



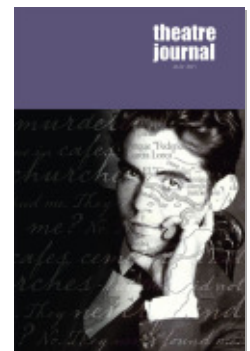
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Memory, Silence, and Democracy in Spain: Federico García  
Lorca, the Spanish Civil War, and the Law of Historical  
Memory

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# Memory, Silence, and Democracy in Spain: Federico García Lorca, the Spanish Civil War, and the Law of Historical Memory

Maria M. Delgado

In the midst of the search for the body of Federico García Lorca, funded by Andalusia's regional government in 2009, journalist Emilio Silva wrote of "the silent bones of Federico García Lorca and the skeleton of our democracy."<sup>1</sup> Contrasting the circulating images of the burial of Chilean folk singer Víctor Jara with the secrecy accompanying the exhumation of Lorca's supposed grave, Silva, cofounder and president of the Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory, or ARMH)—a national organization assisting in the location and exhumation of the graves of Spain's *desaparecidos*, or disappeared, during the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath—praised the "demonstration of the democratization of democracy that those who suffered the Pinochet dictatorship have managed to create." Jara's funeral was conducted in the public eye, with his widow, Joan Turner, sharing the stage with the Chilean president, Michelle Bachelet, who spoke of the funeral as "an act of love and pain for all our dead."<sup>2</sup> Catalan singer Joan Manuel Serrat, who had been prohibited by the Franco regime from singing in his native language when chosen to represent Spain in the 1968 Eurovision Song Contest, offered his own homage to Jara: "[t]o those who say: let the dead rest in peace, I reply: are the dead at peace? Are we at peace with them? . . . This time Joan Turner (his widow) will not walk alone. Beside her will march a multitude that, let no one forget this, still continues to demand justice thirty-six years after the crime."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Emilio Silva, "Los huesos silenciosos de Federico García Lorca y el esqueleto de nuestra democracia," ¡Quitándole el fuego a los dioses! (blog), available at <http://www.emiliosilva.org/los-huesos-silenciosos-de-federico-garcia-lorca-y-el-esqueleto-de-nuestra-democracia/>. All translations from the Spanish are by the author.

<sup>2</sup> Manuel Déllano, "Adiós a Víctor Jara," *El País*, 4 December 2009, available at [http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2009/12/04/actualidad/1259881201\\_850215.html](http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2009/12/04/actualidad/1259881201_850215.html).

<sup>3</sup> Joan Manuel Serrat, "El segundo entierro de Víctor Jara," *El País*, 5 December 2009, available at [http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2009/12/04/actualidad/1259881212\\_850215.html](http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2009/12/04/actualidad/1259881212_850215.html).

The contrast with the politics surrounding the exhumation of the grave where Spain's most internationally recognized twentieth-century poet and dramatist was thought to lie could not have been more pronounced. Manuel Délano, writing in Spain's leading daily newspaper, *El País*, on the day following Jara's burial, stated that "[a]s a result of its impact and the impunity granted to the guilty, the crime against Jara is in Chile the equivalent to the assassination of Lorca in Spain."<sup>4</sup> I would not wish to suggest that the specific and different conditions that led to illegitimate coups d'état in Chile and Spain forty-three years apart can be somehow erased or conflated, but the assassinations of each of these cultural figures mobilized affective international support for the political causes with which they were associated. Silva's blog laments that Spain has not torn down "the cultural estates built-up during forty years of Francoism."<sup>5</sup> The legacy of Franco's thirty-six-year dictatorship remains potent in the politics of silence that has shaped the ways in which the past has been represented in the national imaginary. This essay looks at the politics of memory in contemporary Spain and the ways in which, as Silva states, Lorca's bones function as the skeleton of an "enormous silence" that envelops the Spanish nation, protecting those responsible for the crimes of the dictatorship—whether it be the extra-judicial assassinations of political prisoners like Lorca or the seizure of babies born to Republican or single mothers who were perceived to be "unfit" caretakers. "Here," Silva concludes, "while there is no justice for these families, democracy will remain a skeleton."<sup>6</sup> In examining the ways in which Lorca's remains haunt the national imaginary, I hope to make a contribution to Lorquian historical and biographical studies, mapping the wider ideological framework in which his work has been produced in Spain, and the ways in which it engages with the operation of state-endorsed obliviousness that Milan Kundera calls "organized forgetting."<sup>7</sup>

### Lorca and the Institutional Silence of the Franco Regime

Federico García Lorca's afterlives are indelibly bound up with the Spanish Civil War, which broke out on 17 July 1936 when General Francisco Franco led a military uprising to usurp a democratically elected left-of-center government. Lorca was killed a month after the commencement of the war; Granada was one of the first cities in Spain to fall to the insurgents within a few days of the coup. Seized by Rebel forces in the home of right-wing poet Luis Rosales, where his family thought he would be protected from the purges undertaken during the early weeks of the war, Lorca was shot by firing squad in what became known as *paseos* (strolls); here, political prisoners or citizens branded as Republican sympathizers were placed on execution lists by Rebel soldiers, and then taken at dawn to isolated locations where they were shot, their bodies discarded at the site of execution or dumped into communal graves. Lorca was shot on the early morning of 18 August, alongside a schoolteacher, Dióscoro Galindo González, and two anarchist bullfighters, Francisco Galadí Melgar and Joaquín Arcollas Cabezas, at some point between the towns of Alfacar and Víznar—little more than a kilometer apart and to the north-east of Granada (fig. 1).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Manuel Délano, "La muerte lenta de Víctor Jara," *El País*, 6 December 2009, available at [http://elpais.com/diario/2009/12/06/domingo/1260075158\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2009/12/06/domingo/1260075158_850215.html).

<sup>5</sup> Silva, "Los huesos silenciosos."

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> See Michiko Kakutani, "Milan Kundera: A Man Who Cannot Forget," *New York Times*, 18 January 1982, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/1982/01/18/arts/milan-kundera-a-man-who-cannot-forget.html>. My thanks to one of the *Theatre Journal* referees for pointing me toward Kundera's term.

<sup>8</sup> See Manuel Titos Martínez, *Verano del 36 en Granada* (Granada: Editorial Atrio, 2005). Ian Gibson extensively documents the violent purges that took place in Granada during the early weeks of the Civil

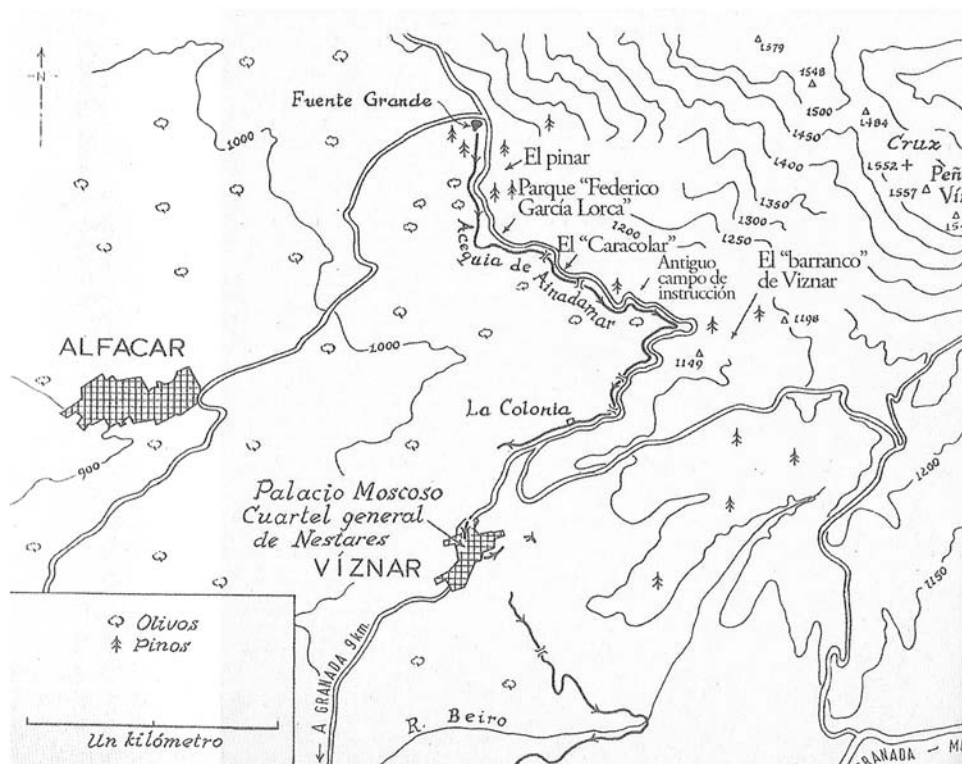


Figure 1. Map showing the alleged site of Lorca's execution, along the road from Víznar to Alfacar.

The map also shows key sites referred to during the course of the essay: the ravine at Víznar (el "barranco" de Víznar); La Colonia, the new demolished children's camp used as a makeshift prison by the Rebel forces during the early months of the Civil War where Lorca was held prior to his execution; the memorial park to Lorca (Parque "Federico García Lorca"); the wider area of Fuente Grande; and El Caracolar. Map © Ian Gibson, taken from *La fosa de Lorca: crónica de un despropósito*, 105.

