Graphic Ghosts:

Reimagining Urban Violence in Augusto Mora's *Los fantasmas de mi ciudad*

Koby Bryan Hansen, University of California

> What is a ghost? A tragedy condemned to repeat itself time and time again? An instance of pain, perhaps. Something dead which still seems to be alive. An emotion suspended in time. Like a blurred photograph. Like an insect trapped in amber. -*The Devil's Backbone* (2001, dir. Guillermo del Toro)

Introduction

Mexico City is undoubtedly amongst the most recognizable cities in the world; with its status as one of the largest metropolitan areas in the Western Hemisphere, it has long become synonymous with the Mexican State. In recent years, it has also developed an international reputation for violence, ranging from the boom of narcotrafficking and disappearances, to feminicidios[1] and state violence, amongst other manifestations of violence. However, the city's relationship with violence begins much earlier with its mythical founding. According to the story, a group of Nahua[2] from Aztlán, a region in the north of Mexico, were guided by Huitzilopochtli, the deity of the sun and war, to establish the new 'City of the Sun.' According to Huitzilopochtli, the Mexica (as they were renamed) were to search for the divine sign that would indicate the location of their new city: an eagle perched upon a cactus and devouring a serpent. Thus, the Mexica founded Tenochitlán, one of the most important cities in Mesoamerica and upon which Mexico City is built today. The iconic symbol of the eagle killing the serpent on top of the cactus also remains important into contemporary times; most prominently featured on the Mexican flag, the violent image has been solidified in the nation's iconography.

Violence only increased exponentially with the arrival of the Spanish and the subsequent conquest led by Hernán Cortés; the atrocities of the Spanish conquest of the Americas is well documented, both by historians and by firsthand accounts from the likes of Bartolomé de las Casas, who vehemently denounces the extent of Spanish cruelty in the Americas (de las Casas 1552). Nevertheless, more contemporary scholars have questioned some of the Spanish accounts of the conquest; Inga Clendinnen, for example, questions the validity of the representations of the Mexica, and specifically that of Moctezuma, as documented by Cortés and the chroniclers in his company (Clendinnen 1991). In the same way that the violent actions of the Spanish conquistadores are well-established, I argue that Clendinnen's suggestion that Moctezuma and the Mexica have been grossly misrepresented is yet another form of systemic violence that prevents them from having the same historical agency afforded to the Europeans. Lastly, it is worth noting that Cortés' conquest ends in 1521 in Tlatelolco,[3] a neighboring city-state to Tenochitlán, that also forms part of the present-day metropolis that is Mexico City.

However, urban violence is not a unique phenomenon to Mexico City nor is it unique to the past; the flood of tweets in August of 2022 depicting the destruction caused by narcos in Tijuana—the burning of cars, the indiscriminate killing of anyone in sight—and the infamy that Ciudad Juarez has gained over the last three decades for its feminicidios are just two of the many examples of how violence is manifested throughout the entire nation. Furthermore, the Mexican government has long been criticized for its handling of narco violence; in recent years, former President and member of Mexico's conservative Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), Enrique Peña Nieto has been harshly denounced for the adverse effects that his tactic of increased military presence and counterinsurgency has caused. The Left, however, is also not without critique; Peña Nieto's successor, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (commonly referred to as AMLO), though Left leaning on the political spectrum, has faced strong criticism for his policy of 'Abrazos, no balazos' ('Hugs, not gunshots'). What their collective presidencies make astoundingly clear is that neither policy—that of Peña Nieto's increase in militarization and violence and AMLO's complete inaction—are effective nor appropriate responses to the violence that is plaguing Mexico today.

How, then, can a society begin to understand nearly 700 years of trauma and memory? Augusto Mora's 2020 graphic novel *Los fantasmas de mi ciudad* (*The Ghosts of My City*) is an attempt to make sense of centuries worth of trauma and memory; centering on the story of Viridiana, a young girl with clairvoyant abilities, and her friends as they try to capture ghosts on camera, *Los fantasmas* explores the reality of youth in Mexico's urban areas. Mora masterfully uses the graphic novel form to its fullest extent, both captivating and horrifying readers with its textual and visual narrative. As Julia Round observes, 'This spectral trope of haunting can also be related to the role of the comics reader who, although absent, is required to fill the events in the gutters between panels, and whose existence is evidenced by these gaps and spaces' (Round 2012: 336).

