

1981, 23
de
febrero.

Intento de
golpe
estatal (23
f",
"Tejerazo".

1981
de

Anatomy of an instant by Javier Cercas:

the humanization of the non-human or living politics*

Adriana Minardi** 

Marcha de
rechazo al
golpe.



um el es

(palabra)

(pensamiento), (palabra)... Y obra

octubre: Acuerdo sobre el Programa de Saneamiento y Reforma de la Economía (primer Pacto de la Moncloa).
1978: diciembre: se aprueba por referéndum la nueva Constitución.

1979: marzo: elecciones: UCD: 35%.
PSOE: 30%.
PCE: 10%.
CD: 6%.

mayo-septiembre: el PSOE abandona el marxismo bajo el liderazgo de Felipe González.

octubre: se aprueban por referéndum los estatutos autonómicos de Cataluña y el País Vasco.

Reception date: 15 de diciembre de 2023

Approval date: 24 de marzo de 2024

How to cite

Minardi, A. (2024). Anatomy of an instant by Javier Cercas: the humanization of the non-human or living politics. *(pensamiento), (palabra). Y obra*, (31), e20577. <https://doi.org/10.17227/ppo.num31-20577>

* This article is an extensive development of a conference given at the XXX CIEHL Congress (2021).

** We refer to February 23, 1981, the date of the so-called "Tejerazo" or attempted coup d'état against the government of Adolfo Suárez

Abstract

In this article I intend to analyze some aspects of what was called CT —Culture of the Transition (Martínez, 2012; Labrador, 2017)—, especially in what refers to the approach to the attempted coup of 23-F, a founding milestone of this process. If the transition was thought of as a myth that interpreted a process, then the nucleus was 23-F, its hegemonic mytheme since it organizes a *metaphorical memory between the dictatorship and the incipient democracy*. The ideological condensation of 23-F transforms the pact of the political transition and makes visible the disenchantment of the Spanish intellectual and middle class. From there, two possible readings arise: the one that enables “peace” and the one that puts the memory of the transition in tension. The first is the one that we will analyze in Javier Cercas’s *Anatomy of an Instant*. From the reading, we propose that the transition can no longer be thought outside of its media consistency. Thinking of this novel as a semiotic artifact that operates ideologically on the ideology of “incipient democracy” also enables us to criticize the triad of heroes that is built as the programmatic and argumentative axis of the plot.

Keywords: transition; memory; democracy; novel; coup

Anatomia de um instante de Javier Cercas: a humanização do não humano ou a política viva

Resumo

Neste artigo proponho analisar alguns aspectos do que foi chamado de CT (ou Culture of the Transition (Martínez, Guillem, 2012; Labrador, 2017), especialmente no que diz respeito ao enfrentamento da tentativa de golpe de 23-F, fundador. Se a Transição foi pensada como um mito que interpreta um processo, então o cerne foi o 23-F, seu mito hegemônico, pois organiza uma *metaforicidade de memória entre a ditadura e a democracia incipiente*. 23-F transforma o pacto da transição política e torna visível o desencanto da classe intelectual e média espanhola. Assim, emergem duas leituras possíveis: a que permite a “paz” e a que coloca em tensão a memória da transição. A primeira é a que analisaremos em *Anatomia de um Momento*, de Javier Cercas. A partir da leitura, propomos que a Transição não pode mais ser pensada fora de sua consistência midiática. o ideologema da “democracia incipiente” também nos permite criticar a tríade de heróis que se constrói como eixo programático e argumentativo da trama.

Palavras-chave: transição; memória; democracia; novela; golpe de estado

Anatomía de un instante de Javier Cercas: la humanización de lo no humano o la política viva

Resumen

En este artículo me propongo analizar algunos aspectos de lo que se llamó CT —Cultura de la Transición (Martínez, 2012; Labrador, 2017)—, en especial en lo que refiere al abordaje del intento de golpe del 23-F, hito fundacional de este proceso. Si la Transición fue pensada como un mito que interpretara un proceso, entonces el núcleo fue el 23-F, su mitema hegemónico, pues organiza una *metaforicidad de la memoria entre la dictadura y la democracia incipiente*. La condensación ideológica del 23-F transforma el pacto de la transición política y visibiliza el desencanto de la clase intelectual y media española. De allí que surjan dos posibles lecturas: la que habilita la “paz” y aquella que pone en tensión la memoria de la Transición. La primera es la que analizaremos en *Anatomía de un instante* de Javier Cercas. A partir de la lectura, proponemos que la transición ya no puede pensarse por fuera de su consistencia mediática. Analizar esta novela como un artefacto semiótico que opera ideológicamente sobre el ideologema de la “democracia incipiente” nos habilita también a criticar la tríada de héroes que se construye como eje programático y argumentativo de la trama.

Palabras clave: transición; memoria; democracia; novela; golpe de estado

Introduction

In subsequent discourses, especially from the 1970s and 1980s on the Spanish transitional process, there was a consolidation and reproduction of a story that, although far from historiographical reality (Gallego, 2008), due to the circumstances of political instability, uncertainty and conflict experienced during those years, was consolidated as a myth. This mythical account of the Transition contains two fundamental narratives that organize it. In the first place, it has incorporated one on the transitional process: this gives an account of the way in which the political change took place in the 1970s, within the majority and hegemonic historiographical literature, from the attack on Luis Carrero Blanco in 1973 -as is the vision of Teresa Vilarós in *El mono del desencanto* (*The Monkey of Disenchantment*)- to the victory of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party in 1982. Another, however, from the political elites, instilled the fiction of consensus, dialogue and freedom during those years (Montoto and Vázquez, 2013; Baby, 2013).

This discourse worked throughout the transitional period, even more so after the attempted coup d'état of February 23, 1981. Thus, the myth of the Transition was able to establish itself in the common sense of Spaniards (Ros Ferrer, 2020), whereby "*España logró, contra pronóstico y por una suerte de batallitas, hazañas, y heroicidades, pasar de la dictadura a la democracia por consenso y sin violencia*" ("Spain managed, against the odds and through a series of battles, feats, and heroics, to move from dictatorship to democracy by consensus and without violence") (Escolar, 2013, p. 5). The fictional narrative cannot but, in addition, incorporate mythological facts (Barthes, 2008) such as the Second Republic, the Civil War and the Dictatorship (Vilarós, 1998), in the sense that they are obligatory places of memory to define the narrative of the present.

