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TITLE: How Does a Memory Become Collective? The Creation and Actualization of Collective Memories in Almudena Grandes' *El corazón helado*

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ABSTRACT: My essay discusses the textual and metatextual techniques that Almudena Grandes' 2007 novel, *El corazón helado*, employs to enlist the reader in the creation of collective memories. On a textual level, the novel proposes literary memories for the reader and reinforces these memories through the strict correspondence between the novel's two narrative voices. The novel also portrays a series of "artifacts of memory" which appear in both narrative modes and create a further continuum between the two. These artifacts attain multiple levels of memory and meaning for the readers, though not necessarily for the characters. On a metatextual level, several references in the novel to the current boom of cultural production regarding the Civil War connect the reader to a community of memory that is necessary to actualize the reader's collective memory. Finally, the epilogue stresses the historical authenticity of the novelized events, further encouraging the reader to add the novel to a growing repertoire of cultural memory works. Combined, these techniques invest the reader emotionally in the story, but also to engage him or her in the process of memory production in contemporary Spain.

KEYWORDS: Almudena Grandes, *El corazón helado*, collective memory, *lieux de mémoire*, twentieth-century Spain, memory politics

RESUMEN: Este artículo trata las estrategias textuales y metatextuales que la novela *El corazón helado* (Almudena Grandes, 2007) utiliza para establecer la memoria colectiva. En el nivel textual, la novela propone memorias literarias y luego enfatiza estas memorias a través de la correspondencia entre las dos voces que narran la novela. La obra también incluye una serie de "artefactos de la memoria" que aparecen en los dos modos narrativos y establecen una conexión entre ellos. Estos artefactos componen múltiples significados y niveles de memoria para los lectores, pero no necesariamente para los personajes. En un nivel metatextual, varias referencias al *boom* de producción cultural sobre la Guerra Civil conectan al lector a una comunidad de memoria necesaria para actualizar las memorias literarias del lector como memoria colectiva. Finalmente, el epílogo enfatiza la autenticidad histórica de los eventos novelados, estimulando a los lectores a identificar la novela con la creciente conversación mediática sobre la memoria de la Guerra Civil. Estas cuatro técnicas conectan a los lectores emocionalmente a la historia, pero también les anima a participar en la producción de la memoria en la España contemporánea.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Almudena Grandes, *El corazón helado*, la memoria colectiva, *lieux de mémoire*, España del siglo XX, la política de la memoria.

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How Does a Memory Become Collective? The Creation and Actualization of Collective Memories in Almudena Grandes' *El corazón helado*

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In what is fast becoming an influential essay on Almudena Grandes' 2007 novel *El corazón helado*, Carmen de Urioste proposes a relationship between the two narrative voices of the novel. The first of these voices is Álvaro Carrión's first-person narrative set in 2005 Madrid. It comprises his investigation into his father's comportment during and after the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), as well as his own romantic pursuit of the enigmatic Raquel Fernández Perea. The second narrative voice—which alternates with Álvaro's story—belongs to a third-person omniscient narrator and details the histories of the Carrión and Fernández families: their dealings during and after the war, Julio Carrión's betrayal of Raquel's grandfather, and the Fernández family's exile and post-Franco return to Spain. Urioste proposes that Álvaro's first-person account belongs to the realm of memory while the third-person accounts pertain to the realm of history, thereby suggesting the necessity of both memory and history in understanding the Spanish twentieth-century past (208). The different narrative voices, she argues, “no se ignoran sino que se relacionan” (206). This interchange between history and memory works to accomplish the main goal of the novel, “la transformación de la memoria individual en memoria colectiva” (200-201).

This present essay aims to make more transparent the textual and metatextual techniques that *El corazón helado* employs to

enlist the reader in the creation of collective memories. On a textual level, the novel proposes literary memories for the reader and reinforces these memories through the strict correspondence between Alvaro's narrative and the historical chapters. To this end, the novel portrays a series of “artifacts of memory” which appear in both narrative modes and create a further continuum between the two. These artifacts—photos, jewelry, identity cards, and even apartments—attain multiple levels of memory and meaning for the readers, though not necessarily for the characters, who lack access to the full details of the history behind them. On a metatextual level, several references in the novel to the current boom of cultural production regarding the Civil War connect the reader to a community of memory that is necessary to actualize the reader's collective memory. Finally, the epilogue stresses the historical authenticity of the novelized events, further encouraging the reader to add the novel to a growing repertoire of cultural memory. As a result of these textual and metatextual strategies, *El corazón helado* highlights the role of cultural productions, and of the recipients of these cultural productions, in the battle over memory politics in contemporary Spain. It does so, however, by obscuring the limitations that literature faces when attempting to represent the past—particularly a traumatic and contentious past—in art.