In what follows, I argue that utilizing a visual medium and the fantastic genre allows Mora to approach and reconcile a violent past with a violent present. Further, an approximation to ghosts as literary figures and problematizing Latin American gothic horror as a response to larger and regionally-specific cultural anxieties are essential to the reconciliation of past and present. The question of violence in Mexico has no easy answer, but as will be shown in this article, embracing the dead with all the complicated emotions that they carry and recognizing the importance of youth involvement is one way of imaging a future Mexico.

Seeing Ghosts, Seeing Trauma

Los fantasmas de mi ciudad opens in media res as Viridiana and her two friends, Benito and Nicario, are hunting for ghosts near the train tracks. When the three ghosthunters approach a pile of tires near the tracks, Viridiana is overcome with 'a lot of pain in [her] chest, like a great anguish'[4] (Mora 2020: 9). Nicario gets angry when Viridiana begins to feel the heaviness in her chest and Benito begins to feel afraid, calling them both cowards and chastising them both for not having uploaded any content to their YouTube channel (10). This opening scene establishes two key points, both in terms of narrative and for the purpose of a reading of trauma and memory through spectral studies; first, it is made clear that Viridiana is special because of her supernatural abilities. In fact, Viridiana's extrasensory perceptions are not limited to sight or hearing, but rather they seem to encompass all of her senses. Second is the sheer determination,

particularly that of Nicario, to capture evidence of spirits on camera; notably, his anger can be understood as the culmination of his frustrations around not being listened to and the abusive relationship that he has with his father (23–24).

Both instances point toward the same central idea: Viridiana's powers and Nicario's obsession with filming ghosts are ways of trying to make sense of a world so entrenched in violence. This is indicative of what Alberto Ribas-Casasayas and Amanda L. Petersen refer to as 'foundational trauma'; in their edited collection, *Espectros: Ghostly Hauntings in Contemporary Transhispanic Narratives*, they explain that:

> foundational trauma is an event, real or imagined, that configures the basis of the discursive formation of the identity of a specific group. In its more melancholic dimension, foundational trauma may involve an attachment to loss or to past injury that can have a limiting effect in the collective members' development in the present…Trauma affects not only the direct victims, but also their descendants, who find themselves haunted in an affective epistemological process of conflictive and incomplete recovery of the past (Ribas-Casasayas and Petersen 2016: 64).

The violence described at the beginning of this text should undoubtedly be understood as a prime example of foundational trauma; it is also important to understand the conditions for limited development that this kind of inherited trauma creates. In a way, Viridiana and Nicario are both trapped in an atemporal loop of experiencing and re-experiencing the traumas of the past—Nicario's violent outburst, for example, clearly demonstrates his frustration after incessantly searching for evidence of ghosts only to come to the same empty-handed conclusion as always; in other words, it remains a violence that without logic and without a culpable figure to make sense of it. On the other hand, Viridiana's temporally looped experience is much more obvious, as the past (in form of ghosts) quite literally define her experience in the present.

The idea of intergenerational trauma is furthered in the story as the ghost hunters flee from the train tracks after the pile of tires topples over, running directly into a group of bullies from school (12–14). The narrative importantly provides two pieces of information in this scene:

first, that Viridiana has a reputation for being a ‘weirdo’. A superficial reading of the othering of Viridiana would suggest that the bullies see her as a weirdo only because she claims to be able to see ghosts. However, I argue that this othering is much deeper than that; if the ghosts that Viridiana can see are the victims of violence and they can communicate their traumas to her then, in a sense, Viridiana’s abilities represent a recognizing of violence with the potential of naming it and its perpetuators, which is non-normative in that the rest of society has accepted violence as an inevitability. Viridiana is, then, truly the Other in the way that she refuses to ignore those who have succumbed to gang violence.

