# INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

**The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.** Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

UMI®

Downloaded from SHAREOK. Persistent Handle URL: https://hdl.handle.net/11244/377

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

# REVISIONS OF DOMESTICITY: SELECTED TEXTS OF ELENA PONIATOWSKA, GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ, AND ISABEL ALLENDE

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

Lois K. Lawler
Norman, Oklahoma
2001

UMI Number: 3028805



UMI Microform 3028805

Copyright 2002 by Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

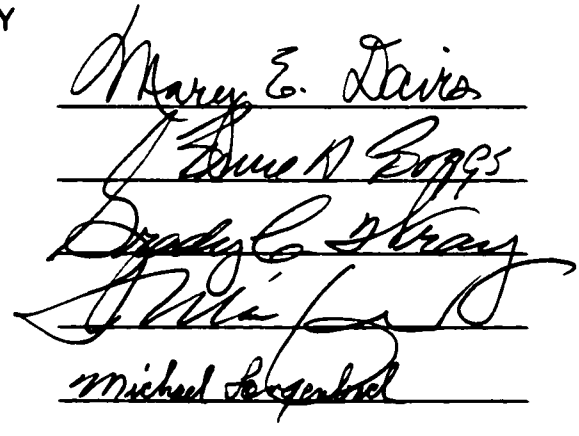
Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

© Copyright by Lois K. Lawler 2001
All Rights Reserved

REVISIONS OF DOMESTICITY:
SELECTED TEXTS OF ELENA PONIATOWSKA,
GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ, AND ISABEL ALLENDE

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES, LITERATURES,
AND LINGUISTICS

BY



## Acknowledgments

Undoubtedly, this dissertation would not have come to fruition without the guidance of a number of individuals. At this time, I would like to take the opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to each of them.

First and foremost, I wish to convey my heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Mary E. Davis, whom I consider a mentor, role model, and friend. I have always regarded Dr. Davis as a consummate scholar and writer, and during the formulation of this dissertation her literary expertise directed me to investigative paths that enhanced my analytical approach. Her insightful revisions clarified my writing and helped me to discover my own voice. Most importantly, she offered me consistent encouragement at every step of this project, and for this I am forever indebted to her.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the other members of my committee. I am deeply appreciative of Dr. Bruce Boggs for his prompt readings and close analysis of my work. His comments offered me validation throughout the process. In turn, I have learned much from Dr. Ismael Márquez, particularly from his informative guidance in genre research. Dr. Márquez consistently challenged me to approximate a text from a variety of theoretical perspectives. I am also thankful for the patient reading of Dr. Michael Langenbach who took time from his extraordinarily busy schedule to assist me in an area outside his own expertise. Also, I would like to thank my dear friend and colleague, Dr. Grady Wray who shares my love of Latin-American women writers. His instructive comments greatly facilitated the process of writing, and his unwavering support encouraged me throughout my doctoral program.

In addition, I am grateful for the assistance of Dr. Luis Cortest for his reading of several of the chapters. His expertise in editing proved invaluable. My gratitude also extends to Danny Lovett whose computer proficiency rescued me from several near disasters.

Most of all, I would like to thank my husband, Pat, and my children, Dan, Carrie, and David for their immeasurable patience and support during the

completion of this dissertation. While I wrote on redefining domesticity, they experienced it firsthand. I am especially grateful to my husband for his wonderful disposition that brightens my life, even during the darkest of days. I proudly share this accomplishment with him.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments....iv

Abstract....vii

Chapter One
Introduction....1

Chapter Two
Hasta no verte Jesús mío:
A Feminine View from the Pyramid....39

Chapter Three
Eréndira's Magical Flight....100

Chapter Four
Afrodita: An Anatomy of Eroticism....156

Chapter Five
Conclusion....208

Bibliography....213

Revisions of Domesticity:
Selected Texts of Elena Poniatowska,
Gabriel García Márquez, and Isabel Allende

Lois K. Lawler

Director: Dr. Mary E. Davis

Abstract

The figurative movement of women from the private space of the home to the public forum gradually materialized in Latin-American literature over the course of the twentieth century. This particular literary transition substantially mirrored the progress of the feminist sociopolitical movement, in which women retained their affiliation with the home as an integral component of their identity, even as they sought to escape its confines. My investigation treats the utilization of the domestic sphere as a microcosmic model of dominance in Hasta no verte Jesús mío by Elena Poniatowska, "La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira" by Gabriel García Márquez, and Afrodita: cuentos, recetas y otros afrodisíacos by Isabel Allende. Through the discursive portrayal of women as strong, resilient characters, and the home as an educative site, these works subvert the masculine representation of authority and reconfigure women as symbolically empowered forces of transformation.

Each of these works reframes historical truth from the context of its own geographic and temporal perspective by the deployment of revisionist narrative approaches. In the first chapter of this study the works are situated within the literary production of each of the authors, as well as within the context of the historical and cultural development of Latin-American gender relations. In addition, the chapter provides an overview of the literary and anthropological interpretations of domesticity in Latin America. Chapter Two discusses Poniatowska's use of the testimonial narrative approach in order to examine the marginalization of subaltern classes in Mexican society from the feminine

perspective of Jesusa Palancares, a domestic worker whose life spans the greater portion of the twentieth century. In Chapter Three, García Márquez's creative interpretation centers on Eréndira as a non-traditional fairy tale protagonist whose emancipation from domestic and familial subjugation metaphorically deconstructs the mythological history of Latin-American imperial dominance. The focus of the fourth chapter is on Allende's use of the narratological elements of the literary anatomy and the symbolic properties of food as a framework for a feminine manifesto of sexuality that incorporates the author's own metafictional memoir of her development as a woman and writer. The final chapter of this study identifies the works analyzed as integral components of the literary development of revisionist approaches to traditional genres and the renewed interest in domestic motifs.

# Chapter One

## Introduction

El secreto de la escritura, como el de la buena cocina no tiene absolutamente nada que ver con el sexo, sino con la sabiduría con que se combinan los ingredientes.
- -Rosario Ferré Sitio a Eros

In Ovid's Metamorphosis, the story is told of King Tereus who violates Philomela and removes her tongue, stripping her of the ability to testify to his atrocity. However, Philomela draws on her accomplished domestic talents and weaves a tapestry so expressive that it immediately conveys the story of her brutalization to her sister, Procne. In many ways, Philomela's narrative reflects the depiction in Latin-American literature of empowered women who utilize their domestic education in order to reveal hegemonic cultural systems. Three twentieth-century narratives, Hasta no verte Jesús mío (1969), by the Mexican writer Elena Poniatowska, "La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y de su abuela desalmada" (1972), by the Colombian Nobel Laureate Gabriel García Márquez, and Afrodita: cuentos, recetas, y otros afrodisíacos (1997), by the Chilean author, Isabel Allende serve as models of this narrative practice. Each of these authors draws upon the gendered experience of Latin-American women to disclose the effects of subjugation and to represent them as figurative agents of cultural transformation. While the works of Poniatowska and García Márquez have enjoyed a degree of scholarly attention, to date little emphasis has been placed on the analysis of the domestic motifs and symbols which function as integral discursive components of the texts. In addition, scholars have not yet given Allende's relatively recent work the critical analysis necessary to situate it

within the scope of a revisionist narrative. This study focuses on these works and reveals the authors' shared objective of representing empowered feminine protagonists through the application of domestic motifs and revisionist treatments of traditional genres.

Although these texts place women within the domestic sphere, each offers a starkly contrasting depiction of the feminine experience. Also, these works reveal the proposition of negotiating social metamorphosis. Through the artful manipulation of fairy tale conventions, García Márquez reinterprets the mythologically constructed history of Latin America and proposes an alternate path for the formation of a true identity. Poniatowska, through the testimonial approach to life writing, denounces the failure of Mexican socio-political institutions in order to erase the lines of gender and class discrimination. In Afrodita, Allende employs the erotic properties of food within the framework of the literary anatomy to initiate an introspective observation on gender-defined sexual roles and her own development as a woman and as a writer. The feminine experience in all of these texts reflects the historical moment and the cultural environment that frame the formulation of the narrative.

Particularly within the last ten years, scholarship by critics such as Debra Castillo, Luiza Lobo, Doris Meyer, and Catherine Davies has acknowledged the discursive use of domestic space as a vehicle for the reassessment of the Latin-American woman's role within the public and paternalistic discourse which Amy Kaminsky describes as the "phallic presence—that which is visible, takes space, enters, asserts, demands" (27). Paradoxically, by situating woman within the restrictive confines of the culturally assigned space of the home, literature exposes the power of feminine nature to create, organize, and to sustain life. As Poniatowska, García Márquez, and Allende reconfigure feminine agency and

authority, each author ironically depicts woman within a patriarchally designated feminine position, which is then methodically exposed and deconstructed through the devices of exaggeration, repetition, and/or parody. By challenging the status of the culturally defined home, these authors transform the nature of domestic space and redefine it as a locus of empowerment—an experiential and educational site.

In these narratives, the validation of feminine authority evolves chiefly through the process of textual focalization, a technique which Mielke Bal describes as "the relationship between the 'vision,' the agent that sees, and that which is seen . . ." (qtd. in Meyer 52). Since in traditional literary practice, women have been interpreted as "more locally-bound, tied to the exigencies of a particular place and time, and tied to the key individuals of their development" (Morgan and Hall 8), the articulated "vision" of each narrative occurs within cultural systems related to specific eras and issues. Poniatowska's Jesusa clearly derives from the Mexican Revolutionary Period, while García Márquez's Eréndira originates from within the Latin-American Colonial experience. Although Allende most closely approximates the assimilation of a multicultural, pan-historic view of woman, the author's personal and cultural roots place her within the contemporary feminist movement of the late twentieth century.

Ultimately, the three works share the common property of defying the narrowly defined, gendered ascription of feminine subservience by revealing woman's strength to endure subjugation. In the process, woman assumes the posture of autonomy and a redefinition of her own identity through the textual reappropiation of her body. Speaking of the fiction of Allende, Susan Frenk refers to the feminine reclamation of identity as an act in which the "integrity of the body is restored, . . . through the dismantling of an authoritarian regime which

exchanges bodies as commodities, the property of the patriarch, in the different but interrelated economies of desire, discourse, and money" (73). Consequentially, the increased independence of the protagonists poses a secondary challenge to the institutions which most closely define them, particularly those of marriage and family—ancillary themes that appear within each of the works.

By representing alterity through the imagery of domestic motifs, Poniatowska, García Márquez, and Allende simultaneously write within and against the grain of Latin-American cultural orthodoxies. As a foundation for a detailed study of these vital works, the remainder of the introductory chapter considers the authors' literary production and themes within the context of their personal worlds and professional preparations as writers. Then, there follows an historical overview of the sociopolitical development of gender relations in Latin America that establishes the historical influence on the literary interpretation of feminine roles. In the final segment, the dynamics of the revisionist literary process and the Latin-American conceptualization of domesticity delineate the analytical approach to each work.

## The Authors and Their Worlds

Although Poniatowska, García Márquez, and Allende interpret the heterogeneity of Spanish America through the filters of diverse regional and personal experience, the three authors share the common connection of writing careers launched from journalistic environments. Scholars have long recognized journalism's role in the shaping of Latin-American reality through its participatory involvement in the Colonial historical process—first in the quasi-journalistic narratives of discovery, and later in the publication of newspapers, broadsides,

journals, and pamphlets. The subsequent assimilation of the nineteenth-century French chronique furnished writers with an outlet for recording events into historical narrative as well as producing a uniquely Latin-American stylization of the genre that Gregory Rabassa characterizes as a "recognized and broadly practiced form, offspring of the more ancient variety, that lies somewhere between journalism and literature" (48).

Aníbal González asserts that the overlapping of journalistic and fictional discourse figures prominently in Latin-American literature as a result of four factors: both are linked to the rise of the bourgeoisie and the opportunistic extrapolation of information for class advantage; journalistic discourse has employed a variety of genres, while fiction conversely has more often employed devices of mimesis; both journalistic and fictional discourse explore the ramifications of empiricism vis-à-vis fact versus fiction; and finally, the rhetorical systems of historical and fictional writing apply equally to journalistic discourse since it effectively purports to transcribe a history of the present (9). González further notes a sociopolitical intertwining of the two discursive modes:

> For its part, since its early years, Spanish American narrative fiction has tended to work with the modernizing impulse fostered by journalism, often making strategic use of elements of journalistic discourse to serve an agenda of social or political change. (19)

González maintains that the sociopolitical agenda of the fictional narrative became increasingly evident during the twentieth century, primarily as an outgrowth of the oppressive political climate in which the state sought to establish institutional truth via control of the press. As a result, Latin-American writers found themselves assuming greater political and social responsibility for the deconstruction of the official story and for providing the reader with an alternate

interpretation of historical events. Ultimately, the gap between journalistic and fictional writing narrowed as authors deepened their introspective examination of writing as an ethical process, a tendency common to the authors of this study.

## Elena Poniatowska

Born in Paris in 1932 to a French father of Polish aristocratic descent and a French-born mother of Mexican heritage, Elena Poniatowska spent the first ten years of her childhood in France. She arrived in Mexico in 1942, accompanied by her mother and her sister, Kitzia, in order to escape the turbulence of World War II. Her father remained behind an additional six years to participate in the war effort. Living in the home of her maternal grandmother in Mexico City, she first attended a private British academy, and completed the final two years of her high school education in the United States at the Sacred Heart Academy near Philadelphia. Formally educated in English, she acquired her knowledge of Spanish through the routines of daily life and through interaction with the domestic workers in the grandmother's home.

Poniatowska's forty-seven year career as a journalist began shortly after the completion of her secondary education. Encouraged to become a trilingual secretary, she instead accepted a position at the daily newspaper Excélsior in 1954, where she wrote articles based on interviews with leading cultural and political figures. In 1955, she began to write at another Mexico City daily newspaper, Novedades, for which she continues to write articles. Throughout her career she has contributed to a variety of journals and newspapers including Siempre!, Vuelta, Plural, and La Jornada. A self-professed feminist, in 1976 Poniatowska was a founding editor of fem, a feminist journal with which she still collaborates.

Under the tutelage of Juan José Arreola, Poniatowska initiated her literary career with the publication of Lilus Kikus (1954), a series of semi-autobiographical narratives. It was during this time that she also wrote her only drama, Melés y Teleo (1956). However, Palabras cruzadas (1961), a compilation of selected interviews from Excélsior and Novedades, demonstrated the author's proclivity for the art of interviewing that would provide the context of her most successful early works, Hasta no verte Jesús mío (1969), and La noche de Tlatelolco: Testimonios de historia oral (1971).

Both works fall into the classification of documentary fiction and manifest an affiliation with the anthropological technique of life-writing notable in the work of Oscar Lewis with whom Poniatowska had previously collaborated (Franco 177). In addition, the works utilize elements of "New Journalism," a style of writing popularized by the North American writers Tom Wolfe and Truman Capote during the 1970s (García 45). Although documentary narratives maintain a fictional base in their adherence to traditional genres, they rely on a journalistic stance in order to represent multiple facets of reality without deliberately exposing the author's personal involvement. While the narrative ostensibly presents itself as a non-altered transcription of a non-literary narrator, discursive techniques such as displacement and condensation reorganize the memories of the speakers. This restructuring frequently reflects an author's preconceived agenda. The testimonial work often presents the stories of the marginalized, those individuals outside the framework of authority, in order to give voice to the voiceless or to present the "unofficial story."

Poniatowska's first testimonial narrative, Hasta no verte Jésus mío, received critical acclaim following its publication and won the Premio Mazatlán de Literatura in 1970. The work also generated critical confusion regarding its

classification within the parameters of traditional genres, although in many ways it resembled the 1966 testimonial work, Biografía de un cimarrón, by the Cuban writer Miguel Barnet. Hasta no verte Jésus mío recounts the life story of a Mexican domestic worker, Josefina Bórquez, referred to as Jesusa Palancares in the novel, which spans the greater part of the twentieth century. Utilizing a picaresque format, the work relates the abuses that Jesusa suffers, first as a child under her father's authority, then as a wife and soldadera during the Mexican Revolution, and finally as a mature woman relegated to domestic servitude. Poniatowska's narrative reveals a sociopolitical agenda through the peripheral examination of the failure of Mexican institutions to alleviate the suffering of Jesusa who stands as a symbolic representation of Mexico's lower class women.

Her second testimonial work, La noche de Tlatelolco (1971), parallels the sociopolitical scope of Hasta no verte Jesús mío while it displays increasingly adept technical skills. The narrative chronicles the massacre of October 2, 1968, at the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Nonoalco-Tlatelolco, when armed troops stormed a peaceful demonstration and murdered hundreds of demonstrators, detaining and torturing others. A cover-up by the government and censorship of the media impeded an investigation of the massacre, but the authorities could not prevent heated condemnation on the part of Mexican intellectual leaders. In La noche de Tlatelolco, Poniatowska pieces together a mosaic of eye-witness accounts gathered from interviews which she then breaks into fragments and reassembles to form a composite account of the event. The text is further fragmented by the introduction of non-narrative materials that include poems, police reports, speeches, and newspaper articles. The shattering of the narrative perspective antithetically establishes a single, coherent representation that, in

effect, deconstructs the authority and the power of official governmental discourse. Through the deliberate editorial organization of the material, Poniatowska subtly reinforces her own interpretation: "Within her thematic arrangement of the material she skillfully employs two additional structuring strategies to validate the division of the defeated students. Repetition and juxtaposition are key devices by which the writer overcomes incredulity, combats the official li(n)e, and creates ironic moments which convey her interpretation of the many conflicting accounts" (Jörgensen 84).

A third testimonial work, Nada, nadie: voces del temblor (1988), critiques the Mexican government and its mishandling of disaster relief following the cataclysmic earthquake that struck Mexico City in 1985. Poniatowska first launched the project as a series of daily articles, in the belief that she could best serve the disaster victims through the exercise of her journalistic voice. When her own newspaper, under government pressure, refused to run the series, Poniatowska turned to the leftist La Jornada which printed the articles. Like La noche de Tlatelolco, the work is based on a montage of eyewitness accounts that exposes the secondary tragedy of the victims who suffered additional hardships as a result of the government's insistence on maintaining an external façade of order and normalcy at all costs.

Poniatowska's intense interest in her adopted country employs a variety of avenues, including three photo-essays: La casa en la tierra (1980); El último guajolote (1982); and Las mujeres de Juchitán (1989). In addition, she has published a number of nonfiction works that deal with prominent Mexican political and cultural figures: Domingo siete (1982), based on interviews with the seven candidates for the presidential elections of 1982; ¡Ay vida no me mereces! (1986), a narrative that pays homage to the Mexican contemporary writers

including Rosario Castellanos, Juan Rulfo, and Carlos Fuentes; Octavio Paz: las palabras del árbol (1998), a portrait of the life and career of the influential twentieth-century poet and intellectual; and Las siete cabritas (2001), biographical portraits of Rosario Castellanos, Elena Garro, Frida Kahlo, Pita Amor, Nahui Ollin, Nelly Campobello, and María Izquierdo.

Poniatowska demonstrated an early affinity for biographical writing in Querido Diego, te abraza Quiela (1976) and Gaby Brimmer (1979), but the innovative biographical novel Tinísima (1992) incorporates the technical devices of the earlier testimonial works. Through a composite of narrative techniques, Tinísima illuminates the complex life of Tina Mondotti (1896-1942), an avant-garde Italian photographer who lived and worked for much of her life in Mexico. From a fictionally based fusion of Mondotti's photographs, correspondence, travels, and personal relationships, Poniatowska skillfully interprets the photographer's impact on the intellectual and political climate of twentieth-century Mexico, while she conversely depicts the effects of Mondotti's actions on the formation of her identity as an artist and a woman (Stavans 55). Although Mondotti's travels and relationships offer an access into the cultural and historical conditions of the first half of the twentieth century, Poniatowska's fictional depiction of the photographer's emotional development offers an additional social reflection on the subordination of women in a patriarchal schema.

Poniatowska's most recent novel, La piel del cielo (2001), expresses the author's continued displeasure with the Mexican government and its effect on the country's scientific environment. The work, which received the prestigious Premio Alfaguara de Novela in 2001, narrates the experiences of a young astronomer, both within his development as a scientist and as a man. Although the protagonist shares the same profession as Poniatowska's late husband,

Guillermo Haro, the author claims that the work holds no biographical elements, and is a purely fictional novel intended to underscore the failure by both the government and the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) to promote scientific research, an action which has motivated numerous Mexican scientists to emigrate to more supportive venues.

## Gabriel García Márquez

A Nobel Laureate and a major figure of the Latin-American Boom, Gabriel García Márquez first achieved international acclaim with the publication of the master work Cien años de soledad in 1967. Born in 1928 in Aracataca of the Caribbean coastal region of Colombia, García Márquez spent much of his early childhood in the home of his maternal grandparents, who by his own admission greatly influenced his writing. According to Mario Vargas Llosa in "From Aracataca to Macondo," the grandmother serves as "the prototype of a whole series of female characters from Macondo" (7). The grandfather appears as a foundation for numerous masculine characters, including the Coronel of La hojarasca (1955), the protagonist of El coronel no tiene quien le escriba (1956), and Coronel Aureliano Buendía and his companion, Coronel Gerineldo Marques, in Cien años de soledad (Vargas Llosa 8). Although the author moved to Bogotá at the age of seven to live with his parents, he never lost his affection for the Caribbean lifestyle and the stories told by both grandparents.

García Márquez entered the field of journalism in 1948 at age 20, writing first for El Universal in Cartagena from 1948 to 1949. Then, he spent two years in Barranquilla, where he produced a humorous column for El Heraldo, under the pseudonym of "Septimus." During this period, García Márquez became increasingly intrigued both by the Caribbean region of his homeland, and by

modern writers such as Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner, who would serve as literary models throughout his career. A move to Bogotá in 1954 to write for El Espectador afforded him an opportunity to work in film criticism, a genre that would develop into an important component of his fiction. Additionally, his duties in Bogotá incorporated investigative reporting which allowed him to expand traditional journalistic styles and themes, and he branched into politically sensitive topics such as the exposé of the Colombian navy that would be published in 1970 as Relato de un náufrago.

The following thirteen years of García Márquez's journalistic career demonstrated the emerging convergence of an interest in fictional aesthetics and a deepening political awareness. After working for a time as an international correspondent in Europe, he established a professional and political partnership with Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza at Prensa Latina, the news organization of Fidel Castro, in 1957. García Márquez drew upon his personal observations of international relations to elaborate upon a larger scale the machinations of politics which he had previously witnessed during the violence of the ten-year bogotazo in his native Colombia.

García Márquez readily attributes his preoccupation with the essence of reality and his awareness of literary aesthetics to his journalistic foundations:

> Ese supuesto mal que le hace el periodismo a la literatura no es cierto. Primero, porque el periodismo ayuda a mantener el contacto con la realidad, lo que es esencial para trabajar en literatura. Y viceversa, la literatura te enseña a escribir, lo que es también esencial para el periodismo. En mi caso, el periodismo fue el trampolín para la literatura y aprendí a hacer periodismo haciendo buena literatura. (qtd. in López de Martínez 240)

Although he maintains that fiction must be grounded in reality, the connection is often tenuous, as he frequently creates fictional relationships that evolve from events only loosely tied to history or daily life.

A prolific writer, in addition to novels and novellas, the Colombian author has published four collections of short stories: Isabel viendo llover en Macondo (1967); Ojos de perro azul: nueve cuentos desconocidos (1971); La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y de su abuela desalmada (1972); and Doce cuentos peregrinos (1992). In 1982 he published Obra periodística, a four-volume compilation of his journalistic works, and currently he is engaged in the writing and publishing of a multi-volume collection of his memoirs. However, García Márquez's fame has originated from the longer fictional narratives that have established his position as one of the most celebrated novelists of the twentieth century.

García Márquez's initial long fictional works, La hojarasca (1955), El coronel no tiene quien le escriba (1961), and La mala hora (1966) reflect a fundamental interest in the correlation among metaphysical issues, politically-charged environments, and the process of fictional writing. Each work centers on a central figure who stands separate and isolated. In La hojarasca, the author explores the dilemma provoked by the suicide of a man who had arrived in the town of Macondo as an outsider during the invasion of newcomers metaphorically configured in the title of the work. As a secondary victim of the military violence that has afflicted the town, he suffers complete ostracism. The work revolves around the tension between the promise of a retired colonel to bury the man versus the town's desire for him to rot where he lies. Narrated from multiple recollective voices, the discourse evolves into an internal questioning of the possibility of knowing another human being. While not an overtly political

work, the narrative implicates military violence as a cause of isolation. El coronel no tiene quien le escriba contains a more salient political connection, but the author merges that consideration with a probing of broad thematic issues. The discourse of the novella focuses on the minutiae of the protagonist's daily life during a fifteen-year wait for a military pension that never arrives, but it simultaneously critiques the external ritual of religion as well as the perpetually ritualistic and empty quality of human existence. The third novella, La mala hora, continues the magical realist style while foregrounding a political theme in the depiction of political repression within a small town. Although solitude emerges as a theme in each of the first three novellas, Michael Bell asserts that in La mala hora, García Márquez reverses his previous conceptualization of solitude, "instead of focusing on the isolation of one individual, it studies a collective experience of mutual solitude" (32), a recurrent motif in the author's later fiction.

García Márquez's masterwork, Cien años de soledad (1967), unveils a more emphatic break with realism through the use of magical realist style, an imaginative approach linked with the fantastic that extended Alejo Carpentier's baroque conceptualization of Latin-American literature. Transposing a universal perspective onto a provincially based setting, García Márquez imaginatively employs the Buendía family as a mythical framework upon which to pose his recurrent metaphysical concerns: the circularity of time, the ramifications of power, and the inevitability of solitude. The novel also manifests the author's preoccupation with the aesthetics of writing, a meditation initiated by Juan Rulfo and shared by fellow authors of the Boom: Mario Vargas Llosa, Carlos Fuentes, José Donoso, and Julio Cortázar. While Cien años de soledad may be interpreted on many levels, the work poses fundamental questions regarding the nature of literature, especially through its extensive incorporation of intertextual

references. In addition, the work serves as a source for later fictional works, especially the short stories contained in the anthology of La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y de su abuela desalmada, throughout which García Márquez interweaves characters from Cien años de soledad.

The longer fictional works after 1967 reflect in varying degrees many of the principal themes and literary aesthetics employed in Cien años de soledad. In El otoño del patriarca (1975), which Raymond Williams describes as a "novel of the dictator [that] is a venerable tradition in Latin America" ("Patriarch" 147), García Márquez extends his experimentation with the style of magical realism. Within the work, the author presents a dark portrayal of the horrors of history through the characterization of an archetypical Latin-American dictator based upon the 1950s Venezuelan politician Pérez Jiménez (Williams, "Patriarch" 147). Through a hyperbolic treatment of the protagonist, García Márquez interprets the emptiness of corrupt political power and the failure of erotic love to overcome solitude. Bell asserts that the dictator himself constitutes a "magical realist" who inhabits an illusory world of his own making to the extent that he "has created a world in which he can no longer tell where fantasy stops and reality starts, and he imposes this uncertainty on others" (80).

In contrast, Crónica de una muerte anunciada (1981) moves away from magical realism and returns to the more journalistic style that borders on investigative reporting, a narrative format suggested by the title. Crónica de una muerte anunciada, loosely based on an actual incident that had occurred in Sucre in the 1950s, utilizes shifting chronologies and narrators to reassemble the events leading to the tragic murder of Santiago Nasar, the victim of an honor killing. While presenting the last day of Nasar's life in minute detail, García Márquez reorders the events in the style of a news article. Gloria Bodtorf Clark in

A Synergy of Styles (1999) contends that the structure of the novel follows the standard journalistic format of a news article in which the text opens with the ending. The "lead in" announcement of the murder is then followed by an inverted pyramidal structure that delivers the specifics of the event. (37). Clark asserts that although García Márquez maintains the work within fictional boundaries through the strong development of the characters, the restructuring of time, and the inclusion of symbolic elements, the narrative purposely leads to the ethical evaluation of the townspeople as accomplices in the murder, an ethical function inherent in journalistic writing.

The theme of love also predominates in El amor en los tiempos del cólera (1985), a conceptual link in García Márquez's works that Bell finds may be more than coincidental: "One book seems partly to give birth to another which then goes on in turn to develop such a distinctive life of its own that it represents, if not a critique of the preceding work, then a significantly new vantage point from which to see it" (107). While the novelist portrays love in Crónica de una muerte anunciada from a tragic viewpoint, the nature of love conveyed in El amor en los tiempos del cólera is a more mature love which endures over the course of a lifetime, but which suffers the same limitations of human destiny that governs Santiago Nasar's demise. Stylistically, the novel follows the post-Boom transition to the use of popular genres and a more simplistic temporal linearity, turning away from the encyclopedic constructions of the Boom. Thematically, the novel also manifests a pronounced shift: "En vez de mostrar la injusticia y desigualdad sociales con el propósito de criticarlas, la novela tiende, cada vez más, a explorar la condición humana y la angustia del hombre contemporáneo. . ." (Donald Shaw qtd. in Swanson 7). According to Robin Fiddian in "A Prospective Post-Script: Apropos of Love in the Times of Cholera," García Márquez's

utilization of a single narrative voice to recount the intertwined experiences of multiple protagonists over three time periods produces a discourse reminiscent of the nineteenth-century folletines de amor, supported by related "documentation of social custom and historical fact" in the style of Flaubert (193). Although not overtly moralistic, through the interjection of costumbrista elements, the work subtly critiques enduring sociopolitical conditions, particularly class issues related to criollismo and slavery. The novel's open ending, in which Fermina and Florentino sail down the Magdalena River, quarantined by the contagion of disease, combined with the title's emphasis on the plural "tiempos de cólera," symbolically suggests that in spite of the couple's final union, their marginalization evidences the fundamental solitude of existence.

The conjoining of isolation and the Magdalena River arises again in García Márquez's last extensive work, El general en su laberinto (1989). The novel follows Simón Bolívar, suffering from a terminal illness, as he sails the river from the interior of Colombia toward the coast in the last months of his life. The author places the narrative within the configurations of history through his reconstruction of the legendary Latin-American visionary, but his interpretation of Bolívar's final reflections on his life's work positions the novel on a much higher symbolic plane. Bell suggests that in El general en su laberinto, García Márquez utilizes the philosophical journey of Bolívar to communicate his own convictions regarding the process of history:

> Rather than a timeless value beyond particular historical occasions, he [Bolívar] represents, on a grand scale, the workings of visionary purpose in history at all times. The interrelations of fictional imagination and historical record in the narrative suggest the

inextricable interplay of vision and process in the making of history. (130)

Throughout the scope of García Márquez's fictional works, Latin-American history tends to isolation. At the end of Bolívar's life, the general stands in stark solitude imposed by the community, by himself, and by his dreams of regional solidarity. While far removed stylistically from Cien años de soledad, El general en su laberinto returns the reader to García Márquez's constant preoccupation with the leitmotif of solitude.

## Isabel Allende

One of the most widely read female authors from Spanish America, Isabel Allende frequently integrates the experiences of her life within the context of her literary works. Born in Lima, Perú in 1942 to the daughter of a Chilean diplomat, Tomás and his wife, Panchita, Allende was also the niece of the controversial Chilean President, Salvador Allende. Her father abandoned the family when she was three years old, and her mother subsequently married a diplomat, Ramón Huidobro, whose foreign assignments took the family to Bolivia, where the author attended a private school run by North Americans, and to Beirut, where she attended a British school. Upon returning to Chile in 1958, she met her future husband, Miguel Frías, and began working for the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization in Santiago. She married Frías, and in 1953 after the birth of her daughter, Paula, the couple moved to Europe where they resided in Brussels and Switzerland. In 1966, Allende and her husband returned to Chile, and she began her career at Paula, an early feminist magazine for which she wrote a humorous column entitled, "Los impertinentes." In 1973, Allende formed an affiliation with the children's magazine, Mamputo, which she briefly directed,

and she published two children's stories as well as a compilation of her magazine columns, which appeared under the title Civilice a su troglodita. Concurrently, she collaborated on two very popular television programs as well as staging her drama, El embajador. With the assassination of Salvador Allende in September 1973, the family was placed in a perilous position, and she emigrated to Venezuela in 1975 where she began to write for the daily newspaper, El Nacional.

Allende's career as a fiction writer began in 1981, when she learned that her grandfather was dying. She began to write him a letter that eventually would become the manuscript for La casa de los espíritus. When the book appeared in 1982, it was met with great acclaim and media attention, but as Patricia Hart and Phillip Swanson note, some scholars including Jorge Edwards and Gabriela Mora, viewed the work as an opportunistic borrowing of García Márquez's magical realist style and his use of the family as a vehicle for the examination of history in a form which lacked in both feminine and social consciousness. However, Swanson and María Roof regard La casa de los espíritus as a family saga that utilizes a magical realist style in order to invert Cien años de soledad. Allende constructs the family chronology on the counter-positioning of matrilineal and patrilineal lines, and she attributes the positive attributes of solidarity and social consciousness to the mother-daughter alliance. The women, whose names—Nívea, Clara, Blanca, and Alba—suggest enlightenment, form an educational hierarchy within which the mother serves as a conduit of values to the daughter, who then passes them on to the next feminine member of the family line. The men, whose repetitive names suggest immobility, appear as symbolic icons of political and social stagnation. Within the novel women are not directly configured as anti-patriarchal forces, but rather as natural catalysts for

reform, as Roof proposes in her study of the family sagas of Maryse Condé and Allende:

> Maryse Condé and Isabel Allende use the trope of the family to define a key subject position for women in altering the direction of their societies. Their narrators are gendered characters, females who must interpret family history from pieces of incomplete histories and propose a new, more inclusive definition of family to promote unity and heal the wounds of the past. (287)

According to Roof, Allende and Condé embrace the belief that because women are marginalized from power, they are freer to break its cycle of misuse, and they bear the moral imperative to effect change. Since woman is a transmitter of social values within the family, she holds the charge to reorder the traditional orthodoxy in which "history becomes the circular repetition of old errors" (Roof 287).

Eva Luna (1987) continues the magical realist trajectory of La casa de los espíritus through a picaresque recounting of a young girl's journey into adulthood. Recent criticism on the work has suggested a number of possible readings, including the analyses by Leasa Lutes who regards the work as a feminine revision of the traditionally masculine Bildungsroman, and Susan Frenk who considers the novel an exploration of gender politics. The plot follows the conventional examination of the protagonist's marginalized childhood and the adolescent exploration of the world, but it centers on Eva's biological and fictive maternal relationships and the gift of storytelling that she inherits from them. In a series of journeys, Eva receives the traditional support of a male figure from whom she receives an erotic education, constructs her identity through relationships with members of a fictional family whose members stand outside

society, and manifests a strong sense of self-reliance. As Eva develops a romantic relationship with the photographer Rolf Carlé, the novel parallels her path toward maturation with that of Rolf's, forming a secondary, masculine Bildung.

The relationship of Eva and Rolf Carlé forms the framework for the subsequent Cuentos de Eva Luna (1989) in which Eva serves as a contemporary Sheherazade for her lover. In response to his request to tell stories "que no le hayas contado a nadie" (10), Eva creates for him twenty-three original tales. Samuel Amago broadly characterizes the stories as "tales of love" (47), but he divides them into four thematic categories: tales of revenge, dissatisfaction, romance, and stories formed around social issues. Amago finds many of the stylistic devices common to folk tales present in Eva's stories, and he cites the predominance of action, stereotypical characters, the generality of geographical placement, the emphasis on action, and thematic and stylistic repetition (50-51). The work reflects Allende's preoccupation with the process of writing and the pursuit of the imagination, as Amago notes: "It is the narrative act itself which represents the text's unifying and thematic feature" (43).

De amor y de sombra (1984), the only one of Allende's works to draw upon her journalistic background, casts a love story against a scenario of political oppression. The love story concerns the characters Irene Beltrán, a young South American woman, and Francisco Leal, the son of Spanish Civil War emigrants, who expose a government assassination of peasants during a military uprising. Allende bases the novel on an actual event that occurred in Lonquén, near Santiago, Chile, in 1978 while she was living in Venezuela. The military, after murdering fifteen peasants, including five members of one family, burnt the bodies in lime ovens, events that the Church eventually exposed. Plagued by

the inhumanity of the murders, Allende decided to write the novel as a commentary "contra los abusos, contra la opresión, contra cualquier militarismo" (qtd. in Hart 143).

Paula (1994) reveals a pronounced maturity in Allende's writing. Written during her daughter's fatal struggle against porphyria, Allende conceived the work as a conduit for the transference of her memories, a personal family saga to serve as a legacy in the tradition of the maternal writings of La casa de los espíritus. The narrative serves much more as a meditation upon the author's own life than a mere inscription of family history. In her battle with death itself, Allende projects a newly recognized feminine association with the creative essence: "Soy el vacío, soy todo lo que existe, estoy en cada hoja del bosque, en cada gota de rocío, en cada partícula de ceniza que el agua arrastra, soy Paula y también soy yo misma, soy nada y todo lo demás en esta vida y en otras vidas, inmortal" (Paula 366).

After Paula's death, Allende, unable to return to fiction, undertook the writing of Afrodita (1997) in order to alleviate the pain of her grief. Written after intensive research, Afrodita utilizes the structure and stylistics of a literary anatomy to discuss erotic love, the aphrodisiacal properties of food, and her own personal erotic development. A compendium of art, recipes, anecdotes, and literary texts, the work displays an irreverent side of Allende not previously glimpsed. Reminiscent of Robert Burton's famous Anatomy of Melancholy (1621) in its encyclopedic intertextual inclusions, physical layout, and thematic development, Allende challenges the assignment of erotic pleasure to the masculine domain. She advocates that women intermingle the traditional feminine spaces of the kitchen and the bedroom in order to appropriate the erotic experience as a fundamental experiential prerogative.

Allende's last two novels follow the author's own geographical movement from South America to California. Hija de la fortuna (1999) and Retrato en sepia (2000) complete the trilogy begun with La casa de los espíritus and recount the development of two strong young women who travel to California from Chile in quest of love and truth. In a counterpoint of fiction and history, Allende presents the protagonists' voyages against the historical backdrop of Chile and California in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth.

## Historical and Political Influences on Latin-American Gender Perception

The Latin-American literary perception of women reflects an historical foundation established upon strongly patriarchal practices. Elizabeth Dore and Maxine Molyneux in Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America (2000), trace the paternalistic treatment of women to the earliest days of Colonization, when the Spanish Crown established the nature of New World gender relations by the dissemination of royal decrees that endowed fathers and husbands with complete legal authority over their households. Ensuing legal regulations ascribed to women the same status as children, and under the guise of offering protection, severely restricted female participation in the legal and social spheres. Although women held certain prescribed legal rights, such as the authority to enter into contracts and to hold land, the privilege extended only to widows or to unmarried women emancipated from their fathers. Women were prohibited from holding patria potestad, the legal authority to control another person, which in effect prevented them from exerting jurisdiction over their own children, even those who resided in the same household. Although efforts were made to protect the rights of the indigenous population, such as the crusade by

Las Casas, limited discussion addressed the rights of women. As the King equated himself to a benevolent father, the prevailing social philosophy dictated that a "well-ordered society was composed of well-ruled families" (Dore, Hidden Histories 11).

> Later, newly emerging republics retained and expanded the paternalistic attitudes established by the Spanish Crown: The imagined communities of the young republics largely reworked old symbols and traditional ideologies. In their search for stability, Latin America's republican leaders attempted to naturalize the patriarchalism they inherited. As a consequence, family patriarchy possibly acquired a greater political significance in the new society than it had in the old. (Dore, Hidden Histories 16)

Political leaders, following the model set by the Spanish monarchy, established themselves as the supreme patriarchs in a society formed of individual families under the authority of legally defined male leadership. Married men were accorded citizenship at an earlier age than their unmarried counterparts; citizenship could be revoked for disobedience or disrespect toward the father. The enactment of constitutional and legal provisions intentionally relegated women to domestic roles within the home.

Although the Church historically had served as a protective institution for women, especially in its definition of marriage as a relationship between partners, in the 1770s secular law superseded canonical law and extended paternal authority via a series of statutes removing the governance of marriage from Church control (Dore, Hidden Histories 13). While Church law had previously upheld the right of a woman to select her marriage partner, new secular laws asserted the paternal right of the father to overrule the daughter's selection, and

declared that ensuing disputes be settled in state courts. Methodically, the state secularized many practices which had been institutionally controlled by the Church, including marriage law, annulments, and determinations of legitimacy of birth. One of the most damaging acts to women was the redefinement of adultery. In the eyes of the Church, adultery committed by either partner was considered sinful and immoral behavior; however, according to secular laws instituted in the nineteenth century and practiced well into the twentieth, adultery on the part of the male was considered legal for all practical purposes, but a capital offense for a woman. As a result of the state's intrusion into canonical law, state policy determined sexual mores, much to the disadvantage of women.

The nineteenth century witnessed a rapid growth in private land ownership, and new post-colonial laws written during the second half of the century sought to eliminate women's acquisition of land and wealth. Of particular consequence to women was the abolition of the mandatory partible inheritance, that is, the equal distribution of the estate among all legitimate children in a household (Dore, Hidden Histories 17). Although the partible inheritance constituted a long-standing practice in Spanish and Portuguese Colonial possessions, lawmakers adopted the Anglo-Saxon practice of primogeniture, in which the entirety of the estate passes to the eldest son. Although the practice ensured that newly privatized lands would not be divided into parcels too small for effective use, the policy removed from women one of the few individual rights enjoyed since the beginning of Colonial times. Women could hold title to land only through their relationship to a man, either as his wife or mother. Additional laws enacted during the second-half of the nineteenth century pertaining to the dowry and joint marital property further damaged women's ability to accrue capital. Envisioning a modernized market economy, Latin-American politicians

viewed women with the same distrust as they had previously viewed the Church, and they worked diligently to dismantle any economic advantage that they might hold.

