

Raising the Dead: García Lorca, Trauma and the Cultural Mediation of Mourning

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The dead embody, and therefore become so much of, what the living are unable to realize.

-Sharon Patricia Holland, *Raising the Dead*

Paul Valéry wrote (Felman 1990): "Our memory repeats to us what we haven't understood" (76). That's almost it. Say instead: "Our memory repeats to us what we haven't yet come to terms with, what still haunts us."

-Kai Erikson, "Notes on Trauma and Community"

Cadavers Past and Present

In a November 2002 op-ed article in *El País*, the historian Gabriel Jackson affirmed that "En España tampoco existe ya el tabú sobre los horrores de la época de Franco." Only three days earlier, however, Congress had agreed on a resolution which, despite morally recognizing and pledging support to victims of the Civil War and dictatorship for the first time since Francisco Franco's death, aimed precisely to contain efforts to recuperate that past. Acknowledging "la necesidad de recuperar la memoria colectiva," Congress emphasized both that this recovery occur "dentro del espíritu de concordia de la Constitución," and that its own recognition of these victims should not "reavivar viejas heridas o remover el rescoldo de la confrontación civil" ("El Congreso"). The barely-disguised anxiety regarding the wounds that the recuperation of a traumatic past might reopen finds a curious echo in the conservative government's 1997 recognition of the life of Federico García Lorca, a figure emblematic of Civil

War and Francoist victimhood. In preparation for Lorca's 1998 centenary celebration, José María Aznar's administration pledged 600 million pesetas for the year's activities, affirming "a los cuatro vientos" that "61 años después del fusilamiento que acabó con la vida de Federico García Lorca, es el momento de olvidar viejas fobias y rencores" (Enríquez Gómez 76). As Juan Enríquez Gómez notes, the Partido Popular's very public financing of institutions dedicated to Lorca and to a national celebration of Lorca's life could be read as:

el primer paso de una serie de acciones encaminadas a lavar la cara de los sectores conservadores del país en el *Caso Lorca*, iniciado con su fusilamiento, en el año 1936. (76)

Indeed, Aznar himself recognized it as, in part, "un gesto para la concordia" (76). Despite his emblematic victimhood, then, Lorca becomes a politicized body that mediates the active *forgetting* of a violent, turbulent, and traumatic past, a body through which a politics of consensus might be reinforced and affective engagements with the past evacuated. This collective memorialization of Lorca's life is thus promoted by the state as long as it grafts a harmonic national (and political) identity over the collective wounds of the past.

More recently, Lorca's body is once again mediating the treatment of these collective wounds. Since 2003, the potential exhumation of Lorca's physical remains from a mass grave in Víznar, Granada, has, in turn, unearthed contentious issues regarding history, memory, and the encryption of the past. On both an international and domestic level, his body is being pressed into service as a tombstone, a literal and symbolic grave marker for those individuals that were apparently killed with him in

August 1936,¹ and for "todos los mártires del fascismo en España" that lie in oblivion (Prado 14). For as Emilio Silva, president of the Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (ARMH), recognizes, and BBC journalist Katya Adler notes, "Lorca's fame gives a face and a name to Spain's dead thrown in ditches." The polemic over whether Lorca's body should be uncovered is thus haunted by larger, unresolved issues regarding the Civil War, the regime, and the post-dictatorship, for indeed, only in 2000, twenty-five years after Franco's death, was the public silence surrounding the mass graves finally broken. The current debates over Lorca's body remains invariably revolve around the relationship between individual and collective memory, the ownership of the dead and their meaning within memorial processes, and the "proper" ways of mourning and of memorializing the past.² Perhaps most importantly, interventions have shown an acute awareness of the tragic proportions of what these tombs hold: remains of the disappeared. For many, these bodies are improperly buried; marked by violence and oblivion, they cannot be effectively mourned where they currently lie. Yet recovery means disinterring the death of the victims, the guilt of their killers, the shame of the survivors for having remained silent; it means unearthing painful personal and collective memories, and recognizing that the nation has not come to terms fully with that past. As such, Lorca's potential exhumation, in turn, has brought to light both a tension between a need to recover the traumatic historical past and an anxious desire to leave it buried, as well as an awareness that Spain is in a state of unresolved mourning. Collective imaginings of these bodies as encrypted alive, awaiting resurrection and proper burial by survivors and subsequent

generations, reinforce the notion that it is precisely the silencing of the traumatic past that has resulted in an unfinished mourning process. In this way, Lorca's dead body currently mediates the nation's relationship to its grievous history and gives shape to a perception increasingly reflected in national headlines and cultural spaces that, like thousands of Civil War victims buried in mass graves, the collective memory of the recent past "esperaba enterrada—pero no muerta" (Serrano).

Recent critical discussions regarding the fragility of the political situation in the wake of Franco's death, the Transition's politics of consensus, and the consequent encryption of a distressing past include precisely the period in which Federico García Lorca's previously censored body was being reinscribed into collective history and memory.³ That is, despite a slow and inconsistent recuperation of García Lorca under the regime, it was not until the waning years of the dictatorship and the complicated start of democracy that a more complete recovery of his figure and corpus was undertaken within Spain. Teresa Vilarós has insightfully written that:

El instrumento de escritura que la historia usa en estos primeros momentos es sobre todo el de un punzón dedicado a horadar y destrozarse, una aguja que imprime sobre el texto de la transición la presencia rotunda de la muerte. [...] [E]l desgarramiento físico y político que la presencia de la muerte supone en estos primeros años de la transición es simplemente sobrecogedor. (118)

In the same vein, I would like to recuperate this "presencia rotunda de la muerte" and suggest that the incorporation of Lorca's

body into national and cultural history during the Transition is heavily mediated by this deathly presence, a process that has also profoundly affected current configurations of Lorca. Significantly, and as is well known, representations of his work, literary criticism, biography, and even celebrations of life at that time were marked by his status as disappeared, by his violent death. Indeed, the interest in Lorca's biography has often overtaken understandings of his literary work. Paul Julian Smith has rightly emphasized the fetishization of Lorca's death and notes that Lorca's life and death have for years been widely regarded by many as the key to understanding his literary work and vice versa (105), defining this "biological determinism" as one of the main tenets of the "cult of García Lorca" (136). Even so, we have yet to explain either this repeated collective return to a lorquian body marked by death or the recurring assumption that body and work are intimately related, two notions that I will argue are connected and underpin most literary and cultural criticism of Lorca's work, as well as his enormous weight as a cultural icon since the dictatorship.⁴

This essay returns primarily to the period of 1970-1986 in an attempt to understand the cultural processes involved in the recent construction of Federico García Lorca, particularly as it revolved around his assassination and cadaver, around a collective desire to imagine his death and/or a lorquian body marked by death. While acknowledging that appropriations of Lorca's death began almost immediately after his assassination and, therefore, well before the 1970s, I examine this recent period of political, social and cultural upheaval as a moment when the dynamics of constructing a lorquian body were particularly complicated and might have yielded different results. For

if we accept the notion that the Transition witnessed a hegemonic effort to eliminate collective spaces that mediated affective engagements with the problematic past, how can we understand the intense interest in the death (and life marked by death) of Lorca? In what ways did that politics of consensus affect Lorca's cultural construction then and his cultural importance now, particularly with relation to issues of encryption, mourning, and memory? Alternately, considering the importance of cultural sites for collective memorial engagement, how did the recuperation and reinscription of Lorca into collective discourses mediate cultural, psychosocial and political processes in the early years of Spanish democracy? The following discussion constitutes an exhumation of García Lorca as a technology of memory—a mediatory space for the production of cultural memory, a site by which people articulate a relationship to the past.⁵ I argue that a significant part of the complex construction that is Lorca today is wrapped up in a kind of exhumation and memorializing of him that was done very publicly in the seventies and early eighties. Analyzing the way in which his previously censored body was being inscribed in the public sphere through 1986 (the 50th anniversary of his assassination and of the start of the Civil War), I propose that the repeated return to his death and the fusion of his *corpus/cuerpo* can be understood as related processes within a dynamics of mourning.⁶ In this sense, I read Lorca and his work as memorial texts marked by encryption and loss. I ultimately suggest that the fetishization of death that has haunted lorquian representations is connected to his iconic role as cultural mediator of unresolved collective and individual mourning—that is, the process of witnessing and working

through traumatic events of the Civil War, of the Franco regime, and of the Transition's politics of reconciliation.⁷

