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# Journalistic Affect in the Spanish Historical Novel, 2000-2004

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# Journalistic Affect in the Spanish Historical Novel, 2000-2004

by

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# Journalistic Affect in the Contemporary Spanish Historical Novel, 2000-2004

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This dissertation adds to the discussion of historical memory in Spain regarding the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship by examining three texts published between 2000 and 2004: *Las esquinas del aire: En busca de Ana María Martínez Sagi* (2000) by Juan Manuel de Prada; *Soldados de Salamina* (2001) by Javier Cercas; and *El vano ayer* (2004) by Isaac Rosa. I argue that these texts exemplify a unique tendency in the literature of historical memory that articulates the act of remembering through new narrative and ethical postures born of what I term journalistic affect. This dissertation identifies the tendency beginning in the early 2000s for fiction to articulate the act of remembering through the compilation and examination of truth objects. Not only do the truth objects shape the narrative of these novels, endowing the act of remembering with real-world consequences, but also the truths are embodied in objects thereby locating them outside the framework of contestable speech acts. Moreover, the search for and collection of these objects operate within a journalistic epistemological framework in that the authors or protagonists use the truth(s) embodied in one object to locate another,

resulting in the act of assembling a constellation of embodied truths and the shaping of a more holistic understanding of the individual that is the aim of the search. The protagonists in these novels have to search for the modernizing discourses that never took root in a Francoist Spain that never entirely faded away, never had an overt counter-revolution, and never proved itself completely criminal on the public stage the way other nationalist dictatorships in Europe and Latin America had. They show us a Spain that has to catch up with discourses about ethnicity, gender (homosexuality), rural/urban spaces in modernization, and an historical iconography for nationhood that had not essentially been renovated since the mid 1960s. As such, the individuals in these works see an inherent lack in the Europeanized Spain that has been culturally colonized by the continent, a situation that engenders a need to reevaluate a national subject position largely frozen since 1939.

## Table of Contents

# Introduction

The explosion of literature in Spain dealing with the Spanish Civil War starting about the middle of the 1990s is a well-known and well-documented artistic event. Many studies have also discussed how the rise of this kind of literature occurs more or less in parallel to renewed public interest in the Civil War as a site of historical importance that continues to influence the country as it moves into the new millennium, manifested in both popular movements (Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica, founded in 2001) and in institutional or political efforts (La Ley de la Memoria Histórica, passed in 2007).[1]

My dissertation seeks to add to this discussion by examining three texts published between 2000 and 2004: *Las esquinas del aire: En busca de Ana María Martínez Sagi* (2000) by Juan Manuel de Prada; *Soldados de Salamina* (2001) by Javier Cercas; and *El vano ayer* (2004) by Isaac Rosa. I argue that these texts exemplify a unique tendency in the literature of historical memory that articulates the act of remembering through narrative and ethical postures that draw on the aura of journalism to create a truth-effect. My dissertation identifies a search for a new Spanish identity in the novels that represents the choices that must be made by individuals born into the legacy of Francoism and who are now coping day by day with the integration of that charged culture's norms and habits into a new European identity. While many critics have addressed the issue of Spain's cultural evolution in

the post-Franco era, this dissertation identifies the tendency beginning in the early 2000s for fiction to articulate the act of remembering through the compilation and examination of truth objects. Not only do the truth objects shape the narrative of these novels, endowing the act of remembering with real-world consequences, but also the truths are embodied in objects thereby locating them outside the framework of contestable speech acts. Moreover, the search for and collection of these objects operate within a journalistic epistemological framework in that the authors or protagonists use the truth(s) embodied in one object to locate another, resulting in the act of assembling a constellation of embodied truths and the shaping of a more holistic understanding of the individual that is the aim of the search.

The individuals in these novels have to search for the modernizing discourses that never took root in a Francoist Spain that never entirely faded away, never had an overt counter-revolution, and never proved itself completely criminal on the public stage the way other nationalist dictatorships in Europe and Latin America had.[2] They show us a Spain that has to catch up with discourses about ethnicity, gender (homosexuality), rural/urban spaces in modernization, and an historical iconography for nationhood that had not essentially been renovated since the mid 1960s. As such, the individuals in these works see an inherent lack in the Europeanized Spain, a Spain that has been culturally colonized by the continent, a situation that engenders a need to reevaluate a national subject position largely frozen since 1939. Each of the authors approaches this project from a unique angle,

showing the multifaceted nature of this problem of identity. Rosa and Prada attempt to give voice to discourses that had never been fully articulated or realized, the historiography of culpability, and discourses of gender, respectively; meanwhile, Cercas attempts to circumvent the problem of culpability and restructure the familiar Nationalist symbolic identity, the only identity that Spain has known since the end of the Civil War, in a manner that would be palatable to a Europe hypersensitive to nationalism.

I argue that each of these texts is organized around a search, the narration and articulation of which leads to a truth effect that arises from the semblance of journalistic ethics in the narrative. What I mean by truth effect is that the narrators or principal characters of the novels collect evidence, clues, miscellanea, interviews, and other "real world" material to guide their search. While this might seem to be very similar to the detective novel, what is unique about these texts is that the clues and evidence that the characters examine and that structure their respective searches, in the cases of *Las esquinas del aire* and *Soldados de Salamina*, are real historical material that was not invented by the authors. With regard to *El vano ayer*, where the story is wholly fictional, I show how Rosa structures the narrative in a way so that the reader assigns real-world ethical value to the fictional actors and events that he portrays by way of reflective judgment. Relying on the work of María Pía Lara, I outline the similarities between reflective judgment, the process by which the arrival at normative understandings of good and evil is a function of

considerations of events and the impact that they have on a social group rather than *a priori* moral categories, and the supposed (or idealized) objective qualities of journalism. The truth effect, then, is the manner in which the authors lead the reader to an ethical posture similar to that experienced when engaging with journalism: the collection, examination, and evaluation of real world "things" that enable a judgment of the historical situation that engendered them.

**1. The Spanish Historical Novel: 1980-1999**

The political and economic reforms of the 1980s and 1990s were largely directed outward, oriented towards Spain's acceptance in the ranks of modernized, industrial nations.[3] Internally, political pronouncements and posturing from both of the principal parties sought to convince the nation that it truly was living in a new, modern, democratic future, free of any unpleasantness that might have been the cause of social or civic antagonism in the past. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, discussion about the years of Francoism began to grow, both in literature and in the press. This proliferation of public discourse about Francoism reached a crucial juncture in 1996 when, upon the rise to power of the conservative Partido Popular and the ouster of PSOE, the new prime minister, José María Aznar, observed that the electoral victory confirmed the end of the Transition and the return to normalcy in Spain.[4] He claimed that the fact that Spain could elect both conservative

and liberal parties to national power and peacefully move from one government to another signaled a fully functioning democracy.

From the late 1980s to the turn of the new century, the narratives being told consist largely of establishing a vocabulary and rhetoric that create the possibility for talking about the past national traumas during the late 1980s and 1990s. Critics began to consider the trajectory of twentieth century Spanish history and culture through the lens of collective memory. Critics such as David Herzberger and Jo Labanyi began looking at the historiography of Francoist Spain and the way that it was either supported or challenged in narrative. Herzberger especially was instrumental in establishing the link between memory, historiography, and narrative. Over the course of several articles and his 1995 work *Narrating the Past: Fiction and Historiography in Postwar Spain*, he shows how memory and history is appropriated to serve the official Francoist narrative. This laid the groundwork for similar rhetorical analyses of post-Franco fiction.

During the first decade of the new century, the vocabulary of memory having been established, critics such as Ana Luengo, Joan Ramon Resina, and Ulrich Winter began to look at the manner in which the memory of the Civil War and Francoism is often located in physical objects. A very common thread running through these analyses is the work of Pierre Nora and his conceptualization of *lieu de mémoire*, the idea that an object, place, or idea becomes a nodal point in a particular community that references a common past. Memory, according to Nora, has an inherently

physical component to it.[5] The physical object is then imbued with memorial or ethical meaning that shapes a social group's self-image or self-understanding.[6] The ultimate purpose of this embodied memory is "to stop time, to block the work of forgetting" (Nora 19). Many of these works examine the way by which memory or nostalgia is appropriated in the novel, either to recover unarticulated discourses or to memorialize what had been pushed to the margins, in a way that the novel itself becomes a kind of *lieu de mémoire*. *Disremembering the Dictatorship: The Politics of Memory in the Spanish Transition to Democracy* (2000) by Joan Ramon Resina, Ana Luengo's 2004 book *La encrucijada de la memoria: La memoria colectiva de la Guerra Civil Española en la novela contemporanea, Casa encantada: Lugares de memoria en la España constitucional* (2005) edited by Joan Ramon Resina and Ulrich Winter, are three important examples of this trend.

In the introduction his edited volume *Disremembering the Dictatorship*, Resina traces the relationship between memory and identity through a series of 20th century thinkers, demonstrating how images, places, and events serve to construct an individual's self image as articulated in Roland Barthes *Camera Lucida*, Michel Foucault's essay "Theatrum Philisophicum," and Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. Likewise, in her chapter titled "Memoria Colectiva y *Lieux de Mémoire* en la España de la Transición," Christina Dupláa argues that Tomasa Cuevas Gutierrez' 1985 biography *Carcel de mujeres: 1939-1945* is a *lieux de mémoire* in contemporary Spain in which "la memoria y la historia compiten en el espacio

textual" to create a "memoria creadora" (35). Resina's concept of the construction of self-image informs my argument that many of the central characters of the novels examined in this dissertation see themselves and their place in Spanish society through the historical lens of the objects that guide their respective searches because his edited volume is a point of pivot toward a reexamination of inherited history through the lens of that which has been left out or ignored. Resina observes that "(a) stimulating approach to the literature of the Transition would be to study it in reference to what it leaves out" (9). It is important to note that *Disremembering the Dictatorship* was published in 2000, the same year as *Las esquinas del aire* appeared and one year before *Soldados de Salamina*. As such, I aim to apply his "stimulating approach" to these works of literature that seem to be paralleling, both temporally and thematically, Resina's call for the examination of that which has been excluded.

Luengo divides *La encrucijada de la memoria* into two parts: the first examines the theoretical history of collective memory beginning with Maurice Halbwachs and moves to a more precise application regarding the Civil War in Spain; the second part employs the theory of collective memory in a critique of six historical novels published between 1991 and 2001. The analyses of these novels are important in that they all deal with a *post hoc* remembering of an event or the effort to reconstitute the memory, a narrative *topos* that became very prevalent during the 1990s and 2000s.

Joan Ramon Resina's and Ulrich Winter's edited volume *Casa encantada* is, in many respects, the logical continuation of Resina's call in *Disremembering the Dictatorship* to reintegrate those parts of society or historical narrative that have been marginalized into a more holistic understanding of neoliberal Spain. As the editors state in the introduction, the motive of the project is to "esclarecer los modos en que un colectivo se relaciona con su pasado, asignándole un espacio virtual en la memoria compartida a través de una localización en el espacio social" (10). The "espacio social" that is in need of a memorial "espacio virtual" in the collective memory are those places that have yet to be incorporated by official historiography: "El pasado repudiado perserva en lugares dificilmente accecibles… en las identidades marginales sometidas a la violencia erradicadora de la globalización, o en barrios de desecho" (12). The essays that comprise the book each examine the way in which Spaniards both individually and collectively incorporate the memory and the remnants of the past into present-day subjective formation. Overall, the majority of the analyses that fall into this category look at the way in which memory as mediated through physical spaces, like the Palanca neighborhood of Bilbao, documentary film, even (in a very self-conscious manner) the Spanish "memory boom" itself shape and content accepted narratives (literary or social), and thereby locate them within a particular post-Franco trajectory.

Nathan Richardson is another critic who has examined the role of objects and places in relation to historical or subjective understanding. In his book *Constructing*

*Spain: The Re-Imagining of Space and Place in Fiction and Film, 1953-2003* (2012), he identifies, in a variety of media from literature to film and spanning five decades, how the idea of Spanishness is molded by the physical world as the country progressively opens up to international activity.

This dissertation builds upon the theories developed in *La encrucijada de memoria*, *Casa encantada*, and *Constructing Spain* by showing how the objects that guide the searches enacted in *Soldados de Salamina, Las esquinas del aire*, and *El vano ayer* both shape the stories being told, linking them to specific historical foci, and enable the authors to stake out their respective ideological positions. By showing how Cercas', Prada's, and Rosa's novels employ the storytelling capacity of physical objects that bear witness in the present to past events, I demonstrate how the they organize an ideological space that represents the protagonists', as well as the authors', idealized vision of post-Franco Spanish society.

**2. Mass Graves, Neoliberalism and Journalism**

The excavations of mass graves, which began to garner significant attention in the early 2000s, has served as a vehicle for introducing historical memory into the Spanish public lexicon. The culpability for avoiding discussion or scientific examination of such an important locus of national history lies with both sides of the political spectrum. After its electoral victory in 1982, the PSOE government avoided making the reconciliation of the Civil War and Francoism a priority in order to avoid

loggerheads with conservative parties in the new democratic system. Likewise, the PP, the intellectual heirs of Franco's regime, upon gaining control of the government in 1996 had no inclination to unearth the anguishes of the past, both figuratively and literally. The pressure to dig up and examine these graves instead came from citizen groups and media outlets, the most famous of which, Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica, was founded in 2000 after the excavation of thirteen Republican bodies killed by Falangistas in Priaranza del Bierzo in the autonomous region of León. It wasn't until October of 2007 that the Cortes Generales, led by José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and PSOE, produced legislation that echoed the popular demand to address issues regarding the Civil War. Commonly known as the "Ley de memoria histórica," the new series of laws codified important concepts vis-à-vis the state's posture toward the legacy of Francoism. Among these are federal assistance for the excavation of mass graves, the recognition of victims of both sides of the Civil War, and a formal condemnation of Franco's regime. Almost as if acknowledging that government action always lags behind popular support, these final two provisions of the law speak to trends in contemporary literature that try to humanize nationalist figures in the discussion of historical memory and an idea that had been migrating from the periphery of social and judicial discourse towards the center: culpability.[7]

This migration was facilitated by newspapers and magazines that served as a vehicle for the popular demand for addressing mass graves. As Spanish politics

evolved into a largely bipolar entity during the 1980s, journalism followed a similar path. Due to what amounted to state control of the press during the dictatorship, during the Transition when private economic interests began to publish their own dailies, newspapers were located along an ideological spectrum. Rosario de Mateo notes "(b)etween 1976 and 1984… the state press lost influence. The private press, already run by private enterprise, became increasingly ideological. While some newspapers defended the old order, like *El Alcázar*, others favoured democracy, like *Mundo Diario*, *El País*, etc." (224). This politicization (or perhaps, ideologization) of major Spanish newspapers continued though the 1980s and 1990s, with *El País* and *El Mundo* being seen as hewing to the left, while *ABC* occupied the right.[8] Beginning around 2000, partially fueled by the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Civil War the year prior, articles and opinion pieces began being published in both local and national newspapers that shown light on the overt, public consciousness of the horrors of the war and the desire to come to some kind of reconciliation with its memory. It is important to note that these articles were published in both liberal- and conservative-leaning papers. This opening up of the public discourse had significant ethical and political questions; some of these questions have to do with simple taste or respect for the dead, while others expose more problematic, entrenched issues. In a December 2000 piece for *El País*, Miguel García-Posada[9] addresses what he perceives to be the gross exploitation for financial gain of those killed during the Civil War.[10] Calling out several businesses in and around Granada

that employ Federico García Lorca's name or likeness in direct relation to his murder, as well as a local community that has a street named after the poet's killer, García-Posada calls it "una suerte de pornografía moral difícilmente superable." However, apart from simply being the crude appropriation of a murder victim for self-promotion, the columnist couches his critique in a much wider reaching, more holistic consideration of the legacy of the Civil War:

> Lo que no es soportable es la ofensa que se infringe a la memoria de las víctimas y la desvirtuación que se lleva a cabo del alcance de la guerra civil considerándola ya episodio concluido, que nada tiene que ver con nuestro presente ni con nuestro futuro.

Echoing Nora's ideas regarding *lieux de mémoire*, García-Posada not only stresses the importance of the physical environment as a locus of memory, but also the way in which this embodied memory should serve as an instructive guide for future social development. Moreover, he forcefully articulates an idea that was rapidly gaining public support at the time and that would be a commonplace in journalism for the next decade: the rejection of the idea that the past, and specifically the Civil War and Francoism, had no influence on the present and the future.

Newspaper articles also frequently documented the rising number of mass graves that were either known to exist and only excavated with enough popular pressure or were discovered during building projects or infrastructure development. In this manner, journalism forced the reading public to come to terms

with the evidence of historical crimes. This is not to say that the public ever doubted that these crimes existed; in many cases, the citizens knew, quite literally, where the bodies were buried. Rather, there was new pressure to identify, both the victims and criminals. This, of course, is an inherently political endeavor, one that had ramifications on both ends of the political spectrum. From the left, Jordi Pujol, president of the CDC and the Generalitat de Catalunya, took a conciliatory posture: "Todos habíamos sido verdugos y al tiempo víctimas… y en el fondo muchos españoles de los dos bandos eran conscientes de ello."[11] Others demanded recognition for those soldiers that fought against the insurgent nationalist forces. In an episode that is illustrative of the positions of both the left and the right, an *El País* article by Marifé Moreno from October 2000 documents how a local government controlled by the conservative PP refused to give such a recognition to a group of some 50 soldiers. The exchange between the local governor José Antonio Díez and the local PSOE representative that made the petition on the behalf of the veterans' group is demonstrative of the political implications surrounding how to deal with the evolving remembrance of the war, a remembrance literally embodied by the surviving soldiers and the rising number of mass graves:

> Díez constestó a esta diputada que no todos los miembros, hoy octagenarios, del colectivo guerrillero eran buenas personas, que no todos habían luchado por la libertad, y que defender a este grupo era "de una simpleza" que le "pasmaba." El presidente de la Diputación insistió, según la diputada

> socialista, en que algunos no merecen la rehabilitación que se pide, y que habían matado a gente. Marqués precisó a Díez que de lo que se trataba era de respaldar la lucha de unas personas que primero defendieron un orden legalmente establecido y luego lucharon en contra de otro orden impuesto, a lo que replicó Díez que ese orden contra el que luchaban "también estaba legalmente establecido." A lo que la diputada contestó que no olvidara que fue impuesto por fuerza de las armas.

Apart from the questionable metaphysical insight that Díez has to claim that not all of the veterans were "buenas personas," what is most important here is the fact that newspapers serve the role of making public the political nature of Spain's historical memory.

The public fixation on mass graves and the identification of the remnants of the Civil War, expressed in journalistic outlets, demonstrate new tendencies in the memory of Spain's fratricidal conflict. Instead of exploring the war and the years of Francoism via fictional or metaphorical means as was the tendency during the 1980s and early 1990s, there exists an evidentiary or explicitly historical inertia in the popular push to exhume and identify. This more "factual" or "truthful" characteristic of the collective desire to remember (or to ignore, as in the case of certain conservative factions, which is an equally important posture when faced with embodied truths) is endowed with an objective legitimacy when articulated in the journalistic medium. As historical memory becomes an increasingly popular

theme for artistic production, the inherently linked concepts of journalism and objectivity likewise become important themes in literature, film, and television.[12] This tendency is also seen in the three novels addressed in this dissertation, in which the search to recover marginalized discourses relating to the Civil War and Francoism structure their narrative around a cache of physical, embodied truths, the compilation of which express a markedly journalistic epistemological framework.

Studies such as *Unearthing Franco's Legacy: Mass Graves and the Recovery of Historical Memory in Spain* (2010), edited by Carlos Jerez Farrán and Samuel Amago, and Jeremy Treglown's 2013 book *Franco's Crypt: Spanish Culture and Memory Since 1936* identify the importance of mass graves, monuments, and other objects that exist in everyday life in that, not only do they project the traumas of the past into the present, but the physical nature of their existence forces the Spanish public to acknowledge them, regardless of any desire to do so. In *Unearthing Franco's Legacy*, Jerez-Farrán and Amago curate a collection of essays by some of the most respected scholars specializing in contemporary Spanish studies, such as Paul Preston, Julián Casanova, Jo Labanyi, along with the editors. The essays examine how mass graves and other physical testimonies of the horrors of the Civil War speak (or silence) a variety of discourses emanating from disparate corners of Spanish society, from the Catholic Church to contemporary media outlets to the relatives of the victims. In *Franco's Crypt*, Treglown divides his examination of Spanish historical inheritance into two sections. In the first, he analyzes how the remaining Francoist

infrastructure has been incorporated into the twenty-first century infrastructure and landscape, and how it influences (or doesn't) contemporary understanding of historical events and crimes. The second part is dedicated to critiques of how the physical world left behind by the dictatorship has impacted story telling, both in written narrative and film. In this analysis, he compares the stories told by those who live through the dictatorship to those told by that generation's children and grandchildren, thus contributing to the conversation regarding post-memory in Spain. These two books speak to the ideological potential inherent to physical objects' truth telling capacity.

This point becomes important when examining the three novels of this dissertation. Whether the site of a largely forgotten mass shooting in *Soldados de Salamina*, an unknown archive in the middle of Madrid of books banned during the dictatorship in *Las esquinas del aire*, or the torture rooms in the basement of a municipal building on the Plaza del Sol in *El vano ayer*, when the stories embodied by the physical world and objects are told, they shape our understanding of Spanish history and identity.

An important critical work regarding the intersection of fiction and history in the new millennium is *Docuficción: Enlances entre ficción y no-ficción en la cultura española actual* (2010) edited by Christian von Tschilschke and Dagmar Schmelzer. Employing a term that began to circulate in the early 2000s, the essays collected in *Docuficción* traces the blending of disparate genres and representational media in

contemporary Spanish literary production. The critics examine the confluence of mimesis, memory, and ideology, pointing to the rise in the use of photography, documentary evidence, historical archives, journalism, and government documents in narrative. This dissertation is informed by the ideas presented in *Docuficción* and builds upon them by demonstrating the processes by which historical objects and physical bodies of people create a truth effect, thereby shaping historical memory at the intersection of fiction and history.

### 3. Journalism, Ethics, and Fiction in *Las esquinas del aire*, *Soldados de Salamina*, and *El vano ayer*

This dissertation weaves together several of these established avenues of investigation, opening up the novels for a new mode of analysis. I show how the protagonists or narrators take a journalistic posture vis-à-vis historical inquiry that supports an ideological position. They collect evidence in the form of physical objects that are imbued with a truth-telling capacity, they probe the memory of those that lived through historical events or who have inherited the memories, and they narratively structure this material in such a manner as to convey the supposed objectivity of journalism. This supposedly non-partisan and rigorous search for the truth, however, takes advantage of the authority of veracity that is inherent to objects and the detached character that the public assumes to be intrinsic to journalism in order to further the ideological ends of the authors.

In my mind, the fundamental question that binds together *Soldados de Salamina, Las esquinas del aire*, and *El vano ayer* is this: What is at stake by structuring the narrative of an historical novel around journalistic affect? What are the implications of including documentary material (or the simulacrum of it, as in the case of *El vano ayer*) mediated through journalistic affect in the fictional recuperation of a collective history? Part of the answer to these questions is precisely what Ana Luengo has termed "huellas del pasado," those pieces of the past that still populate the present and link us to our collective cultural patrimony. However, my analysis of these novels shows that a more complete answer must take into account two other related and important considerations. The first is how the reader is made to experience the journalistic epistemological enterprise at work in these novels. This is achieved by a specific linguistic and visual rhetoric that guides the reader to encountering the novels within a paradigm wherein objects and speech-acts are vehicles for truth. Secondly, I argue that a trait of journalism that is often overlooked in the present media discourse, but that perhaps becomes more apparent when we look at these novels through a journalistic lens, is at play in these works: journalism not as documentation of objective fact, but as the crystallization of the political. We as readers often still cling to an idealization of journalism as the objective reporting and contextualizing of events and information, an assumption that could not be further from the truth in the contemporary media landscape dominated by infotainment and ideological posturing. These novels, appealing to

certain traits of idealized journalism though the appropriation of truth objects, embody a desire for this impartiality. Nevertheless, objectivity gives way to speculation in the name of entertainment and the organizing of ideological positions.

The journalism that I reference in these novels is an idealized understanding of the profession that, while never truly existing, was at least at the heart of the profession. However, over the last thirty years, swept along the rising tide of neoliberal ideologies and the every more centralizing of financial power in the media world, that appeal to impartiality has been supplanted by entertainment in the name of feeding the bottom line. The tradition of investigative journalism is grounded in the idea that dogged, detail-oriented collection of data and evidence, filtered through a dispassionate mediator, leads to balanced and objective evaluations of the world around us. In the contemporary journalistic landscape, however, this ideal rarely conforms to reality. As journalistic outlets become more politicized and driven by ideology rather than impartial representation and analysis of events, the public has begun to doubt their objectivity. The rise of overtly partisan news outlets like Fox News, MSNBC, and The Washington Times in the United States, and ABC, La Razón, and the COPE network of radio stations, along with a galaxy of websites that serve as aggregators of news of only one ideological stripe, has a double effect on the public: first, they provide an echo chamber for pre-established ideas, presenting information in a vocabulary that always confirms the

ideology of the presenter; second, they cause the viewing/reading public to lose faith in the enterprise of journalism as whole. This phenomenon is not alien to Spain, nor is it new:

> (S)i es verdad que uno de los efectos perversos del periodismo de investigación es que se puede llegar a destruir la confianza del ciudadano en las instituciones políticas y económicas, terminará también por hundir a las instituciones mediáticas. Si es verdad que la confianza en los grandes periódicos se está perdiendo, eso obligará a la propia clase periodística a transformarse. Será el momento de reconocer que los periodistas no actúan como vigilantes externos del poder, sino que quizá están ejerciendo ese poder de manera ilegítima, donde la ilegitimidad consiste en esa desnaturalización del papel de la prensa, que ejerce un poder que no le corresponde cuando esa no debería ser su función. (Díaz Güell 422)

By abandoning the central tenet of journalism as an activity the purpose of which is to inform the public, free of ideological predispositions, the field has lost the trust of those that it was tasked to serve.

Despite this failure of trust, journalism has maintained a façade of objectivity coupled with news packaging aimed more at entertaining than informing that has produced billions of dollars for large business conglomerates. This has been especially true over the last thirty years, as the neoliberal trends of international capital have divested the production of journalism from local or national owners to

be assimilated by transnational corporations. An example of this change is the evolution of *El País* from a stalwart of the emergent left in the first years of the Transition to a secure apologist for neoliberal policies in the new century. When Carlos Mendo, the well-known and well-respected reporter and one of the founders of *El País* who spent years covering Washington D.C. and London, died in 2010, his home paper opened his obituary with these lines:

> Una persona con una clara carga ideológica, ¿puede ser un periodista objetivo? Un señor o una señora que se reclamen de derechas o de izquierdas y que acepten sin remilgos tal catalogación, que estén dispuestos a defender, incluso con vehemencia, su catálogo de ideas y valores ¿pueden ser buenos periodistas?

It is an easy conceit for the paper, since it goes on to answer in the affirmative and hold up the conservative Mendo as an example. But these opening questions betray a strong sentiment held by the reading public: objectivity in journalism is a farce.

The conglomeration of media paralleled the conglomeration of publishing houses during the 1990s. Much as the local news outlet or newspaper became a subsidiary of transnational corporations, so large numbers of independent publishing houses, many of which had long histories of resisting political pressure and censorship, were gobbled up by international presses like Random House. Random House was then subsequently bought by Bertelsmann in 1998, a Germany-based transnational company. As Jill Robbins shows, this implied a homogenization

of ownership, and as such, a loss of national identity (90). The further that the ownership of publication becomes from the site of artistic creation, the more artists lose the ability to bring their work to the public since publishing decisions are made based more on economic viability rather than artistic innovation. This transfer of publishing power has ideological implications as well; since the primary focus of the publishing house is the bottom line, they may be reluctant to publish works that present heterodox social and political points of view, thereby controlling the tenor and content of popular cultural discourse.

