized genre itself in order to subvert it. Indeed, by silencing Mariana, Garro subverts the authority of her text at the most basic level. Unlike her male contemporaries who maintain their authority in literary creation by externally challenging truth from outside of the *testimonio*, Garro’s challenge comes from within the genre itself. Her technique is truly innovative, and in the forefront, as her novel predates (in writing but not publication) El jardín de al lado, Crónica de una muerte anunciada and El hablador. The astute reader of Testimonios perceives the importance of Garro’s novel in the functions of the narrator and in the broader cultural context of Latin American literature. Even as other critics mention Garro’s use of the *testimonio* genre in short references in their studies, a more complex understanding of both the novel’s subversion of the *testimonio* and the postmodern elements of the novel brings the reader to a deeper appreciation of Testimonios.

SUBVERTING AUTHORITY

Garro's subversive techniques are truly innovative both in Testimonios but also in her other fiction. Duncan indicates one method of innovation used by Latin-American women authors, including an analysis of Garro: "With increasing frequency, women writers have experimented with narrative strategies through which they might appropriate the male gaze and the male voice, transform them into something more authentically feminine in character, and employ them as tools in the creation of a female body of literature" (234). Although Duncan refers to Garro's short fiction it is clear that her analysis is applicable to Testimonios. However, with this novel instead of simply creating a "female body of literature", Garro begins with a predominately female genre (Maier 1-3). She overturns the genre, and silences the female subaltern, who often has the voice and can be heard in the *testimonio* form. However, Garro uses the *testimonio* as the means by which she both undermines male authority and appropriates the male gaze. Mariana's silence draws attention to male authority, by first centralizing it as the dominant discourse, but subsequently overturning male discourse as incapable of portraying the female subject. Another subversive message in the novel is concerned with the representation of truth and the nature of reality, which I have already alluded to. Duncan analyzes a similar phenomenon in Garro's short fiction:

Garro attempts to redeem and give substance to a vision of the world which stands in opposition to that of mainstream society in order to subvert the notion that there is only one correct way to view reality. In order to realize this goal, a certain degree of duplicity must be used, since we would most likely resist the attempt if it were carried out in a more

straightforward way...By putting us in a position in which we ask questions about the experience of reading and examine the processes through which we grant authority or deny it to narrators, Garro has taken a step toward turning mainstream, patriarchal discursive practices inside out and creating a reverse discourse which speaks for those who are normally denied a voice. (243)

As the quote from Duncan demonstrates, in Garro's short fiction, the reader is asked to question the nature of authority, reality, and the role of fiction within the narrative duplicity of Garro's text. Similarly, Garro's technique in Testimonios, accomplishes the same questioning on the part of reader. In the novel, Garro not only overturns male discourse, but she also involves a subjection of the reader to the same control provoking an attitude of questioning and examination.

The novel's strongest manipulating force is the same for Mariana, for the three narrators and for the reader—Augusto. In Testimonios, Augusto embodies power and masculine authority in Mariana's life, while also maintaining a certain degree of control over fictional authority. In point of fact, Augusto's looming presence is one of very few constants in the text of each narrator. Each narrator agrees that Augusto has a negative impact over Mariana, as an intolerant and controlling husband. However, in spite of his unpleasant nature, he gives veracity to the novel, validating the novel's fictional authority, as it is "una reiteración que ocurre en una especie de umbral en que se juntan y afirman los eventos de las tres narrativas" (Galván "Multiplicidad" 89). Augusto need not be one of the narrators in order to be heard clearly throughout the novel, which indicates for Kristine Ibsen that: "This absent yet dominant voice suggests that he may be

associated with the disembodied power of law, language and order” (99). Indeed, in spite of the fact that all three narrators are critical of Augusto’s behavior, not one of them ever discards his authority completely or tries to change his repression of Mariana.

During the course of the novel each narrator appropriates Augusto’s thinking concerning Mariana in different degrees. Augusto continuously emerges in each narrator’s text insulting every aspect of Mariana, oftentimes in her presence, concerning such topics as “su educación, sus tendencias autodestructivas, su frigidez sexual, su lesbianismo latente, su rechazo a la sociedad y su esquizofrenia, su falta de responsabilidad que la imposibilitaba para educar a su hija” (140), etc. Furthermore, Augusto constantly warns his friends that Mariana is dangerous company. In her narration, Gabrielle records one such comment by Augusto: “era peligroso dejarse arrastrar por la seducción negativa de Mariana. Su capacidad para la mentira era alarmante y era preferible no escucharla. Sexualmente era patológica a pesar de su aspecto saludable” (141). On another occasion, Augusto tells Gabrielle that “Su padre la castró. Y su madre... Gabrielle le aseguro que los dos eran diabólicos. Nunca aceptaron su mediocridad absoluta. Eso los llevó a la simulación. Mariana es una simuladora...” (147). Augusto’s use of the word “castrate” in reference to Mariana is significant as it further indicates his own view of male authority. Indeed, the use of the word in this citation reminds the reader of the repeated ironic use of the word *collons* in El jardín to call attention to issues of gender and fictional authority.³⁹ Even by narrating Augusto’s

³⁹ Also the shared Latin root for *testigo* and *testículo* provide interesting consideration for gender and questions of gender and authority in the novel. As Bartow reveals “*Testigo* and *testículo* are both derived from the Latin *testis*, witness. *Testigo* originates from the verb *testiguar*, which derives from *testificare* in Latin a combination of *testis* (*testigo*) and *facere* (*hacer*)” Bartow, Subject 36. Nancy Saporta Sternbach concurs by indicating that “there is no female form of the Spanish noun so when women are witnesses, they

negativity concerning Mariana, each narrator demonstrates a level of complicity simply by giving credence to him, by allowing him space in his or her narrative, and by inaction against his evilness. This is particularly important in Gabrielle's narration (the longest and most central of the three narrations) as she herself is a female who is committed more to maintaining her job with Augusto, than she is dedicated to her friend Mariana.⁴⁰

This complicity on the part of each narrator demonstrates the fact that relationships of power are often supported or even perpetuated by individuals who suffer under the same authority and control. As Ibsen writes, part of this perpetuation comes from a subconscious acceptance of the control of authority:

It is perplexing that the witnesses find themselves doubting Mariana and giving credence to Augusto, since one of the points in which the three perspectives coincide is in their presentation of Augusto as a sadistic figure...In short, Augusto's access to discursive authority permits him to influence the perspective of the witnesses; this, in turn, is translated into a tension between madness and reason that replicates the unequal power relation in their marriage. (98)

On a universal level, Augusto's domination over Mariana, over the narrators and over the text in general reveals the power of influence for those in positions of authority,

are referred to as "la testigo" Nancy Saporta Sternbach, "Re-membering the Dead: Latin American Women's 'Testimonial' Discourse," *Latin American Perspectives* 18 (1991): 92.

⁴⁰ Indeed, although Gabrielle is considered to be Mariana's closest friend, she denies hospitality to Mariana one night when Mariana arrives at her house seeking temporary refuge. Furthermore, she herself continually remains quiet about Mariana's circumstances, motivated by her own desires for self-preservation and wishing not to jeopardize her position as Augusto's assistant.

regardless of the true nature of their control, whether it is tyrannical or irrational, etc.

As Ibsen suggests, by being subjugated, the oppressed are often associated with madness in comparison to the absolute reason of authority. This holds true for Mariana, who Augusto portrays as utopist, a dreamer and living in a fantasy world. Indeed, as Nancy Walker argues, fantasy in literature “in the forms of dreams and daydreams, madness and utopian vision—is a way of fashioning an alternative reality, of subverting the social order” (29). Undeniably, each narrator is also guilty of perpetuating the belief that Mariana is insane simply by implementing Augusto’s ranting in his or her own discourse. In each of the three texts of the novel, Augusto asserts that Mariana should be committed to an institution, as she is both insane and a pathological liar. Augusto’s assertion leads each narrator to question his or her own sanity using Mariana as a marker or index. Both André and Vicente appropriate Augusto’s choice of words, out loud, such as Vicente’s comments: “¿No puedes ser digna?” (31), “Le gustaba rebajarse” (32) and “¿No puedes hacer algo útil?...vives como un parásito...” (108) resounding Augusto’s earlier declaration, “Mariana es un parásito” (40). Vicente also shows himself to be in conflict concerning that which Augusto tells him about Mariana. Sometimes he is aware of Augusto’s influence over his thoughts, and sometimes he is unaware. He confesses on one occasion “‘Se hará vieja pronto y ya no podrá seguir haciendo males’, había dicho Augusto unos días atrás y me sorprendí pensando lo mismo” (99). At a later point, in a contradictory way, he asks himself, incredulously, during a conversation with Augusto “¿Deseaba convencerme de que una mujer de treinta años era una anciana?” (116), showing that he is seemingly oblivious to his own accusing thoughts of a short time before.

Similarly, André validates Augusto's accusations, by remembering his accusations, and finally by deciding that Augusto's comments concerning Mariana must be reasonably accurate: "Recordé las palabras de Augusto: "Es como su familia, miente como respira", y la miré iracundo. Augusto tenía razón no era tan inocente como parecía, enseñaba demasiado las piernas, ofrecía demasiado la mejilla y estaba en un hotel con alguien que no era su marido" (308). Here, the reader sees that André is a hypocrite. He critiques a married woman for being in a hotel with another man, although that very man is André himself. He even admits his less than honorable intentions later in his narration. Also appropriating Augusto's discourse, André portrays Mariana as mad, "Fue en el momento en que le dije que mentía cuando Mariana pareció enloquecer. Augusto tenía razón, Mariana estaba loca y su locura residía en la mentira" (309). In another instance, André also shows his contradictory nature. He becomes angry when his cousin Bertrand claims that Mariana is crazy: "Me pareció insoportable que hablara de ella con esa crueldad" (318), although he himself later insinuates this very same fact of her insanity directly to her: "Si no me dices lo que pasa llamaré enseguida a un psiquiatra" (337).

In contrast, Gabrielle shows her appropriation of Augusto's control on her own discourse to be different than the control exercised on the discourse of the male narrators. Instead of accusing her friend outright to her directly, she shows herself to be more questioning of Mariana's sanity, and in her own mind, instead of aloud. Gabrielle confesses, thinking: "¿Mariana estaba loca? (137). Indeed, Gabrielle does not fully accept and never vocally appropriates that which Augusto says to her directly about Mariana such as "La mentira es su estado natural" (128) and Mariana es una simuladora" (147). Furthermore, she shows herself to be more aware of Augusto's control than her

narrative counterparts by consistently doubting his motives and his discourse to the reader: “Me pregunté si en verdad mi amiga había intentado suicidarse. ‘¿Y si hubiera intentado matarla y fingir un suicidio?’” (158). Yet, in spite of the differences between the male narrators and Gabrielle, she still gives significant narrative space to Augusto’s claims. Gabrielle shares these claims with the reader, leaving him or her uncertain as to the truth of Mariana’s situation. The very fact that every witness says the very same things about Augusto augments his credibility in spite of his terrible personality. Gabrielle’s less judgmental attitude is more appealing to the reader than Vicente and André’s attitudes, as she seems more sincere with the reader.

While Vicente and André both insult Mariana directly and Gabrielle refrains from outwardly criticizing her friend, the negative influence that others have on each narrator before he or she meets Mariana, can be observed in each section of the novel (Ibsen 95). At least part of the negativity of these secondary characters can be attributed to Augusto’s negative influence, spreading his reach even beyond the narrators. For example, before Vicente meets Mariana, Pepe, who moved in similar social circles as Augusto, comments, “Mariana me era profundamente antipática” (8). Vicente also sees her photograph and makes assumptions based solely on her image in the photo, before meeting her in Paris. Likewise, for André, Bertrand influences his attempt to discern the truth about Mariana, with comments such as, “Mariana no es lo que tú piensas—aseguró Bertrand”(331). Indeed, André shows himself to accept Bertrand’s knowledge about his search for Mariana and the truth: “La verdad tenía tantas caras como la mentira, y en la vida de Augusto y de Mariana había embustes entretejidos con verdades oscuras, que ni Bertrand ni yo podíamos descubrir” (319). Insufficient information and uncertainty also affects

Vicente and André: For example André asks himself: “Además ¿qué hacía ella con aquella compañía dudosa? Era incomprensible y por primera vez pensé que Judith Tessier y Guy Lammont podían estar en lo cierto. ‘Ella y su hija vagabundean por los cafés’ ...”(343). André shows that the opinions of others cause him to doubt the same Mariana whom he claims to love. Interestingly, the comments of mere acquaintances, Judith and Guy, who are also friends of Augusto’s, are more viable than Mariana who never speaks to her own defense in the novel.

Romualdo, a Spaniard also tells Gabrielle of Mariana before they meet. However, Gabrielle again shows herself to be different than the two male narrators, as she resists allowing her opinion to be formed by Romualdo. After meeting Mariana for the first time, Gabrielle thinks “No era la mujer fatal que había imaginado” (138). In spite of the fact that Romualdo tells Gabrielle, prior to their first encounter: “¡Mariana es odiosa! Le hace la vida imposible a Augusto. ¡Es una frívola” (138), Gabrielle makes her own more conscious decision. Years later, although on the page prior in the non-chronological text, Gabrielle uses Romualdo’s choice of words to appease Augusto: “Mariana es una frívola—dije cambiando la palabra astuta por la de frívola” (137). In this passage we see that Gabrielle appropriates negative discourse (Romualdo’s comment) for male satisfaction (Augusto’s). Gabrielle also uses her criticism of Mariana for Augusto’s sake as a strategy by which she can validate her own loyalty to him, and in order to protect her job and her image.

Although Gabrielle seems to be more resilient to the negative effects of Augusto, she is certainly not exempt from these effects. There are times when Gabrielle, of her own volition seems to validate Augusto’s behavior and discourse, albeit in her mind, with

thoughts such as: “Tal vez llevaba razón en este punto, tal vez le preocupaba su mujer, a pesar de los métodos brutales que empleaba para corregirla” (196), demonstrating the absolute authority of reason that Augusto embodies, and its effect on Gabrielle in spite of her resistance to it.⁴¹ Yet, Gabrielle is not a casual user of rhetoric; these very moments of questioning and doubt are employed by Gabrielle to convince the reader of the necessity of her actions towards Mariana and to help her assuage her own feelings of guilt for Mariana’s eventual tragic/uncertain end. In another example of her faltering dedication to her friend, Gabrielle confesses to dissuading Vicente from pursuing a love affair with Mariana: “En mi afán por ayudar a Mariana quizá cometí un error, pero el imaginarla en aquella habitación en desorden, mirando la Columna de la Place Vendome, me ofuscaba” (208). Here, the reader observes that Gabrielle presents an excuse for her actions, but to make matters worse, the remorse that Gabrielle feels is based on the possibility that her friends might discover her unfaithfulness rather than on the traitor-like behavior itself: “¿Y si el muchacho le decía el orden de alejarse de ella que yo le había dicho?” (208). Moments such as these serve not only to solidify Gabrielle’s awareness of her part in Mariana’s destruction, but also her refusal to accept any responsibility for it. In this way, we see that Gabrielle makes a pseudo-confession. She tells the reader of the part she played against Mariana, but shows that she feels guilty for something other than the most central issue.

In summary, in reference to the effect of authority on their texts, Gabrielle’s text is significantly different than Vicente and André’s. She does not insult and belittle

⁴¹ At this point in the novel Gabrielle also compares Augusto and Mariana, he as a “brillante joven” and she as “invariable” and capricious. In this way, the reader also sees that Gabrielle is in conflict between dedication to her friend who she involuntarily associates with madness and the absolute reason that she associates with Augusto’s perspective. Garro, *Testimonios* 196.

Mariana directly; she is the only narrator who shows that she can manipulate Augusto's own discourse to appease him; and finally she, unlike the male narrators, confesses actions that implicate her behavior as a contributing factor in the destruction of Mariana. Gabrielle's narration reads more like a confession, although it too shows some central problems to Gabrielle's sharing with the reader. The confessional nature of Gabrielle's text puts her into a more vulnerable place than the two male narrators, which brings the reader to recall that each narrator is distinctly self-serving (Galván "Multiplicidad" 88). The writing of Gabrielle's section of the novel serves various self-motivated purposes. Her own disclosure to the reader subverts Augusto's authority; it attempts to draw attention away from her own complicity through exposition; it appeals to Gabrielle's desire to validate her identity and most importantly, it guarantees that Gabrielle's own story will not be forgotten. She writes to portray Mariana but also herself, as a way to preserve the memory of herself.

Garro's characterization of Augusto's authority also contributes to the solidifying of the textual authority and the reader's victimization to it as I have already discussed. (Galván "Multiplicidad" 90). By making Augusto's character the one strong link of omniscience, in the novel, Augusto becomes a type of "narrador total" of the entire novel without ever needing a narrative voice ("Multiplicidad" 89). Augusto is a constant throughout the novel. The reader experiences no difficulty at all in understanding Augusto, in comparison with his or her difficulty in grasping the allusiveness of Mariana. Each of the three narrators also has a difficult time in understanding Mariana's elusiveness. For example, Gabrielle characterizes Mariana by her fragmentation. Gabrielle compares Mariana's life to an unanswerable question: "Ahora sé que nunca

hallaré la respuesta para tantos enigmas” (168). In spite of Gabrielle’s intentions, it is important to note that she is unsuccessful, as Mariana’s enigma is one of very few ways that Mariana can escape Augusto’s authority symbolically; by escaping his understanding, which is embodied by her silence—by her refusal to speak.⁴² However, in order to escape Augusto physically, Mariana is pushed to suicide, which may be indicative of Garro’s strong pessimism concerning the oppressed female. On the other hand, Gabrielle’s subversive narration hints positively towards a counter-reaction of Mariana’s oppression, by attempting to break the silence that condemned Mariana. Gabrielle’s courage to speak is based upon her own desire that her image not be destroyed as Mariana’s has been. Gabrielle uses Mariana for her own self-affirmation in order that she can write her way out of the oblivion to which Mariana is condemned.

Gabrielle’s special role in terms of the novel and her relationship with Mariana is a result of her shared womanhood which contrasts her underlying interest with that of the male narrators. Biron, one of few critics of the novel to analyze the three narrations as distinct entities, mentions Gabrielle’s unique role in the novel, although this is but a small part of her analysis. I will build upon Biron’s ideas as I continue to analyze Gabrielle’s role. Biron indicates:

El interés de Gabrielle por Mariana está basado en un tipo diferente de deseo del de Vicente y André. El interés primario de los narradores varones es por la conquista romántica, y sus respectivas interpretaciones

⁴² Isabel Dulfano concludes that in the *testimonio*, it is usually necessary for the subaltern to present his or her argument “in the hegemonic language of the region of influence.” In the case of Mariana it is not a question of an indigenous language versus a dominant language. However, her very silence represents the only stand that she can take against hegemonic power. In other words, she refuses to express herself through language to the reader or to Augusto. Isabel Dulfano, “Testimonio: Present Predicaments and Future Forays,” *Woman as Witness: Essays on Testimonial Literature by Latin American Women*, eds. Linda S. Maier and Isabel Dulfano (New York: Peter Lang, 2004) 86.

sobre la existencia de Mariana revelan un sentido de competencia con Augusto. Esto hace, a fin de cuentas, que la existencia histórica de Mariana sea irrelevante para sus objetivos. Ellos simplemente asumen la autoridad para restaurar su propio sentido de dominio al construir imágenes de ella. La necesidad que siente Gabrielle de describir a la otra mujer, sin embargo, está íntimamente ligada a su lucha de autorrepresentación. Su testimonio está cargado políticamente con el tironeo doble de diferenciarse de Mariana y de identificarse con ella.

(175)

In this passage, Biron refers to the importance of Gabrielle's own struggle with identity that is slowly revealed as she narrates Mariana. This can be contrasted to the feverish desires of the male narrators to sleep with Mariana.⁴³

Indeed, the secret of Gabrielle's narration is a feminist postmodernism, which for Sue Thornham is characterized by the "development of an autonomous female subject, capable of speaking in her own voice within a culture which has persistently reduced her to the status of object" (24).⁴⁴ At the center of the novel, Mariana remains an object, while from the margins, Gabrielle with her own voice is converted/developed into the autonomous female subject referred to by Thornham. Thus, through Gabrielle's own

⁴³ For example, Vicente says, "¡Debí hacer el amor con ella!", me dije furioso" one afternoon when he takes her to a hotel in the country, planning to make love to her and she falls asleep. Garro, Testimonios 19. Similarly, André regrets on several occasions never having consummated his relationship with Mariana.

⁴⁴ Thornham warns of the potential dangers of joining feminism and postmodernism: "A postmodernist feminism, in which sexual difference is no longer seen as a fundamental organizing category, but is replaced by the concept of multiple and shifting differences, threatens to make a feminist politics impossible" Sue Thornham, "Postmodernism and Feminism," The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism, ed. Stuart Sim (New York: Routledge, 2005) 28.

search for self-representation, she overturns male discourse and authority by breaking Mariana's silence with her own voice, thereby re-centering the narrative back onto the female Self, in a way that would be impossible if Mariana were not the focus of her text. Gabrielle is able to utilize Mariana's reflection to her own advantage in a way that the male narrators are unable to do. Gabrielle shows a true desire to bring the reader to understand Mariana, although her discovery of Mariana is contaminated with traces of herself. It is as if the closer she gets to Mariana by narrating her the more she realizes that she is in a similar position. She cautiously begins to compare her and her friend's lives.

GABRIELLE'S CENTRAL ROLE IN THE REPRESENTATION OF THE WOMAN

Garro chooses not to narrate from Mariana's perspective because of the powers of multiplicity and subversion in an observer narrator text. This decision can also be considered a commentary on the difficulty of representing the woman in writing. There are several critical considerations that come to the fore as to Garro's position on this issue. First, I wish to acknowledge the trend in much criticism to link real-life Garro to the character of Mariana, solidifying the importance of authority and subversion in the novel. Ibsen, for example, writes that the characters of Testimonios are centered on Garro's life and marriage to the poet Octavio Paz. Thus, it is not inconsequential that "conspicuously silent and *silenced*, in the novel is the voice of Mariana herself" (93). Although I am not interested in drawing parallels between the novel and Garro's life, I do think Garro's commentary of narrative voice, of the roles of gender, and of the discourse of power and authority are strengthened by this possibility. Although Garro emphatically declares in a letter to Carballo concerning Testimonios "La novela no es un pleito

privado, es ¡una novela!” (xix), Carballo affirms the affinity of the fiction with Garro’s reality.⁴⁵ The possible autobiographical elements of the novel potentially give stronger meaning to how very little the narrators and the reader understand Mariana; speak to the fact that the woman as a subject cannot portray herself; and indicate that the woman who is portrayed by multiple narrators can never become a understandable whole—she will continue to be fragmented as she eludes discourse itself.

It is also quite probable that the alleged autobiographical elements interfered with the way in which the novel was received critically, especially at first. As Estelle Jelinek’s book Women’s Autobiography demonstrates, critics and readers have frequently received female self-writing as “eccentric,” “disturbed,” “unusual,” “frantic,” and “insignificant” (4-5). As Jelinek shows, this leads to an under-appreciation of literature by females, which can be attributed both to critical bias as well as to significant differences in the trends of the autobiographies of men and women.⁴⁶ The most noteworthy difference

⁴⁵ Carballo writes: “En meses recientes de 2006 he conversado (por teléfono) sobre esta novela con su hija Helena Paz Garro, autora de unas memorias únicas en México por su valentía, desenfado y buen decir. En nuestras conversaciones la Chata, así la llamamos cariñosamente sus amigos, ha confirmado casi todas mis hipótesis. La novela es una obra de clave; detrás de los personajes de tinta y papel, existen personajes de carne y hueso. Mariana por supuesto es Elena; ella coquetamente lo deja entrever a lo largo de la novela. Augusto es Octavio Paz; uno y otro son emperadores, uno de Roma, y otro de las letras mexicanas... surgen, en distintos momentos, un argentino, Adolfo Bioy Casares (Vicente), y un mexicano (Archibaldo Burns) a quien le llama Barnaby...” Carballo, ed., Testimonios xx-xxi.

⁴⁶ Among other differences between men’s and women’s autobiography that Estelle Jelinek cites are:

- 1.) Different time periods with surges of autobiographical writing between men and women (6).
- 2.) Men’s autobiography is restrictive to history while women’s autobiography does not focus on a specific time period (7).
- 3.) The focus within autobiography for women is more centered on their personal lives (children, living situation, friends, spouse etc.) (8, 12).
- 4.) Men don’t usually write about their spouse or children, but are more likely to focus on the mother (12).
- 5.) Men idealize their own heroicness, and idealize their childhood with nostalgia while women show struggles and conflicts in childhood (14-16).
- 6.) Men write of or with confidence, women reveal “a self-consciousness and need to sift through their lives for explanation and understanding” (15).

between men's and women's autobiography, for the purpose of this study, is that:

“the narratives of their [women's] lives are often not chronological and progressive but disconnected, fragmentary...” (Jelinek 17). Although Garro's novel cannot and should not be considered an autobiography, there are stylistic elements as well as content concerns that may have led critics to skeptically receive Garro's novel which shows the same disjointed fragmentation cited by Jelinek as is frequent in women's autobiography.⁴⁷ Even though *Testimonios* is not written in the first-person, those who knew Garro could see simply too many affinities between her life and the novel to dismiss the autobiographical traces altogether.

Kazuko Saegusa, a Japanese author, discusses self-writing in a way that is particularly relevant to Garro's novel. Expositing the concepts of Self and Other in gendered writing, Saegusa writes: “Men, in criticism of the way women think, often claim that female narcissism is egocentric and that it does not posit an other”(18).

However, she responds that the reasoning behind this reality is that: “For women, the other is also the self: there is no distinction between the self and the other...” (18).⁴⁸ For

7.) Men write autobiographies with a goal of unity and coherence while women's writing is irregular and unordered (17).

Estelle C. Jelinek, *Women's Autobiography: Essays in Criticism* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1980).

⁴⁷ Another element of Jelinek's argument that is pertinent to my study concerns women's writing and diaries. Jelinek concludes that by “surveying quite a number of bibliographies from various countries and periods, one is struck by the number of women writing diaries, journals, and notebooks, in contrast to the many more men writing autobiographies proper” Jelinek, *Women's* 19. Perhaps Garro intuitively that by giving Mariana a voice in her novel, critics could reduce the literary value of *Testimonios* to an autobiographical diary, hence Mariana's silence and Gabrielle's subversion. In this way, Mariana's silence actually says much more than her speech could possibly say. This is the most effective way for Garro to subvert authority.

⁴⁸ Sue Thornham confirms this concept in Western society, “As Simone de Beauvoir pointed out in 1949, woman in Western thought has represented the Other that can confirm man's identity as Self, as rational thinking being.” Thornham, “Postmodernism,” 25.

Saegusa, the contemplation of Self and Other leads to difficulty in self-conceptualization for the female. Additionally, the professional female author is faced with particular difficulty in writing an “I-novel,” which is not an autobiography, but rather a first-person introspective novel from a female point of view. Contrarily, Saegusa considers that the male writer, “establishes its self/ego by exceeding or overthrowing others” intentionally writing against authors or styles of the past (20).⁴⁹ Saegusa’s reflections concerning Self and Other in male and female discourse can be directly linked to similar situations in Testimonios. First, Mariana’s silence is indicative of Garro’s hesitation or inability to construct an “I-novel.” Secondly, Gabrielle as narrator dramatizes the difficulty for the female writer in the construction of the Self as an entity separate from the Other. Gabrielle’s writing of the Other, Mariana, results also in the writing of her Self. In this way, Gabrielle is indeed narcissistic—by focusing on the other, she hopes to redefine herself. Even in this later situation, Garro masks her attempt at writing the “I-novel” by utilizing three narrators. Finally, as Saegusa has indicated, male authors overthrow previous styles. In contrast, Garro’s novel does not overthrow a previous style but rather adapts an existing style for the female writer’s benefit.

Gabrielle is the only one of the three observer narrators of the novel awarded the benefits of voyeuristic narcissism. By utilizing the *testimonio* genre, one of alterity, Garro stays within a culturally accepted “norm” for a female writer. However, to the astute reader, the subverted message in her parody of the *testimonio* genre overcomes the

⁴⁹ Indeed, as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar demonstrate, a man’s writing that goes against the norm is considered a strong-willed battle against his predecessor in order to establish new forms of writing. A similar endeavor by a female results in her identification with madness or “fear and dis-ease” Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, “From Infection in the Sentence: The Woman Writer and the Anxiety of Authorship,” The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends, ed. David H. Richter (Boston: Bedford, 1998) 1363.

limitations of a traditional *testimonio*. Specifically, Gabrielle, in a way unlike the male narrators, comes to understand that in her exploration of Mariana as the Other outside of herself, she sees herself more fully as she too is destined to always be an Other. In the same way that Mariana cannot narrate herself, Gabrielle can only narrate her version of the events by beginning with a complete focus on Mariana. Thus, Gabrielle's 'I' is the other 'I' in Testimonios, showing the indistinguishable difference between Self and Other for her narration, and the benefit that occurs to the Self by looking at the Other.

An essay by Marcus K. Billson and Sidonie A. Smith, included in Jelinek's study, differentiates the memoir and the autobiography in such a way that is applicable to Gabrielle's narration of the Self as an Other:

For years critics of self-narrative have defined the memoir in terms of the autobiography. They claim the autobiography narrates the story of a person's unfolding sense of identity, the tale of becoming in the world; the account usually involves considerable self-analysis on the part of the author. The memoir, on the other hand focuses not on the narrating self, but rather on the outer world of people and events: the memoir writer's intention is not self examination. Critics who describe the differences in the forms in this way fail to realize that the memorialist's vision of the outer world is as much a projection and refraction of the self as the autobiographer's. (163)

As I have stated, Garro's novel should neither be considered an autobiography nor a memoir. However, Billson and Smith make a distinction about the memoir that illustrates

the task of the observer narrator. Indeed, although Gabrielle does not begin with the intention to examine herself, but rather Mariana, through her observation the Other, especially a similar female, Gabrielle “projects” and “refracts” the Self. Billson and Smith discuss Lilian Hellman’s memoirs, which focus on historical events and participants in Hellman’s past. In her memoirs, Hellman “invites the reader into a world of ‘others’ who, as they come together in her memory, become significant in the articulation of her ‘self’” (Billson and Smith 163). In the same way, Gabrielle’s narration invites her readers to observe Mariana while also revealing the true nature of herself.

Sommer’s study of Elena Poniatowska’s Hasta no verte Jesus mío also illustrates another important function of silent resistance that is applicable to Mariana’s silence, making her representation in discourse difficult. In Poniatowska’s *testimonio* Jesusa holds the power of the narrative through maintaining her right of refusal to speak to the interlocutor. At times, Jesusa resists sharing her story with Poniatowska, which indicates a simultaneous refusal to be understood by the readers. In other words, as Sommer perceives it, the message of Jesusa’s right to silence is clear:

You can take away the frantic activity of my life, she may be saying, but you leave this purloined person hiding in full view, safely untranslated and unassimilable. Empty-handed readers are then caught red-handed, singed by a frustrated desire to have our own way with Jesusa. When she refuses, refusing to be our matrix for narcissistic self-duplication, we confront our limited contours before trying to take another literary life. (“Taking” 937)

In a similar way, in Testimonios, the narrators and the reader find Mariana to be visible, tantalizing even, yet unreachable. Mariana refuses to be heard. However, through

Gabrielle's own search for self-representation, and through her observation of Mariana she reinstates communication to Mariana's silence. Gabrielle brings the reader to Mariana who can serve as a mirror for the narcissistic reader-voyeur through Gabrielle's own gaze. The reader, by actively accepting Gabrielle's central role in the text can use Mariana to benefit his or her fragmentation. As Sommer puts it so well, Mariana's silence prevents her character from becoming an immediate "matrix for narcissistic self-duplication." However, as Gabrielle breaks the silence that enshrouds Mariana, she will once again become the central axis of Gabrielle and the reader's self-affirmation. The renewed communication will be directly and individually with the reader.

In order to get to Gabrielle's subversive commentary the reader must be able to see the textual and rhetorical clues that indicate that Gabrielle is aware of the fact that her focus is not purely on breaking Mariana's silence. Contrarily, Gabrielle is oftentimes responsible for actually silencing Mariana's voice, so that her own narration may be heard. It is Gabrielle who discovers Mariana's diary and the correspondences between Mariana and Vicente at the bottom of Mariana's trunk, yet refuses to reveal their contents to the reader. Instead, Gabrielle wishes for the reader to validate and believe her account (the one we get from the text we read) of Mariana. Gabrielle also admits that she is writing a novel (a fiction) about Mariana, deliberately attempting to give the reader a non-fiction contrast that will give veracity to the account being read.⁵⁰ She also reveals her plan to resolve her fiction with a happy ending, in contrast to the unhappy ending that

⁵⁰ Barnaby is a secondary character in the novel. He has also published a novel on Mariana. This is another text that could perhaps reveal more information about Mariana to the reader but this text also exists outside of the narrative frame. Barnaby's extra-textual fiction leaves the reader knowing that more is left to be said, and strengthens the novel's commentary on its own inconclusiveness.

Mariana faces. Gabrielle desires to write a different story about Mariana that will allow her to escape the forces that Gabrielle considers to be destructive in Mariana's life. She concludes:

Fue entonces cuando se me ocurrió escribir una novela sobre su vida, recordé que la naturaleza imita el arte y decidí darle un final feliz, que cambiaría su destino. Me encerré a escribir, mi personaje era complejo, su vida era un inexplicable laberinto, pero yo la conduciría a través de aquellos vericuentos tenebrosos a una salida inesperadamente luminosa. Era lo menos que podía hacer por la pobre Mariana. (209)⁵¹

By referring to a "fiction" with a different ending, Gabrielle makes the reader more likely to believe the tragic version that he or she is reading of Mariana's story, but Gabrielle also alerts the reader to question the nature of reality, the role of fiction, and the questionable manipulation of everything that she herself narrates.⁵²

Gabrielle's control over Mariana is so significant that she promises to keep Mariana's diary a secret until her death, as she fears that the truth might implicate her: "se lo dejaré a Gerard cuando yo muera, será hermoso que alguien sepa la trágica verdad sobre una bella desconocida, antes no se lo daré a nadie, no se deben tomar riesgos por

⁵¹ One of the possible endings she imagines is for Mariana to become a nun, which would keep her safe from promiscuity and misery, which is also indicative of the sad state of affairs for women. In other words, is becoming a nun the only way that Gabrielle can imagine Mariana's life turning out better? Furthermore, as Gabrielle's expresses her desire to write a different destiny for Mariana, she denies any part or responsibility for Mariana's misfortune, and she believes that in real-life there is little she can do for Mariana. In fiction, though, she imagines herself writing a better destiny for her friend, showing her belief in the power of fiction. Finally, Garro's construction of a fiction within another fictional construct brings the reader to question the construction of the novel.

⁵² As Mark Frisch demonstrates: "The fact that characters within the novel are "writing" a novel about Mariana raises questions about what is fact and what is fiction" Mark Frisch, "Absurdity, Death, and the Search for Meaning in Two of Elena Garro's Novels," A Different Reality: Studies on the Work of Elena Garro, ed. Anita K. Stoll (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1990) 186.

unas mujeres cuyas vidas fueron completamente inútiles y ¿para qué colocar una piedra en el camino de Augusto y en el mío?...” (282-83). Gabrielle is either as oblivious to the paradox of desiring to write a fiction but intentionally withholding the truth, or she is simply manipulative. Here, by contrasting the indefinite with the definite Gabrielle diminishes the importance of the truth by concluding that it might be **(indefinite)** lovely one day **(indefinite)** for someone **(impersonal)** to come across **(unintentional action)** the truth **(definite)**.

For Fabienne Bradu the withheld diary functions as a “verdad más verdadera, al alcance de la mano y sin embargo nunca explotada, nunca revelada” (23). Bradu claims that the diary serves to contrast truth and fiction and to show the inaccessibility of truth itself. However, neither Bradu nor any other critic offers an explanation for Gabrielle’s action and decision to withhold the diary from the readers and the other characters of the novel. In response to the lack of explanation, I postulate that Gabrielle keeps the truth of Mariana’s life a secret so that her own narration about Mariana is centralized and does not lose importance. If the reader has a direct link to Mariana, Gabrielle’s narration becomes unnecessary. By keeping the diary and letters secret Gabrielle sustains control over the text and the reader. Thus, by silencing the truth, written by Mariana’s own hand, Gabrielle validates the power in her own writing and keeps the reader searching to resolve the mystery with a distant comfort of knowing that truth still exists. By gaining the power of the narrative, Gabrielle is able to undermine Augusto as ultimate authority of the novel. Even in Gabrielle’s empowered writing, truth is multi-layered and

dependent upon other people's truthfulness to her, as she too must collect testimonies by other people in order to get information or write her own account of Mariana.⁵³

Indeed, Gabrielle both hides and exhibits her own search for identity and self-representation in Testimonios. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar indicate in The Madwoman in the Attic, that female writers of the nineteenth century also hide the true meaning of their texts. The feminism in Gabrielle's text is kept secret by her focus on Mariana.⁵⁴ Gilbert and Gubar question the nature of this "secret" for nineteenth century novelists, concluding that overwhelmingly in female writing, "the one plot that seems to be concealed...is in some sense a story of the woman writer's quest for her own story; it is the story, in other words of the woman's quest for self-definition" (1364). Gabrielle, as a narrator is in a similar position as the nineteenth century female writer. She knowingly silences Mariana, so that her own story full of doubts and self-affirmation may be heard. Gabrielle's section of the novel is about her own search to understand herself, through Mariana. Her decision to write is the novel's strongest stand against male discourse and authority. Surely, this must come about as a result of Garro's sensitivity to contemporary society's "historical uneasiness about women and power" and inability to "deal with history-making women who trespass into male activities"(164) as Miriam Polster posits with respect to other female authors in her study of female heroism.

⁵³ Other elements of supposed truth are revealed in questionable ways. For example, Gabrielle's search for information about Mariana's disappearance is heavily informed by Gerard who appears angrily at Gabrielle's door one night with a razor blade. Gabrielle decides that Gerard's threatening attitude is an attempt to protect Mariana. Gabrielle is also informed by Sara, who tells her that Augusto's concern with finding Mariana is related to the loss of important and valuable archeological documents about Karnak Garro, Testimonios 264. Gabrielle accepts these truths, just as they are narrated to her. These truths serve as a way to offer explanations to the reader, who must also question his or her second-hand knowledge.

⁵⁴ Garro's novel can also maintain a broad reading public by hiding the feminine message, just as Gilbert and Gubar demonstrate as a common feature of female authors in the nineteenth-century Gilbert and Gubar, "From," 1361.

Jean Franco offers a critique of female characters in Garro's novels that is useful in understanding the subversive power of Gabrielle and her narration. In Franco's reading of Garro's Los recuerdos del porvenir, she concludes that women in Garro's novels are either "the elusive phantom of male desire" or "the undesired surrogates who are not objects of desire but who allow themselves to be seduced by power" (Plotting 138).⁵⁵ On the surface Testimonios mirrors the same two archetypes, though Mariana, who is a phantom of male desire—of André, Vicente, and of Augusto, although in a perverted way; and Gabrielle, who is not an object of desire but rather seduced by power. By maintaining these same archetypal characters in Testimonios, Garro has the ability to control the subversive aspect of the novel even more. Through Gabrielle's weaknesses and the reader's initial impression that she is a perfidious female who is afraid to stand up against Augusto, Gabrielle's subversion functions.

Just as there is a central passage in El jardín in which Julio (actually Gloria) confirms the importance of the gaze and the Self in the mirror, in Testimonios there are four distinct passages, *mirror moments*, in Gabrielle's narration that are particularly important to my interpretation of her central role in the novel. Gabrielle's first reference to a mirror in her text is when she is haunted by Mariana's image reflected in a mirror. She is sent by Augusto to spy on Mariana, and fearing that her friend sees her insincerity she confesses: "Temí que adivinara que yo estaba en su salón alquilado con fines ajenos a nuestra antigua amistad y por primera vez dejó de gustarme mi amiga...Me pareció verla reflejada en un espejo hecho astillas y que también ella contemplaba su imagen mutilada y multiplicada" (132). Three important issues surface in this quote. First, the image of

⁵⁵ In this selection Franco refers to Julia and Isabel respectively.

