

Telling Tales of War to Teens: Ignacio Martínez de Pisón's *Una guerra africana* and Morocco as "Open Wound" in the Spanish National Imaginary

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In the presentation note to the first edition of *El bloqueo* (1928; *The Blockhouse* 1930), José Díaz Fernández stated that "Despite claims to the contrary, Morocco continues to be an open wound in the Spanish consciousness" (5; my translation). He further emphasized this point in 1929 in the "Preface to the English Edition" of his novel by specifying that, "*The Blockhouse* is a war book. Not of the Great War which set half the world ablaze and destroyed ideals and postulates that were accepted as inviolable, but of the colonial war that gnawed like a cancer at the heart of Spain" (14). Díaz Fernández summarized his personal experience of the Spanish colonial enterprise in Morocco, known as the Moroccan Wars (1912-1926), with the graphic metaphor of the "open wound" and the violent simile "gnawed like cancer." By resorting to this imagery, he conveyed the devastating effects of the failed colonial venture and voiced the trauma inflicted on the Spanish national psyche by the "Disaster of Annual," the Moroccan location where the forces of Abd-el-Krim defeated the Spanish army in the deadly summer of 1921. The prescience of Díaz Fernández's statements cannot be overlooked when considering the series of eleven Spanish novels published between 1990 and 2004 that return to the Moroccan Wars of the early twentieth century, and especially to the Disaster of Annual.¹ These include three works authored by Severiano Gil Ruiz, a resident of Melilla since the 1960s: *Prisioneros en el Rif* (1990 *Prisoners in the Rif*), *El cañón del Gurugú* (1992 *The Cannon of Gurugu*), and *La tierra entregada* (1994 *The*

Given Land); David López García's *Raisuni* (1991), which targets young male readers; two novels by women authors—Josefina Aldecoa's *Historia de una maestra* (1990) and María Charles's *Etxezarra* (1993); Eduardo Valero's *Días de Luz* (1994); Antonio Abad's *Quebdani: El cerco de la estirpe* (1997); and Lorenzo Silva's *El nombre de los nuestros* (2001) and *Carta blanca* (April 2004; winner of the Premio Primavera de novela).² In this essay I focus on Ignacio Martínez de Pisón's *Una guerra africana* (2000 *An African War*), a narrative that functions as a history lesson and a cautionary tale aimed at adolescent male readers.

I examine Martínez de Pisón's *Una guerra africana* in order to assess why Spaniards, so ready to forget about traumatic historical events, such as the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and the Franco dictatorship (1939-1975), during the late 1970s and the 1980s, the years of the democratic transition and the "movida" (see Labanyi), are now inclined to remember the more distant past of the Spanish Moroccan War. What are the lingering issues brought back by the resuscitation of this particular historical phantom? If globalization brings forth the need to apply critical sensibility to the spatiality of social life and the reconfiguration of geographical landscapes, how are we to read this dramatic return to a historical epistemology obsessively present in so much of Spanish cultural production at the turn of this century? And why is the retelling of this particular episode of Spanish history aimed at young male readers? In order to respond to these questions, I interpret Martínez de Pisón's Annual novel as a narrative of social identity that sustains the "open wound" to which Díaz Fernández alluded.

Importantly, literature is at the core of theories of trauma; at the crossroads where literature and the psychoanalytic theory of trauma intersect, Díaz Fernández's vivid "open wound" metaphor foreshadows the "open wound" metaphor of Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Caruth evaluates the Freudian theory of trauma by returning to the literary example Freud used to explain the drama of repetition compulsion: the story of the wound endlessly inflicted on his beloved by the protagonist of Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. For her, we must move beyond Freud's fascination with the metaphorical reverberations of the story of Tancred—the hero of the epic tale—because

what is relevant is not how vividly Tasso's story illustrates repetition compulsion. Rather, the symbolic power of this story rests on its exposing "traumatic experience not only as the enigma of a human agent's repeated and unknowing acts but also as the enigma of the otherness of a human voice that cries out from the wound, a voice that witnesses a truth that Tancred himself cannot fully know" (3). More specifically, in the story of Tancred we not only witness the experience of an individual traumatized by the repetition of his past—Tancred wounds and kills Clorinda twice—but we hear Clorinda's voice through the wound. In Caruth's articulation this ultimately means recognizing that history is not only told in straightforward narratives of experience and reference but also emerges where immediate understanding is not possible.