Collective memory and the realist aesthetic

As José Colmeiro suggests, in a literal sense all memory must be individual because individual psyches construct mental representations of experienced past events; nevertheless collective memory is an appropriate term to understand the struggle to produce the dominant and competing representations of the past that will hold sway in any society (222).¹ Collective memory is what Hans Lauge Hansen and Juan Carlos Cruz Suárez mean by their term “memoria cultural:” “la interpretación dialogada que en la actualidad se hace del pasado a través de los medios sociales de comunicación” (22).² The role of media discourses—taken in their broadest sense to encompass artistic representations as well as news and social media—has a double importance for collective memory in Spain. As Astrid Erll explains, all attempts at collective memory depend on representation and communication through media: “Cultural memory hinges on the notion of the medial because it is only via medial externalization (from oral speech, to writing, painting, or using the Internet) that individual memories, cultural knowledge and versions of history can be shared” (“Introduction” 12-13). In the case of Spain, this media context is particularly poignant, as official channels have obfuscated, if not directly impeded, attempts to acknowledge the experiences of the Republican losers of the Civil War.³ Therefore, cultural works have a role in establishing alternative venues for collective recognition. Authors and filmmakers have responded with a robust artistic output in the 1990s and 2000s, causing critics to identify a veritable boom of Civil War literature and film.⁴

Beginning with her earliest novel *Las edades de Lulú* (1989), but particularly since the publication of *Malena es un nombre de tango* (1994), Grandes’ novelistic output has long shown a commitment to representing the experiences of the victims of Francoism. Continuing with *El corazón helado* and her latest novelistic series dedicated to anti-

Francoist resistance, Grandes aims to alter the community’s collective representations of the Civil War and its aftermath by providing stories that challenge hegemonic Francoist discourse. Her political activism and its presence in her novels leaves Grandes open to charges of partiality. Gareth Wood, for example, rightly criticizes *El corazón helado* for its one-sided portrayal of good and evil (190). For her part, Grandes acknowledges her own partisanship as well as the programmatic nature of *El corazón helado* saying, “Yo no quería ser neutral, porque yo no soy neutral ni creo que haya que ser neutral, además me parece que España es el único país de Europa donde no está claro que en una guerra entre fascistas y demócratas los fascistas sean los malos y los demócratas sean los buenos” (“Machado” 128). She seems to suggest here that counter-discourses, even if they tend toward the Manichean, are necessary to change historical perceptions about the war.

To accomplish the goal of educating and persuading the public, Grandes adopts—even more strongly than in earlier novels—a realist aesthetic that attempts to persuade the reader not just of the verisimilitude of the novelized events, but also of their direct relation to reality. In the epilogue to *El corazón helado*, for example, she upends the legalese typically found at the beginning of fiction works by saying: “[N]o quiero ni puedo advertir a sus lectores que cualquier semejanza de su argumento o sus personajes con la realidad sea una mera coincidencia. Lo que ocurre es más bien lo contrario. Los episodios más novelescos, más dramáticos e inverosímiles de cuantos he narrado aquí, están inspirados en hechos reales” (924). She then offers a list of historical events upon which she bases her novel, including the existence of mass graves in Arucas, Gran Canaria and the robbery of Republican property (924; 926-927). Grandes’ moral and political imperative to bring recognition, if not justice, to the vanquished of the Civil War explains to a great extent her emphasis on the connection between reality and representation. To make too apparent the

rhetorical nature of her representations of the Civil War could undermine this imperative.

Scholars of Civil War film and literature, however, have proven more skeptical of realist aesthetics in representing war, the past and trauma. Critics' main concerns are that realist accounts like the historical chapters of *El corazón helado* elide the rhetorical nature of portrayals both of war and of the past. Jo Labanyi, for example, questions the preponderance of realist treatments of the Civil War since the 1990s because these works attempt to "recreate for the reader or spectator a direct experience of the wartime and postwar repression as they were lived at the time" ("Modernity" 111). Ironically, rather than making the past more "real," Labanyi argues that period pieces actually allow the reader or spectator to experience "relief on returning to a present free from such barbarism" (103). Against realism, which suggests "that the past can be unproblematically recovered," Labanyi suggests the "haunting motif" which focuses on the limits to recovering the past but also on its continuing sway over the present (106). Writing about the literature of a different war, Antonio Monegal, similarly notes that "[e]verything that is traumatic in war seems to be *domesticated* by literature, the epic being its oldest and most conventional form of domestication" (emphasis in original "Writing War" 385). Monegal advocates against realism in favor of an "indirect" aesthetic, arguing that the best way to undermine epic, or propagandistic, accounts of war is to "deconstruct its narrative structure, making it impossible to make sense of the story in a logical or teleological way" ("Aporia" 33).

