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Title	Bodies of evidence, resistance and protest: Embodying the Spanish Civil War on the contemporary Spanish stage
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Publication date	2017
Original Citation	Buffery, H. (2017) 'Bodies of evidence, resistance and protest: Embodying the Spanish Civil War on the contemporary Spanish stage', Bulletin of Hispanic Studies 94(8), pp. 863-882. doi: 10.3828/bhs.2017.53
Type of publication	Article (peer-reviewed)
Link to publisher's version	10.3828/bhs.2017.53
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Download date	2026-11-06 16:49:11
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/14452



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Bodies of Evidence, Resistance and Protest: Embodying the Spanish Civil War on the Contemporary Spanish Stage

This article sets out to explore the ways in which the Spanish Civil War has been represented and performed on contemporary Spanish stages, focusing analysis on three recent productions: Àlex Rigola's 2015 adaptation of *Incerta glòria* by Joan Sales; Joan Ollé's 2014 adaptation of *La plaza del diamante* and Carme Portaceli's 2015 adaptation of Carmen Domingo's *Només són dones/ Solo son mujeres*. Beginning by returning to one of the most emblematic texts to construct and explore a space for memory of the Spanish Civil War, José Sanchis Sinisterra's much-loved 'elegy for *a* civil war', *¡Ay, Carmela!* (1987), I will use his play to investigate a recent shift in emphasis from the urge to create a space for memory to concern with the ways in which the often traumatic memories of the war and its aftermath are inscribed corporeally. Whilst this no doubt reflects global theatrical trends towards a greater emphasis on the body and bodies in performance, it will be argued that, in the context of contemporary discursive practice about the Spanish Civil War, the direction in which theatrical explorations are currently taking us presents an opportunity for innovative reflection on the way in which we look at bodies in relation to events of collective violence and trauma, centring not only on the search for the bodies of the dead but also on the ways in which living bodies continue to be marked by and transmit the impact of these events into the future.

Keywords: cultural trauma, theatre, performance, embodiment, surrogation

En este artículo se propone explorar la manera en que se ha representado la Guerra Civil Española en el escenario, centrándonos en tres espectáculos recientes: *Incerta glòria* de Joan Sales (adapt. y dir. Alex Rigola, 2015); *La plaza del diamante* de Mercè Rodoreda (adapt. y dir. Joan Ollé, 2014-2015) y *Només són dones/ Solo son mujeres* de Carmen Domingo (adapt. y dir. Carme Portaceli, 2015-2016). Volviendo la mirada a uno de las obras más emblemáticas relacionadas con la construcción y exploración de un espacio para la memoria de la Guerra Civil Española, la 'elegía de *una* guerra civil' escrita por José Sanchis Sinisterra, *¡Ay, Carmela!* (1987), se investigará la manera en que ésta nos ayuda a identificar y vislumbrar un cambio de paradigma en el tratamiento teatral de la memoria histórica desde el deseo de crear un espacio para la memoria al interés en los procesos por los cuales las experiencias traumáticas de la guerra y el franquismo son corporeizadas e inscritas en el cuerpo. Aunque este cambio se debe en parte a tendencias actuales en el teatro internacional, se propondrá que el énfasis escénico reciente en el cuerpo/ los cuerpos de la Guerra Civil representa una oportunidad para reflexionar sobre las pautas utilizadas para estudiar el impacto corporal de la violencia y el trauma colectivos, que nos lleve más allá de la búsqueda y excavación de los restos humanos a considerar las maneras en que los cuerpos vivos y vivientes incorporan y transmiten las huellas de este impacto hacia el futuro.

Palabras clave: trauma cultural, teatro, cuerpo, memoria sujetada, corporeización, subrogación

As extensive studies by Alison Guzmán (2012a) and Anabel García Martínez (2016) have

shown, there is a relatively rich tradition of plays that focus on representing the Spanish Civil War. However, these have not until recently drawn much critical interest, when compared with the volume of scholarly writings about narrative and filmic representations, and, apart from a few exceptions, existing studies focus primarily on dramatic writing rather than on what happens to these aspiring places of memory in performance (see, for instance, Pérez Rasilla 2009 and Fernández Ariza 2003). On the one hand, I would argue that this is a result of a certain ontological mistrust of the theatrical amongst critics and writers, an attitude that might be seen at its most extreme in the publication of Javier Cercas's novel *El Impostor* (2014) and its critique of the individual and collective self-deception and disingenuity he perceives behind the boom in historical memory, which he himself now appears to disavow.[1] On the other hand, until recently, the discourses of historical memory have placed greatest importance on the need for narrative reconstruction of absent voices, experiences and memories that have only a ghostly presence in contemporary society. This has meant that the more physical and corporeal practices associated with theatre and performance have tended to remain beyond their purview. Even studies that have perceived the complex and layered critical and self-reflexive modalities of many dramatists' attempts to negotiate the ethical, political and aesthetic question of how to represent memories of violence, conflict and trauma on stage have tended to focus on the narrative structure and words rather than on the way in which absent bodies are made present. Key work includes the interdisciplinary approach of Juan Mayorga (1999; 2008), Francesc Foguet's meticulous overview of the case of Catalan dramatic writing (2013), Jennifer Duprey's (2014) elucidation of five key instances of memory theatre in contemporary Barcelona, and above all the developing analyses of Alison Guzmán (2012a; 2012b), who identifies the presence of 'muertos vivientes' as a unifying theme across a significant number of plays by contemporary playwrights, from José Sanchis Sinisterra to Jerónimo López-Mozo, Itziar

1 Other recent novels on this topic from different perspectives include Maria Barbal's *En la pell de l'altre* (2014) and Empar Moliner's *La col·laboradora* (2012).

