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AFFECT AS AN ANTIDOTE AGAINST THE PRIVATIZATION AND DEPOLITIZATION OF MEMORY

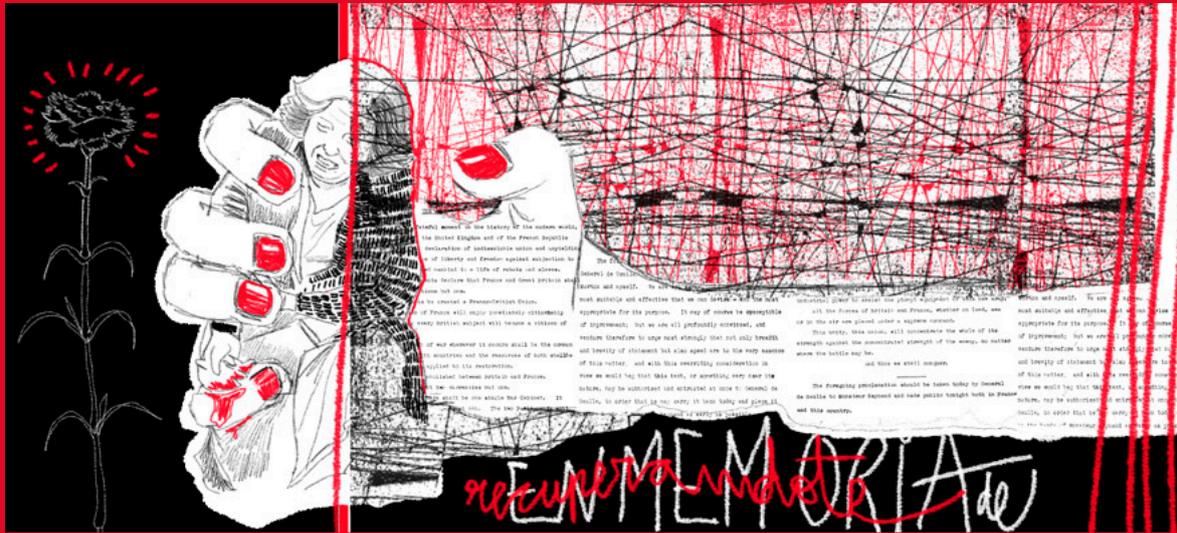
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Abstract || Some of the critical analyses of the so-called “memory boom” literature in Spain point to a privatization of memory and a depoliticization of this theme in narrative, both processes occurring also in Spanish society. In this article, we propose an analysis of the novel *Santo Diablo* (2004) by Ernesto Pérez Zúñiga and the play *El cartógrafo: Varsovia (1:400.000)* (2010) by Juan Mayorga, keeping in mind the Spinozan notion of affect (by way of Deleuze) as well as more recent contributions, as an antidote for privatization and depoliticization. Through affect, we offer a reading of these works that (trans)nationalizes the concept of memory and (re)introduces politics in the narratives about the recent violent past.

Keywords || Affect | Memory | Spanish Civil War | Narrative

0. Introduction

The incorporation of a specific and international lexicon, which is derived from various discourses related to memory, justice, and trauma, is among the most striking aspects of the so-called “memory boom” in Spain. In the words of the Uruguayan sociologist Gabriel Gatti, importing words previously associated to other contexts, like the Shoah or the dictatorships in the Southern Cone, into the Spanish case means that “un viejo problema español se ve[a], de repente, incluido en una categoría universal” (2012: 212). The internationalization of these discourses and terminologies has begun to penetrate various spheres: art, cinema, historiography, and the memorialist movement.¹

The internationalization of the discourses on memory and transitional justice have equally had an impact on narrative from the beginnings of the 21st century. The result is a literature marked by a strong sense of debt to the past and a moral imperative to (re)present the themes of the past, written in large part by a generation that did not live the war (and in some cases, hardly even the dictatorship); a generation of postmemory, to use the term coined by Marianne Hirsch. This literature has a primarily didactic function, to expose and shed light on people and events that were previously unknown, forgotten, or disregarded. The Danish Hispanist Hans Lauge Hansen writes on the narrative of “mímesis de la memoria cultural” with which the comparisons between the exhumations of the remains undertaken by associations like ARMH (2012: 89) are undeniable. The success of these works of “literary exhumation” can be read as a strong case against the management of cultural memory and history in Spain: Isaac Rosa writes that “si buscamos claves en la ficción, es seguramente porque no las encontramos en otros espacios” (2015: 12).