The juxtaposition of Álvaro and Raquel's contemporary story with the historical narrative in *El corazón helado* appears to avoid the "sense of rupture with the past" and the relief of being able to return to the present that Labanyi posits ("Modernity" 103).⁶ Álvaro's investigation of his father's life using personal artifacts, archives, and interviews highlights the avenues available for constructing national and family histories and

emphasizes the continuing influence of the past on the present. As Jerelyn Johnson contends, *El corazón helado* "is an explicit depiction of the past infiltrating the present and wrecking [sic] havoc" (32). To a lesser extent, the novel also recognizes the influence of the present on the past, thereby acknowledging that memory production occurs in the present based on present needs. Colmeiro explains, for example, that "[e]l pasado es reconstruido por la memoria básicamente de acuerdo a los intereses, creencias y problemas del presente" (222). Julio Carrión's death in 2005 instigates Álvaro's investigation into his family's past, as Álvaro seeks to understand his father's life. The descriptions of Álvaro's generation of Spaniards also suggest a present-day need to remember the national past. Amongst the leftist intellectual class to which Álvaro belongs, Republican family roots—far from signifying the dangers of retaliation and loss of power that they did during the Franco regime—suddenly are in vogue. Álvaro's best friend, Fernando Cisneros, for example, uses his prestige as the grandson of a Republican political prisoner to attract women and to gloat over Álvaro (291-92). Álvaro feels a need to be connected to a political past that he values, and so his present situation informs the memories that he creates about his family.

Despite acknowledging this symbiotic relationship between past and present, *El corazón helado* much more frequently obfuscates the complicated questions regarding the relationship between memory, history, literature and representation. Taken as a whole and judged separately from Álvaro's narrative, the historical third-person chapters suggest an easily-recuperated and easily-accessible version of the past that scholars like Labanyi and Monegal criticize. These chapters, while following no chronology and indulging in labyrinthine flashbacks that are a trademark of Grandes' narrative style, nonetheless offer an expansive and unifying narrative of the Spanish Civil War. The inclusion of Álvaro's chapters does not entirely mitigate this effect, since the relationship between the two narrative voices is

always one of corroboration and completion and never one of contradiction or doubt. Álvaro's investigation, for example, never runs into a dead end: archives are available and informative, and interviewees boast near-total recall. Likewise, the transparency of Álvaro's narrative voice of the odd-numbered chapters contrasts with the ambiguity of the narrative voice of the even, begging the question of the identity of the second and the relationship between the two. The juxtaposition of the two narrative frames gives the false impression that the readers share the same knowledge as the two main characters, Raquel and Álvaro. Having solved the mysteries of Julio's double-dealings and Raquel's fictitious claim to have been his lover, readers assume that they share with the characters the complete version of the Fernández/Carrión saga. This sense of completion, however, functions as a rhetorical strategy that the novel uses in the creation of collective memory.

What do Raquel and Álvaro know? the corroboration of narrative voices

It is relatively easy to establish Álvaro's ignorance of the even chapter histories. His initial knowledge of his father's family and Julio's conduct during and after the war comprise only the (false) family story told to him by his parents (205). For example, at first he knows that his grandmother Teresa was a schoolteacher who played the piano (poorly), and who died of tuberculosis in 1937. Through investigation that leads him to archives and to an interview with Teresa's childhood friend, Álvaro learns that his grandmother did not die of tuberculosis, but rather in the Ocaña prison in 1941. Further, he finds out: that his father belonged both to the socialist youth and to the Falange, that he was inexplicably in Paris in 1947, and that Julio cheated the Fernández family out of their properties after the war. All of these events are corroborated

by the historical chapters; Álvaro and the reader share them. But Álvaro cannot know, for example, the fine points surrounding Julio work in a gas station after the war (166), his chance encounter with Eugenio Sánchez Delgado (197), his attraction to and affair with Mari Carmen Ortega (192; 566), or Álvaro's grandmother's feeble attempts to seduce the man who would become her son-in-law (675-76). These details and many more pertain to the historical chapters and are thus available only to the reader, not to Álvaro. The reader's experience differs from Álvaro's because the protagonist's reconstruction of familial past must always be incomplete, while the reader is privy to the complete history of the two families through the third-person narration of the even chapters.

