

## **COMING TO TERMS WITH THE GHOSTS OF THE PAST: HISTORY AND SPECTRALITY IN CONTEMPORARY SPANISH CULTURE**

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In his 'Theses on the philosophy of history', Walter Benjamin notes that the historicist notion of history as a causal continuum links the past with the future in the sense that it subjects the past to a providentialist vision which legitimizes the victors (1992: 248). Spain has been positioned historically - and has internalized this positioning - as one of modernity's losers. I have in the past been severe in my criticism of the tendency of many Spanish intellectuals since the late nineteenth century to construct a vision of Spanish history in terms, not of what happened, but of 'what might have been' (I am thinking of Ganivet, Ortega y Gasset, Américo Castro among many others). The 'disaster' of 1898 was so traumatic, not just because Spain lost the last significant remnants of her empire, but because her defeat in the Spanish-American War signaled the end of earlier models of empire based on settlement, and their replacement by new modern forms of imperial expansion based on capitalist accumulation. The events of 1898 thus constructed Spain not just as the loser to the United States but as a loser at the game of modernity. At this millennial juncture - a time for taking stock - I should like to rethink my earlier criticism of the modern Spanish intellectual tendency to reject empirical historiography in order to locate the nation's destiny in 'lo que pudo ser' (what didn't happen but, in a just world, should have), seeing it rather as a strategy for rehabilitating the victims of history.

'Victim culture' is a concept profoundly antipathetic to the Protestant tradition, and I have to make an effort myself to overcome this antipathy. It has been noted that Spain - like the countries of Latin America - has tended to construct national monuments to heroic losers rather than to victors. The framework that allows me to propose a sympathetic reading of this construction of the national imaginary in terms of a pantheon of victims is Derrida's Specters of Marx (1994) which gives an ethical - and materialist - reading of ghosts as the return of that which history has repressed: for, as he nicely puts it, ghosts are the traces of those who were not allowed to leave a trace. Now that, at the start of the new millennium, democratic Spain has finally claimed its place as a success story in the European and international arena, there is a risk that it will now assign to oblivion the victims of the past: the widespread criticism of the 1992

quincennial celebrations for their refusal to confront the traumas of the past - at home and in Spain's former colonies - immediately comes to mind; the current 'nostalgia industry' for early Francoist culture under the Partido Popular government suggests a similar phenomenon, though nostalgia can signal a return of the repressed as well as its aestheticization. I should like in this talk to suggest that, at the same time as Spain is currently fashioning itself as a new, young, cosmopolitan postmodern nation, one can also trace a counter-tendency to engage with the past by a considerable number of writers and film directors, both older and young. Indeed, I should like to propose, tentatively, that the current postmodern obsession with simulacra may itself be seen as a return of the past in spectral form. I shall be discussing fictional works by Marsé, Llamazares and Muñoz Molina, and films by Martín Patino, Erice and Saura.

Just as there are many kinds of ghosts (I shall be talking about werewolves, vampires, Frankenstein's monster as well as the politically displaced or 'desaparecidos'), so there are various ways of dealing with them. One can refuse to see them or shut them out, as the official discourses of the State have always done with the various manifestations of the popular imaginary, where for good reasons ghost stories are endemic. One can cling to them obsessively through the pathological process of introjection that Freud called melancholia, allowing the past to take over the present and convert it into a 'living death'. Or one can offer them habitation in order to acknowledge their presence, through the healing introjection process that is mourning, which, for Freud, differs from melancholia in that it allows one to lay the ghosts of the past to rest by, precisely, acknowledging them as past. The first two options - denying the existence of ghosts, becoming possessed by them - in different ways result in a denial of history (through repression or through paralysis). The last option - accepting the past as past - is an acknowledgment of history that allows one to live with its traces. As Derrida nicely puts it in Specters of Marx, ghosts must be exorcised not in order to chase them away but in order 'this time to grant them the right . . . to . . . a hospitable memory . . . out of a concern for justice' (1994: 175). For ghosts, as the traces of those who have not been allowed to leave a trace, are by definition the victims of history who return to demand reparation; that is, that their name, instead of being erased, be honored. This concept helps explain why the ungrammatical term 'los desaparecidos' (in English, 'the disappeared'), which wrongly uses 'desaparecer' as a transitive verb, so caught the imagination at the time of the military take-overs in Chile, Argentina and Uruguay: for it constructs the dead, by virtue of the fact that they have not just 'disappeared' but have 'been disappeared', as ghosts or 'revenants' (to use the French term) who refuse to have their presence erased but insist on returning to demand

that their name be honored. Derrida has proposed the term 'hauntology' as a new philosophical category of being - a variant on ontology - appropriate to describe the status of history: that is, the past as that which is not and yet is there - or rather, here. That this 'virtual space of spectrality' (Derrida 1994: 11) is somehow related to the simulacra of postmodernism is an idea that immediately suggests itself.