Pascual, Juan Copete and Laila Ripoll, who have returned persistently to the question of the Civil War's continuing impact on the present. The proliferation of stagings over the past decade has begun to be acknowledged more widely, yet opinions remain divided about their significance and impact, with some critics regretting the over-reliance on ideological polarization, others lamenting the lack of ambition of programmers, and the optimists celebrating the multiplicity of perspectives characteristic of the 'generación de los nietos' (see, for instance, Campos 2015). The primary focus in this article will be on twenty-first century performances, attending to the ways in which the often traumatic memories of the war and its aftermath are inscribed corporeally. However, it is nevertheless important to acknowledge the influence of earlier attempts to represent this multi-layered legacy on stage.

Any consideration of the representation of the Spanish Civil War since Spain's Transition to Democracy is inevitably haunted by one particular text, which has deservedly become a classic and continues to be performed in Spain and around the world: Sanchis Sinisterra's *¡Ay, Carmela!*. Written in 1986, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Civil War, the play has been translated into various languages, including three versions in English. Set in an empty theatre, with sparse scenography, props and only two protagonists (the living Paulino and the dead Carmela), the play is framed by deliberate ambivalence about spatio-temporal location through the reminder that 'La acción no ocurrió en Belchite en marzo de 1938'. By blurring the boundaries between past and present, living and dead, reality and fiction, high art and popular culture, the play transformed the theatre into a palimpsestic space in which the audience was confronted with different layers of memory and was forced to occupy different subject positions, as part of Sinisterra's aim to create a frontier stage in which it was possible for memories of the Civil War to be addressed and explored. Radically open in structure, through its mimicry of the cyclic, repetitive patterns of trauma and melancholia, the play closes with a short epilogue in which the culture of forgetting accepted by Paulino in order

to survive under Francoism is set against the culture of remembering the past championed by Carmela, in a world of the dead which, though increasingly distant from the world of the living, seems to become the only place where resistance is possible.

Premiered in 1987, with Verónica Forqué in the role of Carmela and José Luiz Gómez directing himself as Paulino, *¡Ay, Carmela!* was one of the major theatrical successes of the 1980s and really captured audience imaginations, even though critics were lukewarm about the popular *varieté* elements it contained, at a time when textual theatre had been sidelined by the internationally renowned experimental, collective performance groups like Comediants and La Fura dels Baus, and big budget musical theatre.[2] In Carlos Saura's equally acclaimed film adaptation of 1990, with Carmen Maura in the role of Carmela, Andrés Pajares in the role of Paulino, and introducing a far more loyal and resistant Gustavete, the play was given a far clearer narrative and political positioning, with the only frontier zone that was maintained being that of its geographical location on the Aragonese front in 1938. The need for audience reconstruction, ethical positioning and memory work that was the core characteristic of the original play was replaced with the story of Carmela's (and the Republic's) heroic sacrifice, and ended with Paulino and Gustavete mourning at her unmarked grave. Juxtaposition of play and film brings into sharp focus the very different memory spaces created, with the former resembling a more processual environment of memory and the latter closer to Pierre Nora's (1989) typology of *lieux de mémoire*. It is my contention that the intertwining of play and film has strongly marked the dramatic text's subsequent reception, which, because so easily slotted within the frame of historical memory, has led to its partial occlusion in the wake of the memory boom narratives that followed Javier Cercas's *Soldados de Salamina* (2001). If *¡Ay, Carmela!* is still performed, it is not only because of its now undisputed critical acceptance, but because

[2] Furthermore, it could be argued that the 2013 musical adaptation of *¡Ay, Carmela!* by Andrés Vicente Gómez, directed by Andrés Lima in Madrid's Teatro Reina Victoria, somewhat betrays the ethos of Sinisterra's play by turning it into the very kind of work that it was written against. See Sinisterra's own comments in Álvarez Mongay (2013) for measured consideration of the deficiencies of the adaptation.

it foreshadows many of the features of the more body-focused theatre of today. Indeed, the main reason I have re-presented the play here is to provide an accessible introduction and guide to the three modalities of bodily performance I propose as exemplary of more recent trends.

The first modality that will be addressed is the archaeological and relates to the bodies of evidence of my title; it can be traced back to the strong element of excavation of the space of the dead in *¡Ay, Carmela!*, which is largely transmitted to us verbally through her accounts of the material remains and found objects she encounters and interacts with. The second modality refers to the process by which live actors stand in for the dead through surrogation, seen by performance anthropologists as one of the principal means by which communities ensure their continuity and/or legitimise change. The power of this process, and the indeterminacy of its effects, has meant that Carmela has come to be transfigured into an effigy of the Second Republic (see, for instance, Saval 2002), because her death is associated with the moment at the end of the second act when she resists the pressure to lampoon Republican Spain, and instead stands proud and sings the Battle of the Ebro hymn with the Republican flag draped about her shoulders. The third modality is that of embodied witnessing and can be traced once more to Carmela's empathy with the condemned International Brigadiers in the auditorium, transmitted corporeally, as well as to her commitment to intergenerational transmission at the end of the play.

In my analysis of more recent stage productions, I will explore the development of these three modalities of body-focused practice in recognition of the fact that, as Marvin Carlson shows us in *The Haunted Stage* (2003), they inevitably ghost earlier performances. They are not the only phenomena that indicate a change in paradigm, but read in relation to each other they provide a useful introduction to the ways in which the borrowing of techniques and strategies from dance, experimental music and performance art, as well as the blurring of boundaries between different aesthetic languages, disciplines and media have transformed the

scope of memory-theatre.[3] Yet the increasing intensity of the focus on the body and bodies in plays about the Spanish Civil War must also be seen as symptomatic of changes in discursive framing in contemporary Spanish society. On the one hand, as Maria Delgado (2015) has noted in relation to the case of Federico García Lorca, the increasing civil society concern since the beginning of the twenty-first century with finding and recovering the remains of victims of the Spanish Civil War and Francoist repression, in order to restore them to their families and inaugurate a process of reparative justice, has shifted the discursive focus away from ghosts and absent presences to material remains, including disinterred bodies. Layla Renshaw (2011) has explored the performative function of recent archaeological and forensic excavation of mass graves in Spain, under the conviction that 'exhumation achieves not only a transformation in the condition and position of a set of human remains, but also a broader spatial and temporal reconfiguration that produces significant changes in a community's prevailing memory politics' (Renshaw 2011: 27).