Literature has been representing the trauma of Spain's wars with the Moors since the Middle Ages, but in modern times the genre of "novels of the War in Africa," in which Martínez de Pisón inscribes *Una guerra africana*, arose in the nineteenth century during the Spanish-Moroccan War of 1859-60³ and continued after the twentieth-century Moroccan campaigns (1912-26) with José Díaz Fernández's above-mentioned *El blocao*, Ramón Sender's *Imán* (1930 Magnet), Arturo Barea's series *La forja de un rebelde* (1941-1944 The Shaping of a Rebel).⁴ Each wave of novels on African wars reveals an obsession with the Moroccan other and an anxiety over Spanish identity *vis-à-vis* Northern Africa, as Susan Martín-Márquez indicates in her analysis of Benito Pérez Galdós's historical novels set in the 1859-60 war and a number of paintings by the Catalan artist Marià Fortuny sent by the Diputació de Barcelona in early 1860 to document the Spanish Moroccan War of 1859-60 (7-8). Aldo Blanco makes a similar point in regard to Spanish identity when evaluating the obsessive patriotism displayed in three plays dedicated to justifying Spain's involvement in the Moroccan War of 1859-60: patriotism is directly linked to a fragile sense of the national self (405). The novels on the Disaster of Annual since 1990 return to an event, which for many years was overshadowed in the Spanish national psyche by the trauma of the Spanish Civil War. In light of this apparently anachronistic return, I argue that the current novels should be understood as a particular and new development of the genre of the "novels of the War in Africa" that reappears in the

Spanish cultural landscape when the growing presence of Moroccan immigrants in the Iberian Peninsula has generated tremendous anxiety. Anchored in the collective imaginary by the foundational meta-narrative of the “pérdida de España” (the loss of Spain) to the Moorish invaders from Northern Africa, the presence of Moroccan immigrants is articulated as a most feared return, a “new” Moorish invasion that, as Daniela Fresler contends “echoes the invasion of 711” (74).⁵ William Faulkner’s often quoted phrase, “the past is never dead, is not even past” from *Requiem for a Nun* (Act I, Scene III, 535) resonates forcefully within these socio-cultural discourses. The Spanish Moroccan War of the early twentieth century is not dead or even past, because it has been consistently and obsessively brought back, “kept alive” by socio-political and cultural narratives that keep the wound open.

To understand the historical events at the heart of this “wound,” one must return to 1908, when, at the height of European colonial competition over the African continent and ten years after its traumatic defeat in the Spanish-American War of 1898, Spain undertook an invasion of Morocco as if to find some compensation for the loss of its last colonies. Led by the new king, Alfonso XIII, and the “africanista” ruling circles, the country sought a necessary alliance with Great Britain and France for its return to this colonial pretension.⁶ Spain saw this alliance as an opportunity to gain some standing within the European geopolitical landscape. Indeed, the Count of Romanones (1863-1950), a powerful voice within the “africanista” circle and the mayor of Madrid in 1898, would later recall this last colonial effort in the following terms: “Morocco was for Spain her last chance to keep a position in the Concert of Europe” (qtd. in Enrique Moradiellos 118). Romanones’s concerns, however, were self-serving, since, as Ignacio Martínez de Pisón explains, the Count coveted the mines of the Rif, the Moroccan region where Spain was fighting; his and Spain’s Moroccan interests were economic rather than patriotic (“Las secuelas del desastre de Anual”).

The colonialist enterprise of 1908 was fraught with devastating political and military consequences, including the “Tragic Week” of Barcelona (July-August 1909), a week of major social unrest sparked by the decision of Antonio Maura’s government to call up reservists. As I have indicated, once the lengthy Moroccan Wars began in

1912, the most traumatic event for Spain occurred in the summer of 1921, when the forces of Abd-el-Krim defeated the Spanish army at Annual, subsequently known as the “Disaster of Annual.” The high numbers of casualties incurred on the Spanish side at Annual—calculations have varied from 9,000 to 14,000 dead—was made even more grave by the imprisonment of 500 Spanish soldiers and the hefty ransom demanded for their release. All of these events sent shock waves through Spain and radically altered the political climate (see Alcaraz Cánovas, Balfour, Salas Larrazábal). Indeed, cultural critic Juan Goytisolo argues in *De la Ceca a la Meca* that Franco’s lengthy dictatorship was born out of Spain’s colonial foray in Morocco, “[since] Franco, Sanjurjo, Millán Astray, Mola, Yagüe, and Muñoz Grande forged their spirit of war in Morocco and from there prepared their bloody ‘salvation’ of Spain” (47; quotation marks in the original).⁷

