

THE SPECTER OF FRANCO

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## ABSTRACT

Human rights violations that occurred almost seventy years ago are still a social issue in Spain today. This project analyzed five post- Franco films that dealt with the issue of the Spanish Civil War or Franco regime to determine if they were a counter to official political discourse on the subject. In addition to analyzing the films themselves, research was also done on a variety of official discourse pertaining to the recovery of memory in Spain. Upon examination it became clear that the overarching discourse in Spain is a refusal to address the issues of the past. Films which resurrected painful memories of the civil war and Franco regime for the purpose of telling marginalized stories were in fact a counter to this discourse.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	iii
Chapter 1: The Law of the Land: Official Discourse on the Subject of the Spanish Civil War and Franco Regime.....	1
Chapter 2: Lights, Camera, Action: A Textual Analysis of Selected Films.....	16
Chapter 3: Looking for Perspective: A Contextual Analysis of the Films.....	47
Conclusion.....	62
Bibliography.....	68

## INTRODUCTION

Generales  
traidores:  
mirad mi casa muerta,  
mirad España rota:  
pero de cada casa muerta sale metal ardiendo  
en vez de flores,  
pero de cada hueco de España  
sale España,  
pero de cada niño muerto sale un fusil con ojos,  
pero de cada crimen nacen balas  
que os hallarán un día el sitio  
del corazón.

Preguntaréis ¿por qué su poesía  
no nos habla del sueño, de las hojas,  
de los grandes volcanes de su país natal?

Venid a ver la sangre por las calles,  
venid a ver  
la sangre por las calles,  
venid a ver la sangre  
por las calles!<sup>1</sup>

—Excerpt from Pablo Neruda's "Explico Algunas Cosas"

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<sup>1</sup> Pablo Neruda. "Explico Algunas Cosas." 1938. *The Essential Neruda: Selected Poems*. Ed. Mark Eisner. San Francisco: City Lights, 2004. 62-66.

(Translation mine) "Traiterous Generals: see my dead house, see broken Spain: but from each dead house comes burning metal in the place of flowers, from each hole of Spain comes Spain, from each dead child comes a rifle with eyes, from each crime bullets are born that will one day find the center of your heart.

You will ask: why doesn't his poetry speak to us of dreams, of the leaves, of the great volcanoes of his native country?

Come see the blood in the streets, come see the blood in the streets, come see the blood in the streets!"

The words of Pablo Neruda written in 1937 are still relevant today, seventy-seven years later. The above poem is about the violence and injustices the Nationalists committed against the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War, a topic which even now remains a matter of obsessive concern. Currently, one of the most pressing social issues in Spain is the government's continued refusal to address the crimes against humanity and the 'disappearances' that occurred during and after the war under Francisco Franco's dictatorship.

In October 2013, Spain came under pressure from the United Nations to create a national plan for investigating these disappearances and for investigating those involved in crimes against humanity.<sup>2</sup> In December 2013 la Plataforma por la comisión de la verdad<sup>3</sup> sent a letter to Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy urging him to follow the recommendations of the United Nations. National groups have been urging the government to do this for some time now. In 1996, a poll conducted by a national Spanish newspaper found that 64.5% of Spaniards polled wanted the government to investigate everything related to the civil war and to rehabilitate all those affected.<sup>4</sup> Thus far, the UN recommendations and the pleas of many Spaniards have been ignored.<sup>5</sup> One of the most commonly cited reasons for this refusal to investigate the crimes is that the government claims it would violate the 1977 Amnesty Law which is still in effect, and

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<sup>2</sup> Natalia Junquera. "Las Víctimas Piden a Rajoy Un Pacto De Estado Sobre El Franquismo." *EL PAÍS*. (Dec. 17, 2013) <[http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2013/12/17/actualidad/1387282130\\_656763.html](http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2013/12/17/actualidad/1387282130_656763.html)>.

<sup>3</sup> Translation- The Platform for the Truth Commission

<sup>4</sup> "El Aniversario De La Guerra Civil, Entre La Memoria Y El Olvido." 20 Minutos. (July 18, 2006). <http://www.20minutos.es/noticia/2142200/0/2FESPANA%2FGUERRACIVIL%2FANIVERSARIO%2F>.

<sup>5</sup> Junquera. "Las Víctimas Piden a Rajoy Un Pacto De Estado Sobre El Franquismo." *EL PAÍS*. (Dec. 17, 2013)

that it will rekindle old divisions that have lingered since the civil war era destabilizing democracy.

In the last two decades various organizations have been created for the purpose of drawing attention to this issue and recovering Spain's memory. For organizations such as the Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica<sup>6</sup> this recuperation of memory generally consists of attempting to go through records from the dictatorship to discover what happened to the hundreds of thousands of people<sup>7</sup> who disappeared during the war and during the dictatorship. This organization also excavates grave sites where the bodies of those secretly executed lie unmarked. All this is in effort to recover the memories and the truth that was lost as a result of the government's refusal to investigate these crimes.

The United Nations and organizations like the ARMH are not the only groups preoccupied with recovering historical memory. Since the mid-1990s there has been an outpouring of materials—whether it be films, poetry, novels, news articles, documentaries, etc.—on the topic of the Spanish Civil War. This so-called 'memory boom' has created an obsession with the past in Spain.<sup>8</sup> Many of those in the Spanish cinema industry are using their medium as an outlet for the cause. One flippant Spanish

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<sup>6</sup> "Memoria Histórica." *Memoria Histórica*. Asociación Para La Recuperación De La Memoria Histórica, (10 Dec. 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Fiona Govan. "Spanish Civil War Crimes Investigation Launched." *The Telegraph*. (October 16, 2008).. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/spain/3212605/Spanish-Civil-War-crimes-investigation-launched.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Mercedes Maroto Camino. *Film, Memory and the Legacy of the Spanish Civil War: Resistance and Guerrilla, 1936-2010*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, (2011).p.1

blogger wrote that almost all Spanish movies are about the Spanish Civil War.<sup>9</sup> Her remark is exaggerated, but it illustrates that there is a large quantity of artistic material related to the civil war and that it is common knowledge in Spain.

Neruda's poem poses a question and answer that this thesis seeks to expound upon in the context of cinema. His words "you will ask: why doesn't his poetry speak to us of dreams, of the leaves, of the great volcanoes of his native land?" can be aptly applied to many of the movies produced in Spain. Certainly there are movies produced that have nothing to do with the Civil War, but there are still a great many which do concern this topic. Why this obsession with the past? Why must the films focus on so dark a topic? Neruda's answer can be applied here as well: "come see the blood in the streets". The films included in this study are manifestations of Spain's unresolved past. The violence and previously suppressed topics that they portray are a way of drawing attention to the 'blood in the streets'.

The primary question I will answer in my thesis is this: are post dictatorship Spanish films that pertain to the Spanish Civil War or to the Franco regime a counter to the official discourse concerning these subjects? If so, how are they a counter to the official discourse on the subjects?

### **Background:**

In order to fully understand the situation in contemporary Spain, it is necessary to delve into events that occurred seventy-seven years ago. In this section, this study aims to

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<sup>9</sup> Tigerstark. "A Guide to Spain." Web blog post. *Aquila Non Capit Muscas*. (02 Feb. 2013). <http://tigerstark.tumblr.com/post/42056154994/idk-what-am-i-doing-with-my-life>

outline on a very basic level what transpired during three distinct—but connected—periods in Spanish history: the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939, the dictatorship of Francisco Franco 1939-1975, and the Transition 1975-1982.

### *La Guerra Civil*

The Spanish Civil War broke out on July 18, 1936. It began as a military revolt against the Second Republic. The two primary sides in the war were the Nationalists and the Republicans. The Nationalists, led by General Franco, were made up of rightist supporters, the Catholic Church and the military. The Nationalists were aided by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. The Republicans were comprised primarily of leftist supporters and working class labourers. They received support from the Soviet Union and from various volunteer International Brigades from the United States and England. It is estimated that at least 300,000 died during the war (although many historians now believe this number to be much higher).<sup>10</sup> Ultimately, in March of 1939 the Nationalists claimed a decisive victory<sup>11</sup>, and thus began Francisco Franco's dictatorship.

### *La Dictadura*

The repression under Franco's regime was large-scale. After the war many people were forced into prison camps or into exile. There were severe reprisals against those who fought on the Republican side. Those who did not flee were often tried by military tribunals, and many were sent to their deaths. Franco stated in 1947 that he had 26,000

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<sup>10</sup> The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Spanish Civil War (Spanish History)." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica.

<sup>11</sup> James Kurth. "For Whom the Bell Tolls: The Franco Regime and Contemporary Spain." *Modern Age*. Intercollegiate Studies Institute Inc. (2013). *HighBeam Research*.

political prisoners “under lock and key”.<sup>12</sup> State sponsored censorship lasted throughout Franco’s dictatorship, and noncompliance with the laws of the regime resulted in imprisonment or execution.<sup>13</sup>

Until the last few years of the dictatorship, Spain was entirely subject to Franco’s rule. He attempted to create a monoculture by banning the Basque and Catalan languages in addition to other minority languages and dialects spoken in Spain.<sup>14</sup> Under the regime it was a crime to be a communist or a mason. Franco employed Catholic clergy in political prisons to convert those who had opposed his uprising. The new authoritarian state was determined to squash any form of opposition and to have a united Spain under Franco’s ideology.<sup>15</sup>

### *La Transición*

In 1975 Franco died, and Spain entered into what is known as the ‘transition’ period. This period is known as the ‘transition’ because it was a time of relatively peaceful crossover from dictatorship to democracy. Unlike countries such as Uruguay and Argentina which investigated and prosecuted members of the former dictatorship once it had fallen<sup>16</sup>, the political leaders in Spain during this period chose a path of voluntary amnesia which is often referred to as ‘el pacto del olvido’ or ‘el pacto de silencio’. While this decision to have amnesia in regards to the dictatorship and Spanish Civil War was never explicitly codified, it did manifest itself in the judiciary code in

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<sup>12</sup> "Francisco Franco." *History.com*. A&E Television Networks.

<sup>13</sup> Madeleine Davis. "Is Spain Recovering its Memory? Breaking the Pacto del Olvido." *Human Rights Quarterly* 27.3 (2005): 858-880. *Project MUSE*. <<http://muse.jhu.edu/>>

<sup>14</sup> "Francisco Franco." *History.com*. A&E Television Networks.

<sup>15</sup> Stanley G Payne. *The Franco Regime, 1936-1975*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, (1987).p224

<sup>16</sup> Davis. "Is Spain Recovering its Memory? Breaking the Pacto del Olvido." (2005): 858-880.

another form. In 1977 Spain passed a law of amnesty. La Ley de Amnistia pardoned all acts related to the dictatorship and the civil war prior to 1975 and prevented investigations of allegations of crimes that occurred within said time period.<sup>17</sup>

There are a variety of theories on why Spain chose this particular form of transition. One theory behind the voluntary amnesia is that had Spain tried to build a new government on the based on the previous memory (the dictatorship) they never would have achieved a widespread consensus for democracy. At the time of Franco's death there were still many who were ardent supporters of the dictatorship. Acknowledging the dictatorship—even if the acknowledgement was to prosecute the members of it—could have potentially rallied Franco supporters against the transitional government.<sup>18</sup> Another theory is that a transition to democracy initiated against the old dictatorship (similar to those in Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina which were carried out against the old regime) would have brought back memories of the old divisions that existed during and just prior to the civil war. Despite there being two main sides in the civil war, Spain was a very politically fractured nation during the 1930s, and a resurrection of these fractures could have spelled disaster for a peaceful transition.<sup>19</sup>

Regardless of why this particular path to democracy was chosen, it has serious consequences for contemporary Spain. Cardús says it well in his essay on memory,

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<sup>17</sup> Sergio Gálvez Biesca. "El Proceso De La Recuperación De La 'memoria Histórica' En España: Una Aproximación a Los Movimientos Sociales Por La Memoria." *International Journal of Iberian Studies* 19.1 (2006): 25-51. *La Memoria Recuperada*. La Universidad De Alicante, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Salvador Cardús i Ros. "Politics and the Invention of Memory. For a Sociology of the Transition to Democracy in Spain." *Disremembering the Dictatorship: The Politics of Memory in the Spanish Transition to Democracy*. Ed. Joan Ramon Resina. Amsterdam: Rodopi, (2000). 17-24.

<sup>19</sup> Cardús I Ros. "Politics and the Invention of Memory. For a Sociology of the Transition to Democracy in Spain." (2000). 17-24.

“Transition is methodologically difficult to study because it is a process of historical and social amnesia making the prime materials of analysis not principally visible and objective.”<sup>20</sup> As a result of the ‘pacto del olvido’ and the government’s continual refusal to address the past, Spain remains haunted by unresolved issues. I will examine how Spanish films address these unresolved issues, and whether or not this makes them a counter to the official discourse of the government pertaining to these issues.

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<sup>20</sup> Cardús I Ros. "Politics and the Invention of Memory. For a Sociology of the Transition to Democracy in Spain." (2000). 17-24.

## CHAPTER 1: The Law of the Land: Official Discourse on the Spanish Civil War and Franco Regime

### Theory:

My hypothesis is that post-dictatorship films pertaining to the Spanish Civil War or Franco regime are in fact a counter to official discourse concerning these subjects. My reasoning behind this hypothesis is based on the theory of hauntology put forward by Jacques Derrida. Hauntology as proposed by Derrida in the book “Spectres of Marx” was a way to argue that Marxism would haunt Western society even though Marx was dead and the communism movement in Europe had fallen. Much of this work focused on how and why Marxism would prevail, but in doing so Derrida lay the groundwork for a new theory that differed from the traditional realms of thought on “ghost theory” such as ontology and Being. He classified a specter as something which is neither “living nor dead, present nor absent”.<sup>21</sup> In “Spectres of Marx” Derrida says that haunting is a consequence of a time which is “out of joint” (This phrase is taken from *Hamlet* which is referenced frequently in his works).<sup>22</sup>

This idea of time being “out of joint” is of particular importance not just within the theory of hauntology, but in Derrida’s most famous theory “deconstruction”. In the context of deconstruction, “out of joint”—or anachronism as he will later call it—alludes

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<sup>21</sup> Jacques Derrida. *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. New York: Routledge, (1994).p.11

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Gallix. "Hauntology: A Not-so-new Critical Manifestation." *Theguardian.com*. Guardian News and Media, (June 17, 2011.)

to justice or the lack thereof, implying that time is violent and unjust.<sup>23</sup> Following this logic, it is therefore possible to say that haunting occurs because of a time that was/or is unjust and violent.