At the same time, additional laws impacted women throughout Latin America. Mexico in particular became extremely prescriptive in defining gender roles within a marriage. Legislation in the 1870s provided women with greater protection: it required men to provide financial support for their wives and children; women received the legal right to manage the household budget. However, the general trend of the legislation deliberately removed women from the public sphere and legally assigned them the domestic responsibilities of the home: "the management of and responsibility for household work [los propios trabajos del hogar] shall be the concern of the wife" (Varley 242), a statute not repealed until 1974. By law, women were obliged to reside in the location decided upon by the husband, a provision that remained in effect until 1953, the same year suffrage was granted to Mexican women.

Under the sanctions of the Napoleonic Code, twentieth-century Mexican women held fewer legal rights than their Colonial counterparts, and the inequality between marital partners increased. Women were required to deliver any earned wages to their husbands; they held no right to marital property; they could not testify in court; they were not permitted to hold elected office; they retained no legal authority over their own children, although the new age for the emancipation of unmarried adult children was reduced to twenty-one. Legally and culturally, "women were regarded as lacking in rationality, as too weak and impulsive to be treated as the equals of man" (Dore, Hidden Histories 43).

The ascription of a purely domestic role to Mexican women in turn produced a widening of class distinctions. One-third of the women in Mexico City

worked outside the home at the beginning of the twentieth century, and fifty-seven per cent of those were employed as domestic workers (Varley 142). These statistics imply that a large percentage of the female population served an upper-class clientele. The subservience of the poor became an institutionalized reflection of the larger patterns of social organization:

> The patriarchal system by which the master had separate women performing separate subordinate roles—wife, mistress, and servant—was thereby reproduced. We can conclude, therefore, that who does the housework is therefore not only a gender issue but also a class issue. (Varley 143)

The deepening of class division between women served as a barrier to the development of female solidarity in the quest for gender rights, not only in Mexico, but also in Latin America as a whole.

Maxine Molyneux contends that in the Colonial period, the state focused on the preservation of gender and ethnic inequalities under the guise of the patriarchal right to rule, a practice that continued during the post-Colonial era. However, in the nineteenth century the goal of modernization opened a wedge into the patriarchal system, as Latin America attempted to enter the world market. Molyneux emphasizes that attitudes toward gender equality reflected the political and economic expediencies of the historical moment rather than an authentic attempt to balance inequities.

As Latin-American nations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries sought to shift their global participation from a cultural to an economic level, a variety of interest groups demanded increased political participation. Among these were feminist groups composed of both working-class and middle class advocates of suffrage and juridical equality. Rather than demanding strict

gender equality, women utilized their domestic and maternal identities as a basis for activism and female solidarity, and they carried their roles as homemakers and mothers into the public debate, demanding recognition for their service to the state and suffrage to instill feminine morality into the political domain. According to Molyneux, this "civic maternalism remained a significant element in women's bid for citizenship and was a theme that, with variations, traversed the different state forms that emerged in Latin America in the course of the twentieth century" (45).

Prompted by political and economic expediency, Latin-America states reformed their civil codes inconsistently and slowly. In its efforts to foster modernity, the Mexican post-revolutionary Constitution granted women the right to divorce, contractual abilities, and patria potestad in 1917, although the demand for female suffrage and political participation was firmly rejected on the grounds that women's interests were tied to their husbands' or fathers' interests. Female suffrage continued to be denied until the 1940s when women were permitted to vote and to stand in municipal elections. In 1953 Mexican women received the right to vote and stand in national elections, and only in 1974 was the household management law repealed.

In the remainder of Latin America, the twentieth-century development of the corporate state and populist governments drew on the inclusion of educated men and women to establish popular support for programs of state modernization and expansion. Leaders called on women for support in areas of social reform, particularly in the area of labor rights. However, men received the principal benefits of reforms, and, as had historically been true, policy framers continued to perceive women within traditional, subordinate domestic roles: "the sober hard-working father was the natural complement to the dependent

housewife-mother" (Molyneux 56). Although Argentine women held the right to vote, their mobilization centered not on reforms pertaining to gender rights, but rather on bolstering the support of populist leaders, as evidenced by the political manipulations of Juan Perón and his charismatic wife, Eva.

The repressive dictatorships of the mid-1960s and 1970s impeded progress in gender reform, as military leaders attempted to entrench their rule by posing women as subversive agents against the state:

> If in the nineteenth century the enemy was defined as the indigenous peoples who were "threatening civilization," in the 1970s it was "subversives" who were charged with threatening not only the state but also the nation's very way of life. Feminists were considered to be among the subversives and were targeted as such. (Molyneux 61)

Misogynistic attitudes prevailed, and although the political leadership called citizens to protect the metaphorical motherland, women became the targets of eroticized torture and rape. Leaders called on the populace to return to traditional, closed family structures, and they further reduced women's reproductive rights by increasing restrictions on contraception and abortion.

The collapse of the military regimes and the emergence of neoliberal governments in the 1980s and 1990s revived feminist activism and resulted in the achievement of stronger female participation in the political sphere and workplace. However, the recent changes in Latin-American gender relations do not constitute a substantial feminine entry into the systems of power, but rather a mere beginning in the process of political redefinition. Increased rights have endowed women with greater economic participation, but opportunities remain delineated by class and race, and mirror the dominant and subaltern patterns of

society at large. As a result, the progress toward gender equality reflects as much a movement toward general social reconfiguration as a growth in individual rights. By and large, the feminine role continues to be construed within the same dominantly patriarchal context that has existed since the Colonial period.

## Anthropology and Aesthetics

In Hasta no verte, Jesús mío, "Eréndira," and Afrodita, woman's relationship to the domestic sphere forms the primary thematic material of the narrative discourse. In Hasta no verte, Jesusa's earliest memories transcribe the process of her socialization into the institutionalized domestic subservience that restricts the development of autonomy throughout her life. Under the familial subjugation of her grandmother, Eréndira first suffers a hyperbolic domestic servitude which is later exchanged for an equally surreal sexual slavery. Allende transposes the desire of the bedroom to the domestic realm of the kitchen to suggest the reformulation of feminine sexuality. While each work manifests a distinct vantage point for the exploration of the feminine interpretation of domesticity, the composite perception reflects a set of operative principles which originate from the foundations of Latin-American gender relations: woman is culturally and legally assigned to the interior of the home; the role of the woman is primarily defined by her relationship to a male figure; woman's principal task involves the maintenance of household order which in turn serves as a reflection of social order; woman bears the responsibility for protecting the welfare of the children; and woman's virtue and sexuality are defined, measured, and regulated by patriarchal standards.

In the last half of the twentieth century, female scholars have instigated a significant portion of the investigation on the effects of cultural constructs related

to gender issues in Latin-American literature. The discussion of women's literary role began in earnest in the 1970s and 1980s, when theorists and authors including Rosario Castellanos, Patricia Ahern, Doris Meyer, and Jean Franco addressed the minimal representation of women in the literary canon. Debra Castillo identifies the collection of essays La sartén por el mango: encuentro de escritoras femininas (1985), edited by Patricia González and Eliana Ortega, as a seminal work that explores the absence of feminine presence while addressing the theoretical issues of gender-related analysis. Castillo notes that this work "not only provides a touchstone for gender-conscious analysis of Latin American women's texts but also implicitly positions itself in relationship to the theory/strategy questions" (Talking Back 34). She further observes that the strategic use of domestic vocabulary in the rhetorical framing of the work marks "the public, philosophical call for legitimation of a space traditionally associated with and denigrated as female" (35).

Speaking from the domestic experience poses inherent challenges. In Latin-American literature, the interior space of the home traditionally has been conveyed as a restrictive environment, an attitude described by Rosario Ferré: "La soledad y el anonimato del hogar han sido tradicionalmente el destino de la mujer, mientras el hombre sale a conquistar el mundo" (36). In the early decades of the twentieth century, works by such writers as Teresa de la Parra and María Luisa Bombal began to reveal an emerging dissatisfaction with life behind la reja and the customary ligatures of marriage. In the second half of the century, works by the writers Clarice Lispector, Rosario Castellanos, Rima de Vallbona, and Luisa Valenzuela echoed their predecessors' discontent, but adopted a more assertive stance as the feminist movement gained momentum. In general, women authors utilized the home as a negative symbol of repression,

subservience, and restricted mobility that denied them an identity beyond that imposed by socio-cultural definition.

From an anthropological perspective, feminine isolation results not only from physical boundaries, but also from the monotonous maintenance of household order. The performance of household tasks plays a fundamental role in the social marginalization of women, as literary researcher Jeannette Batz Cooperman notes: "Housework keeps women intimately bound-up with the deepest and most fundamental parts of life yet excluded from the sexual and economic passageways of power" (10). In a cultural context that devalues most time-bound jobs, particularly those of a repetitive nature, women have traditionally found themselves charged with the elimination of the most visible evidence of chaos and decay in a process that entails perpetual effort and a lack of finality, entrapping them in a ritual that excludes the freedom to pursue creative and economic goals. In addition, the competent completion of domestic work serves as an evaluative tool in measuring a woman's worth. Since biblical times, the failure to execute domestic tasks has diminished a woman's moral respectability and virtue: "cleaning carries heavy moral baggage; keeping a clean house has been the 'womanly' way of disciplining oneself into virtuous respectability" (Cooperman 61). From the sociopolitical perspective, household disorder reflects the macrocosmic potential of social disorder, and although chaos and tensions may rage in the public sphere, women bear the responsibility for the preservation of the disintegrating façade.

Additionally, the domestic task of food preparation defines woman's status. Although associated with the same temporality as other household duties, the allocation and provision of food place woman within one of her most powerful positions. As an extension of the maternal breast, food intrinsically links

woman with a creative, biological function, as a giver and protector of life. Moreover, through the provision of food, woman holds the power to establish the borders of the home as an inclusionary community within which to institute the hierarchical ordering of its members through the deliberate allocation of resources. However, the patriarchal assessment of cooking as a physical rather than a mental activity reinforces the appraisal of women's diminished capacity to act within the domain of rational thought (Curtin and Heldke 5). While the experiences of the kitchen endow women with an intimate, experiential body of knowledge, this special expertise is generally transmitted only through the matrilineal passage from mother to daughter.

The sexual role of women also manifests patriarchal domination since, as Nancy Armstrong asserts, sexual activity "is located, as it very often is, *in* the woman's body, sexuality is an attribute or property of the male" (37). As a result, Latin-American cultural ideology has most often configured women within the masculine construction of the madonna/whore dichotomy, a perspective that effectively denies the feminine right to erotic experience. Cultural mores refuse to recognize female sexuality except in biological terms related to pregnancy and childbirth, because, as Sara Castro-Klarén explains, "desire points outside the realm of the domestic" (12). By restricting women to the maternal role of protecting and nurturing children, men maintain their proprietary rights to a virtuous wife and their own sexual freedom.

Hasta no verte, "Eréndira," and Afrodita deconstruct the domestic experience through transformations of traditional genres. The use of genre as an analytical instrument has regained prestige in the later decades of the twentieth century as researchers seek to systemize the confusions of postmodern aesthetics. As a consequence, theorists reconsidering the hierarchical ordering

of genres increasingly have come to recognize the dynamic effects of the revisionist approach in the deconstructive process. The Polish theorist Ireneusz Opacki represents the evolution of genre principally as a process of hybridization in which "genres modify and combine with one another, producing variant forms and eventually giving rise to new genres in which the different evolutionary layers can be discerned" (qtd. in Duff 14). Yury Tynyanov concurs with Opacki's theory, but he also attributes the revisionist process to a cyclical movement within the generical hierarchy. Tynyanov envisions the revisionist process as a dynamic dislocation in which dominant genres arise only to become displaced by newly dominant discursive modes which more suitably reflect "the moving, evolving historical order" (34). To comprehend a revisionist work, Tynyanov demands that it be tied to its historical context, "for *the whole point of a new construction may be in the new use to which old devices are put, in their new constructive significance* . . ." (35).

Through the selection of a particular genre the author makes a deliberate choice, one by which s/he establishes a contractual arrangement with the reader. Jonathan Culler defines the contract as a pact of "literary competence" that establishes the reader's ability "to recognize and interpret the codes of a given genre, and hence to 'perform' readings of particular examples of the genre" (qtd. in Duff 15). In a revisionist work, the author reconfigures the parameters of the genre in order to communicate sociocultural values, but in so doing he ruptures the anticipatory mindset of the reader, who then must reinterpret the revised "code" according to the specifics of the text. As Todorov has suggested, the breaking of generic norms does not destroy the genre but rather accentuates its discursive properties: "the norm becomes visible—comes into existence—owing only to its transgressions" (196).

In order to measure the impact of a revisionist work, one must first examine the degree of the work's non-conformity by studying it in relationship to other works of the same genre. By doing so, one establishes the set of preconceived generical expectations that frame the reader's anticipatory approach to the work. Secondly, the reader must evaluate the author's relationship to the content, in order to examine the type of deformation that reveals the author's unique attitude expressed within the text. Finally, the reader must assess the work within its historical and cultural environment in order to evaluate the author's alliance with or deviation from its socio-cultural context.

In each of the works analyzed in this study, the revision of the genre is replete with a variety of domestic motifs that the authors employ deconstructively to communicate their individual sociocultural perspectives. Far from portraying domestic life as a positive experience, these works incorporate images of domesticity that duplicate the essential attitudes of a society which affirms woman's marginal, subservient existence. Poniatowska, García Márquez, and Allende adopt a transformative stance toward the position of women by creating a female presence imbued with the capacity to withstand the restrictive and often harsh treatment assigned to them. This feminine characterization subverts the passive, stereotypical feminine roles that thread earlier Latin-American fiction and portrays women as agents in the reclamation of essential rights.

Since this study focuses on works by three authors utilizing disparate objectives and different genres, I have chosen an eclectic critical approach. For each of the texts under consideration, I begin the analysis with a narratological discussion of the genre from a morphological and a sociohistorical perspective that details the genre's historical evolution, literary norms, and the sociocultural context from which the work emanates. I then examine the stylistic components

employed by the author in order to measure the revisionist aspects of the text. Through an explanation of domestic motifs which incorporates anthropological elements, I place each protagonist within her particular historical context and analyze the transformational characteristics inherent to her development. I then conclude with an explication of the work's thematics that focuses on the protagonist's deconstructive role.

The following chapter demonstrates how Elena Poniatowska in Hasta no verte Jesús mío superimposes the testimonial approach upon a picaresque format. Edward Friedman's investigations of the picaresque novel indicate that the pícaro and the pícara traditionally have been represented along distinct gender lines. I explain Jesusa's resemblance to male rather than female picaresque protagonists, particularly in her rebellion against the gender-ascribed roles of daughter, wife, and mother. In addition, I examine the genre's affiliations with the portrayal of social marginalization. While previous scholarship, particularly that of Cynthia Steele, provides valuable insight into Poniatowska's narrative techniques and the rebellious nature of the protagonist, my interpretation focuses on the domestic subjugation of Jesusa as an authentic feminine platform from which to examine the marginalization of Mexico's subaltern classes. I conclude with an exploration of the narrator/author relationship between Poniatowska and Jesusa, within the currents of research on the testimonial novel.

The third chapter presents García Márquez's reworking of the traditional fairy tale in the short story "La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y de su abuela desalmada." A number of literary critics, including Mark Millington, Jasbir Jain, and Donald Shaw have offered illuminating analyses; however, most interpretations view the protagonist's final flight as an act of betrayal which

dooms her to the same fate as the avaricious and dominating grandmother. Through an examination of historical models of the fairy tales, I establish the structural components of the genre and demonstrate that the resolution of the fairy tale establishes a new world order through the ultimate emancipation of the protagonist. Next, I correlate the symbolic relationship of Eréndira's domestic and erotic servitude to García Márquez's perception of imperial subjugation. By juxtapositioning the historical roots of the fairy tale with the author's view of Colonial history, I offer an interpretation of Erendira's escape as a transcendent flight toward the creation of an authentic identity.

In Chapter Four, I examine Afrodita by Isabel Allende, a work too recent to have received serious critical attention. In light of its physical presentation, intertextual offerings, and meditative stance, I propose that the work falls within the category of a literary anatomy, a genre derived from the classical Mennipean satire that enjoyed great popularity during the Renaissance. A parallel reading of Afrodita with the Anatomy of Melancholy by Robert Burton reveals strong similarities, particularly with the English work's segment entitled, "Anatomy of Love." In the analysis of Afrodita, I detail the history and properties of the anatomy, and explore the feminine post-modern use of parody as a deconstructive device. I present Afrodita's parodical interpretation of Burton's work in conjunction with an analysis of Allende's association of sexuality with food. Finally, I conclude with an explication of the manner in which the narrative reflects the author's interpretation of feminine sexuality and the process of writing itself.

In "Post Binary Bliss," Nanneke Redclift suggests the possibility of building "multiplicity into the systemic forms of power . . . by seeing patriarchy not as a monolith, but as a discourse that is played out, negotiated, and possibly

subverted in various ways" (230). While the literary juxtaposition of gender and power offers an effective voice for the expression of sexual inequality, it also provides an avenue for the examination of marginalization in general. As Marit Melhuus and Kristi Stølen assert, "in the Latin American context the differences that obtain between men and women can be made to stand for other forms of differences . . ." (2). A focus on the relationship between sexual identity and dominance, an affiliation that constitutes a most basic component of human existence, causes additional forms of hegemonic exclusion to become more clearly visible. Each of the works in this study functions as an agent of subversion through the symbolic characterization of an empowered woman whose actions challenge the patriarchal boundaries of domesticity in order to assert an autonomous identity. By utilizing gender as a symbolic representation for marginalization, these narratives erode a small portion of the patriarchal monolith.

## Chapter Two

## Hasta no verte Jesús mío:
## A Feminine View from the Pyramid

La verdad debe decirse. Nosotros, los hijos de los verdaderos revolucionarios, tenemos la obligación de hablar y pedir que se descorra la cortina. La historia lo pide así, pues nuestra patria no es propiedad de unos cuantos, carrancistas, obregonistas o callistas.
– –Nellie Campobello Mis libros

In a 1998 speech at the University of Oklahoma, Elena Poniatowska likened her homeland of Mexico to Egypt, a "country of pyramids" in which idols exist behind altars. On a literal level, Poniatowska's analogy referred to the imposing pyramids that arise out of the Mexican landscape and bear witness to the indigenous peoples who inhabited the land prior to the arrival of European conquerors. However, of greater importance was Poniatowska's symbolic reference to the political and social pyramid of Mexican reality in which the suffering of the peasant population forms a broad base supporting the small, oligarchic elite at the pyramid's summit, a theme that threads the 1969 testimonial novel, Hasta no verte Jésus mío. During the turbulent decades of the sixties and seventies, the challenge of representing the powerless and marginalized began to assume increased importance in the writings of many Mexican authors, including Carlos Fuentes, who in the 1971 collection of essays, Tiempo mexicano, declared the role of the author equivalent to an intellectual and political mandate:

> Lo que un escritor puede hacer políticamente, debe hacerlo, también primordialmente, como ciudadano. Como escritor, su significado político es de otro nivel, se da implícitamente en la obra

> y se refiere a una capacidad privativa: la de mantener vivo el margen de la heterodoxia a través de la imaginación verbal. (64)

While Fuentes emphasized the significance of opposing the sociopolitical hegemony, he also recognized the problematic nature of speaking for those outside its margins, since political transformation often presupposes a larger cultural modification: "el escritor, el intelectual, no pueden ser ajeno a la lucha por una transformación política que en última instancia, supone una transformación cultural" (64).

The sociopolitical role of the writer has proven especially challenging for the Mexican woman author in the attempt to conceive an appropriate vehicle for the discussion of issues pertinent to a female subject, particularly one whose exclusion from social participation has been barred not only by gender discrimination, but also by class distinction. In Hasta no verte Jesús mío, Poniatowska applies the techniques of a traditional genre, the autobiography, in order to expose the "lost energy" of the millions of Mexico's subaltern citizens, through a testimonial exploration of the life of a solitary, lower-class Mexican woman, Jesusa Palancares. While the testimonial may be perceived as a subgenre of autobiography, the two narrative forms serve two discrete purposes according to Hugo Achugar: "mientras la autobiografía es un discurso acerca de la 'vida íntima,' o interior, el testimonio es un discurso acerca de la 'vida pública' o acerca del 'yo en la esfera pública'" (56). By documenting Jesusa's individual quest for autonomy in a life filled with hardships and the physical struggle to survive during the revolutionary and postrevolutionary periods of Mexico, Poniatowska peripherally examines the sociopolitical forces that determine not only her fate but also the other members of her ciass. The focus of this chapter will be the unique format of the work that merges a testimonial style with

elements of the picaresque, based on the ironies of the protagonist's relationship to the domestic ties that control the nature of her existence.

In order to understand the domestic issues within Hasta no verte Jésus mío, we must first review the distinctive literary elements of the text. Chief among the points of the chapter will be an examination of the character of a testimonial work, its fusion with picaresque elements and the methodology that Poniatowska employs to incorporate components of both genres within the narrative. After a survey of the life of Poniatowska and the history of the novel, an examination of the major criticism and stylistics of the text will emphasize the process of socialization within the domestic parameters of the protagonist's life, particularly as they relate to pivotal roles of daughter, wife, and surrogate mother.

The format of the testimonial novel combines Poniatowska's conception of literature with her journalistic background. Hasta no verte Jesús mío fuses the perspectives of the personal and the collective consciousness, a blending that Poniatowska views as a central function of the role of literature. However, Poniatowska brings to the literary style a unique set of personal circumstances that afford her a singular view of Mexico and its people. Born in Paris in 1932 to a French father of Polish nobility and a French-born mother descended from wealthy Mexican landowners, Poniatowska spent the beginning of her childhood in France, until the time when her family moved to Mexico to escape the conflicts of the Second World War. After attending British and French schools in Mexico City, she completed her secondary education in a convent school in Pennsylvania. Postponing a university career, the young author found herself in the 1950s working as a journalist for newspapers, first the Excélsior and later at Novedades, where she enjoyed the opportunity to interview a number of

important cultural figures from Latin America and Europe, including Diego Rivera, Octavio Paz, Alejo Carpentier, Gabriel García Márquez, and François Mauriac.

Poniatowska's first published work, Palabras cruzadas (1961), included seventeen representative journalistic interviews collected between the years of 1954 and 1961. Beth Jörgensen, in her study of the author's dialogic techniques, The Writings of Elena Poniatowska, Engaging Dialogues (1993), points out that these early interviews with the cultural elite provided the journalist not only with the possibility to sharpen her investigative techniques but also with an opportunity to familiarize herself with the Mexican culture, albeit from a strongly patriarchal perspective. In addition, Jörgensen asserts that these early interviews manifested two significant traits that would emerge in the author's later works. The first deals with the author's remarkable ability to engage the subjects of her interviews in an open dialogue:

> I believe that already in the 1950s Poniatowska demonstrates an aptitude for attentive listening and candid questioning which is one key to her future critique of Mexican institutions and her engagement with the lives and the stories of Mexico's marginalized majority. (Jörgensen 5)

The second characteristic involves Poniatowska's ability to transform creatively the primary dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewed into a literary narrative that projects a fictional vision existing independently from that of either the interviewer or the subject of the interview. "The complex relationship between 'truth' and 'fiction' in Poniatowska's journalistic, ostensibly factual writing is a constant source of creativity and, perhaps for the reader, confusion" (Jörgensen 8).

In 1969, the fusion of these two elements appeared in Poniatowska's first major work, Hasta no verte Jesús mío, a critically acclaimed testimonial novel that won the prestigious Premio Mazatlán de Literatura the following year. Neither a purely factual nor a fictional text, the work purports to retell the life story of Josefina Bórquez (1900-1987), known as Jesusa Palancares in the text, an illiterate domestic worker living in a shanty on the outskirts of Mexico City. According to Cynthia Steele in Politics, Gender, and the Mexican Novel (1992), the angry shouts of Bórquez attracted the attention of Poniatowska in 1963 while the author was visiting an apartment building. The author arranged to visit the woman in her home every Wednesday for a year in spite of a relationship that the author describes as tumultuous: "Ella y yo teníamos una relación personal muy amistosa pero un poco conflictiva" (Poniatowska, "Testimonios" 158). Since Bórquez would not allow Poniatowska to use a tape recorder, a technique that the writer had used in earlier collaboration with the ethnographer Oscar Lewis, after each visit Poniatowska would return home to recreate on paper the conversations of the afternoon.

Although generally classified today as a testimonial novel, at its publication Hasta no verte Jesús mío sparked an ongoing critical debate regarding its classification within the framework of traditional literary genres due to its fusion of autobiographical and fictional elements. Jörgensen suggests that the power of the work emanates from this hybrid quality which permits the possibility of multiple readings emanating from the ambiguity of the novel's textual voice:

> These readings are inexhaustible precisely because they are founded on a productive confusion: a confusion which has its origin in a spilling and mixing (*fundere*) of languages and stories, and a

> further confusion of writing practices (fact, fiction, interview, invention). Hasta no verte Jesús mío remains an open book after almost twenty-five years and a book to which its writer and its readers return time and again, because it destabilizes individual identities (Jesusa Palancares, Josefina Bórquez, Elena Poniatowska) and crosses conventional literary boundaries. (Jörgensen 29)

By considering Hasta no verte Jesús mío as a testimonial novel, we can understand that by deliberately circumventing the paradigms of literary convention, Poniatowska creates a work that delivers a multiplicity of perspectives to the reader in order to develop an alternate voice for the disenfranchised women that Jesusa represents.

The metonymic application of Jesusa's experience to address the search for autonomy while operating as a marginalized individual supports the principal function of a testimonial work according to the interpretation provided by Elzbieta Sklodowska in Testimonio hispanoamericano (1992):

> El escritor inserta su testimonio en un espacio intertextual para entablar una polémica, para desmitificar desde una óptica de la lucha de clases los textos ya existentes, y en consecuencia, para reivindicar a los sectores de la población marginados por la llamada historiografía burguesa. (15)

By positioning the protagonist as a representative member of her class and/or gender during a transitional phase in history, the testimonial work permits a rereading of the "official" discourse and allows a previously undervalued interpretation to emerge. While a testimonial narrative cannot by its nature deliver an impartial perspective, it can provide an alternate philosophical view

which stands outside the patriarchal vision from the white, European, heterosexual tradition.

Biografía de un cimarrón (1966) by the Cuban writer Miguel Barnet stands as the prototype for this style of writing in Latin America. Based on a series of oral interviews conducted over a period of three years, Barnet's text relates the life story of Esteban Montejo, a Cuban of African descent who survives slavery, its abolition, and the Cuban War of Independence. Also a disciple of Oscar Lewis, Barnet applies a quasi-ethnographic approach to the story of Montejo in order to construct a metahistorical investigation of Cuban culture and institutions. Montejo's speech in the work reflects his ethnicity, a textual element that is reinforced by Barnet's paratextual notes, and by the focus on African-Cuban cultural practices as a recurrent textual theme. Although Montejo refuses to define himself as a representative of any ethnic group, he reveals strong personal affiliation with the African culture, which he views as undervalued by the white, European majority:

> Hoy, después de tanto tiempo, yo me pongo a pensar y la verdad es que llego a la conclusión de que el africano era un sabio de todas las materias. Hay quien dice que ellos eran del monte y se comportaban como animales. No falta un blanquito por ahí que lo diga. (Biografía 145)

In turn, Barnet develops a highly sympathetic alliance with Montejo's ethnic identity during the testimonial process:

> Yo creo que políticamente yo soy un negro también, en la medida que tengo que tomar conciencia de la cultura nacional, y la cultura de mi país ha sido muy enriquecido por la cultura africana. Identificarme con los problemas de los negros, no por exoticismo

> de identificarme con alguien que no tiene nada que ver conmigo, sino por asumir la cultura negra por su relación con la cultura cubana. (Bejel 51)

While Barnet's solidarity with his testimoniante reduces the possibility of inaccurately interpreting Montejo's story, the author does volunteer in the work's introduction that the text does not reflect a completely faithful recounting of the interviews with his interlocutor. Instead, Barnet admits to having paraphrased a large segment of his protagonist's statements, as well as having realigned the temporal chronology. He adds that he consciously elected to concentrate on the cultural practices related to agriculture, ceremonies, and celebrations, although in many cases his informant was not able to recall precisely his involvement in them. However, in an attempt to retain the credibility of the reader, he states that he verified certain facts, particularly those pertinent to important historical events such as the Ten Years' War and the War of Independence.

Barnet's work incorporates many of the intrinsic characteristics that shape the testimonial work as defined by Sklodowska: an intentional choice of the testimoniante that corresponds with authorial interests; the solidarity of the intellectual with the cause of the marginalized narrator, indeed, a "presunción de ser el otro;" the utilization of the individual case to illustrate a sociopolitical vision; the strategical premise of making the subaltern speak and be heard; and the presentation of the testimony as an active force linked to various forms of resistance (Testimonio 51). While the author must strive to preserve the sociopolitical vision within the orality of the work, he must also establish a literary presence in order to avoid the creation of a documentary or ethnographic narrative.

In the seminal work Orality and Literacy (1982), Walter J. Ong addresses the problematic nature of transcribing oral representations into literary texts. According to his analysis, in contrast with an oral story, a written text removes the spoken word from "a real existential present" (101) in which the speaker addresses a living person during a specific time, and in an authentic setting. Literary transcription removes from the story the paratextual markers such as gestures and tone of voice that serve as non-verbal indicators of the speaker's situation and intent. Additionally, oral language frequently produces discontinuous and inconsistent information that cannot be corrected even through the speaker's own retractions or denials. The inconsistencies remain embedded in the listener's mind as integral components of the complete oral story. Conversely, in a written text the reader does not have the knowledge that such errors have ever occurred. Ong also asserts that oral reconstructions of life-stories rarely follow a linear chronology, due to the very nature of memory which relies on the mnemonic devices of aggregation, redundancy, and digression in order to reframe past events. Therefore, the production of linear chronology in the relating of life-history must be recognized as an editorial decision of the author:

> You do not find climactic linear plots ready-formed in people's lives, although oral lives may provide material out of which such a plot may be constructed by ruthless elimination of all but a few carefully highlighted incidents. (Ong 143)

According to Ong, by the conscious reassembling of oral stories into a narrative that contains a clearly defined beginning, middle, and end, the author is able to formulate a single, coherent text. As a result of the ability to organize the written

text in solitude, "the writer can subject the unconscious to far greater control than the oral narrator" (148).

Ong characterizes communication as "intersubjective" (177). That is, in order to speak one must address another, and even prior to communication taking place, the speaker must anticipate the mindset of the person to be addressed: "Human communication is never one-way. Always, it not only calls for response but is shaped in its very form and content by anticipated response" (176). In the testimonial narrative, communication must pass through two intersubjective filters: first, the interlocutor shapes the information which he or she supplies to the transcriber in anticipation of an initial set of responses; secondly, the author consciously reformulates the oral testimony in anticipation of the projected response of the reader. Sklowdowska identifies this double reinterpretation of reality as a fundamental issue in the testimonial genre: "Los retratos de los testigos quedan doblemente retorcidos: primero por ellos mismos, luego por sus respectivos amanuenses" (Testimonio 137).

Like Barnet, Poniatowska freely admits that she utilized broad editorial powers in the framing of Hasta no verte Jesús mío:

> Utilicé las anécdotas, las ideas y muchos de los modismos de Jesusa Palancares pero no podría afirmar que es una transcripción directa de su vida . . . . Maté a las personas que me sobraban, eliminé cuanta sesión espiritualista pude, elaboré donde me pareció necesario, podé, cosí, recomendé, inventé. (qtd. in Steele 33)

One theoretical concern that results from such editorial modifications arises from the consequential impact on the story versus the discourse. The conflict between accurately portraying the experiences of the individual while establishing an

external literary framework often poses a critical risk in the establishment of discursive credibility: "el testimonio mediato corre el peligro de subordinar la auto-expresión del individuo al discurso persuasivo y didáctico del editor que con frecuencia se propone reescribir la historiografía valiéndose de la óptica de los marginados" (Sklodowska, Testimonio 100). However, in Hasta no verte Jésus mío, Poniatowska's social commentary emerges only peripherally, presented within a framework of domestic motifs that structure the protagonist's recollections.

Many critics recognize this telescoping tendency as an intertextual borrowing from the picaresque subgenre, "with its inversion of the patterns of idealistic fictions, its expansion of the social panorama, and its foregrounding of the antihero" (Friedman 3). Susan Steele maintains that the socioeconomic conditions of twentieth-century Mexico parallel those of sixteenth-century Spain in which the picaresque novel originated. She cites John Beverley's analysis that traces the development of capitalism in Golden Age Spain—an era that produced surplus populations that had been expelled from traditional forms of peasant life but had yet to be absorbed into a market economy. While the displacement from an agrarian environment into an urban setting offered a new sense of mobility, the lack of integration into the labor market also exposed the displaced individual to a greater risk of degradation. Steele likens the early twentieth-century displacement of Jesusa to that of her sixteenth-century counterpart, Lazarillo de Tormes, whom Beverley describes as

> . . . the product of that still familiar disintegration of the family unit as it passes from an agrarian milieu, where its functions and forms are consecrated by centuries of tradition, into the city life as a marginal subproletariate. His predicament presupposes a

> separation from agrarian community life and mutual aid systems like the *compadrazgo*; he is from puberty onwards, "on his own." As such he constitutes a new form of freedom and mobility, but also of degradation, made possible by market society: the individual. (qtd. in Steele 39)

However, in spite of their similar socioeconomic conditions, Friedman views the two protagonists as expressing two strikingly dissimilar functions: "If Lázaro's text breaks a silence to incriminate him, Jesusa's text breaks a silence to incriminate a repressive society" (171).

In fact, Hasta no verte Jesús mío displays many of the structural characteristics of the picaresque novel. Although elements of twentieth-century Mexican history serve as a backdrop for the work, the fundamental discourse centers on the life-story of the protagonist, Jesusa. Beginning and ending with a present-tense perspective, Poniatowska recounts Jesusa's story in twenty-nine segments that roughly follow a chronological order, with accounts from her childhood and youth, her adulthood, and finally old-age. Each segment relates a particular episode in the woman's recollection of her life, and the majority of the episodes stand independently of each other with the protagonist serving as the common thread, although certain secondary characters such as Jesusa's father and husband appear in multiple sections. As in the traditional picaresque work, the protagonist's life reflects a wandering existence based on the necessity to provide for the essentials for survival, particularly those of food and shelter. Jesusa undertakes a variety of professions, all in the lower quadrant of society—a nanny, a cook, a maid, a factory worker, a waitress, a soldier, and a laundress. Furthermore, the panorama of her occupational experiences places her in contact with a wide variety of individuals, although each exhibits enough

individuality to avoid the one-dimensional stereotypes often utilized in picaresque fiction.

Additionally, the work exhibits a number of stylistic and thematic characteristics typical of the picaresque genre which Timothy Compton summarizes in Mexican Picaresque Narrative: Periquillo and Kin (1997). Among these he includes: the dominant fatalistic attitudes of Jesusa who views her life as a series of tribulations preordained by God; physical violence, particularly abuses of women by men and children by adults; a single protagonist; first-person point of view; uncommon origins; the use of cunning, although rarely exercised by Jesusa, who survives primarily due to hard work; alienation, and by extension, silence; internal instability of the protagonist; a philosophical preoccupation; an unkind, chaotic world; and the quest for physical survival (101-104). Compton does distinguish several characteristics that separate the work from more traditional picaresque texts. These include a subdued narrative rhythm and a protagonist whose moral character displays limited evidence of a criminal nature.

Nevertheless, if we are to consider Hasta no verte Jesús mío as an example of picaresque fiction, we must first recognize the differences in the conception of the pícara by male and female writers. While both sets of writers portray the pícara as operating within a quest for autonomy in a chaotic world order and suffering isolation in an unresponsive environment, a number of significant traits separate the two perspectives. Traditionally, the male-written texts have viewed the pícara as a non-repentant, amoral, and mercenary figure who delights in the retelling of her story strictly for the amusement of the reader. While the male author constructs her history around a journey motif, the fundamental object of her quest lies in wealth avariciously accumulated through

the sexual trade of her body. Neglecting both her spiritual and maternal nature, the pícara shuns marriage as a constricting institution, marrying only when the situation provides economic security. Generally characterized as promiscuous, she demonstrates little maternal instinct and deliberately avoids the confinement of family and/or children.

In Spanish Picaresque Fiction (1993), Peter Dunn explains that in the picaresque novel as written by males, the author depicts the pícara as rejecting the conventional roles of the female protagonist in Spanish literature, those of the wife and the mistress. By acting outside the parameters of socially conditioned behavior roles, the pícara entices and exploits her male victims who are unable to see beyond the traditional feminine models. Dunn traces this depiction of the pícara's antisocial behavior to the limited opportunities extended to women by social mores:

> These conditions are clearly negative ones for the female protagonists; they always require some level of criminality, and all the pícaras resort to masks, disguises, denial of identity in the ingenious swindles they bait with sex in order to contend with the world of male authority and inherited wealth. (248)

Categorizing the development of the pícara as arising from long-held misogynistic attitudes, Dunn finds in the traditional depiction of the pícara "a comic mask by means of which a male author can impersonate the prevailing conceptions, and thus validate them in a tight little loop of demonstration" (249).

Friedman also views the majority of male-authored feminine variations of the picaresque novel as a ploy to pit conservative social norms against an antisocial female protagonist:

> In the case of the feminine variations, the complexity of the sign and the dubious authority of the picaresque narrator turn the union of the author and society against the individual into an uneven battle of the sexes. The women who would challenge the status quo are figuratively and then literally silenced. The men who write these texts underscore the doubling of discourse and the double standard. (xiii)

However, Friedman asserts that in the case of revisionist picaresque texts, the sympathetic alignment of the implied author and the narrator against oppressive socio-economic and political institutions may support the discursive proposition of challenging the order of the world within which the protagonist must operate. He explains that each picaresque work explores the bases of communication and the product of alienation via an ironic style of discourse in which the author complies with the status quo while his character simultaneously operates in opposition to it. In Friedman's estimation, the feminine picaresque novel may serve as a vehicle for the destruction of the social norms which confine the female protagonist through the use of irony:

> The feminine variations of the picaresque extend the illusion of control. Lowering the status of the speaker heightens the irony and increases the distance between desire and fulfillment. The antiheroine fuels the myth of male superiority while contributing to its destruction or deconstruction. She occupies a privileged place in the text that documents her strength and ingenuity, albeit misplaced, along with her downfall. The silenced voice bears a message of repression and a sign of hope. Marginal existence finds validity in the rhetoric of self-defeat. Every act of defiance is

> double-edged, for crime and punishment keep the antiheroine's identity alive. Losing the battle may be the first step in winning the war. (xi)

Picaresque texts written by women provide an alternate reading to the traditional picaresque works centered around a pícara whose narratives most commonly result in a reauthorization of suppression encoded in the voice of a female protagonist speaking from a patriarchal frame of reference, which Friedman categorizes as "the story of an absence, a gender-inflected sign of the duplicity of discourse, and a testament to the unliberated wor(l)d" (xiii).

In the case of a woman author presenting a pícara, a new and sympathetic voice often emerges in which the author frequently aligns herself with the character in a combined stance against social convention and in favor of nonconformity. However, the element of irony performs as integral a role in the feminine picaresque as in the more traditional forms of the subgenre. Often, the essence of the irony appears in the sympathetic treatment accorded the protagonist by the author, although the action of the text may refute a sympathetic reading.

If irony is characterized by a contradictory set of expectations, Poniatowska utilizes a number of paradoxical elements centered on Jesusa Palancares in order to establish ironic tensions within the work. The most obvious lies in the nature of the work itself—a written narrative of an oral discourse generated by an illiterate woman of the lower-class, recorded by an intermediary of the upper-class. Second, one must also consider the historical orientation of the work in which Jesusa's personal quest for autonomy is undertaken against the tableau of the Mexican revolution, a more national struggle for liberation whose principal goals and issues are related only to the

male members of Mexican society, thereby negating Jesusa's quest. Third, although Jesusa views life both as a struggle for physical survival and as a religious preparation for the next life, the harshness of her existence often frustrates her spiritual quest. The final and most extensively analyzed tension, centers on the discrepancies between Jesusa's speech and actions.

Through the fictional techniques of selection, placement, and recurrence, the author of an autobiographical work may invent not only the history of the protagonist but also create a reason for the retelling of the character's life story while emphasizing causal relationships and judging the character's moral fiber. For example, in Lazarillo de Tormes, Lázaro claims to recount his story as a personal contribution to literature as well as a response from a higher social authority. As the narrator recreates his life, he carefully chooses events and descriptions that depict him in a most positive manner and that diminish his antisocial actions. Exactly the opposite scenario occurs in the case of Jesusa, who in an epigraphical introduction explains that she has lived a meaningless existence in a world dominated by lies:

> Algún día que venga ya no me va a encontrar; se topará nomás con el puro viento. Llegará ese día y cuando llegue, no habrá ni quien le dé una razón. Y pensará que todo ha sido mentira. Es verdad, estamos aquí de a mentiras: lo que cuentan en el radio son mentiras, mentiras las que dicen los vecinos y mentira que me va a sentir. (8)

Claiming to have lived three times on the face of this earth, Jesusa views each reincarnation as a path of spiritual purification achieved through perpetual hardships. The tribulations of her current life cause her to remark that she surely must have acted badly in her second life: "¿Por qué vine de pobre esta vez si

antes fui reina? Mi deuda debe ser muy pesada ya que Dios me quitó a mis padres desde chica y dejó que viniera a abonar mis culpas sola como lazarina" (10). More significantly, Jesusa perceives little hope for an easier life in her fourth reincarnation, since she categorizes her current life as a moral morass: "Allá sólo Él tiene apuntado lo que debo. Y no es poco, porque en esta última reincarnación he sido muy perra, pegalona y borracha. Muy de todo. No puedo decir que he sido buena. Nada puedo decir" (13). However, the words of Jesusa reflect a much more negative valuation of her life than her actions portray. In spite of the double threat of being both poor and female, the Jesusa depicted by Poniatowska emerges as an inherently moral woman who nurtures and cares for other members of her oppressed class.

