



uOttawa

L'Université canadienne
Canada's university

**FACULTÉ DES ÉTUDES SUPÉRIEURES
ET POSTDOCTORALES**



**FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND
POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES**

Jordon Tronsgard

AUTEUR DE LA THÈSE / AUTHOR OF THESIS

Ph.D. (Spanish)

GRADE / DEGREE

Department of Biology

FACULTÉ, ÉCOLE, DÉPARTEMENT / FACULTY, SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT

**Re(writing the Spanish Civil War: The Ironic Collision of Fiction, Non-Fiction, and Fantasy in Four
Novels at the New Millennium**

TITRE DE LA THÈSE / TITLE OF THESIS

Rosalia Cornejo-Parriego

DIRECTEUR (DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS SUPERVISOR

CO-DIRECTEUR (CO-DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS CO-SUPERVISOR

Fernando De Diego-Perez

Joerg Esleben

Jorge Carlos Guerrero

**Luis Martin-Estudillo (University of
Iowa)**

Gary W. Slater

Le Doyen de la Faculté des études supérieures et postdoctorales / Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

**(Re)writing the Spanish Civil War: The Ironic Collision of
Fiction, Non-Fiction, and Fantasy in Four Novels at the
New Millennium**

Jordan Tronsgard

Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the PhD degree in Spanish

Modern Languages and Literatures
Faculty of Arts
University of Ottawa

© Jordan Tronsgard, Ottawa, Canada, 2009



Library and Archives
Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file *Votre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-61250-7
Our file *Notre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-61250-7

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.


Canada

Table of Contents

(Re)writing the Spanish Civil War: The Ironic Collision of Fiction, Non-Fiction, and Fantasy in Four Novels at the New Millennium	i
Table of Contents.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Introduction	1
The Civil War at the Turn of the Millennium: From Politics to the Novel (or Vice-Versa) 1	
Writing and Re-writing the Civil War: A Literary Panorama	24
Theorizing Tension: Irony in History, Fiction, and Ethics.....	40
Prologue to Chapters 1 and 2 – The Ironic Acknowledgment of Self: Approaching Metafiction in <i>Soldados de Salamina</i> and <i>Mala gente que camina</i>	57
Chapter 1 – From “True Tales” to True Fictions: Reading and Writing the Civil War in <i>Soldados de Salamina</i>	67
1.1 ¡Otro maldito estudio sobre <i>Soldados de Salamina</i> !	67
1.2 “Relato real” vs. Novel: “Cercas” vs. Cercas	75
1.3 “Literariness” of the War.....	82
1.4 Toward an Ethics and Politics of Memory: The Case of Miralles	91
1.5 The Intertextual Dialogue of <i>Soldados de Salamina</i> : Novel and Film	102
Chapter 2 – Looking for History in all the Write Places: Fiction, Non-fiction, and Politics in <i>Mala gente que camina</i>	108
2.1 The Politics and Poetics of Benjamín Prado	108
2.2 Crafting and Subverting the Illusion of Reality.....	120
2.3 “Truth” in Fiction (in Fiction [in Fiction])?	129
2.4 The Ethical/Political Debate: Many Voices, One Message.....	141
Prologue to Chapters 3 and 4 – Tracing the Impossible Dialogue: Approaching Fantasy in <i>El lápiz del carpintero</i> and <i>Rabos de lagartija</i>	154
Chapter 3 – From the Ghostly to the (Ironic) Nostalgia: <i>El lápiz del carpintero</i>	167
3.1 <i>El lápiz del carpintero</i> : Heroes, Ghosts, and Memory on the Margins.....	167
3.2 Ironic Acknowledgement of Textuality.....	172
3.3 The Painter’s Ghost	177
3.4 Ironic Nostalgia	184
Chapter 4 – Fantasy and Postmemory in <i>Rabos de lagartija</i>	202
4.1 Marsé Returns to the Barrio in <i>Rabos de lagartija</i>	202
4.2 David’s Spectral World	214
4.3 Postmemory and the womb	229
Conclusion.....	248
Notes.....	255
Works Cited.....	285

Abstract

The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) constitutes one of the most definitive events of twentieth-century Spain, leaving the nation with a complex legacy of memory and silence. After decades of censorship under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco and the self-censorship of the Transition to democracy, the Civil War has exploded with visibility and profitability in the literary realm at the turn of the millennium. This dissertation explores the intersection of historical memory, with its inherent ethico-political considerations, and the postmodern destabilization of authority in four novels from the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Chapters one and two examine the blurring of generic lines between fiction and non-fiction in *Soldados de Salamina* (2001) by Javier Cercas and *Mala gente que camina* (2006) by Benjamín Prado, while chapters three and four deal with the juxtaposition of reality and fantasy in *El lápiz del carpintero* (1998) by Manuel Rivas and *Rabos de lagartija* (2000) by Juan Marsé. Each of these texts is self-aware with regard to memory and textuality, depicting how the traumas of war and postbellum oppression are recovered, negotiated, and reconstructed in the present, not as a function of personal experience, but rather through their various narratives.

The central element of this dissertation lies in its treatment of the way in which irony, a leitmotiv of each novel, frames the self-consciously literary approach to history. These texts employ the ambivalent properties of irony in order to establish points of tension between seemingly paradoxical poles, with regard to what is remembered and how it is remembered, without rejecting either premise. In essence, the irony behind these narratives allows them to suggest that Spain's violent past is both absolutely necessary and determinative, and wholly inaccessible without its mediated, and thus problematic, traces in the present.

Acknowledgements

The research and writing of this dissertation has been both highly demanding—academically, intellectually, emotionally—and highly rewarding. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize those who have helped keep the latter from being overwhelmed by the former.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my thesis advisor Dr. Rosalía Cornejo-Parriego. Her guidance came from a sincere enthusiasm for my project and my personal development as a scholar and teacher. She was challenging and encouraging, patient and persistent. From the genesis of this dissertation to its completion, her knowledge and emphasis on critical thinking have been indispensable tools as she always pushed to get the best out of me. Despite her many responsibilities of family, research, and teaching, I always felt that my project and I were genuine priorities. I have learned much over the past four years, and for that there is nobody to whom I am more indebted than her. Muchas gracias, Rosalía.

I am very grateful to the other members of my thesis committee, Dr. Fernando De Diego and Dr. Ofelia Ferrán. Thank you for your time, comments, questions, and suggestions. The benefit of multiple perspectives on the development of my dissertation has been invaluable.

I would like to express my gratitude to the University of Ottawa and the Province of Ontario. Without the financial support provided by the Admission and Excellence Scholarships and the Ontario Graduate Scholarship, I would not have been able to complete my doctoral studies. I would also like to thank the members past and present of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures who have helped me navigate the logistics and administrative side of completing a Ph.D.: Manon Lavallée-Pratte, Harry Kisoka, Catherine Bernard, Sylvie Thériault, Michelle Sigouin, and Dr. Juana Liceras.

Writing a dissertation is by nature solitary work. Therefore, I give special thanks to my fellow graduate students for their camaraderie and friendship. We can all relate to the rigours of research and writing; the many coffee breaks, lunch breaks, dinners, drinks, and parties were welcome distractions. In particular, I would like to thank the following for their support at various times over the past four years: Diana (and Phil), Alberto, Susie, Cristina, Candice, and Claudia.

I am extremely grateful for the encouragement of my family. My parents have always defended my decision to be a “professional student” with love and positivity. For that, and for instilling in me the importance of “using my brain,” I thank you. I would also like to express my gratitude to Kirsten, Chris, Taylor, Quinten, and Spencer; and Devin and Liz. I am very fortunate to be able to count my siblings as friends; thanks for the laughs. No, you do not have to call me ‘doctor’ (though you can if you want). Special mention is required for the backing of my “extended” family: Sara, Dan, Kevin, Heather, and Matt.

Finally, I must thank my wife Kristen, to whom I dedicate this dissertation. It is difficult for me to adequately express all that she has done for me throughout this process. She had faith in me when I had doubts, patience when I was frustrated, encouragement when

I had setbacks, and pride when I had successes. Her sense of humour was a welcome constant; it is hard to be stressed about that final chapter when you are laughing. In practical terms, I greatly appreciated her intelligence and keen eye as a skilled editor. More than that, however, I appreciated her unfailing enthusiasm. Thank you for backing me in this endeavour with unconditional love and support.

Introduction

The Civil War at the Turn of the Millennium: From Politics to the Novel (or Vice-Versa)

To say that the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) stands out as the most decisive, divisive, and tragic event of recent Spanish history has become somewhat of a critical cliché, found in the introduction to almost all studies that give focus to the history, politics, and cultures of Spain in the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries. Nevertheless, despite its apparent hyperbole, such a claim is impossible to deny. This study, therefore, is obliged to begin with a similar statement, an open articulation in recognition of the patent intimacy that exists between Spain's fraternal conflict and its evolution as a nation and people. Indeed, the Spanish Civil War constitutes the legacy moment of contemporary Spain, the culmination of simmering political tensions that subsequently forged the path of national development: from the fall of the monarchy and establishment of the Second Republic (1931), to the eventual military uprising that gave way to the Civil War and the fall of the Republic (1936-1939), to the resulting military dictatorship under General Francisco Franco until his death in 1975, to the Transition to democracy and the Constitution (1978), to Spain's current identity as a liberal democracy (member of the European Union, NATO, etc.). In other words, the war's impact cannot be limited to the three years of open combat, but rather gives place to an inheritance that continues to be felt even today at the beginning of the twenty-first century. As Chris Ealham and Michael Richards note in the introduction to their collection of essays *The Splintering of Spain*, more than 350,000 people died during combat and another 200,000 lost their lives during the early years of the Franco dictatorship "as a result of political

oppression, hunger, and disease related to the conflict,” while roughly a half million Spaniards went into exile, taking with them lingering memories of trauma, longing, and loss (2-3).¹ Given the far-reaching implications of the Civil War and its consequences, it is no surprise that the cultural production of the twentieth century has been marked by this watershed moment, providing the setting for many works and the influence for countless more. What is most intriguing for the present study, however, is that at the turn of the millennium, seven decades after the fighting and three decades since the death of Franco, the Civil War is perhaps now more than ever on the forefront of Spanish national awareness. The desire for dialogue concerning this historical period is particularly evident in the field of literature, both in terms of the proliferation of works dealing with the Civil War and their commercial success.

The genesis of this project came about in 2006, the same year as the seventieth anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War, and perhaps fittingly draws to a conclusion in 2009, the seventieth anniversary of Franco’s victory and the end of official hostilities. While these dates are certainly coincidental, they also cover significant activities within Spain’s political establishment in recognition of its traumatic past, recognition that does not give way to, but rather follows the previously awakened cultural impulse toward historical recuperation. On 22 June 2006 the Spanish Congress under Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero of the Partido Socialista Obrero de España (PSOE), though without the support of the Partido Popular (PP), declared 2006 to be the “Año de la Memoria Histórica” in recognition of the victims of the Civil War.² Following this declaration was the approval of the “Ley de Memoria Histórica” on 31 October 2007, a law that gives official recognition to the crimes and victims of the Civil War and the Franco regime.³ From this legal

framework, 2008 saw Judge Baltasar Garzón Real begin his investigation into the Crimes against Humanity during the early years of Francoist repression and begin the proceedings for the exhumation of mass graves.⁴ Whether or not these events will prove successful in constituting a kind of national reconciliation that does not gloss over nor ignore the victims and victimizers of Spain's recent past remains to be determined. What is certain is that they do represent a new political discourse that breaks with the self-imposed silence of the early democratic era, which followed the silence of censorship under Franco.

In her recent study *Las huellas de la Guerra Civil. Mito y trauma en la narrativa de la España democrática*, Carmen Moreno-Nuño explains that if the Transition to democracy does stand as one of Spain's greatest successes because of its rapid transformation and lack of violent upheaval, it does so at the expense of one of Spain's greatest failures: "la memoria de la Guerra Civil" (14).⁵ As José F. Colmeiro notes of his own experiences and observations growing up straddling both the dictatorial and democratic regimes, "La situación de ignorancia con respecto al pasado común define varias generaciones de españoles nacidos después de la guerra civil y alcanza hasta nuestros propios días" (8). In the face of such failure with respect to the memory of the Civil War, perhaps now there is optimism, guarded optimism to be sure, that the establishment is finally following the appetite for historical dialogue that has been evident in the public consciousness on a more notable level in the past decade. That is not to say that an open exploration of the past is a fully hegemonic stance. As mentioned, both the passing of the declaration of 2006 as the "Año de la Memoria Histórica" and the "Ley de la Memoria Histórica" were achieved without support of the Partido Popular, one of the two largest political parties in Spain.⁶

Nevertheless, while the memory debate remains a polemical issue in Spanish culture, it has become a more open debate in the political arena.

Indeed, the timeframe in which the research and writing of this present study has been undertaken has witnessed the political culmination of a bottom-up impulse to confront the past. That is, the congressional recognition of Spain's literally and figuratively long-buried casualties of its war-torn and postbellum eras gives official visibility to the cultural preoccupation with the nation's history. This preoccupation gained visibility in the late nineties due to its place in literary and cinematographical production and the efforts of citizen organizations such as the Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (ARMH), founded in 2000.⁷ The ethical imperative for such recovery is outlined by the ARMH's co-founder and president Emilio Silva in his book, co-written by Santiago Macías, *Las fosas de Franco. Los republicanos que el dictador dejó en las cunetas*:

La sociedad española había dejado de lado durante la transición a miles de familias que habían perdido la guerra, habían sido durante cuarenta años la anti-España y habían renunciado a sus derechos durante la transición para permitir que el proceso político hacia la democracia fuera un camino tranquilo. Pero en el año 2002 era incomprensible que esa situación permaneciera en la trastienda de la historia. Una cosa era hacer un discurso político acerca de lo necesaria o no que pudo ser la amnesia colectiva, y otro ver los rostros y escuchar las vidas de aquellas personas y no tratar de hacer algo para ayudarlas. (93-94)⁸

Silva, like many who advocate in favour of memory, has a family connection to the mass graves; his grandfather was a Republican killed by Nationalist troops during the Civil War

and dumped unceremoniously in a ditch with other anonymous casualties. For Silva the legacy of the Civil War is a family inheritance, passed from generation to generation though without the closure of a proper burial.

For those behind the resurgence of memory-discourse, Silva embodies Spain's own literal and metaphorical need for closure, to properly bury, and thus honour, their dead. "Los actantes de la guerra y los que hoy recuperan los cadáveres tres generaciones más tarde," explains Ulrich Winter, "no son las mismas personas, pero tampoco están separadas por una frontera infranqueable" ("Localizar" 25). The generational gap signals not only a recuperation of the memories of those who lived the war by those who did not, but also a recuperation of the sense of obligation toward addressing and preserving them. That the aforementioned governmental efforts to provide such closure have resulted from bottom-up initiatives at the turn of the millennium suggests that the political realm still lags behind cultural/societal desires, but also that there exists an official willingness to deal with the ghosts of the past that has not existed since the war itself. As Ofelia Ferrán states in *Working Through Memory. Writing and Remembrance in Contemporary Spanish Narrative* in reference to the negotiations surrounding the passage of the "Ley de Memoria Histórica,"

Whatever the final, revised law may turn out to be, the fact remains that the ongoing work of the ARMH, and other such civic organizations, has been an important force in creating a greater public awareness of the unresolved human rights problem in Spain. That a civic organization, created by ordinary citizens, may thus ultimately have a significant influence on government policy is perhaps one of the strongest indications of the difference between the current political climate in Spain and that of the early stages of the transition. (31)

That the “current political climate” has been more receptive to the efforts of the ARMH and other similar organizations is hardly surprising when one considers the notable proliferation and profitability in the market of films and novels at the end of the twentieth century that place the Civil War and its Francoist consequences at the centre of their representations. In other words, we must recognize that the government’s actions in support of memory come about after a decade in which the Civil War has become a rentable topic of Spanish cultural production.

The tension between what should or should not be remembered and how this debate is framed by the complex relationship between culture and politics can be traced back to the Transition to democracy after Franco’s death. No longer bound by the restrictions of the Censor, the early years of the Transition witnessed a “boom” of cultural production that openly embraced historical recuperation. Autobiographical/memorialistic works like Jorge Semprún’s *Autobiografía de Federico Sánchez* (1977)—in which he describes his participation in, and expulsion from (1964), the Spanish Communist Party in exile—made visible elements of Spanish history that were previously controlled by the state.⁹ To evoke a cliché, the new freedoms of expression “opened the floodgates” for those that had been silenced.

Nevertheless, the top-down resistance to confronting the potentially painful episodes of Spanish history—demonstrated by such acts as the passing of the “Ley de amnistía” (1977), guaranteeing protection from the law for members of the Franco regime—created an environment characterized by the now commonly used phrases “collective amnesia,” “pact of silence,” and “pact of forgetting.” In *Memoria y olvido de la guerra civil española*, Paloma Aguilar Fernández summarizes this phenomenon and its rationale:

A lo largo de la transición española tuvo lugar un pacto tácito entre las élites más visibles para silenciar las voces amargas del pasado que tanta inquietud suscitaban entre la población. Parte de ésta parecía temer la inminente resurrección de los viejos rencores de la guerra que, tal vez, no estuvieran tan apagados como pretendían hacer creer tanto los dirigentes políticos como algunos medios de comunicación. (21-22)

Aguilar Fernández goes on to add that the sense of unease behind the Transition's preferred silence toward past transgressions was not merely a product of the Francoist legacy alone, but rather the Civil War too continued to be a protagonist in the discourses of both those who sought to keep memory alive and those who sought to suppress the past. The conflict, she states, "constituía un problema aún abierto y de no fácil ni evidente solución" (22). Ferrán describes the seemingly paradoxical desires of silence from official circles and the proliferation of memorialistic works in cultural circles as Spain's characteristic schizophrenia of the Transition, adding that certain critics have noted that "this 'pact of forgetting' was operative even though novels, films, autobiographies, historical studies, and other works exploring the past of the civil war and Francoism began to appear after Franco's death" (23).¹⁰ The historian Santos Juliá, for example, cites the work of specific artists in defence of an unofficial counter-discourse to the more official, though certainly unwritten, "pact of silence:"

In this sense it is completely false to say that the Transition was built around a kind of collective forgetting of the Civil War. Quite the opposite: the memories of Dionisio Ridruejo or Pedro Laín Entralgo, the novels of Juan Benet or Camilo José Cela, the theatre of Antonio Buero Vallejo or the cinema of José Luis Borau and Carlos Saura were full of constant references to the Civil War and the years immediately after it,

evoking memories of a time that many Spaniards had not experienced directly, but the effects of which they had suffered for a long time. (112)

Clearly, the early democratic era of the late seventies is a period marked by the past, by memories of the Civil War, both lived and “inherited.” It is the twin responses to that past, fascination and fear, that fed the schizophrenic character of Spanish memory, which continues to manifest itself into the twenty-first century.

During the eighties, this dynamic was certainly present, though perhaps less palpable. The predilection in Spain for ignoring its past became intimately linked to a focus on its future, on becoming a modern, European nation, a part of NATO and the European Union, and all the other markers of a Western democracy. It appeared that Spain no longer desired to be different.¹¹ “[L]os ochenta,” explains Cristina Moreiras Menor, “son años dominados por el deseo colectivo de integrar España y a los españoles en Europa y, de acuerdo a ello, el afecto que se impone en la comunidad nacional es el de la alegría y el exceso celebratorio” (19). Once again, however, the national impulse to look forward is juxtaposed against the production of novels and films that grant the Civil War a continued presence, albeit from what has been called the narrative mythification of history “en la cual la guerra se aprecia como referencia inagotable pero progresivamente lejana” (Mainer 99). Julio Llamazares’s *Luna de lobos* (1985) and Antonio Muñoz Molina’s *Beatus Ille* (1986) are notable examples of novels that demonstrate this dynamic, though I reject the notion that such works deny a meaningful approach to the particulars of history due to their mythical character, as will be explored in the following section. Nevertheless, it is certain that the presence of history within the “distanced” perspective of myth does point to the shifting priorities in favour of the present/future within the Spanish national consciousness alongside the sustained relevance of the past.

The project of Spanish integration within the European community and as a modern, Western nation culminated in 1992 with the Olympic Games in Barcelona and the World's Fair in Seville. Perhaps incongruous, and certainly controversial, was the commemoration that same year of the five-hundredth anniversary of the voyage of Christopher Columbus, a conspicuously odd celebration of its colonial history for a nation that sought to portray itself as progressive. According to Moreiras Menor, in the shadow of these events Spain no longer had a forward-looking, national goal, leaving a kind of cultural void: "Los noventa . . . se caracterizan por no presentar un deseo o proyecto común. La ausencia de un proyecto colectivo, la negatividad (la integración en Europa se vive en muchos sectores desde la sospecha), y la falta de mirada utópica caracterizan la España postolímpica" (19). During this period novels like *Lo peor de todo* (1992) by Ray Loriga and *Historias del Kronen* (1994) by José Ángel Mañas eschew any kind of historical, or even future, consciousness or ethical charge in favour of the present concerns of young Spaniards obsessed with drugs, music and pop-culture, particularly that of North America.¹² Juxtaposed against this brief narrative trend, however, is what I have already outlined as the ever-increasing popularity of historical themes in literary and cinematographical expression as the twentieth century gives way to the twenty-first. In sum, the shift toward a cultural appreciation of memory has once again placed the Civil War in the national spotlight.

It is the place of the Civil War in literature and film during this recent period of heightened historical consciousness that concerns the present study, particularly that of the novel. Indeed, it is clear that Spain's problematic, even schizophrenic, relationship with its war and post-war legacy is reflected in its literary output. According to David K.

Herzberger, twentieth-century Spain has been marked by "two opposing propositions. These

might be termed 'the past embraced' and the 'past renounced,' which prompts the correlative concepts of 'the past as usable,' and 'the past as impracticable' ("Spanishness" 12). That is, there exists a certain kind of tension that views history as essential and/or dangerous for ethical or practical reasons. It is also certain that while the current defence of "the past as usable" finds its proponents mostly on the Left in support of the Republic and opposition to Franco, while those that view the "past as impracticable" are mostly on the Right and believe that memory discourse merely opens old wounds, both poles are not exclusive to one ideology or another. For example, Franco appropriated the myths of a united, Catholic Spain from the Crusades and the Catholic Monarchs of Ferdinand and Isabella, while the crimes of the Franco regime were largely ignored by the first democratic governments as they opposed dwelling on the past in order to progress as a modern, European nation. As Moreno-Nuño explains, this polarized dynamic describes the literary impulse of the democratic era into the nineties: "Ambas ideas contrapuestas, la necesidad de olvidar el pasado y el deseo de recordarlo—olvido y recuerdo—, son el eje central sobre el que gira la literatura sobre la Guerra en los años ochenta y noventa, siendo ambas ideas representadas en la narrativa española como una dialéctica entre dos modos de representación de la Historia" (14).

Toward the end of the nineties, however, this dynamic shifted decidedly in favour of works that demonstrate not only the desire to remember, but also the obligation. If there is a new dialectic, it is between the need to remember and the problematic nature of giving representation to memories that are not one's own.¹³ Given the impact of the Civil War on Spanish society, as noted in the first paragraph of this introduction, it is easy to understand how the conflict has maintained such an intimate relationship with the nation's literary production, from the propagandistic works published during the fighting itself to the best-sellers of today.¹⁴

What is perhaps more difficult to understand is the complex set of factors behind the time-line of the memorialistic boom of the past decade: Why are novels with Civil War themes best-sellers today? Why has the cultural appetite for memory become so pronounced in the past decade? Why have organizations like the ARMH been founded and had such an influence on public policy? In short, the question to be asked is: Why now? This is precisely the query that Antonio Gómez López-Quñones plants at the heart of his study *La guerra persistente. Memoria, violencia y utopía: Representaciones contemporáneas de la Guerra Civil española*:

¿por qué ahora? ¿por qué a mediados de los años noventa la Guerra Civil se convierte en un eje del mercado editorial, cinematográfico y cultural español? La segunda pregunta incluye, tal y como aparece planteada, una de sus posibles respuestas. No constituiría un exceso de cinismo que uno de los motivos por lo que aquel evento de la historia de España, no precisamente el más halagüeño, ha logrado cierta popularidad es porque resulta rentable para una industria cultural como la española. . . En segundo lugar, este libro se plantea si la Guerra Civil ha logrado un espacio protagónico en la cultura española y en su virtual escenario histórico porque dicho evento ya no supone una amenaza (su potencial revulsivo e inquietante ha sido desactivado), o bien porque algunas modalidades de representación que actualmente se proponen liman dicho potencial. (14-15)

Here, López-Quñones follows the fundamental query with two possible responses, of which the second forms the premise of his work. The first explanation is rather circular in its logic, stating that the boom in Civil War awareness results from the profitability of the theme itself; it has become, to use his terminology, a “commodity” (15). The difficulty with this theory

alone is that it merely leads to essentially the same issue: Why is it that the Civil War has now become such a commodity, a driving force in the literary market, to the extent that it has not been in the past?¹⁵ This is not an easy question to answer. Many critics have observed the phenomenon of “Civil War profitability” in the production of literature and film, but none have offered a comprehensive exploration of the interaction between market forces and historical consciousness (with all its ethical and political ramifications). Indeed, this is not a question to be answered in this study either, as it requires a focused attention that goes beyond the scope of my analysis.

Nevertheless, López-Quñones’s second hypothesis, which he favours, does attempt to explain the timing behind the recent visibility—and commodification, as his first observation suggests—of Civil War dialogue in the cultural sphere: Spanish democracy has now progressed to a point that latent fears of a return to authoritarian rule or violent upheaval have for the most part subsided. “Fear was present throughout the transition,” explains Aguilar Fernández in her article “Justice, Politics and Memory in the Spanish Transition,” “largely because of a traumatic memory of the Civil War given renewed impetus by fears of a military or right-wing reaction against emerging democratic forces” (94). Though unsuccessful thanks to the visible support of the King in defence of the new democratic system, the attempted coup led by Teniente Colonel Antonio Tejero on 23 February 1981 provided a tangible face to those uncertainties. At the risk of oversimplifying the political environment of the eighties, it does appear that such collective uneasiness surrounding the Francoist legacy helped the PSOE stay in power for more than a decade, forming the government a year after the Tejero incident and remaining in that capacity until the elections of 1996. In many ways, the victory of the Partido Popular in 1996 can be understood as the

end of the Transition as it signalled the palatability of a (centre) right-wing party to the Spanish mainstream. As Joan Ramon Resina states, “it was precisely the Partido Popular’s coming to power that finally put temptations of unconstitutional adventures to rest” (“Short of Memory” 90). Although the Partido Popular has demonstrated antagonistic stances on issues of officially-sanctioned memory discourse, as evidenced by their lack of legislation dealing with the Civil War and Francoist legacy during their tenure and their more recent opposition to the current PSOE government’s policies toward historical memory, their victory in 1996 coincides with the boom of cultural fascination toward such historical matters. Is this merely an interesting coincidence, or is there a more complex relationship of correlation and/or causation at play? Regardless, the changes observed in the late nineties demonstrate that both the political and cultural spheres reflect, and benefit from, the temporal distance from the Civil War and its re-awakened memory upon Franco’s death.

Of course, it is precisely the passage of time that makes Civil War memory such an interesting topic at the turn of the millennium as almost all of those who participate in current historical dialogues know of the conflict, and indeed much of the Francoist oppression, not through experience and testimony but rather anecdote and representation. What is certain is that “memory” as I understand it—be it a commodity peddled by the market, or a socio-cultural force bound by feelings of obligation toward past traumas, or both—is not the personal recollections of an individual or even of a group, but rather constitutes a cultural consciousness of a shared past across a multi-generational divide that, like historiography, finds expression through discourse. “Remembrance,” explains Resina, “refers to past experiences which are accessible to an individual. Memory is constructed with the data of those experiences, but is eminently social” (“Short of Memory” 87). After a

time-gap of more than seventy years, Civil War memory is appropriated in the present, negotiated, (re)constructed, and (re)presented. In short, memory is a collective, historical project. When Moreno-Nuño speaks of the failure of Civil War memory, she is not referring to the capacity of an individual to recall his or her own past experiences, but rather to the failure of memory as a collective enterprise.

At this point it is worth clarifying a point of terminology for the study as a whole. It is clear that “historical memory” and “collective memory” have been studied as associated, though not synonymous, concepts. Indeed, Maurice Halbwachs, the French sociologist who first coined and theorized these concepts as a pioneer of the study of memory as a social construct, separates the two into divergent entities.¹⁶ Adopting these theories to the context of contemporary Spain, Resina too states that they “ought to be kept distinct, not as one separates the wheat from the chaff but in terms of their discreet mechanics, protocols, and scope” (“Short of Memory” 84). As mentioned, memory as I understand it is intrinsically collective as it evolves through an actively selective process within the socio-cultural matrix. Nevertheless, my use of the term “collective” to describe memory does not refer to the exclusive category of “collective memory” as a distinct entity to “historical memory;” the memory with which I am concerned is clearly the latter and not the former, though it is certain that the latter is by nature the former (but not vice versa). Colmeiro’s treatment of how the past is approached in Spain today provides a helpful breakdown of why it is the specific notion of historical memory with which I am concerned, and addresses the problematic nature of the Civil War therein:

La memoria colectiva incluye todo un conjunto de experiencias, tradiciones, prácticas, rituales y mitos sociales compartidos por un grupo, que no necesariamente

van acompañados de una conciencia histórica. . . . La memoria histórica, por otro lado, constituiría una parte de la memoria colectiva, y se caracterizaría por una conceptualización crítica de acontecimientos de signo histórico compartidos colectivamente y vivos en el horizonte referencial del grupo. . . . La memoria histórica se caracteriza, así pues, por su naturaleza auto-reflexiva sobre la función de la memoria. Toda memoria histórica es por fuerza colectiva, aunque se active de manera individual. Ésta es la memoria de la que hablamos cuando nos referimos a la crisis de la memoria en la España contemporánea. (17-18)

Of course, qualifying a term like “memory” with its various adjectives invites dissent and controversy; in particular when the adjective is “historical,” thus evoking notions of truth. As Resina notes, “Proposing historical memory as a topic for reflection—but whose memory, why precisely historical and not social, political, cultural, or popular?—presupposes that this kind of memory is intrinsically problematic” (“Short of Memory” 83). Indeed, Resina contradicts Colmeiro directly stating that “while there is no doubt that Spain’s Transition to a monarchical regime was associated with a memory crisis, it is not certain that the crisis was of the historical memory” (“Short of Memory” 84). This distinction arises because, unlike Colmeiro, Resina’s understanding of historical memory refers more to the “field of historiography” and is less a function of the “virtual space of the collective memory” (“Short of Memory” 84). Clearly, there exists a great deal of instability with regard to how memory is perceived, codified, and communicated.¹⁷ Nevertheless, Colmeiro’s notion of an historical consciousness within the realm of a collective memory does describe both what has been missing on an official/political level in Spain and what has been partially maintained despite Francoist censorship and the “collective amnesia” of the

early democratic era through novels, films, and other media of cultural production. The self-reflective nature that, according to Colmeiro, characterizes historical memory has become particularly evident as many contemporary works give narrative form to the recuperative process of memory itself, thus representing what they too exemplify.

In this study I focus on the significance and representation of the Civil War and its totalitarian consequences in four novels from the past decade that demonstrate a self-aware approach to historical memory: *El lápiz del carpintero* (1998) by Manuel Rivas, *Rabos de lagartija* (2000) by Juan Marsé, *Soldados de Salamina* (2001) by Javier Cercas, and *Mala gente que camina* (2006) by Benjamín Prado. A genuine cultural phenomenon, *Soldados de Salamina* has already received much critical attention, as has *El lápiz del carpintero* to a lesser extent. Nevertheless, while the present study will act in close dialogue with previous analyses of the novels in question, my intention is to provide an original contribution to scholarship of the Civil War and historical memory in contemporary Spanish narrative because, as Moreno-Nuño justly recognizes of critical studies related to this topic, “éstos son, a pesar de la inmensidad del *corpus* literario y del tiempo transcurrido desde el conflicto, todavía muy insuficientes” (17). Indeed, there is an immense body of literary work devoted to the Civil War. Even by limiting the selection of novels to the decade bridging the turn of the millennium—in which the war has, as mentioned, exploded with visibility—the sheer numbers of such works alone begs the question: Why these four novels in particular? The simple answer is irony. The self-reflective memory narratives of these texts are highly ironic, as I will demonstrate throughout this study, eschewing simple meaning in favour of more complex readings. Irony, with its surface and depth and tension between the two, frames how each of these novels explores the past, both in terms of what is represented and

how it is represented. The study of irony as a component of historical memory in the contemporary novel of the Spanish Civil War has yet to receive the critical attention that it merits, and the texts by Cercas, Prado, Rivas, and Marsé constitute patent examples of works characterized by the intersection of self-referentiality, Civil War (post-)memory from the present, and irony. For *Soldados* and *El lápiz*, my focus on irony provides an original treatment of works that may be approaching critical exhaustion, while the analysis of *Rabos* and *Mala gente* adds irony to what is still a burgeoning dialogue.

My corpus stems from a generationally and regionally diverse group of authors whose works are examples both of what Ana Luengo calls the “novela de confrontación histórica” (49)—novels in which the past and present do not merely coexist in narrative form, but rather the representation of the former is understood to be the product of an active process of recovery in the latter—and what Ferrán calls “meta-memory texts,” a categorization used to “highlight their self-reflexive nature” (15).¹⁸ That is, more than being about the past, these novels are about telling the past, thus painting their interpretation and reconstruction of the historical moment as a “self-conscious exploration of the relations between memory and representation” (Ferrán 15). There are no god-like narrators telling historical tales with objective reliability in these novels, but rather four subjective, involved characters that attempt to uncover and tell “true” stories. Nevertheless, these texts simultaneously destabilize the notion of an accessible, reliable truth by playing with the boundaries of what is understood to be real and what is unreal. I understand the real and unreal here to be values defined by their opposition, either by blurring the line between fiction and non-fiction (*Soldados de Salamina* and *Mala gente que camina*) or between reality and fantasy (*El lápiz del carpintero* and *Rabos de lagartija*). These four novels

paradoxically demonstrate a self-conscious memory imperative from the postmodern paradigm of ontological questioning with regard to history and its mediated, textualized construction. In short, they frame their approach to the past by forcing a collision of the “real” with the “unreal” in which the unreal is ironically championed as the preferred vehicle to address the traumas of the Civil War and Franco repression from today.

The issue of generational diversity is significant here given that the focus of this study is the (re)construction of an unseen past. Because Marsé was born before the Civil War, his testimonial perspective stands in contrast to the second-hand representations of the war upon which the other three are dependent. Nevertheless, I maintain that *Rabos* demonstrates a memory narrative consistent with its socio-cultural climate and thus should be studied in dialogue with other novels from the same period. It is for this reason that although I put significant emphasis on how the novels in this study address the war as a matter of representation and not direct experience, I avoid making any claims in concrete terms to be studying a certain generation’s approach to the conflict and its aftermath. As López-Quiñones explains, it would be erroneous to conclude that there has existed a perfect correlation between the narrative strategies employed in “telling/writing the war” and clearly defined generational classifications (*La guerra* 34). The nature of historical recuperation in the present in which *Rabos* was written largely differs from Marsé’s own experience; personal testimonies such as his own belong to an ever shrinking portion of the Spanish population. The Civil War and Francoist oppression have become, for the most part, a matter of inherited knowledge. Nevertheless, with *Rabos* Marsé takes the setting of his own childhood and his own experiences, but gives narrative perspective and authority to a non-witness as the narrator is shielded from the events he intends to tell by the womb. It is

through my study of postmemory in *Rabos*, a term coined by Marianne Hirsch to describe the impact of the Holocaust on the descendents of its victims, that the relationship between this and the other works becomes clear. The self-aware lack of direct access to the past represented in these novels, a past that is at once determinative and distant, is shared by *Rabos* as the narrator embodies the transfer of memory from the generations that lived and experienced the traumas of war to the generations that recover and recreate. That is, he embodies the postmemory inherent to the approach of writers such as Cercas, Prado, and Rivas.

In all four novels, to reiterate, such recovery and recreation is framed by the aforementioned collisions of what the texts propose to be real and unreal. Herein lies the central query of this study: How do these works of narrative fiction reconcile their clear sense of obligation toward historical memory, a memory that is both supported in the text and exemplified by the text, with an aesthetic that signals an equally clear breakdown of authority and stable notions of truth? Therefore, my analysis of each novel focuses on both how it creates and subverts its narrator's claim to confront and expose an historical tale, and how this ironic and destabilized means of representation interrelates with an ethico-political response to memory. By "ethico-political" I mean, in short, that which pertains to the sentiment of obligation toward the past from the present (ethics) and the specific motivations behind such a concern (politics). Although I will clarify in greater detail how I understand the ethics and politics of memory in the final section of this introduction, it is pertinent to note that there is no singular ethico-political response to memory that pervades Spanish culture, but rather each work crafts its own understanding of the historical moment being represented. Indeed, the ethico-political factor is inherent to the discussion of the past and

how it is approached through memory as history is not processed through a vacuum, but rather through discourse. What is certain is that each of these texts does respond to the aforementioned sentiment of obligation, while simultaneously playing with how one knows what one knows about that (essential) past. Referring to an important antecedent to my corpus, *Beatus Ille*, Ferrán notes that “the exploration of an invented literary history . . . is a re-creation of an imaginary past that Muñoz-Molina presents not merely as a postmodern literary game” (227). The same is true in my works; although their “literary games” shine a light on history as a constructed narrative alongside fiction, they do not capitulate to absolute relativity in the face of any kind of historical responsibility. In fact, the thematic importance given to the Civil War in all four novels intrinsically gives implicit support to the notion that the nation’s tumultuous past should not be forgotten.

To explore this apparent contradiction I employ Linda Hutcheon’s theories of “historiographic metafiction,” her specifically literary notion of the postmodern, primarily explored in her twin studies *The Politics of Postmodernism* and *A Poetics of Postmodernism. History, Theory, Fiction*. Historiographic metafiction has been coined to describe works of historical fiction, like those of my corpus, that are both self-aware with regard to their own construction and with regard to the construction of the past in discourse. While I will outline the application of Hutcheon’s work to my study in greater detail at the end of this introduction, where I discuss the central theoretical tenets herein, it is worth pointing out that at the heart of historiographic metafiction there exists a duality that is inherently ironic given that it describes texts that actively question and seek authority. It is this overriding irony that characterizes the approach to the Civil War in the four novels of this study. Indeed, they all demonstrate a certain amount of ambivalence that treads on two poles of a question—for

example, the need and impossibility of representing history, or the criticism and affirmation of the hegemony, to cite two points of the tensions to be explored—without rejecting either premise.

The thesis here is that the four novels to be analysed employ the ambivalent properties of irony, both in how they represent the past and in what is represented, in order to eschew an either/or proposition with regard to whether or not one can make an ethical claim to historical recuperation. Again, the notion of ethics will be discussed at length in the section on theory. In essence, however, it refers to an obligation to the past; one that requires, presumably, a stable understanding of what that past entails. By playing with the conventions of authority and textuality, from non-fiction to fantasy, these novels affirm Spain's recent history to be absolutely necessary and constitutive and wholly inaccessible without its mediated, and thus problematic, traces in the present. They are works of "meta-memory," to re-quote Ferrán, because they self-consciously give place to the process of memory as a deliberate act and are self-aware of both the limitations and imperatives behind the act. I maintain that each of the four novels in this study gives place to an ironic juxtaposition of desire for historical meaning, an increasingly-visible sentiment in contemporary Spain, against the novelistic play of non-fiction, fiction, and fantasy. As a result, they foment the potential for a critical questioning of that past, not because one naively accepts as fact what he or she reads, but rather because the self-aware nature of the fiction makes known the constructed nature of the past and thus opens it up to criticism and understanding.

Although each work requires its own unique theoretical treatment, all four will be analysed within the framework of historiographic metafiction, irony, and the ethics and

politics of memory. Certainly ethics and politics are intertwined concepts and, indeed, they will be defined as being part of the same impulse, though referring to distinct elements therein. All four works portray the Civil War as something that contemporary Spain should regard as essential to its current self, thus responding to the historical responsibility of memory ethics, though favouring slightly different political responses to the past. In terms of politics there is no doubt that these novels correspond to López-Quñones's claim that "[e]stamos . . . ante una generación de narrativas que tiene en la Guerra Civil su principal referente y que además coinciden en detectar/reconstruir una serie de virtudes o valores políticos, sentimientos y culturales en uno de los dos bandos, el republicano" (16). Nevertheless, despite this apparently hegemonic defence of the Republican cause, there exists a spectrum of political commitment: from the overt condemnation of the crimes committed by the Franco regime in *Mala gente* to the less ideologically-framed and more personal reflection of a family's struggle in *Rabos*.

The body of the study is organized into four separate chapters, one for the analysis of each novel. Chapters one and two deal with *Soldados de Salamina* and *Mala gente que camina* respectively, grouped together because of their shared confrontation of fiction and non-fiction, while chapters three and four deal with *El lápiz del carpintero* and *Rabos de lagartija* respectively as these two novels play with the blending of reality and fantasy. The first chapter is preceded by a prologue that gives an overview of the common theoretical elements behind my analysis of *Soldados* and *Mala gente*: the more explicit nature of metafiction, ironically blurring the boundaries of the "real world" with that of artistic invention. Chapter one is dedicated to exploring how Javier Cercas structures *Soldados* through an ironic appropriation of autobiography in order to underline the literary nature of

the Civil War as it is remembered and represented in the present. Because the object of remembrance here is both a fascist (real historical figure) and a forgotten Republican (invented character), my analysis also gives rise to questions of political commitment and memory. In chapter two I again approach the literary nature of Civil War remembrance through an examination of how *Mala gente* creates a forgotten novel and places it within the real context of postwar Spanish narrative. I demonstrate how this novel—and, by extension, fiction in general—is promoted as a conduit to understanding censored traumas under Franco and how the controversy surrounding its critical “resurrection” echoes the cultural debates in Spain with regard to its own buried past. Chapters three and four are introduced by another prologue, this time with an introduction to the common theoretical elements behind my analysis of *El lápiz* and *Rabos*: the role of fantasy, particularly how the notion of haunting relates to Spain’s relationship with the ghosts of its past. The third chapter centres on the storytelling of Herbal, the ex-fascist guard, in *El lápiz*. By focusing on Herbal’s account in which he demonstrates an obsession with one former prisoner and a relationship with the ghost of another, I examine the nature of the novel’s self-awareness, the symbolic value of the victim’s spirit, and the (ironic) nostalgia for the Second Republic. In the final chapter I continue with the ghostly theme by exploring the fantasy world of the barrio in *Rabos*. I underline how imagination is used to create alternatives to the hunger and oppression of the newly victorious regime as the young protagonist is able to confront the dead (his older brother), the missing (his father), and the yet-to-be-born (his younger brother, the narrator). By focusing on the foetal perspective of the narrator, I conclude this study with an examination of his embodiment of postmemory, the inherited memory of the “unseeing” party. To summarize, in all four novels the realm of fiction is self-consciously promoted,

either as an expression of fantasy/imagination or as a counterpoint to the recognizable sphere of the non-fictional real world.

Writing and Re-writing the Civil War: A Literary Panorama

The cultural impact of the Spanish Civil War cannot be confined to the military campaign that began with the uprising in July 1936 and officially ended on 1 April 1939 when Franco declared that “la guerra ha terminado.” Even if one limits his or her attention to the periods of actual violence, Janet Pérez explains that these dates are insufficient markers given that “a de facto state of war existed for more than a year before the rightist uprising” and, referring to the subsequent purges of the new post-war regime, “The killing did not stop simply because one side disarmed” (170-171). It is this latter fact, the almost forty years of dictatorship to follow, that serves to cement the legacy of the Civil War as more than a three-year military affair from which the nation could quickly heal. As Thomas Deveny summarizes, “the aftermath of the war is difficult to separate from the conflict itself” (129). By considering the hostilities in broad terms, the Civil War has been a constant theme, setting, and/or influence in the Spanish novel of the past seventy years.

The first Civil War novels were those written during the conflict itself. Alun Kenwood explains that although few full-length novels were published during this period, those that did appear constituted “powerful propaganda weapons that revealed the passions and prejudices that divided Spain at the time,” citing works by Ramón J. Sender in support of the Republic, such as *Contraataque* (1938), and *Madrid de corte a checa* (1938) by Agustín de Foxá and *Retaguardia* (1937) by Concha Espina as novels in support of the Nationalist cause (28-29). Kenwood goes on to clarify that the writers on both sides were so firmly entrenched within their ideological perspectives that they “oversimplified and romanticized

the struggle,” simultaneously idealizing their side and demonizing the other (30). In one of the most comprehensive studies of the Civil War novel, *The Novel of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1975)*, Gareth Thomas notes that these propagandistic early works displayed many characteristics of the “novela popular,” a genre generally free of political commitment, particularly with regard to the characterizations of both their protagonists and antagonists: “The psychology of the characters is crude; villains, heroes and heroines unmistakably betray their nature in their facial expression. . . . Characters are portrayed with bold brush-strokes: caricature is the order of the day. The good are saintly, the bad are demonic” (35-40). In Republican works, its heroes are strong, brave, physically attractive, and virile, while the Nationalists are portrayed as weak, effeminate, and ugly. In Nationalist works this scheme is essentially identical, though, of course, in reverse.¹⁹

In the aftermath of the war, propaganda ceased to be the hegemonic literary force and ideology became an implicit matter of interpretation. This was also a period in which the opposition was dead, imprisoned, silenced by censorship, or in exile. Indeed, those in exile provided the first memorialistic accounts of the war as they enjoyed more freedom to openly express their personal traumas. In his adopted home of Mexico, Max Aub published a series of novels under the title *El laberinto mágico* that, although fictional, trace the events surrounding the author’s own life: the Civil War, the French concentration camps of the Second World War, and exile.²⁰ More directly autobiographical is Arturo Barea’s trilogy *La forja de un rebelde* (1951), a personal testimony of Spain during the early twentieth century, culminating in the author’s experiences during the Civil War.²¹ In fact, autobiography and exile maintained a close relationship, according to Michael Ugarte: “The abundance of autobiographical novels written by Spanish Civil War exiles and designated as such by the

authors themselves is difficult to deny; such abundance is not typical of the Spanish narrative as a whole” (97).

Writers in Spain, however, concerned themselves with representing the new reality of post-war struggle: violence and hunger. The most significant works of this period did avail themselves of a memorialistic tone by using first-person, self-conscious narrators, but the Civil War had been reduced to either an absent matter of influence or the looming but indirect source of the societal depression. The former describes the violence of *La familia de Pascual Duarte* (1942) by Camilo José Cela as the plot is actually set in the years preceding the Civil War, while the latter describes the omnipresent shadow of the conflict in Carmen Laforet’s *Nada* (1945), the inaugural winner of the Premio Nadal in 1944, a novel in which “[p]ocas páginas están dedicadas a la contienda pero es marcadísima su influencia (Bertrand de Muñoz, *La guerra* 489). The brutal realism of these novels, sometimes referred to as “tremendismo,” gives way in the fifties to novels that often fall under the related categorization of “social realism,” the use of narrative fiction as a kind of social project that seeks to objectively portray the ills of Spanish post-war reality. The first-person sense of personal testimony in the aforementioned works is replaced by third-person impersonal accounts, characterized by the intentional objectivity of their detached narrative authority. In any case, the Civil War remains on the periphery of the plot; it itself is not given representation as the novels are set post-conflict, but it still constitutes the unspoken source of much of the misery represented. Cela’s *La colmena* (1951), originally published in Argentina due to problems with the censor, about daily life in 1942 Madrid, and Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio’s *El Jarama* (1956) stand as important examples of this period, thus rising above the dearth of artistic/creative presence often attributed to the label of “social realism.”

As Jo Labanyi states, “The term ‘social realism’ is inadequate to describe any of the novels written in the 1950s that can still be read with pleasure” (*Myth* 42).

There are, of course, exceptions to the marginalized presence of the war in early post-war narrative. José María Gironella employs an aesthetic of costumbristic realism to chronicle the events leading up to the Civil War, the conflict itself, and the post-war years from the perspective of a single family, los Alvear, in his three novels respectively: *Los cipreses creen en Dios* (1953), *Un millón de muertos* (1961), and *Ha estallado la paz* (1966). In an era when few desired to speak openly about the war or use narrative fiction to address matters of early historical memory, Gironella is conspicuous in his open treatment of the subject, no doubt due to his participation on the side of the victors. Although these best-selling novels embody Gironella’s desire to confront the war from a temporally distanced and objective point of view (Thomas, *Tensiones* 22), his partisanship is nevertheless evident. Novels such as Ana María Matute’s *Primera memoria* (1959), a coming of age tale set against the outbreak of Civil War, and Mercé Rodoreda’s *La plaza del Diamante* (1962)—originally published in Catalan (*La plaça del Diamant*), about a woman’s brush with love and death during the Civil War—break with the neutral observer of the social realist novel by placing the narrative authority as a function of the protagonists’ memory. The war itself has also become part of the setting, either as a distant backdrop to the unfolding events (*Primera memoria*) or as an integral part of the plot developments (*La plaza del Diamante*). These novels reference the Civil War not as an issue of social struggle, but rather of personal cost; that is, how the war is relevant to the individual, not to society as a whole. Notably, these authors also provide a somewhat rare female presence to literature in general during this period, and particularly that of the Civil War. As Inmaculada de la Fuente explains, the

woman's role in Franco Spain was in the home, not, we might add, with pen in hand or at a typewriter: "En la posguerra española, la Sección Femenina de la Falange, creada en 1934, cumplió ese objetivo de animar a la mujer a volver al hogar con creces: ofreció al régimen en bandeja la cabeza, los sentimientos y la voluntad de las mujeres de esa generación" (51).

It is also worth mentioning that another group outside of the mainstream literary community—writers in exile, such as Francisco Ayala and Sender—also produced works that followed patently different trajectories from their contemporaries in Spain. On one hand, themes surrounding the harshness of post-war Spain were largely ignored as this was not the particular reality facing the exiled writers. On the other hand, they also eschewed the conventions of realism in favour of more experimental and ironic modes of expression, no doubt a result of being free to read and write outside of the realm of Spanish censorship. In his collection of short stories *La cabeza del cordero* (1949), Ayala opts for an oblique focus of the war as its theme (Thomas, *Tensiones* 25), while his most famous novel *Muertes de perro* (1958), a narrative exploration of power and violence through dictatorship, is more closely identifiable with the political milieu of Latin America in the twentieth century, and its "dictator novel," than of Francoist Spain. Sender, for his part, maintained closer ties thematically to Spain than did Ayala and continued to display an active interest in the war, as is evidenced by his novel *Réquiem por un campesino español* (1960), originally published as *Mosén Millán* in 1953. Like Ayala, Sender plays with a more experimental aesthetic as the Civil War is represented via the schematized society whose voices are communicated through the counter-discourses of the priest's memories and the oral *romance* of the townspeople.

In the sixties, writers in Spain too moved away from the detailed realism of the previous decades. Luis Martín Santos's *Tiempo de silencio* (1962), a novel that follows many of its predecessors by dealing with the ills of Spanish society in the forties, is often regarded as the face of this shift as it makes full use of different narrative strategies and irony. It is during this period that the use of myth gained visibility as a vehicle for addressing matters of historical importance, notably the Civil War. In her essential study *Myth and History in the Contemporary Spanish Novel*, Labanyi stresses that myth was an integral part to earlier works and merely became explicit during this period: "The change of course taken by the Spanish novel in the 1960s and 1970s is perhaps described best not as the abandonment of realism but as the abandonment of the pretense of realism, as the mythical undertones of the 1950s are replaced by overt recourse to myth" (52). Characteristic novels that place the Civil War within the sphere of myth include Juan Benet's *Volverás a Región* (1967) and Cela's *Visperas, festividad y octava de San Camilo del año 1936 en Madrid* (1969). In addition, we can also identify a resurgence of Civil War mythification in the 80s in such novels as *Mazurca para dos muertos* (1983), again by Cela, and the previously mentioned *Luna de lobos* and *Beatus Ille*.

The interconnectivity of myth with a specific moment of Spanish history, the Civil War, reveals an interesting dynamic that forces confrontation of the mythological and the historical. Labanyi summarizes the common-knowledge distinction between the two, stating that myth is cyclical and concerns the universal/eternal, while history concerns the particulars of time and space (*Myth* 33). From this perspective, it has been postulated by some that the Civil War in these novels constitutes the background for a narrative expression of myth as the universal human struggle, and not the other way around. Maryse Bertrand de

Muñoz, one of the most prolific critics of Civil War literature, exemplifies this position noting of the novels already cited, to which she adds *A la hora del crepúsculo* (1983) by José Acquaroni and *Los jinetes del alba* (1984) by Jesús Fernández Santos: “En estas y otras novelas, la guerra civil sigue absolutamente necesaria al desarrollo de la trama pero ya no sirve más que de pretexto para relatar conflictos eternos, para dar cuenta de una condición humana, degradada si se quiere, pero perenne” (*Guerra y novela* 65). It is this denial of any historical consciousness in myth that appears to be the subject of Labanyi’s statement in reference to *Volverás a Región*: “It has become a critical cliché to describe the work as a mythical novel” (95). Clearly there are mythical elements to this novel, and to the others cited, but does this mean that they refuse any approach to the particular traumas and memories of the Civil War?

Indeed, Labanyi claims that myth can function as an ironic subversion of itself (*Myth* 53), pointing to “the suppressed historical reality that makes its presence felt beneath the surface mythifications of the text” in works published under the Francoist censor (*Myth* 178). As Herzberger states, comparing Benet’s *Volverás a Región* to a later non-fictional treatment of the war, “Despite the obstacles to history, we sense that we discover more about the war and penetrate more deeply into the writing of history from Benet’s fiction than from his brief ‘history’ published in 1976, *¿Qué fue la guerra civil?*” (*Narrating* 99). Although not operating under the heavy hand of an official censor, the mythification of history during the eighties in works like *Luna de lobos* must be viewed within the context of a period bound by competing forces of collective memory and collective amnesia. Llamazares’s novel, for example, paints the rural guerrillas hiding in the hills after the fall of the Republic as werewolves, forced to live in the shadows, and surfacing only at night. Again we turn to

Labanyi, though in a more recent article than her book on myth, as she notes that the characters in the novel constitute: “a ‘living dead’,” adding that “Llamazares’s werewolves depend on memory: not their own but that of the collective in the form of the villagers and the Civil Guards who, out of love or terror, keep them alive as ghosts of the past through the stories they tell about them” (“History” 76). While politics is perhaps not an explicit thematic element to the novel, issues of memory preservation or oblivion are inherently political in democratic Spain. Therefore, we reject the notion that the myth-creation and history are two divergent spheres, antithetical to one another. Of course, the same is true of the “de-mythification” of historical entities that is equally present in many of these novels. In the context of anti-Francoist resistance, this often involved the breakdown of certain foundational and institutional myths at the heart of the Franco regime by the creation of counter-myths as counter-discourse. In addition, however, certain contemporary works with mythical tones act to “de-mythify” the resulting idealization of the anti-Francoist resistance itself, though without necessarily denying the relevance of such resistance or the motivation behind its favourable portrayals. In reference to *Beatus Ille*, for example, Moreno-Nuño explains, “La labor de desmitologización de la heroica épica antifranquista en esta novela afirma, no obstante, la existencia de una resistencia cultural y social contra la dictadura que cuestiona, mediante la verdad histórica del trauma, la relativización postmoderna” (301). Indeed, it is this kind of de-mythification, along with the destabilization of the conventions of realism, that makes these historical/mythical novels notable antecedents to the works of my corpus.

Perhaps more closely identifiable with the four novels of this present study are the works of memorialistic character, a mode of expression that gained prominence in the sixties,

alongside the presence of myth, during which time certain writers in exile were beginning to receive enthusiastic receptions in Spain (Mainer 99).²² “The novel of memory,” as Herzberger calls it, “unravels the plot of the past and transforms the potential for historical knowledge into a web of relations and interactions between the self and history” (*Narrating* 69). Whether or not these texts concern personal recollections of the past, either as openly autobiographical or containing autobiographical influences, or give narrative form to a character’s exploration of his or her memory outside of the author’s own experiences, the testimonial nature places the individual in the sphere of the collective and the past in the sphere of the present. Juan Goytisolo’s *Señas de identidad* (1966) stands out as a clear precursor to the contemporary novels of historical confrontation; its protagonist Alvaro Mendiola, often referred to as Goytisolo’s alter-ego, returns to his native Barcelona after a long period of self-imposed exile in Paris and begins to reconstruct his, and thus Spain’s, forgotten past through its traces in the present. “[S]e dedica durante tres días,” explains Ángel Díaz Arenas of the connection between Mendiola’s negotiation of his memory and the novel’s title, “con la ayuda de fotografías, artículos antiguos de prensa, documentos, etc. a reconstruir su pasado para recuperar sus ‘señas de identidad’” (26-27). As Herzberger adds, Mendiola’s attempts to reconstruct his personal/national past through various textual artifacts “reveals the reciprocity between history as a formative component of the self and the self as a formative component of history. The texts validate the ‘realness’ of the past (people, places, events actually exist), but the meaning of this past has yet to be determined” (*Narrating* 79). Clearly the influence of *Señas de identidad* can be seen in subsequent works of memorialistic Spanish narrative, in particular those of the past decade that engage in historical dialogue precisely through the representation of such an active process of recovery. Testimony, archival evidence, other works of fiction, photographs, etc.; these are all the

“señas” that the narrators of *Soldados*, *Mala gente*, *El lápiz*, and *Rabos* filter through to arrive at their own expressions of (inherited) memory.

Although novels of memory like *Señas* were published before 1975, it wasn't until the restrictions of the censor were suppressed that one saw the publication of works in which memories of the worst tragedies of recent Spanish History were expressed in an open, vibrant manner (Bertrand de Muñoz, “El viaje” 17).²³ Bertrand de Muñoz also recognizes that during the early post-Franco period it became difficult to identify and define the novelistic genre with regard to memory, as one might expect given its inherent, testimonial quality: “autobiografía, memorias íntimas se mezclan constantemente con la ficción y el género novelesco se confunde cada vez más con géneros antaño juzgados completamente distintos” (“El viaje” 17). Although not a work that deals with the Civil War *per se*, Semprún's *Autobiografía de Federico Sánchez* captures this increasingly blurred line of genre by presenting the author's memoir as a dialogue with himself; the protagonist is the author's pseudonym within the Communist Party, Federico Sánchez, thus creating distance between the past-self and the narrating-self. While Semprún appropriates the generic conventions of fiction to explore his real life, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán appropriates the generic conventions of autobiography to explore the fictional life of the caudillo in his more recent novel *Autobiografía del general Franco* (1992). As Mainer clarifies,

La necesidad de saber seguía, pues, intacta y, a falta de una autobiografía real, buena sería una autobiografía ficticia donde tuviera lugar la idea de un Franco frustrado y resentido que compensó su amargura y su poquedad con la crueldad y el ordenancismo y donde se asistiera a la progresiva identificación del oficial mediocre y metódico con una imagen cuartelera y beata de la historia de España. (85)

As is to be expected, the Civil War figures heavily in this “autobiographical” account as the most significant step in Franco’s rise to power. The influence of this blurring of genre, utilized wilfully by Semprún as a narrative device and toyed with by Vázquez Montalbán as ironic historical revisionism, can again be traced to the novels of the Civil War of the past decade. *Soldados de Salamina*, for example, plays with the possibility of autobiography as “Javier Cercas,” the character, is a not-so-subtle echo of Javier Cercas the author. *Enterrar a los muertos* (2005) by Ignacio Martínez de Pisón, on the other hand, constitutes an example of the novelization of a “true story”—the assassination of Republican (and friend of American author John Dos Passos), José Robles, by the communist apparatus during the Civil War—that takes the form of narrative but affirms, without irony, its historical veracity.

In addition to the blurring of genre, the post-Franco memory novel also began to explore the Civil War in terms of the memory of others, given the almost forty years that had passed between the conflict and the caudillo’s death. These are the novels that most closely anticipate the current narrative trend studied here. In Montserrat Roig’s *La hora violeta* (1980), for example, one of the central characters, the writer Norma, questions her capacity to tell the story of Catalan prisoners in Nazi concentration camps during the Second World War as she was born a year after the camps were liberated and, as the narrator notes, “sólo sabía que existían los campos de exterminio gracias a algún reportaje y a algunas películas, pocas, que llegaron a su país durante el franquismo” (262). It is only through the traces in the present that Norma can approach the traumas of the past, a fact unspoken but at the centre of the novel’s recreation of events from Spain’s own defining conflict. Based on letters and diary entries passed down from one generation to the next, Norma is also tasked with writing the story of her friend Natàlia’s mother Judit and her relationship with Kati

during the upheaval of the Civil War. This friendship and the events surrounding it constitute the middle section of the novel itself. It is a historical tale within a novel set in the present, a historical tale that is inherently understood to be the product of a wilful reconstruction of events unseen.

