FROM THE THEATER OF POLITICS
TO THE SPECTACLE OF THE NATIONAL IN SPAIN'S SILVER AGE

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FROM THE THEATER OF POLITICS TO THE SPECTACLE OF THE NATIONAL IN SPAIN'S SILVER AGE

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The present work examines how modern technologies of vision, representation, and display inflected modern notions and practices of political and aesthetic "representation," as suggested by the Spanish *representación.* Through the works of Santiago Ramón y Cajal, Federico García Lorca, and Josep Maria de Sagarra I trace the progressive intertwining of science, theater, and politics between 1906 and 1931, a period that roughly coincides with the Spanish *Edad de Plata,* with the democratization of the modern nation-state, with the *reteatralización* of Spanish theater, and with the increasing mechanization of life and work under modern conditions**.** The authors selected all partake in their cultural milieu and the project of nationalization of culture, yet, they also occupy a peripheral position with respect to both. Most importantly, as I demonstrate in the dissertation, they all converge in considering theatricality and the spectacular as distinctively modern modes of understanding, engaging, and constructing reality.

The central argument is threefold: (1) that these authors foreground the *theater* and *theatricality* as fundamental paradigms of signification under modernity (2) that, because the theater and theatricality are rooted in the materiality of their medium (i.e., the architectural and economic apparatus as well as the body), they counter the dematerialization of the body associated with the increasing spectacularization of modern life and politics, and (3) that the body is not only the terrain where competing views are negotiated, but also the site where specificity (or imperfection) is inscribed and preserved, through representation and mediation.

Given the complexity of the phenomenon under analysis, I deploy an interdisciplinary methodology that incorporates texts of philosophy, aesthetics, political theory, science and the sociology of science, history, and visual studies. Particularly relevant are old and current views on theatricality (Walter Benjamin, Susan Sontag, Alain Badiou, William Egginton) that rethink subjectivity, presence, and space in ways that resist ontological sedimentation while reflecting on the different viewer and aesthetic reception envisioned by theater compared to film or the spectacle. Also central recent (and non) investigations on the relation between science, representation, objectivity, and gender (Helen Longino, Evelyn Fox Keller, Barbara Stafford, Bruno Latour, Karin Knorr-Cetina).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Loredana Comparone holds a B.A. and M.A. in Hispanic Literatures from Brigham Young University and a Ph.D. in Romance Studies from Cornell University with a focus on Spanish peninsular literature. Her research focuses on 19th-21st century peninsular literature and culture, visual studies, and theater (both in Catalan and Castilian). She is particularly interested in issues of representation, both political and aesthetic, and in the intersection between literature and the built environment. She has also researched Spanish film and co-productions, both European and transatlantic.

Ai miei genitori e al sole del Mediterraneo

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INTRODUCTION

The Man Who 'Saw it All'

"No hay más." "Ya no hay más." There are no lab rats left to continue with the experiments. No more rats from Illinois. It is a crisis, but not the first. Although it is difficult to interpret what the slide is showing, it is clearly cancerous. With a clear sense of urgency Luis Martín-Santos begins his diagnosis of Spain in *Tiempo de silencio* (1961). The country experiences the contradiction of a chronic condition of scarcity which paralyzes the economy as well as the proliferation of warped economic and social underground practices, a situation comparable to the spreading of a cancer colonizing a body with mere debris. The situation is the result of a modernization gone awry, a process that Martín-Santos traces back to the critical stages of the formation of the nation-state during the last quarter of the 19th century. During the "noche sabática" of the Francoist frozen time, "El retrato del hombre de la barba…que *lo vio todo* y que liberó al pueblo ibero de su inferioridad nativa ante la ciencia, escrutador e inmóvil, presidiendo la falta de cobayas" looks down over the protagonist (Martín-Santos 7, emphasis mine). The eyes haunting what appears to be a never ending nightmare are those of Santiago Ramón y Cajal, the scientist who committed his life to proving the existence of what remained invisible to the human eye even when aided by the microscope. Experimenting with dyes and photographic techniques, Cajal discovered that neurons are contiguous discrete elements separated by synapses, which finally disproved the reticular theory (that rejected the possibility of synaptic gaps) and won for him the Nobel Prize in 1906.[1] This important scientific advance

[1] Cajal shared the Nobel with the Italian Camillo Golgi who had experimented with these innovative techniques.

occurred indeed at a crossroads moment for Spain, which was attempting to regain a leading role on the European scene, also thanks to the most famous scientist of that time.

The radical spatial and political reorganization initiated by the process of independentization of the colonies and reinforced by the disaster of '98, and the 'loss' of the object of perception and contemplation (an Imperial Spain to project onto a new international scenario), had intensified the feeling of uneasiness among artists, intellectuals, and political leaders with respect to the *décalage* that existed between the perceived reality and its representations. The most diverse cultural sectors felt the urgent need for a new concept of representation that would meet the expectations generated by modern life.[2] Representation therefore becomes a "*concepto bisagra"* (Palti), or a hinge-concept, which pivots between incommensurable discourses, thus functioning as a nucleus of condensation for broader historical and conceptual questions, which in the wake of liberalism begin to be viewed in a new light. Who is the subject of representation? What relation is maintained with the object of representation? What new languages or codes are needed to express this relation? Who are the 'people' and on what basis can one 'speak for' them, or for the nation? What are the groups, interests and ideas that will contribute to envisioning the community and state? Finally, what are the mechanisms and organizing principles on which to build? As recent historiographical reinterpretations of late 19th and early 20th century Spain show, the imprint left by liberalism on the conceptualization of representation and the model for the modern state was much more significant than traditional views have granted it, and continue to grant it. However fragmented

[2] Terms such as 'modernity' and 'modern' are difficult to pin down, which explains why in the last decade publications proceeding from the most diverse fields have coined terms such as "belated," "uneven," "peripheral," "divergent," "recalcitrant," "queer," "gleaning," "transnational," or "alter" modernity, jus to mention a few. The commonality is a view of modernity as a paradoxical cultural and institutional phenomenon, a view that I share. In the present investigation, 'modernity' refers to a chronological phase inaugurated at end of the 19th century and that roughly runs parallel to the process of modernization and democratization of Spain.

and muddled it may be, this political philosophy was critical in leading Spain to engage European debates on democratic representation.

Political and cultural sectors with different affiliations agreed on the need to create a national image, or rather of competing images, that would 'authentically' visualize an increasingly composite national reality, which was the outcome of coeval cultural and political transformations occurring in Europe and the Americas on the one hand, and of the emergence of regionalist and nationalistic movements in Spain on the other. "The problem of Spain," as some critics called it at the time, originated in a crisis of representation, a cleavage between the reality of a stumbling nation-state and its frustrated imperialistic dreams. Although Spain retained its African territories, in fact it was the transatlantic colonies that continued to hold symbolic value in the national and cultural imaginary, partly because the ties to the 'dark' continent contributed, on the symbolic level, to feeding the perception of the cultural backwardness of Spain. [3] At the same time, scientific and technological advances acted as catalysts for the irruption of the invisible. Microscopic organic and inorganic organisms and minute particles passed the threshold of visibility while non-invasive explorations of the human body opened the way to a whole new physiological reality that called out to be mapped. At the socio-political level, the irruption of the invisible materialized in the emergence of new social and political popular forces and political philosophies. Both of these new realities contributed to disrupting the status quo and compelled a reassessment of "the distribution of the sensible" (Rancière 18)[4] along with the principles and mechanisms of its representation.

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[3] In "No todo se perdió en Cuba," Brad Epps examines the problematic status of the African colonies within the Spanish cultural imaginary well into the 1960s.

[4] For Ranciére it is the outcome of competing forces that shape the visible, sayable, audible, and possible forms within a community through the synergistic interaction of aesthetics and politics, bonded, as they are, by their common implicating of the body, speech, and the visible (18). Rather than an archeology, Ranciére presents a horizontal analysis of the sensible, an approach he believes better suited to display the dissenting forces that

The task was an urgent one. As evoked at the beginning of this introduction, Martín-Santos's novel opens with an emergency call to the protagonist: the histological laboratory has run out of a special kind of rat from Illinois, essential to continuing the experiments on cancer. Awakened by the call, the protagonist slowly incorporates himself in reality, to finally awaken to the sight of Cajal's portrait hanging on the wall. As the emblematic scientist struggling with cultural and economic scarcity, the presence of Cajal at the opening of the novel immediately links the challenging situation of *fin-de-siècle* Spain to that of the Francoist era. The autarchic Spain of the 1950s is the product of a castrated growth and a modernization forced upon the country, with the Illinois rats signifying the dependence of Spain on foreign capital, resources, and knowledge. While Cajal had striven for the independence of Spanish science and individual thought—both paramount to his personal and public enterprise as noted in his *Reglas*—Martín-Santos places in front of the eyes of his protagonist (and audience) the image of a country prostrated by an *illusionary* progress. Gone are the rats keeping up the appearance of ongoing scientific work and the promise of future discoveries. All that is left are the slums and the misery of a life devoted to mere survival, both of which are superbly condensed in the grotesque image of the home-made rats' nursery improvised on the breasts of Amador's daughter in the *chabola.*[5] Ironically, contrary to common rats, which reproduce uncontrollably much like the invasive spreading of a tumor, the cancer-engineered Illinois rats (symbols of rationalized and

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intervene in "the distribution of the sensible." By the same token, what remains outside of body, speech, and the visible grants its each autonomy (18).

[5] This image evokes the link theorized between 'low cancer' and 'high cancer' strains to prove the virulence of the disease. Studies on transmissible breast cancer in mice during the 1940s and 1950s stressed the viral origin of cancer. Thus, "In 1933 John Bittner from the Jakson Laboratory observed that if female mice from a 'low cancer' strain were nursed by mothers from a 'high cancer' strain they developed breast cancer, just like the females of the 'high cancer' strain," ultimately identifying in 1948 a virus as the 'milk factor'" (Löwy 472-73). During the second part of the 20th century, viral studies on carcinogenesis catalyzed the shift from seeing cancer as a cellular disease to seeing it as a "problem of genetic information" (476). On the history of perception of cancer see Ilana Löwy. "Cancer. The Century of the Transformed Cell." *Science in the Twentieth Century.* Australia: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997.

technological progress) are nearly impossible to reproduce, except in the surreal conditions of the *chabola.* While the national economy is cut off from the international market—here also alluding to the scientific network studying carcinogenesis—and has almost reached a stage of homeostasis, 'production' is virtually restricted to the black market. The rats are a phantasmagoric source of cure for a metastasized society: the specters of a modernization whose side effect has been the transformation of Madrid, and Spain as a whole, into a *basurero,* a garbage heap.

The contrast Martín-Santos presents is absolutely staggering. The pathological metastasis of *Tiempo de silencio* shares no resemblance to the swarming of organisms at which Cajal would have stared for hours under his microscope. Despite all of its limitations, in fact, Cajal's cultural and political milieu overflowed with intellectual ideas, hopes, and opportunities, unlike the totalitarian Spain described by Martín-Santos. Framed as it is by the reference to Cajal, *Tiempo de silencio* expresses the return of that which was kept 'outside of the brackets' of the technical vision of the 19th century liberal project of modernization and has assumed a grotesque form under the totalitarian state. The relation between past and present becomes one of contradiction: rather than the emergent scientist, Martín-Santos and his protagonist represent the residue, or the debris, of what was once believed a possibility, while the literaturized Cajal—as his public persona—is turned into the emblem of liberal individualism first, and of the myth of Spain's genius under a proto-authoritarian regime second. The scientist became in fact Spain's currency to access a much desired international market, suggesting to a critic the phrase "la cajalización de España" to describe the process of the internationalization of Spanish science.[6]

[6] D.J. O'Connors speaks of the double image of the scientist: the "national" Cajal who put Spain back onto the international map—an achievement appropriated to transform his science into a "national project" disregarding his unorthodox stance—and Cajal as symbol of the "ideas disolventes," who critically reads his time and his peers (111-12). The phrase "canalización de España" was instead coined by Leoncio López-Ocón Cabrera to refer to what he

Science, as José Ortega y Gasset would put it, was to serve as the "cordón umbilical" [umbilical cord] to Europe. For the proto-authoritarian Spain, Cajal was instead the proof that 'national' progress was the making of great men and great achievements.

Reacting to a mythified (Francoist) account of history, Martín-Santos historicizes Cajal's putative exceptionality by stressing the ambivalence of his figure and by drawing attention to other historical actors and events that are essential to understanding the dynamics at play in the making of the Spanish collective, both at the turn of the century and during the 1960s.[7] And this is where the rats come back into play. Simultaneously pointing to the residual (only a few of them are left) and a problematic emergent (they hold the flawed promise to future discoveries and progress), the rats escape mere symbolic signification: rather than signs of a crisis, they are critical elements of the scientific and cultural paradigm under scrutiny, just like the invisible microorganisms Cajal presents in his scientific and literary work. This is why both the cancer-engineered rats of Martín-Santos and Cajal's invisible pathogens demand more than simply to be *accounted for;* they demand to be *taken into account* as socio-technical actants and mediators of historical change.[8] Cajal's microorganisms, in fact, re-present not only the irruption of the organic invisible onto the scientific, cultural and epistemological stage in the second half of the 19th century, but also symbolically point to the emergence of subterranean social and political

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calls "la era de Cajal," and first appeared in his *Breve historia de la ciencia española* (Madrid: Alianza, 2003) and, later, in "Al hilo del centenario de la JAE (1907-1939): reflexiones sobre la dinamización de un sistema científico y educativo." Both texts challenge the traditional dichotomist interpretation of Spanish scientific progress in terms of success and failure in light of recent scientific historiography.

[7] Demytifying Cajal also invites a more critical reading of the literaturization of his life carried out by contemporaries such as Azorín and Unamuno. Unamuno states in "De los recuerdos de la vida de Cajal," published in the *Nuevo Mundo* in April of 1917, while Cajal is still alive: "la historia de los descubrimientos de Cajal nos interesa más que lo descubierto mismo" (in Fernández 77). By the same token, Martín-Santos also challenges those who discredited Spanish culture in order to establish an alternative narrative for it, such as Ortega y Gasset. It is in fact interesting how Ortega describes the cultural situation of the country in *La ciencia española:*

> En España no hay sombra de ciencia. Podrá haber algún que otro científico: como dice el refrán italiano 'non è sì triste cane che non meni la coda.' El caso Cajal y mucho más el caso Hinojosa, no pueden significar orgullo para nuestro país; son más bien una vergüenza porque son una casualidad. (I, 109)

[8] Bruno Latour uses this terminology to blur the distinction between humans and non-humans and emphasize how both are the product of ongoing socio-technical negotiations and the mutual swapping of skills.

forces, both of which will become a source of anxiety and instrumental players in shaping the Spanish collective in the century to come.

This analysis focuses on social, political and cultural interactions which become visible only by adjusting the *scale* by which one looks at the phenomena. Indeed, the adjustment of scale allows one to identify the "very peculiar movement of re-associations and reassembling" that constitutes the social as a site of negotiation rather than as a given reality, "a special domain, a specific realm, or a particular sort of thing" (Latour, *Reassembling* 7). My objective will be throughout to identify all of the actors, both human and nonhuman, the controversies in which they participate, and the techniques or technologies that are deployed to stabilize these controversies. Acknowledging the invaluable contribution of Michel Foucault to the study of modern visibility and modern technologies of surveillance, but resisting a narrow Foucauldian reading put forth by some critics who identify modernity with the hegemony of vision and an instrumentalizing society, I take the social and its visual distributions to be the outcome of interactions amongst competing actors and interests, and mediation and negotiation to be the catalyst for modern subjectivity as well as for a modern politics of consensus. Hence, I argue, a visual regime of representation is hegemonic only in a Gramscian sense, namely, as the resultant of a multiplicity of vectorial forces expressing specific groups' interests that strategically transform in the process of attaining hegemony. Thinking the social and the political as a contractual activity rebuts the interpretation of historical change as a series of discontinuous events while it reinstates history at the intersection of man and his activity (Gramsci). Given the complexity of the phenomenon under analysis, I deploy an interdisciplinary methodology that incorporates texts of philosophy, aesthetics, political theory, science and the sociology of science, history, and visual studies.

As the motor of all cultural and political change, negotiation always entails the possibility of voicing marginal views; to this end, I focus on authors who, though partaking in their cultural milieu and the project of nationalization of culture, also occupied a peripheral position with respect to both. Thus, Santiago Ramón y Cajal was at once the Nobel Prize winner that catapulted Spain back onto the international scene, but also the scientist who struggled to access the main scientific circles for the reason that he was from the periphery.[9] Federico García Lorca was an acclaimed playwright but also a unique voice in the cultural and political panorama of the time—as a homosexual artist celebrating popular culture. Finally, the Catalan novelist, poet and playwright Josep Maria de Sagarra partook in the intellectual milieu from the space of a deterritorialized culture, practicing a genre, the novel, which had struggled to establish itself within modern Catalan literature. Besides sharing an ambivalent position with respect to mainstream discourses, all of these authors also converge in understanding theatricality and the spectacular as fundamental paradigms of signification under modernity.

It is the ambivalence of Cajal and his historical milieu that this investigation takes as its point of departure, in order to identify an underlying thread that connects authors as diverse as Ramón y Cajal, Lorca and Sagarra and the specific understanding of modernity, the modern subject and the modern Spanish nation which they put forth in their works: *Cuentos de vacaciones* (1905), *El público* (1930) and *Vida privada* (1932). The topics on which I focus in this investigation are not exclusive to the authors I just mentioned nor can they be found exclusively in the texts I selected. Nevertheless, both these authors (as I explain above) and the texts I chose to analyze bring into view specific stages of the process of democratization of

[9] Cecelia Cavanaugh notes that "to his contemporaries, [Cajal] *was* science [but in] popular consciousness, [he] straddled across what Laín Entralgo calls 'el desconocimiento y la beatería'" (197).[9] Though "an essential element to the paradigm, [Cajal] remained a paradox" (198) or, better, he embodied the paradoxical cultural panorama that Spain exhibited at the turn of the century.

representation, and with them specific concerns or questions for which they seek an answer. Their quests and attempted answers, as I suggested as well, point to an understanding of life and polity under modernity as intrinsically theatrical experiences, and seek in the convergence between science, theater, and politics possible articulations for democratic representation.

Cajal's short story allows me to focus on the convergence between the scientific and theatrical discourses as well as to follow the increasing displacement and resolution of socio-political issues on cultural grounds. The fact that Cajal works on the collection over a period of twenty-five years (roughly between 1875 and 1905) impregnates these works with echoes and reverberations of socio-political and cultural changes that become relevant to our discussion on political (and aesthetic) representation. Lorca's *El público* and *Comedia sin título* stand out as Lorca's most experimental and, in my view, 'politically engaged' plays. As such, they allow me to further explore the convergence between scientific, political, and artistic concerns about representation, to set them fully within the theatrical space of representation, and to do so at the rise of European totalitarianism, which would soon denaturalize and make monstruous the process of democratic representation. Moreover, Lorca's plays open up a space to think mediation and therefore representation not as means to control visibility, but rather as democratic tools that preserve the specificity of the individual. Finally, Sagarra's novel, *Vida privada,* allows me to magnify a crucial moment of this process of democratization (the shift from the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera to the Second Republic), and to examine the extent to which the spectacularization of the national space covers for the lack of a strong political reform which might have otherwise been capable of fueling the process of democratization and steering the country away from counter-revolution and fascism.

Although the chronology of the works coincides with the period known as the Spanish Silver Age, the investigation reaches from the aftermath of the Restoration and the disaster of '98 to the advent of the Second Republic, which coincides approximately with the rise of the Spanish nation-state and the liberal project of democratization. My central argument is that certain proposals, or imagined realities, that took shape at different stages of the process of democratization were conceptually indebted to *theater* and *theatricality*, understood either as places of interaction allowing for 'position taking' processes, as concrete practices for political engagement, or as rhetorical strategies. Theater and theatricality provided a material and metaphorical link between the social, cultural and political dimensions of Spanish life during the early decades of the 20th century. From Classical theater to Golden Age theater and Romantic drama, playwrights have thematized the theater-like quality of life. Modernity and theatricality, as William Egginton convincingly argues, appear to be coeval.[10] Nevertheless, my position is that during early modernity theatricality remained primarily a metaphor, since these plays maintained an unquestioned faith in a set of transcendental values, even when they appeared to challenge them. The don Juan of Zorrilla is certainly not the don Juan of Tirso, but neither is he Estragon, Vladimir or Pirandello's Father. It is the 20th century, I contend, that consecrates the theatrical as the very texture and reach of reality, as we see with Beckett or, before, with the experimental theater of Lorca and Pirandello.

Two distinctive channels of subjectivization appear under modernity: corporeality (bodies in space and bodies as means and sites of negotiation) and visual exchanges and practices. Both are essential to theater, and in a way intrinsically theatrical. For the three

[10] I refer to Egginton's enticing first book on *How the World Became a Stage: Presence, Theatricality, and the Question of Modernity* (2002) and to his most recent *The Theater of Truth: The Ideology of (Neo)Baroque Aesthetics* (2010). It must be noted that the periodization I propose differs from Egginton's. And although I concur that theatricality appears with (what I prefer to call) early modernity, I find essential differences in the implications entailed within the two periodizations (which will become clear in what follows).

authors selected in the present investigation theatricality is contiguous with materiality, corporeality and imperfection; all of them speaking of a specificity that is guaranteed only within the horizon of representation and of the *representación*. Conversely, the spectacularization of Silver Age Spain points to the progressive dematerialization of bodies and the erasure of specificity. The oscillation between the materialization and dematerialization of the body reflects the progressive incorporation of modern technologies of vision and representation into modern life (but the opposite is also true, that the reaction to older conventional forms of corporeal representation cleared the way for the success of some modern technologies of representation). Speaking of, or reacting to the increasing mechanization of life and work under modernity, competing artistic and political answers to the question of representation were inflected to a smaller or larger degree by a theatrical (materialization) or a spectacular (dematerialization) language. Historically defined technologies of representation and techniques of display—such as the "theater of proof" and dissection for Cajal; radiography for Lorca; and cinematography and taxidermy in the case of Sagarra—contribute to understanding the type of body that is being envisioned at each time, the oscillation between its materialization and dematerialization, and the consequences in terms of its visibility and ability of being presented or represented.

In beginning this investigation, I therefore accept the provocative gesture of Martín-Santos and I turn to the Spain of Cajal in order to examine the premises laid out for the process of modernization that is supposed to create a new image of Spain and catapult the nation out of the imperial disaster and onto the international scene. And I turn to the paradoxical Cajal who critically reads his time and his peers, to the Cajal symbol of the "ideas disolventes" (O'Connors

111-12) and the one who is recuperated by his most recent and subtle critics.[11] Underscoring the theatrical nature of the scientific activity and "the theater of proof," the first chapter charts the emergence of 'culture' as a modern paradigm of signification and the framework in which questions of subjectivity and collective identity will be negotiated. Against the backdrop of the plan of nationalization led by the regenerationists, Cajal's *Cuentos de vacaciones* (1905), I argue, problematizes the liberal aspiration to a more inclusive notion of representation *vis à vis* the challenges posed by the emergence of new socio-historical actors (the proletariat and women) and new political forces (regionalisms and nationalisms). Framing the discomforting encounter with alterity within the theatrical space, Cajal rehearses on the female body the difficulty of articulating difference within the rigid category of the national. As the sanctuary of illusion, the theater will also be the place where the reassembling of a seamless body will take place, thus foregrounding the intrinsic theatricality of modern polity.

The chapter on Lorca highlights the performative-theatrical character of modern politics and the modern state, testing the possibility of artistic and political engagement from the margin. Lorca's poetics or politics of presence (*el teatro bajo la arena*) thus oppose a poetics or politics of mediation within the great stage of the State (*el teatro al aire libre),* while the argument for the regeneration of the audience, *El público* (1931), engendered by the theatrical crisis in the 1920s and 1930s, becomes coextensive with the creation of modern citizenry. As the nation debates which institutional model to follow (whether representative monarchy or democratic regime), the theater questions its role in the cultural horizon of the 20th century and in the political renovation of Spain. My argument is that by foregrounding the materiality of theater and the body vis à vis the dematerialized body of fascism and cinema, and by reaffirming the

[11] I here refer to the work of Laura Otis's *Membranes: Metaphors of Invasion in Nineteenth-Century Literature, Science, and Politics* (1999), Dale Pratt's *Signs of science: literature, science, and Spanish modernity since 1868* (2001), and Cecelia Cavanaugh's comparative work on Lorca and Cajal.

unavoidable reliance of art on the economic apparatus, Lorca's deviant bodies also articulate an alternative to the politics of homologation put forth by the state while recuperating representation through its link with the intrusive materiality of the body.

Finally, in the chapter on Sagarra I track the progressive transformation of the theatrical social and national domains into a spectacle, a shift that is signaled, I argue, by references to the World Exhibition of 1929 and to cinematographic practices of representation in Sagarra's novel *Vida privada* (1932). With Sagarra we stroll along the streets of a decadent bourgeois society inhabited by characters that are the residues of a world long gone. Thus even the injection of new blood (and money!) from the colony, which is embodied by the sensual (and easily corruptible) Cuban Concha Pujol, cannot perform miracles. Deprived of any real economic and political power, the patriarch of the Lloberolas family is likened to the stuffed dog described in the opening of the novel. The false three-dimensionality of the taxidermic bodies of *Vida privada*, I contend, thematizes the inescapable flatness of the cultural and political life generated by the failed promise of modernization and democratization in the leadup to the revolution, and foregrounds the proto-fascist subjects of the spectacularized national.

Modern technologies of vision and representation as well as modern mechanical instruments are not mere objects of representation for Cajal, Lorca and Sagarra; they inflect their views and perceptions of reality and, just like humans and nonhumans, they participate in the configuration of the sensible. These technologies, and their effect on the scale by which phenomena are displayed, establish distinct thresholds of visibility and identify specific subject positions and corporeal projections. Not only did these technologies extend the reach and array of representative possibilities, but they also mediated our understanding of reality in new and important ways, even when they claimed (as photography or cinema did) the possibility of direct

and unmediated ‘presentation.’ Therefore, against the progressive spectacularization and homogenization of culture, which cuts through the private and public domains, and the increasing dematerialization of bodies, Cajal, Lorca and Sagarra postulate the necessity of preserving the specificity of bodies through materiality, representation and mediation which, rather than the triumph of the old (theater) over the new (photography, cinema and the spectacle), constitutes a radically modern gesture, both artistically and politically.

CHAPTER 1

FROM THE THEATER OF PROOF TO THE PROOF OF THE THEATER: SANTIAGO RAMON Y CAJAL'S *CUENTOS DE VACACIONES*

There is no beautiful surface without a terrible depth.
Nietzsche, Notes to *The Birth of Tragedy*

Questions of epistemology are also questions of social order.
The Edinburgh School

The Irruption of the Invisible

The obsessive preoccupation of the protagonists of Cajal's *Cuentos de vacaciones* (all of them scientists or doctors) with the discovery or emergence of the organic and inorganic invisible calls attention to essential transformations in the process of the construction of modern collectivity. Along with other factors, the discovery of new organisms that would soon become socio-historical actors themselves contributed to the increasing complexity of modern culture and sociability. One can think, for instance, of the role of germs and bacteria in 20th century culture and the possibilities they opened for modern warfare. A scientific analysis of the irruption of the organic and inorganic invisible at the turn of the century, though extremely relevant, is outside of the scope of this investigation. Nevertheless, I will attempt to show, at all times, how the literal and symbolic dimensions of the phenomenon intertwine, and how the invisible is always more than a sign for emerging socio-historical actors (the proletariat and women) or socio-political forces (regionalisms and nationalisms). Both on the literal and symbolic level, however, this shift in the threshold of visibility shattered the confidence in

established categories previously considered as absolutely 'unshakeable,' such as gender and race, just as it fueled the tension between the visible and the invisible, form and the formless, the conscious and the unconscious. Man was not extending his reach into "the infinite deeps of the Invisible," as anthropocentric scientists such as Thomas Carlyle had assumed since the 1830s, nor was he revealing what had long been concealed (Beer 87). What Wordsworth described as "authentic tidings of invisible things" in his poem "The Excursion," had undergone a radical resignification as a result of physics' wave theory, and "[t]he invisible, instead of being placidly held just beyond the scope of sight, was newly understood as an energetic system out of which fitfully emerges that which is visible" (85).[12] As wave theory began to gain acceptance in the scientific domain, it undermined all certainty about the inorganic world, and it also produced the uncanny (*unheimliche*) discovery that the invisible is the very stuff of which we are made.[13]

Numerous factors concurred to catalyze this visual disruption, which demanded a readjustment of the visual economy to account for a changing world, new ways of observing, and new observers that were competing to acquire visibility.[14] The *invisible* became the focus of a multifaceted debate in which all parts strove for control over its meaning, mostly by means of secularizing the unseen through scientific explanations (Beer 85-86). On the political level, the emergence of social and political forces that escaped representation contributed to fueling already intense political debates, especially since liberalism was pressing to broaden the brackets of political representation to include a wider popular base.

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[12] Here Beer refers to the long struggle before the scientific community conceded to the undulatory theory of light, which was ridiculed when first advanced by Thomas Young and only subsequently accepted when reproposed by Fresnel in France and Helmholtz in Germany. See note 6 in Beer's article.

[13] Ranciére links the *unheimlich* (heterology) precisely to the moment of the disruption of visibility.

[14] As Deborah Poole points out, the term "economy" is more suitable than that of "culture" to address the somewhat systematic complexity of visual exchanges taking place across different groups or geographies; interactions that resist subsumption under the same cultural hat. In particular, she argues, the idea of a visual economy proves to be most fruitful when dealing with global or transatlantic areas (8). Moreover, the concept of economy helps visualize at once the production, circulation, and reception of the (visual) objects (9). See her *Vision, Race, and Modernity.* Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1997.

At the time Cajal begins to write his *Cuentos,* Spain was coming out of a long time of unrest that culminated in the Restoration, a period historians have only recently begun to see as bearing an incredible weight on the present and future of Spain.[15] Prior to the Restoration, political change had been more the product of the Army's intervention than of civic involvement. Spain was the patria of the *pronunciamiento*, a phenomenon "tan eminentemente español," Valentí Almirall observes, that cannot be translated into any other language (64). Fractured by the Carlist wars and destabilized by the alternation of short-lived governments (seventy between 1834 and 1870) and by the executive void produced by the death of Alfonso XII[16], Spain suffered an unsightly colonial politics exacerbated by an economic crisis that beginning in 1886 would affect all of Europe at the turn of the century.[17] In spite of its rigid conservative overtone, the Restoration meant a stabilization of domestic politics through the so-called *turno pacífico*, which established a pacific alternation between conservatives and liberals, though one that was granted on the basis of non-democratic elections.

But while Spain was consolidating itself on the domestic front, foreign politics was a different matter. During the decade 1895-1905, Spain's domestic difficulties were seen abroad as reflections of its ruinous colonial policy and as proof of its inability to maintain an empire (Otis "Encontronazo" 219).[18] The rebelling overseas colonies were pressing to receive political recognition, but the proposal to concede them the status of province with political rights was

[15] Antoni Jutglar stresses this point in his prologue to Valentí Almirall's *España tal como es.* Barcelona: Anthropos, 1983.

[16] Maria Cristina was the Regent for the young and sickly Alfonso XIII.

[17] Not without generalizations or exaggerations at times, in his 1886 diagnostic of Spain, Almirall underscores the uneven distribution of population and resources, the problem of a farraginous bureaucracy depending on the practice of *personalismo*, the abysmal public debt, the destabilizing effects of the *pronunciamientos* carried out by its vast and parasitic military apparatus, and finally, the paralyzing dependence of Spain on foreign capital–railroads, mines, and navigation routes are all in the hands of foreign companies at this time (61-69).

[18] In the British press, the image of the vampire illustrated how the Spanish colonial empire, and particularly Cuba, was sucking the blood of the mother country (220). The ambivalent figure of the vampire, representing both the colony resisting the mother land and the colonial power exploiting the colony, speaks of a fear of invasion or contagion that permeated the turn of the century literature of countries such as Spain and England (220-21).

vehemently opposed by those who, for different reasons, were in favor of a military intervention. Woefully unprepared, Spain embarked on the Spanish-American war. As is well known, the outcome would be the so-called disaster of 1898, an event that profoundly marked the country down to its physiognomy—Spain, losing its last transatlantic colonial possessions, after more than four centuries was shrinking back, at least in the collective imaginary, to its peninsular territory. In *Hacia otra España* (1899), Ramiro Maeztu tellingly summarizes the question as a problem of representation: "Cuanto se arguye por los partidarios de la Guerra, es un eufemismo para no confesar el *evidente desacuerdo entre la España que soñaban*, la España de la tradición, *y la España que los hechos revelan*" (117 emphasis mine).

The loss of an Imperial Spain to be projected onto a new international scenario dominated by old and new imperial powers (i.e., England, France and the United Stated) intensified the general feeling of uneasiness vis à vis the gap between the perceived reality and its representations, and increased the need to reassess the national identity, especially since the loss of the colonies also meant the delegitimization of the nation-state. The colonial empire, paradoxically representing at once Spain's grandest achievement and the tragic reason for its fall, became for many the root of a Spanish national pride, since, as Almirall suggested, "Nuestro orgullo nacional se debe basar precisamente en lo que determinó nuestra caida: en el descubrimiento, la conquista y la asimilación de América" (58-59). While at the symbolic level the loss of the colonies intensified the perception of domestic fragmentation, at the economic level it threatened the survival of specific groups, such as the Catalan industrial and textile sectors, which relied to a great extent on the colonial market for economic growth, whereas the Basque industry found relief in its control of the domestic market. The agricultural sector, greatly weakened by the uneven redistribution of the land following the *desamortización* of

1855, and depopulated by massive internal emigration, struggled to substitute for the productions lost abroad. The 'repatriated' capital of the overseas colonies would at least contain the initial collapse, but would soon prove inadequate to offset the economic crisis.

In spite of its catastrophic outcome, or precisely because of it, '1898' became the catalyst of an extensive and multifaceted intellectual effort of re-envisioning the Spanish nation and its territory also in relation to the ex-colonies. The event generated a vibrant cultural production that, responding to the so-called "problem of Spain," set out to recreate the foundations of the country by returning to what were deemed the traditional traits of the Spanish nation. Reacting to the failure of the Restoration, the regenerationist effort aimed at the creation or recuperation of national values to guide the process of construction of a collective identity, but also—and this was crucial—at their simultaneous naturalization. Thus while the historical contingencies generating these values were obscured, the values themselves were elevated to mythical status. In a Barthesian reading of the literary project of the Generation of '98, Jo Labanyi observes that the question of "los males de España," a phrase coined after Mallada's book *Los males de la patria* (1890), spawned similar literary responses in authors as diverse as Uamuno, Ganivet, Azorín, and Baroja, in that they all strove to reduce history to nature by intertwining nationalism, biology, and geography ("Nation" 128). While other nations could count on the work of historians such as Macaulay, Michelet, Ranke, or Alexandre Herculano to reinvent a 'scientific' past that was able to inform the present, Spain lacked historians of this caliber, so the task was left to politicians such as Antonio Cánovas del Castillo or the former clergy Modesto Lafuente y Zamalloa to redact a national history (Vicent 49).