Secondly, there is a direct relationship between the bullies and the gang whose violence plagues the town, Los Tlacuacheros. This can be seen in a comparative reading of two later scenes, one in which the school bullies find Viridiana alone and threaten her with sexual violence, saying ‘I see that up close you’re not so ugly’[5] and then attempting to kiss her (78-79). As the bully gets closer to Viridiana, the graphic novel’s panels zoom in, revealing that the ghostly figure of a woman appears between the bully and Viridiana, suggesting perhaps that she is there to intervene; as Viridiana shouts for them to leave her alone, the feminine ghostly figure makes herself seen, the sight of which is enough to scare off the bullies, but it also opens Viridiana up to other spirits, who flock to her to tell her that the Tlacuacheros ‘did it,’ referring to their murders (81). In any case, these series of sequences establish a close relationship between the kind of violence that the school bullies are capable of and how those same figures can transform into perpetuators of more extreme violence on another level in a sort of school bully to Tlacuachero pipeline, one that goes from nonconsensual kissing to committing feminicidios.

Another key element in the aforementioned *Espectros* quote is that of the inability to fully recover the past; to understand this, I turn to the work of María del Rosario Acosta López, whose concept of ‘gramáticas de la escucha’ (‘grammars of listening’) is incredibly productive in the context of *Los fantasmas*; Acosta López’s philosophical approach to trauma and memory explains that

> the work of memory also comes up against difficulties related to the elaboration and communication of testimonies that come from traumatic events; this is, in more specific terms, with the problem of the *representation* of violence in contexts where trauma still informs and determines—in many cases impeding—the memory of what happened (Acosta López 2019: 62; original emphasis).[6]

'Gramáticas,' then, is a process of sense-making that tries to take on the problem of representing violence. Though Acosta López's work is grounded in contemporary trauma and memory in Colombia, many of the same principles can be applied to the case of Mexico: the fundamental problem being the representation of the unrepresentable. Focusing on the auditory, Acosta López simultaneously recognizes the conditions that prevent testimonies of violence from being articulated and critiques the institutions responsible for their silencing. It also acknowledges the silences that come from the absence of testimonies; in a way, what remains unsaid or untellable is equally as important as what can be heard.

Reading *Los fantasmas* with Acosta López produces an interesting dialogue; whereas 'Gramáticas de la escucha' is thought of around the idea of the dichotomy of audible/inaudible, *Los fantasmas* seems to suggest a full-body affective response to trauma and memory. Not only do the victims of violence have the opportunity to been seen and heard by Viridiana, but they can also be felt. Furthermore, the scene referenced previously in which the ghost hunters run into the school bullies ends with the bullies stealing Nicario's camera. Here the camera is the testimony-making apparatus, the only mode of capturing evidence of the ghosts that Viridiana sees; reading this with Acosta López suggests, then, a 'silencing' of the ghost hunters, ultimately preventing them from sharing the stories of the deceased with the world.

This could be understood in terms of the dialectical optics—'ways of seeing the unseen'—that David McNally proposes in his book *Monsters of the Market: Vampires, Zombies and Global Capitalism* (McNally 2011: 6). Visuality, then, becomes a central theme in *Los fantasmas*, both through the form of the graphic novel and its stylized illustrations and also narratively through the glimpses provided to the reader through Viridiana's clairvoyant abilities.

The Spectral City

In her chapter 'Gothic and the Graphic Novel,' Julia Round presents a close reading of Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's *From Hell*, stating that 'The comic makes Victorian London itself the Gothic domain, a spectral city that, despite being buried in history, nonetheless still exists in the public consciousness as the Ripper legend is determinedly kept alive in collective memory' (Round 2012: 339). As Round points out, the relationship between city space, memory and a gothic aesthetic are not only tightly intertwined, but also mutually constitutive; they are three parts of the narrative that must be understood together to see how the gothic functions. Similarly, *Los fantasmas* brings together a horror aesthetic, Mexican urban spaces, and current sociocultural anxieties around senseless acts of violence.

