

Reading Culture at the Threshold:
Time and Transition in Modern Spain (1800-1990)

by

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A Miguel, por imaginarse historias que me importan

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Chapter I
Introduction: On History and Its Thresholds

How can one speak of history if there is no such thing? For any narrative or enunciation regarding the past will always be a product of perceptions and judgments, both collective and subjective, bound by prior and current authorities of influence, by institutional knowledge and its methods, its discursive limitations and possibilities, and the temporal and spatial specificity from which one speaks; these are determining factors that make each enunciation unique, by silently speaking through it. If we understand that archives on history are constituted by multiple representations produced about the past, then how can one position a beginning within these discursive entanglements, while sensing that we are already *in medias res*? From where and when do we speak, knowing well that, once finished, our speech will always be incomplete? Locating such a strategic origin from which to speak about the past would prove undoubtedly bound to similarly complex conditions that mould one's discursive practice about history, and that risk failing logical coherence by the time we are done speaking about it. Though these are not necessarily negative consequences for positioning our beginning, let us restate the question: how can one speak of history if there is no such object of study that shows itself, except in false totality, as a straw-man of discursive practices aimed at describing the past, questioning its accidents and occurrences, the force of its change, its inconstant ruptures, its discontinuities, its lacunae, its shadowed patterns of similarity dispersed across time?

This problem is immediately troubling, though perhaps liberating, on at least two accounts. First, the aforementioned conditions and circumstances that speak through a representation produced about historical phenomena can never be perceived in absolute form; they are only partially evident to one who speaks about it, and are attributable to influences shaping a complex site of forces that act through the speaking subject, whether the historian, an author, a teacher, or the witness. That is, from the conditions that bind any discursive practice to its circumstance, we may take comfort and caution in awareness that we too are subject to a range of possibilities and influences beyond our conscious register. Yet, when considering what lies outside any one person's contribution to this discourse, beyond a speaking subject who chooses history as his or her "object" of interrogation, the immediacy of this interconnectedness between the speaker, author or teacher and his or her context becomes prevalent. This leads me to a second, more pressing matter. Even though historical accounts are bound to similar discursive conditions as narrative fiction, making history readable, perhaps to some, like a strange genre of objective literature, it might seem obvious to assert that past events are not fictitious, but did indeed happen. Nevertheless, there remains a gamut of ethical dilemmas in assuming that all writing on history is literature, or perhaps even fiction. In order to illustrate this point, I have a dramatic example in mind. For while history is weighted with the gravity of past events—in the extreme case, we need to look no further back in time than twentieth-century history, its wars and armed conflicts, its mass murder and regimes of oppression, to be reminded of the present circumstance—any regard for history as an inexistent object of study should not dismiss the very real, and often traumatic, consequences it has produced in collective and subjective experience. If we

conceive of history as a nonexistent object—one that has nevertheless encompasses a vast field of discourse attempting to make sense of it—consisting of events that have produced pleasures, horrors, and a range of very real affects known to human experience, we risk conflating the past with a fiction that unfolds out of pure determined force, like the plot of a story whose ending is already known to us. What remains at stake, aside from the grave pitfall of suggesting that history follows any sort of determined course or progress, is the willful surrender of one's own recognition of being subject to history, provided with the possibility of beginning to speak about it, yet stripped of a partial consciousness that we too are conditioned by its very interstices.

And so we have already begun. Aware, at least in part, that I am speaking about history through works whose authors have addressed the matters I outline above, I take their works as my point of departure, while moving towards specificity throughout this introduction to the present study and to the questions it asks: what is a historical transition? And, in the case of modern Spanish history, loosely defined from the 1800s to present, what does transition look like? On what terms may it be accounted for, in a field of sociopolitical forces, in subjective and collective experience, and in the practices of knowledge that govern, and become governed by these negotiations? At what times have transitions occurred, and within what temporal framework may they be adequately, though only ever partially, described?

These are some of the considerations laid out in Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, where the author expounds in methodological detail the elements of discursive analysis he proposes for investigative work on epistemic transformations at work in a structural analysis of history, and which would become the framework for his

future and continued genealogical explorations into the history of madness, sexuality, and the human sciences in Western cultures. What Foucault provides are the methodological tools with which to proceed to question history through discursive analysis, tools that prove useful in recognizing the transformative movement of historiography as a product and site of multiple, shifting negotiations between certain players (e.g., subjects, collectives, institutions) and the choices, practices, and norms that govern their actions and the production of discourse. The transitory nature of these governing principles of knowledge, Foucault argues, is not fixedly determined like plots on a map, but consists in “a constantly moving set of articulations, shifts, and coincidences that are established, only to give rise to others” (192). If we think of history, then, as a falsely conceived object of study, it remains possible to investigate, in historiography, “the way in which, in each of these discursive formations, the transitions to epistemologization, scientificity, and formalization are situated and operate; the distribution of these thresholds, which may coincide, be subordinated to one another, or be separated by shifts in time” (191). In sum, despite our slippery object of study—history—we are provided with tools at our disposal to investigate its transitions, its lacunae, the tempo of its change in representation.

What Foucault turns towards in his posterior works, moreover, is the possibility of tracing the ruptures, internal differences, and fissures of histories that are not entirely discursive.¹ We may sense Foucault’s assertion to be true because human experience,

¹ In *Archaeology* Foucault foreshadows his interest in future investigations on the history of human sexuality by suggesting that this sort of analysis might take on a non-scientific or non-epistemic “object” of study, one that nevertheless has ethical implications (192-3). He also suggests briefly that the archaeological enterprise is concerned with political knowledge and the production of material culture, and specifically the arts, (193-5), in that all three examples provided would constitute a different body of

given the vast and seemingly limitless possibilities of enunciating these experiences, may not all be produced in the form of discourse. Foucault himself recognizes that power and the individual who remains subject to it—whether institutional, familial, social, political or otherwise—are not enunciated exclusively as discourse, in that these relations exhibit the form of practices, of interpersonal and daily interactions, of cultural representations that are not necessarily articulated in speech in the ways his analytics of discourse would presume. Within the domain of subjective experience, among affective responses produced by one who has these powerful forces acted upon him or her, and who is still faced with choice, however limited its circumstance, how are we to question history if some of these affects are not enunciated in the working archive we have at present? Discursive practices are certainly not the only sites of readable “evidence” which allow us to question history. To the contrary, as the field of historiography has taken on investigative work in social practices and behaviors in everyday life, and in the individual and collective relationships to inhabited spaces during historical periods, scholarship in multiple disciplines has tended to regard historical investigation as encompassing a greater terrain than narrative or discursive evidence provided in archives.² Foucault himself identified his archaeological enterprise as concerned with non-discursive practices and what he called the “domains” of influence that actively produce discourse—

knowledge—of behaviors, attitudes, practices, and social bodies—than that of the discursive episteme he privileges in this work.

² For an excellent overview of current debates in Spanish historiography regarding the writing of history from the study of individual and collective practices, daily life, and sites of hegemonic culture and power struggle, see Ana Aguado and María Dolores Ramos’ essays in *La modernización de España (1917-1939). Cultura y vida cotidiana* (Madrid: Síntesis, 2002). For an equally comprehensive assessment of current debates in Spanish literary history, from the United States, British and Spanish academies, see Brad Epps and Luis Fernández Cifuentes’ introductory article “Spain beyond Spain: Modernity, Literary History, and National Identity” in their book by the same name, edited by Epps and Fernández Cifuentes (Lewisburg, Pennsylvania: Bucknell UP, 2005) 11-45.

a layered site of encounters among power relations, institutions, subjectivities (*Archaeology* 162)—which would lead to a subsequent turn in his work from archaeological analysis, to his ethical genealogical work on historical subjectivities and power relations in the time that they arise.³

In the following pages I am interested in analyzing historical transition by reading the production of culture, in the time that it arises. Borrowing from Foucault's archaeological enterprise that foregrounds the embedded character of cultural production—embedded within an entangled site of complex subjective and collective negotiations, and the influences, choices, possibilities, and limitations among institutional powers and social practices that (in)form these shifts—culture may be interrogated as caught within this web of discursive elements particular to its time and place of production, or its performance. This is not to say that reading cultural production should be treated in every case like textual analysis, as the term “discourse” might imply. Nor will I suggest that studying a cultural “object” constitutes an academic exercise in reading a fragment from a falsely imagined whole, that of “Spanish” culture. Rather, here I explore how the production of culture materializes within a field of interrelated negotiations that Foucault laboriously described, an endeavor I will take up in greater detail when exploring several case examples in the following chapters. For now, though, I should like to emphasize that “digging up” the past throughout this project evokes

³ The genealogical turn in the trajectory of Foucault's work—one of the author's own transitions—may be traced in his publications posterior to *The Order of Things* (1966) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality, Vol. I* (1976). Here the archaeological enterprise takes a productive digression from his earlier investigations to explore the exertion of power and subjectivity acting within domains of knowledge, both institutional and of the self, in which the subject participates with certain possibilities of choice. Foucault analyzes these micro-histories in the sociological, political, and institutional networks of power traced through time. See *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*. 2nd Edition, Trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1977), and *The History of Sexuality. Volume I: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1978).

Foucault's metaphor of the archaeological excavation; thereby a cultural "object" of study—an artifact, event, or practice—is analyzed with the aim of uncovering its temporal and spatial environment, the underlying circumstances that produced it, and the "field" of negotiations within which it is situated.

Before we may be misled, however, I want to emphasize that here I intend to read specific sites of culture in the historical time each was produced, whose works and practices I have chosen because they concern representing historical subjectivities—historical in my attempt to frame, however incomplete the end result will always be, the interstices of a unique time and place in three moments from modern Spanish history, of circumstances and possibilities that act upon and condition the production of culture: material, literary, performative, and visual. From the outset, this provides us with a certain set of ambiguities that require clarification, concepts that I will attempt to address here, as I will throughout the following chapters: culture, history, modern Spanish history, time and transition, among others. Specifically, to begin I will suggest three moments in Spanish history that seem, at least upon initial assessment, to exhibit temporalities undergoing transition, and then analyze the production of certain culture in each historical circumstance. This task will lead me to question culture, some of the practices of knowledge that inform or make possible its production, the sociopolitical context in which it arises, the choices and influences of the artists who produce it, and the subjects who perform it in practice.

The first time period in question I propose is the era of Francisco de Goya, at the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Therein may be read, in Goya's etchings, the enlightened critique of traditionalism and of the *Antiguo Régimen*, the

Catholic Church and Spanish crown. The artist's critique of these practices and institutions arises from a marginal space of ambivalence for the *Antiguo Régimen*, one in which Goya participated as first royal painter to the crown. For Goya would later be forced to negotiate an institutional turn in Spanish politics that persecuted enlightened "French" influences and the "foreignness" of its ideals. At first sight, the era is perhaps apropos of signaling a sociopolitical transformation on at least two accounts. During this time Spain's first constitution was drafted, thereby formally articulating a social desire to introduce a modern form of sovereignty that would fail. As well, the civilian uprisings against the Napoleonic troops served to foment a sense of national-popular solidarity with the Spanish crown against the foreign occupation. The interrelatedness of these events may be falsely conceived, accidental, or coincidental. Due to their incidence, however, I will question how historical transition may be defined by epistemological thresholds that "suspend the continuous accumulation of knowledge, interrupt its slow development, and force it to enter a new time, cut it off from its empirical origin and its original motivations" (Foucault, *Archaeology* 4).

The second time period I will frame coincides with the crisis of the multitude in 1920s Spain, and the problems it presented for the State to manage unprecedented numbers of crowds. The multitude became a novelty, so to speak, for its appearance in Spanish cities, and for institutional responses that sought to control and curb its violent, destabilizing potential. The question of time here, and the Primo de Rivera Regime's idealization of an obedient multitude, is marked by a potentially emergent practice negotiated between State power and the subjects who performed or resisted the Regime's modernizing projects to improve national production, technology, and infrastructure. The

time of transition I investigate is one that may have defined new strategies for the governing State to regulate its citizens, conceived of as a mass, social body. I look to the *esperpento* plays of Ramón de Valle-Inclán, which exhibit a critique of historical time and the typecast “national” subjectivities in early twentieth-century Spain, cross-cut within this transformative sociopolitical field.

Finally, I will focus on perhaps the most obviously chosen “transformation” in recent memory, the so-called *Transición* in 1970s and 80s Spain, which consolidated a democratic, constitutional monarchy after the Francoist dictatorship. The caution I should like to take in this final analysis, however, is not to regard the realization of democratic governance as the completion of a process—first articulated as an attempt to enact a model of sovereign reform in Goya’s era, and then “achieved” one hundred eighty years later with the adoption of the constitution—but rather as a time period that presents its own dispersion and lacunae of layered power structures bringing about questionable sociopolitical and institutional change. Addressing academic and social criticism on the *Transición*, I question how the political transactions to consolidate democracy have taken the form of a renewed national project after fascism, postmodern in its aesthetic and neo-liberal in economic design. I turn to photography from the era that questions the constructions of visible and un-pictured subjects enduring transformation, whose works may shed some light on the ungrounding of subjectivities in their relationships to place and time.

Does each of these three time periods constitute a threshold? Under what criteria is the threshold constituted in each case? Does their transitory character appear, at least in exteriority, as an epistemic transformation, a sociopolitical negotiation, a new practice in

collective and individual experience? How do these time periods fail or achieve similarity to and difference from an interrogative model that might question the nature of their transition? Finally, why not choose other time periods instead of the selected few? These questions are what will guide my research in the following chapters.

When interrogating each exemplary case, I should like to keep in mind that the “new time” born from a transition is never an absolute break that signals a complete transformation, falsely marking two eras, one “before” and the one “after” an event.

We must not imagine that rupture is a sort of great drift that carries with it all discursive formations at once: rupture is not an undifferentiated interval—even a momentary one—between two manifest phases; it is not a kind of lapsus without duration that separates two periods, and which deploys two heterogeneous stages on either side of a split; it is always a discontinuity specified by a number of distinct transformations, between two particular positivities. (Foucault, *Archaeology* 175)

A threshold, in this regard, does not bear with it all new sites of change that define a wholly novel time in opposition to the past; to the contrary, transformation is laced with both emerging and existing forms, whether they take shape as social practices, within institutional structures, or among sites of intersubjective power relations. Failure, in this light, is perhaps the most illustrative example of how transformation straddles both the time “before” and “after” the emergence of certain “new” phenomena; for, despite that failure provides a return to an existing form, it cannot promise an eternal return to sameness. The failure of enlightened philosophies to achieve a hegemonic, governing logic in Goya’s era, for example, did not imply that the attempt to enact enlightened reform in the Spanish State disappeared from memory in subsequent years, despite the restoration of the monarchy. Nor did the return to governance by a sovereign figure mark an absolute continuity with the past, as if enlightened reform amounted to a complete

wash. Rather, the latency of a “failed” mode of thought or practice—conceived as a failure for having fallen short from achieving a secured, hegemonic position—carries with it the force of potential change “after” the event that marks a threshold.

Tracing failure exposes how a conventional notion of linear time—of a temporal succession from past to present to future events—falsely cleaves historical transition into two absolute eras, one before and one after a defining moment: the threshold. To conceive of history within this progressive march from one constant tempo to another, is to tell the story of its hegemonic players, in the time that they arise, according to their governing logic.⁴ In Chapter III, to the contrary, I discuss how the State negotiated the “crisis” of unruly multitudes in 1920s Spain, a strategy that may have produced both a national-popular support base that endured after Primo de Rivera’s Regime, as much as opposition among regional and syndicate affiliations crystallized against the Regime’s project of national modernizing reform. Though it is not my intent to establish continuity between events, we could suggest, however, that the emerging “newness” of how the social body was imagined as a national subject by the Primo de Rivera Regime is not entirely unique from the fomentation of a Spanish national consciousness, enacted in opposition to the French occupation during Goya’s time. Or, furthermore, that the State’s idealization of its citizens as Spanish National subjects has certainly undergone transformations since, none entirely autonomous from an existing imagination, each

⁴ David H. Herzberger has argued compellingly that “Francoist historiography,” and its hegemony over history writing in twentieth-century Spain, “is resolutely shaped by a conception of truth and temporality in which history is viewed less as a complex web of diachronic and synchronic relationships, both formed and revealed through narration, than as an unfolding of time that is repetitive, deterministic, and radically unchangeable. Hence time (history) is perceived not as a progression or becoming, but rather as a static entity anchored in all that is permanent and eternal” (33). See his work *Narrating the Past: Fiction and Historiography in Postwar Spain* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke UP, 1995).

particular to the sites of hegemonic power within which they operate across time: the dictatorial and democratic State, the social body, and institutional regimes such as the Church and certain economic powers. The temporally scattered nature of frustrated, incomplete, and failed projects—or those never fully realized, which come to the surface and recede, transform and perhaps emerge again—are articulated throughout history in the asynchronous spacing of events and occurrences that resist classification into epochs and definitive ruptures. What remains within this field of transformation is a littering of past traces—which I will argue in Chapter IV on the *Transición* to democracy—that tend to work against a linear trajectory of historical time and methods available to us for describing thresholds of change as inconstant and impartial fissures.

On a Concept of Culture

If we take up a point of contention and a benefit from Foucault’s archaeological methodology despite its flaws and internal contradictions—as all systems of logic under scrutiny will air their own shortcomings—it is the “history of ideas” that the philosopher reassesses in order to radically break up its seamless, homogeneous time between eras, thereby reinserting their ruptures, fissures, displacements, repetitions, and transitions into the monolithic time of historical discourse.⁵ I do not pretend to do the same in the

⁵ In *Archaeology* Foucault lays out his project’s four main points of divergence from the “history of ideas” and from contemporary methods of historiography: first, the archaeological enterprise is not concerned with hermeneutic interpretation in which historical evidence appears as a “*document*, as a sign of something else” or an allegory to be deciphered (138); secondly, its method attempts to brush against the tendency of historiography that establishes a progressive continuity of events from a given era to its subsequent era; thirdly, it searches for governing principles in discursive formations that are not predetermined by the oeuvre of an epoch, or an essence that defines it; last, it is not concerned with locating the origin of “what has been thought, wished, aimed at, experienced, desired by men in the very moment at which they expressed it in discourse,” but the principles that govern their articulation at the time they are produced (139). We might readily perceive flaws in the archaeological enterprise; departing from the overarching concepts that guide historiographical research, Foucault privileges analyzing discourse

following study, to produce a Foucauldian reading, to the letter, of transitions and ruptures in modern Spanish history. Rather, what I wish to take from Foucault's turn from his archaeological to the genealogical enterprise—his own methodological transition from discourse analysis to the power relations that negotiate and constitute, in multiplicity, historical subjects—is the possibility of reading cultural production across seemingly unrelated time periods for their irreconcilable historical specificity, in such a manner that interrogates the formation of subjectivities in the time that they emerge and are exteriorized with readable evidence, in representation. If the effect of these readings produces differences and continuities, it is not through any predetermined intention to locate “the system that makes possible and governs that formation” of culture with underlying unity, but its heterogeneous plurality (Foucault, *Archaeology* 72). Borrowing from Foucault's radical critique of discourse on history, my aim is to question the notion of time and transition in modern Spanish history, rather than recast these differences as a discursive “unity” across history.

This leads us to several questions concerning my choice of terminology. Within what conceptual understanding does “culture” operate when I deploy the term here? I do not wish to suggest that culture is, at least in pure form, a sort of absolute “expression” for a time period, or a “translation” of knowledge into a practice or a material artifact per se, as if one were directly equivalent to the other for “essential” characteristics. Although

formation to reveal its governing principles across an episteme, which tends to produce an underlying continuity established within the logic of an era, a “unity” he criticizes in historiographical literature. In effect, if archaeology attempts to work against disciplinary methods in history writing that produce monumentality, archaeology cannot escape reproducing the monolithic continuity of discourse formations within an episteme. The aim of the archaeological enterprise, however, posits a radical critique, and a productive methodological approach, to writing history that reinserts fissures within historiographical literature, in those spaces that had been produced as blind spots within the domain of historiographic method: subjects who negotiate lived spaces, institutional structures, communal and self-identification, and certain practices of governing knowledge that make up the subject's experience.

culture, in production and practice, may exhibit the tendencies of a predominant mode of thought, or may reach no further than the intimate domain of an individual practice, I attempt to treat its analysis in the following chapters as a materialization or negotiation among a field of relations that are never totally equitable or absolutely referential. Foucault took painting as his example in describing how cultural production may be considered an object of archaeological and genealogical interrogation, in that its “discursive practice [...] is embodied in techniques and effects” that produced the work (*Archaeology* 194). The cultural work, in this sense, may be “shot through—[...] independently of scientific knowledge and philosophical themes—with the positivity of knowledge” (194)—in other words, layered with the circumstance of its production, its reception, the painter’s choices, influences, schools of thought, and the work’s dissemination to an audience. The work is, indeed, “shot-through” with a range of subjective, functional, collective, social, and political factors that constitute its inscription within these networks. I will suggest throughout this study that the production of culture might be understood as a residual substance, akin to what the social body secretes, so to speak, at a given moment in time, becoming the “stuff” or remainder that bears the possibility of reading therein an imprint of its historical circumstance, partial and fragmentary, always incomplete and never absolute. Under this assumption, it would seem that material culture is *shot through with time* as a product of the historical processes that produced it—historical in the object’s temporal and spatial specificity, unique for the interrelated circumstances of its production, however accidental, pragmatic, or intentional they may have been.

Borrowing from the archaeological metaphor to explain the site of excavation and its relationship to the artifact, I will suggest a hypothetical yet relevant case for how the production of culture “materializes” in the social field as an “object”—for my intent here, an object of analysis—that is inherently embedded in the circumstances of its production. A photograph, like a film, a work of writing, fiction and non-fiction alike, or another cultural “object” is produced, let’s say for the sake of argument, in “present time.” The photographer shoots her subject willingly—an architectural detail, a mannequin, an abstract flow of colors—each subject perhaps consciously or accidentally chosen for its content and framing. The photographer may be working alone, in a team, or with a partner, which will presumably negotiate the end product of the work as well. The image, once developed, will be manipulated. It is edited according to the style, taste, and intended content or meaning desired by the photographer, even manipulated further among several subjective interests if others are involved in its production. Moreover, the editing process may also be influenced by the demands of a market, and by her imagined audience for the work. Does it sufficiently meet the demands for the project, the photographer’s wishes, the publisher’s, the gallery’s, or perhaps even those of her intended audience who will receive the work and critique it? And perhaps among the most unconscious decisions made by the photographer throughout the editing and developing process, the influences of personal as well as collective taste, of the photographer’s style as well as those of her influences, indeed leave their imprint on the work. For instance, what might be regarded amateurish to photograph for one audience might be perfectly acceptable for another. The photographer is perhaps unaware of these influences in her approximation of a photographed subject, and in the ways she frames

these images, though they are indeed embedded within processes of decision-making that form the end product, her photographic work. What other photographers, individuals, or groups recognized as “schools” inform her approach to the photographed subject? What sorts of preexisting expectations or limitations from an audience act upon her and shape her approach? What cultural norms exist within the visual genre and act with faceless authority, rendering the image perceived by another as publishable, appropriate, collectable, censurable, or perhaps even regarded as adventurous? For even when the photograph reaches an audience—if it is distributed for “collective consumption” or reception, as Roland Barthes suggested in *Camera Lucida*—there exist preeminent qualifications of authority and selection that would, in the photograph’s future, earn it a place worthy in the archive or museum, in a photo collection, or by critics (98).

If I have belabored the point with examples of how the photograph (i.e., one kind of cultural “object”) is produced, I aim to describe how these unconscious and conscious actions, decisions, and accidents (i.e., the processes between the photographer and the audiences of reception) play out as exchanges and judgments in the social field, whether influenced by a market economy of production, the “subjective” motivations of the photographer, or the expectations and influences that inform processes toward achieving a product, her photographic work. However, the production of the work, as a completed object, does not necessarily mark its finality in posterior modes of reception and analysis. (Criticism in the humanities, for example, holds to the possibility of questioning cultural works from the past that no longer operate within contemporary standards of cultural authority, like the critic who writes about Greek philosophy in contemporary times.) In this sense, the photographer’s work is not a completed “object” but is folded within a

discourse that, like historiography, may be produced about it in the future. Certainly, a consideration of a different historical moment—the late nineteenth century, let’s say—would alter the factors at play in these processes: the demand of photography, the technology of the camera and developing techniques, the cultural and social norms by which photography is produced for an audience, the spaces in which it is displayed and critiqued. As would the processes be significantly different were I to take a work of fiction as an example as my cultural “object,” whereby markets for publishing, collective revisions from editors, as well as readership tastes, vary considerably among audiences, as well as operate among or against genre conventions known to the readership. The cultural “object” then is cross-cut within its site of excavation by a complex network of intersubjective influences, dispersed encounters, authorial intentions, and, to a greater or lesser degree, the sociopolitical, cultural, and aesthetic makeup of authorities that negotiate its production.

Culture as an “object” of study then should not be treated entirely as a material or wholly ideal matter. Among the cultural “objects” I analyze in the following chapters—the etchings, theater scripts, photographs, and theoretical literature that will help me read them—we should add to these objects the “site” of excavation or the circumstances in which they were produced, the intersubjective field of choices and possibilities available to the authors, and the cultural practices each work exhibits within these operations. Power, in other words, will be central to interrogating the production of culture in the following chapters. Goya’s choice to demonize “un-enlightened” traditionalism with grotesque figures in his etchings, Valle-Inclán’s savage critique of dim-witted military men and scheming *canallas* in his plays, and the *Transición* era photographers’ turning

their cameras towards subjects practicing novel and traditional identities in democratic Spain—these portraits gesture towards a domain of cultural practices implicit in the objects in question, in some cases vital to the artist’s project, and sometimes not founded within the scope of the author’s immediate intention. In this regard, the articulation, performance, or enactment of a social role—the “un-enlightened” practices of Goya’s traditional figures, the nationalizing rituals of Primo de Rivera’s government, and the individual performance of new identities in contemporary Spain—are entwined within the intersubjective, social, and political makeup of cultural practices that expose their interrelatedness to the production of “objects” I analyze. The attention I pay in the following chapters to the production of the cultural works in question—at times, to the reception and the processes of distribution that may have influenced how they were produced, and in others, for what schools of thought and individual choices speak through their works—attempts to address these circumstances, albeit inexhaustively, as a site of inherently sociopolitical forces that are not entirely prevalent, at every moment, to their authors.

A Reflection on Modern Spanish History

How can we talk about Spanish history? First and foremost, we should note that a working concept of Spanish history has materialized as an “object” of investigation from archives of historiographical literature and from disciplines that conduct research in its name. Although the term is problematic as a complete notion, throwing us back again to the question of Spain—like “History”—as a falsely whole object of study, or a falsely homogenous cultural entity, I should like to flag this misnomer while proposing that the

present study operates within the traps of its working terminology. For the political boundary that defines the geographic territory of the Spanish nation today, as in the past, is comprised of mixed, plural spaces, marked with overlaps and cultural differences—regional and local, linguistic as much as social, socioeconomic, gender-based, among other social and cultural identifications that constitute the plural spaces, speeds, and times in which daily life is experienced—making up the inherently political tensions of power cast across its geographical terrain. Put simply, as Brad Epps and Luis Fernández Cifuentes explain, “the proverbial ‘problem of Spain,’ typically conceived in ethno-linguistic terms (with Castilian, Catalan, Basque, and Galician, among others, vying for visibility), entails, to be sure, a number of other identities and positions” (19). Were we to take another time period in question—during the colonization of the Americas, the occupation of Morocco, or well before, during the Reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula from the Arab kingdoms—the imaginary of one Spain delimited within geographic boundaries undoubtedly exposes the fluidity of the concept “Spain,” while it overlooks the internal makeup of sociopolitical strata within these borders. While we risk stating the obvious, it should not go unmentioned that there are ideological reasons as to why this object—Spain—has materialized as an entity, however contestable its unity.

David Herzberger has suggested that the operating concept of Spanish history, at present, is largely a product of Francoist historiography and the Spanish National imaginary violently enforced under the dictatorship; this is not to say that Francoism’s idealization of Spain or that Francoist historiography were entirely unsusceptible to transformation throughout dictatorial rule, or thereafter, in democracy. But during Francoism, the

Regime's dominion over history was backed by control over the intellectual base of universities, by the practical matter of censorship, by an articulated disdain for anything that was aberrant and by myths declared and reiterated. Myth allows historians of the State to coerce harmony within the past, to affirm and to preserve what they define as the "essential Spain." Such a Spain is illustrious, imperial, and Catholic and serves to legitimate the rule of Franco and his place within Spanish history. (Herzberger, "Fiction" 30)

By minimizing dissent among historiographical discourses, the Franco regime ensured that the writing of Spanish history upheld the mythical tenets of a "essentialized" Spain, a quaint and folkloric image marked by cultural difference from Europe and Africa, and unified by its inherently Catholic values that legitimized paternal, dictatorial rule of the Spanish people. The institutional players upholding these "inherent" and essentialist characteristics of the Spanish people, cleansed of heterogeneity except in their regional peculiarities, laid their claim to propagating these myths as historical truth and, in the case of Franco's rise to power after the Civil War, to justifying the divine "deliverance" of Spain from its aggressor, the Second Republic. "In fact, the writing of history during the Franco regime generally proposed a teleology of historical discourse that was ethically bound to the natural and to the divine," thereby constituting discursive practices that legitimized their institutional authority from within domains of knowledge preserved by the Church, the State, and the University (Herzberger, "Fiction" 29).

The notion of Spanish history inherited to the present from Francoist historiography undoubtedly remains, in partial form, within an operative social and institutional imaginary that defines what one speaks about when we speak of "Spain" as an entity. Particularly prevalent among conservative and rightwing circles in contemporary Spain, the traces of this myth are found in certain discursive practices—in the form of speeches from politicians, best-selling publications, and memoirs pitched to a

broad readership—that hold to imagining Spain as a unified, Castilian-speaking cultural whole. Likewise, that Francoist historiography is largely responsible for having preserved Spain and its national history in the Spanish academy is perhaps nowhere more prevalent than in Luis Palacios’s lamentation⁶ that historians today cannot speak of a “new” democratic Spanish nation without summoning the very institutional and political structures that produced this “Spain” under fascism.

I will be working within the framework of “Spanish history,” even if we note that it is an imaginary concept, while recognizing that its name is a false misnomer, like our straw-man object of interrogation “history” that consists of heterogeneous and stratified cultural differences: linguistic, socioeconomic, regional, etc. Some of the cultural objects and authors I have chosen to analyze tend to operate within this national framework as canonical or emblematic works—Goya, Valle-Inclán, Martín Gaité, and recently, the photographers of *la movida*—though they were not necessarily chosen on the basis of canonicity. If they have been privileged in posterior criticism as representative of “Spanish culture” or as synonymous with an “era,” I am less concerned with the cultural authority granted to them, than with the possibility that they index the field of negotiations and practices that produced the works. Nevertheless, the circumstantial “sites” of excavation where these cultural objects are found lead me to question Spanish history, not exclusively from its margins, but often from Madrid, the symbolic and material seat of State power since the Spanish Empire.

⁶ In his book *España, del Liberalismo a la Democracia (1808-2004)*, Spanish historian Luis Palacios Bañuelos reflects on the difficulties of speaking about Spanish nationalism in a contemporary context: “La herencia del franquismo y su nacionalismo españolista extremado ha impregnado de connotaciones negativas para muchos españoles la palabra España, el sentimiento de patria o la pública valoración de la bandera española o el himno nacional” (19).

When we add the tag “modern” to our object of interrogation, to become “modern Spanish history,” we introduce a new set of ambiguities. Discussing a “modern” epoch in Spanish history or the experience of “modernity” is not without its share of problems, as these umbrella terms tend to reduce complexities, and cultural plurality, into a single, monolithic domain. Unquestionably, there exists no singular experience of modernity across genders, socioeconomic strata, and cultural identities, across time periods, entire regions, and locally inhabited spaces. The domestic spaces of bourgeois households in Barcelona, for women in the nineteenth century, reflects a drastically different social reality than the regulated punch-clock modernity of steel mill laborers in Bilbao, or for a Galician farmer whose agricultural production would become altered by the inception of the railroad. These and other modernities exist at a given moment in time, asynchronous yet contemporary to each other, providing what Susan Larson and Eva Woods have observed is a range of “modern experience in Spain as varied, discontinuous, inescapably plural and consisting of mixed speeds and spaces” (1). We can assert, with some certainty, however, that modernity is an event—transpiring over centuries—that has provided novel possibilities of exchange among individuals and, furthermore, that individual and collective participation in these exchanges have modified practices of daily life, thereby altering both one’s lived and perceived reality. In fact, contemporary experiences dubbed “postmodern” in character or aesthetic appearance—as well as those in the early modern era, a nomenclature taken up in recent Golden Age studies—are not entirely discontinuous from experiences known as modernity. We might see in postmodernity an elaborately developed, perhaps even an “excessively” accelerated

modernity, and in the early modern era, the nascent economic and social structures of exchange that condition and resemble what would follow.

In this regard, my treatment of “modernity” attempts to be symptomatic in its descriptive and conceptual approach, so as to avoid propagating a false perception that it is as an “object” of totality with an inception and an end. In other words, this approach allows me to locate certain features that tend to demonstrate “modernity”—such as the inception of liberalism and the secularization of the State, arising from a legacy of enlightened philosophies in Western cultures—without pursuing the impossible task of pinpointing the precise temporal origins of modern phenomena.⁷ As I will address in Chapter II, the precipitation of a national imaginary is one symptom connoting modernity. When I treat this demonstrative feature as a symptom of the modern, I have in mind the nature of its demonstration and the manner in which it manifests itself, rather than its pure psychologization; it is a symptom insofar as its incidence may gesture

⁷ The symptomatic treatment of modernity I propose is suggested by Marian Hobson in her essay “History Traces,” which reflects on writing history after deconstruction. Hobson argues that, by locating the temporal and spatial *espacement* of traces in a discourse (history), “there is no origin, nor proper direction of meaning (*sens propre*) from which history can be measured. But this doesn’t mean that a trajectory is impossible. There is no tidy seriality, but a complex pattern of forward and recursive loops” arising in heterogeneity across discursive elements (190). This temporal and spatial *espacement* is marked by difference – or *différance*—that makes absolute identity impossible between two traces. Illustrated with a practical example, the failure of enlightened thought in Goya’s era to have occupied a hegemonic position from which to enact constitutional reform would become frustrated, and then arise again in several, subsequent attempts to instill a Magna Carta as a modern form of sovereign governance in Spain (in Bayona, 1808; from the Courts of Cadiz, 1812; by Royal Statute, 1834; in 1845; in 1869; with the First Republic, 1873; in 1876; with the Second Republic, 1931; and as a Constitutional Monarchy, in 1978). No two of these texts, or the operative bodies of knowledge that produced them, are identical or entirely differentiated from the trajectory that precedes the materialization of each text. That is, the trajectory of their production across time cannot be located in a solid, anchored origin that made their existence possible, but in the materialization of each within its temporal and spatial difference to the others, disseminated across history. See Hobson’s article “History Traces” in *Post-structuralism and the Question of History*, eds. Derek Attridge, Geoff Bennington, and Robert Young (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1987) 101-15. For a comprehensive explanation of Derrida’s terms deployed in his essays on deconstruction, elaborated by the author himself, see *Positions* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1981). Lastly, for a comparative account of Spain’s constitutions, from 1808 to 1978, see Jorge de Esteban’s essays in *Las Constituciones de España* (Madrid: Boletín Oficial del Estado, Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2000).

towards or *index* those features that, scattered across history, may be regarded modern in their external appearance, or for the subjects who experienced them in the time that they arise.

When I mention “modernity” as a complex “event” spaced across centuries in Spanish history, I refer to its frustrated and accelerated periods of modernization (i.e., an enactment of systematic and often technological modifications), to the experiences that these modifications produced in daily life, and to the practices and production of culture respondent to or negotiated by these experiences. “People’s sense of experiencing ‘the new’ or ‘the modern,’” argue Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi, “did not, of course, begin with the onset of the specific process of modernization” undergone in Spain throughout the nineteenth and first third of the twentieth centuries (11). Certainly, daily life in Spain began to take on “modern” and “novel” appearances in earlier epochs, as Spaniards became participants in—and subjects to—identifiably “early modern” markets of economic exchange: throughout colonization of the Americas, for example, or in the “new” bustle of financial capitals, such as Madrid of the Spanish Empire, or the port city Cadiz in the late eighteenth century.⁸ How these experiences negotiated subjects participating in them—and vice-versa, how subjects negotiated modern experiences—intimately binds the production of culture to these modified social realities, to the constructions of individual and collective practices that navigate them, and to the tempo with which these exchanges play out in multiplicity.

⁸ In *Espacio urbano y creación literaria en el Madrid de Felipe IV* (Frankfurt: Vervuert, 2004), Enrique García Santo-Tomás describes daily life in the capital of the Spanish Empire, demonstrating how the city became a bustling urban space enmeshed in early modern networks of capitalist exchange. For more on the cosmopolitan appearance of the port city Cadiz in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see Ramón Solís’s historical account of *El Cádiz de las Cortes. La vida en la ciudad en los años de 1810 a 1813* (Madrid: Sílex, 2000).

The modern epoch constitutes a scattered diachrony—disseminated across time—that shows evidence of its transitions in partial form. The splintered temporality with which modernity arises is what I wish to address here, by way of concluding an open discussion on modern Spanish history. In criticism the word “modernism” is understood specifically to stand in for the plurality of literary, artistic, and cultural movements arising in the first third of twentieth-century Spain,⁹ which is not interchangeable with a much broader range of experiences known as modernity. Yet, even though the era’s artistic and cultural tendencies exhibit messier contradictions than the concept “modernism” may describe,¹⁰ here I refer to “modernism” on this condition: that the term indexes a cultural field of negotiations between collective and individual experience (“modernity”), constituted by the specific time and place in which it arises (its historical circumstance), through complex negotiations in social (and inherently political,

⁹ I should like to clarify that “modernism” could be said to encompass Spanish literary *modernismo*, though the two terms are not interchangeable. Spanish literary *modernismo* and the multiple directions in which the movement developed, tended to reject nineteenth-century realism, exhibited in the works of Manuel and Antonio Machado, Ramón del Valle-Inclán, or Miguel de Unamuno, among others; however, the term modernism I describe here is not synonymous with these literary tendencies that emerged in the late 1800s and early 1900s. For critical essays on literary modernismo, see *La Generación de 1898 ante España. Antología de literatura moderna de temas nacionales y universales*, second edition, edited by Sumner Greenfield (Boulder, Colorado: Society of Spanish and Spanish-American Studies, 1997). On the historical circumstances surrounding Spain’s vanguard literature of Generation 27, and its rejection of literary modernismo in the generations following 1898, see José-Carlos Mainer’s *La Edad de Plata (1902-1939). Ensayo de interpretación de un proceso cultural* (2nd Ed. Madrid: Cátedra, 1983).

¹⁰ Roberta L. Salper and Carol Maier offer a concise explanation of terminology that distinguishes Modernism and *modernismo*: “A distinction has usually been made between Modernism, a cultural manifestation of Western bourgeois dissidence and *modernismo*, traditionally defined as a Spanish-American turn-of-the-century movement. In fact, however, the two phenomena are integrally related. *Modernismo* is that manifestation of “Modernism” that took place in the Hispanic world approximately between 1890 and 1910. “Modernism,” on the other hand, as Raymond Williams has explained, cannot be periodized by drawing upon its own internal ideologies. Nor can any tradition provide a general theory of Modernism. The phenomenon must both be understood historically and related globally to the class (and other) conflicts at the turn of the century” (30). See their essay, “Toward an Understanding of History, Gender, and Valle-Inclán’s Spain” in *Ramón del Valle-Inclán: Questions of Gender*, eds. Salper and Maier, (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP, 1994) 27-38.

economic) encounters and exchanges. By granting that the word “modernism” is a decoy that supplants the question of *how* culture is produced, what evidence has led us to conceive that Spanish modernism was somehow different from culture produced in previous epochs? In other words, if cultural production is enmeshed in the sociopolitical phenomena from which it emerges, what sense of newness and transition materializes in early twentieth-century Spain?

Culture produced in the 1920s tends to respond to the novelties of modern experience, at times simulating new facets of urban life, technologies that modified daily encounters, the accelerated sense of city rhythms, and the distractions these sensory pleasures and anxieties stirred in its inhabitants. Concurrent with these tendencies, modernist works, both visual and narrative, exhibit a shattering of form, a splintering of vision, even a dismembering of an object. Indeed, urban modernity showed signs of having undergone a reconfiguration of time previously experienced in multiplicity, of how this new sense of time was experienced in relation to the self, to the collective, and in sum, to the subject’s position within a linear succession of historical events:

The structure of history, the uninterrupted forward movement of clocks, the procession of days, seasons, and years, and simple common sense tell us that time is irreversible and moves forward at a steady rate. Yet these features of traditional time were also challenged as artists and intellectuals envisioned times that reversed themselves, moved at irregular rhythms, and even came to a dead stop. In the *fin de siècle*, time’s arrow did not always fly straight and true. (Kern 29)

The collective sense that the “present” was subject to rapid changes rendering modern experience fragmented, unsettled, and ungrounded, may be seen in the temporal and spatial splintering of cultural forms, as Kern suggests. Like material remains that bear traces of their historical circumstance, literary and cultural production is marked by this unsettled perception of time, sensed as an awareness of present change, graphed onto

former meanings that could no longer hold as relevant and totalizing truths across disparate social realities.

One common thread “modernism” does indeed demonstrate is this shared crisis of sensory and temporal fragmentation. Though I should like to caution against reducing Spanish modernism to a simple set of features that cannot adequately describe a complex plurality of cultural works, I have in mind certain artistic movements, by way of example, that grapple with—or seem unsettled by—this fragmentation. For these tendencies are exhibited in the more celebrated movements identified with the so-called Generation 98 through the avant-garde in early-twentieth century Spain.¹¹ The Cubist works of Gris and Picasso exploded recognizable forms—and so too, the hierarchical order of space in fine art—into discontinuous lines, visual fragments, and the collage-work of textures, thereby breaking with artistic conventions to expose the creative underpinnings of desire and destruction.¹² This multiplication of viewpoints from which to perceive an artwork became the subject of Ortega y Gasset’s reflection on perspectivism in *La deshumanización del arte* (1925). Rejecting the notion that any given perception bears an

¹¹ In Violeta Castrillo Salvador’s “Análisis semiológico de la luz en *Luces de Bohemia* (1924)” [*Tropelías: Revista de Teoría de la Literatura y Literatura Comparada* 9-10 (1998): 93-111], aside from the semiotic reading of “light” in *Luces*, to which the article’s title alludes, Castrillo offers a brief but important study of “generational” influences among members of Generation 98, and their debates in *tertulias* at Ateneo and Café Gijón. Theosophy gained philosophical appeal among this circle as a timely debate, disillusioned by the failure of Spain’s historically powerful institutions: the Spanish Empire and the Catholic Church. Castrillo suggests that these men were in dialogue with the shifting notions of grand institutional narratives that had historically shaped Spain, but were now shaken, obsolete, or at the very least, in question.

¹² Stephen Kern explores how Cubism and the invention of military camouflage in WWI gesture towards the shifting historical notions of visual space in the early twentieth century, for “they implied that the traditional ways are not necessarily the best ways of ordering objects in pictorial space or men and guns on a battlefield or, with a bit of interpretive stretching, classes in society. The abandonment of the old military uniform, so intimately associated with aristocratic society, was a repudiation of the convention of deference to rank in the army and in the civilian world [...] Cubism and camouflage leveled the older hierarchies in order to re-hierarchize the world in ways that suited the real exigencies of the current situation” (303). Furthermore, the disintegration of the “formal line” of battle in WWI, Kern argues, parallels the dispersed loss of horizon (from any classical vantage point) in cubist painting.

inherent truth—one of the former tenets of nineteenth-century rationalism—Ortega y Gasset postulated that a single dominant reality cannot possibly exist, a problem the author attempts to reconcile between the dismembered and estranged character exhibited in Cubist art, and the critical distance it provides for an alienated viewer. In Unamuno's work, often the perception of reality no longer promises truth, but deception. Illustrated in his *San Manuel Bueno, mártir* (1930) in which the narrator, after an encounter with his confessor, cannot distinguish between memory, lived experience, and truth (“Ahora... ya no sé lo que es verdad y lo que es mentira, ni lo que vi y lo que sólo soñé [...] ni lo que supe, ni lo que creí”), disillusion in Unamuno's literature is tinged with ironic surrender, whence the “pivotal intellectual turning point of the XXth. century is set in motion: reality and the parody of reality are hopelessly mixed together” (Garaczi 104).

Surrealism took up explorations with pastiche forms that destabilized narrative constants of time and place, assembled from the incongruous, dreamtime sequence of cinema—such as Buñuel's famous slashing of the eye in *Un chien andalou* (1929)—and from the temporal interruption the moving image revolutionized for cinema's spectators. Evoking the era's new psychoanalytic literature, surrealism indiscreetly displayed to the public the private time of individual experience, outwardly exposing sexual fetishes and taboos, such as masturbation and anal penetration in Dalí's landscape paintings, in García Lorca's *El público* (1929), and in Buñuel's *L'âge d'or* (1930). And in the arrhythmic tempo of urban modernity, Gómez de la Serna's succinct verses of ironic poetry, his *greguerías* which meditate on the streetcar, the speed of automobiles, and the mannequins in window displays, reveal their embeddedness in the socioeconomic transformations of late 1920s Madrid, during a “time of rapid technological changes, not

yet naturalized” in a Spain undergoing processes of modernization (Highfill 131). The culture of simultaneity made possible by pervasive, new technologies—as in Gómez de la Serna’s radio broadcasts—gestured towards modernity in transition, which stood between nineteenth-century (locomotive, telegraph) speed, and a new form of modern (automotive, broadcast) immediacy (Aubert and Desvois 89).

In the case of Spanish modernism, shifting notions of the subject’s position in time and space certainly echo, and are indeed embedded in, a postwar transition undergone in Europe: from Einstein’s famous report on relativity, published in 1920, that rendered a fundamental, scientific truth obsolete, to the modernist break with temporal narrative conventions, exhibited in Joyce’s celebrated *Ulysses*. “At the end of the century, and this is especially perceptible from the 1920s on,” argues Imre Garaczi, “the Cartesian-metaphysical world concept of the West begins to disintegrate,” a process that Generation 98 and avant-garde writers and artists grapple with as they interrogate the authority of modernity, and the subject’s positioning in time and place in the postwar era (102). Although my initial assessment here is brief, this overview may suggest how the splintering of perception permeates cultural production of *fin de siglo* Spain through the avant-garde, in albeit disparate artistic forms, across visual and literary works that posited no cohesive project. What this sense of fragmentation possibly gestures towards—at times, resembling the novel everyday rhythms of bustling urban centers, and at others, in response to the alienation produced by volatile tensions in societies enduring rapid change—is an epistemological crisis of nineteenth-century positivist and rationalist ideals. For these early twentieth-century artists and writers in Spain tangentially interrogated “la crisis de la razón” that had failed to prevent the Great War (Serrano and

Salaün 21), placing them within a regional, national, and European framework of scientific and cultural knowledge that questioned modernity's authority. The crisis of reason, at the core of these threads of inquiry, is what I turn to now, at the so-called end of the Enlightenment in Goya's Spain.

Chapter II

Modern Dream Time: Goya and the *sueño* of Reason

Origin [*Ursprung*], although an entirely historical category, has, nevertheless, nothing to do with genesis [*Entstehung*]. The term origin is not intended to describe the process by which the existent came into being, but rather to describe that which emerges from the process of becoming and disappearance. Origin is an eddy in the stream of becoming, and in its current it swallows the material involved in the process of genesis.

-Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*

The Problem with Locating Origins

To propose and investigate the study of historical transition informed by the philosophy of Walter Benjamin seems to imply a paradox. For, in the “current of history,” how can one analyze a moment in time—specifically, a historical transition—if it is not easily distinguishable, delineated, nor isolated, from its preceding moment?¹³ In less general terms, if the event of a transition has no absolute or singular genesis, how can we begin from the beginning to describe a historical, epistemological shift through the reading of culture? Or, if we think of “pinning down” an object of study—specifically, that of a historical threshold among several moments that inform and define it—how can

¹³ In his *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, Benjamin notes, “A historical materialist cannot do without the notion of a present which is not a transition, but in which time stands still and has come to a stop” (262). The frozen moment in time, like the photograph, is the moment of reflection for Benjamin, as if an isolated frame were arrested to reveal to the observer the eddy in the stream of constant, fluctuating (historical) currents. To relate this arrested moment of contemplation to its historical context, as a threshold, is what makes our discussion here more difficult, as Benjamin does not establish the moment as one set within epistemological shifts experienced by a culture. Instead, Benjamin’s dialectical image may be understood as a moment alone, containing within it the past and present, like the stream, while it gestures toward the future of its direction. For more on the relationship between the photographic image and Benjamin’s philosophies of modern history, see Eduardo Cadava’s work, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1997). On visibility in Benjamin’s philosophy, see Susan Buck-Morss’s *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989).

we do so without losing the context of its historical specificity? To elaborate this line of inquiry using Benjamin's metaphor for the stream of history, I explore a problem that is presented in the study of culture through historical moments of transition: if temporality always implies a passage through time, from past to present to future, then are not all time periods already undergoing transition? To resolve this problem, I privilege the study of culture in its historical circumstance, where the slippage of time yields to a particular moment's cultural production, and to the historical transition conveyed through the object of study (a transition, a moment in time), which we should be cautious not to essentialize as representative of an absolute example. For in Benjamin's metaphor of the river every moment in time is embodied by a flow (the event of becoming yet another moment) within a current (the preceding moment, the general direction of flow) that subsumes the moment before it in an ebb of multidirectional flows. We might say that although the "stream of history" might seem to have a temporal, unidirectional movement, upon closer inspection we may bear witness to the inner workings of the flow which, when frozen at an instant, might look to a mathematician or physicist like a confused space of multidirectional vectors, each pulling with different force and magnitude. The eddy in Benjamin's "stream of becoming" (a rather Deleuzian prospect itself) might serve as a point of departure for the study of historical moments of transition, where the seemingly apparent direction of history—a problematic notion for its presumed determinacy of sequential events—reveals a more complex system of pulls, directional forces, and dispersions, rather than an absolute rupture between two well-defined historical moments.

Hereafter I explore, from a reading of Benjamin's philosophical writings, a theoretical framework for reading moments of historical transition; undoubtedly, to

describe “what is a historical transition?” with the help of Benjamin requires my analysis to be brief, at times general, though I will attempt to avoid reducing the notion of historical transition to a catch-all, universal example. Rather, I also clarify the limitations of thinking through moments of transition using Benjamin’s concept of history, a point I will develop in the next section by reading this notion against an example from Goya’s well known work, the *Caprichos* series and its capstone image, *El sueño de la razón produce monstruos / The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*. For the purpose of my discussion I elaborate on Benjamin’s notion of the eddy, its flows and back-currents, as a metaphor for the dialectical image of a historical moment, the very image that is arrested at the event of transition where, upon magnification, it seemingly disappears as we recognize that our framed moment of history is always already *in medias res*. From this moment of liminality, of inbetweenness, we may read the historical transition, not in its totality but as a moment of becoming on the edge of its own disappearance.

We might begin our discussion then, quite the same, at some point of origin by recognizing that we are already in the middle of things. How is Benjamin’s image of the eddy useful for defining a moment of historical transition? To better explain this point, I should like to describe our metaphor in mostly theoretical terms, then ground these ideas with a cultural reading of Goya’s work that turns toward questioning how the notion of transition in Benjamin’s writing conceptualizes a historical moment on the threshold. The *American Heritage Dictionary* describes “eddy” as both the natural phenomenon cited by Benjamin in the aforementioned metaphor of the stream and, in light of this comparison, a referent to a particular historical moment: “1. A current, as of water or air, moving contrary to the direction of the main current, especially in a circular motion. 2. A drift or

tendency that is counter to or separate from a main current, as of opinion, tradition, or history.” An eddy in the stream, as a sort of brushing against the grain of flows, implies a change of directional movement, a disruption from the norm, even an epistemological shift from an existing cultural paradigm—a historical transition as the incomplete fissure between emergent modes of knowledge. With the back current of the eddy in mind, I identify our first problem, which I refer to as the slippage of time.

How might we approach a temporal moment or a period of transition if it is always receding from its past into yet another moment, the future? For, if we delineate our notion of the transition solely by time, every historical moment could possibly be conceived of as a transition, which does not further an understanding of historical change. Here I am primarily interested in emergent modes of thought in a culture, not the “passing through” of time like witnessing an arrow moving frame by frame through the air. Rather, we might conceive of modes of knowledge as unbound by the limits of linear temporality, thereby working against the temporal continuum of history, an assumption upon which historical discourse in practice has been traditionally constructed. The inspection of a transitory, historical moment would require us to recognize the epistemological shift as one basis for defining this boundless amount of time I refer to as a moment, while keeping in mind that this instant may never be conceived of in its totality as an “event” with distinguishable, temporal limits. Knowing full well, for instance, that by a modest stretch of imagination one could conceive of “World War II” or “modernity” as a historical event, the problem of temporal boundlessness within a transition presents itself when we attempt to define these “instances” as isolated moments in time. For their consequences may resound well after the defined event as much as the

event may have been produced by its preceding historical moments. To offer an example, we may find this false encasing of history within temporal limits engraved on any monument, where the placement of a dash between two years suggests the historicity (the declared death) of the commemorated event, as if it were to have no influence on the now, the event's future moments. That is, it would seem absurd not to consider the resounding effects of World War II or modernity as inextricably linked to the "moment" in which we define these events, even if these consequences are played out decades later.¹⁴ Thus, rather than define the historical transition based upon time alone, we might agree that the "event" of the transition is marked by a rupture between modes of thought, between cultural epistemes, or social practices, which produce novelty as much as they are steeped in preceding modes of action, practice, and knowledge.

