

Martina, la rosa número trece: The Family Experience as National Tragedy

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Abstract

Scholars have used Derrida's term *hauntology* to characterize the Spanish Civil War's lingering effects in Spain, namely the presence of its ghostly traces in late twentieth and early twenty-first century cultural production. At the turn of the twenty-first century, there has been an explosion of memory texts about the lesser-known experiences of the war's victims. This essay examines Ángeles López's *Martina, la rosa número trece* (*Martina, the Thirteenth Rose*, 2006), a novel about the 1939 execution of Martina Barroso García and twelve other women, collectively nicknamed the 'Trece Rosas.' López's novel is the first to interpret the execution from the perspective of a family member, Martina's great niece.

Through an analysis of López's novel, it is possible to see the inner workings of Derrida's concept of *hauntology*, as well as a renewed effort by younger generations to research, confront, accept, and heal from the traumatic events that they did not personally experience. Martina's memory is not only a metonymic trope for what happened to many other people during the war but also for the impact that her death had on loved ones. As an example of historiographic metafiction, the self-reflective qualities of the narrative encourage readers to consider how some of their own ghost stories have shaped their individual and collective identities, as well as how the past has been recorded and transmitted. In an interview López states: "Todos tienen una Martina en casa" (Everyone has a Martina at home). Martina's story is emblematic of the larger process of recuperation of historical memory that is currently taking place in twenty-first century Spain.

Scholars, including José Colmeiro (2008) and Jo Labanyi (2002), have used a term that Jacques Derrida calls *hauntology* to characterize the lingering effects of the Spanish Civil War, namely the presence of its ghostly traces in late twentieth and early twenty-first century cultural production in Spain.¹ For Labanyi (2002, p. 2), "ghosts are the traces of those who were not allowed to leave a trace; that is, the victims of history and in particular subaltern groups, whose stories—those of the losers—are excluded from the dominant narratives of the victors". Labanyi (2002) observes that the marginalization of these ghost stories has resulted in their popularity, as shown by an explosion of memory texts and literature by war survivors and young authors alike. Historiographic novels such as Manuel Riva's *O lapis do carpinteiro* (1998), Javier Cercas's *Soldados de Salamina* (2001), and Dulce Chacón's *La voz dormida* (2002) incorporate metafiction into their narratives to explain how the ghostly tales of the civil war have been recorded and passed on to younger generations. This essay examines a similar novel, *Martina, la rosa número*

trece [*Martina, the Thirteenth Rose*, 2006] by Ángeles López, and how her account both documents and shows the investigative process behind the tragic fate of one of López's relatives, a victim of Franco's postwar repression.²

Much like the works by Rivas, Cercas, and Chacón, the novel by López weaves fact with fiction to break the silence about the suffering that took place during the civil war, and to exemplify how troubling memories from this event have remained unresolved even in the twenty-first century. *Martina* provides a detailed description of the inner workings of *hauntology*, a concept that speculates on how recollections from the past can linger in the present (Derrida, 1994, p. 10), as well as observations by Freud (1917) about mourning and melancholia.³ Her narrative shares the emotional journey of a young woman, Paloma Masa Barroso, as she discovers and comes to terms with her family's dark secret: the execution of her great aunt, Martina Barroso García, on August 5, 1939. The novel represents a joint effort between López, who wrote the account, and Paloma, who conducted interviews and archival research that serves as the historical basis for the novel. Paloma discovered that Martina was executed along with twelve other women who came to be known as the *Trece Rosas* [the Thirteen Roses].⁴ As the novel's main narrator, Paloma reflects upon the significance of Martina's death and in so doing, sheds light on a phenomenon that Marianne Hirsch (1997, p.22) calls *postmemory*: how younger generations remember and react to a past that they did not witness. *Martina's* intimate point of view, and the way in which the novel was a collaborative project between López and Paloma, sets it apart from other fictional accounts about the civil war. The novel encourages readers to consider how some of their own ghost stories may have shaped their individual and collective identities. In an interview, López (2007) states: "Todos tienen una Martina en casa. . . Un ser anónimo que estuvo en el sitio inadecuado en un momento inoportuno" [interview] (Personal communication, 3 August 2007).⁵ Martina's memory may be interpreted as a metonymic trope for what happened to many other people during the war and for the impact that their death had on loved ones. Paloma's examination of her family's dark past represents a renewed effort by younger generations to research, confront, accept, and heal from traumatic past events. The recuperation of Martina's memory is emblematic of the larger process of recuperation of historical memory that is currently taking place in Spain.

López's narrative oscillates between the present, 2004, and 1939, the year that Martina was executed. The parts of the novel set in 2004 are narrated by Paloma and retrace how she discovered Martina's story over forty years after the execution. The historical parts of the novel piece together and interpret the information that Paloma acquired from family members and through her independent research. López (2006) relies upon the data collected by Paloma as the main sources for the text, and includes scanned images of some of the documents in her account. Yet, at the same time, she also fictionalizes these details and integrates them with other inventive structures such as Martina's ghostly apparition. Through this creative process, López and Paloma create a new interpretation of Martina's legacy and assist the family in finding closure while commemorating their deceased loved

one.