Fatal Fascinations: Narrating Lorca's Death

In his 1966 essay for *ABC*, “La obra de Federico, bien nacional,” Edgar Neville, critic, director and former friend of García Lorca, sought to inscribe the poet into Spanish literary history. Significantly, Lorca takes shape in Neville's article within a discourse on memorializing that seeks to recognize and unite a divided nation. For Neville, rewriting both Lorca's work and “su figura particular, tan mal conocida, tan intencionadamente mal aclarada” into the national consciousness forms part of the project of reinscribing the silenced *vencidos* into national history and Civil War monuments. What is perhaps most interesting about the article is that it harbors the seeds of a fascination that expands in the following decade, as Neville's explicitly stated goal of inscribing Lorca's work as “un bien nacional” is overtaken by a narrative that returns time and again to Lorca's death. For in addition to lamenting Lorca's assassination as both a personal and national loss that has yet to be recognized, Neville literally retraces the poet's fatal path to Víznar (“he ido buscando su huella—tal vez el trocito donde yace—en Bíznar [*sic*]”). This investigative itinerary includes the description of Neville's largely unsuccessful interviews of villagers who refuse to implicate themselves and give him information, his attempts to shift any guilt from the regime to unlocatable others, and his call for Lorca's reburial with official recognition. The article unwittingly suggests, then, that writing Lorca into the national patrimony may only happen by returning to

the originary site of the crime, identifying the guilty, and advocating an exhumation and proper burial in a symbolic ceremony that would unite the nation (“La obra”). Neville’s reshaping of Spanish cultural identity thus imagines the dead lorquian body both as an unresolved event in the individual and national consciousness and, buried as it is by techniques of silencing (distortion, censorship), as one that must be unearthed in order to heal both personal loss and the enduring national divisions of the Civil War. While Neville wrote this piece, historian Ian Gibson was in Spain working on *La represión nacionalista de Granada en 1936 y la muerte de Federico García Lorca* (later retitled *El asesinato de García Lorca*), a project that began as a study of Lorca’s life but, following a path not unlike Neville’s article, nonetheless ended as a ground-breaking investigative history of the poet’s death. His study relied heavily on personal interviews, archival and historical research, and his own retracing of Lorca’s final steps.⁸ Notably, the cover of the recent republication of this book emphasizes the detectivesque nature of the text, bearing as it does Graham Greene’s observation that *El asesinato de García Lorca* stands as “una fascinante investigación sobre el asesinato de Lorca. Tan apasionante como una novela policiaca” (*El asesinato* [1996]). Such a detective story was envisioned by Gibson as a fact-finding mission based on historical testimony that could indeed uncover a truth and guilty parties, an investigative project that was, as he commented regarding his project on Paracuellos, “necesario para la salud de la nación” since it did not seem to him “positivo para la nueva democracia que sigue habiendo tantas incógnitas” (qtd. in Fernández-Cifuentes 88). Though the politics of these writers differ, both envisioned

the recovery of this silenced historical event as part of the nation’s own itinerary along the path of healing. That is, they assume that any reformulation of national narratives of identity (and Lorca’s place within those narratives) starts with a return to the dead body and the resolution of the enigmas it presents. Akin to detectivesques that paradoxically advance narratively by beginning with a cadaver and recreating the past that produced it, Lorca’s absent dead body becomes the origin of individual and collective narratives on the past, present and future.

In a perceptive 1986 review of Ian Gibson’s later two volume biography on García Lorca, Luis Fernández-Cifuentes observed the pressing importance that Federico García Lorca’s death had held for the social imaginary in the intervening years, referring to Gibson’s 1971 text and asserting that “es probable (y también perturbador) que el libro más popular, más divulgado e incluso más importante sobre García Lorca sea el que describe las circunstancias de su muerte” (86). Although the reasons behind and the events leading to Lorca’s death had been at issue since 1936, particularly after 1971, public discussion of his assassination intensified, perhaps in no small part due to Gibson’s investigative study.⁹ Indeed, from the early-1970s through the mid-1980s, there is a constant and growing effort in the national press and other cultural texts (biographies, films, etc.) to imagine the days and minutes before Lorca’s assassination, the moment of the killing itself, and its aftermath. How are we to understand these multiple attempts to imagine and narrate Lorca’s death, and what, if any, connection might they have to the investigative project that preceded them? To what degree do they conceive of the lorquian cadaver as a space that mediates other narratives? I

propose that just as the detectivesque relies on witnesses to produce a testimony regarding the past, we might first approach this repeated return to Lorca's end as, in part, a widespread preoccupation with witnessing. That is, the diverse interventions in a public discussion of Lorca's death during the 1970s and 1980s suggest the articulation of a layered public practice of witnessing, an effort to narrate in different ways and thus testify to what had been a long-silenced event under the regime.¹⁰

One major memorial site in which this fatal return signals a testimonial endeavor is in a range of projects that, like Gibson's and Neville's, attempt to uncover the truth regarding Lorca's end and recuperate the historical past from different angles. More specifically, the aim to remember and narrate the poet's death through investigative discourses permeates the Spanish press over the next ten years, particularly in interviews of primary witnesses that can testify to Lorca's last days and hours, in the narration of itineraries that return to and recreate the path that the poet may have followed from Madrid to Víznar, in interviews of those that have been judged by the public as having had a hand in Lorca's death, and in chronicles of what had been discovered to date about the events surrounding the death.¹¹ In different ways, and particularly in the case of interviews and itineraries, these texts attempt to bear witness to the traumatic event of the death on a primary level. Here I include accounts narrated by individuals who knew Lorca and by those who did not know him but nonetheless feel haunted by his death, "agobiado por la memoria de lo que no he vivido" (Monleón "La muerte" 25).¹² Each text thus becomes a testimony to those traumatic and encrypted events, emphasizing the difficulty of speaking of

them, the veracity of the testimony itself, the sense of personal and/or communal guilt surrounding Lorca's assassination, and the way that his death has marked the witness emotionally and otherwise. These narratives directly relate the ability to talk about what happened in the past to the witness's own well being in the present. Likewise, Gibson's belief that these historical projects were necessary for the health of the nation resonates with these testimonial texts. Indeed, several interviews with Luis Rosales, a friend of Lorca in whose home the poet was detained, emphasize his repeated attempt to form a round-table of witnesses

en donde se hable de 'aquello' desde el principio hasta el fin. Luis quiere el careo y saber la verdad desde todos los lados, y decir la suya y escuchar la de los demás. [...] Luis dice que él lo que quiere es que se sienten todos, que hablen todos los que en esto tienen voz. (Medina 21)