The title of the prologue written by Rosa, (cited above: “Y pese a todo, necesitamos más novelas sobre la Guerra Civil”), is, for this author, quite accurate, and yet there have been a number of critics (of which many are relevant and necessary) of the literature written about Spain’s violent twentieth century. Worth mentioning are two sociopolitical processes that the literature of recent years has assimilated and even worked to solidify: the privatization of memory and the depoliticization of the Civil War.² Despite the internationalization of the discourses on memory and justice, the traumatic past linked to the Republic, the Civil War and the dictatorship (which has been converted into a ubiquitous and debatable topic within the public sphere) has been understood primarily as a *private* trauma and lacking in political significance or connotation. According to Becerra Mayor, this happens in the majority of the novels written since 1989, even in those whose authors are writing from an

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1 | Since its founding in 2000, the ARMH uses the term *desaparecido* (literally ‘disappeared’) to refer to the more than 114,000 people who have as yet to be located since the Civil War and the dictatorship; the photograph in the series entitled *Desaparecidos* (2011) by Spanish photographer G. Sánchez; the historiography in *El holocaust español* (2011) by P. Preston and *Los Fosses del silencio: Hi ha un holocaust espanyol?* (2004) by M. Armengou and R. Bellis (based on the documentary by TV3).

2 | There is ample bibliography on the subject. It is worth highlighting three authors in particular who have worked on the two processes reflected in literature: see Peris Blanes (2011), Gómez López-Quifones (2012) and Becerra Mayor (2015).

apparently progressive and left-wing position (2015: 130).

Meera Atkinson and Michael Richardson, in the text *Traumatic Affect*, link the fields of trauma and affect studies and postulate the following question: if trauma in a society can be ignored or justified (and we could add reduced to private terms, and not collective or political), what can we do with affect, understood as a reaction generated by trauma or something which in itself generates trauma? (Atkinson and Richardson, 2013: 3). Or, to reformulate the question, what is it that motivates those who produce culture (beyond the economic motivations) to continue to (re)present the Civil War? What motivates people who are distanced not only temporally but also geographically or linguistically to be affected by the tragedies and the losses of the Second Republic, the Civil War or the dictatorship? How should we be inscribing the suffering of those past others who call us, who “speak to us,” within a discourse that is wider than that of just tragedy and suffering? Are we capable, today, of being affected by a tragedy that we know “is there,” despite the temporal distance? And to affect the other in our own vicarious trauma?

Affect theories can help us answer these questions in the extent that they allow us to (re)think the limits and connections between individuals, between the past and the present and of how the suffering of others in the past can touch, implicate and affect us. Through affect, this paper proposes a reading of the novel *Santo Diablo* (2004), by Ernesto Pérez Zúñiga, and the play *El cartógrafo: Varsovia (1:400.000)* (2010), by Juan Mayorga, both written and published at the time under consideration in the paper and that (re) present the tragedy and violence of 20th century Spain (and Europe). Affect allows us to consider these works as two ways of working against the privatization and depoliticization of the collective memory of the Civil War in the contemporary moment. Reading about the violence and loss during the Spanish Civil War involves thinking about how we are connected and affected not only by the past of a single country but also how we are implicated in other traumas, past and present.

1. Privatization and depoliticization of memory

As has been discussed, despite the renewed interest in topics related to the Second Republic and the Civil War,³ the understanding of memory has been privatized in Spanish society; fruit of, in the words of the historian Ricard Vinyes, “una decisión política de recluir al ámbito privado, o académico, los efectos de la dictadura, la guerra y la República” (2009: 39). This privatization of memory is a process that is repeated in other post-conflict societies: Argentina, Chile, Central Europe (Peris Blanes, 2011: 38). Even the well-meaning

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3 | As Gómez López-Quiriones notes, we cannot understand the interest in these topics as “un signo definitivamente esperanzador de una conciencia histórico-política en España” (2006: 14).

“Ley de memoria histórica” (Law for Historical Memory) passed by the Socialist Party left the responsibility for exhuming bodies up to the families.⁴ Put another way, digging up the past is, first and foremost, the responsibility of the interested parties: their suffering is understood as a sentiment that is wholly private, individual, and different in each case, in which the familial relationship is privileged over the political association of the nature of the crime committed.⁵ The final result is the idea that the losses of the Civil War are emptied of any notion of collectivity or of immediate political connection.

Literature and other means of representation have been influenced by these social processes of privatization and depoliticization. The privatization of memory can be seen in the so-called “mimesis of cultural memory” mentioned above, in which literature becomes a tool for the recovery and exhumation of history’s forgotten or ignored remains. Certain historical novels seek to shed light on some unknown aspect, episode or figure from the Civil War, whose function, in large part, is educational. Some examples include: *Mala gente que camina* (2006), by Benjamín Prado, *La voz dormida* (2002), by Dulce Chacón, *El corazón helado* (2007), by Almudena Grandes, and *La mujer del maquis* (2008), by Ana Cañil. These are narratives in which the protagonists are family members and individuals who attempt to clarify aspects of the family’s past that are unknown and are focalized on individuals and stories that do not go beyond the group in question. As necessary as these types of narratives may be, they do little more than reflect memory as a private concern.