When the intellectuals later identified as the Generation of '98 took up this task, they seemed to agree that Spain was the victim of social and political disintegration, scientific and

technological backwardness, and a generalized atmosphere of unrest.[19] As evinced in their works, these authors were responding to what they perceived as the centripetal threat posed to the central administration by regionalisms and nationalisms, which had gained ground in Spain precisely as a reaction to the failure of the liberal government to prevent the political crisis. The objective was to offset the instability by assembling a past that would engender an already imagined future. The Party slogan in Orwell's *1984* comes to mind: "He who controls the past, controls the future." And after all, as William James remarked in *The Meaning of Truth*, "there is at all times enough past for all the different futures in sight, and more besides, to find their reason in it, and whichever future comes will slide out that past as easily as the train slides by the switch" (250-51). Thus, these authors sought to counteract in their narratives the sense of instability by describing 'Spanishness' as an ahistorical, fixed quality, by defining the origin of the Spanish nation as the onset of the Modern Age, and by identifying it with the timeless geography of Castile as the centre of an ideally unified space. Besides embodying the sentiment of a generation, at least in the perception of some, and re-evaluating the image of a "Romantic" Spain for all of Europe, the ahistorical nation also fulfilled the need to offset the contingency of historical flux and "olvidar […] que su cultura, la más intrínseca experiencia de sí mismos como seres sociales, no es natural sino inventada" (Jusdanis 165). So it is that three names emerge in the urban toponomy of Spain after 1898: Isaac Peral, Santiago Ramón y Cajal, and Joaquín Costa. José Carlos Mainer reads this threesome as part of a design—or I should say desire—of a unitary perception of Spain. The proof is that the triad is coupled by another, this time institutional, trinity, Cánovas, Sagasta, and Castelar, who came to embody the idea of a national

[19] As E. Inman Fox already argued in 1975, the term "intelectual" officially enters the Spanish language with the authors of the Generation of '98 who, for the first time, showed a clear awareness of belonging to the political and social Spanish vanguardia and of speaking up from a marginal position with respect to the establishment. See his article "Al año de 1898 y el origen de los 'Intelectuales'." In *La crisis de fin de siglo: ideología y literatura.* Barcelona: Ariel, 1975.

political consensus (60-61).[20] But the fact that different names appear on the Catalan side questions the homogeneity of this political design while signaling the existence of concurrent views on the nature and model of the national project.[21]

Despite being inspired by progressive politics and the possibility of creating a democratic society in which 'all' would find representation, the regenerationist effort became, unsurprisingly, also the chance to rectify certain 'anomalies.' The complete adherence to the standards of 'Spanishness,' or 'lo castizo,' became the privileged mechanism that allowed, as well as legitimized, the exclusion of certain groups at once from the regenerationist process and the envisioned future nation, since these were rendered virtually invisible. As Alda Blanco notes, "whole literary movements are singled out, accused, and condemned of non-Spanishness" as canon and nation are being constructed in much the same way, "where borders are imagined, drawn, and subsequently policed in order to protect national security from outside elements" (125).

Against the backdrop of the nationalization led by the regenerationists, Cajal's *Cuentos de vacaciones*, I argue, thematizes and problematizes the liberal aspiration to a more inclusive notion of representation in relation to the emergence of new socio-historical actors. As an essential concern of Cajal's work and 19th century Spanish culture, representation became a pivotal concept around which a variety of aspirations, anxieties, and hopes attempted to find articulation. This is particularly true of Cajal, given his connection to the most progressive

[20] Peral, Cajal and Costa respectively represent the military effort, scientific achievement, and the legal system.

[21] At least in the beginning, the nation-state was not exclusively a Castilian project, and Catalan intellectuals and politicians participated under the assumption of cooperation between the two bourgeois groups. For some, like Prat de la Riba, Catalonia was even going to have a leading role in the process. For a detailed account of the Catalan intervention in the toponomy as a way of creating or telling alternative histories of the *España finisecular*, see Stephane Michonneau's "Políticas de memoria en Barcelona al final del siglo XIX." *Ayer* 35 (1999): 101-120, or his *Barcelona, memòria i identitat : monuments, commemoracions i mites*. Vic: Eumo Editorial, 2002.

sectors of Spanish liberalism, as testified by his fundamental work with the Institución Libre de Enseñanza.

By underscoring the theatrical nature of scientific activity, and by framing the discomforting encounter with the invisible (alterity) within the theatrical space, Cajal foregrounds the emergence of 'culture' as a modern paradigm of signification. Under modernity, theatricality became the material and metaphorical link between the social, cultural and political dimensions of Spanish life at the turn of the century. The political quarrel concerning the meaning of representation and democratic participation, and the nature of the future citizen, were then both rehearsed at the theater, while bodies, and particularly the female body, became the site for negotiating the difficult articulation of difference within the (rigid) category of the national. As the sanctuary of illusion, the theater will be the place where the deconstruction and reassembling of bodies—in Cajal's case, a 'seamless' body—occurs, thus foregrounding the intrinsic theatricality of modern polity. Never reducible to a mere reflection of a situation or phenomenon, Cajal's work is instead a conscious 'act of engagement' in the re-making of the Spanish subject (both as individual and citizen) and the Spanish collective.

Scales of Visibility: Modernity, Science, and Theatricality

When Andreas Vesalius set out to disprove Galen's views on human anatomy in the 16th century, he soon realized that the latter had never dissected a corpse: the practice was in fact not allowed under Roman traditions. Insisting on direct observation as his source of knowledge, Vesalius made of anatomy an epistemological spectacle in which the dissected body was displayed to the observers in attendance in such a way as to produce 'objective' knowledge about the human body. Held "[i]n the assemblage of learned men at Bologna" (4), the dissections were to provide "as truthful and complete [an] account as possible of the fabric of the human body" (4), while the engravings and charts made by Vesalius would be especially useful to those who were "obviously captivated by a knowledge of humankind that is most pleasant to them" but could not bring themselves to attend a dissection (5).

Fig. 1 Andreas Vesalius. *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem.* Basileae: per Ioannem Oporinum, 1555.

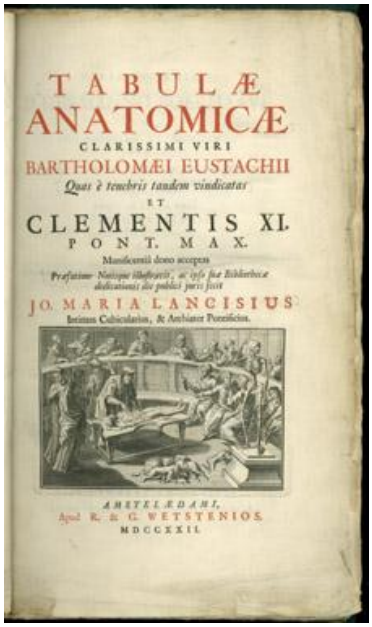

Fig. 2 Bartholomei Eustachii. *Tabulae anatomicae clarissimi viri.* Amstelaedami: apud R. & G. Wetstenios, 1722.

There is no doubt that public dissections contributed to legitimizing the displacement of the written text (and with it the authority of the ancients)[22] in favor of a visual epistemology: to those in attendance, Vesalius concluded, it would be known that "pictures aid the understanding of these things and place a subject before the eyes more precisely than the most explicit language" (5). As Vesalius's painstaking anatomical taxonomy demonstrates, science was intended to produce knowledge and beauty by means of mastering nature through orderly classification.

The appeal of these public dissection-spectacles was such that well into the 19th century the young doctor Yevgeny Bazarov, the protagonist of Ivan Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* (1862), can utter: "What a magnificent body!…Shouldn't I like to see it on the dissecting-table" (63), as he envisions the physical encounter with the woman he loves.[23] The expectation of pleasure tautologically transforms the human body at once into the source of knowledge and the blank screen onto which an orderly epistemological architecture is projected. Nevertheless, the pleasure elicited by the projected autopsy subtly implicates the subjective dimension of this endeavor, since it insinuates the presence of subjectivity in the production of scientific or objective knowledge. I will return to the relation of knowledge and subjectivity below.

By the time Cajal begins to write his *Cuentos de vacaciones* around 1885, however, the examination of the human body has apparently become a troubling spectacle. Under the bluish electric illumination of a balcony at the Teatro Real, the protagonist of "El pesimista corregido," the young doctor Juan Fernández, describes his beautiful girlfriend, Elvira, as she appears to his microscopic eyes:

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[22] As Vesalius wrote, "But let even these men …*trust their not ineffectual eyes and powers of reason more than the writings of Galen*; let them carefully write out these unexpected truths which are not cadged from other authors and not verified merely by a collection of authorities (5 emphasis mine). In Vesalius's view, direct observation would correct the gross approximation with which Galen had described the human body by deducing its anatomy mostly from dissections of monkeys.

[23] Ludmilla Jordanova tellingly uses this same passage to frame her analysis of the relation between scientific language and gender construction in *Sexual Visions.*

> En vano buscaba Juan, presa del mayor estupor, la correspondencia que pudiera haber entre aquel inverosímil montón de carne femenina erizado de verrugas, vergas, crostas y escamas, y la poética imagen de la niña gentil guardada en el relicario de su memoria. ¡Qué decepción! (203-04)

Cajal's young lover could not feel more disheartened and his disillusionment be more complete, and not because expectation and desire have found their anticlimactic fulfillment, though the grotesque sight of a bearded Elvira (the phallus-like elements are in reality facial hairs!) would amply justify such a reaction, but because microscopy and magnification have allowed for the detection of new invisible elements and forces which, once made visible, can no longer be made to recede beyond the threshold of visibility but must somehow be accommodated within the visual distribution of reality.

"El pesimista" is one of five *Cuentos de vacaciones* Cajal wrote around 1885 under the pseudonym "Dr. Bacteria," but published in 1905 when, now a successful histologist, he felt free to openly criticize a parasitic political establishment rooted in bureaucratism, clientelism and conventionalism, and in which privileges related to social status were the primary motor of social mobility. Sharing some of Cajal's biographical traits, the protagonist of "El pesimista corregido" is a young and talented doctor who leads a retired life in Madrid, his social integration hindered by the fact that, like Cajal, he has failed the exams, or *oposiciones*, which would guarantee him an academic position and the economic security that gives access to marriage.[24] Like other

[24] Just like Juan in "El pesimista" and Pedro in *Tiempo de silencio*, Cajal experienced first hand the difficulties of coming from the province, since away from the urban centers social status and conventions regulated the channeling of resources. As he claims in *Mi infancia y juventud*, the endemic corruption of the bureaucratic system left him with no other choice than to enlist as a volunteer medical officer for the campaign in Cuba –though recruitment was basically unavoidable for the lower classes. In Cuba he earned the status needed to return to Madrid and pass the exams that granted him the much desired academic appointment. When stationed in Cuba, Cajal repeatedly denounced practices of corruption within the army ranks regarding the illegal trading of provisions and medicines, a decision that hindered upon his career, and almost cost him his life as he was denied permission to return to Spain although seriously ill with malaria.

characters in *Cuentos*, moreover, Juan is an orphan.[25] Though not an impairment—and in some cases a stimulus for autonomous growth—this condition reinforces the risk of social isolation (a particularly troubling condition for a scientist). Weary of the limited means given to him to fight the invisible organisms that threaten human life—both of his parents have died of an infectious disease—and frustrated by the precariousness of socially held beliefs and categories, the pessimistic young doctor asks,

> ¿qué le costaba al sublime Modelador del cerebro y de la retina, las dos más valiosas joyas de la creación, haber amplificado la capacidad analítica de los sentidos, y singularmente del visual, por donde hasta la invención del microscopio fuera superflua? (183)

Redolent of the changes in the system of signs and knowledge that Foucault describes in relation to the modern *epistēme*, Juan's complaint implies that knowledge is grounded in the connubial relation between mind and body, and that it now resides beyond the surface of the visible, or beyond representation, in the organic structure of beings.[26]

Granted the gift of microscopic vision by a superior entity that has answered his plea, and equipped with this new tool, Juan embarks on an investigation of what lies beneath the surface of things, down to the most minute details and particles comprising the objects and people that

[25] Julián, the protagonist of "Casa maldita," has lost his parents and has been raised by an uncle, whose daughter he finally marries. Emma, the beautiful American assistant-then-wife of the middle-aged histologist Max von Forschung (German for 'research' or 'investigation') in "A secreto agravio, secreta venganza," is described as in the "excelente condición" of being an orphan, while don Esperaindeo in "El hombre natural y el hombre artificial" loses his parents and marries "una señorita huérfana" though "fea, histérica y antojadiza" (249). It is important to underscore, however, that all of Cajal's orphans end up finding their identity within a social institution or network, the smallest being marriage and the family.

[26] Different thinkers have highlighted this move toward invisibility in different terms. For Martin Heidegger, as man becomes *subiectum* and the world turns into a picture, reality opens itself up to the gigantic and the incalculable, a shadow stretching "the modern world…out into a space withdrawn from representation" (136). Donald Lowe singles out time as the new variant of the bourgeois perceptual field that extends perception beyond the realm of "the visible present to the invisible past and future" (87). A spatio-temporal structure of knowledge, together with sight, support and explain the new typographic culture (35). Instead of a shift from space to time, Michael Foucault speaks of a drifting away from the surface (representation and discourse) and a penetration in 'depth' towards the organic structure of beings.

surround him. The richness, diversity and structural beauty of the microscopic inorganic particles leave him in absolute awe. Moreover, he can finally detect a variety of microscopic germs responsible for many diseases. Nonetheless, when he decides to put his gift to good use, namely the progress of science and medicine, Juan's assertions are not believed and he is rejected by scientific circles. The genie had in fact warned him that "tan excepcional privilegio [lo] convertiría en monstruo, en ser aparte, y representaría…un semillero de conflictos y desventuras" (183-84). Alienated by a skeptical scientific community, and by his friends and fiancée who consider him crazy, and overwhelmed by the feeling of disgust for life, Juan comes to regret receiving the gift. In fact it comes at a high price. While Juan is able to wonder at the discovery of fragmentariness and diversity in the inorganic world, the same discovery in the organic world elicits in him unexpected feelings of disgust, which brings us back to the theatrical scene of 'medical examination.' The magnified face of Elvira deeply disturbs Juan because below the surface of visibility science discovers messiness and ugliness at the core of that which was previously believed to embody beauty and perfection. Transformed into a repugnant mass of scabs, wrinkles, and flakes, Elvira cannot compete with the sight of any of Vesalius's bodies (or Bazarov's girlfriend for that matter) lying open on the dissecting table. Before considering Cajal's original contribution to the question of scientific knowledge, however, I want to focus on what connects all of these scenes of medical examinations, namely their theatricality. But in order to do so, I must take a brief detour and introduce the work of another scientist, Louis Pasteur.

In his celebrated study on Pasteur and science in 19th century France, Bruno Latour coins the phrase "*the theatre of proof"* to describe the device by which, since the 16th century, scientists produced objective truth through public display of human autopsies, such as those of

Vesalius. However, as Latour demonstrates, the objectivity of "the theater of proof" depended on the authority elicited by what he calls "quasi-objects"—namely, socially construed objects that were presented as if they were free of rhetorical distortions or faulty perceptions.[27] Rather than the scientific evidence of a truth given 'out there,' these quasi-objects were instead the product of a specific cultural context. An autopsy relied in fact on the creation of a point of view on the one hand—"fewer things are placed before the spectators in all that confusion than a butcher in a market could teach a doctor" (3), in Vesalius's words—and on the credibility of the observer on the other (i.e., the "learned men of Bologna"). This was especially true in the absence of an element or detail, as was the case in the Vesalius-Curtius's quarrel over the "vein without pair" (Crawford 71).[28] "To 'force' someone to 'share' one's point of view," Latour contends, "one must indeed invent a new theater of truth" (*Pasterurization* 86). Fully aware of the convincing power of this theatrical device, and under the threat of a national pandemic, Pasteur managed to settle the concerns of an entire nation in his laboratory, the place where the invisible could be made visible; and all thanks to a highly theatrical finale: the sudden death of a group of chickens in front of the eyes of astounded observers. Just as theatrical were Cajal's experiments with photography and dyes which allowed him to show the invisible, namely, the synaptic gaps between neurons.

The laboratory certainly holds a special role in the process of modernization. In "El pesimista" Cajal groups the laboratory with the *taller* [the workplace] and the farmer's field as

[27] Latour borrows the term from Michael Serres who construes the quasi-object as a 'being between' or as a relation. The quasi-object is not strictly an object though it is found in the world; it is not a subject though "it marks or designates the subject who, without it, would not be a subject. [The quasi-object is] an astonishing constructer of intersubjectivity" (*The Parasite* 225-27). On the production of scientific evidence and medical knowledge since the sixteenth century, and the role of "quasi-objects" in the production of objectivity, see also Crawford's "Imaging the Human Body: Quasi Objects, Quasi Texts and the Theater of Proof."

[28] The point of view, Crawford argues, is created by directing the sight of the observers toward the "proper" details of a body in full view–something Susan Bordo couples with the development of perspective in the visual arts (63-65).

unique places for the progress of modern society—the first as the sanctuary of science, the second as the temple of regenerating work, and the last as the stage of prodigious alchemies. Remarking on Pasteur's work on the anthrax microbe, Latour describes the laboratory as the gravitational pole of multifaceted interests, cross-cutting through different disciplines and areas, but also as the place of the making of interests, or *Los intereses creados* to quote Jacinto Benavente's famous theatrical piece. It is indeed "this double movement of *interest* and *dramatization*" that grants science the possibility of acting in the external world, Latour concludes (*Pasteurization* 87, emphasis mine). As the laboratory extends itself outside of its walls to learn about the pathogens in the world, in fact, theoretical knowledge is transformed into applied knowledge. By extracting the raw material (the pathogens) from the uncontrollable space of the "extended" laboratory (the outside world), the scientist is able to isolate and reproduce the microbe under controlled conditions within the laboratory. Here, "freed from all competitors [the microbe] grows exponentially, but, by growing so much, ends up…in such large colonies that a clear-cut pattern is made visible to the watchful eye of the scientist" (Latour, "Laboratory" 260).

The *displacement* of the laboratory to the "outside" world and back into the "inside," and the subsequent movement from the macro (the invisible threat of epidemics) to the micro (the lab), and back to the macro scale again (the large-scale applications), produces knowledge and innovation through the blurring of these dichotomies (Latour, "Laboratory" 266). Once the dialectic inside/outside and macro/micro is reversed, by making the microbe visible *to all* within the laboratory settings, the scientist can establish the laboratory and, metonymically, himself as the legitimate *loci* to translate, reformulate and mediate this multiplicity of interests. It is the *change of scale* that makes the invisible visible and reverses the forces of the actors. Indeed,

Pasteur ended up knowing more about anthrax and cattle than the farmer, the veterinarian, or even the statistician who put the epidemic problem on the map in the first place (260), with all the political and economical implications that his being able to apply this knowledge to other "equivalent" or "analogous" cases and spaces entailed.[29] Now the scientist could effectively represent, and speak for, a variety of interests which were previously disconnected from the laboratory.

But why is it that one can speak of *The Pasteurization of France,*[30] whereas Juan fails to reap any benefit from the discoveries that he made with his microscopic vision? Though he was able to identify the microorganisms responsible for a variety of diseases, his "admirables hallazgos…No fueron de nadie creídos" ("El pesimista" 210). As a result, Juan ends up being scorned by his fellow scientists and peers, and is abandoned by his fiancée. One may find in this quote certain traces of Cajal's criticism toward the shortsightedness of a scientific community who cannot accept certain unforeseen advances. During his appointment at the University of Madrid between 1892 and 1922 Cajal theorized the existence of neurotrophic factors,[31] despite the fact that their existence would not be demonstrated for another twenty years after his death. Yet this breakthrough discovery was not received by his fellow scientists with the enthusiasm and open-mindedness he had expected. However relevant it may be, the biographical interpretation does not fully illuminate the socio-cultural relevance of Juan's predicament. The

[29] It is interesting to notice how Latour measures Pasteur's political weight in terms of the number of streets bearing the scientist's name all over France. Similarly José Carlos Mainer, as we may recall, emphasized the primacy of three names, Isaac Peral, Santiago Ramón y Cajal and Joaquín Costa, in the urban toponomy of Spain after 1898, which were supposed to represent a unitary cultural perception of Spain. Mainer connects this triad to another 'institutional' trinity, Cánovas, Sagasta, and Castelar, which instead represented the idea of a national political consensus (60-61).

[30] Latour's telling title encapsulates the outcome of a successful campaign done by French hygienists in the second half of the 19th century, which established themselves as the avant-garde of the medical field well into the first quarter of the 20th century, a status that was challenged by the effects of World War I on medicine.

[31] Neurotrophic factors are molecules, usually proteins, involved in the nutrition or maintenance of nervous tissue, by facilitating the growth or repair of nerve cells (*On-Line Medical Dictionary*).

significance of this quote must be sought, in my view, in the self-referentiality of scientific activity. The quote points in fact to a problem of organization. In *Reglas y Consejos* (1897), Cajal compares the intellectual working in isolation to a tumor, an abnormal growth of the social organism.[32] In a similar fashion, Martín-Santos presents the atomized characters of *Tiempo de silencio* as if they were metastasizing cells. By emphasizing the collaborative nature of scientific activity, Cajal challenges the simplistic and idealized Carlylean view of modern progress as the result of the activity of a few exceptional men whose emergence is the outcome of sheer chance. Similarly, Latour links Pasteur's achievements to a collaborative effort. In a way, Cajal is enacting his own demythification as he points to the limits of individualism and calls for the cooperation of all the social components, which aided by a national program of educational and political reform, as well as the guidance of an enlightened elite may overcome the challenges posed by an uneven modernization and restore Spain among the European powers. [33]

From an institutional perspective, Juan's faulty individualism points in two complementary directions. On the one hand, the increased complexity of modern life entails a greater reliance of the individual on the public structure, as well as a much closer interaction among social agents. On the other, individualism becomes an obstacle for a nation-state that aims at attaining a greater knowledge and more efficient control of the territory, people, and ideas comprising the national space.[34] It may be useful to stress that Spain still resembled in

[32] Laura Otis observes that in Cajal's view false hypotheses and intellectuals working in isolation are like tumors since ideas and individuals naturally develop as parts of an organism, both individually and socially (*Membranes* 86).

[33] Martín-Santos thematizes Cajal's move and ties it with his own criticism of the messianic narrative of Francoist Spain. The evocation of Cajal allows him in fact to criticize the liberals' as well as the Francoist narratives regarding the relation between progress, on the one hand, and individual and collective action, on the other.

[34] This objective was to be achieved also by sanctioning statistical and cartographic practices, which sought to make Spain into a legible space, as disciplines of national interest. For a detailed account of the role of statistics and cartography in the development of the Spanish nation-state, see the text edited by José Ignacio Muro, Francesc Nadal, and Luis Ortega *Geografía, Estadística y Catastro, 1856-1870.* Barcelona: Ediciones del Serbal, 1996.

many respects a pre-modern state. Partially blind to its structure, little did it know about its own subjects—not yet citizens—or their wealth and geographical distribution.[35]

That Juan's excessive individualism will not succeed in bringing him the happiness he seeks becomes manifest once he reaches the Museo del Prado.[36] As part of an extended network of cultural institutions intended for the homogenization of heterogeneous cultural elements and the *castellanización* of the nation, the Prado speaks for the process of institutionalization of the visual economy and of the nationalization of education.[37] A symbol of bourgeois liberal individualism, but also a tool for the education of the middle-class and the nationalization of culture, the museum becomes an "exponente y recipiente" of contemporary culture (León 65). Shocked by the "caótico pandemonium" of the crowded streets, "donde se mezclan, en confusión desesperante, informes partículas de piedras, colores, metales y maderas" ("El pesimista" 187), Juan goes to the Museo del Prado in search of a reassuring experience and "ambiente más puro y menos peligroso" (194), only to find the same hallucinatory spectacle. Lacking the nuances, gradations, and combinatorial shades that are perceived only at the distance of the 'distinct vision,' Velázquez's paintings and Murrillo's Virgins lack the harmonious and homogenous appearance they display, let us say, at a distance of "33 centímetros…Por poco artista que sea el lector, comprenderá fácilmente las insufribles incongruencias y disonancias de color, perspectiva y dibujo que chocarían a nuestro héroe" (195). Even the "precisas pinceladas" of Velázquez (196) did not fail to appear blurry.

[35] Contrary to France and England, for instance, that already developed a state map by the late 18th century, Spain lacked any such tool and by 1870 still relied on the fragmentary information provided by the Napoleonic maps organized on a scale of 1:5000. It lacked "a measure, a metric that would allow it to 'translate' what it knew into a common standard necessary for a synoptic view" (Scott 2).

[36] As we know, Positivism singled out solipsism as one of the biggest threats posed by the Romantic spirit to the political program of nationalization, and therefore rejected as degenerate and feminine its cultural expressions.

[37] The 1901 Real Decreto clearly established the pedagogical function of the museum.

The experience points beyond the severing of the link between microcosm and macrocosm and the belief that the work of art, however subjective, could still produce objectivity by means of a transcendental élan. Though it is not thematized in this way, I would argue that the coupling and 'dissecting' of Velázquez and Murrillo generates in the viewer the troubling realization that the values that once constituted the pillars of the Spanish empire have now become precarious. Classicism and Christianity were identified with an unchanging and ageless time, the *España eterna* of the regenerationists. This is why the de-coupling of Velázquez and Murrillo (as the emblem of the bond between the Crown and the Church, the secular and the religious) has an unsettling effect, especially because it is carried out at the museum, one of the modern sanctuaries of history and culture, a "civic laboratory" where the seamless, perpetual past was supposed to be generated and sanctioned.[38] As the place where "specific forms of expertise [are connected to] programmes of social management," the museum becomes a sort of cultural technology that "operate[s] in registers that are simultaneously epistemological and civic" (Bennett 522). Its function is in fact that of producing or reproducing, carrying and preserving the signs, symbols and values shared by a particular collective. As Stewart Clegg suggests in *Frameworks of Power* (1989),

> closure and stabilization strategies used in technological controversies can be interpreted as power strategies, since they [aim] at diminishing interpretative flexibility and fixing an artifact's meaning. From this point of view, the construction of an artifact is simultaneously the building of a semiotic power structure. (in Aibar and Bijker 23)

[38] Tony Bennett refers to modern cultural institutions, such as the museum, as "civic laboratories" both in *The Birth of the Museum* and, in a condensed form, in "The Exhibitionary Complex."

Universities, museums, and scientific circles, as we know, rivaled each other at this time to become the guarantors of an aesthetic appreciation which, rather than being concerned with the truth, aimed at validating specific fictions of a hierarchical society in which the subjective and the particular were subsumed in the general or communal. Aesthetic canons and models of apprehensions were institutionalized by "freezing" semiotic readings and by legitimizing precise visual practices, together with specific 'official' versions of 'national' history and culture.

I concur with Laura Otis that "El pesimista" is a story about interpretation, although to claim that the story explores "the question of who sees reality best: the person who can see biological boundaries, or the person who can see social ones" (*Membranes* 85) may be a tricky way of posing the matter, since it conceals the fact that power lies in the very possibility of construing the question in those very terms. Thus formulated, in fact, the question entails the possibility of a right or wrong interpretation, which makes the story into a quest for truth. It is my view that it is precisely this venture, and the possibility of posing or answering such queries, that Cajal challenges by making his protagonist face the reality that biological and social boundaries are historical constructions that mutually shape each other, and that any hierarchy of perspective is achieved by obscuring this connection, often with the objective of naturalizing power differentials. Whereas Cajal focuses on the relation between art and life, I want to shift the attention to the museal framework within which these observations take place, which is what endows them with real significance. Rather than confirming the museum as a depository of truth and cultural identity, in fact, Juan's visit to the Prado emphasizes the duality of the museum enterprise, and metonymically the duality of the project of modernity; namely, the "conflictividad opositiva de la cara de Jano, entre el coma permanente y la revitalización, entre el

caos y la esperanza" (León 10), and challenges rather than intensifying the *fixity of meaning* by stressing the heterogeneity of the elements that comprise the work of art.

Because he occupies a paradoxical or liminal space, Juan's experience problematizes any clear-cut answer to the identity question and to the process of subjectification. In revising Foucault's view on panopticism, and focusing on what the 19th century legitimized as institutions of visual display (the museum, the fair, the exhibitions), Bennett contends that modern society puts forth a model for subjectification that is antithetical to the objectifying society of surveillance described by Foucault (119).[39] When individuals are asked to perform both as subjects and objects of perception within what he calls "the exhibitionary complex," they are subsumed into the 'democratizing' category of citizenry to learn of power, and of themselves, precisely from the perspective of power (119). Indeed, Bennett maintains, "[t]he exhibitionary complex was also a response to the problem of order, but one which [would] transform that problem into one of culture" (119), linked as it was to "the Gramscian perspective of the ethical and educational function of the modern state" (120).

Though I am going to propose a slightly different route to examine the relation between cultural institutions and practices and the making of citizenry, I find the emphasis Bennett places on the two-way directionality of visual practices in contrast with a 'hegemonic' reading of vision,[40] as well as his remark on the convenience and efficacy of finding a cultural solution to a problem of order, particularly pertinent for my argument. Though it fails to provide Juan the

[39] The complex visual web described by Cajal is closer to what Gill Deleuze, in the "Postscript in Control Societies," calls *control societies* (after Burroughs), than to Foucault's *disciplinary societies.* The economy behind it, or the one that this web supports, is already that of a market economy in which products are replacing production. We could read the economy of the laboratory, in fact, as a sort of metaproduction in which what is bargained is the ability to create and sell services and not products. It is an economy in which "Even art has moved away from the closed sites and into the open circuits of banking" (Deleuze 181).

[40] Clearly, here I am not referring to the Gramscian meaning of 'hegemonic,' rather I refer to the use made of the term by authors such as David Michel Levin and Martin Jay, who understand modernity in terms of a primacy (or domination) of ocularcentrism. See Levin's *The Hegemony of Vision* and Jay's *Downcast Eyes.*

relief he seeks, the scene at the museum offers us two relevant insights into the way in which visual practices participate in the making of the citizen. First, that the observer is an active participant in the act of perception and the eye, and brain, are not simply passive recorders of visual stimuli;[41] and, second, that complete transparency or full visibility is undesirable because "si en el reino de las rocas descubre el análisis maravillas ocultas, en el de la vida (y en la obra de arte su remedo) deshace la belleza que representa un efecto de la visión sintética del conjunto y de la ingenua ignorancia de los misteriosos hilos de la urdimbre vital" ("El pesimista" 201).

But the museum, like most crowded spaces of modern urban life, cannot grant Juan the distance he requires to observe an object while still retaining a *healthy* amount of illusion. Neither is it an option "exigir del Estado para comodidad exclusiva de tan estrafalario parroquiano, la construcción de un local de dos kilómetros en cuadro" (196). This is one of the instances, I believe, when the contradiction between the project of modernity and its factual dimension emerges between the lines of the text: although fostered as an individualistic enterprise, modernity is about the creation of a cohesive, homogeneous, and controllable collective. Juan's individuality, or, amounting to the same thing, his utter otherness, constitutes an impediment to reaching this objective. Along the same lines, the failed attempt to find solace in the museal experience seems to suggest that the museum falls short in providing the kind of cultural cohesiveness that the new collective subject seems to require. I would like to stress another point Bennett makes when he further analyzes the role of the museum as a cultural technology. He observes that the museum, like the laboratory, "*recasts* objects of investigation" and with them "create[s] new configurations of objects that [it matches] with an appropriately

[41] This was the position held by the Impressionists and the core of the aesthetic debate with the Post-Impressionists that held perception to be a structured process of conscious experience. For more details, see Lynn Gamwell's *Exploring the Invisible: Art, Science, and the Spiritual,* and particularly the chapter entitled "Looking Inward: Art and the Human Mind."

altered social order" ("Civic laboratories" 524).[42] Following sociologist Karin Knorr-Cetina's description of laboratory science, Bennett argues that museums, just like laboratories, "do not have to make do with objects as, where, or when they 'naturally' occur…The museum object is, indeed, always non-identical with itself or with the event (natural, social or cultural) of which is the trace" (527).

This point is extremely relevant for my argument regarding the centrality of theatricality to modernity. While the possibility of separating the object from its 'natural' occurrence may prove useful for bypassing the obstructive presence of unwanted information or connections, thus making the object available for a variety of appropriations or 'framings,' this possibility marks an essential difference between the museal and the theatrical experience. The theatrical performance cannot rescind from the body of the actor, nor can it do without the physical presence of an audience. In addition, contrary to the individual aesthetic appreciation generated by the museum, the theater summons the participation of the collective to the performance. The way Jo Labanyi interprets the role National Exhibitions held in the making of what she calls the "schooled spectators" is relevant here. She argues, in fact, that the theatricalization and spectacularization of historical painting and of museal displays (wax museums in particular) contributed to a blurring of the difference between "high culture" and "popular culture," which in turn helped to bridge the social gap between the different groups that identified with them and promoted the liberal project of nationalization of culture ("Horror" 79-82). The emphasis placed on the theatrical dynamics at play in particular exhibitions validates my suggestion that theatricality engages the social and political dimensions in ways that the museum alone cannot guarantee.

[42] Bennett is here referring to the work of socialist Karin Knorr-Cetina on the production of scientific knowledge.

Cajal shows awareness of this democratizing dimension of theatricality when he subtly blurs the differences between a laboratory and a theatrical stage, and carefully stages Juan's journey to self-individuation in theatrical terms (deception and illusion) and in theatrical spaces (the streets and the Teatro Real). It is not surprising that someone like Cajal, who was also heavily invested in the physiology of the body, would find the somatic dimension of the theater so appealing. And although he never wrote for the theater, he was part of the regenerationist group of scientists-authors who extensively cultivated this genre (e.g., Azorín, Galdós, Unamuno).

In order to elucidate my reading of "El pesimista" in terms of a progressive theatricalization of the process of self-individuation, I propose that we closely follow Juan's spatial displacement throughout the text. Just as Juan's movements, like Pasteur's, blur the distinction between private and public spaces by changing the scale of observation from macro to micro, so too do particular practices and skills become transposed from one realm to another and back again, transforming the meaning, reach, and durability of the institutions, groups, or individual actors with which these practices and skills are connected. When we first encounter Juan, he is secluded in his apartment (where is also his laboratory though never directly mentioned or 'seen'), distressed over the death of his parents and wishing for the tools necessary for the preservation of life. From his room, "[d]e vez en cuando percibíase el estrepitoso rodar de los ómnibus madrugadores, cuyas trepidaciones, comunicadas a la estancia de Juan, hacían retemblar los muebles, oscilar la luz y estremecer las cuartillas" (171). Through the window, which I take to be functioning as the frame dividing the proscenium from the temporarily invisible stage, the aural dimension of the *bullicioso* world of the working class sensibly disrupts Juan's private space, his 'clarity' of vision, and the pages of the pessimistic novel he is writing.