The subject and methodology

The versatility of the stories about these places of memory allows the historical¹ event to be narrated from the first person as a collective, involved with a community because it is about traumatic events that have been reviewed by the collective memory but that can also be thought in terms of a social (community) and political body. In this sense, the question of the body becomes central: Is the body a place of the political? Can politics inhabit a *border* body? In this line I think about the effects and the plots of the culture of the Transition (CT), since the bodies that are articulated in the projections that I analyze deconstruct hegemonic norms of thinking the collective or plural/individual and singular; the feminine/masculine and memory/history (Aguilar, 2010; Labrador, 2017), not as a left/right front, but as community affects (Arfuch, 2003 and 2016). In this active relationship I propose

1 The problem for historical theory consists in knowing whether narrative is only an aseptic, neutral discursive form that may or may not be useful in the representation of real events or, on the other hand, is a discursive form that presupposes a certain stance, mainly epistemological and ontological, that explains the political attitude. In this perspective, stories represent reality, reveal its meaning, considering the weight that the media have in our days, this can explain the boom that the study of narrative has had, the epistemological authority that has been granted to it, its cultural function and its social significance in general. Hayden White proposes an analysis of the deep structure of the historical work and argues for the untenability of the distinction between the historical account and the fictional account. Throughout his writings, we are accompanied by the idea that the historian cannot be oblivious to his readers who are concerned with their present in which the past is of great importance. In this paper, although we do not polemize with the metahistorical proposal, we know this novel to be heir to this vision.

the political reading of the narrated body, not as a functional and mimetic account, but as questioning, fluidity, discourse of rupture and deontic enclave of new moralities.

The media, and especially television, reached its massive density as of 2014 with the screening of *Operación Palace* (Operation Palace). Up to that moment, the tributes to the 23-F had focused on the figure of King Juan Carlos I, the pacifying monarch, as a referential and political modality of overcoming monarchy/democracy. However, the breaking point with respect to how the events had been represented in the documentaries was the metafictional game of the *mockumentary*² condition and its production in terms of a reactive cultural artifact. Although the documentary maintains the discursive and ontological foundations of the genre, the idea of scenic montage appears with a *film noir*³ aesthetic. The idea of mockumentary installed a new way of reading and revisiting the 23-F in the light of meta-narratives with their load of irony and parody. In Hollywood style, the hypothesis of a fake coup plan, endorsed by the king himself, only started the way to his monarchical legitimization thanks to the villainous Tejero, preceded by Operation Galaxy⁴.

In this paper I propose a rather linear reading of *Anatomía de un instante* (2009) by Javier Cercas, very different in register and tone from *Una mala noche la tiene cualquiera* (1982), a novel that also works on the representation of the 23-F in a rather doxic⁵, popular register, which also articulates the trajectories of a subordinated, marginalized transvestite subject, but who at the same time struggles to sustain a voice that he claimed as his own in the polyphonic framework that is constructed and armed as a political subject. The linear reading assumes an ordering of the critique according to the structure of the novel itself and not by semantic nuclei or themes. In this case, from that first disquisition regarding active and reactive works,

or transitive⁶ or intransitive, we find that this novel, treatise, essay -there we already have a problematic genre disquisition- follows rather the line of what we understand as reactive works. That is to say, works that somehow follow the discursive line of the culture of the Transition and are ideologically related to its ideological-discursive memory.

In this sense, we will see that the idea of myth is mediated by historical distance and the representation of heroic figures has shifted from an epic to a parodic tone in the novel. We would have a heroic triad arranged in three historical characters: Adolfo Suárez, Manuel Gutiérrez Mellado and Santiago Carrillo. The first, Adolfo Suárez, president of the government, part of the Union of Democratic Center (UCD), politically raised under Francoism; the second, Gutiérrez Mellado, military, also raised under the wing of Francoism; and, finally, Santiago Carrillo, president of the Spanish Communist Party, exiled during Francoism and occupying the seat of deputy. We have that heroic tripod that is the foundation of the epic of the culture of the Transition. That tripod is the basis of the myth of the CT, and we speak of the 23-F as the mythologem that reinforces that myth and that, in some way, legitimizes democracy in the sense of a parliamentary monarchy, that is why the ideological enclave of the king is central. This novel chooses, not at random, those three protagonists who are the ones who base the epic structure from the ideological-discursive memory of the so-called CT, in which the presence of the king is vital to understand the continuity of the ideological system. The methodological framework responds to the field of semiotic-argumentative analysis of the novel as a social discourse. In this line, I follow M. Angenot (2010), for whom all discourse is ideological and through which hegemonic tendencies operate: “*un canon de reglas y de imposiciones legitimantes y, socialmente, un instrumento de control, una vasta sinergia de poderes, de restricciones, de medios de exclusión, ligados a pautas arbitrarias formales y temáticas*” (“a canon of rules and legitimizing impositions and, socially, an instrument of control, a vast synergy of powers, of restrictions, of means of exclusion, linked to arbitrary formal and thematic guidelines”). With this premise I postulate the hypothesis that the

2 This is the name given to a mockumentary that includes comedic overtones. It is presented as a representation of real life, although it is produced as a work of fiction. It also takes the codes and elements of documentary cinema, with participants playing the role of commentators to give an “effect of reality” (Barthes, 1994).

3 Film noir is a film genre that developed in the United States between the 1930s and 1950s. John Huston’s *The Maltese Falcon*, starring Humphrey Bogart and Mary Astor, released in 1941, is usually considered the first film of this type.

4 Operation Galaxy was the code name given to the coup plot that took place in 1978. It takes its name from the place where the officers who took part met, the Galaxia cafeteria in Madrid on November 11, 1978.

5 We refer to the concept of commonplace as opposed to episteme, which is part of the notion of social discourse proper to discourse analysis.

6 In this line, it is interesting to think about the process of argumentation in which the spectator/reader of these works is included as active or reactive according to whether he/she opens new approaches or preserves those of the State, that is, participating in the struggle of political meanings through artistic interventions, such as the television series and literature. As we can see, starting from the linguistic turn and metahistory, access to the recent past finds in fictions new ways of elaborating historical events.

milestones that the novel narrates seek to deconstruct the logic that links social milestones with physiological milestones. In the purpose of crystallizing them, a first element is the legitimate language, the “*lengua nacional*” (“national language”) that constructs the doxa. The configuration of the novel is also marked by the presence of fetishes and taboos: the homeland, the army, science are, according to Angenot, on the side of fetishes; sex, madness, perversion are on the side of taboos. As the same author points out, its treatment is important since they are not only “*representados en el discurso social, sino que son producidos por éste*” (“represented in social discourse, but also produced by it”) (Angenot, 2010, p. 32). The notion of ethos is also useful for us to think of a narrator who is, above all, a politician who, from the genre “novel”, transgresses the norm and enables the essayistic reading of a semiotician.

Structures: “*He visto los ojos que han visto al emperador*” (“I have seen the eyes that have seen the emperor”)

Prima facie, we are faced with a problem of generic definition that presupposes a “taxonomy”. That is to say, a text that, in appearance, plays with the genericity⁷ of a biological, physiognomic treatise. And, on the other hand, there is the second problem: that of temporality, based on the idea of the instant. The logic I propose is linked to thinking of the writing of this novel and fiction as an exercise in photography, and the description of a photograph. The novel would then be a manual that tries to explain certain physiological characteristics of the subjects, similar to what Roland Barthes (2009) analyzes from the “*cámara lucida*” (lucid camera) and the idea of juxtaposition⁸, which is basically what we find at the beginning of each “part” in the novel, also breaking with typography because it appears in italics and is the lethargic description of the images in the Spanish Television documentary of the coup that

is projected three days later. What we see in the text is a photographic description, not a filmic one.