In other words, understanding the notion of historical transition as an epistemological shift allows us one possibility to perceive the re-stacking or reshuffling of meaning that proceeds from the event through the cultural production of the moment. Culture, as it is produced, provides representations of these modes of thought—of knowledge and discourse—that reflect the position of the self in relation to one's environment during a time of transition, when the newly forming modes of discourse no longer sustain their own logic formerly understood as truth, as self-understanding, or in the case of ideology, perhaps as doctrine. During the epistemological shift it is as if "things fall apart" from the perspective of the subject in the present, when *the centre*

¹⁴ We need only to think of the ramifications of WWII for having marked the experience of living in the twentieth century; the resounding effects of the war, one might suggest, are marked even on those who did not experience the war directly. Similarly, the second generation of Holocaust survivors, in many cases, are shown to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) when their parents, not themselves, experienced interment. Cathy Caruth explores PTSD and, separately, the collective trauma of WWII in narratives from survivors of Hiroshima. See her insightful work on trauma and history, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996).

cannot hold for the status quo, to borrow from W.B. Yeats' famous poem "The Second Coming" (1921). We might describe our epistemological shift then as that moment when a form of knowledge, of discourse, breaches its own limits as an encounter with newness, with something inexplicable or incomprehensible according to its own logic; this experience of transition we recognize as a fissure between the former form which cannot "hold" any longer and the emergent discourse, perhaps a new episteme, which likewise produces new subjectivities in response to experience. Although I am primarily interested in what tendencies such a change produces in subjective experience and its representations, this sort of transition may play out for both a collective and the individual.

Nevertheless, this inevitable re-evaluation of the self in relation to one's environment further produces modes of knowledge which are recognized in the epistemological transition as products of ideological power struggles, leading us back to Benjamin's metaphor of the disruptive eddy in the stream of history. Because the transition in history may be described as a rupture in epistemological formations of thought for an era, Benjamin's image of confusion and contradiction in the eddy allows us to explore more intimately the interface between ideologies that produce knowledge, the power relations these ideologies exert to reshape and restructure them, and the subjects who experience this fissure between historical modes of knowledge.

When I describe the notion of transition between two moments as an epistemological shift, I have in mind Foucault's definition of a culture's historical threshold: those transformations that characterize the outward appearance of a body of knowledge produced by a culture, which like the eddy are prone to "spontaneous" shifts

over time.¹⁵ This epistemological formation—the production of knowledge, of discourse—could perhaps be described furthermore as an intimately entwined structure of what a collective produces as its, often contradictory, philosophical and epistemic principles. Therein, we may observe the complex systems of power negotiations (the forces of pulls in our space of vectors) between multiple ideologies at a specific historical moment (the whirling back current in the eddy) that produce a body of knowledge. These currents or pulls are the loci of power struggles and, by the nature of their being in constant negotiation with each other, in turn collectively redefine an ever-accumulating and deteriorating body of knowledge. To offer an example of how this might work, we may think of the eddy as descriptive of history during a moment of epistemological transformation, where the space of multidimensional vectors we mentioned earlier—the pulls and forces of ideological power struggles—determine the apparent flow of a stream to the naked eye. However, this movement, when viewed in light of history and its potential capacity for directional change, reveals the moment of transition as one that may be perceived like the close-up view of the eddy, *only when it threatens to disappear*. The eddy in the stream, thus for Benjamin, is both a coming into being—or, becoming—and the fading away of the moment—its own disappearance—that define the constellation as what was for Benjamin the “true image” of history. For this oppositional

¹⁵ In his preface to *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1970) Foucault defines his work as an attempt to describe epistemological shifts in Western culture, whereby one may study more effectively the moment of transition as a reconfiguration of “how we know what we know about the world,” a reformation of a body of knowledge, of a culture’s *scientia*: “It was upon this threshold that the strange figure of knowledge called man first appeared and revealed a space proper to the human sciences. In attempting to uncover the deepest strata of Western culture, I am restoring to our silent and apparently immobile soil its rifts, its instability, its flaws; and it is the same ground that is once more stirring under our feet” (xxiv).

movement (the eddy, the historical transition) becomes visible at the very moment when it recedes into the past, at the time in which it threatens to fade from recognition.

We might liken this moment of disappearance to the photographic snapshot of a flock of birds in flight, whence the form of the flock is seized at an instant that cannot nor will ever be in the same configuration as the arrested moment we see. Had the photographer released the shutter a half-second earlier or later, the flock of birds would take another form altogether. Even upon magnification of the photograph, the flock begins to lose its form, those characteristics that give the image a shape recognizable to the distant observer. The study of a historical transition provides us with this same difficulty: upon greater inspection of history at its threshold, at an epistemological moment of transformation for a culture, the transitory “event” no longer becomes so up close, but seemingly evaporates into the field of fluctuating confusion, becoming the ideological irruption of things as they no longer have been. As Benjamin describes the stream of history, its current swallows the very moment of continuous change, making the study of its genesis implausible. The slippery movement of the eddy, the appearing-disappearing act that Benjamin refers to as the “origin” becomes crucial to define my notion of historical transition. Just as the photograph of the birds in flight shows us an arrested image within the frame, therein is always implicated what remains absent from this image; that is, the act of framing the photographic image gestures toward what is not pictured at all, that which remains out of view. The image of history I explore, the transitory moment of emerging modes of knowledge, may be thought of as such a photograph, where consideration for the moment of framing leads us to interrogate its

historical continuity with an immediate past (where the image of the flock takes yet another form) and another unique moment after this instant.

Because the slippage of time will only ever provide us with a temporal fragment of the historical moment itself, I propose that a reading of historical transition may be interpreted like the framed photograph, whereby that which remains beyond the borders of the photographic image may be interpreted as an absence endowed with meaning, a blind spot that gestures towards the presence of this moment's historical context—the transition. Thus, likening a freeze-frame image of the eddy to history allows us to consider the messiness and intricacies of a transitional moment without assuming its framing as an absolute temporal “break” from the events that precede it, or the ones to come. After all, this is why, for Benjamin, the philosopher may “begin to recognize the monuments of the bourgeoisie as ruins even before they have crumbled” (*Arcades* 13); that is, the historical moment becomes apparent to an observer at the moment of its decay, or, as Benjamin argued against the terminology used by the German academy, during a given period's “decline,” when it threatens to slip into another form.¹⁶ A reading of absence, gathering from what evidence is verifiably pictured in the image itself, will be fundamental to our methods of describing a transitory moment in time on the cusp of becoming something else, a threshold for its own disappearance.

¹⁶ In *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, Benjamin suggests that this terminology has been misappropriated to consider the *Trauerspiel* a lesser art form of tragedy: “For like expressionism, the baroque is not so much an age of genuine artistic achievement as an age possessed of an unremitting artistic will. This is true of all periods of so-called decadence. [...] These are the periods of ‘decadence’ in the arts, the periods of artistic ‘will’” (55). The same idea is presented more directly in a note on writing his unfinished work, the *Arcades Project*, where he reminds himself in the first sketches of the project to work against portraying the notion of historical progress: “The pathos of this work: there are no periods of decline. Attempt to see the nineteenth century just as positively as I tried to see the seventeenth, in the work on *Trauerspiel*. No belief in periods of decline” (854).

The problem I have called the slippage of time, then, may be restated by approaching the historical transition as a moment of emerging discourse and practice, a new formation of a body of knowledge in the forming episteme. Rather than frame our historical moment of study temporally, we might interrogate the transition like the viewing of a photograph, as a fragment of space represented imagistically that articulates its own absence—a historical past and future—through its own framing. In Benjamin's studies of historical materiality he suggests a methodology for the approximation of the historical moment, isolated and frozen as if photographed for meticulous study, the material "time of the now [...] blasted out of the continuum of history" ("Theses on the Philosophy of History" 261). This deracination of the cultural object from its moment of production, its extraction from a historical context, furthermore provides us with the possibility of reading a cultural object as it partially embodies transition, as it bears with it the very traces of the moment in which it was produced. I am suggesting here that Benjamin's thoughts on what is an epoch, on how to define an era for the cultural tendencies that characterize it (similarly as Foucault's descriptions of epistemological and ideological formations) may be read as being marked onto the cultural object; it is as if the cultural artifact has been "shot through" with time, perceived uniquely through a reading of the image's own framing of absence, which is what Benjamin likens to the disappearing act of "origin," the swallowing of the eddy in its own stream. Specifically, I will argue that a chosen cultural object may be read as a *mise-en-abyme* that has projected, within itself, the image of its historical past and the present. That is, the cultural object studied as a fragment reveals itself as a part of a greater whole—the threshold of change over time—in the very climate of its historical circumstance.

The notion of the *mise-en-abyme* proves particularly helpful to our Benjaminian reading of historical time if we draw meaning from the term's origin: "The practice in heraldry where a quadrant of a coat of arms reduplicates in miniature the structure of the entire coat of arms in which it appears" (Stonehill 8-9). André Gide coined the term as way of reading a short excerpt that suggests a theoretical framework for approaching the work of literature, a kind of fragment that contains, in miniature, the contents of its dispersed contents that remain elsewhere. I would like to extend this method of reading to the cultural artifact, where the chosen object may refer to its greater historical context if we read from the image both what it shows us, and what it gestures towards as an absence from its frame. The *mise-en-abyme* in heraldry becomes an apt metaphor for our reading the historical transition according to Benjamin because it provides us with an image that shows itself, in miniature, as coming into view on the coat of arms and disappearing from sight into infinity, like the eddy into an abyss. Our problem of the slippage of time in reading the historical transition might be resolved in this manner, if we analyze the cultural object for its ability to show itself, from a reading of its suggested absences, as a temporal fragment of history, like the photograph, thereby revealing itself at once as a representation of a historical past and present, however incomplete. Hereafter I will read Goya's *Caprichos* as a *mise-en-abyme*, an example of the cultural object that gestures towards its past and present, thereby exemplifying its embeddedness in the historical moment and the epistemic formations in which it was produced. By visually reading these traces of history marked onto the object, we may gather an understanding of cultural knowledge from the moment in which Goya produced the images, conceived of during a time of crisis.

The Caprices of Power and Modern Subjectivity

...quizá no haya habido en la historia fantasía más desatada, sueño más loco, que el de un mundo regido por los principios de la razón.

-Manuel Cruz¹⁷

Eduardo Subirats has commented that while the Enlightenment in Spain, unlike in other European countries, did not produce a philosopher of wide acclaim, it did produce an artist of the Enlightenment, Francisco de Goya (*Ilustración* 124). Goya's art has indeed earned more critical attention across the "disciplines" (e.g. art history, literary and cultural studies, etc.) than have the writings of Feijoo, Olavide, or Jovellanos, or on the work of other enlightened philosophers in Spain.¹⁸ It might not come as a surprise then, that much of the critical attention given to Goya's work can be attributed to his representativeness: Goya is both a voice of the Enlightenment, and in the view of art historians, one of Spain's first modern artists. For this exemplarity attributed to "the modern" Goya, the artist's work is what I look to, in turn, to emblemize the struggle for modernity already underway in Spain. In the following pages, I explore how Goya's work is itself *shot through with time* and the historical (i.e., cultural, social, political)

¹⁷ See Manuel Cruz, *Las malas pasadas del pasado. Identidad, responsabilidad, historia*, (Barcelona: Anagrama, 2005) 144.

¹⁸ Rather than pursuing the history of this critical attention paid to Goya over that of literary figures and philosophers from the Enlightenment in Spain, I should like to note that Spain's Enlightenment was largely "imported" and adapted from "foreign" models (i.e., mainly through French texts, by way of Voltaire, Montesquieu), perhaps leading to the false assumption that the Enlightenment did not occur in Spain. Such a claim, however, is as well bound to the constructed notion of "Spanishness," a search for uniquely "Spanish" origins of Enlightenment philosophies, as much as it measures the Enlightenment as deficient in Spain for not having dismantled the *Antiguo Régimen* comparable in nature to the results of the French revolution of 1789. All of this is to say that the emergence of Enlightenment thought in Spain may be more accurately described as an "ethos" rather than a "project," the Enlightenment as a form of knowledge and its practice, rather than a cohesive structure of ideology that informed action, an assertion argued by Foucault in his essay "What is Enlightenment?" (in *Ethics*, volume one of the series *Essential Works of Foucault*, edited by Paul Rabinow, New York, The New Press, 1994: 303-19).

circumstances that produced it. But my reading Goya is not a question of process alone, of circumstances and negotiated transactions that produce an art object, but also one of what is at stake in questioning how these “historical” conditions continue to remain in the present.

I have in mind a collection of Goya’s etchings, the *Caprichos*, the content of which prefigures this “modern” tendency in Spanish art, apparent in the satire forwarded by the artist as *ilustrado*, by Goya as social critic. Hereafter I treat the *Caprichos* series as a cultural object that lays bare, in representation, the critique of reason from Enlightenment thought that would become the touchstone of modernizing reform, both institutional and social in design, in early nineteenth-century Spain. To do so, I look to the *Caprichos* in their historical context during Goya’s lifetime, to read them as gesturing toward the emerging conditions of modernity in Spain: a frustrated transformation suppressed—to a great extent—by the Catholic Church and the Spanish Crown to censor secularist and “foreign” philosophies that potentially could have sparked popular revolt (as it did in neighboring France) and subsequently destabilize the *Antiguo Régimen*.¹⁹ My reading of the *Caprichos* will have as its undercurrent this power struggle that Goya himself witnessed during the emergent modernity in Spain that unfolded as crisis well beyond the artist’s lifetime.

¹⁹ In *Los perdedores de la Historia de España* (Barcelona: Planeta, 2006) historian Fernando García de Cortázar narrates this frustrated adoption of Enlightenment philosophies to secularize Spanish politics as a series of representative episodes, echoing a period of what has been described by Eduardo Subirats as the “repressed Enlightenment” of Spain, an idea forwarded in his work *La ilustración insuficiente* (Madrid: Taurus, 1981). García de Cortázar treats the expulsion of the Jesuits under Carlos III, the failed and partial attempts at gubernatorial reform by Gregorio Mayans, the trial by Inquisition of Pablo Olavide under the premise of his anti-Christian ideals, and the censure of Jovellanos by the Spanish Crown, all of which stand as representative of the repression of Enlightenment thought in Spain by a monarchy desperately attempting to maintain the *Antiguo Régimen*.

In the *Caprichos*, a collection of eighty aquatints conceived in the late 1790s and published in 1799, Goya offers a scathing critique of contemporary times: of political follies, social ignorance, and religious fanaticism. As a collection, the catalogue offers images that satirize the social ills of the “un-enlightened” masses, the Catholic Church and the absolutist power of the Spanish monarchy that the *ilustrados*—Goya among them—had perceived as antiquated and necessary to reform. Prostitution and vanity, the corrupt privileges of aristocracy, barbaric and unjust punishment, religious persecution by the Inquisition—all of these matters appear in the content of the *Caprichos* as a social critique of imaginary, sometimes diabolical, scenes. To give an example, in “El sí pronuncian y la mano alargan Al primero que llega” (Fig. 2.1) Goya depicts a young girl, her face covered by a mask, being led by the hand into a crowd of haggard men, among them an elderly figure leaning on his cane, and another shouting while waiving a stick and leaping towards her with anticipation. Indeed, arranged marriages of daughters for economic gain and enhanced social status became a subject of satire in Goya’s time, “El sí pronuncian” paralleling the content of a contemporary play, *El sí de las niñas* by Moratín, an *ilustrado* and close friend to Goya.²⁰ Yet the perversity of the arranged marriage, stemming from the girl’s lack of control in the affair, becomes disturbingly evident in Goya’s work through the contrast between the young, unaware girl and the laughing figure who mocks her—that satisfied puppeteer in control, nearly hidden in shadows. In a parallel image that suggests the girl’s lack of agency in this (literally)

²⁰ Robert Hughes cites the scholarship of Eleanor Syre, whose work suggests that Goya is quoting the satirical poem of yet another close friend, Jovellanos, titled “A Arnesto.” Jovellanos’ poem, Hughes describes, “ferociously attacks the personification of cynicism and frivolity in a fictional member of the Madrid higher classes: a young lady named Alcinda, who has married a rich man for his money and social standing, just like others who, “Without invoking reason, nor weighing / In their hearts the merits of the groom / They say yes and give their hand / To the first who comes” (184-85). See Hughes’s work titled *Goya* (New York: Knopf Press, 2003).

staged scenario, a maid with exaggeratedly grotesque features holds the girl's free hand in restraint behind her, as if to imply the woman's coercion.²¹ Or, if she is not forced to wed in this scene, then perhaps she is a participant who will reap the benefits of her marriage, like those family members and servants around her. The girl's hidden hand then becomes as much a gesture of concealed motives, as the mask she wears to cover her face. Both readings allow us to arrive at the conclusion that this scene stages a masquerade driven by ulterior incentives—perhaps due to familial or monetary gain—than by the traditional bourgeois notion that posits marriage as a contract between two willing parties in love. The forces staging the “auction” of the helpless girl “to the first comer” are not only suggestive of sacrifice for monetary gain and social status, but also allude to the religious benediction for such a transaction, made evident by the elderly woman to the far left of the image, who rubs her hands together as if to suggest greed, as well to connote a gesture of prayer.

This subtlety of inference, requiring a viewer to study the image and text to derive its meaning, leads me to believe that Goya forwards a critique as much as he disguises his social criticism of “un-enlightened” traditionalism. That is, Goya created the series with an audience of *ilustrados* in mind and, in doing so, winks at his audience of insiders through these visual details. The satire posited in the etchings, of customs in contemporary society and the antiquated regime of power—emblemized by the “Holy Alliance” of Catholic Church and Spanish Monarchy—would presumably be most relevant for like-minded *ilustrados*, those who would readily identify the “forces” at play in perpetuating these social ills. The images themselves suggest a codified presentation of

²¹ Regarding this etching's representativeness in relation to the other *Caprichos*, see Glendinning's book, *Goya and His Critics* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1977).

the artist's critique, accessible to an elite of *ilustrados* who might thereby grasp the implied satire.

The abuses of power wielded within the privileged classes, for example, may be observed at their most violent in the plate "Al Conde Palatino" (Fig. 2.2). In this image the aristocrat aggressively stuffs his hand into the mouth of the subservient figure who squints his eyes grotesquely, his hand wringing at his neck while he gasps for air. The other two men here have suffered the same treatment, as one is slumped in a sitting position, his posture showing a tired and weak body, the other doubled over and vomiting onto the floor. The corporeality of the man who is vomiting, his facial and bodily contortions, evoke an experience of pain at its most animalistic level, in the brutal punishment and torture of a subordinate, maybe a hand servant or the aristocrat's adviser. Goya's satire is suggested in the title of the plate, whereby "Count Palate" induces vomiting as a repulsion that describes both the *ilustrado's* distaste for antiquated rank of nobility and for behaviors that render them contrary to the proprieties of their class: abusive in their authority, primitive, even approaching the animal.

These defining features of the grotesque-as-human observed in the *Caprichos* have earned the series its high regard by art critics as marking the advent of modern art in Spain; for Goya's etchings distort and project the rituals of the everyday, mutating and disfiguring the real to approach the monstrous and the surreal.²² In these etchings the

²² On Goya's relation to modernism and the new artistic styles introduced in his work, Nigel Glendinning looks to the criticism of August L. Mayer, who finds in Goya the beginnings of expressionism: "Mayer, in fact, felt that the paintings of the 1790s constituted a revolution in Goya's whole approach to art: a revolution which was 'expressionist' (inward) rather than 'impressionist' (outward) in character" (Glendinning 148). Quoting Mayer, the art critic continues, "Goya now paints according to his outward and inward vision and impulse in a new 'free style', which intentionally breaks with the older art of the 18th century" and, I will suggest, prefigures the modern style of Mariano Fortuny, developed in the mid-1800s, and the expressionist movement (qtd. in Glendinning 148-49). See Glendinning's book, *Goya and His Critics* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1977).

contorted faces and gestures of Goya's characters become a prelude to the developed style of his "dark paintings," those works produced late in Goya's life, depicting an imaginary world dominated by shadows and superstition, a bleak exhibition of the human as inherently animal. Art critic August Mayer contends that Goya "was one of the first who tried to render activity and motion in the modern sense" (qtd. in Glendinning 150), creating a sense of movement first demonstrated in the *Caprichos* as rife with tension. At times chaotic and often marked by anguish and violence, Goya's "modernity" becomes exhibited in the contortion of human and not-so-human bodies and faces that foreshadow expressionism. If the modern features of the *Caprichos* have been attributed to this prefiguration of expressionism, demonstrated by Goya as a visual hybrid of the monstrous and the human in motion, it would seem that this modernity is not merely the artist's satirical vilification of his subjects, but that the works gesture towards the modern as a disfiguring of the "real" as it "plays out" in movement. In other words, the distortion of human features—the disfigurement of man to make him monstrous, in sight and behavior—is not purely satirical, but has to do with how violence becomes enacted in these scenes with movement, with grotesque contortion. Movement, in this sense, is what defines the power struggles depicted here as "forces in play," not as isolated, "imaginary" incidents, but as referential to the "real" subjects Goya portrays. Movement, in the same sense, is what defines the corporeal resignation to the powerful "masters" (i.e., the restrained hand of the young girl, the weak bodies overcome by the Count's violence against them) that produce the characters' grotesque contortions and disfigurements.

The violence exerted on the subjugated characters in both of these images is as much symbolic (i.e., control and coercion in "El sí pronuncian") as it is material (i.e.,

vomiting in “Al Conde Palatino”), thereby rendering the characters monstrous through the display of grotesque features and poses, indicative of underlying power struggles at work in the dominating characters’ motivations. Indeed, here Goya has “shown the world as a stage on which men play their parts controlled by forces, whose identity is concealed from them by the power of illusion” (Glendinning 193). Perhaps the characters of Goya’s images, in this light, could best be described then as “actors,” and their monstrous features doubly as a visual dis-figuring of the human and a con-figuring of movement, of the power wielded by the privileged classes, by the Church and in the reenactment of traditional social practices.

But the features of Goya’s modernity are not only a matter of artistic style; the content of these images, their satire of traditionalism in Spanish society, forwards a concept of the modern in Spain as it emerged in contradiction between the traditionalism Goya critiques and the Enlightened values he and his audience of *ilustrados* perceived as necessary for institutional reform, despite oppressive tactics by the *Antiguo Régimen* to suppress such a “revolutionary” occurrence in Spain. To avoid revolution as it played out in France in 1789 became the central preoccupation for the Church and Spanish monarchy under Carlos IV, who adopted repressive tactics to prohibit the spread of revolutionary ideals in Spain—namely, secularism and liberalism. Carlos IV instituted a ban on foreign texts, making them illegal to import, distribute, or purchase in an effort to prohibit the dissemination of texts central to Enlightenment thought, such as French and English writings promoting liberalism and democracy. The clandestine circulation of these works throughout Spain, however, continued by way of port cities such as Cadiz, whereby “se le cambiaban los lomos poniéndolos etiquetas de libros de Calderón o Lope,

o títulos de sermonarios a libros de Rosseau o de Voltaire” (Solís 92). In this light, Goya was faced with high stakes by publishing his scathing critique of the *Antiguo Régimen*.

The modernity of the *Caprichos* may be identified as this space of critical reflection arising from a contradiction between two seemingly opposed practices of knowledge—Spanish traditionalism, in the contemporary society Goya critiques, and the philosophies of Enlightenment thought to which the artist and his presumed audience of *ilustrados* subscribe. That is, perhaps the *Caprichos* may be said to occupy a space of representation in culture, materialized as these etchings, in response to a social transformation that incited Goya’s critique, marked namely by a contradiction between the forward-looking *ilustrados* (i.e., the modern) and the beliefs, practices and institutional structures regarded by Enlightenment thought as counter-modern, as traditional and superstitious in society, so too conservative and repressive in the *Antiguo Régimen*. In this manner, the artist’s satire of “counter-modern” tendencies in contemporary Spanish society would constitute the modern lens from which Goya takes up his critique: the *Caprichos* as a work of criticism that is self-aware—a self awareness characteristic of the Enlightenment²³—that has as its point of departure a critical, even oppositional, meditation on the values of the epoch at present. Here, in this “movement” of power struggle depicted in the *Caprichos* as a present moment, is where I wish to locate within a greater cultural context those signature qualities that have been regarded

²³ Michel Foucault identifies this self awareness as characteristic of what he describes as the “ethos” of the Enlightenment in Western European cultures, which has as its defining features the consciousness of a “new” form of autonomy, of the self, and critique of the present era: “The critique is, in a sense, the handbook of reason that has grown up in Enlightenment; and, conversely, the Enlightenment is the age of the critique.” See his essay “What is Enlightenment?” in *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984): 303-19.

by criticism as illustrative of Goya's modernity: the dis-figuration of the monstrous and human in motion, controlled by illusory forces in a playing out of power struggles.

Michele Hannoosh identifies the “modern” characteristics of the *Caprichos* as the visually ambiguous features that obfuscate the distinction between the real and the imaginary, the grotesque and the human in the time and space of Goya's etchings: “The uncertainty of the image—its refusal of the categories by which time and space are ordered—provides an example of the ‘amour de l’insaisissable’ that defines Goya’s modernity” (215). It is this refusal of categories, of confrontation between the Enlightened philosophies of reason and the “plague” of the *Antiguo Régimen*, as Goya perceives and satirizes it, that seems to further suggest the marginal space from which Goya defines his object of criticism: during a moment of crisis for those who, like Goya, became witness to a seemingly irreconcilable contradiction in Spain, the conflict of ideologically informed overhaul of the Spanish State—a desire for modernizing reform—that would prove unsuccessful in producing a rupture from the absolutism of the *Antiguo Régimen*. In this manner I should like to think of the “ungraspable” features of Goya’s imaginary scenes—the unlocatability of time and space in Goya’s later works, per Hannoosh’s suggestion—as indicative of this emergent modernity in Spain, of a coexistent rift between enlightened knowledge and the “backwards thinking” traditionalism of the early nineteenth century. Within the historical context of the artist having produced these etchings, regarded both as prefiguring the “modern” and a product of Enlightenment thought, the *Caprichos* may exhibit a power struggle of ideological transformation in Goya’s lifetime.²⁴

²⁴ Art historian Robert Hughes regards Goya’s modernity as a sort of enlightened ethos, “a questioning, irreverent attitude of life; with a persistent skepticism that sees through the official structures of society and

Perhaps the most telling event concerning the production of the *Caprichos*, in light of a personal struggle for the artist, was their failure to reach public reception outside of Goya's most intimate circle.²⁵ Due to a lack of interest from distributors, and to the political overhauls that removed Jovellanos and Saavedra, both *ilustrados* and Goya's closest allies, from their positions as ministers to the Spanish Court, the artist pulled the *Caprichos* from distribution, later submitting the remaining copies—240 in all—and the original plates to Carlos IV under threat of Inquisition.²⁶ With the *ilustrados* in Spain as a class of marginalized elite, without significant influence within the *Antiguo Régimen* to substantially enact these changes of disruptive, even revolutionary, nature, Goya's critique takes up satire in the *Caprichos* from the perspective of the *ilustrados* as marginalized and seemingly already defeated,²⁷ his critique rendered with anguish, whereby “[l]a crítica no se riñe en ella con la esperanza, ni el conocimiento se separa del dolor” (Subirats, *Ilustración* 124). Or, to think of the *ilustrado* as an “actor” in one of his

does not pay reflexive homage to authority, whether that of the church, monarch or aristocrat; that tends, above all, to take little for granted, and to seek a continuously realistic attitude to its themes and subjects: to be, as Lenin would remark in Zurich many years later and in a very different social context, ‘as radical as reality itself’” (10-11). See Hughes' landmark work *Goya* (New York, Knopf Press, 2003).

²⁵ Among Goya's circle of friends and admirers Moratín, Jovellanos, and others are speculated to have been among the few to see or own a copy of the *Caprichos* at the time of its publication. “Las posibilidades de ganancias que se creía poder obtener con la venta de la edición no materializaron. Los 240 ejemplares de los Caprichos no encontraron comprador. Con todo, la serie fue conocida por los iniciados. Así, por ejemplo, los Osuna tenían dos ejemplares de la primera tirada de extraordinaria calidad. Es de imaginar que los Caprichos habrían sido acogidos con admiración en los círculos artísticos: Domenico Tiepolo (1727-1804) dejó a su muerte—junto a casi todos los bocetos de Goya aparecidos hasta entonces—una serie completa de los Caprichos.” (Paas-Zeidler 11)

²⁶ See Sigrun Paas-Zeidler's informative essays on Goya, published in *Goya. Caprichos, Desastres, Tauromaquia, Disparates. Reproducción completa de las cuatro series* (Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili, 1980) 19-20.

²⁷ Though it is not my intention here, it could prove productive, elsewhere, to argue that Goya's irony—the satire of these images, between anguish and *capricho*—is itself indicative of the marginal position of the artist and the *ilustrados* in relation to the “antiquated” practices of knowledge Goya critiques. For irony may be located, in Goya's work, on a sliding scale with the fatalism and terror exhibited in his *Caprichos*, a suggestion of the *ilustrado*'s resignation to a power much greater than himself; irony, in this sense, shares a place with the position of the artist in response to power, as an indication of oppression.

own etchings, Goya's lack of influence despite his close ties to the Court, would render him vulnerable to the Inquisition like the young girl masqueraded into the crowd, and subjugated to powerful demands, as the defeated servants to Count Palatino's domination.

By drawing from another image from the *Caprichos* I wish to recapitulate some features of Goya's social commentary that have been explored so far, this time making reference to the critique of popular superstitions and religious fanaticism, while suggesting that this critique's staging of the monstrous and human in motion may open up questions of the *Caprichos* in relation to the conditions of an emergent modernity in Spain. The final plate of the *Caprichos*, "Ya es hora" (Fig. 2.3), shows four figures, each with a twisted facial expression and open mouth as if to imply howling. The presumably male "actors" exhibit disfigured features—their gaping mouths being the most readily identifiable contortion—that approach the demonic, one of them facing the observer at center with two budding horns. The frenetic movement of their reaching out, as well as the gesture of one character with his head thrown back, another with arms in the air, invokes a sense of chaos in this scene, a sort of diabolical possession or sudden outbreak of pandemonium. Here may be seen the visual sense of movement that earned Goya his regard as modern artist, in a still image that figures as much as it disfigures, alludes to the imaginary yet indexes an experience of the real, unidentifiable within a specificity for place and time. But the etching does provide a clue into the content of its satire, I believe, depicted in the characters' mode of dress. For each "demon" is wearing a cloak that resembles the traditional frock of a cardinal, priest or friar; however, the robe of the figure at center exposes his legs, unlike the traditional dress it invokes, and trails to the

ground behind him in an image suggestive of a devil's tail. Tied at the hip of this figure, where one might imagine a friar to have keys attached to the rope of his belt, may be seen a cluster of miniature legs, maybe human or animal, but evocative of the imaginary ingredients for spell-making, for black magic. The conflation of the wicked and the sacred here suggests a carnivalesque inversion between the demonic and sanctity, between Catholic dogma and popular superstitions, a fear provoked in society by inquisitorial persecution. The commotion among the figures might be understood as a frightful calling, a terrifying arrival at an event—sinister and Christian—just when “it is time.” From this affective display of terror I perceive the grotesque features as incited by a certain “coming” of the unspecified event. Death, the second coming, judgment day, all of these finalities are associated with the fearful arrival in time that Goya portrays, in accordance with the terrors incited by religious dogma of the Church and the practices of the Inquisition during Goya's era. Whether time for mass or the sabbath, Goya shows the panic that ensues, blurring the distinction between the holy and the wicked, further suggesting this etching in the *Caprichos* as the artist's vilification of religious fanaticism and popular superstitions, both of which may provoke the fear of the actors depicted in this scene.

The panicked movement of the actors in this image is acutely expressive (to recall a feature of Goya's regard as “modern” artist) in relation to the absence of a reason that might describe *why* they are gesturing frenetically. That is, the pandemonium does have a cause, but it remains without explanation, except by a clue from the title of the image itself, which helps a viewer understand that the time for *something worth panicking* has come. It seems to me, upon further consideration of this commotion, that Goya suggests

the howling of the figures is voiceless, for two demons hold a thumb up to their gaping mouths as if to imply these men are mute, a gesture that identifies a frustrated attempt to speak—imagined as a repeated tapping of an extended thumb to the lips and mouth—a silence that Goya likewise experienced as he became deaf during the years in which he conceived of the *Caprichos*.²⁸ In this image the inference of the characters' mute cries proves disturbing, an unsettling utterance endowed with meaning (i.e., the figures do gesture towards something frightful, but *what?*) yet devoid of clues to answer the question alluded to by Goya's caption (i.e., if it is time, then time *for what?*). Here Goya has imagined a terrorizing scenario without a recognizable origin. The movement of the actors, again, retains the supposition that their contorted bodies and faces are the material evidence of power at work, in that something unnamed, something terrible and invisible—a moment in time arrived—has indeed come and should be feared.

This ambiguity, as in most of the *Caprichos*, provokes interpretation for the images' failure to provide the source of the emotive response that powerfully moves these actors to panic. Perhaps this lack of referent (i.e., what *time* has come?) is an indication of self-restraint by Goya, who was aware of possible censure for his publication of the *Caprichos*, even trial by Inquisition, were he to answer this question explicitly. Or perhaps this hidden time of reference further indicates that the etchings were intended for reception by a contemporary viewer who might readily identify the satire at work here, a subtlety of visual inference codified for an audience of “insiders” like the *ilustrados*. Or maybe the silent scream is itself indicative of a purely affective

²⁸ Art critic Nigel Glendinning has commented on the autobiographical nature of Goya's *Los Caprichos*, specifically in his etchings on political satire, “works depicting real or imaginary subjects which the artist recalled or invented” (25) and so too marked by the artist's recovery from illness and, after 1793, his own deteriorating health and eventual deafness.

response—that of panic—which appears here without cause—that is, a *lost* cause—an anguish that is characteristic of the *Caprichos* and, speculatively, of the minority position of those who desired to enact modernizing reforms taken up from enlightened principles. Yet Goya’s choice to end the series of the *Caprichos* with this plate leads me to believe that the ambiguous “time” to which the artist refers might be a choice to end his critique with a poignant image: a howl that effectively portrays the muffled voice of an awakening from dreamlike images that, after all, were figments of “imaginary” scenes. The caprice inherent in the title of the series thereby occupies a dual, satirical position, that of “imagined” frivolity and likewise of anguish, perhaps representative of a greater frustration experienced by the *ilustrados* who, having lost influence after the Court’s dismissal of Jovellanos and Saavedra, would largely prove unsuccessful in producing the enlightened reforms within a political sphere of influence. The terror imaged here, it seems, may be said to embody both the critical eye Goya retains in the other *Caprichos* (i.e., a critique of religious superstition and fear for “the coming”) as much as an affective response to his own circumstance and that of the *ilustrados*, a sort of empathetic gesture of irony with which to end his series of etchings. That is, Goya takes up the logic of the *ilustrado* as his lens to criticize the “non-enlightened world,” and thereby reveals the artist himself as subject to the “silent howl” of surrender, a purely affective response marked by cynicism and resignation. As Hofer notes,

“Ya es hora” (It is time), *Caprichos* Plate 80, concludes the published series on a diabolic note. It is the tocsin call to awaken at the last split second of a nightmare’s hold. After all none of this was really “true”—just the fragment of a disordered imagination, as Joseph Addison says in his essay “On the Pleasures of the Imagination” (*Spectator*, July 3, 1712) which Goya’s friend José Luis Munárriz translated: “When the brain is hurt by an accident, or the mind disordered by dreams or sickness, the fancy is overrun with wild dismal ideas, and terrified with a thousand hideous monsters of its own framing.” (Hofer 5-6)

Goya's terrified actors, satirical in function and panicked in guise, cue his viewer to partake in a traumatic awakening with this, the last etching of the series. The imagined scenarios of society's monstrosities were but a dream that could end, in due time, like the closing of a book; or, if Goya intended to address his fellow *ilustrados* by prodding at their imaginations, would Goya's audience merely consider the *Caprichos* a nightmare of chimeras without relative significance to his time?

Despite the images' resistance to narrativity—and their ambiguity that provoke multiple readings—the unlocatable time and space of the *Caprichos* endow the imaginary scenes with a critical function inasmuch as they refer to Goya's stark perception of social realities that the artist chooses to satirize. The distortion of figures and scenes, I have argued earlier, resists an identifiable place and time inasmuch as they demonstrate these imaginary characters as “actors” in Spanish society and politics at the turn of the eighteenth century. Or, to restate again in relation to the power struggles depicted in these images, the monstrous contortions produced by the violence (i.e., both symbolic and material) exerted upon the bodies are themselves indicative of these actors as *subject to the forces* that incite their panic, render them victimized, or induce their vomiting. The young girl, unaware or not of her family's greedy motivations, is submitted to an arranged fate of marriage. The Count, standing in for aristocratic privilege, tortures his subordinates without perceivable or justifiable cause. And the demonic figures, moaning and gesturing violently, are provoked to a state of panic by an unknown source. Even the artist, acting against his will, surrenders a series of controversial etchings for fear of persecution.

Power, it may be observed, is at work within the ambiguous representation and its

half-concealed referent, between the image of satire and its social reality in the “forces” that constitute these actors as subjugated to a greater structure of power relations that the characters—and at times the viewer—do not have enough information to comprehend completely. The Church, the State, and society, all three (though by no means mutually exclusive domains) are perceived by the *ilustrado* as perpetuating the backwards traditionalism that Goya mocks with resignation. The imaginary of the *Caprichos*, at once grounded in the real and approaching the surreal, monstrous and human, Enlightened and superstitious, is what has defined Goya’s modernity for his critics. And so too should I like to suggest that it defines the *Caprichos* as a representation of conditions for the modern that would become negotiated in the theater of greater power struggles—among the institutions of society, the State and Church—responsible for subjugating Goya’s actors to participating in actions well beyond their own comprehension. The movement of contorted bodies, faces and features of these actors—Goya’s making monsters of Spanish traditionalism and the *Antiguo Régimen*—are as much a response to, as they are responsible for, the violence of power exerted on these subjects, both portrayed as vile and ignorant.

Before continuing, I should like to address a matter that I have alluded to without discussion until now, the monstrous features exhibited in the *Caprichos* as a prefiguration of the modern. Although I have looked to criticism of Goya to ask how the etchings are regarded as emblematic of the “modern” for their expression and content, I would like to explore this point further by questioning, to what might Goya’s monsters refer? Here, a summary of what function the monstrous plays in the *Caprichos* will prove helpful. I have noted earlier that the grotesque features of Goya’s characters are demonstrative of a

physical response to power relations acting upon them (i.e., the vomiting servants in “Al Conde Palatino,” the frenzy of gestures and howls in “Ya es hora”), as well as indicative of the artist’s own critique of non-enlightened practices and institutions (i.e., the crowd awaiting the young girl in “El sí pronuncian,” the fanaticism of the devilish-religious figures in “Ya es hora”); from these sketches, it would seem that the monstrous occupies the dual position of: 1) demonstrating the actors in these sketches as subject to controlling forces that render them monstrous, and 2) vilifying (by making monstrous) the non-enlightened institutions and social practices that are forwarded as satire. That is, Goya’s monsters figure as much as they disfigure, sublimating in the visual evidence of corporeal responses to power, to the “counter-modern” practices of the State, Church and contemporary society that the artist perceives as harmful, even terrifying.

The “monster” as a powerful figuration is indeed suggested from the word’s etymological origins. The word “monster” has its roots in the Latin verb *monstrare* (to reveal, to show), which is the origin of *mostrar* in contemporary Spanish and is akin to the English infinitive “to demonstrate.” It would seem by this definition that the “monster” has the ability to “show” not only itself, like the faces of the devilish figures howling, but perhaps also to demonstrate, exhibit, or *reveal* some other thing. In this way the figuration of a monster may refer to something (i.e., the subject of Goya’s critique) as much as it may index some-thing else (the forces acting upon Goya’s characters). The face of the monstrous looking assistant in “El sí pronuncian” collaborates with the figures in power to introduce the girl into the crowd, a clear example for Goya’s demonizing portrayal of the sinister forces at work in the sacrificial offering of the girl’s hand in marriage. The figuration of the monster in “Ya es hora” similarly demonstrates, as I see

it, how the demons might stand in for a vilification of the Church, of “counter-modern” superstitions that control these actors; more importantly, however, they also gesture towards an unknown cause for panic, an unnamed power that produces their anxiety.

It is the figuration of the monster, the unknown cause of danger, that most interests me here. Franco Moretti has argued compellingly that horror literature—the figure of the monster and the vampire—tends to arise in the modern imaginary as a fear that disturbs a culture from its margins, two representations of which he traces to the Frankenstein and Dracula models that continue to crop up in Western societies.²⁹ For, in culture,

[t]he metaphor [of the monster] is no longer a metaphor [in nineteenth-century horror fiction]: it is a character as real as the others. “The supernatural,” Todorov has written, “often appears because we take a figurative sense literally.” Taking the figurative sense literally means considering the metaphor as an element of reality. It means, in other words, that a particular intellectual construction—the metaphor and the ideology expressed within it—really has become a ‘material force,’ an independent entity, that escapes the rational control of its user. (83)

Moretti’s assessment of the monster for the meaning it bears to rationality, although taken from literary examples, accurately describes Goya’s imagination in the *Caprichos*. For the reality of monstrosity is precisely what Goya exhibits in the *Caprichos*—identified by his critics as a tendency of Goya’s modernity—as a figuration of some “thing” that shows itself (i.e., it demonstrates, according to the word’s etymology) as much as it escapes rationality (i.e., that elusive some “thing” else that sets actors into motion beyond their control or comprehension). The figuration of a monster arises by the exertion of power that becomes exhibited in the gestures, contortions, and movement of the *Caprichos*’

²⁹ Specifically, Moretti argues that these monsters have continued to reappear in postindustrial societies, manifesting as the phobic underside of modernity’s complex relationship among collective social alienation and gendered sexual desire. See Moretti’s article “The Dialectic of Fear,” *New Left Review* 136 (1982): 67-85.

actors, rendering monstrous both the subjugated actors and their controlling masters. But as Moretti will remind his readers, it is the elusive nature of these forces that figure the monster, beyond comprehension by the actors, the viewer, and now the imaginary of the artist. No longer something fictitious but perceived as a reality, the monster is endowed with the qualities and functions of an autonomous, ghastly being. That is, the monster becomes produced as a “thing” that escapes the discursivity of certain knowledge.

To consider for a moment the origins of the monstrous figure, I think of the act of “revealing” as a sort of “bringing something to sight” whose presence is known “to be there” but remains hidden from view. After all, popular narratives of monsters, like those hiding under a child’s bed or in the closet, prove frightening when the monster appears or *threatens to appear* from hiding, as its grotesque sight should remain well hidden. Its “appearance,” therefore, might indicate the threat of something that, terrible and horrific, materializes even if one does not want to see it; or, similarly, the mere guise of the monster is the cause of fear, even if it cannot be seen. The power of the monster’s illusion, whether hiding or coming into sight, proves to be the source of terror, a suggestion of Goya’s own rendering of “invisible forces” controlling the actors of the *Caprichos* that remain “out of sight” for these characters and even, at times, for the viewer. The word “monster,” in light of this play between absence and presence, between invisible powers and material gestures portrayed in the *Caprichos*, is derived from the Latin noun *monstrum*, stemming from the verb *monere* (to warn). A *monstrum* often implies an omen in Latin usage, a foretelling of an impending event, an immediate future yet to come.³⁰ And so the word’s etymology proves to be a helpful tool to suggest that, by

³⁰ My gratitude to Nicholas Theisen for suggesting the etymology of “monster” and its association with the Latin verb *monere*.

derivation, the monster is endowed with the possibility of *revealing* something, of showing some “thing” that may be “ominous” in the artist’s imaginary—sensed that it “is there” but remains out of sight—like the foreboding powers, illusory and unidentifiable, to the actors controlled by the institutions and social practices that Goya the *ilustrado* pictures at times as demonic. The fear induced by the monster, for its appearance (a figuration), is related to a time yet to come, sensed with danger, similarly to how Goya demonstrates the panicked movement of his actors in “Ya es hora.” For the monstrous figuration, it seems, might show itself inasmuch as it reveals some-thing else, the sight of some “thing” sensed as a warning, a foreboding event perceived in the present, yet not fully materialized. The threatening appearance of the monster—an event foreseen with terror—is not merely the product of a fictitious beast conjured up by the artist’s imagination, but arises in the moment of danger for a perceived or real threat, similarly exhibited in the contorted bodies, disfigured faces, and frenetic gestures of these actors.

The monstrous in the imaginary of the *Caprichos* may indicate a relatively “modern” demonstration of a relationship between practices of knowledge and the subjugation of these “actors” to powerful “forces” in the etchings, forces that do indeed escape comprehension by the actors moved around like pawns to the social and institutional practices of the “non-enlightened” monarchy, Church, and masses. On the one hand, the monstrous is a figuration. Its appearance represents Goya’s satire for the “counter-modern” practices of knowledge by the *Antiguo Régimen* and by society, against which the *ilustrado* defines himself in opposition, yet to which Goya himself would become subjugated. In this sense, Goya makes monsters of antiquated or “counter-modern” beliefs in practice: superstitions, arranged marriages, aristocratic privilege.

Therein the monstrous manifests itself, at times, as a grotesque corporeal response—a sense of movement, as I have described earlier—to the violence of power exerted upon the unknowing. And on the other hand, the monstrous indexes a greater power structure at play. Its appearance indicates the anxieties of power struggle produced in the etchings as an affect of suffering, a warning sign that “some thing” well beyond comprehension—like the monster, an invisible force that causes terror, even when hidden from view—controls the actors in these scenes as subjects. The monstrous materializes, in this sense, as a gesture of fright, an expressive movement of the body.

In the logic of the *Caprichos* the “monstrous” tends to reveal itself as a figuration, a visual indication that Goya’s actors are subject to unintelligible “forces” (power), and are made monstrous by the practice of unenlightened philosophies (knowledge) which subjugate and render them defeated, suffering, and panicked. This assessment of subjugation approximates how Michel Foucault, over the course of his reflections on forms of power and knowledge, described the conditions of a modern subject, one who became “subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings [of the term “subject”] suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to” (“The Subject and Power,” Foucault 212). The inescapable terror to which the actors of Goya’s *Caprichos* become subjugated might be considered, in this light, a modern occurrence in that the structures of power exerted upon them often remain incomprehensible to the figures displaying grotesque movement. For Goya, the unenlightened monsters embody the practice of an antiquated knowledge that perpetuates social ills: the cooption of freedom of choice in the arranged marriage of the unknowing daughter, the corporeal torture without cause by the hand of

noble privilege, and dogmatic religious fanaticism unfounded in principles of reason. The condition of being subject to these forces, for the *ilustrado*, defines these actors' ignorance as Goya's matter of satire, a figuration of imaginary chimeras of the *Antiguo Régimen*'s power to which the artist himself would become subject.

The monstrous imagination surges as a figuration, sublimating as the ghastly evidence of power struggles that these actors—Goya's audience of *ilustrados*, the artist himself, and the characters depicted in the *Caprichos*—fail to understand, that do not correlate within enlightened logic. This is, after all, why power relations become visible as monsters (i.e., “demon”-strated in the *Caprichos*, or de-“monstrated,” to play with the etymology of the word), at the periphery of Enlightenment thought held as truth by the *ilustrados*, and as promise for modernizing social and political reform. For the monster is born not only from the imagination of Goya's critique, but becomes produced in material form as the beast of difference (i.e., “counter-modern” and not “enlightened”) that is pushed to the periphery of Enlightenment reason, a figuration of some “thing” that becomes disavowed by a forward-looking (i.e., modern) rationality. The promise of Enlightenment reason to “free man” of his bonds to these monstrous social ills, the hope of inciting reform that would take up the responsibility of oneself from the subject-hood of his domination by the grotesque regimes of power, is the sign of modernity under which an emerging subject-hood became formed—the citizen—in an effort to supplant “that which made man monstrous” with the tenets of reason. And so with monsters and modern subjects in mind, I turn to a final etching from the *Caprichos*.

Modern Reason: Dreams and Disasters

The most recognized image from the *Caprichos*, “El sueño de la razón produce monstruos” (Fig. 2.4) depicts an artist with his head down on folded arms, sleeping at his worktable scattered with papers. Goya originally intended this signature work of the series to be the *Caprichos* frontispiece, standing apart from the images that would follow, a suggestion to his audience that the proceeding etchings make a mockery of the un-enlightened world, its social ills and antiquated institutions. However, the artist’s awareness of potential repercussions for such a bold statement—censorship by the Court, even making him suspect to Inquisition, both of which did materialize after publication of the work—is believed to have been cause enough for Goya to later insert the image in the middle of the series as plate 43, thereby serving as an embedded “hidden key” that an audience of contemporary *ilustrados* would presumably understand.³¹ This modification of the *Caprichos* to avoid persecution, the artist’s choice to “embed” the explicit purpose of his satire, might stand as another example of the precarious situation in which Goya and the *ilustrados* found themselves in relation to the oppression of the enlightened philosophies by the *Antiguo Régimen*. However, the image does indeed call attention to itself in comparison to the other eighty prints in the series, leading one to speculate Goya’s choice to “disguise” his satirical intentions in the *Caprichos*. For “El sueño de la razón produce monstruos” is quite notably the only print in the *Caprichos* that contains

³¹ I take the suggestion of plate 43, “El sueño de la razón produce monstruos,” as a “hidden key” from Sigrun Paas-Zeidler’s introductory essay “Goya y su tiempo” in *Goya. Caprichos, Desastres, Tauromaquia, Disparates. Reproducción completa de las cuatro series* (Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili, 1980), 7-16. Paas-Zeidler states, “El artista escondió en la mitad de la serie la hoja clave para entenderla. El ‘Ydioma Universal’ que quería simbolizar con sus ochenta impresiones o laminas eran las habladurías generales del mundo español aún no ilustrado, compuesto—en realidad—por prejuicios, superchería, idiotéz, fanatismo y formas de comportamiento anticuadas tanto en la vida mundana e intelectual como en la espiritual” (11).

its title etched within the framed image itself, the other etchings instead accompanied by captions placed in the margin below each scene. The inscription of the title to the “Sueño” within the image, on the lower left side of the artist’s desk, is likewise notably out of place when compared to the ambiguous, at times ironic, subtext of captions such as “Ya es hora,” “De qué mal morirá?” (Plate 40), or “¿No hay quien nos desate?” (Plate 75), all of which as texts provoke an ominous sense of helplessness or submission, even without consideration for the events figured in the corresponding images.

The original caption below the “Sueño” is indeed explanatory of Goya’s purpose, unlike the satire he puts forward and, at times, obscures in the other images. The caption, which was erased from the design when the plate was moved from the frontispiece to the middle of the *Caprichos*, was intended to read: “El autor soñando. Su intento sólo es desterrar vulgaridades perjudiciales y perpetuar, con esta obra de los *Caprichos*, el testimonio sólido de la verdad.”³² The original subtext announces the artist’s intent rather than satirizing, thereby revealing Goya’s critique in the images that follow in the form of an allegorical “key to understanding” his work that the artist wished his audience to keep in mind when viewing the other *Caprichos*.

So too does the original caption speak to the enlightened promise of enacting “modernizing” reform that the *ilustrado* presents in his etchings. Inferred by the act of “banishing” (i.e., “desterrar”) “harmful vulgarities” is the struggle of mastery held as truth by the tenets of Enlightenment thought, a struggle between “traditionalism” and the emergent promise of a new social order defined by “reason.” For the act of “casting out monsters”—the superstitions, social ills and “vulgaridades” of Spanish society—makes

³² See Paas-Zeidler’s introductory essay in *Goya. Caprichos, Desastres, Tauromaquia, Disparates. Reproducción completa de las cuatro series* (Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili, 1980), 11.

the image all the more representative: the *ilustrados* entrenched in an ideological struggle to dismantle the *Antiguo Régimen*, and to mastering “monsters” with “reason,” curing “social ills” with “truth,” and dominating “superstition” with “Enlightenment thought.” Yet these parts seem to be unequal. Goya’s choice to edit his work, to suppress this caption, may be said to demonstrate one example—albeit more representative than indicative—of the Enlightenment having played out as suppressed by the powers of State and Church in contemporary society, exhibited by Goya’s act of self-censorship. The suppression of the caption and the subsequent embedding of the “Sueño” within the *Caprichos* as a kind of “password to understanding” his enlightened critique of Spanish society again gestures towards the *ilustrados* as marginalized, even removed from positions of influence and power, like the defeated Jovellanos or Saavedra. And yet again the production of the *Caprichos*, for Goya, renders him subject to the power struggles that would lead him to critique and imagine his social actors in these etchings, as much as it related to the very real effects of institutional suppression he experienced. That is, Goya’s “Sueño” speaks as much to the artist’s time as it alludes to how the logic of modernizing reforms became frustrated—or, like the caption, suppressed—in attempts to enact a rupture from the “forces” (i.e., society’s institutions, the State and Church) that Goya critiques. What I will now address by reading the etching is the promise of enlightened ideals and the attempt at mastery over its “monsters” in the greater power struggles exhibited in, though invisible to, the actors of the *Caprichos*. I look to the image and text of the “Sueño” to read them within the dream of reason’s enlightened logic, when it emerges at its most disastrous, depicted in the etching as a moment of rupture, an experience of impending danger.

