

Portrayals of Child Survivors of Sexual Abuse in “Roberto” and “Tierra” by Agustina Bazterrica

By

Bethany Martin

July 2024

Co-Directors of Thesis: Dale Knickerbocker, PhD & Jennifer Valko, PhD

Major Department: Foreign Languages and Literatures

This thesis aims to compare and contrast the short stories of “Roberto” and “Tierra” from the collection *Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro* by Agustina Bazterrica. Both of these stories portray the narratives of sexually abused young girls. Through analyzing these works, I seek to discover how the portrayals of the victims represents the culture related to sexual abuse both in Argentina and around the world. By using a close reading of the literature, I explore the symbolism present in these stories. I also look at psychological phenomena related to sexual assault. Finally, applied psychoanalysis is used to perform a literary analysis. Through the combination of these critical lenses, I propose potential interpretations for these open-ended stories.

Portrayals of Child Survivors of Sexual Abuse in “Roberto” and “Tierra” by Agustina Bazterrica

A thesis

Presented to the faculty of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Hispanic Studies

by

Bethany Martin

July 2024

Co-Directors of Thesis: Dale Knickerbocker, PhD & Jennifer Valko, PhD

Thesis Committee Members:

Laura Levi Altstaedter, PhD

Michael Schinasi, PhD

©Bethany Martin, 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: Overview of the author.....	1
CHAPTER ONE: “Roberto”.....	7
CHAPTER TWO: “Tierra”.....	27
CONCLUSION:.....	50
WORKS CITED.....	55

INTRODUCTION

Established author Agustina Bazterrica emerged on the Argentine literary scene in 2017 with her debut novel, *Cadáver exquisito*. This dystopian narrative is set in a world where animals are no longer safe to be used for meat, so humans are raised as livestock for the meat industry instead. The protagonist grapples with his own morality under an oppressive government; the power of words is a prominent theme in this narrative as well. It is by far her most popular work—having been translated into twenty-three languages (*Cadáver exquisito*; *Tender is the flesh*). In 2017, it was awarded the Premio Clarín Novela and published by Alfaguara (*Tender is the flesh*). The Premio Clarín is awarded every year to an unpublished Spanish-language novel by the publishing company Alfaguara (*Tender is the flesh*). The English translation of Bazterrica's debut novel was nominated in the *Goodreads Choice Awards* in 2020 under the category for the best new horror novel ("Best horror"). Other contenders in the category that year include books by legendary horror authors like Stephen King ("Best horror"). While she ultimately did not win, *Tender is the flesh* still received over 6,000 votes from fans in this category ("Best horror"). Being nominated in the same category as King is noteworthy, as Bazterrica named him as one of her literary idols in an interview with Silvina Frieria of the newspaper *Página 12*. During an interview for Telám news with Claudia Lorenzón, Bazterrica provided a more exhaustive list of authors that she is inspired by: "Franz Kafka, Virginia Woolf, Flannery O'Connor, Clarice Lispector, Juan José Saer, Toni Morrison, James Joyce, Stephen King, Lorie Moore, Albert Camus, Marguerite Duras, Andrés Rivera, Silvina Ocampo, [and] Margaret Atwood. Horror icon Stephen King is mentioned again, this time alongside of feminist

authors who are not primarily known for the horror genre, like Woolf, Atwood, and Ocampo. She also named many prolific short story authors as inspirations.

Her debut novel has been discussed a great deal in both academic and non-academic circles. Argentine newspaper *La capital* published a piece about *Cadáver exquisito* describing its themes of the power of words, women's bodily autonomy, the cannibalistic nature of society, and the dangers of a corrupt government (Roldós). Furthermore, these themes are compared with actual events in Argentine society, such as the debate on abortion rights in Argentina around the time of publication (Roldós). However, Bazterrica remarked in an interview that she did not create this work with the goal of using cannibalism as a metaphor for capitalism; rather, she noticed this metaphor after writing and introspected as to why she wrote this the way that she did (Henríquez Cortéz). Nevertheless, she is grateful that her debut novel has been used in Argentine school curricula— especially given Argentina's history with oppressive governments (Henríquez Cortéz). On the back cover of the English edition of this book, blurbs from publications based out of the U.S., Spain, France, the U.K, and Argentina are provided (*Tender is the flesh*). In *101 Horror Books to Read Before You're Murdered*, Bazterrica's *Tender is the flesh* is included as a book that is representative of horror in the twenty-first century (Hartmann). In more recent publications of Bazterrica's works in English, *Tender is the flesh* is described as an “awardwinning TikTok sensation” (*Nineteen Claws and a Black Bird*). As of August of 2023, the hashtag *#tenderistheflesh* has 26.3 million views on TikTok (*TikTok*). It is through social media that Bazterrica's global acclaim took root, with interviews, podcasts, and snippets from her book going viral. Given that *Cadáver exquisito* has performed so well in an international market, it is surprising that Bazterrica's short stories have not been received similarly widespread acclaim.

Prior to being recognized around the world for her writing after the publication of *Cadáver exquisito*, Bazterrica had authored two other books. Her debut publication *Matar a la niña* was published in 2014 (“Matar a la niña”). This novella is centered around “un ángel homicida [and] una niña santa” (“Matar a la niña”). The blurb describing this book highlights its “ironía y humor corrosivo” (“Matar a la niña”). Dark humor and sarcasm have continued to be recognized as hallmarks of Bazterrica’s works (Belarik; Frías; Ruocco). Bazterrica’s next publication would be her first collection of short stories *Antes del encuentro feroz*, published in 2016 (*Antes del encuentro feroz*). Many of the short stories from this collection would be revised and published as part of *Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro*. In an interview with Miguel Frías, movie and culture critic at *Clarín*, Bazterrica elaborated on how she had also considered a number of career paths outside of the literary scene. She helped organize *Siga al Conejo Blanco* (Frías¹). This movement promoted interaction between authors and other artists—including singers, actors, and painters. Bazterrica’s past in the arts influences her writing. She received a degree in arts from the University of Buenos Aires. Bazterrica also had a past with opera; she studied opera in a conservatory and has previously worked as a bilingual guide at the *Teatro Colón*. This connection with art can be seen in the imagery in her works. When discussing the graphic descriptions in her first novella, Bazterrica noted how she did not write with readers’ reactions in mind. In this interview she also noted that she prefers literature that sparks questions in the readers as opposed to literature that presents them with a simple moral lesson. Nevertheless, she has enjoyed discussing her works with Argentine students. Bazterrica’s writing is often characterized by uncomfortable situations, depictions of violence, and themes that are controversial to the public.

¹ The rest of this paragraph discussing Bazterrica’s life is also based on Frías’s article.

Like in *Cadáver exquisito*, while the short stories in *Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro* are Argentine at their core, their themes are relevant to readers all over the world. This collection is fittingly composed of nineteen² short stories. The protagonists of these stories include young girls, women, and men. Women and young girls are the more common protagonists. Bazterrica utilizes a combination of first-, second- and third-person narrative perspectives throughout the collection. Most of the stories are narrated in the present tense. There are not many details that indicate the time periods of the stories. Most of the stories are set in Argentina—whether in the countryside or Buenos Aires. A notable exception is *Lavavajillas* which takes place in Manhattan. Regardless of the geographical location, most of the stories take place in mundane locations, such as the protagonist’s home, school, or on public transportation. The most prominent themes in the collection include death and grieving, mental illness, misogyny, and sexual abuse. The stories range in length from a couple of sentences to twentysome pages. What unites all the entries in this collection is their absurdity. It is also important to note that some of these short narrative works were previously published in the collection *Antes del encuentro feroz*.

During interviews promoting her books, Bazterrica has given readers insight into her writing process and motivations. In an interview with Zeth Arellano of the digital periodical, *Maremotom.com*, Bazterrica notes how she feels called to uplift the voice of women who are unable to speak up on their own behalf. This perspective contrasts with the anti-feminist characters that she includes in her writing³ (Arellano). While there is a lack of academic discussion related to Bazterrica’s short stories, they have received a number of reviews from

² The English publication of the book has twenty short stories.

³ While this interview mainly pertains to the novela *Las Indignas*, this character archetype can also be seen in “Tierra” (Arellano, 2023).

reputable, popular literary publications. In general, the reviews of Bazterrica's works have been very positive. Beyond the previously mentioned praise directed towards *Cadáver exquisito*, *Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro* has also had overwhelmingly positive feedback. *La voz*, an Argentine newspaper, published a review of *Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro* shortly after its release in Argentina (Ruocco). This review discusses Bazterrica's place among Argentine authors, how she 'plays with words' to get her point across, the flexibility of reality in her writing, and its sarcastic sensibilities (Ruocco). Bazterrica herself has noted that she employs sarcasm and irony to discuss serious subject matters (Frías). A review by Jose María Brindisi published in the Argentine newspaper *La Nación* was more critical of Bazterrica's collection of short stories than many other reviews had been. This reviewer wrote that Bazterrica's stories suffered from being derivative of a typical short story narrative, noting that it was the sordid nature of her narratives that stood out (Brindisi). Author Belarik reviewed Bazterrica's publications for the literary website, *Universo Literario* and also discussed the unique style of Bazterrica's prose. Belarik also emphasizes the use of "humor negro" and a "punzante" style of prose to portray "diversos delirios [and] pesadillas". The author also emphasizes the diverse range of narrators that are utilized in *Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro*; it is noted that Bazterrica experiments with a wide stylistic range of narration styles to go with these diverse narrators, including a more neutral form of Spanish, a narrative voice fitting for a young girl, and a flow of consciousness style of writing (Belarik).

Past academic discussions of Bazterrica's works have generally focused on her first novella or her other short stories. A publication in *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* journal by English Professor Sebastian Williams analyzed Bazterrica's dystopian, eco-horror novella *Cadáver Exquisito* (302-320). This article emphasizes that the true "horror of

the novel is not some inhuman monster, totalitarian regime, (sic) or fantastic creature; it is that which is ‘so human’ [tan humana] that is terrifying about Marcos and others—their complicity in violence and oppression” (Williams 317). Like in this description of *Cadáver Exquisito*, the villains of both “Roberto” and “Tierra” are wholly human, despite the supernatural elements in the story. Graduate student Jorge Antonio Sánchez Rivera compares “Roberto” with short stories by established Argentine authors Samanta Schweblin and Mariana Enriquez in his conference paper. He focuses mainly on the symbolism and imagery used in “Roberto” (Sánchez Rivera). A romance studies undergraduate student from Germany, Leonie Maglie published her analysis of “Lavavajillas” from *Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro*. She focused on the story’s feminist nature and its connection with feminist movements in Argentina (Maglie).

The aim of this thesis is to compare and contrast the portrayals of sexually abused girls in *Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro*. The two selected short stories are “Roberto” and “Tierra,” which tell the accounts of young girls abused in their school and family home respectively. While there are also other stories dealing with sexual abuse—“Un agujero esconde una casa” and “El aliento del lobo”—the two stories analyzed in this thesis were chosen due to their portrayals of abusers whom the victims should be able to trust. The discussion of “Roberto” will focus on themes secondary to the sexual assault in the story, such as the representation of the LGBTQ+ community, portrayals of mental illness, and the presence of fantastic elements in the story. Similarly, beyond the sexual assault and revenge, the chapter on “Tierra” will also highlight the perspectives of the loved ones of child abusers as well as the role of the man in Argentine society.

CHAPTER 1

If *Cadáver exquisito* caused international audiences to recognize Agustina Bazterrica as a literary superstar, the publication of “Roberto” in *Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro* proved to them that her debut novel was not merely lightning in a bottle. Like her award-winning first novel, Bazterrica’s short story, “Roberto” garnered notoriety online; a recording of Bazterrica reading it garnered over 4 million views on TikTok (Kemp-Habib). In “Roberto” the young, female protagonist’s math teacher aims to sexually assault her after hearing that she claims to have a rabbit residing between her legs. The assault is halted when her rabbit, Roberto, scares off the would-be predator. After the teacher is run off, the narrative abruptly ends as “Roberto se volvió a dormir” (Bazterrica 22). “Roberto” ends ambiguously, adding to the story’s intrigue. In an interview with Alice Gawthrop of *Reader’s Digest*, Bazterrica remarked, “With my short story ‘Roberto’ there are a lot of readers who just need to know if the bunny is real or not. They get really mad because I will never finish a short story saying, ‘Okay, so the rabbit was real’”. While “Roberto” is one of Bazterrica’s shorter stories, it still manages to pack quite a punch. Even though it has a length of a mere two pages, this text is rich with social criticism. If anything, the lack of details elevates the universality of the unnamed protagonist’s experience. Despite “Roberto”’s popularity online and compelling themes, there is a lack of academic discussion about this narrative. Bazterrica’s first widespread publication—*Cadáver exquisito*— has been written about extensively in an academic setting. However, there has only been one academic discussion of this short story a conference paper by Jorge Antonio Sánchez Rivera presented at the Congreso Internacional de Literatura y Estudios Hispánicos (1-13). This thesis aims to contribute to a growing discussion about Bazterrica’s literature. In this chapter three potential

interpretations of this story will be presented that highlight the plight of Argentine girls who have been sexually abused. To provide a better context for this topic, discussions of sexual crimes in Argentina, Argentina's LGBTQ+ community, and relevant psychiatric diagnoses in relation to "Roberto" by Agustina Bazterrica will be included in addition to an analysis of the text.

Prevalence of Sexual Crimes

The attempted sexual assault that the protagonist of "Roberto" faces is not an uncommon experience for Argentine school children. According to an article published in 2020 by the Argentine edition of *El País*, 80% of children who have been sexually assaulted disclose their assaults to others while they are in a school setting (Centenera). However, the majority of these students were unaware that their experiences would be categorized as sexual assault (Centenera). It was due to participation in sexual education courses that these students were able to process that they had been sexually abused (Centenera). In 2006, Argentina's government passed a law that promotes sexual education for all citizens ("Educación Sexual Integral"). Topics covered in these courses, according to an informational page by the University of Buenos Aires, include education on contraceptive usage, sexual violence, gender identities, and other relevant concepts ("Educación Sexual Integral"). It is also noteworthy that 80% of the perpetrators of these crimes are known to the children—whether they be family members or other trusted individuals (Centenera).