The defeat Goytisolo highlights entered the collective imagination and became, as I mentioned, a major narrative topic during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Yet, when evaluating the most recent productions within this particular literary niche we must bear in mind that these narratives appear when the always-conflictive relations between Spain and Morocco began to take a turn for the worse in the early 1990s. During this decade Moroccans became the main source of Spanish immigration and the target of violent acts of racism and xenophobia. The severity of the African immigrant situation was made tragically clear in February of 2000 during the infamous events of El Ejido, Almería, which are best summarized in the headlines of *El País* as “Locals from El Ejido Attack Immigrants and Destroy their Businesses” (Constenla and Torregrosa). Two years later, the Spanish-Moroccan tension played out at the national level during the “El Perejil” episode of July 17, 2002. On that day, the Spanish armed forces took over the islet known as “El Perejil” in Spanish and “Leila” in Morocco. El Perejil is a barren uninhabited island to which Spain has dubious claims, since it was not mentioned in the final document by which the Spanish protectorate of Northern Morocco was handed back to Rabat in 1956.⁸ The incident originated on July 12, 2002 when 12 Moroccan frontier guards planted their national flag on the tiny island located 200 meters from the Moroccan Coast. The Spanish government, public,

and press were outraged, and Prime Minister José María Aznar dispatched submarines, attack helicopters, and gunboats to “recover” the islet. Secretary of Defense Fernando Díez Moreno heralded the action as a heroic page in Spanish history, “a page that Spaniards wanted to read” (“Tensión hispano-marroquí”). By specifying that Spanish citizens would want to read about this example of military superiority, Díez Moreno was recalling the ghostly specter of Spain’s defeat inflicted by the forces of Abd-el-Krim during the “Disaster of Annual.”

The rhetorical grandiloquence of Díez Moreno’s description of the Spanish military actions on Perejil Island gain special significance in the context of the tragic and devastating events of the summer of 1921 and reveal, as do a number of recent Spanish novels, that remembering the Spanish-Moroccan War and of the Disaster of Annual takes place within a present-day context of disputes between Morocco and Spain over fishing rights, illegal immigration, and the Sahara, of which El Perejil is only the latest. Thus, the recent novels and the events focusing on El Perejil serve as narratives of national heritage and are reclaimed in different discursive registers as part of the “Historia Patria.” As Carolyn P. Boyd indicates about the role teaching national history plays in the construction of a Spanish national identity: “a shared understanding of the past potentially serves an integrative function” (xiii). Thus, I argue that the recuperation of the “Disaster of Annual” by contemporary narratives “stands in” as history lessons taught through literature.

Spanish history suffers from the repeated trauma syndrome as attested by the current narratives centering on the Moroccan Wars of 1912-26, which arise at a critical moment in the conflictive relations between Spain and Morocco. Although it is not easy to find the precise cause for these tensions registered in the military actions on El Perejil, Spain is experiencing a moment of great uncertainty and anxiety over its national identity. During the 1990s it became a full-fledged member of the European Union, while at the same time it was receiving (and continues to receive) large numbers of increasingly visible non-European immigrants. “Immigration” emerged as a popular topic in the election campaigns of 2000 and appeared in public opinion polls conducted by newspapers such *El País* and *El Mundo* as Spaniards’ third most important concern. Significantly,

the first of the novels recalling the “open wound,” the traumatic defeat of 1921, appeared in the early 1990s, at the height of Spain’s newly achieved international status and when Moroccans were becoming the main source of Spanish immigration (Ramírez Goicochea). The emblematic year 1992 saw the celebration of Spain’s new geopolitical position with the Olympic Games in Barcelona, the World Fair in Seville, and Madrid’s designation as “European City of Culture.” Spain seemed to have become a fully European country, and yet the Annual novels, which expose “the wound” and refuse to allow it to heal, also reveal the anxiety that contemporary Spain feels with regard to its identity, especially in light of its long domination by the Moors after the Arab invasion of 711.