Jesusa's attitudes toward autonomy and domesticity also manifest the same sort of contradictory ideological split. While food, shelter and protection play a significant role in the traditional picaresque novel, they constitute a response to immediate physical needs, disconnected from the protagonist's essential identity. In contrast, many of the textual references to the same elements in Hasta no verte Jesús mío reflect underlying, fundamental forces that shape Jesusa's identity both as a woman and as an autonomous individual. While occasionally embracing the independence afforded by adopting certain masculine behaviors, Jesusa never completely rejects traditional feminine domestic roles and at times utilizes them to bolster her position of authority.

Four domestic motifs thread the novel: space, food, domestic tasks, and maternity. Each theme presents issues relevant to the common experiential life of women while conveying the gender connotations of social role assignments. The private and subservient female domestic role excludes women from

participation in the inherently public and creative male role as Jeanette Cooperman explains in The Broom Closet (1999):

> Housework keeps women intimately bound up with the deepest and most fundamental parts of life, yet excluded from the sexual and economic passageways of power, and trivialized by the profane, as opposed to the sacred, nature of their work. (10)

One result of the gendered roles lies in the contradictory and precarious position that women seeking autonomy must negotiate—is it possible to achieve a liberated female identity without rejecting the écoutrements of domesticity? In Hasta no verte Jesús mío, elements of domesticity play a paradoxical role in Jesusa's development by ironically empowering and restricting her as she responds to the agents of socialization during the various stages of her life.

Jesusa's memories reflect a particularly dark view of childhood in which an absent mother, a dysfunctional family, and enforced domestic labor contribute to shape an understanding of social position and gender roles. In an analysis of Nellie Campobello's Cartucho (1931), a work that also centers on family relationships during the Revolution, Doris Meyer observes that Campobello rejects the master discourse by challenging autobiographical narratives in the patriarchal tradition that generally represent childhood as "an idyllic prelude to the narrator's heroic destiny of preserving an established way of life" (Meyer 58). Poniatowska's presentation of her protagonist's recollections displays the same discursive tendency by utilizing the perspective of the child as a means of examining underlying social realities. Jesusa initiates the revisiting of her childhood by recounting the death of her mother at the age of five, and she will carry forward a number of issues that will follow the child throughout her development. The first deals with the devaluation of the female, as she

describes the unkind conditions of her mother's burial, in which the corpse is treated as a little more than refuse to be eliminated: "No sé si la causa era la pobreza o porque así se usaba, pero el entierro de mi madre fue muy pobre" (17). Demonstrating little concern for the mother's remains and even less regard for ritual, the funeral-goers wrap the body in a petate, throw her into the grave, and begin covering the corpse with dirt while the young daughter looks on. The young Jesusa leaps into the grave and attempts to cover her dead mother's head with her dress in a futile effort to prevent dirt from covering the woman's face. Unnoticed by the mourners, she remains with the mother, stating "Quería que me toparan allí con mi mamá" (17). The mother's death symbolizes the end of the process of maternal socialization, the unspoken, ritualistic intergenerational education of domestic values that Cooperman describes as traveling along "the 'motherlines,' with explicit and veiled messages alike passing from mother to daughter" (11).

In contrast to the strong bond she feels toward the mother, Jesusa describes her relationship with her father as detached and nonpaternalistic. The one exception that endures in her memory occurs when the father crafts the only toy that the girl will ever own, a stuffed animal created from the carcass of a squirrel, dried and stuffed with sawdust until it became a hardened shell that she carried like a doll, although her "manos rebotaban de lo dura que la sentía" (19). In reconstructing the process by which her father fabricates the toy, the mature Jesusa diminishes its emotional value by interjecting a much more utilitarian perspective of the squirrel and its meat via a costumbrista description of a regional recipe:

> En la Mixtequilla se come. Se le echa sal, pimienta y ajo, y vinagre y limón, se abre el animal de patas y se mete en unas estaquitas

> para que el color se vaya dorando al fuego. La ardilla sabe retesabrosa, sabe a ardilla y es muy buena. (19)

Jesusa remarks that this uncharacteristically paternal action of her father occurred while her mother was still living and that afterward he never again treated her as a child: "Después nunca me volvió a hacer nada. Nunca más. Se hizo el sordo o todas las cosas le pasaron como chiflonazos" (18).

Even prior to the death of the mother, Jesusa's childhood behavior reflects both an aversion to typical feminine pastimes and a precocious fatalistic attitude; she engages instead in games of war, marbles, and violence, "a puras cosas de hombre, puro matar de lagartijas a piedrazos, puro reventar iguanas contra las rocas" (20). She robs and sells eggs from bird nests and guts small iguanas whose organs she mixes with salt and serves to the boys of the neighborhood. Killing the small creatures causes her little remorse since, as she reflects, "[t]odos nos hemos de morir tarde o temprano" (20). She expresses an attraction for the most basic elements of Nature, especially the soil whose texture and color fascinates the young child. In a description that linguistically moves from simple to complex verbal constructions, Jesusa's words reconstruct the loss of childhood innocence; from the child's perspective, the soil appears white, revealing God's effort to reflect himself in his creation, but with exposure to evil the soil assumes a chthonic nature:

> Por eso los niños chiquitos juegan con la tierra porque la ven muy bonita, blanca y a medida que crecen el demonio se va apoderando de ellos, de sus pensamientos y les va transformando las cosas, ensuciándoselas, cambiándoles el color, encharcándoselas. (19)

As we will see, the commentary on the forces of evil foreshadows the path of Jesusa's life as significantly as her final words regarding the end of her childhood following her mother's death: "Mi mamá *no me regañó ni me pegó* nunca. Era morena igual a mí, chaparrita, gorda y cuando se murió *nunca volví a jugar*" (20, emphasis added).

Jesusa's statement signals not only the end of childhood, but also marks the imposition upon her of the engendered feminine roles of early twentieth-century Mexico. The ensuing narrative portrays women as disposable domestic commodities whose principal value lies in their service as providers of childcare, meals, and sexual service, as Jesusa quickly learns when her father brings home another woman only eight days after the burial of her mother. The narrator characterizes the faceless and nameless woman as one of many, a mere possession of the father: "No me acuerdo cómo se llamaba. Era una mujer como todas las mujeres. Eso sí quién sabe dónde la conoció mi papá, pero la tuvo mucho tiempo" (20). Although her father classifies the usurper as a maid to care for the children, when Jesusa realizes the threat of the woman's presence, she precociously schemes to undermine her domestic authority by insisting upon sleeping in her father's hammock and by insisting that her father continue to groom her. She finally chases her competitor from the home by pelting her with rocks when the woman returns after having spent the grocery money on other men at the cantina. Steele characterizes Jesusa's aggressive behavior as a reflection of distorted gender roles precipitated by the socioeconomic conditions of the period:

> To a large extent Jesusa adopted the role of matriarchal protector and avenger to Felipe Palancares' role of irresponsible father and innocent victim of opportunistic, scheming women. These are

> gender roles which Fromm and Maccoby found to be prevalent among the residents of the mestizo village that they studied; the psychologists suggest that the male ineffectuality is a symptom of the disintegration of the traditional patriarchal system, in the context of the rural pauperization brought about by the Díaz dictatorship. In its extreme form this syndrome alternates with "sadistic machismo" (leading to the sort of domestic violence which we find in the Palancares household). (46)

In spite of her tenacious stance, Jesusa finds herself facing another competitor for her father's attentions, one whose presence he explains: "Mira, hija, es forzoso traer una mujer que te cuide, que te expulgue y que te bañe porque tengo que ir a trabajar" (22). After months of battle, this woman also leaves, and Jesusa remarks, "[p]ero ni mi nombre supo" (23).

If the sense of exclusion can be measured by familial roles or the lack thereof, inclusion can likewise be expressed through shared family experience, especially through the provision of food, a basic dynamic, as Cooperman explains:

> When we begin to decode our processing of food, the messages reveal social affiliations and power struggles; display hierarchical or consensus based patterns; show inclusion and exclusion; indicate boundaries and the negotiated transcendence of those boundaries. Because food reflects and reinforces these dynamics, it plays a crucial role in family life. (59)

In antithesis to the sense of exclusion felt by Jesusa during the periods when alien feminine presences invade the household, as the family travels to the port of Salina Cruz, Jesusa rediscovers a sense of belonging along with the liberation

to live as a free spirit. She reflects on her nostalgic reminiscences of their excursions to the beach. In contrast to earlier episodes, these descriptions of the freshness of the ocean and sea life utilize the imperfect tense, suggesting an emotional bond to this particular moment of the young girl's life. Much of the narration revolves around nightly ventures with the father to hunt for turtles and their eggs, an activity described with magical overtones that relate the joy of the union between the father and daughter:

> Nosotros íbamos a pescar en la tarde y en las noches de luna para ver la playa limpia. De día no salen las tortugas. A mi papá le gustaba llevarnos porque nos dábamos muy bien cuenta a la hora en que las tortugas regresaban al mar arrastrando la arena y corríamos a sacar los huevos. Mi papá se metía con todo y ropa. Yo también me metía a ayudarlos vestida así como estoy y me mojaba enterita. (24)

Freed from the enclosed patriarchal space of the home, the liberating environment of the ocean allows Jesusa the opportunity to reestablish the emotional connectivity with her father that had been destroyed by paternal authority, the tedium of structured domestic existence, and the mutation of the family structure.

The preparation of the food by the father also redefines his paternal role, and the narration focuses on the process of preparing and eating the catch which was undertaken outdoors, cooking over an open fire, a process that Jesusa recreates with great detail:

> Otras veces, mi papá los guisaba, embrollo decía él. Ponía una olla con jitomate, ajo, cebolla, y ya que estaba todo bien sazonado

nos batía un montón de huevos de tortuga en la olla hirviendo. O nos daba de comer pescado; a pescado por cabeza. (25)

The experiential and temporal connotations of the food are affirmed by the elderly Jesusa, once again isolated from the bonds of community, who metaphorically contrasts her current position by accentuating the freshness of the seafood during the days on the beach and disparaging the dead oysters sold in the capital: "Qué alimento tienen si ya están muertos?" (24).

Jesusa's memories also focus on the ocean's symbolically purifying power: "Me bañaba como a las cinco de la mañana o las cinco de la tarde, no en el rayo del sol. Nada más esperábamos a que la ola nos mojara y nos quitara la suciedad" (25). For her the salt water also contains the force of life, and she vividly recalls the impact of the waves crashing over her small body: "No, el chiste es bañarse en la playa donde la ola que ve uno que se levanta en blanco y lo tapa por entero, resistir el golpe del agua en el cuerpo, vestido o encuerado; para sentir el agua viva" (25). Jesusa allows herself to be submerged in the sea, a force typically considered feminine in that as an element of Nature it remains unconstrained by a patriarchally defined system, and maternal in that it suggests a metaphorical association with the womb.

In contrast, when the family returns to a house of four walls, they find themselves entrapped in habitually dysfunctional patterns. When viewed from the most basic emotional level, the home should provide a refuge from chaos, a locus of nurturing and protection. As Cooperman suggests, the home "occupies symbolic as well as actual space" that should represent safety, security and sanctuary (109). Instead, the chaos from the outside world intervenes, evidenced by physical abuse and enforced labor which Felipe appears powerless to repress. Jesusa witnesses the abuses of women within her own household as

her oldest brother returns with a sixteen year-old wife, Ignacia, whom he beats incessantly while ordering her to serve him. Although Jesusa defends her sister-in-law from one brutal beating, Ignacia in turn assails the young girl for her failure to learn to prepare tortillas. As Jesusa explains, the art of cooking runs contrary to her desire to run free: "Quería que me enseñara a hacer tortillas y yo estaba acostumbrada a andar corriendo. Como desde chiquilla no me hallé sino con la libertad, todo mi gusto era andar sola en el campo o arriba de un cerro" (28).

Jesusa's view of women as powerless victims is affirmed by the treatment of her elder sister Petra, who has been kidnapped and held by a railroad laborer for three years until a neighbor and police intervene. The neighbor, Cayetano, and Petra eventually reunite with the family in Salina Cruz, but Petra's rescue proves futile since her father forces her into domestic servitude, and Cayetano attempts to murder her as she sleeps. The incident poses an enigma to Jesusa who views Petra as a docile and subservient victim; it also serves as the final blow to Petra who dies from the scare according to her sister: "Se la derramó la bilis. Nomás fue secando y la cara se le puso amarilla como un limón; es el color que ella agarró. Se murió de susto, váyase a saber, pero un día la encontramos tendida" (32).

During her childhood, Jesusa also discovers her social position bound to a domestic context, symbolically situated within prison walls. Felipe marries the daughter of a prison rectora, and Jesusa finds herself symbolically and physically imprisoned through the machinations of her stepmother, Evarista. She forces Jesusa to live in an apartment within the prison walls and dominates her with an overpowering routine of domestic servitude. The text first emphasizes the confining and dominant space of the feudalistic structure:

> Era una prisión a la antigua, con una bóveda muy grande, larga, larga y a la mitad tenía un enrejado y luego más rejas y rejas hasta llegar a la puerta que daba a la calle, pero antes de la calle era la pieza en que vivíamos. Así es de que no había por donde fugarse. Había más rejas que presas. (34)

The imposing physical scale of the structure diminishes the power of the female prisoners who are spatially arranged so that those serving longer sentences inhabit cells in the interior of the prison. In a reversal of the Panoptical concept, they remain isolated from observation and any form of human contact, unable to leave their cells. According to Foucault, the overwhelming size of the premodern institutional buildings serves as a visual testimony to the ascription of power: "the art of building corresponded to the need to make power, divinity, and might manifest" (Power/Knowledge 148).

Foucault maintains that the techniques of power operate most effectively on selective groups previously conditioned to obey and who are "situated outside the circuits of productive labour: the insane, prisoners, and now children. For them labour, insofar as they have to perform it, has a value which is chiefly disciplinary (161)." Disciplinary labor, as Foucault describes it, places the individual within a social hierarchy and, through its exertion, systematizes social expectations:

> It measures in quantitative terms and hierarchizes in terms of value of abilities, the level, the "nature" of individuals. It introduces through this "value-giving" measure, the constraint of a conformity that must be achieved. Lastly, it traces the limit that will define difference in relation to all other differences . . . . (Foucault Reader 195)

Within the prison, Jesusa's social position and role become clearly defined. Only eight or nine years old at the time, Jesusa assumes daily tasks as monumental and daunting as the prison itself. She works from four in the morning until seven or eight each evening. Indeed, the girl becomes as much a prisoner as the inmates, enslaved in an exacting system of cooking and cleaning, governed by a rigid schedule that isolates her from the rest of society. Narrative descriptions utilizing parallel descriptors and actions accentuate the promethean routine facing Jesusa in a process that assumes a ritualistic dimension:

> Se enjuagaban y se enjarraban con cenizas y tenía que mojar toda la ceniza a que quedara bien pegadita como cemento, parejita, muy blanca. Aquellos braseros se veían muy bonitos para poner la olla a cocer o el café o lo que se fuera a poner; a aquellas piedras muy bien lavadas con escobeta, que quedan limpiecitas, relucientes, les dicen tenamaxtles. Y ya encendía uno la lumbre y mientras hervía el café agarraba la escoba y a barrer; y a para las cinco de la mañana estaba hecho el café, nos desayunábamos y a misa. (35)

The descriptions of Jesusa's labors in the prison kitchen mark a point of transformation, a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood. During childhood, the elements of Nature provided her with rudimentary toys:

> Como mi papá no tenía medio de comprarme nada, mis juguetes eran unas piedras, una flecha, una honda para aventar pedradas y canicas que él mismo pulía. Buscaba mi papá una piedra que fuera gruesa, dura, una piedra azul, y con ella redondeaba y limaba otras piedritas porosas y salían las bolitas a puro talle y talle. (19)

Jesusa recalls the power of the toys to release her soul to fantasy: "Y mientras gritaban [las piranolas] yo fantaseaba, pensaba no sé qué cosas que ya se me olvidaron o me ponía a cantar" (19). Entrapped in the prison kitchen, Jesusa's view undergoes an acute alteration: the stones of the hearth serve a purely functional role and their polishing must be undertaken as a laborious daily routine; the sticks now serve as tool of punishment, "[y] esta señora se dedicó a enseñarme a hacer quehacer; me pegó mucho con una vara de membrillo, sí, pero lo hacía por mi bien, para que yo me encarrera" (35); her voice now silenced by isolation, "[a]sí es que yo nunca tuve campo de andar jugando ni de andar platicando, ni me acostumbraron a que anduvieron metiéndome en las cosas, si todo era puro trabajar desde chica" (37).

The differentiation of gender roles surfaces as well. While Jesusa's brother, Emiliano, enjoys the privilege and liberty of accompanying the father on his rounds as the prison sereno, Jesusa senses the disparate treatment of the genders, remarking that the "madrastra lo trató bien [a Emiliano], igual que a todos los muchachos de esa casa" (37). Jesusa leads a dramatically distinct existence, separated from her father and brother. She toils long hours in the kitchen during the day and must sleep with a murderess at night, one whose cell lies "en la cárcel del fondo, en el último enrejado" (34). The prisoner, severed from contact with the outside world, arranges with the mother of Evarista to allow the young girl to sleep inside her cell to alleviate her fears; as a result, each evening the madrastra-abuela locks her into the woman's cell. The girl and the prisoner hold equal status in the family's eyes, to the extent that when an earthquake devastates the prison, all abandon the site without thought of freeing the girl from captivity until the tremors have almost completely subsided.

Via her peculiar socialization inside the prison, Jesusa experiences a complete indoctrination in the feminine roles prescribed by the Mexican cultural system. When she leaves its confines, she passively accepts the role of an indentured domestic servant, first to an acquaintance of her mamá-abuela, and then to the daughter of the acquaintance. Forced by necessity, she assimilates her life inside the jail to her existence outside its walls. Jesusa's words address the continuing isolation brought about by unrelenting labor and the minimal amount of communication in her life as an eleven year-old child. Poniatowska heightens her sense of detachment by placing the linguistic emphasis on negative constructions: "cada quien con su quehacer y nada de platicar cosas; ni que les duele ni que no les duele; uno no sabe nada, ni ellas tampoco. Ninguno dice nada. Nadie tiene que andar diciendo nada" (49). Sleeping on the balcony with the dog, without salary, and forced to wash her solitary dress every evening so as to appear presentable the following day, Jesusa fatalistically resigns herself to the conditions for which she has been trained: "Mi papá sabe Dios dónde estaba. Por eso me dediqué a buscarme la vida como Dios me diera a entender. Si no, ¿cómo comía yo?" (51)

The theme of Jesusa's fictive maternity, a motif which emerges throughout the novel, first appears during this period. Still a child, Jesusa finds herself in a quasi-maternal role when she serves as the nanny to five children, a class-structured domestic role particular to the indígena and mestizo poor. Working without a salary, Jesusa characterizes her job as non-demanding, although the depiction of her routine would indicate otherwise. Even though her only role involves caring for the children, her tasks include taking the young ones to the park and the older ones to school, as well as washing and ironing their diapers and clothing. Operating from a pseudo-maternal position that is socially rather

than biologically defined, Jesusa treats the children as real-life dolls; she is fascinated with the actions of bathing and dressing them, changing their clothing each morning, again at noon, and twice each afternoon. The styling of the children's hair, which she undertakes with ritualistic attention, becomes a source of pride to her: "Se mojaba el pelo en agua de linaza, se enrollaba con un carrizo y ya salía el bucle redondo, botijón, tiesecito. ¡Pelos lisos no me gustaban, lacios, no, no, porque se ven muy mal!" (55). Since Jesusa is a child herself, she cannot penetrate the adult world, leaving the children to provide her with the only outlet of communication, since she feels that her "único amigo era el metate" (56).

Jesusa's break with the monotony of domestic servitude coincides with the intrusion of the Mexican Revolution into her life. Elements of the war appear at earlier points in the work, for example during the earthquake episode when the narrator links the occurrence of the natural disaster to Madero's capture of the capital, or with the events that lead to the death of her brother, Emiliano. However, chapters seven through twelve accentuate the war's ramifications within Jesusa's existence, and by extension, demonstrate the impact on a large percentage of the Mexican women during these tumultuous times of political and social upheaval. The role of the Mexican woman during the Revolution has received widely disparate interpretations, ranging from the historical and/or romanticized view of the soldadera to the strong maternal figure of Nellie Campobello's fiction. However, most historians concur that that chaos of the Revolution redefined and loosened traditional feminine behaviors, due to the emancipated roles that women assumed during the period. Debra Castillo's discussion of the revolutionary era in Easy Women (1998) addresses the liberalization of the feminine role during the period from 1910 to 1920, a time that

promoted an emancipatory attitude brought about by female participation in prostitution and quasimilitary efforts:

> Whatever the exact numbers of female soldiers, soldaderas, and actual prostitutes (given the confusion of war, any estimates can only be more or less speculative), there is general agreement that, in that period of tremendous social upset, women were largely on the loose and on their own in Mexico. (4-5)

Jesusa's recollections center on her participation as a soldadera to the Carrancista troops. The soldadera effectively served a domestic role, acting as a personal servant, cook, and concubine to the Revolutionary soldier, especially within the federal ranks. A conscripted man entering the infantries frequently transported his woman and family with him, often to the detriment of military efficiency, in order that they might "share his sufferings and misfortunes in the field rather than be left alone and helpless" (Rutherford 296). While oral history often glamorizes the lifestyle of the soldadera, research provided by Elizabeth Salas in *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military* (1990) demonstrates that Jesusa's portrayal of her military experience closely mirrors an authentic, although personalized, depiction of the variety of roles performed by the soldadera during the Revolution. The first and foremost task of the soldadera as it originated during the regime of Porfirio Díaz centered on providing domestic support to the soldiers of the lower ranks, a necessity since Mexican armies did not offer commissary services until the mid-1920s:

> The soldaderas became the semiofficial quartermaster corps for the lower ranks of Indian and poor men. Women from these groups attended to their needs as camp followers. The major role of the soldaderas in this peacetime army was to feed the men. The

> soldiers were considered day laborers and paid wages every few days or so. They would give their wages to the soldaderas, who would purchase food and prepare it. The soldaderas served the meals much like the caterers who competed with each other for business. (36)

During the Mexican Revolution, the domestic tasks of the soldadera continued as the primary role: "The most important duty the soldadera performed was finding and preparing food. Soldiers often referred to the soldaderas' 'food-gathering abiiities'" (Salas 44). The ability to provide meals endowed women with heightened social status as they assumed control of foraging and preparing meals for their husbands and their friends. Salas cites a Villista officer, General Manuel Mendoza, who noted that "with the Carrancistas the women supervised the food distribution" (44).

The perilous economic condition of the soldadera, whose existence depended heavily on the economic support of and attachment to a soldier, often led to competition between the women who sought men with greater sources of money or possessions: "If a soldier or officer wanted a woman to be his soldadera he had to show her either money or valuables, or perhaps try to woo her. Even if he took her by force . . . in time she could leave him for another soldier-employer who caught her fancy or had more money" (Salas 69). Salas further discovered that this system of bartering often led to distortions of marital and family relationships, in her study of nine women who served during the conflict: "Bitter family and conjugal relationships characterized the early life of all the soldaderas in my sample" (71).

The majority of the soldaderas found themselves coerced into service due to the enforced expectations of their conscripted husbands or relatives, as

victims of abduction and rape, or simply in an effort to procure food. However, a small minority opted to join the military movement of their own volition. Salas refers to Maud Kenyon-Kingdon's observations on the nature of these women: "Through the various towns and villages, lying in the direct route of the soldier's march, there was found a class of women with the inordinate love of wanderlust" (41). A small percentage of these women adopted a thoroughly masculine role, dressing as men, hiding evidence of their gender, carrying weapons, and participating in military incursions. Other women, widowed during the action, elected to assume their husband's military role in order to ensure their own physical survival. In Jesusa's testimony, the reader finds an authentication of the soldadera experience, but more importantly, her recollections address the limits placed on her autonomy by interpersonal relationships—as daughter, wife, and compañera—especially through the domestic motifs that typified female participation in the Revolution.

The first examination of Jesusa's revolutionary involvement deals with the relationship with her father, now an infantry soldier for the Carrancistas, and with her fellow soldaderas. She follows her father, carrying on one arm a basket with the kitchenware necessary for preparing and serving meals, a replication of the earlier actions of her mother, who likewise followed Felipe with little more than her petate, metate, and the few rags of clothing that she possessed. However, the shift to the use of first-person plural serves as a linguistic marker to indicate Jesusa's sense of community both with her father and with the other members of the regiment. She forms a strong affiliation with the other soldaderas, an anomaly given her previously antagonistic experiences with other women. Although one might expect the use of nosotras in describing her affiliation with the soldaderas, Jesusa employs the feminine form of the pronoun infrequently,

preferring the masculine nosotros that would imply a larger sense of solidarity with the troops as a single entity.

In fact, the text delineates a clearly defined, gendered division of roles. The men participate in the actual battles while the women observe only from a distance, serving as the vanguard, scouting enemy troop strength, and establishing camp for those who survive the battle: "Por lo regular las mujeres no estábamos pendientes del combate. Íbamos pensando en qué hacerles de comer" (67). Reconnoitering provisions at each site, Jesusa's memories impart a fondness for the meals prepared by the women, meticulously recounting the preparation of the foods appropriated from the jacales abandoned by the civilians:

> Nos subimos a agarrar gallinas. Estaban en sus estacas y las pelamos así calientes, recién matadas. Luego las tatemamos, las lavamos bien, les sacamos las tripas y cortamos los pedazos. Allí nos encontramos el recaudo y las pusimos a remojar con ajo y vinagre y pimienta y sal, luego colocamos una cazuela grande con manteca en la lumbre, echamos las gallinas a que se doraran y el pellejo hasta chisporroteaba . . . . (67)

The narrative use of asyndeton and the repetition of the first-person plural subject accentuates the recollection of adventure, altruism, and community that permeates the experience of cooking, removing its routine domestic components and equating the sensations of hunger and taste to the liberated nature of her existence, particularly in contrast with her current status: "No he vuelto a comer gallina tan rica como esa vez. Era comida a la carrera y seguro me supo tan rica porque teníamos mucha hambre. Ahora, como ya no tengo hambre, nada me sabe bueno. . ." (67).

During this period, Jesusa also renegotiates the relationship with her father from an aggressive and empowered stance, bolstered by the support of her fellow soldaderas. Continuing to serve as Felipe's surrogate wife, she recognizes her father's inherent need of women, but she nevertheless refuses to bear the abuses brought about by his dalliances or to share his salary over which she has habitually assumed control:

> Mi papá era hombre, a fuerza tenía que ser enamorado. Siempre tuvo sus mujeres y eso sí, yo siempre les pegué porque eran abusivas, porque eran golosinas, porque se quedaban botadas de borrachas, porque se gastaban el dinero de mi papá . . . .(68)

When Jesusa suffers continuous mistreatment at the hands of one of the mistresses, La Guayabita, the soldaderas of the regiment threaten to punish the girl themselves if she refuses to respond to the woman's publicly abusive behavior: "Si no le contestas a esta mujer nosotras te damos el caballo" (68). The women lend Jesusa both physical and emotional support as she finds La Guayabita and attacks her relentlessly with the heel of her shoe. At the same time, her former hombrada attitude reemerges: "yo más bien quería hacerle de hombre, alzarme las greñas, ir con muchachos a correr gallo, a cantar con guitarra cuando a ellos le daban su libertad" (70).

While acknowledging her developing autonomy, Jesusa also recognizes the negative categorization of assertive women within her society, especially in contrast with societal attitudes towards males, and in particular with reference to her father:

> Allá en la corporación me comencé a volver perra. No era que celara a mi papá, sino que ya no lo quería. Lo quise mucho de chica, pero ya después de grande, se dedicaba a las mujeres y

> para qué son semejantes visiones. Dicen que nosotras somos putas, pero ¿a poco los hombres no son putos siempre con el animal de fuera, a ver a quién se lo meten? (78)

Newly empowered, Jesusa severs the ties that bind her to her father by refusing to serve as his domestic servant and aligns herself with a woman whom she considers truly liberated, the general's daughter, who, unlike the other soldaderas, participates in the military side of the conflict—bearing arms, planning battle strategies, and delivering orders to the troops.

Ultimately, the general quashes Jesusa's steps toward independence by marrying the fifteen year-old to Pedro Aguilar, a soldier two years her senior whose advances Jesusa repeatedly rebuffs. In keeping with the tradition of the pícara, Jesusa's plans do not include marriage, especially after eight months of independence from her father and a mature understanding of the status of married women within her own household. In spite of her vehement opposition, the General marries her to Pedro in a misguided attempt to protect the unattached Jesusa. Ironically, Aguilar's treatment of his wife proves brutal rather than protective. He isolates her from social contact and holds her in total confinement, in retaliation for Jesusa's previous rejections of his interest: "Pedro Aguilar me llevó a su casa. Allí me encerró y luego se fue a parrandear" (84). Stripped of her roles both as a wife and homemaker, the new bride remains a virtual prisoner, without knowledge of her husband's whereabouts, and whose only contact with the outside world comes from Pedro's assistant who delivers food.

According to sociologist Georg Simmel, ". . . the power of the woman in relation to the man is exhibited in consent and refusal . . . . Once she has decided, in either direction, her power is ended" (141). Although Jesusa's

choice is made by proxy, the result reflects her total loss of autonomy. Aguilar's domination extends to all aspects of Jesusa's life, even to the point of forbidding her to remove her clothes to sleep. In one of the rare allusions to sexual activity in the work, the text depicts a young woman at the service of the sexual needs of her husband, devoid of any element of affection, serving the role of a prostitute rather than a wife:

> Yo nunca me quité los pantalones, nomás me los bajaba cuando él me ocupaba, pero que dijera yo, me voy a acostar como en mi casa, me voy a desvestir porque me voy a cobijar, eso no, tenía que traer los puestos a la hora que tocaran: "¡Reunión, alevante!" (86)

The elderly Jesusa recognizes from her life experiences that exchanges of affection commonly occur between lovers, but she attributes the lack of these gestures to Pedro's serious nature, which causes him to engage in sexual activities with a purely opportunistic approach: "El tenía con qué y lo hacía y ya" (86). She fails to recognize or perhaps to verbalize the sexual encounters as another of Pedro's ploys to demonstrate manipulation and control totally unrelated to sex, since he receives numerous sexual favors outside the marriage.

In an additional effort to detach her from her sexuality and to bolster his male authority, Pedro demonstrates his control over his wife by degrading Jesusa and reducing her to a subhuman condition, stripping her of any vestige of femininity, forbidding her to socialize, to wear clean clothing, even to bathe or groom herself. Jesusa's condition reflects a particularly loathsome state of filth that places her within the realm of the abject:

> En poder de mi marido nunca me bañé porque ¿con quién andaba quedando bien? Yo no podía voltear a ver a nadie ni me podía

> peinar. No tenía ni escarpidor, me rompió dos escarmenadores y hasta una estregadera de cuando era soltera. Si de chiquilla andaba mugrosa y piojosa, con mi marido se me agusanó la cabeza. El me pegaba, me descalabraba y con las heridas y la misma sangre me enllagué y se me acabó el pelo que era largo y rizado. (96)

In contrast to the strong denunciations that the mature narrator uses to condemn Pedro, at the time of her ordeals, the young soldadera remains immersed in passivity, voiceless, silenced by fear of her husband and her own prideful refusal to allow him to discover the extent of her suffering. Outside the sphere of authority, she elects not to share her miseries with the other women of the regiment, themselves the objects of habitual spousal violence, choosing to bury her miseries inside her own consciousness: "Nunca aclaré nada. Esas son cosas de uno, de adentro, como los recuerdos. Los recuerdos no son de nadie. Nomás de uno. O como los años que sólo a uno le hacen" (98-99).

When Jesusa finally speaks, she does so from a masculine stance and with a masculine authority, challenging Pedro's dominance with an armed pistol. Claiming to have heard the voice of God directing her to defend herself, Jesusa redistributes the balance of authority in the marriage, blessing the Revolution that has offered the opportunity to develop as an autonomous individual. Although accepting Pedro's continuing infidelities, from the day of the challenge forward, she negotiates the relationship with an eye toward her own interests, an attitude adopted from her earlier experiences with Felipe: "Siguió con las mujeres pero conmigo fue distinto porque me hizo muy pelonera, muy perra. Y con los años me fue aumentando el instinto de dar antes de que me den" (102).

Jesusa's post-military experiences demonstrate a return to the tightly paternalistic mores loosened by the Revolution. Pedro dies on the battlefield, allowing Jesusa to escape his domination and his most ominous threat: "Cuando Pedro se quedó con el corazón atravesado yo no había cumplido dieciocho años. El decía que cuando la viera perdida, me mataría. Quería mandarme por delante pero no se lo hizo. Aquí estoy todavía dando guerra" (132). Although equipped to survive the rigors of battle, Jesusa finds herself unprepared for civilian life—robbed of her possessions, penniless, and without food or shelter on the streets of the Capital. President Carranza refuses the widow's pension due her, and his remarks reflect a patriarchal view of women: "Si estuvieras vieja, te pensionaba el gobierno, pero como estás muy joven no puedo dar orden de que te sigan pensionando. Cualquier día te vuelves a casar y el muerto no puede mantener al otro marido que tengas" (136). Jesusa's experience reflects the prevalent treatment of the soldadera, whom the government inherently perceived as the property of a male. Salas explains that the government's perspective emphasized the view of the soldadera as primarily that of a wife or other female relative to a soldier, so that "the work they did in the camps became equated with the housework that all women did for their husbands and families without compensation" (51). Consequentially, the soldadera found herself ineligible for veterans' benefits, and those widows that successfully obtained pensions commonly received only sufficient money to buy food. In Jesusa's case, as a result of her failure to receive widow's benefits, the young woman spends ten months sleeping on the floor in the home of a poverty-stricken acquaintance. Pride does not permit her to accept food from her benefactor, and hunger becomes the most important factor of her existence. Jesusa's lack of even a rudimentary education places her in a perilous position. Illiteracy combined with

an inability to communicate with others prevent her from successfully locating the work necessary for her survival:

> Según mi pensamiento, iba a conseguir trabajo, pero como no le hablaba a nadie ni preguntaba porque no estaba acostumbrada ahablarle a la gente de aquí—y hasta la fecha soy como burra—me quedaba en las mismas. Nomás sabía hablar dentro de mí, quedito me hablaba yo y las ideas me daban vueltas adentro como pelotitas y me atolondraban. (137)

Eventually aided by another poor woman of the neighborhood who befriends her, Jesusa locates a domestic position. However, she loses it due to her poor health and does not receive the wages due her for eighteen months of arduous labor. After enduring a second demeaning domestic position, she obtains a factory position, the first of many that allows her to lead a modest and independent existence.

After experiencing deprivation for so many months, Jesusa measures her financial good fortune by describing at length the food and shelter that her salary provides:

> Renté un cuarto de puerta para afuera y para adentro con un brasero y una azotehuela . . . . Seguía durmiendo sobre el suelo pero ya tenía casa a donde llegar. El petate me costó diez centavos y me tapaba con una cobija nueva de a uno cincuenta. Podía hervirme un café y cocerme unos frijoles; llevaba tortas al trabajo. ¡Y de allí pal real! Iba yo progresando, una vez hasta llevé bisteses así de grandes, porque con un diez le daban a uno cinco bisteses. (147)

However, the freedom from starvation derived from her steady income activates a pronounced change in the personality and behavior of Jesusa who spends the majority of her leisure hours drinking and dancing in the cantinas with friends from the factory. Moving away from a lifestyle inhibited by confinement, isolation and physically exhausting domestic labor, she enters into an aggressive and licentious lifestyle that emulates those of her father and dead husband. At times she wears men's clothing in order to move freely at night, and she engages in physical brawls, causing her incarceration on two separate occasions. She wanders from job to job, pursuing a variety of careers: managing a cantina, working in a variety of factories, serving as a hospital nurse, and eventually returning to the military to work as a maid and cook for a regiment based in Oaxaca. Despite her hard-won independence, isolation and disillusionment, accentuated by rejection and loss, appear to govern her life. Looking back from her perspective as an elderly woman, Palancares laments the cyclical nature of her futile quest for a meaningful life that perpetually escapes her grasp. Poniatowska frames the remarks within an alliterative spiral in which the protagonist stands alone and isolated within its center:

> Y desde entonces todo fueron fábricas y fábricas y talleres y changarros y piqueras y pulquerías y cantinas y salones de baile y más fábricas y talleres y lavaderos y señoras fregonas y tortillas duras y dale y dale con la bebedera del pulque, tequila y hojas en la madrugada para las crudas. Y amigas y amigos que no servían para nada, y perros que me dejaban sola por andar siguiendo a sus perros. Y hombres peores que perros del mal y policías ladrones y pelados abusivos. Y yo siempre sola . . . . (147)

Although freed from the preoccupations of hostile servitude, Jesusa realizes that she has become perpetually entrapped by the solitude of the bondage that has forged her personality and her very perspective on existence.

The nature of Jesusa's circumstances often result from her refusal as an adult woman to assume a subservient role to men. Although she enjoys numerous relationships which she reveals to be platonic, she categorically rejects offers of marriage, speculating that she would be better served to endure hardships than to tolerate the type of brutality suffered at the hands of Pedro: "Mejor pasar necesidades que aguantar marido. Sola. A mí los hombres no me hacen falta ni me gustan, más bien me estorban aunque no están cerca de mí, ¡ojalá y no nacieran!" (173). The experiences of the married women who surround her also reinforce her beliefs, as their husbands abuse and abandon them or force the women into poverty, while they themselves pass their days drinking instead of working.

While Jesusa demonstrates an antagonistic attitude toward marriage, she paradoxically displays a strong maternal instinct. However, in each maternal episode, desertion inevitably leaves her further isolated. At first, she adopts only animals that are either killed or die inexplicably, but life in poverty also shapes unfortuitous relationships with children that cross her path. Pedro and Jesusa befriend the first, Refugio Galván, during a break in battle, but he dies protecting the meat given by the couple to feed his family. Jesusa vents her anger at the boy's mother, who allows the boy to suffer for fifteen days without seeking medical attention, but she fatalistically accepts his death as an element of God's divine plan:

> El entierro no fue triste porque nosotros venimos a la tierra prestados, no es verdad que venimos a vivir sobre ella. Estamos

solamente de paso y muchos niños cumplen con nacer, pero como no tienen permiso de durar, se retachan en seguida. (121)

Jesusa adopts a second child, Ángel, the small baby of a neighbor whom she carries with her to work at the box factory for three years, but he too dies as a result of a visit with his natural mother to the countryside. She claims to suffer little at his death: "A mí no me dio tristeza de que se muriera. ¿Por qué? ¡Gracias a Dios de que ya se había quitado de sufrir! Ni me sentí sola. Ni eché de menos de lata porque a mí nadie me da lata" (182). However, some degree of attachment obviously existed between Jesusa and the child, since Jesusa acknowledges: "Me quedé con tres camisetas de ese niñito Angel. Todavía las tengo" (182). She adopts a third child, Rufino, a ten year-old whom she encounters wandering abandoned on the road from San Luis Potosí to Ciudad Valles. Jesusa treats him as if he were her own: "Cuando lo recogí andando descalzo; le di de comer, lo vestí y le compré zapatos como si fuera mi hijo. Eso sí, no le daba su peseta porque todo lo que quería, lo tuvo" (239). When Rufino robs her and flees two years later, she swears that she will never again raise another child.

After returning to the Capital, Jesusa finds herself again caring for another child, Perico, the youngest of nine whose mother dies and whose father cares more for pulque than for his family. At first, Perico proves to be an affectionate child who helps his adoptive mother in her work as a laundress. Jesusa sacrifices her own physical well being to provide the child with plentiful food, a home, and the opportunity for an education which none of the other siblings receives. Nevertheless, his opportunistic nature emerges, and unsatisfied with what Jesusa offers him, he wanders the neighborhood begging for additional food, and eventually leaves her to live with an aunt, abandoning not only his

surrogate mother but also his chance for an education. When he returns as an adult, Jesusa receives Perico with little enthusiasm, for she knows that in spite of his self-professed need to seek her forgiveness, his reappearance is self-serving. He takes from her what little food she has, and comes and goes without offering to support the household:

> Pero que yo crea que él va ver por mí, no. Al contrario, él quisiera que muy pronto me muriera. Por eso he pensado en irme deshaciendo de cuantos telebrejos tengo; con que me tienda un pedazo de papel en el suelo, al cabo no es la primera vez que duermo así. ¿Para qué quiero cosas? A la hora que me muera, que a él le cueste su trabajo; yo bastante me he ceñido los lomos para tener los palos esos que tengo. A eso le tira Perico, a hacerse de lo que tengo, seguro. Cuando se fue yo no tenía máquina de coser, ni radio, ni ropero, ni tocador de media luna, ni buró, ni las sillitas, no tenía nada porque lo que ganaba era para darle de comer. A la hora que se fue me hice de lo que está viendo. Así es de que ¿a qué viene él? Viene a ver qué me pela. (313)

Jesusa's opinion of Perico reflects the reality of her experiences with men who utilize her for the satisfaction of their own needs, without reciprocation.