During the 1990s, as the ownership of journalism and publishing became ever more concentrated, a new form of relationship between the content producer and her public emerged: blogs. Given the low cost of writing one and the liberty of not having to be accountable to corporate overlords or even an editor, the journalistic and narrative potential for blogs is substantial. In terms of reporting, they exist in a nebulous epistemological space somewhere between journalism, opinion, archive, and documentary. As Endy M. Bayuni, the former editor in chief at the *Jakarta Post*, notes, these new mouthpieces of reporting are a double-edged sword for traditional journalism:

> The bad news for journalists is that in the increasingly wired world, they have lost the virtual monopoly they once enjoyed in disseminating news and information. The good news is that professional journalists have come to rely on the social media to keep abreast of the very latest news. And even

> better news is that journalism can improve upon those raw, early reports of social media by scrutinizing them with such traditional journalistic values as accuracy and fairness. (73)

Bayuni's final statement illustrates the common feeling that blogs and other social media of their ilk lack the veneer of objectivity enjoyed by traditional journalism. However, since we've seen how that attribution of objectivity in journalism is quite problematic, his statement also demonstrates the hegemonic role, deserved or not, that it plays in cultural and political discourse.

Regardless of their comparatively diminished reputation in terms of objectivity in the reporting of current events, blogs are playing an important role in the production of recent fiction. Apart from providing a means for amateurs to bypass the traditional publishing industry, many professional writers actively maintain blogs in which they comment on current events, which at times overlaps or influences their narrative work.

The rise of blogs, the growing skepticism of journalism, and novels like the ones examined in this dissertation all represent distinct relationships between the reader and claims to truth. Journalism, more so than blogs and narrative fiction, is held to a higher standard of verifiability, an understanding demand given its duty to inform the public. Blogs make reference to truth claims as a means of staking out political or ideological positions and boundaries. Narrative fiction, while making reference to real world truths, appeals more to our a priori senses of right and

wrong, beauty and ugliness, to the transcendental truths that inform the development of our moral character. While the critique of journalism as abdicating its responsibility to objectivity is warranted, I do not believe the same could be said of these novels and others like them. At the end of the day, the *raison d'etre* of each medium is different; journalism is to inform and contextualize (even if it falls short, or even it has a political bent), whereas fiction is to entertain, move emotionally, or incite to think. Moreover, given the public's lack of faith in journalism to properly inform, readers find that need for historical emplotment in narratives like the ones examined here. I will argue that *Las esquinas del aire*, *Soldados de Salamina*, and *El vano ayer* demonstrate a desire for historical (which is to say objective) truth. Given traditional journalism's failure in terms of impartiality, the journalistic epistemology at play in these novels, in which the reader and the narrator are fellow travellers piecing the story together from discovered evidence, embodies the reader's hunger for the idealized journalism discussed above. Unfortunately, just as traditional journalism succumbs to speculation, substituting entertainment for reporting, so these novels speculate, employing the information and documentation that is collected to cast the central character as the personification of the authors' preconceived artistic or political ideals. Prada uses truth objects to cast Ana María Martínez Sagi as the perfect 1930s feminist: poet, lesbian, athlete, and political activist. Cercas rewrites the biography of Rafael Sánchez Mazas to conform to the author's notion of the pure poet that, in his heart, is above the messiness politics.

And in the figure of André, Rosa romanticizes the student-protester of the 1960s. By structuring the narrative around truth objects that serve as a map for discovery, a map the reader follows along with the protagonist, de Prada, Cercas, and Rosa appropriate the pre-existing horizon of expectation of journalism to drive their novels. When the truth-telling capacity of the objects and speech-acts lead to speculation, the narrative is not failing the idealized vision of journalism, it is simply being what it is: fiction.

Fiction is not devoid of the potential for ethical or historiographical engagement, as María Pía Lara argues in her 2007 book *Narrating Evil: A Postmetaphysical Theory on Reflective Judgment*. Lara demonstrates how novels, films, and other fictional material have the capacity for engendering ethical considerations, a process that she terms reflective judgment. She grounds her argument primarily in the work of Hannah Arendt, Jürgen Habermas, and Primo Levi. Lara looks to Arendt's and Levi's work as chroniclers and critics of the post-World War II experience in the Jewish diaspora. She comments on how the German-American philosopher articulated the creation of a collective story regarding the traumas of the war, and how the fact that all Jews could identify with that story created the potential for community. Regarding Levi, Lara looks at the manner in which the Italian chemist told his story, and how the rhetorical framework that he employs creates the opportunity for judgment that is not dependent upon retribution or hatred. Habermas' idea of "learning from catastrophe," which is "the

process of establishing a connection between the collective critical examination of past catastrophes and the learning process in which societies engage" (19), gives Lara the framework within which to engage with Arendt's and Levi's ideas, leading to her concept of reflective judgment. This is a judgment that relies on the "disclosive" nature of fiction, it's capacity to enable the reader to approach ethical considerations that, given the reader's subjective position, would have been impossible otherwise. Fiction, then, can create the forum for the evaluation of past events by establishing a critical distance between past events and our present reality.

A continuity exists between the professional lives of Cercas, de Prada, and Rosa and the fictional discourses I trace: the authors in question in this dissertation not only consider *hispanidad* in their novels; each writes as a journalist as well, Cercas publishing with *El País*, Prada with *ABC*, and Rosa publishing widely in blogs. All three write frequently about the present state of Spanish society, locating their observations within a historical continuum. It should come as no surprise, then, that their narratives also are structured by an historical search or evaluation.[13]

The act of the historical search, as it structures narrative unity, is circular; it posits the present as a point of departure to uncover or claim some aspect of the past as a means of explaining the original present. Each of these works is organized around some form of search structured by that temporal loop, aiming to disclose an aspect of the Civil War or Francoism so as to account for the legacy of *hispanidad*

inherited by the protagonist. That legacy is then unpackaged, making possible a new approach to the national Spanish subject, particularly as part of new European ethical domain.

The novels and authors that I address in this dissertation approach this still unreconciled legacy through a search. This search allows them to question the historical processes involved in the creation of the Spanish society in which they find themselves, a Spanish society that, due to the many unaddressed questions left over from its Nationalist past, the authors view as out of joint with its new European surface. Each of these searches seeks to articulate some silenced aspect of Spain's recent history in order to both finally come to terms with the past and to suggest a new ethic of Spanishness. This examination of the past, and by extension the neoliberal present, constitutes the specifically Spanish reorientation of social understanding, unlike any other in Europe after their own Nationalist interludes.

In Chapter One, I examine Juan Manuel de Prada's *Las esquinas del aire: En busca de Ana María Martínez Sagi*, which follows a late 1990s young book collector and aspiring writer as he and small group of friends recover the life events of a Catalan writer, athlete, and feminist of the 1920s and 30s. Prada's book, more than any other discussed in this dissertation, incorporates unquestionably true historical material into its narration. The citation of Ana María Martínez Sagi's poetry, photographs of her, clippings from newspapers and magazines that interviewed her, as well as the incorporation of historically real figures like Pere Gimferrer, all

contribute to a truth-effect. I argue that the revelatory characteristic of journalism guides the unfolding of the narrative arch, culminating in the narrator knocking on Martínez Sagi's door and interviewing the elusive subject herself, and then incorporating a first person recounting of her life into the final third of the novel. Throughout the novel, the protagonist, in his dogged search for Martínez Sagi's work and his reverence upon finding it, creates the Platonic ideal of the 1920s leftist, feminist intellectual. Likewise, I also argue that in the protagonist's obsession with the physical book, the place of veneration that he affords it in his world view, and consequently the poetic and social mind that created it (Martínez Sagi), Prada sees his own idealized vision of the bohemian intellectual. These two figures represent a re-envisioning of a romanticized past in which the politically and socially committed artist stand in stark contrast to the frivolous nature of social discourse in contemporary Spain.

In Chapter Two, I show how Javier Cercas's *Soldados de Salamina*, in blurring the lines between historical documentation and creative fiction, appropriates the polarizing ideologies of the Spanish Civil War to create the simulacrum of an essentialized, stable social structure. Traditional readings of this novel identify the protagonist's search for the truth about two men, one a Nationalist ideologue, the other a Republican soldier, whose lives briefly cross during the war as a refutation or subversion of the possibility of absolutes. I claim at the end of the novel we are not left with an historical absolute but a fictional one. In positing these two men as

the two poles of a "secreto esencial," Cercas attempts to place contemporary, neoliberal Spain within this dialectic. I argue that the novel, in melding history and fiction and finally creating a narrative stability where there is an historical instability, offers a simulacrum of social cohesion in neoliberal Spain and avoids the rising social demand for culpability, the one issue that all other post-Nationalist countries addressed and Spain never did.

In Chapter Three, I demonstrate how in *El vano ayer* Isaac Rosa reconstructs verisimilar representations of the cases of repression and torture committed by the national police forces during the cycles of student protests in Madrid in the late 1960s. Centering around two characters representative of the period, a professor whose loyalties are constantly in question and a leader of the student Communist organization, and recounted by way of multiple first-person accounts and archival documents, the fictional episodes constitute a journalistic and juridical narration of history. Although the various voices in the novel are all fictional, Rosa creates the illusion of being more fully "journalistic" through a multi-perspectivism that creates a symptom of journalistic truth-effect. By creating the opportunity to see multiple (and often contradictory) sides of one narrative and to reflect upon them, the novel produces in the reader a truth-effect that introduces the narration into the political and the juridical. I argue that although this novel is unique in this dissertation in that it does not deal with historically real people, the journalistic affect invites the

reader to a reconsideration of the collective memory of the era and, ultimately, to a judgment of the real people and institutions involved.

Overall, then, this dissertation examines how these three novels, representative of a larger collection of contemporary literature and journalism, express through their enactments of searches for lost political voices a new ethic of Spanish political and subjective formation. They require their readers not necessarily to look for guilt or innocence, but rather to assess the costs and needs of that legacy in an era where silence about Spain's immediate past might mean submersion into Europe and an ultimate loss. Although other studies have looked at the genre of Civil War/Francoism-inspired historical fiction, the majority approach these works by way of memory or 'historical memory' studies that analyze how memory is created. I believe that these studies, although important, do not address how the act of remembering is used as a tool to examine how the Nationalist legacy still organizes the Spanish national subject and conditions her choices in day-to-day life.

As a response to these unanswered questions, this dissertation questions how the act of creating memory in neoliberal Spain has offered a way to address the many discourses and historical legacies that have yet to be dealt with, and as such how that act of remembering is integral to constitution of the contemporary Spanish subject who will be able to be both Spanish and European.

[1] The Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica is an organization consisting of local groups dedicated to documenting repression during the Civil War (http://www.memoriahistorica.org/). *La Ley de Memoria Histórica*, the common name for the *Ley por la que se reconocen y amplían derechos y se establecen medidas en favor de quienes padecieron persecución o violencia durante la Guerra Civil y la Dictadura,* was passed by the Congreso de Diputados on October 31, 2007. The law, which consolidated many previous laws having to do with social benefits and rights afforded to those affected by the Civil War and was developed by the then-ruling PSOE party, dictated that the national government will assist in the location and unearthing of common graves dating to the Civil War, the removal of all emblems and insignia pertaining to Francoism be removed from the public buildings, and the establishment of the Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica in Salamanca, which will also house the Archivo General de Guerra Civil.

[2] Although not completely analogous, the glaring counter-example here is of course Austria after World War II. As Heidemarie Uhl notes, the general problems that denazification encountered in Germany were compounded in Austria due to an extraordinarily high percentage of exemptions granted to former Nazi officials or sympathizers; "(b)etween 85 and 90 percent of the 550,000 registered NSDAP members and applicants for membership thus pleaded mitigating circumstances" (71).

[3] Many domestic reforms were at least tangentially directed outwards as well, ensuring that internal laws and norms aligned with those of other EU nations.

[4] It is interesting to note that Mr. Aznar made the same claim in 2010 regarding the electoral victory of conservative Chilean president Sebastán Piñera, suggesting that the win represents the "culmination" of the South American nation's Transition (http://www.elmostrador.cl/noticias/pais/2010/01/24/aznar-dice-que-el-triunfo-de-pinera-pone-fin-a-la-transicion-chilena/).

[5] "Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects…" (Nora 9).

[6] "Even an apparently purely material site, like an archive, becomes a *lieu de mémoire* only if the imagination invests it with a symbolic aura" (Nora 19).

[7] Another principal actor in this development is Judge Baltasar Garzón, who brought several cases to national attention during the first decade of the new century that revisited the crimes of Francoist officials.

[8] José M. Magone explains in his 2009 book *Contemporary Spanish Politics*, "*El País* was founded by the PRISA group under former tycoon Jesus de Polanco. It started as a platform for the liberal opposition against the Francoist regime, but in the 1980s and 1990s was perceived as being close to the policies of the Socialist Party… Apart from these two main newspapers (*El País* and *El Mundo*), there is also the traditional *ABC* which is quite conservative and is supported by the Catholic media empire" (264).

[9] Miguel García-Posada was a prominent scholar and journalist who earned his doctorate with a dissertation about García Lorca's *Poeta in Nueva York*. Along with working as a visiting professor at a variety of universities, he also wrote for the Spanish daily *ABC* from 1983 to 1991, and for *El País* from 1991 to 2001.
[10] The case that García-Posada highlights represents an extra-artistic example of what Heidi Schlipphacke terms the "exporting and marketing" of national trauma.
[11] This quote is taken from a September 27, 2000, article in La Vanguardia that has no author.
[12] One of the most popular television programs of the late 90s and early 2000s was *Periodistas* (1998-2002), which portrayed the inner workings of a fictional Madrid newspaper. Notable for being a show "del tiempo," or dealing with current social issues, Paul Julian Smith notes that "(b)y episode 8 (entitled 'A Love Story') *Periodistas* had swiftly established itself as the most popular and critically acclaimed drama on television" (113). *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, which began in 2001 and is still in production, dramatizes the life of a middle class family in Madrid during the Transition while incorporating documentary footage from the last forty years of Spanish history.
[13] The three novels considered here are not the only books these authors have written that deal with cultural patrimony. Juan Manuel de Prada has published *El séptimo velo* about France during World War II and the problems of historical memory; Javier Cercas has published *Anatomía de un instante* which looks at the coup of 1981; and Isaac Rosa has published *La mala memoria* about a town coming to terms with a massacre during the Civil War, as well as *¡Otra maldita novela sobre la guerra civil!*, a self-conscious reworking of *La mala memoria*.

## Chapter One: Recovering the *poetisa*: Artifacts, Historical Lacunae, and Romanticizing the Republican Struggle in *Las esquinas del aire: En busca de Ana María Martínez Sagi*

Juan Manuel de Prada's *Las esquinas del aire: En busca de Ana María Martínez Sagi* follows an anonymous young aspiring writer as he and two of his friends piece together both literary and historical clues in an attempt to tell the story of Ana María Martínez Sagi, a Catalan poet, socialist, and athlete who all but disappears after the Spanish Civil War. Prada's book employs characteristics of the historical novel, *la novela policiaca*, and documentary evidence to create a narrative frame grounded in an archival enterprise. This archival reconstruction of Martínez Sagi is indicative of two principal characteristics of the work. First, *Las esquinas del aire* is part of a tradition in post-Franco literature of the recuperation of lost discourses or lost texts, a tradition that passes through such disparate works as Carlos Giménez's *Paracuellos,* Antonio Muñoz Molina's *Beatus Ille*, and Javier Cercas' *Soldados de Salamina*. These lost discourses represent blind spots in either the official or popular history that are brought back into view, or incorporated into those histories, by their recuperation in literature. Second, Prada employs a philological trope in narrating the archival endeavor undertaken by his protagonists. As the team of protagonists follow one clue to the next in their search for the Catalan poet, they operate within a philologic epistemological frame in that truth objects,

documents and testimonies lead to others, ultimately guiding the protagonists in their search for the truth. In the case of *Las esquinas del aire*, the protagonist and his cohorts trace a path through forgotten interviews, neglected collections of poetry, and other archives (creating the Borgesian duplication of an archive creating a new archive) that ultimately leads to Ana María Martínez Sagi herself. The philological trope is reinforced throughout the novel by the inclusion of photographs picturing Martínez Sagi as well as those close to her, culminating in the interview of the lost writer.

What interests me is Prada's treatment of the truth objects that comprise the archive that the protagonists construct around the figure of Ana María Martínez Sagi, and the manner in which this archive constructs an idealized vision of the revered, engaged public intellectual. Grounding my argumentation in the idea that the photographs, contemporaneous interviews and other cultural production from the 1920s and 1930s constitute what Ana Luengo has termed "las huellas del pasado," or what Pietsie Feenstra has called "huella de la realidad," I propose that the truth objects that serve as a map for the protagonists leading to the Catalan poet, by merit of their dual status as both real historical relics and as fodder for Prada's fictional creation, imbue the fictional protagonists with the power to establish an historical, cultural and intellectual landscape that extends beyond the pages of the novel. Likewise, I contend that the idealized vision of Martínez Sagi as the apotheosis of the engaged public intellectual is reinforced by the fact that the

principal protagonist is himself an aspiring writer who has an acute sense of historical inheritance and a desire to be included in the ranks of publicly acknowledged artists. He sees in Martínez Sagi both an artistic and an ethical ideal, a pure vision of the socially and politically engaged writer, unbesmirched by the passage of time, hailing from an era when artists like the young protagonist still had gravitas. In this desire for gravitas in the public sphere, I believe that the protagonist embodies certain elements of Prada's own desire for intellectual and literary respect.

I divide this chapter into three sections. In the first section, I address the use of truth objects in *Las esquinas del aire*. I discuss the relationship between the truth object and memory and how it serves as a link between the present and the past, making possible the recuperation of lost discourses. In the second section, I address the relationship between the truth object and the creation of the fictional novel. This section explicates the process at work when an author employs truth objects as the material for fictional creation. In the final section, I demonstrate how Prada uses truth objects to reconstruct the lost or underrepresented discourses of the 1930s embodied in the figure of Ana María Martínez Sagi (lesbianism, the female athlete, the female public intellectual). In doing so, I argue that these truth objects create an affect of ethical necessity that gives historical weight to the book.

One of the principal techniques that Prada uses in *Las esquinas del aire* in order to construct the archival trope is the insertion of photographs and facsimiles

of book covers into the text of his novel. While not explicitly philological, these documents reinforce the textual journey that the protagonists undertake. The inclusion of these images, as well as references to books, magazines and other forms of physical media, are truth objects that both create an historical horizon and guide the group of protagonists from one clue to the next in their search for Martínez Sagi. Physical objects are synchronic in that they materially exist in the present, but also reference past events, actions or people. In the present, the object becomes part of the narrative of telling the past, a part imbued with great weight due to its synchronic nature; it is not merely telling the past, it *is* the past. One of the most obvious examples of this phenomenon is the modern museum.[1] The objects housed in museums become the locus of a collective memory because the objects organize the public's link to the past. For this reason, museum curration is an inherently political endeavor in that the objects chosen and the manner of presentation structure the public's memory; the museum becomes the agent of enforcing an official version of history and memory. Hans Magnus Enzensberger writes in *Europe, Europe*, as he gazes upon glass enclosed artifacts in the museum of the Spanish Army, artifacts under whom still hang descriptions placed by their former Francoist curators, "War is a single, total work of art touched by magic and mildew, a fantastic reliquary pieced together out of a thousand fragments" (243). War may be a 'single, total work of art', but the act of piecing together the 'thousand fragments' that litter the ground once the last shot is fired, the act of reconstituting

the collective event from a singular perspective, imbues the final work of art with a hermeneutic quality that illuminates the particular present ideological project of whoever undertakes it. In this sense, the war does indeed become a work of art; it is not (perhaps we could say that it never truly is) an objective event in-itself, but is always and forever the product of a subjective recasting through the act of curration and presentation.

As truth objects, public monuments serve a different role than museums in that they are woven into the fabric of the city or town. Whereas museums serve as receptacles for truth objects that are chosen to construct a certain narrative, monuments organize a collective memory both in a more obvious and more surreptitious way. As Michael Rowlands shows in his essay "Remembering to Forget: Sublimation as Sacrifice in War Memorials," they can take on two forms: triumphalist or mourning. The first is a communal celebration wrought material in the form of a monument. The second, perhaps more appropriately named a memorial, serves as a common site on which to purge anguish or guilt. It is even possible for one to become the other, as in the case of Valle de los Caídos, erected by the Francoist regime as a celebration of its victory in the Civil War and later reviled in post-Franco Spain as a reminder of the dictatorship and the slave-labor used in its construction. In both of these cases, collective and historical memory is divested from a people's active memory and stored in the material objects. This enables the public to forget, or at least to ignore, a past that could potentially weigh too heavily

on the conscience.[2] However, the monument as a truth object is no less influential in organizing the public memory in that its "disappearance", the fact that it embodies the collective memory and then becomes part of the background, is testimony to its ideological function in society. Slavoj Žižek discusses in *The Sublime Object of Ideology* how ideology is a socially organizing symbolic field that is enacted principally though the performative relationship that individuals have with the world around them. He states that "[t]he most elementary definition of ideology is probably the well-known phrase from Marx's *Capital*: '*Sie wissen das nicht, aber sie tun es*' – '*they do not know it but they are doing it*'" (28). Given their act of disappearing in plain sight, this concept can also be applied to the role that monuments and memorials (and any other public image or object) have in the public consciousness, especially with the passage of time.[3] However, Zizek complicates the issue of ideology by posing the question: "[w]here is the place of ideological illusion, in the '*knowing*' or in the '*doing*' in the reality itself?" (30). I believe that this distinction is paramount when investigating the role of truth objects in public life. When a truth object becomes part of the social fabric, it immediately reorganizes the collective conscious so as to incorporate itself.[4] This means that the act of forgetting or ignoring the truth object has a very intentional, active component to it.

One of the most important truth objects in terms of its ideological and memorial potential, both in *Las esquinas del aire* and in our increasingly visual

culture, is the photograph. Like the monument or the memorial, the photograph, over time, becomes part of the background; it still represents (visually shows) the moment of time when it was taken, but as we grow accustomed to its presence, we do not actively reference that time and place. The photograph also holds a unique position among truth objects in that the medium can be appropriated in both a truth-telling and an artistic mode. This dual nature of photography has problematized the interpretation of the medium since its inception. Growing out of the periodical of the mid-nineteenth century, the representational power of the captured image gave new authority to both the artist and to the observer. In terms of the photographer, she is able to capture a moment of lived time, a moment crystallized in which the objective image can be taken at face value to represent the lived world. But at the same time the photograph resists (or perhaps begs) interpretation. This is because, as John Tagg argues, the photograph itself is only a medium, a utilitarian thing, that links the photographer and the viewer: "The field of photography… is like the little-studied field of writing, as opposed to literature, or building, rather than architecture" (179). Much like its literary cousin, photography is dependent upon those who produce *and* consume it; defying any kind of subjective fixity, it is "a map of motley differences, identities, jurisdictions, borders, and exclusions that charts a territorial project: the marking out of a yet-to-be-occupied landscape by the closures of power and meaning" (179). Photographs *qua* truth objects, then, form a continually morphing rhetoric that is changed, adapted,

and molded by the historical actors who create or consume them. As Susan Sontag notes in *Regarding the Pain of Others*, "The photographs of the victims of war are themselves a species of rhetoric. They reiterate. They simplify. They agitate. They create the illusion of consensus" (6). Although photographs seem to be a truth-medium in that they are accepted as objective representations of a specific place and time, Sontag shows how they are part of a larger narrative, a narrative that is continually being contested and amended as new participants enter the cultural discourse. The denotative quality of photographs changes depending upon presentation and context; they become floating signifiers that can be filled with political, ethical or moral meaning. The "truth object", be it a photograph, a relic, or a monument, by merit of its synchronic nature, at once populates the present with the past and reifies the past as befits specific cultural and political exigencies.

In *Las esquinas del aire*, Prada employs truth objects, such as photographs, quotations, books, and real people as a means of both moving the story forward and creating an archive that delineates the life of Ana María Martínez Sagi. In this sense, the truth objects at the center of the novel make possible the recuperation of the memory of a real person in a fictional setting. As the protagonists use one clue to lead them to the next, "collecting" the objects that comprise the archive, the truth objects do not exist as independent, self-sustaining entities, but as the pieces of an ideological project executed by Prada. This is why I claim that the truth objects that are at the heart of *Las esquinas del aire* occupy a very nebulous space in regard to

documented history and the fictional story. I do not suggest that they erase the boundary between the true and the fictitious, but that the truth objects, in their capacity as discursively malleable entities, comprise a rhetoric set down by Prada that depicts Martínez Sagi as the ideal public intellectual.

As Sontag has shown, truth objects do not exist as independent objects, but as sites of supposed consensus that are subject to manipulation or usurpation within a given ideological or cultural field.[5] But even given this relativity, the physicality of the objects that comprise the archive is representative of their synchronic nature, embodying both a present, appropriated meaning and a denoted, historical meaning. It is this embodied history that is most important in the development of *Las esquinas del aire*; the truths that the protagonists search for and that ultimately lead to Martínez Sagi are *embodied* truths. Truth, as it is represented in the novel, is grounded in the physical body of the book, the photograph, the archive, even the body of Martínez Sagi herself.

This physicality then serves as a rhetorical link between the story being read (ie. fiction) and the flesh-and-blood Martínez Sagi. Christian von Tschilschke notes that many of the photographs included in *Las esquinas del aire* serve as a visual reinforcement of a written description, which he laments as a missed opportunity for a "problematización de la intervención medial" (192). This hoped-for problematizing is not necessary (in fact, it would be counterproductive) when we understand the photographs as embodied truth objects within the narrative

trajectory of the novel. The fact that they reinforce, in a most literal sense, a written description gives further weight to the project of recovering the memory of a real person within a fictional setting. Von Tschilschke sees the value of this visual confirmation of the written word when he comments on a photograph of the elderly Martínez Sagi, sitting in her home in Moia, in which a photograph of a young Ana María that had appeared earlier in the novel can be seen on a side-table in the background: "mediante el hecho de que la anciana Martínez Sagi sea retratada junto con una fotografía de su juventud se demuestra con posterioridad la 'autenticidad' de las primeras fotografías" (192). By 'authenticating' all the previous photographs in the novel, this photograph not only legitimizes both the embodied archive *qua* fictional device, but also the embodied archive as a recuperation of the real Ana María Martínez Sagi.

The beginning of the protagonist's story establishes the two thematic poles that guide the rest of the book: the found cultural relic *qua* truth object, and writer as public intellectual. The protagonist, both in his need to earn money and in his desire to kneel at the feet of even the most obscure writer who has had a taste of renown, sells old books for a home-bound writer named Gonzalo Martel, a man of the Civil War generation who laments the passing of that world after Franco's death. The figure of Martel, apart from serving as a foil for the literary development of the protagonist, also serves as a cultural and political counterweight to Ana María Martínez Sagi. Unlike the politically engaged and passionately Republican Martínez

Sagi, during the 1930s the aging Francoist had aligned himself with the Falange and the nascent Nationalist movement in a manner that insulated himself from any kind of political conviction or bodily harm, skipping over to Italy as a "correspondent" before the war started and returning only upon the Nationalists' victory. Prada uses Martel as a means of establishing the trope of the archive while at the same time confirming the protagonist's anti-Francoist *bona fides*:

> Al atravesar el pasillo que nos conducía hasta la biblioteca de Martel, siempre me asaltaba la misma sensación de fracaso irremisible y contagioso; de las paredes colgaban como trofeos cinegéticos retratos de Martel acompañado de figurones diversos, estrellas del toreo y el agiotaje que hicieron su fortuna en los años inaugurales del franquismo, plumíferos de alto copete que habían puesto su pluma al servicio de la dictadura, como quien firma su acta de defunción a cambio de unas honras fúnebres anticipadas. (21)

The dual presentation of the library and the anti-Francoist tenor of the protagonist's impression of Martel's memorabilia establish the central role that relics and truth objects play in the book; not only do the objects' truth-telling properties structure our understanding of history, the memorial and moral values that are attached to these objects inform our understanding of present day ethics vis-à-vis history. Martel's library locates the novel's narrative epistemology–irrespective of its fictionality–in the archive of historical relics from the very beginning of the book.

