

ABSTRACT

A Cognitive Poetic Exploration of Elena
Poniatowska's *La noche de Tlatelolco*

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This study of Elena Poniatowska's *La noche de Tlatelolco* is based on a cognitive poetic approach to explore readers' perceptions of the work. It affirms both the historical veracity and literary ingenuity of the text by highlighting literary elements and asserting that they strengthen rather than weaken readers' historical understanding of the censored collective trauma. This study applies theories of readers' literary perceptions to investigate the work as a sensorially immersive experience. It analyzes the emotional atmospheres in "Ganar la calle" and "La noche de Tlatelolco" by highlighting cognitive qualities of emotions within the text. It then postulates that the creative presentation of *La noche* draws readers' attention to historical silences and immerses them into parts of the past often overlooked by conventional historiography.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
DEDICATION	vi
CHAPTER ONE	1
Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER TWO	12
Theoretical orientation: Cognitive Poetics	12
CHAPTER THREE	21
Seniorially Immersive Historical Nonfiction	21
CHAPTER FOUR.....	41
Immersion into Emotional Atmospheres	41
CHAPTER FIVE	59
Readers' Perceptions of Historical Silences	59
CHAPTER SIX.....	210
Conclusion	70
BIBLIOGRAPHY	80

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DEDICATION

A mi familia chapina: a Levi, a Leidy, a Josh, a Obed, y a Ruth. In your hearts I recognize the same fight for justice that is so powerfully present in the writing of Elena Poniatowska.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In *La Noche de Tlatelolco*, Elena Poniatowska wrote that at 5:30 pm on October 2nd 1968, flares in the sky signaled the hail of bullets onto the approximately ten thousand people gathered to hear the speakers of the student movement at the Plaza de las Tres Culturas (229-231). According to Leonardo Femat, “Esta es la representación del genocidio, en su justa, dolorosa dimensión. Sesenta y dos minutos de fuego nutrido hasta que los soldados no soportan el calor de los aceros enrojecidos” (Poniatowska 243). Government officials massacred Mexican student protesters at the plaza in Tlatelolco Mexico. Army troops and police security agents dressed in civilian clothes fired on the crowd, some armed with heavy-caliber machine guns (Poniatowska 203-205). Diana Salmerón de Contreras observed that the entire Plaza was covered with the bodies of the living and the dead (Poniatowska 251). Poniatowska writes that the story of what happened at Tlatelolco is puzzling and full of contradictions; the one fact that is certain is that many died (Poniatowska 234).

There are an unknown number of Mexicans killed by their own government’s officials, and an unknown number of survivors with living bodies and silenced spirits. Rosario Castellanos expresses in poetry that by the next morning the plaza was swept clean. The government censored the event and kept no records. And yet, she writes “Toco una llaga: es mi memoria. Duele, luego es verdad” (Poniatowska 226). The government censored the event, diminishing its significance through its control of the

press (Kelly 14). However, the injustice of October 2nd was kept alive in the trauma of witnesses and survivors, in the grief of the families and the friends of victims, and in the collective memory of the *pueblo*. They converted their pain into poetry, literature, film, documentary, and essay. Spilled blood cries out to the world in ink. The massacre wounded Mexico. It left an enduring impact upon Mexican politics, culture, and society (Rodríguez 181). Despite the state's official silence following the massacre and its efforts to minimize its importance, it is one of the most significant events in the latter half of 20th century in Mexican history, both in national history and public memory (Kelly 14; Allier-Montaña 7).

The government's use of deadly force and censorship in 1968 was not an isolated phenomenon; it stemmed from a long history of concealed authoritarian repression. The state was ruled by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI): a single, mutation-prone, hyper-presidential party with a combination of democratic and authoritarian elements. (Gillingham and Smith viii, 1). The PRI strived to maintain a favorable, democratic image to populations both domestic and abroad, and therefore made deliberate efforts to conceal its authoritarianism. Such was the case on July 7, 1952. The PRI used military tanks to slaughter a crowd of protesters at Alameda Plaza. After receiving the graphic images, national papers were ordered to publish the story entirely in favor of the PRI. Censorship and self-censorship of the national press was generally successful (Rath 101). Press-fueled discourse against growing civilian mobilization was backed by government elites (Blancarte 84). The state used furtive tactics to control student political activism. It installed corrupt leaders in student organizations and

implanted charismatic intermediaries in schools to encourage government support (Pensado 5).

The student movement of 1968 was also not an isolated phenomenon; it was preceded by a 12-year swell in student activism that publicly challenged notions of power. This swell began with the 1956 student strike at the Instituto Politecnico Nacional. In response to the strike the government deployed the military and dispatched riot police. Thereafter, the PRI imprisoned students, labor leaders, and intellectuals. The use of authoritarian force led to an upturn in student political mobilization that continued into the sixties. Students met in independent organizations, wrote in academic and countercultural journals, used the radio as a political platform, and participated in peaceful and violent protests (Pensado 4-6). Student protests were frequently covered in Mexico's top magazines and outraged a politically divided public whose national discourse associated "the rising student problem" with foreign ideologies, particularly communism (Pensado 6-8).

While the Student Movement of 1968 arose concurrently with other global student and political movements, it was most directly a response to a national injustice and was ideologically diverse (Cerón 248; Kriza 84). Mexico responded by the thousands when five student rioters were killed by police on July 28, 1968. Several significant marches took place between July 28 and October 2nd, such as the march of silence on September 13 (Cerón 238-49). Protesters represented numerous ideologies. Left-wing student political activists made up the largest portion of the dissenters, but they upheld a variety of platforms: democracy, communism, Maoism, and Trotskyism, among others. They were also joined by right-wing conservative and Christian groups, street

vendors, members of the working class, neighbors, and numerous others (Cerón 242-45). Students between the ages of 15 and 18 made up a large portion of dissenters. They were labeled unpredictable and violent. (Rodríguez 183-84). As police violence continued, protesters unified to demand the resignation of the chief of police, the release of political prisoners, and the elimination of article 145 of the penal code that criminalized the ‘spreading of foreign ideologies’, an article employed to arrest PRI dissenters (Kriza 85).

Within Mexican literature, the magnitude of October 2nd led it to become synecdochic for the period of state violence and public rebellion from which it arose. The complex themes of the time were explored through the representation of this fateful day and its direct aftermath. In the latter half of the century, Mexican literature shifted away from a tendency towards universalism and avant-garde stylistics, and towards a focus on national events and culture of the revolutionary era. This began with *Los de abajo* (1915) by Mariano Azuela, and peaked with *Pedro Paramo* (1955) by Juan Rulfo (Serur 139-40). The testimonio genre became more prominent after the fifties. Testimonial literature shares an explicit commitment to denounce repression and abuse of authority and to raise the consciousness of its readers about situations of injustice. It offers an alternative view to hegemonic history (Jorgenson 68). The focus of testimonial literature became more acute after the massacre, as national themes were explored through this event. For intellectuals, the massacre of 1968 represents the fourth break in Mexican history following the Conquest in 1521, the independence wars in 1810, and the Mexican Revolution of 1910, a break that began a new movement in literary production that revolved around the event for decades (Kelly 15).

The saga of '68 literature began with the proliferation of various forms of testimonial narrative in the years directly following the massacre (Rodríguez 181). The initial corpus of '68 literature is characterized by genre ambiguity, the presence of testimonial narrative, and the combination of fiction and non-fiction elements. It often mixes journalism, testimony, essay, drama, and fiction (Cabrera). It was influenced by a social and literary counterculture movement called *la Onda*, a movement spear-headed by young writers who used literature as social activism against literary and political norms during the sixties. *Onda* literature features urban settings and often includes youthful and rebellious elements such as urban slang, foreign influences, drug use, and rock music. The movement disdained societal norms and values (Rojo 2).

Several prominent testimonial novels were published directly after the massacre. In *Los días y los años* (1971) by Luis González de Alba, the narrator is a member of the National Strike Council. He observes both the massacre and the daily life of political prisoners (Cabrera). The novel *Tlatelolco T-68. ¡Por fin toda la verdad!* (1973), by Juan Miguel de Mora relates how the journalist narrator compiles the material of the novel: a collage of confidential information of the repressive plans of the government, testimonies, and journalistic texts. Carlos Monsiváis, René Avilés Fabila, José Revueltas, Heberto Castillo, Ramón Ramírez, and Gastón García Cantú are other prominent authors of '68 testimonial literature (Cabrera). *La noche de Tlatelolco* (1971) is the most recognized work of the '68 testimonial movement, the most widely read account of the massacre, and Poniatsowska's most significant achievement in nonfiction writing (Young 77; Jorgenson 72). It is a cult classic in Mexico, and it has received wide acclaim by scholars and the Mexican public alike (Gardener 171).

La noche de Tlateloco documents the student movement leading up to October 2, the massacre, and its direct aftermath through a mosaic structure of more than 680 components (Gardner 501). It brings together testimonies from informants of different political orientations and social classes, as well as protest signs, chants, newspaper statements, student organization documents, photographs, army dispatches, and poems, among other elements. It juxtaposes heterogeneous elements, and embraces contradictions, discrepancies, and narrative gaps. While the work embraces contradictions, it also shows large-scale consensus, particularly of the horrific violence of the state, through the layering of congruent testimonies. Jorgenson writes “By thus rejecting the homogenizing tendencies of much conventional journalism, a discourse which reduces and isolates events in a single synthetic capsule or “sound-bite,” Poniatowska has arrived at a highly effective form of presenting the silenced, marginalized other history of 1968”(78).

Poniatowska is considered one of Mexico’s most original and productive authors. She was born in Paris in 1932 to an upper-class family and emigrated to Mexico in 1942, where she continued her education. She attended school in the United States for two years, then returned to Mexico at age eighteen. In 1954, she began a career in journalism for the daily newspaper *Excelsior*. She conducted interviews and wrote society news before switching to the Mexican City daily, *Novedades*, in 1955. Poniatowska was a founding editor of the feminist magazine *fem*, in 1976, and her works take a feminist stance. Poniatowska is both a journalist and a writer who pushes the boundaries of established genres. Her works frequently combine journalistic discourse with fiction and other literary forms. She notoriously incorporates interviews in her writing to magnify the voices of Mexicans from all sectors of society, and to interpret contemporary society. She

is attentive to silenced and marginalized individuals and groups. She projects the voices of those suffering under class and gender inequality, as well as economic disparity and ethnic discrimination (Jorgensen xii-xvii).

Before the publication of *La noche de Tlatelolco* many believed that the state would censor the book. French-born Poniatowska received a threatening phone call that if she continued writing, her Mexican residence visa would be canceled. The director of the printing press *Ediciones Era* received a bomb threat at his business. However, when *La noche de Tlatelolco* was first published in Mexico three years after the massacre, sales surged across the country. Consistent with the state's long history of covert violence under a façade of democracy, the state made no efforts to censor the popular text. Instead, the government offered Poniatowska Mexico's most prestigious literary award: the Xavier Villaurratia Prize. Poniatowska rejected the award and published an open letter of rebuke to the Mexican government. (Gardner 493; Jorgensen xiii).

La noche de Tlateloco served an important role in the historical reconstruction and cultural memory of the massacre. Historian Juan Rojo observes that Poniatowska's text served as a substitute for an official historical account of the massacre in face of government silence and censorship (Rojo 3). This observation coincides with historical documentation of the country-wide surge in book sales in 1971 and the government's official silence. Gardner writes that the accounts of the massacre by other intellectuals such as Octavio Paz, although accurate and relevant, are abstract and distanced from the direct experience of the massacre. On the other hand, *La Noche de Tlateloco* is replete with concrete historical details: from important statistics to names, events, minutes and

headlines. These details have helped fill the gap in historiography created by government censorship (Gardner 492, 499).

Discussion of the text's role in historical reconstruction and cultural memory has emerged as a common thread in the literary studies of Poniatowska's *la Noche de Tlateloco*. Beth Jorgenson analyzes the intertextual relationship between 'visions of the vanquished' and the work, connecting Mexico's more recent history with its ancient Nahuatl past. She highlights how the text magnifies the voices of the oppressed and minimizes Poniatowska's own voice. She discusses the notion of historical reconstruction and how the texts multiple and contradictory versions aid in the decentered collective retelling of history. Christopher Harris argues that *La Noche de Tlateloco* belongs to the genre of documentary narrative. He emphasizes the visual aspects within the work to affirm the text's historical credibility. He highlights the important role of the text in the construction of cultural memory and discusses its narrative strategies. Angela Di Matteo also discusses the role of the text in the reconstruction of historical memory. She examines "la poética de la plaza" and asserts that the mythical, structural, and social elements of the text outline a new methodology for the reconstruction of historical memory from the intersubjective experience of the silenced periphery. Gardner examines the authorial presence, or lack thereof, of Poniatowska in the text. He argues that the text's impersonality, its lack of "psicologismo", and its fragmented structure give strength to the story itself as a historically significant political narrative. Diana Sorensen compares Poniatowska's text with *Postdata* by Octavio Paz. She examines how their literary forms represent relations between violence, justice, and aesthetics in their portrayals of the massacre. She asserts that Paz's interpretation is ruled by a totalizing

vision, while Poniatowska's is characterized by fragmentation and plurality that conveys the often-dissonant voices of civil society. These studies frequently investigate the specific ways in which the text has influenced historical reconstruction and cultural memory.

There also exists criticism that the literary nature of the text compromises its historical veracity. Rojo makes the claim that due to the death of Poniatowska's brother in the year 1968, *La noche de Tlateloco* "as a referential text, then, is 'tainted' by a tragic subjectivity that is evident throughout the work" (3). He questions the text's reliability as the key document to the massacre on the grounds of the presence of an authorial "tragic subjectivity". However, other literary studies observe how Poniatowska counteracts her own subjective influence. Di Matteo, Gardner and Jorgenson observe the author's purposeful absence. Gardner asserts that the text is impersonal, lacking "psicologismo", because of this authorial absence. Harris observes that "Poniatowska actually anticipates this type of debate about the historical reliability of her text and foresees that critics might want to emphasize the literary nature of the text to dismiss it as an imaginative account of events rather than an ostensibly truthful account...how does Poniatowska articulate that...in a text that a majority of critics consider to be a work of literature? The short answer is this: by producing a highly persuasive documentary literary text" (494). Similarly, my study affirms the text as both a reliable historical account and an exceptional work of literature. It views these as mutually informative aspects of the text, and it explores the text's relationship with historical reconstruction and cultural memory by employing the school of literary criticism called cognitive poetics.