Here we can think about how the logic of superimposition works in the “instant”, which is that of the frozen image of Tejero in Congress. In another scene of the novel, where the authorial figuration appears, that is to say auto-diegetically⁹, Cercas says: “*yo congelo la imagen*” (“I freeze the image”), as Barthes makes explicit when he points out that he looks at the eyes that have looked at the emperor:

Un día, hace mucho tiempo, di con una fotografía de Jerónimo, el último hermano de Napoleón. Me dije entonces, con un asombro que después nunca he podido despejar: veo los ojos que han visto al Emperador. A veces hablaba de este asombro, pero como nadie parecía compartirlo ni tan solo comprenderlo (la vida está hecha así, a base de pequeñas soleadas) lo olvidé. Mi interés por la fotografía tomó un cariz más cultural, decreté que me gustaba la fotografía en detrimento de cine, del cual, a pesar de ello, nunca llegué a separarme. La cuestión permanecía, me embargaba con respecto a la fotografía un deseo ontológico. (Barthes, 2009, p. 3)

(One day, a long time ago, I came across a photograph of Jerome, Napoleon’s last brother. I said to myself then, with an astonishment that I have never been able to get rid of since: I see the eyes that have seen the Emperor. Sometimes I spoke of this astonishment, but as no one seemed to share it or even understand it (life is made like that, based on small solitudes) I forgot it. My interest in photography took a more cultural turn, I decreed that I liked photography to the detriment of cinema, from which, in spite of this, I never managed to separate myself. The question remained, I was seized by an ontological desire for photography.) (Barthes, 2009, p. 3).

Barthes’ quotation details in palimpsest the path of a gaze, which is the operation that the authorial ethos of *Anatomía de un instante* (Anatomy of a moment) performs. It is the analysis of gestures, of the use of the body that

7 Genericity proposes, unlike genre, to relate a text to open generic categories. As soon as there is a text - that is, the recognition of a set of utterances that form a communicative whole - there is an effect of genericity, that is, the inscription of this set of utterances in a class of discourse. Genericity is a socio-cognitive necessity that connects every text to the interdiscourse of a social formation. A text does not belong, in itself, to a genre, but is placed in relation (both from production and reception - interpretation) with one or more genres. The passage from genre to genericity is a change of paradigm. Relating a text, considered as closed, to a generic category constituted as essential, differs profoundly from the socio-cognitive dynamics that we propose to highlight (Adam and Heidmann, 2004).

8 The camera lucida, to which Barthes refers, performs an optical superimposition of the subject being viewed and the surface on which the artist is drawing. The artist sees the two scenes superimposed, as in a photograph that has been exposed twice.

9 We refer to references in which the narrator is part of the novel.

Cercas is interested in detailing and the question is: why make of this “novel” an almost photographic excursus using the logic of freezing in the instant? From the gaze of this tripod, what is proposed is to see what are the springs of meaning and what is the ideological intentionality in the choice of this tripod. I use the word tripod because in reality it is these three characters that sustain the ideological architecture of the CT, as well as the plot line of the novel and the logic of heroes. That is, to safeguard the idea of democracy, which in turn hides that of parliamentary monarchy, we need heroes who are remembered, and legitimized. This is important, especially in the context of the novel’s production, which is no longer that of the early Transition (1981/1982) like *Una mala noche la tiene cualquiera* (Anybody can have a bad night); it is a novel of 2009, two years after the enactment of the Law of Historical Memory. This question must be taken into account because it means that heroes as protagonists must be created anew, which presupposes a logic of antagonists as well. With these antinomies different symmetries are woven in this text that we could call *novel*.

On the one hand, as a hybrid genre, it will have historiographic research; that is, all those paratexts of *non-fiction*: dialogues, sources, documents, oral testimonies. All this serves the authorial ethos, first, to generate an effect of seriousness, of writer-journalist, historian, which in some way will have — following Roland Barthes in *The Discourse of History* (1994)— tropological issues typical of literature, applied to the historiographic discourse. There is a figuration that shows us this ethos of the historian, of the researcher who will choose these three figures. We have the political spectrum of the UCD, with Adolfo Suárez, the main hero of the novel, someone who is formed in Francoism but who at the same time presents himself as a conciliator, a rupturist, a modernist. On the other hand, Gutiérrez Mellado, vice-president, part of the army, part of the Falange, an insurgent on Franco’s side, that is, someone who attempted against the government of the Republic. We can read at that moment, from this authorial figuration that Cercas makes, from his own ethos, that in reality there is a repentance there. In that failure, what this autodiegetic narrator is reading is a democratic morality. It is an ideological effect that is constructed, and it is something that so far helps to build, that legitimacy within the framework of that ideological-discursive memory of the CT.

In this sense, the novel is state-centric and sustains the epic discourse of the Transition, political cohesion, conciliation and heroic gesture —he will repeat that the three characters did not bend down, they remained in their seats as an epic and ethical prosopopeia. The narrative project sustained in *Anatomy of a moment* is part of what Cercas calls the real story and has to do with the new historicism of maintaining, on the one hand, the great epics, the great men, but also their micro-stories, which serve to humanize and legitimize issues such as forgiveness and repentance, central nuclei of historical memory. He will do the same with Santiago Carrillo: to describe him, he argues that he also participated in 1934 in the Asturias revolution and that he attempted against the Republic. In this gesture he rhetorically dissociates the right from the left, achieving an overcoming synthesis in democracy. This ideological montage is also transferred to those who sustain the reading pact: almost the entire text is configured in terms of an absent person. What does this mean? That deictic marks are avoided in the textual space dedicated to the construction of each historical character. In the discursive scenography, the historiographic study montage appears (the *non-fiction*) and constructs an idea that the authorial ethos has investigated, observed the images and documented information. However, he does not tell the artifice: he does not tell us why he selects that, where he gets the sources, and he does so until the end of the novel where he ends up linking Suárez with the figure of his own father. The fictional status is “assembled” by the facts. There appears the resource of making believe truth. The poetics that is constructed tries to transmute into a documentary novel, with historical facts that at the same time tells traumatic facts, because there is a trauma that has to do with the construction of the nation state and with a reflection on collective memory. Where does this collective memory come from? From

documents, but also from oral accounts. It is not only the written archive, but also the oral archive. That is why we will see that it is a narrator who tries not to comment; who apparently, *prima facie*, is not affiliated to that discursive memory, who presents himself as autodiegetic, as part of the plot, from the written documents, interviews, the rumors “*lo escuché*”, “*me enteré del informe*” (“I heard it”, “I heard about the report”) that will also build a specific vision, with the trace of the conspiratorial matrix to talk about the coup. The final hypothesis is that everyone conspired against Suárez, and he had to resign.¹⁰ That is why the use of paradox is important. On the one hand, the novel uses the techniques of this new historicism to narratively construct the 23-F, but, on the other hand, it does not move away from the heroic construction, from the ideological-discursive memory of sustaining the epic of this tripod. Within this intention is the question of who will write the novel of Spanish democracy. Then, we will have, on the one hand, the totalizing and definitive eagerness of that traditional historiography, which pretended to be objective, with the effect of making believe truth and with that of the absent person of *non-fiction*; but, on the other hand, inevitably, we will also find the heteroglossia that diverse voices, the writing of the self and the polemic imply. The paradox focuses on the personal remains, on the subjective plots of the authorial ethos in relation to the different argumentative options of *non-fiction* on which this narrator hypothesizes.