In their book Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America, William Rowe and Vivian Schelling recount a startling anecdote:

There are conditions under which a massive erasure of memory can occur. A study, begun in 1985, of villas miserias (shanty towns) in Córdoba, Argentina, has revealed an absence of memory of the period of military government (1976-85), as compared with the years preceding it. This silence is not the result of fear: informants were not hesitant with information about their activities in the preceding period, details of which could equally be considered 'subversive'. Nor does it indicate a lack of knowledge, since the issue was what they remembered not about the country or the government but about their own lives (1991: 119-20).

Rowe and Schelling suggest that the reason for this traumatic erasure of memory was the lack, during the period of military dictatorship, of any form of collective sphere other than that imposed by surveillance; that is, the lack of any space in which memories could be articulated. What is so striking about this anecdote is that the casualty of this suppression of all forms of collective discourse should have been private memories. For popular memory - relying on oral rather than written transmission - requires some kind of collective space, even if it be reduced to that of the family (which is never a purely private sphere). When teaching adult Spanish students who grew up under Francoism, I have frequently been struck by the fact that the only historical knowledge they had about Spain's immediate past was transmitted to them by their families (and 'family' here means a collective, extended family network).

Interesting work has been done in France by Pierre Nora (1984-93) on the notion of 'lieux de mémoire' or 'memory places': that is, the dependence of memories on attachment to some concrete site; for example, a monument or a landscape. This concept has also been developed by Raphael Samuel in his wonderful book Theatres of Memory. The sense of place in the films of Erice or the novels of Marsé and Llamazares is extraordinarily strong - but in all cases these are spaces where the possibility of collectivity and communication is

denied or at best curtailed. One thinks of the oppressive silences in El espíritu de la colmena (1973) and El sur (1983); the image of snow blotting out the traces of landscape and with it memory in Luna de lobos (1985) and Escenas de cine mudo (1994), plus in both novels the image of the mine which forces memory underground into a disaster-prone space that threatens, and frequently causes, obliteration; while in Marsé's novels the barrio succeeds in keeping popular memory alive only in the form of dispersed, discontinuous, phantasmatic fragments. It is also worth noting that El sur and Marsé's novels focus on Andalusian migrants in the north, while Llamazares's novels deal with the Leonese maquis forced into hiding or (in Escenas de cine mudo) a series of travelers who pass through the Leonese mining village, while Llamazares is himself coming to terms with his own uprooting from his Leonese village now submerged beneath a pantano. In Beatus ille and El jinete polaco, Antonio Molina similarly recreates his fictional Mágina - modeled on his own former hometown, Ubeda - through a return to roots by his protagonists from economic exile in Madrid and New York respectively. In all these cases, there is a traumatic crisis of memory related to a geographical displacement or 'loss of place'.

In El sur, Erice's disagreement with his producer halfway through making the film resulted in the scenes due to be shot in 'the south' never being completed, with the felicitous result that, contrary to García Morales' story where Estrella goes to Seville and meets her father's former lover, in the film 'the south' remains a ghostly presence, felt but invisible. In evoking 'the south', Estrella is, of course, conjuring up the ghost of her dead Sevillian father, whose memory lives in her through the pendulum whose function is to divine the presence of that which is invisible: that is, ghosts. The film also changes the profession of her father's former lover to that of film star, reinforcing the notion of the past as ghost, for the human figure on screen is, literally, a shadow: a spectral presence that is and is not there. The cinema is also central to the topography of the barrio in Marsé's novels, where its spectral images form the basis of the construction of popular memory, allowing the past to endure as a ghostly presence that cannot be suppressed precisely because it lacks tangible form. The jumble of film images and snatches of historical memory in the adventure stories told by the boys in Si te dicen que caí (1973, authorized for publication in Spain 1976) makes the point that the status of history, particularly but not only under censorship, is that of ghost haunting the present: not there but there. The first of the family photographs on which Llamazares' Escenas de cine mudo is based consists in the young Julio standing in front of the stills outside the village cinema. It is the film stills, rather than the films themselves, that leave their trace in Marsé's work, as images of a

spectral past that, unlike official versions of history, is discontinuous, lacking in causal logic, and for that very reason offers a space to let the ghosts of the past in, allowing popular memory to elaborate the ghost stories that are the stuff of oral history. Indeed, the boys' stories in Si te dicen que caí are attempts to conjure up the ghosts of the 'desaparecidos' Marcos and Aurora/Carmen. The spectral quality of the film image is, I suggest, one of the reasons why it so 'haunts' fiction of the post-Franco era, as the expression of a history that can be recovered only in spectral form. In this sense, one could argue that even those writers who, in true postmodernist fashion, replace history with a series of film images are, despite their apparent historical evasion, at least acknowledging the existence of ghosts. The phrase 'post-Franco era', after all, defines it as a period haunted by a spectral Francoist past.

