

Myth Making / Myth Breaking: Subjectivity and
Nationhood in *Tiempo de Silencio*, *Reivindicación del
Conde don Julián*, and *El cuarto de atrás*

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Introduction

It is through the lens of *Weltanschauung* that I begin my analysis of Luis Martín-Santos' *Tiempo de Silencio* (1960), Juan Goytisolo's *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* (1970), and Carmen Martín Gaité's *El cuarto de atrás* (1978). *Weltanschauung* (in Spanish *cosmovisión*) is a special generational or epochal mode of understanding the world and the way in which individuals experience it. The term *Weltanschauung* literally means "worldview" or "world outlook," but it translates best as "world-wide perception." Although it carries many different connotations, worldview most commonly refers to the set of beliefs and ideas through which an individual or a group of people interprets the world as a collective. *Weltanschauung* can include any number of factors in one's surroundings, including politics, science, religion, history, philosophy, society, and culture. Ultimately, a group of individuals living in the same geographic region or the same historical time period share specific commonalities of experience that allow them to connect with one another. Whereas each person's life and circumstances are particular, *Weltanschauung* implies that the general worldview will remain the same. In this way, the thread that unites *Tiempo de Silencio*, *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*, and *El cuarto de atrás* is that of the writers' shared experience of the traumatic Spanish Civil War and the various phases of the postwar period. All three writers reflect critically on the unprecedented social, cultural, and political changes in postwar Spain; as a group, their three novels provide valuable insight into their own experiences as well as those of a nation at large.

The first phase of the postwar period which all three novels either explore or allude to was the economic depression and social inequality of the 1940s and 50s. In particular, each writer reflects on the dramatic socioeconomic divisions that resulted

from dictator Francisco Franco's stifling economic policies. By the end of the War in 1939, Spain had fallen into serious economic disrepair: "the national income, at constant prices, had fallen back to that of 1914, but since the population had increased the per capita income fell to nineteenth-century levels; that is, the Civil War had provoked an unprecedented economic recession."¹ Franco strived to fix this economic crisis by instituting a policy of autarky, which relied on a "self-sufficient, self-capitalizing economy protected from outside competition by tariffs and administrative controls...and regulated by state intervention" (Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa 50). This economic isolationism, which Franco saw as "an ideal and *permanent* solution, not only as a response to the postwar crisis," had profound effects both on Spain's citizens and its relations with other countries (Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa 51). Domestic social divisions worsened; the lower classes, which Martín-Santos depicts in *Tiempo de Silencio*, experienced nearly abject poverty while the upper class thrived. As all three writers demonstrate or allude to in their novels, the poorest of Spanish society "lived in caves or in shacks, *chabolas*, which they built on the outskirts of cities from scraps of wood or stolen bricks. Above them the black market, bribes, and favoritism were producing a class of ostentatious new rich, drawing their income from illegal or immoral sources."² These "years of hunger" in which "poverty was made more painful by the conspicuous waste of the fortunate few" play a particularly significant role in the development of subjectivity in *Tiempo de Silencio* and *El cuarto de atrás* (Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa 52).

¹ Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi Aizpurúa, *Spain, Dictatorship to Democracy* (London; Boston: G. Allen & Unwin, 1979) 49. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

² Richard Herr, *Spain* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971) 231. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

Whereas all three writers reflect on the horrible economic conditions of the 40s and 50s, they focus specifically on the dramatic social isolation of this postwar period. Franco saw himself “as the savior of Spain in a Crusade to rescue ‘true’ Spain from ‘anti’-Spain and its foreign allies” (Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa 18). In order to return to the authentic destiny from which Spain had strayed, he needed to retain total control over his country and protect it from the harmful social influences of the rest of the world. As such, Franco dominated the institutions that controlled daily social interactions in Spain, including the army, the Church, the political parties, and even the family structure. Martín-Santos, Goytisolo, and Martín Gaité all comment on his pervasive presence in every facet of Spanish life, and the alienating effect that this ubiquity had on the Spanish people. In addition to installing himself as a constant fixture in quotidian life, Franco isolated Spain on a social level by imposing strict regulations on immigration to and emigration from Spain during the 40s and 50s; he also limited tourism to a trickle during the postwar period. His establishment of the censor contributed to this isolation by limiting the production and import of knowledge through literature, television, and art. The censor, which was not disbanded until 1966, “emasculated Spanish intellectual life” by forbidding the publication of anything that was considered indecent or contrary to the regime in any way, and often persecuting artists for creating works with subversive content (Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa 46). As we shall see in the subsequent chapters, all three writers denounce these mechanisms of social control in order to reflect critically on the social isolation of the postwar period, and juxtapose it with the unprecedented changes that took place from the late 50s to the 70s.

In order to allow for the social renewal that Martín-Santos, Goytisolo, and Martín Gaité explore in their novels, Franco needed to end the national depression with

major economic reforms. By 1950 “Franco discovered that he must relax his punitive rule and revive the economy if he were not to strangle the country” (Herr 260). He reorganized his ministry, and put in power a team of technocrats “who were, over the next four years, to introduce, piecemeal and imperfectly, a new economic policy to reconcile rapid industrial growth and its ‘conditions’” (Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa 53). They ultimately did so through a series of institutional changes that turned Spain into a capitalist market economy and encouraged foreign investment. Little by little, the government began to open up Spain to the economic influences of the world. By the early 1960s, Spain had achieved the ‘economic miracle,’ and it began to emerge from its self-imposed position of economic isolationism. With the Plan of Stabilization of 1959 and the various institutions that the technocrats established, Spain experienced tremendous growth in new industry, including metallurgy, food processing, and the chemical industry, as well as a major change in the import and export of goods (Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa 56). Above all else, the new booming service sector served as evidence of the modernization of the Spanish economy. All three writers, particularly Goytisolo and Martín Gaité, discuss this period of change in which Spain transformed into a capitalist, consumerist economy.

In addition, Martín-Santos, Goytisolo, and Martín Gaité all emphasize the dramatic social changes that followed this economic renewal. By encouraging foreign presence in Spain, Franco helped to usher in a period of relative prosperity, development, and socio-political transformation. In many ways the true Spanish revolution “was not the defeated struggle of 1936-39 but the social and cultural

transformation wrought by the industrialization of the 1960s and 1970s.”³ Whereas tourism had been heavily monitored and discouraged in the 40s and 50s, by the late 60s annual tourists numbered more than 30 million as Spain’s beaches and coastal cities became major international destinations (Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa). In addition, Spain began to open its borders for its own citizens; emigration rose considerably during the 60s and 70s. A tremendous influx of foreign influences poured into Spain, and ultimately resulted in the decline of traditional Catholic values and the rise of the secular, Western European lifestyle; that is, Spain transformed into a “common consumerist and hedonist culture of the western world” (Payne 484). As the regulations on Spanish life became less and less stringent, writers like Martín-Santos, Goytisolo, and Martín-Gaité began to take bigger risks with their works. As I will explore in chapters one, two, and three, the results of such experimentation were new and different styles of literature. This period of tremendous social and cultural renewal, particularly in comparison with the postwar years of alienation and economic depression that came before it, played a major role in the lives and works of all three writers.

Of the group, Martín-Santos experienced the briefest glimpse of the social regeneration of the 50s, 60s, and 70s. He lived a tragically short life in which he nevertheless produced one of the most influential postwar Spanish novels, *Tiempo de Silencio*, along with several other important political essays. Martín-Santos experienced the Civil War and postwar era as a young man; he was born in 1924, and he died in a car accident at the age of 40. During his life, writing was not Martín-Santos’ only profession; he was also a doctor. He graduated from the University of Salamanca in 1946 with a degree in medicine, and he went on to do his post-graduate work at the

³ Stanley G. Payne, *The Franco Regime, 1936-1975* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987) 484. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

University of Madrid between 1946 and 1949. After this time, he became a researcher at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (National Research Council) in Madrid. Although he was initially trained as a surgeon, Martín-Santos switched to psychiatry, and he became the director of a mental hospital in Ciudad Real. In 1951, he returned to San Sebastián to take a post as the head of the psychiatric hospital. As we shall see in chapter one, his interest in the psychological and his experiences in research, medicine, and science are apparent in *Tiempo de Silencio*.

The Civil War and postwar period deeply affected Martín-Santos' political ideology and literary career, which became increasingly intertwined over the course of his life. He lived in Madrid during a time in which young leftist intellectuals demanded “the reform of the university system and of political structures in general.”⁴ Martín-Santos was profoundly affected by these politically-minded individuals who, like him, had experienced the traumatic events of the Civil War and postwar period firsthand, and desired dramatic change in Spain. He began writing for up-and-coming literary reviews, including *La Revista de España*, and his political ideology developed significantly. By the late 1950s, he was an active member of the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE), which had gone underground in 1939. Between 1957 and 1962, he was arrested several times for his political activity, and even imprisoned for four months in 1958 (Rodgers 319). Such persecution for clandestine and condemned political activity was not uncommon; in fact, many other young intellectuals and artists faced similar fates during Franco's dictatorship. As he became more committed to his political convictions, he strived to find ways of incorporating his ideology into his writing. As we will discuss in chapter one Martín-Santos, like Goytisolo and Martín Gaité, uses *Tiempo de Silencio* as a

⁴ E. J. Rodgers, *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Spanish Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 1999) 319. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

vehicle through which he criticizes the nationalist regime. Because of his untimely death in 1964, he experienced only the beginnings of social renewal in Spain. As such, in *Tiempo de Silencio* he both reflects back on the bleak postwar period and anticipates the regeneration of the future through innovative literary experimentations.

Like Martín-Santos, Goytisolo experienced the traumatic events of the War and postwar decades as a young man, and he similarly used writing as a means of denouncing Franco's regime. Unlike Martín-Santos, however, Goytisolo witnessed the entirety of both the difficult postwar years and the social renewal that followed, and *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* reflects critically on both. Goytisolo was born in Barcelona in 1931 to an educated, aristocratic nationalist family; he and his two brothers, Luis and José Agustín, would go on to become well-known writers. He experienced tragedy early in his life: he was a child when his mother was killed in 1938 in Barcelona in the first Francoist air raid of the Civil War. Shortly thereafter, his father was imprisoned by the Republican government. These events had a profound effect on Goytisolo's life and his relationship with Spain; his embittered connection to his homeland is the main focus of both *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* and the trilogy in which it fits. After his mother's death, Goytisolo studied law at the University of Barcelona and the University of Madrid. It was at the University of Barcelona that he broke with his nationalist past and acquired his leftist political tendencies, which ultimately informed both his nonfiction and fictional works and contributed to his classification as an influential Spanish intellectual and writer.⁵ In the early 1950s, he abandoned his law studies to begin his writing career, and he published his first book, *Juegos de manos*, in 1954.

⁵ Michael Ugarte, *Trilogy of Treason: An Intertextual Study of Juan Goytisolo* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1982) 1. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

As we shall see in chapter two, *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* represents Goytisolo's oeuvre because, like the majority of his works, it is a violent response to the traumatic political, social, and historical events that personally affected him. After he wrote *Juegos de manos*, he and his brother, Luis, published several articles and essays in the Spanish press in which they denounced Franco's regime and political ideology. The Goytisolo brothers were labeled as radicals for their vocal condemnation. Eventually, following years of struggles with censorship issues, police interrogations, and Luis's detainment, Goytisolo chose to exile himself from Spain in 1956 and live permanently in France (he has since moved to Marrakech). While in Paris, he published the Álvaro Mendiola trilogy in which *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* appears alongside *Señas de identidad* (1966), and *Juan sin tierra* (1975). Goytisolo's complicated relationship with Spain, his experiences living as an exile both in France and Africa, and his subversive ideas about Franco's regime deeply informed his construction of all three novels.⁶ In chapter two we will discuss how the renewal of the 50s and 60s also contributed to his writing style and overall message in *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*.

Although she was seemingly less politically inclined than her counterparts, Martín Gaité's traumatic experiences growing up under Franco's regime nevertheless played an essential role in her literary career in similar ways. She was born in Salamanca in 1925 to a well-educated, Republican family; her father, José Martín, initiated her secular education by introducing her to history, art, and literature at a relatively young age. Although her family intended to send her to school in Madrid to follow her sister Ana María, the Civil War forced them to change their plans, and so Carmen remained in Salamanca until she earned her degree in Humanities from the University of Salamanca.

⁶ Abigail Lee Six, *Juan Goytisolo: The Case for Chaos* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

While studying at the University, she became close with fellow writers Ignacio Aldecoa and Augustín García Calvo, and, with their encouragement, she moved to Madrid in 1950. She received her doctorate at the University of Madrid shortly thereafter, and she officially began her writing career in the early 1950s.

El cuarto de atrás represents a glimpse into Martín Gaité's illustrious literary career, in which she bridged countless genres and styles and focused specifically on her experiences growing up as a woman under Franco's regime. She wrote short stories, poems, drama, television scripts, essays, children's books, and novels. In the 1950s, she contributed to periodicals and newspapers, including *ABC*, *Blanco y Negro*, and *Revista Española*. These early essays and articles focused on realistic critiques of social conventions and injustices, and she emphasized the disparities between the sexes in post-Civil War Spain. She received the prestigious Café Gijón prize for her first novel, *El balneario* (1955), and went on to write many other full-length, critically-acclaimed works, including *Entre visillos* (1957) and *Fragmentos de interior* (1976). As I will discuss in chapter three, Martín Gaité critiques social conventions in *El cuarto de atrás* by recalling her own experiences as a woman in Spain between 1936 and 1975. Like Martín-Santos and Goytisolo, she denounces Franco's regime, though she focuses on the multifaceted relationships between history and memory, and memory and the fantastic (Rodgers 318). In doing so, she creates a narrative that is at once personal and representative of a larger, collective experience.

As we have seen, all three authors not only lived through the War, the postwar period, and the years of social, economic, and political renewal that followed, but they also felt the need to reflect critically on these experiences through their writing. One of the principle ways in which the novels at hand do so is by critiquing Franco's regime

through the use of myth. In her book *Myth and History in the Contemporary Spanish Novel*, Jo Labanyi successfully sums up the mutability of myth when she says that “there is no point in trying to establish an objective, universally valid account of how myth functions: myth does whatever people expect it to do. Perhaps the only constant is that myth is always conceived as a way of dealing with historical problems.”⁷ T.S. Eliot similarly sees myth as a vehicle for comprehending history, or “‘a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history’” (Labanyi 8). In his well-known essay *Myth Today* (1959), French literary critic Roland Barthes establishes perhaps the most widely-accepted working definition of myth as a second-order semiological system in which a concept is weighted with a meaning that it does not initially carry. In myth, the links between signifier, signified, and sign become natural to the point where they are unnoticed. Myth, then, is an attempt to provide order and meaning to something that cannot be understood; it does so by assuming as natural that which is, in fact, artificially created.⁸ As will become evident in chapters one, two, and three, the conception of myth as a tool for understanding the incomprehensible plays a fundamental role not only in each of the three texts in question, but also in Franco’s rhetoric during his dictatorship.

Most importantly, myth allows Martín-Santos, Goytisolo, and Martín Gaité to reflect on individual and collective renewal in the unprecedented historical moment of social, political, and cultural change that they shared. In this essay we will discuss the ways in which all three writers use myth to develop the subjectivity of protagonists that are simultaneously unique and representative of a larger experience. In doing so, they

⁷Jo Labanyi, *Myth and History in the Contemporary Spanish Novel* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 3. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

⁸ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972).

create powerful works of reflection and critique that highlight the relationship between the individual and the collective at this critical juncture in Spanish history. In chapter one, I will show how Martín-Santos' *Tiempo de Silencio* functions as a mirror of the bleak social conditions of the postwar period, with particular attention to the author's development of the psychological world of his protagonist, Pedro. Chapter two will focus on Goytisolo's movement deeper into the complicated, labyrinthine psyche of his narrator-protagonist during the years of Spanish economic renewal and consumerism in *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*. Finally, in chapter three we will explore the ways in which Martín Gaité's narrator-protagonist descends into the hidden space of her memories in order to recreate herself anew after Franco's death. This inquiry into these singularly important novels of the late Francoist era is designed to expose what is basic to this generation's *Weltanschauung*: the interrelatedness of subjectivity and collective consciousness, and the importance of myth as a tool for conceptualizing the national experience.

Chapter One: Luis Martín-Santos' *Tiempo de Silencio*

I. *Tiempo de Silencio* as a socio-historical mirror

It was in the midst of the dramatic cultural regeneration of the late 1950s, but with the enduring memories of the bleak 40s and early 50s, that Luis Martín-Santos wrote *Tiempo de Silencio*, a text that greatly altered the direction of postwar Spanish fiction. Franco's reformed economic policies helped to usher in a period of relative affluence and dramatic social transformation, and this period of renewal corresponded to a marked shift in the direction and scope of Spanish literature with Martín-Santos taking the lead. In addition, it occurred in unison with the Latin American Boom, a highly experimental literary movement of the 1960s and 70s which had profound impacts on modern Spanish writing. With no other Spanish texts to inform his artistic decisions, but with the influence of the Latin American writers' innovations of form and style, Martín-Santos produced *Tiempo de Silencio*, a novel that, like the author himself, sits on the cusp of two trends: neorealism and postmodernism, both of which we will return to later in this chapter. *Tiempo de Silencio* breaks new artistic ground with its ability to be both “una obra de arte estimulante de una tremenda fuerza imaginativa” and “una denuncia de una sociedad torva y callada.”⁹ Whereas previous postwar Spanish literature favors objective depictions of harsh realities over artistic form, Martín-Santos experiments with many of the narrative and linguistic innovations of other European and American writers, particularly James Joyce and William Faulkner. In doing so, he creates a work of

⁹Gerald Brown, *Historia De La Literatura Española V. 6: El Siglo Veinte* (Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 1971) 225. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis. From here on, unless otherwise stated, all translations into English are mine. “A stimulating work of art of tremendous imagination and strength”; “a fierce and quiet denunciation of society.”

literature that reflects the harsh realities of life in postwar Spain through a neorealist lens and simultaneously anticipates the future using postmodern literary techniques.

Martín-Santos' decision to use *Tiempo de Silencio* as a vehicle for political and social critique grew out of a new consciousness that artists in the 1930s and 40s began to develop. Immediately following World War II, French existentialist writer Jean-Paul Sartre reacted against the ideas of "art for art's sake" and the "bourgeois writer," instead proposing that artists should view literature as a means for "consciously [engaging] in willed action" within their society.¹⁰ Sartre's call for *littérature engagée* (literature of commitment) immediately encouraged others to use art as a means of expressing their political and social consciences. In *What is Literature?* (1947) Sartre argues that a writer should be held accountable to his society; his literature should reflect his intentions and ideology, and it should be used to promote change.¹¹ Other French existentialists and writers turned to *littérature engagée* in order to articulate their political and social commitment in post-World War II Europe. This active choice to use art as a means of reflecting, criticizing, and catalyzing change influenced Martín-Santos in his writing of *Tiempo de Silencio*. Like the works of the French existentialists, *Tiempo de Silencio* is a committed novel in which Martín-Santos subtly expresses his opinions about post-Civil War Spanish society and government. In this way, *Tiempo de Silencio* signals a great move forward for Spanish literature towards making artistry reflective of political and social realities.

In addition to the influence of *littérature engagée*, Martín-Santos and other Spanish writers turned to the popular European and North American aesthetic style of

¹⁰*Littérature Engagée*, 2009, Encyclopædia Britannica Online, Available: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/343936/litterature-engagee>, 25 Feb 2009.

¹¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *What Is Literature?* (London: Methuen, 1967).

neorealism, or social realism, as a way of expressing their discontent and the struggles of their nation as a whole. Whereas Franco's regime "constructed a myth of national well-being and...plenitude undisturbed by historical circumstance," Spain's economic situation deeply impacted citizens of all social groups.¹² Neorealist artists used a seemingly objective lens to depict the hardships of daily life. The style became widespread among Italian filmmakers in the 1940s and 50s who strived to expose the devastation of World War II in Italy. Both Spanish writers and filmmakers were largely influenced by the "documentary approach to social problems" that dominated the films of Italians Roberto Rossellini, Vittorio DeSica, and Luchino Visconti (Jones 29). Their works "emphasized gray existence, [and] stark misery with no mitigating fantastic or escapist themes," a style that appealed to Spaniards experiencing similarly bleak circumstances (Jones 30). By the late 1950s, European and American social realist fiction had become increasingly popular and influential in Spain. In particular, Spanish writers cobbled a homegrown version of neorealism borrowing from the styles of Franz Kafka, Sartre, Joyce, John Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway, and Faulkner, to name a few. All of these authors had a profound impact on the Spanish neorealists that followed in their footsteps.

The works of other Spanish neorealist authors of the 40s, 50s, and 60s deeply influenced Martín-Santos in his writing of *Tiempo de Silencio* as well. Like the European and American artists whose style they mimicked, these writers focused primarily on providing a seemingly objective portrait of their empirical reality. As Martín-Santos does in *Tiempo de Silencio*, they used neorealism as a way of coming to terms with the pain and despair they experienced in the aftermath of the Civil War. In depicting the harsh world

¹²Margaret E. W. Jones, *The Contemporary Spanish Novel, 1939-1975* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985) 29. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

around them, they hoped to make collective their individual struggles. One of the defining works of neorealist fiction that influenced Martín-Santos was *La Colmena* (1951), in which Camilo José Cela presents a documentary-like glimpse of the minutia of daily life in Madrid. Following the publication of *La Colmena*:

Se produjo un súbito florecimiento (a pesar de las enérgicas podas de la censura) de jóvenes talentos literarios consagrados a la causa de exponer, o al menos de dar testimonio, de las calamidades de la vida española, expresándose en un estilo serio y objetivamente realista que el tema parecía exigir (Brown 224).¹³

The writers of the 1950s and early 60s that followed in this trend focused primarily on content rather than form; that is, their works were “técnicamente insignificantes” (technically insignificant), but they succeeded in objectively revealing the hardships of life in Spain and, in the process, subtly protesting Franco’s regime (Brown 224). As a result, these novels were not very popular at the time of their publication. Not everyone in Spain wanted to see the side of Spanish life that these writers and filmmakers, who strived to act as “testimonio[s] fidedigno[s]” or reliable witnesses, revealed (Brown 225). The neorealist art of the 40s, 50s, and early 60s thus had limited appeal beyond the bounds of the selection of artists who produced it, and it suffered from severe shortcomings. For this group, however, neorealism represented a way of making collective the individual experience of pain and strife.

Although he lived through the bleak postwar years, Martín-Santos emerged on the Spanish literary stage at the precise moment of social and economic renewal discussed in the Introduction; as a result, *Tiempo de Silencio* is a novel that both looks to the past and to the future. Martín-Santos uses neorealist techniques to objectively

¹³ “It produced a sudden flourishing (despite the censor’s energetic pruning) of young literary talents devoted to the cause of exposing, or at the very least giving testimony to, the calamities of the Spanish life, expressing them in a serious and objectively realistic style that the theme seemed to demand.”

describe the harsh realities of daily life in postwar Madrid. His fiction, however, simultaneously pushes the limits of neorealism in order to provide a new model of literature as socio-historical mirror. As we have seen, until *Tiempo de Silencio*, artists relied on the “impassive camera lens” of social realism to reveal the problems that faced their communities (Labanyi 55). At various points in his novel, however, Martín-Santos turns to parody, criticism, and the strong voice of a narrator as an alternative method of reflecting the harsh realities. Through a combination of neorealist techniques and literary innovations, Martín-Santos capably reveals the most fundamental problems that afflicted Spain during this postwar period. The largest of these was the insistence “ ‘que no está tan mal todo lo que verdaderamente está muy mal’...The Spanish problem is, precisely, its refusal to recognize the existence of problems” (Labanyi 56).¹⁴ As a reflection of this denial, “ ‘Spain is different’ was a slogan much used in the sixties to attract tourists and to justify the continuing existence of a government that stood in stark contrast to the democracies of Western Europe” (Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa 49). Thus, the Spanish government not only refused to acknowledge its problems; it packaged them as an appealing attraction for tourists. In using *Tiempo de Silencio* as a vehicle for expressing his political and social commitment, Martín-Santos studies this national denial from several different angles and with an arsenal of both neorealist and avant-garde literary techniques that allow him to realistically depict the harshness of daily life while simultaneously making a clear social commentary.

Even though it is a highly experimental text that paved the way for an entire genre of Spanish literature, parts of *Tiempo de Silencio* retain the objectivity and documentary style of the more conventional neorealist novels. At these moments,

¹⁴ “That that which is actually very bad is really not bad at all.”

Martín-Santos offers the reader an uncensored, direct look into the socio-historical world of postwar Spain but with reference to the renewal and regeneration of 1960. In particular, he focuses on the extreme social divisions between the cohabitating classes and the poorest communities of Madrid, which Franco did not recognize during his dictatorship. In one such place in the novel, Martín-Santos depicts the housing project of a poor thug, Cartucho, on the outskirts of Madrid: “estas chabolas marginales y sucias no pretendían ya como las otras tener siquiera apariencia de casitas, sino que se resignaban a su naturaleza de agujero maloliente sin pretensiones de dignidad ni de amor propio en estricta correlación con la vida de sus habitantes.”¹⁵ This quotation reflects Martín-Santos’ use of neorealist techniques: he refrains from judgment and commentary as he offers the reader a window through which he or she can view the harsh reality of life in a tremendously poor Madrid suburb. Like his neorealist predecessors, Martín-Santos allows his description to speak for itself; it subtly criticizes Franco for refusing to acknowledge the abject poverty of his citizens. By using the neorealist model to objectively describe the city as it appeared in 1949, *Tiempo de Silencio* acts as a mirror of its socio-historical context.

In addition to revealing abject poverty, *Tiempo de Silencio* further acts as a reflection of postwar Spain in its commentary on the place of science and the impossibility of the production of knowledge in society. Immediately following the Civil War, Franco proposed revolutionary changes to the Spanish education system in an effort to undo the educational reforms of the Second Republic. Along with José Ibáñez

¹⁵Luis Martín-Santos, *Tiempo De Silencio* (Barcelona: Editorial Seix Barral, 2007) 139.

Note: From this point forwards, all references made to *Tiempo de Silencio* will be to this edition and will be parenthetical.

“Unlike the other ones, these marginal, dirty shacks did not even pretend to have the appearance of little homes; instead, they resigned themselves to their nature as foul-smelling holes with neither pretension of dignity nor love in strict correlation with the lives of their inhabitants.”

Martín, the minister of education, he closed down many Republican schools for allegedly “nurturing the spirit that had animated the Republic” (Herr 223). Both men promoted Catholicism in the classroom; under their rule “Catholic doctrine replaced the hated beliefs of the Republicans as the basis of educational philosophy, along with nationalist doctrines of the Falange in a modest second place. The government made religion a required and central subject at all levels of schooling” (Herr 223). Franco clearly favored not only a Catholic educational plan but a nationalized one as well, as his regime retained total control over the curriculum and materials taught in schools. The conflict between science and religion could have been a difficult one for Franco to maneuver; after all, in 1939, the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Superior Council of Scientific Research) was established against his will. However, Ibáñez Martín dedicated the Consejo to “‘stripping our culture of its past servility to foreign models,’ and to bringing that culture in line with ‘our religion and our science.’ Its emblem was the *arbor scientiae*...a modern version of the medieval view of knowledge and science” (Herr 225). By favoring religion over rationalism, Franco’s regime heavily restricted the study of science and the production of knowledge in postwar Spain.

Martín-Santos reveals the doomed nature of rationalism and scientific research through his construction of his narrator-protagonist and plot. As he does with his description of the housing project, he similarly allows the circumstances and events of the novel to speak for themselves; that is, he never directly proclaims the fate of science, but its demise is unmistakable to the reader. Pedro, the protagonist, is a scientist who researches diseased rats in order to determine if a cancerous gene is hereditary or caused by environmental factors. The novel begins at a dark moment in which all of the lab mice necessary for his experiments have died. Pedro expresses his disappointment,

saying “esa cepa cancerosa comprada con divisas otorgadas por el Instituto de la Moneda. Traída desde el Illinois nativo. Y ahora, concluida” (Martín-Santos 8).¹⁶ Neither the investigation nor the investigador will succeed; that is, “nunca, nunca el investigador ante el rey alto recibirá la copa, el laurel, una antorcha encendida con que correr ante la tribuna de las naciones y proclamar la grandeza no sospechada que el pueblo de aquí obtiene” (Martín-Santos 8).¹⁷ With this quotation, Martín-Santos expresses Pedro’s disappointment at his inability to change the world’s perception of Spain as an inferior place for scientific research. Although he would like to do so, he simply does not have the funds for more mice; thus, the “scientific backwardness of the country is symbolized in Pedro’s inability to carry out further research. The benchmark in this case is the United States, with its endless supplies of mice, money, and clean laboratories” (Jones 92). With *Tiempo de Silencio*, Martín-Santos reveals the absence of rationalism and scientific progress in postwar Spanish society.

Similarly, the fate of Martín-Santos’ protagonist represents their doomed place in Spain. Due to the misfortunes that take place in the novel, Pedro is fired from his research position; eventually, he boards a train with low hopes of becoming a community doctor in the Spanish countryside. At the train station, Pedro thinks of his exile, saying “yo el destruido, yo el hombre al que no se le dejó que hiciera lo que tenía que hacer, yo a quien en nombre del destino se me dijo: <<Basta>> y se me mandó para el Príncipe Pío con unas recomendaciones, un estetoscopio y un manual diagnóstico

¹⁶ “This cancerous stock bought with foreign currency granted by the Instituto de la Moneda. Brought from its native Illinois. And now, finished.”

¹⁷ “Never, never will the investigator—in front of the high king—receive the crown, the laurel, a lit torch with which he could run to the tribunal of the nations and proclaim the unsuspected magnificence that this *pueblo* has attained.”

del prurito de ano de las aldeanas vírgenes” (Martín-Santos 281).¹⁸ As this quotation suggests, in *Tiempo de Silencio* the national silence and denial that affects Madrid’s social classes clearly limits the progress of science as well. With Pedro’s retreat from Spanish society at the end of the text to live what he assumes will be an unfulfilling life, Martín-Santos reveals the impossibility of the production of knowledge in 1949. *Tiempo de Silencio* thus acts as a socio-historical mirror in revealing the major problems and limitations in postwar Spanish society.

