

ON APPARITIONS, REVOLUTIONS, SECRETS, ATOMIC BOMBS, SPACE SHIPS, SPECIAL EFFECTS AND REPLICANTS

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FIRST APPARITION

I It was Sunday. A sunny Sunday in May. After going to mass the three children drove their flock to the valleys and hills near their little village. They stopped on a hilltop and let the sheep graze. They played peacefully, waiting until it was time to go home. Before eating their meal, they decided to pray the rosary. They always did. Every day. The sign of the cross and an Our Father to start. Then they repeated the mysteries, the Hail Marys, the glorias and the short prayers until they came to the litanies. One after another. Saint, Mother, Queen, Virgin. Lucía, the eldest, was ten years old and led the prayers, while Francisco, who was one year younger and sometimes reluctant to join in, and Jacinta, eight, gave the response. When they finished praying they returned to their games. They were building a stone wall. The wall of an imaginary castle? They had a lot of imagination. A flash of lightning split the open sky. Thinking that a storm was approaching, they gathered the flock and set off for home. As they were going down the hill they were surprised by another flash. They walked on a little and on top of an oak tree they saw a dazzling woman dressed in white who asked them to come closer. They walked into the light radiating from her. It was brighter than the sun, they said later. They were not afraid. They were used to apparitions. In recent months an angel had visited them as many as three times. Lucía boldly asked her who she was, and she simply answered that she was from heaven and if they came to see her in the same place on the thirteenth day of each month for the next six months, on the last day she would reveal her identity to them. Lucía, who was curious, asked her whether she and her cousins, Francisco and Jacinta, would go to heaven and she said they would, although Francisco would have to say many rosaries. However, a friend of her elder sister, Amelia, who had died shortly before at the age of eighteen or twenty and whom she enquired about too, had not been so fortunate and was in purgatory awaiting the Last Judgement. Then she asked them to offer themselves to receive the suffering that God would send them to redeem the sins of others and beg for their conversion. They agreed. The woman said goodbye, telling them to say the rosary every day to achieve peace in the world and the end of the war.

II A war, the Great War, which had broken out three years earlier and involved almost all the world powers, because that sunny May was in 1917 a year of upheaval. Portugal had just entered the conflict officially and hardly a month before had suffered its first casualty on the European front, the soldier Antonio Gonçalves Curado. A Great War which the Portuguese saw as having nothing to do with them and in which they had no desire to fight. Quite recently an uprising, the Revolution of 5 October 1910, as they called it, had driven Manuel II into exile and a parliamentary republic had been set up. The regime was very weak: governments followed one another, the conservative opposition to the Portuguese Republican Party, which clung to power under suspicion of corruption and cronyism, and the trade unions had frequent recourse to violent methods to get their way, riots were common, strikes continuous. The government did not have popular support, especially in rural areas, which were still faithful to the monarch and the church, with which the new non-confessional state had severed the ties that had traditionally bound them. So, bearing these circumstances in mind, an unwanted war and a repudiated government, which had repudiated it, but had been forced to resign itself to it, there is nothing strange, no element of chance about the fact that, as had happened and would happen again on other occasions, the Virgin –threatened, as were the father, the son, the holy ghost and their representatives on earth, the churchmen– should choose that oak tree on a hill near a small Portuguese village to claim what until then had been her place, that of a queen –saint, mother and virgin, too– a place which some thought was as lost as their own.

SECOND AND THIRD APPARITION, AND A SECRET IN THREE PARTS

I One month later the three children returned to Cova da Iria, the spot where the oak tree stood, accompanied by about fifty curious people. Once again a flash of lightning tore the sky open and the woman appeared to announce that the two youngest would die soon and Lucía would live to establish the worship of her immaculate heart, a heart wounded by a crown of thorns, which she showed them. She also asked them to come back in July, to say the rosary every day and to learn to read. The curious onlookers, who were incapable of seeing or hearing her, consoled themselves by saying that they had seen a light illuminating the faces of the little shepherds contorted in ecstasy and the way the leaves of the oak tree moving when the Virgin disappeared.