The narrative strategies for telling Martina's story share traits with historiographic metafiction, a term coined by Linda Hutcheon in her seminal work, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988), to describe a variant of the historical novel. Historiographic metafiction employs a self-reflexive narrative style that aims to depict the past in a new way. Drawing upon earlier theorists including Hayden White, Paul Ricoeur and Michel Foucault, Hutcheon (1988, p.5) states that historiographic metafiction demonstrates how "a theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (*historiographie métafiction*) has made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past".⁶ Patricia Waugh (1984, p.2) adds that these works "explore a theory of writing fiction through the practice of writing fiction". López (2006, p.19) reflects upon the process of writing Martina's story in the novel's preface, describing herself as Paloma's messenger for writing the account: "Yo sólo he sido una escribiente. Simplemente sus manos; sus teclas, sólo. Porque esta historia anidaba en su cabeza desde hacía mucho, mucho tiempo".⁷ By transcribing Paloma's thoughts and discoveries onto paper, López acknowledges the act of creating an original interpretation.

The novel mirrors the observations by Hutcheon (1988, p.118) that historiographic metafiction demonstrates a postmodern desire "to close the gap between past and present of the reader and a desire to rewrite the past in a new context". In the preface, López writes about the importance of timing, along with her deliberate willingness to listen, in the re-discovery of Martina's story:

¿Por qué la vida se reduce al momento justo y al lugar exacto? Lo comprendo pero no lo entiendo. La manera más sencilla de decirlo es que nunca antes había prestado oídos. Cuántas veces escuché la historia, vi que todo estaba en orden y que no precisaba reparación alguna. Descifré mal las señales o, sencillamente, decliné interpretarlas. Hasta aquel preciso instante. (López, 2006, p.23)⁸

As the primary story teller, Paloma narrates Martina's death from the point of view of someone who did not suffer the same trauma as those who lived through the event. She, like other grandchildren and great grandchildren of war survivors, can investigate and talk about the civil war with more critical distance. Most other Barroso family members did not have the same ease of expression as Paloma with regard to sharing the details of Martina's death, nor did they openly discuss it for fear of political or social repercussions. In contrast, the event quietly haunted many of them.⁹ In postwar Spain and onward, citizens, especially those who opposed Franco, could not openly speak about their war experiences or their suffering. Even after Franco's censorship was abolished upon his death in 1975, there was much underlying fear and tension on both individual and collective levels.

The way in which family members suppressed Martina's memory is revealing of how the nation, on a larger scale, held on to the horrific memories of the Spanish Civil War for many decades. Throughout the early years of Spain's democracy, beginning in 1975,

Spain's democratic government tacitly encouraged adopting a "pact of forgetting", the *pacto del olvido*, which discouraged citizens from simultaneously examining the civil war and dictatorship years, and instead encouraged them to focus their attention on current and future goals for the new democracy. Politicians desperately wanted to establish a political "middle ground" that was void of any extremist tendencies and could provide a sense of peace, stability, and security (Aguilar Fernández, 2002, p.236). Adolfo Suárez, who served as Spain's president after 1976, was a strong advocate of *moderation* and *tolerance*, two defining concepts of the transition. In *Disremembering the dictatorship* (2000, p.1), Joan Ramón Resina draws upon Roland Barthes' *Camera lucida* (1981) to suggest that, like Barthes' assessment of photographs that depict the past, civil war memories after Spain's democratic transition only emerged in public as "visible yet immaterial traces". Resina (2000, p.9) also states 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". The silence during and after the transition meant that there were significant holes in public knowledge about the event, especially related to the ghostly recollections of the vanquished from the civil war.

Spanish citizens learned to live with the "ghosts" of the civil war and to discuss their memories of the vanquished in private or, in the case of the Barroso family, hardly at all. Nonetheless, the comings and goings of these ghostly thoughts point to something amiss in the present: the lack of open dialogue about the Spanish Civil War. Derrida (1994) examines how the past lingers in the present and evaluates the corresponding effects of this phenomenon. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida (1994, p.10) coins the terms *hauntology* and *spectropoetics* to explain how Marx and Marxism continue to "haunt" the living at the end of the twentieth century. For Derrida (1994, p.10), communism no longer exists in Europe but its memory and legacy continue in the present. As Labanyi (2002) and Colmeiro (2008) have noted, some of Derrida's ideas can be applied to the Spanish context and the memory of the civil war's vanquished. For Derrida (1994, p.18), the appearance of a specter underscores the gap between the past and present, and creates a situation that he describes as "time [that] is out of joint". He also warns of the negative consequences: "To be "out of joint", whether it be present Being or present time, can do harm and do evil, it is no doubt the very possibility of evil" (Derrida, 1994, p.29).

Martina's death triggered the creation of a situation much like what Derrida describes, where time is "out of joint". Each Barroso family member was devastated by her traumatic death. Yet, they hardly spoke about what happened, nor did they forget or heal from this memory. Their reactions demonstrate how unresolved and disturbing memories can be damaging. With the passing of time, however, Spanish citizens, particularly those, such as Paloma, who did not live through the war, became increasingly aware that, albeit difficult, the marginalized perspectives of the civil war's vanquished should not remain publicly unnoticed.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, children, grandchildren and great grandchildren of civil war survivors searched for more information on those who had died or disappeared during the war or postwar years. Individual citizens began to, literally and figuratively, “dig up” memories of the civil war’s vanquished, beginning with the creation of the Association for the Recuperation of Historical Memory (ARMH) in 2000.¹⁰ The publicity surrounding mass grave exhumations by the ARMH, along with other public manifestations, pressured the Spanish government to confront some of the atrocities from Franco’s dictatorship. In 2004, Spain’s Prime Minister Zapatero ordered the removal of statues in Madrid that celebrated Franco and his regime. In 2007, the *Ley de Memoria Histórica* [Law of Historical Memory] (52/2007) was approved, which sought compensation for those who suffered past hardships from the war and dictatorship.¹¹

