Disinherited Trauma in Adelaida García Morales's *El Sur*

Abstract

Adelaida García Morales's *El Sur* (1985) was written two decades before the surge of public interest in collective memories of the Spanish civil war and Franco's dictatorship at the turn of the twenty-first century. The novella has attracted a good deal of critical attention in the years since its publication, but most scholars have focused on the incestuous family drama at the centre of the work and addressed its allusions to post-war Spain only as a secondary feature. This article revisits *El Sur* with the aim of illustrating how its author anticipates the concerns of the memory movement that emerged two decades after its composition. Of particular interest is García Morales's prescient and nuanced representation of the intergenerational transmission of trauma. Thus while the novella dramatizes the potential for psychological damage in the second generation of the civil war, it illustrates the coping mechanisms that can mitigate the impact of parental trauma. *El Sur* resists the psychosocial determinism that the idea of communal trauma often entails and as a result makes a valuable contribution to the historical memory debates that came to prominence in the decades after its publication.

Keywords: intergenerational transmission of trauma; Spanish civil war; Republicans; Francoism

The works of literature and film typically associated with Spain's memory boom date from the past couple of decades. Artistic representations of the Spanish civil war and Franco's dictatorship have evidently been around much longer. But the turn of the twenty-first century is seen as a watershed in Spanish cultural memory. The return to power of the right in 1996 after a decade and half of Socialist governance coincided with the sixtieth anniversary of the outbreak of the civil war and kindled a progressively self-conscious historical gaze in Spanish society. The country's vaunted transition to democracy and particularly its 1977 amnesty law looked

increasingly anomalous at a time when one of its own judges, Baltasar Garzón, had ordered the arrest of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet for human rights violations. By 2000, the foundation of the Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica, an organized movement to disinter the remains of Republicans buried in unmarked graves, was characteristic of a growing appetite for revisiting the legacy of war and dictatorship in a country that had resolved to put the turbulent past behind it following Franco's death a quarter of a century earlier.[1] Spanish novelists and filmmakers were glad to satisfy the burgeoning public interest in the country's history, and the works they produced were soon among the most conspicuous manifestations of the memory movement. The surge of interest in collective memories of the

[1] The canonical account of Spain's transition to democracy and of the ways in which the consensus politics of the period were shaped by collective memories of the civil war is Paloma Aguilar, *Memory and Amnesia: The Role of the Spanish Civil War in the Transition to Democracy*, trans. Mark Oakley (New York: Berghahn, 2002). A key text for understanding the genesis of Spain's transition, from the early proposals for mediation during the civil war to the political negotiations and social movements that culminated in the 1978 constitution, as well as the shifting interpretations of the transition following the attempted coup of 1981, the 1996 election of the Partido Popular, and the popular *indignado* protests beginning in May 2011 is Santos Juliá, *Transición: Historia de una política española (1937–2017)* (Barcelona: Galaxia Gutenberg, 2017). For an analysis of Spain's model of late transitional justice, which began after the transition proper, picking up pace at the turn of the twenty-first century and culminating in the 2007 historical memory legislation, see Josep M. Tamarit Sumalla, *Historical Memory and Criminal Justice in Spain: A Case of Late Transitional Justice* (Cambridge: Intersentia, 2013). Alison Ribeiro de Menezes's *Embodying Memory in Contemporary Spain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) surveys the various textual and visual manifestations of Spain's rapidly expanding memory culture from around 1998 to the time of her book's publication.

civil war and Franco's dictatorship in the twenty-first century was considered unprecedented precisely because of the comparative lack of public interest in those same memories in the preceding decades. The artistic output of Spain's hedonistic *movida* years that came in the aftermath of the country's transition to democracy is not typically associated with memory. The 1980s and 1990s were marked by a cult of the present, as Spanish society continued at breakneck speed its liberalizing transformation set in motion during the 1960s.[2] The postmodernist cultural vogue seemed the perfect companion for the processes of political and economic modernization, and for a time it seemed that the politically led *pacto del olvido* was a social reality as well.[3] However, there were Spanish artists who cultivated an interest in memory during the 1980s, as incongruous as their works might seem against the brash hypermodernity

[2] For an analysis of Spanish cultural production in the decades immediately following the transition, see Cristina Moreiras Menor, *Cultura herida: Literatura y cine en la España democrática* (Madrid: Libertarias, 2002). Moreiras Menor argues that the memory of Francoism was repressed in 1980s Spain by a generation of young urbanites driven by consumerism and their faith in the market economy. Spanish culture of the period was characterized by exhibitionism and by a determination to be at the cutting edge of European modernity, an ambition that found expression in experimentation with drugs and casual sex and a fascination with popular culture, *Cultura herida*, 63–66.

[3] The extent to which the past was forgotten or silenced during Spain's transition is hotly disputed. Santos Juliá regards the equation of amnesty with amnesia as intrinsic to the wider project of discrediting the transition. According to Juliá, the idea that the transition was neglectful of the past, flawed, and undemocratic—a view that rose to prominence among the *indignados* and the new political movements galvanized by their protests—originated in the increasing political instrumentalization of the transition by the opposition during the Partido Popular's second term in office (2000–2004). See Juliá, *Transición*, pp. 564–65.

of the period.[4] Their works have been overshadowed by the more sustained and readily discernible concern with the civil war and Franco's dictatorship found in the works of the more recent memory boom. But in some of these earlier works the treatment of the legacy of Spain's violent past is more aesthetically accomplished and has greater ethical purchase, owing in part to the subtlety with which this past is addressed.

In her survey of literary and filmic treatment of the Spanish civil war since the transition to democracy, Jo Labanyi registers a gradual shift away from allusiveness and evocation toward more heavy-handed representational techniques. Labanyi differentiates between, on one hand, the films and literary works that use the trope of haunting to represent the Spanish civil war and its repressive aftermath and, on the other, the realistic, documentary style of representation that has predominated since the late 1990s. This first group of literary and cinematic works includes milestones such as Víctor Erice's *El espíritu de la colmena* (1973), Carlos Saura's *Cría cuervos* (1975), Julio Llamazares's *Luna de lobos* (1985), Antonio Muñoz Molina's *Beatus Ille* (1986), Manuel Rivas's *O lapis do carpinteiro* (1998), and Guillermo del Toro's *El espinazo del diablo* (2001). Labanyi argues that the trope of haunting used in these earlier works creates a very different effect from more recent realist works that seek to transport readers and spectators back to the past. Whereas the trope of haunting emphasizes the enduring consequences of historical violence in the present, the realist mode generates a feeling of

[4] Notable precursors of the twenty-first century memory boom include Julio Llamazares's *Luna de lobos* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1985) and Antonio Muñoz Molina's *Beatus Ille* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1986). The artistic seeds of recent memory literature in Spain were evidently sown much earlier: Franco's death enabled the publication of autobiographical works by exiles, such as Jorge Semprún, and by others, such as Carmen Martín Gaite, for whom momentous political and social change prompted a retrospective gaze. Works by Max Aub, Arturo Barea, Ramón J. Sender, and Francisco Ayala, which had been censored under Franco, captivated an avid audience in Spain from the 1980s.

rupture with the past: 'The attention to verisimilitude has the effect of reinforcing the difference of the past from the present, with the result that, at the end of the reading or viewing process, we feel a sense of relief on returning to a present free from such barbarism'.[5] Some of the earlier artistic endeavours to conjure up Spain's past show greater aesthetic sophistication in their concern with the effects of the past on individuals in the present. This sensitivity to subjective memory and experience contrasts sharply with a more recent aspiration to recover the past through the narrative reconstruction of historical events. While the memory boom of the turn of the last century has invested the past with unprecedented prominence in the public sphere, there is much to be learned from earlier pioneers of the genre.