Although Martín-Santos effectively uses neorealist techniques to communicate the abject poverty and absence of science, creativity, and intellectual thought in postwar Spain, he also pushes the boundaries of the genre as he moves closer to postmodernism. He does so in part by adopting a harshly critical tone, which he cleverly conceals behind the guise of neorealist objectivity. For example, he describes the *chabolas*, a poor housing community on the outskirts of Madrid, as Pedro first sees them, saying:

¡Allí estaban las chabolas!...La limitada llanura aparecía completamente ocupada por aquellas oníricas construcciones confeccionadas con maderas de embalaje de naranjas y latas de leche condensada...¡De qué maravilloso modo allí quedaba patente la capacidad para la improvisación y la original fuerza constructiva del hombre ibero! (Martín-Santos 49-50).¹⁹

Martín-Santos objectively observes the *chabolas* through a neorealist lens; he reveals the abject poverty of the community, just as he does when he describes Cartucho’s shack. The reader notices, though, that in this passage he adopts the voice of a narrator who ironically exalts these makeshift huts and the improvisational capacities of the Iberian

¹⁸ “Me, the shattered, me, the man who was not allowed to do what I had to do, me to whom in the name of destiny they said: <<Enough>> and sent me to Principe Pío with some recommendations, a stethoscope, and a diagnostic manual for the anal itching of virginal country women.”

¹⁹ “There were the shacks!...The limited prairie appeared completely occupied with those dreamlike, ready-made constructions of orange boxes and condensed milk crates...in what marvelous mode there remained obvious the capacity for improvisation and the original constructive strength of the Iberian man!”

man. These small modifications push Martín-Santos' critique of the nationalist regime into the spotlight. Whereas his objective portrayal of Cartucho's home provides a subtle nod to Franco's poor economic choices, with this passage he uses irony and a strong narrative voice to directly criticize Franco's espoused myth of national well-being and Spanish ingenuity.

Despite the modification that he makes to the neorealist style in order to more forcefully criticize Franco's regime, Martín-Santos recognizes the inherent limitations of the genre in *Tiempo de Silencio*. Neorealism gives him the tools to accurately establish the hardships, strife, and tremendous lacks that the Spanish people experienced both in and before 1949, the year in which the novel is set. However, it doesn't pretend to examine the inner, psychological world of the individual. Postwar Spanish novelists strived to find ways of coping with the hardships they faced on a daily basis and making collective the individual pain and suffering they saw. Even as *Tiempo de Silencio* acts as an effective socio-historical mirror, Martín-Santos shifts his focus towards the descent into the psyche of his characters in order to more fully achieve these goals. This is precisely the area in which he breaks new ground in *Tiempo de Silencio* and advances toward postmodern literature. His historical placement at a moment of profound cultural regeneration gives him the opportunity to experiment with language and style. The result is a paradigm shift on all levels, and the development of an entirely new way of making collective the individual experience.

II. *Tiempo de Silencio* and the subjective

As we have seen, Martín-Santos creates a world in *Tiempo de Silencio* that closely reflects that of Spain in the late 1940s and early 50s through a unique combination of neorealist literary techniques and his own stylistic modifications. The snapshot that he depicts, however, is ultimately limited in its scope. In order to fully understand this monumental moment in history and represent it most completely, Martín-Santos turns inward in his creation of Pedro. Over the course of *Tiempo de Silencio*, Martín-Santos allows the reader to descend into the depths of Pedro's psychological world as the character himself attempts to uncover and decipher it. Martín-Santos attaches a larger significance to this journey, that is, Pedro's struggles and crises are that of a nation at large. In the same way that the neorealist descriptions in *Tiempo de Silencio* reflect its socio-historical context, Martín-Santos uses innovations of narrative form and language to examine Pedro's subjectivity and mental state. As we shall see, this movement away from social realism towards postmodernism in the novel helps him to establish Pedro's psychological conflict as that of the nation at large.

Martín-Santos' choice of protagonist immediately separates *Tiempo de Silencio* from other works of postwar Spanish fiction. Jo Labanyi points out that a large number of novels published after the Civil War are centered on children:

The child's uncomprehending perspective of postwar repression increases the poignancy but one also feels it is a way of avoiding a political focus, lifting events out of the realm of history into that of myth. The repeated adoption of an infantile perspective is a way of getting past the censor precisely because it conforms to the official requirement that culture be depoliticized (Labanyi 43).

Positioning a child at the center of a novel or film about a particularly traumatic experience allows the reader or audience to feel more emotionally connected with the subject matter. However, as Labanyi argues, it also shifts the focus of the work away

from the political and historical and towards the mythical. In establishing a grown man as his subject, Martín-Santos forces *Tiempo de Silencio* into the political realm and makes it clear that his work is strongly rooted in the historical. He demonstrates great skill and innovation in creating a protagonist that is at once compelling, easily relatable to readers of all types, and representative of the nation as a whole.

Martín-Santos develops this type of complex, multidimensional subjectivity by using a few different narrative techniques. Alfonso Rey outlines some of these in his book, *Construcción y Sentido de Tiempo de Silencio*: “1) autoexpresión, 2) visión desde distintas perspectivas, 3) presencia de peculiaridades personalísimas, 4) conducta que descubre gradualmente la condición del individuo.”²⁰ By describing Pedro through these various lenses, Martín-Santos creates a subject that is recognizable and remarkably humanlike. *Tiempo de Silencio* begins in the third-person; the reader is first introduced to Pedro through the eyes of an omniscient narrator. His actions and overall character are developed objectively during the first part of the novel (conduct that gradually reveals the condition of the individual). In addition to discovering the narrator’s opinion, the reader sees Pedro as other characters view him (vision from distinctive perspectives). However, as the drama of the text unfolds and Pedro begins his descent into the underworld of the *chabolas* (shacks) and the frighteningly bleak world of 1949 Madrid, so too does he plunge into the depths of his own psyche. Gradually, *Tiempo de Silencio* begins to alternate between third-person and first-person narration as Pedro’s voice comes to life in critical moments of self-expression. It is through these soliloquies that

²⁰Alfonso Rey, *Construcción Y Sentido De Tiempo De Silencio* (Madrid: J. Porrúa Turanzas, 1977) 25. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

“1) Self-expression; 2) vision from distinctive perspectives; 3) presence of personal peculiarities; 4) conduct that gradually reveals the condition of the individual.”

the reader understands not only the minutia of the subject himself (presence of personal peculiarities) but his connection with the Spanish people.

Whereas Pedro ultimately reveals himself to be a psychologically complex subject, at first Martín-Santos most closely aligns his character with his profession. Pedro is a research scientist, and he exhibits the traits necessary for success in this field. In the first part of the text, the omniscient narrator frequently describes Pedro's intellectual musings on such topics as the dismal state of his research, the intriguing nature of the *chabolas*, and the three women he lives with in a *pension*. During such moments, “las palabras de Pedro indican una tendencia a examinar la realidad desentrañando su entramado de causas y efectos y esta vertiente intelectual la confirma el narrador al hablar de su...<<racionalismo mórbido>>” (Rey 25).²¹ Pedro is first and foremost a rational, scientific, intellectual being; he spends a large portion of the novel thinking, debating with himself, and pondering the possible outcomes of various situations. His scientific research dominates his thoughts and energy. This is particularly important considering Martín-Santos' emphasis on the doomed fate of science and rationalism in postwar Spain, and it will prove even more significant when examined under the lens of myth in the next section.

Yet even as Martín-Santos defines Pedro in terms of his scientific rationalism, he simultaneously establishes his subjectivity within mimetic time and space, thus allowing his immediate surroundings to deeply affect his psychology. Pedro is a social being in that his interactions with the various social groups of Madrid shape his identity. Developing Pedro's subjectivity in terms of his empirical reality makes him a more relatable protagonist because the reader can trace his physical and metaphorical journey

²¹ “Pedro's words indicate a tendency to examine the reality, unraveling its framework of causes and effects, and this intellectual aspect confirms what the narrator refers to as <<morbid rationalism>>.”

through Madrid and easily identify with parts of his voyage and character. Pedro's social class is relatively fluid, but he seems to belong to the middle-class, or "pequeñaburguesía," that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and still remained relatively isolated within a highly stratified society (Rey 53). Martín-Santos places his subject in the middle-class because he is not excluded from either end of the social spectrum, and over the course of the novel he immerses himself in all of the socioeconomic groups. He visits the *chabolas* and becomes inextricably linked to their community when he performs an illegal and ultimately fatal abortion on Florita, the daughter of Muecas. He spends time in the local cafes, bars, and brothels of Madrid with his good friend Matías. He attends an intellectual social gathering at the home of Matías' mother, in which he experiences a combination of humiliation and envy of the wealthy. His ability to see how the other social classes live deeply affects his subjectivity.

Martín-Santos reveals new aspects of Pedro's character with each social interaction, ultimately creating a multidimensional, contradictory subject. Pedro first encounters the *chabolas* community when he goes with Amador to obtain laboratory mice from Muecas, who illegally breeds them. This experience with the poorest sector of Spanish society reveals a combination of curiosity and lustfulness in Pedro that contrasts sharply with his scientific rationalism. The narrator describes Pedro's feelings upon leaving the *chabolas*:

...La misma presencia a sus pies de la mole mansa y muda de la esposa, las mordeduras de la muchacha toledana formaban...un conjunto del que no podía apartarse fácilmente y que quería conocer aunque en el intento hubiera tanto de fría curiosidad como de auténtico interés, tanta necesidad de conseguir ratones para su investigación como concupiscencia por ver la carne del hombre en sus caldos más impuros (Martín-Santos 63).²²

²² "...The same presence at his feet of the meek, mute hulk of his wife, the bites of the girl...formed a collection from which he could not easily separate himself, and which he wanted to know, even though in

In this passage, Martín-Santos contrasts the irrational world of the *chabolas* with Pedro's cold, scientific curiosity, and reveals his hidden desire to understand the lives of Muecas and his family. Through this brief interaction with the poorest members of Spanish society, Martín-Santos establishes Pedro as a social being. His encounter with Muecas contributes to his subjectivity by revealing that his identification as a rational intellectual is limiting in understanding his identity and psychology.

Similarly, Pedro's interactions with both the middle-class and the wealthiest members of Spanish society reveal significant information about his character, and contribute to his classification as a social being within mimetic time and space. In *Tiempo de Silencio*, the three women at Pedro's *pension* represent the middle-class. Through a combination of descriptions and interior monologues from the perspective of the grandmother, it becomes clear that these women do not see Pedro as the cold, scientific intellectual, but rather as a gallant gentleman who will save them from a mediocre life. They have plans for Pedro to marry Dorita, the granddaughter, and in their eyes "él tenía carácter de enviado dotado de tal virtud que el destino total de la familia...se invertiría tomando otra dirección y nuevo sentido. La nieta podía ver en él el ángel de la anunciación dotado de su dardo luminoso" (Martín-Santos 43).²³ In this passage, the narrator reveals the reverence with which the middle-class women at the *pension* view Pedro on account of his youth and respectable profession. Pedro's behavior towards the women is appropriately polite and civil; he often spends his nights submitting himself to the "rito de la tertulia" (the rite of the reunion) and engaging in respectful, tedious

his desire to do so there was as much cold curiosity as authentic interest, as much necessity to obtain rats for his investigation as lustfulness to see the meat of a man in his most impure stock."

²³ "He had a character gifted with such virtue that the whole destiny of the family would invert itself, taking a new direction and new sense. The granddaughter could see in him the angel of the annunciation bestowed with his luminous dart."

conversation (Martín-Santos 40). Their perception of him as an immensely successful scientist with a bright future differs from the Pedro that the reader encounters at the start of *Tiempo de Silencio*, in the midst of a crisis in his research and on the path to failure. It is clear from this discrepancy that Martín-Santos constructs his multidimensional identity through his social surroundings and interactions.

He continues to establish Pedro as a complicated social being through his interactions with members of the wealthiest class. Pedro's good friend Matías and his mother represent this group in Spanish society; the most significant interaction between Pedro and both characters takes place at a gathering at Matías' mother's home. Just as he does in his encounter with Muecas' family in the *chabolas*, Pedro experiences conflicting emotions towards the wealthy. He simultaneously feels contempt (“¿Pero desprecia este otro modo de vivir porque realmente es despreciable o porque no es capaz de acercarse lo suficiente para participar?”) and envy for the way they live (“¿Por qué envidia?...Ser oído y admirado, saber besar la mano, ser admitido al diálogo insinuante, estar arriba, ser de los de ellos, de los selectos” [(Martín-Santos 166).²⁴ He is disgusted by the superficial, inane dialogue that takes place at the reunion, but he is also intrigued by the potential for respect and admiration. He fights his feelings of jealousy until, during a conversation with Matías' mother, he falls “al fin en la trampa, en el hacerse interesante, en el adornarse de plumas propias aunque pintarrajeadas añade: —Ayer anoche he estado operando” (Martín-Santos 167).²⁵ Pedro is not even a licensed surgeon; however, he cannot resist the temptation to feel like one of the exalted

²⁴ “But does he depreciate this other way of living because it really is depreciable or because he is not capable of bringing himself sufficiently close enough to participate?”; “Why envy?...To be heard and admired, to know how to kiss one's hand, to be admitted to the suggestive dialogue, to be on top, to be one of the them, one of the select...”

²⁵ “At last in the trick, in the temptation of making himself interesting, in adorning himself with his feathers, he adds: —Last night I was operating.”

members of the wealthy class. This exchange further reveals Pedro's complex, contradictory nature, and contributes to his identification as a subject shaped by his empirical surroundings.

Martín-Santos creates Pedro through these social interactions in order to establish his fundamental psychological conflict, one that ultimately affects not only Pedro but the Spanish consciousness as well. Pedro's behavior reveals the significant clash between Pedro as a social being and Pedro as he wants himself to be. In almost every interaction, he acts as he believes others expect him to rather than according to his own desires; in doing so, he allows the people that surround him to form his identity and future rather than constructing it himself. Pedro exhibits overwhelming tendencies towards indifference, passivity, and complacency, and these become more crippling as the novel progresses. As his life unravels over the course of *Tiempo de Silencio*, he moves away from any hope and personal conviction that he possesses at the beginning of the text, and descends into stoic acceptance of his misfortunes and mediocrity. In section III, we will discuss the ways in which Martín-Santos uses myth to show how this affects not only Pedro but the postwar Spanish consciousness at large. Ultimately, this duality between man as a social construct and man as he wants to be is the main focus of the postmodern, psychological portrait that Martín-Santos paints in *Tiempo de Silencio*.

Pedro's inability to act according to his own desires manifests itself in mostly harmless circumstances at the beginning of the text, and gradually increases in scope as the novel progresses. The first example of this disconnect appears after a moment in which Pedro contemplates Miguel de Cervantes' presence in Madrid. He goes to meet Matías at a cafe, but he realizes his mistake as soon as he enters:

Que está equivocado, que venir a este café era precisamente lo que no le apetecía, que él prefería haber seguido evocando fantasmas de hombres

que derramaron sus propios cánceres sobre papeles blancos. Pero ya...está incorporado a una comunidad de lo que, a pesar de todo, forma parte y de la que no podrá deshacerse con facilidad (Martín-Santos 75-76).²⁶

In this passage, the narrator articulates Pedro's internal conflict: whereas he does not want to enter the café, he convinces himself that he has no choice but to do so. He would rather walk the streets alone and think about Cervantes, but he believes that he cannot remove himself from the social environment. Rather than respond to his desires, he gives in to the supposed expectations of others and engages in an unwanted night of drinking with his friends.

Pedro's psychological conflict and his lack of personal commitment in the face of societal expectations are also clear in his relationship with Dorita, the granddaughter at his *pension*. Upon returning home intoxicated after his night with Matías, an erotic encounter ensues between Pedro and Dorita. In an internal monologue that immediately follows, he confesses to feeling trapped by "la celestina," or the grandmother's plans for him to marry Dorita, which is "la celestina que es celestina para no morir de hambre o para no tener que quitar los visillos de sus ventanas...Tenerle de todo, porque al fin ha caído y siendo como es, no podrá escapar. Y cumplirá" (Martín-Santos 114).²⁷ In this passage, Pedro acknowledges his feelings of entrapment, but he convinces himself of the inevitability of his situation and resigns himself to it. He understands his significance for the women at the *pension*, and he finds it easier to give up his own desires than to disappoint them. Near the end of the novel, Pedro finds himself engaged to Dorita. In

²⁶ "That he is mistaken, that coming to this café is exactly what he doesn't want, that he would prefer to continue evoking ghosts of men who spilled their own cancers onto white papers. But he is already part of a community of which, above all, he forms a part and from which he cannot remove himself with ease."

²⁷ "*La celestina* [lover's go-between] that is a *celestina* so that they do not die of hunger or need to remove the lace curtains from the windows...Having everything, because at last he has fallen and he feels what it is, that he won't be able to escape. And he complies."

a long passage filled with irony and satire, the narrator describes his psychological conflict, saying “apretado por el codo de la madre, oprimido contra el brazo de la novia... rodeado de pueblo por delante, por detrás, por arriba, por abajo...” (Martín-Santos 267).²⁸ Pedro clearly feels oppressed by society’s expectations for his betrothal, but he is unwilling to fight against them for his own desires. Instead of acting with conviction, he chooses to resign himself to a life with Dorita, even though it is not what he wants.

This psychological conflict between Pedro as a social being and Pedro as he wants to be becomes more pronounced over the course of the novel, as do his complacency and indifference, and Martín-Santos’ postmodern innovations highlight this progression. The most striking moments of tension occur near the end of the novel, when Pedro is falsely imprisoned for Florita’s death. In a monologue that has become quite well-known since *Tiempo de Silencio*’s publication, Pedro engages in a lengthy debate with himself that reveals his growing sense of resignation to his unfortunate circumstances and the tension he experiences between society and self. The interior monologue begins with Pedro musing about “el destino fatal. La resignación. Estar aquí el tiempo que sea necesario. No moverse. Aprender a estar mirando un punto de la pared hasta ir, poco a poco, concentrándose en un vacío sin pensamiento” (Martín-Santos 209).²⁹ He convinces himself not to think about the situation, and his solution seems to be easing his pain until he asks himself the critical question that exposes his psychological dilemma: “¿Por qué fui?” (Martín-Santos 210).³⁰ After this moment, Pedro

²⁸ “Held tight by the mother’s elbow, oppressed next to his fiancée’s arm...surrounded by the *pueblo* all around, behind, from above, from below.”

²⁹ “The final destiny. The resignation. The time that seems necessary is here. Don’t move. Learn to watch a point on the wall until, little by little, you can concentrate on emptiness without thinking.”

³⁰ “Why did I go?”

begins a descent into a conflicted state of regret, panic, and complacency. He tries to stop himself from playing the rational intellectual, but he cannot avoid dissecting the events of the fateful night in an internal debate in which he argues “tú no la mataste. Estaba muerta. No estaba muerta. Tú la mataste. ¿Por qué dices tú?—Yo” (Martín-Santos 210).³¹ He alternates between calling himself a cowardly imbecile for getting himself involved and convincing himself that he is not responsible for Florita’s death. Martín-Santos uses the interior monologue, a postmodern innovation, to reveal the tremendous tension that Pedro experiences between the person that society has created and the man he truly wants to be.

Furthermore, these interior monologues reflect the protagonist’s gradual descent into loneliness and isolation. After this critical point in *Tiempo de Silencio*, Pedro loses any remaining sense of personal conviction and resigns himself completely to society’s will. Martín-Santos positions his subject in direct conflict with popular institutions of Spanish society including the law, the scientific community, and, as we have already seen, marriage. Rather than engage in a battle for his true desires, Pedro willingly submits himself to society’s pressures. In an act that demonstrates the overwhelming nature of his complacency and acquiescence, he confesses to killing Florita. He convinces himself that this is the right thing to do because “era verdad que él nunca debería haber intentado una operación de urgencia, habiendo como hay tantas clínicas de guardia en la ciudad...Y era verdad que, por todo ello, sentía una culpabilidad abrumadora, una culpabilidad cierta y tremenda” (Martín-Santos 236).³² In this act of resignation, Martín-Santos demonstrates that society’s desires for Pedro have won out over his own

³¹ “You didn’t kill her. She was dead. She wasn’t dead. You killed her. Why do you say you?—I.”

³² “It was true that he never should have attempted an emergency surgery, being that there were many clinics in the city...And it was true that, for all of that, he felt an overwhelming guilt, a certain and tremendous guilt.”

intentions for himself. He publicly acknowledges his culpability (“—Sí. En realidad, yo la maté—reconoció agachando la cabeza”) and turns himself over to the fate of the law (Martín-Santos 236).³³ After he is released from prison, this psychological conflict between society and self continues in Pedro’s confrontation with the director of his laboratory. In a one-sided conversation, the director fires Pedro from his project because of his disgraceful actions and poor scientific results, and encourages him to go home and study. Rather than argue for his position and research, Pedro says nothing, further demonstrating his acceptance of the self that society creates for him. Martín-Santos establishes the conflict between Pedro and society in order to highlight his gradual movement towards indifference, a lack of conviction, and isolation over the course of *Tiempo de Silencio*.

The ultimate result of Pedro’s ongoing psychological conflict between society and self is his metaphorical castration and self-imposed exile from Madrid at the end of the novel. His decision to become a country doctor directly corresponds with the time of silence that Martín-Santos evokes in the title. In one final defining soliloquy, Pedro recognizes society’s emasculating presence, saying “es cómodo ser eunuco, es tranquilo, estar desprovisto de testículos, es agradable a pesar de estar castrado tomar el aire y el sol mientras uno se amojama en silencio” (Martín-Santos 284).³⁴ Pedro recognizes that he has allowed society to dictate his identity, thereby castrating him, but he argues that it is more comfortable to resign himself to social expectations than to fight for his true desires. After acknowledging that “la mejor máquina eficaz es la que no hace ruido” he resolves to spend “así un tiempo esperando en silencio, sin hablar mal de nadie. Todo

³³ “—Yes. In reality, I killed her—he admitted shaking his head.”

³⁴ “It’s comfortable to be a eunuch, it’s peaceful to be devoid of testicles, it’s even agreeable to be castrated, enjoying the air and the sun while one withers in silence.”

consiste en estar callado. No diciendo nunca nada de eso” (Martín-Santos 283, 85).³⁵ At the end of *Tiempo de Silencio*, Pedro finds himself completely stripped of his previous life and identity; he is alone for the first time in the novel, and he is about to isolate himself from everything he has known. Yet he remains stoic and resigned to his fate. It is through this final monologue that Martín-Santos hints at fundamental connections between Pedro’s psychological state and the national consciousness in the postwar decades, which we will explore in detail in the next section.

III. *Tiempo de Silencio* and myth

Whereas *Tiempo de Silencio* falls on the cusp between neorealist and postmodern literature, it is part of the broader category of modernism. The precise dates of the modern period are undefined; however, modernism is a style of art, philosophy, and thinking that advocates a break with the past and the establishment of a new, radically different status quo. The beginning of the 20th century marked a particularly dramatic turning point for modern thought as composers, artists, and philosophers turned away from Romanticism and 19th century realism towards a new order. This period is exemplified by bold, challenging shifts in style and technique in literature and the visual arts that perhaps can be best summarized by their common desire to undermine art’s mimetic impulse and break with tradition. In modernism, innovation and originality are the dominant trends. These and other aspects of 20th century modernism are perhaps best demonstrated by Spaniards Rafael Alberti and Federico García Lorca; Joyce, Kafka, and Hemingway were also particularly influential. As the European political and social climate changed over the course of the 20th century, so too did modern thought evolve

³⁵ “The best, most effective machine is the silent one”; “A little while waiting in silence, without speaking badly of anyone. It is all about being quiet. Never saying anything about this.”

to embrace a new aesthetic code and philosophical ideology. Susanne Langer succinctly sums up modernism in *Philosophy in a New Key*: “this new epoch had a mighty and revolutionary generative idea: the dichotomy of all reality into inner experience and outer world, subject and object, private reality and public truth.”³⁶ This “bifurcation of reality into inner experience and outer world” had tremendous repercussions for the literature of the 20th century, particularly *Tiempo de Silencio* (Scarborough 10).

As modern literature developed and evolved over the course of the 20th century, so too did the place of myth within it. Because of the distinction that Langer proposes, “the inner-outer program also required a distinction between myth and history. History was about events which happened in the objective world; consequently myth was an additional and fictional layer of meaning superimposed on top of the objective world by the irrational or prerational mind” (Scarborough 13). Myth in modernism thus became about turning inwards into the subjective mind in order to make sense of the connections between the internal and the external worlds. As such, many philosophers, doctors, writers, and artists of the 20th century strived to understand this interior world. Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalysis emerged as a scientific study of the human mind, development, and behavior. Freud distinguished between the ego, superego, and id, and he related these ideas to myth. According to him, “for an individual...symbolic expressions are dreams; myths are public, collective dreams. Myths and dreams, then, carry the neurotic contents of the subconscious” (Scarborough 24). Freud’s field of psychoanalysis and his proposed connection between the individual and the collective as formed through myth were very influential to Martín-Santos, who, as mentioned in the

³⁶Milton Scarborough, *Myth and Modernity: Postcritical Reflections*, Suny Series, the Margins of Literature (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1994) 10. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

Introduction, was both a writer and a psychiatrist. Martín-Santos uses Freud's ideas to establish Pedro's subjectivity as reflective of the collective Spanish consciousness.

Martín-Santos was also influenced by Carl Jung's study of archetypes and his proposed connection between self and myth. Jung, a disciple of Freud, agreed with his teacher that "the actual meaning of myth is the depths of the self, in particular the contents of the unconscious viewed positively, even religiously" (Scarborough 42). He believed in the presence of archetypes, or "universal and typical symbols found in myth and other forms of literature," and argued that each person is a manifestation of learned archetypes (Scarborough 25). According to Jung and philosopher Mircea Eliade after him, archetypes are widespread and innate; they are "universal motifs that come from the 'collective unconscious' and are the basic content of religions and mythologies. They emerge in individuals through dreams and vision. The 'collective unconscious' is inherited not acquired."³⁷ As such, archetypes can be expressed easily with myth, symbols, and rituals, and "the task of life is to come to terms with the contents of the individual unconscious through relating them to those of the collective" (Coupe 140). In his text *Cosmos and History*, Eliade seeks to define many of these archetypes and myths with relation to man's behavior in a modern society. Freud, Jung, and Eliade were all important thinkers who proposed meanings for myth within the context of modernism. The connection that Jung establishes through his archetypes between the individual psyche and the collective consciousness is fundamental to Martín-Santos' development of myth in *Tiempo de Silencio*.

Because of its dominating, all-encompassing nature, myth plays a central role in the modernist literature of the 20th century, particularly in the works of James Joyce.

³⁷ Laurence Coupe, *Myth*, New Critical Idiom (London; New York: Routledge, 1997) 139. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

Although many writers successfully integrated archetypes and myths into their novels, Joyce's *Ulysses* is widely considered a paradigmatic work of modernist fiction in its "creation of personal myths by making an inward journey" (Scarborough 26). Joyce patterns his novel as an "odyssey" in which Leopold Bloom plays a modern-day Odysseus questing for home. As such, he blends the external environment of Dublin with Bloom's internal world; as Leopold meanders through the city streets, so too does Joyce explore his psychological world. In this way, Joyce's novel speaks to the division in modernist literature between the external and the internal. As Joseph Campbell says in his analysis of *Ulysses*, "the outward occasions represent, however, substantial external contexts of their own, of historical, socio-political, and economic relationships...' The integrity of the artist depends on this 'dialectical process' in which the inner and outer worlds continue to communicate with each other" (Scarborough 26-27). Joyce's *Ulysses* effectively represents the division between the inner and outer worlds that is fundamental to modernist literature; in addition, it uses myth as a means of representing and giving order to modern history, as T.S. Eliot suggests. In order to achieve this, Joyce pioneers several postmodern techniques that Martín-Santos incorporates into *Tiempo de Silencio*, including stream-of-consciousness, interior monologue, and parody. It is in these ways that *Ulysses* acts as a model for Martín-Santos in his creation of a modernist text that combines the interior and the exterior worlds and utilizes myth as a means of making sense of history.

Like Joyce, Martín-Santos uses the theories of Freud, Jung, and Eliade to create a text that is profoundly mythical both in structure and content. His ultimate goal with *Tiempo de Silencio* is the denunciation of the myths of the nationalist regime. As we shall see, myth served as the foundation of Franco's dictatorship. Although he wrote *Tiempo*

de Silencio during the period of tremendous social and economic change in Spain, Martín-Santos criticizes Franco for using myth to create a “national abulia that stifles progress on every level” (Jones 90). In order to debunk the myths that Franco’s regime propagated after the War, Martín-Santos makes connections between Pedro’s subjectivity and the national consciousness at large; thus, myth acts as a bridge from the personal to the national. It gives Martín-Santos the tools necessary to draw distinct parallels from Pedro’s individual experiences to the national Spanish consciousness in order to refute the myths of Franco’s regime and make powerful social commentary.

In particular, Martín-Santos uses the archetype of the labyrinth and the trope of descent as framing devices for his exploration of both the external world of Madrid and Pedro’s interior psyche. The myth of the labyrinth is one that has permeated literature since its origins. The labyrinth is defined in *Elsevier’s Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery* as “the Fall of the spirit into the perplexing world of phenomena, from which redemption is only possible by finding the Mystic Centre.”³⁸ It is believed that the word ‘labyrinth’ comes from ‘labrys,’ which was a double-sided votive or ceremonial axe used during the Minoan civilization. The symbol itself has many different meanings and its significant continues to evolve over time, but it was thought to reside at the heart of the original labyrinth. According to Greek mythology, Daedalus built the labyrinth at Crete to hold the Minotaur, a vicious creature that was half man and half bull. Theseus eventually defeated the Minotaur, but only with the help of Ariadne, who gave him a piece of thread so that he could find his way out of the maze. The term ‘labyrinth’ has since become interchangeable with ‘maze;’ both are structures “sin aparente finalidad, de complicada estructura y de la cual, una vez en su interior, es imposible o muy difícil

³⁸Ad de Vries and Arthur de Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*, 2nd Engl. ed. (Amsterdam; Boston: Elsevier, 2004) 343.

encontrar la salida.”³⁹ The labyrinth is connected with several myths: “la pérdida del espíritu en la creación, la <<caída>> de los neoplatónicos, y la consiguiente necesidad de buscar el <<centro>> pero retornar a él” (Cirlot 273).⁴⁰ Thus, the labyrinth is not only mythical in and of itself; it is also closely connected with the myths of the return to center and the double-sided labrys.