Martina (López, 2006, p.24) reinforces the sentiments of the larger recuperation of historical memory movement by characterizing Martina’s story as an unresolved tale, “un cuento mil veces contado. [Pero] Nunca escuchado”, and the novel provides an artistic platform to bring recognition to her life.¹² As Derrida (1994, p.xix) argues, a specter or recurring memory of a deceased loved one reminds people in the present of the need to acknowledge the marginalized past:

It is necessary to speak of the ghost, indeed to the ghost and with it, from the moment that no ethics, no politics, whether revolutionary or not, seems possible and thinkable and just that does not recognize in its principle the respect for those others who are no longer or for those others who are not yet there, presently living, whether they are already dead or not yet born.

In order to heal, the family must speak *of* and *to* Martina, both of which are accomplished throughout López’s novel.

One chapter (López, 2006) gives a flashback to February 8, 1939 to describe Martina’s daily routine, as well as life with her family in Madrid. Martina was a seamstress by trade and used her sewing skills to support the fight against Franco. In 1937, she joined a communist youth organization, the *Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas* (JSU). According to López (2006, p.63-64), she hid her political activism from her family: “Hubo un tiempo en que repartía propaganda. . . O intentaba captar a nuevas jóvenes para la causa de convertir España en lo que ella imaginaba podría ser un lugar más justo. Incluso confeccionaba uniformes para los milicianos desde las sedes del Socorro Rojo. Todo lo hacía con miedo”.¹³ Martina’s involvement in the JSU led to her detention. The historian Fernando Hernández Holgado (2003, p.233) interprets the women’s judicial brief, which states that on August 3, 1939, the women were convicted of reorganizing the JSU and the communist party in order to commit “actos delictivos contra el orden social y jurídico de la nueva España”.¹⁴ They were executed two days later. Martina was twenty-four years old.

Some Spaniards, including López and Paloma, yearn to share these little-known tales in a public forum. López (2006) suggests that Martina’s story was destined to be told, which

plays out in a scene when Paloma, at fifteen years old, discovers a pair of baby slippers. The slippers were stored in her mother's closet.¹⁵ Martina had knit them in prison only a few days before her execution; they were a gift for Paloma's mother, Lola, who was an infant at the time. The slippers in the narrative are not only a family heirloom but also function as an "object of memory", or what Pierre Nora (1989, p.8) calls *milieux de mémoire*: the spaces, gestures, images, objects, rituals, actions, or words that cultures have used as forms of memory transmission.¹⁶ When Paloma opens the closet door, the slippers fall from the top shelf, catching her eye and also confusing her: "Sabía lo que estaba viendo, aunque no supiera qué era" (López, 2006, p.48).¹⁷ This life-changing discovery marks a new beginning for Paloma and the Barroso women's legacy: "Y entonces, todo acabó empezando. Todo empezó a comenzar" (López, 2006, p.45).¹⁸

Through an inner dialogue directed toward Martina, Paloma describes herself as the receptor of Martina's story: "¿Por qué soy la depositaria de esta herencia familiar?" (López, 2006, p.187).¹⁹ In *Specters of Marx* (1994), Derrida addresses the role of younger generations in confronting ghostly traces of the past by making a parallel with Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*. In his interpretation of *Hamlet*, Derrida (1994, p.21) notes that Hamlet recognizes that time is "out of joint" and he is called to "put time on the right path, to do right, to render justice, and to redress history, the wrong of history". Despite the fact that *Hamlet* has a tragic ending, the play touches on the notion of an *inherited desire* to correct history, much like Paloma's attraction to Martina's story. In López's novel, Paloma is put in charge of laying Martina's ghostly memory to rest.

After discovering the slippers, Paloma describes her desire to ask her mother about them as a biological need: "Mi objetivo no era llamar la atención sino obtener respuestas a una evidencia muda que ya anidaba en mi interior" (López, 2006, p.49).²⁰ Paloma's longing to know more about her family history and the slippers is not uncommon, but rather, aligns with the research by Marianne Hirsch (1997) on how Holocaust survivors and their children learn about and understand the past. In *Family Frames* (1997, p.22), Hirsch coins the term *postmemory* to highlight the difference between survivors' memories and those of their children: "Postmemory is a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation".

Paloma's optimistic intrigue about the slippers differs from her mother's reaction to them, perhaps because she has little understanding of the traumatic history behind the slippers. Lola, in contrast, is familiar with the atrocities associated with them. She, along with other family members, does not know how to speak about the slippers, thus pointing to how Martina's memory continues to haunt her relatives and remains an unhealed wound from the family's past:

Me miró extraviada como primera estación para terminar hincando sus ojos en el suelo. Como si estuviera haciendo un examen de conciencia. Tras unos segundos

su única elección pasó por relatar con voz monocorde, igual que una beata segunda avemarías en misa, la verdad compartida y silenciada, a través de las mujeres de la familia Barroso. (López 2006, p.49).²¹

Lola may have learned this behavioral response from the other women in the family who had close contact with Martina, especially Martina's sister, Oliva, and her sister-in-law, Manola (Lola's mother and Paloma's grandmother). Lola had little, if any, recollection of Martina because she was a baby when Martina died; however, she was surrounded by family members who were traumatized by Martina's death. This greatly affected her perception of the tragedy. In his study about the transmission of family stories, Daniel Thompson (1993, p.36) explains the power of these tales and how they can influence recipients: "[Family stories] may haunt, or inspire, or be taken as commonplace. But the way in which they are told, the stories and images which are chosen and put together, and the matters on which silence is kept provides part of the mental map of family members". López's novel uses fiction to imagine, interpret, and represent the family members' different reactions to Martina's incarceration and execution. The narrative retrospectively examines the trauma from various perspectives to show that history consists of multiple truths, a characteristic linked to historiographic metafiction (Hutcheon, 1988, p.109).