Cognitive poetics is “a hermeneutic theory with an integral poetic dimension, in order to capture the interaction of meaningfulness and felt experience in literary reading” (Stockwell, “Literary Theory” 1). It refers to “any approach to literary craft that takes models from cognitive sciences as their descriptive frameworks” (Stockwell, *Introduction* 8). Cognitive poetics holistically and exhaustively analyzes literature, treating a work in its entirety so that its context, setting, and cultural significance are accounted for (Stockwell, “Literary Resonance” 26). It is rooted in reader-response criticism and investigates how the poetic and literary aspects of language cognitively affect readers. There is a large and growing corpus of research that provides descriptive accounts of how readers construct propositional content from literary reading and, more recently, a proliferation of research that analyzes the aesthetic and emotional quality of both texts and the reading experience (Stockwell, “Literary Theory”; Tsur, “Aspects of Cognitive Poetics”). However, it also offers theories that account for authorial and textual perspectives (Stockwell, *Introduction*, 2). Cognitive Poetics is not limited to works that are traditionally considered literary; it offers theories that account for the poetics of all written and spoken language. As a poetic theory, cognitive poetics has a thorough grounding in stylistics, to which the notion of “texture” is integral (Stockwell, “Literary Theory” 1).

Cognitive poetics has much to offer in the analysis of *La noche de Tlateloco*. As a reader-response theory, cognitive poetics analyzes how a text influences readers. Cognitive poetics considers the context, setting and culture of both readers and the text. It offers theories to analyze how *La Noche de Tlateloco* has aided readers in the historical reconstruction of the massacre and in the development of cultural memory. As a poetic

theory, cognitive poetics highlights traditional literary aspects, such as rhetoric and texture. However, as cognitive poetics investigates the poetics of all language, from the poetics of political language to everyday speech, a cognitive poetic study does not imply that the text is a literary account rather than a historical one. As a theory grounded in the cognitive sciences, cognitive poetics offers a variety of approaches to address the cognitive notion of subjectivity within the reader's experience. It can further investigate either the claims made by other critics of a "tragic subjectivity that taints the work", or the assertions that the text lacks "psicologismo" and authorial presence.

This study investigates cognitive poetic aspects of the text in order to speculate its historical and cultural significance that on a national level in Mexico was integral to the historical reconstruction of the massacre and the formation of cultural memory. This study analyzes the literary elements of the text and their effects on readers. It investigates the sensorially immersive experience of the text and the poetics of emotion. It investigates readers' perceptions of historical silences. Through cognitive poetic analysis, this study affirms both the historical veracity and literary ingenuity of the text by highlighting these literary elements and asserting that they strengthen rather than weaken readers' historical understanding of the censored collective trauma.

CHAPTER TWO

Theoretical Orientation: Cognitive Poetics

Psychoanalytic literary criticism has made an indelible mark in the world of literary analysis. The traditional theories of Sigmund Freud have been fruitfully applied to literature for decades, and subsequent psychoanalytic theorists, such as French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, have furthered the field's powerful literary impact (Evans ix). However, while psychoanalysis once dominated developments in the psychological sciences, it does so no longer, and researchers describe its waning influence both in literary research and clinical practice (Bornstein 3-20). The burgeoning field of cognitive poetics offers a fresh alternative.

Cognitive poetics brings current advances in cognitive science into the realm of literary analysis. The development of the interdisciplinary¹ field of cognitive science began with the cognitive revolution in the 1950s (Miller 141). Cognitive science is defined as “the interdisciplinary² study of mind and intelligence” (Thagard). Following the revolution, a "cognitive turn" occurred in the arts, humanities, and social sciences (Stockwell, “Literary Resonance”, 25). Cognitive poetics was born from the turn occurring in various disciplines. It is most broadly defined as “any approach to literary

¹ The cognitive revolution instigated an explosion of discoveries in the fields of psychology, linguistics, neuroscience, computer science, anthropology, and philosophy. These disciplines collaborated to develop theories of mind based on complex representations developed through new computer technology (Miller 141).

² Cognitive poetics is considered interdisciplinary because it imports frames from various fields. It is multidisciplinary because it crosses the methodological limits of many disciplines. It is transdisciplinary because it combines fields in unique ways (Stockwell, *Literary Resonance*, 27).

craft that take models from cognitive sciences as their descriptive frameworks” (Stockwell, *Introduction* 8). Cognitive poetics is applied to literature systematically and comprehensively, as described by Stockwell (“Literary Resonance”, 26), “a properly conducted cognitive poetic exploration of a literary text tends to treat the work in its entirety, including its cultural meaning, setting and context”. In my thesis, I apply two cognitive poetic theories: gestalt theory of literary perception and the perception of the emotional quality of poetic texts.

Gestalt theory³ provided the foundation to modern theories of perception. (“Gestalt psychology”, Britannica). Within cognitive science, it is used to study how individuals form perceptions from direct sensorial stimuli. Sensations include information from the five senses as well as any concrete, conscious experience resulting from stimulation of a specific sense organ, sensory nerve, or sensory area in the brain. Sensations are composed of incomplete and contradictory information and are interpreted into integrated and consistent perceptions of the world (“Sensation”, Britannica). Gestalt theory analyzes how sensations are interpreted into perceptions. All forms of perceptions arise from the interpretation of sensations. The formation of perceptions is what allows individuals to attribute meaning, implications, and judgments to the world around them (West). Gestalt theory has been employed by cognitive poetics in the study of literary perception.

The application of theories of perception can be applied to readers’ perceptions of literature because language mirrors how individuals organize their perceptions. Ana

³Gestalt Theory was first described in Max Wertheimer’s seminal paper on visual perception titled “Experimental Studies of the Perception of Movement” (1912).

Margarida Abrantes⁴ states that “language can trigger a cognitive response equivalent to the one evoked by direct sensorial stimulation” (Abrantes 187-188). Stockwell⁵ describes how perception is related to the feeling of being immersed in the text. He writes “When people talk about the experience of reading literature, they describe the feeling of being immersed in the world of the text... the capacity that language has for anchoring meaning to a context in this way is called deixis... and deixis, of course, is central to the idea of the embodiment of perception”(*Introduction*, 41).

According to gestalt theory, our perceptions of sensorial stimuli are ordered so that whole meaningful shapes arise from background information. Perception does not unfold through the indiscriminate combination or addition of sensorial elements.

Abrantes observes that the process is not akin to the cognitive creation of a sort of blind collage formed from the indiscriminate combination of sensory mosaic pieces (182).

Rather, sensory information is processed to form meaningful wholes from sensorial information in predictable ways. She writes “we do not perceive a house, trees and sky to be the mere sum of compositional parts, e.g. a specific number of tonalities, rather they are perceived as holistic shapes, well-formed and independent from each other, and with a distinctive role in the overall scenery” (182). Wertheimer called these well-formed shapes “gestalts”: meaningful, self-contained, wholes. Foregrounding, which separates meaningful gestalt “figures” from the “ground”, allows for gestalt wholes to emerge from the rest of the text in the minds of readers (Stockwell, *Introduction*, 14).

⁴ Ana Margarida Abrantes conducts multidisciplinary research in the areas of Culture and Cognition, Language and Cognition, Cognitive Poetics and German Studies at the Catholic University of Portugal.

⁵ Stockwell’s chapter “Cognitive deixis” expounds on the immersive experience of reading literature (Stockwell, *Introduction*, 41-57).

Within cognitive poetics “figures” are aspects of the literary text that are foregrounded: they are aspects that appear more important than other textual features. The aspects that are of less importance are relegated to the “ground”. While there is a degree of subjectivity in foregrounding, it may be studied through analyzing cues provided by the text (Stockwell, *Introduction*, 14). Dominance is one way that foregrounding occurs. Within texts, the dominant feature is the organizing element or the most salient aspect in the text. The rest of the literary text is dynamically organized around this formal feature (Stockwell, *Introduction*, 14). Prominence also foregrounds aspects of the text. According to prominence, the part of textual field that is most likely to consider the figure will be a self-contained object in movement that emerges from the background of the text (Stockwell, *Introduction*, 15).

Abrantes discusses the subjective nature as it pertains to foregrounding in literary texts. Literary foregrounding is more ambiguous because literary texts frequently and intentionally play with readers’ expectations, challenging the standard relations between figure and ground by disrupting the continuity in the text or inverting standard order (189). Abrantes highlights that perception is slower in art forms because of this intentional ambiguity. She states that this ambiguity is “not so much the vagueness or uncertainty about what is represented, as it is the co-existence of various possibilities within one representation” (185).

Abrantes outlines four levels of literary analysis that mirror the cognitive process of literary perception. I briefly apply them to the short story “Macario” by Juan Rulfo. First, Abrantes delineates that literary perception begins with the identification of the “enunciational structure” of the text, the “conveyance of subjectivity in language”. This

structure includes analysis of the narrative voice, the way in which viewpoints are delivered, and the relation of the content to the source of knowledge (evidentiality). Readers attune themselves to the inherent subjectivity in the text through identifying textual cues about the narrative voice, mode of viewpoint delivery, and evidentiality. Within “Macario”, readers attune themselves to the first-person voice of a boy who sits by the sewer, waiting to kill frogs. Readers assess that his opinions are personal and subjective.

The second level, shaped by the first, is the analysis of the semantic content, “the dynamic relations unfolding in the segment of the reality chosen for close attention by the subjects of the structure of the enunciation.” This is the narrative plot, for example, or the imagery conveyed in a poem” (189). Readers perceive the storyline of “Macario”. They perceive the story of a boy who appears to have an intellectual disability, who suffers from hunger and fears of damnation.

The third level of analysis encompasses the formal and compositional choices in the text- the formal structures that convey the semantic content (189-190). She writes that in sensorial perception, form is an essential feature. The inherent properties of objects and their mutual relations combined with the mind’s intrinsic processes result in the perception of forms (182). Readers perceive that Macario’s viewpoints are delivered in an extraordinarily simplistic manner. They note that “Macario” is one short story among a collection of short stories, and they perceive elements related to this particular compositional structure, such as its similarity to the other stories in *El llano en llamas*.

The fourth level⁶ of literary analysis emerges after the reader has read the entire text and has developed perceptions of it on all previously mentioned levels. The reader then sees the text as a gestalt whole and forms holistic perceptions of the text. On this level, the genre is assessed, and readers develop perceptions of the text in relation to their own life experiences and worldviews (190). Stockwell describes that this is “where the world of the literary work attaches to the world of the reader” (Stockwell, *Introduction*, 136). On this level, readers assess that “Macario” is a fictional short story that offers a critique of aspects of injustice within Mexican society.

The second cognitive poetic theory that I employ is Reuven Tsur’s⁷ analysis of the perception of emotions in poetic writing. He writes that emotional processes are cognitively diffuse. “Diffuse” in this sense implies that individuals perceive their emotional states through internal information that is not localized. A person may name their emotions through their logical thought processes, but ultimately, they are separate from them, and experienced differently (Tsur, “Aspects”, 279). Tsur writes that the structure of language is predominantly sequential and logical which mirrors the structure of our thought processes, which are also sequential and logical. Language does not appear equipped to structurally convey emotional processes, as they are structurally diffuse. Poetic writing is the exception as it purposefully configures language in a way that structurally evokes diffuse emotions and vague moods (Tsur, “Aspects”, 279-280). To explore how poetic writing evokes emotional processes, “Cognitive poetics offers

⁶ A similar theoretical description to Abrantes’s fourth level may be found in Stockwell’s chapter, “Text worlds” (Stockwell, *Introduction*, 135).

⁷ Reuven Tsur’s doctoral dissertation (1971), pioneered the literary approach that he later termed “cognitive poetics”. He is a founding father of cognitive poetics according to *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide* (2006).

plausible hypotheses to justify systematically the attribution of emotional qualities to poetic texts” (Tsur, “Metre”, 7). Cognitive psychologists have discerned 4 qualities of emotions, and Tsur observes the same emotional qualities in poetic writing. I describe these four qualities below, which are mutually informative. (Tsur, “Aspects”, 280).

Emotions increase or decrease a person’s normal energy level and poetic writing mimics this deviation. For example, the emotions “gladness” and “anger” increase a person’s energy level while sadness, depression, and calm have the opposite effect. Likewise, poetic language employs strategies that increase or decrease the perceived energy level within the text to convey a particular emotional atmosphere (Tsur, “Aspects”, 280-281). An abundance of cold, still imagery in a poem will decrease its energy level and create an atmosphere associated with emotions such as sadness or calm. Tsur also notes that joyful people display greater pitch span, greater span of intensity in speech, and speak faster than sad people, as joy increases one’s energy level (Tsur, “Metre”, 15). Poetic devices may exaggerate language to reflect these changes in emotional speech patterns. To this end, poetic writing deviates the energy level through manipulating speech sounds and metric structure (Tsur, “Metre”, 14-15).

A second way that poetic writing mimics emotional processes is through presenting diffuse information that is less differentiated than most conceptual information (Tsur, “Aspects”, 280-281). In emotional processes, “less differentiated” means that a variety of similar emotional information is perceived. For example, anger may be felt through an increased heart rate, increased blood flow, increased negative thoughts and increased pitch volume. While these cues are diffuse, they are not differentiated. To convey this aspect of emotion, poetic writing will employ repetition and parallel

structures to draw attention to semantic similarities. A poem may describe tumultuous water in the first line, lightning in the second, and animals running for cover in the third, in a parallel metric structure. Readers are inclined to extract from similar and parallel entities their common ingredients, which in poetic writing is often an abstract emotional state or vague mood. From these three lines, they may derive a feeling of “fear” or “anger”. The diffuse, less-differentiated information frequently repeats information that deviates the energy level. Repetition of less differentiated and diffuse information may also be reinforced by the rhyme pattern in poetry (Tsur, “aspects”, 281).

A third similarity between poetic writing and emotional processes occurs when poetic writing identifies emotions through language. Specific emotions are often identified and named by individuals in the process called the “cognitive situation appraisal”. An individual with an increased heart rate and blood flow, who has increased her pitch volume, may assess that she is angry. The cognitive situation appraisal is supplied through words in poetic writing that identify the emotional atmosphere. It will often resolve ambiguity between emotions with similar energy levels, such as sadness and calm (Tsur, “Aspects”, 280-281). Alternatively, poetic writing may delay or remove these cognitive cues in order to create emotional ambiguity and delay categorization. When categorization is delayed, more information is perceived by readers, which creates a larger sensory load on the human memory system (Tsur, “Aspects”, 284-285).

The last emotional quality that Tsur describes is the priming affect that poetic writing generates in readers. When a person is in a certain emotional state, information related to that emotional state is in “the back of one’s mind” and is more quickly recollected. If a person is angry, concepts related to anger will be more quickly

perceived. Similarly, readers of poetic writing, who observe the three emotional qualities in poetic writing outlined above, will retain information related to the perceived emotion. This is often an abstract emotional entity that is present subliminally. For example, readers of the poem describing tumultuous water, lightning, and animals running for cover will subliminally perceive and retain information related to “fear” or “anger”. (Tsur, “Aspects”, 280-281).

I explain here how I apply these cognitive poetic theories. My analyses in the following chapters are two-fold. I explore literary elements of the text because “the most effective advance in cognitive poetics requires a thorough stylistic grounding to accompany the conceptual theory” (Stockwell, “literary theory”, 1). I then analyze how those literary elements immerse readers. In chapter three, I employ gestalt theory to show how the text is sensorially immersive; here Abrantes’s four levels of perception help to show how each level of the work sensorially immerses readers. In chapter four, I show how the text is emotionally immersive, using Tsur’s theories of the emotional aspects of poetic writing to identify the prevailing emotional atmospheres of parts one and two. In chapter five, I use Abrantes’ 4 levels of literary perception to show how readers perceive historical silences through the literary aspects of the text.