On the other hand, one unexpected effect of the debates over the Law of Historical Memory and the eventual ratification of a much diluted version that passed the responsibility for implementation to regional and local governments in 2007 is that in some ways the previous focus on the lack of memory and the need for remembering in Spain has been superseded by more diverse questions of how to remember, and greater awareness of the diversity of practice according to socio-cultural background and context. The multiplicity of societal actors with competing visions of how and what to remember produces a very dynamic field, and perhaps nowhere more so than in the places where there is greatest social and cultural diversity. Indeed, there is little doubt that this very diversity has contributed to raise and address questions of how cultural memory can and should be transmitted: the increasing velocity of change in life-worlds

[3] Jeannette R. Malkin (1999) has provided the most influential account of the centrality of memory in postmodern theatre, although Duprey (2014) applies a similar approach in her identification of the presence and influence of what she calls 'memory theaters' in twenty-first century Barcelona.

has resulted in anxiety about intergenerational transmission; the increase in intercultural and transnational encounters has led to the developing presence and influence of multi-directional memory. So, for instance, one key recent development in Spain has been the translation of psychoanalytical approaches used to help recent political refugees to account for how collective trauma is produced and transmitted, thus providing new rationales for the need to remember based on theories of embodiment (Valverde Gefaell 2014; Miñarro and Morandi 2012). This is very strongly reflected in Helena Tornero's prize-winning play *No parlis amb estranys* (2013), which is characterised by intense reflection on bodily relationships with the past, and how these vary according to location, gender, sexuality, generation and class. The framing of bodies in a transnational context, in response to other histories of political violence, has also impacted on the treatment of bodies in performance. For instance, the 'theatre for memory' movement in Argentina, which developed in response to past state violence, alongside the presence of generations of Argentine theatre practitioners in Spain, has had an influence on local practice, in work such as *Valeria y los pájaros* by Sanchis Sinisterra (2008), Victòria Szpunberg's 2008-2010 trilogy on the fragility of memory, and the Hispano-Argentine company La Trinchera Teatral's acclaimed *Trilogía republicana: teatro por la Memoria* (2015). Both the theatre of the Lebanese-Canadian Wajdi Mouawad and representations of diverse histories of colonial and post-colonial conflict in Ireland have in translation opened opportunities to address the socio-historical impact and intergenerational transmission of cultural trauma.[4] In response to La Perla 29's 2017 production of Mouawad's *Boscos*, for instance, director Oriol Broggi writes in the programme:

[4] Oriol Broggi's acclaimed productions of *Incendis* (2012), *Cels* (2014), *Un obús al cor* (2016) and *Boscos* (2017) with La Perla 29 have ensured that Mouawad is somewhat of a household name in Catalonia. In the recent Catalan edition of the plays, Broggi describes the affective impact he and the company registered on experiencing audience responses to *Incendis* as follows: 'Va ser com un «misteri laïc»... com quan es posa a ploure. Com quan les estrelles i els planetes es paren' (In Mouawad 2017: 13). Likewise, Broggi's adaptation of Joseph Kessel's *Mary de Cork* as *Els cors purs* (2016) recasts the Irish Civil War from the perspective of a son considering the scars of internecine violence on his own generation.

> M'agradaria haver escrit aquest gran poema sobre el nostre temps, i el dels nostres pares i el dels nostres avis. M'agradaria haver-lo escrit i poder dedicar-lo als meus pares. No l'hem escrit nosaltres, però tenim la sort de representar-lo avui, davant vostre, de dir-lo, de fer-lo present.

Equally, the main practitioners discussed in the section that follows are indebted both to the ethnographic practices associated with Mexican frontier theatre and to the representational responses to violence on the US-Mexican border. Whereas *Y los huesos hablaron* (2016) was the product of transnational collaboration between the Catalan Societat Doctor Alonso and the Mexican Teatro Babel, Àlex Rigola's 2015 adaptation of *Incerta glòria* was marked by his internationally acclaimed work on Roberto Bolaño´s *2666*, which included field trips and research into the *feminicidios* in Ciudad Juárez. Looking at how these performative phenomena are translated and addressed within the theatre allows us to address important questions of how memories of violence and trauma reside in or are transmitted through certain bodies and not others, and to contribute to thinking through the kinds of transmission that can be imagined into the future.

1. Archaeologies: Bodies of Evidence: *Incerta glòria*

This section will focus on the way in which archaeological approaches have informed recent plays that engage with the process of locating, uncovering, bringing up and reassembling the remains of the dead, in order to resituate them as part of contemporary material culture. The most obvious play of this type would be *Y los huesos hablaron*, which was performed in Barcelona's Archaeology museum in July 2016.[5] Emerging from collaboration between Mexican and Catalan theatre practitioners, the production explored different ways of assembling and making meaning with bodily remains, through the use of performance art,

[5] *Y los huesos hablaron*, Museu d'Arqueologia de Barcelona, 6-9 July 2016. Devised by Societat Doctor Alonso and Teatro de Babel; Directed by Sofía Asenso and Aurora Cano; Dramaturgy by Tomàs Aragay and Camila Villegas; Actors and Co-creators: Nilo Gallego, Hipólito Patón, Ramon Giró and Lluc Baños; Special Guest: René Pacheco (Associació per la Recuperació de la Memòria Històrica); Scenography: Lluc Baños; Lighting designed by Cube.bz; Sound by Nilo Galleho and Ernesto Anaya.

music, dance, ritual instruments and practice, set alongside the excavation of the performative language employed to construct and sustain the foundations and legitimacy of the State and its occlusion of the material remains of violence and oppression that lie beneath. One of the core sections of the production was a presentation by an archaeologist, René Pacheco, who works with the Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (ARMH) on the excavation of mass graves in Spain.

