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Voiced Postmemories: Rozalén’s “Justo” as a Case Study of Singing, Performing, and Embodying Mourning in Spain

Abstract

This article introduces the concept of “voiced postmemories” by analyzing the song “Justo” (2017), created by the Spanish singer-songwriter Rozalén, as well as the documentary that was released with it, *Conversaciones con mi abuela* (2017). The documentary portrays an intergenerational dialogue in which Rozalén asks her grandmother about the murder and “disappearance” of Rozalén’s great-uncle, Justo, at the end of the Spanish Civil War. Justo’s story stands as an archetype of many stories of victims of authoritarian dictatorships. The song shows the need to mourn Justo for four generations. Among the achievements of Rozalén’s project is the exhumation of Justo’s tomb, reactivating an ongoing debate about mass graves in Spain. The essay connects this example with others in Spain, Chile, Uruguay, Israel, and India, and it characterizes some features of voiced postmemories, those aural and oral particularities of postmemories found and expressed through music and sound.

1. Introduction

This essay adds to the emerging field of postmemory studies within the context of the Spanish Civil War (here referred to as “SCW”)¹ and to the ongoing research regarding the intersections of sound studies, gender studies, and memory studies. As Marianne Hirsch asserts, the definition of “postmemory” has evolved since its first appearance in the early 1990s (2020).² The present article considers one additional layer in postmemory studies by exploring the inter- and trans-generational oral transmission of stories popularized, in this case, by singer-

¹ Sebastiaan Faber (2018) contributed a key chapter in which he summarizes the state of affairs of postmemory studies in Spain.

² The most updated definition of the term states: “[p]ostmemory describes the relationship that the ‘generation after’ bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma or transformation of those who came before—to events that they ‘remember’ only by means of the stories, images and behaviors among which they grew up. But these events were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right” (Hirsch 2019a, 172).

songwriters. This proposal goes beyond the visual media (photographs, paintings, documentaries, personal objects, etc.) through which postmemory has mainly been studied by examining a song in detail, and by connecting the case study with further examples. Answering the question of “what aesthetic and institutional structures, what tropes and technologies best mediate the complex psychology of postmemory” (2019a), Hirsch enumerates a number of specialists—“contemporary writers, filmmakers, visual artists, memorial artists and museologists” (2019a)—that have forged an aesthetic of postmemory. In my analyses, I will not survey *what* medium best facilitates the continuity of memory among generations. Instead, I will argue for the need to include music and sonic art in the aesthetics of postmemory, mapping out a tentative characterization of its aural specificities.³ As I will explain further in the third section, this is not the first attempt to study the way subsequent generations in different sociohistorical contexts interacted with their traumatic past through songs (Meyers and Zandberg 2002; Kabir 2004; Friedman 2017; Lobos 2018). The concept of “voiced postmemories” proposed in the present article, however, connects these articulations under a common frame, highlighting their shared aural and oral natures without attempting to homogenize their singularities. I propose to classify as “voiced postmemories” those expressions of postmemory manifested through music and sound that could potentially help us mourn ‘inherited’ traumas, or to react to powerful collective experiences that preceded our birth.⁴

The song “Justo” will be the initial, guiding case study of this essay. It was written by the Spanish singer-songwriter Rozalén (1986-) for her album *Cuando el río suena...* (2017), and it was composed following a conversation with her grandmother, Ángeles. Rozalén stands out as one of today’s most recognized Spanish singer-songwriters, especially after the release of “La puerta violeta”

³ Laia Quílez Esteve and José Carlos Rueda Laffond (2017) edited the first compilation of articles about postmemory in the SCW (1936-1939) and Franco’s dictatorship (1939-1975). Among the aesthetics of postmemory that they study (TV, movies, photography, novels, theater, comics, social media) they include a chapter on radio, a good example of the sonic dimension of postmemory (Montagut Calvo 2017, 75-93). Earlier, in 2013, Irene Gómez-Castellano had studied lullabies and postmemory in a popular SCW film. Both essays are instances of the aural and oral components in Spanish postmemory studies that the present article examines.