Furthermore, the contemporary novel has, arguably, been emptied of political context: the focus on the suffering of the families or groups is not centered on political or historical causes. In his text *La guerra civil como género literario*, David Becerra Mayor cites the work of Carmen Moreno-Nuño who claims that the process of depoliticization has its origins in the Transition. Its politics of de-memory means the War has “pasado a formar parte de un pasado lejano y mítico,” thus literature is distanced from ideology in that “se relatan conflictos humanos eternos” that are lacking in connections to the real battles and suffering related to the political (Moreno-Nuño cit. in Becerra Mayor, 2015: 253).⁶ The result of this privatization is a reductionist literature that sums up the conflict as a “fratricidal war (without any political motive) in which people suffer primarily from “personal vendettas” and thus the individual (rather than sociopolitical or ideological processes) is the principal motor of History. Thus, the war becomes a sort of back-drop upon which the “la sangrienta guerra civil [que] le fue impuesta al pueblo español por el fascismo nacional y extranjero” disappears (Sánchez Vázquez in Becerra Mayor, 2015: 238). According to Becerra Mayor, “la despoliticación del pasado supone una reescritura de la Historia desde un presente que, lejos

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4 | The law considers the rights of families to demand exhumations, but “no involucra al sistema judicial ni la maquinaria del Estado [...] se entiende que la búsqueda de los desaparecidos del franquismo, pues, tiene sentido desde el ámbito privado, pero carece de relevancia pública y de sentido político” (Peris Blanes, 2011: 39). Equally, the ARMH also “insiste en primer lugar en los derechos de los familiares a saber, y por tanto, ahí donde intervenga a petición de familiares, se esfuerza por mantener una posición políticamente neutra” (Bernecker and Brinkman, 2009: 271).

5 | As a further example of the understanding of memory as private, it is worth pointing out that there are 170 groups registered (aside from those with a national framework) that defend the rights and interests of specific groups (political prisoners and members of the resistance, etc.), as well as the geographical inequality of these initiatives, limited as the majority are to Madrid, Catalonia and Andalusia (Bernecker and Brinkman, 2009: 268).

6 | Although Becerra Mayor takes up Moreno-Nuño’s thesis to explain the depoliticization in Spain, the author also points out how the ideological and economic structures of late capitalism that are characteristic of the latter half of the 20th century, have provoked a general depoliticization that includes society as a whole and goes beyond just historical novels and the Spanish state (2015: 254-255).

de enfrentarse a los vencedores de ayer y de establecer una ruptura con el pasado, permite que los vencedores no cesen de vencer” (2015: 38-39).

2. Affect

Given these two characteristics of contemporary literary production, is it possible to have a literature related to Spain’s violent twentieth century that does not engage with an understanding of memory as something solely private? Further, how can we (re)introduce the political into these narratives? Applying affect to the analysis of cultural representation equips us with the tools necessary to (re)think the relationships between people, between the literary text and its reader and between the violent past and the present, with the aim of combating the privatization and depoliticization of historical memory in Spain.

Affect theories, though diverse and varied,⁷ are linked to the concept of the *body* as understood by Deleuze in his writings on Spinoza: “un cuerpo afecta otros cuerpos distintos o es afectado por ellos; este poder de afectar o de ser afectado define también un cuerpo en su individualidad” (2004: 150). In the introduction to *The Affect Theory Reader*, Melissa Gregg and Greg Seigworth eloquently define affect as:

in many ways synonymous with *force* or *forces of encounter*. [...] In fact, it is quite likely that affect more often transpires within and across the subtlest of shuttling intensities: all the miniscule and molecular events of the unnoticed. The ordinary and its extra-. Affect is born in *in-between-ess* and resides as accumulative *beside-ness*. (2010: 2; italics in the original)

For our purposes, (the literary representation of the violent past of the 20th century), what is a body? According to Deleuze, a body is defined “no por su forma ni tampoco como un sujeto,” but “por los afectos de los que es capaz” (2004: 151). Jo Labanyi asks us to consider the literary text as a body because it is constituted as “a thing that does things,” that is, something that tells us something concrete, something capable of touching us, of hurting us, of affecting us. In so doing, Labanyi proposes distancing ourselves from the idea of the cultural text solely in terms of representation: “it might be strategically useful to look at cultural texts not through the lens of representation (representation of what?) but as examples of expressive culture” (2010: 229-230). Along the same lines as Sara Ahmed, who proposes an understanding of emotions as *practices* rather than states, Labanyi argues for the cultural text as a *cultural practice*.

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7 | Labanyi distinguishes between emotions and affect: emotions are, by definition, the result of a conscious decision, often related to moral judgements (love, hate, etc.). Affect more properly refers to the precognitive and pre-linguistic response to external stimuli, occurring before the conscious can process it (2010: 224).