In this study I will appropriate the basis of hauntological theory, and apply it in a manner which is different than the one proposed by Derrida. Jo Labanyi says that hauntology is “a new philosophical category of being—an alternative to ontology—appropriate to describe the status of history: that is, the past as that which is not and yet is there—or rather, here.”<sup>24</sup> I will be using hauntology and the idea that haunting results from a violent, unjust time as a way to conceptualize the unresolved issues of Spain’s past that continually affect the present. In Spain’s case it could be argued that the haunting is two-fold. The violence of the civil war and dictatorship resulted in time being “out of joint”, but the inability of Spain to deal with its ghosts in the present has also created an anachronism.

In “Spectres of Marx”, Derrida outlines three concepts that can be delineated through the analysis of spectres. The first of those concepts, mourning, is particularly relevant to my argument. The following is an excerpt from the passage about mourning:

“One has to know. One has to know it... Now, to know is to know who and where, to know whose body it really is and what place it occupies—for it must stay in its place. In a safe place. Hamlet does not ask merely to whom the skull belonged (“Whose was it?” the question that Valery quotes). He demands to know to whom the grave belongs (“Whose grave’s

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<sup>23</sup> Leonard Lawlor. “Jacques Derrida.” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Stanford University, (Nov.22, 2006).

<sup>24</sup> Jo Labanyi. “History and Hauntology; or, What Does One Do with the Ghosts of the Past? Reflections on Spanish Film and Fiction of the Post-Franco Period.” *Disremembering the Dictatorship: The Politics of Memory in the Spanish Transition to Democracy*. Ed. Joan Ramon Resina. Amsterdam: Rodopi, (2000). 65-80. p. 66

this, sir?"). Nothing could be worse, for the work of mourning, than confusion or doubt: one has to know who is buried where-and it is necessary (to know-to make certain) that, in what remains of him, he remain there. Let him stay there and move no more!"<sup>25</sup>

Mourning is a major catalyst behind the recovery of memory movement in Spain. There are believed to be over three thousand mass graves in Spain from the Franco era. Some of them are estimated to contain the remains of as many as two hundred people.<sup>26</sup> While work has been done by the ARMH to exhume and identify some of the bodies, there are still thousands of people in Spain who do not know the final resting place of their loved ones. The uncertainty that shrouds the whereabouts of family members' remains adds another element to the specter haunting Spain.

The past has a strong foothold in contemporary Spain. Since the memory boom in the 1990s, Spaniards have struggled to come to grips with memories of the Spanish Civil War and Franco regime. This struggle exemplifies the concept of a past that "is not and yet is there". The film industry's proclivity to making historical films that attempt to rewrite the past are further proof that Spain is indeed haunted by its past. The State prefers to shut out these issues or "ghosts" and refuses to acknowledge them.<sup>27</sup> If the post-dictatorship films pertaining to the civil war and Franco era bring to light issues that the government would prefer to bury, then this makes them a counter to said discourse. As such, they would be the tellers of ghost stories and would also be manifestations of the ghosts themselves because they enable the past to continue to haunt the present.

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<sup>25</sup> Derrida. *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. (1994). p8

<sup>26</sup> "Memoria Histórica." (10 Dec. 2013).

<sup>27</sup> Labanyi. "History and Hauntology ;or, What Does One Do with the Ghosts of the Past? Reflections on Spanish Film and Fiction of the Post-Franco Period.", (2000) p.65

Derrida's ghost theory answers the question of "how" films can be a counter to official discourse. If I can establish that these films unearth issues and subjects that the government would prefer to bury, then I have established that these films are a counter to official discourse dealing with the war and dictatorship.

**Discourse:**

For this study the phrase "official discourse" is used to encompass official reports, laws, statements from government leaders, and justice issues. For the scope of this project this phrase must be given constraints. In terms of constraints, first, I will only be looking at discourse post 1975. The films used in this study are all post-dictatorship, and so too will be the discourse examined here. The second constraint for this phrase is of particular importance. I have purposefully allowed the term "official discourse" to remain somewhat ambiguous so that it might encompass a variety of discourse which pertains to Spain's attempts to deal with the memory of the civil war and dictatorship in the present day. It is not possible given the scope and development time of this study to analyze each and every discourse that mentions these subjects. As a consequence of this, I will focus on the most impactful discourses and the overarching trend in Spanish discourse which is to refuse to investigate the issues of the past.

The phrase "official discourse" also requires a caveat. It is important to establish that the views expressed by the different branches of the Spanish government are not homogenous in regards to the recovery of memory. The views are not even homogenous within the individual branches. There are some political/legislative actors who are in

favor of addressing the ghosts of Spain's past. However, these actors comprise a minority voice, and by and large the "official discourse" from the government is against the reconciliation of issues left by the Spanish Civil War and Franco's dictatorship.

To determine if the movies included in the following chapter are a counter to the official discourse in Spain, it is necessary to look specifically at these forms of discourse. I have chosen to organize the discourse pertaining to the Spanish Civil War/ dictatorship and to the recovery of memory from those periods into three categories. The first category is what I will refer to as "Pivotal Laws". The two laws included in this discourse category are arguably of the most importance in regards to the issues that continue to haunt Spain. The second category will be referred to as "Official Government Action Taken". This category will include various less impactful laws, official government statements, and other judicial issues. The third category is basically an "other", and is somewhat of an anomaly since the discourse is not from Spain. The third category will be referred to as "Spain's Response to International Discourse".

***Pivotal Laws:***

Ley 46/1977, de 15 de octubre, de amnistía<sup>28</sup>

Artículo primero

1. Quedan amnistiados:
  - a. Todos los actos de internacionalidad política, cualquiera que fuese se resultado, tipificados como delitos y faltas realizados con anterioridad al día quince de diciembre de mil novecientos setenta y seis

The Law of Amnesty

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<sup>28</sup> "Ley 46/1977, De 15 De Octubre, De Amnistía." *Noticias Jurídicas*. (Accessed 01 Feb. 2014). <[http://noticias.juridicas.com/base\\_datos/Penal/l46-1977.html](http://noticias.juridicas.com/base_datos/Penal/l46-1977.html)>.

This law grants amnesty to any political or war related crimes committed before December 15, 1976. At the time this was very important for those who had been imprisoned under Franco, because they were now absolved of those charges. That is not why this law is of such great importance today however. The 1977 Law of Amnesty should be considered a “pivotal law” because not only did it pardon those that were castigated under Franco, but it also pardoned those who perpetrated crimes against humanity in Spain during and after the Spanish Civil War before the date of 1976.

Article two of the law, sections “e” and “f” grant amnesty to those involved in Franco’s regime.<sup>29</sup>

Artículo Segundo

En todo caso están comprendidos en la amnistía:

- e) los delitos y faltas que pudieron haber cometido las autoridades, funcionarios y agentes del orden público, con motivo u ocasión de la investigación y persecución de los actos incluidos en esta ley
- f) los delitos cometidos por los funcionarios y agentes del orden público contra el ejercicio de los derechos de las personas

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One of the primary reasons for the passage of the amnesty law was to secure the transition to democracy. The Transition could not have been achieved by pointing fingers at former members of the Franco regime, because they were so embroiled in the

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<sup>29</sup> "Ley 46/1977, De 15 De Octubre, De Amnistía." <[http://noticias.juridicas.com/base\\_datos/Penal/146-1977.html](http://noticias.juridicas.com/base_datos/Penal/146-1977.html)>.

<sup>30</sup> Translation (mine): In every case they are included in the amnesty:

e) the crimes and failings that they could have committed, the authorities, the functionaries and agents of the public order, with motive or occasion from the investigation and persecution of the acts included in this law

f) the crimes committed by the functionaries and agents of public order against the exercise of personal or human rights

transition process.<sup>31</sup> In 1977, officials in Spain made the choice to ignore blatant and massive accounts of human rights violations in the name of democracy. The law was passed with a vote of ninety percent in favor.<sup>32</sup> Attempting to create a common memory in which one side recognized fault could have reopened old civil war wounds, and so, with its Ley de Amnistía, the official policy in Spain was to choose the path of forgetting and erasing the past.

Ley 52/2007 de 26 de diciembre/ Ley de la Memoria Histórica

The Law of Historical Memory<sup>3334</sup>

Artículo 1. Objeto de la Ley.

1. La presente Ley tiene por objeto reconocer y ampliar derechos a favor de quienes padecieron persecución o violencia, por razones políticas, ideológicas, o de creencia religiosa, durante la Guerra Civil y la Dictadura, promover su reparación moral y la recuperación de su memoria personal y familiar, y adoptar medidas complementarias destinadas a suprimir elementos de división entre los ciudadanos, todo ello con el fin de fomentar la cohesión y solidaridad entre las diversas generaciones de españoles en torno a los principios, valores y libertades constitucionales.

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<sup>31</sup> Cardús I Ros, "Politics and the Invention of Memory. For a Sociology of the Transition to Democracy in Spain" (2000) p.25

<sup>32</sup> Josep Tamarit Sumalla. "Los Límites De La Justicia Transicional Penal: La Experiencia Del Caso Español. (Spanish)." *Política Criminal: Revista Electrónica Semestral De Políticas Públicas En Materias Penales* 7.13 (2012): 74-93. SocINDEX p76

<sup>33</sup> "Ley De La Memoria Histórica." *Ministerio De Justicia*. El Gobierno De España, (Accessed 06 Dec. 2013). <<http://leymemoria.mjusticia.gob.es/cs/Satellite/LeyMemoria/es/inicio>>.

<sup>34</sup> Translation (mine)- Article 1. The Object of the Law.

"The object of the present law is to recognize and extend rights in favor of those who endured persecution or violence, for political, ideological, or religious reasons, during the civil war and dictatorship, to promote moral reparations and the recuperation of their personal and family memory, and to adopt complementary measures destined to erase divisions between citizens, all this with the goal of fomenting cohesion and solidarity between diverse generations of Spaniards in regards to principles, values, and constitutional liberties

The simplest way to summarize the Law of Historical Memory is that it is the first official explicit condemnation of the Franco regime<sup>35</sup>, and that it recognizes—to a certain extent—victims’ rights. The preamble of the law explains that it is designed in favor of those who endured persecution or violence during the civil war and Franco regime.<sup>36</sup> The law, which was passed in 2007, was intended to pacify those who clamored for state acknowledgement of the crimes against humanity which took place from 1936-1976. Many Spaniards remain frustrated however, because the law does not put the reconciliatory burden of investigating crimes and identifying those in mass graves on the government.<sup>37</sup> Instead, the government placed that burden on local officials, and as of 2011<sup>38</sup> no longer provides any funding for the identification of those in mass graves.

While it is not the first official Spanish discourse to recognize the victims’ rights, it is the first to do so in an all-encompassing manner and to also address the right to personal memory. The objective of this law is important because it acknowledges that Spain’s struggle with the past has much to do with the repression and manipulation of memory. Derrida’s hauntology theory says that if one wants to learn to live, one must learn to live with ghosts. “And this being-with specters would also be, not only but also, a politics of memory, of inheritance, and of generations.”<sup>39</sup> In an attempt to deal with its specters, Spain established—with this law—the right to personal and family memory, or “la recuperación de su memoria personal y familiar”. After the death of Franco,

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<sup>35</sup> Tamarit Sumalla. "Los Límites De La Justicia Transicional Penal: La Experiencia Del Caso Español. (Spanish)." (2012): 74-93. p76

<sup>36</sup> "Ley De La Memoria Histórica." (Accessed 06 Dec. 2013)  
<<http://leymemoria.mjusticia.gob.es/cs/Satellite/LeyMemoria/es/inicio>>.

<sup>37</sup> Tamarit Sumalla, "Los Límites De La Justicia Transicional Penal: La Experiencia Del Caso Español. (Spanish)." (2012): 74-93. p76

<sup>38</sup> The association only received government funds from 2007-2011.

<sup>39</sup> Derrida, "Spectres of Marx". (1994) p.xviii

memories of the travesties that occurred during the war were no longer officially suppressed, but the government's refusal to officially acknowledge these memories was a form of suppression in and of itself.

Derrida's above statement can be applied perfectly to the objective of this law. There is an implicit understanding that memory is political, because the government has the power to legitimate said memory. The reference to "memoria familiar" or family memory incorporates the aspect of inheritance. Does a person's family have a right to memory? Does a family have a right to know if the bones lying in a mass grave belong to their grandfather? Previously, the official answer was ambiguous, perhaps even "no", but the Law of Historical Memory gives families this right. The issue of generations is also pertinent, because those who still possess living memories of what happened from 1936-1976 will all be deceased within the next decade or two at most. The newest generations have no personal experience with the civil war or dictatorship, but are nevertheless haunted by divisions in the past.

***Official Government Action Taken:***

In addition to the two laws discussed above, there have been other instances of official Spanish discourse related to the civil war/dictatorship and/or the recovery of memory. One of the differences between the discourse evaluated here and the laws mentioned above is that the discourse in this category has been somewhat less impactful and was targeted at specific groups. That is not to say that these forms of discourse are unimportant; in fact, one case in particular shows the enormous obstacles the government has created for those who seek to recover memory.