In *Cosmos and History*, Eliade establishes the nature of this center towards which the labyrinth visitor strives. He describes it as “pre-eminently the zone of the sacred, the zone of absolute reality...The road leading to the center is a ‘difficult road’ and this is verified at every level of reality: ...wanderings in labyrinths; difficulties of the seeker for the road to the self, to the “center” of his being.”⁴¹ With this description, Eliade establishes the mythical nature of the center, and indicates that the journey through the labyrinth is a descent into one’s own being. Since the birth of the labyrinth, this combination of literal and metaphorical explorations has become a widespread theme in literature, particularly in such modernist works as *Tiempo de Silencio*. The trope of descent, which is closely connected with both the labyrinth and the center, has also become an integral part of literature. Many international myths are structured around a particular figure’s descent into the underworld; the movement inwards and down is a way of reclaiming that which is lost or unknown. In particular, the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, the Japanese myth of Izanagi and Izanami, and the Akkadian/Sumerian myth of *Inanna’s Descent to the Underworld* all explore this trope. In

³⁹ Juan Eduardo Cirlot, *Diccionario De Símbolos*, 2 ed. (Barcelona: Labor, 1978) 1. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

“Without an apparent end, of a complicated structure from which, once inside its interior, it is very difficult or impossible to find the exit.”

⁴⁰ “The loss of the spirit during creation, the <<Fall>> of the Neoplatonists, and, following it, the necessity to find the <<center>> to return to it.”

⁴¹ Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York: Harper, 1959) 18-19. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

these myths and in many others, the journey through the labyrinth is often viewed as a descent into what Eliade refers to as the “center” of being. The two myths are closely connected with one another, and are often considered interchangeable.

Martín-Santos structures Pedro’s external and internal journeys in *Tiempo de Silencio* as a descent into a mythic labyrinth. As mentioned in section II, Pedro’s movement through Madrid mirrors his plunge into the isolation and loneliness of his psychological world. His exploration of the city leads him to a reality that completely contradicts the popular postwar nationalist myths. Simultaneously, Martín-Santos’ use of the interior monologue in the final portion of the novel reflects Pedro’s movement inwards and down into the labyrinth of his own psyche as he approaches the center of his being. In a particularly important scene, Pedro steps out into the city of Madrid and again thinks about Cervantes while the narrator admits “pero la cosa es muy complicada. Mientras que Pedro recorre taconeando suave el espacio que conociera el cuerpo del caballero mutilado, su propio racionalismo mórbido le va envolviendo en sus espirales sucesivas (Martín-Santos 73).⁴² Pedro then spends the rest of the chapter losing himself in the simultaneous, Cervantine labyrinths of the city streets and his own mind. He creates an internal maze for himself (“primera espiral...segunda espiral...tercera espiral...cuarta espiral...”) in which he ponders the nature of the world and his own place within it as he walks through the winding streets of Madrid (Martín-Santos 73).⁴³ In this scene, Martín-Santos begins to establish the mythical nature of the novel at large: Pedro’s dual labyrinthine descents into the mimetic world of mid-20th century Madrid and his own psyche, which we explored in sections I and II, respectively.

⁴² “But the issue is very complicated. While Pedro continues stamping his feet softly on the space that once knew the body of the mutilated gentleman, his own morbid rationalism envelops him in its successive spirals.”

⁴³ “First spiral...second spiral...third spiral...fourth spiral...”

Martín-Sants highlights the mythical and symbolic nature of the fusion of Pedro's internal and external realities through his exploration of the "center" to which Pedro strives in his descent. The labrys that Pedro seeks to find at the center of his own psychological labyrinth is his individual identity within the construct of collective identity. Pedro's mythic descent into his psychological world culminates in the analysis of a Francisco de Goya painting called "El Aquelarre" ("The Witches' Sabbath"). It is through a description of the painting that Martín-Santos uses myth to forge critical connections between Pedro as an individual and Pedro as representative of the national Spanish consciousness. His descent into Goya's work begins as a fairly objective analysis and progresses towards a one-sided conversation between the narrator and the *bucó*, or the he-goat, at the center of the painting. Through his exploration of the painting "El Aquelarre," Martín-Santos exposes the foundations of the myths on which Franco's authority is based. In particular, he deconstructs the notions of patriarchal authoritarianism ("donjuanismo") and essential Spanish identity and destiny. In doing so, he denounces Franco and the national time of silence that his dictatorship created.

The analysis of "El Aquelarre" begins with an introduction of the he-goat that dominates the painting. Goya depicts a witches' Sabbath in which several women gather around a massive horned goat. They hold up dead children to the male figure, who sits with his legs open and his fists outstretched. From the beginning of this scene in *Tiempo de Silencio*, the narrator seems conflicted as to the identity of the he-goat. He begins by saying "le grand bouc, el gran macho, el gran buco, el buco émissaire, el capro hispánico bien desarrollado. El cabrón expiatorio. ¡No! El gran buco en el esplendor de su gloria, en la prepotencia del dominio, en el usufructo de la adoración centrípeta. En el que el cuerno no es cuerno ominoso sino signo de glorioso dominio fálico" (Martín-Santos,

151).⁴⁴ With this description, Martín-Santos establishes the he-goat as the embodiment of patriarchal authority; he is the ultimate male figure depicted in the quintessential moment of his arrogance. His horns are not dangerous, but rather representative of the supremacy of the phallus. He sits in the center of Goya's painting surrounded by a circle of women, thus adding to his embodiment of male power.

The narrator continues in his exploration of this male figure at the center of "El Alquilarre." He attempts to gain an understanding of the goat's role in the painting, and then expands this outwards to make cultural observations as well. He focuses on the goat's prominent eyes: "¿Pues, para qué tiene tan listo el ojo? ¡Para mirarnos mejor! ¿Para qué tiene tan alto el cuerno? ¡Para encornarnos mejor!" (Martín-Santos 152).⁴⁵ With these exclamations, the narrator establishes the dual nature of the goat: he is simultaneously revered and feared, savior and murderer. The women in the painting turn to him with their dead children seeking help, but it appears that he is the source of their despair. As the narrator makes these observations, he slips into a conversation with the he-goat in which he addresses him directly and takes on the voice of "we." He realizes that the he-goat is not "expiatorio, buco, sino buco gozador;" he does not atone for the tremendous ills he has caused the women in the painting, but rather relishes in his position of domination and authority (Martín-Santos, 153).⁴⁶ The narrator uses the merciless he-goat as a foundation for his cultural analysis in which he recognizes the complexity of the relationships between the powerful and the powerless. He acknowledges that "we" are nothing compared with the he-goat, who is made up of "una

⁴⁴ "The great buck, the grand *macho*, the great goat, the emissary goat, the well-developed Hispanic goat. The expiatory billy-goat. No! The grand goat in the splendor of his glory, in the arrogance of domination, in the profit of his centripetal adoration. In that which the horn is not an ominous horn but rather a sign of glorious, phallic control."

⁴⁵ "Well, why is your eye so sharp? To see us better! Why is your horn so tall? To gore us better!"

⁴⁶ "Expiatory, goat, but a goat who enjoys."

más noble sustancia” than those who possess “la sangre visigótica enmohecida” and reside in “un pueblo que tiene las frentes tan menguadas” (Martín-Santos, 153).⁴⁷ The narrator finishes his dialogue by exalting the male figure for recognizing the inferiority of the “we” and demonstrating the capacity for goodness, saying “pero eres bueno; por eso alzas tu pezuña izquierda un poco más alta que la derecha” (Martín-Santos, 154).⁴⁸

Martín-Santos uses this brief but immensely intricate analysis of “El Aquelarre,” as well as the male characters of Muecas and Pedro, to parody the myths of patriarchal authoritarianism and “donjuanismo” that Franco represented. The narrator’s analysis of “El Aquelarre” points to the “somasochistic relationship between the powerful and the powerless: the latter create the image of an omnipotent, oppressive figure in order to compensate for—and justify—their own impotence” (Labanyi 72). The women submit themselves to the he-goat to compensate for their dead children, and the male figure draws his authority from their adoration, desire, and lack of progeny. Rather than use this scene as a way of demythifying Franco directly, however, Martín-Santos draws parallels between the novel and Spanish society at large. Several male-female relationships in *Tiempo de Silencio* resemble Goya’s portrayal of male domination. Muecas and Pedro both embody the archetype of patriarchal domination that Labanyi and Jung propose, although each man takes a different approach to his role. Muecas is the archetypal authoritarian patriarch of an incestuous family in which his two daughters and his wife serve him dutifully; Florita’s submission to her father ultimately leads to her failed abortion and death. Muecas consciously plays the part of the he-goat in that he utilizes the adoration of his family for his own satisfaction. Pedro, meanwhile, represents the archetypal unconscious, dominating male. The women at the *pension*

⁴⁷ “A more noble substance”; “the musty Visigoth blood”; “a *pueblo* that has such diminished foreheads.”

⁴⁸ “But you are good; because of that, you raise your left fist a little bit higher than your right.”

idolize him because he possesses the youth, respectability, and money that they lack, and he allows himself to be worshipped because he is insecure about his position in Spanish society. In both cases, the female characters praise male authority, just as the women in Goya's "El Alquilarre" exalt the he-goat.

The consecration of the male figure in Goya's painting, and Martín-Santos' critique of the archetypal authoritarian patriarchs in *Tiempo de Silencio*, are closely linked with the concept of "donjuanismo." This idea is an essential part of both the nationalist myths themselves and Martín-Santos' parody and denunciation of them.

"Donjuanismo" comes from the literary character Don Juan, who first emerged in the Tirso de Molina play *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra*. Since its publication in Spain in the 17th century, Don Juan has become an archetypal figure of male domination and sexual deviance. The term "donjuanismo" describes a psychological and social phenomenon in which a man seduces many different women in an attempt to demonstrate his masculinity and sexual prowess, much like the fictional Don Juan. As Antonio de Salgot writes in his text *Don Juan Tenorio y Donjuanismo*, "donjuanismo" consists of three basic characteristics:

Una admiración para el tipo de Don Juan seductor, estimando que cada <<conquista>> constituye un timbre de gloria y de honor para su fama y nombre...un desprecio para la mujer conquistada, la cual queda deshonrada definitivamente por el simple hecho de su <<caída>>...un desprecio...respecto a los hijos habidos como fruto de las conquistas de los Don Juanes, considerados <<indignos>> por su origen ilegítimo.⁴⁹

⁴⁹Antonio de Salgot, *Don Juan Tenorio Y Donjuanismo*, 1 ed. (Barcelona,; Editorial Juventud, 1953) 128. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

"An admiration for the type of Don Juan seducer, respecting that every <<conquest>> constitutes a token of glory and honor for his fame and name...scorn and contempt for the conquered woman, who is left dishonored simply because of her <<fall>>...scorn and contempt towards the illegitimate children that are products of the Don Juan's conquests, considered <<indignant>> because of their illegitimate origin."

As Salgot explains, “donjuanismo” is based on patriarchal authoritarianism and sexual conquest, and can be examined from multiple points of view, including “teológico, ético, moral, médico, social” (theological, ethical, moral, medical, social) (Salgot 129).

“Donjuanismo” is Martín-Santos’ basis for critiquing the nationalist myths and countering traditional patterns of patriarchal authority in Spain, demonstrating all the while the persistence of these patterns at all levels of Spanish society.

Goya’s “El Aquelarre” serves Martín-Santos in this way, in that he uses the painting and the dominating male characters of Pedro and Muecas to expose, and by implication, denounce the myths that Franco, the quintessential, archetypal authoritarian male in postwar Spain, espoused about himself. Pedro reflects the national Spanish consciousness at large, and both he and Muecas represent the mythification of Franco. The women in *Tiempo de Silencio* see Pedro and Muecas as messianic figures who will guide them to salvation; however, both men fail miserably and ultimately lead these women towards death rather than life. Both Dorita and Florita die because of mistakes that Pedro and Muecas make. Similarly, Franco established himself as the mythic savior of Spain who would restore the country to its authentic history and destiny. In making this connection between Franco and the characters of *Tiempo de Silencio*, Martín-Santos highlights that the patriarchal bases of authority as constructed during Franco’s regime are at once psychological, cultural, and political, and they find their common expression in this national myth of “donjuanismo.” The implications here are profound, for in Martín-Santos’s historiography, Franco’s power appears not as derived from any divine authority as Franco himself proclaimed, but from the country’s own social realities: its insecurities and sense of loss in the aftermath of the Civil War. Rather than provide stability, structure, and comfort to his citizens, Franco, like Muecas and Pedro, led them

into the severe economic, cultural, and intellectual depression that *Tiempo de Silencio* depicts. Martín-Santos draws attention to the grotesque nature of all of these characters with his description of the “gran buco” in the painting. In addition, he uses his own characters, the narrator’s ironic tone, and the significant analysis of Goya’s portrayal of the national myth in order to reveal and savagely denounce the mythical bases of Franco’s authority. Martín-Santos’ achievements in this regard open the door for Juan Goytisolo’s violent deconstruction of Franco’s regime in *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*.

Martín-Santos also paves the way for Goytisolo in his development of a strong connection between Pedro the individual and Pedro the representative of the national consciousness through his analysis of Goya’s “El Aquelarre.” He continues to do so over the course of the text, and, in the process, he exposes and denounces other nationalist myths. In particular, he debunks the closely connected myths of the essential national character and the *hombre celtíbero* or *carpetovetónico*. Franco and the political Falange Española party argued that Spanish identity is determined by geography. They believed that people from Spain, and the territory that the country occupied prior to its establishment as such, share distinct characteristics that have been passed down through the Spanish race for generations. In other words:

National character is determined not by history but by the fixed ‘original essences’ of geography and race... Their reduction of history to geography and biology is a perfect example of the reduction of culture to nature, presenting the man-made as given and immutable, that Barthes has proposed as the main characteristic of myth (Labanyi 57).

According to Franco, the most prominent characteristic that defines this mythic, “essential” Spanish identity is stoicism, or *amor fati*, which Labanyi defines as “the capacity to remain faithful to an essential destiny” (Labanyi 57). Spanish philologist and historian Ramón Menéndez Pidal “saw the Spaniards’ innate stoicism as part of their

Roman inheritance, incarnated by the Spanish-born stoic philosopher Seneca,” whom other Spanish writers have described as the “supreme representative of the national character” (Labanyi 59). Thus, stoicism is the fundamental characteristic of an essential national identity that has been inherited from one of Spain’s ancestors. Both Martín-Santos and Goytisolo address this myth in their texts, and Goytisolo develops the figure of Seneca in *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*.

In addition to this notion of an essential Spanish identity, the nationalist regime espoused the myth that Spain possessed an authentic destiny from which it had deviated. Franco believed that Spain needed a strong, centralized government and a powerful ruler in order to return to the greatness it had known under the control of King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile and León in the 15th century. He felt that the country had deteriorated after their reign; the impacts of materialism, syndicalism, and decentralized government that defined Spain in the early 20th century were undeniably responsible for this deviation. He saw himself as the saving grace that would restore Spain to its correct historical course. As such, the nationalist regime advocated stoic *amor fati* as a means of “[legitimizing] not only those who impose their will on the pretext that they embody the national destiny, but also those who are forced to submit” (Labanyi 57). Franco’s notions of an essential, authentic Spanish identity and destiny are the basis for Martín-Santos’ denunciation of nationalist mythology and ideology.

Martín-Santos strives to debunk these myths not by creating his own myths, but by continuing to allow his protagonist’s mindset and situation to represent the national consciousness, as he does when he critiques the myths of patriarchal authoritarianism and “donjuanismo.” Pedro’s psychological conflict between society and self, and his enduring stoicism and total acceptance of his unfortunate circumstances, are

fundamental to this process. He creates this internal battle in order to demonstrate the ways in which his protagonist represents Spanish consciousness. As previously demonstrated, Pedro resigns himself completely to the will of others as his circumstances worsen; thus, he embodies the stoicism that Franco defines as the fundamental Spanish characteristic. In the famous prison soliloquy, for example, Pedro “resorts to the stoic concept of the free acceptance of an adverse destiny to justify the disasters that befall him. That his argument is insincere is shown by the fact that he also claims to be a victim of fate. Thus in prison he will start by lamenting ‘El destino fatal’ and will end up persuading himself he wants things to be the way they are” (Labanyi 58). As Labanyi points out, Pedro fully embodies the nationalist myth of essential national character in his appeal to stoicism as a way of avoiding personal agency. Rather than take ownership over his choices and future, Pedro resigns himself to an unavoidable fate while simultaneously convincing himself that he has actually chosen this destiny.

Martín-Santos uses Pedro to denounce the nationalist myth of essential Spanish identity by showing the pathetic outcome of a person, and thus a society, that defines itself by inherited characteristics. At the end of the novel, Pedro withdraws himself from Madrid as “an unheroic defense against failure...The Castilian *meseta* is shown not to be the ‘paisaje masculino nunca castrado nunca’ that Pedro does his best to see, but represents precisely the castration of the country’s—and Pedro’s—potential” (Labanyi 58).⁵⁰ Pedro’s firm appeal to stoicism leaves him emasculated and alone, and forces him to delude himself about his bleak circumstances. In this way, he represents the defeated consciousness of a collective group that allows itself to be defined by inherited characteristics; his fate is that of the Spanish nation at large when it ascribes to the

⁵⁰ “Never castrated never.”

nationalist myth of essential identity. Martín-Santos uses Pedro's crippling stoicism and resignation as a means of criticizing Franco's regime for convincing its citizens that their depressed circumstances are inevitable and determined not by history or social interactions, but by the mere fact that they are Spanish. He thus establishes Pedro's psychological conflict as representative of Spain's consciousness in order to reveal the devastating effects that this myth has on Spaniards after the War. Like Pedro at the end of *Tiempo de Silencio*, a society built on the notion of essential national identity is emasculated, isolated from the rest of the world, incapable of appreciating scientific and intellectual thought, and oblivious to its own pathetic circumstances. Martín-Santos thus denounces this nationalist myth by using his protagonist's psychological conflict as a representation of the national consciousness.

Another myth that Martín-Santos challenges in *Tiempo de Silencio* is that Spaniards have an inherent vocation for poverty. This is clearly a continuation of the idea of an essential national character, and it is closely aligned with Franco's belief in the fundamentally "Spanish" quality of stoicism. Menéndez Pidal defines stoicism as "contented poverty" in his text *Los Españoles en la historia* (Labanyi 59). According to the nationalist regime, if Spaniards possess innate characteristics that prepare them for an impoverished life, then the miserable standard of living in major Spanish cities during the postwar decades does not need to be altered. In the first section, we explored the ways in which *Tiempo de Silencio* acts as a mirror of its socio-historical context in its portrayal of Madrid's social makeup in 1949. Martín-Santos uses his ironic descriptions not only to criticize Franco's regime for allowing many of its poorest citizens to live in appalling conditions, but also to denounce this myth that these individuals are content to do so. Upon visiting the *chabolas*, for example, the narrator remarks "¡cómo los valores

espirituales que otros pueblos nos envidian eran palpablemente demostrados en la manera como de la nada y del detritus toda una armoniosa ciudad había surgido a impulsos de su soplo vivificador!” (Martín-Santos 50).⁵¹ In this passage, the ironic narrator hints at the nationalist myth of the inherently Spanish vocation for poverty when he mentions the “spiritual values” that other cities envy. Through his ironic descriptions of the *chabolas* and false exaltation of the ingenuity and contentedness with which they are built, Martín-Santos denounces the nationalist myth that Spaniards are, by nature, content to live in poverty.

In large part, Martín-Santos derives this critique of the nationalist myths of essential identity based on geography and authentic Spanish destiny from the works of Américo Castro, a 20th century Spanish cultural historian and literary critic who left Spain after the outbreak of the Civil War. His ideas about national Spanish character and historiography had a profound affect on many Spanish writers, including Martín-Santos and Goytisolo. He argues that Spanish identity is not determined by biology or geography, but rather by the confluence of Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Spain over the last ten centuries. Although Martín-Santos does not explicitly adopt this approach towards Spanish social history in *Tiempo de Silencio*, he clearly denounces Franco’s method in his text. Castro denies the nationalist myth that “la esencia del español cruzó incólume e inafectada a través de las varias gentes y de todo lo acontecido en la Península desde que existe tradición de ella.”⁵² Rather, in *La Realidad Histórica de España* (1948) he argues that the formation of communities is a socio-historical process, that is,

⁵¹ “How palpably were the spiritual values that other *pueblos* envy us demonstrated in the way in which, out of the nothingness and detritus, a whole harmonious city had sprung forth from the impulses of one life-giver!”

⁵² Américo Castro, *La Realidad Histórica De España*, 8a ed. (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1982) 1. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis. “The essence of the Spanish man crossed unscathed and unaffected through the various people and all that happened in the Peninsula since the existence of Her tradition.”

it is the result of a community's will to identify itself. In particular, he writes that the social interactions between the three religious groups, or *castas*, of Jews, Christians, and Muslims form the foundation of Spanish identity. Castro claims that the Christian population in Spain has been intermixed with Muslims and Jews since the 10th century. As such, it is impossible to argue for the existence of essential characteristics that can be traced to Spain's origins because the social impact that each group has had on each other is irrefutable. The recognition of the "presencia positiva y decisiva" (positive and decisive presence) of these castes in Spain's official historiography is necessary, and the nationalist reliance on geography is limiting, unrealistic, and ignorant (Castro 11). Castro proposes a scientific, rationalist historiography that counters the nationalist myths embraced by Franco's regime. As we have discussed, *Tiempo de Silencio* takes a darkly satirical approach to the nation through these myths of national identity. As remains to be seen in chapter two, Goytisolo's *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* demonstrates that Castro's model continues to hold sway over Spanish novels in the 1960s, especially those most critical of the nation's social and political status.

Chapter Two: Juan Goytisolo's *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*

I. The construction of mimetic time and space in *Don Julián*

In the same way that *Tiempo de Silencio* was heavily influenced by Luis Martín-Santos' historical context, *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* reflects the moment in time in which it was written. Juan Goytisolo published the novel in 1970, nearly ten years after Martín-Santos wrote *Tiempo de Silencio*; as such, it responds to dramatically different social and historical circumstances. By 1970, the economic and cultural regeneration that Martín-Santos briefly experienced had reached its pinnacle. Spain opened its borders to the outside world, and it welcomed the capitalism, consumerism, and excess of other western countries. A dramatic rise in tourists in Spain produced a flourishing nation of economic progress, materialism, and wealth that replaced the isolated, depressed, divided Spain that *Tiempo de Silencio* depicts. In addition, the 60s and 70s saw a tremendous influx of political and artistic advancements in Spain as popular movements and ideas, including Marxism and Latin American literature, emerged in the national consciousness.

Goytisolo's works of the 1960s were part of a new wave of Spanish literature that emerged in Spain at this moment of cultural renewal. Juan and Luis Goytisolo, Juan Marsé, Ana María Matute, and Antonio Ferrer are among its most well-known members, and although they did not use a formal title like the neorealist authors, they shared common aims. Their literature "se ha postulado el abandono de la novela social y han proliferado los experimentos formales, la vuelta al autobiografismo, la ruptura con el *tempo* lineal y la presencia de complicados—y a veces muy banales—autoanálisis de la alienación moral del individuo" (Brown 229).⁵³ These authors strived to come to terms

⁵³ "Called for the abandonment of the social novel, and they have proliferated formal experiments, the return to the autobiography, the rupture con the lineal *tempo* and the presence of complicated—and sometimes very banal—auto analysis of the moral alienation of the individual."

with their own traumatic pasts in order to comment more profoundly on individual and collective Spanish identity in postwar Spain. During the moment of cultural renewal in which they lived, they awoke to their need to reclaim forgotten experiences from the Civil War. Goytisolo described the sentiments of the group:

Many of those who are now writing novels were only children during the Civil War. With the eyes of children they saw, calmly, atrocious things. They forgot them. But there was a moment in their lives, as they grew up, in which they suddenly remembered them again... Then, not to forget these things... but to free themselves, they began writing novels. After the first wave... which described the crimes... the second wave arrived, slower, more powerful, that which relates what has been destroyed and what has been awakened in consciences.⁵⁴

As such, the novels of the late 1960s attempted “to define the contemporary Spaniard” by using the author’s own experiences as a basis for a discussion about the country at large (Schwartz 23). In doing so, the writers of this new genre took large steps forward in exploring both the conscious and the unconscious worlds. They borrowed literary techniques and innovations from late neorealist writers, particularly Martín-Santos. Goytisolo and his cohort imitated Martín-Santos’ use of irony and internal monologue in order to more fully establish subjectivity. Like Martín-Santos, they moved away from the objective observations of everyday life towards the internal world of the protagonist. In addition to the influence of *Tiempo de Silencio*, these authors were heavily affected by the Latin American Boom of the 1960s. The Boom literature was highly experimental, and it gave Spanish writers the freedom to stray from accepted literary conventions and norms. As a result, the genre to which Goytisolo belonged was characterized by great innovations of form and style.

⁵⁴ Kessel Schwartz, Juan Goytisolo (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970) 22-23. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

Goytisolo demonstrates his originality and inventiveness particularly well in his Mendiola trilogy, to which *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* belongs. The trilogy includes *Señas de identidad* (1966) and *Juan sin Tierra* (1975). The same character, Álvaro Mendiola, appears in all three books, and he often displays characteristics that Goytisolo himself possesses. The Mendiola trilogy as a whole represents a rapid and dramatic development of narrative technique, as Goytisolo attempts to actualize the sentiments of his literary genre. In particular, he explores issues of personal and collective memory and identity through the various manifestations of the character of Álvaro Mendiola. Alison Ribeiro de Menezes succinctly analyzes the presence of these themes in the first two texts of the trilogy, saying “memory is notoriously subjective and unreliable...Both *Señas de identidad* and *Don Julián* explore these issues through an examination of the creation of a dissident identity. Each novel dramatizes the attempted destruction by its protagonist of an abhorrent past and creation of a hopeful, even utopian, future.”⁵⁵ The simultaneous quest for self-destruction and self-creation after the Civil War is a central theme of *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*. In order to give “center stage to the closely connected themes of memory, history, and identity,” Goytisolo uses innovations in narrative technique, many of which will be discussed later in this section (Ribeiro de Menezes 61).

In the novels of the Mendiola trilogy, particularly *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*, the impact of *Tiempo de Silencio* on Goytisolo’s writing is clear. Like Martín-Santos, Goytisolo places his narrator-protagonist within mimetic time and space, and he carefully develops the details of the physical world. In *Tiempo de Silencio*, Pedro’s journey through the winding streets and periphery of Madrid is easily traceable; similarly, the narrator-

⁵⁵Alison Ribeiro de Menezes, *Juan Goytisolo: The Author as Dissident* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK; Rochester, NY: Tamesis, 2005) 62. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

protagonist of *Don Julián* explores the city of Tangiers. Goytisolo uses many of the same neorealist techniques as Martín-Santos in establishing an objective snapshot of life in the city. The narrator-protagonist of *Don Julián* visits the bars, cafes, and public locales of Tangiers, and he makes frequent observations about his surroundings. Furthermore, Goytisolo takes from Martín-Santos in his establishment of his narrator-protagonist's subjectivity within this framework. *Tiempo de Silencio* acts as a pioneer of postmodernism in its exploration of Pedro's psyche; *Don Julián* progresses forwards in its development of the subject-object relationship, as well as the movement inwards into the narrator-protagonist's conscious and unconscious worlds. Goytisolo expands on many of Martín-Santos' innovative techniques in order to descend to unexplored depths in his subject's mind and memory. Finally, Goytisolo seeks to denounce many of the same nationalist myths that Martín-Santos addresses. In this aspect, and in its creation of a multidimensional protagonist within mimetic time and space, *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* both takes from and builds on *Tiempo de Silencio*.

One of the ways in which Goytisolo expands on Martín-Santos' writing is through his experiments with form and style. Despite its movement between a third-person omniscient narrator and informal interior monologues, *Tiempo de Silencio* is conventional in that sentences are punctuated and dialogue is distinct from description. Even as the narrative voice changes and the writing reflects incomplete thoughts rather than objective reports, the sentence structure is straightforward. Goytisolo's text, on the other hand, represents an entirely different style of writing that corresponds with the experimental attitude of his literary genre. In *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*, Goytisolo uses colons to separate phrases, and he alternates between writing in complete sentences and fragments. Unlike Martín-Santos, he rarely separates dialogue from description,

instead slipping seamlessly from one to the other without warning. During moments of conversation, it is difficult to distinguish between speakers. In addition, Goytisolo experiments with a second-person narrator-protagonist in *Don Julián* by referring to his subject as “tú” (“you”) for the majority of the novel. He demonstrates all of these experiments with form and narrative voice during a scene in which the narrator-protagonist receives a shot at the pharmacy. Goytisolo writes “con el sordo eco de tu pasado angustia y la frente orillada de sudor: tac: ya está: inoculando poco a poco la ponzoña que se diluirá en las venas, paralizará los centros motores y nerviosos...qué, le hago daño?: y tú, aguantando el tipo: no, en absoluto.”⁵⁶ The stylistic and formal innovations evident in this passage reflect Goytisolo’s commitment to advancing beyond Martín-Santos in his experiments with language.