Once it is apprehended visually, the *bullicio* reveals itself as the place of hybridity, contamination, and democratic homogenization, where "los detritus de la vida alta y baja [mix in a] confusión desesperante" (187), which threatens to *dissolve* the orderly space of Juan's own room.[43] Going outside, Juan realizes that "[e]l mundo mosáico y el mundo de cristal" (189) that make up the streets and its passersby have transformed "la impresión simple…en impresión compuesta, y la continuidad en discontinuidad" (188), as if he had suddenly been 'beamed out' to another planet. He has been catapulted into a world "tan real como inverosímil" (202).

Rather than unraveling the amazing complexity of what lies beyond the surface, I am interested in the possibility of reading this scene as an intertextual reference that may reveal the rich and ambivalent relation that this text entertains with modernity. If we think of Juan's grotesque city sights/sites tour as an inversion of Baudelaire's urbanite strolling of crowded streets, then it is safe to say that by bringing to the fore the darker side of modern life and the duality of human nature one can read between the lines of the text a critique of modernity. Whereas the modernist encounter with the anonymous passersby was exhilarating, the same event fills Juan with absolute distress as he painfully discovers the conflict between an innermost structure, which is multiple and dissonant in nature, and the external façade of reality and identity, which appears unified and homogenous only insofar as one decides to ignore, or is unable to perceive, its heterogeneous makeup.

[43] In his attempt to reread the "98" and its intellectuals for post-modern generations, Gonzalo Navajas analyzes the progressive impermeabilization of the private space as one of the outcomes of the crisis of modernity (183). In short, he argues that the significance of the '98 lies in the recuperation of a historical unconscious that has been either repressed or forgotten and that would counteract the a-historical present generated by the postmodern paradigm. See his "El 98 para un español de veinte años." *Nuevas perspectiva sobre el 98.* John Gabriele ed. Frankfurt: Vervuert, 1999, 180-86. In this light, Juan's adversion to the invasion of his private space would signal the incipient and troublesome birth of what would become the "pequeño cuarto mental, insonorizado y climatizado por la indiferencia social y el narcisismo posmodernos" (Navajas 183), which Cajal attempts to counteract with a relentless preoccupation with the historical and the social.

Nevertheless, Juan seems to welcome discontinuity when it is limited to the inorganic world, since he marvels at the complex structure of the crystal particles falling from the sky like "única transformación teatral" (199), turning the entire Calle de Alcalá into a spacious open stage. Theatricality frames again the first unsettling encounter with Juan's fiancée, Elvira (Juan's means to personal and social fulfillment) at the Teatro Real. As we may recall, under the microscopic vision and the bluish light, the young woman appears as a monstrous mixture of dissonant elements, in no way resembling the beautiful woman with whom he had fallen in love. Later, the streets of Madrid become the place of another (intertextual) theatrical encounter. Juan spots Elvira…in her familiar semblance! The description of her garments, however, would quickly reveal to a careful reader the fact that the vision is illusory, even before the narrator openly says that the encounter is taking place "a la distancia de la ilusión" (215-16). Elvira is in fact described as wearing "un soberbio traje de terciopelo verde obscuro" (215), a detail that instantly reminds the reader of another famous theatrical performance in the Spanish literary tradition: the one staged by the priest and the barber, who has disguised himself as a woman, to trick don Quijote into returning home. 'She' too was wearing a green velvet dress. Green, the color of the *engaño.*[44] Yet, the illusion provides Juan with a possible glimpse of a cohesive human being, in spite of his knowledge that essence and semblance do not coincide (i.e., the classical question of *ser* and *parecer*). Without losing sight of the invisible essence of life, illusion acquires a special status, a thickness of its own.

The outcome of Juan's moving from place to place is the superimposition of the scientific and civic laboratory (both pursuing from different angles the stabilization of the controversies in

[44] Cervantes dresses the barber with "unos corpiños de terciopelo verde" [Part I, XVII]. Francisco Márquez Villanueva comments throughout his book on the way the color green has been used in literature, and specifically in Cervantes (caballero del Verde Gabán, infanta Micomicona, Dorotea dressed as pastor), to indicate an illusory reality.

which both human and nonhuman agents participate) but also the gradual shift from a scientific to a cultural epistemology.[45] As Latour demonstrates with Pasteur, the *displacement* of human and non-human actors (from inside-outside-inside and from the macro-micro-macro) allows for the production of knowledge and innovation through the blurring of these dichotomies ("Laboratory" 266), but also through the swapping of skills among the actors. By the same token, moving from the home (the micro-laboratory) to the streets and the theater (the macro laboratory), but also from the symbolic (the space of the subject) to the social (the place of the institution), Juan can be seen as tracing the process by which a cultural solution comes to be applied to a scientific and political problem: the irruption of invisible forces. Precisely in the moments in which the subjective and the objective appear to be out of sync in the text, I argue, it becomes more productive to examine how the nation-state and its institutions enter into the process of cultural negotiation of individual and collective identities.

Nonetheless, when compared to the scientific laboratory, the museum and the theater offer the paradoxical advantage of involving multiple but also less authoritative manipulations of the relationships between objects.[46] In their ability to thrive on the ambivalence of meaning and to articulate reality and illusion lies their effectiveness as modern cultural technologies. Although playing a fundamental role in the process of democratization of culture, museums still rely in my view on a bourgeois model of private contemplation, which "El pesimista" seems to thrust aside in favor of the communal theatrical experience.

[45] I am here using the term 'place' to highlight the relational nature of these spaces. Here, diverse socio-political and economic interests meet to forge identities and ideologies by performing, reinforcing, and fixing specific interpretations and conventions, but also by self-reflexively marking these spaces as crucial sites/sights of contention.

[46] The distinction is made by Ian Hacking ("The self-vindication of the laboratory sciences." *Science as Practice and Culture*. Ed. A. Pickering, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992) and noted by Bennett in "Civic laboratories" (538).

Following this line of reasoning, it is particularly significant that Juan's *resurrection* begins in the public space of the street—where he is "enfocado por unos ojos [Elvira's] piadosos, subyugadores, impregnados de nupciales promesas" (216)[47]—while the truthfulness of the illusion is sanctioned within the frame of the Teatro, where Elvira asks him to meet to "reanud[ar] con más *ilusión* y cariño que nunca las interrumpidas relaciones" (222 emphasis mine). Though it is Elvira's look that reestablishes Juan in life, his reintegration into the social body must symbolically take place among his peers in the chameleonic space of the theater; and this can only happen once Juan has learned to subordinate his personal desire to the collective good and negotiate between the social and individual perspectives.[48] With respect to the finale one may say that, unprepared to live the precariousness of his molecular existence and the dissonance of his constituent parts, Juan prefers to go back to the comforting illusions provided by the molar aggregates and, in psychoanalytic terms, be cured.[49] Indeed, reestablished to his normal sight, Juan regains the 'right' perspective on things and becomes a success story: he wins back his fiancée, friends and colleagues, obtains the much desired public job position, and starts a family. His democratization is complete.

But what may appear from one perspective to be the story of a defeat (i.e., the defeat of the individual) becomes the story of the birth of a collective, the creation of another *point of view* and another *scale* of signification. Since managing exceptionality or difference appears to be a

[47] Marriage is another theatrical performance that settles in cultural terms what is in fact a political and economic matter.

[48] The tension between national identity and tradition, on the one hand, and individual freedom and aspirations, on the other, is another fundamental conflict of modernity. José Alvarez Junco sums up this point by recalling the exchange between Stephen Dedalus and his long-time friend Kevin in Joyce's *Portrait of a Young Artist.* Asked to feel and behave patriotically, Stephen replies that he will defy those nets—language, nationality, religion—that impede his freedom (17).

[49] In the *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze-Guattari state that in the 'molar' dimension of the subject aggregates or societies are artificially construed as homogenized and "unified at the structural level of techniques and institutions" to appear as statistical unities—that is to say species, varieties, a single object, a single subject, etc.. The molar and the molecular do not translate into a contrast between collective and individual, but represent different types of collections or populations that do not share the "same régime, the same relationships of magnitude, or the same uses of syntheses" (287).

difficult task within the democratizing paradigm, in the end Juan concludes, "es cuestión de colocarse en el *adecuado punto de vista*, acercándose con el microscopio o alejándose con el telescopio" (201 emphasis mine). Interestingly, these words are evocative of Nietzsche's statement on vision and art—that same Nietzsche the narrator of "El pesimista" lists among the bad influences feeding Juan's pessimism. In the section of *The Gay Science* entitled "What one should learn from an artist" Nietzsche argues the following:

> How can we make things beautiful, attractive, and desirable for us when they are not? And I rather think in themselves they never are. Here we could learn something…from artists who are continually trying to bring off such inventions and feats. Moving away from things until there is a good deal that *one no longer sees* and there is much that *our eye has to add* if we are still *to see them at all*. (299 emphasis added)

This continual adjustment of sight and scale of which both authors talk, I argue, is what makes of theater a powerful cultural technology insofar as it successfully articulates reality and illusion, identification and separation, individuality and collectivity, through deception and illusion. Theater does not produce realism. On the contrary, it consecrates illusion as an epistemological device. I believe that Cajal's most modern trait—or as Pratt puts it, the reason why he is "Muy siglo XX"—is his ability to perceive (in the midst of modernity) that illusion and theatricality were not mechanisms of deception or self-deception, but fundamental components of modern life and the real *trama* [plot and fabric] of reality.[50] As Kant observed through the optical example of mirror visions, illusion is necessary in order to "know" what escapes rational knowledge, but

[50] I am here keeping the ambivalence implied by the Spanish term *trama* as it refers at once to the twofold nature of the empirical world: its narrative or fictional dimension, and its textural or material one. Though *fabric* maintains the man-made dimension, it does not necessarily allude to fictionality.

it is also necessary to know that it is an illusion. Similarly, Nietzsche understands appearance and falsification as intrinsically modern forms of experiencing reality.

The risk however exists of taking this apparently seamless image for reality itself and of fueling self-deception. Regarding this point, I would like to suggest a parallel between the 33 centimeters dividing the observer from the thing observed (distinct vision) and the 36 centimeters separating the width of the Spanish railroad track from that of the rest of Europe, on which Valentí Almirall ironically remarks in *España tal como es*. Both distances are assumed to grant cohesiveness and protection to the subject. Yet envisioned as a military defense from foreign invasion, the widening of the railroad track backfired because, just as it increased Spain's sense of invulnerability, so too did it increase its insularity (Almirall 67). Similarly, if Juan were to retreat to the safety or sense of immunity promised by distinct vision, he would surrender instinct (perception and heterogeneity) to understanding (interpretation and homogeneity), ultimately hindering his journey to self-discovery.[51] But, again, without distinct vision, sociability appears to be compromised. The solution is to find the appropriate point of view by adjusting the scale of the observation along with the right tools to address the phenomena. This is precisely what Cajal suggests in referring to the different types of observations derived from the microscope and the telescope. If the microscopic observer risks being overwhelmed by the frenzy produced by the spectacle of reality, the telescopic one, instead, simplifies and abstracts reality too much before allowing the eye to *add* and *create* an inhabitable space, and in the process sacrifices instinct. How to articulate the two perspectives? How to conjugate instinct and understanding? This is another way to pose the question of modernity. Through the reading I am proposing of this short story, I suggest that modern theater is the best suited device for the

[51] Nietzsche associates the "óptica del primer plano" with instinct and the ability of assessing the short-run consequences of the origin of beauty, goodness, truth, etc., while he sees understanding as an inhibitory function of the instinctual judgment that allows one to assess the long-run consequences (*Estética* 111).

job insofar as it supplies what science or religion cannot deliver. When driven by pure scientific desire, in fact, Juan instinctively aims at extirpating illusion and mystery, but becomes unable to act. Religion and morality negate this life in favor of the one to come, equally demanding the sublimation of all instincts. In the cultural realm of the theater, instead, the tension between instinct and rationality, art and life, reality and illusion, individual and collective is maintained and transformed into an inhabitable space for the body. In this vein, I suggest that while the museum foregrounds its function of framing and dividing art from life, and fiction from reality, by placing the spectator on either side of the experience (i.e., the museum as a "framed" or "framing" experience), the theater sets itself up as an experience *of the frame*, namely of that liminal space in which the "efluvios del uno al otro continente" blur the distinction in a process of "ósmosis y endósmosis" (Ortega *Meditaciones* 96),[52] and in which the body is inexorably exposed to the possibility of failing.

Contrary to other regenerationists who postulated a sort of metaphysical (Unamuno or Valle-Inclán) or natural (Azorín) escape from the paradoxical condition of modernity, the significance of Cajal is that he places the focus on the paradox itself by making his protagonist inhabit and embody this liminality while self-reflexively signaling the incongruence of understanding the world dichotomically. The gap or *différance* is never erased and otherness is not reduced to a vehicle for self-assertion, since contradiction is placed at the very heart of modern reality, as in the scene where Juan observs the dark smoke of an electric plant: "Ese humo negro…está ligado a la luz, como el dolor al pensamiento" (213). What remains inarticulate, but still echoes in Juan's words is the fact that knowledge and progress are linked to struggle and exploitation. In similar fashion, any worldview has a dark side: it obscures,

[52] In these terms Ortega describes the relation between reality and fiction when he comments on Cervantes's "El retablo de Maese Pedro."

sometimes intentionally, other competing views and this because it is necessarily a view from somewhere. Cajal's story shows that there is nothing natural or self-legitimizing in any particular 'visual distribution' since it is always the outcome of historical contingencies, relations, and negotiations among different historical agents. Along this line, I interpret Juan's naïve witnessing of the 'natural' spectacle of the rain in the Calle de Alcalá: as the rain comes down to cleanse the polluted urban spaces, or so Juan believes, the theatricalization of the scene stresses that both nature and culture are historically shaped and ultimately subject to representation and interpretation. Once more theatricality proves to be the fundamental dimension of modern life, well beyond the metaphorical value it held during the 17th century. But the representation takes now place on the backdrop of a visibly reduced stage, that of the national territory and the national collective. Unable to project its identity on the transatlantic scenery of the colonial empire, Spain has to attempt to make sense of an unfamiliar configuration at a time when other European nations are successfully maintaining their colonial dominions, and new imperial powers are rising on the global scene.

Coming back from the national to the individual scale, Juan's bumpy journey to self-discovery has entailed, and will continue to do so, a delicate negotiation between his individual aspirations and social obligations, and his gains have certainly come at a price. One day, the narrator speculates,

> será *lícito* quizá rastrear la morfología y costumbres de tan diminutas y ultramicroscópicas organizaciones confinantes con la nada y muy distantes aún de las más groseras construcciones moleculares [gracias a] radiaciones invisibles, infinitamente delicadas y todavía ignotas, de la materia imponderable." (182 emphasis mine)

Each historical time shapes its specific socio-political architecture. There may come a time when it will be suitable—or permissible—to give visibility to other configurations or, in Deleuzian terms, to abandon the molar and embrace the molecular structure of the human being and society. But the time is not now. And even this possibility will not exhaust the unseen: "la ciencia no podrá agotar los dominios de la vida. Lo invisible, infinitamente más importante que lo visible, os envolverá siempre," the *genio* warns Juan. Identities and boundaries will continue to be negotiated "y cada edad tendrá sus enemigos inaccesibles" (182) and its contradictions.

In the next section, we will attempt to identify some of the late 19th century inimical and shaded actors, but actors nonetheless. The "betwixt and between" that according to Barbara Stafford fascinated 'romantic' 18th century materialists pose now a serious threat for a political taxonomy. We will therefore return once more to the Teatro Real and our scene of medical examination in order to see how the irruption of invisible socio-political forces (proletariat, rural masses, women and nonhumans), which are perceived as threats of degenerative regression into the barbaric or the primitive (i.e., from the social to the natural human condition), is dealt with within the liberal project of democratization. Like infectious agents, these new actors require a reassessment of borders and boundaries. Unsurprisingly, the sight of negotiation for the modern citizen will be the female body, and theatrical illusion will sanction the reassembling of the social body.

On Pachyderms and Women, or How to Reassemble the (Social) Body at the Teatro Real

Our detour through Pasteurized France has illuminated the intrinsic theatricality of scientific examinations, be it Vesalius's and Bazarov's autopsies or Cajal's microscopic assessments. Despite their commonality, however, these two medical approaches nonetheless diverge in important ways. Since it replaces the gory spectacle of autopsy with a clean, non-invasive technique involving the most advanced technologies of the time, Cajal's microscopy signals an important epistemological shift, which is coeval with the development of the allegedly enlightened project of modernity. A scientific icon of progress, the microscope becomes a tool for the mythologization of a civilized, cultural imperialism that claims to be qualitatively different from the bloody conquests and colonizations of the past. The same civilizing principle makes its way into the foreign politics of European nations at the turn of the century. In the specific case of Spain, although the transatlantic colonies were lost, "the [imperial] illusion was *not*" (Epps 159), and this because, within the European context the empire was perceived as absolutely inseparable from the fate and legitimacy of the nation-state. Spain's "imperial hangover," as Brad Epps calls it, found its civilized expression in influential works such as *La nacionalitat catalana*, in which Prat de la Riba defines imperialism as "the triumphant period of nationalism, the nationalism of a great people" (in Epps 108). As Epps points out, this attitude signaled a shift from a militarized to "a non-coercive practice of 'civilisation,'" which in Prat's specific articulation was to take place under the guidance of Catalonia (154).[53] The same 'civilized' attitude also required a reassessment in the practice of the nation's self-representation in response to two interconnected phenomena: on the one hand, the inscription of the Spanish

[53] Prat's claim to a Catalan leadership speaks of the heterogeneous nature of the process of nationalization and challenges the assumption that the emergent nation-state was by default Castilian-centric.

democratic process within the context of "Europe" as a signifier of modernity, progress and democracy, and, on the other, the increasing claims to autonomy of the Spanish peripheries following the independence of the overseas colonies (147, 154).[54]

At the turn of the century "empire" became the defining political category for modern European nation-states, which in their rush to accumulate colonial territories in Africa and Asia turned competition and domination into privileged relational modes and channels of national formation. But if we compare the two scientific examinations, as described at beginning of this section, in the light of this European imperial discourse, the alleged differences between the two begin to blur. The gap between the autopsy and the microscopic assessment (and the imperial models they metonymically suggest), in fact, significantly narrows when one considers how both instances foreground the intrinsic violence of a masculine gaze penetrating a female body.[55] It is not a coincidence that in all three cases (Vesalius, Bazarov, and Juan) the body under examination is that of a woman.[56] And, again, it is not by chance that a new understanding of difference, the one implied in the unsettling perception of Elvira's magnified face, is negotiated on the female body. Rather than on geographical bodies, cultural imperialism inscribes itself on biological bodies: as the new cultural lenses, biology is used to produce and reinforce what are

[54] For Michael Iarocci the difficult contextualization of Spain within a European framework begins as early as the late 17th century, with the end of Spain's hegemony and the subsequent myth of a "European modernity and of Spain's seemingly sui generis relationship to that grand narrative, its symbolic position throughout most of the modern era, somewhere off to the side of modern Europe" (xi). Challenging this commonly held view, and the peculiar symbolic map of Europe that it generates, Iarocci rests his analysis on the determining role of the "overlapping frameworks of Spain's waning colonialism and modern Europe's growing cultural imperialism" (xvii).

[55] In *Reflections on Gender and Science*, Evelyn Fox Keller highlights throughout the ways in which the scientific enterprise as well as scientific language and metaphors makes use of, and perpetuate, a dichotomous distinction between masculine and feminine, associating them, respectively, with activity and passivity, penetrating and penetrable, dominating and dominated. In this light, the penis-like elements Juan sees on Elvira's magnified face are especially troubling precisely because they undermine this dichotomy by placing masculine traits on a female body.

[56] Autopsies of men were also performed, but mostly female bodies were showed because of the visual pleasure (of domination) that generated in the audience. See especially the third chapter of Jordanova's *Sexual Visions* entitled "Body Image and Sex Roles."

held to be suitable standards of civilization on the one hand, and to explain and legitimize the discrimination of deviant biological, social, and political bodies on the other.[57]

As was true of past political designs, cultural imperialism drew from scientific metaphors in order to inform specific organizations of reality. By consolidating a method, language, and praxis initiated by its founding fathers, modern science had managed effectively to root representations of the world in the separation between mind (man) and nature (woman). Francis Bacon's metaphor of the "chaste and lawful marriage" successfully translated the relation man/nature into one of boundaries (i.e., the lawful), power, and domination, one-sidedly in favor of the knower. But intrinsic in Bacon's metaphor was already a cultural translation of this relation (i.e., marriage) as well as a gendered view of the world. By likening the relation of man with nature to a nuptial bond in which, given the power differential, conjugality presupposed "a conjunction that remains forever disjunctive" (Fox Keller, *Reflections* 95), the metaphor metonymically extended the domination of nature to that of others. Conceptual and social dichotomies, such as "public *or* private, masculine *or* feminine, objective *or* subjective, power *or* love," began to populate scientific discourse, producing and reinforcing (even today) a "science-gender system" (8).[58] In Western thought, all aspects of psychological (cognitive and emotional) development became associated with the 'feminine' and, therefore, were perceived as opposed and subordinated to science and the scientific method, which were instead linked to autonomy,

[57] As Helen Longino already claimed in her seminal work *Science as Social Knowledge*, while physics molded 18th century social, political and psychological thought, so did (micro)biology provide "the source of models and metaphors for twentieth-century thought" (163), a process that begins to be outlined in Spanish realist writers such as Baroja (and his characters' veiled obsession with early theories of contagion— Dale Pratt emphasizes this type of reading of *Torquemada en la hoguera*), and is thematized throughout Cajal's ouvre.

[58] The system would be based on a network of associations (of the kind 'objective fact, power, masculinity') and subsequent disjunctions (i.e., objectivity is opposed to subjective feeling and removed from the sphere of the feminine and love). In the same fashion, the distinction male and female would be rooted in the association of masculinity with power and objectivity and in its disjunction from subjectivity and love (8).

masculinity, objectivity and power (97).[59] Undoubtedly, 19th century Spanish science was no exception, even though in "El pesimista," as in other *Cuentos* and his writings in general, we witness Cajal granting women a certain role, however marginal, within the economy of knowledge, especially when he presents them as the scientist's (i.e., husband's) helper.

Despite their relative visibility, however, Cajal's women still function as screens onto which specific historical views or values are projected, and it is on their bodies that hypotheses are tested. Thus Elvira's body in "El pesimista," as a collected specimen, becomes the means to visualize the threatening effects of differentiation and the place on which these are later resolved. In "A secreto agravio secreta venganza," Emma is the guinea pig for an experiment carried out by her jealous husband, an influential middle-aged scientist, who inoculates her with an infectious disease transmissible through the saliva. The death of Emma's lover by the disease proves at once the wife's infidelity and the scientist's theory of contagion. As both stories reveal, women are perceived as problematic subjects of desire, and their longing and aspirations become unsettling demands that need to be defused: desire is thus sublimated in the marital relation and the preoccupation for the propagation of the species. And in Emma's case, more violently so! The metonymical relation between scales (the microscopic and the macroscopic) established in both of Cajal's stories illustrates how the family stood for the entire nation and women became the repository of specific civic values (particularly self-sacrifice and obedience) which, by placing monogamy at the core of the family and the social group, validated the liberal project of nationalization.[60]

[59] Simone de Beauvoir famously synthesizes this view by saying that "Representations of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men which they describe it from their point of view, which they confuse with the absolute truth" (16).

[60] Mill had criticized the fact that women were indoctrinated to perceive themselves at the service of some external collective cause (family, species, nation), for which they were expected to show complete abnegation.

The tradition of linking women and personification is a well established one in Western culture, and the medical field is no exception. Noting this trend, Ludmilla Jordanova emphasizes how the instrumentalization of the female body has been carried out, particularly in public spaces, under various forms of display (135). But the conventionalism reinforced through the association of 'woman' and 'public space' in reality masks the anxieties generated by the fact that gender complicates the separation between public and private. One could consider, for instance, the different expectations that are raised, depending on gender, concerning what is acceptable behavior in public.[61] Though with a hint of irony in both finales (and much more so in the case of "A secreto agravio"), the narrator does not undermine in the end the univocal association of women with the private sphere (the family). He therefore confirms the paradoxical relation they hold with their social surrounding. It is not so much Elvira (who is fixated on fulfilling her role as wife and mother) but Emma who shows how entering marriage entails de facto the exclusion from a market economy, since she is forced to leave her job as an assistant to her future husband once she has married him.

By the end of the century, the question of gender was not only unavoidable, rather it was crucial, it seems to me, to the legitimization of the nation-state and cultural imperialism. And this not simply because women had become in many ways a thriving economic force (agriculture, industry), but also because the category of 'gender' allowed one to deal metonymically with more troubling realities (class, race) while defusing their explosive effect. From a purely 'scientific' perspective, the focus on gender also derived from the interest of 19th century physiology in the body and the embodiment of perception, a phenomenon that, by this

[61] Jordanova offers the example of President Lyndon B. Johnson who proudly showed off his scar to the public, to demonstrate how boundaries for men are much looser, and that the female body is in general associated with higher standards of privacy.

time, made it possible to talk about life as "embodied experience" (Lowe 85).[62] However, as with Bacon's metaphor, which one-sidedly favored the position of the knower, physiological studies (just like those in the social sciences) often implied a dichotomous relation between an unmarked observer (Western white male) and a marked 'observee' (female, racialized, or class-marked). And while the physiological approach to gender called attention to the specificity of the feminine, at the same time it challenged the possibility of any clear-cut gender differentiation. This ambivalence could obviously open the possibility for manipulation. In the way that he probes the physiological nature of perception, Cajal zooms in on this doubtful distinction, showing that, in any case, it is on and through bodies—some gendered, and some whose functions are artificially potentiated both scientifically and technologically (Juan)—that modern reality attempts to settle its paradoxes. And it is on these same bodies, I argue, that the modern polity aesthetically negotiates the authority and boundaries of individual and national identities. In this light, paradox represents at once the link between bodies and their surroundings, and the category of significance within which modern subjects can find a way of positioning themselves.

[62] Lowe claims that "Life is embodied experience" in the measure that the human subject is constituted not only by body and mind, but also by the historically-formed self (85). Throughout the 19th century, the body had gained epistemological significance. Against the mechanical model of perception of Charcot and Taine, Helmholtz argued in his *Handbook* (1856-1867) for an active role of the brain in the organization of vision, linking Kant's theory of cognition to the body and establishing a physiology of perception (Gamwell 130). The connection between body and perception, therefore, had not been structured the same way in each historical period. During the Middle Ages, the conception of the human body was still based on the ancient theory of the equilibrium of four humors that corresponded to the four elements that constituted nature. So phlegm, blood, choler (yellow bile), and melancholy (black bile) corresponded to water, air, fire, and earth. Based on the principle of anagogy, the human body simply revealed the structure of the universe. With the shift from anagogy to resemblance during the Renaissance, the emphasis was on the body as microcosm, and the human being, now at the center of the universe, became the link between the spiritual and the material (Lowe 85-86). As Lowe points out, however, by the end of the sixteenth century, both empiricism (Hobbes and Hume) and rationalism (from Descartes to Leibniz), created the problem of a mind that was "solipsistically trapped by the logic of identity and difference, never able to obtain on its own the necessary connection with matter" (87). As a result of the separation between mind and body, "[t]he materialistic reduction of the body in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries created the corollary problem of a disembodied mind" (87) and vision came to be understood as the mental apprehension of the thing perceived.

By becoming first and foremost an embodied experience and an experience of what is other from us, knowledge exposes our endless vulnerability to the foreign element, as Juan Fernández reluctantly discovers. Having progressively lost the sinuous and peaceful beauty of classical forms, body and nature are no longer the unproblematic scenarios through which the Enlightenment has projected the achievements of human progress. When magnified, the organic and inorganic worlds appear as unhomely places populated by idiosyncratic elements and beings that contrast with the homogenous appearance of things. They also make self-identification into a doubtful process. This is what happens with Elvira's face, which was once the incarnation of beauty, and to Juan.[63] As Barbara Stafford contends, the ambiguous nature of microscopic vision blurs the hierarchy of elements and "render[s] the insignificant significant and the worthwhile worthless [hence revealing] how easily the observer's perception might become confused" (153). Seeing is no longer knowing: one can stare at something under the microscope for hours without being able to name what is being seen. Likewise, Juan fails to recognize his fiancée despite (or precisely because of) a careful examination. Once legible (as a system of readable signs), the body is now opaque. Most importantly, however, "[m]agnification drives to the center of a major aesthetic problem faced by all natural history description. What to do with beings that are neither one thing nor the other?" (153). Or two things at the same time, as in the case of Elvira. The "betwixt and between" that fascinated 18th century materialists poses a serious threat for a 19th century political taxonomy.

[63] Undoubtedly, technological advancements contributed significantly to heighten the monstrosity of that which was once believed natural, homogeneous, and fixed. Yet, there is a tendency in criticism to infer from this a direct relation between science, technology and society, and to see these disciplines as instruments of manipulation or top-down power strategies of rising state apparatuses. The implicit consequence is a scientific and technological determinism that also informs the idea of the hegemony of vision. This is for instance the approach of Martin Jay, and even more so of Michael Levin, and in part embodied in Jonathan Crary's idealized observer. Despite rejecting more or less openly a technological determinism, these authors focus on the way science and technology are used to shape specific observers, overlooking the way concrete observers and changing perceptional practices informed specific uses or advancements in science and technology.

Throughout the 18th century, symbolization and abstraction had come to help in simplifying what was apprehended as a varied universe: the grid (and its straight lines) rationalized perception and promised a cure for disorder on the safe ground of the 'typical' and the 'ideal.' While Neoclassicism averted the problem of organic cohesion by scrutinizing the parts and by holding a Neoplatonic belief that change did not touch the essence of things but simply their appearance (Stafford 153-4), the organicist vision of the social body of the late 19th century demanded the creation of a coherent whole which, after Hobbes, would allow the parts to surrender their particular identity to a superior will, according to a *pactus subiectionis* that made representation (and theatricality, I might add) a necessary mechanism of modern politics. To borrow a phrase intended to describe the relation between the sexes, it was a matter of achieving an "intimate *consensus* of functions" (35 emphasis mine).[64] I here emphasize "consensus" because it becomes an underlying principle of modern politics and sociability, and as such will be a crucial focus throughout this investigation.

The emphasis on consensus, I maintain, signals a fundamental shift in the understanding of the meaning and reach of words such as 'subject(s),' 'collective,' 'community,' and 'knowledge.' At the same time, it signifies the awareness that the increasing complexity of modern life requires a great deal of simplification in interpersonal and inter-group relations, both on the domestic and the international front. It is my view that "El pesimista" shows how this simplification is negotiated in connection with a new notion of objectivity, which also constitutes an exercise in generating versions of democratic political consensus. Tracing the historical development of the word 'objectivity,' Lorraine Daston demonstrates that the late 19th century

[64] This is the argument British psychologist Henry Maudsley offered in an article entitled "Sex in Mind and in Education" and published in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1874, in which he maintains the absolute legitimacy of discriminating between female and male functions and activities, and attempts to discredit Stuart Mill's critique of the "subjection" of women (*On the Subjection of Women,* 1869).

meaning was purged of any subjective dimension. This 'aperspectival objectivity' (599), as she calls it, responded chiefly to two interconnected phenomena: (1) the growing concern about idiosyncrasies and (2) the need to ensure the 'communicability' of knowledge in an ever-increasingly specialized world (600). Subjectivity came to be perceived as an obstacle in both respects.[65]

Cajal, I believe, questions this move away from subjectivity, since for him, as for other 20th century thinkers, knowledge is a search for meaning, in which the individual necessarily becomes entangled and in which the distinction between subject and object no longer holds. The following passage from *Reglas* will help elucidate my point:

> All description, even if it *appears objective* and simple, becomes a personal interpretation—the personal point of view of the author. *Man mixes his personality in all things*. Even when he thinks he is photographing the exterior world, he very often contemplates and photographs *himself* instead. (in Craigie 192, emphasis mine)

Grounded in "personal interpretation," knowledge (as self-reflection) becomes the outcome of deliberation. But the complex and formless world just discovered and Juan's inability to let go of reassuring categories of signification (e.g., subject/object) prevent him from describing and structuring the reality that he experiences. In an ever more international, specialized, and compartmentalized scientific community, knowledge must be 'democratized' and become much more 'objective' to ensure communication. The division of labor (and of roles), and the less skilled workforce, required a much simpler exchange of information, and a simpler relation between reality and its representations—what for some amounted to a mediocrization of knowledge (Daston 611). Though Juan's scientific findings are rejected by his peers on the

[65]Moreover, the fact that the concept became imbued with moral concerns originally developed within the realm of 18th century moral philosophy facilitated the attachment of moral judgments to all knowledge that was tinted with subjectivity, as Daston convincingly argues (600-03).

grounds that they are 'unbelievable' ("no fueron de nadie creídos"), by reading between the lines we can discern that the real obstacle is the highly subjective dimension of his knowledge. After all, the discoveries are the outcome of his idiosyncratic gift, and are impossible to share. We may recall that the genie had warned Juan that, had he tried to divulge his fantastic findings, people would have seen him as a 'monstruo' or a deviant being. At the peak of his mental and professional capabilities, Juan constitutes an 'ab-normal' subject.

As philosophers of science have demonstrated, the rhetoric of objectivity was inseparable from science's claim to epistemological superiority. Science had long claimed for itself the privilege of providing a reliable representation of reality, on the basis that its authority rested on the assumption that objectivity was "bound up with questions about the truth and the referential character of scientific theories, that is, with issues of scientific realism" (Longino 62).[66] Aperspectival objectivity—or, as Thomas Nagel would put it, a "view from nowhere"—promised to purge representation of any subjective bias, and for this reason could be coupled with a specific gender politics. It was also true, in fact, that science built itself around a masculine worldview according to which the scientist was able to separate his subjectivity and emotion from his research and observations, by looking "upon nature and natural phenomena (including people) as isolated objects" (Hubbarb 10).[67] The subsequent opposition, on psychological grounds, between objectivity, masculinity and autonomy on the one hand, and the

[66] In the referential quality of the scientific method is to be found the link between science and realism in the arts. Dale Pratt intelligently analyzes, within the Spanish context, the tension between the aspiration of science to faithfully represent reality and its limitations. Among the authors he analyzes is Ramón y Cajal.

[67] Since the 1970s feminist scientists have underscored the inevitable connection between subject, object of research, and context. For such a reassessment of objectivity, as it was carried out particularly in the '70s and '80s, see the work of scientists and philosophers of science such as Helen Longino, Ruth Hubbarb, Shulamith Firestone, Evelyin Fox Keller, Donna Haraway, and Bruno Latour, just to mention a few. The point about the assumed objectivity of the scientist's approach to research has been made in particular by Shulamith Firestone in *The Dialectic of Sex*. New York: Bantam, 1972, 170.

emotional sphere of the 'feminine' on the other, along with the reinforcement of this dichotomy through language (Jordanova, Keller), contributed to consolidating the subordination of nature and woman to man, and of daily life to the scientific laboratory, assigning to the latter "the power to name, describe, and structure reality and experience" (Hubbarb 10).