Then, on the one hand, we will have an ethical model, which is intertextual, and whose ethos is made precisely from a hypotext he quotes in the novel and which is called *Los héroes de la retirada* (The heroes of the retreat). There he is telling us that the materiality on which he builds the vision of these heroes of failure has to do with a theoretical text: “*en lugar del héroe clásico, ha pasado a ocupar en las últimas décadas otro protagonista, en mi opinión más importante, héroes del nuevo estilo que no representan el triunfo y la victoria, sino la renuncia, el desmontaje*” (Cercas, 2009, p. 25). (“in place of the classic hero, another protagonist has come to occupy in recent decades, in my opinion more important, heroes of the new style that do not represent triumph and victory, but renunciation, dismantling”) (Cercas, 2009, p. 25). We could think, from this quote, the idea of disassembly because that is, ultimately, the translation he makes of the images captured by Televisión Española. That is the effect of the translation he also makes at the beginning of each part. There he chooses Adolfo Suárez as the main icon of that defeated hero; that is why, somehow, this character runs through all the parts, and, in each one of them, the chapters. Once again, we find ourselves with the game of paradox presented by the authorial ethos: is it a novel or is it not a novel? We will see that we have a structure, with an epilogue and a prologue, which are also presented under the paradox of being their opposite, thus showing us a circularity. Now, what is the reason for the circularity? The novel is presented in five chapters that are located in the center, accompanied by two paratexts at the beginning and at the end; however, the latter do not seem to have anything to do with the core of the text. The first is the citation of another figure: Churchill. This is a modern gesture since he explains that for a large part of society, he was a fictional character and he is using him as a hypotextual model to compare him with Tejero, because Tejero was not known to a large part of Spanish society either. The cameras, in any case, made him known. The mediatization effect of the lucid camera leads Cercas’ authorial ethos to see “the eyes that were going to carry out the coup”, in an intertextual game with Barthes. Following this logic, all photography has something called *stadium*, which would be what the photographer consciously wants to portray, because of an aspiration to fame. But then we have the so-called *punctum*, which is that which escapes the photographer’s intention. That is, in a way, what is at stake here: the question of the heroic nature of these gestures.

Democratic novel

The narrator says: “*yo acababa de terminar el borrador de una novela que intentaba convertir el 23 de febrero en una ficción. Y estaba lleno de dudas*” (Cercas, 2009, p. 35). (“I had just finished the draft of a novel that I intended to turn into a fiction on February 23. And I was full of doubts”) (Cercas, 2009, p. 35). That is to say, the ethos of the documentarian and the researcher is shown in terms of a personal palimpsest, because in reality he is also working on

¹⁰ The topical construction of “resignation” was another of the ideological constructs of the novel of the Transition: its causes, its enigmas, its plots served as a sample of the hero of democracy (Gallego, 2008; Labrador, 2017; Martínez, 2012).

1979: marzo: elecciones: UCD: 35%.
PSOE: 30%.
PCE: 10%.
CD: 6%.
mayo-septiembre: el PSOE abandon
el marxismo bajo el liderazgo de Felipe
González.
octubre: se aprueban por

produced, cropped and edited images that are removed from the here and now of the specific moment in which the historical event took place. We witness the coup through the *gaze of*. Then there is an important reflection on the making of fiction, on the construction of artifice, on television as a mass medium of communication, but also as a builder of realities, as a manufacturer of reality. Then, in the epilogue, there is the development of the trial of the coup plotters. This is related to Operation Galaxy, a precedent in which Tejero was also involved. The central idea of the novel is the protection of the monarchy which, above all, appears in the figure of the king. We have, on the one hand, these paratexts (the prologue, the epilogue), the five parts with the chapters, the use of italics and the translation of those images transmitted by Televisión Española, which have to do with the 35-minute record. Later, the novel will achieve the suspension of that time in the idea of “instant”. The translation of the image, in the manner of photography and a kind of print, is a work with the temporality of the capture of that instant, which is basically the frozen image of Tejero saying “quieto todo el mundo”. (“everybody freeze”). This is where this model of hero appears in opposition to the anti-heroes that also form a tripod that is woven on two other ideological condensations: amnesty and amnesia. Amnesty by the law of 1977 and amnesia by the pact of oblivion, the result of Franco’s death and the Organic Law of the State of 1967.

The idea of the epic instant to be captured, the paradox between real story and fictional story on the

hypotext that is the film archive is based on the spectacularization of the coup. The “Tejerazo” is born mediatized and its protagonist becomes a fictional character rather than the projection of a real character. That is to say, it is mediated by a culture of spectacle, in which there is a relationship between literary form and political forms. The narrator wants to discover the secret of 23-F to end up concluding that there is no such secret, that it was only a derailed man like Tejero who was at the core of its development. Democracy was absolutely responsible and effective in sustaining itself because in order to reconcile it is necessary to resign in pursuit of a king, that is why Suárez’s resignation is central. This means, therefore, that we will have, on the one hand, hero protagonists and, on the other, antagonists.

In another order, we will see that the novel presents the notion of the politician of race that is Adolfo Suárez, who was able to mutate ideologically at the same time as he legitimized himself, as opposed to his counter-figure Alfonso Armada. The ideological effect of the novel is that Armada is the one who was waiting to enter the Zarzuela to talk to the king, who does not receive him, which serves in the text to argue that he knew nothing about the coup. Alfonso Armada is the political part of the coup, and that is why it is possible to think of symmetry with respect to Adolfo Suárez. On the other hand, we have the figure of Gutiérrez Mellado, the Falangist military hardliner of Francoism, although he now appears repentant in the novel. His counterpart will be Milans del Bosch, the one

who attacks, the one who sends the tanks to the streets in Valencia. Part of this criticism is made to Adolfo Suárez for the Amnesty Law, on the one hand, and also for the legitimization of the Spanish Communist Party. These internal ones feed the legitimization of the culture of the Transition/betrayal of Suárez and then of democracy. On the other hand, we are missing a character, that of Santiago Carrillo. Why does the narrator choose him? It is the line that postulates the figuration of the antichrist, of the communist who returns from exile to occupy the seat of deputy. He negotiates to file the revolutionary point in order to be able to enter and become a deputy. He negotiates with Suárez, and that is why he is criticized, because he conciliates with communism. The counter-figure of Santiago Carrillo is Tejero. They are two antichrists who do what they have to do and carry out orders. So we have a symmetry from these ideas of models of heroes and anti-heroes, specifically in Suárez, because he also has the idea of the pure politician, who has this moral of duty to do and who believes in democratic liberalism.

