

## **From Page to Screen: Emili Teixidor's and Agustí Villaronga's *Pa negre***

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Els pobles tenen una memòria, més llarga i més fonda que la història oficial; és la petita història feta de figures aparentment insignificants, de moments aïllats i irrepetibles.

Emili Teixidor

Es muy fácil mantener los ideales en pie cuando todo está bien acomodado. Pero cuando el suelo falla debajo de ti, es más difícil mantenerse con una ética y una moral.

Agustí Villaronga

Gavin Stevens' statement in *Requiem for a Nun* that 'The past is never dead. It's not even past' (Faulkner 1951: 92) is often quoted to emphasize that the past haunts the present. The opening shot of the American Civil War in April 1861 still reverberates 150 years later, especially in the Old South, where a number of states have staged elaborate re-enactments to commemorate the anniversary of the outbreak of a bloody four-year conflict. Many Southerners have not been able to let go of the past or even come to terms with it, as shown by the fact that the Confederate battle flag continued to fly over the South Carolina Statehouse until July 2000, when economic pressure compelled the legislature to reposition it on the Capitol lawn, a slightly less prominent location. It is not surprising that the much more recent Spanish Civil War and post-war period continue to elicit passionate reactions. Numerous place names still honor the Generalíssim, his diehard supporters celebrate the Valle de los Caídos,

and efforts to counteract the official amnesia of the Transition meet with great resistance.<sup>1</sup>

The questions of who is entitled to write history and what the content of that history should be evoke strong feelings not only in the United States but in Spain as well.<sup>2</sup> During the Franco years various novels dealt, albeit indirectly, with topics that press censorship silenced, and in the present era novels and films alike have often sought to counteract the distortions of Francoist historiography. Two such works are Emili Teixidor's and Agustí Villaronga's versions of *Pa negre*. Both have achieved great critical and popular success. The 2003 novel received the Joan Crexells, Lletra d'Or, M. Àngels Anglada, and Nacional de Literatura prizes; the 2010 film was honored with thirteen Gaudí and nine Goya awards and acclaimed at festivals in Spain and the United States.<sup>3</sup> The success both works have

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<sup>1</sup> The 18 April 2011 issue of *Time* magazine devoted ten pages to the question of why at least some Americans are still fighting the Civil War. Forgetting was the price of reconciliation in the years following the military conflict—as it was in post-war Spain—but writer David Von Drehle insists that the time has come to acknowledge that the issue of slavery was central to the conflict: 'To be blind to the reason the war happened is to build a sort of border of the mind, walling off an important truth' (Von Drehle 2011: 51). Truth-telling is equally necessary in present-day Spain.

<sup>2</sup> In the case of Spain's Civil War it is the victors, not the losers, who cling to a past they see as glorious and, if possible, would restore.

<sup>3</sup> *Pa negre* won thirteen of the fifteen Premis Gaudí for which it was nominated, including the prize for the Best Film in Catalan. Villaronga won awards for Best Director and Best Screenplay, Nora Navas for Best Female Protagonist, Roger Casamajor and Marina Comas for Best Supporting Actor and Actress, Ana Alvargonzález for Best Art Direction, and Antonio Riestra for Best Cinematography. Other awards were for Best Original Score (José Manuel Pagán), Best Sound (Dani Fontrodona, Fernando Novillo, and Ricard Casals), Best Makeup (Satur Merino and Alma Casal), Best Costume Design (Mercè Paloma), and Best Production Manager (Aleix Castellón). As for the Goyas, Villaronga was honored as Best Director and for Best Screenplay, Navas for Best Actress in a Leading Role, Laia Marull for Best Actress in a Supporting Role, Francesc Colomer and Marina Comas for Best Breakthrough Actor and Actress. Alvargonzález and Riestra were again honored and the film was selected as Best Picture. Some members of the

enjoyed has led each to be promoted in terms of the other. The words “El llibre que ha inspirat la pel·lícula” and a still from the film grace the cover of the 2011 edition of the novel; the DVD of the film proclaims that it is based on Emili Teixidor’s book. The novel and its cinematic adaptation, of course, have much in common, but there also are significant differences between them, in part because of the possibilities and limitations of each medium, in part because each work is by a creative artist who has a strong personality and a distinctive vision of the world. The pages that follow explore these differences.<sup>4</sup>