II On 13 July they returned to the slope where the oak tree grew. About two thousand people were awaiting them, some say; others say four thousand. The woman appeared to ask them once again to come back the next month and to keep saying the rosary every day to bring the war to an end. Lucía asked her again who she was, although she had already grasped that she was Mary, and asked her to perform a miracle. She replied that she would tell her in October and on that day something miraculous would happen as well. She asked them to offer each sacrifice they made for the redemption of the offences committed against her immaculate heart and the conversion of sinners, and showed them the flames of hell where they were consumed, writhing in agony and surrounded by devils. She also warned them that God would punish the world for its crimes with a bigger war during the reign of the next pope, hunger and the persecution of the church. The sign that the punishment was beginning would be an unknown light breaking through the night. The only thing that could stop it, she said, was the consecration of Russia to her immaculate heart. If that did not happen, she went on, having gone astray Russia would spread its errors all over the world, causing more conflicts and sowing hostility to the church, a church which would nonetheless triumph in the end because Russia would eventually be consecrated. Portugal, on the other hand, would always be true to her and would never abandon the dogma of faith. And then they had an apocalyptic vision of fire, ruins and death with an exterminating angel, a merciful Virgin, a God who showed himself as light, and a procession of members of the church and laymen headed by the pope. Cardinals, bishops, priests, nuns and believers walking towards a Calvary where they would be riddled with bullets and arrows by soldiers as they prayed prostrated before a cross made of rough wood. The woman bade them farewell, telling Lucía and Jacinta that they could tell Francisco what she had said, but urged them to keep the secret of their visions.

III 1917 was also the year in which another important event in that History that is always demanding to be written with a capital H occurred, the Russian February Revolution which overthrew the czarist regime and set up a provisional government of a liberal democratic kind which opened the way – after a second revolution, in October, and a bloody civil war – for the foundation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), a federation of republics ruled by a single party, the CPSU or Communist Party of the Soviet Union, or even at one time the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), doing honour to its origin. A regime that became increasingly authoritarian and where all power fell into the hands of the party and its council, who organised purges every time they felt threatened. A government that, barely seven years after the revolutions, defined itself officially as atheist and definitively severed the strong ties between the state and the Orthodox church which had defined the court of the czars, a court that apparently ended up being controlled by a mystic heretic, Rasputin, with a mysterious and hypnotic stare and, the rumour ran, excessive appetites. The government ordered the closing of Orthodox churches, monasteries and theological schools, public displays of religiosity were forbidden and their members persecuted, as well as those who belonged to other faiths: Catholics, Protestants, Muslims and Jews, who were murdered, jailed, driven into exile or isolated.

FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH APPARITIONS, AND AT LAST THE MIRACLE

I The next month the children could not go to the oak tree. They had been locked up by the council administrator who wanted them to reveal the mystery to him, of the apparitions or the secret in three parts? However, they did not yield to his threats and were released two days later. The Virgin appeared to them again in a different place, Valinhos, almost a week after the frustrated

appointment. Lucía and Francisco were guarding the flocks with Francisco's brother, Juan, and felt a supernatural light that gave them a feeling that she would appear. They asked Juan to go and fetch Jacinta. The Virgin waited patiently until she arrived and revealed herself. She insisted they came back to the oak on the next 13th and that they said the rosary every day. She also told them what they had to do with the money the believers were leaving: build a chapel in honour of the Virgin of the Rosary. Exhorting them to pray and suffer for the sinners, she vanished.

II On 13 September they went to Cova da Iria. The crowd flocked to see them and talk to them. After they approached the oak tree and started to say the rosary, the Virgin appeared to them and told them that the next month she would perform the miracle so that people would believe them.

III It was raining. It was raining heavily when Lucía, Francisco and Jacinta arrived, one month after the last apparition, at the slope. Tens of thousands of people –about thirty thousand, according to some, seventy thousand, others said– were waiting for them in the hope that the Virgin would perform the promised miracle. Lucía asked them to close their umbrellas and begin the rosary. The Virgin arrived after the flash of lightning. She asked them to build a chapel in her honour and repeated that they should continue to say the rosary every day and revealed her title: she was the Virgin of the Rosary. She announced that the war they had not wanted to become involved in was coming to an end and that the soldiers would soon be going home. And at one o'clock in the afternoon, some say, others say it was at midday, the prodigy began: the rain stopped and the cloudy sky opened to let the sun peep out. There was not a breath of wind. All that remained were some wisps of cloud against the blue sky. "Look at the sun! Jesus! Mary! What is going to happen? What will become of us", the crowd began to shout. The sun was covered by a silvery disc, it looked like an eclipse, but they could look at it without pain. A strange silvery light flooded into every corner. The sun trembled and rotated. The light turned blue and then yellow, tingeing the whole scene. Meanwhile, the sun was spinning around. "Miracle, miracle, miracle!", many exclaimed. Then it fell in a spiral towards the expectant crowd who, on their knees, were praying and weeping. It did so three times. When it ended the dance lasted ten minutes, the clothes of those who were watching had dried, and so had the muddy ground.

