



Legacies of War and Dictatorship in Contemporary Portugal and Spain

Alison Ribeiro de Menezes
and Catherine O'Leary (eds)

Peter Lang

IBERIAN AND LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

THE ARTS, LITERATURE AND IDENTITY

This multi-authored volume offers the first extensive exploration of cultural memory in Portugal and Spain, two countries that are normally studied in isolation from one another due to linguistic divergences. The book contains an important theoretical survey of cultural memory today and a comparative analysis of the historical background influencing studies of memory in the Iberian Peninsula. It includes the work of eleven specialists on contemporary Spanish and Portuguese history, culture and literature and establishes a series of parallel themes that lace the chapters together: resistance; literary and popular representations of the figure of the dictator; gender; intergenerational links and changing paradigms of war stories; and the performance of memory. The essays gathered here will be of interest to scholars of both national cultures as well as those concerned with issues of memory, trauma and the historical legacy of war and dictatorship.

Alison Ribeiro de Menezes is Senior Lecturer in Spanish and Portuguese at University College Dublin.

Catherine O'Leary is Lecturer in Spanish at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth.



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Legacies of War and Dictatorship in Contemporary Portugal and Spain

Iberian and Latin American Studies: The Arts, Literature and Identity

Volume 1

Edited by Professor Francis Lough
Department of Hispanic Studies, University of Birmingham



PETER LANG

Oxford • Bern • Berlin • Bruxelles • Frankfurt am Main • New York • Wien

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Preface

It seems hardly credible, given their geographical proximity and comparable political and cultural heritages, that there should exist relatively few comparative studies of contemporary Spanish and Portuguese literature and culture, yet such appears to be the case at the turn of the third millennium.¹ Two nations whose literatures grew out of a common source in Galaico-Portuguese poetry, and which overlapped significantly in the early modern era, seemed by the twentieth century to have become relative strangers to one other, at least in the arena of academic literary commentary. The illustrious Portuguese poet, Luís de Camões, whom Pedro Calderón de la Barca called 'el portugués Virgílio',² could compose happily in either Portuguese or Castilian. His predecessor Gil Vicente likewise produced a bilingual body of texts. If such linguistic proficiency is less marked in the larger peninsular nation, cultural proximity is still a major characteristic of the era, although Portugal's constant wariness of any Iberizing intentions on the part of its larger neighbour, who ruled it from the late sixteenth

- 1 The picture has been quite different in the field of political science, as the early review article by Benny Pollack and Jim Taylor indicates: 'The Transition to Democracy in Portugal and Spain', *British Journal of Political Science*, 13 (1983), 209–42. However, many early comparative analyses of twentieth-century political upheaval in Portugal and Spain approached the matter from the perspective of a universalizing paradigm of democratization and so ran the risk of distorting national specificity. Recent historical work has been more attentive to the historical particularities of each country; see, for instance, Hipólito de la Torre Gómez, *Portugal y España contemporáneos*, published as a special issue of the journal *Ayer*, 37 (2000); António Pedro Vicente, *Espanha e Portugal: Um Olhar Sobre as Relações Peninsulares no Século XX* (Lisbon: Tribuna da História, 2003).
- 2 Edward M. Wilson and Jack Sage, *Poetas líricos en las obras dramáticas de Calderón: Citas y glosas* (London: Tamesis, 1964), pp. 131–2.

century to the middle of the seventeenth century, should not be forgotten. Nevertheless, Lisbon-based publishers of the early modern period, such as Craesbeeck, were happy to print for the Castilian market, and in Tirso de Molina's *El burlador de Sevilla*, Don Gonzalo, recently returned from an embassy to Lisbon, is full of praise for the city, which contrasts in the play with the moral degradation of Seville.³ This cultural familiarity had disappeared by the middle of the twentieth century, so that, when the Spanish protagonist of Antonio Muñoz Molina's 1986 novel, *El invierno en Lisboa*, arrived in Portugal, he experienced a sense of linguistic alienation which contradicts those earlier cultural cross-currents: 'comprobó que si le hablaban rápido el portugués era tan indescifrable como el sueco'.⁴

Of course, linguistic divergences aside, the Spanish and Portuguese *are* now becoming increasingly familiar as neighbours. If, in the 1960s, it took a considerable effort to travel between Lisbon and Madrid, one can now fly from one capital city to the other in an hour, and a high-speed rail link is planned. Regular Portuguese–Spanish diplomatic summits testify to a desire for political collaboration on issues of mutual interest, and as Spanish chains such as El Corte Inglés, Zara, and Adolfo Domínguez increase their presence on Portuguese high-streets, and multi-national expansion continues in the banking world, so connections become ever closer.⁵ It is not surprising, then, that nowadays a Portuguese novelist such

3 We are grateful to Don Cruickshank for drawing our attention to this.

4 Antonio Muñoz Molina, *El invierno en Lisboa* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1986), p. 112; this quotation is noted by Stephen Henighan in 'Writers after the revolution: a comparative framework for Latin American and Lusophone African literature', University of Bristol Occasional Papers, no. 37 (Bristol: University of Bristol Department of Hispanic, Portuguese and Latin American Studies, 2005), pp. 20–1. Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's passing references in *Crónica sentimental de la Transición* to the 1974 Portuguese Revolution are an exception to this, although Spanish concerns about political upheaval in Portugal may be explicable more in terms of its possible knock-on effect for a Spain awaiting the end of the Franco Regime rather than enlightened interest.