A film adaptation is, in effect, a reading of the literary work on which it is based, a re-vision, and reams have been written on the fraught question of fidelity to the original.<sup>5</sup> Geoffrey Wagner establishes a tripartite division, based on three levels of fidelity. In the case of transposition, the original work is transferred to the screen with minimal changes; in commentary the original, purposely or inadvertently, is altered in some respect. Wagner’s third category is

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media, however, attached less importance to artistic values than to linguistic considerations, political ideology, and sexual orientation. In an article entitled ‘Catalanismo y ‘lobby gay’, claves del triunfo de *Pan negro* [sic] en los Goya,’ Santiago Mata alleged that Villaronga won ‘por ser homosexual y catalanista’ and because he had the backing of producer Isona Passola, ‘conocida en el ámbito nacionalista de ERC. No en vano, con ella se fue a celebrar la victoria el director’ (Mata 2011). In contrast, Spain’s Ministry of Culture awarded the 2011 Premio Nacional de Cinematografía to Villaronga and the Cinema Academy nominated *Pa negre* as its candidate for an Oscar for best foreign language film.

<sup>4</sup> *Pa negre* is Villaronga’s first major success. Freixas and Bassa characterize his cinematic universe as ‘turbulento y torturado, turbador y perturbador’ (2005: 161), and his films frequently explore the roots of evil and portray children’s loss of innocence. Teixidor has written some thirty works for children and young adults, works which are much lighter in tone than Villaronga’s and range from the amusing *formiga Piga* stories to historical adventure books like *Cor de roure* (Premi Crítica Serra d’Or de la literatura juvenil 1994).

<sup>5</sup> Hotly debated as well is the question of what fidelity refers to: the original text’s meaning, its spirit, its narrative development and structure, its tone and nuance?

analogy, wherein the director does not attempt to reproduce the original but departs from it substantially in order to make another work of art. Similarly Dudley Andrew describes the film-text relationship as borrowing, intersecting, or transforming. Michael Klein and Gillian Parker too visualize three tiers of fidelity, as does Luis Quesada (Deveny 1999: 5-7).<sup>6</sup> Although Villaronga's *Pa negre* does not fit neatly into any of these categories, 'analogy' or 'transforming' comes closest to describing its relationship to Teixidor's novel. Whatever labels they use, film critics acknowledge that an adaptation is an independent work of art that must be judged on its own merits and in terms of its own forms of expression. These include –in addition to words– images, movements, framing, iconic focalization, the representation of space and time, the performance of the actors, lighting, music, clothing, sets, sounds, and graphic elements (Romea 2001: 25).

The most obvious difference between the two versions of *Pa negre* is that the film incorporates material from other works by Teixidor, notably his 1988 novel *Retrat d'un assassí d'ocells* and the 1979 short story collection *Sic transit Glòria Swanson* (Premi de la Crítica Serra d'Or 1980). As Villaronga explained in a 2011 interview, *Pa negre* 'és un llibre molt interioritzat. Hi ha una part important que són pensaments del nen i genera poca acció, i en el cine és fonamental l'acció, cal que passin coses que expliquin la història. Com que Emili té obres molt semblants, pots anar agafant coses d'aquí i d'allà per, en definitiva, explicar el mateix' (Salvà 2011: 38). Novel and film begin in markedly different ways: one relies on words, the other on visual narration.

Over the years Teixidor has commented repeatedly on the importance of language. In response to a statement by Francesc Bombí-Vilaseca that *Pa negre* is a novel 'que viu de les paraules', Teixidor remarked that an oral, rather than a visual, culture prevailed in his youth and 'hi havia una creativitat popular que em sembla que s'ha perdut. Jo, quan em reuneixo amb amics, de vegades juguem a recorder com es deien les coses, abans' (Bombí-Vilaseca 2003: III).

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<sup>6</sup> See *The Literature/Film Reader* (2007) for more extensive study of issues of adaptation.

Three years later in an interview with Noemí Bibolas he returned to the theme of linguistic impoverishment: ‘Abans hi havia una cultura oral. La gent dels pobles té una riquesa perquè el llenguatge era el seu principal mitja de comunicació i hi havia una recreació constant.’ He then added that ‘La primera funció d’una novel·la és el llenguatge’ (Bibolas 2006: 7). His *Pa negre* celebrates language and in part is a linguistic salvage operation.