The role of the archive is reinforced when the narrating protagonist is joined on his search by two companions. The professions of the two companions further strengthen the importance of the archive in the development of the novel. Tabares, as the proprietor of a rare books shop, is fascinated by the prospect of piecing together Ana María's life by way of literary relics. Likewise, Jimena, employed by a wealthy book collector to catalogue entire industrial shipping containers full of old books, possesses both an intellectual curiosity and specific skill set to aid in the search for Martínez Sagi. These two also reinforce the philologic practice of examining documents and piecing them together in order to come to a complete picture of whatever their object of study is. But what these two characters crystallize is the ethical core of the novel: that recompilation of history matters, that the archive is not a simply a collection of useless miscellanea but rather a fundamental piece of identity, that to approach an understanding of the present one must come to terms with the archive of the past.

The archive remains throughout the book the driving force of both the fictional narrative centered on the protagonists/investigators and the recreation of Martínez Sagi's life. Although each of these archival projects informs the other, indeed neither could exist alone, I believe that it is logical to examine first the archival project of the protagonists and then how the archive that they create in compiling relics and information about Martínez Sagi's life constitutes an alternative

history and counter-narrative to many established histories of pre-Civil War, Civil War, and Francoist Spain.

The protagonists engage in a philologically framed search for and recompilation of material from Ana María Martínez Sagi's life that guides the narrative arc of the novel. In (re)creating an archive of material from her life, the protagonists move from one artifact to another, which ultimately leads them to the poet herself. Their first encounter with Martínez Sagi is in a book that the protagonist is entrusted to sell by Martel. *Caras, caretas y carotas* by César González-Ruano is a collection of interviews and descriptions of people of interest that the author had met. One of these portraits is of the young Catalan athlete and poet that he came to know on her first trip to Madrid. Upon "discovering" Ana María Martínez Sagi, the protagonist decides to investigate the life of this forgotten figure: "Me propuse redimir de las tinieblas su memoria, con esa fiereza mística que reservamos a las misiones bajo cuyas vicissitudes se oculta la búsqueda de nuestra identidad" (54). The almost religious nature with which this task is described reveals two important things about the relationship of the protagonist to his object of study. First, it reveals the importance to the protagonist (and to Prada) of the idea of an almost forgotten memory, one that is languishing in the "tinieblas." Its mere existence is a beckon call for the protagonist to bring it to light. Also, the word that he chooses to describe this recuperation (*redimir*, to redeem) indicates that the memory of Martínez Sagi has been cursed or banished from the public mind. In

bringing it back from the edge of darkness, the protagonist both proves his worthiness as an acolyte to the artists of the past that he so admires, and creates for himself the possibility of achieving the literary stature and gravitas that he so craves. The second thing that this declaration of intent shows about the relationship between the protagonist and Martínez Sagi is the weight that memory has in the understanding of identity. The protagonist's understanding of "nuestra identidad" is contingent upon the recuperation of lost or forgotten memories. Much like secret societies and fraternal organizations rely upon information available only to the initiates for group cohesion, the young writer's conceptualization of identity is predicated upon an incompleteness, the wholeness of which can only be attained though his recovery of lost memories and discourses. This then enables him to claim a more "whole," "complete," or "true" definition of a group's historical (and therefore present) identity.

When examining the archive of Ana María's life that the protagonist pieces together, it is important to note that two parallel but complementary archives are created. The first is the collection of books, magazine articles, and interviews that the protagonist compiles as he travels around Madrid, from Madrid to Barcelona and ultimately to Moià where the aging Ana María lives. Not only does he compile the documents that begin to paint a fuller picture of Martínez Sagi's life, but he engages in what could be considered a pilgrimage of the archive, a philological endeavor in which the protagonists do not have a specific end goal in mind and in

which the information found in one archive leads the protagonist and his companions to another.

The first archive is the library of Martel. Here, the protagonist both posits himself as an aspiring writer and takes his first step in collecting the truth objects that will bring the memory of Ana María Martínez Sagi back from the "tinieblas". After reading González-Ruano's description of the Catalan poet and athlete, he tosses and turns in his bed, posing questions to himself that begin to outline his future archival project:

> ¿Confesaré que aquella noche no logré conciliar el sueño, tratando de imaginar a aquella "Diana roja del corazón sindicalista barcelonés"? ¿Habría muerto o estaría viva? ¿Quedaría constancia de su literatura, de su dedicación al deporte, de su activismo politico? ¿Cómo sería aquella "virgen del stádium" a la que yo ni siquiera había oído nombrar? Despojada de la bisutería sentimental y el lirismo urgente con que Ruano había intentado embellecerla, ¿conserveraría su interés pionero? ¿Seguiría guardando en el "tabernáculo de su intimidad" un secreto que no se entrega? (44)

Again, we see the philological project spurred on by the prospect of uncovering "un secreto", a secret that can only be learned by the compilation of archival material. But the idea of uncovering a secret that holds the key to an identity is an ideological proposition in that it inherently claims that only through comprehensive (and correct) reading of amassed truth objects is an understanding of that identity

possible. In the case of the protagonist and his relationship to Ana María, she holds the secret to the artist of import, the artist whose aesthetic vision goes beyond her work to have influence in the wider world; in short, the artist that the protagonist aspires to be. This ideology of the aesthetic is embodied in a vision that the protagonist has of Martínez Sagi while lying in bed: "Creo que fue entonces cuando imaginé a Ana María Martínez Sagi como un ángel esbelto que hubiese podido retratar Leni Riefenstahl, respirando el aire velocísimo de la victoria en cualquier estadio olímpico" (45). The linking of Martínez Sagi with Riefenstahl locates the Catalan poet within the aesthetic and ideological ideal that the German director tried to show in her work. It also establishes the ideal of the primacy of aesthetic principals regardless of ideological environment.[6] The comparison with Riefenstahl also reinforces a feminism in which the aesthetic and the physical (sport) are not incompatible. Just as Riefenstahl excelled in physically demanding endeavors such as mountain climbing and skiing, and then exalted those sports so poetically as an actress in her feature films such as *Der Heilige Berg* (*The Holy Mountain*, 1926) and *Stürme über dem Mont Blanc* (*Storm Over Mount Blanc*, 1930) and later as a director and actress in *Das Blaue Licht* (*The Blue Light*, 1932), so too Martínez Sagi captures the imagination of the protagonists in her ability to marry the delicate power of poetry with the physical and mental power of sports and political activism.

This vision of the Catalan poet and athlete grows as the team of investigators continually adds new pieces of information and literature to their archive. Among

the first few traces of Ana María's life and career that the protagonists collect (Tabares, impulsed by his talent for bibliographic research and by his penchant to lord little known information over others, compiles these first few pieces) are interviews and criticism of her work by Rafael Cansinos-Asséns, Luís Astrana Marín, and Alberto Insúa. All three fawn over the lyricism and the depth of her poetry, just as they all compare her to Gabriela Mistral, Juana de Ibarbourou and Alfonsina Storni[7], but it is the union of her artistic fragility, read as a feminine virtue, and her outward forcefulness and physicality, a masculine trait, that stays with the team of investigators. The protagonists first look at the description of Cansinos-Asséns:

> "Con su libro en los brazos ha venido a Madrid, y hemos podido contemplar de cerca su rostro de estatua, animado – claro está – de una expresión que las estatuas no tienen, y sus brazos dorados por el sol y el mar, oír su voz clara y animosa y estrechar su mano franca y leal como la de una camarada. Una jovencita moderna, intrépida y resuelta, que inicia por lo menos un paso decidido hacia la autonomía espiritual, aunque los prejuicios del ambiente traten de detenerla. (177)

She is at once a statue, embodying an ideal of feminine beauty, and extending her "mano franca y leal como la de una camarada," embodying the traditional masculine virtues of forthrightness and loyalty. Likewise, she is both a "jovencita" and "intrépida", whose actions seem to be a wave crashing against the dikes of social decorum that try to "detenerla." When the protagonist retakes the narrative voice,

he observes that Ana María "deparaba el retrato espiritual de una muchacha escindida entre un amor sublimado y místico y un 'temperamento pasional,' entre el melancólico refugio de la poesía y la agitación del deporte, entre su afán de modernidad y los prejuicios ambientales que la coartan y obstaculizan" (178).

The next analysis of Ana María that the team takes up is that of Marín, who after stating that he liked her poetry collection *Caminos* even though "[n]o esperaba tanto, y menos de una mujer," concludes that "[n]o sólo Ana María (la llamarémos ya por sólo su dulce nombre) escribe pulcramente en verso, sino que me aventuro a decir que su prosa debe ser muy aliñada y correcta" (179-80). The chauvinism of Marín further underscores the dual nature of Martínez Sagi's exploits, prompting the protagonist to see "aquella esquizofrenia íntima" as "un saludable deseo de contrapesar una vida demasiado vocada hacia fuera y de airear esas regiones del alma que no admiten expresión desde la tribuna o la palestra" (180-1). The contraposition of the masculine and the feminine, the outwardly physical and the inwardly poetic, reaches its apex in an interview given by Martínez Sagi to Insúa and published in the newspaper *La voz* on Friday, July 25, 1930.[8] Upon meeting Ana María (accompanied by a female friend), Insúa is amazed at the behavior of his new Catalan acquaintance:

> Hice la pregunta de rigor:
>
> - ¿Qué van a tomar ustedes?
>
> Su amiga:

- “Vermouth.”

Y ella:

- Un “picón.”

Se había quitado el sombrero… Como un hombre. Y pedía el mismo aperitivo que yo. Como un hombre. Sonreí… (181)

The texts of all three of the commentators and interviewers contemporary to Martínez Sagi begin to create an archive of truth objects that establish Ana María as a poet and as someone who is outside traditional Spanish gender roles, someone who can only be described as being on the cutting edge of early feminism. In doing so, the archive fulfills its ideological function as a guiding lens through which observers (in this case, the investigatory team in the present, and by extension the reader) see the subject. It is not until we get to the end of the book and Ana María is telling her own story do we come to understand the full weight of this scene; she remembers how the “parroquianos no cesaron ni un segundo de taladarme con miradas entre escandalizadas y lascivas; luego, me enteré de que, en Madrid, solo las putas acudían sin acompañante a los cafés” (445).

The archive becomes even more instructive in both our understanding of Ana María as a poet and our understanding of her place in early twentieth century feminism when Tabares introduces the writing (and the person) of Elisabeth Mulder. Essayist, critic, and novelist, Mulder proves to be a pivotal figure both in the life of Ana María and in the development of the archive being pieced together by the

protagonist. When presented by Tabares with a few published pieces by this woman with a foreign sounding name, the first reaction by the protagonist is to feel a link between the two poets: "entre ella y Ana María debió de fluir una corriente de simpatía mutua, quizá la relación fertíl que se entabla entre maestro y discípulo" (192). He is taken by how Mulder describes Ana María as being "muy antigua y muy moderna, como en el tan citado verso de Rubén" (192). His interest is also piqued by a poem by Mulder titled "Retrato de Ana María Martínez Sagi" in which the author lauds her subject in lines reminiscent of Becquer: "Siglo XX… Pero tú, tú, Ana María,/ pertences a todos los siglos, porque eres poesía… Y bendita tú seas./ Bendita tú que esparces/ un puñado de estrellas/ sobre las cosas feas/ de la vida. Bendita seas/ tú que dices palabras/ milagrosas y bellas,/ con aroma de nardos/ y fulgor centellas" (194-5). Ultimately, the protagonist's curiosity drives him to take the next step in his archival exploration: "Quise, de repente, saber más sobre Elisabeth Mulder, la autora de aquel poema; quise dotar de un rostro y una peripecia biográfica y una aventura intelectual a aquella mujer que por entonces sólo era un nombre exótico y aristocrático. Intuí que, al saber más sobre ella, me revelaría más completa la figura de Ana María Martínez Sagi" (196). In expanding the archive of truth objects relevant to the life of Martínez Sagi, the protagonist seems impelled onward by the prospect of a fuller picture of his subject.

However, the prospect of this fuller picture provide by Elizabeth Mulder also begs an important question, articulated by Tabares: "Pero vamos a ver: ¿a quién

buscamos? ¿A un personaje literario o a una persona de carne y hueso?" (251). Energized by the process of exploring forgotten texts and the musky smell of books that haven't been opened in years, the team appears to have blurred the line between the Ana María that they have known as character on the page and the woman "de carne y hueso" that may or may not still be alive.

In this journalistic drive that is generated by the archive, we see how the truth objects mold the archive's ideological nature. If the protagonist's interest was first triggered by the novelty of who Ruano in *Caras, caretas y carotas* called "poeta, sindicalista y virgin del stádium," it is now directed by the nature of the truth objects, such as the articles published by Mulder, that comprise the growing archive (36). As the protagonist sends the better part of two months reading everything by Elisabeth Mulder that he can get his hands on, he becomes more and more convinced of the deep relationship between the two writers and the lasting impression that it had on Ana María. Along with Tabares and Jimena, the team engages in a kind of psychological evaluation of Mulder by way of a literary analysis of her work, leading them to the conclusion that, apart from the praise that she bestows upon Martínez Sagi in her prose, the Catalan athlete is the unnamed object of both affection and frustration in much of Mulder's work. Rationalizing this conclusion by observing that "[p]or entonces, declarar un amor de estas características era una estigma social," the protagonist opens the door to the possibility that either Mulder, Martínez Sagi or both are lesbians (252).

When the team meets Martínez Sagi in her home, the description that she provides of her relationship with Mulder confirms this hypothesis. Her depiction of the moment that they met has an almost cinematic quality to it, full of texture and delicate physicality: "Me di la vuelta, y allí estaba, en carne y hueso, Elisabeth Mulder: increíblemente delgada y esbelta, de unos veinticinco años, apenas tres o cuatro más que yo. Si bien exhibía una tez un tanto pálida, sus mejillas sonrosadas le añadían viveza, y en sus labios palpitaba una sinuosa inteligencia que no requería el concurso del carmine para remarcarse" (462). She subsequently gives a breathless description of her intelligence and social conviction, before finally proposing that their relationship bordered on the platonic ideal: "Fue mi maestra y mi amiga, mi hermana y mi madre; fue, sobre todo, el espejo donde yo afanosa me contemplaba… La guiaba un propósito casi sobrenatural de fundir nuestras almas en una entidad superior, según el ideal de amistad platónica" (466). This platonic characterization seems to be belied by the way in which Ana María describes their shared social life. When discussing a vacation the pair took to Majorca in 1932:

> Fue apenas un frágil espejismo, una proyección del paraíso irrumpiendo efímeramente en mi vida. Alquilamos una habitación en un modesto hotelito de Alucdia, con vistas del mar que, por la noche, exhalaba un áspero perfume de algas y sal. Elisabeth Mulder contemplaba aquel espectáculo sin articular palabra; sus ojos como bosques petrificados contenían el temblor diminuto y

el pavoroso abismo del mundo. Al contemplarme en ellos, tuve la impresión de estar bebiendo un licor de estrellas. (467)

It is not just the fact that Mulder and Martínez Sagi vacation or rent a hotel room together that suggests a more profound level of their relationship; Martínez Sagi's characterization of the trip as a "paraíso irrumpiendo efímeramente en mi vida" suggests that her relationship with Mulder is more than a poetic or intellectual meeting of the minds. Her activity with social causes and movements, and her public poetry readings, show that she receives that form of intellectual satisfaction in other quarters; her relationship with Mulder may of course feed that intellectual or artistic need, but it also goes beyond it. Likewise, Martínez Sagi's description of Mulder's eyes has a markedly romantic tone to it. First, she does not simply "contemplate" her eyes, but rather "contemplates herself" (*contemplarme*) in them. This is to say that Ana María, at some level, sees herself and Elisabeth as one entity, as pieces or parts of one whole that is larger than either one of them individually. This idea is reinforced when Martínez Sagi states that, upon seeing herself in Mulder's eyes, she is "bebiendo un licór de estrellas." Adopting an almost ecclesiastical imagery of the communion, she partakes of the infinite, which is found in the eyes of her lover.

This idea of love as an expression of the infinite, and the relationship between Ana María and Elisabeth as an expression of that love, is revisited in the poet's last lines before ceding voice back to the protagonist. After describing her

eventual return to Spain and settlement in Moìa, and even now at the end of her life, she continues to love and think of Mulder: "sigo soñadando con ella cada día, y sigo caminando hacia ella, y su rostro me sigue llamando a través del velo de ceniza de la muerte, a través de los inciertos pasadizos de niebla que anteceden a la tierra prometida" (525). First, the love that Ana María possess for Mulder is clearly evident in that she continues to dream of her and in that she envisions their (implied) reunion in some kind of afterlife. Second, her description of how Mulder (her voice, her face) continues to call upon Ana María evokes the appearance and role of Beatrice in Canto XXX and after of Dante's *Purgatorio*. The embodiment of beauty and love for Dante, Beatrice takes over for Virgil as guide to Dante, and leads him out of Purgatory and into Paradise. Within this paradigm, the incantational words used to call Beatrice forth become particularly revelatory: "Come, spouse, from Libanus!" (Dante, XXX, 12). She is not just to be a guide, but a spouse to Dante. Like Beatrice to Dante, the memory and the voice of Mulder serves as a guide to Ana María, calling her to the "tierra prometida."

The lesbian theme is reinforced when the investigatory team encounter the next archive in their search for material related to Ana María. The protagonist notes:

> Fue Leonardo Gago (*the proprietor of the collection that Jimena is hired to catalogue*) quien nos habló de aquella biblioteca sumergida que no figuraba en el directorio del Ministerio de Cultura y que no recibía subvenciones de

> organismos públicos, ni de ninguna de esas fundaciones ornamentales que, a rebugo del feminismo de pandereta, han proliferado en los últimos años… Las propietarias de aquella biblioteca eran un par de viejecitas lesbianas que habían mantenido en secreto su amor durante los cuarenta años de dictadura y que, por lo tanto, abominaban de ese lesbianismo vociferante y procesional que habían impuesto las nuevas generaciones. (259)

This "sumergida" library is not only a repository of truth objects that the protagonists use to further their inquiry into the life and career of Martínez Sagi (the women have a copy of *Caminos*, a collection of her poetry that the team has been working to locate), but also an archive, and a truth object, in itself. The archive-within-the-archive, this meta-truth object, further crystallizes several of the ideological points of reference that guide the protagonist. First, it builds upon the theme of lesbianism and active feminism that is first established in the analysis of Ana María's relationship with Elisabeth Mulder and in the public talks that she gave in different forums in both Barcelona and Madrid. Lesbianism, in the context of pre- and post-Civil War Spain, situates Martínez Sagi as well as Gabriela and Mercedes, the two women who maintain this repository of literary material, in a particular anti-authoritarian tradition, a tradition highlighted by the "viejecita's" disdain for what they view as the current "procesional" treatment of lesbianism. Like his desire to attain the social and cultural gravitas of someone like Martínez Sagi, the protagonist also wants to be a part of this anti-authoritarian fight against the

oppressive Franco regime.[9] We first see his aspirations of this sentiment when he tells off Martel in a speech full of posturing and self-aggrandizement: "¿No fuisteis vosotros, los falangistas, los que impusisteis el tuteo? Pues ahora te jodes y te aguantas" (53).

The ultimate truth object, the final point on the trajectory that followed the journalistic path as one truth object pointed to the next, is Ana María Martínez Sagi herself. After a series of exchanges with the Catalan poet Pere Gimferrer – and his name is always preceded by the laudatory title "el poeta," giving further credence to the protagonist's belief that literature *matters* – the writer, through one of his contacts in the office of Social Security, provides the protagonists with Ana María's address in the town of Moià, a few hours outside of Barcelona. Upon confirming that this is the same women that they were searching for, the three protagonists visit the now ninety-year-old poet in her home and record her voice as she recounts the story of her life. Apart from a brief epilogue and a collection of her poetry, the final 125 pages of the book are dedicated to Ana María's voice, describing everything from her youth in a bourgeois Barcelona family to her relationship with Elisabeth Mulder to her involvement in the French Resistance in World War II to her exile in the United States. This first person narrative in the form of an audio recording is the final piece in the creation of a textual archive that gives voice to a history that is rarely included in the traditional historiography of twentieth century Spain.

From an historiographical perspective, the relinquishing of the narrative voice to Martínez Sagi, not only the "object" that has been behind or the impetus for the entire enterprise but also the one who actually lived the events that up to this point had only been mediated through historical documents, marks an important change in both the ethical and narrative orientation of the book. The first question that bears consideration is this: How do we navigate questions of fictionality and documentation given Martínez Sagi's status as both a real, historical actor and as a character in a fictionalized novel?

Much as the historical relics in the novel both exist in the present and provide a connection to a past time, Martínez Sagi too straddles a divide between a person of flesh and blood and a 'novelized' character in a book. In terms of Martínez Sagi's role as a character in a work of fiction, she serves several functions. First, as the 'object' at the center of this project, she provides corroboration and contextualization within the journalistic trope that I argue structures the novel. Much as an investigative journalist collects accounts and evidence to support or uncover a story and then corroborates those accounts with the principal people involved, so too does the investigatory team of the protagonist, Tabares, and Jimena use the interview to substantiate hypotheses about the life of Martínez Sagi (such as in the case of Gimferrer, Ana María's brother-in-law, and I would even argue Martel, even though his account proves to be wrong). In this sense, the interview with Ana María gives close to the journalistic narrative track of the novel; the investigation is

no longer about hypotheses, but about Ana María recounting what she has done. This interview-*qua*-truth object is problematized, however, by one of the conditions that Ana María puts on the encounter when she sets the date over the telephone: "Una sola exigencia condicionaría nuestro encuentro: no la hostigaríamos con interrogatorios, no la obligaríamos a confirmer fechas ni a reconocer documentos" (388). It is this demand that is almost an escape hatch for Prada in terms of positioning Martínez Sagi as either a work of fiction or a real person; by absolving herself of the need to confirm any statement that she makes, we the readers cannot hold the narrative avatar of Ana María responsible for "historical facts."[10]

As a fictional character, Ana María also embodies the artistic and ethical ideal that the protagonist has up to this point attributed to her, if only psychically. The protagonist has discussed his own writing and political convictions with Martel, Tabares, and Gimferrer (who still insists that he publish his work), and has identified in a profound way with the Catalan poet. Shortly after learning about Ana María trip to Madrid, and making a similar journey from his provincial town, the protagonist sees himself in the same situation: "Pensé entonces en Ana María Martínez Sagi, que había viajado a Madrid con la mimsa edad aproximadamente que yo y quizá había paseado por aquellas mismas calles que yo paseaba, oprimida por la misma desazón de no ser nadie en mitad de la noche" (92). Not only does he see himself in Ana María, he sees the true artist that is uncompromisingly true to herself, the model for the kind of writer that he hopes to be. This is in stark contrast

to what he deems to be the narcissistic pose taken by contemporary writers whose only goal is fame, irrespective of the quality or import of their work. When describing the writers who flock to Gago's stall at the Madrid book fair, hoping that some of his fame may rub off on them, the narrator's language is unapologetically disdainful: "Era patético y lamentablilísimo comprobar cómo ninguo había sido capaz de imponerse con su mera literatura y habían tenido que recurrir a poses o fingimientos para hacerse un nombre y delimitarse el terreno" (171). This egotistical pandering is in sharp contrast to Ana María's reaction upon returning to Barcelona in 1969 after decades of self-imposed exile to the distain shown her by the "rebaños sumisos" that had silenced themselves after the Nationalist victory: "Entre tantos signos de mezquindad y abyección, me sentí por primera vez en mucho tiempo limpia y enhiesta: *al menos mi biografía no se había ensuciado con la traición*" (522, emphasis mine). This purity and righteousness of both Ana María's poetry and politics form for the protagonist the ideal public artist, an ideal that he hopes to attain, as evidenced by his self-association with the poet.

The archive that parallels the archive of books, magazines, poetry, audio recordings, and ultimately Martínez Sagi herself that the protagonist compiles is the visual archive that the book presents to the reader over the course of the novel. Upon simply leafing through the pages of *Las esquinas del aire*, the reader immediately realizes that a principal component of the book is photographs and reproductions of book covers. Then, as she reads the novel, she recognizes that

these photographs, like all photographs in books, are not haphazardly placed, but correspond to and supplement the narrative by way of providing a visual representation of what is described rhetorically. The use of photographs, cultural relics that have a real world existence as well as carry a historical weight, further blurs the line in *Las esquinas del aire* between a fictional story about the development of a protagonist and an historical project that aims to tell a story ignored by canonical and hegemonic narratives. The use of photographs in fictional or quasi-fictional storytelling is nothing new; it is a defining characteristic of W.G. Sebald's work and instrumental in the way that his writing approaches memory, history and trauma. But where Sebald attempts to come to terms with historical inheritance and employs photography in what could most commonly be called a "impressionist" manner, Prada's use of photography and the archive that it creates is characterized by its specificity and representational – which is to say historical – nature. The most immediate product of the placement of photographs within the narrative text is a reinforcing of what is rhetorically described; Prada capitalizes on the truth-telling capacity of photographs as well as the reading public's proclivity in the visual age to trust what they see more than what they are told.[11]

The photographs can be divided loosely into three groups, each of which contribute to a more whole vision of who Martínez Sagi is, or perhaps more accurately, how the protagonist wishes to view her. The three categories are political/social, artistic, and biographical. Although overlaps between the groups of

course exist, I claim that the truth-telling capacity of the photographs shape the protagonist's vision, and by extension the reader's vision, of Ana María as the idealized poet/public intellectual along these three categories; the three categories furthermore show Ana María as a multidimensional figure, sewing together different aspects of her life, further crystallizing her as the ideal artist and social critic in that her commitment to beauty, advocacy and rebellion in the name of social progress is not absent from any aspect of her life.

The biographical photographs, while seemingly straightforward, provide a foil against which Ana María's rebellion against her bourgeois birth and upbringing can unfold. The majority of these photos are placed within the context of Martínez Sagi's first person narrative toward the end of the book, thereby leading the reader to a reconsideration of all that he has read up to that point through the lens of her "autobiography." Many of the first few photos clearly establish the future poet as a product of the Barcelona moneyed, pre-Second Republic, bourgeois class. A photograph of her parents, dressed in turn of the century business-class fashion and seated in a classic drawing room pose, accompanies Ana María's description of her father: "José Martínez Tatxé, empresario textil de ascendencia francesa, promotor del deporte y socio fundador del Fútbol Club Barcelona. Fabricaba tejidos de estilo inglés, y empleaba cientos de obrereos con los que mantenía una relación directa y paternal" (403-4).[12] This image of a young girl brought up among all the trappings of a well-off family is supported by a picture of a nine-year-old Ana María posing in a

white gown, a crown of white flowers, surrounded by a lace veil, in preparation for her first communion.[13] The combination of the material wealth exemplified by both her and her parents' dress and the social markers of first communion portraits and a business-owning father show how Prada employs photographs to supplement Martínez Sagi's narrative and locate her within a specific socio-economic class.