Elements of these approaches can be seen in other plays staged in recent years, such as Ivan Fox and Anton Tarradellas's *La balada dels històrics anònims* (2012), *La nit més freda (veus de l'exili)* (2009) Joan Cavallé's *Peus descalços sota la lluna d'agost* (2008) and Àngels Aymar's *Trueta* (2009), as well as being associated with the recovery of Republican texts or authors from the archive, as in the case of Ramon Vinyes's *Ball de titelles* (2012) and Ambrosi Carrion's *La dama de Reus* (2008). Furthermore, some of the more haunting and memorable recent productions of Lorca plays have had this archaeological modality, in particular the work of director Lluís Pasqual, from his 1986 excavation of *El público* to the 2012 production of *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, in which the family house was stretched out before the audience that flanked the stage of the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya´s Sala Petita like an elongated tomb.

Here, I have chosen to focus on Àlex Rigola's theatrical adaptation of the notoriously long, complex and challenging Civil War novel *Incerta glòria* by Joan Sales. Performed in the Sala Petita, the smaller and more flexible second auditorium of the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya, between 20 May and 16 June 2015, the adaptation was also directed by Rigola, and involved an extensive team of actors and technicians.[6] The final production was divided into

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6 *Incerta glòria* de Joan Sales. Teatre Nacional de Catalunya, Sala Petita, 20 May-16 June 2015. Directed and adapted by Àlex Rigola. Scenographer: Max Glaenzel; Costume designer: Sílvia Delagneau; Lighting: August Viladomat; Soundtrack: Nao Albet; Sound: Albert Mosoll. Video: Francesc Isern and Max Glaenzel. Documentation Eleonora Herder. Body art: Alejo Levis. Cast: Lluís - Nao Albet; Commander Rosich/ Trini's father - Andre Benito; Cruells- Marcel Borràs; Carlana/ Commander's wife - Aina Calpe; Merceditas/ Miller's wife - Laia Duran; Picó - Toni Mira; Juli Soleràs - Pau Roca; Trini Milmany - Mar Ulldemolins. 3 hours and 15 minutes running time with 2 breaks of 10 mins each.

three parts, as in the earliest version of the novel. The first part centres on Lluís's life at the Aragonese front, which we see almost entirely from his perspective; the second part takes us back to the home front, in Barcelona, where Trini Milmany struggles to make sense of the world that is collapsing around her; the final part begins with Cruells' attempts to reconcile Lluís and Trini, presenting us with the absurd scenes of a hedonistic banquet with the officers and their wives before the final routing of the Republican soldiers begins again, accompanied by chilling evocation of the confusion, horror and dehumanisation of trench warfare, through the use of a web of hanging microphones to project and echo the voices of Lluís (Nao Albet) and Juli Soleràs (Pau Roca).

The work of excavation involved in researching the production is made clear both in Rigola's references to the length of time he spent working on the adaptation process and in the number of technical collaborators listed on the programme, including a researcher, Eleonora Herder, who unlike other productions where she has worked with Rigola is credited with 'Documentació' rather than 'Dramatúrgia'. Their attention to detail takes the production team on a field trip to the Monegros, where the novel was located, and it is there that Max Glaenzel and Francesc Isern produce the film that is used to anchor and frame the first part of the adaptation. The extent to which every member of the team is implicated in the production can be seen in the fact that not only do a number of the actors take on double roles, but some of them have more transversal roles in the production. Nao Albet, for instance, is commissioned to produce the soundtrack as well as to take on one of the leading roles, as Lluís. Finally, Rigola decides to work with experts on the body: the dancers and choreographers Toni Mira and Laia Duran, who are also included in the cast list, as well as Alejo Levis, the designer of the explicit body membrane that is worn by Duran for one of her *danses macabres*. I will return to consider their work more closely in due course.

In the programme, Rigola rather unusually admits his frustration and sense of failure in

adapting the universe of the novel: 'Aventurar-se a l'adaptació escènica d'una novel·la és acceptar des de l'inici la frustració de no poder ser fidel a l'obra en tota la seva extensió i bellesa. És també un acte d'amor a allò que t'ha fet gaudir'. Even though he notes that the temporality of theatre does not allow coverage of all aspects of the novel, leading him to cut many of the more philosophical disquisitions, critics of the production objected that the first part especially transmits the sense that he is trying to include too much. As well as introducing all of the main characters and plot lines, Rigola manages to include a variety of musical and dance sequences, including Toni Mira's controversial choreographical representation of the violence of battle, video footage of real geographical locations and images of key symbols in the novel, like the praying mantis, and the use of a series of miscellaneous stage furniture and objects to represent particular anecdotes, such as the positioning of a full skeleton on a sofa to evoke the disinterred tombs in a local monastery. When considered alongside the density of information on the hand programme, which, rather than explaining what we are about to see in each part, presents a series of long excerpts from essays, reviews and letters about Joan Sales's novel, it is easy to see why the veteran critic, Joan-Anton Benach, pronounces it to be an 'incierta y confusa adaptación' (Benach 2015).

It is Rigola's decision to follow Sales in presenting the play from the embodied perspectives of three of the main characters that accounts for the sense of fragmentation, alienation, abjection and confusion in Part I, in which we see the world through the eyes of Lluís. The second and third parts are, in comparison, far more controlled and contained, helping us to piece the different elements of the story together in retrospect. The key, I think, is to recognise Rigola's archaeological and forensic attitude to his material, described by some critics and commentators as the increasing distance and coldness with which he treats the stage, in a deliberate attempt to avoid melodrama and over-identification. Instead the full picture has to be pieced together painstakingly from different elements: bodies, objects, images, sounds,

texts, voices, landscapes. We as audience are witnesses to the excavation and reconstruction of the violence and trauma at the heart of a novel Mercè Rodoreda described as 'un cop de puny al ventre' (Rodoreda 1963), after years of mutilation, censorship and ideological rejection (Sòria 2014): 'Es la pesadilla de la Historia que lo atraviesa todo. Dos órdenes sociales contrapuestos, ambos a la vez fracturados en disputas sangrientas, en una zona común alternativamente conocida e irreconocible' (Catelli 2005).