In an interview with *The Guardian*'s Alice Kemp-Habib, Bazterrica described her own personal experience with sexual harassment as a schoolgirl in Argentina. She noted that she and her friends endured verbal sexual harassment and stalking from one particular man; also stating that "a different man once masturbated in front of her on a packed train" (Kemp-Habib). During the interview, Bazterrica stated that no one intervened on behalf of her and her school friends

(Kemp-Habib). It is possible that this happened because sexual harassment incidents like this were not uncommon for passengers to witness.

Cases similar to the experience of Bazterrica and her friends continue to occur in Argentina. In September of 2023, a secondary school teacher was found to have exchanged sexually explicit *WhatsApp* messages with some of his students (“Detuvieron a un profesor”). He had also previously been charged for molesting his five-year-old daughter (“Detuvieron a un profesor”). The word grooming is often mentioned in discussions about the sexual abuse of minors. The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network provides a definition of this term that frequently appears in popular culture; they describe grooming as “manipulative behaviors that the abuser uses to gain access to a potential victim, coerce them to agree to the abuse, and reduce the risk of being caught” (“Grooming: Know the Warning Signs”). While this definition does not specify that grooming occurs in an online context, many other organizations describe grooming in that manner. In the article by *La Nación* discussing the previously mentioned predatory secondary school teacher, grooming is defined as the following: “se trata del delito a través del cual una persona adulta, por medios de comunicación electrónicos, se conecta con un menor de edad con el objetivo de estargar, engañar o cometer un agravio sobre su integridad sexual” (“Detuvieron a un profesor”). A webpage maintained by Argentina’s government defines grooming as “el acoso sexual de una persona adulta a una niña, un niño o un adolescente por medio de internet” (“Guía para madres”). An article published in Argentine newspaper, *La voz*, shared the statistic that approximately sixty minors per week are sexually abused by adults in Argentina (Otero & Digón). Argentine newspaper, *Página 12*, also published data from a survey conducted by UNICEF about the occurrences of sexual assault in Argentina; author Euge Murillo notes that in an eleven-month period between 2020 and 2021, 3,219 children are said to have

been sexually abused. Not only are crimes like these still happening in Argentina, but they are continually occurring on a global scale.

According to the World Health Organization, one-third of women around the globe will experience sexual violence or “intimate partner violence” (“Violence against Women”). The United Nations notes a similar international statistic for sexual assault. Data that they collected from citizens of Argentina includes thought-provoking statistics about intimate violence and the adolescent birth rate. The UN’s report notes that “the adolescent birth rate [in Argentina] is 49.9 per 1,000 women aged 15-19 as of 2018, down from 54.4 per 1,000 in 2017. In 2018, 4.5% of women aged 15-49 years self-reported that they had been subject to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months” (UN Women Data Hub). While these statistics might make it seem that the rates of sexual violence are low in Argentina, this survey could overlook some women and girls. It does not include any girls under the age of fifteen years old (UN Women Data Hub). Additionally, previous studies have noted that children and adolescents did not comprehend that they had been assaulted until they were provided a definition of sexual assault through sexual education courses at school (Centenera). Therefore, this data could be an underestimation of the cases of sexual assault in Argentina. Given that the majority of the perpetrators of these acts are known to the victimized students, they may be less likely to report their assaults (Centenera). The popularity of Bazterrica’s short story both in Argentina and globally could be due to the commonality of the experience that it describes. Having established the sociological background of sexual abuse directed towards young women and girls, the following section will include a brief summary of the text alongside of a close reading of it.

Summary and background of “Roberto”

“Roberto” is the story of an unnamed, adolescent girl who is groomed by her math teacher. It opens with the young protagonist having a discussion with her friend about the rabbit named Roberto who lives between her legs:

Tengo un conejo entre las piernas. Es negro. Yo le digo Roberto, pero se podría llamar Ignacio o incluso Carla, pero le digo Roberto porque tiene forma de Roberto. Es lindo porque es peludo y duerme mucho. Le conté a mi amiga Isabel. Le dije: ‘Isa, hace poco me creció un conejo entre las piernas. ¿Vos también tenés uno?’ (21)

In this excerpt, the first-person narrator describes Roberto as both soft and beautiful. She also provides the rationale for why she refers to her rabbit as Roberto—a traditionally masculine name—and not Carla—a traditionally feminine name. This internal dialogue sets the stage for a discussion of the narrator’s gender identity that will be included later in this chapter. Another detail of interest is the use of the word ‘conejo’ to describe a body part covered by the narrator’s skirt. Conejo, the Spanish word for a rabbit or a bunny is used informally as a slang term for a vagina; it can also be used to refer to the vulva, according to the *Diccionario de la lengua española* (“Conejo, Coneja”). This could be due to the resemblance between a vulva and the rabbit’s ears. The online dictionary *Todotango*, which is maintained by a community in Argentina also notes that conejo can be used as slang for a vagina (“Conejo/ja”).

The narrator and Isabel go into the school bathroom, wherein they discover that Isabel does not have a rabbit. This causes the narrator to refuse to show Roberto to her. The girls bicker, with Isabel going to both her mother and the girls’ math teacher to tattle on her friend. While the mother immediately denies the existence of the rabbit, the teacher has a very different reaction:

El profesor García se ríó y le dijo a Isabel que se fuera a su casa que después él le iba a explicar algunas cosas. El profesor García se sentó al lado mío y me dijo: ‘Sos muy linda. Isabel no sabe nada, vos no le hagas caso’ . Me dio un beso y después me dio otro beso más. Me dijo que mañana después de clases quería ver mi conejito. Me dijo que lo quería ver para enseñarle a portarse bien. (22).

In this textual fragment, readers see the teacher’s sexual interest in his student. His use of the diminutive form of the word conejo—conejito—can be interpreted as demonstrating some of his feelings towards his student (““Diminutive in Spanish”). The suffix ‘ito’ is most literally used to describe something as small (““Diminutive in Spanish”). It can also indicate that the speaker thinks something is “endearing” or that they have “affection” for it (““Diminutive in Spanish”). Essentially, he expresses his desire to see his student’s ‘little vagina.’ Señor García’s use of this word while kissing and propositioning his young student demonstrate the narrator’s role as both a young girl and an object of desire, emphasizing her teacher’s unnatural attraction to her. He convinces his student to meet him in the school bathroom after class, where he compliments and inappropriately touches her. Upon the removal of her undergarments, “Roberto movió las orejas y le mostró los dientes. El professor García gritó y se fue corriendo” promptly terminating their encounter (Bazterrica 22). And thus, the story concludes with the math teacher fleeing the scene of the attempted crime.

Readers of “Roberto” are given very little information about its protagonist. It is narrated from a first-person perspective by a girl of an unspecified age—probably around eleven or twelve years old⁴. The protagonist’s name is never mentioned, highlighting the universality of

⁴ Based on description of the girls in the text and the ages of students in upper primary school or lower secondary school in Argentina (National Center for Education Statistics). Also based on the typical timeline for when girls develop pubic hair (Breehl & Caban).

her experiences. There is a great deal of ambiguity about the events that occur as the narrator herself may not be entirely sure herself of what is occurring. Since readers cannot rely on the young narrator to truly understand the story, they must use their own knowledge to fill in the gaps in the narrative left empty by the protagonist. Other characters include the narrator's friend Isabel, Isabel's mother, and the girls' math teacher Profesor García. The entirety of the plot occurs in the girls' school building—the bathroom being the most prominent location. In total, the plot takes place over the span of three days.

“Roberto” was included in Bazterrica's initial publication of short stories—*Antes del encuentro feroz* (11-13). This collection derives its name from a line in the poem “La verdad del bosque” by Alejandra Pizarnik. In *Antes del encuentro feroz*, “Roberto” is preceded by an epigraph from which the collection derives its name, an excerpt from the poem *La verdad del bosque* by Alejandra Pizarnik (9). This excerpt describes a young girl fleeing from a predatory wolf. While “Roberto” was the opening story initially, it was placed as the second entry in *Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro* (19-22).

Despite no longer serving as the first entry of this collection of Bazterrica's short stories, a lengthy excerpt from “Roberto” is included on the back cover of the 2020 edition of this compilation (*Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro*). In addition to the new placement of its chapter and the missing epigraph, there is only one other small change from the first printing of “Roberto” to this updated one. In the 2020 edition, the titles of “Señor” and “Profesor” are used interchangeably when discussing the math teacher. Bazterrica must have known that she had struck gold with this story, which could explain why the manuscript remained essentially untouched.

Overview of Interpretations

There are three potential interpretations of “Roberto” by Agustina Bazterrica. Each of these interpretations corresponds to an issue that affects young women in Argentine society. First, there is the most literal interpretation—that Roberto, the bunny, truly lives between the protagonist’s legs. The second option is that the bunny is a metaphor, representing the protagonist having genitalia that greatly differ from what is societally expected of an adolescent girl. Under this interpretation, Roberto the bunny is a metaphor for the protagonist being transgender or intersex. A third potential interpretation is that Roberto is a figment of imagination used by the protagonist to cope with past sexual trauma. Support for all of these can be found in the text, but the best interpretation combines elements of all three of these interpretations. The first of these interpretations to be explored in this thesis is the most straightforward interpretation of Roberto’s existence.

Literal Interpretation

The simplest interpretation of what happens in “Roberto” is to take its events at face-value. This would mean that Roberto the bunny is real and is the protagonist’s protector. Based on this interpretation, the narrative concludes with somewhat of a happy ending, similar to how many fairy tales conclude.

The epigraph that introduced “Roberto” for its original printing primes readers to think of the classic children’s tale, “Little Red Riding Hood”:

La acción transcurre en el desierto y qué/ sola atravesé mi infancia como
caperucita el bosque/ antes del encuentro feroz. Qué sola llevando una cesta,/ qué
inocente, qué decorosa y bien dispuesta, pero nos/ devoraron a todos porque ¿para

qué sirven las palabras/ si no pueden constatar que nos devoraron? —dijo la/ abuela. (*Antes del encuentro feroz*, 9).

Psychoanalysis has always been a key component for the discipline of psychology in Argentina (Fierro and Araujo). In the 1950's when psychology departments were beginning to develop in Argentine universities, many of the founding members of these departments were professionals who practiced psychoanalysis (Fierro and Araujo). These practitioners would shape the curriculum of psychology university programs across the nation (Fierro and Araujo). A very popular research method of psychoanalysts was ““applied psychoanalysis”, that is a psychoanalytic reconstruction and interpretation of religious, artistic, and literary phenomena” (Fierro and Araujo). With continued interest in applied psychoanalysis in Argentina, eventually, works by famous American psychoanalyst—Bruno Bettelheim— were translated into Spanish. In his book *The Uses of Enchantment*, psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim⁵ discusses the importance of fairytales in a child's development.

Bettelheim discussed both specific stories and over-arching tropes found in them. One of these tropes is that of the helper animal (Bettelheim). He describes how helper animals represent the hope that children see in the world or “basic trust” (Bettelheim 258). In his discussion of Little Red Riding Hood specifically, he notes that in Charles Perrault's version of the tale⁶ “it is so obvious that [the] wolf is not a rapacious beast but a metaphor, which leaves little to the imagination,” (Bettelheim 168). This predatory animal is a stand-in for men who take sexual advantage of girls (Bettelheim). While there is no wolf in “Roberto,” there is an animal that is

⁵ Years later, Bettelheim would be accused of plagiarizing the ideas published in this text. However, he would have still been highly regarded when Agustina Bazterrica was growing up.

⁶ Perrault's 1697 publication *Histoires ou contes du temps passé, avec des moralités: Contes de ma mère l'Oye* contains the French translation of “Little Red Riding Hood” – “Le petit chaperon rouge” (“Little Red Riding Hood”).

nearly the exact opposite. While the wolf resides at the top of the food-chain in the forest, the rabbit resides near its bottom. The wolf can eat whatever it wants, while the rabbit tries to avoid being eaten by the other inhabitants of the woods. If the wolf represents a predatory man in this classic tale, Roberto represents the exact opposite—the good-natured, self-sacrificing protector of a young girl. While Señor García, the symbolic wolf of this story, repeatedly touches the protagonist, the girl’s protective rabbit does not have to physically interact with him to save her, juxtaposing the two male figures in this story:

El profesor García me sacó la bombacha mientras me daba besos en la cara y en el pelo y en la boca y me decía portate bien nenita que tu profesor te va a enseñar muchas cosas. El profesor García se quedó quieto, con la boca abierta mirando a Roberto. El profesor García se quedó tan quieto que pensé que estaba jugando a las estatuas. Roberto movió las orejas y le mostró los dientes. El profesor García gritó y se fue corriendo. Roberto se volvió a dormir (22).

The only reason that the teacher halts his assault is because of the interference of the male figure of Roberto the rabbit. If “Roberto,” is an extended play on the fable of “Little Red Riding Hood,” the rabbit is a twist on the character of the hunter. Bettelheim describes this character archetype as an “attractive figure . . . because he rescues the good and punishes the bad” (Bettelheim 177). Additionally, a reader can identify the bunny as a helper animal because he provides hope for the protagonist (Bettelheim 258). As a combination of the archetypes of the huntsman and helper animal, Roberto provides hope to the good and innocent narrator by scaring off the malicious, predatory man. If Roberto truly is part of the young girl’s body, then she saves herself—flipping the plotline of the traditional fairy tale on its head. According to Bettelheim,

“Little Red Riding Hood” is the tale of a young girl confronting her sexuality (176). Likewise, Roberto the bunny can be interpreted as a metaphor for a girl’s blooming sexuality. In the next section, the rabbit Roberto will be discussed as a representation of a young woman’s burgeoning sexual and gender identity.