Two minor laws are worth mentioning here because they illustrate the ongoing and slow nature of Spain's process of dealing with the past. The first is the Disposición Adicional a la ley de Presupuestos del Estado (June 29, 1990). This law recognizes the "derechos de indemnización" or the "rights to compensation" for those who suffered three or more years in prison during or after the war. This was the first reparation since the fall of the dictatorship. The second is the Ley de 18 de marzo de 2005 which gives economic reparations to those designated as children of war or "niños de la Guerra".<sup>40</sup> The dates of these laws—1990 and 2005—show that the fight for legitimacy and reparations for victims has spanned over two decades and has been gradual and slow. One could argue that in reality this fight has lasted from 1978 when Spain signed a new constitution affirming its status as a constitutional monarchy/ parliamentary democracy to the present day. The films in this study are not a counter to these particular laws, but rather to the excruciatingly slow process in which they are mired.

It is important to note this particular category does not contain a comprehensive list of discourse related to Spain's dealings with its haunted past. There have been other laws passed than just the two mentioned above. For example, in 2004 there was great debate over a law to remove Franco paraphernalia (statues, street signs, etc.) around the country. Initially, discourses such as this may appear contradictory to my theory since it seems to show the government taking action to address past issues. They are not being excluded from this study because of this potential contradiction. Like the laws mentioned in the previous section however, I would argue that this debate exemplified the Spanish government's slowness and reluctance to act upon these issues. Instead, this debate and

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<sup>40</sup> Tamarit Sumalla, "Los Límites De La Justicia Transicional Penal: La Experiencia Del Caso Español. (Spanish)." (2012): 74-93. p76

others like it have not been included because it would be difficult to fit them in the breadth and scope of this study due to time constraints on this project. There is no available list of Spanish laws and other discourse pertaining to this subject, and so attempting to find every single one would have been a major endeavor—one that is well beyond the scope of this study.

In addition to laws, there have also been recorded statements by government officials referencing these issues. In the third chapter, I will discuss these statements in more detail, but for now they shall simply be mentioned as examples of official discourse on the policy of voluntary amnesia/forgetting. Two of the last four prime ministers (Felipe González and José María Aznar) have said that delving into Franco era crimes is useless, and that doing so would be detrimental to Spain.<sup>41</sup> It is interesting that both of these men made similar statements, because they come from different political parties. González was a member of the socialist party in Spain (PSOE), and Aznar was a member of the Partido Popular which is a right leaning party.

Typically, based on my analysis of the official discourse and which party was responsible for it, the Partido Popular is more in favor of ignoring the ghosts of Spain's past. Overtime, the PSOE has become more in favor of delving into the past. However, González statement shows that not all of the PSOE feels this way, and that in the early days of Spanish democracy the PSOE was fearful of investigating the past.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Omar Encarnación. "Pinochet's Revenge: Spain Revisits Its Civil War." *World Policy Journal* (2007/08): p40. *EBSCO Service*. (Accessed 02 Feb. 2014).

<sup>42</sup> Felipe González was prime minister of Spain from 1982-1996.

In contrast to González, José Zapatero of the PSOE who was prime minister from 2004 to 2011<sup>43</sup> took a more progressive stance. He said that there was a need for a law that would recognize the victims of the civil war and Franco regime<sup>44</sup>. Zapatero backed the previously discussed Ley de Memoria Histórica (Law of Historical Memory). However, this law only established the right to personal memory. It did not establish a collective memory for Spain, and so it did not fully override the policy of amnesia because this policy was not replaced with an official version of history.

Within this category it is also necessary to briefly discuss Judge Baltasar Garzón's attempt to investigate disappearances that occurred during the Spanish Civil War and dictatorship, and to discuss the official discourse that was the consequence of said attempt. Garzón was famous for issuing arrest warrants against Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet, based on the ruling that investigations into crimes against humanity cannot be prohibited by amnesty laws or statutes of limitations.<sup>45</sup> Garzón later attempted to apply this same theory to the crimes against humanity committed in Spain.

His 2008 investigation into the disappearances and his attempts to discover if any of the perpetrators were still living provoked enormous backlash. A case was brought against him by two right-ist groups charging him with the crime of "prevaricación" which is a knowing abuse of authority. They claimed he blatantly disregarded the amnesty law when he chose to investigate the human rights cases. The trial took place in 2012. It went

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<sup>43</sup> The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero (prime Minister of Spain)." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. (Accessed April 16, 2014). <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/962009/Jose-Luis-Rodriguez-Zapatero>.

<sup>44</sup> Encarnación. "Pinochet's Revenge: Spain Revisits Its Civil War." p.41-44

<sup>45</sup> Naomi Roht-Arriaza. "The Spanish Civil War, Amnesty, and the Trials of Judge Garzón." *ASIL Insights* 16.24 (2012): (July 25, 2012).

all the way to the Supreme Court which eventually acquitted him of the charge, but still ruled that he had been incorrect to investigate the crimes.<sup>46</sup> The court found that,

“the crimes committed during the Civil War period and immediately thereafter (the complaint went up to 1952, presumably to try to encompass post-WWII developments) could not constitute crimes against humanity because such crimes had not been defined in either the national penal code or under international law at the time they were committed.”<sup>47</sup>

This ruling effectively crippled avenues for legal justice and criminal investigation into crimes against humanity that occurred before 1976 in Spain. Although the court went on to recognize that these crimes are considered crimes against humanity by today’s standards, saying that they cannot be officially designated as such keeps Spain from being forced to nullify its Amnesty Law.

### ***Spain’s Response to International Discourse:***

There have been several instances of international discourse within the last ten years that indicate an increasing international pressure on Spain to investigate the crimes against humanity. The films are not a counter to this type of discourse, but it is useful to juxtapose this discourse with the discourse to which the films are a counter. Additionally, knowledge of this type of discourse aids this study in two ways: 1) it shows that the haunting continues and that the Spanish people have managed to garner international support for their cause and 2) given the Spanish government’s continued refusal to acknowledge much of this international discourse it indicates a staunch attitude of resistance towards reconciling the past.

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<sup>46</sup> Roht-Arriaza. “The Spanish Civil War, Amnesty, and the Trials of Judge Garzón.” ( July 25, 2012)

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

One such example of discourse is a Spanish report given at a European parliamentary council assembly (PACE). El Informe de la Asamblea Parlamentaria del Consejo de Europa which was signed in Paris on March 17, 2006 denounces the terrible human rights violations that were committed in Spain from 1939-1975<sup>48</sup>. The council proclaimed that July 18, 2006 was to be declared the official day of condemnation of the Franco regime.<sup>49</sup> This international discourse indicates that there is international support for those in Spain who believe that the government should condemn the former dictatorship and take steps to get justice for those who suffered under it.

Recently, Spain has come under fire from the United Nations to address the human rights violations. In October 2013, the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances urged the Spanish government to be more proactive in resolving the disappearances of individuals that occurred in Spain during and after the war.<sup>50</sup> In response to this and other UN groups' demands, the Spanish government issued a statement in November 2013 that they would not consider revising or annulling the 1977 Amnesty Law.<sup>51</sup>

On February 5, 2014 the United Nations Human Rights office issued a new report concerning the controversy in Spain. Pablo de Grieff, the UN international expert on transitional justice investigated the matter and determined that it is essential for the Spanish government to address these human rights violations. De Grieff emphasized that there is value in the "right to truth". He urged that the government consolidate the work

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<sup>48</sup> "Ley De La Memoria Histórica." (Accessed 06 Dec. 2013.)

<<http://ley memoria.mjusticia.gob.es/cs/Satellite/LeyMemoria/es/inicio>>.

<sup>49</sup> Izquierda Unida. *La Asamblea Parlamentaria Del Consejo De Europa Condena El Regimen Franquista*. Izquierda Unida, <<http://www.nodo50.org/republica/docs/condena-franquismo.pdf>>.

<sup>50</sup> Sung Un Kim. "Spain Officials Will Not Review Amnesty Law." *JURIST - Paper Chase*. University of Pittsburgh School of Law, (Nov.7, 2013.)

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

of volunteer groups and agencies that have worked so hard to discover and identify those who suffered or disappeared on all sides, and he urged that the government should make these fact-finding missions and truths official.<sup>52</sup>

These examples of discourse show support from the international community for those who seek justice, but they also demonstrate a continued resistance on the part of the Spanish government towards obtaining said justice. This continued resistance that is clearly seen in the official discourse from the Spanish government is a key aspect of this study. In the chapters that follow I will analyze five films to test the hypothesis that Spanish films pertaining to the civil war or Franco era are a counter to the official Spanish discourse.

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<sup>52</sup> "Spain Should Trust Its Democracy and Work for Victims' Rights" – UN Expert on Transitional Justice." *United Nations Human Rights*. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,(Feb.5, 2014). <<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14220&LangID=E>>.

## CHAPTER 2: Lights, Camera, Action: A Textual Analysis of Selected Films

### **Framework:**

For this thesis, the primary sources of data are films themselves. I have selected five films that will be discussed in this chapter. These films are all post-dictatorship films, but they vary in date of production and director. They were selected for this thesis because they are manifestations of the concept of hauntology. Other films could have been selected, but I choose these because they are critically acclaimed, well-known examples of Spanish Civil War films. The films represent works that were created out of the memory boom. I believe they can be seen as more than art; they can be seen a manifestation of the ghosts which haunt Spain. The sometimes explicit, sometimes underlying, message of these films is counter to the official political discourse.

The films I have selected were analyzed in a manner more similar to a key word search than a traditional cinematographic analysis. When analyzing these films I was looking for references to the Spanish Civil War, Francisco Franco, and other related topics. When these topics were specifically referenced, I then examined the manner in which they appeared in the films. In what light was the former dictator and his regime depicted? How was the opposition portrayed? Questions like these were key to the analysis. Many times in the films, however, Civil War topics were not mentioned explicitly. As a result, it was necessary to use a more cinematographic analysis to

determine what the director was trying to portray. The films analyzed in this chapter are as follows: *¡Ay, Carmela!*, *Libertarias*, *La Lengua de las mariposas*, *Los Soldados de Salamina*, and *El Laberinto del fauno*. They are ordered by release date.

**Films:**

***¡Ay, Carmela!*- Carlos Saura (1990)**

The film *¡Ay, Carmela!* by Carlos Saura addresses the issue of memory recuperation and the pact of forgetting/silence through a variety of metaphors. It is a cinematic adaptation of José Sanchís Sinisterra's play with the same title. This film differs from many other films about the Spanish Civil War, because it is a comedy—albeit a dark one. This tragic comedy is one of Saura's lesser known films, but it is the only one that directly addresses the civil war.

The opening scene of the film depicts a war torn town that the Republican side is struggling to occupy. As the camera rolls through empty streets and the rubble of bombed out buildings, the song “Ay, Carmela” plays. This song, which was a sort of battle hymn for the Republic, will be woven as a motif throughout the film. Audiences are then shown an old warehouse, where we first meet the main characters Carmela, Paulino, and Gustavete.

The characters are part of a traveling variety show that has been contracted to entertain Republican soldiers at the front lines. Carmela sings and dances flamenco. Paulino attempts to be a refined artist, preferring to recite poetry and other high cultured things, but inevitably is requested to do much cruder things. He has the unique ability to pass gas at will, and this is a crowd favorite. Paulino's crudeness, or rather humanness, is a sort of comic theme throughout the film<sup>53</sup>. Gustavete, who is mute, is their assistant. In Saura's film each of these three characters serves as a different metaphor or conceptual illustration.

Carmela is a metaphor for the Spanish Republic. Unlike other films, which are sometimes criticized for idolizing and fetishizing the Republic as some sort of utopia (for example, *Belle Epoque* and *La Lengua de las mariposas*), *¡Ay, Carmela!* presents a more realistic picture that acknowledges the Republic's problems. The lines of who is good and who is bad are a little more blurred in this film<sup>54</sup>, despite its obvious anti-fascist overtones.

Carmela is a flawed character in many ways. She urges her husband Paulino to abandon his contract at the front so that they may flee to Valencia. This is easy enough for audiences to understand, but the manner in which the three artists flee is a bit more morally questionable. The actors have no gas for their truck so Carmela suggests that they siphon some from a Republican army truck. Fleeing from the front is one thing, but further debilitating the war effort in the process is another. As they attempt to siphon gas, a soldier keeping watch in another truck almost discovers them. Carmela flirts with the

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<sup>53</sup> David Archibald. *The War That Won't Die: The Spanish Civil War in Cinema*. Manchester, England: Manchester UP, (2012). Print.p122

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p121

soldier to distract him, but he presses her for sexual favors. After denying him several times, she eventually concedes to let him touch her breasts and gives him a quick kiss saying “Toma, el beso para que no digas...”. Essentially, this means “Here, a kiss so that you don’t say [it was for nothing]”.

On their way to Valencia the trio are captured by fascist forces. Even though she witnesses the execution of several civilians while in jail, Carmela does not seem to grasp with complete clarity the seriousness of their situation. While her husband tries to cajole and beguile fascist officers into believing that they are not Republican supporters, Carmela stubbornly insists that they be returned their truck which was stolen from them upon their capture. Her demands and accusations are completely misplaced when she should be begging for her life.

Despite appearing to be rather morally flexible in the beginning of the film, Carmela adopts a different attitude as time goes. The first time we see this is during the sex scene. Saved from a possible death sentence by an Italian army officer with a penchant for the arts, the performers are ordered to participate in a show produced by the Italian officer, Lieutenant Amelio di Ripamonte. One day he brings them to a very beautiful house that the fascists have occupied so that they can find props for the show. Carmela and Paulino sneak into a bedroom to “go to Uruguay”—Paulino’s euphemism for sex. Carmela suddenly notices two portraits hanging on the wall. She recognizes the man in the portrait as the communist mayor of the town whom they saw executed just a few days before. She cannot bring herself to do something so intimate with Paulino when the ghost of this man hangs over the room. Paulino eventually persuades her to consent,

but this is the first real indication we get that Carmela's moral compass may point further north than previously assumed.

In the show that Lieutenant di Ripamonte has crafted, there is a particularly crude scene involving the Republican flag. Carmela is opposed to the scene from the outset—not because it is an anti-republican, but because of its vulgarity and baseness. She becomes even more offended when she learns that the scene is meant to entertain the Polish prisoners of war with whom she has made friends. The Lieutenant believes they are too stupid to understand real art and hopes to entertain them with a vulgar scene. Carmela warns Paulino before the show that she will not perform this scene if the Polish soldiers are in the audience.