Mariana that haunts Gabrielle is a shattered and fragmented one. Secondly, this fragmented image is ultimately linked to the guilt felt by Gabrielle for her complicity in Mariana's misfortune. She can see Mariana, yet she refuses to do anything to help her, because of her own motivating self-interest. Thirdly, it is Gabrielle, and not Mariana that sees Mariana as a fragmented individual. She insinuates that Mariana also must see herself as fragmented: "pareció...que también ella contemplaba su imagen..." (132). This is the first instance in which Mariana's reflection is shown to literally mirror Gabrielle's own character, in spite of the fact that Gabrielle insinuates that Mariana experiences the same sense. This transference between the two women is extremely important to her narration.

In the second mirror moment, Gabrielle sees Mariana reflected in a mirror when Augusto invites Gabrielle to be a witness to Mariana's insanity after her two alleged attempts at suicide. Mariana first attempts suicide by carbon monoxide poisoning and secondly by attempting to hang herself with an electric cord. In shock, when faced with her friend and the explanation of the circumstances, Gabrielle turns her back to Mariana in order to support herself on the hearth in Mariana's bedroom. She sees Mariana reflected in the mirror:

Reflejadas en el enorme espejo colocado encima de la chimenea, vi las espaldas de los dos hombres y la figura miserable de Mariana. En el azogue, los hombres parecían avanzar hacia mí desde un túnel tenebroso y amenazador. Había algo infinitamente sórdido en la habitación de lujo. Quizás era la presencia del cordón eléctrico que pendía retorcido bajo los rayos azules de los cristales del candil. El cordón partía en dos al mundo

visible y su silueta sinuosa marcaba los límites del horror que había invadido al cuarto. Supe que iba a quedarse para siempre en el interior de aquel espejo y me sentí incapaz de razonar (151-52).

In this passage, Mariana is reflected in the center of the mirror. The faces of the men are not reflected, although their looming figures provoke horror and fear for Gabrielle. This passage literally mirrors the rest of Gabrielle's text. Mariana is the central subject of Gabrielle's gaze, although she is continually overshadowed by the domineering male figures that also have a great influence on Gabrielle. Indeed, the final sentence of this passage: "supe que iba a quedarse para siempre en el interior de aquel espejo" indicates Gabrielle's feelings not only of her struggle to represent Mariana, but also that with Mariana's physical disappearance at the end of the novel is the erasure of her very image, leaving behind Gabrielle's own image and self-identity reflected. In other words, Gabrielle seems to know that Mariana becomes trapped as an image that is eventually destined to be erased from memory, although she has yet to narrate this to the reader.

Gabrielle's difficulty in representing Mariana can be linked to memory but also in her discovery of the Self through her comparison with Mariana. Throughout her section of the novel, Gabrielle admits that Augusto has marred her memory of Mariana as the reader observes, for example, in the opening passage. Gabrielle also reveals that her own memory lacks understanding of Mariana: "Quería recordar a Mariana, encontrar la causa de su fracaso, el origen de su pérdida" (137). She later contradicts herself and decisively indicates a moment when she feels that the origin of Mariana's destruction is decided: "Creo que la fría primavera que decidió el destino de Charpentier, decidió también el de Mariana y el mío" (194). Gabrielle also references Mariana's lack of permanence,

“Mariana fue una desequilibrada y su sombra se ha convertido en nada” (282).

Undoubtedly, at the cost of converting her friend’s memory into nothingness, leaving her trapped infinitely in the mirror, Gabrielle saves herself from oblivion by emphasizing the loss of Mariana’s image and the reconstruction of her own image.

The third mirror moment of Gabrielle’s text comes in the form of a flashback nine years after the incident in which Augusto accuses Mariana of having attempted to commit suicide. Mariana requests Gabrielle’s complicity in changing an empty trunk with her full one just before she disappears. After hiding the trunk at Boris’ house, a true act of cowardice and fear on the part of Gabrielle, she sits down and reflects on Mariana’s struggle in life. This passage links Gabrielle’s sense of incompleteness with Mariana’s suffering and revives the image of the cord dividing the room in two that was part of the second mirror moment:

El cordón estaba en mi casa y de él pendía la vida de mi amiga y la mía...se reflejaba en el espejo de la chimenea de mármol blanco de su cuarto, tostada por el viento en una playa abandonada...Una fuerza poderosa brotaba del espejo y me arrastraba, aunque no podía precisar hacía que dirección. Estaba en el cuarto de mi amiga y ella sin maquillaje con el pelo en desorden repetía: “Me han revuelto como a un rompecabezas, no puedo juntarme, hay una pieza que me falta” (229-30).

Indeed many critics cite the last sentence of this passage, a simile comparing Mariana to a puzzle, to discuss Mariana’s identity. However, no critic actually analyzes this important comment as part of Gabrielle’s flashback of the original suicide episode. In point of fact, Mariana never makes a comparison of herself to a puzzle nor does she directly admit to

feeling fragmented. Rather, it is Gabrielle who transfers her own sense of fragmentation onto Mariana. Coming from Gabrielle, this third mirror moment can be linked to the first, in which Gabrielle assumes that Mariana sees the same fragmented image that she sees. Yet, it is actually Gabrielle who cannot re-construct the whole of Mariana nor of herself. In yet another example, Gabrielle transfers her own idea of fragmentation to Mariana with, “‘El rompecabezas empieza a tomar forma’ hubiera dicho Mariana” (247). What the reader deduces from these passages is that it is Gabrielle who perceives and describes Mariana’s fragmentation. Yet, Gabrielle seems not to fully understand her own fragmentation and continues to question the images of her flashback/daydream: “¿Por qué me había visto a mí misma como un personaje de la Corte de Luis XV en el espejo de la habitación de Mariana? No encontré explicación...me sentí perseguida por aquel círculo de sudamericanos que había visto en el espejo y que amenazaba con destruirme” (230-31).

Gabrielle also emphasizes that by destroying the image, it is possible to destroy the individual: “‘Para destruir a alguien primero hay que destruir su imagen’, me repito. Eso lo ignoraba la pequeña Mariana, que segura de sus pasos se movía como en un escenario, sin saber que alguien había cambiado las luces de los reflectores, para proyectar sobre su figura clara, una luz negra que la desfiguraba, yo lo sé ahora” (143). Gabrielle confesses to knowing that Mariana’s image has been disfigured, indicates her hope in preventing the destruction of her own image. Gabrielle demonstrates that unlike Mariana, she has more control over herself and the representation of her own image. She refuses to end her life as a disfigured image. This external control over Mariana’s own image can be seen when Gabrielle requests Mariana’s passport from Augusto, who

refuses to give it to her. In this scene Augusto discovers that Mariana is hiding under a table by seeing her reflection in a mirrored door and loudly states for both women to hear: “Mariana debe entender, primero: que no acepto chantajes. Segundo: que no estoy dispuesto a permitir que siga persiguiéndome. Tercero: que no debe mentir” (145). In this example, we see that the image of Mariana put forth to Gabrielle is under Augusto’s control. Thus, Gabrielle’s understanding of the image of Mariana, even before she disappears, is filtered through the mirror as a result of Augusto’s gaze. Augusto is shown to have control of the “reflectors” casting shadows upon Mariana. Simultaneously, by drawing attention to Mariana’s lack of control, Gabrielle indicates her own increased level of control over her image in her text. She shows she has overcome the authority disfiguring Mariana’s image by writing her narration, by breaking the narrative silence and by avoiding Augusto’s gaze as a filter.

Through Gabrielle’s contribution to the disfiguration and loss of Mariana’s image, she contributes to a discourse of madness concerning Mariana, much in the way that Gilbert and Gubar conceptualize the use of madness by nineteenth-century female authors: “Indeed, much of the poetry and fiction written by women conjures up this mad creature so that female authors can come to terms with their own uniquely female feelings of fragmentation, their own keen sense of the discrepancies between what they are and what they are supposed to be” (1366). Thus, Mariana’s alleged madness is a way for both Garro and Gabrielle to come to terms with their identity crisis of fragmentation. Gabrielle uses Mariana’s supposed madness as a gauge to measure her own sanity, concluding “‘No, no puedo estar loca yo también’, me dije confusa” (220), although she vacillates in another moment and determines, “‘estaba más loca que mi amiga” (247). In

other moments, Gabrielle gives clues to the fact that she wants to understand Mariana's life in order to understand the insanity in her own life: "Traté de reconstruir mi vida pasada cerca de ella, para hallar las causas del espantoso final que preparaban para mi amiga" (137). Thus, we can determine that Mariana's madness is both a construction of the author and a tool by which Gabrielle arrives at a better understanding of herself.

In Gabrielle's confessed weaknesses we discover her own sense of fragmentation. As a result of her precarious financial situation, Gabrielle acts unfaithfully toward her friend and betrays her own anti-bourgeois values. In one example, she narrates: "Quise contestar, pero me paralizó la idea de perder mi empleo" (132). Mariana on the other hand encompasses the values that Gabrielle wants to possess. Mariana comments negatively about the: "poder adquisitivo en el burgués" after watching a political movie. Gabrielle in turn, feels guilty: "Mariana pronunció 'el burgués' con un tono tan despectivo que me sentí aludida" (133), demonstrating yet again, her guilt complex. In another instance, Gabrielle shows animosity in her thoughts towards Mariana for not giving into bourgeois values, as she has done: "Era una imprudente. Me digo que si ya se encontraba entre ellos, los vencedores, debería haber permanecido en su sitio y aceptar su amarga suerte, como lo hice yo...ella se negó a plegarse a su círculo y el círculo, la estranguló" (143).

Gabrielle's desire to better her economic status is also revealed in a conversation with her friend Stephan. She shares her wish to separate herself from the group of South American immigrants, however, Stephan reminds her that the immigrants have money and that this could be her only chance to a better future (173). Boris even outwardly questions her professed commitment to the communist cause with: "Mírese a usted

misma, luchando y explotando a inocentes, admitiendo los crímenes para guardar su puesto parasitario, como dicen ustedes” (267). Although Gabrielle knows that Mariana is more politically committed than she is, she criticizes both Mariana and Boris, in a misdirection of her own feelings of inadequacy and betrayal in the political realm: “Jugaba al escondite y era amiga de rusos destronados... Mi amiga prefería los augurios, los milagros, el ocio, la Iglesia y los mendigos. Yo pertenecía al presente, no era como Boris o como ella, un objeto antihistórico” (232). With these examples, Gabrielle both disguises and draws attention to her own weaknesses; her participation in and simultaneous desire to reject the bourgeois system that her friend seems to accomplish masterfully.

Gabrielle finds justification for her lacking social commitment in her own poverty. In one typical rhetorical style for Gabrielle, she emphasizes what the rich have in order to draw attention to that which she does not have because of her poverty: “Los ricos gozaban de todos los privilegios, desde las sedas, las flores, los grandes espacios, los perfumes y el silencio para arrojar a los desheredados a lugares invadidos de olores y de ruidos promiscuos. No quise mirarme en los espejos” (160). Her desire to evade mirrors is to avoid the shattered or absent image that she knows is inevitable because of her own lot in life. With her confession concerning herself and her sister, “Tanto ella como yo pertenecíamos a la base del Partido Comunista y esa noche comprendí que el sacrificio es estúpido en cualquier bando político. Arriba las cosas funcionaban de una manera muy distinta a la imaginada por nosotras las idealistas” (200), Gabrielle acknowledges her belief in a utopia, and her broadened perspective which includes a view of the powerful. She realizes that power and glory go hand-in-hand, and she is

excluded from both.⁵⁶ She laments her social situation, her inconsistent political dedication, her profession, and her position as a woman as some of the underlying issues of her own sense of incompleteness and failure.

For Bradu, the very essence of Testimonios is “lejos de la armonía: aun cuando ofrece su propia coherencia, recoge asimismo las huellas o los signos de una identidad despedazada, fragmentaria, contradictoria o mutilada” (12). In spite of the fragmented identity of the text, the fragmented reader gazes upon Mariana’s disappearing image, as portrayed by Gabrielle in order to resolve his or her own feelings of fragmentation. As I have already developed in the preceding chapters, this intense feeling of fragmentation on the part of the characters in the novel and on the part of the reader is a result of postmodernism, which leaves the individual without a clear concept of Self, and without a mirror in which to see his or her reflection, in the pre-mirror stage. Instead, the individual as a self-centered consumer is trapped in the autoerotic stage being able only to see the fragmented self, which I have termed a narcissistic deficiency. In other words, contemporary narcissistic man wants to see a full reflection, however he is destined to dissatisfaction because the lack of a representational mirror. In Garro’s novel, Gabrielle is the postmodern storyteller who leads the reader as an accomplice to Mariana, so that she and the reader may forge an understanding of the Self through observation of Mariana who serves as a mirror.

⁵⁶ Gabrielle uses the terms “power” and “glory” as a reference to Graham Green’s novel, The Power and the Glory an object of much critical debate in literature circles of the time according to Testimonios: “En esos días la novela de Graham Green El poder y la gloria se comentaba en todas las tertulias y asocié el título a la carrera del marido de mi amiga” Garro, Testimonios 201. If Gabrielle’s own observations and motivation are related to the struggle for power and glory which is the cause of the mention of Green’s novel, the same could be implied for the mention of another novel by Greene in Vicente’s narration The Heart of the Matter which Vicente says “me impresionó por el problema de la fe mezclado tan estrechamente a la pasión física” Garro, Testimonios 49.

However, a true appreciation of Garro's technique comes in understanding the three different narrators, which can be visualized to look something like a tri-fold mirror with three distinct panels. Gabrielle's is the central panel that offers a direct reflection of Mariana as subject. Similarly, the two side panels offer reflections of the same image but from a more distant angle. Some critics have insufficiently recognized the differences between the three narrators. For example Bradu writes: "Sin embargo, la uniformidad de las tres voces narrativas contradice en parte la intención plural en la cual parece descansar la novela... apenas se distinguen unas de otras" (19). I disagree with this aspect of Bradu's analysis, as she attempts to show that all three narrators accomplish the same result. In particular, the unique function of Gabrielle's narration distinguishes her narrator from that of the male narrators. However, Bradu's analysis of the novel has several interesting points that enhance my study of Testimonios.

For example, Bradu summarizes the importance of self-representation, narcissism and the mirror in the novel. She concludes:

La página en blanco es siempre un espejo posible para el escritor pero, para la mujer lo es doblemente. Lo es en el tradicional sentido narcisista pero raras veces se trata, en ellas de un narcisismo triunfante. Y lo es como lugar de existencia, de una existencia en la cual la escritura se volvería el centro ausente de la identidad: escribir para ser, un poco más, cada día. (11)

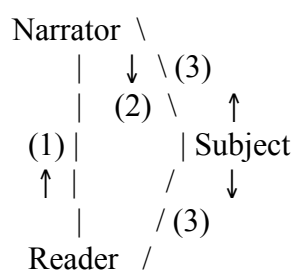
Bradu also postulates of the narcissistic reflection of the writer and the female, that the three narrators form a circle around Mariana by which Garro "duplica el tradicional espejo narcisista en una suerte de círculo reflejante orientado hacia un centro que estaría

vacía: la fantasmal Mariana es una imagen presa en un espejo veneciano” (20).

Bradú further indicates that Garro’s novel is the type that “todo mujer quisiera disponer cuando se degrada la visión de sí misma, o cuando ninguna cara aparece en la superficie luminosa” (20).

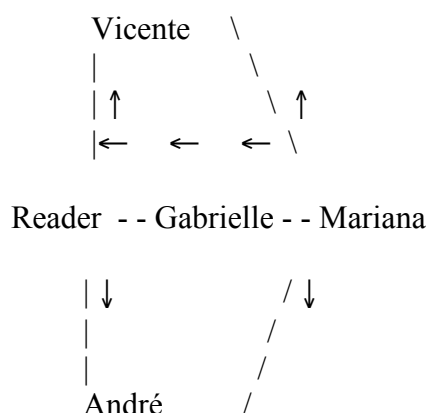
While Mariana is the absent center, trapped and without a voice, as Bradú demonstrates, my analysis of Gabrielle’s special role as a narrator brings new understanding to Bradú’s conceptualization of an empty center. Indeed, the new narcissism proposed by Gabrielle’s observation of Mariana creates a mirror in which not only every woman wishes she could gaze, but in fact is one that every reader can gaze upon. Gabrielle’s narration of herself through her gaze of Mariana actually dramatizes the reappearance of Gabrielle in the looking glass, and she takes the place of the absent center that was Mariana in a circle of mirrored gazes. Each reader also, can occupy this center surrounded by the mirrors, and the narration of all three narrators.

In my introduction, I sketched a general representation between the reader, the narrator and the subject in the novels analyzed in this study.



This basic model holds true exactly as it is for Donoso’s novel, but becomes complicated by the narrative plurality in Garro’s Testimonios. The duplicated mirror brings the relationship between narrators, reader and subject to take the shape of a larger triangle. In addition neither Vicente nor André’s narrations effectively bring Mariana’s image

back to the reader. This happens best in Gabrielle's central narration. With the de-fragmentation of Gabrielle's narration through her own subverted search for self-representation the reader is most directly linked to Mariana, filtered through Gabrielle's narration.



The mirror reflecting Mariana becomes one in which Gabrielle and the reader can see his or her own image more clearly. However, the central importance of Gabrielle's narration should not be seen as way to devalue Vicente and André's reflections, as their angled perceptions provide a more complete image into the space surrounding Mariana. As Galván concludes, the three narrators enhance the reader's understanding of Mariana: "aunque los testimonios sean sobre Mariana, el lector termina por conocer también al testigo y el ambiente que ha rodeado a Mariana. Al hacerlo puede entenderla mejor" ("Multiplicidad" 91). We can also relate the multi-angled view of Mariana to Lacan's mirror stage. Lacan indicates that at the moment of seeing his or her own reflection in the looking glass, the infant will also see the area around him or herself reflected in the glass: "The mirror image inaugurates a new visual and mental experience in the infant's life, since an organized form of himself is seen projected outside, together with the space

surrounding him, in the mirror's surface" (Benvenuto and Kennedy 57). Thus, the three-paneled narrator-mirror reflects both Mariana and her surrounding environment for the benefit of Gabrielle and the reader.

THE ROLES OF VICENTE AND ANDRÉ

The two male narrators of Mariana's story also suffer a sense of incompleteness in their attempt to understand Mariana. Just as is the case in Gabrielle's narration, their attempts are often overshadowed by Augusto's control.⁵⁷ While Gabrielle is able to capture Mariana's image, in the narrations of both Vicente and André, the image of Mariana proves to be as fleeting as her character. For example, after Vicente loses contact with Mariana, she disappears from his photos. His memory of Mariana's image is literally erased from his photos and Augusto's negative portrayal of her is all that he has left. At the end of Vicente's narration, he writes:

Antes de terminar diré que después de mi charla con Augusto, miré las fotografías de Mariana y en todas, salvo en una, su diminuta imagen ha desaparecido. Sólo me queda aquella en la que está sobre la nieve, pero ahora no carga sus skíes sobre los hombros ni sonrío. Tampoco me da la espalda, ha vuelto a mirarme y su figura pequeñísima agita la mano en un señal de despedida antes de desaparecer para siempre... (122).

⁵⁷ Persino indicates that because of the narrative perspective the novel is full of "pursuers" who have difficulties in their search of Mariana: "La construcción narrativa de *Testimonios sobre Mariana* legitima y da existencia real a la persecución sufrida por todos los personajes de Garro... de esta manera, el clima persecutorio es creado desde el lugar del perseguidor y no del perseguido" María Silvina Persino, *Hacia una poética de la mirada: Mario Vargas Llosa, Juan Marsé, Elena Garro, Juan Goytisolo* (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 1999) 125. Vicente, Gabrielle and André equally pursue Mariana, yet because of her differing intentions Gabrielle gets the closest to her, allowing the reader the same advantage of getting close to Mariana. Indeed, Vicente and André's section of novel allows the reader other angles from which to see Mariana.

In this fantastical ending, Mariana's gaze back towards her narrator is shown to be under her own control. In this exchange of power from Vicente to Mariana, the ability to narrate, remember or maintain Mariana's image is taken from Vicente.⁵⁸ As Persino indicates, "Esta vez Mariana no es mirada y vigilada sino que es ella la que mira y luego desvanece su propia imagen. Vicente trate inútilmente de recuperar visualmente a Mariana; pero las fotos, lejos de entregar una verdad, la ocultan" (119). Indeed Vicente's narration has been unsuccessful in visually retaining Mariana's image. This is particularly important to Vicente who shows a precedent of validating his own reality with that which he visually perceives. For example, he writes on one occasion: "Pero me negué a aceptar que estuviera loco, pues la había visto" (69). However, in his narration of Mariana, Augusto's control, and that which is said about Mariana by Augusto affect Vicente to the point in which his memory of Mariana is forever erased, indicating Augusto's ability to control even a broader collective memory. In contrast, the reader sees that Mariana's photograph has not escaped Gabrielle by the end of her narration. She writes: "Algunas veces compro rosas color té y se las ofrezco a su fotografía y a la de Natalia..." (282). Vicente is unsuccessful in ever truly seeing Mariana; for this reason, she disappears from his mind and from his photos.

André is faced with the similar dilemma in capturing and retaining Mariana's image. In his narration he is faced with his cousin's Bertrand's doubt about whether he actually sees Mariana when he claims to see her—some individuals have speculated that Mariana committed suicide some time ago. In one of André's chance encounters with

⁵⁸ Another interesting aspect of Mariana in Vicente's photos is that she centralizes his gaze as an onlooker, in a similar way as the painting of the *Odalisque* centralizes Gloria's gaze of Julio's gaze, as I have analyzed in relationship to [El jardín](#).

Mariana outside of Notre Dame, he asks his photographer friend to take Mariana's picture so that he can prove to Bertrand that he has actually seen her after several individuals have speculated about her death. The next morning his photographer friend calls with the news: "Lo siento, tu rollo se veló y tus turistas desaparecieron" (326). Just as Vicente experiences difficulty in maintaining an external representation of Mariana's image, André cannot prove to anyone else what he thinks he sees. Mariana's photographic image literally escapes him. Unlike Vicente, he is never able to capture Mariana's image in a photograph. On the other hand, in contrast with Vicente, after Mariana is gone, André's memories of Mariana are not victimized by Augusto's negativity. For this reason, André's mental image of Mariana is retained.

A brief look at the use of mirrors in both of the male narrator's texts is also revealing of the differences between their narration and Gabrielle's account. Vicente's resulting difficulty in remembering Mariana's image is prefigured in his section of the novel after a period of extended separation from her. He writes:

"Necesito verla antes", me dije entonces durante varias noches. ¿Antes de qué? El espejo me devolvía mi imagen intacta a los estragos de los meses pasados sin ella. Le supliqué que me enviara una fotografía que no me envió y noté que en la de Pepe, su rostro empezaba a suavizarse, como las fotografías de los muertos antes de borrarse con delicadeza. Trataba algunas veces de reconstruir su rostro, pero era inútil... (25)

Vicente tries to reconstruct Mariana using his own image and his own desire for Mariana. Gabrielle, on the other hand does not try to reconstruct herself first, but tries to see Mariana, and when she does, she is rewarded with her own image in the mirror by truly

seeking Mariana. Gabrielle joins her own search for self-identity with Mariana's lack of self-identity, while Vicente has only his selfish motives and sexual interest in mind. Furthermore, as Vicente reflects on his own attempts to remember, he recognizes the fleeting nature of representation: "Podemos reflejar nuestra vida, dibujándola en hojas de papel y nunca será nuestra vida verdadera. El papel no recoge el tono de voz, la ligereza de unos pasos, la intensidad de un dolor o el golpe definitivo de una puerta al cerrarse" (81). Both Vicente and Gabrielle admit the difficulty of representing reality in writing.

Similarly, in another episode with a mirror, Vicente's feelings of failure in love make it difficult for him to recognize his own image in the mirror, in contrast with Gabrielle's conscious refusal to look at herself in the mirror. Vicente admits: "Me había equivocado en el amor de Mariana. Los sentimientos eran fugaces e ilusorios, como los fuegos de artificio. Después quedaba la noche solitaria y yo había entrado en una dimensión oscura. Al llegar al hotel no me reconocí en los espejos" (72). Vicente's conclusion about his love for Mariana demonstrates his high level of self-interest; he does not think of Mariana at all. Furthermore, it seems that Mariana is an actively destructive force as Vicente's reflection goes from "intact" to "unrecognizable". In contrast to Gabrielle, who suffers a narcissistic deficiency, Vicente suffers a narcissistic surplus.

In a similar episode in André's narration, after he accuses Mariana of lying, she falls asleep, leaving him wondering why he did not try harder to have sex with her. He looks at his own reflection, with a hope to find some sort of self-affirmation, although he is disappointed: "Me contemplé en el espejo y me hallé ridículo, con los cabellos rubios en desorden cayéndome sobre la frente" (309). Hence, in his encounter with the mirror, the reader sees André's selfishness and also his desire to conquer Mariana sexually as the

reflection of his overly narcissistic self. One final episode involving mirrors in Vicente's narration occurs in Mariana's room when Vicente is preparing to leave Paris. This episode reveals Mariana's awareness of the confusion of her own situation to the onlookers: "La encontré en su cama mirando a un vaso colocado sobre la chimenea con tres tulipanes amarillos que se reflejaban en el espejo. –Somos nosotros tres—me dijo" (74). The one chance that Vicente has to learn from the mirror, he bypasses by ignoring the negative connotations of Mariana's comment. The mirror in Vicente and André's narrations does not make their search for identity clearer, as both male narrators attempt a more direct form of narcissism by looking at themselves candidly in the mirror. The desire to see the Self is unsuccessful for Vicente and André because they do not yet practice the new narcissism of postmodernism: narcissism by observing the Other. Therefore, they also cannot see Mariana.

On the other hand, Gabrielle admits to piecing together her life alongside Mariana's in order to understand herself and Mariana better (137). In contrast, Vicente expresses a separation between his and Mariana's lives, "Tuvo la certeza de que un destino adverso marcaba las líneas paralelas de nuestras vidas que corrían juntas pero sin tocarse. En un determinado punto las dos líneas estaban condenadas a separarse, entonces Mariana se alejaría de mí vertiginosamente y yo solitario continuaría mi vida huérfana" (36).⁵⁹ Thus, in Vicente's narration, he finds himself to be separated from

⁵⁹ This passage has a striking similarity with Ernesto Sábato's, *El túnel* in which the narrator Juan Pablo Castel says regarding his desired love-subject Maria: "Y era como si los dos hubiéramos estado viviendo en pasadizos o túneles paralelos, sin saber que íbamos el uno al lado del otro, como almas semejantes en tiempos semejantes, para encontrarnos al fin de esos pasadizos, delante de una escena pintada por mí, como clave destinada a ella sola, como un secreto anuncio de que ya estaba yo allí y que los pasadizos se habían por fin unido y que la hora del encuentro había llegado. ¡La hora del encuentro había llegado! Pero ¿realmente los pasadizos se habían unido y nuestras almas se habían comunicado? ¡Qué estúpida ilusión mía había sido todo esto! No, los pasadizos seguían paralelos como antes, aunque ahora el muro que los

Mariana and he cannot begin to understand her.⁶⁰ Although Vicente shares moments of a life parallel to Mariana's, Gabrielle's life intertangles with Mariana's, giving her narration the most centralized view of Mariana. In contrast, André's limited contact with Mariana is characterized by a few crisscrossed episodes over the period of a decade or so. Clearly, Gabrielle's narration provides the more complete view of Mariana while the male narrators provide distinct, but enlightening views of Mariana.

Vicente & Mariana =====

Gabrielle & Mariana xx

André & Mariana =====x=====x=====x=====x

The fantastical denouement of each narrator's section of the novel is also telling of each narrator's differing relationship with Mariana and his or her portrayal of Mariana. Most importantly, the fantastical element in Gabrielle's narration solidifies her complicity with Mariana, and thereby implicitly with Garro, in purporting the message of the text. After Boris' death, Gabrielle, Irina and Vasily open Mariana's trunk. Inside they find items belonging to Mariana and Natalia: their first ballet slippers, dolls, Vicente's love letters and Mariana's diary. One of the dolls winks at Gabrielle, which Irina claims also to have witnessed (279). This gesture is the clearest indication of

separaba fuera como un muro de vidrio y yo pudiese verla a María como una figura silenciosa e intocable... No, ni siquiera ese muro era siempre así: a veces volvía a ser de piedra negra y entonces yo no sabía que pasaba del otro lado..." Ernesto Sábato, *El túnel*, 25th ed. (Madrid: Cátedra, 2001) 159-60. Similar to Vicente, Castel is motivated by romantic interest in Maria, and his attempt to understand her is for the personal goal of romantic conquest. Vicente later writes: "Tuve la impresión de que había levantado una muralla entre los dos y que jamás la cruzaría" Garro, *Testimonios* 55., and in another moment "Me abandonaba en un largo túnel silencioso" Garro, *Testimonios* 70. Both show that Vicente and Castel are equally self-interested. The two characters link the texts in a unique way.

⁶⁰ Vicente's classification of his own life as an orphan separated from Mariana, reminds us of Julio's own comparison of his life to that of the orphan in *El jardín*. Also, for Vicente, Mariana embodies the desire for the mother—a sense of security and protection, as we see in Julio's case as well. Vicente's separation from Mariana is a strong source of his angst.

Gabrielle's complicity in Mariana's story (Rosas Lopátegui and Reed 74). The other fantastical element in Gabrielle's narration is her claim to see Mariana and Natalia in the Parisian ballets after their death/disappearance: "La verdad y única verdad es que casi todas las noches las veíamos en escena confundidas entre las figuras blancas de los coros de baile" (282). The reader finds this explanation for Mariana's disappearance not very probable. Furthermore, the final words of Gabrielle's narration put this truth into question as a fiction: "Yo sé que a Natalia le gustaría más este final imprevisto" (283). In this quote, Gabrielle draws attention back to the novel that she is writing about Mariana in which she desires to write her a different and more happy ending.

In contrast, the fantastical end of Vicente's narration, in which Mariana disappears from his pictures, as I have already discussed, symbolizes his failed attempts to represent her. She both literally and symbolically fades away from his life. Finally, the fantastical end of André's narration, which is also the end of the novel, is important in understanding him as well. Saturnal, a strange Latin American poet, affirms to André that Mariana has committed suicide a few years ago, "una noche entraron y ella cogió a Natalia de la mano y se tiró desde un cuarto piso..."(351). However, André's latest encounter with Mariana was only two months prior, during which Mariana had visited him and he had confessed his love for her. Saturnal explains André's role in absolving Mariana's sin of suicide. He asks André "¿No sabes que el amor redime de todos los pecados?"(352), the very topic discussed by Mariana with André the last night they see one another. Later, Saturnal confesses to André that he saw only Mariana's ghost. André admits, although with a trace of incredulity, "De alguna manera supe que no mentía y que se sentía feliz al poder decirme la verdad" (352). André's acceptance of the possibility

that he has been in contact with Mariana's ghost puts the veracity of his entire narration and his reliability into question, just as Gabrielle and André's reliability is questionable because of the respective elements of fantasy and impossibility ending their accounts of their experiences with Mariana.

The reader is left no more enlightened of the narrative "truth" when André claims to have seen Mariana's and Natalia's headstones in Liverpool. However, as Mark Frisch indicates, André's order among the narrators gives his section more believability. Indeed the end is "where mysteries are usually resolved; this also helps to reinforce its role as the accurate explanation of Mariana's disappearance" (186). Because of the reader's subjection to the authority of the text, even in such a simple way as its organization, he or she is naturally led to believe André's claim as to the presence of tombs in Liverpool. By extension, all of the fantastical elements of the novel as well as the accounts of the other two narrators are also plausible inasmuch as they do not contradict André's ending. Indeed, according to Frisch, André's narration offers at least partial explanation of some of the unresolved elements of the first two narratives. He claims that André's ending "explains why Vicente may have continuing dreams of her, why Gabrielle may have received a phone call from her recently, and why some claim to still see her even though she is dead" (186).

Indeed, if Garro's novel is to be considered a mystery, it is one without a satisfactory resolution to the question of Mariana's disappearance. In this way, fantasy validates the narrative reality, the reader's trust in each narrator's reliability is undermined, and Garro once again subverts narrative authority. If the reader believes that André's fantastical narration is the most plausible, he or she reveals how easily the reader

of fiction can be manipulated by the structure of a novel, and led astray by the authority of that which is presented as narrative truth. In this sense, narrative authority functions in a similar way as Augusto's authority.

This commentary on narrative authority eventually overtaking Augusto's authority is reinforced by André's quiet rejection of Augusto's authority in the final pages of the novel. André comments to Bertrand who has just told him that Mariana continues to pursue Augusto: "Hace mucho tiempo dijiste que alguno de los dos era una canalla—le recordé" (353). Indeed, the novel's final resolution drives forth the negative commentary against Augusto and serves as a final subversion of authority—if only for the reader who has the advantage of the perspective of the whole text, and the knowledge of that which André does not tell Bertrand, although Bertrand probably would not believe him anyway. Similarly, the use of fantasy can be considered another form utilized by Garro to bring the reader to question the nature of truth. In her study Feminist Alternatives, Walker attributes the proliferation of fantasy in realist works by female authors to dissatisfaction with a female sense of identity in everyday reality (7). As a result of this dissatisfaction Walker proposes that female novelists sometimes use language to appropriate or subvert male discourse, while at other times novels "emphasize women's exclusion from language—their silence" (44). Garro's novel uses all three approaches to express the dissatisfaction of the female with reality: appropriation, subversion and silence in order to challenge patriarchal discourse.

The reader should also consider the importance that Garro gives to the power of love in the resolution of André's narration. According to Frisch, André's love for Mariana gives meaning to her life (184). As he analyzes, "The fact that the heroic break

with the absurd cycle of suffering occurs after death implies that the suicide is to be taken symbolically as a confrontation with death and that one should not permit the void of death to paralyze and psychologically immobilize” (187). I disagree that Mariana’s death is symbolic or that the novel treats the individual’s confrontation with death. However, I do agree upon the importance that André’s love holds, because it is a chaste love and a love of that which is absent, Mariana. Unlike Vicente who consummated his “love” with Mariana, André was never able to do so—this is the reason that his love can save her from the sin of suicide. Throughout his narration, from his first to his last contact with her, Mariana is always just right beyond André’s grasp. In line with the rest of the novel, Mariana’s elusiveness from André’s love is just one more example of female rejection of male authority. Mariana is the love-object that can never be attained by André, who unrealistically maintains the thought that that Mariana awaits him to join her in eternity: “en vez de permanecer en ese cotidiano vértigo sanguinolento, me espera apacible en el tiempo” (353). At the end of the novel André waits, unmarried for Mariana, instead of the opposite. This fact leaves Mariana in control of her own situation, in spite of the fact that Mariana has been elusive, and that she has committed suicide. André is ignorant of the fact that Mariana has control over him and over his love for her, even in her absence. Just as André desires but fails to prove his contact with her by taking her picture, he is left alone with the secret of what he thinks to be a special relationship with Mariana “además no me gusta revelar mi secreto” (353). Thus, even the resolution of the novel, and André’s love for her can be viewed as one final way in which Mariana has reclaimed control and authority is subverted. In this way, the ending is

optimistic neither for André nor for Mariana, but still optimistic for the future of Gabrielle.

CONCLUSION

I have made the point throughout this chapter that many of the differences between Vicente and André and the female-narrator, Gabrielle, stem from their gender and their own motives with Mariana, i.e. sexual interest versus identity searching. In considering Garro's reader, we can make a similar conclusion. Both male and female readers can benefit equally from observing Mariana, depending on his or her motives, as postmodernism is indiscriminate in leaving both genders equally fragmented and in need of seeing a reflection of their whole and not just their fragmented body. In Testimonios, Garro's technique is subversion on many levels. She subverts the *testimonio* genre by suppressing Mariana's voice, while she also subverts male authority and narrative authority. At the same time, Garro's novel rejects bourgeois values directly in the text and aesthetically through the novel itself. By silencing Mariana and simultaneously empowering Gabrielle, Garro allows every reader to combat his or her own possible sense of fragmentation by appealing to the bourgeois individual's desire to become whole again and to seek narcissistic self-affirmation. Garro has done as Barnet suggests is the role of the traditional *testimonio*, which is to: "quebrar las estructuras burguesas, echar abajo todo el edificio de la dominación y el vasallaje de las conciencias y crear nuevas y posibles vías para la identidad. Devolver el habla al pueblo y otorgarle el derecho de ser gestor de sus propios mensajes, ésa es la verdadera vía" ("Testimonio" 307).⁶¹ Thus, even though Garro's novel can be considered in some ways an anti-*testimonio*, she retains

⁶¹ Barnet's Marxist outlook still demonstrates some faith in the grand narratives of modernism, which Garro's novel seems to reject in her individualistic message in Testimonios.

the power and identity forming benefit of the genre, and gives the reader a new path to his or her own self-affirmation. Even as Dulfano indicates that after the 1990s the face of the *testimonio* has changed and will continue to evolve, Garro's novel both predates and prefigures the role of *testimonio* in the context of postmodernism. I suspect that this novel is quite a bit more important than the current critical reception demonstrates.

I would like to touch on two more critical issues before closing this chapter. I am not unaware of the feminist's critic of postmodernism as indifferent "to issues of power and politics" (29), as I allude to this issue in the introduction. How then, do I contend that Garro's novel is both feminist and postmodernist? Thornham asserts that the important theorists of postmodernism are made up of the same group of upper-class, western, capitalistic, white males that dominate modernism, who necessarily re-marginalize women in order to replace the old master-narratives with the new master-narrative of postmodernism (30). In other words, towards the end of modernism when the female (or other subaltern: homosexual, insane, non-white, etc.) finally gains a narrating voice, some theorists of postmodernism attempt to obliterate the concepts of Self and Other by classifying them as empty terminology. However, as I have indicated, Judith Butler shows the two to be complimentary (3-21).

In Garro's novel, the reader witnesses the dissolution of the female object of modernism, Mariana, who is voiceless, and therefore eludes being understood by others. The subject who emerges from the shadows is Gabrielle but she too is obscured by narrative plurality, subjectivity, fragmentation, suspension of truth and uncertainty. The reader is delivered by Gabrielle to the image of Mariana in order to form a reflection of the Self. Through Gabrielle, Garro's novel subverts the *testimonio*, patriarchal authority,

narrative authority and the theories of postmodernism itself. The narcissism of the bourgeois individual that is rejected by the novel's discourse is reinforced and validated by the individual's capacity to benefit as a reader of Garro's text. Bradu interprets that Albert Camus' thoughts on the *petimetre* or *pequeño burgués* are complimentary to this notion of bourgeois narcissism that can be seen in Testimonios:

Disipado como persona privada de regla, será (el petimetre) coherente como personaje. Pero un personaje supone un público; el petimetre no puede asentarse sino oponiéndose. No puede asegurarse de su existencia sino volviéndola a encontrar en el rostro de los demás. Los demás son el espejo; espejo que se oscurece pronto, es cierto, pues la capacidad de atención del hombre es limitada..." (qtd. in Bradu 26)

As Camus' thoughts reflect, the male narrators hope to use the reading public for self-affirmation, which results in a quickly blurred reflection. On the other hand, the reader, and Gabrielle attempt to validate their existence in the mirror of Mariana—one that will certainly not "oscurecerse pronto".

The other issue I would like to raise is that of orality and the storytelling function of Testimonios. As Silviano Santiago writes in his study of the postmodern storyteller, Gabrielle takes on the attitude of "let me look so that you reader, may also see" (139-40). The image of Mariana received by the reader is further enhanced by the special angles provided by Vicente and André. Through each narrator's oral telling of Mariana's story he or she contrasts the ability to be heard with Mariana's silence. Bartow writes the following of orality in the *testimonio* genre "The transcription from oral to written language leaves remnants of another concept of truthfulness that guarantees tension

within the written format of testimonial discourse. Compensating for silence is carried out by transforming the voiced word into the silent written word while retaining the illusion of orality” (47). This illusion of orality exists also in Testimonios as each narrator gives the reader the illusion of hearing Mariana’s story aloud. This written orality is present in Vicente’s narration, “Antes de terminar diré” (122); in Gabrielle’s, “¿Qué puedo decir de ella? (123); and also in André’s “Es difícil explicar lo sucedido...” (353). The renewed attempt at communication is very clear in each text. Just as the *testimonio* genre privileges orality as an accessible route to truth, each narrator speaks for silent Mariana for a similar goal of communication. In this way, as Santiago postulates, through distance and observation, the postmodern narrator can translate the “wisdom” of Mariana’s life, into his or her own oral story, re-appropriating the value of experience which has been lost in postmodernism (135). It is Gabrielle’s story that shares this wisdom most aptly.