Inasmuch as physical labor, physical deprivation, and isolation form the basis for Jesusa's existence, much of her metaphorical commentary on motherhood relies on symbolism extracted from the daily struggle to exist. In several cases Jesusa utilizes food as a commodity to measure her success or failure as a mother. When describing her efforts to raise Perico as a small child,

she details her attempts to nurture the sickly infant by describing her efforts to feed him:

> Como estaba tan necesitado de todo, me costó trabajo criar a Perico. No sabía comer comida . . . .Y creí que se me moría. Entonces le comencé a meter sopas aguadas y le hacía avena y café con leche y cuando podía chocolate y así le fue entonando el estomaguito. (278)

When Perico returns as an adult, Jesusa measures his lack of esteem for her by the amount and types of food that he demands:

> Nunca trae dinero. En cambio tiene que tomar leche, comer pan; cuando menos tres pesos de pan diario, porque él no come pan corriente; puro pan dulce, panqueses, bizcochos, todo lo que no llena y cuesta más. Por mí le retacaba de frijoles una docena de bolillos, pero no. Y tampoco quiere tortillas automáticas, de esas mestizas sin carita que no se inflan por más que estén en el comal. Dice que no sirven, que la masa la muelen con todo y olote. (313-314)

For Jesusa, motherhood must be measured in purely physical terms, because her existence has been measured purely by physical satiety and the absence of emotional engagement.

One extensive self-analysis coincides with Jesusa's description of her relationship with Perico as a small child; she compares the laborious nature of her job as a laundress with her negative view of motherhood:

> Diario lavaba yo sábanas. Les daba cuatro lavadas. En la primera les quito el polvo con pura agua; las tallo bien a que se les salga todo el aire el cuerpo y los pelitos. Luego las enjabono y las echo

> dentro de una tina a que aflojen la mugre; ya que están todas remojadas con jabón, entonces las saco una por una y las voy tallando en el lavadero y las voy apartando . . . . Diario me salían muchas sábanas, y a veces nomás les daba una lavada al ver que me las entregaban muy blanquitas de la cama, pero ya cuando las volteaba a ver estaban negras sobre el tendedero. Les salían chicas manchotas de grasa. Así es el cuerpo de traicionero . . . . Lavar es pesado, pero según yo, es más pesado cuidar niños. A mí, los niños nunca me han gustado. Son muy latosos y muy malas gentes. (279-280)

Rather than focus on the result of newly cleaned linens, Jesusa's perspective dwells on the process itself: the tedium, the physical effort, the elimination of the grime, and the futility of her efforts. For her, the job, and by association, motherhood, imply daily, monumental tasks that require enormous exertion and return little satisfaction or reward.

An examination of the laundry/motherhood analogy may suggest much deeper cultural and gender implications, especially when we note the references to the carnal nature of the biological filth: the body odors, the hairs, and the small stains caused by the mattresses. Cooperman observes a clearly defined and inherently patriarchal correlation regarding the perception of women and the battle against chaos: ". . . we live in a culture that draws heavy lines between male and female, clean and dirty, rational and irrational, right and wrong, body and soul" (102). She continues by asserting that although women are still characterized as unclean and bloody, paradoxically women have been given the task of cleaning the world and eliminating the chthonic disorder. On a larger scale, her analysis proposes that earthy, domestic chaos often reflects an

underlying social disorganization that discloses marginalization, economic insecurity, and the unraveling of communal ties. In her estimation, by creating discourses constructed around the motifs of domestic order, women essentially strive to reorder and reorganize the meaning of their own existence within the cultural framework inside which they must operate, as evidenced by Jesusa's effort to define motherhood through her domestic labors:

> Once again, parallels exist between the efforts of language, which structures and orders our perceptions, and cleaning, which structures and orders the physical environment. In both the "real" world and the world of the imagination, we develop rituals of purity and impurity to unify our experience. Through these rituals, we work out and display the symbolic patterns of our culture, connecting disparate elements and giving meaning to our various experiences. (61)

The text itself discloses the ultimate irony of Jesusa's experience: despite her heroic endeavors to bring about a sense of order in both her physical and emotional existence, she accomplishes neither. Her own words convey a final and complete disillusionment as to the value of her existence: "Algún día que venga ya no me va a encontrar; se topará nomás con el puro viento. Llegará ese día y cuando llegue, no habrá ni quien le dé razón" (8). While Jesusa's words reflect the profound isolation of an individual woman of the subaltern class, her life story as represented by Poniatowska's discourse inevitably invites a questioning of the social and cultural patterns that lead to such a bitter disenchantment. In fact, Friedman's analysis of the narrator/author relationship of Hasta no verte Jesús mío, distinguishes two distinct voices with two separate motives:

> For Jesusa, the events of her narrative are fact, and the commentaries would thus be spontaneous reactions to the narrative events. For the implied author, these events seem to belong to a panorama of irony. The fictionalized Poniatowska is the narratee, the object of an oral performance that, when made public, calls on an implied reader to decipher clues to the narrative and rhetorical structure of a text. (186)

Throughout the novel, the portrait of Jesusa that Poniatowska recreates depicts not the immoral and unscrupulous figure of a pícara, but rather that of an inherently moral and hardworking woman whose path toward autonomy becomes repeatedly blocked by environmental elements outside her control. Although Jesusa frequently blames her gender for these hardships, the text peripherally casts a critical eye on the disintegration of essential cultural institutions that fail not only her, but—through the process of synecdoche—the lower classes of the Mexican population as well.

In Hasta no verte Jesús mío, power conflicts within the individual experience unquestionably reflect deeper conflicts within the institutions that hierarchally organize the society as a whole. Perhaps the most visibly flawed institution that emerges in the work is the family, the most fundamental nucleus of community organization. Claude Lévi-Strauss, in The View from Afar (1985), stresses the necessity of the family unit in order to ensure the continuity of the community through the production of children, the next generation. He emphasizes that in all societies the family is characterized by certain attributes: the family originates in marriage; it includes the husband, wife, and children; the members of the family are united by legal and emotional bonds, as well as rights and obligations; and it exhibits a framework of sexual rights and prohibitions (40).

In Hasta no verte Jesús mío, the families, while producing children, are generally fractured and provide little emotional support and negligible education. Children toil as laborers to compensate for their parents' inability to provide the essential provisions of existence. Parents, operating from their own inability to function or from pure self-interest, abandon the children or leave them in fictive families to be cared for by persons outside the traditional family structure. In an unconventional testimony to the absence of maternal presence, Pedro Aguilar presents his wife to a goat which he categorizes as his mother: "Pues aunque no quieras, ese animal es mi madre. No conocí madre. Ésta es la que yo reconozco por madre. Éste fue el animal que me crió . . . " (125).

From a feminine perspective, much of the endemic family disintegration that Poniatowska chronicles originates in deeply engrained attitudes toward the conjugal relationship and consequentially in the societal sentiments toward women. Many of the experiences related by Jesusa, especially those of physical and emotional abuse, emanate from a depreciatory valuation of the woman as an inferior, powerless partner. Although expressing cultural beliefs outdated from a twenty-first century perspective, Octavio Paz, in El laberinto de la soledad (1950), delineates prevailing social attitudes contemporary with the life of Palancares, which stereotype woman as the reflection of the masculine gaze, a being whose identity passively assumes the character projected onto her by the desires of man:

> Como casi todos los pueblos, los mexicanos consideran a la mujer como un instrumento, ya de los deseos del hombre, ya de los fines que le asignan la ley, la sociedad o la moral. Fines, hay que decirlo, sobre los que nunca se le ha pedido su consentimiento y en cuya realización participa sólo pasivamente, en tanto que

"depositaria" de ciertos valores. Prostituta, diosa, gran señora, amante, la mujer trasmite o conserva, pero no crea los valores que le confían la naturaleza o la sociedad. (31-32)

To manifest her own individuality or desires, Paz continues, would equate to negating woman's own true identity. A woman's role becomes that of passive endurance by which she realizes the same status as man: "Gracias al sufrimiento, y a su capacidad para resistirlo sin protesta, la mujer trasciende su condición y adquiere los mismos atributos del hombre" (35).

Poniatowska's view of woman contrasts dramatically with that of Paz. In her estimation, only the actions of the women preserve the fundamental Mexican institutions: "Siempre he dicho y hasta he insistido, que sin las mujeres, México se caería a pedazos. Porque son ellas las que en general educan a los hijos, les enseñan, los crían; incluso las mujeres con menos recursos económicos" (qtd. in Ascencio 83). In many ways Jesusa personifies the author's perspective. Jesusa rejects passivity and responds to the disintegration of the traditional family by creating her own, nonbiological maternal relationships; she responds to the authoritarian patterns of marriage by living as a single woman after the death of Pedro. Susan Steele cites an interview between Poniatowska and Josefina Bórquez dated May 11, 1964, in which Bórquez discusses the disadvantages of marriage for women of the lower class:

> Es muy bonito vivir sólo sin que nadie le reclame a uno. La vida es más bonita así solito uno, sin quién le pegue a uno un grito. Va uno por la calle muy feliz sin que haya ningún reclamo. Pero vaya usted por ése que tiene su mujer y sus hijos, y luego muy felices andan paseándose ellos, sin saber que sus hijos tienen hambre, sus mujeres están careciendo de lo más indispensable, y éso no es

> justicia. Por eso no tiene uno que meterse en danzas. Por eso mismo vivir sólo sin buscarse compromisos ajenos. (35-36)

In the same interview, Bórquez addresses her own role as a wife: "Pos era su gata del, su criada, su criada, su gata sin sueldo. La mujer no es más que la gata sin sueldo" (36).

Although Jesusa manages to circumvent marriage and to reinvent family structure, she cannot escape the bonds of institutional poverty. Steele contrasts Palancares with the traditional pícaro whose movement through space is horizontal but whose position in society rises vertically:

> Palancares' class movement is only slightly vertical (from servant to independent vendor and washerwoman), emphasizing the radical absence of opportunities for social mobility in postrevolutionary Mexico . . . . Like the picaresque hero, Palancares maintains the position of a "half-outsider" vis-a-vis subproletarian society; her material and psychological needs prevent her from remaining entirely outside of that society, in spite of her condemnation of it. (37-38)

In spite of her strength, deprivations, and independent spirit, Jesusa ironically finds herself at the end of her life entrenched in the degrading poverty of urban life, with scant relief provided by institutional powers. Throughout the work, Jesusa fiercely criticizes the principal agents of the Revolution as self-serving, opportunistic politicians with little regard for the common man, the leaders of the trade unions as usurpers of hard-earned wages, the priests as womanizers, and the educators as purveyors of useless information. Her feelings of utter abandonment lead her at one point to declare a complete disassociation with her Mexican origins:

> Al fin de cuentas, yo no tengo patria. Soy como los húngaros: de ninguna parte. No me siento mexicana ni reconozco a los mexicanos. Aquí no existe más que pura conveniencia y puro interés. Si yo tuviera dinero y bienes, sería mexicana, pero como soy peor que la basura, pues no soy nada. Soy basura a la que el perro le echa una miada y sigue adelante. Viene el aire y se la lleva y se acabó todo . . . . Soy basura porque no puedo ser otra cosa. Yo nunca he servido para nada. Toda mi vida he sido el mismo microbio que ve . . . . (218)

Speaking from the perspective of a marginalized individual, Jesusa's denunciation bears personal testimony to the failure of the Revolution to erase socioeconomic class distinctions, a failure caused in John Rutherford's estimation by a lack of direction from the intellectual forces that held the capacity to shape its reformist efforts:

> The Mexican Revolution was different and deficient in that, lacking the forces that could have shaped it, it never emerged from amorphousness. It had neither idealistic radical fervour nor adequate intellectual guidance to mould it and give it organization and purpose. Only because there were such palpable weaknesses in the forces working against it could it exist at all. (315)

In many ways, the Revolution left the lower and lower-middle classes in a much more imperiled economic state than before its inception. Promises of economic and political reform emerged slowly, only in isolated states, and the reforms affected were rarely enforced, particularly as they related to woman:

> As the violent phase of the Revolution came to a close, Mexican women found themselves scarcely better off than during the

Porfiriato. Women had gained constitutional protection in the workplace, but this legal protection was rarely enforced. They had gained valuable political and economic experiences, and had assumed new positions and new responsibilities, but they had not acquired concomitant political rights. Further, the long-lasting negative effects of the Revolution on women were devastating: rape, pillage, death of loved ones, and break-up of the family had taken a severe toll. (Soto 65)

The discussion of postrevolutionary class distinction invites an examination of the paradoxical author/narrator relationship between Poniatowska and Bórquez, women who occupy opposite points of the social and intellectual spectrum. Poniatowska has repeatedly declared the sociopolitical intentions of her writings; however, by appropriating Bórquez' voice through her authorial privilege, does she further reinforce the class delineation that separates the two women? Kimberle López discusses the contradictory nature of the author/informant relationship in "Internal Colonialism in the Testimonial Process: Elena Poniatowska's Hasta no verte Jesús mío." On one hand, she proposes that the process of authorial mediation protects the marginality of the subaltern speaker, conserving her right to testify; on the other, she suggests that an erudite author may in fact appropiate the subaltern's story in order to further the author's own designs. In López' opinion, the action of an erudite author appropriating the voice of a member of a subaltern class constitutes a form of literary "internal colonialism:"

> The collaboration of the testimonial process separates the two functions of living and writing, resulting in a division of labor that alienates the experiencing individual from the narrating individual,

> implying that subalterns are born to live life, and the privileged are born to read about it. (22)

According to López' analysis, it is Poniatowska who "establishes the parameters of the relationship, and Bórquez can only act within those limits" (24). Although Bórquez can and does assert the right to refuse to speak during the author's weekly visits, Poniatowska incorporates her reluctance to speak parenthetically within the text as an amplification of her informant's rebellious and autonomous nature, as exemplified by Jesusa's final and dismissive words: "Ahora ya no chingue. Váyase. Déjeme dormir" (316). Regardless of Poniatowksa's expressed intentions, the action of providing Jesusa a public voice locates her in a position of authority over the testimoniante:

> Ultimately, the desire to recuperate the silenced voices of the disenfranchised of Mexico cannot erase the author's own position of power within an internal colonialism that aligns her with the institutions that retain those same subalterns in their marginal positions. (35)

López further proposes that although the novel reflects a feminist message, in practice the testimonial process engaged in by Poniatowska and Bórquez replicates the mistress/servant relationship that stands as a major obstacle to the formation of alliances of solidarity among Latin American women. (25)

Commentary written by Poniatowska for the introduction to the recently published English translation of the novel refutes many of López's concerns. The paratextual addition of the introductory section omitted in the original work serves as a preliminary understanding between the reader and the author in the establishment of expectations, "una zona de transición entre el exterior y el interior, y, al mismo tiempo un espacio privilegiado de *transacción*, del pacto

entre el autor y el lector" (Sklodowska, Testimonio 8). In the English translation of Hasta no verte Jesús mío, published in 2001 under the title, Here's to You, Jesusa!, Poniatowska inserts a thirty-page prologue that speaks to a variety of issues: the contentious relationship with her informant; the picaresque nature of Bórquez' life; Bórquez' stoic character; and a sense of alienation present in both women. While the added introduction does not explicitly address Poniatowska's authorial intentions, a recombination of the domestic motifs prevalent in the work itself underscores the utter failure of the Mexican political system to ameliorate the living conditions of the underclasses by furnishing an insightful glimpse into the final stages of life of Josefina Bórquez, who continues to survive in the fringes of Mexico City's slums in the lowest depths of poverty while being pushed geographically and symbolically from the locus of power:

> Over a period of ten years I saw her move three times . . . Each time she moved farther away, because the city drives out the poor, pushes them to the edges, shoving them, marginalizing them as it expands. Jesusa finally ended up on the road to Pachuca, around some hills called Aurora—Tablas de San Agustín—where there are big placards with blue arrows pointing in all directions, where they spell sewage with a *j*, water with an *h*, and electricity with no *e*. No sewaje, no wahter, no lectricity.
>
> There's not a single tree on those bald plains, not a speck of green, no grass, not a bush. The dust storms look like the Hiroshima mushroom cloud and they seem to transport all the waste of the world, absorbing the people's souls. The worst part isn't the mountain of garbage, but the stench, a sweet smell of cold grease, excrement, a refried mixture of all the awful smells on earth

> blended together, piling up under the sun, and as the day goes on, it becomes more intolerable. (xxv)

Although free from intrusive masculine authority, the severity of Bórquez' existence entraps her into a tightly enclosed domestic space that restricts and isolates her. Her home consists of a rudimentary shack, which she fashioned from sticks, bricks, and pieces of cloth, containing a single, tiny room with a cooking fire on the floor, a wooden table used for ironing and eating, and a bed separated from the living quarters by a curtain. The space assumes the character of a miniature prison in which she vigilantly secures her animals and plants during the major portion of the day: "She closed up her room tightly since there was no lock, her animals asphyxiating inside, her plants too" (ix).

In spite of Bórquez' advanced age and failing body, her daily routine continues to revolve around the same sort of menial domestic work that has characterized her entire existence:

> She cleaned at the printshop, swept, picked up, dusted, rinsed and drained the metal pieces. She took the worker's overalls home and often their everyday clothes, and she labored a second shift at her washboard. In the evening she fed her cats, chickens, and rabbit, watered her plants, and tidied up the place. (ix)

Poniatowska accentuates the overwhelming task for the old woman, methodically describing the process of soaking the overalls in gasoline each night to loosen the grime, and then washing them in a metal basin after collecting the water in buckets. The mistress/servant dichotomy surfaces as Poniatowska attempts to assist in the woman's labors, but when she fails in her attempt to scrub the overalls, the action causes Bórquez to remark: "It's obvious that you're high-class and useless" (x). In another occasion when Poniatowska suggests a ride

in her car, the woman responds: "And the chores? Obviously you don't have anything to do" (xvi).

Through her relationship with Bórquez, Poniatowska claims to have acquired a greater comprehension of the impact of poverty in her country:

> I came to understand poverty through Jesusa, real poverty, where water is collected in buckets and carried very carefully so it doesn't spill, where the washing is done on a metal washboard because there is no sink, where a neighbor will tap into another's electric line, where the hens lay eggs without shells, "just membrane," because a lack of sun keeps them from hardening. Jesusa was one of the millions of men and women who don't live so much as they survive. (xiii)

However, she openly acknowledges the monumental social gap between the two women, and her position of wealth which she remains reluctant to relinquish:

> I went to see Jesusa on Wednesday afternoons and when I got home I'd accompany my mother to cocktail parties at one embassy or another. I always tried to maintain a balance between the extreme poverty that I shared at Jesusa's tenement and the splendour of the receptions. My socialism was in name only. As I got into the tub of hot water, I'd remember the washbasin under the bed where Jesusa rinsed the overalls and bathed herself on Saturdays. I was ashamed: "I hope she never sees my house or how I live." (xix)

Importantly, the introduction clearly indicates that through the personal relationship forged with Bórquez, the words and experiences of the woman form a bridge for the author to reexamine the social barriers that previously

disengaged her from the reality of the subaltern women as a whole. From her testimony, the author emerges with a more insightful understanding of the domestic Mexican women with whom Poniatowska first interacted as a child, but from whom she was separated because of class distinction:

> I heard my nanny's voice in Jesusa's, the woman who taught me Spanish, the voices of all the maids who passed through our house like air currents, their expressions, their view of life, if you could even call it that, because they lived for the day, they had no reason to hope for anything. (xix)

As Poniatowska states: "The voices of these other marginalized women sang a chorus to Jesusa Palancares' melody . . . " (xix). While Bórquez recounts a single life, clearly she speaks for a greater, silenced majority in her conversations with the author.

In the final analysis, Poniatowska cannot remove the privilege of her upper-class status. However, to suggest that the class distinction between the author and narrator invalidates the intent of the work negates a basic premise of the testimonial genre—the right of an erudite author to articulate a subaltern perspective. Furthermore, the intellectual and emotional solidarity of the writer with the testimoniante substantially counterbalances the power discrepancy that may exist within the authorial/narrator relationship, as critics including Sklowdowska have noted. A more valid examination of the testimonial collaboration lies in the exploration of the feminine alliance within a feminine subaltern context. I would suggest that the ultimate value of Hasta no verte Jesús mío as a literary creation derives from the ironic representation of the female protagonist both *within* and *against* her traditionally ascribed milieu. Jesusa struggles against domestic servilismo but cannot exist outside it.

However, the representation of her experiences within a culturally defined gender role illustrates in an authentic method the domestic servitude that dominates the majority of Mexican women through culturally restrictive attitudes and institutions.

Although earlier Latin American feminine fictional works such as Aves sin nido (1889) by Clorinda Matto de Turner, and Balún Canán (1957) by Rosario Castellanos offered sympathetic portraits of female members of disenfranchised classes, Hasta no verte Jesús mío opened the path for intellectual women writers to utilize the power of testimonial literature to examine the double marginalization of women living within the patriarchal system while simultaneously confronting the dynamics of the system which confines them. Indeed, the Latin American testimonios that have attracted the most critical attention in the second-half of the twentieth-century recount the experiences of other marginalized female subjects within circumstances particular to their environments and historical moments: Domitila Barrios de Chungara and Moema Viezzer's Si me permiten hablar (1978); Rigoberta Menchú and Elizabeth Burgos-Debray's Me llamo Rigoberta, y así me nació la conciencia (1983); and Hebe de Bonafini and Matilde Sánchez's Historia de vida (1985). While each of the works (including Hasta no verte Jesús mío) purports merely to relate the life experiences of individual female protagonists, the resulting discourse challenges the system of disenfranchisement through a reordering of literary and cultural tradition. Marina Pérez de Mendiola cites Homi Bhabha's theory regarding the process:

> The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. The 'right' to signify the periphery of authorized power and privilege does not depend on the persistence of tradition; it is resourced by

> the power of tradition to be reinscribed through the conditions of contingency and contradictoriness that attend upon the lives of those who are 'in the minority.' (Bhabha qtd. in Pérez de Mendiola 12)

The right of the woman to signify within a feminine context offers the unprecedented opportunity to externalize or make public the private domestic spaces associated with women and thereby to engage in a feminine reevaluation of woman's role in history.

While Poniatowska utilizes her protagonist's voice to awaken the collective social consciousness toward a reexamination of the unfinished business of the Revolution, ultimately Jesusa remains ironically entrenched within the confines of domestic servitude and poverty that have determined her existence. However, by centering the discourse on the gendered roles that frame the experiential base of the subaltern Mexican woman, Poniatowska addresses the difficulty of reordering domination and subordination from a class perspective, and she additionally challenges gender-defined marginalization within a conservative, patriarchal culture. Although the boundaries of power remain tightly closed to Jesusa, the collaborative combination of her experiences, in concert with the sympathetic contextualization created by Poniatowska, furnishes the reader with a work of broad social dimension transcending the individual—a feminine view from the base of the pyramid.

## Chapter Three

## Eréndira's Magical Flight

El hombre caza y lucha. La mujer intriga y sueña; es la madre de la fantasía, de los dioses. Posee la segunda visión, las alas que le permiten volar hacia el infinito del deseo y de la imaginación. Los dioses son como los hombres: nacen y mueren sobre el pecho de una mujer.
– –Jules Michelet, cited by Carlos Fuentes, Aura

For centuries fairy tales have transported their audiences outside the borders of the mundane world through the imaginative power of fantasy, and within their fictional frameworks, mortal figures have undertaken perilous journeys, they have vanquished imprisoning forces, and they have envisioned innovative, humanistic social realms. While the uniqueness of each tale lies partially in the artistic depiction of the hero's magical journey, the ultimate merit of each narrative derives from its distinctive projection of alternate worlds, realms that transcend the temporal and spatial restrictions of cultural parameters. By virtue of this reformative potential, fairy tales hold the power to manifest transformative social values through the hero's symbolic metamorphosis.

In "La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y de su abuela desalmada" (1972), from the collection of the same name, Gabriel García Márquez draws upon the fairy tale model to create a magical realist revision of the transfigurative quest. Through the story of Eréndira, an innocent girl who escapes the adversities of domestic and erotic subjugation, the Colombian author offers a metaphorical narrative that explores the themes of imperial subjugation, the stagnation of time, and the power of self-determination. An analysis of the work's narrative structure and its stylistic elements, reveals that

García Márquez has created a twentieth-century Latin American fairy tale that reflects his own model of individual and social transformation embodied in the empowerment of the feminine protagonist, the fantastic approach to exploitation, and the ultimate metamorphosis of the "cándida Eréndira."

Since the seventeenth century, writers have used the fairy tale to critique oligarchical social systems. In order to place García Márquez's story within this current, the first section of this chapter surveys the historical evolution of the genre within the European tradition. Then, there follows an analysis of the structural components of the fairy tale as delineated by Vladimir Propp, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Joseph Campbell, in conjunction with an examination of García Márquez's own magical realist interpretation of the fantastic. In consonance with the Freudian conceptualization of the Heimische, the study traces Eréndira's transformative voyage through the narrative stages of fantasy, threat, recovery, escape, and consolation, while it also explores those symbolic elements that equate her subjugation to the Latin American historical experience. The final segment of the analysis explicates the text's resolution, a pivotal point in the narrative that reveals Eréndira as an empowered, reformative force.

By the time García Márquez published "Eréndira," he had already achieved spectacular success in the development of uniquely powerful female characters, particularly in Cien años de soledad (1967) and in the early short stories. While the male characters of Cien años inhabit dream worlds of futile wars and enigmatic ciphers, their female counterparts cement together the realities of everyday existence within the walls of the home, establishing a source of power within the most common role allowed them in a patriarchal society, that of domesticity. Feminine efforts deflect the attacks of the chaotic outer world and preserve a sense of order and continuity:

> The concrete expression of Úrsula's matriarchal order is the large house itself. She built and enlarged it according to her design and supervision, and thus the house is the work of her persistent and fixed efforts to keep the family together under one roof and in this way to assure its perpetuation. The great house symbolizes the qualities of its mistress and owner: hospitality, vitality, and obstinate efforts to impose order on the outlandish environment established by men. (Boschetto 135)

As María Elena Valdés suggests, civilization in Macondo prevails because the women prevail. Females organize and sustain the routines of everyday life; they preserve the cohesion of the community as well as its collective memory; they initiate and guide sexual matters. More importantly, they assume the role of judging good and evil, making "value judgments of what is in favor of life and what is against it" (Valdés, "One Hundred Years" 51). By creating female characters possessed of such powers, García Márquez realigns the traditional patriarchal paradigms governing the relationship of women, domesticity, and authority.

Although the two female characters of "Eréndira" operate within the same magical world of inexplicable events as Úrsula Buendía, their interaction within domestic roles and settings projects a disturbing portrayal of the effects of abusive domination. By appropriating archetypal characters and stylistic elements of the fairy tale genre, García Márquez offers the reader a symbolic view of the process and effects of colonial domination of Colombian civilization from a twentieth-century perspective in which greed, institutional ineffectiveness, and individual paralysis have weakened the will to self-determination. In order to understand García Márquez's revisionist interpretation of subjugation, it is

necessary to examine the socio-historical roots of the fairy tale, the intertextual levels of the work, the symbolic elements that arise within the genre's unique format, as well as the story's enigmatic, open ending.

García Márquez originally wrote "La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y de su abuela desalmada" as a film script in 1972, and the work anchors an intertextual anthology of short stories bearing the same title. The completion of a cycle begun in "El mar del tiempo perdido" (1961), and extended in Cien años de soledad (Oberhelman 50), the storyline of "Eréndira" proceeds in a linear progression of episodes revolving around the misfortunes of the young protagonist. A gluttonous old woman enslaves her illegitimate granddaughter, Eréndira, and forces her to care for both her and a decaying mansion in a series of never-ending rituals and tasks. When the granddaughter inadvertently sets fire to the home, the grandmother forces her into prostitution so that each erotic act will contribute toward the repayment of the cost of the home. Eréndira, rescued by a group of missionaries, finds herself again a virtual domestic slave, this time to the Church. When asked to choose between an arranged marriage or the return to her former life of prostitution with the grandmother, she chooses the latter and resumes the repayment of her debt. Eréndira soon gains notoriety and attracts the attention of men from miles away, and one of these is Ulises, the son of a smuggler, who, after sleeping with Eréndira, becomes enamored by the girl and attempts to rescue her from the degrading situation. Captured by the civil authorities, the two are separated. Eréndira eventually summons Ulises telepathically, and the two lovers plan to murder the ominous grandmother. After two unsuccessful attempts, Ulises manages to stab the hideous old woman, who explodes in a sea of green blood over her assassin. Eréndira, after verifying her

captor's death, seizes the gold that she has earned with her body, abandons her rescuer, and runs into the wind, whereupon the text enigmatically concludes.

"Eréndira's" narrative structure and its similarity to that of the fairy tale has not always been clear to critics, including Mark Millington and Jasbir Jain, who recognize the genre's influence while questioning the story's adherence to the fairy tale's structural criteria. However, an examination of the fairy tale's properties and historical functions firmly establishes the story within the parameters of the genre. Jack Zipes provides an historical overview of the genre's development in his work, Breaking the Magic Spell (1979), tracing its origins to the oral folk tale of precapitalist, agrarian societies. According to Zipes, these tales, recounted for hundreds of years, commonly served as a mechanism to manifest the frustration of the peasants with the feudalistic class structure that dominated their existence. Typically, the folk tale centered on the themes of exploitation, deprivation, and injustice, and its narrators intentionally modified the stories in order to reflect the particular historical circumstances of the group in which the tales were recounted. From its inception, the folk tale manifested socio-political objectives, acting either as an instrument to affirm the existing social order or to promote alternate, utopian models. In general, the utopian models were simplistic in nature, and they frequently inverted the social hierarchy by dethroning the monarch and allowing a member of the lower class to assume his role. However, as a result of the stories' perceived subversive character, members of the ruling classes have historically regarded both the folk tale and the literary fairy tale as menacing, political weapons:

> . . . insofar as they have tended to project other or better worlds, they [folk and fairy tales] have often been considered subversive, or, to put it more positively, they have provided the critical measure

> of how far we are from taking history into our own hands and creating just societies. Folk and fairy tales have always spread word through their fantastic images about the feasibility of utopian alternatives, and this is exactly why the dominant social classes have been vexed by them. (Zipes, Magic Spell 3)

According to Zipes, as European societies moved from agrarian to precapitalist economies, the folk tale evolved into a literary genre, particularly in seventeenth-century France, where the aristocracy appropriated the fairy tale to validate the authority of the upper classes. The new literary tale, exemplified by the Histoires ou contes du temps passé (1697) of Charles Perrault and works of numerous women salon writers of the 1690s, abandoned the agrarian, peasant viewpoint, and substituted a newly-emerging ideology reflective of the era. Bolstered by the technological advances in printing, writers of the French fairy tale attracted the interest of the upper classes by creating conservative tales that appealed aesthetically to the socially elite, while simultaneously venting growing frustration with the dire economic conditions of the country under the rule of Louis XIV.

Although the importance of the fairy tale diminished in eighteenth-century European literature, it gained renewed momentum in the 1800s. Influenced by the American and French Revolutions, the creators of fairy tales shifted the hero's quest away from wealth and power toward the assertion of individual emancipation. The late eighteenth-century tale drew upon a revolutionary impetus that would include an anti-capitalist message in the following century:

> As an expression of the progressive elements of the bourgeoisie in early capitalism, the fairy tale at first, both in form and content, places a high regard on the freedom of the creative individual, opposes the growing mechanization of life and the alienation

> caused by capitalism, and implies that human beings must master both their own talents and time to create a new world where humanism reigns, not harmony. (Zipes, Magic Spell 35)

As the fairy tale evolved within a literary framework, the simplistic language of the folk tale shifted toward a greater metaphorical range, reflective of the socio-political stance of the author. The Romantic German fairy tale, popularized by the Brothers Grimm, capitalized on the traditional themes and motifs of the folk tale to attack the preservation of the nobility and the bourgeoisie and to propose the capacity of the individual to control his own destiny by means of open endings that proposed utopian options. In a similar vein, the tales of the Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen examined the issues of power and domination by exploring the fate of a strong and gifted protagonist within an unyielding class structure. Meanwhile, in England, humanistic themes heavily influenced the fairy tale by assessing the effects of social exploitation, authoritarian governments, and class distinctions imposed upon the free will of the individual as a result of the materialistic environment produced by the Industrial Revolution.

Although the genre of the fairy tale has continued to exert an influence in twentieth-century literature, particularly in revisionist formats, the nineteenth-century tale framed the parameters that establish the patterns of the genre, especially for the purposes of critical analysis. In Breaking the Magic Spell, Zipes summarizes the properties that distinguish the fairy tale from the folk tale and endow it with a unique character: (1) most authors use a folk tale or another fairy tale as a point of departure and frame the tale to the social configuration of the time, using an open-ended if not enigmatic resolution; (2) the narrative centers on a multidimensional examination of the conflict between the self and existence that reflects the major themes of loneliness, alienation, and fetishism;

(3) the fairy tale appeals to the imagination to make the familiar appear strange, so that the reader will take a more critical and creative approach to daily life; (4) the protagonist becomes homeless in a world without community, and his existence is threatened by confinement, regulation, or manipulation; (5) happy endings are rare, and when they do exist, they occur in another utopic world; (6) new time and space arrangements allow the protagonist to master his own identity by moving outside a rigidly confining social order that asks him to submit himself to a repressive system controlled by demeaning and dehumanizing forces (65-66). Furthermore, the fairy tale generally lacks the universality of the folk tale and emphasizes a singular view of the historical moment as a result of the specificity of its origins.

In addition to specific thematic and stylistic elements, the fairy tale follows a clearly identifiable pattern of action regulated by an expected resolution, while it adheres to fundamental components that shape its narrative structure. One of the most frequently cited scholars of fairy and folk tales, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien in his treatise The Monsters and the Critics (1983), identifies the four essential elements that shape the structure of the fairy tale as "Fantasy," "Recovery," "Escape," and "Consolation". Bruno Bettelheim in The Uses of Enchantment (1977), adds a fifth element, "Threat," that "is crucial to the fairy tale—a threat to the hero's physical existence or to his moral existence . . ." (144). Similarly, Joseph Campbell in The Hero with a Thousand Faces (1949) links the fairy tale and myth to a progression in which the hero is called to adventure; endures a series of tests, aided by benign helpers; slays the monster-ogre; experiences rescue; and, ultimately, resurrects a new, creative world order (245-246). Vladamir Propp's 1968 study, The Morphology of the Folk Tale, offers the most detailed analysis and expands the basic five-pronged structure to

include thirty-one archetypal functions that propel the action of the narration. Zipes, in When Dreams Come True (1999), condenses Propp's components into the following properties:

1. The protagonist is confronted with an interdiction or prohibition that he or she violates in some way.
2. Departure or banishment of the protagonist, who is either given a task or assumes a task related to the interdiction of prohibition.
3. Encounter with (a) villain; (b) a mysterious individual or creature, who gives the protagonist gifts; (c) three different animals or creatures who are helped by the protagonist; (d) three different animals or creatures who offer gifts to help the protagonist.
4. The endowed protagonist is tested and moves on to battle and conquers the villain or inimical forces.
5. The protagonist suffers a peripety or sudden reversal in fortunes that is generally only a temporary setback.
6. The protagonist makes use of endowed gifts, which include the magical agents and the cunning to achieve his or her goal. The result: (a) three battles with the villain; (b) three impossible tasks that are nevertheless made possible; and (c) the breaking of a magic spell.
7. The villain is punished or the inimical forces are vanquished.
8. The success of the protagonist usually leads to (a) marriage; (b) the acquisition of money; (c) survival and wisdom; (d) any combination of the three. (3-4)

Of necessity, the actions must occur within a setting designed to induce a sense of wonder in the reader, who then accepts the inexplicable as routine.

The primary channel for the cultivation of wonder within the fairy tale lies in the infusion of fantasy. Campbell, Bettelheim, and Tolkien concur that the element of fantasy must emerge early in the exposition of the fairy tale in order to suspend the reader's paradigmatic perception of reality. Although fantasy loosens the connections to reality, in the fairy tale those connections must not be completely destroyed in order to maintain a sense of plausibility for the reader. Tolkien describes fantasy as an imaginative value particular to the fairy tale in which imagination is conveyed through "a quality of strangeness and wonder in the Expression, derived from the Image" (139), a type of imagination only loosely tied to reality, one not far from the fantastic. Tolkien continues:

> I propose, therefore, to abrogate to myself the powers of Humpty-Dumpty, and to use Fantasy for this purpose: in a sense, that is, which combines with its older and higher use as an equivalent of Imagination the derived notions of "unreality" (that is, of unlikeness to the Primary World), of freedom from the domination of observed "fact," in short of the fantastic. I am thus not only aware but glad of the etymological and semantic connection of *fantasy* with *fantastic*, with images of things that are not only not actually present, but which are indeed not to be found in our primary world at all, or are generally believed not to be found there. (139)

In Folktales and Reality (1991), Lutz Röhrich also asserts that the element of fantasy must be tied to reality in the folk or fairy tale. Although she claims that magical deeds are unreal only to the author, the tale "does not wander so far from reality that it is no longer believable" (3). If unbelievable events occur in the

tale, Röhrich insists that they must be plausible within the narrative context, and not interfere with the perceived vision of the author's world. The reader is asked to assume plausibility even when the events of the story stretch the limits of logic and reason.

In many ways, the *fantasy* of the fairy tale manifests the characteristics of the *fantastic*. Tzvetan Todorov, in The Fantastic, a Structural Approach to a Literary Genre (1975), defines the fantastic in very narrow terms, but in language that accommodates the workings of the fairy tale:

> The fantastic requires the fulfillment of three conditions. First, the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and to hesitate between a natural and a supernatural explanation of the events described. Second, this hesitation may also be experienced by a character; thus the reader's role is so to speak entrusted to a character, and at the same time the hesitation is represented, it becomes one of the themes of the work—as in the case of naïve reading, the actual reader identifies with the character. Third, the reader must adopt a certain attitude with regard to the text: he will reject allegorical as well as "poetic" interpretation. (33)

In the case of the style elaborated by García Márquez, the suspension of the borders between reality and the fantastic occurs through the incorporation of "magical realism," a literary style that Robin Fiddian explains as evolved from the theory of lo real maravilloso circulated by Alejo Carpentier in the 1940s. Fiddian summarizes the principal philosophical features of magical realism as: the recognition that the nature of Latin-American reality is inherently extraordinary, out of proportion, and marvellous; the awareness that reality contains magical

elements is inextricable from the cultural beliefs of the people who acknowledge the uniqueness of their environment; the roots of magical reality lie in the sixteenth-century encounters of the Europeans with the New World, and are manifested in the narratives of discovery; and in the twentieth-century post-colonial view, magical realism assumes a political character as a challenge to the hegemonic values of imperial cultures, and as a style, it asserts the singularity of Latin America (16-17). Michael Palencia-Roth, in his own discussion of realismo mágico, defines the style not only as a crossing of the line of demarcation between the real and the imaginary, but as a dual process that redefines the ontological nature of reality:

> Esto significa que, para García Márquez, lo mágico puede transformarse en lo real con la misma facilidad que lo real en lo mágico. Y, todavía más importante, que todo punto en la rueda giratoria tiene la misma validez ontológica. (69)

García Márquez attributes his narrative approach to the tales that were told to him as a small boy by his grandmother, a reflection of the oral tradition inherent in the world of the European fairy tale:

> Me contaba las cosas más atroces sin conmoverse, como si fuera una cosa que acabara de ver. Descubrí que esa manera imperturbable y esa riqueza de imágenes era lo que más contribuía a la verosimilitud de sus historias. Usando el mismo método de mi abuela, escribí Cien años de soledad. (qtd. in Apuleyo Mendoza 41)

Within the structure of "Eréndira," the inculcation of fantasy through the fairy tale provides García Márquez with the opportunity to represent symbolically the

incongruencies of the Latin-American condition, as well as the non-synchronic experience of the past and present.

The first glimpse of the fantastic occurs early in the story, as the author recreates the house in which the grandmother and the granddaughter live. In the fairy tale, the house frequently operates as a register of the disequilibrium of reality which opens a subversive space to propel the dynamics of the narrative. Lucie Armitt's analysis of the fairy tale house in Theorizing the Fantastic (1996) equates the home with "a starting-point for our relationship with the universe" (7), an inner-most space in which the protagonist opposes the antagonistically posed outsider who seeks to enter the inner realm. Within fantasy fiction, the home symbolically connotes the "mother," and the protagonist dwells as a stranger within its walls, without the benefit of maternal protection. As a consequence, within the fairy tale genre, the nuclear family is presented as a dysfunctional unit, with the betterment of one member occurring almost always at the expense of another.