Presumably, as “El sueño de la razón” has been interpreted, the artist is Goya himself, and the nightmares of grotesque monsters—owls, enormous bats, and a large-eyed cat, believed to be Goya’s own—emerge from darkness behind him.³³ The slumbering figure, doubled over, appears restless, surrounded by the shadows of monsters that remain in flight and others, wings spread, imminently about to perch on the desk behind him. Many of the monsters still hover in darkness, as if Goya wishes his viewer to perceive the artist figure as their prey, a victim to nightmares that have yet to be at their worst. For many of the animals have not yet landed on the desk, their beaks open as if to suggest a pandemonium of caws that grow louder with the creatures’ proximity, their eyes fixed on the sleeping figure. In the far left corner of the image one of the monsters may be seen, a large-eyed owl with open beak, holding a pencil in its claw, a gesture interpreted as an invitation to the artist to depict this grotesque world—the nightmare that ensues with the sleep of reason.

From this spatial division in the picture, of the monstrous world behind the artist and the space of the sleeping man, I distinguish two planes of composition within Goya’s etching: the background and foreground, each with thematic characteristics that separate the two in a binary relationship. The obscure background may be readily associated with the realm of fantasy, of dreaming, which shares its border with the lit foreground of the slumbering artist, the domain of (quite literally, “en-lightened”) reality. I notice in the shadowing of the aquatint, from an outline between the artist and the monsters behind him, that there is no overlap between the two planes; that is, the nightmare does not

³³ Regarding the autobiographical nature of the *Caprichos*, see Glendinning’s critical essays on Goya the artist and his works, *Goya and His Critics* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1977).

penetrate the space of the restless figure, but it remains behind him in a separate space.

This opposition between the foreground and background seems tenuous, however, for the movement of the monsters toward the realm of the artist—and the invitation by the monster with pencil in claw to render this dream visually—implies an impending danger, an ominous fissure between the two worlds, and between the characteristic distinctions that separate the nightmare as “fiction” from reality.

Because the image suggests an imminent rupture between its two planes—the dreaming man, his rationality, soon to become invaded by the nightmare, his fantasy—I observe from Goya’s cue to think of the work as positing a tenuous relationship between the monstrous, which appears to haunt the artist figure, and that which may be understood rationally as a dreaming state. That is, perhaps the substance of nightmares retains a thinner barrier from the real as it threatens to merge with the artist’s space. The opposition between the dreaming and awakening states remains unstable, not quite porous, but threateningly volatile for Goya’s sleeping artist.³⁴ I want to consider this contradiction in the work—the imaginary as real, the nightmarish as human—as Goya stages this conflation as a moment of rupture, of impending danger, in the logic of his “Sueño” between the monstrous and the dreaming subject of his etching.

³⁴ Such an undoing of the dialectic opposition established by Enlightenment thought is the touchstone of Horkheimer and Adorno’s well-known work *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, translated by Edmund Jephcott, Stanford, California: Stanford UP, 2002.) “Thinking, as understood by the Enlightenment, is the process of establishing a unified, scientific order and of deriving factual knowledge from principles, whether these principles are interpreted as arbitrarily posited axioms, innate ideas, or the highest abstractions. The laws of logic establish the most universal relationships within the order and define them. Unity lies in self-consistency [of the logical system of enlightened ideas]” (63). The system of logic subsumes and categorizes its objects of study, pigeon-holing them into a consistent taxonomy, free of discrepancies. The authors continue, “Knowledge [...] is one with judgment, by which perceptions are incorporated into the system. Any thinking not guided by the system is directionless or authoritarian. Reason contributes nothing but the idea of systematic unity, the formal elements of fixed conceptual relationships” (63-64).

The widely accepted translation of this signature image, in English, stands as “The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters.” This translation does indeed suit the allegorical meaning of Goya’s intent, as is presented by his original caption to the “Sueño”; the promise of enlightened principles and “truth”—to use Goya’s words—might “cast out harmful vulgarities” of religious fanaticism, injustices of the State, and the Spanish traditionalism that the viewer will hopefully see in the *Caprichos* as antiquated, unenlightened, absurd and even dangerous. The enlightened reading of the image, as Goya intended it, speaks to an audience of *ilustrados*, cautioning against the slumbering of human rationality, against the plague of Spanish traditionalism perceived as an “illness,” and against the *Antiguo Régimen* whose institutions maintained their stronghold of counter-modern governance. Goya’s moral—his “hidden key” to the *Caprichos*—might be stated then as the following: when the faculties of reason sleep or rest, “civilized” man submits to his irrational side, which leads him to ignore his potential to think logically, to distinguish reason, and to establish matters of ethics. This didactic “moral” derived from the image and text relies on a concept of man dominant in the Western philosophy of the eighteenth century, a philosophy that elevated civilized human beings in a hierarchy from the barbaric man and the animal. It would seem that rational thought would deliver humanity from social anxieties unbound by superstition, by magic or witchcraft, and by religious fanaticism—in sum, the promise of Enlightenment thought to produce a rupture from the *Antiguo Régimen* that was perceived as propagating these social myths. From this philosophical concept of “mastery” of the Enlightenment, which, namely from Descartes, may have found its roots in classical philosophy, the reasoning being is therefore uniquely human because he is capable of reason.³⁵ And from reason,

³⁵ I read this “rational” distinction between training one’s “good” and suppressing one’s “bad” half of the

rational principles would endow “enlightened” man with intelligence to conceive of the logical methodologies for the sciences, to form and accumulate bodies of knowledge based on methods that seek to discover and uphold the inherent “truth” in man’s environment; in sum, the legacy of reason that would become the basis for modern pursuits of knowledge and its institutional disciplines. It becomes apparent from these philosophical ideals that the intended moral of Goya’s “Sueño” relies on an ideologically informed notion of humanity in the Enlightenment: that when man allows himself to lose this distinguished critical faculty—when he allows reason to lie dormant—man, like the artist, risks intrusion into his thoughts of the sub-human, the irrational, the beastly, and horrific.

I should like to rethink the interpretation of Goya’s title for the work “El sueño de la razón produce monstruos” because the word *sueño* may be understood to imply a meaning that is not conveyed by the word “sleep” alone. The word *sueño* alludes to “sleep” as much as it leads me to believe that it invokes another sense, that of a “dream” or aspiration to enact modernizing reform by the institutionally marginalized *ilustrados* in Spain. In this way the context of Goya’s image lends itself to an interpretation of *dreams*, of the human imaginary and its projects, of a collective aspiration to social

human conscience, as the idea was taken up centuries later by Cartesian philosophy, thereby citing from Plato’s *Phaedrus* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1995). The man driving a chariot of two, winged horses, one of a good breed and the other with wild blood serves as a binary that was representative of the philosophy of the Enlightenment: “The heaviness of the bad horse drags its charioteer toward the earth and weighs him down if he has failed to train it well, and this causes the most extreme toil and struggle that a soul will face” (33). The consequences for a man who does not learn to train the irrational beast within were punishment and defeat of ‘spirit.’ Goya’s painting has no such didactic message; instead, it gestures towards the belief of the animal and monstrous qualities within every man. On the philosophy of the rational subject during the Enlightenment, I refer to Decartes’ *A Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, and Seeking Truth in the Sciences* (see Donald Cress’ translation, published in Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing, 1993). My sincere thanks to Mike Kicey, whose conversations on the *Phaedrus* and on the philosophical inheritance of the Enlightenment have been a tremendous source of help in thinking through this “mastery” depicted in Goya’s image as the struggle between monsters and reason.

progress. My interpretation of Goya is as well informed by an interpretation of dreams, of temporal fissures, of historical “monsters,” and of the madness depicted in the *Caprichos*. The title to Goya’s etching may also be read as the “dream” of reason that produces monsters, whereby *sueño* alludes to a project born from the collective imaginary, a conjuring up of fantasy or, during the “enlightened” era, a rational notion or philosophy. Here I should like to revisit the dreaming subject in Goya’s etching, to turn the enlightened “faith” in the reasoning subject, the “moral” of this image, on its head; inasmuch as Goya may have wished to show that the *sleep of reason produces monsters*, therein also lies the possibility of reading the artist’s “Sueño” as the content of this “dream” at its most perverse: that the dream or the *project of modernity* has produced monsters in the name of reason, by bolstering a positivist faith in progress, and by enforcing modernizing reforms through violence. The nightmare Goya portrays in his dreaming artist, I will suggest, is not only a conjuring of fantasy from the position of a solitary or mad, dreaming subject, but is instead born from the very margins of rationality (as Monetti argues) that eradicate the “monsters” left in its wake—the real consequences of violence and fear that do not seem to correlate with its positivist imaginary. To ask of enlightened man, in retrospect, by invoking the question of philosopher Manuel Cruz, “cómo pudo ser que ese mismo hombre, que fue capaz de llevar en muchos momentos a la sociedad por la senda del progreso, que creó las condiciones de su bienestar, también la llevara (y la mantenga) al borde mismo de la catástrofe”? (127). The question, both evocative of a past and the present (i.e., the society then “brought to” and now “maintained” at the border of catastrophe), becomes a question of temporal inheritance,

of *sueños* founded in enlightened reason and definitive of the modern, and of this partial trace from the past that remains in the present.

Whereas the Enlightenment in its epistemological formation instituted binary, taxonomic classifications in the methods from which its philosophies were derived (e.g., truth/falsehood, light/darkness, justice/criminality, logical/illogical, rational/irrational, the awakening/dreaming state) these dualities promised by categorization to exorcise the irrational, the illogical, the inexplicable, and the unreal from the domain of the perceptibly “real” and from the modern. One might think of a Western European example of this in cultural practice, the “rational” urban planning and architectural reforms of the mid-nineteenth century, whereby cities were redesigned, often entire sections demolished and reconstructed, to transform the medieval “chaos” of winding streets into a grid of navigable and symmetrical quadrants. The graphic and spatial reforms would more easily minimize disorientation, maximize safety, and open up streets for efficient commerce, sanitation, and traffic.³⁶ Carlos III, a king popularly dubbed “el mejor Alcalde” of Madrid, began to undertake enlightened urban planning reforms of the capital city during Goya’s time, both to maximize efficiency in urban reconstruction designs and in administrative operations. These reforms, however, would become interrupted by the War of Independence against Napoleon’s troops, whose battles and civilian uprisings took place in the streets of Madrid in the early nineteenth century, only to be taken up, again, in the 1830s and eventually in the 1850s, with a plan to quarter Madrid into what is recognizably today the semi-octagonal grid-like expansion of the city’s center. These

³⁶ For an overview of these “liberal reforms” of Spain’s capital city, see Carlos González Esteban’s book, *Madrid: Sinopsis de su evolución urbana* (Madrid: Ediciones La Librería, 2001) and the article “Reflexiones sobre la crisis del planeamiento” by Fernando de Terán, in *Ciudad y Territorio: Revista de Ciencia Urbana* (No. 3, June-Sept., 1970:11-30).

urban reforms evenly dissected, quartered, and reorganized the cityscape to overcome its former labyrinthian character, incidentally disallowing the modern inhabitant maximum license in his environment.³⁷ The casting out of irrationality from the concept of the enlightened philosophies, the denial of the illogical and the seemingly unreal from the domain of “the human” in the Enlightenment (for its association with the beastly) endowed modernity with its own contradiction by categorizing and describing away these qualities *ad infinitum*, denying irrationality from an experience of the real, just as the modern cityscape became deprived of its shadows. A mechanism of disavowal, Goya’s monsters are figured in opposition to—and as a product of—enlightened promise.

I see in Goya’s etching the confrontation of these same binary distinctions as they become blurred, obfuscated, even unraveled within the characterizations of what is understood or defined as human. With the monsters about to creep into the realm of the real, that of the sleeping artist, the hermetic logic of difference between rationality and the surreal fails at the barrier where the beastly nearly encroaches into the domain of

³⁷ Walter Benjamin offers a similar example of urban planning in his discussion of Haussmann’s “Napoleonic imperialism,” exemplified by the architect’s plans to institute new boulevards in Paris. In his 1935 exposé “Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” Benjamin explains the plan to redesign the city streets as a form of social control, a security against revolution: “The true goal of Haussmann’s projects was to secure the city against civil war. He wanted to make the erection of barricades in Paris impossible for all time. [...] Widening the streets is designed to make the erection of barricades impossible, and new streets are to furnish the shortest route between the barracks and the workers’ districts” (*Arcades* 12). The case of Madrid is no exception, as engineers and architects borrowed similar designs from other European capitals to construct the *ensanche* of Madrid (in the 1850s, after the War of Independence and the First and Second Carlist Wars) as a grid-like structure, carving wide boulevards as early as the reign of Carlos III. Most notably are the designs by José de Hermosilla, under commission by king Carlos III, to establish Parisian boulevards in the heart of the city, starting with the Paseo del Prado, which later would become extended to the calle Recoletos and the present-day Castellana that runs the extent of the city from north to south, an artery of traffic that under dictatorship was renamed “El Generalísimo.” This logic for efficiency and social control may be observed at their most aggressive in Francoist reconstruction plans to rebuild Madrid and its radial neighborhoods in the early postwar era, where architectural and urban plans aimed to open streets for possible military occupation, surveillance, and in some designs, to withstand air raids and a possible “soplo atómico y [...] onda explosiva de las bombas ordinarias” (Ureña 190). See Gabriel Ureña’s work, *Arquitectura urbanística civil y militar en el período de la Autarquía (1936-1945)* (Madrid: Ediciones Istmo, 1979).

Goya's artist, demonstrated as the horror of an impending danger. For the very logic that struggles against the intrusion of the nightmare—by upholding the human as capable of rationality—suppresses the irrational, “casting it out” of the domain of the real, to use Goya's own words. The monstrous is disavowed in the sense-making imaginary of Enlightenment thought, as it becomes “othered” in opposition to the *ilustrado*'s dream of reason. The subject position of the dreaming artist, in this light, becomes rendered impossible yet real by the ideologies that produce this dream of reason—the human as rational being (as “not an animal” and so, too, not an inherently violent, but *reasoning* creature), yet subject to the sense of estrangement from this reality that haunts him as a nightmare. That is, the dreaming artist becomes at once enmeshed in a seemingly impossible liminality, between a subject and an object of action, those characteristics that have defined the modernity of the *Caprichos* and their actors as *subject to institutional and social powers* that they seemingly do not comprehend. If we consider the “Sueño” within the context of the actors depicted in the *Caprichos*, here Goya's artist is produced and estranged from the world under the promise of sustained modes of (enlightened) knowledge, failing to understand his world as he dreams. The seemingly impossible erosion of “how one knows what he knows” (i.e., when the nightmare is no longer distinguishable from reality) becomes a moment of disruption that marks an epistemological, even an affective crisis in Goya's slumbering artist, as if to ask: is this a waking nightmare, an experience of the real?

By questioning the enlightened knowledge by which Goya's artist experiences his crisis (i.e., just as the *ilustrados* succumbed to marginalization, their *sueño* for reforms defeated), the nightmare may be telling of the historical struggle to modernize Spain in

Goya's time, and the catastrophes produced in the wake of this aspiration. The production of Goya's "Sueño" could well be attributed to the haunting realities of violence, as those living in the nineteenth century faced a state of very real, seemingly irrational horrors of episodic wars in a volatile struggle to establish a modern form of sovereignty. In this manner the nightmares that haunt the artist in the "Sueño" point towards the horrors that would begin to unsettle a time of "irrational" contradiction for a society enmeshed in the struggle for modernity during Goya's lifetime, perceived in retrospect as an extended episode of violence. The modern subject—the citizen—founded upon principles of social equality and rationality became witness to the irrational, yet very material, consequences of catastrophe from the "enlightened dream" of progress, the birth of the nation-state, and a nascent struggle to enact modernizing reforms. For although the *dream of reason* promised a rational hope for a collective future, it also produced the "monsters" of civil war waged in the name of social progress, a "monster" that became disavowed by the positivist imaginary sustained by enlightened logic. In this light, the *Caprichos* serves as an example of the cultural object that lays bare in representation the power struggle of Goya's critique, whereby the movement in his etchings—a tension exhibited for which the "Sueño" is no exception—makes monsters of both the traditional world the artist renders "backwards" and demonic, as well as the affective response of these power relations at work, exerting on the artist and his actors their illusory control and influence.

Perhaps the "Sueño" may be interpreted as this epistemic confrontation between traditionalism and an emergent modernity in Spain as it was imagined—the enlightened "mastery" over the "nightmare" of traditionalism, an imaginary that conceived of the *ilustrados* as *against* the *Antiguo Régimen*, a rupture that distinguished the "modern"

from the “unenlightened” masses.³⁸ For during the historical moment when Goya etched the *Caprichos* there were many perceived “monsters” that escaped rationality, namely the horrors of catastrophe in Europe, in the Americas and within Spain’s borders.

The turn of the early nineteenth century in Spain, in historiographical literature, has been portrayed as one of perpetual war, marked by falsely “peaceful” pauses of totalitarian rule, by popular uprisings, and by unstable political alliances and the consequences of power struggles at their most violent. The catastrophic losses of the naval battle at Trafalgar (nearly seven thousand Spaniards dead or wounded, another seven thousand taken prisoner) followed a conflict between Spain and Portugal, the Napoleonic Wars and, shortly after Goya’s time, the eruption of the Carlist Wars over the course of four decades. These battles set among alliances that engaged European nations in war among and within their political boundaries came to fruition with the invasion of Napoleon’s troops in 1808 and the growing unrest in the American colonies only a few years after Goya etched the *Caprichos*.

In “El sueño de la razón produce monstruos” Goya demonstrates (i.e., making “monstrous” according to the word’s etymology) an impending violence—that man’s resignation to the beastly and horrific is not dreamlike at all, but became an evermore present reality of the ideological struggle for modernization in Spain and its rapidly disintegrating empire. Goya conceived of his “Sueño” during a time of crisis in Europe, at the end of the eighteenth century when European empires were deteriorating by grave

³⁸ In his discussion of Kant’s essay “What is Enlightenment?” Michele Foucault argues that these tendencies in the ethos of Enlightenment thought prefigure the modern: “philosophical interrogation -- one that simultaneously problematizes man's relation to the present, man's historical mode of being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject -- is rooted in the Enlightenment” (“What is Enlightenment?,” Foucault 312).

economic instability and civil unrest, the Napoleonic Wars were ravaging a vast expanse of Europe, colonial independence was already underway, and most notably for the *ilustrados*, the French Revolution had established the first “modern” State, a Republic founded upon such “modern” terrors as the guillotine.³⁹ Among these conditions of domestic and colonial unrest for their impact in Spain, social reform became the emergent cause that would divide Spain ideologically within the next fifty years between liberal constitutionalists and the traditional supporters of the monarchy. Goya’s nightmarish etching depicts an unsettling premonition of the surging violence within, a foretelling of modernity’s violent conflicts already underway and to come, as if the first tremors were felt before a seizure. Jovellanos, a friend to Goya, sensed this surging violence even before the outbreak of the War for Independence, expressing it in one of his letters:

La guerra civil, el mayor de todos los males, es ya inevitable. Yo he corrido desde Barcelona a este rincón. La vergüenza y la rabia están en todos los corazones, sin excepción de uno y, por desgracia, estos sentimientos hierven con tanto ardor, que parece difícil reducirlos a orden. Sin unidad, sin plan, sin medios, ¿cuál será la suerte de los pueblos llamados a tan terrible lucha? (qtd. in García de Cortázar, 271-72)

In this sense, I agree with criticism that suggests Goya’s modernity is as much *of his time* as I will suggest its monsters are representative of a time yet to come. Or, to remember the etymology of the “monster” in language, its figuration tells of an ominous presence, a danger sensed as “there”—in the periphery of sensory, of logical comprehension, of a culture—yet not fully materialized.

³⁹ Marie-Hélène Huet’s work *Monstrous Imagination* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1993) touches on the violent revolts of the French Revolution in the enlightened imaginary as “monstrous,” having shed blood in the name of “human” equality and liberty. See her chapter “Family Undertaking: Madame Tussaud’s Wax Museum,” 188-218.

The turn of the nineteenth century in Spain became increasingly hostile as Europe and the Americas were immersed in violent revolution and armed conflict. Liberalism and constitutionalism, two modernist movements surfacing in Spain during Goya's lifetime, were derived from the philosophies of the Enlightenment, namely, social contract and the right to a protection of private property.⁴⁰ Under the characteristically modern notions of personal liberty and equality for all "citizens,"⁴¹ these principles greatly informed the constitutional movement to modernize Spain in the late eighteenth century, following the French Revolution of 1789, which served as the catalyst for Spanish bureaucrats to undertake "progressive reform" or risk a similar domestic uprising against the crown.⁴² Having succeeded his father only a year prior to the French Revolution, Carlos IV of Spain attempted this bureaucratic overhaul in Spain and the Spanish-American colonies "con la intención de incrementar su eficiencia, para estimular

⁴⁰ For a comprehensive overview of nineteenth-century Spain and the trajectories of liberalism informed by the philosophy of the Enlightenment, see *Antología comentada de la Literatura española: Siglo XIX* (Madrid: Castalia, 1999) by Andrés Amorós, Manuel Camarero and Tomás Pérez Vejo. The authors trace the origins of liberalism in Spain to the rationalism of seventeenth-century European philosophers (Descartes, Leibniz, Pascal, Bacon, etc.) and the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* in France on August 26, 1789, that "inicia así una nueva época en la historia de Europa," marking the event as an epistemological shift that later played out as modern movements in Spain, liberalism, early nationalism, and constitutionalism (17-49).

⁴¹ From the legacy of the Enlightenment, "De allí procede lo que la modernidad confirma, la aparición de una nueva ética civil, al margen de autoridades religiosas, rompedora de los esquemas hasta entonces vigentes al considerar que 'la historia de los hombres es la del progreso propia de lo terrenal, circunscrito a los límites de la vida de aquí abajo, en la medida en que el último objetivo que busca es la felicidad terrestre' (Michel Vovelle). El pensamiento liberal será, en buena medida, un producto de la Ilustración" (Palacios 27).

⁴² In his book *Spain, 1808-1939* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1966), Raymond Carr explains the influence of the Enlightenment on Spanish intellectuals and the bourgeoisie, whose primary interest to preserve individual freedom to acquire, manage and protect private property fueled the liberal and constitutional movements: "The liberals of Cadiz were not primarily concerned with a socially desirable redistribution of landed property but rather with the establishment of clear and absolute property rights—the Roman Law notion of *jus utendi et abutendi* as against the medieval confusions of multiple claims to enjoy the use of the same piece of property. The untrammelled right of the individual to dispose of his own property as he saw fit was the essential foundation of a liberal economy and a bourgeois society" (99).

el comercio, reprimir los gastos, e incrementar las rentas públicas,” all of which were perceived as a desperate effort to avoid revolution (Burns 12).

In opposition to the monarchy however, those supporting the liberal and constitutional movements sought reform in the philosophies of the Enlightenment, founded on the presumption of rational thought that could establish a system of jurisprudence based upon a notion of truth, a capitalist means of efficient trade and production in a free market economy, and a democratic State, whether by way of constitutional monarchy or secularization of the State, to govern and enforce these principles.⁴³ Dangerously enough for the security of the Spanish monarchy, however, popular support for liberal reform came from several factions of rural sympathizers, who were frustrated by the Spanish State’s agrarian system that governed peasants and farmers by the antiquated laws left greatly unchanged since feudalism.⁴⁴ The maneuver

⁴³ In an excellent essay on the transformation and emergence of the modern State, Stuart Hall describes the expansion of the bourgeoisie in Western Europe and its demands for a contractual State to secure private rights of property and protection. “Precisely because it fused and concentrated every element of rule within one secular centre, and laid claim to an absolute sovereignty which was secular and national, Absolutism [of which Spain was no exception, though not secular, with its consolidation of feudal territories in the peninsula and the expansion of its empire] helped carve a path or prepare the way through which the constitutional ‘bourgeois’ state emerged. [...] sections of the gentry, along with the emerging commercial classes, urban artists and labouring classes, were drawn into a ‘mixed’ struggle against the claims of Absolutism, the power of the court, and the rigidity of mercantilism. Commercial expansion of these new ‘nation states’ had undermined Absolutism” (8). See Hall’s essay on “The State in Question” in *The Idea of the Modern State* (Gregor McLennan, David Held and Stuart Hall, eds., Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press, 1984).

⁴⁴ Concerning the attempts at land reform pursued by the Spanish crown Gonzalo Anes argues: “The legal measures tending to limit or reduce the entailment of lands were not as effective as the most advanced ideologues of the enlightened century wished. [...] The ideas Jovellanos developed in his famous *Informe de Ley Agraria* (Report on Agrarian Law) were thus being applied with the caution and calm that respect for tradition and the interest of freedom of those affected by the measures demanded” (xxxiv). Anes’ comment suggests that land reform was taken up as a conservative measure to appease both those who wished for reform and those who desired to retain the traditional system of governance. See Gonzalo Anes’ introductory essay “Freedom in Goya’s Age: Ideas and Aspirations” in Alfonso Pérez Sánchez and Eleanor Sayre’s *Goya and the Spirit of Enlightenment* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1989), xxvi-xlix. Also see the compilation *Historia de España en sus documentos: Siglo XIX* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1983), edited by Fernando Díaz-Plaja.

by the Spanish crown to suppress revolution through conservative reform was representative of the balance it attempted to strike between appeasing liberal constitutionalists and traditionalists who supported the monarchy.

Tensions would play out in polarized support for and opposition to the monarchy even before government reforms could have “liberalized” Spain, or introduced a modern form of sovereignty under the existing regime. However, the invasion of Napoleon’s troops in 1808 and the subsequent abdication of Carlos IV to Napoleon’s brother, Joseph Bonaparte, further problematized the rift between traditionalists and liberals, whose popular support became less clear after the French occupation. Whereas many rural proponents of agrarian reform previously supported liberals against the Spanish monarchy, the new “foreign invasion” was cause enough for civilians to take up arms against French troops to defend Spain and its king, most notably emblemized by the civilian uprisings in Madrid on May 2, 1808, the consequences of which would become the subject of Goya’s *Los fusilamientos de Príncipe Pío*. And whereas many Spanish intellectuals and a growing number of merchants and bourgeois desired institutional reform derived from the philosophies of the Enlightenment, the Napoleonic Wars produced a popular distrust for French influence in politics and thought, a rejection of the so-called *afrancesados* among Spanish civilians who had fought in guerilla warfare against French troops to protect their properties, communities, and families. The subsequent lynching and exile of *afrancesados* were not uncommon occurrences. And from the violence incited by civilians against the “foreign invasion” and with disgust for the “contamination” of French philosophies in Spanish politics, so too did a national

consciousness emerge for the first time in the popular imaginary, one founded upon the difference between “them,” the French invaders, and “us,” the Spanish.

In response to the crisis of French occupation and the consequent exile of Fernando VII, a special session at the Courts in Cadiz negotiated Spain’s first constitution in 1812 from a delegation of representatives from Spain’s regions and the overseas colonies. The Courts of Cadiz, in meetings from 1810 to 1812, drafted Spain’s first democratic constitution as an attempt to replace the *Antiguo Régimen* with democratic process, thereby declaring the “extinción” of the “régimen señorial,” a separation of State powers, a protected freedom of press, and the abolition of the Inquisition, among other liberal reforms. Yet the constitution—a nascent form of modernizing project, at least in design—was annulled in 1814 with the defeat of the French and the return of Fernando VII to power.⁴⁵ The cries of “¡Viva España!” would be replaced by “¡Viva el Rey!,” and, within the forming consciousness for a Spanish Nation after defeat of the French, a vast majority of Spaniards would welcome the monarchy as its sovereign in place of democratic organization. The political alliances in favor of the monarchy and opposed to it became intricately complex throughout the nineteenth century—even well after Goya’s lifetime—as a violent oscillation among factions that mobilized in bringing about a democratic form of modern sovereignty. The nineteenth-century revolutions, popular uprisings, and civil wars such as the Carlist Wars, that sought to restore sovereignty to an excluded lineage of the Spanish monarchy, are much indebted to this power struggle constituting Spain’s perpetual crisis of governance.

⁴⁵ See Miguel Artola’s informative edition of essays, authored by himself and contributors, on *Las Cortes de Cádiz* (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2003).

It is the cultural and philosophical inheritance from the “dream” of enlightened (i.e. modernizing) reform in Western cultures that interests me in the historical context of Spain during the turn of the nineteenth century. For, if I observe it well in Goya’s etching, the slumbering artist may be interpreted as a figure haunted by a grave contradiction (the “dream” redefined as a rational project, a characteristic of the modern episteme) in the moment imminently during and before the eruption of a nightmarish horror—of war waged in the namesake of the emergent Spanish Nation. Therein Goya’s etching reveals the experience of the artist who—like the other actors in the *Caprichos*—becomes subject to the moment of danger, an impending rupture of the (real) monsters held at bay, irrational and contrary to the philosophies of what constitutes the reasoning man from the animal. That is, Goya’s work exhibits the fissure of logic that its “enlightened moral” (touted by philosophies of reason) purports as “truth” in the domain and logic of progress, of reason.

Perhaps it could be stated speculatively then, that the “Sueño” depicted by Goya might stand as the first of his visual testimonies to come: a testimony to the impending violence and eventual witnessing of the horrors of war to protect Spain from French invasion, within a project unpublished during his lifetime, *Los desastres de la guerra*. It is in these violent images, realized a decade after the *Caprichos*, where Goya has rendered the real experience of modern war, the War of Independence, from the perspective of the witness who observes its irrational consequences with terror—mutilated bodies impaled on trees, lifeless corpses scattered on battleground fields, and innocent civilians assassinated by firing squads. For, as “modern progress” promised through a positivist logic to determine a better way of life—in sum, to confront man with

the most antiquated of terrors, the fear of taking up the reins of his own future, of his own “destiny”⁴⁶—then perhaps little could have proven more traumatic under this promise than to experience firsthand the brutality of war, when rationalized for the sake of social equality, in defense of the Spanish Nation, a principle derived from enlightened promise. Or, to consider the time when Goya might have experienced this eruption of irrationality, perhaps little could have been more alienating than to become witness to the popular uprisings against the French occupation, in the name of the Spanish Nation to become ridden of foreign invaders, when it manifested itself as violent brutality in “civilized” man, rendering him “barbaric,” committing acts of violence without reason.

In light of Goya’s slumbering artist and the “real” monsters that disturb his dream, perhaps the message to the *ilustrado*’s “Sueño” could be redefined, undoubtedly with the present vantage point of knowing (rather than “sensing,” like the artist figured in the etching) the playing out of these historical dramas in posterior years. The Enlightenment, which produced scientific spirit and reason as positive tools for progress, fails to provide an alternative state to the anguish of estrangement experienced by Goya’s modern, dreaming subject; the concept of equality, of personal choice and individual freedom confronts this “new, modern citizen” with a charge of responsibility for which it has proved largely unsuccessful in understanding. And in this manner, the “casting out” of monsters produced by the dream of reason escape the logic of the artist—a mechanism of disavowal—even while they continue to threaten him during an ever-impending moment

⁴⁶ I have taken this suggestion from Manuel Cruz’s argument regarding Enlightened man in the legacy of modernity: “Quizá nunca desvarió tanto el hombre como cuando aspiró a un futuro en el que las relaciones no vinieran determinadas por la riqueza o el dominio, ni el conocimiento nublado por la superstición. O acaso, simplemente, midió mal sus fuerzas y terminó pagando muy cara su arrogancia de enfrentarse a uno de los miedos más ancestrales de la humanidad, el miedo de hacerse cargo de las riendas de su propio destino. A declararse responsable de él, finalmente.” (143-44)

of danger, as the wars to which Goya became witness during and well after his epoch in Spain continued to render casualties. Instead, Eduardo Subirats has argued, the inception of the modern “ha añadido al temor que no supo esperar—el miedo a lo sagrado, la angustia a la muerte—el horror social frente a su propia realidad y poder” (*Ilustración* 127). If social responsibility was born as an enlightened concept—the displacement of a greater “divine” power, of a predestined future, thereby endowing human agency with a transformative, even a revolutionary power—then perhaps history may tell that what fell short of the formation of the modern subject was a responsibility great enough to achieve political and social practice informed by ethical action. I believe the aesthetic of having experienced this grave contradiction may be seen in Goya’s “Sueño” as the initial horror of estrangement, where the artist (Goya’s modern subject of history) becomes haunted by a condition of knowledge —of himself and his world—that violently begins to crumble and deteriorate, as it slips into the confusion of an irrecoverable form: the nightmare as endless waking state, the very real consequences of the modern dream as perpetual violence.⁴⁷ Goya’s etching demonstrates the historical practice of knowledge in crisis, and the power it wields on the subject, by revealing the fissure within what can no longer hold as the promise of *truth* for the dreaming artist, nor as *reality* for the modern.

⁴⁷ When I refer to the aesthetics of estrangement represented in Goya’s work, I do not wish to imply that I am observing an artistic “aesthetics of violence” in his work. Rather, I should like to clarify that I employ the term aesthetics here as a matter of perception that may be read in the etching, as the affect produced in the subject who becomes witness to war. I draw from the etymology of the Greek word *aisthesis*, αἴσθησις, meaning a “perception of the senses” or “to become perceptible” (Liddel 23). From a definition of aesthetics as perception—perhaps even a “structure of feeling” according to Raymond Williams—might come a productive reading of witnessing horror, and the estrangement of perpetual violence represented in Goya’s etching.

Conclusions and Beginnings: Monsters and Masters

The features of Goya's modernity are considered to be ahead of their time (to remember the criticism on his work and modern art that would follow) as well as out of time (in the unidentifiable time and space of the *Caprichos*), and indicative of a time yet to come (for the practice of enlightened knowledge in modernizing reforms in Spain, its power struggle for mastery over monsters). This modernity is definitive as much by the conditions of ideological struggle to modernize the Spanish State, as by the regard Goya's art has earned among critics, having preceded tendencies identifiable with modernism, and with modernity. Notwithstanding this atemporal assessment of Goya's work, I hope to have shown how the "Sueño" may be considered a cultural object that lays bare the practices of knowledge and institutional power in negotiation during the historical moment in which it was produced, at the turn of the early nineteenth century in Spain. It as well prefigures the rumblings of social unrest that Goya perceives so keenly and portrays in the frustrated promise of enlightened reason. Having cast too brief a glance upon this historical context of Goya's etching, at the risk of providing a reductive account of historical events, I hope to have opened the "Sueño" up to a reading of the struggle for modernity in Spain as a figuration of monsters, like Goya's other *Caprichos*, as real as they are perceived, both born from an imaginary and becoming material in the power of movement and contortions that render them disfigured. That is, with consideration for the threatening rupture of the monstrous in his "Sueño," for its tenuous threshold between reason and madness, I look to Goya's etching—by twisting Goya's own satirical and allegorical intentions for his audience to make sense of the *Caprichos*—to read the moment of historical danger, perhaps a product of the eruption of war to

which Goya became witness in his lifetime, but as well telling of the struggle for modernity in Spain beyond the historical moment in which the etching was produced. That is, the traditional and enlightened practices of knowledge, the institutional structures Goya perceives, as well as the failure of enlightened thought to achieve a hegemonic position in its state reform, certainly persisted in the subsequent era: these provide us with a conclusion and a beginning from which to question subsequent moments in time, in the practices, structures, and actions of individuals, men and women, and collectives who negotiated these circumstances.

As his critics tend to agree that the modern features of Goya's work were ahead of their time, I have in mind Goya's monsters as an "ominous" (i.e., *monere*) foretelling of the modern: the violent conditions of an aggressive desire to institute a collective nationalist imaginary in Spain, namely in the twentieth century. To remember from Moretti's argument that monsters tend to arise, to be figured in culture, at the periphery of knowledge (i.e., an autonomous "thing" that escapes rationale), then the violent inception of a national consciousness in Spain failed to become a subject of collective reflection—primarily a matter of critical thought, one tenet of enlightened critique—until well after nationalism in Spain had achieved its most violent playings-out in the two centuries that would follow. Monsters, in this regard, are not only a "thing" of Goya's *Caprichos*, but become an index to power at its most volatile. Just as the material and symbolic violence produced on the bodies of actors in the *Caprichos* may be said to make evident the greater (invisible) powers exerted upon them as subjects (i.e., in the modern, as citizens), the contortions and monstrous sight produced by these actors remains as (visual) evidence of how this power eludes understanding according to these subjects'

practices of knowledge—but not, however, to their experience of panic, corporeal suffering, or dismay. The monstrous’ dual function in the etchings proves telling, at once the artist’s satire of the “unenlightened” world, as much as the evidence of power controlling these actors—the monster that becomes produced dangerously, even threateningly, escapes the dreaming artists’ rationale. The structure of disavowal, the “casting out” of the “unenlightened monsters” from principles of “truth” have their own horrifying consequences when played out historically in the extreme. For, so too would the consequences of the rise of nationalism in Spain escape the positivist logic constructed within the promise of an enlightened knowledge.

During the nineteenth century in Western European cultures, in the “twilight” of the Enlightenment, the dream of reason produced the modern subject—the citizen—from the legacy of “enlightened” philosophy. Insofar as the modern subject was conceived, the imaginary of the nation emerged, the modern manifestation of political sovereignty that legitimized the structure of collective governance and justified the natural *being* of the State. Modernist theories have argued that the nation and nationalism historically tended to arise as

fenómenos modernos relacionados con el desarrollo del capitalismo, la burocratización de los Estados y la secularización, procesos que pueden fecharse con anterioridad al siglo XVIII tardío y frente a los cuales el discurso nacionalista se presenta como una propuesta de articulación social y legitimación del Estado. (Cruz 70)

I should like to add to this assessment another feature in the case of modernity having produced a concept of “nation” in Spain, given that the emergent national consciousness in Spain follows the French invasion, based on the popular identification of cultural difference with its “other” or “enemy”—the Napoleonic troops. In Spain, where the State

as an institution preceded the emergence of a national sentiment, nation formation takes on the characteristics of an *ethos* rather than a structural, institutional overhaul, where the modern prescribes an ideology “de tipo asociacionista y caracterizado por su adscripción a los valores liberales y de progreso” (Cruz 70-71). The adoption of “enlightened” thought by Spanish *ilustrados*, of liberalism and progress, follows a model of “importation” from philosophies of French and British origin, though it passed through periods of repression and censorship by the Spanish monarchy for fear of inciting a result similar in nature to the drama of the French Revolution. That is, the birth of the concept of “nation” in Spain, reactionary as it was to the French invasion and contradictory in nature to the secularizing reforms taken up by other Western nations, was founded in part upon the popular incitation of violence in defense of Spanishness and of the Spanish monarchy, in rejection of the *afrancesados*. In this sense, the Spanish Nation at its origins was tied to a conceptual imaginary and a *practice* partially adopted from Enlightenment thought –though not secular, as I have mentioned, rather than an explicit, identifiable project. Because the State as an institution preexisted the popular concept of nation, as Cruz remarks, it would seem then that the emergence of the nation in Spain is a product of a collective imaginary formed vis-à-vis an “other” named as Spain’s “French” aggressor.

The monster, as figured in the social periphery of enlightened knowledge for Goya, is as well endowed with qualities that mark it as a beast born from difference, and from power struggle beyond comprehension of the subjects these forces control. What Goya so keenly renders in the human as beastly and horrific, with barbarism and irrationality, may be found in the monstrous features of the *Caprichos*, which gesture

towards a struggle for “mastery” of an enlightened practice of knowledge over that of the traditionalist society and of the *Antiguo Régimen*. The Spanish nation, as it became negotiated throughout a frustrated struggle for modernizing reform producing episodes of violence, is revealed (i.e., made “monstrous”) within the logic of Goya’s slumbering artist. For the desire for “mastery” over “monsters” posits a structure of disavowal—of making “other”—some “thing” else perceived with an oppositional character. The Spanish Nation born from a collective imaginary between modernizing reform and its attempts at mastery over an adversary (and more importantly, the adversary’s practice of knowledge) has indeed re-produced historical monsters. In this light, the legacy of reason, like the slumbering artist, becomes unsettled by a dangerous interruption from a world that, at once real and surreal, he fails to understand as he imagines this promise of emancipation: the modern nation.⁴⁸

Goya’s “Sueño” may speak to more than the ideological transformations of Goya’s epoch alone. For the attempt to establish a democratically “modern” State resurfaces in the early nineteenth century as an experience that is not altogether unique to this past, and to the metaphors of reason laid down in Enlightened thought; that is, the outbreak of war and violence in the ideological struggle for modernization in Spain, though conspicuous throughout the nineteenth century, endure for nearly two centuries posterior to Goya’s lifetime. The nascent collective consciousness of a Spanish

⁴⁸ Ernesto Laclau points out Enlightenment thought’s own miscalculation regarding its emancipatory character or “promise” of delivery from former practices of knowledge: “The philosophers of the Enlightenment were perfectly consequent when they asserted that if a rational society was a fully-fledged order resulting from a radical break with the past, any organization previous to that break could only be conceived as a product of ignorance and of the folly of men, that is as deprived of any rationality. The difficulty, however, is that if the founding act of a truly rational society is conceived as the victory over the irrational forces of the past—forces which have no common measure with the victorious new social order—the founding act itself cannot be rational but is itself utterly contingent and cannot be considered as the liberation of any true human essence” (4). See Laclau’s essays titled *Emancipation(s)* (London: Verso, 1996).

“nation”—a symptom that in retrospect has been attributed to the “modern”—may have emerged from civilian opposition to the French occupation, an experience to which Goya himself was witness. But the national imaginary would become over the course of two centuries a specter that haunted the *dream of modernization* in Spain as this aspiration produced violence in its wake.

I do not suggest that the “imaginary” of modernization in Spain has come about, over the course of centuries, as a unified form, or as a cohesive project per se; nor do I wish to imply that modernizing reforms were static and unsusceptible to negotiation by economic, political, and social practices. To the contrary, one could argue from the transformations of Francoism and the conservative modernity it promoted that the ideological implementation of the Franco regime—its nationalist imaginary—was susceptible to cooption over time, namely by global economic interests and tactical political positioning to survive in post-WWII Europe, fascism having been defeated in Germany and Italy. Nor do I imply that Francoism in its many manifestations, from a postwar “crusade” to vanquish the political-left, to the bolstering of an economic image of stability, was consistent with a project of “liberal reform” known during the Enlightenment. Nor should the policies of the Franco Regime be misconstrued as a continuation of the enlightenment reforms. To the contrary,

when Franco began what he in turn was to term ‘a crusade,’ he was not concerned simply to defeat the Republic, which he saw as a modern reflection of the Enlightenment with its dangerous openness to outside trends and foreign influences. He sought to erase it from memory, to uproot it from history. (Johnston 57)

I suggest, in turn, that a nationalist imaginary, founded at its inception by the “casting out” of Spain’s foreign aggressor, and more importantly as a subjugation of citizenry to

forms of institutional practices of knowledge (i.e., the modern aspects observed in Goya's *Caprichos*), would become demonstrated as the struggle of mastery over its citizenry as subjects of the modern Spanish State. That is, without exception, nowhere did the *sueño* of the Spanish nation manifest itself more prevalently as a *nightmare* than in the brutal repression of fascism in the twentieth century, in the proto-fascist policies of Primo de Rivera, during the Spanish Civil War, and under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco. For the national projects conceived before and during Francoism, albeit shifting and negotiated over time, were contingent upon justified acts of violence, a wielding of power to materialize the *sueño* of a unified Spanish Nation and an eradication of its own perceived "monsters," its adversaries. Under the guise of a continuous state of exception, the totalitarian regime of Francisco Franco sought to enforce the ideologies of National Catholicism, of a culturally unified Spain cleansed of regional or political difference, on a glorified path "toward God." Assassination, the taking of political prisoners, exile, and quotidian persecution are but a few of the cases that demonstrate the Franco regime's violent struggle for "mastery" enacted throughout its declared State of emergency (i.e., a moment of perceived "danger" and persecution, like Goya's dreaming artist), prescribed under the dream of restoration to a unified Spanish Nation after the devastation of the Civil War. The "modern" citizen, it seems, endowed at its inception with the responsibility of individual freedom to define a collective future, became burdened with the horrors of its own desperate attempts at mastery, to remember Goya's own words, in an effort to "desterrar vulgaridades perjudiciales y perpetuar, con esta obra [de la Nación], el testimonio sólido de la verdad"—a "truth" defined by the regime in power (Paas-Zeidler 11).

It would appear that the underside of rational logic forms its own closet of irrationality from within the modern, as it produced “monsters” in the wake of nationalism. Casualties of war, victims of repression, censorship of criticism and of liberties promised under the sign of modern individualism—these are but a few examples of material realities that exist at the margins of reason. That is, they do exist, yet do not correlate within enlightened promise for the anticipated dream of progress and emancipation it aspired to produce. And these repressive tactics of State sponsored violence and control (i.e., the struggle for modernity and mastery over alternative practices of knowledge) are certainly not unique to Spain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, when I describe these very real, material consequences experienced during the modern as “monsters” I understand that the word tends to suggest both a fictitious or imaginary beast, as much as the word implies a ghastly connotation, a revolting subjective response or “feeling” of disgust. I should like to assert that the violence of dictatorship, of totalitarian oppression and political persecution—though they might evoke an unsettling reaction—are not at all implied as “fictitious beasts” by my usage of the word monstrous, nor do I wish to make melodrama of the modern, perceiving it as a ghastly occurrence. Rather, the concept of a “monster,” I believe, might prove telling to the modernity depicted in Goya’s “dream of reason” as an ideological struggle that has claimed casualties in ways that this practice of knowledge may only become evident much later—that is, in the aftermath of the dream of modernization.

I should like to propose then that if the deferred inception of a “modern” State became the *ilustrados*’ frustrated dream of reason, the struggle for modernity in Spain, then the realization of this *sueño* in political design did not come about until the early

1980s when democracy in Spain was finally secured as more than a temporal experiment, unlike the short-lived First and Second Republics. For perhaps modern war is not only an experience of the real for Goya's slumbering artist, but also has become the experience of two centuries of modern history in Spain, even bearing residual consequences in the present time of my writing this reflection. After all, in what has been declared a "postnational" world, would it not appear that the residual consequences of these traumas, of war and political divisiveness born from oppression and nationalist violence, continue to unsettle the present state of affairs? Would the public discontent around Catalan autonomy not have come about were it not for the repressive tactics justified by the assertion that Spain is a unified cultural entity? Or would the "post-national" status seem an appropriate term to describe the legacy of nationalism in contemporary Spain, in that of the time of my writing, on the seventieth anniversary of the Spanish Civil War, mass graves still remain to be located, the bodies yet to be identified? It seems that in the wake of historical catastrophes, the democratic State—the *sueño* of modernity—has come about in Spain, but not without having produced disavowal of its monsters in the aftermath of violent struggle to define and defend a concept of the Nation and, with it, its citizens as subjects to its regime of knowledge.

When I open up my reading of Goya's monsters to describe the violence of nationalism experienced over the course of two centuries, it is not by mere casual connection that I look to the time of Goya as a prelude to contemporary Spain. For the monster, as I have posited earlier, may be endowed with the possibility of *revealing* itself as much as it might index something "sensed or known to be there" yet which remains hidden from view. It is this structure of absence and presence—the "monster" as some-

“thing” known to exist but not seen, present and somehow absent, there and not there—that informs my reading of historical moments that might seemingly have little to do with one another, unique unto themselves in time, and unable to be equated or exchanged, the past for this present. For among the “monsters” produced by the *sueño* of nationalism in Spain there exists a similarity of structure between the casualties of violence that escape the enlightened knowledge (i.e., that modern condition that figures the monster at the periphery of logic, according to Moretti) and the oppression of nationalism that produced material and symbolic consequences to power, like Goya’s actors succumbing to acts of aggression and control that render them grotesque in sight. If I see in Goya’s “Sueño” the impending danger of a rupture between the surreal and the real, of war in the experience of the now, I also perceive a structure of denial—the “casting out” of monsters, in Goya’s own words—that defined the power struggle of mastery, of closeting the nightmare as it erupts for Goya’s dreaming artist, a mastery that persists in a time well after Goya etched his *Caprichos*.

Eduardo Subirats, during the *Transición* to democracy in Spain, said of the legacy of the Enlightenment: “Pues, la realidad social y cultural de la sociedad capitalista avanzada sólo se mide de acuerdo con las categorías y valores que acuñó aquella edad que se llamó de las luces” (*Ilustración* 128). Perhaps nowhere more prevalent does this emergent form of the modern—that definitive mastery of power struggle—prove more “revealing” or “monstrous” than throughout the interruption of the democratic Nation-State, for which I will now turn to the years of dictatorship before the Second Republic.

Illustrations



Fig. 2.1. “El sí pronuncian y la mano alargan Al primero que llega,” etching and burnished aquatint by Francisco de Goya, from the *Caprichos* (Plate 2, first edition, 1799).



Fig. 2.2. "Al Conde Palatino," aquatint by Francisco de Goya, from the *Caprichos* (Plate 33, first edition, 1799).



Fig. 2.3. “Ya es hora,” etching, burnished aquatint, and burin by Francisco de Goya, from the *Caprichos* (Plate 80, first edition, 1799).



Fig. 2.4. “El sueño de la razón produce monstruos,” etching and aquatint by Francisco de Goya, from the *Caprichos* (Plate 43, first edition, 1799).

Chapter III

The Time of the Multitude: Crisis and Novelty in 1920s Spain

The Architecture of Managing the Multitude: Primo de Rivera's Dictatorial Modernization of Spain (1923-1930)

As Spain's urban centers underwent uneven processes of industrialization and consolidation of financial capital throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, cities like Madrid, Bilbao and Barcelona would emerge as the concentrated epicenters of new, so-called modern experience.⁴⁹ Due primarily to the mass migration of laborers from rural to urban centers in search of better living wages, cities in 1920s Spain became increasingly more crowded, their infrastructures overtaxed and inadequately equipped to host the swelling numbers of inhabitants.⁵⁰ With the congestion of urban spaces came an accelerated sense of chaos and disorder to city life, notably accentuated by the newfound cohabitation among socioeconomic strata (Aguado and Ramos 106). And while

⁴⁹ In *La España de Primo de Rivera. La modernización autoritaria 1923-1930* (Madrid: Alianza, 2005), Eduardo González Calleja offers a comprehensive overview of the economic and industrial amassing of capital (i.e., human labor, material resources, investment and monetary exchange) in cities throughout Spain's modernization in the 1920s. González suggests in chapter four, "La evolución de la economía" (213-58), that Spain's adaptation to the exigencies of the European postwar economy not only altered the cultural practices of daily life in urban centers, but it made for unevenly distributed wealth in –and subsequent migration of workers to– Spanish cities. Due to the rapid shift in Spain's economic dependence from agriculture to new industrial and technological developments, the accelerated modernization experienced in the 1920s had its origins in early nineteenth-century industrialization, the establishing of modern systems of trade with debt and credit, and fiscal reform to secure the peseta as Spain's currency.

⁵⁰ Throughout the 1920s, "los malos salarios del campo," averaging about 4 pesetas per day, "incitaron a los peones a emigrar hacia las obras públicas de las ciudades," where workers could earn between 7 to 12 pesetas for a workday (González Calleja 266). To demonstrate the significant shift from agrarian labor to the industrial sector during these years, I turn to Juan Antonio Lacomba's *Introducción a la historia económica de la España contemporánea* (Madrid: Guadiana de Publicaciones, 1969), in which the author cites the agrarian sector having fallen from 66% of the working population in 1910, to 45.51% by 1930; meanwhile, the industrial workforce leaped from 15.82% to 26.51% within the same two decades (492).

modernized systems of transportation and communication became an urgent necessity to accommodate the new crowds, inhabitants would encounter a changing urban landscape vibrant with sensory stimuli.⁵¹ Advertising images, storefront displays, streetcars, automobiles, and the advent of the skyscraper would alter urban experience, as well as significantly change the ways in which city spaces were negotiated with increased tempo, speed, distraction, and disorder. Everyday life's "modern" novelties, in this sense, were located in the emerging cultural practices of Spain's urban centers and the public spaces where crowds would gather—in sports arenas and racetracks, in theaters and cinemas, on mass transit, and in the streets—where urban modernity was made possible by the city's privileged status as host to a concentration of banking and industrial capital.⁵²

What interests me here, in the scope of what the 1920s might have looked like in fledgling cosmopolitan centers, such as Madrid, is the emerging novelty of the city, its rhythm, its automotive speed, which serve as the stage to its bustling and at times violent

⁵¹ Madrid's center housed about 886 inhabitants per hectare in 1915, at a time before the city's first metro line was installed in 1919, and before the number of streetcars increased to 477 by 1920. Throughout the first third of the twentieth century, architects were commissioned to redraw the center of Madrid, challenged with the needs of a rapidly expanding city that did not have a main north-to-south traffic artery. One result of this project to cut through the winding streets of Madrid's center was the implementation of Gran Vía, which required massive demolition and reconstruction in downtown Madrid, from Cibeles to Plaza España, in order to facilitate east-west traffic. José Luis de Oriol, an ambitious architect, drafted and proposed several urban developments, none of them fully approved for implementation, which would have required similar large-scale demolitions, including parts of the Malasaña neighborhood, Callao, La Latina, and an entire wall of Plaza Mayor. For more on Oriol's urban planning strategies and designs, see his *Memoria del proyecto de Gran Vía: Glorieta de Bilbao Plaza del Callao* (Madrid: Talleres Voluntad, 1921) and *Memoria del proyecto de reforma interior en Madrid* (Madrid: Mateu Artes Gráficas, 1921). The statistics above are cited from Luis and Joaquín Sáinz de los Torres' article "Edificio del Círculo de la Unión Mercantil e Industrial: Madrid (España)" in *La Construcción moderna* (1924): 126-29.