As the reader soon realizes, however, Juan discovers at the microscopic level that people and objects cannot be apprehended in isolation and that naming is an arduous if not impossible task; moreover, he is also unable to separate observation from emotions and feelings, thus awkwardly undermining the 'scientific' distinction between masculine and feminine. Despite the clear role division established by the ending of the short story, the emphasis on the character's resistance to accept observation as an 'enmeshing' practice, I maintain, destabilizes Juan's masculinity along with Elvira's femininity (let us here recall the phallus-like elements on her face), and exposes the complexity of the gender issue by undoing a simplistic dichotomy based on physiological differences.

The division of roles was a much debated topic in the last quarter of the 19th century, especially in connection with the reform of female education. The focus on both sides was the (male) notion of objectivity. The resistance to women's emancipation rested, in fact, on the argument that between male and female there exist *objective* psychological differences rooted in the dissimilar physiological makeup. A smaller brain and a reproductive system that required more energy and rest to function properly were the reasons adduced to claim that women were best fit for childbearing, and for that reason their access to education and political equality should be limited.[68] Thus, in spite of the liberalism's claim to universal equality, the argument

[68] Many scientific publications contributed to this argument. For example, the American Edward Clarke emphasized in *Sex in Education; or, A Fair Chance for the Girls* (1873) the risk of overtaxing the female body economy; *The Evolution of Sex* (1889) by British scientists Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thomson explained the opposition between the female and male metabolisms and physiques in terms of "anabolic" (or energy-conserving) versus

that women were 'different but equal' was used to separate their right to access the social sphere from their participation in the market economy and the enjoyment of political rights.[69] Although Cajal's female protagonists include educated young women—Emma works for her husband as his personal assistant before marrying him, and Elvira is somewhat educated, being of a middle-class family—and although the scientist vehemently supported the right of women to a better education, his female characters, nevertheless, always find their vocation in supporting their spouses and in caring for the offspring, being subsequently cut off from economic independence.[70] Though the Institución Libre de Enseñanza (to which Cajal belonged) created a number of programs intended for female students—the "Escuela de Institutrices" in 1869 or the "Asociación para la enseñanza de la mujer" in 1870—female education continued to be a bourgeois privilege (Cabrera Bosch 34-36), and a poorly cultivated one for that matter. For this reason, Prat de la Riba could still say in 1903, in a conference at the "Centro Obrero" in Barcelona, that for Spanish women to be considered 'educated' "basta con aprender a leer y escribir, un poco de historia y de geografía, pintura, un par de idiomas, música, baile, algo de bordado y de arte y una gran dosis de religión" (in Nash 79).

In addition to maintaining women's sexual inferiority, those who opposed their emancipation also emphasized progress as a two-way street in order to argue that allowing

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"katabolic" (or energy-burning); the Austrian Otto Weinigen argued in *Sex and Character* (1903) that all individuals shared a mix of male and female aspects (active, productive, conscious and moral/logical, the former, passive, unproductive, unconscious and amoral/alogical, the latter) and that only "masculine" women were entitled to emancipation. These arguments also relied on the legacy of Phrenology (and its founder, the German phisiologist Franz Joseph Gall) that had linked the size of the skull to the intellectual capacity of the individual.

[69] Freud contributed to maintain this paradoxical (in)equality by claiming that women were less stable and productive than men and, therefore, less fit for a competitive market economy. Ruth Hubbarb stresses how this argument was reaffirmed in the 1970s to counteract the economic and political claims of feminism (5), maintain the view of "women as the natural reproducers of the species and men as producers of goods," as well as a differential treatment regarding salary and professionalization, which would relegate women to jobs and services that do not find representation in the standard descriptions of the economy, for instance the Gross National Product (7).

[70] The same standards however did not apply to women of the lower classes (whose participation in the economic base was absolutely necessary) on the basis of a twisted version of the same claim: poor women were perceived as less evolved than their wealthier counterparts.

women a better education and, therefore, a greater social and political participation was a risky business because it created the possibility of regression. British psychologist Henry Maudsley wrote in 1874 that the female reproductive system gave way to a specific "female organization" that impeded "to transform a woman into a man" (32). This claim, he stressed, was "not the expression of prejudice nor of false sentiment [but] the plain statement of a physiological fact" (34), which meant that "in order to assimilate the female to the male mind it would be necessary to undo the life-history of mankind from its earliest commencement" (38). In 1889 Emilia Pardo Bazán, one of the most important feminist voices of 19th century Spain, was invited to contribute to a volume of the *Fortnightly Review*, in which Maudsley had published his pseudo-evolutionist argument fifteen years earlier.[71] Attacking the common characterization of women as bearers of 'lujo' [luxury] and, metonymically, of 'lujuria' [lust] (a comment she interestingly, and repeatedly, frames at the Teatro Real!), Pardo Bazán claimed, in polemical fashion, that females and males enjoyed more equality before the advent of the parliamentary system:

> Más iguales entonces [at the time of the Independence war] el varón y la hembra en sus funciones de ciudadanía, puesto que aquél no ejercía aún los derechos políticos que hoy le otorga el sistema parlamentario negándolos por completo a la mujer, la sociedad no se dividía, como ahora, en dos porciones políticas y nacionalmente heterogéneas. Sentía y pensaba lo mismo la mujer que el hombre, y eran ambos católicos, monárquicos castizos, enemigos del extranjero hasta la

[71] In 1892 Pardo Bazán created "La biblioteca de la mujer" in which appeared her translations of some of the most essential works on feminism, such as John Stuart Mill's *On the Subjection of Women [La esclavitud femenina]* or Ferdinand August Babel's *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* (1879) [*La mujer ante el socialismo]*.

> médula de los huesos. Así que el papel de la mujer en la defensa contra el francés no fue menos activo que el del hombre. ("La mujer española" 87)[72]

On the domestic front, Pardo Bazán also criticized the spurious progressiveness of those authors who, despite focusing on feminist issues, remained nonetheless vulnerable to the temptation of idealizing women, as in the case of Benito Pérez Galdós's figures of the *ángel doméstico.* About the simplistic resolution given by Galdós to crucial issues presented only in germinal form in *Tristana,* Pardo Bazán wrote that the novel "prometía otra cosa; que Galdós nos dejó entrever un horizonte nuevo y amplio, y después corrió la cortina" ("Tristana" 182-83). Offering a sort of 'evolutionary' history of Spanish culture, she concludes her observations on "La mujer española" by stating that "A su dueña la emancipó una emancipadora eternal, sorda e inclemente: la necesidad" (116), clearly subordinating emancipation to the access to a market economy.

The imbalance between the sexes, whose beginning coincides for Pardo Bazán with the onset of the parliamentary experience, was exacerbated during the Restoration as a result of a concerted effort to naturalize sexual difference, on the assumption that the subordination of women was an inherent or self-embraced position. Science and Church found themselves converging on a notion of female sexuality that wanted women as "obedientes y sumisas."[73] This was not only the argument of those who examined the issue from a psychological perspective (Maudsley), but, most importantly, was also the response to the demands of a liberal

[72] It is important to stress that Pardo Bazán spoke from personal experience. She was the second woman to give a talk at the Ateneo and her candidacy for admission to the Real Academia Española was ostracized by almost all of her male colleagues. Moreover, she had the talent and courage of inscribing her writing within the dominant male discourse. It is also true, however, that in her essay still echoes a tendency to speak of women in generalizing terms, as the title, "La mujer española," suggests and as her characterization of the Spanish female 'types' (i.e., *la vasca, la catalana, la galáico-asturiana*) corroborates.

[73] See Rosa Elena Ríos Lloret's article "Obedientes y sumisas: Sexualidad femenina en el imaginario masculino de la España de la Restauración," in which she examines how both science and Church emphasized obedience and submissiveness as innate traits of female sexuality. In *Ayer* 63 (2006, 3): 187-209.

market.[74] The realist novel, as bourgeois epic, had already thematized the anxiety generated by women and the masses in an incipient market society that, although "had a vested interest in keeping the home—and women—private, for women's admission to civil society logically required that of the lower class" (Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization* 35),[75] paradoxically demanded (and favored) the access of women to the social sphere. Particularly true in the case of Spain, which was being built around traditional values, women challenged the ordered structure of a nation-state by blurring the distinction between the public and the private sphere because (1) they occupied simultaneously both realms as family keepers but also as repository of their husband's *honra* (i.e., their public persona); (2) they were excluded from participating directly in the public (political) sphere, but had historically exercised a significant influence on their spouse's decisions; and (3) they maintained a paradoxical relation to the market. Characters such as Galdós's Benina and Fortunata, Valera's Ana Ozores, and many of Bazán's female protagonists embody this ambiguity while questioning (to a lesser or greater extent) how the category 'woman' was being delimited by, and confined within, the liberal paradigm.

Cajal's "El pesimista" and "A secreto agravio" significantly contribute to this debate, I believe. The 'magnification' of the gender problematic and of the risks related to the ambivalent position of women with respect to their spouse and society at large allows the reader to focus on the effect that the *scale* of observation may have on the outcome. At first glance, "A secreto agravio" suggests that Emma's North American liberal education and beauty constitute a threat to the inviolability of the marital bond. Yet the passing mention that she *may* run away with her

[74] Jo Labanyi's analysis of the connections between liberal political theory and the market on one hand, and the reorganization of the family (with particular attention to the role of women) on the other, in late 19th-century Spain is illuminating here. See chapter one of *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel.*

[75] Examining the function of the family and the role of women in relation to the formation of the nation-state, Jo Labanyi stresses how the marriage contract and the Restoration's "política familiarista" [i.e., the infiltration of domestic virtues into the working-class home] gave way to "a feminization of politics, whose aim was not to politicize women (though in practice it did) but to deny that social reform was a political matter" (*Gender and Modernization* 86).

lover and be able to economically support both by profiting from her husband's scientific breakthroughs (which she must therefore understand and to which she has contributed), suggests that the microscopic level (the germ battle and the husband's infectious trap) illuminates an incipient macroscopic phenomenon: the tension between a scientific community that perceives itself as independent of national boundaries (i.e., non-proprietary) and the nationalization of science, which is part of the larger project of the nationalization of culture. Likewise, the case of Elvira reveals the paradoxical nature of the process of self-identification, which rests, as the reversal in scale from macro to micro unequivocally proves, on the (im)possibility of establishing a boundary between the 'self' and what is other from it (be it by gender, race, class, or status as nonhuman).

Though evolutionism is not the scaffolding of Cajal's short story, "El pesimista" draws on this theory to engage in the debates on the possibility of a social regression in relation to women's emancipation.[76] The narrator introduces the topic by identifying Elvira with the concern for the species' progress and by telling the reader that this sound, submissive and well-mannered girl worried that her betrothed may carry "los estigmas de un físico decadente, incapaz de resistir briosamente el fardo abrumador del trabajo," which destined him "acaso a marchitarse y periclitar aun antes de gustar las supremas y dulces abnegaciones de la paternidad" (168). Elvira's vocation is clearly identified with the traditional role of wife and mother. Though evolutionism resonates in the narrator's recurrent mention of the struggle for survival, it is at the

[76] Though the "Gloriosa" allowed for a more liberal evaluation of the significance and limits of Darwin's ideas, the struggling condition of Spanish science , the lack of a geological theorizing, and the constrains imposed by Catholicism impaired the reception of Darwinism in Spain to the point that for Spanish intellectuals "Darwin's 'long argument' [becomes] a short sentence, not about the natural world but about the possibilities of particular kinds of knowledge and their potential significance to Spanish society" (Pratt 48). Though I agree with Pratt, I believe that Cajal is in part an exception since "El pesimista" invites readers to compare and contrast the scientific evolutionary model with any social or sociological model of understanding reality. As such, then, evolutionism is not a mere metaphor to speak about non-scientific phenomena.

Teatro Real where the anxiety regarding the possibility of social regression is articulated in connection with the threat posed by democratic (in)differentiation—i.e., the simultaneous unveiling of heterogeneity as a constituent element of individual and social identity, and the impossibility of extricating identity from sexual, class, racial or human-nonhuman hybridization.

As we saw earlier, Juan notices Elvira in one of the balconies of the Teatro Real. The unsettling image of a "montón de carne femenina erizado de verrugas, *vergas*, *costras* y *escamas*" (204 emphasis mine) elicits in him the disturbing realization that his once beautiful, almost poetic fiancée resembles now a "*paquidermo gigantesco y desaseado*, *un animal antidiluviano de especie ignota*, capaz solamente de inspirar lástima y repugnancia" (205 emphasis mine). A similar reaction had been generated by the sight of the faces of the passersby, suddenly turned into "monstrous gigantes de la fábula o…descomunales paquidermos de la fauna antediluviana" (190). In both instances, the discovery of this dissonance produces in Juan the horror that Stanley Cavell identifies in "the perception of the precariousness of human identity, […] the perception that it may be lost or invaded, that we may be, or may become, something other than we are, or take ourselves for; that our origins as human beings need accounting for, and are unaccountable" (418-19). And this even more so when the familiar face of Elvira suddenly turns into an uncanny encounter.

The description of Elvira, however, points beyond the general uneasiness produced by the fragmentation of modern identity to the anxiety produced by the difficult task of ideologically integrating new socio-historical actors (women, the lower classes, and the 'citizens' or mixed-race subjects of the ex-colonies) while legitimizing the fact that they are not granted full citizenship. The disconcerting elements that comprise Elvira's gendered body—described as a bearded (the phallus-like elements!) "montón de carne femenina" covered with scabs and

scales—evoke monstrous, cold-blooded animals and fantastic (irrational) prehistoric giants, which had been sacrificed by evolutionary progress, science maintained, so that mankind would exist. Though aristocratic conservatism of post-Restoration Spain opposed Darwin's idea of the perfectibility of 'nature' because it exposed the conventionality of the status quo, evolutionism could still profitably legitimize the practice of relegating women to specific social activities and offices by (re)presenting as physiological facts what, John Stuart Mill argued, were instead the mere outcomes of tradition and customs, and by subsequently translating a given relation into a legal right, or lack thereof.[77]

Not unlike Mill, "El pesimista" gestures to the qualitative difference between the model of biological evolution and that of social progress. The way in which evolutionary theory and the notion of competition subtly morphs into descriptions of a capitalist society driven by class division and the maximization of profit, suggests that the element of randomness present in evolutionism is projected onto the capitalist market in order to naturalize the systematic endeavor to devise practices that optimize profit, and that clearly entail the (re)production of power differentials. Ubiquitous in Cajal's (scientific and literary) work, the notion of contradiction is presented as the catalyst of human progress, one that also hints at progress' paradoxical (or parasitical) counterpart, exploitation.

The working classes are evoked at the beginning of Juan's surreal strolling when the narrator mentions the fragments of coal expelled from chimneys and factories, or the particles of wool and silk that are detached from human clothing, or "las indefinibles virutas microscópicas…con que el taller impurifica el ambiente, convirtiéndolo en caótico pandemonium" (187). The byproducts of modern life ("piedras, colores, metales, maderas") mix to create an exasperating spectacle, which is perceived by Juan as that of a world on the verge of

[77] John Stuart Mill intervenes in the debate on female emancipation in 1869 with *The Subjection of Women.*

dissolution: "la disolución de un mundo cuyos elementos hubieran *retrogradado al caos primitivo*" (188 emphasis mine). Again, the language of evolutionism is used to describe the process by which the working classes, albeit metonymically, are given visibility—or, in other words, to describe the process of democratization. But the climactic point in the narrator's description of life under modernity is actually the powerful evocation of the "humo negro" of the factories, that is, the 'dark' side of progress: "Era el humo de una fábrica eléctrica que se disponía a iluminar la ciudad. Este humo negro—exclamó Juan—está ligado a la luz como el dolor al pensamiento" (213). Contradiction (darkness/light, grief/enlightenment) appears again as an essential feature of modernity and the motor of modernization. But if the scientific language of evolutionism aims at naturalizing the systemic ways in which a power differential is (re)produced, by extending the randomness of biological competition to explain class struggle under capitalism, then the use of a similar pseudo-evolutionist language to describe the 'behavior' of microscopic organism (e.g., the "infeliz animaculito…que forcejeaba ansiosamente" to free himself from a raindrop until the surface tension breaks thus saving the "atribulado náufrago" [199]) exposes another contradiction in the project of modernity. Instead of heightening the control of humans over their nonhuman counterpart, upon closer inspection (Juan's microscopic vision), the anthropomorphization of nonhumans suggests the impossibility of separating the two realms, a separation that remaines nonetheless an underlying claim of modernity—one that, as we saw, led Latour to observe that we were never modern in the first place.

If on the one hand Cajal magnifies the problem of establishing sexual and social boundaries, on the other he devotes a careful and even poetic attention to the microscopic dimension of the bodies under scrutiny as well as to the intricacy of their heterogeneity. Again,

it is crucial the change of, or relation between, *scales*. Realism had already devoted some attention to the microscopic dimension of society and culture. As emphasized in Ortega's essay "Azorín o los primores de lo vulgar," Azorín, captivated by the minute details of the Spanish natural and cultural landscape, visually caressed each and every one of the *piedrecitas* of the ruins of Segovia. Modernity's fascination with the miniscule had entered the realist sensibility as a way of self-legitimizing the mediation of the specialist: miniaturization and divisibility pointed to a hidden life that could be unveiled and explained only by the scientist, artist, or intellectual. But while realist authors had already internalized this sense of belonging to a 'community of beholders' or, as Ortega would call them, the "amigos del mirar," they did not fully capture, as Cajal did, the extent to which the microscopic, and microbiology, would revolutionize the understanding of culture along with the relations between humans and nonhumans. Microscopic cells, organisms, and particles are not merely instrumental in putting forth specific worldviews (which can be true in some cases). They are true historical actors and mediators of historical change—as Cajal's story suggests, and as I argued in the opening of this chapter. Expanding the horizon of signification, "El pesimista" implicates the microscopic dimension and microbiology in modern epistemology in order to show that both are transformed under modernity in concrete socio-political players that cannot be left out of any accurate description of reality. But any such account, as Juan experiences firsthand, entails the arduous and painful task of harmonizing heterogeneous elements. A certain amount of illusion (or theatricality) will be necessary to hold them together in seamless fashion, as the ending of "El pesimista" suggests, and to ensure the production of consensus.[78]

[78] In opposite fashion, the conclusion of "A secreto agravio" signals the limits of viewing science as the panacea for all social problems. The story ends with the narrator ironically commenting on the scientist's solution to social order: just like a medicine ages Emma to rid her of her threatening beauty and transform her into a submissive wife and mother, other medical treatments will rid society of all social deviants and deviations.

Toward a Politics of Consensus: Mediation, Theatricality, and the Making of the State

Our reading of "El pesimista" has shown that the perceptions of women, the microscopic world, and the masses at the turn of the century shared the same underlying anxiety about indeterminacy. But these three categories were also construed in similar ways according to the structuring power of an incipient market society, which is why Helen Longino's description of organisms in the 19th and early 20th century "as systems of production and reproduction whose chief organizing principle was a hierarchical division of labor" (210) easily applies to women and masses alike. Within this economic system, to the former is assigned the responsibility of bearing and rearing the offspring in the confinement of the domestic space, while to the latter the duty of creating wealth for the nation inside the space of the factory. Likewise for what attains to the relation between humans and nonhumans, keeping a certain threshold of visibility ensured that they would not share the same space. The difficulty of maintaining such a division of 'labor' and space is what emerges from "El pesimista" since at the microscopic scale, women, nonhumans, and masses prove to be permeable categories.

Modernity was in many ways wrestling with the impossible task of separating the proper from what was other and, subsequently, with the paradoxical necessity of fictional boundaries.[79] On the political level, the synoptic vision of the modern nation-state, which attempted to reduce

[79] The concern expressed by the realist novel about disease and the utter fear of social dissolution proves that this genre was already ironically constructed on the impossibility of separating 'I' and 'Other.' In fact, whereas at the diegetic level disease worked as the "organizing principle [that] informs and relates themes, images, character development, and settings," at the extradiegetic level, it functioned as a "dis/organizing principle," and this because,

> while [these novels] are contextualized in the medical discourse that constructed and conflated disease and immorality with Spain's urban problems and its working class, they systematically subvert the medical model by indicating the dominant class as the source of decay and the transmitter of disease. (Gilfoil 145-46)

Moreover, because it points to the paradoxes governing human existence, namely "the unity and duality of mind and body, the ambiguity of self as both subject and object, and the opposition between the natural and the social being," disease exposes the fictionality of the social sphere threatening its primacy over the natural state (Comaroff qtd in Gilfoil 151).

a polysemic reality to a legible text, left open the question of how much heterogeneity was to be allowed. More than a mere symptom or sign of a phenomenon, the deconstruction and reassembling of Elvira at the Teatro Real, as an aesthetic act, is a concrete attempt on Cajal's part (1) to illustrate the authority that culture was acquiring as a space for political negotiation (2) to engage the cultural and political debates that aimed at defining the *España finisecular*, and also (3) to participate actively in the making of a collective identity. But reassembling the object of perception is never to restore it to its original state. Following traumatic events, "aesthetically apprehended objects"—and we might add subjects—"cannot be merely 'reassembled' as they had been before" (Brown 418). If Juan's misadventures suggest a trauma of some sort, so too the suspicious reassembling of Elvira points to the lingering of this same trauma for the future nation. The ending of "El pesimista," in the style of a fable, hints to a new beginning:

> Y sin que por un momento sintiera la menguada tentación de echar en cara a Elvira antiguos desdenes, [Juan] acudió a la cita y reanudó, con *más ilusión* y cariño que nunca, las interrumpidas relaciones. Y se casaron, siendo felices. Y cuentan las crónicas que el genio de la especie no tuvo motivo de arrepentirse al contemplar, años después, la hermosa y robusta prole. (222, emphasis mine)

As the couple 'reanuda' or 'ties the knots' at the Teatro Real, theatricality and illusion sanction their new bond. Far from the "deshielo de la ilusión" (203) elicited in Juan by the sight of Elvira sitting in the balcony, the ending marks a redemption through illusion and is the auspice of the nuptial contract. The whimsical explanation provided by Elvira for her sudden change of heart—"No me preguntes el porqué del cambio ni te engolfes en disquisiciones psicológicas. Yo misma no lo sé" (221)—reinforces the theatricality of the scene by giving it the flavor of a 'comedia de capa y espada.'

But any myth of origin carries with it the traces of a violent birth. The words of the genie resonate in the mind of the reader as the *curtains* close on the happy couple:

> Algún día os será *lícito* quizá rastrear la morfología y costumbres de tan diminutas y ultramicroscópicas organizaciones confinantes con la nada y muy distantes aún de las más groseras construcciones moleculares [gracias a] radiaciones invisibles, infinitamente delicadas y todavía ignotas, de la materia imponderable. (182, emphasis mine)

But for now difference is erased. For both the "avisada" (221) Elvira and the nation, it seems, the mandate is that order must be reestablished as they both are 'cured' of their "femenil nervosidad" (221). The search for an alternative, the narrator humorously underscores, is untimely because "[c]omo ya frisaba en los treinta años" (221), Elvira could not think this choice over…her face would soon betray the lie of her 'seamless reassembling.'

The call for order was the response to the political rollercoaster of the first half of the 19th century, with its two revolutions, subsequent restorations, and the landmark of the 1812 Constitution, which had opened the way to an ebullient political scenario in Spain, and had stirred a considerable amount of anxiety throughout the whole political spectrum. Likewise, it was the response to the post-1898 political reassessment. The progressive sectors were torn between their liberal aspirations (and their view of a state in which 'all would find representation') and their reluctance to implement those very ideals of democratization. The conservatives, for their part, were unable to reconcile those who defended absolutism to the hilt and the reformist sectors, and often swung between poles (even to side with moderate liberals) in order to shun specific threats. While the revolution was not the model sought in order to bring about changes on either side of the political span, the Crown was either unable or unwilling to expedite a much needed political reform of the country. Challenging historian Josep Fontana's

long undisputed view that the mediation of the Crown had flawed the Spanish democratization, Isabel Burdiel convincingly argues that it was rather the failure of the Crown to comply with its role of political mediator that ultimately undermined the process of democratization (905-08). But despite the inability or unwillingness of the monarchy to catalyze change, Spain was not an unfavorable terrain for liberalism. The legacy of the 1812 and 1837 constitutions, together with the exceptionally progressive nature of the revolution of 1868 had favored the emergence of a liberal discourse—Burdiel's "to speak liberal" (900)—that, despite its somewhat rhetorical nature, signaled a point of no return concerning the need for a political reorganization of Spain.[80] Moreover, the symbolic repercussions of '1898' had contributed to catalyze the politicization of the Spanish masses.[81] With the disappearance of the colonial outlet, which had long held together the economy of the fatherland, Spain was forced to rethink itself in relation to a national market that could no longer support the traditional class and labor division. At the same time, the repatriation of a significant number of people (lower classes and the 'new rich') and capitals from overseas had contributed to widen the gap between the national reality and its political representation.

The description of the public spaces articulated in the short story encapsulates and sheds light on the heterogeneous socio-political scenario of early 20th century Spain. The *bullicio* [bustling] of the streets (a metonymy for the lower classes), perceived by Juan only in its aural dimension prior to the microscopic vision, presents itself once visually apprehended as the place of hybridity, contamination, and democratic homogenization: infectious agents (and ideas) jump from one body to another, disregarding all boundaries. Although constituting the lymph of the

[80] The Gloriosa, in particular, had given the progressive sectors of Spanish liberalism a much greater visibility and, with it, the power to begin addressing the demand to widen the popular base of representation, based primarily on three aspects or mechanisms of representation: the political capacity of electors and candidates, the legitimacy of institutional influences, and the articulation and implementation of the right to vote.

[81] Epps underscores how the symbolic repercussions of "1898" fueled the political awareness of the masses.

nation, the urban masses were still perceived as a threat of degenerative regression to the barbaric, natural human condition, similarly to how rural masses were linked to primitiveness. Even when appearing metonymically, through their smell, sounds, and byproducts, the spaces of the working classes threatened to reverse the Calle de Alcalá and Juan's world back to the same "caos primitivo" (188) evoked by the pachydermic Elvira. Whereas French hygienists had been able to rely on Pasteur's work to convince the authorities that microbiology was 'the' tool to control microorganisms and crowds alike, to 'sanitize' the spaces of the crowds, and to reestablish order (i.e., boundaries) where chaos seemed to reign, the same outcome was unlikely in Spain, because the country lacked an adequate infrastructure (which France had already put into place), and because the Crown was proving incapable or unwilling to carry out the necessary reforms to ensure political control. Struggling to establish itself, Spanish science echoed in the works of several regenerationists (scientists or doctors), who inscribed the analogy between infectious diseases, backwardness, and the spreading of revolutionary ideas in pseudo-scientific discourses that endorsed a technocratic state in which scientific knowledge would successfully reduce heterogeneity and structure social relations.[82]

Indeterminacy and heterogeneity are certainly appropriate words to describe the Spain of the turn of the century, without making it into an anomaly within the European panorama.[83] The

[82] Their scientific discourse was however a Krausist translation of Positivism, that is to say that it aimed at reconciling mind and spirit by means of a sort of metaphysical élan.

[83] Challenging the traditional interpretation of the Spanish "atraso cultural" generated by the simplistic dichotomy capital/province, French historian Roger Chartier uses Armando Petrucci's notion of a "graphic culture," which Petrucci uses to study the Italian cultural production at the end of the 19th century and to bring into focus the complexity of different but simultaneous cultural practices. Similarly, Chartier argues, Spanish culture is the resultant of tensions between urban and rural cultural practices, but also between the metropolitan cultural production and the one proceeding from smaller cities (275). Germany, Italy, and Spain shared a similarly fragmented socio-political and cultural reality at this time. Reducing the complexity of these cultural productions to the simplistic dichotomy between center and periphery would necessarily relegate these countries to a marginal position with respect to Europe. Likewise, in a meticulous analysis of the museal system in 19th century France, Daniel J. Sherman argues for the need to reassess the traditionally marginal role assigned to the province that, on the contrary, intervened in significant ways in the shaping of an institutional culture during the second half of the century. See "The Burgeoise, Cultural Appropriation, and the Art Museum in Nineteenth-century France" in

constitutional revision of 1847 was the attempt of moderate liberalism to counteract the democratic demands for self-government which, in their view, threatened to dissolve the national unity by replacing national sovereignty with the parliamentary sovereignty of the Cortes and the King (Sánchez León 101).[84] Following the revolution of 1868, the conservatives focused primarily on reestablishing and consolidating the bourgeois values that had been under attack (Fusi 76-77), just as the cultural 'deidelogization' of the government of Cánovas after 1874 was the depletion of the subversive potential of popular forces (Sierra, Zurita, Peña 42-43). Though centered on the future role of the masses, political reform focused more on the theoretical significance of their inclusion rather than on guaranteeing their actual participation. But even when short lived, political reform stirred an enormous amount of collective energy, as well as anxiety among conservatives and liberals alike concerning the possible risks implicit in widening the participation of the lower classes.

Ultimately, and regardless of specific affiliations (moderate, progressive, unionist), liberals (including republicans) supported parliamentary monarchy and insisted on order as a common horizon and essential element of the representative system: the increased popular participation (e.g., the political parties or the universal suffrage) was not to subvert the unity of the national will. Representation and mediation would ensure political control over the masses, also through "una visión del voto como mecanismo de delegación más que de participación" (Sierra, Zurita, Peña 18). The coeval depreciation of political participation, the radicalization of a paternalistic notion of the people, and the preference expressed for the representative system as a model superior to the democratic system generated a politics that ultimately elicited agreement

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Science in the Twentieth Century. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999. The same is true for Spain, as critics are recently pointing out in fields as different as history, politics, science, and the arts.

[84] Sánchez León identifies the decision of the moderates to surrender three decades of ideological debates on the moral dimension of representation to ensure order and unity as the cause of "las condiciones intelectuales del enquistamiento de la corrupción en el orden liberal histórico español" (103).

on both sides of the Atlantic (Sierra, Zurita, Peña 19, 21).[85] However, a lack of concrete socio-economic and political reforms following 1868 and protracted until after 1898, together with the rooted problem of *caciquismo*, would prevent the transformation of the subjects into citizens, a phenomenon defined by Borja de Riquer as "the inhibition of citizenship" (in Vicent 77).

Even though a minority within Spanish liberalism, the progressive sector nonetheless left its own imprint on the process of democratization of the Spanish state, an achievement rarely acknowledged by traditional historiography since it subsumes progressivism under the general rubric of liberalism. With all its limitations, in fact, progressives still played a crucial role in changing the national image of Spain, by displacing the imperial perspective developed by the Spanish Enlightenment and by bringing to the fore the fragmentariness of the political nation. In so doing, progressivism productively fueled the tension between the monarchy, the nation and the *pueblos* of the Iberian Peninsula, a tension that had been triggered by the monarchic crisis of the *época isabelina* and had been exacerbated by the debate on the (legal and ethnic) status of the colonies within the political regime of the Spanish monarchy.[86] While leading Spain to engage European and transatlantic debates on what constituted modern representation and citizenship, the progressive sector underscored the need to find a sensible way of incorporating the masses—though this did not mean that they identified themselves with them, or that they embraced them in their ranks. Without departing from "una concepción de la política desde arriba y una vocación tutelar de la ciudadanía" (Sánchez León 137) that was shared with all sectors of liberalism, the progressives found their most distinctive feature in their broader definition of the

[85] This depreciation was in line with the suspiciouns that liberalism continued to display toward the individual (his interests and autonomous character) despite what certain interpretations of liberalism would suggest; it would also respond to the organicistic or harmonicistic view of the social, which played an important role in the Spanish project of associationism, as expressed, for instance, by Roque Barcia (Sierra, Zurita, Peña 22).

[86] See José M. Portillo Valdés. "Cuerpo de nación, pueblo soberano. La representación política en la crisis de la monarquía hispana." *Ayer* 61 (2006, 1): 47-76 for the first Spanish liberalism's take on representation, the idea of the citizen within early liberalism, and the racialization of representation in conjunction with the colonial debate.

laws, mechanisms and practices of electoral participation, as demonstrated for instance by the unprecedented number of voters who participated in the 1854 elections: 696,420 compared to the 140,000 of 1846 (130-134). The electoral reform led by progressivism gave representation to "un importante segmento de pequeños y medianos propietarios, comerciantes, empleados, trabajadores y profesionales de distintos ámbitos que bien podían ser considerados 'gentes nuevas' con intereses colectivos infrarrepresentados en la arena pública isabelina" (134).[87]

As this segment of population continued to grow toward the end of the century, so did their demand for political recognition and participation, and the subsequent need to find sensible or viable ways to incorporate them into the public sphere. In this light, setting the resolution of "El pesimista" at the Teatro Real is not an arbitrary choice on Cajal's part. Theater and opera were perceived as particularly powerful forms of entertainment and education for the middle class and the masses alike. What Federico García Lorca will say of theater in 1934 was already true at the time when Cajal writes:

> El teatro es uno de los más expresivos y útiles instrumentos para la edificación de un país y el barómetro que marca su grandeza o su descenso. Un teatro sensible y bien orientado en todas sus ramas, desde la tragedia al vodevil, puede cambiar en pocos años la sensibilidad del pueblo, y un teatro destrozado, donde las pezuñas sustituyen a las alas, puede achabacanar y adormecer a una nación entera. ("Charla" *Obras VI* 428)

As a tool of social cohesiveness, the theater was to serve as a catalyst for the making of the Spanish collective. In a similar fashion, inserting representations of women within public spaces had long been regarded in the Western tradition as a powerful pedagogical tool because the

[87] Insisting on broadening the popular electoral base and following the example of England, the progressives adopted the universal suffrage in 1867, which would soon be revoked and reinstated permanently only in 1890.

female body was believed to 'naturally' invite symbolic interpretation and allegorization.[88] This is why the visual deconstruction and reassembling of Elvira at the Teatro Real can be read in terms of the creation and education of a new citizen, and of a new structure for the integration of deviant beings. In spite of the final outcome, crowds and nonhumans, I claim, enter along with Elvira into the public sphere of the theater.

As a space where lies assume truthful semblance without hiding their illusive nature, or where truths can be spoken while their effects are suspended, or where the opacity of the body constantly undergirds representation, the theater exemplifies the paradoxical nature of modernity. Discordant realities are in fact made to coexist under the rubric of illusion and theatricality, and mediation becomes the mechanism that both sanctions this nuptial bond and regulates its interactions. As the actor mediates between the character and the spectator, so too does the spectator between the two and the world, with the result that 'truth' is twice removed from access in every direction. As representation takes place under the pretense of true presence (bodies are always 'standing for' something or someone else, and the actor and spectator alike are always constructed as subjects through each other), the theater becomes an exercise in abjuring direct presentation and in generating consensus through mediation, just like Pasteur's or Cajal's laboratories.[89] When describing the procedures followed by Pasteur to set up his theater of proof, Latour interestingly establishes a parallel between the microbes and the laboring masses on the one hand, and the microbe-watchers (the scientists) and socialist politicians on the other. The controlled conditions of the experiment, rather than allowing for self-presentation, allowed

[88] Jordanova examines the didactic or moralizing objectives of public display of the female body in contrast with those of the male body, stressing how expectations and standards of acceptability are more lax for the male body. See especially the last chapter of her *Sexual Visions.*

[89] The idea, as with Maudsley's view on the relation between the sexes, is that of creating an "intimate consensus of functions" where 'intimate' really stands for 'inborn,' therefore reproducing a given organization of power that mantains power differentials on the basis that all positions are self-embraced or dictated by 'natural' predispositions.