Raquel Fernández Perea's relationship to the even chapters proves more difficult to disentangle, for several reasons. The first is that her own story belongs to these chapters; she has no authentic first-person narrative voice, but is mediated through the third-person narrator and later through Álvaro's voice. The second is the ambiguous extent of Raquel's "postmemory" of the war and exile bequeathed to her by her Republican family.⁷ Raquel comes of age among family stories about her grandparents' generation during and after the war; indeed if Álvaro is characterized by his lack of history and memory, Raquel is overwhelmed by the memories of her family. The novel narrates specific moments when Ignacio Fernández Muñoz tells his granddaughter stories of the war, such as when he explains the family's reaction to President Azaña's abandoning Madrid (80-81). Other times Raquel reflects on the many stories about the war that she has been told, such as the time that her two grandfathers captured a German tank (82). Yet Raquel's knowledge of her family's history also lacks the rich details and points of view of the even chapters. The chapters that adopt Julio Carrión's perspective during his time with the *División Azul* and during his betrayal of the Fernández Muñoz family, for example, are

unknown not only to Álvaro and Raquel, but even to Raquel's sources, her grandparents. While Ignacio and Anita can provide a version from their own perspective, they cannot provide one from Julio's.

There are other limits to Raquel's post-memories. Her grandparents tell her their many experiences during the war, but they rarely mention Julio Carrión's betrayal. Ignacio refuses to voice Julio's significance because, as he explains to Raquel, "[l]o más normal es que tú ya vivas aquí siempre. Y para vivir aquí, hay cosas que es mejor no saber. Incluso no entender," referring to the willful collective amnesia of the Spanish political transition (101). For their part, Raquel's parents also maintain a veil of silence around Carrión, referring only obliquely to "[c]uando pasó lo de Carrión" or "antes, o después de lo de Carrión" (786). While a nineteen-year-old Raquel finally extracts an abbreviated version of events from her grandfather, she does not learn the details, nor of her aunt Paloma's role in the betrayal, until a conversation with her grandmother Anita in 2005. Raquel comments to Anita, "Yo no sé nada, ¿qué voy a saber? Si nunca me habéis contado nada, abuela" (802). Though Raquel preserves more knowledge than Álvaro, as with Álvaro the connection between her knowledge and the full stories of each family narrated in the even chapters is only established by the reader, not the characters. When Anita finally tells her the full story, she speaks for three hours, and even though she acknowledges that "había olvidado algunas fechas, algunos nombres, y pasó muy deprisa por algunos detalles," nevertheless "sostuvo sin grandes dificultades una versión precisa, coherente y completa de un episodio que nunca había podido olvidar" (801). The length and precision of Anita's version, which is not narrated in full, suggest that it parallels the third-person account which the reader has already read. The promise of correlation between the two, however, is an illusion created for the reader. In reality, the reader always knows more than Raquel or Álvaro because of the access that the reader has to the third-person historical chapters, to which neither character has access.

Artifacts of memory

What does connect the first-person and third-person narratives are a series of objects, places and events that recur in both. These "artifacts of memory"—a purposeful play on Pierre Nora's term *lieux de mémoire*—begin as personal sites of memory for the characters, but become collective sites of memory as the reader engages in the interplay between the odd and even-numbered chapters. According to Nora, *lieux de mémoire* occur where "memory crystallizes and secretes itself," and serve as a bookmark for collective memory in societies that no longer live a pre-industrial tradition of memory (7). They are a "meaningful entity of a real or imagined kind, which has become a symbolic element of a given community as a result of human will or the effect of time" (quoted in Wood 123). *Lieux de mémoire* are entities that "comprise the bedrock of a community's symbolic repertoire," "evoke a set of symbolic values" and which then aid in a communal construction of the Nation (Wood 124). *Lieux de mémoire* are the remains of memory which "only exist because of their capacity for metamorphosis, an endless recycling of their meaning and an unpredictable proliferation of their ramifications" (Nora 19). In *El corazón helado*, photos, letters, identification cards, bracelets, apartments and even Madrid itself serve as sites of memory that oscillate between the first-person and the third-person accounts. Their appearance and reappearance initiate memory not in the characters—who frequently lack the full significance of the artifacts—but in the reader who serves as a stand-in for contemporary Spanish society.