The Polish soldiers are brought to see the show and Carmela becomes distraught. She begins to drink, and throughout the variety show she makes not-so-veiled anti-fascist comments. When it comes time for the flag scene, something goes wrong technically with the lights which forces the actors to stall. Carmela is wearing nothing but the Republican flag, and this angers the fascists in the audience. They begin to shout insults at her, which in turn upsets the Polish soldiers. They associate her name with the song “Ay, Carmela”, and begin to sing it loudly. Pandemonium breaks loose as fascist troops rush to continue them. The scene is a blur with shouts coming from all sides. Above the roar Carmela screams anti-fascist things and shouts of encouragement to the Poles, and without warning is shot by a Spanish soldier. The panicked scene comes to an abrupt and tragic end.

This scene shows Carmela's changed attitude. She is shot while draped in the Republican flag and this symbolizes the death of the Republic. Interestingly though, even

in this moment, Carmela does not appear as a staunch Republic supporter. She does not cry out Republican ideologies or communist manifestos; instead she shouts for the humane treatment of all people.

Saura's use of Carmela as the metaphor for the Republic helps him avoid presenting an idealized version of this era. Carmela is flawed and imperfect, just like the Spanish Republic. In her final moments however, she stands for freedom for all people which is very symbolic of the Republic.

The other two main characters are also representative devices. Author David Archibald believes that Paulino embodies a sort of grotesque realism.<sup>55</sup> Ideally, Paulino would like to perform higher, more cultured art, but ultimately he must resort to the more popular culture. The baseness found in his art is reflected in his everyday life. Paulino's primary focus is on fulfilling his practically insatiable appetite for food, alcohol, and sex. He is a representation of a reality of war which is that people often revert back to primal instincts when they are fighting for their lives.

Paulino becomes rapidly desensitized and has no qualms switching sides. He is quick to curse the Republican side and is quick to save himself. During their initial meeting with the Italian lieutenant he recites a poem to demonstrate part of their variety act. Without even realizing it, he begins to recite "El crimen fue en Granada" by Antonio Machado. This is a poem that was dedicated to Federico García Lorca who was murdered by the Nationalists. For Paulino, who is normally so suave and smooth talking, to make a blunder like this illustrates just how little loyalty he has to either side. He does not even

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.p122

recognize the significance of the poem; he had simply memorized it like all the other things in his repertoire.

Paulino is desperate to fulfill his basic desires, and nothing will stop him from doing so. Unlike Carmela, he is not repulsed by having sex in the dead mayor's bed. Another example of his return to primacy is shown in his attitude toward food. Despite multiple warnings from Gustavete, Paulino eats cat meat, because he is hungry and convinces himself that it is chicken.

Gustavete, the mute assistant, is an interesting character. Archibald writes that perhaps the opposition to authority and the regime—which was Carmela's trait—will live on in Gustavete since he regains his voice at the moment of her death.<sup>56</sup> It is also possible to interpret Gustavete as a representation of forgetting and silence in Spain that happened after the war. Saura says in an interview that he made Gustavete have a much more pivotal role in the film than the character in the original play.<sup>57</sup> Gustavete lost his ability to speak during a tragic, violent event which he cannot remember. This resonates with the policy of forgetting in Spain. The terrible events that happened during the war are to be pushed away, forgotten, and not spoken about. Perhaps Gustavete's regained ability for speech at the end of the war reflects the memory boom in Spain that was just beginning at the time of this film's release, symbolizing the breaking of the pact of silence and/or forgetting.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid. p124

<sup>57</sup> Saura, Carlos, and Linda M. Willem. *Carlos Saura: Interviews*. Jackson: University of Mississippi, (2003).

### ***Libertarias*- Vicente Aranda (1996)**

Aranda said in an interview that this film attempts to recover historical memory.<sup>58</sup>

*Libertarias* tells a story about members of the Mujeres Libres (Free Women) a group of anarchist women who fought during the Spanish Civil War. Aranda's film follows a motley group of women associated with this organization that includes a nun, prostitutes, and female militants. His choice to make a film about these women sets his film apart from other Spanish Civil War themed films, because these women are fighting against both the Nationalists and the Republicans. They represent a marginalized group whose story has gone untold, thus resurrecting ghosts of the past.

The women in this movie are essentially fighting two wars: one war for the future of Spain and another war for their futures as women in Spain. Pilar, one of the main characters, says, "Somos anarquistas, somos libertarias, pero también somos mujeres y queremos hacer nuestra revolución."<sup>59</sup> The women in this movie exemplify why the Spanish Civil War is sometimes called the last idealistic or romantic war. They are hoping for a utopia of sorts in which they are recognized as equal to men. In the end, the women tragically lose both their wars.

There are many ways to analyze this film, but for this study it will be done primarily through character analysis. Separating the women into three groups and examining each group helps us see Aranda's commentary on the war and the situation in

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<sup>58</sup> "'Libertarias', La Memoria Histórica De Vicente Aranda." *EL PAÍS*. (May 6, 2004).

<sup>59</sup> Magí Crusells. "LIBERTARIAS: LA UTOPIA DURANTE LA GUERRA CIVIL ESPAÑOLA NO FUE SOLO COSA DE HOMBRES." *Film-Historia* 6.3 (1996): 295-300. *Revistes Catalans Amb Accés Obert*.

[Translation (mine): We are anarchists, we are freedom fighters, but we are also women and we want to make our revolution.]

Spain in a clear manner. The three groups will be based upon the women's occupations at the beginning of the film—nun, prostitutes, and militants.

Maria, the nun, has a category all to herself, but this is appropriate since arguably much of the film is from her point of view. It is not necessarily a first person account from Maria, because there are scenes in which she is not present. Aranda employs the technique of focalization here so that much of what the audience sees is tinged with Maria's perspective. Juxtaposing Maria with the prostitutes and militants emphasizes her innocence. In fact, we are told indirectly at the beginning of the film by the mother superior of Maria's convent that she is "la mas inocente"—the most innocent. Other directors of Spanish Civil War films (such as *La lengua de las mariposas* and *El Laberinto del fauno* which are included in this study) chose to tell their story through children, because it lends a sense of innocence and believability to their work. Aranda tries to achieve this same goal through Maria. There are critics who say that this is a major flaw in the film. Magí Crusells question the believability of a nun seamlessly accepting both God and Kropotkin's "The Conquest of Bread".<sup>60</sup> The believability is questionable because "The Conquest of Bread" is a book of anarchist economic theory, and its anti-authoritarian stance is generally interpreted as being anti-established religion. This type of criticism is irrelevant for this particular study, however. The focus here is on what the film was meant to be, not necessarily on how well it accomplishes it.

It is through Maria that Aranda comments on the issues with the clergy. When Maria seeks refuge after being forced to flee the convent, she inadvertently finds herself in a brothel. The Madame of the brothel forces poor, hapless Maria into bed with a client

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

who just so happens to be a catholic bishop. The imagery and mise-en-scene in this part of the film is a well-crafted critique of the catholic clergy, which sided with the Nationalists. The bishop goes to disrobe behind a changing screen and peeks out at Maria through little slats in the screen. He calls her “hija mia”, meaning my daughter, and says that with the help of God everything will be all right. The changing screen with the priest behind it peering out at Maria, conjures up the image of a confessional booth. The sick poignancy of the bishop’s hypocrisy is all the more distressing given Maria’s innocence. Her betrayal by the bishop reflects the betrayal felt by many Spaniards when the Catholic church sided with Franco.

Just a few scenes later, Maria witnesses the execution of the bishop by proletariat forces. Despite having almost been raped by him—the female militants barge into the brothel saving Maria from her almost fate—she cries over his death. This is difficult to interpret. Is it simply her reaction to horrific violence, or is she still clinging to her faith? As the film progresses we see that Maria never abandons her faith, but she does modify it and adopts much of the ideology of the Mujeres Libres.

The more time Maria spends with the anarchists the more she believes in their cause. She consumes the texts of philosophical workers party books and recites them as she would a bible verse. In the trenches the anarchists/communists take turns using a megaphone to shout things at the Nationalist soldiers entrenched on the other side of a river. When it is Maria’s turn she shouts, “In the name of God, lay down your rifles...” and then proceeds to espouse communist ideology. This combination shows that Maria never gives up her Christian faith. It indicates to the audience that there is still hope of heaven or, in the more anarchist term, of utopia.

In the final scenes of the film, the women are brutally raped and slaughtered by Moroccan troops come to aid the Nationalists. Only Maria survives, because an officer catches sight of her necklace with Catholic symbols and spares her. She is taken to a prison where she finds Pilar, who is bleeding to death from having her throat slashed. As she cradles a dying Pilar, Maria once again combines religion and communism as she talks about a coming day “in the time of the Lord” where there will be freedom and no one will be exploited. Aranda says that this combination is meant to inspire people to continue fighting for a utopia.<sup>61</sup>

The next group to examine is the prostitutes. These women are a counter to Maria and the female militants like Pilar, because they do not really identify with the ideological side of the revolution. Once they are ‘liberated’ from the brothel only one woman truly lives for, and ultimately dies for, the revolutionary cause. When the female revolutionaries enter the brothel, Concha, one of the revolutionaries, launches into an impassioned prepared speech about the revolution. She tells the prostitutes about equality and dignity, and how they can fight against their oppressors. For all her passion she receives nothing but blank stares. Pilar sees that this tactic will not work and appeals to the prostitutes in a different way. She asks them, “Do you want to be whores for the rest of your lives? Do you want to have sex with men, ten, fifteen times a day just for a plate of lentils? Or is it that you have seven lives like a cat, and you want to throw this one in the trash?”

This elicits an enthusiastic response from the women, and they leap to their feet asking how they can join the revolution. Many of these women do become part of the

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<sup>61</sup> Archibald. *The War That Won't Die*. (2012) p128

communist community, but as stated before only one goes to the front to fight. In the final scenes of the film, just before the women who go to the front are killed, they receive a letter from a comrade who stayed behind. The woman who wrote the letter was one of the liberated prostitutes. She tells the women at the front that the revolutionaries are no longer interested in liberating prostitutes, and that, in fact, they have opened a brothel. She writes that business in the brothel is going strong, and that the same men who claim to be fighting for freedom and equality visit every day.

From this we see that the prostitutes represent a more pragmatic, or rather, realistic side of war. Ultimately for these women, the initial glamour of the communist/anarchist ideology fades and reality sets back in. The war is not an equalizer for women. Maria and the prostitutes represent two opposing ideas, but the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Maria is a representation of a future hope for a utopia despite the tragedies that have occurred. The fate of the prostitutes is a metaphor for the fate of the last idealistic war.

The female revolutionaries, Pilar, Floren, Concha, and Aura, are the final group. Charo, the prostitute who joins the revolutionaries in battle could also be included here since she is a liminal figure. These women provide us with more Aranda's commentary on the fight for women's place in Spain than on the revolution itself. Aranda uses them to tell the story of a marginalized group whose story history has neglected to tell.

The death of these women is foreshadowed early on in the film, and references to their death continue to be made throughout. When the female revolutionaries arrive in Barcelona they attend a meeting of the Mujeres Libres. One of the key leaders of the organization stands at a podium and announces that women need to return to more

traditional gender roles. She urges them to exchange their rifles for factory machines, and to bring a woman's softness to the war effort. Outraged, Pilar launches into a diatribe against her. She attempts to rally the women in the audience and incites them to keep fighting. She says "We want to die. But we want to die like men not servants."

The next reference to death is made when the revolution's leader, Durruti, orders that women must leave the front immediately. When a messenger comes to order their unit to send the women back, they staunchly refuse. Each of the women named above (in addition to Maria) are insistent that they have the right to fight. One of them even shouts out that she will be buried at the front. This is another reference to their death's which tragically occur in the next scene.

The fate of this group of women represents the fate of the women's anarchist movement at the time. Aranda says that guns represented power for the women because they signified the power to implement their ideas.<sup>62</sup> To stay true to their ideals, they had to fight. This ultimately costs them their lives. Aranda is criticized by some for not developing the characters sufficiently<sup>63</sup>, but the audience can still see depth to them. We can see them as staunch warriors for a cause, but also as human beings. The audience is shown their sexual desires, their insecurities, their vanities, and their fears and frustrations. All of this is in an attempt to make them more relatable, and to make it all the more tragic when they suffer such tragic deaths.

Criticisms of the film aside, it was without a doubt made for a political purpose. The object of the film is to tell a story that has been ignored. The concept of hauntology

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<sup>62</sup> "'Libertarias', La Memoria Histórica De Vicente Aranda." ( 6 May 2004).

<sup>63</sup> Archibald. *The War That Won't Die.*(2012) p128

can be applied aptly to this film. Aranda's narrative evokes the ghosts of women long dead who sacrificed themselves for an unrecognized cause. He is essentially telling a ghost story, and this is opposite of what was encouraged by the official political discourse that existed at the time of this film's premiere in 1996. It would be another ten years before the Law of Historical Memory came into existence, and so at this point in time the government had not officially recognized those who suffered during the war and under Franco.

***La Lengua de las Mariposas*- José Luis Cuerda (1999)**

*La Lengua de las Mariposas* serves as counter to the official political discourse of the Partido Popular (which was in power at the time of the release) by critiquing the Franco regime at a time when there was no state recognition of the repression suffered under Franco. Cuerda's film also counters neo-Franco revisionism. In the late 1990s, there was a movement in Spain in which some popular historians revived the Francoist interpretation of the war. These Franocist interpretations depicted the Republic as almost anarchist and as being a rupture in democracy<sup>64</sup>.

The film is set in the final year of the Second Republic on eve of the Spanish Civil War, and it paints life before the stirrings of war as happy and carefree. The story is seen through the perspective of Moncho, an innocent young schoolboy who does not fully grasp the magnitude of the events taking place. The film compiles three independent

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<sup>64</sup>Carolyn P Boyd . "THE POLITICS OF HISTORY IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: The Politics of History and Memory in Democratic Spain." Ed. Martin Heisler. *The Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 133rd ser., 617 (May 2008). LexisNexis Academic.

stories, originally written by Galician writer Manuel Rivas, to form one narrative that is a criticism of the repressive Franco regime.