Giving voice to the past in public, repeatedly going over the details, piecing together the events of the assassination with others, and recuperating that historical past through the testimony of witnesses and the search for factual evidence is envisioned as a project that will give some kind of individual and collective relief. Furthermore, as in Tico Medina's 1972 interview with Luis Rosales, these testimonial texts often move beyond a focus on the primary witness to highlight the presence and importance of the secondary witness, the individual who elicits, listens to, and makes sense of the testimony.¹³ Particularly in interviews, this representation of the two-sided nature of testifying to the past often emphasizes both the empathetic unsettlement of the secondary witness (LaCapra 47), and the secondary

witness's "contamination" (Felman 107) by the traumatic events that are finally being narrated. That is, the listener takes shape in these texts as empathetic secondary witness and as primary witness to his or her own experience of that testimony.¹⁴ Moreover, the secondary witness's crucial role in the public processing of this traumatic testimony could not be more dramatically exemplified than in Ian Gibson's 1979 interview with Luis Rosales. Following Rosales's frustration regarding the lack of a state-sponsored truth commission on Lorca's death ("Los últimos" 1979, 41), Gibson uses the space of the interview to adjudicate Rosales's guilt, taking on the role of lawyer, judge and jury, and closing with his verdict:

Yo creo, en definitiva, que este hombre de mirada serena y arrolladora humanidad dice la verdad y sólo la verdad—ahí están los testigos, algunos de los cuales he nombrado—, y que hizo todo lo que pudo por proteger y salvar a Federico. Que se le deje en paz con su pena. ("Los últimos" 1979, 43)

In the absence of a governmental and/or community forum in which a collective narrative might emerge, the secondary witness thus transforms both interview and article into a surrogate courtroom where this painful past can be narrated by the primary witness, reimagined by the readers, judged by society, and converted into a catalyst for relief.

Beyond investigative projects that return time and again to Lorca's death, public sites are also populated by repeated efforts to visualize and sensorially imagine the moments preceding the killing, the death itself, and a body marked by death. Multiple representations put the reader at the scene

of the assassination and even in the mind of Lorca, signaling a different process of witnessing. José María Alfaro, a former friend, ends a remembrance of the poet by imagining him at the moment prior to death: "De lo que sí estoy convencido es que al enfrentarse con el trance final debió percibir, por sí y por los demás, todo el desesperado horror de la muerte inútil" (3). Alfaro thus envisions himself one with Lorca emotionally and sensorially, stating confidently what Lorca was feeling when he knew death was upon him. In a similar move, in his 1984 film "El balcón abierto" Jaime Camino uses a handheld subjective camera to represent Lorca's death. Paul Julian Smith has insightfully read the deployment of this technique as part of a liberal political project to ensure the intended audience's identification with Lorca and victims of oppression (113). I would suggest as well that precisely because this technique puts the viewer squarely in the same position as does Alfaro's imagined death trance, that is, in the mind and body of Lorca, such an identification also speaks to a desire to create a reactualization, a witnessing of that death scene from within; it embodies an attempt to know what Lorca's experience of those events actually was. The viewer becomes the one who experiences the assassination; the viewer becomes an impossible primary witness from inside the event, an imagined transformation to which I will return later.¹⁵

Indeed, although all of these testimonial texts on one level establish a relationship with the reader/viewer that assigns the latter a role as a secondary witness—someone who must receive and process the narrative offered by the text—, they frequently work to create a vicarious primary witness in the reader. For as Shoshana Felman has written:

the specific task of the literary testimony is, in other words, to open up in that belated witness, which the reader now historically becomes, the imaginative capability of perceiving history—what is happening to others—in *one's own body*, with the power of sight (of insight) usually afforded only by one's own immediate physical involvement. (108)

Retaking Felman's focus on sight and the imagined experience, what is significant in many of the representations of Lorca's death is an explicit incitement of the contemporary reader/spectator to *see* and thus witness this lorquian body and its end. More specifically, such a call to witnessing surfaces as a push to visualize the events from the "outside," not as Lorca, but as another witness to the events. In a 1986 article on Lorca's "obsession" with death, Anita Arroyo both emphasizes the immediate visibility of the killing ("Duele *ver* tronchar, tan absurda y cruelmente, [...] la fecunda vida de un ser único [...] [3; emphasis added]) and pictures a comforting, idealized image of his final moments:

lo mataron, pero—imaginamos—
que una sonrisa seráfica iluminó su
ultimo hálito de vida temporal y que,
sonriendo, sigue sembrando estrellas
en el cielo. (3)

In this way, the writer and her readers ("imaginamos") are onlookers at the moment of death. A more complex narrative that likewise explicitly involves the reader as primary witness to the death, José Monleón's 1975 article, "La muerte de García Lorca" stages an "exhumation" that is at once of a body and a series of events and places. He unearths them and holds them up to

the light for the readers to see, those that "siguen creyendo que la muerte de Federico es un tema oscuro" (29). Monleón carefully interweaves the versions of Lorca's death with his own personal itinerary "por los últimos lugares en que vivió Federico" (25). Unequivocally including the reader as a walking companion throughout the article (e.g. "Abandonamos el camino principal" [25]), Monleón tells us stories of Lorca's death as he describes in present tense the Granadine scenery now, the spaces where 1936 haunts 1975 Spain. Both through his verbal narrative and the captioned photographs that accompany the article, we are incited to see, hear and feel those places, to experience them as witnesses like Monleón himself (and perhaps as a primary witness in 1936) and make the connection between past and present. Indeed, according to the writer, that assassination is visible everywhere in the present and in public life, even if its historical truth has yet to be recognized or fully narrated, and it is up to the reader and writer, a complicated web of witnesses, to testify to its ghostly presence.

Unlike Arroyo and Monleón's construction of a more intimate cooperative witnessing involving both writer and reader, others seem to actively set out to prompt in the reader/spectator a primary witnessing without an intermediary. In José Antonio Rial's 1979 play "La muerte de García Lorca," the production of an audience that would bear witness to the visually imagined death is crucial.¹⁶ Like Arroyo and Monleón, Rial stages the assassination using techniques aimed at involving the audience in the scene, but actively attempts to create a public, communal witnessing. The playwright set up the space in a circular manner, "donde el público se siente en torno y

participa en la crisis, pasión y muerte de Federico” (Pérez Coterillo, “Cuando el teatro”) or, as Pérez Coterillo wrote in a review of the opening, so that the public sat:

en torno a la estancia, en sillas de anea, atrapado en la misma historia, metido de bruces en ella, tanto, que pueden tocar con las manos si no dieran crédito a lo que ven sus ojos. (“Rajatabla” 43)

Precisely the proximity and embodiment of the imagined events surrounding the death push the audience to bear witness to that past, to see and process it, to experience and participate in the horror of the assassination. The physicality of the staging forces any “Doubting Thomas” into the events in a strange conflation of past and present, allowing touch to confirm the poet’s sacrifice if the witness refuses to see and believe. Similarly, the covers of the 1985 and 1986 *Los Domingos de ABC* special numbers dedicated to Lorca confront the reader point blank with José Caballero’s evocative color representations of the poet’s wounded, dying and dead body. While the earlier number shows a close-up painting of Lorca’s face splashed with blood but still alive and apparently unaffected, the 1986 number goes farther towards narrating the originary moment of trauma by depicting six lorquian bodies that suggest a slow motion representation of the successive moments of the killing. From Lorca facing the guns of a firing squad, to his falling and blood-stained body, to the last image of him bloody and face-down on the ground, the viewer is made to visually pass through the assassination and process of death as if he/she were a primary eye-witness to the event, standing at the time and place of the

killing. In this sense, Juan Antonio Bardem’s movie *Muerte de un poeta* (1986) from the same period takes a tack not altogether different from Rial and Caballero, filming a meticulous recreation of apparently historical events leading to Lorca’s death, crafting what essentially stands as a visual reactualization of his end that converts spectators into primary witnesses of those events.