This article revisits *El Sur*, a novella by Adelaida García Morales published in 1985, with the aim of illustrating how its author anticipates some of the concerns of the memory movement that emerged two decades after its composition.[6] Of particular interest is García

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[5] Jo Labanyi, 'Memory and Modernity in Democratic Spain: The Difficulty of Coming to Terms with the Spanish Civil War', *Poetics Today*, 28:1 (2007), 89–116 (p. 103).

[6] Adelaida García Morales, *El Sur*, in *'El Sur', seguido de 'Bene'* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1985), 5–52. All references to *El Sur* correspond to this edition and are given in the main text of the article. *El Sur* was written in 1981 and published in 1985 in a collection that included a second novella, *Bene*. *El Sur* appeared after the 1983 release of a film version of the same name directed by Víctor Erice, to whom García Morales was married at the time. The film version has received a good deal of critical attention and has been studied in conjunction with the novella. See, for example, Malcolm Alan Compitello, 'Making *El Sur*', *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, 46:1 (1993), 73–86; Kathleen M. Glenn, 'Gothic Vision in García Morales and Erice's *El Sur*', *Letras peninsulares*, 7:1 (1994), 239–50; Clare Nimmo, 'García Morales's and Erice's *El Sur*: Viewpoint and Closure', *Romance Studies*, 13:2 (1995), 41–49; Concha Alborg, 'El Sur, novela y película: Dos versiones de un mismo conflicto', *Anuario de cine y literatura en español*, vol. 3 (1997), 15–24.

Morales's representation of the intergenerational transmission of trauma, an area of study that has received substantial attention from sociologists and cultural historians eager to explain the belated nature of Spaniards' recent preoccupation with their country's past. *El Sur* is ahead of its time not merely because of its engagement with intergenerational trauma but because of its nuanced treatment of the topic. García Morales rejects the psychosocial determinism that the idea of communal trauma often entails and shows her narrator-protagonist's liberation from a damaging upbringing. While *El Sur* dramatizes the potential for psychological damage in the second generation of the civil war, at the same time it shows that this damage is not unavoidable and points to the coping mechanisms that can mitigate the impact of parental trauma. At a time when much recent literature on the Spanish civil war and its continuing repercussions in society is imbued with a certain fatalism, García Morales's novella offers a refreshingly optimistic perspective.

It is important not to make too exaggerated a claim for García Morales's precociousness as novelist of historical memory. Indeed the very optimism *El Sur* embodies in its depiction of the surmountable psychological impact of inherited trauma is at least partially attributable to prevailing attitudes in the period the novella was written.[7] Recent work in sociology has shown

[7] Labanyi makes a similar point with regard to the difference between first and second-generation perspectives, which she argues helps to explain the opposing attitudes toward the past conveyed by Saura's *Cría cuervos* (1976) and Erice's *El espíritu de la colmena* (1973). Although both films use the trope of haunting to tackle the legacy of the Spanish civil war, the ending of Saura's film sees its protagonist liberated from trauma and prepared to leave the past behind, whereas the protagonist of Erice's film refuses to disremember the horror she has witnessed. Labanyi argues that Saura's having lived through the war as a child makes it more difficult for him to confront the past, whereas Erice, who was born after it, is able to probe the war and its continuing legacy without resorting to the comfort of a happy ending. See Labanyi, 'Memory and Modernity', 97–99.

how generational change helps to explain shifting social attitudes toward the memory of the victims of Francoism. It was the generation after García Morales's that was instrumental in bringing the issue of Republican victimhood to the centre of public debate at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The grandchildren of the civil war were not paralysed by the same fear as their grandparents, who had fought in the war and lost, nor were they held back by the scruples of their parents, who presided over the transition and were concerned ultimately with the stability of the fledgling democracy.[8] The absence of any overt vindication of Republican victimhood in *El Sur* means the novella stays in step with the gingerly pace of political reform during the transition. Its author was a member of the second generation of the war after all, as is the protagonist and narrator of García Morales's loosely autobiographical novella.[9] According to sociologists, the second generation was preoccupied above all with overcoming the civil war using a strategy of avoidance, hence the apparent lack of interest in the war during the two decades following the transition.[10] And yet García Morales's text conveys, at the same time, a

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[8] Paloma Aguilar and Clara Ramírez-Barat, 'Generational Dynamics in Spain: Memory Transmission of a Turbulent Past', *Memory Studies*, 12:2 (2019), 213–29, (p. 216).

[9] García Morales alleges the autobiographical nature of *El Sur* in an interview with Itzíar de Francisco, 'Adelaida García Morales: "La mujer es la reserva de la vida. El hombre ha jugado su partida con la existencia y la ha perdido" ', *El Cultural*, 17 January 2001, paragraph 2 of 29; available at <https://www.elcultural.com/revista/letras/Adelaida-Garcia-Morales/13341> (accessed 9 June 2019). On the autobiographical aspects of García Morales's works, see Elizabeth Ordóñez, 'Writing Ambiguity and Desire: The Works of Adelaida García Morales', in *Women Writers of Contemporary Spain: Exiles in the Homeland*, ed. Joan L. Brown (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991), 258–77 and Lourdes Albuixech, 'Recurring Themes and Techniques in Adelaida García Morales' Narrative', *Hispanófila*, no. 151 (September 2008), 93–103 (p. 99).

[10] Aguilar and Ramírez-Barat, 'Generational Dynamics', 218.

palpable unease with the Zeitgeist of the transition. This unease is expressed through allusions to the impact of the civil war on the protagonist's parents and through the suggestion that their trauma has repercussions for the protagonist herself. A fully formed understanding of the role of inherited political identity and transgenerational trauma in Spanish society was still some way off at the time García Morales was writing.[11] Nevertheless, it is the inchoate suggestion of these psychosocial phenomena that gives *El Sur* the lightness of touch that is necessary to ask difficult questions about how children respond to their parents' trauma. The conscientiousness with which García Morales attends to the legacy of the Spanish civil war and Franco's dictatorship is derived in part from the ambiguity and lack of dogmatism with which she addresses the question of inherited trauma. Indeed it is the very subtlety of her treatment of the theme that has meant it has largely escaped the attention of her critics. While interpretations of the novella have focused primarily on the incestuous family drama at the centre of the work and considered the allusions to post-war Spain only as a secondary feature, this article argues for the relevance of García Morales's text as a contemporary work of historical memory that speaks to the memory debates that came to prominence in the decades after its publication.[12]

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[11] For an empirical analysis of transgenerational trauma, particularly in the third generation of the civil war, see Clara Valverde and Luis Martín-Cabrera, 'The Silence of the Grandchildren of the Civil War: Transgenerational Trauma in Spain', in *The Ethics of Remembering and the Consequences of Forgetting: Essays on Trauma, History, and Memory*, ed. Michael O'Loughlin (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 203–27. On the link between war-related trauma and the inheritance of political identities across generations, see Laia Balcells, 'The Consequences of Victimization on Political Identities: Evidence from Spain', *Politics & Society*, 40:3 (2012), 311–47.