Photographs, like film stills, play an important role as images of a fragmentary, discontinuous, spectral past in Si te dicen que caí, as they do in Muñoz Molina's Beatus ille and especially El jinete polaco, in which the past emerges from the gaps in between the photographs of Ramiro Retratisa. Echoing Barthes' famous essay on photography Camera lucida (1984), Ramiro Retratisa perceives his photographs as ghostly images of the dead: 'cuando examinaba una foto recién hecha pensaba que a la larga sería, como todas, el retrato de un muerto, de modo que lo intranquilizaba siempre la molesta sospecha de no ser un fotógrafo, sino una especie de enterrador prematuro' (1991: 93). But this is the case only because the photograph has the capacity to immortalize its subjects after death, in 'una clandestina y universal resurrección de los muertos' bringing back to life 'aquellas vidas que luego no quiso nadie recordar' (1991: 495). Indeed, as the narrator's girlfriend Nadia comments, the only person who cannot be brought back from the dead is the photographer himself, absent from his photographs (1991: 499). Ramiro Retratisa's key photograph is, of course, that of the mummified body - a literal embodiment of a returning past - of the mysterious 'emparedada', stories of whose discovery 'haunted' the protagonist's childhood: a mummified corpse later replaced by a wax simulacrum, but nonetheless kept 'alive' in the collective imaginary. Similarly, history enters El espíritu de la colmena as a ghostly presence via the prewar photograph of Ana's father with Unamuno. In Escenas de cine mudo, the 'silent cinema' of the title consists in Llamazares' narrative animation of the 'stills' comprised by the family snapshots kept by his mother.

In rejecting providentialist readings of history which construct the victors as the only possible outcome, Walter Benjamin has proposed that the historian should play the role of collector or bricoleur, rummaging around in the debris left by the past, and reassembling the

fragments in a new 'constellation' that permits the articulation of that which has been left unvoiced (Benjamin 1997: 45-104; Frisby 1988: 187-265). Benjamin's historian - who looks for significance in fragments and details normally overlooked - is a historian of popular culture: that is, of trivia - for it is trivia that give us the 'structure of feeling' that Raymond Williams saw as the key to understanding a particular period of history. Benjamin is to cultural history what Eisenstein is to film: that is, the theorist of montage. According to Benjamin's theory of cultural history as montage, the historian not only collects bits of rubble from amid the ruins of the past, but reduces the past to ruins and rubble - that is, broken bits and pieces - so it can be reassembled to create new meanings through the dialectical confrontation of fragments that normally are separate. One thinks here of the anarchist leader Durruti's magnificent reply to a foreign journalist during the Civil War: 'We're not afraid of ruins' (cited by Cleminson in Graham and Labanyi 1995: 117). The historian's task is thus, not to put the uprooted fragments of the past back into their context, but to decontextualize even that which has not been reduced to ruins and rubble, allowing new relationships to be created. This, one may note, is exactly what the boys do with their *aventis* in Marsé's *Si te dicen que caí*, and what the protagonist and Nadia do as they rummage through the photographs and other objects in the trunk of the now dead Ramiro Retratista in Muñoz Molina's *El jinete polaco*. As excavator of ruins and 'rubbish collector', Benjamin's cultural historian is a topographer, but one who defamiliarizes the maps made by official surveyors (whose function is to put everything in its 'proper place') in order to create an alternative, phantasmagorical topography that can recover, not just things, but the dreams and desires attached to them which did not find realization as 'fact': that is, popular history. Another image used by Benjamin is that of the photographer who produces a photographic negative of 'normality', in which light and dark are reversed (this, one may note, reduces human figures to ghosts), and who can focus on a detail, or extract a detail and amplify it, destroying illusory official notions of history as continuity and allowing that which is normally overlooked to speak. Benjamin saw this as a materialist history, but it is also a history that, in acknowledging that which is normally rendered invisible (what Benjamin calls the 'optical unconscious'), gives habitation to ghosts.

Ghosts, as Avery Gordon notes in her suggestive book *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, give 'embodiment' to those figures from the past who have been rendered invisible; that is, 'desaparecidos'. Likewise Benjamin's dialectical method of montage 'animates' the fragmentary debris of history. Animation is precisely what Llamazares does to the snapshots that form the basis of *Escenas de cine mudo*, and also what Marsé does to the