5 This was, of course, one important consequence of the two countries joining the European Economic Community, as Nuno G. Monteiro and António Costa Pinto note: 'Progressive integration of Europe profoundly changed the structure of the country's economic partnerships. Neighbouring Spain, for example, became one of the country's most important economic partners.' See Nuno G. Monteiro and António

as António Lobo Antunes should write regularly for the Madrid daily, *El País*, nor that the Portuguese literary journal, *JL: Jornal de Letras, Artes e Ideias*, should conscientiously review translations of works by, for example, Enrique Vila-Matas or, perhaps more understandably, given his Galician roots, Manuel Rivas. And Julio Llamazares has written two travel books on Portugal, *Trás-os-Montes: un viaje portugués* and *Cuaderno del Duero*. Yet there are lacunae. One wonders why a novelist of the stature of Juan Goytisolo, whose work bears similarities to that of Lobo Antunes, is practically unknown in Portugal, or why translations of Carmen Martín Gaité only began to appear in Portuguese in the late 1990s, a belated response to her much longer interest in Portuguese culture.⁶

In this context, the current lack of scholarly comparisons of Spanish and Portuguese literature is very surprising, and may result from theoretical and methodological preoccupations rather than simply a lack of interest. As Stephen Henighan has pointed out, comparative literature, at least of the sort that sets nation states side by side in order to seek out national specificity, is currently out of fashion.⁷ What might previously have come under the rubric of comparative literature was subsumed and developed in different directions by intertextual and postcolonial theories, and has latterly been appropriated by translation and transnational studies. With such an emphasis on hybridity and intercultural connectedness, national specificity and related questions of micro-history are easily elided, and the original, Eurocentric focus of comparative literature can be overcome with apparent ease. But, if care is not taken, such interpretative strategies are in danger of pandering to the forces of a rampant and indefatigable globalization by refuting the possibility of cultural difference. Nevertheless, there are indications that the nation state, an entity largely discredited in the course of the twentieth century, may be finding some new role as a possible counterforce to those very globalizing forces, and, indeed, the consequences of the 2008–9 economic meltdown may well reinforce this.

Costa Pinto, 'Cultural Myths and Portuguese National Identity', in António Costa Pinto (ed.), *Modern Portugal* (Palo Alto, CA: SPOSS, 1988), pp. 206–17 (p. 216).

6 Catherine O'Leary and Alison Ribeiro de Menezes, *A Companion to Carmen Martín Gaité* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2008), p. 202.

7 Henighan, 'Writers after the revolution'.

It is, therefore, with a certain trepidation that we introduce a series of reflections on Spain and Portugal from the theoretical perspective of cultural memory, for, as with other avenues that employ a comparative perspective, one runs the risk of mapping broad precepts onto national experience without sensitivity to local particularities. Contemporary preoccupations with memory attest, as does the postmodern moment more generally,⁸ to a dissatisfaction with ideology and a disillusion with 'master narratives' of all types, that of the comparativist included. Nevertheless, cultural memory, by its very nature, has extensively theorized questions of historical specificity versus universalization. Furthermore, debate itself – frequently changing and unstable, responding to the changing political, social and historical contexts in which it may occur – is an inherent part of any study of cultural memory, its politics, its tensions, its conflicts. Cultural memory studies, then, although in no way immune to the risk of interpretative distortion, must take cognisance of the divergences and shifts, fragmentary perspectives and fractured narratives, that go some way towards guarding against a master(ing) gaze, as Alison Ribeiro de Menezes argues in her exposition of the need for pluralized memory debates in Portugal and Spain today. Her 'Introduction' surveys theories of cultural memory before offering a comparative analysis of twentieth-century Portuguese and Spanish history with a view to stressing both commonalities and divergences. She then outlines possible areas for research on cultural memory in each country.