[12] Among the interpretations of *El Sur* more sensitive to the socio-historical allusions are those of Barbara Morris, 'Father, Death and the Feminine: The Writer's "Subject" in Adelaida García Morales' *El Sur*', *Romance Languages Annual*, vol. 1 (1989), 559–64 (p. 560), Akiko Tsuchiya,

On the surface, *El Sur* relates a disturbing family drama. The novella follows the protagonist Adriana's development from childhood to adolescence, with a particular focus on her unsettling relationship with her father. Events are filtered through the protagonist's perspective at these early stages in her life, with the result that readers are given a partial and disjointed picture of an abusive upbringing. Adriana is subject to the neglect of her mother and the emotional and possibly sexual abuse of her father.[13] Her psychosocial development is stunted by her father's determination to prevent her from attending school and by the isolation he imposes on the family. Her parents' volatile marriage, her father's depression and mother's lack of warmth are dark clouds hanging over these childhood memories, to which the older Adriana returns with the aim of salvaging some meaning that might be useful in her present. We know that some time has passed since the adolescent Adriana resolved to put her troubled childhood behind her by moving with her mother to the north of Spain. The novella opens with

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'Family Plots and Romances: Discourses of Desire in Adelaida García Morales' Narrative Fiction', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 76:1 (1999), 91–108, Montserrat Lunati, 'Breaking Silences, Dealing with the Past: *El sur*, by Adelaida García Morales (1985) and Víctor Erice (1983)', in *Spanish Film, Theatre and Literature in the Twentieth Century: Essays in Honour of Derek Gagen*, ed. David George and John London (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), 283–308, and Miaowei Weng, '"Franco's Children": Childhood Memory As National Allegory', in *Childhood and Nation: Interdisciplinary Engagements*, ed. Zsuzsa Millei and Robert Imre (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 53–71.

[13] For a reading of *El Sur* that draws out the incestuous nature of Adriana's relationship with her father, see Elizabeth Ordóñez, 'Beyond the Father: Desire and Transgression in the Narrative of Adelaida García Morales', in *Voices of Their Own: Contemporary Spanish Narrative by Women* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1991), 174–92 and Abigail Lee Six, ' "Confusa la historia y clara la pena": The Child's Perspective in *El Sur* and *Bene*, by Adelaida García Morales', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 49:2 (2013), 184–91.

an unmaintained grave, overrun with vegetation and visited by none. The preterite tense allows us to intuit the vast expanse of intervening years separating the now of Adriana's present from the then of her adolescence, cut short by her father's suicide, about which the reader learns toward the end of the novella:

> Mañana, en cuanto amanezca, iré a visitar tu tumba, papá. Me han dicho que la hierba crece salvaje entre sus grietas y que jamás lucen flores frescas sobre ella. Nadie te visita. Mamá se marchó a su tierra y tú no tenías amigos. Decían que eras tan raro... Pero a mí nunca me extrañó. Pensaba entonces que tú eras un mago y que los magos eran siempre grandes solitarios. (5)

The novella is framed by the father's life, from Adriana's earliest memories of his magical qualities and supernatural talent in divination to the moment of his suicide in the final pages of *El Sur.* Adriana's father is the addressee of these recollections, and his personality and life are focal points around which Adriana articulates the story of her development. The final pages of the novella are a postscript to her father's life in which Adriana relates a few days spent in Seville following his death. In Seville Adriana pieces together the dark secrets of her father's double life. She meets her father's former lover and discovers she has a half-brother. The act of unearthing her father's hidden life gives her some closure and she leaves Seville to follow her mother to Santander.

Malcolm Alan Compitello observes that *El Sur* shares some of the characteristics of memory writing under Franco.[14] A salient feature of the memory genre in Spain is the discrete identity of narrator and protagonist, two iterations of the same narrative persona situated at distinct moments in time. As the narrative progresses, there is a gradual telescoping of these identities, and the protagonist eventually becomes the narrator of the book we are reading.[15]

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[14] Compitello, 'Making *El Sur*', 76.

[15] On the distinct narrative perspectives embodied by protagonist and narrator and on the heuristic structure of Spanish memory writing, see Samuel O'Donoghue, *Rewriting Franco's*

García Morales makes use of this formal and thematic device of distinct narrative selves by using two different temporal perspectives to convey Adriana's story: the then of Adriana's childhood self and the now of her adult self. We see events mainly through the eyes of the protagonist—Adriana's child self—although the narrator—Adriana's adult self—makes frequent interpolations, often consisting of prolepses that anticipate information gleaned at a later time in the protagonist's life. In addition to these narratorial intrusions by an older and wiser Adriana, the adult narrator appears twice: once at the beginning of the novella in the passage already quoted, in which she resolves to visit her father's grave, and once at the end of the novella in which she explores her abandoned family home by torchlight, vowing never again to return:

> Mañana abandonaré para siempre esta casa, convertida ya, para mí, en un lugar extraño. Ahora no hay luz eléctrica y, desde una oscura desolación, van apareciendo, en el círculo luminoso de mi linterna, los objetos abandonados que la habitan: un tablero de ajedrez, sillones de terciopelo, rincones vacíos, cuadros, lámparas apagadas, postigos cerrados, desconchados en las paredes... Son objetos indiferentes que ya no pertenecen a ninguna vida. Toda la casa aparece envuelta en el mismo aliento de muerte que tú dejaste. Y en este escenario fantasmal de nuestra vida en común, ha sobrevivido tu silencio y también, para mi desgracia, aquella separación última entre tú y yo que, con tu muerte, se ha hecho insalvable y eterna. (52)

Spain: Marcel Proust and the Dissident Novelists of Memory (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2018), 11. Epicteto José Díaz also underscores the structural significance of the distinct temporal frames in *El Sur* and their role in charting Adriana's development, on the basis of which Díaz classifies the novella as a Bildungsroman. See Epicteto José Díaz, 'Imágenes de la soledad en *El Sur* y *Bene* de Adelaida García Morales', *Revista de Literatura*, 70:1 (2008), 223–37 (p. 224).