reproduction of Torrijos's execution on the carpet in Si te dicen que caí: in turning photographs and the figure in the carpet into a form of silent cinema, they are giving the past a ghostly embodiment. Animation and montage are the cinematic techniques used by Basilio Martín Patino in his historical documentary films Canciones para después de una guerra (1971, authorized for release 1975) and Caudillo (1976), which construct an alternative history through the articulation of popular memory, combining voice-over personal memories with a varied range of cultural trivia (advertisements, comics, and above all popular film and song) intercut with newsreel footage which concentrates on images of the debris of war and, above all, of the 'desaparecidos' leaving for exile. The popular songs sing overwhelmingly of loss and absence, conjuring up the ghosts of history who have been rendered invisible. Patino's brilliant use of superimpositions and dissolves give the human figures in the documentary footage a ghostly quality appropriate to this evocation of the 'disappeared', and reducing Franco and other official figures to the same ghostly status. But as ghosts, both the victims and the victors of history are a living presence that we are forced to acknowledge: the animation of newsreel footage or children's comics depicting Franco not only makes him ridiculous but reminds us that ghosts can be placated only if their presence is recognized. For these two films, Patino did a huge amount of archival work, 'digging up' in Berlin previously unknown film footage in an excavation of popular memory that Benjamin would surely have admired. Worthy of Benjamin also is Patino's dialectical concept of montage which intercuts sequences moving in different directions (from right to left, from left to right), in a rapid succession of visual fragments lifted out of context and reorganized into a new constellation releasing alternative meanings. It is worth noting that Caudillo opens with an evocative sequence of ruins, including human ruins, left by the Civil War, leading directly into a pictorial representation of Franco, thereby constructed as a specter inhabiting the ruins of the past.

For ruins are the favorite habitat of ghosts. The boys in Si te dicen que caí conjure up the ghosts of the past in the ruins of the crypt of the appropriately named church Las Ánimas, also frequented by Rosita in the later novella Ronda del Guinardó (1984). The fugitive or 'desaparecido' in El espíritu de la colmena materializes as an apparition from an unknown past in a ruined, abandoned hut. As Paul Julian Smith has noted (2000: 34-5), Erice's film insists on the time-ravaged texture of walls and faces, giving both things and adult humans the quality of ruins: that is, relics haunted by the memory of the past. Like Benjamin, Raphael Samuel describes the historian of popular memory as a rubbish collector 'scavenging among what others are busy engaged in throwing out or consigning to the

incinerator' (1994: 20). The American historian of popular culture, Greil Marcus, in his collection of essays The Dustbin of History, bewails the contemporary tendency, in our obsession with the new, to scorn the past, as in phrases such as 'It's history' which, as he notes, is a kind of contagious 'language-germ' that means the opposite of what it says: 'It means that there is no such thing as history, a past of burden and legacy' for 'once something . . . is "history", it's over, and it is understood that it never existed at all' - 'Gone - it's history' (1994: 22-23). As he comments, 'The result is a kind of euphoria, a weightless sense of freedom'. Marcus notes that the phrase 'dustbin of history' was coined by Trotsky in 1917 when he said of the Mensheviks: 'you are bankrupts; your role is played out. Go where you belong from now on - into the dustbin of history'. Since then, as Marcus wryly notes, we have been busy consigning history's losers to the 'dustbin of history' in our mania for recording only success stories and our embarrassment at the existence of losers who contradict our Western obsession with progress. Marcus's essays in popular history are an attempt to write from inside the dustbin of history; that is, from inside the 'historical hell' to which history's losers are assigned as ghostly 'shades' or 'shadows' - a dustbin or hell which is 'a wasteland in which all are distant from each other, because this is a territory, unlike history, without any borders at all - without any means to a narrative, a language with which to tell a story' (1994: 18). As Marcus puts it: 'written history, which makes the common knowledge out of which our newspapers report the events of the day, creates its own refugees, displaced persons, men and women without a country, cast out of time, the living dead' (1994: 17). What makes these 'refugees from history' (one thinks of the refugee in El espíritu de la colmena, who leaps from a train, a classic image of history as progress) the 'living dead' is the fact that they are denied memory: not only because their story is not recorded by others, but because 'the shame of stories they cannot tell and that no one would believe if they could' means that they 'can barely credit even their own memories' (1994: 20). It is crucial that the refugee in El espíritu de la colmena has no articulated or articulatable past. It is also important that, in Beatus ille, we have no way of knowing how much of the historical reconstruction we are reading is the account of the officially dead Solana - who 'appears' to the protagonist Minaya in a cemetery - and how much of the narrative is written by Minaya. The novel's final postmodern twist, in which Solana reveals that he has trapped his biographer Minaya in his own narrative, but in which he also bequeaths his text (and his lover Inés) to Minaya, to be completed by him, foregrounds the impossibility of history's losers making public their own historical accounts, and the ethical imperative of future generations taking up their ghostly legacy, as an act of historical reparation.