Although this volume is divided into two parts, there are significant and consistent overlaps between each of them in terms of the themes discussed and the memory debates exposed – approaches to representing and interpreting the figure of the dictator; women's experiences, changing societal demands, and the loss of intergenerational connection; the scars of the past in the physical landscape, in architecture, and in literary discourse; and the intersections between public and private remembrance. Many of these

8 On this point, see Andreas Huyssen, 'Escape from Amnesia: The Museum as Mass Medium', in *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 13–35.

issues are explored with regard to very recent literary, filmic, and televisual texts, making the volume not only innovative in its approach but up-to-the-minute in the material discussed. If memory debates in Portugal are more muted than in Spain, this does not mean that there is not a historical legacy of unfinished business. The continuation of literary discourses of resistance, renewed and polemical interest in Salazar, explorations of the rupture of tradition within the family and between generations, and most of all the legacy of the colonial wars are clear evidence of this. But the ethical import that emerges from the Spanish case, and its centring on international law and the discourse of human rights, is less urgent in Portugal. Indeed, what emerges from many of the Spanish contributions to this volume is precisely the argument that the need to remember is a moral and political imperative to counter the legacy of the Franco Regime, which for so long controlled what could be officially recorded and publicly commemorated in Spain. The transition from dictatorship to democracy was both a point of crisis and a new beginning, and many may now lament the choices made then in relation to accountability for past crimes committed during the dictatorship. It should be acknowledged, however, that the so-called *pacto de olvido* was the result of consensus politics and was motivated by the desire to avoid a return to conflict and to focus on progress, modernization and *apertura*. Recent times have seen a revision of the legacy of the civil war, the dictatorship and the transition period, and a debate about how this legacy should best be dealt with and remembered.

In his essay, Mark Sabine explores ongoing resistance to the legacies of dictatorship in the fiction of Nobel Laureate José Saramago via a forensic analysis of his reception and reformulation of the symbolic lexicon of neo-realism in the post-Revolution period. Approaching Saramago's output as what he terms a 'multivolumed macrotext' (p. 40), Sabine demonstrates how Saramago's ideological position has remained broadly consistent throughout his career. Flaunting the historical and ideological location of language highlighted by the neo-realist lexicon, Saramago has turned that pre-1974 writerly resistance to dictatorship into a resistance to the perceived danger of late capitalist society's relapse into totalitarianism, thus giving force to his position via the renewal of a familiar idiom directed towards a new target.

Continued sensitivity in Portugal towards the legacy of dictatorship is evident in Filipe Ribeiro de Menezes' discussion of the impact of the 'victory' of Salazar in the television show *Os Grandes Portugueses*, aired in 2007. The programme, the debate which it raised among Portuguese historians, and the wave of recent publications on all aspects of the dictator's life is symptomatic not only of a renewal of interest in him, but also – as Ribeiro de Menezes demonstrates with regard to Nogueira Pinto's recent *Salazar: O Outro Retrato* – of a politically motivated engagement with the past that is arguably anchored in concerns about the present and future.

In considering Inês Pedrosa's novel, *Nas Tuas Mãos*, Alison Ribeiro de Menezes explores two vectors of the cultural memory of dictatorship in contemporary Portugal: the intergenerational transmission of memory within the family, and the possible intersection of cultural memory with feminism. In exploring the transmission of memory across female generations, Pedrosa's work highlights a dialectic between rupture and continuity that has both feminist antecedents (in the Italian notion of *affidamento* as a form of intergenerational mentoring) and is rooted in the Portuguese experience of a dictatorial society that, with its prescribed roles for women, rendered difficult any simple transmission of female heritage. Pedrosa's unique focus on both the transmission of tradition and its disruption avoids a nostalgic view of the past at the same time as it offers a constructive approximation to history's silenced corners.

The recent upsurge in fiction concerning Portugal's colonial wars is detailed by Isabel Moutinho, demonstrating how enduring memories of the conflicts are, and the extent to which their legacies have yet to be fully addressed. A key motivation for contemporary colonial war novelists is resistance to silence not only imposed by regime censorship, but also by societal lack of interest, and possibly fears of uncertainty in the post-Revolution era. For Moutinho, these new colonial war novels perform an important task, shaping a new memory of the wars for those who did not experience that historical period directly.

Building on this, Alison Ribeiro de Menezes examines one example of this new wave of colonial war discourse, namely António Lobo Antunes' recently published war letters to his wife, which are interpreted in the light of the author's early war novel, *Os Cus de Judas*. Viewing the correspondence

as evidence of a 'self-absorbed anguish' (p. 121) that is understandable in a young man sent to the Angolan front, it is nevertheless contrasted with the treatment of the war in *Os Cus de Judas*, which can be seen as a desacralization of the silencing of colonial war memories in the immediate post-1974 period that Moutinho discusses. Whilst the publication of Lobo Antunes' war letters can be regarded as an important step towards the re-emergence of public debate on the violent end of Portugal's empire, and as a significant example of the merging of public and private spheres of remembrance, there is a danger that the volume may also create a nostalgic view of the past that obscures as much as it enlightens.