From a Freudian perspective, the image of the fairy tale home presupposes a paradoxical duality between the usual connotations of the "homely" (heimlich). Armitt refers to Freud's definition of the heimlich as: "I, . . . belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame, intimate, friendly; II, concealed, kept from sight, so that others do not get to know of or about it, withheld from others . . ." (Freud, qtd. in Armitt 49). She contends that while shared personal space within a domestic framework initiates privacy and excludes outsiders, the concealed secrets of the home may shelter perverse patterns of behaviors or activities from external observation. Through the unheimlich, "the name for everything that ought to have remained . . . secret and hidden but has come to light" (Schelling qtd. in Armitt 49), the clandestine and

often sinister world of the home becomes exposed. The threatening nature of the unheimlich, or the uncanny, develops from the revelation of a disturbing secret within a situation or setting that should inherently breed comfort, trust, and stability. Therefore, in the mode of the fantastic, from the very outset the home provokes a sense of dread, in which inner secrets lurk:

> In summary, then, the uncanny is a confrontation with "concealed" repressions; not perhaps "everything that ought to have remained . . . secret and hidden but has come to light" as Schelling puts it, but certainly something that we might *wish* had "remained . . . secret and hidden but has come to light." (Armitt 50)

She lists four categories of stylistic devices which heighten the sense of the uncanny within the fairy tale:

> . . . an unstable dividing line between animate and inanimate objects, as seen in puppets, waxwork figures, clockwork toys; the presence of doubles; the presence of involuntary repetition; the creation or calling into presence a person or object that has been dreamt up or spoken about without apparent reason. (Armitt 50)

The presence of uncanny elements confronts the reader with an imaginary scenario that defies the demarcation of reality—that is, a blending of the conflicting zones of the fantastic and the real.

In "Eréndira," García Márquez first transforms reality by the description of a mammoth home filled with vestiges of former grandeur, settled in the isolation of the desert. The text depicts an imprisoning structure guarding unheimlich secrets in which the elements of geography invade the barriers of architecture. In an inversion of the arcadian conception of the New World as a garden of

paradise, the house sits in the midst of a hostile desert, facing an artificial garden with suffocating flowers. The narrative emphasizes the insufferable isolation and the inhospitable setting of the mansion: "La enorme mansión de argamasa lunar, extraviada en la soledad del desierto" (97); and, "[la casa] estaba lejos de todo, en el alma del desierto, junto a una ranchería de calles miserables y ardientes, donde los chivos se suicidaban de desolación" (98-99).

Secondly, the text focuses on various components of the house that suggest a bizarre social order disintegrating through temporal/spatial dislocation and confrontation. While Tolkien asserts that fantasy texts "open a door on Other Time," (qtd. in Armitt 25), Armitt adds that the action of the fairy tale exists within a "never-never" place in which both the temporal and spatial elements contribute to form a secondary world, "situated outside the realms of the dominant discourse and thus beyond its coherent articulation" (26). By placing the work outside the dominant discourse, the author can conceivably situate the chronology within a symbolic or metaphorical order.

The fictive chronology of the house centers on the remnants of ancient imperialism and Spanish colonialism, evidenced by interspersed relics of domination. García Márquez incorporates references to the Roman elements of the furnishings as well as to the indigenous slaves that support the grandmother's grandiose illusions of vanished grandeur in the gloomy house filled with imported furnishings:

> Eréndira se ocupó de barrer la casa, que era oscura y abigarrada, con muebles frenéticos y estatuas de césares inventados, y arañas de lágrimas y ángeles de alabastro, y un piano con barniz de oro, y numerosos relojes de formas y medidas imprevisibles. Tenía en el patio una cisterna para almacenar durante muchos años el agua

> llevado a lomo de indio desde manantiales remotos, y en una argolla de la cisterna había un avestruz raquítico, el único animal de plumas que pudo sobrevivir al tormento de aquel clima malvado. (98)

Using a technique employed previously in Cien años de soledad, the author enumerates a series of disparate items accentuated by anaphora, in this instance of the conjunction y and the prepositions de and con. Although the description contains conventional household items (furniture, statues, chandeliers, a piano, and numerous clocks), by juxtapositioning each noun with an unexpected modifier (muebles frenéticos, césares inventados, arañas de lágrimas, barniz de oro, and relojes de formas y medidas imprevistas), García Márquez evokes a sense of anachronism and surreal disorder that is magnified by the subsequent description of remote springs, Indian servants, a sickly ostrich, and a barbarous climate that torments the inhabitants of the region.

Equally surreal is the origin of the family which inhabits the house. Although "[n]adie conoció los orígenes ni los motivos de esa familia" (99), according to local lore the house had been built by a legendary smuggler named Amadís, whose son was also named Amadís—parodies of the consummate knight errant of Spanish literary tradition, the inspiration of Don Quijote. Both father and son had suffered ignominious deaths and were buried in the desolate courtyard in the middle of the desert. The grandmother, the antithesis of the beautiful Oriana, had been rescued from prostitution by the elder Amadís, whose son had fathered the illegitimate Eréndira, who assumed the tasks of fourteen servant girls after the death of the two men. In order to provide a degree of factual authenticity to this strange family history, as well as an additional touch of

exoticism, the author inserts that what is known about it has evolved in a version "en lengua de indios " (99), oral legends as contrasted with the literary Amadís.

The reference to Amadís may be viewed as a deconstructive response on the part of García Márquez to the Spanish interpretation of the colonial experience since, as Elizabeth Spiller notes, chivalric novels such as Amadís de Gaula arguably played a role in defining the historical perspective of the Conquest. Although Spanish authorities attempted to block the exportation of the popular chivalric novels, many of the conquistadores arrived with copies of the texts and, acting with an idealized conception of the marvels of the Americas, they eventually framed political and economic reality to conform to preconceived expectations. That is, European colonizers shaped Latin America not according to the native, marvelous realities which they encountered, but rather according to the fictional preconceptions forged from the literary imagination. By alluding to the chivalric genre from a purely Latin-American context, García Márquez "responds to and critiques the European narratives of discovery that as much created the Conquest as they retell it" (Spiller 376).

Mario Vargas Llosa, in García Márquez. Historia de un deicidio (1971), notes the Colombian author's fascination with the sixteenth-century knight errant and observes an important correlation between the chivalric novel and the perspective of García Márquez's conception of potentiality, a connection also shared with the fairy tale as a genre:

> En El caballero Cifar y en el Amadís de Gaula la realidad reúne, generosamente, lo real objetivo y lo real imaginario en una indivisible totalidad en la que conviven. Sin discriminación y sin fronteras, hombres de carne y hueso y seres de la fantasía y del sueño, personajes históricos y criaturas del mito, la razón y la

> sinrazón, lo posible y lo imposible. Es decir, la realidad que los hombres viven objetivamente (sus actos, sus pensamientos, sus pasiones), y la que viven subjetivamente, la que existe con independencia de ellos y la que es un exclusivo producto de sus creencias, sus pesadillas o su imaginación. (177)

Although the chivalric novel arose from an age long past, historical discourse preserves its mythical influence, creating the plausibility of lifeless Latin-American Amadises who traverse the Colombian desert, not on horseback, but in coffins carried on the backs of enslaved indigenous servants.

A further manifestation of fantasy occurs in the description of Eréndira's servitude to her grandmother during the narrative stage of threat, an integral part of the discourse that must occur in order for escape, recovery, and consolation to take place. As noted earlier, threat reveals to the reader the nature of the danger facing the hero, whether to her physical existence, to her moral existence or both, while simultaneously presenting evidence that the world is not operating as it should and that action must be taken to right it. The element of threat usually occurs early in the story and may take any number of forms, such as desertion, imprisonment, or threat of death. Inherently, these dangers pose immediate and grave damage to the hero; they occur seemingly without any reasonable cause; and the hero accepts her fate without question. The unusual passivity of the hero in the fairy tale is noted by Betttelheim who remarks: "If one contemplates it, it is startling how the fairy-tale hero accepts without question that he is thus threatened—it just happens" (144-145).

The fate which Eréndira passively endures is foretold in the title of the work—the innocent girl serves as a virtual slave to the avaricious grandmother, who assumes the role of the tyrant-monster intent on self-preservation, an

archetypal relationship around which many European fairy tales revolve. However, from a symbolic interpretation of the story itself, the grandmother and the young protagonist serve as personifications of the exploitative Spanish Empire and its domination of colonial Latin America. Through the exaggerated physical descriptions of the two characters, García Márquez accentuates the menacing nature of the relationship. The text repeatedly refers to the grandmother's immense physical proportions which, in the fairy tale tradition, generally suggest a villain who utilizes her physical presence to establish dominance and fear. García Márquez first describes the wicked grandmother as "una hermosa ballena en la alberca de mármol" (97), a metaphorical reference that reinforces her perverse potential if one notes the Christian symbolism of the whale as a metaphorical expression of Hell, death, and the grave (Cirlot 17) and as a symbolic image of "the magical threshold" which the hero must cross in order to undertake the journey of trials (Campbell 90). Like the image of the home, she exhibits a non-synchronous relationship to reality, holding to the past while physically existing during an unspecified present time. The grandmother insistently clings to remnants of her former beauty, which now emerges only as a grotesque and gaudy caricature reproduced by cosmetics painstakingly applied by the granddaughter. Formerly a prostitute and bearing a multitude of tattoos, the older woman exists in memories of past glories, seated in a chair that resembles a throne, listening to elusive records, floating through the swamps of the past. Her descriptions imply a past of sordid grandeur.

The text provides a limited description of Eréndira, but her small stature and meek nature suggest a physical and emotional vulnerability when contrasted to the size and the power of the grandmother: "La nieta había cumplido apenas los catorce años, y era lánguida y de huesos tiernos, y demasiado mansa para

su edad" (97). She is virginal, dark-skinned, and compliant to the grandmother's demands. In fact, the first section of the story establishes the typical fairy tale relationship reminiscent of the Cinderella motif, as the narration gradually reveals the girl's perilous status under the older woman's domination. In keeping with the exaggeration of the setting, García Márquez magnifies the wretchedness of Eréndira's existence by meticulously listing in detail the domestic routines of the young girl. In a reversal of the standard roles of adult and child, the bathing and grooming of the grandmother become her principal tasks, and labors which assume ritualistic proportions in order to preserve the vestiges of the matriarch's faded beauty:

> Cuando acabó de bañarla, llevó a la abuela a su dormitorio. Era tan gorda que sólo podía caminar apoyada en el hombro de la nieta, o con un báculo que parecía de obispo, pero aún en sus diligencias más difíciles se notaba el dominio de una grandeza anticuada . . .Eréndira necesitó dos horas más para arreglar a la abuela. Le desenredó el cabello hebra por hebra, se lo perfumó y se lo peinó, le puso un vestido de flores ecuatoriales, le empolvó la cara con harina de talco, le pintó los labios con carmín, las mejillas con colorete, los párpados con almizcle y las uñas con esmalte de nácar, y cuando la tuvo emperifollada como una muñeca más grande que el tamaño humano la llevó a un jardín artificial de flores sofocantes como las del vestido . . . . (98)

Involuntary repetition serves as another stylistic trait in order to interject the uncanny into an environment, and García Márquez describes Eréndira's second set of tasks as involving a surreal and repetitive series of domestic duties—an interminable cycle of cleaning, cooking, and serving food. The tasks of the day

of her misfortune are gargantuan and never-ending: she must scrub the floors, cook lunch, polish the crystal, care for the ostrich, water the weeds around the graves of the two Amadises, serve lunch to her grandmother, wash the rugs, do the laundry, iron the clothes, remove the flowers, and close up the house. Not only the hyperbolic listing of the tasks but their anachronistic and detailed nature create a sense of fantasy: Eréndira needs six hours to wind and set the clocks in the house; she polishes not merely crystal, but Venetian champagne glasses; the grandmother dines alone, Fellini style, at the head of a banquet table set for twelve.

In contrast to the creative nature of the domestic tasks of Úrsula Buendía and her counterparts, García Márquez in this text focuses on the negative aspects of Eréndira's domestic role and its imminently destructive force. Rabuzzi, in her study of domesticity, The Sacred and the Feminine (1982), suggests that household tasks can indeed convey an ambiguous character, causing a transformation of the person entrapped in their ritualistic execution:

> This transformation can assume either a demonic or a sacred form, but in either case, the performer is caught up in something much larger than herself. In its demonic form housekeeping is extremely distasteful, sometimes even frightening, as the myth of Sisyphus, with its endless, meaningless repetitions, appropriately suggests. (96)

Rabuzzi also maintains that the profane repetition of meaningless acts causes alienation and disjunction, leading to a lifeless existence, "a tomb instead of a cosmos" (115).

Angel Rama discusses the motif of interminable ritualistic action in the works of García Márquez in his analysis of the Colombian author's fiction, "A

Chronicle of American Violence." Rama contends that García Márquez's preoccupation with his characters' impassivity toward life emerges from a fusion of an anthropological perspective with a literary expression of the author's views of his native country:

> The sensation of time standing still, of lives imprisoned in relentless circles which are almost impossible to break, is not solely derived from his favourite subject matter—namely, small Colombian towns abandoned by history, buried beneath the weight of a crushing eternity which transforms them into images of Hell—but also from literary devices, the structural techniques he has developed to express that world. (45)

According to Rama, García Márquez creates worlds in which "hell is the present infinitely repeated" (45), a region wherein choices are denied due to the impossibility of change, thereby suppressing a meaningful existence tied to the choice of a goal. For Rama, García Márquez's preoccupation with immobility serves only as a framework from which to suspend the surface reality while searching for a center of energy in a static universe. Rama claims that the novelist selects the most concrete form of literary expression to initiate the search and thereby to allow his characters the opportunity to locate their natural source of energy: "He merely chooses to condemn his creatures to specific situations, so that they may discretely indicate the energy centre from which their raison d'être in such determined ways of life derives" (45-46). In a universe in which change cannot occur, and in which self-determination does not exist, the normal, sequential patterns of time dissolve.

At first, Eréndira does appear to inhabit a world of the present, infinitely repeated, removed from a universe of mobility and choice, a predicament further

complicated by the addition of two enchantments that amplify her powerlessness. The first, sleep, appears repeatedly in traditional fairy tales and suggests several possibilities. In a discussion of Sleeping Beauty in A Dictionary of Symbols (1991), Cirlot states that on one hand, she [Sleeping Beauty] symbolizes the "ancestral images which lie dormant in the unconscious, waiting to be stimulated into action" (299); on the other hand, he cites Loeffler's interpretation that "princesses in their palaces, though not always asleep, are invariably outside the world of action, so that every sleeping, or otherwise secluded, princess stands for a passive potential" (299). García Márquez's characters operate in the juncture between sleeplessness and wakefulness, yet they maintain the hierarchical order of their roles. Eréndira, the reader finds, has learned to perform her duties while sleeping. Several references emphasize her trance-like quality: "Cerró los ojos, los abrió después con una expresión sin cansancio, y empezó a echar la sopa en la sopera. Trabajaba dormida" (100) [. . .] "En el momento de servir la sopa, la abuela advirtió sus modales de sonámbula, y le pasó la mano frente a los ojos como limpiando un cristal invisible" (100) [. . .] "No es nada, hija . . . Te volviste a dormir caminando" (100). The grandmother, on the other hand, has developed the power to continue issuing commands and talking as she sleeps: "le recitaba el código del orden nocturno mientras se hundía en el sueño" (101). "Se había dormido, pero siguió dando órdenes, pues de ella había heredado la nieta la virtud de continuar viviendo en el sueño" (102). Neither character demonstrates the capacity to operate in a dynamic world—the grandmother opts to relive her past grandeur, while the young girl functions as an automaton imprisoned in an artificial time frame preserved only by her own constant rewinding of the decaying mansion's multitudinous clocks.

The second enchantment is mentioned in the opening line of the story, "Eréndira estaba bañando a la abuela cuando empezó el viento de su desgracia" (97), and as is customary in the fairy tale, it reappears on two additional occasions during the first section of the work. The wind, considered the primary element due to its life-giving breath, symbolically holds both creative and destructive properties (Cirlot 373), and in "Eréndira," it would appear to serve as a wicked force which forever changes the heroine's world. The author personifies the wind as an isolating, omnipotent, and life-threatening force, which causes the goats to commit suicide from desolation, forces Eréndira to fight off its anger, and enters like a pack of hounds when it knocks the candle of the sleeping protagonist against a curtain, destroying the ancient mansion:

> Eréndira no tuvo ánimos para desvestirse, sino que puso el candelabro en la mesa de noche y se tumbó en la cama. Poco después, el viento de su desgracia se metió en el dormitorio como una manada de perros y volcó el candelabro contra los cortines. (102)

Although the text places the emphasis on the destructive force of the combined elements of wind and fire, when viewed symbolically within the larger context of the work, the two elements function as a dynamic source of regeneration. In this case, the effects of the wind propel Eréndira into the traditional fairy tale journey of task fulfillment, an interpretation affirmed by Christopher Little: "The wind actually represents the 'wind of change,' the ideological climate which eventually serves to free Eréndira from her domineering grandmother" (209-210).

The potential for regeneration does not immediately emerge, because the narration instead focuses on a second threat facing the heroine. The matriarch decides to repay the cost of the destroyed mansion with the selling of her

granddaughter's body. Campbell categorizes this type of narrative twist as the "call to adventure" that manifests latent desires:

> This [blunder on the part of the hero] is an example of one of the ways in which the adventure can begin. A blunder—apparently the merest chance—reveals an unsuspected world, and the individual is drawn into a relationship with forces that are not rightly understood. As Freud has shown, blunders are not the merest chance. They are the result of suppressed desires and conflicts. They are ripples on the surface of life, produced by unsuspected springs. And these may be very deep—as deep as the soul itself. The blunder may amount to the opening of a destiny. (51)

The grandmother displays a purely capitalistic attitude when she leads Eréndira to a storekeeper well known for the price he pays for virgins. After measuring and examining the young girl and haggling over her worth, the grandmother hands her over to the widower as if negotiating the sale of an animal, an extraordinary transaction related in a factual tone. The narrative emphasizes the girl's innocence and her passivity by relating that the shopkeeper leads the girl away as if taking her to school, "la condujo de la mano hacia la trastienda, como si la llevara para la escuela" (104).

In contrast to the discursive simplicity used to relate the transaction between the grandmother and the merchant, García Márquez relates the rape of Eréndira in a surrealistic, cinematic style. He combines the supernatural, the elements of Nature, and the poetic—all of which serve to magnify the powerlessness of the young protagonist. In one of the few passages where the heroine actively defends herself, the scene graphically emphasizes the ominous change in Eréndira's condition and her isolation from protection. By means of a

series of allusions, García Márquez carefully constructs a Colombian version of a Greek myth in which the shopkeeper assumes the role of Neptune ravishing Medusa as a young girl at the temple of Pallas (Ovid 98). Eréndira's defense becomes futile, as the elements of the rain and wind silence her screams, and her futile attempts at self-defense are answered by a powerful slap that causes her to fly into the air "con el largo cabello de *medusa* ondulando en el vacío" (105, emphasis added). In a reversal of the mythological Medusa, who inspires terror and evokes images of carnal temptation, the author further detaches the description from reality by incorporating surreal visual images depicting the protagonist's own terror:

> Eréndira sucumbió entonces al terror, perdió el sentido, y se quedó como fascinada con las franjas de luna de un pescado que pasó navegando en el aire de la tormenta, mientras el viudo la desnudaba desgarrándole la ropa con zarpazos espaciados, como arrancando hierba, desbarantándosela en largas tiras de colores que ondulaban como serpentinas y se iban con el viento. (105)

With the loss of her virginity, Eréndira now finds herself assuming the former profession of her grandmother, as she is separated from home and driven into a journey across the Colombian desert, accompanied by the caskets of the two Amadises and the imperial remains unscathed by the purge of the fire: "la cabecera de la cama virreinal, un ángel de guerra, el trono chamuscado, y otros chécheres inservibles" (106). As in her previous domestic existence within the walls of the home, Erendira's principal task centers on reconstructing the lost grandeur of the grandmother's earlier life through erotic subjugation.

Other basic traits of the fairy tale surface when the nomadic ordeal of new trials begins in the middle of the story's second section. The first concerns the

metaphorical nature of the journey itself. According to Northrop Frye, a journey reflects a "directed movement in time through space, and in the idea of a journey there are two elements involved. One is the person making the journey; the other is the road, path, or direction taken, the simplest word for this being *way*" (212). The journey itself may take any number of forms, from the pattern of a cyclical quest in which the protagonist returns to his point of origin, the forking path in which choices determine the route of the hero, or the direct route from point A to point B, which many times reflects the inner change of the hero as he pursues his laborious course. Frye further notes:

> In the majority of these journey metaphors, the journey is seldom regarded as a good thing in itself. It is undertaken because it must be: if the journey is a metaphor for life, life has to be followed to the end, but the end is the point of the journey, or at least the quality of the end is. It is conceivable, however, that a journey might have a value in itself. If so, obviously there would have to be something inside the traveller to resonate against the experience, so the theme of journeying for the sake of the experience of journeying would often be at the same time a journey into oneself. (Myth and Metaphor 221)

Mircea Eliade, explicating the metaphorical nature of the fairy tale journey, also stresses its transformational value, comparing it to an initiation rite or a rite of passage in which the inadequate hero must endure a series of trials in order to emerge into a higher plane of consciousness:

> It is impossible to deny that the ordeals and adventures of the heroes and heroines of fairy tales are almost always translated into initiatory terms. Now this to me seems of the utmost importance:

> from the time—which is so difficult to determine—when fairy tales took shape as such, men, both primitive and civilized alike, have listened to them with a pleasure susceptible of indefinite repetition. This amounts to saying that initiatory scenarios—even camouflaged, as they are in fairy tales—are the expression of a psychodrama that answers a deep need in the human being. Every man wants to experience certain perilous situations, to confront exceptional ordeals, to make his way into the Other World. (qtd. in Bettelheim 35)

With the initial requisites of passage already established by the author, i.e. the heroine's adolescent age and her initiation into sexuality, Eréndira undertakes the second stage of the psychodrama, which in the fairy tale entails leaving home in order to endure a series of tests in which the line of progress becomes the focus, and whose ultimate goal becomes self-knowledge and self-actualization.

The journey of transformation revolves around a second set of trials in which Eréndira ultimately exchanges the insurmountable tasks of domesticity for an erotic slavery, which by the sexual connotation of masculine penetration references the exploitative mining of Colombian gold. The narration focuses on the magnitude of Eréndira's task, her increased isolation, and the brutal nature of erotic subjugation. Donald Shaw in the study, "Chronicle of a Death Foretold: Narrative Function and Interpretation," observes: "One of the major features of García Márquez's work as a whole is its deliberate anti-romanticism. Love is either burlesqued or reduced to mere carnality" (101). According to Shaw, this carnal depiction of love appears frequently not only in García Márquez's fiction but in Latin American literature in general, and "is regularly associated with the overturning of conventional values and those of human solidarity, whether social

or emotional" (101). Although Eréndira shares her bed with countless men, with the exception of Ulises, they emerge as faceless, emotionless figures of desperate men who spend hours in line under the desert sun to spend a few moments with her, suggestive of the legions of fortune-seekers who arrived in the New World enticed by legendary opportunity. As in his initial description of Eréndira's domestic trials, García Márquez utilizes hyperbole, anaphora, and parallel constructions to compose a nightmarish view of the circumstances surrounding the girl:

> La fila interminable y ondulante, compuesta por hombres de razas y condiciones diversas, parecía una serpiente de vértebra humana que dormitaba a través de solares y plazas, por entre bazares abigarrados y mercados ruidosos, y se salía de las calles de aquella ciudad fragorosa de traficantes de paso. Cada calle era un garito público, cada casa una cantina, cada puerta un refugio de prófugos. Las numerosas músicas indescifrables y los pregones gritados formaban un solo estruendo de pánico en el calor alucinante. (145-146)

In essence, Eréndira trades the isolation of the grandmother's home for the solitude of a traveling brothel that assumes the character of a sordid carnival.

The literary motif of the carnival customarily implies an overturning of social hierarchies and systems of power. In Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics (1973), Mikhail Bakhtin categorizes the period of carnival as the reversal of the official and serious life: "free, full of ambivalent laughter, blasphemy, the profanation of all that was holy, disparagement and obscenity, and familiar contact with everyone and everything" (107). In the Christian tradition dating from the Middle Ages, carnival derives from the Latin term carne levare, or the

taking away of meat or flesh, the term referring to the restrictions imposed by the Lenten season immediately following the carnival pageant (Armitt 68). In anticipation of a tightly regulated season governed by spiritual and physical oblation, during carnival, rules are bent, and hierarchical systems are reversed in a sacrilegious celebration in which the spirit of the underworld presides. According to Armitt, the carnival spectacle translates religious ritual into a generalized social scheme, allowing the masses to become the oversized body of the tyrant, participating in the overturning of conventional morality. In this sense, carne levare assumes a non-ecclesiastical connotation, which emphasizes the carrying away of the flesh or erotic pleasure. Through the correlation, Armitt suggests that particularly in the fairy tale "under the spirit of the carnivalesque, the body is not only the central reference point, but also the limit of its concerns—a preoccupation that provides it with its primary socio-political significance as a crucial site of power and manipulation" (68). By participating in the erotic slavery of Eréndira, the masses of males peripherally join as active collaborators in the grandmother's domination.

However, while the carnival, by its very nature, offers an environment in which the norms of morality are subverted, it generally involves only a temporary inversion that allows the collective body a transitory respite from cultural mores. In "Eréndira," the sense of immorality appears pervasive, and the protagonist stands isolated outside the solidarity of the collective community. García Márquez refuses to offer his protagonist any consolation of inclusion, since Eréndira's relationships with the other characters are symbiotic at best and opportunistic at worst. The carnival in fact turns against her in the sixth section, as the local prostitutes, enraged at losing their customers to the young girl,

parade her through the town in a mock penitential procession that symbolically inverts the religious practices of the Lenten ritual:

> Eréndira no pudo escapar del escarnio porque se lo impidió la cadena de perro con que la abuela la encadenaba de un travesaño de la cama desde que trató de fugarse. Pero no le hicieron ningún daño. La mostraron en su altar de marquesina por las calles de más estrépito, como el paso alegórico de la penitente encadenada, y al final la pusieron en cámara ardiente en el centro de la plaza mayor. Eréndira estaba enroscada, con la cara escondida pero sin llorar, y así permaneció en el sol terrible de la plaza, mordiendo de vergüenza y de rabia la cadena de perro de su mal destino, hasta que alguien le hizo la caridad de taparla con una camisa. (148)

No one attempts to rescue the heroine from her imprisonment, not even the narrator who claims to have been present at the time of her disgrace. In fact, he adds that the entourage remains in the desert town, legitimized "bajo el amparo de la fuerza pública" (148), until the grandmother, content with her accumulation of gold, decides to abandon the desert for the sea.

Eréndira's isolation serves an important function within the narrative structure, since isolation drives the journey's dynamic framework, while at the same time it allows for the separability and mobility of the protagonist. As Max Lüthi observes: "The isolation of the figures and objects means at the same time that they are unburdened, ready and free to enter into any combination" (72). Although the fairy tale hero manifests the ability to endure extraordinary physical trials, she generally emerges as an inadequate character, incapable of recognizing a means of escape from the threat that imprisons her. Instead, she paradoxically and unconsciously finds herself open to contact with helpers who

surface unexpectedly during her journey. While these helpers may appear as animals or supernatural beings, they generally assume a human form, and they may act as either malevolent or benign forces. The hero, who chooses to act rather than question her circumstances, rarely ponders the effects of entering into a relationship with them. Since the fairy tale hero often finds herself unable to reach her goals on the basis of her own actions, these secondary characters offer an essential support by permitting the hero to glimpse the possibility of escape, in spite of the fact that the helpers' intervention sometimes leads to unanticipated and unwelcome detours.

The only entities who offer Eréndira a means of escape and recovery are two unlikely rescuers. The first, emerging with the onset of the second wind of change, is a group of missionaries who halt the procession's journey across the desert in the beginning of the fourth section and become the target of a thinly disguised satire of the ecclesiastical intervention in Latin-American affairs. In physical terms they do not seem to pose much of a threat to the grandmother:

> Un grupo de misioneros con los crucifijos en alto se habían plantado hombro contra hombro en medio del desierto. Un viento tan bravo como el de la desgracia sacudía sus hábitos de cañamazo y sus barbas cerriles, y apenas les permitía tenerse en pie. Detrás de ellos estaba la casa de la misión, un promontorio colonial con un campanario minúsculo sobre los muros ásperos y encalados. (121)

Claiming a power emanating from a higher authority, one missionary accuses the grandmother of violating sacred law by the marketing of her granddaughter. The grandmother acquiesces to his authority in spite of her protests that she stands outside the realm of the spiritual, "No entiendo tus misterios, hijo" (122). She

decides to avoid a direct confrontation and chooses to play a waiting game, halting the caravan at the spot. The missionaries make the first move, kidnapping the sleeping girl in the middle of the night.

While biblical tradition endows the desert with ascetic and transcendental powers, the desert of Colombia offers a materialistic setting for the Church and its agents, and the grandmother soon discovers the formidable power of her opponent in the Church's fight for self-preservation and monetary gain. When her attempts, both direct and devious, fail to regain her property, she turns to the civil authority. However, the military man who serves as the mayor of the region demonstrates the invalidity of Colombian civil institutions, since his primary duty consists in shooting holes in clouds to produce rain, a futile and useless action in the middle of the sweltering desert. He advises the grandmother to secure a letter written on her behalf from a higher authority, but he warns her that "los padrecitos, de acuerdo con el Concordato, tienen derecho a quedarse con la niña hasta que sea mayor de edad. O hasta que se case" (123). The colonial concept of the authority of written documents becomes particularly ironic when the grandmother later presents the letter to the commandant of the local detachment who retorts: "Cómo carajo quiere que la lea—gritó el comandante—si no sé leer" (141).

Having been passed from the captivity imposed by the grandmother into the institutional captivity of the Church, Eréndira finds herself facing a new and ironic set of domestic demands. While the grandmother establishes her vigil outside the mission walls, Eréndira appears to find certain happiness within them, in spite of a grueling life imposed upon her. García Márquez satirizes the circularity of the Church's mission: Eréndira is given the meaningless task of whitewashing the stairs every time someone goes up or down, a duty which

assumes Sisyphean dimensions, since the stairs are continuously dirtied by the missionaries and novice water-carriers. Although she labors in isolation, she finds her new life a relief: "lo sintió como un domingo de todos los días después de la galera mortal de la cama" (28). Although Eréndira has exchanged a familial subjugation for an institutional one, her experience suggests an initial metamorphic step toward a new consciousness as she experiences a new sense of community, witnessing the labors shared by the other novices of the mission. During this time, Eréndira makes the sole verbal expression of happiness in the work, breaking the silence that has been her custom since the kidnapping. She speaks only to herself, in the solitude of the symbolic staircase, and her words reflect the first evidence of an emerging awareness: ". . . se quedó sola, donde nadie pudiera oírla, y entonces habló por primera vez desde que entró en el convento.—Soy feliz—dijo" (127-128).

The grandmother remains relentless in her siege, and in a satirical twist, finally outwits the Church at its own game. The missionaries, in their zeal to force the indigenous people to accept European cultural beliefs, comb the most remote areas of the desert in search of pregnant concubines in order to force them to marry. The native women resist, recognizing that by marrying they face a much more arduous life, since the men require greater labor from their wives than from their mistresses. The missionaries resort first to verbal trickery, and then to bribes of cheap cloth and flashy earrings to seduce the women, whom they then bind and carry away to a collective wedding within the walls of the mission. The grandmother appropriates the Church's system of bribery, and she finds an innocent indigenous boy to whom the missionaries have offered five pesos to take his first communion; she lures him with the offer of twenty pesos to marry her granddaughter. Eréndira, powerless against the duplicity of both the

grandmother and the Church, marries the young boy whose name she does not even know. When asked what her free will is, Eréndira chooses to leave the convent not with her new husband, but rather with the grandmother, finding herself "de nuevo bajo el hechizo que la había dominado desde su nacimiento" (130), an enchantment which she must overcome in order to destroy the mythical tyrant.

The insertion of the mission within the narrative serves two functions. First, it provides García Márquez with a vehicle to interject his interpretation of the Latin American experience with the Church's institutional activities. The Church that emerges in "Eréndira" is one stripped of its spiritual essence, an institution in which the characters participate in the traditional rituals of baptism and marriage, but they act more from subservience than from an internalized faith. While Catholicism claims authority from a position of institutional power, García Márquez focuses parodically on its demand of blind submission. As Vargas Llosa comments on the depiction of religion in the collection of La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y de su abuela desalmada as a whole: "se trata de imágenes usurpadas a una tradición católica, despojadas de su esencia 'religiosa', tratadas (maltratadas) con la fantasía y el humor y convertidas en vehículos de lo imaginario" ("Amadís en América" 631).

Secondly, the mission's failure to rescue the protagonist reflects a long-standing tradition of the fairy tale's adversarial relationship with Christian dogma. While both Christianity and the fairy tale purport to espouse a philosophy of individual transformation, each relies on disparate paths and goals. As man searches for help and salvation, the Church traditionally emphasizes the necessity of suffering, with the final reward to be found in the next world; the fairy tale, in contrast, emphasizes the relief from trials with the achievement of

consolation during this lifetime. In fact, the major emphasis of the fairy tale places reliance on the powers of man and magic, in direct contrast to the Church's dependence on God:

> On the surface the fairy tale of magic shows very little that is specifically Christian. Mercy and grace play a small role, just as do Christian figures and institutions. Wealth and power are not in the least despised, but rather aspired to, the final goal being not something in another world but happiness in this one. Magic is delighted in, with help rarely coming from God but rather from anonymous powers. The fairy tale is thus scarcely a creation of the Christian church. (Lüthi, 192)

Although the mission claims to work toward spiritual salvation, its perverse machinations place it much more in the realm of temporal interest, situating Eréndira in the midst of a feudal battle between the Church and the tyrant grandmother. In effect, the Church becomes a second captor.

Eréndira's second rescuer, Ulises, provides the author with a vehicle to reconfigure mythical action via superimposed intertextual allusions. Through Ulises, mythical and regional history coexist with the present, exposing the course of dominance and allowing García Márquez to open the way toward the deconstruction of colonial hegemonic ideology. Reaching first into the mythological realm, García Márquez evokes the image of the hero of Homeric legend, Odysseus, which he reinforces by Ulises' own assertion to Eréndira that his name is one "de navegante" (118). Ulises arrives in the third section of the short story, with "ojos marítimos y solitarios" (113), after he and his father, the smuggler, have become lost on the road to the border. Homer's Odysseus (Latinate form, Ulysses) possesses both legendary physical and mental attributes

that enable him to outwit his foes and to achieve his objectives. In contrast, the reader soon learns that García Márquez's Ulises bears little resemblance to his legendary counterpart, leading Palencia-Roth to label him an antihero: "Pero si el Ulises clásico es un héroe fuerte y valiente, éste parece ser un antihéroe: indeciso en momentos importantes, poco más que un adolescente, enamorado de una prostituta" (156). Ulises' own actions confirm his weakness. Already aware of and intrigued by the girl's fame, he steals money from his father in order to secure the girl's favors. In contrast with the legendary Greek hero, he is sexually innocent, surrounded by "una aura irreal y parecía visible en la penumbra por el fulgor propio de su belleza" (116), an ephebe who must be initiated into the rites of love by the young girl. Ulises triggers an immediate change in Eréndira, who laughs and talks and shares her bed with him out of affection rather than duty: "Eréndira lo había querido tanto, y con tanta verdad, que lo volvió a querer por la mitad de su precio mientras la abuela deliraba, y lo siguió queriendo sin dinero hasta el amanecer" (119). However, Ulises returns to his father, leaving Eréndira in the same bondage as he found her.

When he does return, Ulises uses the call of the owl to signal his presence to Eréndira, and the bird serves as common symbolic evidence of the goddess Athena, the protectress of Odysseus throughout his travels. In Greek society, the prototype for gender roles in Western culture, males played the dominant role as framers and defenders of civilization, while women assumed a subservient and predominantly domestic role, intervening only with the implicit permission of male authority. Although a variety of female characters, including the virtuous Penelope, weave through the Odyssey, the Homeric depiction of the goddess Athena supersedes societal restrictions, emerging as a proactive force by virtue of her role as confidante to the trouble-plagued Odysseus, a role that places her

in a uniquely egalitarian position (Murnaghan 61-62). Athena, as goddess of both war and wisdom, therefore represents an assertive vision of the role of woman. Within the narrative, it is through Eréndira's promptings that Ulises first achieves sexual maturity and eventually becomes involved with the murder of the tyrant.

A second mythological relationship arises from the name that Ulises uses for Eréndira during his second visit to her tent—Aridnere, a letter by letter reversal of Eréndira and an intertextual reference to another mythological character, Ariadne, the young princess of Crete who assists in the slaying of the Minotaur. In the mythological story, Ariadne falls in love with Theseus, a young noble from Athens condemned to die, and she rescues him from the threat of the Minotaur by leading him from the labyrinth with a ball of string. In doing so, Ariadne betrays her father, the king, only to be abandoned by Theseus on a remote island, retreating from his promise to marry her (Downing 54).

Lois Marie Jaeck suggests that in "Eréndira," García Márquez achieves a revision of the Ariadne legend through the reversal of gender roles: the grandmother assumes the role of the masculine Minotaur; Ulises betrays his father (stealing from and abandoning him), just as Ariadne betrays her father; Ulises, like Ariadne, acts from motivations of love; Eréndira abandons Ulises after he kills the threatening monster that oppresses her (Jaeck 381-82). Palencia-Roth also perceives an extension of the Minotaur legend through additional contextual references to Icarus, pointing out that when the grandmother asks Ulises about his wings, the young man responds, "el que las tenía era mi abuelo" (García Márquez 116), a reference to Daedalus, the architect of the labyrinth containing the Minotaur (Palencia-Roth 156). In addition, the truck that Ulises steals from his father to rescue Eréndira rambles

across the desert leaving a trail of feathers, reminiscent of Icarus' cataclysmic flight. When viewed from this context, the text suggests a fatal flaw on the part of Ulises, who like Icarus disobeys his father's interdictions and causes his own demise.

A third set of allusions places Ulises within the Latin American historical context. As do many of García Márquez's works, "Eréndira" incorporates elements of the geography and history from the Colombian coastal area, using "his homeland as a simple bridge between regional reality and universal truths" (Cohn 62). Many of these references emerge in the figure of Ulises, who evidences elements of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Caribbean life in which lawlessness prevailed. The anarchical system of government discouraged attempts at settlement, agriculture and manufacturing existed at very low levels, and commerce thrived only at the hands of contrabandists who thrived on the lucrative gold mining industry. The most obvious result was the rise of buccaneers operating from bases in the Antilles, particularly the Dutch, who stole vast quantities of gold on its way to the Spanish Court or who eroded the Spanish commercial monopoly by trans-shipping merchandise through Sevilla outside the authorization of Crown authorities (Fagg 267).

Ulises, the reader is told, is a second-generation smuggler, the product of the union of a Dutch smuggler and an Indian woman who speaks Guajira, a member of the eponymous tribe which inhabited the Guajiran Peninsula whose terrain serves as the backdrop for much of García Márquez's fiction. The family's contraband consists of diamond-bearing oranges, a symbolic hidden treasure that serves as a fantastic representation of the agricultural import brought to the New World by the Spanish. Ulises repeatedly reiterates to Eréndira his role as a smuggler, yet his only weapon is an antiquated pistol formerly belonging to Sir

Francis Drake. Although Ulises resurrects the presence of the buccaneers of past centuries, he, like Eréndira, has never seen the sea and, "sails" across the desert in passing trucks. Like his historical counterparts, he acts from mercenary motives and a sense of adventure, "escondido en camiones de paso, robando para comer y para dormir, y robando muchas veces por el puro placer del riesgo . . ." (152). Although he views the grandmother with dread, referring to her as "la ballena blanca" (136), she piques his interest with nostalgic dreams of her murdered lover, a man stronger and taller than Amadís, who entered her life the way that Guatarral (Walter Raleigh) entered the Guianas. The association of Ulises with colonial pirates conveys another political connotation, in light of the term "filibustero," the Spanish term of Dutch derivation that was applied to the Dutch, French, and English renegades who seized massive quantities of Colombian gold bound for the Spanish treasury. While filibustero referred to buccaneers in general, it was also applied to the group of adventurers who engaged in unauthorized warfare for colonial interests against Spanish imperialism in the New World (Barnhart 382). From this perspective, Ulises poses a dual peril to the grandmother: he not only attempts to steal her possession, Eréndira, but he threatens to subvert her authority as well.

The final intertextual interpretation of Ulises, that of the fairy tale Prince, appears in the fifth section of the story. Leaving his father's farm (his kingdom), Ulises departs on his long journey carrying the stolen oranges (the magical tokens), eventually to encounter the tent sheltering Eréndira and the grandmother. He enters the tent like a Prince Charming, finding the girl sleeping childlike, and naked with her eyes open. He awakens her by passing his hand over her eyes and calling her by the name he has invented when he wants to think of her, Aridnere. Both the magical awakening and name suggest the first

evidence of escape and recovery in a traditional fairy tale, transformations confirmed by the fact that Eréndira feels shame at her nakedness before Ulises: "Eréndira despertó. Se sintió desnuda frente a Ulises, hizo un chillido sordo y se cubrió con la sábana hasta la cabeza. No me mires—dijo—. Estoy horrible" (135). Although Ulises pleads with the girl to escape with him, Eréndira remains hesitant, trapped by conditioned passivity, a recurrent characteristic in García Márquez's characters, and one that Deborah Cohn attributes to a conditioned response to the circularity of time:

> This fatalism, and the sense of predetermination that it complements, also presupposes a concept of time that is not linear: foreknowledge of the future requires that it somehow be present and identifiable in the present which, as a result, either offers premonitions of death or conversely, appears to be the inevitable fulfillment of a fate determined in the past. (66)

Although the newly awakened consciousness of Eréndira ultimately directs her, "su instinto de libertad prevaleció por fin contra el hechizo de la abuela" (140), the cycle of subjugation remains intact, preserved by Ulises' impotence against political, institutional, and paternal authority.