To assess the Barroso family's trauma, López's account describes the raw emotions that each person must have felt when Martina was taken away, especially those felt by Martina's sister, Oliva. The narrative focuses on the white shirt that Martina was wearing when she was taken to prison in order to demonstrate how each family member tried to maintain the illusion that Martina's circumstances were not so horrific. When the shirt comes back with bloodstains on it, Manola and Oliva take charge of cleaning it to keep the rest of the family from knowing about her gruesome experiences in prison. Manola orders Oliva to keep Martina's physical abuse a secret, thus perpetuating the cycle of denial: "Tu madre verá la ropa blanca tendida de la cuerda, porque no ha ocurrido nada. No hemos visto nada" (López, 2006, p.161-162).²² This situation would occur day after day, but the resulting stress was evident:

Las dos lo vieron: el lamparón, macula, mancha, borrón. Un mapamundi de vino tinto. Rojo tanino. Granate pimentón líquido. Sangre. Hecho a la medida del dolor encallado con imaginación ulcerada. Oliva necesitó irse de paseo por la vida; por el mundo. Por las estrellas. Lejos de aquellas manchas y el olor de Martina en el epicentro de ellas. (López, 2006, p.161-162)²³

Manola's cleaning symbolizes a desire to clear away her family's trauma, or keep it from being openly discussed. After Martina's execution, the family became accustomed to keeping a vow of silence: "Lo horrible, lo llevamos dentro. Los hombres y las mujeres somos así" (López, 2006, p.83).²⁴ Each family member independently dealt with his or her personal grief, and the Barroso women are described in the narrative as the keepers of her memory: "Ellas han preservado a través de la oralidad, como en las antiguas tradiciones orientales, esta historia de dolor, furia y memoria" (López, 2006, p.19).²⁵ Paloma learns

through her mother that it is taboo to utter Martina's name in front of Martina's parents.

In the narrative, Paloma struggles to understand this unspoken rule, and internalizes this information in a private monologue directed toward Martina: "[E]n casa de los abuelos, tus padres, querida Martina, hablaban de ti sin nombrarte ('Lolita tiene las mismas pecas que 'la otra', se parece a la 'otra. . .'). Como si pronunciar tu nombre invocara desastres, cataclismos y demás inclemencias impensables" (López, 2006, p.188).²⁶ In *On Collective Memory* (1992, p.71), Maurice Halbwachs writes about family memories and the assigned meaning of a name: "[By] pronouncing their names we experience a sense of familiarity as in the presence of an individual whose place in the wider context is well known, as is his relative position in regard to proximate individuals and objects". After her death, Martina's first name reminded family members of her tragic death, a highly emotional topic. They sought to separate themselves from the memory of the close relationship that they had had with her.

The family's suppression of Martina's first name and, more broadly, the suppression of her memory, aligns with the assessment by Sigmund Freud (1968, p.244) of the mourning process. In *Memory and Melancholia* (1917), Freud claims that the goal of mourning is to detach from the emotional bond with the person who died and move on: "Reality-testing has shown that the loved object no longer exists, and it proceeds to demand that all libido shall be withdrawn from its attachments to that object". The family passed through a state of mourning by choosing to detach from Martina's memory. However, they never reached the end of this mourning process when, using the description from Freud (1917, p.245), "the ego becomes free and uninhibited again". Instead, Martina's ghostly traces have haunted the family over several generations.

López's novel provides both a literal and figurative interpretation of this haunting, beginning with the appearance of Martina's specter. *Martina* recreates the night when Paloma's mother, Lola, as a young girl, sees a strange woman in her living room; the unknown woman is the ghost of Martina. When Lola describes the woman to her mother, Manola realizes that Martina's ghost has come to greet her: "La chica del quicio, con su brazo y abrazo invisible, su enagua antigua y prestada, sus pecas diseminadas por todo el cuerpo. . .volvía del ayer. Del siempre. Para darle el último aviso-mensaje-recuerdo-despedida. Manola lo sabía" (López, 2006, p.31).²⁷ In the narrative, the apparition is a symbol that works against the family's desire to forget, which López (2006, p.28-29) conveys by contrasting darkness with light: "Su sola presencia era como un depredador que mordiera oscuridad para generar luz".²⁸ The appearance of her ghostly figure is emblematic of the family's hidden secret and points to how Martina's memory could not be completely erased from the Barroso family's history, nor could Paloma forget it after she came across the slippers. Martina's memory resurfaced in a conversation between Paloma and her boyfriend four years after she made her discovery. As a history student, he takes interest in the "leyenda en las zapatillas," (López, 2006, p.51)²⁹ and helps Paloma satisfy

some of her curiosity by finding a newspaper article about Martina and the twelve other women who were executed.