Pasteur to give visibility to the microbes and to establish the laboratory and himself as legitimate mediators. The same happens with the masses and their political representatives. This relation, I argue, implies a fundamental distinction that is proper to modernity: the breach between representation and representativity.[90] Subjects are included in the political system but on the basis of their exclusion from direct political participation; the subversive nature of the democratic model is sublimated into the controlled environment of the representative regime.

The objective of this chapter has been to demonstrate that the sophisticated restructuring of the relation among (juridical) subjects and between these and their representatives was operated through a cultural translation that ensured the primacy of the representative system over the democratic model. While museums played a crucial role in the schooling of a bourgeois citizen, theaters were best suited for the general masses. Moreover, unlike museums, theaters did not foreground the separation between reality and fiction, but rather thrived on the permeability of both by means of focusing the attention on the liminality of the 'frame' itself and, in so doing, provided the opportunity for familiarizing people with the ways in which boundaries are construed. The osmosis between reality and fiction, or life and art, celebrated by Ortega y Gasset in his reading of Cervantes's "El retablo de Maese Pedro" finds its homologue in Cajal's microscopic spectacles, since they both make manifest the porosity of modern social and political categories, and the powerful mechanism of mediation. Applicable to women, nonhumans, and masses alike, political representation counted on mediation to increase control over a much larger population of both national and imperial subjects. This separation of

[90] In this passage Latour stresses the similarity between scientific and political (and I add theatrical) mediation. In both cases, it is a matter of giving visibility to some entity and to prevent self-presentation. In essence representation removes the represented from the realm of representation, bounding the satisfaction of its demands to the interpretation and decision of a third party. I base my argument on another notion of Latour, the network. Contrary to a traditional representative system, the network implies an intrinsic bond among all social dimensions and sees reality as a contractual activity, against the separation of facts, power and discourse (*Never Modern* 6).

representation from representativity ensured the nation-state the ability to carry out a domestic politics of homogeneity and concern for the species while pushing for a dominating attitude abroad, based on that same principle governing the perception of women: 'different but equal.' The cultural translation of power differentials and the double standard implied in the liberal or capitalist logic confirm thate there is no substantial difference between the two models of imperialism mentioned in the beginning: colonialism and cultural imperialism.

By way of occluding direct re-presentation, the *mediated visibility* that operates in the laboratory, the theater, and the political realm reverses the forces of the actors (as it did for Pasteur and the microbes) and achieves the *inclusive exclusion* of what Latour calls the "fresh sources of power" (268). Representation devoid of representativity is the paradoxical incommensurability sanctioned by modernity, and that which had already made its appearance in science in the debate between Hobbes and Boyle.[91] This breach is what Cajal examines from the perspective of modern aesthetics and theatricality when he looks at the relation between 'I' and 'other', individuality and sociability, subjectivity and citizenship. And this is also what we will ultimately see at play in Lorca's opposition between *el teatro al aire libre* and *el teatro bajo el arena.*

[91] Following Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer's argument on the debate (*Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life.* Princeton University Press, 1985), Bruno Latour observes that, although both scientists agreed over the constructed nature of facts, Boyle's theatre of proof called into play a higher civil authority (doxa) as a mechanism for convincing his peers, while Hobbes's identification of knowledge with power left to a mathematical demonstration the task to gain everyone's assent. The social and political implications of the different positions are remarkable. Facing a civil war, any discussion on a political vacuum acquired a particularly troubling resonance. Decided on solving the question of the unity of the Body Politic in the laboratory, Boyle sets to create a vacuum in a glass chamber that would finally disprove Hobbes's theory of the ether wind. The experiment is successful: "a new actor [is] recognized by the new Constitution: inert bodies, incapable of will and bias but capable of showing, signing, writing, and scribbling on laboratory instruments before trustworthy witnesses. These nonhumans, lacking souls but endowed with meaning, are even more reliable than ordinary mortals" (*Never Been Modern* 23). All that is left to Hobbes is to deny the possibility of reproducing his postulated ether wind other than on the scale of the Republic as a whole. He "denies what is to become the essential characteristic of modern power: the change in scale and the displacements that are presupposed by laboratory work" (22). This is why inaugurating modernity with Hobbes is in a sense a paradox. Hence, Latour's title *We Have Never Been Modern.* Or, maybe, this paradoxical turn embodies modernity in full.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEMOCRATIC COMMUNITY OF LORCA'S EXPERIMENTAL THEATER: *EL PÚBLICO* AND *COMEDIA SIN TÍTULO*

> Life is embodied experience.
> Donald Lowe, *History of Bourgeois Perception*

> La ley es muro que se disuelve en la más pequeña gota de sangre.
> Lorca, *El público*

Beyond Semantics: Defining *'Popular,' 'Público,'* and *'Pueblo'*

In an 1896 essay entitled "La regeneración del teatro español," Miguel de Unamuno defined Spanish theater as "el juego mutuo y la lucha entre el elemento popular y el erudito, lucha que acaba con el triunfo del primero, bien que modificado, y no poco, por el segundo" (1131). Although Unamuno refers specifically to the articulation of tradition and progress as it plays out in the encounter between the living soul of the people ("the conciencia colectiva del pueblo") and the refining labor of the intellectuals, by the turn of the century one can no longer ignore the political connotation that 'lo popular' has acquired in relation to the development of a mass culture. The timing and title of Unamuno's piece are clues to the reason why the regeneration of the theater came to be perceived as a political affair, while the emphasis placed by the author on returning to the genre's popular roots—or the "volver a hablar en necio" following the example of Lope de Vega (1154)—connects the question of the regeneration of theater to the institutional and political debates concerning popular sovereignty, the nationalization of the masses, and the growing national popular base. The same concerns

resonate two decades later in "La deshumanización del arte" by Ortega y Gasset who saw in the "Arte Nuevo" the inauguration of a "nueva y salvadora escisión" between the minority of the "hombres hegregios" and the majority of the "hombres vulgares" (48).

The attention given to the 'people' and the 'learned' within the cultural ambit (be Unamuno's "el pueblo" and "los doctos" or Ortega's "hombres egregios" and "hombres vulgares") speaks of the progressive nationalization of the cultural field, the politicization of intellectuals affiliated with specific institutions or political parties, and the increased awareness of the demands of a growing popular readership.

A series of domestic events played important roles in the way the relation between the leading classes and the people was to be articulated: the unresolved issue of land reform which fomented the discontent of vast regions of Spain, the socialist and anarchist demands for better labor conditions which were at the roots of the 1907 mine strikes in Asturias, the obsolete and discriminatory organization of the military which started the bloody events of the Semana Trágica of Barcelona in 1909,[92] the working class uprising that fed the anarchist street protests of 1917, and the too tepid electoral reforms which did not succeed in democratizing the electorate, just to name a few. At the same time, the instability of the Spanish rule under Alfonso XIII of Bourbon had contributed to igniting anti-dynastic sentiments among carlistas, republicans, socialists, anarchists and communists alike, and to exacerbating the polarization between the monarchic rural areas and the republican urban and industrial ones, a separation that will acquire dramatic overtones by the 1931 elections.[93] Finally, both the liberal and the conservative sides

[92] The bloody confrontations between the working classes and the Spanish army were triggered by the attempt of the Crown to enlist active and reserve units in Catalonia among the proletarians to sedate a local uprising in Morocco. Having already served their time, not only did these people not anticipate enlistment, but their ability to refuse rested on the option of paying a considerable sum for a substitute. The maneuver of the government was perceived as a blackmailing and the workers revolted, building street barricades and setting the city on fire.

[93] From a fascist prison, Antonio Gramsci wrote on the responsibilities of the passive rural masses for the insurmountable moral, more than economic, abysm that separated them from the industrialized nation.

of the political spectrum had weakened significantly, while regionalist and nationalist aspirations were acquiring greater visibility since the late 19th century.[94] As expected, each of these political groups or sentiments envisioned different notions of 'popular,' 'people' and 'learned,' and different relations amongst them.

The cultural and political issues that preoccupied the national front were coupled with and magnified by a series of global events that contributed to altering drastically the international scenario. As World War I destabilized the old equilibriums of Europe, and brought down some old empires, it also reinforced 'empire' as a defining category for the most powerful European nation-states; and this at a time when Spain, having long lost the transatlantic colonies, was left solely with its 'uncomfortable' African territories. In the aftermath of the Russian revolution of 1917 the proletariat had become a powerful historical actor and Russia a stronger presence in the political life of many Western European nations. In the face of what the older oligarchies perceived as a political chaos and the eve of a global proletarian turn, but absolutely not in a deterministic fashion, Spanish politics reacted to the crisis of liberalism by drifting toward proto-fascist positions, just as was happening in much of Europe. The populist *Primoderriverismo* (1922-23) and the creation of the Falange Española on the example of the Italian Fasci epitomize the simplification of political alternatives into a unitary and homogeneous vision of the nation that was proposed by a radicalizing right wing in order to counteract the threat of political anarchy. Coeval with proto-fascism, however, was also the development of a democratic line of thought which consolidated around the leftist forces that would later merge into the Second Republic (1931-36) and open the way to the most democratic phase of Spanish politics. Underscoring all of the historical events mentioned, in fact, was a radical institutional change

[94] The progressive forces—socialism, anarchism and communist—were solidly rooted in Andalusia and Catalonia. In the latter, the regionalist sentiment had strengthened around the political party of *Solidaritat catalana.*

taking place in Spain: the shift from the monarchy to a democratic system and the Second Republic. In summary, the 1920s and 1930s in Spain stood as an absolutely critical phase in the process of the democratization of the state, and demanded the modernization of the notion and practice of representation to match the restructured political horizon. The trajectory of these political transformations is mirrored in those debates and interventions which, during the same time, aimed at modernizing the Spanish theatrical stage.

Two theatrical events inaugurate the 20th century in Spain. Benito Galdós's *Electra* premiered in the Teatro Español of Madrid in January of 1901, becoming an immediate hit although it was not an innovative or artistically accomplished piece, and despite the Manichean fashion by which it portrayed women who, embodying human vices, were the object for experiments of social 'regeneration.'[95] Nonetheless, the play managed to elicit a significant commotion both in the press and political circles because it resonated with two current events linked to the resurgence of anticlerical sentiments: the arranged marriage between Mercedes the princess of Asturias and Carlos of Bourbon, which was to take place the following month, and the recent events surrounding the *señorita de Ubao,* a young Basque heiress whose life strongly resembled that of Galdós's female protagonist.[96] In this light, for most, the play came to embody anticlericalism and the victory of liberalism over the reactionary monarchic institution. The osmotic encounter between fiction and reality convincingly reminded everyone of the power of the theater in engaging and mobilizing the masses, who immediately took the protest to the streets. Commentators reported that intellectuals such as Maeztu, Baroja and Azorín left the

[95] We may here recall Emilia Pardo Bazán's criticism of Galdós's characterization of his female protagonists. The cold reception of Galdós's *Electra* in other European cities (Rome, Lisbon, Moscow and Kief) but especially later in Paris in 1904 confirms, as many critics of the time concluded, that the success it had in Spain was largely due to the specificity of the Spanish political and religious situation. See H. Chonon Berkowitz. "Galdos's *Electra* in Paris." *Hispania* 2, 1 (1939): 31-40.

[96] Hostile critics accused Galdós of havind skillfully staged the timing of the debut.

premiere inflamed with an anarchic, anticlerical spirit and joined the crowd against the Jesuits, loudly rooting for freedom and the Republic, while Galdós himself (or in some cases his portrait) was carried on the shoulders of the citizens of Madrid and celebrated by the liberal press as a legendary hero and freedom fighter.[97] A year later, another premiere inflames the Spanish cultural scene: "en medio de un regular escándalo," Mainer stresses, Santiago Rusiñol brought to the stage the one-act play *Els jocs florals de Canprosa,* a parody of the myths of the *Renaixença* "ya convertidos en ruinas de sí mismos: los juegos florales pueblerinos, el curita catalanista, el cacicón de la *Lliga,* el ruralismo idealizante, la obsesión por las barretinas…" (Mainer, *Edad de Plata* 101). A certain sector of the theater was beginning to show its dissatisfaction with the self-complacency of a culture that was turning into a "superficial c*ivilización*" (Mainer, *Años de vísperas* 29).

After a brief but intense phase in which Spanish theater sought the route of experimentation in conjunction with political engagement, however, already by the early 1910s the so-called modernist theater was no longer flirting with the 'popular' and, according to contemporary artists and critics, had either adopted an aestheticizing posture detached from the daily concerns of life and political engagement, or had surrendered to the 'popular' Spanish taste for the 'estreno' [the debut], which produced a serialization of the staged theater and detracted from the quality of the plays.[98] The most obvious target of this latter line of critique was the theater of Jacinto Benavente, Arniches, and the Quintero brothers, which most newcomers to the Spanish theatrical scene associated with established conventionalism and a monopolized production apparatus. However, Benavente's production should not be so easily dismissed as

[97] Maeztu, Azorín and Baroja will all drift toward more conservative positions at a later stage in their life, especially Maeztu who will defend integrism.

[98] This is, for instance, the attitude of Santiago Rusiñol who, disenchanted with the trajectory of his colleagues, turned to the comic genre in order to parody the decadent and decorative aesthetics of Catalan modernist theater.

conventional or serialized. In particular, plays such as *Los intereses creados* (1907) display in my view an acute awareness of the conditions of artistic production under capitalism and a keen self-reflexivity, both of which deserve recognition.

In any case, the new competitors instrumentalized the rhetoric of 'crisis' in and of itself to secure an alternative to the established theatrical landscape, but also to the institutionalization and nationalization of theater which, as Dru Dougherty observes, was linked to "un conflicto necesario e insuperable entre comercio y arte, concepto que conduce, naturalmente, a la llamada por una reorganización de la escena de parte del Estado, según el modelo soviético o italiano" (103). Nevertheless, rather than following the strict dichotomy of a *teatro de muchedumbres* and a *teatro de arte,* late avant-garde theater attempted instead to articulate these two positions beyond the limited options offered by the state and the bourgeois theaters.[99] If Spanish tradition had taught anything to the new playwrights it was precisely the possibility of bridging the popular and the erudite traditions in original ways (el Romancero, Lope, Calderón, la canción popular, etc). This same conviction was not alien to a proto-fascist avant-garde aesthetics. Futurism, for instance, clearly understood that, albeit on different levels, the new art spoke to the masses as much as to its initiated. In any case, in the Spanish theatrical world, "muchos volvier[o]n los ojos a modelos no estatales que pudieran, sin embargo, aportar una alternativa a la organización capitalista vigente" (Dougherty 110), that is to say, that they tried different

[99] Unfortunately, by articulating each section of his analysis of the theatrical crisis of the 1920s ("Talia convulsa") in binary terms, as the choice between opposed terms, Dru Dougherty conveys the false impression that it was simply a matter of choosing between the old and the new way, and less a matter of articulating the two positions. Dougherty's opposition between *teatro de muchedumbre* and *teatro de arte*, as much as the opposition between the *'arte puro'* and *the 'arte social,'* around which crystallized much of the interventions of the time, do not account in my view for the ambivalent position that modernity had toward the masses and their relation with art. Finding an aesthetic expression for what modernity had in many ways already connected was precisely the predicament of the avant-garde theater on all sides of the spectrum, from the most progressive and democratic to the most reactionary, the latter of which will ultimately drift toward fascist positions. Beyond the unfortunate binary reading, Dougherty effectively manages to draw a powerful synoptic picture of the basic issues faced by modernist theater, and of the contributions of playwrights, specialists and commentators of the time to the debate on the regeneration of the theatrical scene. For this reason, I will extensively quote from his article in the following paragraphs.

formulas to offer an alternative to a bourgeois theater of mere entertainment that 'distracted' the audience from the real issues permeating modern life.

Just as artistic circles (Els Quatre Gats), cineclubs (Buñuel's at the Residencia de Estudiantes), exhibition galleries (Dalmau, Salón de Arte Moderno), and *salones de tertulia* (Pombo, Ateneo de Madrid) contributed to bringing the literary and visual *vanguardias* to a wider audience, so too the *teatros íntimos* (Adrià Gual in Barcelona) and the *teatros de cámara,* the *Teatro de Arte* in Madrid (Gregorio Martínez Sierra), theatrical clubs (Club Teatral de Cultura, the Anfistora, El Mirlo Blanco, El Caracol, El Cántaro roto), university groups (Lorca's *La Barraca,* Max Aub's *El Buho,* the *Teatro Universitario Catalán* in Barcelona), the *Misiones Pedagógicas* (Casona) or other itinerant companies (*Unión de Escultores y Artistas Revolucionarios*) pursued aesthetic innovation sometimes outside of a heavily subsidized theater, and always outside of a commercial one—the latter almost unanimously seen as the major cause of the degeneration of theater—and attempted to bring together a selective audience with a wider popular one.[100] What linked all of these efforts was the common aim of the *reteatralización* of the Spanish theater, that is, the rejection of the naturalistic aesthetic that had transformed theater into a mirror of everyday life, and its return to its primitive essence, the pantomime, the play, and the farce.[101] The visual avant-garde succeeded both in Spain and in Europe in creating a "concurrencia entre el grupo o la individualidad y una parte del público" (Brihuega 80). The "*objetos vulgarizadores*" or "*la trivialización de la vanguardia*"—commercials, vignettes, furniture, logos, domestic and public decorations, textiles—were critical for the creation of that

[100] Speaking of Lorca's work with La Barraca, Octavio Ramirez stated that "Hay un solo público que hemos podido comprobar que no nos es adicto: el intermedio, la burguesía, frívola y materializada. Nuestro público, los verdaderos captadores del arte teatral, están en los dos extremos: las clases cultas, universitarias o de formación intelectual o artística espontánea, y el pueblo, el pueblo más pobre y más rudo, incontaminado, virgen, terreno fértil a todos los estremecimientos del dolor y a todos los giros de la gracia" (en Lorca. *Obras VI*, 615-16).

[101] The concept of reteatralización often invoked by Ramón Pérez de Ayala was first used by German theoretician and theatrical manager Georg Fuchs in *Die Revolution des Theaters* (1909).

"gran conjunto de un kitsch vanguardista que [fue] penetrando en la vida diaria y que, como en el resto del mundo, tal vez constituye la verdadera transformación de la cultura visual de la España de estos años" (81). Although it could not exploit the same variety of venues for its 'popularization,' Spanish theater enjoyed in the collective imaginary a privileged position, since it was already viewed as an intrinsically 'popular' genre.

Without a doubt, the speed at which the socio-political arena was changing under modernity made terms such as 'popular' and 'public' especially difficult to pin down, and contributed to the proliferation and variety of takes on their definition. Each proposal encapsulates a competing interpretation of 'public,' 'people,' 'popular' (*público, pueblo, popular*), and of their relation to the theatrical or political realm. In essence, it was the specific meaning and reach of the notion of *representation* as artistic and political practice and device—as suggested by the Spanish word '*representación'*—that was being negotiated in these interventions. Likewise do the views put forth around this time by playwrights, stage directors and critics—which Dougherty recaps in a segment of his essay "Talia convulsa" that he entitles "¿Público o Pueblo?"—attempt to articulate a definition of the *público* in relateion to these same categories. Thus, for instance, a "público corrompido" or "[de] mal gusto" which, according to Ramón del Valle-Inclán explained the degeneration of theater (Dougherty 113), would entail a marginalization of the artist as creator, and the necessary exclusion of the audience from the artistic (and political) process. This is, in my view, the root of Valle-Inclán's *esperpento* as a problematic departure from history toward the ahistorical dimension of the mythical. There were those who instead postulated the existence of a "público inculto" but still sensitive to a "teatro genuino, sea moderno o antiguo" (114), which could therefore be inculcated with a certain taste for sophistication. This was the position of the Patronato de Misiones Pedagógicas and

Alejandro Casona's "Teatro del Pueblo" and "Teatro Ambulante," or Federico García Lorca's "La Barraca" (114). For Lorca the "theatrical audience is like schoolchildren" who nonetheless demand to be taught by gifted teachers who are prepared to "assume great authority" (in Piasecki 76). Others, like Jacinto Grau, saw the audience as a "masa muerta" awaiting rebirth: beyond needing education, "como eterno niño que es," the audience needed to be brought into existence (Dougherty 115). The last instances presuppose, though in a small degree, the audience/popular participation in the process of artistico-poltiical representation. Finally, there were those who searched for a "público auténtico" in the "mayorías subcultas [pero] sanas" (Antonio Espina), in the "espectadores no contaminados por el ambiente" (Rivas Cherif), or in the "pueblo no adulterado por ciertas convenciones históricas y pasajeras" (Araquistain) (116). These last positions may however risk in my view, missing the encounter with the concrete, historical reality.

The faith in an uncontaminated popular undercurrent was also at the root of Unamuno's identification of the popular with what he calls *intrahistoria,* a timeless dimension that harmoniously (!) combines social progress, tradition and Catholicism. A similar move toward a Spanish reality that is equally outside of time and space was also identifiable in the later Azorín who, after a brief flirtation with anarchism, retreated to the provincial and rural world and their traditions in search for the authentic life and people. In both cases, essentialism engenders a populist attitude that invents an imaginary *pueblo-público* separate from the modern industrial society, in a move that is counter to the direction taken by the democratization of life, culture, and politics under modernity.

The pedagogical and paternalistic views of the theater thus far considered relegate the audience to the position of a passive viewer, an attitude shared also by the anthropological

interpretation of theater as a communal ritual, which is embraced, as we will see, by a fascist theater of presence. Nevertheless, beyond the idea of a "público inculto," a "público auténtico," or even of a "masa muerta," there was at least the view of a *público* or *pueblo* "posible," though the objective of searching for one was not always actively pursued:

> A finales de los años veinte y con insistencia en la década siguiente, esta visión de un renacimiento al impulso dinámico de la "soberanía popular", se proclamaba como salida de la crisis teatral (y no sólo teatral). Dejaba de oírse, en cambio, la pregunta que Enrique de Mesa tuvo la curiosidad extraordinaria de hacerse a continuación: "Y qué público?" (Dougherty 117)

Even this limited number of examples prove that, where there seemed to be agreement that theater needed to recover 'lo popular,' what this meant was not clear, nor was any particular notion shared across the theatrical spectrum. Defining the 'people' and 'public' offered the same challenges, and what the 'hablar en necio' popularized by Lope de Vega and referenced by Unamuno in his essay on the regeneration of theater meant for Spain's Silver Age was just as murky. The difficulty of defining these terms points to the struggle for power and the competing interests that are connected to each definition. In the context of this investigation, the most interesting proposals are those that aim at increasing the representativeness of these notions, going beyond the reductive opposition between a theater for the masses and one for the elites, and identifying new forms of democratic art in which it is possible to claim, as Gaziel does in "Teatro y democracia" in 1928, that the aristocratization of art is not antidemocratic: "en plena democracia es necesario, sin dejar de ser ferviente demócrata, aristocratizar el arte, y, con más urgencia que otro, el teatro" (1). Despite the limited dissemination of avant-garde theater (more often than not the outcome of limited resources and the struggle against monopolistic practices),

it is possible to claim that artistic experimentation was not averse to political engagement. Similarly, Lorca believes that the theatrical experimentation and the democratization of the audience—getting "ordinary working people into the theater," as he declares in an interview in 1933 (in Gibson 366)—were not incompatible tasks, which he demonstrates in the way he conjugates the passionate efforts with *La Barraca* with an intense theatrical experimentation. "The public in little villages," Lorca maintained, "always show a respect, a curiosity, and a desire to understand not always matched by spectators in big cities" (in Martinez Nadal 226).

Lorca's *El público* can be considered a sort of manifesto of the theater and audience-to-come. The play reflects Lorca's growing awareness of a changing world and the increased urgency he felt in the 1930s to actively engage the historical circumstances by bridging the distance between the theater and society. Written during the time he spent between New York and La Habana, the play speaks of Lorca's response to a modern society that is becoming increasingly divided by class, gender, and race issues. And if in "Poeta en Nueva York" (1929) Lorca was concerned about denouncing the mechanisms of social life and the pain caused to marginalized beings, between 1934 and 1936 he openly declares that the art for art's sake has become nonsense, challenging the audience-to-come out of their comfortable shell: "I want to put on the stage themes and problems that people are afraid to face," he declares in a newspaper interview in 1934 (in Edwards 26); "my aim is that audiences learn not to be frightened of situations and symbols. I want audiences to come to terms with those fantasies and ideas without which I cannot advance a step in the theater," he concluded in a 1935 radio broadcast in Buenos Aires (in Gibson 417).

The "desorientación absoluta" aimed at by *El público* thematically and stylistically is the means to the creation of a new theatrical experience in which the audience, no longer able to

submerge itself into the fiction, must necessarily participate.[102] No longer feared, as were to an extent the "distinguidos señoras y señores" of *La zapatera prodigiosa,* the audience is made to exorcise its own demons and assume responsibility for its own participation in the making of the performance.[103] The plurality of perspectives proposed in *El público* far from being a mere formal device constitutes therefore a practice in democratic participation and epistemological skepticism, in opposition to the simplification and homogenization of a non-democratic politics of consensus. The 'público' of *El público* is made to experience the uncomfortable need for decision-making, from the Director who has to dare staging a new type of drama, to the Caballos who must dare him to pursue this route, to the Damas and Estudiantes who must have the courage to find their way out of one kind of theater into another one.

And while in the search for 'lo popular' Baroque theater represented a fundamental stylistic and thematic reference for most, many turned to foreign models and translations in the prospect of, or need for, enriching the range of aesthetic possibilities. The theater of Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Cocteau, and Pirandello were obvious sources of inspiration. It must however be said that the Spanish *vanguardia* remained somewhat tangential to the European avant-gardes, and did not fully develop to the same extent or in the same direction. Artists and critics alike lamented the absence of an essential figure of modern theater, the stage director, with the few notable exceptions of Adrià Gual, Rivas Cherif, or Martínez Sierra. If one reads Juan José Lahuerta's opening claim that there is not "*una* vanguardia, o vanguardia alguna, en España en esos años [1920s and 1930s]" (9), as a polemical gesture, then one may concur with his view that

[102] Also see Andrew A. Anderson and Andrew W. Anderson on "'Una desorientación absoluta': Juliet and the Shifting Sands of García Lorca's 'El público.'" *Revista Hispánica Moderna* 50, 1 (1999): 67-85.
[103] This was at least the objective of the play, although Lorca himself believed it impossible at the time, which is why he defined this play "irrepresentable."

around the so-called "arte nuevo" ended up crystallizing "un discurso de autoridad y definición" (9), which

> alejado de toda ruptura, unido, más bien, a las grandes tradiciones, nos tranquiliza, haciéndonos saber de nuestro tiempo, reconciliándonos con él. O sea: que decir Anti es decir Pro. Así que, probablemente, no sea en la literatura de vanguardias europeas donde tengamos que buscar los modelos de las discusiones que sobre el arte nuevo se producen en nuestro país, sino más bien en las proclamas de "regreso al orden"—que vienen también esencialmente de París y que fueron clamorosamente aceptados por todos los "modernismos" moderados o, simplemente, reaccionarios de Europa entera. (10)[104]

This is to say that overall the Spanish *vanguardias*—and Spanish politics—settled around conservative positions, with few significant exceptions such as Grau, la Torre, Buñuel, Lorca, and Picasso. Nevertheless, the fact that the first experimental theatrical group constituted in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War called itself "Arte nuevo" testifies, in my view, to the significance that the *vanguardias* of the 1920s and 1930s referred to by Ortega as the "Arte Nuevo" held in the artistic collective imaginary.[105] In the end, the Civil War will give to the *vanguardias* a final blow since it will disperse its most active members who will either be expelled or choose voluntary exile.

[104] By 1930 renowned publications such as *La Gaceta Literaria* are "a punto de sufrir la involución derechista de su compromiso político" while most artists "se embeben…en la teología de las fuentes parisinas" (Brihuega 72).

[105] "Arte Nuevo" reunited artists such as Alfonso Sastre, Alfonso Paso, Medardo Fraile, Carlos José Costa, José María Palacio, Enrique Cerro y José Gordón, the director. See José Gordón's own account of this and other post civil war theatrical groups in *Teatro experimental español*. Though Gordón himself does not make the connection, the plays put on by these groups and the playwrights who were given visibility suggest a thematic and aesthetic continuity between the efforts of the *vanguardia* of the 20s and 30s and the attempts at renovating the Spanish theater under Francoism.

The present chapter looks precisely at those "años de vísperas" when everything still seemed—and, to a great extent, was—possible.[106] These were decades that seemed to promise great changes both in the political and artistic fields. For the first time, by the end of the 1920s Spanish artists and intellectuals went from questioning the language to overtly problematizating the ways in which artistic production intersected with the social (Brihuega 24). The political world looked upon the theatrical medium with confidence in its ability to mobilize and influence the people; the art world saw in the theatrical practice the path for engaging the cultural and political debates that would determine the future of the nation. These were in fact the years of passionate discussions that would lead to the amending and revising of the Constitution. And where the 1929 draft ended up displaying a conservative approach, the 1931 Constitution set itself as the most progressive ever ratified up to that point, since it left no trace of corporatism, totalitarianism, or anti-individualism, emphasizing instead popular sovereignty and direct participation. The democratization of theater was meant to go hand in hand with the democratization of the nation: *representation* had become a pivotal concept around which the fate of a genre and that of a nation were to be negotiated.

Against the backdrop of the intersection between avant-garde theatrical experimentations, the democratization of culture, and the political struggle for democratic representation, I specifically consider the philosophical and aesthetic significance of the relation articulated in *El público,* one of Lorca's most experimental dramas, between presentation (direct participation) and representation (mediation). Focusing then on the body and keeping in mind the emergence of cinema as a 'modern' medium of representation, I will show that what is offered as the unmediated production of presence (cinema, fascism, direct democracy) on the one hand, and the uncomfortable stumbling upon the opacity and materiality of (theatrical) representation and the

[106] *Años de vísperas* is the title of José Carlos Mainer's analysis of the Spanish cultural life between 1931 and 1939.

body on the other, have significant implications in terms of a true democratic politics and of looking or not at concrete, gender-related, and historically determined bodies. This is particularly true when considering how Lorca's imperfect bodies resist the quasi-scientific examinations to which they are subjected in the attempt of producing transparent, or immediate, and objective knowledge. In summary, *El público* articulates a wider interpretation of the artistic, social and political *corpus*, and, despite rehearsing the possibility of direct and unmediated 'presentation,' it postulates the necessary return to representation and mediation which, rather than the triumph of the old, constitutes a radically modern gesture, both artistically and politically.

Seducing the Formless into Form: Presence and Mediation in Lorca's Poetics of the Margin

As I suggest in the chapter on Cajal, "El pesimista corregido" mirrors the process by which, under modernity, theatricality became the material and metaphorical link connecting the social, cultural and political spheres of Spanish life. More than an effective tool for propaganda, theater proved to be a powerful cultural technology, since it effectively articulated individuality and collectivity, reality and representation, participation and mediation by means of flaunting (rather than disguising) deception and illusion. This way, illusion and fiction were elevated to the status of modern epistemological paradigms. Undoubtedly, a shrewd understanding of theatricality and its cohesive potential was also at the root of the fascist theatricalization and spectacularization of politics, an argument that Jeffrey Schnapp examines in detail in *Staging Fascism,* but that he already put forth in an earlier article where he claimed that, although considering film as a powerful weapon, fascism "singled out the theater as the privileged fascist art," and this because of the significance the theater attached to the body, subsequently placing "theatrical values at the center of fascist politics" ("18 BL" 109). The art world was equally aware that theater offered an opportunity for social and political intervention precisely because it was a cultural technology with 'elective affinities' with politics.

Because theater and politics were intrinsically linked by representation, both were caught up in the same crisis of values and together they began their regeneration, while the notion of 'representation' became a pivot for the interests of old and incipient cultural and political actors. The democratization of the nation state and the crisis of the classical doctrine of representation demanded the modernization of the political category of representation in order to produce an "adecuación entre el ser social y la imagen que lo representa" (García Canales 14), while, as the

guiding principle of the representative system first, and the parliamentary system later, representation was the target of fierce criticism from most conservatives. The struggle for fixing the meaning of representation along with the visual distribution of reality that it would engender is traceable in the theatrical writings and plays of the *vanguardia* of the early decades of the 20th century.[107] The transformations in the concept of representation accelerated also in the arts during the interwar period, particularly in connection with the increased awareness of the political meaning of culture and audiences. Moreover, the feeling of urgency generated by the radicalization of politics in the 1930s stimulated the artists' political conscience and their awareness that the arts needed to reflect their time more closely. As we already mentioned, Lorca also shared this view and by 1934 articulated the relation between theater and politics, calling to arms his fellow artists:

> El teatro es uno de los más expresivos y útiles instrumentos para la edificación de un país y el barómetro que marca su grandeza o su descenso. Un teatro sensible y bien orientado en todas sus ramas, desde la tragedia al vodevil, puede cambiar en pocos años la sensibilidad de un pueblo, y un teatro destrozado, donde las pezuñas sustituyen a las alas, puede achabacanar y adormecer a una nación entera ("Charla" *Obras* VI 428).

Although sharing with fascism a similar view of theater as nation and people 'builder,' the avant-garde theater to which Lorca's most experimental plays belong challenged fundamentally the anthropological interpretation that was at the basis of the fascist ritualistic understanding of performance—one in which visual and bodily exchanges and practices became

[107] Other relevant sources to trace these changes are avant-garde manifestos, pamphlets, proclamations, and other types of interventions made in the cultural and political spheres, such as public speeches and lectures. See, for instance, Jaime Brihuega's *Manifiestos, proclamas, panfletos y textos doctrinales* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1979) for valuable texts generated by the visual artistic avant-gardes in Spain between 1910 and 1931.

mechanisms for the subsumption of the individuals into a collective body. As Jacques Rancière observes, such an anthropological interpretation of theater rests on the specific assumption—and for fascism, its active endorsement, I might add—that the spectator is a passive viewer (as opposed to the active playwright, director or actor), and that knowledge flows from the one who possesses it to the one who is deprived of it. To this "stultified" observer, whose participation in the transmission of knowledge "is predicated on a relation of inequality," Rancière opposes the "emancipated spectator."[108] Rather than creating or maintaining a power differential between the (passive and ignorant) observer and the (active and knowledgeable) actor-playwright, emancipation is understood by Rancière as "the process of verification of the equality of intelligence" and as such is based on the premise that we all learn "by observing, comparing one thing with another thing, one sign with one fact, one sign with another sign, and repeating the experiences [one] has first made by chance" (Ranciére). Thus understood, the theater, rather than a keeper of inequalities, would be the maker of a community of equals, which is precisely the horizon of Lorca's experimental theater.