⁴ My thoughts on the emphasis given to the use of songs as a possible way to mourn and the importance of the act of verbalizing songs are influenced by Stephanie Siebuth’s book *Survival Songs: Conchita Piquer’s Coplas and Franco’s Regime of Terror* (2014). Drawing from clinical psychotherapy, Siebuth studied the ways in which singing coplas (in particular, those by Conchita Piquer) during Franco’s dictatorship could subconsciously help listeners mourn their dead safely.

(2017c), a feminist song that quickly gained popularity. Like other songs in the album *Cuando el río suena...*, “Justo” was released alongside a short documentary called *Conversaciones con mi abuela* (Conversations with my grandma) (2017a), which shows how Ángeles’s traumatic story was transmitted. The documentary stages an intergenerational dialogue between a grandmother and her granddaughter, in which the women speak about the murder and “disappearance”⁵ of Ángeles’s brother, Justo, between 1938 and 1939. In this analysis, Justo’s story stands as an archetype of the “disappearance” stories of Francoism’s victims, and possibly the victims of other dictatorships as well. Cinta Ramblado-Minero explains that, most often, in the case of Spain, those revealing and engaging with the memories of the SCW are the third generation, that of the granddaughters and grandsons (2007, 95). The song “Justo” and its accompanying documentary constitute a powerful example of a new way in which younger generations are narrating, through lyrics, Spain’s institutionally silenced past.⁶

To contextualize the need for this song and its relevance, one should consider the very controversial amnesty agreement reached by the nation’s elites in 1975, during Spain’s Transition to democracy. This was known as the “Pact of Forgetting” or “Pact of Silence.” As Germán Labrador Méndez defends, and as it will also be proved here, this agreement was indeed a struggle for hegemonic control. In the streets, inside the home and in some cultural spaces, however, citizens of the Spanish state never stopped remembering (2017, 61). The goal of the pact was to avoid dealing institutionally with the legacy of Francoism and to move forward toward a “democratic future.” It should also be remembered that, while most northern European countries have found ways to process the violence that arose from WWII, Spanish society has been left to grapple on its own with crimes committed with international complicity.⁷ In 2007, thirty-two years after

⁵ Justo was murdered, and his body was placed in an unknown mass grave. Today most of these graves have been located, even if the Spanish State has not yet invested the funds to exhume the bodies. The 2007 Historical Memory Law resulted in the release of a map of all SCW mass graves (Ministerio de Justicia 2007).

⁶ Apart from the documentary, Rozalén also released a music video that offers a complementary recreation of Justo’s story (2017b). A collage (made from broken photographs and different colored papers) provides the surface for the lyrics. The different broken pieces, of what seems to be Justo’s face, come together in the music video, providing a visual analogy for the story narrated in the lyrics.

⁷ It is well documented that Francoist Spain’s official neutrality during WWII did not translate into a policy of zero intervention. Likewise, the unfolding of WWII greatly impacted the development of the regime. To read more, see David A. Messenger (2014); Sara J. Brenneis and Gina Herrmann (2020).

the Spanish parliament signed the “Pact of Forgetting,” the law was finally revised, with the passing of the “Law of Historical Memory,” which intended to invest funds in the exhumation of mass graves. The initial enthusiasm around the new legislation did not last, since its passing remained a pre-election gesture, and funding to enact the bill was never fully released. The 2007 Historical Memory Law uses the metaphor of “open wounds,” one of the most recurrent tropes in discourses about the SCW: “This Law hopes to contribute to the closing of wounds that remain open within the Spanish people” (BOE 3 2007, my translation).⁸ Rozalén also uses this formulation in the second verse of the first stanza of “Justo:” “Don’t say anything, don’t reopen old wounds, cry always in silence, don’t spread resentment in this small town” (2017b, my translation).⁹ These lyrics reproduce the institutional message, performing the instructions that, first under Franco’s regime, and then mainly from right-wing positions, have always been repeated. However, Rozalén is doing quite the opposite of what her lyrics say: instead of remaining silent, she is singing.