CHAPTER THREE

Sensorially Immersive Historical Nonfiction

La noche de Tlatelolco sensorially immerses readers into the historical accounts of the demonstrations and the massacre. This is evident from the beginning of the text: readers are met with a visual account of the 1968 demonstrations and massacre through a series of black and white photos. The images visually presage the sensorial experience readers encounter in the text. The index follows the photos and breaks the text into four parts. The prologue provides Poniatowska's perspective of the events and the process of gathering the testimonies. Part 1 and Part 2 contain similar mosaic structures. Part 1: "Ganar la calle" contains a mosaic structure of heterogeneous elements and narrative voices. It ends with an ancient Nahuatl poem about La Plaza de Las Tres Culturas. Part 2: "la noche de Tlatelolco", begins with the poem "La memorial de Tlatelolco" followed by several elements and testimonial voices that express the horror of the massacre and ensuing events. A chronology follows Part 2. In this chapter, I analyze each part of the text in the sequential order outlined above: the series of photos, prologue, parts one and two, and then the chronology. I combine my analyses of parts one and two in this chapter. The analyses of each portion of the text are two-part. I first highlight literary elements and then analyze how those literary elements sensorially immerse readers. I then apply gestalt theories of perception to focus specifically on the immersive sensorial experience: how aspects of the text trigger an immersive response into the sights and sounds of the massacre.

In both the literary and cognitive analyses, I follow the levels of cognitive poetic analysis of perception that Ana Margarida Abrantes outlines in her paper “Gestalt, Perception, and Literature”. To summarize here what I explain in greater length in the previous chapter, Abrantes observes that readers’ perceptions of a literary work begin with the recognition of the text’s “enunciational structure” which includes the recognition of narrative voice and the text’s claims to evidentiality. Readers then perceive the semantic content, followed by the text’s structural elements. Finally, readers evaluate the genre of the work and how their perception of the text as a gestalt relates to their own experiences and worldviews. These four levels are interwoven one another, and so are my analyses. I discuss the absence of Poniatowska’s authorial voice, but the presence of her “authorial vision” and “authorial ear”. I observe how the series of photo and prologue provide readers with a visual and semantic basis for the subsequent text. In parts one and two, I explore how the many voices of Mexico’s collective consciousness assume the narrative voice, decenter the narrative, and sensorially immerse readers into the historical events. I show how readers are sensorially immersed through the recreation of dialogue on the semantic and structural levels. I demonstrate that several structural elements of the text sensorially recreate the crowd of protestors, further immersing readers. To conclude, I assert that *La noche* is a work of historical nonfiction that employs literary techniques that sensorially immerse readers into the deep wound within Mexico’s collective consciousness.

I will first define what I mean by “sensorial immersion” as it pertains to the literary experience. Readers’ perceptions of literature may be studied through cognitive poetic analysis because “language can trigger a cognitive response equivalent to the one

evoked by direct sensorial stimulation” (Abrantes 187-188). Stockwell describes readers’ cognitive immersion as:

“the feeling of being immersed in the world of the text, relating to characters, scenes, and ideas in a way that happens rarely in non-literary reading. It seems as if a threshold is crossed and readers can project their minds into the other world, find their way around there, and fill out the rich detail between the words of the text on the basis of real life experience and knowledge”(Stockwell, *Introduction*, 41).

By “sensorial immersion”, I indicate that the text immerses readers into the sensorial experience of the demonstrations and massacre.

I will also define two terms I use frequently in the chapter, and their literary implications for the text: “authorial vision” and “authorial ear”. The text is guided by Poniatowska’s authorial vision and authorial ear rather than her voice. Poniatowska minimizes her individual views yet clearly projects the historical account of the demonstrations and massacre from a variety of perspectives. Ronald Christ comments that “the narrator is no more visible here than a director who chooses what will be photographed” (Jorgenson 80). Like a photographer, she does not clearly portray herself; rather, she uses her perceptive vision to graphically represent the events of 1968. While the term “authorial voice” is often used to describe the unique narrative strategies of an author, I argue that the terms authorial vision and authorial ear are more indicative of Poniatowska’s involvement in the text. Poniatowska possesses a unique and profound ability to perceive events and the complex personhoods of others and then represent them with minimal filtering through her own presence. Through her authorial vision, she creatively uses her visual insights to represent events and people on several levels of the text. Through her authorial ear, she listens to the voices of others and then projects them. Because of her authorial vision and authorial ear, the text includes a great deal of

sensorial information. Each part of the text, from the series of photos to the chronology, makes clear claims of evidentiality by presenting many concrete details, many of which are sensorial.

Poniatowska's authorial vision guides the enunciational structure of the series of photos as she uses photos from anonymous photographers that visually depict the demonstrations and the massacre. The anonymous photographers collectively assume the visual equivalent of the narrative voice. Poniatowska's individual presence is diminished as the photos portray the events from the perspectives of different photographers and depict many individuals within Mexican society. Gardner observes that they are a "visual essay" that precede the literary narrative "Elena Poniatowska es la que selecciona y organiza la información, tanto en el ensayo visual como en los textos escritos; no obstante, se percibe una especie de impersonalidad y eliminación de su propia voz ... La noche de Tlatelolco posee en realidad dos narrativas: una visual y una escrita." (493, 496). On the level of the semantic content, the first photo on page 9 of the ERA 2014 edition contains a dispute between police and student protestors on July 22. No particular individual stands out in the photo; each person is shown in movement and identifying differences between policemen and students are blurred. All the photos contain more than one person, and most focus on groups of people or crowds of demonstrators. Following a photo of President Gustavo Diaz Ordaz embracing Luis Echeverria (14), the montage is structured to show more graphic images depicting violence, blood, and corpses. The series of photos ends with a photo of a crowd of people on November 2nd lighting candles in honor of the fallen (24). Some photos are displayed with identifying captions, and the

montage appears to be arranged in chronological order. The crowd of protestors and the massacre are visually represented through the series of photos.

The first sensorial perceptions that readers form from the text are from the photographic narrative¹. Photography inherently makes a strong evidential claim; readers are thus immediately informed of the text's historical and documentary nature before its literary one through the presentation of visual information. Di Matteo observes, "las fotografías abren el relato y se imponen con su fuerza icónica en la reconstrucción testimonial ya que, como señala Paz, "no creo que las imágenes puedan mentir" (202). Doubts some readers may carry with them about the massacre are dispelled through abundant visual evidence, opening incredulous readers up to evidential claims in the text and beginning the process of sensorial immersion. The protestors are depicted in most of the photos, and readers are therefore primed to observe them collectively as the foregrounded figures in the text. Readers are provided with clear mental images of the protestors, demonstrations, and massacre that they cognitively carry into the rest of the text.

I will use my own reactions to two of these photos to speculate how readers may similarly perceive them. On page 17, soldiers pull a young student down by the hair. Her hair covers her face, obscuring her identity. Meanwhile, the faces of the soldiers are visible. One young soldier nonchalantly smokes a cigarette, and the other smiles directly into the camera. The image is jarring. The soldiers are both obviously human and cruel; human because they look no different than the other student protestors, and cruel because they appear unaffected and jovial while they are physically assaulting a young woman.

¹ Abrantes' paper applies gestalt theory to literature, music, and visual art, making it ideal for the analysis of Poniatowska's multimedia text.

The obscuring of the identity of the student protestor foreshadows the silencing of the protestors' voices, while the image of the assailants anticipates the horrific violence shared in the historical account. The photo on page 22 is also viscerally jarring to readers and sensorially immersive. It features a young teenager appearing to be detained. His arms are up and behind his head. He too is staring into the camera, but with a blank, fearful, angry expression. His clothes are splattered in blood. The young age of the subject communicates that the injustice was committed against children. His clothes splattered in blood indicate he witnessed terrible violence, while his posture and his expression indicate that he anticipates that he is about to be victimized yet again. The violent images foreshadow the graphic textual imagery. Readers begin to construct a visual mental narrative from the presentation of photographic information. They remember the faces of the protestors, many of whom were children, that were violently murdered and incarcerated by their own government. This mental narrative is subsequently reinforced by the literary account. As the themes presented in the photos emerge in the following text, readers re-visualize the photographic evidence. The photos trigger direct sensorial stimulation², immersing readers into the visual images of the demonstrations and massacre. They provide a visual basis for the following text.

The enunciational structure, semantic content, and structure of the prologue provide information that orients readers to key aspects of the text so that they are not lost in the abundance of sensorial information in parts one and two. My analysis specifically pertains to the 2014 edition of *La noche de Tlatelolco*. While the original publication date of *La noche* was 1971, the prologue was written in 2014, nearly half a century after the

² “The way visual patterns are perceived depends both on the configuration of the stimulus and on the grouping tendencies inherent to the human mind” (Abrantes 182).

massacre. It frames the work from a temporally recent perspective, addressing the massacre from a perspective that recognizes the temporal distance between the massacre and more modern readers. In the prologue, Poniatowska includes herself as a voice within Mexican society, appearing as the author. The prologue is written from her perspective, in contrast to all other sections of the text. However, even in the most autobiographical portion of the work, she does not focus on herself but rather introduces several informants, key figures, and important places that reappear in parts one and two. She speaks as one person within Mexican society. Di Matteo notes this in the following: “habla a la sociedad mexicana por medio de las voces de la sociedad misma... E. P. es parte de la realidad mexicana y decide no autoexcluirse de ella, encajando su testimonio como una voz más que se une a la resistencia política” (206). On the semantic level, the prologue shares how Poniatowska³ collected the testimonies (30-44). It deeply questions and criticizes the Mexican Government, discussing issues such as the imprisonment of protestors (35), censorship (43), and the many ways Mexican society was affected for years after the massacre. It traces Mexican history up to the #Yosoy123 movement in 2012, framing politics and other societal issues such as the war on drugs from her perspective and in terms of their relation to the massacre (44-47). The prologue contains striking imagery, such as the bloody dove that becomes symbolic for the massacre that is also featured as the cover art for the text. Poniatowska structures the semantic content in a style that is recollective and mostly linear.

The prologue foregrounds prominent elements of the text, orienting readers to important people, events, and perspectives. Readers are primed to remember the names of

³ Throughout this chapter, the parenthetical citations without authorial references refer to the 2014 edition of *La noche de Tlatelolco*.

the key informants and who they were in relation to Poniatowska. Their attention is drawn to the issues of public outcry, state violence, imprisonment, and censorship. The concept of foregrounding describes how readers delineate between a text's important details: the figures, and its background details: the ground (Stockwell, *Introduction*, 14). In parts one and two, figure and ground are intentionally blurred through the mosaic structure and the presentation of abundant sensorial details. However, in the prologue, figure and ground are distinct. The clear, linear structure provides readers with an interpretation of the subsequent text that helps them understand the unconventional presentation of sensorially immersive content. Just as the photo series provides a visual basis for readers, the prologue provides a semantic basis so that readers are immersed, rather than lost, in the many contradictory and fragmented sensorial details in parts one and two.

An authorial ear guides the enunciational structure of parts one and two and allows for the voices of the student protestors to emerge on several levels of the text. Poniatowska uses her insights from listening seriously. She applies listening to the literary craft with the same awareness and creativity that guides her writing. Listening rather than writing guides Poniatowska to act most prominently as an editor⁴. Through her attentiveness to the voices of others as well as her desire to project them, Poniatowska minimizes her own presence. The lack of a unifying authorial voice decenters the narrative. Poniatowska is not absent from the work; however, she elevates her role as

⁴ Jorgenson similarly observes "She participates actively in the production of the work by framing questions of history, politics and language, but she is careful to hide the evidence of her transforming labor. She exercises control over the material at the same time that she allows the individual voices to claim their own authority as witnesses and participants in the history told" (Jorgenson 88).

listener to the Mexican people above her position as writer about Mexican society. In the narrative space created by Poniatowska's authorial silence, the narrative voice of the work is shared by the voices of the collective consciousness⁵ of Mexico. The narrative voice includes a variety of intertextual fragments but is most prominently assumed by the student protestors united in the demonstration and dispersed during the massacre. The inclusion of the many narrative voices of Mexico's collective consciousness recreates the memory of the crowd of protestors within the enunciational structure of the work.

Vicente Cerevera Salinas observes the collective consciousness in the following:

“Poniatowska acumula numerosos testimonios fragmentarios que exhiben la verdad histórica como un cristal diáfano hecho añicos y diseminado en la conciencia colectiva de esa muchedumbre.” (98). While the voices of the collective consciousness of Mexico are diverse and often conflicting, many share the horrific memory of the massacre, exhibiting its historical truth like a diaphanous crystal- one I argue is reflective because of its multiple facets. The following transcribed page from the text (96-98) exemplifies the recreation of the many voices of Mexico's collective consciousness within the enunciational structure of the text.

Luis González de Alba, DA: No en vano había pasado ya un mes de lucha y manifestaciones, un mes de gritar sin temor lo que se piensa sobre los “democráticos procedimientos” del gobierno. Los burócratas fueron a la ceremonia de purificación cívica, pero no con la tradicional inferencia con que van en los desfiles de apoyo a la política presidencial. Salieron de los ministerios y de las oficinas públicas al grito de: “Somos borregos, nos llevan... bee...beee...No vamos, nos llevan, no vamos, nos llevan, beee, beee, beee”. Iban balando, fíjate nomás, y gritando desde los camiones: “¡Somos borregos!” Sus balidos se oyeron en todas las calles. “Bee... Bee...” Se vaciaron los burócratas.

⁵ “Collective consciousness is a fundamental sociological concept that refers to the set of shared beliefs, ideas, attitudes, and knowledge that are common to a social group or society. The collective consciousness informs our sense of belonging and identity, and our behavior.” Cole, Nicki Lisa. "The Concept of Collective Consciousness." ThoughtCo, 2020.

¡Qué ondón más padre! ¡Qué puntada se botaron! “Somos borregos.” Y eso que se suponía que iban a apoyar el desagravio”.

José Fente Herrera, estudiante de la ESIME del IPN: El gobierno cree que en México sólo existe una opinión pública: la que lo aplaude, la que lo lambisconea. Pero existe otra: la que critica, la que no cree en nada de lo que dice, y otra más aun, la del importamadrismo, la que no sabe de promesas, la que no se ha encauzado, la indiferente, la que nadie ha sabido aprovechar, y que es, a pesar de su incredulidad e incluso de su ignorancia una opinión libre.

Ernesto Hernández Pichardo, de la Escuela Nacional de Economía de la UNAM: La raza está acelerada.

Manta en la manifestación: INSCRIPCIONES GRATIS PARA GRANADEROS EN LOS CURSOS DE ALFABETIZACIÓN

Hugo Peniche Avilés, estudiante de la Escuela Wilfrido Massieu:

- Yo no cargo a Venustiano, tú llévalo.
- ¿Y quién ordenó esta pancarta?
- El Comité de Lucna, pero yo no lo cargo...
- Mujer, no hay que ser...
- No lo cargo, y no lo cargo...
- ¡A ver acáaaaa! ¡Otro brigadista que cargue a Venustiano Carranza!