Metaphorical Representation

This section will discuss the hypothesis that the bunny mentioned in “Roberto” is not truly a bunny, but rather, a metaphor for the protagonist’s genitalia. In his conference paper, “Ninas maracadas exploración de la violencia en los cuentos “Roberto”, de Agustina Bazterrica, “Fin de curso”, de Mariana Enriquez y “Mariposas”, de Samanta Schweblin,” Sánchez Rivera discusses the symbolism that can be attributed to Roberto the bunny. Two themes are highlighted by his literary analysis of “Roberto”. The first of these ideas is that the bunny serves as a metaphor for both female genitalia and society’s expected sexual roles for women.

Using the word “conejo” as a metaphor for female genitalia can be explained by looking at the etymology of the Spanish word for rabbit (“Conejo, Coneja”). Conejo is rooted in the Latin word “cuniculus” which is descended from the word “cunnus” (“Cuniculus: Meaning, Definition”). “Cunnus” can serve as both a translation of the word women and as slang for female genitalia (Cunnus: Meaning, Definition). Also, the *Diccionario de la lengua española*⁷ notes that the word “conejo” can be used as slang for a vulva (“Conejo, Coneja”). Having established the idea that the word “conejo” is used as metaphorical representation of female genitalia, the following section will discuss scenarios in which a person’s genitalia deviates from

⁷ This dictionary is supported by collaboration between all of the Spanish language academies from Spanishspeaking countries who form the “Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española” (“Diccionario de la lengua Española).

the societal norm. This is combined with a discussion of the LGBTQ+ community in Argentina, as people with atypical genitalia fall under that community's umbrella.

LGBTQ+ Community in Argentina

IPSOS, which identifies itself as “the third largest Insights and Analytics company in the world,” conducted a survey related to LGBTQ+ Pride in 27 countries (LGBT+ Pride 2021 Global Survey). The size of the sample who completed this survey in Argentina was 500 people (LGBT+ Pride 2021 Global Survey). While, generally the respondents to the survey from Argentina had accepting views⁸ about the community, there were very few respondents who identified their gender identities as those pertaining to the LGBTQ+ community (LGBT+ Pride 2021 Global Survey). Three-percent of the survey respondents self-identified as someone who is not cisgender (LGBT+ Pride 2021 Global Survey). While this may seem like a low number, Argentina was found to have a higher percentage of “gender nonconforming” people than the global average (LGBT+ Pride 2021 Global Survey). Also, 12% of participants responded that they knew someone who was transgender or gender non-conforming (LGBT+ Pride 2021 Global Survey). If the narrator of “Roberto” is a gender nonconforming person, it would not be surprising if she had never met another gender nonconforming person. This would explain why she describes her genitals in a matter-of-fact way, as she may have never been told that some people's genitals could exist outside of societal norms. Coupled with the lack of sexual education courses⁹, this could explain the protagonist's seeming naïveté when it comes to her situation.

⁸ 53% of participants indicated that they had “spoken out against someone who is prejudiced against LGBT people” (LGBT+ Pride 2021 Survey).

⁹ The Psychological Perspective section of this paper discusses problems with the sexual education system in more detail.

In 2015, the American Psychological Association published “Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People” directed to an audience of psychological professionals. This text also defines relevant terminology based on the input of transgender and gender nonconforming people and organizations run by them (“Guidelines”). A number of these terms could potentially be applied to the protagonist. “Disorders of sex development (DSD, Intersex)” is somewhat of an umbrella term for conditions involving “atypical development of an individual’s physical sex characteristics,” (Guidelines 861). The publication also states that intersex people’s “conditions may involve differences of a person’s internal and/or external reproductive organs, sex chromosomes, and/or sex-related hormones that may complicate sex assignment at birth” (Guidelines 861). The term intersex, like the following terms, exists outside of the gender binary—a worldview that only accepts the genders of male and female, with nothing in between (Guidelines 834-835). Gender dysphoria was first defined in the fifth edition¹⁰ of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*; it involves “discomfort or distress related to incongruence between a person’s gender identity, and/or primary and secondary-sex characteristics,” (“Guidelines” 845-846). Gender dysphoria is something that transgender—“an umbrella term used to describe the full range of people whose gender identity and/or gender role do not conform to what is typically associated with their sex assigned at birth”— individuals experience due to the disconnect between their societally-assigned gender/sex and their own gender and/or sexual identities (Guidelines 862). With the above terminology defined, these definitions will now be applied to an analysis of the narrative.

¹⁰ This edition was published in 2013.

“Roberto” is a brief story that does not go into much detail; so, the inclusion of the detail that the predatory teacher is a math teacher must be significant. The binary system is something that is also used in the field of mathematics; when used in this context it is defined as a system “in which information is represented with a combination of either of two symbols,” (OED). This is similar to the concept of the “gender binary: the classification of gender into two discrete¹¹ categories of boy/man and girl/woman,” (Guidelines). If the narrator truly does exist outside of the societally accepted gender binary, then it is ironic that a teacher whose discipline has its foundation in strict categories would prey on this girl.

The narrator’s self-description gives readers insight that could point to her being gender nonconforming:

Tengo un conejo entra las piernas. Es negro. Yo le digo Roberto, pero se podría llamar Ignacio o incluso Carla, pero le digo Roberto porque tiene forma de Roberto. Es lindo porque es peludo y duerme mucho. Le conté a mi amiga Isabel. Le dije: “Isa, hace poco me creció un conejo entra las piernas. ¿Vos también tenés uno? Fuimos al baño de la escuela y se sacó la bombacha. Pero no tenía nada. Ella me pidió que le muestre a Roberto, pero me dio vergüenza y le dije que no (21).

Up until the point where she sees the genitals of her friend, the narrator has no shame or confusion about her genitals. Given the low number¹² of gender nonconforming people found to be in Argentina by the IPSOS, it is likely that the narrator has never discussed this matter with anyone else, as she might not realize that she could exist outside of societal norms (LGBT+ Pride 2021 Global Survey). It is also revealed that her genitals have a traditionally male name,

¹¹ Discrete is also a term commonly associated with mathematics, defined as “dealing with distinct or disconnected parts,” (OED).

Roberto. This could lead readers to believe that the narrator has a body part traditionally associated with male bodies. While the narrator does explain that she could call the rabbit by other names—such as a traditionally feminine one, she justifies his name by saying that he has the form of a Roberto. Nevertheless, the fact that the narrator mentions names typically associated with different genders could also imply that she is genderfluid. The guidelines put forth by the APA explain genderfluidity as a gender identity that is not immutable by nature (Guidelines 836). At the end of the chapter, the narrator feels shame associated with her genitals:

Me dijo que lo acompañara al baño porque nadie tenía que enterarse de nuestro secreto. ¿Cómo se llama tu conejo? Roberto. ¡Qué nombre más raro para un conejo! ¿Lo puedo ver? Me da vergüenza. (22)

Prior to discussing her genitals with Isabel and then Profesor Garcia, the narrator had no shame associated with her genitals. However, upon discussing them with others, who are statistically likely to be cisgender, she has negative feelings about herself. This naivete could be related to a lack of sexual education regarding non-cisgender identities.

Psychological Perspective

Grooming

The American Psychological Association published an article discussing the “somewhat nebulous” description of grooming in a psychiatric context (Winters, et al. 926). They mention that the concept of grooming is a relatively new term, “having first been identified in the early 1980’s when law enforcement agencies observed that extrafamilial child sexual abusers gravitated to child-serving organizations to gain access to victims and engaged in pre-offense behaviors prior to the commission of the abuse (Lanning 2018)” (qtd. in Winters, et al. 926). They also note that “the term ‘sexual grooming’ has been used interchangeably in the literature

with ‘entrapment,’ ‘engagement,’ ‘subjection,’ ‘emotional seduction,’ or ‘enticement’” (Winters, et al. 926).

The combination of the lack of a universal definition of grooming and the pushback against improved sexual education courses have made it very difficult to protect children from this crime (Centenera). It is also interesting to note that while religious officials are some of those who protest the most against improved sexual education, religious leaders are often the ones who are accused of sexual misconduct in the most well-known, large-scale grooming investigations (Centenera; Winters, et al. 926-927). The sexual grooming model (SGM) put forth by Winters, et al. will serve a guiding definition for grooming when analyzing “Roberto”. The “SGM propose[s] five overarching stages: 1) victim selection, 2) gaining access and isolating a child, 3) trust development, 4) desensitization to sexual content and physical contact, and 5) maintenance following the abuse” (928). The authors noted that they wanted this model to include “observable and measurable behaviors,” additionally, they conducted a follow-up validation study.

Looking at “Roberto” through this lens, it is quite easy to match plot elements with the five stages proposed by Winters, Kaylor, and Jeglic. Readers can see the rapid completion of the stages of the SGM model during the brief narrative. The first stage of victim selection occurs after Isabel tells the girls’ teacher about the protagonist’s claimed condition. Upon hearing this, the teacher smiles and asks the protagonist to come talk with him. At the end of this conversation, he fulfills the second step of the SGM model by isolating the young girl,

El professor García se sentó al lado mío y me dijo: ‘Sos muy linda. Isabel no sabe nada, vos no le hagas caso.’ Me dio un beso y después me dio otro beso más. Me

dijo que mañana después de clases quería ver mi conejito. Me dijo que lo quería ver para enseñarle a portarse bien. (Bazterrica 22).

At this time, he has also attempted to build trust with his victim and has begun exposing her to seemingly innocuous physical contact—the third stage of the SGM model. He continues these tactics the following day, “Me dijo que lo acompañara al baño porque nadie tenía que enterarse de nuestro secreto,” (Bazterrica 22). Assuring the young girl that he won’t tell anyone, the math teacher continues his facade of building trust (Bazterrica 22). As he prepares to continue his inappropriate behavior with the young girl, he reminds her of his position of power over her after removing her underwear “y me decía portate bien Nenita que tu professor te va a enseñar muchas cosas” (Bazterrica 22). However, Mr. García is unable to fully go through with the planned assault, and thus cannot complete the maintenance stage of the model either as he flees from the scene of the crime when Roberto is said to bare his teeth at the man.

Impacts from Grooming

In this short story, it is clear that Profesor García attempted to groom the young protagonist. It is possible that similar past events have lead her to create a bunny named Roberto to be her protector. A multitude of psychological diagnoses can be brought on by experiences like this. One study published by the U.S. National Library of Medicine suggest a strong connection between schizophrenia and hallucinations with childhood sexual assault (Khosravi et al). An article published in *La Nación* estimates that there are 500,000 people in Argentina with schizophrenia (“Esquizofrenia”). This article focuses on the cognitive impacts of schizophrenia such as memory loss (“Esquizofrenia”). Other characteristics of schizophrenia are included in the article by Khosravi; one description of schizophrenia from Khosravi’s study is applicable to the protagonist of “Roberto”:

it has been suggested that schizophrenia is best understood as a disorder of consciousness and self-experience (disturbed ipseity) that involved two key aspects of “hyper-reflexivity” (i.e., forms of exaggerating and alienating selfconsciousness) and “diminished self-affection” (i.e., a diminished sense of existing as a subject of awareness or agent of action) (Khosravi et al).

Throughout her narration, the narrator never describes herself; she gives no name or physical description of herself except for that of her bunny Roberto:

Tengo un conejo entre las piernas. Es negro. Yo le digo Roberto, pero se podría llamar Ignacio o incluso Carla, pero le digo Roberto porque tiene forma de Roberto. Es lindo porque es peludo y duerme mucho (21).

When looking at the protagonist through the lens of schizophrenia as defined by Khosravi et al., the disconnect she experiences from herself is obvious. The fragment of the text mentioned above is the closest that the narrator comes to describing herself, and it is only through descriptions of Roberto. The only other information that the narrator shares about herself is based on the fact that she expects to have the same private parts as her friend Isabel, who is presumably a cisgender girl. The narrator does not talk about herself at all unless it is in relation to another character. The concept of “a diminished sense of existing as a subject of awareness or agent of action” is exhibited by the lack of description of herself during her own account (Khosravi et al). The narrator describes her Roberto as sleeping a lot at the beginning of the story, and the story also closes with the description of Roberto returning to his slumber (Bazterrica 21-22). One could infer that the rabbit only wakes up when the young girl needs protection from sexual assault. This connects back to the fairytale perspective on this narrative, wherein Roberto is the young girl’s savior.

Conclusions

There is evidence for all three of the interpretations discussed in this paper. An argument can be made that “Roberto” is Bazterrica’s modern, feminist iteration of a fairy tale that is based loosely on “Little Red Riding Hood.” From both a literal and metaphorical reading of the text, it can be inferred that the protagonist is going through puberty. Like traditional iterations of this fairy tale, it is about a young girl grappling with her developing sexuality (Bettleheim 166-183). However, this young girl is empowered by her sexuality, as Roberto—the representative of her sexuality—is the one who saves her in the end. This empowerment could come from accepting her own sexual identity or from surviving sexual assaults. Regardless, of how one chooses to interpret what Roberto is a representation of—whether it be as non-cisgender genitalia, a real rabbit, or the protagonist’s coping skills— Roberto clearly represents hope and salvation for the young girl in a world of predatory men.

In addition to being a modern twist on a classic fairy tale, “Roberto” also serves as a contrast to stereotypical portrayals of teacher-student relationships in popular culture. The protagonist of “Roberto” is seemingly a young adolescent girl. In many popular teen tv shows, young teen girls engage in sexual relationships with their teachers that are portrayed in a positive light and even romanticized¹². The protagonist of “Roberto” subverts the expectation of men to hold the power in sexual situations. Ultimately, she does prevent the abuse from escalating. While the presence of a relationship between a male-teacher and female-student could be viewed as stereotypical, Bazterrica still manages to put a feminist spin on the story.

¹² A further discussion of the portrayals of student-teacher relationships both in fictional media and in the news will occur in the conclusion of this thesis.