IV Almost a quarter of a century had gone by when Lucía decided to write two of the three parts of the secret. Another war, the Second World War, even bigger than the first, had broken out. If that date of 1 September 1939 which History marks as the beginning of it is valid, the day Nazi Germany invaded Catholic Poland like the flash of lightning that tore the sky of Fatima when she was about to show herself, it had begun almost eight months after the death of Pius XI, the pope with whom the Virgin said the conflict should have begun, the pope who followed the one who reigned in the Great War and who was on his throne in that warlike 1917, the year of revolutions and apparitions, Benedict XV. History with a capital H, the one we should not believe in today, was far from the one Lucía, now that Francisco and Jacinta were dead, was writing in 1941.

V Portugal took no part in the war. This time it remained neutral, a situation that enabled it to stabilise its precarious economy and reinforce the Estado Novo, a dictatorial regime –heir to a revolutionary military government– which had governed since 1933, fanatically nationalistic and deeply Catholic, though perhaps not quite enough to return to the church what the republic had expropriated, stripped it of, and which she, saint, mother, virgin, had claimed as the queen that the rosary affirmed she was. However, the USSR was decisive in its outbreak, as part of the invading Axis that would be defeated, and at the end as one more of the conquering Allies who divided the world into two halves, or a three for one split as in the Berlin of the wall.

Whilst Lucía, from the safety of her Portuguese convent, revealed the first parts of the secret –a vision of a hell that was by no means new, it was like so many others, and the pre- or rather post-diction of that was that began with another Pius, the one who had received a later number in the conclave–, the explosions of the bombs interrupted the nights of many European cities with their light of destruction, a well known light like the red of the flames of hell, much like the light of that other earlier war, the first, but which could not be compared with the flash that would be seen four years later when Hiroshima and Nagasaki were razed to the ground by *Little*

Boy and Fat Man, the two atomic bombs with which the United States forced Japan –which had joined the Axis by attacking Pearl Harbor in that 1941 in which Lucía revealed part of the mystery– to surrender and sign the capitulation that put an end –Italy and Germany had been defeated some weeks before– to the Second World War. The Hiroshima bomb had a power of 13 kilotons and a temperature of over a million degrees centigrade. The Nagasaki bomb reached 22 kilotons and created winds of up to 1000 kilometres an hour. About 160,000 died. Two detonations that produced a light that had never been seen before, as bright as the light of the sun –an easy, all too recurrent comparison–, like the light the Virgin radiated from the oak tree in her apparitions, like the light of the sun that danced for ten minutes over Portugal without blinding anybody, which ended a war, the one that apparently should have begun according to the message of Fatima with an unprecedented brightness before Pius XI died, and another, colder one began, a war of precarious balances, for nuclear control and world hegemony. And it was in that 1945 when one war ended and another began that Lucía finally put down on paper the third part of the mystery –the vision of the massacred procession–, a handwritten page which the Vatican guarded jealously, awaiting the right moment for its revelation. A secret, with a content in no way fundamental, quite disappointing, which if controlled –information is also a very powerful weapon– would be very useful.

MORE BOMBS AND TWO FILMS, ONE DISASTER MOVIE AND ONE ABOUT APPARITIONS

I In 1941, another chance of the kind that makes history, or rather stories, Edward Teller, a Jewish physicist who fled from Nazi persecution in his native Hungary, joined the Manhattan Project. A top secret project of the American government –so much so that many of those working on it did not know what they were doing, and were not even aware of the risks they were exposing themselves to– launched, the story goes, by a letter sent in 1939 to President Roosevelt by the relative Einstein urging him to investigate the possibilities of nuclear energy as a weapon of war. Germany was known to be developing a programme for the same purpose and, fearful that it might achieve its aims, the United States, Britain and Canada set to work to develop an atomic bomb. Directed by the professor from Berkeley Robert Oppenheimer, the experiments soon focused on the creation of a fission bomb, the kind that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Teller, however, who was an advocate of using fusion, which would produce a far more powerful explosion, was soon disappointed by Oppenheimer's insistence on pursuing the fission line. Teller would have to await his opportunity –with a touch of revenge– for a few years, though not too many.