As Ana María continues to tell the stories of her life, Prada chooses photographs to accompany her narrative that do not betray her story, but that also begin to undermine the boundaries of the bourgeois society in which she grew up. This undermining, representative in the mind of the protagonist as the rebellion and strident individualism of the true artist and social progressive, most commonly takes the form of photos that present a vision of Ana María that goes against the expectations of femininity of the time. Her athleticism is displayed in photos of Martínez Sagi playing tennis, taking part in track and field events, and skiing. Likewise, her dress and haircuts in many of the photographs appear very masculine; her high-cropped hair, even shorter than the popular 'bob' of the time, and her use of masculine ties contrast powerfully against the dresses that we see her wearing as a young girl and the clothes of her parents.[14] They also contrast against the photographs of Elisabeth Mulder that Prada places in sections in which Ana María or the protagonist discuss her relationship the elder poet. The contrast between the photos of the two women crystallizes the motif of lesbianism that is an undercurrent throughout the novel. Prada chooses photographs of Mulder that highlight her

femininity, always with a fashionable hairstyle and obvious use of makeup. Ana María's appearance, on the other hand, play upon the (usually conservative) reading public's preconceived notion of what the visual aesthetic of what lesbian couture should be: men's haircuts, masculine clothing, little to no makeup (the cover photograph is a powerful example). Of course not every photograph of Martínez Sagi conforms to the neat contrast that I have described. But even in many of those photographs in which she does adopt a more traditional feminine dress, hints of her gender non-conformity are apparent, as in a photo of Ana María with María Dolores Bargalló in which she dons very masculine two-tone wingtip shoes.[15]

Many photographs that depict important events in Martínez Sagi's life also carry significant political and social weight as well. Of particular interest here are the photos that chronicle her athletic achievements. The mere fact that women in this period of Spanish history participated in athletic competitions is itself a testament to the social changes that were taking place. However, as the protagonist describes, Ana María's leadership position in the feminization of sports not only places her at the vanguard of the feminist movements that took place during the Second Republic, but also further distances her from her bourgeois upbringing. In order to help this image of the poet fit even more seamlessly into the protagonist's vision of the ideal social activist-cum-artist, Prada includes photos of Ana María throwing the javelin, playing tennis, and posing with the Catalan Track and Field team. Among the several photographs of this team, two in particular capture the

essence of how Ana María embodies the leading edge of an ongoing feminist revolution. Both were taken during the Catalan Track and Field team's 1931 trip to Madrid, during which Martínez Sagi also gave a talk at the *Lyceum Femenino*. In the first photograph, an informal snapshot of the team, we see Ana María seated comfortably on the floor along with a few of her teammates while others stood behind them. Once again we see her blurring the boundaries of feminine fashion by wearing a man's necktie over her blouse while all of her teammates wear the more traditional ensemble of blouse, skirt and the occasional hat.

If the first team photograph captures Ana María and the other athletes in a moment of relaxation, the second is the embodiment of institutional photography. On the cover of the daily newspaper *ABC* from 30 October, 1931, we see the poet standing on a dais with five other women in the Lyceum Femenino. From an aesthetic standpoint, this vision of Ana María differs significantly from those that we have looked at up to this point; she is wearing a calf-length sleeveless dress, heels and lipstick. Her eyes, however, starring into the middle distance and to the left of the camera lens convey the gravity of the talk that she gives on that evening about the *Club Feminí i d'Esports* that she had helped found in Barcelona. The photograph accompanies a transcription of the text from her talk, which concludes with these powerful words:

> Nos interesa la política; nos preocupa toda la cuestión social. Somos leales a la República y aspiramos a la disolución de las clases, del mismo modo que

> aspiramos a que en nuestro Club no haya jerarquías, sólo compañeras de verdad. Nos interesan también la literatura y el arte en todas sus manifestaciones, y nos preocupa construir un futuro mejor. (201-2)

These photographs, historical artifacts with truth telling properties, each in their own way reinforce the image of Ana María as both the social activist and culturally transformative figure: the first displays her breaking away from normative gender expectations, the second shows her as the public voice for the feminist movement permitted by the rise of the Second Republic. The protagonist notes that this visit to Madrid "acapararía el interés de la prensa, que la convirtió en emblema de un futuro amenazante o venturoso, dependiendo de la actitud que el periódico en cuestión mantuviese ante las tesis feministas" (198). The photographs, especially the cover photo from *ABC*, begin to create the visual archive of Ana María's role in the social and political movements of the 1930s.

The photographic archive of Martínez Sagi's political persona also includes several pictures that date from the Spanish Civil War and World War II. A photo of Buenaventura Durruti, an identification card picture of Ana María in he ubiquitous tie and button down shirt captioned "corresponsal de guerra," and a hazy portrait of the poet taken in 1944 during her years of exile in France and during which time she collaborated with the French Resistance against the Nazis all locate her at specific points along a political trajectory that is the archetypical biography of the anti-Fascist political activist in the early 20th century.[16] But what all of these photographs are, in the end, is what John Tagg terms photography's "summons to the real" (180). We, the readers, are compelled

to confront these photographic reproductions not as part of a novelistic or fictional project (although they are, without a doubt, that as well), but as a link to the real, historical Ana María. As Walter Benjamin famously notes in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," "Above all, [the copy] enables the original to meet the beholder halfway, be it in the form of a photograph or a phonograph record. The cathedral leaves its locale to be received in the studio of a lover of art; the choral production, performed in an auditorium or in the open air, resounds in the drawing room" (220-1). Also, although Benjamin as well as Feuerbach, Plato and a host of others before him defend authenticity against the advancing technological reproductive capacity of modernity, Susan Sontag rightly notes in *On Photography* that the photograph is not like the painting, the image of the real *par excellence*, but something else entirely: "But a photograph is not only like its subject, a homage to the subject. It is part of, an extension of that subject; and a potent means of acquiring it, of gaining control over it" (155). The photograph's unique characteristic is its potential to convey the real (Real?).

The photographs then become a projection of the real, but in doing so it also takes on a performative quality. Namely, they permit the reader/view to "see" Ana María in a manner that shapes our understanding of who she was and shapes our understanding of her importance to the protagonist(s). Tagg notes that things such as hairstyles, clothing, and cultural expression in photographs "make meaning with (the) body" (202). He goes on to state that the bodily photographs can result in desire or hatred vis-à-vis the view, but above all the visual images make the body visible and readable in a way that is otherwise not possible or denied (202). The photograph body then becomes "huellas del

pasado," repositories of memory that still exert control over the present (Luengo 32). By placing photographs of Ana María strategically throughout the text that, as we have noted, serve to either, a) subvert conventional understanding of the pre-Civil War Catalan *petit bourgeois*, b) articulate a discourse of political/social resistance, or c) articulate a discourse of lesbian and feminist expression, the novel fills discursive lacunae of post-Francoist thought relating to the Second Republic, the Civil War, and Francoism.

When we consider the fact that Ana María was a real, historical person, the ethical and artistic ideal that the protagonist sees in her is not abandoned; rather, it informs a central question with regard to her historicity. Sebastian Faber argues that the generation of historical literature dealing with the Civil War and Francoism is partially born of an "*obligación moral* – además de una necesidad psicológica – de investigar el pasado y asumir su legado" (102). By using a real person as the central character (and she is the central character even though she does not appear until the final quarter of the book), how is Prada fulfilling this assumed 'moral obligation?' To address this question, I posit that Ana María is the avatar of a constellation of discourses that until the mid-1990s were either actively silenced, or accepted as taboo and thus pushed to the margins of pubic thought and speech. Given this operating paradigm, the historical Ana María, and the journalistic reconstruction and investigation of her life, facilitate a (re)consideration of those lost or marginalized discourses. One of the principal method by which this consideration is achieved is through historical artifacts and relics like photographs,

book jacket illustrations, magazine page facsimiles, and the quotation of real writings from the 1920s and 1930s.

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[1] It is necessary to distinguish between the modern museum and its historical predecessors.

[2] We can also approach this understanding of monuments from a Freudian/Lacanian point of view. The act of repression is foundational in their models of psychology. But what we must remember about repression is the return of the repressed in another form.

[3] A similar take on this issue is Roland Barthes' essay "The Eiffel Tower". Although the Eiffel Tower is distinct in that it is "a pure signifier, i.e., of a form in which men unceasingly put *meaning* (which they extract at will from their knowledge, their dreams, their history)" (238) whereas the monuments and memorials that I discuss are oriented toward a specific historical or cultural point of reference, the Tower still possesses the same ideological, spatial, and historical power of organization. Barthes proposes that the Tower has a "gaze which discreetly fixes, with its slender signal, the whole structure – geographical, historical, and social – of Paris space" (246). The gaze, as we learn from Lacan, is a multi-directional movement, in which we see the Tower, but we also see the Tower looking at us.

[4] T.S. Eliot discusses a very similar process in his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent": "what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new" (808).

[5] I would like to take this opportunity to make clear that what I propose regarding the manipulation of truth object should not be taken as an endorsement of wholesale relativism. With the rise of postmodern schools of thought in the 1970s and 80s exemplified by the works of Jacques Derrida, Frederic Jameson, Stanley Fish, and Jean-Francois Lyotard among others, relativism and the impossibility of absolute truth became the gospel that has been preached in many humanities circles. Evolving out of works like Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* and Derrida's *Of Grammatology* that employ linguistic apparatuses in a critique of cultural discourse, the postmodern assault on truth upended many long-held understandings of knowledge-production, epistemology, philosophy and language. Although widely considered passé in today's academia, the influences of this generation's writings can still be felt. Moreover, new generations of thinkers are

returning to many of the questions regarding truth, showing how they both are being used and refuted in such (perhaps not so) disparate fields as post-9/11 globalization, literary theory and posthumanity. The truth objects that I am referencing in *Las esquinas del aire*, however, belong to a different class of inquiry in that their physicality, whether in the form of a book, a picture, or the body of a person, have an ontology that is not in question. For this reason, I chose to read Sontag's assertion about photographs being read within a predetermined field through the lens of Fish's idea of interpretive communities. Fish claims that it is impossible to interpret any word or object absent the conditions within which the subject finds himself. In *Is There a Text in This Class*, he asserts, "[o]ne does not say 'Here I am in a situation; now I can begin to determine what these words mean.' To be in a situation is to see the words, these or any other, as already meaningful" (XX). Many of Fish's critics point to this claim inherent to interpretive communities in their dismissal of Fish as an unprincipled relativist. I do not wish to enter this debate because 1) it is not applicable to my present study, and 2) Fish wholly accepts these accusations (see *Truth but No Consequences: Why Philosophy Doesn't Matter* in *Critical Inquiry* 29 Spring 2003). However, the idea of interpretive communities is useful in fleshing out Sontag's thesis regarding the 'reading' of photographs within determined cultural and ideological fields.

[6] The question of Leni Riefenstahl's political allegiances during World War II and her relationship to Hitler are contentious and controversial debates. They are debates, however, that are inextricably intertwined with her undeniably genius artistic production and her own post-Nazi biography. What is not in contention is the impact that she had on twentieth century art. Rainer Rother states in his book *Leni Riefenstahl: the seduction of genius*: "Riefenstahl was… considered worthy of a television documentary lasting more than three hours (and broadcast at peak viewing time). A modern choreographer generally described as 'provocative' saw Riefenstahl as her kind of subject… Exhibitions honoured her artistic work in Tokyo, Milan, Rome, and Potsdam. She was invited as a special guest at *Time* magazine's 100$^{th}$ anniversary" (4). This influence on twentieth century art and politics, however, has almost always been viewed through the lens of her links to National Socialism. It is for this reason that Riefenstahl is the case study *par excellence* of the relationship between art and politics. As Rother states, "There is certainly a 'Riefenstahl problem,' but even today there is also a problem *with* Leni Riefenstahl. Moral judgments are an essential ingredient in the debate surrounding the work (which is exemplary and exceptional in equal measure) and its director. That is an inescapable consequence of the extent to which both the work and the person profited from, and contributed to, National Socialism" (5).

[7] The figure of Storni, Ibarbourou, and Mistral situate Martínez Sagi's poetry within a particular feminist tradition. Ruano, Cansinos-Asséns, and Insúa, along with the protagonist, while acknowledging the artistic and feminist inheritance, all view the Catalan poet as going beyond the strictures of moderism. The protagonist notes that although the three Latin American poets "habían fundado una poesía donde la mujer

por fin exponía su conflicto existencial, en confrontación con las convenciones de una literatura que las confinaba en el reducto de la emotividad empalagosa o la anécdota erotica, no habían logrado despojarse de los ropajes un tanto ajados del modernismo" (185).

[8] Apart from the books and magazines that one can readily find in a library or archive, the days and dates of the newspapers quoted in *Las esquinas del aire* lend it further verisimilitude. July 25, 1930 was indeed a Friday.

[9] This is a common theme among post-dictatorial countries that aids in the recasting of the national narrative to both purge the ghosts of the dictatorship and to cleanse the general population of the stain of collusion. A commonly referenced episode of this type of anti-authoritarian coloring of history is France following it liberation from Nazi occupation; all of a sudden, everybody had been a member of the Resistance.

[10] This problematization is, of course, overshadowed by the larger fictional issue: is this really what Ana María said, a mix of Martínez Sagi/Prada, and does it matter.

[11] This is also the basis for modern judicial procedure. There exists a direct link between the visual image, as well as physical objects for that matter, and authority within the legal world. This has not always been the case; one only has to consult the extensive history of the Inquisition to see that trial proceedings were often based on accusations and the relative social standing of the accuser and the accused rather than any evidentiary material. In modernity, the evidentiary object and the photograph have been bestowed with the authority to condemn or acquit the accused. In terms of the photograph, this is largely due to its reproducibility.

[12] See appendix 1.

[13] See appendix 2.

[14] See appendix 3.

[15] See appendix 4.

[16] In many respects, Ana María's biography is similar to that of Antoní Miralles, the character in Javier Cercas' *Soldados de Salamina* that fought in the Spanish Civil War and World War II against the Fascists.

## Chapter Two: Poetics of Stability: The Refraiming of Historical Trauma for Twenty First Century Anxieties in *Soldados de Salamina*

This chapter seeks to examine the manner in which Javier Cercas' *Soldados de Salamina* subverts the structure of the metafictional novel and the basic tenets of poststructuralist thought in the attempt to create the simulacrum of a society organized by a stable, essentialized symbolic structure. I propose that the work, although claiming to exemplify the instability of language and professing the impossibility of ever claiming certainty or truth, employs a journalistic affect to posit the characters of Rafael Sánchez Mazas and Antoni Miralles as two poles that arrange the symbolic order of Spanish society so as to alleviate the insecurities of post-Transition, neoliberal Spain. By using real-world material, such as photographs, textual documentation, interviews, and archives, the protagonist, himself a journalist and named Javier Cercas, moves from one clue to the next in order to piece together the events surrounding the near execution of Rafael Sánchez Mazas at the end of the Spanish Civil War. As the protagonist reconstructs the scenario and identifies the individuals involved in Sánchez Mazas' escape from a firing squad that allowed him to survive and eventually become part of Franco's inner circle, he comes to the conclusion that the story cannot be completed without identifying a lone republican soldier who, having Sánchez Mazas cornered and with

his rifle trained on the Falangist, let him go, indicating to his comrades that there was no one there. In order to reconstruct this narrative, the protagonist uses his experience as a journalist to extrapolate hypotheses from evidence, consult archives in order to corroborate oral claims, and interview principal people who were involved in the events (and their relatives from the subsequent generation, highlighting the shifting nature of truth over the course of time), amounting to a narrative structured by the tools and epistemological underpinnings of journalism. Moreover, the evidence that he collects to construct his narrative grounds the idea of truth in physical objects, presenting them as embodied truths that lend more credibility to their veracity. The product of this journalistic affect is a narrative that engenders a simulacrum of ideological stability.

The citizen of a new, post-Franco, neoliberal Spain is a political subject markedly different from that of twenty or thirty years prior. During the Transition, the (re)organization of the political and economic systems, with very little domestic model to follow, turned to Europe as the standard to imitate at the same time that neoliberal policies began to dominate economic thought.[1] Neoliberalism is the web of economic and social policies that privilege international capital, low taxes and trade tariffs, and market based solutions to social issues over government regulation or initiatives. Luis Cárcamo-Huechante shows how this school of economic thought was first put into practice in Chile by Milton Friedman and his disciples, the Chicago Boys. Naomi Klein, in her book *Shock Doctrine* and

documentary film of the same name, goes on to explain how the model of neoliberalization that was imposed on Chile was exported to other countries, and eventually became the dominant world economic model. Paul McVeigh demonstrates how neoliberal economic trends have not only been embraced by Spain, but how the country has become one of the vanguards for Europe:

> Spain has become one of the most active members of the European Union (EU) in terms of labor market reform, privatization and deregulation, engaged in policy dialogue at the highest levels with the European bastions of the Anglo-Saxon model, the United Kingdom… This neoliberal path embraces … a substantial opening of the Spanish market, the pursuit of financial orthodoxy, erosion of the 'decommodification' functions of welfare capitalism and state intervention and a shift towards 'competition state' model of economic governance" (90-91).

As the tide of neoliberal economics that began to gather strength in Latin America in the 1970s and then the US and Britain during the Reagan/Thatcher years swept over the much of the industrialized world, it invariably reached the shores of Spain, truly becoming the norm during the Partido Popular government of José María Aznar. This is not to say that the PP is solely responsible for the opening up of the Spanish economy; the goal of both the Socialist PSOE government that ruled from 1982 to 1996 and the conservative PP that ruled from 1996 to 2004 was a Spain that retained its national sovereignty within the European community but that

enacted economic reforms that liberalized the domestic economic policy in order to take advantage of European markets.[2] A byproduct of breaking down the barriers of trade and the shrinking of the world due to globalization implicit in the neoliberal model was the homogenization of cultural points of reference, the effects of which begin to become evident in the construction of the individual. Just as Georg Lukács notes in *The Historical Novel* how the evolution of the newspaper and the pamphlet into tools of mass communication allowed for individuals around the world to be intimately aware of events far from their home and identify with them, so too have neoliberal economics and technology fostered a certain degree of homogenization of cultural production.[3] The reference points that the individual takes in its constitution, regardless of where he happens to be in the world, become increasingly uniform. When employed in this manner, the term 'neoliberalism' affords us the opportunity to explore the effects of globalization on social construction.

The protagonist of *Soldados de Salamina* responds to the neoliberalization of the Spanish cultural sphere. He is disgusted by the commercialization of both literature and journalism, products of the vagaries of late-capitalism, seeing them as once-pure endeavors that have been corrupted by monetization and tawdry, lowbrow influences. Whether journalism or literature ever existed to such a degree of purity is not really the issue here (of course neither ever did), but rather the insight that this posture provides with regard to the protagonist's understanding of

'how-the-world-should-be.' Upon Franco's death and through the Transition, questions of Spanish cultural or sociological identifications or definitions are still largely oriented along a Franco – not-Franco axis.[4] With the opening up of Spain during the 1990s to the hyper-capitalism of neoliberal economic policies adopted by almost all of Western Europe, the neat dichotomy is replaced by a multivalent, multi-polar matrix of political and cultural identities and ideologies. For one who places stock in ideas such as the gravitas of the author or the public intellectual (persons of stature and public import in the *ancien regime*), the breakdown of the dichotomy represents the loss of ideological stability that governs how a people sees itself (read: how the protagonist desires for the society to see itself). In reconstructing this lost dichotomy (or perhaps imagined dichotomy, as reactionary thinking is wont to do confronted by a shifting political and social landscape), however, Cercas must also rely on conjecture when the evidence is unable to account for all the events surrounding Sánchez Mazas' escape. The evidentiary capital that the protagonist builds up by way of journalistic affect is put to the service of hiding an ideological motive, even as it is undermined by conjecture. Cercas wants to have it both ways; he wants the novel to portray both an object truth, based on facts and evidence collected through journalistic inquiry, and an ideological or poetic truth, the "secreto esencial" that he repeatedly references, that simplifies the past in such a way as to assuage the fears of a man lost in contemporary Spain.

Two principal lines of criticism have been presented regarding *Soldados de Salamina*. The first investigates the question of the hero as it is presented in the novel, taking as the point of departure the ethics of action as a product of a person's individual choice within an ideology.[5] I will not be addressing directly this critique in this chapter; however, the notion of ethics, or more specifically the creation of a new ethic, does arise in my analysis. The second line of inquiry deals with the relationship between history and fiction, their respective articulations, and how these articulations relate to the idea of truth, which is the stated goal of the novel. Several critics have approached the novel from this angle.

Samuel Amago dedicates an entire chapter of his book on narrative self-consciousness to Cercas' work and the theme of the search for truth, seductively titled "Narrative Truth and Historical Truth in Javier Cercas's *Soldados de Salamina*."[6] Basing his inquiry on the relationship between language, narrative and memory, Amago paints history as a genre, a narrative subject to the fallacy or incompleteness of language that is ultimately open to multiple interpretations (159). Approaching the novel from the historiographical position that a pure, 'true' history is impossible, he concludes by suggesting that history has less to do with facts or events, than with our recognition of the linguistic impossibility of wholly describing those events:

> If there is indeed no "straight" way to invent history, and if facts, as Barthes has suggested, "can only have a linguistic existence, as a term in a discourse"

> (1997, 121), then perhaps the truest way to write a history is to write the history of that history. For in calling attention to the subjective, linguistically derived processes of writing his history, Cercas comes closer to a true account than if he were to mask his narrative in the form of the more traditional historiographies. (165)

Amago ultimately concludes that truth and fiction, as discreet objects of inquiry or search, are secondary to the comprehension that both are nothing but linguistic exercises and the product of human invention. This conclusion should come as no surprise since he erects much of his theory of narrativity, in this chapter as well as the rest of his book, on the work of Patricia Waugh.[7]

Robert Spires takes a similar approach, proposing that the pliable nature of language-as-art determines the final form of the novel. Truth, as an objective entity, is wholly dependent upon the inner-workings of a linguistic construct: "Whether or not the Miralles of the novel was in fact the militiaman who saved Sánchez Mázas' life, artistic truth dictates that he was. In this way the novel subverts the discourse of absolutes. At least some truths are indeed fictions" (506). Both of these critics show how any inquiry into the relationship between truth and fiction in Cercas' narrative is ultimately a dead end since both hold the same status as products of linguistic artifice. Continuing in the post-structuralist tradition, truth cannot hold the status of an absolute since a truth is merely the recreation, through language, of

either an experience or an idea; this recreation, by the mere fact that it is language, is inherently lacking.

Although I draw upon the work of Amago and Spires, as well as other prominent critics like Ana Luengo, Carmen Moreno-Nuño, and María Cristina C. Mabrey, I propose that merely asserting this problematic relationship as these critics do does not go far enough and leaves unexamined a key component of the novel's narrative and ideological structure.[8] I argue that it is the journalistic affect produced by the protagonist's search for historically verifiable objects and first-person testimony that corrects for the linguistic lack that is located at the center of truth. The legitimacy of this evidence is grounded in its physicality; the trace or remnant of an event is not simply a story (that is, the linguistically unstable word or utterance) but a physical *thing*, a projection of the past into the present.[9] These are *embodied* truths. Therefore, it is useful to think of the evidence that the protagonist collects and that guides his journey in terms of Pierre Nora's "lieux de mémoire." Memory, according to Nora, has an inherently physical component to it.[10] The physical object is then imbued with memorial or ethical meaning that shapes a social group's self-image or self-understanding.[11] The ultimate purpose of this embodied memory is "to stop time, to block the work of forgetting" (Nora 19). In shaping his work around real physical objects (books, archives, the body of a person), Cercas validates the truth claim that produces the journalistic affect.

Cercas divides the novel into three parts and structures the narrative around two principal story lines: the life and near death of Rafael Sánchez Mazas at the hands of a Republican firing squad, from which he is saved by an anonymous Republican soldier; and the process of writing *Soldados de Salamina* itself. Part One, written in the first person using a colloquial vernacular, recounts the events of the protagonist Cercas' life that led him to the decision to write *Soldados de Salamina*. In this part, the novel establishes the theme of partial or conflicting truths as we witness Cercas try to unravel the multiple versions of what happened in the aftermath of the failed execution in the forests outside of Girona, Catalunya, in January of 1939. Also in this part, we see how the protagonist Cercas uses his experience as a journalist to search for documentary evidence, interview, and follow one clue to the next in order to have a more comprehensive understanding of the events in Girona at the end of the war. Part Two is a recounting of the life of Rafael Sánchez Mazas, one of the founders and principal ideologues of the Falange, and friend of José Antonio Primo de Rivera. However, after several episodes of his life prior to his escape from the firing squad have been enumerated, the first person voice takes the fore, giving us warning that "lo que a continuación consigno no es lo que realmente sucedió, sino lo que parece verosimil que sucediera; no ofrezco hechos probados, sino conjecturas razonables" (89). The text then presents a possible version of the circumstances surrounding Sánchez Mazas' imprisonment, his escape, and the help he received from the "amigos del bosque" (Pere Figueras

Bahí, Joaquín Figueras Bahí, and Daniel Angelats Dilmé, all locals and Republican deserters). These "conjecturas razonables" are an extension or extrapolation of the documentary evidence that the protagonist collects in Part One. Part Two ends with speculation about the struggle between Sánchez Mazas' political and poetic lives. In Part Three, the first person narrator 'Cercas' from Part One returns and goes in search of the anonymous soldier who saved Sánchez Mazas, believing that only with the inclusion of his version of the events can *Soldados de Salamina* be completed. Upon finding a scarred Catalan veteran of the Republican side of the Spanish Civil War and the French army in World War II named Antoni Miralles in a French nursing home, the protagonist believes that he has located the missing piece that will finally make the story whole.

The embodied truth drives the protagonist's search from the beginning of the novel. After failing to make it as a novelist, he returns to the newspaper at which he worked for years, a move that elicits a certain amount of *Schadenfreude* from his colleagues. After a time of penitence, he begins to write articles of interest again and ends up interviewing Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio, the author of *El Jarama* and son of Rafael Sánchez Mazas. It is from Sánchez Ferlosio that Cercas first hears the story of the near-death of his father at the end of the war, how he was saved by an anonymous Republican soldier, and how he was sheltered by a group of local Republican deserters he ended up naming "los amigos del bosque." After a few years pass and Cercas begins to forget the story, he is assigned to write an article

commemorating the 60th anniversary of the death of Antonio Machado, who had died in France during the final months of the Civil War after fleeing the advancing Nationalist troops. Noting how Machado's brothers, José and Manuel, visited his grave, shared a few words, and departed, the protagonist sees a parallel between the Machado story and the fact that Sánchez Mazas was saved by an unknown Republican soldier at about the same time:

> Nunca sabremos quién fue aquel miliciano que salvó la vida de Sánchez Mazas, ni qué es lo que pasó por su mente cuando le miró a los ojos; nunca sabremos qué se dijeron José y Manuel Machado ante las tumbas de su hermano Antonio y de su madre. No sé por qué, pero a veces me digo que, si consiguiéramos desvelar uno de esos dos secretos paralelos, quizá rozaríamos también un secreto mucho más esencial. (26)

This "secreto mucho más esencial" is not a mere fact, but rather, since there is no documentary evidence or record of the Machado brothers' conversation nor the thoughts of the Republican soldier, but a truth intimately tied to the physical bodies of the men; the "secreto esencial" becomes an embodied truth that speaks to some kind of transcendental or poetic understanding.

In the Part One, we see a protagonist Cercas that we could call, without fear of challenge, pedestrian; he speaks in a colloquial voice, and he is as insecure in his personal life as he is in his professional one. Amago rightly claims, referencing Foucault's thoughts on effective history, that the protagonist Cercas' insecurities

stem from the fact that "we want to believe that historical happenings have some sort of meaning and that they correspond to a meaningful teleology" (152). The logical outcome of this narrative insecurity, the outcome that Cercas himself evidences by the inclusion of interviews and documentation in the novel, is that any approximation of historical understanding is necessarily tied to competing narrative perspectives and the incomplete nature of language itself. This has been a standard avenue of critique when approaching *Soldados de Salamina*.[12] A chorus of voices, from the "amigos del bosque" to Sánchez Ferlosio to Miralles to Sánchez Mazas himself by way of his journals, joins the protagonist Cercas in creating the story. As the narrator moves from one truth claim or object to another and harmonizes the cacophony, obvious questions of narrativity and historiography arise. As a number of critics, such as Linda Hutcheon[13] and Hayden White,[14] have noted, the act of narration imposes an order onto events so as to endow them with meaning. Hannah Arendt, in *Between Past and Future*, develops her definition of History as an enterprise of reconciliation with 'reality,' in which humans give order to "haphazard single actions"(85).[15] In the novel, the protagonist Cercas repeatedly reminds us of the incomplete nature of these remembrances.[16] The resulting problematic relationship between the multiple versions of history and memory, as they are filtered through the prism of writer's pen, shows the insecurity of Cercas' narrative voice.