Within the space of three pages are five distinct selections, and many of these selections feature more than one voice. Poniatowska's presentation of the voices occur in quick succession. The first two selections express government dissent; Luis González de Alba shares the reactions of government employees leaving their offices in protest to join the movement. They were compelled by the government to join a ceremony of “desagravio” to show solidarity with the government with the purpose of re-establishing order and diminishing the effects of the student protests. But the government employees turned it into a form of protest by bleating like sheep to show that this was the government's idea and not theirs. Herrera also observes government disapproval; a banner is presented, followed by an argument between two students, one of whom doesn't want to carry the "Carranza" banner. In just three pages, Poniatowska captures many voices of Mexican society.

In parts one and two, Poniatowska's use of an authorial ear rather than a single authorial voice inundates readers with a multitude of conflicting voices. She recreates the auditory experience of the student protests and massacre through projecting the divergent voices of others, sharing with the voices of Mexico's collective consciousness the title of author. As readers listen to many narrative voices, they are immersed in the memory of the crowd of protestors. This is evident from the above page, in which the government workers join the protestors bleating like sheep, and two students argue over carrying the "Carranza" banner. The text is decentered as there is no unifying voice; the only centralizing aspect among the voices is the collective horror of the massacre. Readers assume the "center" of the narrative: the many voices of the collective consciousness are directed at them, surrounding them with divergent perspectives, and immersing them into the experience of the massacre. From the de-centered narrative voices, readers develop a multifaceted notion of Mexican national identity and are sensorially immersed into their many perspectives and into the historical reconstruction of the massacre.

On the semantic level, thematic threads interweave the testimonial fragments and become multi-layered. Dialogue emerges between the testimonial fragments, as the same themes are addressed from different perspectives. This is evident in the page transcription above (96-98) in which two individuals express government dissent from different perspective. Another example is dialogue between the first two testimonies in part one. They appear to respond to the same question: when the informants became involved with the student movement. This thematic thread becomes multi-layered when it is answered in different ways. Raúl Álvarez Garín says "No es que yo me 'metiera' al Movimiento Estudiantil; ya estaba adentro desde hace mucho" (53). Margarita Isabel responds "Yo le

entré al Movimiento Estudiantil porque un día, sin más, llegaron los granaderos a la Escuela de Bellas Artes con perros policía y cadenas” (53). Dialogue thus emerges among the content of the testimonial excerpts. Furthermore, the cry for dialogue is a repeated theme throughout the text; Robert Escudero remarks, “Hace cincuenta años que el gobierno monologa con el gobierno” (79).

The contradictory thematic information mimics the sensory process. Cohesive perceptions are formed through the process of sensorial stimulation. Incoming sensations are composed of incomplete and contradicting fragments of information from the environment that are cognitively interpreted into meaningful wholes (Abrantes 182; Stockwell, *Introduction*, 14). Most literary accounts present the narrative voice’s perceptions; meaningful gestalts are written on the page and perceived by the reader. This perception is passive, the “passing along” of the authors’ perspective. In *La noche*, the thematic content is not presented in pre-formed gestalts. Contradictions and gaps emerge from the presentation of many different voices retelling the same events in different ways. In order to make sense of the fragmentary, multifaceted information, readers must actively interpret the created ambiguity through a cognitive process akin to direct sensorial stimulation (Abrantes 182, 189). The foregrounded elements in their semantic basis from the prologue become multifaceted through the collision of the thematic content. Themes develops many layers of meanings from the various perspectives that recreate the sensorial experience of a united but diverse crowd with many voices.

The contradictory information may also be further investigated as a literary tool employed by Poniatowska on the structural level. Poniatowska witnessed the historical events, and therefore uses her control over the literary structure of the work to recreate

them. Unlike the Mexican government of the time, Poniatowska avoids the practice of censorship entirely. She arranges and splices the excerpts to create dialogue throughout the work. The cry for dialogue was a repeated demand of the protestors; Poniatowska allows this demand to guide her stylistic decisions as editor. Through her attentive listening, Poniatowska internalized the protestors' desire for dialogue, and then used her authority over the text to create and amplify the discourse that they desired through the text's mosaic structure⁶. Dialogue emerges through the arrangement of narrative voices, some of which completely contradict the metanarrative of the work. Felix Lucio Hernandez Gamundi of the CNH speaks from within the movement "Los camiones del Poli le sirvieron de mucho al Movimiento. En un camión del Poli te sentías en tu casa" (125). Immediately following Gamundi, Pablo Lara Vertiz, a tailor, insults the students "En mis tiempos a una bola de vagos y malvivientes no solía llamárseles estudiantes" (125). Poniatowska juxtaposes conflicting voices, embracing the discursive tension that emerges from insolent comments and the presentation of contradictory excerpts. Through creatively reconstructing uncensored dialogue on the structural level, even the parts of the text most under her control are guided by her authorial ear and the narrative voices of the protestors.

The temporal immediacy of direct sensorial input is recreated through the stylistic choice of putting the fragments into dialogue with one another. In the prologue, Poniatowska discusses that the majority of the testimonial accounts were gathered in 1969-70, the two years following the massacre. The testimonies are thus temporally

⁶ Jorgenson writes "I perceive a unique and semantically rich plurality of voices in the writing of EP, a plurality which is immensely enhanced by a practice of dialogue sustained over the course of a lifetime (xxii).

distanced memories of the events. Semantically they do not reflect direct sensorial input, but they do retain a certain freshness that her prologue written almost 50 years later lacks. However, Poniatowska's stylistic arrangement of the fragments recreates the temporal immediacy of direct sensorial input. She arranges the fragments into contradictory dialogue. Along with the presentation of large amounts of information, the stylistic presentation of contradictory dialogue mimics the temporal proximity of immediate sensorial input, even while the fragments themselves were collected in the two years following the massacre. Temporally distanced memories of an event are more cognitively coherent than the immediate experience of an event as individuals have had the time needed to form meaningful perspectives and forget unessential information⁷ (Roediger 12,844). This may also make temporally distanced memories appear abstract and distanced. The stylistic recreation of contradictions and fragmented information inundates readers into an immersive experience of the demonstration and massacre, drawing readers in temporally as the text mimics the experience of a recent memory before it has congealed.

On the structural level, the crowd of protestors is further represented through their visual representation on the page; many heterogenous testimonies recreate the memory of the individual persons that composed the diverse assembly. Di Matteo observes the plurality of voices when he states, "La arquitectura plural de *La noche de Tlatelolco* reconstruye la dimensión pública de la memoria recurriendo a un amplio abanico de personajes... compuesto de estudiantes, profesores, políticos, periodistas, padres de familia, atletas, antropólogos, actores y otras figuras profesionales y sociales" (203).

⁷ Schema theory similarly postulates how individuals conceptualize their experiences and derive meaning from them (Stockwell, *Introduction*, 75-89).

While overarching themes emerge from both sections, the way the testimonies are visually represented honors the distinct personhoods and perspectives of the survivors of the massacre. The full names of the individuals, along with identifying information, underly the testimonial fragments⁸. The names are reprinted again if other parts of their testimonies are shared. Even small excerpts are identified with full names; the questions “¿Qué va a pasar ahora, mano? ¿Qué va a pasar?” are attributed to “Eulogio Castillo Narváez, estudiante de la Vocacional 1” (310). No comment is devalued in Poniatowska’s presentation, and the full personhoods of the survivors are honored through the presentation and repetition of their full names. Poniatowska recreates the memory of many united but diverse persons on the structural level of the text through the visual depiction of the names on the page between the testimonies.

The unification of the crowd of protesters in part one is visually and auditorily represented through capitalized words in black-rimmed rectangles that interpose the testimonial excerpts. Poniatowska uses the signs to contain the words of banners, chants, slogans, street posters, signs, and placards. On the pages, they visually recreate the memory of the protest signs interspersed among the crowds. There are 45 signs in part one. Most are banners and chants, and many contain repeated messages. The first sign appears six times as both a banner and a chant. It is a cry for unity: “ÚNETE PUEBLO, NO NOS ABANDONES, ÚNETE PUEBLO, PUEBLO, NO NOS ABANDONES, ÚNETE PUEBLO” (49, 54). Versions of the hopeful chant “Mé-xi-co—Li-ber-tad—Mé-xi-co—Li-ber-tad—Méxi-co” appears 3 times (53, 68, 73) and the chant “DIA-LOGO—

⁸ Jorgenson observes, “that each testimony does indeed speak for itself is graphically reinforced by the individual names which identify the fragments and by the blank space that separates each one from the next” (81).

DIA-LOGO” (59,79) is represented twice. The chants represent the protestors auditorily; the capitalized letters recreate the effect of high volume, and the break-up of the syllables aids in depicting the lines as upbeat and rhythmic. Each sign contains an element that historically unified the protesters. Banners, slogans and chants brought diverse individuals together under the same messages. Recreating them on the page illustrates the memory of solidarity; even as protesters represented disparate ideologies, they marched together in the same direction, shouting and carrying the same messages.

Through the visual representation of individual persons, graphically reinforced by the individual names and the spaces between testimonies, the fragments of information are perceived to be representational of whole persons and therefore even more complex than the multifaceted text itself. In part one, the visual and auditory representation of the chants further humanizes the text, creating a feeling of forward-marching movement as the excerpts, banners and chants march along the page with the reader. As readers have been forewarned through the photo montage of the massacre, the movement creates the feeling in readers that the student protestors are inevitably marching to their death. The historical events of the massacre are therefore evident within the literary structure of the work and are subsequently experienced by readers.

The dispersion of the unified crowd and the silencing of their dissident voices are sensorially depicted on the page through the lack of unifying signs in part two that dissects the people’s voices. Harris observes,

“In the Second Part, these interpolations are reduced to just two, and both are rendered ironic by the context of the massacre. The chant 'PEOPLE UNITE, PEOPLE UNITE, PEOPLE UNITE, ...' (NdT: 188), used so often at demonstrations, is rendered ironic by the fact that solidarity is no longer effective in the face of armed military repression...Ultimately, Poniatowska's ironic

interpolations disappear, in keeping with the fact that the Tlatelolco Massacre effectively silenced all forms of dissidence.” (486).

Unity among the people was destroyed by the relentless gunfire that dispersed the crowd. Amidst the roar of the terrified people, their voices that expressed hope, unity, and the desire for dialogue were silenced. The dissection of the peoples’ voices- the repression of their dissidence amidst their irrepressible cries of terror and pain- is auditorily represented by the disappearance of the unifying chants but the continuation of heart-wrenching testimonies. The emotional shift from hope to despair, as well as the physical shift from unity to dispersion, is perceived by readers through the visual structure of the work.

The narrative voice of the chronology belongs to the student protestors. Poniatowska writes that the chronology is “basada en los hechos a que se refieren los estudiantes en sus testimonios de historia oral” (355). The great quantity of concrete information, such as names, dates and locations, makes a strong evidential claim. The chronology starts with a short description of the demonstration on July 22 that is depicted in the very first photo (Poniatowska 357; 9). It ends on December 13 with the statement “A partir de esta fecha fueron arrestadas 500 personas, en diferentes lugares, entre ellas Tita, Nacha, Rodolfo Echeverria del PC por ser Defensor de Gerardo Unzueta” (366). The last sentence in the text explicitly states that the end of the chronology on December 13 does not indicate an end to the abuses against the Mexican people. This information is presented in parts one and two through the testimonial fragments. However, in the chronology, it is presented clearly and linearly.

In the chronology, the student protestors are foregrounded above the other informants presented in parts one and two as they are collectively given the narrative

voice of the last section of the text. The year 1968 is also foregrounded as it is the only year outlined in the chronology. Like the prologue, which helped readers understand the immersive texts of parts one and two, the chronology assists readers in understanding their literary experience. As they reflect on the overload of fragmented information in parts one and two, the semantic content of the chronology and the perspectives of the student protestors become more apparent as this information is revisited. The linear presentation of this information aids readers in the development of meaning both within the text, and in the categorization of the text as a gestalt whole.

The fourth level analyzes the text as a gestalt. I argue that *La noche* is a work of historical nonfiction that employs techniques commonly found in narrative literature to immerse readers, counter hegemonic representations of history, and portray the events of 1968 more authentically⁹. Aaron Sachs, a professor of history and editor of the book *Artful History: an Anthology*, assesses the following: “Is there any reason serious historical scholarship cannot receive literary expression? Even the most committed empiricists and postmodernists might achieve better results by thinking of writing as a craft, rather than a means of packaging research.” (Sachs). *La noche* is a work of historical nonfiction because of its firm commitment to the accurate historical representation of the events of 1968¹⁰; Poniatowska’s use of literary techniques

⁹ Harris observes that Poniatowska “employs a number of rhetorical devices more typically found in fictional narratives in a concerted effort to represent the Tlatelolco Massacre” (Harris 495).

¹⁰ “leemos testimonios directos sobre uno de los datos más disputados de la masacre: las muertes ocurridas en la plaza de Tlatelolco (La noche de Tlatelolco, 176–79), y evidencias mismas de la masacre (La noche de Tlatelolco, 198–99). Esa información la extrae Poniatowska de los participantes mismos de los eventos” (Gardner 499).

sensorially immerse her readers into historical nonfiction. Her literary techniques therefore strengthen her commitment to historical scholarship.

The fourth level of literary perception explores “where the world of the literary work attaches to the world of the reader” (Stockwell, *Introduction*, 136). As a work of historical nonfiction that sensorially immerses readers into a censored national tragedy, the work fills a necessary gap for all readers who partake in knowledge of Mexico’s collective consciousness. The massacre was seared into the shared knowledge of Mexico’s collective consciousness; however, the censorship and repression of the events created a large gash, painfully empty of historical knowledge. Readers who belong to Mexico’s collective consciousness perceive the text as a gestalt to be indispensable, as *La Noche* helps stitch the painful gash closed. The text is perceived as the thread that helps close the wound. The wound is still there, the scar is too big to ever completely heal, but the text helps close the painful void in the collective consciousness.

To summarize, I established in this chapter that the structure of the crowd of protestors is present on several levels of the text. Through Poniatowska’s narrative ear, she projects the many voices of Mexico’s collective consciousness to assume the narrative voice in parts one and two. The many voices de-center the narrative and reflect the structure of the large crowd with many diverse voices. The dialogue that arises between these voices further reflects the crowd of protestors, and the inclusion of opinions that contradict the metanarrative of the work opposes the practice of censorship, and further carries the cries of the protestors themselves for an end to that censorship into the structure of the work. The visual representation of signs interposed among the testimonial fragments, and the full names of individuals identifying those testimonial

fragments, further represents the crowd of protestors within the work's structure. As the signs disappear in part two, the peoples' voices are dissected to reveal that their dissidence was repressed, but their agony continued. I also showed that through these creative elements, readers are sensorially immersed into the historical accounts. The sensorial evidence, such as the abundant visual evidence in the form of photos, and the amount of descriptive detail in all parts of the text, makes clear claims of historical accuracy. Readers develop a visual and semantic narrative from the photos and prologue that is affirmed in parts one and two. The structure of parts one and two sensorially immerses readers. Readers listen to many narrative voices and are immersed into the memory of the crowd of protestors. The presentation of fragmented and contradictory information mimics the process of direct sensorial input. As *La noche* is a work of historical nonfiction, the sensorial immersion that readers experience strengthens their historical understanding of the massacre. Poniatowska creatively channels her historical insights to represent the crowd of protestors on many levels of the text, presenting the history of the massacre in a way that immerses readers more fully into the sensorial details of the tragedy.