The "artifacts of memory" that populate *El corazón helado* employ several strategies to accomplish the novel's main purpose of engaging the reader in the creation of collective memory about the Spanish Civil War. Some, like Teresa's farewell letter and Julio Carrión's contradicting identity cards, identify the residue of a past that has been purposefully

concealed by the war's victors. Others, like the photo of Ignacio and Aurelio in front of the German tank, serve as the reader's initiation into the memory mythology of a community—in this case the Fernández family, a microcosm of Republican Spain—as well as the education of an overlooked historical episode. Still others, like María Muñoz's engagement bracelet or Madrid itself, form a memory palimpsest onto which multiple layers of meaning accrue, even extra-textual ones in which the reader can participate. These artifacts serve as memory place markers that remind the reader of the earlier meanings attributed to them even as newer layers of meaning are added. At times the reader shares these various meanings with Álvaro and Raquel; at other times they are available only to the reader. The result is that while Álvaro and Raquel's commitment to confront the past is thwarted by its limited availability to the present, the reader is frustrated by no such limitation. For the reader, specific meanings become attached to these artifacts from their first appearances, and their subsequent reappearances throughout the novel recall their prior context while also adding layers of new meaning.

By the time that Álvaro discovers Teresa's farewell letter and Julio's two identity cards, the reader already knows why Julio rejected his mother, as well as the circumstances surrounding his participation in both the JSU and the Falange. What for Álvaro is an earth-shattering discovery—uprooting his previously held beliefs about his family—is for the reader part and parcel of a larger story. During the poignant passage when Álvaro reads and rereads his grandmother's letter, the reader cannot help but fill in the gaps and unanswered questions for him, imbuing Teresa's letter with meanings to which Álvaro lacks access (302-07). Throughout the rest of his investigation into Julio's life, only rarely does Álvaro contribute information unknown to the reader; one example is when he learns the true circumstances of Teresa's death. The reappearance of Teresa's letter and

Julio's dueling identity cards during the rest of the novel inevitably reminds the reader of the third-person narrative about Teresa and Julio. The reader feels that Álvaro, through his investigation, participates in this knowledge, though this is an illusion because Álvaro learns only the skeletal version offered by the letter and the identity cards.

Raquel, equipped with more knowledge than Álvaro, also has more artifacts of memory associated with her. One that appears repeatedly and demonstrates the malleability of memory artifacts is María Muñoz's engagement bracelet, "una joya antigua, un aro rígido de oro amarillo que servía de soporte a una especie de constelación espectacular de piedras preciosas, olas crecientes de brillantes, de zafiros, de más brillantes, y en el centro una perla enorme" (501). The bracelet appears relatively early in the novel as part of Ignacio Fernández Muñoz's memory of the last night that the family spends together in Madrid during the war. María gives the bracelet to her pregnant daughter-in-law Casilda, who remains behind while the rest of the family escapes to France (269). Ignacio remembers

el temblor en los dedos de su madre mientras apretaban la mano de su cuñada Casilda un instante después de encerrar en ella su pulsera de pedida, y el sonido de su voz apagada, suplicante, quédatela, por favor, la he guardado para ti, yo ya no voy a poder hacer nada más por vosotros, si las cosas se ponen más feas todavía, cuando nazca el niño igual te viene bien, y si no te hace falta venderla, y es una niña. (269)

At this moment the bracelet serves the function of pathos, heightening the emotional tension of the family's separation and the poor fortunes for their side in the war. Yet even at this early juncture the bracelet assumes other memory functions, reminding the reader of happier times, particularly the privileged union of Mateo Fernández and María Muñoz.

Ignacio never forgets his mother's words, and neither does the reader when the bracelet abruptly reappears on Raquel's wrist in 2005. Álvaro and Raquel both refer to the bracelet only as belonging to Raquel's great-grandmother, suggesting that they do not share in the reader's meanings of the bracelet.