“Roberto” is the story of a young girl whose teacher takes advantage of her. Other narratives in *Diecinueve garras y un pajarito oscuro* include predatory men who have different relationships with their victims. In “Tierra” a young girl is implied to have been sexually abused by her own father, causing her mother to abandon her. Similarly, this protagonist also describes parts of her experience with childlike whimsy as the protagonist of “Roberto” does.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

While the most well-known story from *Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro* is “Roberto,” “Tierra” is equally worthy of discussion. Beyond interviews with the author about “Tierra,” there have been no published discussions about this story. Like “Roberto,” “Tierra” is about a young girl who is molested by a trusted male authority figure. However, instead of occurring in the setting of the girl’s school, the abuse in this story occurs in the young girl’s own home. In an interview with Claudia Lorenzón of the Argentine newspaper *Telam*, Bazterrica herself discusses the similarities and differences between the two short stories (Lorenzón). She notes that while the more famous of the pair, “Roberto,” has a “victorious finale,” the ending of “Tierra” highlights the hopelessness and vulnerability of the female protagonist (Lorenzón). There are many similarities between these two narratives included in *Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro*. “Tierra” is also filled with details that portray how Argentine society treats families involved with cases of incest.

In the interview with Lorenzón, Bazterrica discusses the inspiration for “Tierra,” noting that she challenged herself to write a narrative dealing with incest that did not fit the mold that other authors had used in the past while writing about this particular theme. The most striking aspect of this story is not the incest, but rather the relationship between the mother and her daughter who is abused. Like “Roberto,” this short story first appeared in the collection *Antes del encuentro feroz* as its twelfth chapter (2016). In *Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro* it is the seventh chapter (2020).

“Tierra” describes a broken family dynamic, where both parents have failed their daughter. It is narrated in the first-person by a young girl named Camila. Other main characters

in the narrative include Camila's unnamed father; her mother, Nora; and Nora's friend, Betty. A linear timeline is not used—the narrative alternates between the present and flashbacks. The story opens *in media res*, describing the narrator's current predicament for readers:

La tierra me quema. No está seca. Quema porque hace calor y porque el sol le saca el agua de a poco. Debajo está papá. Mis pies descalzos están sobre la tierra que me lastima, están sobre papá (81).

“Tierra” opens with Camila at her father's burial site, pondering the events that led to this day. As Camila sits there, she remembers the dysfunctional relationships that she has with both of her parents:

Él siempre quería tenerme cerca. “Camila, ¿dónde vas? Vení, que te estoy llamando” . “Ahora voy, mamá quiere que la ayude a lavar los platos” . “Vos no lavás ningún plato, nada, que esas manos tienen que estar como las de las señoritas. Dejá que tu madre lo haga sola” Mamá dejó de mirarme. Así fue al principio, cuando papá sólo me quería cerca. Después con lo que pasó, mamá dejó de hablarme (81).

This textual fragment demonstrates how the father prioritizes spending time with Camila over his own wife, causing her to resent Camila. Not only does it highlight the inappropriate nature of the father-daughter relationship, but it also highlights the growing cracks in the foundation of Camila's relationship with her mother and Nora's relationship with her husband.

Camila reminisces about good times with her mother—and her mother's friend Betty—before the dissolution of these positive relationships. While she recalls these interactions, bugs are crawling all over Camila—who is sitting in dirt by her father's grave. The young girl recalls how her mother left her at the cemetery one day after this act of abandonment:

Mamá se fue. Quise seguirla, pero cuando corrí a su lado me agarró del pelo y me arrastró hasta la tumba de papá, y me empujó sobre la tierra húmeda. Cuando pude pararme ella ya estaba sobre la carreta. Corrí pero no pude alcanzarla (84).

This passage juxtaposes Camila and Nora's perspectives on their relationship. Camila wants to be with her mother, while Nora would do anything to be free of her daughter. Again, Camila recalls a conversation between her mother Nora and Betty where they discussed Nora's plans for the funeral and for Camila:

Mamá le dijo a Betty: "Lo voy a llevar lejos, al Cementerio de la Tranquera Negra". "¿Por qué tan lejos?" . "Porque no puedo soportar la idea de que esté cerca". "Pero eso es muy caro, Norita. Alquilar una carreta, hombres que te ayuden, dos días de viaje." "No me importa". ¿Qué vas a hacer con la nena?". Se hizo un silencio largo. "Tampoco soporto la idea de tenerla cerca" (84).

During the conversation, Betty attempts to advocate for Camila, but Nora has already given up on her daughter. Once more, Camila recalls better days with her mother and then switches to remembering the day of her father's death. He had been in Camila's bedroom and asked her to bring him a glass of wine. When she prepared the glass, she saw her mother's ant poison, and then she added some to her father's glass. After he dies from the poison, Camila's mother enters her room and states "me mataste a mi marido" (86). Camila's experience ends as she is nearly completely buried by dirt at her father's grave site:

Tengo las piernas dentro de la tierra, ya no las siento. Tengo los dos brazos y el resto del cuerpo hundidos. Por mi cara caminan hormigas rojas. No quiero matarlas, no puedo. El sol ya no me molesta, es casi de noche. . . . La tierra sigue húmeda. Cada vez estoy más cerca de papá (86).

In this final excerpt, Camila compares herself to her father, as she sits alone in the cemetery. The themes portrayed in “Tierra” are related to feminine societal roles. It explores the value of women who are no longer able to fulfill the roles expected of them in a patriarchal society. Despite the father’s abuse serving as the catalyst for the plot of the story, it is not the main focus of the plot. Rather, the central theme is how the identities and relationships of the two female family members are altered by this event. This chapter of the thesis will explore how the mother Nora’s role in the family is altered, how Camila’s perception of herself changes based on the abuse she endures, and how the relationship between the two of them is broken down by all these factors.

Camila’s Response to Sexual Abuse

The crux of the plot of “Tierra” is that Camila is sexually abused by her father. To begin, it is necessary to compare his actions with Argentina’s legal definition of sexual abuse— *abuso sexual* in Spanish. Argentina’s government provides definitions of various categories of sexual crimes (Ministerio de Justicia). In general, sexual crimes infringe on the victim’s bodily autonomy; their identity and privacy are also impacted by these crimes (Ministerio de Justicia). The charge of “Aggravated Corruption of a Minor” could apply to the father in “Tierra” (Ministerio de Justicia). This crime is defined as someone who commits sexual acts with a minor (Ministerio de Justicia). The legal definition also notes that the acts impact the “normal sexual development of a minor” (Ministerio de Justicia). Finally, it would be considered an aggravated charge because of the abuser’s relationship to the abusee (Ministerio de Justicia).

While the short story does not explicitly state that Camila is raped¹³ by her father, there is ample evidence to support the idea that she was assaulted by her father. When Camila reflects on her relationship with her father, she compares how she sits unmoving at his grave to other instances in which he required her to remain still

Papá me obligaba a estar parada por mucho tiempo. Al principio me quejaba, le decía que dolía, que no me gustaba, pero él me miraba sonriendo, me tapaba la boca y seguía. Las hormigas rojas me pican. Las mato. (83)

In this fragment, the narrator describes how her father's actions made her uncomfortable—which he was aware of. Despite the fact that his daughter was in pain, he did not stop. He even covered her mouth to prevent further protests—this could even be a metaphorical representation of how Camila's voice is silenced by her father's abuse. The metaphorical connection between Camila's father and red ants is also established in this excerpt. Camila's description of the day of her father's death gives more evidence that he was sexually abusing her:

Un día, el día en que papa murió, él estaba en mi cuarto. Me pidió un vaso de vino. 'Camila, traeme más vino. Apurate que esta botella ya no tiene nada'. 'Le digo a mama porque las botellas de vino están sobre el ultimo estante de la alacena y no llego'. 'Nada, vos no le decís nada a tu madre. Subite a un banco y me lo traés ahora'. Fui a la cocina, acerqué el banco a la alacena y agarré el vino. Cuando fui a buscar un vaso vi que mama se había olvidado el veneno para los bichos sobre la mesa de la cocina. Le puse tres cucharadas y lo revolví, como el

¹³ The word rape is not used in the penal system of Argentina, it included under the broader category of sexual assault (Ministerio de justicia). Violación is the translation for rape, and Argentina's Ministerio de Justicia notes that they now use the term abuso sexual agravado por acceso carnal instead of the word violación (Ministerio de Justicia).

azúcar. Le di el vaso y se lo tomó de un trago. Me miró raro, cómo sabiendo. Se agarró de la garganta, se puso rojo, gritó un poco y cayó al piso. Me quedé parada, mirando como su cara se ponía cada vez más roja, cada vez más hinchada. Temblaba y parecía que no iba a parar. Después dejó de moverse. (85-86)

This excerpt shows that Camila's father was in his daughter's bedroom. He also wanted to keep his actions hidden from his wife. This combination of evidence allows for readers to assume that he was assaulting his daughter. Also, this scene reestablishes the connection between Camila's father and red ants. Ant poison is used to kill him. His dying face is described as red—like the ants that later attack Camila while she sits by his burial spot. The use of the word 'bicho' in this story has interesting implications. While it literally means a small animal or insect, bicho also has various colloquial meanings ("Bicho: Diccionario de la lengua española"). It can mean both a penis and a person with bad intentions ("Bicho: Diccionario Lunfardo"). Camila's father is presumably a person with a penis, and he certainly has bad intentions towards her.

Another potential significance of the connection between ants and Camila's father is related to the overbearing influence of the patriarchy in Camila's life. Not only does it impact the societal expectations of girls and women in Argentina, but it has also influenced violence against them (Binstock 421-443). A study conducted by Argentine researchers from the University of Buenos Aires and from Argentina's National Scientific and Technical Research Council described how the patriarchy affects "gender-based violence" in Argentina. They note the presence of the "Ni una más" movement and its large demonstrations as evidence of Argentine women fighting against these acts of violence (Pispira, et al). Femicides are the easiest form of gender-based violence to collect statistics on, as they are more likely to be reported (Pispira, et al). In 2021, Argentina's government recognized 251 cases of femicides (Pispira, et al). This

reflects a similar global trend recognized by the United Nations where “a woman or girl is killed by a member of her family every 11 min[utes]” (Pispira, et al). These statistics highlight the everpervasive influence of the patriarchy on the lives of young women in Argentina. The ubiquity of the patriarchy can also be seen in which characters in “Tierra” have names. Camila, Nora, and Betty are the only named characters. Camila’s father and the two men who help transport them to the cemetery never have their names disclosed. This could represent how any male figure could commit these acts of violence against women. It could also signify how difficult it is for Camila and her mother to trust men, as they could view them as all having the same motivations when it comes to their interactions with women. Initially, Camila fights back against the continued presence of the ants while she sits graveside:

Hay hormigas y escarabajos. Me divierto matando a las hormigas. Los escarabajos me dan asco. Me siento porque ya me cansé de estar parada. No me importa que el vestido se ensucie, no importa. Las hormigas hacen una fila que se termina en un agujercito del suelo. Les pongo hojas, troncos chiquitos, piedras para que no puedan seguir con la fila, para que tengan que trepar. Algunas se pierdan, parece como si no entendiera, pero al rato encuentran la fila y desaparecen en el hueco (83).

Despite her attempts to fight back, the ants do not stop their attack on Camila. They merely slow down a bit, continuing to bite her. This parallels how Camila’s complaints to her father did not stop his abuse. On a larger scale this mirrors how the impact of the patriarchy is inescapable for Camila and other women in Argentina, its influence is as unending as the swarms of ants attacking Camila. The line referring to a line of ants heading to the dirt hole could also serve as a metaphorical representation of men seeking sexual gratification from women—

possibly through means of force. A study published in *The Journal of Sex Research* by gender studies researcher Virginia Braun and sociologist Celia Kitzinger discusses the various words that are used instead of the technical terms to refer to both male and female genitalia. They categorized the various slang terms that participants used based on common themes; one of these themes was that of a space (Braun and Kitzinger). Words such as hole are included under the category of space, and there are no slang terms for male genitalia under this category (Braun and Kitzinger). They explain that a space is a place that is unfilled, on a deeper level, it could be viewed as a receptacle for the penis and male pleasure (Braun and Kitzinger). In this metaphorical description where men are the ants and women are the hole, it emphasizes how women are objectified and viewed as existing for the purpose of sexually gratifying men.

Once she is abandoned by her mother, Camila changes from enjoying killing the ants to giving in to their inevitable attacks “por mi cara caminan hormigas rojas. No quiero matarlas, no puedo,” (86). As the one person who should have been her ally against a patriarchal society has abandoned her, Camila has lost all hope at stopping the onslaught of the ants. This acquiescence contrasts with how Camila was able to kill her father—a lone abuser in the familial home. Ultimately, Camila kills her father by poisoning him with ant poison. In the previously cited passage from page 85 of *Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro*, Camila describes how she mixes bug poison into the glass of wine that her father requested while he was seemingly assaulting her in her room. This death caused by ant poison solidifies the connection between the ants and Camila’s father. In addition to ant poison connecting the father with ants, the use of this murder weapon is interesting for other reasons. Poison is a means of murder stereotypically associated with women in US culture (Keating 2015). According to the Washington Post, while poison is more frequently used by female killers than by male killers, it is still a relatively rare method of

murder (Keating 2015). In a study by the United Nations, they found that poisoning as a “mechanism” of death is rather uncommon. The category that it falls under in their data “without weapon/other mechanism” is the second least common cause of death (United Nations). Only death by unspecified means is a less common cause of death (United Nations). This category contains other causes of homicide as well, so poisoning would only make up a part of this statistic. While the use of poison as a murder weapon is relatively uncommon, in Argentina, males are more likely to be murdered by a family member than females are, regardless of the murder mechanism (United Nations). In fact, when looking at a murder victim’s relationship to their killer, there are more male victims than female victims in all but one¹⁴ of the categories recognized in the dataset for Argentina (United Nations). For the following victim-murderer relationships, there were more male victims than female victims in Argentina between the years of 2015 and 2022: when the murderer was a family member of the victim, when the murderer had a relationship other than a family or intimate partner relationship with the victim, when the relationship between the murderer and victim was unknown, and when the murderer had no prior relationship with the victim (United Nations).