The Civil War played a prominent role in the canonization of Lorca as one of the conflict's most prominent martyrs and a potent symbol of a progressive culture truncated by Franco's illegitimate coup d'état. Lorca's friend, writer Luis Cernuda, said that after the conflict, Lorca was turned into a "messianic bard."<sup>9</sup> In 1939, art critic Eugenio D'Ors reflected on Lorca's death as a mistake,<sup>10</sup> and this was certainly the narrative promoted by the Franco regime, which sought to dissociate itself from the crime in the wake of international press indignation,<sup>11</sup> fearing that it would harm El Caudillo's (the strongman's) attempts to present his government as a dependable force of law and order aiming to bring stability to a wayward nation.

War; see Gibson, *La represión nacionalista de Granada en 1936 y la muerte de Federico García Lorca* (Paris: Ruedo Ibérico, 1971), and *The Assassination of Federico García Lorca* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1983).

<sup>9</sup>Luis Cernuda, *Crítica, ensayos y evocaciones*, ed. Luis Maristany (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1970), 160, 162.

<sup>10</sup>Qtd. in Silvio d'Amico, "Encuentro con Federico García Lorca," in Federico García Lorca, *Obras completas*, 4 vols., ed. Miguel García-Posada (Barcelona: Galaxia Gutenberg/Círculo de Lectores, 1996), 3: 569–74, quote on 574.

<sup>11</sup>*The Times*, for example, covered the story on 12, 14–15 September and 5 October 1936. For details of further international press coverage, see Ian Gibson, *Federico García Lorca: A Life* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), 470.

When Lorca's immediate family finally secured a death certificate for him in 1940, the entry of death in the Civil Register stated that he had died "in the month of August 1936 from war wounds"—the implication being that he had died on the battlefield or fallen victim to a stray bullet.<sup>12</sup> Rewriting the circumstances of Lorca's death was about burying the political significance of the atrocities of the Civil War in a fatalistic discourse where such crimes were simply dismissed as the inevitable casualties of a fratricidal conflict.<sup>13</sup>

Only on 23 April 2015 did confirmation come that Lorca had been assassinated on official orders. A police report dated 9 July 1965, obtained by Cadena SER radio station, stated that the writer, described as a "socialist and freemason" responsible for "homosexual and aberrational practices," had been "executed immediately following a confession." No details of the confession are given. The report had been produced in reply to the French Hispanist Marcelle Auclair's official request, lodged through the Spanish embassy in Paris, for information pertaining to the circumstances of Lorca's death. Ministerial correspondence verifies that the results of the investigation were deliberately concealed because the Franco regime promoted alternative narratives that absolved it of responsibility for the crime.<sup>14</sup>

During the Civil War and its aftermath, around 200,000 civilians were killed without any kind of judicial proceedings other than following tokenistic military-run hearings in a systematic unleashing of violence that historians Montse Armengou, Ricard Belis, and Paul Preston have termed "the Spanish Holocaust."<sup>15</sup> Fifty thousand were slaughtered within the Republican zone, largely in the urban centers of the nation—a figure much smaller than the 470,000 claimed by Franco in the justification of his regime of terror.<sup>16</sup> Crimes behind Republican lines were far better documented by war correspondents based in the key urban centers who were kept out of the smaller towns and villages where the crimes undertaken by the Rebel (or as they named themselves, "Nationalist") forces largely took place. While it is now known that at least 130,000 died behind the Rebel lines, the figures are thought to be closer to 150,000 and possibly higher. The Rebel forces who orchestrated the military coup unleashed a campaign of terror to exterminate, in the words of Franco's right-hand general Emilio Mola, "without scruple or hesitation those who do not think as we do."<sup>17</sup>

The campaign to purge Spain of those who had not supported the coup was realized across a series of levels: through extra-judicial executions like that of Lorca; show trials conducted by officers with little or no legal training; the exhibition of women whose hair had been shaved off as punishment for and identification as *rojas* (Reds); appalling overcrowding in Francoist prisons and concentration camps, where the incarcerated

<sup>12</sup> Gibson, *Federico García Lorca*, 470.

<sup>13</sup> See Reyes Mate, "El triunfo póstumo del franquismo," *El Periódico de Catalunya*, 7 December 2009, 8.

<sup>14</sup> See El País, "La dictadura ocultó el informe que la implicaba en el crimen de Lorca," *El País*, 23 April 2015, available at [http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2015/04/22/actualidad/1429735487\\_172971.html](http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2015/04/22/actualidad/1429735487_172971.html); and Javier Torres, "Sacado del Gobierno Civil por fuerzas del mismo," *El País*, 24 April 2015, available at [http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2015/04/23/actualidad/1429813953\\_900796.html](http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2015/04/23/actualidad/1429813953_900796.html).

<sup>15</sup> Montse Armengou and Ricard Belis, *Las fosas del silencio: ¿hay un holocausto español?* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 2004); Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain* (London: HarperPress, 2012).

<sup>16</sup> Arturo Díaz, "Málaga 1937: los herederos de los asesinados por el franquismo piden algo más que huesos," *Público*, 4 October 2007, 26–27; Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust*, xvi.

<sup>17</sup> Qtd. in Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust*, xii.

died of malnutrition, typhoid, and injuries sustained during torture (the Francoist regime was obliged to reveal to an international commission that there were at least 270,719 sentenced prisoners in 1940, and this does not take into consideration at least another 100,000 awaiting trial);<sup>18</sup> slave labor (prisoners were employed in public works ventures, including the building of roads, irrigation projects, dams, and, of course, El Valle de los Caídos (The Valley of the Fallen), Franco's mausoleum sixty kilometers north of Madrid); and the kidnapping and passing on of the children of *rojos* to Nationalist families for adoption—a scandal that continued well into the democratic era, with 30,000 infants thought to have been trafficked over a fifty-year period.<sup>19</sup>

The indignity with which the Franco regime treated Lorca was endemic of that meted out to the Republican dead. There could be no open grieving because, as Judith Butler recognizes, “[o]pen grieving is bound up with outrage, and outrage in the face of injustice or indeed of unbearable loss has enormous political potential.”<sup>20</sup> The Franco regime commemorated its own dead—30,000 of them were exhumed and buried amid pomp and ceremony in The Valley of the Fallen<sup>21</sup>—and controlled how the past was historicized through the curtailment of dissonance and the destruction of records that jeopardized its own carefully constructed narrative.

Lorca's death, as I have already indicated, was registered as an “accident of war.” When writer Gerald Brenan, who had known Lorca, traveled to Spain in 1950 and sought to lay a wreath of flowers on his grave, he was told that the body had been dug up from the city cemetery because no one had paid the fee that would allow the cadaver to occupy a permanent resting place. Only later was he able to discover that Lorca had been shot close to Víznar, but that no one dared visit the likely site for fear of possible reprisals.<sup>22</sup> On arriving in Víznar, despite the stories that he had been told of nightly executions, bodies lying in heaps until they were dragged into “shallow cavities from which their hands and feet often stuck out,”<sup>23</sup> Brenan found no gravestones to allow a space for public mourning. The lives of the Republican dead were, to appropriate Butler's terminology, deemed “non-grievable” by the regime.<sup>24</sup>

It was only really after 1953, when Franco's pact with the Eisenhower administration brought financial aid in exchange for the positioning of strategic military airbases on Spanish soil, that the regime, propelled by the need to address economic development, burnished its international image. Central to this was the tourist industry: Spain was promoted as a welcoming abode of awe-inspiring architecture, exotic allure, and thrilling bullfights, populated by enchanting *señoritas* and virile males. In 1950, Spain had fewer than a million visitors; by 1975, this figure had risen to over 30 million.<sup>25</sup>

The year 1953 saw Franco authorize publication of Lorca's *Obras completas* (*Complete Works*), although the censored, very expensive leather-bound volume was anything but complete, promoting a highly reductive and emphatically depoliticized understand-

<sup>18</sup> Qtd. in *ibid.*, 509.

<sup>19</sup> Covered in *ibid.*, 508–17.

<sup>20</sup> Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2010), 39.

<sup>21</sup> Francisco Ferrándiz, “Exhuming the Defeated: Civil War Mass Graves in 21st-Century Spain,” *American Ethnologist* 40, no. 1 (2013): 38–54, quote on 41.

<sup>22</sup> Gerald Brenan, *The Face of Spain* (New York: Grove Press, 1951), 131–60.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>24</sup> Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004), 34.

<sup>25</sup> Stephen Williams, *Tourism Geography: A New Synopsis* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2009), 70.

ing of the author's corpus. Lorca's family was wary of authorizing productions of his plays that might be appropriated to promote the regime's ideological agenda, and the limited production history of his work during the early decades of the Franco era is both a reflection of this caution and the regime's unwillingness to authorize large-scale stagings. During his lifetime, Lorca's dramaturgy, promoting female agency and sexual desire, and his political affiliation with the socially progressive agenda of Spain's Second Republic (1931–39), had generated adverse coverage in the conservative press.<sup>26</sup> In death, Lorca had to be contained: a request to produce his *Bodas de sangre* (*Blood Wedding*) in 1945 at a commercial theatre in Madrid was refused by the authorities.<sup>27</sup> Lorca was consigned to small-scale, single-performance stagings in small noncommercial venues. The first commercial production of his final play, *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (*The House of Bernarda Alba*), written in 1936, was only realized in Spain in 1964. That same year, a staging of *Yerma* by Luis Escobar, a director "trusted" by the regime, saw the deployment of police outside Madrid's Eslava Theatre, pointing to the regime's wider anxieties about Lorca's position as a signifier of the "other" Spain defeated in 1939. Lorca's plays had to be fixed within Andalusian referents used to promote a particular image of Spain: whitewashed houses, flamenco, fans, and *mantillas*.