As Marcus insists, the stories of such 'refugees from history' do not make sense; they puncture the continuity of what we take for history as if they were 'stories told by cranks' (1994: 37). Marcus notes that thriller writers have been able to capture the horror of the Holocaust in a way that historians rarely have, because they are not bent on explaining it; as Marcus comments, one does not explain an abyss, one locates it (1994: 59-62). It is the strong sense of place in Erice's films and Marsé's novels that captures the horror of a historical period traumatized by the prohibition on recalling the past through memory and narrative. Marsé's novels are 'stories told by cranks', while Erice's films are focalized through the eyes of female children or adolescents who have not yet learnt to explain horror away. Marcus has Walter Benjamin in mind when he warns us to 'Beware of the smooth surface of history, looking backwards, making everything make sense', because 'It made no sense at the time, like a random series of jump cuts' (1994: 18): the first time Erice shows us the ruined hut where the 'desaparecido' will materialize from nowhere, he does so through a series of jump cuts. In El jinete polaco, the protagonist compares his experience of history to that of watching a film lacking in continuity editing (1991: 247) or where the images succeed each other so fast that one loses the thread and cannot make out the connections (1991: 248); his reconstruction of the past, as he attempts to fill in the gaps between Ramiro Retratista's photographs, highlights these discontinuities rather than ironing them out. Here Muñoz Molina conforms to Marcus's insistence on the need to counter the deceptive seamlessness of what goes down as history (what he calls 'history as disappearance'), which edits out the bits that do not fit the master narrative of success stories, by letting in through the cracks and disturbances (through the jump cuts) those parts of history that 'survive only as haunts and fairy tales, accessible only as specters and spooks' (1994: 24). El jinete polaco 'resurrects' a past kept alive through the ghost stories told to the narrator as a child, just as Beatus ille literally 'resurrects' its hero Solana, officially declared dead by the Civil Guard in the 1940s. Marcus's epigraphs include the Sex Pistols' line 'We're the flowers in your dustbin' and Bakhtin's dictum 'Nothing is absolutely dead; every meaning will have its homecoming festival'.

Bakhtin, of course, is the chronicler of the popular cultural forms that, from the Renaissance onwards, were gradually forced underground by the growing division between 'high' and 'low' cultural forms. In writing from inside the 'dustbin of history', Marcus is constructing an alternative history from discontinuous fragments of popular culture: pop music, pop art and popular literary forms such as the thriller. In much the same way, Patino's Canciones creates a discontinuous alternative history out of snatches of popular song, rescued from the dustbin to which popular culture is so often consigned and recycled to

form a 'usable past'; indeed, the film shows how, in 'los años del hambre', history's losers themselves recycled songs from earlier periods or songs written by the victors, investing them with alternative meanings as a strategy for coping with loss and bereavement. Snatches of popular song are also woven into the 'aventis' or stories told by the boys in Si te dicen que caí, whose leader is Java, a 'traperero' who recycles rubbish; indeed, many of the stories are told in his 'trapería', which is also reputedly the hideout of the 'desaparecido' Marcos, quite literally walled up in the 'dustbin of history' (one thinks here also of the 'emparedada', another of history's losers, in El jinete polaco). Images of rubbish and of hell run throughout Si te dicen que caí and Ronda del Guinardó; I would read these images not just as signs of moral and physical degradation, but as a metaphorical figure of the consignment of history's losers to the 'dustbin of history' which at the same time is a 'historical hell' inhabited by the living dead.

Which brings me to vampires, werewolves and other forms of the 'undead'. In chapter 21 of Si te dicen que caí, on the pretext of Luisito's death from tuberculosis, the boys tell the story of his visit to the Siamese Consulate, at the time of his father's second 'disappearance', where his mother has been summoned to receive news of 'un hermano desaparecido en la guerra'. The boys recount this episode in the form of a vampire story, which mobilizes the genre's diverse connotations. [1].

Just before this vampire story starts, we are told of the tramp Mianet's stories of 'niños que raptaban para chuparles la sangre': a 'story told by a crank' which 'explains' the prevalence of tuberculosis in 'los años del hambre' as the vampirism of the poor by wealthy who, in drawing blood from kidnapped children to prolong their own live, turn them too into vampires who waste away for lack of lifeblood. The same popular explanation of tuberculosis is related in Muñoz Molina's El jinete polaco (1991: 77). Such popular 'explanations' does not explain horror away; indeed, what could be more appropriate to capture the horror of the immediate postwar period than a horror story? True to form, the vampire in the boys' story appears to the tubercular Luisito immediately after he coughs up blood. It has been noted that stories of vampires (and of the kidnapping of children for organ transplants) have been rife in Peru and other parts of South America in recent years as a way of dealing with historical trauma (Kraniauskas 1998). The notion of the wealthy (particularly the moneylender) as vampires draining the poor is an old one, evidenced in Galdós's La desheredada where Juan Bou calls the rich 'sanguijuelas del pueblo'. [2]. El Tuerto, with his vampire-like dead eye, drains Luisito not just of his lifeblood but 'también la memoria le vaciaron, el pobre nunca más llegó a acordarse de nada' (1976: 319). For vampires are the 'living

dead' because they have no memory (and thus no shadow or reflection): the disease with which Luisito is infected is that of the amnesia of the regime, which the boys' stories, keeping the 'desaparecidos' alive through narrative, are an attempt to stave off. It is loss of historical memory that allows the boys' fathers to degenerate from urban guerrillas into petty criminals. Vázquez Montalbán (1980) has also described the effects of Francoist repression and censorship as a 'vampirización de la memoria'. Sarnita, the chief teller of 'aventis', in later life becomes a morgue attendant, who accompanies the dead in their historical underworld, keeping their memory alive through his own remembrance.