The film can be broken down along the lines of the three original stories.<sup>65</sup> The first story is Moncho's, the second story is his brother Andres's, and the third story is Carmiña's. Each of these stories follows a similar pattern. The primary character experiences a period of opportunity and promises of fulfillment, but ultimately is repressed. This becomes a metaphor for Spain under the Second Republic and then what happened to it under Franco's regime.

Moncho's story is the main one in the film. *La Lengua de las Mariposas*, like many other films on the Spanish Civil and Franco regime, makes use of childhood innocence to lend objectivity to the story. The unfolding narrative of the film is seen through Moncho's eyes. His witnessing of events that he cannot truly comprehend gives the viewer a chance to see the event from an innocent perspective. This, at least, appears to be the director's aim. However, the film has received some criticism for its nostalgic view of the Second Republic. Moncho's childhood innocence is equated by some as being a metaphor for the social innocence of the Second Republic. Author Antonio Gómez López-Quiñones criticizes it by saying, "*la resurrección de un pasado que nunca existió en esos mismos términos coherentes y armónicos depara utopías retrospectivas*"<sup>66</sup> Issues of portraying the Second Republic as a utopia aside, it is important that the film is

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<sup>65</sup> Gregory Kaplan. "La Representación De La Represión Franquista En La Lengua De Las Mariposas." *ÁREA ABIERTA* 27 (2010): 1-10. [Http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/ARAB](http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/ARAB). Universidad Complutense Madrid, (Nov. 2010).

<sup>66</sup>Antonio Gómez López-Quiñones. *La Guerra Persistente: Memoria, Violencia Y Utopía: Representaciones Contemporáneas De La Guerra Civil Española*. Madrid: Iberoamericana, (2006).

[Translation-mine: "the resurrection of a past that never existed in these coherent and harmonious terms presents/creates retrospective utopias"].

made this way because this picture contrasts so sharply with the image it presents of Franco.

Moncho's story has several instances that are commentaries on the Franco regime. On his second day of school, a boy in the class reads from Antonio Machado's poem "Recuerdo Infantil" which translates as "Childhood Memory". The second verse of the poem says,

En la clase. En un cartel  
Se representa a Caín  
fugitivo y muerto Abel,  
junto a una mancha carmín<sup>67</sup>

This poem is used to represent the so-called "cainismo español", and it foreshadows the results of the Spanish Civil War. The story of Cain and Abel is used in a two-fold manner. Brother killing brother is a literal representation of what would occur during the Civil War. The poem can also be interpreted, in the context of the movie, as a symbol for the end of the Second Republic. Abel is the Second Republic which is destroyed by the Nationalistas, for which Cain is a symbol.

The scene in which Moncho fights José María outside of the school can also be interpreted as a metaphor for the struggle between the Second Republic and fascism. In this instance the fight between the two children represents the conflicting ideologies of their parents.<sup>68</sup> José María is the son of one of the richest and most powerful men in town. His father, Don Avelino, is a cruel, intimidating man who is loyal to the nationalist cause. This characterization of Don Avelino is a critique of Francoism, because it shows

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<sup>67</sup> Translation (mine): In the class. In a poster there is a representation of fugitive Cain and dead Abel, next to a red stain.

<sup>68</sup> López-Quiñones. *La Guerra Persistente: Memoria, Violencia Y Utopía : Representaciones Contemporáneas De La Guerra Civil Española*. (2006).p.224-225

its followers as terrible people. Moncho represents his father's values and loyalty to the Republic. José María fights of his own volition and is the instigator of the conflict. In contrast, Moncho fights out of a desire for restorative justice and defense of a friend.<sup>69</sup> The two boys are symbols for the two different sides in the Civil War, and it is obvious that the film is biased toward Moncho.

The end of Moncho's story is the final scene of the film in which the Republican men arrested for treason are paraded in front of the town and then loaded into a truck, presumably on their way to be executed. Fearing for her family because of her husband's previous association with the Republican party, Moncho's mother urges Moncho, his brother Andres, and his father to shout insults at the men as they walk by. One of the arrested men is Don Gregorio, Moncho's beloved teacher. Moncho shouts insults at Don Gregorio screaming, "Rojo, traidor, tilorrinco!" From this we can see that Moncho does not truly understand what he is doing nor does he grasp the seriousness of the situation. "Tilorrinco" is a word that Don Gregorio taught him, and it is the name of a bird. This supposed insult demonstrates that Moncho does not understand the war or what it means to be a "rojo" (red) or "traidor" (traitor).

The movie ends by fading into black and white as Moncho chases the truck shouting insults and throwing rocks. The last image shown is a static picture in black and white that is a close up of Moncho's face. This transition into a black and white static photograph is meant to indicate that Moncho's childhood, and by metaphoric extension, the Second Republic, has come to an end. The black and white photos illustrate the bleakness of the situation in Spain. The static photograph represents repression. Moncho (and Spain) transition from vibrancy to a more repressed state.

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

This film is often interpreted as a commentary on the education system in Spain. Moncho's story highlights the education system under the Republic, and often centers on his patient and kind teacher, Don Gregorio. Through Don Gregorio the modern pedagogical teaching style of the Second Republic, which blended old Spanish liberalism, ideas from the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, and socialist ideas about education.<sup>70</sup> Interestingly, the Ministry of Culture in Spain includes this film in a series for children entitled "Aprendiendo con el cine" ("Learning with Cinema"). The document and activity guide for the film summarizes the film and analyzes the characters, but then transitions into a guided activity on the importance of education. The ministry of culture recommends this film based activity primarily for children ages ten through fourteen.<sup>71</sup>

Some scholars argue that the film criticizes the oppressive nature of the education system under the Franco regime by showing the Republican educational system in such a positive light. In his essay on the film, Kaplan argues that the criticism of the Franco educational system also criticizes- by extension- the Franco regime in general.<sup>72</sup> For this reason, I have not focused as much on the educational plot of the film in the way other analyses do. I agree with Kaplan's argument that the film criticizes the Franco regime by extension of its criticism of the educational system. Additionally, there are so many elements of condemnations against the regime Franco that are unrelated to the educational commentary. It seems much more useful to focus on those rather than a topic that has researched exhaustively.

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<sup>70</sup> Kaplan. "La Representación De La Represión Franquista En La Lengua De Las Mariposas." (Nov. 2010). [Http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/ARAB](http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/ARAB).

<sup>71</sup> "Aprendiendo Con El Cine: La Lengua De Las Mariposas." *Aprendiendo Con El Cine*. El Gobierno De España. <<http://www.aprendiendoconelcine.com/fichas/033.pdf>>.

<sup>72</sup> Kaplan. "La Representación De La Represión Franquista En La Lengua De Las Mariposas." (Nov. 2010). [Http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/ARAB](http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/ARAB).

The second story—which has a thematic plot very similar to Moncho's—is the story of his brother Andrés. Andrés experiences with the Chinese girl and in the final scene equate to a similar plotline of personal growth and then repression.<sup>73</sup> Andrés falls in love with a girl of Chinese descent which helps him become a better musician. (In the film, his saxophone instructor tells him that one must play an instrument in the same way that one holds a girl that they love. Until his encounter with the Chinese girl he does not truly understand this concept and as a result lacks the talent of a skilled musician.) This love is foiled however, by the husband of the Chinese girl, Boal. Boal is very similar in character to Don Avelino, although we do not know his political persuasion.<sup>74</sup> He is rough and cruel, and his foiling of the love between the two young people is representative of the repression of Francoism. Andrés, like his younger brother, is a symbol of the young Second Republic.

In the final scene of the film, Andrés also shouts insults at the arrested men at the urging of his mother. He falters, however, when he recognizes one of the men as a fellow musician in the orchestra whom he has come to respect. This link solidifies the metaphor between the repression of Andrés musically and Francoism<sup>75</sup>. His encounter with the Chinese girl is the primary representation of this repression, but the final scene ties him directly to Francoism.

The third story in the film is the story of the relationship between Carmiña and O'Lis. These two characters have a very sexual relationship (through the perspective of Moncho, the viewer sees a graphic sex scene). The obstacle that comes between them is

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> "Aprendiendo Con El Cine: La Lengua De Las Mariposas."  
<<http://www.aprendiendoconelcine.com/fichas/033.pdf>>.

<sup>75</sup> Kaplan. "La Representación De La Represión Franquista En La Lengua De Las Mariposas." (Nov. 2010).  
p7 [Http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/ARAB](http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/ARAB).

Carmiña's dog, Tarzán. There are several theories about what their relationship represents. Lough writes that Carmiña is meant to be a counterpoint against Moncho and his brother. "El papel [de "Carmiña"] en la película es proporcionar una alusión simbólica y oblicua a las pasiones retorcidas y el odio como contrapunto a las experiencias de Moncho y su hermano"<sup>76 77</sup>

Kaplan disagrees with this interpretation. Lough says that there is no direct correlation between Carmiña's story and the two others, but Kaplan argues that an element of fear is present in all three and this theme links them.<sup>78</sup> Andrés is scared to play the saxophone, Moncho is afraid of going to school, and O'Lis fears Tarzán. Another link between the stories is Carmiña's blood relation to the brothers. She is the illegitimate child of their father. When O'Lis kills Tarzán this ruins his relationship with Carmiña, and it is an allusion to repression. It should be noted that the scene in which Tarzán is killed occurs directly after the radio announcement that Spanish democracy is dead. This is no coincidence. The end of the lovers' passions symbolizes the end of the "democratic paradise" that the film makes the Second Republic out to be.

*La lengua de las Mariposas* clearly expresses a counter to the official political discourse of the time. While the Partido Popular did not vindicate the Franco regime, the pact of silence/forgetting was still a presence in Spain. In 1999 "La Ley de Memoria" which recognized the suffering that occurred under Franco was not in existence. There was no form of recourse for victims, and open discussion of the regime—while not

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid. p.8

<sup>77</sup> Translation-mine: "The role of Carmiña in the film is to provide a symbolic and indirect allusion to the twisted passions and the hatred as a counterpoint to the experiences of Moncho and his brother"

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

prohibited—was certainly not supported. This film harshly condemns the Franco regime and simultaneously regales the Second Republic. While this nostalgia for the Second Republic has been criticized, it does not undermine this form of alternative discourse. Instead, the utopian picture of the Second Republican painted by the film (despite the debate in regards to its veracity) breaks the *pacto del olvido* because it is an active remembrance of a part of Spain's past that the government wished to forget.

***Los Soldados de Salamina*- David Trueba (2003)**

David Trueba's film clearly demonstrates the concept of a past that "is not and yet is there." Through the film, he creates a commentary on Spain's unresolved past and how that lack of resolution affects its present and future. *Los Soldados de Salamina* (2003) is the story of an author who launches an investigation into the famous falangist Rafael Sánchez Maza's survival of a mass shooting during the Spanish Civil War. The film is based on a novel with the same title by Javier Cercas.

This film is unique from many of the other films included in this thesis, because it is not a direct critique of the Franco regime. Instead, the film is a commentary on present day Spain. It addresses the elements of history and memory as many of the other films included in this thesis as data do, but in a different way. Many of the elements of the past that are incorporated into the film are not fictionalized. Sánchez Mazas was actually a leader in the Nacionalistas, and many of the elderly men interviewed by the character Lola, as part of the film, are actually descendants of the people who are part of film's narrative such as the Figueras brothers. The film shows both Nacionalistas and Republicanos, but remains bipartisan unlike many of the other films included in this

work. Rather than criticizing the Franco regime, the film criticizes Spain for how it has dealt, or rather, not dealt with its bloody past.

As the credits roll in the opening scene of the film, black and white footage of a mass shooting fades in and out of focus. The cameras show viewers a rainy forest, and lying on the forest floor are the mud covered bodies of murdered men. The film does not give the viewers any initial context for these shootings. The black and white imagery indicates that it occurred in the past, but no date flashes on the screen, no subtitles, nothing. Then the scene shifts into a modern day bedroom, and the audience is introduced to the main character Lola Cercas. Trueba does not give viewers an explicit connection between the shooting and Lola, but the audience can only assume that there is some implicit connection and that through Lola answers will be provided<sup>79</sup>.

In some ways, Lola provides more answers than questions, but in the film she is the link between past and present and through her investigation the details of the shooting unfold. Sally Faulkner writes that Lola is an essential element to the film and sees her as a symbol of Spain<sup>80</sup>. Lola's personal life does symbolically mirror Spain's present state of being. In the film Lola loses her father, has a break-up, experiences a professional crisis with her work, experiments with her sexuality, and mourns her unfilled desire for children. To summarize, Lola is unstable and unsure of what life holds for her. Today, Spain is a democracy, but is still haunted by the specter of the Civil War and Franco. The issue of acknowledgement of the past has never been truly dealt with, and so there is

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<sup>79</sup> Sally Faulkner. "LOLA CERCAS EN SOLDADOS DE SALAMINA (DAVID TRUEBA, 2003)." *Historia Actual Online* 15 (2008): 166-70. (Feb.15, 2008). p166  
<<http://www.historiaactual.org/Publicaciones/index.php/haol/article/view/242/230>>.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.p168

uncertainty in Spain about if and when the silence is broken what the consequences will be.

Faulkner describes Lola as a liminal figure, and indeed she is. Her investigation of past events keeps her from being fully in the present. Additionally, her professional issues (being a writer who is having trouble writing), failed relationship, and unfulfilled desire for motherhood have her looking into the future, but fear of the future and the pull the past has on her prevents her from moving forward. There are several instances in the film with shots of Lola standing on a bridge. The bridge symbolizes that she is caught between two different places. In the same way Spain's present is caught between its past and its future.