Prior criticism of Testimonios only begins to touch on Gabrielle’s special role in the novel and very few studies engage in close textual analysis to compare and contrast each narrator’s text. An analysis of the novel from the perspective of the first-person non-protagonist narrator, and the possible benefits for the reader through the observer narrator allows the reader a deeper understanding and appreciation of Garro’s novel. While the non-protagonist narrator of Donoso’s text is a female pretending to be male, and in Garro’s novel, the three non-protagonist narrators, two males and one female all narrate a female, in Gabriel García Márquez’s Crónica de una muerte anunciada the non-protagonist narrator tells the story of a dead male protagonist, Santiago whose death validates the life of a female protagonist, Ángela. Issues of gender, authority and

representation are minimal in García Marquez's novel, which instead raises questions of collective truth, memory and reason.

Chapter 3: The Anti-Rhetoric of the Non-Chronicle: (Un)doing Fiction in

Gabriel García Márquez's Crónica de una muerte anunciada

“There are the following types of divine testimony...speech... the world itself and all its order and splendor...the flights of birds through the air and their singing...sounds and flashes of fire given from the air... and also the premonitions of the future which are derived from the inspection of entrails. Many things have been seen too, through dreams experienced while asleep.”

—Cicero Topica 77

“But the shards of broken mirror reflect many aspects of truth, and if the narrator is wiser at the end of his quest, it is in unexpected ways.

--Mary G. Berg

In discussing El jardín de al lado, I demonstrate that Donoso parodies the traditional first-person narration with the sixth chapter in which the reader discovers that what he or she thought to be Julio's narration has actually been Gloria's throughout the text. Similarly, in Testimonios sobre Mariana, Garro parodies the traditional *testimonio* form by silencing her protagonist and subverting authority. Furthermore, Donoso and Garro use the first-person non-protagonist narrator(s): to communicate the story of the true protagonist, to execute the parody and to increase the participation on the part of the reader-accomplice. Likewise, Gabriel García Márquez's short novel Crónica de una

muerte anunciada (1981) also employs an observing narrator who uses parody to drive forth the message of the novel. García-Márquez's narrator parodies the non-literary genre of the chronicle as well as the detective novel.⁶² In Crónica, as Gregory Rabassa indicates, "Fiction is treated like fact treated like fiction" (17), which initiates for the reader and critic a similar questioning of truth and reality and its relationship to fiction as both Donoso and Garro's novels exhibit. Moreover, the role of the active reader-accomplice is also central in García Márquez's novel.

The novel's plot is quite straightforward. Bayardo San Román arrives to a small town and decides he will marry Ángela Vicario. After their marriage and a large celebration involving the whole town Bayardo discovers that his new bride is not a virgin. He returns her home to her mother, and Ángela's twin brothers, Pedro and Pablo Vicario demand to know who has deflowered her. She answers with the name, Santiago Nasar. That morning, the bishop's boat passes by the town, it does not berth, and Santiago is brutally killed in front of his own house by the Vicario brothers. The whole town is implicated and involved in the crime because only very few attempt unsuccessfully to intervene. Many others do not interfere, although the twins announce

⁶² Stephan Hart among others mention some of the parodic elements of the novel. For example he considers Bayardo San Román's reconciliation with Ángela Vicario to be parodic of the "happy-ending motif" Stephen M. Hart, Gabriel García Márquez: Crónica de una muerte anunciada, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Grant & Cutler, 2005) 27. Additionally, Hart writes "The connection between the novel and the detective story is a playful and, at times, parodic one" Hart, Gabriel 30. Other notable articles dealing with parodic aspects of Crónica include: Isabel Alvarez-Borland, "From Mystery to Parody: (Re)Readings of García Márquez's Crónica de una muerte anunciada," Symposium: A Quarterly Journal in Modern Literatures 38.4 (1984).; René Campos, "Un relato sospechoso: Crónica de una muerte anunciada," Atenea: Revista de Ciencia, Arte y Literatura de la Universidad de Concepción 477 (1998).; Dona M. Kercher, "García Márquez's Crónica de una muerte anunciada: Notes on Parody and the Artist," Latin American Literary Review 13.25 (1985).; Katherine Callen King, "Santiago Tyrannos: Dialogic Voices in García Márquez's Crónica de una muerte anunciada," Comparative Literature 43.4 (1991).; and Hugo Méndez Ramírez, "La reinterpretación paródica del código de honor en Crónica de una muerte anunciada," Hispania 73 (1990). In addition to being classified as a parody of the chronicle and the detective novel, King asserts in her article that the novel also parodies the Greek tragedy, the gothic novel and popular romance. King, "Santiago," 306.

their intentions repeatedly, indicating their true desire to avoid the obligations of the honor system by not consummating the murder of their friend. The unnamed narrator claims to desire to reconstruct what really happened the day of Santiago's murder and he interviews townspeople, consults a judge's brief, reviews the Vicario's lawyer's report, and studies the autopsy report. As a result, he writes the text that the reader is reading nearly three decades after the crime. At this point in time, Ángela and Bayardo have reconciled, bringing the novel in a full circle that seems to ridicule all of the happenings of the novel, from Santiago's death itself, to the after-effects on the townspeople.

Crónica also treats the dualities of religion and the system of honor. As Hugo Méndez Ramírez concludes, Crónica parodies the central theme of honor of the 17th century “con la ironización y la exageración...García Márquez ridiculiza a los personajes y su código moral, para subrayar el carácter absurdo y brutal de los vestigios distorsionados de esta herencia cultural española que aun persiste en nuestra Latinoamérica de hoy” (935-936).

Unlike El jardín with a modest amount of criticism and Testimonios with a minimal amount of criticism, Crónica has been the center of an overwhelming amount of critical consideration.⁶³ The novel has been studied from various angles and a diverse range of theories has been applied in order to enhance the reader's understanding, to offer interpretations of the facts and to understand García Márquez as a writer as well as to make generalizations about Columbian and Latin American Literature in general. My analysis of the novel by way of its inclusion in a book-length study on the role of the non-protagonist narrator is unique and offers a critical analysis both of the chronicler and of the reader of Crónica. First and foremost, my analysis will briefly examine the traditional

⁶³ Hart indicates that criticism of Crónica amounts to roughly one article or book chapter per month since its publication Hart, Gabriel 74.

chronicle. Secondly, I will evaluate the narrator's rhetoric in an innovative way using Cicero's rhetorical guidelines. In this way, we will see that García Márquez intentionally undermines all possible sources of truth, leaving the reader with a diffuse and open text. Next, I will analyze the roles of the reader and author, as well as the importance of the mirror. In the course of the novel, the narrator takes on the role of the postmodern storyteller, who by communicating with the reader, enables the reader to affirm the Self and to reconstruct his or her fragmented identity. Both narrator and reader alike use the tragedy of Santiago, and Ángela's reaction in the face of this tragedy as a mirror of instruction and affirmation. Thus, my examination will end with an analysis of the way in which Ángela is changed by Santiago's death, and the effect this ultimately has on the reader.

THE TRADITIONAL CHRONICLE

The Oxford English Dictionary's definition of chronicle, "A detailed and continuous register of events in order of time; a historical record, especially one in which the facts are narrated without philosophic treatment, or any attempt at literary style," easily reveals that García Márquez's novel does not adhere in any way to the elements of the traditional chronicle as his novel is neither detailed in the most important moments, nor chronological, historical, factual or non-literary. Similarly the *Real Academia Española* defines a *crónica* as a "Historia en que se observa el orden de los tiempos/ Artículo periodístico o información radiofónica o televisiva sobre temas de actualidad." Contrary also to the definition in Spanish, García Márquez's novel is neither ordered,

informative, nor treats a current issue. Indeed, the murder happened thirty years before.⁶⁴ Although I focus a large part of the previous chapter comparing Garro's novel to the traditional *testimonio*, an in-depth comparison between the novel and the traditional chronicle is not necessary, as the novel very clearly contradicts the definition as an entity. The only way in which Crónica keeps with the (Spanish) definition of *crónica* is in its relationship to journalism.⁶⁵ However, as Donald Shaw point out, the version presented in the novel is "plainly a long way from a conventional newspaper account of such an event" ("Chronicle" 93). Indeed, while the newspaper article would bring understanding and provide a sense of comfort, Crónica undermines the reader's very sense that he or she can even understand reality (Shaw "Chronicle" 93).

It is well known that Crónica is based on true events in Sucre, Colombia. Although it is no longer necessary to compare the details of the real murder with the novel as Stephan Hart and others have thoroughly done (12-15), I would like to focus briefly on the role of the narrator as a journalist in relation to the factual evidence.⁶⁶ In fact, as Aníbal González concludes, the novel can be considered "A scale model of the process of journalistic investigation" which reveals the role of "casualty, chance and

⁶⁴ Jorge Ruffinelli argues that a chronicle is a register of data such as deaths, births, wars etc. In being a record of Santiago Nasar's death, and in the journalistic link to the chronicle, the novel is show to adhere to Ruffinelli's definition. Jorge Ruffinelli, "Crónica de una muerte anunciada: Historia o ficción," En el punto de mira: Gabriel García Márquez, ed. Ana María Hernández de López (Madrid: Pliegos, 1985) 273.

⁶⁵ Alicia Ríos shows the relationship of the novel with factual information by comparing Crónica to Juan Rodríguez Freyle's El Carnero (1638), first published in 1859, which has some characteristics of a chronicle. She demonstrates similarities between the style and themes of the two. Alicia Ríos, "De El Carnero a Crónica de una muerte anunciada," En el punto de mira: Gabriel García Márquez, ed. Ana María Hernández de López (Madrid: Pliegos, 1985).

⁶⁶ Some notable articles concerning Crónica and journalism include articles by Vicente Cabrera, "García Márquez and the Game of the Chronicle and the Reportage," Cuadernos de Poética 7.19 (1989).; Randolph Pope, "Transparency and Illusion in García Márquez's Chronicle of a Death Foretold," Latin American Literary Review 15 (1997).; and Gregory Rabassa, "García Márquez's New Book: Literature or Journalism?," World Literature Today: A Literary Quarterly of the University of Oklahoma 56.1 (1982).

manipulation in both journalism and narrative fiction” (114). González even goes as far to suggest that journalism is so important to Crónica that it serves as a replacement of religion as the marker of ethics and morality. As he concludes, “Instead of the priest, it is now the journalist who confronts moral questions and anguishes over them, and in a language that is predominately secular and philosophical rather than religious” (111). Thus, the reader is lead to question the extent to which the narrator has manipulated the information received by the reader (115). The unnamed narrator of García Márquez’s novel establishes his own authority only to undermine it later. Similarly, he also undermines other authorities of the chronicle. Thus, Crónica demonstrates, as the other texts included in this study demonstrate, that the observing narrator has a distinct role of manipulating his or her text within the framework of a novel that constantly undermines its own validity. The non-protagonist narrator controls all of the artifices of his work and even the reader’s very perception. As is the case in the other novels of this study, the role of the observer narrator is the most important to understanding the novel as the whole as well as the novel’s protagonist, and the symbolic commentary.

RHETORICAL STRATEGIES OF THE NARRATOR

As I suggested of Gabrielle in Testimonios, the narrator of Crónica can be characterized by his use of rhetorical strategies manipulated to his own benefit. Just as critics refer to the Rashoman effect in Garro’s novel that has three distinct narrators telling the protagonist’s story (Mariana’s) from different perspectives, García Márquez’s novel is similar, however with only one narrator, but several protagonists and numerous witnesses (In my view, Santiago, the Vicario Twins and Ángela can all be considered

main characters.⁶⁷) While Garro's novel is narrated in a Rashoman-style in which the reader must use the contradictory testimonies of each narrator to piece together and decipher truth, Crónica feigns the transfer of this responsibility from the reader to the unnamed narrator. This narrator claims to assume the liability of sorting through the testimony of the witnesses and presenting the reader, unburdened by the ill effects of subjectivity, with the complete truth-bearing chronicle. However, this is far from what the reader actually receives. Instead, the narrator retells the events in five different sections, from five different focal points. Each of these perspectives is his own, yet he focuses on the narration of a different aspect of the murder in each section. Although, these sections do not contradict one another, there are inconsistencies and idiosyncrasies in each section and throughout the text as a whole. As Shaw indicates, one of the biggest factors contributing to the irony of the text is the non-chronological manipulation of these five sections. For example, the end of section four ends with Bayardo and Ángela's reconciliation, seventeen years after Santiago's murder. The brutal account of the murder does not occur until section five, ending the novel with the climax. However, because of the narrator's presentation of the reconciliation immediately before the account of the murder, the significance of the murder is "virtually nullified" (Shaw "Chronicle" 92). The alert reader discovers the narrator to be a deceptive manipulator, filtering only what he privileges of the story to the reader in an intricately constructed way. Therefore, just as in Garro's Testimonios sobre Mariana, the reader is ultimately responsible for making

⁶⁷ Hart recognizes some structural links between the individuals that he recognizes as protagonists: "The first three chapters focus on the point of view of the main characters: Santiago (Chapter I), Bayardo and Ángela (Chapter II), and the Vicario twins (Chapter III). Chapters IV and V bring the enemies together in a gradualist way... It is clear from the separate foci provided by the chapters that a structural parallel is being drawn between three pairs of characters in the novel (i) the Vicario twins, (ii) Bayardo and Ángela, and (iii) Santiago and the narrator. The first two pairs are obvious; the third pair is clear when the various parallels established in Chapters I and V are taken into account" Hart, Gabriel 48-49.

sense of the text and for restructuring it so as not be victimized by the narrator's manipulation.

Indeed, because of the narrator's questionable credibility, his withholding of some facts from the reader and the inaccessibility of other facts in the recounting of events, the reader finds him or herself in a position similar to the narrator's as he sorts through the hearsay. Yet, as I have elaborated, the reader is further subjugated by the rhetorical choices of the narrator himself. The narrator seems to privilege insignificant comments and overly violent details. Furthermore, he chooses to withhold official texts from the reader, replacing the prior written accounts with his own.⁶⁸ Even the narrator's access to these "official" documents is shown to be limited as he is able to "rescue" only 322 of the 500 pages of the judge's report (112), or so he says. Another text withheld from the reader but included in the judge's summary and recapitulated by the narrator, is the autopsy report. The narrator retells only the most gruesome aspects of the autopsy, which functions to sensationalize Santiago's brutal murder and second death by Amador's violent butchering of his cadaver, which I might mention, occurs in section four also before the scene of the murder in section five.

There are other texts that are withheld from both the narrator and the reader. These include the nearly 2000 letters that Ángela writes to Bayardo before their reconciliation; the letter that was placed under Santiago Nasar's door that is not discovered until after the crime is committed; and the letters from Santiago to his

⁶⁸ Similarly, Donoso's text (Gloria as narrator) withholds Julio's first-person novel and Gloria's diary from the reader, and *Testimonios* refers to Mariana's diary, her letters to Vicente, and novels by Barnaby and Gabrielle that are also withheld from the reader by all three narrators. Each narrator has access to writing that the reader does not have access. These more official texts all bear the possibility of truth telling and writing which the non-protagonist narrator undermines.

girlfriend Flora Miguel. While the reasons for keeping these texts from inclusion in the novel may be distinct for each of the three texts, Katherine Callen King offers a possible explanation for the non-inclusion of the love letters. She indicates that because of the nature of the Ángela's and Bayardo's reunification, the withholding of Ángela's letters keeps the novel from turning into an example of supermarket fiction (308-09). However, just as I suggest in Testimonios concerning Gabrielle's withholding of Mariana's diary, the narrator either withholds or does not seek these texts, in order that he may draw attention to the incomplete nature of representation as well as centralize the importance of his own rewriting of the events. Furthermore, the fact that each of these three texts is in letter format, which can be considered a personal instrument of communication, this cannot be coincidence. This must be a commentary, either latent or overt, on Walter Benjamin's lamentation that direct communication of experience is impossible in contemporary society (83-84). Despite the fact that the role of communication in personal letters is overturned, the novel centralizes communication with the reader through his active role. As Matías Montes-Huidobro notes, through the reader's participation, García Márquez achieves "simple and direct communication... with the recipient of the text" (107).

The narrator also controls and manipulates Santiago, who "has no voice within the narrative which led to his death; the reader has to piece together the essence of his character on the basis of conflicting reports of his actions given by other characters" (Hart 37), including the narrator's own subjective rendering of him. In this way, the reader has the same active role as the narrator in making judgments about the crime and the nature of the major participants of the happenings.

The point has also been made that the narrator's manipulation is a result of his desire to hide his crime; perhaps he is the true culprit of Ángela's lost virginity. Hart points to the narrator's frank conversation with Ángela, in which she reveals her friend's suggestions to trick Bayardo into believing that she is a virgin on their wedding night, as a possible indicator of his guilt:

These are hardly subjects that would be discussed by people who did not know each other extremely well. Pointers such as these, insignificant on their own but convincing when placed in the context of other clues, tend to suggest that the narrator was Ángela's secret lover. Although he has made sure to cover his tracks as well as possible, certain hints inevitably surface" (Hart 40).

Another hint of the narrator's guilt could possibly be the strange expression "fue mi autor." Randolph Pope suggests, "The expression comes from 'he was the author of the crime', 'el autor del crimen', but 'my author'? Can we find here an allusion to the fact that perhaps Gabriel himself was to blame for the fateful deflowering, or that Santiago Nasar 'c'est moi'? (189). On the other hand, Martin Jamieson indicates that 'autor' in colloquial Columbian Spanish means the one who takes the virginity of a woman (213).⁶⁹ Surely García Márquez must have known that by using such a phrase in his novel, critics would discuss both connotations as Pope and Jamieson do, as well as other possible explanations alluded to by the multiple meanings embedded in language.

Furthermore, as Hart also concludes, García Márquez himself hints at the narrator's guilt in his very admiration of Oedipus Rex in which the "detective" discovers

⁶⁹ Both Pope's and Jamieson's arguments are also cited in Hart's study as a part of his argument concerning the narrator's possible implication in Ángela's deflowering.

that he is the perpetrator (43-44). Oedipus focuses on the role of chance and fatalism in a similar way as Crónica which further strengthens this connection (King 312). Similarly, Gonzalo Díaz-Migoyo calls attention to the role of secrets in the novel to explain the narrator's capacity to hide the truth as well as to draw attention to the subjective nature of truth in reality and in fiction. He indicates that the narrator's secret relationship with María Alejandrina Cervantes, a prostitute with whom Santiago was in love, indicates the secretive potential between friends (437). Indeed, the narrator's own secretive attitude in his friendship with Santiago puts into question his conclusion about the impossibility that Santiago could ever keep a secret from his friends "nadie podía creer que tuviéramos un secreto sin compartir, y menos un secreto tan grande" (49). With this contradiction, the reader understands that if the narrator is capable of keeping secrets the same might be true of Santiago. Maybe Santiago really is the culprit. The narrator has no guarantee that Santiago would share information about his sexual relationship with Ángela. Furthermore, if the narrator is capable of keeping his sexual relationship with Cervantes from his friend, there is no telling of his potential to lie about a sexual encounter with his own cousin, Ángela, if the narrator is the guilty party. The reader cannot possibly determine if the narrator is to be blamed and he writes to exonerate himself or to cover up the truth, or if Santiago, or someone else should be blamed.

Regardless of whether or not the narrator has victimized Ángela, his narration is full of rhetorical strategies that demonstrate the fact that his real focus has nothing to do with solving the crime of whodunit but rather finding out "why all these people did not try to prevent the murder or why they did not warn [Santiago]" (95), as Manabendra

Bandyopadhyay demonstrates. However, the narrator's faulty rhetorical strategies and proofs serve only to undermine instead of affirm his text. It would seem that the narrator's intentional anti-rhetoric is to send the reader on a proverbial wild goose chase away from the real mystery of the novel. Whether this is an intentional distraction from the narrator's possible guilt, a playful if not manipulative attitude, or an unintentional reality is of little importance. The narrator's style and the effect it has on the reader are centralized, in spite of the lack of explanation for the reason why the narrator uses anti-rhetoric.

Wayne Booth, in The Rhetoric of Rhetoric attempts to reinstate value and respect to rhetoric as an effective means of communication. However, Booth recognizes and highlights the negative connotations of the term, which makes validating it difficult. As he concludes: "A great proportion of rhetoric however we define it, is in fact dangerously, often deliberately, deceptive: Just plain cheating that deserves to be exposed" (x). Booth identifies that rhetoric that "produces misunderstanding" should be renamed *rhetrickery*, which consequently has come to be popularly accepted as the rhetorical norm. As Booth indicates, true rhetoric is supposed to prevent misunderstanding (x). In these terms, I call the narrator's abuse of rhetoric, *anti-rhetoric*, although, the term *rhetrickery* also indicates the intentional deception on the narrator's part using rhetoric.

The narrator's use of *rhetrickery*, as Booth calls it, prevents communication from occurring. However, according to postmodern theorists this loss may already be an unavoidable reality. Therefore, I posit that the narrator intentionally implements *rhetrickery* in order to avoid direct communication. As a result, the reader must step into

an active position in the novel. As each individual reader comes face-to-face with the novel's characters, the lost ability to communicate to the reader *en masse* is reinstated to each individual reader. Ironically, rhetrickery enables the narrator to communicate, whereas without rhetoric he is unable to communicate well.

This technique is not without its share of the problems. The novel's anti-rhetoric results in the intentional overturning of the model of discourse on which the chronicle is based. Certainly, as Carlos Alonso indicates, the reader is lead astray by the novel's mixed messages: "We are led to the realization that the logic that underlies the production of the text appears to be at odds with the logic inaugurated by the novel's avowed rhetorical model" (153). However, one of the ways in which the narrator's rhetrickery is successful is in the provocation of the reader to question this model. The reader sees that precisely every trope that the narrator attempts to use in order to prove a certain point, undermines that very point itself. Although *Crónica* has already been analyzed as a parody of so many genres, I suggest that it should also be considered a parody of rhetoric and discourse itself undertaken by undermining the truth-telling function in journalism, reality itself, the role of investigation and narrative manipulation.

THE PARODY OF CICERO'S RHETORIC

In his rhetorical strategy, the narrator utilizes topics of *inventio* from the external proof of testimony. Cicero elaborates: "The argumentation which is called 'without art' rests on testimony. 'Testimony' in the present context we call everything which is brought in from some outside area to create belief" (Top. 73). According to the Silva Rhetoricae dictionary, the subcategories of the Testimony topic include: Authorities; Witnesses; Rumors, Maxims and Proverbs; Documents; Law and Oaths; Precedent; and

the Supernatural (Burke). In *Crónica*, the narrator depends heavily on these external proofs while each source is found to be lacking in validity. Furthermore, the narrator manipulates each proof artfully in order to deceive the reader. Instead of constructing a believable chronicle based on solid external proofs the narrator deconstructs all of his sources, as a way to validate the importance of the role of the reader in the consumption of the text. For each category that I explore, I will indicate Cicero's thoughts on the topic, as well as the narrator's defective implementation of each rhetorical strategy in *Crónica*. An in-depth breakdown of the narrator's anti-rhetoric, informed by the existing criticism, has yet to be undertaken in this way, and will illuminate both the non-protagonist's role in the writing of the chronicle as well as his strategy in parodying rhetoric. As I have indicated, the narrator's intentional break with traditional communication is what makes him a postmodern storyteller. Ironically, his anti-rhetoric will actually restore the function of communication to the reader, as I will evaluate at a later point in this analysis.

Authorities—*“The greatest authority belonging to nature lies in virtue; in the field of time there are many things which can confer authority: talent, power, age, one's fortune, skill, practice, necessity, occasionally also the fortuitous combination of events” (Cicero Top. 73).*

The supposed authorities of *Crónica* leave much to be desired. There are four figures of authority upon which the narrator of García Márquez's novel predominately relies. These include the judge, the priest, the doctor and the mayor. The narrator shows how each of these individuals is not worthy of the authority concomitant to their position, as each leader proves himself to be “inadequate” (Shaw "Chronicle" 99). The reader will also witness that the narrator eventually undermines his own authority much in the same way as he has undermined the authority of the other questionable figures of power.

While the judge, by the virtue of his position, would seem to be a solid authority, the reader will find his summary to be incomplete (missing pages but also lacking in important details) and the judge himself to be of dubious character as he is known by and presented by the narrator. Neither the reader nor the narrator can establish virtually any useful information to establish his true virtue or authority. The narrator claims to remember that the judge is a recent graduate of law school with new garb and a ring to authenticate his credentials. Although the judge is supposed to be the ultimate authority of the law, the narrator is unable to discover his name in the 322 pages recovered in the summary: “El nombre del juez no apareció en ninguno” (112). Instead of validating the judge’s skill based on what he discovers about him in the report, the narrator undermines his authority with the conclusion that: “Era un hombre abrasado por la fiebre de la literatura...Sobre todo nunca le pareció legítimo que la vida se sirviera de tantas casualidades prohibidas a la literatura, para que se cumpliera sin tropiezos una muerte tan anunciada” (112). As this citation shows, the judge questions the role of chance, which according to Becky Boling, indicates his desire to “understand human events according to a transcendent order of cause/effect and/or destiny” (79), instead of focusing on the facts as his position would dictate of him.

Boling also analyzes that the incomplete nature of the judge’s *sumario* detracts from his authority. The novel we read includes additional information not provided in the judge’s report such as the narrator’s later discoveries, including Father Amador’s confession to knowing about the crime beforehand and the later reconciliation of Bayardo and Ángela which could never have been included in the original document because of

the necessity for time to pass and for the reconciliation to occur (Boling 77).⁷⁰ Louise Detwiler also analyzes the judge's authority as weakened in that he does not record all pertinent information relating to the facts of the crime such as the Vicario brother's search for Santiago at María Alejandrina Cervantes' whorehouse, "Este dato, como muchos otros, no fue registrado en el sumario" (García Márquez 58). Furthermore, an extensive testimony of Bayardo San Roman was never recorded (Detwiler 41).⁷¹ As the narrator himself points out, the summary does not include any specific details concerning Ángela's deflowering, "Así consta en el sumario, pero sin ninguna otra precisión de modo ni de lugar" (113). Indeed, the value of writing and discourse itself is undermined in the judge's report by the fact that he resorts to drawings, such as of the murder weapons, when words do not suffice (Detwiler 42). It seems hardly conceivable that a valid authority would lack in areas of completeness, preciseness or otherwise viable discourse. Thus, in these ways, the narrator undermines authority of the judge as an individual and the judge's written summary.

Another individual who should serve as a source of authority in the narrator's rhetoric but leaves both the narrator and the reader disillusioned is Father Amador. Even before analyzing his character more in-depth, the reader understands that his testimony is put into question by his dishonesty and by his failure to act after receiving word of the

⁷⁰ The narrator recounts Amador's confession: "Sin embargo, el padre Amador me confesó muchos años después, retirado del mundo en la tenebrosa Casa de Salud de Calafell, que en efecto había recibido el mensaje de Clotilde Armenta, y otros más perentorios, mientras se preparaba para ir al puerto. «La verdad es que no supe que hacer—me dijo—. Lo primero que pensé fue que no era asunto mío sino de la autoridad civil, pero después resolví decirle algo de pasada a Plácida Linero.» Sin embargo cuando atravesó la plaza lo había olvidado por completo" Gabriel García Márquez, *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*, Séptima ed. (Barcelona Plaza & Janes, 1997) 80.

⁷¹ The narrator writes the following, concerning Bayardo's statement in the summary: "Hay una declaración suya en el sumario, pero es tan breve y convencional, que parece remendada a última hora para cumplir con una formula ineludible" García Márquez, *Crónica* 99.

Vicario's plans. Father Amador is guilty of a sin of omission. Furthermore, in spite of his failure to do anything for Santiago, albeit with Santiago's blood still fresh on the Vicario's clothes and bodies, the priest deems their surrender "un acto de una gran dignidad" (57), as if his own behavior indicates that he has any concept of dignity. Amador also leads the Vicario brothers to believe that they may be (*tal vez*) excused in the eyes of God. The priest's other major role in the novel is to perform the autopsy on Santiago at the order of the mayor, in the absence of the town doctor. Amador ends up destroying Santiago's already torn body and his subsequent report reveals no conclusive evidence: "concluía que la causa de la muerte fue una hemorragia masiva ocasionada por cualquiera de las siete heridas mayores" (86), which is not a conclusion at all. In any case, the judge, who has already had his authority significantly undermined includes Father Amador's report in his own summary as it "seemed" to be correct enough for him (86), although he should understand that Amador's lack of credentials render the document illegal and invalid. Finally, the priest's use of religious similes to describe Santiago's cadaver, is yet one more element to undermine his authority and his lack of qualification as a coroner (Boling 79). His perspective is shown to be a narrow religious one, with questionable dedication to his own religious values. His very religiosity is undermined by his own sin(s).

Similarly, the narrator diminishes the authority of the town doctor, Dionisio Iguarán. Just as he accuses the judge of being overly interested in literature, he declares of the doctor "además de médico era hombre de letras" (43). In one situation, Iguarán detracts from his own authority as a medical expert when he comes to the non-scientific conclusion that the death of the widow, Xius, was provoked by the sadness of selling his

house, containing a lifetime of happy memories, to Bayardo. The doctor tells the narrator “Estaba más sano que nosotros, pero cuando uno lo auscultaba se le sentían borboritar las lágrimas dentro del corazón” (44). The only man in the entire town to represent science, diagnoses a medical impossibility, to the extent where his diagnosis is laughable. Another interesting aspect of the doctor is his rejection of religion, which provokes one of the major coincidences in the novel. He leaves on the boat the night of the wedding so as not to be in town upon the bishop’s arrival, which necessitates Amador’s undertaking of the autopsy.⁷² Similarly, the doctor’s limited respect for the Catholic Church gives way to another comment that allows for his medical expertise to be put into question. Iguarán criticizes Amador’s faulty autopsy report concerning the section on Santiago’s badly cured hepatitis (an earlier treatment performed by Iguarán). The doctor concludes here, also illogically, “Tenía que ser cura para ser tan bruto—me dijo. No hubo manera de hacerle entender nunca que la gente del trópico tenemos el hígado más grande que los gallegos” (87). The reader is able to perceive two possibilities about the narrator’s portrayal of Iguarán. Either the narrator includes only the most inane comments about the doctor, or perhaps the doctor really is that medically ridiculous. It is possible that the doctor makes other comments that are sensible (as if a fictional character does such a thing), yet the narrator chooses only to include the most illogical and unclear thinking as part of his anti-rhetoric and strategy of textual manipulation.

Coronel Lázaro Aponte is shown to suffer from a different set of authority-undermining strategies on the part of the narrator. He is presented as frivolous and

⁷² The narrator includes the following information among others pieces of information rescued from other people’s memories: “El doctor Dionisio Iguarán, que era primo hermano de mi madre, consiguió que se lo llevaran en el buque oficial para no estar aquí al día siguiente cuando viniera el obispo” García Márquez, *Crónica* 51.

forgetful, a practitioner of spiritualism, inexperienced, and vain. Aponte's role is the novel is to emasculate the political authority in the town. His role in Santiago's death is also important. Aponte takes the first set of knives from the Vicario brothers as they await Santiago in Armenta's shop, but he refuses to arrest them. He then forgets about the situation until he sees Santiago. He congratulates himself for not arresting the Vicarios. The narrator writes:

Yo lo evocaba como un hombre feliz, aunque un poco trastornado por la práctica solitaria del espiritismo aprendido por correo. Su comportamiento de aquel lunes fue la prueba terminante de su frivolidad. La verdad es que no volvió a acordarse de Santiago Nasar hasta que lo vio en el puerto, y entonces se felicitó por haber tomado la decisión justa. (67)

Later, the Coronel learns that the Vicario brothers have returned to Clotilde Armenta's shop with a new set of knives, but instead of acting quickly, he stops by the Social Club "a confirmar una cita de dominó para esa noche (123)" while the crime is physically being committed. It is also the mayor who orders Amador to undertake Santiago's autopsy. The narrator eventually reveals that the post-murder investigation was jeopardized by the fact that the mayor was never trained in legal issues, in other words, he is completely unqualified for his position: "el alcalde había sido antes oficial de tropa sin ninguna experiencia en asuntos de justicia, y era demasiado fatuo para preguntarle a alguien que lo supiera por dónde tenía que empezar" (83-84). To further diminish his own authority, the mayor admits to forgetting about Bayardo until the following Saturday when the widow Xius talks with him (96). Also, the mayor shows himself to be superstitious. In response to Xius' claims that his wife Yolanda has been reclaiming the

things that Aponte assumes stolen from the house that he sold to Bayardo, Aponte makes fun of Xius. However, he practices “una misa de espiritismo” and discovers that Yolanda was in fact “recuperando para su casa de la muerte los cachivaches de la felicidad” (99). His propensity for the supernatural undermines his legal authority. Furthermore, the mayor also changes his legal practices after Santiago’s murder, which indicates to the reader just how simple it may have been for him to prevent Santiago’s murder. In contrast to his behavior before the crime, the mayor becomes more conscientious after the crime is committed, as if dealing with Santiago’s murder has been an important learning experience for him. For example, when Pedro thinks he has been poisoned by rancorous Arabs in jail, the mayor not only takes the Vicario prisoners to his own house for special protection but he also begins an investigation of all of the Arabs in town to ensure that none plots vengeance against the Vicario brothers (91-93). Although he never takes the threat of the homicide of Santiago seriously, he does take the threat of revenge on the murderers very seriously, when in fact it seems to the reader that there is no evidence to suggest plans of vengeance. Finally, as Fernando Rodríguez Mansilla indicates, the very fact that the Vicario brothers take justice into their own hands, undermines Aponte’s authority (303). In these ways, the narrator shows that the mayor is unable to act when it matters but is ready and willing to act when most unnecessary.

Even the narrator’s authority in his writing of the chronicle is questionable. Indeed, Kathleen March questions the narrator’s motives by asking: “¿por qué escribir una crónica que no aporte nada nuevo al sumario extenso que resultó de la previa investigación oficial? (65). I propose a two-fold answer to this question. First, the narrator does explore new facts—he discovers the after-effects of a major event in the

lives of the townspeople. In other words, the chronicle is written partially to show the long-term effects that Santiago's murder had on his closest friends, his family and the town as a whole. Secondly, I propose that the narrator rehashes the details of the crime to undermine all of the important authorities involved so that he can replace their invalid testimony with his own. Indeed, the narrator cannot really add anything to the official judge's report, but he certainly can debase the authority of the judge's report in the first place. Like the judge's report, he can rehash all of the old coincidences, but he can also draw attention to the idiotic behavior of some townspeople that did not figure as part of the initial investigation. However, if the narrator's goal is to debunk the authorities of the text, he does so in a strange way—by calling attention to the same inconsistencies and rarities of his own written version of the events. However, he diminishes his own authority in order to overcome the challenges of communication, in other words to communicate or tell the reader what happened without saying anything at all.

In point of fact, the narrator's authority is just as lacking as the other authorities of the novel. The narrator admits himself to be one of the few people not present the morning of the murder, which automatically detracts from his own testimony. He claims to have been with María Alejandrina Cervantes and his account merely summarizes other's accounts. In other words, his eyewitness account is absent the most important hours of the events. In this way, the narrator's role is more journalistic, although he presents the events as a witness, and the external sources he does use are compiled in a way that seems haphazard. Yet again, through an analysis of his anti-rhetoric, his apparent lack of order is discovered to be an ordered mess or an artistic deconstruction.

The narrator also gives the reader a clue that his own writing may be deceptive or incomplete. He writes of his correspondences with his mother, while he is in college and shares with the reader that his mother left out important information about Bayardo before the narrator meets him. His mother confesses: “—Se me pareció al Diablo—me dijo—, pero tú mismo me habías dicho que esas cosas no se deben decir por escrito” (34). Thus, by including his mother’s remark on his own comment that writing should be selective, the narrator reveals his opinion concerning the writer’s role in the selective manipulation of his or her text. Surely, the fact that this communication gap comes in the form of a personal letter, meant to communicate, is once again not coincidental. Indeed, as Mary Berg indicates “The narrator’s account of the letters his mother wrote to him at school emphasizes the vagueness of the scraps of information she relays” (152). We can suggest that her letters lack communication in the same way that the other extra-textual letters indicate in the novel.

Other critics focus on the narrator’s limits in narrating Santiago, for example Adelaida López de Martínez writes that the narrator avoids speculations: “limitándose a registrar lo confesado y objetivamente comprobable” (242). Similarly, Vicente Cabrera postulates “without hesitation or comments of his own, he recounts the event as it happened” (36). I do agree that the narrator’s point of view and knowledge is limited, although I disagree in that he is objective. Alonso concurs: “the narrator time and time again expresses his agreement with a given witness’s opinion in a formula that arises from shared experience” (151). In this way, the narrator is a journalist who is simply too close to his subjects to be objective. For example, he writes of how Ángela considers the widow Xius’ house to be the prettiest in town, and he adds “yo hubiera dicho lo mismo”

(42). Also, in response to Pedro's comment that he was awake for 11 months after the murder the narrator remarks "Yo lo conocía bastante bien para saber que era cierto" (91). The narrator also makes other value judgments with the word to seem—*parecer*: "su cautela pareció natural" (48). Even when the narrator does not make value judgments, his own discourse consistently shows his opinion about the events surrounding Santiago's murder. For example, he uses strong adjectives to talk about the wedding and Santiago's murder, including "la boda desgraciada" (33) "aquel domingo indeseable" (51) "un martes turbio" (88), "aquel día interminable" (90) and "aquel día irreparable" (94), among others. His word choice often implicates his own opinion and the portrayal of events that he is supposed to portray in an unbiased way. He describes Santiago's murder as "fue destazado como un cerdo" (8), he calls the murder weapons "los útiles de sacrificio" (59-60), he indicates that the autopsy was a massacre (86), and he calls the events of the day a drama (111). Furthermore, the characters are classified as participants in a tragedy (95), and he disqualifies Amador's testimony with the comment, "no era de todo justo" (83).⁷³

The narrator also shows his judgment concerning Bayardo's drunken removal from their town in the presence of his weeping sisters: "Recuerdo haber pensado que un desconsuelo como ése solo podía fingirse para ocultar otras vergüenzas mayores" (97). Finally, the narrator admits in the fifth section, revealing his presence in the text in a more direct way than before, "Mi impresión personal es que murió sin entender su

⁷³ Concerning the narrator's choice of the word tragedy, Fernando Rodríguez Mansilla concludes: "Obsérvese que hablar de 'tragedia' involucra un desplazamiento de percepción frente a los hechos. Se pasa de la verdad particular de la Historia, que se propone en principio la crónica, hacia la verdad universal de la Poesía" Fernando Rodríguez Mansilla, "Sobre la escritura en *Cronica de una muerte anunciada*, de García Márquez," *RILCE: Revista de Filología Hispánica* 22.2 (2006).

muerte” (114). Just as Santiago does not understand his death, the narrator’s writing demonstrates that his account is an imperfect way to explore Santiago’s murder.

Although the events elude understanding and representation, the narrator offers his skewed viewpoint. As he is a male he focuses more on morbid aspects such as prostitutes, guns, and gruesome displays of violence, scatological references and more. He seems to revel in sharing these details (Detwiler 44-45).⁷⁴ Another potentially destructive aspect to the reliability of the narrator’s text is his manipulation of viewpoint during at least one very important moment of the novel: when Ángela confesses that Santiago was the perpetrator of her virginity. As Gustavo Pellón indicates:

Instead of reporting the key incident in the manner of limited narration that characterizes Crónica, where all information can be traced to the investigative efforts of either the judge or the narrator, García Márquez unexpectedly assumes a privileged perspective that reports the thought process of Angela as she denounces Santiago. (402)

This fact indicates at least one lapse in the narrator’s disclosure function when it comes to his relationship with the reader.