The rarity of poison being used in a homicide could indicate that Bazterrica chose this murder weapon due to its metaphorical significance. This detail ties into the extended metaphor of the predatory father as a pest. It is also mentioned that Nora used this poison in her household work, “quisiera tener el veneno del jardín con el que mama mata todos los bichos” (84). If ‘los bichos’ are the men benefitting from a patriarchal society, then Nora could have been using this poison to defend both herself and Camila from the impact of the patriarchy.

¹⁴ Women in Argentina were murdered by intimate partners more often than men were (United Nations).

On the day in which Camila kills her father, it was seemingly not a pre-meditated murder but a conscious act carried out in the heat of the moment. After her father instructed her to refill his glass of wine, Camila narrates her actions of mixing the pesticide into her father's wine glass, similarly to how one would stir sugar into a beverage (85).

She did not plan to poison her father, rather it was an impulsive act that was sparked by finding the pesticide in the kitchen. When Nora arrives, Camila explains to her mother ““No quise mama, pero me lastimaba. Te hacía llorar”” (86). Camila justifies the murder by the fact that her mother was saddened by her husband's actions, so it is fitting that she uses the poison that she has seen her mother use in the past. Perhaps, this was even an indirect way of her mother protecting Camila discretely. If this was the case, however, Nora does not acknowledge the role she played in her husband's murder. It is undeniable that Nora was aware that her daughter was being sexually abused. In addition to the proof of abuse provided by Camila, Nora's conversation with her friend also alludes to abuse:

Un día le dije a mama que me iba al kiosco, pero me quedé y me escondí debajo de la mesa de la cocina. Nadie podía verme porque estaba tapada por el mantel. Betty vino al rato. “¿Está la mocosa?” . “No, se fue al kiosco” . “¿Qué vas a hacer, Norita?” . “No sé” . “¿Hace cuánto los viste?” . “Un mes” . “¿Ellos te vieron?”. “No, creo que no” (82).

This conversation that Camila overhears establishes that Nora and Betty are aware that there is something abnormal about the relationship between Camila and her father. Placing blame on the child in cases of incest is quite common. The *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* published a study by gender studies researcher, Dr. Efrat Shaked, and her team that explored the social discourse surrounding victims of incest and its impact on them. Shaked et al notes some of the

common factors that victims internalize from this discourse: “self-blame and shame . . . removal of guilt from the perpetrator . . . [and] absolving the ignoring environment.” Camila has seemingly internalized these factors, warping her perception of herself and her family situation. One of the participants in this study noted during the interview portion that she did not blame her parents for not noticing that she had been sexually abused by another member of the family because she “didn’t expect them to” (Shaked et al). It is also explained in this study that “survivors of incest who chose to inform their relatives or report the police often encounter negative reactions varying from utter denial, through to being blamed for the abuse, to expecting them to forgive the abuser” (Shaked et al 849). If Camila had similar feelings about her situation, that could explain why she had no ill feelings directed towards her mother. Shaked’s study reiterates throughout itself that society has a tendency to blame or discredit survivors of incest, leading them to have trouble trusting others in the future (Shaked et al). If Camila had ever witnessed a situation where a girl was blamed for a man’s misdeeds in the past, she may have internalized this in addition to internalizing the derogatory words that her mother and Betty used to refer to Camila.

Aftermath of the murder

Throughout “Tierra” Camila’s inner monologue shows her changing self-perception. Paired with condemnation from her mother, this causes Camila to have a warped perception of herself and her role in the family. In her discussion of Argentine families who have coped with incest, Ruth Teubal—a professor of social work— notes the shame that many victims of incest face (Teubal 8). The previously referenced study from the *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* also discusses the feelings of shame and guilt that victims of incest experience (Shaked et al). This article describes the impact that external, societal discourse can have on victims’ self-

perceptions. In “Tierra” Camila’s view of herself is affected by the way that her mother talks about the young girl. The young narrator does not explicitly describe how she feels about herself. However, she compares herself to her father—someone that she can perceive as having done wrong in making her mother sad. As she narrates the story, Camila is sitting at her father’s gravesite, becoming more intertwined with the earth that entombs her father, “debajo está papa. Mis pies descalzos están sobre la tierra que me lastima, están sobre papá” (81). In describing herself “estoy más arriba” than her father, the narrator gives her physical location and a comparison of herself to her father (81). As time passes and Camila remembers familial interactions, she describes the cemetery she is at:

Nadie deja flores en este lugar abandonado. Es el Cementerio de la Tranquera Negra, el que está muy lejos del pueblo. Tan lejos que mamá gastó todos los ahorros en alquilar una carreta y a dos hombres para que lo transportaron por dos días. (82)

Her current physical location mirrors the isolation from society that many survivors of incest experience (Shaked, et al). The cemetery that she is at, “Tranquera Negra,” is not a real location in Argentina. Its name can be translated as the Black Gate, which could be a reference to the symbolic gates of death. The color black is often associated with death and evil (Ferber, 2728). In many literary traditions, there is a gate or door separating the world of the living from the realm of the dead (Ferber, 55). While at this gravesite that is named after the dividing space between life and death, Camila’s perception of herself moves in a negative direction. She recalls the negative comments that her mother and Betty made about her as well as the way her mother treated Camila when she left the cemetery. Despite these negative comments, Camila was still

devoted to her mother. When she explains herself after killing her father, Camila rationalizes her behavior. In her mind, Camila was saving herself and her mother from her father.

Following her contemplation of the murder and the events surrounding it, Camila concludes the story by once more comparing her position in the earth with that of her father “Tengo las piernas dentro de la tierra, ya no las siento. Tengo los dos brazos y el resto del cuerpo hundidos. . . Cada vez estoy más cerca de papá” (86). By the end of this account, the young narrator no longer mentally distances herself from her father. Rather, she essentially pictures herself as equally as bad as him, despite her noble motivations for what she did. This highlights the negative feelings—like guilt, shame, and isolation— that many survivors of incest experience (Shaked, et al.). Given the symbolic imagery of the name of the cemetery, Camila may even perceive herself as following her father into hell due to her actions, which she may now perceive as being as bad as her father’s abuse was. Camila’s self-image is partially defined by her mother’s opinions. However, Nora’s opinions are shaped by how she has been impacted by her husband’s actions.

Impact on the Mother

Nora has to contend with the contradictory thoughts that both she and her daughter are victims. She is aware of her daughter’s abuse; however, she also hints at her own abuse at the hands of husband. Robert Hazelwood edited a book that described a descriptive study of the female partners of child molesters. This study involved interviewing mothers whose husband/long-term boyfriends sexually assaulted the women’s own children—some of the victimized children were also the biological children of the male abusers (Hazelwood). The study also noted the likelihood of the wives of child molesters also being abused by their husbands (Hazelwood). Information collected by Pispari, et al indicates some other factors that

would increase Nora's risk of being a victim of gender-based violence. Nora is at a higher risk because she is in an "intimate partner relationship;" over half of the femicides committed internationally are committed by romantic partners of the victims (Pispari, et al). Her role as a stay-at-home mother could also highlight a higher risk of being a victim of gender-based violence (Pispari, et al). A survey carried out in Argentina found that women who did not have access to higher education were more likely to be abused (Pispari, et al). While the narrator never outright states that her father abuses her mother as well, a conversation that Camila overhears between her mother and Betty suggests that her mother is also suffering from abuse. A conversation between Nora and Betty about Nora's next steps after discovering her husband's secrets highlights Nora's fear of her husband. When describing how it had been a month since Nora had seen her husband and her daughter in the bedroom, Nora confides in Betty that she fears that her husband would kill her if she reported him (82). This occurs after she acknowledges Betty's statement that the abuse of her daughter will only grow worse over time (82). Readers could interpret this as Nora assuming the worst possible outcome or referring to past threats and abuse. At the very least, Nora is wary of her husband. At worst, she is thinking back to past threats and/or abuse.

One reason for Nora to be concerned about losing her husband is due to lack of financial support. Binstock collected data about typical family breadwinners in Argentina (429). In households comprised of a couple with children, the majority of the time, the breadwinner is a man (429). Women are generally the breadwinners when they live by themselves or as a single parent (428-429). It is also noted that up until the past three decades, Argentina, like many other western countries maintained patriarchal expectations of families (421). While the concept of

what makes a family has evolved, Nora and her husband were likely still brought up by parents who set forth the expectation for a traditional family where the man in the primary breadwinner. In the short story, Nora is only seen carrying out household duties—she is seemingly a stay-at-home-mother. Her husband, on the other hand, used to travel for work. Camila's reflections portray a time when her relationship with Nora was more pleasant while her father was working: Mamá sacaba la jarra de vidrio de la heladera y me servía agua despacio. Hacía un ruido largo mientras el vaso se llenaba y salpicaba toda la mesa con gotitas. Yo me acercaba y me quedaba al lado de la mesa para que las gotitas me cayeran en la cara. Mamá me miraba, sonreía y me sacaba las gotitas de la cara con besos. Eso pasaba cuando yo era muy chiquita, cuando papá viajaba mucho, cuando casi nunca estaba. Después lo echaron y no viajó más (84).

While there was a time when Camila's father traveled for work regularly, he has since been fired and stays at home now. If he was the breadwinner of the family, then Nora would now feel the stress of this financial insecurity. This stress is compounded by the knowledge of her husband's incest. When discussing the plans for the burial of her husband with her friend Betty, it appears that Betty is aware of the potential financial woes of the family. A passage from "Tierra" previously quoted in this analysis describes the conversation between Nora and Betty about the funeral plans. Nora plans to bury her husband just about as far away as is possible (84). When Betty hears that her friend Nora is going to bury her husband at a distant cemetery, she promptly brings up the cost and necessary extra steps of doing so. Perhaps, the women had discussed monetary issues before. If having enough money for the family to get by was a concern for Nora, she might not want to divorce her husband. This would lead to both a lack of income and the additional expenditures associated with the legal fees for divorce.

The actions of Nora's husband have corrupted their family. This is quite relevant given the importance of the nuclear family unit in Argentine culture. A chapter from the book *La Argentina en el siglo XXI*, written by sociologist Georgina Binstock discusses how the idea of what defines a family has changed over time in Argentina (421-442). Binstock notes that while the concept of family has evolved to be inclusive of more than just the traditional, heterosexual married couple with children, the most common composition of a household is still that of a straight, married couple with their children (429).

As there is a lot of shame associated with incestuous family situations, there are not many interviews conducted with the women in these families. Out of the twenty women interviewed in the study by Hazelwood, et al, only one had a similar outlook of the situation to Nora; the researchers' write up of this woman states:

One woman admitted that she harbored feelings of anger toward the molested child. She explained that even though she intellectually understood that the child was a victim and her husband a criminal, it was very difficult for her not to believe the daughter, in some way, contributed to the molestation. The daughter was well developed for her age and very mature in her behavior. Furthermore, the victim had defended the molester and became angry at the mother for reporting him to the police. The mother advised that upon learning of the abuse, which had been ongoing for five years, she felt she was literally in a state of shock. So much so that she waited two hours before calling the police to report the offense (3).

Unlike Nora, this woman did eventually inform law enforcement of her husband's crimes. Differing family roles in Argentina and the U.S. help to explain this decision. In Teubal's work with women whose husbands molested their children, she notes that many women

do not want their children to be raised without a father (“Abuso sexual intrafamiliar” 375). The high prevalence of traditional households in Argentina could explain why Nora is afraid to lose her husband out of fear of the potential impact on their societal image and why she lies about her husband’s cause of death. Camila’s narration reveals Nora’s dishonesty when telling others about her husband’s death:

No me habló más. Mamá convenció al pueblo de que su marido había muerto de un paro cardíaco. Todos lo creyeron, nadie preguntó, nadie sospechó. No sé qué habrá dicho de mí. Quizás la gente piensa que me escapé (86).

Even though Nora was no longer speaking to her daughter, Camila is still cognizant of the falsehoods that she has told others. This could imply that Camila knows her mother to be concerned about appearances. This deception could be an attempt by Nora to avoid further damage to her societal role as a mother and wife when dealing with the public. Nora’s husband’s actions have impacted multiple aspects of her life. Her relationships with both members of her nuclear family are shattered, she fears both the physical and financial ramifications for turning her husband in, and she must worry about what others will think of her family.

In the article where she discusses the idea that the mothers of sexually abused children can also be considered victims of the abuse, Teubal provides definitions for primary victims, secondary victims, and co-victims in incest cases (“Las madres frentes” 10-12). The primary victims are those who are most objectively affected by the abuse (“Las madres frentes” 10). Secondary victims, on the other hand, suffer due to the consequences of the abuse instead of the abusive acts themselves (“Las madres frentes” 11). Finally, a mother could be a co-victim with her child if she had also endured abuse from the husband. Given the uncertainty about what

abuse Nora may or may not have faced at her husband's hands, she is definitely a secondary victim of his abuse if not a primary co-victim with her daughter as well.