The 1950s and '60s also witnessed the beginnings of a process of excavating the circumstances surrounding Lorca's death, undertaken, in the first instance, by foreign historians. In 1959, Eisenhower allegedly offered to pass on to Franco a dossier on Lorca's death that had been compiled for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) by Agustín Penón, the son of Republican émigrés who had visited Granada in the mid-1950s.<sup>28</sup> Penón's findings were published posthumously in 1990.<sup>29</sup> From the mid-1950s, Lorca's supposed site of execution became a clandestine pilgrimage destination—a gathering place for those scarred by collective and individual loss that could not be articulated within the cultural spaces of the dictatorship's version of the Civil War.<sup>30</sup> By the mid-1960s, the resonance of Lorca's absence was so potent that the right-wing's flagship daily newspaper, *ABC*, marked the thirtieth anniversary of his death with an issue set to exonerate the regime of any implication in his murder, which was presented as an isolated incident carried out by rogues acting without any official authorization.<sup>31</sup> Dramatist and filmmaker Edgar Neville positioned Lorca as a writer who "lies above political parties," with a body of work that "has brought glory to Spain throughout the world."<sup>32</sup> Lorca was inscribed within harmonizing discourses—a position fiercely adopted by his own biological family from the 1960s onward.

This depoliticization of Lorca's death was decisively challenged as early as 1971 by the publication of Ian Gibson's *La represión nacionalista de Granada en 1936 y la muerte de Federico García Lorca* (*The Nationalist Repression in Granada in 1936 and the Death of*

<sup>26</sup>I cover this in Maria M. Delgado, *Federico García Lorca* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 31–32, 88–89; see also Mario Hernández, "Cronología y estreno de *Yerma*, poema trágico, de García Lorca," *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos* 82, no. 2 (1979): 289–315.

<sup>27</sup>Justino Sinova, *La censura de prensa durante el franquismo, 1936–1951* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1951), 35; see also John London, *Reception and Renewal in Modern Spanish Theatre: 1939–1963* (London: W. S. Maney, 1987), 35.

<sup>28</sup>Ian Gibson, *La fosa de Lorca: crónica de un despropósito* (Madrid: Alcalá, 2010), 211.

<sup>29</sup>Agustín Penón, *Diario de una búsqueda lorquiana*, ed. Ian Gibson (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1990).

<sup>30</sup>See Brenan, *The Face of Spain*, 131–60; see also Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, 193.

<sup>31</sup>José Luis Cano, "Biografía acelerada de Federico," *ABC*, 6 November 1966, n.p.

<sup>32</sup>Edgar Neville, "La obra de Federico, bien nacional," *ABC*, 6 November 1966, n.p.

*Federico García Lorca*),<sup>33</sup> a reconstruction of Lorca's final days, which deployed an investigative format, a detective-like retracing of Lorca's steps that functioned as a form of archaeology: the unearthing of a body of facts that operated as a metaphor for the absent body that the author could not physically disinter. The book was published in an English-language edition as *The Death of Lorca* the following year.<sup>34</sup> Its 1983 edition, published by Penguin and retitled as the more politically inflected *The Assassination of García Lorca*, was endorsed by Graham Greene with the words "as interesting as any detective story," and, indeed, it boasted a forensic approach that brought into the public domain perspectives, testimonies, and stories that had remained untold, constructing a narrative that conspicuously revealed Lorca's political sympathies and known homosexuality (both factors silenced by the dictatorship).

Gibson's book was first published in Spain in 1979. José Luis Vila-San-Juan's *García Lorca, asesinado: toda la verdad* (*García Lorca, Assassinated: The Whole Truth*),<sup>35</sup> first published in 1975, offered a more conciliatory version of the assassination. The book was awarded a prominent prize, *Espejo de España*, by a committee made up exclusively of conservative judges, including politician Manuel Fraga Iribarne, who as Minister of Tourism and Information between 1962 and 1969 had spearheaded the "Spain is different" tourist marketing campaign. By legitimizing Vila-San-Juan's depoliticized reading of Lorca's death as "the whole truth," Fraga sanctioned a narrative wherein tragic inevitability usurped the historical materialism of Gibson's approach, seeking to sideline the latter's monograph prior to its Spanish-language publication. Fraga's words at the awards ceremony that Lorca "had to be understood once and for all in order to be able to bury him once and for all" were about ensuring that the cadaver, called by Salvador Dalí "the most symbolic of all the dead,"<sup>36</sup> was disposed of without exploration or explanation and remained definitively buried once and for all.<sup>37</sup>

### Lorca and the "Silencing" of the Crimes of the Franco Regime

It is impossible to look at the ways in which Lorca has been constructed during the post-Franco era without considering the politics of reconciliation that governed Spain's transition to democracy in the years following Franco's death in 1975. For decades, the transition was judged by historians and political commentators to have been a success—a peaceful handover of power untainted by the conflicts and bloodshed that marked, for example, the breakup of Yugoslavia.<sup>38</sup> During the transition years, a political decision was made to *forget* the Franco era so to speak and move forward. The *pacto del olvido* (pact of forgetting), also known as *pacto de silencio* (pact of silence), operated by sweep-

<sup>33</sup> The volume was published by Ruedo Ibérico, a Spanish-language publishing house operating "in exile" from Paris.

<sup>34</sup> Ian Gibson, *The Death of Lorca* (London: W. H. Allen, 1972).

<sup>35</sup> See Ian Gibson, *El asesinato de García Lorca* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1996); and José Luis Vila-San-Juan's *García Lorca, asesinado: toda la verdad* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1975).

<sup>36</sup> Salvador Dalí, *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dalí as told to André Parinaud*, trans. Harold J. Salemson (London: W. H. Allen, 1976), 138.

<sup>37</sup> See also Melissa Dinverno, "Raising the Dead: García Lorca, Trauma and the Cultural Mediation of Mourning," *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* 9 (2005): 29–52.

<sup>38</sup> Richard Gunther, José R. Montero, and Juan Botella, *Democracy in Modern Spain* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004); Ander Gurrutxaga Abad, "Political Transition in Spain: State and Basque Nationalism," in *Spanish and Latin American Transitions to Democracy*, ed. Carlos H. Waisman and Raanan Rein (Brighton, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 80–100.



ing the crimes of the Franco era under the carpet in order to consolidate democracy in Spain. This involved a process of negotiation and compromise that never entirely satisfied the constituents of either the Left or Right. Rightists were reluctant to relinquish the power of absolute rule that had come with thirty-six years of a dictatorship that had systematically controlled the education system and media, and leftists were impatient and wanted a transition that would shift political and economic power away from the interests of the former. The pact involved sacrifices on both sides in order to avert any fear of a resurgence of civil war or return to dictatorship. The agreement enshrined in the Amnesty Law of 15 October 1977 declared that no individual could face judicial proceedings relating to crimes committed during the war, on either side. Even before the Spanish constitution had been approved in October 1978, which declared Spain a “social and democratic state,” a deal had been struck to avoid a truth and reconciliation commission, recriminations, and/or judicial procedures relating to the violation of human rights during the period from 1936 to 1975.

Franco’s death did not mark the end of Francoism. The administrative infrastructure of the regime remained firmly in place throughout the judiciary, army, and civil service. As I have observed elsewhere, democracy firmly closed off the Franco regime, refusing to provide a public space in which Spanish society could actively reflect on its past and attempt to construct a more nuanced history of the war and its aftermath.<sup>39</sup> The country’s modernity and integration within the wider structures of the European Union was about forging ahead rather than looking back. The self-cultivated image of Franco as an enlightened dictator who brought political stability to a volatile nation proved hard to dislodge. Images of him on holiday with his grandchildren on the beaches of Spain, complete with bucket and spade in hand, were used to promote tourism in the early 1960s; Franco’s publicity machine worked hard to present him as a grandfatherly figure presiding over the nation. Within the Western imagination, he remains, unlike Hitler and Stalin, untarnished by monstrous criminality. And yet, according to Amnesty International, Spain is second only to Cambodia in terms of the number of *desaparecidos*.<sup>40</sup> In 2012 while in Chile, I visited Santiago’s Londres 38, once one of Pinochet’s most notorious torture and detention centers and now an official memorial site to honor the ninety-six victims who were killed there at the hands of military officials. During a meeting with a survivor of it, Ernesto Coloma, the conversation turned to the Franco regime: “Franco did a great PR job in masking his human rights violations,” he told me. “Videla and Pinochet looked to Franco. Franco offered a model that they emulated. He got away with it, so they thought they could too.”<sup>41</sup>

The late 1970s and ’80s were about creating a Lorca that slipped unproblematically into an ideological agenda that refuted self-interrogation and upheld the politics of forgetting that underpinned the early years of post-Franco Spain. New scholarly editions of Lorca’s writings were published that served to appropriate him swiftly and unquestioningly into the canon—with “literary greatness,” as inscribed by editors Mario Hernández and Miguel García-Posada.<sup>42</sup> The publication of the *Sonetos del amor oscuro*

<sup>39</sup> Maria M. Delgado, “La casa de Bernarda Alba [The House of Bernarda Alba], the Spanish Civil War and the Issue of Historical Memory,” in *Theatre and National Identity: Re-Imagining Conceptions of Nation*, ed. Nadine Holdsworth (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2014), 77–95, esp. 85.