For the present analysis, affect is understood as going farther than empathy or identification, as an “unconditional and response-able openness to be affected by others – to be shaped by the contact with others” (Athanasidou et al. 2008: 6). Affect is disarticulated from the private, given that its very definition is conditioned by the interrelationship between bodies. When applied to the literary text, conceived of as *cultural practice*, this interrelationship becomes the stage for affects; a space in which the relationships between people and the relationship between the text and the reader is constructed through this interconnection and capacity for one to affect the other. *Narrative practice* is then considered as a privileged act, capable of transcending physical and temporal barriers by juxtaposing through its pages contexts and times that, in one way or another, could not coexist. Not only does it allow us to highlight but also to generate the connections and associations that exist (Athanasidou et al., 2008:7).

Both Pérez Zúñiga’s novel and Mayorga’s play constitute testimonies of how the individual (a body) is necessarily affected and touched (or even traumatized) by the “affectability” of the other. Both texts achieve this on two levels: first the characters in the works are implicated, are affected by the suffering of others in the moment being narrated; on a second level, both texts insist on our own implication not only in the suffering that occurs in the text, which is undertaken through the act of reading, but also in our implication in the suffering and violence that is distanced from today. This gives the *narrative practice* an undeniably political aspect and the effect produced is of two parallel and simultaneous processes (one at the diegetic level, the other in the act of reading).

By (re)introducing the political into the narrative and by (trans)nationalizing memory, the works in question constitute what Nancy Fraser would call a *transformative* strategy in regards to injustice (2005: 11). More than just considering the function of these two texts as either educational or a comparison of memories (to update memories), the objective of these two works, in considering the “texts that do something,” is to tease out the old temporal, generational and geographic limits that defined the scenarios from which those affected by the violence of the past could give testament to their suffering and reclaim not only recognition but also justice. As such, the two texts allow us to overcome forgetting, the “State’s Good Memory,” national borders, and the passage of time.

2.1. Characters affected or the transnationalization of memory

Narrated in the third person by a narrator that does not reveal his or her identity until the final chapter, *Santo diablo* tells the story of the conflicts between the two antagonistic forces in the fictional town of Vulturno. Unlike the majority of the novels published in recent years,

Santo diablo barely references its historical moment, although it is clear that it is set in the final years of the Second Republic, before the military coup. Even though it is a novel about the Civil War (according to its author), Pérez Zúñiga also informs us that the novel “se inspira en las condiciones sociales y en los personajes que protagonizaron o precedieron, décadas antes, nuestra Guerra Civil” (2010: 57).

In this fictional town, whose name is reminiscent of suffocatingly hot winds, we find two opposing forces. On one side are those led by the ultra-Catholic landowner, Luis Sánchez de León y Bontempo, the self-monikered ‘Master’, in connivance with the church and even with Italian fascists who have come to Vulturno for the express purpose of offering their help in subduing the workers’ inevitable rebellion. On the other side are the laborers, illiterate workers who live in the most abject misery, but who are well versed in liberatory rhetoric due to the efforts of a handful of intellectuals who find themselves allied with them, and led by one of the protagonists, Manuel Juanmaría.

Most noticeable about the two opposing groups (aside from the exaggerated characterization) is the great disparity of wealth between one group and the other. The workers’ eventual rebellion and siege of the sanctuary in the area arises from decades of misery, poverty and injustice, as evidenced by the constant mention of the hunger faced by the workers: “usaban las fuercecillas del hambre en ganar las miserias del jornal y, sobre todo, en paciencia” (Pérez Zúñiga, 2004: 99).⁸ The living conditions can be traced back over generations to that of Manuel Juanmaría’s father, who “dedicaba las tardes a la educación de los jornaleros y a rebelarlos contra la miseria” (*SD*: 85-86). Far from a short-lived poverty, the workers’ rebellion is described as the next link on a long chain of ancient sufferings, a history unto itself that encourages them to continue the resistance “porque habían sacado la fuerza para golpear, no de sus músculos hambrientos, sino de una historia viva y bullente de humillación y pobreza” (*SD*: 171).

The author links the workers’ permanent defeat and humiliation to the historical groups who fought for the right to control the land and the consequent sackings and fires that always arose from a struggle for power:

Las llamas que lamían el teatro, el foro, los graneros, eran lenguas que hablaban fuego para decir que todo aquel vivir de hombre no era más que injusticia en la desigualdad y falta de libertad en el poco poder de unos frente al inmenso de otros. (*SD*: 77)

The ruins of ancient civilizations are present throughout the novel in the descriptions of the town of Vulturno and the surrounding area: “la Catedral, construida sobre la antigua mezquita” (*SD*: 25);

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8 | AFrom now on, this edition of *Santo diablo* will be cited as *SD*.

“Romana, mora, judía y, durante los últimos siglo, católica, [...] es una ciudad blanca bajo el fuego del verano” (SD: 13). The workers see their fight as part of this history of injustice, defeat and conquest; just like them, for the communities that came before, the same land that gives life “no conoce los antaños sino un continuo presente de materias precederas,” where even in the present you can feel the “el bullicio de la antigua ciudad, la pasión y muerte de cada uno de los habitantes” (SD: 85, 87).