In both instances the return to the narrator's present is marked by the use of the adverb 'mañana'. We imagine an older Adriana who returns to the site of her childhood home to visit her father's grave and uses the pilgrimage as an opportunity to travel back in time psychically as well as physically. The text of the novella, an impassioned and sometimes bitter apostrophe to her dead father, arises as a by-product of the journey back to the village where she was brought up. The experience of travelling back seems to have achieved its desired effect, as the older Adriana appears able finally to lay this disturbing past to rest. But the burden that Adriana is ready to leave behind at the end of her narrative is not simply that of her fractured childhood. While Adriana's familial tragedy is the immediate focus of the novella, there are also suggestions interspersed throughout the text that Adriana's individual past has been determined by her country's collective fate.

An ambiance of post-war deprivation is conjured by a series of oblique references from the opening of García Morales's narrative. It is suggested the family itself enjoys a privileged socioeconomic status. Adriana and her parents live in large house in a rural area and are able to keep a servant. They are even in a position to offer protection to the mother's friend Josefa whose tragic backstory is the first of many intimations of the acute suffering endured by many in post-war Spanish society. Dressed in perpetual mourning and described by Adriana's mother as a saint (5), the fanatical Josefa is representative of the ultraconservative Catholic revival that set the moral tenor of Spanish society in the 1940s and 1950s. Josefa seeks refuge with Adriana's family after having been beaten and forced into prostitution by her alcoholic husband. As the voice of moral rectitude and the authority on religious matters in Adriana's household, Josefa is a role model of socially desirable feminine behaviour. Her unshakable faith in spite of the trials that have befallen her make her a real-life martyr and a counterpart to the mythical figure of Joan of Arc, who plays a role in Adriana's childhood fantasies. Thousands of Spanish women resorted to prostitution to make a living during the desperate years of the post-war period. Barcelona had 104 licensed brothels in the 1940s and Madrid was recorded as having 20,000 prostitutes. Casual sex work existed alongside the legally approved brothels, which were

recognized by the state until 1956.[16] Josefa's tale of domestic abuse and enforced prostitution rings true as a representative anecdote of the misery inflicted on the impoverished population of post-war Spain.

The civil war is mentioned explicitly only once in the novella, in a passing reference to Adriana's mother's frustrated vocation as a teacher: 'Quizás aquella [la enseñanza] fuera su vocación, pero, como habían invalidado su título de maestra en la guerra, no podía ejercer más que conmigo' (8). The reprisals against schoolteachers suspected of harbouring Republican sympathies were particularly harsh both during the war and in the post-war period. Around a quarter of schoolteachers were disciplined by purging commissions. Punishments ranged from exclusion from management roles, compulsory retirement, and disciplinary proceedings, at the lighter end of the scale, to permanent barring from the profession, at the more extreme end. Roughly a third of those sanctioned by the purging commissions were permanently barred from teaching; another third were subject to compulsory relocation; and a sixth received a temporary suspension of employment and pay.[17] Women tended to fare better than men, in part owing to their more limited involvement in politics and also to the paternalism of the purging commissions. But the purging was often more ruthless in rural areas, where there was greater familiarity with the ideas and conduct of local schoolteachers.[18] Some 6,000 teachers suffered what would appear to be the fate of Adriana's mother and were forced out of the profession. Yet the narrator of *El Sur* dwells neither on the historical background of Nationalist reprisals against

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[16] Mary Vincent, *Spain 1833–2002: People and State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 174. See also Antonio Cazorla Sánchez on the rise of the clandestine sex trade as a result of post-war poverty, *Fear and Progress: Ordinary Lives in Franco's Spain, 1939–1975* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 64.

[17] Francisco Morente Valero, *La escuela y el Estado Nuevo: La depuración del magisterio nacional (1936–1943)* (Valladolid: Ámbito, 1997), 426.

[18] Morente Valero, *La escuela y el Estado Nuevo*, 427.

schoolteachers nor on the specific reasons for her mother's loss of her teaching license. The fact that Adriana's mother was subjected to a more punitive measure need not necessarily be down to the gravity of her offence. Francoist bureaucracy was renowned for its heavy handed and inconsistent decisions. Adriana's mother might have been tainted by association, victim of a haphazard sweep of practicing teachers in a 'red' area or of an anonymous denunciation. The uncertainty generated by the partial perspective of Adriana's child self produces an impression of state power as mysterious, arbitrary, and unjust. The experience of suddenly being barred from one's profession would undoubtedly have been invested with these very qualities. Adriana's mother does not display an ostensibly subversive attitude toward the regime, despite having good reason to do so, and it is thus reasonable to assume that she may be an innocent victim. Couched in the indeterminacy of her daughter's incomplete perspective, the mother's backstory remains an enigma. García Morales's use of such a perspective obliges readers to reckon with their own incomplete knowledge of the past, which is a far more authentic epistemic standpoint than the illusion of totality produced by an omniscient recreation of historical events in the realist mode.

Although the reasons for her mother's misfortune are open to speculation, Adriana does testify to her mother's intense unhappiness. The narrator thus refrains from documenting the historical events that precede her cognition, but she does illustrate the aftereffects of those events in the past she remembers. Trapped in an unhappy marriage and cloistered in an isolated rural home, Adriana's mother is prone to outbursts of rage and sorrow. The lack of options available to her results to some extent from legislative changes introduced under Franco. The reintroduction of the Civil Code of 1889, specifically article 321, meant that women were subject to the control of their fathers and husbands. Given that divorce was prohibited, Adriana's mother would have had scarce options for escaping her domineering husband. Her daily occupations also reflect the limited domestic sphere in women were expected to operate under the ultraconservative regime: 'Cuidaba el jardín, montaba en bicicleta, cosía o bordaba y leía muchísimo' (8). Although we are told that these very activities are those that she enjoys

most, Adriana's mother is evidently not entirely comfortable with the life of domesticity prescribed for women: 'Ella odiaba el trabajo de la casa' (8).

The background and life story of Adriana's father, Rafael, are even more mysterious than those of the mother, and it is this aura of mystery in which her father is enveloped that exercises a powerful magnetism on Adriana: 'Yo entonces no sabía nada de tu pasado. Nunca hablabas de ti mismo ni de los tuyos. Para mí eras un enigma, un ser especial que había llegado de otra tierra' (6). The narrator does not specify the 'pasado' about which she yearns to know or the identity of the 'tuyos' about which she wants to learn. We could read these vague referents simply as innocent allusions to Rafael's mysterious family background. But Adriana is not entirely in the dark about the different members of her father's family. Her aunt Delia, for example, pays visits to their secluded country home. In contrast, we learn next to nothing of the mother's side of Adriana's family. Similarly, it is unclear why Rafael's hometown of Seville should be regarded as a 'cuidad de leyenda' and 'escenario de un sueño' (6), when Santander, the birthplace of Adriana's mother, seems to be equally alien to Adriana. In the opening of the novella, Adriana describes her mother's move away from the family home after the suicide in terms that suggest some geographical distance: 'Mamá se marchó a su tierra' (5). The location of Adriana's childhood home is not given, but it seems improbable that it is in the north of Spain, as some critics have suggested.[19] The fact that neither Adriana nor her mother have been able to visit her father's grave suggests that her childhood village, where Rafael is buried, is some distance from Santander. It is true the title of the novella sets up a contrast between a fantastical south and an implicit northerly counterpart. Seville is invested with magical qualities in Adriana's imagination as a fairy-tale land where 'el sol parecía brillar con una luz diferente' (6). In Víctor Erice's film version, this contrast between the monotonous north where the protagonist lives and the idealized south is a major theme. Erice no doubt draws on his own background of growing up in San Sebastián as an inspiration for the north-south theme in the

