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by

Lori Noemi Mesrobian

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Committee in charge:

Professor Michael Iarocci, Chair

Professor Dru Dougherty

Professor Anthony Adamthwaite

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## Abstract

Breaking the Pact of Silence: Justice and Memory in the Post-Franco Novel in Catalonia

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Hispanic Languages and Literatures

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Michael Iarocci, Chair

This dissertation explores the interaction between literature, politics and history in post-Franco Spain. More specifically, I examine the relationship between the Spanish Transition to democracy (1975-1983) and novels produced in Catalonia during that time.

The first chapter is an analysis of the historical and political events that encompass the Transition, including a study of the major legislative texts of the period—the Amnesty Laws, the Pacts of Moncloa, and the Constitution (1978). Special attention is given to the so-called Pact of Silence, an unofficial and unwritten agreement between political elites, which vowed to essentially forget the recent past of the Civil War and Franco dictatorship, in order to secure a stable, democratic future. While most historians and political scientists point to the Pact as a major contributing factor to Spain's successful democratization, my contention is that this political silence caused a grave manipulation of collective memory, and was a great injustice to the Spanish and Catalan people.

Whereas the political realm of the Spanish Transition was based on the Pact of Silence and forgetting, the novels of the time period seemed to be based on a pact of remembering. The second and third chapters use two Catalan novelists, Montserrat Roig (1946-1991) and Juan Marsé (1933-), to study the way in which the relationships between literature, history and politics outlined in Chapter One play out in specific novels. For both of these authors, fiction provides a space to break the Pact of Silence and restore justice.

In the second and third chapters, the focus of the dissertation narrows to examine the relationship between the Spanish Transition and the novel particularly in Catalonia. The study starts with an explanation of what Kathryn Crameri calls the Language/Literature/Catalanism Equation, which underscores the importance of language to nation-building, especially in Catalonia. I also see the way in which the Catalan *Estatut d'Autonomia* (1979) dialogues with the other legislative texts which come out of the Transition. After a general overview of the life and work of Montserrat Roig, I offer a close reading of her final novel, *La veu melodiosa* (1987), focusing on the themes of silence and justice. For Roig, and unlike the Pact of Silence, looking to the past is a necessity and yields various positive benefits; it is the basis of the formation of personal and collective identity, it is necessary for the administration of social justice, and it is the only means of ensuring a healthy future.

Chapter Three is a case study of yet another novelist, 2008 Premio Cervantes winner Juan Marsé, which begins with discussion of his bicultural identity (Catalan and Spanish). His novel, *Si te dicen que caí* (1963), is used as a segue to discuss censorship under the Franco dictatorship; I postulate that the rhetorical silence in post-Franco novels is due in large part to the internalization of the silence of censorship. The common thread in Marsé's work is an emphasis on storytelling, especially as it concerns marginalized and silenced histories. Fiction allows Marsé to create alternative realities which often serve to break down the binaries inherited from Francoism. I do a close reading of *Un día volveré* (1982) focusing on the various stories that go against the Official History narrated by the State, and pay special attention to the way in which Marsé subverts myths, particularly the myth of St. George, in order to propose a new order for Spanish and Catalan culture, one based on multiplicity and forgiveness. The chapter concludes with an analysis of how Marsé's *El amante bilingüe* (1990) dialogues with the Catalan Law of Linguistic Normalization.

The fourth and final chapter is a return to the political realm with discussion of the 2007 Law of Historical Memory in Spain. I do a close reading of the legislative text, focusing primarily on the articles related to the unearthing of the mass graves of the Civil War, as well as the establishment of the *Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica*. The law, as well as the ongoing controversy surrounding it, indicates that the justice-related issues generated by the Spanish Transition to democracy, and the concerns which manifested in the novels of the time, are still relevant in current-day Spain. I conclude the dissertation with a return to literature, briefly discussing Javier Cercas' *Anatomía de un instante* (2009) as a literary response to concrete political events, in order to solidify the notion that history, politics, and literature in post-Franco Spain are inextricably linked.

This dissertation is dedicated to the countless victims of the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent dictatorship.

It is also dedicated to Sarkis Sarkissian, Jacob Simonion, and all the innocent victims of atrocity and injustice throughout the world.

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And most importantly, to my parents Arthur & Sossi Mesrobian, thank you for instilling in me an immense curiosity of cultures and languages other than my own, and for giving me the invaluable gift of education. It is only because of your sacrifices that I was able to fulfill my dreams. Շնորհակալ եմ:

Breaking the Pact of Silence:  
Justice and Memory in the Post-Franco Novel in Catalonia

In the famous words of Chevy Chase, “Generalissimo Francisco Franco is still dead.”<sup>1</sup> The first season of Saturday Night Live coincided with one of the most important historic events in the contemporary History of Spain: the death of Franco. The dictator died in bed on November 20, 1975 after a long illness. Chase’s joke is based on the fact that on slow news days, many U.S. news agencies would give daily updates on Franco’s health.

The reaction of Spaniards to the death of the dictator who had ruled for nearly four decades was subdued. As Victoria Prego explains:

No hay movilizaciones ni manifestaciones callejeras. Hay, eso sí, en muchos militantes de la izquierda un claro contento por la muerte de Franco, pero ése es de un asunto estrictamente privado. En la calle no hay ninguna manifestación pública de alegría, entre otras razones porque quien hubiera decidido manifestarla públicamente habría sido detenido de inmediato. Así que lo que hay es, sobre todo, silencio. (324)

The silence of censorship and repression had marked the dictatorship. The death of Franco was greeted with silence, at least in public. And in the political realm, the transition to democracy (1975-1983) would also be based on silence. The Transition was achieved in large part due to a series of concessions and pacts made between political elites from opposing sides; many of the key players were former Francoists. One of the pacts was the so-called *Pacto de silencio*, a pact that called for the recent past to be forgotten in order to ensure peace. Though it was unspoken and unwritten, it would be one of the key reasons why the democratic process in Spain was a success. Today (2010), 35 years after the death of Franco, Spain is a fully democratic country, a member of the European Union, and global leader in the propagation of equal rights and freedoms.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the triumph of democracy in Spain, the success of the Transition had its limits and these were greatly delineated by the *Pacto de silencio*. Digression from silence in public broke social, intellectual, and political consensus, went against democracy, and risked marginalization. Throughout the Transition, the political silence surrounding the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship pushed the victims of the war and the Regime to the periphery of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Spanish History because their suffering was not recognized, and thus due justice was never served.

In the absence of political action, cultural activists such as novelists stepped into the role of preserving the collective memory and demanding justice. Manuel Vázquez Montalbán explains the relationship between literature and politics well:

Miles de años de experiencia sobre la relación literatura-memoria-política nos enseñan que los regímenes autoritarios o más exactamente, el poder, en abstracto y en concreto, llámese dictadura o mercado, trata de apoderarse de la memoria y sobre todo de la memoria coral. *Las dictaduras contemporáneas falsificaron el lenguaje, el patrimonio, la memoria y la conciencia de sus antagonistas y en el*

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<sup>1</sup>“ Saturday Night Live” transcript: <http://snltranscripts.jt.org/75/75gupdate.phtml>

<sup>2</sup> I.e. In 2005 Spain became the third nation to legalize same-sex marriage.



*caso español con la facilidad que les daba la victoria en la guerra civil y una represión cultural más duradera incluso que la vida del dictador.* (244)

The Franco regime had tried to hijack collective memory and History, proliferating myths and monolithic versions of History that legitimized its power. With the death of Franco, it was expected that utmost freedom would reign; however as far as politics was concerned, a narrative of silence replaced the narrative of dictatorship. Vázquez Montalbán goes on to propose that: “en esas condiciones la reivindicación del patrimonio oculto o usurpado pasa por una serie de actuaciones literarias” (244). Literature had the essential task of recuperating “el lenguaje secuestrado” and “el patrimonio oculto”. Finally, and most importantly for this dissertation, literature must recuperate memory because “la memoria se presta a un uso literario emancipador, porque *recuperar la memoria prohibida o secuestrada* es una materia literaria espléndida y propicia una relación casi siempre muy afortunada entre literatura y política” (Vázquez Montalbán 244).

This dissertation is divided into four chapters; the first and fourth chapters serve as the political and historical frame to my literary analysis in the second and third chapters. Chapter One outlines the key historical events of the transition to democracy. I study the legislative texts of the period to see how they contribute to the limits of the Transition and pay special attention to the *Pacto de silencio*. I also compare democratization in Spain to a few other contemporary transitions as an introduction to the concept of justice. In my opinion, the fact that Franco died in his bed and the Regime was never held accountable in a tribunal is at the root of the injustice that resulted from the Spanish Transition. I explore various models of justice and base my argument in this project on the notion that justice should be based on fairness, and not on political considerations.

The second part of Chapter One focuses on memory and in particular the importance that collective memory has on the formation of both personal and collective identity. I explore the consequences of the *Pacto de silencio* on collective memory in Spain and the role of the novelist in preserving or reconstituting collective memory.

Chapters Two and Three serve as literary case studies of two such novelists—Montserrat Roig and Juan Marsé. Both Roig and Marsé identified in varying degrees with Catalan culture, so in the middle chapters my focus narrows to explore the consequences of the Transition in Catalonia. This pairing Catalonia-Transition is not arbitrary: “Like it or not, and many Spaniards didn’t, the goals of democratization and Catalanian autonomy were intimately linked” (McRoberts 48).

Chapter Two provides the context of Catalan Nationalism as well as the *Estatut d'autonomia*, which I study in conjunction with the other legislative texts of the Transition. Montserrat Roig (1946-1991) was very closely aligned with the Catalan Nationalist project, however it was her advocacy for the marginalized and commitment to social justice that was her greatest legacy. Roig’s belief that *jo=nosaltres* underscores the link between personal and collective memory and identity that I discuss in the first chapter. My study of her works, both literary and journalistic, reveals the importance of looking to the past in order to ensure a healthy future, a move that defiantly breaks the *Pacto de silencio* being espoused in the political realm.

Chapter Three is dedicated to Juan Marsé (1933- ) and is greatly influenced by his bicultural identity. Discussion of *Si te dicen que caí* serves as a segue to discuss censorship under the Franco dictatorship and its relation to silence. The study of his work, both fiction and non-fiction, reveals a philosophy very much in line with Vázquez Montalbán's comments above: the role of fiction in preserving collective memory.

Marsé's acceptance speech of the Premio Cervantes in 2008 aptly describes his view<sup>3</sup>:

...lo inventado puede tener más peso y solvencia que lo real, más vida propia y más sentido, y en consecuencia, más posibilidades de pervivencia frente al olvido. [...] Hay una memoria compartida, que no debería arrogarse nadie, una memoria que fue durante años sojuzgada, esquilada y manipulada. El lenguaje oficial había suplantado al lenguaje real...imaginación y memoria, para el escritor, son dos palabras que van siempre entrelazadas, y a menudo resulta difícil separarlas. Ciertamente un escritor no es nada sin imaginación, pero tampoco sin memoria, sea ésta personal o colectiva.

The bottom line for Marsé is that “no hay literatura sin memoria”. The collective memory serves as a form of justice for the victims of the war and Franco dictatorship.

The fourth and final chapter returns to the political sphere to discuss the 2007 Law of Historical Memory. I propose the law is a site of memory and that the legislation officially breaks the *Pacto de silencio*. I discuss the major tenets of the law and their contribution to the administration of retroactive justice. In the thirty-year gap that the Law of Historical Memory fills lays the Spanish novel, which became a site of memory in its own right. I conclude the chapter with a return to the literary and discuss two recent novels by Javier Cercas to see the way in which politics and literature dialogue post-Law of Historical Memory. Although Chevy Chase insisted that Francisco Franco was dead in 1977, his ghost haunted the Spanish transition to democracy and stood in the way of full justice for his victims. The Law of Historical Memory is a hopeful step in the direction of definitively burying the dictator, laying to rest the souls of his victims, and ensuring the continuity of a democratic Spain.

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<sup>3</sup>[http://www.elpais.com/elpaismedia/ultimahora/media/200904/23/cultura/20090423elpepucul\\_1\\_Pes\\_PDF.pdf](http://www.elpais.com/elpaismedia/ultimahora/media/200904/23/cultura/20090423elpepucul_1_Pes_PDF.pdf)

Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. For this reason justice denies that the loss of freedom for some is made right by a great good shared by others. It does not allow that the sacrifices imposed on a few are outweighed by the larger sum of advantages enjoyed by many. Therefore in a just society the liberties of equal citizenship are taken as settled; the rights secured by justice are not subject to political bargaining or to the calculus of social interests.  
—John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*

## Chapter One

### The *Pacto de silencio* and its Historical Framework

“The presence of the absent” (Ricoeur 6) —this apparent oxymoron is a thread which weaves its way through Paul Ricoeur’s monumental work on memory entitled *Memory, History, Forgetting*. The presence of the absent is a process which can characterize what occurs in all three components to Ricoeur’s title (memory, history, forgetting) as well as an operation which can be found in imagination, language, literature, metaphor, gaps, fissures, and silence. To this list we could add ghosts and Derrida’s specters, Droysen’s *überreste* (remains) or traces, or Foucault’s *lacunae* and *aporia*. And specifically in reference to post-Franco Spanish history and culture, we could use Teresa Vilarós’ designated term, *mono*.

Ricoeur contends that both memory and history are concerned with representing through images or signs, that which is absent, and it is “testimony [which] constitutes the fundamental transitional structure between memory and history.” When testimony is silenced as it was in the Spanish transition to democracy (1975-1983), the relationship between memory and history becomes further problematized than it already inherently is and eventually it leads to a term Ricoeur calls “pathology of memory” (69). Seen through the lense of the Spanish Transition, ‘pathology of memory’ means that since Spanish collective memory was manipulated and forced (first by the Franco regime, then by the Transition elites), instead of developing through more organic, social situations, Spaniards had been unable to deal openly with their past and thus heal their historical trauma until very recently.

The so-called *Pacto de silencio*<sup>4</sup> is an example of “a concerted manipulation of memory and of forgetting by those who hold power.” (Ricoeur 80) For the most part, those in power were former Francoist elites who were charged with the arduous task of

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<sup>4</sup> It should be mentioned that throughout the historiography of the period, the terms *amnesia*, *desmemoria*, *olvido*, and *silencio* are used interchangeably to refer to the same phenomenon. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will opt for the denomination *Pacto de silencio* because I feel it is most appropriate to describe the phenomenon which occurred in Spain. *Desmemoria* is also a preferred term because it seems to describe technically what occurs—a decision not to remember. *Amnesia* and *olvido*, however, the former being uncontrollable and the latter being deliberate, seem to miss the point—the past was not forgotten per se. Rather, it was consciously not discussed.

transitioning Spain from dictatorship to democracy. However, as Ricoeur points out, “the duty of memory is the duty to do justice, through memories, to an other than the self” (89). Because of the silence imposed on the Spanish people, the formation of a historical memory was delayed, and thus justice was not carried out.

Most historians and political scientists agree that Spain’s transition to democracy after the death of the dictator, Francisco Franco, was successful.<sup>5</sup> However, few stop to think that “...al margen de los muchos logros del cambio político en España, habría que preguntarse también cuáles fueron *los límites* de la denominada ‘política de consenso’, *quiénes quedaron al margen* de la ‘reconciliación nacional’ de que tanto se habló durante la transición y *qué repercusiones* tuvieron estas carencias en el proceso de estabilización democrática” (Aguilar, Justicia 1-2, emphasis mine). One of the aims of this dissertation is to do just that: to question what the limits of the Transition were, to ask who was pushed to the margins, to explore the repercussions of it all and finally, to examine the relationship that these problematics have with the literature of the period.

Many point to the *Pacto de silencio* as one of the key contributors to the successful political transition. The *Pacto*’s stipulations were two-fold: 1) the past (specifically the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship) would not be discussed, and 2) amnesty would be granted to those who under normal circumstances could be tried in tribunals for crimes committed during the dictatorship.<sup>6</sup> Maravall and Santamaría point out that pacts were the foundation to democratization and, while I agree, I also add that the negative repercussions of the unofficial and unwritten *Pacto de silencio* are being felt until today in Spain, repercussions that I will discuss throughout this dissertation.

The Transition indeed was successful in the sense that Spaniards’ greatest fear, that of being thrust yet again into another Civil War, was not realized. The Spanish Transition was relatively smooth, relatively bloodless. However the strategy of democratization was not without grave consequences, namely a deprivation of justice to the Spanish citizenry who had suffered during the bloody Civil War and then during almost four decades of dictatorship. Further, silencing history was not a particularly democratic tactic, putting the *Pacto de silencio* in conflict with the democratizing principle of the Transition.

When Francisco Franco died on November 20, 1975, he had already taken the steps he believed would ensure the continuity of his regime. In 1969 he selected then-Prince Juan Carlos de Borbón, son of the rightful heir to the throne, to be his successor. Carlos Arias Navarro was in the position of Prime minister<sup>7</sup> but was unable to cooperate

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<sup>5</sup> For a bibliography of historiography of the Civil War see Manuel Pérez Ledesma. “Chapter 3: La Guerra Civil y la historiografía: No fue posible el acuerdo” in *Memoria de la guerra y del franquismo*. Santos Juliá (ed) or Preston, Paul. ‘La Historiografía de la guerra civil española: de Franco a la democracia.’ In *Tuñón de Lara y la historiografía española*. Edited by de la Granja, J. L.; Reig Tapia, A.; Miralles, R. Siglo XXI, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> The decision to adhere to the *Pacto de silencio* can be seen as one of many political maneuvers motivated by the ‘aversion to risk’ which characterized the Spanish Transition. For more information on this aversion model and its connection to game theory see Colomer, Josep Maria. *Game Theory and the Transition to Democracy: The Spanish Model*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

<sup>7</sup> Luis Carrero Blanco was designated Prime Minister by Franco, but was assassinated in 1973 by an ETA bombing.

with the reformist tenor of the Transition and soon resigned. In 1976 Adolfo Suárez became Prime Minister and would play a key role in Spain's democratization.

Suárez and his government took important measures to begin the democratizing process; the 1976 Law for Political Reform was the first step towards reforming the existing government. On June 15, 1977, Spain had its first democratic elections in nearly fifty years and Suárez was officially elected Prime Minister by the populous, thus legitimizing his power and his role in the Transition. The Suárez government came to be known as a government of 'consensus', the Prime Minister doing his best to dialogue and negotiate with many of the opposition parties, including the *Partido Comunista Español* (PCE), the Spanish Communist Party, with whom he negotiated in secret so as not to anger or alarm the Francoists; in a surprise move the PCE was legalized on April 9, 1977. In return for their legal status, the PCE had to accept the monarchy and the Spanish flag—two things which went against their fundamental principles. Considering Franco had spent a lot of energy suppressing Marxism and characterized the Civil War as a fight against Communism, the legalization of the Communist Party was a giant leap in the direction of democratic plurality and just one example of the willingness of all parties to cooperate. The *Generalitat* of Catalonia was restored on September 29, 1977. Arguably the three most important pieces of legislation drafted during the democratization process were the *Pactos de la Moncloa*, the Amnesty Law of 1977, and the Constitution which was approved by a popular referendum on December 6, 1978. While there is little doubt that these three texts are the cornerstones of Democratic Spain, as I will show later in this chapter, they are also plagued with ambiguity and silence about the past, thus contributing to the deficiency of justice which was a byproduct, some say necessary, of the Spanish transition to democracy.<sup>8</sup>

Unlike many other democratic transitions in history, and unlike the Southern European transitions contemporary to the Spanish one, democratization in Spain came from above. It was the elites, not the people as would be the case during a revolution, who negotiated the conditions for change. This democratization from above is perhaps the first key to understanding the insufficiency of justice in the Transition. First, since the change is not coming from below, one could argue that the people did not feel that they had any real power. Granted, the major legislation of the time was approved in popular referendums by overwhelming support, however this cannot be a true indicator of citizens' power. Why not? Just because citizens vote to approve legislation, it does not necessarily mean they have fully read the text in question or that they understand the implications of said legislation. The fact is the majority of the key players of the Transition were themselves former Francoists.<sup>9</sup> Though they demonstrated themselves committed to reform, it is inconceivable how the process could have been truly democratic if the protagonists were once collaborators of a Fascist regime.

In his book *The Making of Spanish Democracy*, Donald Share refers to the Spanish case as "transition through transaction",<sup>10</sup> which is characterized by negotiation

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<sup>8</sup> For a recent study of the Transition, see Bardavía, Joaquín. *Crónica de la Transición, 1973-1978*. Barcelona: Ediciones B, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Later in this chapter I list the key players.

<sup>10</sup> Share gives credit for this term to Giuseppe Di Palma who first used it in his work *Founding Coalitions in Southern Europe: Legitimacy and Hegemony*.

and compromise.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps the origin of this transaction can be traced to “March and April 1976 [when] prominent opposition leaders suggested the idea of a ‘negotiated break’ (*ruptura pactada*): that is, negotiations with the government to install ‘democracy without adjectives’” (Carr and Fusi Aizpurua 214).<sup>12</sup> To summarize the success of this sort of democratization, I turn to Share himself:

The implementation of democratization was successful because its leaders were able to gain initial support from within the regime, to convince a skeptical opposition, and to maintain a balance between control and reform. The consolidation of transition through transaction occurred because franquist elites were able to establish a successful centrist party that bridged the two historical periods, and that mitigated political conflict. Consolidation was also facilitated by the elite, interparty consensus in the early years of democracy. Both factors have led to the foundation of a democracy based on a political compromise, and which consequently is acceptable to a wide range of political forces. (216)

Suárez spearheaded the founding of the *Unión de Centro Democrático* (UCD), and much of the initial success of the center-leaning party was due to the following reason:

As a coalition of franquist reformists and moderate opposition leaders, UCD was a perfect bridge between authoritarian and democratic rule. The presence of important franquist leaders in UCD guaranteed that the new regime would not retroactively harass those responsible for abuses during authoritarian rule, thus lessening the right’s hostility to democratic rule. Suárez’s presence at the helm of UCD salvaged the prospects of the center and prohibited a victory of either extreme, or an unworkable fragmentation of the nascent party system. Finally, it helped to ensure that a reasonable agenda was associated with the inauguration of the new regime. New democracies that are inaugurated by political forces seeking primarily to attack the symbols and officials of the preceding regime may needlessly antagonize otherwise democratic constituencies. While Suárez pledged to implement important reforms, UCD’s victory prevented the formation of an initial political agenda that could have needlessly antagonized ex-franquists, the church, the military, or the private sector. (Share 212-13)

At the party’s first Congress in 1978 Suárez proclaimed: “we have built a great party, without questioning people about where they were coming from, but only about where they wanted to go” (Share 156). This declaration is an open call for disremembering the past,<sup>13</sup> a verbal manifestation of the tenets of the *Pacto de silencio*; it is proof of the continuation, albeit transformed, of Francoism, and the subsequent lack of justice. Donald Share explains how “Suárez represented a whole generation of young franquists who, despite their implication in authoritarian rule, wanted to demonstrate their compatibility with democratic politics” (132) and that “many, if not most of the observers at the time, still analyzed politics in terms of a strict authoritarianism/democracy

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<sup>11</sup> This concept of transaction will also come up later in reference to Paul Ricoeur’s idea that forgiveness is a transaction.

<sup>12</sup> According to a footnote on p 214 of Carr/Fusi Aizpurua: “The expression ‘negotiated break’ was apparently coined by the Communist leader, Santiago Carrillo, in an interview in *Il Corriere della Sera*, 5 March 1976.”

<sup>13</sup> It seems fitting to mention briefly the irony that Suárez, years later, would be diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease and as a result never wrote his memoirs.

dichotomy. Suárez was viewed as a Francoist, despite his admirable reformism. There was little comprehension of the fact that transition through transaction blurs the distinction between democrats and authoritarians” (134-5). No one argues that Suárez was not completely committed to democratization; however the *Pacto de silencio* made it possible to overlook the fact that he was a minister in Franco’s cabinet. It seems highly unjust that those who suffered for so long under the Franco regime had to play along silently as the former Francoist apparatus remained intact and the former protagonists remained center-stage. Manuel Fraga Iribarne was a prime example: Minister of Tourism under Franco and greatly responsible for the tourist boom of the 60’s, he held a political position in Galicia until 2005.<sup>14</sup> Inevitably, with the continuation of former Francoists, democratic Spain inherited many undemocratic values and practices which still linger in present-day Spain. As Share points out:

while the politics of consensus did much to resolve contentious issues dividing the Spanish polity, dependence on elite-level politics was often perceived as constituting a continuation of authoritarian forms of leadership. When combined with the incessant feuding within some of the major parties (notably UCD and PCE), the elitism of Spanish politics contributed to the view that political decisions continued to come *desde arriba* (from above). (215)

The continuity of the Francoist elites and apparatus was a “retroactive legitimation” (Share 171) of the Franco regime whether or not that was the intention.

Perhaps out of fear, the Spanish people particularly on the Left did not demand that the government be fully stripped of its Francoist tendencies in order to begin with a clean slate. In fact, the Right often used the propaganda of a peaceful past, the same sort of propaganda Franco himself used in the second half of his reign, in order to maintain a level of fear and paranoia amongst the populous. Share recalls the *Alianza Popular* (AP) slogan “Spain today, with crime and terrorism: let’s recover our peace and happiness for the common person” (136).

It was not until the Socialist corruption trials and the trials of the GAL death squads in the 1990’s, that it was evidenced that even those in power could be held accountable for their unlawful actions. And, as Baltazar Garzón explains, those shameful and unlawful events were a direct result of the *Pacto de silencio*:

Garzón believes that the corruption that marred the Socialist era had much to do with the nature of the *Transición* and Spain’s refusal, or inability, to make a clean break with the past. As a young man, he had wanted not *reforma*, but a complete break. He had opposed Suárez’s political reform referendum in 1976 (which an incredible 95 per cent of voters backed in a 78 percent turnout), thinking it did not

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<sup>14</sup> Yet another example: “The *Audiencia Nacional* had, in 1977, replaced Franco’s *Tribunal de Orden Público*, the court that gave the persecution of political opponents its legal gloss. TOP’s remit had been ‘to try crimes which show a tendency to subvert, to a greater or lesser degree, the basic principles of the state, disturb public order or sow anguish in the national conscience.’ Some of the *Audiencia Nacional*’s first judges and prosecutors moved straight from one court to another. ‘They didn’t even wait the usual three days to rise from the dead,’ according to one observer. The new democratic regime, however, needed judges and prosecutors to administer justice. It had to turn to those who knew how. People who had once pledged to ‘serve Spain with absolute loyalty to the Caudillo’ and observe ‘strict loyalty to the principles of the Movement and other Fundamental Laws of the Kingdom,’ joined the new upholders of democracy. Several would later reach the Supreme Court.” (Tremlett 129)

go far enough in burying the old regime. ‘I still think that way, even though history has run a good course and we have the constitution and our democracy. But there is too much encumbrance, too many bad habits from the past that should not have been kept. And there are blankets of silence...Look no further than GAL, which is an *intragolpe*, a self-inflicted strike against the state.’ (Tremlett 142)

The Franco elites were not the only ones who subscribed to the *Pacto de silencio*; the Left was also guilty of (or victim of) the silence. As Santos Juliá points out:

...siempre que un grupo de disidentes del régimen encontraba en una mesa de negociación a un grupo de la oposición, el primer punto de acuerdo consistía en mirar al pasado y decidir que no determinaría el futuro; que sobre el pasado debía extenderse una amnistía general o que, si se quiere decir con la afortunada expresión que el mismo Ridruejo había oído a Enrique Tierno, que era preciso ‘convertir en historia nuestro pasado’, *en historia, esto es, en un saber crítico, objetivo, no en un recurso para la acción.* (40, emphasis mine)

If amnesty was a point of agreement for the opposition forces, it was only to avoid further bloodshed. The opposition, namely the PCE and PSOE, was legitimized by legalization, but they had to make so many concessions that they hardly resembled their former selves by the end of the Transition. Gregorio Morán points to the Left’s silence as further proof of the continuity of the Franco regime despite democratization:

Una prueba de que no estaba superada [the división within Spanish society], sino latente, cuando se exigía a una parte—los perdedores—el olvido, *como condición para poder participar* en el nuevo juego político, social y cultural, elaborado durante décadas por los vencedores. Se ampliaba el ámbito, pero se conservaba la hegemonía de quienes habían vencido. (83, emphasis mine)

Silence was a precondition for dialogue, and therefore said dialogue could not truly be deemed democratic. The past needed to be studied and talked about objectively and not turned into a reason to exercise revenge. Instead, the past was silenced, at least as far as the political and historical domains were concerned. Throughout this dissertation, I will show the way in which this silence was addressed in the literary realm despite the prevailing silence in the political arena.

Juliá goes on to argue that the Amnesty Law passed in 1977, which also amnestied participants of the former regime, was merely an extension of a process begun before Franco’s death, that amnesty was an agreed-upon point even before the democratization process began. I would argue, however, that opposition meetings which occur clandestinely before Franco’s death are not in a supposed climate of democracy and thus those decisions are not necessarily transferable to democracy. However, when a democratically elected government amnesties participants of a dictatorial regime and deliberately silences its past, the consequences are much graver than when opposition groups agree to amnesty in a climate of desperation.

Obviously the left-leaning elites opted for silence as a means of negotiating the democratic transition, but they also applied this silence to their own side, for example in the case of the *maquis* who were virtually forgotten by those they were fighting for.<sup>15</sup> And while the *Pacto de silencio*, though unofficial, was the main cause of the silence,

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<sup>15</sup> Tremlett.



there is also evidence that the generations that lived through both the Civil War and early, extreme Francoism were genuinely fed up with the political situation and had applied their own, voluntary silence long before Franco died. The study of silence is further complicated by the fact that much of it was self-imposed. This self-imposed silence was especially evident in smaller towns, where gossip was rampant and where power-relations were not different in democracy than as they were under Franco. Also, greater economic stability seemed to fuel the historical amnesia because Spaniards were more content with their lifestyle; the aforementioned factors complicate the top-heavy model of democratization discussed earlier and show the presence of forces working against open debate even from the bottom-up.

On February 23, 1981, there was an attempted coup on democracy led by Colonel Antonio Tejero. A previous coup plot (*Operación Galaxia*) had been uncovered in 1978, and the masterminds, Tejero being one of them, were only given seven-month jail sentences. In 1981, as Tejero and a few hundred Civil Guards stormed the Congress, the proceedings to elect Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo Prime Minister were being streamed on live television.<sup>16</sup> The country was horrified that Spain could soon be plunged back into Civil War. However, King Juan Carlos took charge and in a nationally televised address, dressed in his military uniform and speaking as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, broke the silence and demanded that the rebels surrender and insisted that no one could jeopardize democracy in Spain. The coup attempt was just one example of how the *Pacto de silencio* had woven itself in and out of the transition to democracy. The *modus operandi* of the transition government was consensus, however just beneath the cooperative surface lay antagonistic forces of the past that did not want to lose power and see democracy prosper; the coup was the most extreme example of these conflicting ideologies. Though the coup was not successful and though the King came out loud and clear in support of democracy, the aftermath of the coup was a return to silence. There was no public trial of Tejero and his collaborators, and though he was arrested and found guilty in the Military Supreme Court, he was released after 15 years and now lives quietly in Madrid. In Chapter Four, I provide a more in-depth discussion of the coup and offer a literary response to this historical and political event.

In Spain, the tension between past and present is palpable throughout the transition to democracy, during the 1980's and 90's and in some sense even until today. The *Pacto de silencio* is perhaps one of the main causes of this tension. Even despite Franco's death in 1975 (an event that would assume a break or a rupture from the past), there was continuity of the *Caudillo* from the smallest coin bearing his image to members of government to the enormous *Valle de los Caídos* where he is buried. Franco's death even caused an identity crisis; Spaniards could no longer define themselves as being pro- or anti-Franco. Of course, instead of discussing these issues publicly, they were swept under the rug along with all the other remnants of the past.

In his book *Ghosts of Spain. Travels Through Spain and Its Silent Past*, Giles Tremlett comments ironically on how Spaniards, "one of Europe's most verbose and argumentative peoples" (35), can be so plagued by silence. He also believes "there

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<sup>16</sup> In fact, the coup was not streaming on live television, rather it was being broadcast live on radio. The video of the incident was released after the coup began. However, the collective memory of the event is that the images were being streamed live though that deviates from the facts.

seemed to be something deeply ironic about the silence into which Francoism had been buried. For the Caudillo was, himself, an expert at silence. [...] His regime was also a great enforcer of silence. To the silence forced on the *vencidos*, the defeated, was added the silence enforced by the censors, both political and religious” (56). Throughout the dictatorship, and especially in the 1940’s, silence had been a defense mechanism in the face of fear; people changed their speaking habits because of the worry that the most innocuous comment could be construed as being anti-regime and would have grave consequences including black listing and imprisonment. This defense mechanism was especially strong in those who had been stigmatized as *rojos*: “se vieron forzadas a pensar que lo mejor para ellas y sus familias era olvidar o, como mínimo, silenciar sus experiencias, sus anhelos, sus ideas, en definitiva, una parte de su identidad. El miedo fue tan extenso, la impotencia tan grande que, ciertamente, se abrió un ‘tiempo de silencio’ sobre el que la dictadura franquista construyó ‘su’ memoria histórica” (Molinero 237). For these families, memory became a tool, a way of maintaining some semblance of identity and culture in the face of repression and censorship. Following Franco’s death, not only was there a physical, tangible continuity of the dictator in the form of coins, statutes, political leaders and apparatus, but also there was continuity in the silence.<sup>17</sup>

### The Legislative Texts of the Transition: Sites of Memory<sup>18</sup>

Though the transition to democracy in Spain gives birth to numerous new laws and legislative texts, the three most important in regard to this project are the Amnesty Law (1977), the *Pactos de la Moncloa*, and the Constitution. All three texts supported the new narrative being written by the elites that depicted Spain as modern, orderly, and logical. However, upon examination of these texts, it becomes obvious that they are impregnated with silences and gaps, and that often the subtexts are dialoguing openly with and contradicting the written discourse. To be fair, all legal language is inherently ambiguous so these silences are not particular to the Spanish legislation. However, I believe it is important to study these texts to fully understand the methods and goals of the Transition. Further, the legislative silence is a manifestation of the broader historical silence that was being projected by the Transition in general and the *Pacto de silencio* in particular.

#### The Amnesty Law: Institutionalized Forgetting, Suppression of Testimony

In an attempt to retrace the origins of the *Pacto de silencio*, it will be necessary to review some of the important pacts and legislative texts that came out of the Spanish transition to democracy. The first such law was *Ley 46* passed by the *Cortes* on October

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<sup>17</sup> Tremlett points out the ironic apparition of silence even in the Spanish national anthem. The *Marcha Real* was purged of its lyrics after Franco’s death and till this day continues without words.

<sup>18</sup> Pierre Nora, in *Les lieux de Mémoire*, explains how memory attaches itself to sites whereas history attaches itself to events. The site can be a text, a place, or a thing. I discuss Nora’s *lieux de mémoire* further in Chapter Four.

15, 1977<sup>19</sup>; it was the first law of amnesty passed by a democratically elected Parliament. As Paloma Aguilar explains:

The political amnesty was considered by many to be the sine qua non for the establishment of democracy in Spain, the foundation stone for the symbolic reconciliation between the victors and vanquished. It represented an attempt to put an end to the repressive consequences of the dictatorship, not only by freeing the political prisoners and ensuring the restitution of their economic and employment rights, but also by modifying the labor and criminal legislation which had led to their imprisonment. Only then would the democratic opposition be convinced of the democratizing resolve of a government which had emerged from within the Francoist regime. (Collective Memory 32)

The question of amnesty is closely related to the administrative and collective amnesia of the Spanish Transition, not only because of the etymological proximity of the two words, but also mainly because the amnesty granted to the former Francoist leaders was a basic tenet of the *Pacto de silencio*.<sup>20</sup> After Franco's death, and mostly in response to rising civil unrest and terrorist action, the Transition government used the release of political prisoners as a bargaining chip in order to keep the opposition Left engaged in the transition process. But even before the dictator had passed, there were mass mobilizations for amnesty, often tied to labor protests, student movements and even some Christian organizations. There seemed to be a keen awareness that for reconciliation to take place, political prisoners had to be freed.

Even after Franco's death, there were still a considerable number of political prisoners, mostly Basque, in the prison system. Every few months, the government would release a number of the detainees, in hopes of appeasing the escalating violence and terrorism. For example, on July 30, 1976, 400 political prisoners were released. However, the sporadic amnesties, especially during the Arias government, did not seem sufficient in quelling mounting terrorist (mainly ETA) activity,<sup>21</sup> and in October 1977 the Amnesty Law was passed.

Law 46, the Amnesty Law, and its ambiguity were a contributing factor to the silence that surrounded the Transition. The first article of the law states:

- I. Quedan amnistiados:
  - a. Todos los actos de intencionalidad política, cualquiera que fuese su resultado, tipificados como delitos y faltas realizados con anterioridad al día 15 de diciembre de 1976.
  - b. Todos los actos de la misma naturaleza realizados entre el 15 de diciembre de 1976 y el 15 de junio de 1977, cuando en la intencionalidad política se aprecie además un móvil de restablecimiento de las libertades públicas o de reivindicación de autonomías de los pueblos de España.

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<sup>19</sup> [http://noticias.juridicas.com/base\\_datos/Penal/146-1977.html](http://noticias.juridicas.com/base_datos/Penal/146-1977.html)

<sup>20</sup> Many historians dispute the relevance of the etymological proximity of the terms 'amnesty' and 'amnesia'. However, Paul Ricoeur believes "the pardon of amnesty has taken on the value of amnesia" (451). What is important is the perceived value of amnesty, which in this case happens to be amnesia, and not necessarily the intention of the amnesty.

<sup>21</sup> As Carr/Fusi Aizpurua point out, "terrorism accounted for 30 lives in 1977, 99 in 1978, and 123 in 1979." (258).

- c. Todos los actos de idéntica naturaleza e intencionalidad a los contemplados en el párrafo anterior realizados hasta el 6 de octubre de 1977, siempre que no hayan supuesto violencia grave contra la vida o la integridad de las personas.

Ambiguity is present from the very start, literally, from Article 1. The statute of limitations set in part 1a of Article 1 is December 15, 1976—the day the Political Reform Law (*Ley para la Reforma Política*) was approved by popular referendum. Essentially, all crimes of a political nature, regardless of their outcome, committed before that date were amnestied. This first section of Article 1 is problematic for many reasons. First, what exactly are crimes of a political nature? Who determines the nature of the crime? Second, the clause ‘regardless of their outcome’ (*cualquiera que fuese su resultado*) is one example of the injustice surrounding the Transition that I refer to throughout this dissertation; it implies that even if the crime involved was an act as grave as torture, repression or even murder, if committed anterior to the date mentioned it was to be amnestied. And finally, the date in question—December 15 1976—is problematic because of the clause which precedes it in the law: ‘before the date’ (*con anterioridad al día.*) How far back into the past does this law and its amnesty extend? Is it merely limited to the time of the Transition government, since Franco’s death? Does it extend back into the Franco regime? The Civil War? I will attempt to answer these questions, but first it will be helpful to keep reading further into the law.

Parts b and c of Article 1-1 also deal with crimes political in nature, however the statutes of limitations they establish are more clearly defined. Article 1-1b establishes a time frame between December 15, 1976 and June 15 1977—the day of the first democratic elections—while Article 1-1c extends the time frame mentioned in 1b till October 6 of 1977. Furthermore, 1c clarifies that the amnesty does not extend to crimes, which have included violence against others. It is opportune to remember that on October 6, 1977 there was a fascist attack in Alicante on a group of communist sympathizers and one of the later group-members is killed.

The Law is comprised of ten articles and nowhere in the text does it explicitly mention who the amnesty law is directed toward and what crimes are being amnestied; however, there are many clues in the text which coax the reader into assuming that the law is written to pardon the Leftist political prisoners that were retained during the Franco regime. For example, Article 2-d states the amnesty is extended to: “Los actos de expresión de opinión, realizados a través de la prensa, imprenta o cualquier otro medio de comunicación.” This portion of the law seems to make reference to the journalists, writers, and intellectuals who were jailed or censored during the Franco regime. Article 5 states: “Están comprendidas en esta Ley las infracciones de naturaleza laboral y sindical consistentes en actos que supongan el ejercicio de derechos reconocidos a los trabajadores en normas y convenios internacionales vigentes en la actualidad.” Again, it is not clear who this article is referring to, however we can infer that it encompasses all those jailed during labor unrests or because of union activity since unions and political parties were illegal during the Franco regime.

As a final example in an attempt to understand whom this law is amnestying, I turn to Article 10 — “La autoridad judicial competente ordenará la inmediata libertad de los beneficiados por la amnistía que se hallaren en prisión y dejará sin efecto las ordenes de busca y captura de los que estuviesen declarados en rebeldía.” After Franco died,

none of the ministers, military officials or leaders associated with his regime were arrested or prosecuted or jailed, so when the law refers to releasing people from prison then it seems obvious that it is referring to those political prisoners jailed by the Franco regime. While there is no explicit mention of names, political parties, or regimes, it seems this law is meant to justify the amnesty given to the Left. However, it is this very lack of specificities which makes the Amnesty Law an important contributor to the *Pacto de silencio*. The former Franco elites, and in general the Franco regime itself, was amnestied because of the ambiguity in the law.<sup>22</sup> As Aguilar points out, “on this occasion, the amnesty also included the Francoists, since the institutions were not purged, nor were the police responsible for torturing political prisoners put on trial, etc...” (Collective Memory 19) Further, since there is no specific naming of those guilty of the crimes it can be assumed that former Franco elites, and symbolically the regime itself, were being included in the list of those who were amnestied. There is no start-date statute of limitation in the law either, so when Article 1a refers to crimes committed before 1976, we could extend that all the way back into the Franco regime or even further to the Civil War. It is interesting to note that the name of Franco never appears in the text of the law, but inversely, the very lack of his name and the amnesty it implies is a building block in the *Pacto de silencio*.