Forms of the verb *dir* echo throughout the novel’s opening chapters. The words used by Andreu’s grandmother, words uttered by the adults and not understood by the children –these make up the verbal fabric of the text and from its very beginning underscore the importance of language.<sup>7</sup> The introductory chapters call attention to (1) the grandmother’s speech:

arbres revells deia l’àvia [...] les flors de saüc –la flaire deia l’àvia- i només respirant aquella olor marxessin totes les malalties, que ella en deia malures [...] l’àvia deia que la gent de ciutat no sabia distingir un paller d’una pallerà [...] Verídiques deia. Hi havia paraules com aquesta, verídica, que només deia ella [...] El món dels grans, els grandots o els ganàpies que deia l’àvia. (2007: 9-28)

And (2) to the mysterious words the children overhear, treasure, and struggle to decipher:

teníem l’oportunitat d’escoltar paraules noves, misterioses, brillants en la seva raresa, que copsàvem amb interès, sense que les dones se n’adonessin [...] Pescàvem aquestes paraules de frontera, i [...] les guardàvem en algun racó del cervell [...] De tant en tant [...] visitàvem d’amagat el nostre tresor [de paraules per] repetir-les, pensar-les, rebregar-les, interrogar-les, omplir-les, deixar que naveguessin pel nostre cap fins a trobar un port que les lligués a un continent de terra ferma, d’experiències conegudes, de coses sabudes. (2007: 29-30)

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<sup>7</sup> Language also plays a central role in Teixidor’s books for young readers. In, for instance, *L’amiga més amiga de la formiga Piga* (Premio Nacional de Literatura Infantil y Juvenil 1997), he plays with sounds and words, coins new terms, and uses repetition and verse to captivate his audience.

These initial chapters, which proceed at a leisurely pace and are almost devoid of action, provide an exemplary introduction to the rural world of the novel and its physical as well as temporal setting; establish the retrospective vision and mood that will predominate; introduce the main characters and the leitmotif of not understanding; and contrast the poverty of Andreu's family (*los vençuts*) with the wealth of their absentee landlords, the Manubens (*los vencedors*). Teixidor makes clear that the ideological, economic, and social differences that led to the Civil War continue unabated in its aftermath and, by focusing on a family of *masovers*, he demonstrates that it is not official History but 'la petita història feta de figures aparentment insignificants' (qtd. in Muntada 2010: 4) that interests him, as it does Villaronca.<sup>8</sup>

If Teixidor's *Pa negre* is 'un torrent verbal' (Izquierdo 2005), the film is a torrent of visual images, of actions, and words are largely absent during its first five minutes. The violence and brutality of the opening sequences stun viewers. The camera focuses initially on the figure of a man walking through the woods beside his horse-drawn cart, which becomes stuck. The man, later identified as Dionís Seguí, senses that he is being followed, becomes apprehensive, and draws a knife. Moments later a cloaked and hooded figure attacks him and after a fierce struggle crushes Dionís's head. The hooded figure throws the body into the cart, where Dionís's terrified son is hiding, leads the cart through a barren landscape, grabs a large mallet, strikes the now blind-folded horse between the eyes, and when it falls to its knees, pushes it over a cliff. Horse and cart somersault through the air before crashing to the ground. Moments later Andreu comes upon the body of Dionís and his dying son, Culet. Andreu utters the film's first words, 'Culet, Culet,' and his schoolmate manages to articulate the mysterious word 'Pitorliua.' Andreu then races to the local bar and in a brief dialogue informs Culet's mother, Pauleta, of his discovery of

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<sup>8</sup> It is these customarily ignored accounts that attract Teixidor's attention in *Els convidats* as well. Apropos his 2010 and his 2003 novels he has asserted that 'es importante dejar testimonio de las historias pequeñas que conducen a la Historia grande. Son episodios de lo que Pere Gimferrer definió acertadamente como el fascismo cotidiano' (qtd. in Piñol 2010).

the bodies. The sequence ends with the words of an old man: ‘Tal faràs, tal trobaràs.’

This beginning raises a number of questions: who are the characters, what is the relationship between them, what motivates the attack, what does ‘Pitorliua’ mean, and why does the old man imply that Dionís’s violent end was inevitable, given his conduct? Villaronga’s introduction, as exemplary in its own way as was Teixidor’s, dramatizes the violence and reprisals that were characteristic of the Civil War and early post-war years and that will prevail in the film, accompanied by omnipresent fear, as demonstrated by Dionís, Culet, Andreu, the horse, and birds startled into flight. Shots of the blindfolded horse and close-ups of Andreu’s face and his huge eyes introduce the motif of not seeing, not understanding. Much of the film’s subsequent action will take place in the forest, a traditional locus of the irrational, often imagined to harbor dangers, demons, enemies, and diseases (Cirlot 1971: 112).