For Paloma, the magazine article marks another important moment in her journey of self-discovery: “El primer paso que activaría definitivamente el metrónomo interno que se había puesto en tímido funcionamiento cuatro años atrás” (López, 2006, p.52).³⁰ By researching Martina’s story, Paloma realizes the traumatic effects that the horrific event had on her relatives, as well as many other people. She also begins to understand how Martina’s death shapes her own personal identity. Published in *Historia 16* in 1985, Jacobo García Blanco-Cicerón’s “Asesinato legal (5 de agosto de 1939): Las “Trece Rosas”” (1985) was the first piece of journalistic writing about the Thirteen Roses that was not written by a friend or family member. The article weaves together oral testimony, the limited archival research that was available at the time, and family photographs to tell the story of the women’s lives and deaths. While the report contains some minor inaccuracies, the narrative describes it as “tan reveladora como urgente” (López, 2006, p. 52).³¹ It made a significant impact in bringing the story of the Thirteen Roses to a larger audience, including to Paloma, as she explains it was: “[E]l artículo-llave que abriría un sinfín de puertas que, en aquel momento, todavía ignoraba” (López, 2006, p.53).³² In its contents, the article features a portrait of Martina. López’s novel includes this same photograph, emphasizing in the caption that it is the only adult portrait of her.

Martina’s photograph serves two functions in López’s text. First, it proves Martina’s existence, much like what Roland Barthes (1981) explains about photography in his seminal work, *Camera lucida*. For Barthes (1981, p.88), the photograph is not simply a copy of reality, but rather “an emanation of *past reality*.” Barthes (1981, p.82) also notes that photography attests to “what. . . has indeed existed,” even though Susan Sontag (1978, p.9), a theorist on photography, states that photographs only show fragments of the past: “Those ghostly traces, photographs, supply the token presence of the dispersed relatives”.

Second, the photograph, along with the information in García-Cicerón’s article, intensifies Paloma’s determination to piece together Martina’s story: “Después del artículo de aquella revista, *Historia 16*, no podía ni quería ni debía ni sabía detener la búsqueda que me guiaba hacia monstruos heptacefálicos, queridos fantasmas, desconocidos ancestros que eran, habían sido antaño de piel y hueso, uñas, cuellos y estómago con varias entrañas” (López, 2006, p.68).³³ The youthful image in the photograph makes Paloma aware that Martina no longer exists, and that she died at a young age. Barthes (1981, p.92) comments on similar reactions in his analysis of the historical relation between photography and death, and how “photographers capture death”.

Although she does not mourn for Martina by looking at the photograph, Paloma is acutely aware of both her absence and her presence, both tendencies that can be associated with what Hirsch (1997, p.20) has published about *postmemory* in the children of Holocaust survivors: “The Holocaust photograph is uniquely able to bring out this particular capacity

of photographs to hover between life and death, to capture only that which no longer exists, to suggest both the desire and the necessity and, at the same time, the difficulty, the impossibility, of mourning". The image also helps her maintain a connection with Martina, yet Paloma also grapples with unsettling thoughts about life and death.

Paloma compares Martina to herself and questions what Martina would be like, if she had lived, in the twenty-first century: "¿Cómo te veo yo, tía abuela? ¿la Martina del 39? ¿la del 2004, que me acompaña en mi búsqueda? La que nunca tuvo la edad que hoy yo tengo" (López, 2006, p.187).³⁴ When examining an image from the past, Barthes (1981, pp.100-102) discusses the comparisons that a viewer makes to the subject of the photograph:

In a certain photograph I believe I perceive the lineaments of truth. This is what happens when I judge a certain photograph "a likeness." Yet on thinking it over, I must ask myself: Who is like what? Resemblance is a conformity, but to what? to (sic) an identity. Now this identity is imprecise, even imaginary, to the point where I can continue to speak of "likeness" without ever having seen the model.

Hirsch (1997, p.267) also elaborates on the conflicting emotions associated with viewing a picture of a deceased person and discovering common traits: "We mourn the people in photographs because we recognize them, but this identification remains at a distance marked by incomprehension, anger, and rage... They are clearly in another world from ours, and yet they are uncannily familiar". Paloma is simultaneously drawn to and disturbed by the photo and finds it difficult to think about her future: "Me observas de nuevo desde la foto. Y se me empaña el futuro... ¿Qué haré, ahora que estás dentro de mi vida sin remedio? Lluve... Siento que mi vida se ha convertido en un país de lluvia... Que me impide olvidarte" (López, 2006, p.237).³⁵ Similar to the other women in her family, Paloma is bothered by Martina's story.

Paloma's inability to forget can be compared to the symptoms that Derrida (1984, p. xix) associates with hauntology. Instead of suppressing her concerns, however, Paloma is proactive in learning more about Martina. Her intentions align with the comment by Derrida (1984, p. 28) about the importance of "resting on the good conscience of having done one's duty" in finding closure to, and in some case justice for, unresolved past events. Paloma's actions also serve a cathartic purpose: "No sé si sirve para algo el recuerdo, como tampoco sé si la justicia del no olvido redime una vida de la tragedia. Sólo confieso que hago lo que hago porque necesito hacerlo. No por ti, sino por mí" (López, 2006, p.191).³⁶ Martina's memory provides Paloma with a chance to understand the profound significance of her family's loss. As Labanyi (2000, pp.65-66) suggests, the acknowledgement of how the remnants of the past have an influence on the present allows an individual or collective group to live with the ghostly traces. In the process of coming to terms with Martina's life and death, Paloma is determined not to allow the trauma of the past affect her as much as it did her older relatives: "No deseaba, a pesar de tanto frío predador como acumulaba mi búsqueda, que el pasado me atormentara también a mí tanto como a ellos" (López,

2006, p.79).³⁷ Instead, she wants to put this past injustice to rest so it does not continue to linger in the future.