Also, as the novel moves from section to section, it seems as if the narrator progressively loses control of his text. In fact, in the fourth and fifth sections of the novel the narrator becomes more honest with himself and with the reader. Here, he begins to draw attention to the defects of his own text. His narrative deficiencies parallel the problems with the other supposed authorities of the text. While Bayardo’s statements in the judge’s summary are criticized as brief, in the narrator’s own summary Bayardo

⁷⁴ For example the narrator seems quite fixated on Pedro’s difficulty in urinating and dedicates several different paragraphs and parts of paragraphs to this topic. García Márquez, Crónica 70.

“se negó a aportar el dato más ínfimo que permitiera clarificar un poco su participación en el drama” (100). Similarly, Ángela’s mother, Pura Vicario “se negó a hablar del pasado, y tuve que conformarme para esta crónica con algunas frases sueltas de sus conversaciones con mi madre, y otras pocas rescatadas de mis recuerdos” (101). Here, the narrator is rescuing memories that don’t belong to him, which also parallels the way in which he rescues 322 pages of the judge’s summary. Furthermore, the narrator criticizes the influence of the literary in the judge’s report and the doctor’s character, although he shows that his own judgment is influenced by the same when he stumbles upon Ángela, as an encyclopedia salesman, over two decades after her failed wedding: “no quise creer que aquella mujer fuera la que yo creía, porque me resistía a admitir que la vida terminara por parecerse tanto a la mala literatura. Pero era ella: Ángela Vicario 23 años después del drama” (101). For Pellón, the linking of life with cheap literature becomes a *leitmotiv* of the novel, effectively connecting the judge and narrator’s texts (401).

Furthermore, the narrator criticizes that the judge views the events of the murder as a vast number of unexplainable coincidences. However, he shows that he and the rest of the townspeople share this same opinion, as he admits to the collective sense of confusion and desire to understand what really happened, how and why: “Nos sorprendían los gallos del amanecer tratando de ordenar las numerosas casualidades encadenadas que habían hecho posible el absurdo” (109). In yet another instance, the narrator seems to poke fun at the judge’s denomination of Santiago’s use of the front door to his house: “con un nombre de folletín: *La puerta fatal*” (17), which rings all too similar with the narrator’s classification of Cristo’s “error mortal” (123). The narrator

coined this phrase to refer to Cristo's act of going to the narrator's house to look for Santiago, which prevents him from being able to warn Santiago.

Also, the narrator reveals that his chronicle is just as inconclusive as the judge's summary in regards to finding someone that had seen Santiago enter his girlfriend's house after separating from Cristo: "El juez instructor buscó siquiera una persona que lo hubiera visto, y lo hizo con tanta persistencia como yo, pero no fue posible encontrarla" (127). In yet another example of the narrator's critique of the judge's report, he concludes: "Muchas veces incurrió distracciones líricas contrarias al rigor de su ciencia" (112), which is precisely the failed attempt in the narrator's supposed chronicle. Instead of giving meaning to the novel, the authority of the narrator and the town's officials are undermined.

Witnesses—*"It is not just anyone who has the weight to provide a testimony; to create belief authority is needed...but the opinion of the many can hardly be changed, and those who judge as well as those who make assessments form all their views with reference to it."* (Cicero Top. 73).

Another important element of external proofs includes the testimonies of the many witnesses to the crime. This is especially significant to Crónica, as the vast majority of the narrator's account is constituted of the testimony of eyewitnesses. In fact, the judge "Tuvo que pedir tropas de refuerzo para encauzar a la muchedumbre que se precipitaba a declarar sin ser llamada, ansiosa de exhibir su propia importancia en el drama" (111). The narrator captures the effect of the plethora of witnesses by including fragments of testimonies from various important and unimportant witnesses. Indeed, as José Mayoralas García confirms "Es característico de este relato el ver cómo el narrador yuxtapone y contrasta testimonios de unos, declaraciones de los otros" (179). The fact

that everyone in the town has something to say about the crime is obviously one of the more unique aspects to the non-mystery like nature of Santiago's murder. Jorge Ruffinelli draws attention to the unique nature of the inclusion of so many accounts by the narrator:

Son múltiples las referencias a testimonios ajenos que implican la investigación del cronista: «me dijo», «me confesó», «muchos coincidían en», «la mayoría estaba de acuerdo», «decía el sumario», «las versiones», «según me dijeron años después», «veintidós personas declararon», «tres personas confirmaron», «declaró el instructor» (278).

Instead of standing behind one univocal account of the events, the witnesses have differing views on the circumstances of the day, although in mostly minor matters. For example, the weather is in question by “muchos coincidían” in the opinion that the weather was beautiful while “la mayoría estaba de acuerdo” that it was an overcast day (8). Similarly Bayardo's declaration that he was going to marry Ángela after he sees her passing by: “Tres personas que estaban en la pensión confirmaron que el episodio había ocurrido, pero otras cuatro no lo creyeron cierto. En cambio, todas las versiones coincidían en que Ángela Vicario y Bayardo San Román se habían visto por primera vez en las fiestas patrias de octubre” (35). Another interesting aspect to the testimony of the witnesses is the difficulty that the narrator has in establishing some facts, not because of conflicting witnesses but because of a lack of or refusal of witnesses to testify. The narrator's use of *nadie*, *nunca* and *sólo* reinforces this idea, in these examples among others: He writes “Nadie supo nunca a qué vino” (32), concerning Bayardo's arrival in their town and “Nunca se estableció muy bien cómo se conocieron” (34), referring to

Ángela and Bayardo. He also writes about Ángela's mother's behavior after she is returned by Bayardo, "Sólo Pura Vicario supo lo que hizo en las dos horas siguientes, y se fue a la muerte con su secreto" (54). Here, the narrator draws attention once again to the role of secrets and the unspoken in the novel.

There are many other factors that put into question the testimonies that the narrator is able to collect. Some witnesses have died, including the death of Clotilde Armenta's husband, Don Rogelio de la Flor before he can give any testimony at all, and Leandro Pornoy, a police agent who was warned of the Vicario's intentions by Faustino Santos, who had died in the years preceding the narrator's return to collect information. Also the drunkenness and the debauchery of the wedding alter the reliability of many of the witnesses as Silvio Sirias indicates (68). For example, even the narrator's sister, the nun, is reported as having a hangover. "Mi hermana la monja, que no iría a esperar al Obispo porque tenía una cruda de cuarenta grados, no consiguió despertarlo" (81), the 'lo' refers to her brother, Luis Enrique who fell from the toilet to the bathroom floor in his own drunken stupor. Victoria Guzmán even claims that the drunkenness of the Vicario brothers is the very reason that she did not find it necessary to warn Santiago. She declares "no lo previne porque pensé que eran habladas de borracho" (17).

Furthermore, the narrator's relationship to witnesses puts his own account into question. He admits to using third-hand information on various occasions. For example, he writes that Pura Vicario: "le contó a mi madre" (53) and includes Pura's citation which diminishes his connection to the direct source of this witness. In fact, the very nature of the narrator's entire chronicle is also undermined as he uses other individual's recovered memories in order to supplement his own failed ability to remember clearly.

“Yo conservaba un recuerdo muy confuso de la fiesta antes de que hubiera decidido rescatarla a pedazos de la memoria ajena” (51). Thus, in the narrator’s account it is unclear to the reader what information pertains to the narrator’s memory, the memory of another person in town, the retelling of popular consensus, or the reconstruction of various testimonies passed off inadvertently to the reader as the narrator’s own.

Another major problem with many of the witnesses is a moral one. Most witnesses are guilty of an individual failure to act and a willingness to give reason over to what they consider to be the fatalism of a crime that in reality did not have to be committed. This results in a plethora of witnesses “who imagine, lie, and invent much more than they actually remember” (Detwiler 40). Thus, much in the same way as the narrator undermines the official authorities of his chronicle, the testimony of all witnesses is put into question by omission. Instead of presenting the reader with one or a few solid testimonies of key witnesses the narrator includes various dissonant voices and witnesses that speak against each other’s conclusions. The narrator uses this external proof as an anti-proof as a way to invalidate nearly all that the witnesses say and do. As Cicero has concluded, regarding the witness, the “opinion of the many” counts in offering external proofs. This is problematized when the masses have essentially nothing to say, such as is the case with some irrelevant and some dissonant voices of *Crónica*.

Rumors, Maxims and Proverbs—“*Of that kind is also the vast variety of suspicions heaped on Palamedes; this sort of thing truth itself is sometimes unable to refute.*” (Cicero *Top.* 76).

In addition to presenting weak authorities and feeble witnesses, the narrator overturns the normal importance of rumors in the town. The narrator shows how the typically effective spreading of rumors actually works against preventing Santiago’s

death. For example, the narrator reveals that some of the townspeople such as his own mother, are always knowledgeable concerning major events in the town “Parecía tener hilos de comunicación secreta con la otra gente del pueblo, sobre todo con la de su edad” (26). However, even when most of the townspeople are in the know, “La noticia estaba entonces tan bien repartida” (71), his mother and others normally sharing her clairvoyance of secrets do not have any idea of the Vicario brother’s plan until it is too late. It is almost as if the fact that Santiago’s death is not a secret, renders the narrator’s mother not privy to the information. Maybe she only gets supernatural information on secrets? Similarly, although the news of Ángela’s lost virginity and Santiago’s alleged guilt in deflowering her spreads through the town like wildfire, this information is treated as a baseless rumor by everyone who could have done something to stop the Vicario’s vengeance. Many of the townspeople hear the “rumor” that the Vicario brothers want to kill Santiago and then go by Clotilde Armenta’s store to see it with his or her own eyes: “pasaban clientes fingidos comprando leche sin necesidad y preguntando por cosas de comer que no existían, con la intención de ver si era cierto que estaban esperando a Santiago Nasar para matarlo” (73). Even after seeing that the alleged “rumor” is true, the townspeople are characterized by their inaction and gawk over the spectacle, hoping to become part of or witness the action. The inaction that characterizes the onlookers continues until Santiago’s murder is consummated, when the witnesses see the “rumor” unfold before their eyes in a wild spectacle.

Father Amador also receives written notice from Armenta and spoken notice from whispering townspeople concerning the Vicario’s secret, that is actually anything but secret: “En el trayecto, tres personas lo detuvieron para contarle en secreto que los

hermanos Vicario estaban esperando a Santiago Nasar para matarlo, pero sólo uno supo decirle dónde” (65). Amador also fails to react. Similarly, another important recipient of the alleged “rumor” is Yamil Shaium, one of very few individuals who find it necessary to investigate the validity of what the Vicario brothers claim that they will do. However, instead of warning Santiago himself, Shaium is concerned by the very fact that the news might be a “rumor” so he tells Cristo instead of Santiago. Cristo, in turn wants to warn Santiago of the terrible “rumor” but Santiago has become lost in the crowd. Shaium admits to the narrator years later: “pensaba que si el rumor era infundado le iba a causar una alarma inútil, y prefirió consultarlo primero con Cristo Bedoya” (117).

In spite of the fact that nearly the entire town talks about Santiago’s fate, which as Cicero projects should strengthen the believability of the information, the various members of the community do not give credence to the “rumor” or are too complacent and interested in talking about the spectacle, valuing discourse over action, when it does not matter, rather than doing anything at all to impede the Vicario’s violent act. Similarly, Bandyopadhyay concludes that the gossipy nature of the townspeople solidifies their inaction. She asks: “Did Santiago Nasar really seduce Ángela Vicario? Not that it matters. In a town where rumors and gossip rage most of the time, where one knows all that happens without even going out of one’s home, nobody really bothers to know if the allegation of Ángela has any validity or not” (100). The townspeople would rather talk about the tragedy before during and after it occurs than to stop it before it occurs. The propensity for rumors neither increases the believability of the Vicario’s plan nor helps to save Santiago from his fate. Finally, as I have already mentioned the rumor that some Arab families might seek vengeance on the Vicario brothers provokes

two important actions on the mayor's part that contradicts his inaction towards the clear forewarning of Santiago's murder: "El coronel Aponte, preocupado por los rumores, visitó a los árabes familia por familia, y al menos por esta vez sacó una conclusión correcta...ninguno abrigaba propósitos de venganza" (93). Thus, instead of incrementing the validity of external proofs, in the case of the murder "rumor" no productive action is taken, yet at a more insignificant moment, the power of rumors provokes action on the part of the townspeople and the law.

The other part of this external proof includes the lines of text that I consider to be maxims or proverbs. These too, are shown to have little effect, no effect or the opposite effect that is intended by the proverb or maxim.

- "*La caza de amor es de altanería*" written by Gil Vicente appears as the epigraph to the novel. While an epigraph may not always be considered in a proverbial sense it makes sense at least to mention the epigraph as an unheeded warning. Several studies link this line to the text. For one, it could refer to Santiago's actual falconry practices, as well as his bird-of-prey behavior with women. Also, Bayardo's "hunt" for a wife is similar to Santiago's behavior with women. The epigraph is even used by one critic to establish Father Amador as the possible perpetrator of Ángela's lost virginity.⁷⁵ Furthermore, the use of the word *amor* is ironic, at best, as it seems that love is absent from the majority of the novel. Ángela's obsessive "love" for Bayardo is questionable, although she does not hunt for it like Bayardo did.

⁷⁵ See Ana María Hernández de López, "La significación del epígrafe en *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*," *En el punto de mira: Gabriel García Márquez*, ed. Ana María Hernández de López (Madrid: Pliegos, 1985).

- “*Halcón que se atreve con garza guerrera, peligros espera*” (75). As Donald McGrady tells us this line also comes from Gil Vicente, and is used by García Márquez to show the importance of the hawk and the “transcendence” of the message (109). The narrator admits to having warned Santiago with this proverb when he originally becomes involved with the prostitute, Cervantes. In and of itself it seems to be sound advice, because Santiago does end up falling in love with and suffering from desperation over Cervantes. However, this sound advice is not limited to the prostitute. If Santiago did take Ángela’s virginity with or without her consent, her denunciation of him makes her the “garza guerrera” who provokes his death. Santiago does not seem to heed the narrator’s advice and fornicates at will. On the other hand, if the narrator is Ángela’s perpetrator, this proverb is overtly ironic and could even be taken as an underlying warning to the reader, meant to atone the narrator’s guilt. If Santiago is not the deflowerer of Ángela, this proverb demonstrates itself to be untrue, as the real culprit goes unpunished.
- “Nos dijo el milagro pero no el santo” (113). This quote was included in the judge’s summary by Ángela’s friends, who had counseled her in the art of tricking her new husband into believing she was a virgin. This quote indicates that the friends were able to testify together (legally illegitimate), while the mixing of religion and promiscuity is overtly sacrilegious. This quote also seems to poke fun at the seriousness of the situation. In any case, this sentence detracts from the reliability of Ángela’s friends. It may not be exactly a proverb, but its construction and unique structure merits mention.

- “*Dadme un prejuicio y moveré el mundo*” (113). This is a paraphrase of Archimedes “Give me a place to stand on, and I will move the Earth.”⁷⁶ This is included as one of the judge’s many marginal notes detracting from the validity and completeness of his summary and putting Santiago’s guilt into doubt because of the lack of conclusive proofs against him. The narrator indicates that this note was found written on the page 416 along with a drawing of a heart and an arrow. The inclusion of this proverb is also ironic in that even without proof as to Santiago’s guilt in deflowering Ángela, the Vicario twins are exonerated , further putting into question the authority of the entire system of law.
- “No hay borracho que se coma su propia caca” (119). Victoria Guzmán made this comment to Cristo Bedoya in reference to her doubt that the Vicario twins would act against Santiago. She is quoted as having said immediately before, “Esos pobres muchachos no matan a nadie” (118). In any case, as the reader knows full well by now, she was flat wrong.
- “*La fatalidad nos hace invisibles*” (127). This is the second faulty maxim provided by the judge, also as a marginal note and also written in red ink. He writes this refrain incredulously as he is unable to find anyone who saw Santiago enter Flora Miguel’s house, or at least anyone willing to admit it in court. This quote also shows the judge’s propensity for sarcasm and his incredulity of the witness’s testimonies.

⁷⁶ Gustavo Pellón indicates that the judge paraphrases Archimedes in order to call attention to the prejudice of the townspeople against Santiago for being wealthy, mixed race-Arab, attractive and a womanizer. Gustavo Pellón, "Myth, Tragedy and the Scapegoat Ritual in *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*," *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 12.3 (1988): 405.

In summary, the rumors, maxims and proverbs either work against Santiago or are ironically based on flawed reasoning, providing yet another example of the narrator's anti-rhetoric.

Documents— “...*But also orators, philosophers, poets, and historians from whose sayings and writings authority is often sought for the creation of belief*” (Cicero *Top.* 78).

I have already shown how the creation of belief by documents is undermined simultaneously with the undermining of every trade and class of individuals in the novel—legal, religious, medical, political, intellectual etc. All written documents are also undermined: such as the judge's report, Amador's autopsy report and the chronicle itself. The letters that avoid real communication, that I have already discussed, are also debased authorities.

Roberto González Echevarría writes of the judge's summary that the narrator must rescue from the Justice Palace of Riohacha.⁷⁷ The physical condition of the Archive itself is telling of destruction:

The volumes are unbound, unclassified and float through deserted offices because the power of the original Archive is suspended. A ruined palace of justice, the Archive functions as a sign, an allegory of the origin...

Descosidos does not really mean unbound, in the sense that the documents are yet to be bound. In fact, *descosidos* could very well mean that these

⁷⁷ The narrator describes the state of the official Archive: “No existía clasificación alguna en los archivos y más de un siglo de expedientes estaban amontonados en el suelo del decrepito edificio colonial... La planta baja se inundaba con el mar de leva, y los volúmenes descosidos flotaban en las oficinas desiertas” García Márquez, *Crónica* 112.

documents were once bound and have now literally fallen apart,
become unsewn. (178)⁷⁸

At this point, González Echevarría suggests that García Márquez, through the chronicler, sets himself to the task of rewriting: “If indeed the Archive is like Borges’ study, it is like Borges’ study after that master demolisher of fictions is through thrashing the books. They only become volumes again when they are rewritten as novel by Fuentes, Carpentier, García Márquez and others, simulacra of the original Archive” (178). Yet as González Echevarría suggests, “Archival fictions are also crypts, like the *Escorial* itself, a figure of the very book we read, monumental repositories of death’s debris and documents lacking currency” (177). In García Márquez’s rewritten account in Crónica, the reader is able to work through the narrator’s anti-rhetoric to learn from his re-bound rendition of the events. However, it becomes apparent that his chronicle is a simulacrum, a mirror image of the original faulty documents.

González Echevarría’s classification of Crónica as an Archival fiction also aids the reader in understanding the way in which the narrator of Crónica does not fit Jean Franco’s definition of the chronicler/ storyteller in her article, “Narrator, Author, Superstar”. Franco describes the traditional narrator/storyteller as an “originator or founding father of a new state, which can create its own discourse” (“Narrator” 150). This is opposite the case of Crónica. As Franco determines, this traditional storyteller is precisely the type that can be found in García Márquez’s Cien años de soledad, in which “memory fails with insomnia and writing has to replace it” (J. Franco “Narrator” 148).

⁷⁸ Indeed, González Echevarría indicates that the destroyed Archive refers to “the constitutive presence of the law” of colonial times, further solidifying the importance of the decay and inefficiency of the legal system and the incompleteness of the manuscript. Roberto González Echevarría, Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) 178-82.

By contrast, in *Crónica*, memory also fails, but writing is proven to be equally inadequate, simply a mirror image of the original failure. In this way, as I have established in the introduction to “The Other ‘I’”, the narrator of *Crónica* is not a traditional storyteller, but rather a postmodern one. The narrator parodies the role of storytelling and discourse, and prevents a version that challenges truth and writing. Instead of glorifying the chronicler or the task of creating discourse, the observer narrator centralizes the renewed role of communication with the reader.

Oaths and Law—“*Many have also fallen into enmities through inadvertence, as recently happened to Staienus who said things—while certain honest men were eavesdropping on him from behind a wall—which, when made public and brought to court, led to his conviction on a capital charge*” (Cicero *Top.* 75).

I have already established the ineffectiveness of the legal system, including the nature of the trial, the judge’s brief, the Vicario twin’s exoneration; the lacking authority of justice officials, including the judge and the mayor; the destroyed legal spaces including the Archive and the idiosyncrasies of the witnesses under oath. The narrator’s anti-rhetoric in the category of oaths and law is abundantly evident. Rodríguez Mansilla concludes “uno de los objetivos del narrador a lo largo de *Crónica*... es precisamente destruir la autoridad que detentaría el sumario. Así la crónica desafía al documento legal” (299).

Precedent—“*Belief is sometimes corroborated, if either a certain skill is applied—for great is the power of our science to persuade—or indeed practiced, because in most cases those are trusted who are experienced*” (Cicero *Top.* 74).

If the narrator would have us believe that Santiago is not guilty of deflowering Ángela, one possible strategy he could use to convince the reader (or one element, if true, that would lead the reader to believe impossible his guilt) would be to identify Santiago

as sexually chaste. For as Aristotle argues in Rhetoric “One line of positive proof is based upon consideration of the opposite of the thing in question” (bk. II ch. 23.1). On the contrary, though, the narrator presents Santiago as the likely future deflowerer of Divina Flor as he writes, “La niña, todavía un poco montaraz, parecía sofocada por el ímpetus de sus glándulas... Ya estás en tiempo de desbravar –le dijo” (14). Similarly, Divina Flor’s testimony indicates the frequency of Santiago’s groping of her, “Me agarró toda la panocha—me dijo Divina Flor—. Era lo que hacía siempre cuando me encontraba sola por los rincones de la casa” (18). The narrator also specifies that Santiago’s reputation precedes him as he has taken the virginity of several girls already (King 318).

In fact, if Santiago had been less aggressive towards Divina, perhaps her mother, the Nasar’s cook, Victoria Guzmán, may have found it necessary or useful to warn Santiago of the Vicario’s intentions, as she had ample opportunity to do so. Guzmán identifies her own role as the protector of her daughter in order that Divina not become Santiago’s prey as she herself was for Ibrahim Nasar, Santiago’s father. The narrator explains that instead of sending Divina to wake up Santiago at his request on the morning of his murder: “cumplió la orden de despertarlo, pero no mandó a Divina Flor sino que subió ella misma al dormitorio con el vestido de lino, pues no perdía ninguna ocasión de preservar a la hija contra las garras del boyardo” (78). Divina Flor affirms after her mother’s death, that Guzmán did not warn Nasar because “en el fondo de su alma quería que lo mataran” (17), for the abovementioned reasons. As King concludes, Guzman’s omission, “appears to be chance and bolsters the townspeople’s ‘fatality’ theory” (King 315), although in reality, Guzmán acts deliberately as a result of Santiago’s prior

behavior, the precedent.⁷⁹ Guzmán's action has a clear cause and effect relationship. Instead of establishing Santiago's lack of guilt, the precedent, his promiscuous behavior leads the reader to entertain the possibility that Nasar could have been Ángela's deflowerer (Sirias 74). As the reader observes, neither the narrator nor other witnesses can prove or disprove his guilt, although the precedent works against his exoneration in the reader's mind.

Other passages and moments in the text become ironic as positive elements of precedent are shown to provoke negative results and vice versa. For example, as the narrator claims, Santiago administrated his business "con muy buen juicio aunque sin mucha fortuna" (9). If he did deflower Ángela, he demonstrates that he does not have good judgment, indicating a conflict between what the narrator says and what Santiago truly is. Another few examples, such as the fact that Plácida Linero claims, "Mi hijo no salía nunca por la puerta de atrás cuando estaba bien vestido" (17), is both an overturned precedent and an unfortunate coincidence, that contributes to Santiago's demise. Further, at the time of the murder, Santiago is unarmed, although he possesses a 357 Magnum. However, because of a mysterious and fantastical precedent, a time when his father's gun accidentally shot through two houses and into the central plaza destroying a life-size statute of a saint (10), he keeps it unloaded. In any case, his friend Cristo who desires to bring him the gun, coincidentally, cannot find him to give it to him. Finally, both the judge and narrator agree to the good nature of the Vicario twins, yet this is a precedent that does not hold true when it comes to Santiago's brutal murder. The Vicario twins are

⁷⁹ Indeed, the Vicario brothers believe themselves to be victims of this same force of fatalism as Pablo is recorded as having said to Pedro "—Esto no tiene remedio—le dijo—: es como si ya nos hubiera sucedido" García Márquez, *Crónica* 71.

characterized in the written summary, “Eran de catadura espesa pero de buena índole,” decía el sumario. Yo, que los conocía desde la escuela primaria, hubiera escrito lo mismo” (20). Thus in this category, we see that the precedent is often contradictory, is used to prove the opposite to be true, or functions to establish a coincidence. At other times, the normally untrue becomes true, and that which is typical yields a distinct result.

Supernatural— *“There are the following types of divine testimony: first speech (for oracles have their name for the fact that the speech (oratio) of the gods is in them); secondly, things in which divine works of some kind may be said to reside: of these, the first is the world itself and all its order and splendor; next the flights of birds through the air and their singing; then sounds and flashes of fire given from the air, and portents manifest in many things on earth; and also the premonitions of the future which are derived from the inspection of entrails. Many things have been seen too, through dreams experienced while asleep” (Cicero Top. 77).*⁸⁰

The element of the supernatural is probably the most important to the narrator’s anti-rhetoric. Furthermore, the various overturned elements of divination detailed by Cicero leads me to believe that this category is the most elaborately constructed and packed with meaning. It seems that García Márquez both draws from and purposefully subverts ancient practices of divination and haruspicy through the augmented role of birds and entrails in the chronicle. However, as we have witnessed in the cases of the narrator’s other external proofs, the results are opposite of what is desired or expected. Skilled diviners misinterpret the signs and the future is never predicted in any beneficial way. In other instances, opportunities for divination are ignored.

⁸⁰ The Imperial Dictionary of English Language identifies the practice of the inspection of entrails with the word: Extispicious which list two definitions “for the purpose of prophesying, from *extispex*, a diviner—*exta*, the entrails, and *specio*, to look at” and “Relating to the inspection of entrails for the purpose of prognostication, augurial” Ogilvie, "The Imperial Dictionary of the English Language: A Complete Encyclopedic Lexicon, Literary, Scientific and Technological," ed. Charles Annandale (New York: The Century Co., 1883), vol. II.

The ancient practices of divination were often used to discover the will or the reason for displeasure of the pagan gods (not the Christian God). It seems however, that although divination is a common practice in the chronicle, the ultimate goal of revealing the future is overlooked. The Encyclopedia Britannica, defines Divination in this way:

Divination, through which the cause of divine displeasure was ascertained, was mainly of three kinds: augury (divination by flight of birds), haruspicy (divination by examining the entrails of sacrificial animals), and an enigmatic procedure using tokens with symbolic names, arts said to be practiced respectively by the 'bird-watcher,' the seer, and the 'old woman.' The omens, as interpreted by these experts, were either favourable or unfavourable and would give a yes or no answer to the sense of questions put to them. In this way, by a lengthy process of elimination, it was possible to determine the precise offence that required expiation. ("Anatolian religion")

Taking this definition in consideration, several problems arise in Crónica. The first problem is the misreading of the signs by the self-professed "experts" of the town. The two "old women" experts include Santiago's mother, Plácida Linero, and the narrator's mother. As the narrator declares on the first page of the book, Santiago's mother falsely interprets two of Santiago's dreams about birds and flying as being about trees: "Tenía una reputación muy bien ganada de intérprete certera de los sueños ayunas, pero no había advertido ningún augurio aciago en esos dos sueños de su hijo" (7-8).⁸¹ Later the narrator

⁸¹ In the first dream, Santiago "Había soñado que atravesaba un bosque de higueros donde caía una llovizna tierna, y por un instante fue feliz en el sueño, pero al despertar se sintió por completo salpicado de

also reveals that Plácida never forgives herself for the misinterpretation of the dreams but does not blame herself for locking Santiago outside of the front door, showing that Plácida's faith is in her own supernatural abilities, which fail her, instead of her own actions that should provoke guilt: "Por el contrario nunca se perdonó el haber confundido el augurio magnífico de los árboles con el infausto de los pájaros" (111). Similarly, in reference to the spreading news of the Vicario brother's plans, the narrator indicates that it is strange that his sister did not know, although it was more strange that his mother the other divination "expert" in town also did not clearly see the future. He concludes:

Era extraño que no lo supiera, pero mucho más que tampoco lo supiera mi madre, pues se enteraba de todo antes que nadie en la casa, a pesar de que hacía años que no salía a la calle, ni siquiera para ir a misa... Parecía tener hilos de comunicación secreta con la otra gente del pueblo, sobre todo con la de su edad, y a veces nos sorprendía con noticias anticipadas que no hubiera podido conocer sino por artes de adivinación. (25-26)

Interestingly, it seems that both Plácida and the narrator's mother hold a similar disregard for religion and value their supernatural abilities instead. As Sandra Maria Boschetto indicates, the presence of the supernatural is important to the matriarchal discourse of the novel, "casi todas las protagonistas de la obra parecen involucrarse en la arte de la

cagada de pájaros", while in the second dream "había soñado que iba solo en un avión de papel de estaño que volaba sin tropezar por entre los almendros" García Márquez, *Crónica* 7.

adivinación” (104). Yet, in the case of Santiago’s murder, the typical powers of all of the women are undermined, although the omens seem to predict Santiago’s death.⁸²

Another important element in divination is the practice of the inspection of entrails. Anthony Aveni discusses the art of Hepatoscopy, the inspection of innards to predict the future (16-18). Father Amador is the only inspector of Santiago’s entrails during the autopsy: “En la nota final señalaba una hipertrofia del hígado que atribuyó a una hepatitis mal curada. «Es decir—me dijo—, que de todos modos le quedaban muy pocos años de vida” (87). Amador’s prediction of Santiago’s future based on his liver is superfluous considering that he is already dead. In the novel, although intestines are an important focus the ability to inspect them to see the future is nullified. None of the intestines are inspected and no foreshadowing is perceived.⁸³ In a town where superstitions, omens and magical abilities to see into the future are the everyday occurrence, Santiago’s death is actually never foretold by divination.

There are several references to intestines in the chronicle, although most of the references are effective only in increasing the reader’s horror at the gruesome events. The first mention is when Santiago is eating his breakfast and Victoria Guzman feeds rabbit intestines to the dogs: “Pero no pudo eludir una rápida ráfaga de espanto al recordar el horror de Santiago Nasar cuando ella arrancó de cuajo las entrañas de un conejo y les tiró a los perros el tripajo humeante” (14). Both this event and the second

⁸² Santiago’s foretold death is foretold in the same way that Don Alonso’s death is announced by the auguries in Lope de Vega’s *El caballero de Olmedo* Méndez Ramírez, “La reinterpretación,” 937.

⁸³ Aveni concludes “You didn’t have to give up your liver to find out how things would turn out. To learn the will of the gods in ancient Babylon, a *baru* or seer (a *haruspex* for the Etruscans) would cut out the liver of a sacrificed animal, usually a sheep. He would hold it in his hand and gazing into that ‘red, shining, consciousness,’ he would look for signs so that he might anticipate the intention of the gods of nature, the arbiters of our fate” Anthony Aveni, *Behind the Crystal Ball: Magic, Science, and the Occult from Antiquity Through the New Age*, Rev. ed. (Boulder: UP of Colorado, 2002) 16-17.

mention of intestines in the novel serve to foreshadowing Santiago's death, although no one seems to notice until after he is dead. The second reference to entrails comes from the Vicario brothers who tell everyone of their plan to murder Santiago as they sharpen their second set of knives: "volvieron a gritar para que los oyeran que iban a sacarle las tripas a Santiago Nasar" (68), which is precisely what they do to Santiago, and exactly what Amador does again in his autopsy. The third reference to intestines is after Santiago is already dead and Divina Flor asks for the narrator's help with the same blood-hungry dogs who ate the rabbit intestines earlier in the novel. Divina screams: "que lo que quieren es comerse las tripas" (84). The subject of Santiago's intestines also comes up in Father Amador's autopsy and any possibility of being able to use the intestines for divination of any other future events is literally discarded. As the priest is not a professional he does not know how to properly replace Santiago's organs and decides simply to throw them away: "el párroco había arrancado de cuajo las vísceras destazadas, pero al final no supo qué hacer con ellas, y les impartió una bendición de rabia y las tiró en el balde de la basura" (88). It is ironic that Amador, the Catholic priest, is the only one who inspects Santiago's entrails. However, he is ignorant of practices of extispicy and divination, and apparently of most everything else.

In another instance, Ángela's own feelings are implicated in the discussion of entrails as she describes her growing hatred for her mother after Bayardo returns her on their wedding night. She tells the narrator: "Se me revolvían las tripas de sólo verla—me dijo—, pero no podía verla sin acordarme de él" (106). Ángela's reference to intestines links her irrevocably to Santiago's fate, hatred and the turning of her own *tripas*. Finally,

in the concluding pages of the novel, in which Santiago's brutal death is recounted, the numerous references to entrails are overwhelming:

Desesperado Pablo Vicario le dio un tajo horizontal en el vientre, y los **intestinos** completos afloraran con una explosión...Santiago Nasar permaneció todavía un instante apoyado contra la puerta, hasta que vio sus propias **vísceras** al sol, limpias y azules, y cayó de rodillas...Se incorporó de medio lado, y se echó a andar en un estado de alucinación, sosteniendo con las manos las **vísceras** colgantes...llevando en las manos el racimo de sus **entrañas**...Tropezó en el último escalón pero se incorporó de inmediato. «Hasta tuvo el cuidado de sacudir con la mano la tierra que le quedó en las **tripas**», me dijo mi tía Wene. (133-35, emphasis mine)

It is ironic that in a tale with innards literally spilling out all over the place, in a town where several people seem to be skilled in divination, that the importance of Santiago's entrails is limited to the narrator's dramatic, bloody and violent effects as he presents it to the reader. As Piotr Steinkeller indicates "the divination from the physical appearance of the entrails of a sacrificial lamb" (12) has great potential to see the future. If Santiago serves as a sacrifice, this potential is completely missed by the townspeople. The intestines must surely be put so vividly before the reader's eyes so that he or she may do that which the others in Crónica have failed to do: inspect them in their bloody entirety.

As part of the narrator's anti-rhetoric strategy, he jests with the very notion of the "muerte anunciada". Santiago's death is only foretold by divination and magic retrospectively. However, everyday people who have no professed powers of magic not only know what will happen (it did not need to be foretold by divination), but have also

decided that the murder is as good as consummated when then hear of the Vicario's plans. Supernatural powers are rendered pointless.

It is quite possible that García Márquez intentionally connects Crónica with the numerous examples of the worldwide practice of hepatoscopy. Aveni indicates that there are examples of this practice in the ancient societies of the Americas: "Five hundred years ago, the Inca chronicler of Peru, Garcilaso de la Vega, wrote about llama sacrifices. The Aztecs of Mexico peered into the innards of the pelican, the ruler of all the water birds in their lacustrine capital city, to seek their future in objects they found there" (18). Garcilaso, el Inca's detail of sacrifice in Comentarios Reales shows how Santiago's ritualistic sacrifice in García Márquez's novel parodies the practice of foretelling the future. The Inca festival of the sun entails a sacrifice of a black llama "para catar los agüeros y pronósticos de su fiesta. Porque todas las cosas que hacían de importancia, así para la paz, como para la guerra, casi siempre sacrificaban un cordero, para mirar y certificarse por el corazón y pulmones si era acepto al sol..." (5.21-22).⁸⁴ Garcilaso also indicates the nature of the way in which the llama was sacrificed:

Abríanle vivo por el costado izquierdo, por do metían la mano y sacaban el corazón, con los pulmones y todo el gazgorro arrancándolo con la mano y no cortándolo, y había de salir entero desde el paladar... Sacada la asadura, lo hinchaban de un soplo, y guardaban el aire dentro, atando el cañón de la asadura o apretando con las manos, y luego miraban las vías por donde el aire entra en los pulmones y las venillas que hay por ellos, a

⁸⁴ Although, Garcilaso's text uses the word *cordero*, English translations and interpretations of the Festival of the Sun indicate this animal to be a llama.

ver si estaban muy hinchados, o poco llenos de aire, porque cuanto más hinchados, tanto más feliz era el agüero” (5.21-22).

Indeed, there are some similarities between Garcilaso’s account of the llama sacrifice and Crónica but also some differences that are important to note, if we are to take Santiago’s sacrifice as an inverted and useless one. First, Santiago is also “sacrificed alive”. Secondly, he attacked “por el flanco derecho”, instead of the left side (131). He also makes an animal sound, “un quejido de becerro” (132), that links him to the ritual sacrifice of an animal.

As Garcilaso describes the goal of removing the llama’s heart, Pedro Vicario attempts to get to Santiago’s heart, but he fails: “lo buscó casi en la axila, donde lo tienen los cerdos” (133), missing the important organ, effectively ruining the ritual. Finally, instead of pulling out Santiago’s innards and analyzing them from a position of control and power Santiago’s intestines seem to take a control of their own: “los intestinos completos afloraron con una explosión” (133) symbolically and literally exploding in the faces of the twins. Of course Pablo and Pedro have no plans of inspecting Santiago’s viscera. Also, just as Garcilaso’s account of the public nature of Incan sacrifices indicates, Santiago is sacrificed in front of the nearly the entire town. In contrast though, there is no Sun God to please, no future to predict and no one to interpret the meaning of his entrails. Santiago is a completely purposeless victim of a sacrifice that has lost its meaning and ritual.

Another definition of divination from Classic Encyclopedia: Love to Know 1911, reveals the importance of the hawk in predicting the future:

Similarly, Divination is practised in all grades of culture; its votaries range from the Australian black to the American medium. There is no general agreement as to the source of the information; commonly it is held that it comes from the gods directly or indirectly. In the Bornean cult of the hawk it seems that the divine bird itself was regarded as having a foreknowledge of the future. Later it is regarded as no more than a messenger. Among the Australian blacks, divination is largely employed to discover the cause of death... ("Divination").⁸⁵

Once again, the importance of a possible divination instrument, the hawk is both undermined and parodied in García Márquez's novel. Santiago is supposedly learned in, "la maestranza de las aves de presa altas", and on one occasion both father and son "trajeron sus halcones amaestrados... para hacer una demostración de altanería en un bazar de caridad" (12). Other instances where the hawk surfaces in the novel include Divina Flor's description of Santiago's hand of "gavilán carnicero" when he gropes her (18). We have already analyzed the inclusion of the two lines of Gil Vicente's poetry in which he "warns the falcon (grammatically male) of the danger it courts in attacking a heron (female)" as Michael Bell indicates (89).

Furthermore, the narrator's discussion of Santiago's rampant sexual behavior in the fourth section of the book links him with the mythical bird, "Como decíamos entonces, él era un gavilán pollero. Andaba solo, igual que su padre, cortándole el

⁸⁵ Donald Shaw sees the "absence of divine protection" to be similar to the godless society presented by Juan Rulfo in *Pedro Páramo*. Donald L. Shaw, "Chronicle of a Death Foretold: Narrative Function and Interpretation," *Critical Perspectives on Gabriel García Márquez*, eds. Bradley A. Shaw and Nora Vera-Godwin (Lincoln, NE: Soc. of Sp. & Sp.-Amer. Studies, 1986) 94.

cogollo a cuanta doncella sin rumbo empezaba a despuntar por esos montes...”

(103).⁸⁶ Yet, if Santiago is to be considered to be a hawk, a bird with divinatory powers, he shows himself to be ignorant of his own future. The only true foretelling of Santiago’s death is in the narrator’s unheeded warning to him about Cervantes. Perhaps Santiago’s sexual precedent indicates that he may have deserved what the Vicario brothers gave him, even if it was not for deflowering Ángela. His hawk-like sexual prowess may have warranted his death.

There are several other supernatural moments worth mentioning in *Crónica* that are not exactly related to ancient practices of divination. The recipients only recognize these signs after Santiago is dead. They can paradoxically be called “retrospective premonitions” (Berg 148). For example Divina Flor says that Santiago’s hand was as cold as a dead man’s hand (18), and Clotilde Armenta, the owner of the store where the Vicarios sat in wait, said that when she first saw Santiago in the morning, he already looked like a ghost (20). Similarly, Armenta tells the narrator of one way in which she was able to temporarily hold off the Vicario twins, claiming to have been inspired by the Holy Spirit “—Por el amor de Dios—murmuró Clotilde Armenta—. Déjenlo para después, aunque sea por respeto al señor Obispo. «Fue un soplo del Espíritu Santo», repetía ella a menudo” (21). In this case, the divine message received by Armenta is essentially futile, Santiago still dies.