The structure that is put together -heroes and anti-heroes- is also based on the idea of spectacle, in which the medium is the message. If in the images we clearly see who is the hero and who is the traitor, that same filmic structure is transferred to the narrator's translation in the novel of those transmitted images, which are prolonged and extended in the fictional mechanics. The rhetorical resource of prosopopoeia, the prolonged description of the agents, also appears. The novel also proposes an ordering that goes from the macro to the micro: the images, the italics, which is like the stamp, and then the prolongation of what is in italics, which is the prosopopoeia. Thus the idea of the print is anatomized, where we also find the visual component, that is, what those bodies do, how they look, what they look at and the spatiality in which they move. The first part already anticipates what will happen, in terms of anatomy as well. The biological metaphor that articulates the text prevails; in fact, the name of the first part is "The placenta of the blow", a biological and physiological metaphor. That first part starts by saying "*solo, estatuario y espectral en un desierto de escaños vacíos*" ("alone, statuesque and spectral in a desert of empty seats"). This is the way in which Suárez is attempted to be constructed. Anticipations also appear: "everything is fine, unless something unexpected happens" (p. 45). The famous anticipatory resource, based on rumors. It also implies the translation of the

recordings and here the focus shifts from the auditory to the visual: "*al mismo tiempo entra por la puerta derecha un ujier de uniforme, cruza con pasos urgentes el semicírculo central del hemiciclo, donde se sientan los taquígrafos, y empieza a subir las escaleras de acceso a los escaños*" (p. 47). ("at the same time an usher in uniform enters through the right door, crosses with urgent steps the central semicircle of the hemicycle, where the stenographers sit, and begins to climb the stairs leading to the seats") (p. 47). The seat is the ideologeme of democracy: "*Es entonces cuando se oye un segundo grito, borroso, procedente de la entrada izquierda del hemiciclo, y luego, también ininteligible, un tercero, y muchos diputados —y todos los taquígrafos, y también el ujier— se vuelven a mirar hacia la entrada izquierda*" ("It is then that a second shout is heard, blurred, coming from the left entrance of the hemicycle, and then, also unintelligible, a third one, and many deputies -and all the stenographers, and also the usher- turn to look towards the left entrance"). Here the description appears, it lengthens that instant that is in the image, until Tejero bursts in: "Everybody freeze" ("Quiet todo el mundo"). After that, narratively, the desert of the seats appears, the nothingness. Then he says "el plano cambia" (p.48) ("the shot changes") (p. 48). It is almost as if it were a didascalía, which is added to the italics:

El plano cambia, pero no el silencio: el teniente coronel se ha esfumado porque la primera cámara enfoca el ala derecha del hemiciclo, donde todos los parlamentarios que se habían levantado han vuelto a tomar asiento, y el único que permanece de pie es el general Manuel Gutiérrez Mellado, vicepresidente del gobierno en funciones; junto a él, Adolfo Suárez sigue sentado en su escaño de presidente del gobierno, el torso inclinado hacia delante, una mano aferrada al apoyabrazos de su escaño, como si él también estuviera a punto de levantarse. (Cercas, 2009, p. 30).

The shot changes, but not the silence: the lieutenant colonel has vanished because the first camera focuses on the right wing of the hemicycle, where all the parliamentarians who had risen have resumed their seats, and the only one who remains standing is General Manuel Gutiérrez Mellado, acting vice president of the government; next to him, Adolfo Suárez is still

seated in his seat as president of the government, his torso leaning forward, one hand clutching the armrest of his seat, as if he too were about to rise. (Cercas, 2009, p. 30).

Our gaze is subject to the camera, to what the cameraman wanted to focus on in the here and now. We look through the gaze, it is a “lucid camera”, in the manner of Barthes, which juxtaposes two images: the real and the constructed. The idea of the seat appears again as well. We do not speak so much of the hemicycle, but of the seat, and of the seat many times personified, the seat that “engulfs”, for example. This is where the grotesque and parody effect takes place. When speaking of the effect of the absent person, typical of the researcher’s ethos, there subtly appear features of construction of these characters that, somehow, in a more underhanded way, can be read from certain tropes that indicate an ideological-discursive tendency with the aim of sustaining the legitimacy of the CT: “*El general Gutiérrez Mellado, sin embargo, sale en busca del teniente coronel rebelde, mientras el presidente Suárez intenta retenerle sin conseguirlo, sujetándolo por la americana*” (p. 102). (“General Gutiérrez Mellado, however, goes out in search of the rebel lieutenant colonel, while President Suárez tries to hold him without success, holding him by the American”) (p. 102). In that scene begins the analogy of the dance: “*bajando la escalera de la tribuna de oradores, pero a mitad de camino se detiene, confundido o intimidado por la presencia del general Gutiérrez Mellado*” (p. 103). (“descending the stairs to the speakers’ tribune, but halfway down he stops, confused or intimidated by the presence of General Gutiérrez Mellado”) (p. 103). Gutiérrez Mellado is raised as a hero and, after the shots, he says further on: “*Mientras las balas arrancan del techo pedazos visibles de cal y uno tras otro los taquígrafos y el ujier se esconden bajo la mesa y los escaños engullen a los diputados*” (“While the bullets tear visible pieces of lime from the ceiling and one after the other the stenographers and the usher hide under the table and the seats engulf the deputies”) (p. 104).

So what about Suárez? He is the nerve center of the whole first part. “*En cuanto al presidente Suárez, regresa con lentitud a su escaño, se sienta, se recuesta contra el respaldo y se queda ahí, ligeramente escorado a la derecha, solo, estatuario y espectral en un desierto de escaños vacíos*”

(“As for President Suárez, he slowly returns to his seat, sits down, leans back against the backrest and remains there, slightly slanted to the right, alone, statuesque and spectral in a desert of empty seats”) (p. 31). In this passage we encounter the idea of the desert; and a metaphor is constructed to characterize Suárez that connects with the idea of the navigator, of the captain leading the ship. At another point he speaks of the armrest as a life preserver to continue the analogy.

The second sequence that follows “*Un golpista frente al golpe*” (“A coup leader in the face of the coup”) will be analyzed in the second part, which is the figure of Gutiérrez Mellado, the military man. The epic paradigm of the repentant military man, who now supports democracy. The text focuses on the epic construction of this tripod. From the origin we go to the coup leader facing the coup. Let us remember that Gutiérrez Mellado was against the Republic. This is what he emphasizes at the beginning, the past is granted to speak of repentance. Then, from this repentance, what interests him is the spring of legitimization of the monarchy and the defense of the three heroes. He devotes the second part to investigate almost psychologically what happened to Gutiérrez Mellado, his repentance and the military gesture, from that anatomical vision. He explains that, above all, this character does not tolerate insubordination. The thesis he sustains, and it is the core of the issue, is that the coup of ‘81 worked as a mirror of the coup of ‘36, that is why the argument is based on rescuing Gutiérrez Mellado in an epic tone. He continues with the perspective of the camera. He reiterates, circularizes the arguments, and describes him standing up: “*Como si quisiera impedirles la entrada*” (p. 45) (“As if he wanted to prevent them from entering”) (p. 45). He puts it as a defender of the seats, but also as a body defending another body.