Paloma's investigation represents the process of recuperating the memory of civil war victims from the third-generation perspective: those individuals who must unravel a past that they never knew. In his writing on postmemory, Ernst Van Alphen (2006, p.485) notes that second and third generation individuals must utilize a completely different approach, one that is much more mediated, in order to learn about the past:

For while the adult world asks first 'what happened,' and from there follows its uncertain and sometimes resistant route towards the inward meaning of the facts, those who are born after calamity sense its most inward meanings first and have to work their way outwards toward the facts and the worldly shape of events.

Paloma first learns about the traumatic feelings associated with Martina's death, and then must retrace the details to familiarize herself with the events. She sifts through much archival material and tries to make sense of the data in order to decipher the truth. Hutcheon (1988, p.114) observes this tendency in other narrators of historiographic metafiction: "As readers, we see both the collecting and the attempts to make narrative order". Paloma describes her search as one big puzzle with many pieces missing: "Porque hay demasiados silencios que rompen todos los puentes y sólo me queda recomponer partes de este doloroso puzzle al que le faltan demasiadas piezas" (López, 2006, p.186).³⁸ The only remnants that she has to work with are written words: "[L]eo y releo los restos mortales de una vida resumida en puntos" (López, 2006, pp.118-119).³⁹ Yet, she wants to fill in the gaps of the puzzle where she has no memory or information about this time. For Paloma, the archive is an eye-opening experience: "*El Diario Oficial de Guerra* me desconcierta tanto como la luz rubia y fría pueda atenazar a un murciélago acostumbrado a la oscuridad: miles de nombres. . ." (López, 2006, p.72).⁴⁰ Paloma concludes her search with the realization that Martina is a metonymic figure for the many victims of Franco's repression. Paloma comes to understand the dire effects of the war and the time that was lost, calling them "años irrecuperables" (López, 2006, p.158).⁴¹

While Martina's relatives, including Paloma, cannot compensate for past tragedies, *Martina* offers a chance to rewrite the past while also providing a subjective interpretation of events that nonfiction accounts cannot. In historiographic metafiction, creative subjectivity is especially vital for demonstrating how this type of writing is, according to Waugh (1984, p.7), "both a response and a contribution to an even more thoroughgoing sense that reality or history are provisional: no longer a world of external verities but a series of constructions, artifices, impermanent structures". In some instances, fiction writers have the creative ability to transform difficult truths and depict them in an optimistic way.

Fictional elaboration, particularly related to Martina's detention and the police interrogation scenes in the novel, allows López to characterize Martina as a strong and admirable woman and communicate to readers the value of remembering and passing on stories

about the vanquished from the civil war. When the police torture Martina, she is rebellious and resilient, just like her curly hair: “Silencio por parte de Martina. Un periódico convenientemente enrollado puede ser un arma brutal sobre el rostro de una chica con hambre y miedo. Fue en la cabeza, sobre su todavía rebelde mechón rizado; altivo” (López, 2006, p.170).⁴² In the narrative, memory is depicted as a vital coping mechanism for Martina, much as how the act of commemorating Martina serves a cathartic purpose for Paloma. While being tortured, Martina vows to remember the important people in her life, especially her brother Luis:

Y su oficio sería sólo el de recordar. Recordar para no olvidar. Recordar para mantenerse viva. Recordar para sentir como propio un cuerpo que había dejado de pertenecerle. Recordar. Incluso a Luis. Porque cada punzada de dolor le devolvía una porción de realidad. Recordar. . . Para cerciorarse que no estaba del todo equivocada. (López, 2006, p.140)⁴³

The text suggests that the slippers also help Martina to cope: “Aunque la puerta del sufrimiento no se cierra nunca, Martina encontró el modo de escapar al dolor. Fue que comenzó a tejer sin descanso, a afanarse sin tregua con el cuello saurio hincado sobre unas miniaturas de esparto, a las que daría forma definitiva con el paso de los días y las huidas” (López, 2006, p.206).⁴⁴ The slippers function as a trope to demonstrate the importance of remembering Martina’s legacy, and to show how it has been passed on from one generation to the next. The text fictionalizes the moment when Martina first passes on the slippers, with an embroidered butterfly on them, to Encarna: “Procure que Lolita pise el umbral de todos los lugares con estas zapatillas. Mi sobrina tendrá una hija que llevará un precioso nombre que tendrá alas. . . Como las mariposas que he intentado dejar escritas para las mujeres de esta familia” (López, 2006, p.42).⁴⁵ The butterfly serves as a symbol for regeneration and rebirth, in much the same way as historiographic metafiction allows for the renewed opportunity to reexamine history in a new light, with imaginative interpretation and from multiple viewpoints.⁴⁶