The bracelet acquires a further layer of meaning for the reader when Ignacio Fernández Salgado and Raquel Perea Millán (Raquel's parents) first visit Spain from exile in 1964. They visit Casilda and learn of her difficult life under Francoism as well as Francoist attempts to erase fallen Republicans from history (633). At the end of this visit, Casilda gives the bracelet to Ignacio to return to his grandmother, María. As a result of this episode, the bracelet becomes reminiscent of Casilda's life under Francoism, but this new layer of memory settles atop the other meanings that have already been established. The reader does not learn how the bracelet moves from Casilda to Raquel until nearly the end of the novel (792). Its meanings for the reader—who knows both María and Casilda's stories from the even-numbered chapters—differs from its meaning for Raquel, for whom the bracelet is only “lo único que queda de la antigua fortuna de mi familia, el último resto del naufragio” (501). While the bracelet undoubtedly has meaning for both Álvaro and Raquel, they lack the multi-layered palimpsest-like meanings available to the reader.

While María's bracelet is the artifact of memory with the most layers of meaning attributed to it, Ignacio and Anita's apartment near the *Plaza de los Guardias de Corps* also serves as a palimpsest of memory. Raquel and her mother's discovery of this apartment in 1976 frames the story of the Fernández family's celebration of Franco's death in 1975 and the family's preparations for returning to Madrid. The apartment, with its light-filled rooms and wrought-iron columns, establishes Raquel's loving relationship with her grandfather Ignacio so thoroughly that all future references to the apartment—particularly as Raquel is living there in 2005

when she begins her affair with Álvaro Carrión—immediately recall not only this relationship, but also the earlier Republican exile experience in France. The mental association between this apartment and Raquel's close relationship with her grandfather is so strong as to render the reader incredulous that Raquel could become Julio Carrión's lover, as she first claims to Álvaro. Álvaro's repeated references to the apartment transport the reader in each occasion to Raquel's idealized family life in the mid-1970s after the family's return from exile. When Raquel and Álvaro are in the apartment in 2005, the reader remembers the apartment from 1977, and all of the family stories surrounding Ignacio Fernández Muñoz's return to Spain.

In their interview of Grandes, Macciuci and Bonatto rightly call *El corazón helado* “un homenaje a Madrid, al que entre 1936 y 1939 asombró al mundo por su heroica tenacidad antifascista” (124). The apartment at the *Plaza de los Guardias de Corps* is really a synecdoche for Madrid itself, especially since in an earlier work Grandes identifies this area around the *glorieta de Bilbao* as “el verdadero centro de la ciudad” (*Modelos de mujer* 9). In *El corazón helado*, this neighborhood takes on epic proportions. Raquel points out the Fernández Muñoz house to Álvaro who describes it as “no [...] un palacio pero sí una mansión, una casa muy bonita que era mucho más que eso, la expresión contundente, opulenta pero elegante a la vez, del poderío económico de una vieja burguesía que, aparte de dinero, tenía buen gusto” (502). Álvaro and Raquel's movements through the city recall Ignacio and his family's life in Madrid before and during the war, since the reader is already familiar with this building, which bears the trace of the Fernández family. The city becomes another palimpsest, with younger generations treading where the traces of the older generations still remain in the reader's memory. Unlike the other artifacts of memory in the novel, Madrid is one in which the readers can participate extra-textually. Thanks to Grandes' Galdós-like specificity in

portraying this area of Madrid, the reader can walk in the footsteps of the different generations the Fernández Family. They can follow Raquel on her way to work, for example, by following the blocks “San Bernardo, Santo Domingo, Ópera” or relive the Madrid war experience with the Fernández clan near the *glorieta de Bilbao* (378).

One final artifact of memory worth considering, the picture of Raquel’s grandfathers with their comrades in front of a German tank, functions somewhat differently. Like the other artifacts mentioned, the German tank episode appears both in the first-person narrative (Álvaro narrates Raquel’s retelling of the event) and in the third-person narrative (both by Raquel and by Ignacio). The reader first learns of the event as part of Raquel’s childhood memories from 1976, as a story that she “había escuchado muchas veces,” a story she knows so well that she can quote her grandfather Aurelio (82). In 2005 the anecdote of the German tank reemerges as a photograph by Raquel’s bedside. Raquel tells Álvaro the story of the tank’s capture, this time quoting the words of her other grandfather, Ignacio (379). The photo first serves a didactic function, teaching Álvaro (and by extension the reader) about Spanish exile involvement for the Allies in World War II (380). Raquel’s ability to recall so specifically the words and actions of her grandfathers, however, suggests a ritualistic retelling of the story, and the story itself as a foundational myth of the Fernández family. While previous artifacts like the apartment or the bracelet attain complex memories for the readers separate from the characters, the capture of the German tank initiates the reader into the Fernández family cycle of stories about the war. The repetition of this story throughout the novel creates a literary memory of the capture of the German tank for the reader. The episode becomes part of the reader’s own literary memory of the war.