As mentioned previously, *Los fantasmas* forms part of a larger (and longer) fantastic literary tradition based in Mexico's urban areas. Amongst these authors are Carlos Fuentes and Amparo Dávila, whose horror stories are some of the most exemplary works in twentieth century Mexican gothic/horror literature. In a more contemporary context, the anthology *Ciudad fantasma: Relato fantástico de la Ciudad de México (XIX–XXI)* (*Ghost City: Fantastic Story of Mexico City (XIX–XXI)*) brings together texts from several authors who share a fascination of Mexico's largest city, its paradoxical past and present, and the possibility to express modern anxieties through the horror genre. The anthology invites the reader 'to think of the metropolis as it is: an intense, dynamic, endless stage whose past is more present and alive than ever' (Esquinca and Quirarte 2017: 18).[7] I argue that *Los fantasmas* makes a similar gesture, inviting the reader to re-envision Mexico City's violent past and present.

In *Los fantasmas*, the urban backdrop of the story assumes a role that goes beyond merely being the setting; the first page of chapter 1 is a full-page illustration of Viridiana's part of town. This part of the city—urban yet more peripherical than the downtown or tourist areas—is represented in meticulous detail, painting a picture that is all too familiar: a street dog sleeping on the less-than-cared-for sidewalk, a chain-link fence in disrepair, graffitied walls, and modest apartment buildings opaqued by a layer of smog being emitted from the industrial buildings in the foreground (7). In fact, the panels that prominently feature the city are illustrated with as

much, if not more, detail as the ghosts themselves, implying that the subjectivities of the characters and their place in the city are given equal importance. At the artistic level, Mora's wispy pen strokes and use of watercolor paints frequently blurs the lines between where the ghostly figures end and the city's structures begin, as best seen in the sequence on page 69.

Returning to the opening of the graphic novel, the choice to begin the story near the train tracks is something worth noting; in fact, one of *Los fantasmas* greatest strengths is the way that it challenges the notion of place and the connection that places have with our haunted/ever-haunting pasts. In his book *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, French Anthropologist Marc Augé argues that one of the symptoms of supermodernity, characterized by an 'overabundance of events, spatial overabundance, and the individualization of references,' is the creation of what he coins non-places (Augé 1995: 40). Because of the way that 'the space of non-place creates neither singular identity nor relations; only solitude, and similitude' (104), and falling in line with his reading of the Paris subway system as a non-place (69), Augé would no doubt agree that the tracks that Viridiana and her friends search for ghosts is a non-place for the same reasons. That is to say that the train has little (or no) cultural significance outside of its capitalist function (i.e. a means to transport products and make money).

Yet, through the figure of the ghostly victims of violence, *Los fantasmas* reclaims spaces like the train tracks as being significant; ghosts, which simultaneously belong to the past and paradoxically exist in the present, are typically represented as bound to places of their death. Viridiana and her friends, pushed to the margins of the metropolis, are similarly 'bound' to their neighborhood as their socioeconomic situations do not allow them to escape from their precarious neighborhood. Instead, I argue that Viridiana and the ghosts that she sees should not be seen in terms of their placelessness,[8] but rather as being the key to understanding the current state of violence in Mexico's urban areas.

Gore Capitalism and the Specters of Violence

After stealing the camcorder, the bullies sell it to the Tlacuacheros. This exchange is part of a larger network of violent capitalistic practices, which is shown in detail in the penultimate chapter. Here, Viridiana and Benito decide that the way of ridding their neighborhood of the Tlacuacheros is to expose their criminal activity with the hope that the police would step in, and justice would be served. To do this, they follow Nicario, who by this point in the story has become involved with the gang and who can be seen taking photos of people as he makes his way back to their base, presumably 'marking' these individuals as potential victims. Upon entering the base, Viridiana and Benito realize that the Tlacuacheros are responsible for nearly all of the crime, from the robbing of technology to a very powerful moment when Viridiana finds her mother's necklace (95–96). This moment marks an important shift from understanding the Tlacuacheros as petty thieves to understanding the role that they have in feminicidios; Viridiana's mother, who leaves in the first part of the novel to cross the border for better economic opportunity, is confirmed as a victim of such violence.