[19] See Compitello, 'Making *El Sur*', 74 and Nimmo, 'García Morales's and Erice's El Sur', 42.

film.[20] But the contrast between Seville and the unnamed province where Adriana grows up is more understated in the novella. The disparity between urban and rural is far more significant in Adriana's isolated upbringing, and the fact that her aunt Delia frequently visits the family home, travelling from Seville often at short notice, such as upon news of Adriana's father's suicide (39), suggests that the city is not too far away. It seems more likely that the location of Adriana's childhood home is in neither the north nor the south but rather somewhere between the two: far enough away from Seville so that this geographical embodiment of 'the south' has a certain allure (but not too far away so as to make aunt Delia's visits impractical) and sufficiently distant from Santander to make visiting her father's grave unfeasible in the years that have passed since his death. It is possible that García Morales had somewhere in her native Extremadura in mind for the setting of the story.[21] The remote expanses of that region and the relatively minor status of even its largest cities might explain why a not too distant bustling hub of the size and fame of Seville would inspire awe in a young child. But Adriana idealizes Seville primarily because of the city's association with her father. The aura of mystery in which Seville is enveloped is the same aura that shrouds everything to do with her father.

It is possible that the attraction Adriana feels toward her father has its origins in some form of sordid intimacy instigated by Rafael during her childhood. Abigail Lee Six suspects the father and daughter's complicity in the secrets of divination is a metaphor for something darker. Six regards the father's divination prop, the pendulum, as 'obviously phallic', and Adriana's emotional and physiological alterations, together with the darkness and intimacy of the pendulum scenes (13), do lend some support to the idea of a sexually abusive relationship.[22] The

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[20] On Erice's self-confessed fascination with the south see José Agustín Mahieu, 'Víctor Erice', *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, no. 411 (September 1984), 85–96 (p. 93).

[21] *Bene*, the novella with which *El Sur* was published, is set in an isolated rural area, reminiscent of *El Sur*, and located in Extremadura.

[22] Six, 'Confusa la historia', 187.

other scenes on which interpretations of an abusive relationship tend to rest are Adriana's dream in which she expresses the desire to marry her father (33–34) and the scene in which her father strikes her when he discovers her in conversation with a young male companion (35). But there are a number of reasons to question readings of an incestuous relationship between Adriana and her father. First, the pendulum scenes ostensibly reveal Adriana's devotion to her father and her enthrallment with what appear to be supernatural abilities. It is difficult to find evidence of physical abuse in the text itself. Second, Adriana's dream does not necessarily instantiate an actual fantasy, nor does the dream imply that her feelings toward her father are reciprocated. The dream appears in the context of her expression of powerlessness when faced with her father's trauma and of her avowed inability to break down the communicative barriers separating them. Thus the dream is more likely an expression of her frustrated desire to connect emotionally with her father and to comprehend his suffering. Third, the violent reaction to Adriana's perceived transgression with a fellow adolescent is a reflection of the authoritarian parenting and ultraconservative social attitudes of the period. Rafael's violence is, moreover, consistent both with his ongoing mental deterioration and with his overprotective behaviour, which is increasingly combined with a feeling of detachment and irrelevance as Adriana grows up.

The answer to the question of why Adriana finds her father so mysterious must be sought elsewhere, and it seems to lurk behind the nature of that shadowy 'pasado' and the identity of those cryptic 'tuyos' (6). These hidden referents might very well allude to her father's affair. Adriana's discovery of Gloria Valle and her illegitimate half-brother certainly exercise a retrospective fascination on the child narrator who will later piece together the story of this hidden second life, but it is equally possible that the reference to her father's enigmatic background is an allusion to his political existence. The first intimation of Rafael's political background is the suggestion of his passionate atheism. We learn that Adriana's mother and Josefa regularly pray for him. Rafael's unhappiness could be relieved, says Josefa, were he to place his faith in God: 'La falta de fe es todo lo que le ocurre. Así sólo podrá ser un

desgraciado' (9). His distaste for religion causes him to exclude his daughter from school, despite the violent protestations of Adriana's mother (13). Although he is able to put aside his loathing of churches to attend Adriana's first communion, he does not take communion himself and expresses his nonconformity by arriving late in slovenly dress and by standing in the back row away from the others (22). Rafael makes no secret of his defiance of social norms, stirring a scandal in the local community that reaches the ears even of its youngest inhabitants (23). His marginalization is partly self-imposed; Rafael refuses to perform the simple social grace of greeting his wife's visitors (23). The way in which Adriana's father distances himself from other people, brooding in a dark, secluded room and declining to participate in the communal life of the family and neighbourhood, contributes to his special aura in Adriana's eyes. It is not simply his curious pendulum and association with the occult that elevates him in Adriana's opinion, but also his repudiation of the conventional mores and collective practices of wider society. He embodies 'una realidad muy diferente de aquella otra en la que se movían los demás' (10) and, from the point of view of Adriana's household and the local community, he is 'un ser extraño, diferente, al que se le sabía condenado, y por eso había que rezar para tratar de salvar al menos su alma' (16–17). Rafael's nonconformity and fierce atheism are suggestive of political disaffection in addition to social alienation. While García Morales does not spell out Rafael's Republican sympathies, she illustrates the tensions between the character and the socio-political institutions of his time. The fact that Rafael is able to practice as a French teacher at the local high school (7), whereas his wife is barred from teaching, might suggest either that he slipped through the net or apparently that he gave the regime no cause for concern. Although Rafael's past political allegiances are ambiguous, clearly he has been scarred by the recent civil conflict. His isolation, lack of communication, and depression are all consistent with an unresolved psychological disturbance, which will lead eventually to his suicide.