Martina, la rosa número trece brings into public view the complex implications of suppressing unresolved traumatic memories and demonstrates the negative effects of the trauma on both older and younger generations. The novel also adds to this perspective by depicting the determination of children and grandchildren to combat past trauma. Paloma’s search reveals a deep desire, a sentiment that perhaps may be felt by many Spaniards, to know what happened during this bloody internal conflict and how it has made a mark not only on her family history, but also on the nation’s historical trajectory.⁴⁷ As its main message, *Martina* emphasizes the necessity to remember, and in some instances, re-member, the ghosts of the civil war. The text serves a cathartic purpose by piecing together Martina’s ghostly traces and putting them to rest. It also provides the creative space to subvert difficult memories and turn them into positive ones. While Paloma ends her investigation without knowing all the intricacies of her great aunt’s life and death, she proudly comes to accept her findings as part of her own life and personal story: “Es sólo una historia. Una de

muchas, Una de tantas. Pero es la mía” (López, 2006, p.233).⁴⁸ López’s narrative offers inspiration for others to initiate their own journey toward discovery and self-discovery by researching the civil war. Instead of burying the past, individuals can take ownership of their family’s ghost stories. By simultaneously discussing, celebrating, and mourning the vanquished from the civil war, Spanish citizens, and the nation as a whole, can heal and move beyond past suffering.



Endnotes

1. For a more detailed discussion of hauntology, see José Colmeiro’s “Re-Collecting women’s voices from prison: the hybridization of memories in Dulce Chacón’s *La voz dormida*,” In: K.M. Glenn & K. McNerney, eds. 2008. *Visions and revisions. women’s Narrative in Twentieth-Century Spain*. New York: Editions Rodopi, pp. 191-210.
2. All of the translations from the novel are my own.
3. In *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917), Freud examines two reactions to loss: mourning, the normal response, and melancholia, the pathological reaction. While a mourner eventually overcomes the loss and moves beyond it, the melancholic individual cannot.

Instead, he or she displays self destructive behavior, marked by a lack of interest in the outside world, an inability to love, and low self regard.

4. Other literary and cultural accounts about the Roses include novels by Dulce Chacón (*La voz dormida*, 2002), Jesús Ferrero (*Las trece rosas*, 2003), theater productions by Júlia Bel (*Las trece rosas*, 2006) and Maxi de Diego (*Abuela Sol y las Trece Rosas*, 2008), Carlos Fonseca's book-length historical study (*Las trece rosas rojas*, 2004), and Emilio Martínez-Lázaro's film inspired by Fonseca's account, *Las 13 rosas* (2007).

5. Everyone has a Martina at home. . . An anonymous person who was at the wrong place at the wrong time.

6. Historians have heavily debated the narrative mode of representation of historical accounts, including whether events can be truthfully represented using techniques more commonly associated with fiction. In *The content of the form: narrative discourse and historical representation* (1987, p.27), Hayden White addresses the function of narrative structure in historical writing, concluding that "what distinguishes 'historical' from 'fictional' stories is first and foremost their content, rather than form". Hutcheon (1988) elaborates on this discussion by calling attention to how historians, and authors, semi-otically transmit knowledge of historical facts. Hutcheon (1988, pp.105-106) states that historiographic metafiction, through its postmodern and self-reflective structure, problematizes the possibility of historical knowledge and also "asks us to recall that history and fiction are themselves historical terms that their definitions and interrelations are historically determined and vary with time".

7. I was only the scribe. Simply her hands, her keyboard, only. Because this story has been dwelling in her head for a long, long time.

8. Why does life come down to the exact moment and time? I comprehend it but I do not understand. The simplest way to state it is that never before had I cared to listen. How many times did I hear the story, see that everything was in order and nothing was in need of repair. I decoded the signals wrong or, simply, I neglected to interpret them. Until that precise moment.

9. For a discussion of trauma theory and the process of working through trauma, see Cathy Caruth's *Trauma: explorations in memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995).

10. For more information on the ARMH, see Emilio Silva Barrera's *Las fosas de Franco: Crónica de un desagravio*.

11. Echoing the sentiments by López that "now is the time" to recognize Martina's story, which she wrote in the novel's preface, the Ley de Memoria Histórica [Law of Historical Memory] (52/2007) officially declares the need to recognize past atrocities related to the war's vanquished: "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” [It is the hour, therefore, that Spanish democracy and the living generations that today enjoy it honor and recuperate forever those who directly suffered injustices and offenses produced because of political, ideological or religious beliefs, during those painful periods of our history]. The legislation (52/2007) covers a wide range of topics, including the need for public recognition of victims of the civil war and Franco’s oppression, monetary compensation, and social and medical assistance to help those who were directly and permanently disabled by the war. The law (52/2007) also designates financial support to archival centers that conserve, and allow public access to, documents from the war and dictatorship.

12. A story a thousand-times told. But never heard.

13. There was a time when she handed out propaganda. . . Or tried to capture the interest of female youth for the cause of converting Spain to what she imagined could be a more just place. Including making uniforms for troops from the headquarters of the Red Cross. Everything she did in fear.

14. “criminal acts against the social and judicial order of the new Spain.”

15. See the attached photograph of Martina’s slippers by Jiménez Vadillo, J.C. [photograph] (Barroso family’s private collection).

16. In “Between memory and history: les lieux de mémoire” (1989), Nora writes about the tendency in modern society to archive the past, as well as the need to create places and objects where collective identity and cultural traditions can be formed and crystallized. He notes the importance of real environments of memory, or *milieux de mémoire*, as well as sites of memory, which he calls *lieux de mémoire*, to unite the past with the present.