CHAPTER FOUR

Readers' Immersion into Emotional Atmospheres

La noche de Tlateleloco comprehensively immerses readers into a historical account of the demonstrations and the massacre by immersing them into the emotions of the tragic events. The text is replete with emotional information, and Poniatowka's arrangement emphasizes the Mexican peoples' reactions to the massacre. Harris discusses how the orientation of the fragmented narratives emphasize the sheer horror of the massacre (Harris 487). He discusses how the text repeatedly highlights the killing and maiming of children, furthering the effect of sheer horror. Alternatively, Salinas mentions unstable emotional states as possible internal mechanisms for why the government reacted violently to the protestors (Salinas 94). However, while the emotional atmosphere within the text is a significant aspect of the work, there is a lack of critical engagement surrounding the topic. In this chapter, I apply Reuven Tsur's theories of the cognitive properties of emotions to discover the salient emotional atmospheres in part one and part two. An emotional atmosphere is the diffuse feeling of a certain emotion conveyed throughout a text. Tsur describes how the cognitive qualities of emotions present in poetic writing create the text's emotional atmosphere. Tsur observes four emotional qualities of poetic writing. First, poetic writing mimics the deviation in energy level caused by emotions. Second, poetic writing also presents repetitive information throughout a text in order to create an emotional atmosphere, which Tsur calls the presentation of diffuse, less-differentiated information. Third, through naming emotions,

ambiguity in the atmosphere is often clarified. The fourth quality is derived from readers' combined perceptions of the first three qualities. Readers construct from this information their notion of the emotional atmosphere of the text, which becomes a quality of the text itself. The emotional atmosphere that they construct influences how they perceive subsequent content. I observe these four qualities within *La noche*.

The two main parts of the text, "Ganar la calle" and "La noche de Tlatelolco", each contain their own complex emotional atmospheres. These emotional atmospheres are established by the poetic texts that begin them: Poniatowska's introduction (51-52), which begins "Ganar la calle" and Rosario Castellanos's poem "La memorial de Tlatelolco" (226), which begins "La noche de Tlatelolco". I analyze the emotional atmospheres within these initial poetic texts. I then assert that they are carried into parts one and two, and I observe how they are respectively conveyed within "Ganar la calle" and "La noche de Tlatelolco". In Poniatowska's introduction and in "Ganar la calle", I observe the presence of an excited emotional atmosphere with a dual nature: hope inextricably bound to a sense of foreboding tragedy. I then analyze the poem "La memorial de Tlatelolco" and the following text "La noche de Tlatelolco". I assert that readers retain a dark emotional atmosphere from these texts in which the emotions of terror, agony, and grief are most salient. To conclude, I emphasize that through immersing readers into the emotions of the Mexican people, Poniatowska's work strengthens readers' historical understanding of the tragedy.

Part one begins with a two-page poetic introduction written by "E.P." The text captures Poniatowska's memories of the student protestors' jovial attitudes during the demonstrations that predated the massacre. As she recollects on their joy she interjects

her memories of their dead bodies on the street. While the text is arranged into two shorter paragraphs and a third paragraph that is over a page long, I consider this text poetic because Poniatowska uses many poetic devices in order to express emotional qualities beyond the inherent meaning of the words. I highlight qualities of emotions within the many poetic aspects of the text in order to observe the presence of an excited emotional atmosphere differentiated into the feeling of hope inextricably bound to a sense of foreboding tragedy.

In the introduction, I observe that the use of simile, imagery, onomatopoeia, metaphor, and rhythm creates excitement and elevates the level of energy within the text. The simile in the first paragraph compares the mood of the students with the mood of children at a street fair. Poniatowska writes “la misma alegría con que hace apenas unos días iban a la feria” (51). A fair connotes elated excitement, and excitement is inherently high energy. The comparison is extended into the rest of the paragraph, creating an atmosphere of excitement. The imagery in the text also elevates the level of energy. Poniatowska describes the first gunshots with bright, colorful, and loud language, “¡Fuego! El relámpago verde de una luz de bengala. ¡Fuego! (51)”. The exclamation of “fuego” along with the vivid imagery of the “relámpago verde” conveys a high energy emotional atmosphere. Like a fair, the colors are bright and the energy excited. Out of context, this sentence is neither positive nor negative; it merely conveys color, excitement and high energy. Just as imagery establishes a high energy emotional atmosphere visually, the use of onomatopoeia increases the energy auditorily. The repeated sound of the gun, “click, click, click” (51) is fast-paced, loud, methodical, and excited. In the concluding paragraph, a metaphor transmits excitement visually and auditorily, “los

muchachos están en el corazón de una naranja, son el estallido más alto de fuego artificial” (52). Readers visualize fireworks as the “estallido más alto” and imagine their explosive sound. The fireworks, like the fair, are festive. The last sentence continues the high energy through rhythm. The text ends with the quick-paced chant, “México, libertad...(52)” which projects excited high energy. These poetic devices raise the energy level throughout the text. While the emotional atmosphere is still ambiguous on this level of analysis, readers experience a high energy emotional atmosphere of excitement.

I will now analyze the presence of the second cognitive quality of emotions in the introduction. Poniatowska’s poetic language mimics emotional processes through diffusely presenting similar emotional information throughout the text. This information differentiates the pervasive high energy into the dualistic feelings of hope and foreboding tragedy. She uses syntactically parallel sentence structures in order to draw attention to the similar emotional elements contained in them. The simile “la misma con que hace apenas unos días iban a la feria” (51) occurs as one segment within a long sentence broken up by commas into many parallel segments. The information in each segment conveys excited energy, but the excitement is not all positive. The optimism of the street fair is carried into the second portion of the sentence through the carefree connotation of the phrase “jóvenes despreocupados”. However, the adjective “despreocupados” gains an ominous implication when the sentence describes the youth’s ignorance of their impending deaths “no saben que mañana, dentro de dos días, dentro de cuatro, estarán allí hinchándose bajo la lluvia”. Each fragment of the sentence contains an emotional atmosphere of high energy; even the dead bodies are described in an active state through the word “hinchándose”. Rain adds energy when its quick falling motion is visualized. As

readers are inclined to extract from parallel entities their common ingredients, (Tsur, “aspects”, 281) they glean an atmosphere of both positive and negative excitement within the poetic text. There thus exists a dualism within the emotional atmosphere.

The continued presentation of diffuse, less differentiated information associates the feeling of hope with positive excitement and the feeling of foreboding tragedy with negative excitement. All the information is explicitly positive; even the portion of the sentence describing the dead bodies under the rain is described as a reality that has not yet occurred, of which the students are happily unaware. Yet, the inclusion of this sentence is intensely negative and foreboding and makes the emotional atmosphere of excitement a complex mix of positive and negative emotions. In the following paragraph, repetition of descriptions of tragedy continues this effect. Poniatowska again describes the future of the students, writing from a temporal perspective that precedes the massacre. The overt feeling of the students remains hopeful as the students are described as oblivious of the horrors that they will face. She captures these horrors in negated sentences such as, “aquí vienen los muchachos, vienen hacia mí, son muchos, ninguno lleva las manos en alto, ninguno trae los pantalones caídos entre los pies mientras los desnudan para cachearlos, no hay puñetazos sorprendidos, ni macanazos, ni vejaciones, ni vómitos por las torturas” (52). The imagery is painful and horrific, yet one could argue that the sentence is technically emotionally positive as Poniatowska negates the horrors. This creates an imbalance in the split of excitement, grounding the section in the positive emotions, as the negative emotions are intensely present but their presence is negated. The students are described as hopeful, but this hope becomes inextricably bound to a sense of tragic foreboding. The excitement of the emotional atmosphere is unanimous as

the diction unanimously conveys dynamic motion; but from this excitement, readers derive the dualistic feelings of hope and impending tragedy.

I assert that through observing the third cognitive quality of emotions in the text that the atmosphere is imbued with an overt sense of hope and a covert sense of impending tragedy. The third cognitive quality of emotions in poetic texts occurs when the text names emotions. These emotions are “cognitively appraised” by readers, who incorporate this information into their notion of the emotional atmosphere established by the first two qualities. The first emotions written in the text are positive. “Alegria” (52) is named, followed by “despreocupados” (52) and the statement “niños que todo lo maravillan” (52). Two negative emotions are then identified: “azoro en los ojos” and “boquiabiertos”. “Feliz” (52) is named three times, followed by the emotion “loca alegría” (52). The negative emotions are more ambiguous than the positive ones and are outweighed in number. Poniatowska concludes with a statement that mentions both negative and positive emotions. She writes, “¿No que México era triste? Yo lo veo alegre, qué loca alegría” (52). In this question, “triste” and “alegria” are identified with Mexico. However, Poniatowska resolves the question in favor of “alegria” by answering her own question and identifying Mexico as “alegre”. Through naming several positive emotions and a few negative ones, Poniatowska continues to create a duality in the excited emotional atmosphere between a sense of overt hope and covert impending tragedy.

Readers then retain from these three qualities the emotional atmosphere of the text and carry their notion of the emotional atmosphere itself into the following text. From the use of poetic devices, readers perceive the emotional quality of high-energy excitement.

They perceive the dual nature of this excitement through the information contained in the parallel sentence fragments, which introduce a sense of hope and impending tragedy.

They then recognize the emotions that Poniatowska names throughout the text, which further establishes this emotional dualism. Through Poniatowska's presentation, the more prevalent positive emotions becoming inextricably tied to tragedy, imbuing the entire text with an ominous feeling. The poetic writing anticipates the emotions in the following text. (Tsur, "Aspects", 280-281). It provides an emotional basis for readers; just as the photos and prologue provide a visual and semantic basis for readers so that they are not lost in the sensory aspects of the text, the poetic introduction introduces readers to the salient emotional atmosphere in part one. Poniatowska employs creative techniques to carry the emotional atmosphere of excitement, divided into feelings of hope and foreboding tragedy, into her arrangement of part one. I will analyze "Ganar la calle" to show how the same emotional atmosphere within the poetic introduction persists within it.

The high energy level of the poetic introduction is maintained in "Ganar la calle" through Poniatowska's inclusion of excerpts that employ rhetorical devices that convey excitement. For example, she includes an excerpt by Gilberto Guevara Niebla who uses a similar comparison to Poniatowska's simile "En la explanada había puestos de fritangas, de aguas frescas, confeti, serpentinas; parecía kermesse" (123). The comparison of the events to the atmosphere of a "kermesse" increases the energy level. Readers also carry with them the abstract emotional information of the poetic introduction, and therefore, the excitement of the fair is remembered when Niebla compares the events to a "kermesse", or festival. Excitement persists through Poniatowska's inclusions of excerpts containing

descriptive, high energy imagery, and the rhythm of the many signs, posters, and songs. Like the chant “México Libertad” in part one, they convey excitement through high energy rhythm. The same chant “México Libertad” is repeated, connecting the emotional atmosphere of the introductory text with “Ganar la calle”. Within the fragments, the discussion of music mirrors the hopeful high energy of the students. Luz Fernanda Carmona Ochoa writes, “A mí me encanta la juventud de hoy, su moda, sus canciones, su libertad, su falta de hipocresía, su manera de enfrentarse al amor y de vivirlo. Prefiero a los Beatles que a Beethoven” (65). The high energy associated with the rock band evokes excitement, increasing the energy level. These examples are but a few of the many rhetorical devices found throughout part one that continue the atmosphere of excitement. While the emotional atmosphere is still ambiguous on this level of analysis, readers experience a high energy emotional atmosphere throughout the text, and they retain the established emotional atmosphere of the introduction, carrying this forth into their perception of “Ganar la calle”. Furthermore, the energy level is increased stylistically with short fragments, which quicken the pace of the descriptions of the many student protestors thereby enhancing the sense of high energy of a crowd.

The second emotional quality is present in “Ganar la calle” through the repetition of semantic information that diffusely conveys hope. Semantic information mentioned in the poetic introduction is described in greater detail in “Ganar la calle”. The poetic introduction discusses the attitudes of the student protestors, conveying a sense of hope. Semantic information that describes this sense of hope is repeated several times in part one. For example, Felix Lucio Hernandez Gamundi’s writes “Nunca se habían visto en Mexico manifestaciones espontaneas tan grandes y tan extraordinariamente vivas como

las estudiantiles” (55). Carefree hope is again described semantically through the student Jan Poniatowski Aor’s conversation with his parents. He describes how he painted slogans on the Palacio Nacional. He replies to his parents “somos inmortales... Además, todo lo tenemos rebién estudiado” (81). Readers extract from parallel entities their emotional similarities, and semantic entities containing a sense of elated hope in the poetic introduction are paralleled in part one, and throughout the fragments of part one. This further establishes the hopeful emotional atmosphere.

Readers perceive the excitement in “Ganar la calle” to be dualistic. The majority of the information presented in part one describes life before the massacre. In the introduction, Poniatowska writes from a temporal perspective that predates the massacre, which overtly captures the emotional atmosphere of the demonstrations before the violence of October 2nd. Similarly, Poniatowska includes testimonial fragments that describe the demonstrations before the massacre.¹ Through her careful arrangement, she selects fragments that bring readers into the student movements, creating an emotional atmosphere that is mostly optimistic and hopeful. However, while the majority of the information discusses events that predate October 2nd, readers perceive that the emotional atmosphere is covertly tragic. Interposed among the hopeful voices are many tragic ones that foreshadow the emotions of part two. Eduardo Santos’s full-length poem (180) conveys terror through descriptions such as “el terror cabalga” and agony in the statement “nos cubrieron con lazos de dolor” (180). Through Santo’s poetic language, all three qualities of a distinct emotional atmosphere are present. The energy level is high. The

¹ Salina describes the structural difference between part one and two, “las dos secciones principales del conjunto se corresponden con dos cortes fundamentales en el tiempo: la primera remite a los sucesos que antecedieron al 2 octubre; la segunda se refiere a la misma noche terrible. Así pues, sus títulos son «Ganar la calle» y «La noche de Tlatelolco» (Salinas 98).”

diffuse information conveys terror and agony. The cognitive appraisal within the poem is conveyed through the identification of emotions such as “terror”. The emotional atmosphere of Santo’s poem serves the same purpose as Poniadowska’s ominous statements in the poetic introduction. Both anticipate the horrific emotions of the massacre, contrasting the pervasive sense of hope in the introduction and “Ganar la calle”. The other ominous voices along with Santo’s poem bind the expressions of hope within part one to a sense of looming tragedy. From Poniadowska’s arrangement of part one, readers thus derive an atmosphere of hope and impending tragedy.