⁵² Becoming epicenters in which capital and labor was amassed, "[c]iudades como Madrid, Sevilla o Barcelona sufrieron importantes cambios en su fisonomía urbana y social: se fue consolidando una población de origen proletario, mientras que los nuevos ensanches, las grandes arterias de comunicación y la implantación de nuevos medios de transporte cambiaron de modo sustancial el estilo de vida de esa España urbana donde la luz eléctrica, el metro, la radio, el cine y los deportes formaban ya parte de la cotidianidad" (González Calleja 262).

multitude. Inspiring new pleasures and anxieties, crowds in early twentieth-century Spanish cities not only reconfigured the ways in which urban spaces were imagined and inhabited, but their volatile destabilizing potential contributed to a collective fear of the masses, particularly for the Spanish ruling elite. The masses—and the multitude’s potential agency for inciting revolutionary change—earned protagonism in the European political sphere, and fomented a global consciousness for those enthused or disconcerted by this newfound transformative power. In the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and as fascism gained momentum in postwar Italy, the multitude had quickly become an “anachronous” agent of historical change, to borrow from Ortega y Gasset’s unsettled observation in *La rebelión de las masas* (1930): an *anachronous* political actor, since the multitude seemingly emerged “out of time,” unexpectedly out-of-step with rigid historical processes which, the philosopher assumed, determined the true course of history.⁵³ In this sense, the “emergency” of the multitude in the early twentieth century—both its “sudden” emergence as a sociopolitical force and the collective alarm this power stirred—produced a substantial fissure in modern epistemological thought.

Specifically, urban life in 1920s Madrid, and the fragmented experiences of modernity clustered in this *metropolis*, may be understood as an intersection of composite times and spaces that shows indications of undergoing transition. Namely, the transition I

⁵³ There is a certain historical determinacy that the ruling classes should remain in power, for Ortega y Gasset. His assessment of the “primitive” soviet and fascist “hombre-masas” is thus shaded with elitism and patriarchy, as he perceives the disobedient masses as “anachronous”—without a historical consciousness—for the past, a past determined by those in power: “Si he hablado aquí de fascismo y bolchevismo, no ha sido más que oblicuamente, fijándome sólo en su facción anacrónica. Esta es, a mi juicio, inseparable de todo lo que hoy parece triunfar. Porque hoy triunfa el hombre-masa y, por lo tanto, sólo intentos por él informados, saturados de su estilo primitivo, pueden celebrar una aparente victoria. Pero, aparte de esto, no discuto ahora la entraña del uno ni la del otro, como no pretendo dirimir el perenne dilema entre revolución y evolución. Lo más que este ensayo se atreve a solicitar es que revolución o evolución sean históricas y no anacrónicas” (230). See *La rebelión de las masas* Ed., Domingo Hernández Sánchez (Madrid: Tecnos, 2003).

question in this chapter is this multitude, which was not unique to the *urbe* alone, but occurred in the city with a heightened sense of emergency. In this section I describe what cultural, sociopolitical, and economic transformations are at play in the temporal and sensory fragmentation of modern experience in 1920s Spain. Then, in the second section, I move to a reading of Valle-Inclán's *esperpento* plays, which represent an emerging perception of time: the time of the new multitude. To address this question, I return periodically to Madrid in the 1920s as an illustrative example, a city that materialized among a field of cultural activity as an important financial capital throughout processes of modernization, and as the consolidated seat of dictatorial power under Primo de Rivera's government. On these terms, my hypothesis is that the unprecedented congregation of multitudes in 1920s Spain contributed in part to the sensory "crisis" of fragmentation experienced in modernity; and, in turn, that constructing a new sense of Spanish nationhood after empire hinged on the problem of managing these multitudes with coordinated synchronization. As I will explore here, the dictatorship's perceived solution to crises brought about by rapid change was the organization and control of the primarily urban, proletarian masses. Reacting to the emergency of the multitude, the Regime synchronized time in subjective and collective experience by binding these multiplicities within a national framework, a matter I describe here. The inquiry that shadows this hypothesis will trace the perception of the multitude—its chaos and, in response, the desire to control the feared, "unruly" masses—as an indication of 1920s society undergoing transition: the modern Spanish nation under construction.

Analyzing a historicized concept of the Spanish nation in the 1920s, however, presents its share of methodological difficulties. The era is "in-between" in the sense that

a spiritual “essence” of Spanish nationhood had not yet been articulated, at least not in a form identifiable with fascism; nor had Republican or left-leaning sentiments substantially mobilized Spain’s culturally disparate regions into a project against the existing regime. The transitory character of the decade makes it difficult to pinpoint emerging sociopolitical forces, since they are often scattered, ambiguous, or considered “incomplete” when compared to Spanish Nationalisms in the 1930s and 40s. I identify this feature—the very dispersion of incomplete and emerging forces—as the threshold of a sociopolitical transformation, where the multitude plays a central role.

Albeit not specifically in the Spanish context, Antonio Gramsci’s writings shed light on the multitude as the crux of sociopolitical change, which further elaborate operational modes of hegemonic power.⁵⁴ Writing as a contemporary witness to the multitude’s emergence in Europe, Gramsci places the masses’ revolutionary potential within a field of complex sociopolitical (and inherently, cultural) negotiations in constant flux. Therefore, he defines the State as “the conscious control of large national masses,” an actor that is necessarily negotiated by an appeal for “emotional and ideological ‘contact’ with these masses” (215). Gramsci’s notion of hegemony proves particularly helpful when thinking through the rise of the multitude in the years that led up to his writing the Prison Notebooks (1929-37). These essays reflect with immediacy on a critical tradition that tended to treat the State as an isolated agent, imagined in a vacuum as the sole actor wielding unilateral control over its governed populace. In this sense, Gramsci, writing from his prison cell in Mussolini’s Italy, participated with high personal stakes in the epistemological crisis addressed by artists and intellectuals throughout the

⁵⁴ See the compilation of Antonio Gramsci’s *Selections from Cultural Writings*, edited by David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, and translated by William Boelhower (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1985).

early twentieth-century. By placing the masses at center stage in his writings, Gramsci interrogated the rigidity of Marxist paradigms that, by privileging the economic superstructure as the site of power relations, tended to undervalue cultural negotiations between the populace and the governing State. In a sense, nowhere more pertinent than in Gramsci's timely observations does the multitude become figured as a scattered, yet powerful agent of cultural and sociopolitical change.

Specifically, Gramsci's model of hegemonic rule, which he questions in line with the contemporary rise of Italian fascism, proves relevant to Spain in the preceding decade before the Prison Notebooks were written. First, achieving a "national" affiliation among Italian peoples, Gramsci argued, was a problem of preexisting differences among disparate local and regional cultures—and here Italy's regional "dialects" stand as his exemplary case—that, historically, had not achieved a unified "national" identification to forge a cohesive, enduring project of popular resistance.⁵⁵ In this sense, Gramsci's model of hegemony tends to echo a similar problematic arising in early twentieth-century Spain: that linguistic and cultural identities in Euskadi, Catalonia, and Galicia, for example, marked spaces of difference from the State's imposition of an emerging Spanish National, and inherently Castilian, ideal. Secondly, Gramsci argued that Italian peoples, once subjected to the emerging project of State control, would prove unable to organize a

⁵⁵ Gramsci posited specific historical events in which a national-popular consciousness or "identification" with the Italian State temporarily emerged—all of them, notably, times of crisis or war—but proved unable to maintain this collective participation that would close the gap between constituent parties and the peoples they represent: "The war [WWI] had been a unifying element of the first order in that it made the large masses aware of the importance that the construction of the governmental apparatus has also for the destiny of each single individual, as well as having posed a series of concrete problems, both general and specific, which reflected the national-popular unity" (242). See "Moments of Intensely Collective and Unitary Life in the National Development of the Italian People," *Selections from Cultural Writings*, edited by David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, and translated by William Boelhower (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1985) 241-44.

cohesive resistance unless they participated in this “national” project’s institutional structures: in schools, in presses, in organized labor, and in local political activities. For Gramsci, these institutions were the very structures that had preserved hegemonic rule among the bourgeoisie and governing classes, perhaps even more adept to change than the State itself. Gramsci’s model exhibits similarities with that of 1920s Spain, as Primo de Rivera’s Regime manufactured support for a regenerated National project among factions of civil society, most notably among the Spanish peasantry scattered across Spain’s regional and local territories. By taking up Gramsci’s notion of hegemony as a useful methodological tool to guide my discussion, I turn to Spain in the 1920s to question the novel time of the multitude.

In the case of Spain, the epistemological crisis of postwar Europe—and modern culture’s sensory and temporal fragmentation that called rationalism into question—is further heightened by Spain’s national identity crisis and the loss of its few remaining colonies. Within the Spanish national context, the *fin de siglo* marks a finality: the century-long disintegration of the Spanish empire. What distinguishes the modern in *fin de siglo* Spain from preceding eras was the collective sense that contemporary times were in the throes of a perpetual state of emergency. On the heels of the nineteenth-century—a century of civil wars, popular uprisings, colonial secessions, and *pronunciamientos*—the Spanish crisis had neither a determinate beginning, nor a foreseeable end. This “new” trope for the “modern” in *fin de siglo* Spain—that the modern would connote a national emergency—accrued cultural value as early twentieth-century regenerationalism gained momentum. For much of the discourse of regenerationalism would attempt to make sense of an imperial Spain in fragments, having ceded its remaining overseas territories in

1898. In this regard, the so-called Great Disaster, Spain's defeat to the United States and its subsequent surrender of Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines, marked the regenerationalists' obsession to identify "the modern era" as synonymous with imperial decadence and decline; for contemporary politics inheriting this crisis felt an urgency to assemble a new (liberal, modern) project on the ruins of nearly one hundred years of colonial losses.⁵⁶ The generational tendency to interrogate the nineteenth-century notion of truth would later converse with the European postwar crisis—a Great War that did not happen in Spain, but "elsewhere"—and with the shattered image of Spain's imperial grandeur that "adquirida en la escuela se revela falsa y pide ser sustituida por un retrato más verídico" (Ciplijauskaitė, "Espejos cóncavos" 15).

The Disaster of 1898 may be said to exemplify the political emergency of modern times sensed as a national identity crisis, though it was certainly not the only event to have done so. With the upswing of industrialization in Spain, so too did a disaffected proletariat emerge, which tended to show more allegiance to political labor activities than to any national cause or liberal—and inherently bourgeois—agenda for State reform. The limits of this disaffection, becoming a growing social "problem" in Catalonia from the early 1900s on, was the violence that erupted between laborers and factory

⁵⁶ Describing regenerationalism as a "movement" among Spanish politicians, intellectuals and a vast majority of the bourgeoisie, is not without its own set of discrepancies. The ambiguity of the term is evident from its varied usage at the turn of the nineteenth century, from those supporting a liberal reform agenda, to those proposing a conservative turn to Catholic values in post-imperial Spain, to reactionary desires that attempted to assign blame for the "Disaster." What can account for these seemingly irreconcilable contradictions, however, is the thread they have in common: that the many manifestations of Spanish regenerationalism called into question how to narrate the post-imperial Spanish nation, perceived in an epoch of historical "decline." Nevertheless, the residual sentiments of regenerationalism, by the early 1920s, tended to value liberal, modernizing reform as the renewed path to progress in Spain; when I refer to regenerationalism hereafter, I have in mind this later transformation of the term "regeneration," in the context of Spain's crisis to forge an emergent national narrative through modernization. For an excellent overview of regenerationalism, its contradictions and multiple manifestations, see Luis Palacios Bañuelos' chapter "La crisis de entresiglos," *España del liberalismo a la democracia (1808-2004)* (Madrid: Dilex, 2004) 189-204.

administration, resulting in the assassinations of both factory managers and labor union organizers and in the notorious years of *pistolero*, or gang-like street warfare, in Barcelona. Even before labor unions gained increasing membership numbers in the 1910s and 20s, however, the anarchist movement had already existed since the 1870s (Carr, *Spain* 56), having consolidated its labor activities in 1910 by founding the *Confederación Nacional de Trabajo* (CNT). Episodes of anarchist-led terrorism, such as the explosion of a bomb that killed twenty-some spectators in Barcelona's *Gran Teatre del Liceu* in 1893, were becoming more common and, in a new turn in the 1910s, the violence was not only directed towards bourgeois spaces of congregation like the theater, but began taking the form of church burnings as well.⁵⁷ Brad Epps effectively summarizes how anarchist violence would become a destabilizing agent within a new "national" narrative in post-imperial Spain, for no longer could "the putatively smooth unfolding of a powerful project of civic and national progress" ignore the presence of its alienated workforce ("Seeing the Dead" 121).

Poor wages, excessively long workdays, and miserable living conditions fueled the unrest of exploited workers against abusive managerial practices, and went hand in hand with increased membership numbers in labor unions during the interwar period.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ During the workers' revolt known as Tragic Week in 1919, twenty-one churches and forty convents were burned in Barcelona, in a single demonstration of anti-clericalism that would remain unparalleled until nearly two decades later, during the Spanish Civil War. (Carr, *Spain* 76)

⁵⁸ For an excellent collection of historical, sociological and anthropological essays on the study of Spain's labor history, see the bilingual edition of *Peuple, mouvement ouvrier, culture dans l'Espagne contemporaine: cultures populaires, cultures ouvrières en Espagne de 1840 à 1936 / Pueblo, movimiento obrero y cultura en la España contemporánea: culturas populares, culturas obreras en España entre 1840 y 1936* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 1990) eds. Jacques Maurice, Brigitte Magnien, and Danièle Bussy Genevois. For a brief narrative on the growing political activities of the anarchist movement from the late nineteenth century to the early 1930s, see Fernando García de Cortázar's chapter "El anarquista vencido" in *Los perdedores de la Historia de España* (Barcelona: Planeta, 2006) 430-57. For a more specific summary of the labor movement and its importance to the changing sociopolitical climate in

As the workers' movement gained strength, strikes and violent protests became powerful disruptive forces that threatened the regenerationalist attempt to forge national unity in post-imperial Spain. For the promise of national regeneration could only succeed in restoring a unified sense of progress if union activities were prevented from violently interrupting economic and modernizing projects. Furthermore, socialist, communist and anarchist political activities, compounded with the 1917 Bolshevik revolution in recent memory, was a matter of unsettling concern for the monarchy and much of the Spanish bourgeoisie, who desired to ensure that modernizing projects were carried out under the existing regime of power. Throughout these years, union activities not only became more violent, their work stoppages potentially more damaging to the Spanish economy, but social unrest began to take on a revolutionary character. In the general strike of 1917, anarchist, socialist and Republican workers met military police with cries of "¡Soldados!, Nuestro enemigo es el vuestro. No defendáis la causa de vuestros tiranos. Uníos al pueblo" (Palacios Bañuelos 229). In 1919, another general strike succeeded in halting most industrial production and transportation services in Catalonia, Madrid, Asturias, Galicia, and Basque Country, particularly in Biscay. Despite military intervention, arrest of political activists, and the government's declaration of martial law in Barcelona, workers demonstrated for the first time en masse their potential to force government to pass a law limiting workdays to an eight-hour shift. These and other work stoppages, like the *Canadiense* strike in 1919 by Barcelona Traction Light & Power employees that would leave the city without electricity for forty days, were the social rumblings of an intensely widening class conflict, one that eroded the promise of liberal, modernizing

1910s and 20s Spain, see Luis Palacios Bañuelos' chapter "Del parlamentarismo a la dictadura" in *España del liberalismo a la democracia (1808-2004)* (Madrid: Dilex, 2004) 213-42.

projects from becoming Spain's recuperated path towards progress. The proletarian multitude, much to the panic of Spanish dominant classes, had made an undeniable demonstration of its destabilizing potential.

Violent labor strikes that fractured regenerationalist hopes of fortifying Spanish nationhood had laid the conditions for a collective emergency by the early 1920s. The intense alarm among the bourgeoisie and ruling classes had passed from one decade to the next: from Spain's loss of its overseas colonies in 1898 to its disastrous military defeats in Morocco in the 1910s and 20s, from widespread labor protests in Spain's regions to barricades and full-fledged street warfare in urban pockets. The failure of parliamentary monarchy to advance a reform agenda led king Alfonso XIII to argue that "a temporary dictatorship was permissible in 'moments of extreme gravity' to clear the way for governments 'that respected the popular will'" (Carr, *Spain* 95). Charged with the call for a national solution to restore order and instill economic progress, one candidate arose from the military as Spain's next head of government: the Captain General of Catalonia, Miguel Primo de Rivera. Having negotiated a pact with king Alfonso XIII to gain the monarchy's support for his candidacy, and with the backing of the disaffected Spanish military in the wake of disastrous foreign wars, Primo de Rivera initiated his peaceful coup on September 14, 1923, promising to enforce a national solution through "iron surgery," by plucking out the social ills of Spain's modern crises:

"Our aim," ran Primo de Rivera's first proclamation to the country, "is to open a brief parenthesis in the constitutional life of Spain and to re-establish it as soon as the country offers us men uncontaminated with the vices of political organization. We will then hasten to present these men to Your Majesty so that normality can be established as soon as possible." (Carr, *Spain* 98)

Although Primo de Rivera's coup was considered peaceful, in the sense that King Alfonso's transfer of powers to the Spanish military did not claim any casualties, the Regime's policies subjected Spaniards to seven years of State-sponsored violence and brutal repression tactics. Beginning with Primo's first public decree in 1923, the Regime declared "el estado de guerra en cada región" of Spain, which would last until the end of dictatorial rule in 1930 (qtd. in Álvarez 59).⁵⁹ In the dictator's own words, the coup responded directly to "todas las novedades importantes que vayan ocurriendo" in Barcelona and Madrid, for military surveillance would be imposed upon "centros de carácter comunista o revolucionario"—and particularly, in Spain's cities—that could potentially destabilize the Regime's aim to forge a national sense of unity and economic progress (both cites, qtd. in Álvarez 59).⁶⁰ By suspending constitutional rights for Spanish citizens in order to resolve the crisis—a measure welcomed by conservative bourgeoisie and ruling elites⁶¹—the Regime was given carte blanche to institute Spain's first modern police State. The homogeneous composite time of National progress, a

⁵⁹ Spanish historian Eduardo González Calleja offers a comprehensive summary of Primo de Rivera's policies, changes to the civil code, and the Royal Decrees instituted by endorsement of Alfonso XIII. It should not go unmentioned that, in this sense, the monarchy remained intact throughout the dictatorship, while Primo de Rivera served to "correct" the national emergency. See Chapter 1 "Los orígenes de la dictadura" in his previously mentioned work, *La España de Primo de Rivera: La modernización autoritaria, 1923- 1930*, 17-74. The information I summarize in the following paragraph, regarding the Regime's repressive policies in its war on Spanish citizens, refers to these pages (54-62).

⁶⁰ The Count of Vallellano, Madrid's appointed mayor during the dictatorship, was more explicit regarding the city's proletarian "enemy": "Es preciso terminar con la anarquía municipal reinante—dice [in his speech to the press]. Robustecer por todos los medios la autoridad municipal. Es una obra de ciudadanía en la que todos debemos colaborar." See Federico Bravo Morata's work, *La Dictadura I (1924 a 1927)*. *Historia de Madrid*. (3rd Ed. Madrid: Fenicia, 1973) 62.

⁶¹ "Primoderriverismo started as an attempt to uphold by means of violence and through non-democratic methods the interests of the possessing classes," argues historian Shlomo Ben-Ami; "Both the urban and rural bourgeoisie acclaimed and indeed created the hysterical atmosphere that made possible Primo's takeover when they reached the conclusion that they could no longer cope with social radicalism if they restricted themselves to parliamentary politics" (51). See Ben-Ami's article "The Forerunners of Spanish Fascism: Unión Patriótica and Unión Monárquica," *European Studies Review* 9.1 (January 1979): 49-79.

project recuperated from the fragmented remnants of positivism, was instituted under an authoritarian state of constitutional exception. What did the Regime's notion of national progress look like? How was the role of the Spanish multitude imagined in this narrative, and what measures were taken to enforce this role in practice?

By stacking government positions with inflated numbers of high-ranking military officials who, after Spain's colonial losses, remained unemployed, Primo de Rivera and his self-proclaimed "military family" gained full jurisdiction over State affairs, effectively consolidating judiciary and executive powers to provide authoritarian control over "criminal" trials, as well as the definition of what constituted criminality (Carr, *Spain* 84). Civilian activities that threatened the security and unity of the nation were tried as subversive crimes by military tribunal, whereas the same doctrine granted amnesty to politicians and the military. Censorship laws prohibited a wide range of print material from public circulation. Outlawed and enforced by heavy fines were: any criticism of the Regime, its leaders or institutions, allusions to the persecutory tactics of the Regime against its "enemies," articles on Bolshevik Russia, information on Spain's military presence in Morocco, announcements for labor organizations, material considered pornography, and political cartoons portraying the military and government. Military authorities could mandate the immediate closure of incriminated presses, cinemas, and their distributors, if it so desired. Local authorities were endowed with autonomous powers of surveillance and policing, free to determine what constituted "discretionary" arrest of civilians, their detainment without criminal charge, as well as the expulsion of foreign residents and exile of Spanish citizens at will. Furthermore, military tribunals were given the authority to sentence "criminals" to life in prison or to the death

penalty, for crimes that had formerly been regulated by the penal code, such as armed robbery. In 1925, the Regime granted government officials full authority to intervene in “suspicious” matters that could lead to public scandals embarrassing to the Regime, civilian uprisings, protests, and general unrest. Under these conditions, and with its continued persecution of syndicate activities, Primo de Rivera’s Regime instituted its dictatorial rule under a seven-year state of exception, without pause.

The architecture of the military’s policies reveal that this “war” within Spain’s borders was designed in part to control the masses and to suppress political activities of syndicalism whose strikes and protests had interrupted Spain’s economic modernization (Aubert 51). Yet, the “national emergency” to subdue the “mobs” of workers was more than an economic crisis; the forging of a regenerated Spanish nation could not succeed without a collective sense of national unity. It was Primo de Rivera’s belief, shared by many of his advisors, that the masses should be organized by instruction and discipline, lest they threaten the stability of authoritarian rule. In part inspired by his recent visit to Mussolini’s Italy, Primo de Rivera sought to foster a nascent political organization of the masses that could—in the dictator’s own words—“unir y organizar a todos los españoles de buena voluntad” and with “ideas sanas” in defense of Religion, *Patria*, and Monarchy (González Calleja 179). Toward this end, in 1924 Primo de Rivera publicly endorsed the *Unión Patriótica* (UP), a “grass-roots” organization, complemented by a youth group and a women’s chapter (*la sección femenina*), that militarized citizens in defense of Spanish national unity.⁶² Militias of armed civilians, such as the UP and the *Cuerpo de Somatenes*

⁶² Shlomo Ben-Ami argues that the *Unión Patriótica* was a proto-fascist mobilization of armed Spanish citizens, whose members would years later defend the Spanish Nation during the Civil War (1936-1939). See Ben-Ami’s article, “The Forerunners of Spanish Fascism: Unión Patriótica and Unión Monárquica” in *European Studies Review* 9.1 (January) 1979: 49-79.

Armados de España, were placed under the jurisdiction of the Army, Civil Guard and police forces, to assist in the “represión de los eufemísticamente llamados ‘delitos sociales,’ especialmente las huelgas” (González Calleja 166). With support from these factions in civil society, and its armed civilian militias, the Regime’s strategy to prevent a social rebellion from the proletarian multitude was primarily twofold: by exercising State power through repressive tactics, and by regimenting an organized militarization of the Regime’s proactive civilian infrastructures. Both means of instruction and control ensured that the Dictatorship’s modernizing path to progress would produce a nascent hegemonic narrative, an imaginary space from within which the Spanish Nation could be written.

When I refer to the Spanish Nation within a nascent hegemonic narrative, I have in mind a field of sociopolitical activity implied in Antonio Gramsci’s notion of hegemony. For the military State’s top-down imposition upon civilian life was certainly not unidirectional in nature, nor did Spaniards succumb passively to authoritarian measures exercised by the State and its gubernatorial organs, police, and its armed mercenaries. In other words, managing the multitude was not exclusively a top-down exertion of power, with the State acting as the only agent of control over its citizens as subjects. The perception among the ruling elite and conservative bourgeoisie that the multitude’s volatile potential was to be feared rather manifested itself as a social articulation,⁶³ one that endowed the State with authority to act as a powerful,

⁶³ Ana Aguado and María Dolores Ramos note that what would become the Regime’s support base among the bourgeois classes began to solidify in reaction to the Bolshevik revolution: “A la altura de 1917 estas burguesías se encontraban fragmentadas en varios clanes políticos desgastados por el ejercicio del poder, pero volvían a cohesionarse a la hora de defender determinados valores: Orden, Religión, Patria, Familia, Monarquía” (113). For an excellent overview of customs, politics, and daily life among the conservative

implementing agent of crowd control. After all, active civilian support for the Unión Patriótica and among the monarchy and Regime's sympathizers would tend to unground any assertion that Primo de Rivera's government was the only factor in enforcing these authoritarian measures.

Although until now I have privileged the question of State coercion, by introducing Gramsci's notion of hegemony, I turn towards the Regime's strategies to manufacture adhesion among the masses for its Nationalist sentiment: what Gramsci identified as the national-popular. For managing the multitudes in Primo de Rivera's Spain lent the Regime to relatively "new" strategies that could achieve popular consent for its authoritarian rule. Particularly worrisome for the dominant classes, the "Stateless" proletarian multitude resisted adhesion to the Regime's push for progress, a resistance that the State acted upon to manufacture a populist support base that could be integrated into the Regime's projection of the Spanish Nation. Arguing that the success or failure of militant factions in Italian civil society hinged upon such mass consent, Gramsci posited that "an organic adhesion of the national-popular masses to the state is replaced by a selection of volunteers of the nation," in which, in the case of Spain, militias like the UP and Somatenes cannot function alone "until 'volunteerism' has been superseded by mass 'national-popular' action" (Gramsci 245). In practice, it seems that Primo de Rivera's Regime understood the chapters of Unión Patriótica, and other armed civilian groups like the *Somatenes*, to be as necessary to the National project as the regime's strategies of manufacturing consent among its populist base. In the examples I explore hereafter, the

Spanish bourgeoisie during this time, see their work *La modernización de España (1917-1939)* (Madrid: Síntesis, 2002).

regime gave particular attention to recasting Spain's local and regional cultural practices, and their multiplicity of spaces and times, into a monolithic sense of national coherence.

The regime's efforts to instill civilian obligation in defense of the *patria*, the Catholic Church, and monarchy thereby coexisted with authoritarian mandates that led Spain through an important period of material regeneration. By modernizing infrastructure (i.e., railroads, roads), technology (i.e., private access to electricity, telephone, telegraph) and fiscal policies (i.e., regarding inflation, foreign investment, controls of exportation and importation), Primo de Rivera's government would supply the structural basis for future capitalist endeavors in Spain. The Regime's attempts throughout the 1920s to diversify industry, balance foreign investment and encourage the ongoing construction boom in urban centers, constituted a new turn in Spain's recuperation of a once failed, national progress. Thereby patriotism—or renewed “faith” in the Spanish nation—was necessarily constructed upon its image of economic growth, and the material comforts it supplied to the growing bourgeois classes (Aguado and Ramos 114).

Perhaps nowhere is the inextricable link between Spain's modernization and the forging of its national narrative more evident than in the Regime's refusal to correct the rapidly deflating *peseta*, a measure that José Calvo Sotelo, Director General de la Administración, considered antipatriotic, synonymous with the Regime's political weakness (González Calleja 254). In a sense, the rapid modernization of Spain under authoritarian control radiated out from the seat of government in Madrid: the metropolis emblematic of Primo de Rivera's political ambitions. Indeed, this precipitative modernizing reform began to synchronize “el reloj parado” of Spain's provincial and

rural regions to the urban tempo of commerce (Magnien 139). From these measures employed by the Spanish State to regiment and pacify the “disobedient” multitude, therein may be observed a new sense of time that has, as two sides of the same coin, the chaotic, heterogeneous pulse of Spain’s cultural multiplicity—the flows, accidents and encounters in the time they arise. In dialectic opposition, the State’s efforts to organize and subdue the multitudes, conceived as a collective National subject, condensed time into a homogenous experience of synchronicity. Before describing how this process took place in 1920s Spain, I first want to ground the somewhat abstract terms *homogeneous* and *heterogeneous* time and the perceptible shift they marked in the fragmentation of modern experience.

Regulatory measures that induced crowd control reconfigured how time was collectively and individually experienced in the early twentieth century. Tracing this important shift in the perception of time in Western cultures, Stephen Kern has suggested that the global regulation of time has historically arisen out of an authoritative necessity: the vital exigencies in times of war to coordinate multitudes in synchronization, dispersed across vast terrain.⁶⁴ The concern for standardizing time across geographic boundaries initially arose in the nineteenth century, as railroads facilitated travel, creating confusion among stations and travelers who faced inconsistencies in “local time” at any given rail station, differing anywhere from minutes to an hour from that of nearby towns. In a similar context, the precise timing of commerce, its flows of goods, deliveries and exchanges, became fundamental to yielding profits and moving resources by rail. Yet the absolute necessity of adhering to a World Standard Time on the European continent,

⁶⁴See Stephen Kern’s essays on *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1983).

proposed in 1890 by Helmuth von Moltke, a military strategist in the Prussian wars, was finally adopted at the onset of World War I, when wrist watches became a requirement for soldiers, synchronized by field headquarters to assure coordinated precision in battle. In this sense, the subjective time in which events were previously experienced in individual and local multiplicity became “obliterated by the overwhelming force of mass movements that regimented the lives of millions of men by the public time of clocks and wrist watches, synchronized to maximize the effectiveness of bombardments and offensives” (Kern 288). Economizing field strategy, in effect, inaugurated a collective practice that survived the war: that local and individual experience would become grafted within the homogeneous time imagined for maneuvering a continental battlefield.

If we understand homogeneous time as an agglomerated synchronization among multiple subjective and collective experiences, then this strategic practice extended to the postwar years’ return to normalcy. For any precise, coordinated action among the masses could become a powerful, perhaps even a dangerous tool—at once, an organizational tactic among revolutionary multitudes, and an authoritarian strategy for managing the “unruly” masses. The ability to synchronize the actions of a national-popular base would become the primary tool, so to speak, for manufacturing popular cohesion to the Regime’s chronometer of regeneration: a nascent Spanish national project.

In light of the military’s repressive policies that sought to enforce Spanish nationhood, how did the Regime’s practice of managing the multitude induce a “new” sense of condensed time in lived experience? With modernization serving as the dictatorship’s metronome of national progress, homogeneous time emerged in conjunction with the State’s widening domain of social, political and economic controls

extending beyond the metropolis to Spain's peripheries. The Regime's attuned vigilance and regulation of civilian life, modernizing processes, exchanges of goods and (censored) information significantly altered the sense of time formerly experienced in heterogeneous flows, in plurality and fragmentation; whereas the powerful centralization and expansion of the Regime's autonomy over these flows and civilian activities condensed time as it was collectively experienced to become a tool of State management.

Modernizing technologies in 1920s Spain (i.e., radio transmission, aviation, mass communication and transportation systems, etc.) and their subsequent instrumentation by the State to "manage" crowds were indeed some of the tools that induced the phenomenon I refer to as the homogenized synchronization of time. As the transformative power of the locomotive and telegraph reduced the relative experience of "real" time and navigable space in the nineteenth century—between points on a map, between sender and receiver—the diffuse installation of communication and transportation technologies in 1920s Spain would similarly accelerate processes of temporal and spatial condensation in subjective and collective experience. From 1921 on, commercial airplanes carrying goods and passengers had reduced travel times between long distances; no longer bound to the static route of railroad tracks, airplanes (and by the 1930s, Zeppelins) freed travelers and goods from transportation's reliance on fixed hubs and nodes (i.e., the train station).⁶⁵ Requiring less time to traverse a trajectory, air travel opened multiple new possibilities for material exchanges, economic flows, and social encounters. The dictatorship, recognizing the military power that airspace control

⁶⁵ In 1921 Spain's first commercial airline *Compañía Española de Tráfico Aéreo* (CETA) was inaugurated, followed by *la Unión Aérea Española* (1925) and *Iberia* (1927). By 1928, the Dictatorship offered to subsidize these companies with government funds, by merging the three businesses into *Compañía de Líneas Aéreas Subvencionadas, S.A.*, supervised by the dictatorial government (González Calleja 271).

demonstrated in the Great War and in Spain's Moroccan conflicts, invested in and regulated commercial air travel as an important aspect of Spain's economic modernization.⁶⁶ The Regime's interest in monitoring air travel for capitalist endeavors, in this sense, was an extension of its powerful function for overseas aeronautical surveillance and national military prowess.

Communication systems, such as radio and the telephone, promised a potentially democratizing effect on daily life and social interactions in 1920s Spain.

The telephone in particular was incompatible with the aristocratic principle that certain persons, by virtue of their position in society—generally propinquity to the monarch—have special importance. Telephones break down barriers of distance—horizontally across the face of the land and vertically across social strata. They make all places equidistant from the seat of power and hence of equal value. (Kern 316)

Those who owned private equipment or who belonged to a radio society could tune into local, national, and international news within frequency's reach. The simultaneous "real time" of broadcasting introduced the possibilities of mass communication into private homes, presses, community spaces of congregation, and other communication hubs, thereby grafting the local sense of time and place into the regional and national.

However, this democratizing potential could also be turned into a useful tool at the institutional service of the regime. With the inception of *Radio España* and *Radio Unión* in 1924, national broadcasts made news stories, music concerts, sporting events, and Catholic mass available to a diffuse public of listeners, across vast geographic spaces.

⁶⁶ My summary of radio transmission and air travel in 1920s Spain is based on Carmelo Garitaonandía's *La radio en España, 1923-1939 (de altavoz musical a arma de propaganda)* (Bilbao: Servicios Editorial de la Universidad del País Vasco, 1988), Eduardo González Calleja's chapter "Sociedad y cultura en la España de los años veinte" in *La España de Primo de Rivera. La modernización autoritaria 1923-1930* (Madrid: Alianza, 2005), 259-316, and Federico Bravo Morata's *La Dictadura I (1924 a 1927). Historia de Madrid* (3rd Ed. Madrid: Fenicia, 1973).

Although radio transmission had not been fully realized as an instrument of propaganda in the 1920s, Primo de Rivera's first radio address on April 2, 1924, foreshadowed how this new technology would become appropriated as a tool of simultaneous instruction from the Spanish State to its citizens as "national" subjects: "Por primera vez me veo ante el aparato de maravillosa invención que ha de recoger mis palabras para difundirlas acaso por el mundo, las primeras que he de pronunciar son un rotundo, categórico y entusiasta ¡Viva España!" (Garitaonaindía 18). Recognizing the potential "dangers" of radio communication by private transmitters—their unmediated messages broadcast instantly to mass audiences—the Regime placed radio under censorship law by Royal Decree in 1923, thereby turning radio transmission over to the State monopoly under the *Ministerio de Gobernación* and the *Director General de Comunicaciones* (Bravo Morata 68). As technologies accessible to the public increasingly modified a lived sense of time and space in social and daily interactions, these technologies became subject to the monopolizing, regulatory services of the Regime's national mandate. While air travel and radio transmission introduced new flows and exchanges into daily life in Spain, the articulation of a "new" national narrative furthermore went hand-in-hand with an experienced temporal and spatial condensation for the Regime's management of the masses.

In practice, State-endorsed mass spectacles in 1920s Spain have as one of their residual effects the condensation of time for more efficient regulation of the "new" (urban and proletariat) multitudes. I have in mind an important example of this temporal condensation at the Regime's service: the sports arena. The stadium's expansion in the late 1920s was made possible by a rise in popular appeal for athletic events—most

notably, soccer—as a novel sporting spectacle. With bullfighting attendance suffering a temporary decline during the 1910s,⁶⁷ and with it, the waning perception that sport was a leisure activity for the wealthy, athletics attracted unprecedented numbers of spectators and participants throughout the 1920s.⁶⁸ But the construction of massive sports arenas and stadiums in the 1920s was due in large part to developments in modern technology in response to escalating numbers of urban inhabitants.⁶⁹ The loudspeaker, now amplified electrically, allowed significant increases in crowds attending an event in an enclosed arena or field. The crowds at *Campo de Ciudad Lineal* in Madrid which in the late 1910s held 8,000 sideline spectators, oversaturated the field’s capacity to require the new construction of *Estadio Chamartín*, where elevated bleachers would house attendances of 15,000 by 1924. The loudspeaker, in this regard, also facilitated a collapse of time and space similar to that of radio. By projecting a single voice across a vast terrain, open

⁶⁷ Bullfighting suffered sharp drops in attendance throughout the 1920s, but reached its lowest point in 1926, a “disastrous” year due to the high number of deaths or injuries to famous toreros, such as Litri, and Mariano Montes (Bravo Murata 185).

⁶⁸ Whereas the petite bourgeoisie tended to imitate “chic” customs of Spain’s wealthy classes (and sports such as tennis, golf, equestrian games, swimming clubs, motor clubs, etc.), throughout the 1920s sport shed its image as a leisure activity for the elite. According to Antonio Rivero Herráiz, popular interest in sport – both in practice and in numbers of spectators—increased among the working classes due to growing membership numbers in labor unions, which promoted physical activity in self-education curriculums as a hygienic necessity for both women and men. See Rivero Herráiz’s *Deporte y modernización. La actividad física como elemento de transformación social y cultural en España, 1910-1936* (Sevilla: Wanceulen, 2005) 185.

⁶⁹ Curiously, Madrid’s second underground metro line, inaugurated in 1924, extended from kilometer zero in *La Puerta del Sol* to the edge of the city’s center, in *Las Ventas*, site of the future bullfighting stadium. When the stadium was in its planning stages, the Las Ventas neighborhood was an undesirable area of Madrid, located at the city’s edge between a cemetery and poverty-stricken *chabolos*. Under construction from 1922-29, the *Plaza de Toros* drew a new upswing in bullfighting attendances once it was finally inaugurated in 1931. This concordance of construction initiatives between public transportation and sites for mass spectacles might stand as a precedent in urban planning, Madrid’s municipal government having aligned plans for the subway route with Las Ventas’ only attraction: the new stadium. See Federico Bravo Morata’s *La Dictadura I (1924 a 1927) Historia de Madrid* (3rd Ed. Madrid: Fenicia, 1973) and the eighth chapter of Luis Palacios Bañuelos’s *España, del liberalismo a la democracia (1808-2004)* (Madrid: Dilex, 2004): 213-48.

fields could now accommodate a greater number of spectators. A tool to instruct the masses, or to inform a crowd of happenings on the field, the amplified sound of the loudspeaker promised to amass even larger attendances, who could respond to the real time voice of an announcer narrating the positions of players on the field, or to the precise movement of troops and weapons during a military parade. The stadium's host of political rallies, sports, and military drills served as the Regime's sanctioned spaces of crowd control and, likewise, as the creative loci for an emergent Spanish national narrative, where winnings by sports teams became synonymous with military victory, a powerful symbol of cultural superiority.⁷⁰ The homogeneous time of the sports arena, and its ability to organize the multitudes in attendance, became a State-sponsored space of collective celebration for Spain's cultural unity.⁷¹

It can be modestly assumed from imagining the crowd's magnitude that the novelty of mass spectacles in 1920s Spain appealed to popular tastes as a genuine source of enjoyment. Such was the case with the revival of traditional folklore in local festivals, which the dictatorship incorporated into State-sponsored celebrations in an effort to

⁷⁰ "La prensa comenzaba a considerar los triunfos deportivos como auténticas victorias nacionales," an association between sports and politics that came about in the 1920s; "Poco a poco se fue pasando de una concepción clasista y restringida del deporte a insertarlo en una política de estímulo estatal" (González Calleja 282).

⁷¹ In the interwar period, public opinion and many European governments "comenzaron a equiparar el éxito deportivo al empuje de la 'raza', al ensalzamiento de la patria y como consecuencia, al poder de la nación. Las competiciones internacionales [...] se consagraron como el marco adecuado para demostrar de forma pacífica pero eficaz, el propio potencial nacional y aún, el prestigio internacional de las naciones y países. [...] En el caso español además, el deporte tuvo otras implicaciones, vinculadas a las exigencias de regeneración y reforma que impregnarían la vida pública del país desde principios del siglo XX: cualquier buena actuación internacional era, para nuestros 'regeneracionistas deportivos', un esperanzador punto de partida para el resurgir de la 'depauperada raza'" (186). By analyzing 1920s and 30s press and political speeches, Antonio Rivero Herraiz demonstrates that Spanish regenerationalist discourse associated sport with military strength, national unity, and personal hygiene of the Spanish "Race." See the chapter "Regeneracionismo, cultura física y deporte" in *Deporte y modernización. La actividad física como elemento de transformación social y cultural en España, 1910-1936* (Sevilla: Wanceulen, 2005) 85-109.

strengthen its populist image among Spaniards (González Calleja 200). Borrowing from the Andalusian, Catalan, Basque, and Galician folkloric traditions, parades and festivals appropriated Spain's regional folklore to forge a culturally unified, albeit regionally diverse, image of Spanish nationhood.

Most notable among these festivals was the Regime's massive undertaking in 1928 to organize the commemorative fifth anniversary of Primo de Rivera's coup. On September 13th, the front page of *La Nación*'s evening edition printed an extensive headline and feature story describing the event: "La fecha gloriosa de hoy. España entera, en la más potente manifestación que registra su historia, rinde homenaje al Régimen y al hombre que la han salvado" (1). Although the newspaper's loyalty to the monarchy and regime may cast doubt on the parade's reported attendance, the numbers constitute the largest multitude of spectators in Spain's history before 1928. *La Nación* estimates that 500,000 spectators filled the streets of Madrid, while 150,000 participants from all regions of Spain marched in the parade.⁷² Among those participating were Andalusian women in flamenco dress, Catalan groups dancing the *sardana*, Navarran men playing the *jota*, Basque men performing *espatadantza*, and musicians playing Málaga's *jabegote* fandangos. The military sections of the parade included significant civilian participation, with youth groups like the *Exploradores de España* and women's auxiliaries of local militias marching alongside armed men from the Somatenes and the Unión Patriótica's district leaders. Representing Spain's idyllic working classes were Sevillian bakers and Arrayanes miners, who wore traditional uniforms that identified their profession, thereby

⁷² "Calculamos que, en total, presenciaron a la manifestación unas 500.000 personas, Desfilaron ante la Presidencia unas 150.000. Calculamos sin exageraciones." See the article published a day after the event, "Cientos de miles de personas en las calles," *La Nación* (14 Sept. 1928): 16.

serving as the Regime's exemplary workforce in counterpoint to the "disobedient" proletariat. Under the watchful gaze of a reportedly entertained Primo de Rivera, the organized masses were instructed to pause and salute the dictator and king Alfonso XIII, making for a multitudinous display of unified allegiance to the military authority.⁷³ The spectacular demonstration of Spain's regional folklore, traditional costumes, dances, military marches, generals, statesmen, workers, and municipal deputies made the parade an unprecedented performance, "un ritual nacionalizador de masas" that inscribed the multitudes within the emergent national narrative of Spain's cultural and political unity (González Calleja 204).

For a dictator who had previously refused to stand while bands played the Valencian Anthem or the Guernikako Arbola,⁷⁴ it would seem contradictory that the Regime would exalt a collective performance of Spain's regional identities. With growing agitation in Catalonia over the Regime's selective censorship of Catalan language in presses and in Catholic mass, any display of Spain's cultural heterogeneity

⁷³ In "Instrucciones generales para la manifestación de mañana," *La Nación* published the parade route and instructions to participants on September 12, 1928, the day before the event: "Al llegar frente al nuevo Ministerio de Instrucción Pública (calle de Alcalá), cada una de las provincias, distritos o grupos, se detendrá el tiempo indispensable para saludar al Excmo. Sr. Presidente del Consejo de ministros que, con el Gobierno de S.M., presenciará el acto desde dicho Ministerio" (4).

⁷⁴ In what Federico Bravo Morata believes was an act of damage control on the Regime's part, on September 13, 1924, Primo de Rivera delivered a speech before Catalan citizens, in which he addressed the Regime's sentiments toward Spain's peripheral nationalisms: "Cataluña sí; con su idioma popular, sin perseguirlo, pero sin poner en pugna con el castellano: con sus trajes típicos, con sus cantos, sus bailes y sus costumbres; como Vizcaya o como Aragón. Cataluña con su glorioso escudo, pero con la bandera nacional de todos: con la española. Esta tierra cariñosa, noble y espléndida que ofrece sus reyes las flores de sus huertos y la luz de los ojos de sus mujeres; la de los hombres emprendedores; la de los soldados valientes; la de los somatenes ciudadanos, merece todo amor; y el mejor modo de amarla es comprenderla en la misma entraña de España para sufrir o gozar, como hija y hermano, como parte de la gloriosa familia hispana" (pp. 30-31). After "exalting" Catalan symbols and essentializing stereotypes as falling within the Spanish national "family" unit, Primo de Rivera read aloud an excerpt in reportedly incomprehensible Catalan. See Bravo Morata's *La Dictadura I (1924 a 1927). Historia de Madrid*. (3rd Ed. Madrid: Fenicia, 1973).

could have potentially marked a space of difference between regional politics and the projection of a unified Spanish nation (Carr, *Spain* 105). Yet, in practice, the performance worked as a powerful nationalizing ritual in the Regime's favor, as Eduardo González Calleja has noted. Not only did the Regime reinforce its directive authority with a massive display of populist support, it mobilized Spanish citizens in a monolithic performance of Spanish national cohesion. The parade, the first of its magnitude in Spain, denominated a common National space within which regional identities could be expressed safely: in a spectacular display of cultural diversity, cleansed of political tension and of subordinate dissidence. The mass demonstration of Spanish patriotism, which required an allegiance to the State above any regional cultural practice or union affiliation, served to exalt the Regime's notion of its idealized Spanish citizens (i.e., workers, officials, traditional peasants, military men, women and youth). Rooted in the militarized exertion of power to pacify and organize the masses,⁷⁵ Spanish nationalism thus projected a mythical, homogenous space that gave the outward appearance of having absorbed its regional, political, and class-based differences.

Within the State-sanctioned spaces of crowd management and instruction, the homogeneous time of the new Spanish national narrative became articulated in a celebratory, mass demonstration of monolithic aesthetics. But beyond this appeal, which arguably predates a fascist aesthetic,⁷⁶ lies an emerging, ideological practice. For the

⁷⁵ González Calleja comments that one of the residual effects produced by popular spectacles from 1920 to 1930 was the pacification of the "unruly" multitudes: "las diversiones populares en estadios, cines y cosos taurinos sustituyeron, con menor riesgo para el poder, las concentraciones multitudinarias en mítines o manifestaciones" (272-3).

⁷⁶ George L. Mosse has noted that in German fascism, monumental spectacles and festivals formed an integral part of Reich's aesthetic appeal to mass participation these events: "el 'monumentalismo' era inherente a la combinación de estética y nacionalismo. El movimiento monumentalista lo ejemplificaron

parade inscribed the multitudes who performed Spain's regional and local cultural traditions within the national hegemonic narrative, thereby inaugurating traditionalism and a patchwork of idealized military men, patriotic citizens, and working classes, within the myth of a homogeneous, unified Spain. Because the parade was a mass performance, the Regime's appropriation of traditionalism was not a purely symbolic act, but a social practice with material consequences. In his Prison Notebooks, Antonio Gramsci described the assimilation of regional folklore as vital to forging a nascent national-popular base in Italy, given that folklore "is much more unstable and fluctuating than language and dialects," furthermore making its popular appeal an important agent of cultural identification among the national-popular (195). Folklore is malleable, transformative, able to assimilate new power relations within "traditional" constructs; moreover, as Gramsci the linguist noted, folkloric tradition is in constant "dialog" with new forms of power that negotiate its practice as a symbolic demonstration of sovereignty. Arguing against the quaint, picturesque treatment of folkloric traditions, Gramsci lambastes Francesco Perri's historical novel *Emigranti*, in which "historical distinctions, essential for understanding and depicting the life of the peasant, are wiped out," leaving the folkloric figures to represent a "confused whole" (305). In other words, "[t]he absence of the historical dimension is 'deliberate' in order to lump together pell-mell all the generic folklore motifs that in reality have very distinct temporal and spatial characteristics" (306). This appropriation of folklore, if we draw a comparison to Primo

aún más los festejos públicos cuya función fue vital para el culto nacional, porque el impulso hacia lo monumental fue parte integrante del desarrollo del nacionalismo en la época de los movimientos de masas, cuando una gran parte de la población se vio arrastrada a manifestarse a favor de la unidad nacional" (49). See *La nacionalización de las masas: simbolismo político y movimientos de masas en Alemania desde las Guerras Napoleónicas al Tercer Reich* (Trans. Jesús Cuéllar Menezo, Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2005).

de Rivera's nationalizing ritual, achieves a similar effect within the hegemonic Spanish National narrative. For the time of the parade, in the perceptive sense of individual and collective experience, unified the projection of national-popular support for the Regime, albeit comprised of mixed times and spaces, with each idealized delegation seemingly wiped clean of political and cultural particularities.

The homogeneous regulated time in which the modern nation-State is narrated, argues Homi Bhabha, paradoxically upholds a sense of National unity through agglomeration of heterogeneous regional, cultural and political practices. "For the political unity of the nation," Bhabha explains, "consists in a continual displacement of its irredeemably plural modern space, bounded by different, even hostile nations, into a signifying space that is archaic and mythical" (300). Primo de Rivera's anniversary parade, a monolithic performance of national patriotism, is comprised of these heterogeneous practices that, at once, refuse and return to "the patriotic, atavistic temporality of Traditionalism" (300). The time of tradition, in the social practice of ritual, returns as sameness in the prescribed motion of a dance step, in playing a musical chord, or in the archaic dress that symbolizes a cultural identification with a collective past (tradition). That is, the repetitious time of practicing tradition re-inscribes the past within the present and within the passage of historical time. Thus, the nationalizing ritual, by subsuming the circular time of traditionalism, worked to powerfully reinforce the emergent monolithic time from which the renewed Spanish nation could be forged. "Quite simply, the difference of space," between Spain's regions, "returns as the Sameness of time, turning Territory into Tradition," within the hegemonic national narrative, "turning the People into One" (Bhabha 300). The homogenizing and linear

narrative time of the nation, forged by authoritarian mandate, incorporates the mythical circular time in which historical events are determined, written, and erased from (Spain's cultural) heterogeneity. The parade in Madrid, the seat of dictatorial government from which the Regime consolidated its power, drew unprecedented multitudes from across Spain's regions to a celebratory demonstration that inscribed the nation's temporality as an imaginary composite of folkloric and idealized (national) practices. The spectacle became ritualized within the homogenous time of the nation, developed throughout the Regime's seven-year consolidation of authoritarian powers, thereby contributing to a new sense of time folded within the emergent articulation of a Spanish national narrative.

If traditionalism constituted a temporal repetition, a ritualized link between the past and its reenacted present-time—now become a “quaint” property of the Spanish Nation—then the regime's promise of future progress upheld a vision of national salvation. The modernizing reforms that had driven the dictatorship's policies to control the masses and instill a sense of economic progress could be demonstrated, in this sense, by the anniversary parade's grand finale. An estimated 100,000 people gathered before the Royal Palace in the *Plaza de Oriente*, where the crowd was treated to a celebratory spectacle of modern technology—a thundering fly-over of airplanes in formation (González Calleja 2013). Amid the multitude as mass spectator, the monolithic royal residence, and the powerful spectacle of new surveillance technology, is the affirmation of the State's prowess over the multitude as its collective, national subject. The modernizing reforms that the regime sought to instill would indeed hinge upon reinforcing an image of Spain's economic progress, and its spectacular modernity, as seen from below, among the masses.

It is not a coincidence that emerging sites of mass culture—the stadium, the folkloric festival and the military exercise—were to become the Regime’s condoned spaces to forge a collective sense of Spanish nationhood. And not surprisingly, sites of mass culture were subjected to rigorous censorship and control, not only in cinema and print material, but through suppression of collective behavior. The six-month closure of Barcelona’s *Les Corts* soccer stadium in 1925 is but one example of this censure, a measure in response to the crowd having whistled and booed when the band played the Royal March (González Calleja 108). The mass spectacle would become the popular locus where narratives of the Spanish nation were generated and practiced, by organizing the Spanish multitude to become subjects of the modern police State. That the national citizenry might adhere to the regulatory processes of modern control and pacification thus defined the Regime’s architecture of State power to manufacture popular consent for Spain’s regenerated path to progress. And, in turn, the national “solution” practiced within this temporal (dictatorial) parenthesis would emerge, concomitant to technologies that altered lived experience, as a projected monolithic sense of National time.

Yet, the linearity of homogeneous, linear time “ha dado paso a una multiplicidad de niveles locales, regionales, a ciclos desfasados pero reconocibles en su articulación interna, a una gran diversidad en los ritmos de desarrollo,” in which composite experiences of mixed times and spaces, public and private, shared and individual, abound in heterogeneity (Aguado and Ramos 313). Folded within complex flows of economic exchanges, technological advances, and collective social practices that dramatically altered everyday experience, the Spanish national imaginary emerged as part of the ruling elites’ solution to rapid changes in times of crisis. That the multitude should play a

submissive role in these social negotiations furthermore became vital to the success of the dictatorship's "redemptive" project to forge a narrative of Spanish national progress through modernizing reforms. The control and instruction of mass spectatorship produced an emerging "idealized" notion of Spanish citizenship and the ideological architecture from which State power would be exercised: reaching from the consolidated seat of government, in the metropolis, towards Spain's regional territories. In this sense, the regime's consolidation and regulated supervision of economic, technological, and social infrastructures responded forcefully to the crisis of cultural hegemony in the post-1917 era, at times with subtle measures that manufactured popular adhesion to an emerging, National imaginary. In response to "modern experience in Spain as varied, discontinuous, inescapably plural and consisting of mixed speeds and spaces" (Larson and Woods 1), the articulation of the Spanish Nation became an imaginary space at the crux of a solution: an attempt to rectify the temporal and sensory fragmentation that ungrounded the dictatorship's restoration of progress—a project that could not succeed without efforts to synchronize its national-popular subject.