Furthermore, *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* represents a progression away from *Tiempo de Silencio* in the development of the subject-object relationship. *Tiempo de Silencio* is a socio-historical mirror, an exploration of subjectivity, and a denunciation of nationalist myths. In chapter one, we explored the techniques that Martín-Santos uses to fully establish these three dimensions. At the heart of all of them is clearly a strong connection between Pedro, the subject, and his objective, physical surroundings. Martín-Santos uses the city of Madrid as a means of establishing Pedro’s subjectivity; in this way, the subject and object are deeply connected and dependent on one another. Goytisolo develops a more complex, intricate subject-object relationship in *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*. He establishes two concurrent journeys in the novel: the exploration

⁵⁶Juan Goytisolo and Linda Gould Levine, *Reivindicación Del Conde Don Julián*, Letras Hispánicas, Segunda Edición ed. (Madrid: Cátedra, 1995) 104. Note: From this point on, all references to Goytisolo’s text will be parenthetical and will correspond with this edition.

“With the deaf echo of your anguished past and your forehead edged with sweat: tac: there it is: inoculating little by little the venom that will dilute in the veins, paralyzing the motor and nerve centers...what, did I hurt you?: and you, tolerating the man: no, absolutely not.”

of the narrator-protagonist's physical surroundings, and a mental voyage in which the narrator-protagonist descends into the labyrinth of his memory and identity. These quests overlap with one another at various points in the novel, and it is in these moments that *Don Julián* resembles *Tiempo de Silencio*. Although Goytisolo takes from Martín-Santos in his establishment of recognizable physical surroundings for his subject, this mimetic framework gradually wears away over the course of the novel in favor of the narrator-protagonist's interior, imagined world. In this way, Goytisolo moves beyond Martín-Santos in his establishment of a complex, experimental subject-object connection in which the exploration of the narrator-protagonist's subjectivity frequently diverges from the development of his empirical reality. We will explore the disintegration of the mimetic world in section II of this chapter.

Despite Goytisolo's progression beyond Martín-Santos in his experimentation with form, language, and the subject-object connection, it is clear that Goytisolo draws on Martín-Santos in order to establish a mimetic framework. At various points in the novel, Goytisolo's choppy, fragmented phrases of prose read as fluid descriptions of real people and places, just as Martín-Santos objectively portrays the harsh realities of life in Madrid. For example, at the beginning of the novel the narrator-protagonist explores his small room: "mirando a tu alrededor en un apurado y febril inventario de tus pertenencias y bienes: dos sillas, un armario empotrado, una mesita de noche, una estufa de gas: un mapa del Imperio Jerifiano escala 1/1000000, impreso en Hallwag, Berna, Suiza: un grabado en colores con diferentes especies de hojas" (Goytisolo and Levine 86).⁵⁷ In this passage, the narrator-protagonist carefully describes the contents of his

⁵⁷ "Looking around you in an awkward, feverish inventory of your belongings and goods: two chairs, a built-in cupboard, a small night table, a gas stove: a map of Imperio Jerifiano with the scale of 1/1000000, printed in Hallwag, Berne, Switzerland: a colored engraving with different types of leaves."

living quarters, thereby placing himself in a particular space. He then pans out to the city of Tangiers, and he describes the library, a recognizable public place, using the objectivism typical of neorealist literature:

Pisando la dudosa luz del día, escaleras arriba, hacia el rellano del principal: sombrío interior de un edificio un tanto deslucido, puertas con guarniciones de marquetería y un tiesto verde con un helecho escuálido: treinta y seis peldaños abruptos antes de afrontar la placa con la inscripción enunciativa en el negro aviso sobre fondo blanco... (Goytisolo and Levine 105).⁵⁸

With this passage, Goytisolo similarly describes the particularities of the library in order to firmly place his narrator-protagonist within a mimetic framework. He establishes the city of Tangiers as the backdrop of his novel by weaving objective descriptions with his experimental narrative form and style. In doing so, he creates a dichotomy between empirical and psychological, objective and subjective, that we will examine further.

Goytisolo adds additional subtlety and richness to his narrator-protagonist's empirical surroundings by taking on the voice and identity of a citizen of Tangiers in order to more accurately portray the city. When the narrator-protagonist leaves his room to wander about the streets, he is approached by beggars and scroungers. Without distinguishing between the narrator-protagonist and a new character, Goytisolo adopts the dialect and speech patterns of these individuals. For example, he writes that "pasando del caso personal al familiar, del singular al plural...ponerse en guardia con el florete orientado peligrosamente hacia ti: mi mamá, la pobre, como siempre: tirando bien que mal: setenta años ya y la salud y los disgustos: y el dolor de cabeza que no la deja: que

⁵⁸ "Treading on the dubious light of the day, up the stairs, to the main landing: somber interior of a building a little bit spoiled, doors with decorations of marquetry and a green flowerpot with a squalid fern: thirty-six steep stairs before facing the place with the inscription in the black warning with the white background..."

ni come la pobrecilla...” (Goytisolo and Levine 97).⁵⁹ This passage demonstrates both the seamless transition between objective narrative description and dialogue and the precision with which Goytisolo captures the character of the beggar. The particular speech pattern that Goytisolo adopt in relaying the beggar’s story about his ailing mother serves to enhance the realistic nature of his identity and his circumstances. Rather than simply describe Tangiers, Goytisolo inhabits the voice of this particular citizen in order to realistically portray the people that surround his narrator-protagonist.

In addition to establishing the recognizable space in which his subject exists and the culture of the city in which he lives, Goytisolo places his narrator-protagonist within an easily identifiable timeframe. The novel is circular in nature in that it starts and ends at the same place. Unlike *Tiempo de Silencio*, all of the action of the novel takes place in a single day. Just as Goytisolo creates the narrator-protagonist’s physical surroundings, so too does he hint at the chronology of the day. At the beginning of the second section of *Don Julián*, for example, he writes that “las calles están desiertas ahora y la luz de los faroles agiganta desmesuradamente vuestras sombras e invalida, de rechazo, vuestra precaria, insegura realidad” (Goytisolo and Levine 161).⁶⁰ The narrator-protagonist’s journey through the city of Tangiers is traceable not only spatially but also chronologically; Goytisolo’s description in this passage implies the arrival of dusk. At the end of the day, the narrator-protagonist returns home to his apartment, where he prepares himself for sleep: “orinarás, te lavarás los dientes, pasarás a tu habitación”

⁵⁹ “Passing from a personal to a familiar case, from the singular to the plural...putting oneself on guard with the fencing foil dangerously pointed towards you: my mom, the poor thing, like usual: surviving good and bad: seventy years old and the health and the disgust: and the headache that never leaves her: so bad that the poor thing can’t even eat.”

⁶⁰ “The streets are deserted now and the light of the street lamps immeasurable magnifies your shadows and invalidates, in its refusal, your precarious, insecure reality...”

(Goytisolo and Levine 303).⁶¹ Through such descriptions of typical daily rituals and other indicators that mark the passing of time, Goytisolo carefully constructs the chronology of a conventional day and firmly establishes mimetic time.

Just as Martín-Santos does for Pedro, Goytisolo places his subject within a specific historical context. *Tiempo de Silencio* provides a socio-historical mirror of Madrid in 1949; similarly, *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* reflects the political, social, and economic realities of both Spain and Tangiers in the late 1960s. Goytisolo uses a complicated combination of irony, criticism, and flashback in order to do so. For example, the narrator-protagonist sharply criticizes the materialism and culture of excess that defined Spain in the late 60s and early 70s:

Del raudo progreso que, según testigos, juvenece la faz, ayer dormida y torva, hoy floreciente y dinámica del vetusto país: estaciones de servicio y moteles, películas verdosas y extranjeras con bikini en las playas: different, yes...populorum progressio: gracias al tacto y competencia de vuestros esclarecidos tecnócratas (Goytisolo and Levine 99).⁶²

In this passage, he mocks Spain's progress and hedonistic western culture. He mentions the illustrious technocrats and the nationalist motto that "Spain is different;" both of these comments indicate the narrator-protagonist's specific historical context.

Goytisolo sharply contrasts this depiction of industrialized, modern Spain with his descriptions of life in Tangiers and in doing so, he begins to create a fascinating subject-object relationship that he expands and develops over the course of *Don Julián*. In the first part of the novel, the narrator-protagonist follows a little boy around the *medina*, or the city center. During his labyrinthine journey, he explores the underbelly of

⁶¹ "You will urinate, you will brush your teeth, you will go into your room."

⁶² "From swift progress that, according to witnesses, giving life to the face, yesterday asleep and stern, today the ancient country is flourishing and dynamic: service stations and motels, unfamiliar movies and strangers wearing bikinis on the beach: different, yes...populorum progression: thanks to the tact and the competence of your illustrious technocrats."

Tangiers society, which he juxtaposes with his commentary on Spain. He describes the “regateos que imantan los inevitables curiosos en torno al improvisado palenque del forcejeo ritual: cautivo de ese primario universo de economía de trueque no embellecido por el fausto del hollywoodiano technicolor” (Goytisolo and Levine 118).⁶³ In this passage, the narrator-protagonist portrays a city untouched by the falseness, capitalism, and glamour of the western world. Despite its poverty and makeshift economic structure, in the eyes of the narrator-protagonist Tangiers is morally superior to the “menguados beneficios de la arrabalera, peninsular sociedad de consumo: de esa España que engorda, sí, pero que sigue muda” (Goytisolo and Levine 119).⁶⁴ Living conditions may be harsh, but according to the narrator-protagonist Tangiers retains its authenticity; he cannot say the same for Spain. In this way, Goytisolo establishes Tangiers as a “símbolo antagónico de la moderna civilización industrial y la progresiva comercialización de la sociedad española” (Gould Levine, n. 78, 119).⁶⁵ He provides contrasting descriptions of both places in order to create a realistic, multidimensional mimetic framework for his subject. Ultimately, his portrayal of Tangiers is less objective and more a projection of his narrator-protagonist’s anger and disgust for his motherland. The clear distinction between Spain and Africa will become increasingly significant in Goytisolo’s establishment of subjectivity.

In addition to providing these descriptions that reflect the condition of life in Spain after the ‘economic miracle,’ Goytisolo alludes to the legacy of the Civil War and Franco’s enduring ubiquity in his homeland. Later in this same scene, the narrator-

⁶³ “The haggling that magnetizes the inevitable curious ones around the improvised fence of ritual struggle: captive of this first universe of barter economics unembellished by the splendor of Hollywood Technicolor.”

⁶⁴ “The diminished benefits of the poorly-bred, peninsular society of consumption: of this Spain that grows fat, yes, but that remains mute.”

⁶⁵ “Antagonist symbol of the modern industrial civilization and the progressive commercialization of the Spanish society.”

protagonist mentions the “próvidos celadores del secular enfermo, condenado aún, después de previsor sangría, a la inmovilidad y al reposo, a la cura de sueño, a la hídrica dieta: en vía de recuperación al fin bajo la ubicua potestad de Tonelete” (Goytisolo and Levine 99).⁶⁶ Linda Gould Levine, the editor of this version of *Don Julián*, writes that this “es la primera referencia al tema de la sangría, alusión satírica a la guerra civil española y a la depuración de los enemigos del régimen de Franco” (Gould Levine, n.32, 99).⁶⁷ Furthermore, the latter part of the passage references Goytisolo’s invented nickname for Franco, <<el Ubicuo>> or the ubiquitous one, and mocks his small stature (Gould Levine, n.33, 99). Like Martín-Santos in *Tiempo de Silencio*, Goytisolo makes other references to Franco in the text. For example, when the narrator-protagonist visits the library he feels the overwhelming presence of “la autoridad enmarcada del ubicuo” (Goytisolo and Levine 107).⁶⁸ With these allusions, Goytisolo subtly depicts particular aspects of life in Spain during the Civil War, and hints at Franco’s lingering presence in the narrator-protagonist’s mind.

In developing a complex subject-object relationship, Goytisolo carefully places his narrator-protagonist within two distinct worlds, Africa and Spain, in order to demonstrate the ways in which he (the subject) perceives and relates with his objective surroundings. Goytisolo’s juxtaposition of the *medina* in Tangiers with the Spain of consumption, excess, and omnipresent authority sets up an important relationship that positions the Arab as Spain’s “other.” As we will see, the narrator-protagonist’s relationship with Tangiers is based on his desire to obliterate Spain; in his mind, Tangiers

⁶⁶ “The diligent caretakers of the secular ill, still condemned, after the foreseeing blood, to the immobility and rest, to the cure of dreams, to the hydric diet: en route to recuperation at last under the ubiquitous authority of Tonelete.”

⁶⁷ “Is the first reference to the issue of the sangria, satirical allusion to the Spanish Civil War and the purification of the enemies of Franco’s regime.”

⁶⁸ “The framed authority of the ubiquitous one.”

thus becomes an icon of authenticity, humility, and moral superiority in contrast with his motherland's culture of greed and excess. Although Goytisolo clearly establishes a detailed mimetic framework for his narrator-protagonist and a distinct subject-object connection, the objective physical space and time ultimately prove secondary to the psychological, subjective world of the narrator-protagonist. Unlike the straightforward connection between Pedro and Madrid in *Tiempo de Silencio*, the recognizable world around Goytisolo's subject progressively wears away in favor of the internal world. Goytisolo begins part II of *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* with the words "hacia dentro, hacia dentro" (Goytisolo and Levine 161).⁶⁹ This invitation to dive deeper begins the descent into his narrator-protagonist's psyche, and the mimetic framework that Goytisolo painstakingly constructs slowly starts to disappear. As the novel progresses, the journey into the subject's mind takes the place of his own objective exploration of Tangiers. At times, the two voyages overlap, and a specific aspect of the mimetic world will provoke a flashback or mental adventure. In the last part of the novel, too, there is a conflation of the real with the imagined as the reader—and the narrator-protagonist himself—cannot distinguish between the two. Goytisolo's careful establishment and juxtaposition of Spain and Tangiers, however, is not insignificant; rather, the tension in his descriptions predicts the narrator-protagonist's psychological conflict: he experiences an internal battle between different versions of his own subjectivity.

⁶⁹ "Into the inside, into the inside."

II. *Don Julián* and the subjective

Despite *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*'s experimental nature, it is carefully organized on a structural level to allow Goytisolo to fully establish his narrator-protagonist's complicated subjectivity. The text is divided into four parts: "the first chapter gives general background information about the protagonist; the second describes his traumatic childhood experiences; the latter part of the second, the third, and part of the fourth chapter represent the planning and the invasion of Spain," and the final portion of the fourth part represents the climax of the narrator-protagonist's quest.⁷⁰ As the novel progresses, Goytisolo gradually descends deeper into his narrator-protagonist's psychological world and reveals critical aspects of his subjectivity. Although he uses many experimental techniques and innovations of style, his adherence to this four-part structure organizes the novel in an accessible way and lends cohesiveness to the narrator-protagonist's psychological journey. Ultimately, this quest requires the narrator-protagonist to move away from the city of Tangiers and descend inwards into his own psyche. It is through the gradual dissolution of the objective world that Goytisolo leads the reader to an understanding of his narrator-protagonist's duality.

Although the subject-object relationship changes over the course of the novel, at the start of the text Goytisolo uses his narrator-protagonist's physical surroundings as a means of developing his subjectivity. *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* begins in the narrator-protagonist's room, from which he can see both the bustling city of Tangiers and the outline of Spain across the water. It starts: "tierra ingrata, entre todas espuria y

⁷⁰Genaro J. Pérez, *Formalist Elements in the Novels of Juan Goytisolo* (Potomac, Md.: J. Porrúa Turanzas, North American Division, 1979) 135. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

mezquina, jamás volveré a ti” (Goytisolo and Levine 83).⁷¹ By referring to Spain as an ungrateful land and adopting a tone of aggression and resentment, Goytisolo alludes to a prominent theme in his novel: the narrator-protagonist’s relationship with Spain. He reveals the strained nature of this connection shortly thereafter when he writes

“compensación mental, neurosis caracterizada: arduo y difícil proceso de sublimación: luego, el extrañamiento, el desamor, la indiferencia: la separación no te bastaba si no podías medirla: el despertar ambiguo en ciudad anónima, sin saber dónde estás: dentro, fuera?: buscando ansiosamente una certidumbre” (Goytisolo and Levine 86).⁷²

Goytisolo identifies his narrator-protagonist as an exile through his brief depiction of “las diferentes etapas por las cuales pasa el exiliado” (Gould Levine, n. 11, 86).⁷³ He develops his narrator-protagonist’s severed connection with Spain further when he looks out the window and says “adiós, Madrastra inmunda, país de siervos y señores” (Goytisolo and Levine 88).⁷⁴ By referring to Spain as a dirty stepmother, he reveals his disgust and alludes to his desire to separate himself from his homeland. In this first scene, Goytisolo uses the narrator-protagonist’s physical surroundings as a means of developing his identity: he is as an embittered Spanish exile who now resides in Tangiers.

Goytisolo also uses his exploration of the physical world in the first scene to establish the narrative voice of the text, which prepares both him and the narrator-protagonist for the journey into the psychological world. *Don Julián* begins in the first person, when an unnamed character, ostensibly the narrator-protagonist, swears “jamás

⁷¹ “Ungrateful land, between everything spurious and petty, I will never return to you.”

⁷² “Mental compensation, characterized neurosis: arduous and difficult process of sublimation: later, the banishment, the indifference: the separation was not enough for you if you couldn’t measure it: the waking up ambiguous in an anonymous city, without knowing where you are: inside, outside?: anxiously searching for certainty.”

⁷³ “The different stages through which the exile passes.”

⁷⁴ “Goodbye, filthy stepmother, country of servants and men.”

volveré a ti” (Goytisolo and Levine 83).⁷⁵ However, this first-person narrative style lasts only a few lines, after which Goytisolo switches to second-person narration. In the moment of transition, Goytisolo writes “en escorzo, lejana, pero identificable en los menores detalles, dibujados ante ti, lo admites, con escrupulosidad casi maniaca: un día y otro día y otro aún” (Goytisolo and Levine 83).⁷⁶ This passage marks the shift from the first- to the second-person, which operates as a “manifestación del pseudo-diálogo y batalla inferior vivida por el protagonista, de la cual el lector es <<testigo indirecto y oblicuo>>” (Goytisolo and Levine, n.1, 83).⁷⁷ Goytisolo calls his reader’s attention to the simultaneous presences of a “yo” (“I”) and a “tú” (“you”) in the narrator-protagonist. For the majority of the novel, he uses the second-person; however, in the fourth section of *Don Julián*, Goytisolo reverts to the first-person again. These two distinct narrative voices presented in the first scene in *Don Julián* are critical in understanding the narrator-protagonist’s subjectivity and central psychological conflict.

Ultimately, this duality of self to which Goytisolo alludes in the first scene of *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* is the most fundamental aspect of his narrator-protagonist’s subjectivity. He reveals its nature early on when he says “y desdoblándote al fin por seguirte mejor, como si fueras otro...consciente de que el laberinto está en tí: que tú eres el laberinto: minotauro voraz, mártir comestible: juntamente verdugo y víctima” (Goytisolo and Levine 126).⁷⁸ In this moment in the *medina* of Tangiers, the narrator-protagonist acknowledges that his subjectivity consists of two parts: *víctima*

⁷⁵ “I will never return to you.”

⁷⁶ “In foreshortening, distant, but identifiable in the minor details, painted before you, you admit, with almost maniacal scrupulosity: one day and another day and another still.”

⁷⁷ “Manifestation of the pseudo-dialogue and internal battle of the protagonist, of which the reader is <<indirect and oblique witness>>.”

⁷⁸ “And unfolding yourself at last so as to better follow yourself, as if you were another...conscious that the labyrinth is inside you: that you are the labyrinth: voracious minotaur, edible martyr: simultaneously executioner and victim.”

(victim, martyr) and *verdugo* (executioner, minotaur). He also recognizes that because these separate entities reside in him, he himself is a labyrinth, that is, his internal world is a complex maze made up of distinct parts. The process of exploring his *desdoblamiento*, or unfolding of self, is a gradual one that occurs over the course of the novel. As we have seen, Goytisolo sets it into motion with the foreshadowing invitation “hacia dentro, hacia dentro: en la atmósfera algodonosa y quieta, por los recovecos del urbano laberinto: como en la galería de espejos de una feria, sin encontrar la salida y con los papamoscas, en la acera, riendo de cada uno de tus tropiezos” (Goytisolo and Levine 161).⁷⁹ With this passage, Goytisolo clarifies his first reference to the internal bifurcation of his subject by emphasizing “la dualidad que existe dentro del narrador, cuya personalidad y voz lingüística están escindidas entre el niño del pasado que era hace veinticinco años y el Conde don Julián, con quien se identifica” (Gould Levine, n. 87, 126).⁸⁰ The narrator-protagonist’s subjectivity is thus made up of both the child (victim, martyr) and Count Julián (executioner, minotaur).

Goytisolo establishes his narrator-protagonist’s divided subjectivity in two simultaneous, parallel movements: the descent away from the mimetic framework into the subject’s interior, and the progression from duality to unity in his identity. He begins both processes by developing the character of the child in the first and second sections of *Don Julián*. Parts of Goytisolo’s carefully constructed empirical world act as triggers that send the narrator-protagonist into memories of his childhood self; as such, in Goytisolo’s development of the character of the child, there is significant overlap

⁷⁹ “Into the inside, into the inside: in the cottony and quiet atmosphere, through the hidden corners of the urban labyrinth: like in the gallery of mirrors at a fair, without finding the exit with the flycatcher, on the sidewalk, laughing at every one of your setbacks.”

⁸⁰ “The duality that exists within the narrator, whose personality and linguistic voice are split in the boy of the past, who existed twenty-five years earlier, and the Count don Julián, with whom he identifies.”

between the objective and the psychological worlds. As he does with the labyrinth, he recovers specific images and threads in order to connect the physical, objective space of Tangiers with the narrator-protagonist's self-contained world. Gradually, though, as Goytisolo develops the second half of his subject, the recognizable world wears away in favor of the psychological. Unlike the child, the narrator-protagonist inhabits his Count Julián side completely in his mind; there is little overlap between his empirical reality and his imagined assault on his motherland. In this way, the gradual dissolution of the mimetic world over the course of the novel parallels Goytisolo's development of the two characters that make up his subject's identity. Both processes reach a climax in the fourth section, when the narrator-protagonist's imagined assault against Spain culminates in the violent unification of his subjectivity.

In the first and second parts of *Don Julián*, Goytisolo develops the identity of the child within his narrator-protagonist. In order to do so, he uses a few images and themes that reappear at various points in the novel and signal the movement from the mimetic to the psychological world. For example, the child first appears during the narrator-protagonist's visit to the pharmacy to receive a shot for syphilis. He arrives at the pharmacy "con el cinturón aflojado ya y la vista en los estantes cargados de chismes, en la mesa Camilla, en el taro de vidrio: como todos los días después del análisis serológico: en claustrofóbica espera: con la infusa aprensión del insecto amenazado de destrucción" (Goytisolo and Levine 103).⁸¹ These physical, objective experiences propel the narrator-protagonist into his childhood memories of his obligatory Natural Sciences class: "encerrado con él en el Palenque hermético: intentando escapar, resbalando,

⁸¹ "With the belt already loosened and an eye on the shelves loaded with gossip, on the round table with the heater beneath it, in the glass jar: like all the other days after the serologic analysis: in claustrophobic wait: with the infused apprehension of the insect threatened by destruction."

probando de nuevo, volviendo a caer...alborotado el ritmo de tu nunca empedernido corazón fascinado por la rigidez de los anillados segmentos, por la brusca erección de las pinzas” (Goytisolo and Levine 104).⁸² In this scene in the pharmacy, “el tarro de vidrio en el despacho del médico [funciona] como imagen evocadora del pasado del protagonista, en su calidad de testigo de semejante acto de tortura, no dirigido contra sí mismo, sino contra el saltamontes atrapado por el escorpión” in the Natural Sciences classroom (Gould Levine, n. 42, 103).⁸³ The objective, physical space of the pharmacist’s office acts as a trigger for the narrator-protagonist, and he slips into memories of his boyhood in the obligatory class. He loses track of the mimetic world around him and resides completely—albeit briefly—in his psychological sphere. From this point onwards, the image of the Natural Sciences classroom becomes a trope through which Goytisolo signals the transition from the external, physical space to the narrator-protagonist’s private memories of his childhood in Spain.

Goytisolo later returns to this recurring scene of torture in the classroom as a means of indicating the constant shift between the mimetic and the psychological. He again describes the Natural Sciences class, saying “los infantiles rostros que constelan el taro y la sonrisa celestial del cura: con el sordo eco de tu pasada angustia y la frente orillada de sudor: tac: ya está: inoculando poco a poco la ponzoña que se diluirá en las venas...qué, le hago daño?” (Goytisolo and Levine 104).⁸⁴ In this passage, the physical experience of the pharmacist’s shot brings the narrator-protagonist back to the present

⁸² “Locked away with him in the hermeneutic arena: trying to escape, slipping, trying again, falling again...disturbing the rhythm of your never-hardened heart fascinated by the rigidity of those annulated segments, by the sudden erection of the pincers.”

⁸³ “The glass jar in the doctor’s office functions as an evocative image of the protagonist’s past, and his experience as a witness of a similar act of torture not directed toward himself, but rather toward the grasshopper trapped by the scorpion.”

⁸⁴ “Those childish faces that stud the jar and the celestial smile of the priest: with the deaf echo of your anguished past and your forehead edged with sweat: tac: there it is: inoculating little by little the venom that will dilute in the veins...what, did I hurt you?”

moment. Later in the second section, he is again transported to the Natural Sciences classroom during his exploration of the *medina*. This time, he similarly recalls:

Los infantiles rostros que rodean el tarro y la inefable sonrisa del hombre que...asiste a los esfuerzos desesperados e inútiles del insecto y le agarra (a él) suave, pero firmemente del cuello para obligarle a mirar...y le clava el aguijón venenoso en tanto que él (el niño) palidece de súbito como un muerto y cae, al suelo, redondo/qué, le hago daño? (Goytisolo and Levine 165).⁸⁵

In this passage, the classroom teacher asks the same question of the childhood narrator-protagonist (“¿qué, le hago daño?”) that the pharmacist administering the syphilis shot asks of the adult narrator-protagonist (Goytisolo and Levine 104). Thus, Goytisolo uses the Natural Sciences class as a means of demonstrating the gradual wearing away of the mimetic world (the pharmacy and the *medina*) in favor of the psychological world (the narrator-protagonist’s boyhood memories).

In addition, Goytisolo uses the recurring image of the classroom to more completely establish the identity of the child and descend deeper into his psyche. Later, the child appears in front of the narrator-protagonist, “el mismo que te ha ido a visitar al café hace unos instantes: alumno aplicado y devoto, idolatrado e idólatra de su madre, querido y admirado de profesores y condiscípulos: Delgado, y frágil...repassando la diaria lección de Ciencias Naturales o abismado en la abstrusa solución de un problema” (Goytisolo and Levine 166).⁸⁶ With this description, and with each of the aforementioned moments in the Natural Sciences classroom, Goytisolo shifts further way from the mimetic, physical world of the *medina* in Tangiers to the psychological

⁸⁵ “Those childish faces that surround the jar and the ineffable smile of the man that attends to the desperate and useless efforts of the insect and he grabs him (the insect) softly but firmly by the neck and forces him to look...and he drives the poisonous sting in him so that he (the boy) suddenly goes pale like a dead person and falls, to the floor, round/what, did I hurt you?”

⁸⁶ “The same that brought you to the café a few moments earlier: devoted and diligent student, worshipping and worshiper of his mother, loved and admired by professors and schoolmates: thin, and fragile...reviewing the daily Natural Sciences lecture or cast down in the difficult solution of a problem.”

sphere by exposing critical aspects of the child's—and thus the narrator-protagonist's—subjectivity. The frame of the Natural Sciences classroom reveals that the child is disciplined, obedient, and diligent. He fulfills his obligation to attend the class, even though it means witnessing the disturbing, torturous killing of the grasshopper by the scorpion. Gradually, over the course of the novel, the narrator-protagonist reverts to this part of his memory every time he feels trapped, obligated, or confined. In this particular situation, “el uso del pronombre <<él>> es significativo porque demuestra el deseo del narrador de mantenerse a una distancia de esta imagen (inventada o real) de sí mismo hace veinticinco años” (Gould Levine, n. 137, 165).⁸⁷ The child's conformity and eagerness to abide by the established rules, and the narrator-protagonist's desire to distance himself from his childhood self, will prove particularly fascinating when juxtaposed with the other half of his subjectivity.

In addition to the Natural Sciences classroom, Goytisolo introduces another recurring theme through which he establishes the child's identity and the movement away from the mimetic framework. During the first part of the novel, the narrator-protagonist describes his desire to “inventar, componer, mentir, fabular: repetir la proeza de Sherezada durante sus mil y una noches escuetas, inexorables: érase una vez un precioso niño, el más exquisito que la menta humana pueda imaginar: Caperucito Rojo y el lobo feroz, nueva versión sicoanalítica con mutilaciones, fetichismo, sangre” (Goytisolo and Levine 85).⁸⁸ Goytisolo returns to this theme of creating stories, and the seemingly abstract, violent references to a new version of the Little Red Riding Hood

⁸⁷ “The use of the pronoun <<he>> is significant because it demonstrates the desire of the narrator to maintain a distance from this image (invented or real) of himself twenty-five years earlier.”

⁸⁸ “Invent, make up, lie: repeat the prose of Scheherazade during her one thousand and one solitary, inexorable nights: once upon a time there was a precious boy, the most exquisite that the human mind could ever imagine: Little Red Riding Hood and the fierce wolf, a new psychoanalytic version with mutilations, fetishism, blood.”

fairytale involving blood and mutilation, immediately following the scenes in the Natural Sciences classroom. The child reads aloud to the narrator-protagonist “la paradigmática historia de Caperucita y el lobo feroz,” but the story is interspersed with a disturbing conversation about a “guardián de obras” and his lover in which the guardian urinates on his lover’s child (Goytisolo and Levine 166).⁸⁹ Through the process of adding grotesque details to this childhood fairytale, Goytisolo moves from the mimetic space of Tangiers into the narrator-protagonist’s psychological world, and he introduces two archetypes that clearly manifest themselves in the narrator-protagonist himself: Caperucita Roja (Little Red Riding Hood) and the fierce wolf. In this twisted story, Little Red Riding Hood is the quintessential victim while the wolf is a figure of domination and violence. Goytisolo returns to the story of Little Red Riding Hood in order to establish the archetypes of victim and dominator that are fundamental to the narrator-protagonist’s duality.