Metatextual references and the actualization of collective memory

Thus far, this essay has considered principally the intratextual techniques that *El corazón helado* employs to create literary memories of the Civil War for its readership. These include the interplay and correspondence between the two narrative voices and the use of “artifacts of memory.” Two important metatextual allusions, however, further aid the reader in actualizing the created memories as collective memory. Actualization, or recognizing the memories as legitimate contributions to a community’s collective memory repertoire, is vital in the creation of collective memories because, “[w]ithout such actualizations, monuments, rituals, and books are nothing but dead material, failing to have any impact in societies” (“Literature” Erl 5). The correspondence between narrative voices and the artifacts of memory function within the text to validate the novel’s representations of the Civil War; the metatextual references connect the novel and its readers to the current discussion of memory politics in Spain and to historic events.

The first of these metatextual references, and the only self-referential moment in Grandes’ otherwise resolutely realist novel, occurs when the novel recognizes its status among the myriad other novels, movies, documentaries and television programs that focus on the Civil War. When Raquel confronts Julio Carrión about his betrayal of her family, she threatens nothing less than a literary *escrache*,⁸ or a public denouncement of Carrión, through the publication of her family’s story.⁸ Raquel taunts Julio, saying, “no se puede ni imaginar la cantidad de libros que se están publicando ahora mismo en España sobre personas como usted y vidas como la suya” (822). The narrator then continues:

las librerías estaban verdaderamente llenas de libros sobre la guerra y la posguerra, y cada mes aparecían nuevos documentales sobre el tema, y los jueces autorizaban todas las semanas exhumaciones de las víctimas de la represión franquista, y el Estado seguía pagando indemnizaciones a los partidos y sindicatos republicanos expoliados por los vencedores de la guerra civil [...]. (856)

This overt reference to the aforementioned literary boom and public preoccupation regarding the Civil War locates *El corazón helado* within a community of memory and affirms Erll's contention that other cultural productions about memory lay the groundwork for newer works and channel the public discussion that these works will spark ("Literature" 396). As Erll argues, "The 'memory-making film' as well as the 'memory-making novel' are made in and by the media networks surrounding them" (emphasis in original 396). In this case the reference to other recent works about the Civil War locates *El corazón helado* as part of a particular memory tradition, and suggests to the reader the context in which this novel should be read. The narrator, however, soon retracts Raquel's assertion that her family's story parallels that of the literary boom, "porque había tantos casos parecidos y tantos peores, más novelescos, más aparatosos, con más niños, más víctimas, más muertos [...]" (856-57). Even this ironic retraction further pulls the reader into the novel's reading community because the reader knows that Raquel's family's saga provides fodder for a 900-page novel.

The second metatextual reference in *El corazón helado* is Grandes' epilogue, which further encourages the actualization of the memories proposed in the novel. As stated previously, Grandes insists on the strict historicity of many of the accounts she has fictionalized. The epilogue enumerates the events in the novel which correspond to historical events. For example, Grandes explains that the mass grave in which the character Adolfo's grandfather lies corresponds to an incident

in Arucas, Gran Canaria, when Republican sympathizers were buried alive (392: 924). The true-life theft of property of the García Lorca family serves as the basis for Julio Carrión's robbery of the Fernández family (926-27), among many other examples. While the author did not witness these events, the epilogue adopts a testimonial tone, as when Grandes emphasizes "[y]o he estado allí" and "[y]o las he visto" (924). Grandes' rhetoric recalls strongly Goya's own exclamations of "Yo lo vi" in his paintings of the second and third of May, 1808. The difference is that Goya witnessed the events in his paintings while Grande's narration is several steps removed from eyewitness testimony. To be fair, Grandes does not claim to have witnessed events from the Civil War, only to have visited Civil War sites and to have interviewed survivors and their children. Her rhetoric, however, serves to elide this historical distance.

The repetition of historical episodes in the epilogue serves a function similar to the "artifacts of memory" within the novel by adding new layers of memory to the stories. The epilogue's insistence on connecting the novelized events to history functions to validate them as stories worthy to be actualized as collective memories. Even the two moments when Grandes' admits to deviating from historical truth—the exact location of the jail which held communist soldiers during the fall of Madrid and the width of the Voljov river—through their very irrelevance further try to convince readers of the novel's historical merit (925-26).