According to sources from the Government Delegation on Foreigners and Immigration (Delegación del Gobierno para la Extranjería y la Inmigración), with data up to the year 2003, there were 333,000 thousand legal Moroccan residents in Spain (“Anexo 1,” Cívile). It is difficult to assess how many undocumented Moroccan immigrants reside in Spain, but Moroccans make up Spain’s largest foreign community, which is also the most feared and most criminalized. Abdel Hamid Beyuki, of the Association of Moroccan Immigrant Workers in Spain (Asociación de Trabajadores Inmigrantes Marroquíes en España), offers some sobering statistics from the National Police and the Civil Guard, according to which of 12,710 people under arrest in 1998, a total of 7,457 were Moroccan citizens, with 550 from “the rest of Africa” and 2,297 from “the rest of the World” (“No más muertes en El Estrecho” 306). Thus, I understand the eleven novels published between 1990 and 2004 that center on the historical “Disaster of Annual” as part of the symbolic process by which Spain’s new European identity is forged through the re-inscription of a feared Moroccan “Other” from the past.⁸

Ignacio Martínez de Pisón’s *Una guerra africana* was published in the prestigious collection “Gran Angular” of Ediciones SM—a powerful editorial house in the field of literature for children and young adults. The novel has a clear didactic agenda, often a feature of stories directed at teenage readers. On the back cover, the author admonishes his young readers to remember that Annual is “a history that no Spaniard should forget,” singling out this event in the long and varied Spanish past as one of particular importance

to Spanish historical memory for a new generation of Spaniards. Martínez de Pisón draws on a multilayered set of techniques—paratexts (like the just quoted back cover), intertextual references to earlier “novels of the War in Africa,” and appeals to a young man’s developing sense of masculinity—to achieve his educational purpose. Gérard Genette argues in *Paratexts* that texts do not come to us unmediated, and Martínez de Pisón makes strategic use of these authorial gestures, such as statements on the covers of the book and the title itself, which link the novel to the entire tradition of novels of the War in Africa, especially to José Díaz Fernández’s *El blocao*. In fact his novelistic technique and material establish a direct lineage with Díaz Fernández’s novel, a first-person account of the military conflict by Sergeant Carlos Arnedo divided into seven sections. *El blocao* also assesses relationships with women—the anarchist rebel Angustias, and two Moorish teenage girls named Aixá—and Moroccan costumes. The narrator’s obsession with Moorish women (“[t]he impenetrable mystery of these women began in the course of time to disturb my sleep” [*The Blockhouse* 114]) shares center stage with the theme of the diminishing the colonial enterprise (“In all the time I was in Morocco during the difficult campaigns of the 21st, I cannot recall any outstanding deed of heroism” [*The Blockhouse* 109]). Articulated in terms of “penetration” or lack thereof, the displacement of the imperialist desire onto Moroccan women is one more example of what is now considered a cliché of all colonial histories: the “possession” of the native woman’s body equates the “possession” of the nation she represents. According to David Spurr, in “the rhetoric of empire” the “conquest” of the native woman’s body is a surrogate for the “conquest” of her nation (171). Significantly, this obsession with Moroccan women, as I explain below, is reproduced in *Una guerra africana*.

Martínez de Pisón reinforced his intention to continue the tradition of the earlier wave of “novels of the War in Africa” in the comments he offered to webislam when discussing the research he conducted on the Moroccan Wars: “They said that we were going to bring civilization [to Morocco], but we only brought illiterate soldiers, corruption, and a bloody war” (“Las secuelas del desastre de Annual”). However, while in interviews the author questions the colonial enterprise, on the back cover of the novel—one of the para-

texts framing and guiding how to read the actual narrative—we are told that this is a story taking place in 1921, a few months after the “Disaster of Annual,” which gives the novel a ghostly nature. That we are dealing with symbolic processes in a series of cultural narratives that reinforce Spanish identity is made evident in another revealing paratext, “The note from the author.” Presented at the end of the novel, Martínez de Pisón’s note establishes how “his African war” follows the literary footsteps of three soldier authors—Sender, Díaz Fernández, and Barea—who actually experienced “that African War” (158). Martínez de Pisón wants us to interpret *Una guerra africana* visually through the lenses of “verisimilitude” and “literal truth” and even within the parameters of “testimonio” (testimony) since he cites as one of his sources the actual testimonial of a Catalan soldier who documented everyday life in Morocco in his *Diary of J.M. Prous i Vila*. By specifying that *Una guerra africana* was also inspired by the detailed information provided by a “non-literary” account of the actual events, Martínez de Pisón designates his novel as an artifact of social identity. Significantly, Díaz Fernández employed a paratext (an introductory note at the beginning of *El bloqueo*) to evoke the “open wound” metaphor and shape the reader’s expectations and guide the reader’s reception of the novel he or she is about to begin. Both authors depend on paratexts to direct and control the reception of their texts, and it is at the threshold of both novels, in the paratextual framing devices, that “the wound” finds “the voice” (both Caruth’s formulations). There emerge some of the critical issues being negotiated by Spain and Morocco in the long and conflictive history both nations share.