<sup>40</sup> Sudarsan Raghavan, “Civil War Wounds Are Far from Healed,” *Washington Post*, 29 October 2009, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/28/AR2009102804654.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Ernesto Coloma, personal communication with the author, 31 July 2012, Santiago, Chile.

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, Federico García Lorca, *Antología poética*, ed. Mario Hernández (Madrid: Alce, 1978), and *Obras completas*, ed. Miguel García-Posada, 6 vols. (Madrid: Akal, 1980–94).

(*Sonnets of Dark Love*) in the conservative daily *ABC* on 17 March 1984 was titled simply *Sonetos de amor* (deleting the word “dark”), and it is with this title that they appeared in the 1986 Aguilar edition of Lorca’s complete works (edited by Arturo del Hoyo).<sup>43</sup> The “material existence for this *desaparecido*”<sup>44</sup> was realized through a literary corpus that could be manipulated to promote the nation’s cultural and political aspirations.

The cultural commodification of Lorca that was consolidated during these years generated the beginnings of what has become a lucrative heritage industry in Granada: the Museo Casa Natal (Birthplace Museum), located in the house in the town of Fuente Vaqueros where Lorca was born in 1898, opened in 1986, the fiftieth anniversary of his death. Premiere productions of *El público* (*The public*) and *Comedia sin título* (*Play without a Title*)—coproduced with Milan’s Piccolo Theatre and the Odéon-Théâtre de l’Europe in 1986 and 1989, respectively, and directed by Spain’s most internationally recognized director, Lluís Pasqual—introduced audiences to hitherto unknown works. These had not previously been authorized for performance by Lorca’s family, primarily because they deal explicitly with homosexual desire, but the visibility of Pasqual’s stagings effectively consolidated Lorca’s export value throughout the global cultural marketplace. In 1987, Spanish state television coproduced a lavish six-part miniseries titled *Lorca, muerte de un poeta* (*Lorca, Death of a Poet*) in order to “present” Lorca’s life story for prime-time audiences. Directed by Juan Antonio Bardem, one of the most censored filmmakers during the Franco years, the series inscribed Lorca’s supposed universalism, in part through the choice of using a dubbed British actor, Nickolas Grace, in the title role. Lorca’s Andalusian accent was erased, along with references to his homosexuality, here refracted simply through effeminacy. The result was a Lorca appropriated in aid of the project of national reconciliation: his assassination framed as a predetermined, sacrificial though ultimately redemptive act, the symbolic body transcending death to bequeath a literary corpus containing within it the possibility of a nation’s regeneration. Lorca was refashioned as a repository for fantasies about the symbolic body transcending death—a luminous Christ-like figure nurturing the soil of Spain with his blood.<sup>45</sup>

Generous state subsidies helped fund cinematic adaptations of *Bodas de sangre* (1981) and *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1987) by Carlos Saura and Mario Camus, respectively, that were packaged as “national” productions selling “brand Lorca” in an international marketplace. Reports that the playwright’s heirs had been paid 12 million pesetas (some US\$120,000)<sup>46</sup> for the cinematic rights for *La casa de Bernarda Alba* further highlighted the increasing commercial currency of the Lorca trademark.

The packaging of Lorca shifted in the 1990s as cracks in the legacy of sociological Francoism began to emerge. Historians challenged the myth of “collective responsibility” that had guided the transition.<sup>47</sup> While survivors of the Francoist terror and their children had grown up in a culture of silence, their grandchildren—by 2000, 45 percent

<sup>43</sup> Federico García Lorca, *Obras completas*, ed. Arturo del Hoyo, 3 vols. (Madrid: Aguilar, 1986).

<sup>44</sup> Dinverno, “Raising the Dead,” 46.

<sup>45</sup> This is an observation made also by Paul Julian Smith in *The Theatre of García Lorca: Text, Performance, Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 112.

<sup>46</sup> Julio Fernández, “*La casa de Bernarda Alba* inicia su rodaje en Antequera,” *El Periódico*, 23 November 1986, 69.

<sup>47</sup> Carolyn P. Boyd, “The Politics and History and Memory in Democratic Spain,” *American Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 617 (2008): 133–48, esp. 136–40.

of the Spanish population recalled neither the war nor the dictatorship<sup>48</sup>—now began to ask questions about the past's repression and exile, and to question the legitimacy of a democracy that had been built over the corpses of those who had been killed defending a legally elected government. Those who had lived through the atrocities of the Civil War and its aftermath began to speak of what they had experienced and witnessed without fear that they would vanish in the middle of the night. Memoirs were authored.<sup>49</sup> In January 2000, Silva began the process of exhuming the body of his grandfather, who had been shot and dumped, along with twelve others, into an unmarked grave in Priaranza del Bierzo, a village in León. Later that year, together with Santiago Macías, Silva founded the ARMH.<sup>50</sup> Across the whole of Spain, a grassroots movement of associations for the recovery of historical memory began recording the testimonies of those who had suffered torture and imprisonment during the dictatorship, as well as to lobby for a recognition of sites of mass murder and acknowledgment at the state level of the crimes of the Franco era, and thus to pull down the wall of silence that had been constructed around Spain's mass graves.

The right-wing PP (or People's Party), in power between 1996 and 2004 under the leadership of José María Aznar, sought to avoid any discussion of a truth and reconciliation commission, reparations for the Republican dead, or the petitions on the part of the ARMH for state support to fund the exhumation of the nation's mass graves. Allocating 600 million pesetas (US\$3.3 million) to the 1998 Lorca centenary celebrations, Aznar co-opted Lorca to legitimize a politics whereby the "collective state memorialization of Lorca's life" was sponsored by the government to endorse a narrative that promoted the pact of forgetting.<sup>51</sup> Aznar implored "let no one bring out old stories because poetry has no ideology, it is beauty and humanity. Spain, today, is called Federico."<sup>52</sup> This position is endorsed by the family, who argued that Lorca's homosexuality and left-of-center affiliations were "superficial" and a distraction from the work.<sup>53</sup> The state-sponsored centenary Lorca exhibition at Madrid's modern art museum, the Reina Sofía, conveniently airbrushed all references to the writer's homosexuality or political writings. Aznar may have spoken of the need to "forget old phobias and resentments,"<sup>54</sup> but ultimately, for all his attempts to conflate amnesty with amnesia and somehow position Lorca "beyond" ideology, Aznar was unable to extricate Lorca's posthumous legacy from a civil conflict that left 400,000 dead and sent over half a million into exile across Europe and the Americas.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>49</sup> See Jo Labanyi, "Testimonies of Repression: Methodological and Political Issues," in *Unearthing Franco's Legacy: Mass Graves and the Recovery of Historical Memory in Spain*, ed. Carlos Jerez-Farrán and Samuel Amago (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 192–205.

<sup>50</sup> Fernando Ferrándiz, "The Return of Civil War Ghosts: The Ethnography of Exhumations in Contemporary Spain," *Anthropology Today* 22, no. 3 (2006): 7–12, quote on 8.

<sup>51</sup> Dinverno, "Raising the Dead," 30.

<sup>52</sup> M.A.T., "José María Aznar: España, hoy se llama Federico," *La Vanguardia*, 6 June 1998, 42.

<sup>53</sup> At an international conference held in Granada to celebrate the centenary of the playwright's birth, his nephew, Manuel Fernández-Montesinos García, attacked researchers who chose to reduce Lorca's life to such "simplistic" and "superficial" issues as his homosexuality or left-wing activism. See Rafael Troyano and Francisco Ruiz Antón, "La familia Lorca arremete contra los que sólo ven al poeta como 'andalucista, gay y de izquierdas,'" *ABC*, 26 June 1998, 57; see also Silva, "Los huesos silenciosos."

<sup>54</sup> Juan Enríquez Gómez, "El Gobierno del PP se vuelca en la preparación del Año Lorca," *Tribuna*, 28 April 1997, 76–77, quote on 76.

<sup>55</sup> See Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust*, xi.