The reasoning behind the amnesties is understandable: the government wanted to show a clear-cut difference between its policy and the Francoist policy of retroactive punishment. The Left and Center demanded amnesty as a matter of justice, while the Right agreed to the concession out of generosity and clemency.<sup>23</sup> It is important to remember that after Franco’s victory in the Civil War, he was in no way lenient to the losers and did not allow amnesty to the defeated side. The Law of Political Responsibilities was passed, making past or present participation in any political party which was not Francoist punishable by law. Franco’s treatment of the defeated is often referred to as the Pact of Blood. As Raymond Carr explains:

despite its espousal of Christian values, the new state showed no forgiveness for the defeated. ‘Spaniards, alert’, the state radio announced on the day of victory: ‘Peace is not a comfortable and cowardly repose in the face of History. The blood of those who fell for the Fatherland does not allow for forgetfulness, sterility, or treachery. Spaniards, alert, Spain is still at war against all internal and external enemies’. (265)

Franco had shown no mercy for the opposition, and understandably the transition government wanted to set itself apart from the old regime. And on the other hand, “...the opposition groups had to renounce any policy of prosecution and punishment of those politically responsible authorities and officials involved in repressive activities under Francoism” (Maravall and Santamaría 84) in order to secure their place at the bargaining table. Prosecuting the former regime participants could have been construed as an act of revenge instead of a bringing to justice and would have further polarized the country. However, instead of being amnestied and returning quietly to civilian life, the former

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<sup>22</sup> “La mayoría de los españoles desconoce que la propia Ley de Amnistía contiene dos artículos que impiden perseguir a los torturadores y a todos aquellos que hubieran cometido abusos de poder durante la dictadura.” (Aguilar, *Legados* 20)

<sup>23</sup> Aguilar *Memory and Amnesia*... p 166

Francoists often took center stage in the transitional government as was the case for example, “of the 500 Procuradores in the Cortes [Francoist], some 80 reappeared in 1977 as deputies or senators” (Maravall and Santamaría 83).

### The Pactos de la Moncloa: from *ruptura* to *reforma*

Some point to the *Pactos de la Moncloa*<sup>24</sup> as the possible origin of the *Pacto de silencio*. The *Pactos de la Moncloa* was a series of agreements made by 10 political leaders during negotiations on October 8 and 9, 1977. The Senate then approved these pacts on October 27, 1977. The *Pactos* are organized in two sections—Economic Reform and Political Reform, the former comprising the bulk of the text. While a solution to the economic crisis plaguing Spain in the immediate post-Franco era was the primary concern of these agreements, there was also special attention paid to the concept of democratization, and thus, the *Pactos de la Moncloa* resemble the building blocks of the Constitution which was written the following year.

The major economic problems discussed in the text are inflation, unemployment, and uneven foreign trade. When solutions to these problems are discussed, there is an acute awareness of “democratización,” “los representantes de los trabajadores,” and “los partidos políticos”. Similar to the Amnesty Law, the Franco regime is never mentioned.

The second part of the *Pactos de la Moncloa* is dedicated to “Actuación jurídica y política” and though it is shorter and less developed than the economic pacts, it is more relevant to the study of justice (or lack thereof) in the Spanish Transition. The introduction to the second part states the purpose of the legislation: “Los objetivos de política legislativa a corto plazo propuestos se centran en la introducción de reformas parciales y urgentes para la adaptación del ordenamiento jurídico a las exigencias propias de la nueva realidad democrática.” The second part of these pacts focuses on civil liberties such as freedom of expression, assembly, and the freedom to be associated with political parties. As these freedoms demonstrate, and as the introduction to Part 2 clearly states, the introductions of these freedoms into Spanish life is a necessity because of the new Spanish democracy. Part 2 also limited the power of the military and ensured the military did not interfere with judicial affairs in the civilian realm.

The official text of the *Pactos* ends with a note by the President of the Senate who ratified the legislation. He wrote that, amongst other things, the Senate would “Pedir a todos los Grupos políticos y fuerzas sociales que colaboren solidariamente y presten su apoyo para la superación de la crisis y la consolidación de la democracia.” Earlier in the text, the same desire for collaboration is expressed:

Los representantes del Gobierno y de los distintos partidos políticos coinciden en que los objetivos anteriormente descritos resultarán inalcanzables si el país no toma conciencia de la gravedad de la situación y entienden que si las acciones expuestas se cumplen señalará el punto de partida de una nueva etapa que conducirá al asentamiento de un sistema económico estable que reduzca gradualmente las tensiones hoy existentes en la sociedad española.

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<sup>24</sup> [www.vespito.net/historia/transi/pactos.html](http://www.vespito.net/historia/transi/pactos.html)

This warning for the need for collaboration was as much for the Right as the Left, as many conservatives were concerned about the level of freedom being granted to the opposition. These changes were facilitated by “un proceso de flexible y dinámica negociación” and in “un clima de cooperación responsable que contribuya a la consolidación de la democracia.” The *Pactos* are self-reflexive in that they are “en espera de lo que en este sentido pueda derivarse de la nueva Constitución y del eventual establecimiento de gobiernos autónomos.” Despite the various ambiguities that exist in the *Pactos de la Moncloa*, the aim of the text was clear: to consolidate democracy by means of economic and political reform. Collaboration and negotiation were key components not only to the democratization but also to the *Pacto de silencio*. Silence would be one of the key tools of negotiation.

The irony and ambiguity of these pacts are compounded by the study of the authors of the agreements. The 10 leaders who drafted the pacts are: Adolfo Suárez González, Felipe González Márquez, Joan Reventós Carner, Josep Maria Triginer Fernández, Manuel Fraga Iribarne, Enrique Tierno Galván, Juan Ajuriaguerra Ochandiano, Miguel Roca i Junyent, Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo y Bustelo, and Santiago Carrillo Solares. What is striking about this list is not merely that it is the ‘Who’s Who?’ of the Spanish transition to democracy. The salient feature of the list and a general problematic of the Transition as a whole is that many of the key players of the Transition were former Francoists, and the apparatus they used during democratization was that of the former Fascist regime. Adolfo Suárez was Director of the state-run *Radio Televisión Española* and went on to become a Minister in the National Movement. Manuel Fraga was also a minister in Franco’s National Movement and was quite unpopular because of his repressive tactics. Not only were the former Franco ministers not being punished for being involved with a repressive Fascist regime, they were the ones charged with the task of leading Spain into democracy. Though there does not seem to be any doubt today that these leaders, most notably Adolfo Suárez, had abandoned their affiliations with fascism and were committed to the transition to democracy, it does seem a slap in the face to all those who had suffered under Francoism and who, despite the freedoms being granted under the flag of democracy, would not see justice for the crimes committed against them.

## The Constitution

The Spanish Constitution<sup>25</sup>, ratified by a popular referendum on December 6, 1978, is another textual site, which demonstrates the silencing of the Franco regime and the subsequent Transition government. The Constitution is notoriously ambiguous; a prime example is the recent use of Article 32 — “El hombre y la mujer tienen derecho a contraer matrimonio con plena igualdad jurídica” — by same-sex marriage advocates to support their cause since it does not directly stipulate that marriage should be between the man and the woman. The preamble of the Constitution begins: “La Nación española, deseando establecer *la justicia*, la libertad y la seguridad y promover el bien de cuantos la integran...” (emphasis mine).

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<sup>25</sup> <http://constitucion.rediris.es/legis/1978/ce1978.html>

Justice, the very first item the Constitution wanted to establish, in the end became the very thing the Transition denied to those who suffered under Francoism. The Constitution established and guaranteed rights in many of the same arenas as the *Pactos de la Moncloa* before it—political parties, workers’ unions, individual freedoms—as well as laid the framework for the Legislative and Judicial branches and the outline for the powers of the King. It is important to note that Article 2 “reconoce y garantiza el derecho a la autonomía de las nacionalidades y regiones que la integran.” Article 3 establishes Castilian as the official language of Spain and allows for the other languages to be co-official in their respective autonomous regions. The text outlines the rights and responsibilities of the autonomous regions in relation to the Central government and sketches out the various tracks to achieving autonomy.<sup>26</sup> These articles will be important to remember in Chapters Two and Three as I deal specifically with the repercussions of the Transition in Catalonia.

Article 20 protects the freedom of expression with particular attention given “a la producción y creación literaria, artística, científica y técnica” and adds “el ejercicio de estos derechos no puede restringirse mediante ningún tipo de censura previa.” It is interesting that although the Constitution specifically states that thought and artistic expression will not be restricted by censorship, censorship and the silence associated with it will continue to influence the way in which Spaniards think, read, and write because of the *Pacto de silencio*. In Chapter Three I discuss the roots of censorship in Francoist Spain and its continuation, be it through internalization or self-censorship, during democratic Spain.

The issue of amnesty makes its way into the Constitution as well, this time as a pre-emptive measure. Article 71 states “Durante el período de su mandato los Diputados y Senadores gozarán asimismo de inmunidad y sólo podrán ser detenidos en caso de flagrante delito. No podrán ser inculcados ni procesados sin la previa autorización de la Cámara respectiva.”

The original text of the Constitution ends with a *Disposición Derogatoria* and a *Disposición Final*. The Derogation Provision literally undoes a prior law and is one of very few direct references to what came before democratic Spain—the Franco regime. The Derogation Provision states:

1. Queda derogada la Ley 1/1977, de 4 de enero, para la Reforma Política, así como, en tanto en cuanto no estuvieran ya derogadas por la anteriormente mencionada ley, la de Principios Fundamentales del Movimiento de 17 de mayo de 1958, el Fuero de los Españoles de 17 de julio de 1945, el del Trabajo de 9 de marzo de 1938, la Ley Constitutiva de las Cortes de 17 de julio de 1942, la Ley de Sucesión en la Jefatura del Estado de 26 de julio de 1947 todas ellas modificadas por la Ley Orgánica del Estado de 10 de enero de 1967 y en los mismos términos esta última y la de Referéndum Nacional de 22 de octubre de 1945.
3. Asimismo quedan derogadas cuantas disposiciones se opongan a lo establecido en esta Constitución.

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<sup>26</sup> The term *nacionalidades* has come to be seen as one of the many ambiguities and a great problematic of the Constitution because it is an invented term, invented in the sense that it was not a term used before the Constitution is written and does not explain what exactly constituted a *nacionalidad*.



-Disposición Final: Esta Constitución entrará en vigor el mismo día de la publicación de su texto oficial en el boletín oficial del Estado. Se publicará también en las demás lenguas de España.

The final thought of the Constitution is based in plurality—the Constitution would be translated into the other languages of Spain. In this sense, the Constitution and most of the major legislation which marks the Transition period, is truly democratic and just. However, just behind the façade of plurality and order of these texts, lays the truth of a broken and silenced Spain.

### Speaking to Spain's Neighbor: Portugal's Transition to Democracy

Although the events leading up to and following democratization in Portugal were quite different from those in Spain (colonial wars and horrible economic conditions are two examples), it is interesting to look at the Portuguese transition to see what insights we can gain into the Spanish case. Regardless of their differences, one thing was clear: "...both the United States of America and the European democracies, [...] sought to avoid the repetition in Spain of a 'Portuguese-style' transition" (Aguilar Collective Memory 33). The first difference between the two democratic processes was that in Spain there was never a regime collapse, whereas in Portugal (and Greece, its other Mediterranean neighbor going through a contemporary process), the Salazar regime (the *Estado Novo*) was dismantled and overthrown. António de Oliveira Salazar came to power in 1932 as Prime Minister and became de facto dictator until his stroke in 1968 and his subsequent death in 1970. After his death, Marcelo Caetano was able to prolong the life of the *Estado Novo* for a few more years, but on April 25 1974, the *Movimento das Forças Armadas* (the Armed Forces' Movement), carried out a successful overthrow of the government which popularly came to be known as the Carnation Revolution. This image became significant not only in the Portuguese collective memory, but in Spanish and international collective memory as well. The MFA was comprised of a group of mid-ranking military officials who were tired of fighting a colonial war they did not believe they could win. As Kenneth Maxwell points out:

In every other case a vital element in the process of democratization was the extraction of the military (in most cases a military regime) from power. By contrast, in Portugal it was the military that destroyed a fundamentally nonmilitary authoritarian system. Whereas elsewhere the military saw its institutional interests best served by removing themselves from the political arena, in Portugal the military saw their institutional future (in fact, the avoidance of outright military defeat in Guinea-Bissau) as being served by a coup.

As a movement, the MFA was based in socialism and was committed to social justice for all.

The opening lines of the MFA manifesto issued on April 25, 1974 state:

In consideration of the fact that after 13 years of fighting in the overseas territories the existing political system has nonetheless as yet failed to define any concrete, realistic policy towards the overseas territories that might lead to peace between Portuguese citizens of all races and religions; in further consideration of the fact that it will only be possible to work out such a policy by reconstructing

the present political structure and its institutions, by ensuring that democratic processes are applied so that they become truly representative of the Portuguese people...” (Kohler 178)

The manifesto goes on to lay down the procedures for democratization, a process which would be grueling considering the length of the preceding dictatorship and a total lack of democratic structure. This was different than the Spanish case, where the second half of the Franco regime was marked by *apertura*, an opening up of the system, and reform. The 1950's in Spain were marked by rapid industrialization, abandonment of the former isolationist economic policies, foreign investment, and tourism, which all played a part in facilitating the transition to democracy. “In comparative perspective, this failure to liberalize, something the Spaniards were able to achieve in 1975-76, meant that the Portuguese missed the opportunity to negotiate a transition without *ruptura* in the immediate aftermath of Salazar's death in 1970” (Maxwell 113).

It should be clear from reading just the first few lines of the manifesto that there was a fundamental difference between the Portuguese and Spanish approaches to regime change. The Portuguese Transition would have to be marked by a dismantling of the former regime, accompanied by a blatant rhetorical distancing from the *Estado Novo*. In Spain, however, there was political rhetorical silence and, to large extent, continuity of the Francoist apparatus. In Portugal, “once the coup succeeded, there was a ready-made group of clearly identified individuals to whom the military could turn if it wished to form a government composed of men whose hands were clean of any involvement with the fallen regime [the young Socialists and Communists who lacked experience]” (Maxwell 118), the opposite of a Spanish system which saw the continuation of former Francoist elites in the new government.

Another interesting facet of the Portuguese transition was the degree of international intervention. “At first the most characteristic reaction abroad to the successful coup d'état of 25 April 1974 was uncertainty. At home it was euphoria—a springtime of exuberance which gave the revolution its popular identification as the ‘revolution of flowers’ after the red carnations with which the victorious soldiers adorned themselves and their rifles” (Maxwell 115). As Beate Kohler further explains:

In the political situation in which Western Europe found itself in 1974 and 1975, the outcome of the struggle between Socialists and Communists in Portugal could not be a matter of indifference to Portugal's neighbors; in France, the Union of the Left was hoping to be able to form a government; in Italy the Communist Party was striving to attain an historical compromise; in Spain, where there was considerable uncertainty surrounding post-Franco developments, it was clear that they would be considerably influenced by left-wing opposition forces; in Greece the Panhellenic Socialist Movement had made major gains in the local election. It was perfectly understandable that conservative circles should regard this apparently inexorable shift to the left in the western and southern states of Europe with growing concern. (187-8)

By 1974, the United States had military bases in the Azores and therefore had a direct interest in the outcome of the ousting of the regime Portugal. They also feared that rapid decolonization in Angola and Mozambique would leave room for Russia to go into Africa, an outcome the U.S. wanted to avoid at all costs. Foreign intervention even

played a part in the formation of the political infrastructure, as most of the political parties were set up via support from foreign countries, especially the U.S. and the USSR.

At least in theory, what the Portuguese wanted to do in 1974 was bring justice to all:

It is only in Portugal [in relation to Spain and Greece] that the change in the political system was accompanied by a transformation of social power relationships. The collapse of the authoritarian regime set in motion a dynamic that led to the politicization of wide areas of the population, and to powerful voices being raised in favour of a basic restructuring of social arrangements. A rapid transition to socialism was a vision of the future to which the overwhelming majority of political parties, trade unions and other organizations pledged themselves publicly at the time of the 'carnation revolution'. (Kohler 243-4)

Of course theory greatly differed from the harsh economic reality of 1974 Portugal, both because of the loss of the colonies and the generally poor global economy. The extreme polarization and fragmentation of the Left meant the Socialists found it nearly impossible to implement their plans. Similar to Spain, Portugal too went through a period of *desencanto* and nostalgia for the former regime; "politically these disappointments resulted in a political apathy, abandonment of the hopes placed on socialist developments and a concentration on what was politically and economically possible, and in the final analysis, a subdued nostalgia for the Salazar era" (Kohler 244).

It is interesting to note the amnesiac tendencies in Portugal that are similar to Spain. The most salient example is the renaming of the Salazar Bridge to *Ponte 25 de abril*. The suspension bridge is a prominent feature of Lisbon and spans across the Tagus River that originates in Spain, and after cutting west through Portugal, flows into the Atlantic Ocean. Very soon after the Carnation Revolution the bridge was renamed; even in a country where the vestiges of the former regime were minimal, efforts were made to bury the past. I am not arguing for a preservation of dictators' propaganda, rather I am merely observing the immediate attempt to erase physical reminders of the past without accounting for the social or emotional scars. In Spain, even this physical erasure would not be complete until the Law of Historical Memory took effect in 2007.

What is most important about the Carnation Revolution, as it relates to this project, is the impact it had on the collective memory of the country and on neighboring Spain. When the revolution began, a Spanish film crew was sent over to document the events and report back to the government; although the images were censored, news of the revolution reached Spain anyway by way of travelers flowing between the two countries. "Popular mobilization followed the coup; it did not cause it" (Maxwell 109); however, it is the popular participation which is most remembered both within Portugal and on a global level. When the soldiers of the *Estado Novo* attempted to resist the overthrow, the Portuguese people went into the streets and placed red carnations in the soldiers' gun barrels, urging them to swap their arms for flowers; it worked. The images of soldiers adorned with red flowers catapulted around the globe and were especially poignant in neighboring Spain where citizens probably dreamed of doing the very same thing in their own country. The events could have been a mirror for Spain, however there was never mass public mobilization against the government.

As Resina points out, another factor that set the Spanish Transition apart from other democratic processes is that it was not an ideological project:

Compared with the transitions undergone by other Western dictatorships in this last quarter of a century, from Chile to Poland, Spain's journey into modernity seems unexceptional. Over and above the ideological agendas of the various opposition movements, the true locomotive of historical change—to use Marx's metaphor—was not the revolution but the market. It was the market's implacable logic that pushed Spain, from the sixties on, out of the autarchy and into reformist policies leading up to the Moncloa pact and the Constitution of 1978. (Resina 92)

A desire to join and benefit from the market economy was the impetus behind democratization and was a process that began even before Franco was dead. The Leftist ideologies that for so long had sustained the opposition were slowly dying out, to the point that, by 1975, the Transition was no longer a result of passionate ideological convictions.

### Justice

One of the main claims of this project is that the Spanish transition to democracy, though characterized as successful by historians and political scientists, in some regards deprived the victims of the Civil War and the Franco regime of due justice.<sup>27</sup> There is still no consensus about how justice is best served, but there is no doubt that:

Those who have suffered unspeakable acts of torture and abuse, who have lost loved ones and associates, and who have had their lives torn apart by capricious and uncaring governments must be able to feel that their losses have been addressed and that their new leaders have taken seriously the necessity of restoring the moral order of a damaged world. This attention, it is felt, is owed to the victims simply by virtue of their humanity. (McAdams ix-x)

So the question is never if justice should be served, but by what means. Though the conception of justice that I will expound is legal and political in nature, it is also inevitable that justice be desired on moral grounds; after the Nuremburg and Tokyo trials, there has arisen a sense that these types of crimes must be prosecuted for the sake of humanity. Juan Méndez warns:

Postmodernist thought has provided useful insights into the motives behind every political action, and prompts us to exercise a healthy distrust of measures that are justified in high moral tones. But this approach can also make us cynical about quite worthwhile efforts to restore truth and justice. Worse still, it could cause us to lose confidence in the ability of democratic forces to shape events to good effect, even if they cannot always control them. (21-2)

Since most agree that morality plays some part in justice, how do we define what is just or good without taking the moral high ground?

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<sup>27</sup> For a study on justice specifically as it pertains to Catalonia see Aracil, Rafael, Andreu Mayayo, Antoni Segura. *Memòria de la Transició a Espanya i a Catalunya. Ensenyament, cultura, justícia*. Vol VI-VII. Barcelona: La Universitat de Barcelona, 2004. The chapter by Manuel Gerpe Landín “De la ‘justícia’ franquista a la justícia democràtica.” pp 283-290 is especially interesting in the way it compares models of justice under the Franco dictatorship and under democracy.

There is no agreement about the nature of justice, and the concept may vary greatly based on if you are talking to a liberal, a Marxist, or a utilitarian. I believe John Rawls' 'Justice as Fairness' model is a good place to turn to even though recent criticism has tried to reject his argument saying it is too relativist or does not take into consideration issues such as race and gender.<sup>28</sup> Rawls, typical of his liberal leanings, detaches himself from alignment with a moral or value-based justice, though he does concede that morality is important to justice. He sets up justice as a hypothetical social contract with a 'veil of ignorance' which deprives the citizen of knowing where they will end up in society in the long run, putting them in an 'original position' in order to establish the basic principles which will rule society without having a utilitarian viewpoint. Justice, he argues, should be about fairness and should be rooted in the basic principles of liberty and equality in a society based on "a system of fair social cooperation [which entails pre-established rules] between free and equal persons" (Justice as Fairness 52). He explains that "...in a constitutional democracy the public conception of justice should be, so far as possible, independent of controversial philosophical and religious doctrines. Thus, to formulate such a conception, we apply the principle of toleration to philosophy itself: the public conception of justice is to be political, not metaphysical" (48). However, even though justice according to Rawls should not be based on metaphysical morality, morality does come into play because it is based on a social contract, and at the heart of the contract are citizens who deserve to be treated fairly.

Rawls does not deny that because we are social creatures, metaphysical matters inevitably influence our sense of justice and morality, though justice and morality are not one and the same. We do not divorce ourselves from our religious or philosophical conceptions of good, rather we must learn to participate simultaneously in those metaphysical circles as well as in a public-political circle which acknowledges that there are many conceptions of 'good' in a democracy. He explains:

Since persons can be full participants in a fair system of social cooperation, we ascribe to them the two moral powers connected with the elements in the idea of social cooperation noted above: namely, a capacity for a sense of justice and a capacity for a conception of the good. A sense of justice is the capacity to understand, to apply, and to act from the public conception of justice which characterizes the fair terms of social cooperation. The capacity for a conception of the good is the capacity to form, to revise, and rationally to pursue a conception of one's rational advantage, or good. In the case of social cooperation, this good must not be understood narrowly but rather as a conception of what is valuable in human life. Thus, a conception of the good normally consists of a more or less determinate scheme of final ends, that is, ends we want to realize for their own sake, as well as of attachments to other persons and loyalties to various groups and associations. (Justice as Fairness 55)

In order to establish social unity, citizens must unite and not establish a common conception of the good, but rather should look upon 'justice as fairness' as a value in and of itself and not part of a larger doctrine.

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<sup>28</sup> For varying conceptions of justice, including criticism of Rawlsian justice, see *Justice. A Reader*. Michael J. Sandel (ed.). Oxford Press, 2007.

There is a vast spectrum of ways justice can be served: oblivion, trials, truth commissions, amnesty, or complete justice, which is impossible. As in the Spanish case: There may be times when the most responsible way of dealing with a legacy of human rights abuse is, in fact, to pass over the crimes of a former dictatorship in silence, that is, to forget and if possible, to forgive past offenses in the interest of national reconciliation. By the same logic, the most sensible choice at other times may be to turn instead to less divisive means of wrestling with the past, such as those availed by truth commissions and other fact-finding agencies. (McAdams xiv)

As Juan Méndez explains, accountability trials make “good political sense in the transition from dictatorship to democracy. In fact, the pursuit of retrospective justice is an urgent task of democratization, as it highlights the fundamental character of the new order to be established, an order based on the rule of law and on respect for the dignity and worth of each human person” (1). Granted, there are inherent problems with accountability trials; there is a risk that they will evolve into show trials and that restrictions will be put on who can be prosecuted. Unfortunately, to date, these trials seem the fairest means of bringing justice to victims.

The Spanish amnesty policy toward the former regime was a clear-cut form of denial of justice. As Méndez explains:

...a policy of letting bygones be bygones is not wrong primarily because its view of stability looks suspiciously like yielding to thuggery and blackmail. Rather, I would argue that it is morally wrong because it fails to recognize the worth and dignity of each victim. It is also politically wrong because it sets the new political order on the weak foundation of privilege and the denial of the rule of law. Such a democracy may not be worthy of its name. (3-4)

Not only was amnesty of the former elites unjust in a political nature since it failed to follow a democratic process, it was unjust on a humanitarian level as amnesty violated basic human rights for those who had suffered under the fascist perpetrators.

Méndez goes on to establish a four-step procedure for how justice should be carried out in a transitional situation:

Societies faced with a legacy of human rights violations must strive to fulfill four obligations that the state owes to the victims and to society. The first of these is an obligation to do justice, that is, to prosecute and punish the perpetrators of abuses when those abuses can be determined to have been criminal in nature. The second obligation is to grant victims the right to know the truth. This implies the ability to investigate any and all aspects of a violation that still remain shrouded in secrecy and to disclose this truth to the victims of injustice, to their relatives, and to society as a whole. The third obligation is to grant reparations to victims in a manner that recognizes their worth and their dignity as human beings. Monetary compensation in appropriate amounts is certainly a part of this duty, but the obligation should also be conceived as including nonmonetary gestures that express recognition of the harm done to them and an apology in the name of society. Finally, states are obliged to see to it that those who have committed the crimes while serving in any capacity in the armed or security forces of the state should not be allowed to continue on the rolls of reconstituted, democratic law-enforcement or security-related bodies. (11-12)

According to this schematic, the Spanish Transition failed miserably at implementing justice for the victims of the regime. To be fair, in 1977 there was one attempt by the government to impart political justice. On the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bombing of Guernica, a historical truth commission met in the Basque city and demanded access to archives in order to debunk the Francoist myth that the city's inhabitants had destroyed their own city, and to establish responsibility in the crime which had played (and still plays) such a decisive role in the collective memory of the Spanish people. Ironically, it was the German government who first agreed to grant the Spanish historians access to their archives, followed one year later by the Spanish government agreeing to grant only one of the historians of the truth commission access to its archives (Aguilar, Legados 44).<sup>29</sup>

This lack of justice seems especially shocking considering that “la democracia actual es el único régimen español de este siglo que no ha pedido responsabilidades jurídicas y políticas a los mandatarios del régimen anterior” (Aguilar, Legados del franquismo, 13-14). Going as far back as the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera who had sought retroactive justice of the Restoration government, the Second Republic had done the same to Primo de Rivera, and of course Franco had done so to the Republicans. The reasoning behind the Transition government's lack of action was to avoid a cycle of bloodshed which had plagued Spain for nearly a century. However justice should not have been confused with revenge. No former Franco leaders were prosecuted for the crimes of repression or torture. Till this very day, many victims still do not know the truth about what happened to their loved ones. Though there was a meager attempt to restore pensions to former Republican soldiers, no large-scale reparations programs were established. And finally, those who had committed crimes were allowed to remain serving in the new government and the security forces.<sup>30</sup> The fact that the roots of these crimes originated in Civil War Spain further complicated the ability to restore justice, since both sides committed unspeakable acts during the war itself. However, the war was followed by nearly four more decades of crimes against humanity committed by the Franco regime.

A key to Méndez's argument though, is that “...accountability is a process and not a result...” (14), an argument very similar to Mark Osiel's. What is important during an accountability trial, and what is essential in the process of justice and was gravely lacking during the Spanish Transition, is the arena in which families and society as a whole can participate in (re)constructing the story of their country, formulating the policies which will determine their future, and in the meantime creating and preserving their collective memory. A prosecution of former Francoists in Spain would have had “a

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<sup>29</sup> Of course, the return of Picasso's famed painting *Guernica* to Madrid can be seen as another example of symbolic justice.

<sup>30</sup> The *Caso Ruano* is an interesting example to note here; Enrique Ruano was detained in 1969 for allegedly propagating Communist literature. When his dead body was discovered in a plaza two days later, police claimed it was suicide. The investigation that followed was a farce, and no one was held accountable for the young man's death. In 1992, Ruano's family attempted to open a case against the three police officers who were popularly suspected to have caused the boy's death. Not only were those officers still active members of the police force, but also the Ruano family was unable to form a case because the statute of limitations had passed, and the Amnesty Law of 1977 technically amnestied the police officers. See Aguilar, Legados pp 33-34.

place in establishing memory against oblivion” (Méndez 16). Prosecution would also have helped to consolidate democracy and create social solidarity more quickly.

Mark Osiel is yet another who believes that criminal trials play a crucial role during democratic transitions, but not so much in relation to justice as it concerns social solidarity and collective memory. Often, these trials or legal activities in general help a society at times of founding (or re-founding, as was the case in Spain) because it creates a sort of myth to help explain where the society comes from and what it stands for. And often, “a traumatized society that is deeply divided about its recent past can greatly benefit from collective representations of the past, created and cultivated by a process of prosecution and judgment, accompanied by public discussion about the trial and its result” (Osiel 39). Osiel’s main thesis is that what is most important and beneficial about a public trial is not the verdict; rather, the process itself gives society a chance to dialogue about what has occurred, thus creating and perpetuating a collective memory, and publicly mourning what has happened. The law is not used deliberately to create social conditions, but social solidarity and the formation of collective memory is the by-product of legal proceedings.

It also allows society to construct a framework on how to manage conflict in the future, and in line with Rawls, the key is not agreeing on a certain concept of justice or morality, but agreeing on the necessity of establishing a framework for dealing with disagreement. Osiel demonstrates that there are no guarantees that the trial will have a certain effect on society, but evidence seems to show that the effect will be salubrious. In Argentina for example, the fact that the war trials were televised allowed society to engage in the proceedings whereas despite Japan’s war trials for crimes throughout Asia and because of Emperor Hirohito’s mythic status, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had a greater impact on collective memory than the atrocities committed by the Emperor.<sup>31</sup> What happened in Spain during the democratic transition was the exact opposite; there was no trial to stimulate public discussion and the *modus operandi* was a pact of silence. Since the Spanish Transition was characterized by a top-down democratization presided over by elites, the people were not participants in constructing the ever-important societal framework.

Postmodernists become suspicious whenever the state attempts to legislate history, but a trial would not be hijacking history. Rather, because of the rules and regulations of legal proceedings, the courtroom would become a venue for the telling of a diverse set of stories or legal storytelling. “Postmodernist accounts of narrative typically view the cacophony of alternative tales about the same large-scale event, and the resulting conflict between them, as valuable in themselves. The proliferation of ‘little narratives,’ each by performative utterance, ensures that no single ‘grand meta-narrative’ will ever consolidate itself as *the* collective memory of an event” (Osiel 51). A trial, and the discussions which would follow it, would have provided an impetus for this all-important storytelling. Faced with the lack of this legal venue, in Spain the storytelling was thus confined to a fictional realm and manifested itself in the novel of the Transition.

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<sup>31</sup> Osiel does point out, however, that since the death of Emperor Hirohito, discussion about the war crimes has flourished in the country.



And although it is idealistic to claim that governments should not legislate on questions of memory, the plain truth is that they do.<sup>32</sup>

In Transitional Spain, since there was fear that conflicting memories would cause turmoil, two things occurred—silence, and ‘equal distribution of blame’. There was a great fear in Spain that prosecutions and placing official blame would only be seen as acts of revenge and would compromise reconciliation. To combat that, “...in Spain, a consensus historical memory of the Civil War emerged in which, firstly, *all those involved were equally guilty* of the atrocities that had taken place during the war and, secondly, the tragedy must *never again* be repeated” (Aguilar Collective Memory, 4). Instead of letting the law decide who was guilty of what, the elites created a narrative of equal and bilateral guilt, which seemed doubly unfair to those who had been deemed losers of the Civil War and had endured 40 years of blame from the Franco regime. Perhaps the Spanish paranoia of revenge was just that, paranoia. According to Osiel, “among antagonists who must go on living together in the same society, a judicial narrative perceived as ‘balanced’—in recognizing valid claims of wrongdoing on both sides—is best suited to facilitate reconciliation and reconstruction of social solidarity” (129). Had a fair legal system decided on equal blame, perhaps society could have swallowed that pill. However, since a handful of elites (many of whom had been active participants in the Franco regime) had been the ones who decided who was to blame, the trauma of Civil War and living under dictatorship was silenced and suppressed even more, at least in the political realm. Furthermore, criticism of the Transition was not tolerated or even attempted because it was viewed as a criticism of democratization in general and harmful to the transitional process.

Why there was no demand for justice by the people during the Transition could have been due to a matter of priorities; “En las encuestas llevadas a cabo entre 1975 y 1976, las prioridades de los españoles eran la paz, la estabilidad y el orden, incluso por encima de la justicia, la libertad y la democracia” (Aguilar Fernández, “La evocación de la guerra...” 300). Also, even after Franco’s death, many Spaniards still associated the regime with the myth of relative stability and economic development, albeit because of internalization of the regime’s propaganda which could help to explain why there were no mass movements for justice or reparations.

Granted, Osiel points out that there are many obstacles that stand in the way of trials doing their part in creating solidarity. There is a risk of converting the trial into a spectacle and compromising the rights of the defendants. There can be unfair and opportunistic readings of precedents. However, “the least we might fairly expect from courts, at such trying times, is a stimulus to democratic dialogue between those who wish us to remember very different things. A courtroom may not be the optimal place for such a dialogue to occur, still less to be resolved. But a courtroom is one place where it might fruitfully begin or be carried forward” (Osiel 282). The bottom line is that “public memory can be constructed publicly if the law advances social solidarity by ventilating and addressing disagreement, rather than concealing it—by acknowledging and confronting interpretive controversy, not suppressing it” (Osiel 283) as was done in Spain.

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<sup>32</sup> Two examples: In the United States, there are state laws about Holocaust education in schools. In 2006, France passed a bill making the denial of the Armenian Genocide a crime.

Who controls memory? What is the purpose of remembering something? To incite anger? To gain moral high ground? It may not be the responsibility of the courts to answer society's questions about its past and about its collective memory. However, the fact is that in Western society citizens inevitably look to the courts to answer these life-changing inquiries. With no public trials of former regime leaders and with the continuity of some of these leaders in the new government, Franco stood above the law even in his death.

'Reconciliation' was one of the catch-phrases of the democratic transition in Spain, but reconciliation does not equal forgiveness and, in fact, may go against justice. The Oxford Online English Dictionary defines reconcile as: "To bring (a person) again into friendly relations *to* or *with* (oneself or another) after an estrangement"<sup>33</sup>. However, according to further definitions, to reconcile can also imply atonement (which was not carried out by either side in the Spanish Transition) or submission against one's will (which occurred mainly on the Left). What was lacking in the Transition was forgiveness, and if we return to Ricoeur's thoughts on remembering the past:

The question of forgiving arises where there has been an indictment, a finding of guilt, and sentencing; the laws dealing with amnesty thus consider it as a sort of pardon....

The significance of amnesty is quite different. To begin with, it brings to conclusion serious political disorders affecting civil peace—civil wars, revolutionary periods, violent changes of political regimes—violence that the amnesty is supposed to interrupt. [...] But amnesty, as institutional forgetting, touches the very roots of the political, and through it, the most profound and most deeply concealed relation to the past that is placed under an interdict. The proximity, which is more than phonetic, or even semantic, between amnesty and amnesia signals the existence of *a secret pact with the denial of memory*, which as we shall see later, distances it from forgiving, after first suggesting a close simulation. (Ricoeur 453, emphasis mine)

To put it simply, "the axiom goes as follows: in this social dimension, one can forgive only where one can punish; and one must punish where there has been an infraction of the common rules" (Ricoeur 470). When Ricoeur speaks of punishment and infraction of rules, he is speaking of justice. Where there is no justice, there can be no forgiveness or true reconciliation. Forgiveness is a linguistic transaction or an exchange; forgiveness must be requested and granted. This linguistic transaction is lost in the silence of the *Pacto de silencio*, and the forgiveness insinuated in the Amnesty Laws is a mere caricature (Ricoeur 488).

## Collective Memory

I have spoken of collective memory and it will be a concept that will weave itself in and out of the rest of this project, so it is fitting to pause here to review the concept as

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<sup>33</sup> www.dictionary.oed.com

Maurice Halbwachs defined it.<sup>34</sup> Paloma Aguilar points to the creation of collective memory as an important factor during a transition to democracy. Memory, and even more so collective memory, is socially constructed and is a collection of stories that a group tells themselves about the past. These memories are positioned within time and space. Even though individuals perform the act of remembering, memories are tied to social groups and institutions. Memories are both created and reinforced by commemorative events. The individual's autobiographical or direct memories are anchored in historical or indirect collective memories. Further, our memory of the past is socially constructed in relation to the salient concerns of the present. For the Spanish elites who were spearheading the democratic transition, the major concern was to avoid re-entry into a Civil War and for that reason they chose to construct a vision of the past which placed blame on both sides while at the same time avoiding discussion of the past, at least officially.

Halbwachs believed that “there are no empty spots in the lives of groups and societies; an apparent vacuum between creative periods is filled by collective memory in symbolic display, or simply kept alive through transmission by parents and other elders to children and or ordinary men and women” (Halbwachs 25). In fact, “...the greatest number of memories come back to us when our parents, our friends, or other persons recall them to us” (Halbwachs 38). But what happens when that transmission of stories from one generation to the next is stunted, as was the case in 20<sup>th</sup> century Spain? After the Civil War, families were torn apart often based on which side of an arbitrary line they found themselves when the fighting broke out. During the fascist dictatorship that followed, strict censorship and repression, as well as self-censorship for fear of punishment, greatly impacted the way in which stories were told about the country's past; in the place of personal stories Franco inserted a fictitious narrative of an Official Story. Once Franco was dead and when the time seemed ripe to break the silence imposed by the dictatorship and as a result of fear, the *Pacto de silencio* once again delayed the transmission of stories from one person to another, thus impeding the formation of a collective memory and arguably of social solidarity. However, as I will show in the following two chapters, fiction was an agent of collective memory and provided an arena for Spaniards to talk about the past.

Because of the *Pacto de silencio*, Spain did not experience an event which under normal circumstances would have led to the formation and/or consolidation of collective memory and solidarity, and would have aided a population in healing trauma of a historical nature. As Cardús explains:

The main problem was, undoubtedly, that the deceased [Franco] had died a natural death without showing any doubts or regrets concerning his actions. This in spite of the fact that his agony, prolonged by well-meaning individuals, had much of a Valle-Inclán *esperpento* or of the ending of a great dictator of Latin American fiction. Only a year before that, the Portuguese had been fortunate enough to experience the ecstasy of a revolution and the satisfaction of seeing on their television screens how members of the feared political police, PIDE, were arrested and taken out into the streets in their underwear. The Italians and French

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<sup>34</sup> See Maurice Halbwachs. *On Collective Memory*. Edited, Translated, and with an introduction by Lewis A. Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

of 1945 had seen the liberators' armies and proud *maquisards* with bandannas around their necks marching through their streets, and even had corpses hanging by their feet. In less violent times, the Greeks had seen their colonels being sentenced and put in jail. In Spain nothing of the sort happened, and the events at Vitoria and Montejurra even proved—among other posthume tributes to the dictator—that rabies had not died with the dog. (24-5)

There is never an epiphany moment which marks the Transition. Whereas in neighboring Portugal, the people could recall their participation in, hearing stories about, or seeing images of the Carnation Revolution, in Spain there is merely silence. Even events which would seem to have been 'ah-ha moments' —the assassination of Carrero Blanco, the death of Franco, the failed coup attempt—are shrouded in silence and are points plotted on the infinite line of continuity as opposed to being a moment that can be regarded as a shifting-point in the lives of the individual Spaniard or the country as a whole.

### Oblivion

As Ricoeur and many other memory theorists will defend, forgetting is an essential part of memory. So why the big fuss about Spain's *olvido*? I think the reason why the pathological memory of the Spanish past has become such a contentious issue is that the oblivion was imposed on the people by official (censorship during the Franco regime and Amnesty Laws during democracy) and unofficial (*Pacto de silencio*) means. And in the case of the unofficial *Pacto*, it may as well have been an official document because it is a discourse produced by the elites and thus impregnated with official power. Though some of the silence was self-imposed by the people of Spain, it could be argued that this behavior was merely an internalization of hushed behavior the people had been subjected to by those in power since 1939. This self-censorship is discussed further in Chapter Three.

As Salvador Cardús i Ros explains in the first chapter of *Disremembering the Dictatorship*:

There are many reasons why the Transition depended on the erasure of memory and the reinvention of a *new* political tradition. But the main reason is that a process of change built on the strength of the previous memory would never have facilitated a broad social consensus in favor of democracy at a time, let us not forget it, when Spain had allowed the dictator to die in his bed rather than ejecting him from power. This circumstance exposed the fact that the 1939 military triumph, on which the dictatorship rested, had dilated its legitimating force through several decades down to 1975. For this reason, a transition to democracy carried out *against* the dictatorship would have reactivated the memory—or rather, the diverse and counterposed memories—of the dramatic division of Spanish society in the Civil War, visions that had never been fused into a single common memory. And not only this, but also the fact that, having developed for nearly forty years under a dictatorship, the larger part of Spanish society had internalized a political culture that trivialized the authoritarian character of Franco's regime. In turn, this nonchalance was helped along by the

contemporizing attitude of the international community. Compromise with the regime had gone much too far for a break with it to be staged at this late date. It would have been considered unnecessary and socially unjustified. (19-20)

We must add to this, the memory of Spain's last and failed attempt at democracy, the Segunda República, which had ended in Civil War. Also, the internalization of Francoist propaganda about peace and stability had a tremendous impact on the self-imposed silence in Spain. Paloma Aguilar offers the following equation as a graphic demonstration of the regime's propaganda:

Franco régime = development + prosperity = peace + order + stability = guarantee of further development and prosperity VS change of régime = chaos + disorder + anarchy = economic slump + social unease = new civil war (*Memory and Amnesia* 130)

It should be noted that not everyone is in agreement of the existence of the *Pacto de silencio*. Santo Juliá attributes what occurred in Spain more so to ignorance than to silence and denies that amnesty led to silence. The problem here is that Juliá seems to be forgetting the subtext of the Amnesty Law, the amnesty being extended to the former Francoists. In fact, according to Juliá, the only *pacto* which comes out of the Transition is the Amnesty law which amnestied terrorists and police. Granted, many of those amnestied by this law were ETA members, but the terrorist-police rhetoric of opposition seems more in line with the dichotomy thinking of the dictatorship than with a pluralistic democracy, a dichotomy that, as I show in Chapter Three, Juan Marsé will deconstruct in many of his novels.