⁸⁶ Katherine Callen King also develops the importance of Santiago’s comparison with a hawk. King writes, “Santiago Nasar may not have taken the virginity of the particular woman in question, Angela Vicario, but had he lived he would certainly have taken Divina Flor’s. Furthermore, the reader learns that the “gavilan carnicero” whose icy clutch had repeatedly violated Divina Flor’s person had also hunted elsewhere. In the course of asserting Santiago Nasar’s probable innocence on the basis of his known sexual behavior, the narrator describes his former friend as a “gavilan pollero” who had seized the bud of many a pubescent virgin “por esos montes” King, “Santiago,” 318.

In another example of the unexplainable, Cristo Bedoya tells the narrator that Margot's insistence that Santiago join her for breakfast "«Era una insistencia rara—me dijo Cristo Bedoya—. Tanto, que a veces he pensado que Margot ya sabía que lo iban a matar y quería esconderlo en tu casa.»" although the narrator counters with "En realidad mi hermana Margot era una de las pocas personas que todavía ignoraban que lo iban a matar" (24-25). Margot's insistence might have some sort of supernatural importance, but only if it had an effect on saving Santiago. However, on the contrary, it actually prevented Cristo from warning Santiago, as he assumes that Santiago must have gone to her house to eat breakfast.

Luis Enrique, the narrator's brother, also seems to have a mysterious premonition that is recognized in retrospect. When the Vicario twins tell him their plans to kill Santiago, he responds "Santiago Nasar está muerto" (79). Luis Enrique later insinuates that he does not even remember saying this, as he was simply too inebriated. Similarly, Hortensia Baute is the first person to cry for Santiago, even before he is actually killed when she sees the Vicario's knives. "Porque vi los cuchillos con la luz del poste y me pareció que iban chorreando sangre" (71). Another strange and mysterious occurrence, is the persistence of the smell of Santiago after his death, "Todo siguió oliendo a Santiago Nasar aquel día" (90). According to Raymond Williams, these symbolic events such as the persistence of smells in García Márquez's fiction "are called moral indicators" (Gabriel 136). Also, Santiago's murder is thought to have provoked a series of mysterious changes in some of the townspeople. Some after-effects of Santiago's murder include insanity (Hortensia Baute), strange eating habits (María Alejandrina Cervantes), insomnia (Pedro Vicario), runaway girlfriends sold into prostitution (Flora Miguel),

bladder spasms (Aura Villeros), heart attack (Don Rogelio de la Flor) and vegetarianism (Mayor Aponte). In any case, none of these symbolic or mysterious events nor any of the failed/ignored practices of divination augment belief or foretell the future.

In summary, although the narrator implements an external structure upon which to create belief using all of the facets of testimony elaborated by Cicero, the reader ends the novel less convinced by the narrator. The reader has only been presented with facades of evidence by unqualified authorities and with empty unfulfilled superstitions. In this way, as Jorge Olivares concurs, the chronicle is but a “densely populated map of misreadings...[and] misinterpretations” (485). However, not only does the narrator base his anti-rhetoric on the subversion of Cicero’s external proofs, but also on defects of the internal framework of *Crónica*. For example, as I referenced before, the narrator manipulates each of the five sections of the novel so that each section, except the fourth, ends in another retelling of the gruesome details of Santiago’s death. In this way, the novel focuses only on the most sordid aspects instead of presenting an unbiased account of the happenings. For Williams, this type of textual manipulation entails “the use of detailed particularity concerning irrelevant matters on one hand, and vagueness about points of real importance” (*Gabriel* 136), creating ambiguity as a result. Indeed, the arbitrary inclusion of largely insignificant events contributes to what the reader perceives to be a haphazard piling up of superfluity, although this is one way in which the narrator demonstrates the importance of the crime’s rituality (Alonso 157).

Finally, the indistinguishable mixture of the various temporal levels is also a central method of the narrator’s anti-rhetorical style. As Isabel Alvarez-Borland analyzes, oftentimes the narrator does not qualify if he is quoting from interviews in his present day

investigations; from an investigation happening in the years between the crime's occurrence and the present day; or from his own recollections the day of the actual murder; or any other combination of time frames (279). For Shaw, the rapid changes in the time structure between "widely differing points on the time scale" in the first chapter affects the way the reader perceives the rest of the novel, although afterwards the technique "becomes rather less complex" ("Chronicle" 95). Miguel Bello also references the anachronic construction through which the narrator employs both prolepsis and analepsis (80), once again seemingly putting the narrator in the rhetorical control of the novel. Similarly, as Alonso analyzes, the novel's structure, which he considers a "ritual repetition" of the crime contributes to its effect on the reader (156). For example, the horror of the final murder scene becomes an anticlimactic event because the reader has already been desensitized to Santiago's death by Amador's butchering of him in the autopsy before he is even murdered by the Vicarios. (Alonso 154). This effect is achieved precisely by manipulating the time structure.

Both through the external proofs and internal idiosyncrasies, the end result of the narrator's *rhetrickery* is an undermining of his own text as he writes it. By presenting himself as an invalid authority, the narrator rescinds his own power over the text, leaving the reader to undertake the task he began in his initial desire to re-write the events of Santiago's death—with the sole purpose of understanding Santiago's death better. The narrator's anti-rhetoric, thereby, empowers the reader. I have undertaken a detailed description of the way the narrator (ab)uses rhetoric to emphasize the fact that he actually writes in order that the reader doubt his account which allows the reader to participate and construct his or her own account. Booth evaluates Aristotle's distinctions of the

kinds of rhetoric. It becomes apparent that the narrator's rhetoric can be considered "*Forensic*" which "attempts to change what we see as truth about the past (attempts which may of course also affect the future)" (17). The narrator writes for this purpose. He recreates a flawed past in order to influence the way the reader perceives his or her own future. Although the reader may initially be lead astray by the narrator's anti-rhetoric, eventually the active reader will perceive his or her central role, which is metaphorically to rewrite the text. The reader is empowered by Santiago's death, the narrator's anti-rhetoric, and his or her act of narrating itself.

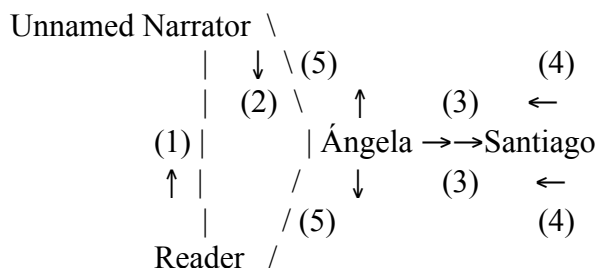
THE ROLE OF THE READER/THE POWER OF THE MIRROR

Both Donoso's and Garro's novels have important moments in which a central character contemplates him or herself in the mirror (Gloria vis-à-vis Julio, who is actually Gloria herself; and Gabrielle who sees Mariana, and henceforth herself in the mirror). These mirror moments help to connect the importance of the gaze, the relationship between the Self and the Other and the reader's own benefit bestowed upon him by the postmodern storyteller. The catalyst of Ángela's Vicario's own life, and the key to understanding the symbolic message, in García Márquez's novel, that of the renewed possibility to control one's own destiny is narrated near the end of the fourth section of the novel in an episode in which Ángela sees herself reflected in mirrors. Ángela tells the narrator of her trip to Riohacha with her mother for an eye exam, well after her fateful wedding. She and her mother stop at the *Hotel del Puerto*: "Pura Vicario pidió un vaso de agua en la cantina. Se lo estaba tomando, de espaldas a la hija, cuando está vio su propio pensamiento reflejado en los espejos repetidos de la sala. Ángela Vicario volvió la cabeza con el último aliento, y lo vio pasar a su lado sin verla, y lo vio salir del hotel"

(105). This crucial moment, in which Ángela sees both herself and the estranged Bayardo in the mirrors, provokes a very important chain-reaction of changes in Ángela's life. Her first reaction is to reject her mother's control. She then begins to eroticize her growing love for Bayardo proportionate to her growing hatred for her mother. Ángela describes that her heart is "hecho trizas" (105) about her own situation, which leads her to finally see her mother for who she is: "una pobre mujer consagrada al culto de sus defectos. «Mierda», se dijo" (105).

After this catalytic moment, Ángela rejects the control of her past and embraces her future, which as Willy Oscar Muñoz suggests, indicates a revolution of sexuality and equality (104). Ángela writes the first of nearly 2000 letters that she will send Bayardo over the next 17 years before he returns to her. As the narrator concludes, Ángela's conversion makes her become "dueña por primera vez de su destino... se volvió lúcida, imperiosa, maestra de su albedrío, y volvió a ser virgen solo para él, y no reconoció otra autoridad que la suya ni más servidumbre que la de su obsesión" (106), which Arnold Penuel considers a "rebirth" in the form of a "psychological awakening" (764). Ángela was forced to marry Bayardo without love, and once she liberates herself from her mother and society's imposing role, she begins to do only what she wants. In this way, it becomes apparent that starting with the death of Santiago, Ángela finds liberation from authority. Through the narrator, the reader sees Ángela as a recipient of liberation, which occurs because of Santiago's death. With Santiago's murder Ángela becomes whole again and can begin to control her own fragmented life. Santiago is not the central object of the narrator's gaze, but instead, the object of Ángela's gaze/liberation. Thus, the reader's gaze must be directed towards the narrator, who looks to Ángela, who

subsequently looks to Santiago to become complete. As Ángela finds her self-liberation she reflects this back to the narrator and to the reader. Ángela must serve the role of a living mirror, also reflecting the dead Santiago.



The reader finds his or her self-affirmation in becoming liberated from authority in a similar way as Ángela does. Santiago's death propels Ángela's liberation into movement. His death also provokes the narrator's writing of his anti-rhetorical text filled with undermined authorities, witnesses, documents, etc. Thus, when the active reader realizes the narrator's failed authority in the text he or she can take control of the very narrative authority that victimized him or her by thrusting him or her into a central role of the text. Indeed, in *Crónica* not only is Ángela liberated from *machista* authority, but the reader also is liberated of narrative authority. The observer narrator's power is limited and antiauthoritarian by which the reader's own role becomes an active and involved one, allowing the narration to open a space in which every reader/individual becomes the single authority of the text he or she simultaneously consumes and coauthors. The construction of a limited narrator achieves a similar effect to that which Barbara Freedman describes in *Staging the Gaze* concerning Shakespearian comedy. She concludes: "Shakespeare stages both the eye that sees and the gaze that sees that the eye doesn't see" (20). In terms of *Crónica*, the narrator is the seeing eye, yet the reader is

able to see that the narrator's eye has a limited scope. Thus, the reader becomes the other I/eye of García Márquez's novel.

The desire to narrate is another *leitmotiv* of the novel, however with some quite significant underpinnings. Each member of the town desires to share his or her role in the tragic events of the murder: Indeed, "narrative within the town and within the novel is seen as a means of nomination, i.e. of identifying oneself and attributing meaning to life and death and providing it with form" (Boling 80). Also, Ángela finds her voice in the tragedy of her disgraced wedding. Her letter writing begins a connection to the important task of creating discourse and forming her own authority. However, the problem with these first-person narratives is authority and communication, just as I have developed in the introduction. Narrative has lost credibility. The narrator has already prefigured this problem by citing Ángela with twelve direct quotes, making her the most quoted of all characters. As Williams affirms, "the narrator thus gives precedence, ironically, to the version of the story given by precisely the person investigated" (Williams Gabriel 137). Not to say that Ángela's power to narrate is unimportant. She denounces Santiago and gets him killed, she refuses to narrate or lie to Bayardo about her virginity, and she rejects her mother's authority. In this way, Crónica is a story of murder but also of independence which Ángela gains by "love and writing" (Bell 100). However, the most important texts of the novel that underscore the meaning of the novel are the extra-textual ones. Ángela's letters slowly liberate her and the text that the reader is writing—his or her personal version of Crónica, will allow him or her to find the same liberation that Ángela has found, adaptable to his or her personal situation, even if the reader's life resembles something of bad literature.

Olivares develops a penetration metaphor that also centralizes the importance of writing in the chronicle. Olivares describes the novel as the product of three penetrations: Santiago's penis, the Vicario's murder weapons and the narrator's pen (484). In this sequence Santiago penetrates Ángela (assuming his guilt), the Vicario twins penetrate Santiago, the narrator penetrates/probes the details of Santiago's murder. To add to Olivares' conclusions, Bayardo also penetrates Ángela, which is a sexual penetration that Ángela longs to relive. The narrator describes the contents of one particular letter to Bayardo: "Le hablé de las lacras que él había dejado en su cuerpo, de la sal de su lengua, de la trilla de fuego de su verga africana" (García Márquez 107). Through the killing of Santiago, Ángela is returned home, she proceeds to choose Bayardo by her own free will, thereby taking control of her own pen/penetration instrument. By writing, she is able to penetrate Bayardo, first reconciling with him and then achieving the literal penetration that she dreams of after getting a taste on her wedding night.

In short, Ángela's rejection of her mother's authority and acceptance of her own power to narrate/penetrate parallels the reader's rejection/denial of narrative authority and his or her ability also to become a central character and re-writer of the text. Indeed, Olivares provides a metaphorical reading of the text, which highlights the role of the reader in Crónica. Starting with Barthes' essay "The Death of the Author" Olivares asserts that the reader is born through Santiago's death (Santiago as the metaphorical author). Ángela is the text (the narrative) that refuses to cover up her lack of virginity with a new fiction, and through denouncing Santiago, she in fact kills him through her brothers vicariously (Vicario). By killing Santiago, Ángela (as text) becomes her own

author (authority) making Bayardo her reader. Although Bayardo refuses to read what she has written, she accomplishes that he penetrate her literally, thereby establishing and maintaining her authority. *Ángela* is now a text with no author, however by procuring Bayardo as a reader she gains the control of her own text/penetration (Olivares 488-92). Through Olivares' convincing metaphorical reading, we see that the power of masculine and narrative authority shifts; the penis is no longer the only tool of insertion, shifting the balance of power from the male to the female, and from the author to the text and the reader. Thus, the reader's renewed role can be perceived as the act of taking the author's pen and writing a more conclusive and succinct text.

The reader's active role has led critics to classify him in various distinct ways. For example, Montes-Huidobro postulates that the reader becomes partly responsible for what occurs in the chronicle. The readers are made "accomplices in the killing by finding ourselves within the pupil of the «narrative camera» that captures the scene" (120). Another specific example of the way in which the suspense and drama of the scenes augment the reader's complicity is when Clotilde Armenta shouts a warning to Santiago. Because of the reader's intimate relationship to the text, he or she participates in this moment of suspense (Montes-Huidobro 106). Indeed Montes-Huidobro concludes that this heightened participation in the text, leads us as readers to ask "if we could have done something to keep Santiago Nasar from dying" (Montes-Huidobro 108).

Ana María Hernández de López also affirms the reader's new role, as that of an accomplice or coauthor alongside the narrator:

Sugiriendo u obligando al lector a que piense que hay algo velado, algo que necesita aclaración y que él va a dejar en el misterio para que el lector

tenga la oportunidad de ejercer su capacidad de coautor de la obra. Es decir, el autor no solo abre la puerta al lector, sino que deja inconclusa la novela con el fin de que éste la acabe (215).⁸⁷

If, as Hernández de López claims, the reader and narrator are coauthors, or co-detectives I shall assert that their relationship can be considered as similar to that of Sherlock Holmes and Watson. In Arthur Conan Doyle's famous detective stories, Watson, who is helpful and smart yet unable to truly solve crimes, narrates the stories and assists Holmes, who has the real insight to unravel the mystery. Following this same pattern, the narrator, sharing Watson's role as writer, in *Crónica* does the legwork for the reader, Holmes, the true detective. The twist of the postmodern element is that each reader/Holmes may come to a different conclusion about the real solution of the crime. As Peter Brooks elaborates, in the typical solvable Holmes/Watson mysteries: "The narrative chain, with each event connected to the next by reasoned causal links, marks the victory of reason over chaos, of society over the aberrancy of crime..." (49). However, in García Márquez's novel, a postmodern detective fiction, the cause and effect relationship is upset and the crime goes unsolved; thus, chaos and uncertainty reigns. Similarly, Stella Clark posits that the chronicle should be considered postmodern because of the narrator's deception of the reader regarding his own reliability (23-24). In various ways, it can be concluded that, García Márquez has postmodern-ized the traditional detective pair, Watson and Holmes. Indeed, Ian Pears' conclusions concerning Watson and Holmes remain true for the postmodern detective (the reader) and his sidekick (the narrator):

⁸⁷ Hernández de López makes a case for the way in which the epigraph gives the reader a clue to his active role in solving Santiago's mystery. In her analysis, Gil Vicente's *Comédia de Rubena*, in which a priest gets a girl pregnant and leaves her, indicates for Hernández de López that the most likely perpetrator of the crime is Padre Carmen Amador.

Dr. Watson, in contrast, is by far a more fleshed-out character; we are given more hard facts about his life than about the hero of the stories, and the division which gives most of the action to one figure, and most of the character development to the other, is a strange literary device which proves remarkably effective in practice. Had the stories depended on Holmes alone, they would perhaps have been a little too dry; had Conan Doyle tried to fill out Holmes character, he would have diminished the mystery: Holmes is fascinating because nobody knows him well. Instead, Conan Doyle adopted the risky technique of all but forcing the reader to identify with the second string, the man constantly shown up by his friend's brilliance, whose instincts and conclusions are an infallible guide only to what did not happen. (ix-x)

In Crónica, García Márquez follows this pattern to an even more extreme point. In Conan Doyle's novels, Holmes is mysterious, yet in Crónica, Holmes is completely static and undefined, he is every active reader. In this way, the reader no longer needs to identify with the sidekick but rather becomes the brilliant hero (Holmes), taking only what is useful and necessary from the narrator (Watson), who shows himself to be oftentimes misled. In the same way, García Márquez's narrator (Watson) may deduce that Santiago could not have been the perpetrator, but he presents the reader (Holmes) with a great deal of evidence in contradiction to his own conclusion. That is not to say that Santiago is the real perpetrator, although he may have been, for as postmodern detective fiction goes, it

is the responsibility of every reader/Holmes to make his or her own conclusion as there are no absolutes, no correct answers.⁸⁸

In Crónica then, the reader is more than just the accomplice, but becomes a central character and a detective, or as Rene Campos concludes, a "testigo/ investigador vicario" (223). Campos also indicates a collective sense of guilt implied by Santiago's last words "Que me mataron, niña Wene" (135). Campos questions "el colectivo impersonal, ¿se está refiriendo a los hermanos Vicario?, ¿al pueblo?, ¿al Narrador?, ¿o a nosotros mismos? (Campos 237). In this way, the reader is perceived to be an active participant in the events of Santiago's death. Similarly, for Aleida Anselma Rodríguez the narrator is a "narrador panóptico." Rodríguez compares the narrator's viewpoint in Crónica to the prison guard of the panoptic tower discussed by Foucault.⁸⁹ But, as she identifies, the panoptic vision of the narrator also applies to the reader: "Yo, tú, él, García Márquez, cualquiera que abra las páginas de la novela y ocupe el lugar de guardián. El narrador panóptico es sinónimo de lector panóptico" (265).

Much in the same way that Ángela's heart is "hecho trizas" (105), and based on the fact that she works to put the fragmented pieces back together, the narrator admits that he perceives his role as to "recomponer con tantas astillas dispersas el espejo roto de

⁸⁸ Hubert Pöppel concurs with the opinion that there is no one single solution to the novel's mystery. He discusses "Keeping a Crime Unsolved" by Elena Rahona and Stephanie Sieburth who assert that Ángela has been a victim of her own father's incest. Pöppel concludes that although their argument is convincing "Lo que no les concedo a ellas es la exclusividad que reclaman" Hubert Pöppel, "Elementos del género policíaco en la obra de Gabriel García Márquez," Estudios de Literatura Colombiana 4 (1999): 37.

⁸⁹ Rodríguez references Foucault's Vigilar y castigar, nacimiento de la prisión as well as Benjamin Bentham's writings of the prison style of the 18th century.

la memoria” (10-11)⁹⁰, a task he completes so that the reader also may begin his task simultaneously as “the piecing together of a jigsaw puzzle” (Penuel 753). In other words, just as the narrator pieces together other’s memories in order to reconstruct his own memory, the reader must reconstruct the fragmented pieces of the novel, the witness’s testimonies and the other information that he or she is presented about the text. These dual tasks of representation bring the reader to question reality and fiction. As Alvarez Borland indicates:

Mirrors have always been crucial to self-conscious texts as novelistic devices enhancing the problematic relationship between reality and its literary representation. In Crónica, the narrator is not only our mediator between the facts and his crónica, but he also seems to mirror a multiplicity of fictional roles going beyond his explicit task of reporting the facts” (Alvarez-Borland 283).

Just as narrative authority is undermined, literary representation is questioned, so much so that the reader is left to his or her own decisive role in the fiction—the role of observer-detective-accomplice. As the reader writes his own text, liberated from the narrator’s authority, he gains experience in the re-piecing together of fragments that will enable him to rework his fragmented self.

As I have indicated, González Echevarría observes that the chronicle and the judge’s summary mirror one another. The narrator’s version is another simulacrum of the same. He concludes, “the story and the text that contains it duplicate each other on the

⁹⁰ Nearly all articles mention this quote to establish the piecemeal nature of the novel. Yet, in the context of the narrator’s anti-rhetoric and the role of the reader in reestablishing his own sense of narrative authority, we see that the task of reconstruction applies to the reader’s role as well.

sheen of the water that floods the Palace of Justice, turning its floor into a mirror, a reversed and illusory dome; an inverted law overarching yet undermining the constitution of the text” (179). At the same time, the reader must use the same simulacra of mirrors in which to constitute a new text explaining the unresolved elements of García Márquez’s text. Méndez Ramírez concurs: “La novela de García Márquez es un espejo roto de la memoria que proyecta distintas realidades fragmentadas, y no sólo una cómoda y ordenada visión del mundo. Depende del lector, por lo tanto, reconstruir ese espejo roto” (940). Similarly, as Olivares indicates, the reader must “enter into an investigative process of textual reconstruction analogous to the one carried out by the diegetic chronicler” (484). However, as I have concluded, the reader must reject and reevaluate the narrator’s conclusions first. He must become empowered and liberated to write his own simulacra of the events, even as his version will necessarily suffer the same problems of representation.

Derrida also discusses the problems of representation between the represented and the representer:

Representation mingles with what it represents, to the point where one speaks as one writes, one thinks as if the represented were nothing more than the shadow or reflection of the representer. A dangerous promiscuity and a nefarious complicity between the reflection and the reflected which lets itself be seduced narcissistically. There are things like reflecting pools, and images, an infinite reference from one to the other, but no longer a source, a spring” (36).

In considering this citation in regards to Crónica, we can see that both the narrator and the reader who takes on the role of rewriting the text begins to see his or her represented Other as a narcissistic representation of the Self. Therefore, it is essential that the narrator disprove his own text with anti-rhetoric in order to allow the reader to write and to represent the Other, in order that he or she may see a representation of the Self, a narcissistic self-affirmation. Because of his new role in the novel, the narrator engages in a narcissistic search from himself in the pieces of the fragmented mirror. This new narcissism of postmodernism allows the postmodern storyteller to lead the fragmented reader to a reflection of him or herself through the observation of the other

The reader's own rewritten text will mirror the narrator's text. Indeed, as Detwiler concludes, the narrator himself "participates in a narcissistic identity-fest throughout his story" (39). The narrator also writes for narcissistic reinforcement, to write the Self by exploring the Other. As Christopher Lasch concludes, the confessional mode achieves this introspective purpose. The mode "attempts, precisely through self-disclosure, to achieve a critical distance from the self and to gain insight into the historical forces, reproduced in psychological form, that have made the very concept of selfhood increasingly problematic" (17). Indeed, the narrator struggles to see himself. Through writing the chronicle, he desperately searches to reconstruct the mirror of the past in which he can see himself reflected completely and re-piece together his fragmented self. The narrator expresses the reader's role to him. He too must reconstruct the shattered mirror of the pieces of the novel in which to see his own reflection.

Thus, Watson takes Holmes on a discovery of faulty external proofs in order to provide a mirror image or simulacrum by means of which the reader can reconstruct the

events of Santiago's death. The narrator even admits to his faulty memory of the events, "Yo conservaba un recuerdo muy confuso de la fiesta antes de que hubiera decidido rescatarla a pedazos de la memoria ajena" (51), which serves to solidify the reader's forced role of reconstructing a new text. Indeed, in the beginning of the chronicle the narrator dramatizes his own and the reader's own role as an observer through other's eyes. He writes of his own observation through Santiago's mother's eyes: "Lo vio desde la misma hamaca y en la misma posición en que la encontré postrada por las últimas luces de la vejez, cuando volví a este pueblo olvidado..." (10). A few paragraphs later, the narrator adds another observation through Santiago's mother's eyes: "Yo lo vi en su memoria. Había cumplido 21 años la última semana de enero, y era esbelto y pálido, y tenía los párpados árabes y los cabellos rizados de su padre" (11). Just as the narrator puts himself into the perspective of the Other to see what he or she sees, the reader must also see the events of the novel through the narrator's eyes. His or her re-writing is based on the "astillas" and "trizos" provided by him. Indeed, in the novel, the narrator also underscores his own limitations, when he thinks of Bayardo's family's behavior ("que un desconsuelo como ese sólo podía fingirse para ocultar otras vergüenzas mayores" (97)), and refers to secrets in the novel (Bell 93).

Surely, as the problem of representation surfaces, the act of reconstruction is a self-motivated reconstruction of the fragmentation implicit to the individual living in contemporary society. In becoming the central detective the reader is offered a solution for his narcissistic dissolution, and with each piece of the narrative that he puts back together he or she is also reconstituting him or herself. The reader's central role and gaze of Ángela/Santiago is the novel's solution to his narcissistic deficiency.

The relationship of mirroring, representation, fragmentation, simulacra and authority is also played out in the middle of the text (in the third section). This moment is an axis on which the fragments of the other sections of the text both are joined together but also reflect one another. At first, the reader may see this passage as superfluous, but upon closer evaluation it can be considered an intercalated story that solidifies the important elements of the rest of the chronicle. As Bell has concluded, the chronicle is such that no action or detail can be considered arbitrary (104). The narrator writes:

Santiago Nasar tenía un talento casi mágico para los disfraces, y su diversión predilecta era trastocar la identidad de las mulatas. Saqueaba los roperos de unas para disfrazar a las otras, de modo que todas terminaban por sentirse distintas de sí mismas e iguales a las que no eran. En cierta ocasión una de ellas, se vio repetida en otra con tal acierto que sufrió una crisis de llanto. «Sentí que me había salido del espejo», dijo. Pero aquella noche, María Alejandrina Cervantes no permitió que Santiago Nasar se complaciera por última vez en sus artificios de transformista, y los hizo con pretextos tan frívolos que el mal sabor de ese recuerdo le cambió la vida. (75)

The reader, has observed, throughout the novel, the overturning of narrative and masculine authority. This central event emphasizes the same overturning of authority. Santiago's power to change/shape/write the identities of the prostitutes is taken from him by Cervantes who refuses to allow his game of disguises to continue on the eve of his death. His authority then is emasculated, which symbolizes and prefigures his murder. In the writing process (i.e. by making new identities for the prostitutes) Santiago

illustrates two important things. First, he shows that fiction requires reconstruction by using the pieces (costumes) supplied. He also illustrates the power of representation, which is dramatized by the prostitute's horror when she sees herself so similarly reflected in another. The prostitute is aghast at seeing her fragmented reflection as she lives without a "mirror" in which to see herself reflected. As King concludes of Santiago's behavior in the whorehouse, his act solidifies the idea of "a totally dominating culture that can/will differentiate only on the orderly basis of class, gender, and type, not on the unpredictable basis of individual subjectivity" (321). In his re-writing of the prostitutes, Santiago makes them more fragmented, more dislocated and less individual. This passage also reiterates the novel's *leitmotiv* of the importance of narration, by the fact that Santiago's authority is taken away, resulting in and reflecting his death.

CONCLUSION

The novel comes to constitute a "complex patchwork" which involves combining real-life details from García Márquez's life (not just of the murder but images, dress, names, identities etc.) within the novel's fiction (Hart 21). García Márquez's autobiography, Vivir para contarla confesses to the reader his perception of the importance of weaving real life into his fiction.⁹¹ Although I have avoided giving personal anecdotes elsewhere in this study, in order to pursue this point most accurately, I would like to briefly mention my participation in a creative writer's seminar in June of

⁹¹ Hart gives examples such as Santiago's dress, which resembles García Márquez's father's dress or the presence of María Alejandrina Cervantes a real brothel owner among other crossovers between fiction and reality that are revealed in light of García Márquez's autobiography published in 2002.

2006 at the Fundación Mempo Giardinelli in El Chaco, Argentina.⁹² One question that was asked continuously of the various writers by the seminar participants related to the conceptualization of characters and events in their novels and short stories. In one particularly memorable moment Giardinelli was asked about his conceptualization of the twins in “La triste historia de las gemelas Popoff” a short story included in Estación Coghlan y otros cuentos. His answer, went something like this, “cuando yo era niño había unas gemelas que...” His answer and other similar ones brought alive the conflict between Roland Barthes’ “Death of the Author” and William Gass’ article of the same name, considering the role of the author. After this moment in the seminar, I recall several instances in which other participating writers made similar comments concerning real experiences that they later changed and molded into anecdotes or characters in their fiction.⁹³ This conflict, between the importance and role of the author and his work of art as a separate entity became the most impressive of the entire conference, underscoring that the writer’s task is to take real-life and weave and embellish and entangle threads of fiction into its essence. I should clarify that by no means, in order to write about twins, must the author know twins. Indeed, brothers or friends can be carved and molded into twins in a fictional account. For an example of this, one need look no further than García Márquez’s Vicario twins who were brothers in the real life events of Sucre, but worked better as twins in his fiction. In any case, I am convinced that my experience in Argentina brought alive this connection between real-life and fiction that becomes so

⁹² The writers in attendance at the 2006 June seminar in Resistencia included Alicia Borinsky, Mempo Giardinelli, Noé Jitrik, Tununa Mercado, Ana Maria Shúa and Perla Suez.

⁹³ The same can be said for the task of the critic. This very study began as a seed of real life that very day at the conference. (based on fiction—Giardinelli’s short story; based on reality—Giardinelli’s real life experience with the twins). Indeed, life is full of novels and novels are full of life.

important to Crónica. While I do not mention the role of the author in El jardín or Testimonios, I do so with Crónica for one important reason, which is that mixing of the author into the character narrator. López de Martínez has suggested that García Márquez gives the novel an “ilusión de realismo” (242) through the figure of the narrator that seems to represent himself. Similarly, as Jacques Joret concludes, with Santiago’s murder: “Se acabó para siempre jamás el tiempo de Santiago Nasar-Gabriel García Márquez. Su muerte... señala el nacimiento de una vida nueva: la de García Márquez como ser ficticio” (78). García Márquez is quoted as saying the following about Crónica:

It was always clear to me that the book had to end with a meticulously detailed description of the crime. The answer was to introduce a narrator who could move freely through the novel’s temporal structure: I wrote in the first person, for the first time. So what happened was that after thirty years I discovered something we novelists tend to forget—the best literary formula is always the truth” (qtd. in Bandyopadhyay 92-93).

Therefore, if the best literary formula is to include real life and truth in fiction, this allows for fiction to enter real life and provoke changes. Alvarez-Borland also draws attention to the narrator’s fixation on the relationship between fiction and non-fiction. The narrator focuses on the judge’s love for literature; the judge’s thought that Santiago’s murder has more coincidences than should be conceivable; and Ángela’s new life. As Alvarez-Borland posits, “The confounding of life and art clearly indicates a commentary on the author’s craft, and makes the reader aware of the text’s conscious fictionality” (281). At the same time, the mixing of fiction with reality, that I saw too in the writer’s conference, demonstrates that literature is not separate from life.

In conclusion, the overturning of power: narrative, masculine or otherwise is central to García Márquez's conscious construction of fiction, yet relates intrinsically with the challenges of real life. It follows that the reader's life has been shaped by similar subjugations to authority as Ángela's life has—necessitating a liberation. Ángela offers hope in that she learns to control her own destiny, yet she also offers failure in writing an unread text, although this is the paradox of incommunicability of postmodernism. Ángela teaches us that writing (narrating, storytelling, discourse, etc.) is about the impact that it can have on the individual. Each reader can use the lessons learned from Ángela's successes and failures, and from Santiago's death, filtered through the eyes of the narrator to reap his or her own narcissistic benefit of the observation of the Other. As the narrator's own self-affirmation is found in his text, he simultaneously does not convince the reader with his *rhetrickery*. This necessitates that the reader step in and fix the narrator's text, centralizing his or her own role. As the author weaves real life into his fiction, the power of the narrated experience on an individual level can provoke real changes in the reader's life. In the last text that I analyze, Mario Vargas Llosa's El hablador, the unnamed narrator undergoes similar trials as he writes of the protagonist, yet he achieves the same results and benefits as the other postmodern storytellers included in this study.

Chapter 4: Stories of the Other/ Reflections of the Self: Narcissistic

Validation in Mario Vargas Llosa's El hablador

“Narration is not an inferior way of knowing”

—Michael Palencia-Roth

“The Story-teller is the figure in which the righteous man encounters himself”

—Walter Benjamin

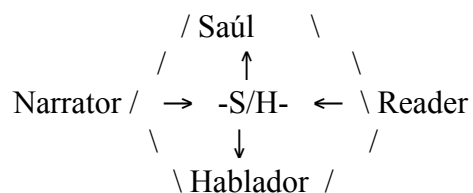
In Mario Vargas Llosa's El hablador (1987), the observer narrator tells the story of two different figures who are eventually revealed to be the same individual. On the one hand, the narrator writes about Saúl Zuratas, a university friend, who has been nicknamed Mascarita as a result of a large purple birthmark disfiguring the right side of his face. Not only is Zuratas marginalized in Lima for his physical appearance but also because he is Jewish in a predominately Catholic society. On the other hand, the narrator also writes about the figure of the *hablador*, an important member of the Machiguenga Indian tribe of the Peruvian Amazon, who serves as the only source of communication among a scattered and sparse tribe:

El nombre los definía. Hablaban. Sus bocas eran los vínculos aglutinantes de esa sociedad a la que la lucha por la supervivencia había obligado a resquebrarse y desperdigarse a los cuatro vientos. Gracias a los habladores, los padres sabían de los hijos, los hermanos de las hermanas, y gracias a ellos se enteraban de las muertes, nacimientos y demás sucesos de la tribu. (El hablador 90-91)

The narrator is fascinated with the *hablador*, whose life essence is to tell stories, as he too is a storyteller, a novelist. Through the link of storytelling, the narrator and *hablador*'s roles are paralleled.

The unfolding of the novel begins in Florence as the narrator stumbles upon a photo exhibition displaying photos of the Amazon. Amongst the photos the narrator discovers one particular shot which catches his attention, that of a *hablador* narrating to a circle of listeners. This photograph is particularly noteworthy for the narrator, whose nearly thirty year obsession with the Machiguenga storyteller, has been as source of personal turmoil and a representation of his unfulfilled artistic interests; he has always wanted to write a story about the *hablador*. After this short introductory chapter, in which the narrator discovers the picture in Florence, the reader of El hablador accompanies the narrator to various other times and spaces, returning to present day Florence at the end of the novel in chapter eight. Through the frame of chapters one and eight, the novel completes a circular time-space continuum. The remaining chapters alternate between narrators, much in the same way as La tía Julia y el escribidor and Historia de Mayta are written. In El hablador, in chapters three, five and seven, the narrator adopts the voice of the storyteller as if he were narrating to a Machiguenga audience. Chapters two, four and six are narrated in a more traditional way, in the narrator's own voice. Each of the narrator's chapters has a different vantage point and each is set in a number of different locations. Chapter two gives background information concerning the narrator's relationship with Saúl Zuratas as they are University students at San Marcos from 1953-1956. Chapter four tells of the narrator's first trip to the jungle in 1958; his discovery of the *hablador* through a conversation with a missionary couple; a

conversation with Saúl in August of 1958 before the narrator leaves for Madrid; as well as a brief account of his academic investigation of the *hablador* figure while in Madrid and Paris. The last of the narrator's long alternating chapters, six, recounts the narrator's participation, for a period of six months, in a television program entitled "La Torre de Babel" in 1981, as well as a second trip to the Amazon, some twenty-three years later as part of this same show.⁹⁴ It is also in chapter six that the narrator hears of a particular *hablador* from the same missionary couple he had met twenty-three years earlier, the Schneil's. The *hablador* that the Schneils mentions fits the description of his friend Mascarita. At this point in the novel, the end of chapter six, the figure of Saúl merges with the figure of the *hablador*. The narrator who once shared his gaze between two marginalized figures, both Saúl and the *hablador*, finally unites the fragments of the novel into a whole, bringing together both the odd and even chapters. Ultimately, this unification becomes more apparent in the last storyteller chapter, seven, throughout which the narrator adapts the Machiguenga stories to add anecdotes of Saúl's life and his perspective, such as his admiration for Kafka's Metamorphosis and references to Judaism. In a similar way as the other novels of this study, the narrator's relationship with the observed and the reader can be graphed:



⁹⁴ The narrator's attendance of Lima's San Marcos, the 1958 scholarship to study in Madrid, the television program Torre de Babel among many other elements link the fictional narrator to real-life Vargas Llosa.

The narrator's gaze of Saúl and the *Hablador* is eventually united in the novel, leading the reader to use this dual image as an Other entity separate from the narrator Self in order to validate the reader Self.

In observing the progression and vacillating of the chapters, the reader realizes that the sense of time sets up a significant difference between the *hablador's* chapters and the narrator's chapters.⁹⁵ The reader perceives that the storyteller's tales are timeless and parabolic, yet progressively more revealing of the fact that the storyteller is Saúl based on what the reader learns about him from the narrator. In contrast, the narrator's chapters are distinctly situational, with clear divisions of time. This contrast is emphasized by the fact that each of the narrator's chapters covers a wide range in the time-space continuum, oftentimes intermixing and juxtaposing different frames. For example, in chapter four, the narrator writes about his conversation with a Dominican Missionary in Madrid but links the past (1958 Madrid) to the present (1985 Florence) by concluding: "Quedé encantado con su informaciones sobre la cosmogonía de la tribu, riquísima en simetrías y—lo descubro ahora, en Firenze, leyendo por primera vez la Commedia en italiano—con reverberaciones dantescas" (El hablador 103). This technique draws attention to the fact that the storyteller's chapters occur in an immediate present while the narrator's chapters are more transparently constructed. Although the general mapping of time frames between chapters helps the reader piece together the parts of the novel, the reader must be constantly aware of the narrator's presence throughout the whole text. Although he seems to disappear from the *hablador's* chapters he has the distinct role of manipulating each chapter, in order to construct difference.

⁹⁵ While all of the chapters belong to the narrator, I will use these denominations throughout this chapter to indicate the supposed perspective of the chapter.

In my analysis of El hablador I begin by investigating the way in which Vargas Llosa constructs his novel based on a binary system. He perceives that establishing roles of Self/Other is the only feasible way for him, the Europeanized narrator, to be able to write the story of Saúl and the *hablador*. Next, I discuss the way in which El hablador undermines traditional anthropological absolutes, and the study of ethnography as a whole. In the following section, on “authenticating the self” I demonstrate how the narrator’s focus on the Other, both Saúl and the Machiguenga serves as a way in which the narrator and the reader can affirm him or herself also. I then discuss the role of the postmodern storyteller in overturning the binary system on which the novel is based, which allows for the increased communication with the reader. In the subsequent sections, I look at the more technical aspects of the way in which the narrator writes, including how his chapters can be differentiated from the *hablador* chapters, as well as the narrator’s use of factual sources. I also discuss the implications of the narrator’s use and inversion of Biblical concepts and Christianity in the novel. Finally, I show that both the reader and narrator are able to re-authenticate the sense of Self through the Other.