Indeed, Aznar's narrative of clean resolution was progressively countered by cultural narratives that argued for a consolidation of Spain's democracy that engaged with the country's disavowed social traumas.<sup>56</sup> Collections of testimonies and documentaries recognized the complex layering of fragmented memories that made up twenty-first-century Spain.<sup>57</sup> Horror films, such as *El espinazo del diablo/The Devil's Backbone* (2001), *El laberinto del fauno/Pan's Labyrinth* (2006), and *El orfanato/The Orphanage* (2007), characterized Spain as a haunted house filled with specters. Only by digging into the past could the protagonists unearth connections to the otherworldly and unlock the secrets of the hauntings. Memory became the "key site for identity formation" in twenty-first-century Spain.<sup>58</sup> Historical novels revisiting the Civil War—as with Fernando Marías's *La luz prodigiosa (The Prodigious Light)*, where Lorca features as a character who survives the firing squad—encouraged public deliberation and debate.<sup>59</sup> The trope of an investigation into the past, used by Javier Cercas in his *Soldados de Salamina (Soldiers of Salamis)*, first published in 2001, offered a reflection on the responsibilities of historians to dig through the debris and tell stories that have lain dormant. Investigative studies of Lorca's death by Marta Osorio, Manuel Titos Martínez, María Pilar Góngora Ayala, Gabriel Pozo, and Miguel Caballero Pérez<sup>60</sup> further constructed memorializing narratives in which the focus on forgotten episodes or the process of storytelling became a political act, a way of reframing the past or, in the words of critic Samuel Amago, a means "to remember the deceased through narration."<sup>61</sup>

### Looking for Lorca

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, as mass graves became the focal point for debates over the silenced stories of those defeated in the Civil War, Lorca functioned as the public face of the *desaparecidos*—the site of struggle through which the debates as to whether to dig up the past or to attempt closure were realized. "Lorca's fame," argues Silva, "is a chance for us to say to the rest of the world that we have a problem."<sup>62</sup> Lorca was effectively the battleground over which the pro- and anti-exhumation lobbies fought, the ultimate revenant or living dead hovering over the public imaginary in the unearthing of these disinterred corpses.<sup>63</sup> In *ABC*, features and letters lamented the "witches' Sabbath" that would ensue if the "enthusiastic rummagers of bones" were

<sup>56</sup> See Ferrándiz, "The Return of Civil War Ghosts," 7.

<sup>57</sup> A number of these are discussed in Labanyi, "Testimonies of Repression."

<sup>58</sup> A phrase taken from Geoff Eley, "The Past Under Erasure? History, Memory, and the Contemporary," *Journal of Contemporary History* 46, no. 3 (2011): 555–73, quote on 556.

<sup>59</sup> Fernando Marías, *La luz prodigiosa* (Barcelona: Destino, 1990).

<sup>60</sup> Marta Osorio, *Miedo, olvido y fantasía: Agustín Penón—crónica de su investigación sobre Federico García Lorca, 1955–1956* (Granada: Editorial Comares, 2001); Titos, *Verano del 36 en Granada*; María Pilar Góngora Ayala and Miguel Caballero Pérez, *La verdad sobre el asesinato de García Lorca: historia de una familia* (Madrid: Ibersaf, 2007); Gabriel Pozo, *Lorca, el último paseo: claves para entender el asesinato del poeta* (Granada: Ultramarina, 2009); Caballero Pérez, *Las trece últimas horas en la vida de Federico García Lorca* (Madrid: Esfera de los Libros, 2011).

<sup>61</sup> Samuel Amago, "Speaking for the Dead: History, Narrative, and the Ghostly in Javier Cercas's War Novels," in *Unearthing Franco's Legacy*, 243–61, quote on 249.

<sup>62</sup> Qtd. in Katya Adler, "Spanish Fight over Poet's Remains," *BBC News*, 4 March 2004, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3522653.stm>.

<sup>63</sup> Between 2003 and 2012, Lorca was evoked in 137 articles in *El País* and 82 in *ABC* dealing with historical memory. The process of "excavating memory" represented by the digging up of corpses is covered in Victoria Sanford, *Buried Secrets: Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 17; and Ferrándiz, "The Return of Civil War Ghosts," 7.

allowed to pillage Lorca's grave, appropriating secular relics as part of a Republican holy grail.<sup>64</sup> The left-of-center *El País* first argued for the exhumation in 2000, making a case, like Antigone, for proper burial that would redress the "wrongful" burial meted out by Franco's Creon.<sup>65</sup> Parallels with Christ further epitomized an ethereal agency;<sup>66</sup> Lorca became the secular saint for a twenty-first-century Spain.

In August 2002, Silva and the ARMH tested the Spanish Amnesty Law of 1977 by presenting sixty-four cases of "forced disappearances" to the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID). The following year, Spain was included by WGEID on its list of countries with uninvestigated cases of forced disappearances.<sup>67</sup> Over 500 bodies were recovered in the sixty exhumations that took place between 2000 and 2005,<sup>68</sup> generating calls for what ethnographer Francisco Ferrándiz calls "a social autopsy."<sup>69</sup> It was José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, replacing Aznar as prime minister following the 2004 elections, who initiated this process at a state level, introducing the 2007 Law of Historical Memory, which called for the removal of all symbols and monuments promoting the military rebellion, Franco, or his dictatorship from public squares and streets, extended benefits to the families of those killed defending democracy from 1968 to 1977, and offered Spanish nationality to international brigadiers and the children and grandchildren of the exiled—regardless of their date and place of birth. The PP, then in opposition, argued that it was too extreme. However, Amnesty International and the ARMH argued that it did not go far enough: there was no real addressing of the 1977 Amnesty Law and only limited state assistance provided for the location, identification, and exhumation of those buried in mass graves, consequently resulting in what Fernando Ferrándiz calls "a human rights outsourcing system" whereby responsibility for "the research, exhumations, identifications, and the overall management of the executed bodies" would be transferred to "the historical memory associations and victims' relatives, and ultimately to the technical teams collaborating with them."<sup>70</sup>

The parameters of this legislation and its relationship to the Amnesty Law of 1977 have been tested in the judicial sphere by the investigating judge, Baltasar Garzón. Garzón has become a highly vocal advocate of the need to engage with the silence that enveloped the crimes of the Franco era. In October 2008, Garzón, who came to international prominence following his earlier success in securing Pinochet's arrest in London in 1998 and the conviction of Argentine torturers in Madrid in 2005, issued a judicial edict declaring the repressive acts of the Franco era "crimes against humanity." He cited 114,266 *desaparecidos* and accepted a petition by over a dozen historical memory associations to open up nineteen mass graves, one of these thought to house Lorca's remains.

<sup>64</sup> Qtd. in Ignacio Camacho, "Dejad dormir a Federico," *ABC*, 20 August 2006, available at <http://hemeroteca.abcde Sevilla.es/nav/Navigate.exe/hemeroteca/madrid/abc/2006/08/20/005.html>.

<sup>65</sup> Miguel García Posada, "La memoria de las víctimas," *El País*, 14 December 2000, available at [http://elpais.com/diario/2000/12/14/cultura/976748413\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2000/12/14/cultura/976748413_850215.html); Antonio Rodríguez Almodóvar, "Tumba verdadera a Federico," *El País*, 7 September 2003, available at [http://elpais.com/diario/2003/09/17/andalucia/1063750927\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2003/09/17/andalucia/1063750927_850215.html).

<sup>66</sup> Antonio Orejudo, "Misterio," *El País*, 22 September 2003, available at [http://elpais.com/diario/2003/09/22/andalucia/1064182930\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2003/09/22/andalucia/1064182930_850215.html).

<sup>67</sup> Ferrándiz, "Exhuming the Defeated," 40, 43.

<sup>68</sup> See Ferrándiz, "The Return of Civil War Ghosts," 8.

<sup>69</sup> Ferrándiz, "Exhuming the Defeated," 39.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 45. This paragraph builds on an idea first presented in Delgado, "La casa de Bernarda Alba," 85.

Garzón's recourse to international human rights law was challenged by the Spanish Supreme Court, which invoked both the 1977 Amnesty Law and a statute that argued that these crimes happened too long ago to be recognized by Spanish Penal Law—even though international rights law recognizes such crimes as a "continuing violation."<sup>71</sup> Garzón was forced to withdraw the indictment four weeks later, handing over the jurisdiction to the regional courts where the graves rested. He has subsequently faced protracted legal proceedings for his investigations of the human rights atrocities of the Franco era, and while he was acquitted of knowingly abusing his judicial powers in February 2012, the ruling judiciary also criticized his decision to investigate these deaths as crimes against humanity. This was one of three cases brought against him in Spain's Supreme Court during the first three months of 2012. And while he was acquitted of charges of accepting bribes from the Santander Bank, Garzón was found guilty of endorsing the illegal wire-tapping of conversations between prisoners and their lawyers in a money-laundering case involving the PP and consequently disbarred for eleven years. This verdict, which has been judged a politically motivated witch-hunt by human rights organizations that have highlighted the role of extreme right-wing bodies in initiating the trials, brought out thousands of protesters in Spain's major cities. To this day, Garzón is the only individual to have been placed on trial in post-Franco Spain for the crimes of the Civil War and/or the Franco era.

The exhumation of Lorca's grave, first authorized by Garzón in 2008, further illustrates the operational structures of this culture of acrimony. On the day after Garzón's ruling, Lorca's nephew, Manuel Fernández-Montesinos García, voiced the biological family's opposition to any possible exhumation of the grave as a "desecration"; he argued that they knew the location of the grave and therefore saw no need to disinter it. Lorca's "memory," he concluded, was best preserved by leaving the corpse in the grave where it has lain since 1936.<sup>72</sup> For his niece Laura García-Lorca de los Ríos, Lorca's celebrity status threatened to overshadow the stories of the many other victims of the purges in Granada whose bodies lie in the mass graves between Alfacar and Víznar. Exhumation might also reveal explicit details about the circumstances of Lorca's death that might cause the family further distress.<sup>73</sup>

The enigma of a missing cadaver has, however, arguably been a powerful selling point for the Lorca industry. Perhaps, as Natalia Junquera suggests in *El País*, maintaining the myth remains commercially important for those who control the estate.<sup>74</sup> According to *El País's* columnist Concha Caballero, every five minutes a professional production of

<sup>71</sup> Ursula Urdillo, "Impunity for Enforced Disappearances in Contemporary Spain," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Rights Law* 6, no. 1 (2011): 41–60, quote on 43.