II The first flash surprised everyone. It had come early. It was not planned to fall so soon. It was 29 August 1949. A black cloud rose from the steppe of Kazakhstan. The USSR had managed it. At last they had an atomic bomb. One that was the same –a replica– as *Fat Man* and which, it is said, was more the fruit of Stalinist espionage than Soviet science. It seems that the explosion reached the same 22 kilotons that destroyed Hiroshima.

III The United States was alarmed. The threat was now real. They had lost their monopoly on the atom bomb. Truman asked the scientists in the laboratories at Los Alamos, where the investigations of the Manhattan Project had been concentrated, to look for a more powerful bomb. Teller had the answer: the fusion bomb or thermonuclear bomb or hydrogen bomb or H bomb. Oppenheimer, who after the massacres in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, believed in firm international control of nuclear weapons and had become chairman of the advisory committee of the Atomic Energy Commission, opposed the investigation because he considered that this new weapon with its greater destructive capacity could only be an instrument of genocide. An opposition that made him regarded as a risk for national security, as well as suspicious of anti-American activities. He was finally removed in 1953 after to submitting to an audit in which Teller, his former colleague and a declared warmonger, testified against him. Taking advantage of the fact that his former chief was being questioned, Teller placed himself at the head of the new programme and, working with the mathematician Stanislaw Marcin Ulam, perfected his system. At last he could develop the H bomb.

IV Ivy Mike exploded on an atoll in Micronesia in the Pacific Ocean near the Bikini atoll that had become famous in 1946 as the site of another atomic test, at the same time that the two-piece bathing costume was launched like a bomb on the market. The atoll was pulverised instantly. The force of the explosion multiplied the effect of *Fat Man* by almost five thousand. It

reached 10.4 megatons, 10,400 kilotons. A power which nonetheless was far from the 192 million megatons emitted 65 million years earlier by the asteroid that crashed into the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico, bringing about, it is thought, the extinction of the dinosaurs.

V A red star, Bellus, is heading for Earth. It will collide with it and destroy it completely. The worst fears have been confirmed. An astronomer, Dr Hendron, tries to warn the United Nations Organisation that the end of the world is at hand. There is one hope. Bellus is accompanied by Zyra, a planet that seems to be inhabitable. They have to try to reach it. His warnings are ignored. In the face of the rejection, the scientist decides to build a rocket, funded by an industrialist who believes in him, to take a group of people and animals to the saviour planet. A modern Noah's Ark which in the end will serve to prevent the disappearance of the human race. A love triangle, the race against time and the struggle between the builders of the spaceship to see who will be travelling in it, seaquakes, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions adorn the script of *When Worlds Collide*, a film produced by Paramount which was released in 1951 and won the Oscar for the best special effects.

VI A red star of war as threatening as the five-pointed star that appeared next to the hammer and sickle on the flag of the USSR, even more destructive than that first flash launched on the steppe of Kazakhstan, created with special effects that were not so special, simple devices, beginner's tricks, despite the awards, quite different from that benign silvery, blue and yellow sun that fell three times on the faithful who flocked to the encounter with the Virgin in Fatima, so real. Different?

Perhaps not very. The prodigy of the dancing sun and the story of the apparitions were quite similar to that Bellus heading for Earth in the 50s and to the story that grew up around it or, as some believe, other believers, the flying saucer trying to land or aliens of the kind exploited by B pictures at the double bill in the picture houses of the time, even more precarious but equally sustaining the illusion. An illusion that has been called simulacrum in the cinema, a matter of faith in religion. Apparitions, inexplicable disasters and extraterrestrials that now have the leading roles in some late night television shows and where it is not so much a matter of explaining them as of showing them transformed into pure spectacle, whether they are considered frauds –special effects – or true –indecipherable mysteries–. Miracle and special effect overlap in more than simple appearance, a mixture of *apparition* and *science*.