As a cultural narrative that reinforces Spanish identity, *Una guerra africana* relies on rhetorical strategies that foreground the testimonial aura it aims to convey. José Carril, a first person narrator and a direct witness to the events, is the most salient testimonial feature. Through José’s personal narrative, the young readers to whom the novel is directed can identify with the story and enter the symbolic sphere in which Spanish identity is reinforced via contrast with the Moroccans:

It was my third week in Africa. I had left my town fleeing from poverty, and after a period of bumming around I had ended up enlisting as a volunteer. For that I even had to falsify my date of birth: I had just

turned 16, but I was well-developed and could pass for 18. I took my initial training in a camp in Cordoba province. I was there when the disaster of Annual happened, in which some 10,000 Spanish soldiers died, and my company was one of the first to arrive in Melilla to defend it from a possible attack from Abdelkrim. (11-12)

The summary of historical events of the “open wound” in the above-cited passage is brief and effective and serves as the kind of pedagogical tool so often found in literature for young readers. The events are made relevant to teenage readers because the narrator-protagonist José is their same age, and he introduces himself in relation to the most traumatic moment of the Spanish-Moroccan War. More importantly, he does so by highlighting the name of the episode “Disaster of Annual,” the number of casualties (10,000) and the name of the feared enemy, Abdelkrim.

Soon thereafter readers are introduced to “el blocao,” the military emblem of the Moroccan War, which has become the central symbolic representation of the War in the Spanish cultural imaginary, thanks to Díaz Fernández’s narrative of 1928. In 2000, more than 70 years after the event, this semiotic space is presented in Martínez de Pisón’s novel in the following way:

‘I bet you have never seen a barricade, have you?’ the joker of Chinchilla asked me, pointing to the top of the hill. I shook my head ‘no,’ and he added, ‘You’ll get fed up.’ A barricade was nothing more than a small fortress situated in the top of a rise. That one, seen from the outside, was a wooden barricade about six meters long and some four wide, protected up to a meter high by a parapet of sandbags which, in return, was surrounded by barbed wire. That was where we were going to spend the following months. (12)

The didactic purpose of the *novela juvenil* is most evident in the first three chapters of *Una guerra africana*, as they summarize the historical events of “The Disaster of Annual” and present “el blocao” as the central emblem of the Spanish-Moroccan War. The repetition and recuperation of the history of Annual for a new generation of young readers is, however, ambivalent, since poverty, rather than patriotism, prompts the teenager José Carril to join the army.

Despite this ambivalence, Martínez de Pisón’s novel does participate in the “construction of nationness” (to borrow Homi
<https://www.purvisia.org/etel/vol30/iss1/11>
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Bhabha's term [140]) by reinscribing Spanish identity through the feared Moroccan Other. This process is achieved, in part, through a safe and temporary identification with the—mostly manly—characters of the novel: José, the young and heroic narrator; Sergeant Medrano, the valiant and stoic model for José; and, even with a strong female character, the ever committed revolutionary Aurora. José Carril's passionate desire to "possess" Aixá, the female Moroccan other, also contributes to the national identity building process. Recalling David Spurr's ideas about the conquest of a woman's body serving as a stand-in for the domination of her country, it seems evident that, as with *El blocao*, Orientalist ideology underlies *Una guerra africana*.