<sup>72</sup> Qtd. in Antonio Astorga, "Hurgar en la fosa de mi tío Federico García Lorca es una profanación," *ABC*, 17 October 2008, available at <http://www.abc.es/20081017/nacional-nacional/hurgar-fosa-federico-garcia-20081017.html>.

<sup>73</sup> ElPaís.com, "Los herederos de Lorca se oponen a que la exhumación del poeta sea un espectáculo," *El País*, 18 September 2008, available at [http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2008/09/18/actualidad/1221688806\\_850215.html](http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2008/09/18/actualidad/1221688806_850215.html); Jon Lee Anderson, "Lorca's Bones," *New Yorker*, 22 June 2009, 44–48 (Laura García-Lorca de los Ríos' views are on p. 48). The family's position was supported by a number of prominent cultural figures, including writer Javier Marías and actress Nuria Espert; see Javier Marías, "El folklore de los huesos insignes," *El País*, 22 November 2009, available at [http://elpais.com/m/diario/2009/11/22/eps/1258874823\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/m/diario/2009/11/22/eps/1258874823_850215.html); Europa Press, "Nuria Espert dice que si fuera la hija de Lorca, no querría desenterrarle porque es 'un muerto manipulable,'" *20 Minutos*, 18 July 2010, available at <http://www.20minutos.es/noticia/768481/0/>.

<sup>74</sup> Natalia Junquera, "¿Quién oculta a Lorca?" *El País*, 11 October 2009, 8–9.

one of Lorca's plays is being produced somewhere in the world; thousands of editions of his works are sold on a daily basis.<sup>75</sup> The cultural capital of the Lorca family—for example, his niece sits on the board of Madrid's opera house, the Teatro Real, and his nephew was a socialist politician in the first democratic parliament (of 1977) before going on to play a key role in establishing and then running the Federico García Lorca Foundation—has rendered them powerful cultural agents. Arbiters of, and financial beneficiaries from, the Lorca corpus, they authorize translations for staging, adaptation, and publication, approving or otherwise use of the writer's words for advertising, film, and television, and control reproductive rights over his drawings and illustrations. Theirs has been a grip as tight as that of the Beckett or Brecht estate. The idea of a "legacy" to be "consecrated" by a biological family—and as Paul Julian Smith has noted, "[l]esbian or gay artists whose relationships remain invisible or unrecognized by law may not be best served by those who legally inherit what remains of their name and property"<sup>76</sup>—was challenged by Garzón's ruling, which assigned responsibility for these authorial remains to the nation-state and consequently to the regional government of Andalusia. Gibson, whose investigative work into the circumstances surrounding the writer's death is itself a process of excavation, was a visible supporter of the families of Galindo and Galadí—two of the three individuals shot alongside Lorca—who were requesting the exhumation of the grave. Consistently challenging the family's ownership of Lorca, Gibson has repositioned him as "national heritage" and argued, alongside other historians like Caballero and Francisco González Arroyo, for the state to take responsibility both for a full judicial inquiry into the circumstances of his death and the search for the corpse.<sup>77</sup> While *El País* evoked the emotional healing that an exhumation of the grave would permit,<sup>78</sup> *ABC* drew repeatedly on the family's opposition in stressing the need to leave the body to rest in peace and avoid a "Lorca circus," asking instead for attention to focus on his writings.<sup>79</sup> But it is naïve to expect that the writings can somehow be disentangled from the factors surrounding his death or the wider issue of historical memory in Spain.<sup>80</sup>

The family finally withdrew its opposition to the exhumation in recognition of the requests made by the families of Galindo and Galadí, and the process of excavation was begun in October 2009 under the jurisdiction of Begoña Álvarez, Andalusia's regional minister for justice. Garzón had located two possible locations for the communal

<sup>75</sup> Concha Caballero, "Lorca: caso abierto," *El País*, 21 December 2009, available at [http://elpais.com/diario/2009/12/21/andalucia/1261351330\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2009/12/21/andalucia/1261351330_850215.html).

<sup>76</sup> Smith, *The Theatre of García Lorca*, 2.

<sup>77</sup> EFE, "¿Van a desenterrar a Lorca?" *El País*, 12 September 2008, available at [http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2008/09/12/actualidad/1221170404\\_850215.html](http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2008/09/12/actualidad/1221170404_850215.html); Caballero, "Lorca"; Francisco González Arroyo, "Federico, dónde estás," *El País*, 18 August 2010, available at [http://elpais.com/diario/2010/08/18/andalucia/1282083730\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2010/08/18/andalucia/1282083730_850215.html).

<sup>78</sup> Jesús Ruiz Mantilla, "Abrir las fosas cura," *El País*, 3 October 2009, available at [http://elpais.com/diario/2009/10/03/sociedad/1254520801\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2009/10/03/sociedad/1254520801_850215.html); Natalia Junquera, "¡Llevo diez años esperando este momento!" *El País*, 16 October 2008, available at [http://elpais.com/diario/2008/10/17/espana/1224194404\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2008/10/17/espana/1224194404_850215.html).

<sup>79</sup> EFE Logroño, "El sobrino de Lorca reivindica que se hable más de la obra de su tío antes que del lugar donde yace," *Ideal*, 9 December 2009 (unpaginated cutting in the Fundación Federico García Lorca, box B-8).

<sup>80</sup> Astorga, "Hurgar en la fosa de mi tío Federico García Lorca"; Antonio García Barbeito, "¿Dónde está Federico?" *ABC*, 20 December 2009, available at [http://www.abcdesevilla.es/hemeroteca/historico-20-12-2009/sevilla/Opinion/donde-esta-lorca\\_1132644947077.html](http://www.abcdesevilla.es/hemeroteca/historico-20-12-2009/sevilla/Opinion/donde-esta-lorca_1132644947077.html). This point was first made in Delgado, "La casa de Bernarda Alba," 92–93, but is expanded on here.

grave: one next to the olive tree in Fuente Grande, now the site of the Federico García Lorca Memorial Park, where the assassinations are thought to have taken place; and the second at a spot known as El Caracolar, which is 400 meters toward Víznar. Only the former was excavated. Testimonial narratives had located four other possible locations for the grave within a two-kilometer radius, but none of these was considered. In December, following months of daily speculations in the Spanish press, a statement was released by Álvarez stating that while six supposed burial pits within an area of 200 square meters were dug up, no human remains had been located.

If the Law of Historical Memory was about offering a public space to specters, bodies, and voices that had been excluded by Spain's discursive frames, the process of exhuming Lorca's grave effectively excluded the many and often contradictory testimonial narratives that had created the histories of Lorca's assassination circulating in the public domain. As Shoshana Felman recognizes, "testimony is provided, and is called for, when historical accuracy is in doubt and when both the truth and its supporting elements of evidence are called into question."<sup>81</sup> I would argue that in the absence of nuanced historical narratives, the "truth" in Spain has effectively been constructed from a complex collage of testimonies and memories where, as Butler says, representational practices that have been excluded often haunt the hegemonic structures that have suppressed them.<sup>82</sup>

The team responsible for the exhumation of Lorca's grave, led by archaeologist Francisco Carrión, was guided solely by a single historical briefing provided by Rafael Gil Bracero, then vice president of Granada's ARMH, that determined which testimonies would be included and which excluded when settling on the site for exhumation. There is no evidence that they consulted the report produced by a 1980 Commission of Inquiry to identify the likeliest place of Lorca's assassination, which had drawn on multiple accounts and testimonies by, among others, José Roldan Dobos, an employee of the Granada council who allegedly saw the corpses of Lorca, Galindo, and the two *banderilleros* at the side of the road; two other witnesses who had seen Lorca's body on the 20th of August while walking on the road from Víznar to Alfacar; photographic evidence signaled by one in a group of six members of the *Escuadra Negra* (the Black Squadron) who had allegedly shot Lorca on the night of 18 August; and Gibson's recordings of Manuel Castilla Blanco, tasked with the responsibility of digging the graves of Lorca and the three others shot alongside him, who had indicated first to Penón in 1955 and to Gibson eleven years later precisely where he had buried the corpse: "in a narrow ditch, one on top of another, at the foot of an olive tree that's still there beside a plinth that signals where it took place."<sup>83</sup>

When the Federico García Lorca Memorial Park was constructed in the mid-1980s by the county council as homage to those who had been killed at Fuente Grande, human remains were allegedly located close to the olive tree and moved to a new grave within

<sup>81</sup> Shoshana Felman, "Education and Crisis: On the Vicissitudes of Teaching," in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, ed. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (London: Routledge, 1992), 1–56, quote on 6.