VII The prodigies of Fatima were used as a weapon of mass conversion in the Cold War. The Virgin, or rather the image of the Virgin, another representation – like the visions of the shepherds themselves, of that most traditional hell that appears in all the last judgements on altarpieces in churches or the execution of churchmen and laymen with a little war reporting, martyrology for children and cowboys and Indians comics or, if you prefer, since it was written in 1945, war movie, Easter movie and western – became a missionary. A twofold representation, a double replica, because there are two virgins, the one that travels and the one that stays in the shrine, the great shrine that was begun with the money left by some of the first witnesses of the prodigy, the queen had to have her palace. Miracle and special effect overlap: they do not kill but they do attract and convince.

VIII *When Worlds Collide* was another propaganda tool. Its pro-science message is quite clear, at a moment when science was being questioned for its participation in the massacres in Japan, and its anti-Soviet message, since the USSR was a real threat in the struggle for world hegemony. The nuclear – and space – projects were often justified as the only possibility of salvation in the face of a hypothetical asteroid crashing into the Earth and bringing about the supposed disappearance of the human race, as had happened 65 million years before with the one that crashed in Mexico and presumably wiped out the dinosaurs: the atom bomb would destroy it before it arrived, it was said. Science fiction that almost ceased to be so with the Star Wars of the Reagan era, an extension of that Cold War that began in 1945. Science fiction that had a great deal of a Christian story about it: Noah and his lost ark or Lot in Sodom and Gomorrah, in which the sinners were punished, drowned or, as in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, charred by a ball of fire, but more specifically there was a good deal of Puritan myth about them, in the end Zyra became the New Jerusalem, a name the pioneers gave to the territory of the United States, what was also called the New World, pioneers who in this case would be the young, intelligent and beautiful people chosen by Dr Hendron, prototypes of the American ideal or the ideal American, in a lottery that may have been over directed.

IX Young, intelligent and beautiful people who have trusted in the predictions of a prophet and will thus be saved, just as the humble, innocent and pure peasants believed in the shepherds rather than the corrupt republican politicians in a film released by Warner in 1952, the year of the H bomb, entitled *The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima*. In it Lisbon looks like Moscow at the height of the revolution and Aljustrel like a small town in the American West. The Virgin, her image, floating over the oak, was like one of those ghosts that astounded the public who went to fairs to see the magic lantern shows, a special apparition made in the studio with optical tricks and post-production that asked for the conversion of Russia, which had turned aside from the path of Christianity and capitalism, justifying with its ventriloquist's dummy discourse – which was almost more political than religious – the situation in the Cold War: the division of the world into two blocks, where the goodies were those of the Western block and the baddies those of the Eastern, and where the United States was seen as the leader of a new Crusade. It also alluded indirectly to that third part of the mystery, not made public, which was believed to be the revelation of the End of the World, an Apocalypse that was expected to be atomic and could only be avoided if the atheist sinners repented and converted. Behind the apparitions the sun danced – a phenomenon more suggested by the lighting, the editing and the performances than seen on screen – to certify the truthfulness of the event. An inexplicable event was the necessary proof that confirmed the truth of the prediction.

REPLICANTS

I “If the priests and friars knew the thrashing they were going to get, they would step up to the choir and sing freedom, freedom, freedom”.

Popular version of the *Himno de Riego*, the official anthem of the Second Spanish Republic.

II In 1951 the Marshall Plan ended. It had not only served for the reconstruction of the countries of Europe after the Second World War, but also for the cementing of alliances in the face of the Soviet threat: the countries that would act as buffers had to be strengthened. It was twenty years since Spain had appointed the Second Republic, fifteen since the outbreak of the Civil War and twelve since it ended with the imposition of a conservative dictatorial regime. In the first years of the Republic the burnings of churches and images, similar to those of Fatima, and the violent attacks on priests and monks had been common. Amidst the atrocity of the Civil War, the republican side, associated with the Communist Party that dominated and had close ties with the USSR, from which it received aid, murdered hundreds of priests and nuns, some of the now beatified by the church as martyrs. Murders that seemed to confirm what the Virgin had said in Fatima, or rather to anticipate what Lucía wrote in her convent as a postdiction: the errors of Russia would spread over the world and Christians would be persecuted. Deaths that were used by the church and the nationalists as propaganda in the search for alliances. Anti-communist propaganda like the kind introduced into the script of another film, *La señora de Fatima* by Vicente Escrivá and Rafael Gil, released the same year that the Marshall Plan slipped away for ever, in a Fatimist furore that had begun shortly before, in the postwar years, and which had also spawned dozens of books and stories for children, thousands of prints and the mass production of replicas of the image of the Virgin of Fatima.