Before concluding this section, I should like to comment on the State's will to manufacture mass consent and its central role in the nascent concept of Spanish nationhood. For Primo de Rivera's desire to arm civilians like the UPs and Somatenes, motivated by control, was in part borne from fear: the "new" multitude should subscribe to the belief that the military State constituted—and thereby would redeem—the legitimacy of the Spanish nation. This sense of collective (national) redemption is evident in right-wing discourse, which generally portrayed city life as synonymous with moral decadence and degenerate behavior that "threatened" upstanding, National-Catholic

values. Nowhere more pertinent is this vilification of urban culture exemplified than in the pedagogical mission of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, founder of the Falange and the dictator's son.

As general secretary of the UMN [Unión Monárquica Nacional] in 1930, he toured the country preaching the destruction of the liberal state and 'urban society,' which he blamed for shattering the 'traditional foundations' of Spain and for creating 'an army of paupers.' He therefore called for the patronization by the state of 'the workers' cause' and for restoration of values such as 'honour,' 'fatherland,' 'army,' and 'sexual purity.' (Ben-Ami 64)

The rise of Spanish fascism—inextricably tied to a forging of cultural homogeneity and of civic belonging to the Spanish Nation—gained momentum as a mobilization of the masses who sensed “fear, dislocation, and meaninglessness” in the modernizing projects of liberal reform (Graham and Labanyi 15). The homogenization of cultural difference taken up by fascist ideology may be considered a violent, reactionary response to this collective disaffection: the emerging fragmentation of modern experience that provoked fear. The Franco regime, years after Primo de Rivera's dictatorial rule, would take up a similar project, though more recognizably fascist in its ideology of National-Catholicism, and more notably “conservative” in its implementation of modernizing reforms.⁷⁷ Although the Primo de Rivera Dictatorship was not founded on rigid, ideological principles identifiable with fascism, Ben-Ami argues that the social conditions laying the groundwork for the rise of Spanish fascism had their origins in this emergent “newness” of 1920s Spain: the mobilization, organization, and instruction of the masses by an authoritarian regime that perceived the multitude with fear. The

⁷⁷ Primo's Regime differed from fascism in that the Primo de Rivera dictatorship undertook rapid modernization by authoritarian measures, a project aligned with liberalism in its negotiation of economic policies. Fascism, as it would arise from the consolidation of right-wing groups founded during the Primo Regime, or in the case of the Falange, shortly thereafter, has as one of its ideological tenets a rejection of liberal ideals (González 402).

evidence that Spanish fascism's "national solution" provided orderly discipline among its national-popular base, a sense of belonging to a falsely unified cultural entity, and a rejection of liberal-minded reforms that had brought about "chaos" and fragmentation experienced in modernity, has perhaps been overshadowed by the precipitant rumblings of fascist ideology, and the phenomenon of the multitude, in 1920s Spain.

Spanish (National) History Deformed: the Time of the Multitude in Valle-Inclán's *Esperpentos*

Although publishing houses and printing presses were subjected to censorship during Primo de Rivera's Regime, print material became an important space of critical reflection in the cultural renaissance of the 1920s vanguard. In this sense, despite censorship, the dictatorship could not assimilate literary production's plurality—a vital component to foment the national-popular, for Gramsci⁷⁸—that questioned the sovereignty of the regime. With rising literacy rates among Spaniards, due to educational reforms both from Primo's "top-down" mandate, and from mobilization of union-oriented education programs, literature gained increasing numbers of readers throughout the decade (Mainer 77-78). Met with a growing mass readership, presses funded by private investors and commercial advertisements distributed literary works in pamphlet and pocketbook form, often at low cost.⁷⁹ Between three to five pesetas on average, book

⁷⁸ Gramsci takes French philosophy and literature as his example, whereby "the meaning of 'national' already includes a more politically elaborated notion of 'popular' [in France] because it is related to the concept of 'sovereignty': national sovereignty and popular sovereignty have, or had, the same value" (208). In contrast, Gramsci regards the failure of Italian intellectuals to have provided a "national-popular" literature as responsible for the lack of "national intellectual and moral bloc" cemented among mass readership (209).

⁷⁹ In 1927, millionaire Ignacio Bauer, from the Rothschild Bank in Spain, founded the *Consortio Iberoamericano de Publicaciones* (CIAP), directed by an editorial board of notable politicians (José Francos Rodríguez, Antonio Goicoechea) and university professors (Rafael Altamira, Pedro Sáinz

prices in the 1920s were too expensive for most household incomes, costing over one half of a teacher's average daily salary; whereas literature published in serial format, available for purchase in newsstands and kiosks, ranged from ten céntimos for a newspaper to twenty céntimos for a magazine (González Calleja 57, 287; Aubert and Desvois 56). The limited distribution of books, given their high cost, may have lead the Office of Information and Censorship to believe that literature was not influential among the public, thereby prompting the regime to focus its censorship activities on journalism that reached a daily, mass audience of readers (González Calleja 57; Aubert and Desvois 63). Appealing to a widely diverse readership in Spain were pro-monarchy (e.g., *ABC*, *El Matí*) and pro-Regime publications (e.g., *La Nación*, *El Debate*), newspapers that maintained strong criticisms against Primo de Rivera's dictatorship (e.g., *El Liberal*, *Heraldo de Madrid*, *La Época*), and a range of local and regional news sources (e.g., *La Publicitat*, *La Voz de Navarra*, *El Diario Vasco*, *El Noticiero de Cáceres*), with the top five distributors printing over 100,000 copies per print run (Aubert and Desvois 69). Furthermore, print material appealed as much to highbrow tastes for classical literature and criticism as to middle-brow interest in mystery and intrigue; often, sensationalist coverage of public scandals, gruesome murders, and crimes mimicked the popular noir genre of detective fiction (Mainer 77; Rubio Jiménez 53). The rise in literacy among Spaniards, the inexpensive distribution of reading material, and a varied content that

Rodríguez). "CIAP realizó una campaña de divulgación cultural de gran importancia, tanto con colecciones como sus 'Clásicos Olvidados' o las series 'Las cien mejores obras de la literatura española' y 'Las cien mejor obras de la literatura Universal', como con monografías y repertorios documentales de historia hispanoamericana." The Consorcio was largely responsible for pioneering inexpensive distribution of literature to the masses, like the collection "Los grandes autores contemporáneos" at 1.5 pesetas, with works by Fernández Flórez, Valle-Inclán, Pío Baroja, Concha Espina, and Unamuno. (Mainer 77-8) Likewise, publications in Catalan language proliferated throughout the 1920s, like the Editorial Bernat Metge, also due to private investors who sought to defend Catalan cultural autonomy from the Regime's repressive censorship tactics. (González Calleja 110)

covered a range of consumer tastes and political thought, were some of the economic and social circumstances that earned literature a growing cultural currency among Spaniards in the 1920s, despite the State's regulation of print material.⁸⁰

Several literary publications in serial format would become a laboratory of criticism against the Primo de Rivera Dictatorship, and in certain circles, among a Republican-leaning readership (Aubert and Desvois 70). Providing an experimental space of literary invention were publications like *La Pluma*. Founded in 1920 by the future president of the Second Republic, Manuel Azaña, and his brother-in-law, theater director Cipriano Rivas Cherif, the magazine was inspired by the brothers' trip to Paris, where they came to know new trends in French vanguard drama (Rubio Jiménez 9). Positioning *La Pluma* as a creative space of "refugio donde la vocación literaria pueda vivir en la plenitud de su independencia, sin transigir con el ambiente," its contributing authors included some of the era's most important writers, including Unamuno, Baroja, García Lorca, and Valle-Inclán, whose innovative literature, the editors promised, "romperá el silencio, astuto y bárbaro, en que la producción literaria languidece" (both cites qtd. in Rubio Jiménez, 10). By the mid-1920s *La Pluma* showcased experimental literature that exhibited explicitly anti-Regime sentiments, joined by other pro-Republican publications in circulation, like *España*, where Ramón del Valle-Inclán's play *Luces de bohemia* first appeared in serial edition in 1920 (July 31 to October 23), later revised as a volume in 1924.

⁸⁰ For a detailed summary of the press, the publishing industry and local and national readership in 1920s Spain, see Paul Aubert and Jean-Michel Desvois' chapter "Libros y medios de comunicación de masas" in *Los felices años veinte. España, crisis y modernidad*, Eds. Carlos Serrano and Serge Salaün (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2006) 55-90.

In literary journals like *La Pluma* and *España*, Valle-Inclán contributed significantly to developing a new literature of social commentary, offering an innovative “break from silence” that the editors promised their readers. In 1921 *La Pluma* featured Valle-Inclán’s first edition of *Los cuernos de don Friolera*, a play that scathingly criticized the Spanish “military family” through characters that condoned gruesome murder to uphold the military’s delusional concept of fraternal honor. In 1926 Valle-Inclán’s theatrical work *El terno de difunto* appeared in *La Novela Mundial* (later published as *Las galas del difunto*), offering a comical and degrading portrait of decorated Spanish soldiers who, returning from the war in Cuba, found themselves abandoned by this military family, and in financial ruin. Valle-Inclán’s writings on contemporary Spain would gain momentum in his outspoken criticism of the Primo de Rivera Regime throughout the 1920s, exemplified by the farcical account of its military coup in *La hija del capitán*, published in Spain for the first time in 1927. Particularly aggressive in its portrayal of the regime, *La hija* prompted an immediate recall of *La Novela Mundial* by the Dirección General de Seguridad, citing the work’s offensive intent to “denigrar clases respetabilísimas a través de la más absurda de las fábulas” (qtd. in Rubio Jiménez 23). It was the regime’s view that Valle-Inclán’s theatrical works, within the critical space of literary thought, “sólo pueden alcanzar el resultado de prostituir el gusto, atentando a las buenas costumbres” of its mass readership (23).

Having suggested earlier some of the economic, sociopolitical, and technological processes in the 1920s that gave rise to a changing perception of time for the multitude, I turn to Ramón del Valle-Inclán’s theatrical works to question how the crowd is traced within this emerging notion of historical time. In *Luces de bohemia* (1920, 1924) and the

Martes de Carnaval (1930) compilation of three plays (*Las galas del difunto*, 1926; *Los cuernos de don Friolera*, 1921, 1925; and *La hija del capitán*, 1927), what Valle-Inclán called his *esperpento* works, the characters are portrayed as a historical multitude, collectively subject to—and as much a product of—specific social conditions and institutional powers whose architectures remain concealed from them. In the theatre of *esperpento*, Valle-Inclán represents the Spanish masses as a cast of deformed, grotesque, violent, and fantastically absurd characters—exemplary features of these plays. As I will explore here, the *esperpento* aesthetic forms part of the author’s ironic critique of modern Spain, depicted in the social rot and disfigurements of the new multitude. Whereas the first section has “set the stage” for describing the nascent form of Spanish national hegemony that arises at the time of the multitude, here I turn to the heterogeneous pulses, flows, accidents, and encounters in Ramón del Valle-Inclán’s theater of history, known as the *esperpentos*. What sense of time in Valle-Inclán’s works is shaped by the phenomenon of the multitude in 1920s Spain? Under what circumstances are the *esperpento* works a conceptual dramatization of the historical time in which the Spanish nation arises?

Valle-Inclán was acutely aware of a transformative relationship between the amassing of crowds, sociopolitical change, and literary production over time. In an interview with *ABC* newspaper in 1928, the author explained,

la Novela camina paralelamente con la Historia y con los movimientos políticos. En esta hora de socialismo y comunismo, no me parece que pueda ser el individuo humano héroe principal de la novela, sino los grupos sociales. La Historia y la Novela se inclinan con la misma curiosidad sobre el fenómeno de las multitudes. (*Entrevistas* 261)

Literary production, for Valle-Inclán, is a cultural space that works through social and political movement arising within historical time. The shift in literature’s focus from the

individual hero to the collective protagonist, in this light, becomes the author's logical parallel to the "phenomenon of the multitude" experienced in 1920s Spain. Perhaps this is why, for Valle-Inclán, literature is inextricably bound to sociopolitical undercurrents of historical change, leading the author to argue in an interview with *La Libertad* in 1926 that the trajectory of literary movements has followed the social formation of the modern State in European cultures. From the French Revolution's security of property rights and individualism came a literature rooted in "la exaltación del personaje aislado, del héroe, del hombre solo que acertaba a destacarse," and proceeding from it, the development of the psychological novel (*Entrevistas* 194).

The author's own suggestion brings us to briefly situate Valle-Inclán within—or perhaps even outside of—his time, a matter debated in the vast amount of literary criticism dedicated to Valle-Inclán and the esperpentos. Valle-Inclán started to write in the late 1880s at the height of *modernismo* and "at the close of the period during which an ascending bourgeoisie had struggled to impose an alternative vision for society as a whole" (Addis and Salper 104). Portraying the resistance of militant working classes against this hegemonic transformation, "part of Valle-Inclán's literary production [...] is related to the facet of the European post-1917 avant-garde that moved from bourgeois dissidence to a certain affiliation with, or overt sympathy for, the working class and marginalized" (Addis and Salper 104). Valle-Inclán's esperpento works indeed speak from the margins, as did the author: as a Galician writer, against the *castizo*, Castilian, and particularly monarchic traditions he openly mocked; in contradiction, as a self-proclaimed Carlist and Roman Catholic⁸¹ and, likewise, a secular Republican who

⁸¹ For a detailed exploration of Valle-Inclán's many confounding political contradictions, among them his exaltation of traditional Carlist ideals in modern Spain, see Margarita Santos Zas' *Tradicionalismo y*

exalted democratic participation of the working classes; as a writer who valued the tenets of rural traditionalism while residing modestly in a *madrileño* working-class neighborhood for nearly his entire adult life. Among contemporary authors, Valle-Inclán stands in-between, with seemingly irreconcilable contradictions that resist categorization, between *modernismo*—which he regarded vain and ideologically “faulty”⁸²—and new trends associated with the Spanish avant-garde. In this sense, so too has the writer been excluded from the European modernist ethos attributed to the works of Joyce or Proust in most literary criticism.⁸³ “In a broad Continental framework, as well as in a Spanish

Literatura en Valle-Inclán (1889-1910) (Boulder: Society of Spanish and Spanish-American Studies, 1993). Ángel G. Loureiro contends that traditional Carlist ideals are used aesthetically in Valle-Inclán’s work (more a provocation and less an ideology), forming a radical protest and critique of the historical present, thereby mounting a regenerationalist critique that is not necessarily in tension with the modern (295). See his chapter “Valle-Inclán: La modernidad como ruina,” in *Nuevas perspectivas sobre el 98*, John P. Gabriele, ed. (Madrid and Frankfurt: Iberoamericana & Vervuert, 1999) 293-303. For more on the political evolution of Carlism, see Francisco Rodríguez de Coro, et al, *Los Carlistas, 1800-1876* (Vitoria, Spain: Fundación Sancho el Sabio, 1991).

⁸² Francisco Javier Grande Quejigo comments on this important feature of Valle-Inclán’s *Luces de bohemia*, the playwright’s satire of bourgeois literary modernistas who postured as bohemians: “la vida de Max Estrella satiriza en dos momentos simétricos la ineficacia del Modernismo anarquista y de su decadentismo esteticista. Ambas manifestaciones críticas, desde su marginalidad periférica en el mundo cultural burgués o desde su integración en la élite cultural, terminan siendo asimiladas por el sistema que pretenden criticar” (326). See his article “De la sátira de 1920 a la denuncia de 1924: La crítica del modernismo en *Luces de Bohemia*” in *Valle-Inclán universal: La otra teatralidad*, Eds. Cristóbal Cuevas García and Enrique Baena (Zaragoza: Congreso de Literatura Española Contemporánea, 1999) 323-331.

⁸³ Whereas Luis T. González del Valle argues that Valle-Inclán created a new form of tragedy by “inverting” classical forms with the esperpento esthetic. This technique, he argues, predated similar tropes in modernist literature and theater that would twist or corrupt classical forms of tragedy. See González del Valle’s article “Valle-Inclán ante la tragedia,” *Hecho Teatral: Revista de Teoría y Práctica del Teatro Hispánico* 1 (2001): 55-75. Among criticism that situates Spanish modernism within a literary, cultural, or sociopolitical European context are Joan Ramón Resina [see “Número mítico y matemática de espejo,” *Ideologies and Literature: Journal of Hispanic and Lusophone Discourse Analysis* 3.1 (Spring 1988): 97-127], contributing essays in Carol Maier and Roberta L. Salper’s *Ramón del Valle-Inclán: Questions of Gender* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP, 1994), the collected conference papers from *El 98 a la luz de la literatura y la filosofía*, edited by Dezső Csejtej, et al, (Szeged, Hungary: Fundación Pro Philosophia Szegediensi, 1999), and essays from Jesús Torrecilla’s edition of *La generación del 98 frente al nuevo fin de siglo* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000).

context,” Carol Maier and Roberta L. Salper contest this view, “Valle-Inclán’s literary production is enmeshed in this historical juncture of early Modernism and the shift to the more openly confrontational avant-garde” of post-1917 European politics (31). In this light, although Valle-Inclán stands among other authors of the so-called Generation 98, like Azorín, Baroja, Machado, and Unamuno, and within a greater European framework that interrogated the “myth” of modernity (Resina, “Número mítico” 99), he likewise stands apart from other authors in his ideology: that the ideals of the artist and laborer are inseparable from their work, in practice. This body of literature may be read, similarly, as the author’s conscientious critique of the emerging National narrative as it arises, a sort of counterargument that questions the time of the multitude in contemporary historical processes throughout early twentieth-century Spain.

If Valle-Inclán desired his esperpentos to form new directions between literature and social commentary—a certain marriage between theory and practice—then the author finds this crux of power struggle to be represented, not in the individual, but in the emergent phenomenon of the Spanish multitude:

Ahora, el protagonista de la vida es el grupo, la colectividad, el gremio, la multitud. Es la supremacía de lo social sobre lo individual, que ha perdido su valor. Son los días del Soldado Desconocido, símbolo y encarnación de todos los soldados muertos. (*Entrevistas* 194)

The multitude—embodied by the soldier, the commoner, the laborer, the individual who represents the many—would become the collective protagonist of the esperpentos, portraying its many characters as embedded within and subject to the sociopolitical changes experienced in 1920s Spain. As Valle-Inclán suggests, if the times knew the fallen Unknown Soldier to be a powerful symbol of the many who died in war, then the

character portraits in his esperpento works further lend credence to the author's claim. For in the esperpento plays, the individual characters are portrayed as *typecast figures*; the exaggeration of their features and behaviors codifies their actions for a contemporary audience to perceive them, like the Unknown Soldier, as a type that represents a greater collective faction of Spanish society. Caricaturesque augmentation thereby recasts the individual character as a representative identity among a greater mass of common characters. Drawing from stereotypes of figures and *tipos*, the individual stands-in for the collective throughout the esperpento works: in the drunk intellectualism of Max Estrella, the bohemian poet in *Luces*; in the womanizing, picaresque ways of Juanito Ventolera, the penniless expatriated soldier in *Las galas*; from the murderous impulses of military Lieutenant Friolera who performs an honor killing of his wife in *Los cuernos*; and in the scheming captain's daughter La Sini, whose involvement in a public scandal helps justify her father's participation in a military coup d'état in *La hija*. The characters, society's marginalized and the powerful, are endowed in Valle-Inclán's esperpentos with emblematic qualities that represent the collective, typified by these characters' behavior, speech, and revealing actions. Having in mind that Valle-Inclán's critique of the Spanish multitude is conscientiously folded within these typecast character portraits, I now turn to the notion of esperpento.

Identifying esperpento in Valle-Inclán's plays may prove a simple task for a reader, and yet it becomes more challenging to pinpoint what aesthetic nuances constitute its irony.⁸⁴ The reductive descriptions of characters, argue Cardona and Zahareas, their

⁸⁴ Identifying the features of an "esperpento genre" is an endeavor that has been taken up in a significant amount of criticism, though it is not my intention to do so here. Among notable studies regarding this topic is Dru Dougherty's essay "Valle-Inclán y la farsa," *Ínsula: Revista de Letras y Ciencias Humanas* [46.531 (March 1991): 17-18], in which the author posits the study of genre theory as a productive means to pull

actions and behaviors that exhibit grotesque absurdity, are some of the aesthetic features that define esperpento, but by no means do they explain its horrific, monstrous,⁸⁵ or comic effect (*Visión del esperpento* 30). The grotesque, in this sense, serves a critical function to distance the audience—or readers—from Valle-Inclán’s “patético” portrayal of his characters,⁸⁶ degrading them to become mere “títeres,” whose strings are pulled by forces invisible to them (30). The powerful “pulling of strings” that compel characters to act and speak with typecast (grotesque and comical) mannerisms not only suggests their stereotypical representativeness among a greater multitude; their tics and quirks also reveal the collective as guided by social, institutional, and ideological practices of knowledge that render them marionettes in Valle-Inclán’s theatre of Spanish history. As I explore here, the dramatic playing-out of individual character actions and their

apart the literary context of the esperpento works as avantgarde novelty: “el género no sólo informa al lector-espectador sobre la manera en que debe comprender el texto sino que como apunta Jakobson, permite ver la novedad del texto individual al subrayar su desviación de las normas históricas” (18). The generic novelty in the esperpento works is its treatment of farse, with the esthetic operating in distinction from other literary farses for its historical dimension.

⁸⁵ Vance Holloway convincingly describes monstrosity in Valle-Inclán’s theater as a form of excess. In dialectic opposition, the sacred and the monstrous are related (for their super-natural and sub-natural opposition) in Valle-Inclán’s esperpentos, since they emerge from a common space of representation that transgresses distorted norms. See Holloway’s article “Monstruos paganos, primitivos y populares en el teatro de Ramón del Valle-Inclán,” *Hecho Teatral: Revista de Teoría y Práctica del Teatro Hispánico* 1 (2001): 77-94. In a similar vein, Noël Valis posits that the excess and decadence of esperpento manifests as a “dynamics of transition,” specifically as a cultural articulation in response to the loss of the Spanish empire and to the obsolete aesthetics of Romanticism (140). See her chapter “Decadence and innovation in *fin de siglo* Spain” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Spanish Novel: From 1600 to the Present*, Eds. Harriet Turner and Adelaida López de Martínez (Cambridge, England: Cambridge UP, 2003) 138-52.

⁸⁶ Rodolfo Cardona and Anthony N. Zahareas offer an important comparative analysis of Valle-Inclán’s esperpento aesthetic to Brechtian tragedy and the alienation achieved between audience and stage. “The fact is that a so-called tragic role is so demanding that, metaphorically, it is superior to the Spanish actors who act out the script of Spanish history: when actors gesture pathetically in their persistent attempts to play the dignified roles of tragedy, they are over their heads, and in their pathetic declamations, in the words of some critics, they *appear to be just what they are*: loud mouthed puppets in the historical spectacle of the never-ending absurd tragedy of Spain” (103). See “The Historical Function of the Grotesque: Valle-Inclán’s Art of Spectacle,” *Ideologies and Literature: Journal of Hispanic and Lusophone Discourse Analysis* 2.1 (Spring 1987): 85-104.

representativeness as the Spanish multitude is intricately embedded within historical notions of place, time, and practices of knowledge in Valle-Inclán's Spain. These elements serve as the basis from which to question how Valle-Inclán traces a notion of historical transition—of a Spain undergoing historical transformation—through grotesque deformation.

Esperpento made its debut in Valle-Inclán's canonical work *Luces de bohemia* with a hallucinatory exegesis by the poet Max Estrella. As Estrella and his drinking companion Don Latino wander through Madrid until sunrise, they encounter prostitutes, gambling, street violence, and stir a public "disturbance" that leads to Estrella's unjustified imprisonment and his eventual negotiated release by sympathetic authorities. At dawn, moments before the inebriated and ill Estrella dies from exposure at his apartment's doorstep, the poet describes esperpento in what Don Latino believes to be a drunken exposition:

Los héroes clásicos han ido a pasearse en el callejón del Gato. [...] Los héroes clásicos reflejados en los espejos cóncavos dan el Esperpento. El sentido trágico de la vida española sólo puede darse con una estética sistemáticamente deformada. (Scene XII, 168-69)

The grotesqueness of esperpento is foremost posited by Estrella as a *way of seeing*, one that distorts and deforms to reveal its concrete object of reflection. The concave and convex mirrors on Callejón del Gato, a common site of entertainment for those passing by the street in Madrid, inspire Valle-Inclán's esperpento aesthetic as analogous to perceiving distorted forms in representation. By seeing one's image reflected in—and grafted onto—the surrounding cityscape, the deformed sight of the funhouse mirror performs its double trick: the esperpento augmentation of features appear comical or grotesque, while the warped body becomes laminated onto the reflected image of one's

surroundings. It would seem that Valle-Inclán's having provided name-places of Madrid, as he traces Max Estrella's odyssey throughout the city,⁸⁷ is not a coincidental detail; rather, these sites mark the characters as inseparable from their place, confined by the spaces they inhabit. In this sense, Max Estrella and the gamut of marginal characters appearing throughout *Luces* are indeed the degraded images of wandering "classical heroes" who, stripped from decisive agency, exhibit Valle-Inclán's "tragic sense" of contemporary "Spanish life," seen through the mirrors of Callejón del Gato. The deformed portrait of the collective becomes inescapably bound to a shared condition, and to a determinate space.

Echoing the regenerationalist obsession with Spanish post-imperial decline, Estrella posits this collective plight in the lines that follow. He continues: "España es una deformación grotesca de la civilización europea," a bastardized malformation of "civilized" culture, making Spain the disfigured image of its northern European neighbors (169). Spain is referred to, through Estrella's assessment, as the geographical boundary that delineates the nation, a marginalized entity marked by inferiority and difference from Europe. The crippling condition shared by these characters, according to Estrella, is their inescapable tragedy, bound to two notions of collectivity: their (Spanish) place and their (historical) circumstance. Esperpento manifests itself in Valle-Inclán's works as an augmentation of character features, behaviors, and social "realities" to become grotesque, deformed, and inverted, thereby providing a critical operation that

⁸⁷ Dru Dougherty has noted that the esperpentos mark an encounter between city and writer within "aquel fenómeno europeo—la literatura sobre la metrópoli—cuyo tema latente es el encuentro del escritor con la llegada de lo moderno" (160). See *Palimpsestos al cubo, prácticas discursivas de Valle-Inclán* (Madrid: Fundamentos, 2003).

performs Valle-Inclán's social critique. Inseparable from its fragmented object of reflection, esperpento degrades its typecast characters to gesture towards the Spanish multitude's "tragic condition" as inescapably tied to their (historical) time and their deformed (national) place.

When Don Latino retorts, however, that seeing one's reflection distorted by a concave mirror provides genuine entertainment, Max Estrella agrees and further qualifies: "La deformación deja de serlo cuando está sujeta a una matemática perfecta. Mi estética actual," in Estrella's literature, "es transformar con matemática de espejo cóncavo las normas clásicas" (169). The wandering anti-hero Max Estrella typifies this "mathematical" inversion of the classical heroic figure, a bohemian counterpoint to the traveling intrepid warrior among Valle-Inclán's deformed multitude of marginal characters. Through the grotesque distortion performed by esperpento, the penniless and underappreciated poet becomes one man among many, where his inspirational source of lucidity may be found, like his drinking companions, "En el fondo del vaso" (170). The title *Luces de bohemia*, in this esperpento inversion, refers at once to its literal meaning and its "degenerate" opposite: bohemian lights, or "enlightened" characters [the prisoner to Max: "Parece usted hombre de luces. Su hablar es como de otros tiempos" (101)], and hopeless drunks ["Don Filiberto: ¿Mala Estrella se hallaría como de costumbre?... Don Latino: Iluminado" (116)]. In the wake of Estrella's death, his widow, Madam Collet, and their daughter Claudinita, are left grief-stricken and with no economic means to support themselves, resorting to a double suicide that makes sensationalist newspaper headlines ["¡Muerte misteriosa de dos señoras en la calle de Bastardillos!" (211)]. Thus, the play closes with an ironic "tragic sense" of two deaths that, shouted in the street for collective

consumption, are reduced to a headline story and effectively serve as a bleak reminder of the masses' alienation from each other's suffering. With Max Estrella inscribed among the many marginal characters he encounters in his journey through Madrid's nightlife, and among the women he leaves behind "sin acordar de estas pobres mujeres!" (184), the term *lucos* implicates one character among many in a collective tragedy. Esperpento's ironic function, performed through this sense of estrangement, becomes a critical lens from which to view Valle-Inclán's deformed image of contemporary Spanish society: the common plight of these characters' shared condition.⁸⁸

Valle-Inclán's technique of systematically distorting characters and augmenting their tics makes these features comically peculiar and alienating to the observer. They are sarcastically reduced to objects of ridicule, revealing the powerful forces that shape the collective nature of their inescapable circumstance. In this double inversion of hierarchy—between menial and supreme power—lies the parody at play in the carnivalesque. It is no surprise, then, that the esperpento features of Valle-Inclán's works share a likeness to carnival, not only because power is challenged by their mockery, but also because the comic effect from the strangeness of figures, caricatures, and their actions—as Don Latino suggests—is genuine. When Lieutenant Roviro's glass eye habitually pops out of its socket and rolls across the table during a meeting among fellow military conspirators (*Los cuernos de don Friolera*, scene VIII), there is little mistaking that Valle-Inclán embeds his scathing disdain of Spanish military leaders within his

⁸⁸ László Vasas situates Valle-Inclán among a tradition of grotesque aesthetics in Spanish literature, from medieval times up to Valle-Inclán, as a humorous deformation that expresses "un sentimiento doloroso de desgarrar ante la realidad lastimosa. Y esta actitud ha desembocado muy a menudo en ironía amarga (sarcasmo) y deformación extravagante" (234). See "La tradición de lo grotesco en la literatura española y los esperpentos de Valle-Inclán" in *El 98 a la luz de la literatura y la filosofía*, eds, Dezső Csejtei, et al. (Szeged, Hungary: Fundación Pro Philosophia Szegediensi, 1999) 232-36.

audience's laughter. Or, when the Monarch appears before a crowd of subjects, his figure earthworm-like and wearing a buffoon's smile, the distortion of king Alfonso XIII serves to ridicule this caricature's speech that follows, in which the Spanish crown simply-mindedly endorses the military coup (*La hija del capitán*, scene VII). These esperpento features of the *Martes de Carnaval* plays are echoed by the double allusion to the compilation's title. For *Martes* refers to the last Tuesday before lent—the orgiastic height of Carnaval—and to *Marte*, the Roman god of war, which points towards the plays' buffoonery of Spanish military leaders and their insatiable greed for power. Within this allusion, Valle-Inclán inscribes the Spanish military among the collective that will determine through foolery the murderous and scheming actions of its characters. The comedy of Valle-Inclán's social critique, performed by the degrading lens of esperpento, becomes as fundamentally linked to the work of criticism as its necessary object of reflection. For esperpento, which oscillates abruptly between violent irruptions and sarcastic parody, folds Valle-Inclán's social critique within this ironic distancing, marked by disdainful humor and weighted by the gravity of the events in question.

The grotesque, violent, and ironic features of Valle-Inclán's characters—their actions, appearance, and speech—constitute a critical perspective to brutally portray suffering in 1920s Spain, evoking even the bleakest features of Goya's painting.⁸⁹ To what does Valle-Inclán attribute the “shared condition” of these characters? If Estrella's exposition on esperpento alludes to contemporary Spain as the common site of a

⁸⁹ The esperpento distortion has its origins in Goya, as Max Estrella posits in *Luces*. Wadda C. Ríos-Font explores the plastic and literary dimensions of Goya's *Caprichos*, portrayed through Valle-Inclán's monstrous portraits of his characters. See “Valle-Inclán, Goya y el esperpento,” *Hispanic Journal* 13.2 (Fall 1992): 289-300. Also, Richard W. Rotert explores the parallels between the enlightened artist and Valle-Inclán's failed poet, Max Estrella, in *Luces*. See “Monster in the Mirror,” *Estreno: Cuadernos del Teatro Español Contemporáneo* 17.2 (Fall 1991): 39-42.

collective tragedy, what circumstances determine their plight? With some characters resorting to prostitution, seduction and trickery for economic survival, with others committing murder to restore a collective sense of honor, assassinating innocent civilians, and conspiring against enemies with deceitful rumors and military plots, Valle-Inclán's esperpento plays have as their common thread certain specific historical referents. For Valle-Inclán's works magnify social realities that date to 1920s Spain, seen through the playwright's distorted portrayal: the mental wreckage and financial ruin of soldiers returning from foreign wars, the "foolery" of military leaders and simple-minded monarchs in power, the State-endorsed persecution and assassination of labor activists, and the cold reception of men and women who witnessing these occurrences play their roles as conspirators or disinterested bystanders. Portraying his characters as fantastically absurd, Valle-Inclán invites ridicule, transforming the Spanish multitude—comprised of the powerful and the powerless—into puppets controlled by sociopolitical forces that escape their comprehension. By performing this jarring estrangement between his audience and the characters, at times testing the limits of social propriety and bourgeois notions of decency,⁹⁰ Valle-Inclán's esperpento enacts an important activity of social critique in a conscientious audience. Demystifying Spanish history by making it a spectacle of marionettes, the plays call into question—for readers, as well as for a

⁹⁰ Discussing the shockingly grotesque elements of Valle-Inclán's *esperpentos* and his *comedias bárbaras*, Juan Trouillhet Manso argues: "En definitiva, los elementos siniestros en estos dramas contradicen el realismo de las comedias burguesas y amenazan el mundo racional, provocando una fuerte conmoción en el lector / espectador, a la vez que se configuran como un arma contra la moral tradicional burguesa y las convenciones estéticas vigentes en su época." See his article "El teatro de lo siniestro de Valle-Inclán" in *El Pasajero. Revista de estudios sobre Ramón del Valle-Inclán* Vol. 15 (2003) <<http://www.elpasajero.com/trouillhet.html>>.

contemporary audience—the sociopolitical circumstances that constitute the multitude’s “tragic” role since *fin de siglo* Spain.

The esperpentos are saturated with historical allusions to post-imperial Spain, its military disasters and State-induced violence. These references are not suggested merely in passing; they constitute the events that inescapably bind the characters to their contemporary existence and their collective place of inhabitation.⁹¹ In *Luces* the bloodied prisoner who Max Estrella encounters in jail awaits his condemned death sentence by firing squad, his original crime: “No quise dejar el telar por ir a la guerra y levanté un motín en la fábrica” (104). Set against the volatile climate of a Barcelona that “alimenta una hoguera de odio” (100), the activist’s imprisonment refers to the violent protests and assassinations of laborers during Tragic Week in 1919, when factory workers protested against their involuntary enlistment in the Moroccan War. And shadowing Estrella’s midnight journey through Madrid in *Luces*, the *Acción Ciudadana* mob serves to dramatically enhance the sense of danger in Madrid’s streets through reference to the 1910s “civilian” organization that acted with the Spanish police to violently disperse workers strikes. The right-wing youth group first appears in *Luces* outside Pica Lagartos’ tavern, where the young bar hand, rushing in from the street, his face blotted with a bloodstained handkerchief, frantically warns the patrons, “¡Hay carreras por las calles!”

⁹¹ Joan Ramón Resina argues convincingly that the subtext of *Luces* provides a commentary on a city in transition: Madrid, like Dublin in Joyce’s *Ulysses*, as a capital undergoing economic processes of modernization. “Si la economía en que Bloom y Max están sumergidos no permite la acumulación de riqueza, ello se debe [...] a que en ellas no se ha alcanzado todavía la organización industrial de la sociedad, retraso que a su vez condena a los habitantes de las ciudades a una situación de desempleo crónico, restringe drásticamente la circulación del dinero, y paraliza la interacción al suprimir el medio de conversión de un trabajo en otro” (122). Instead, Resina explores, language serves as these characters’ currency, translating and transmitting heterogeneous social realities of the era. See “Número mítico y matemática de espejo,” *Ideologies and Literature: Journal of Hispanic and Lusophone Discourse Analysis* 3.1 (Spring 1988): 97-127.

(71), prompting Pica Lagartos to securely close the bar [“¡Chico, baja el cierre! Se invita salir al que quiera jaleo” (73)]. Thus, embedded in *Luces* are historical referents to the contemporary Spanish multitude, emblemized by worker strikes and protests from 1917-1919, the martial law that sought to suppress them, and the tumultuous climate of volatile sociopolitical change.

As the dramatic background of Estrella’s midnight odyssey in *Luces*, Madrid’s street violence plays out in a struggle between “anarchist” demonstrators, the police, and the State’s mobilized faction of civilian lynch mobs, culminating in a nightmarish and ironic scene that typecasts the ideologically fragmented multitude of 1910s and early 20s Spain. As Max Estrella and Don Latino wander through Madrid *de los Austrias* (scene XI), the neighborhood named after the reigning dynasty from Spanish imperialism, they encounter an uneasy crowd congregated on the sidewalk, standing between a convent, a nobleman’s mansion, and a nearby tavern. There, in a space marked by historical institution (Catholic and Imperial) and class difference (the private residence of wealthy nobility and the commoners’ tavern), the group of onlookers watches a woman hysterically grieve the murder of her child, whom she clutches in her arms, his chest bloodied from a bullet wound. Here again, Valle-Inclán has endowed his characters with metonymic qualities that index a greater collective. Among the crowd are a pawnbroker, a guard, the tavern owner, a *portera*, a brick mason, an old woman, a rag picker, and a retired man—each character offering commentary that exemplifies his or her affective distance from the woman’s suffering.

“Siempre saldréis diciendo que no hubo los toques de Ordenanza,” the tavern owner comments, assigning blame to the mother for not fleeing with her son when the

police fired a warning shot, which was intended to disperse the street mobs stealing food (162). The retired man's response, "Yo los he oído [...] Mi palabra es sagrada," attempts to justify the tavern owner's accusation by invoking an antiquated honor code, trumping the value of his own "sacred" spoken word against the grieving woman's cries (162). Whereas the bricklayer conceives of the child's death as a sacrifice for the workers' struggle against capitalist interests: "Se ha matado, por defender al comercio, que nos chupa la sangre" (162). The proletarian who "no representa nada para el Gobierno" (163) forms but one part of the Spanish *pueblo* that "tiene hambre," he argues, forced to steal food in order to survive (161). In stark contrast to the proletarian's claim, the bourgeois pawnbroker assesses his shop's property damage, his primary concern being whether the government will reimburse him for "daños a la propiedad privada" (161). Among the confusion of voices, the tavern owner diagnoses the Spanish *pueblo* as suffering from a lack of patriotism ["El pueblo que roba en los establecimientos públicos (...) es un pueblo sin ideales patrios" (161)], in an assertion that parrots the Spanish nationalist ethos. Meanwhile, the *portera* criticizes the pawnbroker's carelessness for not closing his shop before the mob arrived ["¿Cómo no anduvo usted más vivo en echar los cierres?" (161)]. Then, moments later, the *portera* contradicts herself by complaining with a typecast colloquial expression: "¡Nos quejamos de vicio!" (163). As the bystanders comment savagely on the scene, they each reveal their own ideologically motivated concerns for, or disinterest from, the woman's loss. The dramatic horror produced by the child's death becomes a fragmented, coexistent space of projection for the crowd's multiple readings, each character blinded by self-motivated interests. The collective performs, in this respect, the only critical operation known to these representative

characters: the elderly man swears by his sacred word, upholding an antiquated honor code from generations past; the bourgeois merchant concerns himself with the protection of his property; the nationalist tavern owner diagnoses the Spanish people as lacking patriotism; the proletarian mythifies human sacrifice as part of the workers' struggle; and the *portera* spouts her criticism with canned expressions of provincial knowledge. These caricatures, their confusion of outbursts and typecast perceptions, make marionettes of the crowd in Valle-Inclán's ironic portrayal of social, political, and ideological practices of knowledge that constitute the contemporary Spanish multitude.

Interrupting the crowd's commentary, the thunder of off-stage gunfire echoes through the streets, causing the crowd to move "en confusa y medrosa alerta" (163), while the mother pleads desperately for the unseen gunmen to murder her as they did her child. Max Estrella learns, in this moment, that the firing squad has completed the anarchist refugee's death sentence, prompting him to lament to Don Latino, "La Leyenda Negra en estos días menguados es la Historia de España" (164). Political prisoners charged with the death penalty, lynch mobs of right-wing youth groups in Madrid's streets, and the deaths of innocent civilians who must steal to find food constitute Spain's modern Black Legend, thereby inscribing the bleak political and social circumstances of contemporary Spain within an extension of its inquisitorial past. The crowd, congregated on the sidewalk below buildings that serve as material emblems of class boundaries that divide space (i.e., the private space of a nobleman's residence; the tavern as a public space of working class congregation) and historically powerful institutions (the Catholic Church; the Spanish monarchy), becomes inescapably bound to the "tragic sense" of the characters' situation and place, and to forces that continue to act on them in

contemporary times. For the multiple readings of the child's death from the crowd of bystanders—each guided by a specific ideological or social knowledge—place these representative characters amid a fragmented contemporary multitude, within Valle-Inclán's condensed mise-en-scene of Spanish history. In this doubling trick, Max's nightmarish journey in *Luces*, paralleling Dante's tour through circles of hell, “sugiere la inmovilidad proyectada fuera de la temporalidad” that furthermore extends to all his esperpento works, a cyclical temporality that evokes “la eternidad desprovista de esperanza” in the staging of Spanish history (Resina, “Número mítico” 115).

In this sense, Valle-Inclán melds the esperpento aesthetic to queer history; he makes history queer, not in the sense often referred to in “queer studies,” but in that esperpento deforms history—and the playwright's present time of writing—to become peculiar, strange, alienating. Through this ironic distancing, esperpento's contorted image does the work of portraying social interactions to expose the hegemonic underpinnings of contemporary experience: a critical project not altogether separable from the aim, in academic criticism, of “queering” a text. From this critical operation, esperpento endows historical events with the outward appearance—to Valle-Inclán's audience—of having become estranged from a present reality, turning history into an absurd, “tragic parody” of itself. Through exaggeration and satire, Valle-Inclán's esperpento functions as a critical lens from which to view the National narrative in formation—among the crowd—a locus of power struggle among the fragmented multitudes, the ruling classes, and the social practices and institutional powers that play a powerful hand in acting upon them. Exaggerated traits, speech patterns and typecast behavior over-determine the character's social categories, turning them into recognizable stereotypes to (comically, and at times,

tragically) represent a greater faction of the Spanish multitude; and yet, in so doing, these augmented features reveal the characters as blindly guided by antiquated honor codes, military pride, economic motives, and ideological narratives that estrange them from each other, and from a sense of collective agency.⁹²

Valle-Inclán's staging of Spanish history operates as well within a parallel, esperpento form of augmentation. By saturating the esperpento works with historical references—coexisting in the characters' collective space and their present time—Valle-Inclán compresses historical institutions, social practices, and ideologically informed utterances into a dramatic *mise-en-scene*, all of which together show *how* these forces continue to act upon the present multitude. He makes historical time race with speed and circularity,⁹³ which “sirve como una metáfora de la historia de España, donde todo, incluso las revoluciones y las guerras, da vueltas sin que nada cambie” (Ciplijauskaité, “Espejos cóncavos” 29). If *Luces* traces the collective “tragedy” of characters inescapably bound to sociopolitical changes that produced violence in 1910s and 1920s Spain, the *Martes de Carnaval* plays accelerate the historical “development” of Spain's

⁹² In an interview with the playwright, Valle-Inclán commented on literature as a witnessing act between the author, or primary witness, and the reading public, particularly in times of war: “Yo quisiera dar una visión total de la guerra; algo así como si nos fuera dado el contemplarla sin la limitación del tiempo y del espacio. Yo sé muy bien que la gente que lee periódicos no sabe lo que es la fatalidad de esta guerra, la continuación de la historia y no su interrupción como creen todos los parlamentarios, algunos cronistas de salones y tal cual literata. Lo que sucede es que no ven, no saben ver sino lo que pasa en su alrededor y no tienen capacidad para contemplar el espectáculo del mundo fuera del accidente cotidiano, en una visión pura y desligada de contingencias frívolas” (qtd. in Dougherty, *Valle-Inclán olvidado* 78).

⁹³ Dru Dougherty has noted that the esperpentos set in Madrid, *Luces de bohemia* and *La hija del capitán*, tend to simulate the speed and exhaustion of urban rhythms, and of moving pictures: “Si el espacio urbano tiene un protagonismo notable en estos dos esperpentos, el tiempo acelerado asociado a ese espacio les marca un ritmo peculiar. Basta recordar que las quince escenas de *Luces de bohemia* y las siete de *La hija del capitán*, estaban pensadas para correr sin descanso. Valle-Inclán no dividió su historia en tres actos—los tres tiempos—tradicionales. La acción es continua, desde el comienzo hasta el final, presentando incluso algunas escenas simultáneas en el fluir interrumpido de los cuadros. Las siete escenas de *La hija del capitán*, siendo menos, acentúan la sensación de aceleración, alcanzando en algunos momentos el ritmo de una película del cine mudo” (*Palimpsestos* 174).

militarization, its foreign wars, and their consequences for the Spanish multitude. In this sense, Valle-Inclán condenses the sociopolitical changes of Spanish History into the plays' staging of its characters, their collective place of "tragic" existence, and their condition as subject to the national narrative that—through the augmented reflection of *esperpento*—determines their misery and plight.⁹⁴

In *Las galas del difunto* Juanito Ventolero, a womanizer and decorated soldier from the Spanish-American War in Cuba, returns to Spain poor and homeless, assigned temporary lodging at the local pharmacist's house. Passing through the town, Juanito stops at la Casa de la Carmelitana, a brothel whose name alludes to the Discalced Carmelite Order in Spain. At the outset of the play, Valle-Inclán establishes an ironic parallel between the prostitutes held captive in la Carmelitana, owing infinite debts to a matron who keeps their clothes [La Daifa: "tengo una deuda en la casa donde estoy, y el ama me retiene la ropa" (118)], and the cloistered sect of "barefoot" Spanish nuns. During his visit to the brothel, the penniless soldier Juanito laments his lack of financial means to pay for a night with the prostitute La Daifa, who, taking note of the decorations pinned to his military suit, comments in disbelief, "Dirás que no la tienes, con las cruces que llevas en el pecho. ¡Alguna será pensionada!" (85). In exchange for a night with La Daifa, Juanito offers his medals as payment ["Te hago donación de todo el tinglado" (86)], pinning them one by one on her gown. When La Daifa marvels at the badges, asking, "¿Qué medalla es ésta?" Juanito devalues the symbolic meaning of his medals,

⁹⁴ On "El Concepto Valleincliniano de Historia," Israel Forteza González notes, "La importante aportación de Valle-Inclán a este respecto [the political and historical reality of the moment], radicaría en extraer de los grandes temas históricos la anécdota, presentando así la otra cara de la Historia, con el sano objetivo de desmontar las versiones oficiales y posibilitar con ello un revisionismo crítico y objetivo posterior. Respecto a la intención o capacidad historicista de Valle-Inclán, cabe destacar la anécdota reseñada por el autor del libro citando una entrevista al dramaturgo: 'Después de Valle-Inclán—ha dicho el Conde de Romanones—, yo soy el primer español que más sabe del siglo pasado'" (Forteza 57).

claiming that one stands for “Sufrimientos por la Patria,” and his cross a worthless “lilailo” (86). In coquettish disbelief, La Daifa exclaims that his military service in Cuba made him a “hero” [“¡Has sido un héroe!”], to which Juanito retorts, “¡Un cabrón!” offering her all his decorations by swearing on his word: “¡Mi palabra es de Alfonso!” (86). The seducer’s promise, the audience recognizes, is as substantially “worthless” as the Spanish king Juanito has served in battle.

The simple exchange in this scene, one that will establish Juan Ventolera’s scheme to obtain money for a night with La Daifa, is intricately laced with symbolic relationships among the Church, the military, the Spanish monarchy, and the characters’ circumstances that bind them to their “tragic” condition as subject to these powerful institutions. For La Daifa’s entrapment in her cloistered service to la Casa de la Carmelitana is only escapable through economic earnings that will pay her debts; meanwhile, the soldier’s power to seduce her with his “honorable” military service, a “patriotic” ideal he blatantly denigrates, becomes La Daifa’s possible means of escape, hinging on a monetary exchange that cannot be paid by the penniless Juanito without a devised plan. Debt and exchange place the two characters in an economic transaction based on bankrupt investment: La Daifa’s hope of her own escape is invested in Juanito’s money, which he must scheme to steal, while she seduces a false image of the idealized, honorable soldier serving his national *patria* in a war that Juanito himself claims is “una cochina vergüenza” (82). The bargaining process thus constitutes a kind of “double talk,” as Biruté Ciplijauskaitė has noted in Valle-Inclán’s other works, in which “cada uno de los dialogantes dice lo que no cree, y sabe que el interlocutor es consciente de ello” (“Espejos cóncavos” 22). In this interplay between La Daifa and Juanito, “[l]as

conversaciones no representan comunicación, sino un juego lingüístico o estratégico en el que saca partido el que sabe engañar mejor,” a game that becomes predicated upon bankrupt promises for these two characters (22).

This “bankrupt” exchange is not only monetary, but translates to the social knowledge invested in the idealized formation of Spanish nationhood. For Juanito consistently degrades the “honor” his military service has earned him in the name of the *patria*, having left the soldier in financial ruin upon his arrival to Spain. “El soldado,” adds Juanito, “si supiese su obligación y no fuese un paria, debería tirar sobre sus jefes”—a vehement criticism of the Spanish-American War that extols the soldiers’ emancipation through mutiny (82). So too does La Daifa lament her situation, stating that soldiers are not the only ones who “pasa[n] las penalidades,” because “las consecuencias alcanzan a los más inocentes” (83). La Daifa, whose lover Aureliano Iglesias was sent to Cuba and died in combat, has been left with no option but to place their illegitimate son in an orphanage: “un hijo que hoy estaría criándose a mi lado, lo tengo en la Maternidad. Esta vida en que me ves, se la debo a esa maldita guerra que no sabéis acabar” (83). The patriotic belief that a soldier who serves the *patria* returns with glorified honor becomes an empty promise for the characters in the wake of war’s disastrous consequences. The hope of escaping their present condition, which Valle-Inclán portrays as obliterated by the disastrous after-effects of the Spanish-American War, leads La Daifa and Juanito to invest in a new redemptive possibility: monetary gain. The dramatic structure of *Las galas* plays out in this exchange, through seduction and trickery, following the accidental circulation of a letter written by La Daifa.

In a letter to her father, the town pharmacist, La Daifa asks for money to pay debts owed to the head matron so she may flee the brothel and escape to Portugal [“Dicen que allí las españolas son muy estimadas” (118)], where her Spanishness would make her even more profitable than in Barcelona. The prostitution of La Daifa for her “Spanishness” in a foreign land thus serves as an ironic counterpoint to the idealized notion of military “honor” for repatriated soldiers like Juanito. The characters’ “tragic” circumstance is determined by the effects of Spain’s Great Disaster (1898 and the loss of its colonial power), having marked their individual experiences. Left to plot their escape through financial gain, these characters turn to their only remaining resource, inherited from the ruins of an idealized *patria* that has failed them: La Daifa’s prostitution for her sexualized Spanish identity, and the seductive power of a soldier’s military honor.

However, Juanito’s economic prospects improve when his host, the pharmacist, reads the letter from his estranged daughter and dies suddenly from shock—a death brought about by an inconceivable blow to his family’s honor. Devising a plan to improve his financial situation by robbing a wealthy man’s grave, Juanito accidentally chooses his own patron’s burial site. Returning to the pharmacist’s house dressed in the dead man’s suit, Juanito attempts to seduce the pharmacist’s widow by claiming that her deceased husband had promised him the suit’s accompanying hat and cane. Juanito’s negotiation with the widow is notably the third and final collection of “debts owed” from her husband’s burial, for even the town Barber and Sacristan have tried to defraud the widow by fabricating an expensive bill for her husband’s funeral services. Upon seeing Juanito dressed in the deceased pharmacist’s burial suit, the nerve-racked widow faints in an attack of hysteria and presumably falls dead, allowing Juanito to rob the house.

Returning to the brothel where he met La Daifa, this time dressed in his new luxury suit and carrying a sack of cash, the soldier invites all the women to coffee, a customary transaction that opens negotiations between a client and a prostitute [“tengo para comprarte todo el ganado” (116)]. Here, at the close of the play, Juanito retrieves the letter buried in the pharmacist’s suit pocket, reading its contents aloud to publicly reveal La Daifa’s plans to flee Spain. La Daifa suffers a fit of hysteria upon hearing the news of her father’s death, furthermore worsened by Juanito’s full disclosure of La Daifa’s intent to escape her debts at the brothel. With commentary that marks the characters’ ironic distance, Juanito claims his stake in half of the inheritance [“¡Niña, los dos heredamos!” (117)], and the Carmelitana house matron solicits her own cut of the money for the girls: “Juanillo, hojea el billeteaje. Después de este folletín los cafeses son obligados” (118). The petition of exchanges among characters—La Daifa, Juanito, the Sacristan, the Barber and the matron—are motivated by their wish to recover from financial debts and thereby escape their *collective* plight.

The scheming actions of these characters overturn the idyllic notions of imperial grandeur, military honor, and service to the *patria* in Spain’s post-Disaster era. The hope that Juanito and La Daifa can escape their circumstance becomes one of fleeing Spain (for La Daifa) and elevating one’s social class (for Juanito). With La Daifa’s only valuable asset being her Spanishness, when prostituted to foreign bidders, and with Juanito’s available resource being his powers of seduction and trickery, attractive to La Daifa for his “heroic” military service, the two characters’ survival tactics are determined by monetary exchanges that substitute for a former sense of “honorable” (national) value. In this regard, the pharmacist’s death after reading his daughter’s shocking letter may be

understood as Valle-Inclán's attack on a bourgeois notion of family honor. The complete devaluation of this ideal, for the pharmacist, causes his sudden death; the liquidation of his estate results in material benefit for the characters' escape. Folded within this "family narrative" is the allegorical bankruptcy of Spain's imperial "value" and the military honors it promised to soldiers like Juanito in the wake of the Cuban war, leading Valle-Inclán's characters to scrounge for means to escape their "tragic" place of existence and their economic circumstances. The characters in *Las galas* are thereby portrayed as actors controlled by social constructs of value and exchange in Spain's post-Disaster era, in which any belief that the nationalist imaginary could redeem Spain's imperial grandeur suffers a plummeting devaluation.