<sup>82</sup> See Butler, *Frames of War*, 1–62, and *Precarious Life*; Rachel Clements, "Framing War, Staging Precarity: Caryl Churchill's *Seven Jewish Children* and the Spectres of Vulnerability," *Contemporary Theatre Review* 23, no. 3 (2013): 357–67.

<sup>83</sup> Gibson, qtd. in Fernando Valverde, "Quizá Lorca, quizá," *El País*, 12 October 2008, 8.



the park without autopsies or any attempt at identification.<sup>84</sup> This was not revealed to the team in charge of the excavation in 2009, and no official record exists of the discovery of remains. Were they buried under the ornamental fountain in the park when the bones were found in 1985, as Ernesto Molina, vice president of the council, has claimed off the record?<sup>85</sup> Was the Lorca family involved in a cover-up in 1986? Lorca's nephew was godfather to Molina's daughter. Did the Franco regime protect its own complicity in the crime by removing the body forty-eight hours after the assassination? Why was the area surrounding the olive tree—now outside the parameters of the park—not purchased by the council in 1985, even though a farm laborer had testified to finding human remains less than ten meters from the spot indicated by Castilla in the mid-1950s?<sup>86</sup> As Arroyo concluded in *El País*, the excavation had been handled in a partial and incomplete manner.<sup>87</sup>

A case for El Caracolar, 600 meters to the southeast of Fuente Grande, as Lorca's resting place had been promoted by Arroyo and journalist Gabriel Pozo Felguera.<sup>88</sup> Caballero Pérez's *Las trece últimas horas en la vida de Federico García Lorca* (*The Last Thirteen Hours of Federico García Lorca*), drawing heavily on the forty-eight testimonies collected by Eduardo Molina Fajardo, pointed to El Peñón del Colorado, about a half-kilometer away from the excavated site, as the more probable site of execution.<sup>89</sup>

Memory, as historian Tony Judt recognizes, "is inherently contentious and partisan."<sup>90</sup> But as Jo Labanyi notes, "to reject memories"—or in this case, certain memories—"as an unreliable witness to the past is to miss the point, for what memory reveals is present-day attitudes to the past. Such attitudes, always emotionally charged, need to be understood if the different members of society—whose conflicting vested interests means that they will never agree—are to live together."<sup>91</sup> Granada's ARMH and Andalusia's regional justice department did not opt for a formal investigation prior to beginning the exhumation, despite the lack of consensus as to where the body might lie; rather, in their desire for closure, they effectively put aside the mass of contradictory testimonials at play in favor of a single narrative to be followed through.

With the world's press camped outside the tent in the early stages of the exhumation, ABC's cover feature on 7 and 8 October offered an exclusive revelation by Luis Avial, an employee of the Cónдор Georadar company, who had snuck into the park at night and used ground-penetrating radar to reveal both the dimensions of the grave and indications of disruptions to the tomb in the immediate aftermath of the assassination. These revelations fed into theories that had circulated for decades around the possible removal of the body in the days following Lorca's death.<sup>92</sup> Granada-based journalist Fernando Guijarro, for example, accords with the findings of María José Córdoba's 1994

<sup>84</sup> "El terreno ha sufrido agresivas remociones," *ABC*, 19 December 2009, 66.

<sup>85</sup> Gibson, *La fosa de Lorca*, 139.

<sup>86</sup> Valverde, "Quizá Lorca, quizá," 8.

<sup>87</sup> González Arroyo, "Federico."

<sup>88</sup> Gibson, *La fosa de Lorca*, 99.

<sup>89</sup> Eduardo Molina Fajardo, *Los últimos días de García Lorca* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1983).

<sup>90</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (London: Vintage, 2010), 829.

<sup>91</sup> Jo Labanyi, "The Politics of Memory in Contemporary Spain," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 9, no. 2 (2008): 119–25, quote on 122.

<sup>92</sup> Gibson, *La fosa de Lorca*, 146; Eduardo Castro, "Aparecen removidas las tierras donde se supone está Lorca enterrado," *El País*, 7 October 1980, available at [http://elpais.com/diario/1980/10/07/ultima/339721208\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/1980/10/07/ultima/339721208_850215.html).

doctoral thesis that Lorca's father paid 300,000 pesetas (today's equivalent of about US\$460,000) to the civil governor of Granada, José Valdés Guzmán—who was then building up a war chest—two days after the assassination to have the body removed from the grave in Fuente Grande and transferred to the family's summer home, La Huerta de San Vicente, where it was buried in the foundations of the extension to the house undertaken during this time.<sup>93</sup> Gibson asserts that the body may have been moved by Nationalists soon after the assassination to cover the tracks of their crime.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, the many testimonies circulating in the public domain narrate the need to inscribe this silenced event, offering a range of further possibilities: that the body was dug up and transferred to the Valley of the Fallen, to the Lorca family's country residence in Nerja (south of Granada), or to a cemetery a few miles from Fuente Grande; or that it was taken by the family into exile when they left for the United States; or that it was removed by Lorca's ex-lover, wealthy writer Enrique Amorín, to Uruguay in 1952; or even that Lorca had survived the assassination though suffered brain damage.<sup>95</sup> Gibson recalls being stopped in one of Granada's central streets to be told that Lorca was buried in the crypt of the cathedral.<sup>96</sup> The right-wing newspaper *Ideal* even had a blogger alleging that Lorca hanged himself at his parents' house while running away from the army in 1936.<sup>97</sup>

The institutional silence imposed by the authorities—with all those involved in the excavation obliged to sign confidentiality clauses as requested by the Lorca family<sup>98</sup>—could only hark back to the silences of the regime. The giving of account, Georgina Blakeley argues, is a key element of historical reconstruction.<sup>99</sup> With no truth and reconciliation commission, the public iterations of interviews, narratives, and stories collected in Gibson's, Molina's, Góngora's, and Caballero Pérez's investigations have offered a space for Spanish society in which to come to terms with the fact that its history cannot easily be etched, neither literally nor metaphorically, in stone.<sup>100</sup> The imposition of silence by the Andalusian regional government did not allow a space for the gaps of an obscured past to be filled in or a recognition that memorialization is only ever *incomplete*; instead, it was political instrumentalism and ideological schisms that came

<sup>93</sup> Jesús García Calero, "Primera imagen de la fosa de Lorca," *ABC*, 7 October 2009, available at <http://www.abc.es/20091007/cultura/-primera-imagen-fosa-lorca-200910062234.html>, and "Alguién excavó en la fosa de García Lorca pero después de su asesinato," *ABC*, 8 October 2009, available at <http://www.abc.es/20091008/cultura/-fosa-lorca-abierta-200910072216.html>.

<sup>94</sup> Antonio García, implausibly known as *El Matapelos* (the Hair Killer), specified that it was moved to the Avenue of the Martyrs, about a hundred meters from the original grave, while Antonio Gallego y Burín, the right-wing mayor of Granada during the Civil War, mentions that the move took place to thwart attempts by the Republicans to capitalize on the political currency offered by Lorca's assassination. See Gibson, *La fosa de Lorca*, 49; Rafa López and Quico Chirano, "La diputación movió huesos en la zona donde fue fusilado Lorca al hacer el parque en 1986," *Ideal*, 20 October 2008, available at <http://www.ideal.es/granada/20081020/granada/diputacion-movio-huesos-zona-20081020.html>; and J. Castro-Villacañas Ildefonso Olmedo, "¿Está enterrado en un cementerio?" *El Mundo*, 13 December 2009, 4–5.

<sup>95</sup> Juan Luis Tapia, "La fosa uruguaya de Lorca," *Ideal*, 16 February 2010, 50–51; Fernando Valverde, "Quizá Lorca, quizá," 8; Natalia Junquera, "¿Y ahora dónde estás, Federico?" *El País*, 20 December 2009, 48–49, quote on 48, and "¿Quién oculta a Lorca?"; Gibson, *La fosa de Lorca*, 193.

<sup>96</sup> Gibson, *La fosa de Lorca*, 68.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>98</sup> Junquera, "¿Quién oculta a Lorca?"

<sup>99</sup> Georgina Blakeley, "Evaluating Spain's Reparation Law," *Democratization* 20, no. 2 (2013): 240–59, quote on 251.

<sup>100</sup> Judt, *Postwar*, 829.

into play. The PP's local vice president in Granada, Antonio Ayllón, used the €70,000 (US\$95,150) costs of exhuming the grave at a time of growing recession to undermine reparation politics, and with it the possibilities for constructing a more complete history of the genocide that took place in Granada during the Civil War: 5,500 bodies are thought to lie in the eighty-six mass graves in Granada and its surrounding area.<sup>101</sup>

The problems that marked the exhumation of Lorca's supposed grave display the dilemmas involved in handling transitional justice in a nation that judges itself *post-transitional*. Only in 2011 did the socialist government publish a protocol for exhumations, which had been lacking in the handling of the Fuente Grande disinterment. The ensuing debates demonstrate that political conciliation may perhaps have been achieved during the transition, but what Georgina Blakely calls "social reconciliation" remains a work in progress.<sup>102</sup> The PP, currently in government, has not yet condemned Franco's military uprising or the dictatorship.<sup>103</sup> Ernest Renan may argue that "forgetting . . . is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation,"<sup>104</sup> but as Judt notes, "[a] nation has first to remember something before it can begin to forget it."<sup>105</sup> The process of exhuming Lorca's body was not about unearthing memories buried like bones in a grave, but rather about recognizing how Spain's history had been built, to appropriate Judt's term, on "deliberate *mis*-memory."<sup>106</sup> The sanctioning of an "official" memory, as Henry Rousso observes, "celebrates, neglects and censures in the name of the state."<sup>107</sup> The specter of Lorca exposes the cracks in this "official" memory.