As all writers on the subject insist, vampires are close relatives of the werewolf: both predators on the living who are human and yet non-human. Vampire stories are complicated because the vampire turns his victims into vampires too; indeed, many vampire stories express pity for the vampire who is condemned to a living death (in Si te dicen que caí, El Tuerto has become a vampire because he previously was the victim of torture at the hands of Marcos and Aurora). Llamazares' Luna de lobos casts in the role of werewolf the rural guerrillas forced into clandestinity in the Cantabrian mountains after the civil war: predatory loners not of their own choosing. If the vampire has no memory, Llamazares's werewolves depend on memory: not their own but that of the collective in the form of the villagers and the Civil Guards who, out of love or terror, keep them alive as ghosts of the past through the stories they tell about them. In struggling to survive in the snow, the maquis are struggling against the threat of oblivion (whiteness/blankness). Greil Marcus laments the recent prevalence of apocalyptic narratives that assign the past to 'history' in the sense of non-existence. It is important that Llamazares's novel is open-ended: the last of the maquis is expelled from the memory of his loved ones in the village and is left with no alternative but to 'disappear' into exile, but at the end of the novel he is still alive and, most importantly, is telling his story.

The centrality to El espíritu de la colmena of Frankenstein's monster has been much commented on. While the monster has mostly been seen as an embodiment of the 'otherness' which the Franco regime sought to repress by demonizing it - an association made explicit by Ana's equation of the monster with the refugee or 'desaparecido' - it has also been connected with Ana's father, seen as an embodiment of patriarchal authority (Evans 1982). Ana's father's connection with the monster is clear from the scene when he is filmed via his shadow in a retake of Murnau's classic vampire film Nosferatu. But there are problems with this interpretation, not so much because it casts the monster in the role of both victim and oppressor (we have seen how

vampires are both), as because Ana's father - played by Fernando Fernán Gómez who, although never a political activist, had since the 1950s moved in opposition cultural circles - is a kindly figure, whose prewar association with Unamuno casts him as a Republican intellectual. I should like to suggest a different reading of the monster image in the film, whereby he represents not so much the demonization of the 'other' as their assignment to the status of 'living dead': Frankenstein created his monster out of body parts taken from a collection of corpses. In this sense, the monster stands as the embodiment, which returns to haunt the present, of a collective living death, which includes Ana's father as Republican intellectual denied self-expression except through his private diary, just as Ana's mother can tell her story only through letters to a 'desaparecido' or ghost. There is no suggestion in the film that the fugitive is Ana's mother's former lover, but they both share the condition of being ghosts of history. In offering the fugitive hospitality, Ana is carrying out Derrida's moral imperative of granting ghosts 'the right . . . to . . . a hospitable memory . . . out of a concern for justice' - indeed, by giving him her father's watch, she is reinserting him into historical time. Ana is right to see the fugitive as the embodiment of the monster in James Whale's film for, as we have seen, films do not so much represent reality as embody it in the form of shadows or ghosts. Appropriately, the body of the 'desaparecido' is laid out beneath the screen where the film Frankenstein had previously been shown. As in Patino's Canciones, El espíritu de la colmena insists on shots of the cinema audience watching the shadows on the screen, showing how ghosts are given embodiment in the collective memory which, after the show is over, can continue to tell their story.

The final words of the film, 'Soy Ana', have encouraged readings which minimize its political significance by seeing it as a Freudian narrative of Ana's oedipal trajectory, as she learns to separate from parental figures and establish an autonomous identity. Avery Gordon, in her book Ghostly Matters (1997: 50-8), notes that Freud, while acknowledging the importance of haunting in his work on mourning and melancholia, nevertheless dehistoricizes it by theorizing it as a psychological projection. Indeed, she observes that Freud's early anthropological reading of spirits as a form of animism, whereby men introject the dead into themselves in the form of totemism, was leading him towards a historical theory of hauntology, but that he stepped back from this (just as he stepped back from acknowledging that his female patients were the victims of real seduction by the father), instead positing ghosts as a purely imaginary externalization of the inner contents of the unconscious. Derrida makes similar points about Marx's use of spectral imagery to figure the psychological projection that is bourgeois ideology (1994: 171-2). Gordon and Derrida insist