The majority of Part One consists of Cercas collecting the evidence that tells these multiple versions of history. After publishing the article positing the "secreto esencial" between Sánchez Mazas and Machado, he is contacted by a midlevel functionary of Banyoles, a town near where the mass execution took place, named Miquel Aguierre, who has more information about the episode. Upon meeting with Aguierre over lunch, the protagonist is surprised when the civil servant mentions the "amigos del bosque," a detail of the story that he had not mentioned in his newspaper piece. Not only does Aguierre know about the "amigos del bosque," he knows the son of one of them, a man named Jaume Figueras. When the protagonist is finally able to meet with the son of one of the men that sheltered Sánchez Mazas (after a series of missed connections that allows for time to flesh out the relationship between Cercas and his girlfriend Conchi), two important pieces of evidence vis-à-vis Sánchez Mazas' story begin to shape the protagonist's drive to follow clues to complete a narrative. The first is a small diary that Figueras found in his father's house after his death that, by all appearances, belonged to Sánchez Mazas and details the days that he spent hiding in the forest with the "amigos del bosque," all of them evading the retreating Republican army (Sánchez Mazas because he was "el falangista más antiguo de España" and the local boys for being Republican deserters).[17] The second is the fact that Jaume Figueras tells Cercas that his uncle Joaquim, another of the "amigos del bosque," is still alive.

Both the diary and a real, live "amigo del bosque" constitute embodied truth objects in that they serve as a direct link to the event in question, and their physicality makes that direct link incontestable. These are the first of what turns out to be a series of truth objects, one leading to the next, that guide the protagonist on his search for the truth about what happened in that forest in 1939. What inspires Cercas to follow these clues is his own uncertainty and distrust of disembodied truth claims, that is, spoken claims of memory *qua* truth:

> Ardía en deseos de hablar con el tío de Jaume Figueras, con María Ferré y con Angelats, si es que aún estaba vivo. Me decía que, si bien el relato de Jaume Figueras no podía ser fiable (o no podía serlo más que el de Ferlosio), pues su veracidad ni siquiera pendía de un recuerdo (el suyo), sino del recuerdo de un recuerdo (el de su padre), los relatos de su tío, de Maria Ferré y de Angelats, si es que todavía estaba vivo, eran, en cambio, relatos de primera mano y por tanto, al menos en principio, mucho menos aleatorios que aquél. Me pregunté si esos relatos ajustarían a la realidad de los hechos o si, de forma acaso inevitable, estarían barnizados por esa pátina de medias verdades y embustes que prestigia siempre un episodio remoto y para sus protagonistas quizá legendario, de manera que lo que acaso me contarían que ocurrió no sería lo que de verdad ocurrió y ni siquiera lo que recordaban que ocurrió, sino sólo lo que recordaban haber contado otras veces. (62)

Cercas eschews not just memory but post-memory as well.[18] For him, what is most important is not the extant social self-understanding shaped by memory and postmemory, but the events as they took place. This posture is representative of the prevailing ethic when it comes to the contemporary fascination with the Spanish Civil War, and understandably so when so much knowledge of the actual events have been repressed or erased.

This inherent skepticism is initially engendered by his questioning of one detail of Jaume Figueras' story about his father, which if proved to be false would undermine every aspect of it. "Como asaltado por una súbita iluminación, pensé: 'Todo es mentira.' Razoné que, si el primer hecho que intentaba contrastar por mi cuenta con la realidad – la estancia de Pere Figueras en la cárcel – resultaba falso, nada impedía suponer que el resto de la historia igualmente lo fuera" (64). Jaume had told Cercas that at the end of the war, his father had been jailed in the local prison and that his family had sent letters to Sánchez Mazas, by then a high-ranking member of Franco's cabinet, petitioning his freedom. In an effort to prove (or disprove) Jaume's claim, the protagonist visits the Historical Archive of the town in order to look for Pere Figueras' name in the registry. Upon finding his name and ingression and release dates (proving his presence in the prison by way of physical documentation), he realizes that the circumstances of his release were suspicious, leading Cercas to surmise that it would only have been possible as the result of a direct order from a high level member of the government. He uses this supposition

to explain the fact that a page of the diary had been ripped out precisely at the point of the narration, given the development of the text, that would have stated the names of the "amigos del bosque," Pere and Joaquím Figueras Bahí and Daniel Angelats.

What is important about this supposition is the fact that it is made by way of the convergence of three distinct pieces of evidence: the oral history of Jaume Figueras; the ripped out (which is to say, absent) page from the diary; and the archival records from the local prison. Whether this is truly what happened or not, this collection and analysis of evidence that leads to an evaluative statement is the first example in the novel of what we have termed journalistic affect. In discussing her documentary film work for TV3 in Cataluña on such projects like *Els nens perduts del franquisme* (2002) and *Les fosses del silence* (2003), Montse Armengou Martín argues that one of the principal jobs of the journalist is "to piece together the jigsaw puzzle to reveal" the larger picture or truth (161). This is precisely what Cercas does when takes the individual evidentiary pieces of the notebook, his conversations with Jaume Figueras, and the prison archives and deduces the reasonable circumstances of Jaume's father's release from prison and the missing page.

It is also important to note the convergence of two arguments that have been made thus far in Cercas' deduction regarding these pieces of evidence. On the one hand, it engenders a journalistic affect that legitimizes truth claims in the mind of

the reader. On the other, the three truth claims are themselves *embodied* truth claims. So, returning to what has been stated, Cercas' distrust of oral history and fallible human memory leads him to corroborate this memory with physical truth objects. But at the same time, it also leads him to understand the value and necessity of oral history within the constellation of truth objects, if he is to have as complete as possible an understanding of the events surrounding Sánchez Mazas' escape from the firing squad and if he is to complete his "relato real."[19] For this reason he tells us at the end of Part One that "(v)arias veces viajé a Madrid, y constantemente a Barcelona, para hablar con eruditos, con profesores, con amigos y conocidos (o con amigos de amigos y conocidos de conocidos) de Sánchez Mazas" (70). Likewise, Cercas sits down for interviews with Joaquím Figueras, María Ferré, and Daniel Angelats. After observing that "(l)os tres conservaban buena memoria," Cercas explicates the usefulness of multiple interviews when attempting to reconstruct past events:

> Las versions de los tres diferían, pero no eran contradictorias, y en más de un punto se complementaban, así que no resultaba difícil recomponer, a partir de sus testimonios y rellenando a base de lógica y de un poco de imaginación las lagunas que dejaban, el rompecabezas de la aventura de Sánchez Mazas. (71)

In the recompilation of this evidence and source material, we witness both the layering of truth claims and the composition of the novel itself.

The interviews with Figueras, Ferré, and Angelats, or rather Cercas' reaction to the interviews, also establish a fundamental concern vis-à-vis the embodied truth object, which is the contrast between an objective truth and a necessary truth. After commenting on the similarity of their memories about Sánchez Mazas, Cercas states the following:

> Por lo demás, los tres eran tan diversos que lo único que a mis ojos los unía era su condición de supervivientes, ese suplemento engañoso de prestigio que a menudo otorgan los protagonistas del presente, que es siempre consuetudinario, anodino y sin gloria, a los protagonistas del pasado, que, porque sólo lo conocemos a través del filtro de la memoria, es siempre excepcional, tumultuoso y heroico. (72)

As much as Cercas is concerned with documenting past events as they actually happened, he is not immune from bestowing upon historical actors a mantle of heroism. This can end up having dangerous historiographical consequences in that, a) it can separate the person from the actions that he or she does (the link between which is ostensibly Cercas' ultimate goal), and, b) by lionizing the historical actor, the heuristic gaze of the observer in the present can interpret fact so as to justify the heroic attribution. Moreover, he diminishes the literary aura of traditional heroes of the literary left, such as Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio and Antonio Machado, thereby shining more light on the Francoist poet.

I argue that this is precisely what occurs in Parts II and III of *Soldados de Salamina.* In the first ten or so pages of Part II, Cercas recounts Sánchez Mazas' biography prior to the Civil War, highlighting both his aristocratic upbringing in Bilbao, his immersion and dedication to a life of letters, and his conversion to fascism. Although he was a mediocre student, Cercas is fascinated by his development as a poet:

> A los trece años escribía poemas a la manera de Zorrilla y de Marquina; a los veinte imitaba a Rubén y a Unamuno; a los vientidós era un poeta maduro; a los veintiocho su obra en verso estaba en lo esencial cumplida. Con caraterístico ademán aristocrático, apenas se ocupó de publicarla… Por lo demás, Sánchez Mazas es un buen poeta; un buen poeta menor, quiero decir, que es casi todo lo que puede aspirar un buen poeta. (80)

This amounts to a hagiography of the true poet; regardless of his talent, he writes for the love of poetry, for the love of the words and the art, not caring if it even gets published. In addition to this purity of purpose, Cercas also observes that, although his poetry only has "una sola cuerda," there is a similar purity of vision in his verse:

> (C)anta la melancolía agridulce del tiempo que huye y en su huida arrastra el orden y las seguras jerarquías de un mundo abolido que, precisamente por haber sido abolido, es también un mundo inventado e imposible, que casi siempre equivale al mundo imposible e inventado de Paraíso. (80)

Extrapolating from this observation, Cercas proposes that this desire for "el mundo abolido, inventado e imposible del Paraíso" is what ultimately draws Sánchez Mazas to fascism, seeing it as an "intento político de *realizar* su poesía" and seeing Benito Mussolini as a return to "el tiempo de los héroes y los poetas" (82).[20] This conflation of heroism and poetry, superimposed on a traditional and hierarchical social order, establishes a worldview that is both devoid of insecurity and laudatory of the man of letters and the artistic class.

Cercas is careful to point out that this purity of ideological affiliation was not just something that afflicted Sánchez Mazas, but rather a condition that found its way into all political and, most importantly, artistic discourse of the era. He illustrates this cross-ideological uniformity of purpose by pointing to a communist, who espouses what all seem to be thinking:

> (E)n 1927 un joven escritor llamado César Arconada, que había profesado el elitismo orteguiano y que no tardaría en engrosar las filas del partido comunista, resumía el sentir de mucha gente de su edad cuando declaraba que "un joven puede ser comunista, fascista, cualquier cosa, menos tener viejas ideas liberales." Ellos explica en parte que tantos escritores del momento, en España y en toda Europa, cambiaran en pocos años el esteticismo deportivo y lúdico de los felices veinte por el combate político puro y duro de los feroces treinta. (84)

As Cercas goes on to describe the growing fascist movement in Spain, of which Sánchez Mazas was a key player (along with José Antonio Primo de Rivera, Ernesto Giménez Caballero, and Ramiro Ledesma Ramos), he indicates how these men of letters created the "parafernalia cada vez más podrida y huérfana de significado con la que un puñado de patanes luchó durante cuarenta años de pesadumbre por justificar su régimen de mierda" (86).

Sánchez Mazas, as Cercas has delineated him, is now a figure endowed with a purity of social compromise, political compromise, and artistic vision. But the language that Cercas employs to describe Sánchez Mazas' contribution to the rhetorical and propagandistic iconography that justified Francoism also bestows upon him a certain pathetic quality as well. It wasn't because of *him* that it became "podrida y huérfana de significado;" it was "un puñado de patanes" and "*su* régimen de mierda" that sullied what had once been heroic. Sánchez Mazas is the poet who couldn't maintain the reconciliation between artistic and political purity.

This image of Sánchez Mazas is solidified in the second half of Part II as Cercas describes the Fascist writer's odyssey as a fugitive at the outbreak of the war cloistered in the Chilean embassy, a prisoner in Cataluña, his time in hiding with the "amigos del bosque," and eventually "ministro sin cartera" in Franco's first cabinet. The portrait is created, however, on very shaky narrative ground, demonstrated by the repeated use of qualifying statements and rhetorical get-out-jail-free cards. The

first example of this tendency comes after a description of Sánchez Mazas' early life, education, and participation in the founding of the Falange:

> Su peripecia durante los meses previos a la contienda y durante los tres años que duró ésta solo puede intentar reconstruir a través de testimonios parciales… y también a través del velo de una leyenda constelada de equívocos, contradicciones y ambigüedades que la selectiva locuacidad de Sánchez Mazas acerca de ese periodo turbulento de su vida contribuyó de forma determinante a alimentar. Así pues, *lo que a continuación consigno no es lo que realmente sucedió, sino lo que parece verosímil que sucediera; no ofrezco hechos probados, sino conjeturas razonables*. (89, emphasis mine)

This quote is a very problematic turning point in the novel in that Cercas proposes to remedy the questionable nature of Sánchez Mazas' recollections (or at least his reproduction) of events by conjecture in what has been a factually based enterprise. The fact that the Falangista's story has holes in it, a product most probably of both conscious omission and historical entropy, is not be unexpected, as the trope of partial history is an integral characteristic of the novel. What is alarming is Cercas' reaction to this lack. Throughout the novel, the protagonist repeatedly states that his intention is not to write a novel but "un relato real," a nebulous term that lies somewhere between fiction and straight history. But above all, the principal concern here is not to get the facts right, but to tell a story, "un relato." So when Cercas proposes supposition and conjecture, his motive no longer is achieving

historical accuracy but rather shaping an ideological narrative. This may seem at odds with his obsession with truth objects and evidence that we see in the first half of the novel. But I suggest that it is in fact absolutely essential to understanding Cercas' overall project with *Soldados de Salamina* in that the journalistic affect, the way in which the narrator gives form to a story by using embodied truth objects, is ultimately not in the service of historical accuracy but rather of a story crafted for ideological ends. By proposing a conjectured storyline, are we to assume that Cercas has privileged knowledge of Sánchez Mazas' motives or thoughts? If he doesn't (which is a reasonable assumption), then his selection of one particular narrative out of a myriad possible ones, because what is conjecture other than this, represents an ideological choice, privileging Cercas' idealized (and flattering) portrayal over a more critical one. This is not to say that the remainder of Part II is fabrication, not in the slightest; the majority of the events described (approximate dates of Sánchez Mazas movements, his ingression in prison boats and escape from the firing squad) are readily verifiable. But the language that Cercas uses to describe the events demonstrates how he blurs the line between verifiable truth and fiction in order to achieve an ideological end.

The description of Sánchez Mazas' transfer from the prison boat *Uruguay* in the port of Barcelona to the prison in the Santa Maria de Collell monastery exemplifies the affective language that leads the reader to identify with the character.

> El autobús recorre en silencio Barcelona, convertida por el terror de la desbandada y el cielo invernizo en una desolación fantasmal de ventanas y balcones cerrados a cal y canto y de grandes avenidas cenicientas en las que reina un desorden campamental apenas cruzado por furtivos transeúntes que triscan como lobos por las aceras desventradas con caras de hambre y de preparar la fuga, protegiéndose contra la adversidad y contra el viento glacial con abrigos de miseria… La caravana avanza con interminable lentitud. De vez en cuando se detiene; de vez en cuando, con una mezcla de asombro de odio y de insondable fatiga, alguien mira fijamente a los ocupantes del autobús, envidioso de su comodidad y su abrigo, ignorante de su destino de fusilados; de vez en cuando alguien los insulta. (96-97)

The omniscient narrator that provides this description is not only privileged to the thoughts of Sánchez Mazas but to those of the fleeing denizens of Barcelona as well. However, it is the vocabulary that he uses that conveys a sense of foreboding and terror. The streets are in "desorden;" the people on the sidewalks have been transformed into "lobos" trying to overcome starvation; the refugees on the side of the road only look at Sánchez Mazas and the other prisoners with "odio" and "desdén" because they are ignorant of the fact that the men in the bus are on their way to die. Given the reader's knowledge that Sánchez Mazas is on the bus, which is to say creating the sensation of seeing the scene through his eyes, the cumulative

effect of the passage not only leads the reader to identify with the Falangista, but to empathize with severity of his plight.

Having established Sánchez Mazas as a man of pure ideals and artistic integrity, which Cercas means for the reader to interpret as positive characteristics despite their fascistic underpinnings, and as an empathetic character, his ultimate decline takes on a heroic quality. Cercas describes in lamentable fashion how the revolution started by José Antonio, Sánchez Mazas and their compatriots "iba a acabar diluyéndose en un aguachirle gazmoño, previsible y conservador" (128). He grows bored with his position in Franco's cabinet, and ultimately just stops going to meetings (132). Likewise, Cercas describes how Sánchez Mazas is pessimistically aware that his election to the Real Academia Española had less to do with his artistic talent than his poster-boy like stature as a founder of the Falange (131). He becomes an "esperpentic" reflection of his idealized self.[21] This pathetic reimaging of Sánchez Mazas reaches it apex when the narrator postulates that the fact that the poet ended being a Falangist, and by extension the rhetorical visionary of Francoist Spain, was merely a result of historical necessity:

> Quizá Sánchez Mazas no fue nunca más que un falso falangista, o si se quiere un falangista que sólo lo fue porque se sintió obligado a serlo, si es que todos los falangistas no fueron falsos y obligados falangistas… sintió que una amenaza real se ernía sobre el sueño de beatitud burguesa de los suyos, Sánchez Mazas nunca se hubiera rebajado a meterse en política, ni se hubiera

aplicado a forja la llameante retórica de choque que debía enardecer hasta la victoria la pelotón de soldados encargados de salvar la civilización. (136)

Sánchez Mazas was not some embodiment of evil or bloodlust, he was no Goebbels, out to destroy large swaths of Spain out of hatred, the narrator seems to be saying. He was simply reacting to forces that threatened what he understood to be a civil society. The end result of this apology is the primacy of poetics over politics; yes, Sánchez Mazas was supremely conservative and one of the principal architects of the tragedy of the Civil War and Francoism, but before all of that, at his core, he was a poet.

The apotheosis of the poet is a trope that Cercas develops over the course of the novel that serves to humanize Sánchez Mazas, to endow him with noble qualities despite his political affiliations, which in turn engender pathos in the reader. As Ana Luengo shows, Cercas at times plays fast and loose with his description of the poet in order to portray the Falangista as an heroic figure, but the result is nonetheless the same: a (perhaps *the*) Falangista portrayed as a sympathetic character and the embodiment of pure ideals, the product of historical forces beyond his control who ultimately becomes disillusioned when the messiness of the real world corrupts the purity of his poetic vision.[22] Despite his political leanings and culpability in the Civil War, Sánchez Mazas was an artist of gravitas, forgotten to the history of letters, memorialized only by a street in Bilbao that bears his name (140).

Keeping in mind that this book was written during the late 1990s and published in 2001, Cercas foreshadows with this statement what would become a flashpoint of political and social debate in the first decade of the twenty-first century: street names and public monuments that bear the name or likeness of prominent Falangists, fascists, or Nationalist victories during the Civil War. Jeremy Treglown ably documents in his book *Franco's Crypt: Spanish Culture and Memory Since 1936* the fights over the removal of monuments and the changing of place names. Treglown not only discusses the lingering remnants of Francoist iconography, but the literal unearthing of the Republican opposition to the Nationalist as well: mass graves. Although the issue appears to be binary (Nationalist – bad; Republican – good), he recognizes the problematic nature of coming to terms with the national patrimony, stating "(y)ou don't have to be an admirer of Franco's to believe that removing all trace of an uncomfortable past is not the best way of dealing with it" (81). History is messy, and binaries are never black and white but evolving shades of gray.

Cercas, however, explicitly erects a binary relationship as the denouement of *Soldados de Salamina,* veiling it as historical uncertainty. At the beginning of Part III, he returns to the trope of the meta-novel by claiming that he had finished writing *Soldados de Salamina*, which the reader is to understand as Parts I and II of the book in her hands. And although Cercas likes what he has written, he feels that something is missing: "Eufórico, lo leí, lo releí. A la segunda relectura la euforia se

trocó en decepción: el libro no era malo, sin insuficiente, como un mecanismo completo pero incapaz de desempeñar la función para la que ha sido ideado porque le falta una pieza" (144). The missing piece that Cercas identifies is Antoni Miralles, an aging veteran of the Spanish Civil War and World War II who now resides in a nursing home in Dijon, France. Through a series of conversations with Roberto Bolaño about a scarred veteran that the Chilean writer had met in his youth, Cercas becomes convinced that Miralles is the anonymous soldier who had spared Sánchez Mazas his life after his escape from the firing squad.[23] Explaining that he had met the Catalan former soldier when he was a youth, Bolaño tells the protagonist the stories that Miralles had recounted to him, about enlisting in Líster's regiment at the beginning of the war, retreating from Cataluña into France with Lister's column, entering the French Foreign Legion, and carrying the flag of a free France with General Jacques-Philippe Leclerc across north Africa during World War II. This paints the image, both in the mind of Cercas and in the mind of the reader, of the ideal leftist freedom fighter. Enrique Líster is an avatar of the heroic Republican soldier in the Civil War, being both a communist and the regiment commander at such important and famous battles as Guadalajara, Belchite, and Teruel. That Miralles would be a member of Líster's storied "11ª División" endows him with the same aura. Like Líster, Leclerc is an almost mythic figure in the history of World War II, embodying the fight for a free France and the pride of rejecting the German-dictated Vichy government. However, unlike Líster the stonemason turned

communist politician, Leclerc came from an old-line aristocratic family, that had even survived the French Revolution. The superimposition of these two figures onto Miralles creates the image of the soldier of pure ideals that fights against tyranny, irrespective of political or social background. After considering the bloody and adventurous life of this relic of what over time have come to be understood as "good wars" (and not uninfluenced by his nagging need for the final piece to *Soldados de Salamina*), Cercas convinces himself that Miralles had saved the Falangista:

> Pensé en el fusilamiento de Sánchez Mazas y en que Miralles había sido durante toda la guerra civil un soldado de Líster, en que había estado con él en Madrid, en Aragón, en el Ebro, en la retirada de Cataluña. "¿Por qué no en Collell?", pensé. Y en aquel momento, con la engañosa pero aplastante lucidez del insomnio, como quien encuentra por un azar inverosímil y cuando ya había abandonado la búsqueda (porque uno nunca encuentra lo que busca, sino lo que la realidad le entrega) la pieza que faltaba para un mecanismo completo pero incapaz desempeñe la función para la que ha sido ideado, me oí murmurar en el silencio sin luz del dormitorio: "Es él." (165)[24]

Like when Cercas decides to offer "conjeturas razonables" regarding the life of Sánchez Mazas, we see the same tendency here with regard to Miralles: the protagonist abandons his reliance on hard evidence to tell the story in favor of an ideological choice. However, this pivot towards supposition does not wholly

abandon evidentiary truth. Over the course of the novel, the journalist affect employed by Cercas builds capital in the mind of the reader vis-à-vis embodied truth; the body, due to its undeniable physicality, becomes the bearer, or the manifestation, of truth itself. This equation of "body equals truth," however, is undermined by Cercas' insistence (by way of conjecture) on forcing Miralles to play the role of the Republican soldier. This is why, even though the body of Miralles cannot be denied, Cercas' choice to cast him as the savior of Sánchez Mazas is an ideological one, the purpose of which is to give shape to the Nationalist/Republican dialectic that is couched in the romanticization of a lost social and poetic compromise.

The tendency to prioritize the ideological over the factual is reinforced, ironically, by Roberto Bolaño. Mimicking the figure of Cercas himself (both a real person and a character in a novel), Bolaño's presence in *Soldados de Salamina* is both a narrative foil for the protagonist, which is to say a purely rhetorical or plot-driving device, and an embodied truth object that lends historical weight (and therefore verisimilitude) to the novel. It is ironic, however, that this real-life person, even in fictionalized form, urges Cercas to invent pieces of a "relato real" in the absence of historical fact.[25] When Cercas explains his project to the Chilean and expresses his difficulty at finding the final piece that would give it coherence, Bolaño remarks that "(t)odos los buenos relatos son reales, por lo menos para quien los lee, que es el único que cuenta" (166). Likewise, when the protagonist is unable to

locate anyone in Dijon named Miralles who fits the appropriate description, Bolaño tells him that if he wants to include an interview with the Catalan soldier in his book that he would have to "inventarla" (169). Bolaño's suggestions, that truth is in the eye of the beholder and that a piece of an historical story can be invented, support Cercas' ongoing ideological project in that they privilege a preconceived outcome over evidence, even if the evidence has yet to be found.

Bolaño's suggestion to invent the interview with Miralles problematizes the protagonist's ultimate encounter with the aging Catalan man he finds in a French nursing home. Could this section of the novel itself be invention? Conjecture? A "relato" fabricated to support Cercas' ideological project? There is, of course, no way to know. Regardless, the narrative device of finding Miralles, when read in the light of Bolaño's advice, allows the reader to call into question all of the evidence that the Cercas has collected as fiction.

Beyond structuring the narrative framework that allows Cercas to invent a character out of ideological necessity, Bolaño himself, which is to say the character in the novel that recalls the real Chilean writer, endows the protagonist with a cultural caché that frames him as a writer of importance. Bolaño, in his masterwork *Los detectives salvages*, tells the story of the search for a lost poet, which thematically parallels Cercas' search. However, it is Bolaño's cultural status as an icon of Latin American intellectualism that Cercas hopes to appropriate by way of proximity. Much like in his interlude with Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio, the protagonist

hopes that the gravitas of the Chilean is transmitted to both his project of resurrecting the memory of Sánchez Mazas and himself as a writer. Moreover, this gravitas, and Bolaño's posture vis-à-vis the figure of Miralles, assuage the problems of veracity surrounding the Republican soldier mentioned above.

When Cercas encounters Miralles, their conversation crystallizes the image of the former soldier as the ideological counterweight to Sánchez Mazas in terms of humanistic purity. Alone in an assisted living home and never visited by friends or family, Miralles becomes the embodiment of the pure republican soldier that fought to rid Europe of the plague of fascism in two wars, that is now forgotten by the very people that enjoy the fruits of his suffering and that of his comrades. After melancholically and dramatically naming all his friends that fought alongside him and remarking that "(n)inguno de ellos sobrevivió," he reflects on their legacy in the modern day:

> Nadie se acuerda de ellos, ¿sabe? Nadie. Nadie se acuerda siquiera de por qué murieron, de por qué no tuvieron mujer e hijos y una habitación con sol; nadie, y, menos que nadie, la gente por la que pelearon. No hay ni va a haber nunca ninguna calle miserable de ningún pueblo miserable de ninguna mierda de país que vaya a llevar nunca el nombre de ninguno de ellos. (201)

Echoing the final lines of Part II that observe that little is remembered of Sánchez Mazas although a street in Bilbao bears his name, Miralles, by his mere physicality if not his memory, is established here as the avatar of the anonymous soldier that

fought for the salvation of Europe, even if there is no monument to prove it. But it is the anonymity of this soldier that endows him with purity and righteousness. After Cercas tells him the story of Sánchez Mazas being saved by a Republican militiaman, Miralles reproaches the writer for peddling in sentimentalities: "Así que lo que andaba buscando era un héroe. Y ese héroe soy yo, ¿no? ¡Hay que joderse!... Los héroes sólo son héroes cuando se mueren o los matan. Y los héroes de verdad nacen en la guerra y mueren en la guerra. No hay héroes vivos, joven. Todos están muertos. Muertos, muertos, muertos" (199). Miralles' denial of heroism (both his and the idea that a living person could be considered a hero) achieves two ends: first, it defines heroism as a Platonic ideal that can only exist in the shadow of the act or the actor; and secondly, it entrenches Cercas' desire (and by extension, the reader's) for this aging Catalan to be that soldier that spared Sánchez Mazas.[26]

As I have mentioned, mixing historical inquiry and a pre-established desire can result in dangerous outcomes. When Miralles informs Cercas that he was not that soldier ("Era usted, ¿no?... Su respuesta fue: -No" (204-05)), it has little impact on the remainder of Cercas' story, thus demonstrating Cercas' ethical posture regarding the object of his search: the prioritizing of narrative over truth evolves into a primacy of "necessary truths" over historical truths.[27] Von Tschilschke makes this observation succinctly: "Aunque Cercas le otorgue al fin y al cabo primacía a la ficción, éste considera… que la literatura está al 'servicio de la realidad,' solo que el primero reinventa el pasado de un plumazo con el pretexto de devolverle a la

historia su potencial utópico" (188).[28] I agree, Cercas does use literature (which is to say the story) in "servicio de la realidad." But I believe that von Tschilschke points to the wrong reality. I argue that it is not to return a utopianism to history, but to impose a utopianism on the present.