Historical events in the *Martes de Carnaval* plays determine character interactions that portray the multitude as subject to the collective circumstances of the post-imperial Spanish nation. By collapsing the disillusion of Spanish soldiers returning from foreign war into the dramatic action of *Las galas*, Valle-Inclán reduces the passing of historical events into a collective process synonymous with regenerationalism's obsession for post-imperial "decline." If the condensation of historical events in *Las galas* functions as Valle-Inclán's critique of post-Disaster Spain, and *Luces* furthermore examines the phenomenon of the 1910s and early 20s multitude, then *Los cuernos de Don Friolera* and *La hija del capitán* would serve to reinforce this marking of historical "processes" and "tragic conditions" that determine the characters' plight as a collective subject.

In *Los cuernos*, rumors develop among local townspeople that Lieutenant Friolera's wife Loreta has been cheating on her husband with Pachequín, the lame town barber. A plot develops among the lieutenant's peer military officials to expel him, citing

“pleitos familiares” that have stained the military corps’ honor because of Loreta’s alleged adultery (164). Asking his rifleman for advice in the matter [“¿Qué haría usted si le engañase su mujer, Cabo Alegría?” (135)], Don Friolera is instructed to avenge his military honor and his career [“Mi Teniente, matarla como manda Dios.” (135)], an act of murder pardonable by the State, justifiable by the military honor code, and mandated by religious right. The Church, State, and Military serve here as the powerful institutional structures that condone spousal murder in defense of restoring the corps’ reputable “honor.” Faced with these pressures to perform an honor killing of his wife, the simple-minded and indecisive lieutenant begins to show signs of cracking. His mental instability becomes more evident in his violent irruptions and frequent outbursts, “¡Pim! ¡Pam! ¡Pum!” (155), in which he pantomimes military training target practice. Culminating the dramatic action, Lieutenant Friolera maniacally shoots at his wife and her “lover” in a fit of delusional rage, attempting to murder them both and restore his respectable military standing. Instead, don Friolera’s miscalculated aim proves to be fatal for only one victim, his own daughter Manolita. When he learns of his disgraceful mistake, after reporting the incident to his commander who congratulates him with a Cuban cigar [“Excuso decirle que está interesado en salvarle el honor del Cuerpo. ¡Fúmesese usted ese habano!” (198)], Lieutenant Friolera returns to the scene and decapitates Loreta and Pachequín with a hatchet, carrying their heads to the main plaza in a medieval display of restored justice by vengeance.

The blind poet who closes the play with a song, immortalizing Lieutenant Friolera by describing the gruesome butchery of Loreta and Pachequín, and asserting that the military man’s restored honor surpassed even that of his service in the Moroccan War,

where he alone killed “cien moros / en una campal batalla” (202). Earning him a greater status than a national war hero, the lieutenant’s murderous impulse is lauded in the popular *romance* as a noble defendant of his military “family.” Thus, the portrait that Valle-Inclán paints in stark contrast to the poem is that of an indecisive petty-officer, whose training has prepared him to kill purely by impulse, epitomized in his target practice pantomime: ¡Pim! ¡Pam! ¡Pum! In this sense, the fame of Don Friolera—represented in the poem, through the passing of time—functions as a mythologizing narrative that mimics the “honorable” glorification of Spain’s historic, overseas battles. For the poetic verses inscribe the legend of Lieutenant Friolera within a nationalist discourse on duty and the defense of the Spanish *patria*. In ironic counterpoint, however, Valle-Inclán twists this idyllic notion, degrading the national hero’s fame as an “honorable” sacrifice of his family and his wife’s lover. The legendary status granted to Friolera in verse, however, is turned into sarcastic fodder for two “anarchist” prisoners observing from their jail cell: “en la literatura aparecemos como unos bárbaros sanguinarios. Luego se nos trata, y se ve que somos unos borregos” (203). The prisoners’ denigrating comments on the Lieutenant’s legendary fame serves as an esperpento parallel to Valle-Inclán’s treatment of Spanish citizens as “borregos,” where honorable military battles in defense of the *patria* become reduced to accident, foolery, and ritual, just as Don Friolera performs (inaccurately) that fatal task his military training has prepared him to do: sharp-shoot a human target.

Valle-Inclán’s profile of the Moroccan War veteran, representing the Spanish military’s “foolish” leadership, is portrayed in the powerful band of esperpento characters who plot to remove the “cowardly” lieutenant from office. In scene VIII, the military

conspirators meet to decide if their *brother* “de armas,” Don Friolera, will be tried by tribunal for his wife’s alleged adultery, a disgrace to the military family (171). The conversation among military leaders takes a nostalgic detour through colonial-era Spain, with Lieutenant Campero debating Napoleon’s defeat by the Spanish, and Lieutenant Cardona reminiscing about his glory days in the Philippines: his trysts with underage prostitutes and his knowledge of Tagalog: [“*Tanbú*, que quiere decir puta. *Nital budila*: Hijo de la mala madre. *Bede tuki pan pan bata*: ¡Voy a romperte los cuernos!” (172)]. Lieutenant Roviroso, covering his glass eye to keep it from popping out of his head, exalts the “natural” supremacy of the *patria*, casting Spanish nationhood as a superior force over its “foreign” invaders: “Siempre nos han mirado con envidia otros pueblos, y hemos tenido lluvia de invasores. Pero todos, al cabo de llevar algún tiempo viviendo bajo este hermoso sol, acabaron por hacerse españoles” (172). Thus the military history of Spain and its colonies becomes a farcical parody in this discussion among the conspirators. Their mythologized image of the “honorable” *patria* consists in a composite temporal patchwork of personal (colonial) nostalgia and common knowledge of (national) military battles, whose history, says Lieutenant Cardona, “No la he leído” (171).

In *Los cuernos* Valle-Inclán offers a critique of the collective, mythologizing operation that, in practice, sustains a national imaginary of the Spanish *patria*. Guided by military instruction (i.e., Friolera’s training that has taught him to mindlessly pull a trigger), a collective belief in Spanish national grandeur (i.e., exemplified by the military leaders’ nostalgic conversation), and the violent execution of power to preserve the institutional structure (i.e., the plot that coerces Friolera to commit murder to restore the

military corps' honor), the *patria* is “honorably” enacted as a social and ideological practice among military leaders and their subject of coercion, Don Friolera. However, in representation, Valle-Inclán portrays the dramatic action as having originated in these grotesque characters' misunderstanding, ignorance, and accidents. The military leaders who play a powerful hand in preserving the institution's status quo—and its defense of the *patria*—are reduced to institutional puppets, controlled by parroting and reproducing the very military discourse of *patria* that renders them grotesque in Valle-Inclán's esperpento character descriptions. By saturating the present time of the stage with a condensed glossing of Spain's military history, *Los cuernos* accentuates—and serves to critique—the social forces and institutional forms of knowledge that have upheld a “foolish” and historically violent Spanish nationhood. *La hija del capitán* furthermore accelerates this mythologizing process exhibited in *Los cuernos* to relentlessly degrade the Spanish military leaders that plotted the installation of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship.

La hija turns “Madrid Moderno” into a grotesque stage of prostitutes, gamblers, extortionists, murderers, street *canallas*, and most of all, military men. The dramatic action unfolds among accidents, exchanges, and conspiracies that lead to the *coup d'état* of Military Governor General Miranda, Valle-Inclán's esperpento stand-in for Primo de Rivera. The play opens with a gossiping crowd gathered in the street: Captain Sinibaldo Pérez has prostituted his daughter “La Sini” to General Miranda, not for money or professional favors, but to prevent the high-ranking official from charging the Captain with the murder of a fellow military sergeant. For La Sini to become General Miranda's new lover though, she has had to brush aside her former flame, El Golfante, a jealous young student who left his studies and poses as a panhandler and organ grinder. The same

night, a fellow gambler nicknamed El Pollo de Cartagena leaves the Captain's house after an evening of drinking and card games, where El Golfante awaits in the shadows outside and kills him, mistaking El Pollo for La Sini's lover, General Miranda. Standing over the body, the military men debate how to dispose of El Pollo's corpse, a necessary measure to avoid a public scandal that could taint the military's image in the press ["trae consigo la explotación del crimen por los periódicos" (222)]. And, because it is summer, the Captain cautions, there is no hope of censoring the papers, or receiving help from the Cortes, which are not in open session ["cerrada la Plazuela de las Cortes" (222-23)]. After conjuring up macabre scenarios to dispose of El Pollo's body—bury him in the garden, send him by post to the Americas, chop him into pieces⁹⁵—they finally settle on hiding it in the Captain's basement.

La Sini, perceiving an opportune escape from her father's abusive control, pick-pockets the dead man's wallet and runs off with El Golfante, but not before threatening the Captain and General to expose them to the newspapers if they pursue her. El Pollo's wallet contains La Sini's ticket out of town as well as material for blackmailing her ex-lover: a five-thousand peseta credit, two gambling notes worth forty thousand pesetas from the General, and a written promise note by the same debtor, asking El Pollo for more time to repay him. What La Sini does not know, however, is that the contents of *El Pollo's* wallet—effectively “empty” from any real value, but filled with bargaining

⁹⁵ The murder of *El Pollo* in *La hija del capitán* is inspired by the sensationalist press coverage of a gruesome crime and military cover-up in 1913, in which Captain Sánchez murdered a high-stakes gambler, dismembered the body to hide it in the captain's military residence in Madrid, and sent his daughter to collect a dead man's debt at the Circle of Fine Arts (Cardona and Zahareas, *Visión del esperpento* 203-06; Rubio Jiménez 49-56). The other historical basis for Valle-Inclán's work is, of course, Primo de Rivera's coup d'état. For a comprehensive overview of the historical referents mentioned in all of the *Martes de carnaval* plays, see Cardona's article "La desconstrucción de la historia en *Martes de carnaval*," *Revista de Filología y Lingüística de la Universidad de Costa Rica*, 1 Supplement (Winter 1995): 177-85.

notes—would set into motion a regime change from democracy to military dictatorship. The couple devises a plan to cash the banknote, expose their story to the press, and leave town, a venture that will take them through Madrid’s underworld of gamblers, bargaining journalists, loan sharks, and “¡Las orgías de Madrid Moderno!” (234).

La hija del capitán provides an intricate portrait of characters and power relations that are bound to historical notions of place, time, and practices of knowledge in the formation of a Spanish national narrative. Conjuring up a mythical image of Spain’s capital city as a stage where anachronous times coexist in a single present, the *acotaciones* or scene descriptions⁹⁶ are laced with the looted remains of Spain’s colonial past: a caged “loro ultramarino” that recites the words “¡Cubanita canela!” (207) and shells and coral interior decorations that reminisce “nostalgias coloniales de islas opulentas” (214). The material remains of Spain’s bygone colonial era, placed within these scenes, mark the characters’ actions and schemes among traces of Spain’s historical past—the loot of an empire in ruins.

The dramatic focus of *La hija* shifts from La Sini to the military’s rise to power when *La Constitucional* newspaper runs a thinly veiled account of the scandal. The General, in response to the slander, argues that military men are left “indefensos ante los ataques de esos grajos inadaptados” (240), the press’s “invasion of privacy” rendering them insufficiently protected by the law. The “chaos” that runs rampant in society,

⁹⁶ Simone Trecca argues that the *acotaciones* supply necessary meaning in the narrative structure of the *Martes de Carnaval* plays, offering descriptions vital to developing Valle-Inclán’s esperpento aesthetic. Trecca describes in depth the ways in which Valle-Inclán breaks with theatrical norms—and how criticism has responded to this ingenuity—by making the stage instructions an “aside” or marginal space fundamental for the play’s development of its characters and their esperpento features. See “La típica esperpéntica en el discurso descriptivo de las acotaciones en *Martes de Carnaval*,” *Criticón* 87-89 (2003): 865-75.

according to the General, serves as his precipitating argument for making a case for regime change. “Las Cámaras y la Prensa” of democratic Spain, he continues, “son los dos focos de donde parte toda la insubordinación que aqueja, engañándole, al pueblo español” (240). By promising to restore “honor militar” (240) and thereby rescue the Spanish nation from its congress and press, the two men drum up support among the military ranks for a *coup d’état*, including the granted support of one of their many subordinates, the cross-eyed Colonel Camarasa. With surmounting emotion throughout the scene, the General twists his self-motivated plan into a declaration of patriotic intent [“¡Me sacrificaré una vez más por la Patria, por la Religión y por la Monarquía!” (241)], forging his cause as “la salvación de España” motivated by “deber religioso” (243). The “religious duty” and “sacrificial” nature of the General’s disingenuous statement undoubtedly serve to ridicule Primo de Rivera’s own claim as “Spain’s savior” in a time of national emergency. With immediate support for his candidacy to become the new head of State—albeit, from his inferior commanders—the General exalts “este rasgo de la familia militar” among his accomplices, reminding them of the military’s code of fraternal honor: “¡Mientras la honra de cada uno sea la honra de todos, seremos fuertes!” (244). That Valle-Inclán would have these absurd, deceitful characters parrot Primo de Rivera’s military idealization for Spain’s “salvation” clearly performs an ironic gesture, typifying the nationalist discourse that the author cunningly mocks, by citing it verbatim.

The final scene in *La hija* consummates the interrelated storylines between the General’s coup and La Sini’s escape with El Golfante, among a crowd of Spanish citizens gathered in a train station. Here, in the final moments of the play, the dramatic narrative of the scheming characters is elevated from Madrid’s particularity to become of national

importance. The awaiting crowd consists in factions of society that represent “idealized” Spanish citizens, both for the play and for Primo de Rivera’s government. The Colonel kisses the Bishop’s ring while infantry men, waving flags, march to a band; the women from the Commission of the Red Cross, smiling “embobada[s]” (246), are led by Doña Simplicia, “Delegada del Club Fémina, Presidenta de las Señoras de San Vicente y de las Damas de la Cruz Roja, Hermana Mayor de las Beatas Catequistas de Orbaneja,” whose title alludes to her religious worship of Primo de Rivera Orbaneja (248); and, among the crowd, appear “Muchos manteos, fajines y bandas” of regime supporters like *Acción Ciudadana* who await the arrival of the Royal Train (246). The idealized *patria* is thus comprised of typecast groups: the obedient masses of right-wing lynch mobs (seen in *Luces*), the common people who proudly wave the Spanish flag, the organized band of armed soldiers, the military leaders pledging their service to the Catholic Church, and devout women who worship the Dictator like a religious figure.

Doña Simplicia’s speech expresses women’s patriotism for the nation by citing the “dolores y angustias” of legendary Spanish historical figures—from Santa Teresa de Jesús, María Pita, Agustina de Aragón to Mariana Pineda—thereby inscribing women’s self-sacrifice into Spain’s national narrative (248). In this suggestive manner, Doña Simplicia mythologizes sacrifice as an inherent “tradition” of the Spanish Nation. However, when she invokes the names of heroines across centuries of Spanish history in an attempt to justify the “Spanish” sacrificial ideal, she errs by citing Mariana Pineda, a liberal “martyr” executed in 1831 for embroidering a flag with “Equality, Freedom and Law.” Doña Simplicia’s mistake in mentioning the “liberal” heroine—whose legend emblemizes the “liberal” ideals in the Press and Courts that the military sought to

correct—constitutes Valle-Inclán’s mockery of the “simple-minded” character, and furthermore reveals the present national narrative as laced with falsehoods and re-appropriations from Spanish history. National history, in Valle-Inclán’s critique, becomes a constructed, mythologized space that serves to justify the Regime’s projected ideals of Spanish nationhood. The esperpento parody of this “national sacrifice,” however, reaches its comical limit when Doña Simplicia asserts that “patriotic” women lie down, willingly trampled by the national cause: “nosotras alfombramos vuestro paso con nuestros corazones” (248).

When the Colonel bows to kiss the Bishop’s ring, his gesture symbolizes a ritualized reenactment of subservience to the religious institution, one that the audience is led to believe is disingenuous from the character’s actions in *La hija*. Nevertheless, the willing subservience of Spanish citizens to the new regime, the ritualized performance of obedience to religious institution, the civilian and military organization in defense of patriotic ideals, and the sacrifice of women to the national cause, constitute the representative makeup of an idyllic Spanish National imaginary in which the masses participate as a collective subject.

Determined by ritualized and symbolic social practices subservient to the Military State, Church, and Monarchy, the willing multitude becomes a puppet to the new regime’s unsubstantiated leadership, and its narrative of national “salvation.”⁹⁷ Even the Monarch, appearing from the train car like an earthworm poking its head out from a hole

⁹⁷ Luis T. González del Valle asserts that Baudelaire’s usage of caricaturesque distortion undermined the classical norms of Western literature and philosophy, thereby constructing the modern critique upon parody, a tool for interrogating former modes of knowledge. He argues that Valle-Inclán’s *La hija del capitán* serves as an exemplary case in Spain for how these satirical caricatures are endowed with a critical function to reflect on Spain’s historical circumstance. See “El precedente moderno baudelaireano en el ‘Esperpento de la hija del capitán,’” *Revista de Filología Hispánica* 18.1 (2002): 31-50.

[“sacando la figura alombrigada” (249)], becomes reduced to a marionette in this esperpento finale. Applauding Doña Simplicia’s speech, the emasculated figure of Alfonso XIII endorses the military coup with his “voz de caña hueca,” thereby declaring democratic Spain a cadaver, “y los fiambres no resucitan!” (249). The crowd enthusiastically shouts a cacophony of “¡Vivas!” in the name of the King, Spain, the Military, and the “Rey intelectual,” “con todos los atributos viriles” (249). El Golfante joins them by crying out, “¡Viva el regenerador de la sociedad!” (249), while La Sini mocks them poignantly with a sarcastic play on the idyllic notion of national “sacrifice.” For if El Pollo had not died, La Sini laughs, “la hubiera dañado la Madre Patria!” (249). La Sini’s laughter thereby closes the play with a cynical cackle that mocks the willing masses’ faith in the redemptive power of the military to become the Spanish nation’s savior. And, in this ironic twist, her laughter serves to magnify the Spanish multitude’s condition as subject to these institutional powers, exemplified by the parroted cries of “¡Viva el Rey! ¡Viva España! ¡Viva el Ejército!” (249). For concealed from the multitude are the double-dealings and extortion, as well as the accidents that enabled the military’s rise to power, projected for the multitude’s reception as an honorable national cause.

In this sense, as John Gabriele has observed, La Sini, “like Max Estrella and Don Friolera before her, represents a historical subject that exists within a prevailing social structure,” set within—and against—the transitional powers at play in motivating these characters (312). I should like to add to Gabriele’s claim that it seems the institutional and social structures themselves are what constitute these subjects *as* historical in Valle-Inclán’s esperpento plays. Like marionettes controlled by social and institutional practices beyond their immediate comprehension, the characters, in their grotesqueness

and plasticity, are magnified as historical subjects of the powerful forces that pull their strings, so to speak. That is, the grotesque representation of Spanish history in Valle-Inclán's esperpentos constitute a critical lens to view institutionally-guided social practices that preserve a glorified concept of *patria* (i.e., the military schemers in *Los cuernos*), that negotiate characters into navigating their own escape from a collective disillusion (i.e., the “bankruptcy” of honor in Juanito and La Daifa's circumstance in *Las galas*), that serve to violently reinforce the national imaginary through powerful acts of coercion (i.e., Friolera's honor killing of his wife), that mythologize the National cause from invented historical “traditions” (i.e., Doña Simplicia's discourse of national sacrifice), and that maintain the fragmented multitude at the institutional margins of agency (i.e., exemplified by the alienated bystanders' multiple, coexistent reading of an innocent death in *Luces*). Here, Spanish history becomes condensed into a single, coexistent present, where the mise-en-scene of saturated historical processes reveals the Spanish nation, in Valle-Inclán's representation, as a mythical time populated with historical actors that function as puppets—performing only what their institutional and social knowledge allows them. The confines of this bind—of one's place (the Nation) to one's circumstance (as subject to forces beyond their immediate perception or control)—determines Valle-Inclán's portrait of a contemporary “tragedy”: the Spanish people bound to an inescapable condition as collectively subject to their national plight. The characters—both the powerful, like the military leaders in *La hija*, and the powerless, like La Daifa and Juanito in their postwar condition—are shaped into subjects of historical forces acting upon the greater collective: the soldier, the captain, the mother, the prostitute, the poet, the laborer, and the bourgeois merchant.

The historical mise-en-scene of Valle-Inclán's esperpentos place typecast characters in temporally "impossible" coexistence (e.g., within the Black Legend of Inquisitorial Spain, the era of American colonization, the epoch of foreign wars in Morocco, the Philippines, and Cuba, the workers' struggle of 1910s and 20s Spain). This fictional coexistence is furthermore accentuated by historical institutional powers (e.g., Church, Monarchy, State, Military, etc.) that guide the characters in performing their roles as marionettes, as subject to social knowledge that produces their actions, guides their rituals, and informs their readings of others' suffering. That "cada uno de los esperpentos está basado en realidades históricas de España, fácilmente documentables" becomes a prelude to Valle-Inclán's recasting of Spanish history into a deformed fictional world of "tragic" present circumstances (Cardona and Zahareas, *Visión del esperpento* 43). Wars, eras, and institutional powers become produced, dramatically, in the characters' plural and composite present time of contemporary experience. The condensation of these social categories and actors into a staged "historical process" saturates the plays with a similar mythologizing effect as the National narrative he critiques.

As the abstract, hegemonic time of the Spanish National narrative emerged concomitant to the Regime's authoritarian militarization of the multitudes, a monolithic, homogenous time was produced from which the nation would be narrated. In turn, the esperpento condensation of historical time echoes the mythologizing invention of a national imaginary to reveal its grotesque, uncanny double at the margin, among society's mundane and most powerful characters. For exposing that very fissure from within the national narrative is the alienation of the working classes, the violence produced in

political struggles, the disastrous consequences of foreign wars for soldiers, and the gamut of deformed images that erode the national narrative for Primo de Rivera's projected image of progress. By portraying the coexistence of these multiple pasts in the unified present, Valle-Inclán's rendition of Spanish History becomes a reductive account, even a comical parody, that accounts for national subject formation, its historical actors, and their continued prevalence in contemporary times. In this sense, the esperpento augmentation of character features—and the plays' saturation of historical events, figures and institutions—comprises a critical lens to view Spain's "tragic" history as one that provides an exit, a mass consciousness.

The esperpento works simulate the historical condensation of time, a feature that makes their critique possible by alienating the audience from the typecast characters. Although matters of time may not have been central to the author's explicit purpose, it seems that the esperpento plays are folded within a condensed sense of time that, arising with the phenomenon of managing the multitude in 1920s Spain, recasts the collective into its role as a (national) subject. The historical actors of enduring institutions shape this idealized imaginary of Spanish citizens (i.e., Catholic, patriotic, "honorable," obedient to authority) in their contemporary role as subject to these anachronous forces. The individual characters' performance of these typecast roles in the esperpento works (e.g., their stereotypical speech, mimetic actions, ritualizing gestures) render them controlled by forms of knowledge (i.e., foolery) and powerful actors (i.e., accidents) they do not comprehend or which remain concealed from them. That is, the idealized entity of the Spanish nation, in Valle-Inclán's parodic representation of their grotesque features, behavior, and characteristics, is "tragically" bound by the alienation of its "citizens" from

one another, from their place of being, and from recognizing what forces condition their circumstance. Valle-Inclán's esperpento mirror shows the grotesque image of contemporary Spain, revealing therein a "new art" of social critique where the masses and their collective condition as a (national) subject are reflected in this double-image—a narrative distortion of time wherein fiction becomes inseparable from history.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ "Detrás de ese nutrido repertorio de personajes del esperpento surge de nuevo, cegador relámpago, la concepción social del arte, tan nueva en su momento, que aún puede costar trabajo reconocerla, pero en la que vemos la insoslayable urgencia de 'participar,' de estar en un aquí y en un ahora, del que no se puede nadie, absolutamente nadie, considerar insolidario. Detrás de eso surge, amenazadora, una desconsoladora anonimia, la de la vida aislada de las grandes ciudades, donde se comparten engañosamente las veinticuatro horas del día, pero donde resulta difícil hallar un co-latido próximo" (25). See Alonso Zamora Vicente's introduction to *Luces de Bohemia* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 2006) 9-30.

Chapter IV

Time, Unsettled: Traces of the *Transición* to Democracy in Photography and Narrative

In retrospect, visual art from the 1970s and early 80s in Spain has been regarded an experiment in postmodern frivolity, often characterized by the *movida*, its protagonists and followers. Pablo Pérez Mínguez, one of the more prominent photographers of *la movida madrileña*, summarizes this generalization when he asserted that frivolity, “uno de los grandes éxitos de la movida,” allowed artists of his generation to acquire a playfulness in the content and approach to their work, to which photography was no exception (qtd. in Gallero 83). Among the new styles experimented with in the photographic medium are the absurd, the psychedelic (e.g., Ouka Lele’s subjects donning hats made from lizards or lemons, Jorge Rueda’s airborne Zeppelin-pickle), kitsch (e.g., often poking fun at essentializing stereotypes of Spaniards and traditions, like Pablo Pérez Mínguez’s bullfighter posing with a lamb) and photomontage and collage (e.g., cut-and-paste images by Antonio Ávila, Joan Fontcuberta, and Miguel Ángel Yáñez-Polo). Even so, photography from the *Transición* era exhibits a much greater range of work than the characterization of “frivolity” it has earned in criticism.⁹⁹ For these artists’ innovative approaches to photographed subjects and camera techniques reveal more of the years when they were taken than the playful qualities they apparently exhibit. As I

⁹⁹ When I refer to frivolity as an aesthetic feature of postmodernism, regarded so, albeit pejoratively by high modernist theory, I have in mind Jean-François Lyotard’s assessment in *The Postmodern Condition* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: U of Minnesota P, 1984). Lyotard laments the “anything goes” ethos of postmodern art at the time of writing his essay in 1979, and he mistakes kitsch as a pandering to “the confusion which reigns in the ‘taste’ of the patrons” that amount to the current “epoch [being] one of slackening” (76).

will explore here, photographers from the *Transición* years tended to take up the position of the camera to represent newness in the emerging sociopolitical context of post-Franco Spain. For during this time, the photographic medium became a widely diffuse space of representation for the common celebrations and uncertainties of the new democratic State and its repercussions for Spaniards. That is, photographers who produced abstract and spectacular photographs during the 1970s and 80s, as well as those who took a documentary approach to their work, tended to use the medium to question the promise of a Spain transformed, socially and politically: for instance, what does it mean to be “Spanish” when a regime no longer univocally defines the nation? Or within the medium, what kind of “picture-taking” constitutes legitimate photography?

The photographic medium and its growing popular reception throughout the 1970s offered novel possibilities to visually stage, explore, and document the constructions of “newness” that the *Transición* to democracy promised; the camera, in this sense, captured present occurrences, contemporary to the restructuring of a democratic State that was defined in opposition to Spain’s dictatorial past. As cultural production—and more significantly, the subjects taking photos—became uninhibited by dictatorial censorship, photographers turned their lenses on persons and practices that emerged within the newfound security of identity expression. Often exhibiting “postmodern” styles, their photography depicted the changing formations of identities subject to these novelties, “un sujeto que, desde ahora, empieza a no pasar por el Estado para poder constituirse” (Moreiras-Menor, “La realidad in-visible” Section 6).

The work of Miguel Trillo offers one example of this novel representation of photographic subjects when met with “newfound” liberties of expression set against the

urban backdrops of 1980s Spain. Trillo's flashy, image-conscious portraits of young same-sex couples, nightclub goers, and tattooed bikers grant visibility to these subjects' "uncensored" exhibition, identities that under Francoism were subverted from public view.¹⁰⁰ In this sense, and through the photographic medium, those who had been excluded from visibility under Francoism—the *rockeros*, queers, and the urban nightlife that primarily served as their stage—earned protagonism with the anticipated dismantling of the Franco Regime. Photography, which will be my primary focus in the following pages, is one space of cultural production that was in the process of exploring these and other new identity formations, specifically in the context of an emerging democratic State. For even the "frivolous" spectacle of much experimental photography and its nonconformist approach to represent these "new" (or, newly visible) photographic subjects are bound within the political and social climate of post-Franco Spain. Both the photographers and the subjects they photographed became witness to a *Transición* that promised "new things," even if the artists like Pérez Mínguez and Trillo might not have explicitly intended this as the aim of their project.

In the following pages I will argue that a selection of photographs by Ferran Freixa, taken between the 1970s and the early 1990s, posits questions regarding subjectivities that become witness to transition, even as his work seems to stand apart from the "frivolous" veneer that often has been said to characterize experimental art produced from this era. Although Freixa's work cannot be categorized simply as documentary photography, nor as exhibiting the artistic playfulness associated with the

¹⁰⁰ For a selection of Trillo's work, see *Miguel Trillo* (Madrid: La Fábrica, 1999) and the publishing house's associated webpage, *Miguel Trillo*, NoToDo. La Fábrica Editorial, Madrid. 12 May 2008 <http://www.photobolsillo.com/fotografos/miguel_trillo/miguel_trillo.htm/>.

movida, here I will propose that these photographs depict a collective uncertainty experienced during the years when they were taken—the consolidation of the “new” democratic State and, subsequently, the ungrounding of identity constructions, a point I will develop by analyzing these images among other photographic works from these years.

Photography’s capacity for opening an ample space within which to represent emerging identities is attributable, in part, to the accessibility of the artistic medium to the general public, both in amateur photography and by way of a growing number of photography publications in the early 1970s. Magazines such as *La Luna de Madrid* featured a colorful mix of pop art, experimental photography, cartoons, fashion, and star sightings in Madrid’s nightlife, in which photography played an important role in fashioning the image-conscious characterization of the *movida*.¹⁰¹ Whereas the more austere black-and-white visuals of documentary artists like Català-Roca had earned photography the status of a high art form by the *Transición* era, the public appeal of playful and experimental artworks in publications like *La Luna* was greatly responsible for giving photography greater popular recognition. Working against the traditional notion that photographers were exclusively professional artists, amateur photography in 1980s Spain favored the snapshot image and, with it, the manipulation of developing

¹⁰¹ Malcolm Alan Compitello and Susan Larson explain, “*La Luna* was eventually identified with the slippery and poorly-understood phenomenon, *la movida*. While the magazine had no specific intellectual agenda, it promoted the liberating forces of the postmodern because *La Luna*’s intellectual brain trust believed that radical postmodernism provided the best way to challenge the Habermasian vision of modernity championed by young politicians who swept into power as a result of the PSOE’s victories in the municipal elections in 1979 and in the general elections of 1982 generally referred to as the ‘elecciones de cambio’” (154). See Compitello and Larson’s interview, “*Todavía en La Luna: A Round Table Discussion with José Tono Martínez and Friends*,” *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* 1 (1997): 153-68.

processes, lack of focus to enhance blur or motion, and mixed media practices.¹⁰² As Manuel Santos explains, “[g]enerally, the photographer of the 1970s lack[ed] specific instruction,” which was derisively termed “poor photography” of the 1980s (29).¹⁰³ Whereas *poor photography* connotes both the modest economic means of the new photographers and doubly serves as a criticism of these photographs’ technically “poor” image quality, Santos defines the term as the amateurish methods showcased in the widely influential publication *Nueva Lente*. By showcasing amateur works, the magazine tended to oppose formal training in photography as “the abuse of sophisticated techniques of studio shots or laboratory processes, not accessible in the penury of photographic instruction at the time” (Santos 29). If contributors to *Nueva Lente* advocated that anyone with a camera could become a photographer, then no movement might have been more divergent from this practice than the clear-shot, methodological approach to the photography of the New Topographics. A school that would influence the photographic techniques employed by Ferran Freixa, New Topographics produced highly technical

¹⁰² This tendency of younger generations to experiment with new photographic techniques was not unique to artistic practices. In her article “Against the grain: Photojournalism in transition-era Spain” [in *Journalism*, 5.4 (2004): 440–457] Maria Nilsson explains how this emergent practice, due in part to advances in camera technology, influenced approaches to documentary styles, as well, subsequently distinguishing younger generations of photographers. “In the late 1960s and early 1970s, some photographers, in particular freelancers [...] began experimenting with new techniques. Hand-held flash and high-speed film made photographers more mobile and allowed them to get closer to events and to photograph in difficult light situations” (442).

¹⁰³ See Manuel Santos’ article “Contemporary Spanish Photography, 1970-1990” published in *Cuatro direcciones: fotografía contemporánea española, 1970-1990; Catálogo de la exposición, Tomo I* (Madrid, 1991) 25-39. Santos, as the Project Director of the exhibition *Cuatro Direcciones*, gives a comprehensive overview of the history of Spanish photography. Incidentally, the title of the 1992-1993 exhibition in the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía echoes Beaumont Newhall’s chapter “New Directions” in *The History of Photography* (New York: New York Graphic Society, 1982), notable because both Newhall and Santos describe and group the recent tendencies of photography in order to show in what “directions” the future disciplines of the medium might be headed.

images that contrast with the antagonistic playfulness of photography typically associated with *la movida*.

Having achieved international recognition before becoming influential among Catalonian artists, the New Topographics style contrasted “poor photography” with “a cold and neutral documental,” even a clinical, photographic gaze for landscapes and city spaces (Santos 33). Manuel Santos explains,

This tendency, originated in the U.S.A., promoted a complete neutrality, an asepticism of feelings, formal ideologies and criterions at the moment of documenting the human environment. In this way, landscapes, usually urban, are reflected with the coldness with which a topographer prepares the description of a terrain. In these works, a sensation of distance dominates neutrality, the territory is not well known, and the photographer leans on that distance of sentiments to achieve a greater objectivity. (33)

The spatial distancing and cold, “objective” aesthetic it produces in these images stand in diametric opposition to styles often appropriated to the 1980s Spanish photographers, whose artistic production is deeply entrenched in the visual constructions of appearance and the self-image of the artist-as-subject (Moreiras-Menor, *Cultura herida* 135).

Internationally celebrated photographer Joan Fontcuberta describes the Catalonian school influenced by New Topographics as distinct in that “these authors do not approach the documentation of just any subject, but precisely one of a known territory, one to which, for some personal circumstance, they are bound by a deeply-felt relation” (qtd. in Santos 33).¹⁰⁴ Santos further explains Fontcuberta’s claim, attributing the Catalonian

¹⁰⁴ Topographics, the documentary photography of man-altered landscapes and interiors, became associated with the photographers of the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in the late 1970s and early ‘80s. The Düsseldorf school (Bernd and Hilla Becher, Andreas Gursky, Candida Höfer, and Thomas Ruff, to name a few) later gained commercial popularity, although the New Topographics’ contribution to photography, according to Victor Landweber, had been downplayed by Beaumont Newhall in his work *The History of Photography from 1839 to Present Day* (New York: New York Graphic Society, 1982). Landweber mentions the contributions of the New Topographics photographers (in the United States: Robert Adams, Joe Deal, Nicholas Nixon, and Stephen Shore) whose work documented landscapes and interiors without humans, while there exist traces of “a human order imposed on” without the presence of human subjects. For a more

photographers' affinity for "places" to the political environment during the 1970s: "[c]onsidering the rapid mutations of post Franco Spain, their attitude is to detain their glance upon loved environments that will be the stages of change" (33).

Having in mind this documentary character of New Topographics photography and its reflection on the *Transición* years, I argue that the range of work from one such photographer, Ferran Freixa, reveals uneasiness for the transitory spaces depicted in these images. The visual reading I propose of these spaces will guide a theoretical elaboration of transition in relation to questions of place, temporality, and subjectivity, as they are portrayed in the photographs. Whereas Freixa's early work—the black-and-white photographs of childhood memories, the window displays of corner shops in Barcelona—has been described as nostalgic (Fontcuberta 12), when visually analyzed for their composition and content, Freixa's photographs from the 1970s to the 1990s suggest the inhabitability of these spaces rather than a nostalgia for them. As Roland Barthes explains, photography is "the explosion of the private into the public" for collective consumption (98); it should thus be kept in mind that Freixa's photography instills public and private spaces with foreignness, both in relationship to the photographer and to the viewer. This defamiliarizing effect would tend to counteract any sort of longing for a nostalgic past implied by Fontcuberta's appropriation of Freixa's photographs—a point I develop here. To begin I describe a selection from Freixa's work, then analyze these photographs within their framework of content and form, exposing Freixa's way of seeing the familiar as uninhabitable.

complete description of the New Topographics in the United States, see Victor Landweber's on-line article "Three Recent Movements in Photography," *Photo History and Concepts*, The Academy of Art University, San Francisco, 3 Sept. 2005 <<http://elmo.academyart.edu/study>>. For more on the Düsseldorf school see the interview by Daniel Birnbaum, "Thomas Ruff talks to Daniel Birnbaum," *Artforum*. 41.8 (2003): 218.

The Photographed Subject: Portraits of Absence

Since 1978 Ferran Freixa has specialized in the photography of architecture, both topography and interiors, for the commercial market and for his own creative work.¹⁰⁵ In contrast to the spectacular photographs exhibited in *Nueva Lente*, however, Freixa has dedicated his work almost entirely to capturing meticulously focused images in black and white, photographing interiors with an attention paid to shadows that enhance textures (e.g., wood grains, folds in tablecloths), patterns (i.e., neatly stacked plates, tile floors) and the symmetry of material objects placed within them. Freixa's spatial composition tends to obey a balanced *mise-en-scene*, wherein the photographer has staged a world deserted of human subjects. Thus, the hotel lobbies absent of protagonists in Venice (Fig. 4.1) and San Sebastián (Fig. 4.2) become the photographed subjects themselves, portrayed through the straightforward image of neatly aligned chairs equidistant from the tables at center. Similar to the New Topographics style of photography, these images are framed to distribute evenly the photograph's content, measured by the material objects within this square. In this manner, the spacing of the curtains and windows adheres to an orderly proportion, giving the appearance that these rooms without people could be folded in half, where the left side might be a perfect duplication of its right.

The order of these symmetrical interiors, however, is often disrupted by the traces of human habitation, although humans remain outside our frames of view. Echoing the

¹⁰⁵ Although Freixa was mostly self-taught in photography, as Santos explains was typical for his generation of artists, he was trained in painting and drawing in Barcelona before beginning his photography career in 1968, when he opened a graphic design and photography studio dedicated to fashion, industry and publicity. All references to Freixa's photography are from the compilation *Ferran Freixa, 1977-1994* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1994). This collection lists an extensive bibliography of the artist's work, as well as a short biography in the last few pages of the book. The information I summarize above comes from these unnumbered pages.

balance of chairs positioned around tables (in Fig. 4.1 and 4.2), here is another hotel lobby (Fig. 4.3) with four empty chairs, positioned as if there had been people sitting here in casual conversation. Instead, I see the four chairs as if they were the objects talking to each other, with no sign of the people who once sat here, while the arrangement of the chairs (and their void) suggests a human presence. This is the most striking feature of Freixa's work: the overall absence of (human) photographic subjects, although there remain traces of their presence within the optical frame of view. Just as the chairs are arranged as if people occupied them, Freixa's symmetrical balance of interiors is often disrupted by the traces of persons who seem to have disturbed the spatial order of things. To illustrate this point further I should also note that, like the three scenes of furniture without people, Freixa has an affinity for showing us the absence of a human collective—a nonexistent crowd to inhabit these spaces. In a series of frames that display Freixa's acute observation for material textures and household items (e.g., the folded corners of cloth napkins, glasses unused and overturned [Fig. 4.4], dinnerware stacked in piles near a box for packing [Fig. 4.5]), the artist's attention to detail becomes evident through his staging of banal artifacts from everyday encounters and spaces. It seems as though these ordinary objects have been or will be used to serve a large dinner party, a collective of people who remain out of sight from the photograph. Furthermore, it can be assumed that the many glasses and plates are stacked in storage; the glasses remain upside-down and the plates empty, neatly arranged, as if the spectator were not being asked to join the table at a place setting, but to observe alone. Nevertheless, it may be deduced that there is a group of people, elsewhere, who has been or will be waiting for service with these items, as the tray of glasses implies. They are objects in waiting—having been washed and

dried, organized and stored on tables. If it can be assumed that there exists a party out of view, outside the photograph's frame, then the "talking" chairs likewise suggest a missing crowd before the viewer's eyes as the evidence of people who have eaten, gathered to talk, and lived in these deserted spaces, having disrupted the symmetry of Freixa's portrayed spatial order by doing so. Though these public spaces are uninhabited by human subjects, their very absence remains marked by traces of "having been here," or perhaps even their chance arrival. Considering this, what is implied by Freixa's insistence on portraying the absent collective? As I continue to cite more of Freixa's work, it becomes evident that his photography consistently erodes the viewer's sense of place from these photographs, as if to erase the onlooker from these rooms, making the observer one of the vanished among the absent many. This void of human presence, save the material traces that have marked the crowd's existence, extends to the position of the viewer and precludes the possibility that Freixa wishes his viewer to reflect upon the photographer's personal memories alone, the evidence for which will continue to appear in the images that follow.

Another set of Freixa's photographs is dedicated to an empty theater interior, again a communal space that has been abandoned. The shrouding of the house seats on the main floor (Fig. 4.6), the ornate box seats (Fig. 4.7), and partially covered walls show a vast space that cannot host an audience, although perhaps at one time it might have. Barcelona's *Gran Teatre del Liceu*, documented after a fire that caused the house to close, is an interior that suggests its own temporality: once this space *had been* occupied by a crowd whose collective attention was directed towards a stage outside the photograph's frame. The coverings, although they disguise the rows of seats underneath,

allude to its absent collective of guests once sat here to see a show, but at present no longer remain; that is, the absence of people in these photographs suggests their presence as well. Whereas the shrouded seats allude to a funerary interior (i.e., exhibiting some black and white contrast, yet more grey compared to Freixa's other photographs), I am unsure as to whether this event (the event of the photograph) marks the closing of the theater, or its anticipated opening. Rather, I would like to propose both of these readings, to say that the theater is closed, perhaps under renovation, but captured during and within a frame of temporal uncertainty.

What echoes throughout Freixa's work, witnessed in these photographs, is the question of an ambiguous loss, namely that of the inhabitants themselves, at the time we view these interiors. Among these spaces without human subjects, the traces of their existence become evident by taking note of the objects that disrupt the room's symmetry, the material things here in waiting. From the observer's viewpoint, these interiors might be deserted simply because they are transitional places, visited by the tourist (i.e., the hotel) and the passer-by (i.e., the window displays in Freixa's early works, the theater). Yet, without enough information as to who the human subjects are, it is almost as if the photographer asks his viewer to question—from the glasses and plates in storage, the theater and the empty chairs—that if these transitory spaces seemingly await a collective or a group of people, why are they out of view? I do not believe there is a definitive answer to this question, however, by prescribing "narrative" meaning to these frames, because Freixa's photographs do not imply a visual narrative from the material objects waiting here. The invention of narrative meaning from these photographs' content—to make the images tell a story—would first imply a preexisting sequence of events, a series

of happenings that these images do not at all suggest. The material objects in these spaces (i.e., the meticulous placing of an ashtray, a tablecloth, and chairs) seem to fail this narrative operation, because they do not gesture towards a readable chronology of events. Rather, the household items here might only be perceived as objects that are about to be used—or like the plates, they have been used, washed and reordered—and remain in storage. Rather than evoking narrative meaning, Freixa's photographs instead insinuate a question; that is, one gathers the sense from observing these photographs that in the captured moment (the present moment of the photograph) either we observers have missed the affair altogether, or it has yet to begin. Or to rephrase our seeing Freixa's photography in terms of witnessing a (non)gathering of people: either we have arrived too late, or perhaps too soon. The paradox of Freixa's craft is that he endows material objects with enough presence to mark traces of human existence, as if to signal to the observer—through these traces—the places where the collective subjects of his photographs might have been or will be. Among vacated hotel rooms and theaters, these community spaces remain uninhabited, and the viewer's untimely arrival at these scenes—the photograph's temporal uncertainty—becomes evident through seeing.

Barthes comments that, even if a photographed landscape or space is unknown, to be inviting it must be "*habitable*, not visitable. This longing to inhabit, if I observe it clearly in myself, [...] is fantasmatic, deriving from a kind of second sight which seems to bear me forward to a utopian time, or to carry me back to somewhere in myself: a double movement" (39-40). Although Barthes' point of departure for reading the photograph refers to his intimate reaction to the exterior of the house he sees, his observation on the scene's inhabitability is not a mere matter of taste. When presented with a photograph of

a place he has not visited, Barthes' contemplation reveals the uncanny familiarity of the scene, because this somewhere is not merely a place to visit, but one that invites the viewer to reside within its space. I should like to draw from Barthes' suggestion to assert that Freixa's photographs confront the observer with a similar problem. If the moment of the photograph cannot be determined (i.e., the arrival of the viewer as too soon, or perhaps too late) the double movement which Barthes aptly describes thus relates the problem of time (at once a future and a past) to the lack of human subjects, providing an ambiguity of whether or not these spaces are (will be or have been) inhabited. When Barthes describes this particular photograph, his usage of the term "utopian time" in itself conjoins the photograph's temporal and spatial unlocatability to that of the viewing subject. For the image reproduces both a specific place that is no-where (*u-topos*, or no-place) and a definite event that is no-when (no-time). And so by eluding Barthes, the photograph's power of dis-location stirs a strange familiarity: "Looking at these landscapes of predilection, it is as if *I were certain* of having been there or of going there" (40), awakening in the author an uncomfortable familiarity for this place. Freixa's photography conjures up a similar response to witnessing the traces of others' existence, of people not pictured yet somehow present, within the portraits of interiors that have been lived in, or are waiting to be. This uncertainty for *who* and *when* turns Barthes' thoughts on inhabitability around, for these transitory spaces and the material objects placed here do not invite the observer to occupy them, to participate in them as a subject. Paradoxically, Freixa's photographs portray uninviting interiors that may only be visited, despite the signs that make one question if there are inhabitants who (have or will) live here.

To continue with Freixa's representations of time and space, following Barthes, I should like to consider the role of subjectivity—of the inhabitant—and the absence of human subjects in his photography. The barbershop (Fig. 4.8) is a stunning example of another communal space that shows us the signature features of Freixa's work discussed so far. This public space vacated of people displays the traces of things left in storage (waiting to be used or left here) by human hands—the folded and stacked towels, a set of plastic-rimmed glasses beside an ashtray: all signs of human disorder to an otherwise nearly symmetrical *mise-en-scène*. A chair, centered within the frame, faces the observer with the seat aligned at eye level. Perhaps this, among other works, is why Freixa's photography has been regarded “nostalgic” by Fontcuberta, since here we occupy the perspective of a child reluctantly waiting for a haircut, where the imposing chair at center cannot be interpreted as inviting. This uneasiness for familiarity, and not for the black-and-white childhood memories, however, is what becomes evident in this frame. For if nostalgia implies a longing to return, to inhabit again, these spaces (including the barbershop) and the lack of occupants in them are anything but enticing since, as Barthes reminds us, they estrange the viewer from participating in these scenes.

This active estrangement of the viewer's perception may be said to characterize the photograph's force. Even though the reflection of a clock in the mirror permits the observer to see the indicated time backwards (the clock reads 5:25), one cannot decipher from the positioning of these objects whether the shop has closed for the afternoon or if it is about to reopen to service customers, whether or not we should be present in this otherwise empty space. Playing into the temporal ambiguity evoked by Freixa's photography, the spectator's position seems even more uncertain. That is, in the same

mirror that inverts the reflection of the clock on the back wall, one should also see the reflections of those in the room from the waist up, if anyone else is present. There is no one here, not even the observer, for Freixa has positioned the camera (with the use of a tripod, we might assume) out of view from our line of sight that would show a trace of the viewer's position. Instead, the mirror only reflects the clock and a door leading to the outside source of light, absent any trace of the viewer, the camera, or the other inhabitants in this room. It is as if time, though specified by the clock, were not enough to tell *when* the viewer arrived at this scene or, through the reflection of the mirror, if the viewer exists at all. Looking into the mirror exposes Freixa's double trick: the observer is provided with a visual perspective, a line of sight into these scenes, from which all traces of the observer's self-identification have been erased, stirring a sense of estrangement from these unsettling photographs. What sense can be made of this absence of subjects in Freixa's work—including the absence of the observer's identity—in relation to time?

Keeping in mind Barthes' understanding of atemporality and inhabitability of the photograph as a "fantasmatic" "double movement," I will look at a final transitory space, where Freixa invites his viewer to see oneself in the mirror's reflection as an absence. The interior of this hotel room (Fig. 4.9) is comprised of three distinct spaces, delimiting the room's claustrophobic interior. To the far back of the image may be seen the depth of the backlit doorway leading into a bathroom with checkered tiles. The second space is the one the spectator occupies within the room—that is, the viewing position of the observer at center. Directly in front of the observer, an uninviting chair is turned with its back to us, tucked beneath a vanity dresser with mirror against the wall. Finally, the wall between the bathroom and foreground comprises a plane that reflects an image of the

photograph's third space—one that, through the mirror's reflection, may be seen behind our viewing position. The play between these three spaces—in front of the observer, and the wall and the mirror reflecting what remains behind the spectator's position—seem to envelop the perspective of the viewer within these uninviting interiors. In the mirror's reflection we see the blinds are drawn, allowing only a few slats of light to illuminate the room from behind us. This pattern of sunlight through the blinds is duplicated not only in the mirror, but is also cast onto the wall that shares its position with the vanity. Therein exists the double image of an elusive world outside, one whose trace is shed in front of the spectator's position (i.e., the light on the wall) and one behind (i.e., the light seen through the blinds in the mirror), neither of which can be seen directly, both of which diminish any viable (visual) exit from this room. The contrast between darkness inside and light outside is obscured near the edges of the photograph so that one has little information of what else is in this room, if much at all. But here again Freixa has rendered the presence of his observer an absence within this room, because the viewer cannot see oneself in the mirror, a mirror that is turned directly towards us, inviting the spectator to see oneself as nothing.

By portraying these interiors as familiar yet uninviting communal spaces, Freixa has inscribed the observer among his vanished subjects, among the material traces these inhabitants have left behind. While the viewer is instructed to see oneself as a void, an absence consistent with these empty rooms, it likewise becomes evident that despite any time referent to a specific present (the moment of the photograph) the interiors impose an uncomfortable temporality, a question of untimely arrival and impossible (human) being. The absent subjects of these photographs, even the self-reflexive gaze of the mirrors,

which demonstrate that all recognizable identity has been erased from the frame itself, gives the sense that the viewer is looking into a nearly empty material world in black-and-white. Thus the observer may only participate here as a visitor, to pass through—or to haunt, according to the word’s etymology—but never to inhabit. The subjectivity of the “onlooker” in Freixa’s uncanny interiors is determined by wandering, bound by the enclosures of rooms without exit; unsettlingly, the spectator is not invited to stay in these transitory spaces that cannot be, nor are, inhabited by others. Our looking, positioned at an indefinite time within a specific space, becomes estranged from a photographic event—the present—that paradoxically is determined by references to a specific time, and to a definitive place. The lack of others, the non-existence of oneself in the mirrors, and the clinical gaze with which Freixa chooses to portray these interiors insinuate that his viewer is not invited to stay—never to desire that nostalgic return to them—but only to look upon them for a moment, to haunt without a trace. The perspective of Freixa’s camera into this uncomfortable world renders the act of looking fantasmatic, unsettled, even disturbed.

By thinking through the recurrent motifs in Freixa’s photography from the 1970s to the 1990s, I should like to begin posing questions concerning these transitory spaces and the discomfort of the subject (staged by the lens of Freixa’s camera), whose untimely arrival at these empty rooms invites the viewer to share in a moment of uncertainty. These photographs may be described as a constellation of images that resists narrative structure, one that nevertheless suggests some persistent questions for the viewer. Who are the absent subjects of these photographs? In what present are we viewing these images? And, at what untimely moment have we arrived at these scenes? Despite the

photographs' ability to offer an observer some material clues to answer these questions (e.g., the clock may be read, the everyday objects and rooms may seem easily recognizable, or perceived as familiar) the viewer's temporal and spatial bearings are rendered indeterminable, for the photographs induce a recurring sense of "who?" "where?" and "when?." Instead, I propose that a possible "way out" of this predicament, like finding the window behind us in Freixa's starkly-lit hotel room, is to consider the photographs within their greater cultural context, to which Freixa's uninhabitable interiors may shed some light. This task will lead me to interpolate meaning from the uncanny and fantasmatic aesthetic represented in and produced by Freixa's work.

These indeterminable moments depict a time, space, and subjectivity as in-between, a no-when and no-one in seemingly familiar scenes. Freixa chooses to carefully construct each of these spaces with clearly identifiable signs that make them familiar, and which make them a proper *place*: the barbershop, theater, bedroom, and hotel lobby. Yet, Freixa portrays these spaces as if they were impossible to return to, where the present (the photograph) is rendered disorienting. The sense of *place* then becomes ungrounded despite the clearly identifiable markers—the material traces left in these rooms—that make the interiors familiar. The material traces then teeter between providing the spectator with decipherable meaning or orientation in these rooms, and staging our estrangement from them, turning these places into *spaces* liquidated of familiar security. Parallel to this subtle movement from place to space is Freixa's question of collective and individual identities that have, as well, become evacuated from any sign of recognition, rendered fantasmatic among their expected appearance (the chance arrival) and their undeniable absence (the past tense departure). The unnarratable present of the

photograph, then, becomes an uncanny space defined by its temporal out-of-jointedness, an untimely framing of spaces marked by seemingly familiar objects. That is, Freixa's work might be read as a constellation of images that seems to be bothered by a recurring, uncanny aesthetic, wherein the (collective, individual) photographic subject is bound to a sense of dually anticipated and lost time. I will not attempt to overstep bounds here by claiming that Freixa explicitly intends this as its project. Rather, what Freixa does portray repeatedly in his photographs—or perhaps conversely, what seems to disturb the content of his photographs, to haunt them—is the uneasiness of the present moment, the event of the photograph, that is dislocated from time, place, and that subsequently is evacuated from personal and collective identification (i.e., that of the missing crowd). Perhaps then the photography of Ferran Freixa may be interpreted as cultural evidence of a present marked by definitive traces during an uncertain temporality, rendering this set of images unsettled, even unsettling.