So strong is the connection between the workers’ fight and the civilizations past that History’s victims break into the present in the shape of ghosts. The ghosts appear around the ruins of the ancient city called Ambusta, an area that provokes shivers “donde todo el aire es presencia de difuntos” (SD: 149). According to Juanmaría’s brother-in-law, the ghosts return in order to “jorobar,” entering houses, removing furniture, because they cannot rest: “Mira qué mal llevan el más allá, qué intranquilos están, como buscando algo que nunca encuentran” (SD: 93).

Despite their differences, the workers form part of other communities and other battles: for the lack of land, resources, rights, etc. Worth noting is that the ghosts in the novel are not only present around the ruins, rather they are inside the homes of the families: Juanmaría’s mother-in-law continually sees the ghosts of her three sons, who died at different times, because she has become inconsolable over their loss. Similarly, the ghosts of civilizations past return because they died from, what they consider, injustice, treason, invasion, just as the workers suffer the oppression of the Master, who controls the means and conditions for the suffering:

Tejados construidos por manos árabes, judías, cristianas, todas trabajaron el mismo día inmóvil para cobijar destinos diferentes, creencias y costumbres que les condenarían a una guerra continua contra sí mismos, y contra sociedades que albergan la semilla guerrera de otras costumbres y creencias. ¿Eso era el ayer, el hoy, el continuo mañana? (SD: 191-192)

Despite the disparate unjust conditions of the ghosts and the workers, it is possible to see how the lines between the past and the present are erased between them. The workers of Vulturno are incapable of separating their suffering from the suffering of others to the extent that even the past “touches” them.

In Juan Mayorga’s *El cartógrafo* (*Varsovia 1: 400.000*) the protagonists are equally affected by the suffering of others, in spite of the temporal and geographic distances that separate them from certain past traumas and those who suffered them. Mayorga’s text was published in *Memoria – política justicia* in 2010. In *El cartógrafo*, Blanca, the protagonist, is affected by the suffering of the victims

of the Warsaw ghetto and the Holocaust. As she is not Jewish, this suffering need not be her own and yet it helps her to look inside herself and confront her own losses.

Blanca and Raúl, a married Spanish couple, arrive in Warsaw so that he can take up his new position at the Spanish embassy after having lived and worked in various cities around the world. Blanca travels around Warsaw and discovers the history of the city, its streets, the limits of the old ghetto, and the suffering of the 400,000 Jews who were confined there. In the first scene, Blanca returns home late after a walk through the city during which she saw an exhibition of photographs supposedly taken in the ghetto. After seeing the exhibition, she goes in search of the same streets she saw in the pictures; she is surprised that some of the street names remain the same and, at the same time, she also finds many empty spaces:

BLANCA. [...] Una de las fotos decía que ahí empezó la rebelión, pero no hay señal de ello [...] Pero lo que más impresiona, es el vacío alrededor, el vacío que rodea las estatuas. [...] En una de las fotos esa calle estaba llena de niños, era la calle más alegre del mundo. Hoy no hay nada. Aquí me di cuenta de que era de noche y de que había estado toda el día caminando. (Mayorga, 2014: 605)⁹

Blanca is perplexed by the absence she finds in Warsaw; by all the History linked to the places she visits. How can they be the same places? They both are and are not the same, because things are missing, people, buildings, and yet some of the names and spaces are the same. In spite of the empty spaces she finds, Blanca is attracted, horrified, affected by the mere act of sharing a space, of co-existing with the same streets that were witnesses to what had happened years earlier. Blanca says to Raúl: “Esta casa, mira el mapa. ¿Te das cuenta de que nuestra casa está dentro del gueto?” (EC: 605).

Blanca’s attraction to the history of the streets and people that were condemned to perish transcends any generational or national connection. After her first walk, she apologizes for arriving late: “Lo siento. Perdí la noción del tiempo” (EC: 603). Her interest and feelings lead her to want to make a map showing the limits of the ghetto, “un mapa para los que viven aquí. [El gueto] es parte de la ciudad. Debe estar en el mapa», y “marcar en el suelo la silueta del gueto” (EC: 613). Raúl, however, is uncomfortable with his wife’s insistence and does not understand what all this has to do with them:

RAÚL. Imagina que un extranjero llegase a Madrid dándonos lecciones sobre nuestra historia. Que se le ocurriese marcar en el mapa, en el suelo, las atrocidades de nuestra Guerra Civil. ¿No te sentirías ofendida? [...] No somos polacos, no somos judíos, no somos alemanes. ¿Qué ciudad no tiene sus heridas, sus sombras? (EC: 613)

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9 | From now on, this edition of *El cartógrafo* will be cited as EC.