Ultimately, then, and despite their wide-ranging techniques and mediums, all of these narratives can be read as testimonial texts. They embody a repeated attempt to imagine traumatic events, yet one which takes place within an effort to process that past. Akin to Felman’s understanding of testimony in *The Plague*, these narratives that circle Lorca’s cadaver and return to his execution imply that

[t]he task of the testimony is to impart that knowledge: a firsthand, carnal knowledge of victimization, of what it means to be ‘from here’ (from quarantine), wherever one is from; a firsthand knowledge of a historical passage through death, and of the way life will forever be inhabited by that passage and by that death [...]. (111)

Enacting varied practices of witnessing, they suggest an attempt to understand those events and thereby work through them, whether on a primary or secondary level, whether as an individual or a community. In this sense, Lorca’s dead body is imagined as a space through which people can return to, process, and judge what has happened. His body functions as a site that mediates this discourse of and on witnessing, what is in essence an effort to establish an individual and collective relationship with a grievous past.

Witnessing the Encrypted Body: A Dynamics of Mourning

The cadaverous presence is the presence of the unknown before us.

-Maurice Blanchot

How are we, then, to understand more broadly this desire to witness this dead body, to see, narrate, and claim Lorca's fate? We might begin by noting that this cadaver is marked first by the fact that Lorca, like so many others, was disappeared, and as such, his death embodies a violent end and injustice, but no less importantly, a large measure of irresolution. Any consideration of the execution is plagued by a series of unanswered questions—why was he killed, where was he taken, how was he killed, what did he experience, where was he buried—questions which all point to a fundamental lack of understanding regarding the very events of his murder. For on the one hand, those witnesses who might have actually testified to the death and to the events leading to it have either been killed (i.e. the victims themselves), or have given conflicting answers to some of these questions, rendering them factually unreliable (i.e. those people somehow knowledgeable of events surrounding the executions). On the other hand, in the immediate aftermath, the nationalists, and later the regime, kept the events from people by using repressive techniques that reflected two extremes: burying the historical referent either through censorship or by propagating rumors—in other words, by oversaturating collective spaces with divergent narratives.¹⁷ Both techniques ultimately worked to keep people in the dark on the fatal events. If the mourning process is at heart always about understanding, about coming to terms with loss, then this lack of knowledge regarding

these events would function as an obstacle to individually or collectively narrating the traumatic past and working through the implications of that loss; they block the mourning process. In this sense, then, the disappearance and death of Lorca can be approached as an event akin to what Felman and Laub have called “the event-without-a witness,” that is:

an event which historically consists in the scheme of the literal *erasure of its witnesses* but which, moreover, philosophically consists in an accidenting of perception, in a *splitting of eyewitnessing* as such; an event, thus not empirically, but cognitively and perceptually without a witness both because it precludes seeing and because it precludes the possibility of a *community of seeing*; an event which radically annihilates the recourse (the appeal) to visual corroboration (to the commensurability between two different seeings) and thus dissolves the possibility of any *community of witnessing*. (211)

The radical erasure of Lorca's body through disappearance and mass or unmarked burial, the annihilation of witnesses to the event, and the “methodical deafness” (Felman 178-83) of the immediate community that certainly did know something of the killing as even later press suggests,¹⁸ create this event-without-a witness, this “traumatic impact of a historically ungraspable *primal scene* which erases both its witnesses and its witnessing” (224). Without a physical body, without testimonial narratives that reconstruct the events in a way that satisfyingly provides resolution of the enigmas surrounding the death, there is no cadaver to “see” nor through which a process of mourning might be elaborated; there is no

corroboration that might serve as a basis for collective witnessing, for the creation of a community of witnesses.

This dead body is further marked by the fact that, during most of the dictatorship, it could not be publicly mourned as a collective loss, nor, of course, mentioned as a political crime. Indeed, in the months preceding Franco's death, José Monleón considers the significance of a forthcoming biography on Lorca entitled, *García Lorca, asesinado: toda la verdad*, writing:

Las palabras 'García Lorca, asesinado' se escriben por primera vez en la prensa española desde que fuera, efectivamente, asesinado, hace treinta y nueve años. El tema se ha conservado a medias palabras, en alusiones veladas y misteriosas, como las familias conservan algunos de sus secretos; como la familia de 'La mordaza,' de Alfonso Sastre. ("García Lorca, asesinado" 21)

Monleón's terms are evocative of the collective encryption of the assassination, one that has arguably resonated beyond public spaces of collective memory and into the private arena. Exploring this gesture toward collective encryption, we might turn to psychoanalytic notions of encrypted memory and mourning as articulated by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok. Rewriting Freud's notion of incorporation as, instead, an *obstacle* to mourning, they argue that incorporation embodies a radical denial of loss, that is, "the refusal to acknowledge the full import of the loss, a loss that, if recognized as such, would effectively transform us" (127). According to Abraham and Torok, it is the impossibility of speaking of a loss for some reason, the inability to acknowledge its profundity, that leads to an entomb-

ment of the lost object, a burying alive of the memory within an intrapsychic tomb (130, 140). Thus the "[p]eople who are not authorized to mourn in the name of their lost object" (163), those who have nowhere to work through that loss openly, covertly bury that memory "without legal burying place" within themselves, separated from the ego and unavailable to processes of assimilation (140). This "secret," or entombed trauma, stands as a form of what Abraham and Torok call, rather fittingly for our case, "preservative repression" (140). Given the sustained subjection of diverse narratives that needed to be told about Lorca's death, a collective encryption of this loss can be said to evolve during the regime.¹⁹ Akin to Abraham and Torok's articulations of entombment and blocked mourning, the fact that there is "no legal burying place" for Lorca's body, either literally or metaphorically during the dictatorship, creates a collective inability to assimilate that loss and, as such, it is encrypted in the collective unconscious and lies "awaiting resurrection" (140). The suppression of these narratives, the impossibility of giving voice to and acknowledging this loss, is experienced as a traumatic erasure of memory on the collective level, much as was the post-regime *Pacto de silencio*, as both Moreiras and Vilarós have argued. Furthermore, this traumatic experience of erasure might also have been repeated on the individual level, especially if we take into account Jo Labanyi's gloss of William Rowe and Vivian Shelling's observation regarding the loss of private memory in post-dictatorship Argentina. In other words, a cause of the traumatic erasure of private memory may very well be the absence of a collective space in which to articulate memories ("History" 67). Indeed, as implied above in Monleón's analogy

("García Lorca, asesinado" 21) and as observed by Elizabeth Kolbert more recently, the silence in the public arena regarding the painful and complex history of the Civil War and Francoism has to a great degree been matched by a silence in private spaces on those same topics and has surfaced in gaps in storytelling, secrets within a family, topics that cannot be broached (69).