After he develops the character of the child, Goytisolo establishes the identity of Count Julián, the mythic figure that represents the other half of the narrator-protagonist’s divided subjectivity. The child clearly demonstrates obedience and studiousness during his moments in the *medina* with the narrator-protagonist and in the Natural Sciences classroom. Julián, on the other hand, represents betrayal, treachery, and violence. As the narrator-protagonist prepares himself to attack the core of Spanish culture and values in part three, he asks Julián to lend him the courage to violate his homeland. He describes “la violencia, la violencia siempre: jalonando de golpe el orden fingido, revelando la verdad bajo la mascara, catalizando tus fuerzas dispersas y los donjulianescos proyectos de invasión: traición grandiosa, ruina de siglos” (Goytisolo and

⁸⁹ “The paradigmatic story of Little Red Riding Hood and the fierce wolf”; “guardian of works.”

Levine 126).⁹⁰ With this quotation, the narrator-protagonist directly connects his desires to invade Spain with Count Julián. In addition to acting as his alter-ego, Julián is the narrator-protagonist's companion and fellow warrior in this virulent attack. After he has engaged in his own invasion, the narrator-protagonist calls on the Count to forge onward and act out his version of betrayal, saying "falta el lenguaje, Julián...nuestro, nuestro, nuestro...únete a ellos, Julián...vehículo de la traición, hermosa lengua mía: lenguaje pulido y cortante, ejército de alfanjes, idioma cruel y brusco!...no olvides el olé...el olé, Julián, el olé!" (Goytisolo and Levine 264-67).⁹¹ With these directions, the narrator-protagonist revives Count Julián in order to use him as his accomplice in his imagined attack against Spain. He invokes the spirit of the mythic betrayer because he alone understands the depth of the narrator-protagonist's desire for vindication and can help him destroy the most fundamental aspect of Spanish culture: its language.

As the narrator-protagonist acts out his invasion of all things Spanish in part three of *Don Julián* and the character of Count Julián comes to life, Goytisolo's mimetic framework completely fades away in favor of the imagined battleground of the narrator-protagonist's psyche. Whereas his regression into his childhood self is triggered primarily by things in the physical world, the Julián aspect of his identity exists solely in his own mind. In the middle of part three, the narrator-protagonist smokes hashish in a cafe with Tariq; in his intoxicated state, he embarks on a journey through Tariq's mustaches, which serve as his battleground. This descent into the imagined world of his invasion is a continuation of the wearing away of mimetic time and space that occurs in

⁹⁰ "The violence, always the violence: using a blow to stake out the feigned order, revealing the truth under the mask, catalyzing your separated strengths and the *donjuanianesque* projections of invasion: grandiose betrayal, ruin of centuries."

⁹¹ "The language is left, Julián...ours, ours, ours...unite yourself with them, Julián...vehicle of betrayal, my beautiful language: polished and sharp language, armies of scimitars, sudden and cruel language!...don't forget the *olé*...the *olé*, Julián, the *olé*!"

conjunction with the development of the child in sections one and two. The rest of part three consists of his psychological assault of everything that he connects with Spain, particularly the Catholic church, the nationalist regime, the iconic Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Spanish literary canon, and the belief in the essential Spanish destiny and identity. From this point onwards, the text takes place completely in the narrator-protagonist's mind. As he does with his development of the child, Goytisolo retrieves the motifs and threads that he establishes earlier in the text in order to demonstrate this continued movement from the empirical to the psychological world. For example, as he begins his imagined assault in part three, he says "cauteloso, sagaz, escurre y serpentea por la piedra, culebra astuta, arma poderosa de Julián: su cabeza triangular y aplastada oscila conforme a la modulación hipnótica, sus ojillos agudos, de transparentes párpados, vigilan, tenaces, como cabezas de alfiler" (Goytisolo and Levine 215).⁹² Goytisolo describes Julián with precisely the same words that he uses to depict an imagined act of destruction early in the novel. In the moment of invasion, Goytisolo picks up the thread of violence that the narrator-protagonist creates in his mind in order to highlight the complete dissolution of the mimetic world in favor of the psychological battleground. In doing so, these details "are interwoven with one another and connected by a set of symbolic bridges, leading directly and indirectly to the portrayal of the protagonist" (Pérez 135). Thus, the physical world wears away in favor of the psychological as Goytisolo develops the warring sides of his narrator-protagonist's subjectivity.

Part four of *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* represents the climax of the descent into his psychological world and the completion of Goytisolo's establishment of

⁹² "Cautious, wise, slide and snake through the rock, astute snake, Julián's powerful weapon: his triangular, squashed head oscillates and conforms to the hypnotic modulation, his keen, bright eyes, with transparent eyelids, stubbornly guard, like the heads of pins."

subjectivity. He begins the section with a quotation from a poem by José de Espronceda's entitled "El Pelayo": "Se halla en los brazos de Julián fornidos/ ahogándole, a su cuello retorcidos./ Sobre él enhiesto a su garganta apunta/ fiero puñal, que el corazón le hiela;/ procura desasirse, y más le junta/ pecho a pecho Julián, que ahogarle anhela" (Goytisolo and Levine 270).⁹³ In the dream of King Rodrigo, "el rey sueña que Julián le ahoga...tal delirio le sume en un abismo de terror hasta que se despierta y descubre que lo que creía ser el brazo de Julián era su propio lienzo anudado alrededor del cuello" (Gould Levine, n. 253, 270).⁹⁴ With this epigraph, Goytisolo revives the thread of duality that he introduces in the first sentence of his novel and returns to the roles of *víctima* and *verdugo* (victim and executioner).

The section begins with another retelling of the story of Caperucita Roja, although the narrator-protagonist reveals that this is the tale of Caperucito Rojo.⁹⁵ He describes a boy "que todo el mundo da en llamarle Caperucito Rojo, hasta el extremo de haber caído en el olvido su verdadero nombre" (Goytisolo and Levine 272).⁹⁶ With the reference to the boy's forgotten name, Goytisolo connects Caperucito Rojo and the child in the *medina*, whose name the narrator-protagonist cannot remember. In this version of the fairytale, Caperucito Rojo goes to his grandmother's house, only to find Count Julián, "un moro de complexion maciza, ojos de tigre, bigote de mancuernadas guías, capaz de partir en dos, con sus zarpas bruscas, una baraja de naipes," in her place

⁹³ "He finds himself in the well-built arms of Julián/ drowning him, at his twisted neck/ over him, erect at his neck, he points/ a fierce dagger, and his heart freezes/ he tries to free himself, and more he joins/ chest to chest Julián, and in longing for him he desires."

⁹⁴ "The king dreams that Julián drowns him...delirious, he submerges into an abyss of terror until que wakes up and discovers that what he believed was Julián's arm was actually his own cloth knotted around his neck."

⁹⁵ Caperucita Roja is a female Little Red Riding Hood, while Caperucito Rojo is the male Little Red Riding Hood.

⁹⁶ "That everyone called Caperucito Rojo, to the point of having forgotten his real name."

(Goytisolo and Levine 275).⁹⁷ Julián sodomizes the child, and “the boy goes to his home and soon becomes mesmerized by the man’s phallus, returning often to be raped, beaten, and infected with syphilis. When urged to bring his mother so that she too can be abused...the boy hangs himself.”⁹⁸ Immediately following this horrific scene, however, the narrator-protagonist stops and says, “no/ no es así/ la muerte no basta/ su destrucción debe ir acompañada de las más sutiles torturas/ perros hambrientos/ lobos sanguinarios” (Goytisolo and Levine 276).⁹⁹ He describes a ritualistic process of sacrificing the young boy “al monstruo encerrado por el rey de Minos en el alambicado laberinto de Creta” (Goytisolo and Levine 276).¹⁰⁰ The novel ends with the offering of the child in a sacrificial rite.

With this new, imagined version of the Caperucito Rojo story, the horrific act of sodomy, and the sacrifice, Goytisolo completes the simultaneous movements from duality to unity and from the mimetic to the psychological world in his narrator-protagonist’s subjectivity. He makes explicit the connection between his subject and the child, Alvarito, when he says “el niño?: qué niño?: tú mismo un cuarto de siglo atrás, alumno aplicado y devoto, idolatrado e ídola de su madre, querido y admirado de profesores y condiscípulos, muchacho delgado y frágil, vastos ojos, piel blanco” (Goytisolo and Levine 280).¹⁰¹ The child in *Don Julián* is clearly an incarnation of the narrator-protagonist himself twenty-five years earlier; thus, his imagined sodomy of his

⁹⁷ “A Moor of compact complexion, eyes of a tiger, mustache of an animal guide, capable of dividing in two, with his sharp claws, a deck of playing cards.”

⁹⁸ Randolph D. Pope, *Understanding Juan Goytisolo*, Understanding Modern European and Latin American Literature (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995) 109.

⁹⁹ “No/it is not this way/death is not enough/his destruction must be accompanied by the most subtle tortures/starving dogs/bloodthirsty wolves.”

¹⁰⁰ “To the monster enclosed by the King of Minos in the elaborate labyrinth of Crete.”

¹⁰¹ “The boy?: what boy?: you yourself twenty-five years ago, diligent and devoted student, worshipping and worshiper of his mother, loved and admired by professors and schoolmates, thin and fragile boy, huge eyes, white skin.”

younger self is a manifestation of “[su] odio irreductible hacia el pasado y el niño espurio que lo representa” (Goytisolo and Levine 278).¹⁰² The child symbolizes everything that the adult narrator-protagonist detests about Spain. The connection between Count Julián and the narrator-protagonist, and the references to *desdoblamiento* that Goytisolo makes early on in the text, become even more clear when he says “Ulbán (no cabe la menor duda: eres tú!)” and, later, “eres Julián/ conoces el camino que ningún respeto ni humana consideración te retengan” (Goytisolo, 274, 279).¹⁰³ The narrator-protagonist’s imagined attack on Spain culminates in the purging of his own Spanish identity through the violent unification of his two selves. In this final, climactic battle, he inhabits the presence of Count Julián in order to violate his younger, Spanish self and rid himself of all traces of Spain. Once he has “razed Franco’s Spain to the ground and ‘undone’ his childhood self, he is reborn as the new Islamic messiah” in the form of Count Julián (Labanyi 200). In this way, the narrator-protagonist is simultaneously *víctima* and *verdugo* (victim and executioner). The younger, Spanish version of himself is the victim of the monstrous impulses of his older, Moorish self incarnated as Count Julián. His imagined battle against the culture, values, history, and language of Spain culminates in an imagined act of violence against himself that ultimately unifies the two parts of his subjectivity.

After this climactic moment of sacrifice in which the narrator-protagonist symbolically purges himself of his Spanish identity, Goytisolo uses the rigid structure of his text to demonstrate the futility of this act. The narrative voice of the “yo” (“I”) that begins the novel returns; this should signify the end of the duality and the completion of

¹⁰² “His unconquerable hate towards the past and the spurious boy that represents it.”

¹⁰³ “Ulbán (there isn’t the slightest doubt anymore: it is you!); you are Julián/ you know the way from which neither respect nor human consideration will hold you back.”

the narrator-protagonist's unity, as the introduction of the "tú" ("you") at the start of the novel represents the start of this separation. As he prepares himself for another invasion, the narrator-protagonist says "soy Bulián, tu admirador y amigo," thereby acknowledging the triumph of his violent Moorish self (Goytisolo and Levine 285).¹⁰⁴ However, at the end of the section, the mimetic world of Tangiers slowly begins to take shape once again, bringing with it the return of the "tú" (you) in the narrative voice and the narrator-protagonist's duality. Goytisolo returns to a vivid image of a mutilated cat that he introduces at the beginning of the novel, saying "en medio de los desperdicios del Mercado (papeles, huesos, monadas de fruta) y su secuela de emanaciones y olores (secreción, podredumbre, carroña) el terso y pulido cadáver se destaca y brilla" (Goytisolo and Levine 300).¹⁰⁵ This description signifies the start of the narrator-protagonist's movement upwards away from his psychological world towards the recognizable streets of Tangiers. He slowly winds his way through the city and finds himself back in his room, where "tirarás de la correa de la persiana sin una mirada para la costa enemiga, para la venenosa cicatriz que se extiende al otro lado del mar: el sueño agobia tus párpados y cierras los ojos: lo sabes, lo sabes: mañana será otro día, la invasión recomenzará" (Goytisolo and Levine 304).¹⁰⁶ With these words, Goytisolo demonstrates the narrator-protagonist's continuous need to engage in the imagined invasion of both himself and Spain. Throughout the text "he vindicates himself by sublimating...all the bitterness, hate, love, and frustration he feels as a Spanish émigré, while at the same time attaining a new and authentic identity. However, this ritual must be repeated each day in

¹⁰⁴ "I am Bulián, your admirer and friend."

¹⁰⁵ "In the middle of the waste of the market (papers, bones, fruit peels) and the after-effects of its emanations and smells (secretion, putrefaction, carrion) the smooth, polished cadaver stands out and shines."

¹⁰⁶ "You will close the blinds without a glance towards the enemy coast, towards the poisonous scar that stretches out on the other side of the sea: sleepiness overwhelms your eyelids and you close your eyes: you know it, you know it: tomorrow will be another day, the invasion will begin again."

order for the protagonist to maintain his identity” (Pérez 134). Thus, the novel comes full circle at the end of the day, when the narrator-protagonist returns home and prepares to begin the process of creating his subjectivity anew.

In all of these ways, *Don Julián* represents a significant departure from *Tiempo de Silencio* in its establishment of the narrator-protagonist’s subjectivity. As we have seen, Goytisolo borrows from Martín-Santos in his development of an empirical reality and specific historical context. However, as the novel progresses, Goytisolo clearly moves away from this recognizable time and space to the dark, labyrinthine world of the narrator-protagonist’s psyche. The climax of the text reveals that just as Goytisolo develops his narrator-protagonist’s subjectivity, so too must his subject create himself anew every day. The act of establishing subjectivity is taken on by both author and subject in *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*, thus recalling the narrator-protagonist’s expressed desire to create stories like Scheherazade. Goytisolo’s movement away from the distinct separation between author and subject in *Tiempo de Silencio*, and his progression towards the development of subjectivity by both parties, will reach new heights in Carmen Martín Gaité’s *El cuarto de atrás*.

III. *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* and myth

Like the establishment of subjectivity, the use of myth in *Don Julián* is complex and multidimensional. In chapter one, I explored the ways in which Martín-Santos manipulates myth in order to create profound social commentary about life in postwar Spain. In particular, Pedro’s resignation and stoicism reflect the national consciousness. Martín-Santos exposes and critiques the Francoist myths of essential Spanish identity by showing the effects of such an attitude on the Spanish people. Goytisolo similarly uses

myth to denounce the homeland from which he fled; however, he takes a very different approach to myth. In *Myth and History in the Contemporary Spanish Novel*, Jo Labanyi points out that “if Martín-Santos exposes the psychological drives which have led Spaniards to take refuge in stoicism, Goytisolo rejects casual explanation; as a result the values he mocks appear given and fixed” (Labanyi 196). This analysis recalls Roland Barthe’s definition of myth as that which makes the created seem natural. In order to viciously condemn Franco, the nationalist regime, and the Spain of excess and materialism, Goytisolo depicts “Spain through the spectacles of Nationalist myth, presented as a *fait accompli* which cannot be modified but only obliterated” (Labanyi 196). Goytisolo accepts the nationalist myths as literal in *Don Julián*, but he uses parody to highlight their absurdity. Through the destruction of Spain and Francoist mythology, Goytisolo links myth to historiography and demonstrates the need for a revised version of Spanish history. *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* thus represents a significant departure from *Tiempo de Silencio* in its manipulation of myth.

Whereas Goytisolo’s novel succeeds in denouncing many of the nationalist myths that Franco propagated after the Civil War, the text itself is, paradoxically, mythical in structure. The narrator-protagonist’s journey requires him to return to his origins in order to create his identity anew. This process involves a ritualistic sacrifice of his childhood self and his rebirth from his own ashes. As he imagines his destruction of Spain, he expresses his need to “rehusar la identidad, comenzar a cero: Sísifo y, juntamente, Fénix que renace de sus propias cenizas” (Goytisolo and Levine 204).¹⁰⁷ In *Cosmos and History*, Mircea Eliade emphasizes two important aspects of this creation process: “1. Every creation repeats the pre-eminent cosmogonic act, the Creation of the

¹⁰⁷ “To refuse his identity, start from zero: Sisyphus and, simultaneously Phoenix that is reborn from his own ashes.”

world. 2. Consequently, whatever is founded has its foundation at the center of the world (since, as we know, the Creation itself took place from a center)” (Eliade 18). He describes the center as a symbolic, sacred place where intersections take place. The narrator-protagonist’s movement “hacia adentro, hacia adentro” (into the inside, into the inside) throughout the course of the novel is thus a reflection of this necessary return to origins. As we saw in relation to *Tiempo de Silencio*, the narrator-protagonist’s labyrinthine mental journey and his physical exploration of the *medina* in *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* are both attempts to return to the center. Just as Pedro must descend into the maze of Madrid in order to find the foundation for the nationalist myth of patriarchal authoritarianism, so too must Goytisolo’s narrator-protagonist explore the labyrinth of his own being. His journey leads him to the moment of climax in which he discovers that he is both *víctima* and *verdugo*, child and Count Julián, martyr and minotaur. Goytisolo’s novel thus follows the mythical structure for creation that Eliade outlines in his text in that the narrator-protagonist’s journey requires his movement towards his own center and origins.

Similarly, the circular nature of *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* reflects the myth of the eternal return. Eliade identifies two conceptions of time: “the one traditional, adumbrated...in all primitive cultures, that of cyclical time, periodically regenerating itself *ad infinitum*; the other modern, that of finite time, a fragment...between two atemporal eternities” (Eliade 112). Goytisolo’s novel intertwines both notions of time. On the one hand, as we have seen, his narrator-protagonist clearly exists in the recognizable space and time of Tangiers in the late 1960s. On the other hand, he explores the cyclical nature of time in that each day of the narrator-protagonist’s life consists of the same process of descent, destruction, and regeneration. These two

streams overlap during the novel, but as the mimetic framework wears away in favor of the psychological, so too is finite time replaced by the cyclical as the narrator-protagonist engages in his brutal invasion. Eliade asserts that an important element of this primitive conception of time is “the eternal repetition of the fundamental rhythm of the cosmos: its periodic destruction and re-creation. From this cycle without beginning or end, man can wrest himself only by an act of spiritual freedom” (Eliade 115). The narrator-protagonist’s unending journey reflects this process of destruction and recreation. Goytisolo ultimately offers him no opportunity for spiritual freedom; he is forever trapped by the myth of the eternal return in the never-ending process of self-destruction and self-creation.

Goytisolo’s use of ritual in the fourth part of the novel is mythical as well and closely connected with the myth of the eternal return. Eliade writes that “not only do rituals have their mythical model but any human act whatever acquires effectiveness to the extent to which it exactly *repeats* an act performed at the beginning of time by a god, a hero, or an ancestor” (Eliade 22). Goytisolo’s description of the sacrifice of the narrator-protagonist’s childhood self reflects this observation about the nature of ritual:

Perros hambrientos
lobos sanguinarios
sanguijuelas
beberán su sangre joven, fresca y pura
con seis muchachos más siete doncellas
será ofrendado inerme
en holocausto
al monstruo encerrado por el rey de Minos en el alambicado laberinto de
Creta
(Goytisolo and Levine 276).¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ “Starving dogs/ bloodthirsty wolves/ leeches/ will drink his young blood, fresh and pure/ with six boys and seven maidens/ he will be offered, unarmed/ in Holocaust/ to the monster entrapped by King Minos in the elaborate labyrinth of Crete.”

With this passage, Goytisolo precisely replicates the ancient sacrifices to the gods. His use of the word holocaust and his reference to the labyrinth of Crete imply that this ritual is an exact repetition of other sacrifices that were performed at the beginning of time. The narrator-protagonist must offer his childhood self in sacrifice in order to be reborn as Count Julián, and he does so in precisely the same way as his ancestors. Thus, *Don Julián* is mythic in structure, particularly the moment of climax in which the narrator-protagonist is simultaneously sacrificed and reborn from his own ashes.

This imagined sacrifice in the fourth part of his text serves as a way of criticizing the nationalist myths of sacrificial death, rebirth, and the arrival of the messiah. In order to explain the massive number of deaths after the War, Franco and his regime espoused the belief that “the nation must undergo a ‘sacrificial death’ to hasten ‘rebirth’” (Labanyi 36). With Franco as their savior and leader, Spain would be rebuilt from its own ashes with the memory and spirit of those who had died for her. Franco saw himself as a messiah who had righted Spain on her course to an authentic destiny, and he believed that he was responsible for facilitating the process of national rebirth. The narrator-protagonist’s expressed desire to begin anew and recreate his identity from within himself reflects Franco’s belief in a mythical regeneration after the Civil War. After he sacrifices his childhood self, the narrator-protagonist is reborn as the new Count Julián, an Islamic messiah who calls not for the metaphorical rebirth but the complete obliteration of the nation. In this way, “the novel inverts the Nationalist demand for a messiah to return the nation to its lost purity by exalting the figure of the traitor; but Goytisolo’s traitor figure is also a messiah preaching destruction as the prelude to rebirth (including his own)...in order to usher in a new millennium of corruption” (Labanyi

200). Thus, Goytisolo uses his narrator-protagonist's psychological journey to denounce the nationalist myths of sacrificial death and rebirth. In addition, Eliade explains that "all sacrifices are performed at the same mythical instant of the beginning; through the paradox of rite, profane time and duration are suspended...and he who reproduces the exemplary gesture thus finds himself transported into the mythical epoch in which its revelation took place" (Eliade 35). Thus, through his self-sacrifice, the narrator-protagonist transcends history and achieves the legacy and eternal life that Franco so desperately desired during his dictatorship by connecting himself with his ancestors. Goytisolo not only exalts the figure of the narrator-protagonist as the Islamic messiah in place of Franco; he also gives him a mythical intransience that Franco does not achieve.

In addition, with *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*, Goytisolo denounces the nationalist belief in an essential Spanish identity and an historical destiny, or the notion of <<continuidad española>> (Spanish continuity). As we saw in chapter one, this is the idea that Spanish identity is determined by geography and biology, and that all Spanish people possess innate, essential qualities that connect them to one another. Américo Castro denounces this notion in *Realidad Histórica de España* by calling for a scientific, processual approach to history rather than a mythic one. *Tiempo de Silencio* critiques the myth by developing the subjectivity of a narrator-protagonist who is stunted by the stoicism and resignation that are supposedly inherent to his character. In *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*, Goytisolo denounces the nationalist myth of <<continuidad española>> through two of his secondary characters, don Alvaro Peranzules and Seneca, who embody the *carpeto* and *carpetovetónico*. Both of these terms refer to pre-Roman towns and their inhabitants that existed in territories that are now

Spanish, including Madrid, Guadalajara, Salamanca, Ávila, and Toledo.¹⁰⁹ The *carpeto* and *carpetovetónico* thus represent the continuation of the essential Spanish identity dating back from pre-Roman times and passed down through biology and geography to the modern Spanish population. Spanish writers of the Generation of 1898 suggested “that the national character was determined by the Castilian landscape,” and they believed in the immutability of this geographically defined identity (Labanyi 197). As demonstrated in chapter one, Franco and the nationalist regime revived this myth of <<continuidad española>> in order to justify the Civil War and lend authority to Franco’s crusade.

Goytisolo satirizes this myth of a national Spanish character and the representation of the *carpeto* and the *carpetovetónico* through the figures of don Alvaro Peranzules. In the first part of *Don Julián*, the narrator-protagonist stops in a cafe and is approached by a *figurón*, or show-off, who identifies himself as the lawyer don Alvaro Peranzules. A fellow exile, don Alvaro tells the narrator-protagonist that “los carpetos que vivimos lejos de la patria tenemos que reunirnos de vez en cuando... ahogados en la Africana masa desvertebrada” (Goytisolo and Levine 152).¹¹⁰ Alvaro represents everything about Spanish culture and values that the narrator-protagonist detests. He is the archetypal traditionalist and Falange supporter, as demonstrated when he says “pues debes venir: hay que mirar hacia adelante y hacia arriba: concebir la vida como servicio: obedecer prontamente y con alegría todo lo que nos manden” (Goytisolo and Levine 152).¹¹¹ Like the child version of the narrator-protagonist, Alvaro is fiercely obedient and committed to Franco’s regime, and he echoes the technocrats’ desire for progress.

¹⁰⁹ B. Antonio Gonzalez, *Juan Goytisolo, La Reivindicacion Del Conde Don Julian (1970): Guia De Lectura*, Available: <http://agonzalez.web.wesleyan.edu/span250>, 3 February 2009.

¹¹⁰ “Us Spaniards that live far from the motherland need to get together from time to time...drowned in the dislocated African mass.”

¹¹¹ “Well, you must come: you have to look ahead and up: conceive of the world as a service: obey all that they demand of us quickly and with happiness.”

Above all, he believes wholeheartedly in the <<continuidad española>>. Goytisolo again engages in a powerful parody of this myth when don Alvaro picks up a piece of dung from a Spanish goat and says “es una capra hispánica, dice: ten, huele!...efluvios éticos!, dice: esencias metafísicas! : Gredos, Gredos!...las entrañas de Gredos son como las entrañas de la Castilla heroica y mística!...la capra encarna nuestras más puras esencias, no lo sabías?” (Goytisolo and Levine 154).¹¹² In this passage, “Goytisolo lleva su parodia de la...retórica falangista a nuevas alturas al yuxtaponerlas con la cagarruta que don Alvaro huele con verdadero fervor” (Gould Levine, n.127, 154).¹¹³ Goytisolo does not call attention to the nationalist myth of a fixed national identity, but he parodies it with such intensity through his development of don Alvaro that its absurdity is unmistakable.

Similarly, he establishes the figure of Seneca as a means of criticizing the nationalist myth of Spanish essentialism. Seneca was a Roman philosopher who was born in what is now Córdoba; he was also one of the founding members of the philosophical school of stoicism. As such, Spanish essentialists feel that Seneca is the origin of the stoicism that supposedly characterizes the Spanish character at large. He appears in *Don Julián* in part two, when Goytisolo reveals that he is actually don Alvaro Peranzules: “sí, don Alvaro Peranzules, más conocido ahora por su seudónimo de Séneca, nació en la comarca de Gredos, de familia limpia y de muy buena sangre” (Goytisolo and Levine 184).¹¹⁴ When Goytisolo divulges that the two are the same person, he reveals the unfixed nature of identity in the novel. He does not overtly refute

¹¹² “This is a Spanish goat, he says: take it, smell it!...ethical scents!, he says: metaphysical essences!: Gredos, Gredos!...the bowels of Gredos are like the bowels of Castille, heroic and mystical!...the goat embodies our most pure essences, didn’t you know that?”

¹¹³ “Goytisolo takes his parody of Falange rhetoric to new heights by juxtaposing it with the droppings that don Alvaro smells with true fervor.”

¹¹⁴ “Yes, don Alvaro Peranzules, better known now for his pseudonym Seneca, was born in the area of Gredos, of a clean family and of very good blood.”

the nationalist myth of Spanish essentialism; rather, he satirizes it by subjecting Seneca to “continual metamorphosis...fusing variously with Alvaro Peranzules Junior...Luis Moscardó (son of the hero of the siege of the Toledo Alcázar in the Civil War...), Little Red Riding Hood, a bullfighter, Unamuno, Sánchez Albornoz, and Franco” (Labanyi 197). By constantly shifting the form of Seneca’s character, Goytisolo points to the mutability of the national character. Goytisolo’s “Protean concept of character is clearly intended to imply that there is no such thing as fixed, coherent identity; at the same time the multiple guises assumed by Seneca, being versions of the same stoic endurance, give the impression there is no escape from the proliferation of Senecas” (Labanyi 198). Like Martín-Santos, Goytisolo suggests that the Spanish people have forced themselves into a self-perpetuating history of stoicism and resignation. However, unlike *Tiempo de Silencio*, *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* argues for the complete obliteration of Spain as a means of remedying this problem.

In addition to criticizing <<continuidad española>>, Goytisolo also denounces the nationalist myths that both vilify and ignore Arab presence in Spain. In doing so, Goytisolo creates a new mythical pattern that mirrors that of the nationalist regime, and he comments profoundly on the place of the Moor in Spanish historiography and myth. Arab rule in Spain began in 711, when the armies of Tariq ibn-Ziyad invaded from Gibraltar. As such, since the 8th century—and especially during Franco’s dictatorship—Moors in Spain have largely been viewed by essentialists as ‘usurpers’ and ‘traitors.’ As previously discussed in chapter one, Franco believed that Arab presence interrupted the divine course of history for ‘essential Spain.’ After the Civil War, he strived to legitimize his claim to power by “alleging descent from a founding tradition, subsequently ‘betrayed’ by ‘usurpers’” (Labanyi 199). The branding of the Moor in Spain as an

outsider or “other” within this essential Spanish history and identity enables the conclusion that he embodies everything that Spain is not. As Franco proposed, his presence in Spain marks a deviation from an essential Spanish destiny, one that claims the philosopher Seneca as its forefather. The impact of this Arab coexistence with Spaniards on the Spanish language and value system is not recognized, and essentialists and nationalists highlight the tremendous character differences between the Moors and the Spanish people. Whereas Spaniards are stoic, rational, and progressive, Moors are represented as irrational, passionate, and uncivilized. Their sexual deviance is contrasted with Catholic Spain’s emphasis on modesty and self-restraint. In these ways, Franco’s regime represents the Moor as Spain’s “other” in Spain’s historiography and its mythology.