that ghosts are not psychic projections, but the form in which the past lives on in the present. In this sense, Gordon insists that haunting is 'neither pre-modern superstition nor individual psychosis' but 'a constituent element of modern social life' (1997: 7). Faced with such a phenomenon, sociology - traditionally based on facts and statistics - does not know what to do and thus has joined the censors by insisting that ghosts do not exist. How, Avery asks, 'do we reckon with what modern history has rendered ghostly? How do we develop a critical language to describe and analyze the affective, historical, and mnemonic structures of such hauntings?' (1997: 18). Her answer is found through readings of literature: Luisa Valenzuela's narratives of the 'desaparecidos', Toni Morrison's stories of the returning ghosts of earlier generations of black slaves. I suggest that Erice's representation of Frankenstein's monster likewise makes the point that ghosts, while they require remembrance in human consciousness, have an objective existence as the embodiment of the past in the present. As Derrida reminds us, ghosts are not just the object of the gaze for they look at and summon us (1994: 7). This point is made by the culminating sequence in *El espíritu de la colmena* in which Frankenstein's monster appears to Ana, and in which something extremely important happens. The sequence starts with the subjective point-of-view shot so characteristic of the film, which constructs the monster as a psychic projection of Ana; but as it slips into a re-take of the scene from James Whale's *Frankenstein* - seen earlier in the film by us and Ana - in which the monster appears to the little girl by the lake, the camera suddenly changes position, filming both Ana and the monster from behind, from an objective vantage-point that belongs to no character. Thus the monster cannot be explained away as a projection of Ana's fantasy: it is 'really there'. Or rather, as befits a ghost of the past, it is and is not there, for it is a cinematic shadow: intangible but nonetheless embodied. The monster is thus a perfect illustration of the ontological (hauntological) status of history in the present.

In *Ghostly Matters*, Gordon condemns the hypervisibility and superficiality of contemporary postmodern culture: 'No shadows, no ghosts' (1997: 16). But in fact the recent burst of writing on hauntology is related to 'the return of the real' which some critics (notably Hal Foster in the book of that title) have proclaimed as the underside of the postmodern emphasis on simulacra. For the ghost is an embodiment of the real in the form of the simulacrum; which is to say that postmodernity's conversion of reality into simulacra does not after all mean the death of history but its return in a spectral form. The term Hal Foster gives to this phenomenon is 'traumatic realism' or, using a Lacanian pun, 'troumatic realism' in the sense of a 'trou' or gap in reality, for Lacan defines the traumatic as a missed encounter with the

real (1996: 130, 132, 136). Ghosts are, precisely, the 'might have beens' of history that return as an actualizable, embodied alternative reality. Fredric Jameson says something similar with his suggestive phrase 'Spectrality is . . . what makes the present waver' (Gordon 1997: 168); that is, it opens up a hole in reality as we like to think we know it. As the monster appears to Ana, it troubles her image (his image) in the water, opening up a hole in comfortable notions of what is self and what is out there, what is present and what is an apparition of the past. Derrida insists that, just as there is a mode of production of the commodity, so there is 'a mode of production of the phantom', through the process of mourning which, unlike melancholia which has no direct object, is always triggered by a trauma (1994: 97). Hal Foster reminds us that the word 'trauma' means 'wound' (1996: 153): when the 'desaparecido' disappears out of Ana's life, he leaves behind the tangible evidence of the blood from his wounds. The wounds of the dead body which we and Rosita confront at the end of Ronda del Guinardó do not help establish the victim's identity but nevertheless provide tangible evidence of the historical fact of repression.

Haunting, as Gordon puts it, is the result of 'improperly buried bodies' (1997: 16): that of the unclaimed torture victim in Ronda del Guinardó whom the police want to see 'dead and buried' in the sense of consigned to oblivion; that of the unknown fugitive in El espíritu de la colmena; that of the 'emparedada' in El jinete polaco, or that of the officially dead Solana in Beatus ille; that of the 'desparecidos' evoked in the songs and images of Canciones para después de una guerra; that of the miners buried beneath the slagheaps in Escenas de cine mudo. But what should one do with improperly buried bodies: give them proper burial, or learn to live with their ghosts? Derrida advocates the second option: a 'being-with specters' that is a 'politics of memory, of inheritance, and of generations' (1994: xix). In El jinete polaco, the 'emparedada' and the doctor don Mercurio (described in his old age as a living corpse) are revealed at the end to be the protagonist's great great grandparents, thus inserting the ghosts of the past into the family. The narrator's girlfriend Nadia inherits Ramiro Retratista's photographs from her recently deceased father, again stressing the importance of personal inheritance. As Barthes notes (1984: 7), the photographs that most move us are family photographs. El espíritu de la colmena, El sur and Si te dicen que caí rely on family photographs to bring back to life a past - that of the Republic and the Civil War - that has been consigned to oblivion. The structuring of Escenas de cine mudo around the photographs in the family album assembled by the narrator's mother, inherited by him on her death, provides an image of history as discontinuous fragments held together by personal inheritance, just as the text of Beatus ille is made possible by Minaya's acceptance of the officially dead Solana's legacy, in the