Shifting from Portugal to Spain, the importance of the image and reception of the figure of the dictator leads Susana Bayó Belenguer to explore the link between memory, autobiography and truth. She shows in her analysis how Vázquez Montalbán, in his openly provocative *Autobiografía del general Franco*, not only attacked the figure of the dictator, but also questioned the official narratives of the past. The alternative memories of the author's *alter ego*, Pombo, are presented as a counterpoint to Franco's 'official' memories. Bayó Belenguer comments on the manipulation of memory and its use and abuse in social and political spheres, and demonstrates how Vázquez Montalbán parodies the regime's efforts at cultural control with this fictionalized autobiography. The ability of autobiography to present a self-serving account of historical events is here subverted in an account that, instead, highlights the protagonist's failings. It explores the use of memory, history, embellishment, and fiction to create the public figure of the dictator, and shows how a similarly imaginary reconstruction of Franco in this fictionalized autobiography may in fact reveal an alternative portrait of the man that is just as valid.

The link between memory and the physical landscape, and the creation of symbolic public spaces for collective memories, are explored in Catherine O'Leary's analysis of Jerónimo López Mozo's *El arquitecto y el relojero*. The central conflict within the drama addresses the interplay between a desire to acknowledge publicly, and a counter-desire to suppress, traumatic memories of Spain's recent past. O'Leary shows how López Mozo engages with contemporary debates about the location and the preservation of memory, and she links this to questions of national identity. The opposition

of generations and ideologies, as well as that of memory and progress within the play, are used to question contrasting attitudes towards the politics of memory in Spanish society. The play's dramatization of this conflict in the clash between the architect and the clockmaker challenges the spectators to consider their own compulsion to repress traumatic memory in the name of progress. In a discussion of the need for a space for memory, O'Leary implies that the dramatist's use of multimedia techniques is intended to engage the spectator directly with previously suppressed memories and to give the past a spectral location in the present.

In her essay, Lorraine Ryan discusses the impact on Spanish society of the Franco Regime's attempts to control memory and the later suppression of memory during the transition to democracy. In her analysis of Alfons Cervera's *La noche inmóvil*, she explores the place of individual memory within collective memory, and the links between narratives of memory and identity. Highlighting the significance of the narration of memory to an individual's self-identity, she comments on its cathartic role in the negotiation of 'one's relationship to the past in the present' (p. 174), particularly in the aftermath of trauma. In considering Cervera's *La noche inmóvil* within a framework of memory studies and mnemonic communities, Ryan points to the importance of the transmission and survival of suppressed (in this case, Republican) memories from one generation to the next and she concludes that this necessarily involves 'a recontextualization' of memories and an 'interactive dialogue' (p. 178) between past and present and between the generations who experienced trauma directly and those who did not.

Mercedes de Grado offers a contribution on the connection between memory and testimonial narrative, and suggests, in echo of Bayó Belenguer's argument, that the collective memory of Spain's traumatic recent past can incorporate fictionalized memory narratives as well as historical fact. In this essay, de Grado explores the theme of the legacy of Republican women, which is also considered by Ramblado. The regime's preoccupation with the 'Eugenics of the Hispanic race', she contends, had a particular resonance for Republican women who were branded as 'Reds' and 'a malignant cancer' (p. 204) to be cured or removed from society. Analysing the merits of Dulce Chacón's *La voz dormida*, de Grado relates this novelistic testimony to the reality of women's lives in prison and to the regime's

treatment of women generally, and she concludes that the memories and voices of Republican women were twice suppressed, as they were punished for both their politics and their gender. She discusses the *pacto de olvido* and the politics of memory during the transition to democracy and suggests that an opportunity for remembering and accountability was lost at that time. The recent emergence of texts such as *La voz dormida*, she implies, has finally addressed this suppression of memory and has contributed to a more holistic view of Spain's recent past and to a greater understanding of the relationship between gender and collective memory.

María Cinta Ramblado-Minero's article considers the representation of Republican women in contemporary Spanish cinema and their depiction as transmitters of the legacy of the Second Republic. Analysing the female figure within the Nationalist-Catholic ideology, Ramblado shows how she was represented as the guardian of a system of traditional, conservative values or, in the case of the Republican woman, as anti-feminine. In her analysis of Mario Camus' *Los días del pasado* (1977), Montxo Armendáriz's *Silencio roto* (2001), and Guillermo del Toro's *El laberinto del fauno* (2006), Ramblado argues that Republican women were not mere victims of the regime, but can be considered significant figures in the struggle against the dictatorship. In this essay, as in Mercedes de Grado's contribution, the perspective of female characters is presented as a type of counter-history to the dominant, patriarchal, official memory of Spain's traumatic past. Ramblado concludes that the long-silenced history of dissident women, and of Republican mothers in particular, needs to be revised to reflect their role in the resistance against the dictatorship and in the preservation of the memories of the vanquished.