It would be remiss to not mention the material conditions and consequences that the graphic novel also demonstrates; the seminal work of Sayak Valencia helps to elucidate the inextricable nature between these kinds of violence and capitalism in a Mexican context. Without a doubt, the Tlacuacheros can (and should) be read as what Valencia describes as endriago subjects. Endriago subjects are

> new discursive figures that make up an *episteme of violence*, as well as reconfiguring the concept of work through a perverse sense of agency, now rooted in the necropolitical commercialization of murder […] These subjects confront their situation and their context by means of *necroempowerment* and the fugitive, dystopian *necro-practices* of gore, as they convert this process into the *only possible reality* and attempt to *legitimate* the processes of underground economies (black market, drug trafficking, weapons, bodies, etc.) through their reign of violence. (Valencia 2018: 26–27; original emphasis)

Valencia signaling towards necro-practices as the only possible reality is extremely important in the context of *Los fantasmas*, as are the monstruous endriago. Perhaps one of the most important elements of Mora's graphic novel is the ways that monstrosity is represented; from the beginning, the text's illustrations clearly show that the ghosts that Viridiana can see are terrifying. In this way, the text's 'twist' that the ghosts are not villainous but rather victims of violence lends itself well to understanding Mora's graphic novel both in the context of gore capitalism and the 'body-panic' presented by David McNally. The real monsters are not the ghostly figures themselves, but instead they show that

> modernity's monstrosities do not begin and end with shocking crises of financial markets, however wrenching and dramatic these may be. Instead, the very insidiousness of the capitalist grotesque has to do with its invisibility with, in other words, the ways in which monstrosity becomes normalised and naturalised via its colonisation of the essential fabric of everyday-life, beginning with the very texture of corporeal experience in the modern world. What is most striking about capitalist monstrosity, in other words, is its elusive everydayness, its apparently seamless integration into the banal and mundane rhythms of quotidian existence. (McNally 2011: 2)

McNally's reading of the vampiric figure in Marx and the connections that it has to the anxieties produced by the modern, globalized capitalist market resonates particularly well in the Mexican context; especially around the time of the passing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the figure of the vampire assumed a very central role in representing the economic crises that ensued. Most notably, Guillermo del Toro's 1991 film *Cronos* prominently features a vampiric character who faces conflict with an international company.

Interestingly, though, Mora did not opt for vampiric or zombified victims, but rather for ghosts. I understand this to be directly related to the kind of violence that is represented in *Los fantasmas*; while McNally's 'body-panic' makes sense for stories related to bodysnatching and the illicit organ market, the violence in *Los fantasmas* falls more in line with what Rossana Reguillo calls 'expressive violence' as it relates to the narco-machine (Reguillo 2011). In contrast to the organ trade, the kind of gang violence represented in *Los fantasmas* is expressive

in the way that market profit becomes secondary to the blatant expressions of power (through violence and death). Further elaborating on the narco-machine, she describes it as an apparatus that is 'ubiquitous, elusive, phantasmagoric, and it persists, despite the occasional appearance and momentary subjugation of its servants' who victims are 'converted into units of common sense (broken bodies, disarticulated bodies); they are transformed into universals [...] they are bodies transformed—by the work of violence—into abstract entities' (Reguillo 2011).

It is because of this expressive violence that the narco machine can so effectively reduce fragmented or dismembered bodies into non-human objects. This too is precisely why the victims in *Los fantasmas* are better represented as ghostly figures and not as monstrous bodies à la Frankenstein. This article shows the importance of putting Latin American fantastic literature in dialogue with traditional approaches to the genre in Anglophone spheres not only for their similarities, but also for the rich conversations that come from their differences; after all,

> The Gothic was absolutely present in the Latin American cultural imagination—especially after the advent of film—and these rhetorical devices were appropriated from Gothic sources and transformed, resulting in innovative artistic creations in which characters in made-up worlds also gave shape to fears and apprehensions that artists were experiencing at particular social and political junctures. (Serrano 2019: 1–2)

The Latin American gothic (and horror genre writ large) are shaped specifically in ways that articulate their unique experiences, as Serrano describes in the quote above. *Los fantasmas de mi ciudad* demonstrates perfectly how the genres can be used to illustrate and (re)articulate the processing of violence and trauma as the narco machine and other institutions of violence continue to create more and more ghosts each day.