Goytisolo denounces this myth of the Moor as Spain’s “other” in *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* by co-opting it. Although his novel is fictional, it reflects Goytisolo’s desire for a new Spanish historiography in which a role reversal takes place. In his new version of Spanish history, “the Arab ‘usurpers’ are simply recast as a ‘founding tradition’, turning Castilian rule into a ‘usurpation’” (Labanyi 199). According to Goytisolo, the country must return to the Arab tradition from which it was born, and Franco’s version of Spanish history must be undone. Like Castro, Goytisolo points to the inaccuracy of a national historiography that both vilifies and denies the impact of seven centuries of Arab rule. In *Don Julián*, he denounces the myth of the Moor as Spain’s “other” and initiates the process of recognizing and reclaiming his impact on Spanish culture. In doing so, Goytisolo virulently attacks Franco and the nationalist regime for propagating such myths, and he parodies values that Spaniards perceive to be inherent to their national identities. Goytisolo’s assault is subtle, in that *Reivindicación del*

Conde don Julián “shows Francoist historiography to be a mythification not by contrasting it with an alternative view of history, but by debunking it through parody” (Labanyi 196). In this way, Goytisolo simultaneously reveals the absurdity of the nationalist historiography and mythology, and creates his own version of Spanish history in which the Moor plays a central role.

Goytisolo’s first level of attack against the Franco regime’s mythification of history consists of the denunciation of Spanish values. As mentioned in chapter one, Franco regarded the Spain of Isabella and Ferdinand as the pinnacle of the nation’s greatness; the centuries after their reign represented another deviation from Spain’s authentic historical destiny. As we will explore further in chapter three, Franco regarded Isabella as a model of the ideal Spanish woman: modest, virtuous, and, above all, dedicated to Christian values. Goytisolo parodies this perception of Isabella when he shows her engaging in a strip-tease in the third section of *Don Julián*. Isabella represents the daughter of *el perfecto caballero cristiano* (the perfect Christian gentleman)—another myth that Goytisolo will attack—and she first appears in the novel dressed as a nun. As the Rolling Stones’ “Time is on my Side” plays on the radio, though, her movements “se acuerdan poco a poco con la cadencia histórica de la música!: sucesivamente desabrocha la chaquetilla de su pijama, se despoja del pantalón, intenta cubrir la desnudez con los brazos, gira y evoluciona por escena entre ademanes implorantes y sobresaltos de pudor” (Goytisolo and Levine 234).¹¹⁵ With this section, Goytisolo “comienza su labor de sensualizar varios símbolos de la vida religiosa española” (Gould Levine, n. 212, 235).¹¹⁶ The parody continues as Isabella finishes the strip-tease and morphs into the figure of a

¹¹⁵ “Become more and more intertwined with the historical cadence of the music!: successively she unbuttons her short pajama jacket, strips off her pants, tries to cover her nudity with her arms, gyrates and turns between imploring gestures and fits of modesty.”

¹¹⁶ “Begins his task of making sensual various symbols of Spanish religious life.”

sensuous mulatto from a James Bond film that the narrator-protagonist sees early on in the novel. With the strip-tease and the transformation of Isabella la Católica, Goytisolo denounces several nationalist myths simultaneously. He attacks the myth that Spaniards are inherently sexually modest and religiously devoted by sexualizing the iconic figure of purity and femininity. Furthermore, he acknowledges the impact of Arab presence in Spain by showing Isabella as a mulatto, thus demonstrating the inability to separate even the most quintessentially Spanish figure from her history of Arab domination. The scene ends when a car of American tourists arrives to explore Isabella's vagina and womb, further representing Goytisolo's desire to desecrate Franco's myth of sacred Spain. By sexualizing Isabella la Católica, Goytisolo clearly assaults several of the nationalist myths that Franco propagated in the aftermath of the Civil War.

In addition to denouncing the myth of the perfect Spanish woman, Goytisolo attacks the notion of an ideal Spanish man. The figure of the *caballero cristiano* (the model Spanish gentleman) appeared in the Golden Age Spanish comedies of such iconic writers as Calderón de la Barca, Tirso de Molina, and Lope de Vega. He symbolized the piety, loyalty, and honor that every Spanish man should demonstrate. As Gould Levine points out, the myth of the “caballero cristiano se conserva intacto en la retórica de la Falange” (Gould Levine, n. 202, 228).¹¹⁷ Goytisolo demonstrates this in *Don Julián* when he cites a section of García Morente's *Idea de la hispanidad* in which he defines the *caballero cristiano*: “a diferencia de otras almas que aspiran a lo infinito por el lento camino de lo finito, el caballero cristiano aspira a colocarse de un salto en el seno mismo de la divina esencia” (Goytisolo and Levine 228).¹¹⁸ By including this quotation, Goytisolo makes clear the

¹¹⁷ “Christian gentleman was conserved intact in the Falange rhetoric.”

¹¹⁸ “Unlike other souls that aspire to the infinite by the slow path of the finite, the Christian gentleman aspires to place himself with a single leap in the breast of the divine essence.”

connection between the “ideología del caballero cristiano y los lemas de la Falange” (Gould Levine, n. 202, 228).¹¹⁹ He similarly denounces this myth when he reveals that the *caballero cristiano* in *Don Julián* is none other than don Alvaro Peranzules, the *figurón* from the cafe, whose daughter is Isabella la Católica. Alvaro represents Franco’s ideal Spanish man in that he is a traditionalist, a Falange supporter, and a fiercely patriotic Spaniard. Goytisolo mocks the outdated nature of his identity, saying “don Álvaro se mueve trabajosamente, haciendo crujir las distintas piezas de su armadura ósea, mezcla híbrida de mamífero y guerrero medieval” (Goytisolo and Levine 231).¹²⁰ With these descriptions and his establishment of the hereditary connection between Isabella la Católica and don Alvaro, Goytisolo denounces the myth of the *caballero cristiano* in postwar Spain. In *Don Julián*, the ideal Spanish man is father to a lascivious daughter, his traditional Spanish patriotism is outdated and exaggerated, and he is subject to transformation into other characters, thus disproving once more the <<continuidad española>>. Like his denunciation of religiosity and the ideal woman, Goytisolo accepts the nationalist myths as truth in order to viciously attack them.

The final assault against the mythification of Spanish history consists in the invasion of the Spanish language and the essentialist belief in Spain’s <<pureza lingüística>>, or linguistic purity. Spanish essentialists refused to acknowledge the impact of Arab presence on Spanish language as well as national identity. The narrator-protagonist seeks to reclaim the Spanish language by taking back all Spanish words that are of Arab descent. He begins the invasion by saying “falta el lenguaje, Julián/ desde estrados, iglesias, cátedras, púlpitos, academias, tribunas los carpetos reivindican con

¹¹⁹ “Ideology of the Christian gentleman and the goals of the Falange.”

¹²⁰ “don Alvaro moves laboriously, making the distinct pieces of his bony armor creak, hybrid mix of mammal and medieval warrior.”

orgullo sus derechos de propiedad sobre el lenguaje...nuestro, nuestro, nuestro...reflejo de nuestro espíritu” (Goytisolo and Levine 260).¹²¹ If essentialists believe that the Arab presence in Spain was a mistake, then the narrator-protagonist will gladly remove all traces of it by reclaiming the words that reflect the Arab spirit. In order to do so, he tells Count Julián “vaciarás aljibes y albercas, demolerás almacenes y dársenas, arruinarás alquerías y fondas, pillarás alcobas, alacenas, zaguanes/cargarás con sofas, alfombras, jarros, almohadas/devastarás las aldeas y sacrificarás los rabaños...” (Goytisolo and Levine 265).¹²² The narrator-protagonist systematically empties the Spanish language and culture of all things Arab, ending with the most fundamental of all: the *olé*. At the end of section three, the narrator-protagonist says “no olvides el olé...el olé, Julián, el olé! el bello y antiquísimo wa-l-lah! saca el adocenado orín que lo cubre, restituyéndole el luster original!” (Goytisolo and Levine 267, 68).¹²³ The culmination of the assault on the Spanish language is the reclamation of the *olé*, the heart and soul of the Spanish culture, because it is descendent from the Arab word *wallah*. With the profound absence of the *olé*, Goytisolo proposes, the nationalist regime can no longer overlook the Arab presence in Spain. Spain’s “other,” this insidious Moor, is unleashed upon a people in whom the Moorish element is basic, just as the *victima* becomes, paradoxically, his own *verdugo*.

In using *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* to viciously denounce the nationalist myths that dominated postwar Spain, Goytisolo turns to the model that Martín-Santos establishes in *Tiempo de Silencio* and sets the stage for Carmen Martín Gaité’s *El cuarto de*

¹²¹ “The language is left, Julián/ from platforms, churches, cathedrals, pulpits, academies, tribunals the *carpetos* claim with pride their rights of property over the language...ours, ours, ours...reflection of our spirit.”

¹²² “You will empty cisterns and water tanks, you will demolish warehouses and docks, you will ruin farmsteads and boarding houses, you will knock down bedrooms, kitchen cupboards, hallways/ you will carry sofas, carpets, jars, pillows/ you will devastate small villages and you will sacrifice radishes...”

¹²³ “Don’t forget the *olé*...the *olé*, Julián, the *olé*: the beautiful and ancient wa-l-lah! take away the mediocre rust that covers it, restore it’s original luster!”

atrás. Goytisolo focuses his attack on the myths of an essential Spanish identity and language, “donjuanismo,” and the Moor as usurper of Spain’s authentic destiny through his development of his narrator-protagonist’s divided subjectivity. It is through the gradual dissolution of his subject’s carefully constructed empirical reality in favor of his psychological world that Goytisolo explores the impact of the nationalist myths on the Spanish people and nation. Ultimately, in both *Tiempo de Silencio* and *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* the authors develop the individual as a means of critiquing the enduring, oppressive vestiges of Franco’s outdated dictatorship during a moment of monumental social change in Spain. As we will see in chapter three, Martín Gaité borrows from both Martín-Santos and Goytisolo in order to reach new heights in her development of a unique, nuanced subject that represents the national experience.

Chapter Three: Carmen Martín Gaité's *El cuarto de atrás*

I. The development of mimetic time and space in *El cuarto de atrás*

The eight years between Juan Goytisolo's *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* and Carmen Martín Gaité's *El cuarto de atrás* represented an unprecedented period in Spanish history and, as such, a tremendous challenge for Spanish writers. Whereas the years of social, cultural, and artistic renewal between 1960 and 1970 were certainly significant, the transition from dictatorship to democracy during the 70s was incomparable in its importance to Spanish citizens, particularly those who had experienced nearly four decades of repression under Franco. By the time Goytisolo wrote *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* in 1970, Spaniards were already anticipating Franco's death and, with it, the end of the isolation, repression, and unrealistic expectations for a Spain of the past. The nation that Franco helped to shape during his dictatorship—a State built on fear, discipline, and deprivation—no longer existed. Spaniards eagerly awaited the triumph of a democratic government predicated on civil liberties, and they dreamed of Spain assuming its rightful place within the community of European democracies. It was primarily for these reasons that the transition from dictatorship to democracy between 1970 and 1978 occurred so smoothly: the majority of the population was eager for it to succeed. Spaniards recognized that they were experiencing historic events of a monumental magnitude. The nation's writers, who felt so deeply the experience of living under Franco, were naturally compelled to come to terms with these events in their writing.

The 1970s brought with them tremendous social, cultural, and political changes that had profound effects on Martín Gaité's *El cuarto de atrás*. The period of regeneration

and renewal that *Tiempo de Silencio* and *Don Julián* reflect culminated in a crisis of political contradictions for the regime. Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa describe this conflict:

Spain was officially a Catholic state; yet the church was at odds with the regime. Strikes were illegal but there were hundreds of them every year. Spain was an anti-liberal state yet desperately searching for some form of democratic legitimacy. It was a state whose official ideology was ‘an integrating national Socialism’, but which nevertheless had transformed Spain into a capitalist society (Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa 194).

The ‘economic miracle’ of the late 1950s and early 60s ultimately failed, and an economic crisis emerged in the early 1970s. In addition, and perhaps most significantly, Franco began his succession from the Spanish government. As he grew older and his health worsened, he gradually relinquished power as President of the government and Chief of State, while condoning the coronation of Juan Carlos as king of Spain (Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa 196). Towards the end of his life, Franco and his cabinet made plans to retain the stability of the regime even after his demise; his assertion that “ ‘all is tied up and well tied down’...expressed his support for continuity” (Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa 207). Juan Carlos’ coronation, and the resulting institution of the Francoist monarchy, would be the first step in ensuring his enduring legacy.

Despite these extensive arrangements, Franco appeared to recognize his country’s need to move towards democratization and liberalization at the end of his life. His death on November 20th, 1975 catalyzed this transition, and opened the door to profound institutional transformations. Despite his efforts to ensure his continued presence in Spain, the “ ‘decomposition of Francoism’ (in Ricardo de la Cierva’s word) in the six months following Franco’s death was evident; it seemed as if most Spaniards had thrust him from their memories” (Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa 216). Immediately following his death, Spaniards enjoyed greater political and cultural freedom than they had experienced in forty years: “political parties held open meetings and congresses;

demonstrations were authorized; the press had almost total freedom” (Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa 216). Still, Franco’s legacy persisted: “the opposition felt it was living under some extension of Francoism: suddenly a meeting would be banned by a zealous civil governor, or a newspaper censored” (Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa 216). The first democratic elections of 1977 helped to firmly propel Spain into a new era. In these historic elections, Adolfo Suárez, a vocal advocate for political reform, became the first Prime Minister of Spain. This movement to a democracy brought with it many significant changes that facilitated Spain’s progression towards a new national identity. In addition to enjoying newfound political freedoms, Spaniards experienced the liberating dissolution of the censor in the early 1970s and the recuperation of their freedom of speech.

This new wave of cultural regeneration and renewal in the wake of Franco’s death serves as the backdrop for Carmen Martín Gaité’s *El cuarto de atrás*. Like Martín Santos and Goytisolo, Martín Gaité lived through both the Spanish Civil War and the difficult postwar years, and she similarly used her writing as a means of coming to terms with the trauma. Martín Gaité belongs to a wave of Spanish writers who became increasingly well-known after Franco’s death; among this group were Jesús Fernández Santos and Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio, to whom Martín Gaité was married for a short time.¹²⁴ The specific aims of Martín Gaité and her fellow writers are not nearly as strictly defined as those of previous literary movements, particularly the neorealism in which *Tiempo de Silencio* belongs. However, their works exhibit a tendency toward “renovated realism” in which the writers “clearly proclaim their political and social criticism,

¹²⁴ Goytisolo is often considered part of this collection of authors as well, predominantly because the censor banned the publication of his works—including *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*—in Spain until Franco’s death.

but...attempt to introduce new expressive techniques” at the same time.¹²⁵ These writers used innovation of form, language, and perspective to develop scathing critiques of the regime that had such profound impacts on their early and adult lives. In doing so, many of them, including Goytisolo and Martín Gaité, employed a “mythical and epic treatment of collective problems” in order to reflect on the trauma of the War and the postwar years (Cagigao, Crispin and Pupo-Walker 100). Their writing differs from the Spanish literature of the 1950s and 60s in its liberation from the rigid laws of censorship. With the dissolution of the censor, these authors were free to experiment with literary form and innovation in ways that were inconceivable for Martín-Santos and other neorealist writers of the immediate postwar decades. The reclamation of personal and artistic freedoms after Franco’s death is a major theme in the literature of the transition period.

Due to the dramatic differences in historical context and cultural climate in which the authors lived, *El cuarto de atrás* represents a progression beyond *Tiempo de Silencio* and *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* in terms of the exploration of the psychological world of the subject. Whereas certain aspects of *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* reflect the biographical details of Goytisolo’s life, the novel is not autobiographical; *Tiempo de Silencio* is purely fiction. *El cuarto de atrás*, on the other hand, is widely considered pseudo-autobiographical in its establishment of the narrator-protagonist’s subjectivity. Throughout the course of the novel the unnamed subject reflects on her experiences growing up under Franco’s regime, and she explores her current mindset following his demise. Her life bears a striking resemblance to the biographical details of

¹²⁵José L. Cagigao, John Crispin and Enrique Pupo-Walker, *España 1975-1980 : Conflictos Y Logros De La Democracia* (Madrid: J. Porrúa Turanzas, 1982) 99. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

Martín Gaité's own life; as such, the connection between author and subject is a significant theme. Although *Tiempo de Silencio* and *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* may be considered personal in their descent into the psychology of their narrator-protagonists, the tone of Martín Gaité's novel is decidedly intimate, as the subject allows the reader unbarred access into her private memories and informal thoughts. In addition, although Martín Gaité experiments with literary form and style, she does not do so in the same ways as Martín-Santos and Goytisolo. The structure and prose of her text are fairly straightforward, and the novel is written exclusively in the first-person perspective. However, she introduces the concept of the fantastic and develops a clever framing device through which the drama of *El cuarto de atrás* unfolds. As such, her descent into her narrator-protagonist's psychology takes on a very different form than the explorations of both Pedro in *Tiempo de Silencio* and the narrator-protagonist in *Don Julián*. The nature of this movement inwards, and its repercussions for Spanish society at large, will be discussed later in this chapter and in the conclusion as well.

Although *El cuarto de atrás* represents a progression away from *Tiempo de Silencio* and *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* in terms of style and tone, all three writers establish a recognizable mimetic framework and a larger socio-historical context for their subjects. Martín-Santos depicts the harsh realities of life in the city and suburbs of Madrid in 1949; Goytisolo's narrator-protagonist explores the public locales of the African city of Tangiers during the late 1960s. Similarly, Martín Gaité creates an empirical reality through which she develops her narrator-protagonist's subjectivity. In a kind of reversal of *Don Julián's* structure, the drama of the novel unfolds over the course of a single night in which the narrator-protagonist engages in a lengthy conversation with a mysterious visitor about her childhood under Franco's regime. When the man in black shows up at

her apartment at 12:30 in the morning—a rather unconventional hour for an interview—the narrator-protagonist does not recognize him or recall setting up the interview. Like Goytisolo, over the course of the novel Martín Gaité forges a strong connection between the recognizable time and space her narrator-protagonist inhabits, and the psychological world she explores and creates. As *El cuarto de atrás* progresses, the narrator-protagonist gradually superimposes her subjective reality over her empirical world. This process of psychologizing the mimetic will be discussed in-depth in the next section of this chapter.

Prior to creating the connection between the narrator-protagonist's psychological and empirical realities, however, Martín Gaité establishes a recognizable location and timeframe for her. The whole novel takes place within the confines of the narrator-protagonist's apartment, which Martín Gaité depicts in great detail. She does not specify the geographic location of the apartment, but she does carefully describe the narrator-protagonist's material surroundings. Early on in the novel, she establishes the chaos of the narrator-protagonist's room, saying “los libros, las montoneras de ropa sobre la butaca, la mesilla, los cuadros, todo está torcido.”¹²⁶ She continues to portray the clutter and disorder that dominate the space, saying “zapatos por el suelo, un almohadón caído, periódicos...¡Qué aglomeración de letreros, de fotografías, de cachivaches, de libros...!; libros que, para enredar más la cosa, guardan dentro fechas, papelitos, telegramas, dibujos, texto sobre texto...” (Martín Gaité 16).¹²⁷ With these descriptions, Martín Gaité establishes the narrator-protagonist's material environment, which is disorderly

¹²⁶ Carmen Martín Gaité, *El Cuarto De Atrás*, 1. ed. (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1978) 15.

Note: From this point on, all references to Martín Gaité's text will be parenthetical and will correspond with this edition. All English translations are from: Carmen Martín Gaité, *The Back Room*, trans. Helen R. Lane, *Twentieth-Century Continental Fiction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

“The books, the piles of clothes on the armchair, the night table, the pictures on the wall, everything is tilted.”

¹²⁷ “Shoes on the floor, a cushion that has fallen, magazines...What a hodgepodge of posters, photographs, odds and ends, books!...books that, to make things even messier, have dates, slips of paper, telegrams, drawings inside them, one text on top of another...”

and full of old books and keepsakes. She continues describing her disorganized apartment, saying “encima del radiador, rematada por barrotes torneados, hay una estantería laqueada de blanco—*étagère* se decía en los años del *art-déco*—, y en un hueco, entre dos grupos de libros, sujeto con chinchetas a la pared, destaca un grabado en blanco y negro de unos veinte por doce” (Martín Gaité 17).¹²⁸ Martín Gaité’s meticulousness in constructing the material environment recalls Goytisolo’s depiction of his subject’s room, although Martín Gaité’s narrator-protagonist remains objective in her descriptions while Goytisolo’s does not. As we will see in the next section, the clutter and chaos that dominate the narrator-protagonist’s home are later revealed as profoundly symbolic, and they become the basis for Martín-Gaité’s reflections on distinct shifts in character and ideology after Franco’s death.

Martín Gaité describes the rest of the narrator-protagonist’s empirical reality with the same detached, almost scientific attention to detail. In chapter 2 (“El sombrero negro”) of *El cuarto de atrás*, these descriptions become even more minute and focused than in chapter 1; Martín Gaité attracts the reader’s attention to seemingly inconsequential details in order to more completely depict her narrator-protagonist’s empirical reality. For example, as she goes downstairs to let in her mysterious late-night visitor, Martín Gaité follows her movement through the apartment: “al llegar a la puerta que sale al pasillo, cubierta a medias con una cortina roja, me detengo unos instantes” (Martín Gaité 28).¹²⁹ Martín Gaité again pays close attention to the details of her subject’s surroundings, including the color of the curtain that separates the apartment

¹²⁸ “Above the radiator is a set of knickknack shelves lacquered in white with lathe-turned bars at each end—an *étagère*, as they used to be called in the years of art deco—and in a gap between two groups of books, pinned to the wall with thumb tacks, is a black and white print approximately eight inches high and five inches wide.”

¹²⁹ “When I reach the doorway, half covered with a red curtain, that leads to the hall, I stop for a few seconds.”

from the corridor. As she waits for the man in black, the narrator-protagonist describes the “baldosas blancas y negras” (the black and white tiles) of the apartment building and, upon returning to her apartment with her visitor, she indicates that the door to her bedroom is half-open (Martín Gaité 30). This attention to particularities continues in her description of aspects of the sitting-room in which she and the man in black engage in their discussion. Her mysterious guest sits without being invited, while the narrator-protagonist “me he quedado en pie junto a la mesa donde acaba de posar el sombrero. Por la parte superior de la máquina asoma un folio empezado, leo de refilón: <<...al hombre descalzo ya no se le ve>>” (Martín Gaité 31).¹³⁰ With these seemingly trivial details, Martín Gaité clearly establishes a recognizable physical space for her narrator-protagonist within her apartment.

In addition, like Martín-Santos and Goytisolo, Martín Gaité also creates an identifiable timeframe for the action of her novel, although she does so primarily through suggestion rather than overt references to the passage of time. *El cuarto de atrás* begins during the night, when the narrator-protagonist receives a call from the mysterious man. She asks him for the time, and “me contesta que las doce y media, que ésa era la hora que le había marcado para la entrevista, no sé de que entrevista se trata, pero no me atrevo a confesárselo” (Martín Gaité 27).¹³¹ With this quotation, Martín Gaité identifies the exact moment in time when the action begins: 12:30 in the morning. The conversation that takes place between the two characters lasts the duration of the night, and it ends when, in the early hours of the morning, she tells him, “me está

¹³⁰ “I have remained standing, next to the table on which he has just deposited his hat. A page already begun is peeking out of the top of the typewriter, and I read out of the corner of my eye: ‘...The barefoot man has now disappeared from sight.’”

¹³¹ “He answers that it’s 12:30 A.M., that that was the time I had set for the interview. I don’t know what interview he’s talking about, but I don’t dare admit this.”

entrando un poco de sueño” (Martín Gaité 201).¹³² Other than the clear progression from night until morning, though, the passage of time is difficult to discern. The narrator-protagonist gives no indication of the hour after she first meets the man in black. She engages in long moments of self-reflection and lengthy conversations with both her mysterious interlocutor and with Carolina, a woman who calls on the phone, that last indeterminate periods of time. The only other suggestion of the passage of time comes at the end of *El cuarto de atrás*, when the narrator-protagonist awakes to find her daughter in the room; when prompted, she tells her mother that it is five o’clock in the afternoon. Even though she does not indicate the hour, Martín Gaité establishes the mimetic timeframe of the novel as the progression from night to morning. The fact that the conversation between the narrator-protagonist and the man in black takes place at night will become increasingly significant in section II of this chapter.

Again drawing from Martín-Santos and Goytisolo, Martín Gaité situates her narrator-protagonist within a larger historical context in order to eventually connect her with a collective identity. Like *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*, *El cuarto de atrás* spans more than the single night in which the action of the novel occurs; through the use of flashbacks, Martín Gaité reflects on forty years of Spanish history. The novel begins in late 1975, immediately following Franco’s death. The narrator-protagonist describes the moment in which she learned of his demise, saying:

Se acabó, nunca más, el tiempo se desbloqueaba, había desaparecido el encargado de atarlo y presidirlo, Franco inaugurando fábricas y pantanos, dictando penas de muerte, apadrinando la boda de su hija y de las hijas de su hija, hablando por la radio, contemplando el desfile de la Victoria, Franco pescando truchas... <<la van a enterrar>>, pensaba... (Martín Gaité 137-138).¹³³

¹³² “I’m getting a bit sleepy.”

¹³³ “It was all over, never again. Time unfroze. The man responsible for checking its flow and presiding over it had disappeared. Franco officially opening factories and reservoirs, decreeing death penalties,

In a divergence from Martín-Santos and Goytisolo, Martín Gaité overtly situates *El cuarto de atrás* within a critical historical juncture: Spain on the cusp of dramatic changes in the aftermath of Franco's death. Rather than use parody and modified neorealist techniques to establish the broad social and political time period, Martín Gaité relies on her narrator-protagonist's memory to indicate the exact moment in Spanish history in which the action of the novel unfolds.

Furthermore, her narrator-protagonist's memories allow the reader access to other important historical moments that Martín-Santos and Goytisolo address in their novels: life under Franco's regime. *El cuarto de atrás* represents three different periods of time: "the present, post-Franco writing of the work; the evocation of childhood during the Second Republic; and the monolithic time of the post-War period."¹³⁴ In order to firmly place her narrator-protagonist in the postwar period, Martín Gaité describes the regime's expectations for women her age during the 1940s: "orgullosas de su legado, cumpliríamos nuestra misión de españolas, aprenderíamos a hacer la señal de la cruz sobre la frente de nuestros hijos...a decirle que tanto monta monta tanto Isabel como Fernando...y que el ajo es buenísimo para los bronquios" (Martín Gaité 96).¹³⁵ With this quotation, the narrator-protagonist recalls the devotion and obedience to the regime that women her age were expected to exhibit after the Civil War, which we will explore further in sections II and III. This memory of her adolescence serves to identify the

giving his daughter and the daughters of his daughter in marriage, speaking over the radio, watching the annual parade commemorating Victory, Franco fishing for trout... 'They're going to bury him,' I thought."

¹³⁴ Ellen C. Mayock, *The "Strange Girl" In Twentieth-Century Spanish Novels Written by Women*, 1st ed. (New Orleans: University Press of the South, 2004) 127. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

¹³⁵ "Proud of her legacy, we would fulfill our mission as Spanish women, we would learn to make the sign of the cross on our children's foreheads...to tell him that *tanto monta monta tanto Isabel como Fernando*...and that garlic is excellent for the bronchial tubes."

historical period to which her flashbacks transport her: the stifling, oppressive postwar decades of the 1940s and 50s.

As is the case with *Tiempo de Silencio* and *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*, the order in which Martín Gaité reveals or conceals defining historical details is every bit as important as the information itself. In the narrative structure that Mayock identifies within *El cuarto de atrás*, the Civil War itself is clearly missing from the narrator-protagonist's established chronology of self-reflection. She shapes her narrative around her memories of life before and after the War; however, she spends much of her dialogue with the man in black actually reliving events from her childhood during the War. For example, she recalls the bombings she witnessed, saying “un día cayó una bomba en una churrería de la calle Pérez Pujol, cerca de casa, mató a toda la familia del churrero; la niña era muy simpática, jugaba con nosotros en la plazuela, al padre no le gustaba ir al refugio...” (Martín Gaité 60).¹³⁶ The traumatic events of the War are clearly instrumental parts of the narrator-protagonist's past. Her mode is to underplay or undermine such references, however, disallowing them to structure her narrative in an obvious way. They thereby become the marks of repression. The only way in which she permits herself and the reader to reflect on these painful memories is through her *fugas*, or mental escapes into the recesses of her mind. As we shall see, these *fugas* contribute to the formation of the narrator-protagonist's subjectivity, and ultimately allow her to privately reclaim her memories of the Civil War without allowing them to define her externally.

¹³⁶ “One day a bomb fell in a cruller shop on the Calle Pérez Pujol, near home. The cruller seller's whole family was killed. The daughter was very nice, she played with us in the little square. Her father didn't like to go to the shelter...”

II. *El cuarto de atrás* and the subjective

Martín Gaité begins *El cuarto de atrás* with a dedication to Lewis Carroll in which she hints at the goal of her novel. She starts the text “para Lewis Carroll, que todavía nos consuela de tanta cordura y nos acoge en su mundo al revés” (Martín Gaité).¹³⁷ Lewis Carroll was a popular 19th century author best known for *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and its sequel, *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*, in which he explores the title character’s hidden worlds. With this brief homage, Martín Gaité invites the reader to enter a universe like that of Carroll’s novels in which things are not completely as they seem. In both books, Alice falls down a rabbit-hole and finds herself in a new world full of fantastical creatures and events. Similarly, *El cuarto de atrás* is the story of a woman who, like Alice, enters a passageway and descends into a strange new place. Unlike Carroll’s protagonist, however, Martín Gaité’s subject finds herself within her own interior world, which she is finally free to access after nearly forty years of repression under Franco. The development of her subjectivity, then, consists of her exploration of this repressed, secret world of her memories and imagination in an attempt to uncover not only her own identity but that of an entire generation of Spanish people—particularly women—as well.