I will now observe the third emotional quality in part one. Emotions are not frequently named in “Ganar la calle”. Most of the fragments describe the events, opinions and politics of the student movements. The emotional atmosphere of hope and foreboding tragedy is present, but it is conveyed mostly through the first two emotional qualities rather than through the naming of emotions. Readers also carry the named emotions from the poetic introduction into part one, and note the “terror” mentioned in Santo’s poem. One of the few cognitive appraisals in “Ganar la calle” is the identification of the emotional atmosphere of the school CNH. Roberta Avendano Martinez recalls “en el CNH privaba un ambiente de juventud, con su irresponsabilidad, sus juegos, sus bromas, sus chistes.” (60). While not explicitly a named emotion, “un ambiente de juventud” serves as an emotional cognitive appraisal for readers.

To conclude with my analysis of “Ganar la calle”, I assert that readers extract and retain an atmosphere of high-energy excitement from the text that is then differentiated into a sense of overt hope and foreboding tragedy. The rhetorical devices and figures of speech carry forth the excitement of the poetic introduction, while the diffuse emotional

information helps to clarify the dualism in the emotional atmosphere. The atmosphere of hope which is more prevalent, becomes inextricably tied to the feeling of impending tragedy. Readers are immersed into the emotional atmosphere of the student movements, as well as survivor's memories of these demonstrations that are inextricably tied to the memories of the traumatic events that followed.

I will now analyze part two of the text: "La noche de Tlatelolco." I begin by analyzing the first included text in part two, Rosario Castellanos's poem "Memorial de Tlatelolco" (225). The poem is written from a retrospective voice that remembers the emotions of the tragedy. I highlight the cognitive qualities of emotions within the poem. I observe a dark emotional atmosphere in which the emotions of terror and agony are most salient. I describe how this emotional atmosphere permeates part two, ubiquitously conveying the darkness of the massacre.

The use of imagery and anaphora conveys high energy through depicting the violence of the massacre and the urgent need to remember the injustice. There is an abundance of violent imagery that conveys high energy, such as the lines "los que agonizan", "los que huyen", and "los que se pudren". The words "agonizan", "huyen" and "se pudren" convey energy through conveying action. These statements begin with anaphora. The repetition of the phrase "Los que" emphasizes both the guilt of the perpetrators as well as their anonymity. Anaphora creates emphasis that reflects the patterns in urgent, emotional speech. The urgency of the need to remember the massacre is also stressed using anaphora. "Recuerdo, recordamos" is repeated twice in the last stanza, reflecting high energy through subscribing to the repetitive pattern of urgent

speech. Readers thus experience an emotional atmosphere with a high energy level as the emotions of the massacre and its aftermath are expressed poetically.

The second cognitive quality of emotions in the poem reveals a dark emotional atmosphere through the diffusion of words associated with darkness. The poem begins with the line “La oscuridad engendra la violencia y la violencia pide oscuridad para cuajar el crimen” (225). The switching of the object with the subject strongly relates darkness with violence. Readers glean the abstract emotional similarity that exists between “la oscuridad” and “la violencia”, subsequently perceiving a dark emotional atmosphere. Darkness is significant in the poem in a literal sense, as the violent events occurred during the night. Darkness also represents evil and the concealment of evil, and it is this symbolic meaning of darkness that establishes the emotional atmosphere. Both the literal and symbolic meanings of darkness are present when it is mentioned, such as the line “por eso el 2 de octubre aguardó hasta la noche para que nadie viera la mano que empuñaba el arma” (225), and the literal and symbolic connotations of a dark well in the line “los que van a caer al pozo de una cárcel”(225).

In the last two stanzas, similar grammatical tenses connect the image of blood with the action of remembering, furthering the dark emotional atmosphere by showing that the memory of the massacre is dark and violent. The second to the last stanza ends with the line “sangre con sangre y si la llamo mía traiciono a todos”(225). The narrative voice repeats the word sangre. When she says “si la llamo mia”, she writes that this blood is also hers, just as the painful memory is hers. When she writes “a todos”, she notes that the blood belongs to many. Like the repetition of the word sangre, “recordar” is repeated when she begins the last stanza with the sentence “Recuerdo, recordamos”(225). Just as

she calls the blood her own blood in the first person as well as the blood of all, she writes that she personally remembers, and that we all remember. As readers are inclined to glean the emotional information from parallel entities, readers connect blood with the concept of the memory of the massacre. The act of remembering is painful, the memory is dark, but the need to remember the violent deeds is vital.

In the last stanza there is a brief shift in the emotional atmosphere through the mentioning of light instead of darkness. Castellanos writes that the act of remembering is “nuestra manera de ayudar a que amanezca”. This statement continues the feeling of urgency attributed to the act of remembering the massacre. Darkness is unanimously associated with the massacre in the poem, but through collectively remembering the dark deeds of the massacre, Castellanos recognizes that Mexico may once again find hope. The line “ayudar a que amanezca” does not imply that the dawn has already come, but rather, that through the act of remembering the darkness while still immersed in it, there is a ray of hope for the many consciences still in mourning. The memory itself is dark, but the collective act of remembering is the path towards light.

Through naming several emotional states, the poem defines the dark emotional atmosphere as an atmosphere of agony and terror. The first emotion is also a physical one: “agonizan”(225). It is reinforced by the line “más he aquí que toco una llaga: es mi memoria”(225). As the agony exists in the narrative voice’s memory, agony is an emotional state. Terror is another integral part of the dark emotional atmosphere. Castellanos writes “los que se quedan mudos, para siempre, de espanto”. Terror is reinforced by the action “huir” in the statement “los que huyen sin zapatos”. Through the

naming of these emotional states, readers cognitively appraise terror and agony as the salient dark emotions in the poem.

From these emotional qualities of the poem, readers retain a dark emotional atmosphere of terror and agony. They also diffusely perceive a sense of urgency surrounding the act of remembering the massacre. Castellanos's use of imagery and anaphora increases the energy level through the depiction of dark violence and the urgency to remember. Through the repetition of dark symbolic imagery, the emotional atmosphere is dark. Through the cognitive appraisal of words such as "agonizan" and "espanto", readers perceive terror and agony as the salient emotions within the dark emotional atmosphere. Castellanos's poem marks the shift in emotions between part one and part two, overtly expressing the emotions of the massacre and its devastating aftermath. It provides readers with an emotional basis for the rest of part two. I will now analyze the emotional atmosphere of Part II, "La noche de Tlatelolco".

In "La noche de Tlatelolco", the many different emotions and the many descriptions of grief create a turbulent mix of high and low energy. When the massacre itself is described, the energy is consistently high. Following the poem "Memorial de Tlatelolco", Poniatowska includes her own emotionally powerful voice. She states that part two is the story of the bereaved; the story of the imprisoned students, and the story of grieving mothers, brothers, and sisters. She writes "aquí está el eco del grito de los que murieron y el grito de los que quedaron" (227). Through these statements, the narrative voice of part two is unanimously given to people who suffered immensely.

Poniatowska's description of a grieving mother conveys low energy in the following "este relato recuerda a una madre que durante días permaneció quieta, endurecida bajo el

golpe” (226). It conveys high energy in the second part of her sentence, “de repente, como animal herido -un animal a quien le extraen las entrañas- dejó salir del centro de su vida, de la vida misma que ella había dado, un ronco, un desgarrado grito (226)”.

Throughout part two, witnesses describe in detail their memories of the massacre, which are filled with memories of panicked action. Margarita Nolasco describes fleeing from death in the following, “Recorrimos un piso tras otro y en la sección central del Chihuahua, no recuerdo en que piso, sentí algo chicloso bajo mis pies. Volteo y vio sangre, mucha sangre... Tlatelolco entero respira sangre” (235). The many descriptions of people fleeing increase the energy, as do the many references to spilled blood, because the image of blood symbolically carries life and therefore energy.

The same experiences are repeated within the testimonies of the survivors that diffusely convey an atmosphere of terror, agony, and grief. The name of part two, “La noche de Tlatelolco”, shares the name of the title of the work. It alludes to both the concrete and symbolic connotations of night. Like Castellanos’s poem, the emotional atmosphere of part two is dark. Terror is salient through the repetition of the bewilderment of the witnesses, such as Nolasco, as they ran in droves from bullets coming from all directions. The description of panic is shared by many witnesses, pervasively spreading the emotional atmosphere of terror across part two. Physical and emotional agony are also prevalent, and both convey agony within the emotional atmosphere. Carlos Gavin describes suffering torture in prison, “y nos golpearon como si estuvieran quebrando piñatas” (300). Emotional agony is present in the words of the wounded and in the words of the loved ones of the wounded and the dead. Emotional agony is strongly connected to grief, and the words of Diana Salmeron de Contreras,

reflect both emotions. Emotional agony is present when she recollects, “los gritos, los aullidos de dolor, los lloros, las plegarias y el continuo y ensordecedor ruido de las armas hacían de la Plaza de las Tres Culturas un infierno de Dante (251). Her testimony is one of the most prominent examples of grief in the text as it is extended across 10 fragments and interspersed among the other voices. She recounts her final moments with her younger brother. Emotional agony is expressed within the urgency of her speech as she watches her brother die “Hermanito háblame... ¡Una Camilla, por favor! Hermanito, aquí estoy.... ¡Una Camilla!” (252). In a subsequent excerpt, she shares how grief² impacted her parents, leading to the death of her father, “Mi padre murió poco tiempo después de que muriera Julio. Como resultado del choque, tuvo un ataque al corazón. Era su hijo único, el menor. Repetía muchas veces: “Pero ¿por qué mi hijo?...” Mi madre sigue viviendo, quién sabe cómo” (261). Through dispersing her testimony of the loss of her brother across part two, grief and agony are conveyed throughout “La noche de Tlatelolco”.

Part two contains numerous identified emotions as most excerpts share the horrific testimonies of the massacre, rather than descriptive accounts of the student movement. A full span of emotions associated with pain, trauma, death and bereavement are named. Testimonies of the emotions that survivors experienced are frequently shared. The most salient emotions such as are repeated many times throughout the text. Fear is named as a response to torture by Ignacio Galvin ““Francamente sentí miedo porque

² Harris observes that Contrera’s statements are disturbingly factual in the following “In a series of discontinuous testimonial statements, we follow her from the moment her brother is hit by a bullet, through desperate attempts to get him to hospital on a makeshift stretcher (because Red Cross access to the injured is being denied) and then on to the moment of his death. Her closing statements are disturbingly factual.” I add that her lack of emotion is indicative of a depressive state of grief.

nunca me había golpeado así” While terror, agony, grief and their synonyms are repeatedly mentioned, negative emotions other than those that are most salient in the emotional atmosphere are also named. For example, Eduardo Valle Espinoza names hatred, “En el trayecto vi a varios compañeros del CNH, tenían miradas extrañas. No era terror, ni tan siquiera miedo; era un brillo de odio reconcentrado, unido al suplicio de la impotencia” (246). The array of negative emotions deepens the dark emotional intensity.³ Readers are thus immersed into a plethora of dark emotions surrounding the horrific injustice.

To conclude my analysis of part two, I emphasize that readers extract and retain a dark emotional atmosphere in which the emotions of terror, agony, and grief are most salient. The emotional atmosphere of the poem “La noche de Tlatelolco” persists in part two, but becomes even darker and more complex through the many traumatic testimonies of survivors. The different ways that grief is expressed bring about great variances in the energy level. Through the repetition of similar traumatic occurrences within the testimonies of the survivors, an emotional atmosphere of terror, agony, and grief is conveyed. A full range of negative emotions are named in part two that deepens the intensity of emotional darkness.

By documenting the traumatic emotions of the survivors of the massacre and immersing readers into them, Poniatowska’s work strengthens readers’ historical understanding of the tragedy by immersing them into a crucial aspect of the Mexican

³ Kelly notes the following “where Paz is introspective and encouraged remembrance, Poniatowska is bombastic and emotional. Fuentes lies somewhere in between. The time lag, or lack thereof, between the massacre and the dates of publication is important. These works highlight the intellectual pole’s emotional outrage and set the tone for films and plays of the same era.” I argue that the work is bombastic and emotional because the massacre itself was bombastic and emotional.

peoples' history. The emotional shift between parts one and two captures an essential aspect of the historical shift in Mexican history. The emotional information helps readers accurately understand the magnitude and horror of the massacre in a way that historical accounts confined to semantic details cannot achieve. Furthermore, Poniatowksa's work is primarily the Mexican peoples' history, and emotions are an integral part to the human experience. History cannot be separated from humanity if it desires to comprehensively document it. The emotional trauma of the Mexican people historically impacted the country and the repercussions of the collective national trauma persist to this day. The documentation of the emotions of the Mexican people in Poniatowksa's work is thus invaluable historical information that should not be overlooked.

CHAPTER FIVE

Readers' Perceptions of Historical Silences

Testimonial literature denounces hegemonic forces and provides a historical alternative to official historiography (Jorgenson 68). *La noche* goes a step further as it has served as a replacement for an official history of the massacre in lieu of the government's silence and censorship (Gardner 492,499). However, the text has received criticism as a reliable historical account. Rojo critiques *La noche* as a referential text on the grounds that it is tainted by a tragic subjectivity (Rojo 3), and Harris observes that many critics consider it to be a work of literature (494). On the contrary, I contend that the "literary" aspects of *La Noche* that draw suspicion from some critics enhance the historical veracity of the text and readers' historical understanding. To narrow the scope of this assertion, I focus on the critical issue of silences within historiography. In *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, author Michel-Rolph Trouillot investigates how parts of the past are muted on multiple levels of historical production. He identifies specific hegemonic mechanisms operating within historical narratives that silence parts of history. I introduce a few of his arguments in order to more substantially comment on the topic of silences within historical production. I also identify historical silences¹ in *La noche* that derive from the hegemonic forces² operating within the historical events themselves, such

¹ From a literary perspective, Jorgenson investigates silences in the work. She writes "Poniatowska's work recoups silenced voices and poses an effective challenge to official history in such a way that hierarchies of signification and authority are deconstructed and not merely reversed (Jorgenson 76). My interpretation differs from Jorgenson in its focus on how silences are represented in historiography and how readers perceive these silences.

² Jorgenson discusses hegemonic forces in *La Noche* from a different perspective "Both structurally and thematically *La noche* confronts the tension inherent in the double, duplicitous nature of

as the government's silence and censorship. I observe these silences in order to make the following assertion: the creative presentation of *La noche* draws readers' attention to historical silences and immerses them into parts of the past that conventional historiography often overlooks. I investigate this assertion on Abrante's 4 levels of perceptions to analyze how readers are immersed into these important aspects of history from the text.