Cercas, in the end, appears to want to have it both ways: he presents the novel as a search for historical truth objects that explicate or illuminate a series of events (and persons) that have become lost or ignored in the pages of contemporary historiography; he also wants to show the story as one that contains a Spanish (if not universal) transcendental, poetic truth. These parallel goals are nothing of the sort, in that the first is in service of the second. The manner in which Cercas collects documentary evidence, interviews, and other truth objects in an effort to understand the events surrounding Sánchez Mazas' escape create a journalistic affect that then is made to serve (or makes possible) a poetic truth, regardless of its historical falsity. In order to erect an ideologically stable understanding of contemporary Spain, a country that to the protagonist lacks some kind of artistic, aesthetic, or political purity that earlier generations possessed, he *needs,* as Spires notes, Miralles to be that militiaman, otherwise his entire poetic/ideological project falls down. However, in order for the reader to accept this premise, the protagonist must first create the narrative conditions by way of a journalist affect in which such a conjecture would seem acceptable. After determining that Pere Figueras was released from prison on the order of now Minister Sánchez Mazas, a journalistic-

style conjecture (albeit a plausible one) made from analyzing various pieces of evidence, the implied conjecture that Miralles was the man who saved the Falangista, and therefore the missing piece of Cercas' story, is acceptable in the reader's eyes. This process of conjecture couched in a cache of seemingly objective information is a common trait of contemporary journalism. Cercas appropriates this tendency of journalism that hides the speculative and ideological behind the appearance of the objective and truthful.

As I noted, Cercas does not establish the simulacrum of balance with Sánchez Mazas and Miralles being the two poles in an effort to rewrite history, but to make contemporary (and future) Spain conform to his antediluvian understanding of society. Although *Soldados de Salamina* does possess some of the "everybody is culpable" strain seen in conservative commentary about the Civil War since the late 1990s, I do not argue that the book is an apology for the Francoist state in a functional sense. Rather, it attempts to resurrect an ideological purity, which is also a poetic purity, in which each social actor knows where he is in relationship to another. Which endows the final lines of the novel with no short degree of irony. Imagining his idealized image of Miralles fighting across North Africa for a country that wasn't his, Cercas gives the reader a final image of pure ideological soldier:

> … aquel mar llameante de arena infinita, caminando hacia delante bajo el sol negro del ventanal, sin saber muy bien hacia dónde va ni con quién va ni por

qué va, sin importarle mucho siempre que sea hacia adelante, hacia adelante, hacia adelante, siempre hacia adelante. (209)

In Cercas' understanding, this could very easily just as well be a description of the ideal poet, struggling ever forward, not knowing where he is going but steadfastly sure in his conviction. The irony, however, lies in the fact that this hagiography celebrates ideological certainty in the face of an unknown future, yet the protagonist imposes the social relationships of the past onto his present precisely *because* of his anxieties about said present and the future.

Cercas' concerns about the present stem from a disjuncture between what he perceives to be the noble and prestigious role of the writer and the loss of gravitas that he believes the writer experiences in late twentieth century commodity culture. I contend that it is no accident that Cercas includes Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio (who stopped writing for quite some time after the publication of *El Jarama* ostensibly out of protest of the Franco government) and Roberto Bolaño (a veteran of the anti-dictatorial Left of 1970s Latin America, a recurrent theme throughout his work) as they both embody the poetic purity for which the protagonist pines, and they legitimize Cercas' own artistic stature by mere association. In resurrecting the figure of Sánchez Mazas, Cercas knows that he runs the risk of being accused of Fascist revisionism, the antidote for which is associating the Falangista, and by extension himself, with those pure artists of the left. Which is why journalistic affect is so important to the novel: it allows the protagonist to wrap himself in the mantle

of objectivity while pursuing ideological ends. It creates the illusion of being *not* ideological because the reference points that the protagonist employs as signposts for the narrative trajectory of the novel are, for the most part, truth objects. However, once Cercas begins to proffer conjecture, the equivalent to journalistic editorializing, he can no longer claim ideological neutrality, hiding behind the curtain of objectivity.

Feeling some kind of essential loss in present-day Spain, be it the commoditization of books, the poet/writer's diminishing gravitas, or the usurpation of the fundamental by the ephemeral, Cercas places his faith in truth objects;[29] the author uses these "things," that by their physicality are inherently imbued with a truth-telling capacity, to generate a journalistic affect in the reader, endowing the story with real world ethical value. Since he must rely on conjecture in order to find the balance that would complete the "relato real" in a manner that assuages the author's discomforts with contemporary society, this conjecture too is located in a physical body (Miralles) that takes advantage of the affective capital generated in the search for Sánchez Mazas. Having found this equilibrium, the protagonist finally is able to cocoon himself in contemporary Spanish society, comfortable in believing that there still exist pure poets and pure warriors.

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[1] "The newly created social democratic state was constructed in part around the notion of the myth of Europe, which epitomized everything that was modern. Among those who shared the myth was the belief that Spain must rejoin Europe, which was critical to the reinvention of a democratic consciousness" (Farrell 215).

[2] "Not surprisingly, the PP government supported the Lisbon Declaration (2000), in particular the development of a knowledge-based economy, the modernization of the European social model, and the limitation of government activity in the management of the economic system" (Farrell 218).

[3] Lukács specifically points to the French Revolution and the subsequent years of wars throughout the continent, that occurred at the same time as an expanding information network, to discuss the effect of the flattening of the world on the individual: "It was the French Revolution, the revolutionary wars and the rise and fall of Napoleon, which for the first time made history a *mass experience*, and moreover on a European scale. During the decades between 1789 and 1814 each nation of Europe underwent more upheavals than they had previously experienced in centuries. And the quick succession of these upheavals gives them a qualitatively distinct character, it makes their historical character far more visible than would be the case in isolated, individual instances: the masses no longer have the impression of a 'natural occurance.' One need only read over Heine's reminiscences of his youth in *Buch le Grand*, to quote just one example, where it is vividly shown how the rapid change of governments affected Heine as a boy. Now if experiences such as these are linked with the knowledge that similar upheavals are taking place all over the world, this must enormously strengthen the feeling first that there is such a thing as history, that it is an uninterrupted process of changes and finally that it has a direct effect upon the life of the individual" (23).

[4] I am careful here to not say 'anti-Franco,' as it is reductive and not very useful. Especially during the 1980s, during which time there were various discourses regarding how Spain should structure its political and economic realities, it was often not framed as 'anti-Franco' but rather as a matter of not repeating past mistakes. Even when the name is not invoked, it's presence is felt by its obvious and weighty absence. I would contend that, with regard to the cultural legacy of Francoism, this rhetorical avoidance perhaps ended up doing more harm than good.

[5] For more on this line of inquiry, see del Valle, Valdés, and Vargas Llosa.

[6] Amago's chapter is one of the finest examples of the 'hybrid narrative' inquiries into Cercas' work. The larger book, *True Lies: Narrative Self-Consciousness in the Contemporary Spanish Novel*, is an excellent examination of metafiction in contemporary Spanish novels.

[7] I do not mean to criticize the work of Waugh here. In fact, I agree with much of what she proposes. I simply mean to show the critical tradition that Amago inherits.

[8] The incompleteness of these lines of inquiry are most evident in Christian von Tschilschke's claim that Cercas, like Prada, merely "restitu(ye) a aquellas personas de la memoria colectiva amenazadas de dos maneras: por el franquismo y por el olvido de la posteridad," and that "Cercas desea expandir el imperativo de la memoria también al lado fascista" (194).

[9] "Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present" (8). (Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*." Representations. 26 (Spring) 1989.
[10] "Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects…" (Nora 9).
[11] "Even an apparently purely material site, like an archive, becomes a *lieu de mémoire* only if the imagination invests it with a symbolic aura" (Nora 19).
[12] This has been a standard avenue of critique when approaching *Soldados de Salamina* that has been explored by Amago (156), Spires (501), and Martín Galván.
[13] "Historiographic Metafiction." *Metafiction* ed. M. Currie, Longman Group. 1995.
[14] White's chapter on Hegel in *Metahistory* is particularly useful in thinking about the construction of narrative, as it discusses Hegel's idea of the "emplotment" of historical events into an understandable narrative.
[15] "History – based on the manifest assumption that no matter how haphazard single actions may appear in the present and in their singularity, they inevitably lead to a sequence of events forming a story that can be rendered through intelligible narrative the moment the events are removed into the past – became the great dimension in which men could become 'reconciled' with reality (Hegel), the reality of human affairs, i.e., of things which owe their existence exclusively to men"(Arendt, 85).
[16] Cercas employs a variety of narrative techniques to create the sense of a fragmented or partial memory: as we have seen, the recognition of repeated, performative stories passed from generation to generation; the recognition that a piece of Sánchez Mazas' journal is torn out (58); the advice given by Roberto Bolaño to the protagonist Cercas that "(l)as novelas se escriben combinando recuerdos"(151).
[17] See appendix 5.
[18] Postmemory is the label for the memories that an individual has of those events that happened before his or her birth. Marianne Hirsch, one of the most prominent theorists of postmemory, describes it as such: "Postmemory characterizes the experience of those who [...] have grown up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are displaced by the powerful stories of the previous generation, shaped by monumental traumatic events that resist understanding and integration."
[19] Montse Armengou Martín asserts that the interview, especially in terms of the recuperation of historical memory, is beginning to lose the stigma of unreliability that is once had, especially in those cases like Spain's in which documentary and physical evidence has been repressed or destroyed: "How do journalists make these silenced voices come to the surface? Our main tool is the interview. Some people question this resource, and other disciplines often look down their noses at it.

Fortunately this mistrust is becoming a thing of the past, as multidisciplinary approaches are yielding results" (159).

[20] Given the overtly militaristic nature of both Mussolini's fascism and, later, that of the Falange, it is interesting to contrast Sánchez Mazas' view of Paradise and heroism (which I would argue is more Cercas' view) with that of Sir Thomas Moore. A comparison with Moore's understanding of heroism in his Utopia place Sánchez Mazas/Cercas firmly within the Greek and Roman tradition than that of the Renaissance, as explicated by Moore: "They detest war as a very brutal thing, and which, to the reproach of human nature, is more practised by men than by any sort of beasts. They, in opposition to the sentiments of almost all other nations, think that there is nothing more inglorious than that glory that is gained by war."

[21] "'Antes eras un escritor y un político, Rafael," le decía por esa época Agustín de Foxa. 'Ahora sólo eres un millonario'" (134). In this context, to be a millionaire rather than a poet and politician is to describe a fall from grace.

[22] In Part One, Cercas contends that it is ultimately the poets who win wars, citing José Antonio Primo de Rivera: "había dicho que 'a los pueblos no han movido nunca más que los poetas.'… (E)s verdad que las guerras se hacen por dinero, que es poder, pero los jóvenes parten al frente y matan y se hacen matar por palabras, que son poesía, y por eso son los poetas los que siempre ganan las guerras" (51). Luengo rightly observes that this is a very cynical (and I would argue anti-humanist) position: "Posiblemente haya olvidado un adjectivo, o peca de gran insensibilidad histórica: ni Federico García Lorca – aún a riesgo de caer en el tópico -, ni Miguel Hernandez, ni Antonio Machado, ni muchos otros poetas (los que murieron, los que se exiliaron, los que se quedaron, fantasmas de sí mismos – recordando las palabras de Aub) la ganaron" (244).

[23] Christian von Tschilshke discusses how the appearance of Roberto Bolaño, like the appearance of Pere Gimferrer in *Las esquinas del aire*, constitute a "*mise en abyme*, el reflejo interno-ficcional del proceso de la producción de un texto" (186).

[24] The protagonists of both *Soldados de Salamina* and *Las esquinas del aire* come upon revelation regarding the respective objects of their searches in bed during fits of insomnia.

[25] The irony may be assuaged by the fact that Bolaño himself was so proficient at reimagining history, and that he as well used an alter ego of himself in *Los detectives salvajes*.

[26] Desire is always a function of a lack. This idea is most readily articulated within the scope of the Lacanian idea of *objet petit a*, in which *objet petit a* is something separate from the subject that instigates desire. Lacan notes that "(m)an's desire is the desire of the Other" (235). As Slavoj Žižek explains, "The object *a* is not what we desire, what we are after, but rather that which sets our desire in motion, in the sense of the formal frame which confers consistency on our desire" (214). Put

another way, *objet petit a* serves as a symbol of the separation between the subject and the object of desire.

[27] If the most important goal was the confirmation of facts, which is to say to determine either in the positive or negative if Miralles truly was that militiaman, the ending of the book would be starkly different.

[28] Von Tschilschke notes that although their approach to the reconstitution of history is similar, Cercas' and Pradas' goals are distinct, observing that while Cercas wants to imbue the story with its "potencial utópico," Prada "se limita a reconstruirla" (188).

[29] Cristina Moreiras Menor discusses in her essay "Spectacle, Trauma and Violence in Contemporary Spain" how post-Franco Spain "unreservedly embraces the cultural of spectacle" (135). I would argue that the "cultural of spectacle" is the superstructure that enables the diminished focus in journalism on truth in lieu of performance or the spectacular.

## Chapter Three: Fiction, History, and Culpability: Reflective Judgment in *El vano ayer*

Isaac Rosa's 2004 novel *El vano ayer* tells the story of how the paths of a university professor, the leader of a radical student group, and the national police become intertwined during a series of student protests in the mid-1960s. Set in late Francoism, the novel turns a critical eye on the relationship between the police force and the Spanish public during a time when Spain was supposedly emerging from its more authoritarian, post-Civil War era and opening up on the world and European stages. Although the story offers criticism of the police's treatment of political opposition, it is the book itself, and the way in which the book is structured, that ultimately prove to be the hermeneutic tool necessary for realizing this goal. Highly self-aware and self-referential, *El vano ayer* follows in the tradition of such disparate works as Italo Calvino's *If On a Winter's Night a Traveler* and Tomás Eloy Martínez' *La pasión según Trelew*, displaying the first's ironic deference to the reader's active role in the creation of the story, and the multi-voiced and juridical journalism of the latter. In this chapter, I examine how the journalistic structure, although self-admittedly fictionalized, works within the highly theatrical form of the novel in order to create a believable representation of state repression shortly before Franco's death. The believability of the representation thereby opens the regime to judgment. In doing so, Rosa fixes the historical coordinates that enable the reader in

the present to engage in what María Pía Lara terms "post-metaphysical reflective judgment," a process by which "(a)ccounting for the past affects and constructs a distinctive view of justice" (27). The act of "accounting for the past," according to Lara, necessarily implies an ethical component that links our common "need to understand" to a political evaluation and judgment (136). This view of justice is a view *from* the present, and is consequently only able to be acted upon from said present. I argue that Rosa capitalizes on the combination of the reader's complicity in the construction of the novel as such and the epistemological, juridical and evidentiary characteristics of journalism to create the space in the present for the judgment of the past. In doing so, he calls into question the contemporary historical and memorial ethic that has allowed the events of the late 1960s and the early 1970s to go scantly noted, and identifies the Francoist regime as subject to judgment.

I divide this chapter into three sections. In the first section, I discuss María Pía Lara's concept of reflective judgment and how it relates to the journalistic epistemology that I find at work in Rosa's novel. Lara's theorization of postmetaphysical judgment produced by the consideration of a story informs my argument that Rosa's novel moves beyond the political politeness of the post-Transition and assigns culpability on the Franco regime. In the second section, I address the fictionality of the novel. The process of creating a fictional story should not be taken for granted in *El vano ayer*. I demonstrate how the narration, through a

process of emptying out and then filling up (or perhaps destructing and subsequently reconstructing) the narrative space, forces the reader to view a fictional world with a moral and ethical code that is normally reserved for true historical events. Having laid bare this process, I move on to the final section in which I show how the multiple and often contradictory voices that weave together the narration constitute a journalistic approach to storytelling while not abandoning, but rather supplementing, the novelistic project. Since the reader is already ethically and morally invested in the events depicted, this faux-journalism creates a journalistic affect that serves to problematize the collecting/writing of history and to locate the actions depicted within a political framework.

In her 2007 book *Narrating Evil: A Postmetaphysical Theory of Reflective Judgment*, María Pía Lara outlines the theoretical and practical framework by which a story leads a reader to a reflective judgment. Reflective judgment, as she defines the term, is an extension of Jürgen Habermas' concept of "learning from catastrophes,"[1] which proposes that our normative concepts of good and evil possess a postmetaphysical characteristic in that they are the products of "societies confront(ing) their past as they come to critically understand what has happened" and "learn(ing) about their true content only if some important catastrophes make us aware of them because these notions were violated in the empirical actions of cruelty between humans" (Lara 25, 26). Reflective judgment, then, is a consideration of events or actions weighed against definitions of good and evil that

are the products of experienced tragedy, not a priori moral (which is to say, metaphysical) definitions. In this sense, reflective judgments are a central component of a continuing redefinition of moral concepts in that every action or event, including those portrayed in stories, can be considered to be within this matrix. This is why Lara proposes that stories, literature, and other forms of narrative possess a disclosive characteristic that make them particularly well-suited media for the creation of reflective judgment:

> Literature makes it possible to capture the historical differences between the past and the present. Yet it is only through our moral application of reflective judgments that we are able to recover those stories as tools that help us learn about our evil deeds… The disclosiveness of the description of actions relates to the aesthetic realm because they are well-constructed *expressions* that make us see things in a way that we were not capable of seeing before. With this conscious move, I mean to connect a disclosive view of language that affects both realms to the aesthetic qualities of an expression and to the moral capacity of immanent critique while using certain expressions in an original way to communicate something. (34, italics in the original)

Stories, in their carefully crafted way of conveying information and ideas, "disclose" the possible moral elements of action in a manner that makes possible the reader's reflective judgment. In the 1954-55 *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, R.M. Hare states that "no work of fiction can be about a concrete individual" (310).

Diamond in ---- responds and reaffirms this sentiment by claiming that "any moral judgment we are led to by a novel is necessarily universal" (40). This is precisely the transcendentalism that Lara is trying to escape by way of a postmetaphyscial understanding of morals and ethics. Moreover, stories operate within the public sphere, opening the consideration of their moral content to multiple reflective judgments, which are themselves open to judgment, scrutiny and revisions, a crucial step in the process of creating normative definitions of good and evil outside of metaphysical prescription.

In developing her theory of reflective judgment, Lara's two principal points of reference are Primo Levi and Hannah Arendt, especially the latter's 1963 work *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, because these thinkers highlight how stories create a space for understanding the historical and moral significance of action (Levi) and are instrumental in forming a political community (Arendt). Lara's analysis of Levi, an Italian chemist and Auschwitz survivor, centers primarily on *The Drowned and the Saved* (1986), one of his final examinations of his experience in the Nazi concentration camp before his death in 1987. In Lara's view, "Levi's narratives avoid the simplistic strategy of forming judgmental views about the moral collapse he witnessed. Instead, I wish to argue, his narratives offer us the vital elements, that when brought together, make it possible for us to form our own judgments" (120). We can already see how Lara considers Levi's narrative technique to engender reflective judgments by not imposing his own judgments upon the reader, but rather

by telling a story that invites the reader to consider its elements and reach his own conclusions. One of the principal mechanisms that Levi uses to achieve this end is the human identification between the reader and the subjects of his ruminations, enabling the reader, according to Lara, to extract the "moral lesson of the story in order to build up some kind of moral judgment" (123). In recognizing that we are humans just as the guards and as the *kapos,*[2] the reader of Levi's stories is able to view herself in that moral space, hopefully leading to some form of understanding: "(t)his is the space where the story creates the possibility of self-reflection, of understanding, of seeing the example as a way of mirroring ourselves into our own corrupted shape" (123).

This is also where Levi, who has a very nuanced and cautious approach to the judgment of his captors and oppressors,[3] invites the reader, by way of his imagination and identification with the victims of the story, to this judgment. An integral part of reflective judgment is the story's ability to provoke an identification with a particular subject or character, thereby locating both that subject's situation and whatever happens to her within the same normative, postmetaphysical ethical universe as the reader. The obvious advantage to this approach is that the reader is able to come away from the story possessing an innate understanding of a character's singular experience, an experience whose totality will always escape the limited nature of human language.[4] Levi uses this bridge across the ineffable to crystallize the Jews' status as victims, and the guards and camp officials as

oppressors. When describing those unfortunate prisoners who were forced to either beat or kill their fellow Jews in *The Drowned and the Saved*, Levi implores the reader not to pass judgment on these men, but rather to attempt a thought experiment:

> Let him imagine, if he can, that he has lived for months or years in a ghetto, tormented by chronic hunger, fatigue, promiscuity, and humiliation; that he has seen die around him, one by one, his beloved… and that he is at last flung inside the walls of an indecipherable inferno. This… is the true *Befehlnotstand*, the 'state of compulsion following an order.'" (Levi 59)

Levi bases his call for compassion on our ability to imagine the experience while still adhering to the "we can never understand" claim. Although we cannot share the feeling of being tortured or of killing, the act of imagining it and the reconsideration of one's subject position in light of these imagined horrors, is in service of a judicial and retributive claim when applied to the guards and administrators of the camp: "I do know that I was a guiltless victim and I was not a murderer. I know that the murderers existed, not only in Germany, and still exist, retired or on active duty, and that to confuse them with their victims is a moral disease or an aesthetic affection or a sinister sign of complicity; above all, it is precious service rendered (intentionally or not) to the negators of truth" (48-9).[5] Levi hopes that, by at least linguistically approaching some form of link across that ineffable gap of personal experience, the

reader, and therefore the world, will cast judgment upon the German soldiers who tortured at Auschwitz.[6]

This collective judgment of the German persecution of Jews leads the reader to a consideration of Lara's analysis of Hannah Arendt and how reflective judgment forms political communities. Lara sees in Arendt's work a process by which actions are linked to judgments through narration. This narration, then, in its status as a common text contemplated and evaluated by multiple individuals, serves a unifying role. To illustrate how this process works, Arendt unpackages the disclosive nature of the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann in her 1963 account, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. While working as a writer for *New Yorker* magazine, Arendt attended and reported on the trial of Adolf Eichmann, a Nazi officer responsible for the transportation of Jews to Auschwitz and Dachau who had been hiding in Argentina since the end of World War II.[7] The outcome of his trial in Jerusalem was a foregone conclusion, but the process by which the court, and the country, came to that conclusion exemplifies how the disclosive nature of narrative creates a political community. Lara explains how the formation of community by way of the "reading" of a common narrative involves two stages:

> (B)y linking action to judgment through *narratives* we can see why reflective judgment consists of two different moments: The first happens when the spectator or reader issues a judgment about what is happening in the representation, where she considers the idea of a spectator who sees action

> with an impartial detachment. The second moment occurs when spectators engage in understanding action, to pursue new paths to transform themselves. Then the viewer becomes an actor. In deliberating with others, then, spectators see themselves as persons whose responsibility toward their community needs to activate their collective judgment in order to create a sense of community. (44)

This second moment is precisely what occurred during the Eichmann trial. The Israeli people (as well as Jews worldwide) were crystallized in a political community in their common consideration and judgment of Eichmann's actions.[8] Although rightly considered to be a show trial catering to the Jewish state's desire for post-World War II catharsis, the collective consideration of the past is an important moment because not only does it create the space for dialogue about events in the past, but it also serves as a transitional period, opening up the possibility for what Lara calls "critical periods of accountability… where justice should be redefined" (52). She goes on to comment, "Eichmann's trail was meant as a well-orchestrated representation and dramatization of a criminal past. This is why the spectators' attendance at the trial allowed them to become a political community" (52). In their status as both observers and actors in the creation of national collective memory, the Israeli people's common "reading" of the Eichmann narrative and the subsequent judgment of his actions show how reflective judgment is instrumental in the creation of political communities.

Lara's examination of both Levi's and Arendt's works demonstrates how the telling of stories leads to a reflective judgment which is integral to a post-metaphysical understanding of ethics and morals. This possibility is grounded, as Lara repeatedly notes, in the disclosive nature of the act of telling and consuming stories. I argue that the narrative structure identified by Lara that leads to reflective judgment is akin to the journalistic structure at work in *El vano ayer*. Although Rosa's novel is, of course, a fictional story, it employs a journalistic structure that leads to reflective judgments. When analyzing *The Drowned and the Saved*, Lara notes that reflective judgments come about by the consideration and piecing together of disparate elements: "Levi's narratives avoid the simplistic strategy of forming judgmental views about the moral collapse he witnessed. Instead, I wish to argue, his narratives offer us the vital elements, that when brought together, make it possible for us to form our own judgments" (120). Is this not parallel to what occurs within the journalistic framework, where a writer (supposedly) dispassionately presents the multiple elements of a story, making possible the reader's independent reflective judgment? Likewise, Lara contends that the legal structure of the Eichmann trial performs a disclosive function, making reflective judgments possible:

> Bilsky highlights that the judges at the Eichmann trial could behave either by following previous written scripts (what Kant would call making a "determinant judgment"), or by finding new resources to produce their own script in accord with the evidence shown at court (which would mean making a reflective

> judgment). This interpretation makes it clear that legal justice is achieved through the process of disclosive stories presented in a legal court. It is a forum for developing a reflective judgment about international justice because such stories help to frame in broader terms our sense of understanding and responsibility. (52)

I believe that the same could be said about journalism. Just as a court does, the journalistic mode of presentation has a prescribed structure and code of conduct that give forum to disclosive stories that then lead to reflective judgments. Although I contend that Rosa does have a distinct political agenda, I show in the following pages how the journalistic practices employed by Rosa in *El vano ayer*, mimicking the supposedly objective nature of journalism, perform the same disclosive function that Lara sees in Levi's non-judgmental narrative and in the Eichmann legal proceedings, leading to a reflective judgment of the practices employed by the national police during the student protests of the 1960s.

In *El vano ayer*, Rosa creates the space for moral reflection by framing the novel so that the reader views the story as if it were the collection of testimonies and historical accounts, assigning it moral and ethical value that is normally reserved for the consideration of history. One of the difficulties confronted by every author whose work deals with historical events is the task of engaging the reader who already knows, at the minimum, the macro-outcome. In the case of *El vano ayer*, Rosa must craft a narrative with political overtones set in the mid-1960s that

captures the reader who already is aware of Franco's death a decade later, to say nothing of the Transition and Spain's globalization in the '80s and '90s. His task, then, is to remain faithful to the documented and popularly known circumstances and events that took place while creating the fictional space needed to develop the stories of his central characters.[9] He accomplishes this by using history books themselves as a starting point: "En las páginas de un libro: oculta entre la (*sic*) páginas de un libro, tenaz como flor desecada y en su interior prisionera de aniversarios o lecturas memorables; en la página cuatrocientos veintisiete, cincuenta y tres, ciento dieciséis, doscientos cuatro, en cualquier página de cualquier libro abandonado en los estantes superiores a la espera de un moroso rescate…"(9). The narrator, in referencing the pages of history books, attempts to "seleccionar aquellos nombres menos mencionados, y entre éstos los desconocidos, los completamente desconocidos, los olvidados"(9) in order to begin his story from a historically real person who is so completely ignored by history that he is a name only, an empty (but real) vessel that the narrative voices can fill up. By selecting real history books, Rosa locates his principal character within the scope of recorded history; the books that Rosa cites are indeed real: Heine's *La oposición política al Franquismo* (Crítica 1983), Tuñon's *Historia de España* (Labor 1980), Tusell's *La dictadura de Franco* (Alianza 1988), among others. However, the obvious fictionality of the character that Rosa "selects" from history begins to instruct our understanding of Rosa's narrative project vis-à-vis historical reconstruction.