This novelistic dialogue between past and present characterizes a particular brand of historical fiction that has enjoyed popularity in the post-Franco era. *La hora violeta* falls within the categorization of the “nueva novela histórica,” novels that, as Ana Luengo explains, place the historical tale as an analepsis from a narrative present resulting in two (or more) interrelated temporal axes (45-46). Therefore, the depiction of the past is not divorced from its mediated perspective in a later present. Muñoz Molina’s previously mentioned first novel *Beatus Ille*, a work of myth and memory, is given a similar structure as its plot revolves around a young student in the sixties writing a doctoral thesis about a supposedly executed Republican poet from the Generation of 27 while trying to figure out who killed his uncle’s wife in 1937, a crime he discovered in the course of his research. The metafictional twist in *Beatus Ille* concerns its play with the conventions of what is real and what is invention, culminating in the revelation that the narrator is none other than the supposedly dead poet at the centre of the investigation. In both novels, the act of negotiating one’s understanding of history is itself given narrative form.

La hora violeta and *Beatus Ille* constitute two examples of works that anticipate the boom of the “new historical novel”—novels built around prolepses and analepses, an identifiable trend that became notable in the nineties—and its particular branch, Luengo’s previously mentioned “novela de confrontación histórica” (49). Luengo analyses *Cambio de bandera* (1991) by Felix de Azúa, *El jinete polaco* (1991) by Muñoz Molina, *La hija del canibal* (1998) by Rosa Montero, *Cielos de barro* (2000) by Dulce Chacón, *La caída de*

Madrid (2000) by Rafael Chirbes, and *Soldados de Salamina* as prominent examples. For his part, López-Quñones also recognizes this particular novelistic approach to the past, adding *El lápiz del carpintero*, *El nombre que ahora digo* (1999) by Antonio Soler, *Las guerras de Etruria* (2001) by Julio Manuel de la Rosa, *Tu rostro mañana. Fiebre y lanza* (2002) by Javier Marías, and *Enterrar a los muertos* to Luengo's list as works that all share the same narrative proceedings:

un personaje o varios personajes indagan, desde el presente (ya sea mediante una investigación, una conversación o una búsqueda bibliográfica) en un pasado que exige tenacidad y voluntad gnoseológicas. La estructura de las novelas nunca pierde de vista que la Guerra Civil es 'presentizada' por documentos, conversaciones, descripciones, recuerdos y suposiciones de varios personajes. (*La guerra* 24)

In addition to the works cited by Luengo and López-Quñones, we can add *Rabos de lagartija*, *El vano ayer* (2004) by Isaac Rosa, and *Mala gente que camina* as notable examples of novels that give thematic importance to the process of historical confrontation in addition to the particular historical moment being confronted.

If Spain has always demonstrated a tense duality with regard to the memories of its Civil War, then it is clear that Spanish artistic representations have always given light to that dynamic. Particularly in the post-Franco era, literature has taken its place on the forefront of the memory dialogue as a close marker of the changing cultural desires. In the introduction to his collection of essays *Lugares de memoria de la Guerra Civil y el franquismo: Representaciones literarias y visuales*, Winter identifies the way in which literature has made visible the transformations of discourse with regard to the war, stating,

En un primer momento, entre la muerte del dictador y 1982, una parte considerable de novelas está marcada por el traumatismo. Hasta mediados de los noventa, este paradigma se ve reemplazado cada vez más por la estetización y desrealización metaficcional de la Historia, mientras que los últimos dos lustros están bajo el signo de una política estética de la reconciliación que interioriza—a veces irónicamente—el escepticismo historiográfico de los años ochenta (10).

In simplistic terms, the “traumatismo,” “desrealización metaficcional,” and “política estética de la reconciliación” correspond to what I have identified as the memorialistic boom of the Transition (juxtaposed against the political “pacto del olvido”), the distanced perspective of myth in the eighties, and the current boom of works that seek to address the political and social particulars of the war and Franco regime through open historical recuperation. Despite these kinds of generalizations, however, an overriding characteristic of the contemporary literary milieu is its rejection of a unified, aesthetic movement. While it is certain that there is an identifiable trend in novels addressing the Civil War that reclaims a recognition of the past and denounces the transformation of the war into a mere mythical episode (Moreno-Nuño 30), it is equally certain that this reclamation of the past enjoys decidedly pluralistic modes of expression.

Indeed, while the self-conscious exploration of memory and fictional identity place the novels of my corpus within the aforementioned group of novels of historical confrontation, there are also many notable novels that address the Civil War today from distinct perspectives. Though I do not seek to provide an exhaustive list, certain examples are worth mentioning. Many works paint the Second Republic and anti-Francoist resistance in an idealized light, often framing their narratives with a characteristic sentimentality such

as *La voz dormida* (2002) by Chacón, *Las trece rosas* (2003) by Jesús Ferrero, and Rivas's collection of short stories *¿Qué me quieres amor?* (1995). Unlike the novels of my corpus, these works are about the past and not about *telling* the past, thus they do not give place to the inherent negotiation of meaning behind memory as an active process. The first two also deal with the participation and sacrifice of women, both militants and at the "home front," during the war and postbellum period, a theme previously addressed in Josefina Aldecoa's trilogy of a woman's struggle through a twentieth century marred by the Civil War, persecution, and exile: *Historia de una maestra* (1990), *Mujeres de negro* (1994), and *La fuerza del destino* (1997). In terms of narrative form, notable collections of historically-themed short stories have also been published in this period, such as the aforementioned book by Rivas, *Capital de la gloria* (2003) by Juan Eduardo Zúñiga, and the best-seller *Los girasoles ciegos* (2004) by Alberto Méndez. The works by Rivas and Méndez also exemplify the popularity of films from this period that explore the Civil War through adaptations of their literary sources: *La lengua de las mariposas* (1999) and *Los girasoles ciegos* (2008) respectively, both by director José Luis Cuerda. In fact, two of the four novels of this present study have also been adapted to the cinema: *Soldados de Salamina* (2002) by David Trueba and *El lápiz del carpintero* (2003) by Antón Reixa.

Certain writers have given much of their literary careers and artistic efforts to matters of Civil War/postbellum representation, either as a combined reflection of personal and historical memory, such as Marsé, or as an inherited "postmemory," fully mediated by discourse, such as Muñoz Molina and Rivas. As I conclude this section of the introduction, two contemporary writers merit particular mention due to the trajectory of their body of work: Almudena Grandes and Isaac Rosa. Although Grandes and Rosa do not figure into the

corpus of this present study, it is essential to recognize how their works of narrative fiction contribute to the visibility of the Civil War at the turn of the millennium. The former exemplifies the shift of historical preoccupations in literature, while the latter enjoys an ambivalent relationship with the theme in question as a part of, and commentator on, the boom of memorialistic novels. Grandes rose to fame with the erotically charged and graphic novel *Las edades de Lulú* (1989) before placing democratic Spain's confrontation with its violent and repressive past as the increasingly prevalent centre of her narrative production. Grandes's third novel, *Malena es un nombre de tango* (1994), for example, traces a family's two blood lines—the "good" and the "bad"—as they pass from the present back through the dictatorship to the Civil War, running parallel to what has commonly been referred to as the schizophrenic nature of the "two Spains."²⁴ More recently, *Los aires difíciles* (2002) also deals with the dualities of family and national/historical politics as one of its protagonists seeks to flee her complicated past, born the daughter of Republican "losers" after the war but raised as a member of an upper-class family in good standing with the new regime. *El corazón helado* (2007), perhaps Grandes's most ambitious novel at more than nine hundred pages, stands as a kind of culmination of her treatment of the Civil War legacy as it again brings together two families on opposing sides of the conflict, weaving back and forth between the two distinct inheritances over time as they eventually converge, forcing a confrontation of winner and loser and past and present.²⁵

La malamemoria (1999) by Rosa, born at the cusp of democracy in 1974, constitutes the young author's first novel and foray into the historical memory of literature as its plot revolves around the investigation into the massacre of a town's population by Franco's troops, again exemplifying the trend of historical confrontation from a narrative present. In

El vano ayer (2004), Rosa approaches Francoist repression in the sixties through a highly metafictional and highly ironic mode of expression, characteristics shared by the novels in this study. It is this sense of self-reflective irony that also frames his most interesting work to date, *¡Otra maldita novela sobre la guerra civil!* (2007), a “Lectura crítica de *La mala memoria*,” according to the title’s subheading, that provides his previously published novel with the scathing commentary of an anonymous reader. The patent irony of the novel’s title reflects Rosa’s status as a participant in, and observer of, the cultural preoccupation with the past as it simultaneously takes advantage of and questions the profitability of such a theme in the Spanish literary market. Clearly the works by Grandes and Rosa, in addition to all the others already cited, maintain a close dialogue with those of this study as part of the larger matrix of the Civil War novel. Indeed, although this project is limited by considerations of space, its expansion in future research will give place to a study of my corpus alongside these notable texts; in particular, the works by Rosa. The ironic ambivalence in his novels echoes the destabilization of historiography in the four novels of this present study, one that gives rise to questions of memory and its ethico-political motivations. In the next and final section of this introduction, I will outline the general theoretical framework behind my examination of this essential tension and, thus, define certain concepts that run throughout as leitmotifs of the study as a whole.

Theorizing Tension: Irony in History, Fiction, and Ethics

The novelistic treatment of the Civil War in *El lápiz*, *Rabos*, *Soldados*, and *Mala gente* is explored here via the way in which each text embraces the inherent tension behind how one approaches an essential moment in history through the mediated filters of the present. This is a tension fuelled by irony that arises at the intersection of ambivalence-

inducing narrative strategies and the ethico-political significances of such historical representations. All four novels exemplify and promote thematically, and oftentimes ironically, the privileged space of literature within the discourse of historical recuperation. This notion endorses fiction's ability to transcend the verifiable facts of History in order to arrive at a more profound historical truth (or truths). In essence, they seek to demonstrate, take solace in, and indeed be the kind of narratives that Paul Ricoeur identifies when he states that "sometimes fictions come closer to what really happened than do mere historical narratives, where fictions go directly to the *meaning* beyond or beneath the facts" (italics in the original; "Imagination" 15). This statement is made in reference to representations of the Holocaust, of which Ricoeur notes the importance of both body counts and narrative accounts ("Imagination" 15). Indeed, theories of Holocaust trauma—specifically with regard to its place in narrative—can be particularly helpful to this present study as the passing of time since this horrific event gives rise to a legacy of inherited memory and representation, much like the Civil War/postbellum oppression in Spanish society today. Dominick LaCapra too has studied the role of story-telling in "working through" historical traumas, specifically the Holocaust, granting (fictional) narratives a positive space within which one might look to the past. Like Ricoeur, LaCapra does not view such narratives as a means by which historical discourse is controlled—that is, rewritten and closed to interpretation—, but rather, at its most optimistic, as a means "to work through posttraumatic symptoms in the present in a manner that opens possible futures" (121-122). In short, fiction has the potential for ethical significance within the realm of historical confrontation, a complementary—and often necessary—companion to historiography as one attempts to understand the essential moments of the past from the present.

Nevertheless, the breakdown of genre between fiction and non-fiction and the collisions between fantasy and reality that frame the historical recuperations of these four novels are characteristic of a postmodern destabilization of history's authority that puts to doubt any notions of its objective "knowability." History is always a matter of narrative, be it fiction or otherwise, and as such is always ordered by someone for someone. "Narrative memory is never innocent," explains Richard Kearny, "It is an ongoing conflict of interpretations. A battlefield of competing meanings. Every history is told from a certain perspective and in the light of specific prejudice" (27). The (intentionally) extreme response to this paradigm—that is, to the question posed by the title of his book *Why History? Ethics and Postmodernity*—is Keith Jenkins's assertion that "history has ended as a groundable (epistemological/ontological) discourse" because "the past as history always has been and always will be necessarily configured, troped, emplotted, read, mythologized and ideologised in ways to suit ourselves" (2-3). The (intentionally) polemical conclusion arrived at by Jenkins, that we ought to look to the present and future but not the past in order to avoid placing undue emphasis on the ultimately unknowable grasp of a history shaped by subjective means, is nevertheless inconsistent with the sense of obligation toward granting visibility to the Civil War from the democratic present in my works.

To attempt to reconcile this tension I turn to Linda Hutcheon's particular brand of postmodern thought, one that is deeply historical and literary, which acknowledges the lack of confidence in history's authority while still recognizing it to be absolutely determinative (*Poetics* 89).²⁶ This paradoxical dynamic, combined with an essential self-reflexivity, is at the heart of Hutcheon's postmodernism: "In general terms it takes the form of self-conscious, self-contradictory, self-undermining statement . . . of complicity and critique, of reflexivity

and historicity, that at once inscribes and subverts the conventions and ideologies of the dominant cultural and social forces of the twentieth-century western world” (*Politics* 1-11). Although Hutcheon shares with Jenkins an understanding of the way in which history is inherently mediated through discourse, she arrives at a more ambivalent, complicated, and ultimately positive conclusion with regard to how one ought to conceive the past. “History is not made obsolete,” she clarifies in *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, “it is, however, being rethought—as a human construct. And in arguing that *history* does not exist except as a text, it does not stupidly and ‘gleefully’ deny that the *past* existed, but that its accessibility to us is entirely conditioned by textuality” (italics in the original; 16). For Hutcheon, the postmodern impulse toward scepticism of history is matched by an impulse that rejects its outright dismissal; instead, history is approached from the self-aware recognition of its constructed nature and limitations, though the limitations are embraced and do not justify its denunciation.

As “metamemory texts,” to continue with Ferrán’s terminology, the novels of this study self-identify the act of memory recovery; they also self-identify this process’s place within the literary sphere. The way in which this introspective character plays with the historical scepticism of the postmodern evokes Hutcheon’s concept of “historiographic metafiction,” a description of works that underline their own identities alongside the inherent impossibility of approaching history outside of discourse: “its theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (*historiographic metafiction*) is made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past” (italics in the original; *Poetics* 5). It appears, therefore, that the contradictions at the centre of Hutcheon’s postmodernism constitute the essential elements of historiographic metafiction as well. On

the most basic level History, with the capital H, does constitute reality, but it must be understood as something other than real as the instantaneous passing of time has rendered it without existence in the present except for its traces (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 114). In short, the past has become textualized; even the memories of direct testimony are not history itself, but rather the continually re-codified perspectives of the past from the present, filtered and negotiated as something other than the “actual,” “real” events. “Historiographic metafiction self-consciously reminds us,” Hutcheon summarizes, “that, while events did occur in the real empirical past, we name and constitute those events as historical facts by selection and narrative positioning. And, even more basically, we only know of those past events through their discursive inscription, through their traces in the present” (*Poetics* 97).²⁷ In *Politics* Hutcheon specifies that the traces of the past in the present include “documents, archives, but also photographs, paintings, architecture, films, and literature” (75). Documents, archives, interviews with witnesses, and the media of artistic production are all found in the reconstructions of memory in the novels of this study, the sources that the narrators seek out and utilize in crafting their tales. Of course, these works are themselves literature and, as such, they self-promote this kind of “literariness” behind historical recuperation. Indeed, texts that demonstrate qualities of historiographic metafiction are those that break down the traditional authority of (non-fictional) historical narratives, not to reject them, but to open up a space for an unabashed, fictional approach. By understanding history as we know it to be a construct in the present, historiographic metafiction simultaneously adopts the ontological questioning of postmodernism—leading to a recognition of the problematic, textualized accessibility of the past—and endorses narrative fiction as an important vehicle to access that past. The result, however, is not a balanced, fully harmonious reconciliation of history and fiction, but rather an ongoing contradiction, an unresolvable paradox (Hutcheon, *Poetics*

106). In contrast with Jenkins's too easy proposal to do away with history as an entity with significance for the present, Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction proposes doubt, but is unconvinced; it relishes in the conflict.

Through the meetings of non-fiction, fiction, and fantasy, the novels in this study embed their representations of historical recovery specifically within the conflict of the "real" and "unreal," thus creating a narrative environment in which a single voice of authority is questioned, leaving room for a fragmented, polyphonic discourse. This is the dialogic potential of historiographic metafiction, the kind of dialogue that Mikhail Bakhtin famously outlines in his now-classic collection of essays *The Dialogic Imagination*. According to Bakhtin, dialogism constitutes more than the mere communicative exchange between characters, but rather describes the heterogeneity of an utterance (verbalized discourse) within a social and historical context; the utterance becomes the point of "intersection" for the "processes of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, . . . it is in fact an active participant in such speech diversity" (272). The tensions of historiographic metafiction play out in the overlapping realm of the dialogic. The binary opposites quoted by Bakhtin both exert pressure without succumbing to the other. In this sense, the give and take of dialogism can be described as a tense space of relativity. As I will demonstrate, however, such relativity is characteristic of the self-critical historical readings of my corpus, a relativity that is acknowledged without ever giving way to absolute relativism. In this way, the tension inherent to the Bakhtinian notion of dialogue is also inherent to historiographic metafiction and essential to the corpus of my study. While there can be dialogism without metafiction, there can be no metafiction without dialogue. In fact, as Patricia Waugh states, the self-awareness of metafiction acts to expose the dialogic

potential of a text in an explicit manner as this kind of self-reflexivity implies the fragmentation of an authoritative centre (11). In the novels that I study, the narrators are in constant dialogue with the traces of the past, the competing discourses regarding the truth. At the same time, the play of fiction/non-fiction and fantasy/reality breaks with the “unexposed” realism of conventional narrative fiction to create a self-reflexive dialogue, often in an ironic fashion, between the narrator, the author, the reader, and the constructed account itself. For LaCapra, this kind of critical, self-reflexive dialogue and the actual reconstruction of the past events “are complementary but at times tensely related aspects of historical understanding” (76). In other words, reconstructing a particular moment in history involves both the investigation into its time, space, and peoples, and the recognition of impossibility with regard to securing a singular, hegemonic, authoritarian, and objective interpretation of the past.²⁸

So where does this tense contradiction leave me? How do the novels in this study negotiate the paradox of historiographic metafiction? The answer is not found in the resolution of tension, but rather in the appropriation of tension. That is, in the other leitmotif of my study: irony. Irony is an essential component to all four novels, both in terms of what is represented (the self-conscious narrator in *Soldados* and *Mala gente* and the Republican hero in *El lápiz* and *Rabos*, for example) and how it is represented, the convergence of history and narrative fiction.²⁹ Because of its varied manifestations at different levels of all four texts, I will not present a single, closed definition of irony; instead, I will offer a loose “notion” based on certain characteristics that will provide the framework for understanding the general irony of historiographic metafiction as well as the individual ironies of each novel.

In his book, simply titled *Irony*, D.C. Muecke states that an ironical work of literature is one that eschews simple meaning in favour of oppositional values, it should have “both surface and depth, both opacity and transparency, [and] should hold our attention at the formal level while directing it to the level of content” (5). It is this tension of competing levels of understanding that characterizes irony as I understand it here. According to these terms, as Muecke notes, the author—particularly, though not necessarily, of a historical novel—already finds him- or herself in an ironic position because he or she seeks to portray reality though a world that is decidedly separate from the “real,” given its identity as artistic creation. Indeed, as Muecke explains, the obligation to “give a true or complete account of reality” is by nature subverted by the impossibility of such a goal (*Irony* 20). Of course, this is precisely the dynamic facing the authors here, one that is self-consciously exposed as the works break down and build up their own authority toward the past. If, as I contend, irony is characterized by its essential tension, then the central irony of this study revolves around how these texts simultaneously advocate in favour of memory while questioning the essential legitimacy surrounding historical approachability in general. Following Muecke’s assertion that a certain manifestation of irony “consists of a juxtaposition of equal and opposite propositions, situations, or values” (*Irony* 31), I explore overall the ironic promotion of the unreal (fiction/fantasy) as a vehicle to understanding the historical real by highlighting this juxtaposition without seeking to identify a “winner” on one side or the other. It is the “undecidability” of irony that finds meaning in the nexus of tension.

More than mere juxtaposition, however, irony in this study carries an inherently ethico-political significance. The tension that is central to its identification cannot be “neutral;” while the readings at both surface and depth carry their own charge, the conflict

between them and the unresolveability itself also has implications. In *Irony's Edge*, Hutcheon distinguishes between mere paradox or juxtaposition, stating that “irony is decidedly edgy” and maintains an “affective ‘charge’ . . . that cannot be ignored and that cannot be separated from its politics of use if it is to account for the range of emotional response (from anger to delight) and the various degrees of motivation and proximity (from distanced to passionate engagement)” (15).³⁰ Gary Handwerk, for his part, also acknowledges the way in which irony plays with notions of incongruity in order to provoke a meaningful response. He calls this “ethical irony” as the tension obliges “a deeper interrogation of the self-consciousness” (2). “For ethical irony,” Handwerk clarifies, “an incompatibility in discourse suspends the question of identity by frustrating any immediate coherence of the subject. Such suspension, of course, requires that there be a certain undecidability between alternatives rather than an easy either-or-choice” (2). For a Spanish culture caught between competing impulses to remember and forget, the ironic relationship demonstrated in the corpus between history’s constructed nature in the present (inherent limitations) and its essential quality for the present (inherent relevance) allows for both propositions to be true; it allows for the closeness of a determinative history and the distance of a self-critical reading of that history. Irony, in short, allows for the reconciliation of the juxtaposition without reconciling the essential tension of the juxtaposition. Hutcheon’s claim that irony provides “the necessary distance and perspective” for approaching history within a cultural context obsessed with the competing urges to remember and forget (“Irony” 206) is notably suitable for the particular case of Spain at the new millennium. If the questions asked within the Spanish cultural debates surrounding memory are “can we remember (in a collective, historical sense) the Civil War/postbellum era?” and “should we remember?,” the ironic presence in the novels of this study establishes a tension that affirms

that we cannot remember—at least from an objective, unmediated perspective—but that we are certainly obligated to do so, as they themselves exemplify by giving representation to that memory.

This sense of obligation toward past traumas from a distanced present describes what I call the “ethics of memory”—or “memory ethics,” both used interchangeably—a term that is loaded with polemics as both “memory” and “ethics” are notions defined through the tangled webs of discourse. To be clear, the debate surrounding memory ethics in theoretical terms—and, indeed, even in the more specific context of contemporary Spain—is a related, though distinct, issue from the individual expressions of historical responsibility represented in the four novels of my corpus with regard to their own approaches to the Civil War. In other words, the question of what makes memory necessary and/or problematic and/or dangerous on a conceptual level is itself irrelevant to the particular questions raised by each text. Nevertheless, it is clear that the latter (memory in each novel) will be framed by the language of the former (memory in theory). In fact, language is itself the point of departure for the memory debate as I refer to its ethical, and not moral, impetus. Is this merely an issue of semantics? The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy defines ethics as the “philosophical study of morality,” adding that “its principal substantive questions are what ends we ought, as fully rational human beings, to chose and pursue and what moral principles should govern our choices and pursuits” (244). And yet, Jenkins explains that ontological questioning, the same postmodern paradigm that has led him to question the relevance of history for the present, establishes “a situation where we can (and do) live *outside* of ‘ethics’ but *in* ‘morality’” (italics in the original; 2). In short, Jenkins identifies “ethical systems” as predetermined sets of codes of conduct that drive the decision-making process.

Nevertheless, he claims, postmodern thought has collapsed such systems leading to decisions that are moral and not ethical because the decision now has to “go through the agonies—and the ecstasies—of the *aporias*, again and again, alone; an eternity of always ‘original’ decisions without surety. Here ethics (ethical systems) flounder before the unique choice” (21). Of course, Jenkins is not speaking of memory *per se*, but his distinction does reveal the potential instability of equating ethics with morality. The difficulty with Jenkins’s theory for the present study is that memory as I understand it would conform to “history” as he understands it: unusable for the present, thus rendering moot the issue of ethics or morality.

On the other hand, Avishai Margalit has identified a theoretical difference between ethics and morality specifically with regard to memory as a collective enterprise. He begins by differentiating between two distinct levels of human interaction: what he calls the “thick” and “thin” relations; the former being the bonds of family and community, those united by intimate cultural links, while the latter refers to humanity in general without any sense of specific closeness. Margalit’s contention that ethics govern our thick relations while morality oversees our thin relations leads to the conclusion that memory is an ethical, not a moral, imperative (7-8). In other words, crimes against humanity, such as genocide, are judged according to moral convictions (murder is wrong), while the motivations behind how one preserves the memory of the victims is guided by ethical principles (memory is neither right nor wrong in and of itself as an absolute value, but rather advantageous or disadvantageous to the community).³¹ “Memory is the cement that holds thick relations together,” Margalit states, “and communities of memory are the obvious habitat for thick relations and thus for ethics” (8). In the concrete terms of Spain today, it is the legacy of the Civil War and the subsequent traumas that flows through generations of individual families,

communities, and the Spanish society as a whole that is bound by its collective, historical memory and the ethics therein. This ethics of memory is also one that does not pretend to convey a History of facts and figures; it constitutes a memory of “alleged memories of the past but not necessarily past events” (Margalit 59). Indeed, it is the consciousness in the present of how memory takes a determinative past and grants it meaning for the future that gives place to an ethical charge. Ricoeur makes a similar claim, noting that the “duty to remember” is “an ethico-political problem because it has to do with the construction of the future: that is, the duty to remember consists not only of having a deep concern for the past, but in transmitting the meaning of past events to the next generation” (“Memory” 9).

Because time demonstrates a general tendency toward “erosion,” explains Ricoeur, toward the gradual destruction of knowledge from and about the past, memory acts as a counter-force to this impulse, particularly for the victims of history (“Memory” 10-11). The losers of the Civil War and those persecuted by the Franco regime, for example, depend on memory as their histories have not been written. Indeed, the notion of ethics as a function of “thick” relations is particularly useful here, as the concept of historical memory is not an omniscient value with authority in the realm of absolutes, but rather is intrinsically part of Spain’s socio-cultural matrix.

Nevertheless, stating that memory be addressed in ethical terms does not suggest that there exists a singular ethics of memory nor that memory is always positive. Indeed, the very notion of “thick” relations can give rise to problematic, and even dangerous, appropriations of the past if construed on very narrow terms. That is, when the notion of community is conspicuously fragmented and made antagonistic, memory may function as a weapon. Consider, for example, the acts of vindictive atrocities perpetrated by the

Nationalists and the early Franco regime under the supposedly ethical justification of earlier Republican violence. Here, memory serves as a pretext for hostility. Moving back to more theoretical concerns, even if there exists a general consensus with regard to the historical realities of trauma and violence, of victims and victimizers, of oppression and subjugation; the question still remains: Is memory always positive? or Can one be critical of memory without defending the suppressing regime? In fact, it appears that a propensity for criticism is necessary for memory to be constructive. As Tzvetan Todorov states in *Los abusos de la memoria*, “sacralizar la memoria es otro modo de hacerla estéril” (33). In the case of Spain, some have addressed the recent memory boom with scepticism for this very reason, arguing that by placing on a pedestal any approach to the past has resulted in what Colmeiro identifies as the “inflation” of memory (14). Paradoxically—explains Colmeiro, echoing Todorov’s assertion—such an indiscriminate flood of historical narratives has reduced the impact of memory: “queda cada vez menos memoria y el pasado se vuelve progresivamente más remoto cuanto más historificado” (15). Therefore, it is certain that while there exists a denial of the past and its victims via forgetting, there also exists a denial of the past and its victims via historical obsession. Labanyi addresses this dynamic in the language of the supernatural, which I will explore further in chapters three and four, arguing that there are three ways in which the ghosts of the past are confronted in the present: “The first two options—denying the existence of ghosts, becoming possessed by them—in different ways result in a denial of history (through repression or through paralysis). The last option—accepting the past as past—is an acknowledgment of history, that allows one to live with its traces” (“History” 66). It is this third way of dealing with ghosts that corresponds to Todorov’s identification of the beneficial use of memory over the titular abuses of memory: “Lejos de ser prisioneros del pasado, lo habremos puesto al servicio del presente, como la

memoria—y el olvido—se han de poner al servicio de la justicia” (*Los abusos* 59). As a category of analysis, therefore, the ethics of memory not only encapsulates the issue of responsibility toward the past from the present, but also whether or not memory fulfills the mandate of liberation—that is, the “working through” of trauma—or merely acts as reinforcement of suppression.³²

Moving from the discussion of memory on a conceptual or general level as a framework for my corpus to the specifics of its literary representations, it is clear that each of the four novels does indeed support an ethics of memory; certainly the central importance of the Civil War in each text is itself incompatible with any defence of silence. In fact, I will demonstrate how memory ethics stems from a sense of obligation or duty to give voice to those who have previously been silenced, to preserve the past from “erosion,” to provide textual manifestations of what Pierre Nora calls the tangible spaces of memory or “lieux de mémoire.” In this sense, the novels of this study constitute places of memory construction and memory preservation.³³ Because these works address issues of Civil War memory from the democratic present, after the censorship of Franco and the self-censorship of the Transition, Margalit’s notion of ethics as a matter of thick relations is particularly useful. The question of memory in Spain—or, one would imagine, in any context—cannot be removed from its place in the collective; that is, from its historical, social, cultural and political contexts. Employing Labanyi’s language in reference to such context, I maintain that by playing with the irony of what is real and what is unreal and the notions of authority therein, these texts avoid being possessed by the ghosts of Spain’s past, but rather they accept and acknowledge the spectral traces as being of the past but for the present. By placing history as a function of its negotiated reconstruction in the present with their many

“metas” (metamemory, metafiction), these works demonstrate self-reflexivity toward the ethical imperative as they both give visibility to the Civil War/postbellum era and portray the process of making that memory visible on the textual level itself. While Kearny states that representation can be an essential part of memory ethics because it allows for the spectator to approach past horrors through an aesthetic that allows for an imaginative response simulating having been there (30), the novels of my corpus frame their ethical relationship with the past by self-consciously emphasizing and embracing precisely the opposite: an aesthetic of absence, an ethics of representation based on the individual not having been there. What Margalit, Ricoeur, Kearny, and Todorov all share is a notion of memory ethics, so named or not, based on a sense of responsibility toward the well-being of the community (community in a very broad sense), which relies on the present and future being aware of how the past shapes who they are and where they are going. “It is good that the wounds of history remain open to thought” (“Imagination” 17) expresses Ricoeur in simple, though compelling, terms. Clearly there are open “wounds of history” in contemporary Spain, ghosts that have yet to be exorcised; these are the elements of the past that find visibility in, and through, the novels of this study.

Of course, ethics—like historiographic metafiction and irony—is an element present in discourse; it does not arise within a bubble of neutrality, but rather is presented and interpreted within a socio-political context. For this reason, when I speak of an ethics of memory, I must also give consideration to a politics of memory. Certainly these two concepts are inextricably linked in general terms, though the case of Spain offers a particularly evident example of their bond considering that Spanish historical memory concerns a Civil War and a repressive dictatorship that gives way to clearly distinct and

conflicting legacies, both of the victims and the victimizers. To evoke the memory of common graves is to remember who put them there, to ask questions that still lead to uncomfortable answers for many in the present. As Winter states, “Toda memoria histórica implica una política de la memoria” (“Introducción” 11).³⁴ Throughout this study I speak of both the ethics and the politics of memory; as such, I conclude this introduction by clarifying how we distinguish between the two. Because there can be no ethics of memory without political concerns, and no politics of memory without ethical implications, the distinction is not immediately apparent. In fact, they are two related parts of historical memory that work together, not as antagonistic elements but still distinguishable. The ethics of memory corresponds to questions of whether or not there is a cultural obligation to keep alive the traces of the past (certainly a political question), while the politics of memory concerns what is remembered (or forgotten) and how that memory is ordered and given meaning in the present. In short, the politics of memory concerns how the determinative past, considered as such by the ethics of memory, is used in the present. Todorov too identifies two separate acts of memory that correspond to my notions of memory ethics and memory politics respectively: the recuperation of the past and its subsequent utilization (*Los abusos* 17-18). The act of recuperation is relatively simple, while the selection process of what is recuperated and how it is then applied is much more problematic and, perhaps, relevant. As Resina states of memory in democratic Spain, “Current debates on historical amnesia are not so much about the loss of the past as about the politics of memory. The dispute is really over which fragments of the past are being refloated and which are allowed to sink” (“Short of Memory” 86). For example, while most of the proponents of memory ethics in Spain today do so from a perspective sympathetic to the Republic, or at least to its democratic ideals, Pío Moa’s *Los mitos de la Guerra Civil* (2003)—a work of revisionist history, also a best-seller

and favourite of former Prime Minister José María Aznar—demonstrates a sense of duty toward exposure of the Civil War with a completely distinct political significance as he expresses support for Franco and the Nationalist cause.

This is an extreme example of the divergent politics of memory; nevertheless, it provides a clear demonstration of how the two, politics and ethics, constitute complementary, though unique, aspects to the varying memory imperatives. As Herzberger summarizes of the way memory politics is inherent to the debates surrounding collective amnesia or recollection, “the desire to remember or to forget relate[s] specifically to how one wishe[s] to use the past in the present” (“Spanishness” 17). In this study, all four novels demonstrate an ethics of memory by both representing the past and by representing the representation of the past. Nevertheless, despite their common ideological leanings on the left of the political spectrum, I will examine how each novel demonstrates distinct levels of explicit or implicit political commitment, from the personal focus on the victims of hunger and oppression in *Rabos* to the more overtly political focus on the victimizers and subsequent demand for vindication and judgement in *Mala gente*. To say that a work is personal does not negate its political significance, and vice-versa, but in doing so I recognize the different ways in which narrative fiction appropriates and gives meaning to the past in the present within a larger ethical imperative.

Prologue to Chapters 1 and 2 – The Ironic Acknowledgment of Self:

Approaching Metafiction in *Soldados de Salamina* and *Mala gente que camina*

Soldados de Salamina and *Mala gente que camina* share a common trait with regard to the aesthetics of their memory narratives: the strategy with which they address the past is characterized by a highly ironic sense of self-awareness. In the following two chapters I explore how the generic fluidity, or illusion of generic fluidity, between fiction and non-fiction results in the deauthorization of History and the protagonism of literary discourse as it pertains to the Civil War and the Franco regime in these two texts. While the literary nature of Spain's dialogue with its totalitarian past is maintained in all four novels of this study, the works by Cercas and Prado covered in these two chapters constitute more explicitly metafictional narratives. In both cases the narrator is a self-conscious writer that gives account of his investigation into a forgotten figure of the Francoist past. In addition to the protagonist's authorial self-awareness, the text itself is presented as the final product of his investigation and recording. That is, the novel constitutes a text within a text; the novel that the flesh-and-blood reader purchases, reads, and keeps on his or her bookshelf masquerades as the published work of a fictional author.

The first extensive study on self-conscious narrative, what one calls metafiction, is Robert Alter's *Partial Magic. The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre*. In its prologue Alter explains, "A self-conscious novel, briefly, is a novel that systematically flaunts its own condition of artifice and that by so doing probes into the problematic relationship between real-seeming artifice and reality" (x). What is notable is how Alter not only acknowledges the aesthetic element of a work of fiction that is self-aware, but also how this self-awareness

provokes an active consideration of the nature of fictional representation. In other words, Alter introduces metafiction as a narrative mechanism that promotes the positive potential of criticism as opposed to one that is merely a vapid and elitist experimental mode. As Robert Scholes exemplifies in his collection of essays *Fabulation and Metafiction*, however, not all critics view narrative self-consciousness as a “legitimate” form of fictional expression. Instead of engaging the imagination of the reader, Scholes argues, metafiction “attempts . . . to assault or transcend the laws of fiction” (114). For Scholes, fiction provides a means through which “the great task of the human imagination” functions, “to generate . . . systems that bring human desires into closer harmony with the systems operating in the whole cosmos” (217). In other words, the suspension of disbelief in fiction allows us to “re-imagine” ourselves, a key to “bring[ing] human life back into harmony with the universe” (217). Therefore, Scholes’s objection to metafiction is that its self-reflective nature breaks with this imagination imperative and thus is “a narcissistic way of avoiding this great task,” a “masturbatory reveling in self-scrutiny” (218).

In his recent book *True Lies. Narrative Self-consciousness in the Contemporary Spanish Novel*, Samuel Amago succinctly responds to Scholes’s opposition to metafiction by stating, “Indeed, contrary to what Scholes would have us believe, narrative self-consciousness is not irreconcilable with the human search for meaning, but rather can be used as an important tool in that search” (17). Amago’s affirmative take on metafiction is directly linked to Alter’s original study and to the work of those critics who have followed in his theoretical perspective, such as Waugh and Hutcheon. In her notable study *Metafiction. The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*, for example, Waugh echoes Alter’s previously quoted passage with a remarkably similar definition:

Metafiction is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text. (italics in the original; 2)

Like Alter, Waugh recognizes the critical potential of self-referential fiction as being inherent to the aesthetic structure of a work that is aware of its own artifice. This is a point that she reinforces with her generalized summary of what makes a work metafictional: “the lowest common denominator of metafiction is simultaneously to create a fiction and to make a statement about the creation of that fiction” (6). To “make a statement” is to promote interpretation. That is, a metafictional narrative demands an active reader. If traditional realism provides an imaginary world that allows the reader to immerse him- or herself as a passive participant, accepting a one-way flow of meaning and understanding thanks to the suspension of disbelief, metafiction requires that the reader acknowledge the fictionality of the narrative and his or her own role in the interpretation of what is being communicated, thanks to the break with the suspension of disbelief. As Hutcheon explains, “self-conscious novels have asserted their fictiveness while refusing to allow the reader the particular kind of distance that comes of passivity or lack of involvement” (*Narcissistic* 150). This assertion of “fictiveness,” to use Hutcheon’s phrase, is what I refer to as the novel’s “literariness:” the self-aware recognition that the work is at once an example of literature and treats literature as a central theme.

Despite having been named and studied as such since the latter half of the twentieth century, it is evident that self-conscious narrative fiction does not represent a new literary phenomenon. This is certainly the case in the specific context of Spanish literature. In fact, studies of metafiction often cite *El Quijote* (1605) by Miguel de Cervantes and Miguel de Unamuno's *Niebla* (1914) as precursors to the postmodern "boom" of self-conscious fiction that is found in the past three decades.³⁵ Two works concerning metafiction in contemporary Spanish novels merit mention here: Robert Spires's *Beyond the Metafictional Mode*. *Directions in the Modern Spanish Novel* and the aforementioned study by Samuel Amago. Spires approaches metafiction as a "celebration of the creative process" (128) that resulted from Franco's death in 1975. Given the dynamic nature of societal and cultural paradigms, Spires maintains that the "metafictional movement" of the post-Franco decade "is irrefutably destined to give way, if it has not done so already, to a new novelistic genre. Yet the end of the metafictional movement of recent times will not mark the end of metafiction" (*Beyond* 128). In fact, despite the socio-cultural differences between the immediate post-Franco years and the new millennium, it is clear that the plurality of discourse in the self-aware texts of Spanish fiction today still function in contrast to the authoritative discourse of the Franco regime. Indeed, Amago responds directly to Spires's conclusion as he explains the impetus for his own study of more contemporary works. "Spires's *Beyond the Metafictional Mode*," he notes, "concludes with a projection that serves as an excellent springboard for the discussion of contemporary Spanish fiction of the 1990s and 2000s that is developed in *True Lies*" (25). In *True Lies*, Amago does explore the nature of metafiction as it is observed in a variety of novels from the nineties and the first decade of the twenty-first century with a particular emphasis on how the narrative self-consciousness serves, as was quoted earlier, as "an important tool" in "the human search for meaning" (17). In other words, Amago defends

metafiction as being integral to the contemporary Spanish novel and maintains that it “offers a functional, constructive alternative to the pessimistic worldviews articulated by the more negative critics of cultural postmodernism” (14).

Unlike the studies published by Spires and Amago, my consideration of metafiction does not constitute an exploration of its varied manifestations and meanings in selected works of contemporary Spanish fiction. Instead, I look to a similar metafictional construction based on the presence of non-fictional elements in two works, *Soldados* and *Mala gente*, and examine how it addresses a specific cultural preoccupation: Spain’s debate surrounding contemporary readings of the Civil War. Therefore, the following chapters do not pick up from where Amago leaves the discussion, but they do share with him a general understanding of self-conscious fiction as having critical potential, based largely on the aforementioned scholarship of Waugh and Hutcheon. In other words, while our theoretical perspectives on metafiction are similar, I depart from Amago by situating my analysis within the context of current debates concerning the ethico-political nature of “writing the Civil War” from the present. This is notable because Amago does dedicate a chapter of his book to the study of metafiction in *Soldados*. However, while he maintains that the novel “offers an alternative approach to the reconstruction and representation of reality, history, memory, and consciousness” (30), he does not extend these conclusions outside of the text to understand how the novel addresses the specific reality, history, and memory of the Civil War as a topic of dialogue in Spain today. In this present study, the critical potential inherent to self-conscious fiction is explored directly in relation to how the nation’s tumultuous recent past is viewed from the present as a function of its representation in the novelistic genre. That is, I will demonstrate how *Soldados* and *Mala gente* reflect the present-day confrontation with the Civil War and Franco regime by being not simply examples of a

literary approach to history, but also self-aware of such a literary approach to history. By asserting their works' literariness in the face of non-literary elements, Cercas and Prado create statements not only about fiction, but also about how our understanding of history is mediated by fiction.

The key to this approach as it will be discussed here is the presence of irony. Although largely ignored by Amago, irony is an inherent element to the metafictional mode. A metafictional text steps out of its fictional world in order to address the reader with regard to its own created identity. In other words, by breaking with the suspension of disbelief in order to engage the active reader, it pulls itself out of the traditional world of fiction, ironically the only world to which it belongs. "Metafiction, however," clarifies Hutcheon in comparison to more traditional narratives, "seems aware of the fact that it (like all fiction, of course) actually has *no* existence apart from that constituted by the inward act of reading which counterpoints the externalized act of writing" (*italics in the original; Narcissistic* 28). There exists a constant tension in self-aware narrative between the created world and the acknowledgment of its own invention. This constant tension is the primary source of irony in the metafictional text. As Muecke summarizes of the essential nature behind irony in the literary realm, "Ironic literature . . . is literature in which there is a constant dialectic interplay of objectivity and subjectivity, freedom and necessity, the appearance of life and the reality of art" (*Irony* 78). In fact, it is the last point given here by Muecke, "the appearance of life and the reality of art," that characterizes the ironic relationship between fiction and reality, when reality is a matter of historical understanding, in the novels of the following two chapters.

In order to recognize the specifically ironic nature of the narrative self-awareness in these two novels, it is helpful to consider the general definition of metafiction given by Hutcheon at the beginning of *Narcissistic Narrative*: “‘Metafiction,’ as it has now been named, is fiction about fiction—that is, fiction that includes within itself a commentary on its own narrative and/or linguistic identity” (1). In *Soldados* and *Mala gente*, the fictional identity of the narrative is ironically underlined by a constant insistence by the narrator/fictionalized author on the veracity of what they relate. In other words, my understanding of the fictionality of the novels results ironically from the protagonists claiming that what they are “writing” is not fiction but rather an exposé of the “truth.” Complicating the matter further is the fact that the fictional nature of the text is not only juxtaposed against the claims of historical fidelity, but also against the presence of real historical figures and works that permeate both novels. In *Soldados* the realm of reality is introduced into the realm of fiction, while in *Mala gente* the opposite is true, the sphere of fiction is introduced into the sphere of reality. However, both works are undeniably novels, works of fiction. Although they blur the line between the generic distinctions of fiction and nonfiction, they do so as a tool of novelistic expression; this play of boundaries enriches the literary dialogue with the past and how it is perceived from the present. The historiographic elements, the historical facts and “real” characters, serve as ironic counterpoints to the protagonism given to fiction with regard to the contemporary dialogue with the Civil War and Francoism. That is, fiction is embraced as the privileged site of confrontation with the past. It is this alternative world outside of traditional/official historical discourse that stands out as the location of understanding with regard to the censored, distant past. *Soldados* and *Mala gente* infuse reality into fiction in order to suggest that truths from this era, and their

visibility for the unseeing generations, are not necessarily to be found in the established sphere of History, but ironically in the invention of literature.

This literariness of historical dialogue corresponds to a statement made by the famous Falangist writer Dionisio Ridruejo in his autobiography *Casi unas memorias* (1976):

El testimonio vivo de la guerra—lo diré de paso—es poco probable que lo refleje un historiador, porque más bien es tarea del novelista, ya que la rememoración imaginativa de lo que es complejo no la expresan los datos que se pueden buscar en las hemerotecas o en los relatos parciales de los testigos políticos, sino que exige una imaginación evocadora y, al mismo tiempo, distanciada. (66)

Although all four authors in this study have demonstrated political sympathies that are at odds with the Falangist writer, Ridruejo's notion is supported by each of their novels.³⁶ In *Soldados* and *Mala gente*, the novelistic approach to recuperating the war is seen as a theme of the novel itself. These are novels that are not set in the war or post-war years, but rather in the present; more than being about the past, these novels are about telling the past. They are quintessential examples of the previously mentioned "novela de confrontación histórica," Luengo's identification of works that make up the "nueva novela histórica" in which "se presentan unos narradores y unos personajes que se sitúan en la época actual y que, mediante analepsis, reconstruyen ese pasado ficcional enmarcado, generalmente, en sucesos de la realidad fáctica" (46). In fact, this denomination of novels that frame their historical approach from the present lends itself to the metafictional mode. While traditional realism would set a historical novel in the time-period it wishes to represent, the "novela de confrontación histórica" underlines the recreation of the past in the present, a process that, in

the novels of this study, is paralleled by the metafictional underlining of their fictional identity. In this sense, there exists a clear parallel between the self-aware approach to the past in these novels, identified as their sense of historical confrontation, and the previously defined concept of historiographic metafiction. *Soldados* and *Mala gente* are both aware of their novelistic identity and how their process of historical recuperation is mediated by their novelistic identity. They exemplify, and advocate for, Ridruejo's defence of literature as a means to approach the Civil War.

Given this self-avowed literariness, the following questions become pertinent: Does the open embrace of the literary come about at the expense of the historical? and How does this dynamic relate to the ethico-political nature of historical memory? By juxtaposing the real world with the invented world, Cercas and Prado have created works that demonstrate the inherent construction and interpretation of historical representation. However, as Waugh states, "metafiction functions through the problematization rather than the destruction of the concept of 'reality'" (40). That is, the highlighting of history's problematic nature does not result in the complete disregard of the past as being unknowable. Instead, these self-conscious narratives ironically embrace fiction's inherent construction and interpretation as a means by which, seventy years later, Spain is able to confront the horrors of its recent past. Colmeiro describes this ethical imperative, stating that "para poder olvidar o, mejor dicho, superar el pasado es necesario primero enfrentarse y asumirlo con todas sus luces y sombras" (24). In the case of *Mala gente*, the confrontation with the past carries an explicit message of historical vindication, while in *Soldados* there appears to be a more distanced and less politically polarized approach to the need to remember. In both cases, the ethical imperative of memory is embraced and seen as a function of fictional discourse. In this way, both

novels are examples of Hutcheon's aforementioned historiographic metafiction, fiction that "attempts to demarginalize the literary through confrontation with the historical" (*Poetics* 108).

Chapter 1 – From “True Tales” to True Fictions: Reading and Writing the Civil War in *Soldados de Salamina*

1.1 ¡Otro maldito estudio sobre *Soldados de Salamina*!

The heading of this portion of the chapter is evidently an ironic allusion to Rosa's novel *¡Otra maldita novela sobre la guerra civil!*, a title that, as covered in the Introduction, refers to the proliferation of the theme in the Spanish marketplace. Within this literary milieu no work has achieved as much visibility as *Soldados de Salamina*; as such, evoking Rosa's work seems pertinent for another analysis of Cercas's already famous novel. Certainly, *Soldados* stands out as having achieved the most commercial success of the four works covered in this study. Not only has the novel been a “best-seller,” but it also has become a cultural phenomenon spawning a film version by David Trueba (2002) and a theatrical adaptation by Juan Ollé that was performed throughout Spain in 2007. In addition to commercial success, *Soldados* has also received much critical acclaim; it has been made the subject of a relatively large number of academic studies despite having been published less than a decade ago. With *Soldados de Salamina*, explains López-Quñones, “Javier Cercas logró su inmediata consagración en el canon literario español” (*La guerra* 50). From their own unique perspectives, almost all studies of the novel have undertaken an examination of how it deals with the memory and representation of Spain's tumultuous past from the stand-point of an interested present. Here, I seek to contribute to the dialogue by focusing on the work's irony and how what is remembered is understood as a function of how it is remembered.

The plot of *Soldados de Salamina* revolves around a frustrated writer, the autobiographically-named “Javier Cercas,”³⁷ and his efforts to investigate and tell a forgotten story from the last days of the Spanish Civil War: the attempted execution and escape of the Falangist leader and poet, Rafael Sánchez Mazas. After showing early promise as a novelist, “Cercas” is unable to build a career in fiction and gets a job as a reporter in order to improve his financial and emotional well-being. Writing for the culture section of a newspaper, “Cercas” first learns of Sánchez Mazas’s adventure through an interview with his son, and noted author, Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio.³⁸ According to Sánchez Ferlosio, his father managed to avoid being killed during a mass execution of Nationalist prisoners at Collell by fleeing amidst the chaos of the shooting. Hidden in the woods following his getaway, Sánchez Mazas is discovered by a Republican soldier who, upon seeing the prisoner, allows him to escape. The Falangist leader avoids further capture in the woods thanks to the help he receives from three Republican deserters, his “amigos del bosque.” When Franco’s forces break through the Republican lines, the former fugitive-in-hiding becomes a minister in the new government. From his position of influence, Sánchez Mazas is able to have his “amigos del bosque” released from prison, a debt repaid for having saved his life.

Soldados is divided into three parts: “Los amigos del bosque,” “Soldados de Salamina,” and “Cita en Stockton.” The first section is the one in which “Cercas” gives account of his efforts to reconstruct the details of Sánchez Mazas’s escape in an attempt to verify the tale’s veracity. Intrigued by the anecdote, “Cercas” initially relates it in an article entitled “Un secreto esencial” in which he compares the events surrounding the death of Antonio Machado with those surrounding the failed execution of the Falangist poet, both having occurred more or less at the same time. In response to his column, “Cercas” receives

three letters, one of which is from an historian, Miguel Aguirre. Aguirre puts “Cercas” in contact with Jaime Figueras—the son of Pedro Figueras, one of the “amigos del bosque”—and lends him a copy of a book published by another supposed survivor of the execution, Jesús Pascual Aguilar, entitled *Yo fui asesinado por los rojos*.³⁹ After interviewing Jaime Figueras and the surviving members of the “amigos del bosque,” Joaquim Figueras and Daniel Angelats, and María Ferré, another survivor that gave aid to Sánchez Mazas in the woods, “Cercas” decides to once again leave his job to write. This time he intends to write not a novel, but rather a “relato real” that gives light to this forgotten episode. In one conversation with Daniel Angelats, “Cercas” learns that Sánchez Mazas himself had promised to write of his adventure with the “amigos del bosque” and planned to entitle the work “Soldados de Salamina.” As a result, when “Cercas” settles on writing the “relato real,” he dubs it *Soldados de Salamina*, the title of Sánchez Mazas’s promised memoir and the title of the novel by Javier Cercas that we read.

The second part of the novel is comprised of this text, written in a reporter’s style “y desde una supuesta instancia extra-heterodiegética” (Luengo 235). Although “Cercas” has set out to write an objective account of the deciding moments in this Falangist poet’s life, he undermines his attempted disconnectedness by interjecting occasionally with personal opinion. Referring to Sánchez Mazas’s political beliefs, for example, “Cercas” writes: “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” (136). Nevertheless, this second part of the novel largely maintains a dry and uninteresting style of exposition that contrasts with the more engaging personal narratives of the first and third sections.

After finishing the text, “Cercas” himself demonstrates certain disappointment with his finished product. The third part of the novel begins with the protagonist’s admission of dissatisfaction with his “relato real.” “El libro no era malo,” he laments, “sino insuficiente, como un mecanismo completo pero incapaz de desempeñar la función para la que ha sido ideado porque le falta una pieza. Lo malo es que yo no sabía cuál era esa pieza” (144). This is the impetus around which the third part of the novel is based: the search for the tale’s missing piece. Having finished his work, “Cercas” returns to his position as a reporter. One of his first interviews is with the Chilean writer Roberto Bolaño.⁴⁰ Through their discussions, “Cercas” learns that Bolaño knew a man named Miralles, an octogenarian ex-pat that fought in the Civil War for the Republican side and was in Collèl around the time of Sánchez Mazas’s supposed execution. Bolaño also notes how Miralles enjoyed the pasodoble “Suspiros de España,” the very same song that the soldier who spared Sanchez Mazas’s life enjoyed. Believing that what his story is missing is the perspective of this soldier, “Cercas” locates and travels to interview Miralles, now living in a senior’s residence in Dijon, France. Although Miralles denies being the anonymous soldier, “Cercas” sees him as the hero that his insufficient tale requires.

The place of the heroic in *Soldados*—that is, the need for a hero to fulfill the vision expressed by “Cercas”—has been pondered by many critics from distinct perspectives. For Spires, the conduct of the anonymous soldier that saved Sanchez Mazas’s life “elevates the event from an intriguing story to a moral parable” (“Depolarization” 498). That is, in the inherently political environment of the Civil War, Spires explains, the soldier embodies the heroic by opting to act according to humanitarian and not military motivations (“Una historia” 85). This reconciliatory notion of the tale’s hero stands in contrast to the opinion of

others, such as Luengo, who state that what Miralles provides to the story is a specifically *Republican* hero (235). From the perspective of the democratic present, the adventure of Sánchez Mazas, a Falangist, is unsatisfactory without the more acceptable intrusion of a positively-characterized Republican counterpoint.⁴¹ Of course, following “Cercas’s” own recognition that his original text seems to be missing an essential element, one must also consider the narrative benefit to finding the anonymous soldier, thus providing closure to the anecdote. This necessity is clearly ironic considering that “Cercas” desires to merely tell a true tale without resorting to an invented resolution, the trappings of traditional storytelling. In any case, “Cercas’s” search for a hero is rebuffed by the supposed hero himself, Miralles, when he states, “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 se matan. Y los héroes de verdad nacen en la guerra y mueren en la guerra. No hay héroes vivos, joven” (199). In this chapter, I explore the way in which ironic tension shapes the memory narrative, both in terms of the work’s metafictional makeup with regard to the identity of genre, and of the ambiguity surrounding the heroic; that is, between the “depolarized,” to use Spires’s term, and the polarized in favour of the Republic.

Indeed, the emphasis of this study is largely placed on the exposition that “Cercas” provides surrounding his storytelling in sections one and three of the novel, not on the story told in section two. An examination of how this novel deals with reconstructing and representing the past (the active process of memory and narrative creation by “Cercas”) provides for a more profound historiographic dialogue than an examination of the historical tale that is itself reconstructed and represented (the supposed execution of Sánchez Mazas). As Mario Vargas Llosa maintains, in *Soldados* “la estrategia del narrador es más inusitada y

fascinante que lo que aparenta narrar” (16). This strategy, what I call the metafictional mode, is manifested here on two interrelated levels: the autobiographical ambiguity between Javier Cercas (author) and “Javier Cercas” (character and fictional author), and the writing of the “relato real,” the text within a text.⁴² The relationship between the two levels is characterized by the ironic distinction between the motivations of the character and his work and those of the author and the novel at large. Nevertheless, this layered examination of historical representation does frame the aforementioned issues of heroism, moral conduct, and agency thereof, thus obliging consideration of the novel’s political impetus with regard to that which is remembered. Although, as I will demonstrate, Prado’s *Mala gente* provides a more boisterous critique of the Francoist past, *Soldados* too offers the medium of fiction as a means to remember those that have been officially silenced during the Franco regime and unofficially silenced during the transition to democracy: the exiled loser, the forgotten Republican. Because my conclusions result from how the novel blurs the distinction between the realms of fiction and nonfiction, I must ask how the film adaptation affects such interpretations given that “Javier Cercas” is replaced by a female protagonist, Lola Cercas, and other figures from reality are substituted by invented characters. As such, I will conclude this chapter with a brief examination of how the novel and its film version of the same name engage in a kind of intertextual dialogue.

Before moving on to my analysis, it is pertinent to once again reference the critical dialogue surrounding this oft-studied novel by specifically pointing to two recent studies of *Soldados*; they can be seen as complementary to this present work as they too address the collision of genre (fiction/nonfiction) and its relation to the treatment of the past: the chapter “*Soldados de Salamina: El valor del testimonio y la retórica de la anti-literariedad*” in the

aforementioned *La guerra persistente* by López-Quiñones and Amago's chapter "Narrative Truth and Historical Truth in Javier Cercas's *Soldados de Salamina*" in the also aforementioned *True Lies*. Despite the many similarities found between the analyses of López-Quiñones and Amago and my analysis, there are distinctions that must be outlined in order to provide justification for the present study. In *La guerra persistente*, López-Quiñones claims that *Soldados* demonstrates a "retórica de la antificcionalidad" (55). That is, the importance of oral testimony to the story's reconstruction and "Cercas's" insistence in his work's generic separation from the realm of fiction reveal an inherent disdain for that which is literary. López-Quiñones does not delve into the self-conscious nature of the novel and thus pays no attention to the irony of a self-conscious work of fiction that tries to distance itself from its identity as artistic invention. Amago, on the other hand, does focus more on the novel's self-awareness but, like López-Quiñones, largely ignores the work's ironic subtext. Therefore, while Amago notes that "The strength of the metafictional novel . . . lies in its ability to pre-empt and acknowledge the weaknesses of autobiographical and historical discourses through the process of writing fiction" (147), he does not explore how the irony of the relationship between historical and fictional discourses in *Soldados* advocates for literary discourse as it pertains to a contemporary dialogue with the Spanish Civil War.

Born in 1962 (Ibahernando, Cáceres), Javier Cercas is of a generation whose experience of the Civil War is completely mediated by matters of anecdote and representation. In fact, not only had the Civil War ended twenty-three years before his birth, but Cercas also experienced little of the Franco regime having been merely thirteen years old when the dictator died in 1975 and sixteen when the new constitution was passed in 1978.

By contrast, the “amigos del bosque,” both the characters and their homologues in reality, exemplify the dying generation whose experience of the war remains one of memory and testimony. It is apt, therefore, that *Soldados* both promotes a novelistic negotiation of the past and gives voice to a fictionalized version of its author who also pieces together the past through his own process of negotiation. This authorial fragmentation and the blurring of genre are characteristics also found in Cercas’s previous works, such as the novels *El inquilino* (1989) and *El vientre de la ballena* (1997), and his collection of “true tales,” *Relatos reales* (2000).⁴³ “Many of Cercas’s narrators bear a marked similarity to Cercas himself,” (146) explains Amago,

Even when they are not explicitly named “Javier Cercas,” his narrators are typically writers who have spent time in the United States—often Urbana, Illinois—and that currently live in Girona. Fiction offers Cercas a method of turning personal and historical reality into art at the same time that it permits him to explore the ambiguous territory that lies at the intersection of nonfiction and the novel. (146)

It is curious, however, that Cercas’s new book *Anatomía de un instante* (2009)—another historical narrative, this time about the attempted coup by Tejero on 23 February 1981—claims to address this polemical moment as a non-fictional account, a claim made without irony. If anything, it is ironic that a writer with such a penchant for blurring the line of genre would defend his narrative by stating that for this work he has decided to dispense with fiction in order to get to the facts surrounding the events in question.⁴⁴ This most recent work aside, it is certain that Javier Cercas has consistently played with notions of reality and how that reality manifests itself within the creative space of fiction. Nevertheless, it is in *Soldados* that there exists an explicit fragmenting of the self: Javier Cercas versus “Javier

Cercas.” It is this dynamic against which one must consider all claims of fidelity toward reality and history.

1.2 “Relato real” vs. Novel: “Cercas” vs. Cercas

Referring to the inclusion of the realms of reality and history in *Soldados*, Spires explains that the novel results from a transformation of sterile truth into fertile fiction (“Una historia” 76). The explicit second-self created by Javier Cercas to narrate his novel stands out as the most evident and telling example of this dynamic, due to “Javier’s” narrative centrality and ironic claims regarding the veracity of his “relato real.” In fact, almost every work of criticism devoted to this novel has recognized that *Soldados* is to be read as a novel and not a journalistic account written in a narrative style. Were this not the case and the novel was meant to be read as a kind of documentary, it would be of little interest.