Conclusion

Viridiana and Benito infiltrate the Tlacuachero base with the hope of exposing them and thereby bringing them to justice. Ultimately, Viridiana and Benito are seen leaving the Tlacuachero base, leading to a chase that ends with the two young protagonists trapped on a bridge over the train

tracks with the gang closing in on them from both sides. In this moment, Viridiana proclaims 'Ya no les tengo miedo' ('I'm not scared of you all anymore'), which presents an interesting play on words (109). In Spanish, the direct object pronoun 'les' is used to refer to a group in the third person and, in this case, it is not specified who it is directed toward—the Tlacuacheros or the ghosts, who in the very next panel materialize all around Viridiana, or perhaps both groups. The newly appeared ghosts exact their revenge on their killers, throwing all of the Tlacuacheros over the side of the overpass.

I argue that the naïveté of their plan functions as an intentional foil to the graphic novel's spectacular ending; the comparison of the original plan of exposing the gang to what actually happens to them is key; not only does it echo the legitimation of underground economies as Valencia suggests, but it also provides a staunch critique of the very institutions that are meant to protect citizens. As Viridiana explains in the epilogue, 'no one suspected that a couple of kids could throw three delinquents off a bridge. Nobody was interested in investigating the case' (118).[9] The general disinterest that the police have in investigating gang activity is telling, especially given their reputation for committing violence themselves; what *Los fantasmas* suggests, then, is that there needs to be a radical change in the logic of justice and the complacency towards violence.

Even after having read the text multiple times, I am continuously drawn back to the graphic novel's epilogue; the novel's end refuses to be the story's end. In the epilogue, Viridiana tells the reader that Nicario no longer leaves his house, perhaps being indicative of his incapacity to reconcile the role he played while involved with the gang and his lack of readiness to go through the same emotionally laborious task of processing what has happened in his lifetime. Yet the way that the narrative leaves Nicario's future ambiguous also implies that it should not be written off as totally lost; he may also one day let the ghosts of his past help him make sense of his present and future. Similarly, Viridiana's story is without end; her narrative voice in the final panel tells the reader that Viridiana no longer feels alone, but that does not mean she has a happy ending. Her mother is dead; her aunt Albina, whom she now lives with, is still recovering from being attacked by thugs; she no longer maintains a relationship with either Nicario or Benito. But her story resists being written off as a tragedy.

This resistance is the graphic novel's greatest motif; for as much as *Los fantasmas de mi ciudad* appears to invite a reading of it as tragic, it fully resists. It is a resistance that comes spearheaded by a young girl who is fed up with gang violence and who refuses to be the only one to recognize the ghosts for what they are: victims. They are not supernatural manifestations of evil; they are simply the displaced and disoriented souls of those who had the misfortune of seeing organized gang violence firsthand. Thinking more broadly, this kind of resistance also has major implications for the way that we think about Mexico's past, present, and future; much like Viridiana, Mexico's history is clearly marked by violence, but violence is not what defines it. Mexico's present is testament to the resistance and resilience of its people, despite and because of its past. There, too, are many that share Mora's optimism in imagining a future full of Viridianas, a future in which the ghosts of the past give power to those who are ready to engage in the processing of their collective traumas.

Weaving the supernatural narrative through the medium of a graphic novel, Mora both literally and metaphorically re-envisions urban violence in Mexico. With Viridiana, he invites readers to see a new framework of processing trauma from this kind of violence, one that embraces the fear of danger and the unseen and uses the power of the memories of the victims of violence to say for once and for all: basta.[10]

Endnotes

1. Throughout this paper, words with significant and inseparable cultural connections will not be translated. In this case, feminicidios is used as it is defined by Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano: '[it is] the murders of women and girls founded on a gender power structure... [it] is gender-based violence that is both public and private, implicating both the state (directly or indirectly) and individual perpetrators (private or state actors); it thus encompasses systematic, widespread, and everyday interpersonal violence… [it] is systemic violence rooted in social, political, economic, and cultural inequalities' (Fregoso and Bejarano 2010: 5). The use of the word in its Spanish form is symbolic to acknowledge the intersection of gender and the sociocultural/political context of Mexico.