Teixidor’s 1988 novel provides the starting point for these opening sequences, and it is instructive to highlight several examples of how Villaronga utilizes his sources. Tori, the narrator of *Retrat d’un assassí d’ocells*, recollects in piecemeal fashion his discovery of two bodies in the forest, bodies he initially does not identify as those of Dionís and Culet. He runs to the local bar and tells the owner, Pere Burot, of his discovery, and Pere Burot declares that ‘Tal faràs [...] tal trobaràs’ (1988: 32). At first villagers believe the deaths were accidental; only later do they realize the truth. Villaronga condenses some thirty pages of *Retrat* into a few minutes of screen time while also fleshing out the bare bones of the novelistic account by adding the graphic depiction of the actual killing, Andreu’s recognizing the bodies and hearing Culet say ‘Pitorliua,’ and his communicating the news to Pauleta, wife and mother of the deceased. The emotional impact of the film’s beginning, its drama, its evocation of fear and pity in viewers — all are the result of how Villaronga develops his source. As the title *Retrat d’un assassí d’ocells* implies, birds play an important part in the 1988 novel. It opens with Tori’s recollection of unearthing a small box that contains the bodies of a pair of turtledoves

and subsequently we learn that Dionís and Tori's father raise birds.<sup>9</sup> In the film birds, born to fly, become important symbols of freedom and idealism. Andreu's father, Farriol, compares himself to the chaffinch, which cannot live caged:

Veus aquest pinsà? Aquests són els ocells més esverats de tots, sempre volen fugir. L'he de tenir amb una gàbia de palletes perquè si no es destrossa les ales i el bec. Això és el que em passa.' Farriol continues: 'Els ocells són per volar i ser lliures, Andreu. Com els àngels, que no tenen fronteres. Els podem engabiar, però no podem canviar com són. Els ideals de la gent, les coses que un estima, allà on un vol arribar, també són així. Però si no es compleixen, les persones es poden tornar molt dolentes. Per això s'ha de lluitar pels ideals. Cadascú pels seus.

Villaronga further develops the flying motif first in the figure of a tubercular youth who flaps his shoulders as if they were wings and speaks of taking flight, and then in a photo of Marcel Saurí, costumed as an archangel for Carnival in 1935. In *Retrat*, Saurí is the homosexual lover of a member of the French family that owns La Farfutalla. Villaronga makes the landowners Catalans (the Manubens) in his film and expands Saurí's role. In both novel and film the wealthy families are ultimately responsible for the castrating of Saurí, carried out by Dionís and Tori's/Andreu's father.

The buried box of *Retrat* also contains a hand; and variations upon the line 'Mà morta, mà morta, truca aquesta porta...!' echo throughout the novel's initial chapter (9-13) and find their way into the film, where we learn that the explosion of a grenade destroyed the left hand of Andreu's cousin Núria.<sup>10</sup> (She keeps the stump in a buried

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<sup>9</sup> Eudald Tomasa notes that it is significant that the initial verb of *Retrat* is *desenterrar*, for the novel is 'el desenterrament de tot un món que el pas del temps ha colgat i que roman només a les golfes de la memòria' (1989 : 78). Both versions of *Pa negre* similarly disinter the past. On Teixidor's reclaiming of the past in his 2003 novel see Glenn's 2008 essay in *Journal of Catalan Studies*.

<sup>10</sup> In *Retrat* the character who has lost a hand is Tori's male classmate Roger, not a female cousin.

box.) When Núria attempts to seduce Andreu in the film and places his hand on her pubic area, she utters the words ‘Mà morta, mà morta, truca aquesta porta.’<sup>11</sup> The title story of *Sic transit Glòria Swanson* is the source of the film’s details that Núria’s father hanged himself at daybreak after blowing up two bridges to impede the advance of Franco’s troops, and the girl now removes her clothes at dawn and stands on the balcony of her room to commemorate her father’s death and cope with her grief.<sup>12</sup>

Transforming a novel into a film necessitates changes, such as fleshing out characters or rendering them more schematic, adding or deleting characters and scenes, shifting emphases, and making explicit what may have been implicit in the original (or vice versa). As noted

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<sup>11</sup> Teixidor had used the phrase ‘Mà morta, mà morta, pica a aquesta porta!’ in *Sic transit* (58) but without the sexual connotations it assumes in Villaronga’s film.