Arguing for a difference between the (proto)fascist and the avant-garde theaters on the basis of Rancière's distinction between 'stultification' and 'emancipation' would be rather simplistic. Yet, contrasting how the viewer's participation is theorized by each will allow me to bring into focus what they have in common: the elaboration of notions of aesthetic representation that generate distinct political counterparts. Thus, instead of looking at the objective (i.e., the mobilization of the audience-masses, since both theaters successfully achieved this goal to different degrees), it is to the premise of such mobilization that I would like to draw attention. Fascism cunningly succeeded in eliciting the viewers' involvement while maintaining at all times

[108] Rancière connects the notion of the "emancipated spectator" to the theater of Brecht and Artaud, but it can be easily related to other types of avant-garde theater and to the Spanish vanguardias. The version of Rancière's "The Emancipated Spectator" that I am here referencing is available online but has no pagination.

a rigid hierarchical relation (of one to many) between them and the 'producer' of the event, thus effectively dissociating mobilization from actual (political) participation. As Emilio Gentile observes, totalitarianism and fascism, in particular, successfully turned theatricality and theater "into a 'factory of the consensus' [which] was to produce a collective trance state in the congregation [by means of a] symbolic dramatization of the unification of the nation through its leader" (85). At no time does the communion remove the power differential between the congregated nation and its leader. On the contrary, the paternal-filial relation established during the performance is carried beyond the event, without ever offering an alternative option for identification.

Bridging this notion of the fascist spectator with the 'representational' focus of this investigation, I suggest that the fascist celebration of the birth of the nation and the national subject is structured as an act of 'presence'—as in attending or being present but also as in witnessing (i.e., the Spanish *presenciar*)—an experience that is ritualistically repeated to confirm and strengthen the bond. The fascist subject *presents* itself, that is, responds to the call of the nation's leader, and is in turn *presented with* an inhabitable subject position that, reworked by means of technological metaphors and imagery, promises deliverance from a precarious and vulnerable condition of existence. In this light, Rancière's notion of "stultification" well describes the illusive or simulacral participation of the fascist viewer-subject. But as with all perfect lies, also the fascist deliverance was based on an appealing and seemingly true prospective: the promise of mass (direct) participation in the performance and 'the national.' Even though fascism was initially perceived and projected as a revolutionary and popular faction, it soon revealed its counterrevolutionary nature by setting itself in opposition to the parliamentary system and by containing the incorporation and participation of the masses into

the political realm. Although the tension between participation and order was felt on both sides of the political spectrum with similar anxiety, the relation between pluralism and unity, presentation and representation, the 'popular' and the 'people,' or the subject-citizen and the nation was envisioned in fundamentally different terms on the progressive side, and always underscoring the necessity of mediation and representation.

Imbued with contemporary debates on representation, Lorca's *El público* stages an aesthetico-political reflection on the tension between the production of presence (i.e., 'pure art' and unmediated participation) on the one hand, and the tainted opacity of representation on the other. The realization that immediacy and mediation are fundamentally intertwined and that under modernity representation comes to constitute an intrinsic part of modern life and art, as well as of modern polity, leads to the theorization of an aesthetico-political subject which departs from the reactionary and openly fascist alternative that, according to some, the historical time seemed to demand. Indeed, the avant-gardes were an attempt to counter the homogenizing cultural and political forces that were entrenched behind the pretense of guarding the traditional values. The progressive homogenization of the cultural and political panorama was not however a new phenomenon since it was linked with what we have grown accustomed to call the project of modernity. In *La estratificación de los márgenes* Nelly Richard sums up modernity as "una vocación triplemente unificadora-uniformadora" (39), identifying three fundamental stages in this process of homogenization. The first corresponds to the enlightened project of rationalization which, on the basis of a cognitive instrumentalization of reason, intends to categorize and systematize human experience by turning reason and progress into "ideales reguladores de un proyecto necesariamente universalista, puesto que descansa en la conciencia objetiva de un metasujeto absoluto" (39). The second stage corresponds to the creation of a

bureaucratic, administrative and technological network whose objective is maximizing the rational functionality of the social machine, which is understood and measured in terms of 'performativity' (39). Finally, the third "avance 'civilizador,'" as Richard ironically calls it, couples social progress with the expansion of multinational capitalism and the market logic, which reiterate the dependence upon a center where economic power is concentrated and from where it irradiates (39). Configuring modernity as a triple normative tendency consequently denotes a project that "busca producir y reproducir el *consenso* en torno a sus modelos dominantes de verdad y progreso" (39 emphasis mine).

If modernity is comprehended as a 'culture of consensus,' Lorca's experimental theater opposes the politics of normalization by flaunting the theatrical (or representational) nature of politics and by questioning the mechanisms that generate consensus through the categorization and integration of the individual into the state apparatus. The enunciation of this exposure, however, is consciously produced within fiction, and does not offer itself as a consolation or escape from representation. While Walter Benjamin linked the process of commodification of art with the inevitable prostitution of the artist beginning with Baudelaire, for Edoardo Sanguineti the essential condition and accomplishment of the avant-garde is the awareness of embodying this split conscience and the perseverance with which "ne confessa indiscretamente il meccanismo nascosto" (*Ideologia* 56), attitude that in turn saves the intellectual from marginalization. The coexistence of conflicting positions—identified by Sanguineti as avant-garde proper and by Egginton as the essential posture of the Spanish Baroque and Neobaroque toward modernity—is also found in Lorca's idea of the theater and its attraction-resistance to presence and representation.[109]

[109] Sanguineti identifies two positions which he calls the heroic-pathetic moment and the cynical moment, that is the simulated ignorance of the commercial nature of art and the cynical participation of the artist in the economic circuit

Lorca's experimental theater displays just such an ambivalent approach toward representation. As the political mechanism governing popular participation in the political, representation is the starting point and horizon of *El público* and of Lorca's criticism. The most incisive critique directed by the *vanguardia* at representation is that it does not produce presence since it rests on the principle of mediation. The other fundamental accusation is the one directed against the instrumentalization suffered by representation within most radical forms of nationalism, fascism and nazism, but also in the parliamentary form of government. Both ideologies had become increasingly homogenizing during the interwar period, and both were accused of turning political and aesthetic (theatrical) representation into a mechanism of control and integration of the subject[110]. Although questioning the mechanisms and categorizations which govern the center as cultural and political apparatus, and although rehearsing the alternative of an unmediated presentation, or self-presentation of the subject, in opposition to a politics of consensus, *El público* nonetheless concludes reinstating mediation as a fundamental structuring element of modernity and of the modern subject.

In *How the World Became a Stage,* Egginton explains modernity in terms of its theatrical dimension, distinguishing between *performativity* and the *suspension of performativity.* This distinction will help us to unfold the relation established in *El público* between representation (*teatro al aire libre*) and presentation (*teatro bajo la arena*).[111] When understood as 'acting,' performativity is associated with representation and depends on established social frames that separate the real from the imaginary: "Performativity is thus [...] always a reiteration of a norm

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of artistic production (*Idelologia* 54-56). For Egginton's argument, see his *The Theater of Truth.* Stanford, California: Stanford U Press, 2010.

[110] For a synoptic view of the birth of the subject and subjectivity in relation to theatricality, with an emphasis on the philosophical, phenomenological, political, psychoanalytical and aesthetic dimensions of the phenomenon, see the chapter "Theatricality versus Subjectivity" in William Egginton's *How the World Became a Stage*.

[111] Egginton develops previous takes on the concept of performativity, respectively Erving Goffman's and Judit Butler's ideas of self and gender as performative. For Goffman see his *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1985).

or a set of norms, and […] to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition" (Egginton 16). Despite separating reality and fiction, these frames "are nevertheless susceptible to interpenetration and mise en abyme, *precisely because the spaces that comprise them are mimetically related*" within a culture of theatricality (79).[112]

It is the suspension of these frames, and therefore of performativity, that produces presence. Interestingly, Egginton stresses that the suspension of performativity is generated within a metatheatrical structure, but does not automatically follow from the technique of the 'play-within-the-play' (75-76). Cervantes's *El retablo de las maravillas* illustrates this difference along with the effect of social frames on collective behavior. Knowing too well the implications of not being acknowledged as 'castellanos viejos,' the villagers pretend to see the fantastic characters evoked on the stage by the master puppeteer, so to maintain the fiction of their *honra* [honor]. But since the 'play-within-the-play' does not collapse reality and fiction, performativity is never suspended, or, to put it in Gasset's terms, no osmosis or endosmosis takes place between the two realms. In *El público* the 'play-within-the-play' is superseded by a metatheatrical structure: the audience is at the theater to view a performance of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet,* a drama that, among other things, shows how 'acceptable' social conduct is decided on the basis of set conventions or frames: kinship, not love, leads to marriage. Shakespeare's play becomes therefore the backdrop and foil for a metatheatrical commentary on the possibility or 'acceptability' of theater, which begins with the Director being visited by the Caballos first, and the Hombres later, and which involves, at different times, the actors, the audience, the Director, and the Prestidigitador, the latter finally intervening to restore order. But

[112] For a genealogy of the frame, and its relevance to the notion of a performative self, see Erving Goffman's *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience,* New York: Harper & Row, 1974.

it is only in the scene of the sepulcher that the *teatro bajo la arena* is inaugurated, while the conventional theater of representation and mediation, the *teatro al aire libre,* fades in and out of view on the stage, as suggested by the comments of the audience concerning the Shakespearean drama, or by the applause that is heard off stage.

Metatheatricality foregrounds the role of the frames and of mediation, both of which hold a special relation to modernity, so much that the modern subject has been understood as the effect of both.[113] By intertwining the *teatro al aire libre* and the *teatro bajo la arena* to the point of blurring the transitions between the two, Lorca stages the tension between a modern existence within representation and the (also modern) longing for presence and immediacy. Since the beginning of the play we learn that the Director of the theater is troubled by the unsatisfactory possibility that his theater will always be one of representation: "¡Mi teatro será siempre al aire libre!" (I.119), he desperately utters, "[p]ero yo he perdido toda mi fortuna. Si no yo envenenaría el aire libre" (I.120). Pressured by economic constraints, the Director feels compelled to compromise and bring to the stage a type of theater which he would otherwise destroy. If the Hombre 1 is right, and it is "a los teatros que hay que llamar […p]ara que se sepa la verdad de las sepulturas" (I.123), this is not the theater that the audience is accustomed to seeing or willing to support, as the Director painfully recognizes. "¿Qué hago con el público si quito las barandas al puente?", he asks, showing preoccupation for "la moral" and "el estómago de los espectadores," that is, for what ensures his own economic support (I.124). Continuing with the

[113] According to Martin Heidegger representation marks the birth of the subject: man, previously exposed as the object of an alien representation or "looked upon by that which is," resolves to "ge[t] into the picture" (131). Thus understood, representation inaugurates modernity as "The Age of the World Picture" and of mediation since, in its modern meaning, representing "means to bring what is present at hand [*das Vorhandene*] before oneself as something standing over against, to relate it to oneself, to the one representing it, and to force it back into this relationship to oneself as the normative realm" (131), in a process in which the human being "takes up this position as the one constituted by himself" (132). Goffman reiterates the role of mediation and role-playing as constitutive aspects of the self in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.*

teatro al aire libre, however, is the same as "engañarnos," replies the Hombre 1, "para que todo siga igual" (I.125).

But despite its aesthetic appeal, the theater wanted by the Hombres would leave the Director completely exposed, vulnerable to a presence that is otherwise kept at a safe distance as when, for instance, we accept mediation in the form offered by the mask. The mask constitutes therefore an ambivalent symbol. On the one hand, it stands for the individual's hypocrisy, the constraints of social norms, and the falsity of the *teatro al aire libre:*

> En medio de la calle, la máscara nos abrocha los botones y evita el rubor imprudente que a veces surge en las mejillas. En la alcoba, cuando nos metemos los dedos en las narices, o nos exploramos delicadamente el trasero, el yeso de la máscara oprime de tal forma nuestra carne que apenas si podemos tendernos en el lecho. (III.156)

Also for the Hombre 1 the mask falsifies existence because it stands in the way of our true presentation to others, and it is only by getting rid of this obstacle that individuals can commune: "Te amo delante de los otros porque abomino de la máscara y porque ya he conseguido arrancártela" (III.157). For the Director, on the other hand, the mask is an ineludible reality: "No hay más que máscara. Tenía yo razón Gonzalo. Si burlamos la máscara, ésta nos colgará de un árbol como al muchacho de América…colgado de sus propios intestinos" (III.156, I.124). Although social norms and conventions are fictions, their effects are nonetheless very real, as racial violence proves.[114]

[114] The reference is to the lynching of a young black man, an episode which Lorca learned about while in the United States, and an illustration of which he planned to include in *Poeta en Nueva York* to accompany the poem "Norma y paraíso de los negros." The illustration was apparently entitled "Negro quemado," and strikes me its resemblance with another illustration entitled "Matadero" showing hundreds of butchered cows hanging from the ceiling of a slaughter house. In her edition of *Poeta en Nueva York,* María Clementa Millán indicates the original order in which Lorca intended to place the various illustrations to the poems. These illustrations appear on p. 122 and p. 180 of Millán's book.

Embedded in the characters' reflections on the mask is the same concern experienced by Juan Fernández, the protagonist of Cajal's "El pesimista," when he is suddenly deprived of the "33 centímetros" that make possible a distinct vision. From too close up, as seen through microscopic eyes, objects and people appeared to Juan as uncanny and even threatening. There was no need for the lover to apprehend his beloved in every minute detail. On the contrary, such a detailed perception of people and the world seemed to destroy beauty, prevent making sense of one's surroundings, and threaten social bonding. Although a falsification of perception, the mediation provided by distinct vision and the mask appears in both texts as to enable social relations rather than hindering them.

The same tension that exists between identity [*identidad*] and mask [*máscara*] is reproduced in *El público* between costume [*traje*] and character [*personaje*]. All of the characters, with the exception of the Hombre 1, who maintains unaltered his homosexual appearance, change costume. The problem, however, is not the excessive fluidity with which these changes take place as much as the incomplete coincidence between costume and character. Emblematic is the scene where the Hombres, returning from the performance that is taking place on the other side of the screen, appear on the scene only half-way dressed as women and one of them asks for a lip gloss which another "*Se saca …por debajo de la barba y le ofrece*" (I.127).

The nature of Lorca's theatrical reflections on the notion of representation and their relevance for the historical circumstances of both Spain and Europe can be better understood by means of a comparison between Lorca's *El público* and a less well-known play by the Italian playwright Luigi Pirandello. While most critics have emphasized the obvious metatheatrical parallel between Lorca's experimental theater (*El público* and *Comedia sin título*) and Pirandello's *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* [*Six Characters Searching for an Author*] (1921,

1924), I would suggest a more apropos counterpart for *El público*, namely Pirandello's unfinished play *I giganti della montagna* [*The Giants of the Mountain*] (1936).[115] Especially in the 1921 version, *Sei personaggi* essentially stages the failed encounter between art (presence) and the material world (representation or *representación*). The actors do not understand and cannot represent the personal drama of the characters who finally leave the stage on a platform that is hoisted up to disappear into the ceiling of the theater, symbolizing their return to the superior world of art from which they originally descended.[116] The 1924 version of the play significantly problematizes this ending—the Daughter storms off the stage, through the stalls toward the entrance of the theater, symbolizing art and theater lingering in the world of men. Nonetheless, the spectator leaves the theater with the feeling that the world of art and that of men are substantially incompatible. Because materiality, the corporeality of the actor, and the mediation of both author and text prevent the production of presence, it would almost seems pointless to ever attempt such an encounter. In the trilogy to which *Sei personaggi* belongs, Pirandello continues to explore the risks involved in the production of presence, and the protection provided by mediation (both in the form of the text and the mask).[117] But it is in his last and unfinished work, *I giganti*, that Pirandello concludes with the painful necessity of

[115] This play is part of a second trilogy comprising *La nuova colonia* [The New Colony] (1928), *Lazzaro* [Lazarus] (1929) and *I giganti della montagna* (1934, The Mountain Giants).

[116] In an earlier version staged by Pirandello the characters left toward the backstage area. Georges Pitoëff introduced the platform in his 1923 staging of the play.

[117] Pirandello's first trilogy comprises *Sei Personaggi in cerca di'autore* [*Six Character Searching for an Author*] (1921, 1924), *Ciascuno a suo modo* [Each in his Own Way] (1924) and *Questa sera si recita a soggetto* [Tonight We Improvise] (1930). In *Ciascuno a suo modo* Pirandello further explores the osmotic relation between reality and fiction; *Questa sera* explores instead the necessity of mediation in the scene when the actors decide to send away the director and to summon the character onstage improvising the dialogues without the support of the text, an attempt that almost costs the life of the actress.

pursuing the encounter with art and presence within the material world of representation and men, even when this is haunted by failure or death.[118]

In *I giganti* we find the same tension as the one set up by Lorca's Director between a traditional theater of representation—that of the actors—and a theater of presence, one in which words, masks and costumes are vehicles for the materialization of the characters directly on stage. The play centers around the encounter between a company of professional actors, that of the Countess, and "*gli scalognati"* [the unlucky or unfortunate ones], a group of beggars, marginalized or self-marginalized individuals (e.g., the magician Cotrone, their leader) who live in an enchanted house which at night becomes the theater of fantastic apparitions and other inexplicable phenomena. Cotrone invites the actors to remain in this privileged place where proffering a verse or a line from a text is enough to produce the apparition of characters and give life to a play, without resorting to representation or being subjected to the demands of an ignorant or uncooperative audience. It is a theater of pure presence: "agli orli della vita, [that] a un comando si distaccano; entra l'invisibile: vaporano i fantasmi. È cosa naturale. Avviene, ciò che di solito nel sogno [...] anche nella veglia" (II.70). At night, as the actors themselves can witness, puppets of human dimension and gigantic instruments come alive and act as if moved by a superior force. In the same way, Cotrone argues, the play of the Countess could acquire life in this enchanted place, a miracle that neither representation, the fictitious translation which actors make of the text, nor embodied acting could operate:

[118] It is beyond the scope of this investigation, but it would be worth exploring further the relation imagined in *El público* and *I giganti* between presence and representation, and the approach to materiality proposed by each, especially in connection with the diverging political contexts in which they appeared—the onset of a republican phase the first, and a fascist regime the second. This would also shed new light on the mutual influence between the two playwrights. The way Pirandello deals with the tension between presence and the necessity of representation is in fact much more overt in *I giganti* than in any other play of both trilogies.

> E il miracolo vero non sarà mai la rappresentazione, creda, sarà sempre la fantasia del poeta in cui i personaggi son nati, vivi, così vivi che lei può vederli *anche senza che ci siano corporalmente.* Tradurli in realtà fittizia sulla scena è ciò che si fa comunemente nei teatri. Il vostro ufficio. (III.124 emphasis mine)

According to Cotrone, the actors will never be able to compete with these fantastic figures because they are always "un po' più sotto" (III.124), always falling short compared to them.

Although frustrated by the shortcomings of materiality, and attracted to the magic of a theater of presence, the Countess does not share Cotrone's decision to do without the body of the actors, or the material constraints of the theater, including the presence of a real audience. Refusing Cotrone's invitation, the Countess states that she will continue to act for an audience, even if it means that she will have to go "sola, a leggere, se non più a rappresentare la Favola" because this [the fable] "[d]eve vivere in mezzo agli uomini" (II.90, 91), even when these are the ignorant and violent Giants of the mountain, of whom stories are told of having killed the actors when the performance was not of their liking. The fast changing times demand of the artist a greater compromise. In "una época fundamentalmente política," as the playwright Eduardo Ugarte defined it already in 1933, also the theater has to be sensitive to this sense of urgency (in Lorca *Obras VI,* 538). "At this dramatic moment in time," Lorca writes in 1936, "the artist should laugh and cry with his people. We must put down the bouquet of lilies and bury ourselves up to the waist in mud to help those who are looking for lilies" (in Gibson 439).

Like Pirandello's Giants, Lorca's audience is unsophisticated and reluctant to abandon theatrical conventions, and ends up reacting violently precisely because it sees the illusion of the performance: the actors loved each other but the characters did not; "se amaban los esqueletos y estaban amarillos de llama, pero no se amaban los trajes y el público vio varias veces la cola de

Julieta cubierta de pequeños sapitos de asco" (V.169). The audience rebels because there is no need, the Damas emphasize, to go beyond fiction and representation: "Las voces estaban vivas y sus apariencias también. ¿Qué necesidad teníamos de lamer los esqueletos?" (V.168). Although it cannot be established if it is the lack or excess of realism that troubles the spectators—if Juliet's feet are too feminine or not feminine enough!—the riot finally explodes because "se encontraron a la verdadera Julieta amordazada debajo de las sillas y cubierta de algodones para que no gritase" (V.169), while a fifteen year old boy was playing her part on the stage. Ironically, the historically accurate detail, namely that of having a young boy acting a woman's roles as in Shakespeare's time—frustrates the spectators accustomed to a contemporary naturalist drama of a conventional kind, while the collapse between reality and representation prevents them from happily immersing themselves in the fiction, as they would much rather do: "[l]a gente se olvida de los trajes en las representaciones," says the Estudiante (V.169).

Tellingly, the suspension of performativity takes place in the crypt where Julieta is buried. Following the notion of 'frame' elaborated by Erving Goffman, Egginton identifies the crypt as the inmost frame and liminal space whose suspension triggers the crossing over to the realm of presence. But the suspension of performativity is perceived as a threat because it opens a breach for the irruption of the invisible, the formless, or 'the real' by suppressing the distance between the audience and the representation, between reality and fiction. In a 1933 interview in *La nación,* Lorca explains the audience's violent reaction to the play by saying that

> [the play] is the mirror of the public. That is to say, it puts on the stage what each spectator may be thinking while, unaware, he is watching the performance. And since the drama within each of us is intense and usually shameful, the audience would rise up in anger and stop the performance. (in Martinez Nadal 229)

As the Estudiante argues, "el público no debe atravesar las sedas y los cartones que el poeta levanta en su dormitorio" (V.169). On the contrary, "se ha de dormir en la palabra, y no ha de ver a través de la columna las ovejas que bailan y las nubes que van por el cielo" (V.169). When the Director instead "abrió los escotillones, y la gente pudo ver cómo el veneno de las venas falsas había causado la muerte verdadera de muchos niños" (V.170), he elicited the violent reaction of the audience that produced the death of many of the actors, "por pura curiosidad, para ver qué tenían dentro" (V.174). The frivolous reason moving the audience to 'dissect' the actors in search of an essential difference between reality and fiction foregrounds the doubtfulness of their epistemological enterprise and of the (supposed) objective knowledge produced by scientific means, a point to which we will return. And although extreme situations such as those presented in *El público* are never explicit in Pirandello, and are only alluded to in *I giganti*, the Italian playwright concurs that the suspension of performativity produces chaos and interrupts the performance:

> Ove la commedia è da fare, [o] da recitare a soggetto, [...] il conflitto [...] impedisce che la commedia si faccia e che l'improvvisazione sia governata e regolata e seguitamente a una conclusione; ove la commedia è fatta, [...] il conflitto ne manda a monte la rappresentazione. (*Maschere nude* I, 51)

The collapse between reality and fiction exposes the structure and functioning of the theatrical machine, which would otherwise remain invisible, hidden or shielded by the surface appearance. This is the path suggested in the stage directions of the Cuadro Primero of *El público* where "*Las ventanas son radiografías*" (I.119). The inclusion of a radiographic image thematizes the importance of seeing but inverts the conventional relation between visibility and invisibility. At the same time, it speaks of the symbolic power associated with technology and

imaging, but also of the ability of science for exposing privacy and challenging social order and morality, as confirmed by the many cartoons that appeared in the Victorian popular press (Lentle 513-514). The exposure of the theatrical machine brings into question a social and political apparatus rooted in the fiction of representation and in performativity as devices that prevent real participation. In the case of totalitarianism and fascism, as Emilio Gentile reminded us, these political mechanisms aim at the mere mobilization of the subjects rather than their direct participation, which is controlled and simulated. But theatricalization is not exclusive of such radicalized political structures but affects all forms of government, including the parliamentary.

Alain Badiou's reflections on theater will help us to shed light on the political significance of Lorca's own considerations on the concept of representation. For Alain Badiou theatricality is the essence of "lo político" [*the political*] understood as "la ficción donde la política hace el agujero del acontecimiento" (*Pensar* 9). He therefore distinguishes between *the political*, which he associates with representation, and *politics*, which is identified with the moment of presentation or the suspension of performativity. Likewise, Badiou differentiates between *théâtre*, which corresponds to "la forme parlamentaire de la politique" and depends on "l'épaisseur du consensus qu'elle organize," and *Théâtre* which, instead, corresponds to "une politique véritable, apte à penser au lieu où elle s'effectue" (*Rhapsodie* 35). The *théâtre* therefore constitutes a double mediation of presence insofar as "il *représente* la *représentation,* non la preséntation" (56).

When enumerating the essential characteristics of theater, Badiou emphasizes the isomorphic relation that this entertains with the political, since they both share the same basic elements: an audience gathered to attend a performance or *representación* (the summoning of the masses), the actors who submit themselves, in voice and body, to the scrutiny of the audience

(the authorized representatives), and a textual referent that legitimizes the discourse. Political life is nothing but a mise-en-scene (*Rhapsodie* 14-17).[119] This is why, Badiou concludes, "le théâtre est une affaire d'État, *moralment suspecte*, et qui exige un spectateur" (11 emphasis mine). It is morally suspicious probably because it "concentre tout ce qui de l'action nous est disponible" (12), which means that the subject is granted access solely to a representation of a representation, that is, to appearances. Badiou claims that "[i]l y a quelque chose de terrible, et d'irrémissible, absolutement propre au théâtre" (64) [political parliamentarianism], which has to do with the fact that representation can do without the subject: "[l]e théâtre est le re-nounment figuratif de la politique [i.e., mobilization without participation], et ceci ne dépend pas de son sujet" (*Rhapsodie* 23).

But if representation can do without the subject, the reverse is not true. And although Jacques Derrida links representation to "the horror of calculable subjectivity," which is why he describes the age of representation as "the most powerful, the longest, and also the most dangerous of all" ("Sending on" 317, 322), he nevertheless concludes that *nous sommes en representation,* because "the authority of representation constrains us, imposing itself on our thought through a whole dense, enigmatic, and heavily stratified history. It programs us and precedes us" (304) as the model and space "of all thought of the subject, of every idea, of all affection, of everything that happens to the subject and modifies it in its relations to the object" (314).

Echoing the visual and poetic avant-gardes, Lorca stages a sort of poetics of the margin, both in terms of how his dramaturgy relates to conventional theatrical genres and practices, and

[119] The seven basic elements of theater, which this shares with politics, are "Lieu, text ou son tenant lieu, metter en scène, acteurs, décor, costumes, public" (*Rhapsodie* 18). Moreover, Badiou argues that since 1890 theatricality has progressively transformed from the fulcrum of religion and the catholic mass into the fulcrum of political life (*Theorie* 102-05).

how he brings certain themes and characters to the stage.[120] Absolutely not limited to the topic of homosexuality, a theme overtly treated for the first time in *El público*, marginality extends also to the place occupied by Lorca's experimental theater within the Spanish theatrical scene, to the relation between the Spanish *vanguardia* and its European counterparts, to Lorca's fondness for minor or popular artistic form, and, from a political perspective, to the open support the playwright gave to the progressive forces, which caused his death at the hands of the nationalists. The margin constitutes a space in which Lorca can engage in but also deflect the established theatrical and political discourses, and thus rescue theater and representation by placing them at the core of the modern state and by articulating an alternative path to political subjectivization that, despite intersecting the one proceeding from the center, does not end up reproducing it.

Speaking of an aesthetic of the margin, Nelly Richard clarifies that the margin relates to an "infracción," that is, to the possibility of resisting the closure of a culture of the center (11), and of pointing in the direction of a *desterritorialization* (13) in which a "pluralidad dialogante" becomes the alternative to a univocal discourse and to a practice of the consensus (15). Opening a dialogue with someone, she further mantains, does not presuppose a general consensus, but rather a "consenso mínimo (local y parcial) [que] no tiene por qué uniformar tonos ni desactivar antagonismos bajo la enseña de un pluralismo sospechosamente pacificador"; a type of consensus, therefore, that continues to be "cuestionante de las relaciones de cada parte al total y de las partes en sí" (15). But not all types of margins are equally challenging to the established discourse, and not all types of consensus are democratic. Varying greatly, the margin can be: "mecanismo de autocertificación" that is projected negatively from a center; expression of a "voluntad general de marginalidad como postura" from which the governing logic is obliquely

[120] I am here thinking of how visual artists such as Juan Gris or poets such as William Carlos Williams experimented on the margin (or "edge") as a liminal experience and as the limit and possibility for new knowledge ("It is at the edge of the petal that love awaits," Williams writes in "The rose is obsolete").

questioned; ritualization and "cautiverio feliz de los excluidos"; "autosatisfacción de pertenencia"; metaphor of the artists's feeling like a "larva"; or, finally, "una especie de reducto" or a "reservation" from where no activity proceeds against the center that is being questioned (26). Clearly, the list encompasses a range of possibilities that goes from the most to the least operative ones. The best scenarios propose a notion of the margin that embodies a *poética del desajuste* (18), namely a poetics of the interferences that contrast with the homogenizing tendencies of the center, because in the dialogical space between margin and center can take place those "juegos entre anversos (el discurso regimentado o doctrinario) y reversos (la voz disidente o la palabra heterodoxa)" (19) in which both positions undergo negotiation.

A contrast between the characterization of the margin in *El público* and *I giganti* will help us to elucidate how Lorca envisions it rather as a potential space for artistic and political emancipation. Speaking of the subsumption of the individual into the system, the magician Cotrone observes how, in most cases, the integration is a self-imposed process: "Caro giovanotto, ognuno di noi parla, e dopo aver parlato, riconosciamo quasi sempre che è stato invano, e *ci riconduciamo* disillusi in noi stessi, come un cane di notte alla sua cuccia, dopo aver abbaiato a un'ombra" (III.119 emphasis mine). Escaping representation, he concludes, is possible only by choosing a life at the margin: "Noi siamo fuori di questi limiti, per grazia di Dio," he utters by stressing that only in this state of complete freedom is achieved "il libero avvento d'ogni nascita necessaria" (III.124). But the relief experienced by Cotrone entails exceeding the system altogether, a situation which corresponds to the least operative notions of the margin listed by Richard, and specifically to the view of the margin as ritualization or "cautiverio feliz de los excluidos"; "autosatisfacción de pertenencia"; metaphor of the artists's feeling like a "larva"; "una especie de reducto" or a "reservation" incapable of generating any

concrete action against the center (26). This is confirmed by the fact that most residents of the enchanted house are beggars, individuals that threaten the economic system by exploiting it without investing or returning anything to it. Such paradoxical figures, though pointing to the limits of the system, cannot engage it except to undo it; they can be utopian revolutionaries but not reformers. On the contrary, reform is the road to undertake for representation within theater and the parliamentary or democratic system since neither can exist without, or outside of, representation. Hence, the decision of the Countess to bring the theater to the Giants is the only sensible one, even if it means risking one's life. In the fourth act, which Pirandello never wrote but for which he left some notes, the actors actually perform for the Giants who, just like the audience in *El público,* react by killing them for challenging the theatrical conventions and transcending the limits between reality and fiction.

The Countess's decision in *I giganti* demonstrates that the real margin retains the connection with the space of representation, namely the world of men and materiality, where one makes onself vulnerable to otherness. In this light, we need to think the ending of *El público* as an attempt at superseding the dichotomy established between *teatro al aire libre* and *teatro bajo la arena*, or the one suggested by Badiou between *thèâter* and *Théâtre.* [121] Just like the late avant-garde theater sought to overcome the opposition between *teatro de arte* and *teatro de muchedumbre,* so Lorca seeks to reconcile presentation and representation by occupying a tangential position in relation to both. If unmediated presence resists assimilation into a system whose equilibrium depends on the ability to control deviance by means of integration into preexisting categories, it does not appear to be a safely inhabitable position.

[121] Badiou claims that "la esencia de la política consiste en excluir la representación, y no tener jamás como imagen la conciencia programática. Su esencia está enteramente en la fidelidad al acontecimiento tal como éste se materializa en la red de las intervenciones". It is "presencia sin mediación" (*Pensar* 56).

Indeed control is what the Estudiantes demand, arguing that it is "detestable" for a spectator to be part of the representation; he or she should rather behave like the visitor of an aquarium who "resbala sobre los cristales sus ojos y aprende" (V.173) in a sort of epistemological trance. Collapsing the distinction between reality and fiction produces instead "una desorientación absoluta" (V.174), as the one experienced by the audience who, in the attempt to differentiate between the real Julieta and the young boy playing her part on stage, kills them and opens their bodies only to find out that there is no significant difference.

This absolute disorientation is undeniably a successful technique on Lorca's part for taking the audience out of their comfort zone by means of a thematic, stylistic and linguistic shock. Stylistically, Lorca seems to be moving in the direction of a discourse of fragmentation that is capable of defying the representative character of language, something that is evident in the fragmented language of the Caballos, for instance, in the pseudo-free associations comprising the exchanges between the Figura de Pámpanos y Figura de Cascabeles, or in the constant struggle between "forma y ceniza" (as the Caballos put it in the Cuadro Tercero), or the polysemic nature of the individual and the desire for unity. So Romeo can be a bird or a grain of salt, while Juliet can be a stone or a map, for example, and yet they will never cease to be Romeo and Juliet, and in love (I. 122). The fragmentary structure of the play (beyond what is to be expected in an unfinished work) and the individual scenes, the osmotic movements between the *teatro al aire libre* and the *teatro bajo la arena,* and the fluidity of the characters give rise to a "dificilísimo juego poético" (IV. 184)—as the director calls it—that requires an active participation of the audience in the game of signification staged by the play. [122]

[122] Derrida speaks of a series of "*renvois* of traces [which] do not have the structure of representatives or of representations, nor of signifiers, nor of symbols, nor of metaphors, nor of metonymies, etc." but refer to each other according to the play of the différance (324). Badiou's approach centers on the interpretative interruption, on the oneiric and uncanny character of language, and on the division of language proposed by Mallarmé (*Pensar* 60).