Further, Juliá believes:

Y por lo que respecta al debate público—público en el sentido ahora de social, no de político/ institucional—, hablar de la transición como de un tiempo en que el silencio sobre la Guerra y el franquismo fue más absoluto es, sencillamente, disparatado. Sin pretender que la mayoría de la sociedad se volcara en la rememoración del pasado—o quedara presa en sus redes—, es lo cierto que abundaron en diarios, revistas, libros, cines, exposiciones, homenajes, series periodísticas o coloquios y ciclos de conferencias, incontables ocasiones para traerlo a la memoria de un amplio sector de ciudadanos menos amnésicos de lo que tantas veces se da por supuesto. (59)

Juliá points to many popular magazines, for example *Interviú*, as well as scholarly journals that dealt with the past, especially about the war, Francoist repression and censorship.<sup>35</sup> Juliá is right; the past was visible in the sense that it appeared as the subject of cultural production. There was an explosion of artistic creation in the 1960's, 70's and 80's.<sup>36</sup> However, as I will show in the next section, there is a lack of open debate in the political sphere surrounding the past, despite the fact that it was appearing in newspapers, magazines, and literature. Paloma Aguilar comments on the paradoxical position of the *Pacto de silencio* in her book *Memory and Amnesia: The Role of the Spanish Civil War in*

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<sup>35</sup> For a summary of contemporary publications that dealt openly with the past see Santos Juliá, "Chapter 1: Memoria, historia y política de un pasado de Guerra y dictadura". In *Memoria de la Guerra y del franquismo*.

<sup>36</sup> For a literary and cinematographic bibliography of the period see José Carlos Mainer's "Chapter 4: Para un mapa de lecturas de la Guerra Civil (1960-2000)" in *Memoria de la guerra y del franquismo*. Santos Juliá (ed).

*the Transition to Democracy*. Although the Civil War and Franco were treated openly as literary subjects, there was no open debate about the past in social or political circles. While the daily press was constantly commenting on and condemning the collective amnesia of the Spaniards, they were simultaneously being bombarded with cultural production which took the recent past as its focus. Juliá contends that the work of memory which begins in the 1970's in Spain has continued uninterrupted until today, and that if those who speak of the silence of the Transition would take the time to research and catalogue the publications which deal with memory, the list would be extensive and diverse. This may be true; there may be an infinite number of memory productions since the 1970's, and this would make the problem of political silence surrounding the past even more enigmatic.

### Out of Oblivion, Narrative

In his introductory remarks to *Disremembering the Dictatorship: The Politics of Memory in the Spanish Transition to Democracy*, Joan Ramon Resina quotes Benedict Anderson: "All profound changes in consciousness by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias. Out of such oblivions, in specific historical circumstances, spring narratives" (9).<sup>37</sup> Resina goes on to propose that "a stimulating approach to the literature of the Transition would be to study it in reference to what it leaves out, what it subtracts from what we know from experience or what can be learned from less popular and more inaccessible sources" (9). Because of the many absences, gaps, and silences that the Transition purposefully and unintentionally created, literature stepped in and attempted to fill those empty spaces with stories, often stories which went against the official (Hi)story being propagated by the Transition government. The politically correct narrative which emerged out of the transition process, especially the legislative texts generated during this time, was that Spain was a modern, orderly, rational, and unified nation. The literature that came out during the Transition was disjointed, fragmented, and often irrational. How does one account for this difference, and what does it mean?

Before moving on to the literary portion of this project, perhaps it would be helpful to review Paul Ricoeur's distinction between history and literature:

The pair historical narrative and fictional narrative, as they appear as already constituted at the level of literary genres, is clearly antinomical. A novel, even a realist novel, 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 expectation on the side of the reader and different promises on that of the author. In opening a novel, the reader is prepared to enter an unreal universe concerning which the question where and when these things took place is incongruous. In return, the reader is disposed to carry out what Coleridge called a 'willful suspension of disbelief', with the reservation that the story told is an interesting one. The reader willingly suspends his disbelief, his incredulity, and he accepts playing along as if—as if the things recounted did happen. In opening a history book, the reader expects,

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<sup>37</sup> Anderson *Imagined Communities*, 204

under the guidance of a mass of archives, to reenter a world of events that actually occurred. What is more, in crossing the threshold of what is written, he stays on guard, casts a critical eye, and demands if not a true discourse comparable to that of a physics text, at least a plausible one, one that is admissible, probably, and in any case honest and truthful. Having been taught to look out for falsehoods, he does not want to have to deal with a liar. (Ricoeur 261)

Though they both employ narrative, a concept I shall explore further in Chapters Two and Three and concretely in relation to Hayden White, the expectations that a citizen (or reader) has in relation to historical and fictional narration are quite distinct. History has a real referent, while literature has an imaginary one. If we imagine history and literature as points on a spectrum, the former would be on the side most closely aligned with objectivity, while the latter would be on the subjective side. Justice could serve as a center point. In the absence of this central spot, though, the distinction between history and literature gets even blurrier.

While the historian searches for truth, he is not a tribunal; the judge's role is to offer justice to the victim. However, in absence of the judge, the novelist seeks to offer justice, even if only in a fictitious world. However, the relationship historian-judge-novelist is not so cut-and-dry. History is constantly subjected to processes of revision, so "the circles that the judge closes after having cautiously opened them, the historian pries open again" (Ricoeur 321), and to extend the metaphor even further, then the novelist jumps in and changes its shape yet again. The judicial judgment is final, but the historical and literary judgments are always being played with.

The novel is also an important site for the quest for justice because of the role of the reader. As Ricoeur explains:

Having set out to find an impartial yet not infallible third party, we end by adding a third partner to the pair formed by the historian and the judge, the citizen [who is also the reader]. The citizen emerges as a third party in the order of time: with a gaze that is structured on the basis of personal experience, variously instructed by penal judgment and by published historical inquiry. ... In the final analysis, the conviction of the citizen alone justifies the fairness of the penal procedure in the courts and the intellectual honesty of the historian in the archives. (333)

Since there was a lack of acknowledgment of the injustices of the past on a governmental, historical, and sociopolitical level, literature in Spain salvaged the historical memory even if it were merely a fictional one. To put it simply, the novel attempted to administer poetic justice.

The end of official censorship in Spain did not create as drastic a change in literature as was expected. After Franco's death there was a great demand for non-fiction, be it by means of newspaper articles or books of a historical or political nature. During the dictatorship, fiction offered the populace alternate histories it was lacking in everyday life. After the death of the dictator, Spaniards turned to non-fiction because they were looking for truth...until, of course, the coming of the *desencanto*, when they once again returned to fiction as the genre of choice.

Whereas in the sociopolitical realm there was a *Pacto de silencio*, in the cultural arena there seems to have been a *pacto de memoria*, an obsession even, with the Civil War and its aftermath which would seem to indicate the public's interest in such

themes.<sup>38</sup> If the *Pacto de silencio* was a political maneuver, “nunca fue respaldado en el ámbito de la producción cultural” (Aguilar Fernández 315, “La evocación de la guerra...”). There was a definite rise in profits in the publishing industry but the general economic crisis had publishers looking only to sure-fire best-sellers, especially since “in 1979, still half of the Spanish population was unable to mention the name of a writer” (Amell 13). A barrage of non-fiction publications flooded the market and though they were quite successful, there was also a desire for the good-old-fashioned story, a good plot. Many critics “affirm that one of the defining characteristics of the novel during the last decade [referring to the 1980’s] has been the turning away from experimentalism and a return to realism and the pleasure of narrating stories” (14). This return to storytelling will be evident in Chapters Two and Three as I discuss the work of Montserrat Roig and Juan Marsé in detail. And it should not be considered mere coincidence that these storytellers are using Spain’s past (1936-1975) as the temporal framework for their stories.

The historical framework I set up in this chapter will help orient the reader in the second and third chapters as I examine the effect the historic-political context had on literature in the aftermath of the Spanish Transition. However, the effects of literature on sociopolitical change are seldom studied, and at the end of this project I hope to show that it is because literature was the stand-in agent of the production of collective memory and the administrator of justice, that the many sociopolitical advances happening in Spain today (namely, the Law of Historical Memory) were even possible.

In the specific literary texts I will be studying—Montserrat Roig’s *La voz melodiosa* and Juan Marsé’s *Un día volveré*—I will focus on the presence of absences, especially when it comes to silence. I will investigate the plural functions of silence and show that while in history and politics voice is privileged over silence, it is not so in literature. In fact, the silences and subtexts in the novels I will present scream loudly, and with their silent utterance, demand historical justice while at the same time commenting on the limits of language. History is institutionalized memory and tends to create binary (i.e. silence versus voice, *rojo* versus *nacional*, etc.) or monolithic (i.e. Francoist historiography) relationships. Literature, on the other hand, is truly democratic in as much as it is pluralistic and polyphonic.

However, this literary clamor for justice is not just a pointless game due to its imaginary nature, for as Osiel points out, storytelling and power are linked. “The criminal law must necessarily make one story *authoritative*. But it may also, in so doing, *authorize* and thus encourage the telling of other, more personal stories, both within courts and elsewhere in society” (262). By the creation and telling of stories, the author gives authority to an alternate view of history and, by default, a disenfranchised sector of society whose story was never granted authority in real life. Osiel also points to postmodernism as one of the reasons behind the authorization of literary stories since one of the base concerns of postmodernism is:

...with preserving an awareness that many differing stories—all of them offering at least part of the truth—may be told with the same set of brute facts. Its infuriating excesses notwithstanding, postmodernism has at least made us more

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<sup>38</sup> Paloma Aguilar Fernández. “Ch 9: La evocación de la guerra y del franquismo en la política, la cultura y la sociedad españolas” in *Memoria de la guerra y del franquismo*. Santos Juliá (ed).



aware that there are alternative ways of truth telling, and that we are therefore responsible for the forms we use to tell our truths. Criminal law will be useful for telling some of these stories, tort law (in private actions against tortures, for instance) for telling others. Nonlegal narratives will be necessary to capture still further aspects of any complex political experience. (251)

Concretely, literature is one of these nonlegal narratives; in Transitional Spain, in the absence of legal narrative and the presence of the *Pacto de silencio*, this nonlegal narrative takes the main stage in the formation of collective memory and the administration of justice.

And it should not be ignored that the stories which emerge out of the Transition are so diverse and plentiful. There seemed to be a need on the part of the Spanish people to produce and consume stories. Joan Ramon Resina attributes this need to Spain's ghosts, its absences:

Histories proliferate according to the need to countenance a society's ghosts. The historian gives a face to the faceless dead, the unknown, silent, or silenced ones. During the Transition new histories seemed to emerge from the great zones of amnesia; histories that were not grounded in the accepted historical discourse. Such histories were not just other but were often irreconcilable with those bequeathed by the state-oriented historiography. Their emergence amounted to a deregulation of memory, lifting the state monopoly on the past. This situation can be described with the analogy that Toni Morrison uses to describe the nature of her work: "You know, they straightened out the Mississippi River in places, to make room for houses and livable acreage. Occasionally the river floods these places. 'Floods' is the word they use, but in fact it is not flooding; it is remembering. Remembering where it used to be". (112)

The absences, the silences, and the gaps are not devoid of information. Quite the contrary, the absences are indicators of presences which perhaps cannot be articulated in language.

It is with this historical, political, theoretical, and literary framework in mind that I will move on to analyze two novels which communicate through their absences. Interestingly, memory is not only the subject of the two novels involved, but also plays a role as a trigger or activator for the storytelling which is done in the works. Since we have already established what got put in and left out of the historical and political narrative of the Transition (namely justice), I am interested to see what is included and omitted from the literary narrative of the time and what those absences can tell us. What is the role of silence in mediating the relationship between history and literature? And to borrow Ricoeur's concern, "is a sensible politics possible without something like a censure of memory?" (500)

Memory is the most potent truth.  
Show me history untouched by memories  
and you show me lies.  
—Carlos Eire

## Chapter Two

### Montserrat Roig

In the last chapter, I outlined the major historical and political events of the Spanish transition to democracy. While democratization was successful, one of its shortcomings was the silence surrounding the injustices suffered by the victims of the Franco dictatorship. The following two chapters will be a shift from the political realm to the literary; Montserrat Roig and Juan Marsé will serve as case studies of the reaction of literature to the political events of the Transition.

With Francoism gone, literature was no longer bound by censorship and ideology; writers were freer to explore alternative interests (sexuality, the role of women, etc.) as well as write in their mother tongue. However, as I will establish throughout this chapter, Roig maintained a vested interest in demanding justice for voiceless victims, both in her fiction and journalism. In my opinion, this investment in advocating for justice is in direct opposition to the *Pacto de silencio* and exemplifies the writer's belief that having an honest relationship with the past is the only means of guaranteeing justice in regards to the past, while at the same time investing in a healthy future. This need on the author's part to break the political silence is often in tension with the internalized silence inherited from the Franco regime. On the same note, the silence of the Transition is often equated with the repressive silencing of the former Fascist dictatorship.

In Catalonia this concern for justice coincides with a shift in Catalan Nationalism after Franco's death. Jaume Lorés summarizes the new ideology well: "llibertat, democràcia, nacionalisme, europeisme, progrés i justícia social eren els fonaments indiscutits i en aparença consensuats, per la ideologia que conduí Catalunya als resultats electorals del 15 de juny de 1977" (107). Catalonia made an attempt to return to its humanistic roots for "les primeres generacions de postguerra van donar cops de timó al catalanisme tradicional posant com a condició prèvia per a qualsevol plantejament nacionalista l'exigència que sempre la justícia social havia d'acompanyar-lo." <sup>39</sup> (Lorés 155)

To understand the relationship between nationalism and humanism in Catalonia, it is important to review the evolution of the ideology during Francoism:

Si la generació dels anys 40 fou sobretot nacionalista i demòcrata amb una preocupació clara pels problemes socials, però poc explicitada i formulada, per la

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<sup>39</sup> This union of nationalism and social justice were especially important for the Catalan opposition. While Francoism can be seen as the primary cause for issues of social justice taking a back seat to nationalism, Lorés points out that infighting also led to a loss of unity of these two concepts.

prioritat donada a la tasca de salvar les restes del naufragi de Catalunya, tenint sempre un nacionalisme ple, rotund i sense fissures, la generació dels anys 50 ja havia rebut una formació franquista, estava aïllada des de sempre de la cultura europea i havia passat pel sedàs d'una castellanització brutal, pels baptismes per immersió i per força en l'espanyolisme cultural i històric donat com a *veritat oficial*, i, sobretot, condemnada a un desconeixement de les realitats de Catalunya, per raó tant del genocidi cultural i de la repressió de postguerra com del *silenci majoritari dels seus pares*, identificats amb el franquisme o, més nombrosament potser, *pactant psicològicament amb la situació i tractant d'oblidar el trauma de la guerra civil*. (Lorés 109, emphasis mine)

While in Catalonia the 1940's are informed by nationalism and a concern for social justice, the harsh conditions created by the Civil War, and mostly by being on the side of the *vencidos*, meant that day-to-day survival overshadowed nationalist and humanist concerns. By the 1950's, Francoism has a strong hold on Catalan culture and thinking. Lorés' assessment implies that the *Pacto de silencio* had its origins in Francoism, that silence and amnesia were a means of coping with trauma. The Catalan concern for Humanism and social justice fell by the wayside as a natural result of their fight for survival. The 1960's, however, saw a shift back into fierce antifranquist attitudes and activities; this shift coincided with the changing economic and social conditions of the country and was exemplified in the May 1968 student uprisings. Once Franco was dead, nationalism and social justice united once again especially when it came to defending the rights of the worker, to the extent that one of Jordi Pujol's<sup>40</sup> mottos became "Nationalism is humanism."

While the first chapter focused on the Spanish Transition (by "Spanish" I refer to the Spanish state), both Roig and Marsé are Catalan writers, and in the following pages I will narrow the geographic and historical context of the dissertation to Catalonia.<sup>41</sup> However, identity is fluid and citizens participate in multiple cultures simultaneously; this fluidity will be addressed time and again as I explore the issues of silence and voicing, remembering and forgetting, and justice as they pertain to the Spanish Transition.

### The Language/Literature/Catalanism Equation

The connection between politics and literature is at the root of Catalan identity. A statement by writer Joan Fuster forms the basis for Kathryn Crameri's argument in her book *Language, the Novelist and National Identity in Post-Franco Catalonia*: "Llengua, literatura i catalanisme semblen identificar-se per sempre més" (14). The 'language/literature/Catalanism equation' as Crameri refers to Fuster's theory will be key to understanding why the politics of the Transition in Spain, and concretely the *Pacto de*

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<sup>40</sup> Pujol was the President of the Generalitat from 1980-2003. In the 1960's he spent two years in prison for anti-Franco activities. He contributed greatly to the redefinition of Catalan identity: "[La espina dorsal] de un proyecto nacional como el catalán no es la etnia, ni la religión, sino la lengua, la cultura y la conciencia histórica." (King 8) April 1995, National Archives of Catalunya opening

<sup>41</sup> For a detailed account of Francoism in Catalonia, see Marín, Martí. *Història del franquisme a Catalunya*. Lleida: Pagés Editors, 2006.

*silencio*, are so closely connected to the literary panorama in Catalonia. It is difficult to definitively represent a country's reaction to such abstract political processes as 'transition', 'freedom,' or 'political silence', and it is probably even more challenging to characterize the response of a specific region inside that country's borders as is the case of Catalonia. However, Catalonia's relationship with these political questions is not merely born out of the Transition, rather they have always marked her history.

The study of any form of nationalism is polemic because of the highly charged emotions involved. There is much dispute about the origins of nationalist movements and even less consensus about the role of language in nationalist projects.<sup>42</sup> However, despite the disagreement, there is no denying the importance of the Catalan language to Catalanism, the nationalist Catalan movement. Benedict Anderson explains the intrinsic relationship between nationalism and language when he states:

...*amor patria* does not differ in this respect from the other affections, in which there is always an element of fond imagining. What the eye is to the lover—that particular, ordinary eye he or she is born with—language—whatever language history has made his or her mother-tongue—is to the patriot. Through the language, encountered at mother's knee and parted with only at the grave, pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures dreamed. (154)

Regardless of political circumstances, world recognition, or physical boundaries, "...it is enough for them to feel that they are a nation, without needing to know why they feel that way" (Cramer 2).

According to Anderson's definition, Catalonia is a nation since it is defined as "an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (6). A nation is "imagined" not in the sense that it is fictitious, but rather because it is an invention of the imagination; it is not plausible to meet every person in our nation or community, yet we feel a very strong sense of connection to them because we can use our imagination to envision ourselves as belonging to a nation with them. A nation is inevitably "limited" by boundaries even if they are flexible or disputed; for example, Catalonia is comprised of territories in the south of France and the north east of Spain. A nation is "sovereign" depending on who is in power; the case of Catalonia is of course complicated by the fact that the supreme power is the Spanish state. And a "community" fosters a sense of comradeship even despite unequal relations (be it due to class or gender, etc.), a community that its citizens would often be willing to die for.

It should be no surprise that the concept of 'nation' and the popularity of the novel coincide in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe, for "these forms [the novel and newspaper] provided the technical means for 're-presenting' the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation" (Anderson 25). If a person could imagine the world evoked by a novel then they could also imagine a nation:

That all these acts [the plot of a novel] are performed at the same clocked, calendrical time, but by actors who may be largely unaware of one another, shows the novelty of this imagined world conjured up by the author in his readers' minds.

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<sup>42</sup> There have been successful nationalist movements that are both connected to and independent of language. The Armenian nationalist movements are a good example of the importance of language in nationalism whereas Irish nationalism has not been rooted in linguistic identity.

The idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history. (Anderson 26)

Cultural Catalanism soon gave way to political Catalanism after the *Renaixença* (1833) whose leaders believed that “la literatura funcionaba como el espejo del alma nacional” (King 2). Literature began to be used as a nation-building tool, either by propagating national continuity or by working in and thus promoting the language. In 1859 the *Jocs Florals* poetry competition was established, and through it Catalan became a legitimate literary language; before the *Jocs*, it was a language reserved for the domestic sphere.

However, the perspective that the *Renaixença* created about culture was that it was homogeneous, especially in regards to language use. The activists of the *Renaixença* wanted to replace all that was Castillian with Catalan because Spanish was equated with colonialism and repression. Spain was constructed as the ‘Other’ and set in opposition to Catalonia; the notion that the nation’s History was created in Castilla was challenged. If the insistence on Catalan as the only language of Catalonia’s nation-building seemed implausible in the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>43</sup>, it is even less practical in the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to globalization and immigration. Once Franco is dead, Catalans could stop defining themselves as being against Franco, but also, they could stop thinking of themselves as in opposition to the rest of Spain. The second part of this equation has still not been fully resolved and in some circles there is a continuation of the ‘us versus them’ mentality.

This tactic of the politicization of Catalan culture, specifically literature, was successful until around 1939, however in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century political considerations, especially the Franco regime and postmodernism, made the project more difficult. Under Franco:

the Catalan language was once again under severe threat because of repressive measures from the center, and to produce erudite writing in Catalan was to safeguard the status of the language and to remind people that Catalonia as a Nation existed. The ‘language/literature/Catalanism’ equation was clearly still in play; moreover literature seemed to be the only possible weapon against Franco’s determined de-Catalanization programme. (Cramer 24)

Because of the repression of dictatorship, Catalan identity depended even more heavily on literary production.<sup>44</sup> The 1960’s in particular saw a renewed and increased Catalanism. The equation *fer art=fer pàtria* was employed, often with blatant disregard to the quality of the art being created. It is during this period of active nation-building that the novel became the preferred genre of the nationalist movement, replacing the poetry propagated by the *Jocs Florals*. While the *Jocs* tried to connect to a mythical and medieval past, the novel was a modernizing genre which attempted to be all-inclusive and accessible. The novel becomes the pulse of the nation and, for that reason, in the next two chapters I turn to Catalan novels to gauge the nation’s response to the political silence of the Transition.

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<sup>43</sup> Víctor Balaguer points this out in a 1893 letter “Es un error de los modernos catalanistas, que así se titulan, creer que sólo se puede ser catalanista escribiendo en catalán...No basta escribir en catalán para serlo. ...El renacimiento catalán se hizo por los catalanes que escribieron en castellano” (King 28).

<sup>44</sup> Cramer points to specific dates/events to mark the Franco phase of politicized culture: 1) The first publication of “Serra d’ Or” in 1959 at Montserrat.; 2) The establishment in 1962 of the Edicions 62 publishing house.; 3) The publication in 1962 of Mercè Rodoreda’s *La plaça del diamant*.

After Franco's death, Catalan elites were also thrown into crisis because, like the rest of Spain, so much of their movements had been based on anti-Francoism, and the dictator's death opened an ideological vacuum. Catalan elites participated, heavily, in the pact-making process that in large part defined the Spanish transition to democracy; at the head of the negotiating table was Jordi Pujol. Many Catalan Nationalists were angered by the concessions Pujol made in Madrid and especially with Adolfo Suárez. Specifically:

Des de Catalunya es va veure clarament l'amença que, sota l'excusa de la solidaritat, i amb el pretext de no fer greuges comparatius, s'apliqués a Catalunya un llistó autonòmic baix i, sobretot, que no es tingués en compte l'especificitat i la diferència de la seva cultura i la seva societat, sumades a la seva voluntat política, deixant-la fet i fet en peu d'igualtat amb la Rioja. (Lorés 153)

Let us not forget that Franco's death and democratization coincided with a pronounced movement towards autonomy for the Catalan people. While the Spanish Constitution and the Catalan *Estatut d'autonomia* addressed the "Catalan question" for some, others were unsatisfied because these political texts and pacts fell far short of achieving the goal of complete independence from Spain. The geopolitical redefinition of Spain, dividing the country into 17 regions, and recognizing the existence of five languages showed a commitment to some, but for radical Catalan Nationalists, it was not enough.

Novelists in post-Franco Catalonia played a very special role in the transition to democracy. They "became immersed in a series of professional debates which had at their root a single—and highly political—aim: the protection of a vulnerable national identity" (Cramerí 51). In her article "La política cultural catalana (1980-2003) y los escritores catalanes de expresión castellana" Cramerí discusses two concrete manifestations of the politicization of the Catalan language after the Transition:

... la insistencia por parte de la Generalitat y ciertas instituciones culturales en las cifras de ventas, premios, traducciones a idiomas extranjeros, etcétera; y el uso del Día de Sant Jordi como instrumento de promoción exterior de Cataluña. ...el Día de Sant Jordi se usa dentro de Cataluña para promocionar la literatura catalana-aunque, según Adolf Tobeña, se trata de 'comprar llibres un sol dia de l'any i no llegir-los mai' (84)-, y fuera de Cataluña para ayudar en la tarea de concienciar a los otros pueblos del mundo de la existencia de Cataluña—un país económicamente desarrollado y culturalmente dotado—dentro del estado español (Cramerí, 46; Vilarós, 47). (19)

In Chapter Three I will refer to Marsé's treatment of Sant Jordi in his novel *Un día volveré*, but it will be important to remember this use of the myth in the promotion of Catalan culture and specifically literature.

As already discussed this national identity was based in language and so contemporary novelists chose to write in Catalan for varying reasons—economic considerations, personal choice, or political reasons. For Montserrat Roig "la meua llengua sempre ha estat la catalana. [...]yo, al nacer, no elegí ni la lengua...ni la cara que tengo" (*Los hechiceros*...23). To take the question of language one step further, Roig believed "el hecho de escribir va irremediabilmente ligado al hecho de pertenecer a la cultura catalana" (*Los hechiceros*...14). Not only did Roig write in Catalan because it was her maternal language, but the fact that she wrote at all was connected to her identity as a Catalan woman.

However, the result of that choice has implications beyond the writer's personal feelings. It is the act of choosing to write in Catalan or in Spanish "which normally classifies a writer as 'belonging to' the literature of one or the other" (Cramer 52). The language a novelist writes in is a political statement, whether or not they intend for it to be. In the case of Roig, her "choice of Catalan as a literary language was integral to her feminism and her concern for cultural and historical memory. For her, Spanish was the language of 'power and domination, while the language of love and affection' was Catalan" (Bergmann 299 referring to Nichols 147). This choice also had grander implications for the Catalan language as a whole since "Roig's Catalan-language fiction, journalism, and television interviews were instrumental to the reconstruction of Catalonian culture during the transition to democracy and regional autonomy in the 1970's" (Bergmann 299). It is impossible not to think of the post-Franco Catalan novel as a response to the literary gap created by the Franco regime. Montserrat Roig pondered:

Yo tampoco sé qué habría sido de la literatura catalana si no hubiesen muerto jóvenes en el frente, si no se hubieran ido sus mejores promesas hacia el exilio, hacia el silencio de tantos años. Luego, no obstante, se han reincorporado los que han podido—Obiols, Trabal, Jordana murieron ya—, enriquecidos por la experiencia del dolor, la ausencia, de la huida, a la traumatizada vida catalana. (*Los hechiceros...55*)

Not only was the novelist charged with recuperating the language and literary tradition that was stunted due to historical circumstances, but also the literature that was produced after the fact was inevitably informed by these historical circumstances. She reflected on this uniquely Catalan literary problem again in an interview with Geraldine Nichols saying:

el problema de los novelistas catalanes es que no tenemos una tradición detrás; somos una generación sin maestros. Tenemos novelas pero no novelistas: dos o tres grandes novelas de Rodoreda, de Llorenç Villalonga. En el campo de la mujer, el panorama es todavía más pobre por situaciones históricas muy claras; empezábamos prácticamente desde cero, a finales de la década del sesenta, cuando en el mundo anglosajón las escritoras tenían una tradición de unos doscientos años. Es un campo de batalla muy difícil, porque no tenías ni maestros para ir en contra de ellos. Al revés, había que respetarlos, porque eran los únicos. (173-4)

Roig expressed a necessity to root herself in a past; in this particular case it was a literary past but her comments can be extended to "the importance of history in the construction of self" (Francés 63).

Benedict Anderson points to the primacy of language in imagining the nation; the nation and the community are literally imagined through language.<sup>45</sup> The role of language in the formation and propagation of a sense of nation is especially evident with certain types of speech:

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<sup>45</sup> Anderson sites as an example of this primacy how the "French and American imperialists governed, exploited, and killed Vietnamese over many years. But whatever else they made off with, the Vietnamese language stayed put" (148). The same can be said about the Catalan and Armenian languages; despite compromised boundaries and situations of repression and war, the language remained at the core of the concept of nationhood and national identity.

...there is a special kind of contemporaneous community which language alone suggests—above all in the form of poetry and songs. Take national anthems, for example, sung on national holidays. No matter how banal the words and mediocre the tunes, there is in this singing an experience of simultaneity. At precisely such moments, people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody. The image: unisonance. (Anderson 145)

It is no coincidence that Article 8 of Catalonia's Estatut reads "The flag, the holiday and the anthem are the national symbols of Catalonia, defined as a nationality by Article 1".<sup>46</sup> The writers of the text were well aware of the power of the collective voice when imagining their nation. Both Roig and Marsé will demonstrate a keen awareness of this phenomenon as well— Roig by her discussion of the *voz melodiosa* (melodious voice) and Marsé by the symbolism associated with the Fútbol Club Barcelona, including its anthem.

The two novelists that will be discussed in this dissertation, Montserrat Roig and Juan Marsé, were both born and raised in Catalonia yet only Roig is considered a 'Catalan riter' because of her choice to write in Catalan.<sup>47</sup> Although in the purely linguistic sense, Marsé transgresses the limits of Catalan nationalism by writing in Spanish, I would like to propose that he is just as Catalan a writer as Roig. Roig and Marsé occupy the periphery and the center at the same time. In the case of Roig, being a Catalan woman makes her a "double-minority"<sup>48</sup> if she is being examined from the center represented by literature written in Spanish by men; however, in the Catalan literary canon, Roig is at the center. In the context of this highly politically charged Catalan literary world, it is Marsé who is the outsider since he writes in Spanish.

But the novelist's role does not stop at the choice of language; in defiance of the *Pacto de silencio*, the novel also plays a decisive role in reconstituting and determining collective memory. It is this investment in the collective memory that will ultimately link Roig in this chapter and Marsé in the following chapter. For "when collective personal histories are so fraught with suffering, loss, pain and institutionalized deceit, the urge to create a 'new' history becomes part of the battle for survival" (Cramer 157); it is through narration that Roig and Marsé deal with the political change they live through. Both novelists use narration to communicate personal stories, however these individual narratives of personal histories inevitably intermingle with the collective stories of the Transition and with the writing of national History. The amnesia and deceit which resulted from the Franco years and later the *Pacto de silencio* had to be filled with new stories. The novelist became the new writer of History in competition with the elites of the Transition who attempted to write their own version. Roig and Marsé's warnings about unreliable narrators in their fictional work can also be read as a warning against the unreliable narrators of History, those who hold power. Through their novels, Roig and Marsé have power over the past, a power they lacked in everyday political life since

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<sup>46</sup> Compare to Catalan version: "1. Catalunya, definida com a nacionalitat en l'article 1, té com a símbols nacionals la bandera, la festa i l'himne."

<sup>47</sup> It should be noted, however, that Roig also wrote in Spanish especially when she did journalistic work.

<sup>48</sup> McNerney, Kathleen and Cristina Enriquez de Salamanca (ed). *Double Minorities of Spain: a bibliographic guide to women writers of the Catalan, Galician, and Basque countries*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1994.



historians and politicians had opted to silence the past. While Catalonia, and especially Barcelona, looked to the future after the Transition (in architecture, business, tourism, etc.) they, like the rest of Spain, have a problematic relationship with the past. It is the Catalan novelist who is charged with the task of reminding the people not to forget their history, while at the same time working to preserve and recreate that past.

The Spanish transition to democracy<sup>49</sup> is at the very least a two-fold consideration when it comes to Catalonia;<sup>50</sup> Catalans experienced the political processes as citizens of Spain *and* as Catalans. The demand for regional autonomy paralleled the demand for other rights propelled by the Transition. The *Estatut d'autonomia de Catalunya* was ratified on August 7, 1979 and had at its core a grave concern for the protection of Catalan language and identity.<sup>51</sup> The Preamble begins by emphasizing the continuity of the Catalan people tracing the origins of their institutions.<sup>52</sup> The text explicitly establishes an important aspect of Catalan identity, that of nationality:

In reflection of the feelings and the wishes of the citizens of Catalonia, the Parliament of Catalonia has defined Catalonia as a nation by an ample majority. The Spanish Constitution, in its second Article, recognises the national reality of Catalonia as a nationality.

However, the identity established by the Preamble is problematic. While the first sentence demonstrates that the question of nationality is one determined by the will of the people, the second sentence looks to legitimize the status vis-à-vis the Spanish state. This same problematic dichotomy is apparent in Article 6 dedicated to the question of language:

Article 6.1: Catalonia's own language [la llengua pròpia] is Catalan.  
2. Catalan is the official language of Catalonia, together with Castilian, the official language of the Spanish State.

Once again, the Catalan-Castilian dichotomy rears its head. While Catalan is the language of Catalonia, it is in supposed coexistence and constant conflict with the language of the central State.

The *Estatut* is also an important site for further proof of the language/literature/Catalanism equation. For example, Article 127 establishes the power of the Generalitat in the cultural realm:

Article 127: Culture: a) Artistic and cultural activities carried out in Catalonia, including: First. Measures related to the production and distribution of books and

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<sup>49</sup> Though when I refer to the Spanish Transition to democracy I refer to the political processes which led Spain from dictatorship to democracy, it should be understood that the Transition was also a social, cultural, and chronological process.

<sup>50</sup> To speak accurately about the impact of the Transition on individual citizens other factors such as gender, economics, age, etc., must be taken into consideration, but these considerations lie outside the scope of this dissertation.

<sup>51</sup> All quotes from the *Estatut* come from the Generalitat de Catalunya's website (<http://www.gencat.net/generalitat/cat/estatut/>) which reflects the version of the *Estatut* reformed and ratified on June 18, 2006. The *Estatut* is available online in multiple languages including the original Catalan and the English which I will be quoting.

<sup>52</sup> This continuity of nationality is also connected to the continuity of language: "...once one starts thinking about nationality in terms of continuity, few things seem as historically deep-rooted as languages, for which no dated origins can ever be given" (Anderson 196).

periodical publications in all forms, and management of copyright and the granting of identification codes.

d) The promotion of culture, including: First. Promotion and dissemination of theatrical, musical, audiovisual, literary, dance, circus and combined-art creations and productions carried out in Catalonia.

Second. Promotion and dissemination of the cultural, artistic and monumental heritage and cultural heritage centres in Catalonia.

Third. The international projection of Catalan culture.

The government of Catalonia, and by default the political party in charge, is for the most part in control of the cultural production of the autonomous region. What the Estatut does not mention directly is that the *Generalitat* and the *Ajuntament* of Barcelona give support, monetary and otherwise, to writers, publishers, and academics who publish in Catalan thus politicizing the novelist's choice of language and linking it to economic concerns.

However, the linguistic issue in Catalonia comes to have symbolic value as well. As Crameri points out:

the right to speak one's native language came to represent all other rights, because the suppression of language was more immediate and more tangible to the people of Catalonia than other freedoms which were at stake. The clear opposition between Catalan and Castilian, as has been mentioned, was carried over into the Transition and beyond by those resentful of the enforced supremacy of Castilian. (37-8)

Once again, we see a merging of the linguistic and political projects and by default since language and literature are so closely related in Catalonia and the literary project.

Because of the number of writers who had been exiled or killed during the war and the subsequent dictatorship:

it was as if Catalonia was missing a forty-year chunk of its national history, and the first task during the Transition was to compensate for this loss. [...] The intense climate of the Transition is very much reflected in the activities of the publishing industry, critics and cultural commentators. The importance of literature after 1975 was inevitable given that it had provided one of the most successful mechanisms for promoting Catalan culture during the dictatorship, and given the resulting strength of the long-established language-literature-Catalanism equation. In addition to this, the issues which had become the focus of life in Catalonia during the Transition also influenced the writing of many of the region's novelists. This combination of factors meant that novelistic production was to some extent conditioned by political forces, involving writers, publishers and critics in games of cultural politics which resounded through Catalonia in the same way as did the activities of the politicians proper. (Crameri 47)

The *Normalització*<sup>53</sup> (Catalan Language Normalization), which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters Three and Four, was launched soon after the *Estatut* was

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<sup>53</sup> The term normalization is highly problematic since it creates and fosters the dichotomy Catalan (normal) versus non-Catalan (not normal). This dichotomy is perhaps at the root of the contemporary challenges being faced in Catalonia with discrimination against immigrants (both from within and outside of Spain) and racism. It is writers like Roig and Marsé who first deconstruct this dichotomy, showing the 'other side' of Catalonia, the *xarnegos*, as opposed to the stereotypical middle-class, bourgeois, conservative Catalan.

created. In 1976 the newspaper *Avui* was published, becoming the first Catalan language paper in four decades; it is no mere coincidence that it had a special section dedicated to proper language use. As in the 1960's, there is a renewed interest in Catalanism, especially in the fields of history and tradition. The Generalitat revived the Sant Jordi festival, a celebration which is the embodiment of the language/literature/Catalanism equation; Sant Jordi plays a central role in the Juan Marsé novel I use as a case study in the next chapter.

### History as Silence and Forgetting

As Gonzalo Navajas points out, “los españoles han adoptado dos posturas básicas frente a su pasado: lo han desestimado y negado y han pretendido anular cualquier conexión con él. O lo han falsificado, disimulado o deformado los aspectos más debatibles de ese pasado para consolidar un repertorio ideológico específico” (210). In a sense, the *Pacto de silencio* combined these two options: disassociating from the past while falsifying and fictionalizing parts of it. The coincidence of the postmodernist movement with the Spanish Transition also helps to explain Spain's problematic relationship with the past. Postmodernism's obsession with the present and devaluation of the past mirrored the code of conduct of the *Pacto*.

Since the beginning of History, the issue of forgetting has been of grave concern. Michelet advocated speaking for the dead to save them from oblivion whereas Renan believed that some forgetting was necessary in all acts of memory.<sup>54</sup> As mentioned in Chapter One, during Spain's transition to democracy, silence was the *modus operandi* in the political sphere. I gave as an example the lack of any mention of the recent past in the Spanish Constitution. Benedict Anderson points to the American Declaration of Independence as a concrete example of the intentional gaps which populate most political texts since there is no mention of Columbus or the Pilgrims or even the 'nation'. In fact, the text inspires “a profound feeling that a radical break with the past was occurring—a ‘blasting open of the continuum of history’—spread rapidly...mark[ing] rhetorically a profound rupture with the existing world” (193). As the majority of the elites of the Spanish Transition were actively avoiding a rupture, the rhetorical rupture by way of the silences and gaps left the nation with a hunger for an explanation, a story, a way of remembering. It is the novel which served this function in post-Franco Catalonia. Montserrat Roig's own reflections on the impact of the presence of the unnamed and thus absent Franco is crucial to understanding the toll that silence had on future generations:

Si en la adolescencia te preguntas qué es el mal, es porque aparece lo  
Innombrado, que, en mi caso, se presentó bajo la forma de un personaje  
rechoncho y algo grotesco. Me dijeron: “Éste y los suyos ganaron la guerra. Es  
un militar resentido que se sublevó en África contra todo lo que queremos...” Y  
entonces surge la noción del “nosotros” y “ellos”.

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<sup>54</sup> “Or, l'essence d'une nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup de choses en commun et aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses... Tout citoyen français *doit avoir oublié* [obliged already to have forgotten] la Saint-Barthélemy, les massacres du Midi au XIIIe siècle.” (Anderson 199)

...Y el personaje grotesco se engranda aunque tenga una voz chillona y mueva el brazo como un autómeta; él es el causante de todo el dolor, de la no ley y el desorden. Él hizo que los tuyos cuchichearan en vez de hablar, que vivieran como si no tuvieran el corazón helado, cuando lo tenían, que nos educaran bajo las estrictas reglas del miedo. Él consiguió que tu relación con la lengua materna, que con los años se convertiría en literaria, fuera una relación heroica. Él nos definió y trabajo tuvimos para desdefinirnos. (*Dime que me quieres* 75-6)

Though Roig did not live through the Civil War, she was still directly affected by its aftermath, especially by the silence that surrounded the Franco regime both before and after its dismantling. The consequences of the silence of previous generations were palpable in Roig's life; she was deprived of a carefree childhood because of a war that had ended before her birth and as a result "era, pues, un monstruo fabricado por las nostalgias de los mayores. Me habían transmitido, a través de la queja y la añoranza, el 'espíritu' de la lengua como si fuese una pesada losa" (*Dime que me quieres* 57).<sup>55</sup> No one seems to summarize the dangers of suppressing the past better than one of Roig's fictional characters in her novel 1972 *Ramona, adiós*:

...la guerra, cuyo recuerdo nos va a durar toda la vida, toda la vida nos roerá por dentro, a nosotros y a nuestros hijos, y quién sabe si a nuestros nietos.

...Y pasarán muchos años antes de que la gente de este país lo olvide. Porque nos han hecho mucho daño, y las penas se quedan muy adentro y no habrá alegría que las reblandezca. Y fingiremos que aquí no ha pasado nada, aquí paz y allá gloria, y todo el mundo volverá a la vida de siempre, pero un día, zas, estallará la cosa, y tal vez sea la generación que seguirá a la generación de los más jóvenes de ahora la que armará el barullo. (26)

The *zas* moment to which this character refers is being lived out in present-day Spain, and I will dedicate the final chapter of this dissertation to exploring current-day ramifications of decades of silencing the past.<sup>56</sup>

In History, the metaphoric ellipsis, the gaps, and the silences serve "to remind one of something which it is immediately obligatory to forget" (Anderson 201). But Anderson follows up this rather bleak view of History with a tinge of optimism by way of narration:

All profound changes in consciousness, by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias. Out of such oblivions, in specific historical circumstances, spring narratives. After experiencing the physiological and emotional changes produced by puberty, it is impossible to 'remember' the consciousness of childhood. How many thousands of days passed between infancy and early adulthood vanish beyond direct recall! How strange it is to

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<sup>55</sup>The continuation of this quote, ("De la misma manera que en 1915, en los campos de exterminio turcos, las mujeres armenias dibujaban antes de morir las letras de su alfabeto para que sus hijos las recordaran para siempre.") shows the connection the author is able to make between one historical injustice shrouded in silence and another.