DICHOTOMIES OF DIFFERENCE

Indeed, the narrator both affirms and undermines his narrative authority when he recognizes his own subjectivity. For example, in the last few pages of the novel, as the figures of the Machiguenga *hablador* and Saúl Zuratas merge into one being inscribed by the narrator, it is the visual image of Malfatti’s photograph that enables the narrator to begin his tale. He confesses, with no degree of certainty, “He decidido que el hablador de la fotografia de Malfatti sea él. Pues, objetivamente, no tengo manera de saberlo” (E

hablador 230). As the narrator acknowledges, Malfatti's photograph is merely a tentative and shadowed simulacrum of Mascarita: "Cierto que la figura de pie denota en la cara una sombra más intensa—en el lado derecho—donde él tenía el lunar—, que podría ser clave para identificarlo. Pero, a esa distancia, la impresión puede ser engañosa, tratarse de la mera sombra del sol" (El hablador 230). As the narrator puts his own interpretation of the visual representation into question, he simultaneously brings the reader to consider the simulated nature of his version of the *hablador's* discourse in chapters 3, 5 and 7. The narrator readily recognizes, with his own observation of the photograph, that he has two handicaps to his position as onlooker that parallel his difficulties in representing the *hablador* through writing. These handicaps include the distance and the shadowy marginal angle from which he, as an outsider, must view the Machiguenga *hablador*.

These very handicaps dramatized by the narrator's position in relationship to the subject in the photo explains the narrator's struggle and failure to write, at first, a story about the *hablador*: "Me puse a trabajar con mucho entusiasmo. Pero los resultados fueron pobrísimos. ¿Cómo se podría escribir una historia sobre los habladores sin tener un conocimiento siquiera somero de sus creencias, mitos, usos, historia?" (El hablador 102). It is not until the narrator visualizes Saúl, his own friend as the storyteller, that he finally begins to conceive an idea of the *hablador*. Saúl, who shares some traits with the narrator, is a less different Other than the Machiguenga. When the narrator realizes the accessibility of the Machiguenga Other through Saúl he transposes his marginalized friend onto the figure of the *hablador*. Thus, Mascarita comes to represent, for the narrator, an attainable difference, a fathomable figure, whom the narrator is able to

describe, although in a limited way, in writing. Through the narrator's struggle to represent the Other, Vargas Llosa dramatizes the dilemma of the ethnographer or anthropologist who must always begin from his own privileged position in order to observe and record information about the people and cultures that he or she hopes to portray. The same can be said for the novelist who must enter their characters in order to write them. However, as we see through the narrator of El hablador, neither the anthropologist nor the writer can ever really escape the Self in order to attain a sense of the Other.

As an end result, the narrator's portrayal of the Other functions to reinforce his sense of Self through these observable differences. As this joint concept of Self and Other necessitates a perceivable dichotomy, the narrator immediately launches into a comparison between himself and Saúl based on a series of differences. The narrator first establishes differences between himself and Saúl as students at San Marcos using this same system of dichotomies to compare himself as a writer and the *hablador* (Saúl) as an oral storyteller. These two relationships of Self/Other are the foundation upon which the novel becomes a carefully balanced system of dichotomies, with which the narrator comes to know who he is—by establishing who he is not. His own narcissistic self-affirmation comes as a result of his observation of Saúl/the figure of the *hablador*. The following table shows some of the most significant differences elaborated by the narrator:

The narrator and Saúl as students at San Marcos:

	The narrator	Saúl
The narrator draws attention to Saúl's physical appearance while never mentioning his own. The narrator does generalize other's appearances as normal in comparison to Saúl and includes a quote from Saúl calling him normal. ⁹⁶	<p>"... un horror pintoresco, una excepcionalidad que los otros compadecían o escarnecían, pero sin concederle el respeto y la dignidad que sólo merecían quienes se ajustaban en su físico costumbres y creencias a la «normalidad»" (<u>El hablador</u> 30).</p> <p>"De repente, ser medio judío y medio monstruo me ha hecho más sensible que un hombre tan espantosamente normal como tú a la suerte de los selváticos" (<u>El hablador</u> 30).</p>	<p>"Saúl Zuratas tenía un lunar morado oscuro, vino vinagre, que le cubría todo el lado derecho de la cara y unos pelos rojos y despeinados como las cerdas de un escobillón... Era el muchacho más feo del mundo" (<u>El hablador</u> 11).</p>
The narrator's and Saúl's personalities are contrasted. Saúl is likened to a saint and archangel, although the narrator makes a point to link holiness to insanity. He also includes a letter from Saúl drawing attention to his own aggressiveness when compared to Saúl.	<p>"El incidente, al entrar al billar, no lo provocó él, sino yo, que nada tengo de arcángel" (<u>El hablador</u> 16).</p> <p>"A ver so ese hueso mágico te calma los ímpetus y dejas de ir puñeteando a los pobres borrachitos... [No] se deja ganar por la rabia..." (<u>El hablador</u> 17)</p>	<p>"simpático y buenísimo... un arcángel" (<u>El hablador</u> 11).</p> <p>"Ese género de decisión, la de los santos y los locos, no se publicita... Me imagino que en el curso de este proceso—la forja del proyecto y su mutación en acto—el santo, iluminado o loco, se va aislando..." (<u>El hablador</u> 36)</p> <p>"Mascarita no se enojaba conmigo, porque él no se enojaba nunca por nada y con nadie..." (<u>El hablador</u> 24)</p>
The narrator emphasizes the religious differences between being a Catholic, which requires a minimal commitment versus	<p>"Nosotros éramos unos suertudos siendo católicos. La religión católica era un pan con mantequilla de simple, una misita de media hora cada domingo y unas comuniones cada primer viernes del mes que se pasaban al vuelo" (<u>El</u></p>	<p>"Él en cambio, tenía que zambullirse los sábados en la sinagoga, horas y horas, aguantando los bostezos y fingiendo interesarse por los sermones del rabino—que no entendía ni jota—para no decepcionar a su padre... Si</p>

⁹⁶ Indeed, as Elisa Calabrese analyzes, "El escritor nada cuenta sobre sí que pueda importarnos, excepto lo que genera el relato de su propia escritura" Elisa Calabrese, "El hablador de Vargas Llosa: O, La imposibilidad de la utopía," Discurso: Revista de Estudios Iberoamericanos 10.2 (1993): 54.

<p>being a dedicated Jew.</p>	<p><u>hablador</u> 12).</p>	<p>Mascarita le hubiera dicho que hacía tiempo había dejado de creer en Dios y que, en resumidas cuentas, eso de pertenecer al pueblo elegido a él le importaba un comino, al pobre Don Salomón le hubiera dado un patatús...” (El <u>hablador</u> 12)</p>
<p>Saúl also undergoes a conversion. The narrator uses his perspective and knowledge of Catholicism to attempt to understand Saúl’s mystical conversion from an intellectual standpoint while Saúl actually feels and undergoes the conversion.</p>	<p>“Es la única experiencia concreta que me ha tocado observar de cerca...eso que los religiosos del colegio donde estudié querían decirnos en las clases de catecismo con expresiones como «recibir la gracia», «ser tocado por la gracia», «caer en las celadas de la gracia» (El <u>hablador</u> 22)</p>	<p>“Puedo decir que Saúl experimentó una conversión. En un sentido cultural y acaso también religioso” (El <u>hablador</u> 21-22). “Aquella conversión había ido fermentando en su interior hasta adquirir las características de un raptó místico, tal vez de una búsqueda de martirologio” (El <u>hablador</u> 32)</p>
<p>The narrator’s academic interests are erudite and rational while Saúl’s interests are affective and emotive (implicitly irrational in the narrator’s opinion).</p>	<p>“Hablaban de aquellos indios, de sus usos y sus mitos, de su paisaje y sus dioses, con el respeto admirativo con que yo me refería a Sarte, Malraux y Faulkner...” (El <u>hablador</u> 18).</p>	<p>“Su interés... era más que «etnológico». No era un interés profesional, técnico, sino mucho más íntimo aunque no fácil de precisar. Algo más emotivo que racional seguramente, acto de amor antes que curiosidad intelectual” (El <u>hablador</u> 19).</p>
<p>Saúl and the narrator also differ in their political ideals.</p>	<p>“Cuando hablábamos de política, me daba cuenta que él se forzaba a hacerlo para darme gusto, pues yo, en esa época, tenía entusiasmos revolucionarios y me había dado por leer a Marx y hablar de las relaciones sociales de producción” (El <u>hablador</u> 23).</p>	<p>“¿Por qué le importaba a él tanto? No por razones políticas, en todo caso. A Mascarita la política le resultaba la cosa menos interesante del mundo” (El <u>hablador</u> 22-23).</p>
<p>The narrator indicates his opinion that Peru would</p>	<p>“No teníamos alternativa. Si el precio del desarrollo y la industrialización para los</p>	<p>“Debemos respetarlos. Ser así los ha ayudado a vivir cientos de años, en armonía</p>

<p>benefit from progress and modernization. The narrator supports acculturation. Saúl, on the other hand supports the idea of preservation.</p>	<p>dieciséis millones de peruanos, era que esos pocos millares de calatos tuvieran que cortarse el pelo, lavarse los tatuajes y volverse mestizos—o, para usar la más odiada palabra del etnólogo: aculturarse—, pues, que remedio” (<u>El hablador</u> 24).</p>	<p>con sus bosques. Aunque no entendamos sus creencias y algunas de sus costumbres nos duelan, no tenemos derecho a acabar con ellos... ¿Nos dan derecho nuestros autos, cañones, aviones y Coca-Colas a liquidarlos porque ellos no tienen nada de eso?... Que se conviertan en zombies, en las caricaturas de hombres que son los indígenas semi aculturados de las calles de Lima” (<u>El hablador</u> 28).</p>
<p>Man’s relationship to nature is contrasted by Saúl’s defense of safeguarding the Amazon, while the narrator indicates a wasteful consumer attitude of nature.</p>	<p>“Todo lo contrario de lo que estábamos haciendo los civilizados, que malgastábamos esos elementos sin los cuales terminaríamos marchitándonos como las flores privadas de agua” (<u>El hablador</u> 29).</p>	<p>“Habían sobrevivido porque sus usos y costumbres se habían plegado dócilmente a los ritmos y exigencias del mundo natural, sin violentarlo ni trastocarlo profundamente, apenas lo indispensable para no ser destruidas por él” (<u>El hablador</u> 29)</p>
<p>The narrator believes in peaceful coexistence between the city dwellers and the Amazonian Indians, while Saúl thinks it impossible.</p>	<p>“las tribus amazónicas podrían simultáneamente, modernizarse y conservar lo esencial de su tradición y sus costumbres dentro de ese mosaico de culturas que constituiría la futura civilización peruana” (<u>El hablador</u> 76).</p>	<p>“conversando... sobre la condición del débil y del pobre...” (<u>El hablador</u> 75) “la cultura más débil” (<u>El hablador</u> 75) “aquella coexistencia entre el Perú moderno y el Perú primitivo que Mascarita creía imposible e indeseable”</p>
<p>The narrator looks outward towards Europe while Mascarita looks inward to the Peruvian indigenous.</p>	<p>“Vine a Firenze para olvidarme por un tiempo del Perú y de los peruanos y he aquí que el malhadado país me salió al encuentro esta mañana de la manera más inesperada” (<u>El hablador</u> 7).</p>	<p>“Volvió a Quillabamba en las Navidades y se pasó allí todo el verano. Regresó en las vacaciones de julio y el siguiente diciembre. Cada vez que en San Marcos había una huelga, aun de pocos días, zarpaba hacia la selva en lo que fuera...” (<u>El hablador</u> 20).</p>

The narrator and the *hablador* (Saúl) as storytellers

	The narrator	<i>El hablador</i> (Saúl)
The narrator draws attention to his own deficiencies of memory while Saúl as an ‘oral’ storyteller depends on his memory	<p>“La memoria es una pura trampa: corrige, sutilmente acomoda el pasado en función del presente. He tratado tantas veces de reconstruir aquella conversación de agosto de 1958 con mi amigo Saúl Zuratas... que ahora no estoy seguro de nada, salvo, quizás de su gran lunar color vino vinagre...” (<i>El hablador</i> 93).</p> <p>“Pero mi memoria no puede haber fabricado totalmente la feroz catilinaria de Mascarita contra el Instituto Lingüístico de Verano, que me parece estar oyendo veintisiete años después, ni mi asombro al ver la sorda cólera con que hablaba” (<i>El hablador</i> 93).</p>	<p>“Recordaba todo lo que decían de este mundo y de los otros. Lo de antes y lo de después. Las explicaciones y las causas recordaba... Nada de lo que iba oyendo se me olvidaba. A veces, a la familia que iba a visitar, le contaba lo que había visto y aprendido” (<i>El hablador</i> 202)</p>
The narrator’s writing is portrayed as inexact, while the <i>hablador</i> ’s oral discourse has an aura of authenticity.	<p>“Su cartita, decía algo así.” (<i>El hablador</i> 17)</p>	<p>“Es al menos, lo que yo he sabido” (<i>El hablador</i> 39).⁹⁷</p>
The narrator draws attention to writing while Saúl draws attention to speaking and being heard. ⁹⁸	<p>“—puesto que he cedido a la maldita tentación de escribir sobre él—debo inventar” (<i>El hablador</i> 37)</p> <p>“Presiento que en cualquier momento se me acabará la tinta” (<i>El hablador</i> 234).</p>	<p>“hablaba como yo hablo ahora”</p> <p>“Yo repetía la historia... Ellos me escuchaban... Desde entonces estoy hablando” (<i>El hablador</i> 203)</p>

⁹⁷ Pedro Blanco indicates that this repeated phrase serves a double function in the *hablador*’s discourse. First, it functions as a reminder of the oral nature of the discourse between speaker and audience and secondly as a *captatio benevolentiae*. Pedro E. Blanco, “*El hablador*: Elementos para un discurso oral,” *Antipodas: Journal of Hispanic Studies of the University of Auckland and La Trobe University* 1 (1988): 185.

⁹⁸ This point is developed in a book section entitled “Orality versus Literacy” by Jean O’Byrne-Knight, *The Story of the Storyteller: “La tía Julia y el escribidor”, “Historia de Mayta”, and “El hablador”* by Mario Vargas Llosa, *Portada Hispánica*. 1 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995) 78-84.

		“Se la puedo contar ahora... es una historia que no le gusta oír ” (El <u>hablador</u> 222)
The narrator writes in solitude while the hablador speaks to an audience. ⁹⁹	“irreducible soledad ” (El <u>hablador</u> 7).	“Aquí estamos. Yo en el medio, ustedes rodeándome . Yo hablando, ustedes escuchando” (El <u>hablador</u> 41).
The narrator sees language and speech as provocative and emotionally charged while the <i>hablador</i> speaks as a historian.	“A veces, para ver hasta dónde podía llevarlo «el tema», yo lo provocaba ” (El <u>hablador</u> 23).	“Esta es la historia de la creación. Esta es la pelea de Tasurinchi y Kientibakori. Eso era antes . Allí ocurrió en el Gran Pongo. Allí el principio principió ” (El <u>hablador</u> 205).
Machiguenga words seem magical to the narrator, while for the Machiguenga the power of the word is the creation of all beings. ¹⁰⁰	Lo he llevado conmigo, doblado en cuatro, en un rincón de mi cartera, como amuleto ” (El <u>hablador</u> 83)	“Pachakamue. El que, hablando, nacería a tantos animales. Sin darse cuenta, parece” (El <u>hablador</u> 128)
The narrator’s attempts to write and express are arduous and frustrating while the hablador’s efforts to speak seem effortless and destiny-driven.	“Desde mis frustrados intentos a comienzo de los años sesenta de escribir una historia sobre los habladores machiguengas, el tema había seguido rondándome” (El <u>hablador</u> 151).	“Un día, al llegar adonde una familia, a mi espalda dijeron: «Ahí llega el hablador. Vamos a oírlo.» Yo escuché. Me quedé muy sorprendido. «¿Hablan de mí?», les pregunté. Todos movieron las cabezas «Ehé, ehé, de ti hablamos», asintiendo. Yo era, pues, el hablador. Me quedé lleno de asombro ” (El <u>hablador</u> 203)

As these comparisons show, the narrator uses the dichotomies between himself and Saúl, and himself and the *hablador* (potentially also Saúl) to bring the reader to an

⁹⁹ O’Byran-Knight also develops this point extensively. O’Byran-Knight, *The Story* 79.

¹⁰⁰ As Julianne Newmark has indicated, “the act of speaking is a progenitive force” for the Machiguenga. Julianne Newmark, “Language, Absence, and Narrative Impossibility in Mario Vargas Llosa’s *El Hablador*,” *Latin American Literary Review* 31.61 (2003): 16.

understanding of a set of conceivable differences between the Self and the Other.

Furthermore, in this way, the narrator also creates a division between a contemporary and a premodern Peru. Indeed, As Efraín Kristal concludes, “Vargas Llosa creates two parallel worlds, one modern and the other archaic, which are secretly linked” (158). The end result of the narrator’s dichotomies between Self/Other, city/jungle, writer/storyteller is a reinforcement of the traits which solidify his own identity, discarding the traits that do not pertain to him.

The novel also deals with a changing and static sense of Self. Indeed, in order to be able to write his novel, the narrator must also undergo a mental and literary metamorphosis to be able to put himself in Saúl’s place, which serves the dual function of helping him to understand himself better.¹⁰¹ The narrator’s change also parallels Saúl’s evolution. Saúl, had to become a Machiguenga in every way possible in order to achieve the right to the oral transmission of the tribe’s stories. The narrator’s metamorphosis from Self to Saúl to Machiguenga requires the movement between two distinct levels. The narrator must first begin to see his own world of Lima through Saúl’s position as a marginalized Other within mainstream Peruvian society. Subsequently, the narrator must then envision Saúl’s transformation into the *hablador* as he becomes the Other on the outside of society. This double separation—of being on the margin of the margin—is an underlying force of the novel, reiterated by Saúl’s two passions in life, Kafka’s Metamorphosis and the Machiguenga Indians. As Kristal concludes: “The Machiguenga are a society excluded among societies, as Gregor Samsa is an individual excluded from his own society” (160). In a similar way to Saúl, the narrator estranges himself from Peru

¹⁰¹ The choice of the word metamorphosis refers to Kafka’s work of the same name, mentioned several times in El hablador.

by going to Florence, where he is considered an outsider, an Other. He also estranges his narrative voice in order to narrate chapters three, five and seven from the point of view of the *hablador*, much in the same way as Gloria in El jardín de al lado does.

However, instead of actually giving voice to Saúl or to the Machiguenga, the narrator, in gaining the ability to tell the story of the storyteller achieves the opposite effect. As the reader perceives, the narrator does not really understand Saúl as the Other within society, and his difficulties in understanding Saúl as an Other outside of society, as a member of the Machiguenga tribe are even more exacerbated. The narrator must intentionally reject a true understanding of the Other in order to gain the authority to write. The narrator's lack of being able to understand Saúl has led various critics to question Saúl's motives, when in fact the narrator himself is responsible for the misconstruction of Saúl as the *hablador*. M. Keith Booker writes of Saúl's betrayal to the purity of Machiguenga storytelling:

Yet Saúl modifies Machiguenga tradition by inserting allusions to Western cultural texts like the Bible and Kafka's 'The Metamorphosis' into his stories. Further he compounds the intervention by often constructing his stories with the specifically didactic intention to institute changes in Machiguenga tribal traditions like the treatment of women and the killing at birth of deformed infants. (130)

Booker adds to his conclusion, "the *hablador* chapters are not really Saúl's narration at all but are in fact simulations created by the Western narrator as projections of his own notions of Machiguenga storytelling" (131) and further, these are his projections of the way he feels his disfigured friend would react to Machiguenga reality. María Isabel

Acosta Cruz also determines that the *hablador*'s faulty style is a result of the fact that Saúl is "caught between the Western and Machiguenga cultures and telling stories in order to change certain tribal customs" (134). Yet, unlike Booker, Acosta Cruz never contemplates the narrator's role in Saúl's storytelling, as her analysis hinges on the relative independence of the *hablador* chapters. Indeed, as she concludes, "the two narratives are fairly independent, assuming the reader does not totalize the two by assigning a transcendental authorial power to the Vargas Llosa persona writing in Italy" (134). Yet, in neglecting to authenticate the entire novel as the narrator's construction, the reader will fall short of a true understanding of the narrator's technique and will attribute to Saúl an agenda that he is unlikely to have. Furthermore, if we view the *hablador* chapters as "written" by Saúl we also miss the most important theme of the novel: that the Self, (the ethnographer, anthropologist, elite) cannot offer a true understanding or representation of the Other. In the narrator's intentional misunderstanding of Saúl and the Machiguenga he parodies the ethnographer's text. As is the case of each of the other novels that I have analyzed in "The Other 'I'", the observer narrator's parody of a more traditional genre is the key to understanding virtually all of the symbolic commentary of each novel. El hablador is no different. The very fact that the narrator makes a point about the nature of the anthropological text, reiterates the fact that the reader needs to attribute the writing of the *hablador*'s chapters to him and not to Saúl.

In fact, for the narrator, it is inconceivable that Mascarita could become a Machiguenga storyteller without importing certain experiences and thoughts of his pre-Machiguenga days into his storytelling. The narrator assumes to understand what is

important for his friend Saúl as they are students together at San Marcos. However, he transfers this limited knowledge into assumptions of how Saúl might behave as a Machiguenga. For example, in chapter two, the narrator includes a quote by Saúl concerning the Machiguenga practice of infanticide of babies not born physically perfect. Saúl tells the narrator: “Yo no hubiera pasado el examen compadre. A mí me hubieran liquidado—susurró—. Dicen que los espartanos hacían lo mismo, ¿no? Que a los monstruitos, a los gregorios samsas, los despeñaban desde el monte Taigeto, ¿no? (El hablador 27). This earlier conversation between Saúl and the narrator resurfaces in chapter seven, when the *hablador* speaks out against this custom: “Cuando empezaba a andar oía que una mujer había ahogado en el río a sus hija recién nacida porque le faltaba un pie o la nariz, porque tenía manchas o porque habían nacido dos hijos en vez de uno. No entendía parece... Nunca entendería bien, quizás. Por ser como soy, teniendo la cara que tengo, me será difícil (El hablador 203-04). The narrator admits the possible problems of what he thinks he knows and remembers about Saúl. He indicates that his memory could be affected by the passage of time or that maybe he is guilty of manipulating his memories of Saúl in order that they may fit with the later chapters of the novel.

Indeed, the narrator himself seems to feel uncertain about the past. He could have invented the conversation with Saúl about his own feelings on infanticide, in order that the reader him or herself can detect parallels between Saúl and the *hablador*. Another possibility is the narrator’s own desire to reconcile a Machiguenga belief that does not coincide with his Western value system. The *hablador’s* alleged attempts to change Machiguenga customs are entirely the narrator’s doing, and simply cannot be considered

a failure on the part of Mascarita to avoid changing the Machiguenga culture as Acosta Cruz identifies (136).¹⁰² Another example of the narrator's role in manipulating Saúl's discourse is confessed directly by the narrator. When he tells the reader that he himself witnessed Saúl's personality change in their shared days together as students, he also calls attention to his self-doubt as well as to the (possibly) fictionalized nature of his narration. He concludes: "Se había vuelto más serio y lacónico, menos suelto que antes, me parece. Aunque no me fio mucho de mi memoria en esto. Tal vez siguiera siendo el mismo Mascarita risueño y parlanchín al que conocí en 1953 y mi fantasía lo cambia para que encaje mejor con el otro" (El hablador 37). Regardless of what Saúl was really like in the late fifties, and the nature of the narrator's (un)intentional manipulations of him, the reader is left with a series of intentionally emphasized differences, and an unclear idea of what really happened to Saúl. The nature of the narrator's manipulation of Saúl is one of the novel's great ambiguities. The narrator himself seems unsure of the role he plays in the re-construction of the events from his perspective.

In this way, the narrator uses Saúl from his San Marcos days as a source of information of his *hablador* chapters as well as a way to make cultural commentary concerning his own desires for changes in the Machiguenga culture. This becomes apparent in the storyteller's chapter seven, when Saúl (again, through the narrator) tries to convince the Machiguenga that he was born with a disfigured face. As a result, the people of the tribe become angry with him, as they are unable to accept a belief so distinct from their own. As Felicia Fahey indicates, this rejection marks a lack of

¹⁰² In a similar way, Gloria in El jardín manipulates what she tells the reader that Julio thinks or feels. This leads to a discrepancy in what Saúl and Julio supposedly say versus what the non-protagonist narrator says that he says.

“cultural translation” (49). Yet again, this situation must be understood as a creation of the narrator. Perhaps he makes this commentary to demonstrate a point about his own and probably the reader’s own belief system. Just as the Machiguenga are unable to accept the storyteller’s confession, the Western reader is most likely going to oppose and misunderstand the infanticide practiced by the Machiguenga. In this particular issue, the two cultures are shown to be incapable of true understanding or accepting of one another’s beliefs. However, by transforming Saúl into a proactive agent of change for the culture, the narrator reveals his belief that making cultural changes reflecting Western values can be positive. Thus, the reader perceives that the narrator manipulates the *hablador* for his own anthropological purposes of cultural commentary. The reader never knows what Saúl would actually say or do if he were not a fictional character but rather a disfigured Peruvian Jew converted into a native Machiguenga *hablador*. Indeed, the reader only sees fictional Saúl through the narrator; he or she is subjected to the narrator’s authority and selection of the information that the narrator wishes to share about him.

Indeed, from the very first chapter, as the narrator identifies the *hablador* in the photo to the final chapter when he decides that Saúl is the *hablador*, we see that all of the narrator’s actions are “literary decision[s]” (Kristal 159). Among the narrator’s literary decisions include the construction of conversations with Saúl (maybe really occurring in the narrator’s fictional life— or possibly invented conversations within the fiction) in order to convert the fragments of his shared past with Saúl into an authentic rendering of the *hablador*’s own discourse in a style identified by José Castro Urioste as a “ventriloquized narrative” (246). As the narrator designs his admittedly literary work, he

establishes the dichotomies clearly observable in the table, which allow him to portray the Machiguenga and Saúl in a way that is easily perceptible to the reader. In fact, the very skill of the narrator is in combining the Saúl of the margin that he knows, remembers or recreates from San Marcos (the visual and dialogic) with his own academic investigations, observations and readings of the Machiguenga (the intellectual) and his ability to imagine (the creative).

The narrator's tale is actually quite transparent as he admits in chapter two that he did extensive academic research in order to better understand the Machiguenga from an intellectual standpoint. Thus, by combining these elements (visual, emotional, academic and creative) and then superimposing Saúl's deviance from the norm onto the Machiguenga tribe's marginality, the narrator overcomes his inability to write the story of the storyteller. As the narrator finishes his novel, the reader can begin to dissect it, which proves to be as difficult as it was for the narrator to write initially. The task of representing the Other is always difficult, if not impossible. James Clifford concludes that this is the "predicament" of ethnography: "the fact that it is always caught up in the invention, not the representation of cultures" ("Introduction" 2). Thus, Vargas Llosa's novel not only shows the predicament of ethnography in the narrator's endeavor to portray the Machiguenga, but also underscores the connection that anthropology and literature have as structures of invention.

UNDERMINING ANTHROPOLOGY

The observant reader recognizes that the narrator's rendition of the Machiguenga offers an equally skewed view as any other anthropological document, in spite of the fact that Vargas Llosa's document is classified as fiction, thereby not carrying the same

pretensions of faithful representation as the anthropological study claims. Jean O'Bryan-Knight and others actually suggest that Vargas Llosa's novel "can be read like an ethnography of... the Machiguenga" (75), linking intrinsically, the functions and limitations of anthropology and literature.¹⁰³ Moreover, the narrator's struggling attempt to represent the Other only solidifies the novel's commentary at the impossibility of the very task it sets out to undertake, which is the reason that the novel can be considered a parody of the very genre in which it could, at least theoretically, be included.

Historically, the link between ethnography and literature was not always as clearly defined as it is today. Edward Bruner indicates, that in fact, in the past, any ethnographic study "that inserted the Self into the account of the Other deviated from the standard realist mode and was considered inappropriate" (3). However, as the relationship between Self and observed Other evolves, the connection linking anthropology and literature becomes more apparent. For example, Thomas Gallagher's study indicates the subjective nature of anthropology which necessitates a consideration of the concepts of Self and Other:

The observer, the training, the life experiences, the focus, the personality as well as the interpersonal relationships between the observer and the culture all affected the results. We once believed that we could understand other people absolutely. Now we recognize that any

¹⁰³ Indeed, as Sara Castro-Klarén concludes, "In having become the 'speaker' among the Machiguenga (as Vargas Llosa among us) he proceeds to fictionalize the consciousness of the culture in question. Thus what he sees of the Machiguenga is the effect of ethnographic discourse, and what he does not see marks both the invisibility of that culture and the limits of his discourse" Sara Castro-Klarén, "Monuments and Scribes: *El hablador* Addresses Ethnography," *Structures of Power*, eds. Terry J. Peavler and Peter Standish (Albany NY: State U of New York P, 1996) 46-47.

understanding we develop is distorted by our own world view...

Today, scholars...recognize that understanding can never be value-free.

(122-23)

The fact that ethnography and anthropology are both experience-based, links the science of the observation of the Other more directly to literature. Joseph Francese shows the critical point where this connection is made in his discussion of the abdication of the author. As he concludes, writing is necessarily limited by a writer's own experiences (49). I make a similar observation in regards to García Márquez's Crónica, by emphasizing the role of experience in the reality of the author's fiction. The ethnographer's task of separating Self from Other is oftentimes problematic, especially in Latin America as Amy Fass Emery concludes. In her opinion, cultural hybridity blurs the dividing line between Self and Other (i.e. elite and popular classes) (18).¹⁰⁴

The increased critical attention to the idea that anthropology and fiction are linked has resulted in an extreme reaction to the lack of ability to observe objectively. As Doris Sommer indicates, this has also resulted in a focus on the Self which actually overtakes the study of the Other: "Today's self-critical anthropology is one response, although sometimes can lead to even more self-interestedness, precisely by focusing on the investigating self instead of 'objective' data" ("About-Face" 103). In this way, the reader can observe that the problems of anthropology and ethnography closely match the limitations of the observer narrator. In the case of each novel that I investigate, the observer narrator begins from his or her own limited and biased perspective with the goal

¹⁰⁴ In Latin American literature, as Roberto González Echevarría indicates, there is an "Other Within...Archival dictions have not given up on the promise of anthropology, but they probe into anthropology itself, becoming a kind of ethnography of anthropology, as in Mario Vargas Llosa's novel El hablador" González Echevarría, Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative 173.

of narrating the Other, yet he or she ends up more self-focused than perhaps was initially intended. Furthermore, the reader of any text (anthropological or fictional) is under a similar set of limitations. The reader is limited by his or her point of view, life experiences and distinct perspective.

The problems of the distinct perspective and experience of each reader are precisely the reason why the observer narrator can be an effective storyteller. Once the reader recognizes the impossibility of absolutes and the writer's incapacity to narrate truth, he or she must become responsible for formulating his or her own meaning based on his or her own value system. While self-interest is a negative result in aware anthropology, the focus on the self is the desired result of reading the first-person non-protagonist postmodern storyteller. The renewed ability of this storyteller to communicate in a way that matters to his or her reader, allows for the reader's experience with the text to be a beneficial one. As I have shown throughout this present study, the theorists of postmodern man indicate that he is a victim of fragmentation. Just as the suffering narrator of El hablador dramatizes in his own observation of the Other(s), the reflection of the Other transposed onto the Self can help the reader to identify a clear conceptualization of the Self.

As the narrator consistently portrays divided binaries with extreme absolutes, most readers will find his or her own sense of reality to reject this notion of absolutes. However, with a view of the full spectrum the reader can find the precise point along the spectrum on which his or her own beliefs can be pinpointed. In the process of accompanying the narrator, the reader experiences the world that is the text—and he or she can learn from this experience. As James Nicosia indicates, El hablador teaches,

“the only way to learn how to become a speaker is to first be a listener. In order to *tell* stories, one must become a *participant* in the stories; to preserve the world in which one lives, one must *live* in the world” (141). This wisdom is available to the reader who actively partakes of the world of the text and the experience as a reader participant.

In presenting extreme dichotomies, one particular frequently observed Latin American tradition surfaces—*civilización y barbarie*. El hablador dialogues with this institution, which has seemed to undermine itself from the onset. Citing José Eustasio Rivera’s La vorágine and Rómulo Gallegos’ Canaína as examples, Emery concludes that the opposing sides of this dichotomy are not as clearly separated as the reader might imagine:

Civilization in the guise of the hero-protagonists sets itself as a guiding light to be wielded against the regressive forces that rule the anarchic jungle and the lawless *llano*, but ends up giving in to, being seduced by, the dark savage barbarity that assaults the tenuous borders of the civilized Self. The startling intimation in these novels of a savage Other within the Self signals an erosion of faith in the embattled forces of civilization...”

(19)

Indeed, by pretending to establish clear-cut dichotomies, El hablador overturns the scenario of civilization as being overtaken by barbarism. Saúl, who is already an Other, is seduced by the Machiguenga Other. In turn, the narrator Self is seduced both by Saúl and the Machiguenga storyteller as he is able to see traits of the Other within his Self. However, the Machiguenga tribe is absent the savage barbarity likened to the Other that Emery references. Both Saúl and the Machiguenga are identified by their peaceful

reconciliation with the order of the universe, while the narrator Self is characterized by his aggressive and compulsive behaviors (Vargas Llosa El hablador 18). Therefore the dividing line that the narrator draws between Self and Other is blurred. Every Self has an Other within. Indeed, “the Other coexists with the Self in a very real way” (Emery 18). Maybe, as Vargas Llosa’s novel avoids examining directly, modern civilization is much more barbaric than pre-modern Amazonian tribes. Indeed, the narrator’s creation of and undermining of the dichotomies of superior versus inferior has produced an inexact and indefinite space that rejects classifications and supports hybridity.

Resisting his own narrative structure of dichotomies the narrator explores the possibilities of the *Other within* throughout El hablador. Tzvetan Todorov indicates that the recognition of the Other within undermines hegemonic superiority complexes: “The representatives of Western civilization no longer believe so naively in its superiority” (249), a realization which came about through the recognition of the “interior other...the other in oneself” (248-49) and through the discovery that “man is not *one*—or is even nothing—that *je est un autre*, or a simple echo chamber, a hall of mirrors” (248). As the concept of the *Other within* demonstrates, the subaltern Other will also have traits recognizable to the Self which can be used in order to redefine and understand the Self. In this way, it becomes apparent that El hablador both implements and overturns, by parody, its own system of dichotomies.

As Saúl transforms into a Machiguenga he arrives at an interesting and neutral place that parallels Albar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca’s special transitory state as described by Todorov:

Cabeza de Vaca also reaches a neutral point, not because he was indifferent to the two cultures but because he had experienced them both from within—thereby, he no longer had anything but “the others” around him; without becoming an Indian, Cabeza de Vaca was no longer quite a Spaniard. His experience symbolizes and heralds that of the modern exile, which in its turn personifies a tendency characteristic of our society: a being who has lost his country without thereby acquiring another, who lives in a double exteriority...(249)¹⁰⁵

In the same way as Cabeza de Vaca is confronted with a double exile, Saúl can never truly become a Machiguenga, nor can he be reintegrated into mainstream Peruvian society. Through his experience with the Other, Saúl moves into a space where he is neither Self nor Other. The second part of Todorov’s conclusion concerning modern exile perhaps can explain the narrator’s fascination with Saúl’s transformation. As the narrator suffers the sense of loss exemplified by the exile metaphor that I developed in the Donoso chapter and which Todorov mentions here, he begins to try to understand himself and find his place in the world. By mapping and understanding Saúl’s dilemma in a space where he will always be an Other, the narrator is able to make sense of his own estrangement or his “double exteriority”. The feeling of exteriority can be likened to this same sense of fragmentation in the lacking of center in postmodernism

¹⁰⁵ Cabeza de Vaca’s conversion into a shaman is not unlike Saúl’s becoming a *hablador* in the process of being one and becoming two entities. However, unlike Saúl, it seems as if Cabeza de Vaca was forced to become a shaman while Saúl willingly seeks and accepts his conversion. As Todorov writes: “This is not a deliberate choice but after certain vicissitudes, the Indians decide that Cabeza de Vaca and his Christian companions can cure the sick, and ask them to intervene. At first the Spaniards resist declaring themselves to be incompetent; but since the Indians then cut off their food supply, they finally consent...” Tzvetan Todorov, The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper & Row P, 1984) 198.

As Todorov indicates, exile provokes a feeling of being trapped and disconnected. The concept of exile is manifested in various ways in *El hablador*. For example, symbolically, chapters 1 and 8 frame the narrative from the narrator's physical place of exile—European Florence—, a place he went in order to forget: “Vine a Firenze para olvidar por un tiempo del Perú y de los peruanos” (*El hablador* 7). The narrator's journey to Florence can be considered a voluntary separation from Peru in order that he may search for himself. However, instead of forgetting Peru, the narrator's estrangement in Europe only makes his Peruvian identity stronger. Just as the narrator is prompted to leave Peru because of his struggle for a sense of belonging in society, Saúl also chooses an *auto-exile* as he converts into a Machiguenga. Although the narrator looks abroad and Saúl looks to the Peruvian interior, both men are motivated by the same lack of belonging and reconciliation between the Self and the Other. Indeed, both men find validation in their similar trajectories—a journey from Self to Other and from estrangement to inclusion.

AUTHENTICATING THE SELF BASED ON THE OTHER

The narrator and the reader both gain a strengthened sense of Self through his or her observation with the Other. One of the ways that the narrator is able to do this is by validating his role as a writer through his observation of Saúl and the Machiguenga storyteller. By speaking for Saúl, speaking for the Machiguenga, and recording this process in his novel, the narrator draws attention to the unbalanced relationship of power between the control and longevity of writing associated with the Self on the one hand and the oral subaltern on the other hand. The narrator clearly romanticizes the oral storyteller. He tells Saúl concerning the *hablador*: “Son una prueba palpable de que

contar historias puede ser algo más que una mera diversión... Algo primordial, algo de lo que depende la existencia misma de un pueblo..." (*El hablador* 92) Yet, in his very admiration, embedded in the text we read, it becomes apparent that the narrator is dependent on his privileged position as a writer, and seeks a sort of life justification for his own profession through his admiration of the figure of the oral storyteller. However, as he writes his novel he too is fully aware that his oral storyteller is encoded by an act on his part. By writing the storyteller's oral discourse, the narrator denies the possibility of oral communication, which reinforces the importance of his role as an author in society. In this way, the narrator knows that his portrayal of the Machiguenga and of Saúl is contingent upon a paradox. On the one hand, the narrator is infinitely limited and oftentimes considers his own Self and need for validation as the most central aspect of his writing, while on the other hand, he is able to bring the reader to understand the Machiguenga and Saúl in a more complete way than would otherwise be feasibly possible.

Throughout the novel the narrator dramatizes the way in which his own contact with the tangible other, Saúl, allows him to configure and ultimately write the "oral storytelling" of the Machiguenga chapters. However, the narrator's desire to merge Saúl and the *hablador* leads him to the problematic inclusion of subtexts. Indeed, as Michael Bernard-Donals adds, with each *hablador* chapter, the narrator's novel becomes less about the Machiguengas than about how the unnamed narrator has been able to fictionalize the *hablador's* voice (116). The novel can be considered the narrator's own trajectory of control as he gains momentum and confidence with each of the *hablador's* chapters. In this trajectory, the storyteller's discourse becomes increasingly intertextual,

pragmatic and Western. Finally, in the last *hablador* chapter, the narrator takes full liberty to link Saúl to the *hablador* in every way possible, thereby combining their qualities of difference into one figure Other.

Part of the narrator's accomplishment in fictionalizing the oral storyteller's voice is to create dialogue between oral and written discourse originally centralized by Walter Benjamin: who suggests that the role of oral storytelling in the past allows for a sense of community, while contemporary print culture, leads to the solitary practice of writing and reading novels (Booker 123). As I have already discussed in each chapter, this isolation leads to what Benjamin defines as an increased difficulty in communicating experiences (83-84).¹⁰⁶ Indeed as Jean Franco also analyzes, the narrator evokes the traditional storyteller of the past, as "el hombre recto que pasará el conocimiento adquirido en la vida a las generaciones siguientes" ("La historia" 14). Franco also emphasizes the difficulties facing the contemporary writer who occupies the more solitary space of literature.