In the face of Raúl's criticism, Blanca insists. For her, her ideas for the development of a map for the inhabitants of Warsaw and to mark the streets has nothing to do with wanting to educate or commemorate ("no se trata de museos ni de monumentos"), and even less to do with correcting or criticizing. Rather, it is about recognizing our physical connection to the past through the spaces that we share, even if we are not always aware of it, recognizing that the bodies of the past affect us.

The notion of the coexistence of different people and of two distinct moments in time is also made clear through the structure of the play. The scenes in which Blanca speaks about her walks and her discoveries on Warsaw's streets are interspersed with others in which The Elder and The Girl, two Jewish people who live in the ghetto in the 1940s, appear. Later there are scenes in which Deborah, a professional cartographer (and survivor of the ghetto) who makes maps for school books and as an independent cartographer, also appears. In the scenes that take place during the ghetto years, The Elder, an old cartographer who never leaves his house, teaches The Girl the importance of map-making, and she goes out into the streets of the ghetto and makes maps to show the Elder and to tell him about what is happening outside his house.

The two moments in time (the time of the ghetto and a vague moment "entre 1940 y la actualidad") are brought together in some scenes in which there is no dialogue, only explanations of the actions of people who inhabit different moments in time but share the same spaces despite these temporal rifts: scene six "*Blanca camina siguiendo un mapa. La Niña mide distancias con sus pasos*»" (EC: 612) or the twelfth scene "*La Niña mide distancias con sus pasos. Blanca dibuja en la tierra un mapa*" (EC: 626). Even though the characters do not interact in these scenes, it is possible to see how Blanca and The Girl inhabit the same spaces despite the temporal difference.

Finally, the affect and interest that Blanca feels for Warsaw's violent past, despite her husband's criticism, take on a new meaning through the juxtaposition of her insistence and worry with comments made by The Elder, while he sees in 'real time' the horror unfolding before his eyes: "¿Cómo puede nadie asombrarse de lo que está pasando?" (EC: 611) and "¿Pueden dormir, comer, besarse, sabiendo lo que sucede a este lado?" (EC: 630). In spite of the temporal distance, it is as if Blanca can hear The Elder's questions about the catastrophe being lived in the ghetto. Blanca's capacity to be affected by what is left of the screams and whispers that resound and emanate from the cobblestones of Warsaw's streets are demonstrated by her desire to remain in Warsaw:

RAÚL. Puedo conseguir un destino tranquilo en algún lugar agradable donde tengamos tiempo para nosotros.
BLANCA. Pide ese traslado si quieres. Yo no voy a irme de Varsovia.
RAÚL. Desde que estamos aquí, todo ha ido a peor. Tienes que salir de aquí. Voy a sacarte de aquí.
BLANCA. No voy a irme de Varsovia. [...] No voy a irme de Varsovia. (EC: 633-634)

In another scene, which takes place years later, Deborah the cartographer echoes this idea when she explains some maps she has made for herself: we can live with the past through space, be aware that we share spaces that were witness to atrocities, or the opposite, we can live ignorant of and disconnected from others. Deborah talks about how she would like to make biographical maps in which she would show the places frequented by famous people from different times in Warsaw: “Resulta asombroso comparar algunos de esos mapas. Ver cómo hombres separados por siglos eligen las mismas calles, los mismos rincones” (EC: 639). To this Dubowski, the man interrogating her, replies: “También puede suceder lo contrario. Que dos personas vivan al tiempo en una misma ciudad, pero en mundos distintos” (EC: 639).

Towards the end of the play, Raúl tells Blanca that he is worried about her, that he has spoken with her family and they want her to return to Madrid. When asking her about the maps she is drawing based on her own silhouette, and which occupy all of her time, we find that she sees in her own body, as on a map, the different places and people that have marked her:

BLANCA. Miras tu cuerpo y aparecen cosas. Personas, animales, palabras. Colores, fechas. Sonidos. Lugares. Madrid. Varsovia. Londres. Cosas que estaban separadas, aparecen juntas. Cosas olvidadas vuelven. Tú cuando te conocí. Alba el día que nació. Alba el primer día de colegio.
RAÚL. Blanca...
BLANCA. Alba caminando sola por Londres. Alba el día que murió.
RAÚL. Blanca...
BLANCA. ¿Por qué nunca hablamos de ella?
RAÚL. No hablamos de ella porque nos hace daño hablar de ella. (EC: 643)

We can see how, like what Dubowski tells Deborah during their conversation, after suffering the death of their daughter, Raúl and Blanca are capable of living in the same place, but in different spaces. And after this scene, we learn why Blanca allows herself to be affected by all the losses that surround her in Warsaw: after learning about her daughter’s physical vulnerability after she commits suicide in London, Blanca is able to recognize the physical vulnerability of all the death and destruction that are still present in the old streets of the ghetto. And it is only through this recognition of the horror and suffering of the Jewish people in the ghetto and in allowing herself to

be affected by History that she can look inward and understand her own vulnerability, her own loss, the loss of her daughter.