Martín-Santos, Goytisolo, and Martín Gaité all strive to achieve this same goal of making collective their personal experiences. As we saw in chapter one, Martín-Santos allows Pedro’s resignation to reflect that of the Spanish people at large. In the process, he reveals the consequences of the stoicism that Franco claimed was part of the essential Spanish identity. Goytisolo uses his narrator-protagonist as a representative of the larger exile experience, and he focuses on the complexity of the connection between exile and

¹³⁷ “For Lewis Carroll, who still consoles us for being so sensible and welcomes us into his world turned topsy-turvy.”

motherland. In *El cuarto de atrás*, the female narrator-protagonist ultimately represents a collective *nosotras*, a population of women who, like the author herself, survived both the War and the difficult postwar years (Mayock 129). Like Martín-Santos and Goytisolo, she develops a subject whose experiences are simultaneously personal and collective; her protagonist's quest for personal liberation from her past reflects "to some extent both the Spanish transition to democracy and the larger global movement of Women's liberation" (Mayock 129). This shift from the individual to the group occurs throughout the course of the text as Martín Gaité develops a fascinating subject.

Although we have already seen that the three novels at hand share many similarities, Martín Gaité strays from Martín-Santos and Goytisolo in her establishment of her narrator-protagonist's subjectivity by using her empirical surroundings as a vehicle to the interior. As previously demonstrated, the mimetic world wears away in favor of the psychological realm over the course of *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*. The connection between these two spheres is slightly different in *El cuarto de atrás*, in that the psychological world does not replace the mimetic; rather, the mimetic becomes a portal through which the narrator-protagonist uncovers her internal reality. In this way, Martín Gaité psychologizes and personalizes the empirical world. She uses ordinary objects in the narrator-protagonist's apartment such as a mirror, a typewriter, and a stack of books as points of departure for her *fugas*, or flashbacks, which reveal essential aspects of her identity and experience. The man in black is a critical part of this process; he acts as her interlocutor and the catalyst for her discovery of her identity, and Martín Gaité presents a duality between him and the narrator-protagonist. Through these explorations of the narrator-protagonist's subjectivity, Martín Gaité also highlights many shared characteristics between herself and her subject. The pseudo-autobiographical nature of

the novel, as well as the use of the mimetic world as a portal into the internal, separate *El cuarto de atrás* from *Tiempo de Silencio* and *Revindicación del Conde don Julián* in its style, tone, and overall goal.

The title of Martín Gaité's novel serves as a point of departure for an analysis of the unique ways in which she establishes subjectivity. The exploration of the narrator-protagonist's identity in *El cuarto de atrás* is fundamentally linked with the development of physical space, particularly the back room to which the title refers. Although the narrator-protagonist gradually exposes the nature of <<el cuarto de atrás>> (the back room) during her discussion with the man in black, there is one particular point near the end of the novel in which she sums up its significance to her life. She describes the special room in her childhood home in Salamanca in which:

Reinaban el desorden y la libertad, se permitía cantar a voz en cuello, cambiar de sitio los muebles, saltar encima de un sofá desvencijado y con los muelles rotos al que llamábamos al pobre sofá...era un reino donde nada estaba prohibido. Hasta la guerra, habíamos estudiado y jugado allí totalmente a nuestras anchas...el cuarto era nuestro y se acabó (Martín Gaité 187).¹³⁸

The back room represents the chaotic, inspirational, unfettered dimension of being. It was a place in which she could feel free and uncensored as a child; she was allowed to be herself and enjoy the pleasures of disorder and originality. Over the course of the novel, it becomes clear that the <<cuarto de atrás>> represents both a literal and metaphorical space of creativity, imagination, and innocence.

For the narrator-protagonist, the start of the War, and the forty years of oppressive dictatorship that followed, represent a symbolic <<cuarto de delante>> (a

¹³⁸ "Disorder and freedom reigned. We were allowed to sing at the top of our lungs, move the furniture around as we pleased, jump on top of a rickety old sofa with broken springs that we used to call the poor sofa...it was a kingdom where nothing was forbidden. Up until the war, we felt entirely at home there, and there was more than enough room for us to study and play in it...the room was ours, period."

“front room”) under which the metaphoric <<cuarto de atrás>> lies buried. The divide between the two is signaled in the same monologue in which she exposes the nature of the back room to the man in black, detailing its destruction: “hay como una línea divisoria, que empezó a marcarse en el año treinta y seis, entre la infancia y el crecimiento. La amortización del cuarto de atrás y su progresiva transformación en despensa fue uno de los primeros cambios que se produjeron en la parte de acá de aquella raya” (Martín Gaité 187-188).¹³⁹ The narrator-protagonist implies that the War destroys the innocence, freedom, and chaos that she enjoyed as a child. The back room is slowly reduced to its material value during this time of scarcity as it becomes a storage space for the food supplies that her mother hides during the War. As it evolves physically from a place of juvenile fun into a holding place for necessary market goods, so too does the narrator-protagonist’s sense of innocence disappear as she confronts the harsh realities of the War. She is no longer able to live the carefree, unconventional lifestyle that she enjoyed as a girl; rather, she must face the oppressive institutions of the Franco regime. The transformation of the narrator-protagonist’s <<cuarto de atrás>> marks the end of an era of unconformity, liberation, imagination, and innocence, and the start of a lifetime of oppression under Franco. In particular, she experiences the painful transition from the pleasant girlhood she shared with her non-conformist mother to her maturation under the watchful eye of the Sección Femenina, the branch of the Falange party that aimed to socialize young women. As we shall see, Martín Gaité establishes subjectivity in large part through these reflections on the repression of the War and postwar years.

¹³⁹ “There’s a sort of dividing line, separating childhood and adulthood, that began to be marked off in ’36. The ‘amortization’ of the back room and its gradual transformation into a storeroom was one of the first changes that took place on this side of that line.”

In *El cuarto de atrás*, Martín Gaité gives her narrator-protagonist the opportunity to finally open the door of her very own <<cuarto de atrás>> and engage in the process of releasing and reclaiming the creativity, freedom, and disorder that she enjoyed as a girl. Her task over the course of the novel is to uncover her personal repression, expose her hidden identity, and find inspiration for her writing, all of which are now possible after Franco's death. By revealing the story behind the <<cuarto de atrás>> to the man in black, the narrator-protagonist reopens the doors of this special place in her memory and allows herself to experience the "freedom, imagination and memory, not restricted by the confines of order or logic" that she experienced as a child in the back room.¹⁴⁰ In doing so, "Martín Gaité embarks on that inward odyssey that Adrienne Riche has so eloquently called the journey of the woman artist through <<the cratered night of female memory to revitalize the darkness, to retrieve what has been lost, to regenerate, reconceive and give birth>>" (Martín Gaité et al. 167). Gould Levine identifies the overall goal of Martín Gaité's development of subjectivity: the recreation and recuperation of her narrator-protagonist's identity in the aftermath of forty years of oppression. In doing so, Martín Gaité represents not only a particular young woman but a whole generation of repressed women struggling to reclaim the remnants of their individual and collective <<cuartos de atrás>>.

Martín Gaité establishes her narrator-protagonist's subjectivity and, in turn, allows her narrator-protagonist to engage in this rediscovery of her identity, in two interconnected ways: through her conversation with the man in black and her psychologizing of her empirical reality. The man in black's arrival at her apartment is

¹⁴⁰ Carmen Martín Gaité, Mirella D'Ambrosio Servodidio, Marcia L. Welles and Society of Spanish and Spanish-American Studies., *From Fiction to Metafiction: Essays in Honor of Carmen Martín-Gaité* (Lincoln, Neb.: Society of Spanish and Spanish-American Studies, 1983) 169. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

mysterious; she does not remember setting up an appointment with him, and she does not recognize him when she first sees him. Still, over the course of the novel he comes to represent the ideal interlocutor for her: he asks probing questions that allow her to retract into the recesses of her memory; he appreciates her *fugas* and praises her wit; and he is a patient and attentive listener. As Gould Levine asserts,

It is apparent that the stranger who appears in the writer's apartment without pen or pad for a midnight interview serves as her muse...her guide into the underworld of herself. It is only through his probing questions, gentle criticism of her previous works, non-patronizing enthusiasm and gift of a pill...that she is able to pull back the curtains that hide her rich imagination, that metaphorical <<cuarto de atrás>> and recreate her adolescence and theories of writing (Martín Gaité et al. 162).

The man in black thus serves as a catalyst for the narrator-protagonist's exploration and self-recreation; he encourages her to descend into the back room of her memory and begin anew. At one point in *El cuarto de atrás*, he asks her if she remembers the fairytale of Pulgarcito (Tom Thumb), saying "cuando dejó un reguero de migas de pan para hallar el camino de vuelta, se las comieron los pájaros. A la vez siguiente, a resabiado, dejó piedrecitas blancas, y así no se extravió...con eso basta por ahora, tenemos mucha noche por delante" (Martín Gaité 105-106).¹⁴¹ With this allegory, the man in black encourages the narrator-protagonist to use him as her guide and companion on her descent into the back room of her memories.

Throughout the course of *El cuarto de atrás*, then, the man in black plays several fundamental roles in the establishment of the narrator-protagonist's subjectivity. By encouraging the narrator-protagonist to reflect on her life, he allows Martín Gaité to develop the basic characteristics of her subject, many of which she herself shares. The

¹⁴¹ "When he left a trail of breadcrumbs in order to find his way back, the birds ate them. He was annoyed, so the next time he left little white pebbles, and by so doing he didn't get lost...that's enough for now, we have a long night before us."

first such trait is the narrator-protagonist's identification as a woman, the revelation of which indicates an immediate divergence between *El cuarto de atrás* and the two previous novels. As Gould Levine implies in her analysis of *El cuarto de atrás*, the narrator-protagonist's gender is her defining characteristic, and her experiences as a girl and woman before, during, and after Franco's dictatorship are fundamental in understanding her subjectivity. Through her conversation with the man in black and the psychologizing of her mimetic space, the narrator-protagonist explores her complex relationship with her femininity. In addition, Martín Gaité exposes other basic parts of her narrator-protagonist's subjectivity, including her age and profession. Like the author herself in 1978, the narrator-protagonist is middle-aged and has a grown daughter. Martín Gaité never reveals her full name; she does, however, disclose that her first name, like the author's own name, begins with a C. Furthermore, she establishes her narrator-protagonist's profession: she is a writer whose previous novels include *El balneario*, a work that Martín Gaité wrote in her real life.

In addition to allowing Martín Gaité to reveal these basic, superficial characteristics, the man in black also helps her to develop some of the deeper parts of her narrator-protagonist's identity that are fundamental to the progression of *El cuarto de atrás*. Early on in the novel, he finds the narrator-protagonist's typewriter in her living room; it contains a page with the words "al hombre descalzo ya no se le ve" (Martín Gaité 33).¹⁴² When he asks her about the pages, she denies having written them, saying "¿Ahora?...No, ahora no, hace tiempo que no escribo nada" (Martín Gaité 34).¹⁴³ In this brief part of their conversation, the narrator-protagonist reveals both her faulty memory and her writer's block, which we will return to later in this section. Although the man in

¹⁴² "The barefoot man has now disappeared from sight."

¹⁴³ "Right now?...No, not at present, I haven't written anything for some time."

black points out that the pages are from her typewriter, she does not remember having written them. As their conversation unfolds, the narrator-protagonist reveals the fragile, unreliable nature of her memory. It also becomes clear that the descent into her psychological world is fundamentally based on the act of remembering. The narrator-protagonist engages in countless small trips into the recesses of her memories; her capacity to slip back and forth between past and present is critical to her subjectivity. The man in black tells her that “usted es una fugada nata, y además lo sabe...no tiene nada de malo, lo único malo, vamos, malo para usted, es que se pretenda justificar” (Martín Gaité 123).¹⁴⁴ With this quotation, he confirms and validates her identification as a “fugada,” or escapist. He encourages her to embrace this part of her subjectivity and allow him to come along on her *fugas* so that he may understand her better. Martín Gaité thus uses the man in black as a means of exposing fundamental parts of her narrator-protagonist’s subjectivity, particularly the tension between her faulty memory and her reliance on it in her journey.

In these ways, the man in black acts as a catalyst for the narrator-protagonist’s descent into her internal world and her recreation of self in the aftermath of Franco’s death. At the beginning of chapter 4 (“El escondite inglés”), the man in black offers her a pill. When she asks if it will enhance her memory, he answers “bueno, sí, la avivan, pero también la desordenan, algo muy agradable” (Martín Gaité 108).¹⁴⁵ With the pill, the man in black gives the narrator-protagonist the permission and means to reclaim her memories and relive the disorder of her childhood in the back room. He acts as her guide on this process by posing questions and comments that send her into her *fugas*, and

¹⁴⁴ “You are a born escapist, and what’s more you know you are...there’s nothing wrong in that. The only bad thing, that is to say bad for you, is that you try to justify yourself.”

¹⁴⁵ “Well yes, they restore [one’s memory], but they also disorder it, something that’s very pleasant.”

allow her to reflect on the unspeakable, repressed nature of her past. For example, at the end of chapter 2, he says to her “o sea, que se consideraba más feliz que la niña de Franco” (Martín Gaité 69).¹⁴⁶ The narrator-protagonist then engages in a pivotal moment of contemplation in which she thinks about her inability to express her experiences both verbally and, as previously demonstrated, in her writing. In a particularly revealing soliloquy, she muses:

Podría decirle que la felicidad en los años de Guerra y postguerra era inconcebible, que vivíamos rodeados de ignorancia y represión, hablarle de aquellos deficientes libros de texto que bloquearon nuestra enseñanza...pero este hombre no se merece respuestas tópicas. –La verdad es que yo mi infancia y mi adolescencia las recuerdo, a pesar de todo, como una época muy feliz (Martín Gaité 69-70).¹⁴⁷

In this highly significant moment, Martín Gaité uses the man in black to expose significant aspects of her narrator-protagonist’s subjectivity, particularly the unspeakable nature of her past and the tremendous blockages in her memory, speech, and writing as a result of forty years of oppression. Even as she remains incapable of speaking the truth about her childhood to the man in black, he allows her to reflect on it herself.

Through their dialogue, Martín Gaité presents a duality between the narrator-protagonist and the man in black. This allows her to explore the narrator-protagonist’s ongoing process of self-creation, an act that is central to Martín Gaité’s establishment of subjectivity. In chapter two, I mentioned that Goytisolo’s narrator-protagonist, likening himself to Scheherazade, creates the story of his identity as Goytisolo develops his subjectivity. Martín Gaité’s narrator-protagonist, too, must rewrite her own personal

¹⁴⁶ “In other words, you thought of yourself as being happier than Franco’s daughter.”

¹⁴⁷ “I could tell him that happiness in the war years and the years just after the war was something inconceivable, that we lived surrounded by ignorance and repression. I could tell him about those textbooks with all sort of things missing that kept us from getting a decent education...But this man does not deserve stereotyped responses. –The truth of the matter is that I remember my childhood and my adolescence, despite everything, as a very happy time in my life.”

narrative and, in doing so, recuperate her repressed memories in order to recreate herself in the aftermath of Franco's death. In the next section of this chapter, we shall see additional ways in which the complicated, fantastical structure of the novel allows her to write the story of her own identity as Martín Gaité simultaneously molds her. The man in black is a critical part of this creation of self in *El cuarto de atrás*; in addition to asking probing questions that encourage her *fugas*, he acts as "creation and mirror of the protagonist's psyche" (Mayock 133). Although his conversation with the narrator-protagonist lasts nearly the entire duration of the novel, the reader is never sure if he actually exists or if he is merely a figment of her imagination. He is extremely familiar with her "life, work and the writing process" and "he may well represent her male animus in Jungian terms."¹⁴⁸ For this reason, he is a comforting companion to her, but the narrator-protagonist cannot confirm his physical existence in her home. Rather, he represents her need to "dar alas a las palabras," that is, he helps her to remove the immense blockages in memory and speech that are the result of forty years of oppression (Martín Gaité 148).¹⁴⁹ His character, "in fact, is...constructed from the narrator's giving wings to words, as he is endowed with the exact characteristics C. desires in an interlocutor, as well as with the attractive stereotype of the mysterious male visitor" (Mayock 130). The man in black allows both Martín Gaité and the narrator-protagonist herself to establish subjectivity by acting as a mirror in which she sees her identity reflected. She "needs this other of the opposite sex in order to narrate and write, in short, to achieve subjectivity" (Davies 238). Thus, his role in the development of the

¹⁴⁸ Catherine Davies, *Spanish Women's Writing, 1849-1996* (London; Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Athlone Press, 1998) 237. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

¹⁴⁹ "Giving wings to words."

narrator-protagonist's recreation and Martín Gaité's development of her subjectivity is critical.

In addition to the mysterious man in black, the narrator-protagonist's mimetic surroundings function as another vehicle through which Martín Gaité explores deeper aspects of her subjectivity. In section I, we explored the ways in which Martín Gaité carefully constructs her spatial surroundings; it becomes clear in her establishment of subjectivity that this space symbolizes the very being of the narrator-protagonist. Ordinary objects in her home such as her mirror and typewriter are departure points for her *fugas* as her empirical reality becomes a portal through which she descends into her interior world. At various points in the text, the mere sight of a material object or the recollection of a particular date is enough to provoke an intense memory or feeling. A prime example of this psychologizing of her mimetic surroundings occurs early on in *El cuarto de atrás*, when the man in black asks the narrator-protagonist how long she has occupied her home. She tells him that she has lived there since 1953; immediately afterwards, she writes “suspiro. He vuelto a coger el hilo, como siempre que me acuerdo de una fecha. Las fechas son los hitos de la rutina.—Precisamente ese año—reanudo—es cuando empecé a escribir mi primera novela, esa que le decía antes que es bastante misteriosa” (Martín Gaité 47).¹⁵⁰ The recollection of a recognizable historical moment is enough to send the narrator-protagonist into a *fuga* in which she remembers the process of writing her first novel. The specific date becomes a vehicle through which she begins to recreate the significant events and feelings of her past that have remained hidden for

¹⁵⁰ “I heave a sigh. I have caught hold of the thread again, as always happens when I remember a date. Dates are the milestones of routine. —That was the very same year, I go on, that I began to write my first novel, the one that is rather mysterious.”

many years. In this example, the narrator-protagonist superimposes the psychological world of her memory over the mimetic moment in history in which she lived.

Throughout *El cuarto de atrás*, the narrator-protagonist continues to use her empirical reality as a vehicle through which she reflects on her personal experiences before, during, and after the War. For example, the pill that the man in black gives her for her memory immediately transports her back into a fond memory of her childhood: playing Parcheesi with her family. She asks her visitor if she will become addicted to the pills; her question provokes a *fuga* in which she thinks:

Lo peor de los juegos es que se conviertan en hábito. Aquel primer día me encantaron los círculos de colores que se veían a través del cristal...Luego, en cambio, cuando ya aprendí las reglas, jugar al parchís se convirtió en una rutina obligatoria...es una nube gris que se extiende ahora sobre los años de guerra y postguerra, uniformándolos, volviendo imprecisos y opacos sus contornos: los años del parchís” (Martín Gaité 107).¹⁵¹

The pill itself, a recognizable physical object within her mimetic surroundings, provokes this profound moment of recollection in which the narrator-protagonist compares the potentially addictive natures of it and Parcheesi. The game eventually became part of an obligatory routine that she now associates with the War and postwar years. In this moment, she psychologizes her mimetic surroundings by using them as a departure point for her descent into her memories. Martín Gaité’s carefully constructed empirical reality becomes a vehicle through which she exposes significant aspects of her narrator-protagonist’s past in order to develop her subjectivity.

Another example of the superimposition of the subjective reality over the empirical occurs early in *El cuarto de atrás* when the narrator-protagonist recalls the

¹⁵¹ “The worst part of games is that they become an addiction. That first day I was enchanted by the colored disks you could see through the glass...On the other hand, once I had learned the rules, playing Parcheesi became an obligatory routine...the game is now a ray cloud extending over the war years and the postwar ones, making them all alike, blurring their outlines and turning them opaque: the Parcheesi years.”

bombardments of the War. She remembers hiding from the cold and the bombings as a young girl, but she also imagines herself taking refuge in history. She thinks about “cubriendo el ruido de la lluvia, han empezado a sonar las sirenas de alarma anunciando un bombardeo. Aquella trepidación, que estremecía de improviso la plaza provinciana, se estrella sin miramientos contra las almenas altas del Castillo, construidas con recortes de mi investigación sobre el siglo XVIII, tambalea toda la edificación...” (Martín Gaité 59).¹⁵² In this quotation, the narrator-protagonist mixes her empirical reality in which she hears the sound of the rain and the sirens with the bombardments of her imagination. Later in this section, she recalls the air raids that she experienced as a child during the War. She describes a memory in which she and her siblings were “recortando mariposas en el cuarto de atrás;” her parents entered and instructed the children to go to the refuge (Martín Gaité 61).¹⁵³ The narrator-protagonist and her family “salimos a la escalera, nos tropezamos con el vecino del Segundo, un comandante muy nervioso, con bigote a lo Ronald Colman, que iba gritando, mientras se despeñaba hacia el portal: <<¡Sin precipitación, sin precipitación!>>” (Martín Gaité 61).¹⁵⁴ With this quotation, the narrator-protagonist recalls a particularly traumatic childhood memory with immense clarity. The sound of the rain and the siren outside her apartment force her to recall her personal experiences; in this way, she superimposes her memories of the War over her empirical reality. This is another moment in which Martín Gaité uses her mimetic surroundings as a means of exploring her narrator-protagonist’s unique psychological

¹⁵² “Drowning out the sound of the rain, the sirens warning of a bombing have begun to sound. That vibration, that suddenly shook the provincial public square, pitilessly assaults the lofty battlements of the castle built of bits and pieces of my research on the eighteenth century, sets the entire edifice to tottering...”

¹⁵³ “Cutting out paper dolls in the back room.”

¹⁵⁴ “We went out to the stairway and ran into our third-floor neighbor, a very nervous army major, with a mustache like Ronald Colman’s, who kept shouting as he dashed downstairs to the outside door: ‘Don’t rush, all of you, there’s no need to rush!’”

world. During these episodes in which the subjective, interior world of her subject takes the place of her empirical reality, the reader is permitted access to the narrator-protagonist's innermost thoughts and memories. It is through these *fugas* that Martín Gaité establishes a nuanced, complex subjectivity.

In another highly significant moment in *El cuarto de atrás* in which the narrator-protagonist psychologizes her empirical reality, the mirror in her kitchen allows her to reflect on her relationship to her mother and her femininity, two significant aspects of her identity. At the start of chapter 3 (“Ven pronto a Cúnigan”), the narrator-protagonist goes into the kitchen to make tea. She happens to look up at herself in the mirror, and she gets lost in her own reflection, saying:

He terminado de limpiar el hule de la mesa, alzo los ojos y me veo reflejada con un gesto esperanzado y animoso en el espejo de marco antiguo que hay a la derecha, encima del sofá marrón... a decir verdad, la que me está mirando es una niña de ocho años y luego una chica de dieciocho, de pie en el gran comedor de casa de mis abuelos en la calle Mayor de Madrid, resucita del fondo del espejo—¿era este mismo espejo?... (Martín Gaité 74).¹⁵⁵

In this moment, the narrator-protagonist is transported into her own psychological world through the recognizable physical presence of the mirror. Her reflection triggers a chapter-long contemplation on her girlhood in which she thinks about her mother, who “le encantaba... leer y jugar a juegos de chicos, y hubiera querido estudiar una carrera... pero entonces no era costumbre, ni siquiera se le pasó por la cabeza pedirlo... mi madre no era casamentera, ni me enseñó tampoco nunca a coser ni a

¹⁵⁵ “I have finished cleaning off the oilcloth table cover. I raise my eyes and see myself reflected with a hopeful, cheerful expression in the mirror with an antique frame, hanging on the wall to the right, above the maroon sofa... to tell the truth, the girl who is looking back at me is a child of nine and then a youngster of eighteen, standing in the huge dining room of my grandparents' apartment in the Calle Mayor in Madrid, come back to life from the depths of the mirror—was it this same mirror?...”

guisar” (Martín Gaité 92).¹⁵⁶ The narrator’s mother is clearly a non-conformist whose unconventional approach to femininity reflects the sense of liberation that the narrator-protagonist experienced as a young girl in the <<cuarto de atrás>>. Prior to the start of the War, her mother refused to ascribe to the expectations of other women; for example, “<<hasta a coser un botón aprende mejor una persona lista que una tonta>> le contestó un día a una señora que había dicho de mí, moviendo la cabeza con reprobación: <<Mujer que sabe latín no puede tener buen fin>>, y la miré con un agradecimiento eterno” (Martín Gaité 93).¹⁵⁷ As this quotation reflects, it is through the structure of the mirror in the kitchen that the narrator-protagonist introduces the unconventional figure of her mother, who has had a profound impact on her subjectivity.

On a larger scale, this mental escape that the narrator-protagonist’s mimetic surroundings provoke also provides insight into the experiences of other women of her generation. During her *fuga* in the mirror, she recognizes that her mother’s behavior sharply contrasted with the Sección Femenina’s expectations that women embody “el heroísmo abnegado de madres y esposas, en la importancia de su silenciosa y oscura labor como pilares del hogar cristiano” (Martín Gaité 93).¹⁵⁸ After the War, the narrator-protagonist and all other women are supposed to be selfless, diligent mothers and wives who never complain about their fate. The narrator-protagonist receives contradictory messages from her free-spirited mother, who believes in the importance of educating women, and the strict Sección Femenina:

¹⁵⁶ “She loved to...read and to play children’s games, and she would have liked to study at the university...but it wasn’t the custom in those days for girls to prepare for a career, so the thought never even crossed her mind to ask to do so...My mother was not the sort who was eager to see me married. She never taught me to cook, or to sew either.”

¹⁵⁷ “‘A clever person learns even such a thing as how to sew a button on better than a stupid one,’ she retorted one day when a lady, shaking her head in disapproval, had said of me, ‘A woman who knows Latin can come to no good end,’ and I looked at my mother in eternal gratitude.”

¹⁵⁸ “Unselfish heroism of wives and mothers, the importance of their silent and obscure labor as pillars of the Christian home and family.”

Todas las arengas que monitores y camaradas nos lanzaban en aquellos locales inhóspitos, mezcla de hangar y de cine de pueblo, donde cumplí a regañadientes el Servicio Social, cosiendo dobladillos, hacienda gimnasia y jugando al baloncesto, se encaminaban...al mismo objeto: a que aceptásemos con alegría y orgullo...nuestra condición de mujeres Fuertes, complemento y espejo del varón (Martín Gaité 93-94).¹⁵⁹

In this quotation, the narrator-protagonist describes the oppressive nature of the Sección Femenina; like other young women her age she was expected to accept her role as a complement to and reflection of a man with happiness and pride. She continues to describe the ubiquitous presence of the Franco regime in her girlhood, specifically the appropriation of the figure of Isabella la Católica, saying “se nos ponía bajo su advocación, se nos hablaba de su voluntad férrea y de su espíritu de sacrificio, había reprimido la ambición y el despotismo de los nobles” (Martín Gaité 95).¹⁶⁰ As Goytisolo parodies in *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*, Franco used Isabella as a representation of the ideal Spanish woman; in *El cuarto de atrás*, the narrator-protagonist does not like imitating her behavior, but she does so anyway. During her moment in the mirror, she reflects on the stifling life for women during and after the War.

In doing so, Martín Gaité allows *El cuarto de atrás* to simultaneously become a unique portrait of a specific subject and a reflection of a collective experience. Through the narrator-protagonist's *fugas* in which she reflects on her femininity, Martín Gaité creates “a unique *Bildungsroman* for a whole generation of Spanish women who will undoubtedly see themselves reflected in the minute descriptions that the author provides of her own upbringing” (Mayock 168). This is underscored by an emphasis on the

¹⁵⁹ “All the harangues that our instructors and female comrades subjected us to in those inhospitable buildings, reminiscent at once of airplane hangars and popular movie houses, where I grudgingly did my Social Service, sewing hems, doing gymnastics, and playing basketball, all turned out to have the same aim: to get us to accept, with pride and joy...our status as strong women, the complement and mirror of the male.”

¹⁶⁰ “We were placed beneath her advocacy, we were given talks about iron will and her spirit of sacrifice, we were told how she had held the ambition and the despotism of the nobles in check.”

feminine nature of the abundant generational points of references that tie the story together and give it its historical coherence. The narrator-protagonist places herself firmly within a larger context “through her vivid descriptions of such varied topics as the hairstyles of the period, the duties of the seamstresses, the songs that were popular in the forties and fifties” (Martín Gaité et al. 167). Early on in the interview, for example, the narrator-protagonist mentions that she envied Carmencita Franco “un poco por el pelo...como a Diana Durbin. Para la moda de entonces, lo ideal era el pelo ondulado, yo lo tenía muy liso” (Martín Gaité 65).¹⁶¹ With this response, the narrator-protagonist establishes the particular details of life in the 1940s and 50s that are at once subjective and shared by other girls her age. She mentions a particularly memorable moment growing up “cuando le dieron el primer premio Nadal a una mujer, lo que más revolucionario me pareció...fue verla retrada a ella en la portada del libro, con aquellas greñas cortas y lisas” (Martín Gaité 66).¹⁶² Later in the text, she talks about her admiration of Conchita Piquer, a popular singer of the postwar period, who sang of her fleeting passions in songs such as “Tatuaje.” The narrator-protagonist describes the excitement of listening to her sing and laments the oppressive nature of her own life, saying, “una pasión como aquélla nos estaba vedada a las chicas sensatas y decentes de la nueva España” (Martín Gaité 154).¹⁶³ These historical details—which are distinctly feminine—“mark the beat of this <<sorority>> that Martín Gaité creates with the alienated women...who scorned the <<propaganda noña>> of the times and lived an intense passion” (Martín Gaité et al. 168). By gendering history in these ways, Martín

¹⁶¹ “Well, yes, I envied her a little on account of her hair...the way I envied Deanna Durbin. According to the reigning standards of fashion in those days, curly hair was the ideal, and mine was as straight as a string.”