As Jo Labanyi points out, “a major problem in the Law of Historical Memory is its preamble, which insists that memory is a private matter. This significantly fails to acknowledge that the ‘historical memory’ is a form of collective and non-personal memory” (2008, 120). In this regard, it could be fruitful to look at memory through a feminist lens. As explained by Mercedes Carbayo Abéngozar, a consequence of several gender-biased laws passed during the dictatorship—which intended to send women back to the private sphere—is that women once again become pillars of memory. These laws reinforced the convention that women needed to be the ones in charge of orally transmitting, from one generation to the next, traditions and family memories (Carbayo Abéngozar 2013, 510). Rozalén joins a long legacy of feminist activists who have fought to make private affairs political and public. Indeed, it must be noted that Justo’s “received history” (Young 1990) is passed down across *four generations* of women that appear in the documentary: two speak (Rozalén and Ángeles), while two are presented as being quiet (Rozalén’s great-grandmother is recalled by Ángeles, and Rozalén’s mother appears behind them in the first shot of the documentary). Hence, in the song “Justo,” we can recognize a gendered transmission of the past, which scholars¹⁰ such as Hirsch, Andrea Petö and Ayşe Gül Altınay have been

⁸ “La presente Ley quiere contribuir a cerrar heridas todavía abiertas en los españoles”.

⁹ “Calla, no remuevas la herida / Lloro siempre en silencio / No levantes rencores, que este pueblo es tan pequeño...”

¹⁰ For SCW gendered memory studies, see Sophie Milquet (2016) and Sarah Leggott (2017).

calling “gendered memories”¹¹ (2015), and which, in this essay, could potentially be referred to as “voiced gendered postmemories.” By making this private history public, Rozalén engages in a feminist practice through the subversion of the Law of Historical Memory’s concealed aim to keep memory out of the public sphere, and she therefore turns this song into an explicitly political act.

2. “Justo”: From a Silenced Murder to Public Discussion

Rozalén graduated in Psychology and then obtained a master’s degree in Musicology. This background makes her particularly sensitive to the use of music both as a platform for political communication and as a form of psychotherapy. A significant feature of music is the power, not found in photographs, paintings, documentaries, exhibits, etc., to allow others to *verbalize* the lyrics. This enables the articulation of stories that may be close to the experiences of those listening.¹² Many (either familial or affiliative) postmemories have been shown to arouse feelings of empathy, having a beneficial impact on the processes of individual and collective mourning.¹³ In Rozalén’s song, postmemory interacts with the audience in a way that differs from other cultural forms, because it requires the listener’s *voice* and *bodily* involvement with the story and the work of art. The specific engagement that songs enable is a core feature of what I am identifying here as voiced (gendered) postmemories. This characteristic is even more emphasized in Rozalén’s “official video performance” (Rozalén 2018a). Here, the translation of the song into sign language, interpreted by Beatriz Romero, hints at the centrality of the lyrics—Justo’s story—over the music. Moreover, the use of sign language widens the audience that has access to Justo’s story. “Voicing” and “performing” postmemory are ways of experiencing the weight of the inherited past that stimulate an active response in later generations—a response that could potentially help the audience come to terms with the past. Rozalén’s music inspires others to engage in the story by inviting them to sing along or move

¹¹ This term questions if the “female witness or agent of transmission differs from that of her male counterpart” (Hirsch and Smith 2002, 2). Also see Hirsch 2019b, 20.

¹² See Sierbuth (2014, 37).

¹³ Hirsch develops this distinction in her book *The Generation of Postmemory* (2012). In brief, while “familial postmemory” is associated with (grand)parents and their (grand)children, “affiliative postmemory” is used when there is an identification, an affiliation with a transmitted memory without the familial tie, but with a larger collective. Also see Hirsch (2019a, 173).

their body—a physical engagement that has perhaps not received enough attention in the theorizations of postmemory until recently.¹⁴