2. Note on terminology: Nahua is the broad term to define any group or individual that speaks Nahuatl. Aztec or Azteca is used in reference to origins in Aztlán, though it is commonly misused to refer to what is known as the Aztec Triple Alliance (the Mexica, the Acolhua, and the Tepanec). The Mexica are the most dominant group in the 'Aztec Empire,' and they are the group that establishes Tenochitlán.

3. The Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Tlatelolco is also the infamous site of the 1968 student massacre in which the Mexican government ordered the ambushing and subsequent killing or disappearing of student activists.

4. Original text: 'Siento mucho dolor en el pecho, como una gran angustia.'

5. Original text: 'Ya vi de cerca que no eres tan fea.'

6. Original text: 'el trabajo de la memoria se topa también con las dificultades relacionadas con la elaboración y la comunicación de los testimonios provenientes de memorias traumáticas; esto es, en términos más específicos, con el problema de la *representación* de la violencia en contextos donde el trauma aún informa y determina—en muchas ocasiones impidiéndolo—el recuerdo de lo ocurrido.'

7. Original text: 'a pensar la urbe como lo que es: un escenario intenso, dinámico, inagotable, cuyo pasado está más presente y vivo que nunca.'

8. See Relph, E., *Place and Placelessness*, London, England: Pion Limited, 1976.

9. Original text: 'Nadie sospechó que un par de niños pudieron tirar a tres delincuentes por un puente. A nadie le interesó investigar el caso.'

10. Literally translated, 'basta' means 'enough'. However, its English equivalent fails to accurately capture the texture of the word with all the frustration and finality that it carries. It is a word that has been very significant in expressing resistance against further acts of violence and oppression in the Spanish-speaking world, and it is simply not sufficient to just say 'enough'.

References

Acosta López, María del Rosario, 'Gramáticas de la escucha: Aproximaciones filosóficas a la construcción de memoria histórica': *Ideas y Valores* 68, 2019.

Augé, Marc, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*: Verso, 1995. Translated by John Howe.

Clendinnen, Inga, "Fierce and Unnatural Cruelty": Cortés and the Conquest of Mexico': Representations 33 (1991), pp. 65-100. https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520913103-003

De las Casas, Bartolomé, *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, Seville, 1552.

Esquinca, Bernardo and Vicente Quirarte (editors), *Ciudad fantasma: Relato fantástico de la Ciudad de México (XIX-XXI)*, Mexico City: Almadía, 2017.

Fregoso, Rosa-Linda and Cynthia Bejarano, *Terrorizing Women: Feminicide in the Americas*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

McNally, David, *Monsters of the Market: Zombies, Vampires, and Global Capitalism*, Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2011.

Mora, Augusto, *Los fantasmas de mi ciudad*, Mexico City; Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM): La Cifra Editorial, 2020.

Reguillo, Rossana, 'The Narco-Machine and the Work of Violence: Notes Towards its Decodification,' e-misférica, 8.2, 2011. Translated by Margot Olavarría. https://hemisphericinstitute.org/en/emisferica-82/reguillo5.html

Relph, E, *Place and Placelessness*, London, England: Pion Limited, 1976.

Ribas-Casasayas, Alberto and Amanda L. Petersen (eds.), *Espectros: Ghostly Hauntings in Contemporary Transhispanic Narratives*, Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2016.

Round, Julia, 'Gothic and the Graphic Novel,' *A New Companion to the Gothic*, edited by David Punter: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, pp. 335-349.

Serrano, Carmen A., *Gothic Imagination in Latin American Fiction and Film*, Albuquerque: University of Mexico Press, 2019.

Valencia, Sayak, *Gore Capitalism*: Semiotext(e), 2018. Translated by John Pluecker.