III Fatima was a perfect model of an apparition. It was not just its anti-Soviet message that was interesting; from a sociological point of view it repeated many of the stereotypes of the time. It even corresponded to the gender ratios that statistics on visionaries of the period confirmed: two thirds women and one third men, two girls and one boy. Religion was women's affair. Politics was men's. It seems that poor Francisco, who found saying the rosary boring, had trouble hearing the Virgin. It was Lucía and Jacinta who had to tell him the three-part secret even though he had been present when she appeared.

IV “These have been nine days of heaven: of so much religious fervour, so many conversions, such wild demonstrations of love for Our Lady; that I think She came to Madrid to launch the Crusade for the purification of Christian customs, that She wants Spain for the conversion of Russia”.

Leopoldo Eijo y Garay, bishop of Madrid-Alcalá, about the visit of the image of the Virgin of Fatima to Madrid in 1948 to celebrate

the twenty-fifth anniversary of his bishopric.

V The Franco regime and the church decided to promote the missions of the pilgrim Virgin of Fatima in Spain so that those sheep who, they thought, had strayed during the atheistic and anticlerical period of the Republic would return to the fold. The church recovered part of its lost power and privileges and the regime set the communists as its main enemy and reinforced the imposition of its conservative catholic-nationalist ideology. The conversions followed on one another along the journey through towns and cities. The apparitions multiplied, as had happened decades earlier when the church felt threatened by the Republic and the monarch, Alfonso XIII, was driven into exile. The degraded model of Fatima was repeated. Sometimes elements were taken from another famous apparition, Lourdes, the one which in 1858 helped the dogma of the Immaculate Conception to be recognised among those who did not believe it, even though it had been accepted by the church four years before. They were poor copies and something or other was always missing. It was also symptomatic, as William A. Christian writes in his article “Religious Apparition and the Cold War in Southern Europe” (*Zainak*, 18, 1999, pp. 65-86), that the visionaries, mostly women, belonged to families who had been in the Republican ranks in the war or lived in towns with a left-wing majority. Replicas that evaded the authority of church and state, not at all inoffensive, moved masses that could get out of hand. There was a debate over whether to accept them or reject them. The visionaries, mostly women, acquired public notoriety and power over a group of people, occupying a place which they would never have been allowed to reach any other way. The need for fame, the incredulous called it. They took advantage of the – almost atavistic – impulse to the sacralisation of the space by choosing locations with strong symbolic connotations or sublime landscapes. La Codosera, Aldeamoret, Ibdes, El Palmar, Cuevas de Vinromá, Yuncillos, Villaesteva, Garabandal... were some of those places where Virgin is said to have appeared over the four decades the Franco regime lasted.

VI A second wave of apparitions took place in the 80s. No doubt as a reaction to the end of a nationalist catholic dictatorship, the establishment of a non-confessional democracy and the gradual secularisation of Spanish society. Moreover, in 1987 the seventieth anniversary of the apparitions of Fatima was celebrated, and on that date a large number of apparitionist phenomena were concentrated, as had happened in 1954, the Marian year. Phenomena which in many cases were related to strategies that favoured the visionaries’ healing business – for example, in the case Santón de Baza, whose surgery the believers flocked to in huge numbers after the apparitions he had been witness to were published, which had left some of his followers blind in the face of a promise of a new sun dance– or sought media notoriety –like the pathetic participation of Trinidad Eugenio, a seer from Lepe, in a sleazy late night talk-show in which she went into ecstasy live; it seem that the Virgin waited to be on the air to show herself as she had when Jacinta had been separated from Lucía and Francisco in the fourth apparition, which broke the regularity of her appointments.

VII Hidden stories behind these photographs which Julia Montilla has taken at some of the sites of the apparitions. An archive without encyclopaedic pretensions which brings to light a forgotten story, the memory of events which History, with a capital H, preferred to overlook because they were outside the rule. Bare images from which any suggestion of the supernatural has been eliminated, just as it has been exaggerated in that other series of photographs recreating, replicating, in the studio, with minimal special effects, the miracle of the dancing sun of Fatima according to the testimony of José Maria de Almeida Garrett, professor of the Faculty of Sciences at the University of Coimbra, just like what happened in those propaganda films at the height of the Cold War which made the apparitions a double-edged sword.