Judith Butler considers this idea of bodily vulnerability and how this can help us identify with and implicate ourselves in the losses of others: “Loss has made a tenuous ‘we’ of us all. And if we have lost, then it follows that we have had, that we have desired and loved, that we have struggled to find the conditions of our desire” (2004: 20). In her book *Prekarious Life*, Butler recognizes the importance of recovering the individual body in the struggle for and the vindication of individual rights (the rights of the LGTB community, women’s rights). Even the author, however, argues that while this language is useful within the liberal-democratic framework, “it does not do justice to passion and grief and rage, all of which tear us from ourselves and bind us to others, transport us, undo us, implicate us in lives that are not our own, irreversibly if not fatally” (2004: 25). Though we may come to reclaim our bodies (and this is both good and necessary), this is not, for Butler, a given, but rather an achievement that is not guaranteed. If we remember and understand our original state as one dependant on others, our connection to other people and our way of being for others, we understand violence as the violation of this connection that links us to others (2004: 27).

The concept of interconnection between bodies sheds light on the characters of *Santo diablo* and *El cartógrafo* and how they can be affected by the past, to see themselves implicated in the violent acts suffered by others. In both texts, this affect transcends temporal and geographical limits in a process that is the inverse of the privatization of memory. The workers who rebel in Pérez Zúñiga’s novel, in an ancient fight for the rights of the masses in the face of the powerful, understand their own miserable conditions within a historical framework of repression, exploitation and injustice through the appearance of ghosts who, in their agitation, force their presence onto the narrative moment. In the case of Mayorga’s play, Blanca is seen to open herself up to the voices that had forcibly been silenced and even allows herself to be touch, affected and hurt, even though she is not, as her husband reminds her, Polish, Jewish or German.

2.2. The reader as an implicated body or the (re)politicization of memory

Just as we see the protagonists of the two works implicate themselves in the suffering and the struggles of others, and in other times, both, toward the end of their narration, establish a strong connection between the narrated events, the people, their own privations and losses, and the reader, the time of writing, publication and reading. In the second-to-last chapter of *Santo diablo*, the narrator reveals his identity as the librarian of Vulturno’s always deserted public

library and the grandson of the town's historian (who witnessed the workers' rebellion and the subsequent shooting of the leader, Manuel Juanmaría). Conspicuously dated in May 2003, the librarian-narrator claims to want to reveal the town's history because of his "afecto por la verdad" and to make known what his grandfather kept silent on the history of the uprising that occurred in the town (SD: 390). The narrator admits to including the only footnote in the novel (which appears much earlier in the text) that explains the origins of the sanctuary that was taken by the workers and is an object of adoration of the townspeople, among whom are the antagonist fascist forces. According to the narrator, the church's status as a place of worship dates back to the Iberian era, before the Arab invasion, although its origins as a non-Catholic sanctuary are not common knowledge. The librarian claims to have included the information on the church in the text because he knows its history and is the guardian of the information: "y así será mientras los que quieren ocultarlo no quemem mi Biblioteca como han hecho con la de Bagdad" (SD: 390). The reference to the tragic burning of the National Library and Archives of Iraq, during the first weeks of the American invasion in 2003 in which Spain also participated, extends the connection between the catastrophe of the conquests and re-conquests of the Civil War with contemporary conflicts.

The reference to the Iraq war, which started one year prior to the novel's publication and which was strongly criticized by Spanish civil society, forces the reader to feel directly implicated in contemporary injustice. The precise allusion to the invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq suggests and forces readers to connect the workers' struggle, the Civil War and the ashes of civilizations past (whose struggles were different and in many ways are unknown to present society) with the present. Suddenly, speaking about the Civil War, an era that has in some senses been relegated to history books and the private sphere and excised from the sociopolitical, demands that we speak about past and present wars, the unjust foundations of the present and those that are being built today. In digging in the past we will always find ashes which, whether we like it or not, whether we are aware of them or not, cling to us, belong to us. The author himself summarizes his novel in the following reflection: "Me hice novelista con *Santo diablo* justo porque necesitaba explicarme, imaginar y contar una historia que, sin haberla vivido, formaba parte de mi herencia tanto como el idioma con el que hablo y escribo" (2010: 58).

This, then, is how politics is written back in to the narrative of the Civil War. In *The Future of Trauma*, Michael Rothberg points to two recent tragedies, the burning and collapse of clothing factories in South-East Asia, to talk about two types of violence. The first, that suffered by the survivors of the burnings and their families, and the second, the

existing system of violence that is, in itself, traumatic: the structural violence in the exploitation in the neoliberal, capitalist era. According to Rothberg, in a globalized world controlled by late-capitalism the term *bystander* is no longer useful as a means of describing our position when faced with these kinds of tragedies: “we are more than bystanders and something other than direct perpetrators in the violence of global capital” (2014: xv).