Throughout *El corazón helado*, Álvaro, a physicist, repeats a version of the adage "the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts." He adds: "El todo solo es igual a la suma de las partes cuando las partes se ignoran entre sí" (373). Urioste argues that the "parts" of Álvaro's axiom are history and memory (208). In the case of this novel, the readers' experience of the confluence of the two parts, or narrative voices, creates a result greater than the sum of Álvaro's story and the historical chapters; the symbiosis of these narrative voices aids in the creation of collective memory about

the Spanish Civil War. Readers of *El corazón helado* may actualize the stories in the novel as collective memories of the Civil War because these stories resonate with personal memories of the war, or the postmemories of younger generations, or because they form a coherent corpus of collective memory stories with other cultural output of the 1990s and 2000s. While, as Urioste contends, the alternating narrative voices of the novel privilege both memory and history as the ingredients necessary to come to terms with Spain's traumatic twentieth century, this essay discussed the specific techniques that the novel employs to convince the reader of its value to the Spanish collective memory debate. While using a realist aesthetic, the novel utilizes sophisticated strategies to create literary memories for the reader and then to convince the reader to actualize these memories. These are: the creation of an illusion of direct correspondence between the narrative voices and the use of "artifacts of memory" to recycle memories and imbue them with new meanings; also, two metatextual references tie the novel both to its context of literary reception and to the historical reality on which it is founded.

Notes

¹Colmeiro says that "la memoria colectiva" is rather "una entidad simbólica representativa de una comunidad" (222). Erll also reminds us that "notions of 'cultural' or 'collective' memory proceed from an operative metaphor. The concept of 'remembering' (a cognitive process which takes place in individual brains) is metaphorically transferred to the level of culture" ("Introduction" 4).

²Erll suggests that the terms "cultural," "social" and "collective" memories are largely interchangeable, though the last term is the most broad and inclusive ("Introduction" 1).

³On the obfuscation by official channels, consider the government's initial responses to the *Asociación de la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica's* attempts to disinter Francoist victims buried in mass graves (Davis), the political debate that eventually resulted in the 2007 law of "Memoria Histórica" ("Politics" Labanyi), and the polemic

surrounding the Salamanca Papers (Anderson).

⁴See, for example, Hansen and Cruz Suárez for their discussion of this literary boom (22). Labanyi also says about this boom: "Since the late 1990s, escalating after 2001, there has been a flood of novels and collections of testimonies on the wartime and postwar repression as well as a significant number of fiction films and documentaries" ("Modernity" 95). In contrast, historian Santos Juliá has argued against a sudden spike in memory-related works, sustaining instead that even in the 1970s and 1980s—the so-called years of amnesia—there was robust academic production regarding the Civil War and the Franco regime (15).

⁵See Rueda-Acedo, who demonstrates the importance of historical context even within Grande's earlier, more subjective, novels. Grande acknowledges as much as well: "[Y]o le estoy dando vueltas al tema de la memoria personalmente desde que era una niña pequeña, y como escritora prácticamente desde *Malena es un nombre de tango*. Quizás desde *Las edades de Lulú*, aunque *Lulú* es una novela erótica ya hay alusiones a la memoria histórica, a lo que es el franquismo y la dictadura" ("Machado" 125).

⁶In her ranking of Civil War novels, for example, Liikanen places *El corazón helado* in the intermediate category of reconstructive novels. Novels in this category represent the process of reconstructing the past, and are therefore superior to novels which never break the mimetic illusion. Novels in the "modo reconstructivo," however, fail to question the possibility to construct the past (43-47).

⁷Postmemory is a term coined by Marianne Hirsch to describe the memory experiences of some children whose parents have survived an extreme trauma like the Holocaust. These parents have passed that trauma on to their children so vividly that the second generation feels that it remembers parental experiences. These inherited memories can "displace" children's memories of their own lives (12). Raquel's experience of her family's history seems to approach the level of postmemory, as Andres-Suárez describes: "[Raquel] ha nacido y crecido entre fantasmas teniendo que sobrellevar el peso de los secretos familiares y el silencio ominoso de la tragedia de los suyos" (169).

⁸*Escrache* is a word popularized in the Southern Cone in the 1990s and 2000s. When official legal channels failed to hold perpetrators of the military coups responsible for their actions, protestors planned public events outside the homes of these men in order to publically denounce them to their families and neighbors.

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