<sup>56</sup> In "Tolerancia" Roig gives us one of many concrete, unfortunate results of the unresolved issues of the past, namely terrorism. Commenting on her disdain for seeing dead bodies on television, she adds: "Ni tampoco uniformes ensangrentados, y más si resulta que los guardias civiles tenían quince años a la muerte de Franco" (*Melindros* 61).

need another's help to learn that this naked baby in the yellowed photograph, sprawled happily on rug or cot, is you. The photograph, fine child of the age of mechanical reproduction, is only the most peremptory of a huge modern accumulation of documentary evidence (birth certificates, diaries, report cards, letters, medical records, and the like) which simultaneously records a certain apparent continuity and emphasizes its loss from memory. Out of this estrangement comes a conception of personhood, *identity* (yes, you and that naked baby are identical) which, because it can not be 'remembered', must be narrated. (204)

In a similar way, the political silence of the Transition engendered a need for narration, a need to break the pact of silence. For Roig this narration was achieved in both her fictional and non-fictional work. She at no point claimed to be creating the Official History; rather she focused on the family, the individual, and the woman in particular, and lent an ear or her voice to their story. She rejected any account of History being propagated by the Center and claiming to be the singular truth, and opted rather to allow for the display of multiple histories from the periphery; as a Catalan woman invested in both feminism and Catalanism, her position on the periphery allowed her to do this.

However, this relationship with silence is multi-faceted and ironic since novelists like Roig often employ silence in their narration as a literary tool. The cause and forms of this narrative silence is multiple— silence as a vestige of the censorship of the Franco regime (both self-imposed and by authorities), silence as a rhetorical device, silence as a form of speech, as a decision, a punishment, etc. In her essay "The Aesthetics of Silence", Susan Sontag pointed out the trend of art as a whole moving toward silence. Whereas historically the artist was concerned with finding a voice, the contemporary author could and often does opt for silence. Silences and gaps do not lead the reader toward oblivion; quite the contrary, since "'Silence' never ceases to imply its opposite and to depend on its presence; just as there can't be 'up' without 'down' or 'left' without 'right', so one must acknowledge a surrounding environment of sound of language in order to recognize silence" (187), the presence of an absent. The political silence of the Transition is countered with the stories of the Transition; that is to say, the gaps were so blatant that they begged to be filled. For Roig, the most important use of silence is what Sontag terms "keep[ing] things 'open'" (Sontag 194) since "a person who becomes silent becomes opaque for the other; somebody's silence opens up an array of possibilities for interpreting that silence, for imputing speech to it" (Sontag 191). At the end of the day, Roig's project was postmodern since "the function of art isn't to sanction any specific experience, except the state of being open to the multiplicity of experience" (Sontag 198). Roig's use of silence is not a propagation or condoning of the political silence of the Transition. Rather, it is in protest of the one-dimensional History put forth by the elites; it is to liberate art from History, as Sontag argued in an earlier context.

Roig herself seemed conflicted about silence and presents many contradictions in her own work. For example, she admits:

no hay texto sin silencio. El buen actor sabe cuándo tiene que callar, sabe que sólo callando en varias fracciones de tiempo, las antiguas palabras adquieren una nueva fuerza en el presente. Y les recordé el dolor callado de Eurídice en *Antígona*, el silencio de la esposa de Creonte al saber de la muerte de su hijo Hemón. Es entonces cuando el Corifeo, la voz de la razón, dice que sólo el

silencio, cuando es tan profundo, es tan terrible como el más grande de los gritos. Si es difícil, hoy, enseñar a los niños el valor de la palabra, más lo es recordarles el sentido del silencio. (*Melindros* “El silencio” 190)

She plainly recognized that silence is often necessary, however, her relationship with silence was also an ironic one. In “Me olvidé de Chile” she writes that after a prolonged absence from home, she returns to find her washing machine broken. Her response is quite poetic and at the same time revealing: “Mi lavadora tiene razón: hay que estropearse uno ante el silencio y la ausencia” (*Melindros* 428). Roig seems to suggest that breakdown is the proper response to silence. Even more ironically, in yet another article entitled “El silencio” Roig tells the story of an old couple who hardly ever spoke to each other when they were out in public. To everyone, including the couple, this silence seemed destructive and sad. However, when the woman dies, suddenly the absence of that silence becomes even more destructive and sad. A friend of the couple comments, “-Es más triste- reflexionó don Eusebio- la ausencia del silencio. Cuando se calla, todo está por decir. El silencio da esperanza, mientras que las palabras siempre son el pasado” (*Melindros* 330). Roig never gives a definitive value to silence; at times it is necessary and positive and, at the same time, can be destructive and unhealthy.

### Roig’s Quest for Justice

One of Montserrat Roig’s main concerns during her short life was the very anti-postmodernist concerns of morality and justice, especially for the marginalized. Like many postmodernists, Roig rejected all historical metanarrative and “by doing so [she] could side with those who didn’t ‘fit’ into the larger stories—the subordinated and the marginalized—against those with the power to disseminate the master narratives”(Butler 15). She was well aware that “...the political and historical event [the Civil War, the Franco Regime and the transition to democracy] always reaches us in a fictionalized form, in narrative, massaged by the more or less hidden hand of political or economic purposes” (Butler 111). Although postmodernism should not be “allowed to justify a kind of ironic indifferentism” (Butler 121), unfortunately, it often does. Roig dedicated her life to fighting this tendency.

In his biography of Roig, Pere Meroño writes “la mare [de Montserrat] afirma que Montserrat tenia una personalitat justiciera” (125). Jaume Martí-Olivella writes about Montserrat Roig that “she could listen with an utmost degree of empathy as if her own self had completely dissolved in favor of the other’s voice” (12). In her book of essays *Dime que me quieres aunque sea mentira. Sobre el placer solitario de escribir y el vicio compartido de leer*, the author explains the power of words: “las palabras te salvan de la angustia del malestar que experimentas cuando contemplas el dolor de otros” (64). Though she was unsure if writing could actually *detener el mal*, her writing had two goals: to spread the word and to use it as therapy.

For Roig, *jo=nosaltres*, the individual equals the collective. Referring to the daily column she wrote for four years in *El Periódico de Catalunya*, the author confessed: “Durante cuatro años tuve la suerte de ser los ojos y los oídos de mucha gente. [...] Más

de una vez tuve la sensación de que no escribía yo, sino los ‘otros’” (*Melindros* 11). As Christina Dupláa explains:

La autora, en su percepción de la historia como un proceso genealógico, necesita de la voz de los sin voz para poder tener voz propia. El texto, a través del narrador o narradora testimonial (voz entrecomillada) y de la narradora transcritora (en tercera persona), recuerda que la falsificación de la historia/realidad ha creado una sociedad enfermiza, distorsionada y perdida. Roig quiere recuperar la voz de los obligados a vivir en silencio porque si no ella no puede participar en un proyecto liberador para su cultura. Sabe que el testimonio de estos hombres y mujeres no es el testimonio de una derrota, sino de una injusticia que, tras ser denunciada, se presenta como proyecto liberador.

(Testimony 55)

For Roig, looking to the past is a necessity and yields various positive benefits: it is the necessary basis for the formation of personal and collective identity, for the administration of social justice, and thus it is the only means of having a healthy future.

In fact, everyone who has written about Montserrat Roig underscored her concern for justice. At the core of her quest for justice, Roig placed the problem of History: “té por, l’escriptora. Por de no captar les ‘coses’ més enllà dels fets. Vol les persones, no les dates. Vol la vida que belluga. Vol les històries, no pas la Història” (Meroño 155). For the Catalan writer, the histories in her novels were in direct response to and dialogue with the Official History offered by whoever happened to be in power at the time—be it Franco, the Transition elites, etc. And language is always at the center of this political game. In an interview with Geraldine Nichols, Roig revealed: “para mí, el castellano es siempre una lengua impuesta, comenzando con el colegio. Era la lengua del poder, del dominio, mientras que la lengua del amor o del afecto era la catalana” (147). For her, even in a democratic Spain, Catalonia was “un país ocupado” (Nichols 152). Writing in Catalan helped her break the dialectic of *vencido-vencedor* which was often equivalent, at least in the context of Catalonia, to *catalanoparlante-castellanoparlante*.

Roig’s relationship with History is an ironic and playful one. While she never mentioned the political *Pacto de silencio* directly, she was no doubt informed and affected by its existence.<sup>57</sup> This is made clear by her collaboration with the Catalan illustrator Cesc in *L’autèntica història de Catalunya*.<sup>58</sup> The introduction to this short, graphic novel states:

L’autèntica Història de Catalunya, una petita nació situada al nord-est d’Espanya, i de com sobreviu després d’una guerra civil, una dictadura feixista interminable, una fràgil transició i, també, de com viu, avui, sota una democràcia que fa veure que el passat s’ha acabat definitivament. Dibuijada per en CESC, poeta irònic supervivent de tots els mals d’aquest segle, i escrita per MONTSERRAT ROIG.

Civil War, Fascist dictatorship, Transition, and Democracy are all put on the same plane. The irony is palpable; not only is Cesc described as an ‘ironic poet’, but more importantly

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<sup>57</sup> The term *pacto de silencio* appears in her fiction though not in direct reference to the political phenomenon. For example, in *Ramona, adios* the term is used to describe the dynamics of the relationship of one of the main characters with her husband: “Mundeta a veces sospechaba que su madre padecía un temor inexplicable hacia el marido, como si entre ambos existiera un secreto, un pacto de silencio” (77).

<sup>58</sup> Due to censorship, this text was originally published in Japanese and was not published in Catalan until 1990.

the project is labeled the ‘authentic History of Catalonia’. One of Roig’s claims was that there could be no such thing as an authentic singular History because it would inevitably come from the center and marginalize the peripheral voices. Rather, History is (or should be) a compilation of multiple histories; so to characterize the book as *the* authentic History is obviously tongue in cheek. Roig also referred to the Transition as “la llamada transición democrática” (*Dime que me quieres* 196, emphasis mine) underscoring her questioning of the representation of the process as truly democratic. Roig dedicated herself to the recovery of the silenced past—whether that past be of Catalonia, Spain or an entirely different country, and whether that silence be imposed by dictatorship, democracy, or the individual. Because Roig’s, “projecte ideològic traspasa les barreres de la seva cultura” (Duplóa 48), it was a universal outcry.

Further, Roig questioned the opposition and distinction between history and fiction. In *Los hechiceros de la palabra*,<sup>59</sup> Roig confessed: “...yo creo que todo escritor inventa, aunque parta de la realidad. Ésa siempre se ‘reinventa’” (140). Roig considered herself a realist writer. Reality fascinated her; however, she regarded the concept of reality as open to interpretation and differing applications. The question of this dichotomy is made clear in a novel like *La voz melodiosa*<sup>60</sup> which has been characterized as a “joc entre realitat i ficció” (Meroño 210). In her fiction, Roig’s representation of history subverts the main discourse in power; her histories are fragmented, not chronological, and full of gaps and silences. As Christina Duplóa summarizes:

El compromís de Montserrat Roig amb els febles, marginats i ignorats ha estat la posició que com a intel·lectual l’ha portada a la recuperació de la memòria històrica. Mitjançant la veu de testimonis, i a partir d’un discurs poètic narrativament vinculat al testimoniatge com a gènere literari, l’escriptora dona veu al silenci forçat. (48)

Fiction is the space where voices silenced by historians and politicians can be brought to life; reality can no longer be ignored once it is written down. Also, as Roig herself revealed “...la ficción es una zona de libertad privada para mí...El mundo fictivo es un poquito más de dentro hacia afuera; el periodístico es de fuera hacia adentro” (Nichols 171). It is this freedom that fiction affords the writer and the reader which allowed Roig to explore the History that the Transition and its version of freedom denied. As is obvious in her words and works, her commitment to bringing justice through writing was not isolated to the realm of fiction. Her work as a journalist was also dedicated to this quest and is exemplified in no better place than in her 1977 book *Els Catalans als camps*

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<sup>59</sup> I will return to this book in Chapter Three since Juan Marsé is one of the *fabuladores* whom Roig interviewed.

<sup>60</sup> All references to this novel will come from the Spanish translation of the text by Goytisoló only because my command of Spanish is superior to my understanding of Catalan. However, I respect Roig’s thoughts on translation [“...creo que es necesario que tanto a Carme Riera como a mí nos leas en catalán; las traducciones no tienen nada que ver. No estoy contenta de las mías; no es realmente lo que yo escribí en catalán, que es otro ritmo, otra música.” (Nichols 159)] and have made comparisons to the original version in Catalan when I deemed it necessary. For a discussion of some of the inherent problems of translating from Catalan into Spanish, see King, Stewart. *Escribir la catalanidad. Lengua e identidades culturales en la narrativa contemporánea de Cataluña*. Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2005.



nazis. In this particular text, as in many of her fiction and non-fiction works, Roig turned to *testimonio*<sup>61</sup> to give voice to the silenced.

However, throughout the process of the recuperation of the past, Roig never underestimated the role that Franco plays in the present, despite his physical absence in the country. Reflecting on her childhood she remembered: “he leído muchos libros de antes de la guerra, leía en catalán, sin Franco. Para mí no existía Franco; existía un mundo idílico que era el de la infancia, de mi familia, una familia numerosa” (Nichols 152). But at no point did she forget that “todos llevamos un Franco en el corazón, todos hemos sido educados en el fascismo y esto no te lo quitas nunca. Puedes luchar contra ello si eres consciente, pero el Franco lo tienes dentro” (Nichols 165). You can try as you might to forget Franco, whether through imposed silence or the creation of a sheltered childhood (a denominator Roig shares with Alpargata, a fictional character in *La voz melodiosa*), but the Civil War and its aftermath was and still is fully entrenched in the identity of the Catalan people.

While the Transition government was intent on forgetting the past in order to secure the future, Roig was keenly aware that a healthy future was impossible without an honest examination of the past. Specifically, “...la falsificació de la història/realitat ha provocat una societat malaltissa, distorçada i perduda. Montserrat Roig vol recuperar la veu dels obligats a viure en silenci perquè si no ella no pot participar en un projecte de futur alliberador per a la seva cultura.” (Duplúa 49) It is the recuperation of this silenced history that will guarantee a free future.

#### A Note about Novels

There is no doubt that the novel is the most popular literary genre in post-Franco Spain.<sup>62</sup> As mentioned in Chapter One, while there was no huge shift in literature<sup>63</sup> after Franco’s death, the trend was “a pesar de la pervivencia de obras experimentalistas, en los últimos veinticinco años han predominado las novelas que *cuentan historias*” (Langa Pizarro 25, emphasis mine). Along the same lines, Santos Alonso<sup>64</sup> points out “el gusto

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<sup>61</sup> For a fundamental text on the role of testimony in the work of Roig see Christina Duplúa-*La voz testimonial en Montserrat Roig*. Chapter 1 in particular has an excellent, comprehensive bibliography on testimony in general.

<sup>62</sup> Though academics are often seen as the final word in the literary history of the Spanish novel, their work should be taken with a grain of salt because of the immense gaps which exist in their works when it comes to female authors and authors from the periphery. Santos Alonso does not even mention Montserrat Roig or Carmen Riera in his study that is supposed to examine the novel from 1975-2001. Langa Pizarro, a woman, does better though not by much; she dedicates seven lines to Roig in her *Diccionario de autores*.

<sup>63</sup> Nearly all of the critics point to the importance of such novels as *Tiempo de silencio* (1961) and *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta* (1975) as fundamental texts in the evolution of the Spanish novel.

<sup>64</sup> In general, Alonso is highly critical of the contemporary Spanish novel:

“...lo que ha sucedido en política y economía, ha ocurrido en el campo de la novela hemos pasado de una narrativa de resistencia y subsistencia a una narrativa de abundancia que, según han avanzado los años desde 1975 hasta hoy, a medida que se asentó la democracia y la sociedad del bienestar, ha desembocado en muchos casos, salvo otras muchas excepciones de rigor, en la frivolidad y la estupidez digestivas, es decir, en un mercado de novelas cuyo máximo valor ha sido el número de ejemplares vendidos y cuya máxima responsabilidad ha sido hacer a los lectores más pasivos y, por tanto, menos implicados en la

por la narratividad, la imaginación, la fantasía y el placer de leer ficciones cuyas fábulas fueran capaces por sí mismas de abrirle infinitos mundos posibles” (52). There has also been renewed interest in History. After Franco’s death, the press renovated itself; it was no longer the creator of historical truth as it had been during the regime. Rather, novelists began collaborating with journalists (or in the case of Roig, novelists were themselves journalists) to explore the relationship between history and fiction. In general terms, it can be said that the literary production of the 1970’s focused on reflection and revision while the 1980’s was a time for normalization (Alonso).

Plurality and diversity characterize both the content and the form of the novelistic production of post-Franco Spain. In particular, “Roig’s strong identification with Catalan language and breaking silence with unheard voices reminds us of Bakhtin’s concepts of polyphony and heteroglossia” (Francés 57). As Mikhail Bakhtin explains, in the novel “language is transformed from the absolute dogma it had been within the narrow framework for sealed-off and impermeable monoglossia into a working hypothesis for comprehending and expressing reality” (337). The novel is the site for heteroglossia, for the telling of multiple stories and it is thus no wonder that writers like Roig turn to the novel as a site to challenge History. For a writer as socially conscious as Roig, the novel was also an obvious site because of the intrinsically democratic and dialogic nature of language. According to Bakhtin:

As a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else’s. It becomes “one’s own” only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. (349)

Since Roig identified with the ‘other’, the word becomes the point of contact with the marginalized.

Of all the studies of the relationship between literature and the Civil War in Spain, Carmen Moreno-Nuño’s seems the most useful for the purpose of this project. Her thesis is that the literary representation of the Civil War and its aftermath are characterized by tension between myth and trauma, this trauma occurring because of the open wound in the Spanish collective memory caused by the institutional forgetting and silencing which occurred not only under Franco but also continued during the Transition. In her own words:

Existe además una profunda relación entre trauma y literatura, la cual se asienta sobre el papel fundamental que la narración juega en la formación identitaria. Para Geoffrey Hartman (1995), la ficción—especialmente la narrativa—es el vehículo privilegiado para la expresión del trauma, ya que casi toda catarsis de la experiencia traumática pasa por recuperar el control de una historia personal que es convertida ahora en relato. De hecho, aunque deriva del psicoanálisis, la teoría del trauma ha recibido una fuerte influencia de los estudios literarios. Dado que la experiencia traumática se compone de un nivel literal—experiencia registrada más que experimentada por la psique—y de un nivel figurativo—

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interpretación del texto” (19). Though he includes Juan Marsé as one of the few “exceptions”, he does not even mention Montserrat Roig or Carme Riera who very obviously defy his opinions about the novel.

memoria reiterada de lo traumático—, la literatura puede reconstruir el orden simbólico que ha sido fragmentado por el trauma, identificando y reconstruyendo lo real lacaniano en la ficción. (23)

According to Moreno-Nuño, fiction became the space for rewriting, revision, reconstruction, and ultimately the recuperation of historical memory; the novel became a *lieux de mémoire* as outlined by Pierre Nora. Unequivocally, “serán los productos culturales—literatura, cine, historiografía—los encargados de construir una nueva memoria en la etapa democrática” (Moreno-Nuño 55) especially for the *vencidos* who never had an actual, physical site of memory as the *vencedores* did, for example at the Valley of the Fallen.

During the Franco dictatorship, resistance constituted a large part of Spanish and Catalan identity. Suddenly, with the newfound freedoms and abundance afforded by the Transition, there was a loss of ideology and there was a need to constitute a new identity that was no longer defined by opposition to Franco. Some point to this ideological lack as the reason behind the return to historical themes in fiction. Or perhaps, as in the case of Roig, fiction is merely a space in which to rework Catalan and Spanish identity, a way to “...expresar con la recreación del pasado una metáfora de nuestro tiempo” (Alonso 107). Alonso seems to summarize the role of the novel when he writes:

Por aquellos años [...] los novelistas acogieron en sus obras una realidad compleja, de múltiples perspectivas, donde se entrecruzaban las manifestaciones visibles de la experiencia con las inexplicables y ocultas. Si bien parecieron alejarse de la realidad social más inmediata, abrieron no obstante otros horizontes de esa misma realidad que incluía también lo imaginario y lo novelesco como parte imprescindible e integrada de la realidad cotidiana. (108)

There had to be a new way of seeing the new reality which was being lived in Spain—a new “realismo imaginario” (Alonso 61).

### Alpargata’s Transition

Montserrat Roig’s final novel before her untimely death in 1991 at the age of 45 was *La voz melodiosa* (1987), a fictional depiction of the consequences that suppression of the past and creation of alternate realities can have on future generations. This novel seemed to mark a shift in her fiction, a “shift from realism to a more symbolic, dreamlike style” (Francés 63). M. Angels Francés points to how “idealizing history and denying reality also create a parallel world of monsters and lies. Silence and speech, unheard voices, intertextuality and polyphony melt together in Roig’s novel to reveal, as a strident chorus, fragmented feminine personalities” (56). It is quite well known that Roig’s fictional writing is woman-centered and often expresses her love of her mother-tongue. This relationship of woman to language is especially relevant in the context of 20<sup>th</sup> century Catalonia since the Catalan language was for the most part preserved through storytelling by the women of each family. The novel’s main character, however, is a

male: Alpargata is born on January 25, 1938<sup>65</sup> with bombing, hunger, and death in the backdrop. He is born into a middle class, Catalan home in the Gràcia section of Barcelona, a home where he will spend the first two decades of his life. Alpargata is an orphan; his mother dies two months after he is born and the only memory that the child has of his mother is by means of a large, nude painting of her that is hanging in the house. The identity of his father is unknown and will remain silenced until the very end of the novel. Alpargata is left in the care of his grandfather, Señor Malagelada<sup>66</sup>, a defunct poet who decides to sequester his grandson in the family home and educate him in the mother-tongue and in the Catalan Humanistic Tradition<sup>67</sup>, promising his grandson “construiré para ti-dijo [el abuelo]- un pequeño paraíso. Y cuantas voces oigas te sonarán melodiosas” (Roig *LVM*17). This emphasis on plural voices will come to play an important role not only in Alpargata’s education but also in the construction of the novel. While the title of the novel indicates the presence of only one melodious voice, the text is actually a compendium of many voices.

One of the grandfather’s motivations in his overprotective treatment of Alpargata is the child’s monstrous appearance. He orders the nanny, “esconda todos los espejos. No debe [el niño] saber cómo es” (17). Not only is Alpargata a monster, an image which will come to be representative of the entire post-war generation, but his monstrosity is silenced by the preceding generation. At one point Alpargata comments, “creía que la vida era silencio y oscuridad” (Roig 24). Without mirrors in the house, Alpargata is denied direct access to the truth about his own life, just as the *Pacto* denied subsequent generations of direct access to truth about their own national and familial past.

The historical backdrop of the novel is inserted in subtle ways. For example, at one point the narrator comments:

Se propagaron diversos rumores: unos decían que el general Franco había prometido no bombardear la ciudad, otros aseguraban que en la Rambla y en la Plaza de Catalunya había carteles y pizarras que anunciaban la paz. Muchos eran los que afirmaban que los habían leído, sin embargo los historiadores dicen que tales carteles y las pizarras nunca existieron. (14)

There is a discrepancy between the Official History propagated by historians and the collective memory of the people. In the short example above there are three different voices, three different ideas about the same experience, and though they are vastly different the narrator chalks them all up equally to rumors. The grandfather’s goal is to create an atemporal world for his grandson, a world devoid of History and of the historical processes unfolding outside his doors. The very few interactions with History inside the house reflect the grandfather’s view of how History is structured: it is a list of facts, a chronological list of events. The History of Spain is not recounted directly, rather

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<sup>65</sup> On January 25, 1938 an *aurora borealis* was seen around the world. Many believed the mysterious lights were a sign of the coming of war. The fact that Alpargata is born on this specific day reinforces his Messianic characterization.

<sup>66</sup> The grandfather’s name Malagelada is a compound word in Catalan made of the words *mala* and *gelada*, which mean bad and frozen respectively. The symbolic value of this name is obvious; the grandfather’s stagnated (frozen) ideologies are not good for the future of his grandson or his country.

<sup>67</sup> Interestingly, the *Estatut* also makes reference to this Catalan Humanistic Tradition: “Catalonia, with its humanistic tradition, affirms its commitment together with all peoples to constructing a peaceful and just world order.”

it is the backdrop of the history of Senor Malagelada's family; the scarce memories he does recount share the stage with such major historical figures and moments as General Prim, the Restauración Borbónica, liberalism, and the postwar.

Alpargata's education is achieved by way of a collection of different voices. For the first six years of his life, the only human contact he has besides his grandfather is with Dolors, the nanny. As the only connection to the outside world, "la mujer intentó recordar cuanto había visto y vivido antes de la guerra y, siguiendo las órdenes de su señor, iba separando los recuerdos dulces de los desagradables. Regresó a su infancia, al pueblo, y escogió las mejores imágenes de un tiempo ido" (23). The stories the nanny tells Alpargata are selective, filtered not only through her memory but through the grandfather's desire to avoid sharing unpleasant ideas with the child.

When Alpargata is about six years of age, the grandfather begins to recruit teachers from the Ateneo Barcelonés to instruct his grandson in various academic fields. Vicenç Soler, an unemployed poet, becomes the contact person and represents the fate of many artists and intellectuals in Catalonia who were not exiled or killed during the war but had to scramble in order to survive. As Melissa Stewart rightly points out,

the conservation of the boy's Catalan identity is to be achieved by providing him with extensive knowledge of the classic literature of his homeland. The great importance attached to this aspect of his education explains in part why it must take place in such clandestinity in the period immediately following the war; all vestiges of Catalan independence were suppressed at the time. (Constructing 180)

Catherine Davies proposes that "the fact that Alpargata is deformed suggests [...] that Catalan culture—hidden, restricted, threatened—was similarly distorted, not intrinsically perhaps but certainly when reflected by the deformed world in which it existed.

Alpargata is only ugly to those who see him that way" (79). This interpretation, that it is vestiges of Francoism which deform the child are plausible, but we later find out that Alpargata's grandfather is in fact his father; it was not an outside force which deformed the child, but rather someone from inside the family. This incest suggests a critique of the Catalan bourgeoisie who played a pivotal role in transitional politics. Roig is not critical of the fact that Alpargata receives his Catalan education at home since the historical conditions of the time required such secrecy. Her assessment is two-fold.

First, she:

Recognizes [...] that this enterprise [the recovery of the Catalan past] is not without its pitfalls. She rejects attempts to overcompensate for the silence of the postwar by casting all of Catalonia's past in a favorable light. For a number of characters, this lack of critical sense, which leads to the evocation of a Catalan past of mythic proportions, has serious consequences....the dangers involved in losing touch with reality. (Stewart, Constructing 184)

Though Roig rejects the myths of reconciliation and forgiveness created by the *Pacto*, she does not condone the creation of new myths as in the case of Alpargata's grandfather who creates an ideal, yet unreal, Catalan world based on fiction. According to Jo Labanyi, myth and history are in opposition to each other. It has been proposed that myth can heal the wounds of time because of its atemporality; it is stable and thus reassuring.

In contrast, History is about temporality and change so it often incites fear.<sup>68</sup> The grandfather's reaction is understandable since he is acting out of fear, fear of the political situation and fear of his own incestuous secret; "se inventó una nueva realidad para poder durar. [El abuelo] había construido la vida del nieto sobre la idea de que el mundo es bello y la humanidad bondadosa" (*LVM* 67), however in the meantime "...no transmitió al nieto ni un solo recuerdo de su infancia" (66). Alpargata is denied access to making his own memories and at the same time his grandfather does not share any of *his* memories either. The grandfather's recourse to myth is no different than the use of myth by the Transition elites to 'sign' the *Pacto*; the political elites founded the pact on the myth of reconciliation and Spanish unity. This use of myth also recalls the way in which the Franco regime used myth to legitimize its power.

Life is not fiction, "life is not poetry [...]; the protagonists are deluded by verbal fictions, be they nationalist discourse, Catalan poetry or left-wing propaganda" (Davies 77). Secondly, Roig condemns the silence that is propagated around Alpargata, especially since at the end of the novel it is revealed that what the grandfather is really trying to hide from Alpargata is far more sinister than the historical conditions outside their Gràcia apartment; Malagelada spends his life hiding his role in the incest which produced the monstrous Alpargata.

The one condition the grandfather has for all those who come into contact with Alpargata is that they must shelter him from the harsh reality of the outside world; they must never speak to the child about the war or about any personal problems they may be facing. The tutors who instruct Alpargata are merely transmitters of the grandfather's agenda of creating a safe, ideal world for the child. The grandfather's desire to control the outside influences is so great that he even changes the names of the those who come in contact with Alpargata because of the connotations associated with them, rebaptizing Dolors (pain) as Leticia (joy), Mercè Rius and Madame Germaine become Mónica (solitary woman) 1 and 2 respectively and Vicenç Soler and Jacob Simonian become Alfredo (man of peace) 1 and 2 respectively.

One of Alpargata's first tutors is astronomer Jacob Simonian, survivor of the Armenian Genocide of 1915. Jacob teaches Alpargata many important life-lessons including how to tell time and the importance of putting theory into practice, but it is what Jacob teaches the child about his Armenian heritage that will haunt him for the rest of the novel and will serve as one of the main allegories of the injustice of the *Pacto*.

Simonian asks permission of the grandfather to teach Alpargata about the Armenian Genocide. The grandfather agrees because "el sufrimiento, cuando está lejos, y sobre todo si es antiguo, no hace tanto daño" (36) and warns "siempre y cuando no le explique lo que sucedió aquí" (35). The grandfather's relationship with the past is problematic; he sees the value in teaching the child about History but only if there is chronological and emotional distance from the events. However, the History which effects the child directly, namely the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath, is shrouded in silence.

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<sup>68</sup> Labanyi, Jo. *Myth and History in the Contemporary Spanish Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. I will revisit Labanyi's discussion about myth in Chapter Three since myth plays a crucial role in Juan Marsé's portrayal of the Spanish Transition.

Simonian teaches Alpargata about the atrocities committed against the Armenian people at the hands of the Ottoman Empire. He shares with him stories of heroism and survival, stories which highlight the centrality of the Armenian language to both the survival of the people and its centrality to its modern identity. For example, families being sent into exile would risk their lives to smuggle ancient manuscripts or mothers would spend their dying moments sketching out the Armenian alphabet in the Der-Zor desert sands in hopes of transmitting the language to their children.<sup>69</sup>

The Armenian is playing an active role against institutionalized forgetting. He says defiantly, “los turcos estaban convencidos de que la gente olvida pronto todo aquello que se hace por la fuerza” (36). In the Armenian case, this forced forgetting was enacted by physical force: rape, torture, exile, and genocide. However, ‘forced forgetting’ is also an adequate way of characterizing the intentions of the *Pacto*.

Roig includes the Armenian character in her novel as a way of doing poetic justice to a group of people who had been denied political justice.<sup>70</sup> Roig identified with the Armenians<sup>71</sup> because:

La historia de la persecución y exterminio del pueblo armenio y de la preservación de su cultura contra múltiples obstáculos externos sirven de inspiración para la Cataluña del presente (la década de los 80 en la novela) que todavía se percibe a sí misma en conflicto con un poder central para la consecución de sus fines colectivos. En Armenia, Cataluña ve un modo de solidaridad con un pueblo con el que guarda analogías en su naturaleza fundamental...Armenia se percibe como un compañero en el infortunio. Al mismo tiempo proporciona un ejemplo de resistencia frente a las ambiciones de un poder hegemónico. (Navajas 213-14)<sup>72</sup>

The treatment of Mount Ararat is an important means of achieving this justice since “el monte [Ararat] era el símbolo de la libertad de un pueblo perseguido” (*LVM*35). Simonian uses Ararat as a reference point when speaking of his country, when teaching Alpargata about telling time, or when speaking of the geography of Barcelona; however,

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<sup>69</sup> In the stories, it is the women who are charged with transmitting collective memory via stories to their children. It is interesting to note that while the majority of Roig’s novels are female-centered and indeed these females play the role of protecting and propagating the Catalan identity, in *La voz melodiosa*, there is an absence of this female presence.

<sup>70</sup> While there is overwhelming archival and testimonial proof of the Armenian Genocide, modern-day Turkey denies the Armenian Genocide of 1915. And while many countries have officially recognized the atrocities as Genocide, others such as the United States and Israel, continuously refuse to characterize the events of 1915 as ‘Genocide’ because of fear of repercussions from Turkey, a political ally.

<sup>71</sup> In email correspondence with me Geraldine Nichols writes: “She was obviously moved by the terrible injustice of that episode [the Armenian Genocide], and filed it away as more monstrous proof that the world needed a lot of work. She was so vital and committed, funny and pretty and passionate about so many things. It is a pity that she was taken so soon.” (July 29, 2008). This quote not only gives us insight into Roig’s justice-seeking character but I also found it so interesting that Nichols would refer to the atrocities as “monstrous” proof since in *La voz melodiosa* Alpargata is characterized as a monster. Pere Meroño also communicated to me via email that “El interés de la escritora por Armenia se puede justificar, creo, por dos aspectos: su intenso catalanismo, y por tanto, su interés por otro hecho nacional, y su tradicional apoyo a causas justas y difíciles.” (September 25, 2008)

<sup>72</sup> Though Navajas continues on to argue that the novel puts forth a justification for the mythification of Catalan culture, I believe that Roig is critical, not of the use of myth, but the use of myths that are so out of touch with reality as in the case of Alpargata’s grandfather.

it is the fact that Simonian refers to the mountain as “mi Ararat” (34) which brings justice to the cause. It is the seemingly insignificant, two-letter possessive adjective *mi* which encapsulates one of the great injustices of the Genocide’s aftermath and poetically rights this wrong. Since 1923 Ararat has fallen within the territorial boundaries of Turkey, on the northeastern border of Armenia. However, the mount lies mere miles from the border and is visible from a vast majority of the country of Armenia including from its capital city, Yerevan. Though the mountain has not officially belonged to Armenia for nearly a century, it is the utmost symbol of Armenian identity and one of the few geographic reparations demanded by survivors of the Genocide and their descendents. Roig symbolically returns the mountain to Armenia when her character uses the possessive pronoun *mi*.

There is an attempt by Roig to draw powerful comparisons between the Armenian people and the Catalans: they both celebrate national holidays on days which commemorate lost battles, both have celebrated writers (Abovian for the Armenians and Verdaguer for the Catalans) who set out to make their language a literary language, both are historically *pueblos perseguidos*, but most of all, for both cultures language is at the center of their identity.

Alpargata is very obviously affected by the stories that Simonian shares with him. At one point he has a nightmare that he is in the desert with the Armenians, and when he runs to Leticia for comfort she responds, “terminarás enfermo con tantas tragedias de buenos y malos como te explican. Las historias reales son malas de digerir” (38). Leticia is still propagating the grandfather’s ideals, that fiction is preferable to reality. The effect that Simonian has on Alpargata is further evidenced by a recurrent image, an image which haunts Alpargata throughout his life. It will serve as a narrative thread to unite various parts of the novel—the Armenian eyes of the mosaic. Simonian shares with the child a sketch of a mosaic on the floor of the temple of Garni in Armenia, a mosaic of a woman missing a mouth and a nose. The only recognizable part of the woman’s face is a pair of eyes with “una mirada sola que pugnaba por no desaparecer bajo las pisadas de los hombres” (37). These Armenian eyes, which will serve as a narrative thread connecting many of the injustices in the novel, are real, and Roig writes about the first time she saw them on a trip to Armenia:

Una vez pisé unos ojos de mujer. Unos ojos medio borrados por centenares, miles de pisadas, por el polvo, por los vientos por los años, en un antiguo mosaico armenio que hay cerca del templo helenístico de Garni, en el lugar donde fueron inmoladas muchas doncellas en honor de los dioses de Urartu. Eran unos ojos sin nariz, sin boca. Unos ojos de mujer que miraban el mundo desde el suelo y que parecían pedir ayuda. Aquellos ojos de mujer deberían ver figuras perpendiculares, alargadas, distorsionadas. Pero todos los ojos creen ver la realidad. (*Dime que me quieres* 109)

These Armenian eyes are literally fighting against forgetting, they are pleading so that history does not forget them. Roig identifies with the suffering of others but warns that “para comprender el dolor hemos de saber recordarlo” (*Dime que me quieres* 136).



## Alpargata's Quest for Justice

Despite his status as a monster and outsider, or perhaps precisely because of it, Alpargata is the only character in the novel who is genuinely concerned with social justice often at the cost of his own sacrifice. M. Angels Francés points out how “he silently accepts all sorts of humiliations and does not protest the injustice [committed against him], representing a new kind of Messianic figure” (65). This concern for the world around him is implanted in him by the Armenian tutor who enabled him to identify with the suffering of others. However, Alpargata does not witness injustice with his own eyes until he enters university at the age of 23.<sup>73</sup>

As a university student Alpargata befriends a group of students who are highly involved in a clandestine political movement referred to as *la plataforma clandestina* and run by *sacerdotes*<sup>74</sup>. For these friends (Mundeta<sup>75</sup>, Joan Lluís, and Virginia), Alpargata is the scapegoat and the comic relief alike. They marginalize Alpargata and keep him in the dark about the true nature of their political activities.

The second part of the novel in large part is occupied by the retelling of the May Day events, referred to as “la ascensión a la colina, la bajada al pozo”. On May 1 the group climbs a hill expecting to find a picnic celebrating workers; instead they are victims of a set-up. When they get to the top of the hill the police are waiting for them and push them into a *pozo* where “no había sino aire y silencio” (119); the fall into the well will be a fall into hell. They are interrogated and tortured by faceless and nameless men. Because he is being tortured Alpargata reveals the names of some of the *sacerdotes* and because of this ‘treason’ the group further marginalizes him. At one point, he shares a prison cell with Joan Lluís who acts as if Alpargata does not exist. Roig shows that justice-seekers like Alpargata are inevitably marginalized. The five-minute hike up the hill will come to mean the loss of youth for the four friends and will change their lives forever. In an instant Alpargata will go from being the funny-guy to the traitor and in fact, “bastó, pues, un instante para que Alpargata perdiese su nombre” (99).

Even Alpargata's name<sup>76</sup> will be different after the events on the hill. Virginia, the narrator, reveals “el día en que subimos a la colina, el día en que cambiaron nuestras vidas y también el nombre de él, que a partir de entonces pasaría a llamarse Alpargata.” (77). The reader comes to find out that Alpargata is not even the main character's birth name yet we are never given access to his real name. The character is rebaptized

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<sup>73</sup> Alpargata leaves his home for the first time at age 15 in 1954 to attend high school and learn Spanish. His university days mark only his second encounter out of the home and roughly correspond with Part Two of the novel.

<sup>74</sup> The *plataforma* of the novel seems to make reference to the Marxist Platform. The main critique here seems to be the disconnect between the platform's theories and the reality of the lack of action when it comes to helping solve the problems of people in need.

<sup>75</sup> Though he only ever appears in the novel as a side note, Mundeta is dating Jordi Soteres; this is the same Mundeta-Jordi couple which appears in Roig's previous novels.

<sup>76</sup> It is interesting to note that the majority of the proper names do not get hispanicized in the Spanish translation of the novel. For example, Joan does not get translated to Juan. However, Espardenya's name is uniquely translated to Alpargata. The reason behind this decision to translate, I assume, is that the Spanish reader will surely identify with the ordinary nature of the image of an *alpargata* whereas they will probably be unfamiliar with the term *espardenya* in Catalan. Names like Joan on the other hand are more familiar to the average Spanish reader.

Alpargata because he feels responsible for the fall of the *Plataforma*, the political party. Of course the character takes responsibility for something that is not his fault; he merely takes the fall and is victimized by both the repressors and the repressed. He is tortured for being a communist, not because of his affiliation with the Platform but because he wanted to help those around him. When he ends up in jail after being captured he proclaims “llamadme Alpargata”<sup>77</sup> (100), an *alpargata* being a slipper made of canvas commonly worn by peasants and workers. However, Alpargata’s name-change is corroborated by the forgetting of his friends who admit that “habíamos olvidado su nombre. Eso es lo que queríamos: perder la memoria” (96) and “en el camino entre la colina y el pozo, nosotros, por todo lo que pasó después, nos habíamos convertido en candidatos al olvido” (97). After the events of the *colina/pozo*, the friends embark on a willful process of forgetting. It is difficult not to draw an analogy to the forgetting induced by the *Pacto de silencio*. The silence and inability to name go hand in hand with forgetting. There are many references to the name he used to have but no revelation of the truth. This refusal to name is one of many silences (i.e. the identity of Alpargata’s father) which plague the narrative.

The *bajada al pozo* also begins a process of forgetting for all the friends. As they are being pushed along by the police, “a cada paso, un poco de olvido” (122). The silence of the *pozo* and the forgetting of the events go one step further; “al bajar al pozo, [Alpargata] había perdido su voz” (124). While waiting in captivity, his friends ask Alpargata to sing “La dama de Aragón” to entertain them as he always had; he is unable to utter a single word.

The lessons he learns after the fateful May Day protests are devastating to him but function as an important message being examined by Roig. Gone is the ideal world-vision that his grandfather tried to create for him. In the ugly reality in which Alpargata finds himself, all that is left are “los ojos de Eugenia, negros como un lago de noche” (152) and “...sobre todo, el mundo era el silencio de los amigos” (153). In the end, the only truths are the truths of silence and injustice. Also, “...l’Espardenya discovers that the potential for doing evil exists even in those he considers to be his friends; it is not confined to any one group, such as the ‘winners’ of the war” (Stewart Constructing 180). Alpargata’s lesson is a subversion of the *vencidos-vencedores* dichotomy so prevalent in Spain even after the death of Franco and can even present today three decades after democratization.

What the Party is unable to do, Alpargata does. He is the true revolutionary, and he pays for it dearly, by being tortured and punished. All the other characters are posers and opportunists. They are involved in the political party not because they genuinely care about class struggle but because they “[imagined that they possessed] aquello que el día no nos proporcionaba: un asomo de libertad, una vaga sensación de vivir en el país donde los milagros eran posibles” (77).

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<sup>77</sup> The narrator Virginia offers various, slightly different, accounts of what exactly Alpargata says when he renames himself. This discrepancy in the memories is a realistic manifestation of the way in which memory functions and the inevitable gaps which arise.