<sup>12</sup> *Sic transit*, Teixidor’s first book for adult readers, is a seminal work; and he subsequently develops characters, story lines, and wording first found in the 1979 collection of narratives. His 1979, 1988, and 2003 books are all set in the early 1940s and the Vic area where Teixidor (1933 Roda de Ter) grew up. A character in ‘Un camí estret sense fi ni tornada’ describes the period as *els anys de la fam*: ‘Era el temps de l’estraperlo, de les cues del racionament, del *pa negre*, de la llet blava i de les mongetes amb jaumets’ (1979: 124, emphasis added). A storytelling grandmother and the motif of the incomprehensibility of adults’ words, important in both versions of *Pa negre*, appear in ‘Ara ja no canten.’ ‘L’ou gargot’ is an especially significant antecedent of the two versions in that it anticipates much of the back story of Andreu: ‘el pare era a la presó de Vic -l’havien de jutjar i el fiscal demanava pena de mort, i la mare treia el fetge per la boca a la fàbrica, jornada completa i les hores extraordinàries, un sou que no arribava per comprar pa blanc, oli de ca l’oliare i sucre fi-, a mi em van portar a casa dels avis, a pagès, perquè em mantinguessin’ (135). When the story’s narrator visits his father in prison, he takes him an egg (a chaffinch in the film), and after his father’s death he smashes the hens’ eggs (in the film Andreu slaughters the birds his father had been raising). Villaronga uses the father’s eyeglasses, mentioned in ‘L’ou gargot’, to show how Andreu initially adores his father and wants to be like him by putting on his glasses: glasses which he breaks after he discovers his father’s role in the castrating of Saurí and killing of Dionís and Culet. Both actions illustrate the relationship between father and son.

earlier, Villaronga recognized the need to emphasize action over reflection in his 108-minute film, and in order to incorporate material from *Retrat* and *Sic transit* he had to cut much of Teixidor's 400-page *Pa negre*. In the novel Andreu's grandmother is a major character and her household consists of herself, her husband, her son Bernardo (father of Quirze), and her daughters Albina, Concepció, and Enriqueta. Her son Farriol, father of Andreu, is in prison. The priest who heads the monastery of Sant Camil de Lelis, where tubercular patients are housed, is a frequent visitor.

Villaronga reduces the role of the *àvia*, limiting her to one instance of storytelling, and eliminates the grandfather, the priest, and Bernardo (as well as Albina). Thus apart from the boys Andreu and Quirze the household is an exclusively feminine preserve and without the protection of adult males. The most important changes involve Farriol and his back story. When the novel begins he is already in prison because of his politics, guilty of the 'crime' of *tenir idees* and *significar-se massa* both before and after the Civil War, a crime for which he will be executed. Teixidor's *Pa negre* devotes more attention to politics than does the film, and the shadow of the war and its aftermath looms larger in the novel. The author experienced firsthand the horrors and hardships of the military conflict and *els anys de la fam*; Villaronga, born twenty years later, did not, and the difference in age and experience of the two men may explain in part the differing emphases of their works.

Darío Prieto has pointed out that Villaronga created a film 'limpio de ideología política' (2011), and the Mallorcan filmmaker has acknowledged that he tried to do precisely that and focus instead on the loss of ideals, ideals that it is easy to uphold when all is going well, 'pero cuando el suelo falla debajo de ti, es más difícil mantenerse con una ética y una moral' (qtd. in Prieto 2011).<sup>13</sup> In the novel, the body found in the woods is that of a horse, not human beings, and local authorities are concerned with the political

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<sup>13</sup> Villaronga explained to Bernat Salvà that he wanted to show 'el que pot ser una guerra, amb la misèria, gent que intenta subsistir... Més que mostrar gent dolenta, prefereixo veure la crisi moral a què es pot enfrontar una persona en una situació en què es troba tan estreta, que pateix tanta misèria' (2011: 38).

implications of the death and fear the animal may have belonged to maquis or smugglers. Villaronga, on the other hand, incorporates material from *Retrat* about the slaying of Dionís and his son and stresses the villainy of the Manubens. In the film the senyora bribes Dionís to steal documents that would mean she would have to share the family fortune, and after Dionís tries to blackmail her, she has Farriol kill him. While in prison Farriol in effect gives his life for his son by promising not to denounce Mrs. Manubens if in return she pledges to provide Andreu with an education. The woman's hypocrisy and cynicism are staggering, as is the shamelessness with which she lectures Florència about Farriol's guilt, all the while implying that she is as pure as the proverbial driven snow. And this leads me to the specifically cinematic forms of expression that Villaronga employs so effectively.