The name that Rosa selects is Julio Denis, the pseudonym used by Julio Cortázar in a short collection of poems, *Presencia*, published in 1938 (Pedregal Casanova 132). This homage to the Argentine writer is important to the development of *El vano ayer* for two reasons. First, Pedregal Casanova shows how Rosa desires to avoid language that has become hollow and rendered meaningless when talking about Francoism or any other twentieth century ideological movement: "Palabras como *represión, clandestinidad, régimen, comunista, célula, camarada* (Rosa 22)." This language of order, of structure, is the very thing that Cortázar's masterpiece *Rayuela* calls into question: Horacio's search for meaning only makes more clear the meaninglessness of his life and of the social orders through which he moves. This free-flowing, untethered understanding of language and reality is most evidently embodied in Cortázar's use of jazz in the novel. The allusion to Cortázar is important for a second reason. The decentered, reader-driven narrative structure that Cortázar develops in works such as the two collections *Las armas secretas* and *Todos los fuegos el fuego* as well as *Rayuela* undermines the certainty of both language and reality. Rosa adopts this narrative trope by grounding the beginning of the work in real works of history and by making the reader a co-author of the story being told.

From this beginning, two important points inform our reading of the novel. First, Rosa does not begin with the story itself, but with the book as such. The book, especially the book devoted to history, be it fictional or not, creates the horizon of

expectation that the work will in some fashion inform the reader about a set of historical events. Traditionally, the history book aims to flush out the description of each historical actor to the greatest extent possible so as to imbue her with as much validity as possible. This validity is then understood as reliable evidence for whatever truth claim the book makes. The narrator at the beginning of *El vano ayer*, however, does the exact opposite. In looking for those names "menos mencionados," his aim is to capitalize on the reader's faith in an objectively historical actor as he is presented in a history book, and all of the ethical and moral considerations that go along with it. Having garnered that faith from his reader, Rosa then sets out on a new project of social critique via the novelization of a life that is nothing but a name. In this empty name, a name that does not carry the weight and responsibilities of a lived life (or at least a life that we are aware of after extensive research), the narrator continues on to "una vida singular, a una fábula no contada, a un misterio concentrado y a punto de extinguirse con sus testigos, a una novela, al fin, a una novela" (10). This "real" life that is to be novelized places Rosa's work in a liminal space, consciously straddling a line between fiction and reality. Although we know that there was never a professor named Julio Denis working in Madrid in the mid-1960s, the historical distillation process that Rosa enacts at the beginning of the novel imbues the character with the moral and ethical accoutrement of a real person, allowing the author to utilize that character as a window through which to examine the historical environment in which he "lived."

The trope of the fictionalized character that becomes operative as (or at least the embodiment of) an historical actor that we see in Rosa's novelization of Denis is mirrored by the creation of a character within the confines of the story. Early in *El vano ayer*, one of the panoply of voices that lends itself to this work describes how one of the central characters, the student protest leader André Sánchez, ignorant of his own heritage and of the identities of his parents, invents his own past as a way of crystallizing his present identity:

> André sabía que nada de eso era cierto porque no existía, no tenía una sola prueba, y sin embargo él era una de esas personas – todos lo somos de una u otra manera – que inventa sus recuerdos hasta acabar creyéndolos ciertos, que asume un pasado extraño como propio; y eso en el fondo debería bastar para darles realidad, la invención no es despreciable en el acontecer de los hombres porque igualmente acaba influyendo sobre sus decisiones, sobre sus actos. Por decirlo más sencillo: si André no se hubiera creado y creído su hermoso y trágico pasado, tal vez su comportamiento heroico se habría moderado un tanto. (96)

Condensed in this description of one character's autogenesis are two of the central elements that drive the novel: the past as created (novelized) artifact, and the effect that the created past has on both ethics and lived action in the present. But it is also representative of the underlying question that ties all of these works together: the relationship between a fiction and the truth object at its core. Here Rosa-by-way-of-

Sánchez reinforces the idea that the fiction presented to the world holds as much ethical or moral value as the flesh and blood man himself.

Upon recognizing that, although Rosa positions the novel so that we, the readers, however hesitantly, approach it from a historical perspective, we also recognize that there is no history in this book. By this I mean, in juxtaposition to Cercas and Prada, both of whom incorporate historical evidence of real events and people into the narration of their respective stories, Rosa engages in a project of pure fiction. None of the characters were or are real people. The events described are not narrative representation of specific real occurrences. Given this glaring lack of documented history, I claim that two narrative techniques, the complicity of the reader in the construction of the novel and the use of journalistic affect, allow the reader to extract moral and ethical questions from the fiction and meet them on a very real and judiciary level.

The complicity of the reader in the development of the novel must be recognized for what it truly is: a narrative conceit wholly within the artistic purview of the author. Just as the novel is not a documentation or reconstruction of historical events as such but a verisimilar representation, so the reader's involvement must be recognized as a mechanism in Rosa's larger project. The reader's status as a co-author, therefore, needs to be understood as part of an intentional action by Rosa in the playing out of his critical project. In exploring Julio Denis' possibilities as a novelistic character, he outlines this larger critical project, including the reader as a co-inquisitor:

> ¿Seremos capaces de construir una novela que no mueva al sonrojo al lector menos complaciente? ¿Sabremos convertir la peripecia de Julio Denis en un relato de la

> dictadura franquista (pues no otro será el objetivo de la possible novela) útil tanto para quienes la conocieron (e ignoran)? ¿Consiguiremos que ese relato sea más que una fotografía fija, sea un análisis del período y sus consequencias más allá de los lugares comunes, más allá del pintoresquismo habitual, de la pincelada inofensiva, de la épica decorada y sin identidad? ¿Será posible, en fin, que la novela no sea en vano, que sea necesaria? (17)

In outlining the underlying questions that drive the novel, Rosa not only identifies the reader as a co-author, but as one who is equally invested in achieving the goals described as the *raison d'être* of the novel.

Rosa leads the reader to adopt this status as fellow traveler in the epistemology of the journey of the narrator in several ways. First, the narrative voice, when describing how the novel will be organized and developed, repeatedly uses "nosotros." The frequency of this inclusive pronoun forces the reader to begin to see the questions posed by Rosa as her own. The second way that the reader becomes invested is that Rosa, conscious of the elevated status that historical memory and the recuperation of that memory occupy in the contemporary *Zeitgeist*, understands and plays upon the public's desire to reconstruct the past. Therefore, he situates his work within the current trend to investigate historical memory in "la creciente promiscuidad de ficción y no ficción en la más reciente narrativa española, la comparecencia de lo real bajo el disfraz de reportaje, la subordinación de la imaginación narrativa de los terminus de una realidad más o menos documentable" (14). However, once locating his work within this narrative trajectory, the author appeals to the reader's better judgment (both of artistic taste and of history) by

declaring that he is aware of the genre's tendency to overuse "todos esos elementos que han sido adulterados por novelistas de guante de seda, cineastas industrializados y hasta alguna serie de televisión que ha culminado la corrupción de la memoria histórica mediante su definitiva sustitución por una repugnante nostalgia" (22). In recognizing both the public's desire (or perhaps creating its need) for a recuperation of historical memory, and then claiming that everything created in this vein up to this point has been tainted with a "repugnante nostalgia," Rosa makes an undeniably ideological turn that identifies the reader with the development of the novel. In discrediting other narratives and films dealing with historical memory, he positions his novel so that it will right his predecessors' wrongs. This is why he denotes the work "necesaria," not just a work that is following along in the current economically and popularly convenient discourse. In this positioning, the reader/author, already invested in the recuperation of historical memory, is ethically invested in saving the historical process from nostalgia.

The repeated use of "nosotros" throughout the novel constantly reminds the reader of two opposing but closely linked themes: the novel as a work of artifice, and the reader/author's role as the investigator of historically real ethical questions. The fact that *El vano ayer* is a pure work of fiction is reinforced time and again by referring to the theatricality of the narration. When one character describes his experience of being arrested and taken to the *Puerta del Sol,*[10] a recurring motif throughout the novel, his description appropriates the typical formula for a filmed or staged police interrogation scene, culminating in his own recognition of its theatricality:

> Yo ya entendía que aquello no era un detalle de hotel, sino la típica escenografía para una paliza. Y como ellos sabían que yo me lo olía, me tuvieron durante horas esperando. De vez en cuando venían dos, entraban en el despacho y se reían de mí, se animaban el uno al otro a pegarme, pero decían, no, déjalo, a éste lo reservamos para el final, que le tenemos más ganas y se merece más atención. Y se iban, hasta que un par de horas después volvían y otra vez con el mismo teatro. (71)

While wholly believable as a scene that very likely could have occurred, the triteness of the set-up and familiarity of the players involved is not lost on the narrator. This same *mise en scène* is repeated by the voice of a student protester who, after being arrested, is taken to *Sol*: "Había poca luz, sólo un flexo sobre la mesa, aquello tenía mucho de escenografía, de decorado de película norteamericana, sólo faltaba el típico espejo que por un lado refleja y por otro deja ver" (123). This hyperawareness of the novel's fictionality, of its status as a made object, constantly reminds the reader that what he is reading is not documentation, but the end result of narrative choices.

The reader, conscious of the novel's fictionality but invested in the ethical questions of history that the novel explores, occupies two places with regard to *El vano ayer*. Her role as reader is informed by the understanding and constant reminder that the novel is artifice. However, her role as an engaged critic of the ethics of twentieth century Spanish historiography is something quite different. As I have proposed, it is through a journalistic affect that the invested reader is able to construct an appraisal of the fictional, yet verisimilar, parties involved (principally the national police force). In this sense, the fact that the characters giving first person testimonies are fictional is less important, from

an ethically judicious standpoint, than the truth-effect that these testimonies create by way of reproducing the methods of journalistic inquiry. Journalistic affect, I argue, creates the space for the judgment of the depersonified act, leading to an indictment of the system as a whole instead of individual people.

Journalists rely on multiple testimonies generally obtained through interviews, but also through sifting through evidence, police reports, and so forth to garner a more whole understanding of the issue in question. But the question of testimony itself is one of both experience and interpretation. It is vital to the journalistic epistemology because it is the source of multiple perspectives even as it grounds the narrative in a specific experience. At the same time, the conflicting testimonies destabilize any single truth claim, a claim that is further undermined by the incommensurability of language and experience. An undeniable element of the journalistic epistemology in the text that has two simultaneous yet opposing implications: it mimics the objectivity of journalism based on a thorough exploration of evidence, but it also suggests the subjectivity and self-referential claims to truth that come into conflict, undermining the cohesion of the narrative as a whole.

One of the ways in which *El vano ayer* creates the illusion of journalism is through multiple narrative points of view, each presented as a unique truth claim much as a journalistic inquiry would involve multiple interviews with sources. The tactic of using multiple points of view represents a narrative self-consciousness common in postmodern literature. Patricia Waugh in *Metafiction* proposes two concepts that help explain the role of this technique: play and frame analysis. Both of these concepts are tied to the idea that literature (and life) are artificial constructs, dependent upon preconceived structuration

and order. The object of metafiction, she argues, is to unbalance the order and to break apart the structure so as to show the absence of any metaphysical systemization. Novelistic play first establishes the rules of the narration and then undermines them, bringing into focus how the fiction relates to the 'real world': "Metafiction functions through the problematization rather than the destruction of the concept of 'reality'. It depends on the regular construction and subversion of rules and systems. Such novels usually set up an internally consistent 'play' world which ensures the reader's absorption and then lays bare its rules in order to investigate the relation of 'fiction' to 'reality', the concept of 'pretence'" (40-1). Likewise, her analysis of frames shows the importance and, ultimately, inescapability of a referential understanding of knowledge. Discussing Erving Goffman's *Frame Analysis*, Waugh concludes that "[f]rames in life operate like conventions in a novel: they facilitate action and involvement in a situation… Analysis of frames is the analysis… of the organization of experience"(30). Both of these concepts come to bear on *El vano ayer* because the novel's journalistic organization of knowledge establishes rules of interaction between the narrator(s) and the reader (which is analogous to Waugh's idea of "play") and specific models of discourse and credibility (which is analogous to "frames").

The journalistic framing of the multiple testimonies, the fact that they are presented as sources playing the role of witness or of expert, sets the novel in a different class than other multiple narrative books. The most traditional role of the multi-voiced narration is the undermining of structural cohesion. And since, as Waugh rightly proposes, the defining characteristic of metafiction is that it reveals the artificial nature of

the narrative process, especially as we have inherited it from the Enlightenment ideal of Hegel's emplotment, the conflicting testimonies of multiple narrators achieve this end with great success. In this respect, *El vano ayer* has one foot in this tradition; the way in which Rosa makes the reader complicit in both the narration of the story and the ethical questioning that informs it calls into question the role of the narrator and the structure of the book as a whole. However, the specific role of each voice as a journalistic source, while destabilizing a congruous narrative, serves a unifying role as well. Each voice, in its role as a witness, makes a claim to truth. Normally, multiple and conflicting truth claims demonstrate the absence, or at least invalidation, of any metaphysical organization. Yet, Rosa's primary concern here is not to show the limits of narrativity but to use narrative in an exploration of historical ethics: for Rosa, the role of the aesthetic is to be a vehicle for the ethical. Within the journalistic framework, multiple truth claims do not destabilize a center, but in fact bring the center more into focus by creating the discursive space for dealing with the ethical question at hand.

Journalistic affect leads to a political awareness and judgment through the truth claim inherent to the form of the journalistic aesthetic. Affect as a rhetorical implement is based upon the idea that one's position, from an epistemological or emotional standpoint, vis-à-vis an event, person or body of knowledge can be influenced, leading to new subject positions. This idea has been explored by thinkers and philosophers for millennia. In the case of *El vano ayer*, the reader sees in the narration a preconceived understanding of journalistic aesthetics that creates a horizon of expectation. This horizon of journalistic expectation, and the subsequent truth-effect, is a product of affect

because the specific medium through which the reader consumes the work influences how the work is interpreted.

A particularly powerful use of this truth-effect is the multiple voices that describe the brutality and torture perpetrated by the national police force in its campaign against subversive and dissident social movements. Here we see how the truth claim built into journalism enables Rosa to straddle a generic fence, free to craft a fictitious narrative on the one side while creating the space for a judgment of the systemic oppression of the police based on evaluated "evidence" on the other. The reader, as an historical actor, is the recipient of countless stories of torture (especially institutionalized torture perpetrated by the state: Nazi Germany, Khmer Rouge Cambodia, Junta Argentina, among others) that inform her reading and condition her response, which is to say that torture is an established narrative locus already populated by descriptive archetypes. This is important not only in terms of the narrative construction of the novel, but also in latching onto the ethics of victimhood and witness that inform those ethics and how they are intrinsically linked to the idea of a truth claim.

Affect is especially important in terms of the relationship between a truth claim and an ethical judgment. The work of Primo Levi, especially his essays exploring the meaning of his internment, his survival and the connection between the oppressed and the oppressor, is an example of this relationship. There are obvious differences between what happened at Auschwitz and what happened in Spain in the late 1960s. The most immediate, of course, are the sheer size and systemization of the German example as compared to the much smaller and comparably rudimentary Spanish operation, and the

number of people that were interned and killed. Another important difference is the fact that many people responsible for what happened in World War II had been put on trial, either during the Nuremburg trials in 1947 or during subsequent decades of trials in the national court systems of, most notably, Germany and Poland.[11] This process of denazification, however problematic, at the least made public the horrors that had occurred under the pretext of a national project.[12] Although the large majority of the public did not experience the horrors of Hitler's Final Solution, the telling of the story, both in narrative works like those of Levi and Elie Weisel's *Night* and in a legal setting, created the affect in the reader that led to a space for judgment. Most notably, these works made this affect possible by fashioning a specific language with which to describe oppression and torture.

In *El vano ayer*, Rosa also establishes a specific language for describing the relationships between the police force and the other characters in the novel, as well as between the novel and the reader. After haven given voice to several people who had been tortured by the police, and just before entering into one of the longest passages devoted to the theme, the narrator asks, "cómo podemos referirnos a la tortura en una novela" (155). Repeating (and reinforcing) the role of the reader both in the development of the story and in the exploration of an ethical space, Rosa's question posits torture both as a theme subject to narrativization and something that radiates out from the novel, linking onto a discursively problematic world outside of the book. The narrator first describes the possible ways of approaching torture though narrative, suggesting that "indefinición" and a few suggestive techniques leaves it to the reader, or the mind of the

reader, to actually torture the character (155). He quickly discards this prospect because it affords the reader the choice of taking part or avoiding involvement according to his or her disposition. However, this dismissal immediately proves ironic in that the description of the different levels of involvement achieves the very goal of having the reader be the one to torture the prisoner:

> "(P)odrá limitarse a escuchar los gritos desde una habitación contigua: o contemplar fotografías forenses; o asistir a la tortura aunque tapándose los ojos, mirando sin querer mirar a través de los intersticios de sus dedos colocados como antifaz; o si sus conocimientos médicos se lo permiten podrá adivinar los destrozos interiors, los que no se ven, la extra vasación de la sange, la formación silenciosa de hernias, la quiebra en sordina de los huesos más delgados, la hinchazón de los órganos, la coagulación sanguínea en el laberinto cerebral; o incluso participar, algunos lectores sádicos preferirían participar en el tormento, empuñar la vara que azota, retorcer los miembros con sus propias manos, levantar las uñas con ese bolígrafo publicitario que guardan en el bolsillo de la camisa, accionar la dinamo eléctrica con habilidad insospechada." (155-6)

This enumeration of the reader's possible approaches to torture proves that it is indeed the voyeuristic and sadistic reader, in the fictional setting, who ultimately tortures the victim: if one does not read, the prisoner is not tortured.[13] But Rosa attempts to exhaust the vocabulary of torture from within a fictional paradigm in order to lend more credibility and increase the truth-effect of the victim who is about to speak.

Rosa cedes narrative voice to an anonymous torture victim because "hablar de tortura con generalidades es como no decir nada; cuando se dice que en el franquismo se torturaba hay que describir cómo se torturaba, formas, métodos, intensidad… hay que recoger testimonios, hay que especificar los métodos, para que no sea en vano" (156). The movement from imagined (although sometimes specific) ideas about torture to a specific person who is able to say "This happened to me" creates the effect of a documented interview, thereby also inducing the reader to view the ensuing "testimony" within a distinct ontological framework.

The victim describes how he was tortured twice, once in 1959 when he was a member of an armed resistance group and was caught transporting weapons to Madrid, and again in 1974 when he as arrested and tortured as a scapegoat for a crime that he did not commit. These episodes locate two common memes in the anti-Francoist discourse that have long been sites of fictional exploration. The first is the armed resistance fighter, occasionally in the form of a Maquis cell member, who despite the odds refuses to give up his gun and therefore becomes the locus of Republican Civil War fantasy (*Luna de lobos* by Julio Llamazares*, Laberinto del fauno* by Guillermo del Toro, *El embrujo de Shanghi* by Juan Marsé, among many others). The second is the arbitrary cruelty of the police under Francoism personified in the political scapegoat (*El crimen de Cuenca* by Pilar Miró, *El lobo* by Miguel Courtois). By referencing these two topoi, Rosa acknowledges the artistic heritage of which he is the recipient and broadens the scope of the question of torture to include both enemies of the state and "regular citizens."

In describing his experiences in police custody, the anonymous victim repeatedly depersonifies the agents of the government and his torturers. Apart from a few instances in which he specifies "un comisario acompañado por dos bestias" (158), "un policía" (166, 168), and "los jueces…los abogados… el fiscal, todos militares, todos repetían como loritos eso de 'las heridas causadas por la resistencia del acusado durante su detención'" (169), all of which dehumanize the subject by reducing it to a label or a caricature, the victim only references the agents of the government by using the third person plural verb form. This depersonification of the act of torturing shifts the responsibility from a specific individual to the governing system that facilitates and condones such action. In recognizing the ultimate culprit of his pain, the victim crystallizes this movement: "Correctivos de ésos dio muchos el franquismo" (157). The police agent that put the alligator clips on the body and fires up the battery, sending increasing amounts of voltage running though the body of his victim, is only the exterior manifestation, the tool, of Francoism's symbolic universe.

Although the victim restructures the process of assigning culpability in his torture, the experience itself remains beyond the scope of narration. The narrator recognizes that there exists an unbridgeable gap of experience between himself and the reader, a gap of the ineffable that will forever make it impossible for the reader to share the victim's subjective experience. This is a persistent problem in the literature of witnessing:

> (N)o sirve de nada que intente transmitir el dolor que sentía, porque eso sólo puede conocerse al experimentarlo, no existe vocabulario que lo describa, es mentira que se pueda informar del dolor al lector, es posible describir la tortura exteriormente, pero

> el dolor no, sólo puede sentirse, sólo queda invitar al curioso a que se pille un dedo entre las bisagras de una puerta, sin rompérselo, apenas una herida, la uña hundida, que sienta cómo le duele, y sólo me refiero al dolor inmediato, el que le humedece los ojos y le hace morderse los labios. En unas imposibles matemáticas del calvario multiplique ese dolor hasta el infinito, en intensidad, en duración, en extensión por todo el cuerpo, y aun así sólo habrá logrado un ligera aproximación. (165)

In this description of the un-describable, we hear echoes of Levi's description of his experience in the *lager*. It is important to note that this victim distinguishes between describing the physical act of torture (the methods used and the acts committed) and the pain of the experience. Although the question of transmitting the experience of sensation or emotion from one subject to another has long been a question that has occupied phenomenological and semiotic inquiries,[14] the specific question of torture is a place where there has been an attempt to bridge the ineffable in order to move torture from the realm of the morally horrendous (the unimaginable) to that of the ethically and morally codifiable. This move is integral to reflective judgment, because it is an attempt to identify the reader with the experiences of the victim. As Lara has shown, this identification then serves as a common discursive space in which actions can be deemed ethically valid or invalid based on the readers ability to imagine those horrors being committed to her own body.

In *El vano ayer*, the gap of the ineffable is most evident the section that recounts the detention of a young woman named Marta Requejo, a member of a university resistance group, who then flees the country with her father. Her story is a retelling of an

event that has already been described earlier in the book. In this section, another member of the university cadre, a young man, describes in a first-person narration the events surrounding a police raid on an abandoned house on the outskirts of town that they were using to plan an upcoming general strike. Declaring that "(l)as casualidades no existen," the young man claims that Denis' previous contact with Marta proves his collaboration with the police and that he was instrumental in providing the information that led to their capture. The second recounting of this incident, strengthening the journalistic structure of the book as a whole, takes on a much different tone. Told from the point of an omniscient narrator with no punctuation apart from commas and the capitalization of proper nouns, the voice captures the frantic energy of the youth movement and the frenetic terror of capture and loss of home. Throughout these few brief but frenzied pages, the common thread that tries to bring the recklessness of the language into some kind of focus is the treatment of the whole system of the national government, the police, the protesters, and the standers-by as a representation of the ironic or even the grotesque. The narrator continuously reminds the reader of the carnivalesque order of things and that the only way of dealing with it is to laugh: "varios de los reunidos salieron a correr por al puerta trasera por la sola diversión de jugar con los policías"(150); "los agentes de paisano irrumpieron por la puerta con espectacularidad de payasos, empuñando pistolas de agua y guiñando los ojos a los muchachos" (150); "le pedían que repitiese los mismos chistes que se contaban entre ellos los estudiantes en las reuniones" (151); "le preguntaban acerca de Guillermo Birón, que debía de ser un exitoso *clown*" (151); "(su padre) comentó… que todo era una travesura tardía aplicada contra él en el cuerpo de su

hija, porque él ya había conocido el carácter bromista de aquel regimen… en el treinta y nueve" (151); "se instalaron en Toulouse, donde el padre abrió un restaurante español, La Vieille Espagne, en el que los compatriotas trasterrados se reunían por las noches a reír sus nostalgias" (152). The pain is sublimated into laughter, allowing the reader to peer down into the gap of the ineffable and truly comprehend that it can never be crossed.

What makes these testimonies, and others like them, fall within the scope of a journalistic epistemology, rather than that of testimonial as such, are the multiple and opposing points of view presented in the novel that serve as an ideological counterweight to the anti-authoritarian positions that they take. When voice is given to a police officer, his testimony, while betraying the political project of Rosa, at least creates the illusion of journalistic integrity: "Claro que tenían motivos para patearnos, porque nostotros pegábamos fuerte, así ha sido siempre, ahí no valen democracias ni dictaduras: la policía pega fuerte en todas partes, porque eso te lo enseñan en las academias, es la única forma de que se tomen en serio tus advertencias para la próxima vez. Si no, ¿Qué pasaría?" (91). Although it is obvious where Rosa's loyalties lie, the multiple and opposing points of view create the illusion of journalistic objectivity so that when the victim of torture is afforded the opportunity to speak, it is understood as the filling out of the journalistic inquiry.

This becomes even more apparent in the penultimate section of the novel where the voice of a police officer returns, chastising Rosa (or perhaps the reader/writer) for writing a trite and self-indulgent book that says more about the disposition of the author than about the object of his inquiry. The police officer (and we know that he is a police

officer by his use of the pronoun "nosotros" in reference to the ironic phrase of "los policías malísimos") begins his rebuke claiming that "(e)scribir una novela resentida es fácil, ya lo creo: y esto que usted está perturbando es, sin duda, una novela resentida, un *J'accuse* poco meritorio y en realidad inofensivo," before adopting a chiding and snide posture:

> [Q]ué facil y qué gratuito andar pidiendo cuentas a estas alturas, exigir responsabilidades con la boca chica, culpar a todos sin disculpas ni contextos ni coyuntura, da lo mismo:… los policías malísimos que torturaban y torturan y torturarán… pequeños franquitos con un tic golpeador en el brazo desde que salimos de una academia en la que parece que todavía nos hacen jurar fieldad a los principios del Movimiento nacional. (265)

In closing the investigatory aspect of the novel with this critical voice instead of one more person making claims of Francoist oppression (the novel itself closes with what could be described as two codas: one describing the shell-of-a-man that Denis becomes in Paris, the other a description of an ex-patriot Spanish restaurant in Toulouse), Rosa fulfills a journalistic obligation to give a forum to varying viewpoints on a particular issue. However, this dissenting voice, in criticizing the "44,7% de las páginas" dedicated to cataloguing the abuses of the Franco regime, highlights the fictitious nature of the work: "resulta evidente que usted se beneficia de la buena disposición del lector, trabucando sus sentimientos mediante su exposición a terribles experiencias personales que, de entrada, son absolutamente falsas, se trata de personajes ficticios, producto de una imaginación necesitada de mártires que adornen la fácil patraña del Estado policial" (267,

268). The fictional status of the voices does not, however, detract from their ability to engender an affect that leads to an ethical judgment. This is because the judgment is a product of epistemological system at work in the novel that is organized around competing claims to truth that reference an extratextual reality, not the reality of the characters themselves.