Finally, Guillermo del Toro's *El laberinto del fauno* (2006) is one of several recent Spanish films dealing with the Spanish civil war and its aftermath to capture the public imagination. In relating this film to others from the end of dictatorship and the transition, Gabrielle Carty points to the trope of the family as microcosm of society, child-centred narrative, the use of fantasy and 'the connotative value of fairytales as parables or fables' (p. 231), as well as the use of conventions from tales of Gothic horror. She also shows that *El laberinto del fauno*, in common with several other more recent films, foregrounds previously suppressed memories, in this case, the

story of the *maquis*. Finally Carty argues that, with his 'unique hybrid' (p. 239) of visually stunning motifs and cinematic tropes, Del Toro connects past and present, linking *El laberinto del fauno* to earlier oppositional films, while also creating a new and valuable contribution to cinematic explorations of Spain's traumatic past.

Inevitably, a number of people and institutions have helped in the completion of this book. Many of the essays originated in a symposium on memory in Portugal and Spain, organized by Alison Ribeiro de Menezes in October 2007, with the kind assistance of the Instituto Cervantes, Dublin; the Instituto Camões, Lisbon; Professor Jean-Michel Picard of University College Dublin's School of Languages and Literature; and Professor John Kinsella of NUI Maynooth's Department of Spanish. Particular thanks go to Ambassador Paulo Castilho, who not only offered generous support and hospitality on that occasion but on many, many others during his time as Portugal's Ambassador to Ireland. Our thanks also to John Breakey for permission to reproduce his work, *Uneasy Calm*, on the cover. We should like to thank University College Dublin and the National University of Ireland for financial assistance in the production of this volume, and Professor Francis Lough, our series editor at Peter Lang, for his helpful suggestions with the preparation of the manuscript. Finally, we are grateful, as ever, to our families and friends for their support.

ALISON RIBEIRO DE MENEZES

Introduction: Cultural Memory and the Legacies of War and Dictatorship in Contemporary Portugal and Spain

Cultural Memory and Its Debates

Most surveys of theoretical and scientific reflection on cultural memory today point to three key figures: French sociologist, Maurice Halbwachs; German Egyptologist, Jan Assmann; and French historian Pierre Nora. Halbwachs, as sociologist Jeffrey Olick notes, built on Emile Durkheim's concept of the *conscience collective* by demonstrating the manner in which collective representations of the past circulate as the shared symbols of collective cultural inheritance.¹ His work, nevertheless, has limitations: whilst his focus on memory as collective and socially constructed is immensely important in relocating memories of the past in a specific temporal and spatial context, the question of the transmission of collective memories is inadequately addressed, and hence, the problem of what happens when collective memory is stalled or impeded by political events, by authoritarian repression, or by deliberate ideological manipulation, is left unanswered. On the other hand, as Paul Connerton notes, Halbwachs stressed the importance of the relative stability of our material milieu for the creation of the illusion of the co-existence of the past in the present,² a point of contrast

1 Jeffrey Olick, *The Politics of Regret: On Collective Memory and Historical Responsibility* (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 5–6.

2 Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 37.

that usefully highlights the rapidity of change that not only characterizes our contemporary world but has also brought about significant changes in our relationship to the past and the manner in which we access it. The work of Jan Assmann likewise serves today to indicate the rapidly changing role of memory in contemporary society. Assmann developed Halbwachs' work in distinguishing cultural memory from collective memory. The latter, he argued, has a limited life-span of three or four generations, and is informal and frequently oral; the former is more enduring, having a fixed point or horizon which does not change with the passage of time, although our interpretations of it may change. It is, he argued, made up of 'fateful events [...] whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance)' which then become 'islands of time'.³ Assmann's emphasis on shared practice, on a common archive of memories (whether physical or symbolic, whether in a repository of books and papers or customs and practices), now seems too static, suggesting only slow changes in the memory horizon. Also problematic, in the final instance, is the work of Pierre Nora, which, echoing Halbwachs' interest in social milieux, focuses on place and its relation to memory, which is explicitly contrasted with History (with a capital 'H') seen as big events and great names. For Nora, our recall of the past is a dialectic of remembering and forgetting, or a process of deformation and manipulation according to the demands of the present.⁴ But there is something positive, even celebratory, about Nora's view of memory,⁵ just as there is something secure and enduring about Assmann's notion of the archive, that leaves both these approaches rather unsatisfactory when it comes to a study of silenced, persecuted, or repressed collective and cultural memories.

The question of troubling and traumatic memories is broached by Dominick LaCapra with regard to contemporary historiography of the Holocaust. He begins his study, *Representing the Holocaust*, with an epigraph

3 Jan Assmann, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', *New German Critique*, 65 (1995), 125–33 (p. 129).

4 See Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de mémoire*, 3 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1997).