Two characters in the film are grossly overweight. The first is Senyora Manubens, and Villaronga twice shows her stuffing her face. When Florència goes to beg that she intervene on behalf of Farriol, she keeps popping sweets into her mouth, and later when she and her husband visit the farmhouse, the two gobble the food Andreu's aunt Ció has prepared for them. The other *porc* is the priest who denies burial rites to Farriol. Florència describes him graphically as 'cent vint quilos de greix' without an iota of Christian charity. On the other hand, the members of Andreu's family are slim and, as Farriol's stay in prison lengthens, he becomes increasingly emaciated. The visual contrast between rich and poor, *vencedors* and *vençuts* is striking.

Also striking is Villaronga's use of color and contrasts between light and dark. The clothing of Andreu's family is dark and utilitarian but Mrs. Manubens' dresses, in addition to being voluminous, are frilly, made of fine fabric, and pastel in color. The farmhouse is dark, lit by candles, lanterns, and firelight, cramped, and poorly furnished. Three generations of the family are crowded together, and Andreu and his cousin Quirze share a narrow bed. The Manubens mansion, one of several they own, is spacious, ornately furnished, and filled with light, and the scenes set there transpire during the day while a number of the farmhouse scenes take place at night. The contrasts are visual reminders of lines from William Blake's 'Auguries of Innocence': 'Every Night and every Morn /

Some to Misery are Born / Every Morn and every Night / Some are Born to sweet delight / Some are Born to sweet delight/ Some are Born to Endless Night.’

Food and drink also serve to contrast the world of the Manubens and that of Andreu. Near the film’s beginning when Andreu and his father are summoned to the town hall, the mayor orders that the boy be given a snack. He is served café au lait in a tin mug and when he stretches out his hand to take a chunk of white bread, he is sharply told it is not for him and he should take the black instead. When Andreu and his mother go to the Manubens’ house, however, the senyora comments that he looks pale and needs a good steak, a “Let them eat cake” remark. She orders the smartly uniformed maid to prepare refreshments for the boy. Andreu is then seated at a table covered with a snowy-white tablecloth which appears to be made of damask; and a veritable feast of white bread, cheese, glacé fruit, cake, and hot chocolate, all served on fine china, is set before him.

From the very beginning of the film sound and lighting establish mood. Music throbs in the background, creating an ominous tone, and the opening shots are of swirling blacks, browns, and ochers suggestive of dried blood. These colors are repeated in the most disturbing scene of the film, Andreu’s and Núria’s descent into the cave where Saurí was attacked. Cirlot describes the cave as an objective image of Hades (1971: 40) and, in the film, it functions as a Conradian heart of literal and figurative darkness. Scratched on the cave’s walls are the name Dionís and the letter F, which could be the beginning of the names Francesc, Ferran –or Farriol. Andreu has a hallucinatory vision of what occurred previously in the cave: the attack upon Saurí. Flaming torches give a hellish cast to the scene and illuminate the faces of the enraged members of the mob who fall upon their victim. His anguished scream and a brief shot of Farriol’s face end Andreu’s vision. Throughout the film sound effects heighten the emotional tension. We hear Civil Guards pound up the stairs to the attic where Farriol is hiding, break the door down with their rifle butts, and then fire two shots. Later the hooting of an owl presages Farriol’s impending death. The din of the looms at the textile factory where Florència toils underscores her helplessness and the idea she is merely a cog in a large machine.

The number of Gaudí and Goya awards won by *Pa negre*'s actors attest to the quality of their performances. Nora Navas (Florència), Roger Casamajor (Farriol) and Francesc Colomer (Andreu) are outstanding in their ability to communicate through body language and facial expressions. Early in the film Andreu's parents' quarrel and then the camera shows the prelude to their lovemaking, which makes Andreu smile and turn away rather than continue to watch them. Later Florència tries to elicit the help of the mayor, a former suitor she had rejected in favor of Farriol. Through a window Andreu sees the mayor paw her and then when she offers herself to him, he spurns her. On this occasion Andreu looks away in shock. The camera repeatedly focuses on the boy's face and frames him listening behind doors, looking through keyholes or windows, and peering around corners as he attempts to understand what is happening. Colomer's face is very expressive, and Villaronga elicits from his child actor a wide range of emotions. Two examples will suffice and will further illustrate differences between novelistic and cinematic treatment of material.