Justo's life and murder are described in the second stanza of the song. The stanza echoes the dialogue between grandmother and granddaughter in the documentary. Rozalén encourages Ángeles to talk about her oldest brother by showing her a photograph of him, as is often the case when evoking memories (Hirsch 2012, 36-40). The black and white photo reveals two men: an older man, who is Ángeles's uncle, and a young child, Justo. While looking at the picture, Ángeles remembers how Justo learned to write at school. This allowed Justo to send letters when he was away at war, and it was precisely the sudden absence of this communication that alerted his family that something had happened to him. The song explains: "After thirteen days without news, a joy that lasted one second. / Another letter arrives, from one of Justo's comrades. / The news said it was a bullet" (2017b, my translation).¹⁵ In the documentary, Ángeles reads the date on one of his last letters, "26th June 1938," and then explains that he died in 1939, so he was not away from home for a long time. As it is narrated in the second stanza, Ángeles remembers that he left town singing, since, according to Ángeles, young men like her brother did not always recognize the risks of joining the war: "He used to happily sing a song down the street. / At the end of 1938, they were called to go to war [...] They jumped onto the truck as if there was a party" (2017b, my translation).¹⁶ According to Ángeles, Rozalén inherited her passion for singing from her great-uncle Justo, thus strengthening the link between the two. Indeed, the last stanza of "Justo" is part of a Puerto Rican *habanera*, "La caña dulce," a song popularized in Spain at the time by Sara Montiel, and one of Justo's favorite songs. Including a stanza of "La caña dulce" in "Justo" becomes another way to interact with his memory. Rozalén, as well as her listeners, can now verbalize and repeat what Justo used to sing. The audience *voices* Justo's favorite song, making this personal homage a collective one: a public and embodied tribute to a victim of Francoism.

In the fourth stanza, performance plays an important role. The lyrics concentrate on how the family realized that Justo had been murdered – as previously mentioned, because his correspondence ceased. In the documentary, Ángeles unconsciously reenacts the events that took place the day Justo died.

¹⁴ See other recent examples in Hirsch 2019b.

¹⁵ "Tras trece días sin noticias, la alegría de un segundo / Llega una carta de vuelta. Otra de su compañero / Fue una bala, nos leía el diario."

¹⁶ "Él cantaba por las calles, siempre alegre una canción. / Al final del 38 son llamados a la guerra / [...] Se subieron al camión como si fuera una fiesta."

When Ángeles remembers the traumatic moment when she found out that her brother was gone, she goes back in time and *voices* her mother and her younger self. She narrates the episode in a highly personal way (almost through role-playing), as she represents the scene speaking in the first person singular when she recalls what her mother said that day: “This letter is not from my son! It says, ‘Return to sender’! The worst must have happened to my son!” (2017a, my translation).¹⁷ Then, she remembers her own reaction, when she “could not utter any words” (2017a, my translation),¹⁸ except for his name: “Justo, Justo, Justo;” and she repeats it again, just as she did when she first realized that Justo was gone. Rozalén preserves this recreation in the song’s lyrics; she reproduces this way of narrating the story by screaming, as if she were Ángeles’s mother: “Bastards, you killed my son!,” which in Spanish is “¡Canallas, me lo habéis matao!” (2017b). By keeping the colloquial turn of phrase, “matao,” Rozalén circulates a mode of speech and communication that derives from the standard form (“matado”), thus raising the level of authenticity of this performance, in which she is giving *voice* to her great-grandmother’s sorrow. “Quoting” her grandmother’s embodied experience is a powerful process of personification, a way to bring her voice back. As Diana Taylor notes in her extensive study on the subject, “embodied performances have always played a central role in conserving memory and consolidating identities” (2003, XVIII). The fourth stanza invites Rozalén’s audience to play a vital part in the performance of the song: as she shouts this line, the listeners briefly inhabit the frustration of Justo’s mother. The audience is then able to insult the dictatorship by shouting “Bastards!”, and to articulate the tragedy of losing a son to the war (“You killed my son!”), which allows for a liberating speech that many generations have been prohibited from uttering. The integration of the echo of “lost voices” in the song thus becomes another distinguishable feature of voiced postmemories. The song provides a medium to recover the voices of those who are absent, through singing.

The inclusion of archival material in the fourth stanza of the song hints at the strong family involvement in the creation of postmemory. In the documentary, Rozalén and her grandmother look at a family album that Rozalén’s father gave as a gift to Ángeles when he was a child. One of the pages in this album was devoted to Justo. Since Rozalén’s father did not have any photographs of Justo’s dead body, he creatively used magazine pictures and drawings to recreate an obituary for Justo. This was a significant act because, at the time, families from

¹⁷ “¡Ay que es de vuelta / esta carta, que no es de mi hijo, /que es de vuelta. A mi hijo le ha pasado lo que sea.”