Addressing claims that the novel functions as a chronicle of trustworthy facts, Vargas Llosa clarifies, “Pero esto no es cierto; si lo fuera, el libro no valdría más que por los datos que contiene y su existencia—su valor—, como en el caso de un reportaje periodístico, dependería por completo de una realidad ajena y exterior a él, que la investigación de que da cuenta el texto habría contribuido a esclarecer” (16). This correlation between a lack of reader interest and an exposition of facts is found in the novel itself. Unlike the unsatisfactory result of his own “relato real” that leaves “Cercas” disillusioned, *Soldados* is built on the illusion of being a “relato real,” an illusion that is subverted by the splitting of the author’s self. Therefore, the novel is capable of addressing the issue of historical recuperation from a position that engages the reader’s interest; it avoids the dry lack of climax and multiple perspectives that plague the writing of what are supposedly just the facts, as is the case in the text that makes up the second part of the work. Indeed, the middle

section (the historical tale itself) becomes a mere counterpoint to the notably more engaging first and third (the articulation through narrative of the process).

The opening paragraph of the novel plants and undermines this fundamental illusion; it is worth quoting the first few lines:

Fue en el verano de 1994, hace ahora más de seis años, cuando oí hablar por primera vez del fusilamiento de Rafael Sánchez Mazas. Tres cosas acababan de ocurrirme por entonces: la primera es que mi padre había muerto; la segunda es que mi mujer me había abandonado; la tercera es que yo había abandonado mi carrera de escritor. Miento. La verdad es que, de esas tres cosas, las dos primeras son exactas, exactísimas; no así la tercera. (17)

In *Diálogos de Salamina* (2003)—a book of transcripts of conversations between Javier Cercas and David Trueba, the director of the film version, concerning their related works—Cercas addresses these first lines of the novel. “Esa primera frase es estrictamente cierta,” he claims, referring to his first contact with the failed execution of Sánchez Mazas, “En cambio, no es verdad lo que sigue” (11). In other words, Cercas explicitly dispels the notion that “Cercas” represents a faithful rendition of his own self. This first paragraph is a snapshot of the novel as a whole; it provides occurrences and characters that have roots in reality but have been appropriated as fictional entities with fictional biographies that contrast with their extra-textual selves. After affirming that the first sentence of the novel corresponds to his own account, Cercas proceeds to list how his narrator’s biography has, like the narrator himself, been invented: “La verdad es que mi padre no ha muerto. . . . Tampoco es verdad que mi mujer me haya abandonado, por lo menos hasta esta tarde. . . . Ni siquiera es cierto

que yo trabaje en un periódico, como el protagonista de la novela” (11). However, although *Soldados* demands an active reader, it is not necessary that the reader be aware of each biographical detail of the flesh-and-blood author in order to question the narrator’s fictional identity. “Cercas” begins his account with a lie, an acknowledged lie, but a lie nonetheless. This simple statement arouses a sentiment of critical mistrust within the active reader’s process of interpretation. Adding to this mistrust is the narrator’s hyperbolic, and ironic, correction of his lie: the first two life-moments mentioned were not just “exactas”, but rather “exactísimas.” In fact, the dynamic between a lie and the truth is seen as parallel to the dynamic established between fiction and reality: fiction is, by nature, a lie. Javier Cercas himself addresses this correlation in his conversation with Trueba:

lo que aparece en mi novela tiene mucho que ver con lo que sucedió en la realidad. Lo que ocurre es que, como te decía al principio, en la novela hay una manipulación de muchos elementos reales, empezando por mi propia biografía. Entonces, alguien puede preguntar por qué hacer eso, por qué mentir. Y mi respuesta es muy sencilla: porque el oficio del escritor (o por lo menos del novelista) consiste en mentir. Pero no se miente porque sí, sino para, a través de la mentira, llegar a una verdad superior, a una verdad que no es la verdad de los hechos, la verdad histórica o periodística, sino una verdad universal, una verdad moral o poética. (18)

Because fiction itself is a particular type of “lie,” it is of little importance to determine which facts from Cercas’s true life have been given textual life as part of the narrator’s biography. That is, the creation of the narrator is by nature a lie in the sense that it has no reality outside the created, textualized world. This particular manifestation of the author does not exist in the material world, regardless of whether his name is Javier Cercas or not. However, by

bestowing upon his narrator a shadow identity to his own, one complete with the same name and some of the same life events, Javier Cercas creates a fictional world that is characterized by a constant tension between its claims to belonging to reality and its subverted fictional identity.

This tension describes the essence of the text's metafictional make-up. As Waugh states, "Metafictional novels tend to be constructed on the principle of a fundamental and sustained opposition: the construction of a fictional illusion (as in traditional realism) and the laying bare of that illusion" (6). In this novel, the "sustained opposition" ironically functions through the construction of a factual illusion, due to the autobiographical naming of the narrator and the plot centrality of real figures and events, and the laying bare of that illusion. The laying bare of the work's factual illusion is what makes it a self-conscious novel; it highlights its novelistic identity by way of an ironic self-characterization as narrative documentary. Again, the key figure to this dynamic is not Sánchez Mazas, but rather "Javier Cercas;" the problematization of historical truth that results from this tension does not concern the accuracy of Sánchez Mazas's tale *per se*, but rather the manner in which it is reconstructed and represented by the narrator in the present. This novel is metafictional because it acknowledges the fictionality of more than just the historical narrative, but also of our contemporary approach to that historical narrative. The Civil War and today's understanding of the Civil War are reaffirmed to be textually mediated. In reference to the novel's textuality, López-Quñones states, "El hecho de que el narrador identifique y señale la condición textual del segundo capítulo ayuda a insuflar en el primero y en el tercero un particular relieve y vivacidad. Un relieve y una vivacidad que hacen parecer estas secciones no textuales, reales o mejor dicho, 'pre' y 'post' textuales, anteriores y posteriores al acto de

la escritura y a sus resultados” (*La guerra* 56). However, while López-Quiñones only grants textual identity to the second part of the novel, I maintain that the constant tension of identity between author and “author” underlines the novelistic, and thus textual, character of the work in its entirety. If the second part of the novel is the “relato real” that the protagonist purports to write, then the first and third parts also pretend to be the “author’s” journalistic depiction of his investigative process: his own “relato real.” As mentioned, however, this is the illusion of fact that ironically serves to underline the fictional imperative of *Soldados*. That is, the constant allusion to the “real world” does not grant the novel objective reliability, but rather the opposite: to use Hutcheon’s phrase, it succeeds in “forcing recognition of a *literary code*” (italics in the original; *Narcissistic* 49).

It is the protagonist’s attitude toward the generic distinction of his project that reveals, in the most telling way, the ironic dynamic created between “Cercas” and Cercas, fiction and nonfiction. In the first part of the novel the narrator constantly and explicitly affirms that his telling of the execution of Sánchez Mazas differs from the process and product of his previous career as a novelist. The fact that this narrative contains figures from the annals of history sets it apart from the genre of fiction; there can be no overlap. This notion is initially revealed when the historian Miguel Aguirre asks “Cercas” if he is planning to write a novel based on his article and investigation: “‘Ya no escribo novelas,’ dije. ‘Además, esto no es una novela, sino una historia real.’ ‘También lo era el artículo,’ dijo Aguirre. ‘¿Te dije que me gustó mucho? Me gustó porque era como un relato concentrado, sólo que con personajes y situaciones reales. . . . Como un relato real’” (37). As mentioned, the term “relato real” used by Aguirre is picked up by “Cercas” and becomes his catchphrase with regard to his work’s generic identity and authority therein. While the shift from

“historia” to “relato” characterizes the act of narrativization, “Cercas” maintains that the “real” transcends the process, faithfully rendering a moment in time as it was in narrative form.

Indeed, “relato real” is a phrase he repeats throughout the novel with increasing hostility toward literary invention. Describing his decision to undertake this project, the narrator notes, “decidí también que el libro que iba a escribir no sería una novela, sino sólo un relato real, un relato cosido a la realidad, amasado con hechos y personajes reales, un relato que estaría concentrado en el fusilamiento de Sánchez Mazas y en las circunstancias que lo precedieron y lo siguieron” (52). Statements like “un relato cosido a la realidad” are emblematic of “Javier’s” discourse, as if fiction transcended reality completely and was the product of an independent world of fantasy. When “Cercas” explains to his girlfriend Conchi that he intends to write again, she questions whether or not it will be yet another novel. His response to her query further highlights the negative rhetoric with which he approaches fictional discourse: “‘No,’ dije, muy seguro. ‘Es un relato real.’ ‘¿Y eso qué es?’ Se lo expliqué; creo que lo entendió. ‘Será como una novela,’ resumí. ‘Sólo que, en vez de ser todo mentira, todo es verdad’” (68). Fiction is not just presented as a generic opposite to nonfiction, but rather it is a lie. For “Cercas,” genre lacks flexibility. It is a matter of authority through authenticity in the case of non-fiction in contrast with the lack thereof of fiction; there is no room for the greater truths of artistic invention, while, inversely, a non-fictional narrative categorization enjoys the integrity denied to the novel.

In the third section of the novel, “Cercas” is forced to confront his dissatisfaction with the final product of his “relato real.” In order to improve his narrative it becomes necessary that Miralles be the anonymous soldier he seeks; an interview with him would

provide the counter-perspective that the story requires. For this reason, “Cercas” worries that Miralles will not end up being that soldier. Upon explaining his concerns to Bolaño, the Chilean writer emphatically contradicts the narrator’s insistence that the tale’s veracity be maintained and suggests that “Cercas” invent the interview with Miralles, that he invent the required perspective to his story. In keeping with his increasingly negative vocabulary with regard to fiction, however, “Cercas” notes that to invent the interview with Miralles “equivalía a traicionar su naturaleza” (170).

The message is very clear, polemical, and naive: all fiction is a lie, an ethically charged term, and artistic invention in the face of real characters would constitute a betrayal of the story. On the other hand, the “faithful” narrative re-telling of history is wholly truthful. This message is also meant to be read as ironic: all statements regarding the “truth” of the “relato real” are undermined by the metafictional play between those events and characters that do exist in reality and their fictional homologues in the novel. In particular, the dynamic created between Cercas and “Cercas” and their intended narrative products, novel and “relato real” respectively, underline the driving force of irony in terms of how *Soldados* treats the nature of historical representation.

This is one of the fundamental differences between Amago’s analysis of the novel and that of this present study. For Amago, the narrator’s claims are not weighed against his connection to the novel’s author, but rather are specific to his story-telling: “The narrator’s frequent statements as to the truth of his story may stem from his desire to assuage the reader’s doubts as to the veracity of his account, but mostly they serve to reveal his own narratorial insecurity” (152). However, by recognizing the “sustained opposition,” to re-quote Waugh, established between Cercas and “Cercas,” it seems that these frequent

statements made by the narrator actually serve as ironic contradictions to the work's fictional identity. It is as if Cercas is winking at the reader each time "Cercas" states that his tale is true and not a novel; the author and reader are sharing an "inside joke" at the narrator's expense.⁴⁵ Muecke refers to this kind of irony as "half-concealment" and states that the "the detection and appreciation of the camouflage is a large part of the reader's pleasure" (*Irony* 52-53). Recognition of this ironic sub-text requires recognition of the incompatibility between the narrator's identity as artistic creation and his desire to avoid the influence of artistic creation in his writing. The protagonist's ironic declarations not only enrich the reader's experience, but also invoke evaluation of what is being declared. As Handwerk states, "Recognition of incompatibility demands judgement" (3). Judgement in this case involves how this ironic "inside joke" speaks to the nature of historical and fictional representation in general. By giving voice to a polarized view of fiction and nonfiction, *Soldados* questions the authenticity of historiographical discourse; the narrator is essentially being mocked for the naivety of his insistence in presenting an accurate representation of reality. This does not result in a denial of the importance of knowing the past, but rather grants fiction a privileged role in how one approaches history.

1.3 "Literariness" of the War

It is the third section of the novel—the search for the missing piece, Miralles—that fully explores the literariness of the past and its access to us in the present. Here, Cercas gives what might be called the "voice of reason" to Roberto Bolaño in the face of his narrator's stubborn hold on the "relato real." That a character based on a real individual is the one that advocates for the use of artistic invention is not coincidental, nor is the fact that Bolaño himself is a writer of fiction. The Chilean author serves to echo what the novel's

ironic contradiction established between the narrator and his task implies. For Bolaño, what matters is the story itself, thus emphasizing literary importance over factual accuracy. When “Cercas” restates that his project “no es una novela. Es una historia con hechos y personajes reales. Un relato real,” Bolaño replies, “Da lo mismo. . . . Todos los buenos relatos son relatos reales, por lo menos para quien los lee, que es el único que cuenta” (166).⁴⁶ In fact, Bolaño not only dismisses the story’s need for factual precision, but also maintains that fiction may offer more of an understanding of what is real than “reality.” Upon explaining the need for “Cercas” to invent the interview with Miralles, Bolaño adds, “La realidad siempre nos traiciona; lo mejor es no darle tiempo y traicionarle antes a ella. El Miralles real te decepcionaría; mejor invéntatelo: seguro que el inventado es más real que el real” (170).

Bolaño’s suggestions here reaffirm the novel’s metafictional questioning with regard to the possibility of an exact recreation of past events. As Hutcheon clarifies, “The interaction of the historiographic and the metafictional foregrounds the rejection of the claims of both ‘authentic’ representation and ‘inauthentic’ copy alike” (*Poetics* 110). By rejecting claims of authentic representation, Bolaño also gives voice to the novel’s assertion that this impossibility be seen as a complementary counterpoint to fiction’s potential in approaching the past. To summarize this leitmotiv of the novel and my study, artistic invention and an understanding of reality are not antithetical. While Hutcheon states that “Past events are given *meaning*, not *existence*, by their representation in history” (italics in the original; *Politics* 78), I expand this to state that literary representations of past events also speak to their meaning and not their existence. This is the relationship between literature and history to which LaCapra refers when he explains, “Fiction, if it makes historical truth claims at all, does so in a more indirect but still possibly informative, thought-provoking, at times

disconcerting manner with respect to the understanding or ‘reading’ of event, experience, and memory” (132). While the claims of historical truth are tempered in *Soldados* and *Mala gente* by a conscious recognition of the past’s problematic textualization in the present, both novels advocate for a “reading” of Spain’s fratricidal conflict and totalitarian consequences that embraces its own (re)constituted, (re)written identity.

In *Soldados*, this notion of historical understanding through literary invention is embodied in the figure of Miralles. Again, Cercas is playing with a contradiction between the attitude demonstrated by his narratorial second self and the direction taken by the novel. While “Cercas” asserts that it would be a betrayal of the story to invent the character of Miralles as the counter-perspective to the testimony of Sánchez Mazas and the “amigos del bosque,” the third part of the novel revolves around the search for, and interview with, the Republican ex-pat. However, as Spires notes, “Miralles, tal vez el personaje más real de *Soldados de Salamina*, puede no ser sino una invención artística” (“Una historia” 79). That is, in spite of the pervasive presence of characters based in reality and their role in the reconstruction of an actual historical event, the episode of Sánchez Mazas, the novel gains its moment of closure and its ethical imperative regarding the representation of history through the life of an octogenarian that exists only in the fictional sphere of this novel. It has been suggested that Miralles, in fact, stands out as the true centre of *Soldados* (Neuschäfer 151). Although I maintain that “Cercas” and his ironic process of historical recuperation constitute the true centre of the novel, it is certain that the story of Miralles usurps that of Sánchez Mazas as the figure of central historical/narrative importance. In addition, the forced confrontation between the narrative importance of the two characters frames the debate—as I will discuss in the following section—surrounding whom and what should be remembered.

While the “relato real” of the Falangist escapee turns out to be unsatisfactory, to use the narrator’s own words, the life and testimony of a character of pure artistic invention appears to become that which the novel promotes as its historical truth. As Spires adds, “Exista o no como realidad histórica, no cabe menor duda de que Miralles funciona como realidad artística, ficticia, que es la realidad más verdadera de *Soldados de Salamina*” (“Una historia” 80). In other words, that Miralles is a product of fiction does not signify a betrayal of the truth, but rather that one’s understanding of historical truth is mediated by such a fictional product. Thus, I maintain that *Soldados* identifies the contemporary “reading” of the Civil War as just that, a reading: the conflict is viewed in terms of its literariness.

By establishing a close dynamic between (explicitly) literary discourse and historical memory, *Soldados* echoes the nature of Spain’s contemporary cultural perception of the past in the sense that for an ever increasing percentage of the population, knowledge of the Civil War is a product of anecdote and representation as opposed to testimony and experience. Indeed, at the beginning of the novel the protagonist represents a generationally distanced ignorance with regard to the nation’s fratricidal conflict. “Cercas” explains that his curiosity toward the Civil War corresponds directly to his fascination with the tale of Sánchez Mazas, acknowledging that until then he knew as much about the battles of the Civil War as the battle of Salamis, adding—with an ironically self-deprecating nod from the author—that the stories of the war “siempre me habían parecido excusas para la nostalgia de los viejos y carburante para la imaginación de novelistas sin imaginación” (21). Of course, it is precisely the novelistic quality of Sánchez Mazas’s adventure that intrigues the protagonist in the first place and gives him the impetus to reconstruct the tale in writing, albeit as a “relato real.” In this way, the account of Sánchez Mazas exemplifies the literary quality of what is

supposedly historical reality. Aguirre and “Cercas” reaffirm this attitude in an explicit manner when they first meet to discuss the tale. In response to Aguirre’s statement that “muchacha gente pensó que era mentira,” the protagonist explains that he does not find this surprising given that “es una historia muy novelesca,” to which Aguirre replies, “Todas las guerras están llenas de historias novelescas” (35). For those that have only lived through peace, like “Cercas” and Aguirre, war lacks the immediacy and intimacy necessary to distinguish its events and characters from those found in a work of fiction.

At the end of the novel, Miralles confronts this experiential divide between those who lived the war and those who seek to represent it when the protagonist explains the purpose for his visit. This fragment of conversation described by “Cercas” is worth quoting in its entirety:

Le conté la historia. Cuando hube acabado, Miralles dejó su taza vacía sobre la mesa e, inclinándose un poco, sin levantarse de la butaca abrió el ventanal del balcón y miró fuera.

“Una historia muy novelesca,” dijo luego, en tono neutro, mientras sacaba un cigarrillo del paquete mediado de por la mañana.

Me acordé de Miguel Aguirre y dije:

“Es posible. Pero todas las guerras están llenas de historias novelescas, ¿no?”

“Sólo para quien no las vive.” Expulsó un penacho de humo y escupió algo que quizás era una hebra de tabaco. “Sólo para quien las cuenta. Para quien va a la guerra para contarla, no para hacerla.” (198)

Although “Cercas” sets out to chronicle the forgotten, but “true,” events surrounding the failed execution of a Falangist prisoner, his account retains its novelistic character

throughout. In fact, the dissatisfaction with the “relato real” is seen to be remedied by the literary convention of a hero’s presence. Considering the novel as a whole, the novelistic interpretation of history is further advanced by an acknowledgment that the saving grace of the narrator’s work is Miralles: the incarnation of literary invention in the face of real figures.

Miralles’s claim that the nature of war is novelistic for those that have not lived it is not disputed in *Soldados*, but rather appropriated as a defence of the literary approach to the conflict. In her book *Allegories of Violence. Tracing the Writing of War in Late Twentieth-Century Fiction*, Lidia Yuknavitch comments on how one attempts to understand a war that he or she has not experienced by stating that “if we exclude the primary victims, it is true, or true enough, that our understanding of war is fundamentally arrived at by and through representation” (viii). “Javier Cercas” and Miguel Aguirre—like Cercas, Prado and Rivas—epitomize the discourse of those who are not primary victims. As the research undertaken by the narrator demonstrates, even the testimonies of those who are able to give first-hand accounts of the conflict are textualized and integrated into the interpretative, representative process. Yuknavitch goes on to conclude that not only is war approached in an indirect manner through its presence in various forms of representation, it also “has been remembered, conventionalized, mythologized and historically charted in large part by literary means” (121). In addition to exemplifying the “literary means” by which the Civil War is remembered, *Soldados* also self-consciously promotes such literary means as a viable vehicle for historical dialogue. That is, while the reader will never fully comprehend the horror, pain, and devastation caused by the war itself, fiction stands out as a medium through which one may consider its relevance to the present. While “Cercas” consults biographical

texts (*Yo fui asesinado por los rojos* by Jesús Pascual Aguilar), academic texts (by Andrés Trapiello), and eye-witness testimony (“amigos del bosque”, María Ferré), and attempts to present this information with factual objectivity, it is the story of Miralles—the invented, literary story—that ultimately speaks to what is remembered and why.⁴⁷

Because the figure of Miralles stands as the culmination of the novel’s literariness in the face of non-fiction and traditional historiography, I must ask how this “fictionality of the war” can be reconciled with López-Quñones’s contrasting insistence that the novel demonstrates a “retórica de la anti-ficcionalidad” (*La guerra* 55). Although this present study shares many observations with the work of López-Quñones, this particular distinction obliges consideration as it speaks to my thesis of the novel in general. The basis for his conclusion is twofold: the weight given to oral testimony over written archive in the reconstruction of Sánchez Mazas’s tale and the disdain with which “Cercas” treats the genre of fiction in comparison to the accuracy of his “relato real,” both of which stem from a reading of the novel that ignores the presence of irony. Clearly, any sense of “anti-ficcionalidad” is, in essence, ironic “anti-ficcionalidad.”

Oral testimony is undoubtedly the privileged mode of information transfer in *Soldados*. As López-Quñones points out, although “Cercas” does consult historical and bibliographical texts, “la columna vertebral de su investigación está compuesta por las versiones y pistas aportadas de viva voz” (*La guerra* 52). This face-to-face communication includes conversations between “Cercas” and his contemporaries in which he is given advice regarding the direction of his project and, more importantly in terms of historical recuperation, the oral testimonies of those who personally witnessed and/or played a part in the story of Sánchez Mazas. In fact, oral testimony is intimately linked to how the present

gains access to the past, thus in the “novela de confrontación histórica,” to reuse Luengo’s term, the oral transfer of information is commonplace among characters trying to understand history. As Mechthild Albert explains, “el relato oral de la memoria constituye un importante paradigma discursivo de la nueva novela histórica y por ello desempeña un papel primordial a nivel metanarrativo” (22). Referring to *Soldados*, López-Quñones accurately notes that memory and oral communication are not only important facets of the investigative process, they also constitute privileged media for the transmission of historical information in contrast to the impossibility of arriving at the centre of this episode of the Civil War by following a fundamentally textual approach (*La guerra* 52).

That “Cercas” explores history through oral testimony cannot be denied. However, this does not mean that the novel itself advocates for a non-textual approach to understanding history. The very nature of this work, a novel, is evidence of a means of communication mediated by text. Even the oral testimonies are textualized. Of course, oral testimony is also a “text” in that it constitutes a narrative that has been negotiated and processed by a witness, not necessarily as a conscious operation, before being verbalized. On the other hand, the novel demonstrates how oral texts also give way to written texts. The reader is not having a conversation with the surviving members of the “amigos del bosque,” or Miguel Aguirre, or Roberto Bolaño, but rather he/she is reading their accounts as they have been organized and presented: on one level by “Cercas,” the fictional author of a supposedly “true tale,” and on the other by Cercas, the author of the admittedly fictional work of narrative. On both levels, the spoken transmission of information becomes words on a page, textual evidence of the past. *Soldados* revels in the ironic tension created by the incongruity established between the narrator’s contention that historical knowledge is found in the truthful discourse of oral

testimony and the author's insistence in the power of the fictional text with regard to historical dialogue. Hutcheon maintains that a work of historiographic metafiction, "while teasing us with the existence of the past as real, also suggests that there is no direct access to that real which would be unmediated by the structures of our various discourses about it" (*Poetics* 146). In this case, the access to history is mediated by textual discourse, both in terms of oral transmission and the recording of that verbalized "text." As Hutcheon clarifies succinctly, "we know the past (which really did exist) only through its textualized remains" (*Poetics* 119). Therefore, while López-Quñones defends his conclusion regarding the novel's "anti-fictionality" due to the importance of oral testimony, one must recognize the irony of such textual disdain being revealed in a textual form: both as the protagonist's account of his investigation (inner text) and the novel itself (outer text).

Referring to the generic identity of the text, López-Quñones appropriates the narrator's contempt for that which is literary, at least with regard to his "relato real," as an inherent message of the novel itself:

Este despectivo tratamiento de la Guerra Civil como punto de partida para la escritura (sin duda paradójico en una novela sobre aquel trienio) tiene una función bastante clara: evitar el poso literario depositado sobre este evento. En este sentido, el rechazo de los términos 'novela' o 'ficción' ejemplifican este deseo de evitar los trucos, clichés o lugares comunes forjados por una tradición novelística para acercarse a un evento y dar cuenta de él. La literatura aparece retratada como un filtro edulcorante y por todos reconocible que se interpone entre el acontecer terrible de una guerra y el conocimiento de ésta. Un filtro que, según reza la retórica de *Soldados de Salamina*, debe ser evitado y superado. (*La guerra* 56-57)⁴⁸

As I have observed, however, the narrator's perception of his work in terms of genre is undermined by the novel as a whole. Here it is imperative that one recognize that such disregard for novelistic discourse is ironically manifested within a novel. In addition, while affirming that literature appears as a filter that obstructs knowledge of the war by glossing over its horrors, López-Quñones ignores the impossibility of viewing history without a textual filter. Indeed, even oral testimony, while certainly more direct, still maintains the filters of memory and human subjectivity. As Hutcheon states, "Knowing the past becomes a question of representing, that is of constructing and interpreting, not of objective recording" (*Politics* 70). Therefore, while "Cercas" does demand that his work be seen as an objective recording of the truth, this is seen to ironically underline the work's novelistic—that is fictional—identity, an identity that is embraced for its potential in historical discourse. While López-Quñones claims that *Soldados* offers "una fachada que evita lo literario como paradójico salvoconducto hacia una literatura más eficaz" (*La guerra* 58), I maintain that if it does constitute a more effective literary approach to history, it does so as a result of ironically revealing that knowledge of the past is, in fact, mediated by the fiction of literature.

1.4 Toward an Ethics and Politics of Memory: The Case of Miralles

In his article "Depolarization and the New Spanish Fiction at the Millennium" Spires explains that with *Soldados de Salamina*, Javier Cercas "questions the accuracy of information and history, the univocal definition of morality, and above all any definitive interpretations of reality" (497). As has been outlined, the metafictional and ironic blurring of genre in this novel certainly gives credence to this notion. In this sense, Cercas's play with the boundaries of fiction and non-fiction exemplifies the postmodern questioning of

absolutes, particularly with regard to how history is understood. However, as Hutcheon explains, the ambiguity associated with a lack of absolutes does not necessarily lead to an absolute rejection of historical discourse: “In both fiction and history writing today, our confidence in empiricist and positivist epistemologies has been shaken – shaken, but perhaps not yet destroyed. And this is what accounts for the skepticism rather than any real denunciation” (*Poetics* 106). In fact, it is this lack of “any real denunciation” that characterizes the relationship between the aesthetics of fictional representation and the ethics of memory in all four of the novels of this study including *Soldados*. That is, while each novel plays with irony in its own specific way, the great overriding ironic concept shared by all results from the juxtaposition of a postmodern questioning of truth against the work’s clear support of the notion that the nation’s past should not be forgotten.

On one hand, the plot of *Soldados* revolves around a forgotten episode of the Spanish Civil War; on the other hand, this moment in history is viewed from the present, thereby drawing the reader’s focus to both the horrors of the Civil War and its contemporary reconstruction and interpretation. Because of this, there is no critical debate as to whether or not this novel supports the need to remember; it is generally accepted that *Soldados* inherently supports an ethics of memory. Winter, for example, maintains that Cercas’s novel exemplifies a trend seen in some historical novels of the late nineties and early twenty-first century—including *El lápiz del carpintero*—that are read as a “política poética de reconocimiento” (“Localizar” 33). Giving a more in-depth assessment of the novel’s relationship with historical consciousness, López-Quñones concludes that “*Soldados de Salamina* afronta y representa la Guerra Civil como un pasado traumático al que se debe volver, no para reabrir heridas innecesariamente, sino para analizar y pensar sin ningún tipo

de cortapisas” (“La guerra” 124). The question is not whether the novel presents the Civil War as a topic of contemporary interest or not, as this is evidently so, but rather what is the nature of this ethical imperative. In other words, my focus in this section concerns the politics of memory as a function of the already-established ethics of memory. As outlined in the Introduction, the ethics of memory concerns the cultural responsibility to keep open the past for the present, while the politics of memory describes the motivation behind that imperative. If *Soldados* defends the realm of narrative fiction as a privileged site of historical dialogue, then the question now concerns the political nature of the impetus surrounding such a dialogue.

While Spires notes that *Soldados* questions the possibility of historical and moral absolutes, he too affirms the novel’s concern with confronting the nation’s tumultuous past. In fact, this ambiguity lends itself to Spires’s notion that this work by Javier Cercas demonstrates a politics of depolarization. That is, by giving narrative centrality to a figure of fascist Spain, normally a marginalized figure in today’s liberal democracy, Cercas’s novel serves to question the hegemony of anti-Francoist sentiment and view the Civil War from a depoliticized present:⁴⁹

The anecdote and its presentation seem designed to change polarized views of the two sides in the Spanish civil war. By choosing to tell a story in which the role of villains and victims is reversed from conventional liberal views of the war, the readers, who [sic] marketing devices assume to be overwhelmingly pro-republican, are encouraged to feel empathy with the fascist Sánchez Mazas. (“Depolarization” 499)

The palatable figures from the past in Spain today are not founding members of the Falange or ministers in Franco's government, both of which describe the career of Sánchez Mazas.⁵⁰ And yet, he is approached alongside Antonio Machado in the original article that gave way to the "relato real" and is presented here without any obvious condemnation of his politics.

Indeed, the protagonist rejects the potentially polarizing opinions of anti-Francoist, main-stream sentiment. When discussing the origins of his project, for example, "Cercas" criticizes those who object to the study of the life and work of fascist writers: "Algunos ingenuos, como algunos guardianes de la ortodoxia de izquierdas, y también algunos necios, denunciaron que vindicar a un escritor falangista era vindicar (o preparar el terreno para vindicar) el falangismo" (22). In addition to the inherently-polarized orthodox left, the voice of the "uninformed" general public is also disapproving of the subject of the narrator's research. This voice is exemplified by Conchi when she expresses her displeasure toward the tale's protagonist: "¡Mira que ponerse a escribir sobre un facha, con la cantidad de buenísimos escritores rojos que debe de haber por ahí! García Lorca por ejemplo. Era rojo, ¿no?" (69). In a novel with few female characters, the fact that Conchi—unsophisticated, unlearned, and uncouth—embodies the ignorant counterpoint to what the narrator puts forth as noble work lends a misogynistic tone to the memory dialogue. Regardless of whether or not the rejection to such opposition is sexist, it is certainly driven by the trivialization of its detractors. The unsympathetic characterization of Conchi is important because in the face of Lorca or Antonio Machado, with whom "Cercas" compares Sánchez Mazas in his original article, the Falangist writer is notably distinct because of his now-taboo politics. What "Cercas" claims, however, is that his "relato real" merely brings to light the story of one man's struggle for survival. That the man is a Falangist is important to the story for

historical reasons, but not because it confers to the tale any political message regarding ideology. That is, the implicit message behind the protagonist's work suggests that the narrative presence of the now-deceased writer and politician contains neither support nor condemnation of his politics. Of course, such an assumption reveals a certain amount of naiveté; a Falangist will always be important—that is, politically significant—within the context of contemporary Spain's dialogue with its past.

Indeed, Spires's work on the politics of depolarization in *Soldados* largely stems from the “resurrection” of a story that brings together Republican *and* Falangist protagonists. The problem with Spires's conclusion—at least as it is understood without being framed by the essential presence of irony, as I will demonstrate—is that the “battle” for narrative centrality in the novel between the forgotten Nationalist Sánchez Mazas and the forgotten Republican Miralles is won by Miralles. The tale of Sánchez Mazas constitutes a window to the past, a facilitator that leads to that which merits recording and remembering: the anonymous act of humanity by an anonymous *Republican* soldier. Although the anecdote of Sánchez Mazas's failed execution is certainly a forgotten episode, and Sánchez Mazas himself today is largely ignored, the Falangist leader lives on in history books and recorded documents. Miralles, on the other hand, represents the war's loser; he is not recognized by the archives of history, he is a silenced exile.

The elderly Republican's “inexistence” from the perspective of the official annals is underlined by his inexistence in the real world of flesh-and-blood outside of the textual realm. Set against “real” characters, Miralles stands out as being notably fictitious. Because the Republican loser/exile has no place in the official history, a figure with no standing in the realm of reality is an apt representative. In fact, even when Miralles denies being the

anonymous soldier for whom “Cercas” is searching, he still constitutes the centre of the tale, the reason for which the protagonist desires to write. Nevertheless, while “Cercas” sees Miralles as the complement to his story about Sánchez Mazas, it is clear that the former usurps the protagonism of the latter in the novel as a whole. It becomes increasingly less important whether or not Miralles was the unknown soldier; what matters is that he fought for the Republic and has been denied a space in the nation’s official recognition of its past, a space that “Cercas” provides in his true tale and that *Soldados* provides, in terms of what he represents, through the novelistic genre.

Although both Miralles and Sánchez Mazas can be viewed as forgotten figures of the past, the novel offers the street sign as a concrete symbol of the Nationalist’s preserved presence and the Republican’s absence in the official discourse. At the end of the second section, the “relato real” itself, the narrator’s last two sentences about the life of Sánchez Mazas are revealing: “Hoy poca gente se acuerda de él, y quizá lo merece. Hay en Bilbao una calle que lleva su nombre” (140). Despite his lack of contemporary recognition, there is physical acknowledgment of his place in the nation’s history. This is in direct contrast with the experience of Miralles and his fellow soldiers. During one of his interviews with “Cercas,” Miralles explains the frustrating anonymity of those who fought and died for the losing cause:

Cuando salí hacia el frente en el 36 iban conmigo otros muchachos. Eran de Terrassa, como yo; muy jóvenes, casi unos niños, igual que yo; a alguno lo conocía de vista o de hablar alguna vez con él: a la mayoría no. Eran los hermanos García Segué (Joan y Lela), Miguel Cardos, Gabi Baldrich, Pipo Canal, el Gordo Odena, Santi Brugada, Jordi Gudayol. Hicimos la guerra juntos; las dos: la nuestra y la otra,

aunque las dos eran la misma. Ninguno de ellos sobrevivió. . . . Nadie se acuerda de ellos, ¿sabe? Nadie. Nadie se acuerda siquiera 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. (199-201)

It is probable that the names given by Miralles are, like him, fictional creations and did not exist, but that is not the point. They represent those who did exist, who did fight, who did die, and who have not been properly recognized within the official Civil War discourse. In fact, Colmeiro echoes Miralles's lamentations in his defence of the imperative for historical recuperation with a remarkably similar statement regarding concrete spaces of memory, or lack thereof: "No hay en España un museo dedicado a la guerra civil, ni siquiera un monumento a los padres y madres de la República, o un recuerdo a los perdedores, los fusilados o los exiliados. No hay calles con sus nombres en las ciudades españolas, aunque todavía sobreviven los de muchos héroes fascistas" (24). The absence of Miralles and his compatriots in the textual traces of official history is countered by their presence in *Soldados*, suggesting that a possible medium for dealing with recognizing those that have been omitted by the Franco regime and negated by the collective amnesia of the Transition to democracy is found in the relative freedom of narrative fiction. While there may not be museums, monuments, or streets that recognize the contributions of those that lost the war, there are literary avenues open to contemporary Spain's dialogue with its Civil War and dictatorial aftermath.

“Cercas” too makes explicit the power of letters in keeping alive the memory of Miralles and his fellow soldiers, albeit from the continued and ironic insistence in his tale’s veracity. Sitting in the train on his way home from having interviewed Miralles, the protagonist explains,

allí vi de golpe mi libro, el libro que desde hacía años venía persiguiendo, lo vi entero, acabado, desde el principio hasta el final, desde la primera hasta la última línea, allí supe que, aunque en ningún lugar de ninguna ciudad de ninguna mierda de país fuera a haber nunca una calle que llevara el nombre de Miralles, mientras yo contase su historia Miralles seguiría de algún modo viviendo y seguirían viviendo también, siempre que yo hablase de ellos, los hermanos García Segué—Joan y Lela—y Miguel Cardos y Gabi Baldrich y Pipo Canal y el Gordo Odena y Santi Brugada y Jordi Gudayol, seguirían viviendo aunque llevaran muchos años muertos, muertos, muertos, hablaría de Miralles, de todos ellos, sin dejarme a ninguno, y por supuesto de los hermanos Figueras y de Angelats y de María Ferré . . . pero sobre todo de Sánchez Mazas. . . . Vi mi libro entero y verdadero, mi relato real completo. . . (208-209)

Of course, the narrator’s penultimate phrase given here, that above all his work will keep alive the memory of Sánchez Mazas, appears to suggest that his memory imperative does not stem from political motivations. The juxtaposition of using his text to recognize the silenced losers of the war and the forgotten winner forces an ambiguity of political significance. Therefore, one must pose the question: Does the claim made by “Cercas” mean that the initial anecdote about Sánchez Mazas really does take precedence (or at least is given equal billing, in any case giving place to a politics of memory based on reconciliation) or are the

narrator's intentions fully subverted by the author in favour of Miralles alone? On the other hand, is there not a third option, given the ironic relationship established between the layers of the real and textual worlds? That is, is there a kind of middle ground crafted by the novel's characteristic irony that constitutes not a compromise *per se* between the two poles, but rather a tension of meaning that seeks ethicopolitical clarity with regard to addressing the legacy of the Civil War while simultaneously embracing ambiguity?

Although *Soldados* shares with its narrator the potential for the written word in "keeping alive" the memory of those that might otherwise be forgotten, I identify two differences between what "Cercas" states and what Cercas seems to suggest through his second self. First, by blurring the line between fiction and reality, Cercas discredits the possibility of a "true tale" and uses his protagonist's claims as an ironic affirmation of the novel's fictional character. Thus, instead of a "relato real" being used as a faithful testimony to history, the novel stands out as the medium by which history may be approached, not as a function of what has been officially recorded, but of what has been previously omitted by the dictatorship and the subsequent "collective amnesia." This fictional bias is related to the second inconsistency, that above all the tale will tell the story of Sánchez Mazas. After explaining with passion how his work will keep alive the story of Miralles and his comrades, "Cercas" is unconvincing with his affirmation that Sánchez Mazas remains the central interest. By this point the novel has moved on from the original anecdote, one that was related with the bland journalistic style, and has found its climax in the character of Miralles. By being both a fictional creation and the focus of memory preservation, Miralles embodies the novel's thesis with regard to representing the war: the positive space of literature in the

face of traditional historiography and the need to give voice to the defeated, exiled, and forgotten defender of the Republic.⁵¹

Nevertheless, by recognizing that Miralles drives the memory imperative, despite the narrator's intentions, I am not denying the existence of any inherent tension to the political significance of the novel. In other words, *Soldados* is a novel not without ambiguity, which leads to multiple interpretations. For some, like Spires, the mere humanization of a Falangist figure carries a heavy political connotation. Clearly, the need to leave open to consideration all who participated in the Civil War, and not just those on the Republican side, constitutes part of the historical memory defended here. Like the blurring of limits that characterizes the novel as a whole, there is an inherent ambiguity here that denies an easy either/or classification with respect to glorifying/demonizing the "heroes" and "villains" of history. Nevertheless, while this tension is not resolved, it is clear that the humanization of Sánchez Mazas does not result in his story progressing beyond the relatively boring background to the other events of the novel, notably the search for Miralles. "Cercas" is not disingenuous when he states that his story will above all recognize the dead Falangist, but he is naive about how his own work has been taken over by the octogenarian Republican and how such a shift in priorities colours the narrative that he purports to craft and tell. Regardless of how one views the hierarchy of memory, there remains an ironic inconsistency. If the tone is reconciliatory given the presence of a Falangist protagonist, it is ironic that a Republican hero is created to give closure to the tale. On the other hand, if the impetus for memory revolves around giving voice solely to the Republican victims, then it is ironic that their struggle is represented parallel to a figure that stands for the oppressive forces of Franco's victorious regime.

Referring to the way in which *Soldados* promotes the remembrance of the War's victims, Vargas Llosa concludes his review by affirming, "Quienes creen que la llamada literatura comprometida había muerto deben leerlo para saber qué viva está, qué original y enriquecedora es un manos de un novelista como Javier Cercas" (16). Is *Soldados* an example of "literatura comprometida?" Perhaps, though it does wallow in the murky waters of ambiguity surrounding the politics of memory for which it advocates; while it does not fall into the depolarized realm of reconciliation, as has been suggested, neither does it serve an agenda of historical justice. Unlike *Mala gente*'s explicit condemnation of the Franco regime's institutions of oppression, exemplified by the disappearance of Republican children, *Soldados* makes no comment on the dictatorship's sins of the past. Sánchez Mazas is not glorified, but neither is he demonized; he is, however, humanized. The novel supports the need to remember those who have been silenced as a vindication of their pain and sacrifice, rather than the need to bring to justice those that have inflicted pain and put into motion the mechanisms of silence. Any critique found in *Soldados* is directed more toward contemporary ignorance and/or collective amnesia and the traditional media of historical dialogue than to the policies and actions of the late Caudillo.

To this end I must also consider that any message gleaned from the text is marked by the metafictional destabilization of historical discourse. Thus, I return to the seemingly paradoxical conclusion: *Soldados* demonstrates an ethics toward the Civil War that at once judges the representation of history to be problematic and necessary. By playing with notions of fiction and reality, Cercas's novel ironically subverts notions of historical veracity, not so that dialogue with the past may be dismissed, but rather so that artistic creation be championed as an avenue through which Spain's tumultuous past might be

approached. Despite the narrator's desire, *Soldados de Salamina* is not a "relato real," a fact that is affirmed by the central importance given to Miralles, the character without any ambiguous relationship to reality. Therefore, what Cercas's novel espouses is the potential to appreciate matters of the past by "reading" the past, by accepting the power of the (ironically) unabashed artistic creation.

1.5 The Intertextual Dialogue of *Soldados de Salamina*: Novel and Film

To conclude this examination of *Soldados* I will consider in brief how the film adaptation of the novel by David Trueba affects the conclusions arrived at in the preceding analysis. That is, because my interpretation of the novel is intrinsically linked to the blurring of genre between fiction and non-fiction, both in terms of Sánchez Mazas's tale and the ambiguity between Cercas and "Cercas," at first glance the film seems to destabilize this dynamic. "Javier Cercas" is replaced with a female protagonist, Lola Cercas, and figures such as Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio and Roberto Bolaño are substituted by another figure from reality and an invented character, Chicho Sánchez Ferlosio and a young Mexican student respectively. The distinct nature of each medium makes it impossible for the film to maintain the novel's metafictional text within a text and the establishment of a narrator that functions as a homologue to the flesh-and-blood author. The film is not shot as the "making of" another film in the way that the novel is written as an account of its own fictional creation. Therefore, the irony that characterizes the desire to tell a true tale within the novelistic genre is apparently lost in the film adaptation.

However, this ostensible incongruity only ends up being problematic if one considers the novel and the film to be two distinct, but hierarchical, works: original and copy. As

Robert Stam explains referring to the relationship between “source” novels and their adaptations, “The inter-art relation is seen as a Darwinian struggle to the death rather than a dialogue offering mutual benefit and cross-fertilization” (4). By identifying that traditional concepts of film adaptation tend to be expressed in the conflictive and unequal designations of origin and copy, Stam categorizes such criticism in terms of what he calls “fidelity discourse:”

Fidelity discourse asks important questions about the filmic recreation of the setting, plot, characters, themes, and the style of the novel. When we say an adaptation has been ‘unfaithful’ to the original, the very violence of the term gives expression to the intense sense of betrayal we feel when a film adaptation fails to capture what we see as the fundamental narrative, thematic, or aesthetic features of its literary source. . . . ‘Fidelity discourse’ relies on essentialist arguments in relation to both media. First, it assumes that a novel ‘contains’ an extractable ‘essence,’ a kind of ‘heart of the artichoke’ hidden ‘underneath’ the surface details of style. (14-15)

In other words, “fidelity discourse” questions whether or not a film has been faithful or unfaithful—terms that inherently point to notions of morality and ethics—to its novel according to delineated criteria. This critical vocabulary has already been applied to *Soldados*. In his article “De la novela al cine: *Soldados de Salamina* o ‘el arte de la traición’” (note the idea of betrayal expressed in the title itself), Luis García Jambrina explains that “hay que traicionar la letra de la obra original y buscar siempre soluciones cinematográficas” and adds that the film constitutes “algo muy distinto y, al mismo tiempo, muy fiel a la novela” (32). Although García Jambrina approaches the two works of *Soldados* in terms of how the film manifests equivalence to the novel, Stam argues that such an

exercise is merely a futile demonstration of fidelity discourse: “there can be no real equivalence between source novel and adaptation” (18).

Therefore, in the face of this “Darwinian struggle,” it is the notion of “mutual benefit” and “cross-fertilization” mentioned by Stam with which I intend to consider the connection between Trueba’s work and that of Cercas. In agreement with Stam, it seems more useful to leave aside notions of fidelity and embrace a model of criticism that considers how the two works interact with each other without the hierarchy of original/copy: “Notions of ‘dialogism’ and ‘intertextuality,’ then, help us transcend the aporias of ‘fidelity’ and of a dyadic source/adaptation model” (27). “Dialogism” and “intertextuality” as they are quoted here refer to the works of Bakhtin and Julia Kristeva.⁵² Based on these notions, Stam’s theory of adaptation asserts that a source novel and its film adaptation do not constitute isolated works, but rather artistic manifestations of different media that are situated in a literary, social, and historical web; they influence each other and are influenced by their antecedents. While Cercas and Trueba recognize in *Diálogos de Salamina* that the narrative strategy of playing with the metafictional identity of the author connects the novel with works such as *El Quijote* or *Niebla*, it is certain that the two *Soldados de Salamina* also interrelate, to use Stam’s vivid phrase, “in an amorous exchange of textual fluids” (46).

The point of viewing these works in terms of an intertextual dialogue is not to merely list the differences observed between them, but rather to consider what these differences reveal with regard to their approach to the representation of the Civil War. Spires, for example, speaks to the establishment of an “unreal” version of Javier Cercas, the narrator, being highlighted as a function of the film’s change in protagonist: “Indeed, the film version of *Soldados de Salamina* underscores this personage’s carnal unreality because in the movie

the protagonist is a woman” (“Depolarization” 503). The presence of Lola Cercas in the film does not destroy the autobiographical ambiguity of the novel; on the contrary, she calls attention to the blurred line between what is real and what is not. As such, it is particularly telling that Conchi, upon discussing the shortcomings of the “relato real,” suggests to Lola that she change the perspective of the story and participate herself in the work; a clear allusion to the dichotomy of creator/participant that Javier Cercas exploits in the novel. Ironically, Lola rejects the recommendation due to the fact that her participation would destroy the veracity of the tale for which she strives. It is this same implicit reference to the novel’s author/protagonist that characterizes the scene in which the camera focuses on the newspaper article that Lola Cercas supposedly has written comparing the failed execution of Sánchez Mazas with the death of Antonio Machado. With the exception of a change in photo and author’s name—in this case it reads “Lola Cercas”—the article on camera, titled “Un secreto esencial,” is the actual article that was written and published by Javier Cercas in real life.⁵³ Here, Trueba employs the visual mode of the cinema to link his protagonist with the protagonist and author of the novel.

A similar juxtaposition between fiction and reality is achieved by the splicing of archival historical footage with the main cinematographical sequences. When Lola is thinking back to the attempted coup by Colonel Antonio Tejero, for example, Trueba cuts footage of the actual event into the film to illustrate his protagonist’s thought process.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, like all aspects of reality and artistic creation in *Soldados*, the clear-cut distinction between the two realms is subverted leading to a blurring of the boundaries. The visual manifestation of this dynamic is achieved in the film by removing Sánchez Mazas and

inserting the actor who plays his part in the film into archival footage showing the interactions between the co-founder of the Falange and the Caudillo.

In fact, Trueba frequently utilizes the visual potential of film to play with the conventions of fiction and reality, whereas the novel, due to its nature, plays with the idea of a fictionalized text within a text. In the novel it is not evident without further investigation whether or not the characters and testimonies of Joaquim Figueras, Daniel Angelats, and Jaime Figueras—the son of the third “amigo del bosque”—have their roots in reality or if they are artistic inventions like the interviews with Miralles. The credits at the beginning of the film, however, reveal that the work includes “los testimonios reales de Joaquim Figueras, Daniel Angelats, Jaume Figueras y Chicho Sánchez Ferlosio.” In addition, instead of using actors, Trueba allows them to give their testimonies on camera as part of the film and, in the case of the “amigos del bosque,” in Catalan. As a result, their interviews with Lola take on the style of a documentary; a style that is notably and ironically incompatible with the identity of the interviewer. That is, the authenticity of the “amigos del bosque”—real characters playing themselves, speaking their own real words, telling their own real stories—is juxtaposed against the invented character Lola Cercas, played by Trueba’s wife Ariadna Gil. The documentary is the film version of the non-fiction text. While Cercas blurs the line between fiction and reality on a textual level primarily through the fragmenting of self, Trueba forces a collision between the two realms on a cinematographical level by literally placing the “real world characters” on camera with the actors playing roles and reading scripts.

In sum, both the novel and the film employ the specific strategies unique to their media in order to play with the conventions of literary invention and reality. The intertextual

dialogue that is established between them underlines the fictionality of certain “real” figures, such as Cercas and Bolaño, while giving more life to others, such as the “amigos del bosque.” This relationship, however, does not lead to conclusions surrounding a character’s identity, but rather reaffirms the instability of such identifications. As I have mentioned, while this instability certainly reflects the problematic nature of historical representation, it does not constitute a rejection of the need to remember. The blurred line between the real and the unreal does not question whether or not the attempted execution of Sánchez Mazas or the attempt to reconstruct it by Cercas took place, but rather it demonstrates the literariness of their representations. In both the novel and the film it is the wholly fictional character of Miralles that stands out against the “real” figures as the one through which the historical “truth” is revealed, a patent irony that at once champions the cause of the defeated, unrecognized and forgotten exile and self-consciously advocates for the privileged space of fiction, be it narrative or film, in contemporary discourse of the Spanish Civil War.

Chapter 2 – Looking for History in all the Write Places: Fiction, Non-fiction, and Politics in *Mala gente que camina*

2.1 The Politics and Poetics of Benjamín Prado

Benjamín Prado's novel *Mala gente que camina* can be described in a variety of superlative terms in relation to the other three works of this study. Published in 2006, it is the most recent novel and has yet to receive much academic attention. As such, this chapter will engage in less critical dialogue than that of the more examined works such as *Soldados* and *El lápiz*. In addition to being the most recent and least studied, it is also the most explicitly political novel of the four. While each of the texts covered here advocates in favour of a literary approach to Spain's previously censored or silenced past, *Mala gente* is the one that most clearly harnesses the ambivalence-inducing postmodern aesthetics of irony and metafiction to paint a decidedly unambivalent portrait of the ethical and political imperatives of historical recuperation. The title itself acts as an implicit but powerful signal of partisanship with regard to the Spanish Civil War: "Mala gente que camina / y va apestando la tierra..." (84) is a stanza written by Antonio Machado, taken from a poem originally published in 1907, now found in the collection *Soledades. Galerías. Otros poemas* (1983). Of the Machado brothers, Antonio belonged to the Republican side; he was *their* Machado.⁵⁵ "The authorship of the quote is significant," explains Luis Martín-Estudillo referring to the novel's title and its poetic source, "because Machado became one of the most prominent icons of the cultural opposition to the dictatorship, and Prado's novel is a fierce condemnation of the Franco regime" (242). Like in *Soldados*, one of the central themes of *Mala gente* is the opposition to silence in the face of Spain's history. However, while

Cercas's novel promotes memory in order to give voice to those that have been forgotten, Prado's novel promotes memory in order to bring to light the crimes of the dictatorship, crimes that have been silenced if not forgotten. If Cercas advocates for commemoration, Prado advocates for vindication if not justice.

As with *Soldados*, *Mala gente* structures its approach to matters of historical recuperation by playing with the blurring of genres between fiction and non-fiction. Basing my analysis on the ironic interplay of ethics/politics and this metafictional mode, I will examine in this section how Prado constructs and deconstructs the illusion of reality within the novelistic realm. I use the term "deconstruct" here not in Derrida's post-structuralist sense, but rather as a matter of destabilization; that is, how Prado creates the illusion of reality and then undermines this creation to highlight its fictional nature. By recognizing the ironic self-awareness of the novel as an imagined space of textual construction, I then focus on how *Mala gente* treats literature as a site of "truth," of meaningful historical confrontation. Given this work's multilayered metafictional makeup, I will explore the novel's central ethical/political concern, the Franco regime's sanctioned abduction of Republican children following the war, as it is revealed by a fictional novel (studied by the narrator), within the fictional novel ("written" by the narrator), within the real novel by Benjamín Prado. Although Prado frames his criticism of the dictatorship—and silence toward its transgressions—through the narrator himself, there are many distinct characters in the novel, each representing a different discourse of contemporary Spanish culture with regard to how society ought to deal with matters of the war and its aftermath. Therefore, my analysis will conclude with an examination of how this polyphony interacts with the blurring of genre and the issue of missing children in a novel that ironically plays with narrative

ambivalence while offering an unambivalent political perspective on recent Spanish history. Before addressing these points of study, I will include in this introduction a summary of the plot of *Mala gente*, a brief review of how this novel relates to Prado's previous works, and a brief examination of the author's political activity regarding the Francoist past and cultural memory.

From the first page of the novel, the narrator speaks directly to the reader about the story to be told from the retrospective present. The exact nature of the dynamic between storyteller and reader is not immediately apparent, but it is clear that the narrator already knows how the tale unfolds and is aware of his role in its communication. "Les decía que aquella mañana estaba en mi despacho," begins the second paragraph, "y que mientras esperaba la visita, a las nueve en punto, de una de las tres mujeres que protagonizarán esta historia, me puse a trabajar en el ensayo sobre Carmen Laforet que pensaba presentar en un congreso que iba a celebrarse en Atlanta, Georgia" (9-10). The narrator/protagonist, unidentified until the end, is a high-school literature teacher who, as the quote states, is preparing a presentation on the work of Carmen Laforet for a conference and possibly a future book. The woman for whom he is waiting is Natalia Escartín, the mother of one of his students who is having problems at school. Although her son's troubles are incidental, this meeting constitutes the basis around which the plot revolves. In the course of their conversation, Natalia learns of the narrator's work on Laforet and mentions that her mother-in-law, Dolores Serma, was a friend and contemporary of Laforet in the forties. Like Laforet, Serma was also a writer; her forgotten novel *Óxido* was written around the same time that the more famous author wrote the award-winning *Nada*. Intrigued by the possibility of adding something original to his presentation, the narrator learns that Serma is

still alive but suffers from Alzheimer's disease and is unable to provide him with more information. Nevertheless, on his flight to Atlanta he reads a copy of *Óxido* that Natalia has given him. At this point he becomes convinced that this forgotten author needs to be investigated. As a backdrop to his enquiry into Serma and *Óxido*, the narrator's work is complicated by eventual affairs with Natalia and his ex-wife Virginia and an on-going debate with his mother regarding the relative merits, or lack thereof, of the Franco regime.

The little-read novel *Óxido*—written in the style of Kafka, according to the narrator—tells of a woman that leaves her house one morning to look for her son. Unable to find him, she ventures further and further from her house, day after day, week after week, year after year without any success. Although the people of the city recognize the woman, they have not seen her son and even deny that she ever had one. The woman becomes obsessed; her search for a son that the world insists does not exist leads her to madness. Although Serma maintained a close relationship with the “Auxilio Social” and its founder Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, and was affiliated with the Falangist “Sección Femenina,” the narrator senses that her lone work contains an implicit critique of the policy to separate children from the Republican parents after the war.⁵⁶ This practice was based on Dr. Antonio Vallejo Nájera's theories that Marxism constituted a mental disease and, thus, it was necessary to remove the children from their parents for their own well-being.⁵⁷ Often these children were adopted by families loyal to the regime and brought up as biological children to their adoptive parents. The narrator becomes convinced of his hypothesis when he discovers that Serma's pregnant sister was imprisoned as a Republican sympathizer after the war. Through more investigation, he concludes that Serma's son—and husband of Natalia, Carlos Lisvano—is actually her nephew. Serma's “official” life is a lie; she raised her

sister's son as her own to avoid his abduction like so many other children of Republican parents.

Armed with this fascinating and original story about a forgotten author, the narrator intends to make public the story of Serma and *Óxido* in an academic work of non-fiction entitled *Historia de un tiempo que nunca existió (La novela de la primer posguerra española)*. Unfortunately, Lisvano does not grant him permission to use the family documents as proof of his claims and thus the narrator is forced to publish his findings as a work of fiction because, as he states, the genre of fiction allows him to still present his work without fear of being sued by Serma's family. This work of fiction is the novel itself; the protagonist is the self-aware author who directs his narration directly to the reader. "Ha sido un placer hablar con ustedes," he concludes in the penultimate paragraph, "Les doy las gracias por seguirme hasta estas últimas líneas y espero que nos volvamos a encontrar en alguna otra ocasión" (428). However, unlike in *Soldados* where Javier Cercas introduces himself from the beginning, immediately implying an autobiographical blurring of the subject, Prado waits until the last lines to give his narrator a name: "Por cierto, me llamo Juan. Juan Urbano, para servirles. Con tanto jaleo, casi se me olvidaba decírselo" (428). Despite Urbano's casual claim that he merely forgot to give his name, it seems that Prado has deliberately withheld this information in order to play with the possibility of autobiographical ambiguity right up until its end.

Issues of narrative authority stemming from complex, ironic, and even contentious relationships between self-aware narrators and their creator are a constant in the work of Benjamín Prado. This is true even in his first foray into the world of literature when the young writer, born in Madrid in 1961, began publishing works of poetry in the mid 1980s.

Prado's first book was a collection of poems entitled *Un caso sencillo* (1986).⁵⁸ In his anthology of contemporary Spanish poetry *La generación del 99. Antología crítica de la joven poesía española*, José Luis García Martín identifies Prado as the veteran of a group of poets known as the "Generación del 99," an established "elder statesman" of youth poetry in Spain at the turn of the millennium. Although the "Generación del 99" is delineated temporally as poets born after 1960 "que han publicado al menos un libro" (18), García Martín maintains that such a categorization is based on a desire to study poets and poetry from a certain era together and not, he stresses, an attempt to identify a common poetic thread. There is nothing that unites this group of poets besides a seemingly arbitrary age definition and that all the writers included have achieved some measure of success: "*La generación del 99*—título de un libro, no otra etiqueta para la confusión de los gacetilleros—no pretende definir una generación poética . . . ni establecer la nómina cerrada de sus integrantes; no es una imposición del antólogo, sino una cortés invitación: estos son, a mi entender, los más notables de los nuevos poetas; pasen y lean" (García Martín 30). Prado, for his part, eschews such categorization. In an open interview with the readers of *El País.com* from 2006 he states, "no me reconozco parte de nada. De hecho, prefiero desertar de casi todo."