The torture victim who had been arrested delivering weapons in the 1950s and arrested again in the 1970s shows how a judgment is not dependent upon the flesh-and-blood reality of the character, concluding his testimony with two passages that make evident the fictional nature of his story and the ultimate authority of Rosa: "Es inutil, una vez más, que el autor intente en su relato elegir palabras para mi sufrimiento. No tenía prácticamente fuerzas para sacudirme, para aullar, para suplicar, aunque el autor forzará mi léxico, me hará buscar comparaciones imposibles" (167). In reinforcing the ineffability of his experience ("Es inutil… elegir palabras para mi sufrimiento"), the victim also clarifies his ontological status as a fictive subject ("el autor forzará mi léxico"). Shortly thereafter, the same victim leaves no doubt about the nature of his story: "Y aquí concluye mi relato. Puede el autor seguir con esta ficción de la que me ha obligado a formar parte…" (170). The reader is then confronted with a fictional account of the true ineffable. Despite the fictional nature of the victim, despite the reader's awareness of her own complicity in the writing of story, the reader is also aware of her own inability to bridge the gap of the ineffable, leading to reflective judgment of the Francoist system.

In adopting a journalistic structure, Rosa imbues *El vano ayer* with a capacity to induce the reader to make a judgment of the Franco regime. The reader, already ethically invested in the question of (re)writing history by way of his involvement in the writing of the novel, is influenced by a journalistic affect that leads to a reflective judgment. The multiple voices that weave the story together take on an evidentiary quality, especially since the journalistic form, while supposedly objective, is operative in both informative and judgmental capacities. By this I mean that journalism, in its role as a source of information, enables a reader to use that information in order to make an independent judgment. As each distinct voice builds the story, journalistic affect leads the reader to identify with the speaker. This identification, of course, can be both affirmative (which is to say compassionate, as with the cases of the prisoners who were tortured) or negative (which is to say unsympathetic, as with the cases of the police officers). In either case, the "evidence" guides the reader to morally identify with the political opposition of the era. The subsequent reflective judgment, in which the reader becomes part of the political community of the opposition, as Arendt has shown, condemns not only the actions of those individual police officers, but in identifying them as pieces within a larger social body, it also condemns Francoism as a whole.

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[1] Habermas' idea of "learning from catastrophes" stems from a larger thesis regarding the postnational state that he develops in 1998 book *The Postnational Constellations: Political Essays*. In this volume, he contributes to discussions about the social and political development of the twentieth century, a discussion prominently continued by Alain Badiou in his 2000 work *The Century*. Habermas

proposes that one of the defining characteristics of the past century was the development of the modern welfare state. He argues that the welfare state, organized around the idea of citizenship, locates this society in moral universe distinct from others of modernity.

[2] A *kapo* was a prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp who served a functionary role, and received either more lenient treatment or a reduced sentences as a reward. *Kapos* often became known for their harsh treatment of other prisoners. This harsh treatment was an extension of the prisoner's status, crystallizing the social hierarchy of the *lager*. As Levi notes, even in these extreme circumstances, the drive to establish and maintain social order is strong: "the intoxication with power is so powerful as to prevail even under conditions seemingly designed to extinguish all individual will" (67).

[3]Levi is careful to locate the person who he is judging within a specific frame of responsibility that he lays out in *The Drown and the Saved*. This frame is influenced by his postmodern understanding of memory and the role that memory plays in judgment: "Judges know (that memories lie) very well: almost never do two eyewitnesses of the same event describe it in the same way and with the same words, even if the event is recent and if neither of them has a personal interest in distorting it"(23). From here, he goes on to absolve all those "whose concurrence in the guilt was minimal and for whom coercion was of the highest degree" (44). Levi places many lowlevel workers and functionaries in this group. He of course condemns outright the leaders of the camp and many of the guards. His most cautious judgment is reserved for those prisoners who worked in the offices of the concentration camps and in close quarters with the camp staff. He recognizes the morally gray area that these individuals occupy in that they are facilitating the operation of the camp, but they also aid their fellow prisoners in "sensing who among (the prison officials) might be corrupted, who dissuaded from the crueler decisions, who blackmailed, who deceived, who frightened by the prospect of a *redde rationem* at the war's end" (45).

[4] The relationship between language and experience touches upon two important questions: phenomenology (experience as it is presented to consciousness) and semiotics (the sign systems by which communication is mediated).

[5] I believe that it is important to contextualize this quote within Levi's larger argument in *The Drowned and the Saved*. His claim that he was a guiltless victim and not a murderer is made in response to and as a refutation of observations made by filmmaker Liliana Cavani: "The film director Liliana Cavani, who was asked to express briefly the meaing of a beautiful and false film of hers, declared: 'We are all victims or murderers, and we accept these roles voluntarily. Only Sade and Dostoevsky have really understood this.' She also said she believed 'that in every environment, in every relationship, there is a victim-executioner dynamism more or less clearly expressed and generally lived on an unconscious level'" (48). What this

contextualization shows is that Cavani is speaking structurally, attempting to explicate what the Italian chemist calls "the unconsciousness and the minds depths", whereas Levi is looking to assign blame on those who persecuted him, noting that "confusing the two roles (of victim and persecutor) means wanting to becloud *our need for justice at its foundation*" (49, italics mine).

[6] Susan Sontag, in *Regarding the Pain of Others*, examines another example of an attempt to bridge the gap of the ineffable: Fenton's photograph of a battle scene in the Crimean War, "The Valley of the Shadow of Death". Claiming that "Fenton's memorial photograph is a portrait of absence, of death without the dead", Sontag shows how although the viewer does not experience directly the pain or the death visited upon the 600 British soldiers who were ambushed at this place (in fact, the viewer does not even see a body), a sense of the terror is still experienced, conveying that which eludes description.

[7] The capture of Eichmann is itself a riveting story. Having fled Germany at the end of the war under an assumed name, he took up residence in Buenos Aires, Argentina and worked as a supervisor at an automobile factory. Although Eichmann changed his name, he neglected to change those of his wife or his daughter. By way of this oversight, knowledge of his residence in Argentina ultimately made it back to Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency. Unsure as to what the response would be from the Argentine government should they request his extradition for the purpose of trial, a team of Mossad agents abducted Eichmann on the way home from work, drugged him, and snuck him onto an El Al flight back to Jerusalem.

[8] Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* is the most comprehensive and thorough consideration of the creation of normative communities via the negative marking or marginalization of the other. Expanding upon his work in *The Order of Things* exploring the negative formation of identity, Foucault chronicles the evolution of discipline from its location on the body in pre-modernity to the controlling of time and space in modern times.

[9] This is the task of any novelist who sets the story in a historically real time and place. In order for the story to maintain verisimilitude, the author working in the realist tradition, as Rosa does, must acknowledge and work within the events of the story's setting. This dictum is all the more important when dealing with politically volatile events. For example, were a novelist to set a story in England in the year 1940 without acknowledging World War II, the story would lose all credibility. This is not to say that those politically charged events must be the central focus of the story, but the crafting of the narrative must take them into account.

[10] The *Puerta del Sol*, when referenced in this novel, alludes to the *Dirección General de Seguridad*, which during Franco's dictatorship was housed in the building that now is the seat of the government of the Community of Madrid. During the post-Civil War years, it gained a reputation for fierce interrogation and torture. For more

on the *DGS*, see *Franco's Justice: Repression in Madrid After the Spanish Civil War* by Julius Ruiz.

[11] Peter Weiss's 1966 play *The Investigation* deals directly with juridical descriptions of torture as they are presented in courtroom in post-war Germany. Based on real court documentation and using the names of people who were put on trial for their participation in camp activities, the witnesses' descriptions of torture techniques makes direct links between the pain that they suffered and those who inflicted the pain.

[12] Denazification has been a contentious issue since the end of World War II. It first started as a part of the Allied-led occupation of Germany and the accompanying war-crimes trials. It later became an intricate social question as many low-level functionaries and soldiers reintegrated into German society. Aware that a complete purge of all people with ties to the Nazi regime was neither possible nor desirable, the German public was faced with the question of how to reshape their society conscious of the complicity of a large portion of their citizens in the horrors of World War II. Some of the most famous cases of this question occurred in the universities, prominently exemplified by Martin Heidegger. Having been appointed rector of Freiburg University and having become a member of the Nazi Party in 1933, he was stripped of his post in the post-war years. During the denazification process, he was designated a *mitläufer*, literally meaning walking (*laufen*) with (*mit*), and allowed to return to teaching. His association with National Socialism continues to be a source of controversy and the focus of many works published on the philosopher.

[13] Alejandro Amenábar explores the same theme in his 1996 film *Tesis*. Likewise, Pier Paolo Pasolini's 1975 film *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* examines the abuses of fascism by way of the relationship between torture and voyeurism.

[14] Emotions hold a unique position in a consideration of sign systems because their social and individual values both precede and are subject to the process of naming. Roland Barthes explains the function of the sign in discourse thusly: "Every sign includes or implies three relations. To start with, an interior relation which unites its signifier to its signified; then two exterior relations: a virtual one that unites the sign to a specific reservoir of other signs it may be drawn from in order to be inserted in discourse; and an actual one that unites the sign to other signs in the discourse preceding or succeeding it" ("The Imagination of the Sign" 211). As objects of discursive consideration, therefore, emotion is socially constructed in that a given reaction to stimulus has a communally accepted meaning. However, this is not to say that emotion does not have a more primal, immediate existence. As Sergio Salvatore and Claudia Venuleo observe, "emotion is clearly close to the naïve experience everyone has of affective arousal that 'commonsense' considers emotion. Nevertheless, [this definition] does not take into account the socio-constructive nature of the relationship between subject and the world, and is therefore

insufficient to enable the semiopoietic capability of language to be understood" (34). This is to say that, although an emotion is immanent in relation to the affective influence, the emotion itself is not free of semiotic construction in that the person has been socially conditioned to react in certain ways to given stimuli.

# Conclusion

The embodied truths that provide the narrative foundation for *Soldados de Salamina*, *Las esquinas del aire*, and *El vano ayer* indicate several reorientations in Spanish historical fiction. One level, as I have described, it is a move away from the wholly fictional novels of the late 1980s and 1990s and toward fiction that incorporates extant historical material. This evolution, however, is parallel to (or the progenitor of) another important reorientation: the move towards a fiction that begins to negotiate questions of ethics and trauma related to the Spanish Civil War and Francoism by assimilating truth objects into novels that are embraced by the neoliberal, mass-marketed paradigm of publishing indicates an emergent stage of twentieth century Spanish historiography.

That these novels are being published (and voluminously sold) at the same time as a new historical consciousness begins to be manifested in both the court system and in the physical infrastructure demonstrates a collective will to return to the sites of past trauma and to come to terms with a historical narrative that had been coopted by self-interested ideological voices: the PP as the heirs to Francoist thought and the PSOE as adherents to Europeanized, neoliberal ideology. It wasn't until there was enough popular pressure did José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero's government engage with the growing memory movement and enact legislation.

These *lieux de memóire* that populated the Spanish landscape occupied a troubling position with regard to the traumas of Francoism. They represented open wounds that had yet to heal, but which were never given the proper attention that would facilitate any kind of recovery. Likewise, the lack of acknowledgment did not allow for the opportunity to ponder what the future of Spain would or should look like. Graves, monuments, and street names embodied a piece of Spanish history that had been marginalized or silenced, thus leaving the national trauma unreconciled. This is a similar position to that of Franco after his death as articulated by Juan Goytisolo. If Franco was the national father whose influence was felt most acutely by his absence, then these embodied truths wield similar (if perhaps inverse) influence in that they were present in everyday life but beyond the limits of acceptable analysis and discussion. The impact of this active ignoring only compounded over time as those sites of memory began to simply become part of the background, leaving younger generations with no reason see them as anything more than the backdrop in front of which contemporary life takes place. The reclaiming of these objects as viable for examination facilitates a negotiation of trauma that had been absent in democratic Spain.

This renegotiation of Spain's physical space so as to be seen as the extension of Francoist ideology into the present day leads to the types of questions that are at the core of Cerca's, Prada's, and Rosa's novels. Once one recognizes the overt, open *lieux de memóire*, a natural progression is to inquire about what has been hidden. It

is a movement from the street name or statue to the unmarked graves. It is this hidden or forgotten characteristic that these authors choose as the starting points of their novels: the archive surreptitiously curated by two lesbians for seventy years, Sánchez Mazas' notebook, the torture rooms in the Plaza del Sol, to say nothing of the bodies of Ana María Martínez Sagi and Antoni Miralles themselves. Moreover, by employing them as the starting point for fictionalized narrative, Cercas, Prada, and Rosa promote a post-metaphysical evaluation of both the objects themselves and the events surrounding them. By recovering these *lieux de memóire* in fiction, the authors create the ethical space for the restructuring of Spanish historiography in light of the objects and places.

It is important to characterize the conditions under which this evaluation takes place, as it will inform the nature of Spanish historical fiction going forward. Two conditions in particular merit consideration. The first is to acknowledge that those filling the ranks of ARMH and similar groups, the members of Parliament that passed the *Ley de memoria histórica*, and the authors of these novels are not of the Civil War generation but rather the children and very often the grandchildren of that generation. This is to say that those that are reclaiming these sites of trauma and opening the rhetorical space in which to discuss them are not the ones that experienced the war itself; it is now a matter of post-memory. Although many did grow up during the latter part of the Franco dictatorship, that was a society in which discussion of the war and its aftermath was strictly controlled, leading to an

historical blind spot by the time that they were in positions of power or social control at the end of the century. As such, the post-metaphysical examination of these sites of trauma is further facilitated by the fact that, since the current generation that is engaging in the evaluation never lived through the horrors of the war or of Francoism, stories and narrative become the vehicle for remembering. And by grounding those stories in objects, by fashioning narratives that take their cues from embodied truths, narrative fiction serves a role in negotiating national trauma.

The second condition that informs the coming to terms with trauma is that the recuperation of embodied truths and their reintegration into national conversation occurs within the scope of early twenty-first century society of spectacle.[1] As Guy Debord famously states, "(t)he spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images." This aphorism seems particularly apt in the case of the Spanish recuperation of embodied truths. The manner in which information technology such as satellite television, blogs, cellular telephones, and social media facilitate the easy and instantaneous flow of information serves a crucial function in achieving the critical mass necessary for social change.[2] When the unearthing of a mass grave in Andalucía can be immediately seen, not only in Galicia or País Vasco, but around the world, social relations are created that did not exist before, and are based upon the embodied truth that is shown. This form of spectacle also fosters a collective understanding

via a participatory capacity not possible before. That everyday citizens can communicate digitally and immediately with each other and, more importantly, with social and political entities collectivizes the trauma embodied in these sites of memory.

As these sites of trauma are reintegrated into the national conversation regarding the legacy of the Civil War and Francoism, the question for literary critics is what role they will play in Spanish historical fiction. This ends up being a chicken-and-egg type of proposition. Will Spanish authors embrace these embodied truths, thus leading them to new approaches to narrative fiction? Or will new modes of literary production, facilitated by our ever-expanding digital world, make as yet unseen demands on the historical material from which the authors fashion their stories? Currently, Spanish authors are engaging with digital media in a very intentional manner. The writers of the Afterpop movement, informally led by Agustín Fernández Mallo, use both traditional print and new digital modes of expression to push the limits of narrative expression, frequently via blogs or mixed media productions. Although these writers are not expressly interested with questions of historical memory, they are creating new avenues of storytelling that are particularly well suited to the types of endeavors undertaken by Cercas, Prada, and Rosa.

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[1] My understanding of the idea of spectacle is informed by the critical tradition as inherited from Guy Debord, beginning with his 1967 work *The Society of the Spectacle*. Spectacle, as described by Debord and later writers like Jean Baudrillard

and Jean-François Lyotard, describes the manner in which the subject constitutes his position in a social environment in via objects and events around him that come to take the place of his own lived experience. In this sense, social and ethical norms are established by way of commodity fetishism and the voyeurism inherent to mass media. In Spain, spectacle became increasingly important during the second half of the twentieth century as it began to redefine itself as a tourist destination and as it transitioned to democracy. Justin Crumbaugh's 2009 book *Destination Dictatorship: The Spectacle of Spain's Tourist Boom and the Reinvention of Difference* shows how spectacle became an institutional tool for attracting foreign tourism, and as a result reshaped Spaniards view of themselves. Likewise Richard Maxwell's 1995 book *The Spectacle of Democracy: Spanish Television, Nationalism and Political Transition* examines the role of mass media in the redefinition of Spanish society as it moved out of dictatorship and into democracy. Also, Cristina Moreiras Menor has written in her books *Cultura herida: Literatura y cine en la España democrática* and *La estela del tiempo: Imagen e historicidad en el cine español contemporaneo* on the role of film in shaping the post-dictatorial Spanish identity, especially in their capacity of consumer products in the marketplace.

[2] Manuel Castells speaks to this phenomenon in his book *The Rise of the Network Society*: "architecture of the network is, and will remain, technologically open, enabling widespread public access and seriously limiting governmental or commercial restrictions" (384).

# Appendix 1

*José Martínez Tatxé y Consuelo Sagi-Barba, padres de Ana María.*

403

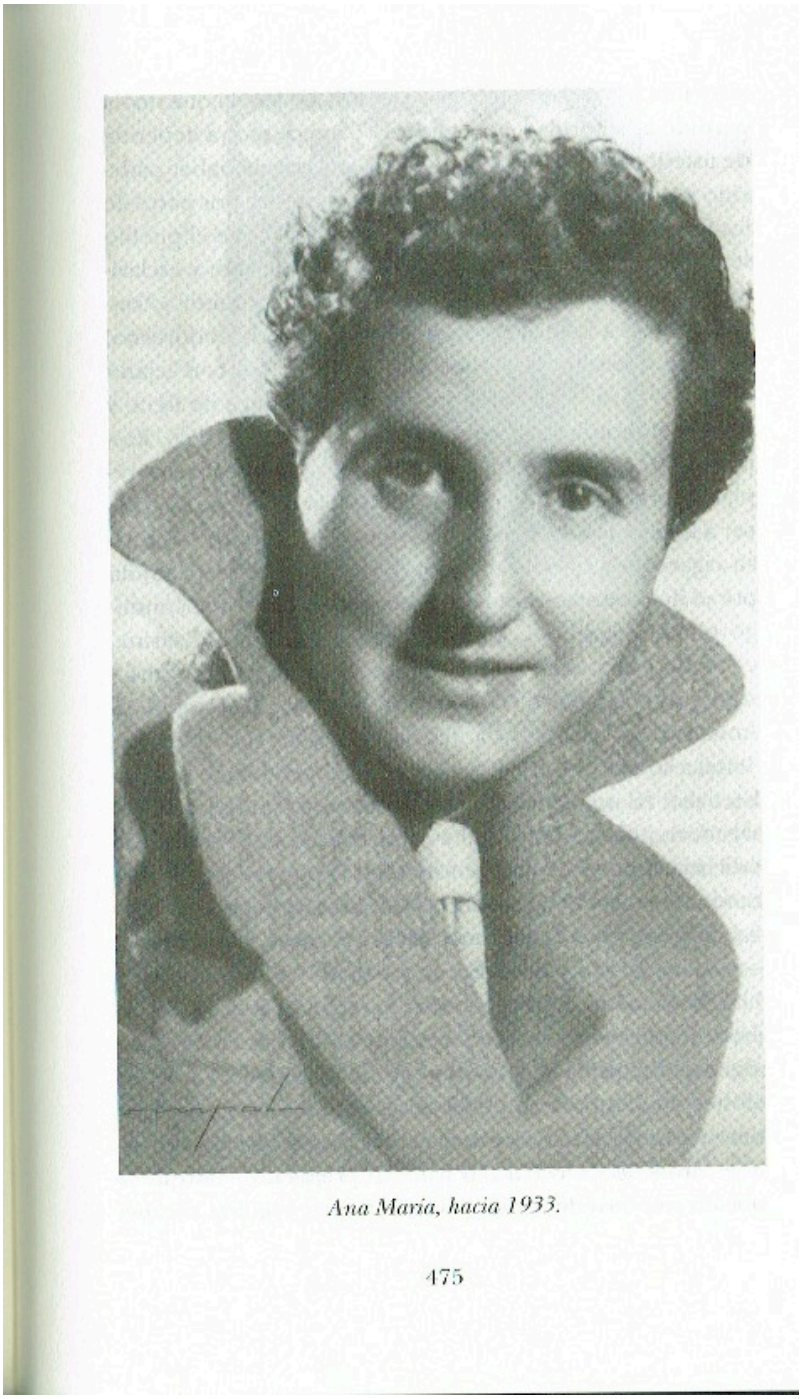
# Appendix 2

*Ana María con nueve años, en su Primera Comunión.*

manos pegajosas de sudor? «Porque así lo mando yo.» ¿Por qué aprender a ejecutar aquellos execrables encajes de bolillos, cuando ya todas las mujeres los usaban fabricados a máquina? «Porque así lo mando yo.» ¿Por qué confesarnos

425

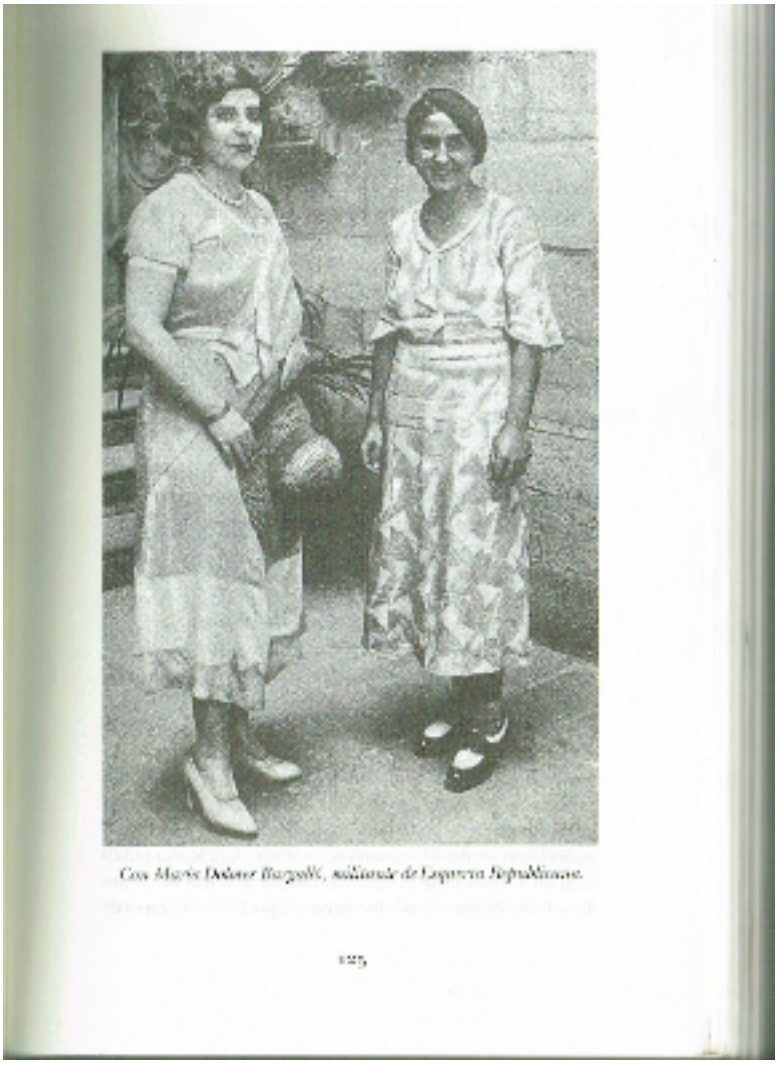
# Appendix 3



*Ana María, hacia 1933.*

475

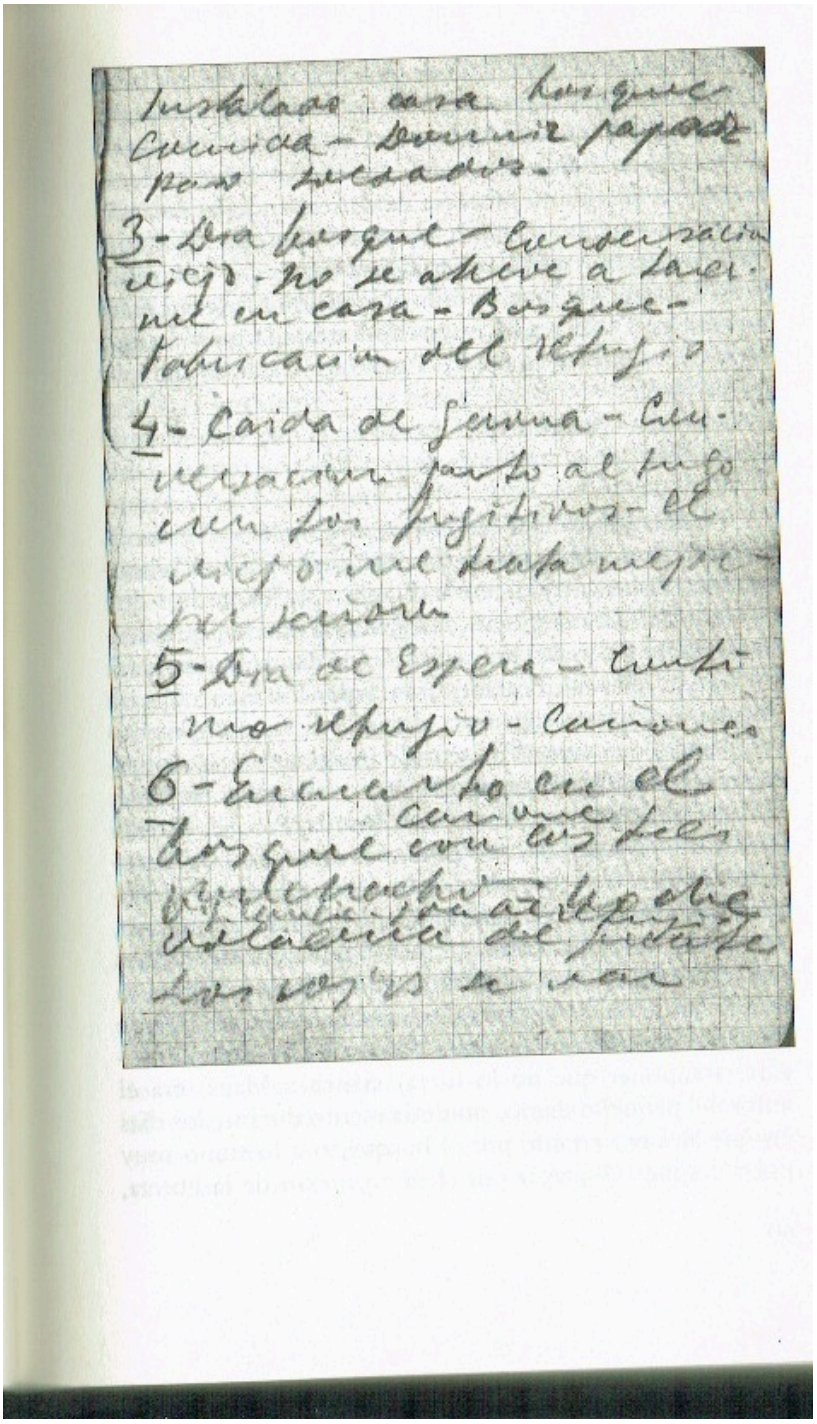
# Appendix 4



Cora Mairis Dalmer Burgos, militante de Izquierda Independiente.

125

## Appendix 5


Instalados en el bosque
Cuando - Dormir pagado
por hacendados -

3 - En bosque - Condensación
viejo - no se atreve a lavar
ni en casa - Bosque -
Fabricación del refugio

4 - Caida de semana - Cu-
mplen parte al trigo
con los fugitivos - El
viejo no duda mejor -
los señores

5 - En de Espera - Cuatro
nos refugio - Caminos

6 - Encuentro en el
bosque con los
[illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible]
los viejos se van

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