17. I knew what I was seeing, but I didn’t understand what it was.

18. And then everything ended by starting. Everything began to begin.

19. Why am I the depositary of this family legacy?

20. My objective was not to get attention but rather to get answers to mute evidence that dwelt inside me.

21. She looked at me at first with a faraway glance then finishing with her gaze on the floor. As if she were examining her conscience. After a few seconds, her only option was to recount in a monotone voice, just like a devout woman reciting *avemarías* during mass, the shared and silenced truth, of the women of the Barroso family.

22. Your mother will see the white clothing hung on the line, because nothing has happened. We have not seen anything.

23. The two women saw it: the stain, spot, blot, smudge. The world map of red wine.

Tannin red. Deep red, liquid cayenne pepper. Blood. Made by measuring the pain with ulcerated imagination. Oliva needed to go and take a walk for her life, for the world. For the stars. Far away from those stains and the smell of Martina at the epicenter of them.

24. The horrible, we carry it inside us. Men and women, we are like that.

25. The women have preserved through orality, like the ancient oriental traditions, this story of pain, fury, and memory.

26. In the grandparents' house, your parents, dear Martina, they talk of you without naming you ('Lolita has the same freckles as 'the other girl', she looks like the 'other girl'...). As if pronouncing your name would invoke disasters, cataclysms, and other unthinkable inclemency.

27. The girl near the doorjamb, with her arm and her invisible hug, her antique, borrowed petticoat, her freckles scattered all over her body. . . returned from yesterday. From eternity. To give her the last warning-message-reminder-goodbye. Manola knew it.

28. Her very presence was like a predator that bites the darkness to generate light.

29. "legend in the slippers"

30. The first step that would definitively activate the internal metronome that had been put into lukewarm operation four years ago.

31. As relevant as urgent. For a brief analysis of Blanco-Cicerón's account and a revised assessment of the Roses' execution, see Mirta Núñez Díaz-Balart and Antonio Rojas Friend's article "Las Trece Rosas. Nuevas revelaciones sobre su ejecución" in *Historia 16*. 18 (1993): 21-25.

32. The article-key that would open an endless number of doors of which, at that moment, I was still unaware.

33. After the article in this magazine, *Historia 16*, I couldn't, didn't want to, shouldn't have nor did I know how to stop the search that was guiding me toward heptacephalic monsters, beloved ghosts, unknown ancestors who were, had been, in the past, skin and bone, nails, necks, and stomach and guts.

34. How do I see you, great aunt? The Martina of '39? The Martina of 2004, that accompanies me in my search? She who never reached the same age as I am today?

35. You observe me again from the photo. And my future is tarnished. . . What will I do, now that you are inside my life without remedy? It rains. . . I feel that my life has turned into a country of rain. . . that prevents me from forgetting you.

36 I do not know if remembering serves any purpose, just as I do not know either if the justice of not forgetting redeems a life of tragedy. I only confess that I do what I do because I need to do it. Not for you, but for me.

37. I did not desire, despite so much predatory cold that my search piled up, the past to torment me as it did them.

38. Because there are too many silences that break the bridges and all I can do is to put together parts of this painful puzzle that is missing too many pieces.

39. I read and re-read the mortal remains of a life summarized in points.

40. The archive disconcerts me as much as the blond and cold light can grip with fear a bat that is accustomed to darkness: thousands of names. . .

41. irrecoverable years

42. Silence from Martina. A conveniently rolled up newspaper can be a brutal weapon on the face of a hungry and fearful girl. It was on the head, on her still rebellious tuft of hair; proud.

43. And her job would only be to remember so as not to forget. To remember so as to stay alive. To remember so as to feel as her own a body that had stopped belonging to her. To remember. Even Luis. Because every stab of pain returned to her a portion of reality. To remember. . . to make certain that she was not totally wrong.

44. Although the door to suffering never closes, Martina found a way to escape the pain. She began to weave tirelessly, to toil without respite, her neck craned over some hemp miniatures, to which she would give definitive form with the passing of the days and the [momentary] escapes.

45. Try and get Lolita to step through the door to all places with those slippers. My niece will have a daughter who will bear a precious name that will have wings [a reference to Paloma, whose name means dove]. . . like the butterflies that I have tried to leave written for the women of this family.

46. The themes of regeneration and rebirth have been noted in several earlier literary interpretations of the Thirteen Roses' death. At least three poems [Flor Cernuda's "Fusilaron 'Trece rosas' de la libertad", Ángeles García-Madrid's "A Trece flores caídas", and Rafaela González's "Como mueren las estrellas."] were written during Franco's dictatorship and utilize nature imagery, especially stars and flowers, to pay homage to the Roses, celebrate their beauty, and express the idea that their young lives were cut short. González's poem was written only days after the Roses' death and circulated within Ventas prison, where they were being held, through oral story-telling. López calls attention to the butterfly to communicate similar ideals: the beauty and delicacy of life, and to show how, like nature, Martina's story has the possibility to be renewed each time it is told. For a more detailed analysis of the Thirteen Roses' poetry, see Linhard, T.A., (2002). "The death story of the 'Trece Rosas.'" In: *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 3(2), pp. 187-202.

47. For another example that shows a young woman's search into her family's civil war past, see C.M. Hardt's documentary, *Muerte en El Valle* (1996).

48. It is only a story. One of many, One of so many. But it is mine.

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