I investigate this assertion on the first level of the text that readers perceive: the enunciational structure. *La Noche* draws readers' attention to silenced persons who were prevented from contributing their voices to the work. This is evident within the series of photos that begin the text which portray many unnamed people and victims of the massacre. Page 20 depicts the crowd of protestors gathered at the Plaza on the 2nd of October. The vast number of people in the photo greatly outnumber the narrative voices that contribute to *La noche*. On the following page, an unnamed person is carried on a stretcher; the photo has no caption and the victim is unidentifiable. Readers cannot perceive whether the person on the stretcher is male or female, dead or alive. By beginning the work with these enigmatic photos, readers perceive the images of the people who lost their lives in the massacre, whose voices cannot be recouped through historical production. They identify that there are gaps in the enunciational structure that the text does not recover. Castellanos's poem that begins "La noche de Tlatelolco" emphasizes this fact. "¿Quién es el que mata? ¿Quiénes los que agonizan, los que mueren? ¿Los que huyen sin zapatos? ¿Los que van a caer al pozo de una cárcel? ¿Los

power: power as domination versus power as creative, enabling energy. The difficulty of engaging in the second practice of power without falling into the first is fundamental to the portrayal of the student movement in *la noche de Tlatelolco*" (78).

que se pudren en el hospital? ¿Los que se quedan mudos, para siempre, de espanto?” (225). The poem accentuates both the missing historical details and the missing people who would know them. By repeating “Quién”, the poem draws even greater attention to the latter. Castellanos announces the limits of the text’s historical knowledge. On this level of literary perception, readers attune themselves to the relation of the content to the source of knowledge, and thus recognize these historical limitations. Similarly, Poniatowska draws attention to the missing people in the enunciational structure and highlights the silencing role of trauma within the narrative voices that do share their testimonies. She writes, “Aquí está el eco del grito de los que murieron y el grito de los que quedaron. Aquí esta su indignación y su protesta. Es el grito mudo que se atoro en miles de gargantas, en miles de ojos desorbitado por el espanto el 2 de octubre de 1968” (227). Readers perceive the existence of silences within the voices of the victims. Their attention is thus openly drawn to the historical silences within the enunciational structure.

Furthermore, *La noche*’s unique inclusion of a multitude of voices immerses readers into parts of the past that conventional historiography often overlooks. Historical narratives may silence parts of history through a narrow selection of sources³ (Trouillot 51). They frequently present information, even that from many sources, from the perspective of one narrative voice. By choosing to embrace, rather than exclude, multiple contradictory voices that create unresolved tension, *La noche* silences less. For example, Readers perceive the tension between the voices of a student and a police officer. The

³Di Matteo recognizes that the multitude of voices supports the veracity of the work in the following “De este modo, el conjunto de las voces no cumple sólo con una necesidad de dramatización narrativa, sino sirve hasta de “soporte y autenticación de la veracidad” (205). I show that this authentication takes place on the first level of readers’ perceptions.

student Leonardo Avila Pineda states “Te acuerdas de la noche de bazucazo?, creyeron que íbamos a correrles a los tanques, pero nel, les aventamos hasta los zapatos” (102). Following a chant, a police officer says to students ¿Qué van a hacer? ¿Derrocar al gobierno? ¿A poco, a poco? ¿A poco se sienten tan cabroncitos? (52). Poniatowska does not dryly summarize the interaction between students and police officers as a mere historical fact about two historical subjects. Rather, she allows both to speak for themselves, which preserves more historical detail in the process. Readers historical understanding is improved by the greater contextual detail and the presentation of history from several different testimonial perspectives.

Poniatowska’s text immerses readers into the voices that hegemonic forces frequently silence. Trouillot writes that history is written by those in power “Most important for our purposes is that all these schemes recognized degrees of humanity. Whether these connecting ladders ranked chunks of humanity on ontological, ethical, political, scientific, cultural, or simply pragmatic grounds, the fact is that all assumed and reasserted that, ultimately, some humans were more so than others” (76). There are three ways that I observe Poniatowska’s narrative opposing hegemonic mechanisms. First, and most obvious, the main discourse within *La noche* opposes the actions of the government in power; the work is framed by the images, prologue, and introductions to parts one and two which project the voices of the students above the voices of the government. Readers are immersed into the many voices that opposed these powerful forces. Second, Poniatowska predominantly projects the voices of the lower class and the marginalized. For example, she gives two pages to Daniel Esparza Larpe, who begins his account with the following “Soy de provincial y soy de origen campesino. Tengo veinticinco años y he

visto compañeros de mi edad morir como nacieron: fregadísimos. Mi familia vino por hambre al Distrito Federal.” (125). Readers are immersed into peoples’ history that is overlooked by conventional historiography. Third, the editor of history wields power. Poniawska opposes her own power by including voices who supported the government’s authoritarian intervention, such as Gerardo Ponce “Es indudable que, con sus desmanes callejeros e intraescolares, los estudiantes universitarios y politécnicos dieron motivo para una intervención de las autoridades policiacas” (60). *La noche* thus immerses readers into history that opposes the hegemonic mechanism operating in many historical narratives.

Poniawska’s inclusion of newspaper headlines draws readers’ attention to silences on the semantic level. Following her introduction to part two, Poniawska includes 10 headlines from the most prominent national newspapers on October 3rd 1968. The inconsistencies between them are evident:

EXCÉLSIOR: Recio Combate al Dispersar el Ejército un mitin de Huelguistas. 20 Muertos, 75 Heridos, 400 Presos. Fernando M. Garza, director de Prensa de la Presidencia de la República.
NOVEDADES: Balacera entre Francotiradores y el Ejército en Ciudad Tlatelolco. Datos Obtenidos: 25 Muertos y 87 Lesionados: El Gral. Hernández Toledo y 12 Militares más están heridos.
EL UNIVERSAL: Tlatelolco, Campo de Batalla. Durante Varias Horas Terroristas y Soldados Sostuvieron Rudo Combate. 29 Muertos y más de 80 Heridos en Ambos Bandos; 1 000 Detenidos.
LA PRENSA: Muchos Muertos y Heridos; habla García Barragán. Balacera del Ejército con Estudiantes.
EL DÍA: Criminal Provocación en el Mitin de Tlatelolco causó Sangriento Zafarrancho. Muertos y Heridos en Grave Choque con el Ejército en Tlatelolco: Entre los heridos están el general Hernández Toledo y otros doce militares. Un soldado falleció. El número de civiles que perdieron la vida o resultaron lesionados es todavía impreciso.
EL HERALDO: Sangriento encuentro en Tlatelolco. 26 Muertos y 71 Heridos. Francotiradores dispararon contra el Ejército: el General Toledo lesionado.

EL SOL DE MÉXICO (Matutino): Manos Extrañas se Empeñan en Desprestigiar a México. El Objetivo: Frustrar los XIX Juegos. Francotiradores Abrieron Fuego contra la Tropa en Tlatelolco. Heridos un General y 11 Militares; 2 Soldados y más de 20 civiles muertos en la peor refriega.

EL NACIONAL: El Ejército tuvo que repeler a los Francotiradores: García Barragán.

OVACIONES: Sangriento Tiroteo en la Plaza de las 3 Culturas. Decenas de Francotiradores se enfrentaron a las Tropas. Perecieron 23 personas, 52 lesionados, mil detenidos y más vehículos quemados.

LA AFICIÓN: Nutrida Balacera provocó en Tlatelolco un Mitin Estudiantil.

There is no consensus from these headlines as to what happened on the night of October 2nd. The headlines are a poignant example of censorship, which Poniatowska addressed in the prologue. Furthermore, they highlight the historical silences that resulted from the censorship and silence of the government. The number of dead and wounded varies. The headlines predominantly vilify the students and give them different identities; Excelsior calls them “Huelguistas”, Novedades “Francotiradores”, El Universal “Terroristas”, and El sol de Mexico “Manos Extrañas”. The contradictory headlines mirror the contradictions between the voices in parts one and two. No full picture of the massacre is ever provided, and Poniatowska does not attempt to fill in the gaps created by these historical silences. On the contrary, she writes, “Tlatelolco —a pesar de todas sus voces y testimonios— sigue siendo incomprensible. ¿Por qué? Tlatelolco es incoherente, contradictorio. Pero la muerte no lo es. Ninguna crónica nos da una visión de conjunto” (234). Readers historical understanding of the censorship of the massacre is greatly improved through Poniatowska’s clear presentation. From these blatantly censored headlines, they must perceive and grapple with this tragic area of historiography.

The presentation of semantic information immerses readers into an abundance of historical details that other accounts would relegate to the background or leave out

entirely⁴. In his analysis on silences within archives, Trouillot contends that even the past that is preserved gets pushed to the background and silenced in the selection of archival information (52). The abundance of details that Poniatowska provides silences less by presenting information that frequently would be looked over. For example, rather than merely leaving readers with a concise statement of censorship of the press Poniatowska provides the above headlines and intersperses clips from newspapers throughout parts one and two. While she discusses censorship in other places, she does not mediate these headlines with her own voice. She merely presents them, silencing less of the past in the process and allowing readers to come to terms with the historical information without her direct input.

The compositional choices of the text draw readers' attention to the historical silences *in La noche*. By using many incomplete fragments to structure the work, the obvious cuts and slices of the testimonies draw attention to the limiting choices and selections Poniatowska made as editor of *La noche*. Historical narratives are frequently written in a linear and continuous manner. Such a style, while easy for readers to comprehend, projects a false sense of historical completeness. On the contrary, the unique presentation of many incomplete narratives, abruptly sliced, clearly demonstrates the silences created by Poniatowska's limited selection of material. Short decontextualized fragments proclaim that what is included in the text is limited, improving readers historical understanding through accurately highlighting the

⁴ Gardner similarly notes the following, "Por ser un libro repleto de detalles: fechas, nombres, eventos, conversaciones, actas, noticias y otra información, el mosaico que es este libro está lleno de información que no poseen los demás libros sobre Tlatelolco. Por lo mismo, el libro rellena de alguna forma una parte de esa laguna histórica que aún permanece en cuanto a los eventos del dos de octubre de 1968 en Tlatelolco. Además de los detalles que no poseen otros libros de Tlatelolco, el libro de Poniatowska crea un foro de diálogo y muchas veces es un diálogo clandestino". (492).

limitations of historical knowledge. For example, one statement from Elvira B. de Concheiro, mother of a family, is included “Lucianito está allá adentro!” (254). Her testimony is continued on page 260, but the obvious cutting of her testimony highlights the silences unavoidably created in the process of historical editing.

Furthermore, Poniatowska compositional choices includes voices that conventional historiography would most likely overlook. This is evident in the inclusion of the anonymous voices of victims (264):

Voces en la multitud: ¡Alto! ¡Alto el fuego! ¡Alto el fuego! ¡Alto!
Voz de mujer: ¡No puedo! ¡No soporto más!
Voz de hombre: ¡No salgas! ¡No te muevas!
Una voz: ¡Cerquemos! ¡Ahí! ¡Ahí! ¡Cérquenlos, cérquenlos les digo!
Una voz: ¡Estoy herido! Llamen a un médico. ¡Estoy...!
Una voz: Parece que ya se va a calmar...

Poniatowska chooses to include the exact words of the anonymous victims of the massacre, as well as the voice of an anonymous perpetrator. The voices of the fatally wounded were abruptly silenced; by including the anonymous voices of the wounded, the text partially recoups the voices of the victims. Her compositional choices that connect part one with part two also recoup silenced voices. The poem⁵ that ends part one serves a transitional function; it is an ancient Nahuatl text translated by Angel Maria Garibay that laments the violent loss of Tlatelolco to the European conquerors. The poem ends with “todos” “Es cercado por la Guerra el tenochca, es Cercado por la guerra el tlatelolca!” (221). The poem projects the ancient voices of the Tenechoa people who lost their lives

⁵ Jorgenson analyzes the placement of the poem “placed at the structural axis of la noche de Tlatelolco, the poem has a double orientation back toward what has been read and ahead toward what remains to be told. For example, the capture of Cuauhtemoc reiterates the theme of the imprisonment and torture of student leaders already elaborated in “taking to the streets”, while the images of blood, tears, and death anticipate the postponed narrative of the massacre.” (92).

and their culture at La Plaza de las Tres Culturas. Part two then begins with Castellanos's poem, which recoups silenced voices that were lost on the same plaza centuries later. Her poem alludes to the pre-colombian beliefs of the Tenechoa people, "que todo se le ha dado como ofrenda a una diosa, a la Devoradora de Excrementos" (226). Both poems project the action of the sweeping away of the lives and stories of the Mexican people at la Plaza de las Tres Culturas. They serve as bridges between part one and part two. While the poems parallel one another, the several hundred years between them draws readers' attention to the greater historical context of the massacre. Again, readers perceive the silences in the text as the centuries of history following the Spanish conquest is not included, yet the mention of the conquest indicates to readers that this historical context is important. The connection between the two poems further connotes the importance of Mexico's past to its more recent history, highlighting a silent gap within the text.

In chapter three, I consider the work to be historical nonfiction. Here, I specify that it may be considered a work of peoples' history as well a work of testimonial literature; historical genres that immerse readers into parts of the past that conventional historiography often overlooks. On this level of perception, readers see the text as a gestalt whole and form holistic perceptions of the text. As a peoples' history, readers perceive that *La noche* decentralizes the account of the massacre and recoups the voices of the lower class and the marginalized. It philosophically embraces Trouillot's most fundamental critique of historiography that he summarizes in the following "the production of historical narratives involves the uneven contribution of competing groups and individuals who have unequal access to the means for such production" (p. xix). Similarly, as part of the testimonial movement, readers perceive that it uses oral history

and eyewitness accounts to narrate an event seared into the collective memory of Mexico.

George Yúdice's gives the following definition of testimonial literature:

“an authentic narrative, told by a witness who is moved to narrate by the urgency of a situation (e.g., war, oppression, revolution, etc.). Emphasizing popular oral discourse, the witness portrays his or her own experience as a representative of a collective memory and identity. Truth is summoned in the cause of denouncing a present situation of exploitation and or oppression or exorcising and setting aright official history (Gugelberger and Kearney, 4).

Testimonial literature⁶, and *La noche* in particular, fights against historical erasure by denouncing and projecting the histories of exploitation and oppression of the people.

In the above analyses, I investigate historical silences on the four levels of the text that readers perceive. Here, I note that readers are immersed into these historical silences because the text is an immersive literary experience. Stockwell describe immersion as the capacity for literary language to anchor meaning to a context in such a way that readers describe the feeling of being immersed in the world of the text (Introduction, 41). The sensorial and emotional aspects of the text described in chapters 3 and 4 immerse readers into the historical information described in this chapter. Readers therefore perceive this historical information, such as the historical silences, in an immersive way.