¹⁸ “No me salía el habla.”

the defeated side in Spain could not usually publish obituaries in newspapers (Fernández de Mata 2009). In this unofficial obituary, Rozalén's father wrote: "Justo Tomás Suárez died because of man's hatred. His body has no known grave. As many others, he never received flowers. His only grave is in the heart of his loved ones. Rest in peace" (2017a, my translation).¹⁹ In her song, Rozalén uses the sentence "his only tomb is their heart," quoting and *voicing* her father's words. Subsequently, the song demonstrates how the second generation also tried to interact with this trauma, even though this was something that remained in the private sphere of the family. Hence, in this case, the third generation publicly discusses Justo's murder but, in doing so, their words interweave with the previous generations' reactions to the murder, thus rendering visible the ongoing dialogue with this family ghost.

Justo had a phantasmagoric presence in the family for 77 years, and this impacted both Rozalén's composition process and the resulting song. After Justo was murdered, his body "disappeared." It is only while Rozalén was working on this project that, with the aid of the Spanish Historical Memory Association, Justo's mass grave was finally located and exhumed (Rozalén 2018b, 117). Even then, however, the ghost of "Justo" seems to continue to accompany the singer, *haunting* her, to use Labanyi's terminology (2000). In Rozalén's words: "At times, I have even considered that Justo helped me finish the song. I have never believed in spirits, but this time I have felt very powerful things" (Neira 2017, my translation).²⁰ Rozalén makes this "spiritual" or "spectral" encounter explicit, and she includes it in the chorus, singing: "And now I can hear you sing / I see you in this harmonious place. / If you don't heal the wound, it will hurt, it will fester, there will not be peace" (2017b, my translation).²¹ The identification of Justo's mass grave has given weight to his ghostly existence, since now there is a material site associated with his memory. Labanyi explains:

the exhumation and reburial of the remains of those killed by the Francoist repression and left lying in unmarked mass graves since that time has a major therapeutic value for the relatives concerned, in addition to the fulfilling and ethical obligation to honour the victims of injustice. (2008, 121)

¹⁹ "Justo Tomás Suarez murió por culpa del odio de los hombres. Su cuerpo no tiene tumba reconocida. Como a tantos otros, nunca le llevaron flores. Su única tumba: el corazón de los suyos. Descanse en paz."

²⁰ "He llegado a pensar que me la terminó escribiendo él mismo. Nunca había creído en los espíritus, pero esta vez sentí cosas muy fuertes."

²¹ "Y ahora yo logro oírte cantar / Se dibuja tu rostro en la armonía de este lugar. / Si no curas la herida duele, supura, no guarda paz."

Rozalén shared her grandmother's relief after they found Justo's remains. Rozalén says that, when Ángeles visited Justo's grave, her grandmother became someone else (Cifuentes 2018). However, even then, Ángeles only thinks about her mother, who did not live long enough to be able to bury her son: "Oh, I wish my mother was here... My mother... How many times she wondered where her child's bones were... It's very painful" (2017a, my translation).²² This scene breaks down the ways in which different generations reacted to this inherited pain. The second generation—Rozalén's parents—and third generation—Rozalén—found relief once Justo was buried. Ángeles, on the contrary, oscillates between her own memory and the inherited anguish that she recalls. While she has found personal peace, she cannot let go of the fact that her mother died without being able to bury her son. The uneven reaction that Ángeles experiences highlights the urgency to find ways to mourn the victims of Francoism since, in most cases, at least one generation has already passed away without having found justice for their loved ones.