### Conclusion

The exhuming of the grave where Lorca was thought to lie may have failed to offer up the remains of the poet, but it demonstrated the extent to which seventy-something years after his death Lorca still functions as a potent site of struggle in contemporary Spain. As Alan Sinfield observes, "you don't fight over things that don't count."<sup>108</sup> Lorca's iconic status has kept the issue of Spain's mass graves center stage: the most recognizable living memento of what Carlos Jerez-Farrán and Amago call "the power of the dead to speak beyond language as they mutely but eloquently remind the nation of the crimes perpetrated against its own people during and after the Civil War."<sup>109</sup> In August 2012, Caballero Pérez lodged a request with the Andalusian government to use ground-penetrating radar to investigate a further potential grave at El Peñón del Colorado, a training ground for Nationalist troops just 300 meters from the original excavation site. In September, he lodged a further request with Granada's public prosecutor for a full investigation of the circumstances surrounding the construction

<sup>101</sup> Gibson, *La fosa de Lorca*, 151; Elena Llopart, "El atlas de la guerra civil localiza 86 fosas y 5.500 víctimas," *Granada Hoy*, 7 February 2011, 12–13.

<sup>102</sup> The terms of political and social reconciliation come from Georgina Blakely, "Digging Up Spain's Past: Consequences of Truth and Reconciliation," *Democratization* 12, no. 1 (2007): 44–59, quote on 44.

<sup>103</sup> Urdillo, "Impunity for Enforced Disappearances," 55.

<sup>104</sup> Qtd. in Judt, *Postwar*, 803.

<sup>105</sup> Qtd. in *ibid.*, 829.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.* (emphasis in original).

<sup>107</sup> Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 304.

<sup>108</sup> Alan Sinfield, "Heritage and the Market, Regulation and Desublimation," in *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism*, rev. ed., ed. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 255–79, quote on 255.

<sup>109</sup> Jerez-Farrán and Amago, "Introduction," in *Unearthing Franco's Legacy*, 1–29, quote on 1.

of the Federico García Lorca Memorial Park in 1985 and the excavation of possible human remains.<sup>110</sup>

A new project initiated by Víznar's town council in June 2013 assembled a team of experts to begin investigating nine possible mass-grave sites in a 10,000-square-meter area about three-quarters of a kilometer from the site excavated in 2009. Press briefings highlighted the diverse range of sources that Iván Sánchez, the archaeologist in charge of the operation, appears to have drawn on in pinpointing the area for excavation and the desire to provide information on the 2,000 cadavers thought to lie in this terrain.<sup>111</sup> In December 2013, ground-penetrating radar identified a possible mass grave at the site identified by Caballero. At the time of writing (December 2014), a new search, with an estimated cost of €15,000, has been initiated at El Peñón del Colorado under the leadership of archeologist Javier Navarro. "We're not just looking for one person," Juan Francisco Arenas of the Andalusian government stated, "but for all of them."<sup>112</sup> The international recognition of the Lorca brand has given the exhumations, and by association the wider work of the ARMH, a visibility that the current PP government of Mariano Rajoy has attempted to curtail, since 2013, by its annulment of all public funding for the exhumation of mass graves.<sup>113</sup>

Three weeks into the 2014 search, there is still no material body through which the process of mourning can be addressed, no tomb through which that loss can be publicly acknowledged. Continuing uncertainty still surrounds the contested narratives of what might or might not have happened in Lorca's final hours. It is the ongoing detective mystery that cannot be solved with a formulaic ending, and it has a resonant echo in the stories of countless others who were murdered during the Civil War and its aftermath. The road between Víznar and Alfacar is now signposted as a *lugar de memoria histórica de Andalucía* (place of historical memory in Andalusia), a warning against forgetting those who died in the purges undertaken by Franco's Rebel forces. As the commemorative stone in the Federico García Lorca Memorial Park states: "They were all Lorcas."

Spanish philosopher Reyes Mate argues that the assassination of Lorca is not simply a private matter of interest only to the family, but a political act that has shaped the nation's collective present. If the contemporary constitutional order is based in the forgetting or silencing of the significance of this political act, then, he argues, there is

<sup>110</sup> Valme Cortés, "Cultura revisa la petición del investigador que busca a Lorca," *El País*, 27 August 2012, available at [http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2012/08/27/andalucia/1346092083\\_553181.html](http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2012/08/27/andalucia/1346092083_553181.html); Fernando Valverde, "Un investigador pide analizar unos restos hallados en 1986 en el parque de Alfacar," *El País*, 18 September 2012, available at [http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2012/09/18/andalucia/1347988027\\_919817.html](http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2012/09/18/andalucia/1347988027_919817.html).

<sup>111</sup> Valme Cortés and Lucía Vallellamo, "La Junta señalará y dignificará las fosas del barranco de Víznar," *El País* Andalucía, 7 June 2013, available at [http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2013/06/07/andalucia/1370620437\\_200147.html](http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2013/06/07/andalucia/1370620437_200147.html); Valme Cortés, "Comienzan las prospecciones en nueve fosas del barranco de Víznar," *El País* Andalucía, 24 June 2013, available at [http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2013/06/24/andalucia/1372092308\\_595887.html](http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2013/06/24/andalucia/1372092308_595887.html).

<sup>112</sup> Cited in Ashifa Kassam, "Archeologists Hope to Uncover Playwright García Lorca's Resting Place," *Guardian*, 17 November 2014, available at <http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2014/nov/17/spain-archaeology-federico-garcia-lorca-mass-grave>; see also Natalia Junquera, "24 pasos y 78 años para buscar a Lorca," *El País*, 22 November 2014, available at [http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2014/11/22/actualidad/1416689210\\_359312.html](http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2014/11/22/actualidad/1416689210_359312.html).

<sup>113</sup> Natalia Junquera, "La promesa que Rajoy sí cumplió," *El País*, 5 October 2013, available at [http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2013/10/05/actualidad/1380997260\\_542677.html](http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2013/10/05/actualidad/1380997260_542677.html).

the chance that it will be repeated. The ghostly existence of the *desaparecidos* “refers us to a criminal past and a present which has not taken responsibility for that past.”<sup>114</sup> It is not the identification of the remains per se that is important, but the “recognition of what those deaths meant and the meaning they have now taken on.” Ghosts give a visibility to that which has been made invisible; or in the words of Jo Labanyi, “they have an objective existence as the embodiment of the past in the present.”<sup>115</sup>

The specter of Lorca has played a significant role in bringing the hidden bodies of the *desaparecidos* into the public sphere. Evoked by Pedro Almodóvar in his 2006 film *Volver*—a feature where the supposedly dead mother returns to life—it has functioned as a reminder of the need for accountability and transitional justice. “The momentum is here,” Almodóvar told me in 2009; “families are going to continue to look for their dead.”<sup>116</sup> Psychiatrist Carlos Castilla del Pino claims that we exist only for as long as someone remembers us; our identity is subject to the memory of others.<sup>117</sup> As I have argued elsewhere and as Jacques Derrida observes in *Specters of Marx*, ghosts need not be exorcized, but they do need to be acknowledged.<sup>118</sup> Derrida reminds us of the need to live with the ghosts of history rather than repress them, arguing both for a recognition of the paradoxical state of the specter—a being and not being, both present and absent, alive and dead—and the need for justice, with responsibility to the ghosts of our past and, by association, our inheritance.<sup>119</sup> The ghostly haunt, as Avery Gordon recognizes, “gives note that something is missing”—a reminder that while “death exists in the past tense,” disappearance always disturbs the present.<sup>120</sup> If, as I have argued in this essay, contemporary Spanish society is haunted by the indecently buried bodies of its *desaparecidos*, then the exhumation of mass graves facilitated by the Law of Historical Memory can be viewed as a mode of public remembrance and a move toward better understanding both the events of the past and the fissures of the present in a country where issues of justice have been compromised for too long by a culture of silence.

<sup>114</sup> Mate, “El triunfo póstumo del franquismo.”

<sup>115</sup> Jo Labanyi, “Coming to Terms with the Ghosts of the Past: History and Spectrality in Contemporary Spanish Culture,” *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Literary and Cultural Studies* 8, available at [http://arachne.rutgers.edu/vol1\\_1labanyi.htm](http://arachne.rutgers.edu/vol1_1labanyi.htm).

<sup>116</sup> Maria Delgado, “Sensory Perception,” *Sight & Sound* 19, no. 9 (2009), 40–44, quote on 44.

<sup>117</sup> Qtd. in José María Pozuelo Yvancos, “Viznar, García Lorca y la memoria de todos,” *La Verdad*, 2 October 2008 (unpaginated cutting in the Fundación Federico García Lorca, box B-8).

<sup>118</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (London: Routledge, 1994), 3–48. This observation is made in Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, 184, 200–201.

<sup>119</sup> Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, xviii–ix, 37–48. This observation is made in Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, 200–201.

<sup>120</sup> Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 17, 113.