If Rigola's adaptation is approached from the perspective of contemporary archaeological practice around exhumation, it becomes possible to better understand his use of a wide range of 'objects, particularly photographs, but also letters, documents, and other mementoes, creating new assemblages' (Renshaw 2011: 28). Even so, there are remainders that are difficult to fit within such a frame, the most troubling one being Laia Duran's performance of the Molinera, which involves an almost offensively stereotyped rendering of Aragonese peasant dialect and intensely distorted and spasmodic body work. Other representations of explicit bodies on stage, such as the skeleton and Duran's later dance performance as a flayed victim of war, make me inclined to see the bodily presence of the Molinera/Duran as another piece in the picture of Lluís's intensely alienated experience of his time in Aragon, where a land that he feels should be familiar to him is abjected as entirely and radically foreign. However, when we consider that, even within the linguistically hybrid context of Sales's novel, the speech of the Molinera is by far the most grotesquely caricatured, it is almost blinkered not to see the figure embodied by Duran as a 'monstrous effigy' that for Lluís and Sales stands for that which lies beyond the limits of the desired nation. The slippage in aesthetic register from the archaeological into the grotesque and carnivalesque is in many ways entirely in keeping with the dark Doystoyevskian irony of the novel, but in the play it is somewhat problematically achieved through turning the living body of the dancer into another object in the imaginative assemblage of Lluís's Civil War experience.

2. Effigies: Bodies of Resistance: *La Plaza del Diamante*

The notion of the effigy is drawn from the work of Joseph Roach and has been borrowed and translated by other scholars working on how performance re-members and reenacts memories of violence and conflict, most influentially Diana Taylor (2003) and Rebecca Schneider (2011). They, however, prefer the secondary, more explanatory notion he uses, of surrogation, to explain the 'doomed search for originals by continuously auditioning stand-ins' by which cultures reproduce and re-create themselves (Roach 1996: 3). Introduced and explained in his wide-ranging and ambitious *Cities of the Dead* (1996: 33-41), the effigy, whether an object or photograph used to remember a dead person or the kind of crudely fabricated image that is commonly destroyed in their stead, is both a surrogate and a means of re-incorporation. In its fleshly form, as produced in the bodies of actors in different modes of performance, it is a way of engaging with the past through embodiment in order to either maintain continuity or shape alternative futures. It thus takes on a more processual sense of evoking and filling in through 'surrogation a vacancy created by the absence of an original' (1996: 36), disclosing 'an urgent but often disguised passion: the desire to communicate physically with the past, a desire that roots itself in the ambivalent love of the dead' (1998: 23).

If I turn to this notion here in lieu of the kind of hauntological approach that has become common to scholarly framing of cultural memory in contemporary Spain since the work of Jo Labanyi (2000) and Joan Ramon Resina (2000), especially, it is because my focus is on the way in which these ghosts are simultaneously presented and represented in physical bodies, through the 'twice-behaved behaviour' we are now accustomed to associating with performance (Schechner 1985). This is not because I somehow disagree with calls to address the ways in which the spectres of Spain's past haunt the present, nor, indeed, the need to negotiate processes of mourning, justice and reparation, but because the framing in terms of absences, ghosts and

spectres has led to a blind spot regarding bodies. More precisely, it has led to an understandable focus on the absent bodies that haunt Spain's present rather than the way in which present, living bodies channel, embody and contain these spectres. Interestingly, it is a blind spot that is already present in Derrida's *Specters of Marx* in his use of the ghost of Hamlet's father and the visor effect to underpin his discussion of the spectre, passing over the fact that one of the major problems *Hamlet* presents for theatrical performance is that his father's is an all-too-solid ghost, traditionally embodied by generations of actors in performance.

Even though it would be possible to explore the process of effigying in a more expansive sense, in which case it could almost include all plays about the Spanish Civil War in performance, I will restrict my consideration of the effigy to the category of performances that very overtly focus on embodying individual figures that themselves have come to represent or are chosen in a particular context to stand for the Spanish Civil War. An obvious example would be the treatment of the figure of Federico García Lorca in performance, perhaps most famously Pepe Rubianes's *Lorca somos todos* (2008), and more recently in Pep Tosar's increasing identification with the body of the poet in plays such as *El público* (2015) and *Federico García* (2017). Yet we could also consider stagings that evoke past performers, such as LaBarni Teatre's *Ojos verdes. Miguel de Molina* (2008), López Mozo's *El olvido está lleno de memoria* (2003) and even, as posited earlier, *¡Ay, Carmela!* which, through the impact of the film performance by Carmen Maura, made Carmela into an effigy of the Second Republic; those designed to remember the contributions of alternative 'national' heroes, such as the case of Aymar's *Trueta* (2008), López Mozo's *Las raíces cortadas* (2008) or Conejero's *La piedra oscura* (2014); and, most recently, a range of plays intended to recover and represent Republican women, such as *Trece rosas* (2006), *La maternitat d'Elna* (2008), *Un cel de plom* (2015) and *Només són dones* (2015).

Here I will consider the 2014 production of Mercè Rodoreda's *La Plaza del Diamante*,