Effect on the Mother-Daughter relationship

While the abusive relationship between Camila and her father is the catalyst for the events of "Tierra", the impact of the abuse on the mother-daughter relationship is more central to the story. The young narrator emphasizes how their relationship has changed by describing the evolving role that water has played in past mother-daughter interactions. In literary tradition, moisture and liquids are associated with youth and livelihood (Ferber 89, 99). Likewise, dryness—and a lack of water—is associated with aging and loss of vitality (Ferber, 99). Initially, water/moisture was a part of positive interactions between the mother and daughter. This is highlighted in a passage previously referenced in this chapter (pp 83-84). Camila recalls a day when she was thirsty and her mother poured her a glass of water. The glass of water spilled, and drops of water splashed onto Camila's face (83). Her mother's reaction was to kiss the water droplets off of her daughter's face (83). At the end of this recollection, Camila notes that this day occurred when her father was still almost out of the house while traveling for work (84). During this interaction, the mother and daughter share the water—the metaphorical representation of youth (Ferber 99). They are not competing with one another, merely enjoying a loving relationship. This pleasant interaction occurred while the father was still traveling for work and could not create conflict between them. Once the father was at home more often, these positive mother-daughter interactions would no longer occur. In her first graveside recollection, Camila notes how her father commanded her not to help her mother with the dishes "que esas manos

tienen que estar como las de las señoritas” (81). He seemingly views his wife as aged and dried up¹⁵, and more fitted to household work than his young daughter is. This undermines Nora’s role as a wife and partner to her husband, placing her in a more subservient position (“Abuso sexual intrafamiliar” 397). The final interaction involving liquid between Camila and her mother is when Nora abandons her daughter at the cemetery:

Mamá se fue con los hombres. Me dejó acá, en el Cementerio de la Tranquera Negra. Hicieron un agujero en la tierra, metieron a papá y lo taparon. Mamá les dijo a los hombres que esperaran en la carreta, que nos dejaran un momento solas. Cuando se fueron lejos, mamá miró la tierra oscura y la escupió. Después me escupió a mí. Me quedé parada, sin entender. Mamá se fue. Quise seguirla, pero cuando corrí a su lado me agarró del pelo y me arrastró hasta la tumba de papá y me empujó sobre la tierra húmeda. (84)

In this last interaction, Nora spits on her daughter, essentially throwing her daughter’s metaphorical youth back in her face. The story culminates with Camila in the moist dirt, stuck as a naïve girl who will never have the chance to grow into adulthood.

In the previously cited article on primary, secondary, and co-victims, Teubal discusses the many ways that mothers of incest survivors are negatively impacted by this experience, to the point that they may also be considered victims (“Las madres frente”, 3-15). Teubal notes that the mothers of sexually abused children are often blamed for not protecting their children from the abuse (“Las madres frente”, 9). Additionally, as wives, the bonds with their husbands are damaged as these women feel obligated to choose a side between their spouse and their children

¹⁵ Sexual desire is often represented by fire in literary tradition (Ferber 75). Camila’s father may feel that his sexual desires can only be quenched by his young daughter and not his aged wife.

(“Abuso sexual intrafamiliar”, 397). This can lead women to feel like they have been inadequate wives, causing their husbands’ deviant behaviors (“Abuso sexual intrfamiliar”, 383). Thus, their self-esteem in their roles as mothers is damaged. The discussion between the mother and daughter once Nora discovers her husband’s dead body demonstrates how Nora continues to place blame on her daughter and how Camila views her mother as a fellow victim:

Mamá entró en el cuarto, sin mirarme. “Lo mataste”. “Sí”. Mamá no dijo nada. Miraba a papá y parecía que quería hablar, pero no le salían las palabras. “No quise, mamá, pero me lastimaba. Te hacía llorar”. “Callate. Ayúdame a ponerlo en la cama”. La ayudé a cargarlo y, en cuanto estuvo en la cama, me largué a llorar. “Callate , mocosa de mierda. Esto es tu culpa. Me mataste a mi marido”. No podía parar de llorar, no podía contestarle. “Ahora es este. Mañana puede ser otro”. No pude entenderle, yo sólo quería que ella me volviera a mirar, que limpiara mis lágrimas con besos. (86).

Despite knowing that her husband has abused their daughter frequently, Nora seemingly has chosen to align herself with her husband instead of with her daughter. Camila’s reasoning for hurting her father emphasizes her naïve nature—she explains that her father made her mother cry. Meanwhile, Nora claims the victim as her husband but not as Camila’s father. Nora’s identity as both a wife and as a mother is damaged by her husband’s abuse of their daughter. Camila’s memories from before the murder show how Nora’s husband had pushed her away to spend more one-on-one time with their daughter:

Él siempre quería tenerme cerca. “Camila, ¿dónde vas? Vení, que te estoy llamando.” “Ahora voy, mamá quiere que la ayude a lavar los platos”. “Vos no lavás ningún plato, nada, que esas manos tienen que estar como las de las

señoritas. Dejá que tu madre lo haga sola”. Mamá abría la canilla con fuerza. El agua tiraba los platos apilados, pero a ella no le importaba que se rompieran las cosas. Mamá dejó de mirarme. Así fue el principio, cuando papá sólo me quería cerca. Después, con lo que pasó, mamá dejó de hablarme. Se sentaba en la silla mecedora y miraba un punto en la pared. “Mamá, que mirás?”. “Dejá a tu madre en paz, Camila. Vení que papá quiere mostrarte algo”. Mamá se quedaba quieta, la silla se quedaba quieta. (81)

This demonstrates how the husband overlooked his wife. In expressing his desire for Camila’s hands to remain young-looking, he made his wife to do more work so that their daughter could maintain her youthful appearance. His comment that he wants his daughter to maintain young-looking hands – along with the actual sexual abuse that he carries out— is indicative of the father’s physical preference in women. Nora’s anger at her family situation is also displayed in this fragment. Upon hearing her husband prioritize Camila, she uses the faucet forcefully. She also begins ignoring Camila. As the abuse goes on for longer, she no longer shows anger but rather hopelessness as she sits unmoving while her husband continues abusing their daughter. The most explicit portrayal of the degraded mother-daughter relationship is in the use of the word “mocosa” to describe Camila. “Mocosa” can be used to mean a young person who is misbehaved and bold (“Mocoso”). It can also be a synonym for a brat (“Mocoso”). The first time that it is used to describe Camila is when Nora and Betty believe that she is out of the house in a passage previously cited in this text (82). Camila feigned leaving to go shopping, so that she could listen to her mother and Betty’s conversation while hidden underneath of the kitchen table (82). Under the belief that Camila is out of the house, the two adult women refer to Nora having witnessed her husband and daughter together in the bedroom (82). During this

conversation, Betty refers to Camila as “mocosa,” contrasting with her earlier actions of bringing candy to Camila when visiting with Nora (82). In the past, Betty had been friendly to Camila, as she is the daughter of her friend. The transition to referring to her as “mocosa” demonstrates how Nora’s perspective of her daughter has impacted Camila’s relationships with people outside of the family. Even though Nora has seemingly only seen her husband and daughter in bed together once, she and her friend already refer to them as one entity. They allude to seeing both of them committing a hurtful act, instead of Camila being harmed by her father. This shows that the women may view Camila to be equally at fault as her father.

Later, following the death of Nora’s husband, she tells Betty her plans for the funeral and life after it. In this instance, Betty does not describe Camila as harshly as she had in the previous conversation:

“‘Tampoco soporto la idea de tenerla cerca’. ‘Pero, es tu hija’. ‘Ya no, después de lo que pasó’. ‘Ella no tiene la culpa’. ‘Sí, la tiene’. ‘No entiendo, Norita. Ella es una víctima’. ‘No, no lo es. Ella es peligrosa’”. (85)

Following the murder of her father, Betty recognizes Camila as a victim. Unlike the women in the study on the wives of child molesters, Nora seems to truly believe that her daughter is to blame for the family’s misfortunes (Hazelwood). The second and final time that Camila is called “mocosa” is when her mother confronts her after her father’s death “Callate, mocosa de mierda. Esto es tu culpa. Me mataste a mi marido,” (86). The word “mierda” is combined with this term to amplify its insulting nature. Nora is undoubtedly caught off guard by her daughter’s act of patricide. However, she continues to blame her underage daughter for the murder that was prompted by her adult husband’s actions.

Camila is both the narrator and the protagonist of “Tierra”. She is the one who is abused and the one who enacts revenge on her abuser. Nevertheless, it is her mother, Nora, who undergoes the most changes throughout the story. While she began as a kind and loving mother, by the end of the story, she is emotionally withdrawn from her role as a mother. The text makes it clear that Camila is the primary victim of her father, as she is undoubtedly a recipient of his abusive actions (“Las madres frentes” 10). Less clear, however, is the extent to which her mother Nora has been abused. Nora is at least a secondary victim of her husband, as she experiences consequences of her husband’s abuse of their daughter (“Las madres frentes” 11). While Nora is cruel to Camila, they both still ultimately suffer because of the husband. So, based on the evidence presented in the text, a label of “co-victimas” seems most applicable in this situation (“Las madres frentes” 12).

The sexual assault is Camila’s father’s main offense against the family. However, it impacts many aspects of the family’s lives. Both Camila and Nora experience effects on their psychological states as well as on their roles in the family. It is easy to avoid discussing heavier topics—such as those discussed in “Tierra”. For people like Camila and Nora, these topics are inescapable. Bazterrica deftly exposes the multi-faceted consequences of the sexual abuse while stepping around potentially triggering descriptions of the act of the abuse itself. This story is important as it prompts discussion of the impacts on survivors of abusive family dynamics. It urges readers to reconsider their pre-conceived notions of the romantic partners of abusive men. This narrative can evoke empathy in readers, something which they will hopefully also apply to victims of similar situations in real life

CONCLUSIONS

Both “Roberto” and “Tierra” are complex narratives that can be interpreted in a variety of different manners. This thesis has already discussed their general connection to Argentine culture. The next step is to discuss their relevance to culture on a greater scale. In an interview with Vanessa Henríquez Cortés, a professor from a Chilean university, Bazterrica discussed how her debut novel *Cadáver exquisito* has been used in classrooms in Argentina. She was excited to note how the students, who normally “están inmersos en plataformas como Netflix” were engaged with reading her book (Henríquez Cortés). Bazterrica is a champion of the arts, has previously run an art initiative, and is active in writing workshops in Argentina (Henríquez Cortés). Promoting reading among the future generation must be an incredibly rewarding experience for her. I believe that her writing, such as the short stories discussed in this thesis, could have a place in American schools as well. While the themes of her writing are brutal, her books are still incredibly popular among young readers—especially on social media.

Stories like hers have been used in American classrooms countless times. Dr. Victor MaloJuvera found that using the novel *Speak*¹⁶ in a middle school language arts classroom led to students being less likely to agree with date-rape myths when compared to students who had not studied this book. While the environment and work of literature in this study are quite different than the works of interest in this thesis, this study lays the groundwork for the idea that fictional narratives of sexual assault can be used to improve education on the topic of sexual assault. Discussing stories like “Roberto” and “Tierra” outside of a classroom setting would likely also have a positive impact on readers’ empathy.

¹⁶ The plot of this book revolves around the teenage narrator coming to terms with her status as a victim of date-rape (Malo-Juerva).

The idea that the short stories by Bazterrica can be used to educate others about the issues of people with less privilege is aligned with Bazterrica's ethos. In an interview about her newest novela *Las indignas* she mentioned that she wants her writing to give a voice to those who do not have voices in our society (Arellano). Another interview with Filo News celebrating the release of her most recent publications notes that Bazterrica wants her writing to prompt critical thinking amongst her readers (Romanazzi) In the previously cited interview with Hernández Cortés, she noted that she was happy to hear that some schools in Argentina were incorporating *Cadáver exquisito* into their curriculum.

Bazterrica's works also play an important role in discussions of sexual assault in both fictional media and the news. In addition to being comparable to real-life abuses, as was mentioned in both chapters of the thesis, these kinds of stories play an important role in popular media. Teacher-student relationships have a storied history of portrayal in the media. There is an unsettling pattern of the romanticizing of student-teacher relationships in television shows. Many popular drama shows with teen audiences have portrayed teacher-student relationships in a positive and even enticing light. An article published in the *Louisiana Law Review* by Christine Corcos lists some teacher-student relationships that were portrayed in popular shows. One of the most infamous portrayals of this type of relationship is in the teen drama *Pretty Little Liars* (Corcos). Though the couple does eventually marry, they first met when the teen girl was a student in a high school English class taught by her future-husband (Corcos). Other teen shows that feature this trope that were mentioned in this article include *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, *Skins*¹⁷, and *One Tree Hill*.

¹⁷ *Skins* is the only one of the aforementioned tv shows that has a relationship between a female teacher and a male student (Corcos). Two other popular teen tv shows *Gossip Girl* and *Riverdale* also portray relationships with male victims

An article published in *The Journal of Social Psychology* discusses the differing perceptions of student-teacher relationships based on the gender of the teachers (Howell et al). Despite the romanticizing of teacher-student relationships in fiction, the public perception of male perpetrators is still overwhelmingly negative (Howell et al). Outside of fiction, the public perception of predatory teachers is still sexist and problematic in nature (Howell et al). This is attributed to the societal idea that men are more of sexual beings than women are. The general perception is that male teachers are more predatory than female teachers, with different motives assigned to them (Howell, et al). This warped perception of female abusers is changing, as seen in the Letourneau case. Forbes Magazine conducted an interview with her victim Vili Fualaau following the release of a movie that was incredibly similar to his real life experience with his teacher (Murray). Mary Kay Letourneau sexually abused Fualaau while he was twelve years old and enrolled in her sixth-grade class, eventually she would give birth to his children (Murray). In an interview, Fualaau noted how his perception of his abuse had evolved over time. Similar to the case of some Argentine school children, it took time and perspective to recognize how he had been taken advantage of (Centenera and Murray). In spite of this, Forbes noted that the relationship was still portrayed in an exploitative manner in a Netflix movie inspired by the case (Murray). The protagonist of “Roberto” subverts the expectation for men to hold the power in sexual situations. Ultimately, she does prevent the abuse from escalating. While the presence of a relationship between a male-teacher and female-student could be viewed as stereotypical, Bazterrica still manages to put a feminist spin of the story.

When discussing the inspiration for writing “Tierra” Bazterrica described how her goal was to write an incest narrative that did not fit the traditional archetype (Lorenzón). She achieved her goal of subverting this story stereotype as well. When incestuous relationships are portrayed

in media, they are sometimes shown as a part of life in a different time. In the hit fantasy show *Game of Thrones* and its spinoff *House of the Dragons*, members of the noble families engage in incest, often leading to psychologically troubled or “mad” offspring (Ough). Incest is also a common trope in the genre of gothic fiction (DiPlacidi). Reviewers of famous gothic literature have noted their disgust with the trope (DiPlacidi). “Tierra” does not seek to disgust readers with over-the-top descriptions of incestuous sexual abuse. Rather, the incest serves to critique the traditional family unit under the patriarchy, similar to the gothic tradition (DiPlacidi). Both of these stories portray sexual abuse in a non-exploitative manner, allowing the girls to reclaim their sexual agency.