Given the denial of collective mourning rituals that might have enabled dealing with both that death and its silencing, this lorquian body was kept encrypted in the social imaginary, locked in a state akin to Abraham and Torok's notion of inexpressible mourning.²⁰ When the regime's politics on Lorca slowly began to change in the 1960s, this corpse could be named and identified, but only in very limited terms, as we see in the case of Neville's careful neutralization of the regime's guilt in 1966 (itself another form of encryption, intended or not).²¹ Finally, once Lorca could be "legally mourned" in the aftermath of Franco's death, the growing pressure to *understand* that past during the first half of the decade merely increased. Indeed, as Monleón suggested in 1975, this "silencio político" (21) was ready to explode and might be broken by a text that both investigated Lorca's death and engaged in what had been for forty years "the danger of naming" (Richard 19). We thus return to the repeated representation of Lorca's death in these early years of democracy. Investigative projects, sensorial imaginings, provocative reactualizations: these divergent cultural manifestations all coincide in an effort to remake, to see, and to understand the event of annihilation, even if they are approaching it by enacting different practices of witnessing. On one level, then, we can read this late-dictatorship and early-democratic return to the

traumatic moment of death as an attempt to witness a radically-censored historical moment and thus begin to elaborate a process of mourning that might end with Lorca's reincorporation into collective history and memory. This effort to testify to those events would therefore stand as a way of reversing the erasure effected by the event-without-a-witness, creating a lorquian cadaver, accounts of the assassination, contemporary witnesses to those events, and, ultimately, a community of witnesses.

Nonetheless, given the radically overdetermined nature of García Lorca's body during these years, the resonance of this testimonial project must be read as moving beyond a rewriting of collective history. For during this period, and naming only a few associations, Lorca is imagined as a symbol and/or metaphor for the self (e.g. López Castellón 5), for the tragedy of the Civil War and Francoism (e.g. Monleón "La muerte," Armiño "El libro"), for national trauma (e.g. Gibson), for individual and communal pain (e.g. Arroyo), for the brutality of dictatorial regimes (e.g. Vargas Llosa), for thousands of individual victims (e.g. Monleón "La muerte," "Especialistas"), for rebellion against Francoism (e.g. "Nueva etapa"), for a rich artistic and cultural past (e.g. "Nueva etapa"), for the tragedies of twentieth century history (e.g. "Especialistas"), and for pre-Transition leftist intellectual projects that revolved around a common enemy and a nostalgic and utopic recuperation of the past (e.g. "Nueva etapa"). Clearly, this dead body is intensely cathected, and as such, the insistent return to this traumatic origin suggests a deeper and more complex significance than the reinscription of an erased historical event (however complicated that process might be). That is, what has been lost and cannot be effectively mourned

moves beyond Lorca as an individual, as a symbol of other victims, or as an erased historical event.

Examining more closely the dynamic embodied in the repeated imaginings of Lorca's moribund body, we might turn to the work of Maurice Blanchot and Sharon Patricia Holland on death. For both Blanchot and Holland conceptualize the dead as the locus of unresolved issues of the living, a space in which the unknown or the unrealized is located and takes shape.²² These mortal and epistemological saturations of the body in Blanchot and Holland may, in a sense, deepen the impact of Peter Brooks's suggestive formulation of the body as always "other" and his assertion that the writing of the body into language is, therefore, an attempt to master, to possess, to know it. The bringing of the *dead* body into symbolization, then, reveals the act of representation even more compellingly as an emphatic attempt to make this radically unknown "other" intelligible. Assuming that working through loss is grounded on understanding certain unknown or unintelligible past events (LaCapra 143), these inscriptions of the lorquian corpse in narrative can be read as essential to working through trauma and elaborating a mourning process. For if as Dori Laub writes, "The testimony is inherently a process of facing loss—of going through the pain of the act of witnessing, and of the ending of the act of witnessing" (91), then the bringing of this dead body into symbolization and thereby testifying to its passage through death constitutes the first steps of this grieving process. Therefore, the multiple inscriptions of this cadaver into collective spaces write the body into cultural cognition, where it might not only be incorporated into collective identity and memory, but also function as a cultural icon, a media-

tor of collective and individual relationships to the past and to the present.²³ Indeed, ultimately what is mourned is not simply Lorca as a radically lost object (both physically killed and discursively suppressed), but the multiple drives he mediates in Spanish society at the time.²⁴ Once that body is exhumed from the collective crypt, narrated, and witnessed, the similarly encrypted cathexes it mediates on both collective and individual levels (trauma, injustice, loss, pain, resistance, silence, etc.) may be worked through. This cadaver as a layered nexus of meaning suggests, then, that the mourning of this death enacts the working through of a range of other deaths that, likewise, have yet to be claimed and understood.

The repeated return to and historical recovery of Lorca's death is thus characterized by a will to memory marked by trauma and mourning.²⁵ Thinking through issues of representation and the breaking of traumatic silence, Nelly Richard writes:

To speak of sensitive surfaces of memory reinscription means to address a scene of production of languages [...]. Images and words, forms and concepts, help to transfer the resignification of the experience to planes of legibility where the lived materiality will become part of an understanding of the events capable of unveiling the knots of violence that existed previously as a figure without a face or expression. (27)

In this sense, Lorca's body becomes a signifying space, a site onto which traumatic experience can be transferred, held at a distance, and made intelligible. His body thus functions as a cultural site that mediates an individual and collective breaking of traumatic silence and the working through

of a range of losses, all of this in a way that perhaps could not be undertaken otherwise. The mechanism underpinning this cultural site, then, is akin to Jean Laplanche's notion of the secondary scene, in which this cadaver functions at once as a traumatic symptom or symbol of a primary scene of trauma, and as a scene through which that originary trauma might be represented and understood. In this way, my reading of the lorquian body as a secondary scene of trauma is similar to Cristina Moreiras's insightful interpretation of Juan Goytisolo's *Cuadernos de Sarajevo*, of which she writes:

Tomando como base otros tiempos, otros sucesos históricos, otros afectos, apelan directamente a un acontecimiento de su propia historia [...], a la vez enlazada intrínsecamente a la historia colectiva [...]. (181)²⁶

Put in the most basic terms, Lorca stands in as a more manageable way of coming to terms with other personal and collective losses. Dealing with the encrypted trauma of the Civil War, Francoism and a lack of a "legal burying place" for a range of events and experiences, the repeated return to this lorquian corpse marks a memorial engagement that seeks to grasp both this death and the issues it mediates. Furthermore, in addition to the iconic function of varied representations of Lorca's body, as we have seen, the testimonial narrative of the 70s and early 80s and its embodiment of a layered practice of witnessing suggests that his very inscription into language may be read as what Dominick LaCapra has metaphorically termed "writing trauma," for if trauma "indicates a shattering break or *cesura* in experience which has belated effects," then

[w]riting trauma would be one of those telling after-effects in what I termed traumatic and post-traumatic writing (or signifying practice in general). It involves processes of acting out, working over, and to some extent working through in analyzing and 'giving voice' to the past—processes of coming to terms with traumatic 'experiences,' limit events, and their symptomatic effects that achieve articulation in different combinations and hybridized forms. (186)

In any event, both the act of writing this body and the resultant iconic representation that this signifying practice generates work to reconstitute entombed or erased individual and collective voices. For if giving testimony is a process through which the traumatized survivor may recuperate an inner-witnessing self and thus reclaim the ability to see and say (Laub 85), Lorca as memorial text (both in the process of being written and as a cultural icon) facilitates a working through that might lead to a reconstitution of a political and ethical agency in the early years of democracy.²⁷

Corporal Textualities and the Politics of Reconciliation

[W]e are forever striving to make the body into a text.