The last chapter of Teixidor's novel and the film's final scenes concern Andreu's new life after he is adopted by the Manubens; and both depict Florència's visit to the religious school where her son is now being educated. In the novel Andreu describes his mother's visit as an intrusion and an embarrassment: 'Alguna cosa dintre meu cridava contra la intrusió a la meva nova vida d'aquella dona esprimatxada, fràgil, envellida, desamparada, desnortada i sola' (391), and when she departs he closes his eyes so as not to see her. The novel's last two paragraphs, with their insistent repetition of *meu/meva* and *un monstre*, call attention to his self-absorption and his monstrosity:

Era la meva vida, la meva decisió, el meu futur, el meu camí, el meu cos, els meus sentiments, la meva tria, la meva experiència, el meu rebuig, el meu desig, la meva acceptació, els meus estudis, els meus somnis, el meu món tan nou com jo pogués, els meus llibres..., ¡el meu, el meu, el meu! [...] vaig entendre, fascinat per la pròpia transformació, amb una barreja de vanitat i por, que començava a convertir-me en un monstre. En el monstre que havien planificat que fos. En un monstre capaç de reunir en un sol cos, en una sola

vida, dues naturaleses diferents, dues experiències contràries. Un monstre que yo mateix no sabia que m'habités. Un monstre. (394)

The film has no equivalent of the 'Era la meva vida' paragraph or the emphasis upon Andreu's monstrosity, but it suggests both. A classroom scene at the Piarist school opens with a priest's lecturing in Castilian, not Catalan, upon the *Odyssey* and the Cyclops Polyphemus, who is monstrous not only because he has one eye and is a giant, but because 'su naturaleza humana se había corrompido hasta convertirlo en un ser de naturaleza diferente a la que antes tenía, que llevaba escondida.' As the priest speaks, the camera zooms in on Andreu's face and his expression makes clear that he realizes the relevance to him of the priest's words. At the end of his mother's visit, we see Andreu watch through a window as she walks away down a long hallway, head bowed, shoulders slumped, black coat sagging on her slender frame, the very image of dejection.

When he breathes on the window, her figure fades into the mist. He then proceeds to obliterate his mother verbally. When a classmate asks him who that strange woman was, Andreu replies with the film's concluding words: 'Una del poble que m'ha portat un paquet,' a package of food he has not even bothered to pick up. An earlier shot of Andreu in his school uniform showed the name 'A. Manubens' embroidered on his breast pocket, and his denial of his mother completes his transformation into a worthy member of the Manubens family. Once again, Villaronga makes use of visual elements to communicate the implications of the original novel.

Some years ago Andreu Martín declared that 'cuando se pasa una obra literaria al cine hay que cambiar mucho para conseguir que no cambie demasiado' (2001: 39), an epigrammatic assertion that can be applied to Villaronga's *Pa negre*. Novelist and filmmaker alike tell the (hi)story of seemingly insignificant figures and thereby counteract the distortions of official History. Teixidor had the village schoolmaster tell his students that 'la història l'escriuen els guanyadors, i [...] els vençuts no tenen dret ni a una nota a peu de pàgina en el gran llibre de la història' (205), words that Villaronga incorporates into his film, merely reversing the order of the clauses: 'Els vençuts no tenen dret ni a una petita nota a peu de pàgina en el

gran llibre de la història, perquè la història l'escriuen sempre els guanyadors.' And Teixidor surely subscribes to the sentiment expressed by Villaronga's Farriol: 'La guerra ens ha fet molt de mal a tots.' Despite changes in storyline, shifts in emphasis, and differences in manner of expression, novel and film are remarkably similar in spirit and, as Villaronga proposed, 'en definitiva, expli[quen] el mateix' (Salvà 2011: 38).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> On several occasions Teixidor has remarked how pleased he was with the film. See, for example, the 50-minute section on the making of *Pa negre* that is included on the DVD and contains comments by Villaronga, Teixidor, Passola, the main actors, and members of the technical crew.

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