adapted and directed by Joan Ollé, using a translation by Celina Alegre and Pere Rovira, for the Teatro Español in Madrid. Originally programmed for 24 September to 23 November, it enjoyed a three-month run, followed by a tour throughout Spain, including a long run at the Teatre Goya in Barcelona in April-June 2015, a re-run in Madrid at the Teatro de Bellas Artes, and a Latin American tour in 2017. Produced by the Catalan production company, Bitò productions, with Lolita Flores in the role of Natalia/Colometa,[7] music by Pascal Comelade, lighting by Lionel Spycher and costumes by Ana López, it was framed for non-Catalan educational audiences by a 'cuaderno didáctico' intended to provide contextual information on the background significance of the Rodoreda's novel, as well as a description of the adaptation and the process of staging the play. This was, of course, unnecessary for the performances in Catalonia, where, as in the case of *¡Ay, Carmela!*, the protagonist of Rodoreda's novel was already an undisputable effigy of the trials and tribulations of the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath, most famously embodied by the actress Sílvia Munt in Francesc Betriu's costume drama representation of the novel for the cinema in 1982. Furthermore, the Natàlia-Colometa-Senyora Natàlia protagonist of Joan Ollé's extended monologue had itself already been embodied by previous actresses, including Jessica Lange in New York, with the very first staging actually having used three separate actresses to represent distinct stages in the protagonist's life. Audiences attending the Barcelona showing would also, potentially, have been haunted by other reimaginings, including the production of Josep Benet i Jornet's version of *La Plaça del Diamant* for the Any Rodoreda in 2007, identified by Duprey (2014) as a key instance of memory theatre, but most especially their own interior stagings as readers of this highly emblematic and distinctively voiced text. Significantly, whilst there is almost no trace of reflection on this process of haunting in the critical and audience reception of the play in Barcelona, apart from to register pleasant – and often rapturous – surprise at the way in which

[7] The programme notes for the production use the Castilian-Spanish spelling of Natalia rather than the Natàlia of Ollé's adaptation into Catalan, even though the protagonist's pet name Colometa remains untranslated.

Lolita Flores brings to life a text and character they know and love so well, the numerous reviews and blog posts in response to the Madrid showings are generally characterised by the need to contextualise the Rodoredian ur-text: whether as the best novel of Catalan letters (Notodo.com 2016; Bloggin'Madrid 2016; Cómo explicarte 2016), a faithful chronicle of post-war Barcelona (*El Imparcial* 2014; Desde un rincón de mi habitación 2016), or as yet another text about the Spanish Civil War (Ellas 2014; El Español 2016). Even though some reviewers go to great lengths to show their familiarity with the original novel (Fuentes 2014; El mirador 2014; Palinuro 2016), the most frequent references for comparison are to the RTVE serialisation of 1986 (Efecto Madrid 2014) or to remembered performances of an alternative monologue, based on Miguel Delibes's *Cinco horas con Mario* (El arte de lo posible 2014; Bloggin'Madrid 2016; El mirador 2014). One Madrid theatre-goer and blogger fulminates at length about the pointlessness, repetition, incoherence, and lack of originality and aesthetic value of the dramatic text, before going on to extol Lolita Flores's artistry and express his appreciation of the *mise-en-scène* (Universo de A 2014).

The contrast brings into clear focus at least two levels at which Lolita Flores's performance as la Señora Natalia looking back over the most significant aspects of her life functions as an effigy that represents and re-draws the boundaries of national or community identity, which is identified as a key function of surrogation in Roach (1996), Taylor (2003) and Schneider (2011). On the first level, we find the fact that even for spectators like the bloggers of Lo mío es puro teatro (2015) or El Universo de A (2014), for whom the original novel is completely absent as a frame of reference, Flores's performance unmistakably evokes a text-type that is immediately recognisable as a result of its perceived cultural ubiquity: that concerned with the need to remember and represent the individual and societal trauma of the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath through testimony to the violence, privation and repression suffered by its victims. What is interesting is that both are able to separate their boredom or

incomprehension from their appreciation of Lolita Flores's work in embodying this particular effigy, as if she brings something to the text that is not there in the original. They ultimately separate an effigy of the original Catalan text from the superior version represented by Flores. Elsewhere, in Alfonso Armada's blog (El mirador 2014), the play is a salutary reminder of the horrors of a shared history that is in danger of being forgotten by contemporary Catalan politicians such as Artur Mas in their, for him, chimeric dream of independence:

> mientras vemos cómo una parte de los españoles llamados catalanes que no se sienten españoles ni quieren serlo sueñan con ser libres siendo más otros [...] imagino, más ingenuo que Natalia, es decir, que Colometa, y mucho más ingenuo que Lolita Flores, mucho más, que esta obra acaso haría recapacitar a Artur Mas, y a tantos otros que se empeñan en cortar los nudos hondos con esta parte, que somos nosotros, y que no seríamos los mismos ya sin ellos. Como si el teatro pudiera cambiar el curso de la política, y el curso de la vida.

This contrasts with Catalan reception of the text and the performance, in which there is greater emphasis on the challenge and the legitimacy of Flores representing an undisputed effigy of Catalan cultural identity.

On the one hand, then, the effigy stands for a particular community memory, the cultural trauma narrative of a Catalan society broken and repressed as a result of the Spanish Civil War; on the other, for a national identity in which such a narrative is a flawed remainder that is surplus to requirements. Even if we consider the views expressed by some of these spectators to be extreme, there are clear indicators in the paratexts surrounding the production outside Catalonia that audiences are not expected to know who Rodoreda is. The Teatro Español website, for instance, gives the following background summary, with information that is paraphrased in the majority of reviews produced in the rest of Spain:

> La novela es una crónica fiel de la Barcelona de posguerra y de cómo marcó este periodo histórica a sus habitantes. Mercè Rodoreda está considerada una de las escritoras de lengua catalana más influyentes de su época y su obra se ha comparado a veces, por su estilo y su capacidad descriptiva, con la de Virginia Woolf.

Furthermore, many of the press announcements and reviews record the director's view that 'Si

Rodoreda hagués nascut en un país seriós la Colometa seria com Madame Bovary' (Teatre Barcelona April 2015). Indeed, there is indication in the particular framing of this version that Ollé intended his effigy to build some sort of a bridge between these two community narratives, at a time when they appear to be increasingly irreconcilable. This can be found both in his representation of his motivations for staging the play at the Teatro Español, as a way of bringing a text that ought to be canonical to the attention of the nation (i.e. removing it from an exclusively Catalan frame), and in the bodies that are invoked in order to support this decision: Lolita Flores and Joan Manuel Serrat. The former's association with one of the most quintessentially 'Spanish' families of performers of the post-war period might seem to translate Colometa into a more recognisable Señora Natalia for a Spanish-language audience, yet her father was born in Gràcia, thus also giving her the necessary connection to Catalan society. The latter is one of the most emblematic singers of the Nova Cançó movement, yet his famous self-identification as a *xarnego* stands for a reconciliation of perceived divisions between Catalan and Spanish identities. It was to Serrat that both Ollé and Flores attribute the decisive role in casting the play: he was the one to convince them to rise to the challenge.