As the title indeed suggests, *El público* is a play about the audience, about the questioning of a bourgeois spectatorship accustomed to conventionalism and the making of a new and more critical audience. A metatheatrical play raises the issue of reception with particular efficacy since it compels the audience to occupy simultaneously the position of a critical viewer to whom the artifice of art is revealed, and that of an active participant in the performance, by tearing down the conventional separation of the fourth wall and by drawing the audience into a dynamic process of interpretation. Hence, intradiegetically, the Hombres and Caballos appear first as members of the audience, convincing the Director to renounce conventional theater, and later as characters of the *teatro bajo la arena*; among the audience, the Damas and the Muchachos loudly manifest their discontent and frustration for having been forced into the *teatro bajo la arena*, and the Estudiantes, some of whom probably helped the actors to inaugurate the new theater, improvise themselves as critics of the play; finally, other spectators react violently by assaulting the stage and killing the actors. The extradiegetic audience participates just as actively in the construction of meaning. 'Subjected' to a proliferating and disorienting array of semantic possibilities, visually, verbally, and discursively, the audience cannot find relief in the reduction or purification of the polysemy. The process of interpretation becomes an uncomfortable but powerful exercise in individual assertion and a channel for subjectivization.

Other European dramatists and stage directors had already experimented with the audience. Marinetti and the Futurists began by including fake spectators among the audience as agitators, a formula that allowed the dramatist or the stage director to extend the action to the stall while retaining control over the performance. Later, playwrights and directors such as Pirandello, Appia, Evreinov, and Piscator made repeated attempts at blurring the separation

between stage and audience by engulfing the audience within the performance. The fact that even in Lorca's most experimental plays the action never overflows into the stalls is another proof, in my view, that he was consciously working within the limits of representation. And although audience and 'pueblo' do not overlap—as Lorca himself pointed out "Al público se le puede enseñar—conste que digo público, no pueblo" ("Charla sobre teatro" 429)—I would like to argue that seeking the active involvement of the audience in the performance as *El público* does is a form of aesthetic intervention in the making of a participatory and responsible citizenry.

The entrance of the Prestidigitador on stage is supposed to reestablish the fiction of order and representation, as his name ironically suggests. Despite the remark of the Director that it is already too late—"Mis amigos y yo abrimos el túnel bajo la arena" with the help of people such as the Estudiantes who now "niegan haber trabajado a pesar de tener las manos llenas de heridas" (VI.183)—and that the audience cannot but "atender, lleno de espíritu y subyugado por la acción" (VI.183) this new theater, the Prestidigitador explains to the Director that he can convert "sin ningún esfuerzo un fracaso de tinta en una mano cortada llena de anillos antiguos" (VI.183). The power of the Prestidigitador, the Director laments, is that of giving life to lies, to that theater that he has been trying so hard to destroy because, in it, the actors "mueren para despertar sonriendo cuando cae el talon" while his characters "queman la cortina y mueren de verdad en presencia de los espectadores" (VI.184). Insensitive to the words of the Director, the Prestidigitador reiterates his capacity for 'converting' or, if needed, for making things disappear with extreme ease as he demonstrates with the Señora and the Traje de Arlequín that suddenly vanish.

Although it is "rompiendo todas las puertas el único modo que tiene el drama de justificarse, viendo, por sus propios ojos, que la ley es muro que se disuelve en la más pequeña

gota de sangre" (VI.185)—that is by substituting presence for representation—the "frío," symbol of the return to representation and of the integration of the anomaly into the categories of normalization, enters the stage to take possession of it:

> (*El* Prestidigitador, *sentado cerca de la cabeza de caballo, silba y se abanica con gran alegría. Todo el ángulo izquierdo de la decoración se parte y aparece un cielo de nubes largas, vivamente iluminado, y una lluvia lenta de guantes blancos, rígidos y espaciados).* (VI.189)

And while the white gloves fall on stage, suggesting the presence of a conventional audience, and the Prestidigitador "*agita con viveza el abanico por el aire [y en] la escena empiezan a caer copos de nieve*" (VI.189), the resignation with which the Director allows the audience to enter marks the return to the *teatro al aire libre*.

A (superficial) political reading of Lorca's play would point to a negative dimension of mediation and to a distrust of totalitarian forms of government—both the conservative or reactionary stances that will later crystallize in the Francoist regime, as much as the forms of democratic and parliamentary government which, in a similar fashion, transform representation and theatricality into their most powerful weapon and guarantor. But given that there is no interaction outside of representation, we may ask if the arts, as self-reflexive representational practices, may hold a special place in the battle for political emancipation. A similar belief in the power of art to anticipate collective changes is expressed by Ortega in "La deshumanización del arte" (1924). For Ortega, "el arte y la ciencia pura, precisamente por ser las actividades más libres, menos estrechamente sometidas a las condiciones sociales de cada época, son los primeros hechos donde puede vislumbrarse cualquier cambio de la sensibilidad colectiva" (75-

76).[123] The particular relation that the theater entertains with presence—as immediate and concrete action taking place in the present tense and in presence of an audience whose interpretation it demands[124]—and the fact that in theater illusion and truth coalesce allow the stage to produce a fissure in the texture of reality and a momentary disclosure of the real, as shown in the scene of the sepulcher. "Todo teatro sale de las humedades confinadas. Todo teatro verdadero tiene un profundo hedor de luna pasada," the Director replies to the Prestidigitador, who asks what type of theater could possibly come out of a sepulcher (VI. 183).

Full presence, or death, cannot however take place fully within representation or existence. Neither one constitutes an inhabitable position. Once the revolution has broken out, the audience finds itself trapped in the theater, panicking and unable to find an exit: "Es horrible perderse en un teatro y no encontrar salida," utters the Dama 1 while on stage the actors are preparing to dissect the Desnudo (V.171). Lost within a theater of presence, the audience cannot interact with the external reality. Maybe climbing on a fake tree, the Muchacho 1 suggests, they may be able to reach "uno de los balcones y desde allí [pedir] auxilio" (VI.172). And when it does not produce death, opening all of the doors of the theater or allowing the repressed to return in all of its violence threatens to make the stage impracticable, filled as it would be "de mastines, de locos, de lluvias, de hojas monstruosas, de ratas de alcantarilla" (VI.185).

As the theatrical debates of the 1920s and 1930s seem to confirm, modernity operates as a culture of consensus and mediation, and from the discourses of and on modernity stems a politics of representation that rests on practices of normalization. But also modern is the longing for presence and immediacy. While mediation progressively sets itself up as a modern practice

[123] Similarly, for Badiou, "el arte anticipa las imágenes de la conciencia política [because] la literatura puede nombrar un real al que la política permanecía cerrada" (*Pensar* 21).
[124] I am here referring to Martin Esslin's synthetic description of drama in his dated but still relevant analysis entitled *An Anatomy of Drama* (1977).

for controlling visibility[125]—in the sense that through mediation only the appearances or representation of reality are left exposed—the avant-garde theater embodies in a singular way the paradox of the modern (political) subject, disenchanted about the illusory nature of representation and, nevertheless, inconsolably fated to live in and through appearances while longing for immediacy. Indeed a painful position to inhabit, *El público* seems to suggest, because one cannot simply conclude that "representation is bad," Derrida reminds us (304), but neither can one renounce the desire for self-presentation. Far from staging the escape from representation toward the interiority of the poet-character, as many critics have suggested, and although flirting with the possibility of suspending performativity and producing unmediated presence, *El público* postulates instead the radical necessity of representation understood as mediated presentation of the artistic object, as the principle governing all communication, and as a political mechanism of subjectivization and mediation.

Any universalism is necessarily established in relation to that which is excluded from its taxonomies or that which, because it escapes them, is the target of renewed attempts at normalization.[126] "Toute totalité", Badiou argues, "exige qu'exist un terme au moins qui n'est pas du Tout, ne lui appartient pas" (*Théorie* 279). Badiou's immigrants (who, although present on the French soil, are excluded, with very real effects, from the fiction of political life) are analogous to Lorca's homosexuals, gypsies, blacks, and other marginalized individuals.[127]

[125] I here refer to the ontologies of being and reality that characterize modernity in terms of a withdrawal from the surface and representation. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault speaks of a withdrawal from discourse, from the surface of representation toward the organic structure of beings. In the first chapter we dealt specifically with the focus late 19th century physiology placed on what remained beyond the reach of human sight, namely the microscopic organic and inorganic.

[126] The tension between the modern impulse to categorize knowledge and social life (museums, political parties, etc.) and the failure of any taxonomy is brilliantly encapsulated in Luis Borges's funny-grotesque project of the Chinese encyclopedia, the same example with which Foucault begins his observations on modernity in *The Order of Things.*

[127] Pirandello's marginalized beings represent also those artists and intellectuals who had been completely silenced by a regime interested simply in the instrumentalization of a mediocre art.

However, as Badiou suggests, what remains at the margins of representation, or "lo inadmissible," "no es lo que se espera, sino aquello de lo que se parte. La apuesta política presume que de la interrupción, de lo inadmisible, va a deducirse la organización, según apuestas sucesivas actualizables" (*Pensar* 76) of a political discourse that is more productive because, as Richard put it, is the expression of a "pluralidad dialogante." Therefore, despite its tragic finale, *El público* sensibly suggests that from the margins of representation one can articulate a discourse that, without hiding its intrinsic fictionality and yet wary of easy or banal tricks and prestidigitations, can establish a dialogue with the cultural and political centers that resists a totalizing closure on their part. In order to find hope in *El público,* we need to find it in the idea that any circular structure, despite its apparent perfection, is never a full circle. Even in an identical repetition there is room for subversion. In the same way, when by the end we return to the initial scene of the play, a perceptible disjointedness (the horse head and the gigantic eye laying on the stage) point to a small yet significant change. By the end, the spectator ends up believing, or at least hoping, that that which for a moment acquired life will not merely vanish or return to the crypt without leaving a trace, or a representation of itself.

X-Rays and Surgical Knives: the Making of an Audience Between Paradoxical Presences and Medicalized Bodies

There will be a time, the Genius foretold Juan Fernández, the protagonist of Cajal's short story, when invisible radiations will enable scientists to go beyond the molecular dimension and examine the ultramicroscopic structures comprising the organic and inorganic worlds. If microscopy allowed science to penetrate deeper into the structure of the human being and contributed to displacing the invasive procedure of the autopsy, as we argued in the previous chapter, prior to nuclear microscopy the discovery of X-rays by German physicist Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen in 1895 opened the way for a more accurate and painless incursion into biological bodies which left the surface absolutely untouched. Not merely the herald of an epochal advance, this technology provided another powerful visual metaphor for the enlightened project of modernity, and became the ally of the microscope in the struggle against subterranean (domestic and foreign) enemies.[128]

For many avant-gardes artists and intellectuals the X-ray image stood for the metaphorical possibility of transcending materiality and rationality toward a hidden, ethereal, and therefore superior dimension of reality, as it was understood by expressionism, for instance. The stage directions in the Cuadro Primero of *El público* place on stage some real or metaphorical windows that signal that the whole play is to be seen as a series of radiographic images. Before Lorca, José Bergamín opened the section entitled "Variación y fuga de una sombra" of his play *Enemigo que huye* (1926) by X-raying the protagonist, Don Juan. In the center of Doctor Fausto's laboratory, "*un gigantesco aparato de Rayos X; y, por todos lados*,

[128] When taking a radiographic image, X-rays penetrating a body are absorbed differently by layers of diverse density and composition. The rays that go through impress a sensitive film (more recently a digital detector) with a two-dimensional representation of the overlaid structures which display variable transparency.

tubos y cables" (154) constitute the perfect machinery to produce powerful visions and fantastic apparitions. In this oneiric atmosphere, Bergamín brings together on the stage Doctor Fausto, the Diablo, Wagner, and Don Juan in a metatheatrico-philosophical exchange that questions the meaning and purpose of representation, its relation to presence and modern technologies such as cinema, and the possibility of salvation through the production of presence. Prepped with a special liquid to facilitate the imaging of his body, Don Juan is placed in front of the X-ray machine. A series of tongue twisters and rhyming phrases thematize the playful confusion of the epistemological codes summoned by the experiment: science, art, and magic mix to create a dream-like scene in which a monstrous, gigantic image of the internal organs of Don Juan is projected onto the wall of the laboratory. Once again magnification produces an uncanny vision, and Doctor Fausto and Wagner feel compelled to reduce the image down to its original size by punching it with gigantic boxing gloves. 'Resized' and beaten unconscious, Don Juan is laid on a table to proceed with a more conventional examination of the body when, suddenly, "*la obscuridad del laboratorio se puebla de llamaradas azules que aparecen y desaparecen y en medio de ellas se dibuja el ESPECTRO de DON JUAN recortado en luz y sombra, formando una gran* X" (160).

As a sign of an *incognita*, the large "X" underscores the unintelligibility of the individual and the opacity of what it means to be human. However, the "X" also invokes Leonardo da Vinci's diagram of the human being, the symbol of Renaissance knowledge and of the centrality of man as the link between micro and macrocosm. According to French anthropologist David Le Breton, beginning with Leornado, and even more so with Vesalius, the body is no longer undifferentiated from either man or the world. The invention of 'the body' [*le corps*] within Western culture is in fact the outcome of the advance and subsequent banalization of the practice

of dissection between the 15th and 17th centuries. And while anthropologically and ontologically the distinction between individual and body allowed for the body to be objectified and studied as an autonomous reality (61-63), the epistemological break presupposed by the practice of dissection made it possible, first, to think the modern body and, second, to advance individualism, understood as the separation of a cultural elite from a communal, popular culture (65, 79). Technological advances such as the telescope or the microscope (both mentioned in Cajal's short story) further dissociated body and man, for they entailed mediation in the use of the human senses and bound the observer to the awareness of their deficiency (94).

As an object on display, the modern body suffered yet another 'assault'. Radiography promised a transparent and coherent body in which nothing would remain secret from the sight. From Leonardo and Vesalius down to radiography, Le Breton contends, the task of modern techniques of imaging has been that of reducing the imaginary: what science offered through the radiographic technique was no longer a copy of reality, but the "[r]éel purifié" (246-47). The human skeleton, once the sign of the fear and the humorous experienced in relation to our finitude (251), had become the symbol of a radical purification carried out on the body.

However, just like dissection and microscopy, radiography carries with it the seeds of its own contradiction, which fascinated avant-garde artists. Both Bergamín and Lorca focus on the relation between dissection and radiography, inviting an examination of the human body that implicates at once the risk of its objectification, but also the possibility of finding in its intrinsic polysemy a way of resisting reduction and purification, both of which are consubstantial aspects of the politics of consensus and the taxonimization on which the success of the modern socio-political apparatus rested.

The relevance of radiography in *El público* goes well beyond that of signifying a novel form of visual apprehension of the drama and a deeper insight into reality, as most critics have reductively argued. Lorca's well known interest in science, which he had the chance to cultivate while at the Residencia de Estudiantes, points in a much more productive direction. Indeed, the presence of radiography in *El público* problematizes the act of observing and interpreting, questions the traditional notion of representation, thematizes the history of medico-scientific knowledge by challenging its supposed objectivity, and draws on a number of contradictions in this history in order to show how the imperfect materiality of the body resists the normativization that is signaled by the repeated attempts at medical examinations and other surgical practices suggested in the play.[129] In what follows, I elaborate on each one of these interconnected points.

Concerning the practice of observation and interpretation, I believe that the reference to the "*ventanas"* being *"radiografías"* constitutes, consciously or not, a reinterpretation of Ortega's optical metaphor of the windowpane and the garden, and an intervention on the part of Lorca in Spanish contemporary aesthetic thought. Unlike Ortega, Lorca does not present the two planes of observations as mutually exclusive, although their apprehension requires a new way of adjusting one's sight, such as the one thematized by the radiographic image. As a triangular interaction between X-rays, a bi-dimensional screen and the three-dimensional reality of the body, the radiographic image is the result of a mediation of technique which paradoxically brings life and art closer together. The metatheatrical structure, the fragmentation of the dialogue, and the combination of semi-realistic scenes with overtly experimental and quasi-cinematic ones contribute to keeping the aesthetic frame in focus, while the opaque transparency and the distorting nature of the radiographic screen prevents naturalistic mimesis. At the same time,

[129] X-ray images also respond to an expressionist aesthetic of distorsion, as noted by Walter Sokel who points out that expressionists use "an X-ray eye for detecting the dynamic essence of their time" (in Jerez-Farrán 119).

however, the emphasis on the body, its almost palpable materiality and vulnerability to love and death, brings the drama closer to lived reality. The 'spiritual distance' (Ortega's term) between spectators and drama is reduced and the audience cannot but empathize with the Director for his 'failed' attempt.

The reference to radiographic imaging also problematizes the status of representation as a cognitive model, something that puzzled Röntgen himself. Despite making the invisible visible, radiography posed an interesting epistemological problem: how to prove the existence of those invisible rays that rendered the opaque visible? It was in fact impossible to show how the X-ray machine functioned, which essentially made the new invention appear to rely on an external authority, in much the same way as did the spectacular dissections of the theater of proof. In order to prove how the machine worked along with the existence of a medium (the X rays) "which the audience however well-trained, would be unable to see, [Röntgen] used another nineteenth-century technological innovation—photography" (Crawford 73). The advantage of resorting to photography, Crawford argues, was that these images

> could be reproduced and circulated immediately, not as representations of a presentation that had passed but as the presentation itself. Because the data were revealed only by picture, *the photograph no longer re-presented an absent object: it was the object or, more properly, the quasi object*. (73 emphasis mine)

Despite the apparent analogy with the theater of proof and the creation of quasi-objects, and despite the fact that Röntgen still "considered visibility the arbiter of proof [, his] development of X-ray technology marked a subtle but significant shift in the rhetoric of the theater of proof" (73). Whereas Vesalius and medical autopsies could still claim that their authority resided in

direct observation, which meant that the ideology of representation embedded in the act of observation was concealed,

> after the introduction of photography, X rays, and cinema, body imaging came to rely on the quality, methods, gestures, and protocols surrounding those technologies. Photographs enabled the circulation of heretofore unrecognized rays that could miraculously open bodies without pain. (Crawford 73)

Pausing for a moment to examine the "shift in the rhetoric of the theater of proof" brought about by photography will allow us to emphasize the connection between Lorca's radiographic attempts at visualizing the invisible depth of the human being and Cajal's own efforts in experimenting with dyes and photography to render visible the intricate neuronal structure and the processes occurring inside the human brain—a complexity which is thematized in "El pesimista" and remarkably displayed in Cajal's own drawings. Considering the enormous faith placed in the discovery and application of X rays at the dawn of the new century, one can imagine what great expectations Cajal placed in the future applications of these and other types of "radiaciones invisibles" to microscopy, which indeed occurred. "El pesimista," I showed, already resonates with the problem of how to represent and interpret the complexity of modern knowledge, and in Cajal's particular case of biological knowledge, which is presented not as an apriori set of truths about the human being but as the effect of processes and activities that involve a great deal of interpretation and distortion.

While the questions raised by magnification helped us to reconsider the practice of dissection in connection with the construed nature of the quasi-object and the role of the observer in the making of knowledge, as well as to foreground the issue of hybridity, the questions raised by radiographic imaging point in two other directions: the fallibility of all forms of (biological)

knowledge, a truism Cajal would share, and the evidence that knowledge is rather generated by "superimposing…over one another" all of the layers of available data, abandoning the idea that any kind of suppression or 'purification' may "lead to direct knowledge" (Crawford 76). Although presented as the "reél purifié," radiographic imaging foregrounds, one, the ambiguity and multiplicity of modern reality along with the impossibility of establishing clear boundaries or hierarchies, and, two, that "purification is but one of a range of resources used to produce knowledge," in spite of the fact that modernity naturalized it as a chief path to progress (Latour, *Reassembling* 77).

X-rays imaging acquires in *El público* the status of an epistemological metaphor that does not conceal its mediating power or the fact that it produces a paradoxical presence. Because the radiographic image of the body is perceived only once the film is developed, it is no longer a re-presentation of an absent object, but the presentation of the quasi-object itself: presence as the outcome of mediation. Let us recall the mediating role of the "methods, gestures, and protocols" that developed around modern technologies such as radiography, photography, and cinema. And let us also recall that, because the assessment for imaging results relies mostly on the observer's subjective knowledge and criteria, radiography places a significant weight on the individual's previous experience and ethical responsibility in the interpretive process, both of which are relevant when we think of the kind of theater and audience that Lorca wanted to create.

A third observation regarding X-ray imaging relates to the non-invasive nature of the procedure, which foregrounds, from yet another perspective, the relation between visibility and invisibility, or, in other terms, the relation between presence, representation, and mediation. Far from displaying the gruesome spectacle of a dissection, and more powerful than a microscope, X-rays promised modern science the ability to extend its reach to the most recondite areas of the

human body and, among other things, the ability to diagnose and cure the large numbers of soldiers wounded in modern warfare. But because it inverts the relation between the visible and the invisible, interpreting radiography problematizes the relation between inside-outside and private-public, by exposing that which is kept out of sight, hidden or secret, or conventionally excluded from the public spheres of society and politics and relegated to the private sphere of the individual (sexuality and homosexual desire in the particular case of Lorca). Likewise, radiography inverts the relation between the underlying, sustaining structure and the outer (supposedly protective) layer or shell, since the dark background of the radiographic image, corresponding to softer tissue areas, becomes the support out of which emerges the white, spectral image of the internal frame, as a sort of ghost of the machine.

If X-ray images appear to better encapsulate modern knowledge and its increasing complexity, then how do we interpret the repeated attempts in the play to subject the bodies to different violations and pseudo-scientific practices of dissection? The attempted rape of Juliet, the staged dissections of the Desnudo Rojo as well as the one performed by the audience to the two Julieta, along with the many cutting tools mentioned in the play (scalpels, scissors, blades, knives, etc.) do more than establish a mere negative comparison with radiography. They counter the risks involved in the stylization of a radiographic image and constitute a crucial reminder that *the body is not a metaphor*.

In the first place, the repeated mentions of cutting, slicing, pricking, and opening thematize the body as a material support for the inscription of desire. The Director would like to use "unas tijeras" to rip the tuxedo of Gonzalo (the Hombre 1 and his lover) in order to embroider his flesh with "agujas": "te quiero bordar…Te bordaré sobre las carnes" (I.126). Manuel Delgado Morales notes Lorca's interest in "the symbolic potential of these artforms

[embroidery, sewing, lacemaking] normally carried out by women" (37). Embroidery symbolizes the making of a text or fabric. Following Roland Barthes's idea that "Text means Tissue," the tissue emphasizes the fact that "the text is made, is worked out in perpetual intertwining; lost in this tissue—this texture—the subject unmakes himself, like a spider dissolving the constructive secretions of [her] web" (in Delgado Morales 39-40). Therefore the body is simultaneously the place of inscription of the law and the place of its unmaking, or of the unfolding of desire.

The direct references to dissections, instead, thematize the vulnerability of the body as well as the limits of scientific knowledge that attempts at making the body legible and controllable. Thus, the "cuchillos" become "achas" then "navajas", "espadas," "dientes," "pinzas," bisturí," "punzones," and "tenazas" in an ongoing displacement that shows the futility of the actual act of opening a body on the one hand, and the resilience of the body itself on the other. A dissected body does not reveal any truth. In what ways are the cows cut up in pieces in the butcher shop 'truer cows' than the "hermosas vacas" Julieta saw in Verona, or the ones she admired "pintadas en [los] libros"? (III.150). The dissection performed on the Desnudo Rojo—probably a reference to Marc Chagall's "Le Nu Rouge" [Red Nude Sitting Up] (1909) or Amedeo Modigliani's "Nudo rosso" [Red Nude] (1917) both addressing the voluptuousness of desire—does not reveal anything other than the Hombre 1 lying on the other side of the bed, still wearing its tuxedo and beard (V.173). Even the most direct of these dissections, the one performed on Julieta and the young boy who played her part on stage, which is supposed to satisfy the audience's curiosity of "ver lo que tenían dentro," leaves the spectators in "una desorientación absoluta" (V.174)

The insistence on the non-metaphorical dimension of the body is particularly relevant if we think of the kind of *retreatralización* undertaken by Lorca in connection with the debate on the relation between the 'old' theatrical mode of representation and the new possibilities offered by cinematography, as well as with the popularity that cinematographic representation was encountering especially amongst right-winged supporters. The possibility of presenting the body as a phantasmatic entity (that is, a voice without a body) indeed provided fascism with a powerful tool for erasing specificities and subsuming more easily the individual into the collective body. On a somatic level, the 'rivalry' between theater and cinema translated in a tension between different conceptualizations of the body, oscillating between the cinematic dematerialization of the body in favor of the voice, and its re-materialization through the materiality of the theatrical representation.

One of the reason why *El público* was perceived as a 'drama irrepresentable'—which is how Lorca himself defined most of his experimental theater—is indeed its display of a conscious engagement with cinematic language, which is encapsulated in the non-traditional use of the *biombo,* a screen through which the characters pass in order to appear instantaneously transformed, as in a filmic montage. The connection is not casual. The friendship with, and admiration for, Buñuel are an immediate reference. Moreover, around the time he writes *El público,* Lorca is also writing the screenplay *Viaje a la luna* (1930) and cinematic scripts such as the *Diálogo de los cartuchos*. The emphasis on the organic (sexual and racial) materiality of the body can be interpreted as counteracting the dematerialization of the body inaugurated by cinema, and as preserving the specificity of the individual by means of preserving the site where this specificity can be located, namely the body.

Likewise, Lorca's organic and vulnerable body becomes a critique to the fascist glorification of the machinic body and to the notion of an 'armored body.' A brief description of the libidinal relation established between the body of the leader and that of the collective will elucidate what I mean by a fascist body. Mirroring himself in the ecstatic crowd, the leader—who irradiates with his energy the 'body' of the nation—disperses and reconfigures himself in a double (centripetal-centrifugal) movement in which everything is reabsorbed. Examining the works of high modernists such as Futurist F. T. Marinetti and Vorticist Wyndamn Lewis—both identifiable with proto-fascist aesthetics—Hal Foster shows how the ideological function of this binding-unbinding of libidinal energy "at the level of the subject…may center on the aesthetic management of this tension" (10), which is to say that the process produces a sort of schizophrenic yet aesthetically unified subject. Alice Kaplan's *Reproductions of Banality* thoroughly documents the peculiar way in which fascism succeeded as a "polarity machine" that bound what were traditionally opposed elements (Left and Right, modern and antimodern, revolutionary and conservative, populism and elitism, technological and primitive, male and female, selfishness and selflessness, construction and destruction, self and other, etc.) (25-35). Though extremely volatile, this binding-unbinding managed to articulate order and entropy in such a way that would ultimately overcome fragmentation by means of what many critics of fascism have referred to as the 'shielding' or 'armoring' of the fascist technological subject.[130]

Though across the spectrum high modernism responded to the "specter of the damaged body of the worker-soldier" (Foster 9), the subject envisioned by the avant-gardes greatly contrasted with the fascist 'armored' subject. Both the artist and the audience are exposed and, in some cases, subjected to a deeply discomforting erasure of dychotomic possibilities for being

[130] See Alice Yaeger Kaplan's *Reproductions of Bamality*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986; Al Foster's "Prosthetic Gods"; and Karen Pinkus's *Bodily Regimes: Italian Advertising under Fascism.*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

and interpreting, and to the multiplication of forms of expression, without the possibility of settling on any of them. Unlike the fascist body, Lorca's fragmented bodies cannot be reassembled or shielded; they are exposed, nude and vulnerable, to the audience and to the world. No centripetal force intervenes to undo the fragmentation or reduce the polysemy, as we suggested earlier. The "lágrimas," "saliva" and "sudor" together with the mention of 'unbecoming' bodily functions ("defecar," "orinar") and sexual practices (homosexuality), which are repeatedly evoked in the play, stress the fact that it is with our biological body that we engage the world, suffering it.

On Law and Order, or a Theatrical Exploration of Democratic Institutions of Power

In my concluding remarks, I would like to examine the other unfinished play by Lorca, *Comedia sin título,* in order to show how, during the last years of his life, the same concerns thematized in *El público* acquire more clear overtones as they are explicitly linked to the contradictions and fate of democracy and capitalism. Conceived as a three-act play, *Comedia sin título* (or *El sueño de la vida*, as Lorca referred to it) was probably written in 1935, although, like *El público,* it remained unpublished until 1978. By the mid 1930s, Lorca was expressing an increasing sense of urgency, probably in response to the unfolding of totalitarianism throughout Europe and the fear that the conflict with the reactionary forces at home might rapidly worsen. The trip to the Americas had opened his eyes to the faults of capitalism and to the suffering of entire sections of the population that were economically or racially discriminated. As we may recall, Lorca speaks of '1936' as a "dramatic moment in time": the Second Republic is on the verge of an open battle with the rebels and is struggling to retain its authority. Soon violence would erupt on both sides of the spectrum, tainting the democratic institution of the State. A year earlier, in 1935, Lorca had expressed the intention of departing from dramas such as *Yerma* or *Bodas de sangre* in order to write "several plays of the human, social type. One of these plays will be against war," he declared (*In the Green Morning*, 215). That same year the playwright was addressing the Catalan workers and saying that "una obra d'art no és res més que un reflexe de la vida humana. i per això que cap artista, malgrat vulgui ésser exageradament abstracte, no por [*sic*] restar insensible a la monstruosa dolor del temps que vivim" (*Obra VI* 708). Again, one of the circumstances eliciting this partial change of mind—one that Lorca shared with "molts amics meus que els ha passat el mateix" (712)—was the trip to North America and the 'horror,'

as he calls it, that he felt upon learning of the millions who were unemployed or dispossessed there (712).

Comedia sin título conveys this sense of urgency much more overtly than *El público,* presenting in clear-cut ways the deep fractures of contemporary Spanish society. The characters stand for the different groups struggling for power, namely the bourgeoisie (the Espectador 1º, his wife and the owner of the theater), the working classes (the Obrero and the Criado), and the military (the Espectador 2º). The intelligentsia is instead divided between those who, like the Autor, want to engage the struggle and sensitize the audience-people to the inhumane conditions of life, and the elite, represented by the Joven, who is tepid, when not passive, regarding any possibility of success, and who even ends up confessing, in a nutshell, that he secretly despises the masses. Finally, the theater staff is completely indifferent to the ideological struggle, as suggested by the Actriz who merely wants to entice the Autor with her skillful but insincere interpretations, and prefers fame to truthfulness, or the Leñador who, oblivious to the street riots, is only interested in playing his part on stage, or the Traspunte who, although aware of what is taking place outside of the theater, is only concerned with technical issues and how to render on stage certain theatrical effects. The situation skillfully sketched by Lorca is clearly that of a society that betrays the clash between capitalism and socialism, as well as between democratic and non-democratic (or falsely democratic) practices, and one that elevates the rule of the many above individual thinking—or personal desire as in *El público*. Cultural and ideological conformism constitutes the central theme of the play, and is linked to a warped sensibility that is intolerant of difference and anesthetized toward cruelty.

Set up as a metatheatrical diatribe between Autor and audience, in which the other characters merely serve as illustrations of specific issues, the play opens with a long introductory

speech by the Autor who warns the spectators that he is not interested in amusing them, but rather in teaching them about "un pequeño rincón de realidad…tan rea[l] como la lujuria, las monedas que lleváis en el bolsillo, o el cáncer latente en el hermoso seno de la mujer, o el labio cansado del comerciante" (275).[131] Picking up on a rhetorical question posed by the Autor, one of the spectators jumps into the conversation with a comment that betrays his crude and unimaginative view on the theater. Shushed by the Autor, the spectator promptly replies on the assumption that purchasing an entrance to the theater entitles one to do so. At this point Lorca has the Autor express what amounts to his view on the role of the audience: "A usted le gusta o no le gusta, aplaude o rechaza, pero ¡nunca juzga!" (277). The spectator's quick and interesting reply: "La única ley del teatro es el juicio del espectador" (277).

The subtle shift made in this exchange from *gusto* [taste], to *ley* [law] and *juicio* [judgment] restates the major criticism moved by *El público* and most experimental plays to the established theater, namely that of being controlled by the capricious expectations of a bourgeois audience that identifies theater with mere entertainment. More interestingly, however, are the ideological ramifications implicit in this shift.[132] Although, as Pierre Bourdieau has shown, judgments of 'taste' are linked to specific social position, the way Lorca embeds 'gusto' and 'juicio' in the characters' diatribe suggests a small but significant difference between the two, one that, tellingly, gets temporarily suspended in their triangulation with the law.

Whereas the Autor acknowledges the audience's right to dislike the performance ("A usted, le gusta o no le gusta"), the claim of the Espectador 1º encapsulates instead a pseudo-democratic belief in the rule of the many, which finds in conformism and consensus its most

[131] For *Comedia sin tíutlo,* I refer to Miguel García-Posada's edition of Lorca's *Obras,* volume VI.
[132] In his article " Una comedia sin público"; Metatheater, Action, and Reaction in Lorca's "Comedia sin título," Mark Allison stresses the ideological significance of the spectator's claim, but by equating "gusto" and "juicio" actually erases the small but significant difference that, in my view, is critical to appreciate Lorca's criticism of an 'unlawful' law.

powerful tools. Thus, addressing the audience directly, the Autor claims that he wants to bring to the stage "las cosas que no queréis ver…que no queréis oír" (275), forcing the spectator "emboscado" in the crowd out of his comfortable zone. The middle-class spectator, instead, prefers to take refuge in the fiction of the theater the same way he shields himself from the world in the private space of his home where "tiene la mentira esperándolo, tiene el té, la radio y una mujer que cuando lo ama piensa en el joven jugador de foot-ball que vive en el hotel de enfrente" (278). But the exchange that probably best encapsulates not only the hypocrisy and conformism that ensure the survival and reproduction of this society, but also the tricky coalescence between taste and law, is the one between the Autor and the Traspunte, who is worried about the effects that the riots may have on the "economía del teatro" (291). "¿Qué entiende usted por economía?" asks him the Autor, to which the Traspunte replies, "Es un misterio en el cual creo y que respetan todas las personas sensatas" (291-92). Belief (individualism) and respect (conformism or the 'respect for the rule') are trumped in such a way that taste imposes itself as if it were a dogma or, a law.

As *El público* demonstrates, fear of defying conformism and the mask have prevented the Director from openly displaying his feelings for the Hombre 1. In *Comedia sin título* conformism generates two specific kinds of behavior: the blind and violent intolerance that leads the Espectador 2º to kill the Obrero in the belief that God will repay him for this holy and just act, and the banalization of cruelty performed by anesthetized perceiving subjects. The exchange between Autor, Criado and Joven perfectly elucidates this second type of conformism. As he comes on stage to deliver a coffee to the Autor, the Criado trips in the props that clutter the backstage that is completely submerged into darkness, and gets scared: "Yo no estoy acostumbrado y he pasado miedo," he declares (281).