The subtlety with which García Morales weaves socio-political allusion into the family drama of Adriana's formative years means that the ultimate cause of Rafael's crisis and suicide is shrouded in ambiguity. It is probable that Rafael's rejection by his former lover, Gloria Valle,

is at least a contributory factor to his misery. But it is mistaken put too great an emphasis on Rafael's unhappy love life as a reason for his suicide, as some critics appear to do, encouraged perhaps by Erice's film adaptation, which draws a clearer link between Rafael's frustrated love and his suicide.[23] Adriana understands her father's affair cannot account entirely for the family's breakdown: 'Supe que en tu vida había existido otra mujer. Pero eso no me parecía a mí que tuviera tanta importancia como para provocar el cataclismo que se había declarado en casa' (25). And on the one occasion she confronts her father and asks him if Gloria Valle is the reason for his anguish, Rafael confesses that his suffering transcends any single cause: 'el sufrimiento peor es el que no tiene un motivo determinado. Viene de todas partes y de nada en particular. Es como si no tuviera rostro' (37). The faceless, unfathomable affliction described by Rafael is indicative of trauma, and Adriana's description of his 'sufrimiento sobrehumano e incomprensible' (9) points in the same direction. The idea that this trauma is rooted in Rafael's wartime experience can be inferred from Akiko Tsuchiya's astute observation that García Morales's works are 'psycho-political allegories of Spanish society in the wake of Francoism'.[24] Tsuchiya proposes that the claustrophobic space of Adriana's family drama is a microcosm of the insular post-war nation and that the violence of the civil war is not addressed candidly because it is repressed by the narrator:

> Adriana's private struggles symbolize the collective condition of the post-War generation, unwitting heirs to past atrocities, yet also unwitting participants in the silencing of those realities. The cultural unconscious becomes laden with new phantoms, as each individual must struggle with his or her role in the construction of an

[23] See Compitello, 'Making *El Sur*', 74 and Cristina Martínez-Carazo, '*El Sur*: De la palabra a la imagen', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 74:2 (1997), 187–96 (p. 193).

[24] Tsuchiya, 'Family Plots and Romances', 92.

> official (collective) history that denies not only socio-political but also psychical realities.[25]

In a similar vein, Montserrat Lunati interprets the historical ambiguity at the heart of *El Sur* as a re-enactment of the silences that typified the post-war period.[26] Politics and history were taboo for the cowed and muzzled society of the time, particularly for former Republicans who were forced into silence as a strategy for survival. Lunati regards Adriana's mother and father as victims of an inner exile, particularly the father who seems unable to muster the same resilience as his wife and ends up a 'belated casualty of the war', his suicide stemming directly from his sense of political disaffection as a member of the defeated side.[27] Lunati's Freudian reading of the novella sets Rafael's melancholic attitude toward the past in opposition with the more productive process of mourning undertaken by Adriana, who uses writing as a means of 'laying her ghosts to rest'.[28] The fact that García Morales hints at Rafael's Republican background without committing fully to the possibility is consistent with the silence over Republican victimhood that marked the consensus politics of the transition. Our uncertainty over Rafael's politics is also clearly a reflection of Adriana's own. Her parents' resistance to communicating their past is symptomatic of the behaviour of many Spanish families during the post-war period. In Republican families, in particular, the repression faced by members of the losing side and the stigma associated with that side caused many to conceal their ideological commitments and traumatic experiences. In more rural areas, where there was greater potential for negative judgment by peers in close-knit communities, the act of hiding former Republican affiliations was even more prevalent.[29] Despite the fact that Adriana is not socialized with any explicit

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[25] Tsuchiya, 'Family Plots and Romances', 94.

[26] Lunati, 'Breaking Silences', 287.

[27] Lunati, 'Breaking Silences', 292.

[28] Lunati, 'Breaking Silences', 293.

[29] Aguilar and Ramírez-Barat, 'Generational Dynamics', 218.

political identity, she feels a strong affiliative connection to her father's past experience and her narrative registers the emotional and psychological burden of living with her father's trauma:

> Toda la amargura imaginable y un desprecio infinito anidaban en ti de manera visible. Tu silencio angustioso estaba poblado de rumores malignos e inaudibles para otro que no fuese yo. Tu quietud tan perfecta no era sino un sobresalto de horror que parecía haberse detenido en el peor de sus instantes. Alguna noche larga de estudio o de insomnio me estremecieron quejidos tuyos que venían de tu sueño o quién sabe de dónde; desde luego no eran de este mundo. (33)

Rafael's symptoms of embitterment, anger, alienation, anguish, intrusive thoughts, terror, and distressing dreams are suggestive of posttraumatic stress disorder.[30] Despite her father's avoidance of talking about the past, Adriana claims a special connection with Rafael's suffering, observing that she is able to overhear the distressing thoughts that plague him.

Research on the intergenerational transmission of trauma suggests that the extent to which parents exhibit symptoms of unresolved trauma is a determining factor in the appearance of psychological alterations in children: 'When survivors are unable to process their experiences and evidence psychological and somatic symptoms, this may lead to communication styles characterized by fragmentation, indirectness, silence, and the keeping of secrets. Repercussions for the offspring include feelings of guilt, victimization, and identification with the survivor, and the development of a terrifying worldview.'[31] Rafael's inability to communicate his emotions, together with the secretive atmosphere created by his wife and him, has a detrimental impact on Adriana's psychological wellbeing. As she gets older, Adriana perceives a connection between her father's self-imposed isolation and her own alienation from her peers at school:

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[30] For a description of the symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, see Amy Lehrner and Rachel Yehuda, 'Trauma Across Generations and Paths to Adaptation and Resilience', *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 10:1 (2018), 22–29 (p. 24).

[31] Lehrner and Yehuda, 'Trauma Across Generations', 26.

‘Nunca logré hablar de mi impotencia para acercarme a las demás niñas, de aquella mezcla de extrañeza y miedo que me obligaba, en los recreos, a permanecer siempre sola, lo más lejos posible de las otras, procurando no mirarlas siquiera’ (28–29). In addition, Adriana relates her father’s communicative difficulties to her own, recounting how their faculty of speech is overwhelmed by this suffering they seem to share: ‘tú no sabías nada de mi sufrimiento. Era tan intenso que desbordaba toda palabra, que me sumergía en un silencio similar a aquél en el que tú te encerraste con tenacidad hasta tu muerte’ (28). The linguistic echo in the narrator’s later description of Rafael’s pain, which is described using the same words, ‘tan intenso que desbordaba la palabra’, suggests an implacable fate uniting father and daughter: ‘querías expresarme algo tan intenso que desbordaba la palabra, aquel dolor impensable en el que te estabas ahogando’ (36).

Adriana’s sympathy with her father originates from an inchoate political awareness and a sense of injustice at society’s treatment of him. From a young age, Adriana feels identified with her father’s social isolation and difference, united with him in what she calls ‘el mal’ (16). She evidently shares her father’s religious apathy, expressing a preference for their shared game of divination over her mother’s excited preparations for her first communion (19). Moreover, Adriana leaps to her father’s defence when another child denounces his atheism: ‘¡Nunca va a la iglesia. Es ateo y malo. Se va a condenar!’ (23). The accusation against her father seems to Adriana to have the backing of the entire community. As she lashes out by pushing the other child onto a cactus, Adriana describes the sensation of her father and her being alone against the whole world. The reaction of her mother and the other adults reinforces her feeling of us versus them. While the adults attend to the other child’s wounds, Adriana bemoans their neglect of her grievance: ‘Sentí aquella indiferencia como un supremo desprecio a mi dolor’ (24). The manner in which Rafael is condemned—especially the revealing ‘tono de triunfo’ (23) with which the denunciation is voiced—and the sense of unfairness provoked in Adriana by society’s treatment of her father evoke the punitive ideological crusade waged during the years of Franco’s dictatorship against the defeated side in the civil war. An earlier act of aggression against the

same child reveals a pattern of violence in Adriana's behaviour, which seems to have been moulded by the deleterious environment of her childhood home. Adriana's lack of socialization, in particular, has a detrimental impact on her. After quarrelling over a game of make-believe based on a film about Joan of Arc, Adriana performs the scene of Joan of Arc's martyrdom by tying her playmate to a tree and setting fire to a mound of paper and dry plant matter at the victim's feet (14–15). It is difficult not to interpret such brutality as the product of the confrontational household in which Adriana is brought up, where a persistent lack of communication causes disagreements to fester and then explode. Her parents' unresolved psychological disturbances poison family life, and there is a sense that Adriana's cruel behaviour echoes the savagery of Spain's recent conflict, as an unresolved legacy of violence is transmitted to Adriana by her parents' own psychopathology.