Only with the caravan's arrival at the sea does the narration project a transformation in the vision of both Eréndira and the grandmother, expressed as a resurrection of life and hope: "Una tarde, al final de un desfiladero opresivo, percibieron un viento de laureles antiguos, y escucharon piltrafas de diálogos de Jamaica, y sintieron unas ansias de la vida, y un nudo en el corazón, y era que habían llegado al mar" (149). The laurel, sacred to Apollo, traditionally promises the fulfillment of dreams and, for the grandmother, the arrival at the sea offers a nostalgic glimpse of her roots across the water. For the young girl, the arrival

heralds unprecedented visions of prospective independence, inspired by the grandmother's pronouncement of imminent autonomy: "Cuando yo te falte—prosiguió la abuela—, no quedarás a merced de los hombres, porque tendrás tu casa propia en una ciudad de importancia. Serás libre y feliz" (149). She proclaims that Eréndira's home will be prestigious, a place where important government affairs will be discussed, and the fate of entire nations will be decided. Like Daphne who fled love and carnal experience with Apollo himself through metamorphosis into a tree, Eréndira quickly grasps the potential of her future, and she realizes that in order to achieve a new life free from sexual subjugation, she must end the life of the grandmother.

Although empowered by her glimpse of freedom, Eréndira cannot gather enough strength to break the enchantment that the old woman has cast, a conventional fairy tale device that amplifies the dominance of the tyrant. She retreats from one opportunity to kill the grandmother and, attempting to break her isolation, calls instead upon Ulises from the labyrinth. From across the miles, Ulises magically hears her voice as clearly as if she were speaking from across the room, and he immediately responds, despite the threat of his father's banishment and curse, "a dondequiera que vayas te perseguirá la maldición de tu padre" (151).

Again acting within the conventions of fairy tale fantasy, he is drawn magically across the desert to the seaside town and to Eréndira's tent. Gazing upon her with such intensity that Eréndira awakens, Ulises reencounters her "con una ternura callada y una dicha recóndita que se parecieron más que nunca al amor" (152). But while the Prince and the entrapped Princess experience love at one end of the tent, at the other end lies the monster who becomes more hideous as she relives in her sleep the glories of her past beauty and fame.

While Ulises becomes more intrigued by the grandmother's tale, Eréndira becomes more resolute in her desire to kill her, finally asking her lover "sin un quebranto mínimo en la voz" (154) to kill her captor.

Although logic and cunning generally provide the two key paths to escape and recovery in the fairy tale, the grandmother proves to be such a mighty foe that Ulises finds his first attempts to kill her completely futile. In fact, her murder requires three attempts, each more violent than the previous one, a device often utilized in the fairy tale to create heightened dramatic suspense. He first feeds her a pastry filled with enough arsenic "para exterminar una generación de ratas" (156); he reappears two weeks later and blows up the piano while the grandmother plays, immersed in a profound nostalgia. While the blast does not kill the old woman, it does destroy all her belongings, renewing the granddaughter's original fealty. Although Eréndira would appear entrapped in a feudal cycle of perpetual debt, the matriarch paradoxically dreams of a peacock, a symbol associated with both the apotheosis of princesses and immortality (Cirlot 25), a prophetic sign of Eréndira's eventual liberation.

Faced with a renewed vision of perpetual imprisonment, Eréndira's treatment of Ulises becomes one of complete contempt, and, spurred by his lover's disdain, he seizes a kitchen knife and plunges it into his monstrous foe. In a battle reminiscent of a fight between a medieval knight and dragon, Ulises struggles to kill the monstrous grandmother. After the first attempt, the grandmother, described as a hideous beast, tries to strangle him, but he summons the strength to stab her a second and a third time, finally cutting her belly, causing an explosion of green blood that covers him from head to foot:

> Grande, monolítico, gruñendo de dolor y de rabia, la abuela se aferró al cuerpo de Ulises. Sus brazos, sus piernas, hasta su

> cráneo pelado estaban verdes de sangre. La enorme respiración de fuelle, trastornada por los primeros estertores, ocupaba todo el ámbito. Ulises logró liberar otra vez el brazo armado, abrió un tajo en el vientre, y una explosión de sangre lo empapó de verde hasta los pies. (161)

Eréndira watches the scene passively, but when the struggle is over, she leans over without touching the body, to ensure that her captor is dead.

The grandmother's death precipitates changes in the two remaining characters that are both immediate and radical. The evolution of Eréndira demonstrates the completion of the element of recovery that was initiated by her resolve to murder the grandmother and the subsequent summons of Ulises to her side: "y cuando se convenció de que estaba muerta su rostro adquirió de golpe toda la madurez de persona mayor que no le habían dado sus veinte años de infortunio" (162). The death of the grandmother also signals the expected release from the spell that fosters transformations on two levels: for Eréndira, an external, physical change from girl to woman that represents the inner condition of maturation and a resulting sovereign authority in which her power extends beyond herself to assert control over external forces in the world; and for the reader, a suggestion that the order of the world has been corrected and that all is right and just—that good has triumphed and evil has been punished. Both of these concepts, the development of individual power and the reestablishment of the proper existential order, are fundamental to the fairy tale's development of a consolatory resolution.

Eréndira's actions reinforce the narrator's assessment of her new power. Ignoring her rescuer, she picks up the vest of gold earned by her miseries and leaves the tent. There is no communication with Ulises who sits next to his

victim, exhausted and unable to extricate himself from the grandmother's blood that seems to be oozing from his fingers. Even as he shouts for her to return, Eréndira does not hear him, consumed with her escape: "Iba corriendo contra el viento, más veloz que un venado, y ninguna voz de este mundo la podía detener" (162). Her flight retraces all the sites of her miserable journey to the sea—the salt-peter pits, the talcum craters, the shacks of the shanty towns where her prostitution began, beyond the desert where her enslavement originated, until the known world and her misfortune cease to exist. Eréndira escapes, "más allá de los vientos áridos y los atardeceres de nunca acabar, y jamás se volvió a tener la menor noticia de ella ni se encontró el vestigio más ínfimo de su desgracia" (163).

Clearly this is not the formulaic ending of the fairy tale in which the prince marries the heroine and all "live happily ever after." In fact, there is no promise of any satisfactory ending for Ulises, who remains behind completely stripped of the final remnants of his power. Abandoned by the woman for whom he has committed murder, he regresses to childhood, pursuing Eréndira futilely as a child seeking his mother: "Entonces hizo un último esfuerzo para perseguirla, llamándola con unos gritos desgarrados que ya no eran de amante sino de hijo" (162). When the grandmother's Indians find him, he resembles a small child, crying from "soledad y de miedo" (162).

Both the abandonment of Ulises and the solitary escape of the heroine have intrigued García Márquez's critics, leading to various interpretations of both the narrative structure and its significance within the context of the work. Mark Millington, in his analysis of "Eréndira" and the collection as a whole, proposes that the unifying narrative element is that of "idas y vueltas," arrivals and departures. He asserts that each of the stories in the collection begins with an

arrival that invades and disrupts the status quo, thereby causing a series of events that produce both interest on the part of the reader and movement within the narration. In the case of "Eréndira," the invading force is of course the "wind of disgrace" that sparks the destruction of the house, the original cosmic center for the two female characters. He further contends that the new course of action for the characters entails an expansion of community that makes the new instability a shared event, and for Millington, the community includes the symbiotic travelers that compose the traveling brothel, although the trio of the girl, the grandmother, and Ulises provide the framework upon which the episodic structure hangs.

Of particular concern to Millington is the fact that the characters of the story "rarely have overt or identifiable goals" (122), and he asserts that the author poses the central unifying question of whether or not Eréndira will ever be free of her grandmother only within sections six and seven, well into the narration. According to his analysis, the delay of this unifying question promotes very slow forward movement, causing the ending itself to become particularly crucial in creating a sense of resolution. Finding an inadequate outcome of the conflict, Millington proposes that only through Eréndira's departure can the author provide a sense of an ending by which he does not need to provide an explanation for the actions of his characters or for the world in which they exist, other than to mark the expansion of the characters through a juxtaposition of the reader's frames of knowledge and the idiosyncratic narrative space which the characters occupy.

Millington proposes that García Márquez has created a story in which the characters move through arrivals and departures within the framework of a universe that operates outside of a rational order. While it would be consistent

with García Márquez's works to create such a world, Millington fails to note the dialectical relationship between the grandmother and the girl that establishes the dynamic tension within the story. Lutz Röhrich has pointed out that the presence of social oppositions in fairy tales is essential not merely to project feudal attitudes but as "an artistic and narrative prerequisite" (Fairy Tales and Society 7), to advance the characters toward a freedom that shatters social barriers. In "Eréndira," this dynamic tension provides the episodic framework that ultimately results in the death of the grandmother and the liberation of the heroine.

Although Millington claims that the basic purpose of the work, and of the anthology as a whole, is to open up and transform, he asserts that to label these stories as fairy tales is inappropriate: "To have recourse to such labels as fairy stories or children's stories to describe ISS [Incredibly Sad Story] would be to seek security and closure by removing the stories into an unworldly, 'purely literary' frame of reference (if such a concept is anything more than wishful thinking)" (132). While Millington trivializes the genre of the fairy or folk tale, one must recognize that its most basic theme revolves around transformation, both of the individual and the social hierarchies within which the protagonist must operate, exactly the purpose that Millington identifies as central to "Eréndira" and the collection as a whole. In addition, the lack of overt or identifiable goals that he notes serves a crucial role in the fairy tale narrative structure as an integral step in the heroine's progress toward transformation, although rarely recognized by the protagonist herself.

Jasbir Jain's study, "Innocent Eréndira: The Reversal of a Fairy Tale," also concludes that the story's "underlying pattern strongly suggests the structure of the fairy tale" (103). Citing Tolkien's formula for the genre, she notes the following similarities: a heroine who appears entrapped by a dragon or evil

stepmother; a lover who comes to the rescue but must wait for the enlightenment of the heroine; the use of magic and supernatural powers; the archetypical segmentation of good and evil; the trials that test virtue and courage; and the ability of the heroine to communicate with the preserving agent (104). As we have seen, all these elements are obviously present in the work and link it to more traditional fairy tales such as "Cinderella," "Snow White," and "Rapunzel." However, according to Jain, the story lacks an appropriate consolatory resolution, a fact that causes her to classify Eréndira as the reversal of the fairy tale. Her assertion results from the failure to perceive an "encatastrophic [sic] ending" (104), which she interprets along traditional patriarchal lines to exhibit "[t]he assurance that freedom is possible, that love is a reality. . . " (105).

Jain's critique oversimplifies the nature of the denouement in a number of vital ways. Indeed, Tolkien does emphasize the necessity of an "eucatastrophic" ending (a term which he coined to describe a sudden and miraculous grace creating a resolution that inspires great joy [153]), in order for story to qualify as a fairy tale, since it is within this series of events that the person hearing or reading the tale will experience consolation, or the knowledge that the world is "right" and that good and justice will prevail in the end. However, Tolkien's definition of the eucatastrophic ending does not exclude some element of pessimism and must be considered within his complete description of the nature of consolation:

> It does not deny the existence of *dyscatastrophe*, of sorrow and failure: the possibility of these is necessary to the joy of deliverance; it denies (in the face of much evidence, if you will) universal final defeat and in so far is *evangelium*, giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief. (153)

Jain also ignores the remainder of Tolkien's treatise, which relates that a successful creation of joy within fantasy can be explained principally as the discovery of an underlying reality or truth—"a brief vision that the answer may be greater—it may be a far-off gleam or echo of *evangelium* in the real world" (155). Given this interpretation, Jain's analysis of Ulises' abandonment and Eréndira's flight falls within paternalistic paradigms that reinforce the masculine/dominant right to action and negate the feminine/subordinate effort toward self-determination.

By assessing the resolution from the analytical scope of the Heimlich, an alternate perception of Erendira's actions becomes apparent. With the deliberate intrusion of the uncanny, and its attendant dislocation of the familiar, the primary focus of the tale becomes the quest for the Heimische, the real home. According to Zipes, the resolution of the fairy tale quest produces two distinct outcomes: the first, a psychological interpretation meaningful to the individual reader, and the second, the acquisition of values for participation in society wherein the protagonist attains greater power of self-determination ("Liberating Potential" 260). Freud held that the fairy tale narrative implements the uncanny as a force that opens the reader to primal experiences, but in addition it serves as the impetus for the ultimate goal of the tale in projecting "unfulfilled but possible futures to which we still like to cling to in fantasy, all the strivings of the ego which adverse external circumstances have crushed . . ." (qtd. in Zipes, "Liberating Potential" 260).

Zipes refers to Ernst Bloch's postulation that in order to achieve Heimische, the protagonist must achieve a realization of autonomy by demonstrating a non-fatalistic vision of the future, which transcends the past and bears a revolutionary outlook. In order to realize the true home, here construed

as utopia, the creative hero must not only overcome exploitation and subjugation, but additionally she must seek a transformative return to the roots of her origins:

> *The true genesis is not at the beginning, but at the end*, and it starts to begin only when society and existence become radical: that is, comprehend their own roots. But the root of history is the working, creating man, who rebuilds and transforms the given circumstances of the world. Once man has comprehended himself and has established his own domain in real democracy, without depersonalization and alienation, something arises in the world which all men have glimpsed in childhood: a place and a state in which no one has yet been. And the name of this something is home or homeland. (Bloch, qtd. in Zipes, "Liberating Potential" 260)

Propp, Tolkien, Lüthi, and Zipes concur in that the achievement of home requires a visionary projection from a new posture and, above all, that what matters is not the means to the end, but rather the end itself: "This must not mean that the liberating fairy tale must have a moral resolution, but that, to be liberating, it must reflect a *process* of struggle against all types of suppression and authoritarianism and project various possibilities for the concrete realization of utopia" (Zipes, "Liberating Potential" 261). The symbolic struggle for autonomy must not be hindered by elements that would strip the protagonist of the newly achieved emancipatory status.

Various critics have construed Eréndira's action as a reincarnation of the grandmother's immorality, but her escape with the gold and the abandonment of Ulises, when judged within the paradigms of the genre, serve as essential measures of the process of her metamorphosis. Lüthi, in The Fairy Tale as Art

Form and Portrait of Man (1984), interprets the hero's actions from a Jungian perspective, maintaining that the external actions of the hero express internal clashes between the unconscious and the conscious, wherein immoral actions are justified in the effort to release the powers of the good:

> The hero may with good conscience trick quarreling giants out of their magical objects, for the battlers represent an unconscious shadow form (*Vorform*) of the hero himself; he has to appropriate their treasures himself, i.e., bring them up into the light of the conscious. In this way what appears to be immoral finds its justification. (161)

Additionally, Lüthi upholds Freud's interpretation that to judge a character's actions as good or evil is not the purpose of the fairy tale, but rather an action of the listener:

> From the point of view of content, the values are not spelled out precisely. The fairy tale provides as little an inflexible specification of the good as it allows itself to be bound by a precise definition of the beautiful. In one case obedience proves to be appropriate, in another disobedience here honesty, there trickery. (163)

Eréndira's solitary escape with the gold may appear on the surface as an immoral and selfish act in light of her complicity in the grandmother's murder and her abandonment of Ulises. Conversely, her escape may also be interpreted as an ultimate act of rectification and self-realization, with her reappropriation of the gold seized by the processes of subjugation serving as an essential and symbolic reclaiming of her birthright.

In the appropriation of her birthright, Eréndira moves toward the symbolic reclamation of her virginal status—her original, unspoiled essence prior to

imperialistic exploitation. Furthermore, her actions demonstrate a mature comprehension of her agency within the reformed social order. According to Joseph Campbell, the modern mode of the quest emphasizes the role of the hero in manifesting mankind's coming to maturity, in contrast with the practices of ancient mythologies that dealt primarily with the mysteries of the physical universe. The focus, Campbell maintains, has become man himself:

> Not the animal world, not the plant world, not the miracle of spheres, but man himself is now the crucial mystery. Man is that alien presence with whom the forces of egoism must come to terms, through whom the ego is to be crucified and resurrected, and in whose image society is to be reformed. (391)

The power of the modern hero arises from his ability to realize his own consciousness: "the aim is not to *see*, but to realize that one *is*, that essence; then one is free to wander as that essence in the world" (Campbell 386). Eréndira's flight into the interior of the desert metaphorically parallels her inner journey toward her essence, freed from familial mythology.

Through Eréndira's metamorphosis into an empowered figure endowed with self-agency, García Márquez revises the material of the fairy tale in two significant ways. First, he breaks the anticipatory mindset of the reader by inverting the customary gender relationships of the genre. In the traditional tale, the reader's sympathies anticipate the typical paternalistic resolution, in which the intervention of a masculine rescuer, although essential in liberating the female hero from the threat of the tyrant, obligates her to the rescuer in a renewed cycle of subordination and indebtedness—i.e., the newly emancipated feminine hero escapes the subjugation of the tyrant only to enter the masculine domain of the king's castle. While the newly formed alliance externally

represents the world order restored to the requisite realm of the good, within its paternalistic structure the feminine protagonist cannot assert the autonomous identity achieved during the educational journey of trials. Instead, she becomes a captive of the castle. By returning to Ulises, who remains contaminated by the grandmother's blood, Eréndira would return to the same historical subjugation which she endured prior to her escape, and she would thereby deny the achievement of a reformative vision of social order.

Additionally, while the resolution portrays Eréndira as a dynamic feminine force, the final segment of the narrative antithetically removes power and authority from the masculine figure of Ulises. In a more orthodox resolution, Ulises, as the dragon-slayer, would assert his authority by assuming the role of the new king. However, Ulises hold no rights to the kingdom, suffering from his father's banishment and curse. Nor does he reveal sufficient strength to establish a new kingdom, for although he has slain the tyrant, the text discloses that the efforts of the battle have left him forever traumatized: "Ulises permaneció sentado junto al cadáver, agotado por la lucha, y cuanto más trataba de limpiarse la cara más le embardunaba de aquella materia verde y viva que parecía fluir de sus dedos" (162). Unable to extricate himself from the green blood of the dragon, he evolves into the ultimate victim of the grandmother's legacy of avaricious exploitation, a secondary victim of his own murderous act.

Conversely, Eréndira bears no mark of the trauma. The text depicts her as a mobile and independent individual, who at the threshold of establishing the new order, manifests the requisite dynamism to pursue infinite options outside the dominance of earthly forces: "iba corriendo *contra el viento*, más veloz que un venado, y *ninguna voz de este mundo la podía detener*" (162, emphasis added). From this emancipated stance, she holds the power to establish the

Heimische prophesied by the grandmother: "Cuando yo te falte. . . no quedarás a merced de los hombres, porque tendrás *tu casa propia* en una ciudad de importancia. *Serás libre y feliz.* (148-149, emphasis added). Unrestrained by paternalistic or familial controls, the energized Eréndira holds the potential to construct the true home from a position of autonomy.

By accentuating the polarity of Eréndira's and Ulises's conditions, the narrative simultaneously emphasizes the obsolescence of archaic models in the visionary process of reform. Ulises, as the textual representation of historical mythologies, ultimately remains entrenched in the conventional, externally-driven utopic quest in which Eréndira serves as "the unattainable, infinitely desirable, and uncontainable other" (Armitt 184), an embodiment of the chivalric motifs that formed the imperialistic vision of the Conquest. Ensnared in the paradigms of ancient models that limit his knowledge and capacity to grasp the truth, Ulises demonstrates the futility of perpetuating antiquated ideologies that obstruct future-oriented conceptualizations of the social order. Through the final depiction of Ulises, the mythological sailor, as an abandoned child "llorando de soledad y de miedo" (161) at the sea's edge, it is plausible that ultimately he stands at the threshold of his own transformative journey.

Reading this text as an analogy of liberation, a fairy tale of transformation, we must recognize García Márquez's unique perception of self-determination and his concept of power: "siempre he creído que el poder absoluto es la realización más alta y más compleja del ser humano, y que por eso resume a la vez toda su grandeza y toda su miseria" (qtd. in Plineo Mendoza 125). Within his fiction, García Márquez links power to solitude, an alienation imposed by destiny; however, the ultimate consideration in evaluating the nature of alienation in "Eréndira" is that the protagonist's final solitude configures a triumphant

ascendance over her predetermined role in a patriarchal world—her choice shatters cultural barriers in order to achieve complete, sovereign authority with infinite possibilities. In this manner, "Eréndira" reflects the essence of García Márquez's conception of Utopia, which the author defines as a reality in which the empowered individual dynamically searches for unprecedented possibilities:

> Es evidente, pues, que en tanto que proyección de la visión ideal de un *deber ser* alternativo, el pensamiento utópico está a menos interesado en alcanzar fines concretos que visualizar imaginativamente posibilidades. Desde el momento en que una idea se presenta como una especulación de "un posible futuro", hay pensamiento utópico. (qtd. in Maciel 79)

Nearly thirty years after the publication of "La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y de su abuela desalmada," the author's own expression of the reformative route that Latin America must follow closely parallels the literary model revealed in the metamorphosis of Eréndira. In remarks published in Retrato de Gabriel García Márquez (1997) by Juan Luis Cebrián, García Márquez confirms his conviction that in order for Latin America to transform itself, it must achieve independence from external influences, destroy the internal oligarchical hierarchies, and install democratic cultural values:

> Si en América Latina se logra una mayor independencia nacional de los países en relación no sólo con los Estados Unidos, sino con cualquier otro centro internacional de poder; si se logra una mayor democratización interna, no sólo en cuanto a las posibilidades de expresión democrática sino en el control y distribución de la riqueza, el desmonte de las oligarquías y de sus alianzas con los poderes extranjeros, si eso se logra, será una revolución. (82)

The home toward which Eréndira moves is one derived from individual metamorphosis, removed from the constraints of history and familial subjugation, and framed by a new consciousness in a dynamic world of choice—a symbolic projection of García Márquez's model for Latin-American transformation.

## Chapter Four

## Afrodita: An Anatomy of Eroticism

Y así como un poeta juega con las
palabras, así jugaba a su antojo con
los ingredientes y con las cantidades,
obteniendo resultados fenomenales.
- -Laura Esquivel Como agua para chocolate

For centuries food has functioned as a primary element of feminine identity, one of the sanctioned realms of power for women. Indeed, within many cultural contexts, a woman's ability within the kitchen has stood as a measure of her worth, one in which feminine value becomes equated with domestic competence. Recognizing the ramifications of this socio-political distinction, Latin-American writers of the second half of the twentieth century have utilized the symbolic properties of food and its domestic context as allegorical expressions of marginalization and discontent, as we have already seen in the discussion of García Márquez's Eréndira. However, the motif emerges even more conspicuously in the works of women writers such as Rosario Castellanos, Clarice Lispector, Elena Poniatowska, Luisa Valenzuela, and Laura Esquivel—writers who are determined to emancipate women from conventional cultural paradigms.

Isabel Allende, one of Latin America's most widely recognized authors, views her role as a writer from within the same perspective, creating works that simultaneously redefine the author herself and encourage the reader to restructure reality from a feminine point of view. As Allende stated in 1989, she perceives herself as a participant in the struggle to reframe the values that have structured human society since the beginning of time, a revolt in which, after

"centuries of silence, women are taking by assault the exclusive male club of literature" ("Writing as an Act of Hope" 51). One of Allende's most recent works, Afrodita: Cuentos, recetas y otros afrodisíacos (1997) offers, as its title suggests, a compendium of stories, recipes, and treatises on aphrodisiacs; additionally, the work promotes a redefinition of the cultural connections between woman, food, and erotic experience. In fact, an analytical study of Afrodita reveals a multidimensional text that incorporates within itself a narrative of self-actualization, a feminine manifesto of sexuality, and a metafictional memoir. Allende has created this multi-layered text by constructing Afrodita as a late twentieth-century feminist parody of the literary anatomy. More specifically, Allende's work mirrors many of the structural and technical devices found in The Anatomy of Melancholy published in 1621 by the English Renaissance writer, Robert Burton. In order to establish Afrodita within this framework, the evolution and construction of the anatomy, the nature of parody, the relationship of parody to postmodern feminine literature, and the elements of parody and anatomy within the text of Afrodita will be considered.

To facilitate the placement of Afrodita within the genre of the anatomy, it would be instructive to survey the anatomy's evolution, function, and its unique characteristics. The anatomy may be categorized as a complex genre that has evolved over many centuries of Western literature. According to Northrop Frye, who revitalized the genre in the celebrated 1957 work, The Anatomy of Criticism, the framework of the anatomy first surfaced in Menippean satire, a style of composition attributed to Menippus, the Greek philosopher and cynic of the third century BC. Although none of his works remain, his satirical style manifests itself in the extant fragments of his followers, Lucian and Varro, and their imitators, Petronius and Apuleius. In addition to the original verse format of the satire,

prose interludes were added, until the Menippean satire evolved into a prose form into which verse was interspersed.

Thematically, Menippean satire centers on beliefs rather than on social figures or institutions typical of the more traditional styles of satire (Frye, Anatomy 310). In Menippean satire, the author inundates the reader with personal opinion through encyclopedic and random displays of knowledge with the ultimate objective of presenting a single revelation. Frequently, the focus becomes obscured in intellectual braggadocio, which often results in deceptive expansions and mental detours for the reader unaccustomed to the genre:

> At its most concentrated, the Menippean satire presents us with a vision of the world in terms of a single intellectual pattern. The intellectual built up from the story makes for violent dislocations in the customary logic of narrative, though the appearance of carelessness that results reflects only the carelessness of the reader or his tendency to judge by a novel-centered conception of fiction. (Frye, Anatomy 310)

Although less formal than Lucilian satire, the Menippean narrative tends to overwhelm the reader who must often wade through an accumulation of erudite terms and jargon.

Menippean satire reemerged as a popular literary form in Renaissance Europe, with the publication of Jean Leroy's Satire Ménippée (1594), a pamphlet that adopted the classical blending of both prose and verse. However, Renaissance writers added a new perspective, combining classical satirical style with a renewed interest in the Aristotelian desire for analysis, creating the genre currently recognized as the anatomy. Devon Hodges, in Renaissance Fictions of

Anatomy (1985), links the linguistic and literary development of the term with the social and historical context of sixteenth-century England:

> The word [anatomy] made its significant appearance during the Tudor period: the Oxford English Dictionary records that it was first used to signify a dissected body in 1540; the process of dissection, in 1541; the science of bodily structure, 1391 (the anomaly in this list of dates) and in 1541; it is recorded as a trope in 1569. The shift from an analogical to an empirical order which enabled the appearance of the anatomy can be connected with social and economic events of the period—the decay of feudalism, the emergence of the bourgeoisie, the fragmentation of a unified church all accompanied the rise of scientific rationalism which put traditional beliefs in doubt. (2)

The emphasis on scientific rationalism that Hodges mentions played a significant role in the evolution of the anatomy: the literary anatomist attempted to duplicate Renaissance scientific methodology—that of the medical dissection, in order to view the individual components of a complete structure; conversely, the medical field came to look at the process of thinking and writing as the presentation of "bodies" of knowledge.

The anatomy quickly achieved enormous popularity, especially in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England, and writers such as Francis Bacon, John Lyly, and Thomas Nashe produced texts on literary, scientific, and theological topics. However, none received more attention than Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, with its conspicuous subtitle: "What it is, with all the kinds, causes, symptoms, prognostickes, and severall cures of it." Frye, in his discussion of genres, categorizes the seventeenth-century work as the "greatest

Menippean satire in English before Swift" (Anatomy 311), a vital text in which "human society is studied in terms of the intellectual pattern provided by the conception of melancholy, a symposium of books replaces dialogue, and the result is the most comprehensive survey of human life in one book that English literature had seen since Chaucer, one of Burton's favorite authors" (Anatomy 301).

A mammoth work of almost one thousand pages, The Anatomy of Melancholy became an immediate bestseller in its day, appearing in six revised editions by the year 1651. Although Burton proposed to present a scientific and rational analysis of melancholy, he instead launched a new, amorphous format of writing in which the subjective opinions of the author weave through a web of narrative approaches. In "Literary Art and Scientific Method in Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy" Karl Höltgen describes the narrative format of the anatomy as: "a compendium of classical and Renaissance learning, a treasury of quotations, extended self-revelation on the part of the author, a dialogue with the reader, a sermon on vanity, a treatise on consolation, medical and priestly advice in the event of adversity and suffering, and an attempt at self-healing through the act of writing" (Höltgen 2).

Despite his most sincere of intentions, Burton proposed neither a cause nor cure for the melancholy from which he suffered, and the popularity of the anatomy as a pure genre diminished toward the end of the seventeenth-century despite the scholarly interest of subsequent generations. According to Frye, in later literary periods the anatomy reemerges with the novel to produce both the roman à thèse and novels in which the characters serve principally as symbolic expressions of social or philosophical concepts. In many cases, the novels whose random nature most exasperate the reader display the most salient

characteristics of the anatomy: Tristam Shandy; Moby Dick; The Compleat Angler; and, Ulysses. The rise of the essay also served to diminish the importance of the anatomy, since it offered the writer a concise method to expose personal opinion without the encyclopedic effort required by its precursor. Frye's own Anatomy of Criticism refocused attention on the Renaissance genre, and writers of the second half of the twentieth-century including Carlos Fuentes, Julio Cortázar, and Walter Benjamin, have reintroduced the anatomy as a viable rhetorical form. Like most revisionist treatments, the twentieth-century authors of anatomy have chosen to personalize its structure, but deep within the core of these works lies the fundamental desire to dissect a body of knowledge in order to expose an underlying structure of elements that contains an essential nucleus of "truth."

The renewed interest in the anatomy coincides with the revitalized literary role of parody. Parody may assume a variety of forms, but by its very nature it must offer a conscious manipulation of an existing text in a way that may be construed by the reader as serious or absurd, simulative or dissimulative, sympathetic or ridiculing. Although the term ridiculing frequently connotes a critical attitude, in parodic literature it generally describes the comic intent of the parodist rather than a negative approach toward the original text. Margaret Rose in the definitive study, Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-Modern (1993), offers the following characterization of the parodic style of writing:

> . . . parody in its broadest sense and application may be described as first imitating and then changing either, and sometimes both, the "form" and "content," or style and subject-matter, or syntax and meaning of another work, or, most simply, its vocabulary. In addition to, and, at the same time as the preceding, most

> successful parodies may be said to produce from the comic incongruity between the original and its parody some comic, amusing, or humorous effect, which, together with the changes made by the parodist to the original by the rewriting of the old text, or juxtaposition of it with the new text in which it is embedded, may act as "signals" of the parodic nature of the parody work for its readers. (45)

The success of a parody, according to Rose, must be measured not by the imitative value of the original parodied text, but rather by the deconstruction of the norms realized by the original in such a way that a new relationship stands between the emergent parody and its social content.

The deconstructive character of parody parallels the postmodern propensity toward the sabotage of familiar narrative forms and the creation of works that hinge on ambiguity. The parodist endeavors to annihilate the paradigms of the parodied text by placing its relevance within a social context; the postmodernist author utilizes aesthetic experimentation in order to question dominant cultural forces. Linda Hutcheon emphasizes the importance of the socio-political dimensions of postmodern literature in The Politics of Postmodernism (1989): ". . . postmodernism appears to coincide with a general awareness of the existence and power of systems of representation which do not reflect society so much as grant it meaning and value within a particular society (8)." Due to a marked deconstructive function, contemporary parody has gained renewed momentum as a viable technique to preserve yet destroy previous texts, while concentrating on stylistic presentation. Malcolm Bradbury in his study No, Not Bloomsbury (1988) places parody in the mainstream of late twentieth-century literary practice:

> . . . it seems clear that in our century parodic activity has vastly increased, moved, in art and literature, in practice and in theory, from the margins to the centre, and become a primary level of textual or painterly representation. An essential part of our art is an art of mirrorings and quotations, inward self-reference and mock mimesis, of figural violation and self-presence . . . . (Bradbury 60)

While contemporary critics have yet to arrive at a single, precise definition of postmodern parody, the current consensus distinguishes three dominant components within the genre: metafiction, autoreflection, and a critico-comical base. As we examine Afrodita, we will discover that Isabel Allende has incorporated each of these elements into the amorphous text.

In particular, parody has particularly attracted postmodern women writers who find themselves entangled in a paradoxical position. Hutcheon maintains that both feminism and postmodernism focus on the challenge to cultural authority and the aesthetic representation of this challenge. However, she asserts that while the male writer serves as a complicitous participant in the very system that he seeks to disrupt, the feminine writer stands apart, in an unambiguous stance against the norms that support the politics of literary representation. As a result, women writers of the later years of the twentieth-century have usurped the conventional and classical voice of patriarchal speech through the mode of transtexual parody. Such a mode, Hutcheon states, allows the development of a "femino-centric" voice, based principally upon an ironic inversion that does not deconstruct the original text. Indeed, feminine reinvention coincides with the last of the three stages of feminist revolt identified by Elaine Showalter: a period of imitation and absorption into the dominant cultural

tradition, a stage of protest and vindication of minority rights, and, finally, a search for an independent feminine identity (Showalter 13).

The feminine use of parody offers a natural means of expression for the woman writer, particularly in Latin America. Elzbieta Sklodowska, in La parodia en la nueva novela hispanoamericana 1960-1985 (1991) suggests that feminine writing is revisionist by nature and must therefore, by necessity, recontextualize already existing texts. However, while women writers may imitate masculine systems of expression, they cannot duplicate them, for in her estimation:

> Al contrario, la mujer descontextualiza la práctica discursiva masculina, sea por medio de una repetición juguetona, sea a través de una desautomatización . . . . Ambos procedimientos le permiten a la mujer el discurso con el objetivo subversivo de revelar la naturaleza de su propia explotación y supresión. (144)

Restated, female imitation of texts by male writers leads to parodic expression in which the female writer employs a style of masculine discourse in order to subvert it. Sklodowska claims that for Latin-American female writers, postmodern parody has evolved from the nineteenth-century mimetic novels, and from vanguardist experimentation of the twenties and thirties, and it has secured its presence in the works of writers such as Mireya Robles, Luisa Valenzuela, Diamela Eltit, and Isabel Allende.

Several of Allende's early works have shown evidence both of intertextuality and parody. For example, Sklodowska's analysis recognizes the imitative quality of Allende's La casa de los espíritus (1982), but it categorizes the work as a nondeconstructive parody of Gabriel García Márquez' novela totalizante, Cien años de soledad (1967), written from a feminine rather than a feminist viewpoint: "Allende aprovecha la inherente proclividad del género hacia

la parodia no para desviarse de los modelos—inexorablemente masculinos—con hostilidad, 'con venganza,' sino para domesticarlos desde una perspectiva fémino-céntrica" (Sklodowska, Parodia 153). Sklodowska asserts that Allende shifts the central focus of the work outside the traditional masculine order and recreates the world through both female narrator and characters. Because of this shift, Allende's fiction falls within the parameters set for parody rather than the exact imitation of the preexisting text: "La parodia aparece en La casa de los espíritus en forma de un juego irónico y ambivalente de rechazo y atracción, de apropiación y transgresión y no como una mera reproducción de Cien años de soledad" (Sklodowska, Parodia 155).

Elements of intertextuality and parody also surface in Cuentos de Eva Luna (1990). Allende uses the protagonist of her earlier novel Eva Luna (1987) as the "Sheherazade" of an anthology of short stories, and the author methodically interweaves characters and locations from the novel within the stories themselves. In "Entre la realidad y la ficción," Jacoba Koene suggests that the collection constitutes a singular metafictional parody of the traditional genre of the love story organized around individual stories that serve as separate parodies within the love-story genre. As an example, she cites "Tosca," a love story intertextually linked to Puccini's tragic opera. In Allende's version the story parodically inverts the traditional gender roles of the female and male protagonists: the aristocratic woman abandons her husband and child because her spouse is socially inferior to her; the husband from the lower class remains loyal to the child and displays a natural goodness. Conventionally, Ezio would be cast as "Tosco," but in the final outcome of Allende's story, the weak Maurizia becomes the "Tosca" of the title.

Allende's experimentation with genres again becomes apparent in Paula (1994), the work immediately preceding Afrodita. Written as a quasi-autobiographical narrative during her daughter's prolonged struggle with porphryia and subsequent death in 1992, the work purports to trace the author's family and personal history while simultaneously delivering an elegy of the dying woman. Catherine Perricone examines the autobiographical nature of the work and classifies it as a metarealistic narrative in which Allende has created a "reality about reality," one in which reality incorporates within itself a commentary on its own verisimilitude and accuracy or veracity" (42). Perricone maintains that Allende has constructed a metarealistic narrative through the deliberate selection of multiple genres within which to present her discourse: history, memoir, confession, autobiography, and testimonial. Allende herself recognizes the recreative and introspective nature of her writing, and she shares her perspective with the reader of Paula: "writing is a long process of introspection; it is a voyage toward the darkest caverns of consciousness, a long, slow meditation. I write feeling my way in silence, and along the way discover particles of truth, small crystals that fit in the palm of one hand and justify my passage through this world" (9). She also expresses the necessity of writing as a means of self-preservation: "My life is created as I narrate, and my memory grows stronger with writing; what I do not put in words on a page will be erased by time" (8), a tenet echoed in 1986 by Rosario Ferré, who proclaimed that women must write in order to survive: "Creo, como ella [Anaïs Nin], que la mujer debe escribir para enfrentarse cada día a la pérdida y a la muerte" (39). In fact, Ferré proposed that the woman writer cannot succeed in forging exterior realities that deal with universal themes until she has first constructed her own internal reality: "Al escribir sobre sus personajes, un escritor escribe siempre sobre sí mismo, o

sobre posibles vertientes de sí mismo . . ." (21). Allende's narrative begins: "Escucha, Paula, voy a contarte una historia, para que cuando despiertes no estés tan perdida" (11). The reader of Paula recognizes that the work could have easily been titled Isabel, for the dominant focus hinges on the author's reconsideration of personal history from childhood, through the development of her career as a writer and as a woman.

Allende's reflective meditation on the passages of her life resurfaces as the point of initiation for Afrodita, and she elects to frame her introspection within a revision of the literary anatomy. In spite of the passage of nearly four-hundred years, Isabel Allende's Afrodita bears a striking resemblance to Burton's 1621 work, beginning with an allusion to both her precursor's style and title in the dedication itself: "Dedico estas divagaciones eróticas a los amantes juguetones y ¿por qué no?, *también a los hombres asustados y a las mujeres melancólicas*" (emphasis added). Burton, who in turn recognizes the meandering nature of his writings, compares his investigation of melancholy to the wanderings of a spaniel distracted from the hunt:

> . . . a ranging spaniel, that barks at every bird he sees, leaving his game, I have followed all, saving that which I should, and may justly complain, and truly (for who is everywhere is nowhere), which Gesner did in modesty, that I have read many books, but to little purpose, for want of good method. (13)

Allende, in a provocatively frank and enticing fashion that establishes the tone for her work, announces to her reader that she will embark on a similar voyage in which food and eroticism will serve as the central theme: "De allí viene la idea de este libro, que es un viaje sin mapa por las regiones de la memoria sensual,

donde los límites entre el amor y el apetito son tan difusos, que a veces se me pierden del todo" (11).

One vital connection to Burton's work appears in Allende's attempt to duplicate the structural components of the Renaissance writer's introduction. Adhering to Burton's format, Allende launches her sensorial treatise with two poetic selections. The first, from the twelfth-century writer, Kumaradadatta, metaphorically mingles the parts of a lover's body with a series of sensual offerings that center on food: aromatic honey, a mature mango, a lotus, and an assortment of spices. The second selection, entitled "Rondo Capriccioso," composed by the author herself, reveals her mentality upon reaching fifty years of age, and a self-preoccupation with sensuality. At first, Allende delivers a traditional elegy at reaching the afternoon of her life:

Los cincuenta años son como
la última hora de la tarde,
cuando el sol se ha
puesto y uno se inclina
naturalmente hacia la reflexión. (9)

Allende rejects convention and declares that "el crepúsculo me induce a pecar." Reflecting on her relationship with food and eroticism, she laments that the weaknesses of the flesh, although tempting, "no son las que más he practicado" (9).

The introduction immediately captures this lament, establishing a bridge from the rondo to the prose that follows: "me arrepiento de las dietas, de los platos rechazados por vanidad, tanto como lamento las ocasiones de hacer el amor que he dejado pasar . . ." (10). Former lovers reenter her life through their interconnection with certain foods, causing Allende to discover an inextricable,

Proustian link between her memories and her senses, particularly with regard to the men of her life, whom she recalls "por la textura de su piel, otros por el sabor de sus besos, el olor de sus ropas o el tono de sus murmullos y casi todos ellos asociados con algún alimento especial" (11). Turning away from the past, she grasps the potentialities of the present: "No puedo separar el eroticismo de la comida y no veo razón para hacerlo, al contrario, pretendo seguir disfrutando de ambos mientras las fuerzas y el buen humor me alcancen" (11).

With customary ironic deprecation, Allende admits that she can offer little justification for writing Afrodita, since thousands of cookbooks and erotic manuals appear annually, and that she knows no one who either cooks or practices sex by a manual. Instead, she assures the reader that the ideal of investigating aphrodisiacs appealed to her as an amusing project, and although she states in Burtonian fashion that "en estas páginas intento aproximarme a la verdad," she also counters "pero no siempre es posible" (11). Invention becomes a necessity since, "¿Qué se puede decir, por ejemplo, del perejil?" (11). She does impose certain restrictions stating that she will not include perversions, magic, or any ingredient that cannot be obtained at the neighborhood grocery, advising that if "usted necesita recurrir a tales extremos para elevar su libido a las ganas de amar, sugerimos que consulte a un psiquiatra o cambie de pareja" (13). However, in the section "Filtros de amor," she does include a variety of natural products that may enhance sexual pleasure, reflective of Burton's own discussion of "philtres" within his treatise on love.