While the "Generación del 99" may not define a poetic generation in terms of content, Prado's early novels place the author within a more clearly demarcated novelistic "generation" of the 1990s, much to his chagrin as the previous quote attests. With his first two novels, *Raro* (1995) and *Nunca le des la mano a un pistolero zurdo* (1996), Prado has been studied alongside writers such as José Ángel Mañas and Ray Loriga as the so-called "Generación X" in Spain, also known as the "generación Kronen" after Mañas's

quintessential novel *Historias del Kronen* (1994).⁵⁹ Martín-Estudillo explains that these works are intimately bound to Spain's socio-political climate in the early nineties:

“Moment X,” as I will call it, can be roughly identified with the 1990s, a period when these and a few other authors launched their aesthetic responses to the shock of a country which went from an instant of spectacular hype (which culminated with key international events hosted by Spain in 1992) to an almost immediate disillusionment marked by financial and political scandals and the growing sensation that what seemed to have become a dynamic society was, in fact, deepening its inequalities and creating new areas of exclusion. (235)

The “aesthetic responses,” including those found in Prado's early novels, relate specifically to youth culture and popular culture, particularly that of the United States. Addressing the influence of American literature and culture on this group of writers, Cintia Santana explains, “The brisk syntax and set of cultural references said to be characteristic of Dirty Realism began entering contemporary Spanish writing” (34), and notes that Loriga, Mañas, and Prado “became the paradigm of a new generation of Spanish writers. The authors self-consciously and insistently associated themselves with the United States, and were often grouped by critics under the literal translation of the English term: *Realismo sucio*” (34). Whether or not the term *Realismo sucio* accurately describes this literary aesthetic by comparing these works to those of American Dirty Realism,⁶⁰ what is certain is that the young characters in these novels interact in an urban Spain full of free time, drugs, alcohol, (North American) popular culture, and a lack of responsibility. These works paint an egocentric view of society, though not from a critical angle. As Cristina Moreiras Menor states, these authors “no parecen tener interés en hacer con su escritura una inscripción ética o una intervención

política a la realidad que examinan” (190). More importantly for this present study is the egocentric view of time in these novels. That is, they demonstrate a lack of concern for the past or the future; their characters live in the immediately gratifying space of the present. Colmeiro addresses this issue directly:

Los jóvenes narradores enmarcados dentro de la llamada ‘generación X’, José Ángel Mañas, Ray Loriga, Ismael Grasa, entre otros [including Prado], presentan el panorama desolador de una generación juvenil sin memoria, y también sin futuro. La renuncia al pasado y al futuro va acompañada del asentamiento en un presente sin grandes narrativas ni señas de identidad permanentes, convertidos en consumidores globales homogeneizados, desconscienciados, desmemoriados y desidentificados de sí mismos. (154)

Prado’s early novelistic output would suggest that he belongs to this “young generation without memory” as his works are entrenched in the present and free of any ethical imperative or political project. Nevertheless, *Mala gente*—with its central importance of history, both in terms of its representation and ethical/political character—stands in contrast to this mentality. Although Prado has been identified as part of the “generación X,” it is only useful to consider this categorization in reference to his first novels, or, as in this study, to demonstrate his thematic evolution.

It is precisely this change that leads Martín-Estudillo to clarify that the writers in questions do not necessarily *belong to* a so-called “Generation X” as much as their works are understood to have been *produced during* what he calls “Moment X.” The “convergence” of certain common elements that appeared to bind the works of Prado, Mañas, Loriga, and

others “was to gradually disappear,” he states, “due to the predictable divergences that would define their literary projects” (235-236). It is clear that Prado’s “literary projects” would be defined by a deep historical preoccupation, antithetical to the live-in-the-moment ethos typical of the Gen. X novel. In fact, Martín-Estudillo cites *Mala gente* as a clear example of such evolving narrative considerations. Responding to the claim that the notable works by Prado and his contemporaries demonstrated a clear “indifference to history,” Martín-Estudillo maintains that “[a]lthough this statement may be true of the inaugural novels of these authors, it often has to be nuanced—or plainly denied, as we shall see with Prado’s latest novel *Mala gente que camina* . . .—if we contrast it with their post-Moment X works” (240).

Indeed, Prado’s novelistic confrontation with the past does not begin with *Mala gente*. Published in 1999, *No sólo el fuego* breaks with the pop-culture references and metafictional make-up that characterize Prado’s previous works; it is a novel that covers five generations of a Spanish family, generations that “funcionan como metonimia de los diferentes momentos histórico-políticos de la España contemporánea” (Urioste 120). Nevertheless, with *Mala gente* Prado returns to what has been a constant in his previous novels, the metafictional play of ambiguity surrounding what is real and what is not, as the aesthetic backdrop to another literary confrontation with the past. In terms of narrative structure and setting, *Mala gente* shares with *No sólo el fuego* an understanding of history as it is viewed from the retrospective present. Unlike *No sólo el fuego*, however, where history is approached across many generations, *Mala gente* directs its attention to a specific episode of postbellum oppression, the abduction of Republican children, and its representation in the face of censorship through the novel *Óxido*. While “*No sólo el fuego* already anticipated the

deep historical preoccupation which is at the foundation of *Mala gente que camina*” (Martín-Estudillo 242), it is the latter that most explicitly gives narrative voice to Prado’s political sympathies and attitudes toward the Civil War and the Franco regime.

Prado’s politics have been well documented as he is an active contributor to Spain’s cultural debates surrounding memory, silence, and justice. Although pro-democracy/anti-Francoist sentiment is largely hegemonic in contemporary Spanish society, Prado’s political discourse goes beyond a passive acceptance of the status quo. For Prado it is imperative that Spain not only look to its democratic present and future, but also to its past: the Second Republic.⁶¹ As a writer himself, one that maintains a close connection between art and politics, it is no surprise that Prado often frames his engagement with the Republic through its original poetic defenders. Antonio Machado has already been mentioned as the source for the title of *Mala gente*; in addition, Prado extols the virtues of María Teresa León in the face of tyranny in his essay *Los nombres de Antígona* (2001). In the autobiographical/biographical exposition of his years working with Rafael Alberti, *A la sombra del ángel. 13 años con Alberti* (2002), Prado notes that their relationship was always one of inequality, not merely because he was so much younger and less accomplished than the famous poet, but more tellingly because Alberti “era un viejo luchador por la libertad, un defensor de la República y un héroe de la guerra civil cuyo nombre ondeaba como una bandera en la mente de algunos ciudadanos y llenaba de ira el corazón de otros” (11-12). This admiration toward defenders of the Republic gives rise to Prado’s continued support for a connection between Spain’s post-Franco democracy of the past thirty-plus years and its pre-Franco democracy brought down by the Civil War. For Prado, the Republic and its fall are at the heart of memory politics. This is perhaps most clearly expressed in the manifesto

written by the collective “Memoria del Futuro: 1931-2006” and signed by Prado in April 2006.⁶² While this political treatise is too long to cite in its entirety, I provide here the first paragraph in order to summarize its message of historical vindication:

El 14 de abril de 1931, España tuvo una oportunidad. La proclamación de la II República Española encarnó el sueño de un país capaz de ser mejor que sí mismo, y reunió en un solo esfuerzo a todos los españoles que aspiraban a un porvenir de democracia y de modernidad, de libertad y de justicia, de educación y de progreso, de igualdad y de derechos universales para todos sus conciudadanos. Hoy, setenta y cinco años después, los firmantes de este manifiesto evocamos aquel espíritu con orgullo, con modestia y con gratitud, y reivindicamos como propios los valores del republicanismo español, que siguen vigentes como símbolos de un país mejor, más libre y más justo.

The close connection that Prado maintains with the Republican past as a counterpoint to the Franco dictatorship suggests that he espouses an ideology that understands contemporary progressive politics not as spontaneous and confined to the present, but rather as a dynamic product of the Republic, the Civil War, and the transition to democracy.

Prado has manifested this deeply historical view of Spanish democracy by continually advocating for dialogue in the face of silence with regard to the war and its totalitarian consequences. In the previously-cited online interview with *El País.com*, Prado makes explicit his belief that confronting the nation’s most tragic and potentially “uncomfortable” chapters is a necessity. Responding to a question on whether or not the sins of the past should by now just be forgiven, Prado states, “En cualquier caso, creo que lo que

tenemos que comprender es que el perdón y el olvido son cosas distintas y que la Historia de un país no se puede hacer sumando medias verdades. La Historia hace mala pareja con el silencio.” The use of a capital H in history is significant: it suggests that it is undeniable, essential, and knowable; that uncovering that which has been silenced through censorship or a desire to forget ultimately leads to the “truth.” For Prado, history and openness are unavoidably linked. The reverse is also true, as he notes in his contribution to a collection of essays entitled *Memoria del futuro. 1931-2006*, affiliated with the manifesto/group of the same name that defends Republican values: “El silencio es lo contrario de la Historia, pero es un buen aliado de la falsedad” (195). An example of this attitude is found in an opinion article published by Prado in 2004 in *El País* entitled “Desentierren a Lorca, por favor.” Once again approaching the past through its poetic protagonists, Prado raises the issue of mass graves as a result of the war and post-war assassinations. Possibly the most famous of these victims is Lorca, a symbol of martyrdom for all of Franco’s victims during the Civil War. Prado equates disinterring the Andalusian writer’s body with vindication for the Republic’s fallen and forgotten in general: “Será una forma de hacer justicia en un país donde aún existen, a la vez, un Valle de los Caídos para los vencedores y miles de fosas anónimas para los derrotados. El olvido no es lo contrario del rencor, sólo es lo contrario de la memoria” (14). For Prado, memory is intimately linked to justice. His understanding of history is not a matter of observation without judgement, but rather of exoneration for the victims and condemnation of the transgressors. If the issue of common graves is a wound that has yet to heal, as Prado suggests in the article, then the issue of Republican children stolen from their parents is a wound that many are only now realizing existed. As Prado maintains in the online interview, “de ese tema de los niños robados a los republicanos y entregados a familias afectas al Régimen no se sabía gran cosa, sólo lo que contaron en un

documental de TV3 y en un libro los historiadores Montse Armengou, Ricard Belis y Ricard Vinyes.” With *Mala gente*, Prado confronts what he sees as an ignored tragedy and—in a self-conscious, ironic fashion—highlights the place of literature in its exposition.

2.2 Crafting and Subverting the Illusion of Reality

While Prado’s works have evolved from pop-culture filled novels entrenched in the present to ones with more deeply historical narrative considerations, one theme that has been fairly constant is a wilful ambiguity regarding what is real and what is not. “En todas sus novelas,” explains Eva Navarro Martínez, “hay un cuestionamiento de si las cosas existen o no realmente, e incluso de la propia identidad y la de la gente que los rodea. Consecuencia de esto es también el hecho de la sensación de realidad cuando no lo es” (413). Although Navarro Martínez’s article refers to those works published before 2001, it is certain that *Mala gente* is no exception. In fact, the illusion of reality within the novelistic framework constitutes one of the most determinative themes in the text and thus is at the root of this analysis. Concerning the creation process of *Mala gente*, Prado himself addresses this fluid back-and-forth of fiction and non-fiction in his previously-mentioned interview: “En cualquier caso, lo divertido de escribir una novela de este tipo es que no sólo tienes que inventar [sic] personajes de ficción que se relacionen [sic] con los reales, sino conseguir que los reales funcionen como personajes de ficción.” “Divertido,” perhaps; but such a blending of discourses also demonstrates a more introspective character. It plays a significant role in how this novel addresses fiction as more than mere storytelling, isolated from the preoccupations of an interested public, but rather as an ironic and active space of historical connection.

Because Urbano waits until the final lines of the novel to introduce himself, the most immediate ambiguity surrounding reality concerns whether or not this work is autobiographical in nature. Although not explicit like in *Soldados* where Cercas christens his protagonist with the same name and thus a shadow identity, the direct dialogue between narrator and reader from the beginning of *Mala gente* creates the sense that it is the work's writer, not a narrator/character, addressing his reader. Examples of this are numerous and found throughout the text, including those already cited in the plot summary. Nevertheless, a few of such passages are more telling in their treatment of the dynamic between "writer" and "reader;" they speak to the purpose of Urbano's text and therefore merit special mention here. Concluding an early chapter in which he opines that "los dictadores no hacen Historia, sólo la deshacen," Urbano states: "Ésa es mi opinión, por si les interesa. Y estoy seguro de que la mayor parte de los lectores que me sigan hasta el final de esta novela que me he visto obligado a escribir, estarán de acuerdo conmigo. O eso, o es que no tienen corazón" (86). In addition to addressing his readers explicitly, Urbano recognizes the novelistic identity of his work. However, much like "Cercas's" insistence that his work is a true tale, Urbano's use of the term novel refers to his "real-life" account that he has been obliged to write in the guise of narrative fiction. In another instance near the end of the novel, Urbano confirms the academic (non-fiction) identity of his findings, told through a non-academic (fictional) channel, by appealing to the reader for aid in distributing his meticulous research. Referring to a particular draft of *Óxido* that he has uncovered, Urbano states, "Lo descubrí porque soy un investigador muy minucioso, de los que siempre han sabido que, en este oficio, el otro cincuenta por ciento del rigor debe ser la curiosidad. Lo digo por si algunos de ustedes son editores y les interesaría contratarme mi *Historia de un tiempo que nunca existió*. Nunca se sabe quién te puede estar leyendo. A veces lo hace la gente más rara" (361). While Urbano

is self-aware, he is not a narrator that recognizes his function as a fictional entity, but rather one that confirms his role as a writer with a specific message communicated through a specific addressor/addressee relationship. Although Prado certainly succeeds in demonstrating what Waugh defines as the essence of metafiction, “the construction of a fictional illusion (as in traditional realism) and the laying bare of that illusion” (6), he does so as an ironic counterpoint to his narrator’s reality-infused world. That is, Prado plays with the parallels established between his novel as a whole and the work created by his narrator therein; the latter claims to be a “true story” under the guise of a novel, while former is a novel under the guise of a “true story.”

While the metafictional creation of a text within a text is nothing new—as has already been mentioned, writers as diverse as Cervantes and Unamuno have created a particularly Spanish tradition—*Mala gente* seeks to enforce the illusion of reality by populating Urbano’s created world with vast quantities of details, characters, and other published books that do in fact exist in our verifiable “real world.” This minutia of information results largely from the narrator’s meticulous research. Historical associations and figures such as the “Sección Femenina” of the Falange and its founder Pilar Primo de Rivera, the related “Auxilio Social” and its founder Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, and the previously mentioned psychiatrist Dr. Vallejo Nájera, to cite a few examples, all form the backdrop of Urbano’s inquiry into Serma and her imprisoned sister after the war. More pervasive than the mere mention of historical characters, however, are the almost omnipresent allusions to actual writers and their works. Urbano’s treatment of literature and literary criticism demonstrates significant bibliographical knowledge, which he employs as a tool of credibility. His essay on Laforet, for example, cites so many other figures that he

appears to be name-dropping; that is, showing off his familiarity with such a large quantity of authors and their works. The following fragment of the Laforet study included by Urbano, another metaliterary moment, serves as a useful illustration:

Si entre los autores españoles Juan Ramón Jiménez la comparó con Baroja y Unamuno; Ramón J. Sender la puso por encima de George Sand, Gertrude Stein o Virginia Woolf, y Miguel Delibes vio en *Nada* un antecedente tanto del *nouveau roman* francés, y en concreto de autores como Marguerite Duras o Alain Robbe-Grillet, como del objetivismo que Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio desarrollaría más tarde en *El Jarama*; si todo eso, unido a los halagos de Azorín, la atención de eminentes exiliados como Francisco Ayala, que comentó la novela en la revista argentina *Realidad*, y el reconocimiento de colegas como Ana María Matute o Carmen Martín Gaité, ocurrió entre los literatos españoles, más allá de nuestras fronteras, escritoras de la categoría de Alejandra Pizarnik o Jane Bowles y críticos como Jeffrey Bruner, Ruth el Saffar, David W. Foster, Roberta Johnson o Sara E. Schyfter. . . . (13)

In addition to the many other writers mentioned in the novel, I could add to this discussion the myriad of critical texts cited, such as *Testimonios de mujeres en la cárceles franquistas* by Tomasa Cuevas and the aforementioned book/television documentary *Los niños perdidos del franquismo*. Of course, Urbano's knowledge is a reflection of the research done by Prado himself, which has led one critic to suggest that future editions of the novel include source information for the overwhelming quantity of references: "With few exceptions, Prado does not give credit to the sources he used in the writing of his novel, which undoubtedly draws from a richness of historical research; hopefully this oversight will be mended in future editions with a bibliographical appendix" (Martín-Estudillo n.34, 244). While it is certain

that an accompanying bibliography would aid the reader in any further investigation of “real world” entities given place within the narrative, it is also certain, as I will explore, that the addition of bibliographic information would be consistent with Prado’s ironic appropriation of these “real” texts and their authors for fictional gains. That is, such an appendix would further grant to the novel the kind of extra-textual authority upon which it relies as it seeks to create the illusion of its existence outside of the novelistic realm.

Although Prado places his narrator within this web of reality-based references, thus playing with the idea of the character’s extra-textual existence, it is the subject of his narration, Dolores Serma and *Óxido*, that culminates the process of creating an illusion of reality. In this sense, *Mala gente* not only follows the metafictional tradition of writers such as Cervantes and Unamuno, but also relates to more recent novels such as Muñoz Molina’s *Beatus Ille* and Cercas’s *Soldados*. In these works, the approach to the Civil war and postbellum period revolves around a narrator’s attempt to uncover the truth regarding a forgotten writer of Spain’s Francoist past. Dolores Serma is treated as such: a little-read author quickly relegated to anonymity. Details concerning Serma and her work are presented within the context of Spanish post-war narrative. For example, Urbano notes that his search for *Óxido* in the ISBN results in the following bibliographic citation: “Serma Lozano, Dolores. *Óxido*. Ediciones de la Imprenta Márquez. Valladolid, 1962” (29). Confirmation of Serma’s work is also given by her appearance in memoirs and studies of postwar fiction written by well-known contemporaries. Urbano states that Miguel Delibes—a former neighbour of Serma, according to Natalia—supposedly mentions the forgotten author in his study, a real study existing outside of the novel, *España 1936-1950: Muerte y resurrección de la novela*:

Carreño, de ascendencia mexicana y con parientes en Valladolid, era conocido mío, primo de los Gavilán (familia de artistas) y, *cuando estaba en la ciudad, frecuentador de algunas tertulias a las que también asistían jóvenes aspirantes a literatos como los poetas Francisco Pino y Pepe Luelmo o la hoy día muy oculta Dolores Serma, narradora de interés a quien traté bastante en mi juventud. . . . Pero Dolores Serma, que tanto prometía, se desvaneció con los años, como tantos otros. . . .*

(emphasis added; 44)

Such a rich attention to detail obliges the flesh-and-blood reader to consider the veracity of the tale told in the novel. “If the novel bears the marks of authenticity in its representation,” explains Herzberger in his article “Reading Fiction through Historiography (or Vice Versa?),” “if dates, places, and events seem to be right based upon our general knowledge, the inevitable question arises: did things happen that way? If the reader is persistently curious, he or she will probably pursue the matter of ‘truth’ outside of fiction, often by consulting a book in which the authority of truth is expected to be found” (36). ISBN bibliographic information, citations in verifiable texts, relationships with real historical/literary characters: these are the “marks of authenticity” surrounding Serma and her work. The minutia of information serves to reinforce the reader’s suspension of disbelief almost to the point of belief.

Nevertheless, if one is “persistently curious,” as Herzberger suggests, then he or she will discover how such marks of authenticity are manipulated by Prado to create the subject of his narrator’s research. For example, the passage by Miguel Delibes that Urbano cites as evidence of Serma’s place in the literary community does exist, though it has been significantly altered. The italicized portion of the quote from the novel given in the previous

paragraph contrasts with the following passage from Delibes's original text: "Carreño, de ascendencia mexicana y con parientes en Valladolid, era conocido mío, primo de los Gavilán (familia de artistas) y escritor por tres costados. Ante él tres grandes premios: *El Adonais de poesía, el Nadal de novela, y un tercero de teatro, el Lope de Vega, que ganó también con su obra Condenados*" (emphasis added; 57). The original has no mention of the forgotten author; Dolores Serma has literally been snuck into the history of postwar narrative. In fact, the convincing nature of Serma's carefully crafted history has provoked many to attempt to confirm her existence by searching the internet. Responding to a question from a reader during his online interview regarding Serma's identity, Prado notes, "me ha hecho ilusión que muchos periodistas me confesaran que antes de ir a entrevistarme habían mirado en Google qué salía al teclear el nombre de Dolores Serma, incluso uno me preguntó si pensaba hacer una edición crítica de su supuesta única novela." Even those literary figures that are cited as having known Serma, he adds, recognize how easily her created existence has permeated the literary history:

Pero lo que me ha encantado es que dos de los presuntos amigos de Dolores, . . . Miguel Delibes y José Manuel Caballero Bonald, me hayan asegurado que se encuentran bien como personajes de ficción en mi libro. Caballero Bonald dijo, en una charla pública que tuvimos ayer mismo en la librería del Reina Sofía, que fue a leer el párrafo de sus memorias donde se supone que habla de Dolores Serma y que casi le extrañó no verla allí.

This appropriation of the real for the development of fictional entities speaks to the ironic potential of Martín-Estudillo's previously quoted desire for a bibliographical appendix to the novel. Prado cites such works as if this were a literary study, though they have been altered

to create the illusion of reality with the ironic purpose of underlining its own fictionality. Despite the details given, Urbano and Serma—unlike “Cercas” and Sánchez Mazas from *Soldados*—are fully novelistic characters without real-life homologues. They function like Miralles: created alongside, but as an ironic counterpoint to reality.

Prado employs discourses of non-fiction to paint his novel with the guise of veracity only to undermine this dynamic, paradoxically highlighting its literary nature. To again use Waugh’s terminology of metafiction, this is the “laying bare” of the illusion of reality that was mentioned earlier. In addition to the breakdown of ambiguity surrounding the potentially-linked identities of author and narrator at the end of the novel—when Urbano finally introduces himself, thus confirming his separation from Prado—there are many other indications in the text that point to its fictional character in the face of pervasive, real-world elements. In one conversation with Natalia, for example, Urbano comments on their interaction by stating, “Es que me siento como si fuésemos personajes secundarios de una novela de don Benito Pérez Galdós” (115). This playful allusion to characters acting within a crafted plot and not a memoir is echoed in another instance when Urbano explains how he met three professors in Atlanta named Charlotte, Emily, and Anne (191). This clear reference to the Brontë sisters, all novelists themselves, also acts as a subtle subversion of the illusion of reality.⁶³ Prado even has his narrator belie his own supposed role as the writer of a real experience when Urbano consults directly with the reader in terms of the story’s content. Referring to a particular conversation with Natalia, he enquires of his interlocutor, “Natalia me miró . . . ¿con qué? ¿con admiración, ternura, complicidad, simpatía? Elijan ustedes mismos y eso será lo que pasó” (121).

In the face of omnipresent elements of reality, these passages exemplify how *Mala gente* self-consciously asserts its own fictional identity. To again use Hutcheon's phrase, Prado subverts the novel's carefully fabricated union with the real by "forcing recognition of a *literary code*" (italics in the original; *Narcissistic* 49). In this sense, *Mala gente* is typical of Prado's work. "Esta obsesión por la literatura como existencia omnipresente en la realidad," explains Santos Alonso, "es tema central en la novelística de Benjamín Prado" (225). Like *Soldados*, this is literature that celebrates its own literariness. Also like *Soldados*, this literariness relates directly to the non-fictional discourses that the novel ironically purports to espouse. Although on the surface the extra-textual details establish an environment in which the fictional characters become more "real," the inverse actually occurs: the "real" figures are recognized as homologues of artistic creation. This dynamic is at the heart of the novel's approach to the ethics of historical memory. While literariness is one central theme, so too is how Spain's Francoist history is understood for those in the present that seek to recuperate this past. On one hand, *Mala gente* suggests that History—with the authoritative capital H—is relevant and merits contemplation; on the other, it implies that such understanding is found not in history—small h—but rather in the relative freedoms of fiction. Literature and history are parallel narratives as they are both a matter of construction; but, in terms of facts, dates, and names, the ethical demands of history are not required of the literary: "there is no such moral or ethical imperative at work in the writing of fiction. Authors may use or ignore facts as they choose. They may draw together occurrences from the historical world and those purely invented. They may distort, invent, or augment through the authority bestowed upon them by tradition and convention" (Herzberger, "Reading" 36). Thus, the overriding irony of *Mala gente*, as I explore in the

following sections, is that it demonstrates a clear ethical call for historical vindication from a place of self-avowed literariness.

2.3 “Truth” in Fiction (in Fiction [in Fiction])?

In his study *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Paul Ricoeur addresses the difference in reader/writer dynamic as it relates to historical narratives of fiction and non-fiction. “A novel, even a realist novel,” he states, “is something other than a history book. They are distinguished from each other by the nature of the implicit contract between the writer and the reader. Even when not clearly stated, this contract sets up different expectations on the side of the reader and different promises on that of the author” (261). What Ricoeur means is that the reader of a novel is aware, implicitly perhaps, of the factual liberty enjoyed by the novelist as opposed to the supposedly objective account of an historian’s work. In *Mala gente*, Prado is constantly toying with this relationship through the appropriation of non-fictional elements. Following the previous section’s analysis of how the illusion of reality is constructed and deconstructed, it seems that the novel plays with Ricoeur’s “contract” through three steps: 1) it obliges the reader to consider its “reality,” thus suggesting a contract more in line with a history book; 2) it lays bare the creation of that reality to self-consciously affirm its literariness, thus reaffirming the novelistic contract; and 3) it ironically asks the reader to consider this artistic space as a source of historical understanding, thus appropriating the history book’s claim of authority for the novel. Referring to its self-conscious purpose, Gloria García Urbina notes that in Prado’s novel, “la ficción puede servir para cubrir los vacíos que deja la historiografía; que más allá de datos y fechas, los sentimientos y los relatos anónimos pueden ayudar a comprender mejor el curso de nuestras vidas, pues la literatura y el arte no son sino otra vía para comprender la realidad.” While

this statement describes one of the work's central themes, it is incomplete. The realm of fiction is not understood as a mere complement to historiography, but rather the *privileged* space of truth, revealing not just that which has been overlooked by traditional discourses, but also that which has been censored, silenced, or even misrepresented. This is a theme that *Mala gente* both exemplifies and treats as central to its plot across all layers of its metafictional make-up: the novel itself by Prado, Urbano's "novel," and Serma's *Óxido*.

The idea of historical truth is not approached as an abstract concept, but rather relates to a specific issue raised: the institutionalized abduction of Republican children by the Franco regime. As mentioned, this tragic occurrence in Spanish history resulted from Dr. Vallejo Nájera's anti-Marxist theories. Urbano's research into the disappearances of children runs parallel to his research of *Óxido*. It is Natalia who introduces him to the psychiatrist's books—"real," extra-textual works—as they were supposedly in Serma's possession. Urbano dedicates a large number of pages to Vallejo Nájera and the application of his theories, thereby educating his "reader"—and by extension, Prado's flesh-and-blood reader—of this dark and relatively unknown chapter in the nation's past. The following two paragraphs taken from the novel exemplify its expository nature regarding this topic. As Urbano expounds,

Una vez *probado* por Vallejo Nájera que ser marxista era una enfermedad cerebral, se hacía necesario, según expresión muy del gusto del Régimen, "separar el grano de la paja," quitándoles sus hijos a los "débiles mentales," porque "si militan en el marxismo, de preferencia, psicópatas antisociales, la segregación total de esos sujetos desde la infancia podría liberar a la sociedad de plaga tan terrible."

Dicho y hecho, las autoridades franquistas aplicaron con todo el rigor del mundo sus tesis, llegando a crear en Madrid una penitenciaría para madres lactantes y disponiendo a su antojo de los hijos de las presas, que sobrevivían en condiciones terribles, hacinadas en cárceles inmundas, sin atención médica y sin derechos de ningún tipo. Sus hijos podían estar con ellas, pero como máximo hasta los tres años. Cuando ejecutaban a sus madres o ellos excedían ese edad, eran enviados a un seminario para que se los reeducase, o dados en adopción por la Iglesia y el Estado, que se habían atribuido su tutela legal, a familias católicas afines a la causa. (italics in the original; 137-138)

While this passage performs an explanatory function with regard to this central historical theme, it does not stand out as the primary source of historical approach. In other words, the theories of Vallejo Nájera and the actions taken by the regime in response to his work are treated as essential to Urbano's investigation, but it is as they are revealed through Serma's mysterious life and forgotten novel. *Mala gente* gives direct presence to the writings of the noted psychiatrist, a verifiably real figure in Spanish history, but it is *Óxido* that is understood to be the medium of insight.

In fact, Urbano regularly frames his approach to the Republican era, the Civil War, and the Franco regime through the literary works produced during each period. This is particularly evident in the frequent debates in which he engages with his mother. Like Prado himself, Urbano cites poetic heroes of the Republic, such as Lorca and Antonio Machado, as evidence of its culture and civility in the face of the barbaric Nationalists and resulting Francoism. His mother too offers a response to such criticism of life under Franco via literary means, citing well-known authors sympathetic to the regime: "yo lo que te

recomiendo es que te leas *Gente que pasa*, de Agustín de Foxá, o *Ni pobre ni rico, sino todo lo contrario*, de Mihura, para que veas que algunas de las cosas de aquellos años no están mal, por mucho que las escribiesen los que no son de tu cuerda” (179-180).⁶⁴ The written word—that is, narrative fiction—is put forward as the battleground for the ethical/political debate surrounding historical memory. Novelists and poets are seen as witnesses; their works are testimony. In terms of the post-war era of censorship, Urbano stills reads literature for insight into an age in which he has not lived. However, his focus turns to what lies behind the explicit: criticism of the regime hidden between the lines. Notable authors such as Luis Martín-Santos, Juan Benet, and even Camilo José Cela are mentioned as examples of those whose works ambiguously subvert the Francoist party line.⁶⁵ The mere fact that there were women writers during this period signalled to Urbano that the patriarchal paradigm of the regime was being undermined by the simple act of putting pen to paper: “Es obvio que personas como Carmen Laforet, Ana María Matute, Carmen Martín Gaité o Josefina Aldecoa no hubieran tomado al pie de la letra esas recomendaciones de la Sección Femenina” (81). It is from this standpoint that the narrator questions Dolores Serma, her political sympathies, and her novel: “¿De qué lado estaba la autora de *Óxido*? ¿O militó en las filas de los neutrales, que es donde siempre se situó Carmen Laforet, llevándole la contraria a sus propias novelas, que son una denuncia evidente de aquella sociedad atroz? Eso tal vez conviniese investigarlo” (80-81).

The answers to these questions posed by the narrator are mediated by the textual traces left behind by Serma. As Urbano self-consciously commits to informing the reader of his investigative measures and thought processes, one can track how *Óxido* both provokes inquiry and serves as the authority in support of the enigma’s resolution. The first step

toward uncovering the truth is Urbano's recognition of incompatibility between what he has learned about the forgotten author's supposed connection to the Falange and *Óxido*: "La verdad es que me costaba unir esa escritura al arquetipo de una militante del Auxilio Social, con su camisa azul de la Falange" (131). Armed with what seems like coincidental information regarding the work of Dr. Vallejo Nájera in the immediate postbellum period, when *Óxido* was purported to be written, Urbano moves from a recognition of general incompatibility between Serma's work and life to specifically questioning whether or not her novel in fact speaks to the abduction of Republican children: "¿*Óxido* hablaba de todo eso entre líneas o sólo en mi imaginación? Y, si yo estaba en lo cierto, ¿qué demonios tenía que ver ese libro con una afiliada a la FET y las JONS y, por lo visto, estrecha colaboradora de Mercedes Sanz Bachiller? Qué asunto tan extraño" (138). The triumphal rhetoric of the Francoist establishment is not only absent in *Óxido*, but rather the opposite is true: society is painted in extremely pessimistic and cynical tones. Comparing the novel to other famous post-war works that reveal less than positive interpretations of Spanish life, Urbano speaks to its even more vehement, though still implicit, critique: "pero en *Óxido* había algo más ácido: la imagen de una sociedad perversa e irredimible, en la que a algunos se les podía culpar de sus actos y a otros de su silencio o de su cobardía" (147). By uniting his new-found knowledge of the implementation of Dr. Vallejo Nájera's theories with his observation that *Óxido* potentially constitutes a subversive critique of Francoist society, Urbano finally arrives at the conclusion of his analysis. In one of his many conversations with Natalia, Urbano summarizes his hypothesis regarding *Óxido* in explicit terms: "yo la he interpretado, sobre todo, como una crítica desgarrada al franquismo, lo que no casa muy bien con su condición de afiliada a la Sección Femenina. . . . Y estoy seguro de que también es una denuncia de uno de los temas más horribles de aquellos años y que está, por cierto, muy en

relación con el libro de Antonio Vallejo Nájera que me contaste que tenía ella en sus biblioteca” (185).

It is through this incongruity between *Óxido*’s treatment of children being stolen from their Republican parents and Serma’s noted affiliation with certain institutions of the Francoist apparatus that Prado, through his layered constructions of Urbano and Serma herself, proposes that the location of Truth is found in the created space of fiction. This is a theme explored not through subtlety, but rather through the direct verbalization of these two central figures. Urbano’s conclusions surrounding his research into Serma’s life and work give an explicit declaration of how *Óxido* supersedes her official biography as wife of Rainer Lisvano Mann, mother to Carlos Lisvano, and sympathizer of the regime:

¿Quién era Dolores Serma? Por qué su historia estaba hecha de tantas mentiras e identidades inventadas? No sé qué pensarán ustedes, pero yo, a esas alturas, ya daba por confirmadas la sospechas que tuve en cuanto leí *Óxido*: la vida oficial de su autora, su militancia en la Sección Femenina, su trabajo en el Auxilio Social, su adscripción ideológica a la Falange y, casi con toda seguridad, su matrimonio con aquel incierto conglomerado de Rilke, Novalis y Thomas Mann, eran pura ficción, mientras que lo que había contado en su novela era la verdad. Sólo restaba descubrir los pormenores de esa verdad. (305-306)

The truth is found in that which has been created through fiction, while that which has been understood to be the truth is itself a creation of fiction. Carlos Lisvano is actually Serma’s nephew, rescued from her imprisoned sister Julia to avoid being abducted like so many others. Serma’s husband is also an invention, a required piece of the puzzle to cover up her

son's origins. As Urbano states, only the details of this truth need to be sorted out.

Traditional historiography, therefore, is seen as required to fill the gaps left by art, not the reverse as García Urbina has previously suggested. Confirmation of Urbano's claim of truth in *Óxido* and deception in life comes from Serma herself. In the course of his search to sort out "los pormenores de esa verdad," the narrator finds a manuscript of *Óxido*, though not the version submitted for publication. This particular draft contains short paragraphs dispersed throughout the text in which Serma reveals the events that she and her family experienced between September, 1940 and October, 1945. "Yo no quiero escribir esto," she begins, "No quiero que se sepa lo que voy a contar y sin embargo, por alguna razón, aunque sólo sea esta vez, necesito hacerlo" (374). The next paragraph she writes is as direct a disclosure as Urbano's previously cited conclusions:

Mi vida entera es falsa. No hay nada mío que no esté adulterado por la simulación y el engaño. Tuve que cambiar los rostros de quienes más quiero por máscaras y apartarme de mi vocación para salvaguardarlos. ¿Me perdonarán si algún día llegan a conocer la realidad? Todo empezó en Madrid, en septiembre de 1940, la primera vez que me dejaron visitar a mi hermana Julia en la cárcel en la que llevaba ocho meses encerrada. (374-375)

Serma's hidden, textual confession constitutes a literal between-the-lines revelation of the truth. Prado again eschews nuance in favour of the overt when his characters face the recurring theme of reality as a function of literature. What Urbano has interpreted as the text's veiled message is confirmed by Serma's cathartic admission that her life is a product of simulation and deception. Of course, the characters and plot of *Óxido* are the product of

simulation, like all fictional creations; yet, the novel is ironically upheld as the bearer of enlightenment.

The dichotomy between the general truths found in the literary text and the sustained lies of what is understood to be reality results as a function of censorship in *Mala gente*. This occurs at all levels of this novel's metafictional makeup. As previously addressed by Herzberger, fiction operates with a certain level of freedom as it makes no assertion that its characters and plots really existed and happened—except in ironic terms, such as in *Mala gente*. Thus, any truth claim in literature is hidden, and protected, under the guise of a lack of reality-based responsibility. “Cuando no se podía hablar,” Urbano explains to Natalia of her mother in law's situation, “escribe una novela como *Óxido*” (200). Serma's novel constituted a subversive critique of Francoist policies when official documents would have been censored. Urbano too is obliged to deal with censorship; this time not state-sponsored, but rather due to the familial/societal desire for silence in order to avoid opening old wounds of the past. As I will cover in the next section, this form of censorship in the contemporary, democratic era is personified by Carlos Lisvano. When he refuses to allow the family's documents as support for Urbano's investigation into his mother, Lisvano forces the narrator to abandon the authority of an academic work as the medium to communicate his research findings. Therefore, Urbano clings to the redemptive potential of literature that he found in *Óxido* in order to circumvent the restrictions placed on his work. Addressing the reader directly, Urbano reflects on his attempt to have the release contracts signed, allowing him to move ahead with the publication of his study:

Lo cual no iba a suceder y, como supondrán, es la causa de que, en lugar de escribir aquella *Historia de un tiempo que nunca existió* (*La novela de la primera posguerra*

española) que había proyectado, haya tenido que hacer este otro libero que ustedes están a punto de terminar. La ficción es uno de los dos únicos territorios en que es posible esconderse de los abogados. El otro es el cementerio. (391-392)

Prado is drawing a clear parallel between what could not be said for fear of repression during the Franco regime and what many feel cannot be said in the democratic age for fear of dividing the nation. "What stands out from Prado's novel," explains Martín-Estudillo, "is the need to recover and protect the memories of those who had them silenced by Franco's authoritarian regime, but also by a democracy which, for the most part, decided it was convenient to ignore a long history of crimes and oppression" (243). "Callar es inmolarsse, pero qué hacer" (376), exclaims Dolores Serma in one of her revelatory paragraphs only found in the one manuscript. This attitude both expresses her obligation of silence and describes democratic Spain's reluctance to openly and officially recognize the victims and victimizers of the past. However, both Serma and Urbano answer her implied question of "what can one do?" by acknowledging the power of artistic creation as a conduit of understanding, a means of communication that reveals truths beyond the dates, places, and people of controlled historiography.

That the characters that overtly recognize fiction's potential for expressing the truth are, in fact, fictional themselves is fundamental to Prado's exploration of literature and history. That these fictional characters also interact within the illusion of non-fiction is fundamental to the work's self-reflective irony. "Irony," explains Nancy A. Walker, "is a mask that the reader is invited to see *as* a mask in order to view simultaneously the reality underneath it" (*italics in the original*; 27). In *Mala gente*, irony stems from the play of genre; elements of non-fiction become such a transparent mask that stands as a counterpoint to

fiction, ironically enforcing its literary code and showcasing the reality underneath it.

Therefore, this is a novel that advocates at the level of plot for a coming together of the literary and the historical while at the same time stating its own self-avowed literariness in the face of “real,” verifiable elements. Just as Serma’s novel constitutes a product of imagination, revealing that which reality has hidden, Prado sides with artistic invention as a means by which the censored, forgotten, or ignored transgressions of Spain’s Francoist past might be approached by highlighting his own novel’s fabrication.

In other words, the interpretations of Urbano and Serma within the text influence the interpretation of the novel itself. Like *Óxido* and Urbano’s “novel,” *Mala gente* also clearly purports to raise awareness of the practice of children being abducted. Just as significantly, on the other hand, is how Prado frames his approach to this largely overlooked phenomenon via the self-consciously literary medium. Even the name of Prado’s forgotten writer is a reflection of fiction’s place in confronting the Francoist past. In the previously cited online interview, Prado draws a comparison between *Óxido*’s author and another figure whose writing has regularly dealt with life under the Franco regime: Juan Marsé. As Prado explains: “el apellido de la protagonista de *Mala gente que camina*, Serma, es Marsé dicho en otro orden.” As I will demonstrate in chapter 4, Marsé’s personal testimony of postbellum Barcelona is a constant element in his own narrative production. As such, he is cited as an example of how the representation of history is given novelistic form, of how historical narratives belong to the realm of artistic creation in addition to that of non-fiction. Indeed, it is through Serma and *Óxido* that Prado traces two parallel discourses: the reality of children being robbed from their parents in the immediate post-war climate of oppression and the “unreality” of a fictional witness/protagonist to this tragic occurrence, the latter being

portrayed as a powerful form of bringing light to the former. That Serma did not exist is irrelevant. Like Miralles in *Soldados*, Serma represents countless people, now forgotten, that did experience the trauma of which Serma writes. To re-quote Hutcheon, “Past events are given *meaning*, not *existence*, by their representation in history” (italics in the original; *Politics* 78). While Hutcheon is referring to history in general, not just that as represented in literature, her statement speaks to Prado’s treatment of fiction as a potential channel for addressing past events. This novel does not prove that the institutionalized abduction of Republican children took place, but rather makes it visible. It was not necessary for the plot and characters of *Óxido* to be real for it to be a critique of society under Francoism, nor is it necessary for Serma or Urbano to be “real” for *Mala gente* to attach meaning to this mostly silenced past. In this sense, the title for Urbano’s attempted academic study is ironically apt: *Historia de un tiempo que nunca existió*. For the narrator, Serma’s lack of existence is a figurative allusion to both the absence of *Óxido* in critical circles and the concealment of her true history. Prado, on the other hand, underlines fiction’s created reality, including the invention of both Serma and Urbano, as an ironically powerful counter-discourse to censored reality. In simple terms, *Mala gente* is about the search for a figure that never was, but might have been.

This clear advocacy in favour of a literary approach to the past echoes LaCapra’s most optimistic correlation between art, ethics, and history that was previously quoted in reference to *Soldados*: “Fiction, if it makes historical truth claims at all, does so in a more indirect but still possibly informative, thought-provoking, at times disconcerting manner with respect to the understanding or ‘reading’ of event, experience, and memory” (132). It is evident that *Mala gente* both makes a historical truth claim with regard to the crimes of the

Franco regime and self-consciously revels in the indirect manner to which LaCapra refers. This is the work's literariness; the ironic recognition of its fictionality in the face of its appropriated "real" references. LaCapra's "indirect" here is the imaginary: the freedom from verifiable facts, dates, and places. In other words, the literariness of Prado's historical criticism separates it from the authoritative nature of traditional historiography. As this kind of historiography has been associated with the myth-creation of the Franco regime, the postmodern, metafictional play of genre in this novel in itself constitutes a subversion of Francoist discourse. The postmodern, post-Franco literary dynamic, exemplified here, is discussed by Herzberger:

Postmodern fictions are particularly troublesome when it comes to history, since on the face of it they generally deny the possibility of writing history with a narrative discourse whose referent can only be other discourses. It is precisely this insistence on the discursive core of history and fiction, however, that makes Spanish postmodern fiction such a powerful source of intertextual dissidence in relation to Francoist historiography. It discredits not only the concept of master discourse capable of conveying the truth about the past, but also undermines in a specific way the myths of history created and sustained by the State. ("Reading" 39-40)

Although *Mala gente* eschews such a direct master discourse by blurring the lines of genre, it does not suggest that the past is a wholly relative concept, completely unknowable due to its narrative construction. In fact, such an idea is antithetical to the ethical/political impetus of the novel. Therein lies the paradox: on one hand, the "real" world is broken down into the relative freedom of the fictional realm (the freedom to imagine and create with impunity),

thereby subverting authoritative historiography; on the other, history is understood to be essential, determinative, and fit for judgement from a point of moral authority.

2.4 The Ethical/Political Debate: Many Voices, One Message

In the previous section I referred to LaCapra's theory that describes fiction's potential for addressing matters of the past through indirect channels, exemplified in *Mala gente* through its literariness. In this concluding section I again turn to LaCapra as his statement regarding ethics, politics, and truth captures the essence of Prado's philosophy toward historical memory as represented in this novel: "With respect for art, it is problematic, especially at the present time, to see it as a discrete, autonomous, purely aesthetic sphere that is simply beyond truth claims and ethical considerations. Rather there is a complex interaction between art, truth claims, and ethics (including the ethicopolitical)" (100). Responding to the previous section's examination of truth claims in literature, here my focus is the novel's clearly defined ethicopolitical driving force: the imperative for Spanish society to reject a closed eye to the past so the crimes and victims of the Franco dictatorship might be recognized. As Prado himself explains in his interview, this should not imply partisan controversy, but rather is simply a matter of truth. "No creo, en absoluto," he explains, "que *Mala gente que camina* sea un libro ofensivo, ni que esté lleno de ira: sólo lo está de ganas de saber la verdad." Nevertheless, *Mala gente* does acknowledge that the need for active recovery of the past—and/or that the truth is found in such recovery—is not a hegemonic stance in contemporary Spain, but rather is one side of a complex cultural debate.

This debate is manifested in the novel by the polemics surrounding *Óxido*. Urbano even speaks of wanting to "desenterrar" the forgotten novel. The language employed here is

not coincidental; it evokes the image of Franco's victims dumped in common graves, many now being unearthed for proper burial. For some, digging up old graves represents the opening of old wounds, for others, it is a matter of closing them. That is, one must literally open the graves so that the nation can figuratively close them, to achieve closure as catharsis to the traumas of the past. As mentioned in the Introduction with regard to the work of the ARMH and Judge Garzón, to dig up or leave buried continues to be a polemical issue in Spain today, one that provides a tangible face to the memory debate. The philosophical/theoretical motivations behind the ethics and politics of memory enjoy physical expression in the actions taken toward the common graves of Franco's victims, both for and against.⁶⁶ There is a direct parallel between Urbano's attempt to bring light to *Óxido* and Prado's defence in *El País* of exhuming Lorca as a symbol of remembrance and vindication, as previously mentioned in the introduction to this chapter where I outlined the author's political commitments.

While Urbano advocates for the parallel goals of historical transparency and making known the life and work of Dolores Serma, Serma's family and Urbano's mother constitute distinguishable and unique counter-discourses to that of the narrator. The cultural debate is, in fact, a multi-voiced debate within the text. These novelistic voices create what one might call a dialogic environment as they all incarnate different perspectives found in contemporary Spanish society. Based on the theories of Bakhtin, Graham Allen explains such a polyphonic dynamic:

Every character in the dialogic novel has a specific, in some senses unique, personality. This 'personality' involves that character's world-view, typical mode of speech, ideological and social positioning, all of which are expressed through the

character's words. . . . In the polyphonic novel we find not an objective, authorial voice presenting the relations and dialogues between characters but a world in which all characters, and even the narrator him- or herself, are possessed of their own discursive consciousnesses. The polyphonic novel presents a world in which no individual discourse can stand objectively above any other discourse; all discourses are interpretations of the world, responses to and calls to other discourses. (23)

While *Mala gente* exemplifies the first part of Allen's description, it is incompatible with the polyphonic novel's defining lack of authorial discourse. The irony is that while the different voices in *Mala gente* interact almost democratically in that everyone gets their say with regard to recent Spanish history, there still is a distinct and clear "authorial voice" that does "stand objectively above" the others. This is the voice of Prado manifested through his narrator. As Bakhtin himself states, while the author can be seen as a third party to the textual debate, "he might be a *biased* third party" (italics in the original; 314). Therefore, all diverging perspectives are compared against the standard set by Urbano.

Like Prado himself, Urbano's ethical and political motivations with regard to historical memory are intimately linked to a sympathetic view of the Second Republic. The Franco regime is not just seen as the totalitarian precursor to today's democracy, but also the barbaric, and illegal, usurper of a previous democratic system.⁶⁷ This attitude is articulated throughout the text, particularly as an argument raised by the narrator in defence of his partisan view of the war. Contemplating Serma's affiliation with the Fascist Auxilio Social and Sección Femenina, for example, Urbano celebrates the idealized role of women within the Republic: "La República había luchado por la dignidad de las mujeres, les había dado, por primera vez, entre otras muchas cosas, el derecho de votar" (85). In another instance, he

continues to equate giving power to the powerless with dignity by outlining Republican efforts for agrarian reform that gave “justicia a cientos de miles de labradores que vivían en un mundo regido por códigos medievales” (226). Progressive ideals aside, the essence of Urbano’s support for the Republic results from the fact that the pre-Franco government was the legitimate government, democratically elected by the people. Therefore, the Civil War should not be considered a war of two opposite, but morally equal sides, but rather the product of criminal rebellion (Nationalists) and justifiable defence (Republic). For Urbano, any treatment of the war and its consequences begins with this fact, as he explains to Natalia: “yo estoy dispuesto a matizar a partir de un hecho: todos los que alentaron, financiaron, pusieron en marcha y sostuvieron el golpe de estado contra la República democrática eran o unos criminales o la sombra de los criminales” (119). From this standpoint, Urbano frames his response to historical recuperation. Franco’s crimes of action give way to democracy’s crimes of inaction; that is, the pact of silence. “Me parece una vergüenza,” he explains to Natalia, “la forma en que unos y otros han pactado el olvido; porque aquí, a base de hablar de la reconciliación nacional, no se ha intentado pasar página, sino arrancarla” (117).

Urbano represents those who are not satisfied with a politically neutral ethics of memory that recognizes the importance of looking to the past without “pointing the finger” in accusation. Urbano represents an ethics of memory that is explicitly political, lamenting that “aún siguen enterradas siniestras fosas comunes, por las cunetas de todo el país” (117). The literal unearthing of bodies signals a figurative unearthing of truths; for the narrator, the “unearthing” of *Óxido* belongs to the same imperative for openly confronting Francoist transgressions.

While Urbano corresponds to the current proliferation of memory discourse in Spain, the reticence of Serma's family toward "opening old wounds" is indicative of the continued cultural tension concerning how Spain ought to approach its past. Dolores, Natalia, and Carlos demonstrate inability, indifference, and hostility respectively in the face of memory. That Dolores suffers from Alzheimer's disease, a disorder that affects one's ability to remember, is significant; her censored-self that sought to hide her true history has actually lost the capacity to know who she is or was at all.⁶⁸ For Natalia—who belongs to the same generation as the narrator, born in the waning years of the regime—the past is not inaccessible, but rather of little importance.⁶⁹ She does not understand Urbano's passion for the war or its consequences and, as such, represents those for whom the present supersedes any relevance that the past might hold. "¿Por qué tienes tanto interés en esa época?," she asks Urbano, "A ti la dictadura te afectó poco: eras demasiado joven" (116). For Natalia, historical consideration is wholly mediated by experience. That is, although she, like Urbano, was born before the death of Franco, she lived most of her life in democracy and therefore is unaffected by the Civil War and postbellum oppression. Therefore, Natalia embodies a perspective on memory that is neither antagonistic nor enthusiastic; any lack of passion and outrage toward the dictatorship is a product of "present-centric" indifference, not necessarily of scepticism. She maintains a certain interest in the narrator's work, but more in terms of it being a fascinating story than being an ethical imperative. The questions of who did what to whom in the past are inconsequential to concerns of the present and future. In this sense, Natalia exemplifies the "Gen. X" mentality of the nineties as her present-centric ethos reflects the lack of historical preoccupations of the characters in novels such as Mañas's *Historias del Kronen*, though perhaps without their self-destructive apathy in general as she is a professional woman with a family.

More openly hostile to Urbano's project is Natalia's husband Carlos Lisvano. Unlike the mere historical apathy of his wife, Lisvano advocates against the desire to confront the past. For Lisvano, past traumas are not merely irrelevant, but rather potentially divisive and dangerous for the present. Responding to the narrator's claim of responsibility toward "nuestra guerra," Natalia summarizes her husband's position by stating: "te va a contestar que ya no es nuestra guerra, sino una parte del pasado que se superó con la democracia y a través de la reconciliación nacional. Te dirá que para lo único que vale reabrir viejas heridas es para desenterrar viejas hachas de guerra" (263). As Martín-Estudillo notes, Lisvano "symbolizes the official preference for a functional oblivion" (243). That is, Lisvano's opposition to memory corresponds to satisfaction with, and preference for, the status quo. Although by no means a supporter of the dictatorship, Lisvano does stand out from the other characters in the novel as a product of the Francoist education system (García Urbina). In addition, his life has been one of privilege. Thus, his resistance to "opening old wounds" results not just from a belief that the nation is better served by ignoring its traumatic past episodes, but also from a sense that the "truth" uncovered will be unjustly critical and, on a personal level, will affect him adversely. That is, while he celebrates contemporary democracy over past dictatorship, Lisvano does not demonize society under Franco and views much historical recuperation as politically, rather than historically, motivated. This sentiment is exemplified in how he responds to tales of Republican children being taken by the regime: "Pero todo eso de los niños no puede sino ser una exageración" (397).⁷⁰

In essence, Lisvano represents an attitude in line with the "ignorance is bliss" cliché. His comfortable life reflects a prosperous, forward looking Spain for which it is easier to

“not know” as knowledge might disrupt the positive status quo. For Lisvano, it is Urbano’s research into *Óxido* that threatens his secure concept of self. His identity lies with his mother’s official life-story; thus, he rejects any attempt to interpret a different biography than that which he has always known. “No es que me niegue a decirte lo que sé,” he explains to Urbano, defending his inability to help more with the research, “sino que no deseo saber, ni que nadie sepa, más de lo que mi madre quiso contarme” (293). The conflict between Urbano and Lisvano in the novel demonstrates a conflict of two opposing perspectives on memory: on one hand, the narrator advocates for “openness” in order to find the truth behind the cover-up, while on the other, Lisvano finds truth in generally accepted discourses of authority, thus there is no need to revisit the past. When Urbano relates anecdotes of cruelty against women prisoners and their children after the war, Lisvano contends that “no son más que leyendas, . . . Y un investigador debería saber que la Historia no se compone de fábulas, sino de hechos probados” (398). With this statement, Lisvano is at odds with not just Urbano but also the previously-outlined overriding theme of the novel itself: fiction over fact as a meaningful space of historical discovery, an intersection between past and present. Lisvano’s commitment to the unquestioned facts of his life reflects a particular fear behind the pact of silence: when Spain looks to its past, it will be forced to deal with the unpleasant consequences of what it finds. For those exemplified by Urbano, this is a necessary step for national catharsis; for many like Lisvano, however, the self-preservation of silence is much easier.

To a certain extent, Urbano’s mother shares Lisvano’s perspective in the face of her son’s unabashed bias. She too maintains that some things are better left alone “[p]ara no desenterrar viejos odios” (250), and that life under Franco has been unfairly painted in a

negative light. While she accepts that there is truth to many of her son's accusations, she responds, "Pero acepta tú también que ahora los falangistas han sido demonizados y algunas de las salvajadas que se les atribuyen pueden ser simples exageraciones" (351). Unlike Lisvano, however, the narrator's mother does not reject the ethical imperative of memory *per se*, but rather advocates for a more politically neutral and dialogical approach than her son. "Urbano's mother, who lived rather comfortably during the postbellum years," explains Martín-Estudillo, "has somewhat ambivalent feelings toward her son's passionate endeavors, but she is always willing to revisit her past and discuss with him her own views and first-hand experiences as a regular citizen under Francoism" (243). These discussions, found throughout the novel, constitute the most significant expression of Spain's cultural debate because they give voice to two opposing discourses that are not immediately written off by characterization. That is, while Lisvano demonstrates hostility as a product of ignorance, Urbano's mother responds to her son with well thought out and intellectual arguments. She revels in the dialogic atmosphere and respects her son's opinions. Despite disagreeing with many of her positions, the narrator affirms that she is "una mujer feliz, positiva y, sobre todo, perspicaz" (83). In fact, this positive characterization contrasts with Urbano's frequent cynicism, creating an interesting and ironic dynamic in which the more pleasing character embodies an ideology at odds with not just the narrator but also the novel itself.

In addition to enjoying the dialectic nature of her and her son's relationship, the mother's approach to the topic of historical recuperation is also characterized by its lack of one-sidedness. For her, Spain's history should be considered without the subjective influence of emotion. "En fin, si quieres hacerme caso," she cautions her son, referring to his criticism of the Franco regime, "procura tomar distancia y no te dejes llevar por la cólera,

que suele nublar la razón. Piensa en lo que dice el refrán: el que juzga con ira, venga pero no castiga” (79). In this sense, the mother demonstrates an ethics of memory that promotes a more ambivalent and reconciliatory politics. Hers is the voice of reason that denies a black and white reading of history, thus finding the truth in the “grey area.” “Porque si lo reduces todo a una cuestión de ángeles y demonios,” she explains to Urbano, “no comprenderás nada. Las cosas no son tan sencillas” (248). Of course, for the narrator the opposite is true: “me parece que las cosas son sencillísimas: aquí hubo fascistas y demócratas. Nada más” (248). While Urbano’s mother does not demonize the Nationalist side in the war nor the resulting Francoism, her essential criticism of the narrator’s position is not one of unconditional support for these entities either, but rather stems from what she perceives to be his lack of objective investigation. According to her, a more honest search for the truth gives consideration to the violence perpetrated by both sides of the conflict: “o aceptas que disparates se cometieron en los dos bandos o nunca llegarás a esa verdad que dices que buscas” (351). This is a common defence for those who oppose the particular brand of historical recuperation supported by Urbano, the kind that, according to such opposition, “opens of old wounds:” the crimes committed under Franco cannot be judged because the Republican side was also guilty. The implication is that for reconciliation to take place, any exploration of the nation’s past should be investigative but not accusatory in nature, undertaken from a politically objective distance. This opinion—as Urbano states, much to his chagrin—is “el eco de millones de opiniones iguales, repetidas durante años por los más cínicos y asimiladas por los más ingenuos” (354).

By raising the issue of Francoist oppression through the particularly heinous theories of Dr. Vallejo Nájera and subsequent removal of Republican children from their parents,

Mala gente proposes an ethical response to the past that is at odds with both the “pact of silence” and any reconciliatory politics based on ambivalent, blanket neutrality. Although opposing perspectives surrounding this cultural debate on memory are given voice in the novel, the dialogic nature is undermined by the overwhelming sense of discursive authority granted to the narrator. In other words, Natalia’s indifference, Lisvano’s hostility, and the mother’s scepticism of one-sided condemnation with regard to an open examination of the Franco regime constitute arguments to be refuted, rather than arguments of equal but opposite merit. Of particular note is the ironic mother/son dynamic in which the more pleasing character’s less conflictive, more distanced, and more dialogic standpoint is incongruous with the novel’s unabashed bias as represented by the frequently disagreeable narrator. What this suggests is that an ethicopolitical response to memory that is non-judgmental with the purpose of reconciliation is attractive and tempting, but ultimately unsatisfactory as it denies vindication for Franco’s victims and responsibility for the perpetrators of such violence. As Prado himself states, it is necessary for Spain to know the “whole truth” of its past and to respond accordingly: “cosas tan elementales como quitar las estatuas de Franco de las calles y desenterrar a los más de treinta mil españoles que aún siguen en cunetas y fosas comunes dispersas a lo largo de toda nuestra geografía, por poner dos ejemplos dolorosos” (“La distancia” 197). Whether it is digging up dead bodies or bringing to light forgotten novels, Prado maintains that the consequences may be painful but necessary.

This correlation between memory and judgement is addressed by Herzberger: “For those wishing to evoke the past in post-Francoist Spain, for those seeking truth, perhaps the antonym of forgetting was not remembering, but justice. In all instances, however, there

exists the implicit belief in a past that is knowable, stable, and wholly usable as a source of authenticity” (“Spanishness” 16). A knowable past that gives rise to a desire for justice accurately describes the foundation of the ethicopolitical stance of Prado, Urbano and *Mala gente* itself. That the message is clear is certainly ironic considering the novel’s postmodern characteristics. This is the irony of paradox, of Muecke’s previously cited “constant dialectic interplay of objectivity and subjectivity, freedom and necessity, the appearance of life and the reality of art, the author immanent in every part of his work as its creative vivifying principle and transcending his work as its objective ‘presenter’” (*Irony* 78). The blurring of genre to force recognition of the novel’s literariness in the face of reality questions the nature of authoritative, historical discourse. Similarly, the polyphonic character of the cultural memory debate as represented in the text also serves to question a single, conclusive, and “official” perspective. However, while this “constant dialectic interplay” stands in contrast to Franco’s carefully controlled master discourse, is it also ironically employed to highlight that the truth of Spain’s past is not relative and open to any interpretation. *Mala gente* suggests that although they might be revealed in the indirect realm of fiction—in fact, this may be necessary due to various forms of censorship—the transgressions of the Franco dictatorship are neither irrelevant to the present nor political spin, but rather the truth that requires recognition. If there can be no justice for the perpetrators, at least there can be judgement of the crime and vindication for its victims.