Lola's sexuality could also be interpreted as liminal. In one scene, the viewer shares Lola's point of view (via the camera shot) in which she is staring at Conchi. Lola's attraction to this woman is very apparent, but in a clumsy sort of way. The expression on Lola's face during this scene indicates that she, herself, is a little surprised by her attraction to another woman. She hides her face almost comically behind a book, but can't resist peeking at Conchi. The audience does not know what exactly Lola's sexual orientation is, and throughout the rest of the film it remains unclear if she is heterosexual, a lesbian, or bisexual. In another scene, the audience is introduced to an ex-boyfriend of Lola's with whom she had a serious relationship. From this scene and the scene where she kisses a male student, viewers can gather that she is somewhat attracted to both sexes. It is unclear which category she belongs to, and it appears that she is somewhere in the middle. The audience's—and to some extent Lola's—uncertainty about her sexuality positions her once again as a liminal character.

Another example of her liminality is illustrated in the final scene. After her final meeting with Miralles, the man she believes to have saved Sanchez Mazas from execution, Lola gets into a cab. As the cab pulls away from the nursing home, Lola tearfully turns back to look at Miralles<sup>81</sup>. The juxtaposition of her backwards glance as the cab moves forward once again has her caught in between two sides. She is simultaneously moving forward and backward.

Lola's being a liminal character is a very important element in the film. Each instance of liminality strengthens the symbol of Lola as Spain. Her character's confusion resonates with present day Spain. The country is trying so hard to move forward, but the past has such a strong foothold in the present and it begs to be addressed.

The past's foothold in the present is shown in the film in a variety of ways. The film uses the song "Suspiros de España" as a sort of motif for the nostalgia of the past. The song was originally written by Antonio Alonso Alvarez as a *pasodoble* that was used for military marches. The lyrics were added almost thirty years later. This particular song is thought to resonate strongly with those who were forced into exile during or after the Spanish Civil, because it represents a nostalgia for their lost country<sup>82</sup>. One could interpret this loss in two different ways, which are not mutually exclusive. Their country could be lost to them, because they are no longer able to live there. It could also be lost because the "utopian" Republic had fallen into the hands of a dictator.

The song can be heard at several different points in the film. It is the song that the Republican soldier—who Lola believes is Miralles—sings in the rain. When her student

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid. p.168

<sup>82</sup> "El Navío Castellano." : *Suspiros De España, Historia*. El Navío, (July 4, 2012). <<http://elnaviocastellano.blogspot.com/2012/06/suspiros-de-espana-historia.html>>.

Gaston shows her a video of a summer resort where he was employed, Miralles is dancing to this song. The song is also played during parts of the film that show the bodies of the men who were executed in the forest. This motif links all of these links together. Even though Miralles denies that he is the soldier who saved Sánchez Mazas the song links him to the forest where Mazas's life was spared.

The song is lamenting, and its tone perfectly captures a sense of loss. Its connection to Miralles is very fitting since it is through his character that the film explores ideas about heroism and loss. Lola wants him to be a hero because that would fit perfectly into her novel, what Miralles tries to make her understand is that war is not about heroism. He talks to her about all of his friends who were killed, whose stories were never told, and who will never receive any sort of recognition for the sacrifice they made. In this exchange, Trueba is trying to imply that the war was a total war, and that neither side really was untouched by loss which still impacts Spain today. This attitude is very different from what is shown in many other post-Franco films.

While much of the film is spent focused on preoccupations with the past, Trueba's work also contains elements of a pre-occupation with the future. Lola's preoccupation with having children that is noted throughout the film is symbolic of uncertainty surrounding Spain's future. In the novel, the main character was male, but Trueba changes Javier Cercas into Lola Cercas for the film. This is a masterful decision, because it allows for the symbol of children to have a stronger role in the film.

The audience can note Lola's preoccupation with children at various stages of the film. When she runs into her ex-boyfriend she notes that he is carrying a bag from one of the most popular baby item stores in Spain. The realization that the man with whom she

thought she was going to have children with has them with another woman brings Lola to tears<sup>83</sup>. During her investigation, viewers see yet another example of her longing for children. She borrows a friend's car to visit the site of the mass execution, and while driving, she gazes wistfully at the baby rattle, toys, and baby car seat that are in her friend's vehicle. When she is interviewing the Figueras descendants, Lola watches a group of children playing in the forest. (Here again is an example of her liminal state. She is investigating the past, while thinking of the future). The final and perhaps most telling instance occurs with Miralles. They watch a group of children walk across the street from school. Miralles asks her if she has children. When Lola says 'no', he asks if she doesn't like them. Lola replies that she likes them, she just doesn't have any. She tells him she came close to having them once, though.

Lola's desire for children shows that she wants to move forward, but has not been able to do so. This is a reflection on Spain. Since Franco's death in 1975, the country has tried to move forward. Spain is now a democracy, but at the time when this film was produced (2003) the Ley de Memoria had not even been passed yet. That law was passed in 2006 even though it was highly contested by members of the Partido Popular (a political party in Spain). The law granted recognition to those who had suffered under Franco and during the war, but still does not let them denounce those who caused said suffering. Spain wants a prosperous future, but since it has not truly dealt with the ghosts of the past that haunt it forward movement is limited.

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<sup>83</sup> Faulkner. "LOLA CERCAS EN SOLDADOS DE SALAMINA (DAVID TRUEBA, 2003). (Feb 15, 2008) p.167

### ***El Laberinto del Fauno*- Guillermo del Toro (2006)**

*El Laberinto del Fauno* by Guillermo del Toro presents audiences with a powerful counter-narrative to the hegemonic official discourse regarding the post Spanish Civil War years. Del Toro's use of both historical fiction and fantasy to tell a story that many have tried to erase or forget, applies perfectly to Labanyi's appropriation of Derrida's theory of "hauntology". The element of fantasy in this film adds to the spectral dimension because audiences are sometimes unsure of what is real and what is not. *El Laberinto del Fauno* addresses the specter haunting contemporary Spain which is the previously unacknowledged stories of those on the side of the resistance.

Set in 1944, the film is about a young girl who moves with her mother to be with her new stepfather, Captain Vidal, a loyal fascist determined to eradicate the last of the Republican resistance. The film has two separate yet, often simultaneous narratives within it: Ofelia's narrative and the narrative of the adults. The adults' narrative provides the most commentary on fascism, and it will be the initial focus of this analysis.

One of the main characters in the adult narrative is Ofelia's new stepfather, Captain Vidal, who is the embodiment of Francoism. Vidal represents Franco himself as well aspects that have come to be associated with the dictatorship such as violence and the subordination of women. Del Toro depicts Vidal as a horrifically violent individual. The two bloodiest scenes in the movie are when Vidal murders a father and son because they are accused of communist loyalties and during the scene in which he tortures the captured resistance fighter. The violence in these scenes can be interpreted as both a representation of the violence that occurred during the Civil War and the dictatorship and

as a commentary on Francisco's Franco personal nature. In another scene, as the captain is shaving his beard, he attacks his reflection in the mirror with a razor and pantomimes slitting its throat. This points to a conflicted nature and can also be interpreted as the director's commentary about Franco.

In the end of the film, Vidal is killed by the rebels, but not before he commits one last violent act by murdering Ofelia. The victimization of Ofelia shows the despite the rebel's victory, it is ultimately the reality of fascism that triumphed during this period.

Vidal's attitude towards women is also very characteristic of the dictatorship ideals. He criticizes Carmen, his new wife, and takes away her sense of agency. When Vidal realizes just how dangerous the pregnancy is, he instructs the doctor that if he must make a choice, he is to save Vidal's unborn son rather than the mother. This is part of Del Toro's commentary about what a woman's role was during this period and how they were treated as inferiors. Towards the end of the film, when Vidal discovers that Mercedes is a traitor, he tells her that she was invisible to him, because she was a woman. Here again is a blatant example of Del Toro's negative view of dictatorship gender roles.

There is also a small reference to the Catholic church's role in the dictatorship. In the scene where the Captain invites important people to dinner, one of the guests is a Catholic priest. During the discussion about wiping out the resistance he says that God has already saved the souls of the resistance fighters, but he does not care what happens to their earthly bodies. This is showing the alliance of the Catholic Church with the Nationalists. By including it in the movie—and subtly portraying the church in a negative light—Del Toro alludes to the often anti-clerical attitude of contemporary Spain.

In addition to representing an alternative memory to that put forward by official discourse, one of the themes explored by the film is historical memory. Specifically the movie delves into the erasure or forgetting aspects of memory. It also raises the question of what can be considered ‘true social reality’.

One of the primary examples of the theme of historical memory can be found in the watch motif. The captain’s watch makes many appearances throughout the film, and it symbolizes this idea of historical memory. It is fitting that Del Toro does this through a watch, because the evocation of time is very powerful in this context. The inside of the captain’s room actually looks like the inside of a watch creating a strong connection between Vidal and memory.

During the dinner scene, one of the men tells the captain that he knew his father. He goes on to say that he was an incredible general who fought in Morocco, and that when he died he smashed his watch upon a rock so that his son would know what time a brave man died. The captain responds that this story is nonsense, because his father never owned a watch. Here there is an example of the erasure of the past- or of memory. The Spanish occupation of Morocco, although not commonly discussed, was a particularly bloody occupation. Many atrocities were committed there. Captain Vidal’s denial of his father’s final act is also a form of memory erasure. In denying this detail he also begins to erase his father’s involvement. This is typical of contemporary Spanish official discourse, and is what the film tries to stress. The purposeful forgetting and denial shown in the movie is a parallel to what the Spanish government often does today.

Another example of this is the final scene in which Captain Vidal is killed by the rebels. He prepares to stop his watch—here again the watch motif indicates memory—

and asks the rebels to tell his son what time he died. Mercedes tells him that they won't even tell his son his name. This is one of the film's most powerful commentaries on the erasure of memory and historical memory. It represents the attitude of the Transition government. According to Salvador Cardús i Ros, the Spanish chose to transition to democracy through a process of forgetting or erasure of memory because "a process of change built on the strength of the previous memory would never have facilitated a broad social consensus in favor of democracy".<sup>84</sup> This is represented in the rebel's refusal to tell Vidal's son anything about him. The Spanish government does not expressly seek to show Franco's regime in a positive light, but it does not carry out change *against* the dictatorship either. Rhetoric from these ends of the spectrum is avoided, and the middle ground is silence. Acknowledgement of what happened from any perspective is dangerous, and so forgetting is the best route. This is what the rebels choose in the movie, and it is symbolic of the choice of the Spanish transition.

From Ofelia's narrative there is also an exploration of historical memory. It is unclear throughout the film whether or not the faun and the other fantastic elements are a figment of her imagination. No one else can see the faun, but her mother is able to see the mandrake that the faun gives to Ofelia. This uncertainty about what is reality represents questions about historical memory. If memories are created and are interpretations of a particular social reality, then who is to say which reality is 'truth'? This question applies to Spain in the form of a question about its history and its current national identity. During the dictatorship, Franco attempted to impose a monocultural identity in Spain. After his death this changed and the government sought to reestablish the 'true Spain'.

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<sup>84</sup> Cardús I Ros. "Politics and the Invention of Memory. For a Sociology of the Transition to Democracy in Spain." (2000). 17-28.

The question remains however, how does one decide whose memories and creations of social reality are genuine? This use of fantasy by Del Toro highlights the struggle for understanding and legitimacy in the post dictatorship society.

## CHAPTER 3: Looking for Perspective: A Contextual Analysis of the Films

“I have become increasingly uncomfortable at the number of studies of representations of the civil war and its repressive aftermath that engage in textual analysis with little or no mention of the public debates inflecting the texts’ production and reception.”

-Jo Labanyi

Analyzing the films for their commentary on Franco and the civil war does not definitively show that these films are a counter to the official discourse in Spain. Doing a textual analysis provides a framework that must then be coupled with a contextual analysis. However, an examination of every political, social, and economic event influencing the production and release of these films is well beyond the scope of this study. Even if it were possible to formulate a list of all the different political, social, and economic phenomena that could have influenced the films, proving (or disproving) causality or correlations between every single one of those aspects and the films would have been incredibly difficult. Given this, I chose to narrow my research down to a few factors: box office sales, interviews with the director, and official discourse at the time of production/premier. The purpose of this chapter is to compile what definitive factual information I could access about the context of the films to see if they are counters to official discourse and to address the issue of forgetting in a more general contexting.

**Box Office Sales:**

Table. 1

Film	Grossed (domestic)	Grossed (international)
<i>¡Ay Carmela!</i> (1990)	Unknown	Unknown
<i>Libertarias</i> (1996)	ESP 306,809,601 <sup>85</sup>	Unknown
<i>La Lengua de las mariposas</i> (1999)	Unknown	USA \$2,086,098 <sup>86</sup>
<i>Soldados de Salamina</i> (2003)	\$1,481,789 <sup>87</sup>	Unknown
<i>El laberinto del fauno</i> (2006)	\$11,774,227 <sup>88</sup>	Unknown

This rather scant data actually holds a wealth of information. With the exception of *El laberinto del fauno* (the only film in this study not directed by a Spaniard), these movies were not very popular in Spain. To put the numbers into context *Soldados de Salamina* grossed \$1,481,789 and was ranked #105 on Spanish box office charts in 2003. The number one movie that year was *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* and it grossed \$39,834,538 in Spain.<sup>89</sup>

The relative unpopularity of these films in Spain is unsurprising. There is a stigma against civil war movies in Spain, and the media often portrays this type of film as trite

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<sup>85</sup> "Libertarias." *IMDb*. IMDb.com, (Accessed Feb.2, 2014.)

<sup>86</sup> "La Lengua De Las Mariposas." *IMDb*. IMDb.com.