¹⁶² “When they gave the first Nadal Prize to a woman what impressed me as most revolutionary...was her picture on the book jacket, with those short, straight locks of hers.”

¹⁶³ “A passion such as that was forbidden us sensible, decent young ladies of the new Spain.”

Gaite makes a distinct connection between her unique narrator-protagonist and her generation.

As such, Martín Gaité allows the central metaphor of the <<cuarto de atrás>> to extend beyond the bounds of her narrator-protagonist's life into the national Spanish consciousness at large. Through her novel, she proposes that a back room is not specific to her narrator-protagonist; rather, it represents any literal, metaphorical, or historical hidden space in which chaos, disorder, and freedom dominate. For the narrator-protagonist, "the 'cuarto de atrás'...refers on the literal level to the playroom in Martín Gaité's childhood home, and on the metaphoric level to her creative state of mind."¹⁶⁴ Over the course of the novel, she gradually opens the door to this back room and releases the memories that she has hidden inside. For the Spanish people, the years of the Second Republic represented a <<cuarto de atrás>> in that they signaled, from this novel's vantage point, a time of freedom and inspiration. During the Second Republic, Spaniards enjoyed greater civil liberties than they had ever experienced. Franco's dictatorship similarly represented a sealing up of the metaphorical national back room of individual freedom and imagination, and a transition into a life of oppression and silence. In allowing her narrator-protagonist to finally open up the hidden space of her memories, Martín Gaité signals the need for the entire Spanish nation to emerge from repression and create itself anew in the aftermath of Franco's death. The narrator-protagonist's interlude of self-reflection in the mirror terminates with: "me desplazo del marco, apago la luz, y el aparador invade, solitario, el azogue oscurecido" (Martín Gaité

¹⁶⁴ Sandra J. Schumm, *Reflection in Sequence: Novels by Spanish Women, 1944-1988* (Lewisburg; London: Bucknell University Press; Associated University Presses, 1999) 125. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

98).¹⁶⁵ With this assertion, the narrator-protagonist both physically removes herself from the frame of the mirror and symbolically separates herself from these painful memories of her past, thereby expressing her commitment to recreating her identity. During this same monumental historical period:

Spain was experiencing a slow but inevitable release from the collective trauma of the previous forty years...for the first time the events of the Civil War could be commented on freely. The Transition was marked by a plethora of memoirs, published by figures, eminent and unknown, who recounted their experiences during the War, their lives in hiding or in exile, and their subversive activities against Franco (Davies 239).

Thus, the path of Martín Gaité's narrator-protagonist towards a reclamation and recreation of self after Franco's death reflects the larger need of the country to unlock the national back room and begin anew.

III. *El cuarto de atrás* and myth

By the time Martín Gaité published *El cuarto de atrás* in 1978, many Spanish writers had already experimented with the techniques that Martín-Santos and Goytisolo use to establish, treat, and deconstruct the mythical framework that Roland Barthes proposes in *Mythologies*. As we have seen, they developed creative ways of using parody and satire to covertly denounce nationalist myths during particularly dark moments in Spanish history. They paved the way for other Spanish writers to establish their own lexicon of symbols and characters that would allow them to dismantle Franco's rhetoric within the rigid specifications of the censor. For these reasons, the act of revealing as artificially constructed an idea or notion that appears natural was fully developed by the time Martín Gaité wrote *El cuarto de atrás*. By 1978, many of the tropes that appear in her

¹⁶⁵ "I move out of the frame, switch off the light, and the sideboard, all by itself now, fills the silver-backed surface."

novel including the descent, the labyrinth, the Fall, and the myth of the eternal return were already well-established in Spanish literature. As such, Martín Gaité effortlessly incorporates them into her own text, but with a different aim than Martín-Santos and Goytisolo, due in large part to the critical historic juncture represented in *El cuarto de atrás*.

On the whole, *El cuarto de atrás* diverges from *Tiempo de Silencio* and *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* in its representation of this significant historical moment. As we have seen, all three works share several similarities: their authors establish a mimetic framework through which they explore the subjectivity of the protagonist, and they are heavily steeped in myth. However, *El cuarto de atrás* separates itself from the two aforementioned novels in its focus; rather than emphasize a denunciation of Franco's regime, Martín Gaité encourages a revival of the female and Spanish creative spirits at large. At the heart of both *Tiempo de Silencio* and *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* is a vicious critique of the dictatorship and its crippling, oppressive impact on the protagonists of both novels. Martín-Santos and Goytisolo develop subjectivity in part as a way of more forcefully dismantling nationalist myth and ideology. Whereas *El cuarto de atrás* certainly criticizes Franco's regime, particularly its treatment of women during the War and postwar periods, it is ultimately a hopeful work about the possibility for both personal and collective regeneration and liberation in post-Franco Spain. In *El cuarto de atrás*, "the fact that the narrator's personal memories of her childhood...are at one and the same time a critical reflection on the entire Franco period provides an additional dimension to the novel which anchors it firmly in social reality. [Her] memories are not idiosyncratic fantasies but are representative of the collective memory" (Davies 239). Thus, Martín Gaité uses myth in a very different way from Martín-Santos and Goytisolo

in order to further emphasize the female experience, and the self-recreation that is at once unique to her subject and shared by an entire generation. In this way, myth becomes a framing device through which she explores the critical historical moment in which the novel takes place.

Like *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*, Martín Gaité's novel is, somewhat paradoxically, mythical both in structure and content, although *El cuarto de atrás* is also based heavily on the theory of the fantastic. At the beginning of the story, the narrator-protagonist trips on a copy of Tzvetan Todorov's *Introducción a la literatura fantástica* (*The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*). In doing so, she draws attention to the Franco-Bulgarian philosopher, who is most well-known for defining the fantastic, the fantastic uncanny, and the fantastic marvelous in literature. His theory of the fantastic plays a crucial role in *El cuarto de atrás*, as both the narrator-protagonist and Martín Gaité are heavily influenced by it. According to Todorov, "the pure fantastic rarely exists on its own, but rather is a vacillating dividing line in and of the present between uncanny and marvelous events."¹⁶⁶ He writes in *The Fantastic* that "[f]ar from being a praise of the imaginary [the] literature of the fantastic posits the majority of a text [as] provoked by reality" (Merino and Song 148). As Todorov explains, the fantastic in literature encompasses the moment in which the reader must decide for himself if an extraordinary event that is presented is, in fact, real, or if it is merely an illusion. The decision that the reader makes influences the categorization of the event as either the fantastic uncanny or the fantastic marvelous. In addition, these moments in which the reader hesitates are interspersed with and provoked by moments of recognizable reality

¹⁶⁶Eloy E. Merino and H. Rosi Song, *Traces of Contamination: Unearthing the Francoist Legacy in Contemporary Spanish Discourse* (Lewisburg, [PA.]: Bucknell University Press, 2005) 148. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

in a text. This explanation of Todorov's proposed connection between the fantastic and reality is critical in understanding *El cuarto de atrás*.

The fantastic plays a fundamental role in Martín Gaité's novel, both in terms of structure and the establishment of the narrator-protagonist's subjectivity. In the final scene of the text, Martín Gaité exposes the fantastical nature of *El cuarto de atrás* by revealing that it is both a novel written by Martín Gaité, and the manuscript of a book that her subject creates over the course of her interview with the man in black. When the narrator-protagonist first trips over Todorov's book, she describes it as "de esos libros que te espabilan y te disparan a tomar notas, cuando lo acabé, escribí en un cuaderno: <<Palabra que voy a escribir una novela fantástica>>" (Martín Gaité 19).¹⁶⁷ At the end of the novel, when she finds the finished manuscript on her bedside table, it becomes clear that *El cuarto de atrás* itself is the fantastic novel that she swore she would write as a younger woman. Thus, the novel's structure is both fantastic and metafictional; the novel that we as readers enjoy is also the manuscript that the narrator-protagonist has written about her own experiences over the course of the night. We are not entirely sure whose novel this is or what the precise relationship is between Martín Gaité and her narrator-protagonist. Similarly, as discussed in section II, the man in black embodies the theory of the fantastic in that the reader is never convinced of his existence. Particularly at the end of the novel, we are forced to decide whether he is a real person or merely a figment of the narrator-protagonist's imagination. Based on several cryptic clues, the reader is left wondering if the conversation actually took place, or if the entire experience was a dream. Thus, *El cuarto de atrás* is fantastical both in its structure and its establishment of subjectivity.

¹⁶⁷ "It's one of those books that wake you up and set you to taking notes furiously. When I finished it, I wrote in a notebook: 'I swear I'm going to write a fantastic novel.'"

In addition, like *Tiempo de Silencio* and *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*, Martín Gaité's novel is mythical in content, particularly in its use of the trope of descent into a labyrinth. As we explored in chapters two and three, the myth of the labyrinth plays an important role in both of the aforementioned texts. In *Tiempo de Silencio*, Pedro plunges into the labyrinth of 1949 Madrid in his search for his individual identity within the construct of collective identity. His descent into the depths of the city culminates in a scathing critique of Franco's patriarchal authoritarianism, manifested in the form of the *macho-cabrillo*, or *Aquelarre*, in Goya's painting. The narrator-protagonist of *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* moves through the overlapping labyrinths of the Tangiers city center and his own psyche as he attempts to purge himself of his Spanish identity. Like Pedro, his maze leads him to a place of harsh criticism and systematic destruction of Franco's regime and the Spanish nation at large; he also arrives at the unification of the two parts of his subjectivity and his futile attempt at regeneration. Like the narrator-protagonist in *Don Julián*, Martín Gaité's narrator-protagonist plunges into the labyrinth of her own psychological world as a means of reclaiming, regenerating, and recreating herself. Her descent is a vehicle not for destruction and critique, but for rebirth associated with chaos and disorder. In *Cosmos and History*, Mircea Eliade articulates the connection between chaos and rebirth through his description of a particular ceremony in which the primary goals are the "abolition of past time, the restoration of primordial chaos, and the repetition of the cosmogonic act" (Eliade 57). In this ceremony, the first act "suggests universal confusion, the abolition of order and hierarchy...chaos. We witness, one might say, a 'deluge' that annihilates all humanity in order to prepare the way for a new and regenerated human species" (Eliade 57). As Eliade suggests, chaos is fundamentally linked to the archetype of rebirth; without chaos and the complete destruction of the

existing order, there can be no possibility for new life. In *El cuarto de atrás*, Martín Gaité's narrator-protagonist descends into the labyrinth of her memories in an attempt to embrace the redemptive chaos of creativity and regenerate herself after Franco's death.

The hidden back room of the narrator-protagonist's mind is the site of this labyrinthine journey for the reclamation of self. Throughout the novel, she associates both the literal and symbolic <<cuarto de atrás>> with creativity, freedom, and disorder. In *Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard describes the attics and garrets that are interchangeable with the narrator-protagonist's <<cuarto de atrás>>:

And all the spaces of our past moments of solitude, the spaces in which we have suffered from solitude, enjoyed, desired and compromised solitude, remain indelible within us, and precisely because the human being wants them to remain so. He knows instinctively that this space identified with his solitude is creative; that even when it is forever expunged from the present, when, henceforth, it is alien to all the promises of the future, even when we no longer have a garret, when the attic room is lost and gone, there remains the fact that we once loved a garret, once lived in an attic. We return to them in our night dreams.¹⁶⁸

El cuarto de atrás, then, represents the night dream in which the narrator-protagonist returns both to the literal <<cuarto de atrás>> of her memories through the man in black, and the metaphorical back room of her creativity and imagination in the writing of her novel. Her descent into the labyrinth of her psyche results not in a vicious denunciation of Franco's regime but in a puncturing of the repression of both her identity and her writing ability that she has endured for many years. Early in the novel, the man in black tells the narrator-protagonist that in exploring her past she will find herself "en un laberinto, bueno, pero no en un castillo. Hay que elegir entre perderse y defenderse" (Martín Gaité 56).¹⁶⁹ At this moment, Martín Gaité reveals that the

¹⁶⁸ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (New York: Orion Press, 1964) 10.

¹⁶⁹ "A labyrinth, if you like, but not a fortified castle. One must choose between losing oneself and defending oneself."

narrator-protagonist must decide between losing herself in the chaotic labyrinth of her memories, and continuing to repress them in the sealed-up <<cuarto de atrás>> of her mind. By agreeing to descend into the labyrinth of her past, the narrator-protagonist goes on a “journey through her <<own looking glass toward literary autonomy>> faithful to her experience as woman and creator” (Martín Gaité et al. 166). As Eliade proposes in his mythical framework, she rediscovers the chaos and disorder—represented as creativity, imagination, and freedom—of her past in order to regenerate herself in the present as a woman and a writer. The mythical descent into the labyrinth of her mind and memory becomes the vehicle through which the narrator-protagonist rediscovers her identity and creativity.

In addition to manipulating the well-established myths of the descent and the labyrinth as a means of encouraging the revival of her narrator-protagonist’s creative spirits, Martín Gaité uses what Jo Labanyi describes in *Myth and History in the Contemporary Spanish Novel* as the myth of the Fall, or Paradise Lost, to structure her narrative. As we saw in chapter two in relation to *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*, Franco’s regime believed that the period of Spanish history that began with the Arab invasion of Spain in 711 represented a metaphorical expulsion from the Garden of Eden of authentic Spanish destiny. Franco saw himself as a messianic figure of salvation who would “recover lost purity” and restore Spain to its essential, true path (Labanyi 36). Goytisolo clearly attacks these nationalist myths by proposing that Franco’s regime and not the eight decades of Arab rule in Spain represented a Fall from the authentic course of Spanish history. According to Goytisolo, the only solution to this problem is the methodical destruction of Spanish values, history, and language in order to recreate anew. He argues

for a new historiography of Spain that positions the Moor as a critical part of Spanish history rather than a usurper.

In *El cuarto de atrás*, Martín Gaité also takes up the myth of the Fall, or Paradise Lost, but she approaches it in a very different way from Goytisolo. In *El fantástico femenino en España y América*, Zoé Jiménez Corretjer proposes that Martín-Gaité's narrator-protagonist "sufre dos caídas: una literal y otra simbólica. Cae de la cama y, al mismo tiempo, cae en el sueño de lo fantástico para contemplar, conversar y comulgar con su hombre misterioso."¹⁷⁰ The literal fall to which Corretjer refers occurs in the first chapter of *El cuarto de atrás*:

Cuando voy a agacharme a recogerlos, con la cesta en la mano, tropiezo con uno y también yo ruedo por el suelo. De la tapadera de mimbre entreabierta escapan carretes, enchufes, terrones de azúcar, dedales, imperdibles, facturas, un cabo de vela, clichés de fotos, botones, monedas, tubos de medicinas, allá va todo, envuelto en hilos de colores (Martín Gaité 18-19).¹⁷¹

When she falls, the narrator-protagonist, like Goytisolo's subject in *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*, opens a metaphorical Pandora's box that contains the contents of her past. These physical odds and ends hidden in a secret place are the tools necessary to weave her narrative over the course of the novel. Her metaphorical fall, then, takes place immediately afterwards, when she falls asleep in the first chapter. At the start of the second chapter, the ringing of the telephone awakens her; from this point onwards, as we have already seen, the reader is not sure if the conversation with the man in black on

¹⁷⁰ Zoé Jiménez Corretjer, *El Fantástico Femenino En España Y América: Martín Gaité, Rodoreda, Garro Y Peri Rossi*, 1 ed. (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2001) 156. Note: subsequent citations taken from this study will be indicated in my text, in parenthesis.

"Suffers two falls: one literal and the other symbolic. She falls from the bed and, at the same time, she falls into the dream of the fantastic so that she can contemplate, talk with, and take communion with her mysterious man."

¹⁷¹ "Just as I am about to bend over to pick them up, with the sewing basket in my hand, I slip on one of them and I too tumble to the floor. From the half-open wicker lid there come spilling out spools of thread, electric plugs, cubes of sugar, thimbles, safety pins, bills, and candle-end, snapshots, buttons, coins, bottles of pills, everything imaginable, all tangled up in colored threads."

which the novel hinges is real or imagined. In this way, as Corretjer suggests, the novel is based on the image of falling, both literally and symbolically, into the world of the narrator-protagonist's mind. With her homage to Lewis Carroll at the start of the text, Martín Gaité evokes the image of Alice falling into the rabbit-hole in *Alice in Wonderland*. Like Carroll's fictional character, the narrator-protagonist falls into the topsy-turvy, fantastic world of her imagination in order to rewrite her identity.

In addition, the myth of the Fall is deeply connected with the representation of the narrator-protagonist's <<cuarto de atrás>> and her labyrinthine journey to recover the hidden creativity and identity that are stowed within its metaphorical walls. As we discussed in section II, the back room of her home in Salamanca represented a hallowed place of imagination, innocence, and naiveté for the narrator-protagonist. It was a Utopia for her in that there were no rules or restrictions, and she was free to exist in a state of liberation and disorder. The transformation of the back room into a storage space for food during the War and the corresponding repression of the narrator-protagonist parallel the myth of the Fall. The narrator-protagonist's childhood in the <<cuarto de atrás>> represents a “‘natural’ way of life threatened by the advent of adulthood,” or the start of the Civil War (Labanyi 42). The narrator-protagonist is unexpectedly expelled from her private Garden of Eden of childhood freedom into a frightening world of oppression and conformity under Franco in which she is forced to grow up and accept the responsibilities of womanhood. The novel reflects the myth of Paradise Lost in that she experiences both the sweetness of life before the War in her own, private Garden of Eden (her <<cuarto de atrás>>) and the harshness of Franco's regime after her expulsion.

In positing the dictatorship and the postwar years as the exile from a metaphorical Garden of Eden, Martín Gaité, like Goytisolo, denounces the nationalist myth of the ideal Spanish woman in somewhat paradoxical fashion. Through her descriptions of her own deviations from the norms and her inability to conform to this model, she dismantles the myth of the obedient, virtuous, selfless Spanish woman. As we have seen in section II, through the narrator-protagonist's psychologizing of her mimetic space, she reveals the "asphyxiating presence of the <<Sección Femenina,>>...the mirror image of Isabel la Católica held up to women as a model, the catchwords designed to mold and delimit proper feminine behavior: <<amor eterno en el hogar,>> <<organizarse bien,>> <<heroísmo abnegado de madres y esposas>>" (Martín Gaité et al. 168).¹⁷² The narrator-protagonist continues to describe the dictatorship's expectations for women when she says "quedarse, conformarse y aguantar era lo bueno; salir, escapar y fugarse era lo malo" (Martín Gaité 125).¹⁷³ Yet it is clear that no matter how hard she tries, the narrator-protagonist is never able to fit the mold of the mythic, idealized Spanish woman. She is not alone in her unconformity; rather, she is represented in *El cuarto de atrás* as part of a "<<sorority>>...[of] alienated women, the <<frescas,>> <<deshonradas,>> and <<atrevidas,>> who scorned the <<propaganda noña>> of the times and lived an intense passion which was <<vedada a las chicas sensatas y decentes de la nueva España>>" (Martín Gaité et al. 168).¹⁷⁴ As Gould Levine describes, even though the narrator-protagonist's metaphorical place of imagination and creativity is lost during the War and postwar years, she never loses her

¹⁷² "<<eternal love in the home,>> <<organize oneself well,>> <<unselfish heroism of wives and mothers>>."

¹⁷³ "Staying put, conforming, and making the best of things was good; skipping out, escaping, running away were bad."

¹⁷⁴ "Loose, bold, audacious women...childish propaganda...prohibited to the sensible, decent girls of the new Spain."

forbidden desire for “la alegría—no a la alegría impuesta oficial y mesurada, sino a la carcajada y a la canción que brotan de una fuente cuyas aguas nadie canaliza” (Martín Gaité 154).¹⁷⁵ As such, through her reclamation of her memories of her past, and her representation of not just herself but a whole generation of progressive women, the narrator-protagonist denounces the nationalist myth of the ideal Spanish woman.

As she dismantles Franco’s conception of the model Spanish woman through self-reflection in *El cuarto de atrás*, and reveals the utopian nature of her metaphorical space of “freedom, imagination and memory,” Martín Gaité’s novel begins to reflect Mircea Eliade’s myth of the eternal return (Martín Gaité et al. 169). We have already discussed in chapter two the ways in which the cyclical structure of *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* represents a manifestation of this myth. According to Eliade, “there is no going back to the past; if there is to be a ‘return to origins’ it will have to take place in the future” (Labanyi 7). The circular nature of Goytisolo’s novel reflects the narrator-protagonist’s inability to accomplish his task and achieve spiritual freedom; he cannot return to his past, and so he is forever stuck in his never-ending, cyclical process. *El cuarto de atrás*, on the other hand, represents the future that Eliade refers to in his description of the myth of the eternal return. Whereas Goytisolo’s narrator-protagonist is trapped in his imagined act of self-destruction, Martín Gaité gives her subject the freedom and tools to return to her origins. The <<cuarto de atrás>> represents the utopian Garden of Eden of her childhood, but she is allowed to go back after Franco’s death via her conversation with the man in black. Like *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*, the novel is vaguely circular in nature: the narrator-protagonist begins and ends in her bedroom in her apartment in Madrid. However, whereas Goytisolo’s narrator-

¹⁷⁵ “Joy—not the imposed, official, measured joy, but the hearty laughter and the song that sprout from a fountain whose waters cannot be contained.”

protagonist is involved in a “labyrinthine circle of meaningless repetition...Carmen’s cyclical reevaluation of her past conveys part of a positive process of self-development and self-creation” (Schumm 125). Through her exploration of the back room in which she has hidden all of her memories from the War and postwar period, the narrator-protagonist returns to her origins in order “to regain the freedom she felt as a child” (Schumm 125). In this way, both the structure and the content of *El cuarto de atrás* are mythical in nature, and the novel represents a clear departure from *Tiempo de Silencio* and *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* in the “narrator-protagonist’s capacity to free herself through experience, memory, and, most importantly literary production” (Mayock 131). Whereas Pedro and Goytisolo’s narrator-protagonist fall short of achieving redemption and renewal, Martín Gaité’s subject succeeds over the course of *El cuarto de atrás*.

In guiding her narrator-protagonist beyond the place of self-discovery and regeneration that the protagonists of *Tiempo de Silencio* and *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* reach, Martín Gaité makes a larger claim about the possibility and need for the redemption of the Spanish nation at large after Franco’s death. Through her development of a unique narrator-protagonist that is also representative of an entire generation, and her treatment of various familiar myths, *El cuarto de atrás* becomes a sort of manifesto for its unprecedented historical moment. In *Cosmos and History*, Eliade suggests that death, like chaos, is both associated with and necessary for renewal; death allows space for new life to begin. Franco’s death in 1975 marked a significant period of redemption for Spaniards, as they were suddenly able to reclaim all that they had lost during his dictatorship. By choosing to dive into the chaotic labyrinth of her memories after Franco’s death, Martín Gaité’s narrator-protagonist revives the hidden place of her <<cuarto de atrás>> and rediscovers her creativity, imagination, and distinctly female

spirit. Martín Gaité thus uses the mythical motif of descent into the interior of the labyrinth as a way of encouraging not just her narrator-protagonist but all Spanish people to recover the things that they have repressed during Franco's dictatorship. The back room is not particular to the narrator-protagonist; rather, it represents any hidden space of repression and isolation. By associating the narrator-protagonist's <<cuarto de atrás>> with the distinctly positive traits of creativity, imagination, and inspiration and allowing her to open it through the labyrinthine narrative structure, Martín Gaité acknowledges the need for the Spanish nation to take advantage of this rare moment of renewal after Franco's death. The narrator-protagonist's success at the end of the novel reflects this capacity for the revival and redemption of the Spanish spirit at large at what was, in short, one of the most profound transitional moments in the nation's history. She eventually finds a way for her traumatic personal experiences to guide her on her path to rediscovery without allowing them to structure her personal narrative, much as was occurring concurrently on the national stage when Martín Gaité composed this work.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the predominant thread that unites the three novels under consideration is the ways in which the progressive descent into the interior world of the subject allows each writer to draw connections between the individual and a larger population. Martín-Santos, Goytisolo, and Martín Gaité create nuanced, unique subjects whose experiences are simultaneously personal and collective. In *Tiempo de Silencio*, Pedro represents the national Spanish consciousness at large. His complacency, resignation, and ultimate retreat to the barren countryside demonstrate the consequences of the stoicism that Franco claimed was inherent to Spanish national identity. The experiences of Goytisolo's narrator-protagonist in *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* are, like Pedro's, simultaneously personal and shared. He represents the exile living between two worlds; he feels contempt for his homeland of Spain, and desperately wants to identify with Morocco, but he is incapable of fully belonging to either country. As I discussed in chapter three, Martín Gaité's narrator-protagonist represents an entire generation of Spaniards, particularly women, struggling to assimilate their new levels of civil liberties in the aftermath of Franco's death. By diving progressively deeper into the psychological world, Martín-Santos, Goytisolo, and Martín Gaité all create subjects that are highly individualized yet nonetheless representative of a collective.

Like their subjects, *Tiempo de Silencio*, *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*, and *El cuarto de atrás* are simultaneously personal, and reflective of the national Spanish experience at large. I began my Introduction with a reflection that is worthy to return to on the concept of *Weltanschauung*, that is, a particular generational mode of comprehending the world and an individual's relationship to it. According to this notion, individuals living in the same historical moment or geographic area share a common understanding of

particular experiences that is fundamental to their sense of themselves as a collective. The idea of *Weltanschauung* emerges from our comparison of these three novels and is linked to the common threads we have identified between them. Each of the three writers faced the trauma of the Spanish Civil War and the difficult postwar period differently; as such, the variety in style, content, and form between the novels echoes their unique experiences. However, as a group, *Tiempo de Silencio*, *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*, and *El cuarto de atrás* all reflect on the same unprecedented historical moment in Spain. Together, the novels provide an accurate portrait of the devastating effects of the Civil War and Franco's imposed social isolation on the national spirit and consciousness. Through their reflections on the shared historical period, all three writers create a new mode of conceptualizing the national experience that allows for a rupture with the past through the individual, and acknowledges the need to narrativize on a personal and national level in times of repression.

The progressive movement between the novels into the unique, psychological world of the subject reflects a new paradigm of understanding which argues for social regeneration on a national level vis-à-vis the individual. As a group, the writers recognize that collective renewal through the reclamation of personal agency by all Spaniards is both necessary and increasingly possible in the aftermath of the Civil War. As we saw in the Introduction and chapters two and three, in contrast with the years of social isolation immediately following the end of the War, the later portion of Franco's dictatorship represented an unprecedented moment in Spain's history as the country opened itself to the influences of the rest of the world. The gradual shift in political ideology and the subsequent influx of new ideas and people in Spain through tourism encouraged Spaniards to shed the rigid orthodoxies of the past and embrace personal

freedom for the first time in forty years. As a group, the novels parallel the national experience of renewal on a social and political plane by emphasizing the significance of the individual in breaking with the past and moving forward toward a full acceptance of modernity. Thus, with *Tiempo de Silencio*, Martín-Santos opens the door to a new mode of conceptualizing the collective experience by embracing modernist notions of subjectivity. As Goytisolo and Martín Gaité demonstrate with their progress in the development of unique narrator-protagonists in *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* and *El cuarto de atrás*, respectively, this paradigm of understanding reflects a common *Weltanschauung*, and it parallels the national experience of renewal and breaking with the past on a socio-historical level.

In situating the individual at the center of this historic regeneration, Martín-Santos, Goytisolo, and Martín Gaité also underscore the key role narrative plays in times of repression. Many of the experiences that Spaniards shared and the issues they faced in the bleak postwar years were difficult to fully comprehend. These novelists pinpoint the need for narrative on both a personal and national level through the use of myth as a guiding framework. In all three novels, myth functions as a way of explaining the unexplainable. The myths of the labyrinth, the descent, and the eternal return, for example, allow the writers to fully establish the narrative of protagonists that are simultaneously unique and representative of a collective experience, and ultimately facilitate their critiques of the nationalist regime. Without myth as a guiding framework, many of the issues that Martín-Santos, Goytisolo, and Martín Gaité treat in their novels would be difficult for the public to comprehend or impossible to discuss under the rigid censorship laws. Thus, myths give each writer the tools necessary to develop narratives through which they can explore complicated and often subversive ideas in a way that is

at once personal and public (applicable to society at large). Through the use of myth, the novels as a group demonstrate the necessity of such narrativizing strategies in times of repression.

In addition, both *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* and *El cuarto de atrás* build on Martín-Santos' lead in demonstrating the need for narrative as therapy in this difficult historical moment. With *Tiempo de Silencio*, Martín-Santos acts as a harbinger of a distinct type of narrative that is inextricably linked to a new worldview and social order. He not only captures but critically reflects on political and social realities and on the role of the individual within his or her community, that is, on the relationship between perception and reality, subjectivity and society. Both Goytisolo and Martín Gaité carry his ideas further through their use of the process of writing itself as a way of embracing this new world order and cleansing themselves of their traumatic pasts. Thus, with Martín-Santos' leading the way, narrative ultimately becomes a catharsis and a vehicle for regeneration. In *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián*, the narrator-protagonist likens himself to a Scheherazade at multiple points in the novel, and he uses narrative to recall and corrupt his memories in order to regenerate his identity without them. Martín Gaité's narrator-protagonist also uses narrative as therapy to come to terms with her childhood memories. The process of writing over the course of the novel represents a catharsis for her in that she is finally able to release the contents of her interior <<cuarto de atrás>> and, in the process, recover the creativity and imagination she has lost. Thus, as Spain approaches the period of profound institutional reform following Franco's death in 1975, the novel becomes an increasingly necessary tool for reflection, catharsis, and regeneration. The shared world vision that emerges from these works corresponds to the special demands of the times and is directly related to the emergence of individualism

and subjectivity in relation to modernization: that is, to both the Spanish society's impulse and desire to break with its past and to its need to narrativize its complex collective experience through the manageable lens of subjectivity when it feels that the nation's moment has something of an epic dimension.

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