In Pérez Zúñiga’s novel, in reading about the conflicts in Spain in the 20th century, it is worth bearing in mind both Benjamin’s *Angel of History*, with its vision of History as a series of tragedies on top of tragedies, and also our own direct and indirect implication in the suffering of others. Through my own reading of *Santo diablo*, the novel does more than simply criticize the war in Iraq. Rather, it introduces the burning of the library and national archive in Baghdad in a chapter in which the narrator himself declares his intention and desire to clarify the events that occurred in the years leading up to the Spanish Civil War, a war that the novel’s readers can feel is their own, as part of their history. In effect, this calls attention to how we are, each of us, implicated in the contemporary violence committed by those who govern us and in our name.

In *El cartógrafo* something similar happens when, near the end of the novel, Blanca shows Raúl how to understand his body like a map. Blanca, still fascinated by Warsaw’s history and especially for the story of The Elder and The Girl cartographers, meets a now older Deborah, who Blanca believes is The Girl from the story. Blanca informs Deborah that she found her after finding her book, *Cartografía de la ausencia* “mapa del exilio republicano español, mapa de la limpieza étnica en Yugoslavia... Una cartografía de la desaparición” (EC: 646). Deborah, a Holocaust survivor, shows her other maps that she has done that always take her experience of the ghetto as their starting point. Among the maps she shows Blanca is the one she made in Sarajevo that shows where the snipers were located during the war and the “Map of Europe for Africans.” Deborah comments on the latter saying, “desde que me jubilé, sólo hago mapas útiles. Cómo entrar, dónde obtener ayuda... mapas para gente que huye. Yo veo el mundo desde el gueto” (EC: 648).

Like the mention of the Iraq war in *Santo diablo*, the juxtaposition of these tragedies from past decades with more recent traumatic events reinvigorates the relevance of the Holocaust and the Spanish Civil War for contemporary readers. As Rothberg suggests, the term *bystander* no longer serves, and as time passes the best way to commemorate and remember the tragedies and losses of the past is to concentrate on our own implication and complicity in contemporary violence like the war in Iraq or the deprivations suffered by migrants who arrive in Europe, fleeing from physical, political or

economic violence. According to Butler in *Precarious Life*, the object of mourning is to establish a community that begins with our own experiences of violence and ends with our understanding of our own complicity in other violent acts (2004: 19). This is a vision that reminds us of Fraser's *all-affected principle*, according to which every subject affected by injustice has the moral right to demand justice.

In the case of the literary representation of the Spanish Civil War, some literary critics have already echoed this idea when they write that it "could be reconnected with some of the most pressing political discussions of our time" (Gómez López-Quiñones, 2012: 89). To avoid understanding the losses (both material and abstract) of the Spanish Civil War, the dictatorship or other tragedies as merely static events, relegated to history, "one of the ways in which the memory of Francoist repression and the tragedy of exile can be salvaged from distortive fossilization is by endowing it with an explicit contemporary relevance" (Faber, 2005: 216). Both *Santo diablo* and *El cartógrafo* (re)introduce the political into the narratives on Europe's violent past in the 20th century, making clear our own implication in the suffering of others in the present.

3. Conclusion

In his criticism of the novels on the Civil War written since 1989, David Becerra Mayor references Benjamin's fifteenth thesis when he writes that "estas novelas no cuestionan el presente, no pretenden disparar contra los relojes." In my opinion, the two texts considered above do, however, shoot the clock towers in that they alter the vision of the past as something that should not or does not affect us today. In *El cartógrafo*, The Elder explains to The Girl that time is the most difficult thing to represent on a map, but it is also the most important: "Lo más importante del espacio es el tiempo" (EC: 611). Deborah reiterates this idea towards the end of the play during a walk with Blanca when she says: "No basta mirar, hay que hacer memoria, lo más difícil de ver es el tiempo." She recognizes that in time everything is erased, although "lo último que se borrará es lo que nadie podría dibujar. [...] El ruido del gueto, los gemidos que nunca cesaba, de día y noche, el silencio del gueto" (EC: 649). These two works create narratives that demonstrate the connections and hidden dimensions between the past and the present. At the same time, in paying attention to how affect theories consider the immanent capacity of our bodies to touch and be touched by the others, reading these two texts can take us beyond the temporal connections of past-present. They also show us how one is not only affected by the past and present but also how we are implicated in and form part of contemporary and future injustice. In other words, speaking of the Civil War (or any other humanitarian tragedy that result in unjust suffering) necessarily

requires speaking about other wars, other tragedies and injustices. This creates a wide field that includes other contexts and reinfuses narratives on the violent past with political connotations that allow us to construct a collective of direct and indirect witnesses of the injustice that transcends the limits and borders of forgetting. Only then can we become aware of our own implication in on-going acts of injustice.

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