Alpargata's social consciousness reaches its height when he begins to work with refugees of the floods of 1962<sup>78</sup> living in a converted palace on Montjuic. Every Saturday he volunteers his time to teach Catalan to the poor refugees, and more importantly, to listen to their stories. However, the benefit is reciprocal, since for the first time in his life Alpargata feels that he belongs.

The metaphor of silence touches the world of the refugees as well since "fuera del palacio había silencio, pero cuando entrabas, entrabas en otro mundo: había que hablar a gritos, tanto era el barullo que armaba aquella gente al caminar por un laberinto de pasillos mal iluminados" (105). A facade of silence shrouds the situation of the refugees. The plight of the refugees intensifies when donations collected on their behalf are stolen by one of the priests organizing relief efforts. Alpargata "les dio [to the refugees] su promesa que el mundo se enteraría y avisó a la prensa" (110); though Alpargata wants the world to know of the injustice suffered by the refugees, he will be confronted by censorship and imposed silence. He has a hard time getting the reporter in to the refugee camp and there is a lack of leadership, "los del patronato dijeron que ellos no se hacían cargo de nada, que era cosa del Ayuntamiento, o quizá del Estado" (110). There is no mechanism set in place to protect the citizens and their problems are met with indifference. When the reporter gives up on gaining access to the camp and exposing the story, he tells Alpargata:

Cuando lo de las riadas dijeron que nadie se quedaría sin techo. Hubo una campaña de beneficencia muy bonita. La gente se volcó. Pero luego el tiempo pasa y todo se olvida. No interesa que sepa que aquí está toda esa gente. Los tienen en el palacio y les dicen que esperen. Ellos se lo creen, ya están acostumbrados. No le des más vueltas. (111)

Once again, the act of forgetting camouflages a volatile situation with silence.

Alpargata not only breaks class hierarchies when he goes to Montjuic to work with the poor, but he falls in love with one of the displaced girls. When he first sees Eugenia he immediately recognizes her because her eyes "eran los ojos negros del mosaico armenio. Los mismos ojos que emergían entre la cerámica borrada del templo de Garni y que reclamaban ayuda" (130). The Armenian eyes which had haunted Alpargata so much as a child reappear in the figure of his lover and once again serve to elevate the suffering of an individual to a collective level. Before the narration mentions his affair with Eugenia, the reader is introduced to the image of a doll without eyes when Virginia sees Alpargata wandering around La Rambla one night clutching it. Because the narration is not linear, it is not until Part 3 that the reader learns of the circumstances behind that fateful night. That particular evening Alpargata had gone looking for Eugenia only to be advised by one of the refugees to forget her since her father had found out about their relationship and had made her disappear. Unsatisfied with the advice to merely forget, Alpargata begins roaming the city by night and "entre los restos de un cubo aparecía una muñeca sin pelo y sin ojos que les miraba con las cuencas vacías y las manos tendidas. Y la muñeca, con voz melodiosa, le dijo que nunca más encontraría a Eugenia" (137). If the Armenian mosaic and Eugenia only had eyes with which to

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<sup>78</sup> The floods, which displace the refugees in the novel, seem to be making reference to the real-life flooding of the Llobregat River which occurred on September 25, 1962 and killed hundreds and displaced hundreds more.

communicate, the doll that Alpargata finds communicates with her mouth, with her melodious voice that tells him the truth unlike all the voices around him that surround him with lies and hypocrisy.

This love affair is yet another device that helps fuse the singular with the collective. As Gonzalo Navajas explains, “a través de la experiencia amorosa que Alpargata concibe para él y los que lo aman, la separación sujeto/objeto y yo/otro, que ha ocupado a la modernidad, queda eliminada. El yo y el otro se fusionan y el universo participa en la unión indivisible de los amantes” (218). To put it more simply, “la felicidad de ellos [de Eugenia y Alpargata] es la felicidad del mundo” (Navajas 219); or, as Roig would have put it, *jo=nosaltres*.

Despite his sheltered childhood, Alpargata is wise beyond his years:

En tiempo de los griegos el dolor era sencillamente lo contrario del placer. Los pies le dolían todavía y pensó que era una buena señal: él existía. Pero sentía otro tipo de dolor y no sabía qué nombre darle. Era el dolor de la ausencia, como si le hubiesen amputado una parte del cuerpo. Sus maestros nunca le hablaron del dolor que produce la añoranza. Y eso que todos, pensó Alpargata, sentían nostalgia. El abuelo, de un mundo que no había ya de volver, el poeta, del país perdido al acabarse la guerra, el armenio, del país que nunca volvería a encontrar, Mónica número uno, de su amor que desapareció en la batalla del Ebro. Quizá Leticia era la única que no sentía añoranza. Le enseñó cuanto sabía sin ningún tipo de censura, pero nada más que hasta los seis años. Con ella aprendió el mundo de las cosas, y las cosas son buenas de recordar. Los demás le enseñaron ideas, y ahora no se le ocurría ninguna que pudiese serle de ayuda. El abuelo le hizo vivir en el paraíso, es decir, en la ausencia del dolor. Y eso no se lo podía perdonar. (*LVM*153)

For the grandfather, a world without pain was paradise; it was his only means of survival. But Alpargata, like Roig, knows that there is no use running from your pain. He must confront it in order to be able to move on. Alpargata had no choice but to inherit the nostalgia, the fear, and the silence of the previous generation. But he refuses to inherit their willed forgetting. He wants to remember the past and feel his pain.

The characters of his childhood (grandfather, tutors, etc.) are juxtaposed to his university friends who:

Le maltrataban, pero eran la humanidad. Y aunque ellos le rechazasen, se hizo una promesa: nunca los dejaría. Se sentía profundamente ligado a ellos, como nunca se había sentido con los Alfredos y las Mónicas, ni con el abuelo o con Leticia. Con todos aquellos que le habían ocultado la verdad para hacerle feliz. Los amigos no le querían feliz sino que vivían simplemente a su lado. Ellos eran su gente. (154-5)

What Alpargata values above all is the transparency of truth, a truth denied to him by his grandfather.

The fact that Alpargata’s grandfather dies on the very day that Alpargata is released from jail is proof that the silence surrounding his past is broken, and that he can achieve true freedom. Alpargata wishes that he could have more time with his grandfather to tell him “que el amor absoluto es siempre un amor equivocado. El amor absoluto se fabrica a base de mentiras” (156). For even though the grandfather “le ahorró el dolor, [pero] nunca le besó” (157). All that Alpargata ever wanted and needed was

unconditional love. However, not all of the old man's lessons were in vain; Alpargata is appreciative of the gift of education that his grandfather imparted to him.

Alpargata begins to reminisce about literature he had read as a young man, especially works by Rilke. His grandfather denied him access to his own pain, however "la desgracia humana, transformada en narración, le producía el gusto de sentir pena" (162). This is of course juxtaposed to the fact that "el abuelo había querido poner orden en el caos de la vida como si fuese una novela. Pero el mundo exterior seguía desordenado"(161). The grandfather's view of History and Literature are similar—they are meant to be orderly, linear, and didactic. Montserrat Roig's view of History and Literature are the exact opposite. As reflected by the non-linear narration of this novel, literature and history are not about order but about remembering the past and moving towards the future in a healthy manner.

### Out of Oblivion, Narrative

The narrative structure and techniques employed in *La voz melodiosa* also reinforce Roig's project of questioning History and demanding justice. The text is not chronological and resembles a pastiche of memories rather than a linear narration. The "...suma de fragmentos para alcanzar la totalidad es una estrategia textual constante en toda su narrativa" (Dupláu Testimony 45). The organization of the novel mirrors one of the thematic messages of the novel: the parts equal the whole, *yo=nosaltres*.

Structurally, the novel is divided in four parts; the first part has a third-person omniscient narrator, while the rest of the sections are narrated in the first person. The shift in narrator coincides with Alpargata's entry into the real world as he leaves his home and enters university.<sup>79</sup> However, the identity of the first person narrator is shrouded in silence, and the reader must work hard at connecting clues to figure out that the first person narrator is Virginia, one of Alpargata's university friends. Virginia herself participates in this confusion as she often refers to herself in the third person in the very same sentence she narrates in the first person. For example, while describing a party at Alpargata's house, the narrator/Virginia recounts that "Alpargata cogió un paño de hilo y limpió la wamba. Acto seguido se arrodilló ante Virginia y se la colocó en el pie. Mientras él me abrochaba la wamba yo no sabía qué decir" (Roig *LVM* 88, emphasis mine). The fusion of narrators is made possible through a rhetorical fusion; the tennis shoe is the unifying force. At the beginning of the memory the tennis shoe belongs to Virginia, but by the end of the story it belongs to 'me', the narrator. This collapsing of narrative boundaries is a textual manifestation of one of Montserrat Roig's greatest beliefs: *yo=nosaltres*. The singular voice *yo/yo* is literally a representation for the collective:

Virginia, however, does not conceive of her attempt to compose an account of this period solely as a personal inquiry. Part of her aim is to reach an understanding of what happened to 'us'—the members of her university group who were involved in opposing the Franco regime. The highly critical picture Virginia

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<sup>79</sup> The shift in narrator occurs in Part 1, Chapter 5.

offers of herself and the others, as well as her probing approach, lends credibility to her interpretation of these past events. (Stewart Construction 178)

The fuzzy boundaries also remind the reader that the narrator is not reliable, not only because she is personally invested in the story she tells but because after twenty years of silence, the gaps in her memory are making it difficult to narrate the story in a consistent manner.

And finally, it is the act of writing which connects the individual to the collective. Past Virginia (third person character) and Present Virginia (first person narrator) are inevitably fused as the Present makes sense of the Past through the act of writing. Though it has taken her years to come to this realization, Virginia is the only one who understands Alpargata because they are both rendered outsiders. Alpargata, too, feels the bond between the two and confides in her one of the most important messages of the entire project when he tells her, “Virginia, es una cosa triste no poder expresar el dolor” (LVM94). Virginia’s writing is not a decision or a desire; she feels she simply must remember after so many years of silence and suppression of pain. Remembering and writing are her therapy, her quest for a new order. The passage of time is a necessary component for this remembering/writing process, and Virginia recognizes “esto me es posible decirlo ahora, al cabo de veinte años, cuando los he perdido ya a todos de vista y trato de reconstruir algunos momentos aislados y tal vez inconexos con objeto de comprender qué nos pasó tras el descenso al pozo” (98).

Many critics point to Virginia’s gender as an important component to the novel since it is a woman who breaks the silence. Whereas in the majority of her fictional work “...Roig created storytelling women characters whose voices bring the Catalan language to life in her work” (Bergmann 299), in *La voz melodiosa* there is an obvious scarcity of women characters; rather, it is a series of diverse voices—masculine and feminine, Catalan and foreign—which bring the Catalan history and language to life. Though Virginia’s agency in the novel appears to continue Roig’s gynocentric tendencies, I would like to propose that there is a difference; it is a joint effort on the part of Virginia and Alpargata, woman and man, which enables the truth to be told. Alpargata is essential to this process because:

His privileged gaze is able to see further, to find the beauty concealed by the cruel world, just as his own beauty is hidden under his deformed countenance, and he is ready to face his destiny, becoming a poet. In this fashion, he denies the patriarchal construction of male identity, personified by the aggressive, authoritarian Joan Lluís, for example, and becomes a kind of androgynous being. (Francés 67)

Alpargata is the one with the strength and vision to stand up against injustice; Virginia has the voice with which to tell the story to the world, thus revealing the truth.

The act of writing can also be seen as an act of protest. Thinking about the author and her place in History, “in the Francoist context, the act of writing is itself a subversion of the silence imposed on forms of expressions other than the dominant ones. Roig not only writes as a militant committed to political resistance to the dictatorship, but also as a Catalan feminist woman, that is, as a triply defiant and marginalized human being” (Francés 56). This protest also transfers to Virginia; as she writes the story of Alpargata, she is going against the silence that had been the norm for her university friends.

Virginia's relationship with the past contrasts with the attitudes of the other characters. "[The] younger generation, with the exception of l'Espardenya, relies on a conscious 'forgetting' of events in order to confront reality. For Joan Lluís and Mundeta, only by separating themselves from the trauma of what happened on May Day are they able to move forward with their lives" (Stewart Constructing 186). For the young couple, forgetting is positive; for Virginia, it is impossible. The process of forgetting begins almost simultaneously as the events which the university students want to forget, and it would not seem unreasonable to think that this young generation has inherited its attitude about the role of silence and forgetting in history from the previous generation. However, it is this connection with the past which enables Virginia to be hopeful about the future:

The process of reconstructing the past in *La veu melodiosa* enables Virginia to recognize the problems in relying on previous interpretations of what happened twenty years before. The power of words is clear because writing this new version of the past frees her to move forward. The text closes hopefully, with Virginia speaking in the first-person, convinced that she will be 'reborn' in a future encounter with l'Espardenya [Alpargata]. (Stewart 31-2)

According to Roig's narrator, Spain as a whole, and Catalonia in particular, must come to terms with their past in order to move into the future. Because this examination of the past is absent in the political and social realm, Roig turned to her fiction to do this important work. And Roig had no illusions about the difficulty of the task at hand. For example, in Virginia's case, the act of looking back is a difficult one since:

The slips in her narrative demonstrate that she cannot ever truly make a complete break with her youth. Writing about her university days forces Virginia to come to terms with the less than attractive side of who she and her radical friends were then. It becomes clear to her that l'Espardenya was the only authentic revolutionary among them. The rest of the group's actions, both personal and political, were dishonest and destructive. (Stewart 30)

You can never entirely escape the past and it is this realization that drives Virginia to write. In large part Virginia writes to understand her present, but equally she writes to be understood and to be forgiven. In this sense "she manages to escape both the tendency of the old, like l'Espardenya's grandfather, to fantasize and the young protagonists' rejection of anything that threatens an unequivocal affirmation of their past. In this respect, she is exceptional among the protagonists in Roig's longer fiction" (Stewart Constructing 187). Revisiting the past reveals her role in Alpargata's demise, however she also realizes the positive benefits of looking back and hopes that through this act she can be forgiven and move forward. Virginia knows we are all marked by our past, but through writing she unlocks the creative potential of that past.

The novel ends on a highly optimistic note; twenty years have passed and Virginia updates the reader on the lives of the main characters. Alpargata is a writer and sends Virginia signed copies of his books. She waits patiently because "sé que me sacará de casa, en donde vivo como si ya estuviese muerta. Me querrá como si yo acabase de nacer. Yo le llamaré por su nombre" (Epílogo). The future is defined by naming as opposed to the silencing which infected the novel and permeated the Spanish Transition. But this return to naming and truth is only made possible by the rebirth of Virginia after

her twenty-year death process and Alpargata's fall into hell on that fateful day in May.<sup>80</sup> And it is Alpargata, the monster-turned-poet, who is in charge of this transition to truth; he "is the new creature who reconciles the masculine and the feminine, the past and the present: he is the only one able to face the difficult reconstruction of Catalan history and identity in the new time that is approaching, the post-Franco era" (Francés 67). Roig shifts Alpargata's position from monster to model for "he, who had been denied an identity when he was confined in an artificial paradise, is the incarnation of the Catalan humanist, in which past and present collide; he is a new figure with an androgynous voice, who reconciles ideals with reality through his sacrifice" (Francés 68).

To conclude, for both Roig and her monstrous character, "la invención, la fabulación, es decir, la mentira, nos devuelve un poco de verdad" (*Dime que me quieres* 203). It is through the act of narration that one can subvert silence and come to terms with the past. By rejecting the status quo, the novel can offer up new realities. As Catherine Davies summarizes:

As far as morality and aesthetics are concerned, *La voz melodiosa* sets up and deconstructs a series of hierarchical binaries: ugliness-beauty, altruism-selfishness, ignorance-knowledge, progressive-regressive, lies-truth, appearance-reality. The Romantic adage 'Beauty is Truth' certainly does not hold here.

Alpargata, the martyr, the Christ figure—noble, sincere, thoughtful, and active—is all that humanism could expect from a person, yet he is ugly and deformed; he is likened to a fish, a fly, and a cockroach. What the novel seems to be considering is a new order of things, a new humanism. (77-8)

The process of subversion occurs on an artistic and thematic level, by the stories that are told and the way in which they are told.

It is also through narration that a nation like Catalonia could begin to reconstruct and redefine its identity after Franco's death by way of its collective memory. Through narration, Roig legitimized the marginalized and forgotten histories of Catalonia. However, this process was not only applicable to Catalonia; Roig felt solidarity with all those who, like Alpargata, are pushed to the periphery, and she felt that by telling their stories there was hope for a future of justice.

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<sup>80</sup> That the melodious voice be connected to death is no coincidence. The novel opens with a poem by Ausiàs Marc which equates the melodious voice with death:  
Ojos llorosos, cara de terror,/ mesándose el cabello entre alaridos,/ la vida quiere darme su heredad/ y de sus dones quiere hacerme dueño,/ llama con voz horrible y dolorosa,/ como la muerte llama al que es feliz,/ pues cuando el hombre a males está uncido,/ le es la voz de la muerte melodiosa.



En los labios niños  
las canciones llevan  
confusa la historia  
y clara la pena.  
—Antonio Machado

## Chapter Three

### Juan Marsé

In this chapter I turn my gaze to yet another Catalan writer, Juan Marsé. The issue of blurry personal identities that I mentioned in passing in the previous chapter will be given further consideration here because Marsé participates prominently in two cultures—Spanish and Catalan. Marsé and Roig may differ in their approach to nationalist projects and politics, however they both believe in the responsibility of the writer to break the political silence in Spain and actively create and/or preserve the collective memory of their nation and community. For Roig, collective memory was closely allied to justice. Marsé is skeptical about the ability to objectively know the reality about the past, and thus he does not believe political justice can be served. According to Marsé, the collective memory and not the scales of justice will *ajustar las cuentas* of the past.

On the morning of November 27, 2008 the headlines of the Spanish daily newspaper *El mundo* read: “El escritor *catalán* Juan Marsé gana el Premio Cervantes 2008” (emphasis mine).<sup>81</sup> I was of course thrilled to see one of my favorite novelists receive what has been referred to as the Nobel Prize of Spanish letters. More importantly, I had just begun researching this chapter of my dissertation and felt the news was an omen of sorts: I was going in the right direction. I knew Marsé was a polemic figure both in regards to the Catalan versus non-Catalan question, and also because for so long academia had refused to give him the credit and attention he deserved merely because he had popular appeal.

With these questions in mind, I would like to compare three other headlines from that day to the one in *El Mundo*. *Avui*, the largest Catalan-language daily wrote: “El novel·lista *català* Juan Marsé guanya el Primi Cervantes 2008” (emphasis mine).<sup>82</sup> *El Mundo* and *Avui* highlight the author’s ‘Catalanness’, the latter doubly so, considering that the language of the headline and subsequent article was in fact Catalan. However, it was interesting to see the headlines in *ABC* and *El país*, the more mainstream national, Spanish daily papers: “Juan Marsé gana el Premio Cervantes 2008”<sup>83</sup> and “Juan Marsé gana el Premio Cervantes”<sup>84</sup> respectively. While these last two articles do refer to Marsé

<sup>81</sup> [www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2008/11/27/cultura/1227796893.html](http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2008/11/27/cultura/1227796893.html)

<sup>82</sup> [www.avui.cat/article/cultura\\_comunicacio/47615/novel.lista/catala/juan/marse/gua...](http://www.avui.cat/article/cultura_comunicacio/47615/novel.lista/catala/juan/marse/gua...)

<sup>83</sup> [www.abc.es/20081127/cultura-literatura/posible-juan-marse-200811271651.html](http://www.abc.es/20081127/cultura-literatura/posible-juan-marse-200811271651.html)

<sup>84</sup> [www.elpais.com/articulo/cultura/Juan/Marse/gana/Premio/Cervantes/elpepucul/200...](http://www.elpais.com/articulo/cultura/Juan/Marse/gana/Premio/Cervantes/elpepucul/200...)

as “barcelonés”, they in no way mention or promote the fact that the author is Catalan. To be fair, the *ABC* article does mention that *Si te dicen que caí* was prohibited under Franco and had to be published in Mexico, but this of course does not belong to a Catalan-specific collective memory. *El mundo*, however, even goes so far as to speak of Marsé’s father’s imprisonment by Franco for his leftist political activism. These headlines, and the apparent tension within them in regards to the Catalan-Castilian dichotomy, return me to the issue of blurry identities I mentioned in Chapter Two.

Those who do not speak or write in Catalan were not part of the projected plan of the *Renaixença* I outlined in the last chapter. According to Catalan Nationalists, a Catalan writer is one who writes in Catalan, because Castilian is seen as a hegemonic language. The fact that Marsé does not write in Catalan has been a large source of the rejection he has experienced from the Catalan intelligentsia and academia, a rejection he addressed directly during his acceptance speech of the Premio Cervantes.<sup>85</sup> This mentality is taken one step further in the 1990’s with the linguistic normalization plan set out by the *Generalitat*, to be sure, Catalans may have felt abnormal vis-à-vis Spain during the dictatorship, but the normalization made non-Catalan speaking inhabitants of Catalonia feel abnormal.<sup>86</sup> Since the *Renaixença*, Catalan identity has been seen as fixed and homogeneous, and manifested through symbolic acts like language, myths like Sant Jordi, and performance acts like the *sardana*. Juan Marsé questions these essential notions in much of his work; in *Un día volveré*, he deconstructs the myth of Sant Jordi while in *El amante bilingüe*, language is his target. This questioning of a homogeneous Catalan identity is a common thread that ties Marsé to Montserrat Roig.

Many critics focus on the absence of the Catalan language in the work of authors like Marsé, saying it does not reflect the reality of Catalonia.<sup>87</sup> However, Marsé’s novels do not follow a classic form of realism; if anything, they are questioning the very notion of the real. Further, as Stewart King<sup>88</sup> points out, the coexistence of the two languages and cultures in the text is a better reflection of the reality of Catalonia than the use of a single language. Though Marsé writes in Spanish, he does sprinkle his narrative with Catalan words and, more importantly, thematically and geographically his novels reflect a Catalan reality. Besides, Marsé’s Catalan-speaking readers have special access to his work; they are ‘in on the game’ and have access to hidden truths and messages which can easily be decoded if they speak the language. For example, the bar in *Un día volveré* is called Trola; in Catalan *trola* means lie. King contends that Marsé’s form of writing is the new *seña de identidad* which indirectly offers a counter-narrative to Francoism:

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<sup>85</sup> Although there is a great effort to translate literature into Catalan, it is interesting to note that Juan Marsé’s novels, written in Castilian, have not been translated into Catalan. For a full text of the speech see [http://www.elpais.com/elpaismedia/ultimahora/media/200904/23/cultura/20090423elpepucul\\_1\\_Pes\\_PDF.pdf](http://www.elpais.com/elpaismedia/ultimahora/media/200904/23/cultura/20090423elpepucul_1_Pes_PDF.pdf)

<sup>86</sup> There is much opposition to the Catalan Linguistic Normalization laws, most notably perhaps from the Foro Babel.

<sup>87</sup> Francesc Vallverdú is probably the most vocal of these critics. His name is eerily similar to Jordi Valls Verdú, the name of Norma’s boyfriend in *El amante bilingüe*.

<sup>88</sup> Stewart King’s *Escribir la catalanidad. Lengua e identidades culturales en la narrativa contemporánea de Cataluña*. Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2005 has a fantastic bibliography and would be a great resource for those interested in exploring more closely the relationship between Catalan culture and writing.

Si el régimen de Franco creó una metanarrativa española que, en teoría, unía a todos los españoles al borrar las diferencias entre ellos y que producía una cultura ‘española’ homogénea, entonces los escritores catalanes en lengua castellana demuestran que esta metanarrativa es intrínsecamente falsa al destacar una realidad y una historia catalanas diferentes de las de la España franquista. (64)

By creating a multilingual and multicultural narrative world, Marsé goes against the homogenizing tendencies of Francoism and Catalan Nationalism alike. King proposes deconstruction as the healthy way of redefining Catalan literature and, by extension, Catalan culture:

Proponemos que la única manera de reconocer simbólicamente la catalanidad de todos los ciudadanos de Cataluña—y así contribuir a la incorporación de los elementos marginales—es desconstruyendo la misma institución literaria catalana que tradicionalmente ha desempeñado un papel imprescindible en la construcción y el mantenimiento de la cultura e identidad catalanas y, mediante esta deconstrucción, abrirla a una multiplicidad de interpretaciones, voces y obras alternativas que reflejan la diversidad de la sociedad catalana actual. (156)

This multiplicity of voices, the bringing to the center of those who are marginalized, is yet another element which connects Marsé with Roig. If Catalan identity is defined by language and exclusion, then redefining Catalan literature would be a first, healthy step towards a more inclusive nationalism which would base itself on more universal concepts such as social justice and equal rights rather than language.

Using Roig and Marsé as the case studies for this project is no coincidence; they are both storytellers, concerned with social justice, believers in the importance of collective memory, and two sides of the same Catalan coin. Roig was a great admirer of Marsé and interviewed him for her book *Los hechiceros de la palabra*. In the chapter entitled “Juan Marsé o la memoria enterrada”, Roig referred to him as “novelista catalán en lengua castellana” (85). As I explained in the previous chapter, for Roig, language was an essential component of her identity as a Catalan and as a writer. She seemed disappointed by Marsé’s choice to write in Spanish and confessed:

He discutido varias veces con Juan Marsé, incluso en los papeles públicos. Le he preguntado más de una vez por qué, siendo catalán, no escribe en esa lengua. Nunca nos hemos entendido, pero hemos continuado siendo tan amigos. Seguro que el mérito es de Juan Marsé que, a pesar de la violencia y sadismo utilizado en su narrativa, del pesimismo y del desprecio, es de una humanidad difícil de encontrar en los círculos desgastados por el escepticismo y la frustración permanente. Al leer *Si te dicen que caí* comprendí que existe un divorcio, una diferencia o un abismo—vaya usted a saber—entre el mundo de los marginados y el de la cultura catalana. Que no tienen nada que ver. (*Los hechiceros* 89-90)

Roig acknowledged that despite Marsé’s choice of language, he is a contributing force to the study of Catalan culture and identity. In fact, nearly every single interview I read while researching this chapter, as well as numerous critical articles, made reference to this question of his nationality and cultural identity. Born in 1933 and raised by adoptive parents, Marsé grew up bilingual. In 1946, at age 13 he was forced to interrupt his formal education in Spanish, because his father was thrown in jail for being associated with anti-Franco movements, and the young writer had to work in order to contribute financially to his household. Aside from his short, formal education, Marsé’s literary education was in

Spanish; he read popular literature—adventure novels, comics, etc.—all of which were written in Spanish. His family had been forced to burn their Catalan-language books for fear of being punished by the dictatorship. Since all the books he had access to were written in Spanish (as opposed to Catalan), it seemed natural that as an adult Marsé would also write in Spanish.

While Marsé may not write in Catalan, there is no doubt that his work is infused with what some consider Catalanness, both on a linguistic and thematic level. On a very basic level, Catalan words are sprinkled throughout his narrative but, more importantly, Catalonia and more often than not Barcelona plays a starring role in the stories he tells. You simply cannot transplant Marsé's stories to Madrid and expect them to be the same; the geographic space in which these stories unfold is not arbitrary, as we will see later in this chapter. While there is a tendency to want to classify Marsé as either Catalan or Spanish, his work engages both typical Catalan and Spanish values and reflects both regional and national experiences. According to Marsé, “la dualidad cultural y lingüística de Cataluña, que tanto preocupa, y que en mi opinión nos enriquece a todos”<sup>89</sup> should be seen as an asset and not in opposition to each other.

### Censorship

It would be impossible to talk about Juan Marsé without broaching the subject of censorship, since his *Si te dicen que caí*<sup>90</sup> is “la obra paradigmática por excelencia de la literatura trashumada [out of country] a causa de la censura” (Abellán 72), being published in Mexico in 1963 instead of Spain. As mentioned in previous chapters, the Transition did not produce a blatant change or rupture in the production of literature because most writers were writing what they wanted to begin with and publishing elsewhere, as was the case with *Si te dicen*. Also, by the 1960's, due in large part to the reforms of Manuel Fraga, censorship laws had been liberalized and writers were finding more freedom to express themselves as well as further techniques to circumnavigate remaining censorship. As Manuel Abellán explains in *Censura y creación literaria en España (1939-1976)*:

Desde los albores del franquismo, ya en su etapa bélica, y luego, en los años de consolidación definitiva, la censura, robustecida y potenciada por toda la gama de actividades y funciones que fueron vertebrándose en ella, fue concebida como tarea encaminada a establecer la primacía de la verdad y difundir la doctrina general del Movimiento. (15)

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<sup>89</sup>[http://www.elpais.com/elpaismedia/ultimahora/media/200904/23/cultura/20090423elpepucul\\_1\\_Pes\\_PDF.pdf](http://www.elpais.com/elpaismedia/ultimahora/media/200904/23/cultura/20090423elpepucul_1_Pes_PDF.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> In a note in the 2003 edition of *Si te dicen*, Marsé acknowledges:

“Escribí esta novela convencido de que no se iba a publicar jamás. Corrían los años 1968-1970, el régimen franquista parecía que iba a ser eterno y una idea obsesiva y fatalista se había apoderado de mí: la de que la censura, que aún gozaba de muy buena salud, nos iba a sobrevivir a todos, no solamente al régimen fascista que la había engendrado sino incluso a la tan anhelada transición (o ruptura, según el frustrado deseo de muchos), instalándose ya para siempre, como una maldición gitana del Caudillo, en el mismo corazón de la España futura. Tal era de negra y pesimista la perspectiva después de más de treinta años de represión y mordaza. [...]Desembarazado por fin del pálido fantasma de la autocensura...” (7)

Censorship, at least in principle, was a political and ideological instrument for ensuring homogeneity and control over the masses, all the while disseminating the Franco regime's propaganda and agenda. This control was established from the very beginning, during the Nationalist uprising, via the *Política de Comunicación* released on July 18, 1936, which made illegal the publication and/or distribution of socialist, communist, or pornographic texts. Soon thereafter the *Delegación del Estado para Prensa y Propaganda* was created and the institution would remain, with very little updates, for thirty years. Especially in the first decade of the dictatorship, censorship was very strict, and at times, slightly ridiculous. For example, even foreign-sounding names in titles were silenced regardless of the nature of the film.

Franco used censorship as a tool for establishing a single truth.<sup>91</sup> This single truth also extended to the realm of History—there was only one acceptable version, the Official History. The “choque con los supuestos de la historiografía nacionalista” (Abellán 112) evolved into one of the criteria subject to censorship. It is precisely against this concept of truth and Official History that writers like Marsé would battle up until the time of the Transition. Marsé comments on this phenomenon in *La gran desilusión* when he writes: “el cronista tenía pues que seguir reprimiendo cualquier intento, no ya de ajustar cuentas con la historia oficial y denunciar agravios y falsedades a la memoria colectiva, sino que, en relación con ciertos asuntos, no podía permitirse ni siquiera ser objetivo” (9); this was especially true during the time the regime escalated violence right before its collapse. Franco did not invent censorship in Spain; it is important to remember that censorship has ecclesiastic origins, the Franco regime had an *Índice de Libros Prohibidos* much like during the Inquisition, and the Church was in league with the dictatorship. Even the Second Republic had instituted censorship in the 1930's.

While there was a lot of imbalance and inconsistency in enforcement throughout the years in regards to what was being censored, perhaps due to the fact that censors were part-time employees and the position was not prestigious by any means, a general list of questions used to determine if something should be censored included:<sup>92</sup>

- 1) ¿ataca al dogma?
- 2) ¿a la moral?
- 3) ¿a la Iglesia o a sus ministros?
- 4) ¿al régimen y sus instituciones?
- 5) ¿a las personas que colaboran o han colaborado con el régimen?
- 6) los pasajes censurables, ¿califican el contenido total de la obra?

(Abellán 19)

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<sup>91</sup> The Franco Regime, and by extension the censors, seemed to be obsessed with the concept of truth. For example, Jardiel Ponela had to make corrections to his *Amor se escribe sin hache*, having to change the line “porque la mentira es la única verdad del mundo” to “porque mentir es lo propio de sinvergüenzas” (Abellán 21).

<sup>92</sup> For an alternate list of norms of censorship from 1940, including the clause dealing with regional languages, see: “La censura literaria en los primeros años del Franquismo. Las normas y los hombres.” Juan Beneyto Pérez.” Pp 27-40 in Abellán, Manuel L. (ed) *Diálogos hispánicos de Ámsterdam. Censura y literaturas peninsulares*. No 5. Ámsterdam: Rodopi, 1987. (It is interesting to point out that Beneyto Pérez was director general of censorship under Franco.)

It is quite clear that the guidelines for what should be censored were so broad and ambiguous that the Regime could justify virtually any act of erasure or silencing. Film, theater, public acts, performances, and the press were all subject to the censor's pen and, of all the literary genres, the novel and the theater were the most strictly censored and, consequently, the most severely punished—a logical consequence of their easy accessibility to the public.<sup>93</sup> However at the same time, “la novela fue el género que mejor se prestó al soslayo de las imposiciones de la censura, ya fuera empleando tácticas de diversión, ya fuera aportando repetidamente modificaciones al texto original” (Abellán 85). Despite the special attention the novel received from the censor, or precisely because of it, the novel had to develop innovative ways to communicate; silence and analogy would be two such means that authors like Marsé and Roig would use to covertly communicate with their readers.

The tentacles of censorship extended far beyond the first few decades of the dictatorship and its severe repression, they would outlast Franco himself. The archaic, anachronistic policies did not change until March 18, 1966 with the passage of the *Ley de Prensa e Imprenta*.<sup>94</sup> While Manuel Abellán refers to this law as “un montaje jurídico” (119), Miguel Cruz Hernández<sup>95</sup> argues “...es un hecho histórico cierto que su aplicación [La Ley de Prensa e Imprenta] abrió el camino a la preparación del cambio político español y que sin su rodaje de diez años (1966-1976) la llamada transición española no se habría efectuado tal como tuvo lugar” (42). It is difficult to determine the extent to which this law had an impact on democratization. Both Abellán and Hernández use the term inertia to refer to the evolution of the censorship laws; in other words, the Regime had no choice but to liberalize the censorship policies because other aspects of the country were liberalizing. The new law stopped the *consulta previa* but kept the *consulta voluntaria*, although most writers still did the previous consultation out of fear. Also, editors had more responsibility in censoring the texts before they were published.

It is impossible to determine the extent of self-censorship, even once censorship was officially lifted. Juan Marsé admits, “nunca sabrá uno, en la época en que tenías que presentar todo a censura, hasta qué punto sufrías una especie de autocensura en el terreno casi de lo inconsciente. Automáticamente tú no llegabas un poco más allá (Gracia y Maurel, 51). Further, there are varying degrees of autocensorship: explicit autocensorship in response to a censor's suggestions or implicit autocensorship by the author which in turn can be divided into conscious and unconscious forms.

Of course the minority languages of Spain were especially subject to the censor's actions because the mere fact of writing in a minority language was seen as a threat to the hegemony of the Regime. The minority languages were addressed early on: “con respeto a la utilización literaria de los idiomas españoles no oficiales, un oficio de la Subsecretaría, con fecha 16 de marzo de 1939, establece su proscripción, salvo que sirvan

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<sup>93</sup> There seems to be discrepancy even in the way critics write about the censorship of novels. Neuschäfer writes that “la novela, al ser literatura escrita dirigida a un receptor-lector solitario, no era controlada con total severidad, de ahí que fuera la primera en transformar su lenguaje” (87). This seems logical; though the novel is accessible to the general public, it is also consumed in the private sphere and thus not as ‘harmful’ as the theater, for example, which belongs to the public sphere.

<sup>94</sup> The Minister of Information and Tourism, Manuel Fraga Iribarne, spearheaded this law and would be one of the many Franco elites who would later go on to play a substantial role in the Transition.

<sup>95</sup> Cruz Hernández was director general of Cultura Popular under Franco.

a dar mejor ambiente o mayor divulgación a las obras del Movimiento y del Gobierno”(Beneyto Pérez 33). Despite fierce repression, and because of a variety of factors (social, economical, institutional, etc.), Catalan literature fared much better in comparison to the other Peninsular languages.

The issue of censorship is especially relevant to this project because of its relation to silence. In this past section I loosely referred to censorship as silencing; Iris Zavala likens censorship to a “semiología del silencio: desentrañar lo que dice y lo que no dice un texto, en tanto en cuanto todo discurso es ideológico” (147). In censored texts, what is removed is just as important as what is approved. Even in the case of conscious, implicit autocensorship, what is omitted is just as important as what is written.

Also, as mentioned above, innovations were sought especially in the novel and used to circumnavigate the censor’s restrictions<sup>96</sup>; Hans-Jörg Neuschäfer<sup>97</sup> refers to this phenomenon as a *discurso de la censura* because of “tácticas de camuflaje y de disimulo, es decir formas de hablar indirectas y encubiertas, ya que la enunciación directa del pensamiento podía ser peligrosa” (10). It is important to clarify that *discurso de la censura* does not refer to the censorship apparatus itself, rather “las huellas que deja en la creación misma, a sus efectos sobre el proceso de creación literaria y cinematográfica” (Neuschäfer 45). Novels written and/or published during the time of censorship are characterized by silences, omissions, and ambiguities. Silence and allegory were relatively easy techniques writers could use in order to communicate with their readers because they were already familiar with these tools in their daily life. It is early on during the dictatorship that the novel begins to push the boundaries of censorship. The first such case was:

en 1942, en medio de aquella chatura total de ambiente, apareció una novela, *La familia de Pascual Duarte*, de Camilo José Cela. Una obra que no hablaba de política pero que presentaba, con los peores trazos, una realidad atroz de crímenes, adulterios, violencia e injusticia, exactamente el reverso de todo cuanto la retórica oficial pretendía ofrecer como caracterización de la vida española. Y, poco después, le sigue *Nada* (1944), obra de una joven estudiante, Carmen Laforet, que en lenguaje sencillo y directo presentaba la Barcelona de la posguerra, vacía, desolada, desgarradoramente absurda. La escritora situaba los hechos, con admirable valentía, en su marco histórico real, lo que no ocurría en la obra de Cela, que era intemporal y se mantenía al margen de toda referencia histórica concreta. (Guillermo 12)

One of the main consequences of Francoism was that silence became “el primer deber del ciudadano” (Neuschäfer 46). The Press became the propaganda machine of the State and

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<sup>96</sup> “Recordemos tres fechas tempranas en las que se logró romper el silencio impuesto por la censura: 1942, año de aparición de *La familia de Pascual Duarte*, la novela de Cela; 1949, estreno de la obra teatral *Historia de una escalera* de Buero Vallejo; y 1952, año en que llegó a los cines *Bienvenido Mr. Marshall*, la película de Berlanga. No es casual que fuese la novela la primera en encontrar de nuevo un lenguaje propio, que la siguiera algo más tarde el teatro y que el cine precisase más tiempo para procurarse cierta libertad de movimientos frente al poder opresor de la censura.” (Neuschäfer 11)

<sup>97</sup> In his book *Adiós a la España eterna. La dialéctica de la censura. Novela, teatro y cine bajo el franquismo*, Neuschäfer bases his argument on Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams*. According to Freud, censorship inhibits communication but stimulates creativity and it is for that reason that censorship and literature have a dialectic relationship. Allusions, indirect language, camouflage, disguise, symbolism are all the natural result of this dialectic.

journalists had to obey the unspoken law of silence. In the street, common people were in constant threat of punishment if they were found to be speaking against the Regime, so they had to learn to communicate through silence. The text of a writer like Marsé is at the very least a double text, based on what is present and what is absent. Or, perhaps it is more appropriate to use the imagery of layers when speaking of his fiction because as we saw in the first section of this chapter, the linguistic multiplicity could be considered another double text.

### Body of Work

A brief glimpse at Marsé's work, both fiction and non-fiction, is a helpful indication of his attitudes towards the political events taking shape in Spain in the 1970's and 1980's. The outstanding message of his literary production is the importance of breaking the political silence about the past, and the preservation and production of collective memory. It is obvious that for Marsé, History can never be taken out of context; the events of the present are inevitably influenced by the past. We can take as an example his 2004 publication, *La gran desilusión*. *La gran desilusión* is a History book of sorts; made up of short chapters and photos, the text mixes historical, cultural, and personal stories from the years 1929-1950. According to the prologue, the purpose of the book is so that a reader can browse through it in hopes that one of the images or stories will spark a personal memory. Just from this short description it becomes clear that, for Marsé, History is a collection of personal, collective, and official accounts.

The book also establishes a connection between the past and the future. In Chapter Two, Marsé establishes the Spanish *Segunda República* as “uno de los períodos más sangrientos de su historia [de España], abriéndose a sí misma una llaga que tardaría muchos años en cerrarse” (27). Arguably, that open wound would go on to be one of the leading causes of the Civil War; and because of the lack of justice after the end of the Franco regime, many would say that wound is still palpating today, especially for the *vencidos*, those who had not been allied with Franco during the war. There is also a chapter dedicated to “La hora de ajustar cuentas (Nuremburg y otros procesos)”. There, Marsé speaks of the United States' role in administering justice<sup>98</sup> after World War II and writes, “por vez primera en la Historia, los vencedores de una guerra procesan a sus vencidos.” (170)

Also interesting is the commentary Marsé makes in *Confidencias de un chorizo* (1977), a fictional transcription of a conversation between Paco the *chorizo* (Marsé's alter-ego) and a police commissioner. The text focuses on “...la dialéctica entre libertad y represión que gobernó el proceso de transición política; de ese modo, mientras el ‘chorizo’ se expresa libremente, el comisario intenta reprimir o reconducir esa libertad” (Rodríguez 151) showing a continuity of certain repressive tactics from dictatorship to democracy.

The *Confidencias* reveal Marsé's critical and ironic perspective on the Transition and his disgust with the hypocrisy and lack of justice:

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<sup>98</sup> Ironic as always, Marsé points out the problematic nature of the United States' dealings with justice considering they commit the atrocity at Hiroshima six months prior to the Nuremburg trials.



A lo largo de la serie, Marsé hace un repaso sarcástico de la realidad social y política del país y una acerada denuncia del secretismo y la desmemoria que caracterizó el proceso de reforma democrática; al hilo de los acontecimientos, señalará con el dedo la lentitud de los cambios, la pervivencia de la censura, las insuficiencias de aquella reforma y el carácter vergonzante—sobre todo para la memoria de los vencidos—de algunas concesiones y pactos. (Rodríguez 152)

These pacts and the false consensus they simulated are characterized as congenital illness (Rodríguez 158) and are a target of Marsé’s criticism in many of his texts. And specifically, the *Pacto de silencio* was “un modo de garantizar un proceso controlado y dirigido por quienes más tenían que olvidar...el escritor denunciará tanto la pervivencia de la presión ultraderechista como la falsificación del pasado y del presente” (Rodríguez 160).