For all four novels in this study, Spain’s recent history is viewed as a function of its recollection from an interested present. In *Soldados* and *Mala gente*, this process of “looking back” takes an explicitly literary form: these novels both exemplify a writing of the past and place such a writing of the past as a thematically integral part of the plot. By combining

autobiography and other non-fictional elements with fiction, these two novels force an ironic confrontation of genre in which the literary supersedes the real as a site of historical discovery. Invented characters such as Miralles and Serma represent those who have been omitted from traditional, official historiography and thus aptly find voice in the un-official, “free” space of narrative fiction. In this sense, both novels can be characterized by Martín-Estudillo’s explanation of the memory imperative demonstrated by *Mala gente*: “The novel is an exploration of the importance of remembering, or better, of *commemorating*: to remember along with others, collectively, reaching beyond one’s own memories and thus knitting a dense net where we can place our existence and give it a meaning . . .” (italics in the original; 243). In *Soldados*, the idea of commemoration concerns raising awareness of forgotten people from a forgotten time. Although Miralles certainly takes narrative precedence over the Falangist Sánchez Mazas, thus suggesting Republican sympathies, there is no indication that the impetus for historical memory be condemnation of the crimes of the dictatorship. In *Mala gente*, the opposite is true: memory serves to bring injustices to light, to commemorate the victims and indict the victimizers. This novel is a literary response to Spain’s cultural responsibility as outlined by Mainer:

es un imperativo ético aceptar el resto del párrafo: el antifranquismo, como todo antifascismo, como quizá otros muchos *antis* de la historia, no son empecinamientos irracionales e intolerantes, sino fuente integral e inalienable de nuestra dignidad. Y debe seguir siéndolo para nuestros herederos que han de saber cuánto dolor y cuánta sangre, y también cuánta impotencia, cuánta decepción de nosotros mismos y cuánto miedo a la libertad, empezaron a concluir para siempre el 20 de noviembre de 1975.

(88)

While both Cercas and Prado advocate for an ethics of historical recuperation, *Mala gente* explicitly maintains that there can be no recuperation or national reconciliation without judgement; that critical exposition of Francoism is, as Mainer notes, the integral and inalienable source of dignity in the face of past and present fears brought about by the dictatorship.

Prologue to Chapters 3 and 4 – Tracing the Impossible Dialogue:

Approaching Fantasy in *El lápiz del carpintero* and *Rabos de lagartija*

The central irony that characterizes the imperative for historical confrontation in all four novels of this study results from a collision between the “real” and the “unreal,” in which the unreal is given precedence. As outlined in chapters one and two, this seemingly paradoxical juxtaposition of truth and invention plays out in the explicitly literary battleground of genre, pitting against one another—and blurring—the realms of fiction and non-fiction in *Soldados de Salamina* and *Mala gente que camina*. In chapters three and four I explore the fluid interconnectivity of the real and unreal as it relates to the process of recovering the past in Manuel Rivas’s *El lápiz del carpintero* and Juan Marsé’s *Rabos de Lagartija*. Unlike the openly literary nature of historical confrontation in the works of Cercas and Prado, the two novels in this section combine a general foundation of reality—that is, the recognizable chronotopes of the retrospective narrative present and the past as it is reconstructed via the narrator’s memory—with elements of fantasy: the painter’s ghost inhabits Herbal’s reconstruction of the past in *El lápiz*, while the narrator of *Rabos* bases his tale on recollections of in-utero dialogue with his brother, David (whose world is also populated by the ghosts of his past and present). This seamless integration of supernatural and/or imagined figures casts doubt on the notion of a stable, authoritative representation of history, while at once embracing Spain’s war-torn past as relevant to the present.

The presence of fantasy (conspicuously unreal) within a work otherwise characterized by its setting within the real—war-torn Galicia in *El lápiz* and post-war Barcelona in *Rabos*—leads one to question the nature of fantasy itself as it is manifested in these novels and understood in this analysis. I do not approach the fantastic as a genre itself,

but rather, as Rosemary Jackson asserts in *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, as a literary “mode” of expression that is present across a variety of generic contexts.⁷¹

According to Jackson, it is precisely the kind of cohabitation between the seemingly supernatural and the natural, already established as an essential quality of Rivas’s and Marsé’s texts, that characterizes fantastic narratives: “They assert that what they are telling is real—relying upon all the conventions of realism to do so—and then they proceed to break that assumption of realism by introducing what—within those terms—is manifestly unreal” (34). Articulating the particular manifestations of this dynamic in the two novels covered, I coin the phrase “impossible dialogue” to describe the fantastic contact between characters. That is, the essence of fantasy here involves interactive relationships that break with the natural order established by the “real world” setting of the novels. Individuals of flesh-and-blood communicate with those that are characterized by their very lack of such tangible, physical presence. In fact, the notion of impossible dialogue constitutes the meeting of the carnal and non-carnal; carnal in the literal sense of material embodiment and not lascivious sexuality. I refer to the “impossible” half of the impossible dialogue—that is, those whose participation belies their absence in the physical realm—as ghosts.

Ghost, as it is used here, is not a term of identity, but rather a theoretical term of representation and meaning. As Mery Erdal Jordan suggests, a ghost can take a variety of names, such as apparition, vision, etc., “pero todos estos signos son . . . referentes ideacionales—*i.e.*, abstracciones—y de ahí, eminentemente simbólicos” (33). In other words, while the existence of ghosts within a tale that desires the truth is certainly revealing, so too is the specific, symbolic nature behind each “ghost” and its haunting. While traditional definitions of the ghost refer to the dead returning to haunt the living, here the

only requirement is the presence of the absent. That is, the impossible dialogue gives voice to those that have been excluded from the real; they are there but not really there. “Ghosts, like the memories they stand for,” explains Resina, “are beyond the ontological realm and, in that respect, beyond empirical skirmishes, beyond proof or disproof outside their own affect-effect. To say that they are unreal, in the sense that they are not or were not, is irrelevant; to predicate anything about them is already to avow their aporetic presence” (“Introduction” 4). In other words, whether or not the figures of fantasy are spirits from the dead, visions of those that are missing (or never existed), or the conversing un-born, or whether or not any of these exist only in the imagination, all are united by their lack of material existence (even the foetus is sheltered from the real world outside the womb).

The theoretical notion of the absent but present ghost as the essence of the fantastic in these novels has its general foundation in Jacques Derrida’s influential study, *Specters of Marx. The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, published in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union. In this work, Derrida rereads Marx and Marxism by considering the very language of the first line of the communist manifesto in which the authors refer to the spectre of communism that is haunting Europe. Derrida’s approach to the continued haunting of Marx in the global hegemony of capitalism gives rise to theories of the ghost that go beyond the specifics of the late German philosopher. For Derrida, there is an inherent relationship between ghosts, haunting, and hegemony: “Hegemony still organizes the repression and thus the confirmation of a haunting. Haunting belongs to the structure of every hegemony” (46). The dominant ideology will inevitably exclude those that challenge its dominance. The power of those that have been excluded lies in their very absence; their haunting is characterized by the threat of

disrupting the balance of power. To this end, it is not necessary for the ghost to be an actual spirit. As Derrida states, “The specter is also, among other things, what one imagines, what one thinks one sees and which one projects—on an imaginary screen where there is nothing to see” (125). The natural, supernatural, or imaginary identity of the ghost is irrelevant; its defining value is its nagging absence, commenting on the hegemony without “being there” in a physical sense. In fact, the very idea of an absent but present ghost comes directly from Derrida. Regarding haunting in a specific sense, he notes, “The specter *appears* to present itself during a visitation. One represents it to oneself, but it is not present, itself, in flesh and blood. This non-presence of the specter demands that one take its times and its history into consideration, the singularity of its temporality or of its historicity” (italics in the original; 126). For Derrida, the ghost not only lacks carnality, but it is also inherently historical. The apparition is never a neutral, generic entity, but rather is specific to a certain time and place. This is a logical connection; the emergence of a ghost and its capacity to haunt depends entirely on a specific imbalance of power in which those that dominate silence those that do not.

In her book *Ghostly Matters. Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, Avery Gordon develops a concept of haunting very much in line with Derrida. In fact, Gordon presents her book as an “homage to the viability of a Marxist concept of haunting” (20). However, while Derrida’s notion of the spectre results from the specific case of Marx at the turn of the millennium, Gordon views haunting as a general sociological certainty. According to Gordon, the apparition is not significant as a supernatural entity at all, but rather a metaphorical one within the social realm. “Haunting,” she states, “is a constituent element of modern social life. It is neither premodern superstition nor individual psychosis;

it is a generalizable social phenomenon of great import. To study social life one must confront the ghostly aspects of it" (7). Like Derrida, Gordon identifies the essence of the ghostly being as a projection of the marginalized, ignored, or actively denied. Therefore, haunting becomes not merely the fear-inducing act of terrorization commonly associated with the term, but rather a means to understand those that have been pushed into absence. Though fear is perhaps still present, the power of haunting lies in its capacity to bring about confrontation between the absent and present, confrontation that obliges consideration:

The Ghost or the apparition is one form by which something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there to our supposedly well-trained eyes, makes itself known or apparent to us, in its own way, of course. The way of the ghost is haunting, and haunting is a very particular way of knowing what has happened or what is happening. Being haunted draws us affectively, sometimes against our will and always a bit magically, into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as a transformative recognition. (Gordon 8)

At the heart of Gordon's (and Derrida's) concept of the excluded ghost is an almost contradictory dynamic: the apparition at once signals absence, but from a non-carnal presence. That is, as Gordon explains, omission (from official discourse, history, social structures, etc.) is recognized only through the omitted's return: "A disappearance is real only when it is apparitional because the ghost or the apparition is the principal form by which something lost or invisible or seemingly not there makes itself known or apparent to us" (63). For Gordon, an effective way in which the disappearance becomes real is through narrative channels; that is, the ghost story. "To write stories concerning exclusions and invisibilities," she notes, "is to write ghost stories. To write ghost stories implies that ghosts

are real, that is to say, that they produce material effects” (17). Although the ghost is characterized by its lack of materiality, the ghost story gives visibility to the invisible, materiality to the “immaterial,” makes real the unreal. In other words, the ghost story is haunting in narrative form. While Gordon contends that such visibility of the spectre does have a place in the exclusions of the present, it is inherently linked to historical understanding. Haunting, she explains, “is about reliving events in all their vividness, originality, and violence so as to overcome their pulsating and lingering effects” (134). For Gordon, this constitutes a positive sociological force by which the marginalized or “disappeared” gain voice. Haunting allows the present to come to terms with the ghosts of its past; in essence, it demonstrates the potential to provoke catharsis.

Every culture has its own ghosts that haunt its establishment. In her article “History and Hauntology; or, What Does One Do with the Ghosts of the Past? Reflections on Spanish Film and Fiction of the Post-Franco Period,” Labanyi takes the theories of Derrida and Gordon and applies them to post-Franco Spanish society and its literary and cinematographical production. In the case of democratic Spain, the ghosts of the past are directly related to the fraternal conflict of the Civil War and the subsequent Franco regime. “The phrase ‘post-Franco era, after all,’” notes Labanyi, “defines it as a period haunted by a spectral Francoist past” (“History” 68-69). The late Caudillo haunts as an omnipresent shadow marking both the dictatorship, as an oppressive counterpoint to contemporary democracy, and its victims, sanitized and censored during Francoist rule and “forgotten” during the Transition’s “pact of silence.” In his essay “In Memoriam F.F.B. 1892-1975,” dated five days after Franco’s death, Goytisolo notes that the indelible mark left upon the nation by Franco after almost forty years of dictatorship would not soon fade, that so many

years of irresponsibility and impotence have created “un pueblo necesariamente enfermo, cuya convalecencia se prolongará en razón directa a la duración de su enfermedad” (17).⁷²

Novels like Roig’s *La hora violeta*, in which Franco appears in the protagonist’s nightmares,⁷³ and Vázquez Montalbán’s *Autobiografía del General Franco* give credence to Goytisolo’s remarks as they exemplify the continued presence of the Caudillo in literature of the democratic era.

It is from this historical perspective that Labanyi adopts the related theories of Derrida and Gordon respectively: “For ghosts, as the traces of those who have not been allowed to leave a trace (Derrida’s formulation again)—are by definition the victims of history who return to demand reparation; that is, that their name, instead of being erased, be honoured” (“History” 66), and “Ghosts, as Avery Gordon notes . . . give ‘embodiment’ to those figures from the past who have been rendered invisible; that is, ‘desaparecidos’” (“History” 70). As in every war, the Civil War had its winners and losers. Labanyi outlines the use of spectral images and figures in literature and film of the seventies, eighties, and early nineties in order to give voice to the “losers” under Franco, the “victims of history” as Derrida puts it, and makes them visible after having, in Gordon’s words, “been rendered invisible” by official historical discourse.⁷⁴ The Republic, the Republican, the Civil War itself, those who went hungry, those who were censored, those who were imprisoned and/or executed for opposing—or appearing to oppose—Franco: these are the elements of Spanish history that often have been denied visibility, voice, and vindication. In agreement with Derrida and Gordon, Labanyi acknowledges that the act of exclusion itself does not create a ghost, but rather it is the return of the excluded past in the present that signals haunting (“History” 77). To this end, the various spectral elements in certain post-Franco historical

fiction are identified as resulting from a kind of textual or cinematographical “séance” in which the ghosts of the past are embodied in the present; that is, the present in which the work was produced.

In addition to exploring how the ghosts of Spain’s dictatorship “haunt” in post-Franco film and literature, Labanyi also comments on how the inclusion of the spectral realm is indicative of a postmodern reading of history. Due to its lack of material presence, the ghost operates as a simulacrum, an illusion instead of reality. However, the notion that postmodern ontological questioning signals the “end of history,” due to its breakdown of clearly defined boundaries between truth and fiction, is rejected; the very “un-reality” of the spectre allows for a re-conceptualization of the past that goes beyond recorded facts and statistics. That is, if history has been rendered “simulacra” in the present, then the ghost—itsself an absent image—becomes an apt manifestation of that past in today’s postmodern consciousness (Labanyi, “History” 78). Resina too acknowledges the ironic potency of the ghostly image when confronted by the instability of authenticity. “[I]s not the ghost,” he asks, “that residue of the past in the emotions of the living, the only guarantee, in a world of simulacra and media-powered discourses, that something has actually been and that it is still soldered to Being, *our* being?” (italics in the original; “Introduction” 2-3). In other words, while the ghosts themselves give place to considerations of specific aspects of the past, the very inclusion of the fantastic realm within the space of the historical realism is itself significant. Addressing the particular case of Spain, Labanyi affirms that the artistic freedom to create provides spectral materialization and is employed as a means to approach the nation’s past when postmodern thought questions the very notion of historical truth:

But ghosts cannot make their own voice heard; they rely on an interpreter to speak for them. The postmodern stress on the impossibility of direct access to the past may be a response to the ubiquitousness of the media, advertising and heritage industries, which convert history into a consumer commodity; but it can also be seen as a recognition of the spectral quality of the traces left by the past on the present, and of the moral imperative that requires us to bear witness to ‘the traces of those who were not allowed to leave a trace’; namely, ghosts. In a country that has emerged from forty years of cultural repression, the task of making reparation to the ghosts of the past—that is, to those relegated to the status of living dead, denied voice and memory—is considerable. Derrida’s notion that history occupies in the present a ‘virtual space of spectrality’ contradicts the notion that postmodernism signifies an ‘end of history’ in the form of the revenant (“History” 80).

In essence, this defence of the ghost story describes the central irony introduced in the first paragraph of this chapter: the unabashedly “unreal” becomes the conduit to understanding, and coming to terms with, the past.

In fact, my focus on the elements of fantasy in *El lápiz* and *Rabos* operates in many ways in dialogue with Labanyi’s study. The ghosts that she identifies as haunting post-Franco literature have not changed at the turn of the millennium. What differentiates several of the works in Labanyi’s article and the two covered here is the cultural environment surrounding their literary production. These novels by Rivas and Marsé have emerged from a culture that is increasingly more comfortable with the past and actively engages it. Gina Hermann calls this Spain’s “ubiquitous memory boom” (73), resulting in what many refer to as the literary commodification of the past (Winter, “Introduction” 12; López-Quñones, *La*

guerra 14-15). On the other hand, the decade and a half following Franco's death, the period that gave rise to much of Labanyi's corpus, viewed the past as a hindrance to a prosperous present and optimistic future. Derrida's statement that "the more life there is, the graver the spectre of the other becomes, the heavier the imposition" (136) suggests that the more a society avoids the ghosts of its past, the more power they have to haunt. Nevertheless, I intend to show that despite any contemporary willingness to confront recent Spanish history in open dialogue, *El lápiz* and *Rabos* propose that the ghosts of Spain's past have yet to be exorcised. I also intend to adapt Labanyi's treatment of the ghost as indicative of a positive, and not dismissive, postmodern re-reading of history to my hypothesis that the elements of fantasy in the two novels do not constitute a break with any notion of truth/reality. My exploration of fantasy maintains an ironic duplicity by on one hand exemplifying the "cuestionamiento de la supuesta vigencia de una única noción de realidad" (Erdal Jordan 110), and on the other, affirming the importance of understanding that reality. While David Roas signals the destabilizing nature of fantasy ("En definitiva, la literatura fantástica ha puesto de manifiesto la relativa validez del conocimiento racional: el relato fantástico ilumina una zona de lo humano donde la razón está condenada a fracasar" [95]), I maintain that the impossible dialogues that make up *El lápiz* and *Rabos* provide an alternative sense of reason that is not authoritative, but neither is it condemned to failure. Indeed, it is the questioning of authority that grants significance to these narratives in opposition to master-narratives, such as those crafted under Franco. As Jackson notes, the presence of fantasy undermines the rigidity of realism, "opposing the novel's closed, monological forms with open, dialogical structures" (25). The ethical approach to history outlined in these works echoes Gordon's view of truth within the postmodern paradigm: "Warnings about relativism to the contrary, truth is still what most of us strive for. Partial and insecure surely, and

something slightly different from ‘the facts,’ but truth nonetheless: the capacity to say ‘This is so’” (20). Fantasy recognizes the place of relativism and thus embraces the partial insecurity of the truth, but it does not deny it.

In this sense, my understanding of fantasy echoes the previously outlined relationship of self-conscious narrative fiction and reality. In addition to the shared themes that link chapters one and two (fiction/non-fiction) and chapter three with chapter four (fantasy), all four novels in this study correlate more closely than is perhaps immediately apparent. By underlining the fictional identity of its characters, *Soldados* and *Mala gente* give voice and textual materiality to the unreal; they are ghost stories.⁷⁵ As Labanyi states, “Ghosts are, precisely, the ‘might have beens’ of history that return as an actualisable, embodied alternative reality” (“History” 78-79). What are Miralles and Serma if not the “might have beens” of history? That they did not exist does not matter, they represent countless individuals that did. On the other hand, *El lápiz* and *Rabos* are themselves works of metafiction in that, to re-quote Hutcheon, they force “recognition of a *literary code*” (italics in the original; *Narcissistic* 49) through fantasy’s collision with the real. “By offering a problematic re-presentation of an empirically ‘real’ world,” Jackson notes, “the fantastic raises questions of the nature of the real and unreal, foregrounding the relation between them as its central concern. It is in this sense that Todorov refers to fantasy as the most ‘literary’ of all literary forms, as the ‘quintessence of literature,’ for it makes explicit the problems of establishing ‘reality’ and ‘meaning’ through a literary text” (37). In other words, fantasy becomes an implicit signal of self-conscious fiction. “Lo fantástico,” explains Erdal Jordan, “es captado como un producto de la auto-conciencia textual, y ésta puede presentar otras marcas, implícitas o explícitas, como la construcción en abismo y la conversación de

conceptos metaliterarios en elementos diegéticos” (133). As such, the novels by Rivas and Marsé also demonstrate the inherent irony of Hutcheon’s previously outlined concept of historiographic metafiction, a notion that “refuses the view that only history has a truth claim, both by questioning the ground of that claim in historiography and by asserting that both history and fiction are discourses, human constructs, signifying systems, and both derive their major claim to truth from that identity” (*Poetics* 93). Much like the appropriation of the genre of non-fiction in *Soldados* and *Mala gente*, the presence of fantasy in *El lápiz* and *Rabos* subverts the illusion of reality as a recognition of history’s constructed nature while ironically maintaining an ethics of memory.

From the general theoretical framework outlined above, the novels of chapters three and four will be analyzed according to a particular aspect of their retrospective tales. In *El lápiz*, I will examine how the spectral presences demand evaluation of the period from which they haunt and thus give way to considerations of nostalgia for the Second Republic and the Republican hero. I will define the nostalgic impulse and outline how it is common in contemporary historical fiction. In contrast to Rivas’s previous works that reinforce it, i.e. “La lengua de las mariposas,” this kind of romanticized longing has become what I call “ironic nostalgia” in *El lápiz* due to the novel’s simultaneous affirmation and criticism of the idealized past. My examination of *Rabos* will consider how the “impossible dialogues” that make up the narrator’s memories compare to Marsé’s previously fantasy-laden tale of post-war Barcelona: *Si te dicen que caí*. Particular emphasis will be placed on the self-awareness of historical recuperation demonstrated in *Rabos* from the standpoint of a distant but interested present. I define the foetal narrator’s account using Marianne Hirsch’s term “postmemory”: the memory of a non-witness. The intimate connection between the narrator

and his story, despite his lack of personal testimony outside of the womb, echoes contemporary Spain's preoccupation with the violence of the Civil War and the Franco regime. In a sense, this final chapter will provide a fitting conclusion to this study. While Marsé is the only one of the authors covered here that personally experienced the post-war trauma, his narrator represents writers such as Cercas, Prado, and Rivas; their attempts to recover the past are marked by a plurality of voices and self-conscious realization that history, like their texts, is a construct of the present.

Chapter 3 – From the Ghostly to the (Ironic) Nostalgia: *El lápiz del carpintero*

3.1 *El lápiz del carpintero*: Heroes, Ghosts, and Memory on the Margins

In the first chapter of *El lápiz del carpintero*, it appears that the process of historical recuperation will again take a textualized form, like in *Soldados* and *Mala gente*. A young newspaper reporter named Carlos Sousa is assigned to interview Dr. Daniel Da Barca, a previously-exiled Republican who had lived in Mexico until Franco's death and returned to Spain in democracy, regarding his experience in Nationalist prisons throughout Galicia during and after the Civil War. The elderly Da Barca—described as lively, though requiring an oxygen tube due to his declining health—is accompanied by his wife Marisa Mallo, the “love of his life” since the days of the Republic.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, Da Barca's personal testimony and its recorded recompilation by Sousa are absent from that point on. The second chapter introduces a separate scene, also from the present: a brothel on the outskirts of a city in which another elderly man Herbal, a former member of the Guardia Civil and prison guard for the Nationalist forces, tells of Da Barca to Maria da Visitação, a prostitute that “había llegado hacía poco de una isla del Atlántico africano. Sin papeles” (20). It is this oral account of the former prisoner's story from Herbal's memory that largely forms the plot of the novel. Certainly this overt change in perspective is not some kind of narrative fault, an error committed by Rivas in the construction of his novel, but rather constitutes an intentional contrast of the ways in which memory is reconstructed and represented. As I will demonstrate at a later point, the oral dialogue between Herbal and Maria stands as a

marginalized counterpoint to the more mainstream transmission of memory between journalist and exiled war hero, supposedly recorded for the public at large.

While Herbal's narration is retrospective, it is not entirely chronological, involving occasional prolepses and analepses. The first glimpse of the past is found in the third, and shortest, chapter: the first memory that the guard relates to Maria is one in which he expresses regret for having had to execute a prisoner known only as the painter. Herbal explains that he committed many acts of brutality before, and he would commit many more after, but felt sorry for ending the painter's life. Having carried out the order, Herbal picks up the titular carpenter's pencil that the painter used to sketch the fellow prisoners and put it behind his own ear. This will become the voice of his victim; the ghost of the painter haunts Herbal from his perch above the guard's ear, urging him to protect those prisoners that are still alive. Although further chapters step back in time to detail moments of the painter's life in prison, it is as a spirit that he fully interacts with the narrator.

When the Nationalist uprising began, prominent Republicans were rounded up and imprisoned, among them the painter and Dr. Daniel Da Barca. Working for the Falange, Herbal had already been spying on the doctor, compiling a report of his leftist activities. Herbal was like a shadow to Da Barca, and he hated him, a fact compounded by his attraction since childhood to Da Barca's girlfriend, and later wife, Marisa Mallo. When Da Barca was imprisoned, Herbal enlisted as a guard in order to maintain his almost obsessive vigilance. The doctor, for his part, took little notice of Herbal and saw to the physical and emotional well-being of his fellow prisoners. Da Barca managed to escape the fate of the Painter, thanks in large part to the fact that the ghost of his friend now occupied a place of privilege within the mind of the guard, a voice that urged Herbal to do right by his enemy.

Because of his Spanish/Cuban dual citizenship and intercession by the Cuban government, the doctor's death sentence is commuted to life in prison. Eventually, he is allowed to leave Spain with his wife, having been married by proxy while still incarcerated.

The final chapter of the novel returns to the present. Herbal is reading the obituary of Da Barca in the newspaper. He concludes his story by noting to Maria that he never saw Marisa or the doctor again but that they had a son, conceived on their belated wedding night, and that upon Da Barca's release in the fifties, the family fled Spain for the Americas. "Ni siquiera sabía que habían regresado" (186), Herbal explains. Maria then asks Herbal if the painter still visits him. He lies and says no. The painter speaks to him then and there, asking him to give Maria the carpenter's pencil, which he does, thereby extending the pencil's lineage and transferring its power.

Indeed, the pencil itself not only provides a tangible presence for the voice of the painter, it also symbolizes the transmission of memory from the seeing/experiencing party to the receptive/inheriting interlocutor. It is passed from generation to generation, often through violent confrontations, giving rise to a lineage of memory that runs parallel to Spain's own violent past. In this sense, the notion of the novel as a "lieux de memoire," Nora's concept as mentioned in the Introduction, becomes even more visible as the first editions of *El lápiz* were sold with a small, red carpenter's pencil. Through the pencil, the reader holds a concrete connection to the text; he or she has become part of the memory preservation through the act of purchasing and reading the novel. Of course, the fact that the woman who receives Herbal's pencil is a young African prostitute raises even more questions with regard to the legacy of Spain's defining conflicts and the notions of Spanish identity today. As an illegal immigrant, Maria's identification as a "new Spaniard" hinges

on the tenuous hold of her present circumstances; the Civil War remains a distant consideration as she of course does not belong to the generations that lived the conflict, but also because she is not a descendent of those generations given that her place of origin is literally and symbolically remote. Being a prostitute, as I will discuss further on, also adds to Maria's sense of marginalization. Herbal's oral account to Maria, signified by the physical transfer of the pencil, constitutes an alternative transfer of historical memory on the periphery. The pencil symbolically grants the young immigrant a cultural inheritance from which she would otherwise be denied. In short, because Maria represents an increasingly transnational Spanish society, the pencil connects the "new Spaniard" with the "old Spain."⁷⁷

Born in La Coruña in 1957, Rivas began his career as a newspaper reporter at the age of 15 before also turning his attention to poetry, essay, theatre, and narrative fiction. Publishing almost exclusively in Galician, with translations of his works in Spanish and other languages to follow, Rivas has become one of the most widely read and significant figures of contemporary Galician literature.⁷⁸ In addition to critical acclaim, the award-winning *El lápiz* has also enjoyed much commercial success, becoming the most widely distributed novel written in Galician (Harney 33). Two of Rivas's most popular works have also been adapted to the cinema: three short stories from the collection *¿Qué me quieres, amor?* (1995) inspired José Luis Cuerda's film *La lengua de las mariposas*⁷⁹, and in 2003 Antón Reixa brought *El lápiz del carpintero* to the big screen.

Through its setting and subject matter, *El lápiz* exemplifies two constant themes found in the works of Manuel Rivas, from the aforementioned *¿Qué me quieres amor?* to the more recent *Los libros arden mal* (2006): Galicia and the Civil War.⁸⁰ As is the case with Cercas and Prado, Rivas's connection to the Civil War and the immediate postbellum

oppression functions as a matter of active, wilful recovery as opposed to personal testimony. As William J. Nichols explains, although Rivas did grow up under Franco, it was during the gradual opening-up of the country: “Manuel Rivas, nacido en 1957, se crió durante los años sesenta, una época en la que Franco reticentemente abandonaba su visión autárquica y abría la sociedad española a inversiones extranjeras y al turismo” (158). Despite these changes, however, issues relating to the Second Republic, the Civil War, and the post-war oppression were either not spoken of or remained tightly controlled by Francoist institutions such as the media and education system. Colmeiro describes his own upbringing in the sixties as such: “En la vida cotidiana de la España desarrollista de los años 60 en que me crié no se hablaba generalmente de la guerra civil, excepto en referencias ocasionales y casi míticas” (7). For Rivas, therefore, approaching the Civil War is inherently a matter of investigation, processing information, and communication through the creation of narrative. “Con tramas ubicadas en la Guerra Civil española,” notes Nichols, “Rivas construye precisamente ese momento de la historia española reciente de la cual él no tiene memoria directa ni experiencia personal. Rivas sólo puede acceder a ese pasado por medio de la escritura y las historias que le cuentan” (158).

In the first section of this analysis, I will provide examples from *El lápiz* of how Rivas ironically plays with the textual/fictional nature of Herbal's tale as a self-aware recognition of the written word as a medium for historical representation. The second and third sections of the chapter will focus more on the relationship between aesthetics and the ethico-political response to memory in the novel. Like Prado, Rivas's politics have been well documented. Active in social and environmental causes (he was a founding member of Greenpeace in Spain), Rivas has been both a vocal critic of the Franco regime and an

outspoken defender of the Second Republic.⁸¹ Like Prado and Cercas, Rivas signed the manifesto by the group “Memoria del Futuro 1931-2006” that commemorated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Second Republic and extolled the values that the Republic purported to uphold.⁸² In *El lápiz*, the republican prisoners, and the Republic by extension, are idealized through their positive characterizations. The second section will explore one such figure, the silenced republican loser of the war: the painter’s ghost. In the final section, the idealization of Da Barca gives rise to considerations of nostalgia for the Second Republic. This will be the most extensive of the three sections as it will include theories of nostalgia, the presence of nostalgia in contemporary Spanish fiction, and how *El lápiz* at once upholds and questions the nostalgic hegemony of memory. This is what I call “ironic nostalgia.”

3.2 Ironic Acknowledgement of Textuality

The opening two chapters of *El lápiz* establish a confrontation of memorialistic expression between written recording and oral transfer. One assumes that Sousa’s interview with Da Barca provides a public audience for the former prisoner’s testimony: a tangible, textual trace of the past. This is merely an assumption because the novel is not made up of this interview, but rather of the explicitly non-textual conversation between Herbal and Maria. “El periodista que visita el doctor exiliado garantiza, en mayor o menor medida,” explains López-Quñones, “el diálogo de una comunidad. Herbal no cuenta, por el contrario, con ningún interlocutor que demande inicialmente la exposición de sus recuerdos” (*La guerra* 67). In the battle for narrative supremacy, Sousa loses; his written column for public consumption is nowhere to be found, while Herbal’s intimate account is favoured. Of course, and herein lies the ironic paradox, this private dialogue constitutes the plot for a novel, a written work of narrative fiction published for the consumption of the reading

public. It is this dynamic that Rivas plays with and underlines through occasional, though purposeful, allusions to “real life facts” being framed as a product of fiction, particularly that of the novelistic genre, and vice versa, a theme already explored at length in my analyses of *Soldados* and *Mala gente*. This textual self-awareness speaks directly to how Rivas acknowledges literary creation as a parallel historical discourse to the inevitably (re)created articulation of memory/testimony.

The very language employed by the characters is one of the simplest markers of Rivas’s play with his own work’s identity. A clear example is provided by the ongoing dialogue between Herbal and Sergeant Landesa with regard to Da Barca’s leftist activities. After the elections of 1936 in which the Popular Front was victorious, the Sergeant met with a group of Falangist sympathizers, including Herbal, with the aim of learning all they could about prominent Republican figures. “Quiero que me escriban una novela sobre cada uno de estos elementos. Quiero saberlo todo” (43) are the instructions given by Landesa to his men. Of course, Herbal volunteers to shadow Da Barca, stating, “Seré invisible. No se me dan las letras pero le escribiré una novela sobre ese tipo” (44). When Herbal finally hands in his report four months after the initial meeting, the reaction of the Sergeant again employs the same terminology: “El sargento lo valoró al peso. Pues sí que parece una novela” (45). On the surface, the use of the word “novela” to describe Herbal’s report seems to be merely a descriptive term, suggesting that the report’s extensive and detailed coverage has resulted in a large, multi-paged document and thus compares to the physical dimensions of a novel. This surface reading is undermined by Herbal’s parallel expositions of the life of Da Barca and their relationship with the encompassing work by Rivas. That is, while Herbal’s initial report is described as being novelistic in scope, the ex-guard’s oral account to Maria in the

narrative present—again outlining the activities of the doctor, this time in prison—constitutes the greater part of an actual novel. Both cases point to what one might call the “novelization” of historical memory/testimony, echoing the literariness of the war as discussed in the analysis of *Soldados* and *Mala gente*.

The novel’s self-awareness functions much in the same way as in the previously examined works of Cercas and Prado: the narrators ironically point to the novelistic genre as precisely what their tale is not. For “Cercas,” his is a “relato real;” for Urbano, his is an academic study. Herbal, on the other hand, does not claim any generic identity for he is telling, not writing, his story. Nevertheless, when describing the unlikely relationship between the republican Da Barca and Marisa Mallo, a daughter of high society, Herbal notes, “Eso estaría bien para una novela, pero no para la realidad de aquel tiempo. Era como echar pólvora en el incensario” (139). The narrator’s claim to his interlocutor that the complications of Da Barca’s life would make a good novel, if they were not already the subject of his real testimony, places Herbal as the victim of irony in that he has become “the person whose ‘confident unawareness’ has directly involved him in an ironic situation” (Muecke, *Compass* 34). Rivas has created a relationship with his reader at the expense of the narrator much like that of Cercas and “Cercas;” the previously mentioned “inside joke” between Cercas and the reader with regard to the narrator’s claim that his work is not a novel but a “relato real” is echoed here. Of course Da Barca’s tale would make a good novel, for that is exactly what this work is, unbeknownst to Herbal. In this sense, Herbal’s “naiveté” brings Rivas himself into the work, stressing its creation. As Muecke states, the self-conscious artist “will break into the artistic illusion with a reminder to his public (not necessarily an explicit one) that what they have before them is only a painting, a play, or a

novel and not the reality it purports to be" (*Compass* 164). While *El lápiz* gives form to the present's desire to recuperate and represent Spain's recent past, an act embodied by Herbal, it also suggests, perhaps in a subtle manner, that this memory discourse inevitably runs parallel to the novelization of history with fiction and reality being mutually influential.

López-Quiñones comments on the nature of Spain's cultural climate with regard to historical memory and literature, stating that *El lápiz*, like other novels at the turn of the millennium, represents a "ficcionalización de un proceso cultural que España atraviesa" (*La guerra* 71). Without doubt, this statement accurately reflects how Herbal's process of uncovering, reconceptualising, and communicating memories of a violent past to a younger generation constitutes a novelistic mirror of contemporary attempts to understand the previously censored, silenced, and unwitnessed past. The ironic references to the story's novelistic identity, on the other hand, demonstrate a self-awareness at the heart of *El lápiz* that places this fictionalization of the cultural process as something not only exemplified, but treated as a theme itself. To this end I am in agreement with Nichols's affirmation that "El texto de Rivas propone la novela misma como un posible, aunque imperfecto, lugar que preserva la memoria y complementa al acto oral" (157). *El lápiz* at once brings to light the meeting of past and present and inserts itself as a medium *and* participant of such interaction.

Related to issues of self-conscious fiction is the appropriation of reality—that is, the insistence in the tale's veracity—by the unabashedly fictitious. The following example reflects the novel as a whole. Shortly after the incarceration of republican sympathizers, a prisoner named Moroño, "un socialista al que los amigos llamaban O'Bo" (33), breaks the sombre silence of his fellow inmates by telling them a folkloric story about two beautiful, happy sisters who lived alone named "Vida" and "Muerte." Because of their great devotion,

the sisters agree to never let a man between them: they may flirt and even become involved briefly with men, but they must always return to each other. One night, a ship with a thousand accordions crashes against the shore; the accordions blow in the storm's wind, playing sad songs all night. In the morning, all the accordions are destroyed except one that is found by a young fisherman. Playing the accordion at the next town dance, the young man falls in love with Vida, who in turn falls in love with the fisherman due to his graceful playing of the accordion. Fearing Muerte's vindictiveness, the pair runs off. To this day, especially on stormy nights, Muerte goes door to door searching for her sister. If the occupant of the house cannot help her, she absconds with the person. The story is well received by Moroño's fellow inmates. It is, in fact, a familiar story; one prisoner states, "la escuché en una taberna. Hay tascas que son universidades" (35). This fable-like tale is one that has evidently been repeated, probably through generations. Yet when Moroño introduces the story he claims, "Os voy a contar una historia... No es un cuento, es un sucedido" (33). The folktale account of Vida and Muerte, in which Muerte ends up haunting the people of Galicia to this day, is not presented as the ghost story that it is; Moroño makes clear that his story is more than that, it is a "sucedido." He openly defies the conventional boundaries of what Mario J. Valdés calls "the hopelessly naïve distinction between fiction and non-fiction" (14). In this way, Moroño's tale mirrors the novel itself: a ghost story that claims a place in reality. Though Rivas is not suggesting that the events of *El lápiz* are "sucedidos," he does create an environment in which memory and imagination are not mutually exclusive, nor are they antagonistic. The identifiable present (Herbal's Galicia) and past (the Civil War) interconnect through the ghost story. The spirits of the past embody—in a figurative, not a literal, sense given the ghost's defining nature—the mechanism of

confrontation/understanding with the present. This of course leads me to the next subject of analysis: the painter's ghost.

3.3 The Painter's Ghost

El lápiz is a novel replete with supernatural references. From Moroño's account of the sisters Vida and Muerte to a figure called the "Hombre de Hierro," a voice that teaches Herbal to intimidate and encourages severity, the spectral realm inhabits a significant part of the ex-guard's recollection. Of course, of these fantastic beings none has a larger presence or influence on the events told than that of the painter's ghost: the voice, symbolized by the titular carpenter's pencil that sits behind Herbal's ear.⁸³ Lucy D. Harney refers to the dead painter as being a "Rulfoesque spectre" that "maintains the fantastic aura of magical realism throughout the work" (38). Without engaging with the potentially loaded term "magical realism," I can say that the painter does exemplify the novel's distinctive coexistence of the realms of fantasy and historical verisimilitude.⁸⁴

The spectral figure of the painter, an otherwise unnamed Republican, gains prominence in the text after he is imprisoned and executed for what the Nationalists refer to as his dangerous occupation: "Es el cartelista, el que pinta las ideas" (27). It is this execution that creates the lifelong link between the fascist guard and his nameless victim, a link that defies unambiguous characterization. On the surface, theirs is a connection formed by the clear divisions of executioner/executed, victimizer/victimized, and winner/loser. Nevertheless, the painter's death sentence signals a break with the brutality and pure antagonism that previously characterized Herbal's attitude toward his enemies. The first memory that Herbal shares with Maria is how he uncharacteristically felt remorse upon

killing the painter, and how he ended his victim's life so quickly in order to save the painter the torture that was typical of such assassinations. Channelling the way his uncle swiftly dispatched with trapped foxes, Herbal notes,

Cometí muchas barbaridades, pero cuando me encontré ante el pintor murmuré por dentro que lo sentía mucho, que preferiría no tener que hacerlo, y no sé lo que él pensó cuando su mirada se cruzó con la mía, un destello húmedo en la noche, pero quiero creer que él entendió, que adivinó que yo lo hacía para ahorrarle tormentos. Sin más, le apoyé la pistola en la sien y le reventé la cabeza. (23)

Although the other guards were disappointed with the execution's lack of "excitement," Herbal's actions were a reflection of the respect that the painter had earned in the eyes of even his captors. The prison director requested that the painter not suffer and Herbal himself notes that "el pintor era un señor hecho y derecho. En sus idas y vueltas de la cárcel, trataba al carcelero como si éste fuese el acomodador de un cine" (26).

This benevolence follows the painter into death. When Herbal picks up the carpenter's pencil and puts it behind his ear the ghost of the painter follows, speaking to his executioner and urging him to protect the other prisoners, especially Da Barca. In one notable episode, the painter advises Herbal to volunteer for Da Barca's assassination, so that he can spare the doctor:⁸⁵

la voz del pintor le dijo: Procura ir voluntario esta noche. Y él, sin miedo de que alguien pudiese escucharlo, respondió enojado: No me jodas. Venga, Herbal, ¿vas a dejarlo ahora? No me jodas más, pintor, ¿te das cuenta de cómo me mira? Es como si me espetase dos jeringas en los ojos. Cuando Marisa viene a verlo, piensa que es

cosa mía que me ponga justo en el medio a escuchar lo que dicen y no dejar que se toquen ni la punta de los dedos. ¡Ese tipo no sabe lo que son las ordenanzas!

Hombre, le dijo el pintor, podías hacerte un poco el ciego. Ya lo hice, dejé que se tocasen con la punta de los dedos. (64)

Although Herbal is often hesitant to heed the requests of his dead companion, he ultimately complies as this conflict demonstrates. In this case, Da Barca returns to the prison unscathed. Ángel Loureiro explains that the intervention of the painter “humaniza a un Herbal que es normalmente calculador, cruel y sin escrúpulos, y en esos momentos de ocupación mental por el muerto Herbal hace cosas que no haría de no estar poseído por la muerte” (150). Loureiro’s interpretation of this dynamic hinges upon the idea that the guard’s body and mind are fully usurped by the spirit of the painter, making him powerless to act on his own accord.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, a fully subjugated Herbal cannot be a humanized Herbal if his acts of decency do not carry any personal agency. In other words, I maintain that Herbal is only “possessed” to the extent that he is still conscious of his own decisions and actions, which is why his behaviour toward Da Barca is characterized by such conflict, conflict that would not be present if the painter’s spirit was operating through his body. What is certain is that because of the painter, Herbal becomes a multidimensional character, he enjoys a certain ambivalence that would be denied had he given his conscience solely over to the Hombre-de-Hierro-influenced brutality. The change that the painter’s ghost brings is evident given Herbal’s distinct behaviour between when he is left alone and when he is in dialogue with his dead victim. When the painter is away searching for his son, for example, Herbal “se acercaba a la celda de castigo en la que estaba el doctor Da Barca y escupía por el ventanuco de la puerta. Una noche se despertó ahogándose. El corazón le

golpeaba angustiado en el arca del pecho” (112). On the other hand, when the painter returns, the lifting of Herbal’s spirits is described as “Un milagroso alivio” (113).

Although Herbal does not demonstrate remorse for his violent role in the Franco regime, his affinity for the painter creates a dynamic in which he is fantastically held to account for such actions, even in the narrative present. That is, the ghost’s continued companionship demonstrates that Herbal is unable to reconcile with the one victim for whom he cared. The complex nature of this ongoing relationship is foretold by the look that Da Barca gives to Herbal shortly after the painter’s death: “le clavaba su severa mirada, ojos que decían no me olvidaré de ti, asesino del pintor, que tengas una larga vida para que crezca en ti el virus del remordimiento y te pudras en vida” (60). Herbal is at once haunted by, and dependent on, the ghost. While Nichols explains that “el fantasma del pintor más que atormentar, ayuda a Herbal” (168),⁸⁷ it is certain that Herbal’s continual supernatural “friendship” with his victim’s ghost also paradoxically signifies that the guard is at the continual mercy of the painter, becoming the victim of his own deed. Although the painter always demonstrates benevolence, his presence constitutes a haunting nonetheless. According to Gordon, haunting “is all about reliving events in all their vividness, originality, and violence so as to overcome their pulsating and lingering effects” (134). Herbal, however, is perpetually haunted, unable to exorcise the ghosts of his violent past; he is, as López-Quñones explains, “atrapado casi obsesivamente en un pasado que arruina la posibilidad de un presente sin remordimientos ni complejos” (*La guerra* 68). Although the painter does not torment Herbal, Herbal is tormented by the painter.

If, as mentioned, *El lápiz* turns Spain’s cultural process of memory recompilation and representation into narrative fiction, then the spectral presence of the painter stands in for the

Republican “losers” of the Civil War and Franco regime. His death and return as an absent presence reflects the place of those that were also “disappeared” and thus do not appear in official history under Franco nor in the collective amnesia of the transition to democracy. As Nichols states, “las voces desvanecidas de un pasado ausente que atormentan a la España contemporánea se manifiestan en *El lápiz del carpintero* por medio del fantasma del ‘pintor’” (167). The compulsion to verbalize memories of a violent past that Herbal demonstrates echoes contemporary Spain’s need, in addition to desire, to revisit its parallel, painful past. Just as the painter prevents Herbal from moving beyond the barbaric acts he committed, so too do the ghosts of Spain’s past prevent a cultural vision of the present and future that denies the traumatic and divisive history. “For ghosts,” to re-quote Labanyi, “are by definition the victims of history who return to demand reparation; that is, that their name, instead of being erased, be honoured (“History” 66). Though the painter is “unnamed” but for his occupation, he embodies the victims of Spain’s history “that return to demand reparation.” By maintaining a constant presence in Herbal’s life—even into the narrative present of post-Franco, democratic Spain—the martyred Republican demands that the “losers” of the war be given voice and be heard. Thus, the painter’s “reparation,” to use Labanyi’s term, results from preventing Herbal from living free of his past deeds.

That the painter haunts not through any kind of terror-inducing vindictive malevolence, but rather the unlikely camaraderie of two individuals bound by a shared experience, is certainly telling. The spectre both underlines the forced recognition of the dead as something that cannot be ignored, and exemplifies the novel’s political understanding of the victims that the painter represents: idealized in life, unjustly killed, and gracious but resolute in death. Such positive characterization of the Republican prisoners,

particularly Da Barca in addition to the painter, is one of the most prominent themes of *El lápiz* and will be examined at length in the next section as it pertains to issues of nostalgia for the Second Republic in contemporary literature. Before that, however, I will examine the inherently spiritual nature of the painter's representation, being the only character whose place in Herbal's memories is greater in death than in life. While *El lápiz* is rife with supernatural, mythological, and biblical references, there is one religious entity to which the painter is favourably compared: that of Christ himself. After completing his prison sketch of the Pórtico de la Gloria with his carpenter's pencil, the painter describes which prisoner represents which biblical figure. While the painter does not name any of the figures in the drawing as himself, it is no coincidence that all are spoken for with the exception of Christ in the middle. It is Herbal that implicitly draws the connection between Christ and the victim for whom he felt remorse for killing. Channelling the artistic knowledge of the recently dead painter, Herbal identifies in the sketch the "belleza dolorida que muestra la melancolía por la injusta muerte del Hijo de Dios" (57). What Herbal recognizes as the unjust death of the painter at his own hands echoes the unjust death of the Son of God. The guard reinforces and makes more explicit this connection by his response to the prison director's query into the painter's death the day before: "¿Cómo fue lo de ayer, Herbal?" asks the director, to which Herbal replies, "Era un nazareno, señor" (58).

In fact, there are many references to Christ-like characters in the novel, though none with the same consistency as the characterization of the painter.⁸⁸ Mercedes Tasende, for example, draws a connection between Christ and Da Barca: "Daniel Da Barca, en fin, emerge de los recuerdos de Herbal como una especie de redentor dispuesto a sacrificarse por los demás" (213). Although Tasende is perhaps correct in stating that Da Barca was willing

to be a sacrifice, he survives multiple attempts on his life and is able to eventually find refuge in exile. It is the painter, however, that dies and returns from the dead so that others, like Da Barca, might live. While Da Barca survives the war, it is the painter who is killed. That is, the essential Christian doctrine that Jesus, though blameless, was killed as a sacrifice for mankind and that his return signalled a victory over death is echoed by the painter's own "resurrection" as a spirit. His unjust death serves as a sacrifice; his power is unveiled not in life but as a function of his return in death. Therefore, the painter's benevolent attitude toward Herbal represents the redemptive power of Christ in that his saving grace is not limited to his compatriot, Da Barca, but also to his enemy, the "sinner" Herbal. As Nichols states, "Los esfuerzos del fantasma parecen un esfuerzo por proteger a Da Barca, pero al final logran la redención y la salvación de Herbal" (168). Whether or not the relationship between the painter and Herbal ends with redemption and salvation is debateable. It is possible that the painter urges Herbal to give the pencil, and thus himself, to Maria as a signal of the redemptive catharsis gained by the ex-guard due to the oral imparting of his memories. That is, the spectre recognizes his work to be finished, thus moving on to aid another. It is also possible that Herbal can never come to terms with his past and the passing of the pencil merely foreshadows his death. Regardless, it is certain that this kind of catharsis is integral to the "raison d'être" of the painter's ghost. In this sense, the supernatural presence of the painter in *El lápiz* not only exemplifies Labanyi's previously outlined notion of the literary spectre as a means by which the silenced victims of the Franco regime are given consideration, but also that any healing, or "salvation," of Spanish collective culture depends on the essential dialogue between the living and the resurrected dead. Colmeiro's statement that in order to overcome the past "es necesario primero enfrentarse y asumirlo con todas sus luces y sombras" (24) becomes a theme that Rivas

exploits: the painter at once brings confrontation and (Christ-like) saving grace to the present via his ghostly return.

3.4 Ironic Nostalgia

In the introduction to her collection of essays, *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Spain. Theoretical Debates and Cultural Practice*, Labanyi summarizes the relationship of political hegemony with the written word as it relates to the Franco regime: “For histories of the nation and of national literatures . . . are written by the winners of history, for whom the losers are at best an embarrassment, at worst (as under early Francoism) the enemy” (6-7). The transition to democracy after Franco’s death almost completely reversed this dynamic, positing the late caudillo’s regime as the new loser of history; the dictatorship was seen as a repressive contrast to the new progressive democratic system. Salvador Cardús i Ros addresses this shift in his article “Politics and the Invention of Memory. For a Sociology of the Transition to Democracy in Spain” by stating that although the change in government would be brought about by members of the old Francoist apparatus, “Franco represented all that the new regime should not be” and “the new model would be constructed against the Franco regime” (25). It is from this political perspective, defined by the oppositional values of Franco/post-Franco, that I consider the current proliferation and commercial success of the Civil War in literary and cinematographical production. In broad terms, what characterizes the contemporary artistic approach to the war and postbellum strife is the almost hegemonic nature of the political tendencies: they fall overwhelmingly in favour of the Republican cause. That is, with the exception of a few notable figures (for example, Pío Moa), the politics of the past in contemporary artistic production trends toward unsympathetic

depictions of Franco's Nationalists and his subsequent regime (rightly so) and/or open support for the Second Republic.

Such devotion to the Republic is a clear example of how the past is reconceptualised through present considerations. The memory that fuels the boom of historical literature is, as I have stressed, a collective memory given that the majority of those who participate in cultural dialogues regarding the past were born after the Second Republic, the Civil War, and the most oppressive years of the dictatorship. López-Quñones explains in great detail how the Republic has become an attractive historical entity despite, or perhaps due to, this lack of personal experience because it provides Spain with an acceptable precursor to its current ideological centre:

La Guerra Civil y la revisión idealizada de la Segunda República atraviesan un momento de popularidad y difusión en diversos medios culturales y políticos porque . . . una democracia como la española necesita trazar sus antecedentes y crear una familia genealógica. Es evidente que en el seno de dicha familia, la Segunda República resulta un antepasado más atractivo y conveniente que el régimen de Franco o la dictadura de Primo de Rivera. En otras palabras . . . la democracia española . . . puede trazarse un evidente movimiento cultural que busca recuperar la herencia de la República como ese antepasado noble en el que la democracia española puede y debe mirarse, reflexionar sobre su carácter y aprender lecciones positivas. (31)

A concrete example of this search for a democratic cultural inheritance is found in the project of the aforementioned group "Memoria del Futuro 1931-2006" as outlined in their

manifesto.⁸⁹ The Second Republic is viewed as the historical counterpart to the Franco regime (pre-Francoism) as much as the current democracy constitutes the current counterpart (post-Francoism). Contemporary Spanish artistic production is rife with manifestations of this comparative relationship. More than seventy years after the military action gave rise to the Civil War, and more than thirty since the transition to democracy, there exists a strong literary and cinematographical tendency toward what Susan Martin-Márquez calls “Second Republic Prelapsarianism” (745).⁹⁰ That is, the Republic has acquired a polished image, becoming an idealized political system thanks to its antifascist impetus and the seemingly parallel desires of present-day democratic Spanish society. This “Second Republic Prelapsarianism,” according to Martin-Márquez, exemplifies a burgeoning “Spanish nostalgia industry” (746). What must not be forgotten, however, is that the nostalgic expression by which the Republic is portrayed constitutes nostalgia for a time never lived by those responsible for its depiction.

The term “nostalgia” has its origins in two Greek words: *nostos*, which means “to return home”, and *algia*, which means “desire” or “longing”. Although the concept initially referred to a physical illness akin to homesickness, it now applies in general terms to feelings of yearning for a time or place that has become inaccessible.⁹¹ In this study, my approach to nostalgia is limited to attitudes toward the Second Republican period of Spanish history and not of Spain itself as my concern is not exile literature. In agreement with various critics, I understand and treat nostalgia as a manifestation of two interrelated elements: 1) the idealization of an event or historical period and 2) the function of the present in the construction of such an idyllic image. Speaking to the first criterion, Aaron Santesso notes, “A work may look to the past; it is only truly nostalgic if that past is idealized” (16). That is,

a nostalgic work and a historical work differ due to the fact that the former paints the particular historical moment in utopic colours. On the other hand, it is also imperative to recognize that the root of the past's idealization is not found in the admirable qualities of the period itself as much as in the interests and priorities of the present (Santesso 13). Because the nostalgia-inducing period is inaccessible by definition, the present is able to re-imagine and recreate it with impunity. As Hutcheon states in her article "Irony, Nostalgia and the Postmodern,"

Nostalgia, in fact, may depend precisely on the *irrecoverable* nature of the past for its emotional impact and appeal. It is the very pastness of the past, its inaccessibility that likely accounts for a large part of nostalgia's power—for both conservatives and radicals alike. This is rarely the past as actually experienced, of course; it is the past as imagined, as idealized through memory and desire. In this sense, however, nostalgia is less about the past than about the present. (*italics in the original*; 195)

Of course, the "present" does not constitute an all-encompassing, homogenous entity; it does, however, refer to a hegemonic impulse within a particular group. Indeed, certain critics have argued that the contemporary understanding of nostalgia intrinsically revolves around its collective nature, that a particular group's concept of self may be shaped by their united affinity for a previous era, now held up and admired (Santesso 24; Wilson 31). This, of course, brings us back to López-Quñones's statement in which he outlines Spanish society's embrace, as exemplified in the cultural production, of the Second Republic as a desirable antecedent to its current Western, liberal, and democratic incarnation.

While Rivas often portrays themes related to the Civil War in his works, *El lápiz* and his short story “La lengua de las mariposas,” from the collection *¿Qué me quieres, amor?*, demonstrate a clear nostalgic impulse toward the Second Republic due to the idealized, even sanctified, characterization of the central Republican characters. This particular short story along with two others from the same collection, “Un saxo en la niebla” and “Carminia,” were united to form the script for José Luis Cuerda’s successful film version *La lengua de las mariposas* (1999), a film that shares with its textual relative the same nostalgic vision of the Republic.⁹² The identification of such an impulse in these works is nothing new: Martín-Márquez cites *La lengua* as a quintessential example of “Second Republic prelapsarianism,” while Harney appropriates the same term in her treatment of *El lápiz*. Nevertheless, in this concluding section of the chapter I suggest a new reading of *El lápiz*, one that places significant emphasis on the incongruity between the nostalgic image of the Republic and the source of its expression, a fascist guard. By highlighting the straightforward nostalgia of “La lengua” (as much the film as the text) as a counterpoint, I explore the simultaneously sincere and ironic nostalgia of *El lápiz* as a self-aware recognition of how the contemporary repudiation of Franco’s nationalist cause, justifiable to be sure, plays out in the sanitization of its opponents.

Set in a small Galician town in the tumultuous last days of the Republic, “La lengua” is the story of a young schoolboy, Moncho, and his relationship with the elderly school teacher, the “maestro” don Gregorio. When the military uprising begins, Galicia is one of the first zones to fall under Nationalist rule and don Gregorio, along with the other suspected Republican sympathizers, is detained. As Moncho’s father supported Azaña’s party, the family seeks to avoid his detention and other difficulties with the new regime by shouting

insults at the paraded Republican prisoners. In this chaotic environment, however, Moncho chases after the truck transporting the prisoners shouting not insults, but rather terms from nature that he had learned from his beloved teacher: “¡Sapo! ¡Tilonorrinco! ¡Iris!” (39).

That the constructive relationship between Moncho and don Gregorio is framed in terms of student/teacher is not an irrelevant detail. The “teacher” as a profession maintains a strong link to the Second Republic; it almost serves as a metonymy for this political period given the general importance placed on education, the reforms of the educative system that the Republic desired to implement, and the lay impetus behind these changes.⁹³ In addition to being a symbolic allusion to the importance of (secular) education for the Republic, the figure of the “maestro” also serves as a reminder of the post-war Francoist crackdown on enemies of the new regime given that teachers, and those related to teachers, were among the first and most severely repressed recipients of Franco’s vindictive violence. In this sense, “La lengua” follows in the tradition of previous works that draw parallels between the “maestro” as a profession and the Republic as a political entity, both as the source of progress before the war and the target of postbellum oppression.⁹⁴

So strong is this connection that don Gregorio is immediately recognized for his Republican identity despite never professing his ideology in explicit terms. While López-Quiñones refers to this lack of overt politicking in the classroom as the teacher’s “neutralidad de la enseñanza” (*La guerra* 225), don Gregorio is not a neutral figure; his Republican credentials are both evident and essential. During a lesson on poetry, the teacher has the students read “Recuerdo Infantil” by Antonio Machado, a poem that gives reference to Cain and Abel thus foreshadowing the fraternal conflict that will envelope Spain. As a counterpoint to his brother Manuel Machado, a Nationalist figure, Antonio Machado perhaps

more than any other literary figure stands out and is celebrated as a symbol of the Republican cause.⁹⁵ Therefore, there can be no separating don Gregorio from his vocation and the Second Republic as a historico-political entity. In addition, if teachers “son las luces de la República,” (34) as Moncho’s father suggests, then don Gregorio shines the brightest as a model of what a teacher should be. He does not hit or raise his voice, yet he cares for, and commands the respect of, his pupils. Don Gregorio is not merely a good teacher; he is an idealized character that exemplifies the cultured, secular counterpoint to religious education. In the film version, even the casting serves to reinforce the virtuous image of the Republican; the well-respected actor Fernando Fernán Gómez brings instant credibility, likeability, and established political ties to the Left to the role of don Gregorio (García-Abad 242; López-Quiñones 225). Intelligent, patient, polite, honourable: these are the definitive qualities of don Gregorio. Moncho’s childhood naivety permits a perspective of absolutes that depicts don Gregorio in an infallible light, one that cannot be separated from his profession, nor his profession from its symbolic political identification. The maestro embodies the Republic as irreproachable, but ultimately betrayed and abandoned.

In *El lápiz*, Rivas again explores the notion of a Republican professional that is both flawless in character and representative of Spain’s democratic political past: Dr. Daniel Da Barca. Although Da Barca’s testimony is replaced by the fascist ex-guard Herbal’s account, the characterization of the Republican protagonist is neither negative nor antagonistic. In fact, as Claudia Jünke notes, Da Barca is represented as a character free of any ambivalence; he is “mythified” and even sanctified (115). In the painter’s sketch of the Pórtico de la Gloria, Daniel Da Barca takes the place of his biblical namesake, with all its connotations of bravery and righteousness. The Prophet Daniel’s survival in the lion’s den mirrors Da

Barca's own survival in the Nationalist prisons during and after the Civil War. The doctor demonstrates this characteristic courage and physical strength when he is detained after the outbreak of the war: "Cuando por fin se acercó a casa de su madre, se le echaron encima los cinco que formaban la patrulla y él se resistió como un jabalí. . . . El doctor Da Barca sangraba por la nariz, por la boca, por las orejas, pero no se rendía" (51-52). Even in captivity, the doctor refuses to allow his character to be broken; he reinforces his dignity by keeping up his physical appearance and personal hygiene. In contrast with the destitute faces of his fellow inmates, Da Barca is careful to always express self-respect through his appearance: "El doctor Da Barca no dejó de afeitarse cada día. Se lavaba metódicamente en el aguamanil y se miraba en un pequeño espejo con el cristal hendido en una línea que le partía el rostro. Se peinaba a diario como para un festivo. Y limpiaba los gastados zapatos, que tenían siempre el brillo de una foto sepia" (107). Even Da Barca's love life reflects his ennobled characterization. The eventual consummation of his marriage while still in captivity brings to light the doctor's virility, as the Sergeant in charge of supervising the pair reveals to Herbal, "¡Tres veces!, exclamó cuando volvió. Lástima de un agujero en la pared" (180). In contrast to common Nationalist propaganda that depicts Republicans as effeminate and weak, Da Barca constitutes the pinnacle of masculinity: a strong leader of men and a passionate lover of women.⁹⁶ Brave, intelligent, compassionate, loyal, strong: these are the defining characteristics of the doctor. Although the doctor's characterization through mythical allusion (Prophet Daniel and Christ, for example) is understood to be poetic and not literal, one cannot ignore how such hyperbole belongs to a fantasy-laden tale. Da Barca's almost god-like being does not suggest that he is a supernatural figure, but it does correspond to a fantasy nonetheless: the "fantasy" of a blameless victim against which one might compare the rightfully condemned Franco regime.