5 Olick also critiques Nora's work from this perspective in *The Politics of Regret*, p. 182.

from Freud's well-known essay, 'Mourning and Melancholia', and combines it with one from Geoffrey Hartman stressing the need for 'the limits of representation to be healing limits'.⁶ LaCapra's emphasis is not just on the negative elements of traumatic memory, but on the potentially positive aspects to be gained from working through such memories. LaCapra seeks to combat any tendency to become fixated on, or over-valorize, states of intense melancholia and self-victimization, whilst preserving a recognition of the existence of severe trauma and the near-impossibility of overcoming extreme suffering. LaCapra further stresses the importance of transference as part of the interpretative process. His nuanced discussion of continuity and change in relation to the return or repetition of a repressed past, and his stress on the need to contextualize in order to uncover similarities and differences in the object of study, is highly instructive.⁷ In discussing the complex, and far from binary, relations which he sees between Freud's notions of melancholy and mourning, LaCapra articulates two key questions for public memory:

First, does modern society have suitable public rituals that would help one to come to terms with melancholia and engage in possibly regenerative processes of mourning, even if in extremely traumatic cases an idealized notion of full recovery may be misleading? Second, who is it that one mourns and how can one specify the object of mourning in ways that are both ethicopolitically desirable and effective in reducing anxiety to tolerable limits?⁸

This seems to shift the emphasis from a separation of the public and the private, and from any binary division of the officially sanctioned and the repressed, towards a consideration, first, of the dialectical relationship between personal and social aspects of any 'working-through' of a traumatic past, leading to healing, and, second, of the need to evaluate, in a historically contextualized manner, deserving objects of mourning.

6 Dominick LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. vii.

7 See particularly the final chapter of *Representing the Holocaust*, entitled 'The Return of the Historically Repressed'.

8 LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*, pp. 213–14.

There are, nevertheless, problems with an approach to memory that links remembering and forgetting with trauma theory, problems that are, indeed, specifically discussed by LaCapra himself.⁹ His stress on the need for a self-reflexive discourse on the past that avoids the dangers of melancholia and a sublimation of trauma, which he neatly characterizes as ‘a scene fixed in amber’,¹⁰ and the centrality of what he calls ‘empathic unsettlement’, or an affective response to a narrative of trauma, are, for Ofelia Ferrán, key aspects of his analysis of cultural memory work.¹¹ Whilst Ferrán’s readings of specific Spanish narratives that engage in memory work demonstrate the potential of LaCapra’s approach, he himself does not offer as illustration specific case studies, either in *Representing the Holocaust* or in his later volume, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*.¹² Indeed, his preoccupation with deconstructionist thought and its emphasis on binary oppositions, whilst perhaps understandable at the time of writing, has a dated ring in the context of, on the one hand, Marianne Hirsch’s development of the notion of ‘postmemory’ – which takes the question of emotional engagement with a traumatic past in one particular direction – and, on the other hand, the arguments made by Andreas Huyssen and Paul Connerton regarding the importance of a new perception of temporality, allied to economic and technological changes in the last three decades, which are transforming our understanding of memory and the connection between history and the present.

- 9 Cathy Caruth’s work reveals some of these difficulties, which arise out of a tendency to define history as trauma, in terms such as ‘our catastrophic age’ (*Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995], p. 11) or observations of the nature, ‘History is precisely the way we are implicated in each other’s traumas’ (Cathy Caruth, ‘Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History’, *Yale French Studies* 79 [1991], 181–92 [p. 192]).
- 10 LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*, p. 34.
- 11 Ofelia Ferrán, *Working Through Memory: Writing and Remembrance in Contemporary Spanish Narrative* (Lewisburg: Bucknell, 2007), p. 52.
- 12 LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

Whilst Hirsch's notion of 'postmemory' is directly tied to the Holocaust and the intergenerational transmission of trauma,¹³ her underlining of an affective response to historical trauma is important and recalls LaCapra's call for an empathic unsettlement in the historiography of traumatic pasts. It is reasonable to ask to what extent Hirsch's concept of postmemory might transcend the Holocaust context, for, used to describe the relationship of second-generation family members to the experiences of their parents, and inspired particularly by family photographs, Hirsch's initial conceptual frame is in fact quite specific. Nevertheless, her emphasis on postmemory as a tension between an imaginative investment in accessing a lost past and the impossibility of belatedly gaining direct access to that past – a tension which she finds inherent in the photographic medium – makes postmemory highly relevant for questions of trauma, loss, and the construction of silenced, repressed or buried family stories. Her intergenerational focus broaches the issue of the transmission of memories, which has become increasingly important with the march of time and the ageing and natural demise not just of Holocaust survivors, but of survivors of other historical conflicts and catastrophes. The theory of the emotive engagement of later generations with the traumas of their parents, and indeed perhaps grandparents, has, in the case of Spain, been carefully applied by Ferrán to the fictions of Antonio Muñoz Molina.¹⁴

If Hirsch attends to the matter of intergenerational transmission, Andreas Huyssen and Paul Connerton have looked to the question of precisely why we live – paradoxically – in societies that are characterized by ever more informational and perceptual overload, and ever faster technological transformation, and yet are ever more obsessed with archivization, musealization and with dealing with a surfeit of memory. For both theorists, the answer lies in transformations in the structure of temporality that are affecting our perceptions of place and space, and our understanding of the relationship between past and present. And, whilst Connerton's outline