As in *La gran desilusión*, past, present, and future are inextricably linked. At one point the police agent tells Paco that he does not want to hear anything about Spanish politics to which the young man responds: “la política española, la del pasado, la del presente y mucho me temo que la del futuro, es una pesadilla de la que trato de despertar” (136-7). Marsé shares Roig’s perspective on the importance of the past. Juan Rodríguez recognizes this similarity and explains that “Marsé, como tantos otros hijos de vencido, parece tener claro que el futuro del mismo pasa por el reconocimiento del pasado y de la verdad histórica, y que la literatura puede y debe contribuir a ello” (146-7). Not only is an honest examination of the past essential to a healthy future, but literature must play an active role in that process.

In “Los que piden amnesia”, Paco witnesses a protest in which an extreme-rightist is walking around with a sign that at first glance he thinks reads “Amnistía” but upon further inspection finds that it actually says “Amnesia”. This confusion amnesty-amnesia is one of the most important criticisms of the Transition, that by amnestying former Francoists the people of Spain were really being asked to forget their past. In “Se irán de rositas”, we hear of a man who comes into the police station to lodge a complaint against Franco and all his men. His worry is that “están reformando todo de manera que puedan irse de rositas, sin tener que responder de ninguno de sus actos, sin nadie que les pida cuentas, sin obligaciones jurídicas ni morales de ninguna clase. [...] Se trata de cuantos, de algún modo, apoyaron de obra o de palabra su dictadura infernal” (220). The phrase *irse de rositas* translates to ‘getting off the hook’ and essentially, because of the *Pacto de silencio*, the Franco regime did get off the hook. The plaintiff’s concerns are valid, but nothing will be done to right the wrong.

This topic of amnesty is dealt with again in “Aproximaciones al pantano” when Paco ponders, “¿la reciente amnistía me alcanza a mí?” (127). He considers the crimes he commits as crimes of a political nature because “siempre he sido antifranquista. Y lo sigo siendo. Y lo seguiré siendo” (127-8) and wonders “¿quién perdona a quién? o mejor: ¿quién debería aquí perdonar a quién?” (128). To all these ponderings the police officer responds that Paco should just forget the past and move on. The *chorizo*’s response can be seen as representative of Marsé’s perspective as well as that of a countless number of *vencidos*: “Olvidar el pasado es renunciar a mi identidad, a la acera soleada de mi calle, a la entereza de mi madre trabajando de noche para darme de comer, al valor de mi padre en la cárcel Modelo, a las fatigas de mi tío en el exilio, a la memoria

de mi otro tío muerto en el Ebro...” (130) Forgetting the past is tantamount to denying one’s identity and personal history.

Marsé does not seem to think that the democratic government of Spain is any better than the Franco regime. In “Aquellos perros, estos collares”, he uses the metaphor of the dog to suggest that though the collar may be different, a dog is a dog. Likewise, in “Ellos se lo guisan y ellos se lo comen” he rewrites the famous proverb *dime con quien andas y te diré quién eres* as “dime de qué movimiento vienes y te diré con quién eres” (107), which shows Marsé is critical of the fact that the Transition was managed by former Francoists.

But despite the apparent bitterness and pessimism, Marsé’s text hints at a bit of hope for the future by means of memory. In “Miedo a la memoria de un pueblo”, we hear of a novel that is first censored by the Franco regime only to be censored once again after a democratic government takes power. Not only does Marsé equate Franco and the Transition government, but also, in Paco’s account, the story still circulates—proof that as much as governments may try to censor and destroy the evidence, because of storytelling, memory always persists and prevails. Marsé fervently defends his right and responsibility to tell stories in order to recuperate the collective memory which was damaged not by the mere passage of time but by those who hold power (“La aventis secuestrada” p 172). The *chorizo*/Marsé defiantly blasts, “Yo no olvido ni perdono” (172) and adds “tarde o temprano, el poder político tendrá que rendir cuentas a esta memoria colectiva que, quiérase o no, acabará por imponerse” (174). Whether they like it or not, and hard as successive governments may try to silence the past, it is the collective memory of the people which will inevitably *ajustar las cuentas*.

Catalonia is not exempt from this criticism<sup>99</sup>; quite the contrary, Marsé points his finger quite blatantly at the Catalan leadership. In “L’Avinguda de Pau Casals”, the *chorizo* defends his lack of knowledge of his mother-tongue, Catalan:

Nuestros prohombres de la catalanidad, férreos conductores de la democracia, que se enriquecieron con el franquismo y que tanto hablan del *seny* y la industriosa Catalunya, los López Rodó, los Samaranch<sup>100</sup>, los Udina Martorell... Y otros más que siguen dirigiendo el cotarro, ¿por qué no protestaron años atrás, pero públicamente, que se viera, por las vejaciones y las humillaciones que sufrió el maestro [Pau Casals]? [...] El nombre de Pau Casals en boca de Samaranch o de un ex ministro franquista es, cuando menos, una falta de respeto para con el pueblo. Zervió no olvida ni perdona. (212-213)

While this incident is in direct reference to the renaming of a street during the democratic transition, the sentiment of hypocrisy can be generalized. The Catalan leadership benefited from the Franco regime and was mostly concerned with personal gains when it pacted with the Transition government. Rodríguez explains how “...la Transición es vista como una componenda entre políticos cuyos intereses corporativos favorecieron la manufactura del consenso” (158). Paco’s attitude in relation to the Catalan government is “no pido perdón, [...] sino justicia” (211), and this is perhaps an appropriate summary of

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<sup>99</sup> Marsé is also highly critical of the Catholic Church whose leaders were silent during the Franco regime, especially in regards to the atrocities and injustices being committed, and then during the Transition stepped in to object to certain freedoms being proposed by the democratic government.

<sup>100</sup> Samaranch would go on to obtain international fame as President of the International Olympic Committee and for pulling off a successful Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992.

Marsé's sentiment. Apologies, empty words (i.e. renaming streets), and the removal of statues are all superficial attempts to avoid the administration of justice.

The fiction Marsé writes, especially around the end of the dictatorship and during the democratic transition, can also be useful in determining his critical attitude towards the political events of the time. In his 1966 novel *Últimas tardes con Teresa*, Marsé brings to life the unforgettable character of Pijoaparte, a Murcian playboy who has a summer fling with the bourgeois Catalan girl, Teresa. The novel is infected with lies, fictions, silence—all concepts which seem to haunt Marsé about the political situation in Spain and which seem to surface in all his fiction. For example, as a child Pijoaparte invents his life, so much so that he comes to believe the fiction he has created. There is a keen awareness that “las cosas a veces no son lo que parecen” (207).<sup>101</sup> Silence plays a key role in the novel;<sup>102</sup> most notably Manolo and Teresa make an unspoken pact of silence. Hard as Manolo tries to recreate his image and identity, his past of crime always comes back to haunt him just as Spain's past comes back to haunt the nation.

Or we can look to *La muchacha de las bragas de oro* (1978) in which Luys Forest, an ex historian and editor of the Franco regime, writes an autobiography which diverges from the truth on more than one account. His niece (he comes to find out she is his daughter only after he has had engaged in sexual relations with her) constantly challenges him on the veracity of his account. When his work is subject to censorship, Luys wonders, “qué derecho tienen estos hijos de puta a enmendarme la plana, a mí, que por ellos he llegado a enmendar la historia contemporánea del país?” (158). As in *Últimas tardes*, we are reminded that “las cosas no son como son, sino como se recuerdan” (151).<sup>103</sup> Once again, as much as Luys tries to cover up the past, “la dudosa realidad del presente venía a enturbiar, a degradar la realidad indiscutible del pasado” (248). He tries to kill himself with a gun that is supposedly no longer in his possession, a gun which would implicate him in his Fascist past; ironically, the gun is jammed and he is unable to kill himself. The fictions can no longer cover up reality, and it becomes clear that they can no longer substitute for memory.

Marsé's most critically acclaimed novel is *Si te dicen que caí* (1973), which is perhaps the least accessible in terms of the difficulty of the narrative structure; the chaotic time, space, narrative voices, discourses, and characters help the reader feel what it was like to live in such a tumultuous time. *Si te dicen* is also his most controversial novel since it was censored under Franco and had to be published in Mexico. The novel is made up of multiple and diverse voices which come from stories that the neighborhood kids share and in which it is difficult to distinguish between reality and fiction. The main character of the novel is undoubtedly the *aventis*<sup>104</sup> and as imaginative as the stories

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<sup>101</sup> The narrator makes the following comment about the nature of lies: “Era, en cierto modo, como una de esas mentiras que, debido a la confusa naturaleza moral del mundo en que vivimos, pueden pasar perfectamente por verdades al sustituir, por imperativos de los imaginación, mentiras aún peores” (92-93). This could very easily be considered a definition of the *Pacto de silencio*.

<sup>102</sup> At a certain point Señor Serrat is talking to doctors about Maruja's condition and speaks “de amnesia local y amnesia general” (265). It is obvious from the context and the qualifiers “local” and “general” that what Teresa's father is really talking about is anesthesia. Is it a Freudian slip on the part of the character? Or is it Marsé commenting on the collective amnesia which had started to take root in Spain?

<sup>103</sup> When Luys tells his niece this she responds “Eso lo dijo Valle-Inclán.”

<sup>104</sup> *Si te dicen* is also a metafiction. The following description of how the kids invent their stories is also indicative of the way in which Marsé writes his novels: “...Java perfeccionó el método: se metió él mismo

were, they paled in comparison to the fantastical reality that was being lived in post-war Spain, especially by the *vencidos*. The maquis get special consideration in the novel, especially their corruption and decadence. Once again the impact of the past on the present and future is palpable: "...al principio todos decían esto no puede durar, esto no aguantará, sin sospechar que el eco de sus palabras llegaría arrastrándose a través de treinta años hasta los sordos oídos de sus nietos" (63) leaving "imborrables tatuajes y cicatrices en la piel de la memoria" (72).

### Contador de aventis<sup>105</sup>

Samuel Amell titles his 1984 study of Marsé *La narrativa de Juan Marsé, contador de aventis*. Edenia Guillermo refers to Marsé as a "gran narrador" (73). Without a doubt, this characterization as a storyteller is the salient feature of his fiction. According to Marsé, a novel must entertain readers without boring them, enabling them to forget that they are reading a text. Marsé's theory of the novel is that it should be written with the heart and not the mind. He is opposed to literary theory or experimental language which takes the focus away from the story being told. His novels are not based on ideas, but rather images; while critiques may arise from these images, the author never sets out to write an ideological novel. He rejects labels such as social realism or fantasy and believes that a storyteller who is good enough can make the reader believe anything, including that elephants can fly.<sup>106</sup> Marsé's fiction grants access and power to the reader, and his rise in popularity in the 1970's coincided with a move by the publishing company Alianza to publish *libros de bolsillo*, giving everyone access to literature.

The *aventis* Marsé creates in his novels are in direct opposition to the Official History propagated first by the Franco regime and later by the democratic government of Spain; the many narrative voices of the *aventis* mean there is no singular, authoritarian voice. Marsé does not merely tell a story, rather he creates characters, usually poor children of the *vencidos*, who tell the multiple stories themselves; his seventh novel *Un*

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en las historias y acabó por meternos a nosotros, y entonces el juego era emocionante de veras porque estaba siempre pendiente la posibilidad de que, en el momento menos pensado, cualquiera del corro de oyentes se viera aparecer con una actuación decisiva y sonada. Nos sentíamos todo el tiempo como alguien a quien va a sucederle un acontecimiento de gran importancia. Java aumentó el número de personajes reales y redujo cada vez más el de los ficticios, y además introdujo escenarios urbanos de verdad, nuestras calles y nuestras azoteas y nuestros refugios y cloacas, y sucesos que traían los periódicos y hasta los misteriosos rumores que circulaban en el barrio sobre denuncias y registros, detenidos y desaparecidos y fusilados. Era una voz impostada recreando intrigas que todos conocíamos a medias y de oídos: hablar de oídas, eso era contar aventis, Hermana. Las mejores eran aquellas que no tenían ni pies ni cabeza pero que, a pesar de ello, resultaban creíbles: nada por entonces tenía sentido." (39)

<sup>105</sup> Definition of *aventis*: "término que naturalmente no figura en la academia, en el diccionario de la academia y de hacerlo habría que entenderlo ya como desusado. Deriva de aventura y se usaba generalmente en plural porque el relato era de aventuras y no de una sola. Existía un niño narrador, capaz de imprimirle no sólo chorros de perversa imaginación sin expresividad e interés. El pequeño grupo sentado en corro intervenía atentamente y, a menudo, corrigiendo la historia, era un relato coral, colectivo como lo formula Marsé." (Marco 70)

<sup>106</sup> Gazarian Guatier, Marie-Lise. *Interviews with Spanish Writers*. Elmwood Park (IL): Dalkey Archive Press, 1991.

*día volveré* (1982) is no exception. In the rest of this chapter, I will be using *Un día volveré* as a case study in hopes of better understanding the role of literature during the transition to democracy. Along the way I will explore the role of silence in the novel as well as the use of myth. My contention is that literature is a free space where authors like Marsé could break the *Pacto de silencio* and express their frustration with the lack of political justice. Also, Marsé's treatment of silence during the dictatorship is an indication that the *Pacto de silencio* continues a climate of silence that predates democracy.

*Un día volveré* tells the story of Jan Julivert Mon, an ex *maqui*, who returns to Barcelona after spending some time in jail. He returns to the home of his sister-in-law Balbina, who for economic reasons has been forced into prostitution. His nephew, Néstor, has suffered trauma whose effects have led him to a life of violence.

The novel is a constant dialogue between silence and stories. It "is concerned with communication and its absence, with images which conceal or protect an inexpressible reality, with signs, words and gestures that comfort, distort, delight and destroy" (Devlin 30<sup>107</sup>). The title itself, with its ambiguous subject, is a prime example of these silences. Who is coming back? Franco? The past? Will the return be hopeful? Or will he who returns seek revenge? Many questions are raised, but few are answered, at least definitively. It is the reader who plays an active role in determining the truth. The ambiguous narrator is yet another example of narrative reticence:

This breakdown of narrative hierarchy is also a breakdown of narrative authority. If no single voice imposes its viewpoint on the text, all voices have equal validity. The narrative structure of the novel subverts the political structure of the society it describes. If the latter is based on the imposition of falsehood masquerading as absolute truth, the former proposes a collective vision in which all voices are shown to be unreliable and in which, consequently, no single voice is privileged. (Labanyi 160)

While this quote is in reference to *Si te dicen*, it can very easily be applied to *Un día volveré*. Also, as Currie Thompson points out, this narrative uncertainty is reinforced on a linguistic level by the prominent use of conditional verbs as well as verbs like *parecer*<sup>108</sup> which imply uncertainty. Silence is also an important theme in the novel, which should come as no surprise considering the prominence of various types of silence during the Franco Regime and continuing into the transition to democracy: the silence of censorship, the silence of isolationism, the silence of exile to name a few.

In *Un día volveré* there are many things which are left unsaid (the true nature of Jan's sexuality, the identity of Nestor's real father, Polo's killer, what really happened at the Eucort factory heist, etc.), however there are also multiple stories being generated by the characters in the novel who attempt to fill these absences. Two characters exemplify this relationship: Polo on the one hand is the representative of the Official History whereas el Viejo Suau's storytelling represents the collective memory of the neighborhood. While Suau is the town storyteller and keeper of their memories, due to

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<sup>107</sup> John Devlin's article is a great source of information about the influence of cinema, especially Westerns and gangster films, on the novel.

<sup>108</sup> Thompson, Currie K. "Returning to the Text: Juan Marsé's *Un día volveré*". *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*. vol 10, issues 1-3 1985. Pp 81-98.

his age and the fragmented nature of memory, his account of the past cannot be trusted. His hobby is painting and reproducing movie posters yet instead of copying the image directly, he reproduces it from his memory resulting in obvious discrepancies. Regardless of his untrustworthiness, Marsé uses Suau as a model; “With Polo’s death Suau is left to weave, unhindered by ‘official’ protestations, his counter-version of the ‘facts’ of Jan’s life” (Devlin 35). It is Suau who fills in the gaps and tells the reader about the first encounter between Jan and Klein, though, ironically, it seems Suau is unaware of the romantic interest between them. The model which Marsé suggests is that we come to History by telling stories.

Jan himself is the subject of many stories: his past is remembered and often invented, his future is imagined. In fact, his absence is substituted by so many stories that he becomes mythified. However, when Jan returns, the children of the neighborhood, for whom he was a hero, are disappointed and disillusioned:

Por cierto, no era el tipo extraordinario que habíamos imaginado, no era tan fornido ni tan pistonudo como Néstor lo había descrito en las viejas aventis o como la medrosa memoria del barrio lo había deformado, no tenía las espaldas tan anchas ni la mandíbula tan cuadrada, aunque sí la boca dura y despectiva, y tampoco era especialmente guapo ni altivo a la manera que eso puede gustar a las mujeres, no vimos en él nada excitante. (49)

The storytelling during Jan’s absence had created an image of a tough fighter in the collective imaginary. The reality of Jan, a tired and battered man, is unsatisfactory for a *pueblo* who had been looking to him for an *ajuste de cuentas*. The neighborhood believes that Jan has returned to Barcelona to exact revenge on those who had imprisoned him and humiliated his family. The hunger that the neighborhood, especially the children, have for this vengeful justice is palpable in the novel and manifests itself by way of the violence displayed by the youth of the city, especially Néstor. According to Ricoeur in the second chapter of *Memory, History, and Forgetting*, violence is one of the results of silence, a false way to break it. Jan is an ex-boxer and it is this feature which helps elevate him to the status of a hero who can right wrongs. The children in the novel are fascinated with boxing and violence of all sorts; the use of violent language is prominent and Néstor is looking for any excuse to pick a fight, especially with el Nene. The children seem to have inherited the rage and pain of their elders; these children may not have lived through the Civil War, but they have been negatively affected by its aftermath.

I believe the hunger for an *ajuste de cuentas* felt by the children of the novel is an allegory for a desire for truth and justice felt by the *vencidos*. After the transition to democracy, it is the new generation of Spaniards that fights for recognition of the past and tries to break the *Pacto de silencio*. Marsé did not live through the Civil War himself, but rather is a product of the post-war era. Likewise, most of those involved in the recent establishment of the Law of Historical Memory never experienced the war first hand; they were either born in the post war or are the children or even grandchildren of Civil War survivors.

The past is irrevocably lost. Time destroys the facts: papers are lost, witnesses die, entire civilizations get buried under rubble. All we are left with in the present are memories and traces which will inevitably influence our future. In the novel, memories are like ghosts; as much as people try to forget the past, the memories come back to haunt

them. Although Jan is a changed man, and disappoints many of the children with his return to reality, there is no doubt that “Jan Julivert no olvidaba [el pasado]” (86). For example, while he is jailed his mother dies and since Balbina is left alone (Jan’s brother had since run off to France), their neighbor Señor Folch takes advantage of Balbina’s vulnerability and steals much of their furniture. When Jan returns, one of his first tasks is to confront Folch and make him burn the items he had stolen from Jan’s family home.

Even up to the very end of the novel there is confusion as to the real reason Jan returns to Barcelona; however, there is no doubt that his return is closely tied to the judge, Klein Aymerich, although we are not sure in what capacity. Throughout the novel, the reader is on a quest for truth, trying to fit together the pieces of the puzzle and solve the mystery. Klein is a personification of the *desmemoria* of the Civil War; he is an amnesiac. After suffering an accident he becomes “un alcohólico perdido en una extraña amnesia” (241). This amnesia is quite convenient considering Klein was responsible for sending Jan, along with many other anti-Francoists, to prison. He recognizes that “afortunadamente disfruto de una memoria con fisuras” (312-13). The character of Judge Klein can be read as an allegory for the many former Francoists who conveniently ‘forgot’ their role in the fascist regime once Spain transitioned to democracy, and then actively participated in political life.

But the Judge’s amnesia does not free him from the past; the past “huele mal” and its ghosts constantly come back to haunt not only the former Fascist but all the other characters as well. The characters are often characterized as having “cicatrices”, physical scars which remind them of a violent past. Klein’s scar is in the form of a lizard, an image which will be discussed later in the section dealing with the myth of Sant Jordi.

Another result of the Judge’s amnesia is a liberation of repressed homosexual desire. Klein’s sexual repression can be seen as symbolic of the political and social repression of the Franco regime. Only when Klein forgets the past is he free to explore his true sexuality, albeit clandestinely. For Klein, like those around him, is ultimately concerned about hiding his reality and creating the illusion that he is heterosexual.

One of the main stories being transmitted by Marsé in this novel (and especially in *Si te dicen que caí*) is the miserable situation of the *ex-maquís* during the post-war period. Most of them are portrayed as disillusioned, corrupt, and having lost sight of the ideals for which they fought. He conveys their plight through “historias de seres que se han quedado sin futuro, porque les ha hecho añicos el pasado” (Arenes). Through fiction, the autor shows the connection between past and future and the role of fiction in determining the outcome. At one point in *Un día volveré* Falcón confronts Jan saying “... después de estos años que has pasado en la cárcel no sé hasta qué punto has cambiado, no sé cuáles son tus ideas, pero no habrás olvidado...” (334). Jan’s ideals have in fact changed and he has distanced himself from the corruption and opportunism of old colleagues like Falcón, but he has surely not forgotten. The recourse to memory is interesting; Falcón resorts to Jan’s memory in an attempt to incite complicity in a revenge plot. For the *ex-maquís*, memory translates into revenge and corruption; it is precisely this reaction that was meant to be avoided by the *Pacto de silencio*. For Jan, memory has an entirely different role. He admits “no creo que sirva de nada matar a un fantasma” (335) because for him “el juez es historia pasada, un fantasma; parece como si todo el mundo hubiese perdido la memoria” (338). This amnesia extends much further than the Klein house. In fact, “casi todos los personajes, pertenecientes a la clase alta y, sobre

todo, a la baja parecen haber olvidado sus ilusiones e ideales” (García Suárez 35). This loss of memory is in regards to injustices committed as well as ideals once held dear. It seems to effect all of Spain regardless of politics, age, class, or which side of the war you were on.<sup>109</sup> Further, it shows that the *Pacto de silencio* extends much further than the political realm.

Many critics have misinterpreted Marsé’s work as a call to forget the past in order to move forward into the future. Joan Ramón Resina believes that for Marsé, “neither memory nor loyalty to the past are relevant to the present; memory is at best a self-defeating flight to never-never land” (94). Kwang-Hee Kim thinks the overarching purpose of the novel is to “invitar al olvido” and have a “borrón y cuenta nueva” (111). Quite the contrary, memory is usually the motor and the *hilo conductor* behind Marsé’s narrations (Fidora). Jan is by no means advocating a loss of memory. Rather, he is trying to break the cycle of violence which has characterized the Spanish conflict. He advises Néstor “no vas a estar pegándote con él toda la vida. Así no resolverás nada” (384), referring to his conflict with el Nene. However, we could generalize this advice and apply it to Spain as a whole.

It is also important to mention the accessibility of the novel to an average reader, especially in comparison to *Si te dicen que caí*. The structure and ambiguity of *Si te dicen* make it a very difficult read. With *Un día volveré*, Marsé seems to return to basic storytelling. This is not to say that the structure or language of *Un día* are not complicated or important to the transmission of the message of the novel; in fact, there is still quite a bit of structural ambiguity. For example, at times the narrator is first person, at times third person and sometimes omniscient. Even on the very last page of the novel the reader does not know for certain who is telling the story. While there is much dialogue, there is also free indirect discourse and the use of diverse registers.

### Fiction as an Alternative Reality

Regardless of the genre in which Marsé writes, a common thread in all his texts is his belief in the impossibility of establishing an objective or empirical verification of the truth. At the same time, he declares “he procurado siempre mantenerme fiel a una realidad que es la que viví y no a otra” (Gracia y Maurel 49). For Marsé, all truth is relative and there are “verdades que sobrepasan a las verdades históricas” (Sanpedro 19). Marsé’s fascination with the conflictive relationship between reality and appearance is evident in both his fiction and non-fiction. His recourse to fiction is not a means of escape; rather, it brings him, and by default the reader, closer to understanding the reality in which we live. In other words, “su búsqueda de la verdad a través de la ficción está detrás de toda su creación novelesca” (Amell 164). For example, in *Señores y señoras*<sup>110</sup>,

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<sup>109</sup> The only person in the novel who actually remembers anything directly is Bibiloni but ironically enough these memories (i.e. of bombings) are so traumatic that he goes mad.

<sup>110</sup> Two interesting notes about *Señores y señoras*: 1) It is written at a time when censorship is high so a lot of reading between the lines is required. 2) Marsé includes a self-portrait/autobiography in this compilation thus including himself in the deconstruction of the relationship image-truth. Also, the biographies in this book first appear in the satirical newspaper *Por favor* of which Marsé is the editor from 1974-78. Ironically, the paper goes out of business in 1978 which may seem a natural result of the overall poor



he tries to deconstruct the images of famous people showing the disconnect between their image (represented by a photo) and the reality (represented by a narration written by Marsé). In this book of biographies, Marsé pays special attention to actresses as well as those involved in the democratic transition and often denounces their complicit silence both during and after the Franco regime.

This fascination with the truth-value of fiction calls attention to the tension-filled relationship between the novel and History. Who has access to the correct way to remember the past? The historian or the novelist? In many ways, the novel puts the reader in the role of the historian, desperately trying to put together clues to recreate the past so that it becomes understandable. This relationship is well summarized by Marla William:

Cuando Marsé borra las fronteras entre hecho y ficción, lo ficticio surge como el tema dominante [...] Ficción, vista como el deseo de suspender la incredulidad por parte del lector, juega con los orígenes de la credibilidad misma y muestra que la fantasía es tan creíble como cualquier forma de documentación histórica. Marsé permite que tanto sus personajes (como cuento) como sus lectores (por la forma discursiva) puedan crear una nueva forma de realidad a base de creer en sus propias percepciones, en vez de basarse en los valores tradicionales atribuidos a la realidad y la fantasía. (17)

For Marsé, “imaginación y verdad histórica se funden en un mismo género novelístico” (Fidora 32) and his novels are “crónicas históricas ficcionalizadas” (34). The Franco regime operated under a binary system, legitimizing its power through dichotomy; fact was diametrically opposed to fiction, the Official History to individual stories, *los vencidos* to *los vencedores*. What Marsé does is blur the boundaries between fact and fiction, thus defying the type of bipolar thinking which was characteristic of the Regime and which marginalized so many people. Marsé’s storytelling gives importance to the silenced histories of the past especially since they are often told by children of the *vencidos*.<sup>111</sup>

As Vázquez sees it, “la *aventi* [es] como [una] opción a la *realidad oficial*” (142).<sup>112</sup> The *aventis* is an alternative system, a new order that subverts the old Regime and the old mode of thinking. Let us not forget that the *aventis* is based in orality, which is in and of itself an alternative discourse. The *aventis* is a way to rewrite History, all the while recognizing its fictitious state. It is because of this fiction and because it is an alternative to the Official History that as a discourse it holds a symbolic and superior role in the novel. Another role we could assign storytelling or the realm of fiction is a metaphoric depiction of the historical rewriting that was done during the Franco Regime and yet again during the Transition.

But not all fictions are necessarily beneficial to society. For example, “Marsé considers the post-Franco reconstruction of the Catalan identity a political scam in which

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economic condition of the country, but really, the paper had a hard time drumming up financial support because it is being so truthful about the social and historic reality of Spain.

<sup>111</sup> The fact that often Marsé assigns the storytelling role to children is seen by Facundo Vázquez as a double marginality due to their age and *vencidos* status: “Por un lado es el discurso de los niños y por el otro es la forma que tienen ellos de asimilar una realidad que de otro modo no pueden comprender, una guerra en la que no intervinieron pero que de todos modos los sitúa en el lugar de los vencidos.” (142)

<sup>112</sup> This quote is actually taken from the title of one of the sections of Vázquez’ article.

reality is forever lost in symbolic simulacra” (Resina 100). The same can be said regarding his attitude about the Transition in general. By opening up a dialogue between multiple stories, and by affording fiction the same rights as truth, you run the risk of its becoming a destructive discourse as in the case of Catalan myth-making.

That *Un día volveré* seeks to offer “la versión auténtica y completa” (13) of Jan’s life is an obviously ironic statement, because it not only goes against every indication inside the novelistic world, but also against Marsé’s beliefs of the impossibility of distinguishing between fact and fiction. Currie Thomson’s observation that “one can never reach the ‘truth’ about Jan Julivert, because Jan Julivert is himself a fiction, a *trola*” (89) is astute. To talk about the historical reality of the postwar by way of a fictitious narration seems logical since “la situación específica de la posguerra es traumática, tan acentuadamente inverosímil, tan desequilibrada y delirante, que el mecanismo de restitución de lo que fue (y lo que la gente vivió entonces) ha debido pasar necesariamente por la alquimia del artificio: cine, novela, arte” (Jorge Gracia 25). The postwar period, especially as it was experienced by the children of the *vencidos*, was so surreal that there seemed no adequate way to represent the past. Since these children were not accepted in the space of the official discourse, in Marsé’s novels they turn to fiction and myth-making as an alternative space, a space I will elaborate on shortly.

#### *Un día volveré* as analogy

The narrative time of the novel spans from June 1959 to November 1959, although through flashbacks we also have access to the years 1930-1947. At the same time, Juan Rodríguez points out that aside from being a story about the misery of 1950’s postwar Spain, *Un día volveré* “transluce también el desencanto de los tiempos en que ha sido concebida, la frustración que genera la farsa de la transición escenificada por los políticos del franquismo y la oposición reformista, y que tuvo como consecuencia la desmovilización de la sociedad española” (*Cuadernos* 13). Marsé uses the postwar as an analogy for contemporary Spain, using the past to indirectly speak of the present. His novels “no se limitan a contarnos historias de un pasado concreto, sino que lo que en ellas es algo relevante para el lector y que está vigente en el momento actual” (Amell Elementos 42). That he does so through the novel is supported by critics like Joan Gilabert who believe that “toda gran novela es precursora del devenir examinando el pasado y *Un día* no es excepción” (67). It is the responsibility and role of the novel to examine the past in order to consolidate the future. In Marsé’s own words, he does not write about the past as a “crónica periodística, sino para rescatar unas experiencias personales y unas emociones que también pueden darse en la época actual” (Amell 42).

That *Un día volveré* may be read as a case study of Marsé’s opinion of the democratic transition is supported by the structure of the novel. Like most of his novels it ends with an epilogue which distances itself temporally from the time that the narrated events took place. The temporal distance seems to contribute further to the unreliability of the narrative, but more importantly, this structure indicates the close relationship between the past and the present, and by default the future. The novel ends with the following words:

...hoy ya no creemos en nada, nos están cocinando a todos en la olla podrida del olvido, porque el olvido es una estrategia del vivir...

Seguramente, aquel supuesto huracán de venganzas que esperábamos llegaría con él, y sobre el que tanto se había fantaseado en el barrio, no escondía nada en realidad, todo lo más la ilusión contrariada del vencido, la cicatriz de un sueño, un sentimiento senil que había sobrevivido a los altos, heroicos ideales...Hombres de hierro, le oímos decir alguna vez al viejo Suau, forjados en tantas batallas, hoy llorando por los rincones de las tabernas. No podíamos entenderlo entonces, pero él había sobrepasado esa edad en que un hombre deja de sentir el deseo de ajustar cuentas con nadie, salvo tal vez consigo mismo. (393-4)

Though there is some ambiguity about the identity of the narrator, it is clear that he is the adult version of one of the children of the postwar. These final words “signal a generation’s relinquishing of the mythology of violence as a substitute for genuine progress” (Devlin 33), a progress that would not be solidified until 2007 with the passage of the Law of Historical Memory, which I will discuss in the final chapter. While Marsé understands the collective amnesia, he does not accept it or believe in it.

Like Marsé, the writers who are prominent in the 1960’s do not remember the war as a personal event, but rather an historical one. This is not to say they were not or are not affected by the war in a personal way, but they have no direct memory of it. The narrator is accompanied by his young son, a metaphor for the fact that the trauma of the war is going to be transmitted to yet another generation unless some positive action is taken.

Alexander Fidora explains this relationship between past and present in the following way: “...el pasado, los hechos acontecidos en el pretérito, se nos transportan hacia el presente, demostrándonos que el pasado se halla siempre ‘aquí’ y ‘ahora’ en todas las épocas que intentemos diseccionar, pues los sucesos del presente se remontan, forzosamente, a acontecimientos y razones acaecidas” (27). The past is always being reevaluated, thus converting it into an object of the present. In Marsé’s novels, the reexamination of the past is achieved through new and multiple points of view, for example, through the lens of the marginalized children. Jo Labanyi reminds us that indeed “History is perceived as a symbolic abstraction which tells us about the present rather than the past” (141).

### Collective Memory

As was the case with Roig, the writer in post-Franco Spain is charged with the responsibility of creating, recreating and transmitting the collective memory of the people especially since for so long the collective memory was in large part controlled by the Franco regime, at least as far as official narratives were concerned. In the interview Roig conducted of Marsé, he mentioned “lo que importa es la memoria colectiva, la voz que no pertenece a nadie y es de todos” (Los hechiceros 89), a fundamental belief shared by interviewer and interviewee alike. That Marsé starts from his own personal memories seems logical enough considering the close relationship between individual and collective memory. Our personal memories are marked by our interaction with family, community, History. Inversely, collective memory is a conglomeration of individual memories, and

does not necessarily have to coincide with Official History. José Luis Sanpedro goes so far as to equate collective memory with History: “¿Qué es la Historia sino la memoria colectiva, la que entre todos hemos hecho y seguimos haciendo? Porque en cada instante cada uno de nosotros es una suma de memoria y biología. Eso es lo que somos. Y la memoria colectiva es la Historia” (17). While in theory I agree with Sanpedro, that History is a conglomeration of stories that most agree upon, unfortunately in practice, politics and power often determine an Official History which is in direct opposition to the collective memory.

Marcos Maurel underscores the importance of the writer when he explains how “los fascistas pudieron amargar al hombre, pero ayudaron a forjar al artista. Y el artista consumó su venganza literaria alzando la voz y manteniendo viva la memoria irreducible de unos seres perdedores a los que difícilmente se podía consolar...” (43). Because redress was denied in real life, the artist used his/her voice to ensure justice via the collective memory; by justice I am referring to Rawls’ “justice as fairness” model outlined in Chapter One. As Marsé himself explains it, “la literatura es una lucha contra el olvido, una mirada solitaria y cómplice a la alegría y al fracaso del hombre, una pasión y un empeño por fraguar sueños e ilusiones en un mundo inhóspito”.<sup>113</sup> But Marsé is not alone in his literary service to the nation. Marie-Lise Gazarian Gautier reminds us that “Spanish writers have played an especially important role in the culture, politics and development of their nation. They took an active part in the formation of the Republic in 1931 and, with the death of Franco in 1975, in the shaping of the democratic monarchy” (ix). Gazarian is referring to direct involvement of writers in politics (i.e. Cela’s role in writing the Constitution) but we can extend this investment to the indirect influence of writers via the formation of collective memory.

In a 2002 interview with Gracia and Maurel, Marsé comments “para mí el novelista es memoria, si no sé qué es. Memoria, por supuesto, siempre a través de la imaginación. [...] Lo que es interesante es esa cuestión de si los vencedores y vencidos son ya capaces en este país de mirar fríamente al pasado” (54). After all, what is a novel if not a fictitious memory? While Marsé emphasizes that he writes to recover his personal memory, he also understands his power and responsibility as a creator and transmitter of collective memory, and acknowledges the role of the imagination and fiction in transmitting the past. However, he is skeptical about whether Spain is ready to do the type of work Germany and Italy have done, in terms of examining their past.

Memory is an important theme in the novel, not only in terms of the loss of memory but also because of its connection to identity. Fidora points out how “un hombre pierde la memoria si pierde la identidad y he aquí el sentido de la novela de Marsé: perdurar la historia de su propia identidad, tanto individual como colectiva” (34). Without memory there can be no identity, be it individual or collective. In fact, as Samuel Amell points out, “la memoria [funciona] como hilo conductor del discurso narrativo” (127); it is the “germen del que todo parte” (Amell Elementos 37).

Marsé’s fictitious worlds connect “pasado, presente y futuro y dota a los hechos y personajes de sus narraciones de un carácter ambiguo donde la verdad, la mentira la imaginación y la ilusión se mezclan sin que el lector pueda atrapar con seguridad ninguna

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<sup>113</sup> I am taking this quote from Marcos Maurel’s article (p 32) but they were originally published in an article in *La Vanguardia* on 1-12-1997 p 30.

de ellas” (Amell Elementos 37). For the writer, memory is inextricably linked to the imagination and to fiction, just as the past is connected to the present and by default, creates a memory for the future.

### The Recourse to Myth

One of Marsé’s greatest contributions to the healing of the historical wound of the Civil War is to challenge the binaries so prevalent under Franco. Francoism appropriated the myth of the hero, personified at times by El Cid or even Franco himself. However, both sides, *vencedores* and *vencidos*, used myth opportunistically during the Civil War and postwar period and Marsé actively demythifies the heroes on both sides. Though the demythification of the *maquis* is a common theme in his novels, Marsé leaves no one untouched; he also demythifies the worker, the student, the ex Francoist, Catalan nationalism and ideology, memory politics, etc. The first step in Marsé’s treatment of myths is to humanize the mythified, usually by way of the stories he tells about them. This humanization is made possible by the fact that myth is shown to be man-made and thus, can be rewritten.

Myth and History have traditionally been envisioned in opposition to each other. While myth is associated with the illusion of universality, organic origins, and has a cyclical structure, History is seen as linear, representative of progress and has a legitimizing function. Jo Labanyi points out that myth and History are often seen in opposition because the former is associated with atemporality and ahistoricism whereas History deals with change. Further, “both are ways of organizing reality into meaningful structure that may have little to do with reality as it is experienced” (Labanyi 34). In this degree, both myth and History are fictions, because they do not always reflect reality; “...myth, has some basis in historical fact: the problem is the impossibility of knowing where fact stops and fiction starts” (137). In both cases, it is impossible to recover the original; the past is always lost and replaced by a representation or fictional double.<sup>114</sup> The existence of myth in the novel is a natural pairing, for the novel itself is a form of representation. Because of myth’s atemporality, it has often been seen as a safer alternative for those who fear history. I believe that both Marsé and Roig use myth to heal the wounds of History.

However, in the case of Nationalist Spain, myth was used to legitimize the State’s actions and power. In fact, “Fascism is indeed the ultimate expression of the Romantic appeal to myth in that it takes literally and puts into practice the urge to ‘undo’ history and return to origins” (Labanyi 36). Franco positioned himself as the man who was charged with the task of freeing Spain from its perverted History and to do so the country had to come together in unity. Of course this unity excluded all those on the margins, be they geographic or social. At the same time, Romanticism also bequeathed a connection between myth and nationalism, which would explain the Catalan Nationalist Movements’ recourse to myth. And so both sides of *las dos Españas*—*vencidos* and *vencedores*—fictionalized History; they turned to myth in order to maintain power and explain their

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<sup>114</sup> Labanyi

particular version of reality. Whereas in the past, myth reduced people to good versus evil, Marsé blurs this dichotomy.

In literature, the inversion of myth or its ironic use became a form of rebellion. In the 1950's writers turned to myth as a way to covertly reject the Official History and offer imaginary solutions to real-life problems, deconstructing existing myths to write their own versions. Not much had changed by the time Marsé came onto the literary scene and in his work, myth is definitely used as a user-friendly way to rewrite History. For Marsé not only uses myth in a classical sense, but he also appeals to the popular imagination by incorporating imagery from film and pulp fiction. Myth is yet another way that Marsé achieves the breaking of the Francoist binary; he "breaks down the barrier between myth and history by showing how the opposing social groups that comprise the historical reality of Franco's Spain are governed by myth in one form or another" (Labanyi 135). However, unlike many of his contemporaries (Labanyi points to Martín-Santos and Benet), Marsé still believes in the creative power of myth and its ability to steer the country into the future as opposed to keeping it locked in the past. In the hands of power (Franco), myth can be destructive, a lie; at the same time, he "suggests that it [myth] can provide an alternative source of power for the dispossessed" (Labanyi 136), as in this case the *vencidos*. By undermining the narrative authority<sup>115</sup> of the Nationalists (and here I mean Francoist as well as Catalan Nationalist), Marsé can envision a new order by telling his *aventis* and creating his own myths. Political authority should not determine narrative authority.

In the specific case of the children in Marsé's novels, they turn to myth-making as an alternative discourse since they are not accepted in the Official discourse. They want to reveal truths that the adults would just as soon forget. Marsé associates myth with childhood; when the myth is destroyed, you have made the difficult leap to adulthood. Further, since myth is inherently oral and relies on memory, it is closely connected to collective memory. Oral myth making and transmission is a collective venture since many people participate in the production of truth. It is the narrative structure of myth and at the same time its essentially pluralistic make-up (Levi-Strauss referred to it as *bricolage* for that reason) which makes it a natural way in which Marsé can help reclaim and rewrite the collective memory of his people; those who control myth also have a hand in controlling the creation of collective memory.