Medical research shows a variety of means by which posttraumatic stress disorder in parents can have an impact on their offspring. The mechanisms of intergenerational transmission include: unconscious psychodynamic influences in childhood; vicarious trauma caused by exposure to details of catastrophic events, which in turn trigger posttraumatic stress symptoms such as nightmares and intrusive thoughts in children; the assimilation of parents' pervasive fear, anxiety, or embitterment, which become learned emotional states; parenting styles and environments marked by the death of family members, overprotection, detachment, or neglect, which can cause distress in children; and biological factors that result in the offspring of PTSD sufferers presenting similar physiological anomalies to their parents, which can be explained by their exposure to stress hormones in the womb, their inheritance of epigenetic changes caused by trauma, or by postnatal adaptation to parental behaviour.[32] *El Sur* provides some clues as to possible conduits by which Adriana may have been exposed to her parents' pathology. Given the lack of communication in the family, vicarious trauma can be ruled out. As for biological transmission, there is insufficient evidence on which to speculate on

[32] Lehrner and Yehuda, 'Trauma Across Generations', 25–26.

the possibility of prenatal influences. Adriana's psychopathological symptoms seem to be a case of learning and modelling her parents' insidious emotional states and behaviours: on one hand, her father's muteness, misanthropy, embitterment, and anger; on the other, her mother's resentment, volatility, remoteness, and depression. Adriana's childhood is also marked by her father's overprotective parenting, which results in an inadequate socialization, and her mother's and subsequently her father's detachment and neglect. The conflict between her parents is also responsible for some of the psychological harm, not least because Adriana seeks to emulate her father in order to rebel against her mother, by whom she feels unloved. Adriana's mother perceives in her daughter the very qualities she despises in her husband: 'mamá hablaba como si, en realidad, ya anidara en mi interior el germen de ese espanto que a ella parecía perturbarla' (13). But Adriana defies her mother by voluntarily assuming those qualities and the stigma associated with her father's difference in order to be closer to him: 'Sólo tu presencia me ayudaba a reconciliarme con aquel monstruo que ya veía yo aparecer en mi interior ante la mirada de mamá. Ella era como un espejo donde únicamente podía reflejarse aquella imagen espantosa en la que yo empezaba a creer y de la que tú tenías el poder de rescatarme' (15–16).

While Adriana's damaged upbringing seems to point irresistibly to lasting psychological harm, *El Sur* resists a simplistic representation of the mechanics of intergenerational trauma. At the same time as the novella alludes to the detrimental impact of the civil war on Adriana's parents, which in turn is felt indirectly by their daughter through the unresolved traumas that disfigure their domestic relationships and blight their parental care, *El Sur* also illustrates the paths to coping and resilience exemplified by the protagonist of the story. Adriana's belated socialization and escape from the cloistered existence of the family home constitute initial steps in circumventing the influence of her parents' psychological disorders, which have shaped her upbringing (31–32). As she reaches adolescence and begins her schooling, she gradually breaks free from the centrifugal pull of her family and makes tentative progress toward a more complete integration within society. Once the spell of the oppressive family unit starts to fade, Adriana is able to envisage the path by which she will free herself

from her parents' burdensome past. It is important to observe that Adriana's determination to prevail over her parents' psychological legacy does not imply simply running away from that legacy and wiping this troubled childhood from her consciousness. Following her father's death, Adriana yearns to find out more about his past, and the act of interrogating that past gives her some sense of closure. Abigail Lee Six's optimistic view of Adriana's trip to Seville is persuasive: 'At the end of the text, we feel that she is on the road to recovery through discovering her father's bedroom and belongings, talking to those who knew him before his marriage, and above all, meeting his son.'[33] Determined not to perpetuate the pain her father has inflicted on her, Adriana does not disabuse her half-brother, Miguel, of his illusions about their father. As a result of this determination, she is unable to reveal her identity and unwittingly invites the amorous affections of her half-brother. Adriana's parting note to the lovesick Miguel—'Yo también te amo' (52)—might initially seem to strike a discordant note with her otherwise compassionate attitude. The act of giving false hope to a pretender who is still in the dark about the true nature of their relationship seems mischievous at best or downright malevolent at worst. But in reality the note represents a metaphorical reparation for the suffering endured by her father. On discovering Gloria's letters among her father's possessions after his death (40–42), Adriana uncovers Rafael's piteous struggle to restore some meaning to his life. Chasing a happy memory, Rafael had reached out to his former lover in the hope of resuming their relationship. Adriana undoubtedly comprehends the sadness Gloria's terse farewell must have caused her wretched father, and so in the note to her half-brother, she reverses the formula with which Gloria severed ties with Rafael: 'ya no te amo' (42) becomes, in Adriana's note, 'Yo también te amo' (52). It may be the unthinking act of a confused and grieving adolescent but it

[33] Abigail Lee Six, 'Men's Problems: Feelings and Fatherhood in *El Sur* by Adelaida García Morales and *París* by Marcos Giralt Torrente', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 79:6 (2002), 753–70 (p. 769).

nevertheless betrays a commitment not to inflict on another the ubiquitous pain she has witnessed.

Although we see the early stages of Adriana's recovery in the novella itself, her fundamental development occurs off-stage, in the intervening years between her departure from Seville and her return to her childhood home with the intention of visiting Rafael's grave. The few occasions on which the older narrating Adriana intervenes in the story told through the eyes of her younger self give a sense of her progress in overcoming exposure to her father's trauma. Thus the narrator discloses her perilously intimate relationship with her father during her childhood: 'yo me sujetaba a ti en la vida' (17). But by qualifying the description with the words 'en la vida', the narrator suggests she has managed successfully to extricate herself from the injurious attachment since his death. Similarly, a frank recognition of her father's influence in shaping her personality is moderated by the intimation that Adriana has found peace with the destructive side of her temperament: 'Pues creo que heredé de ti no sólo tu rostro, teñido con los colores de mamá, sino también tu enorme capacidad para la desesperación y, sobre todo, para el aislamiento. Aun ahora, cuanto mayor es la soledad que me rodea mejor me siento. Y, sin embargo, me encontré tan abandonada aquella noche' (6). While Adriana accepts that her father's pathological traits have formed her own character, there is also a trace of resilience in the suggestion that she has learned to be self-reliant. She admits that the death of her father, who was the only person to whom she had ever felt close, left her with a feeling of absolute desolation, but years later she claims to be reconciled with this solitude. The possibility that Adriana might follow the same dark path as her father is a palpable threat following his suicide: 'Aquella noche sentí que el tiempo era siempre destrucción. Yo no conocía otra cosa. El jardín, la casa, las personas que la habitábamos, incluso yo con mis quince años, estábamos envueltos en aquel mismo destino de muerte que parecía arrastrarnos contigo' (37). There is the risk that Rafael's trauma, represented metonymically by the silence with which it is associated, will outlive him: 'tu silencio, amargo, de piedra, [...] se extendió por la casa y, de alguna manera, te sobrevivía' (38). Rafael's silence, as we have seen, is indicative of a morbid response to some