13 Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

14 Ferrán, *Working Through Memory*, chapter 5.

of changing technological media and life spaces places more emphasis on explaining the reasons for changes in the structure of temporality than does Huyssen's analysis of cultural events and objects, both thinkers seek to avoid a simple dichotomy between remembering and forgetting, or memory and amnesia. In Huyssen's words,

the mnemonic convulsions of our culture seem chaotic, fragmentary, and free-floating. They do not seem to have a clear political or territorial focus, but they do express our society's need for temporal anchoring when in the wake of the information revolution, the relationship between past, present, and future is being transformed. Temporal anchoring becomes even more important as the territorial and spatial coordinates of our late twentieth-century lives are blurred or even dissolved by increased mobility around the globe.¹⁵

In essence, the rapidity of modern life – the speed of technological development, the collapsing of distance with increased global mobility, the ever more evanescent nature of visual and electronic media, the instability of the capitalist system and its disruption of formerly relatively enduring working practices, the fragmentation of communities and family units – creates a desire for stability and rootedness, for relatively secure moorings, that make us turn towards the past rather than look to the future. In addition, the failure of utopian thought in the twentieth century has emptied out the future of all promise of progress, although Huyssen, crucially, does caution against the dangers of being seduced into forgetting that 'memory discourses themselves partake in the detemporalizing processes that characterize a culture of consumption and obsolescence'.¹⁶ His call for a self-conscious examination of memory's processes is thus a key contribution

15 Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), p. 7. Paul Connerton concludes thus his book, *How Modernity Forgets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 147: 'Our world is hypermnestic in many of its cultural manifestations, and post-mnemonic in the structures of the political economy. The cultural symptoms of hypermnestic culture are caused by a political-economic system which systemically generates a post-mnemonic culture – a modernity which forgets.'

16 Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 10.

to current memory debates, as is his – arguably related – refusal to see the backward gaze solely in a negative light:

In literature, the old dichotomy between history and fiction no longer holds. Not in the sense that there is no difference, but on the contrary in the sense that historical fiction can give us a hold on the world, on the real, however fictional that hold may turn out to be.

By working through rather than cynically performing this problematic of utopia/reality, such literature can actually help maintain the tension between fiction and reality, aesthetic representation and history. It is in the attempt to maintain that tension, that dialectic, against the lure of the simulacrum that I see utopian energies at work in literature today.¹⁷

The search for the real, for Huyssen, has itself become utopian, but that does not mean that we should abandon the quest, nor that we should unthinkingly allow the tension between the past and the present to be collapsed into either the ‘timeless present of the all-pervasive virtual space of consumer culture’,¹⁸ or a static and fossilized memory horizon, set in amber, as LaCapra might have it. There is constant movement and transformation in public memory practices over time, as each new ritual repetition, commemoration, or memorial event takes place in a new context, bringing past and present into an ever-shifting dialogism that Connerton’s emphasis on bodily practices and the performativity of ritual in *How Societies Remember*, and Jeffrey Olick’s emphasis on mnemonic practices as an ongoing Bakhtinian process of ‘utterance and response’, each highlight.¹⁹

I find Olick’s work particularly useful in thinking through the question of memory debates, shifts, and battles. His emphasis on mnemonic *practices* stresses the dynamics of memory, seen clearly through disputes and memory contests as well as in the historical transformation of storage and retrieval mechanisms, and in the shifting semantics of commemoration and memorialization. And his concern with ‘what symbols and words were

17 Huyssen, *Twilight Memories*, p. 101.

18 Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, p. 10.

19 Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), chapter 3; Olick, *The Politics of Regret*, p. 12.

available to [speakers] in which times and places and hence how those cultural frameworks are prior to, and thus shape, their intentions [...] contrary to any instrumentalist take on political language' attends to the manner in which individuals engage with, and find their interventions shaped by, the far from static memory horizons available to them.²⁰

The need for a clear awareness of the shifting and contextualized nature of memory practices raises the question of the interaction between local specificity and global change. Huyssen argues that although memory discourses appear to be a global phenomenon, they remain tied to the histories of specific nation states, and so geographically and temporally located.²¹ There is, then, a dialectic between the local/national and the global, of which we must take cognisance. There is also, of course, within this a dialectic between the local/regional and the national that affects some nations more than others, Spain being a case in point. 'National memory debates,' Huyssen writes in *Present Pasts*,

are always shot through with the effects of the global media and their focus on themes such as genocide and ethnic cleansing, migration and minority rights, victimization and accountability. However different and site-specific the causes may be, this does suggest that globalization and the strong reassessment of the respective national, regional, or local past will have to be thought through together. This in turn raises the question whether contemporary memory cultures in general can be read as reaction formations to economic globalization. Such is the terrain on which new comparative work on the mechanisms and tropes of historical trauma and national memory practices could be pursued.²²

The processes involved in the interaction of the national and the global are therefore pertinent, and one of the issues raised by Huyssen in this regard, and a matter also broached by Olick, is the overspill of Holocaust

20 Olick, *The Politics of Regret*, p. 7.

21 Attention also needs to be paid to the unevenness of global economic development and care taken not to detemporalize on the basis of a globalization argument that may have restricted relevance in certain cases. Nevertheless, with regard to Spain and Portugal, as members of the European Union well integrated into the Western capitalist system at the time of writing, such concerns are not immediately relevant here.