However, as I have demonstrated throughout "The Other 'I'", the postmodern storyteller is able to overcome this incommunicability. The observer narrator who tells both Saúl's and the *hablador*'s stories invites the reader-accomplice to re-appropriate lived experience in a simultaneous looking at the Other. This act of looking creates a unique perspective for each reader/Self. As Julianne Newmark is accurate to question: "If storytelling is (or has been made), as Benjamin suggests, obsolete, is Vargas Llosa attempting to pose an investigation of the impossibility of telling stories in the

¹⁰⁶ Booker writes ironically, "Benjamin's narrative of the gradual decline of storytelling over the centuries of the bourgeois era shows Benjamin himself to be a rather gifted and convincing storyteller, an irony suggesting that his announcement of the death of narrative is... greatly exaggerated" M. Keith Booker, Vargas Llosa Among the Postmodernists (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1994) 136.

modern(ist) moment? Is this an impossibility that forces the literary postmodern to emerge? Perhaps so” (5). Indeed, Vargas Llosa’s novel does investigate the oral storyteller, and his own investigative fiction necessitating the reader’s participation leads to the narrator’s conversion into a postmodern storyteller. His novel is the postmodern answer to the postmodern dilemma. Vargas Llosa’s narrator simultaneously presents, uses and questions the role of storytelling and the transmission of experience in society to develop a new relationship with his reader, in order for experience to once again have value. As Braulio Muñoz indicates, Vargas Llosa has consistently rejected Benjamin’s notion of the loss of the ability of the storyteller:

Benjamin believed the Storyteller was a character of the past, a character whose voice was finally drowned by the metallic, impersonal noises of modernity. A man born in Peru, at the fringes of the modern world, in a land where *habladores* still make a living performing in the streets, cutting through the veil of ideology and custom, exposing collective wounds, raising a mirror to collective feelings and failings, Vargas Llosa believes the Storyteller has metamorphosed but endures...Vargas Llosa not only makes room for the Storyteller as a character in his literary creations, he aspires to be one himself. (91-92)

The storyteller becomes the most important figure to validate the narrator’s own life as a writer, as he too is converted into an postmodern storyteller.

This dialogue between oral and written storytelling extends to include a dialogue between the past and the present, neither affirming nor rejecting the notion that one is more valuable than the other (Booker 124-26). This dialogue also occurs as the

postmodern storyteller emerges: between the oral storyteller of the Machiguenga (premodern, chapters 3, 5, 7), the novelist embodied by the narrator writer (modern chapters 1, 2, 4, 6, 8) and the union of the two that constitutes the novel as the whole (postmodern chapters 1-8). By observing the Other; by including and appealing to the reader, and by overcoming this sense of incommunicability indicated by Benjamin, the narrator of El hablador combines the forces of the oral storyteller with the writer storyteller, transforming his own character into a postmodern storyteller, the one who reinstates the value of experience into his narrative. Furthermore, the narrator indicates that the narrating Self actually becomes the Other as the role of the reader is centralized.

However, as Bernard-Donals demonstrates, the narrator is keenly aware that his writing of the Other functions to limit the Other's very ability to be heard, indicating a conscious refusal on the narrator's part to give his narrative power to the subaltern. His text takes the place of other anthropological or ethnographic study in that it shows the ways in which Western perspective overpowers non-Western:

For, what you see in Zuratas, mascarita, the grotesque, and what you see in the Machiguenga, the people who walk but who can only be heard through the language of anthropology (and of fiction) is the carnivalization and subversion—the limit and the excess—of the language of the West, of the novelist, and of mimetic representation itself" (114).

By writing about the Machiguenga, the Western narrator both reveals the tribe and takes from them the right to be heard. In this way, each reader can appropriate the gaze of the Other, which is still based in the Western center and is directed from this center outward. The reader accompanies the narrator Self in his observation of the Other, thereby also

becoming a Self, one who appropriates the Other in an attempt to see the Self more clearly. As such, by reading the narrator's account, the bourgeois reader also denies centrality to the subaltern in the same way that the elite writer does (Bernard-Donals 115). By focusing his own discourse onto Saúl and the Machiguenga, the narrator and the reader re-centralize the gaze of the Other to reflect the Self. While the narrator privileges his necessity to write in order to understand the Other within, the reader will undergo a similar trajectory, in the exploration of his own Other within.

As I have also analyzed in relationship to the other authors evaluated in this study, the use of the first-person non-protagonist narrator may be considered a bourgeois endeavor in order for the intellectual elite to keep the power to narrate out of the hands of the non-elite. Thus, it follows that the narrator controls the entire text, instead of marginalized Saúl or the even more marginalized *hablador*. Through the narrator's control, the Machiguenga become accessible to a reader in a way that would otherwise be impossible. Vargas Llosa's intellectual reader may be more able to relate to the tale of a Western man who struggles to understand the Machiguenga than to an account provided by a Machiguenga individual himself. Furthermore, if the Machiguenga tell the story of the *hablador* there is an assumption that truth telling in the narration becomes possible. However, Vargas Llosa and the other authors in this study reject the notion of truth by narrating an Other, in a relationship condemned by fleeting truth and subjectivity. Similarly, as Misha Kokotovic indicates, the narrator knows that his own story of the Other is one way for him to maintain authority over the Machiguenga, as they become a "vehicle for a story about the importance of stories, and of storytelling...It is striking how much this description of the *hablador*'s role in Machiguenga society resembles the

traditional role, or at least the self image, of the writer/intellectual in Latin America” (456). Therefore, the Other can be seen merely as a pathway to the Self.

Through the narrator’s attempts to understand the Other on the basis of the dichotomies that he establishes, the reader also is forced “to reconsider the name of (aspects of) the Other in herself... What is regenerated is one’s sense of self, one’s understanding of how she has a place in lived life, in history... (Bernard-Donals 120). As the very concept of Self in postmodernism has become increasingly dissolved, through the contemplation of the Other, the narrator takes the reader to *Saúl*/the hablador. This figure offers a reflection to the reader and narrator that allows for a reconfiguration of his or her fragmentation. In this way the observation of the Other/Saúl has the potential to provide to the reader a “transcendent meaning”. Clifford explains “cultural transcendence” through the experience of a !Kung woman giving birth. Although the !Kung woman’s experience is distinct from a Western woman’s experiences, in that she gives birth alone in the bush, her experience also transcends her, as it carries meaning in other cultures. As Clifford indicates, the process of birth is necessarily an allegory for all humankind, most specifically the female sex (“On Ethnographic” 99). Thus, even the experiences of an Other that is so different from the Self can transcend culture and affect or transform the reader Self of any culture. These shared similarities and differences between the Self and Other surface in various different ways in El hablador. For example, Sara Castro-Klaren indicates the various layered meanings of the Other in Vargas Llosa’s novel: “Whether we take this ‘other’ to mean the alienating relation with the past spelled out by Sartre (hell is the other), or the specular ‘other’ of the mirror stage postulated by Lacan or the ‘other’ as primitive man elaborated by ethnography, the other

condenses the alienating contents assigned to either the rival, the unconscious or both” (41). Indeed as Castro-Klaren proposes, the narrator looks from his perspective of the present, the Self, to his beliefs of the past, the Other, as he is estranged even from his younger self. This surfaces in the novel as the narrator admits that the ideas of progress of his younger self, twenty-five years prior were just as utopist as Saúl’s ideas of preservation. The narrator asks himself:

¿Creíamos, de veras, que el socialismo garantizaría la integridad de nuestras culturas mágico-religiosas? No había bastantes pruebas de que el desarrollo industrial, fuera capitalista o comunista, significaba fatídicamente el aniquilamiento de aquéllas? ¿Había una sola excepción a esa terrible, inexorable ley? Pensándolo bien—y desde la perspectiva de los años transcurridos y del mirador de esta Firenze calurosa—éramos tan irreales y románticos como Mascarita con su utopía arcaica y antihistórica. (El hablador 76-77).

Here, Vargas Llosa explores, in El hablador, his changing notions towards *indigenismo*, and his realization that socialism was an ineffective utopia. The narrator uses his own broad time-space perspective in the novel in order to comment on his past Other.

Furthermore, as we have seen above, Castro-Klaren relates Lacan’s mirror stage to the discourse of the Other in El hablador, which solidifies my assertions in this study concerning the role of the Other in rebuilding the fragmented Self. As I have already elaborated in my analysis of the other novels of this study, the infant’s initial feelings of love for his fragmented body are replaced by his love for his Other-Self during the mirror stage, when he sees his full reflection for the first time. Thus, in El hablador, the

narrator's observation of the various Others—Saúl, the Machiguenga, and his younger self, allows the narrator to reconstruct his fragmented pieces to get a clear reflection of himself, allowing the same for the reader. This space of reconciliation is no longer a dichotomy between the Self and Other, or civilization and barbarism, or oral and written, etc. The narrator and reader's reflection will allow him or her entry into a space not unlike the one occupied by Cabeza de Vaca in Todorov's conclusions, a no-man's land of indefinite classifications, a space referred to in theory as *Thirdspace*.

THIRDSPACE

In the narrator's initial failed attempts to write about the Machiguenga, he comes to the realization that his perspective (Western, Self, Affluent, Catholic) inhibits his ability to write from the perspective of the Machiguenga. However, the narrator is able to use both Saúl and narrating/storytelling as his entryways into conceptualizing the Machiguenga. Through Saúl he is able to convert the Machiguenga Other into writable fiction. This same inability to narrate the Other finds its precedence in Latin American fiction, in Jorge Luís Borges' *El etnógrafo*.¹⁰⁷ In Borges' short story, the protagonist is Fred Murdock, an average, young, American, middle-class college student who agrees at the insistence of his professor to embark on a two-year ethnography study of a western American Indian group and to write a thesis upon returning. As Murdock arrives to the tribe he quickly acclimates himself to their patterns of sleeping, waking, dressing and eating. As the omniscient narrator reports, he achieves two mental breakthroughs: "llegó a soñar en un idioma que no era el de sus padres... [y] llegó a pensar de una manera que

¹⁰⁷ Alejo Carpentier's *Los pasos perdidos* also explores the meeting of the Self with the Other as his unnamed protagonist encounters primitive society ultimately changing his modern ways of thought and behavior. Alejo Carpentier, *Los pasos perdidos* (New York: Penguin, 1998).

su lógica rechazaba” (4). After some time, Murdock returns home and reports to his professor that he has decided not to write the thesis. The professor, who questions Murdock’s motives, asks if he has been sworn to secrecy or if English cannot express what he has learned. Murdock responds:

Ahora que poseo el secreto, podría enunciarlo de cien modos distintos y aun contradictorios. No sé muy bien cómo decirle que el secreto es precioso y que ahora la ciencia, nuestra ciencia, me parece una mera frivolidad... —El secreto, por lo demás no vale lo que valen los caminos que me condujeron a él. Esos caminos hay que andarlos (67).

This is precisely the problem that is elaborated in El hablador. Murdock cannot use words to tell of his experience, but rather he indicates the necessity for each person to undergo the same experience. In El hablador the narrator has a difficult time telling the story of the Machiguenga. Even though he uses Saúl to see life from the Machiguenga perspective, this does not solve his problem of being able to narrate the Other. Just as El hablador reveals, in order to truly understand the Other, the Self must undergo a conversion and become the Other who can neither abandon who he was before nor completely embrace who he will be. Even then, the Self will never be able to express that which he learns from the Other, it is his or her own experience (Benjamin, once again). As Murdock comes to the realization that the experience is necessary in order to understand it, he rejects any desire to express that which he learned along the way, as well as indirectly criticizing the sciences of ethnography and anthropology that claim to share that which he discovered could only be learned through direct contact. Thus, in El

etnógrafo, Borges alludes to the difficulties that ethnographers face in the difficulties of representation.

We can see that the physical spaces of the university and the tribe in El etnógrafo follow the same patterns of binary opposition used by Vargas Llosa in El hablador. As Murdock's journey indicates, the passageway between these two spaces matters most, as Murdock himself indicates that the journey is the most important of all. The *camino* between the two extremes of the binary, the space in the middle, the Thirdspace, is where the secret to true understanding lies. The same applies to Vargas Llosa's novel. The technique of alternating chapters in Vargas Llosa's novel sets up clearly defined borders to separate these spaces in Vargas Llosa's text, with narrow and unlit pathways connecting each space (Newmark 13). However, as the reader transverses these two opposing spaces in El hablador he or she arrives at new understanding. By becoming an accomplice, the reader travels a *camino* similar to Murdock's and re-appropriates experience in a way that would be impossible for the narrator to convey. This crossing of spaces is one way in which the postmodern storyteller reinstates the value of experience in his discourse.

Edward Soja defines a concept called thirding-as-Othering. In order to explain this concept Soja builds upon Henri Lefebvre's critical work in a way that is particularly relevant to the binary system that exists in El hablador. Soja concludes:

For Lefebvre, reductionism... begins with the lure of binarism, the compacting of meaning into a closed either/or opposition between two terms, concepts or elements. Whenever faced with such binarized categories (subject-object, mental-material, center-periphery, agency-

structure), Lefebvre persistently sought to crack them open by introducing an-Other term, a third possibility or “moment” that partakes of the original pairing but is not just a simple combination or an ‘in-between’ position along some all-inclusive continuum. This critical thirding-as-Othering is the first and most important step in transforming this categorical and closed logic of either/or to the dialectically open logic of both/and also... (60).

El hablador does precisely this. The novel starts with the narrator’s construction of binary oppositions and ends with a space that is more than just an in-between, but that becomes a “both/and also”. In fact the most important space of the novel is between each chapter, this is the space where the reader walks the *camino* and arrives at the “secret” of El hablador. Rather than being a neither-nor the other becomes a Third. As Todorov indicates regarding Cabeza de Vaca, Saúl becomes a Machiguenga but does not stop being an intellectual Peruvian, he is forever affected by his experiences on both sides of the binary. He becomes a hybrid, a both.

Soja demonstrates how the thirding-as-Othering works by using a personal anecdote from bell hooks’ preface of *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, in which hooks explains the concept of the Other on the margins. She writes:

To be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body. As black Americans living in a small Kentucky town, the railroad tracks were a daily reminder of our marginality. Across those tracks were paved streets, stores we could not enter, restaurants we could not eat in, and people we could not look directly in the face...Across these tracks was a

world we could work in as maids, as janitors, as prostitutes, as long as it was in a service capacity. We could enter that world but we could not live there... Living as we did—on the edge—we developed a particular way of seeing reality. We looked both from the outside in and from the inside out. We focused our attention on the center as well as the margin. We understood both. (ix)¹⁰⁸

The reading experience of El hablador leads the reader to achieve an understanding that can be constituted as a 'both', just as Saúl and the narrator have achieved by crossing the spaces of Self/Other. This perspective is the only way in which experience can once again be shared. Indeed, the reader accomplice's journey brings him to live the both.

The observer narrator manipulates the novel in order to erase the fuzzy dividing lines between Self and Other to show that there are aspects of the Self in the Other and the Other in the Self. Mark Millington agrees that Vargas Llosa creates displaced characters, who suffer from uncertain identities, but "they also enable an exploration of the blurred edges and the fault lines between different traditions as they come into contact" ("Insiders" 169). In other words, it is the clashing of binary opposites that opens a space in which the reader can explore the Self /Other concept as it relates to him or her directly. Finally, the implications of Thirdspace are important in the self-affirmation that benefits the reader as well as the way in which fragmentation in postmodernism is conceptualized. In this interplay between Self and Other, hegemony is overturned leaving that which used to be the center with the sense of fragmentation and loss felt by the groups that previously were considered periphery (i.e. now the Self necessarily must see

¹⁰⁸ This quote is originally cited in Edward Soja, Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996) 99-100.

himself as an Other). This allows for both the hegemonic and subaltern to share a sense of being neither one nor the other, but both, which is implicit to the Thirdspace concept (Soja 83-88).

STYLIZING DIFFERENCE

As we have seen in the previous sections, the narrator establishes a set of dichotomies in order to differentiate the self/writer from Saúl/oral storyteller, only to undermine this system with the novel as a whole, by the creation of this space in which both sides exhibit traits of the opposite side, thereby negating the binary. However, the narrator does not show himself to necessarily be aware of the nature of his project. It is as if the narrator cannot break away from the nature of contrasting opposites. In this section I will explore the way in which the narrator's writing style draws attention to the ongoing dialogue in the novel between the oral and the written. In chapters 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8, the narrator's style functions specifically in order to bring the reader to experience his text. In other words, although the narrator does not have the same live audience that the *hablador* chapters have, the narrator appropriates techniques of oral storytelling to bring his sections alive to the reader. Instead of exposition, the narrator favors dialogue, bringing the reader into the middle of his conversations as an eavesdropper. One of these techniques entails the asking of a question that is subsequently answered in the narrator's own writing. For example, after telling the reader about Saúl and his father, Salomón, the narrator anticipates the reader's curiosity about Saúl's mother. Instead of writing the dialogue that occurred between himself and Saúl, or writing something such as, "Then I asked Saúl about his mother, and he told me..." the narrator simply forms the idea into a question and answer. In this example the narrator writes, "¿Y la madre de Mascarita?

Había muerto a los dos años de trasladarse la familia a Lima” (El hablador 13). This style makes the reader a more active part of the narrator’s past conversations and his thought processes in the present as he actively restructures the past in front of the reader’s own eyes. He shows himself to be conscious of his audience. In this way, he demonstrates that a writer also can take on some characteristics of a live oral storyteller, who puts himself in an interactive position with his or her listening audience. At other times, the narrator recounts dialogue in the same question and answer style as various recounted conversations with Saúl show. In one example, Saúl asks the narrator “¿Te imaginas...?”, subsequently answering “No, no te lo imaginas” (El hablador 13). Throughout the narrator’s chapters there are many examples of this technique with affirmative as well as negative and uncertain answers, such as, “¿Qué le interesaba en la vida? No lo sabía aún, sin duda” (El hablador 15) and “¿Por qué le importaba a él tanto? No por razones políticas, en todo caso” (El hablador 23). This technique also gives an element of immediacy to past conversations, some of which took place more than 25 years before.

Another interesting technique includes the narrator’s use of antithesis. In one instance, the narrator describes how walking with Saúl shows the difficulties of living with a disfigured face “Andando por la calle con Saúl se descubría lo *molesta* que tenía que ser su vida...” (El hablador 16, emphasis mine), although moments later he indicates Saúl’s mild manner in reacting to the mean stares and jarring comments: “A él no parecía *molestarle*; reaccionaba siempre a las impertinencias con alguna salida chistosa” (El hablador 16, emphasis mine). In this example, we see the faulty nature of the narrator’s perspective of what he assumes to be Saúl’s view of the world. In other words, the

narrator's observation of what he thinks to be Saúl's thoughts do not match up with Saúl's actions, leaving the reader uncertain as to Saúl's real view. As the reader knows, the narrator of a written account obviously has ample opportunity to correct or explain his writing. Therefore, the reader is left to suppose that the narrator intentionally draws attention to his own insecurities and inconsistencies. This specific example illustrates that the narrator is unconcerned with reconciling certain issues of his text. Furthermore, this lack of reconciliation draws attention to his narration of Saúl and the fact that he may intentionally manipulate the information that reaches the reader. The use of antithesis both draws attention to the impossibility to narrate the Other, and to the narrator's role in deciding what words to put in Saúl's mouth in the storyteller's chapters.

In other instances of antithesis, the narrator establishes a contradiction in order to give credit to himself and to discredit Saúl. For example, the narrator asks and answers himself a question "¿Los *idealizaba*? Estoy seguro que sí" (El hablador 25, emphasis mine). However, on the subsequent page, he quotes Saúl as having said to him: "No creas que los *idealizo*. Para nada" (El hablador 26, emphasis mine). This contradiction accentuates the narrator's doubt in what Saúl says (the perceivable) versus what he feels (the unattainable), while also drawing attention to the narrator's central problem in interpreting the Other. This is also a way for the narrator to bolster his own weakened authority, implicit in his attempt to narrate the other. Paradoxically, as he tries to boost his authority in chapters 1, 2, 4, 6, and 8 he undermines his authority in chapters 3, 5 and 7, as he begins to include his own ideals in the *hablador's* discourse. In point of fact, as Booker has concluded, the narrator's attempt at portray the *hablador* is often regarded as successful, although in actuality his unfaithful representation of Saúl should be

considered unsuccessful. Through his use of antithesis the narrator demonstrates that his Western ideas have the power to dominate the non-Western culture (Booker 134-35). The ultimate message expressed by the narrator is that the power of the pen is more enduring than the oral storyteller's spoken discourse.

Another technique that the narrator employs is that of a seemingly deviant delight in sharing Saúl's secrets with the reader in dramatic asides, oftentimes in parenthesis, as a means to draw attention to the ways in which Saúl further marginalizes himself from the already marginalized. For example, the narrator tells of a day when he and Saúl had a long conversation during which the two of them ate "chicharrón (que a él le encantaban)" (El hablador 26), emphasizing not only that Saúl breeches the standards of the Torah, which prohibits the consumption of pork, but also that Saúl loves to do so.¹⁰⁹ Here the narrator emphasizes Saúl's marginality as a Jew, but also that his non-conformism marginalizes him within that group itself, or in the narrator's words Saúl truly is, "un marginal entre los marginales" (El hablador 233). In another example the narrator draws attention to Saúl's difficulty in relating to females. He writes, in parenthesis "(Era con ellas de una gran timidez; yo había advertido, en la Universidad, que las evitaba y que sólo trababa conversación con alguna de nuestras compañeras cuando ella le dirigía la palabra.)" (El hablador 28). It seems as if the narrator enjoys showing the various differences between Saúl and a normal male of his age. Furthermore, by using this technique the narrator increases the conversational nature of his writing as a way in which he can reach and communicate with the reader.

¹⁰⁹ Prohibitions concerning the consumption of pork can be found in the Old Testament in Levi. 11.2-8.

Yet another strategy employed by the narrator that makes his tale more dramatic is his use of various types of anticipation, which surface in diverse moments in the novel. For example, early in the novel, well before the reader can fathom Saúl's fate, the narrator leads the reader to the conclusion that Saúl's future was shaped by circumstances beyond his control. The narrator prepares the reader for a negative end result by his choice of words and by the way in which he describes Saúl's situation: "Iba trazando ese laberinto en el que Mascarita entraría para no salir jamás" (*El hablador* 15). The narrator also claims that now, in retrospect, he understands Saúl's fate, again vaguely referring to the past and to Saúl's victimization: "Ahora sé...un cuarto de siglo más tarde...con la perspectiva del tiempo, sabiendo lo que le ocurrió después..." (*El hablador* 21). Other similar examples foreshadow a seemingly horrible destiny. These examples abound throughout the narrator's chapters about Saúl, creating a dramatic irony that builds throughout the text, such as: "...Me permitió entender mejor...la fuerza del impacto que cambió el rumbo de su vida" (*El hablador* 72). This type of anticipatory discourse builds suspense for the reader and increases the shock value when the reader finally comes to understand that Saúl's own conscious decision to become a Machiguenga *hablador* is that which the narrator indicates, with an air of tragedy, "happened to him".

Other elements of Saúl's early life parallel his later years spent as a *hablador* after becoming a Machiguenga, which bring to mind several issues regarding the narrator's role in the construction of the text. First, the narrator depends upon his memory. Secondly, as the 'writer' of all eight chapters, the narrator chooses which elements to include in his description of the young Saúl and in his writing of the *hablador*. The

reader comes to realize that the narrator may be entirely guilty of embellishment. One example of this possibility is in the narrator's definition of the way that Saúl speaks. The narrator identifies early in the novel that when they first meet, Saúl's manner of speaking was unique and full of street slang "Palabras y dichos de la jerga callejera brotaban en cada frase que decía, dando incluso a sus conversaciones íntimas un aire de chacota" (El hablador 11). This information could link Saúl's past with his future as a *hablador*, making his conversion more believable. Then again, maybe his way of speaking in his San Marcos days indicates that becoming a *hablador* truly was his destiny all along, and the narrator remembers that detail because it was so definitive of Saúl's character. Or, on the other hand, perhaps the narrator constructed the event (lied? invented?) in order to make the reader believe in the likelihood of Saúl's conversion. In any case, the anticipatory comment about Saúl's way of talking is echoed in chapter seven, as he tells of the first time he is called a *hablador*. He innocently asks: "¿Me había encontrado con mi destino?" (El hablador 203).

Another element of background information that seems to construct a Saúl that fits in the with the image is the *hablador* is the fact that he has as a pet, "un lorito hablador" (El hablador 12). The reader must ask if his parrot is a useful device for the narrator to connect the two figures, or is the bird merely a symbol to show that the narrator cannot really produce the *hablador*'s discourse but can mimic it in the way he imagines it to be. On the other hand, perhaps the bird is a visual stimulus that helped the narrator in his construction of the book. Emil Volek writes of another possible source of the bird that he found in Father Joaquín Barriaes study, a source cited by the narrator, and certainly consulted by Vargas Llosa. In the priest's study there is a photograph of a

well-dressed Machiguenga woman with a bird on her left shoulder, although the bird is not a parrot. However, as Volek concludes “Bien mirado, el loro da más color a la historia: Es un compañero romántico en la selva, pero también un contrapunto juguetón, paródico, del narrador” (Volek 113). Perhaps the parrot served all three purposes for the narrator: a unifying device to link the San Marcos Saúl to the *hablador* Saúl; a symbol as a talking bird that can only mimic discourse; and a visual stimuli from the narrator’s own research of the topic, which draws attention to the presence of fact within the fiction of the novel—but only for the critic who consults Barriaes’ study. Another particularly noteworthy anticipatory example is in an episode in which the narrator visually connects his friend Saúl to the *hablador*. The narrator recounts: “Le pedí que me contara algo más...Yo estaba echado en su cama y él sentado en un baúl, con su lorito en el hombro” (*El hablador* 17). This visual image functions also to centralize Saúl as the subject of the narrator’s gaze. This very image is later transposed onto the image of Saúl as a Machiguenga storyteller, with a parrot on his shoulder as well. In the later focus he is not just the subject of the narrator’s gaze but of an entire crowd’s gaze.

The narrator also employs a different set of techniques to demonstrate the orality of the *hablador* chapters. Although his own chapters emphasize orality, the *hablador*’s chapters do so in a much more significant sense. For one, “Saul’s discourse is marked throughout by repetitive signs of hesitation through the constant use of words like ‘parece,’ ‘tal vez,’ and ‘quizá’” (Acosta Cruz 136) which draw attention to his role as an oral reporter of that which he has heard. In addition, as Pedro Blanco has noted, the *hablador*’s speech is also highly dramatized, as he uses strategies such as an increased level of dialogue, sound effects and gestures in order to bring his stories alive. The

narrator's chapters do not employ these same sets of skills (184). O'Bryan-Knight also draws attention to some important differences between the *hablador's* and narrator's discourses. For one, the narrator relies on physical descriptions in his chapters, while the *hablador's* chapters lack descriptions of space as they are unnecessary to his live listening audience (79). Also, linguistically, the *hablador's* chapters are significantly different than the narrator's written discourse: "The *hablador's* language is characterized by short simple sentences, frequent noun clauses, and a reduced vocabulary marked by very limited use of adjectives" (O'Bryan-Knight 80). Further, as Volek concludes, the *hablador's* chapters are also marked by an increase use of the gerund (115).

Another significant difference in the narrator's technique to differentiate the odd and even chapters is in the type of stories that are told. Kokotovic categorizes the various types of stories told by the *hablador*, a task that would be impossible for the Western narrator whose discourse is not limited to a certain type or limited number of stories. The categories indicated by Kokotovic include Machiguenga myths of creation and history, stories of contact and exploitation from non-Machiguenga individuals, the recounting of stories/gossip told by other Machiguenga, and stories about the *hablador's* adventures (453). This closed set of narrative possibilities facilitates the reader's ability to understand the non-traditional form of narration found in chapters three, five and seven. The *hablador's* stories have a distinct value of transmitting specific message. Furthermore, the limited nature of possibilities increases the accessibility to the reader. The *hablador's* meanderings can be reduced even further, as Alicia Andreu indicates that his tales include only twenty-four stories (347).

The role of the *hablador* is also clearly defined by the type of stories that he tells. Andreu discusses the role of the *hablador* as “mensajero, historiador, actor, y vocalista, acciones todas con las cuales entretiene e instruye a sus ‘escuchadores’ en tanto trata de preservar sus tradiciones y costumbres” (350). Similarly, Michael Palencia-Roth also calls the storyteller a “jungle courier” (364). However, the storyteller’s job should be considered an “epistemological act as valid as any of those in contemporary western civilization. Narration is not an inferior way of knowing” (Palencia-Roth 364).

Thus, the narrator and storyteller’s ways of speaking are distinct. The *hablador*’s discourse is more limited and categorical, and he holds a specific function to express a specific type of communication in his society. However, both the narrator and the *hablador* offer valid means of knowledge and expression. In this way, the unification of the two figures comes through the production of language to a reader/ listener in a combined effort. In summary, the narrator employs strikingly different strategies to set the *hablador*’s and his own chapters apart. However, although the chapters seem to provide rigid dividing lines, in the end, the decisive lines are blurred. Both figures share traits undermining the structure of dichotomies. The combination of the whole narration results in the intermixing of both sides of the divide, the birth of the postmodern storyteller.

FACTUAL SOURCES FICTIONALIZED

The lines between fact and fiction are just as blurred as the other structures of division in the novel. Vargas Llosa himself concludes the following about the novel in René Avilés Fabila’s study: “En efecto las novelas mientan—no pueden hacer otra cosa—pero ésa es sólo una parte de la historia. La otra es que, mintiendo, expresan una

curiosa verdad, que sólo puede expresarse disimulada y encubierta, disfrazada de lo que no es” (26). Vargas Llosa adds that in his opinion, truth is not the reason to write: “No se escriben novelas para contar la vida sino para transformarla, añadiéndole algo” (27). These comments are especially pertinent to El hablador as truth and fiction are interwoven in an indiscernible way. At the same time Vargas Llosa indicates in an interview with Ricardo Setti, about El hablador that there are many real but also many imagined elements of the novel. He indicates: “Así es que no se trata de una autobiografía disimulada, sino de una novela, una ficción en la que también hay unos elementos autobiográficos integrados con elementos de la imaginación” (72).

There are various sources for factual information in the novel. For example, much of what the reader discovers about Machiguenga language is presented in chapter four, which the narrator tells from the perspective of his 1958 expedition to the Amazon. It is chapter four that provides the reader with useful information to decipher the *hablador's* chapters, although the reader has already read the first of the *hablador's* chapters (three) in a state of confusion during the first reading. In chapter four, among the most solid sources of information are Edwin Schneil and his wife, protestant missionaries who live among the Machiguenga. In point of fact, the Schneils are based on an actual missionary couple, Wayne Snell and Betty Elkins-Snell, whom the author supposedly met on his first real-life trip to the Amazon just as the narrator character does (Kristal 163). From the Schneils, the narrator learns that the Machiguenga do not have proper names, but rather transitory and situational names: “el que llega o el que se va, el esposo de la que acaba de morir o el que baja de la canoa...” (El hablador 81). Furthermore, in the novel, the narrator learns that any number beyond four is simply

classified as “many” (El hablador 81). Finally, based on what the narrator learns about and hears of the Machiguenga language he classifies the sounds with this description: “una crepitación sonora, con súbitas notas agudas...Era una lengua arcaica; de vibrante sonoridad y aglutinante, en la que una sola palabra compuesta de muchas otras podía expresar un vasto pensamiento” (El hablador 83-84).

Kristal compares this passage from Vargas Llosa’s novel to Barriaes’ book, Matsigenka, which is the same study referenced to by Volek that contains the photograph of the Machiguenga woman with a bird on her shoulder. For one, the narrator of El hablador refers directly to Barriaes’ collection of Machiguenga myths and songs (El hablador 151). Also, as Kristal underscores, Barriaes’ analysis of Machiguenga language is very similar to the narrator’s: “It is a language that allows a man to express everything he may wish to express by means of signs. [Its] extraordinary agglutination gives deep meaning to its words” (164).

In addition, Fray Vicente de Cenitagoya’s study is the first written academic account of the Machiguenga tribe that the narrator confesses having read “de un tirón” after finding the book in the Madrid library (El hablador 101). Cenitagoya’s conclusions on the oral sounds of the Machiguenga language concur with Barriaes’ and seem to show an every stronger parallel to El hablador. Cenitagoya writes: “La lengua machiguenga es dulce y musical en alto grado... Esta lengua es sumamente aglutinante; pues algunas veces, una sola palabra expresa los elementos todos de la oración” (19). With this example, the reader becomes readily aware of the way in which Vargas Llosa’s novel pushes the limitations of fiction and the very nature of the novel itself. The

anthropological and factual elements function to make commentary on ethnography itself while consistently demonstrating the necessarily subjective nature of writing.

Cenitagoya's study also provides other details about the Machiguenga that gain importance in Vargas Llosa's novel. I will look a little closer at some that seem to be the most significant, as no previous study has shown the inclusion of Cenitagoya's into the threads of the entire novel. For example, in one passage Cenitagoya refers to long conversations between the Machiguenga and their propensity to laugh at things they do not understand: "Los machiguengas no accionan ni gesticulan cuando conversan. En sus interminables conversaciones echan largas parrafadas uno tras otro con los ojos bajos y las manos entretenidas en cualquier bagatela. Por eso cuando ven al misionero gesticular o accionar en sus pláticas o sermones apenas pueden contener la risa" (30). This passage brings the reader to remember the *hablador* who asks of his Machiguenga audience: "¿De qué se están riendo tanto?" (El hablador 221).

The reader also observes in Vargas Llosa's novel, that the *hablador* seems to be solely a male tradition. For example, when the storyteller comes upon a woman who claims to be learning to speak "hablar" it seems to be an unnatural phenomenon. In fact, she is ridiculed by other members of society: "Apenas se comprendía lo que la yaminahua decía, y las otras mujeres, burlándose... La hacen trabajar y la tratan mal" (El hablador 107), which coincides with Cenitagoya's observation that Machiguenga men are more talkative than the women. Cenitagoya concludes: "En todas las razas humanas se advierte que la mujer es más habladora que el hombre. Entre los machiguengas se nota el fenómeno contrario. El hombre es un formidable conversador, para el que son cortas las veinticuatro horas del día" (32). Indeed, according to Cenitagoya, the Machiguenga man

is an incessant talker. Perhaps this is something that Vargas Llosa extrapolated from Cenitagoya's study, or perhaps his source was another, however, the reader promptly sees that the reality validates Vargas Llosa's fiction, and the role of investigation that he makes transparent to his novel.

Indeed, as Cenitagoya confirms, the Machiguenga society functions upon this basis of oral communication—the Machiguenga is constantly talking and gossiping. As he concludes, typical Machiguenga conversation topics include:

Excepción hecha del tiempo que gasta en murmurar del prójimo—que es la pésima ocupación de la mayor parte de los hijos de Adán— generalmente no habla más que de sí mismo: de sus enfermedades, de sus andanzas por el monte y por los ríos, de las incidencias que le han ocurrido en sus viajes, y otras noñeces por el estilo, y esta cantinela la repite una y otra vez, hasta dejar hastiado y bostezando al interlocutor” (33).

The end of this passage draws attention to Edwin Schneil's comments in the novel concerning his experiences with the *hablador*. He cynically tells the narrator: “Todavía me duelen los huesos, y sobre todo, la boca, de tanto bostezar, recordando esa noche” (El hablador 175). Schneil also admits that after a night with the *hablador*, he feels miserable: “La verdad, cuando terminó de hablar, ya estaba rendido, me dolían todos los huesos. Así que en seguida me dormí. Dése cuenta, cuatro o cinco horas sentado, sin cambiar de postura, después de remar contra la corriente casi todo el día. Y oyendo ese chisporroteo de anécdotas. No tenía ánimos para nada” (El hablador 173). It becomes apparent that

Schneil does not treasure the *hablador* experience in the same way as the narrator would if he could ever have the privilege of witnessing the *hablador* in action.

As Jennifer Peterson has also noted, Schneil's lack of interest in this Machiguenga tradition illustrates "a sad, but realistic point" also applicable to Cenitagoya's study of the Machiguenga: "there are many cultures in today's world that have been, and always will be, misunderstood" (52). Both Cenitagoya and Edwin Schneil are portrayed as typical Westerners who are unable to find the same value to the oral means of communication or storytelling as the Machiguenga find—the value that the narrator hopes to build in the novel. Cenitagoya makes a value judgment as to the boring nature of the incessant talking of the tribe while Schneil demonstrates little interest in the tradition, to the point where he describes it as a physically painful experience. Indeed, Vargas Llosa's emphasis on the storyteller figure indicates one of the most important messages in the novel, that the Self specifically looks for things in the Other to help define himself or herself. Surely, as missionaries, Cenitagoya and the Snell's/Schneil's are more interested in Machiguenga religious rituals than the narrator/author who focuses predominately on the role of the *hablador*. Just as the narrator accuses Saúl concerning his early obsession with the preservation of the Amazonian indigenous: "Te has vuelto un temático, Mascarita. Ya no se puede hablar contigo de otra cosa" (El hablador 22), the narrator is equally guilty of being obsessed with the storyteller, as if no other aspect of the Machiguenga has any importance. This point goes to demonstrate that the topics that the narrator excludes are as significant as those that he does include.

For all of the informative details that Vargas Llosa is able to gain from reading Cenitagoya, and that he includes in the novel there are discrepancies that raise critical

questions. For example, the narrator claims that references to the *hablador* are plentiful in early studies but stop in the 1950s. In actuality, from Cenitagoya the reader does not get a clear idea of the existence of a storyteller figure, however Cenitagoya's focus on incessant talking and gossiping is interesting and could be a very subtle reference. As the narrator comments: "Pero nunca, en ninguno de estos trabajos contemporáneos, encontré la menor información sobre los habladores... En los textos de misioneros dominicos que escribieron sobre ellos en los años treinta y cuarenta—los Padres Pío Aza, Vicente de Cenitagoya y Andrés Ferrero—había abundantes alusiones al hablador" (El hablador 151). It seems that the comment "abundantes alusiones al hablador" is not even an accurate declaration for Cenitagoya's study, which shows that in spite of the intermingling of fact, El hablador has to be considered a work of fiction.

Other factual information about the Machiguenga also surfaces in Vargas Llosa's novel—giving the investigative reader the sense that the novel is far from fiction, but also leaving him or her with incredulity and a questioning attitude towards the possibility of Saúl's metamorphosis into a *hablador*. Elements such as Cenitagoya's elucidations of Machiguenga myth, his mention of Tasorinchi and Kientibakori, his definition of the *cushma*: "La *cushma* es una túnica talar de algodón con tres aberturas, por donde les salen la cabeza y los brazos" (101), among various other elements that Vargas Llosa includes in his novel, give El hablador a strong sense of authority and believability. Furthermore, the two university professors in the novel, Porras Barrenechea and Matos Mar were both real professors at San Marcos, that Vargas Llosa has portrayed in accordance with their real personalities (Kokotovic 451-52).

However, the most significant result of the intermixed fact with fiction is in the reader's response. For example, knowing that the Machiguenga are a real people and discovering that many of the figures are historical makes it more difficult for the reader to balance the layers of truth and fiction in the novel. For example, when I first discovered that Cenitagoya was a real Dominican priest, I set off to find out what other details in the novel could be verified. I asked myself which of the narrator's comments could be believed? In this sense, Vargas Llosa's novel makes its point about Thirdspace in the dichotomy between fiction and reality as well. Fiction is not a simple dichotomy of truth or lies, but rather the novel itself becomes a Thirdspace, somewhere in the middle where the novel is neither truth nor fiction, but both. As Vargas Llosa masterfully weaves real research based on living people into literary characters of his novel he solidifies the connection between the novel's structure, the system of binaries, and finally the novel's more general commentary on the nature of fiction as well as the role of ethnography.

At the same time, the reader who has read both the novel and one or more of the "historical" texts is able to see the shortcomings of anthropologic study. For example in Cenitagoya's study, his analysis of the Machiguenga's wandering spirit differs from Vargas Llosa's, although the practice indicated is the same. Cenitagoya writes: "El salvaje siente una inclinación irresistible hacia los bosques que le vieron nacer. Bien puede estar con el civilizado veinte o treinta años. Al primer contratiempo se huye al monte, sin que su naturaleza se resienta con el cambio brusco de vida" (78). He also writes: "Los machiguengas son muy amigos de andar de una parte a otra. Apenas permanecen un año o dos en el mismo lugar" (84). In El hablador, the Machiguenga are

also portrayed as transient. However, we also see that Cenitagoya's study lacks an explanation of the sort the reader is able to gloss from the novel.