<sup>87</sup> "Spain Yearly Box Office." *Box Office Mojo*. IMDb.com, (Accessed Feb. 4, 2014). <<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/intl/spain/yearly/?yr=2003&sort=gross&order=DESC&pagenum=2&p=.htm>>.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*.

and redundant. David Trueba, the director of *Soldados de Salamina*, talks in an interview about this stigma. He says that one hears critics say that Spanish filmmakers only make films about the civil war, but, in reality, of the one hundred films that are made each year there may be only two about the Civil War<sup>90</sup>. According to Trueba,

“...yo no he oído nunca decir a nadie que se hacen demasiadas películas de la guerra de Vietnam, que es una guerra infinitamente menos interesante porque es una guerra colonial. La nuestra fue una guerra civil, ideológica, y además la última guerra romántica. Era la guerra sobre la que más libros se han escrito en el mundo, más que de la I y la II Guerra Mundial.”<sup>91 92</sup>

It is unclear from what source originated the sentiment that there are too many civil war movies. Nevertheless, films pertaining to the Spanish Civil War and Franco era receive a large amount of national criticism for a variety of reasons: inauthenticity, triteness, and biasedness to name a few.<sup>93</sup> These films are not being made to garner enormous revenues. They are much more likely to achieve critical acclaim from those viewing them in French art houses than from those viewers in a typical Spanish movie theatre. Despite their dismal sales in Spain, the films typically do quite well abroad.<sup>94</sup>

The films have won a variety of awards, both in Spain and abroad. *Ay! Carmela* won thirteen Goyas (the Spanish equivalent of an Academy Award) in 1991<sup>95</sup> in addition

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<sup>90</sup> Alvaro Corazon. "David Trueba: «En Madrid Nos Gusta Tanto El Cielo Porque No Lo Alcanzan Los Concejales De Urbanismo»." *Jot Down Cultural Magazine RSS*. Jot Down Contemporary Culture Magazine.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Translation-mine: "I have never heard anyone say that there are too many films made about the Vietnam War, which is an infinitely less interesting war because it is a colonial war. Ours was a civil war, ideological, and in addition the last romantic war. More books have been written about this war than any other in the world, more than the first and second world wars."

<sup>93</sup> "¿Por Qué Odiamos Las Películas Sobre La Guerra Civil?" Cinemanía. (June 12, 2013.)

<http://cinemania.es/noticias-de-cine/por-que-odiamos-las-peliculas-sobre-la-guerra-civil>.

<sup>94</sup> Corazon. "David Trueba: «En Madrid Nos Gusta Tanto El Cielo Porque No Lo Alcanzan Los Concejales De Urbanismo»."

<sup>95</sup> Elsa Fernandez-Santos. "La Película "¡Ay, Carmela!" Obtiene 13 Premios Goya." *EL PAÍS*. (Feb. 17, 1991).

to winning nine other awards from multiple countries<sup>96</sup>. *Libertarias* won two Goyas in 1997. *La lengua de las mariposas* won six awards (including several Goyas) and was nominated for a total of nineteen awards from a variety of countries.<sup>97</sup> It is also currently featured on Netflix under the category of foreign films. *Soldados de Salamina* won a total of ten awards from a variety of sources<sup>98</sup>. *El laberinto del fauno* won five Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences awards, four British Academy awards<sup>99</sup>, and six Goyas<sup>100</sup>.

The amount of awards these films won is a testament to their quality and to their purpose. They are not sleazy, shoddy films churned out to make a quick profit. Instead, they take on an unpopular topic to disseminate an often unpopular message, and this corroborates their function as a counter to official discourse in Spain.

### **Directors' Comments:**

Magí Crusells theorizes that there are three characteristics (or types) of post-Franco films in terms of rigor and historical memory. The first characteristic is one of a biased history that creates a myth about the Republican side and presents exaggerated stereotypes of the Nationalists. The second simply uses the civil war as a backdrop, and it does not delve deeply into the war. The third is an 'honest film' which tries to be as objective as possible.<sup>101</sup> I would argue that most of these films (with the exception of

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<sup>96</sup> "Awards- ¡Ay, Carmela!" *IMDb*. IMDb.com.

<[http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0101025/awards?ref\\_=tt\\_awd](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0101025/awards?ref_=tt_awd)>.

<sup>97</sup> "Awards- Butterfly" *IMDb*. IMDb.com.

<sup>98</sup> "Awards- ¡Ay, Carmela!" *IMDb*. IMDb.com.

<sup>99</sup> "Pan's Labyrinth." *AOL Moviefone*. AOL, (Accessed Feb. 12, 2014).

<<http://www.moviefone.com/movie/pans-labyrinth/25436/synopsis>>.

<sup>100</sup> "'Volver' Y 'El Laberinto Del Fauno' Triunfan En Unos Premios Goya Que Olvidaron a 'Alatriste'" *EL MUNDO*. El Mundo.es, (Jan. 29, 2007).

<sup>101</sup> Magí Crusells, *La Guerra Civil Española: Cine Y Propaganda*. Barcelona: Ariel, (2000).

*Libertarias*) can be classified according to the first characteristic—even though I find Crusells’s definition of this characteristic to be a little unforgiving. This classification is important because in choosing a bias towards the Republicans and trying to rewrite history the directors are countering official discourse. What the directors have to say about the films or about their personal inclinations on the subjects to which the films pertain is essential to determining if the films are indeed such a counter.

Carlos Saura has been making films in Spain for over sixty years. One of his most famous films *La Caza*, which was released in 1973, was one of the first criticisms of Franco even though the criticism is metaphoric due to stringent censorship. *¡Ay Carmela!* is one of many films directed by him, and has actually received little notoriety in comparison to his other films. During an interview in 2000, Saura briefly mentions this film. He says “The only time I deal with the war directly is in *¡Ay Carmela!*, but that isn’t my concept, it’s someone else’s.”<sup>102</sup> Dealing with war directly may not have been Saura’s concept (the movie is based on a play by José Sanchis Sinisterra), but many of the concepts Saura is famous for are apparent in the film.

Saura is known for being a creator of images rather than narratives. He creates an alternative lens to provide the viewer with another perspective through which to consider established social and political constructs. Marvin D’Lugo, in his book *The Films of Carlos Saura: The practice of seeing*, refers to this new perspective as “discursive resistance”, and argues that it questions “established meaning”.<sup>103</sup> From Saura’s very limited comments on the film, *¡Ay Carmela!*, we cannot determine that the film is a

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<sup>102</sup> Saura and Willem. *Carlos Saura: Interviews*. (2003).p.166

<sup>103</sup> Marvin D’Lugo. *The Films of Carlos Saura: The Practice of Seeing*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, (1991).

counter to official discourse. However, if the viewer sees it as questioning “established meaning”—a typical Saura film concept—then that assertion can be argued more strongly.

The director of *Libertarias*, Vicente Aranda, expresses very clearly his thoughts on recovering memory and how his film contributes to that. One of his main objectives with this film was the recovery and reclamation of historical memory in regards to the civil war. Critic Ramón Freixas says that “[El filme] se confirma como un arma en la lucha contra la estrategia del olvido” [translation- The film confirms itself as a weapon in the fight against the strategy of forgetting.] In an interview Aranda explicitly stated that he was not inclined to be a collaborator in the amnesia of the country, and that “it is bad to forget”<sup>104</sup>.<sup>105</sup>

Aranda’s statements clearly indicate that the film is meant to be a counter to the official discourse. His reference to forgetting and amnesia is the chosen policy of the Spanish government. In taking up this cinematic project he produced something in complete opposition to government policies on the subject.

José Luis Cuerda, director of *La Lengua de las mariposas*, said that his film did better than other Spanish films in the U.S., specifically because of the fact that it pertains to the civil war. When asked in an interview if he thought there were too many films being made about the Spanish Civil War Cuerda responded, “¡Poquísimas! Para la importancia moral, social y económica que ha tenido, para el atraso que ha supuesto en la

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<sup>104</sup> “es malo olvidar”

<sup>105</sup> “‘Libertarias’, La Memoria Histórica De Vicente Aranda.” (May 6, 2004).

elaboración de la personalidad de los españoles, se ha escrito poquísimos.”<sup>106</sup> <sup>107</sup> To further his point he adds in the interview that Spanish Civil war movies experienced great box office earnings that year; something that critics say never happens. This indicates that the Spanish people do want to see these types of movies.<sup>108</sup>

In the previous section of this chapter I referenced a quote from David Trueba, the director of *Los Soldados de Salamina*, about those who criticize civil war films. In the same interview in which he made that comment, he went on to explain in further detail his opinions on historical memory. Trueba argues that it is not about memory or history, or even historical memory. For him it seems only natural that if people are lying unknown, buried in mass graves that they be exhumed, identified, and buried in a place of honor. Fear of the past and of old divisions should not impede this basic human dignity.<sup>109</sup> This attitude counters official policy which places the burden of exhumation and identification on individuals and private organization rather than upon the government.

Guillermo del Toro is the outlier of the group. He is the only director included in this study who is not Spanish. However, *El Laberinto del Fauno* was filmed in Spain, and del Toro feels a connection, or rather, empathy with the country. He identifies with Spain because he sees himself as an artist in exile or a refugee from his home country (Mexico), and this is similar to those who fled Spain after Franco came to power. Del Toro says that

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<sup>106</sup> Translation- mine: “Too little! Given the moral, social, and economic importance that it has had, given the backwardness that it has supposed in the elaboration of the personality of the Spanish people, too little has been written.”

<sup>107</sup> Manuel De Lorenzo. "José Luis Cuerda: “El Aprecio Que Se Tiene En España Por El Trabajo Intelectual Es Cero”." *Jot Down Cultural Magazine RSS*. Jot Down Contemporary Culture Magazine, (Aug. 2008). <<http://www.jotdown.es/2012/08/jose-luis-cuerda-el-aprecio-que-se-tiene-en-espana-por-el-trabajo-intelectual-es-cero/>>.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

the labyrinth is a metaphor and the story as a whole is a parable. Children go into the labyrinth and can emerge never knowing the name of their father.<sup>110</sup> This represents the history of Spain during the war which left many children fatherless, but it also represents Spain today in which new generations are unaware of history because of the policy of forgetting.

Some of the above commentary from the directors explicitly labels their films as being a counter to the official discourse. For others it is more ambiguous, but their comments still show that the films were not meant to support the policy of voluntary amnesia. Following the logic of the film theory *Auteurism*—which establishes the director as the creative force behind a movie—if the director is opposed to the government policies concerning memory and the civil war, then a civil war or Franco era film created by said director, would be imbued with the director's political and ideological stance. Thus, the film itself, not just the director, would be in opposition to the government's policies. The theory of *hauntology* applies here as well. In choosing to make films about the civil war or Franco era, directors are—whether or not it is their intention—resurrecting the ghosts of the past. The government prefers to pretend these ghosts do not exist, and by resurrecting the ghosts in film this goes against government policies.

The comments from these directors support the hypothesis that films pertaining to the Spanish Civil War and Franco era are a counter to the official discourse. However, this variable alone does not definitely prove the hypothesis since it is a broad one and includes all Spanish films pertaining to the civil war and Franco era. Still, it does support the hypothesis in regards to these five films specifically.

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<sup>110</sup> Mark Kermode. "'Pain Should Not Be Sought - but It Should Never Be Avoided'" *The Observer*. (November 05, 2006). <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2006/nov/05/features.review1>.

### **Official Discourse:**

In addition to examining reception of the films and directors intentions, it is also necessary to take into account the official discourse and the debates surrounding it at the time of the films' production and release. This is particularly difficult to do since production start dates are often unknown, and whether or not a director was influenced by events which occurred during filming is almost impossible to know unless they say it explicitly. Given these obstacles, I have chosen to focus on discourse/events that occurred around the time of the films' release. This would at least provide a picture of how the reception of the films may have potentially been influenced by the passage of laws, political debates, and social movements related to the civil war and Franco regime.

### ***Discourse from 1990-1999***

*¡Ay, Carmela!*, *Libertarias*, and *La lengua de las mariposas* were all released during the 1990s. In this decade there were instances of official discourse related to the Spanish Civil War and Franco era that could have affected the reception of the films. I do not make the claim here that any of the following examples of discourse had a direct impact on the films. Rather, I seek to provide a more contextual background of the political and social situation in Spain regarding the civil war and Franco era at the time of the film releases.

There is only one significant official discourse that coincides with the release of *¡Ay, Carmela!*. In Chapter 1, I first mentioned the Disposición Adicional of 1990 which granted indemnity rights to those who had been imprisoned three or more years following the civil war (for war or regime subversion related crimes). This particular law was

important because it was the first time since the fall of the dictatorship that the rights of those imprisoned had been recognized.<sup>111</sup> It is also important to note that the release of this film coincides with the beginning of the ‘memory boom’ in Spain. The ‘memory boom’ which was rooted in the artistic world did not align with government sentiments at the time. Socialist Prime Minister Felipe González openly admitted he had no desire to delve into Franco era crimes, and that forgetting the past would be beneficial.<sup>112</sup>

In the mid to late 90s, there were several forms of discourse that would coincide closely with the release of *Libertarias* (1996) and *La lengua de las mariposas* (1999). In 1995 coins bearing the effigy of Franco were removed from circulation.<sup>113</sup> This policy going into effect reflected a broader struggle in Spain of what to do with monuments, street signs, stamps, etc. that were remnants of Franco’s legacy. The government elected to slowly remove the last vestiges of Franco’s regime, but not without bitter debate which has continued until the present day.

Interestingly, the discourse which sparked the most public debate around the time of the films’ releases was only indirectly related to the Franco era. In 1996, Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón issued an arrest warrant for Chilean dictator General Pinochet. When Pinochet was arrested by British officials in 1998, it sparked an enormous debate in Spain over what was perceived as a hypocritical action. Spain was willing to enact its judiciary power to bring to justice a man who had committed human rights abuses in a foreign country, but was not willing to do the same at home. A large portion of the Spanish public supported the arrest of Pinochet, but the government in power at the time did not.

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<sup>111</sup> Tamarit Sumalla. "Los Límites De La Justicia Transicional Penal: La Experiencia Del Caso Español. (Spanish)." 2012): 74-93.

<sup>112</sup> Omar Encarnación. "Pinochet's Revenge: Spain Revisits Its Civil War." *World Policy Journal* (2007/08): p40. *EBSCO Service*. (Accessed 02 Feb. 2014).

<sup>113</sup> Encarnación. "Pinochet's Revenge: Spain Revisits Its Civil War." p39.

Prime Minister José María Aznar (1996-2004) of the Partido Popular was not in favor of the arrest.