22 Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, p. 16.

discourse into other memory contests. To a certain extent a prism through which to refract all discussions of genocide and historical trauma, Huysen notes that such use of Holocaust discourse – beyond the question of whether or not the Holocaust is to be seen as a unique event – may either highlight important concerns, or blur and conceal key factors in nationally specific debates. It is a trope that should be used with care, and in this regard Olick's conceptual distinction between memory practices based on an 'ethics of responsibility' and those deriving from an 'ethics of conviction' is a helpful corrective, as it focuses attention on the (universalizing) philosophical claims and discourses of human rights and of transitional justice frameworks that frequently underpin memory debates.

In outlining his notion of what he terms a politics of regret in contemporary society, Olick writes:

Recent literature offers two distinct frames for understanding the politics of regret: a philosophical-jurisprudential discourse centered around the concept of universal human rights, and a comparative-political study of regime transitions now often referred to as *transitology*. These two frames are well developed and ubiquitous, yielding much insight into varieties of contemporary political regret and problems faced by practitioners. Nevertheless, they are often less interested in explaining what is unique and new about regret as a political principle, either denying its novelty or seeing it merely as the result of contingent historical events – most often Nuremberg or the transformations of 1989.²³

Olick's argument is clearly relevant to any discussion of memories of dictatorship in Portugal and Spain, which have been taken to be the starting points in a 'third wave' of democratization culminating in the transitions in Eastern Europe following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Indeed, Olick's highlighting of the dangers of 'transitology' points to one of the problems of political science discourse particularly on Portugal, namely the frequent lack of an insightful understanding of national particularities and specificities that defy the universalizing tendencies of transition theory. Portugal's peaceful Revolution is often presented as an 'odd' case, since the military ousted a dictatorship and were instrumental in the subsequent establishment of democracy, and the Revolution is often seen as an

23 Olick, *The Politics of Regret*, p. 122.

inexplicably sudden and unexpected event, interpretations which both fail to appreciate the nature of the Portuguese military and the strong legacy of nineteenth-century liberal Republicanism in the country.²⁴ Olick's concerns also indirectly reveal an issue pertinent to Spain's current memory debates, namely the influence of debates on past traumas in Latin America, notably Chile and Argentina – debates which are themselves shot through with Holocaust references. A key impetus in the emergence of Spain's current civic movements calling for the opening of common graves from the civil war period was arguably the 1998 attempt by Judge Baltasar Garzón to extradite Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet from Britain, where he was seeking medical treatment, for crimes against Spanish citizens in Chile during his rule. This triggered an 'irruption of memory', in Alexander Wilde's phrase, that signalled the fact that Spain had not dealt with her own traumatic civil war past.²⁵

24 The opening of Samuel Huntington's study neatly illustrates this point: 'The third wave of democratization in the modern world began, implausibly and unwittingly, at twenty-five minutes after midnight, Thursday, April 25, 1974, in Lisbon, Portugal, when a radio station played the song "Grândola Vila Morena". [...] The April coup was an implausible beginning of a world-wide movement to democracy because coups d'état more frequently overthrow democratic regimes than introduce them. It was an unwitting beginning because the installation of democracy, much less the triggering of a global democratic movement was far from the minds of the leaders of the coup.' (Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the late Twentieth Century* [Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992], pp. 3–4). A reassessment is offered by Maria Inácia Rezola, 'The Military, 25 April and the Portuguese Transition to Democracy', *Portuguese Journal of Social Science*, 7 (2008), 3–16 (p. 3). Aside the misunderstanding of the Portuguese case, Huntington's notion and dating of a third wave does not take into account earlier events in Peru and Bolivia, which could be said to anticipate the Portuguese left-wing military intervention.

25 Alexander Wilde, 'Irruptions of Memory: Expressive Politics in Chile's Transition to Democracy', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 31 (1999), 473–500; see also Omar G. Encarnación, 'Reconciliation after Democratization: Coping with the Past in Spain', *Political Science Quarterly*, 123 (2008), 435–59 (p. 448) and Stephanie R. Golob, 'Volver: The Return of/to Transitional Justice Politics in Spain', *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 9 (2008), 127–41 (p. 128). Huyssen notes in *Present Pasts* (p. 95): 'The debate about the surfeit or even excess of memory in contemporary