What does the Ollé-Flores collaboration bring to the effigy of Colometa? To begin with, Ollé's adaptation involves a process that must inevitably tighten the focus of Rodoreda's narrative in order to fit into an 80-minute monologue told directly to the audience, as if to intimate confidants, by an aging woman sitting on a park bench, and interspersed with nostalgic tunes, evocative of her first waltz in the Plaça del Diamant in Gràcia. Even a monologue of that length delivered by a single actor in a large darkened auditorium places immense strain both on the actor's own body and voice – she had a handkerchief to hand and a glass of water under the bench throughout the performance – and on the bodies in the audience.[8] The anecdotes Flores

[8] Another commonplace in the reviews is reference to the incessant coughing and fidgeting of audiences who witnessed the production, which might appear to pull against the perceived emotional intensity of the performance. However, while this phenomenon is attributed by reviewers to be a sign of a lack of theatrical culture, it could also be seen as expressive of the unease and discomfort of being interpellated and cast as

is given to recount generally centre more on Señora Natalia's own significant life experiences rather than the stories she hears from others, and there is less of the detail, the rambling repetition and wide-eyed innocence many readers associate with the novel's protagonist and narrator. Furthermore, the selection of excerpts arguably places greater emphasis proportionally on the tragic impact of the war and early post-war years, as reflected in the reviews mentioned earlier. There are shifts in tone between comedy, humour, joy, nostalgia and tragedy, but the over-arching flavour is a nostalgic one, as much because of the *mise-en-scène* and musical interludes, as because of the quality of the acting. Critics and commentators all point to the containment of Lolita Flores's gestures, applauding the director for reining in her tendencies towards more melodramatic flourishes; indeed, it is the unusual subtlety of her performance that for many commentators brings her closest to embodying the fragile and poetic interior voice of Colometa. Yet there are nevertheless moments of high melodrama in which she herself and many of her audience are brought close to tears; furthermore, this is something Flores reflects on insistently in recounting the process of embodying the role, the fact that she has no method but has to completely believe the text, that 'todo me lo paso por el hígado' (in Buenafuente 2015; see also Blanco 2015). All of the reviews strongly reflect this bodily possession: 'la verdad y la vida que rezuma por todos los poros de esa mujer apocada que ha hecho Lolita Flores' (Vila 2014); 'Todo pasa en su cara, sus ojos, su voz. Podría ser una hermana de Ovidi Montllor [...] Posee como él, un don inusual: la rotunda capacidad de conmover sobriamente' (Ordoñez 2014)); 'Aquest sentiment de proximitat epidérmica és el que fa, em sembla, que el monòleg interior de Rodoreda en boca de Lolita Flores s'impregni d'una autenticitat esparverant' (Sotorra 2016).

It was in the speech that Flores delivered directly to the audience immediately after her standing ovation on the day I attended the production that she gave us her own reading of what

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embodied witnesses to Flores/Natalia's tale of woe.

the process represented: the opportunity to connect with the privations experienced by a whole generation of women, many of whom were represented in the audience that day; the duty to express her own debt to Catalonia, to her father's memory, and to Rodoreda and Ollé for providing a text that enabled her to experience this process of learning through incorporation in performance. Elsewhere, in a review for *El Mundo*, she is quoted as saying: '«Me dijeron que me fuera a casa, que dejara de estudiar por unos días. Y ese día, Colometa entró en mí. Desde entonces no se me ha vuelto a ir»' (Blanco 2015). Hers was an effigy, then, that joined together different and often superficially opposed cultural narratives in one body, but that in order to do so had to bring the interior monologue of the novel out into the open, through her eyes, onto the surface of her skin, and project it confidently enough to engage a full house in the auditorium. If her performance lost some of the qualities of contention of the original, this was balanced by her having to rein in the energetic arm movements characteristic of her usual performance style. By meeting Colometa half-way, she performed a cultural encounter that was met with acclaim by audiences in Barcelona and Madrid, notwithstanding the modesty and conservatism of aspects of the project.

3. Embodied Witnesses: Bodies of Protest: *Només són dones*

The final production to be considered here, which I was fortunate to see when it was premiered on 19 June 2015 in the Teatre Josep Maria de Sagarra in Santa Coloma de Gramenet, shares many similarities with the previous ones. *Només són dones* was based on a series of five short monologues written in Spanish by the Barcelona-based writer Carmen Domingo, and adapted by Catalan theatre director, Carme Portaceli. Following the summer premiere, it was programmed both for the autumn Temporada Alta festival in Girona and the 2015-2016 season at the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya, running from 8 October to 11 November in the Sala Petita, touring throughout the Catalan-speaking territories, before being taken to the Teatro de la

Abadía in Madrid, where it was performed entirely in Spanish from 30 March to 17 April. Directed by Carme Portaceli, with scenography by Paco Azorín, choreography by Sol Picó, original music by Maika Makovsky, costumes by Antonio Belart, lighting by Miguel Muñoz, sound by Efrén Nelostes and audiovisual materials by Lala Gomà, the three women chosen to embody Republican memories were Míriam Iscla, Maika Makovski and Sol Picó (with Xaro Campo alternating in the dance part at the TNC, and Carmen Conesa taking over the musical performance for the Madrid run).