In the face of barbaric acts committed by the nationalists, Da Barca embodies the magnanimity of the Republic as a counterpoint.⁹⁷ Together with don Gregorio, the doctor exemplifies how Rivas appropriates the pre-Franco past to the post-Franco age: “El doctor Da Barca, culto, progresista, demócrata, humanista, y filántropo, se convierte en un representante de una tradición ‘recuperable’ (la del liberalismo moderado español)” (López-Quiñones, *La guerra* 73). Indeed, Rivas’s Republican protagonists stand out as the culmination of a nostalgic process that, to use Hutcheon’s phrase, “sanitizes as it selects” (“Irony” 195). That is, the more violent and extreme elements of Republican history are left absent in these works. These are the elements underlined by historians such as Stanley Payne in criticism of an irreproachable Republic. “Very early in the life of the new government,” Payne maintains, “Catholic churches and buildings became targets of arson and mob destruction in the famous *quema de conventos* of 11-12 May 1931, in which more than 100 buildings were torched and sacked in Madrid and several cities of the south and east, destroying also priceless libraries and art” (17).⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the heroes here do not burn churches, nor do they carry out any vigilante executions outside of the parameters of the law. They are not revolutionaries, but rather operate within the confines of the democratic system.⁹⁹ To this end, these works also omit the often deadly infighting between the more radical factions of the fractured Republican alliance: between anarchists and communists, and between Stalinist and non-Stalinist communist factions. That is, the internal purges on the left, as described in narratives such as George Orwell’s memoir *Homage to Catalonia* and Martínez de Pisón’s *Enterrar a los muertos*, are absent;¹⁰⁰ the Republican heroes in Rivas’s works are not partisan, but rather are unifying figures. The guards keeping watch over Da Barca, for example, are amazed by his ability to transcend division. “Anda con republicanos,” notes the Sergeant, “anarquistas, socialistas, comunistas, pero ¿qué carajo es

este tipo?” (49). Therefore, it is the ideological elements of the Republic that continue to resonate today that are given light in these works. In sum, Rivas has constructed two characters in agreement with a vision of historical recuperation that grants idealization to the anti-Francoist side, the Republic, due to the hegemonic anti-Francoist Spanish democracy of today.¹⁰¹ Don Gregorio and Daniel Da Barca constitute representatives of the Republic not necessarily as it was across the spectrum of the many leftist manifestations, but as the cultural hegemony in Spain desires for it to have been: the noble defender of democracy and reason in the face of the threat of fascism.

In the case of *El lápiz*, however, this definitive conclusion becomes problematic considering the narrative importance of Herbal, a former fascist guard. The significance of the story-teller's identity is imperative given that the work's pervasive nostalgia results from the explicit process of reconstruction and subsequent communication of the past. The act of telling the story becomes as important as the story being told. In “La lengua” the influence of the present, a defining aspect of nostalgia, is hidden; it constitutes a more traditional historical narrative in the sense that it is set in the period represented. On the other hand, *El lápiz* underlines the retrospective nature of the nostalgic characterization by placing Herbal's memorialistic story-telling in a brothel in present-day Spain. Of course, just as important as who retains narrative centrality is who does not. The journalist Sousa represents a disinterested present with regard to its past, a mainstream voice—much like “Javier Cercas” at the beginning of *Soldados*—whose stance on the war is one of indifference. “El personaje de Sousa,” explains Jünke, “marca así el momento en que nace una memoria despolitizada, netamente cultural, de la Guerra Civil” (118). Sousa's historical apathy, however, is countered by the subject of his interview: the inherently political figure of Da Barca, now celebrated as a returned exile, an old foe of the Franco regime. Their differences aside, the

meeting of Sousa and Da Barca constitutes a dialogue within the generally accepted mainstream culture. Nevertheless, from the second chapter on it is the perspective provided by Herbal that “colonize[s] the narrative point of view” (Harney 38). Though Da Barca’s character is still celebrated, the source of this idealization is at odds with the new hegemony. By understanding the “contemporary cultural hegemony” in terms of its sympathetic posture toward the enemies of the Franco regime, I am not denying the existence of contradictory thought, but rather simply recognizing what has been previously addressed as the visibility in artistic production of pro-Republican values (the success of writers such as Pío Moa notwithstanding). In addition, the initial dialogue between the reporter and the returned exile also frames the cultural hegemony established in the novel as one that denies place to Herbal and what Herbal represents. Therefore, while it is certain, as López-Quñones notes, that *El lápiz* demonstrates “una inversión de las hegemonías memorialísticas del régimen dictatorial anterior” (66), both in terms of an anti-Francoist idealization and a democratic lack of authoritative discourse, it is ironic that Herbal, a vestige of the “régimen dictatorial anterior,” drives the plot.

If Sousa and Da Barca belong to the mainstream, then Herbal and his interlocutor, Maria da Visitação, constitute a completely marginalized pair. Jessica A. Folkart explains that Herbal “is despicable from a contemporary, Democratic perspective because he is a Nationalist guard who colluded in heinous acts against prisoners of war” (301). In other words, not only are Herbal’s violent actions at odds with morally acceptable human conduct, they are also representative of a now taboo political entity. While Herbal is excluded from the socio-political centre for historical reasons, Maria inhabits the margins of society due to pressing concerns of present-day Europe, including Spain: race, nationality, and exploitation.

For being black, an illegal immigrant, and a prostitute, Maria represents another face outside of the accepted mainstream. In this case, as Folkart explains, the very act of migration points to a life lived on the periphery: “Maria has been transported from one marginalized space, her island of origin, to another, the house of prostitution outside the city” (311). This physical separation of the brothel from the city echoes the “outsider” status that Herbal and Maria exemplify with regard to contemporary Spanish society. And yet, it is this marginalized pair and not the more politically correct dialogue of Sousa and Da Barca that gives voice to the recovery of this definitive period of Spanish history.

Because nostalgia for the Republic is largely a collective enterprise, the product of a contemporary cultural hegemony, it is imperative that one’s reading of such nostalgia in *El lápiz* be mediated by the ironic centrality of Herbal and his historical dialogue from the margins. Although critics of the novel often address both Herbal’s surprising narrative role and the diametrically opposed characterization of history’s victims and victimizers, the ironic relationship between the two remains to be explored. That is, the elements of the novel favouring the Republican cause are justly identified but without recognition of any underlying irony. While Jünke states, for example, “Con la representación de la relación entre Herbal y Da Barca la novela enfoca el conflicto entre prisionero y carcelero, entre víctima y verdugo, entre impotencia y poder que está presentado aquí como conflicto entre los principios abstractos del bien y del mal” (115), I suggest that it is necessary to consider how Herbal’s identity as both representative of the “bad” side and the source of the tale might alter the novel’s interpretation. Similarly, while Tasende accurately states that *El lápiz* advocates for a notion of historical confrontation in which “hay que dar salida a todas esas voces reprimidas por el régimen franquista” (217), it is equally significant that the voice

employed to raise these issues is one that belonged to the Franco regime and was responsible for the repression of those who were previously silenced. In “La lengua,” don Gregorio is seen through the naive, apolitical eyes of Moncho. In contrast, Herbal is intrinsically political given his fascist past. It is a politics, however, that in the present exists largely, though perhaps not exclusively, in the periphery. That is, although support for Spain’s authoritarian past may not constitute a politics that has disappeared altogether, its presence is generally obliged to lie under the surface of the publicly acceptable political conventions, taboo in explicit expression. Therefore, while the patent sentimentality of “La lengua” gives rise to nostalgia without ambiguity, the play of narrative authority in *El lápiz* breaks with the expectations of congruity surrounding the story-teller and the story being told. The result is a form of idealization that is highly ironic, one that serves to call attention to the process of forming a nostalgic image. Because hegemony inherently belongs to mainstream culture, the reinforcement of such perspective via the dialogue between two “outsiders” invites scrutiny—due to the sense of incongruity—upon the homogeneity of memory.

In other words, one must be careful not to read Herbal’s participation in the nostalgic characterization of Da Barca as a kind of extra indicator of proof regarding the Republic’s ennobled status. The conclusion is not that the Republican hero enjoys a more favourable, objective depiction given that even the fascist guard recognizes his greatness, but rather the fact that even the fascist guard recognizes his greatness suggests that there exists a univocal, unchallenged approach to how the past is culturally represented. That Rivas makes a patent effort to provide an “outsider” perspective just to have this marginalized voice echo mainstream nostalgic sentiments begs the query: If even the voice of the fascist guard is called upon to recognize the greatness of the Republican figures and demonize the barbarity

of the Nationalist ones, then how open to polyphony is the collective memory of the Civil War? In other words, Rivas's text forces one to question how critical and introspective the nostalgic hegemony has been in its cultural manifestations. In this sense, *El lápiz* is an exploration of the way in which the individual is appropriated by the whole in terms of reconstructing the past. The point is not that Herbal has adjusted the anecdotes told in order to conform to any contemporary cultural sympathy toward his former enemies, but rather that his identity as a disagreeable vestige of a disagreeable past has been appropriated by the novel as the ironic means through which that sense of sympathy is conveyed. Therefore, in addition to the content of what is remembered, Herbal's narrative privilege obliges the active reader to contemplate and question the very act of memory as being a process that defines, and is defined by, hegemony. As Nichols explains, "Rivas no busca la reivindicación de los muertos republicanos de la Guerra Civil española sino que investiga la persistencia de la memoria e indaga la capacidad de acceder al pasado en la sociedad española contemporánea" (156). Although the presence of the painter's ghost suggests that the novel does in fact provide consideration for dead Republicans from the Civil War, Nichols's statement is accurate in its assessment of how *El lápiz* is as much about the nature of confrontation between past and present as it is about the past itself.

A significant characteristic of Rivas's novel, therefore, is the uneasy combination of idealized nostalgia for Da Barca, Marisa Mallo, the painter, and all those who embody the Republic, and a postmodern breakdown of absolutes highlighted by Herbal's narrative centrality, the blending of reality/fantasy, and an overall textual self-awareness. It is for this reason that I refer to this kind of depiction of the past as ironic nostalgia, a relationship explored in theory by Hutcheon:

In the postmodern, in other words, (and here is the source of the tension) nostalgia itself gets both called up, exploited, *and* ironized. This is a complicated (and postmodernly paradoxical) move that is both an ironizing of nostalgia itself, of the very urge to look backward for authenticity, and, at the same moment, a sometimes shameless invoking of the visceral power that attends the fulfilment of that urge. (italics in the original; “Irony” 205)

The desire for a cultural inheritance between contemporary democratic society and the Second Republic that has resulted in the latter’s many sympathetic literary portrayals, including Rivas’s previous work “La lengua,” is given an ironic twist. It is laid bare and, to use Hutcheon’s phrase, “exploited.” In a sense, therefore, *El lápiz* serves up a nostalgic vision of the past only to subvert it, questioning the creation of such an image.

Nevertheless, it would be erroneous to state that the irony inherent to Herbal’s characterization of Da Barca results in a complete disavowal of positive associations with the Republic. Indeed, the opposite is still true. The ironic source of nostalgia does not create ambivalence toward the Republic nor toward the rightful condemnation of its fascist opposition, but rather self-consciously points to how the motivations behind such criticism do give rise to an historical image based on an impossible standard. As Hutcheon also explains in *Irony’s Edge*, “Irony rarely involves a simple decoding of a single inverted message . . . it is more often a semantically complex process of relating, differentiating, and combining said and unsaid meaning—and doing so with some evaluative edge” (89). By indentifying an ironic component to the idyllic representation of Republican figures I am not maintaining that the opposite is true, that the novel is a critique of the Nationalist’s opponents in the war or that it in some way supports the Franco regime. In other words,

what is under scrutiny is not the Republic or even the nostalgic impulse itself, but rather the forced homogeneity of memory, the pervasive unquestioned painting of the Republic in utopic shades. In fact, the essence of irony as it pertains to nostalgia in *El lápiz* is that the novel at once sustains and destabilizes the hegemony surrounding historical discourse of the Civil War in literature, self-consciously pointing to the desire for a flawless opponent to the nation's fascist past.

To conclude this chapter I turn to Svetlana Boym's study *The future of Nostalgia* and her useful theories of "restorative nostalgia" and "reflective nostalgia" as a means by which I differentiate between the "straight" nostalgia of "La lengua" and the ironic nostalgia of *El lápiz*.¹⁰² Exploring post-Soviet cultural artefacts that evoke memory of the communist motherland, Boym engages with nostalgia by offering a "typology," as she puts it, that differentiates between the two aforementioned branches of longing based largely on their critical potential. Restorative nostalgia, Boym explains, focuses on "a return to the original stasis, to the prelapsarian moment. The past for the restorative nostalgic is a value for the present; the past is not a duration but a perfect snapshot. Moreover, the past is not supposed to reveal any signs of decay; it has to be freshly painted in its 'original image' and remain eternally young" (49). In the context of Spanish culture, restorative nostalgia equates to the previously cited concept of "Second Republic Prelapsarianism" and describes the idealization without ambiguity of don Gregorio in "La lengua." Restorative nostalgia is not nuanced, it does not offer more than one perspective; it even denies its nostalgic identity, preferring instead to consider its vision of the past "as truth and tradition" (Boym xviii). Because it does not recognize itself, restorative nostalgia lacks ambivalence and self-critique.

Reflective nostalgia, on the other hand, is more complex. It openly grants the “irrevocability of the past” and “suggests new flexibility, not the reestablishment of stasis. The focus here is not on recovery of what is perceived to be an absolute truth but on the meditation on history and passage of time” (Boym 49). Boym states that reflective nostalgia is pluralistic, giving voice to longing in both “individual and cultural memory” (49), thus underlining the problematic nature of a singular memorialistic discourse. As such, reflective nostalgia is inherently (self-)judicious. “Reflective nostalgia,” clarifies Boym, “can be ironic and humorous. It reveals that longing and critical thinking are not opposed to one another, as affective memories do not absolve one from compassion, judgement or critical reflection” (49-50). Stemming from the memories of a fascist guard, the portrayal of the Second Republic acquires an ironic edge that points to a restorative nostalgic reckoning in *El lápiz*. “Contrary to common sense,” Boym states, “irony is not opposed to nostalgia” (354). While irony is not opposed to nostalgia, it does function to create a self-aware nostalgia. The irony present in *El lápiz* does not erase any of the novel’s utopic dimensions, but it does call to attention the nature of nostalgic construction. That is, the reflective nostalgia of Rivas’s text seeks a connection with a previous anti-Francoist entity, the Second Republic, while at the same time calling into question a blind, univocal approach to the past. By granting the voice of idealization to Herbal, a fascist guard on the periphery of mainstream contemporary Spanish society, *El lápiz* turns on its head expected notions of hegemonic memory while still affirming that there exists a foundational association between the past and present.

“Reconocimiento” is a term Winter employs to describe a particular approach to history that is openly dialogic in nature, allowing for both stabilization and destabilization of the process (“Localizar” 29). He goes on to suggest that *El lápiz* and *Soldados*, in addition to

other works of the past decade, possess plotlines and narrative techniques that can be read as a “política poética de reconocimiento” (33). In both novels, the mere centrality of a fascist figure within the remembrance discourse serves to provoke a kind of ambivalence, a subtle ambivalence to be sure, that one would not expect in works that otherwise are openly sympathetic to the Republican cause, to a specific politics of memory that favours the war’s defeated. In *El lápiz*, the historical reality of the Spanish Civil War/Franco regime is juxtaposed against the unabashedly unreal: the ghostly inhabitations of memory. Similarly, the patent nostalgic characterization of the Republic is at once underlined and undermined, sustained and subverted, by Herbal’s marginalized status in society and privileged status within the text. *El lápiz* is bound by competing forces, seemingly contradictory forces, that strike a harmonious balance because of, and again this is paradoxical, the unresolvable tension of irony. It is this tension that makes it possible to say that the novel advocates for the importance of historical confrontation, specifically in recognition of the victims of Nationalist/Francoist transgressions, while acknowledging the mechanism of memory to be a process inherently mediated and limited by the present.

Chapter 4 – Fantasy and Postmemory in *Rabos de lagartija*

4.1 Marsé Returns to the Barrio in *Rabos de lagartija*

In her previously cited book on “metamemory” texts of contemporary Spanish narrative, Ferrán addresses the continued affect of the Civil War and subsequent Franco regime across generations as memory passes from being a function of direct exposure to one of inherited and mediated sources: “New generations of Spaniards have had to come to terms with such experiences of postmemory, of inheriting a devastating memory of a civil war, postwar repression, and long dictatorship that they have not necessarily lived, but that haunt their lives in the voices and echoes, in the fears and recollections of their parents’ and grandparents’ generations” (231). Postmemory—the term coined by Marianne Hirsch in reference to the legacy of Holocaust trauma for the descendents of its victims, as mentioned in the Introduction—is employed here by Ferrán to describe the cultural and literary production of the so-called “generación de los nietos” in the specific context of post-Franco Spain.¹⁰³ Because of the temporal distance between the turbulent era in question and the present at the turn of the millennium, this notion certainly resonates with the memory narratives of my study. The relevance of novelistic questioning with regard to how history is recovered and communicated in the present is understood in the works of Cercas, Prado and Rivas because their knowledge of the Civil War is not a matter of experience, but rather of representation due to their generational distance from the conflict. In addition, even their personal familiarity with the Franco regime is limited to adolescence, by which time the most repressive years had already passed. Given that this active recovery of a past-not-lived is at the heart of my analysis, Juan Marsé’s first novel of the twenty-first century, *Rabos de lagartija*, may seem to be an odd fit. Born in 1933, three years before the military uprising,

the Catalan writer does not belong to the “new generations of Spaniards”—as Ferrán puts it, exemplified by the other three—but rather is of the “parents’ and grandparents’ generations” that constitute the source of any inherited memory. Nevertheless, in this chapter I will underline how *Rabos* demonstrates a contemporary approach to the immediate postbellum period in line with the self-conscious poetics of historical recuperation that characterize the post-transition, postmodern paradigm by playing with the ironic relationship between reality and fantasy. As a fitting conclusion to this study, I will also explore how *Rabos* in fact gives place to a fictionalization/personification of postmemory—the memory of Cercas, Prado, and Rivas—through the unborn, foetal perspective of its narrator.

The unique nature of the narrator’s focalization becomes evident from the opening paragraph of the novel as he reveals that his perception of the events to be told originates from the oneiric space of his mother’s womb: “Mis padres me engendraron hace muchos años, pero en este momento no tendré más de tres o cuatro meses. Todo está ocurriendo en un sueño congelado en la placenta de la memoria, en un tiempo suspendido que engendró la caraba de mascaradas públicas e infortunios privados, atropellados y desventuras, calabozos y hierros” (9). It is the summer of 1945; the recently dropped atomic bomb, signalling the end of the war in the Pacific and ushering in the nuclear age, is but a backdrop to the hunger and oppression of postwar Barcelona, the vestiges of Spain’s own defining conflict. The foetal voice is that of the future Víctor Bartra Junior. His tale revolves around his older brother David Bartra, his pregnant mother Rosa (la pelirroja), and their run-ins with Inspector Galván. Galván is assigned to track down David’s father Victor—a fugitive, thanks to his support for the Republican cause, that has abandoned the family—though regular visits to the Bartra household appear to be more a reflection of the inspector’s

affection for Rosa than for a desire to find her missing husband. Unable to work in her old profession as a teacher after the war, Rosa supports the family with meagre wages as a seamstress.¹⁰⁴ Rosa is pregnant and unwell; the gifts of coffee and sugar from Galván are welcome in the harsh economic climate. Despite the nature of their relationship, there is little hostility as Galván's concern for *la pelirroja* seems genuine. The Inspector is less enamoured with David, however. A combative dynamic is established between the two of them from the beginning of the novel culminating in the death of Chispa, David's long-suffering dog, at the hands of the policeman. For Galván, he has provided a service to the family by ending the stress the dog caused Rosa; for David, this was an act of murder.

At the centre of the narrator's tale is the fourteen year old brother David. When not antagonizing Galván, the young Bartra spends his time with Paulino in the gully behind their house looking for lizard tails, the imaginary cure for his friend's haemorrhoids, or in the *Delicias* cinema where Paulino solicits David's participation in his homosexual exploration. Paulino's sexual abuse at the hands of his uncle, a police officer and ex-legionnaire, provides a side-story to the novel's main plot and is symbolic of the violence and hypocrisy of the new regime. Near the end of the novel Paulino shoots his uncle in the backside—possibly by accident, possibly on purpose—and he is subsequently sent to reform school.

David's world is split between the often blurred realms of reality and fantasy. The relationships established between David and his friend Paulino, his mother, and the Inspector are no more real to him than those he maintains with the spectral figures of his past and imagination: Juan, his older brother killed in the war; his absent father; the RAF pilot, Bryan O'Flynn, from the poster that hangs on his wall; his dog Chispa (post-mortem); and his unborn brother, Víctor. It is this latter fraternal dialogue that shapes much of the narrator's

perspective as he takes in and processes that which he cannot see. Although the focalization of Víctor's account is situated in utero, he tells his story from the narrative present years later, reflecting on his family's postbellum struggles, his mother's death during childbirth, his subsequent adoption by relatives (a touch of autobiography included by Marsé), and, as I will discuss further, the eventual but premature death of his older brother David.¹⁰⁵

Of the four novels in this study, *Rabos* is without a doubt the least political and most personal take on the imperative of historical memory. To state that the personal is given precedence, however, does not mean that it supersedes the political. A novel of historical memory concerning a latent civil war and its repressive aftermath is inherently political; but, the reality of this politically charged atmosphere is presented in *Rabos* as it concerns the individual and not parties, policies, and/or ideologies. The politics of memory here are implicit, clearly significant but not a matter of named political implication. In contrast to *Mala gente*'s unabashed judgement of the crimes of the Franco regime, the (ironic) nostalgia toward the Republican hero in *El lápiz*, and the importance of giving voice to the silenced Republican in *Soldados*, Marsé's novel concerns the general post-war struggle to survive for a family on the losing side of the conflict while putting aside issues of demonized culpability and idealized, heroic resistance. Herzberger's quote that was so pertinent to the politics of memory in *Mala gente*, "For those wishing to evoke the past in post-Francoist Spain, for those seeking truth, perhaps the antonym of forgetting was not remembering, but justice" ("Spanishness" 16), is simply inapplicable to the work of Marsé. Nevertheless, without any explicit treatise on the injustices of Franco's new regime and its role in the hardships facing the family, one still senses the omnipresent shadow of the dictatorship touching every aspect of daily life in the barrio. The narrator's reconstructed image of his mother is perhaps the

most significant reflection of the novel's treatment of post-war reality: "El grávido perfil de su cara y de su cuerpo, su postura reflexiva y triston, vista a contraluz en esta cocina oscura y estrecha como un túnel, es la imagen más viva y preferida que guardo de la pobreza cotidiana y puntual a la que ella debió enfrentarse, la imagen más cabal y persistente entre todas las que he ido remendado y reconstruyendo en la memoria" (170). Without mentioning Franco, Nationalists, or Republicans, this quote does point to the fact that *Rabos* is about the hunger, poverty, and oppression in Barcelona as experienced by the war's losers. In this sense, the "losers" are those who fought against the victorious Nationalists, but also all who were adversely affected by the chaotic and violent post-war period. As William M. Sherzer states, "Marsé siempre se ha identificado con los vencidos de su sociedad" (36) and the most common "vencidos" depicted in his work are those of the Civil War and Franco regime.

This is the Barcelona of Marsé's own childhood, the Barcelona and its inhabitants that form the backdrop to many of his novels. That is, the combined struggle against poverty and the dictatorship shaped his early life experiences and provided a constant source for his novelistic settings.¹⁰⁶ Marsé's father, for example, was imprisoned "debido a su actividad política, como miembro de Esquerra Republicana y más tarde del PSUC" (Sherzer 19), forcing the thirteen year old future author to drop out of school and work in a jewellery shop.¹⁰⁷ By the mid fifties Marsé was publishing short-stories and in 1960 he published his first novel, *Encerrados con un solo juguete*, which was listed as a finalist for the Biblioteca Breve prize, a prize he eventually won in 1965 for his novel *Últimas tardes con Teresa*.¹⁰⁸ This first novel is a clear antecedent to *Rabos* in that it too focuses not on the politics but rather the daily realities of the post-war struggle. As Sherzer explains of Marsé's debut: "No se trata tanto de los problemas políticos de la posguerra como de los problemas personales

que resultaron de esa posguerra . . . y está escrita en un estilo en el que falta la ironía y el sarcasmo” (23). With the exception of the lack of irony and sarcasm, both found in abundance in *Rabos*, this commentary would be an accurate assessment of the novel in question, published almost forty years after *Encerrados*. It appears that for Marsé, Spain’s post-war political reality was at once of fundamental importance, as evidenced by his family connection to the left and his literary identification with the politically and socially oppressed, and tempered by an aversion to becoming entrenched within the discourse of absolutes. This ambivalence is demonstrated by the fact that while in Paris, where he wrote *Últimas*, Marsé became a member of Communist Party, yet he has never been militant. As Kwang-Hee Kim postulates, “Para Marsé, detrás de cada ideología política no hay nada más que fanatismo” (*El cine* 154). In his most complex novel, *Si te dicen que caí*—originally published in 1973 in Mexico, due to Spanish censorship, and eventually published in Spain in 1976 following Franco’s death—Marsé follows *Encerrados* by again placing the individual over the ideological in the chaos of postwar Barcelona. Fantasy laden, told in memorialistic flashbacks, and eschewing political absolutes, *Si te dicen* is perhaps the closest antecedent to *Rabos* and will provide a useful point of comparison in this chapter given that it was published almost 30 years before the more contemporary novel.

Marsé’s demonstrates a patent affinity for representing often painful historical realities through the exploration of how human beings move and interact within their particular social situations. That is, he favours the exploration of conflict on a personal level over the open confrontation of named political entities. This constitutes an ethicopolitical response to memory based on giving visibility to the place of the individual within the collective. In an interview with Juan Cruz, published on *El País.com*, Marsé explicitly states

that “[l]a memoria es el instrumento más importante que tiene un escritor.” With this quote he is referring to the life experiences that have shaped his narratives, but also to the responsibility of the writer in general to keep alive that which should not be forgotten. In Marsé’s case, post-war dictatorship, the former overlaps with the latter; personal experience gives rise to an obligation to address socio-political concerns through narrative channels. Of course, it is pertinent to clarify once again that while the works of Marsé tend toward the personal over the overtly political, issues of war, poverty, oppression, violence, and class, and how they are remembered are inherently political within Francoist and post-Franco Spain. Works such as *Encerrados*, *Si te dicen*, *La muchacha de las bragas de oro* (1978)—a novel highlighting revisionist history in which an ex-Falangist writer attempts to sanitize his past in accordance with the new political hegemony—and *Rabos* may not necessarily demonize nor idealize certain historical entities, but neither do they suggest that such history is irrelevant or somehow objectively neutral (as if such a classification were possible).

Though a writer like Prado demonstrates a much clearer agenda than Marsé with regard to recovering the past, both advocate in favour of memory and in opposition to silence. Referring to the Catalan writer’s objection to the collective amnesia of the transition, for example, Juan Rodríguez explains that the pact of silence “como a tantos otros vencidos, irrita a Marsé y a su criatura, pues no sólo condiciona y determina el devenir del proceso, sino que constituye en sí mismo un menosprecio de la memoria de quienes cayeron en la lucha por la libertad” (“Juan Marsé” 160). Returning to *Rabos*, despite the lack of concrete references to Franco, one of the four epigraphs quoted by Marsé, the one by José Martí, suggests that the close relationship between memory and writing serves to draw attention to the oppressors and the oppressed; in the words of the Cuban poet: “Del tirano di todo, di más” (7).

As mentioned in the introduction to *El lápiz*, in this chapter I will examine the association of the realm of fantasy with the active construction of memory—that is, postmemory—and the representation of history in *Rabos*. That is, along with the focus on the war's personal toll, the novel in question is also consistent with Marsé's work at large in terms of its almost seamless blending of the real and unreal. "Se mezcla, pues, la realidad y la fantasía, lo histórico y lo fabuloso ya en la misma farmacopea del autor," concludes Alexander Fidora, "no hay distinción, a mi parecer, en la memoria que Marsé presenta en sus escritos" (25). Paradoxically, however, such a blurring of what is objectively historical with that which results from fable and fantasy does not constitute a breakdown of any notion of reality, but rather there appears to be a kind of harmony in the works of Marsé that sees the unreal as an integral part of the real. Despite his previous statement noting the pervasive fantasy in Marsé's work, Fidora too contends, "Con la novelística de Juan Marsé, poseemos un fidedigno documento de la situación de la Barcelona de la posguerra" (26). Such is the nature of many of Marsé's novels, a "reliable document" of post-war Barcelona that is replete with images, scenes, and events that are unabashedly "unreal." As Álvaro Fernández summarizes, Marsé's literary production is based on a conjunction of distinct "languages" and genres that breakdown, fragment, and obfuscate the truth by adorning it in the easily recognizable robes of fiction. Nevertheless, one reads Marsé as a realist writer and this is not an error of comprehension; his works are invariably anchored in a concrete reality. They reference an identifiable world—typically, Barcelona during the forties—alongside the identifiable fiction—that is, the realm of fantasy—so that they always appear to present a world as believable and real as Galdós's Madrid (185). As I will demonstrate in this chapter, it is not an error to read *Rabos* as realist fiction either. The chronotope of post-war Barcelona under Francoist rule is not an irrelevant setting, but rather the essential subject of

the memorialistic imperative. The irony of *Rabos* is how the ghostly presences of David's fantasy world and the dream-like narrative perspective of the foetus are presented as the channels through which we approach this real past. Because of its own spectral beings, *Si te dicen* again provides a notable antecedent to *Rabos*. In fact, because *Rabos* shares so much with previous works by Marsé in terms of setting and content, then the following questions must be posed: Is *Rabos* merely another tale of post-war struggle for the working class (also the "losing" class) in Barcelona, the retelling of the same material, published at the turn of the millennium but with no discernable difference from its predecessors? And, if there is a difference, how does the novel relate to its time of its publication and other contemporary works?

Putting aside the issue of whether or not a particular narrative can ever be merely a retelling of a previous work (highly unlikely), it is my contention that *Rabos* is not a "broken record" repeating some kind of unchanging marseano prose, but rather is intimately linked to its "present" at the turn of the millennium. In this sense I am following Mainer's lead on both questions posed earlier. "*Rabos de lagartija* . . .," he states, "es la consecuencia de repensar el mismo material narrativo a la luz de ciertos desengaños y, sobre todo, del paso inexorable del tiempo. A fin de cuentas, Marsé siempre ha sido fiel a las consecuencias estéticas del principio de indeterminación de Werner Heisenberg: la presencia del observador altera los datos del fenómeno observado" (102). As Mainer suggests, *Rabos* is an original work influenced by its socio-cultural climate that can be studied in dialogue with other novels from the same period in spite of any generational gap. The preeminence of the past over the present, or vice versa, depends largely upon the specific historical context surrounding the clash of eras; because the past and present are mutually beneficial, the

context of that present inevitably alters the perception of its past (Aguilar Fernández, *Memoria* 56). The point is, while it is certain that *Rabos* demonstrates a clear inheritance to works such as *Si te dicen*, it is also inextricably bonded to the matrix of contemporary Spanish historical fiction in general and to the postmemory of the works of Cercas, Prado, and Rivas in particular. How *Rabos* maintains a significant place within Marsé's literary tradition, while still being read in dialogue with the newer generations of writers, is best viewed by first highlighting the parallel aspects of *Si te dicen* before moving on to exploring how those same elements play out in *Rabos*. That is, to understand the trajectory from the former to the latter is to understand how Marsé views the same barrio but from different eyes, from a perspective that reflects the reality of historical recuperation in Spain at the new millennium.

The demythification of anti-Francoist resistance and the coexistence of memory and fantasy with regard to 1940s Barcelona constitute clear points of similarity between *Rabos* and *Si te dicen que caí*, despite the almost thirty years between their dates of publication. Like *Rabos*, the earlier novel constitutes “la crónica de una época atroz . . . la memoria traspasada de la mente al escrito” (Fidora 34). In addition to the relationship between the author's own memory and its manifestation within the fictional realm, *Si te dicen* also runs parallel to *Rabos* in that memory itself is also a central thematic element to that which is represented. As Fidora puts it, memory is its “hilo conductor” (34). The plot of the novel is revealed through flashbacks, mostly by Sarnita telling the story of his friend from the barrio, Java, thirty years later, but also by others, including members of a group of maquis. Adding more layers of textual richness are the many aventis—tales told by the boys of the barrio that mix historical reality with fantasy, sex, and figures of their own popular culture/mythology—

that populate the various analeptic narratives. As Kim notes, this crossing of flashback and storytelling, skilfully woven together by Marsé, creates a novelistic environment in which there exists a sensation of ambiguity and confusion that is constantly building (*El cine* 62). The telling of *aventis* is a means by which the boys simultaneously approach and escape the miserable conditions of their post-war reality, working through their individual traumas by creating a collective front through narrative.

Like the Bartra family in *Rabos*, the inhabitants of the barrio in *Si te dicen* are faced with hunger, disease, violence, and oppression. Therefore, the title—*Si te dice que caí*—imbues the novel with a scathing sense of irony given that it is taken from the lyrics of the Falange's hymn "Cara al sol." "Como se puede apreciar," explains Kim, "su letra, cargada de sentido patriótico, infunde una honda esperanza en un futuro victorioso. Sin embargo, lo que se percibe en la novela no es más que miseria, opresión y humillación; una realidad donde no cabe sino la desesperanza próxima al fatalismo" (*El cine* 61). Nevertheless, criticism of the nationalist discourse of victory during this time of hardship through the ironic appropriation of the hymn's lyrics does not give place to a hierarchy of political value-judgements and absolutes. Like the flawed Republican father in *Rabos*, as I will demonstrate, the *maquis* in *Si te dicen* play the part of resistance to the regime though, again like in *Rabos*, they are far from heroic figures.¹⁰⁹ Although the *maquis* rationalize their actions under the guise of justified guerrilla warfare, their tactics come across as being merely criminal. Speaking to the demythification of the *maquis* and the political tone of the novel in general, Kim declares,

En *Si te dicen que caí* las actividades de los *maquis* durante la posguerra están lejos de ser consideradas actos propios de resistencia o subversión contra el régimen

franquista, más bien todo lo contrario. Se trata de acciones sustancialmente delictivas. . . . Lo que predomina es la intención de analizar los hechos pero desde la neutralidad. Si la novela está repleta de contenido político es porque la época también lo estaba. (“La desmitificación” 186)

As I have put forth, Kim’s work on the breakdown of anti-Francoist myth creation in Marsé’s historical fiction provides essential analysis of the thematic bridge between the novel in question in this study and its antecedents.¹¹⁰ Although I am in agreement with Kim’s assessment of how Marsé favours giving consideration to the personal cost of war over the overtly political, a fact exemplified by the lack of idealization of the maquis in *Si te dicen*, the term “neutrality” must only be taken to mean the absence of a good/evil dichotomy. This is a fundamental distinction. The irony established by the juxtaposition of the Falangist hymn and the misery of the barrio is inconsistent with a notion of neutrality that is above identification with any group or individual. It is without doubt that Marsé identifies with the “losers,” thus providing voice to those outside the power structure (the boys of the barrio in *Si te dicen* and the Bartra family in *Rabos*) without succumbing to politically motivated idealization.

The fantastic elements in these two novels operate in support of their marginalized protagonists. The spectral realm allows for the dead, missing, or otherwise excluded to become present again. Their memory is kept alive as they return to haunt the space from which they have been removed. For the boys of the barrio in *Si te dicen*, the ghosts, monsters, and mythological heroes of film and comics that inhabit their *aventis* serve to preserve a collective memory that is their own, belonging outside the “official discourse” of “official reality” under the regime. “[T]he barrio succeeds in keeping popular memory

alive,” explains Labanyi “only in the form of dispersed, discontinuous, phantasmatic fragments” (“History” 67). Indeed, the simulacra of film (and other visual arts such as photos and comics), so central to life in the barrio, are appropriated by the boys alongside the haunting of their ghost stories as they create and tell their *aventis*, tales that view history through the lens of their own untouchable mythology.¹¹¹ That is, a spirit cannot be suppressed as it has no physical, tangible reality; this mythical world exists outside the censored realm of history. Labanyi reveals that the use of mythical elements to conceal the narrative treatment of a particular historical reality is characteristic of certain novels of the later years of the Franco regime. Referring to three of these novels, including *Si te dicen*, she states that “what matters is the suppressed historical reality that makes its presence felt beneath the surface mythifications of the text” (178).¹¹² The barrio is replete with such mythology as the boys conjure up ghosts, monsters, and other fantasies that are their own, outside the power of those to whom they are subjugated. In both *Si te dicen* and *Rabos*, fantasy creates a world of freedom within a world that largely goes without. Where I draw the distinction between the two works is how fantasy and memory interrelate. While make-believe tales are part of the recollections told in *Si te dicen*, imagination is understood to be a constituent element of memory in *Rabos*, a part of how one “remembers” and processes an unseen past.

4.2 David’s Spectral World

The world recreated by the narrator centres on the reality experienced by his older brother David, a seamless integration of alternative spaces populated both by figures of flesh and blood and the spirits of the dead, disappeared, those that have never existed, and the one that has yet to exist (the narrator himself). Inherent to the dynamic established between these

two realms is the lack of combativeness. That is, fantasy does not compete with the more identifiably real. Instead, there exists a kind of ambivalence, which according to Iris Zavala gives place to both contiguity and coexistence (121). The irony of the ambivalent approach to alternative realities that Marsé has crafted is that his protagonist and source of imagination, David, is preoccupied with uncovering and relating what he understands to be an unambiguous and authentic truth. Of course, irony too is a figure of ambivalence, eschewing a one-over-the-other appreciation of meaning in favour of granting multiple, often contradictory, notions of significance (Zavala 147). Walker too addresses the interconnectivity between fantasy and irony with regard to how their shared propensity to open up alternative spaces results in subversive potential: "Fantasy and irony, as narrative devices, have several elements in common. Both point to a contrast between different truths or realities, irony by causing a revision of ostensible statements or events, and fantasy by imagining alternative patterns or scripts by which life may be conducted" (29). In *Rabos*, fantasy and irony are not only both present, but also mutually influential. The importance of revealing truth is manifested on the textual level, David's desire to "get the story straight," as well as on the extra-textual level, the novel as an account of post-war Barcelona. Nevertheless, the irony of this imperative on both levels is that an alternative to what is regarded as reality, stemming from David's fantasy world, becomes part of the means by which that reality is expressed. Continuing the theme of this study, the unreal is again being promoted as the vehicle for addressing a specific reality. The ambivalence of irony denies an antagonistic relationship between reality and fantasy, thus allowing David's alternative perspective, one that gives voice to otherwise silenced figures, to participate in the dialogue concerning truth despite, and again herein lies the irony, David's own insistence on the facts.

The nature of David's fantasy world brings me back to the ghost as introduced in the prologue to chapters three and four where I traced the identity of the spectre as the return of history's losers, excluded from any official discourse (Derrida, Gordon) that is manifested in Spanish narrative as the apparition of the victims of the Civil War and Francoist oppression (Labanyi). Moreiras Menor follows Labanyi's recognition of the "haunting" of the past in contemporary Spanish culture, stating, "El presente siempre está tamizado, así, por la presencia más o menos desvanecida de una figura espectral que se muestra en los intersticios de los relatos, en sus márgenes o pliegues, actuando, interviniendo en el modo en que el presente es experimentado" (16). While the spectral figure is inherently marginalized due to its definitive absence, in the case of *Rabos* the ghosts are not found in the gaps, folds, or peripheries, but rather occupy a space that is "front and centre." If contemporary Spain is continually haunted by the omnipresent shadow of its past, in *Rabos* the ghosts take explicit forms that at once populate the previously mentioned alternative reality and are able to give presence and voice to the absent losers of this particular era. This is the same dynamic explored in *Si te dicen* as the ghost stories of the boys in the barrio served to preserve their own memories; the alternate realities of the *aventis* acted as counter-discourses to the controlled discourse of "official" reality under the regime.

David's fantasy world is notably insular, pertaining almost exclusively to his family. Although he appears to be an only child to outsiders, Inspector Galván's interrogation of Rosa reveals that David is the middle child of three sons: past, present, and future. When Galván notes that he thought David was the only son, Rosa explains, "Hay dos más (uno me lo matasteis en un bombardeo, piensa seguramente, y el otro está al llegar, espero que vivito y coleando)" (45). The younger brother is, of course, the narrator, whom I will cover in

more detail in the following section in which I will discuss his embodiment of postmemory. Killed in the bombing of Barcelona during the war, Juan Bartra (the eldest brother) becomes the first spectral figure to visit David in the novel. Juan represents the victims of the war that, due to death, have no carnality in the present, thus his appearance conforms to the suggestion that haunting allows for a return of those that have been excluded. In fact, Juan's appearance itself—that is, his actual physical description—is also notable:

Juan se sienta a horcajadas en la silla con los brazos colgando del respaldo, frente a la cama de David. Tiene la cabeza vendada y el pantalón desgarrado deja ver la pierna cercenada por debajo de la rodilla, aunque en el hueso astillado no hay ni rastro de sangre. Su bufanda marrón y sus ropas de abrigo conservan todavía el polvo rojizo del edificio que se le vino encima enterito el mediodía de un lejano 17 de marzo, pero él no aparenta los años que tenía entonces, sino los que tendría hoy, unos veinte. (54)

Although his blood has dried up and he has aged, the unchanging wound and other permanent traces of the bombing serve to underline the brutal violence of the war even as time passes. When Juan is leaving, David ironically states, “Y de paso sacúdete el polvo que pareces un fantasma. ¿O es que los fantasmas no se cepillan la ropa?” (57). The dust, however, is part of the spectre's eternal state, a constant reminder, like the wound, that he is the victim of another time. Because Juan is not a tangible being of flesh and blood, he belongs to the realm of the past, not the present. “The specter *appears* to present itself during a visitation,” explains Derrida, “One represents it to oneself, but it is not present, itself, in flesh and blood. This non-presence of the specter demands that one take its times and its history into consideration, the singularity of its temporality or of its historicity” (*italics in the original*; 126). The singularity of Juan's time is expressed in his wounds; his

return to the present signals not the reintegration of a fallen figure, but rather serves as a reminder of a specific loser of the war: the dead.

Emblematic of another of the war's losers, the disappeared Republican, is David's father Víctor senior. Fleeing in the middle of the night, supposedly being wounded in the buttocks in the process, Víctor is not a victim through death, but rather through political oppression resulting in his absence, consequently making victims of the family as well.¹¹³ Though not necessarily dead, he nonetheless only survives in the novel through his son's world of fantasy. Hunting for lizard tails in the gully with Paulino, David begins to think about his father thus prompting the elder Bartra to materialize. He has the physical appearance of someone in hiding and is bleeding from a tear in the seat of his pants: "Con barba de varios días y ojos amarillos, la colilla de Chester apagada en la comisura sonriente y la botella de coñac en el sobaco, papá se agacha sobre el turbio estiaje desplegando un pañuelo manchado de sangre" (76-77). Despite the passage of time between Víctor's escape and his apparition in the gully, the wound is fresh and still bleeding. Like the image of his fallen son Juan, the father's state of being does not change as he is trapped in his exact moment of loss. David, however, does age and change; the distinction forces a clear contradiction between the world as it was, and the world as it is and is becoming. Indeed, it is a particular change that prompts the apparition of Víctor senior. David's fantastical conceptualization of his father comes about in response to the introduction of Galván to the family dynamic. That is, it is precisely the Inspector's search for Víctor that causes the fugitive to appear to his son. David views Galván as the enemy; not only is he a policeman looking for the boy's condemned father, but he also shows too much affection for Rosa, suggesting that the Inspector is both responsible for, and taking advantage of, the paternal

absence within the struggling family. For his part, Víctor articulates a desire to set the record straight regarding his need to flee, stating that his escape was a selfless act motivated not by fear of persecution, but rather the well-being of his wife and family: “No escapé por temor a eso. Ni por salvarme yo, ni por salvar a unos compañeros o algunos papeles comprometedores. No me rajé el trasero como un cerdo por miedo a que me pillaran, añade con voz fugitiva. . . . No abandoné a tu madre por nada de eso. Lo hice porque la quería mucho. Y aún la quiero” (77-78). In the face of the menacing intruder (Galván), David has “brought back” his father as a counterpoint.

Nevertheless, Víctor Bartra’s characterization does not benefit from the sanitizing freedom of fantasy. Despite his absence, supposedly due to clandestine activities, David’s father is not a mythologized figure, idealized as a martyr for the cause. He is a drunk, filthy from living in hiding, and bleeding from his almost comically pathetic wound. From the beginning of the novel there appears to be a disconnect between the valiant efforts of Rosa and those of her downtrodden, missing husband. In interviews with Galván, the Bartras’ neighbours refer to Víctor as a “sinvergüenza” and “malparido,” adding that “Cuando una le vuelve la espalda, lo primero que hace este hombre es mirarte el culo” (25). Of course gossip within the community, particularly during police questioning, cannot be considered as an accurate assessment of character. It does, however, introduce the missing father to the novel in a way that facilitates the later breakdown of the image of a heroic freedom fighter, forced to abandon his family in support of the resistance. Víctor Bartra is not the noble loser of an unjust war fighting “the good fight” for the Republic in hiding. He is merely a loser, a victim of an unjust war. Instead of being the praised defender of ideals in the face of tyranny, David’s father is nothing more than a flawed human being in the wretched hunger

and oppression of 1940s Spain under Franco. Víctor himself simultaneously plays with and destabilizes any notion of bravery in the face of political persecution when he responds with heavy irony to David's concern that his wound will get infected: "Tonterías. La sangre derramada por la patria no se infecta jamás" (78). This sense of ambivalence becomes even clearer as he ironically contradicts any illusion of being a freedom fighter by connecting his leftist ideology not to socialist/communist ideals, but rather to a thirst for vodka. Stating that a broken bottle of the Russian liquor would have been a more appropriate source of his wound than the can of sardines that cut him, Víctor tells David: "Hombre, en algo deben basarse los de la Brigada Social para decir que soy un bolchevique fiel a mis ideales. . . . Je je" (80). As López-Quñones explains, in *Rabos* "la idealización o recuerdo del pasado se hacen desde una conciencia irónica sobre los mecanismo narrativos de la memoria. . . . En toda la obra de este autor, conviven dos impulsos: uno que idealiza el bando republicano y la resistencia anti-franquista, y otro que ironiza y desinfla dicha idealización" (277). Like the ironic voice of nostalgia for the Republic in *El lápiz* (due to its fascist source), the impulse to idealize anti-Francoist elements of history in *Rabos* is tempered. Here, the humanization of Víctor Bartra—ironic considering his lack of carnal presence—takes the place of what one might expect to be the image created by his son: that of a mythologized hero.

That is not to say that David's world is devoid of heroic figures. The RAF pilot Bryan O'Flynn from the poster hanging on the boy's wall takes "life" as the valiant counterpart to the drunken father. In an interview with Jordi Gracia and Marcos Laurel, Marsé speaks to the need for a boyhood idol, taken from his own experiences as a child, and how the myth creation behind the fantasy of O'Flynn responds to the demythification of Víctor. Referring first to the father he states, "Es un caradura. Se trataba de desmitificar al

personaje. Lo que pasa es que al mismo tiempo me sale otro, que es el piloto de la RAF. Tiene que haber un héroe en la adolescencia, parece casi una fatalidad. Este personaje pertenece a mi mitología personal” (52). As the novel progresses, these two spectral entities engage one another, competing over an accepted version of their supposedly shared past—including relationships with Rosa—and forcing a comparison in the eyes of their young creator. David desperately wants to venerate his father but the elder Bartra falls short of the standard set by the idolized pilot, a fact that is exemplified by the boy’s shame regarding the nature of Víctor’s wound:

Lo único que está en su sitio es el tajo en la nalga. Es un duro golpe comparar su lamentable aspecto con el del piloto irlandés de sus sueños, pero David se muerde la lengua y no dice nada, piensa solamente que si por lo menos papá pudiera presumir de otra clase de herida en otra parte del cuerpo, si por ejemplo llevara un vendaje en la frente, o el brazo en cabestrillo con su propio foulard, o un parche de cuero negro en el ojo, tal vez aún habría alguna posibilidad de mantener cierto decoro . . .” (276)

Although the poster shows the pilot’s spitfire going down in flames having been hit by the Luftwaffe and Víctor Bartra is a missing fugitive on the run from Franco’s police, only the father represents the absent loser given presence through the power of fantasy. O’Flynn is not a loser, but rather stands a symbol of Europe’s defeat of Hitler, what the pilot calls “nuestra gran victoria sobre el fascismo” (278). This is a particularly bitter point of distinction between the two men as the Republic was unable to achieve its own victory over Franco, thus leading to the family’s present predicament, and the eventual victory over fascism in Europe did not result in Franco’s fall as many Republicans had anticipated. Therefore, the pilot not only personifies the hero that David’s father is not on an individual

level, he also provides a successful contrast to Víctor's losing cause. It is worth stating that with this fantastic conflict, Marsé has not merely sacrificed the nostalgic reverence of one cause (the Republic) for another (Allies during WWII), but rather the mythical persona of the pilot is employed to underline the lack of idealization of the father and myth-creation behind the anti-Francoist cause he represents.

Much of the scholarly criticism on *Rabos* tends to focus on this relationship between the father, the Republic, and the contemporary culture's nostalgia for the latter. López-Quiñones's previously cited statement that Marsé's work often involves the impulse to ironize or deflate such idealization is certainly a pertinent commentary for this particular novel. "La figura del padre, del luchador por las libertades," explains Marsé in the aforementioned interview with Gracia and Laurel, "se ha convertido en una especie de guñapo sanguinolento. Esa mitificación que había antes (en *Un día volveré* y en otras novelas) acerca de esto, en *Rabos* no la hay. . . . En *Rabos de lagartija* ya lo convierto en un personaje grotesco" (51-52). In her article "La desmitificación de los tópicos sociales de la posguerra en la novelística de Juan Marsé," Kim summarizes that the demythification of popular heroes, a predominant theme in novels by the Catalan writer, once again is apparent in *Rabos*. The distinction between this and the previous works, however, is that *Rabos* drives this notion exclusively through one individual character: Víctor Bartra, representative of the ex-combatant Republican (192). The demythification of such Republican figures can be understood in *Rabos* on a familial level; one must consider the father/son dynamic established between David and Víctor as essential to the destabilization of the hero. The boy seeks in his father a figure with which he is both connected and proud. "La actitud de David es muy propia de un adolescente," explains Kim, "el chico quiere sentirse orgulloso de su

progenitor” (193). This desire echoes what I outlined in chapter three as being ironized by Rivas in *El lápiz*: contemporary Spanish culture’s look to the Republic as an idealized pre-Franco democratic antecedent to the post-Franco democratic reality of today. On both the family and societal level, however, Marsé opts to destabilize this nostalgic impulse by placing the work’s sympathies with the struggles of a family at odds with the regime and not the heroic resistance of a man/ideology at odds with the regime.

The absence of any ennobled representation of resistance on the part of Víctor runs parallel to Inspector Galván’s equally ambivalent lack of demonization. Though he constitutes a figure of police oppression within a totalitarian political reality and has committed brutal acts of violence, Galván too is a family man doing his job to support his own family and, in the course of his investigation, demonstrates genuine concern for Rosa’s wellbeing. As Kim maintains, Marsé has employed the characterization of these two men to breakdown the victimizer/victim dynamic to propose that war and the subsequent political repression of a fascist regime makes victims of all aspects of society:

El inspector Galván representa la autoridad, aunque a medida que lo conocemos un poco más sabemos que se trata de un derrotado más, al igual que el resto de los personajes vencidos de la obra. En sentido estricto, no existe ningún vencedor; todos son víctimas de una guerra y de la política fascista... Nadie es absolutamente malo pero tampoco completamente bueno; todos y cada uno de los personajes son víctimas de la intolerancia ideológica, en este caso de la fascista que les marca una pauta de conducta a seguir. (*El cine* 135, 148)

With *Rabos*, Marsé eschews a vision of historical recuperation that centres on political absolutes, opting instead to embrace the nuance of a complicated historical reality during a period that was rife with hunger and violence. As Marsé explains to Gracia and Laurel, first in reference to the characterization of the father and then to that of Galván: “A mí me parece que estas cosas, esta ambigüedad, esta aparente contradicción es buena. Lo mismo que el inspector de policía: es un torturador, pero también es capaz de enamorarse y de ser sensato en algunas cosas” (53). In fact, such ambiguity of character that stands in opposition to the exploitation of unquestioned ideological rigidity in *Rabos* is a constant in Marsé’s works. “Para el escritor catalán,” summarizes Kim, “un mal ideológico arraigado en la sociedad de la posguerra es la mitificación de los héroes y de los que la potencian en provecho propio. El autor luchó contra este síndrome social desde la primera novela” (“La desmitificación” 173). In *Si te dicen*, for example, the maquis are certainly characterized as flawed criminals despite their supposed role as active combatants against the regime. In *Rabos*, Marsé is consistent with *Si te dicen* and other previous novels by suggesting that the struggles of the poor and politically subjugated during the early years of the Franco dictatorship are no less significant if the victims are portrayed without heroic idealization; and, equally, that the oppression is no less condemnable if the perpetrators are humanized and not portrayed as mere monsters.

Clearly, the postbellum period represented by Marsé defies neat and convenient categorizations. The ambivalence of character is symptomatic of a greater juxtaposition of seemingly contradictory notions, which bring me back to the place of fantasy within a realist “document” of narrative fiction and to the central point of divergence between how memory and fantasy interrelate between *Rabos* and *Si te dicen*. Told in multiple flashbacks that mix *aventi* with “real life” by various narrators, thus preventing a chronologically linear narrative

with a single authoritative voice, *Si te dicen* achieves a complexity that embraces the blurring of reality and fantasy and its inherent confusion. Like the works in this study in which the unreal is put forth as a passage to the real, the confusion of *Si te dicen* does not play fantasy against reality, but rather relishes such ambiguity as a narrative echo to the chaos that was post-war Barcelona.¹¹⁴ Because the postbellum society was characterized by such a tumultuous environment in which nobody knew what was real and what was not, the place of fantasy as a tool to destabilize reality in fact does the opposite: chaos was reality. Of course, the ambiguity of the fantastic realm is also present in *Rabos* given that the limits between imagination, memory, and referentiality are intentionally confused (Domínguez Castro 78).¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, though both novels play with disorder through the conjuring of ghosts, in *Rabos* such confusion does not underline the turbulent socio-political environment as much as it reflects the dynamic/destabilized nature of memory itself as a narrative that develops through different filters (time, voice, etc.). *Si te dicen* employs fantasy in its reflection(s) on the past, while *Rabos* employs fantasy as a reflection on memory. Indeed, though fantasy and memory are integral elements to both works, it is the role that the former plays in conjunction with the latter in *Rabos* that is so crucial to my study, an association not present in the earlier novel. That is, fantasy takes the form of historical recovery in *Si te dicen* but it does not make any explicit comment on memory as a creative process of historical recovery, as it does in *Rabos*. Both works are “meta-memory texts,” to re-use Ferrán’s term, that play with the parallel notions of evoking spirits of the past and processing memories about the past. Nevertheless, while the earlier novel explores the active *recall* of memory (personal recollections) and the fantasy therein, *Rabos* explores the active *creation* of memory, particularly—as I will demonstrate—as it gives place to a second-hand memory due to generational separation.

While the relationship between the narrator and his prenatal tale is central to this dynamic, as will be covered in the next section, David too demonstrates a high level of self-awareness with regard to the transmission of facts and his own responsibility to establish and communicate the truth. It is through David that the irony of fantasy is at its most explicit as his desire for, and commitment to, historical accuracy is juxtaposed against the alternate reality by which he is surrounded. Commenting on David's need to both uncover the truth concerning his father's disappearance and see that that truth is passed on, the narrator notes, "David no vio la tan comentada fuga nocturna, pero él menos que nadie quería faltar a la verdad, en este episodio cuando menos, y por eso me la contó años después con pelos y señales" (17). Perhaps the clearest manifestation of this seemingly paradoxical union of David's yearning for the truth and the ghosts of his imagination plays out in the debates between the boy's father and the RAF pilot. Although he idolizes O'Flynn in contrast to the more grotesque image of Víctor, David is taken aback by the pilot's indifference as to whether or not his version of events constitutes an accurate assessment or not: "A David, lo que más le llama la atención del piloto es que habla como si le importara muy poco estar o no estar en posesión de la verdad" (147). David's hero espouses an apathetic attitude toward the truth that is out of place with his own reverence for the facts. Of course, the patent irony here is that the very figure that David expects to offer faithful testimony of reality is nothing but a figure of the boy's own personal mythology. The young Bartra is enraptured by the history shared by O'Flynn, Víctor senior, and Rosa; he immerses himself in the struggle between the two men over their joint past and strains to deduce the truth from their accounts. Indeed, the dialogue between the father and the pilot turns into a philosophical treatise on what truth is and to whom it belongs, an ironic debate considering that the two participants are ghosts, brought to "life" by the boy's imagination. In other words, the holders of the

truth surrounding David's reality are products of his own fiction. Unfortunately for the boy, he fails to appreciate his paradoxical employment of fiction to approach the truth, a failure that ultimately leads to his tragic death.

After Rosa's death while giving birth, David and the new-born infant are adopted by relatives. The novel jumps forward a few years to 1951, though still an analepsis for the narrator; Víctor Bartra Junior is being cared for by his aunt and uncle and cousin Fatima, while his older brother, now a young adult, works as a photographer for señor Marimón. David brings to his profession the same ethical obligation to uncover and faithfully render the truth that he ironically demonstrated through the anecdotes shared with his younger brother. During the spring of 1951, a hike in transit fares leads to a tram-user strike, leaving the vehicles empty as they carry out their routes through Barcelona. David's boss is an active member of a clandestine union and proposes that his young apprentice capture a photographic testimony of what is happening in the streets. Mingling with protestors, David shoots various pictures of the empty, circulating trams. Upon developing his photos, David is dejected to find that the last picture on his roll is the perfect shot, but for the presence of a lone passenger. Not understanding David's ethics of representation, the boss orders his young employee to simply retouch the photo, erasing the errant passenger. Despite the modified photo's now successful documentation of the events in question, David is unsatisfied with what he perceives to be a dishonest illusion and sets out to capture a more authentic image. In response to his cousin's suggestion that he go to the depot and take all the photos of empty trams that he wants, David opines that "Ha de ser un tranvía circulando de verdad por la calle" (341). Then, giving the retouched photo to his younger brother, David sets out to capture the "truth" through his lens: "Yo haré otra mejor. Otra que será

como debe ser” (342). In the course of his endeavour to capture such an image, David gets into an altercation with the police and is killed as he is hit by a tram while attempting to flee. Although the young photographer’s death is symbolic of the regime’s desire to silence those that give portrayals of reality—here as images, not words—outside of the controlled discourse (Clark), it also points to David’s ironic failure to grasp fiction’s potential to tell truths that are otherwise denied.