Bazterrica’s writing masterfully delves into controversial topics, prompting conversations about taboo topics. The female characters portrayed in “Roberto” and “Tierra” represent the anxiety that many women feel in association with their bodily autonomy. The girls in these stories represent the people who benefit most from the work of feminist organizations. One of the most prominent organizations that fights for women’s rights is *Ni una menos*, a feminist movement that originated in Argentina (Carta orgánica”). *Ni una menos* has many causes that they are dedicated to including workplace equality, access to abortions, and believing the testimonies of female¹⁸ abuse victims (“Carta orgánica”). They are also against systemic abuses of power such as those in the educational¹⁹, judicial, and medical systems (“Carta orgánica”). *Ni una menos* acknowledge that they build upon past feminist and progressive movements²¹:

¹⁸ This includes not just cisgender women but also members of the LGBTQ+ community and others who are harmed by a heteronormative society.

¹⁹ Her most recent publication *Las indignas* is partially inspired by her experience attending Catholic school as young girl, and this novel deals with an extremist religion and its oppression of women (Arrellano and Frías). ²¹ Other well-known feminist movements are *MeToo* and the *4B movement*.

Somos parte de esa historicidad y, a la vez, contemporáneas de un movimiento de mujeres novedoso, potente, popular, transversal, libertario, con mil rostros y miles de entonaciones, que es regional e internacional, a la vez que se inscribe en cada parte del territorio nacional. Ni Una Menos es un colectivo que reúne a un conjunto de voluntades feministas, pero también es un lema y un movimiento social. (“Carta orgánica”)

The protagonist of “Roberto” is potentially not cisgender and abused in a school setting. So, she could be described as gender nonconforming person who is victimized by the educational system. “Tierra” highlights the importance of believing abuse victims—or at the very least not blaming them for their abuse. It also portrays the societally expected unpaid labor of women in the household: another cause of interest for the feminist organization. If the sexual assaults portrayed in either of these stories had resulted in pregnancy, these two young girls would have potentially sought abortions, which this group would assist with.

Bazterrica’s stories highlight the atrocities that women face in mundane contexts. These stories allow for readers to either see their own suffering reflected in characters or to open their eyes to abuse that is different from how society typically describes them. These stories portray resistance against a patriarchal society, which women strive for all around the world. They are entertaining stories that can and should be used to promote discussions of taboo topics.

Works Cited

“10 Tips for Parents to Teach Children about Body Safety and Boundaries.” Home, America

STudisn Academy of Pediatrics, 11 Apr. 2023, www.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/health--safetytips/10-tips-for-parents-to-teach-children-about-body-safety-and-boundaries/.

Álvarez Lobato, Carmen. “Una mirada a la infancia: El espanto social en Las cosas que perdimos en el fuego, de Mariana Enríquez.” *Escritos*, vol. 30, no. 64, 2022, pp. 60–74.

DOI.org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.18566/escr.v30n64.a04>.

Amaral, Lara Luiza Oliveira, and Gilmei Francisco Fleck. *As bruxas da america latina:*

Memorias das cicatrizes. Novas narradoras latino-americanas: corpo, memória, imaginario, Universidade Estadual de Mato Grosso do Sul, 2018, pp. 221-243.

Amatto, Alejandra. “*Transcultural el debate*. Los desafíos de la crítica literaria latinoamericana

actual en dos escritoras: Mariana Enriquez y Liliana Colanzi.” *Valenciana*, no. 26, www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2007-25382020000200207.

American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th,

ed. American Psychiatric Publishing, 2013. DSM-V, doi-org.db29.linccweb.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596.dsm02 .

Answers to Your Questions about Transgender People, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression,

American Psychological Association, www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/transgender-people-genderidentity-gender-expression. Accessed 20 Nov. 2023.

Arellano, Zeth. “Somos personas con matices, oscuridades, hay muchas mujeres machistas:

Agustina Bazterrica”. *Maremotom*, 28 Nov. 2023, <https://maremotom.com/somos-personas-con-maticesoscuridades-hay-muchas-mujeres-machistas-agustina-bazterrica/>.

Arnés, Laura A., Lucía M. De Leone, and María J. Punte. *Historia Feminista De La Literatura Argentina. en la intemperie: poéticas de la fragilidad y la Revuelta*. Universidad de Chile, Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades, 2021.

Ascanio, María J. L. "Bodies becoming pain: Unusual strategies of dissent in some transnational latin-american women writers." *brumal : Revista de investigación sobre lo fantástico*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2020, pp. 113.

CrossRef,

<https://doaj.org/article/6cdc59c6014a428cb9a37e2efd7f1c40>,doi:10.5565/rev/brumal.675.

Bazterrica, Agustina. *Antes del encuentro feroz*, Alción editora, 2016.

———. *Cadáver exquisito*. Alfaguara, 2017.

———. *Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro*. Alfaguara, 2020.

———. *Las Indignas*. Alfaguara, 2023.

———. *Tender is the flesh*. Scribner, 2020.

———. *Nineteen claws and a black bird*. Scribner, 2023.

Belarik. "Reseña de Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro." *Universo Literario*, 1 Sept. 2021,

<https://universoliterario.com.ar/resenas-de-libros/diecinueve-garras-y-un-pajaro-oscurolosiniestro-y-lo-bello/>.

Benzecry, Claudio E. "With a Little Help from My Friends: Intellectual Sociability and Literary Value in Contemporary Buenos Aires." *Ethnography*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2006, pp. 155–78.

"Best Horror". *Goodreads*, 2020, <https://www.goodreads.com/choiceawards/best-horror-books-2020>.

Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment*. 1976.

Bianchi, Paula Daniela. *Dermis, huellas de una herida que cincela los huesos*. Enríquez, Stigger y Nettel. *Revista de estudios literarios de UEMS*, 15 Feb 2019, p 163-187.

“Bicho: Diccionario de la lengua española”. Real Academia Española, 3rd edition, updated 2023, <https://dle.rae.es/bicho>.

“Bicho: Diccionario Lunfardo.” *Todo Tango*, <https://www.todotango.com/comunidad/lunfardo/termino.aspx?p=bicho>, Accessed 12 Jan 2024.

“Binary System.” Oxford English Dictionary, www.oed.com/dictionary/discrete_adj. Accessed 26 Nov. 2023.

Braun, Virginia and Kitzinger, Celia. “‘Snatch,’ ‘Hole,’ or ‘Honey-Pot’? Semantic Categories and the Problem of Nonspecificity in Female Genital Slang’. *The Journal of Sex Research*, vol 38, no. 2, May 2001, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3813705.pdf?refreqid=fastlydefault%3Afa4b653f1f5ed0dbbc103f3a2e514479&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptT C=1.

Breehl, Logen and Caban, Omar. “Physiology, Puberty.” *National Library of Medicine*, updated 27 Mar. 2023.

Brescia, Pablo. “Literatura Argentina Del Siglo Xxi: Primera Aproximación.” *Romance Notes*, vol. 48, no. 3, 2008, pp. 281–90.

Brindisi, José María. “Reseña: Diecinueve garras y un pájaro oscuro. Cuentos de oscuridad y sordidez.” 12 Sept. 2020, *La Nación*, <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/opinion/cuentos-de-oscuridad-ysordidez-nid2446357/>. Accessed 1 Aug. 2023.

“Carta orgánica”. *Ni una menos*, 3 June 2017, <https://niunamenos.org.ar/quienes-somos/carta-organica/>.

- Carvajal, Jessica Hurtado. “La voz femenina en la nueva narrativa argentina.” *La Palabra*, Universidad del valle, 27 July 2023, <https://lapalabra.univalle.edu.co/la-voz-femenina-en-la-nueva-narrativaargentina/>.
- Centenera, Mar. “Ocho de cada diez niños argentinos víctimas de abuso sexual lo cuentan en la escuela.” *El País Argentina*, 10 Jan 2020, www.elpais.com/sociedad/2020/01/09/actualidad/1578608245_487201.html?event_log=oklogin.
- “Conejo, Coneja: Diccionario de La Lengua Española.” “Diccionario de La Lengua Española” - Edición Del Tricentenario, Asociación de academias de la lengua española, dle.rae.es/conejo. Accessed 20 Nov. 2023.
- “Conejo/ja”. *Todotango*, Accessed 10 Mar 2024, <https://www.todotango.com/comunidad/lunfardo/termino.aspx?p=conejo%2Fja>.
- “Coño: Diccionario de La Lengua Española (2001).” “Diccionario Esencial de La Lengua Española,” Real Academia Española, www.rae.es/drae2001/co%C3%B1o#. Accessed 20 Nov. 2023.
- Corcos, Christine A. “Growing up in Popular Culture in The Time of Title IX”. *Louisiana Law Review*, vol 83, Fall 1, 15 Dec 2022, <https://digitalcommons.law.lsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6918&context=lalrev>.
- “Country Fact Sheet: UN Women Data Hub.” Country Fact Sheet | UN Women Data Hub, data.unwomen.org/country/argentina#:~:text=In%202018%2C%204.5%25%20of%20women,to%209.2%25%20spent%20by%20men. Accessed 13 Nov. 2023.

- Cuiñas, Ana Gallego. "Feminismo y literatura (argentina) mundial: Selva Almada, Mariana Enríquez y Samanta Schweblin". *Literatura latinoamericana mundial: Dispositivos y disidencias*, edited by Gustavo Guerrero, Jorge J. Locane, Benjamin Loy and Gesine Müller, Berlin, Boston: DeGruyter, 2020, pp. 71-96.
- "Cuniculus: Meaning, Definition." Wordsense EU, www.wordsense.eu/cuniculus/. Accessed 21 Nov. 2023.
- "Cunnus: Meaning, Definition." Wordsense, EU, <https://www.wordsense.eu/cunnus/>. Accessed 20 Nov, 2023.
- "Detuvieron a un profesor de biología por acoso sexual de alumnas en un colegio de Pilar." *La Nación*, 21 Sep 2023, <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/seguridad/detuvieron-a-un-profesor-de-biologia-poracoso-sexual-de-alumnas-en-un-colegio-de-pilar-nid21092023/>.
- "Diccionario de la lengua Española". Real Academia Española, Accessed 31 Mar 2024, <https://dle.rae.es>.
- "'Diminutives in Spanish'; Spanish lessons beginner/intermediate/advanced." Spanish Dictionary, <https://www.spanishdict.com/answers/278582/diminutives-in-spanish-spanish-lessons-beginnerintermediateadvanced>. Accessed 13 Dec. 2023.
- DiPlacidi, Jenny. "Introduction: Disrupting the Critical Genealogy of the Gothic." *Gothic Incest: Gender, Sexuality and Transgression*, Manchester University Press, 2018, pp. 1–33. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt2204rt6.4>. Accessed 2 Apr. 2024.
- "Discrete, Adj. & N. Meanings, Etymology and More." Oxford English Dictionary, www.oed.com/dictionary/discrete_adj. Accessed 26 Nov. 2023.
- Domínguez, Nora. "Entre Lo Singular y Lo Colectivo." *CELEHIS (Mar Del Plata)*, no. 36, Dec. 2018, pp. 1–45.

“Educación Sexual Integral”. *University of Buenos Aires*, Accessed 31 Mar 2024,

<https://www.argentina.gob.ar/educacion/progresar/progresar-es-para-vos/aprende/educacionsexual-integral-esi>

English Translation of “conejo” - Collins Online Dictionary, Collins Dictionary,

www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/spanish-english/conejo. Accessed 1 Dec. 2023.

Escalona, Fernanda Bustamante. “Cuerpos que aparecen, ‘cuerpos-escrache’: de la posmemoria al trauma y el horror en relatos de Mariana Enriquez.” *Taller de Letras*, no. 64, 64, June 2019, pp.

31–45. [tallerdeletras.letras.uc.cl](https://doi.org/10.7764/tl6431-45), <https://doi.org/10.7764/tl6431-45>.

“Esquizofrenia: probarán en el país el primer medicamento contra los síntomas cognitivos”. *La*

Nación, 29 Nov 2022, <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/sociedad/esquizofrenia-probaran-en-el-pais-el-primer-medicamento-contra-los-sintomas-cognitivosnid29112022/#:~:text=Las%20personas%20con%20esquizofrenia%2C%20se,planificar%20o%20modificar%20sus%20planes..>

Ferber, Michael. *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*. 2nd edition, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Fierro, Catriel and Araujo, Saulo. *Psychology qua Psychoanalysis in Argentina: Some Historical*

Origins of a Philosophical Problem (1942–1964), *Journal of the History of the*

Behavioral Sciences, 22 Oct. 2020,

onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jhbs.22070?saml_referrer.

- Frías, Miguel. “Agustina Bazterrica: las mil vidas de la escritora del “canibalismo”. *Clarín*, 21 Jul. 2020, updated 24 April 2024, https://www.clarin.com/viva/agustina-bazterrica-mil-vidas-escritoracanibalismo-_0_NK5Zrm3TF.html.
- Friera, Silvina. “Agustina Bazterrica le da pelea a Stephen King | La novela ‘Cadáver exquisito’ se mete en las grandes ligas.” *Página12*, 31 Oct 2020, <https://www.pagina12.com.ar/302802-agustinabazterrica-le-da-pelea-a-stephen-king>.
- Gawthrop, Alice. “Interview: Author Agustina Bazterrica on opening new doors to reality.” *Reader’s Digest*, 23 May 2023. <https://www.readersdigest.co.uk/culture/books/meet-the-author/interviewauthor-agustina-bazterrica>.
- “Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.” United Nations, www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/genderequality/#:~:text=35%20per%20cent%20of%20women,the%20harmful%20practice%20is%20most. Accessed 20 Nov. 2023.
- Gossip Girl. Created by Josh Schwartz and Stephanie Savage, Warner Bros Television, 2007-2012.
- “Grooming: Know the Warning Signs”. *Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network*, 10 Jul 2020, https://www.rainn.org/news/grooming-know-warningsigns?_ga=2.123659851.1188676123.1711923001-991478361.1711923001.
- “Guía Para Madres, Padres y Docentes: Grooming.” Argentina.Gob.Ar, 26 June 2023, www.argentina.gob.ar/justicia/convosenlaweb/situaciones/guia-para-madres-padres-docentesgrooming.
- Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Transgender and Gender, American Psychological Association, www.apa.org/practice/guidelines/transgender.pdf. Accessed 21 Nov. 2023.