Even an informed reader will not be able to discern with certainty whether Father Cenitagoya or Vargas Llosa's portrayal of the Machiguenga is the most accurate. The narrator comments on this issue directly in El hablador, by stating that the Machiguenga in Cenitagoya's study "aparecían vistos desde afuera y bastante lejos, pese a que el misionero había vivido entre ellos más de veinte años" (El hablador 101). On the other hand, through the narrator's technique of writing from Saúl's perspective (the outsider on the inside of the outside), the reader is able to gain an understanding and even an appreciation and admiration for the Machiguenga's need to walk as a time-tested manner of self-preservation, and not as the unexplainable phenomenon referred to by Cenitagoya. However, the reader does not know whether or not the narrator's account can be believed either. In other words, perhaps the Machiguenga walk because they simply enjoy mobility as Cenitagoya has indicated, or as the storyteller has portrayed, perhaps the Machiguenga must walk to keep the sun in the sky. Kristal holds the opinion that Vargas Llosa manipulates Machiguenga myth to be more novelistic—maybe he does. For example, the section of the novel in which the *hablador* talks of the disappearance of the sun is based on a myth translated by none other than Betty Elkins-Snell. Kristal concludes: "Vargas Llosa borrows the disappearance of the sun motif as the ominous sign at the end of the world, but he inverts the story and transforms the Machiguenga's central myth to suit his anthropological fiction" (167). In this aspect, a simultaneous study of Vargas Llosa's sources mentioned in the novel seems to indicate the ways in which a writer appropriates and adjusts reality in order to suit his or her own needs and to validate

the concept that Vargas Llosa's novel cannot be considered truth or entirely fiction, but somehow can be classified as both.

One final passage of Cenitagoya's study also merits mention, which is a development of the way that the Machiguenga speaks. Cenitagoya's study seems to have influenced Vargas Llosa's portrayal of the *hablador's* speaking in the novel. Cenitagoya talks of Machiguenga manners when receiving guests: "Cuando una familia machiguenga recibe alguna persona en calidad de huésped, le pregunta:—'¿Vienes?'. Y el recientemente llegado le responde: 'Ehe'—sí" (116). Cenitagoya's elucidation is echoed in the beginning of chapter 5 of El hablador, as the storyteller tells of a visit with a family he did not expect to find: "Pero ahí estaba y lo mismo su familia y la mujer que se robó. «¿Estás ahí, Tasurinchi?» «Ehé, Ehé, estoy aquí»" (El hablador 107). Here is simply another outward demonstration of the way in which the narrator's/author's academic investigations fuel his fictionalization of the Machiguenga, even on the level of the creation of dialogue.¹¹⁰ The reader who checks Vargas Llosa's sources will be fascinated to discover his masterful implementation of them.

In fact, after reading Vargas Llosa's novel the reader feels as if he or she is well informed enough to read other academic work on the Machiguenga. El hablador gives

¹¹⁰ The narrator mentions works by other missionaries and anthropologists, which informed his study of the Machiguenga. A Google search quickly revealed the existence of some individuals, although their written accounts are difficult if not impossible to procure. For example, Padre José Pío Aza is easily found and listed as the author of an article about the Machiguenga, while Fray Elicerio Maluenda, referenced on the same page of the novel does not appear in a Google search, leaving the reader curious as to his historical existence. However, Vargas Llosa mentions conversations with Maluenda and not articles, so if Maluenda was not a published Friar, this may explain why he cannot be quickly found on the Internet. The narrator also undermines any authority that Maluenda may have by questioning what he tells him: "¿Cuánto habría de cierto en esto y en los otros datos que me dio Fray Maluenda? ¿No habría hecho el amable misionero demasiados añadidos y adaptaciones en el material que recogió?" All said the narrator's questioning of his own sources and information leaves the reader doubtful and uncertain, while also functioning to illuminate the investigative nature of the narrator's "fiction". Mario Vargas Llosa, El hablador (Bogotá: Seix Barral, 1987) 104.

the reader a solid starting point albeit fictionalized to begin to understand and interpret the Machiguenga reality. For example, Patricia Davis' linguistic study of the impact of increasing literacy rates among the Machiguenga draws attention both to the benefits of literacy as well as the negative side of literacy: "El alfabetismo puede ser una espada de dos filos que acelera la desintegración cultural y fomenta la discriminación social y los valores materialistas en sus 'beneficiarios' confiados (7), which shows the same binary system of negative and positive impact about which Saúl and the narrator disagree. After reading the novel, the reader is in a position in which he or she can judge and evaluate an academic study, such as the one by Davis, of the Machiguenga.¹¹¹

However, lest the reader forget, he or she may be misinformed in some aspects of the Machiguenga reality as the narrator manipulates the texts and the factual sources to tell the story that he wishes to portray. This is precisely Vargas Llosa's point, though. His fiction has simply added another account into the collection of anthropological works about the Machiguenga. He shows that any observer, ethnographer or anthropologist studying an Other will always necessarily be presenting a fiction, just as he has done. The only difference is that he intentionally rejects telling things precisely as they are, while in ethnography manipulation or ignorance can be the cause.

The reader also realizes the implications of Thirdspace in reference to Davis' opinion. Although she shares neither Saúl's nor the narrator's specific viewpoints, her own viewpoint places her in the Thirdspace category of "both" as she shares traits from both sides of the debate. One final illuminating issue in her study (which is in fact

¹¹¹ Patricia Davis' study was written in cooperation with the Instituto Lingüístico de Verano Perú, the very institute mentioned in the novel, which facilitated the narrator's trip to the jungle with Rosita Corpancho in 1958 and that is an institution that provokes a lot of dissent in Peru. Vargas Llosa, *El hablador* 69.

written after 1950, which counteracts the narrator's comments in chapter six) is an isolated comment in her introduction that the Machiguenga have a "rico repertorio de literatura oral", which she does not develop any further than this comment (6). In the same way that Cenitagoya refers to the Machiguengas as talkative, perhaps the oral literature also alludes to the figure of the *hablador*, although maybe not. Even though the concept of oral literature may seem to be a paradox, the *hablador* chapters of Vargas Llosa's novel very much bring alive this phenomenon.

Another ethnographic piece that provides information about the Machiguenga and helps the reader gauge the anthropological aspect of the novel is an article by Orna R. Johnson and Allen Johnson called Male/Female Relations and the Organization of Work in a Machiguenga Community. While the narrator makes no mention of this piece in the novel, the reader can easily interpret the fact that the article does not contradict Vargas Llosa's portrayal of the Machiguenga but rather validates (even in subtle details) his novel. For example, the Johnson's indicate that for agricultural reasons the Machiguenga are "semi-sedentary" and live in "small mobile settlements of two to three households averaging twenty to thirty people or single household units of four to nine occupants" (636). While these details also emerge in Vargas Llosa's novel, his artistic and creative portrayal of the tribe brings the Machiguenga reality alive to the reader, in a unique way, in a way the anthropological studies cannot..

BIBLICAL CONCEPTS AND SYMBOLISM

As we have seen, one of the most significant challenges facing the Self in writing the Other is perspective. One of the clearest examples of the influence of Western perspective is in the narrator's incorporation of religious and Christian metaphors in order

to explain the Machiguenga belief system. Intertwined with Machiguenga myth many Biblical parallels can be found, such as the battle between good and evil (the sun and the moon), a story of a fall from grace, the story of a destructive flood, etc. Some of the narrator's discourse directly echoes Biblical passages, such as "Allí empezamos y allí acabaremos los machiguengas" (El hablador 42), referring to man's return to the bottom of the Gran Pongo. The very wording of this citation resounds the Biblical passage: "You [will] return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return" (King James Gen. 3:19). In another example, the storyteller recounts that in the beginning of time, when the world was still perfect, "Las crías del tigrillo mamaban de las tetas de las mujeres" (El hablador 43), which echoes the Biblical concept of peace between animals that normally are predator and prey, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them" (Isa. 11:6). Although these two parallels explain different parts of the Machiguenga myth than their Biblical counterparts, the affinities with Biblical passages are undeniable.

The concept of creation is another example of Machiguenga myth that seems to have a Christian resemblance. In the novel, the storyteller tells of creation as being produced by the first *hablador*, who has a similar role as the Christian God during creation:

Algunas cosas saben su historia y las historias de las demás: otras, sólo la suya. El que sabe todas las historias tendrá la sabiduría, sin duda. De algunos animales yo aprendí su historia. Todos fueron hombres, antes. Nacieron hablando, o, mejor dicho, del hablar. La palabra existió antes

que ellos. Después, lo que la palabra decía. El hombre hablaba y lo que iba diciendo, aparecía. Eso era antes. Ahora el hablador habla, nomás. (El hablador 128)

This concept resonates the creation of the world according to the Bible which directly results from God speaking: “And God said, let there be light: and there was light... And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night” (Gen. 1:3, 5). The concept of creation as linked to discourse is also reiterated in the New Testament: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

The storyteller seems to take the Biblical parallels to an extreme point, when he begins to relate the story of Jesus, inserting a completely foreign concept into Machiguenga oral history. The *hablador* makes reference to the trinity with the following passage: “«Soy el soplido de Tasurinchi, soy el hijo de Tasurinchi, soy Tasurinchi. Soy esas tres cosas a la vez»” (El hablador 207). Furthermore, as the *hablador* portrays Jesus he concludes that Jesus also was a storyteller: “«Será un hablador», diciendo «Serán historias que cuenta», diciendo. El iba de un lado a otro, como yo. Hablando, hablando iba. Enredaba y desenredaba las casa, dando cosas. Tenía otra sabiduría, parece” (El hablador 207). Furthermore, the loaves and fishes, which Jesus multiplied, and other miracles that Jesus performed in the gospels of Bible evolve into Machiguenga accessible myth as the *hablador* tells of this savior figure: “Podía convertir unas pocas yuccas y unos cuantos bagres en tantísimos, en muchísimas yuccas y pescados para que toda la gente comiera. Devolvía los brazos a los mancos, los ojos a los ciegos y hasta hacía regresar a su mismo cuerpo a las almas que se habían ido” (El hablador 208). The narrator presents Jesus to the Machiguenga in a similar way as the

Christian Jesus by adjusting small details in order to fit with the lifestyle and discourse of the Machiguenga, such as bread to yucca, or raising the dead as the returning of souls to those “que se habían ido.” As the storyteller’s presentation of Jesus continues, he details his rejection by the leaders “los seripigaris” (El hablador 208), and his crucifixion, complete with a “corona de espinas de chambira” (El hablador 209). However the focus on Jesus changes to focus on the persecution of “el soplado por Tasurinchi-jehová” (El hablador 209), (the Jewish people). The storyteller laments the continual rejection of this people, the killing and persecution, the tearing apart of families and the denial of stability or land, all of which are and have been real conflicts facing the Jewish population.

At this point, the *hablador* assimilates the exiled Jew to the Machiguenga people—the people that walk to avoid destruction. In this section, the *hablador* is linked directly to Saúl as the storyteller asks: “¿Por ser distinto a los demás sería odiado?” (El hablador 211). However, the reader will recall that it is the narrator himself who indicates the feeling of rejection and suffering because of Saúl’s appearance and not Saúl himself—so although this passage may seem at first to affirm Saúl as the *hablador* all it really affirms is the narrator’s portrayal of Saúl and decision to make him the *hablador* is a well implemented one, presenting Saúl as faithfully as he can possibly imagine, from his own perspective.

Furthermore, the parallels between Christianity and Machiguenga origins call attention to a series of problems. For example, one difficulty is the fact that the ethnographic texts that the narrator uses to inform his knowledge of the Machiguenga have been written by priests and missionaries who had a tendency to portray the

Machiguenga in terms that they themselves understood. For example, Cenitagoya and Barriales' religious perspectives tainted the way they explored Machiguenga myth. In this way, the narrator's portrayal of the Machiguenga is also necessarily contaminated by his reading of the accounts of Machiguenga myth from Western God-believing sources as well as his own belief system.

Another important consideration concerning the role of the Christian religion in the novel is Saúl's name. As I have already analyzed in the chart comparing Saúl and the narrator, the idea of religious conversion is used by the narrator in order to bring the Western reader to an understanding of the change in Saúl. Because of his name, Saúl is compared to the Biblical Paul who is considered by some to be the most important convert of the New Testament.¹¹² Indeed, as Castro-Klarén has indicated:

Like Saul (the apostle), Zuratas (the Peruvian Jew) experiences a conversion. Mascarita speaks a gospel. Just like Saul/Paul, Mascarita creates a logos out of a few loose and uncorroborated stories. The uncontaminated and 'pure' Indians that Mascarita claims to have found appear not as a construction of the self but rather as a figment of desire with no referent whatever outside language" (52).

Indeed, in the seventh chapter, the *hablador* tells of the day when he was first called *hablador*, which made him realize that he had finally found his destiny. He refers to the place of his epiphany, "en una quebradita del río Timpshía" and indicates "«Aquí nació la

¹¹² Jennifer Geddes also mentions the implications of using the idea of conversion to describe Saúl's becoming a Machiguenga, which parallels Saul of Tarsus' conversion in the New Testament. Jennifer L. Geddes, "A Fascination for Stories: The Call to Community and Conversion in Mario Vargas Llosa's *The Storyteller*," *Literature & Theology: An International Journal of Theory, Criticism and Culture* 10.4 (1996): 372.

segunda vez»... «Aquí volví sin haberme ido»...Así comencé a ser el que soy. Fue lo mejor que me ha pasado, tal vez” (*El hablador* 203). Of particular note, is the use of the Christian concept of rebirth of the born-again Christian in order to express the storyteller’s sudden change from lacking a purpose in life, to gaining the importance of becoming a storyteller.¹¹³ Indeed, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus is similar to the *hablador*’s. As Saul travels from Tarsus to Damascus planning to persecute Christians by binding them and taking them to Jerusalem he is struck by a bright light and a voice from the heavens asking “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (Acts 9:4).¹¹⁴ I. Howard Marshall classifies this moment for Saul as a receiving of a divine revelation that works as an agent of change in his life (169). Thus, after Saul de Tarsus’ conversion he becomes an effective preacher and ‘storyteller’ of the gospel connecting communities with the word of God by preaching. In this same way as Saúl the Pharisee was changed, Saúl the storyteller is also born again into his new life as a *hablador*.¹¹⁵

Still the reader must ask, what is a converted Saúl into a Christian religion if there is no Jesus figure in whom to focus his attention? If Saúl is to be considered a convert there must be a savior for him to preach and follow. Kit Brown, for example, concludes that the storyteller/Saúl is the savior to the Machiguenga: “Incluso existe la posibilidad

¹¹³ One of numerous passages of the Bible that mention the concept of rebirth is in John 3:3-7. “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

¹¹⁴ The story of Saúl’s conversion is included in Acts 9:1-30.

¹¹⁵ Peter Standish also links Paul of the Bible with Saúl as he indicates that Paul had a physical defect that he refers to in the Bible as a “thorn in the flesh” in 2 Cor. 12.7 and Gal 4.13. Peter Standish, "Vargas Llosa's Parrot," *Hispanic Review* 59.2 (1991): 149.

de ver en el hablador un Segundo advenimiento de Cristo, un Salvador para los machiguengas. Aunque sea una interpretación razonable, encierra más verdad poética que religiosa...” (77). On the other hand, J. Franco concludes that Vargas Llosa/ the narrator figure is the savior who also steps into the “posición del Redentor” (“La historia” 14), an interpretation that I am more apt to accept than the fact that Saúl is the new Jesus. For J. Franco, the narrator/author is the one who saves the Machiguenga from being forgotten by writing of his image and essence. The narrator becomes so obsessed with the role of the storyteller in society that the very figure of the storyteller is apotheosized.¹¹⁶ Even more important is the narrator’s own role in El hablador to re-appropriate the communication of experience through the postmodern storyteller as a saving force for society and the individual. As Muñoz concludes, “Vargas Llosa harbors the hope (or is it the ambition?) that the Storyteller of old has merely metamorphosed into the writer/critic of today” (80-81). Indeed, Vargas Llosa says as much in an interview referring to the figure of the Machiguenga storyteller: “Ese hombre, desde tiempos inmemoriales, está cumpliendo una función parecida a la que yo cumplo en esta sociedad en que vivo: fabular, contra historias, entretener y, al mismo tiempo, también comunicar algo que viene de otras partes” (Setti 73). In other words, it becomes apparent that the author apotheosizes himself as a savior. His obsession with the *hablador* is converted into an obsession about his own storytelling.

CONCLUSION

¹¹⁶ Indeed as Booker concludes: “There is not really that much difference between his apotheosis of the habladores and Jean-Jacque Rousseau’s invocation of the ‘noble savage’ Booker, Vargas Llosa Among the Postmodernists 134.

Castro Urioste considers that in El hablador there is a clear notion of a “discourse of conquest.” In this conquest, the Self has an encounter with the Other during which the Self tries to dominate both the Other and his or her space (242). However, as a study of El hablador demonstrates, the observer narrator constructs these binary oppositions only to undermine them throughout the novel. In other words, the discourse of conquest itself is undermined in the blurring of the lines between Self and Other. As the binary system is overturned, the figures of Saúl and the *hablador* are united and both the oral and written storytellers join in the function as a savior of society. The final chapter solidifies the process of unifying polar opposites. As Sergio Franco indicates, this unification comes about as a result of the narrator’s transposition of Peru onto Florence (585). The narrator brings together the past and the present, the premodern and postmodern, the old and the new, the emotive and the intellectual, etc. The narrator shows, in his discourse in the eighth chapter, that Peru becomes a presence in Florence solidifying the erasure of distinct dividing lines. For example, as the narrator looks at Florence he sees that tourists flow like the “río amazónico, and the fact that the “nativos” have left because of the heat (El hablador 225). The narrator also admits that the mosquitoes are as ferocious in Florence as in the Peruvian jungle, concluding that even their presence does not detain the tourist: “En todo caso es inútil. Ni los bichos ni el calor ni nada en el mundo serviría de dique a la multitudinaria invasión” (El hablador 225). The reader comes to the very same conclusion about the invasion of the Amazon—that it is unstoppable, and that it brings both positive and negative results. There is no longer a system of dichotomies, but rather a blend, a both.

Yet, the narrator's questioning and uncertain attitude throughout the novel shows that he has conflicting thoughts on modernization, which can be seen especially in a comparison between his younger self and his older self. In fact, the reader cannot even be certain which of the narrator's comments about the Peruvian project of modernization are valid and indicative of his true feelings, as he often undermines his statements about progress through declarations to the reader such as "A veces, para ver hasta dónde podía llevarlo «el tema», yo lo provocaba" (*El hablador* 23) and "Se lo dije para que descargara su artillería pesada contra mí" (*El hablador* 25). Indeed, the entire novel and the succinct systems of binaries reflect the idea that the narrator is undecided about his feelings on the what to do about the Amazonian Indians. Although Castro Urioste and other critics declare that Vargas Llosa sees the indigenous as an obstacle of modernity (242), the narrator (we must not confuse him with the author) is less decisive.¹¹⁷ Sommer also captures this idea well. She indicates that the duality between modernization and preservation in the novel:

¹¹⁷ Another critic, who asserts that Vargas Llosa sees the Peruvian indigenous population as a hindrance to modernization, is Misha Kokotovic. Her conclusion actually puts into question my own analysis concerning the narrator's overturning of the binary relationship in *El hablador*. She writes: "The very terms in which the dilemma is posed predetermine its resolution. Vargas Llosa sets up a false dichotomy by opposing Western modernization to the straw man of cultural 'preservation,' by which he means literally freezing 'primitive' indigenous cultures in time...If 'forced to choose,' Vargas Llosa informs us, he would choose modernization, though with great sadness. Yet who or what is forcing such a choice? Is preservation the only alternative to modernization? Is there only one form of modernization, the one that leads to a Western modernity? Are contemporary indigenous cultures not already the product of centuries of interaction with their European conquerors? In Vargas Llosa's binary vision, 'archaic' cultures are to be replaced wholesale by another, modern one, as if culture were a repository of discrete, substitutable and mutually exclusive collections of traits rather than a creative social process" Misha Kokotovic, "Mario Vargas Llosa Writes Of(f) the Native: Modernity and Cultural Heterogeneity in Peru," *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 25.3 (2001): 449. On the other hand I share Doris Sommer's view that although Vargas Llosa admits to holding the view of modernization over preservation, the novel, "at least keeps the alternatives in tension and fixes the dilemma into static, unnerving irresolution" Doris Sommer, "About-Face: The Talker Turns," *Boundary 2: An International Journal of Literature and Culture* 23.1 (1996): 95. Finally, as I indicate in my own analysis, at least in the novel, the solution presented by Vargas Llosa can certainly be a both.

Is a source of both concern and hope. It can lead to dismissing indigenous otherness as inassimilable and inessential to the Peruvian body politic, a dismissal that countrymen read in Vargas Llosa's consistent carelessness about Indian cultures and lives. Instead of two souls in one body, his novel shows two faces, as one confronts the Other in an endless, but intimate, standoff. This literarily sustained confrontation also holds out a hope: the possibility of reconciliation—on a reading from this geographic remove—even if the promise is betrayed by a man called Vargas Llosa ("About-Face" 132).

This is the benefit of the observer narrator who sees more than he actually believes or can grasp. Throughout the novel, the narrator presents everything that he sees, including Saúl's opinions and his own opinions. But, in the end he still leads the reader to a space where he or she alone can make a judgment on the issues of preservation, modernization or a solution that somehow entails both—regardless of the opinion of Vargas Llosa himself. In this way, El hablador shows that the Machiguenga as a society and the *hablador* as the glue holding them together are a failed utopia. In El hablador, social change is presented as not feasible, the *hablador* can no longer save the Machiguenga although the narrator can try to save society. The postmodern narrator shows that the only type of change possible is individual change.

The unnamed narrator of El hablador is not Vargas Llosa's first observer narrator. La tía Julia y el escribidor y Historia de Mayta are two other novels with unnamed narrators telling the story of another protagonist. I chose to write about El hablador because the novel's very focus on the art of storytelling and anthropology lends itself to

understand the Self (observer) and the Other (observed) implicit in the relationship of every narrator and his subject examined in this study. Indeed, as Gallagher has also confirmed, the value of *El hablador* is the ability for each individual to bring his or her perspective to the novel. El hablador:

Recognizes the barriers to understanding the other, the difficulty of penetrating their life and culture, and the impossibility of conveying one's own understanding accurately to a multitude of readers.... He seems to believe that his story will have to be decoded by his readers who bring their own point of view to his novel (125) .

The narrator and his reader accomplice have crossed various spaces: Lima, the jungle, Madrid, Paris and Florence and have attained a heightened perspective. Like Cabeza de Vaca and bell hooks the narrator and reader can no longer be considered Self nor Other but rather both. This is what the observer narrator gives to the reader—a new perspective and a new sense of self. The journey to explore the extent of Otherness begins a process of self-actualization. The novel has a very important function for “narcissistic purposes of self-definition” (Millington "Insiders" 175). Through the observation of the Other, the postmodern storyteller brings the reader face to face with the mirror of the Other. In the novels of the first-person non-protagonist narrator, a new narcissism surges, one that is characterized by looking inward in order to look outward. Looking at “The Other ‘I’” is one way for the Self to reconstruct his shards of identity. This is the role of the new narcissism of postmodernism.

Conclusion: Postmodern Problems with Postmodern Solutions

“Ovid’s Narcissus, condemned to fall in love with a treacherous double, represents the plight of the late twentieth-century individual, confronting problems of wounded self-esteem, blurred self-object boundaries, and grandiosity”

—Jeffrey Berman

“That is, all of us, as we read, use the literary work to symbolize and finally to replicate ourselves”

—Norman Holland

As I close, I would like to return to Ovid’s Narcissus and his relationship with Echo. Hugo Achugar makes a very poignant observation concerning the Latin America *testimonio* genre. Achugar compares the relationship of Echo and Narcissus with the relationship of the interlocutor and the witness:

En el testimonio, el letrado solidario (Miguel Barnet, Elena Poniatowska, Elizabeth Burgos-Debray, etc.) parecería establecer un diálogo similar al de Eco y Narciso. El letrado solidario como la joven ninfa repite enamorado lo que el Otro dice. Pretendiendo espejo oral de un discurso ajeno, la repetición no es ni total ni significa necesariamente lo mismo... En la historia de Ovidio, Eco entusiasmada por lo que equivocadamente cree ha sido una respuesta positiva a sus requerimientos, intenta abrazar a Narciso y es rechazada por el joven. Es luego de rechazar a Eco y de rechazar a Aminias que Narciso vagando por el bosque descubre su

imagen en la fuente... Sin la voz de Narciso, Eco no tiene voz y sin la presencia de Narciso, la imagen de Narciso no tiene posibilidad de existir. Sin la voz del letrado el individuo que brinda su testimonio no existe para el legitimante universo letrado. Así como Eco enamorada de Narciso posibilita el diálogo, el letrado solidarizado /enamorado del testimoniante posibilita su discurso. (73)

The point that Achugar makes here is that without one another the interlocutor and the witness are both condemned to silence. The relationship between the two is mutually necessary. The interlocutor, as Echo, can only reflect the discourse of the witness, although the mirror image reflection will be inexact. Narcissus, who fixates upon his own gaze, eventually dies, but what happens to Echo? Jeffrey Berman indicates that with the silence of Narcissus, Echo also is faced with her own death. She “retreats into the woods and feeds her love on melancholy until her body withers away. Echo’s crippling dependency on Narcissus betrays a self that cannot exist on its own” (9).

In the novels that I have examined, Donoso, Garro, García Márquez and Vargas Llosa reject this mutual dependence and ultimate condemnation to death. Each author reverses the roles of Echo and Narcissus in the texts under consideration. The non-protagonist observer narrator becomes a postmodern Narcissus, one who knows that his reflection exists and hunts desperately for it as a way to combat the fragmented identity that he or she cannot overcome. The Observed, the protagonist, becomes Echo, who serves as a mirror to reflect the narrator. Instead of rejecting her, the new Narcissus embraces Echo as he recognizes that the relationship with his un-fragmented Self can be achieved through her. However, in order to use Echo as a mirror the observer narrator

must challenge the very authority limiting his or her ability to represent the Other. In order to achieve authority, the narrator benefits from a witness. Each narrator needs a reader-accomplice on his or her journey of self-identification, and as a result, each reader, who also suffers a narcissistic deficiency or fragmentation, can benefit from the observation of the Other, in a slow but certain reconstruction of the Self. This fragmentation touches every aspect of contemporary man, who acts constantly in search of self-affirmation. Literature and the act of reading is one way in which the fragmented individual can reconfigure an image of him or herself.

Throughout this study, including immediately above, I have alluded to, although I have not analyzed in depth, the function of reading in regards to its psychological benefit. Marshall W. Alcorn Jr. and Mark Bracher underscore this relationship in their article “Literature, Psychoanalysis, and the Re-Formation of the Self: A New Direction for Reader-Response Theory.” Alcorn & Bracher establish a link between the possible benefits of reading and psychoanalysis: “Recent developments in object-relations theory suggest that the process of reading and discussing literature is similar in a number of crucial ways to the process of psychoanalysis, which is specifically designed to mobilize and alter the internalized structure of the self” (345). Alcorn and Bracher show some of the major similarities between the two including the ability to readjust or vicariously fulfill unconscious fantasies; learning to confront reality; the transference phenomena; the evaluation of preconceived beliefs; and the confrontation and interpretation of one’s own value system (346-47).

However, the most important similarity between psychoanalysis and literature is the bond or relationship between patient/therapist and text/reader. William Meissner

analyzes the important of an alliance between the patient and the analyst, which allows for psychoanalytic progress. As Meissner indicates, the individual who may be defensive at first, can eventually form a relationship of trust with the therapist because of his or her empathy:

A transition, however, must be made from this initial level of narcissistic defensive alliance to a genuine therapeutic alliance. The critical element is transformation of basic trust into a more elaborated and secure sense of secondary trust. What makes this transition possible is empathic responsiveness of the analyst, who senses the locus of the patient's narcissistic vulnerability and provides sufficient support and reassurance for the patient to enter more deeply into the relationship without threat of further narcissistic injury (Therapeutic 176-77).

In a similar way, in literature, the reader will enter into an empathetic relationship with the text in order to form this bond. As Alcorn and Bracher indicate:

A reader's initial attraction to a particular author often takes the form of a narcissistic alliance. As psychoanalysts have noted, the need for such narcissistic support is universal...Literature provides such support for many people, in fact, one might argue that this function constitutes literature's primary appeal (348-49).

As Alcorn and Bracher further analyze, oftentimes the figures in literature are portrayed as "confronting the same aspects of existence...that threaten the reader's own sense of self" and as a result the reader "forms a narcissistic alliance" with the figure (349). This concept describes perfectly the relationship that the reader can form with the postmodern

storyteller of the novels that I examine in this study. Indeed, the reader accomplice joins the postmodern storyteller in camaraderie against the shared existential crisis of postmodern fragmentation, forming a narcissistic alliance and achieving the benefit of overcoming his or her narcissistic deficiency. While Alcorn and Bracher do not mention the kind of text that reaps the greatest benefit, I posit here that because of the special bond that the reader forms with the narrator in the texts that I consider in this study, their relationship is even more assimilated to the patient/therapist relationship.

Finally, I would like to address the negative connotations that accompany a contemporary view of narcissism and clarify my own position on what I mean by a narcissistic deficiency. Beginning with Christopher Lasch's The Culture of Narcissism, which I analyze in the introduction, narcissism has been associated with the rise of capitalism and can be described as self-centered, egotistical, individualistic, materialistic, self-love that replaces community values, respect and empathy for others. Although this phenomenon is often linked to a North American consumer society, José Luis Trechera Herreros indicates that the trend is increasingly more widespread (221-23). He indicates the following regarding Narcissism:

Narciso ya sólo trabaja para la liberación de su Yo, y para ello no dudará incluso en renunciar el amor. Su nuevo programa revolucionario será: amarme a mí mismo es suficiente como para no necesitar otra cosa para ser feliz...Cada uno se convierte en el ombligo del mundo, a la búsqueda del Yo perdido. El propio hedonismo se personaliza y se vuelve narcisismo psi. (223).

It becomes apparent that for critics like Lasch and Trechera Herreros narcissism is a negative problem of society of epidemic or plague-like proportions. Trechera Herreros even suggests that just as Albert Camus' 1942 work draws a parallel between man's absurd condition and the eternal condemnation of Sisyphus, the self-defeating self-love that affects the individual entering the twenty-first century is represented by Narcissus (222). So, it follows to ask the reason why I treat narcissism in this study as a desirable outcome. Meissner's differentiation between self-love and selfishness illuminates the distinction: "Self-love was assumed to be synonymous with selfishness. But the psychoanalytic understanding of narcissism is more inclined to view selfishness as reflecting a lack of self-love; rather than being identical, they are opposites—selfishness is the mark of narcissistic deficiency or depletion" (Ethical 146). Indeed, Meissner indicates that some behaviors that are attributed to man because of his narcissism, in fact, are a result of a narcissistic deficiency and not a surplus.

I would suggest that when narcissism meets postmodern theory a healthy balance of self-love is overturned, becoming a deficiency rather than a surplus. In order to return to a normal equilibrium, postmodern man must try to fulfill this deficiency through psychotherapy, literature or other methods of self-affirmation. Narcissism and postmodernism cannot be separated as distinct from one another. Through the in-depth studies of El jardín de al lado, Testimonios sobre Mariana, Crónica de una muerte anunciada and El hablador it becomes clear that the selection of the non-protagonist narrator by each of these authors is not a simple coincidence but rather a complex rebuttal to the problems of postmodern society. The most pressing problem for the individual in

this society is the feeling of fragmentation, which is indicative of the narcissistic deficiency, in other words the lack of self-love when the individual most needs it.

Concepts such as truth, the representation of the Self and Other and narrative authority are particularly important in each of the novels that I examine. First and foremost, as I have established, each novel in question is a parody. Donoso's novel parodies the realist novel; Garro's novel parallels the traditional *testimonio* novel; García Márquez's novel parodies the journalistic chronicle while Vargas Llosa's novel offers a parody of the ethnographic study. Not only does each novel parody a traditional form, allowing for the parody to cross over into the realm of postmodern pastiche but also the genres that are parodied share an important similarity. The realist novel, the *testimonio*, the chronicle and the ethnography study are all written to communicate a specific message, a narrative truth. However, the parody of these genres shows that specific communicative messages can no longer be shared in traditional forms of narrative. At the center of each of the parodied genres is a first-person narrator who is either an individual of a historic moment, a subaltern, a reporter or a scientist who writes from his or her perspective as if what he or she wishes to express can be communicated to and received by the reader. In contrast, the non-protagonist observer narrators, Gloria, Gabrielle, and the two unnamed narrators of García Márquez's and Vargas Llosa's novels write in order to perceive the Other, knowing that his or her perspective is limited, which both excludes truth-telling and questions the possibility of communication. The first-person non-protagonist narrator knows that absolutes and master narratives are undermined in postmodernism. However, the first-person perspective allows for an

immediate bond with a reader who can join the narrator in his struggle to write and to represent the Other.

The narrator's limited viewpoint of the Other leads to direct commentary in each novel in regards to the treatment of Self and Other. The inquiry into the critical issue is undertaken in distinct ways in each novel. In El jardín, Testimonios and Crónica the most detectable Self/Other relationships are a result of specific issues of gender inequality. In El jardín, Gloria is a female, pretending to be a male writing a male as a way to liberate herself from a lifetime of subjection to *machismo*. She achieves this by writing her own novel, when her husband's novel fails. In Testimonios, Augusto's narrative authority is so strong that Gabrielle has a difficult time representing Mariana. However, in this novel, Gabrielle's rebellion against Augusto comes by way of taking to the task of writing Mariana in order to explore and affirm her sense of Self. Gabrielle gains liberation by becoming empowered as a narrator.

In Crónica, Santiago is a rich, womanizing, Other of Arabic descent who may or may not have deflowered Ángela, the female Other of the novel. The narrator focuses on Ángela's discovery of her own ability to control her destiny, as the key to the novel's message of overcoming societal control and limitation. Ángela's liberation too comes from gaining the power to narrate, which begins with her renunciation of Santiago. The narrator also achieves the power to narrate and to bring the reader-accomplice to narrate through Ángela's renunciation of Santiago. Finally, in El hablador the narrator explores Saúl as a Jewish, disfigured Other who becomes a Machiguenga Indian Other of the Amazon. The narrator and Saúl are both empowered by narrating. Saúl narrates as an oral storyteller. The narrator, as he gains control over Saúl's discourse, becomes a postmodern

storyteller who once again has a specific task in society. In the case of each novel, the power to narrate enables the postmodern storyteller, but the true power is transferred to the reader as a result of the narrator and reader's gaze of the Other. Narrative power can be achieved by overcoming the limited ability to communicate with discourse that problematizes postmodernism.

As I have discussed repeatedly, Silviano Santiago claims that the postmodern storyteller achieves a renewed sense of communication by appropriating the reader as his accomplice. Therefore, the empowerment that each narrator gains by writing is available to the reader as he or she consumes the narrator's text. This new relationship simulating the patient/therapist bond renews the ability to communicate experience in literature in the context of postmodern society.

As such, each of the observer narrators of "The Other 'I'" engages in specific techniques that diminish his or her narrative authority. One important strategy that is underscored is the role of memory in the portrayal of the Other. Gloria portrays Julio's memory of the past, Chile, as intermixing with the present, and with the garden next door. As such, Gloria focuses her writing on the meshing of two sets of displaced memories. Gabrielle claims that her memory of Mariana is blurred and fragmented because of Augusto's control. The chronicler points out his own faulty memory of the events of a murder that he did not even see first-hand, comparing his own journalistic task to that of piecing together the fragmented mirror of memory. The unnamed narrator in *El hablador* also questions his ability to remember Saúl from decades before. He emphasizes the fact that he might be remembering unclearly or even manipulating what he does remember so that the past can fit better with the present. Each of the narrators

likens the task of remembering to reconstruction. This reconstruction is ultimately linked to the reconfiguration of the fragmented self that becomes possible through the narrator's representation of the Other.

Each narrator of the four texts puts his or her authority into question in other ways as well. Gloria's seemingly easy explanation of her sources in the last chapter can be construed as undermining her authority. Indeed, every feeling that she narrates from her husband's point of view is her own supposition. Gabrielle's lack of dedication to her friend indicated by her self-focus undermines her narration and her reliability. Gabrielle shows that she is willing to sacrifice Mariana's story for her own. The narrator of Crónica uses strong anti-rhetorical strategies to undermine his own text in order to empower the reader. The chronicler establishes the ways in which the external proofs are unreliable and then deconstructs his own text indicating similar weaknesses. The narrator in El hablador, like Gloria in El jardín is the author of everything that Saúl says. He sets his entire narration up on the Self/Other dichotomy to then show the impossibility of limiting his narration in this way. This narrator overturns the structure of his own narration in a symbolic commentary on literary Thirdspace. Also, the narrators of Crónica and El hablador intermix fiction and reality in a way that leaves the reader questioning the nature and relationship of the two resulting in an overwhelming feeling of uncertainty and a questioning attitude about reality itself.

Another element linking the uncertainty of these novels together is references in each text to extra-textual texts and secrets. These extra texts provoke an underlying feeling in each novel that the reader is only getting half of the story. For example, Gloria's and Mariana's diaries are kept secret. Julio has two versions of a novel we never

see, nor do we see Barnaby's or Gabrielle's fictions about Mariana's life. In Crónica, there are official documents withheld such as the judge and autopsy report, various letters we never can read as well as the sexual secrets that we hear about and those we do not. Also, in El Hablador there are various references to the narrator's supposedly true external sources. The investigative reader of El hablador can actually find and study some of these, but not in the novel itself. This trait contributes to the reader's sense that he or she can see only fragments of the very text that he or she reads.

Furthermore, in the center of each novel included in this study is a displacement of location or temporality. The concepts of exile and existential orphanhood parallel the metaphysical lack of belonging emphasized by fragmentation in each of these texts. Julio and Gloria in El jardín are displaced from Chile and then from Sitges. Furthermore, the metaphorical and physical garden next-door are unreachable *locus amoenus* to both characters who are exiled from happiness. In Testimonios Gabrielle narrates Mariana who is a Russian displaced to Latin America now living in Paris. Similarly, Gabrielle's sense of exile lies in her own poverty and social class. Her existential feeling of displacement links her to Mariana's physical exile. In Crónica, the narrator was absent from the events of the murder and he is also separated by decades from that which he wishes to reconstruct. Similarly, the narrator of El hablador is separated by time from Saúl and his university days and can be found self-exiled in Florence, trying to escape a Peru that haunts him. It follows to mention that each of the authors of these texts faced the reality of exile, either forced or voluntary when writing the novels under consideration. Donoso and Garro were in Paris as their protagonists were, García

Márquez was in México and Vargas Llosa wrote El hablador at least partially from holidays in Florence just as the narrator of his novel does.

Although I have summarized just a small number of the affinities connecting these texts, at the center of each is the most important project of identifying with instead of rejecting others. The postmodern storyteller renews the power of literature to change and shape the individual, even as he or she is a postmodern product. Alcorn and Bracher indicate that perhaps literature is one system not overturned by postmodernism, that can allow for the reader's sense of belonging and his avoidance of both alienation and fragmentation:

By exercising and strengthening our capacity to identify with others, literature provides us with an ability that will allow further growth and adjustment as we encounter new realities in the course of our lives. No only can literature provide us with a map of the rough terrain that may be ahead, and not only does literature offer us provisions for the journey; it can also help us attain the adaptability and resilience necessary to survive and prosper in the unfamiliar regions where we may find ourselves (351).

It all sounds a bit utopian, but as writers continue to author texts, readers continue to consume them, and critics continue to analyze them, there is no doubt that there must be something there, something that remains even amongst the ruins that postmodernism criticism indicates. As Jeffrey Berman concludes, "The preservation of a delicate balance between self and other are antidotes to narcissism" (Berman 54). As the novels that I examine in "The Other 'I'" indicate, the New Narcissus embraces Echo because he

realizes that alienation from her contributes to his fragmentation, while the possibility of his individual fulfillment lies in reconciliation.

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