In his recent study *After Theory*, Terry Eagleton confronts the problematic relationship between truth and fiction in reductive though useful terms. On one hand, he states that “fiction is incapable of telling the truth” given that fiction, by definition, cannot make the claim that what is represented “really, literally happened” (90). “In another sense, to be sure,” he counters, “fiction can be truer than real life” (89). It is this second statement that resonates with *Rabos*, particularly as exemplified by the “perfect” though touched-up photo in contrast to the others with empty tram cars that were unsatisfactory in capturing the atmosphere of the moment. As the narrator concludes: “aquella fotografía que él había manipulado con un lápiz de punta fina en la soledad del cuarto de revelado, hoy sigue siendo la imagen más pertinente y turbadora de cuantas captó David, el testimonio más cabal y más veraz de lo que un día, hace mucho tiempo, conmovió a esta ciudad” (344). Indeed, the Aristotelian notion of “truth in fiction” as a concept is one of the novel’s central theses, a concept that eludes David despite his own immersion into the world of fantasy. Referring to this essential paradox and its manifestation in the tragedy of David’s untimely death, Juan Rodríguez summarizes that Marsé:

rompe, en definitiva, . . . con un relato puramente mimético como para sugerir que si se aspira a reproducir la realidad de una forma veraz, es necesario apoyarse en la

ficción, de la misma forma que un obstinado David se ve obligado, al final de la novela, a trucar su mejor foto (borrar un pasajero fantasmal, insólito en aquellos días de tranvías vacíos) para ofrecer un testimonio auténtico de la huelga de 1951 y pierde la vida en el empeño por conseguir una foto ‘real’, sin trucos, pues ni siquiera ha aprendido, a pesar del triste desenlace de su guerra personal contra el inspector Galván, que la realidad es una materia maleable y dúctil, y que, con frecuencia, la verdad se halla oculta tras un montón de detalles aparentes y contradictorios. (“Juan Marsé en la narrativa española” 15-16)

Though David is unable to reconcile his own fantastic reality with the possible viability of alternate paths to the truth, his younger brother embraces the multiple perspectives that permit him to (re)construct and (re)present the events of the summer of 1945, which he lived from the womb: there but not there. The ghosts, photos, and in-utero conversations with his older brother are all simulacra that stand for an unseen past and shape the narrator’s memory, a memory that is not his own, a “postmemory.”

4.3 Postmemory and the womb

As previously outlined in the Introduction, Franco’s death in 1975 was followed by a boom of historical/memorialistic works of fiction and non-fiction dealing with the Civil War, suggesting that despite the government’s reticence to openly engage with the nation’s past there remained a cultural desire to confront what had previously been denied through censorship. Although almost forty years had passed since the military uprising gave way to the fraternal conflict and, thus, many Spaniards had not actually lived the events themselves, there existed a consciousness both about the past and the need to preserve it for the new

generations. “In 1975 the memory of the Civil War was still alive,” explains Aguilar Fernández, “although it was a transmitted memory rather than a lived one for most people” (“Justice” 96-97). Transmitted memory, to use Aguilar Fernández’s term, is a memory that is inherited: essential to one’s past but not a personal recollection. At the turn of the millennium, an even larger portion of the Spanish population belongs to the generations for which the horrors of war and/or Francoist oppression are a matter of anecdote: told by grandparents, read in books, viewed in photographs, studied in the archives, but not part of their own personal life experiences. And yet, the Civil War is perhaps now more than ever a rentable topic within the sphere of cultural production given the proliferation and commercial success of works that look to the past. Regardless of the motivation behind such publications—be it commercial, political, ethical, or all of the above—it is undeniable that the ghosts of Spain’s past have yet to be exorcized. It appears that Aguilar Fernández’s affirmation that the “repercusiones psicológicas de la Guerra Civil fueron tales que también alcanzaron a las generaciones que no habían vivido la guerra” (*Memoria* 30) continues to enjoy relevance at the beginning of the twenty-first century. It also appears that such repercussions continue to feed a wilful, active memorialistic process through which the children and grandchildren of the war’s survivors and victims appropriate the memories of a traumatic period that they themselves have not lived.

The “recollections” that Víctor holds from his prenatal existence represent an inherited memory that flows from generation to generation, from testimony to second-hand knowledge. The notion of such inherited memory has been studied by Marianne Hirsch in relation to how the descendents of Holocaust survivors perceive the horrors of an experience that is so intimate to who they are and where they come from, yet is completely mediated by

memory narrative and not personal recollection. Hirsch calls this memory “postmemory” in order to stress its separation from the direct access of first hand “survivor memory.”

Describing the genesis of the term, Hirsch explains,

Children of survivors live at a further temporal and spatial remove from that decimated world. The distance separating them from the locus of origin is the radical break of unknowable and incomprehensible persecution; for those born after, it is a break impossible to bridge. Still, the power of mourning and memory, and the depth of the rift dividing their parents’ lives, impart to them something that is akin to memory. Searching for a term that would convey its temporal and qualitative difference from survivor memory, I have chosen to call this secondary or second generation, memory ‘postmemory.’ (“Past” 420)

Of course, just as I adopted Boym’s study of nostalgia within the context of post-soviet Russia in chapter three to contemporary Spain’s relationship with the Second Republic, Hirsch’s concept of postmemory is not unique to the particular pain of the Holocaust and is ideally suited for my discussion of the Civil War and Franco regime as the subject of historical memory in Spanish narrative today. Hirsch notes that her aim is not “to restrict the notion of postmemory to the remembrance of the Holocaust, or to privilege the Holocaust as a unique or limit experience beyond all others: the Holocaust is the space where [she is] drawn into the discussion” (“Surviving” 11). The aftermath of the Civil War, then, is where I am “drawn into the discussion.” Víctor Bartra junior’s narration not only exemplifies the act of postmemory through the retelling of his family’s story, but he also embodies the generational divide of postmemory through his narrative perspective from the womb.

In *Rabos*, memory functions as a creative endeavour of reconstruction that establishes a line of inheritance between what is seen and experienced by a witness and how it is conceptualized, negotiated, and represented by a non-witness. Even the title itself, *Rabos de lagartija*, offers a helpful metaphor of postmemory. The trauma experienced by the eponymous reptiles upon having their tails removed by David or Paulino in the gully gives rise to a subsequent process of regeneration, a process that echoes Víctor's recreation of memory in response to the familial/national trauma of war and dictatorship. The unborn narrator's observations are not his own; he is seeing through the eyes of his mother and brother, creating memories that are as vivid and "real," if not more so, than the reality that now surrounds him as a child. "Nunca veré los ojos de mi madre," (62) reflects the narrator, but he will create a vision of his family's life from the womb as if he was looking through them. Of course, it is Víctor as a boy being cared for by his cousin that actually tells the story and not the foetus. To this end I am in agreement with Kim who notes, while addressing the critics who fail to make such a distinction between the narrator's physical reality and his story-telling angle, that it is necessary to "hacer hincapié en que el narrador de la undécima novela de Marsé es Víctor, adolescente con discapacidad física . . . y no Víctor en su etapa fetal" (*El cine* 150). Nevertheless, the young narrator adopts what he has been told by David and combines it with his own sense of imagination to place himself within the womb as a conscious inhabitant, shaping his narrative perspective and conjuring up the image of a not-yet-born ghost: there but not there. It is this perspective, this level of closeness to the events surrounding the Bartra family without direct testimony that gives patent expression to the narrator's memory as postmemory, a memory so clear that it is as if he were there because, in a symbolic sense as a developing child inside his mother's womb, he was.

Hirsch defines postmemory in terms of such close identification in spite of the generational and experiential divide: "Postmemory most specifically describes the relationship of children to survivors of cultural or collective trauma to the experiences of their parents, experiences that they 'remember' only as the narratives and images with which they grew up, but that are so powerful, so monumental, as to constitute memories in their own right" ("Surviving" 9). For the narrator, his memories in utero are as "powerful," "monumental," and vivid as if they were in fact his own, images seen with his own eyes. Paul Ricoeur states that "The typical formulation of testimony proceeds from this pairing: I was there," (*Memory* 163) whereas the narrator's formulation of postmemory over testimony results from this expression of observation: *as if* I were there. Referring to one of David's altercations with the Inspector, Víctor introduces the scene by stating: "Lo estoy viendo como si ocurriera ahora mismo ante mis ojos" (10). A similar expression is used to describe the collar of David's dog, Chispa: "Recuerdo ese collar de Chispa como si lo hubiese visto" (198). This type of statement—what one might call the "as if" phrase: "as if I had been there," "as if I had seen it with my own eyes," etc.—is common to Víctor's narrative discourse and is highly indicative of the intimacy of his appropriated memory: it reflects both absence and certainty.

The unique viewpoint of a foetal narrator stands out as a tangible symbol of this memorialistic dynamic. While Víctor is a non-witness, he is literally and figuratively connected to his past. The placenta and umbilical cord signify the physical transfer of nutrients, oxygen, and other necessities of life and growth from mother to son, one that echoes the flow of inherited memory from the mother's experience to the child's interpretation. Indeed, the narrator frames his self-aware storytelling process in the

biological terms of family connection, referring to the “memoria desvanecida de la sangre” (335) and his place within the “placenta de esta historia,” (335) adding that as he approaches the climax of his tale, he finds himself “encajado en la pelvis de la historia” (200). Through the fantasy of his own foetal participation, Víctor establishes his unborn self as a physical bridge between the generations. Although the world of la pelirroja and David is one that the narrator will never know, it has become an intrinsic part of his own identity; it has been appropriated as his own. Jumping chronologically between his narrative present as a bed-ridden child and his narrative perspective as the unborn observer, Víctor reflects that the distinction between the experiences of both realms become blurred as his foetal memories attain a level of familiarization that make them even more real to him than his present reality:

Hace apenas un minuto todavía flotaba enroscado en el vientre materno, pero ya mis ojos, desde esa tiniebla esponjosa, presentían la luz del mundo y sus reiterados espejismos: lo que veo y lo que no veo son ya la misma cosa... Todo se halla en penumbra en la memoria que guardo de aquella casa, y todo me habla de sentimientos quebrantados y de emociones sofocadas, de un tiempo en que los silencios en torno a la mesa ocultaban graves trastornos de familia, oscuros sucesos, amarguras del corazón... La casa que nunca habité es más real y tangible que este mordisqueado lápiz mío que traza garabatos sobre el papel. (15-16)

By affirming the reality of that which has been imagined, Víctor’s perception of the past epitomizes the central tension inherent to Hirsch’s theory: intimate connection without direct experience.

It is this combination of factors that rejects a passive convergence with the past and grants imagination such a privileged space. Postmemory describes a process of reconfiguring the memories of others that is inherently active, drawing on one's creative faculties in order to replace that which has been seen through the physical eye with that which has been (re)constructed in the "mind's eye." As Hirsch clarifies, "Postmemory is a powerful form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation... postmemory seeks connection. It creates where it cannot recover. It imagines where it cannot recall" ("Past" 420-422). This imaginative impulse manifests itself throughout the novel. David's fantasy world can be seen as a surrogate reality that serves to complement the absent aspects of his daily reality. The spectral presence of his father, for example, provides the troubled young man with answers to his curiosity regarding the republican fugitive's disappearance, imagined though they may be. For the narrator, on the other hand, imagination is more than merely a tool of post-war adolescent survival, but rather it becomes a necessary means by which he constructs his memory. Of course, the two creative endeavors can both be understood to be invocations of the ghosts of people and places that have, for each of them, become absent. "Absent, neglected, ghostly," explains Gordon of those that have been excluded and rendered invisible, "it is essential to imagine their life worlds because you have no other choice but to make things up in the interstices of the factual and the fabulous, the place where the shadow and the act converge" (196-197). While David's present reality is mediated by the impossible dialogues of his fantasy world, the same ghostly presences are also given "life" in the oneiric space of the narrator's uterine memory as he adopts the older brother's recollections.

Far from disparaging the imagination as inherently flawed and without value, the foetal narrator defends his creative impulse against the more “authentic” first-person testimony. Describing the Inspector’s knock on the door one day while the pregnant Rosa was out, David criticizes his unborn brother for not having been there to hear it: “tú, de ningún modo podías oírlo, porque no estabas allí ni allá ni en ninguna parte, monicaco, aún no habías salido del cascarón,” to which the narrator replies, “Vale, de acuerdo, tú lo has vivido, pero yo lo he imaginado. No creas que me llevas mucha ventaja en el camino de la verdad, hermano” (18). The attitude expressed here by the foetus again epitomizes one of the novel’s central theses: the realm of imagination provides certain freedom to how one reconstructs the unknown. The notion of a greater truth represented not necessarily in what was, but in what might have been is applied to postmemory’s use of imagination to understand the past. Indeed, there are many instances in the novel in which the imagination is openly touted as a more powerful conduit of understanding than observation precisely because it is not bound by experience and can thus give voice to the individual’s greatest desires or fears. An example of the latter arises from David’s reaction toward news that Galván had killed a man by throwing him from a tram, foreshadowing the young protagonist’s own death, when he exclaims to his unborn brother, “Precisamente por eso, porque no lo vi, puedo imaginarlo mejor que tú” (38). Of course, the narrator could not have seen the episode in question either as he was shielded by his mother’s belly, but the point is made concerning the power of the mind’s invention. In a more positive sense, the ghost of Juan Bartra maintains that the unborn narrator will fulfill the pelirroja’s dream by growing up to be a successful artist because of his need to imagine his past. Speaking with David, he explains, “Lo que hará que ese piojo se convierta a su debido tiempo en un artista será precisamente la ausencia de papá: se pasará la vida imaginándolo” (56). With this statement,

Juan articulates the narrator's complex relationship between his identity and his evoked origins through the specific image of his father. For Víctor junior, memory and imagination form a symbiotic relationship in which the former only exists as a function of the latter.

Nevertheless, the narrator affirms that even the memory that results from one's own active process of reconstruction suffers the same gradual dissolution as experienced memory:

“Lo mismo que el recuerdo de algunas vivencias personales que nos habían parecido imborrables, la memoria de aquello que hemos visto con la imaginación, porque no alcanzamos a vivirlo, también se hace borrosa con el tiempo, también se desgasta” (207).

Víctor relishes in his ability to visualize the past through his own channels of invention, and yet he still confronts the limitations and ethical charge of both individual recollection over time and the memory/imagination dynamic, thus confronting his own (post)memorial recreation. It is clear, therefore, that imagination and a desire for the truth are not mutually exclusive; it is a memory that actively seeks and creates connection. Neither does the narrator's imaginative impulse imply a lack of responsibility toward his reconstruction. In other words, Víctor both defends his appropriation and reconstitution of the memory of others and openly accepts its inherent reservations. Addressing the reader directly, the narrator acknowledges the problematic nature of basing his account on foetal memories and dialogues with David: “Lo que cuento son hechos que reconstruyo rememorando confidencias e intenciones de mi hermano, y no pretendo que todo sea cierto, pero sí lo más próximo a la verdad” (20). What is certain is that truth, like imagination, is understood to be a product of interpretation and recreation. According to Hirsch, it is this sense of negotiation that creates a potent exploration of the unseen past: “Postmemory is a powerful form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through

recollection but through representation, projection, and creation. . . . That is not, of course, to say that survivor memory itself is unmediated, but that it is more directly—chronologically—connected to the past” (“Surviving” 9). Unlike his older brother David who, as the younger Víctor puts it, “esgrime temerariamente la memoria de otros como propia,” (73) the narrator is forthcoming with his own appropriations. He demonstrates self-awareness toward the “second-handness” of his memory; even while affirming its vividness, the narrator openly gives credit to its source. Referring to the infusion of David’s account into his own, for example, Víctor states, “No sabría hablar de ti sin hablar contigo, hermano. Me cuesta mucho desenredar tu voz de la mía y solamente lo consigo a ratos, cuando tu verbo golpea imprevisible y airado y se impone veraz y urgente, testimonial y único, por ser la resonancia cabal de un tiempo que ya para siempre será un refugio imaginario para los dos” (111). By openly confessing to having adopted another’s voice and recollections, Víctor highlights the fantasy of his participation from the womb, thus embracing and self-consciously exemplifying the “representation, projection, and creation,” to re-quote Hirsch, that characterizes the mediated nature of postmemory.

This open exploration of representation results from Víctor’s awareness not only of the inherited and subsequently reprocessed makeup of his memory, but also of his identity as the story teller. That is, the tale uncovered in the novel does not spring from a kind of impersonal, omniscient narrator that reveals the (post)memory from the young Víctor’s head, but rather the boy himself is taking the events imagined and giving them an explicit plot structure with a beginning, middle, and end. “Pero si he de proceder por orden,” he explains, “si ese tumulto de voces me da un respiro, la historia que me propongo contar empieza de verdad cuando el inspector Galván llama a la puerta de casa un día que no estoy en casa”

(18). Like “Javier Cercas,” Juan Urbano, and Herbal in the other three novels, Víctor Bartra junior approaches the past from his present as a carefully crafted reconfiguration of the events in question, directed toward a named or unnamed interlocutor (the fictional reader in *Soldados* and *Mala gente* and Maria in *El lápiz*). Indeed, unlike the wholly oral account of Herbal’s dialogue with Maria, the narrator in *Rabos* shares with “Cercas” and Urbano the role of a self-identified writer. Víctor focuses his appropriated and re-imagined memories so as to give them both narrative coherence and concrete textuality. It is this overt exposition of the relationship established between memory and recording that, as Kim states, provides *Rabos*’s treatment of history with a unique facet not present in Marsé’s previous works (*El cine* 141). For example, while memories make up the plot of *Si te dicen* through its various flashbacks, it is the telling/writing of memories that constitute the story told in *Rabos*.

According to Víctor, it is his responsibility, even his destiny, to put to paper an account of his family’s struggle through the misery and hunger of their postbellum reality. Describing his mother’s death during child-birth, the narrator confesses, “No pocas veces, en el transcurso de mi vida, habría de lamentar que ella no me llevara consigo esa noche, bien arropado en su ilusión secreta y romántica de ex maestra de escuela represaliada, en esa ensoñación ingenua que he sido para ella durante siete meses, una sombra intrauterina con una pluma en la mano. Sal y cuéntalo, habría dicho, de poder hacerlo” (331). To the best of his abilities, Víctor complies with what he imagines to be his mother’s wishes. As a bed-ridden child he has become in his own imagination the in uterine shadow with a pen in hand, recording from “memory” the sounds that he has not heard and the sights that he has not seen in order that they be made real and that they not be silenced.

Such is the ethical charge inherent to the discourse behind bridging the generational gap: such closeness with the past, attained through the vivid adoption of memory, serves to keep alive or resurrect that which might otherwise be forgotten. It is easy, therefore, to see the connection between postmemory and the ghost as those that inherit memory can be understood to be haunted by the traumas that they did not experience and by the victims that did. For Víctor, this haunting manifests itself as a kind of “ghost story” as he gives narrative form to his memories from the womb and seeks to give this narrative a tangible, textual reality. For Víctor, the act of writing enjoys an ethical charge as it constitutes the open articulation of postmemory. This is significant because, as Hirsch maintains, postmemory itself describes an ethical relationship between the victims and their fragmented recollections and the descendants that pick up the pieces in order to reconstitute new, surrogate memories that they make their own so as to form a bond of identification:

It is a question of adopting the traumatic experiences—and thus also the memories—of others as experiences one might oneself have had, and of inscribing them into one’s own life story. It is a question, more specifically, of an *ethical* relation to the oppressed or persecuted other for which Postmemory can serve as a model: as I can ‘remember’ my parents’ memory, I can also ‘remember’ the suffering of others.

(italics in the original; “Surviving” 10-11)

By recording the memories that he has “inscribed” into his “own life story,” Víctor seeks to harness the power of the written word to prevent not only the suffering, but the entire story of his family from falling into oblivion. Just as “Cercas” envisions his book to be the means by which Miralles and Sánchez Mazas are not forgotten, and Urbano seeks to publish the story of Dolores Serma so that she might be remembered, so too does the young Víctor

Bartra take his fantastic recollections from the womb and transcribe them so that his family will live on as a recorded trace of the past. “No hay una sola voz de cuantas llevo aquí,” he states from his bed in the narrative present while scribbling in his notebooks, “ni una sola palabra emborronada en estos viejos cuadernos escolares—olas interminables y simétricas parodiando una escritura ilegible de discapacitado, es lo que oigo decir—que no esté enraizada en aquel torrente desmoronado y pútrido que mi memoria preserva del olvido. Mi lápiz corre sobre el papel pautado solamente para mantener inviolado su recuerdo” (337).

The river rushing through the gully serves as a symbol of lineage; it is the gully of his brother, his father and his grandfather. It is a family inheritance. The river flows with the voices of the father and grandfather, subconsciously appropriated by David as his own and self-consciously appropriated by Víctor, written in the notebooks to preserve their existence. It should be stated, however, that *Rabos* differs from *Soldados* and *Mala gente* in that the novel itself is not the text as written by the fictionalized author/protagonist. It is unlikely that Víctor’s scribbles in the notebooks constitute a legible account of his memory narrative; nevertheless, they demonstrate his intention to take the ephemeral quality of his foetal memory and give it tangible representation so that the people, places, and events so crucial to his own identity might persevere even as memory fades.

Víctor’s desire to “run his pencil across paper” reflects the preservative character of the text. While this is a specific postmemory that deals with a singular family’s struggle during the early post-war years, the greater implication of how more contemporary generations approach, interpret, and “work through”—often by writing—the traumatic events of the Civil War and the Franco regime in general can be extrapolated from the narrator’s unique perspective. This notion of a constructed memory that openly finds expression in

imagination reflects the postmodern paradigm that recognizes the constructed, mediated nature of history itself. Although Hirsch is again referring to reaction toward the Holocaust, the following statement can be applied to Spain's dialogue with the Civil War and, more specifically, to the foetal narrator's memory in *Rabos*: "I am speaking of a historical, generational moment—hence postmemory's connection to the postmodern with its many posts—a cultural and intellectual moment that is shaped by the traumas of the first half of the twentieth century and that understands its own fundamentally mediated relationship to this painful history, even while considering it absolutely determinative" ("Surviving" 11-12). The relationship between postmemory's constructed nature and postmodernism is important as it characterizes the process of remembrance in this novel and in many other works of narrative fiction in the past decade that deal with the Civil War and its consequences. Spain too is burdened by a painful history that is still considered to be absolutely determinative, just as the pelirroja and Víctor senior are as much a part of Víctor as his present reality. And yet, just as Víctor admits that he can only approximate the truth without ever fully capturing it, so too do postmodern Spanish works of historical fiction render the notion of historical understanding to be both imperative and impossible.

This is the inherently historical and literary postmodernism as outlined by Hutcheon's concept, omnipresent in this study, of historiographic metafiction. "Historiographic metafiction," explains Hutcheon, "while teasing us with the existence of the past as real, also suggests that there is no direct access to that real which would be unmediated by the structures of our various discourses about it" (*Poetics* 146). Even Víctor's imagined narrative perspective lacks direct access to the real as he is shielded from the exterior by the womb, creating the aforementioned sense of presence without being present. By reverting

back to his unborn existence, the narrator fantastically embodies the postmodern/postmemory dynamic: confrontation with the past while simultaneously surrendering to its inherent barriers, barriers that are only overcome through the necessary, though necessarily limited, reconfiguration of the traces left behind by others. As such, *Rabos* provides a narrative fictionalization of what Hutcheon identifies as postmodern fiction itself:

The past is something with which we must come to terms and such a confrontation involves an acknowledgement of limitation as well as power. We only have access to the past today through its traces—its documents, the testimony of witnesses, and other archival materials... The process of making stories out of chronicles, of constructing plots out of sequences, is what postmodern fiction underlines. This does not in any way deny the existence of the past real, but it focuses attention on the act of imposing order on that past, of encoding strategies of meaning-making through representation. (*Politics* 55-63)

The memories of the summer of 1945 define the narrator, though they have been pieced together through the traces left by those who witnessed what he himself could not see. “La placenta de la memoria,” as Víctor puts it, imagines the generational and physical connection to his mother and is shaped by the stories told and photos left behind by David before his death. These are the traces of the past in the present that give form to the narrator’s memory: photographs to be interpreted, testimony to be questioned, scenes to be imagined.

Indeed, the medium of photography constitutes a particularly tangible approach to the past as it documents a subject that is, by nature, frozen in the time it was captured. Although

Víctor expresses that his recollections stem from those told to him by David, it is clear that *Rabos* also puts forth the photograph as a vivid source of testimony—one must consider, for example, David’s profession and the events surrounding his death—and a key component to the narrator’s own memory creation.¹¹⁶ “Con apenas seis años y todavía ovillado como un feto la mayor parte del tiempo,” explains Víctor, describing his post-natal, childhood reality, “me veo rodeado de fotografías de tranvías y garabateando viejas libretas escolares con un lápiz negro y la vista borrosa” (335). A photograph takes a past moment and gives it visibility in the present. In his famous collection of essays, *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes recognizes such reviving power, noting that every photograph signals “the return of the dead” (9). In this sense, therefore, the spectral realm and photography function alongside one another as complementary paths to the past.¹¹⁷ The ghosts that David creates in his imagination are also brought back to life for Víctor via their captured images. For Hirsch, it is this ability to endure over time, this ability to link the present observer to the past observer (or the object observed) that makes photography such an intrinsic tool of postmemory. “Camera images, particularly still photographs,” she explains, “are precisely the medium connecting first- and second-generation remembrance, memory and postmemory. Photographic images are stubborn survivors of death. We receive them, uncompromisingly, in the present tense. Inasmuch as they are instruments of memory, then, they expose its resolute but multilayered presentness” (“Projected” 10). Ferrán, too, suggests that photographs and postmemory are linked by their common bond of breaking down the chasm separating past and present as the photograph constitutes one of the traces of that past with which one reformulates his/her inherited memory:

Such visual *aides mémoire* can be seen to re-create a dynamic similar to that of post-memory: they allow one generation to inherit, assume as if they were their own, the images, even the experiences of a previous generation, thus often collapsing distinctions between self and other, present and past, absence and presence...

Photographs combine presence and absence in the same way that postmemory does (231, 248).

By surrounding himself with photographs of his past, Víctor assumes the images as if they were his own; and, by placing himself in that past as an unborn “observer,” he achieves the same quality as the photos: a coexistence of “absence and presence.”

However—and it is with this thought that I conclude my exposition of postmemory in the novel—while the image captured on film is put forth in *Rabos* as a significant document that shapes the active recovery of postmemory, David’s retouched photo suggests that this dynamic enjoys a multi-layered complexity that rejects the passive acceptance of truth passing from the witness to the non-witness. Again, there are truths outside of the truth. In other words, by confirming that the edited picture represents “el testimonio más cabal y más veraz de lo que un día, hace mucho tiempo, conmovió a esta ciudad” (344), Víctor embraces the limitations and creative potential of even photography, despite its often privileged status as an authentic depiction in comparison to oral testimony. Approaching the photograph, like any articulated memory, implies a process of interpretation, negotiation, and representation. For Víctor, this is his postmemory as he takes the pictures and stories so inherent to, but predating, his being and gives them life in his own mind as a foetal participant and on paper as a chronicler of such a determinative era.

In many ways, *Rabos de lagartija* constitutes a continuation of Juan Marsé's narrative trajectory that began with his first novel *Encerrados con un solo juguete* and passed through other notable works, such as *Si te dicen que caí*: postwar Barcelona from the barrio, no overt political commentary resulting from ideological absolutes, and a blurring of fantasy and reality. Differing somewhat from Marsé's previous works, however, *Rabos* not only looks to the past, but also incorporates what has become more visible in Spanish historical narrative at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries: an explicit, self-conscious exploration of how this "look to the past" unfolds. It is from this perspective that David's spectral world becomes so pertinent as he ironically establishes the created world of his own invention as a vehicle to address what he seeks to be the objective, authentic truth. Indeed, fantasy and history are indelibly linked in *Rabos* as the narrator too imagines the oneiric space of his own foetal participation. This is the space of postmemory, the space of absence and presence that signals the connection of one generation to another. As a fitting conclusion to this study, the narrator's postmemory can be understood to describe the process of memory negotiation undertaken by Cercas, Prado, and Rivas. Although he himself experienced the violence of war and the hunger and oppression of postbellum Spain, Marsé has created, through Víctor Bartra junior, the embodiment of the postmemory of the other three authors. They too are joined to the past without having been exposed to its trauma; their narratives give expression to a postmemory formed by traces of events and experiences unseen. Víctor's attempt to write his family's story runs parallel to the three author's own novelistic production. In many ways, *Soldados de Salamina*, *Mala gente que camina*, and *El lápiz del carpintero* are the real life analogues to Víctor's notebook scribbles, resulting from their personal quests for connection and represented, on another level, by their own characters' motivations and actions. In symbolic terms, Cercas, Prado,

and Rivas—and other contemporary writers like them who demonstrate a desire to process and give voice to this inherited memory—are culturally bonded to the war and its consequences, just as Víctor is “umbilically” bonded to the events of the summer of 1945, events that are at once not his own and intrinsic to his identity.

Conclusion

As the first decade of the twenty-first century draws to a close, we look back at the way in which the Spanish Civil War, now past the seventieth anniversary of its totalitarian resolution, exploded with visibility in the cultural, social, and political consciousness of the Spanish nation, beginning in the mid- to late-nineties and continuing to today. The reasons behind this surge in memory discourse are complex and varied, encompassing the most optimistic suggestions that Spain is finally ready to fully engage with its painful past and move toward meaningful national reconciliation, and the most cynical claims of the mere commodification of the Civil War as a rentable “topic du jour” of political and cultural capital. As we leave behind the historically charged turn of the millennium and look forward, one is inevitably obliged to pose the question of sustainability: Has the protagonism of historical memory run its course? Or are there still new perspectives to be explored, stories to be told, books to be written and read, films to be made and viewed, policies to be enacted, etc.? The answer to the former appears to be a resounding no, and to the latter a resounding yes; though exactly how the evolution of Civil War dialogue will play out remains to be seen. What is certain is that the ghosts of Spain’s past have yet to be fully exorcised, the dead have yet to be properly buried, the wounds have yet to heal, and, perhaps fittingly given the literary nature of this study, the page has yet to be turned; whatever the metaphor or cliché, the Civil War will not soon vacate the national psyche or cultural landscape.

Consider, for example, the news of Pedro Almodóvar’s next project. In an interview with *El País*, dated 19 May 2009, the famed director reveals that he is working on a film about a subject that has been notably absent in his previous work: the Spanish Civil War.

This film—which will focus not on the battles themselves, but rather the human cost—constitutes a clear departure from Almodóvar’s well-documented embrace of the present at the expense of the past, particularly during his early years as one of the more famous participants of the “fiesta” of Madrid’s *Movida*. In a sense, Almodóvar—and the *Movida* he represented—sought to remove Franco from the post-Franco equation, opting instead for a politics of expression free from politics.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, Almodóvar states quite clearly in the interview, “me preocupa mucho el tema de la memoria histórica,” revealing that the story to be told will be based, at least in part, on the memoirs of a survivor from a Francoist prison, Marcos Ana.¹¹⁹ The narrative strategy of integrating a “true story” within a work of fiction is a familiar one for this present study, as is the (likely) overtly retrospective nature of the film. Addressing the absence of combat in the script he is writing, Almodóvar explains that “[h]ablaremos de otras cosas, de seres que ahora viven y que, en ese momento, eran muy jóvenes.” The answer to the question of “why now?” for Almodóvar is unknown, though it is likely to be found somewhere along the spectrum of cultural motivations hypothesized by López-Quiñones (as already discussed in the Introduction); that is, within the complex matrix of catharsis and commodification. What is certain is that this new film fits; it carries on with the contemporary success of Civil War discourse in literature and film. The film’s anticipated self-awareness toward the Civil War as an entity removed from the present by a temporal and experiential divide also appears to fit the particular narrative approach established by the four novels covered here.

Indeed, the study of *Soldados de Salamina*, *Mala gente que camina*, *El lápiz del carpintero*, and *Rabos de lagartija* reveals that the Spanish Civil War not only occupies a place of central importance in contemporary Spanish literature, but also that there exists a

strong impulse toward the fictionalization and textualization of the contemporary literary approach itself. Through the fusion of historical and narrative flashbacks, these novels depict both the Civil War (including its immediate aftermath) and the attempts to understand the Civil War across the previously-mentioned temporal and experiential divide, thus raising issues of how one recuperates, negotiates, reconstructs, and represents the past. Cercas, Prado, Rivas, and Marsé have crafted works that articulate explicitly literary historical perspectives, self-consciously recognizing the way in which the Civil War is now known through its stories told, and not experiences lived. The self-identification of the war's "literariness" is largely achieved in these four narratives by blurring the boundaries between fiction and reality, between the identifiably real and the unabashedly unreal. In *Soldados* and *Mala gente*, the genre of non-fiction is exploited as the source of this juxtaposition. In *El lápiz* and *Rabos*, the emphasis on the literary is made more explicit through the integration of fantasy into the historical tales being told. In all four texts, the focus of analepsis concerns the all-too-real trauma of the Spanish Civil War, and yet, ironically, it is the *unreal* that is given precedence as the vehicle through which this historical reality may be approached and understood. Indeed, what sets these novels apart from so many others that have been published within this time frame and have also dealt with the Civil War is the patent presence of irony. Irony thrives on self-awareness and incongruity, obliging an active reader of both the fictional narrative and the articulation of historical narrative therein.

By contesting the boundaries of reality, fiction, and fantasy within the context of how one processes and gives narrative form to the Civil War from the present, these novels raise questions about the authority of discourse. By nature, such destabilization lends itself to ambiguity and/or ambivalence, which is evident, embraced, and exploited to a certain

extent in all four works. The issue of memory politics is perhaps most revealing in this regard. Although each novel advocates for a politics of memory in accordance with the justifiably hegemonic anti-Francoist sentiment in Spain today, even demonstrating sympathetic postures toward the ill-fated Second Republic, the suggestion of ambiguity imbues the political meaning with ironic subtext. With the exception of *Mala gente*, each work contains a character that can be identified with the Nationalist/Falangist/Fascist/Francoist cause—that is, the now taboo political entities on the right—who maintains some level of central importance to the plot without suffering a fully dehumanized characterization. This dynamic is most evident in *Soldados*, as the Falangist Sánchez Mazas and Republican Miralles “compete” for narrative and memorialistic importance, becoming in the process the representatives for those who have been omitted and/or forgotten by the history books, now given voice in the literary realm. In *El lápiz*, the narrative authority granted to the former fascist guard, Herbal, is incongruous with the idealized vision presented of the Republic and its Republican heroes. To that end, I refer to the historical perspective crafted by Herbal as ironic nostalgia; it simultaneously—and self-consciously—affirms and questions the hegemony of memory by being a marginalized voice in the contemporary, democratic context. In *Rabos*, the least explicitly political novel of the four, Marsé does not play with the absolutes of left and right, but rather portrays the victims of the war and their postbellum struggle. Clearly, this focus is critical of the Nationalist cause and the Franco regime, and highlights the trauma of the Republican survivors. Nevertheless, the Republicans are not heroes (the father) and the officials of the regime are not monsters (the Inspector), but rather all suffer from the all-too-human inhumanity of the violent and oppressive post-war society. In contrast, *Mala gente* is the most explicitly political novel studied here and the one that toys with ambiguity the least. The irony of

Prado's exploration of the Civil War is that he populates his novel with varying postures toward memory—which represent the different voices in the contemporary debates, thus fostering a polyphonic environment that eschews the authority of a singular discourse—while advocating in concrete terms for an uncompromising and unapologetic call for judgement against the crimes perpetrated by Franco and his Nationalist army during and after the war.

The issue of irony, then, is essential to understanding how these texts exemplify, and give self-aware narrative form to, the literary means by which the war is “worked through” in the present. Indeed, the parallel questioning of narrative and historical authorities is at its heart a question of memory ethics. While each novel demonstrates a subtly different politics of memory, albeit all under the same anti-Francoist/pro-Republican values, they all articulate a sense of obligation toward the Civil War, to preventing the loss of memory, to preserving a voice for those that have previously been denied. And yet, they do so by questioning the present's ability to fully engage with its past. By portraying history as a narrative construct alongside the literary realm, these novels concede to the impossibility of objective and absolute historical truth, while simultaneously affirming the imperative to remember. The tension that results from this paradox is allowed to remain unresolved here due to the permissive character of irony. In other words, the need for a national historical memory is not subverted by the uncertainty of authority, but rather ironically enriched by the exploration of memory transfer as a flow of information through the filters of (inherently subjective) human perspective and time. These novels demand that the Civil War be remembered and understood to be an essential element of contemporary Spain's concept of self, but also that such understanding requires recognition of the almost-clichéd adage that there are “truths” outside of the “truth,” particularly in the face of almost four decades of

Francoist controlled historiography. Cercas and Prado express this notion through the ironic suggestion of non-fiction, while Rivas and Marsé do so through the fantastic tales told by their ironic narrators. Although Marsé's perspective on the war results from personal experience, the postmemory of his foetal narrator embodies the postmemory of Cercas, Rivas, Prado, and all other writers of today and the tomorrow for whom the war is as it has been represented in these novels: the product of narrative and historical (re)construction, operating in parallel, from an openly retrospective present.

In this study I sought to identify the way in which irony constitutes a defining aspect of self-aware memory narrative with regard to the Spanish Civil War in four novels from the past decade. It is certain that the preceding analysis, in response to the original questions posed, leads to many more questions as I conclude. In short, where do we go from here? How have other works addressed their own identity—if, in fact they have done so—as artistic artefacts of historical confrontation? Consider again, for example, the most recent book by Cercas in which, as mentioned, he examines the events surrounding the attempted coup of 23-F. Addressing his decision to craft a narrative about this particular moment, Cercas echoes the ironic claims of his narrator-self in *Soldados*—though seemingly without irony here—stating, “Hay muchas ficciones y muchas leyendas sobre el 23-F. Por eso yo decidí prescindir de la ficción. Mi trabajo ha sido como el de una asistenta, me he dedicado a limpiar la casa de falsedades, pero aún así seguirán existiendo leyendas sobre el 23-F.” In contrast, Rosa's aforementioned-novel *¡Otra maldita novela sobre la Guerra Civil!* openly plays with its own artifice and self-aware existence as part of the contemporary boom of historical fiction. Why are certain authors, like Rosa, turning more and more to irony as a means by which they approach the war (and historical memory in general), while others, like Cercas, are leaving it behind in favour of more “straight-forward” narratives? Perhaps even

more interesting is the question of how future works will address their own identity with regard to the nation's past. How will the increasingly transnational Spanish culture, for example, approach the more traditional, collective historical experiences of the Civil War and Franco regime? How will irony shape these narratives? Indeed, *will* irony shape these narratives? This critical discussion lies in wait as one anticipates the release of Almodóvar's next film and other works as-yet-unknown. What is certain is that the Civil War—and, indeed, issues of historical memory in general—will continue to be given voice through Spanish literary and cinematographical production. As such, one should respond to the question of where we go from here by continuing to explore Spain's evolving historical narratives, the artistic invention of its fictional narratives, and the intersection where the two meet.

Notes

¹ Ealham and Richards cite studies by Díez Nicolás, Abellán, and Richards (2002-2003) in support of their statistics.

² See Carlos E. Cué's article in *El País* "El congreso, sin el apoyo del PP, declara 2006 Año de la Memoria" (2006).

³ See Cué's article in *El País* "La ley de memoria se aprueba entre aplausos de invitados antifranquistas" (2007).

⁴ See the article published on 17 October 2008 in *El País*, "Una forma de rehabilitación ante el silencio desplegado hasta la fecha" and José Yoldi's article from the same year, "La justicia de los vencidos." Garzón, a controversial figure in Spain due to his high profile investigations, made headlines in 1998 for his proceedings against Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. It is symptomatic of Spain's relationship with its past dictator that another nation's regime was judged before its own.

⁵ For a collections of essays that question the celebratory tone surrounding discourses of the Transition, see *Disremembering the Dictatorship: The Politics of Memory in the Spanish Transition to Democracy*, edited by Joan Ramon Resina.

⁶ With respect to the debate surrounding memory, Colmeiro provides the following breakdown of differing perspectives: "No faltan entre estos pensadores quienes critican públicamente la falta de memoria, la necesidad de recuperarla y de combatir la amnesia histórica en la España contemporánea, . . . como uno de los males crónicos de nuestro tiempo. Para otros, sin embargo, estamos experimentando una inflación de memorias. Algunos acusan su subjetividad y escasa fiabilidad, ubicada en el campo fértil del personalismo y la tergiversación, . . . criticando la compulsión rememoriadora generalizada, .

... mientras otros, en cambio hacen alabanzas al olvido como una necesaria parte catártica de la memoria colectiva . . . o hacen llamadas al necesario equilibrio entre memoria y olvido” (13-14).

⁷ The ARMH is an organization that seeks to uncover mass graves from the Civil War and Francoist repression and exhume and identify the remains of the victims therein. For more information, see their website: <http://www.memoriahistorica.org>. It is also worth pointing out that before Spain’s own official recognition of the crimes of the dictatorship, in 2002 the United Nations included Spain on its list of countries with unidentified victims in mass graves as the result of previous crimes against humanity. See Cué’s article in *El País* “La ONU pide que se investigue dónde están enterrados republicanos fusilados tras la guerra” (2002).

⁸ Ofelia Ferrán notes that Silva borrows the terminology used in reference to the Latin-American military dictatorships as a conscious means of connecting Spain’s often (self)censored approach to the Franco era and the less polemical, more visible advocacy for the “disappeared” across the Atlantic: “The use of the term ‘desaparecido’ [disappeared] to describe the people presumed to be interred in mass graves in Spain, but whose exact location is unknown, is one that Emilio Silva consciously assumed in order to evoke the experience of various Latin American countries, including Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay, that have experienced military dictatorships and massive human rights violations” (20).

⁹ Although originally from Madrid, Semprún fought with the French resistance during World War II, was imprisoned in Buchenwald, and spent the remainder of the Francoist period as a resident of France. From 1988 to 1991 Semprún was the Minister of Culture in Felipe González’s government (PSOE).

¹⁰ In *El mono del desencanto. Una crítica de la transición española (1973-1993)*, Teresa Vilarós underlines the inherent tensions of the Transition as a period characterized by its often unresolved “tug-of-war” between competing urges. “[L]a tensión,” she explains, “se escribió en conflicto inconsciente como un estado de pasaje al que los españoles y españolas, adictos sin saberlo al régimen dictatorial, llegamos de forma brusca y que quedó colgado entre la modernidad y su pos, entre el duelo y la celebración, entre la producción y la destrucción, entre la esperanza y el desencanto” (21).

¹¹ Famously, the tourist slogan for Spain under the Franco regime was “Spain is Different.”

¹² See chapter two for more information on the so-called “Generación del Kronen.”

¹³ Moreno-Nuño calls this the “dilemma of the second generation:” “el conflicto entre la necesidad de la representación de la memoria del evento traumático y la imposibilidad de representar una memoria inexistente porque no es la memoria propia” (294).

¹⁴ The Spanish Civil War’s influence on the literary realm was not limited to works written by Spaniards in Spanish. With participation by Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, the Soviet Union, and the International Brigades, the Civil War was an international affair and was documented as such in novels such as Ernest Hemingway’s *For Whom the Bells Toll* (1940) and *L’espoir* (1938) by André Malraux, and in memorialistic texts such as George Orwell’s *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), an account of his time in the communist militia POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista), and his escape when the party became the focus of Stalinist purges due to its suspected Trotskyite sympathies.

¹⁵ A possible factor that warrants mention but that is outside of the scope of this study is the rise of the “Grandes Editoriales.” For a negative take on the commercialization of the literary market during the current democratic era and what he claims to be the subsequent

rise in mediocrity, see M. García Viñó's *La novela española del siglo veinte*. In it, García Viñó cites Javier Marías, Antonio Muñoz Molina, Almudena Grandes, and Rosa Montero as examples of favoured writers of the era being propped up by the "Grandes Editoriales" (curiously, all four have published notable works in which the Civil War or Franco regime maintain central importance). "Ninguno de los cuatro," he states with intentional contempt, "es un verdadero novelista" (199).

¹⁶ For more on Halbwachs's definitions of, and distinctions between, these two concepts, see *The Collective Memory* (1950).

¹⁷ Aguilar Fernández notes that "collective memory" is itself an assemblage of different collective memories: "En el estudio de la memoria de la Guerra Civil, el sujeto depositario de la misma es, efectivamente, colectivo, lo cual no quiere decir que todas las personas del mismo grupo posean igual memoria factual de un mismo episodio histórico. . . . Además, no sólo ocurre que cada grupo de edad comparte memorias peculiares; también podría hablarse de la existencia de memorias específicas derivadas de la región, la clase social, el sexo, la profesión, y otras variables" (*Memoria* 26). Nevertheless, while she acknowledges the pluralistic nature of even a collective memory, Aguilar Fernández also underscores the existence of a historical memory, a potentially heterogeneous though certainly hegemonic impulse, that places the nation in dialogue with its past: "Podríamos decir que la memoria histórica de una nación es aquella parte del pasado que, debido a una coyuntura concreta, tiene capacidad de influir sobre el presente, tanto en sentido positivo (ejemplo a seguir), como en sentido negativo (contraejemplo, situación repulsiva que hay que evitar)" (*Memoria* 35-36). Indeed, the ethics of historical memory for many in Spain today results from a sense of obligation toward keeping the violent dictatorial past in the national consciousness so as to

avoid a return to authoritarian rule or, at the least, that the freedoms guaranteed by the new, democratic constitution are not “taken for granted.”

¹⁸ Ferrán’s study of “metamemory texts” deals with the narrativization of “working through” memory in works from the sixties to the nineties by Jorge Semprún, Juan Benet, María Teresa León, Montserrat Roig, and Antonio Muñoz Molina. Although I approach a corpus from a more contemporary era and from a distinct critical perspective, the issues of self-awareness and historical memory common to both treatments place Ferrán’s work in close dialogue with the present study. This is particularly evident in my analysis of *Rabos de lagartija*.

¹⁹ See Wadda C. Ríos-Font’s chapter “Literature and Propaganda: Agustín de Foxá’s and Ramón J. Sender’s Novels of the Civil War” in her book *The Canon and the Archive: Configuring Literature in Modern Spain*. This dynamic is also discussed in chapter three with regard to nostalgia and the Republic in *El lápiz del carpintero*.

²⁰ Written between 1939 and 1967, the six novels of the series are: *Campo cerrado* (1943), *Campo abierto* (1945), *Campo de sangre* (1951), *Campo del moro* (1963), *Campo francés* (1965), and *Campo de Almendros* (1967).

²¹ Barea’s adopted home in exile was England. The three volumes—*La forja*, *La ruta*, and *La llama*—were all published in instalments as English translations in the forties before being published together in Spanish in 1951.

²² Herzberger articulates the relationship between the memory novel and the previously influential works of social realism: “The novel of memory clearly stands with social realism in opposing the historiography of the Regime. In contrast to social realistic fiction, however, it strips history of its structured oneness, of its mythical enactment of progression, and most

importantly, of its discourse that disaffirms dissent in the narrative capturing of the past” (*Narrating* 67).

²³ At this point it is worth mentioning that I recognize the over-simplification inherent to statements that suggest a sudden rupture occurred in Spanish social reality on 20 November 1975 when Franco died. As historians such as Santos Juliá have demonstrated, the “opening up of the country” thanks to the “implantation, in short, of a capitalist market economy” initiated an evolution of social change that began in the sixties (105).

²⁴ See Rosalía Cornejo-Parriego’s “Genealogía esquizofrénica e identidad nacional en *Malena es un nombre de tango*.”

²⁵ *El corazón helado* was voted the “Libro del Verano” by Casa del Libro, one of Spain’s largest retailer of books, and spent many weeks on the best-seller list.

²⁶ “[W]hat I want to call postmodernism,” Hutcheon explains, “is fundamentally contradictory, resolutely historical, and inescapably political” (*Poetics* 4). She also notes that the term “postmodern” enjoys a plurality of meaning, though she does recognize two distinct “sides:” “Whatever the confusion over the definition of the term, however, in terms of evaluation there are two clearly opposed ‘camps’ in the postmodern wars: the radically antagonistic and the provisionally supportive” (*Politics* 16). Vance R. Holloway has made a similar observation: “Existen, esencialmente, dos vertientes de posmodernismo vigentes en los años ochenta y noventa. La primera se asocia con nombres tan conocidos de Jean François Lyotard, Fredric Jameson e Ihab Hassan. La segunda se relaciona con críticos, algunos muy representativos, como John Barth, Umberto Eco, Charles Jencks, Linda Hutcheon y Brian McHale” (41-42).

²⁷ Jenkins too confirms that the “end of history” does not mean that the past didn’t happen, but that it has lost its significance for the present: “It did occur, and in exactly the way it did. But it is an imaginary with respect to the historical meaning and understandings, the significances and purposes it has been deemed to have for us, both as a whole and in its parts” (14).

²⁸ This acceptance of a heterogeneous breakdown of authoritative voice is pertinent to the context of post-Franco Spanish narrative given the previous control of discourse by the dictatorship. See Herzberger (1995).

²⁹ See Joseph A. Dane for a comparison of Bakhtin’s dialogism and irony (186).

³⁰ Explaining the close connection between irony and the ethicopolitical, Hutcheon states, “Irony removes the security that words mean only what they say. So too does lying, of course, and that is why the ethical as well as the political are never left far beneath the surface in discussions of the use of and responses to irony (*Irony’s Edge* 14).

³¹ As Margalit clarifies, “Thick relations are grounded in attributes such as parent, friend, lover, fellow-countryman. Thick relations are anchored in a shared past or moored in shared memory. Thin relations, on the other hand, are backed by the attribute of being human. Thin relations rely also on some aspects of being human, such as being a woman or being sick. Thick relations are in general our relations to the near and dear. Thin relations are in general our relations to the stranger and the remote” (7).

³² Paradoxically, it is often the discourse of the victims themselves that impedes the positive potential of memory. As Todorov explains, because their sense of self is intrinsically tied to victimization, memory is used to reinforce such an identity instead of moving beyond it: “Es más ventajoso seguir en el papel de víctima que recibir una reparación por el daño sufrido

(suponiendo que el daño sea real): en lugar de una satisfacción puntual, conservamos un privilegio permanente, asegurándonos la atención y, por tanto, el reconocimiento de los demás” (*Los abusos* 54).

³³ See Nora’s “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire” for a more in-depth examination of how different material and symbolic entities carry and communicate a sense of memory. Nora’s concept has been used within the specific context of post-Franco Spanish literature. Moreno-Nuño, for example, states that recent narratives act as spaces of memory and cites a variety of recent studies that also place Nora’s theories at the base of their analyses of the Spanish cultural context (15 n. 3).

³⁴ Herzberger also notes that the ethical debates surrounding memory are not worked through in a political vacuum: “to know when to forget or to remember, and to know in what manner either should be carried out is vexed by political, social, and cultural encumbrances” (“Spanishness” 11). It is from this point of view that I return to the idea of a “politically distanced” representation of the war through myth in the sixties and later in the eighties; these works still demonstrate an inherently political posture despite the apparent mythification of history. “[I]t would not be accurate to say that in these narratives the ‘poetic’ confronts the political;” explains Resina, “much less that it conceals it. On the contrary, politics are never far from them, for at bottom they *are* political tales” (italics in the original; “Introduction” 9).

³⁵ Amago explains, “In the cultural context of twentieth-century Spain, the study of metafiction has tended to center on the writings of Unamuno, to whom Alter, Scholes, and Robert Spire all devote chapters” (21).

³⁶ In fact, Ridruejo is represented in very critical terms in *Mala gente*. Responding to why this is the case, Prado explains, “Muchas personas me han preguntado por qué elegí precisamente a Ridruejo para encarnar el espanto de la Falange en mi novela *Mala gente que camina*. ¿Por qué él, si muchos otros fueron más indecentes, sacaron más provecho del Régimen y no dijeron nunca una palabra sobre la sangre que manchaba sus camisas azules? Y la respuesta siempre es la misma: justo por eso, porque él se ha convertido en la gran coartada, en el ejemplo que parece justificar a los demás y, por extensión, absorberlos [sic]” (“La distancia” 193).

³⁷ In order to distinguish between Javier Cercas, flesh-and-blood writer, and “Javier Cercas,” protagonist and narrator, all references to the novelistic character will be written in quotations marks.

³⁸ Both Sánchez Mazas and his son Sánchez Ferlosio are examples of one of the characteristic recurring themes in *Soldados*: the fictionalization of real life figures. Sánchez Mazas (1894-1966) was a poet and a founding member of the Falange. After the outbreak of the Civil War, Sánchez Mazas sought asylum in the Chilean embassy to avoid imprisonment. While trying to flee the country in 1937, he was arrested and sent to the prison-ship “Uruguay,” where he remained until shortly before the attempted execution. As mentioned in the Introduction, Sánchez Ferlosio is the author of one of post-war Spain’s most famous novels, *El Jarama*.

³⁹ Pascual Aguilar, another “real” character, self-published his book *Yo fui asesinado por los rojos* in 1981. The other witnesses to Sánchez Mazas’s tale, the “amigos del bosque,” are likewise actual people. In fact, the surviving members—along with Chicho Sánchez, another

son of Sánchez Mazas—are featured as themselves with their own testimonies in Trueba’s film version.

⁴⁰ Recently deceased, the Chilean writer Roberto Bolaño (1953-2003) is best known for his award winning novel *Los detectives salvajes* (1998) and his sprawling opus 2666, published posthumously in 2004, in which he confronts the violence in a fictionalized version of Ciudad Juárez.

⁴¹ See Chapter three for more on the post-Franco democratic interest in establishing a line of inheritance from the pre-Franco democracy of the Second Republic.

⁴² The author’s splitting of self between Cercas and “Cercas” can be viewed as the reverse dynamic to that of the previously-mentioned *Autobiografía de Federico Sánchez* by Semprún. While Semprún uses his pseudonym, a fictional name, to create a novelistic version of his real self, Cercas uses his real name to create a fictional character outside of his real self.

⁴³ Other works of narrative by Cercas include *El móvil* (1987), *La velocidad de la luz* (2005), and *La verdad de Agamenón* (2006).

⁴⁴ See Jesús Ruiz Mantilla’s interview with the author on *El País.com*.

⁴⁵ It is this sense of irony behind the author/protagonist dynamic that distinguishes the narrative exposition in the present of a “true story” from the Civil War in *Soldados* from the previously-mentioned *Enterrar a los muertos*. Although both works give place to the novelization of people and places from the real world, the claim to non-fictional fidelity is ironic in Cercas’s novel, but sustained without irony in that of Martínez del Pisón.

⁴⁶ The connection between truth and quality of the story given by Bolaño has been applied to the novel itself. Jordi Gracia, for example, states that “*Soldados de Salamina* es una novela

verdadera porque es una buena novela literaria; yo diría, incluso, una novela tan perdurable como las de antes” (25).

⁴⁷ The writer Andrés Trapiello has published works in a variety of genres, including poetry, narrative fiction, and essay. A notable example of the latter is his award-winning book *Las armas y las letras. Literatura y Guerra Civil 1936-1939*. In addition, Trapiello has edited and published books by several Spanish poets, including Sánchez Mazas.

⁴⁸ As one can see, López-Quñones does recognize the paradox of a fictional approach to history within a fictional text, but there is no comment on the sense of ironic tension that this juxtaposition might create.

⁴⁹ As will be explored in Chapter three, *El lápiz* also gives central importance to a Falangist character: the narrator Herbal.

⁵⁰ While support for the Franco dictatorship has become taboo in the democratic era, it is worth noting that support for the Republic is certainly not universal and, in fact, there are former members of the dictatorship who are still active in politics today. Manuel Fraga de Iribarne, for example, was a minister under Franco before founding the Partido Popular in the late eighties, a party he now represents as a senator. Even in the literary market, however, there are signs of support for an historical perspective that is more sympathetic to the regime, as demonstrated by the commercial success of Moa's *Los mitos de la Guerra Civil*.

⁵¹ López-Quñones shares the second part of this conclusion while defending his notion of the novel's anti-fictionality: “*Soldados de Salamina* apoya esta reivindicación de la memoria

de los perdedores/exiliados en una estrategia narrativa que podría ser definida como una retórica de la anti-ficcionalidad” (*La guerra* 55).

⁵² As Stam explains, “Bakhtinian ‘dialogism,’ meanwhile, refers in the broadest sense to the infinite and open-ended possibilities generated by all the discursive practices of a culture, the matrix of communicative utterances which ‘reach’ the text not only through recognizable citations but also through a subtle process of indirect textual relays” (27). Stam places the novel and film in the adaptation dynamic within the “matrix of communicative utterances.”

⁵³ Published on 11 March 1999 in the Cataluña edition of *El País*, “Un secreto esencial” by Javier Cercas does in fact, as the novel implies, address the sixtieth anniversary of the death of Antonio Machado as a point of comparison for the anecdote about Sánchez Mazas.

⁵⁴ As mentioned briefly in the Introduction, Lieutenant Colonel Antonio Tejero of the Guardia Civil became the face of an attempted coup against the democratically elected government of the UCD (Unión de Centro Democrático) on 23 February 1981. As part of a greater conspiracy—for example, tanks also rolled in the streets of Valencia—Tejero stormed Congress and held the deputies hostage for eighteen hours. The events were televised due to a news crew’s presence in the Congress at the time; this is the footage that Trueba includes in the film. The coup lost support and was eventually called off when King Juan Carlos, the official head of state and the military, appeared on television in defence of the democratic system.

⁵⁵ Manuel Machado, Antonio’s brother, was also a poet and seen as an important cultural figure for the Nationalist cause.

⁵⁶ Founded by Mercedes Sanz Bachiller—widow of Onésimo Redondo, the founder of the JONS (Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista), a right-wing party that merged with the Falange in 1934—the “Auxilio Social” was a humanitarian organization that gave aid particularly to children and pregnant women during and after the Civil War. The “Sección Femenina” was the women’s arm of the Falange. Directed by Pilar Primo de Rivera, daughter of the dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera and sister of the Falange’s founder José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the “Sección Femenina” instructed young women how to be good Spanish citizens by being good Christians and good wives. See Carmen Domingo’s *Coser y cantar* (2007).

⁵⁷ Dr. Vallejo Nájera was a leading psychiatrist during the early Franco years and head of psychiatry at the University of Madrid. Regarding Nájera’s theories and their application in the separation of children from their Republican parents in the aftermath of the Civil War, see Eduardo Pons Prades’s *Los niños republicanos en la guerra de España* (2004) and the book (2003) and documentary of the same name made for TV3 (2002), *Los niños perdidos del franquismo*, by Ricard Vinyes, Monste Armengou, and Ricard Belis. This book/television documentary, as will be discussed, is also referenced in the novel.

⁵⁸ Benjamín Prado has published works of poetry, essay, memoirs, and narrative fiction. In addition to *Mala gente que camina*, his novels include *Raro* (1995), *Nunca le des la mano a un pistolero zurdo* (1996), *Dónde crees que vas y quién te crees que eres* (1996), *Alguien se acerca* (1998), *No sólo el fuego* (1999), and *La nieve está vacía* (2000). He has also published a collection of short stories, *Jamás saldré vivo de este mundo* (2003).

⁵⁹For a variety of essays dealing with the “generación X,” see *Generation X Rocks* edited by Christine Henseler and Randolph D. Pope.

⁶⁰ Paul D. Begin, for example, states: “Some critics, such as Germán Gullón, refer to works by authors such as José Ángel Mañas, Ray Loriga, Benjamín Prado, Lucía Etxebarria, and other as ‘Realismo sucio’ (Dirty Realism); however, it is my conclusion that these works share more in common with Generation X production [than with the Dirty Realism works of the eighties]. The use of the term Dirty Realism to describe the works being discussed in this volume is a misapplication, or, as Cintia Santana has so insightfully pointed out, a mistranslation” (n.12, 30).

⁶¹ The Second Republic as an idealized source of nostalgia for contemporary Spanish democracy will be examined in the analysis of *El lápiz del carpintero*.

⁶² “Memoria del Futuro” is a diverse collective of individuals, linked to the Asociación para la recuperación de la memoria histórica, that commemorated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Second Republic. Their manifesto is found on the website of the Fundación Contamíname, www.contaminame.org/memoriadelfuturo, a group that also supports “mestizaje cultural” in Spain. I should be noted that in addition to Prado, Javier Cercas and Manuel Rivas also signed this manifesto.

⁶³ In more than one instance in the novel Urbano refers to Charlotte Brontë herself when listing other writers. The use of her name together with her sisters as separate characters appears to be a deliberate attempt to draw the reader’s attention to the novel as creation.

⁶⁴ As mentioned in the Introduction, Foxá’s *Madrid de corte a checa*, written during the Civil War, paints the Republican opposition in decidedly negative terms. Playwright Miguel Mihura, affiliated with the Falange during the Civil War, is perhaps best known for his comic play “Tres sombreros de copa,” written in 1932 and published in 1947, and his collaboration on the script of Luis García Berlanga’s film *Bienvenido, Mister Marshall* (1953).

⁶⁵ In terms of political commitment, Cela has always been an intriguing case as he can be viewed as of the regime and outside the regime. During the Civil War Cela volunteered to spy on fellow writers, yet he constantly battled the censor throughout his career.