As I have described previously in his portraits of absence, Freixa enables his spectral observers to see these spaces personally familiar to him, from the photographer's perspective as unfamiliar. Freud defines this phenomenon as the uncanny, that which bears an eerie resemblance to perceiving something intimate yet ambivalently unfamiliar: “uncomfortable, uneasy, gloomy, dismal, uncanny, ghastly, (of a house): haunted, (of a person): a repulsive fellow” (125). Freud's essay on the uncanny is particularly helpful, I believe, for describing the subject's changing sense of place as it occurs in time, and the ambivalence this transition provokes. Written at a moment when the precarious political climate of post-WWI Germany became threateningly nationalist, when the “homeland” devastated by war no longer seemed like “home” to the author—as Haughton suggests in

his introductory essay—Freud’s observations on the uncanny may be read autobiographically as signs of the author’s own uncertainties concerning the increasing violence of Germany towards Austria (Haughton xlix-l). For as I read Freud’s writing embedded within this historical context, I wish to propose the uncanny as indicative of Freud’s own circumstance when witnessing a moment of temporal and political uncertainty, to which he himself was subject. As Freud was writing between the Great War and the threat of “new” aggression from an impending nationalist movement, the uncanny aesthetic he contemplates situates our author within a timeframe that lies in-between: with violence in recent memory laid to rest, so to speak, and with the unsettling awareness of an emerging nationalist ideology. Spain’s *Transición* to democracy may point us towards a structurally similar timeframe as in-between, when the emerging democratic State, marked by traces of a dictatorial past, indeed held promise of “newness,” as much as it was marred by an uneasy return to dictatorial violence in the years immediately following Franco’s death in 1975. That is, to escape a replaying of the past (i.e., the Civil War, the return to dictatorship) became an impetus of political consensus for which the future of Spanish democracy would be (re)constructed. Before elaborating this point and the extensive criticism it entails, for the moment I should like to emphasize that in Freixa’s work the location of this unsettling “transition” may be perceived in the subject position represented in cultural production—in photography, and in Freud’s writing. In this case, the uncanny aesthetic reveals the subject position to be ungrounded by sociopolitical undercurrents experienced with an impending transformation, when they are sensed as an ominous or foreboding crisis. In other words, in these photographs we may perceive the subject position taken up by the lens *as subject*

to an uncanny affect arising from transition, made evident in the uneasy perception of the self's relationship to place, at unsettled times.

The uncertainty as to whether or not an event has already played out, if it repeats itself, or if this is the first time it has been experienced—the indeterminate time and space of the subject's context—constitutes the uncanny aesthetic as a vertigo of uneasiness for one's own spatial and temporal bearings. Thus, Freud recounts the panic that ensues after becoming lost in winding city streets, only to find himself perpetually and unintentionally at the same place where he began (144). Similarly, Freixa's interiors produce a familiarity of unsettling repetition, in an unsure moment that beckons the observer to ask: have we arrived too early or too late? This question cannot be resolved from a (visual) reading of these interiors, despite referents that index a specific time (i.e., the clock reads 5:25) and a certain place (e.g., the theater, a hotel room, etc.). This is the photograph's acute tension: the meticulously framed perspective disorients the viewer's bearings, despite markers that would otherwise seem to ground the observer's perspective. Rather, the viewer's displacement among these scenes and their mirrors inviting him to see the self as a void, provoke uneasiness as if, referring to Barthes' uncanny photograph, Freixa wishes to show his viewer that "we are certain of having been here before," but are not welcome to stay.

The unsettling aesthetic of Freixa's uninhabitable interiors is revealed in these spaces vacated of familiar significance, thereby estranging the viewer from them. Freud defines *heimlich* as "belonging to the house," that is, an inhabited space: a place for living, a house, a territory, or—to draw from Haughton's suggestion—a nation, a "homeland" (126). The viewer perceives oneself as the subject-as-absence who wanders

through Freixa's photographic interiors, an absence temporarily occupying a transitory space (e.g., the house, the communal meeting place, the "homeland") that is not hospitable, but estranging. Freixa's portraits of absent interiors throw a sense of time, space, and subjectivity into crisis, evacuated of their former meanings (perceptible familiarity), within which the lens is situated. The staging of this perception, through positioning the camera lens, furthermore allows us to question how the image is framed, what aesthetic the content and style evoke, features that gesture towards an identification (behind the lens) with the environment the photographer captures or stages. That is, the photographs' organizational structure and the uncanny aesthetic they provoke tend to stage a time, place and subjectivity undergoing transition as crisis, marked by loss and estrangement when faced with an emergent unfamiliarity. Moreover, the uncanny aesthetic frames the self in relation to the transitory interior as an absence, thereby stirring a sense of uneasiness for when the self is "duplicated, divided and interchanged" (Freud 142). In Freud's essay, the author explains the frightening realization that the seemingly "other" reflection in the mirror is in reality Freud himself, thereby defining duplication and recognition of the same self as an uncanny experience; I should like to note that "this uncanny element is actually nothing new or strange, but something that was long familiar" or well known (148). The threat of an eternal return to sameness defines the uncanny aesthetic as symptomatic of an identity crisis of duplication (i.e., the fear of self-erasure through duplication), which results in the replaying of a seemingly familiar yet *other* world, identity, or event. Perhaps, then, Freixa's photography has the ability to haunt because the images themselves are haunted, disturbed by a crisis of

uncertainty that is not foreign at all, but that resurfaces from what is in aesthetic force and in structural form, like Freud's reflection in his historical moment, very familiar.

Viewing these photographs together with an understanding of Freud's notion of the uncanny proves particularly revealing because what appears to be alien, Freud explains, is nothing new or foreign, but instead originates from what is well known, or "close to home." Freud's essay on the uncanny lends itself to reading culture within its historical context, in that—as Houghton reminds us in his Introduction—the uncanny aesthetic does not arise from the unsettling apparition itself, but tends to be rooted in "our own and our own culture's disowned past that haunts us" (xlii). Inasmuch as subjects in transition are exempted from "familiarity," the shifting constructions of the subject gesture towards the greater cultural and historical circumstance when the aforementioned anxieties arise. As Freud, himself witness to the aftermath of the Great War, wrote his descriptions of uncanny occurrences under the ominous threat of replaying violence after catastrophe, my reading of his work considers both Freud's essay and Freixa's photography as unsettled by a similar crisis bound by temporal uncertainty within the immediately perceptible future. In this uncertain present, these subjects—the author and photographer—reveal, through their works, the reconstitution of *their being subject to* sociopolitical transformations in which the existing (familiar) significance of place perceptibly comes undone. At the crux of this reconfiguration is the writing and photographing subject who senses the uncanniness of a new form—straddled between a sense of strange novelty and identifiable similarity—and portrays the familiarities ungrounded by its aesthetic force. To draw from a comparison in Freixa's photographs, this movement is marked by the liquidation of *place*, by the denial of a comfort and

perceptible identification that its familiarity provides, making it an estranging *space*. What remains on the cusp of this transformation, so to speak, is not a narrative present, nor the photographer or author's immediate perception of the former and emerging forms. What remains, instead, is the *force* of the uncanny aesthetic: a force that Barthes described as the photograph's violence, "not because [its image] shows violent things, but because on each occasion *it fills the sight by force...*" (91, emphasis in the original). Notably, in Freud's essay and in Freixa's uncanny interiors, produced between this erosion and reemergence of familiar forms (i.e., the author and photographer's situation in place), the past (i.e., an existing structure) may be perceived as an anachronous trace or form that persists in the present. For Freud's reflection on the uncanny—particular to its historical moment, as was Freixa's school of New Topographics for documenting a Spain transformed—the trace is inextricably tied to its prevalence within a new structure, namely the perception of a national identity formation and its repercussions for Spanish citizens. If Freud's observations on the uncanny locate him, while witnessing transition, as anxiously subject to the precipitating rise of German fascism that he observed so unsettlingly, the uncanny aesthetic of Freixa's works gesture towards an erosion of identification with places that at one time seemed more familiar. The trace then, like these material objects, becomes endowed with the force of an anachronous remainder that survives the passage of time; its intrusion reminds us of the eroded past, in partial form, and unsettles the present moment. Or, to use Freixa's photograph as a visual illustration, the temporal coexistence of the (past) trace recast into the present moment of the photograph—this uncanny "double movement"—is allegorically similar to Freixa's visual and spatial arrangement of the dark hotel room. Therein our forward looking gaze

sees, with the help of the mirror's reflection, where slats of light that originate behind us are shed onto the wall before us, like traces of the past projected into our own space, into the present, as observers.

Earlier I mentioned Freixa's work in relation to other photographers of the *movida* whose works, providing a stark contrast to Freixa's uncanny photographs, explored novelty and new identity formations in democratic Spain. This seemingly unrelated difference reveals that both the "frivolous" regard of spectacular photographs and Freixa's uncanny images share in common an exploration in visually representing how the subject position (the subjects photographed and the photographer behind the lens) responded to transition beyond the immediately visible, photographic frame. Their works demonstrate an inbetweenness, standing between familiarity and a new, unfamiliar form. In these photographs' sense of estrangement from and identification with place, the images tend to reveal how these portrayed identities would be, and had been, negotiated by transformations of the State and its repercussions for identities witnessing these changes. Keeping in mind the notion of the *trace* when perceiving transition in cultural representation, here I should like to compare Freixa's uncanny interiors to Cristina García Roderó's portraits of men and women practicing Spanish traditions, thereby drawing from this productive play between photographs of absent collectives and pictured subjects.

Documentary photography from *Transición*-era Spain encompasses a wide range of content, from traditional festivals (like María Ángeles Sánchez and Cristina García Roderó) to urban and rural landscapes (the early work of Óscar Molina, Ferran Freixa), to practices and scenes that constituted daily life, and the ways in which these places were

inhabited. One of the prominent features of documentary works is their tendency to represent subjects in relation to place (i.e., quotidian ritual and familiarity for place) and to time (i.e., the present moment in which these photographs were taken—before and throughout the democratic *Transición*). Cristina García Rodero, the most celebrated documentary photographer in contemporary Spain, has produced an extensive body of black-and-white photographs depicting Spaniards who practice rural traditions in modern times, thereby portraying these subjects as they became witness to states of change.¹⁰⁶ As Jo Labanyi has noted, García Rodero’s photographs “show the anachronistic survival in contemporary Spain of cultural relics from the past” (“Postmodernism and the Problem of Cultural Identity” 399), for these photographs portray contemporary “actors” (i.e., photographed “subjects”) performing past traditions in striking contrast to the changing sociopolitical landscape of post-Franco and “postmodern” Spain. That is, in diametric counterpoint to Miguel Trillo’s previously mentioned tattooed punk rockers and drag queen performers who comprise a composite image of “new” identities for a Spain transformed, García Rodero’s photographed subjects reinsert the “frozen time” of traditional identities and rural cultural practices into Spain’s rapidly emergent, postmodern landscape. It is this tendency of documentary photographers like García Rodero to which I will relate Freixa’s photographs, for their ability to show the subject’s unsettled location within new conceptions of place and time.

¹⁰⁶ For more on García Rodero’s work in Spain, see *España oculta* (Barcelona: Lunwerg, 1989), perhaps her most internationally acclaimed photography project to date. Also see *Cristina García Rodero: Historia de una pasión* (Madrid: La Fábrica, 2004) and the publishing house’s associated website *Cristina García Rodero*, NoToDo, La Fábrica Editorial, Madrid. 12 May 2008 <http://www.photobolsillo.com/fotografos/cristina_garcia_rodero/cristina_garcia_rodero.htm/>.

García Rodero, who, like Freixa, works from clear-shot, black-and-white documentary style, has been credited with showing Spanish subjects uncomfortable with practicing these traditions. That is, García Rodero photographs rural “anonymous subjects who locally re-present their Spanishness in front of her lens by registering physical discomfort with their current roles through their grotesque poses” (Perivolaris 162). While displaying uneasiness with the traditional practices they perform, the photographed subjects break with a conventional linear temporality, which Paul Julian Smith has noted induces “vertigo.” García Rodero’s work, he observes, “can only be described as postmodern in its appeal to an unsettling of subjectivity and a disruption of linear time that are not simply dissolutive” (52). From the observations of Smith and Perivolaris, the representation of García Rodero’s subjects before the camera lens reveal an uncomfortable portrait of subjectivities that are dispossessed from a familiar sense of place in the time they are photographed, evident in the “grotesque” poses of the men and women pictured. The “frozen time” of traditionalism, in this sense, is not at all a fixed construct in García Rodero’s photos despite their depiction of reenacted rituals; rather, the traditional subjects and practices she displays are evidently contorted and physically unsettled by their traditional roles, revealing the uncanniness of their performance in a contemporary context. Criticism on her work attributes the grotesque aesthetic in these anachronous practices to shifting notions of subjectivity under the new democratic State. That is, the “Spanishness” in the rural citizens she portrays echoes the unfamiliar, displaced and, consequently, inconstant identities enduring uncertain change: “García Rodero’s antiauthoritarianism uncannily disturbs the familiarity of universalism, *makes the homeland unhomely for a moment*, and is literally monstrous according to the

etymology of the word, given that the monstrosity signals ‘that which reveals’ renegade possibilities of perception and identity” (emphasis is mine, Perivolaris 159). While García Rodero’s work documents Spanish people practicing traditions in modern times, the uncanniness she photographs in these subjects is demonstrated in their grotesque or “monstrous” sight. For the diachronic time of the subjects depicted here, forged through reenacting traditions in the present, display these men and women as grotesquely dispossessed from their changing environment—their uncanny place of being. By performing “relics” of Spanish traditionalism, their reenactment of these rituals constitutes a lingering trace of the past in the anachronous present undone by new unfamiliarities. That is, their “monstrous” and grotesque discomfort renders García Rodero’s photographed subjects ghostlike, exhibiting an ungrounding of the “frozen time” of traditionalism in an emerging (National) structure that has seemingly outdated the practices—and identities—they perform. The rapidly changing sense of place in postmodern Spain, read against García Rodero’s photography, appears to have usurped the traditional identities of its inhabitants. Strikingly, the uncanniness of their changing sense of place, readable in their grotesque discomfort from performing traditional identities in contemporary times, becomes prevalent in the poses and contortions of these ghostlike subjectivities. In other words, the changing sense of time and place of the subject’s context is readable as visual evidence, in García Rodero’s photos, of the very subjects who perform their unsettled identities.

Ferran Freixa’s photography accomplishes a similarly impressive effect for the following inversion: Freixa has documented spaces that remain vacated of human photographic subjects, save the material traces they leave behind. Yet, these interiors

evoke an uneasiness that arises from their inhabitants' absence. Whereas García Rodero captures the photographed subject in uncanny poses provoked by the sense that they are out of place, Freixa achieves a similar effect by photographing the (collective) absence of humans within familiar architectures. Thus García Rodero's photographed subjects serve as a point in comparison with Freixa's uninhabitable interiors, in that both depict the photography of uneasiness—about a time, space, and subjectivity. Both photographers posit questions of uncertainty when experiencing transition within a sociopolitical framework, beyond the photograph's frame. The spectral subjectivities of Freixa and García Rodero's photographs reveal these (present and absent) actors to be, in the now-time of the image, subject to emergent newness in their environments that would register their traditional practices a past "relic" undone by sociopolitical change, and would liquidate their familiarity of place from familiar meaning to become an uninhabited space. These images allude to a tension, in counterpoint, between "new" social practices faced with the repetition of Spanish traditionalism; "new" perceptions of place reconfigured from former, perhaps more comfortable familiarities; "new" collective and subjective uncertainties weighted by shifting constructions of time. Or, simply stated, the persons in García Rodero's photos reveal, in these uncanny places and their grotesque poses, to be subjects of unsettling newness, of change, and coexistent with reenacted traces of an anachronous past.

It seems as though the photography of Ferran Freixa, when analyzed along with other contemporary photographers, points his viewers toward a question: what does it mean to become subject to transition? To have an eroding sense of one's own position as a subject, in a seemingly (un)familiar place, in a present permeated with traces that

gesture towards a temporal in-between (i.e., the *has been* of the photograph, and its *will have been*). That is, for Freixa, an experience of the vanished, unsettled, uncanny, and *haunted* as well as haunting. In contrast with the spectacular photographers of *la movida*, and similar to García Rodero's portraiture, Freixa's work reveals its own exploration of subjectivity throughout the *Transición*, portrayed as an evacuation of unidentifiable subjects, in indeterminable space, at uncertain times. If Freixa asks his viewer to share in a moment of uneasiness, then one may bear witness to this transition by taking up the position of the camera, as only can be seen.

Beyond the Photograph's Frame: Reading Traces in the *Transición*

Whereas I have argued elsewhere that the uncanny aesthetic represented in Freixa's photographs is attributable to the collective anxieties experienced during the *Transición*, such as the fear of a return to dictatorship,¹⁰⁷ hereafter I would like to rework this assertion and the lopsided attention it pays to the historical past. For if we understand Freixa's photography as demonstrating an uncanny representation of Spain's democratic *Transición*—a timeframe between its then disavowed, dictatorial past and the uncertain political future—it would seem that defining transition within this framework would only ever be determined by an ominous replaying of the dictatorial past in uncanny form. This assumption, however, does not take into account the emergent, the new, or the reconfiguration of shifting identity formations, strikingly prevalent in other, more spectacular photographers of the *movida*, or in García Rodero's documentary portraits of subjects practicing Spanish traditions. If Freixa's own work may provide some indication

¹⁰⁷ See "The Uninhabitable Interiors of Photographer Ferran Freixa (1970-1990)," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* [7.1 (2006): 1-22].

contrary to my former claim, the unsettled spaces he portrays indeed exhibit an ambiguous present, one in which the uncanny aesthetic of experiencing transition as crisis—or, loss of familiarity—occurs in response to novel relationships among constructions of place, subjectivity, and time. Simply stated, the photographed present is one of change, perceptibly so, because it marks a difference with the past in ways that are aesthetically portrayed as unfamiliar to this new circumstance. In my previous discussion I have edged towards this possibility by describing how the uncanny aesthetic force of a staged perception (the photograph) positions the subject (and lens) in-between: on the one hand, situated within a new unfamiliarity, and on the other, embedded within a former “structure” that can no longer validate legitimate meaning for, or make narrative sense of, the present. The photographs in question serve as a window into this halfway point of perception that, in Freixa’s case, fails to provide narrative meaning; instead, they are littered by readable traces visually constituting the unsettled aesthetic. The material traces then function as the *remainders* in Freixa’s photographs, left behind for storage or waiting to be used, that doubly serve as *reminders* of the present’s temporal uncertainty. The careful placement of material traces within these interiors is what gestures towards absent subjects and leads us to question their significance beyond the photograph’s frame. Here I will take up the pending matter regarding the national and sociopolitical framework within which the reconfiguration of subjectivities, places, and times seems to operate in the photographs I mention from the *Transición*. Specifically, I will explore how the trace, which has its origin in the past, is grafted into the emergent and new (National) structure at present, but with an understanding that the past does not constitute it, nor determine it, entirely.

We understand one manifestation of the trace, through Freud's suggestion, as an uncanny presence of the past that lingers in the now, exhibited as a monstrous "relic" of traditionalism in García Rodero's photographs, and as a haunting material remainder of human inhabitants in Freixa's work. Yet, the present of the democratic *Transición* was tinged or layered by a *new crisis* facing Spain during these years—what Jean-François Lyotard, in *The Postmodern Condition*, has called the crisis of sociopolitical "legitimation" of State sovereignty in the wake of disintegrating ideological narratives. One of the defining features of the postmodern condition, becoming perceptible in the latter half of the twentieth century, Lyotard argues, is that its so-called contemporary "crisis" arises from the failure of narrative meaning to legitimate a hegemonic, governing logic: "Lamenting the 'loss of meaning' in postmodernity boils down to mourning the fact that knowledge is no longer principally narrative" (*Postmodern* 26). This narrative extends to Grand Master Narratives of History that, at Lyotard's moment of writing his reflection in 1979, could no longer constitute a unified, ideological "truth" for liberal or Marxist thought. Lyotard's assertion is particularly relevant to Spain in the *Transición* years, when the dictatorial State could no longer unilaterally preserve one of its greatest and most constant myths that had defined the narrative tempo of Francoist History: the determinate characteristics of its idealized subjects under National-Catholicism, whereby the Spanish people had been die cast in the fascist imaginary as a unified, obedient, and culturally homogeneous entity. Francoist History and its authoritarian origins were not wholly erased but were silently introduced into the present of the *Transición*, coexistent with emergent discourses in the time of the democratic State, comprising a fragmentary space of mixed narratives, none of them officially recognized, about the dictatorial past.

The very crisis of narrative hegemony that Lyotard describes may be perceived in this political and social transition playing out in the years following a dictatorship that the *Transición* attempted to tuck away neatly in the annals of history, for prominently at stake was the contamination of Spain's new democratic image with its fascist past.

Indeed, a plan for the democratic State was hatched within dictatorship itself¹⁰⁸; the inception of a “new” State was less a complete structural overhaul than it was a cementing of continuity with Francoism and its political actors, albeit accompanied by a “democratic” facelift of neo-liberal economics. The “grand narrative” of Spanish National Catholicism under Franco, which the promise of democracy would conceal rather than dismantle, had lost hegemonic legitimacy after the sovereign's death, marking what Lyotard calls a crisis of “credibility” for ideological narratives in contemporary politics and society, “regardless of what mode of unification it [the narrative] uses, regardless of whether it is a speculative narrative [of fascism] or a narrative of emancipation [of Marxism]” (*Postmodern* 37). The *Transición*, in this regard, was less an epistemological crisis—i.e., not constituted by a principle break from former modes of knowledge practiced in hegemonic culture—than it was an era marked by new identity formations in the wake of an imposed, anachronistic National Narrative that had survived other European fascisms. By the death of the dictator in 1975, the Francoist State had

¹⁰⁸ Historian Josep Fontana relates the “historia fraudulenta” of the democratic *Transición* crafted by Francoist politicians who sought “los mínimos cambios que permitieran la supervivencia del sistema” in democracy (172). In his epilogue to the republished compilation of *Por Favor* editions—a satirical magazine from the *Transición* years that was subject to censorship for its irreverent portrayal of politicians and social happenings—Fontana cites the last speech pronounced by Franco in October 1975, from the Royal Palace before a crowd of his supporters; in response, the Count of Mayalde, José María Finat y Escrivà de Romaní, politician and former mayor of Madrid, who stood next to the ailing dictator in the palace balcony, reportedly stated, “Esto no significa nada; lo que hay que hacer ahora es convocar unas elecciones y ganarlas.” See Josep Fontana, “‘Por Favor’ como testigo histórico de la transición,” epilogue in *Por Favor. Una historia de la transición*, by Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, et al (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 2000) 171-182.

expired, at least formally as a hegemonic discourse, for in democracy it could not constitute, nor regulate in absolute, the idealized projection of its National subjects as a falsely unified Spanish people. What endures in democratic Spain, however, after what Joan Ramon Resina has called the *Transición*'s "special effect"¹⁰⁹ that produced an image of democracy from dictatorship, are the traces of Francoist discourse in cohabitation with emergent discourses on citizenship, nationalism, and new modes of self-identification and collective affiliation, both social and political.¹¹⁰ If we think of National history as measured by narrative tempo, then the democratic *Transición* was not an event that

¹⁰⁹ The greater market-driven economy of Spain, one whose businesses were eager to participate in international trade relations after nearly forty years of economic and political isolation under Francoism, is explained by Joan Ramon Resina as responsible for the political *Transición*'s illusion, its "slight of hand": "[r]ather than an event, the Transition was the special effect [...] of a collective installation in a present that wished itself absolute: the present of the market" (93). Resina's comments on the "special effect" of the *Transición* may be understood dually as both the projected "illusion" of a break between dictatorial and democratic governments (a rupture that was not produced, he argues), and understood as the rapid introduction of Spain to a world economy. That is, as the image of a new Spain became a "special effect" projected into an international economy, postmodern (international) styles were imported into Spain, first introduced to its cities which were to become the social stages of *la movida*—and to urban youth who were supplied with new, postmodern objects of (distraction) consumption: new fashions, international music styles, new drugs, new "identities" associated with democratic Spain. Resina alludes to the "special effect" of the *Transición* as a spectacle (or illusion) that distracts the viewer from the substance of the matter that, for Resina, embodied the political *Transición* itself, since the new Spanish State did not produce a rupture from its former dictatorial regime but induced political continuity instead. Moreover, the sense of urgency to produce and "sell" a new "democratic image" to an international market was economically and psychologically motivated, as Cristina Moreiras-Menor explains, when throughout the *Transición* "emerge la imperiosa necesidad de integrarse activamente en el ámbito internacional, fundamentalmente en Europa, para así transformarse en un sistema político, social y culturalmente moderno que la haga partícipe de los avances económicos, tecnológicos e informáticos que caracterizan el mundo internacional" (*Cultura herida* 60). This sense of urgency to cement and "market" a new, democratic Spain is folded within political ramifications for Spanish citizens, as Cristina Moreiras-Menor helps us understand, when *something else* at stake is seemingly missing from this spectacular, new image: "En el contexto de la sociedad del espectáculo, modo de relación predominante en la España de los ochenta, o de una cultura que es estructura a partir de la desaparición de la realidad y de su sustitución por la acumulación de imágenes, y donde el sujeto se hace espectacular (alienado en su imagen), la diferencia se torna también producto espectacular y se convierte en modo de separación más que de unificación," thereby producing "un sujeto afectado inevitablemente por la alienación y la ausencia de raíces históricas" (*Cultura herida* 72). See Resina's essay "Short of Memory: The Reclamation of the Past since the Spanish Transition to Democracy," *Disremembering the Dictatorship: The Politics of Memory in the Spanish Transition to Democracy*, Joan Ramon Resina, ed. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000) 83-126. Also see Moreiras-Menor's work *Cultura herida: Literatura y cine en la España democrática* (Madrid: Libertarias, 2002).

¹¹⁰ See *Traces of Contamination: Unearthing the Francoist Legacy in Contemporary Spanish Discourse*, edited by Eloy E. Merino and H. Rosi Song (Lewisburg, Pennsylvania: Bucknell UP, 2005).

entered a new time severed from itself, one in which the past could no longer constitute meaning for the present; rather, its continuity implied a cohabitation of emergent and preexisting forms. Here, with this temporal framework in mind, I should like to examine the notion of transition as it was marked by the traces of a dictatorial past in the present of the democratic State—but also, as a present marked by an emergent *newness* in the so-called postmodern crisis of legitimizing National narratives.

Cultural criticism on the *Transición* has tended to posit the correlative relationship between an absence of official State discourse—or, History with a capital “H”—and a presence of historical memory in cultural production concerning Spain’s dictatorial past. In this sense, discursive practices of historical memory, having provided a space of reflection denied from “official” History, are primarily a *cultural* memory of this past, as Labanyi, Medina, Moreiras-Menor, Resina and Vilarós, among others, have shown.¹¹¹ What this criticism gestures towards, which I will gloss through, is a tension between cultural production’s revindicated “history of losers” so to speak (e.g., the vanquished Second Republic, political prisoners, assassinations, and victims of Francoist oppression) and these representations’ insertion into hegemonic culture with a kind of “ghostly” presence in democratic Spain. I say ghostly, because the literature, cinema, photography and visual arts operating as historical remembrance tended to appear at the margins of visibility within a scene of hegemonic cultural activity, peripherally there and yet not center-stage, rendered “spectral” since these matters of remembrance had been

¹¹¹ Many authors and scholars have argued that the *Transición* did not produce a substantial break with Francoist policies in the new politics of the democratic State, nor did Spaniards pass through a period of collective reflection regarding the dictatorial past. Among Spanish authors and critics who argue these points are Cebrián, Vázquez Montalbán, and Villar and, in a range of scholarly work on the matter, Medina Domínguez, Morán, Moreiras-Menor, Resina, Sartorius and Alfaya, Subirats, and Vilarós.

precluded from a space of formal State recognition. What historical memory provided, contributing to its fantasmatic character, was an emerging space of cultural production consisting in diachronic threads—or “versions” of history—that arose in local and individual multiplicity, each with its own temporal and spatial uniqueness. In the absence of legitimizing narrative from the democratic State concerning its Francoist past, culture’s working through these “ghostly” and disparate temporalities served as memory work that held no cohesive, overarching project. Because cultural memory failed to occupy a substantially visible space of critical reflection in tempo with the *Transición*, lamented by Vázquez Montalbán and Villar, among others, these representations fell short of providing a collective awareness of Spain’s dictatorial past in the time that they were produced. Described by Sartorius and Alfaya as the “historical parentheses” of fascism, Francoism became fossilized, unaddressed yet remaining in Spain’s democratic present as an untimely trace.¹¹² From the *ghostly* matters of historical memory emerging

¹¹² Sartorius and Alfaya argue in *La memoria insumisa: sobre la dictadura de Franco* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2002) that Spain never achieved a collective awareness—a political conscience for the Francoist past—regarding the atrocities of the dictatorship, neither during nor posterior to the democratic *Transición*; it is as if Spain’s history were lived within this present silence as a void of history itself: “Es como si hubiese habido un paréntesis en nuestra historia. Hemos pasado de la Guerra Civil a la transición democrática dejando un vacío de cuarenta años,” without a significant effort to collectively reflect upon the events of the dictatorship, to question critically the events that led to Francoism and sustained the dictatorship for nearly four decades (21). According to the authors, the lack of critical reflection on Francoist Spain during the years of the *Transición* has proven detrimental, in that a culture of political awareness for this past was not successfully acquired in media, in the social sphere, nor in a collective consciousness contemporary to the democratic *Transición*: “El pueblo español ha superado, probablemente de manera definitiva, ese tipo de regímenes políticos, pero ni ha desarrollado una profunda conciencia antidictadura ni, por lo tanto, una sólida conciencia demócrata que le inmunice frente a los errores del pasado” (11). In a similar light, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán has argued in *Crónica sentimental de la transición* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1985) that during the years of the democratic *Transición* in Spain there were no strong political leaders or public intellectuals who could gain an adequate following of youth to foster a critical consciousness of the present political moment, with the exception of autonomous efforts to organize labor syndicates: “El escepticismo juvenil en España no alimenta una nueva conciencia crítica como en Italia, nutridora de experiencias como la de la *autonomía obrera* o de las filas de un terrorismo doctrinario. [...] Aquí, por pasar, se pasaba incluso de la radicalidad y no teníamos un Toni Negri que ordenara racionalmente el caos que relacionaba la realidad y el deseo de la izquierda española más impaciente. No andaba la izquierda sobrada de teóricos ni de líderes” (160). In his essays on *La década sorprendente, 1976-1986* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1986) Sergio Villar likewise contends that, collectively, Spanish citizens were unsuccessful at establishing “una

in cultural production throughout the *Transición* years—both the unique temporalities of fragmented narratives of historical memory, and the relics of a Francoist past that continued to linger in the new democratic State—neither could achieve a cohesive, narrative meaning within official discourse; and according to Lyotard, neither could they, after the failure of Grand Master narratives, since the present became a heterogeneous time dispersed with diachronic traces, disseminated in local and individual multiplicity.

Fredric Jameson has noted in his introductory essay on Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* that this temporality is a symptom of postmodernism's erosion of narrative legitimation, in that it consists in

the vitality of small narrative units at work everywhere *locally* in the present social system, [...] accompanied by something like a more global or totalizing 'crisis' in the narrative function in general [...]—(e.g., we no longer believe in political or historical teleologies, or in the great 'actors' and 'subjects' of history—the nation-state, the proletariat, the party, the West, etc.). (xii)

The mixed, heterogeneous temporalities—which Lyotard recasts as a generic symptom of “postmodernism” and its relationship to temporality—that historical memory provided during and beyond the *Transición*¹¹³ became perceptible concomitant to the disintegration of the Francoist National Narrative from hegemonic power, if we take cue. Simply restated, within the narrative crisis of History—that defining characteristic of

transformación cultural, fomentar una mutación—cuando menos una evolución—de las mentalidades colectivas, una profundización de los métodos democráticos de relación entre gobernantes y ciudadanos, unas nuevas prácticas de libertades” that came with the promise of the “new image” of democratic society in Spain (131). All four authors tend to agree at their time of writing, there had not been sufficient engagement of Spain's past, to address the repercussions of the past adequately in public dialogue, with the exception of isolated cases, which often came in an untimely manner—such as now, at my present time of writing, thirty years after secured democracy in Spain. Rather, too late to bear significance on a collective (historical) consciousness when the stakes of the *Transición*, and a fear to a return to dictatorship, were felt to be much more grave.

¹¹³ For essays on the “memory boom” in post-*Transición* Spanish culture and recent debates in official State discourse on Francoism and the Second Republic, see Joan Ramon Resina and Ulrich Winter, eds. *Casa encantada: Lugares de memoria en la España constitucional (1978-2004)*. Frankfurt, Germany; Madrid, Spain: Vervuert & Iberoamericana, 2005.

postmodernism for Lyotard—the privileged space of hegemonic culture persists with dispersed *traces* or partial fragments of past ideological narratives that have failed, and which, despite their reinsertion into democratic politics, have not achieved sovereign legitimization in the present. Or, to problematize Freud’s uncanny return, as suggested in Freixa’s photographic aesthetic, the trace is not necessarily a simple replaying of the past as it was, *per se*, but an unnarrated remainder—and thereby a reminder—of the past having taken on a new perceptible form in the democratic State.

In the *Transición* to democracy, neither maintaining fascism nor returning to a Republican government was perceived as a viable model upon which legitimate State sovereignty could be constructed. Instead, the anachronous reinstatement of a constitutional monarchy—anachronous because it instituted a pre-Republican model of sovereignty, whose head of State, King Juan Carlos I, was groomed to replace Franco—served as middle ground from which the *Transición* could be negotiated by political actors. Moreover, during the majority rule of the Socialist Party (PSOE) from 1982-1996, the leadership clearly demonstrated that it had abandoned the Marxist thought upon which the party was founded, constituting what Villar has traced as the political left’s *desencanto*, or its “missed opportunity” and subsequent disenchantment given its failure to instill democratic governance with these ideological principles.¹¹⁴ With parties on the political right and left migrating towards neo-liberal economics, the *Transición* would be celebrated as a successful transaction that secured a path towards economic progress,

¹¹⁴ Sergio Villar, *La década sorprendente, 1976-1986* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1986). Among other polemical decisions made by the Socialist government, contributing to the disenchantment of the political left, was the vote to grant Spain’s entrance into the European Economic Community in 1985; the call for a national referendum approving Spain’s permanent membership in NATO in 1986; and a display of favorable relations with the United States under Ronald Reagan and, later, in artillery support of the First Gulf War under George Bush in 1991.

thereby conflating Spain's rapid introduction into an international market with its new, democratic image.

Considering Freud's notion of the uncanny read in the existence of past traces, embedded within Lyotard's "postmodern" temporality that arises with *newness*, the trace is marked within (Spanish) State sovereignty after the delegitimization of the Historical (National) Narrative. As has been argued in critical commentary on the democratic *Transición* in Spain, "forgetting" the Francoist past—and particularly, its dictatorial tactics of oppression, assassinations, and political persecution—was a fundamental basis for political parties to negotiate this transaction: a reinstatement of sovereign legitimacy from a dictatorial to a democratic regime, exemplified by the political *pacto de olvido*. This agreement among politicians to "forget" or cease to mention the dictatorial past and the Civil War was a strategy that in part served a pragmatic end to secure political careers for those who served under the Franco Regime (e.g., Manuel Fraga, Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo); as well as, this "forgetting" introduced into democratic participation the Socialist and Communist parties, whose members were formerly persecuted or in exile under dictatorial rule (e.g., Santiago Carrillo, Alfonso Guerra and Felipe González), and without whose participation the image of a "democratic Spain" would have been implausible. But what became negotiated under the pretense of a false amnesia for the past may be said to have resurfaced as displaced, even deferred.

The *pacto de olvido* was not only a political maneuver, but was indicative of a collective social desire to turn away from the traumas of dictatorial oppression, having become evident in forms of self-censorship in politics and journalism, as Resina, and others have argued. The false amnesia promoted by the *pacto de olvido*, Resina asserts,

was not an erasure of memory at all, but occurred in the social body itself as a form of repression, a coping tactic to collectively “turn away” from dictatorship in order to construct a democratic image of Spain, which held promise of a future (namely, economic) divorced from its Francoist past:

Unquestionably, the post-Francoist volatilization of certain aspects of the past was a form of censorship—politicians and journalists repressing something they did not want to face for personal reasons to protect the interests of political and economic claims. But disremembrance was also motivated by the need to achieve political consensus and to facilitate the eventual alteration of power.
(*Disremembering* 91)

What this “disremembrance” enacted, however, was precisely the mode of self-censorship inherited from Francoism,¹¹⁵ thereby embedding a *trace* of what Cristina Moreiras-Menor has called the lingering presence of the fascist past in the democratic State: “Desde la lógica historicista, el fascismo ha sido enterrado; sin embargo, intuimos [...] que pese a su desaparición, el fascismo está allí donde se detiene la mirada” (“Historia a contrapelo” 48). Concerning the silence in public discourse (i.e., in the media, in political negotiations) regarding Spain’s Francoist past, induced “forgetting” did not relieve the present from this past, for as psychologizing narratives will explain the mechanics of repression, the historical matter does not cease to remain *there*, but it continues to unsettle, to return, to disturb as an uncanny trace.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ For more on modes of self-censorship and its Francoist legacy in contemporary Spain, see Alejandro Herrero-Olaizola’s *The Censorship Files: Latin American Writers and Franco’s Spain* (Albany: State U of New York P, 2007).

¹¹⁶ Regarding Spanish cultural production and this resurfacing of the disavowed past as “traces” of Spain’s traumatic past see Alberto Medina Domínguez’s work: *Los exorcismos de la memoria: políticas y poéticas de la melancolía en la España de la transición* (Madrid: Libertarias, 2001). Likewise, Cristina Moreiras-Menor has shown that the residual effects of (historical) violence, even through the passing of time from Franco’s death beyond the inception of the Spanish democratic State, have become scattered in contemporary cultural representation as displaced referents to the collective traumas of Francoist oppression and the Civil War; see her previously cited work *Cultura herida: Literatura y cine en la España democrática* (Madrid: Libertarias, 2002). Teresa Vilarós’ work *El mono del desencanto: Una crítica*

Writings from the democratic *Transición* contend that, indeed, the past did continue to “weigh on the minds” of those who became witness to the *Transición*. For the structural overhaul of the Spanish State did not produce a rupture between dictatorial and democratic regimes, but instead constructed the foundation for the “new” State on this pact of forgetting. Juan Luis Cebrián, director of *El País*, describes the fear of violence that permeated the social imagination—State violence, terrorist attacks, the Civil War—all of which continued to be *there*, prevalent during the *Transición*. With collective remembrance having been denied a space of hegemonic articulation, Cebrián’s comments illustrate how the fear of a return to what he calls “historical” violence became subverted into fragmented, private narratives within the social body. He writes in 1980, two years after the constitution was ratified by Spanish citizens:

Hay miedo en la calle a la delincuencia, al terrorismo de ETA, al terrorismo de los GRAPO, del Batallón Vasco Español, de la extrema derecha. Hay también un miedo histórico y casi congénito al golpe militar, a la división sangrienta, a la repetición del drama de nuestras guerras civiles. Y un miedo a la represión, a los abusos coactivos del poder, al retorno del autoritarismo. Pero más aumenta ese miedo a la represión, más la represión crece. (9-10)

Keeping the past from public visibility provided an ineffective remedy to calm the social fears that Cebrián describes, for this past continued to haunt the present, so to speak, despite the *pacto de olvido* having attempted to silence its call to be remembered. Instead, there existed tremors of a collective fear for a return to violence experienced by those living during the democratic transition as a sort of impossible temporal coexistence between two times: the authoritarian past and the present emergence of the “new”

cultural de la transición española (1973-1993) (Madrid: Siglo XIX de España, 1998) as well addresses the residual effects of Francoism in the democratic State as a grouping of “monos.,” which Vilarós conceives of as a collective symptom of abstention (or, hangover) from dictatorship, ushered into an era of individuation in contemporary Spain.

democratic State. For when Cebrián describes the “historical” fear that disturbed his generation as “congenital”—a conflation of two distinct moments, the past and present, folded into one time—Cebrián articulates the diachronic “fantasmatic fears” as the threat of a return to violence; in sum, the “ghosting” of historical memory that remained absent from formal public address.

It should not come as a surprise then that sociological narratives on the subject of remembrance in recent Spanish history describe a similar concurrence between the *pacto de olvido* in political implementation and in the social body, as neither is a mutually exclusive domain from the other.¹¹⁷ In an extensive work that explores the multiple and contradictory forms of individual and collective remembering and forgetting of Spain’s past during the democratic *Transición*, Paloma Aguilar has noted that up to the unsuccessful coup attempted by Tejero in 1981, an event that secured democracy under the constitutional monarchy, “the vast majority of Spaniards acted on the assumption that the Civil War could be reignited at any moment and, therefore, that it was a matter of priority to avoid this outcome at any cost” (163). Here Aguilar explains the underlying motivations of collective denial, alluding to an origin for the *pacto de olvido* as rooted in the fearful repetition of violence, a comment that echoes Cebrián’s own displaced

¹¹⁷ Stuart Hall has remarked, “the state arises out of society and is powerfully shaped and constrained by the social relations which surround it. At the same time, it constitutes an organized and condensed point of power sufficiently separate to act back on, intervene in and shape society in its turn” (22). Perhaps nowhere more prevalent is an example of this interrelatedness of the state and social imaginary than under dictatorship, when during the years of autarky in early postwar Spain, the power wielded by the State enforced that citizenry become subjects of its political and social control via interment, executions of political “dissidents” and institution of censorship laws. The formation of the Spanish State under Franco constituted, in light of Hall’s suggestion, the condensation of a fascist (National Catholic) imaginary enforced by the autarky who maintained power in the hands of a few, delegating and enforcing the constitution of its citizens as political subjects. See Hall’s chapter “The State in Question” in *The Idea of the Modern State*, edited by Gregor McLennan, David Held and Stuart Hall (Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press, 1984), 1-28.

“fantasmatic fears” for this threatening return—an anxiety that gives credence to Cebrián’s ill-eased sense of these years’ unstable politics.

What confounds the trace, moreover, is its occurrence as a temporal implausibility. In the cases Aguilar and Cebrián describe, the trace served as both a *remainder* of something collectively unaddressed and a *reminder* of its persistence to disturb the present: a temporal displacement of past violence into the early *Transición* years. What makes the trace diachronic, in the fears described by Cebrián, is that the Francoist past weighed beyond a time for those who experienced it firsthand and who witnessed the present of the democratic *Transición*. With nearly forty years between the declared end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939 and the death of Francisco Franco in 1975, younger generations were not witness to the “material” devastation of the war; that is, of course, unless we consider material damages to include the marks the war left on separated families and survivors of those missing, exiled, and assassinated. Yet, the fear of return becomes evident in that historical violence *remains there as an imminent possibility*, a prevalent reality of threatening repetition even for those who were not alive to witness the Civil War.¹¹⁸ Considering this time lapse between generations I am reminded of a similar case known in trauma studies on second-generation Holocaust survivors, those whose parents survived interment in the camps before liberation; for studies of the survivors’ children suggest that the resounding effects of their parents’ traumas are marked even on those who did not experience the horrors of the

¹¹⁸ Aguilar argues in the introduction to her work, “a similarity did exist between the Spanish situation in the 1930s and that of the 1970s when Franco died, this being precisely what produced the fear of repetition. What was important was not whether things really had changed since the Second Republic, but peoples’ subjective perception of the situation and the intensity with which the present was able to evoke the past” (9-10). See *Memory and Amnesia: the Role of the Spanish Civil War in the Transition to Democracy* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002).

concentration camps themselves, most notably when these traumas remain unarticulated. “There is some evidence,” Susan Brison explains in her work *Aftermath*, “that trauma [...] causes more harm to others (for example, subsequent generations) when transmitted through ‘untold stories’ than when it is narrated” (110). In the studies mentioned by Brison, many children of Holocaust survivors suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) when it was their parents, not themselves, who were subjected to the horrors of interment.¹¹⁹ The question of how the past may become perceived as a very real experience of the present, it seems, is a matter that permeates the social body as a form of collective inheritance, whether or not this past violence has been explicitly articulated.¹²⁰ For although younger generations of Spaniards may not have been witness to the traumas of Francoism or the Civil War, this does not preclude the reality that they were subject to a past not altogether experienced firsthand. For the threat of the violence experienced in previous generations in some cases may have provoked the fear of repetition described by Cebrián and Aguilar, a phenomenon that gestures towards the haunting of collective memory, despite its individuation in personal narratives denied a formal articulation in hegemonic discourse of the political *Transición*.

Even as the Francoist past became disavowed, denied public address at the democratic State’s inception, the collective act of turning away was exemplified nowhere more prevalently than in the political adoption of the *pacto de olvido*, produced a form of

¹¹⁹ Cathy Caruth explores post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and, separately, the collective trauma of WWII in narratives from survivors of Hiroshima. See her insightful work on trauma and history, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996).

¹²⁰ The two studies to which Brison refers in her work are Dan Bar-On’s book *Fear and Hope: Three Generations of the Holocaust* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard UP, 1995) and Nadine Fresco’s article “Remembering the Unknown,” published in the *International Review of Psycho-analysis*, Trans. Alan Sheridan, vol. 11 (1984): 417-27.

cultural *haunting*, one that emerged in cultural production as a body of delayed memory work, occurring *out of joint* with time. For these traces of the past—diachronic for their prevalence over time, to the present—tended to exhibit the ghostlike characteristic I mentioned previously in the nature of memory work; there and not there, here and not here, the fantasmatic *trace* becomes a metaphor of intrusion, of some-“thing” of the past that appears very real in the present and has the ability to unsettle the *now* of the *Transición* years.

The trace challenges, and perhaps even disrupts the tempo of historiography, of linear narratives and National narratives, in the crisis that Lyotard perceives with great concern. His plea to return to instilling narrative meaning in the present, as a legitimate form of knowledge, seems indicative of his wish to recuperate the “loss” he laments. While Lyotard upholds the radical possibility of heterogeneous time, he undervalues its destabilizing agency within the postmodern narrative “crisis.” Working against the accumulative and archival bodies of knowledge—for Lyotard, a sign of postmodernism and, in Jameson’s criticism following Lyotard, of late capitalism—the philosopher takes a Nietzschean turn in proposing forgetting as a requisite means to an end: “it is necessary to admit an irreducible need for history understood [...] not as a need to remember or to project (a need for historicity, for accent), but on the contrary as a need to forget (a need for *metrum*)” (*Postmodern* 28). In this manner, Lyotard posits forgetting as a productive possibility for reinstating narrative *metrum* in an ever-accumulating archive of history; what becomes privileged in this “forgetting,” however, is the reenactment and return to inducing homogeneous time that once measured the tempo of Grand Master narratives. I hope to have shown in Freixa’s photographs, however, that the anachronous trace does

not necessarily manifest itself in narrative form, and it resists the narrative tempo that Lyotard wishes to recuperate. Within a historical context, furthermore, “forgetting” or “disremembering” Spain’s dictatorial past did not provide a space of substantial visibility in hegemonic culture to narrate the past, with the narrative tempo that Lyotard so desires to restore. The trace, its atemporal and underprivileged site of visibility in hegemonic culture, is what I turn towards, instead, to interrogate its productive potential in untying the linear, homogenous time of historicizing narratives that Lyotard perceives as the present’s greatest loss.

The ghost-like character of the trace I refer to, moreover, is a cultural haunting; it is not a psychological projection or hallucination akin to the symptoms demonstrated in post-traumatic stress disorder. Rather, the *trace* produces very real effects—i.e., the “fantasmatic fears” that Cebrián describes—that permeate cultural representation, in what Cristina Moreiras-Menor has coined *wounded culture*, as marked by the violence of the Francoist past, albeit produced in the democratic State. In post-Franco Spain, Moreiras-Menor argues, “no hay lugar en la realidad contemporánea para practicar la memoria,” a hegemonic or visible space from which to

abrirle un espacio a sus fantasmas y dejarles desvelar en sus estelas una multiplicidad de significaciones, en la medida en que hacerlo supondría una paralización del desarrollo y progreso hacia el que la historia de éxito se dirige. (*Cultura herida* 39)

I have taken the suggestion of the “cultural haunting” from several works of academic criticism specific to the case of Spain and the *Transición* to democracy.¹²¹ These works

¹²¹ The notion that a contemporary Spanish culture is *haunted* by the Francoist past—a concept often referred to by the term “hauntology”—is well explored Spanish cultural studies, although the rhetoric of “hauntology” is not explicitly employed by all criticism concerning the matter. Jo Labanyi and Joan Ramon Resina have addressed the study of “engaging the Francoist past” as facing history’s “ghosts,” in the case of Spain’s twentieth-century history. See Labanyi’s “History and Hauntology; or, What Does One Do with

have taken up the task of reading cultural production in contemporary Spain as bearing the *huellas* or traces of violence (both from the Civil War and Francoist oppression) of Spain's disavowed past, a thesis forwarded in these authors' arguments as functioning within a structure of psychological repression and of trauma. However, this lack of space in public discourse to "practice" remembrance of the past was furthermore driven by a "new" economic push for progress, as Moreiras-Menor and Resina argue, in the wake of Francoist isolationism. Remembrance was silenced for the sake of the "new" emerging (democratic, neo-liberal image of) Spain, within the political and economic projects of the *Transición*. Spain's emerging "democratic and economic image" may have been the motor of such a pact to repress the past from public address, an argument further reflected in Resina's previously cited analysis for the social desire to push aside the events of Francoism during the forging of the new democratic State. The production of a "ghost," it seems by this suggestion, consisted in a dual mechanism at work in the cultural practices of *Transición*-era Spain: a collective denial (i.e., a social and political desire to "turn away" from the past) and an emerging economic project (i.e., the desire to project a "new" neo-liberal, democratic image). In other words, the manufacturing of a ghost was produced at the margins of hegemonic culture, perceptible by traces of the past having

the Ghosts of the Past? Reflections on Spanish Film and Fiction of the Post-Franco Period" in *Disremembering the Dictatorship: The Politics of Memory since the Spanish Transition to Democracy*, edited by Joan Ramon Resina (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 65-82, and Resina's essay "Short of Memory: The Reclamation of the Past since the Spanish Transition to Democracy" in the same work, 83-126. Jo Labanyi has given an overview of works from the early *Transición* period, the 1970s, through contemporary culture that immediately figure the ghost, thereby suggesting hauntological readings in that the "ghosts of the past" continue to haunt present cultural production in Spain. Cristina Moreiras-Menor's work explores the possibilities of a productive "hauntological" reading (to understand the traces of the traumatic past in cultural production, decades later) as a theoretical structure of repression and the apparition of past ghosts (namely, Francoism) in contemporary culture.

left their mark on cultural production and reenacted in social practices within the emergent structure, the democratic State.

But while the structure of disavowal becomes evident in the production of past “ghosts,” and is at work in the *pacto de olvido*, the project of induced forgetting may only displace the anxieties Cebrián and Aguilar aptly describe—these “fantasmatic fears”—into the private and unarticulated social space of remembrance. This displacement, Moreiras-Menor demonstrates in her work, is indeed a form of historical haunting while it remains unaddressed in the Spanish State; instead, memory work of this silenced past became prevalent in Spanish film and narrative throughout the 1980s and 90s, posterior to the *Transición*. For the “haunting” may be located as a phenomenon at the margins of history, at the periphery of consciousness, as some-“thing” seemingly there but collectively pushed “out of sight.” The heinous crimes of dictatorship and war in this light disturbed the social body of democratic Spain in spectral form, a figuration absent of a collective discourse from which to engage the violence of the past.

Los fantasmas del pasado, las estelas que ellos dejan en la historia, debían ser silenciados [during the *Transición*] para que el proyecto colectivo de modernización y europeización fuera realizado desde la estabilidad y la comodidad. Sin embargo, los residuos dejados fuera, los secretos silenciados, los pactos de consenso, marcan la historia también, desde sus márgenes, como una historia que se repite, como un presente que se estructura bajo las mismas cadenas simbólicas y bajo el dominio de una misma figura simbólica de poder. (Moreiras-Menor, *Cultura herida* 57)

A notion of progress is indeed at work in displacing address of the past from collective discourse, thereby producing the “ghosts of the past” at history’s margins, the fear for which becomes reenacted as (historical) violence in repetition: a fantasmatic fear. The historical haunting, “fears” that conjure up the traumas of the Francoist past, continued to unsettle the social body in *Transición*-era Spain without an adequate public

forum from which to address this collective historical “wound.” With political discourse having turned away its sights from the Civil War and Second Republic, driven by an impetus to construct this image of “newness” for a Spain transformed, the trace becomes re-inscribed in the “new” projects of the democratic State, for it does not merely “go away” or recede with the passing of time. The most salient evidence of this, undoubtedly, are the contemporary debates in Congress to address these collective traumas with the approval of the Law of Historical Memory; for remembrance in official discourse has not occurred in step with the *Transición* years, but as a temporally *deferred* process.