For example, in *Un día volveré*, we see the way in which Marsé deconstructs three *ex-maquis*: Jan, Falcón and Mandalay. Kwang-Hee Kim explains:

...que el escritor quiere desmitificar la imagen idealizada de los maquis. Las actuaciones subversivas de Jan en el pasado no tenían nada que ver con la causa. Además, su presencia actual en la casa de los Klein obedece únicamente al interés propio. Del mismo modo, las convicciones políticas de Falcón están basadas tan sólo en el odio personal. En definitiva, también hemos reconocido el miserable proceder de un ex militante republicano capaz de todo, incluso de actuar contra sus antiguos ideales. Por diferentes motivos, los tres mantienen fijo su interés en

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<sup>115</sup> The demythification of Francoism does not only occur on a discursive level; there are various references to characters urinating on images of Franco (in *Un día volveré*, in *Muchacha con bragas de oro...*) which are also examples of demythification, although it is important to see the distinction between urinating on the image which is merely a representation versus having direct access to the source.

el bienestar de Luis Klein, aunque, como hemos podido corroborar, ninguno está interesado en él por la causa. (Kim, “La desmitificación”, 188-9)

All three characters are somehow involved with Judge Klein. For Manadaly, it is purely economic opportunism. Falcón is the personification of vengeance; he wants to kill Klein as an act of personal revenge even though the old amnesiac is no longer a threat to anyone but himself. Jan’s motives for inserting himself into Klein’s life are more ambiguous and are never fully resolved. What is clear is that by the time Jan participates in the Eucort incident he has completely lost his faith in the cause. He seeks Klein out not for economic gain or vengeance as the neighborhood kids believe, but rather because of unresolved, intimate feelings which were first kindled in 1938 when Jan and Klein were both coincidentally hiding out in a Barcelona apartment during an air raid. Marsé never overtly writes of the homosexual relationship between the *vencido* and the *vencedor*, but based on all the textual clues, it is the only logical motive for Jan’s return. By hinting at the possibility of an intimate relationship, “el novelista intenta despertar la conciencia del lector, quiere destacar que en ningún conflicto bélico puede haber triunfador, sino sólo víctimas” (Kim “La desmitificación”, 194). Marsé explodes the *vencedores-vencidos* binary and additionally puts them on equal footing, but in a compromising situation, thus engaging in his own historical revision. Not only is it possible for Jan to love Klein but also Jan ends up dying, side by side with Klein, at the hands of his old comrades who were also *vencidos*.<sup>116</sup>

Another example of this broken binary can be seen in the epigraph which begins the fourth part of the novel: “Todas las banderas han sido tan bañadas de sangre y de mierda que ya es hora de acabar con ellas (Flaubert)” (321). This quote is a succinct manifestation of Marsé’s equal distribution of blame. He is admittedly non-political; for him, all sides of the conflict share the blame and there are victims on both sides. It is also important to note that Marsé breaks this binary nearly two decades before Javier Cercas does so in *Soldados de Salamina*, a novel I will discuss further in the fourth and final chapter.

### The Myth of Sant Jordi

More specifically, the exploration of the myth of Sant Jordi is an interesting way to illustrate how Marsé treats the rewriting of History. The neighborhood children elevate Jan to mythic proportions, but their lionization is very closely associated with Sant Jordi. To rewrite the myth of Sant Jordi as opposed to any other mythical figure is a logical move since Sant Jordi is the patron saint of Barcelona. Marsé deconstructs both these myths, Jan and Sant Jordi, to show their fictitious natures.

In Néstor’s mind, the mythification of his uncle begins long before Jan’s return to Barcelona; the child’s relationship to his uncle based on invention. In Jan’s absence, Néstor’s only means of making him present and tangible was to tell *aventis* about him, by exaggerating his strengths and by mythifying him.

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<sup>116</sup> Jan is shot as he is reaching for a handkerchief because his old comrades mistakenly think he is reaching for a gun, highlighting the ease of confusing fiction with reality.

Slowly, Marsé uses narrative and imagery to associate Jan with Sant Jordi. For example, in chapter five, Néstor summons his uncle's help to kill a "dragón"/lizard which is hovering above his mother's sleeping body; at that time Jan does not take the bait. In chapter one of the second part, Néstor once again tries to convince his uncle that his mother is facing imminent danger because of a dragon in her room. The dragon is an essential piece of the myth of Sant Jordi, for the saint slays the dragon in order to save the damsel in distress. Inserted into the legend, Balbina is no longer a mere prostitute; she is the mother of all future generations, however her community has failed to recognize her importance. At one point the narrator asks "¿alguien se había ofrecido a ayudar a la viuda mientras su cuñado estaba en la cárcel?" (45) and by doing so he implicates the community, the Catalan people, for not having stepped in to help Balbina. Balbina Roig (her last name means red in Catalan) is yet another victim of Spain's bloody past. While Marsé recognizes that the task of disentangling myth and history is nearly impossible, he is capable of extricating the realities of History in order to expose them to the world; Balbina's deplorable situation is one of those realities.

In his third and final attempt to get his uncle to save his mother, Néstor tells Jan that the dragon has bitten Balbina. Jan goes into his sister-in-law's room to take care of the dragon once and for all. He sees the salamander, "casi descolgada, pendiendo del frágil hilo de su mentira" (286), picks it up and throws it in the trash. The dragon, centerpiece of the myth of Sant Jordi, has been destroyed, highlighting the fictitious nature of the myth itself, and of Jan's association with it.

Early on, the theme of homosexuality is introduced as a corollary to the Sant Jordi motif. Marsé never outs Jan, but he drops enough hints about his relationship with Klein that the reader assumes the answer to the question which plagues the characters of the novel: "¿Para qué [o quién] has vuelto, Jan?" (331). There are images associated with Sant Jordi all over the Klein home which could lead the reader to believe that while Jan is not interested in Balbina, he may be interested in Virginia Klein. However, on one of Jan's nightly rescue missions of the Judge, he finds Klein in a hotel room with Lambán even though the two men had gone up to the rooms with female prostitutes in an attempt to cover their tracks. Jan "miraba la espalda del juez; una gran cicatriz en forma de lagarto brillaba como la púrpura sobre su paletilla derecha", and he thinks to himself "¿y por qué esta comedia? ¿por cubrir las apariencias?" (257). Here the Sant Jordi motif collides head on with the themes of homosexuality and fiction for "the subsequent mention of 'una cicatriz en forma de lagarto' on Luis Klein's back is a hint that the protagonist may have rescued a distressed doncel instead [of the distressed damsel in the form of Virginia]" (Thompson 90).

Jan is Sant Jordi after all, but instead of rescuing the princess in the form of Balbina or Virginia Klein, he is rescuing the Judge. Both Jan and Klein are covert homosexuals, who are living a lie. In the Catalan imaginary, Sant Jordi is an ultra virile male motivated by heterosexual love; he is charged not only with the task of saving the princess but by extension saving the motherland, Catalonia. But, "St George the man has been so long obscured by St George the myth that his real lineaments have now become scarcely discernible to us behind the haze of legend" (Scott Fox 12). This confusion of Sant Jordi man and Sant Jordi myth is exactly what happens in Jan's case because the myth created by the neighborhood children substitutes his real identity.



The Catholic Church in Spain allowed little room for outsiders and “Sant Jordi [is] a symbol of the Catalan nationalist fight against evil defined as outsiders who threaten Catalan culture and identity” (Clark 162). In this sense, *xarnegos* (a despective term for those who emigrate to Catalonia) and gays are all outsiders. For Marsé, modern Catalan identity is no longer defined by religion, birthplace, or even language despite the desires of *pujolismo*; contemporary Catalans are those living in Catalonia and working towards the greater good.

At first glance, Jan’s homosexuality may seem like a rewriting of the Sant Jordi myth inverting the ideals of masculinity and heterosexual love. But in fact, “icons of St George reject the love myth, traditionally showing him galloping away with a young male slave on the croup of his horse leaving the princess at the palace gate” (Clark 167). The homosexual roots of the myth are conveniently ‘forgotten’ by the Catalan imaginary. In fact, in the Catalan version of the myth, the ending is quite different. In one particular version which is traced to Mallorca, once Sant Jordi has killed the dragon “i quan el rei insisteix a oferir a Sant Jordi la mà de la princesa i la meitat del seu regne en recompensa, l’herald de Crist refusa, sublima qualsevol desig I prossegueix incansable, cavaller virginal, el seu camí pel món, a lluitar per l’ideal” (Soler 37). In this version, Sant Jordi is virginized and he refuses the King’s offer of the princess’ hand in marriage not because he wants to ride away with the male slave, but because he is dedicated to traveling the world to fight for his ideals.

At first this ending would seem to fit Jan perfectly; he could very well be a virgin for we have no proof of any sexual relations, his last name Mon means world in Catalan and suggests he is ready to travel the world to fight for his...man? Here we encounter a glitch. We have already established that the disillusioned Jan is no longer fighting for an ideal; if anything he is fighting for the love he feels for a man. Rosemary Clark suggests that since Sant Jordi is “...feminised in appearance and desexualized by his rejection of the princess, perhaps he is brought on to a middle ground where male bonding and rejection of traditional social sexual pairings open up new possibilities for reworking the icon” (167). And that is exactly what Marsé does; he rewrites the myth (ironically bringing the man closer to the true version of the myth) because he no longer feels Sant Jordi is capable of defining the ever-changing Catalan identity.

Another possible reason for Marsé’s rewriting of the Sant Jordi myth is because he feels it is not an image which is autochthonous to Catalonia. As Resina points out: There is nothing inherently Catalan about St George. The myth was transculturated in the late-sixteenth century, probably from England, but in the course of the next century the figure of the Christian knight becomes Catalonia’s patron saint. The irony is evident: even the sacred image of national identity is the outcome of symbolic displacement and the accumulation of difference. In attempting to articulate an image of the integrated self, nationalistic desire (re)produces the otherness and the symbolic intrusion that it blames for the loss of its imaginary unity. (“The double coding of desire” 97-98)

Marsé seems fed up of the hypocritical use of Sant Jordi as the ultimate Catalan symbol which inevitably alienates all those who do not fit into the mold of Catholic, heterosexual, Catalan. The greatest irony of Sant Jordi is that he is no more Catalan than a *xarnego* who moves to Barcelona from Andalucía to look for work and fight for an ideal life.

While many critics call the ending of *Un día volveré* pessimistic, the new myths Marsé creates in the novel arise from the popular imaginary and suggest a great deal of hope for the future of Spain and especially Catalonia. The old Sant Jordi myth is rewritten and substituted with a new symbol: the blue and red scarf. When we first glimpse the scarf, it is not even complete yet for “en las manos [Jan] llevaba dos madejas de lana, una roja y otra azul, traspasadas por dos agujas de hacer punto” (175). Jan works on “la bufanda azulgrana” (252) at night whenever he has a break during his guard duty. This blue and red scarf is highly symbolic because they are the colors of FC Barcelona, the football club. Like Roig, Marsé seems to be proposing a new order which is symbolized in the “labor azulgrana”. Knitting is hard work, it requires patience and a gentle touch; this “labor azulgrana” can be seen as symbolic of the hard work the Catalan people must do in order to rebuild their nation and deal with the past. It is an approach set in opposition to the old way of handling things, characterized by violence and antagonism.

To Catalans, Barça is not just a football team; it is a symbol of their uniqueness, their historical fight to assert themselves and “throughout some of Catalonia’s most difficult years, the flag [of the team] represented the people’s hopes for freedom, and today that very flag is the symbolic link which continues to represent the ties between a very special club and its supporters”.<sup>117</sup> The Civil War in Spain greatly interfered with sport and especially so in the case of Barça; fascist soldiers murdered the president of the club, Josep Suñol, one month after the war began. A fascist sympathizer assumed his position and forcibly changed the team’s name to the Spanish Club of Fútbol Barcelona, a name which remained until 1973 when the team was officially known as Fútbol Club Barcelona once again. Over time, “the club became more and more identified with the Catalan society of that time and began to be known as ‘more than a club’ because of its social importance. The club again became a focus for nationalist sentiments during a period of dictatorship which came down hard on any other popular manifestations of Catalan identity”.<sup>118</sup>

The hymn of the team<sup>119</sup> is a testament to the inclusive nature of the club, for from the very start, despite the club’s strong identification with Catalan identity, it has

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<sup>117</sup> [www.fcbarcelona.com](http://www.fcbarcelona.com)

<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> Tot el camp

es un clam,  
 Som la gent blaugrana,  
 tan se val d'on venim,  
 si del sud o del nord,  
 ara estem d'acord, estem d'acord;  
 una bandera ens agermana,  
     Blaugrana al vent,  
     un crit valent,  
     tenim un nom, el sap tothom,  
     BARÇA!! BARÇA!! BAAAAARÇA!!!!

Jugadors,  
 seguidors,  
 Tots units fem força,  
 son molts anys plens d'afanys,  
 son molts gols que hem cridat,

been a multi-national, multi-ethnic undertaking. The club's founder was a German, arguably its most famous player (Johan Cruyff) was a Dutchman and today's Barça is comprised of players from all over the world. The colors of the team, blue and red, are the symbols of the clan, and an entire people (not limited to Catholic, Catalan, heterosexual) is united in brotherhood under these colors; to substitute the myth of Sant Jordi with Barça is an all-inclusive cultural and national endeavor.<sup>120</sup>

Jan's farewell from his nephew is one of the most poignant and symbolic scenes of the novel. Néstor goes to the Klein house one last time to make a delivery and he "distinguió la bufanda azulgrana liada con descuido alrededor del cuello [de su tío]..." (384). Seeing that his nephew has been badly beaten in a fight, Jan offers the advice that "no vas a estar pegándote con él toda la vida. Así no resolverás nada" (384). Obviously, violence is no longer the answer for the conflict between Néstor and el Nene, or symbolically between the *vencidos* and the *vencedores*.

Jan knows his death is near and his way of saying goodbye to his nephew is to pass the torch to Néstor which he accomplishes when "se quitó la bufanda del cuello y la echo sobre sus hombros. –Toma, ya está terminada" (385). The feminine ending on *terminada* seems to be an obvious reference to the *bufanda* which Jan has been working on for weeks. But, just like many other open-ended statements in the novel, we can fill in the nominative blank with other possibilities- *¿la Guerra está terminada? ¿mi vida? ¿la novela?* When it comes time to say goodbye "lo único que hizo [Jan] fue arroparle mejor con la bufanda que le había regalado..." (386); the red and blue scarf has been passed from Jan to Néstor, from old to young, from past to present. This shift from old myth to new myth is obvious once again during Jan's funeral. In a very short scene, with barely any description, the narrator makes sure the reader knows that "Néstor llevaba liada al cuello la bufanda que su tío tejió para él" (391).

Contrary to the popular belief of the pessimism of the final scene of the novel, the fact that the narrator, now a grown man and associated with Marsé himself is back in the old neighborhood with his son gives a sense of optimism for the future, the same forward-looking feeling Jan must have wanted to impart to Néstor when he gave him the scarf. One of the very first images of the novel was of a group of children urinating on a mural of Franco while a lizard (later to be associated with Sant Jordi) cast its shadow on the wall. At the end of the novel, Franco is dead, the lizard has been shown to be a fiction, and now the child is pissing on Jan's buried, mythified gun.<sup>121</sup>

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i s'ha demostrat, s'ha demostrat,  
que mai ningú ens podrà torcer,  
Blaugrana al vent,  
un crit valent,  
tenim un nom, el sap tothom,  
BARÇA!! BARÇA!! BAAAARÇA!!!!

<sup>120</sup> Here I do not take into consideration any inequality which may occur because of gender.

<sup>121</sup> Currie Thompson makes an important connection between Sant Jordi and the theme of silence. It is customary on the Day of Sant Jordi for men to give a single red rose to women. Thompson refers to the myth of Harpocrates in which Cupid gives a rose to Harpo, the Greek god of silence, which is how we come to have the expression *sub rosa*, in silence. In the novel, Jan's pistol is supposedly buried under a rose bush, shrouded in silence.

In summary, in *Un día volveré*, “fiction is shown to be a form of myth-making, but it can be used to unmask the political myths that encourage us to accept as natural power relations that are man-made and the result of specific historical circumstances: in this case, the Civil War.” (Labanyi 177) When myth is used to legitimize power and subjugate the powerless, it should be dismantled. However when myth is in service of producing or preserving collective memory, as is the case with the new version of Sant Jordi offered in *Un día volveré*, it can be seen as a source of liberation.

### The Role of Literature in Redress

Despite the fact that Juan Marsé adamantly denies that he is a political writer, there is no disputing that his work has sociopolitical resonance.<sup>122</sup> The fact that in *Un día volveré* the people of the neighborhood think Jan has returned for an *ajuste de cuentas*, shows a hunger for justice. There is an expectation of revenge by the characters but also by the readers; character and reader alike are looking in art for an answer which escapes them in reality. John Devlin points out how “Jan has become the surrogate for the revenge of a humiliated generation on the perceived agents of its shame; that is to say the collaborators, informers and opportunists who exploited the utter defenselessness of those associated with the enemies of the state” (31); these perceived agents come from both Left and Right. “Néstor, meanwhile, unaware of his uncle’s secret motive, persists in his vain attempts to direct the action of the novel to his own vengeful ends” (36), using ploys like the plastic lizard in desperate attempts to force Jan to action. Devlin goes on to connect this revenge with “Nestor’s dream of deliverance” (31); in the absence of justice, the only option for someone like Nestor is violence.

Aside from his great talent as a storyteller, it is impossible to overlook Marsé’s “valor ético y moral de sus creaciones” (Amell, Elementos 31). Further, “no puede negarse que Marsé está comprometido, y muy comprometido, con el ser humano, con las víctimas, los perdedores y los fracasados de una sociedad que devora a todos aquéllos que no se adaptan a sus reglas” (Amell 42). Despite desires of silencing the harsh reality, Marsé “...nos ha plantado cara y nos ha dicho: ahí va toda esa porquería [poverty, thugery, etc.] que, os guste o no, convive con vosotros en esa gran ciudad, la Ciudad de las Ferias y los Congresos... (Roig, *Los hechiceros* 87). Marcos Maurel argues that “Marsé apunta con su obra a la defensa de unos principios morales ( la verdad, la justicia, la bondad, la decencia, la comprensión, la civilidad...), más que enlazar o machacar planteamientos políticos. Eso sería coartar de algún modo la libertad del lector” (Este sol 46). Marsé does not naively believe that literature can change the world, but he does believe in the freedom of the individual, in this case the reader, to take action and thus have an effect on the collective.

While Marsé denounces the institutional and political injustice of the past, he does not believe that it can necessarily be addressed in the institutional or political realm. This explains, for example, his opposition to the linguistic normalization in Catalonia. One

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<sup>122</sup>William Sherzer makes this contention in his book. Though I do not refer to Sherzer’s study at any other point in this project, it is a good starting point for anyone interested in better understanding Marsé’s work. Sherzer, William M. *Juan Marsé. Entre la ironía y la dialéctica*. Madrid: Editorial Fundamentos, 1982.

injustice should not be substituted for another. He recognizes that modern life has made the administration of justice more difficult, but regardless, he also is a firm believer in its importance, now more than ever:

Yo creo que el paso del tiempo destruye y corrompe algunos ideales. Este es un siglo que ha sido muy expresivo en ese sentido, demasiadas cosas se han derrumbado. Pero creo que los sueños de solidaridad, de igualdad, de justicia, de libertad, por los que tanta gente ha luchado siguen vigentes y son absolutamente necesarios. La mitología sobre eso y, sobre todo, algunos sistemas que intentaron llevarlo a cabo, han fracasado, entonces debemos mirar con ojos lúcidos, sin mitificar nada. Lo cierto es que no hay héroes de una sola pieza, no hay puros.  
(Arenes)

In this quote, ideals, myth, and memory collide and we see the way in which these elements work together to provide or inhibit justice. Though this quote shows Marsé's opposition to myth that blinds us to reality, his rewriting of Sant Jordi reworks the status quo to create new realities. The fact that Marsé reminds his readers of the importance of justice can be seen as a return to the original ideals of the Catalan Nationalists who connected their politics with a concern for social justice.

At the same time, the fact that Marsé shows the collective defeat of Spain, of *vencidos* and *vencedores*, can be seen as an *ajuste de cuentas*. In interviews, Marsé reflects on the irony that even today there are some *vencedores* who seem oblivious to this collective defeat and live their lives with a sense of arrogance and entitlement and "andan todavía pensando que son los herederos de la victoria" (Gracia y Maurel 54). The bottom line, according to Marsé himself is "mientras el país no sepa qué hacer con su pasado, jamás sabrá qué hacer con su futuro" (Amell 163). This statement is eerily similar to Roig's belief of the impossibility of having a healthy future without an honest examination of the past, and the role of literature in this crucial task is primary.

### Marsé and the Law of Linguistic Normalization

So far in this chapter I have showed the way in which Juan Marsé dialogues with the politics and History of the Franco regime and subsequent democratic transition, his reaction to laws both written and unspoken; to a large extent, this relationship was indirect, allegorical, and theoretical. In the 1990's, his dialogue with politics and History continued and if anything became more overt. His 1990 novel, *El amante bilingüe*<sup>123</sup>, is a direct dialogue with legislation, a reaction to the 1983 Catalan Law of Linguistic Normalization.<sup>124</sup> The word choice in regards to the name of the law is telling: the term normalization implies that what came before it was abnormal, pathological. While the language of the law as expressed in the preamble points to protecting and promoting the Catalan language as the main purpose of the law, there have been many vocal opponents

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<sup>123</sup> In Marsé's novelistic chronology, *El amante bilingüe* follows *Un día volveré*.

<sup>124</sup> For a comprehensive study which spans from the roots of Catalan nationalism to contemporary times, see McRoberts, Kenneth. *Catalonia: Nation Building Without a State*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001. There is an especially critical chapter on the Linguistic Normalization Laws.

to the legislation<sup>125</sup> (including, but not limited to Marsé himself) who see the law as a way of alienating and discriminating against the non-Catalan speakers of Catalonia.

*El amante bilingüe* is in dialogue with *Llei 7/1983, de 18 d'abril, de normalització lingüística a Catalunya (LNL)*. However, 15 years later the law was amended and expanded to become the *Llei 1/1998, de 7 de gener, de política lingüística (LPL)*.<sup>126</sup> For the most part, the new law is identical to its predecessor. Article 3 of the Spanish Constitution allowed the establishment of co-official languages in the respective autonomous communities; interestingly enough, in the *Estatut d'autonomia* it is also Article 3 which establishes Catalan as the *llengua pròpia* of the autonomous region alongside Spanish, the official language of the Spanish State. This room for multilingualism is attributed to “una etapa de convivència democràtica”. At the same time Catalan is used as the proof for both cultural and linguistic unity, an idea that Marsé will openly question and critique in his novel.

Many reasons are given as to why the Catalan language finds itself in a precarious situation in 1983, most important of which is “les prohibicions i les persecucions contra la llengua i la cultura catalanes desfermades a partir del 1939” (1983). In the revised law, the need for language legislation is explained by “s’ha vist [the language] afectada negativament per alguns esdeveniments de la història de Catalunya, que l’han portada a una situació precària.” The original law makes no qualms about pointing to the Franco regime as one of the reasons behind the need for such a law, whereas the 1998 law reverts into the status quo of silence. By 1998, the conservative *Partido Popular* was in power in Spain and this reversion to silence could be seen as a possible political concession on the part of the Catalans.

Both versions of the law establish Catalan as the official language of education<sup>127</sup>, and both emphasize the role of the *Generalitat* in promoting the publication of written material (literature, informational pamphlets, etc.) in Catalan.<sup>128</sup> As a result of the law, all primary and secondary education in Catalonia is now primarily in Catalan. While there was a gradual grace period, this created major problems for a variety of people including: (1) new immigrants to Spain who must now learn not one but two new languages, (2) non-Catalan speaking resident citizens of Catalonia who must learn a new language, (3) non-Catalan speaking teachers who must attain a certain level of Catalan in order to remain employed or gain employment.

However some differences between the two laws are worth pointing out. The revised law pays much more attention to emphasizing Spanish and Catalan as co-official languages in Catalonia, as well as ensuring language equity. Article 6 of the LPL states: “La llengua catalana és un patrimoni que Catalunya comparteix amb altres territoris amb

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<sup>125</sup> One of the most vocal and well-organized oppositions to the law is the “Manifiesto por la lengua común” <http://manifiestoespanol.blogspot.com/>. Led by writer Mario Vargas Llosa, the group aims to “protect Spanish” and would like to see all minority languages receive equal protection under the law. While there is no direct reference to the Catalan Linguistic Normalization, the text of the manifesto mirrors the text of Laws of Linguistic Normalization, making it quite clear to those who have read both texts that the manifesto is in response to the Catalan case.

<sup>126</sup> The text of both of these laws is published in its entirety in the *Diari Oficial de la Generalitat de Catalunya* and is accessible in multiple languages on the *Generalitat*'s website. [www.gencat.cat](http://www.gencat.cat)

<sup>127</sup> Article 20 in the LPL, Article 14 in the LNL

<sup>128</sup> Article 28 of the LPL, Article 23 of the LNL

els quals constitueix una mateixa comunitat lingüística”; this article was missing in the LNL. The importance of this article is that it establishes a sense of unity and geographic continuity, a linguistic community. The danger of such a statement is that it implies that Catalonia has a singular identity represented by a single language. Also, the revised LPL puts linguistic quotas on television, radio, film and publications. For example, Article 26 guarantees that “Les emissores de radiodifusió i de televisió han de garantir que en la programació de música cantada hi hagi una presència adequada de cançons produïdes per artistes catalans i que com a mínim el vint-i-cinc per cent siguin cançons interpretades en llengua catalana o en aranès.”

The laws also address the issues of toponymy and anthroponomy<sup>129</sup>, establishing that Catalan is the only language in which proper names can be named. The importance of these changes is, of course, that it is righting one of the many wrongs of the Franco regime which had substituted the Catalan names (street names, plaza names, etc.) with the Spanish version or had forbid the use of proper names in Catalan (i.e. Joan instead of Juan or the use of ‘i’ to join two last names instead of ‘y’.)

Marsé’s *El amante bilingüe* is about schizophrenia<sup>130</sup> not only because the main character has a hard time distinguishing between reality and fiction, but also because it is a metaphor for the dialectical linguistic status in Catalonia. With the exception of two chapters which are journal entries about the past<sup>131</sup>, the action of the novel takes place in 1986, once Linguistic Normalization has taken effect. The novel’s primary layer of meaning comes from a cuckolded man who chooses to dress up as a means of winning back the love of his ex wife, 14 years his junior. In the very first sentence of the novel, Joan Marés recalls finding his wife Norma in bed with another man. It is important to note that the lover is a *charnego* and the date is November 1975. *Charnego*<sup>132</sup> is a pejorative term used in Catalonia to refer to immigrants, usually from Andalucía. In response to his wife’s cheating, Marés embarks upon a process of transformation which begins with his conscious decision to disguise himself as a *charnego* in order to seduce and win back his ex. His multiple identities merge and overlap and it is difficult to pinpoint where the various versions of himself definitively begin and end.

The process of conversion begins when Marés takes to the streets with his accordion and becomes a street performer. Slowly, he begins to disguise the tone of his voice and uses a *charnego* accent, for example speaking with a *seseo*<sup>133</sup> and aspirating his s’s. The street performances eventually give way to a stint as a shoeshine and the evolution takes a giant leap forward when he assumes the identity of his childhood friend

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<sup>129</sup> Catalan anthroponomy is one of the important revisions to the LNL.

<sup>130</sup> Marsé confesses that the image of Juan Faneca, the main character of *El amante bilingüe*, is a result of hearing about a patient of a psychologist friend who was Catalan by birth but dressed like a *charnego*. See Solelo Vázquez, Adolfo. “Historia y discurso en *El amante bilingüe* de Juan Marsé” in *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*. 488 (1991) pp 141-150.

<sup>131</sup> Chapters 1 and 7 are Joan’s journal entries, symbolic of his need to remember. These two chapters are in contrast to Faneca’s desire to forget Norma. This tension between remembering and forgetting echoes some of the concerns of Marsé’s previous novel, *Un día volveré*, where the narrator is described as having “el dedo en el gatillo de la memoria” (315).

<sup>132</sup> Etymology: *de nocharnego* (something that comes out at night)

<sup>133</sup> In dialectology, the term *seseo* refers to the lack of distinction between the phonemes /s/ and /θ/. Common in Andalucía and the Canary Islands, those who speak with *seseo* would not distinguish between the pronunciation of *tasa* and *taza*, for example.

Juan Faneca, a real-life *charnego*. As Faneca, the character's routine is comical—he puts on an eye patch and a green contact lens in his other eye. He dons a curly dark wig and fake lashes, paints his brows darker, draws in a mustache and glues on fake sideburns, not to mention the dimples he creates with makeup to put the final touches on his *chulo* persona. He even goes as far as to put prosthetics up his nose to change its shape and stuffs his cheeks with cotton. As ridiculous as this get-up may seem to the reader, the “ficción murciana” (79) works on his ex-wife Norma and Marés/Faneca is able to sleep with her one last time.

On a primary level, the reason behind this charade is to win back his ex, the irony being of course that the character is cuckolding himself! However, when we peel back this first level, we see that the author seems to be making a statement about the nature of identity. Marés/Faneca is an example of the way the day-by-day routine of life requires simulation and manipulation of identity and we are in constant fear of being unmasked or outted. Joan Marés becomes Juan Faneca because as he confesses “es que no sé vivir en mí...nunca he sabido” (60). Perhaps for that reason, Marés “se sentía inesperadamente cómodo en la piel del desconocido” (76). It is as though the costumes he puts on finally give him access to an identity, albeit a fictitious one, which underscores the belief that identity is mostly a sociolinguistic construction or, as Bourdieu believed, a biological illusion where we imagine ourselves as characters in our personal story. In Catalonia, and especially after the implementation of linguistic normalization, this schizophrenic splitting becomes more and more common on a linguistic level. Non-Catalan citizens suddenly find themselves in a peripheral position; overnight their public world has switched language. A legislative text has determined the language in which business will be done, children will be educated, and ultimately memories will be made.

It is impossible to ignore the biographical associations with the names of these two characters. Joan is of course the Catalan version of the name Juan; Marés is eerily similar to the author's last name and having been adopted at a young age, Faneca is Marsé's birth name. Just in that superficial deconstruction we have uncovered two dualities—Catalan versus Spanish, adoptive versus biological family. Even Norma, the object of Marés' obsession leads a double life. By day she is an elite Catalan Nationalist linguist, by night she has affairs with *charnegos*. This duality is even supported on a structural level since the book is divided into two parts, each part being further subdivided into 20 chapters.

*El amante bilingüe* gives us an insider's glimpse at some of the workings of Linguistic Normalization. There is talk of dubbing films in Catalan, changing street and store signs into Catalan, and a general catalanization of the business sector. Curiously, when Marsé writes his novel, the LNL has no specific stance on *retolació*, lettering or signage. However the 1998 upgrade specifically requires that signs, both inside and outside of stores and public places, be in at least the Catalan language, Castilian-language signs being voluntary.<sup>134</sup> Making store signs in Catalan can be seen as an act of defiance, since the Franco regime forced all store-owners to display signs only in Castilian. However, in the novel, the law creates a hostile environment where neighbors are ratting each other out if they have failed to substitute their Castilian-language signs for Catalan

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<sup>134</sup> Articles 30-35



ones, reflecting Marsé's belief that the linguistic normalization is leading to further alienation.

I now return to the date I mentioned above—November 1975. Of course, this date coincides historically with the death of the dictator Francisco Franco and leads to the third layer of Marés' disguise. At one point, the narrator comments that the only way for Faneca to live is by “la máscara y la amnesia” (170), essentially describing the *modus operandi* of the Transition. While Marés desperately holds on to the memory of Norma, Faneca wants to forget. This interplay between remembering and forgetting was of course an integral part of post-Franco Spanish political and social reconstruction, especially as embodied by the *Pacto de silencio*.

More specifically, in Catalonia, this novel is a critique of the *Generalitat's* Linguistic Normalization plan which began in 1983. This plan, along with Catalan Nationalism in general, was based on the assumption that there is a singular Catalan identity, which is in turn represented by a single language. Although the reader witnesses Joan Marés' slow death, for Marsé the duality of identity is slightly more hopeful. The transformation from Marés to Faneca is a gradual, painful process, a process described by the narrator as a “progresivo afantasmamiento” (202). In fact, Faneca is likened to a ghost multiple times, which of course returns us to Ricoeur's idea of the presence of an absent being. At times, Marés “sentía que la máscara de Faneca le iba devorando, que los rasgos del charnego le estaban acuchillando el rostro” (191).

After eight months the authorities declare that he has disappeared.<sup>135</sup> The final version of him is as a modified Faneca, dressed as a bullfighter, playing *sardanas* on his accordion. The irony of this image is blatant; he is the personification of the binaries—Spanish versus Catalan—that the Catalan Nationalists want to keep separate but the socio-historic reality of Catalonia constantly brings together. This image is also useful as far as my project is concerned. I have been weaving in and out of the terms Catalan and Spanish (with regards to identity, geography, legislation, literature, etc.) without much definition precisely because in relation to a person's identity, the boundaries between these terms are fluid; they are not in opposition, but rather complimentary and often overlapping.

This merging of binaries is also apparent on a linguistic level. Norma is a sociolinguist who studies “los contactos conflictivos de las dos lenguas, el catalán y el castellano, tanto en lo individual como en lo social. Ese punto en que las dos lenguas se friccionan” (109). While the text of the normalization law purports to create unity and value equity, in practice it creates friction between two languages and cultures. However, the relationship between the two languages and cultures does not have to be dialectical. The final paragraph of the novel is a speech by Marés/Faneca which is a hodgepodge of literary dialects—Catalan, normative Spanish, *charnego* Spanish, and gibberish:

Pué mirizté, en pimé ugá me'n fotu e menda yaluego de to y de toos i així finson  
vostè vulgui poque nozotro lo mataore catalane volem toro catalane, digo, que  
menda s'integra en la Gran Encisera hata onde le dejan y hago con mi jeta lo que  
buenamente puedo, ora con la barretina ora con la montera, o zea que a mí me

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<sup>135</sup> The use of the term *desaparecido* by Marsé is poignant and purposeful. While it is a term which has been associated with kidnappings in Argentina in the 1970's and 80's, the practice was utilized by Franco long before and many of those victims still lie in mass graves today.

guta *el mestizaje*, zeñó, la barreja y el combinao, en fin, s'acabat l'explicació i el bròquil, echusté una monetía, joé, no sigui tan garrapo ni tan roñica, una pezetita, cony, azí me guta, rumbozo, vaya uzté con Dió i passiu-ho bé, senyor... (p 220, emphasis mine)

This new dialect, and the character's new identity, can be characterized by one word—*mestizaje*—and it is an alternative to the linguistic and cultural homogeneity being propagated by Catalan politicians. The novel is a model in polyphony at its best, and this polyphonic model is being offered as a mold for a democratic Catalonia and for all of Spain for that matter.

Marsé uses a quote by Antonio Machado as an epigraph to his novel: “Lo esencial carnavalesco no es ponerse careta, sino quitarse la cara.” For Joan Marés, it is the stylized performance and exploration of a fictional ‘other’ which leads to a greater understanding of his own personal identity. The game of dress up is so much more than a superficial, sentimental ruse; for the character, pretending to be the other is an exercise in self-authorship, and is preferable to being himself. The character is Bakhtinian, the grotesque result of inverting hierarchies. However for Bakhtin, this death and rebirth in a carnival setting makes possible the creation of a new order. Marés' death is substituted by Faneca's rebirth, his new identity characterized by *mestizaje*. The theatricality of the novel, the recourse to costumes and performance, allow the character to recreate and redefine himself in order to survive in an increasingly fluid, multilingual, and multicultural society.

## Chapter Four

### The Humanizing Effect of Culture: A New Generation Returns to Politics

In Chapters Two and Three I proposed a model of dialogue between transitional politics in Spain and novels produced in the aftermath of this Transition. The novels of Montserrat Roig and Juan Marsé underscored the importance of preserving and transmitting collective memory especially in light of the political silence surrounding the *Pacto de silencio*. For Roig, these concerns were tied to a commitment to social justice whereas Marsé's skepticism about the ability to definitively know the past translated into offering a new collective memory in the place of an *ajuste de cuentas*.

The work done by Roig and Marsé, along with many other artists, is a precursor to the 2007 Law of Historical Memory. While the law has its shortcomings, especially vis-à-vis the autonomous communities, it is a positive step in the direction of definitively healing the wounds of contemporary Spanish History. This chapter will outline the key provisions of the legislation, posit the law as a site of memory, and finally return to the contemporary novel as a place of dialogue between politics and collective memory.

### Legislation and Remembrance

In the prologue to *Casa encantada. Lugares de memoria en la España constitucional (1978-2004)*, Joan Ramon Resina reminds us that remembering is an act of resistance against History. However, the desire to remember and forget coexists, and this conflict often plays itself out in a site of memory, whether that site is a novel, legislation, or a monument. Resina reminds us of the importance of *lugares de memoria*, the Spanish adaptation for Nora's concept of sites of memory, and he underscores the need for a space (be it concrete or virtual) for people to remember. These sites provide an opportunity to re-live the past by remembering in the present and thus stop their real-lived event from crossing into the realm of History and memory.

Pierre Nora classified sites of memory in four ways: (1) symbolic: commemoration, celebration; (2) monumental: buildings, cemeteries, monuments; (3) topographic: museum, archive, library; and (4) functional: organizations, autobiographies. As mentioned in Chapter One, legislative texts are considered sites of memory. For example, H. Rosi Song explains how the Spanish Constitution is a site of memory because “expresa su utilidad como entidad material, simbólica y funcional. Así, primero, como documento histórico, segundo como símbolo del logro de la democracia y, finalmente, como objeto de articulación de una identidad colectiva mediada por el patriotismo constitucional” (234). In the same way, all the legislative texts of the democratic transition, as well as laws like the Catalan Normalization Laws, can be seen

as sites of memory, sites that propagate a foundational myth of a unified nation that has a singular, collective identity.

Personal identity depends on a feeling of continuity, identification, and placement into a larger collective identity. And this identification is based on narration; “por eso, toda identidad humana es una identidad narrada. Todo yo existe o se autoconstituye [self-narration] como tal gracias a un acto narrativo. La identidad es una construcción narrativa que pretende dar sentido a una historia vivida, por eso Bourdieu hablaba de ‘ilusión biográfica’, porque nos construimos como personaje de nuestro propio relato” (Castañeira 45). In many ways, nations are constituted in the same manner: they are imagined (Anderson, Halbwachs), they need continuity, and recognition. As Jay Winter explains, war “radically disturbs the narrative, the life story, of individuals, the stories people tell themselves and others about their lives. Through such stories, we know who we are, or at least we think we do” (53). After war, privileged narratives of power substitute these individual stories. In the case of Civil War Spain, the first such narrative was written by Franco in the perspective of the *vencedores*. However, after the death of Franco, the *Pacto de silencio* became the prominent narrative, at least in the sociopolitical realm. Institutionalized silence and asymmetrical pact-making left an open wound in the Spanish collective memory. By contrast, in the literary realm there was a desire to break the political silence. While unofficial counter-narratives abounded in the private and often clandestine sphere, without political power they were not able to overwrite the official discourse. For this reason, legislative and literary texts play a powerful role in the formation of collective and personal identity, and the memory of the citizens they effect.

Intrinsically, a site of memory implies that there is some agreement on how to narrate the past. In Spain, however, the narrative is complicated because of the multiplicity of experiences related to the past. Perhaps that explains the delay in democratic Spain in regards to establishing sites of memory of the Civil War or Transition, be they textual or monumental. It was not until 1985 that a monument was inaugurated in the memory of both sides of the Civil War, and even then a plaque was merely added to a pre-existing monument on the Paseo del Prado.<sup>136</sup> An official site of memory in the form of legislation did not come until 2007. Ulrich Winter explains this difficulty in two ways:

En España, realidades históricas, políticas y culturales diversas impiden este discurso monolítico desde dos perspectivas.

- 1) Una posible explicación de la ausencia de un discurso sobre lugares de memoria podría ser la falta hasta hace poco de un momento propicio. Durante la transición, las fuerzas sociales optaron por una política de la memoria (y desmemoria) conducente a una reconciliación constitucional forzada, o extorsionada, entre pasado y presente, entre memoria republicana y memoria franquista, y entre distintas identidades nacionales. Por otra parte, como señalan la literatura y el cine del primer decenio democrático, la experiencia franquista planeó sobre aquel momento de manera obsesiva, representándose más como un trauma o un estado de posesión que como un recuerdo

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<sup>136</sup> In 1985, King Juan Carlos re-dedicated the *Monumento a los Héroes del Dos de Mayo* as *Monumento a los Caídos por España*.

2) Al contrario que en Francia, los posibles lugares de memoria españoles están atravesados por las fisuras de diversas memorias colectivas: las memorias de las ‘dos Españas’, por un lado y, por otro, de las múltiples naciones e identidades culturales. Esta pluralidad histórica es un dato relevante para el futuro: [...] Esto significa que los lugares de *memoria(s)* invocados como propios de toda España, suponiendo que fueran deseables, deberían ser narrados por una pluralidad de voces y de idiomas. (23)

Analogous to Nora’s concepts of sites of memory, Jay Winter’s notion of remembrance can also be helpful in understanding memory politics in post-Franco Spain. Winter prefers the term ‘remembrance’ to ‘memory’ because it implies agency, it is an act of defiance against forgetting. Remembrance is a process; memory, be it individual or collective, is its product. Remembrance is a link between memory and History, brought together by their similar “signifying practices”, a concept similar to Ricouer’s image of the presence of the absent; documented historical narratives are in dialogue with the personal narratives of those who lived through the events.

Jay Winter attributes the renewed interest in remembrance to the 20<sup>th</sup> century “memory boom”, a phenomenon that began with World War I and intensified with the Holocaust, fueled by the progress of technology and the testimony of Holocaust survivors. Because of the memory boom, narratives of war are more often than not written by victims and not by military leaders or victors, as was the case historically.<sup>137</sup> Memory should be based in multivocality, especially since:

...collective memory is rarely what the state tells us to remember. There are always too many people who construct their own narratives which are either at a tangent to those constructed by politicians or their agents, or which are totally inconsistent with what the state wants us to believe happened in the past. Those who hold power always try to construct a narrative of the past legitimizing their authority. But their voices are never the only ones engaged in acts of remembrance...(Jay Winter 277)

Nations do not remember, people do. That is why political elites should not be able to monopolize History and propagate a single discourse. Perhaps this is why the fictional works of Montserrat Roig and Juan Marsé resonated so much with the Spanish readership, and ultimately why their words resonated so much with me. Both writers believed in the importance of plurality of narrative and modeled their fictitious worlds on this polyphony. They both recognized that “cultural history is a chorus of voices; some are louder than others, but they never sound alone” (Jay Winter 136).