Not surprisingly, the articulation between the conquest of women and the conquest of a nation rests on the reinforcement of traditional accounts of masculinity. Indeed, the author appears to valorize conventional heroic masculinity in the two central male characters of the novel. José Carril, the young soldier who admires and wants to emulate Sergeant Medrano, the stoic soldier modeled after the hero myths of the past. José Carril most admires Sergeant Medrano's self-control. As Margery Hourihan posits in *Deconstructing the Hero*, the "essence of the hero's masculinity is his assertion of control over himself, his environment and his world" (69). Thus the return to Annual in *Una guerra africana* has significant consequences for the cultural imaginary of present-day Spain. By making its readers return once more to that summer of 1921, Martínez de Pisón's novel in particular, but, ultimately, all the novels published on the Moroccan War theme between 1990 and 2004, become privileged sources for the construction of a Spanish collective identity that is sustained by an obsession with not forgetting the "Disaster of Annual" and the particular form of masculinity that war represents, namely an acceptable homosociality. In the case of Martínez de Pisón's novel, it is also sustained by Orientalist fantasies and the corroboration of conventional forms of masculinity.

Una guerra africana cannot be read as a text that defends Spain's past colonial intentions. In fact, and within the didactic premises of the "novela juvenil," it does question Spain's presence in Morocco and identifies its central and heroic characters—Sergeant Medrano and Aurora—as young anarchists with serious doubts about the

war who are saved in the end. However, Martínez de Pisón's story falls victim to the related dangers of fetishization. For example, the narrator, young José Carril falls for Aixa, an even younger Moroccan woman described in the following terms: "a young Moorish woman about fourteen or fifteen years old who seemed absolutely beautiful to me. She had dark eyes with long eyelashes that rarely would return one's gaze but, when they did, I was left breathless, as so sparkling and pretty were they" (45-46). The scene promotes the stereotypical connection between the exotic racialized body and the erotic, exposing the desire for a non-threatening fetishized "difference," since Aixa, the erotic-exotic other, rescues José when he is the sole survivor of the attack on his "blocao." Aixa, José's intense object of desire, feeds him, cleans his wounds and takes him to the safety of a river bank so he can find his way to a Spanish convoy (75).

By representing Aixa as a savior rather than a menace, Martínez de Pisón partially distances himself from Díaz Fernández's representation of the Moroccan woman as the treacherous erotic-exotic Other in *El blocao*. Aixa is introduced in the first episode of Díaz Fernández's novel; she is the enticing bait that brings with her a surprise night attack by the Moroccans when the narrator is tricked into opening the protective wire fence. Significantly, the moment is marked by aggressive desire: "I saw her make a gesture that was half-pathetic, half-humble, and I was stirred. I felt more than ever before a violent desire to possess a woman; I was filled with dark erotic longing. . . . I passed through the barbed-wire entanglement. . . . A sentry cried: Sergeant! The Moors!" (*The Blockhouse* 32-33).

A second Aixa appears in the fourth episode of *El blocao*, and, as the daughter of a member of the collaborationist Moroccan elite, she also symbolizes duplicity and disloyalty (*The Blockhouse* 109-23). However, despite his efforts to portray empathetically the Moroccan Other as an individual person, Martínez de Pisón's recuperation of the character of Aixa returns readers to "the order of things." Moroccans are to be feared; they are devoid of identity except the one bestowed by the typology that transforms adjectival racial terms like "Moorish" into weapons to destroy individuality.⁹ The symbolic processes by which contemporary Spain defines itself against the "Moorish" Moroccan other are complex. The formulation of collective Spanish identity as opposed to the Moorish was

dramatically inscribed in the national imaginary by Queen Isabel the Catholic's campaign against the Moors of Granada in 1492, and the arcane weight of colonial history is always relevant when bringing attention to the strategies by which Spanishness is being constructed at the turn of the twenty-first century.

By telling tales of war to teens and keeping the memory of the Disaster alive for a new generation of readers—more than half a century removed from the events—the author ensures that “the past is not dead” and contributes—against his own aims and desires—to the perpetuation of stereotypes for both Spaniards and Moroccans. Martínez de Pisón's remembering the lengthy war works within a “Spanish colonial imagination.” *Una guerra africana*, and the other recent novels focused on the Spanish-Moroccan War, create a common symbolic space that contributes to the articulation of a collective identity based on a sense of historical memory. This memory uses the Other—the neighboring Other, not distant Latin America and the Philippines as in the Disaster of 1898—as the emblem of a terrible threat to the self, as a “Disaster” waiting to happen, as it did once, in the summer of 1921. Within the contradictory impulses that move the novel—to criticize the colonial enterprise of the Moroccan Wars, to remember a tragic moment of Spanish history that no Spaniard should ever forget—the wound is opened once again. In listening to the “voice that cries out through the wound” (Caruth 2), Spain may realize that its own trauma is tied up with the trauma of Morocco.