Narratives that tell the experience of the *Transición* as fraught with social anxieties of the threatening repetition of past violent episodes, or as rife with political tensions conjuring up their association with the Civil War, are certainly not the only stories told from these years, nor are they representative of an entire sociological body of work on the *Transición* era. It has been described as an era that was welcomed as the end of Spain’s dictatorial past, and, through the projection of a “new democratic image,” Spain was rapidly incorporated into international relations via trade and political participation, as it underwent an accelerated period of modernization. But I should like to caution against the positivist and celebratory perception of the *Transición* as a successful one, as it commonly has been regarded by economic and political standards, in that these processes are, as I have suggested earlier, in part responsible for the production of the “ghost,” which continues to be a matter at hand in current debates on historical remembrance. Rather, if the latest discussions in Congress may be of some indication for this persistence of the past to unsettle the present, it would seem that contemporary Spanish culture is no exception to Ross Chambers’ suggestion that, “National cultures,

these days, seem increasingly aware of the sense in which they are haunted, both by past atrocities and by the continuing injustices those atrocities have spawned” (34).¹²²

To exhibit the atemporal trace that resists the narrative constancy upheld by Lyotard—and the radical possibility that this “haunting” works against temporal homogeneity—I turn to a reading of Carmen Martín Gaité’s work *El cuarto de atrás*, published in 1978. The patchwork narrative of personal memory, which itself resists the homogeneous metrum upheld in the Grand Narrative of Francoist Spanish Nationalism for its spatial and temporal uniqueness, stands as an example within which cultural production addressed the dictatorial past contemporaneously with the *Transición* years, a “ghosted” subject matter excluded from hegemonic visibility in the emerging democratic State.

¹²² On April 27, 2006, the Congreso de Diputados in Madrid passed a draft of legislation by a majority vote to declare 2006 “Year of Historical Memory,” an act that when approved by the Senate would officially recognize the victims of nearly forty years of Francoist oppression and those who fought to defend the Second Republic during the Spanish Civil War. Under the law, which marks a recent turn towards remembering the Francoist dictatorship and an unprecedented mention of the Second Republic despite a divided political stance on the issue, the Spanish government rendered homage to these victims within the year, as well as recognized those who fought against fascism in defense of Spain’s short-lived Republic. The debates in Congress raised eyebrows, not only because the new legislation declared the Second Republic the predecessor to the current democratic State—a controversial, even politically taboo association between the Republican democracy (1931-1939) and the constitutional monarchy ratified in 1978—but because the legislation indicates a desire to return to a space of history that was presumably “forgotten” during the *Transición*, to revisit a past that has remained previously unaddressed by the State. The only previous act of State recognition for the victims of the Civil War, to my knowledge, was the pending twenty-fifth anniversary commemoration of the constitution, passed by Congress on November 20, 2002, the very date of the anniversary of Francisco Franco’s death. The act, which recognized those who were exiled during Francoism, sought “el reconocimiento moral a las víctimas de la Guerra Civil y de la represión en la dictadura franquista y se reclaman ayudas económicas para exiliados, así como la recuperación de la nacionalidad para los *niños de la guerra* y sus descendientes directos.” Marking the first State sponsored recognition of the consequences of the Francoist past, the text included a short resolution speaking out against violence as a means for governance, in that no State “puede sentirse legitimado, como ocurrió en el pasado, para utilizar la violencia con la finalidad de imponer sus convicciones políticas y establecer regímenes totalitarios contrarios a la libertad y a la dignidad de todos los ciudadanos, lo que merece la condena y repulsa de la sociedad democrática.” See “El Congreso en bloque expresa su reconocimiento moral a las víctimas del franquismo,” *El País* 20 November 2002, 27 April 2006 <<http://www.elpais.es/>>, and Agencia EFE, “Todos los partidos salvo el PP aprueban declarar 2006 Año de la Memoria Histórica,” *El País* 27 April 2006, 27 April 2006 <<http://www.elpais.es/>>.

Reading Carmen Martín Gaité's *El cuarto de atrás* as an Ethical Turn towards History

...¿de qué sirven esas leyes que parecen regir indiscutiblemente el orden del tiempo?; no hay nada que no esté trastornado por el azar.
-The narrator's interlocutor¹²³

Admittedly, conversing about history is not as simple as I may have suggested. If my previous discussion about the lack of public discourse throughout the democratic *Transición* on the violence of Spanish fascism may serve as some indication, the *delayed* response in articulating remembrance of the Francoist past—in culture produced after the event, and in State discourse, thirty years after the dictator's death—might hint at the difficulty of granting visibility to the pervasive representations of this history that do indeed exist in cultural and often narrative form. That is, rather than emphasize the formation of discourse concerning Francoist history, here I am interested in the process of turning towards or granting visibility to narratives that have been “ghosted” at the periphery of hegemonic discursive practices.¹²⁴ The two tasks are nevertheless inextricably related. When I say that the discussion here will focus on the possibility of “facing history,” hypothetically my intention would be to locate a method from which to work against the tactics of “turning away” from that past, thereby granting visibility to underrepresented spaces that reflect on, in this case, the dictatorship. That is, we might ask that, collectively and publicly, there exist some space of conversation (between two

¹²³ Carmen Martín Gaité, *El cuarto de atrás* (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 2004), 91. All cites are from this edition.

¹²⁴ Such a project may be demonstrated, similarly, in the *Premio Nacional de Literatura* having been awarded to Martín Gaité's work, in 1978. Gonzalo Sobejano has noted that *El cuarto de atrás* forms part of the literature engaged in memory work during these years: “the novel of memory sought to recover the inner lives of people who, in that recent past, had experienced the closure of a protracted process. Once completed, that past called for a kind of recapitulation, a view from a new vantage point, a view long desired and so patiently awaited.” See “The Testimonial Novel and the Novel of Memory” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Spanish Novel: From 1600 to the Present*, edited by Harriet Turner and Adelaida López de Martínez (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2003) 191.

interlocutors or more, between a reader and an author via a text, among students and an instructor), one in which the participants of this dialogue (an act of listening, speaking, interpreting—or, reading) actively engage the historical event, thereby facilitating a “seeping into consciousness” of the events of history into individual (and collective) recognition. This may be a fundamental question to ask for our own teaching and writing practices, in the context of post-memory work that has taken up questions on how to represent a past not directly experienced by the speaking subject, or the subject’s interlocutor(s). My suggestion is to exploit the ghostliness of the trace, drawing from its power to “haunt” or destabilize the homogenous narrative metrum of Francoism and to unsettle the annals of an official history with the trace’s temporal inconstancy.

To offer an example from the case of Spain, this sort of “recognition” might take the form of bringing to light the many men and women who were assassinated during the postwar “cleansing of the Reds” by Nationalist sympathizers—the murder of communists, union organizers, and Republicans even after the Civil War had been won by the Nationalists—which served to gruesomely demonstrate the new authoritarian power dynamic of postwar Spain. Although largely undocumented, despite having taken place in many cities and small towns across Spain, neighborhood “cleansings” have not been forgotten by the families who lost relatives to the assassinations, and to others who witnessed these actions, both of which persist in private and often familial narratives about the war. This example stands in tension with the lack of State discourse produced in tempo with the *Transición*, providing the kind of “ghostly” presence in the social body I argued previously. To facilitate this awareness would require us, first, to have a collective (subject at present) recognize that such events continue to haunt—or, “weigh

on the minds” of those in the present—and then to ask how we might engage this past, in a contemporary dialogue. Although I believe there are endless possibilities to facilitate this moment of recognition, and furthermore have it disseminated or distributed—e.g., in the classroom, in public dialogue in government or debates in the media and by Internet—here I will limit my discussion to the act of reading fiction and interpretation, a sort of exchange between the reader (the individual subject) and the text, as a possible solution to achieving this moment of recognition.¹²⁵

When I refer to engaging or “imagining” historical events, as this encounter implies, I do not wish to suggest that the study of history conjures up falsehood, or a misleading invention of a historical event that cannot be verified. Rather, I am positing a project that would allow the participants of the dialogue to incorporate the event—as one’s own “investment” in the past—into consciousness. This is, on a micro scale, practiced in our classrooms when teaching literature and culture in a historical context. In *Heterologies* Michel de Certeau asserts that fiction is historiography’s repressed “other”—repressed because narrating history presupposes a pure objectivity that its writers cannot possibly achieve; therefore, the space of “real history” for de Certeau is inherently comprised of subject positions that struggle to achieve a complete objectivity when framing past events in narrative form, in contemporary practices of news media, and in writing history, all perceived falsely within each genre (documentary, journalism, historiography) as “objective” methodologies. Fiction and literature, de Certeau proposes throughout his work, continue to haunt this “objectivity of representation,” further

¹²⁵ Kathleen Glenn suggests, similarly, that the exchange between the narrator and her interlocutor in Martín Gaité’s novel parallels “the dialogue which, ideally, will take place between author and reader.” See “*El cuarto de atrás: Literature as juego and the Self-Reflexive Text*” in Servodidio and Welles, *From Fiction to Metafiction* 153-54.

unsettling history's real "other" that these genres struggle against to exclude. Therefore, we might take from de Certeau's suggestion that fiction is more conducive to interpellating a reader—i.e., the (collective) subject—for its evocative, imaginative capacity than methodological endeavors in historiography allow.¹²⁶

It should not go unmentioned, furthermore, that granting visibility to historical ghosts—the task of "facing" the historical event at present—confronts us with great difficulty since, if we take the metaphor literally, a historical event in representation has no one "face." Rather, "recognizing" the events of history—and more problematically, recognizing the horrific events that may adversely cause one to want to ignore them altogether—presents us with a new set of problems to interpret with those interlocutors to whom aim to converse. Unlike the ethics of dialogue explored by Levinas, where the interlocutor subjects oneself to the face of "the other," and unlike the interpellation of Althusser's subject that hears oneself called out by name, the fantasmatic trace that persistently unsettles the present and asks to be recognized does not have a single face, nor does it call out to anyone directly. Rather, the work of (collectively) addressing the past might be conceived of as the ethics of conversation about "turning towards" a substanceless and faceless residual—a "ghost," in that we know there *is* something there, yet we cannot perceive any one "entity" or event in its entirety (i.e., not the Civil War, nor Francoist oppression¹²⁷)—which leads us to a haunting question in and of itself. That

¹²⁶ See Certeau's *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1986) and, particularly, his essay "History: Science and Fiction," 199-221.

¹²⁷ The partial object of the past, the historical event as fragment, that cannot be perceived in its entirety at present is well explored in studies on memory and trauma, whereby the past event may only ever be reconstructed (remembered or represented) as a partial form of itself in the present. I believe studies on memory attribute this to the negotiation among a complex interface between collective (historical) and personal memory, the genre of storytelling and testimony, the politics of the interlocutor and speaking subject, among other intersubjective negotiations. Trauma studies (Caruth, Moreiras-Menor, Medina) tend

is, if some-thing unsettles the present, one might call out, by taking Ross Chambers's suggestion in his work on cultural haunting,¹²⁸ and begin the conversation by asking, "who's there?"

I believe Carmen Martín Gaité's widely acclaimed *El cuarto de atrás* illustrates an ethics for one kind of conversation that facilitates a moment of "recognition" between two parties and, namely, a peculiar "dialogue" between two characters, forming a similar double-play between the reader and text. Namely, the kind of memory work explored in Martín Gaité's novel relies on the narrator recounting, in stream-of-consciousness form, her personal memories from the Civil War and her experience living during the Franco Regime. The structure of the story itself leads the reader through the disoriented experience of the narrator, who awakens from sleep, first recalling a surreal description of her dream, primarily an inventory of artifacts from her home—dismembered doll parts, antique maps, a painting of an ominous devil. These objects, spliced with remnants from childhood memories, culminate in her awakening, to find herself at home, confronted with an enigmatic interlocutor whose identity is never revealed. Although we readers are led to "discover" the identity of the "man with the black hat," in tempo with how the narrator pieces these clues together, the most we can gather about him is from the narrator's deduction that *this must be an interview*, but about what we're not certain. That is, even as the narrator is not quite sure with whom she is speaking ("who's there?") or

to focus on the return of this past as repressed, having splintered to take another form (another signification) that permeates culture with its traces of that which is not verifiably, nor often recognizably, the verifiable historical (traumatic) moment itself. Both studies to the approaches of past remembrance are illustrative of the collective and individual subject's relationship to the present.

¹²⁸ "Calling out" to an unknown interlocutor—asking "who's there?"—is described by Ross Chambers as the fundamental point of departure for interpreting historical "ghosts" that have disturbed the social body, and which continue to haunt a culture and cultural production. See *Untimely Interventions: AIDS Writing, Testimonial and the Rhetoric of Haunting* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: U of Michigan P, 2004).

what purpose the conversation serves, their dialogue ensues despite her uncertainty and despite the narrator's difficulty when telling her story. In the novel, the narrator's greatest discovery to foment this speech-memory act is her encounter with, and perhaps her invention of, an interlocutor (Ciplijauskaitė, *La novela femenina* 111). Throughout their conversation, the narrator plays hostess to her guest, offering him tea, chatting in casual conversation, and most significantly, recounting a flood of personal memories: the sound of air sirens and the bombing of her town during the Civil War; the anger and envy felt as a young girl towards Franco's daughter, Carmen; her desire to study literature. What becomes evident, though, are the hospitable conditions of the conversation between the two characters, whereby the mysterious interlocutor provokes and listens to the narrator's memories, even the details that are not always pleasant to hear, indicating that the narrator's hospitality is not perfunctory conversation alone—both for the reader and the man with the black hat. Rather, critics have tended to focus on the interlocutor's role in helping the narrator create speech, and eventually lead her to write, by guiding her through personal memories; he is, as Linda Gould Levine has noted, the narrator's creative muse (162).

Like the story's opening dream sequence, these memories come back to the narrator and are at times articulated in a stream of consciousness, while readers are privy to both her inner thoughts that describe personal memories from her past, as well as her spoken exchange with the man. But we should note that, again like the dream, these memories are admittedly incomplete, coming to the narrator in fragments, in "pieces" that require interpretation (e.g., the material objects from the dream, the dismembered doll parts, and the clutter of her home with artifacts) and are then assembled, like the language

of the conversation, to compose the memories of her childhood we read. Thus, the narrative line of flight, or *fuga* as the narrator calls it, and these narrative detours provide important trajectories throughout Gaité's work, where the distraction of the narrator when faced with an interested interlocutor facilitates (rather than denies) a reconstitution of this past.

The work of memory, of personal narrative in "flight" to re-present the past, serves as an important, if not the primary organizational structure in the novel, one that is interrupted, splintered, at times self-censored, and at others, uninhibited. From this narrative fragmentation itself the characters (interlocutor and narrator) engage in what becomes an ethics of respecting the *fuga* as a vehicle for recuperating the narrator's memories, an event that leads to her writing notes, as well in the broken form of fragments. In one moment of conversation, the narrator speaks of Conchita Piquer's songs and their emotional charge, giving way to a pause and a moment of flight, when she turns her back to the man with an ambiguous gesture that reaches out to him with physical proximity: "me limito a encogerme de hombros y a una pequeña torsión de cuerpo, mediante la cual la espalda me queda descansando contra el borde del sofá, cerca de sus piernas estiradas" (104-105). This interruption does not deter the man from encouraging her to continue speaking and to look for her notebook so she may jot down notes from memories coming to her at present. "Da igual," she retorts, "no tiene importancia. Era un recuerdo de la guerra, pero ya se ha desvanecido" (105). Just as she utters this rejection, the man hands her a pencil: "¿Qué es esto?" she asks, to which he replies encouragingly, "Nada, por si quiere apuntar lo de Burgos, ¿no quería apuntarlo?" (105). Finally, after some convincing, she takes the pencil in hand and jots down,

“Cementerio de coches. Burgos. ¿1938?,” casting doubt on the reconstruction of fragmentary memories that come to her throughout the story, some of which are only achieved by her interlocutor having prompted the narrator to remember and, at times, to write (106).

The mysterious man asks the narrator to recall her memories of the war and from her childhood, despite these narrative *fugas* that disrupt a fluid conversation between the two. In fact, it is for this *fuga* that the narrator apologizes to the man, stating simply, “Gracias. Y perdone,” when her interlocutor responds, “¿Qué tengo que perdonarle?”; for my *fugas*, she says, to which the man replies, “Me gustan mucho sus fugas. [...] Por mí fúguese todo lo que quiera, lo hace muy bien” (107). In this conversation, the man utilizes his interlocutor’s *fuga* as a method to help her recall past memories, and he continues to allow her these moments of interruption, of silence, of fragmentary conversation, by understanding that these pieces are the resurgence of personal memories, necessary, or at least important for the narrator, to recall. The unidentified man listens attentively to her story, acting as the ethical and perhaps conditioned interlocutor at present, who allows her to return to these private and often emotional moments from the past, without calling into question the authenticity of their disrupted narrative framework. Rather, he accepts their disjointed character, against the narrator’s will, in the time that they arise. The dual time of memory, unique and fragmentary, operating as a trace within the present act of recounting this past, coexists with her present-time of narrating, to become re-presented in synthetic form: as fiction. The question of historical authenticity in the novel, a doubt cast by the narrator herself, is eclipsed by its narrative contents. “Truth,” in Martín Gaité’s novel, as Brad Epps has

noted, “is no longer a function of an authorial or authoritative reality, of codified and catalogued history, but is rather an intricate and inconstant intersubjective process, a dynamic play, as Foucault suggests, of monumental oblivion and counter-memory” (“The Space of Sexual History” 80). The operating function of this conversation, I will add, provides one form of “ghosted” memory work discussed earlier that brushes against the grain of Francoist historiography—formerly posited as Truth—and brings to light one representation of what Lyotard and Jameson described as postmodernism’s fragmented narrative units operating locally after the delegitimization of Grand Master narratives (fascism). In the case of Spain, I should like to note, the hosted space of this narrative is, as the novel suggests, primarily private. The narrator discusses, with some reluctance, her memories of Francoism and the Civil War in her own home, a confine that appropriately serves as a parallel to how these narratives were subverted from public visibility into private and peripheral cultural spaces and the practices that delimited them. As Ruth El Saffar has noted, this private space of memory shares a common thread with the confessional, in that Martín Gaité’s narrator has difficulty escaping her sense of self-condemnation for the memories that “carry her away” into fiction—an impetus synonymous with the escapist power of her narrative *fugas*.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Ruth El Saffar explains, “The fact is that C.’s stranger is receiving her confession. But far from ordering up penances, as the priests of her childhood were wont to do, he continues to honor precisely those things C. has learned to condemn in herself. Faced with the impossible heap of memories and the despair of ever giving them shape, C. retreats to another level of self-judgment, confessing that she is ready to run away, and noting, ‘Running away in childhood always meant severe punishment.’ ‘I like it very much when you run away,’ the man tells her, ‘You can run away as much as you like.’ ‘You’re a born escapist,’ he continues, ‘and there’s nothing wrong in that. The only bad thing, that is to say, bad for you, is that you try to justify yourself.’ Confronted with the stranger’s salvific, unexpected acceptance, C. is plunged into the memory of a world so tightly closed in on itself that anything but absolute conformity was tantamount to madness and brought the threat of ostracism, if not murder, with it.” See her article “Redeeming Loss: Reflections on Carmen Martín Gaité’s *The Back Room*,” *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 20.1 (1986) 7.

In this sense, the narrator's reaction to the man, wishing to hear more *fugas* and personal memories, is one of rejection, burdened by an overwhelming sense of shame:

Dejo el vaso en el suelo, me abrazo las rodillas y me quedo quieta y absorta, bajo el sortilegio de su extravagante absolución, me ha dicho que soy una fugada, me lo ha dicho sin reproche alguno, ¿por qué, si me halaga, tiene al mismo tiempo que inquietarme? El recelo me llega de muy atrás, de los años del cuarto de atrás, de los periódicos, de los púlpitos y los confesionarios, del cuchicheo indignado de las señoras que me miran pasar con mis amigos camino del río, a través de visillos levantados [...]

...and so the narrator's stream of consciousness continues (108). It is this ambiguous rejection of her interlocutor—"why has he not reproached me for being a *fugada*?" she asks—that allows us as readers to understand the source of her shame. She chastises herself and feels apologetic, even guilty for her *fugas* because they have interrupted standard rules of conversation. This shame is steeped in the shame she felt, deep in the "back room" of memories, of Catholic confessionals and the judgmental gossip of townswomen, the very ideological and social forces that act on her to feel embarrassment for her fuga's "impropriety." However, from the narrator's perspective, the man has "absolved" her from the distraction without reproach, an unanticipated response to her mind's wanderings. That is, based on the norms of previous conversations, we might assume, she anticipates that her interlocutor *will not want to hear* or listen to the moment that escapes her, the past that "no tiene importancia" because, after all, it is "un recuerdo de guerra." In this sense, the very content, as well as the disjointed narrative structure of her memories conjure up feelings of guilt for approaching these matters when faced with a willing interlocutor.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ The liberating force of the man with the black hat, as her creative muse, is endowed with a certain sexual power, as Ruth El Saffar has noted. He is "the lover who *could* involve C. [the narrator] in stories of passion, jealousy and violence. Yet he is also the listener, the interlocutor through whom creativity is

The *cuarto de atrás* to which the narrator refers in the previous passage establishes a metaphor for how the narrative plays out throughout the novel, like a storage room containing the memories that come to her spontaneously—her *fugas*. Earlier in the novel the narrator suggests this connection between the storage room and the clutter of personal memories when she describes the *cuarto de atrás* from her childhood home in relation to another house she remembers involuntarily.

El comedor aquel también ellos lo llamaban ‘el cuarto de atrás,’ así que las dos hemos tenido nuestro cuarto de atrás, me lo imagino también como un desván del cerebro, una especie de recinto secreto lleno de trastos borrosos, separado de las antecámaras más limpias y ordenadas de la mente por una cortina que sólo se descorre de vez en cuando; los recuerdos que pueden darnos alguna sorpresa viven agazapados en el cuarto de atrás, siempre salen de allí, y sólo cuando quieren, no sirve hostigarlos. (80-81)

Despite the narrator’s own advice that one must surrender to the temporal *flow* of these memories as they resurface in the present (“siempre salen de allí, y sólo cuando quieren”), in the previously cited passage she sinks into a moment of feeling shame for this “escape,” even though she purports that one should only seek to understand this phenomenon, for her memories only arise when they like. One cannot “beat them out” of hiding (“hostigarlos”), for they await their own unpredictable moment when the mind “draws its curtain back” to reveal its concealed clutter. The metaphor is an apt one, for the feelings of guilt and apology felt by the narrator reveal that she does indeed conceive of herself as subject to the uncontrollable timing of these memories, in the unpredictable moments when they spill out. It is this defenselessness that extends to the narrator’s difficulty believing that her interlocutor wants to listen to her moments of flight, causing her to feel shame for her erratic behavior. It seems as though the *cuarto de atrás* might

awakened.” See El Saffar’s article “Liberation and the Labyrinth: A Study of the Works of Carmen Martín Gaité” in Servodidio and Welles, 194.

also bear the significance of a storage room of memories which ought to remain—at least from the narrator’s perception—“out of sight” for the sake of no one wanting to become witness to them, held at bay in the back room, (shamefully) hidden from public view.

The narrator suggests that this back room—its clutter of remnants and storage—is analogous to a dual space of her own personal memories, and within a cultural framework, of matters Francoist history has denied from visibility and elided from its national narrative. These visual and narrative contents of the *fugas* are, as Louise Ciallella has argued, the very atemporal ghosts of uncanny “images that arise ambivalently from the [Francoist] past and disrupt the novel’s fantastic present” (147). In the context of Martín Gaité’s novel, it is this occlusion “in the back room” that, in part, conditioned the narrator to feel shame for rummaging through these “private” memories *when faced with* an interlocutor, despite the unknown man’s interest in hearing her speak. Respecting the narrative tempo of the *fuga*, however, takes a turn at the center of the novel, leading the narrator to a personal realization about the private significance of these memories within a historical context.

Interestingly enough, Martín Gaité’s novel was first published in 1978, less than three years after Franco’s death, a pivotal moment that the narrator recalls in detail. The narrator describes Franco’s burial in the Valley of the Fallen, the image of the dictator’s daughter Carmen in mourning, the narrator’s disbelief when watching the televised burial, and most importantly, her “awakening”—her own awareness of this event seeping into consciousness. She thus comes recognize that her life experience had been marked by history, sensing that she was, at this moment, “enmarcada por ese círculo que giraba en torno mío” (118). In other words, the narrator offers a critical turn in recognizing that

she (at “center,” as a subject) is inscribed by and within the historical event itself, of the dictator’s death, which had measured her life experience in tempo with and under Francoism. This “doble fuga,” she calls it, inscribed her own life experience within that of a fifty-year cycle. For “los años de su reinado, los sentí como un bloque homogéneo” of time and space, as if “Franco había paralizado el tiempo” (116). In that moment she conceives of her personal memories as inextricably bound to the macro scale of history—of Franco’s death, her schooling years under fascism, the air raids of the Civil War, etc.—whereby the content of these memories is folded within a historical and national framework, having real consequences on the experience of her present.¹³¹ The “face” of history, it seems, is comprised as much by her own memories—those she is reluctant to reveal to the unknown man—as it was by the death of the dictator and the authoritarian narrative his figure emblemized. For the death of Franco marked, in the social body, the death of the sovereign mandate and fascism’s “state of exception” that had univocally defined the “frozen” temporal parenthesis for nearly forty years, as Cristina Moreiras-Menor has noted.¹³² Or, as the narrator of Martín Gaité’s novel suggests, with the death

¹³¹ Antonio Pineda has commented on the complexity and fragmentary character of time in the novel, and its relationships to space, whereby “el tiempo y el espacio se liberan de la linealidad y la causalidad que los caracteriza en el mundo cotidiano, y pasan a desarrollarse como algo simultáneo, aleatorio, fragmentario. Los cruces entre el espacio-tiempo lineal y el espacio-tiempo aleatorio son, por otra parte, continuos: toda la novela es, de hecho, una gran interrupción onírica (desde el momento en que, aparentemente, Carmen no puede conciliar el sueño, y que dura hasta su posterior despertar) que emplaza el discurso en un cronotopo fragmentado. [...] Además, es importante señalar que tanto el espacio como el tiempo desarrollan operaciones paralelas en sus movimientos: el cuarto de atrás (espacio) se complementa con el viaje temporal hacia atrás, dadas las frecuentes analepsis que se producen.” See “Comunicación e intertextualidad en *El cuarto de atrás*, de Carmen Martín Gaité (2a Parte): De lo (neo)fantástico al caos” in *Espéculo. Revista de Estudios Literarios* 17 (2001) Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 14 May 2008, <<http://www.ucm.es/info/especulo/numero17/apineda2.html>> Section 1.2.

¹³² “Franco es la ley precisamente porque él es la suspensión de la ley que aplica a aquellos a su alrededor pero no a sí mismo o a los que son como él. Esto es, él es el estado de excepción puesto que mientras aplica la ley él está excluido de su entramado, de su territorio de funcionamiento,” as a sovereign power that defines and is always already excluded from the law he mandates (48). See Moreiras-Menor’s article, “Historia a contrapelo: Estado de Excepción y temporalidad en la Transición española,” *Quimera* 279 (Feb 2007) 46-50.

of the dictator, “parecía como si las palabras ‘regir,’ ‘destino’ y ‘patria’ se quitasen el uniforme oficial y apareciesen en cueros sobre una mesa de disección para dejarse hacer la autopsia,” marking the discourse of National Catholicism as having deceased with the sovereign body that defined these terms for his rule (117). The narratives excluded from State discourse in the years posterior to the novel’s publication, constitute a “ghosted” space that is occupied, in this case, by a work of literature and the construction of personal experiences and memories re-presented as fiction. So, we might conclude, what I have earlier called the “face of history” that haunts the historiographic narrative of Spanish fascism is not “something else” at all. But, like the narrator who realizes she is inscribed within this history, a possibility to which she awakens at the moment of Franco’s death, the “face of history” is the content of the narrative *fuga* in the very constructedness of this dialogue, of her personal memories and their patchwork of contradictions, uncertainties, and inaccuracies.

From the novel we might furthermore extrapolate an exemplary manner of conversation, that of engaging history not as an inherently objective *other* but, like the novel’s conditioned interlocutor demonstrates, as an intersubjective re-presentation of fragments, detours, and ellipsis that may violate standard narrative conventions. After all, the destabilizing effect these memory traces have in counterpoint to the authoritarian “seamlessness” of Grand Master narratives serves to undo them. Not only do they stand in opposition to the National Narrative of Francoism, thereby granting cultural visibility

to their occluded status in private and personal memories, but they operate with temporal instability, having an ungrounding effect to delegitimize its narrative unity.¹³³

Yet, when I speak of engaging the past, it should not go unnoticed that modes of reception will undoubtedly shape how history is engaged and re-presented at present, proposing a gamut of considerations regarding to whom we are speaking, how we speak and frame the subject matter in question, and what space and time shape these enunciations and their interplay as a dialogue. However, here these potential discrepancies provide us with a vantage point, in that the plurality offered in the intersubjective process of reading, writing, and conversing about the subject matter, posits criticism with its greatest strength, that of difference in its discursive practices. Therefore, by analyzing the ungrounding of subjectivities, these shifts and ruptures of subjective perceptions and identities as they became redefined—e.g., when Francoist policies could no longer univocally define the Spanish nation, nor mandate the writing of its history after the dictator's death—we have our opportunity to become witness to the subject's perceived relationship to the disintegration of what Lyotard called modern history's grand master narratives. As Martín Gaité's narrator comes to recognize her own graftedness within history, the subject's position in history does not imply a tenuous connection between a macro and micro scale, but is already entwined within the workings of sociopolitical, and inherently cultural, negotiations willed to the present. That is, we

¹³³ Estrella Cibreiro has noted that the man with the black hat serves to help the narrator construct a space for memory-work, thereby subverting the “discurso mítico, unívoco de la posguerra.” See “Transgrediendo la realidad histórica y literaria: El discurso fantástico en *El cuarto de atrás*” *Anales de la Literatura Española Contemporánea* 20.1-2 (1995): 38. In a similar vein, Robert Spires argues that the novel “centers on an attempt to free past, present, and future female subjects from their subjection to the various ideological apparatuses fashioned by the modern post-totalitarian state,” thereby operating as a form of counternarrative to Francoist historiography. See *Post-Totalitarian Spanish Fiction* (Columbia, Missouri: U of Missouri P, 1996) 64.

might further understand what it means to be subject to history, and what kinds of ethical dilemmas this embeddedness posits as we negotiate, and are negotiated by, a past we may not have experienced in the first person.

Illustrations

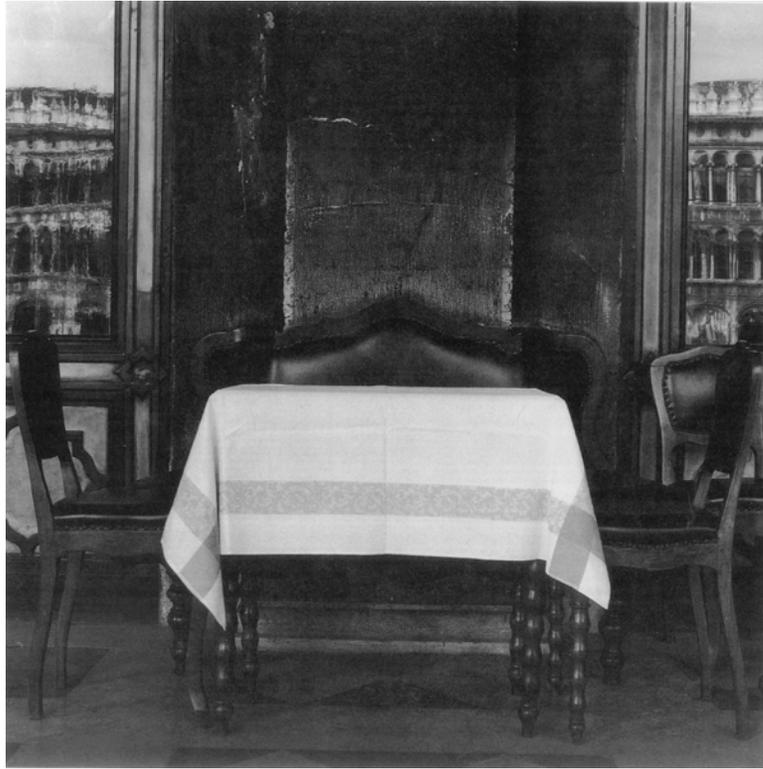


Fig. 4.1. Café Florian, Venice (1981)

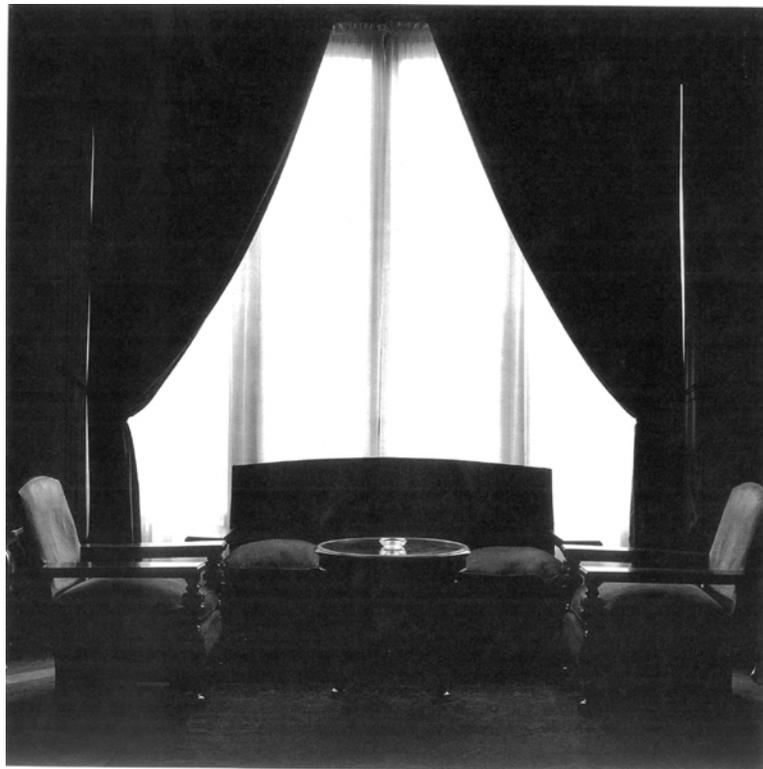


Fig. 4.2. Hotel Maria Cristina, San Sebastian (1984)

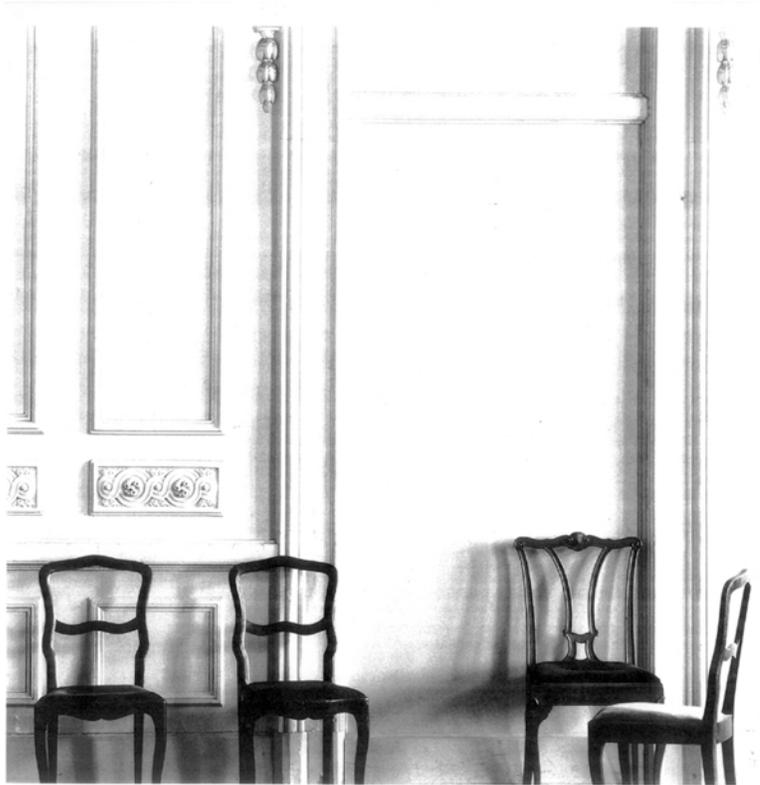


Fig. 4.3. Hotel Maria Cristina, San Sebastian (1985)



Fig. 4.4. Hotel Maria Cristina, San Sebastian (1985)



Fig. 4.5. Hotel Maria Cristina, San Sebastian (1985)

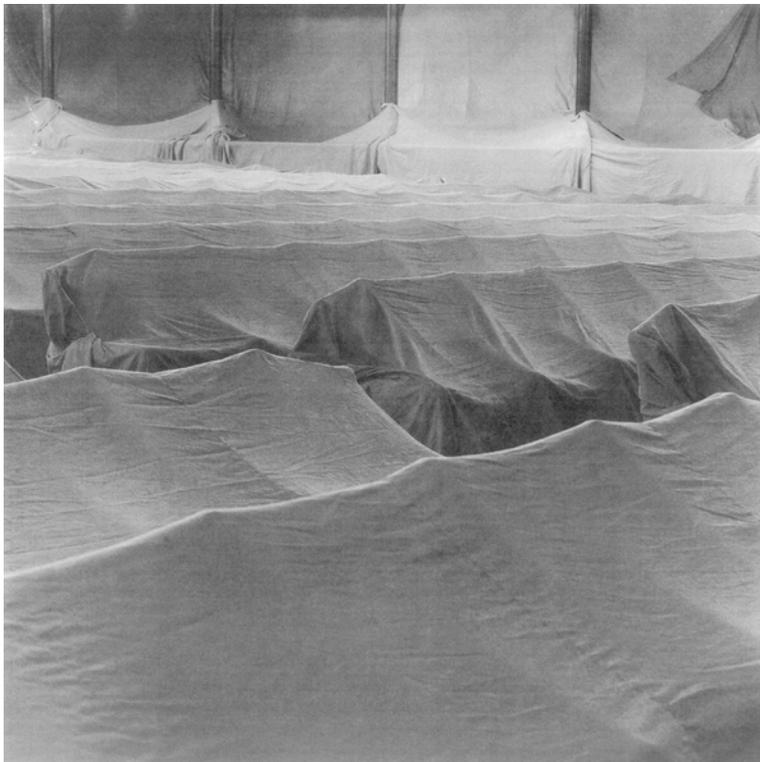


Fig. 4.6. “Gran Teatre del Liceu”, Barcelona (1984)

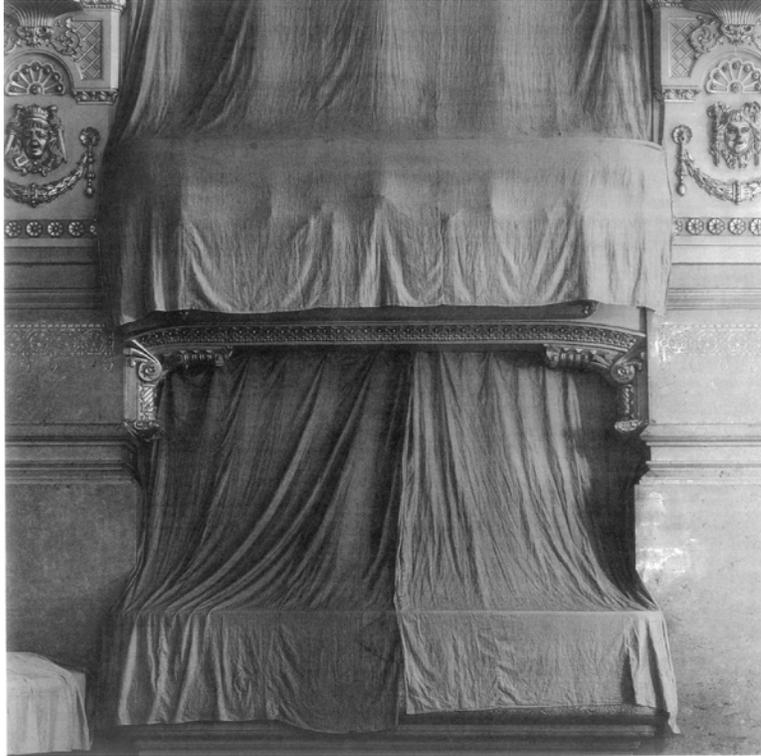


Fig. 4.7. “*Gran Teatre del Liceu*”, Barcelona (1984)



Fig. 4.8. “*La Trona*” Peluqueria, Barcelona (1979)

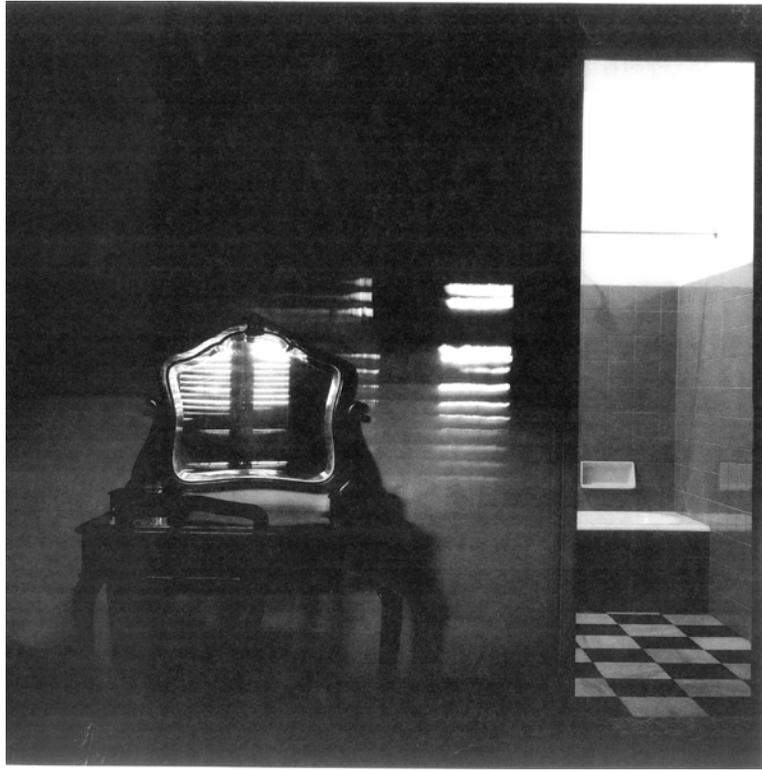


Fig. 4.9. Hotel Maria Cristina, San Sebastián (1985)

Epilogue
On Time, History, and Sense-Making in the Present

As Sanford Kwinter has argued in his excellent work on historical time and its transformations through perceptions of space and subjectivity, time itself may be understood as a cultural construct, having become as a regulatory tool of measurement in the modern imaginary. Dating to discursive methods of scientific exploration in the Enlightenment, the modern quantification and standardization of time emerged from

the advent of rationalized accounting practices, the discovery of universal mechanical laws and constants, the application of systematic techniques for governing populations, the rise of humanistic disciplines and experimental method, the birth of the Cartesian or modern “self.” [...T]he forms of time expressed in these seemingly disparate historical developments are not, strictly speaking, “real” at all, but only the chimeras of an emerging and very specific instrumental culture; they are, in a word, *abstractions*—ingenious tools contrived to distribute the senseless procession of events in nature within an external, thinkable space of measure, management, and mastery. (Kwinter 4)

Kwinter goes on to argue that the modern concept of time became appropriated in the Enlightenment—i.e., made a scientific “object” of study and furthermore standardized—for the purposes of (Western) cultures to construct bodies of knowledge: in economics, physics, political science, the humanities, among other “new” sciences of the time, recognized today as the genesis of “disciplines” in scientific inquiry. That is, the regulations and measurements of time, its quantification and cause-and-effect sequence of linearity, is conceived of as a constant to fit the demands of a logical system within which “time” could function as a standardized and measurable norm. In the present study, I too have been interested in time as an abstraction and its manifestations that modify

reality in lived experience. Perceptions of time do not always determine a constant linearity that historical narratives tend to purport, for their inconstancy undermines the trajectory of modern time that methodologies of historical inquiry have taken as their constant, perhaps even considered truth.

Perceptions of time, argues Kwinter, are rather constructed by historical circumstances that condition how individuals and collectives negotiate spaces, and conceptualize events and flows. The abstract time of the clock that came to regulate economic exchange, “is a linear, homogenous, or numerical time,” measurable across heterogeneous cultural practices as a graduated tool of economic, political, and social exchange (111). This (modern) homogenous time is “a time that can be divided without changing in kind or nature. [...] It is the (spatialized) time of the clock, the fixed, external ground *against* which events occur, not the actualizing flow within which they arise” (111). Perceptions of time, in this sense, are subject to change, most notably when time becomes regulated at the service of powerful social relations between individuals, collectives, and institutional structures. In this sense, time is a malleable substance that is produced by cultural and social practices to regulate (hourly work schedules), normalize (across time zones) and, at times, to justify an operating, collective imaginary, as we have seen in the patchwork narratives of Primo de Rivera’s Spain, which posited itself as an authoritarian narrative legitimizing the “nation.”

It is in time, or against it, that we may become witness to moments of temporal crisis that seem “out of joint,” or that propel, break, and continue into a new perception of time severed from or continuous with itself. This “out of joint” time, Derrida noted in *Specters of Marx*, opens a fissure in absolutism; it provides the present with an

opportunity for assuming ethical responsibility—notably, after the fall of Communism emblemized by the dismantling of the Berlin Wall—which the author senses with urgency. That is, Derrida calls for an emerging discourse that can disturb the totalitarianism of a triumphant neo-liberal regime. Even as modernity has not played out entirely, nor has it provided a viable alternative for those who witness its aftermath, Derrida argues, it seems that past atrocities continue to intrude into the present in the form of a collective inheritance, “whether we like it or know it or not” (*Spectres* 54). To detain a glance upon history becomes an ethical matter of how to define a culture’s relationship to the past, not with disregard for the past as “dead” or long forgotten, but as it has produced violence, the traumas of history that can be turned toward with critical attention for the present. The ethical matter at hand becomes one of witnessing history, per Derrida’s suggestion, as the present inherits these remains, *whether we choose to face it or not*. For, “history, like trauma, is never simply one’s own,” Cathy Caruth argues; rather, “history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other’s traumas” (24).

In a sense, the emergence and practice of deconstruction as a theoretical discourse is itself haunted. It arrives out of joint with historical time. Or, we might say, its language bears the traces of historical ghosts. In the aftermath of two world wars and, most significantly, the horrors of the Holocaust, deconstruction as a discourse has emerged by calling into question the impetus of Western philosophy, one whose terrible historical reality failed to sustain the emancipatory logic of enlightened ideals for generations who survived these catastrophes. For the trajectory of deconstruction may be read as a markedly disillusioned attempt at a cure, so to speak: an attempt to found a basis of inquiry after the failure of grand narratives—both fascism and communism having

produced oppressive, totalitarian regimes, in practice—and against absolute idealism that manifested in its most horrific forms. This is, after all, what Adorno and Horkheimer gesture towards in their radical critique of enlightened thought and its twentieth-century legacy: how could modern reason have produced—at the uncanny limit of the post-industrial imaginary—factories designed to exterminate human populations? In writing practices after the Holocaust, for the Frankfurt school and thinkers like Derrida who owe a debt to its work, one could “historicize” deconstruction in part as this problem-solving endeavor, as a reflection on the ruins of historico-political “master narratives” in modern history when they most failed to explain the irrational horrors emblemized by Auschwitz. Lyotard offers his example of how postwar criticism and writing is intricately bound to its historical circumstance:

Adorno pointed out that Auschwitz is an abyss in which the philosophical genre of Hegelian speculative discourse seems to disappear, because the name ‘Auschwitz’ invalidates the presupposition of that genre, namely that all that is real is rational, and that all that is rational is real (Lyotard, “The Sign of History” 162).

Critical studies produced in the aftermath of destructive master narratives (i.e., fascism) and the theoretical discourses that fell short of explaining them (i.e., economic and political, historical dialectics, Marxism), tend to operate within the crisis Jean-François Lyotard called “a sort of *fission* affecting the unity of the great discourses of modernity” (“The Sign of History” 163). Deconstruction has served as one analytical lens from which to debase the terrifying unity of absolutism, in theory and in practice, by exposing a concept’s philosophical displacement and internal unsustainability, its textual scattering of contents.

The dissemination across time, and across modern history in Spain, of temporalities undergoing collective transition, may be perceived as concomitant to the transformation of the State and its national subjects, most significantly when the moment of transition produces an experience of crisis. That is, transformation becomes perceptible, among other possibilities, when the moment of transition produces a fissure in collective modes of thought, at times usurping a subject's identification with one's familiar sense of place, and at others, in reconfiguring a sense of lived time and space in experience, all of which constitute a modified reality. In sociopolitical transformations brought about by enlightened thought, and its failure to produce a complete rupture within the rule of the *Antiguo Régimen*, we may witness the precipitant rumblings in the formation of the modern State whereby modern subjects would be constituted as a *national*, collective subject. The emergent form of democratic sovereignty, however, would not become solidified as a hegemonic form of governance, despite nineteenth-century attempts at implementing a constitutional democracy, but would instead serve as an earmark of solidarity with the *Antiguo Régimen* after the French occupation by forging the Spanish people as a national subject. In the early twentieth century, the multitude emerges as a crisis with destabilizing potential for the regime of power. Specifically, the (proletarian) masses could not be systematically assimilated under hegemonic rule within the Primo de Rivera Regime's redemptive narrative of national progress, modernization, and discipline. The State policies adopted to regulate the masses as a National subject, and thereby manufacture cohesion to this project, arose in time with the emergence of mass culture and the sense of lived time and space modified by transformative powers of technology that would attempt to constitute the masses as an imaginary, collective body,

wiped clean of difference. In other words, the absorption of cultural (spatial and temporal) heterogeneities within a “regenerated” image of the Spanish post-imperial Nation was vital to the regime’s implementation of progress, measured by the homogeneous narrative tempo of its emerging national narrative. Finally, in the democratic *Transición* of the 1970s and 80s, we may perceive the crisis of temporal experience as a past (memory of fascism) that persists in the present after Francoism, and in the future of a democratic State that had yet to be consolidated, while State formation promised new projects in a market-driven, neo-liberal economy. The traces of this transformation are read, dually, in the fantasmatic subjects and subjective perceptions of place ungrounded by transition, and in the “ghostly” reinsertion of these remainders from collective narratives (on the political right and left), rendered splintered, a-temporal traces persisting beyond the present-time of transformation.

The emergence of a modern (National) subject at the end of the Enlightenment becomes spaced across time, interrupted in partial form, negotiated within collective and individual experiences among institutional and sociopolitical forces. The constitution of this collective National subject resurfaces again at the crux of a crisis in the emergence of multitudes that the post-imperial State perceived as necessary to assimilate as a collective (National) subject in order to sustain hegemonic power. And in democratic Spain, the uncanny perception of this interrupted form ungrounded individual and collective experiences within the “new constitution” of democratic sovereignty, appearing as a trace (perceptibly present and partially absent, novel yet not entirely recognizable, at once familiar and foreign). The constitution of the modern subject as a national subject in Spain is disseminated across history, in temporally spaced moments of transformation,

across fragmented moments or events that materialize in collective and individual experiences. It is across this temporal spacing of crises that cultural production reveals, in representation, the modern subject *as subject to* sociopolitical transformation. Particularly, the hybrid and monstrous manifestations of enlightened mastery, the estranging malformations of esperpento, and the uncanny character of remembrance and disavowal of historical ghosts, constitute a range of grotesque aesthetics emerging in response to the experience of modernity in Spain as crisis. The monstrous, deformed, and ghostly features of these representations of the individual and collective tend to index a dark underside of modern experience in counterpoint to the narratives of enlightened “emancipation,” National “salvation,” and “triumphant democracy,” at the moment when each arises. Within these moments of crisis, if I perceive it well, the production of culture puts forward its contents and aesthetic force as an indication of transformation within the social body, negotiated according to the logic of how this body is conceived in conflict among hegemonic imaginaries, thereby providing the present with an opportunity to bear witness to its tempo of change. We may thus see the subject *as subject to* historical narratives that define its grotesque appearance in representation, but more importantly, to the powers constituting and acting upon it. The individual and collective delimit, in this operation, the very sites where sociopolitical change becomes legible.

It seems that time, at least in terms of quantitative standards by which its passage is measured as a timeline, marches out-of-step with the historical events it delimits, and for the ways in which these events play out as consequences in intersubjective and social fields. Perhaps, then, the constant tempo of historiography should be reconsidered for cultural phenomena that seem to violate its concept of linear narrativity. For what is lost

to modern quantifications of time is the actual matter at hand in history: in the crudest of terms, its pleasures and suffering, its disasters, both manmade and natural, the banality of everyday practices and unassimilated rhythms that contradict its presumed temporal constancy. The present, perhaps by a modest stretch of the imagination, could be described as bearing the remnants of historical traces that coexist in the now-time of present perception. These traces and their violation of linear temporality show haunting as an effective tool towards rethinking modern temporal conventions, which Ross Chambers has argued in his work *Untimely Interventions* tend to purport “a falsely linear dimension of time that encourages obliviousness by fostering a belief in the distinctness of past, present, and future” (43). By working against this perception of the past as dead—the notion that history belongs uniquely to the domain of an “other”—the study of cultural production is provided with an impossible vantage point of perception. That is, by looking to history—only as it may ever be perceived from the present, in representation—we are granted with an encounter to bear witness to its inconstancies, its fissures, its shadowed patterns of similarity and difference, disseminated across time.

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