Authorial ethos and narrative fiction

It is not by chance that in the third part the first person appears, which until then had not appeared. There is a metafictional gesture in “*Descongeló la imagen*” (“I unfreeze the image”). There we also see the artifice that

shows us how he is writing while he is looking. That is why this juxtaposition effect that we saw in the example of the camera lucida was important to work on the 3D effect that, in a way, will help us to see how the artifice that appears within the construction of fiction itself is given. What remains of that has to do with what I call “moral realism”, that is to say, the truth that this text has, in some way, is the moral, the ideologies that are constructed and the legitimacy of democracy. All that is what we could call moral realism. It does not matter whether the sources are true, legitimate or not legitimate, what matters is that they construct an effect of moral truth. By this we mean that the doxa is crystallized not by the information that the novel puts into circulation but by the representations that the characters project in terms of generation and subjective truth. That is why he will say: “*por un momento, en el apoyabrazos del escaño, la mano del joven presidente y la mano del viejo general (p. 105)*” (“for a moment, on the armrest of the seat, the hand of the young president and the hand of the old general) (p. 105)”. This is important because it alludes to the intergenerational issue. Here the concept of post-memory (Hirsch, 1997) intervenes, which refers to the memories of the generation that precedes a subject and takes the strength to consider them as one’s own experiences. Thus, studying post-memory requires analyzing the ways in which second generations interrogate their past in order to define their own space as political subjects. In this novel, the interrogation is based on these questions: for whom is *Anatomy of a moment* written? Is it addressed to the second generation? Is it written for the third generations? Is it written for the children? Is it written for the grandchildren? Why is it important for the young and the old to unite? Why is it important for the young and the old to unite? Because this image of unity is also a metaphor for the old structures of Francoism and the advent of the future democracy. That is to say, without those foundations, democracy cannot be built:

la mano del joven presidente y la mano del viejo general parecen buscarse, como si los dos hombres quisieran afrontar juntos su destino. Pero el destino no llega, ni llegan los disparos, o no de momento. [...] intenta apaciguar con palabras su ira, le ruega que vuelva a su escaño y consigue que entre en razón: tomándole de la mano como si fuera un niño. (p. 105)

(the hand of the young president and the hand of the old general seem to seek each other, as if the two men wanted to face their destiny together. But the destiny does not come, nor do the shots come, or not for the moment. [...] he tries to appease his anger with words, begs him to return to his seat and succeeds in bringing him to his senses: taking him by the hand as if he were a child.) (p. 105)

Again we see in this quotation the struggle to return to the seat, and the mention of childhood in moments of tension: “*lo atrae hacia él, se levanta y le deja paso, y el viejo general —después de desabrocharse la chaqueta con un gesto que descubre del todo su camisa blanca, su chaleco gris y su corbata oscura— se sienta finalmente en su escaño*” (p. 105). (“he draws him to himself, stands up and makes way for him, and the old general —after unbuttoning his jacket with a gesture that fully reveals his white shirt, his gray vest and his dark tie— finally sits down on his seat”) (p. 105). The two generations, the logic of the seat, and the value center of these characters, legitimized by their actions. Then, a revolutionary in the face of the coup: Carrillo. What the novel analyzes, in this autodiegetic perspective, has to do with repentance in the events of the coup. The discourse of repentance is very important in the novel because, in addition to configuring the defeated hero, he is enthroned as a savior of democracy. If the accusation was for his participation in the Asturias revolution, now in the attempted coup he shows that what matters is the defense of democracy. The narrator, in this narrative gesture, unites the three, under the ideologeme of the seat and the defense of democracy. He manages, as we said before, to freeze the image in the three heroes. In this anatomy, which configures the value center of the construction of this heroic tripod, the first person appears. Says “*una luz acuosa, escasa e irreal envuelve la escena*” (“a watery, dim and unreal light envelops the scene”); it translates these visual images, “*como si tuviera lugar en el interior de un estanque o en el interior de una pesadilla o como si sólo estuviera iluminada por el barroco racimo de globos de luz que pende de una pared, en la esquina superior derecha de la imagen*” (“as if it were taking place inside

a pond or inside a nightmare or as if it were only illuminated by the baroque cluster of light globes hanging from a wall in the upper right corner of the image” (p. 180). We continue with the visual translation: “*Que de repente se descongela: la descongelo*” (“That suddenly thaws: I thaw it”). Here he is showing us this artifice and this author’s configuration: “*Ahora, en el silencio crepitante y atemorizado del hemiciclo, los guardias civiles deambulan por el hall de entrada, por el semicírculo central, por las cuatro escaleras de acceso a los escaños, buscando todavía su lugar en el dispositivo del secuestro*” (“Now, in the crackling and frightened silence of the hemicycle, the civil guards wander through the entrance hall, through the central semicircle, through the four stairways leading to the seats, still looking for their place in the kidnapping device”) (p. 181).

Kidnapping device: another ideogeme construction. It is not a coup; it is a kidnapping. With this the narrator is also giving much more force to the critique of the coup: “*por encima de Adolfo Suárez y de la hilera de ministros sentados junto a él, entre la desolación de escaños vacíos*” (“above Adolfo Suárez and the row of ministers sitting next to him, among the desolation of empty seats”) (p. 82). We can see the insistence on the idea of the seats: “*asoman una, dos, tres, cuatro tímidas cabezas*” (“one, two, three, four timid heads peek out”). The synecdoche is clear with respect to the role of the congressmen: “*tímidas cabezas de diputados que se debaten entre la curiosidad y el miedo*” (“timid heads of deputies who struggle between curiosity and fear”) (p. 182). Here we have, then, for the first time in the third part, this singular first-person. There is a very marked deixis. We observe the artifice and figuration of the novelist, of the ethos that translates, but also freezes, thaws, arms and disarms. And the idea of the stage as a device of a kidnapping. With which there is also an axiological charge with respect to the coup, in negative terms. There is a clear position of the coup as a kidnapping in this scene, which serves to sustain the defense of the king and the monarchy. In some way it symbolizes the attempted kidnapping of democracy.