Allende also mirrors Burton's preoccupation with the process of writing. Burton's introduction carefully delineates the method used by the author to compose his study:

> I put forth what my genius dictated, out of a confused company of notes, and writ with as small deliberation as I do ordinarily speak, without all affectation of big words, fustian phrases, jingling terms, tropes, strong lines, that like Acestes' arrows caught fire as they flew, strains of wit, brave heats, elogies, hyperbolical exhortations, elegancies . . . which so many affect. (24)

Allende, in turn, deals at length with her own methods, which involve an unusual collaboration that includes her mother, a literary agent, and a Swiss friend. Both authors frankly admit freely borrowing from other sources. In Burton's case, the lack of concern toward plagiarism reflected the Renaissance distrust of new knowledge:

> In Burton's time the pursuit of knowledge was still very much based on authority and tradition. Innovation, new matter was often considered unsound . . . . Matter was less important than method. The matter was accessible to everybody through books, and its adaptation was not regarded as theft or plagiarism. (Höltgen 10)

In fact, Burton describes himself as a housewife who weaves a single piece of cloth from many fleeces, as well as a bee who gathers nectar from a variety of flowers to produce his own honey nectar without injury to others:

> I have laboriously collected this cento out of divers writers and that without injury. I have wronged no authors but given every man his own . . . . I have borrowed, not stolen, and what Varro speaks of bees they are by no means malicious, because they injure nothing they take honey from, I can say of myself, whom have I injured? (19-20)

The emphasis, claims Burton, falls on the manner in which an author creates a new weaving created from authorities and writings that predate him: "we can say nothing but what hath been said, the composition and method is ours only" (20). Clearly, Burton's methodology reflects the fundamental parodic practice of manipulating already existing texts for the author's specific purpose.

Allende offers a much more sardonic description of her "borrowings" from the authors included in Afrodita. She volunteers no formal reason for the absence of a bibliography, electing instead to include the authors she cites as unsolicited partners in her collaboration: Robert Shekter, Panchita Llona, and Carmen Bacells. She explains the refusal to cite her borrowings with a tongue-in-cheek apology:

> Participaron pasivamente medio centenar de autores cuyos textos consulté sin pedir permiso y a quienes no tengo intención de mencionar, porque hacer un bibliografía es un fastidio. Copiar de un autor es plagio, copiar de muchos es investigación. (15)

Allende adds: "Y participaron inocentemente muchas de mis amistades, quienes para complacerme se presentaron a probar las recetas y contarme sus experiencias, aunque estaban convencidos que este libro jamás vería la luz" (15). Similar to Burton's random pattern of documentation, when citing the writings included in the text, she generally provides only a pseudo-citation, at times providing the name of the work cited, perhaps the name of the author, a century, or a country of origin or any combination of the above, leaving the reader to accept the veracity of the material to which she refers.

Allende also declines to provide a rationale for her selection of texts which she cites with one notable exception, that of the insertion of a variety of cuentos. Allende relates that the collaborators decided to include short stories

only after believing the project to be complete. They realized however, that after having included aphrodisiacs that enticed the senses, the collaborative team had omitted the one aphrodisiac that appealed to the intellect, that of oral narration. Allende refers to Las mil y una noches, a work that she confesses to have read secretly as a young girl:

> En nuestras largas vidas de gozadores, Robert, Panchita, Carmen y yo hemos comprobado que el mejor estimulante del eroticismo, tan efectivo como las sabias caricias, es una historia contada entre las sábanas recién planchadas para hacer el amor, como lo demostró Sheherazade, la portentosa narradora de Arabia, quien durante mil y una noches cautivó a un cruel sultán con su lengua de oro. (16-17)

Allende suggests that tales created between lovers tantalize and energize intimate moments, "como en las más refinadas tradiciones del Oriente" (17). She counsels that a tale need not be original but may originate from the "inmenso repertorio estimulante de la literatura universal" (17). Utilizing an intertextual affirmation, Allende cites the prologue to her own Cuentos de Eva Luna, in which she has already demonstrated the power of narration. She devotes almost a page to the memory of her character, Rolf Carlé who, attempting to recreate mentally a scene of intimacy between himself and Eva Luna, recalls a moment during which he requests a special favor of his lover:

> —Cuéntame un cuento—te digo.
>
> —¿Cómo lo quieres?
>
> —Cuéntame un cuento que no le hayas contado a nadie. (18)

In 1996 Allende explained her personal connection to the episode: "Someone mentioned to me the opening scene of this collection, in which Rorca Lee and

Eva Luna make love, and afterwards he asks her to tell him a story. I did that because for me lovemaking and story writing are very close, are two very similar experiences. And in that opening paragraph I wanted to blend these two experiences that are for me the most striking experiences in my life. Writing to me is similar to tantric love or tantric sex" ("The Short Story" 25).

Allende's preoccupation with her own writing also appears in the final pages of the introduction, in a section entitled "Apología de los Culpables" in which she discusses the relationships forged between herself and her collaborators, as well as her own relationship with the work. This systematic apologetic of self-justification also emulates the Anatomy of Melancholy, for the same topic similarly consumes a large portion of Burton's introductory remarks. Burton's aplogia lists many motives for undertaking the monumental task upon which he embarks, but he concentrates most closely on what he perceives as his most pressing need, that of self-diagnosis and healing:

> There be many other subjects, I do easily grant, both in humanity and divinity, fit to be treated of, of which had I written only to show myself, I should have rather chosen, and in which I have been more conversant, I could have more willingly luxuriated, and better satisfied myself and others; but at this time I was fatally driven upon this rock of melancholy, and carried away by this by-stream, which as a rillet, is deducted from the main channel of my studies. . . . (27)

Allende offers strikingly similar motives, explaining to the reader that an obsession with food became a means for her to escape the pain caused by her daughter Paula's terminal illness and subsequent death. She claims to have consumed gluttonous quantities of arroz con leche "con la vaga esperanza de

que aquel nostálgico plato de mi niñez me ayudaría a soportar la angustia de ver a mi hija muy enferma" (24). Recognizing that food did not offer a realistic relief from her pain, she turned instead to writing: "y así me decidí a enfrentar el problema con la única solución que conozco para mis obsesiones: la escritura" (25). Writing about food also became a method of overcoming a three-year depression following the death of Paula, in which "el mundo había perdido los colores y un gris universal se extendía sobre las cosas inexorablemente" (25).

The curiously deliberate meanderings of the introduction/apologia provide a preview of the structure of the main body of the work. Allende divides the text into two major sections, although in a most anti-Burtonian manner, she provides neither an index nor titles for either. The first major division, encompassing more than two-hundred pages, contains a wide-ranging exploration of aphrodisiacs, their ingredients, their social and cultural history, personal anecdotes, and reminiscences, as well as related literary selections in both prose and poetic forms, organized in forty-two sections that average five pages in length. The second division of the work, of approximately one-hundred and twenty pages, presents a compendium of aphrodisiac recipes provided by the author's mother, prefaced by the author's own commentaries.

Burton, in his attempt to duplicate a scientific appearance for his anatomy, also divided his study into major sections, in this case three "partitions," further segmented into numerous sections, members, and subsections, each clearly numbered and titled, revolving around related topics of analysis. In each major partition, a synoptic table of great complexity provides a map of Burton's projected discussions—a type of anatomical skeleton of the work. However, for the reader who hopes to discover a sense of order from these pseudo-scientific

charts, only confusion results. As Hodges purports: "To the extent that the tables do mirror the text, they participate in its disorder" (114).

In contrast, Allende dismisses any appearance of structural organization, providing neither a synopsis nor index. In their place she utilizes an iconographic technique—identifying each section not only through its title, but also by means of the incorporation of related works of art. Each section, above each title, contains a small oval-shaped detail from an unidentified work of art, each so small that often the reader must work to find a relationship between the inset and the theme of the section. Only as the reader progresses through the section does s/he view the larger piece from which the detail has been taken and thus surmises the work's overall relationship to the text which in many cases serves to amplify the narrative message—serving as a modern alternative to the Renaissance practice of emblematic instruction. For example, in the section titled "La Buena Mesa," the insert depicts three pieces of fruit rotating in distinct orbits around a lighted candle (35). Four pages later the reader views the complete painting, an oil entitled "Table with Candle and Fruit Above" (1977) by the Catalan-Mexican surrealist painter Remedios Varo. The complete work allows the reader to view a surreal scene in which multiple pieces of fruit spin in orbits above a table, some orbiting in their own paths, others careening wildly into each other, another exploding as if from the speed of its trajectory. Below them lies a table in which the plates hang suspended in mid-air, tilting away from the static lighted candle that anchors a tablecloth, itself spinning in a circular motion. The table occupies a dimly lit room in which small translucent insects float as if suspended in space and fragile vines grow up from the platform upon which the table sits.

The painting would appear to stand in ironic contradiction to the "Buena Mesa" of the chapter; however, the title is clearly a misnomer, for Allende deals with the refinements of elegant dining only in the first paragraph, and she asserts that the only practitioners of this art are those who "han nacido y crecido en sitios evocativos, como la campiña francesa o una villa de Italia, donde sus madres y abuelas cultivaban un arte tan delicado como suculento" (35). Her own experience, by contrast, was that of a family in which "el acestismo en las costumbres se consideraba bueno para la salud" (36). She claims that while other women of her grandmother's position and age concerned themselves with domestic tasks, "la mía se ocupaba de aprender a levitar" (36). The dinner table functioned as a site for séances rather than meals, and upon the death of the grandmother, her mother handed over the preparation of meals to a fearsome cook whose additional duties included drowning newborn kittens and decapitating the domesticated animals for the evening meal. The dinner table, rather than serving as "la buena mesa," served as the battlefield for the family's civil war between the tyrannical cook, Allende's beleaguered mother, and her demanding grandfather. The art of eating, the author explains, only surfaced much later in life, when she realized "que una de las pocas cosas que hombres y mujeres tenemos en común es el sexo y la comida" (40). When viewed within this context, the painting achieves new clarity and assumes a visually allegorical role.

Allende's desire to link the visual with the verbal also extends more broadly into the structural organization of Afrodita. Utilizing a Janus approach, both the front and back cover duplicate each other, although on the back Allende parodies the passive woman surrounded by foods on the front, by inserting herself as an active consumer of the foods found in the original. An enlarged

detail of the original painting appears toward the beginning of the hors d'oeuvres recipes in the second division, in this instance focusing on the naked torso of the woman. In a second instance, a small inset of a photograph of Allende appears directly under the work's title; a complete view of the photograph appears at the end of the first division in which the author poses next to a surrealistic painting of a bar scene that includes both clothed and unclothed figures.

Both Burton and Allende initiate the discussion of their primary themes by proposing definitions. Burton adopts cause-and-effect methodology by explicating the connection between the fall of Man from God's grace and his subsequent affliction with diseases, arriving at a definition of melancholy only after a forty-page analysis. Following Burton's format, in the first subsection following the introduction entitled "Afrodisíacos," Allende defines the term "aphrodisiac," but in contrast to Burton, she achieves her objective in the first two sentences: "¿Cómo definir un afrodisíaco? Digamos que es cualquier sustancia o actividad que aguijonea el deseo amoroso" (26). However, within the remaining pages of the section, Allende establishes the tone and modus operandi for the remainder of the work. Engaging the reader with a conversational tone by the use of the first-person plural form of address, the author moves from the first, narrow definition of aphrodisiacs to a wide-ranging survey of cultural norms related to eroticism, asserting that what may be erotic to one may be pornographic to another. In one case, she mocks the Puritans and their abhorrence of evil practices: "Se requería muy poco para excitar a esa buena gente" (26). In another, she facetiously points out that anything with a French name automatically assumes the character of an aphrodisiac and that one may invent names for erotic positions as long as they bear names reminiscent of Asian sex manuals. In spite of the playful nature of this section, it

serves the important role of offering the reader a glimpse of the topics that will serve as motifs for the work as a whole.

The author begins by separating food from the traditional realm of domesticity and by placing it within the erotic space of sexuality, a topic not particular to Allende but of general interest to women writers during the latter decades of the twentieth-century. This revisionist slant signals a significant rupture with dominant Western philosophy and its historical assignment of women to the routine and menial task of food preparation. The distinction of gender roles emerged as early as the fourth century BC, when in books II and IV of the Republic Plato delegated the role of food providers to the category of "wage earners," a category of citizens whom he viewed as unworthy to rule since their souls were dominated by appetitive instincts rather than by reason. In the "just state" envisioned by the Greek philosopher, the inhabitants of this lowest of the classes passively accepted their social role and recognized their subjugation to the ruling class. Accordingly, the classification of women as food givers in Western culture has relegated them to a socially insignificant role that has excluded the potential of philosophical or intellectual activities.

Consequentially, food has socially and symbolically served as a divisive element for women—a culturally isolating element that assigns them to domestic confinement. As opposed to the seekers of knowledge, women engaged in domestic labor found themselves entrapped in a temporal framework of menial and interminable tasks, standing outside the spheres of power. Women also found themselves bound within a limited scope of experience that denied them the authority to venture into the cultural, scientific, and political arenas. For contemporary women writers, this experiential deficit has frequently translated into a narrowing of themes culturally available to them.

According to Rosario Ferré, feminine literature has been forced to dwell almost exclusively with the interests reflective of the writer's own existence, with limited social significance, yet characterized by subversive tendencies due to the scarcity of culturally acceptable themes:

> Este destino que nos impone la naturaleza nos coarta la movilidad y nos crea unos problemas muy serios en cuanto intentamos reconciliar nuestras necesidades emocionales con nuestras necesidades profesionales. Pero también nos pone en contacto con las misteriosas fuerzas generadoras de la vida. Es por eso que la literatura de las mujeres se ha ocupado en el pasado, mucho más que los hombres, de experiencias interiores que tienen poco que ver con lo histórico, con lo social y con lo político. Es por eso también que su literatura es más subversiva que la de los hombres, porque a menudo se atreve a bucear en zonas prohibidas. (32)

The "zonas prohibidas" most consistently targeted by both postmodern and feminine literature center on the representation of the body, the expression of erotic desires, and challenges to traditional paradigms. As Linda Hutcheon postulates, women writers have become increasingly involved in the examination of gender representation: "what systems of power authorize some representations while suppressing others? Or, even more specifically, how is desire instilled through representation by the management of reading or looking?" (143). This examination of gender representation has emerged in a body of erotic feminine literature that challenges traditional cultural authority through the deconstruction of the typical scenario of male-observer/passive-female, while simultaneously creating the model of a dynamic woman who

pursues her erotic desires rather than suppressing them indefinitely. Hutcheon also maintains that the transtextual parody of male texts provides one avenue by which women writers successfully challenge patriarchal restrictions. Through the use of ironic excess and revised contexts, traditional representations become distorted and reconfigured, creating a more open feminine voice.

Allende indicates her intention to redirect the conventional relationship of woman and food, as well as the relationship of writer and language in the first page of the main text, by immediately linking food to eroticism rather than to its traditional association with sustenance, by using frank, explicit language not customarily found in feminine writing:

> Algunos afrodisíacos funcionan por analogía, como las ostras en forma de vulva o el espárrago de falo; otros por asociación, porque nos recuerdan algo erótico; también por sugestión, porque creemos que al comer el órgano vital de otro animal—y en algunos casos de otro ser humano, como sucede entre los antropófagos—adquirimos su fuerza. (26)

By the inclusion of both male and female anatomical references and the utilization of the first-person plural form of address, Allende quickly erases the barriers between the genders—suggesting that sexuality and aphrodisiacs appeal to both men and women. In addition, the direct tone, the sexual references, and the conversational approach of the text indicate that she intends to disregard the traditional feminine style of discourse.

Debra Castillo, in Talking Back (1992), presents this type of linguistic openness as one element of the struggle of the woman writer to disassemble artificial boundaries and to participate fully in the act of writing. She asserts that women have customarily used language that denies a wide range of emotional

expression due to the restrictions of pudor feminino, electing to operate within a linguistic conservatism that promotes civility and formality (98). She cites Luisa Valenzuela's view that linguistic domination reinforces a much larger cultural precept:

> For Valenzuela, such linguistic censorship figures other, more directly politicized forms of censorship, and the palabrotas are at the heart of a much-needed transformation in language. Men dominate women by dominating the range of expression of eroticism; until women learn to take control of their share of erotic/obscene language, they will continue to be dominated in other realms as well, for by appropriating the language of desire, men appropriate as well what is *propio* to women, what is their very own, though alienated by custom. (99)

In the case of Afrodita, the appropriation of erotic language emerges throughout the work and affirms Allende's conviction of the feminine right to express and embrace erotic desire.

Allende also redirects the standard attitudes toward food by using the quasi-scientific framework of the anatomy to classify and categorize foods according to their erotic properties. She begins her survey in the same manner in which Burton initiates his discourse on the melancholy of love, through an exploration of sensorial reactions. Embarking on a discussion of the sense of smell in the section entitled "El conjuro de los Aromas," she selects an epigraph from a section of El jardín perfumado that erotically pairs the arousal of woman to the handling of fruit: "La mujer es como una fruta que sólo exhala su fragancia cuando la frotan con la mano. Toma, por ejemplo, la albahaca: a menos que la calientes con los dedos no emite su perfume" (47). Allende winds her way

through a variety of sources in which the sense of smell has played an integral role: Cleopatra's influence over Julius Caesar through the use of perfume; the case of a literary protagonist who lacks his own personal odor but who creates a substitute with the aroma from the bodies of virgins; Genghis Khan's opportune discovery of musk; her own personal experience with a skunk; and the creation of pheromones. Intermingled within this labyrinth of anecdotes, Allende interjects literary citations: a haiku, brief Biblical passages from Proverbs and the Song of Songs, and an excerpt from The Songs of Bilitis by Pierre Louÿs. The blend of the anecdotal and the literary creates a rhythmic counterpoint that swings from high to low, assaulting the reader with exactly the sort of encyclopedic barrage customary in the anatomy. In a circular system, Allende begins her discussion by linking taste and smell: "¿Dónde comienza el gusto y termina el olfato? Son inseparables" (47). She closes the circle by linking the arousal produced by the body to the arousal produced by the aroma of freshly prepared food: "Así como el aroma del cuerpo es excitante, del mismo modo lo es el de la comida fresca y bien preparada" (54). The relationship of taste/smell now becomes an association of sexuality/smell.

Allende further strengthens the intersensory connection to sensuality by the inclusion of two contrasting literary selections. The first selection, a fragment of the "Oda a la ciruela" by the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, whom Allende categorizes as a "poet of the senses" ("Conversations" 344), reinforces the positive associations with aroma by encapsulating images of Nature that evoke associations with the fragrance and the transparency of the plum:

Desde entonces
la tierra, el sol, la nieve
las rachas
de la lluvia, en octubre

en los caminos,
todo
la luz, el agua
dejaron
en mi memoria
olor
y transparencia
de ciruela (55)

In the following verses, the plum comes to embody the forces of life itself, and finally becomes an associative link in the interplay of Nature, aroma, and sensuality through the metaphor of a kiss:

¡Oh boca
de la boca
en la ciruela,
dientes
y labios
llenos
del ámbar oloroso
de la líquida
luz de la ciruela! (55)

Allende's choice of this fragment of Neruda's ode functions as an intertextual reinforcement for her own recollections that immediately precede the poem, in which she recalls a powerful image of a tray of plums beneath the overwhelming sun of an afternoon in Sevilla. Like Neruda, she associates the elements of Nature, aroma, memory and sensuality: "Sevilla es para mí la fragrancia dulzona de aquellas ciruelas y de los jasmines que al atardecer llenan el aire de deseos" (54).

The second literary selection, and the final segment of the section on the sense of smell, originates in tenth-century Japan, in a short story by the Lady Onogoro, entitled "Muerte por perfume," and it reflects a negative view of aroma by relating the vengeance taken by a servant woman betrayed by her courtesan lover. The woman, hiding her anger, promises her lover a novel experience, and,

she methodically bathes his entire body in a variety of fragrances, knowing that the combination will produce a toxic effect on her victim. Each ensuing fragrance produces a negative emotional reaction until he expresses a wish to die, a wish that she finally grants. Ironic in its antithetical treatment, this brief text reverses the typical cultural connotations of perfume, including the use of fragrance as a weapon rather than as an enticement, and the role of the woman as aggressor rather than victim.

Allende amplifies the reversal of gender roles while continuing the erotic analysis of the remaining senses. Claiming that sexual attraction begins through visual contact, she subverts the concept of "the masculine gaze" through the inclusion of a nontraditional beauty pageant that focuses on males as erotic targets. She offers the example of an African competition in which the men assume the role of the judged:

> En Niger, en la tribu de los Wodaabe, cada año se lleva a cabo un concurso de belleza masculina. Los hombres jóvenes se acicalan y bailan ante un jurado feminino que selecciona a los más atractivos. Los guerreros se ponen bizcos e inventan morisquetas para mostrar hasta la última muela, porque el blanco de los ojos y de los dientes se considera el más preciado atributo de la hermosura. (60)

In contrast to the men who are judged by the whiteness of their eyes and teeth, she presents the Western version of the beauty contest that features the sexual attributes of its women participants: "En este lado del mundo tenemos un equivalente, pero son muchachas en bañador, ante un jurado de hombres, quienes ponen en evidencia senos y muslos, en vez de dientes y ojos" (60).

Allende reaffirms the feminine right to erotic stimulation by utilizing a parallel analysis in which she asserts that food must offer visual enticement: "La comida también entra por los ojos" (60). Linking the forms and colors of foods to those of the body, she uses the natural form of the oyster to illustrate her contention:

> Las ostras, esas seductoras lágrimas del mar, que se prestan para deslizarlas de boca a boca como besos prolongados, vienen en conchas duras de abrir. También se consiguen en frascos, pero parecen muestras de turmores malignos, en cambio, en las conchas, húmedas y turgentes, sugieren delicadas vulvas. Es un buen ejemplo de la comida que entra por la vista. (61)

As a consumer in both the culinary and sexual markets, she reiterates her preference for lo natural: "Prefiero los alimentos en su estado natural y así también me gustan los varones" (61). Utilizing foods in their natural state does not preclude innovative play however, as the author suggests novel serving presentations that resemble anatomical forms: "espárragos largos y firmes con dos papas nuevas en la base, dos mitades de duraznos con pezones de frambuesas en un lecho de crema chantilly" (61).

In the same vein, Allende pairs the sense of taste with sensuality, and once again she incorporates the experiential power of memory. In the first lines of the section "Con la punta de la lengua," she discusses the difficulty of describing specific flavors and aromas, but she affirms that both are experiential in nature and evoke specific moments within the memory: "Ambos son espíritus con vida propia, fantasmas que aparecen sin ser invocados para abrir una ventana de la memoria y conducirnos a través del tiempo a un suceso olvidado" (69). Tastes, she declares, must be cultivated and acquired through a lifetime of

experimentation, and she equates the evocative nature of foods with that of the flavors of the body:

> La piel, los pliegues del cuerpo y las secreciones tienen sabores fuertes y definidos, tan personales como el olor. Poco sabemos de ellos, porque hemos perdido el hábito de lamernos y olisquearnos unos a otros. (70)

Allende's insistence on the experiential nature of the sense of taste reflects the necessity to redefine the process of eating. While the experience of food is temporal, the contextual value of the experience increases when viewed retrospectively. As Dean Curtin suggests:

> . . . the absolute nature of foods can be found only in reflection on the experience; they are not found in the moment of experience. As a consequence, the individual connection to food comes only through experiential knowledge: "the knowledge" one comes to have through authentic presence to food is bodily and experiential. This is not conceptual knowledge prepared in advance and applied to the world. It is a kind of knowledge that comes to be for, and speaks authoritatively only to, the person or persons shaped definitively by a particular kind of experience. (128)

Allende relates the interplay of taste, memory and sensuality from her own experience. Unable to recall the face of the first man she kissed, she does remember precisely the taste of the kiss itself: "Aún recuerdo el sabor a goma de mascar, tabaco y cerveza de mi primer beso, hace exactamente cuarenta años, aunque he olvidado por completo la cara del marinero americano que me besó" (70).

In the final phase of the discussion of taste, Allende constructs a triangular relationship of food, music, and sexuality, proposing that the perfect meal must take into consideration a variety of flavors that complement rather than compete with each other. The well-planned dinner should follow the compositional rules of a crescendo that "empieza con las notas suaves de la sopa, pasa por los arpegios delicados de la entrada, culmina con la fanfarria del plato principal, al que siguen los dulces acordes del postre" (71). She instructs that the practice of thoughtful lovemaking must be exercised in the same manner, "comenzando por las insinuaciones, saboreando los juegos eróticos, llegando al clímax con el estruendo habitual y por fin sumiéndose con un afable y merecido reposo" (71).

Allende creates additional auditory parallels in the section "Susurros," focusing on the oral connections between food and sexuality. She begins with a discussion of the role of language and its seductive properties, asserting that "el mejor afrodisíaco son las palabras" (110). She cites the passionate verses of Cyrano de Bergerac and Catullus as evidence of the evocative power of language to describe, suggest, and excite passion. The experience of food, Allende maintains, is reinforced by commentary on the process of its consumption: "también en la comida el lenguaje es afrodisíaco; comentar los platos, sus sabores y perfumes es un ejercicio sensual para el cual disponemos de un vocabulario vasto, pleno de gracia, metáforas, referencias, humor, juegos de palabras y sutilezas" (111). Even the sounds of eating may connote pleasure and the author compares them to the sound of a kiss described in El jardín perfumado:

> El beso debe ser sonoro. Su sonido, ligero y prolongado, se eleva entre la lengua y el húmedo del paladar producido por el

> movimiento de la lengua en la boca y el desplazamiento de la saliva provocado por la succión. (112)

In addition, the emotive properties of music contribute to the sensual experience of eating, and Allende suggests musical forms that promote eroticism, including gypsy melodies, oriental compositions, jazz, and love ballads. She concludes her observations on auditory stimuli by pairing the quotidian and the sensual by asserting that even the most routine tasks of cooking and eating elicit powerful aphrodisiacal cues through musical associations that are easily recalled due to their accessibility within the personal memory:

> . . . puedo evocar sin vacilaciones el chispear del aceite al freír la cebolla; el ritmo sincopado del cuchillo picando verduras; el borboriteo del caldo hirviente donde dentro de un instante caerán los desdichados mariscos; las nueces al partirlas y la paciente canción del mortero moliendo semillas; las notas líquidas del vino al ser escanciado en las copas; el chocar de los cubiertos de plata, el cristal y la porcelana en la mesa; el murmullo melodioso de la conversación de la sobremesa, los suspiros satisfechos y el casi imperceptible crepitar de las velas . . . . (115)

The musicality of the description itself affirms the author's emphasis on the role of auditory stimulation.

After surveying the sensorial links between food and its erotic properties, Allende frames a second system of categorization through an analysis of foods by groups. In spite of the random sequencing, these sections clearly constitute a definable subsection that includes treatises on categories such as herbs and spices, meats, breads, seafood, fruits, and vegetables among others. While these sections resemble the first segment of the text by their inclusion of

anecdotes, historical reference, and literary citations, the element that most clearly defines their commonality originates in Allende's combination of foods within each group. Within each division she provides a commentary regarding the erotic histories and the properties of the foods in a style imitative of the anatomical method. Structurally much more concrete in its approach, the second method of categorization serves as a transitional bridge between the less structured discussions on the senses and the more highly formatted division of recipes that follows.

In spite of the author's more systematic approach within these sections, the discourse remains as random as the first, although the reader can perceive an attempt to work from the general to the particular. Generally, the opening remarks of each category resemble the pattern established in the sensorial discussions in which Allende offers an encyclopedic examination of the erotic history of the food category interspersed with anecdotes presented in a conversational and familiar tone. She does not connect the prelude to the alphabetical listings that follow, except in the few cases in which the author interjects personal recommendations regarding the preparation or presentation of the foods.

The most notable element in these sections is Allende's graphic and frank language. She begins her discussion of fruits by stating: "En la literatura erótica el sexo oral recibe a veces el nombre de frutos prohibidos" (158). The almond, she offers, originates according to mythological sources from the vulva of the goddess Cibeles; the avocado assumes its name from an indigenous word meaning testicle; the peach eloquently represents the intimate female organs. Allende uses anatomical terms without embarrassment or restraint. However, she juxtapositions her frankness with intertextual references to the masculine

mythology surrounding the aphrodisiacal properties of fruit, that include allusions to the conquistadores, Shakespeare, and Greek mythology.

The section on bread, however, serves as a counterpoint to the other discussions. The author engages in a much more poetic and metaphysical treatment that is evidenced in its title, "Pan, Gracia de Dios." Although Allende includes references to breads that resemble physiological forms, the text revolves around the creation of a parallel relationship in which she first equates the baker of bread with the writer of poetry. The former nourishes the body while the latter feeds the soul: "Como la poesía, el pan es una vocación algo melancólica, cuyo primordial requisito es tiempo para el alma. El poeta y el panadero son hermanos en la esencial tarea de alimentar al mundo" (132). She warns, however, that although bread must be considered an integral ingredient of the erotic kitchen, since wheat may be considered an aphrodisiac and a symbol of fertility, its preparation consumes hours that may be better spent in bed. In fact, Allende uses the act of baking bread as an erotic substitute for those without lovers, by the inclusion of poetry and personal reminiscence. She presents a brief poem by Patricia Donegan that touches on the melancholy of solitude while simultaneously projecting the erotic nature of kneading dough:

Esta noche
como muchos sin amante
voy a hacer pan
humiendo mis nudillos
en la masa suave. (134)

Allende's meditation continues with the inclusion of her personal memory of an incident in a convent in Brussels in which the author states that she witnessed the "cópula de la levadura, la harina, y el agua" (134). While the author watches from a penitential bench in a corner, a nun with the shoulders of a dockworker

and the hands of a ballerina kneads and molds the dough into molds, leaving them to rise on an ancient wooden table. Since the nun works at the opposite end of the kitchen, she stands removed from the bread as it comes to life:

> . . . en otro extremo de la cocina se producía el sencillo milagro cotidiano de la harina y la poesía, el contenido de los moldes cobraba vida y un proceso lento y sensual se desarrollaba bajo esas blancas servilletas que, como sábanas discretas, cubrían la desnudez de las hogazas. La masa cruda se hinchaba en suspiros secretos, se movía suavemente, palpitaba como cuerpo de mujer en la entrega del amor. (135)

Although bread symbolizes the feminine gift of the fertile earth, in the text Allende purposely relegates its preparation to those women who stand outside the realm of sexuality. This section, that places woman in a more conventional and domestic relationship to food, also allows an uncharacteristic exposure of the writer, who confesses that upon witnessing the mysterious process "lloraba sin saber por qué" (135).

In most cases, Allende writes with a bravado that defies the stereotypical female characterization. However, a derisive and more strident attitude toward gender roles and patriarchal authority appears as a second motif early in the introductory section on aphrodisiacs:

> Las sociedades patriarcales, es decir, casi todas, menos algunas de indios perdidos en las crónicas de olvidados conquistadores, tienen verdadera obsesión con la virilidad y su símbolo: el falo. Se trata de producir hijos, varones, por supuesto, para garantizar la sucesión y preservar el poder, la familia. (27)

She traces the roots of Occidental chauvinistic authority to a cultural system constructed upon religious institutions that propogated and preserved a male-dominated view of social organization, particularly in the sexual arena:

> Según judíos y cristianos, Dios creó al hombre a su propia imagen espiritual; pero la mujer es carne y tentación, un animal dominado por la sensualidad que sólo puede elevarse a través de un marido. En el sistema patriarcal los hombres tienen la libertad que niegan a las mujeres. (149)

In the same passage she also criticizes Islam, which she claims has isolated woman from man in order to protect the latter from the moral corruption of the former:

> El islam impuso la más estricta separación entre ambos sexos, convirtió a la mujer en prisionera con el argumento de que no se puede confiar en ella: es seductora y promiscua por naturaleza. De este modo se culpa a ella de la lujuria que lo caracteriza a él. El harén no se creó para proteger a las mujeres, como se ha dicho, sino para preservar la moral de los hombres. (149)

Allende also reiterates her criticism of the Church in a staunchly feminist interpretation of the biblical story of the temptation of Adam in the Garden of Eden. According to the author, no biblical text actually states that Eve offered an apple to her partner. Rather, she proposes that this oral tradition originated from misogynist Church leaders:

> Se supone que los padres de la Iglesia—célibes y misóginos—escogieron la manzana como el fruto prohibido porque al cortarlo por la mitad aparecen las semillas dispuestas en forma de vulva,

> parte de su anatomía que la malvada Eva usó para tentar al bueno de Adán. (161)

She asserts that secular history has likewise been defined by male standards, castigating female participants while exculpating their male counterparts, as in the case of Cesonia and Caligula: "Se sospechaba que un brebaje semejante dio a beber Cesonia a Calígula para obtener su amor, causándole aquella locura frenética y arrogante que tantos crímenes le hizo cometer, pero esta explicación es típica de los historiadores, quienes siempre encuentran la manera de culpar a la mujer " (95).

Allende subsequently narrows the scope of her attack from an institutional focus to a more gender-oriented critique. This censure creates an additional paradox as she ironically depicts men whom she generally views as her erotic quarry in bestial terms:

> El hombre está más cerca del mono que la mujer. No me cabe la menor duda. Son más peludos, tienen los brazos más largos, y en ellos el impulso sexual empieza por la vista, herencia de sus ancestros, los simios, a quienes la hembra llama durante el periódo de celo con un cambio notable en sus partes íntimas. (109)

Visual stimulation, she contends, explains the popularity of magazines directed toward male audiences that feature displays of semi-nude women. However, when the same approach has been explored with the feminine public, the opposite reaction has occurred: "las imágenes de muchachos bien dotados desplegando sus encantos en páginas a todo color han resultado un fiasco; las compran homosexuales, más que mujeres " (109).

Satirizing what she views as the male reverence for masculine sexual organs, Allende recounts an episode of a butcher who sells lamb testicles but

cannot bring himself to eat them, because "[a]quella parte de la anatomía masculina, tan vilipendiada en toda clase de chistes y comentarios, no obstante exige respeto. De más está decir que no se puede ir muy lejos sin pisotear terreno sagrado" (101). She also refers to the infamous case of Lorena and John Bobbitt, remarking that after the notorious attack, authorities went to great lengths to recover the lost organ due to cultural bias: "Más tarde los policías recorrieron minuciosamente el camino con linternas hasta encontrar el apéndice amputado—jamás se tomarían tales molestias si se tratara de un órgano femenino" (101). For Allende, the opposite type of male attracts Latin-American women—a man without the macho attitude. Masculine domesticity offers an erotic enticement. She notes: "Pocas virtudes más eróticas puede poseer un hombre que la sabiduría culinaria" (41). Citing her romantic experience with the man upon whom she based the protagonist of El plan infinito, Allende explains that she fell in love with him as he prepared dinner, which in her estimation constitutes a novelty for a Latin American woman accustomed to the rigid protocol of machismo. She explains: "Muy pocas mujeres latinoamericanas han tenido una experiencia semejante, porque en general los machos de nuestro continente consideran toda actividad doméstica como un peligro para su siempre amenazada virilidad" (41).

Her reassignment of gender roles applies equally to women: "Un hombre que cocina es sexy, la mujer, no tal vez porque recuerda demasiado el arquetipo doméstico" (41). Accordingly, Allende focuses her attention throughout the work on women who have acted in an aggressive and nontraditional manner, including a variety of historically notorious figures. She celebrates the bacchanalian lifestyle of the Duchess María Isabel du Berry, an eighteenth-century French courtesan whose infamous orgies became social events during an era that

promoted a new social freedom for women. Describing her, Allende concentrates on characteristics generally perceived as amoral: "La duquesa du Berry, bella, rica y de carácter explosivo, se lanzó en una carrera de amante de todos los pelajes, parrandas homéricas y escándolos de dinero que andaban en boca de nobles y plebeyos. Nada la intimidaba" (85). Married at eighteen and widowed four years later, the young courtesan, who planned elaborate orgies in which wine ran freely and sexual activity occupied the guests' attentions, serves as a springboard for the author who fantasizes about the nature of her own orgy: "¿cómo sería mi propia orgía? ¿a quiénes y dónde invitaría? ¿qué ofrecería en vez de monstruos, fieras y gladiadores?" (86)

Allende also shows an affinity for those women who, like herself, have defied the restrictions imposed by marriage. She endorses the long-standing Asian and European practice of endowing women with the same extramarital relationships enjoyed by their husbands through the practice of the gigolo. Adopting an anthropological approach, she asserts that in previous centuries marriages served only a social and economic purpose in which love did not enter into the contract. She cites the seventeenth-century French writer, Madeleine Scudèry, whose contemptuous attitude towards the institution attracts her admiration: "Uno se casa para odiar. Por eso es preciso que un verdadero amante no hable nunca de matrimonio, porque ser amante es querer ser amado y querer ser marido es querer ser odiado" (128).

Allende affirms the right of gender equality in the sexual arena, endorsing the view that women whose husbands maintain lovers and illegitimate children, "podían buscar amor en otros brazos" (128). She counsels that in the modern world any woman who can afford to do so can contract with an expert lover who guarantees hygienic pleasure and confidentiality. Paradoxically, when Allende

relates her own encounter with a gigolo in the Frankfurt airport, she elects not to follow her own advice, and she chooses instead to pass her time interviewing the young American man over dinner: "No estoy habituada a caricias mercenarias y además me pareció un pecado gastar esa suma de dinero en fines egoístas, habiendo tantísima gente necesitada de caridad en este mundo, así que decliné su ofrecimiento lo más gentilmente posible . . ." (130).

Allende's ambiguity toward personal erotic liberation reemerges in the final section of the first division of the work, where the reader encounters Allende's ultimate reversal. In these three pages, appropriately titled, "Finalmente," Allende recapitulates many of the topics already treated in the text: the connection between food and eroticism; the nature of her own personal experience; the experiential process of writing; and the gender-conditioned responses toward eroticism. Although the reader recognizes the predictable generalizations and aphorisms of the literary anatomy that have threaded the work, the view of the author that ultimately emerges depicts a woman torn between convention and redefinition.

As in the majority of the subsections, the author utilizes unsubstantiated generalizations to redirect the examination of the link between food and eroticism. In the first line of "Finalmente," she proclaims that food and sexuality are the primordial forces of human history: "Apetito y sexo son los grandes motores de la historia, preservan y propongan la especie, provocan guerras y canciones, influyen en las religiones, la ley y el arte" (207). However, instead of concentrating on the erotic nature of food and sex, she bases their connection on the physical participation in the process of death and regeneration, a departure from earlier considerations: "La creación entera es un proceso ininterrumpido de digestión y fertilidad; todo se reduce a organismos devorándose unos a otros,

reproduciéndose, muriendo, fertilizando la tierra y renaciendo transformados" (207). She concludes the dissection with a nonscientific list, so common to the poematic of Neruda and Paz, of the fundamental ingredients of the regenerative cycle: blood, semen, sweat, ash, tears—the incurable poetic imagination of humanity searching for meaning.

Finally, Allende turns the focus of the analysis upon herself and the introspective process of writing: "Después de dar un par de vueltas completas por el mundo de afrodisíacos, descubro que lo único que en verdad me excita es el amor" (207). In fact, she has made the same claim earlier in the work, "el único afrodisiáco verdaderamente infalibe es el amor" (31), but within a different emotional context, one in which love works in tandem with the "segundo afrodisiáco más podoroso: la variedad" (32). After having presented the scenario of sexual liberation for some two hundred pages, the author admits to having deceived her reader, as she proposes an alternate source of authority:

> Pero seguramente en estas páginas he dado la impresión de que no soy romántica y, por lo tanto, carezco de autoridad para hablar de ese frenesí. Nada de eso. Por desgracia pertenezco al tipo de persona que cree en el amor a primera vista y se casa. (207)

Allende refuses to adhere to either stance and alternates between the conventional and the provocative. She embraces a marital relationship as comfortable as a pair of old slippers:

> Los viejos amantes son cómodos, como las pantuflas. En mi edad provecta he descubierto el placer de estar casada en las pantuflas. Cuando el marido y el amante son la misma persona, tal vez se pierde buena parte de la diversión, pero hay más tiempo para ver

películas. Me gusta ver películas . . . y el matrimonio no está mal tampoco. (208)

Antithetically, she admits to having married her husband in order to secure a visa: "pero me casé por razones puramente prácticas: necesitaba una visa para permanecer en Estados Unidos" (208). She presents herself as a vehemently passionate woman who spent a year researching and writing about aphrodisiacs, in the hope that her husband would survive her passion in "pleno vigor y buena salud" (209). The reader finds her/himself cast in the dilemma of identifying the authentic author—the woman who has preached sexual freedom or the woman who exists comfortably in a conventional marriage.

Allende offers another paradox in the second division of the work, "Recetas afrodisíacos de Panchita," subtitled "(con comentarios míos)." At first glance, this segment of Afrodita resembles a standard cookbook divided into the conventional categories. Allende even provides color-coded tabs at the bottom of each page, the first instance of a useful reference guide in the text for the reader. However, the nature of the recipes as well as the unusual relationship revealed between the author and her mother regarding cooking practices indicate that Allende will redirect the reader to the practice of cooking itself.