-Peter Brooks

In 1975, José Luis Vila-San-Juan won the Premio Espejo de España for his book *García Lorca, asesinado: toda la verdad*, a text that seems to fit squarely in the bounds of testimonial narratives that we have already

analyzed. The publication of and national recognition garnered by this purportedly investigative project, however, led to a polemic in the Spanish press over just *how* this death was (finally) being inscribed into the public sphere. The indignation and frustration expressed by Ian Gibson and José Monleón, for example, took principle aim at the depoliticized body that the text created and the claim that this book was touted as a “documento definitivo” (Monleón “¿Toda la verdad?”), that it disclosed, in effect, “toda la verdad.”²⁸ Indeed, the conservative make-up of the award committee (which included Fraga Iribarne, Areilza, Serrano Súñer, and Manuel Aznar) might have been enough to prompt suspicions about the book’s characterization of Lorca’s death, not to mention Fraga Iribarne’s comment at the award ceremony that “había que descubrirle de una vez para enterrarle de una vez” (qtd. in Monleón, “García Lorca, asesinado” 21). Ultimately, as Pérez Coterillo suggests when Gibson’s 1971 history of Lorca’s assassination is finally published in Spain in 1979, Fraga’s comment and the book to which it referred were read by many as “el ultimo intento—fracasado—de desdibujar las verdaderas razones de aquel fusilamiento sin juicio” (33). What this polemic underscores then, is not only the affectively charged nature of the return to this assassination, but the crucial importance of the precise *language* in which this body is written into collective spaces. That this text and its marketing seemed to harbor a desire to control Lorca’s body through a depoliticization and immediate reburial before that body could be inspected and interpreted (e.g. Monleón “¿Toda la verdad?”), brings us back to the importance of the *specific construction* of this memorial text. For it is in the moves of representation that we witness the writing of

collective history and memory, the struggles over assigning meaning to the past, present, and future.

This 1975 effort to rebury a newly depoliticized lorquian cadaver reminds us that a conservative politics of normalization began during the regime, though it also foretells and later dovetails with the Transition’s traumatic silencing of a painful historical past, a *pacto de silencio* that cut across political affiliations. Here, then, we return to our original frame of the Transition’s politics of reconciliation and the issue of how it may have affected the cultural construction of García Lorca then and now. Given an overwhelming public fascination with and attempt to testify to an assassination that would seem to draw attention to precisely those scars that a politics of consensus strived to avoid, how did post-dictatorship efforts of erasure and the resulting attempt to bury the grievous past of the Civil War and regime impact the writing of Lorca’s body? One answer may be found in what I read as a shift in the way this body is represented in the public sphere, a move which seems to consolidate around approximately 1980. That is, concurrent with efforts to testify to Lorca’s death and cadaverous presence, we find a call to move away from Lorca’s dead body and towards a collective focus on his construction as literary genius. On the one hand, a number of editorial projects are undertaken in the 1970s that would make such a change possible, and publications and performances provide new and wider access to Lorca’s work. Furthermore, there is a desire to get beyond stereotypical characterizations of Lorca and delve into the nuances of his personality and the work he left, much as Jorge Semprún insists in 1976, writing that:

Lo simbólico, ya se sabe, si a veces esclarece un momento de la vida, o de la muerte, colectiva, también puede, al convertirse en estereotipo, [...] cegar las fuentes de una cabal comprensión histórica. En el caso de Lorca, la historia crítica de su muerte está hecha. [...] Pero Lorca no es solo una muerte, también es una obra. (15)

Similarly, in 1980 Mario Vargas Llosa harshly criticizes those who say Lorca owes his fame to his death, and, while acknowledging the assassination, he focuses on and vindicates the writer's work. I would argue, however, that a more significant shift toward his literary work occurs precisely due to the articulations of Lorca embodied in some of the first major editions published during the post-dictatorship, particularly those by Lorca scholars Mario Hernández and Miguel García Posada. These texts are akin to Vargas Llosa's defense of the poet's work, for as Florencio Martínez Ruíz notes in his 1980 review of García Posada's edition:

se le sitúa en unas coordenadas estrictamente literarias. Del hombre mitificado, exaltado, idealizado y hasta calumniado, se nos pasa la secuencia cordial de una criatura llena de gracia [...] que hizo de su vida una vocación permanente de comunicación estética y vital. ("Lorca, para lectores de todos los días")

These editorial inscriptions of Lorca construct him in literary terms and move attention away from the politics of the cadaver and toward the aesthetics of his work.²⁹ Certainly, it is precisely this textual focus that prompts Mauro Armíño to stress in 1982 that:

El mito Lorca no es un mito circunstanciado a una época política ni a un asesinato. Detrás de esa panoplia accidental está uno de los tres poetas [sic] mayores del siglo. ("Una interpretación modélica")

According to Armíño's reading, Lorca is revolutionary not in his politics, but in his poetry.

Nonetheless, and despite this call to depoliticize Lorca's figure and move instead to a collective concentration on his literary work, what can be traced at this moment in public spaces is a strange *conflation* of body and text. In other words, inscriptions of Lorca in public sites increasingly reflect what Peter Brooks would call a simultaneous somaticization of the text and semioticization of the body. Returning to early reviews of these 1980 editions, for example, we find that Ian Gibson is interested not in the literary text (ostensibly the point of the review of an edition), but in "[e]l Lorca que emerge de estas páginas." Envisioning Lorca's work (editions, plays, critical studies) as important insofar as it materializes Lorca's person, Gibson seems to suggest that the work can *produce* the body, inviting us to reconsider both the dominant placement of a large photograph of Lorca in the center of the article, and the implications of the review's title. For a second reading of "Una nueva y excelente edición de Lorca," cannot fail to note the implication that person and text are semiotically interchangeable, and indeed, for Gibson, what is begotten by García Posada (or by Aguilar, which, he notes significantly, "acaba de parir" a new edition) is a new "Lorca," a body that can be read through the text. Likewise, Martínez Ruíz also praises García Posada's edition and the image of Lorca it creates, noting that "Los

rasgos de su personalidad parecen unificar en una sola persona vida y literatura,” and thus wrapping body and text in a double-helix of identity. Mauro Armíño’s 1982 review of another of García Posada’s Akal editions underscores this intimate *corpus/cuerpo* connection and further ties it to the nation: “la obra del poeta que encarnó, con su vida y su obra, el destino trágico de una España en trance de matarse a sí misma” (“El libro de la semana”). What we find, then, is that even within this very effort to depoliticize Lorca to some degree and shift his cultural inscription from political symbol to literary genius, the result is a conceptual and linguistic merging of body and work. Instead of simply reshaping the way Lorca is written into public discourse by enacting a clean move from his cadaver to his textuality, some kind of political residue haunts the text. In effect, these attempts to politically neutralize Lorca’s cultural construction coincide with a heightened preoccupation with the smooth interchangeability of *cuerpo/corpus*. The body is not displaced by the text, but commingled with it.

It may be unsurprising, then, that the effort to memorialize García Lorca in Spanish culture since the 1980s has taken place within a framework where corporality is crucial, where text and body meld, suggesting the connection with and the potency of this burgeoning shift in the late 70s and early 80s. In addition to repeated verbal representations of this yoking and even intermingling of life and work (his “figura y obra adquieren de nuevo una palpitante actualidad” [“El legado”]), lorquian archives are often envisioned in corporal metaphors (e.g. “Sorpresa en Granada”), and other memorial spaces such as “casa-museos” are organized according to a conceptual and practical unification of life and text (e.g.

the Diputación de Granada’s original plans to designate the Huerta de San Vicente as both the house where Lorca once lived and the site to keep his archive, the Casa-Museo in Fuente Vaqueros, the Fundación de Federico García Lorca, and the Residencia de Estudiantes). Manifestations of this *corpus/cuerpo* often involve slippages between the two, as in the 1993 article that makes it seem that Lorca, not his texts, is apparently living in a space within the CSIC (Recio). Furthermore, within discussions of memorial sites such as archives and editorial projects, the text itself is saturated with corporal metaphors: it is repeatedly represented as fluids, bones, stumps, voice, breath, born, and resurrected.³⁰ Indeed, Luis Fernández-Cifuentes has argued that Gibson’s historiographic work incessantly constructs a life-work equivalence, one that Paul Julian Smith has more recently commented as simply one of the fundamental elements of contemporary constructions of Lorca.