cataclysmic life event. During her childhood, Adriana's reaction to this event is mediated through her father's intractable silence, which has a harmful impact on her psychological wellbeing and the early stages of her development. Given that their lack of communication is instrumental in the protagonist's inheritance of her father's psychopathological traits, the narrator's action of addressing Rafael is a symbolic act of repair. Adriana's ability to narrate her childhood experience through an apostrophe directed at her deceased father represents a victory over the baleful silence that traumatized her as a child. In presenting the act of narration—and implicitly that of writing—as a strategy for coping with inherited trauma, *El Sur* resists a reductionist view of intergenerational trauma. The novella dramatizes the process by which the effects of a traumatic event can be felt across generations, but it rejects a deterministic model that stresses the unavoidably negative outcomes for the children raised amid parental trauma. García Morales's representation of intergenerational trauma is consistent with medical researchers' nuanced view of the subject and, in particular, their emphasis on the variables that affect children's vulnerability or resilience to the social and interpersonal stressors associated with parental trauma.[34] In their review of the literature on inherited trauma, Amy Lehrner and Rachel Yehuda emphasize that exposure to parental trauma does not lead to a single, fixed outcome. Lehrner and Yehuda caution against an overly deterministic understanding of intergenerational transmission and warn, in particular, not to take at face value the significant finding that children can share a similar biological footprint with their traumatized parents:

> It is easy for popular media and others to espouse a biological reductionism, in which biological markers are assumed to destine an individual to some negative outcome, rendering him or her the same as the trauma survivor. However, offspring may demonstrate similar biological signatures as their parents, or quite different ones reflecting adaptations or reactions to parental biology and behavior. Furthermore, biology is not valenced positively or negatively; trauma-related biological changes

[34] Lehrner and Yehuda, 'Trauma Across Generations', 25.

> simply reflect our species' ability to adapt flexibly to environmental stressors and threats, giving us an evolutionary advantage. Therefore, the fact that children of traumatized parents may show differences in their stress-response systems does not necessitate an interpretation that they are damaged.[35]

El Sur foregrounds a number of the different indicators of resilience highlighted by Lehrner and Yehuda in their summary of second-generation responses to parental trauma.[36] Adriana's journey to Seville and quest for knowledge about her father's past are symptomatic of resilience, as is the narrator's tentative commitment to social and political activism through her allusions to post-war suffering and Republican victimhood. But the principal sign of resilience exhibited by Adriana is her act of artistic creation. It is through writing this impassioned address to her father that Adriana overcomes her inherited hurdles to communication and sense of solitude, effecting a symbolic triumph over this pathological legacy. By committing her past to paper, Adriana also mirrors her mother's own coping strategy but with a more productive outcome. Adriana informs us of her mother's abortive attempts at becoming a writer: 'Alguna vez creo que intentó escribir algo que no llegó a terminar' (8). By succeeding where her mother failed, Adriana will effect a psychological recovery that remained elusive for her long-suffering mother. It would perhaps be misguided to put too much stock in a comparison of *El Sur* with García Morales's own life, but it is worth teasing out the autobiographical impulses underlying this theme of writing as a medium for sublimating a difficult past. For example, Adriana's decision to take up writing in imitation of her mother is reminiscent of García Morales's account of her vocation in an interview with Itzíar de Francisco: 'En el inicio de mi escritura está la imitación a mi madre, una mujer distante que se encerraba en una habitación con su máquina de escribir, pero que nunca llegó a publicar.'[37] Furthermore, the paternal origins of

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[35] Lehrner and Yehuda, 'Trauma Across Generations', 27.

[36] Lehrner and Yehuda, 'Trauma Across Generations', 26.

[37] Francisco, 'Adelaida García Morales', paragraph 25 of 28.

Adriana's malaise and the therapeutic benefits she derives from the act of narration recall that same interview in which García Morales claimed that the act of writing *El Sur* helped her to overcome the negative impact of her father's depression on their relationship: '[*El Sur*] es una obra que me sigue gustando y su escritura fue para mí una terapia. Yo admiraba mucho a mi padre y al entrar él en una profunda depresión se produjo un distanciamiento, y cierta amargura. Esa angustia desapareció con la escritura del libro.'[38] García Morales claimed to have conquered her grief through the act of writing, and there is a sense at the end of *El Sur* that the narrator has come some way in exorcizing the demons of her past. But the novella strikes a balance between the tragedy of inherited pathology and the happy ending of a narrative cure. There remains a bitterness in the final lines of Adriana's apostrophe to her father and a sense that this dark past will never be completely dead and buried. Adriana will leave behind her childhood home never to return. She will visit her father's grave one last time. She will refuse to allow her past to determine her future and will disinherit this familial trauma. But she will not forget: the memory of her parents' trauma and its lingering legacy will be preserved, immortalized in her testimony and in the consciousness of her adult mind.

This article has sought to make a case for *El Sur* as a precocious work of historical memory that has continued relevance for the debates concerning the legacy of the Spanish civil war and Franco's dictatorship. García Morales addresses the topics of historical violence, Republican victimhood, and intergenerational trauma with subtlety and intellectual honesty. Eschewing the illusions of totality encouraged by documentary realism, García Morales uses a child's perspective to convey the epistemic indeterminacy that characterizes the viewpoint of a second generation that experienced the effects of the war without witnessing it directly. Her treatment of the subject of inherited trauma, in particular, shows both prescience and integrity. While illustrating the debilitating impact of growing up in a Republican family, *El Sur* shows that past traumas need not determine the future. Consonant with medical research that has

[38] Francisco, 'Adelaida García Morales', paragraph 23 of 28.

problematized fatalistic interpretations of intergenerational trauma, *El Sur* explores the resilience and coping strategies that can be brought to bear on traumatic experiences. Through her narrative act, Adriana lays the past to rest, showing a determination to commemorate it but not to allow it to shape her own life. In some ways, *El Sur* is a product of its time: it contains no overt vindication of Republican victimhood and its overriding message is arguably consistent with an era typified by its resolve to let bygones be bygones. But in others the novella seems remarkably enlightened. It speaks to current debates in Spanish memory studies with a freshness undiminished by the years that have passed since it was published. It would be remiss to overlook its pioneering contribution to a movement that emerged two decades after its composition.