As indicated by the title of the division, Allende's mother provides the recipes that form the nucleus of this division of the work. The contribution of the mother's expertise could be viewed as a normal part of the cooking experience, since the intergenerational transmission of recipes from mother to daughter has functioned as a traditional avenue for the preservation of familial customs as well as perpetuating communal ties. However, such recipes are generally transmitted orally, practiced in close physical proximity, and revolve around the daily provision of sustenance for the family or community. They involve limited formal

knowledge relying rather on a sort of experiential "knowing" of ingredient and processes—a style of cooking based primarily on what looks and feels appropriate. Dean Curtin refers to Jean-François Revel's classification of this manner of cooking as "popular," one categorized by the following traits:

> . . . [popular cooking] has the advantage of being linked to the soil, of being able to exploit the products of various regions and different seasons, in close accord with Nature, of being based on age-old skills, transmitted by way of imitation and habit, of applying methods of cooking patiently tested and associated with certain cooking utensils and recipients prescribed by a long tradition. (Ravel qtd. in Curtin 125)

Popular cuisine is generally assigned low prestige in comparison with haute cuisine, analogous to the distinguishing of crafts from fine arts. Curtin even places popular cuisine within a cultural hierarchy: "The distinction is even gender-based: fine arts and international cuisine are the 'father,' while applied arts and popular cuisine are the 'mother'" (Curtin 125).

Although Allende's cookbook contains a variety of regional and family recipes, the reader quickly perceives that the author has no intention of presenting traditional dishes in the conventional mode. After all, these are "aphrodisiacal" recipes, paradoxically compiled and tested by her mother over a period of months, presented in a precise written format far removed from the family kitchen. However, Allende holds no reverence for their reliable transmission nor for family tradition, and she advises the reader that she deliberately revised her mother's offerings: "Después me tocó ponerlas en la computadora y en el proceso confieso que hice unos pequeños cambios" (211). She lightheartedly warns the reader that if s/he encounters difficulties as a result

of her substituting a "chorro" of liqueur in place of her mother's "tres gotas," to write directly to her since she would prefer that her mother not know of the substitution.

She insists that the joy of cooking must emanate from a playful attitude, and she advocates a rejection of her mother's timid, perfectionist approach to cooking: "Estas recetas de Panchita me han acompañado desde que me casé—hace dos mil años—, pero no les tengo demasiado respeto y espero que tampoco lo tenga usted. La filosofía de la cocina es como la del juego: si no divierte, olvídelo" (244). In the introductory comments for the soups, she criticizes her mother's cooking technique as devoid of spontaneity, a product of routine practice: "Panchita hace sus caldos automáticamente, igual como teje sin mirar los palillos" (246). Allende endorses a radically different approach to the preparation of food: "No es necesario ceñirse a las instrucciones, en este caso las recetas son apenas un punto de partida, una ventana a la inspiración" (244). Allende joyfully "plays" with her role as a writer, while attempting to reframe the domestic relationship of recipes and cooking, accentuating her perspective by an antithetical positioning of provocative introductions against the precise and routine delivery of the recipes themselves. Each section bears a subtitle that suggests an erotic attribute: "Salsas, y otros fluidos esenciales;" "Hors d'oeuvres, primeros cosquilleos y mordiscos;" "Sopas, entrando en calor;" "Entradas, juegos amorosos, beso a beso;" "Platos principales, Kama Sutra ¡bueno, más o menos!;" "Postres, final feliz." In addition, the brief remarks that preface each section contain culinary and amatory advice such as that for sopas: "En el caso de las sopas se aplica un criterio similar al de las salsas: son los preámbulos del amor y deben prepararse teniendo en cuenta todos los sentidos: vista, aroma, sabor, textura y, en algunos casos, sonido" (243). A lengthier

introduction follows each preface, but in contrast with the introductions from the first division, these offer light-hearted observations on eating, sex, and cooking—omitting the previous encyclopedic treatises. Allende also prefaces each recipe with a reference to its use as an aphrodisiac. Furthermore, she modifies some of the recipe titles to suit her theme, as she admits in the section on postres, substituting "Seno de novicia" for its more sedate name: "El nombre verdadero es pecho de monja, pero por razones literarias hemos escogido algo más sugerente" (316).

The last recipe of the cookbook also bears a revised title, "Arroz con leche del consuelo espiritual," and it returns the reader to the work's introduction, as Allende indicates by the recipe's introduction: "¿Recuerda mi sueño del arroz con leche al principio de este libro?" (323). In turn, the redirection also causes the reader to reflect on the nature of the work as a whole and the author's self-professed intentions for its creation. Has it served the healing role originally expressed by Allende? One can find no mention of consolation in the paragraph in which she continues her conversation with the reader:

> No puedo imaginar un postre más sensual . . . Esta receta es para ocho personas normales, pero me parece un crimen reducirla. Yo soy capaz de devorarla sín parpadear en una sola sesión, no veo por qué sería diferente en su caso lectora o lector. Si llegara a sobrar, puede guardarlo en la nevera y si el buen humor le alcanza, use los restos para cubrir a su amante de pies a cabeza con este lujorioso arroz con leche y luego lamerlo lentamente. En una ocasión así las calorías se justifican. (323)

She does not mention her grief, her daughter, her role as a writer; rather she focuses once again on eroticism. In fact, Allende concludes her work in the

same manner as Burton—without hint of self-consolation, with an admonishment to the reader—he asking his reader to repent, she requesting hers to embrace sexuality. In either case, both authors deliver an unresolved paradox that results in an ambiguity which the reader should not naively accept as spontaneous or unplanned. Both Burton and Allende make conscious decisions in the formulation of their texts that plot the capture of the reader, the revelation of information, and the creation of dichotomies. Both start with one objective, and end with an alternative.

Martin Heusser's study of the Anatomy of Melancholy provides a useful explanation of the ambiguity produced by the anatomy. Heusser suggests that Burton carefully controls the reading process in the anatomy through a series of authorial techniques disguised in the presentation of overwhelming amounts of information, and he proposes that the interaction between the reader and the text creates two virtual variants of the text, including that of the author who serves as the first reader of the work. The author's preoccupation with the nature of his own writing, the value of the work itself, and the self-deprecation regarding his role as a writer establishes the first variant of the text, the authorial. The second variant, that of the reader, materializes as the reader interprets the text when taken along with the author's previous commentaries regarding his role as the writer. According to Heusser, the anatomist utilizes two basic types of influence on the interface between the text and reader that occur both concurrently and synergistically—one destructuring, the other restructuring (Heusser 40). Through the destructuring process, the author conditions the reader through a series of irritations that allow the restructuring to occur; through the restructuring, he modifies the reader's perception of the text and consequentially his view of the world.

Destructuring occurs through the increasing fragmentation of the anatomical text. This process results in the reader's isolation and intimidation through the utilization of multiple textual idiosyncrasies. These idiosyncrasies include the linguistic techniques that serve as the cornerstones of the anatomy: elaborations; qualifications; quotes; intertextual citations; epitomes; digressions; aphorisms; antitheses; paradoxes; and non-sequiturs. The combination of these devices when fused with the author's propensity toward dissection often serves to suspend the author's credibility and reliability in the eyes of the reader. However, the loss of reader confidence never becomes complete and never serves as an end in itself. In fact, throughout the Anatomy, Burton continuously belittles his own pretenses and intentions in an effort to maintain a certain degree of control over his reader.

The erosion of reliability permits the author to initiate a restructuring of the reader's perspective of the text through three strategies. The first strategy, description, revolves around the emotional content of the work and features a subjective approach by the author. The anatomist utilizes concrete cases containing strongly emotional components described with high degrees of vividness that supersede the normal range of human experience, because of their grotesque, bizarre or humorous quality. The strong emphasis on abnormality conversely enables the recognition of normalcy. The descriptive strategy employs associative hooks, amplifications of motifs, and anecdotal presentations that amplify the reader's connection to the author.

The second reconstructive strategy identified by Heusser, enacting, involves the exposure of the author's own personal experience within the subject matter of the text. Although these exposés often exhibit postures that superficially contradict the position ostensibly held by the author, they generally

serve as examples for her/his underlying argument. As the author allows the reader to view a small glimpse of her/his own individual experience, s/he reveals her/his genuine beliefs and provides the reader with a new and authentic source of information for the dilemma posed within the work.

Exposure, the third strategy, involves placing the author's views within the reader's experience by forcing the reader to extract the author's message through a participatory reading. This technique relies on a conversational mode of discourse in which the author encourages the reader to respond in a positive or negative fashion. As a result, the author spends much of her/his efforts maintaining the reader in as close proximity as possible in order to ensure the success of the exposure. However, such exposure, framed in a montage of proofs and instructive aphorisms, often leads to a paradoxical situation in which the reader, having digested an ever-increasing body of information, discovers that the number of irresolvable questions expands in relation to the broadening of his knowledge.

In Burton's case, the reader finally arrives at the realization that no actual definition of melancholy could conceivably exist nor can the author propose a remedy for its cure. Instead, Burton places the reader within the ultimate paradox, because his text proposes a scenario in which man, who must act as his primary source of cure, antithetically acts as the principal agent of his own destruction. Furthermore, the quest for knowledge increases the intensity of melancholy itself. Heusser categorizes this realization as Burton's ultimate paradox:

> Burton himself becomes paradox personified, a tangible, palpable, and, most of all, a plausible and undeniable paradox. With this he proves irrefutable, because irrationally, his tenet that man must

> accept paradox—must, but also can, with the necessary portion of belief. And with this acceptance goes melancholy, as a given quantity to be integrated into life rather than extracted from it. (51-52)

Burton's fragmentation of knowledge and his subsequent creation of paradox mirrors many of the postmodern strategies used by contemporary writers. In fact, Hodges mentions him as a possible protodeconstructionist. Like his twentieth-century counterparts, Burton envisioned new potentialities of knowledge that supersede predetermined limitations. As we have seen in the discussion of Afrodita, Allende also has attempted to reframe contemporary views on a number of cultural issues related to women—writing, eroticism, and the role of food. She, like Burton, concentrates on the relationship between herself and the reader by weaving her text through both deconstructive and reconstructive interplay of the same strategies utilized by Burton almost four hundred years earlier, and she does so deliberately.

In a discussion of food as a literary motif, Susan Leonardi traces the derivation of the word recipe to its Latinate root, recipere, a verb that connotes an exchange between a giver and a receiver. Leonardi asserts that like a story, "a recipe needs a recommendation, a context, a point, a reason to be. A recipe is an embedded discourse . . ." (340). In the reciprocal acts of writing and reading in Afrodita, the embedded discourse upon which the discussion of food is constructed centers on the redefinition of the feminine identity which emerges from the reordering of domestic experience. By transforming the kitchen into an erotic and experiential space, Allende deconstructs the orthodox parameters of feminine domesticity and seemingly endorses an emancipated and erotic feminine lifestyle. However, as Hodges adverts, "the anatomist reveals himself

in revealing the world"(41). Allende reveals herself as a woman torn between redefinition and convention.

Paradox constitutes a core element of the literary anatomy, one through which contradictory visions of order are conceivably reconciled in a philosophical "middle ground." Hodges asserts that "paradox subverts opposites by placing extremes together so that they transgress each other, rupturing the wholeness of opposed bodies, and leveling differences" (77). In the final analysis, Isabel Allende's writing purposefully deconstructs and restructures the reader's frame of reference regarding the relationship between women and the domestic sphere, primarily in order to address certain fundamental issues pertinent to her role as a woman and as a woman writer. Her own words explain her fundamental convictions. First and foremost, she lays claim to the title of feminist:

> Because I am a woman and because I am an intelligent woman, excuse my arrogance, I have to be a feminist. I am aware of my gender; I am aware that being born a woman is a handicap in most parts of the world. In only very privileged societies, very privileged groups, have woman achieved enough freedom and enough awareness to be able to fight for their rights. ("The Short Story" 10)

Secondly and consequentially, she asserts the feminine right to a complete and experiential knowledge that permits erotic fulfillment:

> We [Latin-American women] come here to experience through the body things that the spirit could not experience otherwise. So we need the body, and we have to transform this body into a temple of learning. It is difficult because our culture does not promote that at all. ("The Short Story" 10)

Third, she advocates an active and participatory role for her reader, a role that involves defining issues and examining the multiplicity of potential resolutions:

> I want to invite them [the readers] to a wonderful place where we can share a story, and I only give him or her half the story; the other half has to be recreated or created by the reader and that is the space we are going to share . . . . I don't have answers; I just have the questions and I want to share the questions. ("The Short Story" 11)

Finally, Allende shares the recreative nature of her writing in terms of her own identity: "I am inventing myself all the time, and at the same time I am inventing fiction, and through this fiction I am revealing myself" ("The Short Story" 11).

Ultimately, Allende and Burton reveal the contradictions that their dissections have exposed through the process of self-reflection. Although Allende advocates a liberated approach to feminine erotic desire and fulfillment, she does not distance herself from emotional love as a fundamental prerequisite for erotic enjoyment. Although she proposes the process of writing for the purpose of self-healing and consolation, in the resolution of the text she does not state that either has occurred. She rejects conventional institutions, yet chooses to live within them. By exposing her own ambiguities within the redefinement of domesticity, Allende has effectively placed the reader within a secondary condition of self-reflection that confronts the identical paradox facing modern women at large.

# Chapter 5

## Conclusion

The figurative movement of women from the private space of the home to the public forum materialized very slowly in twentieth-century Latin-American literature. This gradual literary transition substantially mirrored the nature of the feminist sociopolitical agenda in which women paradoxically retained the affiliation with the home as an integral facet of their identity even as they attempted to escape its confinement. In both literature and society, as Latin-American women sought increased autonomy, the domestic space of the home emerged as a focal point for the examination of patriarchal cultural attitudes toward gender identity. The confrontation of women with the domestic environment as a reflection of restrictive, paternalistic subjugation constituted an important theme in literature of the second half of the twentieth century—one that paralleled the larger post-modern preoccupation with systems of power.

Hasta no verte Jesús mío by Elena Poniatowska, "La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y de su abuela desalmada" by Gabriel García Márquez, and Afrodita: cuentos, recetas y otros afrodisíacos by Isabel Allende utilize gender as a means of reshaping and redefining relationships of power by deploying the domestic sphere as a microcosmic model of dominance and subjugation. By means of discursive portrayals of women as strong, resilient characters in contrast with their conventional characterization as passive figures, these works subvert the traditionally masculine representation of authority. While each of these narratives reinterprets the framework of dominance from a distinct geographic and temporal perspective, they adhere to the fundamental proposition of reframing historical truth. Through the analysis of the

characterization of women within the domestic environment, as well as within the narratological and historical context encompassing each work, this study has elaborated upon the intent of the authors to reconfigure women as symbolically empowered forces of transformation.

As this study has demonstrated, a vital element of the narrative approach lies within the authors' intentional choice to utilize revisionist formats. By posing alternate views of history and culture within revisionary approaches to traditional genres, these narratives counter standard generical patterns and accentuate the authors' unique ideological stances that form the bases of the texts. While each genre utilizes established patterns in order to form expectations in the mind of the reader, the selective displacement of this framework emphasizes the author's intent to create a textual disequilibrium which opens the way to unconventional resolutions. As a result, the disruption of conventional narratological patterns facilitates the rupture with preconceived notions of the order of reality.

Autobiography, customarily considered a form of private writing, allows the review of the past from a previously unexplored perspective. Not a precise recreation of history, the autobiographical mode of writing permits an exploration of historical events from the retrospective view of an individual participant. From this individualized outlook on history, autobiography lends an interpretative dimension to the past through the selective reassembly of memory. The testimonial form of the autobiography employed by Poniatowska in Hasta no verte Jesús mío transfers life writing from the realm of the private to the public, and extends the power of memory to the voiceless via the literary representation of the life experiences of a marginalized individual. The protagonist, Jesusa, to a great extent typifies the feminine reality during the Mexican Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary periods, eras in which women attempted to redefine their

traditionally subservient association with significant male figures, especially those of the husband and father. Although Poniatowska depicts Jesusa as initially compliant with the domestic identity assigned to her by Mexican cultural practice, throughout the novel the protagonist reveals an emergent recognition of the restrictions that she suffers as a woman. Jesusa's experiences manifest many correlations with official history, but her story counters the professed goals of the revolutionary movement. Although a strong and rebellious individual who confronts her domestic subjugation throughout her life, Jesusa ultimately remains in isolation on the periphery of society. By examining marginalization from the non-traditional feminine perspective, Poniatowska constructs the protagonist as a symbolic model of subaltern people who suffer as a result of Mexican institutional paralysis.

Since the seventeenth century, the genre of the fairy tale has challenged the patriarchal sociopolitical order. Through the subversion of oligarchical hierarchies, the fairy tale depicts the hero's quest as a transformational route toward the achievement of individual emancipation and a new and humanistic world order. García Márquez draws on this tradition in the depiction of Eréndira, a protagonist who endures and overcomes domestic and sexual subjugation at the hands of a familial tyrant. In order to establish the work within the parameters of the genre, the author appropriates the structure of the fairy tale by adhering to the conventional structural phases of fantasy, threat, recovery, escape, and consolation. Particularly in the initial phases of the story, domestic images conveyed through the style of magical realism establish the theme of subjugation by the portrayal of the home as a locus of "uncanny" secrets which imprison Eréndira in a ritualistic pattern of domestic servitude. Through the protagonist's transformational journey of trials, García Márquez metaphorically

associates Eréndira's exploitation with the Latin-American experience of Colonial imperialism. By reconfiguring Eréndira outside the typical feminine characterization of the fairy tale in her ultimate emancipation from masculine authority, the author proposes a revisionist view of history in which archaic mythological models are supplanted by a future-oriented conceptualization of social order.

Isabel Allende has assumed a feminist stance in both her writings and interviews, and she has encouraged her readers to restructure reality from a feminine point of view. In Afrodita, Allende utilizes the genre of the literary anatomy as the framework for a feminine manifesto of sexuality that incorporates a metafictional memoir tracing the author's own development as a woman and writer. Historically, the anatomy as a genre has been viewed as a vehicle to disorient the center, to oppose permanence, and to fracture social norms through the technique of displacement as a medium of self-exposure; that is, through the vehicle of displacement the author reveals herself by exposing others. In this work, in which the connection between food and eroticism serves as the unifying theme, Allende weaves an historical overview of feminine sexuality through an encyclopedic compilation of anecdotes, intertextual citations, recipes, and treatises on aphrodisiacs. However, in spite of the work's premise to reformulate the cultural connections between woman, food, and erotic experience, the author discovers herself in the same paradoxical position that faces modern woman at large—torn between convention and redefinition. In the meditation on her own internal conflicts, Allende reveals the dilemma confronting modern women as they redefine their feminine identity.

Each of these works reveals a transformational view of woman through the juxtaposition of domestic motifs and socio-cultural contexts. In addition,

these texts serve as vital components of a greater literary movement toward the utilization of revisionist genres in the exploration of feminine identity. Particularly in the United States the revisionist format of the fairy tale has been employed deconstructively by feminist authors, and the Argentine writer Luisa Valenzuela also has employed the genre in her collection of stories, Simetrías (1993), to speak to the literary and cultural oppression of women. The testimonial style of writing employed by Poniatowska in Hasta no verte Jesus mío initiated a series of feminine testimonial narratives in the seventies and eighties, including Si me permiten hablar (Barrios de Chungara/Viezzer, 1978). Me llamo Rigoberta, y así me nació la conciencia (Menchú/Burgos, 1983), and Historia de la vida (Bonafini/Sánchez, 1985), texts which recount the life stories of marginalized women in various Latin-American societies. While the literary anatomy has not been widely utilized by Latin-American women writers, the genre has regained popularity as twentieth-century writers such as Carlos Fuentes, Julio Cortázar, and Walter Benjamin have utilized its rhetorical format for the analyses of cultural topics. However, Allende's pairing of the kitchen with erotic experience stands within the growing literary current in which food manifests the Proustian property to initiate emotive associations. One example of this trend, Como agua para chocolate (1991) by the Mexican writer Laura Esquivel, parodies the popular novela de entrega in which a restrictive domestic environment and the symbolic production of food serve as unifying narrative threads. As the contemporary literary scene revives traditional and popular genres in the experimentation with narratological approaches, the continued exploration of the female perspective and domestic themes articulated by Poniatowska, García Márquez, and Allende will constitute a significant influence in the shaping of literature in the twenty-first century.

## Bibliography


Achugar, Hugo. "Historias paralelas/historias ejemplares: La historia y la voz del otro." Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana 36 (1992): 49-71.

Allende, Isabel. Afrodita. New York: HarperLibros, 1997.

—. Cuentos de Eva Luna. Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1991.

—. Paula. Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1994.

—. "The Short Story." Journal of Modern Literature. 20.1 (Summer 1996): 21-28.

—. "Writing as an Act of Hope." Paths of Resistance: The Art and Craft of the Political Novel. Ed. William Zinsser. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989.

Amago, Samuel. "Isabel Allende and the Postmodern Literary Tradition: A Reconsideration of Cuentos de Eva Luna." Latin American Literary Review 56 2000: 43-61.

Armitt, Lucie. Theorising the Fantastic. London: Arnold, 1996.

Armstrong, Nancy. "The Violence of Rhetoric: Considerations on Representations and Gender." Technologies of Gender. Ed. Teresa DeLauretis. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Asencio, Esteban. Me lo dijo Poniatowska: su vida, obra y pasiones, contadas por ella misma. México: Ediciones del Milenio, 1997.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics. Trans. R. W. Rotsel. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1973.

Barnet, Miguel. Historia de un cimarrón. Barcelona: Ariel, 1968.

Barnhart, Robert K, ed. The Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology. New York: H W Wilson, 1988.

Baruch, Elaine Hoffman. Women, Love and Power: Literary and Psychoanalytic Perspectives. New York: New York University Press, 1991.

Bejel, Emilio. "Entrevista con Miguel Barnet." Hispania 29 (1981): 41-53.

Bell, Michael. Gabriel García Márquez: Solitude and Solidarity. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

Bettelheim, Bruno. The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales. New York: Vintage Books, 1977.

Beverley, John. Subalternity and Representation: Arguments in Cultural Theory. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.

Boschetto, Sandra María. "The Demythification of Matriarchy and Image of Women in Chronicle of a Death Foretold." García Márquez. Ed. Robin Fiddian. London: Longman, 1995.

Bottigheimer, Ruth. Grimm's Bad Girls and Bold Boys: The Moral and Social Vision of Tales. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.

Bradbury, Malcolm. No, Not Bloomsbury. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

Brumble, H. David. Classical Myths and Legends in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Dictionary of Allegorical Meanings. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998.

Burton, Robert. The Anatomy of Melancholy. Eds. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan Smith. New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1948.

Campbell, Joseph. The Hero With a Thousand Faces. New York: MJF Books, 1949.

Campobello, Nellie. Mis libros. México, D.F.: 1960.

Carazas, Milagros. La orgía lingüística y Gregorio Martínez: un estudio sobre Canto de sirena. Lima: Línea y Punto, 1998.

Castillo, Debra. Easy Women: Sex and Gender in Modern Mexican Fiction. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

—. Talking Back: Toward a Latin American Feminist Criticism. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.

Castro-Klarén, Sara, ed. Women's Writings in Latin America: an Anthology. Boulder: Westview, 1991.

Cebrián, Juan Luis. Retrato de Gabriel García Márquez. Barcelona: Galaxia Gutenberg, 1997.

Cierard, Irene, ed. At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999.

Cirlot, Juan Eduardo. A Dictionary of Symbols. Trans. Jack Sage. New York: Dorset Press, 1991.

Clark, Gloria Jeanne Botdorf. A Synergy of Styles: Art and Artifact in Gabriel García Márquez. Lanham: University Press of America, 1999.

Cohn, Deborah. "The Paralysis of the Instant: The Stagnation of History and the Stylistic Suspension of Time in Gabriel García Márquez's La hojarasca." College Literature 26.2 (Spring 1999): 59-74.

Collins, Robert A. and Howard D.Pearce, eds. The Scope of the Fantastic—Culture, Biography, Themes, Children's Literature. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1980.

Compton, Timothy G. Mexican Picaresque Narratives: Periquillo and Kin. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1997.

Cooperman, Jeannette Batz. The Broom Closet: Secret Meanings of Domesticity in Postfeminist Novels by Louise Erdrich, Mary Gordon, Toni Morrison, Marge Piercy, Jane Smiley, and Amy Tan. New York: Peter Lang, 1999.

Counihan, Carole. The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender, Meaning, and Power. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Counihan, Carol and Steven Kaplan, eds. Food and Gender: Identity and Power. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998.

Curtin, Deane W. and Lisa M. Heldke. Cooking, Eating, Thinking: Transformative Philosophies of Food. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.

Cyamdadu, Amaryll B. "Las soledades y los solitarios, en 'La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y de su abuela desalmada'." Symposium 40.4 (1986-1987 Winter): 297-307.

Danow, David K. Models of Narrative: Theory and Practice. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.

Darby, Phillip. The Fiction of Imperialism: Reading between International Relations and Postcolonialism. London: Cassell, 1998.

DeLauretis, Teresa, ed. Technologies of Gender. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Diel, Paul. Symbolism in Greek Mythology: Human Desire and Its Transformations. Trans. Vincent Stuart, Micheline Stuart, and Rebecca Folkman. Boulder: Shambala, 1980.

Detjens, Wilma Else. Home as Creation: The Influence of Early Childhood Experience in the Literary Creation of Gabriel García Márquez, Agustín Yañez, and Juan Luis Rulfo. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.

Deveny, John J. Jr. "Women and Society in One Hundred Years of Solitude." Journal of Popular Culture 40.4 (Winter 1986-1987): 297-307.

Dore, Elizabeth, ed. Gender Politics in Latin America: Debates on Theory and Practice. NY: Monthly Review Press, 1997.

— and Maxine Molyneux, eds. Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.

Downing, Christine. The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine. New York: Continuum, 1996.

Duncan, Carol. The Aesthetics of Power: Essays in Critical Art History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Dunn, Peter. Spanish Picaresque Fiction. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Esquivel, Laura. Como agua para chocolate: novela de entregas mensuales con recetas, amores y remedios caseros. México: Planeta, 1989.

Fagg, John Edwin. Latin American History. London: Macmillan, 1969.

Farrer, Claire, ed. Women and Folklore. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975.

Fernández-Braso, Miguel. La soledad de Gabriel García Márquez. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1972.

Ferré, Rosario. Sitio a Eros: Quince Ensayos Literarios. México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1986.

Fiddian, Robin, ed. Intro. García Márquez. London: Longman, 1995.

—. "A Prospective Post-Script: Apropos of Love in the Times of Cholera." García Márquez. London: Longman, 1995.

Foster, David William. Alternate Voices in the Contemporary Latin American Narrative. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1985.

Foucault, Michel. Foucault Reader. Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books,1984.

—. Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977. Ed. Colin Gordon. Trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, KateSoper. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.

Fox, Ruth. The Tangled Chain: The Structure of Disorder in the Anatomy of Melancholy. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976.

Franco, Jean. Plotting Women: Gender and Representation in Mexico. New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.

Friedman, Edward H. The Antiheroine's Voice. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987.

Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

—. Myth and Metaphor. Selected Essays, 1974-1988. Ed. Robert D Denham. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990.

Fuentes, Carlos. Tiempo mexicano. México: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, 1971.

García, Kay S. Broken Bars: New Perspectives from Mexican Women Writers. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994.

García Márquez, Gabriel. La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndida y de su abuela desalmada. 11th ed. Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1990.

George, Rodemary Marangoly, ed. Burning Down the House. Boulder: Westview Press, 1998.

Glenn, Kathleen M. "Postmodern Parody and Culinary-Narrative Art in Laura Esquivel's Como agua para chocolate." Chasqui 23.2 (Nov 1994): 39-47.

González, Aníbal. Journalism and the Development of Spanish American Narrative. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993

Gullón, Ricardo. García Márquez o el olvidado arte de contar. Madrid: Ediciones Taurus, 1973.

Hart, Patricia. Narrative Magic in the Fiction of Isabel Allende. London: Associated University Presses, 1989.

Hernández, Edgar A. "Hace Poniatowska homenaje a la ciencia." Reforma. México (6 March 2001): Online. Internet. 24 July 2001.

Heusser, Martin. "Interpretation Analyzed and Synthesized: Robert Burton's Methods of Controlling the Reader in The Anatomy of Melancholy." English Studies 1 (1989): 37-52.

Hodges, Devon L. Renaissance Fictions of Anatomy. Amherst: University of Massachusestts Press, 1985.

Höltgen, Karl Josef. "Literary Art and Scientific Method in Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy." Explorations in Renaissance Culture XVI (1990) 1-36.

Hood, Edward Waters. La ficción de Gabriel García Márquéz: repetición e intertextualidad. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.

Hutcheon, Linda. The Politics of Postmodernism. London: Routledge, 1989.

Ibsen, Katherine. "On Recipes, Reading and Revolution: Postboom Parody in Como agua para chocolate." Hispanic Review 63-2 (Spring 1995): 133-146.

Iftekharuddin, Farhat. "An Interview with Isabel Allende." Speaking of the Short Story: Interviews with Contemporary Writers. Eds. Farhat Iftekharuddin, Mary Rohrberger and Maurice Lee. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997.

Jaeck, Lois Marie. "The Incredibly Sad Tale of Eréndira: A New Look at Female Suppression." Canadian Review of Comparative Literature 20 (1993): 3-4.

Jain, Jasbir. "Innocent Eréndira: "The Reversal of a Fairy Tale." García Márquez and Latin America. Ed. Alok Bhalla. New York: Envoy, 1987.

Jones, Anny Brooksbank and Catherine Davies, eds. Latin American Women's Writing: Feminist Readings in Theory and Crisis. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

Jones, Steven Swann. "The Structure of Snow White." Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm. Ed. Ruth B. Bottigheimer. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986.

Jörgensen, Beth E. The Writings of Elena Poniatowska: Engaging Dialogues. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994.

Kaler, Anne K. The Picara: From Hera to Fantasy Heroine. Bowling Green: State University Popular Press, 1991.

Kaminsky, Amy. Reading the Body Politic: Feminist Criticism and Latin American Women Writers. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

Kerr, Lucille. "Gestures of Authorship: Lying to Tell the Truth in Elena Poniatowska's Hasta no verte Jesús mío." Modern Language Notes 106 (1991) 370-94.

Koene, Jacoba. "Entre la realidad y la ficción: la parodia como arma de subversión en 'Tosca' de Isabel Allende." Romance Notes XXXVIII, 3 (Spring 1998): 263- 270.

Kulin, Katalin. Creación mítica en la obra de García Márquez. Budapest: Editorial de la Academia de Ciencias de Hungría, 1980.

Kushigian, Julia A. "Transgresión de la autobiografía y el bildungsroman in Hasta no verte Jesús mío." Revista Iberoamericana 140 (July-Sept 1987): 667-677.

Leonardi, Susan J. "Recipes for Reading: Summer Pasta, Lobster à la Risholme, and Key Lime Pie." PMLA 104.3 (1989): 340-47.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. The View from Afar. Trans. Joachim Neugroschel and Phoebe Hoss. New York: Basic Books, 1985.

Little, Christopher. "Eréndira in the Middle Ages: The Medievalness of Gabriel García Márquez." García Márquez. Ed. Robin Fiddian. New York: Longman Press, 1995.

López, Kimberle S. "Internal Colonialism in the Testimonial Process: Elena Poniatowska's Hasta no verte Jesús mío." Symposium 52.1 (1998) 21-40.

López de Martínez, Adelaida. "El neorrealismo de Gabriel García Márquez." En el punto de mira: Gabriel García Márquez. Ed. Ana María Hernández de López. Madrid: Editorial Pliegos, 1985.

Lutes, Leasa Y. Allende, Buitrago, Luiselli: aproximaciones teóricas al concepto del "Bildungsroman" femenino. New York: Peter Lang, 2000.

Lüthi, Max. The Fairy Tale as Art Form and Portrait of Man. Trans. Jon Erickson. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

Maciel, Nahuel. Gabriel García Márquez: elogio de la utopia. Una entrevista de Nahuel Maciel. Buenos Aires: El Cronista Ediciones, 1992.

Magnarelli, Sharon. The Lost Rib: Female Characters in the Spanish-American Novel. London: Associated AP, 1985.

Marting, Diane E. The Sexual Woman in Latin American Literature: Dangerous Desires. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001.

McNerny, Kathleen. Understanding Gabriel García Márquez. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989.

Melhuus, Marit and Kristi Anne Stølen, eds. Machos, Mistresses, Madonnas: Contesting the Power of Latin American Gender Imagery. London: Verso, 1996.

Méndez, José Luis. "La dialética del amo y el esclavo en 'La cándida Eréndira' de Gabriel García Márquez." La Torre 1.1 (1987): 59-68.

Mendoza, Plinio Apuleyo. Gabriel García Márquez. El olor de la guayaba. Conversaciones con Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza. Barcelona: Editorial Bruguera, 1982.

Meyer, Doris. "Dialogics of Testimony." Latin American Women's Writing: Feminist Readings in Theory and Crisis. Eds. Anny Brooksbank Jones and Catherine Davies. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

Millington, Mark. "Aspects of Narrative Structure in 'The Incredible and Sad Story of the Innocent Eréndira and Her Heartless Grandmother.'" Gabriel García Márquez: New Readings. Eds. Bernard McGuirk and Richard Caldwell. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.

Molloy, Sylvia. At Face Value: Autobiographical Writing in Spanish America. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Molyneux, Maxine. "Twentieth-Century State Formations in Latin America." Hidden Histories of Gender and State in Latin American. Eds. Elizabeth Dore and Maxine Molyneux. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.

Montejo, Esteban. The Autobiography of a Runaway Slave. Trans. Jocasta Innes. Ed. Miguel Barnet. New York: Pantheon Books, 1968.

Morgan, Janice and Colette T. Hall, eds. Redefining Autobiography in Twentieth-Century Women's Fiction: an Essay Collection. New York: Garland, 1991.

Mottram, Eric. "Existential and Political Controls in the Fiction of Gabriel García Márquez." García Márquez and Latin America. Ed. Alok Bhalla. New York: Envoy Press, 1987.

Murnaghan, Sheila. "The Plan of Athena." The Distaff Side: Representing the Female in Homer's Odyssey. Ed. Beth Cohen. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Oberhelman, Harley D. Gabriel Garcia Marquez: a Study of the Short Fiction. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991.

Ong, Walter J. Orality and literacy: The Technologizing of the Word. London: Routledge, 1982.

Ovid. Metamorphoses. Trans. A. D. Melville. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Palencia-Roth, Michael. Gabriel García Márquez. La línea, el círculo y la metamórfosis del mito. Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1983.

Paz, Octavio. El laberinto de la soledad. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica,1990 [orig. 1950].

—. The Other Mexico: Critique of the Pyramid. Trans. Lysander Kemp. New York: Grove Press, 1972.

Peavler, Terry J. Individuations: The Novel as Dissent. London: University Press of America, 1987.

Pérez de Mendiola, Marina. Gender and Identity Formation in Contemporary Mexican Literature. New York: Garland Publishing, 1998.

Perricone, Catherine R. "Genre and Metarealism in Allende's Paula." Hispania 81 (March, 1998): 42-49.

Plato. Republic. Trans. G.M.A. Grube. Rev. C.D.C. Reeve. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992.

Poniatowska, Elena. Hasta no verte Jesús mío. México: Ediciones Era, 1998.

—. Here's to You, Jesusa. 34th ed. Trans. Deanna Heikkinen. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001.

—. Public Lecture. University of Oklahoma. Norman, Oklahoma. 11 Nov. 1998.

— and Patricia Elena González. "Testimonio de una escritora: Elena Poniatowska en micrófono." La sartén por el mango. Ed. Patricia Elena González and Eliana Ortega. Rio Piedras: Huracán, 1984.

Propp, Vladamir. "Fairy Tale Transformations." Modern Genre Theory. Ed. David Duff. Harlow: Longman, 2000.

—. Morphology of the Folk Tale. Trans. Laurence Scott. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968.

—. Theory and History of Folklore. Trans. Ariadna Y. Martin and Richard P. Martin. Ed. Anatoly Liberman. Theory and History of Literature. 5 Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Rabassa, Gregory. "García Márquez's New Book: Literature or Journalism?" World Literature Today 56.1 (1982): 48-51.

Rabuzzi, Kathryn Allen. The Sacred and the Feminine: Toward a Theology of Housework. New York: Seabury, 1982.

Radner, Joan Newlon, ed. Feminist Messages: Coding in Women's Folk Cultures. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993.

Rama, Ángel. "A Chronicler of American Violence." García Márquez. Ed. Robin Fiddian. New York: Longman, 1995.

Redclift, Nanneke. "Post Binary Bliss." Gender Politics in Latin America: Debates in Theory and Practice. Ed. Elizabeth Dore. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997.

Rico, Francisco. The Spanish Picaresque Novel and the Point of View. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Rodden, John, ed. Conversations with Isabel Allende. Trans. John Rodden and Virginia Invernizzi. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999.

Rodríguez-Luis, Julio. El enfoque documental en la narrativa hispanoamericana: estudio taxonómico. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1997.

Roof, María. "Maryse Conde and Isabel Allende: Family Saga Novels." World Literature Today 70.2 (1996 Spring): 283-288.

Rowe, Karen E. "To Spin a Yarn: The Female Voice in Folklore and Fairy Tale." Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm. Ed. Ruth B. Bottigheimer. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986.

Röhrich, Lutz. Intro. Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm. Ed. Ruth B. Bottigheimer. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986.

—. Folktales and Reality. Trans. Peter Tokofsky. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1991.

Rose, Margaret. Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-Modern. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

—. Parody/Meta-Fiction. London: Croom Helm, 1979.

Rutherford, John. Mexican Society during the Revolution: a Literary Approach. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

Salas, Elizabeth. *Soldadera* in the Mexican Military: Myth and History. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990.

Saltz, Joanne. "Laura Esquivel's Como agua para chocolate: The Questioning of Literary and Social Limits." Chasqui. 24.1 (1995): 30-37.

Schaefer, Claudia. Textured Lives: Women, Art, and Representation in Modern Mexico. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1992.

Shaw, Bradley A. and Nora Vera-Godwin, eds. Critical Perspectives on Gabriel Garciá Márquez. Lincoln: Society of Spanish and Spanish American Studies, 1986.

Shaw, Donald L. The Post-Boom in Spanish American Fiction. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998.

Showalter, Elaine. "Toward a Feminist Poetics." The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory. New York: Pantheon, 1985.

Simmel, Georg. On Women, Sexuality, and Love. Trans. and Intro. Guy Oakes. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.

Sklodowska, Elzbieta. La parodia en la nueva novela hispanoamericana (1960-1985). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1992.

—. Testimonio Hispano-Americano: historia, teoría, poética. New York: Peter Lang, 1992.

Smith, Sidonie. A Poetics of Women's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Sommer, Doris. Proceed with Caution, When Engaged by Minority Writing in the Americas. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.

—. "Taking a Life: Hot Pursuit and Cold Rewards in a Mexican Testimonial Novel." Signs 20 (1995): 913-40.

Soto, Shirlene. Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman: Her Participation in Revolution and Struggle for Equality, 1910-1940. Denver: Darden Press, 1990.

Spiller, Elizabeth A. "Searching for the Route of Inventions: Retracing the Renaissance Discovery Narrative in Gabriel García Márquez." Clio 28.4 (Summer 1999): 375-398.

Stavans, Ilan. "Revolution in Camera." Rev. of Tinísima, by Elena Poniatowska. Nation 263.13 1996: 52-54.

Steele, Cynthia. Politics, Gender, and the Mexican Novel, 1968-1988. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992.

Stone, Kaye F. "Feminist Approaches to the Interpretation of Fairy Tales." Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm. Ed. Ruth B. Bottigheimer. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986.

Swanson, Phillip. The New Novel in Latin America: Politics and Popular Culture after the Boom. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995.

Todorov, Tzvetan. The Fantastic, a Structural Approach to Literature. Trans. Richard Howard. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975.

—. "The Origins of Genres." Modern Genre Theory. Ed. David Duff. Harlow: Longman, 2000.

Tolkien, John Rohald Reuel. The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984.

Tynayanov, Yury. "The Literary Fact." Modern Genre Theory. Ed. David Duff. Harlow: Longman, 2000.

Valdés, María Elena de. "One Hundred Years of Solitude in Women's Studies Courses." Approaches to Teaching García Márquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1990.

—. The Shattered Mirror: Representation of Women in Mexican Literature. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998.

—. "Verbal and Visual Representations of Women: Como agua para chocolate/Like Water for Chocolate." World Literature Today 69.1 (1995) 78-82.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. "Amadís en América." García Márquez. Ed. Robin Fiddian. New York: Longman, 1995.

—. "García Márquez: From Aracataca to Macondo." Modern Critical Views: Gabriel García Márquez. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House, 1999.

—. García Márquez: Historia de un deicidio. Barcelona: Monte Avila Editores, 1971.

—. La verdad de las mentiras: ensayos sobre la literatura. Barcelona: Editorial Seix Barral, 1990.

Varley, Ann. "Women and the Home in Mexican Family Law." Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America. Eds. Elizabeth Dore and Maxine Molyneux. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.

Vera León, Antonio. "Hacer hablar: La transcripción testimonial." RCLL 18 (1992): 181-99.

Williams, Raymond L. "The Autumn of the Patriarch." Modern Critical Views: Gabriel García Márquez. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House, 1999.

—. Gabriel García Márquez. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984.

Youngkin, Betty R. The Contributions of Walter J. Ong to the Study of Rhetoric: History and Metaphor. Lewiston: Mellen University Press, 1995.

Zipes, Jack. Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979.

—. "The Liberating Potential of the Fantastic Projection in Fairy Tales for Children." The Scope of the Fantastic—Culture, Biography, Themes, Children's Literature. Eds. Robert A. Collins and Howard D. Pearce. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1980.

—. "Marxists and the Illumination of Folk and Fairy Tales." Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm. Ed. Ruth B. Bottigheimer. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986.

— When Dreams Come True: Classical Fairy Tales and Their Tradition. New York: Routledge, 1999.