form of his story or voice. In El jinete polaco, it is the protagonist's postmodern profession as international interpreter - secondhand transmitter of a global Babel of voices - that enables him to respond to the summons of the ghosts of the past, which, via Ramiro Retratista's photographs, beckon him back to the historical roots he had attempted to leave behind him. The novel's first part is titled 'El reino de las voces', for to hear voices is analogous to seeing ghosts. But ghosts cannot make their own voice heard: they rely on an interpreter to speak for them. The postmodern stress on the impossibility of direct access to the past may be a response to the ubiquitousness of the media, advertising and heritage industries, which convert history into a consumer commodity; but it can also be seen as a recognition of the spectral quality of the traces left by the past on the present, and of the particular need to bear witness to 'the traces of those who were not allowed to leave a trace'; namely, ghosts. In a country that has emerged from forty years of cultural repression, the task of making reparation to the ghosts of the past - that is, to those relegated to the status of living dead, denied voice and memory - is considerable. Derrida's notion that history occupies in the present a 'virtual space of spectrality' abolishes the supposed opposition between postmodernism and history, for history is always a 'virtual' rather than 'empirical' reality. The fact that Spain returned to democracy at the height of the postmodern vogue for 'virtual reality' should not necessarily be bemoaned as having prevented an engagement with the past. Perhaps instead we should consider the ways in which postmodernism, by breaking with empiricist concepts of mimesis, allows us to recognize the existence and importance of ghosts.

To try out this idea, I should like to end with a literal ghost story, El amor brujo, in Saura's postmodern film version of 1986. This is the drama of a woman haunted by the ghost of her murdered husband: the ghost as embodied memory. The film starts with the sight and sounds of the outside world being shut out as the door to the post-industrial site where the film is being shot comes clanking down; for the rest of the film we remain in the 'virtual space' of this post-industrial site, whose empty interior mimics an 'outdoors' in the form of a gypsy shanty town on the edge of the city. Although we never re-emerge from this 'virtual space', it is punctuated by the off screen sounds of the approaching police sirens at the climactic moment when Candela's husband José is stabbed to death and the man who loves her, Carmelo, is wrongly arrested for his murder: as Fredric Jameson has notoriously insisted, history - even though it cannot be directly represented - will always intrude for 'History is what hurts' (1981: 102). As befits the reappearance in the present of a traumatic event, the ghostly status of the otherwise solidly embodied José is signified by the bloodstain from his stab wound; in order to summon him, Candela

dons the jumper stained with his blood at the moment of his death. José's ghost appears from a gap in the mounds of post-industrial debris which construct the *mise-en-scène* as a postmodern landscape in the double sense of a self-consciously stylish simulacrum and the product of late capitalism, while also referring to the gypsies' historical marginal status as chatarreros (scrap merchants). The 'virtual reality' of José's ghost is thus a form of 'traumatic realism' (the wound as the mark of history), which is also a 'traumatic realism' (emerging through a gap in the *mise-en-scène* from a space beyond representation). At first, only Candela (and the privileged film spectator) can see the ghost of José; by the end of the film, he is visible to all those present within the diegesis. To start with, it is José's ghost that summons Candela; by the end of the film, she and the collective are summoning him. But what of Lucía's sacrifice, as she 'lays the past to rest' by going with José to the land of the dead, leaving Candela and Carmelo free to live the future? Is this a call for the historical amnesia that some would say characterized the neo-liberal market policies of the Socialist period under which the film was made? Or is it a recognition that one cannot move into the future until one has acknowledged the ghosts of the past? I will not attempt to answer that question but will merely observe that the film's end, while acknowledging the embodied reality of José's ghost, assigns Lucía, as female sacrificial victim, to a limbo from which there is no suggestion that she will return. José's ghost represents the return of the male victim of history, whose acknowledgement allows Carmelo finally to possess Candela. Lucía, it seems, is denied the status of historical revenant for she is represented, not as a victim of history, but as a woman who has 'chosen' self-erasure. The male José's death leaves behind a traumatic memory; the female Lucía's exit from history consigns the past to oblivion. But, by talking about her and showing you the end of the film, I can bring her back and acknowledge her role as a victim, not of history perhaps, but of Saura.

## Notes

1. For an exploration of the symbolic potential of the vampire genre, see Gelder 1999.
2. Tannahill (1996: 167-88) shows that the vampire myth, often but not only in this sense, predates its nineteenth-century literary manifestations by several centuries in the popular imagination, notably in the 'vampire epidemic' that swept Hungary, Moravia, Silesia and Poland in the late seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries.

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