In that quotation the change of shot occurs, in which Carrillo now appears. “*Un diputado permanece sentado y fumando*” (“A deputy remains seated and smoking”) (p. 169). The peace of Carrillo, the quiet revolutionary, makes the camera focus on him, as he fulfills the idea of an absent person, as he is projected as an entity that no one is handling. The left of the hemicycle seems an inverted reflection

of what happens in the right wing. This is also interesting for the ideological analysis of spatiality in the novel. If he is telling us that the same thing that happens in the left wing happens in the right wing, what he is talking about is the dissociation of the classical notions of right and left in the political spectrum. This dilemma dissociates them and achieves the legitimacy effect of democracy. The only thing that exists is a reversal of meanings, not opposition. This is not a novel that can be analyzed from a narratological point of view. What we have is a hybrid text that combines essay, historiographic writing and the effect of spectacularization. The text takes advantage of fictionality, but the narrativity of this novel is very condensed and contaminated by other discursive scenes. We have to look for other tools to analyze it. Later in the text, we will have Carrillo again, with the epic character, saying no and confronting the kidnappers, which also implies dismantling the coup. To oppose is typical of a hero, of these heroes of failure that we have been analyzing and that, according to Enzensberger’s paratext, are part of the process that brings the end of a dictatorship to the beginning of a democracy. They are heroes whose weapons have been intelligence and caution. They never uttered glorious phrases, but rather distinguished themselves by their tact and prudence. Enzensberger begins his list with Nikita Khrushchev, the Stalin official who had the courage to reveal the crimes of his predecessor. The “*héroes de la retirada*” (“heroes of the retreat”) come from dictatorships and a great hero of the retreat was Adolfo Suárez, having planned the transition to democracy.

Therefore, we will have to see what happens with the idea of failure, because at a structural level, this work can also be understood as a success or a failure at the genre level. This is another question we can ask ourselves: does it manage to be a novel? Does it manage to be an essay? Perhaps the narrator does not solve the enigma, but one of the hypotheses he presents also has to do with the fact that the defense of the seat appears as a metaphor for democracy, and it is there, in that *topoi*, that the text seems to legitimize itself or to be on the side of Suárez and the king; and, therefore, of the culture of the Transition that reads in this sense of defense. Another reading that is sustained goes in line with the structure of the text, the way in which it is formally constructed from this question of circularity, but also of failure as a genre. Not being able to define generically in what way the coup is said, also implies a failure in the culture of the Transition.

Conclusions: “Esos escaños vacíos” (“Those empty seats”)

With this quote above we have another metaphor, that of the desert. As we know, there is a summary secret about the coup attempt; this implies that 50 years must pass since the event or 25 years since the death of all the protagonists to be able to open the archives. For this reason, there is not much historiographic material that works on those documents, and then it is there when the use of imagination becomes much more present, with the only source of the recording that was not broadcasted live. We have an edition of what happened, witnesses and some reports, but there is another issue, and that is just when the deputies were released, the condition set by the coup perpetrators was that there should be no press as well as no photos of them should be taken. For that reason, the “*retirada*” (“withdrawal”) is interpreted as another secret of summary, because we do not have information on how the exit pact was. This is also the origin of the suspicions of a coup staged by the king himself, and it is this background that gives rise to the fictional resources.

In order to imagine and write this novel, the starting point is the recording, what the camera follows. That is why I return to the effect of the lucid camera, from which the observation of the anatomies is interesting, because at the same time they comprise tropologies, all these biological metaphors that we have been analyzing and that suppose that the exercise of writing has to do with the semiotic, with the physiological, with observation and with the gaze.

The argumentative path that sustains this thesis and that has its center in the placenta of the coup, that is to say, in the previous to the coup that gives, later, with the emerging figure of Suárez, is also connected with the way in which this coup is intellectually designed. That is why all the textual space dedicated to the president is very important. The narrator argues that he earned the hatred of all, and that this hero was trying to initiate changes and generated the insubordination of all sectors. That is why he talks about the placenta, which is very important as a biological metaphor.

In parts 4 and 5, the Congress of Deputies is specifically and spatially located. The left wing acts as a stage and accompanies the paratext: “*en la tarde del 23 de febrero*” (“on the afternoon of February 23”). It is no longer, in general, February 23. It goes from the macro to the micro.

In these parts it goes to the particular. That is where the palimpsest is generated. We are uncovering, and it seems that the nerve center is the legitimacy of democracy and, therefore, the reason for the coup is not made explicit. That is to say, they are a series of hypothetical constructions to never arrive at a univocal explanation. It is not so much about the data that the visual archive can give us, but rather about the discourse it interprets. Data are also constructions, ultimately. This is the origin of the metanarrative gesture of history, of which Cercas is clearly aware. What we are dealing with here is to generate, in this real story, an interpretative construction of the coup. This authorial fiction that is intended to construct a hermeneutic gaze between description, narration and argumentation. The strongest one has to do with that center as it is argumentation, because there they build cause-consequence relationships, definitions and dissociation of notions, resources that have to do with an argumentative rather than narrative thread and that bets on trying to convince us, the readers. It is a device that tries to convince us and that operates the culture of the Transition. The argumentative matrix, which also has a semantics in the text, assumes as well that we see this construction in terms of a sort of hiatus, a waiting situation that has to do with the tension of this tripod in the Congress of Deputies. The focal point is located from the inside, not from the outside. It is the inside that matters here. It is the fictional effect, the fictional reconstruction of something that does not seem to be a historical event because it is born mediated, as a spectacle. The narrator builds his own perspective, his gaze. We also see it in the deictic matrix: there, over there, here. The hand of the one who is enunciating his own gaze will be crisscrossed all the time by this perspective of the narrator’s gaze. He does not see the actors but the gaze. Also, it is the cameraman’s gaze.

Why freeze this instant and not another? Why freeze this heroic tripod and not others? Why this perspective and not a perspective of the more general coup or of those who hide under the seats? There, we necessarily have to take consider what remains to the narrator of what he sees, what interests him. Because there is what is shown, but what is important is what serves him to build his perspective, which is the autobiographical aspect. That is the *punctum*, what remains to him. This idea of bringing to himself the understanding of that historical event that is born mediated by force of screen. That is why his anchorage is observed when he says “*esa es la imagen, ese es el gesto diáfano que*

contiene muchos gestos” (“that is the image, that is the diaphanous gesture that contains many gestures”) (p. 189). Suárez in *antonomasia*, is the model of the human, of contradiction and error. He is the model of democracy.

The narrator here is clearly posed as a narrator who claims to be subjective and needs to position himself in that place. This ethos has to do with autobiographical invention, especially with the figure of the father himself. We see this in the fourth part: “*Todos los golpes, el golpe*” (“All the blows, the blow”) from the *antonomasia*. The model of the blow is given from that individuality, which we saw in the metaphor of the placenta, to the idea of the collective character. Now he proceeds from the macro to the micro, which will allow the emergence of autobiographical fiction from the inside with these counter-figures, these antagonists who retreat to the outside, since he focuses on his own life as an authorial ethos. On the outside we find Milans del Bosch, in Valencia, the crudest part, in which the tanks appear in the street. And Armada, who connects with the king. They are waiting for orders, especially those of the king.¹¹ The inside and the outside are dissociated. We continue with the perspective from the inside, but the outside begins to appear. There we realize that a scene appears *in media res*, in which there is no longer any image, no image is translated, it goes to black and makes us wonder why it is cut.