⁶⁶ As mentioned in the Introduction, the desire to unearth common graves is emblematic of the cultural climate of the past decade and gained prominence due to the work of the ARMH. See Silva and Macías. Certainly Prado's support for disinterring Lorca, the most notable of the buried victims, is but one side of an ongoing polemic as many oppose disrupting the dead, for varying motivations. Lorca's family, for example, opposes his disinterment. For a recent report on the controversy surrounding the actions of Judge Garzón and the Andalusian branch of the ARMH, see "¿Van a desenterrar a Lorca?," published in *El País* in September 2008.

⁶⁷ Although it is outside the scope of this analysis, how the novel represents different eras of post-Franco Spain warrants study. While Urbano claims connection to the Republican past as an ideal to uphold, he also regularly cites the excesses of the eighties as a period lived in the present without responsibility. His wife Virginia's Hepatitis infection, due to drug use, represents the consequences of such naive optimism. The present-centric notion of instant gratification behind certain cultural events of the eighties, such as the "movida madrileña," gives way to responsibility toward the past in the twenty-first century as reflected in the evolution of Urbano's motivations.

⁶⁸ In the third novel of her trilogy, *La fuerza del destino*, Josefina Aldecoa also establishes a parallel between the Alzheimer's disease that afflicts her protagonist, an ex-Republican exile, and issues of "collective amnesia."

⁶⁹ The irony of Natalia's indifference toward the past, as Martín-Estudillo notes, is that she works in neurology, a medical field in which memory as a physiological function is of fundamental importance (243).

⁷⁰ See the first section of the Introduction for more on the "Pact of Amnesia" and the current debates surrounding historical memory. For more on this polemic and the motivations behind the different positions, see Aguilar Fernández (1996) and (2001), Vilarós, and Colmeiro.

⁷¹ Defining fantasy as a genre of narrative fiction is particularly problematic given that such a categorization has often been the product of chronologically-based criticism. Mery Erdal Jordan summarizes this view stating, "La narrativa fantástica se configura genéricamente en el siglo XIX, en el cual dominan, sucesivamente, el romanticismo y la escuela realista" (9). Of course, fantasy has not disappeared from literature in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, leading many to reconceptualise the idea of genre in theoretical not historical terms. In his seminal study *The Fantastic. A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, for example, Todorov identifies the defining aspect of fantasy as the unresolvable uncertainty provoked by an intrusion of the supernatural into the natural. The resolution of uncertainty moves the text out of the genre of fantasy and into that of the "uncanny" if the explanation is found in the logic of the real world, or the "marvellous" if the explanation results from an open acceptance of the tale being truly "out of this world" (41). The spirits that populate and interact within the natural order of the narrator's tales in *El lápiz* and *Rabos* may be supernatural beings, or they may be products of the characters' imaginations. To this end, there exists the defining uncertainty on the part of the reader. Nevertheless, the texts do not oblige the reader to attempt any kind of resolution of that tension. Although Todorov states

that the “fantastic confronts us with a dilemma: to believe or not to believe?” (83), it is clear that while the elements of fantasy in these novels might provoke a curious reader to consider such a dilemma, there is certainly no confrontation. Because fantasy here concerns issues of truth, authority, and historical representation, whether or not the supernatural interactions truly break with the natural order or are merely the products of imagination is not pertinent as in either case they represent the impossible dialogue, the unreal in the face of the real. For this reason, I consider the role fantasy *within* the narratives, while ignoring the issue of whether or not they *are* fantastic narratives.

⁷² Referring to Franco’s omnipresent shadow in life, Goytisolo affirms, “Su presencia omnímoda, ubicua, pesaba sobre nosotros como la de un padre castrador y arbitrario que gobernara nuestros destinos por decreto” (15). According to Goytisolo, Franco’s death arrived too late for Spain to escape its negative legacy, for Spain to be spared the infection, to use the author’s illness metaphor, of the dictatorship: “Para haber producido todo su impacto, debería haber llegado 15 años antes, cuando conservaba intacta mi pasión por el país y hubiera podido intervenir en su vida pública con mayor fe y entusiasmo que ahora. En 1975 soy, como dijo el poeta Luis Cernuda, ‘un español sin ganas’—un español que lo es porque no puede ser otra cosa. El daño ha sido también irreparable y él me acomodó a mi manera, sin rencor ni nostalgia” (18).

⁷³ It is worth providing a fragment of this dream-sequence as it is particularly graphic in its portrayal of Franco’s continued intrusion into the post-Franco era. Describing her sexual encounter with another woman on the beach (lesbian desire being, of course, at odds with the dictatorship’s ideology), Natàlia continues, “De pronto, Franco emergió de las aguas, como un Neptuno furioso. Parecía un profeta bíblico a punto de lanzarnos el peor de los anatemas.

Nos separamos despavoridas. . . . El dictador nos prohibía que hiciésemos el amor. En cuanto nos separamos, Franco regresó a las aguas. O al infierno” (144).

⁷⁴ The films studied by Labanyi include Víctor Erice’s *El espíritu de la colmena* (1973) and *El sur* (1983) and Basilio Martín Patino’s *Canciones para después de una guerra* (1971) and *Caudillo* (1976). The novels covered are Llamazares’s *Luna de lobos* and *Escenas de un cine mudo* (1994), Marsé’s *Si te dicen que caí* (1973) and *Ronda del Guinardó* (1984), and Muñoz-Molina’s *Beatus Ille* and *El jinete polaco*. Marsé’s *Si te dicen que caí* will be given particular attention in this study in chapter four as it relates to *Rabos*.

⁷⁵ In his article “Una historia fantasmal: *Soldados de Salamina* de Javier Cercas”, Robert Spires draws a similar conclusion. By focusing on the characters’ inexistence and, thus, lack of carnality, he states that “el hombre real se convierte en personaje irreal, en fantasma” (83).

⁷⁶ Francisco Álamo Felices notes that Rivas based the characters of Da Barca and Marisa Mallo on Galician doctor Francisco Comesaña, also imprisoned and exiled to Mexico, and his wife Conchina Concheiro (78).

⁷⁷ It is clear that there exists a transnational dimension to the issue of historical memory in *El lápiz* given the identity of Maria and the dual-citizenship of Da Barca and his years spent in exile. Although outside the scope of this present study, the way in which the growing heterogeneity of contemporary Spanish society merges with memory and cultural inheritance with regard to the Civil War demands to be considered. That is, one must question how the collective historical traumas of the Civil War and Franco regime are juxtaposed against the emerging identities of present-day Spain, not only in terms of those that are too young to remember the events themselves, but also those that have been excluded from a direct

lineage through exile or those that lack a traditional lineage altogether as they constitute “new Spaniards” due to migration.

⁷⁸ López-Quñones sums up well the place Rivas holds within the Spanish literary field: “Rivas es sin duda el escritor gallego . . . más representativo de la narrativa gallega. Sus obras han sido reconocidas con el Premio Torrente Ballester, el Premio Nacional de Narrativa o el Premio de la Crítica y alguna de sus piezas, como *Un millón de vacas* (1990), *¿Qué me quieres, amor?* (1998) [first published in 1995] y, por supuesto, *El lápiz del carpintero* han obtenido una excelente acogida crítica y comercial. Su estilo compagina una deliberada sencillez, un impresionismo poético, la imitación de la oralidad y la recreación de fábulas populares” (*La guerra* n. 65-66).

⁷⁹ The three short stories are: “La lengua de las mariposas,” “Un saxo en la niebla,” and “Carminia.” How these stories and their film counterpart compare to *El lápiz* in terms of the nostalgic vision of the Second Republic will be analyzed in the final section of this chapter.

⁸⁰ Other novels by Rivas include *Los comedores de patatas* (1991), *En salvaje compañía* (1994), *Bala perdida* (1996), and *La mano del emigrante* (2001). He has also published collections of short stories: *Un millón de vacas* (1990), *Ella, maldito alma* (1999), *Las llamadas perdidas* (2002), and *Cuentos de un invierno* (2005).

⁸¹ Like Cercas and Prado, Rivas is a frequent contributor to *El País*. His commentaries “Boca abajo” (2007) and “El día histórico” (2008) serve as two recent examples of his contributions in support of historical memory of the Civil War and in support of Judge Garzón’s project of disinterring Franco’s victims from their common graves.

⁸² See the introduction to the analysis of *Mala gente* in chapter two.

⁸³ Although only mentioned as another example of the supernatural presences in the novel, it is worth noting that the Hombre de Hierro stands as the harsh counterpoint to the calming presence of the painter. While I will address the painter more at length, it is also appropriate to give an example of the Hombre de Hierro's role in Herbal's attitude: "Así pues, el Hombre de Hierro se lo encontraba bien predispuesto para tender consejos que eran órdenes. Aprenda a sostener la mirada y a dominar con ella, para eso debe apretar los dientes. Hable lo menos posible. Las palabras, por imperiosas y malsonantes que sean, son siempre una puerta abierta a los diletantes, y los más débiles se agarran a ellas como un náufrago al palo del mástil. El silencio, acompañado de gestos rotundos, marciales, tiene un efecto intimidatorio. Las relaciones entre humanos, no se olvide, siempre se establecen en términos del poder. Como entre lobos, el contacto exploratorio deriva en un nuevo orden de cosas: o dominio o sumisión. ¡Y abróchese el botón del cuello de la guerrera, soldado! Usted es un vencedor. Que se enteren" (93-94). In keeping with the political subtext of the novel, it is also worth noting that while the painter exemplifies the positive associations with the Republic, the Hombre de Hierro demonstrates the brutality of Nationalist values.

⁸⁴ The coexistence of spectral figures and those of carnal reality in *Rabos* has also resulted in the suggestion that Marsé's novel too maintains a connection with "Magical Realism." As Kwang-Hee Kim states, "quizás sea posible hablar de una representación del *realismo mágico*, aunque las situaciones extraordinarias, plasmadas en *Rabos de lagartija*, tienen poco que ver con las que se dan normalmente en la literatura hispanoamericana (*El cine* 157).

⁸⁵ In group executions, as described in chapter nine of *El lápiz*, one prisoner was often spared. This prisoner would return to the prison as a witness and would thus spread the fear of death. The painter urges Herbal to volunteer so that he might spare Da Barca.

⁸⁶ As Loureiro also states, “La ocupación mental que sufre el carcelero no es tampoco una alegoría de su posible mala conciencia o de su remordimiento, sino que es una usurpación total de su subjetividad” and that the painter “se convierte periódicamente en Herbal, quien queda transformado en esos momentos en un muñeco animado por el espíritu del muerto” (150). However, this notion that Herbal is entirely powerless and becomes merely the body in which the painter acts belies any quarrels between the guard and his dead prisoner, Herbal’s reluctant and conflicted actions in response to the painter’s requests, and the continued presence of the painter in Herbal’s present-day life.

⁸⁷ Nichols is referring specifically to how the painter helps Herbal by encouraging him to protect Da Barca. It is also clear that the painter’s presence benefits Herbal himself. As the extradiegetic narrator explains, “al fin y al cabo el pintor le daba conversación en las horas de vigilia, en las noches de imaginaria. Y le enseñaba cosas” (89).

⁸⁸ In one case even the actions of Herbal—a far from sanctified character—allude to a moment of Christ’s life as described in the Bible. The description of Herbal’s novel-like document on the activities of Da Barca, “Los abundantes borrones de tinta, cicatrizados con papel secante, parecían vestigios de una fatigosa pelea. De no ser azules, se diría que eran gotas de sangre caídas de la frente del escribano” (45), echoes the anguish of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane when he sweat drops of blood (Luke 22:19).

⁸⁹ See the introduction to the analysis of *Mala gente* in chapter two.

⁹⁰ To clarify, the term “prelapsarian” most commonly refers to the religious notion of a perfect state of being that was corrupted by original sin. Though Martin-Márquez does not define “prelapsarianism,” it is evident that she is drawing parallels between the fall of man

from paradise and the perception that the fall of the Republic constituted the breakdown of an idyllic political entity.

⁹¹ For a more detailed summary of how the term “nostalgia” has evolved in meaning and usage, see Boym, Santesso, and Wilson.

⁹² As mentioned, *El lápiz* has also been adapted to the cinema in a film of the same title, directed by Antón Reixa and released in 2003. The film, however, does not offer any additional, relevant elements to the present study and, therefore, will not be discussed.

⁹³ For a concise summary of the Second Republic’s prioritization of education, see Christopher Cobb’s essay “The Republican State and Mass Educational –Cultural Initiatives 1931-1936.”

⁹⁴ Notable examples include Dolores Medio’s *Diario de una maestra* (1961) and, from the post-Franco era, the previously mentioned trilogy of novels by Josefina Aldecoa that gives light to the triumphs and trials of Republican teachers before and after the war: *Historia de una maestra*, *Mujeres de negro*, and *La fuerza del destino*. For more on the repression of Republican teachers, see Carmen Morán’s article in *El País* “La guerra en las aulas. Represión contra los maestros en la Guerra Civil. Los homenajes de los docentes a sus colegas muertos en la contienda de 1936 recuperan su memoria.”

⁹⁵ For more on this brotherly dynamic—also an echo of the Cain and Abel theme—and the importance of Antonio Machado to the Republican cause, see Ian Gibson’s *Cuatro poetas en guerra*. As Gibson notes, “A lo largo de toda la guerra, el poeta luchará por que su pluma valga como eficaz arma bélica” (48). It should also be mentioned that verses by Antonio Machado continue to be quoted as affirmations of support for the Republic, and leftist politics in general. Indeed, in this study I have already given attention to such a connection;

the death of the Republican poet is represented in contrast to a Nationalist counterpart (Sánchez Mazas) in *Soldados*, while *Mala gente* takes its title directly from one his poems. The title of another recent novel dealing with the Civil War—Almudena Grandes's *El corazón helado*, to cite an example outside of the corpus—is also an allusion to a poem by Antonio Machado: “Una de las dos Españas ha de helarte el corazón . . .”

⁹⁶ Agustín de Foxá's novel *Madrid de corte a checa* provides a clear example of the Nationalist discourse equating Republican ideals with deficiencies in character and physical appearance, particularly within the realm of sexuality. As Wadda C. Ríos-Font explains, “In *Madrid de corte a checa*, characters identified with the Republican side and its ascribed values are depicted as repulsive not only in their ideology, but also in their appearance. . . . Left wing politics are the domain of the imperfect, the unsatisfied, and the unfulfilled, of those whose intelligence and physical limitations do not allow them access to the higher realms. Most of the negative characterizations, however, have something to do with sexual depravity, and especially homosexuality” (132). To give a more recent example, Carlos Saura's film *¡Ay, Carmela!* (1990), based on the play of the same title by José Sanchis Sinisterra, depicts a Republican theatre company's accidental excursion into Nationalist territory where they are forced to give dramatic performances in which the Republic is portrayed as effeminate and a prostitute. As Ríos-Font explains, however, it should also be pointed out that this propagandistic discourse was also found in Republican works depicting Nationalists as weak and lacking masculinity, such as Ramón Sender's *Contraataque*. Referring to this novel Ríos-Font notes that ideology is represented as “(Nationalist) effeminacy versus (Republican) virility” (139). It is this notion of virility that Da Barca embodies in *El lápiz*.

⁹⁷ As Harney explains, the idealized characterization of the Painter, Da Barca and other Republicans is matched by the demonization of the Nationalists: “Moreover, the antagonists are as vicious as the protagonists are exemplary. The Falangists are cruelly sadistic, as are Herbal’s father and brother-in-law; the bureaucrats are expedient and self-serving, the clergy are hypocritical” (35-36).

⁹⁸ It should be made clear that we have provided an example of Republican atrocities merely to demonstrate the kind of actions that have been excluded from Rivas’s representation, not to reinforce the Nationalist ideology that used such incidences as justification for their uprising against the democratically elected government. As Sebastian Balfour states of conduct during the Civil War, “Neither the Republican authorities nor the political parties on the left sanctioned such reprisals. Indeed, they condemned such violence and soon restored democratic order in the Republican zone. The savage repression perpetrated by the Nationalist side, however, was an official, systematic, and calculated strategy of dissuasion aimed at eliminating the ‘enemies’ of Spain” (257).

⁹⁹ A counter-discourse to this sanitized version of the Republican hero is found in the previously mentioned novel *Madrid, de corte a checa*. Ríos-Font explains that the novel’s thesis revolves around the depiction of Republicans as “savage beings impelled by centuries of deprivation (the result of their natural social inferiority) to destroy the highest representatives of civilization” (130). As a novel that clearly serves propagandistic purposes, Foxá’s work justifies Nationalist ideology by placing emphasis on the more extreme and violent elements of the loosely-knit Republican alliance.

¹⁰⁰ As mentioned in the Introduction, Orwell’s work describes his affiliation with the anti-Stalinist POUM and escape from Spain when the party became illegal due to its supposed

affiliation with Trotsky, while *Enterrar a los muertos* is about the true story of the death of Republican José Robles Pazos at the hands of the communist apparatus.

¹⁰¹ López-Quñones calls the vision of the past in *El lápiz* “un boceto de unos antepasados cuyo recuerdo no avergüenza ni incomoda” (*La guerra* 74).

¹⁰² Matching the defining characteristics already put forth here, Boym recognizes both nostalgia’s “utopic dimension” and its determination “by needs of the present” (xiv-xvi).

¹⁰³ Ferrán’s work on postmemory as an explicitly named theory centres on her study of Antonio Muñoz Molina, particularly on his novels *Beatus Ille*, and *El jinete polaco* (1991).

¹⁰⁴ Lourdes Gabikagojeaskoa draws a parallel between Rosa and Homer’s Penelope as both women knit/sew and wait for their husbands to return (17). Nevertheless, Gabikagojeaskoa explains that while Penelope and Odysseus belong to the privileged class possessing a palace and many lands, Rosa and Víctor are the poor losers the Civil War (18). Also notable is the fact that Odysseus is a heroic figure while Víctor is, as I will demonstrate, completely devoid of any idealization.

¹⁰⁵ Born Juan Fonseca, Marsé was orphaned when his mother died after childbirth and adopted by the Marsé family. Autobiographical references are commonplace in his work. For example, William M. Sherzer refers to Marsé’s adolescence spent working in a jewellery shop and his subsequent time spent in Paris as being reflected in the author’s early novels: “el protagonista de *Encerrados con un solo juguete*, Andrés Ferrán, trabaja en un taller de joyería y es en cierto sentido un personaje autobiográfico. También lo es, aunque menos, Paco J. Bodega, de *La oscura historia de la prima Montse*, en el hecho de que desempeña un trabajo en París, parecido al de Marsé mismo (un compañero de Marsé allí se llama, en efecto, Bodegas)” (20). As Marsé himself states in an on-line interview with Juan Cruz, “A

mí lo que me gusta decir es que mi biografía, la que yo conozco de mis padres adoptivos, está ya en mis novelas. En algunas está enmascarada, a veces está más explícita, pero está ahí.”

¹⁰⁶ Kwang-Hee Kim summarizes, “Con la excepción de *La muchacha de las bragas de oro* (1978) y *El amante bilingüe* (1990) . . . Marsé ha ubicado siempre sus relatos en la posguerra española, haciendo especial hincapié en la década de los cuarenta. Todas sus obras reflejan de modo ejemplar la incertidumbre social y política de aquellos años, provocada como resultado de una devastadora contienda—la guerra civil española—y de sus consiguientes represalias políticas” (“La desmitificación”173).

¹⁰⁷ Esquerra Republicana was a Catalan left Republican party while PSUC is the Partido Socialista Unificado de Cataluña, a Catalan communist party.

¹⁰⁸ Marsé has enjoyed much critical and commercial success culminating in being granted the Premio Cervantes for 2008, the most prestigious award for Spanish language literature. The following is the complete list of Marsé’s novelistic bibliography and some of the more notable awards he has won: *Encerrados con un solo juguete* (1961), finalist for the Biblioteca Breve; *Esta cara de luna* (1962); *Últimas tardes con Teresa* (1965), Biblioteca Breve; *La oscura historia de la prima Montse* (1970); *Si te dicen que caí* (1973), Premio Internacional de Novela “México;” *La muchacha de las bragas de oro* (1978), Premio Planeta; *Un día volveré* (1982); *Ronda del Guinardó* (1984), Premio Ciudad de Barcelona; *Teniente Bravo* (1987); *El amante bilingüe* (1990), Premio Ateneo de Sevilla; *El embrujo de Shanghai* (1993), Premio Nacional de la Crítica; *Rabos de lagartija* (2000), Premio Nacional de Narrativa and Premio Nacional de la Crítica; *La gran desilusión* (2004); *Canciones de amor en Lolita’s Club* (2005).

¹⁰⁹ The *maquis*, guerrilla participants in armed resistance after the Civil War, constitutes another theme of contemporary Spanish historical narrative. Marsé's "demythologising" of the post-war resistance stands in contrast to Julio Llamazares's explicitly mythological *Luna de lobos*, to cite a notable example, in which the *maquis* are compared to werewolves, the "living dead" as Labanyi puts it, "who bury themselves in caves or underground during the day, and emerge only at night" ("History" 76).

¹¹⁰ Summarizing the relationship between *Rabos* and *Si te dicen* with regard to their political implications, Kim reiterates, "En *Rabos de lagartija* su visión sigue siendo analítica, al igual que en *Si te dicen que caí*; no le interesa acusar a un partido político en concreto ni revolver el pasado para encontrar responsables. Lo que le preocupa es que asistamos a las monstruosas consecuencias de la guerra y que nos replanteemos si realmente existe la necesidad de acudir a estos conflictos inhumanos" ("La desmitificación" 194).

¹¹¹ Referring to the importance of the cinema, for example, Labanyi explains, "The cinema is also central to the topography of the barrio in Marsé's novels, where its spectral images form the basis of the construction of popular memory, allowing the past to endure as a ghostly presence that cannot be suppressed precisely because it lacks tangible form. The jumble of film images and snatches of historical memory in the adventure stories told by the boys in *Si te dicen que caí* . . . makes the point that the status of history, particularly but not only under censorship, is that of ghost haunting the present: not there but there" ("History" 68).

¹¹² In addition to *Si te dicen que caí*, Labanyi addresses the close relationship between history, particularly that of the Civil War and dictatorial consequences, and its veiled representation through myth in Luis Martín-Santos's *Tiempo de silencio* and Juan Benet's *Volverás a Región*. It should also be clarified that "mythification," as it is used here by

Labanyi in reference to the tall tales of the boys' *aventis*, does not constitute a portrayal of the nostalgic impulse to idealize past figures, such as Republicans or *maquis* (as mentioned, Marsé destabilizes such characterizations in both *Rabos* and *Si te dicen*), but rather describes the counter-discourse to the fact-based realm of traditional history. "The mythology on which his novel draws," explains Labanyi, "is in part that of Francoist ideology but more fundamentally that of the movies, comics and pulp fiction that coloured the imagination of a working-class boy growing up in Barcelona in the 1940s" (*Myth* 135).

¹¹³ The disappearance of Víctor Bartra continues the lack of paternal figures in Marsé's work. As the author himself notes in the interview with Juan Cruz: "Hay . . . una constante en mis novelas: lo del padre ausente; o está en el exilio, o está oculto, o está muerto. El padre ausente. Eso probablemente tiene que ver con mi biografía." Considering his last statement, it is important to remember that Marsé's father gave him up for adoption after the death of his mother during childbirth and that his adoptive father was imprisoned during the author's childhood for subversive activities.

¹¹⁴ As Sherzer maintains, "el autor borra completamente la quizás ilusoria división entre realidad y ficción. Esto subraya lo que ya hemos visto como punto referente de la novela: que en la inmediata posguerra nadie sabía lo que era realidad y lo que era ficción. Pero también expresa cierta filosofía sobre la realidad en sí, que cada cual crea su propia realidad, inventando, y así podemos justificar la invención del novelista, que termina siendo tan real como la realidad que se nos impone desde afuera" (42). Adding to Sherzer's comments, Heike Scharm Cannon explains that if we accept *Si te dicen* to be "una obra genuinamente realista, no lo es a pesar de su complejidad estructural, sino en gran parte debido a ella,"

adding that the fragmented voices (and, we might add, the fragmentation of the real through fantasy) result in “un realismo más auténtico y convincente” (204-209).

¹¹⁵ It should also be pointed out that fantasy is also a notable presence in another of Marsé’s novels that deals with historical memory: *La muchacha de las bragas de oro*. However, in this novel in which an ex-Falangist seeks to reinvent himself after the death of Franco, the use of fantasy is carefully orchestrated by the narrator, corresponding to his desire to control his own historical narrative, instead of the more organic nature of fantasy as a by-product of post-war confusion in *Si te dicen*. “La fantasía existe en *La muchacha*,” explains Sherzer, “pero es una fantasía totalmente manejada por el autor/narrador, mientras que en *Si te dicen que caí*, quizás la novela más objetiva de Marsé, el autor desaparece y la fantasía se instala como sucedáneo” (32).

¹¹⁶ There are numerous instances in Spanish literature and film of the photograph being touted as a powerful anchor of memory through which the past and present are bound. The photograph is one of the titular marks of identity for Álvaro Mendiola in Juan Goytisolo’s *Señas de identidad* and the absent father, Leopoldo Panero, is made omnipresent through the constant evocation of photography in Jaime Chávarri’s documentary *El desencanto* (1976), to give a couple of examples.

¹¹⁷ The intimate relationship between photography and the phantasm is another common element shared between *Rabos* and *Si te dicen*. As Labanyi states, “Photographs, like film stills, play an important role as images of a fragmentary, discontinuous, spectral past in *Si te dice que caí*” (“History” 69).

¹¹⁸ That is, while the pleasure-seeking frivolity of the *Movida* in itself carried a political charge in response to the ultra-Catholicism of the dictatorship, it did not signal an open political project of national historical resolution, nor of future development. “Almodóvar states,” explain Kathleen M. Vernon and Barbara Morris, “that frivolity became, for all practical purposes, a political posture in itself” (11).

¹¹⁹ The book to which Almodóvar is referring is Marcos Ana’s *Decidme cómo es un árbol*, published in 2007.

Works Cited

Primary Authors, Texts, and Films

Cercas, Javier. *Anatomía de un instante*. Barcelona: Mondadori, 2009.

---. *El inquilino*. 1989. Barcelona: Acantilado, 2002.

---. *El móvil*. 1987. Barcelona: Tusquets, 2003.

---. *El vientre de la ballena*. 1997. Barcelona: Tusquets, 2003.

---. *La velocidad de la luz*. Barcelona: Tusquets, 2005.

---. *La verdad de Agamenón*. Barcelona: Tusquets, 2006.

---. *Relatos reales*. Barcelona: Acantilado, 2000.

---. *Soldados de Salamina*. Barcelona: Tusquets, 2001.

---. "Un secreto esencial." *El País.com* 11 marzo 1999. 2 April 2009.

<http://www.elpais.com/articulo/cataluna/MACHADO/_MANUEL/MACHADO/_ANTONIO/secreto/esencial/JAVIER/CERCAS/elpepiespcat/19990311elpcat_5/Tes>.

Cercas, Javier, and David Trueba. *Diálogos de Salamina. Un paseo por el cine y la*

literatura. Ed. Luis Alegre. Barcelona: Tusquets, 2003.

La lengua de las mariposas. Dir. José Luis Cuerda. Sogetel, 1999.

Marsé, Juan. *Canciones de amor en Lolita's Club*. Barcelona: Areté, 2005.

---. *El amante bilingüe*. 1990. Barcelona: Planeta, 1993.

---. *El embrujo de Shanghai*. 1993. Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 2001.

---. *Encerrados con un solo juguete*. 1960. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1989.

---. *Esta cara de la luna*. 1962. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1982.

---. *La gran desilusión*. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2004.

---. *La muchacha de las bragas de oro*. Barcelona: Planeta, 1978.

---. *La oscura historia de la prima Montse*. 1970. Barcelona: Biblioteca Breve, 1990.

---. *Rabos de lagartija*. Barcelona: Areté, 2000.

---. *Ronda del Guinardó*. 1984. Barcelona: Lumen, 2000.

---. *Si te dicen que caí*. 1973. Ed. William M. Sherzer. Madrid: Cátedra, 1982.

---. *Teniente Bravo*. Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1987.

---. *Últimas tardes con Teresa*. 1966. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1976.

---. *Un día volveré*. 1982. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1989.

Prado, Benjamín. *A la sombra del ángel. 13 años con Alberti*. Madrid: Aguilar, 2002.

---. *Alguien se acerca*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 1998.

---. "Desentierren a Lorca, por favor." *El País.com* 25 junio 2004. 2 April 2009.

<<http://www.elpais.com/articulo/opinion/Desentierren/Lorca/favor/elpepiopi/200406>

25elpepiopi_9/Tes>.

---. *Dónde crees que vas y quién crees que eres*. Madrid: Anaya, 1996.

---. *Jamás saldré vivo de este mundo*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 2003.

---. "La distancia es mirar para otro lado." *Memoria del futuro. 1931-2006*. Ed. Bernardo

Atxaga et. al. Madrid: Visor Libros, 2006. 189-197.

---. *La nieve está vacía*. Madrid: Espasa, 2000.

---. *Los nombres de Antígona*. Madrid: Aguilar, 2001.

---. *Mala gente que camina*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 2006.

---. *No sólo el fuego*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 1999.

---. *Nunca le des la mano a un pistolero zurdo*. Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1996.

---. *Raro*. Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1995.

---. *Un caso sencillo*. Granada: Maillot Amarillo, 1986.

Rivas, Manuel. *Bala perdida*. Madrid: Alfaguara Juvenil, 1996.

---. "Boca abajo." *El País.com* 1 septiembre 2007. 3 April 2009.

<http://www.elpais.com/articulo/ultima/Boca/abajo/elpepiult/20070901elpepiult_2/Tes>.

---. *Cuentos de un invierno*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 2005.

---. "El día histórico." *El País.com* 18 octubre 2008. 3 April 2009.

<http://www.elpais.com/articulo/ultima/dia/historico/elpepiult/20081018elpepiult_1/Tes>.

---. *El lápiz del carpintero*. 1998. Trad. Dolores Vilavedra. Madrid: Suma de Letras, 2000.

---. *Ella, maldita ama*. Trad. Dolores Vilavedra. Madrid: Alfaguara, 1999.

---. *En salvaje compañía*. Madrid: Santillana, 1994.

---. *La mano del emigrante*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 2001.

---. *Las llamas perdidas*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 2002.

---. *Los comedores de patatas*. 1991. *El secreto de la tierra*. Trad. Basilio Losada. Madrid: Alfaguara, 1999.

---. *Los libros arden mal*. Trad. Dolores Vilavedra. Madrid: Alfaguara, 2006.

---. *¿Qué me quieres, amor?* 1995. Trad. Dolores Vilavedra. Madrid: Suma de Letras, 2000.

---. *Un millón de vacas*. Ed. Basilio Losada. Barcelona: Grupo Zeta, 1990.

Soldados de Salamina. Dir. David Trueba. Lolafilms, 2002.

Critical and Theoretical Bibliography

Abellán, José Luis, ed. *El exilio español de 1939*. 6 vols. Madrid: Taurus, 1976.

Aguilar Fernández, Paloma. *Memoria y olvido de la guerra civil española*. Madrid: Alianza, 1996.

---. "Justice, Politics and Memory in the Spanish Transition." *The Politics of Memory:*

Transitional Justice in Democratic Societies. Ed. Alexandra Barahona de Brito,

Carmen González-Enríquez and Paloma Aguilar. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001. 92-118.

Álamo Felices, Francisco. *El tiempo en la novela. Las categorías temporales en El lápiz del carpintero de Manuel Rivas*. Almería: Universidad de Almería, 2002.

Albert, Mechthild. "Oralidad y memoria en la novela memorialística." Winter 21-38.

Allen, Graham. *Intertextuality*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

"Almodóvar prepara una película sobre la Guerra Civil." *El País.com* 19 mayo 2009. 17 June 2009.

<http://www.elpais.com/articulo/cultura/Almodovar/prepara/pelicula/Guerra/Civil/elpepucul/20090519elpepucul_2/Tes>.

Alonso, Santos. *La novela española en el fin de siglo 1975-2001*. Madrid: Marenostum, 2003.

Alter, Robert. *Partial Magic. The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1975.

Amago, Samuel. *True Lies. Narrative Self-consciousness in the Contemporary Spanish Novel*. Lewisburgh: Bucknell UP, 2006.

Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica. 2 April 2009.

<<http://www.memoriahistorica.org/>>.

Bakhtin, M. M. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: U of Texas P, 2004.

Balfour, Sebastian. "Spain from 1931 to the Present." *Spain: A History*. Ed. Raymond Carr. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. 243-282.

Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1981.

Begin, Paul D. "The Pistols Strike Again! On the Function of Punk in the Peninsular

"Generation X" Fiction of Ray Loriga and Benjamín Prado." Henseler and Pope 15-32.

Bertrand de Muñoz, Maryse. "El viaje a las raíces de la memoria personal e histórica y la novela reciente de la guerra civil española." *Castilla: Boletín del Departamento de Literatura Española*. 14 (1989): 15-21.

---. *Guerra y novela. La guerra española de 1936-1939*. Sevilla: Alfar, 2001.

---. *La guerra civil española en la novela: bibliografía comentada*. Madrid: Porrúa, 1982.

Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Best Books, 2001.

Cardús i Ros, Salvador. "Politics and the Invention of Memory. For a Sociology of the Transition to Democracy in Spain." *Resina* 17-28.

Clark, Rosemary. "Normalization and/or and Ethics of Difference: Marsé's *Rabos de lagartija* in a Post-Colonial World." *Journal of Catalan Studies* (2002): 3 April 2009. <<http://www.uoc.es/jocs/5/articles/index.html>>.

Cobb, Christopher. "The Republican State and Mass Educational-Cultural Initiatives 1931-1936." *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction. The Struggle for Modernity*. Ed. Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995. 133-138.

Colmeiro, José F. *Memoria histórica e identidad cultural: De la postguerra a la postmodernidad*. Barcelona: Anthropos, 2005.

Cornejo-Parriego, Rosalía. "Genealogía esquizofrénica e identidad nacional en *Malena es un nombre de tango* de Almudena Grandes." *Encinar and Glenn* 43-59.

Cruz, Juan. Interview with Juan Marsé. "El escritor, o es memoria o es nada." *El País.com* 21 diciembre 2008. 3 April 2009.

<http://www.elpais.com/articulo/portada/escritor/memoria/nada/elpepucul/20081221elpepspor_3/Tes>.

Cué, Carlos E. "El congreso, sin el apoyo del PP, declara 2006 Año de la Memoria." *El País.com* 23 junio 2006. 2 April 2009.

<http://www.elpais.com/articulo/espana/Congreso/apoyo/PP/declara/2006/Ano/Memoria/elpepiesp/20060623elpepinac_16/Tes>.

---. "La ley de memoria se aprueba entre aplausos de invitados antifranquistas." *El País.com* 1 noviembre 2007. 2 April 2009.

<http://www.elpais.com/articulo/espana/ley/memoria/aprueba/aplausos/invitados/antifranquistas/elpepuesp/20071101elpepinac_18/Tes>.

---. "La ONU pide que se investigue dónde están enterrados republicanos fusilados tras la guerra." *El País.com* 16 noviembre 2002. 2 April 2009.

<http://www.elpais.com/articulo/espana/ONU/pide/investigue/estan/enterrados/republicanos/fusilados/guerra/elpepiesp/20021116elpepinac_13/Tes>.

Cuevas Gutiérrez, Tomasa. *Testimonios de mujeres en cárceles franquistas*. Ed. Jorge J.

Montes. Huesca: Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses; Diputación de Huesca, 2004.

Dane, Joseph A. *The Critical Mythology of Irony*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1991.

De la Fuente, Inmaculada. *Mujeres de la posguerra*. Barcelona: Planeta, 2002.

Delibes, Miguel. *España, 1936-1950: Muerte y resurrección de la novela*. Barcelona:

Destino, 2004.

Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Deveny, Thomas. "From Page to Screen: Contemporary Spanish Narratives of the Civil War." Pérez and Aycock 129-138.

- Díaz Arenas, Ángel. *La historia de España (1936-1996) en la literatura española contemporánea*. Madrid: Vosa, 1999.
- Díez Nicolás, Juan. "La mortalidad en la guerra civil española." *Boletín de demografía histórica* 3.1 (1985).
- Domingo, Carmen. *Coser y cantar: las mujeres bajo la dictadura franquista*. Barcelona: Lumen, 2007.
- Domínguez Castro, María Esperanza. "Juan Marsé: esencialismo simbólico." *Dicenda. Cuadernos de Filología Española* 25 (2007): 57-81.
- Eagleton, Terry. *After Theory*. New York: Basic Books, 2003.
- Encinar, Ángeles, and Kathleen M. Glenn, eds. *La pluralidad narrativa. Escritores españoles contemporáneos (1984-2004)*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2005.
- "Entrevista: Benjamín Prado. Los internautas preguntan." *El País.com* 17 mayo 2006. 2 April 2009.
- <http://www.elpais.com/edigitales/entrevista.html?encuentro=2084&k=Benjamin_Prado>.
- Erdal Jordan, Mery. *La narrativa fantástica. Evolución del género y su relación con las concepciones del lenguaje*. Frankfurt: Vervuert; Madrid: Iberoamericana, 1998.
- "Ethics." *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*. Ed. Robert Audi. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995.
- Fernández, Álvaro. "Tensiones posmodernas. Juan Marsé: la lucha por el sentido." *Actas del XIV Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas (III)*. Ed. Isaías Lerner, Robert Nival, and Alejandro Alonso. New York, 2000. 185-191.
- Ferrán, Ofelia. *Working Through Memory. Writing and Remembrance in Contemporary Spanish Narrative*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2007.

- Fidora, Alexander. "La comunicación de la memoria en la obra de Juan Marsé." *Crítica Hispánica* 27.1 (2005): 25-35.
- Folkart, Jessica A. "On Pencils, Places, and the Pursuit of Desire: Manuel Rivas's *El lápiz del carpintero*." *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 40.2 (2006): 297-315.
- Gabikagojeaskoa, Lourdes. "Las mujeres vencidas del franquismo en la narrativa de Juan Marsé." *Ojancano* 33 (2008): 3-29.
- García-Abad García, M^a Teresa. "El cuento en el cine: La realidad inteligente de Manuel Rivas en *La lengua de las mariposas*." *Letras Peninsulares* 16.1 (2003): 227-248.
- García Jambrina, Luis. "De la novela al cine: *Soldados de Salamina* o 'el arte de la traición'." *Ínsula* 688 (2004): 30-32.
- García Martín, José Luis, ed. *La generación del 99. Antología crítica de la joven poesía española*. Oviedo: Nobel, 1999.
- García Urbina, Gloria. "No basta con que callemos. *Mala gente que camina*, de Benjamín Prado: Una reivindicación de la historia completa." *Espéculo. Revista de estudios literarios* 33 (2006): 2 April 2009.
<<http://www.ucm.es/info/especulo/numero33/malagen.html>>.
- García Viñó, M. *La novela española del siglo XX*. Madrid: Endymion, 2003.
- Gibson, Ian. *Cuatro poetas en guerra*. Barcelona: Planeta, 2007.
- Gordon, Avery F. *Ghostly Matters. Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997.
- Goytisolo, Juan. "In Memoriam F.F.B. 1892-1975." *Libertad, Libertad, Libertad*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 1978. 11-19.
- Gracia, Jordi. *Hijos de la razón. Contraluces de la libertad en las letras españolas de la democracia*. Barcelona: Edhasa, 2001.

- Gracia, Jordi, and Marcos Laurel. Interview with Juan Marsé. "Conversando con Juan Marsé." *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos* 628 (2002): 45-57.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *The Collective Memory*. Trans. Francis J. Ditter and Vida Yazdi Ditter. New York: Harper & Row, 1980.
- Handwerk, Gary J. *Irony and Ethics in Narrative. From Schlegel to Lacan*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1985.
- Harney, Lucy D. "Nostalgia, Myth, and Science in Rivas's *El lápiz del carpintero*." Sánchez-Conejero 33-41.
- Henseler, Christine, and Randolph D. Pope, eds. *Generation X Rocks: Contemporary Peninsular Fiction, Film, and Rock Culture*. Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2007.
- Herrmann, Gina. "A Usable Nostalgia for Spain: Oral History and the Novel." *Journal of Romance Studies* 2.2 (2002): 70-90.
- Herzberger, David K. "Reading Fiction through Historiography (or Vice Versa?)." *Spain Today: Essays on Literature, Culture, Society*. Ed. José F. Colmeiro et al. Hanover: Dartmouth College, 1995. 35-44.
- . *Narrating the Past. Fiction and Historiography in Postwar Spain*. Durham: Duke UP, 1995.
- . "Spanishness and Identity Formation From the Civil War to the Present: Exploring the Residue of Time." Sánchez-Conejero 11-20.
- Hirsch, Marianne. "Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile." *Exile and Creativity: Signposts, Travelers, Outsiders, Backwards Glances*. Ed. Susan Rubin Suleiman. Durham: Duke UP, 1996. 418-46.

- . "Projected Memory: Holocaust Photographs in Personal and Public Fantasy." *Acts of Memory. Cultural Recall in the Present*. Ed. Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe and Leo Spitzer. Hanover: UP of New England, 1999. 3-23.
- . "Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory." *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 14.1 (2001): 5-37.
- Holloway, Vance R. *El posmodernismo y otras tendencias de la novela española (1967-1995)*. Madrid: Fundamentos, 1999.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetics of Postmodernism. History, Theory, Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 1988.
- . *Irony's Edge. The Theory and Politics of Irony*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- . "Irony, Nostalgia and the Postmodern." *Methods for the Study of Literature and Cultural Memory*. Ed. Raymond Vervliet and Annemarie Estor. Vol 6. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000. 189-207.
- . *Narcissistic Narrative. The Metafictional Paradox*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- . *The Politics of Postmodernism*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Jackson, Rosemary. *Fantasy, the Literature of Subversion*. London: Methuen, 1981.
- Jenkins, Keith. *Why History? Ethics and Postmodernity*. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Juliá, Santos. "History, Politics, and Culture, 1975-1996." *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture*. Ed. David T. Gies. New York: Cambridge UP, 1999. 104-120.
- Jünke, Claudia. "'Pasarán años y olvidaremos todo': La Guerra Civil española como lugar de memoria en la novela y el cine actuales en España." *Winter*. 101-129.
- Kearny, Richard. "Narrative and the Ethics of Remembrance." Kearny and Dooley 18-32.

- Kearny, Richard, and Mark Dooley, eds. *Questioning Ethics. Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Kenwood, Alun. "Art, Propaganda, Commitment: Hispanic Literature and the War." *The Spanish Civil War. A Cultural and Historical Reader*. Ed. Alun Kenwood. Providence: Berg, 1993. 27-38.
- Kim, Kwang-Hee. *El cine y la novelística de Juan Marsé*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2006.
- . "La desmitificación de los tópicos sociales de la posguerra en la novelística de Juan Marsé." *Anales de la Literatura Española Contemporánea* 31.1 (2006): 173-198.
- Labanyi, Jo. "History and Hauntology; or, What Does One Do with the Ghosts of the Past? Reflections on Spanish Film and Fiction of the Post-Franco Period." *Resina* 65-82.
- . "Introduction: Engaging Ghosts; or, Theorizing Culture in Modern Spain." *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Spain. Theoretical Debates and Cultural Practice*. Ed. Jo Labanyi. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002. 1-14.
- . *Myth and History in the Contemporary Spanish Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989.
- LaCapra, Dominick. *History in Transit: Experience, Identity, Critical Theory*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2004.
- López-Quñones, Antonio Gómez. "La Guerra Civil española: *Soldados de Salamina* de Javier Cercas." *La Palabra y el Hombre* 127 (2003): 115-129.
- . *La guerra persistente. Memoria, violencia y utopía: Representaciones contemporáneas de la Guerra Civil Española*. Madrid: Iberoamericana; Frankfurt: Vervuert, 2006.
- Loureiro, Ángel G. "La vida con los muertos." *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 30.1 (2005): 145-158.
- Luengo, Ana. *La encrucijada de la memoria. La memoria colectiva de la Guerra Civil Española en la novela contemporánea*. Berlin: Edition Tranvía, 2004.

Mainer, José-Carlos. *Tramas, libros, nombres. Para entender la literatura española, 1944-2000*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 2005.

Margalit, Avishai. *The Ethics of Memory*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 2002.

Martín-Estudillo, Luis. "Afterword. The Moment X in Spanish Narrative (and Beyond)." Henseler and Pope 235-245.

Martin-Márquez, Susan. "Spanish Literature and the Language of New Media: From Film Adaptation to Digitized Cultural Interfaces." *The Cambridge History of Spanish Literature*. Ed. David T. Gies. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 739-755.

Memoria del futuro. 1931-2006. 2 April 2009

<<http://www.contaminame.org/memoriadelfuturo/>>.

Moa, Pío. *Los mitos de la Guerra Civil*. Madrid: La esfera de los libros, 2003.

Morán, Carmen. "La guerra en las aulas. Represión contra los maestros en la Guerra Civil." *El País.com* 27 enero 2003. 2 April 2009.

<http://www.elpais.com/articulo/educacion/Represion/maestros/Guerra/Civil/elpedupor/20030127elpepiedu_1/Tes>.

Moreiras Menor, Cristina. *Cultura herida. Literatura y cine en la España democrática*. Madrid: Libertarias, 2003.

Moreno-Nuño, Carmen. *Las huellas de la Guerra Civil. Mito y trauma en la narrativa de la España democrática*. Madrid: Ediciones Libertarias, 2006.

Muecke, D.C. *Irony*. Norfolk, UK: Methuen, 1970.

---. *The Compass of Irony*. London: Methuen, 1969.

Navarro Martínez, Eva. "La novela de Benjamín Prado: Como construirse un mundo y una realidad propios." *Letras Peninsulares* 14.3 (2001): 405-426.

- Neuschäfer, Hans-Jörg. "La memoria del pasado como problema epistemológico: Adiós al mito de las 'dos Españas'." Winter 145-153.
- Nichols, William J. "La narración oral, la escritura y los 'lieux de mémoire' en *El lápiz del carpintero* de Manuel Rivas." Winter 155-176.
- Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: Les lieux de Mémoire." Trans. Marc Roudebush. *Representations* 26 (1989): 7-25.
- Payne, Stanley G. *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic, 1933-1936*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2006.
- Pérez, Janet. "Behind the Lines: The Spanish Civil War and Women Writers." Pérez and Aycock 161-174.
- Pérez, Janet, and Wendell Aycock, eds. *The Spanish Civil War in Literature*. Lubbock, Texas: Texas Tech UP, 1990.
- Pons Prades, Eduardo. *Los niños republicanos en la guerra de España*. Madrid: Oberón, 2004.
- Resina, Joan Ramon, ed. *Disremembering the Dictatorship. The Politics of Memory in the Spanish Transition to Democracy*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000.
- . "Introduction." Resina 1-15.
- . "Short of Memory: The Reclamation of the Past Since the Spanish Transition to Democracy." Resina 83-125.
- Richards, Michael, and Chris Ealham. "History, Memory and the Spanish Civil War: Recent Perspectives." *The Splintering of Spain. Cultural History and the Spanish Civil War, 1935-1939*. Ed. Chris Ealham and Michael Richards. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005. 1-20.

Richards, Michael. "Memory and Historical Consciousness in Post-war Spain."

Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut (2002-2003): 174-92.

Ricoeur, Paul. "Imagination, Testimony and Trust. A dialogue with Paul Ricoeur." Kearny and Dooley 12-17.

---. "Memory and Forgetting." Kearny and Dooley 5-11.

---. *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2004.

Ridruejo, Dionisio. *Casi unas memorias*. Ed. César Armando Gómez. Barcelona: Planeta, 1976.

Ríos-Font, Wadda C. "Literature and Propaganda: Agustín de Foxá's and Ramón J. Sender's Novels of the Civil War." *The Canon and the Archive*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2004. 121-163.

Roas, David. "Voces del otro lado: El fantasma en la narrativa fantástica." *Brujas, demonios y fantasmas en la literatura fantástica hispánica*. Ed. Jaume Pont. Lleida: Edicions Universitat de Lleida, 1999. 93-107.

Rodríguez, Juan. "Juan Marsé en la narrativa española contemporánea." *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos* 628 (2002): 7-16.

---. "Juan Marsé, una mirada irónica sobre la transición (los textos de *Por favor*, 1974-1978)." *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea* 32.1 (2007): 139-178.

Sánchez-Conejero, Cristina. *Spanishness in the Spanish Novel and Cinema of the 20th-21st Century*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007.

Santana, Cintia. "What We Talk About When We Talk About Dirty Realism in Spain." Henseler Pope 33-56.

- Santesso, Aaron. *A Careful Longing. The Poetics and Problems of Nostalgia*. Newark: U of Delaware P, 2006.
- Scharm Cannon, Heike. "Los embrujos de Marsé: Escritura cinematográfica y realismo en *Si te dicen que caí*." *Memoria histórica, género e interdisciplinariedad. Los estudios culturales hispánicos en el siglo XXI*. Ed. Santiago Juan-Navarro & Joan Torres-Pou. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2008. 199-213.
- Scholes, Robert. *Fabulation and Metafiction*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1979.
- Sherzer, William M. Introduction. *Si te dicen que caí*. 1973. By Juan Marsé. Madrid: Cátedra, 1982. 13-49.
- Silva, Emilia, and Santiago Macías. *Las fosas de Franco. Los republicanos que el dictador dejó en las cunetas*. Madrid: Temas de hoy, 2003.
- Spires, Robert C. *Beyond the Metafictional Mode. Directions in the Modern Spanish Novel*. Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1984.
- . "Depolarization and the New Spanish Fiction at the Millennium." *Anales de la Literatura Española* 30.1-2 (2005): 485-512.
- . "Una historia fantasmal: *Soldados de Salamina* de Javier Cercas." Encinar and Glenn 75-88.
- Stam, Robert. "Introduction: The Theory and Practice of Adaptation." *Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation*. Ed. Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005. 1-52.
- Su, John J. *Ethics and Nostalgia in the Contemporary Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005.
- Tasende, Mercedes. "El proceso de mitificación en *El lápiz del carpintero*, de Manuel Rivas." *Monographic Review/Revista Monográfica* 17 (2001): 206-222.

Thomas, Gareth. *The Novel of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1975)*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990.

---. "Tensiones internas y el problema del estilo trágico en la novela de la Guerra Civil española." *La guerra civil española. Arte y violencia*. Ed. Derek Gagen y David George. Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 1990. 13-28.

Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Fantastic. A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. Trans. Richard Howard. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1975.

---. *Los abusos de la memoria*. Trans. Miguel Salazar. Barcelona: Paidós Ibérica, 2000.

Trapiello, Andrés. *Las armas y las letras. Literatura y Guerra Civil 1936-1939*. Barcelona: Planeta, 1994.

Ugarte, Michael. *Shifting Ground. Spanish Civil War Exile Literature*. Durham: Duke UP, 1989.

"Una forma de rehabilitación ante el silencio desplegado hasta la fecha." *El País.com* 17 octubre 2008. 2 April 2009.

<http://www.elpais.com/articulo/espana/forma/rehabilitacion/silencio/desplegado/fecha/elpepiesp/20081017elpepinac_8/Tes>.

Urioste, Carmen de. "Metonimias políticas de la familia en *No sólo el fuego* de Benjamín Prado." *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 30.2 (2003): 119-138.

Valdés, Mario J. *World-Making. The Literary Truth-Claim and the Interpretation of Texts*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1992.

"¿Van a desenterrar a Lorca?" *El País.com* 12 septiembre 2008. 2 April 2009.

<http://www.elpais.com/articulo/cultura/Van/desenterrar/Lorca/elpepucul/20080912elpepucul_4/Tes>.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. "El sueño de los héroes." *El País* 3 September 2001: 16.

- Vernon, Kathleen M., and Barbara Morris. "Introduction: Pedro Almodóvar, Postmodern Auteur." *Post-Franco, Postmodern. The Films of Pedro Almodóvar*. Ed. Kathleen M. Vernon and Barbara Morris. Westport: Greenwood P, 1995. 1-23.
- Vilarós, Teresa M. *El mono del desencanto. Una crítica de la transición española (1973-1993)*. Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1998.
- Vinyes, Ricard, Montse Armengou, and Ricard Belis. *Los niños perdidos del franquismo*. Trans. Daniel Royo. Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 2002.
- Walker, Nancy A. *Feminist Alternatives. Irony and Fantasy in the Contemporary Novel by Women*. Jackson: U of Mississippi P, 1990.
- Waugh, Patricia. *Metafiction. The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. London & New York: Routledge, 1984.
- Wilson, Janelle L. *Nostalgia. Sanctuary of Meaning*. Lewisberg: Bucknell UP, 2005.
- Winter, Ulrich. "Introducción." Winter 9-19.
- . "From Post-Francoism to Post-Franco Postmodernism: The 'Powers of the Past' in Contemporary Spanish Discourse (1977-1991)." Trans. Jacqueline Cruz. *Traces of Contamination. Unearthing the Francoist Legacy in Contemporary Spanish Discourse*. Ed. Eloy E. Merino and H. Rosi Song. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2005. 177-198.
- . "'Localizar a los muertos' y 'reconocer al otro': Lugares de memoria(s) en la cultura española contemporánea." *Casa encantada. Lugares de memoria en la España constitucional (1978-2004)*. Ed. Joan Ramon Resina and Ulrich Winter. Madrid: Iberoamericana; Frankfurt: Vervuert, 2005. 17-39.
- , ed. *Lugares de memoria de la Guerra Civil y el franquismo: Representaciones literarias y visuales*. Madrid: Iberoamericana; Frankfurt: Vervuert, 2006.

Yoldi, José. "La justicia de los vencidos." *El País.com* 8 septiembre 2008. 2 April 2009.

<http://www.elpais.com/articulo/espana/justicia/vencidos/elpepuesp/20080908elpepinac_7/Tes>.

Yuknavitch, Lidia. *Allegories of Violence. Tracing the Writing of War in Late Twentieth-Century Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 2001.

Zavala, Iris M. *Escuchar a Bajtín*. Barcelona: Montesinos, 1996.

Civil War Literature and Film

Acquaroni, José Luis. *A la hora del crepúsculo*. Barcelona: Planeta & Janés, 1983.

Aldecoa, Josefina. *Historia de una maestra*. 1990. Barcelona: Anagrama, 2001.

---. *La fuerza del destino*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 1997.

---. *Mujeres de negro*. 1994. Barcelona: Anagrama, 2006.

Ana, Marcos. *Decidme cómo es un árbol*. Barcelona: Umbriel, 2007.

Aub, Max. *Campo abierto*. 1945. Madrid: Suma de Letras, 2003.

---. *Campo cerrado*. 1943. Madrid: Suma de Letras, 2003.

---. *Campo de los almendros*. 1967. Madrid: Suma de Letras, 2004.

---. *Campo de sangre*. 1951. Madrid: Suma de Letras, 2003.

---. *Campo del moro*. 1963. Madrid: Suma de Letras, 2004.

---. *Campo francés*. 1965. Madrid: Suma de Letras, 2004.

¡Ay, Carmela! Dir. Carlos Saura. Iberoamericana, 1990.

Ayala, Francisco. *La cabeza del cordero*. 1949. Madrid: Alianza, 1983.

Barea, Arturo. *La forja de un rebelde*. 1951. Buenos Aires: Losada, 1966.

Benet, Juan. *Volverás a Región*. Barcelona: Destino, 1967.

Cela, Camilo José. *Mazurca para dos muertos*. 1983. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1990.

---. *Visperas, festividad y octava de San Camilo del año 1936 en Madrid*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 1969.

Chacón, Dulce. *Cielos de barro*. Barcelona: Planeta, 2000.

---. *La voz dormida*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 2002.

Chirbes, Rafael. *La caída de Madrid*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 2000.

De Azúa, Félix. *Cambio de bandera*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 1991.

De Foxá, Agustín. *Madrid, de corte a checa*. 1938. Madrid: Prensa Española, 1976.

De la Rosa, Julio Manuel. *Las guerras de Etruria*. Sevilla: Algaida, 2001.

El lápiz del carpintero. Dir. Antón Reixa. Filmanova, 2003.

Espina, Concha. *Retaguardia: (imágenes de vivos y de muertos)*. San Sebastián: Librería Internacional, 1937.

Fernández Santos, Jesús. *Los jinetes del alba*. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1984.

Ferrero, José. *Las trece rosas*. Madrid: Siruela, 2003.

Gironella, José María. *Ha estallado la paz*. Barcelona: Planeta, 1966.

---. *Los cipreses creen en Dios*. 1953. Barcelona: Planeta, 1974.

---. *Un millón de muertos*. Barcelona: Planeta, 1961.

Goytisolo, Juan. *Señas de identidad*. México: J.M., 1966.

Grandes, Almudena. *El corazón helado*. Barcelona: Tusquets, 2007.

---. *Los aires difíciles*. Barcelona: Tusquets, 2002.

---. *Malena es un nombre de tango*. Barcelona: Tusquets, 1994.

Hemingway, Ernest. *For Whom the Bells Toll*. 1940. New York: Scribner, 2003.

Llamazares, Julio. *Luna de lobos*. 1985. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1992.

Malraux, André. *L'Espoir*. 1938. Paris: Gallimard, 1967.

Marías, Javier. *Tu rostro mañana. Fiebre y lanza*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 2002.

- Martínez de Pisón, Ignacio. *Enterrar a los muertos*. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2005.
- Matute, Ana María. *Primera memoria*. 1959. Barcelona: Destino, 1979.
- Medio, Dolores. *Diario de una maestra*. Barcelona: Destino, 1961.
- Méndez, Alberto. *Los girasoles ciegos*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 2004.
- Montero, Rosa. *La hija del caníbal*. Madrid: Espasa, 1997.
- Muñoz Molina, Antonio. *Beatus Ille*. 1986. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2002.
- . *El jinete polaco*. Barcelona: Planeta, 1991.
- Orwell, George. *Homage to Catalonia*. 1938. London: Secker & Warburg, 1967.
- Rodoreda, Mercè. *La plaza del diamante*. 1962. Trans. Enrique Sordo. Barcelona: Edhasa, 1979.
- Roig, Montserrat. *La hora violeta*. Ed. Jacqueline A. Hurlley. Trans. Enrique Sordo. Madrid: Castalia, 2000.
- Rosa, Isaac. *La malamemoria*. Badajoz: Del Oeste, 1999.
- . *¡Otra maldita novela sobre la guerra civil!: lectura crítica de La malamemoria*. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2007.
- Sánchez Ferlosio, Rafael. *El Jarama*. Barcelona: Destino, 1956.
- Sender, Ramón J. *Contraataque*. 1938. Ed. José Antonio Pérez Bowie. Salamanca: Almar, 1978.
- . *Réquiem por un campesino español*. 1960. Barcelona: Destino, 1977.
- Soler, Antonio. *El nombre que ahora digo*. Madrid: Espasa, 1999.
- Vázquez Montalbán, Manuel. *Autobiografía del General Franco*. Barcelona: Planeta, 1992.
- Zúñiga, Juan Eduardo. *Capital de la gloria*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 2003.

Additional Literary Works Cited

Ayala, Francisco. *Muertes de perro*. 1958. Ed. Nelson R. Orringer. Madrid: Cátedra, 1996.

Cela, Camilo José. *La colmena*. 1951. Barcelona: Neguer, 1969.

---. *La familia de Pascual Duarte*. 1942. Ed. Adolfo Sotelo. Barcelona: Destino, 1995.

Cervantes, Miguel de. *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*. 1605. Ed. John Jay Allen. Madrid: Cátedra, 2000.

El desencanto. Dir. Jaime Chávarri. Elías Querejeta P.C., 1976.

Grandes, Almudena. *Las edades de Lulú*. Barcelona: Tusquets, 1989.

Laforet, Carmen. *Nada*. 1945. Barcelona: Destino, 1979.

Loriga, Ray. *Lo peor de todo*. Madrid: Debate, 1992.

Machado, Antonio. *Soledades. Galerías. Otros poemas*. Ed. Geoffrey Ribbans. Madrid: Cátedra, 1983.

Mañas, José Ángel. *Historias del Kronen*. Barcelona: Destino, 1994.

Martín Santos, Luis. *Tiempo de silencio*. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1962.

Rosa, Isaac. *El vano ayer*. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2004.

Semprún, Jorge. *Autobiografía de Federico Sánchez*. Barcelona: Planeta, 1978.

Unamuno, Miguel de. *Niebla*. 1914. Ed. M.J. Valdés. Madrid: Cátedra, 1999.