- Hartmann, Sadie. *101 Horror Books To Read Before You're Murdered*. Page Street Publishing, 2023.
- Hazelwood, Robert R. *Wives of Child Molesters within the Family*. Springer International Publishing AG, Cham, 2015.
- Henríquez Cortés, Vanessa. “Al final todos seremos devorados: entrevista a agustina bazterrica.” *Nueva revista del Pacífico*, no. 76, June 2022, pp. 274–85. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, <https://doi.org/10.4067/S0719-51762022000100274>.
- “Honorable Congreso de la nacion Argentina”. *Argentina.gob.ar*, 24 Oct 2006, <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/normativa/nacional/121222/texto>.
- Howell, Jennifer Lee, et al. “The Reverse Double Standard in Perceptions of Student- Teacher Sexual Relationships: The Role of Gender, Initiation, and Power”. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, Feb 2011, DOI: 10.1080/00224540903510837.
- “*I Have Always Believed That in Our Capitalist, Consumerist Society, We Devour Each Other.*” *The Irish Times*, 21 Feb 2020, <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/i-have-always-believed-that-in-our-capitalist-consumerist-society-we-devour-each-other-1.4179631>. Accessed 23 Aug. 2023.
- Ilian, Ilinca. “Desarmar el discurso filiocéntrico. Figuras de la maternidad en la narrativa latinoamericana contemporánea.” *Cuadernos del cilha*, no. 37, 25 Nov 2022. p. 1-29.
- “Imperfect” Spanish Dictionary, <https://www.spanishdict.com/guide/spanish-imperfect-tense-forms> Accessed 12 Jan 2024.
- Keating, Dan. “The weapons men and women most often use to kill”. *The Washington Post*, 7 May 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/05/07/poison-is-a-womansweapon/#>.

Kemp-Habib, Alice. “Agustina Bazterrica: ‘Capitalism and cannibalism are almost the same.’”
The Guardian, 10 May 2023.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2023/may/10/agustina-bazterricacapitalism-and-cannibalism-are-almost-the-same>.

Khosravi, Mohsen, et al. “Dissociation as a Causal Pathway from Sexual Abuse to Positive Symptoms in the Spectrum of Psychotic Disorders.” *BMC Psychiatry*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, 24 May 2021, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8142477/.

LGBT+ Pride 2021 Global Survey - Ipsos,

www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/202106/LGBT%20Pride%202021%20Global%20Survey%20Report_3.pdf. Accessed 21 Nov. 2023.

“Little Red Riding Hood”. *Pitt.edu*, revised 21 Sep 2003,

<https://sites.pitt.edu/~dash/perrault02.html>.

Llarena Ascanio, María Jesús. “Bodies becoming pain: Unusual strategies of dissent in some transnational latin-american women writers.” *Revista de investigación sobre lo fantástico, Brumal*, vol. 8, no. 1, revistes.uab.cat/brumal/article/view/v8-n1-ascanio.

Lorenzón, Claudia. “Bazterrica: “Quiero que mis libros rompan el mar que se escarcha cuando naturalizamos la crueldad.” *Clarín*, 29 Aug 2020,

https://www.clarin.com/cultura/bazterricaquiero-libros-rompan-mar-escarcha-naturalizamos-crueldad_0_flcne725R.html. Accessed 23 Aug. 2023.

Mackey, Allison. “Aguas ambiguas: encarnando una conciencia antropocénica a través del ecogótico rioplatense.” *Revista CS*, no. 36, Mar. 2022, pp. 247–87. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, <https://doi.org/10.18046/recs.i36.4773>.

- Maclean, Marie. "Pretexts and Paratexts: The Art of the Peripheral." *New Literary History*, vol. 22, no. 2, 1991, pp. 273–79. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/469038>.
- Maglie, Leonie. "En lucha por la igualdad [sic]. El alejamiento del machismo en Argentina a partir del cuento "Lavavajillas" de Agustina Bazterrica". *Grin Publishing*, 17 Jan 2022.
- Malo-Juvera, Victor. "The Effect of Young Adult Literature on Adolescents' Rape Myth Acceptance". Florida International University Digital Commons, 9 Mar 2012, <https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1667&context=etd>.
- Martínez, Valeria. 125 Docentes Investigados Por Acoso y Abuso Sexual Contra Estudiantes En 2023, *La Nación*, 29 June 2023, www.nacion.com/el-pais/educacion/125-docentes-investigados-poracoso-y-abuso-sexual/EJDRGHBY7ZDYVEKNOBXXYHQWNA/story/.
- Mayet, Graciela. "La materialidad en la visión distópica de Agustina Bazterrica: La estética de la desviación objetual." *Polígramas*, (56), 2023, pp 1-14.
- Mercier, Claire, and Gabriel Saldías Rossel. "Políticas del hambre y diplomacia animal en Cadáver exquisito de Agustina Bazterrica." *Chasqui* Vol. 50, No. 1, May 2021, pp. 169-186.
- Ministerio de Justicia de Argentina. "Delitos contra la integridad sexual". *Derecho Fácil*, <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/justicia/derechofacil/leysimple/delitos-contra-la-integridadsexual#:~:text=Para%20que%20se%20considere%20abuso,cuerpo%20de%20la%20víctima%3B%20y> , Accessed 12 Jan 2024.
- "Mocoso: Diccionario de la lengua española". Real Academia Española, 3rd edition, updated 2023, <https://dle.rae.es/mocoso>.

Muniz, Gabriela. “Nuevos Miedos En La Literatura Policial de Chile y Argentina.” *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, vol. 42, no. 3, 2018, pp. 567–85.

Murillo, Euge. “¿Por qué aumentan las denuncias de abuso sexual en las escuelas de nivel inicial?” *Página 12*, 2 June 2023, <https://www.pagina12.com.ar/554261-por-que-aumentan-las-denunciasde-abuso-sexual-en-las-escuel>.

Murray, Conor. “Mary Kay Letourneau’s Ex Vili Fualaau Is ‘Offended’ By ‘May December’ — Though Film Crew Says It’s Not About Them”. *Forbes*, 4 Jan 2024, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/conormurray/2024/01/04/mary-kay-letourneaus-ex-vili-fualaau-isoffended-by-may-december---though-film-crew-says-its-not-about-them/?sh=46f1bb423157>.

National Center for Education Statistics. *Comparative Indicators of Education in the United States and Other G-20 Countries: 2015*, U.S. Department of Education, nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016100/app_a1.asp. Accessed 25 Nov. 2023.

Orta, Yuliana M. Ramos. “Trashed Beauty: Abjection and Burned Females in Mariana Enríquez’s *The Things We Lost in the Fire*.” *Journal of Gender and Sexuality Studies / Revista de Estudios de Género y Sexualidades*, vol. 45, no. 1, 2019, pp. 127–40.

Otero, Mariana, and Digón, Virginia. “Cada vez más estudiantes que sufren abuso se animan a contarlo en la escuela.” *La Voz*, 4 June 2023.

<https://www.lavoz.com.ar/ciudadanos/cada-vez-masestudiantes-que-sufren-abuso-se-animan-a-contarlo-en-la-escuela/?register=google>.

Ough, Tom. “Inbreeding is coming: Everything *Game of Thrones* has taught us about incest”. *Independent Co. UK*, 31 Aug 2022, <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/house-of-the-dragon-game-of-thrones-incest-inbreeding-targaryens-b2156253.html>.

Pispira, Joselyn, et al. „Gender-based violence in Latin America (Ecuador and Argentina): current state and challenges in the development of psychoeducational materials.”

Discover Psychology, vol.

2,1 (2022): 48. doi:10.1007/s44202-022-00060-4.

Prado, Esteban, and Lucio Ferrante. *Devenir americano del terror argentino. un diálogo crítico con franco bifo berardi*. *Revista del ciffyh área letras*, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, 11(17), 21 July, 2020, 142–167.

Regazzoni, Susanna. *El cuerpo (re) escrito. Autoras argentinas del siglo XXI*. Editorial Verbum, 2021.

Rita-Procter, Steven. *narratology, rhetoric, and transitional justice: The function of narrative in redressing the legacy of mass atrocities*, 2018, York University, PhD dissertation.

Riverdale. Created by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, Berlanti Productions, 2017-2023.

Roldós, Claudio. “La novela habla de cómo el patriarcado profundo sigue hundiendo sus garras en todos los aspectos de nuestras vidas.” *La Capital*, 30 July 2018, <https://www.lacapitalmdp.com>, <https://www.lacapitalmdp.com/la-novela-habla-de-como-el-patriarcado-profundo-siguelhundiendo-sus-garras-en-todos-los-aspectos-de-nuestras-vidas/>. Accessed 26 Aug. 2023.

Romanazzi, Camila. ““Las Indignas” es la nueva novela de Agustina Bazterrica: "Escribo para sobrevivir". *Filo.news*, 18 Sep 2023, <https://www.filo.news/noticia/2023/09/18/las-indignas-esla-nueva-novela-de-agustina-bazterrica-escribo-para-sobrevivir>.

Ruocco, Pablo. *Agustina Bazterrica: “En mi obra intento explorar esa zona de no conocimiento: El cuerpo”*. *Continuidad de libros*, 2020,

<http://continuidaddeloslibros.com/agustina-bazterricaobra-intento-explorar-esa-zona-no-conocimiento-cuerpo/>. Accessed 1 Sep. 2023.

Sanchez, L.A. *Resistencia y libertad: Una lectura de “las cosas que perdimos en el fuego”* de Mariana Enriquez desde las perspectivas de Foucault y de Beauvoir. *Acta literaria*, 59(59), 107-119. doi:10.4067/S0717-68482019000200107, 2019. from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2394540372>.

Sánchez Rivera, Jorge Antonio. “Niñas Marcadas” *Exploración de la violencia en los cuentos “roberto” de Agustina Bazterrica, “Fin de curso”, de Mariana Enriquez y “Mariposas” de Samanta Schweblin.* XXXII Congreso Internacional de Literatura y Estudios Hispánicos, 9-12 Mar 2023, Cartagena de India.

Santos, Cristina. “Horror as Real and the Real as Horror: Ghosts of the Desaparecidos in Argentina*.” *E-Cadernos CES*, no. 32, Dec. 2019. DOI.org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.4000/eces.4723>.

Shaked, Efrad. et al. “Internalization and Opposition to Stigmatized Social Discourse among Incest Survivors”. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 30 Aug 2021, vol. 30, no. 7, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10538712.2021.1970680>.

Sierra, Marta. “Spectral Spaces: Haunting in the Latin American City.” *Urban Spaces in Contemporary Latin American Literature*, Jan. 2019, pp. 47–65.

Smith, Peter H., and James N. Green. *Modern Latin America*. 2019.

Sutton, Barbara, and Elizabeth Borland. “Abortion and Human Rights for Women in Argentina.” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, vol. 40, no. 2, 2019, pp. 27–61. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.5250/fronjwomestud.40.2.0027>. Accessed 1 Sept. 2023.

- . “Poner El Cuerpo: Women’s Embodiment and Political Resistance in Argentina.” *Latin American Politics and Society*, vol. 49, no. 3, 2007, pp. 129–62.
- . “Zonas de Clandestinidad y ‘Nuda Vida’: Mujeres, Cuerpo y Aborto.” *Estudios Feministas*, vol. 25, no. 2, 2017, pp. 889–902.
- Tapia Vázquez, Jazmín G. “La nueva frontera de lo fantástico: escritoras hispanoamericanas en los umbrales de la irrealidad.” *Revista crítica de narrativa breve*, no. 16, *Lejana*, 2023, dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=8924948.
- Teubal, Ruth. “Las madres frente al abuso sexual infantil intrafamiliar de sus hijos ¿Son víctimas?” Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2010.
- . “Abuso sexual intrafamiliar de niños, niñas, y adolescentes . La experiencia de madres protectoras.” *A vueltas con la violencia*. pp 375-401.
- TikTok*. “#tenderistheflesh.” Hashtags, accessed Aug. 26, 2023.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. “Intentional Homicide”.
- <https://dataunodc.un.org/dpintentional-homicide-victims>. Accessed 12 Jan 2024.
- UN Women Data Hub. Country Fact Sheet: Argentina, United Nations,
- data.unwomen.org/country/argentina#:~:text=In%202018%2C%204.5%25%20of%20women,to%209.2%25%20spent%20by%20men. Accessed 25 Oct. 2023.
- Vázquez-Medina, Olivia. “Ugly Feelings in Mariana Enriquez’s Short Fiction.” *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, vol. 98, no. 2, Feb. 2021, pp. 289–317. Taylor and Francis+NEJM, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14753820.2021.1891647>.
- Villarreal, Mariano. *América Fantástica*. Ediciones Huso, 2019.
- “Violence against Women”. World Health Organization, www.who.int/news-room/factsheets/detail/violence-against-women. Accessed 20 Nov. 2023.

- Williams, Sebastian. "Self-Consumption: Cannibalism and viral outbreak in Agustina Bazterrica's *Tender is the flesh*." *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, Feb. 2021, pp. 302-320.
- Wilson, Tamar Diana. "Introduction: Violence against Women in Latin America." *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2014, pp. 3–18.
- Winters, Georgia M., et al. "Toward a universal definition of child sexual grooming." *Deviant Behavior*, vol. 43, no. 8, 2021, pp. 926–938,
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2021.1941427>.