Rozalén's influential song is more than a "canción con historia," as José Colmeiro refers to those songs written and sung "against the constant danger of the erasure of the past" (44). Voiced postmemories such as "Justo" are capable of *doing* something once voiced, acquiring the power to affect and transform, in this case, the destiny of the victims of Francoism, their relatives, and the public debate. Sieburth draws from J.L. Austin's examples in *How to Do Things with Words* to suggest that, sometimes, singing a song (in her case study, "Tatuaje") has been "an act that *brought into being*, or achieved, what it declared" (Sieburth 2014, 139). In the song "Justo", Rozalén not only tells the story of a missing great-uncle, but her lyrics also *impact* others, including: Rozalén's family, Justo's remains, and her wider audience, as this essay has explored. Indeed, the song has managed to both reactivate the debate about the Spanish mass graves, and to make possible the discovery of the remains that this family was looking for since 1939, offering hope to those who are still looking for their "missing" ones. Ultimately, "Justo" *creates* the milieu for a homage during concerts, when Rozalén takes time before singing it to allow both silence and applause, since she is aware that this might be the first time many people in the audience are collectively and publicly honoring those murdered.

²² "Ay mi madre si estuviera aquí, si mi madre... Que cuántas veces decía: '¿Dónde estarán los huesos de mi hijo?' Claro, eso es muy doloroso."

3. Expanding postmemory studies: voiced (gendered) postmemories

In the previous section, I suggested that Rozalén's "imaginative investment" (Hirsch 2012, 5) in the past may allow her listeners to project their own stories onto Justo's. Furthermore, by singing it (especially at a concert, by rupturing the solitude through collective voices and bodies), they could even begin to personally work through their own trauma. In a country where, almost a century after the start of its civil conflict, far right parties seem to hope that time will finally erase the remaining traces of this large-scale violence, it seems crucial to study the SCW from a highly interdisciplinary approach, exploring different media and looking for tools that disciplines such as Holocaust studies, WWII studies, gender studies, etc. offer to examine a democratic debt that is owed to the victims of the dictatorship. Therefore, it felt important not to limit myself to a singular case study, but to look beyond it in order to locate similar examples that could consolidate and expand the understanding of voiced postmemories.

Rozalén's 2017 album includes two other songs that we could identify as voiced postmemories. The first is "Amor prohibido" ("Forbidden Love") (Rozalén 2017c), a song that narrates the complicated love story of Rozalén's parents. Her father was a Catholic priest for ten years, making the relationship with her mother a completely unimaginable situation during Francoism. Their marriage resulted in social rejection and guilt, but Rozalén transforms and overcomes those negative feelings by working through them in the song (Rozalén 2020). The other instance is the song "El hijo de la abuela" ("Grandma's Son") (Rozalén 2017c). Here, Rozalén shares the story of how her grandmother harbored Miguel—a young man who was tortured and exiled from the Basque Country in 1968—in her house. Miguel was forced to go to Letur (Albacete), as part of a strategy implemented by the regime to disband the emerging resistance to Francoism in the Basque Country. After some years, their lives drifted apart, but this song brought them back together, since Rozalén was able to locate Miguel with the assistance of a mutual friend who heard the song and put them back in touch.

In 2019, two years after the release of the album studied in this essay, Rozalén collaborated with Pedro Pastor: together they sang "Sin flor," a song that emphasizes the ongoing need to remember Spain's violent past. However, Rozalén is definitely not the only Spanish singer-songwriter to have engaged with

the memory of the SCW.²³ Since the country's transition to democracy, several generations have used different technologies of sound (ranging from radio to *Spotify* and *YouTube*) to build their own inclusive and counter-hegemonic narratives, and to give voice to the “memory crisis” that still afflicts Spain's democracy and, more broadly, Europe as a whole. The following list of songs does not intend to draw an exhaustive map, but rather offers a persuasive constellation of examples that could be studied as voiced postmemories of the SCW and Francoism.²⁴ These other contributions include Ismael Serrano's album *La memoria de los peces* (1998) (“The Memory of Goldfish”), with songs such as “Al bando vencido” (“To the Defeated Spain”). This may be one of the best-known examples of a singer-songwriter who wants to highlight, through his music, Spain's repression of its recent past. The song “Huesos” (2004) (“Bones”), written by singer-songwriter Pedro Guerra, describes the story of those who, like Justo, were killed during the civil conflict and whose bones remain spread all over Spain. Other instances could be Luis Pastor's “Los hijos de España” (2009) (“Spain's Children”), written in memory of the Spaniards who fought in WWII. More recently, María Arnal and Marcel Bagés's album *45 cerebros y 1 corazón* (2017) was composed after a group of researchers unexpectedly found “45 brains and 1 heart” in a mass grave. María Arnal explains that the whole album was intended to address silence that has been passed down from one generation to the next (Cano 2017).