In this chapter, I analyze the veracity of the historical presentation. I highlight that the text accurately depicts historical silences, therefore improving readers' historical understanding of the massacre. The text improves readers' historical understanding by focusing on parts of history that are important and often overlooked. The text highlights

⁶ Jorgenson discusses intertextuality as a central component of testimonial works “All testimonial discourse is referential and claims truth value; in addition, it is always intertextual because, explicit or implicitly, it assumes another interpretation (another text) about its object (referent) . Prada Oropeza is emphasizing here the relationship between testimonio and the dominant discourse to which it is opposed. I would add that a testimonial work may also interact with other testimonios referring to them to strengthen its own vision and to press solidarity with other struggles” (89).

the limits of its own historical knowledge. Within the enunciational structure, it draws attention to the many dead who were unable to contribute to the work, clearly demonstrating that the historical information is not complete. On the semantic level, the text portrays contradictions and inconsistencies that clearly depict the limits of historical knowledge. The text draws readers' attention to the issue of government censorship and its role as a silencer of history. The composition of *La Noche* draws attention to the incomplete nature of the text through its at times jarring use of cuts and slices in the arrangement of the testimonial fragments. *La Noche* also recoups parts of history frequently silenced by conventional historiography; on the enunciational level it includes a wider selection of sources and it projects the voices that hegemonic forces frequently silences. The semantic content provides readers with an abundance of detail that other accounts would relegate to the background or leave out entirely. As a work of peoples' history also belonging to the genre of testimonial literature, the text fights against historical erasure and projects the histories of exploitation and oppression of the people. Thus, the creative techniques that draw attention to these historical silences immerse readers into the text and also enhance readers' historical understanding. They present the historical information in a creative way that draws readers' attention to the limits of the historical knowledge and immerses readers into the parts of the past that conventional historiography often overlooks.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

In my application of cognitive poetics to *La noche*, I affirmed the literary ingenuity and historical veracity of the text by highlighting literary elements and asserting that they strengthen rather than weaken readers' historical understanding of the censored collective trauma. I first investigated how readers are uniquely immersed into the sensorial details of the student movement and massacre in chapter three. By highlighting unique aspects of the text on the four levels of literary perception described by Abrantes, I explored how the text sensorially immerses readers into the history of the student movement and massacre. On the first level of perception, I established that the structure of the crowd of protestors is present within the enunciational structure. I proposed that Poniatowska projects the many voices of Mexico's collective consciousness to assume the narrative voice in parts one and two, and that the many voices de-center the narrative and reflect the structure of the large crowd. I then applied cognitive poetic insights to assert that these aspects of the text sensorially immerse readers into the historical memory of the crowd of protestors. From the de-centered narrative voices, readers develop a multifaceted notion of Mexican national identity. On the second level of readers' perceptions, the semantic level, I observed that the contradictions between the many perspectives oppose the practice of censorship, immersing readers into the protestor's desire for dialogue by immersing them into dialogue on the thematic level. On the third level of readers' perceptions, the

composition, I highlighted that the many voices are presented in incomplete fragments and arranged in a way that creates contradictions between the voices. I related the unique composition of the work to the cognitive process of direct sensorial input in which incomplete and fragmentary information is interpreted into a cohesive whole. I asserted that the work is sensorially immersive because of this unique cognitive aspect of the text. On the fourth level of readers' perception in which readers assess aspects of the text as a whole, I asserted that *La noche* is a work of historical nonfiction and that the sensorial immersion readers experience subsequently strengthens their historical understanding of the massacre. I ended chapter three with the assertion that Poniatowska creatively channels her historical insights into many levels of the text's structure, presenting the history of the massacre in a way that immerses readers more fully into the sensorial details of the tragedy.

I then explored how the text immerses readers into the emotional atmospheres of the student movement and the massacre in chapter four. I used Reuven Tsur's theories of the four cognitive properties of emotions within poetic writing to identify the emotional atmospheres within parts one and two. I observed that the two main parts of the text, "Ganar la calle" and "La noche de Tlatelolco", each contain their own complex emotional atmospheres which are established by the poetic texts that begin them. Poniatowska's introduction (51-52) establishes the emotional atmosphere of "Ganar la calle" and Rosario Castellanos's poem "La memorial de Tlateloco" (226) establishes the emotional atmosphere of "La noche de Tlatelolco". I analyzed the emotional atmospheres within these initial poetic texts and asserted that they are carried into the following sections. By analyzing the four cognitive properties of emotions, I observed the presence of an excited

emotional atmosphere with a dual nature in Poniatowka's introduction. I observed that this dual nature is the feeling of hope inextricably bound to a sense of foreboding tragedy. I demonstrated how this emotional atmosphere is carried into "Ganar la calle". I then analyzed the four cognitive properties of emotions in the poem "La memorial de Tlateloco" and demonstrated how they are carried into the following text "La noche de Tlatelolco". I asserted that readers retain from the second half of the work a dark emotional atmosphere in which the emotions of terror, agony, and grief are most salient. To conclude, I claimed that Poniatowska's work strengthens readers' historical understanding of the massacre by immersing readers into the emotions of the historic tragedy. I ended the chapter by asserting that the documentation of the emotions of the student movement and the massacre improves the historical veracity of the account. The emotional trauma of the Mexican people historically impacted the country and the repercussions of the collective national trauma persist to this day. Thus, I asserted that the documentation of the emotions of the Mexican people in Poniatowska's work is invaluable historical information that should not be overlooked.

In chapter five, I explored in greater depth the historical veracity of the work through applying Abrantes' four levels of readers' perception. I explored how the creative presentation of *La noche* draws readers' attention to historical silences and immerses them into parts of the past that conventional historiography often overlooks. I incorporated arguments from *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* by Michel-Rolph Trouillot. I observed that the enunciational structure draws readers' attention to the many dead who were unable to contribute to the work. By highlighting the gaps in the enunciational structure, readers clearly perceive that the historical

information is incomplete. Questions are left unanswered because those who would know the answers were killed. By highlighting the missing people and thus the missing perspectives within the enunciational structure, the text draws readers' attention to the limits of the historical knowledge. Within the enunciational structure, *La Noche* also recoups parts of history frequently silenced by conventional historiography by including a wider selection of sources and by projecting the voices that hegemonic forces frequently silence. Readers are therefore immersed into perspectives that are frequently overlooked. On the semantic level, the text portrays contradictions that clearly depict the boundaries of historical knowledge. The text draws readers' attention to how the censorship of the press silenced history. The semantic content also recoups overlooked parts of history by providing readers with a far greater amount of detail than traditional historiography. The composition of *La Noche* draws readers' attention to the limitations of the text through its use of cuts and slices to arrange the testimonial fragments. Finally, exploring the genre of the work demonstrates that it recoups overlooked parts of history. I specify that the work of historical nonfiction is a peoples' history that also belongs to the genre of testimonial literature. These genres fight against historical erasure and project the histories of exploitation and oppression of the people. Thus, the creative techniques that draw attention to these historical silences enhance readers' historical understanding.

My cognitive poetic approach to *La Noche* adds to the critical discussion of the texts' role in the historical reconstruction and cultural memory of the massacre by focusing on their essential antecedent: readers' understanding of the text. The historical reconstruction and cultural memory of the massacre have been greatly influenced by Mexican readers' collective understanding of the text. Cognitive poetics, as a rigorous

reader-response approach, is therefore equipped to analyze how readers perceive Poniatowska's unique presentation of history. Beth Jorgenson's study discusses the texts' multiple and contradictory versions and how the text magnifies the voices of the oppressed. I expand these observations from a cognitive poetic perspective. I observe the multiple voices of the text within the enunciational structure to demonstrate that they are perceived as the collective narrative voice. I assert that the contradictory information, along with the abundance of information, aids in immersing readers into the historical account. Christopher Harris identifies the genre of the work as documentary narrative. While I discuss genre, I put greater emphasis on how readers' understanding of the text as a gestalt whole aides in their historical understanding of the work. In chapter three, I identify the text as a work of historical nonfiction that employs creative techniques that immerse readers into history. In chapter five, I discuss how the work as a peoples' history and as a part of testimonial literature improves readers' historical understanding by opposing hegemonic mechanisms at work in conventional historiography. Harris emphasizes the visual aspects of the work; I explore how readers are sensorially immersed into the account of the massacre in chapter three. Angela Di Matteo examines "la poética de la plaza", examining poetics in the text. I discuss the cognitive aspects of emotions within poetic writing in chapter four to demonstrate how readers are immersed into the emotions of the massacre. Sand asserts that the mythical, structural, and social elements of the text outline a new methodology for the reconstruction of historical memory from the intersubjective experience of the silenced periphery in the reconstruction of historical memory. I discuss how the representation of historical silences in the work improves readers' historical understanding, the fundamental

antecedent to historical memory. Gardner examines the lack of authorial presence in the text and argues that its fragmented structure gives strength to the story itself as a historically significant political narrative. In chapter five, I discuss that the enunciational structure of the work include more sources than most historical texts, which strengthens its historical veracity and readers understanding. I assert that the presentation of history in fragments highlights the presence of historical silences, and therefore, the works historical limits. Finally, Diana Sorensen compares Poniatowska's text with *Postdata* by Octavio Paz. She states that *La noche* is characterized by fragmentation and plurality that conveys the often-dissonant voices of civil society. I discuss how readers are immersed into the many voices of Mexico's collective consciousness in chapter three.

For a work of such great historical and cultural significance, that served as a substitute for an official historical account of the massacre (Rojo 3), there is relatively little critical engagement with *La noche*. Critics may have hesitated to analyze the literary elements of the text out of fear that their analyses would undermine its historical reliability. Indeed, Harris observes that "critics might want to emphasize the literary nature of the text to dismiss it as an imaginative account of events rather than an ostensibly truthful account" (494). However, cognitive poetics is equipped to investigate the literary aspects of the text without undermining its historical nature. It is an approach grounded in stylistics, but its theories may be applied to all written and spoken language (Stockwell, "Literary Theory" 1). My study has affirmed the text as both a unique and exceptional work of literature and a reliable historical account. It has rigorously investigated literary aspects of the text and has applied cognitive poetic insights to investigate how readers perceive them. I demonstrated throughout chapters 3, 4, and 5

how Poniatowska creatively channels her historical insights into the structure of the work, immersing readers into the history of the massacre on many different levels of the text. I have investigated the ways in which Poniatowska's unique presentation immerses readers into the history of the massacre.

While my study has rigorously investigated how readers are immersed into the text, improving their historical understanding of the massacre, future studies could more greatly consider the context, setting, and cultural significance of Mexican readers to analyze the text's role in the historical reconstruction of the massacre and development of cultural memory. A thorough cognitive poetic investigation considers the context, setting and culture of both readers and the text (Stockwell, "Literary Resonance" 26). However, the burgeoning but relatively new field of cognitive poetics has not sufficiently expanded its theoretical application to account for these essential aspects of the reader-text relationship. Stockwell writes that "cognitive science has paid insufficient attention to the social and ideological roots of shared human experience" but that "cognitive poetics- as an essentially applied form of cognitive science- is ideally positioned to take up this challenge"(An introduction, 170). An international workshop on cognitive poetics organized by the Toronto Semiotic Circle addressed this gap by expanding cognitive poetics to "draw its inspiration and methods not only from cognitive linguistics and cognitive psychology, but also from cultural, social, and evolutionary psychology". By applying insight from cultural, social and evolutionary psychology, cognitive poetics more fully discusses context, setting and culture in the relationship between readers and texts.

I contend that there are flourishing bodies of research in cultural psychology that should be utilized by cognitive poetics in order to account for the influence of contexts, settings, and cultures in the text-reader relationship. In 1955 Diaz-Guerrero founded a new paradigm called ethnopsychology. While previous psychological paradigms saw their theories as being universally applicable, ethnopsychology was unique in its identification of socio-cultural variables as important determinants of behavior. It asserts that behavior patterns vary from culture to culture. Ethnopsychology investigates the impact of historic, biological, psychological, environmental, social and cultural variables on human behavior. Indigenous psychological paradigms emerged from ethnopsychology and among them Mexican and Mestizo psychology. Mexican psychology has become a flourishing area of psychological investigation of the unique Mexican historical, psychological, environmental social and cultural variables that affect Mexican behavior. Mexican psychology differs from mainstream Eurocentric psychology in numerous ways (Ramirez 4).

Considering that there exists a flourishing body of psychological research that embraces the Mexican worldview and that there is a need to expand cognitive poetics through the application of cultural psychology, I suggest that a future direction in the cognitive poetic study of *La noche* be the application of two culturally relevant psychological theories within Mexican psychology. The first theory that is Mexican psychology's analysis of the person-environment relationship. Mexican and mestizo psychology embraces the understanding that there exists a deep relationship between the individual and the environment. It defines ecology as an important aspect of personality development and functioning. The psychology of an individual is affected by his

surroundings. Harmony with the environment, both physical and social, is thus a primary concern in psychological adjustment. From the mestizo perspective, the person is viewed as intimately linked to the sociocultural and physical environments in which he/she interacts. (Ramirez 8). How Mexican readers are immersed into *La Noche* could be addressed from this angle, which would take into account the environment and culture of Mexican readers as they engage the text.

A second direction for future research is the application of historical trauma theory to the cognitive poetic study of the reader-text relationship. Antonio Estrada asserts that minority-focused historical trauma theory is applicable to the Mexican people. Historical trauma theorists have observed that historical and social events have led to trauma that is manifested by entire societies, intergenerationally, and across the life span. Estrada outlines that this trauma is expressed as symptoms of depression, self-destructive behavior, substance abuse, identification with ancestral pain, fixation to trauma, somatic symptoms, anxiety, guilt, and chronic bereavement. Sotero (2006) developed a three-stage conceptual model of historical trauma. First, a dominant group subjugates a population, resulting in segregation and displacement, physical and psychological violence, economic destruction, and cultural dispossession. Second, the first and second generation of subjugated individuals elicit a physical, social, and psychological trauma response. Third, these trauma responses are transmitted to subsequent generations through environmental factors, psychosocial factors, economic, social, and political systems, and legal and social discrimination. From this perspective, the text's role in the documentation of the historical trauma and its place among a society affected by the same historical trauma discussed in the text could be examined. It could

also discuss the importance of the Mexican historical and cultural context to the readers' reception of the work as a reconstruction of the censured collective trauma.

Lastly, I contend that Poniatowska's successful and impactful approach to documenting the massacre could be considered a model for documenting other historical moments of upheaval, tragedy, and injustice that we do not want forgotten. Even recent moments in history, such as the protests following the murder of George Floyd and other acts of police violence in the United States, could be documented through her approach. Through her careful arrangement of material, she allows the Mexican people to speak for themselves. The use of her 'authorial vision and authorial ear' as opposed to an 'authorial voice' truly inform readers and encourage remembrance.

I have investigated how Poniatowska's historical insights are carried into the structure of the work, sensorially and emotionally immersing readers into the history of the massacre and improving readers' historical understanding of the events. I contend that there is much left to be critically explored in this indispensable text, and much left to be discussed about the text's relationship with the Mexican public's understanding of the massacre itself and its aftermath. Through a mosaic structure of many heterogeneous voices, *La noche* documents one of the most impactful events in modern Mexican history. It puts into words the shared pain within Mexico's collective consciousness; pain that was repressed and exacerbated by the government's silence and censorship. It fights for justice and against historical erasure through excellent historical documentation. As Castellanos implores in poetry, "Recuerdo, recordamos, hasta que la justicia se siente entre nosotros" (Poniatowska 172).

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