The fourth part is an intellectual reflection on how to tell the story of the coup, how to think about it. It is more intellectual than an attempt of translation as it has been. The idea of unveiling little by little the enigma appears, which has to do with the way the conspiracy took place and how the coup was executed. That seems to be the great unanswered enigma, and because there is no answer, the novel appears. The setting of the fact in imagination. This will lead us to the fifth part, which has to do with the interdiscursive game regarding fiction, starting with Rossellini’s work. In this operation the fictional construction begins, there is no longer a historical referent. They are referents of culture, and of cinematographic culture, in which there is no political leader. This last part focuses on the end of the recording. “*Y al final, casi treinta y cinco minutos después de iniciada, la grabación se cierra con un torbellino de nieve*” (“And at the end, almost thirty-five minutes after it starts, the recording closes with a whirlwind of snow”). And from there, the narrator moves to an evaluative register: “*Suárez no fue un buen presidente del gobierno durante sus dos últimos años en el poder, cuando la democracia parecía empezar a estabilizarse en España, pero quizá era el mejor presidente con que afrontar un golpe de Estado*” (“Suárez was not a good president of the government during his last two years in power, when democracy seemed to begin to stabilize in Spain, but perhaps he was the best president with which to face a coup d’état”) (p. 190). Here we have it again—he resisted, confronted: how was the coup d’état disarticulated, by Suárez or by the king? We enter into ambiguity again. The text continues with the liberation of the hostages, another anatomical gesture that has to do with the almost embrace between Suárez and Armada, the same one who was diagramming and going to the Zarzuela to convince the king embraces Suárez. A reading that is not a political reading: it is hyper-romantic, closer to the erotic register than to the documentary. The narrator seeks to establish this idea of the pact, but the text reveals that Suárez was unaware of Armada’s intentions. This embrace is not based on a pact of conciliation or forgiveness, but on a fiction, on the individual perspective that each one

11 The event that took place on February 23, 1981, was called a coup attempt or “Tejerazo”. The Congress of Deputies was voting on the investiture of the new President of the Government, Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo, when Antonio Tejero Molina burst into the premises with armed guards. He pointed his gun at the president of the Congress, Lendelino Lavilla, and ordered everyone to stand still. The outgoing Vice-President of the Government, Manuel Gutiérrez Mellado, a career military man, jumped up from his seat. He rebuked him and demanded explanations. Then, Tejero shot at the ceiling and the more than 300 deputies threw themselves to the floor. Three main characters of the Transition did not have that reflex: Gutiérrez Mellado; the leader of the Communist Party, Santiago Carrillo; and the outgoing president, Adolfo Suárez. The events had been precipitated by the resignation or so-called resignation of Suárez, three weeks earlier.

has. That is what the text, from its form, dismantles. On the one hand, there is what it argues and, on the other, what it shows with its form. Given the form of this text, we can argue that it was the king who, by not receiving Armada, stops the intention of the coup. Finally, it does show that almost embrace that they give each other, but in reality, one of them believes one thing and the other believes something else.

With this embrace emerges the paradoxical force of the text regarding politics. It states:

cuya verdadera respuesta es la propia pregunta. A menos que el reto que me planteé al escribir este libro, tratando de responder mediante la realidad lo que no supe y no quise responder mediante la ficción fuera un reto perdido de antemano y que la respuesta a esa pregunta, la única respuesta posible a esa pregunta sea una novela.

(whose real answer is the question itself. Unless the challenge I set myself in writing this book, trying to answer through reality what I didn't know and didn't want to answer through fiction was a lost challenge beforehand and that the answer to that question, the only possible answer to that question is a novel.) (p. 200)

The resolution of the genre is not clear either, in this moral realism. There appears this figure of the hero and the narrator's father: "Lo entendí. Creo que esta vez lo entendí. Y por eso unos meses más tarde, cuando su muerte y la resurrección de Adolfo Suárez en los periódicos formaron una última simetría" ("I understood. I think this time I understood. And that is why a few months later, when his death and the resurrection of Suárez in the newspapers formed a final symmetry") (p. 200). From the text itself this question of symmetries is raised:

la última figura de esta historia, yo no pude evitar preguntarme si había empezado a escribir este libro no para intentar entender a Adolfo Suárez o un gesto de Adolfo Suárez sino para intentar entender a mi padre, si había seguido escribiéndolo para seguir hablando con mi padre, si había querido terminarlo para que mi padre lo leyera y supiera que por fin

había entendido, que había entendido que yo no tenía tanta razón y él no estaba tan equivocado, que yo no soy mejor que él, y que ya no voy a serlo.

(the last figure of this story, I could not help but wonder if I had started writing this book not to try to understand Adolfo Suárez or a gesture of Adolfo Suárez but to try to understand my father, if I had continued writing it to keep talking to my father, if I had wanted to finish it so that my father would read it and know that I had finally understood, that I had understood that I was not so right and he was not so wrong, that I am not better than him, and that I will not be anymore.) (p. 203)

To conclude, there is a point of escape to the field of biographical self-figuration, as if history were a point of view on the construction of the narrative ethos that is founded on the effects of genericity of social discourse as the narratable and the arguable of a contemporaneity that still seeks to build places of memory.

References

- Adam, J. y Heidmann, U. (2004). *From genres to genericity. The example of stories (Perrault and the Grimm)*. *Langages*, 38 (153), 62-72.
- Aguilar, P. (2010). *Memory and oblivion of the Spanish civil war*. Alianza.
- Angenot, M. (2010). *The social discourse*. Siglo XXI.
- Arfuch, L. (2003). *Culture and crisis: intersections*. Arguments.
- _____. (2016). The affective turn. Emotions, subjectivity and politics. *DeSignis*, (24), 245-254.
- Baby, S. (2013). *The myth of peaceful transition. Violence and politics in Spain (1975-1982)*. Casa de Velázquez.
- Barthes, R. (2008). *Mitologies*. Siglo XXI.
- _____. (1994). "The discourse of history". *The whisper of language* (pp. 163-177). Paidós.
- _____. (2009). *The camera lucida*. Paidós.
- Cercas, J. (2009). *Anatomy of an instant*. Mondadori.
- Enzensberger, H. (1997). "Magnus The Heroes of the Retreat". *ZickSak* (pp. 55-63). Surkamp.
- Escolar, I. (Coord.) (2013). "The end of the Spain of the Transition". *Notebooks from Eldiario.es*, 1.

- Gallego, F. (2008). *The myth of the Transition: the crisis of Francoism and the origins of democracy (1973-1977)*. Critics.
- Hirsch, M. (1997). *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*. Harvard University Press.
- Labrador, G. (2017). *Guilty for literature. Political imagination and counterculture in the Spanish transition (1968-1986)*. Akal.
- Martínez, G. (Comp.) (2012). *CT or the Culture of Transition: Criticism of 35 years of Spanish culture*. Debolsillo.
- Montoto, M. y Vázquez, A. (2013). The dead man was not so healthy. Disaffection with the current Spanish political system. Some contributions. *Proceedings of the Sociology Congress Spanish Federation of Sociology*.
- Ros Ferrer, V. (2020). *The memory of others. Stories and resignifications of the Spanish Transition in the current novel*. Iberoamericana Vervuert.
- Vilarós, T. (1998). *The monkey of disenchantment. A cultural critique of the Spanish Transition (1973-1993)*. Siglo XXI.