All these songs feature original lyrics written out of inherited collective or personal histories. However, projects like the album *Allez, allez...!* (2017), recorded by Luisa Pérez and Cuco Pérez, question the need to consider other varieties of voiced postmemories. These siblings collected lyrics sung by Spanish exiles of the SCW, starting with the songs their mother could remember and then researching and interviewing many other survivors. Their “creative involvement” lies in the curation and performance of these older lyrics, not to mention the important archival work they have made available to all. They compiled a CD-book full of features that could potentially enrich the understanding of voiced postmemories, the most important being that “voiced postmemories” could include both ‘new’ lyrics as well as ‘recuperated’ songs.

²³ To have a general picture of the history of singer-songwriters in Spain, see Esther Pérez-Villalba (2007). Also, my doctoral dissertation will reevaluate this history by including the work of the female singer-songwriters of 20th-century Spain that preceded Rozalén.

²⁴ A fruitful area to expand this analysis in Spain would be to look at the use of voiced postmemories that invoke 1960s transformative political movements, such as uprisings and revolutions—a good example being “Papá, cuéntame otra vez” (Serrano 1997). For an analysis of this song, see Colmeiro 2004.

These are all persuasive cases of singers voicing postmemories in a variety of ways. The presence, and persistence, of lyrics that engaged with lived or inherited stories related to the SCW or Franco's dictatorship shows signs of a possible cultural trend. Voicing postmemory through songs is not a new practice, but rather music has constantly been a *lieu de mémoire* in the Spanish tradition. With these observations in mind, one could reflect on the presence of voiced (gendered) postmemories beyond the SCW, in other contexts. In Holocaust Studies, Oren Meyers and Eyal Zandbering have already identified *Ashes and Dust*, produced by two sons of survivors of the Holocaust, as the most influential Israeli music album ever recorded (2002, 389).²⁵ In the Southern Cone context, Marcela Lobos has explored postmemories through the music of Chilean-French singer Ana Tijoux and the Uruguayan Jorge Drexler (2018).²⁶ As a third example, Ananya Jahanara Kabir talks about "musical recalls" when she studies how "music offers certain therapeutic possibilities for traumatized subjects that go beyond those offered by narrative, or the telling and reading of stories" (2004, 175) in the context of the Punjab region, which was particularly affected by the Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. While the list of songs that could be included exceeds the constraints of this essay, the aforementioned examples are among those that critics have already engaged with and, therefore, they prove that this aural/oral trend in postmemory studies exists and is considered productive well beyond the Spanish context.

This essay has begun a theorization of "voiced postmemories" based initially on the interpretation of one song about a victim of the SCW and the visual medium that accompanies it. However, considering the extensive examples provided, it seems certain that its methodology and field of inquiry ought to be expanded in order to diversify the types of voiced (gendered) postmemories that have contributed to the transformation, and mending, of powerful past collective experiences. In these and further cases to come, it would also be relevant to acknowledge that (as suggested throughout the essay) studying postmemory in songs (rather than in written or visual works) aims at exploring the ways in which songs expand the embodied resonance of textual mimesis, through multisensory stimulation, motor responses to rhythm, and the breaching of solitude through

²⁵ For further examples in the context of Holocaust studies, see Jonatchan Friedman (2017).

²⁶ Voiced postmemories in the context of Latin America would certainly include songs about the colonial past – Café Tacvba's "El fin de la infancia" (1994) being an illustrative example, among many. In the case of Spain, there is a much-needed study to be done around those songs that challenge, through music, the other long-lasting "Pact of Silence" – that of their violent imperial past. This project would likely echo Silvia Bermúdez's study of songs that challenged Spain's notion of homogeneity, boundaries, accommodation, and incorporation (2018).

collective voices. Future analyses will need to consider the shared features, as well as the unique characteristics, of voiced postmemories, those qualities that resemble, and differ from, other aesthetics of postmemory.

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