Notes

1 I do not mean to imply that no novels on *Annual* were published before the 1990s, but the Disaster became a more frequent central narrative topic in the early 1990s. For example, while eleven novels were published between 1990 and 2004, only five such novels appeared between 1946 and 1980 (Francisco Camba's *Annual* [1946]; Ricardo Fernández de la Reguera and Susana March's *El desastre de Annual* [1968]; Juan Antonio Gaya Nuño's *Historia del cautivo* [1969]; Fernando Cobo's *Todo por la patria* [1972]; and Fernando González's *Kabila* [1980].

2 Silva also authored travel narratives on the topic, *Del Rif al Yebala: viaje al sueño y la pesadilla de Marruecos* (2001) and “Un viaje a Sidi-Drís” (September 2002), <http://www.lorenzo-silva.com/index_espanol.htm>. His grandfather fought in the Moroccan war; thus he has a personal investment in remembering it, and his work connects the personal to the metanarratives of history.

3 The Spanish-Moroccan War of 1859-60 produced abundant literature (for example, Benito Pérez Galdós’s *Episodios Nacionales* [V Series] and Pedro Antonio de Alarcón’s *Diario de un testigo de la Guerra de África* [1859]). Gaspar Núñez de Arce also wrote briefly about his experiences and travels in his *Crónicas periodísticas: Guerra de África* (1860), as did the Catalan author Víctor Balaguer in his *Jornadas de gloria; o los españoles en África* (1860).

4 To date, Antonio M. Carrasco González’s *La novela colonial hispano-africana* (2000 *The Afro-Spanish Colonial Novel*) provides the most comprehensive evaluation on this particular field of literary production. He dedicates an entire chapter (4) to “The Annual Cycle” ‘El Ciclo de Annual’ (71-141).

5 Juan José Téllez’s *Moros en la costa* (2001 *Moors on the Coast*) summarizes this fear in the following terms: “But the fear to the invasion was already one of the constant references in the collective imaginary of Spaniards for the last decade” (25). Ironically, and despite Téllez’s very clear efforts to combat racism against immigrants, the title of his essay, *Moros en la costa*, makes evident how deep the fear of the invasion runs.

6 The term *africanista* can be best translated as “supporter of the war in Africa.”

7 Francisco Franco contributed to the cultural narratives of “The War in Africa” with the series of articles published between 1924 y 1928 in the *Revista de Tropas Coloniales* (Journal of Colonial Troops). The Fundación Nacional Francisco Franco published all of them in 1986 under *Papeles de la Guerra de Marruecos. Diario de una bandera, La hora de Xauen, Diario de Alhucemas* (Papers from the Moroccan War. Diary of a Flag, The Hour of Xauen, Diary of Alhucemas). Franco’s *Diario de una bandera* is considered to be a “classic” within the so-called “novelas legionarias” (Carrasco 136). And while these novels do return to the Spanish-Moroccan War, they should be studied as a specific and distinct genre within “the novels of the

War in Africa”

8 Perejil belongs to the cluster of the Chafarinas islands, one of three such island groups that, along with Ceuta and Melilla (two cities on the mainland of Morocco), constitute Spain's remaining territories in North Africa. Morocco has long disputed the legitimacy of Spain in all these territories. In Spain, the sovereignty over El Perejil is not without contention, as revealed in three articles in *El País Digital* published between July 17 and August 8 of 2002. In "Memoria histórica y relaciones hispano-marroquíes" (Historical Memoir and Hispano-Moroccan Relations), Juan B. Vilar argues that maps dated as early as 1640 document the islet as belonging to Spanish territory. However, both María Rosa de Madariaga ("El falso contencioso" [The False Litigant]) and Luis Matías López ("Más dudas que certezas" [More Doubts Than Certainties]) express reservations about Spain's claims.

9 As the emblem of the erotic-exotic and feared other, Aixa is first represented as a betrayer in Luis Pérez Lozano's *Aixa. Novela de costumbres marroquíes*, an earlier Annual novel dated 1922 but published in 1925. The author served as military auditor during the Spanish Protectorate.

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