Although it is made possible by a series of material factors and responds to diverse projects, I propose that this literary turn in the public inscription of Lorca’s figure and the resultant creation of a corporal textuality has much to say about the formulation of Lorca as a memorial text and his iconic use in the labors of mourning. That is, the increasing entanglement of corporality and textuality coincides with growing social and political pressure in Spain to work within a politics of reconciliation. For we recall that this push to depoliticize Lorca’s body occurs simultaneous to a collective preoccupation with witnessing his assassination and working through its profound cultural, political, social, and personal implications. In other words, while there is some pressure to move towards writing this figure from aesthetic

angles and thereby neutralize or downplay his political legacy, unfinished mourning work nonetheless continues to haunt this dead body, perhaps in no small part because some would have this cadaver exhumed only to be immediately encrypted more deeply in the collective unconscious. We might read the somaticization of Lorca's text and the semioticization of his body, then, as an outcome of the encounter between unresolved mourning and the increasing consolidation of a politics of consensus, one that required a guarantee, as Gregorio Morán observes, "que nadie pudiera utilizar el pasado para desentrañar el presente" (87). Given the potentially disruptive nature of depictions of Lorca's victimized corpse within this context, the body is grafted onto the text, the text is seen in terms of corporal metaphors, and the work of mourning now continues via the additional terrain, or the even more intensely cathected terrain, of textuality. In this way, the imagined corporal textualities become memorial sites with equal or even greater potency than the imagined body had in isolation. For ultimately, this reinvigorated focus on Lorca as a literary genius results in the creation of a literary corpus which can stand in for the body, thus producing a material existence for a *desaparecido* and providing the reader with a body to mourn. Moreover, given literature's polysemic quality, this fusion of body/text makes it possible for readers to continually locate new relationships to the past, and therefore, new understandings of both Lorca and the present. In this sense, Lorca's iconic function as we have envisioned it here is not lost—he continues to operate as a technology of memory and in the same way; however, he becomes at once a more complex secondary scene and a potentially incommensurate transferential

space through which the wounds of the past might be confronted.

Raising the Dead: Lorca, Memory and Mourning

Ultimately, Spain's politics of reconciliation certainly affected the use of Lorca in retribution—focused politics, in elaborating a politics of working through the past through affective engagements, and in the cultural forms through which the mourning of his death and its symbolic meaning were processed. In this sense, the *Pacto de silencio* stands as a political, social and economic force crucial to the critical construction of García Lorca and future discussions of his cultural weight and meanings. Witnessing the narrative of trauma, mourning and survival that is unwittingly within memorial narratives on Lorca during this period, we are invited to reexamine his production as a cultural icon in different mediums and across periods. In this light, for example, the scholarly concentration on death as a theme or foreshadowed fate in Lorca's work might instead be reevaluated as perhaps embodying what LaCapra would call a transferential reading (142), suggesting that the often-cited lorquian obsession with fatality owes its existence in no small part to Lorca's readers and their needs as they relate to loss. Furthermore, imagining the body/text as a potentially incommensurate interpretative space might also help explain the continued cultural importance that Lorca claims in post-dictatorship Spain: the text can be continually reshaped for divergent ends (whether related to mourning or not). Similarly, the labors of mourning wrapped up in the memorializing project that Lorca mediates remind us of the potential resilience

of the will to memory and the inability of a politics of oblivion to entirely obliterate the difficult past, as here, the lorquian memorial text is made to persist, shape-shifting under different pressures, but surfacing nonetheless. In this sense, and particularly in a situation where a politics of reconciliation continues to evacuate memorial sites of affective engagements and simply pay lip service to the persistent presence of the traumatic past, it may ultimately turn out to be unsurprising that this emotionally-charged cadaver repeatedly resurfaces as a site through which an encrypted past might be witnessed. For as Sharon Patricia Holland observes, the dead both embody our own unknowns and “acknowledge no borders” (19). Writing on the potential raising of Lorca’s body from the mass grave at Víznar, Nuria Labari notes that “pese a que nadie tiene ningún interés en desenterrar al poeta éste sigue empeñado en ver de nuevo la luz.” Showing a resilient and “outrageous disrespect for boundaries” (Holland 18), this ignored lorquian body is again surfacing subversively to provide another space for confronting the past. But particularly in the event that this cadaver embodies an encrypted and improperly buried past, this ghostly presence will surely continue to both haunt Spanish culture and mediate new articulations of cultural memory.

Notes

¹ Francisco Galadí, the grandson of the banderillero thought to have been killed with Lorca, notes that:

El que mi abuelo comparta fosa con Lorca es sin duda la razón por la que hemos podido encontrarlo y por eso celebro la casualidad [...]. (Labari)

The recuperation of his grandfather has only been possible because Lorca’s remains have marked the alleged place of burial; it is precisely

this assumption that has stirred the debate involving the disinterment of Lorca’s body.

² See Soria Olmedo, Prado, and Labari, for example.

³ See, for example, Labanyi, Morán, Moreiras-Menor, Navarro, Resina, Subirats, and Vilarós regarding the Transition’s *Pacto de silencio* and its profound implications. In particular, Moreiras-Menor and Vilarós assert that this attempted collective erasure of a grievous history resulted in the traumatic encryption of that past and of the attempt to deal with the wounds of the Civil War and Francoism. It is within both this understanding of the post-dictatorship and the Franco regime’s own traumatic silencing of the historical past that I am reading the cultural construction of Lorca.

⁴ It has been noted that this life/literature bond owes something to the fact that many of the first to write about Lorca’s life were literary critics (e.g. Monleón “La muerte” 25). I agree this is part of the larger picture, as is the fact that historians (particularly Gibson) sought biographical data in Lorca’s literary work. My reading, however, implies a broader way of understanding even those earlier inscriptions, while it both posits and seeks to explain why there is an intensification and fusion of this body/text binary during the Transition.

⁵ I understand cultural memory similar to critics such as Oren Stier and Marita Sturken. Sturken writes,

Cultural memory is produced through objects, images, and representations. These are technologies of memory, not vessels of memory in which memory passively resides so much as objects through which memories are shared, produced, and given meaning. (9)

I thus assume that the relationship between individual and collective memory is one of entanglement and that the production of memory is a site of interpretational struggle.

⁶ Lorca’s cultural construction depends on a range of social, economic, political and cultural issues (e.g. sexuality, exile and diaspora, modernity). I focus here only on death, trauma and

mourning as one major area of that construction. Within that, I begin to set up a dynamic in which we can read a wide range of representations of Lorca. Though I at times explicitly consider texts in the politics of their venues, I emphasize this less due to the constraints of an essay and as I attempt to identify a broad-based framework that includes politically-opposed texts.