As in the case of *Incerta Glòria*, the process of adaptation undertaken was a collective one, drawing on the input of the three women that, in interview, Portaceli recounts immediately came into mind on reading Domingo's provisional script: actress Míriam Iscla; dancer and choreographer Sol Picó; and musician and composer Maika Makovski. Furthermore, just as Sales's novel drew on his letters to Màrius Torres between 1936 and 1941 (Sales 2014), so the source text for this production emerged from an engagement with a series of pre-texts, primarily the letters and narrative testimony of three Republican women who suffered violence and repression at the hands of the Nationalists in the Spanish Civil War and immediate post-war period: Amparo Barayón, who was arrested and executed in 1936 as the wife of the prominent writer and communist politician Ramón J. Sender; Matilde Landa, who had been General Secretary of the Red Cross during the Civil War, and was prominent in the PCE resistance in Madrid, but ended up committing suicide to escape psychological torture in prison in Palma de Mallorca in 1942; and the prison survivor and testimonial writer Tomasa Cuevas, who was imprisoned and tortured between 1939 and 1945, before escaping to France and Prague (Grandes 2016).

Like Ollé's *La Plaza del Diamante*, the adaptation placed emphasis on the culturally invisible experiences of Republican women, seeking to overcome the silencing of what Neus Català has called the 'oblidades entre els oblidats' (2013), primarily through the process of

surrogation, by using live bodies to stand in for the dead. However, unlike the case of Lolita Flores-Natalia or Mercè Aranega-Neus Català, the process of effigying was made visible for scrutiny on stage, thus drawing attention to the bodily effort involved in producing a dialogue between present and past. Many of the techniques and processes used were similar to the more archaeological modalities we have just observed in relation to *Incerta glòria* and *Y los huesos hablaron*, with the use of an intermedial layering of languages, the redeployment and inter(in)animation of material remains, and explicit framing using documentary evidence. Furthermore, the mix of avant-garde techniques with material remains and documentary traces from the past, placed it on a par with the new affordances Renshaw (2011) reports to have been made possible by the framing of the archaeological past with modern technologies like carbon-dating and DNA testing. However, whilst there are similarities between *Incerta Glòria* and *Només són dones* in the use of experimental electronic music and dance as a way of embodying a traumatic past, the treatment of dance and of the dancer's body is significantly different in my view. Whereas in *Incerta Glòria* the dancers' bodies are primarily presented as effigies of dead bodies on stage, and at certain moments, such as in Laia Duran's figuring of the Molinera, evoke the awkward and uncanny arrangements of bones in a mass grave (a technique I also witnessed in *Y los huesos hablaron*), in *Només són dones* the dancer is given the opportunity to display more agency in her communication through the body. We, as audience, are openly allowed to see how her movements respond to the narratives she hears, the images she sees, the music she feels, and the objects that texture the space of the stage. At times, this is conveyed as a performance of the words she has just heard, often accompanied by their aesthetic synthesis in the music of Makovski; at other moments, it is produced after a period of silent and still observation of the gestures that accompany Iscla's narrative, beginning with minimal marks of kinaesthetic reception as she begins to mirror and mimic, which are then amplified and stylised into a choreography; at others still, there is more spontaneous interaction with the objects and

images on the stage, through a process of inter(in)animation and intercourse with her fellow actors. All three modes come together in one of the most powerful moments of the play, when she reenacts the involuntary baptism *in articulo mortis* of Matilde in a water-filled transparent coffin-like bath on stage, followed by spasmodic movement reminiscent of a foetus in the womb as well as death throes.

This triangulation of witnessing is an incredibly powerful instance of bodily performance that simultaneously draws attention to and transmits the immediate effects of violent acts on the body, provides reflection on the process of mediating memory through the body, and confronts us with a body as embodied witness or spectator on stage. Yet, in many of the paratexts, the production is presented more conventionally, following the kind of historical memory discourses used by Domingo, as an 'espectacle contra l'oblit', intended primarily to perform the functions of homage and surrogation, that is both to recognise and to stand in for the experiences of 'Esposes, mares, filles i germanes, però també, i sobretot, militants, sindicalistes, guerrilleres i lluitadores incansables per la democràcia i pels drets adquirits durant la República, que han estat les grans oblidades de la nostra història'. Furthermore, Portaceli herself shows ambivalence and uncertainty about the function of the triangulation she places in motion on stage. In the short hand-programme for the premiere she justified the multidisciplinarity as follows: 'Els personatges estan interpretats per una mateixa actriu, Míriam Iscla, que interactua amb la ballarina Sol Picó, representació de totes les dones del món i amb la cantant i compositora Maika Maikovski, la veu de l'inconscient, del que mira des de fora'. By the time the play is at the TNC, Iscla has become the words, Sol Picó embodies the spirit, and Maika Makovski provides emotional depth. Nevertheless, for me, the most inspirational aspect of this layering of embodied practices was the way in which Sol Picó channelled and performed the process of witnessing trauma, through intensely physical embodiment of 'empathic unsettlement' (LaCapra 2001) and 'heteropathic identification'

(Silverman 1996). Through the process of witnessing and inter(in)animating each others' performances, all three women become bodies of protest.

Read in isolation these plays may present little more than an intuitive focus on bodily processes and on the ways in which memories of conflict have been incorporated and transmitted across bodies. Read together they begin to provide a vision of something new that appears to be happening on the Spanish stage, in response to the changing social, political and ecological environments surrounding responses to the material traces of the past, in particular those associated with the violence and repression of the Civil War and Francoist period. In my approach to the plays, I have relied in part on my own experience of embodied spectatorship, and thus the vision I have presented will almost inevitably appear partial, provisional and subjective. Yet I hope to have shown that it is an embodied spectatorship that has been shaped by the particular observation, disposition, manipulation, movement and mirroring of bodies witnessed in recent productions on the Spanish stage; all of which have provoked visceral, and at times extreme, reactions from different audiences. The modalities proposed here draw somewhat artificial lines between different practices, whose affordances are at least as much affected by sociocultural location as by performative aesthetic. This is why it has been just as important to marry the insights of embodied spectatorship with archival excavation, investigation of reception, and close attention to the discursive frameworks with which these plays enter into dialogue. Nonetheless, I am convinced that continued attention to what the contemporary stage tells us about bodies of evidence, resistance and protest will provide valuable future insights into the intergenerational and transnational transmission of trauma.

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