Some scholars believe that the arrest of Pinochet was the catalyst for the breaking of the pact of forgetting. Whether or not this is the proper attribution of the ‘roto’ or breaking of the pact, it did appear to set more political debates into motion. In 1999 the government began to receive a flurry of requests for assistance in the exhumation and identification of bodies buried in mass graves that were casualties of the war or Franco regime. These requests were met with outright disdain by Prime Minister José María Aznar of the Partido Popular (Popular Party). Aznar’s administration refused to fund these endeavors saying there was “no point in opening old wounds that afflicted Spanish society.”<sup>114</sup>

### ***Discourse from 2000-2006***

*Soldados de Salamina* and *El laberinto del fauno* were released in 2003 and 2006 respectively. Given these premier dates, this subsection will cover discourse from 2000-2006. The year 2000 marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Franco’s death. The parliamentary left took this as an opportunity to push a resolution through which declared Franco’s uprising as “an illegitimate action against democracy”. This measure was not approved until 2002 which shows how hard the Partido Popular in Spain fights to prevent any form of historical memory legislation from being passed.

In 2003, the Izquierda Unida (The United Left party) organized an event to prevent “forgetfulness and poor memory”. They invited Republic Civil War veterans and members of International Brigades to attend a lavish gala. The Partido Popular refused to attend the event altogether.

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<sup>114</sup> Encarnación. “Pinochet’s Revenge: Spain Revisits Its Civil War.” p.41

Then, in 2004, José Zapatero of the PSOE (socialist party) came into power. Zapatero announced in 2004 the need for a law that would recognize the victims of the civil war and Franco regime. This would eventually be the Law of Historical Memory which is discussed in the first chapter, but since it was not ratified until 2007 it will not be discussed at length in this subsection. However, Zapatero's announcement is of great importance because it sparked a great debate in Spain<sup>115</sup>. The law was hotly debated in parliament and these debates were covered by national papers and television stations at the time of *El laberinto del fauno*'s release in 2006.

### **The Issue of Forgetting:**

The haunting of Spain is a complicated affair, and each movie that serves as a counter to the policy of amnesia revives these complications. Clearly, Spain is torn over the issue of the recuperation of memory. This is apparent from the varying official discourses and the unpopularity of the movies that exists simultaneously with pleas by some Spaniards for the exhumation of mass graves. Why then is Spain so torn?

There is political motivation for both recuperation and forgetting. Earlier in this study it was mentioned that there is a fear of destabilizing democracy by delving into the past. This is the most commonly cited reason<sup>116</sup>, but there are others. The background of political parties and their constituencies has a great deal to do with whether a party is for or against forgetting. The Partido Popular had leaders who held political offices during the Franco regime, and many of its constituents (or the parents of its current constituents)

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<sup>115</sup> Encarnación. "Pinochet's Revenge: Spain Revisits Its Civil War." p.41-44

<sup>116</sup> Cardús I Ros. "Politics and the Invention of Memory. For a Sociology of the Transition to Democracy in Spain." (2000). 17-24.

were pro Franco at one time.<sup>117</sup> Given these allegiances it is obvious why some party members would be against investigating crimes committed by the Franco regime. The opposite is true of socialist and left leaning parties. Their constituents and political leaders tend to be the victims of the Franco regime, and thus they are more in favor of recuperation. However, as stated in the first chapter and earlier in this one, Prime Minister Felipe González (who was socialist) was against delving into the past. This indicates that the fear of destabilizing democracy truly is a strong factor.

There is yet another political issue to contend with—one that is of a geopolitical nature. According to hauntology, haunting occurs from a time that was violent or unjust. Remembering the civil war and Franco regime recalls memories of a violent, unjust time which reflects very poorly upon Spain. Spain adopts an ideology of a ‘civilized’ Western Europe identity. The type of violence that occurred during the war and the dictatorship and the thousands of disappeared persons draws parallels to violence that occurred in Eastern Europe in places such as Cyprus and former Yugoslavia.<sup>118</sup> This is a parallel which Spain does not want drawn, and so there is an ongoing battle between wanting to fit into the Western Europe identity and wanting to bury the past.

There are also personal reasons for both forgetting and remembering. Many of those who lived during the regime and war are fearful of bringing up past issues, because it was forbidden under the dictatorship. Others wish to forget because the blame did not fall solely on the Nationalists. Republican and anarchist groups were responsible for

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<sup>117</sup> Andrés Cala. "Franco-fascism on the March in Spain: Is the Government Doing Enough?" *The Christian Science Monitor*. (October 11, 2013). <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2013/1011/Franco-fascism-on-the-march-in-spain-is-the-government-doing-enough>.

<sup>118</sup> Christian Sellar. "Public Policies of the European Union." Lecture, Public Policies of the European Union 338, Trent Lott Building, University, MS (March 21, 2014).

crimes as well.<sup>119</sup> In fact, there was a movie released in 2011 that is filmed from the perspective of the Nationalists and shows the murder of priests (this is also shown in *Libertarias*). Still, others want the crimes and disappearances to be investigated because they see it as resolution for families whose loved ones are still missing seventy years later. Others are simply curious.<sup>120</sup>

Having a greater perspective on the wider culture practice of forgetting is essential to the contextual analysis of this study. With an understanding of what shapes the discourse, it becomes clearer what constitutes a counter to said discourse. The argument could be made that all products of the memory boom are a counter to official discourse, and that these films are merely examples of this movement. I find fault with this argument however, because not every work which mentions the Spanish Civil War or the Franco regime is resurrecting the ghosts of the past. The spirit of the policy of voluntary amnesia is not to never mention the war, but to forget the issues that accompany the war. When films bring up these issues or comment in some way against the policies of contemporary Spain in regards to the war that is when they are a counter to the discourse.

Again, it is difficult to say with any certainty how the forms of discourse discussed in the previous sections of the chapter may or may not have impacted the reception of the films. In fact, to truly explore this topic would be another thesis in and of itself. The point here is to provide a more in-depth context of the official discourse and the reactions to it that coincide with the films. To do an analysis of the film representations of the civil war and Franco era post dictatorship without at least

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<sup>119</sup> Boyd. "THE POLITICS OF HISTORY IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: The Politics of History and Memory in Democratic Spain." (May 2008).

<sup>120</sup> "Memoria Histórica.". <http://www.memoriahistorica.org.es/joomla/>.

mentioning the public debates surrounding their production and release would be neglecting to provide important historical context.

## CONCLUSION

This study sought to determine whether or not post-dictatorship films pertaining to the Spanish Civil War and Franco era are a counter to the official discourse in Spain concerning these subjects. I chose a case study style framework to answer this question. I selected five films, each with a different director and year of release. Each one was analyzed using textual analysis of the film itself, and then I analyzed them using a contextual analysis with four variables: box office sales, awards, directors' comments, and official discourse coinciding with their releases. Coupling these analyses with a study of the official discourses, I determined that each film was in fact a counter to the official discourse in Spain. Through my work I hoped to establish what I perceived as a missing link in the vast academic work on the recovery of historical memory—the connection between films and official discourse.

Derrida's theory of hauntology was appropriated for this study. A simplified explanation of the basic idea of hauntology is that there is something from the past that is always present in the future, and that this something is waiting to return.<sup>121</sup> This something is a specter. When Derrida wrote this his aim was to show that despite the fall of communism in Europe, Marx's ideas still had an effect on the present and that they would return in the future (This was written in response to those like Fukuyama who

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<sup>121</sup> Chris Hughes. "Dialogue between Fukuyama's Account of the End of History and Derrida's Hauntology." *Journal of Philosophy: A Cross Disciplinary Inquiry* 17, no. 18 (2012): 13-26. Ebsco Host.

postulated that the fall of communism marked an ‘end of history’ and that these ideas would never resurface<sup>122</sup>).

My thesis is entitled the “Specter of Franco”, because this is a summation of what haunts Spain. In Derrida’s the “Spectre of Marx” it is not really Marx himself who does the haunting, but rather the ideas of Marx. Hughes says that “Derrida shows that the death of a particular social/political system (e.g. Communism) does not entail the death/devaluing of the thinker(s) who inspired that system...”<sup>123</sup> Following this logic, the death of Franco’s dictatorship does not entail the death/devaluing of the thinker(s) who inspired that system. Despite the Franco regime having been internationally condemned in 2006 by an official declaration from the EU Parliamentary Assembly, there are still those who in Spain approve of the regime. As a result, the haunting in Spain is two-fold. It is haunted by the victims of the Civil War and Franco regime whose stories are ignored by the government and for whom justice is denied, but it is also haunted by the memory of Franco and his policies which created victims. This is why my title is the “Specter of Franco”, because the haunting results as a consequence of the actions taken during his reign and because of Spain’s inability to resolve the legacy of these actions.

In the first chapter I examined key pieces of official discourse in Spain concerning the Spanish Civil War and Franco era. The forms of discourse were divided into three categories: pivotal laws, other official government action, and international discourse. In the “pivotal laws” category, I found that the films were unquestionably a counter to the Law of Amnesty 1977. This law seeks to make all parties equally responsible for the terrible things that happened from 1936-1975, and it prevents the

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<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* p14

investigation into any crimes that occurred. The films do the exact opposite. Each film takes a side thus negating the equally responsible concept from the Law of Amnesty. In addition, the stories the films tell are a way of investigating the past which is also in direct contradiction to the law.

The second law in this category was the Law of Historical Memory 2007. All of the films were released before the law was enacted, and so it could be possible to argue that they cannot be a counter to this discourse. However, since that time more films related to these topics have been released, and the purpose of my project was to make an assertion about five films which could then be applied to Spanish films pertaining to the civil war and Franco era in general. Films which bring to light issues about the recovery of Spain's memory would be a counter to this law.

The next category of discourse I examined was "official government action". Some of these actions when looked at individually appear to be steps towards reconciling the past which would not support my theory. However, these types of discourse are few and they have been staggered over almost four decades now. I argue that the films are not a counter to positive instances of discourse, but rather to the painfully slow process of restoration and reconciliation in which they are embroiled.

Also in this category, I discussed Judge Baltasar Garzón's attempt to prosecute human rights abuses in Spain. I found that the films are not counters to his actions which should be considered official discourse. Reflexively, films pertaining to the war and dictatorship should be considered counters to the actions of the government which overturned Garzón's decision and ruled that crimes pre-1975 cannot be prosecuted.

The final category of discourse was “international discourse”. Much of this discourse is recent, and well past the release date of the five films in this study. Nonetheless, I felt it is important to include because it shows that this is an ongoing issue. The films are not a counter to this discourse, but I included it to emphasize that the overarching trend in official Spanish discourse continues to be a refusal to investigate and reconcile the past.

The second chapter was my textual film analysis chapter. I selected five films to serve as the data for this thesis, almost like case studies. These films were selected primarily for their notoriety as Spanish Civil War films and for their date of release. I analyzed them based upon the manner in which they presented the war or Franco era and on whether or not they addressed issues of concern in contemporary Spain. From this analysis, I determined that they were counters to official discourse in Spain because they contradict the policy of voluntary amnesia that the government propagates.

There are a plethora of movies that can be categorized as pertaining to the Spanish Civil War and Franco era, and obviously, I did not analyze each one individually. Still, my assertion that this category or type of film is a counter to the official discourse in Spain concerning the war or dictatorship stands provided that the films uncover issues that the government would prefer to bury. Referencing Magí Crusells again, there are three characteristics (or types) of post-Franco films in terms of rigor and historical memory. The first characteristic is one of a biased history that creates a myth about the Republican side and presents exaggerated stereotypes of the Nationalists. The second simply uses the civil war as a backdrop, and it does not delve deeply into the war. The

third is an ‘honest film’ which tries to be as objective as possible.<sup>124</sup> Films falling into either the first or third characteristic bring to light issues of historical memory and should be considered counters to the official discourse. Any film that falls into the second category would require further exploration to determine whether or not it is a counter.

In my third chapter I looked to provide a contextual analysis to couple with my textual analysis. There has been criticism of work that only analyses representations of the Spanish Civil War in the films themselves without looking at the political debates which surrounded the production and release of the film. This chapter of my study is one of the major contributions of my work to the existing body of literature. This type of contextual analysis is not present in much of what has already been written.

For the contextual analysis I looked to four variables: box office sales, awards, directors’ comments, and official discourse at the time of film release. All of these elements in conjunction supported my hypothesis. The contextual analysis showed that Spanish Civil War films typically do poorly in regards to box office sales in Spain. There is a sentiment held by some in Spain that people are inundated with material about the war, and yet directors keep making the films. I argue that this shows the films are meant to be more than entertainment; they are meant to send a message that is counter to the official political discourse.

The production of films about the Spanish Civil War has yet to cease. The latest film used in my analysis was released in 2007. However, three films were released in 2011 all of which pertained to the Spanish Civil War: *There Be Dragons*, *Balada Triste de trompeta*, and *La Voz dormida*. Two more were released in 2013. Given that the issue of recovering historical memory has not yet been resolved in Spain, I argue that the

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<sup>124</sup> Crusells. *La Guerra Civil Española: Cine Y Propaganda*. (2000). p.234

release of these films reaffirms that they are a way for the specter to manifest itself and are a counter to the policy of voluntary amnesia. Spain has recently been under internal and international pressure to change its policy and work actively towards finding and identifying missing persons before those who lived through the war and dictatorship are all deceased. Since this has yet to occur, the movies continued production refuses to let the government ignore these issues.

Pablo Neruda writes in his poem “Explico Algunas Cosas”, “You will ask why his poetry doesn’t speak to us of dreams, of the leaves, of the great volcanoes of his native country?” The same could be asked of film directors in Spain. Why do their films not speak to us of tapas, of the beaches of Barcelona, of the mountains of their native country? The answer would be the same as Neruda’s: “come and see the blood in the streets”. These films resurrect the ghosts of Spain. They defiantly call attention to human rights abuses that the government staunchly attempts to ignore. As long as these films continue to point out the “blood in the streets”, they will haunt Spain as counters to the official discourse concerning these issues.

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