⁷ On trauma, see Caruth (esp. 91-92, 135-36) and Erikson (esp. 183-90). I work with psychoanalytic notions of mourning as a process by which a subject recovers libidinal investments associated with a lost object and gains distance from that prior fixation (see esp. Freud; Abraham and Torok). See also LaCapra on “working through”:

the person tries to gain critical distance on a problem and to distinguish between past, present, and future. [...] [E]specially in an ethical sense, working through does not mean avoidance, harmonization, simply forgetting the past, or submerging oneself in the present. It means coming to terms with the trauma [...] and critically engaging the tendency to act out the past [...]. (143-44)

The labor of mourning requires “working through the painful memories and recollections instead of reliving them and acting them out” (Jehlin 6).

⁸ See Gibson’s “La muerte” (1975) and *El asesinato* for more on this text’s troubled publication history. His effort follows a prior detectivesque project, that of Agustín Penón, whose work was finally published posthumously by Gibson in 1990 as *Diario de una búsqueda lorquiana (1955-1956)*.

⁹ To get a broad sense of the avalanche of texts written on Lorca’s death in the 70s and 80s, see, for example, Gibson’s most revised bibliography on this topic (*El asesinato* 381-84).

¹⁰ In the following discussion, I use primarily concepts of witnessing and testimony as articulated by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub in *Testimony* in order to reveal the testimonial

aspect of a range of cultural texts during this period. Some of the most important concepts for this analysis are primary witness, secondary witness, belated witness, and the impossible witness of the event-without-a-witness.

¹¹ See, for example, “Introducción a la muerte de Federico García Lorca” (interview with Rosales) (1972), “La muerte de García Lorca. Exhumación de un crimen” (1975), “Los últimos días de Federico García Lorca: El testimonio de Angelina” (1975), “Los últimos días de García Lorca: Luis Rosales aclara su actuación y la de su familia” (1979), and “Casi toda la verdad” (1979). There are literary and filmic representations of the same type of investigative project, a detectivesque narrative that seeks to solve a series of enigmas and discover the truth regarding Lorca’s death, one example of which would be Jaime Chávarri’s *A un dios desconocido* (1977). Regarding “primary witness” see Felman and Laub. This generally refers to a person who experienced first-hand the traumatic event, while “secondary witness” denotes an individual who helps make sense of the primary witness’s testimony, the person that “begets, the truth, through the speech process of the testimony” (16).

¹² Despite the fact that these are different types of witnesses, for this discussion I include those who witnessed something first-hand and those who experience a kind of postmemory (Hirsch 8), particularly since the itineraries by second-generation writers both imagine a reliving of the past and often include interviews of primary witnesses.

¹³ See footnote 11 regarding “secondary witness.”

¹⁴ To help make this testimony intelligible, the listener must witness the victim’s difficult process and his own *present* empathetic engagement with the victim’s memories (Laub 57-58).

¹⁵ See Felman (esp. 224-40) regarding an attempt to testify from inside otherness, an impossible witness to the event-without-a-witness.

¹⁶ The Spanish première took place in Madrid in 1979. See Pérez Coterillo “Cuando el teatro” for more on Rial himself and on the difficulties he faced in producing this in Spain.

¹⁷ Rumors continue to circulate that not long after Lorca's murder, authorities exhumed and moved the body to another site, suggesting a fear of both the stories this body might witness and the power people might derive from it. According to yet other rumors, Lorca was not buried in Víznar at all, but near a neighboring town. See, for example, Kolbert 75.

¹⁸ Similar to Felman's concept of "methodical deafness" is that of "percepticide," articulated by Diana Taylor in *Disappearing Acts* (1997). For examples of such a methodical deafness or percepticide, note Neville's observation when he tries to gain information from people in Víznar: "Nadie sabe nada: los jóvenes, porque no habían nacido; los viejos, porque aún les dura ese miedo a comprometerse [...]." In "Exhumación de un crimen," José Monleón also comments on his experiences in FuenteVaqueros and Granada:

un vecino, que nos vio con la cámara fotográfica y sospechó nuestro oficio, nos dijo que al escritor lo habían fusilado en Málaga, que la culpa la tenía la familia y que, dentro de muy poco, iba a levantarse un gran monumento a Federico en la plaza más cercana. [...] Aquí mismo, en Granada, es fácil descubrir el gesto evasivo si habláis de Federico ante gente desconocida. Como si el tema pudiera postergarse eternamente; como si no fuera nuestro, dolorosamente nuestro, y necesitaríamos a los franceses o a los ingleses para esclarecerlo. (25)

In these articles, encryption takes shape through silence, through rewritings of the past in a way that avoids the painfully known facts, and through evasion and delay. Finally, regarding Monleón's last comment, it is worth noting that many of the efforts to "exhume" Lorca indeed were undertaken by foreign scholars. I am studying this in a related project within the context of exile, repatriation and national identity.

¹⁹ See prior note regarding encryption.

²⁰ This can be described as a melancholic state in the broad sense that it stands as an obstacle to mourning, that is, insofar as melancholy

may denote an inability or refusal to mourn the lost object, or even more generally as the result of an inexpressible grief. At the same time, this term may be more limiting than not. The more technical notion of melancholy suggested by Abraham and Torok holds that the melancholic subject comes into being not via the creation of the crypt (created out of an inexpressible mourning, for example), but via an identification with the lost object in order to protect the crypt, for "as long as the crypt holds, there is no melancholia" (136). As Idelbar Avelar rightly notes, according to Abraham and Torok,

Melancholia thus emerges as a reaction against a threat to the protective crypt, because the subject begins to identify with the love object as a way of protecting him/her from the possibility of being mourned. (9)

According to this definition, then, melancholic identification is only one possible modality of the intrapsychic crypt and endocryptic identification, and therefore may be only one path to a more complex understanding of the dynamics of mourning, loss, and encryption in Spanish society at this time. (See Abraham and Torok, esp. 130-136, 140-142.)

²¹ At what is still a complicated moment in Spanish history, Neville carefully depoliticizes the crime:

A esta distancia nadie podrá creer que pretendemos atacar a un régimen que como tal, no tuvo la culpa del drama. [...] A Federico lo mató el desorden de los primeros momentos, cuando los malvados de cada campo aprovecharon el barullo para saciar su instinto y vengarse de sus enemigos o del éxito ajeno. Fue un crimen pueblerino, así se puede decir que personal [...].

²² See especially Blanchot 257 and Holland 19.

²³ See Stier's articulation of "icon" as an "embodied memorial representation" (33) which marks a path "through the icon to memory to discover our relationships to the past" (47). Thus, a major characteristic of the icon is that it facilitates an individual or collective engagement with the past.

- ²⁴ As Torok notes, it is not at all a matter of 'introjecting' the object, as is all too commonly stated, but of introjecting the sum total of the drives, and their vicissitudes as occasioned and mediated by the object. (113)
- ²⁵ On two forms of the will to memory (identity and trauma), see Eyal.
- ²⁶ See especially Moreiras 170.
- ²⁷ Regarding working through and both political and ethical agency, see LaCapra 144.
- ²⁸ See Gibson ("La muerte"), Monleón ("García Lorca," "¿Toda la verdad?") and Pérez Cotterillo "Casi toda la verdad." Part of the irony of Vila-San-Juan's 1975 publication and definitive truth claim is the fact that Gibson's 1971 history of Lorca's death was censored in Spain until 1979.
- ²⁹ This is not to criticize the politics of these editions. Indeed, concentrating on Lorca's literary work was regarded by many as a way of defending the poet from detractors, much as we see in the stance taken by Vargas Llosa.
- ³⁰ In a related project, I study the way that editorial constructions of Lorca's work at this time were envisioned by many as burial rites. I also examine the way certain corporal metaphors surfacing in particular textual situations indicate, conversely, an unfinished mourning process.
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