Furthermore, both Roig and Marsé were and are ‘one of us’; they did not belong to the Francoist political elites that were telling the public how to remember in the political realm. Jay Winter recognizes the role of the writer in the memory boom:

Historical remembrance entails not only first-person narratives, but scripts which later generations form and disseminate about significant events in the past. That is why any consideration of the contemporary memory boom must recognize the role of novelists, playwrights, poets, filmmakers, architects, museum designers

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<sup>137</sup> For some reason, this interest in victims’ narratives intensifies in the 1970’s and 80’s, which coincides with the era I am studying in this dissertation. Winter offers no explanation for this intensification.

and curators, television producers, and others in this varied set of cultural practices we term historical remembrance. (278)

Fiction can be considered one such script; the multiple narratives of the characters are not only dialoguing with one another, they are also in dialogue with the readership. One of the lines of inquiry in this project was to determine the role of the writer in post-Franco transitional politics and memory; basing my conclusions on Winter's view of the role of the writer, I believe the writer creates the opportunity for open and diverse dialogue, especially in the absence of such candor in the political realm. Both Roig and Marsé created characters who struggled with memory. For example, thinking of Alpargata in *La voz melodiosa*, his deformed body remembered, or carried traces of, something his family and country would just as soon forget. The *vencedores* had tangible sites of memory, exemplified by the *Valle de los Caídos*; even under censorship, the novel was one of few available *lugares de memoria* for the *vencidos*. It is also important to mention the role that television played in the transmission of collective memory. Series such as "La Transición" (1995) and "Cuéntame cómo pasó" (2001-present, both on TVE) followed the lead of the novel and broke the political silence about the war. In 2009, "Cuéntame cómo pasó" won the *Premio Nacional de Televisión* because the jury recognized "la gran calidad de una obra que ha conseguido reconstruir visualmente nuestra memoria más reciente, transmitiendo a las jóvenes generaciones, presentes y futuras, los valores de convivencia y diálogo que constituyen el mejor legado de la Transición".<sup>138</sup>

Remembrance can manifest itself in multiple forms: literature, film, memorials, trials, etc. Winter points to Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* as a prime example of remembrance; the painting is both art and politics, has traces of History and memory, and is a piece of collective memory. It is interesting that Winter also designates war crime trials as an example of remembrance, a site of memory. In Chapter One, I contended that the lack of a war crime trial in post-Franco Spain was at the root of the injustice of the Transition. A war crime trial would have legitimized the victims and the witnesses. Further:

Memory, if honestly recalled in public [referring to South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission which absolved some criminals after an honest testimony], has been defined in this special case as the path to repentance, to reconciliation, and perhaps even to forgiveness.

Even more than the perpetrators, the victims needed to find a kind of solace, a way to live with their memories. It is for this reason that there is a very broad and varied therapeutic community at work today in the field of memory. (Jay Winter, 7)

The Spanish transition to democracy is often said to have been crafted in a "spirit of reconciliation and collaboration". However, true reconciliation can only be possible after honest and public recollection of injustice, and not by political silence as was the case in Spain.

On December 26, 2007, the *Pacto de silencio* forged 30 years prior, was broken. With the passage of *Ley 52/2007 de la Memoria Histórica* (Law of Historical Memory), the Spanish government officially addressed the gaps and silences of the democratic

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<sup>138</sup> <http://www.rtve.es/noticias/20091221/serie-tve-cuentame-recibe-primer-premio-nacional-television/307106.shtml>

transition and made an attempt to right the wrongs and restore justice to the victims of the Civil War and the Franco regime. The timing of the law was poignant; as victims and their relatives are dying out there is a sense of urgency in the country to turn the political faux-reconciliation into true healing.

The purpose of the law is to correct the injustices of not only the Franco regime but also the Transition. It makes an unequivocal “condena del franquismo” which was lacking in the legislative texts of the Transition, overturns any remaining laws which remain on the books from Franco, delegitimizes Francoist bodies (administrative, judicial, and penal), as well as makes numerous mentions of the unjust nature of the past. The text highlights historic continuity, emphasizing that the law is based on the “espíritu de la Transición” —a spirit of collaboration and reconciliation—,as well as the democratic principles of justice outlined in the Constitution. Generational continuity is also emphasized, as Article 1 admits that one of the goals of the law is to encourage solidarity between the various generations of Spaniards. This continuity is important in the establishment of identity as humans need to tell themselves a coherent, connected story in order to feel they belong. The law is ambiguous in terms of the time frame of the aforementioned past, so it is safe to assume that it includes the gaps and silences of the Transition. The Law creates the “Oficina para las Víctimas de la Guerra Civil y la Dictadura”, and while there are offices in various Spanish cities, this is the only sort of recognition of the regional differences involved in historical memory.

The law effects a broad range of people, Spanish citizens and non-citizens alike: Es la hora, así, de que la democracia española y las generaciones vivas que hoy disfrutan de ella honren y recuperen para siempre a todos los que directamente padecieron las injusticias y agravios producidos, por unos u otros motivos políticos o ideológicos o de creencias religiosas, en aquellos dolorosos períodos de nuestra historia. Desde luego, a quienes perdieron la vida. Con ellos, a sus familias. También a quienes perdieron su libertad, al padecer prisión, deportación, confiscación de sus bienes, trabajos forzados o internamientos en campos de concentración dentro o fuera de nuestras fronteras. También, en fin, a quienes perdieron la patria al ser empujados a un largo, desgarrador y, en tantos casos, irreversible exilio. Y, por último, a quienes en distintos momentos lucharon por la defensa de los valores democráticos, como los integrantes del Cuerpo de Carabineros, los brigadistas internacionales, los combatientes guerrilleros...

The law is intended for the direct victims of the past along with their family members, Spaniards as well as those international brigadiers who left their own countries to support the Republic.<sup>139</sup> The bottom line being that “la presente Ley quiere contribuir a cerrar heridas todavía abiertas en los españoles y a dar satisfacción a los ciudadanos que sufrieron, directamente o en la persona de sus familiares, las consecuencias de la tragedia de la Guerra Civil o de la represión de la Dictadura.” In the absence of a dictator who could be tried in a court of law and condemned, the legislative text is personified and offered as an all-encompassing attempt to heal the wounds of History.

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<sup>139</sup> In 1996, the International Brigaders were offered Spanish citizenship but on the condition that they renounce their current citizenship. This new Law offered the Brigadiers the option of dual citizenship as well as a pension from the Spanish government.

Articles 15 and 16 of the law call for the removal of all remaining monuments or signs that make reference to Franco. This provision of the law has been controversial as was exemplified in a video clip accompanying the article “Adios a la última estatua ecuestre de Franco” in *El Mundo* on December 18, 2008. In compliance with the law, one of the last statues of Franco was being removed in the city of Santander; the accompanying video showed a heated argument between those who supported the removal of the equestrian statue and those who were in support of the statue, and by default Franco. Similarly, in Melilla, where the last remaining statue of Franco still stands, the president of the autonomous city is defying the Law of Historical Memory and refusing to remove the figure.

In a critical *New York Times* article, Michael Kimmelman reminds us that “legislating monuments [or removing them] doesn’t rectify injustices of the past, it just fumbles with the symbols of history, reminding us why we devise them in the first place”. Removing the visual reminders of Francoism seems to be engaging in the same silencing and manipulation of collective memory that is at the root of the injustices inherited from the Transition. The government is taking action to erase History. Most notably, this provision of the Law has an impact on the *Valle de los Caídos*; while the site can remain as a cemetery, commemorations of any kind are no longer allowed. In 1998, on my first trip to Spain and my only visit to the *Valle de los Caídos*, I coincided with a group of young men, all with shaved heads and militant outfits, celebrating Franco’s birthday. I remember feeling uncomfortable by their presence though at the time I did not know why. In the 1980’s and 90’s tourist guidebooks characterized the *Valle* as a site to honor both sides of the war, though of course that was not true. The *Valle* was built by Franco as a testament to his undying power, as an honor to the fallen Nationalist soldiers, as the place where he would be buried and remembered eternally. The untold part of the narrative of the *Valle* was that Republican soldiers built it while being held as prisoners. So what should be done with a site of memory like the *Valle* when that particular memory site belongs to the Fascists? Noël Valis proposes that they “should be preserved, no matter how embarrassing they prove to current governments, to remind us of the terrible cost in human lives, freedom, and dignity that these monuments represent” (426). After the war, Franco tried to erase signs of Catalanness from Catalonia by ordering the removal of monuments and the renaming of streets<sup>140</sup>; many refer to these actions as “cultural genocide”. Both sides engaged in the same action—the removal of statues and signs. What makes one more just than the other?

The question begs: Is it the job of the government to regulate historical memory? The text of the Law of Historical Memory anticipates this objection, explaining that it “parte de la consideración de que los diversos aspectos relacionados con la memoria personal y familiar, especialmente cuando se han visto afectados por conflictos de carácter público, forman parte del estatuto jurídico de la ciudadanía democrática, y como tales son abordados en el texto.” It continues to say:

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<sup>140</sup> For an example of this erasure see Agustí Colomines’ “La deconstrucción de la memoria, el argumento perverso sobre la represión franquista.” in Resina, Joan Ramon and Ulrich Winter (eds.). *Casa encantada. Lugares de memoria en la España constitucional (1978-2004)*. Madrid: Iberoamericana 2005. Pp 207-219.



No es tarea del legislador implantar una determinada memoria colectiva. Pero sí es deber del legislador, y cometido de la ley, reparar a las víctimas, consagrar y proteger, con el máximo vigor normativo, el derecho a la memoria personal y familiar como expresión de plena ciudadanía democrática, fomentar los valores constitucionales y promover el conocimiento y la reflexión sobre nuestro pasado, para evitar que se repitan situaciones de intolerancia y violación de derechos humanos como las entonces vividas.

Personal and collective memory are inevitably interrelated. Though government should not intervene in the formation of either type of memory, it should protect its citizens from injustice and the violation of basic human rights. Carmen Moreno-Nuño gives another possible answer to the question of whether or not it is the government's role to legislate memory. She explains:

Partiendo del cuestionamiento de la política de la reconciliación—que no necesariamente del cuestionamiento de la reconciliación misma, antes al contrario por lo general—, el movimiento para la recuperación de la memoria histórica busca sacar a la luz pública aquellos aspectos de la Guerra que a través de los años han sido especialmente rechazados o menospreciados como objeto de conocimiento y estudio. Por eso, la recuperación de la memoria histórica tiene como principal objetivo—junto con la reconstrucción de la dignidad de los vencidos—la creación de un foro público de conocimiento y opinión. En este sentido suele afirmarse que la revisión del pasado responde al objetivo de luchar contra la erosión del olvido y contra la colonización de la memoria por los vencedores que ha caracterizado la vida democrática española. (70)

Obviously, the law is aimed at offering retroactive justice to the victims of the Civil War and Francoism, but an indirect result of such legislation and what sets it apart from the legislation created during the Transition, is that it creates an opportunity for open and public dialogue about the past, as opposed to the political silence characteristic of the Transition.

### The Bones of Remembrance

Four out of the 24 articles of the Law of Historical Memory address the issue of the exhumation of the mass graves left over from the Civil War. The recuperation of bodies from the mass graves is much more than remembering a memory; the bodies are a physical manifestation of the trauma. “El retorno de lo olvidado [the mass graves] anula el hiato entre pasado y presente, entre Memoria e Historia” (Winter 24).

In large part, the exhumations are under the direction of the *Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica*<sup>141</sup> which has multiple branches in different Spanish cities. The Association has even presented cases of disappeared to the UN Human Rights Commission. The first *fosa común* was unearthed in 2000 in Priaranzo de León. While there are mass graves all over the country, the largest is in Málaga where it

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<sup>141</sup> <http://www.memoriahistorica.org>

Other similar organizations include: *Asociación contra el Silencio y el Olvido por la Memoria Histórica*, *La Asociación de la Memoria Viva*, *Presos Políticos Antifranquistas*, etc.

is believed 4,000 victims are buried. The exhumation effort, while subsidized by the government, is mostly run by volunteers. There has also been large interest and participation by students, even from US institutions, who welcome the opportunity to connect directly with History, and often the history of their own families. DNA technology and the Internet have made the identification of victims much easier than in the past. Also aiding the effort, is the fact that the new generation of Spaniards in charge of the excavations is not motivated by fear of plunging back into a bloody Civil War as was the apprehension during the Transition.

While for the most part the ability to recover and identify victims has been welcomed by the Spanish people, the exhumations have not been without controversy. Judge Baltasar Garzón<sup>142</sup> was the first to order the opening of a gravesite in 2008, a decision which was met with resistance. Many accused Garzón of violating the 1977 Amnesty Laws and breaking with the spirit of reconciliation characteristic of the Transition; Garzón was breaking *the Pacto de silencio*. The thinking is flawed because “la defensa de la reconciliación sobre la que se basa el pacto democrático español, el miedo a las consecuencias de la ruptura del pacto democrático y el deseo de hacer justicia a los logros históricos de la Transición no deben llevar a la negación de la existencia de un silencio que ha tenido y todavía tiene profundas consecuencias para la vida nacional” (Moreno-Nuño 21). Charges were brought against Garzón, accusing him of overstepping his boundaries, and eventually the Judge dropped his investigation into the mass graves. Luckily, the private Associations of Historical Memory stepped in and resumed his activities.

In a recent article in *The Washington Post*, Sudarsan Raghavan writes:

Spain is deeply divided over confronting its own history. Many on the right oppose the exhumations, charging that it is a political ploy by Spain's ruling Socialist Workers' Party. Reopening old wounds, they say, will spawn new hatred. Those on the left say influential rightists, who built wealth and power under Franco's regime, want to keep the truth buried. Reconciling with the past would help heal festering wounds, they say, and bring dignity to those who died.

The most popular case of such controversy is in relation to the possible resting place of Federico García Lorca; the poet-playwright's family was for a long time opposed to digging up the mass grave where it is believed he lies along with twenty or so other victims, for fear of creating a spectacle. The family went as far as to appeal to the Spanish courts to let Lorca rest in peace; however after pressure from human rights and victims' rights organizations the family gave its consent and digging began on October 28, 2009.

On March 25, 2008, the *Generalitat of Catalunya* was the first autonomous community to pass legislation about the mass graves, mirroring the actions of the Law of Historical Memory. The *Generalitat* also created the *Direcció General de la Memòria Democràtica* with a special office specifically dedicated to *Fosses comunes i desapareguts*. Their website<sup>143</sup> offers a list of *Espais [sites] de Memòria*. It is estimated

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<sup>142</sup> It is interesting to note that Garzón gained international fame because he led the aggressive push to prosecute Agustín Pinochet. Pinochet can be seen as a symbolic substitute for Franco; since Franco is not alive to prosecute, a trial involving Pinochet could serve as an allegorical act against the dead Spanish dictator.

<sup>143</sup> <http://www10.gencat.cat/drep/AppJava/cat/ambits/Memorial/index.jsp>

that there are 179 mass graves in Catalonia<sup>144</sup>, most of them concentrated in Lleida and Tarragona, which correspond to the border of the Civil War front.

If “remembrance is an act of symbolic exchange between those who remain and those who suffered or died” (Jay Winter 279), unearthing these graves breaks the symbolic association and makes it a tangible, real-life relationship, no longer symbolic. Try as the state might to silence the past and forget, the bones of the those victims remember. After more than 70 years, unearthing the graves and giving families the chance to bury their dead in a dignified manner may be the only form of justice they will ever see.

### The Documents of Remembrance

One of the most important provisions of the Law of Historical Memory is the establishment of the *Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica*. The Centro was created on June 1, 2007 through *Real Decreto 697/2007*.<sup>145</sup> The Center, located in Salamanca, is home to the national archives, containing documents from the greater part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Concretely, the Center contains all official archives from not only the Civil War, but also the Second Republic (1931-1936), the Franco dictatorship and the democratic transition. The Center also houses the most complete archive of Spanish Masonry. In this way, the Center is based on the same principles of continuity that inform the Law of Historical Memory; historical events are not seen as existing independently from one another. Rather, the Second Republic is seen as the antecedent of the Civil War, and Francoism is its consequence.

After visiting the Centro in July 2009, what I found most interesting was the history of the building itself, as well as the information stored there. The national archives, which are located on Calle Expolio in Salamanca, the very building where today Spaniards and non-Spaniards alike may take a trip to the past, was from 1938 until the end of the dictatorship Franco’s *Centro de Información al servicio de Poder*, it was used to house the Regime’s archives. The new *Centro Documental* has reappropriated the building, and the information contained therein, in order to give the public access to the past.

One of the key forms of information reappropriated was the *Fichero General* of the Franco regime. The *Fichero* is a collection of nearly three million *fichas* or information cards, compiled and maintained about *los enemigos* of the regime. The *fichas* were not limited to official Republicans who fought against Franco during the war; *fichas* were also established for anyone who had belonged to a political party during the Second Republic, been a member of a labor union or organization of any kind, made a small donation to the soldiers fighting for the Republic, intellectuals (García Lorca had a *ficha*), political leaders, or family members of any of these people. All those who showed “afecto a la causa republicana” or “desafecto al Movimiento Nacional”<sup>146</sup>, two

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<sup>144</sup> [http://www10.gencat.cat/drep/binaris/mapa%20fosses\\_tcm112-88112.jpg](http://www10.gencat.cat/drep/binaris/mapa%20fosses_tcm112-88112.jpg) for a map of the graves

<sup>145</sup> BOE, num 143. Viernes 15 junio 2007. pp 25976-25978.

<sup>146</sup> Quotes taken from Pilar Larumbe García, Jefe de Sección-Responsable de la Difusión Cultural de Archivo General de la Guerra Civil Española de Salamanca.

vague euphemisms, were indiscriminately labeled *rojos* and in some form or another repressed by the Regime.

During Franco's rule, "el Estado no contratava a nadie para trabajar dentro de él que hubiera estado aquí fichado. Desde Madrid y otros puntos de España se pedía constantemente a Salamanca informes sobre determinadas personas y, si éstos no eran lo favorables que cabía esperar, no se tenía acceso a determinados puestos de trabajo."<sup>147</sup> Today, the public has free access to these *fichas*. Pilar Larumbe García recognizes the contradictory nature of the *fichas* given that "la misma ficha que sirvió durante el franquismo para represaliar o castigar a una persona, sirve, cincuenta años después, para pagarle una pensión estatal."

Between the years 1993 and 2008 the statistics show<sup>148</sup> that there were nearly 500, 000 visitors to the Center. 333 people have consulted 34, 724 documents from the archives and nearly 1000 people, mostly family members, have consulted the *fichas*. The *fichas* are organized alphabetically, by last name, but no attempt has been made to classify the information based on geographic origin. In other words, the narrative being told about the Center is that it is a *Spanish* site of memory, thus disregarding the all-important nuances of the minority cultures of Spain. Since classification is only done on an alphabetical basis, there is no way of knowing how censorship and repression varied from one region to the other, whether one minority was targeted more than the other.

This disregard for a minority context has been the root of much criticism of the Center, most notably in the infamous *Papeles de Catalunya* case. After the Civil War, thousands of documents were confiscated from Catalonia and sent to Salamanca to be housed in Franco's archives. A 2005 law called for those documents to be returned to the *Generalitat*, however the new Law of Historical Memory and the creation of the CDMH have changed the fate of those infamous papers. In *Ley 21/2005 de 17 de noviembre*, the Spanish government took concrete steps towards restitution for Catalonia—the law ordered the return of historical documents and archives to the Catalan government. The history of the documents is traced in the law: The Constitution of 1931 had allowed the creation of the *Estatuto de Cataluña* which had in turn given the autonomous community power over their own archives. However, when Franco came to power these freedoms for the autonomous region were reversed by *Ley 5 de abril de 1938* which took away previous freedoms granted to Catalonia. *Ley 5* also created the *Delegación del Estado para la Recuperación de Documentos* (DERD), the body in charge of gathering and maintaining archives about the so-called enemies of the Regime, the same archives that were housed in the current site of the *Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica*. *Ley 21/2005* is positioned as a logical step in a series of events whose object is to "restaurar situaciones jurídicas afectadas injustamente por la legislación y la actuación del régimen franquista" (Article III). The law notes that the reestablishment of the *Generalitat* in September of 1977 (even before the ratification of the Spanish Constitution) includes "[el] derecho de sus Instituciones a recuperar su memoria histórica" (Article I). The current law allows the return of all those documents which were illegally taken from Barcelona during the Franco regime, under the condition that a copy of each document is left in the *Archivo General* in Salamanca, the cost of which had to be shouldered by the

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Statistics provided by Pilar Larumbe García

*Generalitat*. We are talking about 160 tons of papers, which makes the task quite difficult and costly. The law also opens the door for other autonomous communities that want to reclaim their historical documents. The Spanish Government wants to maintain one centralized archive related to its 20th century History, propagating the narrative that there is a singular (if not singular, then unified) narrative of events. However, the *Generalitat*, along with thousands of Catalan citizens, have demanded the return of those documents to Catalonia.

While the set up of the archives is problematic vis-à-vis the autonomous communities, it should be commended for the work it does against propagating a binary view of History as was so common during the Regime. The mission of the Center is to: “poner al alcance de la sociedad información sobre el valioso Patrimonio Documental que conserva, difundiendo con ello la memoria histórica de nuestro pasado común.”<sup>149</sup> The Center is not intended to be a site of memory only for the *vencidos*. Although most of the items on display in the public viewing area pertain to the victims on the Republican side, there are also documents and artifacts that show the repression and violence that was carried out by Republicans. The Royal Decree which brought the Center into existence is displayed prominently in the building; it explains that the Centro is a place to deposit historical and collective memory, it is a *lugar de memoria*.

### The Novel as *Lugar de memoria*

A report in *El Mundo* on June 15, 2009 about the *Feria del Libro de Madrid* notes a 10% increase in sales over previous years, narrative being the preferred genre, so it should be no surprise that in the summer of 2009 the bookstores of Spain, as well as the hands of metro riders, were overwhelmingly filled with two literary phenomena—Swede Stieg Larsson’s *Los hombres que no amaban a las mujeres* and Javier Cercas’ *Anatomía de un instante*. The former, detective fiction in translation, is part of a best-selling trilogy, while the latter is a detailed account of the intricate workings behind the coup attempt in Spain on February 23, 1981.

It is hard to categorize *Anatomía* into a single literary genre; on the jacket of the book, Sergi Pàmies called it an “Excepcional cruce de géneros narrativos” whereas Joaquín Estefanía called it “un libro emocionante que reivindica la potencia de la narrativa para explicar el mundo”. The text is a hybrid creation, a mixture of non-fiction, History, fiction, and autobiography. Cercas likens his text to a detective novel and at the same time each of the five parts begin with a narrated description of different parts of the video of the coup.

Cercas seems to be playing a game with the reader, actively contributing to the confusion of genre. For example, the text begins with a section entitled “Epílogo de una novela”, although the information contained in the section is non-fiction and autobiography. He even offers a disclaimer that “no puedo asegurar que todo lo que cuento a continuación sea verdad; pero puedo asegurar que está amasado con la verdad y sobre todo que es lo más cerca que yo puedo llegar de la verdad, o de imaginarla” (277).

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<sup>149</sup> Transcribed from a placard at the CDMH.

What is clear is that Cercas wants to tell the story (*historia*) of the coup, and not the History. However, he characterizes the coup, referred to in Spanish as 23-F, as a “novela colectiva”, thus underscoring the interplay between fiction, History, memory, and reality in the event itself.<sup>150</sup> Also, since the work of talking about the past is a collective endeavor, Cercas has every right and responsibility (as do all of us) to insert his personal narrative into History. “En democracia la política es un teatro...” (Cercas 136), and the coup a “puesta en escena”. As readers or as in real-life, we are spectators, participants, and crime-solvers. It is a brilliant assertion—History is a collective novel, a story comprised of multiple narratives. For, if we return to Joaquín Estafanía’s comment for a moment, the real star of the text is not Adolfo Suárez or the King Juan Carlos or democratic Spain; rather, narrative itself is charged with the task of explaining the past. In fact, although I already knew the way the story would end (the coup would not succeed), I read the text voraciously as if encountering the story for the very first time, completely hooked by the way in which Cercas narrates.

Reading the collective novel, I could not help but think that Cercas was loudly and clearly breaking the *Pacto de silencio*, going against the status quo of History. He addresses the *Pacto* directly:

Un cliché historiográfico afirma que el cambio de la dictadura a la democracia en España fue posible gracias a un pacto de olvido. Es mentira; o, lo que es lo mismo, es una verdad fragmentaria, que sólo empieza a completarse con el cliché opuesto: el cambio de la dictadura a la democracia en España fue posible gracias a un pacto de recuerdo. (108)

He explains further that:

Ese pacto no incluía olvidar el pasado: incluía aparcarlo, soslayarlo, darlo de lado; incluía renunciar a usarlo políticamente, pero no incluía olvidarlo. Desde el punto de vista de la justicia, el pacto entrañaba un error, porque suponía aparcar, soslayar o dar de lado el hecho de que los responsables últimos de la guerra fueron los vencedores, que la provocaron con un golpe de estado contra un régimen democrático, y porque también suponía renunciar a resarcir plenamente a las víctimas y a juzgar a los responsables de un oprobioso ajuste de cuentas que incluyó un plan de exterminio de los vencidos... (108-9)

There has been much debate about the appropriate term to describe the memory politics of the Spanish Transition—*Pacto de olvido*? *Desmemoria*? *Silencio*? *Amnesia*?

Regardless of the term, the silence surrounding the participation of Francoists in the Transition, their total amnesty, and the lack of recognition and reparation for the victims, was a complete injustice which often manifested itself in the novel.

Cercas confesses: “yo había contado el golpe del 23 de febrero como un fracaso total de la democracia, pero la mayoría de aquellos artículos, reportajes y entrevistas lo contaban como un triunfo de la democracia” (17). Actually, History has judged the failure of 23-F as the triumph of democracy; stating the contrary as Cercas does would have been seen as going against the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration of the Transition. But the terms reconciliation and collaboration have been shown to be flawed, because they are based on the silence and injustice of the *Pacto*. Also, during the

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<sup>150</sup> A prime example of how the event itself is tinged in fiction is that the coup was not televised live though most people remember it that way; only the radio broadcast was live.

Transition, the term reconciliation was a euphemism for betrayal. “Traicionaron el pasado para no traicionar el presente” (274); most noticeably, Santiago Carrillo gave up 40 years of anti-Francoism to reconcile with the Right. However, true reconciliation does not begin until a year and a half after the coup, when a majority of Spaniards decided by way of national elections that the descendants of the *vencidos* could once again hold power.

The author deconstructs the heroic portrayal of Suárez as well as the King, repeatedly calling the former President “un escalador del franquismo” (18). The *Pacto de silencio* had made it so that no one talked about the Francoist roots of those who had been charged with engineering the Transition. He reminds us that:

...la izquierda no olvidaba—no tenía por qué olvidar—que, aunque a partir de determinado momento quiso [Suárez] ser un político progresista, y hasta cierto punto lo consiguió, Suárez fue durante muchos años un colaborador leal del franquismo y un prototipo perfecto del arribista que la corrupción institucionalizada del franquismo propició. (33)

But the association with Franco was not exclusive to Suárez. Cercas repeatedly reminds the reader that most of those involved with the Transition, perhaps with the exception of PCE leader Santiago Carrillo, were at some point and to some extent Franco collaborators.

Cercas deconstructs the events leading up to the coup along with the figures involved, what he refers to as its “placenta”. He pays special attention to the General Gutiérrez Mellado (Suárez’s vicepresident), Santiago Carrillo (the Communist leader), the King, and the triumvirate of coup conspirators—Armada, Milans, Tejero. He describes a situation of total chaos in Spain—ETA violence, economic disarray, problems with decentralization, political and economic deterioration, social disillusionment (*el desencanto*). There was a feeling, at least on the part of Suárez, that the whole country was conspiring against him—the Church, the political parties, the military, the press, the King. There were constant rumors of a coup. In fact there was even a prior, failed coup attempt, so no one should have been surprised when on February 23, 1981, General Tejero stormed the Congress. And the public response to the coup? — “Ésa fue la respuesta popular al golpe: ninguna” (Cercas 209). What was surprising, to Cercas at least, was the nearly absolute silence of the Spanish people (be they politicians, businessmen, or common citizens) in the face of the coup. Until the King went on television hours later to officially condemn the coup, no one publicly opposed it. The Spanish people did not take to the streets demanding an end to the coup, or fighting to protect their fragile democracy; instead they locked themselves in their homes and waited, in fear and silence. Cercas points to this passivity and silence as a form of acquiescence.

As Cercas makes clear, the Transition was a time of contradictions and ironies. Ironically, inside the Congress, the two people who stood up to the *golpistas* besides Suárez are Gutiérrez Mellado and Santiago Carrillo; it is ironic because Gutiérrez Mellado had participated in the coup against the Republic in 1936, and as a Communist, Carrillo had for so long been against democracy. Also ironic because during the war, Gutiérrez Mellado was at one time a fascist prisoner at Paracuellos de Jarama, condemned to die, but in a lucky twist of fate evaded execution. At the time, Santiago

Carrillo was indirectly involved with orchestrating those executions. Along with Suárez, Carrillo and Gutierrez Mellado—*las dos Españas* incarnate—stood up against the coup.

In 1975, the King had promised to be King of all Spaniards, rhetorically doing away with the *las dos Españas* binary. Though his power came from Franco, his legitimacy came from the way in which he renounced some of these powers and supported a constitutional monarchy. In 1981, dressed in military attire, he went on the television airways to demand an end to the coup; till this day he is hailed as a hero for his actions on that fateful day. But Cercas' reconstruction of events shows that the coup failed because Armada, Milans and Tejero were not in agreement about who was in charge and what sort of government would be created after the coup; the plan had already begun to fall apart in the middle of the coup.

Whereas Cercas is very critical of Suárez in the beginning of the novel, telling his story enables him to change his mind about the ex-Francoist, and the course of History. Cercas poignantly describes how Suárez, "...permaneciendo en su escaño mientras las balas zumbaban a su alrededor en el hemiciclo durante la tarde del 23 de febrero, Suárez no sólo se redimía él, sino que de algún modo redimía a todo su país de haber colaborado masivamente con el franquismo" (385). Suárez was not the only one guilty of upholding the *Pacto de silencio*; Cercas points his finger at everyone involved—politicians, royalty, Spanish citizens. In the end, Cercas admits that despite its shortcomings and injustices, both the political Right and Left had to give up quite a bit in order to orchestrate the Transition.

Es cierto que no se hizo del todo justicia, que no se restauró la legitimidad republicana conculcada por el franquismo ni se juzgó a los responsables de la dictadura ni se resarcó a fondo y de inmediato a sus víctimas, pero también es cierto que a cambio de ello se construyó una democracia que hubiese sido imposible construir si el objetivo prioritario no hubiese sido fabricar el futuro—*Fiat iustitia et pereat mundus*—enmendar el pasado... (432-3)

In the end, Franco, and more importantly Francoism, were dead and that was the goal.

According to Cercas "...el 23 de febrero no sólo puso fin a la transición y a la posguerra franquista: el 23 de febrero puso fin a la guerra" (428). The war was over, but the healing had not begun. Javier Cercas quotes Juan J. Linz: "<<La transición es ya historia—escribió en 1996 el sociólogo Juan J. Linz-. No es algo que hoy sea objeto de debate o lucha política.>>" and responds that "Una década después Linz ya no hubiera podido decir lo mismo: de un tiempo a esta parte la transición no sólo es objeto de debate, sino también—a veces implícita y a veces explícitamente—objeto de lucha política" (431). Despite the definitive end of the war, despite the passage of the Law of Historical Memory, the past is still an open wound today. The popularity of this novel, as well as the abundance of popular titles about the war and post-war, seem to prove a continued hunger on the part of the Spanish people to continue dialoguing with the past.

In the last few lines of the novel, Cercas admits that writing this book was an attempt to understand his father who had been a staunch Suarista, while young Javier, as well as the Javier at the beginning of *Anatomía de un instante*, always viewed him as an opportunist and a fraud because of his ties to Franco. After writing his book, Cercas comes to better understand Suárez, as well as his own father, creating an exceptional model of History, one based on a polyphony of voices and stories, both official and personal.



*Anatomía* is not the first time, though, that Cercas attempted to break the *Pacto de silencio*. His 2001 novel, *Soldados de Salamina*<sup>151</sup>, uses many of the same tools in order to rewrite History: multiple genres, blurring of reality and fiction, efforts to reconstruct events, etc. The similarities between the two projects are palpable; both treat the historiographical project as detective work where writer and reader must put together pieces of a puzzle to reach a version of the truth. Cercas yet again is playing the genre game, for example by stating that he is not writing a novel, but rather telling a true story. The story in question is about Rafael Sánchez Mazas, one of the founders of the Falange, and his escape from a firing squad. At one point he reveals that many people do not believe the story of Sánchez Mazas “porque es una historia novelesca”, but quickly explains that “todas las Guerra están llenas de historias novelescas” (35), setting up the close relationship between History and storytelling.

One of the most important aspects of Cercas’ project is the way in which he rewrites History, quite similar to Marsé’s project of breaking the binaries. The protagonist of the novel is a Fascist, Sánchez Mazas. Cercas’ stories humanize the Fascist, shows that there was suffering and good on both sides of the Civil War. After telling the story of Sánchez Mazas, Cercas looks for the Republican soldier who spared Sánchez Mazas’ life because, as he reveals, “lo que no tengo es ninguna versión republicana de lo que ocurrió allí y sin ella el libro se me queda cojo” (176). For the story to be complete, for the truth to be told, all sides must participate in the dialogue.

To complete the story, Cercas turns to Miralles, who he believes is the soldier that spared Sánchez Mazas’ life.<sup>152</sup> At first Miralles is skeptical about Cercas’ project: “Créame: esas historias ya no le interesan a nadie, ni siquiera a los que las vivimos; hubo un tiempo en que sí, pero ya no. Alguien decidió que había que olvidarlas...” (177). He is of course referring to the *Pacto de silencio*. Besides, “nunca nadie me ha dado las gracias por dejarme la juventud peleando por su mierda país” (175). However, despite Miralles’ adherence to the pact, it is the new generation represented here by Cercas, who feel the need to soldier on in search of the truth. In fact, the novel ends with the image of a soldier who is moving “hacia delante, hacia delante, hacia delante, siempre hacia delante” (209). Not only does this image carry with it a sense of hope, but it also carries a sense of responsibility. Until the truth comes out and justice is served, the new generation must keep working and moving forward, always forward.

Democratic Spain was and is a triumph, but the suppression of memory of the Civil War during the Transition was its biggest failure. Carmen Moreno-Nuño summarizes the root of the failure well:

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<sup>151</sup> In 2004, the Catalan translation of the novel was published (*Soldats de Salamina*, L’ull de Vidre). While in the past it had been quite common to translate Catalan novels into Spanish, more and more, publishing houses are seeing the importance of publishing Spanish novels into Catalan.

<sup>152</sup> The manner in which Cercas learns Miralles’ identity has allegorical importance. While Cercas is interviewing an exiled Chilean author, the author tells him about an ex-Republican soldier he had met at a campground in the 1970’s and the way in which this man danced a pasodoble, the same way that Sánchez Mazas had described the soldier who had spared his life. Beyond this strange dancing coincidence, what is interesting is that Cercas gets his information from someone who had fled his country because of Pinochet, and as I described earlier when speaking of Judge Garzón, Chile can be seen as an allegory of what Spain has suffered.

Aunque el desafío que se le plantea a todo proceso transicional es recordar el pasado de modo tal que permita a las víctimas y al conjunto de la sociedad avanzar hacia el futuro, la Transición española no opta por una reconstrucción del recuerdo, sino por una construcción del olvido. El ‘olvido oficial’ se impone como única vía posible para conseguir la reconciliación nacional. Así, la memoria de la Guerra es objeto del abandono pasivo y de la represión activa. La memoria más afectada es la memoria de los vencidos, ya que mientras la memoria de los vencedores había gozado de una posición de privilegio durante la dictadura, la memoria de los vencidos—aplastada durante el franquismo—va a ver postergado su reconocimiento político durante la democracia, disfrutando sólo de espacio abierto en el terreno cultural. (52-3)

Again, the novel is able to break the *Pacto de silencio* because it belonged to the realm of cultural production, and not to the political sphere where silence reigned.

Although the 2007 Law of Historical Memory is an obvious attempt to definitively break the *Pacto de silencio*, the wounds of the Spanish Civil War and Franco regime are still open. While the recent legislation is a *lugar de memoria* that a new generation of Spaniards can turn to for justice, there still seems to be skepticism about trusting the official narrative of the government. For that reason, I believe that literature will remain an important *lugar de memoria* for all of Spain, where regardless of your geographic origin, art can help explain and fill the silences of the past.

## Some Final Thoughts

A recent poem by singer, song-writer Joaquín Sabina illustrates the continued need for dialogue and healing around the issue of the Civil War:

### Fosas comunes

No es lo mismo el ejército que la gente,  
aunque, quien más quien menos, todos mataron  
al rojo, al facha, al primo de los de enfrente,  
fue más cruel el terror de los que ganaron.

Declararon rebelde lo más decente,  
purgaron a los tibios y fusilaron  
al pedagogo, al ácrata, al inocente  
que defendió las leyes que profanaron.

Tantos años después siguen discutiendo  
quién era el malo, el bueno, el noble, el tirano,  
el Judas, el Caifás, el samaritano  
quién pierde cuando gana y gana perdiendo.

Los hijos y los nietos de la sangría  
hartos de tanto valle de los caídos  
en vez de odiar soñamos que llegue el día  
de rescatar la honra contra el olvido.

Se pide la memoria, no la venganza,  
la historia, no el garrote para el impune,  
aquí no hay más Quijote que Sancho Panza,  
y quedan demasiadas fosas comunes.

(*Interviú*, 2009)

The poem highlights some of the key threads that have woven their way through this dissertation: it breaks the binary *vencedores-vencidos* that had for decades hindered true progress between Spaniards; it recognizes the transmission of trauma from one generation to the next; it emphasizes the importance of remembering and honoring the past; and finally, it calls for justice for all those victims whose remains still lay in mass graves.

The issue of mass graves and memory politics is not unique to Spain. More and more, there is a desire to unearth the past, both figuratively and literally. For example, in Russia there is a renewed push to unearth the mass graves of Polish victims from the

Katyn massacre of 1940.<sup>153</sup> When Russia invaded Poland during World War II, thousands of Poles were taken prisoners and held in concentration camps; it is estimated that 22,000 Poles were killed during the Katyn massacre alone. There is archival (orders signed by Stalin) as well as testimonial proof of the atrocities. Historians and family members alike are urging Russia to declassify information about the massacre, to open the mass graves and identify the victims. Instead of honestly revisiting their history, Russia is trying to displace the blame on Germany.

And then there is the case of those who do not have direct access to their history, the Armenians for example. Hostile relations with Turkey and decomposition due to nearly 95 years of burial make the task of recovering and identifying the remains of Armenian Genocide victims nearly impossible. In a poignant article aptly titled “Bones”<sup>154</sup>, writer and professor Peter Balakian describes his interaction with a mass grave discovered during an oil dig in the Syrian desert:

I put my hand in the dirt, grazing the ground, and came up with hard white pieces. “Our ancestors are here,” I muttered. Then I began, without thinking, picking up handfuls of dirt, sifting out the bones and stuffing them in my pockets. I felt the porous, chalky, dirt-saturated, hard, infrangible stuff in my hands. A piece of hip socket, part of a skull. Nine decades later.

I filled my pockets with bones, compelled to have these fragments with me... In the absence of political action that would support the excavation and identification of his ancestors, Balakian must hold on to the fragments of a past that politicians would rather he soon forget. Spain’s Law of Historical Memory, created more than seven decades after the start of the Civil War and three decades after the death of Franco, is a hopeful sign for nations around the globe that have been waiting patiently for politicians to recognize and legitimize their history.

This dissertation was framed around questioning the limits of the Spanish transition to democracy. While I believed that the Transition was a success in so far as its main goals of democracy and peace, my quandary had been the lack of recognition for the victims of the Civil War and Franco dictatorship, and the concerted manipulation of collective memory through the *Pacto de silencio*. As John Hooper rightly argues:

It was perhaps inevitable that the Valle de los Caídos, Franco’s pharaonic mausoleum near Madrid, which he had hewn out of a mountainside after the civil war by forced labour, should remain a tourist attraction. It was perhaps inevitable too that his relatives should re-emerge as gossip magazine celebrities. But it was by no means unavoidable that notorious torturers from the Franco era should have been allowed to remain in the police and, in some cases, climb to the highest levels in the service. Nor was it unavoidable that journalists who once profited handsomely from their collaboration with the Franco regime should have been allowed to carry on seamlessly to become commentators and editors, only too ready to offer their views on how best to run a democracy. (84-5)

Because the change in government after the death of Franco was based on transition and not rupture, concessions and a certain amount of continuity were to be expected.

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<sup>153</sup> Stack, Megan K. “The old graves and the new hurt.” *Los Angeles Times*. Page 1, Column 1. May 20, 2009.

<sup>154</sup> Balakian, Peter. “Bones”. *New York Times Magazine*, Lives section. December 5, 2008.

However, political silence surrounding the injustices of the past should not have been part of the deal brokered by those in charge of the Transition. Admittedly, the task of transitioning a country from dictatorship to democracy is a delicate task that requires balance. Eugeni Gay explains that the issue of memory complicates the task of political transitions even further:

Tenen l’habilitat de barrejar dos conceptes que són normalment una mica excloents: *transició política i memòria*. Aquests han estat dos temes de difícil conciliació. Sembla que no es podia fer una Transició si fèiem molta memòria, i sembla que la memòria dificultava la Transició. Per tant, que hi hagi activitats que demostrin que es pot parlar de la Transició fent memòria del que pasaba abans i del que va passar durant la Transició, és un requisit ineludible d’una societat que vulgui ser moderna, que vulgui evolucionar. (256)

As difficult as the task was in 1970’s Spain, if 21<sup>st</sup> century Spain wants to be modern, it must evolve and reconcile the problematic surrounding the silenced collective memory of the past. The Law of Historical Memory is a step in the right direction, a step made possible by cultural players like Montserrat Roig and Juan Marsé who kept the door open for decades in the absence of political action. The democratic principles and plurality modeled by the novel continue full force in contemporary Spain—the 2009 *Premio Nacional de Narrativa* was awarded to Kirmen Uribe for *Bilbao-New York-Bilbao*. The novel is written in Euskera and has not yet been translated into Spanish. To award a national literary prize to a novel written in a minority language is indicative of the inclusive direction in which today’s democratic Spain is headed.

Eugeni Gay also underscores the importance of human dignity in justice, a concept similar to the “justice as fairness” model I outlined in the first chapter. To demand justice for the victims of the Spanish Civil War, to support the excavation of their mass graves, to expect recognition for the suffering endured on both sides of the conflict is not a question of politics, but rather of basic humanity.

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