Denying ever being afraid on the workplace, probably an ill-famed bar given that the Autor asks him about it, the Criado tells instead the grotesque anecdote about a group of drunkards, habitué of the bar, who made a bet to see who got drunk first, a peacock or a child, something that he nonchalantly dismisses as "cosas de borrachos" (282):

> Ayer llevaron un niño y un gran pavo y jugaron para ver cuál se emborrachaba antes. Al niño le daban coñac y al pavo anís con mijitas de tabaco. Nos reímos mucho. Se emborrachó antes el niño y se daba con la cabeza por las paredes. Al pavo le cortaron luego la cabeza con una gillete. Y se lo comieron. (282)

Scared by theatrical illusions, the Criado is instead untouched by the horror evoked in this scene, which he, as the other drunkards, finds laughable, and which he did not try to prevent because one must be "agradable a los parroquianos" or the paying customers (282). Surprised by the horrified reaction of the Autor, the Criado gives yet another example of the kind of anesthetization that the Autor wants to fight:

> ¿Se asusta usted? ¿Pues si viera los carnavales? El año pasado vino un borracho tocando el violín. Todavía me río de recordarlo. ¿Sabe usted lo que era el violín? Era un gato crucificado boca arriba sobre una tabla de lavar, el arco era una gran manojo de zarzas, y al pasarlas sobre el animalito éste daba grandes maullidos que servían de música para el baile de dos mujeres muy bien vestidas, eso sí, ¡de raso!, una de Pierrot y otra de Colombina. (283)

Rather amusing for the Criado, the scene is instead shocking for the cruelty it displays, down to the grotesque, farcical detail of the puppet-like figures of the *Commedia dell'arte* dancing to the chilling noises produced by the suffering animal.

While the effects of the first kind of conformism are more blatant, the subtlety with which the latter insinuates itself in all interstices of life makes it much more disturbing because it resembles that sort of "reproduction of banalities" that Kaplan describes as one of the most unsettling features of fascism, one that appears to be unchallenged by almost all sides of the social spectrum: "Los que se las echan de listos llaman a esto barbarie, otros aberraciones, y dan media vuelta para dormirse," remarks the Joven, concluding that, even when they are made to be aware of the reality, "seguro que recién salidos del sueño, con las cuerdas de una conciencia convencional todavía flojas, la mitad de ellos pediría el manojo de zarzas para restregarlas con fruición sobre el animal crucifijado" (283). The disturbing interpretation offered by the Joven dramatically draws closer together totalitarianism and democracy, signaling the pervasive power of conformism under both political regimes, which is rooted in the dimmest and most visceral form of plebeian knowledge, as the reply of the Criado confirms: "Y harían bien. Los gatos son peligrosos, arañan a los niños y no son fieles" (284).

And even though such a premise makes resorting to force seem almost superfluous, the Hombre invokes the "!Mano dura!" of the law since "El bien, la verdad y la belleza han de tener en esta época un fusil entre las manos" (293). "Muy bien dicho," utters the Leñador theatrically, without forgetting who pays him the salary. As the 'lawful' owner of the theater, the Hombre comprises in himself the rule of the law and of private property, symbolizing the reach of the 'illusory' external reality onto the 'truthful' reality of the theater, and conflating the law ("El bien, la verdad, la belleza") and the force ("un fusil"). Surely enough, "La fuerza" (the 'arm of the law') is charging the crowd outside of the theater, as the Traspunte remarks, while the Espectador 2º writes down the name of the Tramoysta, "Bakunin el loco" (297)—who has offered to rescue the children of the Espctador 1º y Espectadora 1º whom the parents have left at

home ‘alone,’ with the governess and the servants (!)—simply “[p]ara denunciarlo después” (297). The law does not take on the form of justice but of reprisal, and it is presented as a tool in the hands of a few to guarantee either the preservation of the status quo (e.g., the Hombre-owner of the theater), or even a regression to a previous state, as the one implicit in the actions of the Espectador 2º, probably a member of the military, who, following the laws of the Old Testament (i.e., the law of retribution), feels entitled to take the life of the Obrero in order to avenge God.

Annoyed by the disturbance inside the theater, the Espectador 2º loudly shouts “¡Que los acomodadores saquen a esa gente que impide la representación!” (299). The metatheatrical reference to the Shakespearean play that is scheduled to be rehearsed draws attention to the collapse between reality and fiction. Much more interestingly, however, is considering the political reverberations of this utterance. It speaks of a political establishment where “esa gente que impide la representación” are the rebels who are paralyzing the normal functioning of the system, and “la representación” would obviously stand for the representation of the interests of the ruling class (i.e., the owner of the theater, the bourgeois couple, and the military). At no time the views or demands of the ‘rebels’ are voiced; there would be no need to do so, since their lawfulness is immediately grasped in opposition to the absurd and dictatorial views uttered by the representatives of the opposite side.

At the same time, the mention of “la representación” may also be understood as a reference to the progressive spectacularization of the national, as if it were a flat screen onto which any fantasy of power could be projected once it is stripped of all its ties to the concrete reality and is grounded in conformism. Tired of those “personajes de las comedias [que] no dicen más que lo que se puede decir en alta voz delante de señoritas débiles, pero se callan su verdadera angustia,” the Autor exclaims, “no quiero actores sino hombres de carne y mujeres de

carne" (279). Also *El público* reacted against this same attempt at stripping reality of its corporeality, suggesting instead that the subject and corporeality in some way point to the truth of things: "la ley es un muro que se disuelve en la más pequeña gota de sangre" (VI.185).

As the Autor emphasizes at the beginning of the *Comedia sin título,* however, these are difficult times, in which "una verdad destructora puede llevar al suicidio y el mundo necesita más que nunca verdades consoladoras, verdades que construyan. Se necesita no pensar en uno sino pensar en los demás" (286). Nevertheless, as both plays by Lorca show, there is no democratic thinking of the collective without preserving the specificities of the "hombres" and "mujeres" of flesh and blood. The alternative, suggested in the opening speech by the Autor, is that of a bourgeois atomized collectivity in which each individual is shielded in his own house, attentive to the disembodied voices transmitted by a radio, and whose wife, while she is having sex with him, fantasizes instead about the football player living in the cheap hotel on the other side of the street. And what if the mesmerizing radiophonic voice to which the man is listening is the one of a fascist leader?

As the Autor argues, it is necessary to think about building social ties, but both the subject and the collective-to-come must be thought of from within the system if one does not want to yield to utopian thinking. In both plays, Lorca makes his characters and audience think from within the limits of representation in order to consider what it means to refuse representation. Lorca's quasi phenomenological interest in the body allows him to analyze the conditions under which reality and the body work, as a reminder of how important it is to think from within the existing options. Subjectivity, Lorca seems to suggest, is precisely the outcome of placing oneself inside and against reality, the act of breaking itself, from inside, aiming at reappropriating what has been denaturalized, namely the body and the common. And as we saw

in *El público,* also in *Comedia sin título* the 'inside' is the margin. Not however the neutral position advocated by the Joven, who "prefier[e] estar al margen" of "la caza mayor" without siding with the bloody conservatism of the Espectator 2 º nor with the 'threatening' demands of the revolutionaries. On the contrary, the margin is the one signaled by the Autor who is ready to destroy the doors that isolate the theater from the streets and inaugurate that "*teatro bajo la arena"* which was feared by the Director of *El público*: "He dicho que abran las puertas," the Autor cries, "No quiero que se derrame sangre verdadera junto a los muros de la mentira" (291). And not unlike *El público,* which closes with the entrance of the audience on stage and the return to representation, *Comedia sin título* ends with the Tramoyista announcing that "¡El pueblo ha illuminating all (302).

In conclusion I would like to stress that it is in his most avant-garde plays that Lorca delves into the complexities of subjectivity, desire and representation, concurrently acknowledging the necessity of working within the material (corporeal and economic) constraints of reality. If Walter Benjamin ties the marginalization of the intellectual, beginning with Baudelaire, with the process of commodification of art, for Edoardo Sanguineti the inevitable prostitution of the artist upon entering the artistic market constitutes the essential condition of the avant-garde. Both *El público* and *Comedia sin título* thematize the awareness of belonging to a bourgeois society, which is precisely what saves the intellectual from marginalization and allows him to bear witness to its contradictions.[133] Without a doubt, these plays were written during a time of profound social and political transformations. *El público* just two years after the death of Primo de Rivera, one after the implementation of the progressive Constitution of 1931, and was sketched while Lorca was traveling and giving talks in the Americas. *Comedia sin título* was probably written in 1935, in the leadup to the Civil War, when

[133] This is how the condition of the avant-garde is described in *Gruppo 63*.

the democratic state was showing clear signs of crisis and a lack of authority. Offering a reflection on a Spain torn between different but equally radicalizing positions, these plays challenge the homogenization of political and aesthetic alternatives—or, what amounts to the same thing, a non-democratic politics of consensus—by presenting a plurality of perspectives which do not constitute a mere formal innovation but a practice in democratic participation and political skepticism. What these plays stage is a sort of "ideological realism": a demystified vision of society produced through an ideological defamiliarization [*Verfremdung*] and an optical deformation that produce a sharper reading of reality (Sanguineti, "Arte e morale" 31).[134] I would dare saying that the 'unrepresentability' of these plays has to do more with the active resistance or unwillingness of the (bourgeois) audience to undergo the transformation demanded than with its unpreparedness to do so, which, in my view, gives the unrepresentability a political hue rather than an aesthetic one.[135]

While they are not political plays in a narrowly conceived way, *El público* and *Comedia sin título* can be read as politically engaged texts that rehearse on the stage the very possibility of a more inclusive notion of the Spanish citizen and the Spanish collective: from arguing for widening what is still largely a bourgeois audience (*público*), to highlighting the clash between capitalism and socialism, to foregrounding the threat of social and political homogenization, the role of democratic institutions, and the use of force within the boundaries of the legal state. At stake is the meaning and reach that concepts such as representation, democratic institutions, citizen, and people will hold in the collective-to-come.

[134] Although some connections could be made with Valle-Inclán's *esperpento*, I want to stress that one does not find in the two plays under analysis that same departure from history toward the ahistorical dimension of myth that characterizes Valle-Inclán's theatrical trajectory.

[135] I think, for instance, of the way in which the masses responded enthusiastically to performances or spectacles that were just as innovative (BL18, *Illuminations* in Germany) but did not 'disorient' or dismantle the bourgeois subject without performing its symbolic rebirth in the new fascist subject.

CHAPTER THREE

FROM TAXONOMY TO TAXIDERMY: PRIVATE LIVES AND PUBLIC SPECTACLES IN JOSEP MARIA DE SAGARRA'S *VIDA PRIVADA*

> Things are not as they appear. Neither are they otherwise.
>
> Surangama Sutra

> Life is not a spectacle, or a feast; it is a predicament.
>
> George Santayana

Showcase of Decay

Concerning the genesis of *Vida privada* (1932), Marina Gustà notes that after the failure of *All i salobre,* a novel whose plot is constantly interrupted by the digressing flights of a narrator pursuing different objectives every time, *Vida privada,* Sagarra's third and last incursion into the novelistic genre, posed for the author a narrative dilemma: either to maintain a narrow focus and develop in detail the worldview of the characters, more in the style of the psychological novel, or to widen the field of observation while keeping unaltered the traditional distance from the characters (33-34). As Gustà goes on to explain, Sagarra preferred the second route in order better to serve the cause of the Catalan novel: "la literatura català no té el coixí que suposa per a les altres literatures europees la gran novel.la del XIX, que defineix la societat a través del retrat de les diverses classes que la componen. No hi fa res que el propòsit de palliar aquest buit sembli anacrònic en ple segle XX si els resultats són vàlids" (Gustà 36). While the limited Catalan novelistic tradition undoubtedly played a part in Sagarra's narrative approach to *Vida privada,*I also believe that the *scale* by which he decides to analyze these characters becomes meaningful in and of itself when we consider that, among other things, scale: (a) allows

him to treat and thematize the impact of certain public events which, although completely or partially omitted from the narrative, end up shaping in crucial ways the world of the characters, (b) signals the collapse between these macroscopic events and the way lives are carried out at the microscopic level, (c) allows him to reflect on the speed at which this world is disintegrating, and, finally, (d) establishes a closer relation between *Vida privada* and new forms of visual representation, such as cinema. Although not articulated explicitly in terms of scale, this view suggests that the individualization of cinema, a process that brings cinema closer to the episodic novel than to melodrama, was negotiated also on the basis of scale, namely by moving away from the concentrated conflict toward an adoption of the lengthy view necessary for telling a story.

This shift in scale from concentrated conflicts to macroscopic phenomena, and the way it reinforces a certain cinematographic aesthetics, is integral for understanding *Vida privada* and the way that it traces the transformations experienced by Spanish society between the late 1920s and the 1930s, transformations that are connected to the progressive spectacularization of the national domain observable throughout Europe at the same time. On the margin of any dispute of genre, the fact that the novel reflects on a spectacular dimension of the national as a European phenomenon may add an interesting nuance to Josep Pla's definition of *Vida privada* as "un llibre d'una normalitat europea inqüestionable" (420).[136]

Vida privada describes the decline of the Lloberola and the aristocratic Barcelona through three generations that have survived the changing of time, as the ostrich, by hiding their head under the wing. The one depicted by Sagarra is a shallow time: fortunes are made and lost rapidly; the value of an individual is established "por la raya de unos pantalones o la calidad de unas medias" (269). The novel opens with a promising narrative gesture, namely the awakening

[136] From *Josep Maria de Sagarra i la seva prosa*, in *Retrats de passaport* (*Obra completa*, XVII, Barcelona 1970).

of one of the characters and his slow incorporation into reality. "No es pot negar," Gustà claims, "que és un inici brilliant: el lector obre els ulls amb el personatge, experimenta la mateixa sensació física i descobreix, a poc a poc, el món" (38). But as the heavy eyelids of the character open with an almost mechanical "clac," and as the character struggles to bring reality into focus, the reader ironically realizes that the awakening is taking place "a las cuatro de la tarde y algo más" (29) and that the character is not the focalizer of the scene since, almost immediately, a third person omniscient narrator announces that "[e]l hombre de los párpados irritados, Federico de Lloberola, se despertaba normalmente" (29). By encapsulating in this single phrase the daily routine of Federico, the "*hereu*" of a once distinguished family of Barcelona, the character is presented as an indolent and parasitic individual who possesses nothing of the traditional industrious Catalan aristocracy who had valued its bond to the land. And as Federico slowly remembers the reason that took him to the sordid room of Rosa Trénor, the reader also learns about the blackmailing that constitutes the narrative motor of the first part of the novel, another expedient by which we measure the state of economic and moral decay of the aristocratic Barcelona.

As Gustà puts it synthetically, the novel introduces the reader to the world of that

> aristocràcia local que viu els seus darrers moments en la transició de la Dictadura a la República. Aquest moment històric representa la crisi d'unes condicions socials i d'uns valors que les mantenien. De manera inevitable, en la mesura que contribueixen a la dissolució d'aquest grup social i, poc o molt, se'n beneficien, cauen dins el camp observat dos altres sectors: l'alta burgesia—les noves fortunes nascudes de l'esforç personal més o menys honest—, que manté amb aquelles restes de noblesa unes relacions molt ambigües, i el món subterrani que, en

> complicades ramificacions, procura treure el màxim profit de les tares d'alguns i dels deliris de perversió i modernitat de tots plegats. (36)

The dictatorship represented indeed the last breath for don Tomás, the patriarch of the Lloberola, who saw in the coalition between the monarchy and Catholicism the last resort to reestablish the old monarchic order in the person of Alfonso XIII and, therefore, to preserve some class privileges. By 1932, however, don Tomás's support for the most conservative branch of the Bourbons (uniting Carlism and Catholicism) constituted a blatant anachronism because, by then, it was reasonable to suppose that the social changes brought by the war were going to be permanent. Moreover, if '1927' instilled any belief in the masses, it was that the revolution was near and that it would take place in Barcelona, not Moscow, although from an institutional perspective the monarchy, the rural aristocracy, and the high bourgeoisie had been convinced by the military response to the general strike of 1917 that "no era de temer un brusco cambio revolucionario al estilo soviético" and that much more threatening were instead "las disidencias ideológicas, sobre las cuales era posible montar una reforma política de las costumbres y de la administración pública" (Vicens Vives in **Jutglar 243**). "El gobierno de Primo de Rivera," Antoni Jutglar contends, "pretendió ser la defensa militar con que los conservadores de la 'generación acumulativa del 98'" (which had fully entered the political scene following the radicalization of ideological positions in '1917') tried, in the words of Vicens Vives, to "escamotear al país la existencia de los grandes problemas nacionales. Pero como éstos existían, apenas vaciló el régimen dictatorial se plantearon con fuerza acrecentada, arrollando toda prudencia con ímpetu dramático. La II República, la guerra civil y el Estado Nacional arrancaron del seno de aquel profundo desengaño" (in Jutglar 245).

Reflecting on the end of an epoch through a bundle of anachronistic individuals struggling to cover for the fact that they lacked any real social and political weight in spite of their cultural visibility, the novel unfolds the lives of a series of characters, some grotesque, who are scornfully unveiled in their most intimate and shameful behaviors, and who are offered up as a foil for the radical transformation of Catalan society in the aftermath of the European socio-political crisis triggered by World War I, a crisis of which the characters are (ironically) largely unaware: "[l]a inconsciència i la inocència d'aquest viure frenètic és, encara que els personatges de *Vida privada* no ho saben, producte de la crisis moral de la Gran Guerra" (Gustà 36). With few (meaningful) exceptions, Sagarra introduces a series of socially representative characters according to his plan of defining a society through the novelistic portrait of its different classes, in the style of the 19th century novel.[137] Contrary to what we saw in Cajal and Lorca—where taxonomies of the subject were challenged by means of problematizing and thematizing corporal singularity—Sagarra's taxonomic design aims at showing and upholding the existence of a 'natural' social order connected to the notion of *herencia,* which in the novel functions simultaneously as an element of criticism but also as something that transmits a certain 'essence,' thus resonating with the French Naturalist worldview but also with Josep Pla's determinism, and which is probably the outcome of Sagarra's bourgeois subconscious. This 'natural' and almost physiological taxonomy is rooted in the connubial relation between essence

[137] After the timid and unsuccessful attempts of the *Renaixença* at establishing the novel as a modern literary genre in Catalan—Raimon Casellas's *Els sots forecs* (1901),Victor Català's *Solitud* (1905), Bertrana's *Josafat* (1906), the doubtful 'novela' of Santiago Rusiñol *L'Auca del senyor Esteve,* and *La vida i la mort de Jordi Fraginals* of (1912)–, the *Noucentisma*, as Joan Fuster noted, meant the impossibility of practicing the novelistic genre: "El "Noucentisme" [1911-1931] se caracteriza por una especie de miedo a la realidad; un recelo o un desinterés por el espectáculo de la vida cotidiana en sus más amargas facetas. No será necesario indicar, pues, que con tales aprensiones la novela era imposible" *Literatura catalana contemporània* Curial Barcelona, 1971 (24). Responding to this real or perceived lack of novel, the Generalitat establishes in 1928 the Premi Creixelles, which Sagarra will win in 1932 precisely with *Vida privada*. With the new 1971 edition of *Vida privada* also begins the "recuperación" of Sagarra and his works, an enterprise, as Marcos Ordoñez argues, that has been for the most part "un empeño plenamente generacional en el que coincidirán Marsé, Terenci, Montserrat Roig, Lluís Permanyer y Pere Gimferrer," with the noted exceptions of Joan Fuster, Josep Palau i Fabre and Juan Ramón Masoliver all of whom stressed at different times the crucial role of Sagarra within the context of Catalan literature (24).

and behavior—the latter understood specifically as acceptable sexual drive and practice—which the narrator connects with "el fondo secreto de la persona" (258), a sort of biological heritage that precedes any moral,[138] and which is embodied in the novel only by those characters who preserve a certain 19th-century worldview, such as the Condesa Pilar de Romaní and her son Bobby Xuclà, and, in part, Hortensia Portell. The remaining characters are instead scrutinized by the narrator with a "mirada casi entomológica" (Ordoñez 17) that cold-bloodedly observes them, as if behind the lenses of a microscope, in their most sordid social and sexual behaviors. Displaying "una ferocidad solo registrada en el mundo de los insectos" (*Vida* 38), these characters specularly reflect a hollowed and hypocritical society whose morality is irreparably corrupted.

The whole array of characters is introduced early on in the novel, either encountered in questionable circumstances, or identified as key players of the degraded world that is being reconstructed. In any case, by the time we meet the baron de Falset, who is waiting with his wife in Dorotea's parlor to consummate their sexual encounter with Guillermo de Lloberola, the reader has no difficulty extending metonymically this description to the upper class society of Barcelona in its entirety, including the *nouveau riches* such as the baron whose "facciones…parecían hervidas, como chupadas por una especie de fiebre interior" (65), namely his perverted sexual desire. And the change of scale from the individual to the collective is immediately signaled by the narrator:

> En los museos etnológicos pueden contemplarse esas cabezas reducidas que consiguen los salvajes de Ecuador, en las cuales parece que la reducción de las distintas partes del rostro haya sido hecha por una especie de fuerza extraña que

[138] This view resonates with Ortega's notion of an authentic vocation and deep 'I' ('yo profundo') which the philosopher opposes to artificial or inauthentic postures.

> tirase desde el centro del cráneo y fuese prensando y comprimiendo los músculos externos, que fuese chupando el volumen de la carne hasta dejarla convertida en una cantidad exigua, pero horriblemente expresiva. (65)

The fascination of modernity with the exotic contributed to institutionalizing the disciplines such as anthropology and ethnography, to establishing the 'other' as a fundamental object of investigation (dreams, fetishes, *mentalité primitive,* etc) and of culture (the latter now seen as a constant interplay between the familiar and the unfamiliar), and to understanding culture and cultural norms as artificial constructions that can be analyzed and compared discretely. This new understanding of culture also questioned ruling taxonomies through the celebration of cultural impurities, cross-pollination, and cultural syncretism (cf. Andre Breton's ethnographic surrealism), and the belief that each culture is a depository for both its rules and its transgressions (cf. George Bataille's study on sacrifice and transgression).[139] Coeval with this heterogeneous understanding of culture, the institutionalization of ethnology, following the creation in 1925 of the Institut d'Ethnologie in Paris by Paul Rivet, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl and Marcel Mauss, entailed the possibility of essentializing cultural traits and making them the repository of ethnic, racial and/or national qualities of individualized groups (Clifford 143). Rivet's founding of the Museum of Man in the 1930s signaled the subsumption of science and public education within the framework of a progressive humanism whose values (cosmopolitanism, progress, and democracy) the museum upheld in the World Fair of 1937, a view of humanity as stable, complete and idealized, as encapsulated in Valéry's inscription on the façade of the museum: "Every man creates without knowing it, as he breathes. But the artist

[139] This view is summarized by James Clifford in "On Ethnographic Surrealism" in *The Predicament of Culture.* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.

is aware of himself creating. His act engages his entire being. He is fortified by his well-loved pain" (in Clifford 144).

Although betraying a certain ethnological tendency to formulate generalizations about 'human nature,' Sagarra does not adopt a real sociological attitude because the views he expresses through the narrator remain largely based on the personal experience of an insider to the world being described. Moreover, the novel's narrator makes no effort to conceal the fact that the outcome of this taxonomic design amounts to a rather fascinating but worthless array of specimens that may easily belong to one of those 'freak shows' that pseudo-scientific curiosity made so popular under modernity. We are in fact closer to the cultural dislocation of the Trocadéro Museum of the 1920s (with its chaotic accumulation of exotic objects that lack any scientific and pedagogic vision, and that are perceived more as artworks—albeit of a Goyesque nature—than cultural artifact) than to systematized knowledge in the service of progress displayed in the Museum of Man (as the Trocadéro became known in the 1930s).[140] The latter's full-fledged imperialistic view of culture is, I believe, unconsciously challenged in Sagarra's taxonomy of a decaying *'Barcelonisme'* that ends up being more the outcome of living the *nowness* of a spectacular time, of that "imprevisión…que dejó la guerra en la sociedad que empezó su evolución a partir de 1920" (*Vida* 269), than the launching of a Catalan imperialistic discourse running counter to the one proceeding from the political center.

[140] I am here referring to the distinction between the anthropological approach of the Trocadero and the Museum of Man emphasized by James Clifford (133).

Cultural and Political Technologies of Display

By emphasizing the moral and political disarray of this world ("the viure frenètic" signaled by Gustà), Sagarra also questions the responsibility of the ruling classes in transforming Barcelona, and metonymically Catalonia, into a cultural spectacle. Lacking any real power, the Catalan aristocracy attempted to find a political outlet by mingling with the high bourgeoisie that had successfully managed to couple their new economic clout with political power under the dictatorship (e.g., the barón de Falset). As the narrator notices, it is in the cultural realm that this new alliance is sanctioned:

> La inauguración del Estadio constituyó una sublime fusión entre aristocracia y democracia. Nunca se había visto una cosa semejante. Los sombreros de copa del rey, de sus hijos, de su cuñado, de sus gentilhombres, de toda la chusma municipal y provincial de toda la burocracia parasitaria del momento, se convirtieron en las chimeneas del humo del entusiasmo. (188)

Designed by Pere Domènech i Roura, the Estadio Olímpico de Montjuïc was inaugurated in 1929 in connection with the Barcelona World Fair and signaled, as the narrator stresses, the collapse of politics, sports and sociability under the banner of the spectacle and mass culture.[141] As Rubén Gallo argues in relation to the modernization of Mexico, "Stadiums mechanized political spectacle by providing a stage for mass rallies and ceremonies in which the industrial processes of Fordism and Taylorism were applied to human bodies" (24). For Siegfried Kracauer, the fragmentation of the body carried out in the massive spectacle pointed to the expendability of the human body while its performers resembled workers in a factory (Gallo

[141] This is also how the youngest of the Lloberola, Fernando, understands reality, as a mixture of the "comuniones resplandecientes y teatrales" and the "horas un poco deportivas y libres" (299) that a Jesuit education is providing him, a mixture signaling for the Sagarra the impossibility of any meaningful upbringing.

216). In spite of the class fusion supposedly produced by the stadiogenic event, the homogenization of the upper classes in the abundance of top hats does not however erase the hierarchy still implied in the analogy created between the hats (the upper class) and the chimneys (the factory, which they own) that end up channeling the enthusiasm (sheer labor) of an invisible crowd. Unlike their predecessors, 20th-century stadiums were built with, and in order to boast of, modern building techniques and materials, and were meant to host massive numbers of spectators. From a political perspective, these structures, as will those of the world exhibitions or the Olympics, "were designed to convey a carefully structured image of the nation…as evidence that they belonged to a select group of developed nations" (Gallo 202). In *Crowds and Power,* Elias Canetti examines how fascism made a particular use of stadiums for their elaborate spectacles. Whereas the original objective of the stadium was indeed to boast of Spanish progress and the Spanish nation, from an institutional perspective the scene described by Sagarra becomes an esperpentic version of Ortega's view on "El origen deportivo del estado,"[142] since it replaces the exuberant vitalism of the "juventud" envisioned by Ortega as the pillar of the future State with a grotesque "chusma" of old parasitical individuals lacking any individualism (we only see their hats) or moral depth. As Ortega will later argue, Spain lacks that selected minority necessary to carry out the process of nationalization that would lead Spain into Europe, which was indeed the political objective of a cultural event such as the 1929 World Fair.

It is undeniable that Sagarra's rather essentialistic critique of the societal organization often acquires a moralistic tone, which the narrator makes no effort to conceal. However, in

[142] At the end of his essay, Ortegas sums up the State with these words: "La primera sociedad es esta asociación de jóvenes para robar mujeres extrañas al grupo consanguíneo y dar cima a toda suerte de bárbaras hazañas. Más que a un Parlamento o Gobierno de severos magistrados, se parece a un Atlétic Club. Dígame el lector si es tan excesivo como en un principio pudo parecerle proclamar el origen deportivo del Estado" (270). Following Ortega's genealogy of the State, one may be tempted to understand Sagarra's mention of the swapping of women between Madrid and Barcelona during the dictatorship as a reference to the founding myth of the (Castilian) nation.

spite of the fact that for the narrator "el fondo secreto" of a person, which precedes any moral system, is also "independiente del tiempo y del *espacio*" (258 emphasis mine), the connection between the transformations of specific spaces and places and the characterization of the aristocracy and the *nouveau riches* of Barcelona suggests a much more relevant impact of the environment in the social and moral upbringing of these characters, one that is not reducible to the rupture of the atavistic bond with the land. As Gustà observes, "[e]l contrast 1850-1918/1918-1931 entra a *Vida privada* a través de la caracterització d'alguns personatges (Pilar, Bobby, Leocàdia); del *excursus* típics del Sagarra narrador, i de la caracterizsació plàstica del món: els ambients connoten inequívocament una època i, de retop, una concepció del món, dels mobles de don Tomàs a la decoració de vidre i metall de Níobe Cases" (43). The urban layout of the novel reinforces throughout the connection between the modernization of public and private spaces of interaction and the moral fiber of the characters of the novel, even though, or especially when, these transformations are not fully addressed or remain unacknowledged. The expansive urbanization radically alters the ties that the individuals have with their physical surroundings, transforming the way social bonds are formed and maintained.[143] "La reforma de Barcelona perjudicó a Tía Paulina, porque la demolición practicada en su barrio la obligó a cambiar la idea topográfica que tenía del mundo"(195), a sudden and drastic change that the narrator subtly connects with the Exposición as a turning point of the process of urbanization and a fatal shock for a decayed remnant of the old generation: "Tía Paulina murió dos días después de la inauguración de la Exposición de Montjuic. Tenía ochenta y ocho años, y durante los últimos cuatro meses había sido un esqueleto con un poco de piel; dentro de su cuerpo quedaban un pedazo de pulmón que fingía respirar y unos intestinos que no digerían nada" (197).

[143] Sagarra's own childhood was marked by the radical urban development of Barcelona when his aristocratic family house at the Diagonal 400 was demolished during the construction of Vía Laietana.

As the novel's narrator stresses, '1929' signals the great divide between the two halves of the novel and two fundamentally different historical phases, but also reveals the contradictions of Catalan cultural imperialism. Although it did not alter the general mentality, *Noucentisme* was crucial in changing the aesthetic and civic attitude of Catalonia between 1906 and 1920, and in inaugurating a new cultural politics in which Catalanism (as a 'tactic' program) promoted Catalonia as the central axis of a new *proyecto civico-cultural* of the Peninsula, in line with a European imperialistic discourse that rejected the Positivist worldview (Bilbeny 131). Culture was separated from Nature and connected to the notion of a natural identity: with *Noucentisme* "la inicial quintaessència de la nació com a Historia esdevé, a un mateix temps, mitificació i institucionalització de la nació com a Cultura" (131). As we pointed out in the chapter on Cajal, it was a matter of becoming men of the 20th century (cf. Ortega's "Muy siglo XX"). Imperialism was Prat de la Riba's 'up-to-date' answer to the problem of Spain, as we may recall from our discussion of Cajal. The idea of an 'Imperial' Barcelona was part of a Catalan imperialistic alternative to the Castilian-based design. The organic intellectuals of Catalan bourgeois nationalism, such as Eugeni d'Ors and Gabriel Alomar, would later narrativize the myth of the *Gran Barcelona* and create an idealized version of *Catalunya-ciutat* that would 'Europeanise' Catalonia (Ealham 3; also Ealham "Class" 36). Ors's *La Ben Plantada* (1911) tellingly rehearses the return from overseas of Teresa, the statuesque, aesthetic embodiment of *mediterraneisme* (the classicistic reaction of *Noucentisme* to Romanticism and the anarchic *Modernisme* of Joan Maragall) and her symbolic ascension in Rome in order to signify the spiritual rebirth of the Catalan Nation from the ashes of the Roman Empire.

Spain's neutrality during World War I generated a significant economic growth for Catalonia given that Barcelonan industrialists were able to trade with both belligerent sides. This

new industrial revolution helped fund the 20th century vision of Catalonia that materialized in the radical urban reform undergone by the city of Barcelona. Already traceable in the 1859 utopian plan of Cerdá[144] for the extension of Barcelona, the working hypothesis of the city's urbanization was that the rationalization of urban space would counteract social conflict and promote freedom, almost completely disregarding the possibility that such an approach could instead propagate social separation and inequalities (Ealham 3).[145] Prior to World War I Barcelona had already been a revolutionary center and the stage of working class struggles. Nevertheless, the prosperity generated by the war helped transform the city into "a genuine orgy of profits," in the words of Catalan industrialist Pedro Gual Villalbí (in Ealham "Class" 37). However, with the end of the war and the easy profits, the social and economic contradictions reemerged with more force than ever, and "utopian urban visions were overshadowed by dystopian nightmares" (37). This bourgeois perception of the city as an unruly landscape was rooted in the failure of the ruling classes to claim control over the urban space through 'rationalizing' projects such as the *Eixample*, but it also speaks of Barcelona's specific urban landscape and its resistence to being disciplined according to a grid template. And while reformers held the banner of urban progress, the impact that the World Fair of 1929 had on the city questioned their 'enlightened' understanding of democratic urbanization, and demonstrated instead that the urban space was "reorganized by market forces," in much the same "unplanned and chaotic fashion" (Ealham 4) that informs Sagarra's reconstruction of his novelistic world.

Although many "sucesos de brillante transcendencia" affected Barcelona's public life "considerablemente" during the five years elapsing between the two parts of *Vida privada*

[144] For a detailed analysis of the Cerdà plan see Aibar, E. and Bijker, W.E. "Constructing a city: the Cerdá plan for the extension of Barcelona" in *Science, Technology and Human Values*, 22, 1 (1997): 3-30.
[145] Chris Ealham here paraphrases the argument of M. Perau *et al.* in *Noucentisme i ciutat*, Barcelona, 1994.

(187),[146] the exposition synthesizes the superficial 'effervescence' of the time, becoming for Sagarra the climactic embodiment of this social and urban renewal:

> Habían pasado cinco años desde el día en que el barón de Falset se agujereó la cabeza de un balazo. Durante esos cinco años la vida pública del país cambió considerablemente. En Barcelona hubo sucesos de brillante trascendencia. La Exposición de Montjuic marcó el momento de más lustre. (*Vida* 187)

Opening on May 20 of 1929 on the Montjuïc hill in Barcelona, the World Fair continued until January 15 of the following year. As suggested by the cover of the *Anuario de la Ciudad* entitled *Barcelona 1929-1930: Recuerdo de la Exposición*, an Official Publication of the *Sociedad de Atracción de Forasteros*, the exposition of 1929 had been engineered to coalesce spectacle and business: "Barcelona, grande en su historia y su progreso, metrópoli financiera, industrial y comercial, interesa lo mismo al turista que al hombre de negocios," much in the same way as the soccer stadium inaugurated that same year did, as we have already seen.

Walter Benjamin was intrigued by the possibility of establishing correlations among phenomena, small and larger, "with the hidden line which holds them together and enables the historian or philologist to recognize that they must all be placed in the same period," as Hannah Harendt puts it in her introduction to *Illuminatons* (11). Therefore, he investigated modern public events and spectacles (world's fairs, the Parisian arcades, barricades, promenades, etc.) looking for those underlying cultural assumptions and values which signaled their sharing in an epochal aesthetics. World exhibitions had long functioned as a powerful means to project a city or a country on the global map, but also, as Benjamin noted in his famous 1935 essay, "Paris,

[146] In four lines Sagarra swiftly does away with five critical years of Spanish history and events such as the end of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, the promulgation of the Estatut of Catalan autonomy by the Generalitat, which was supposed to solve the 'Catalan problem,' and the advent of the Second Republic. These were also the heated years of anti-religious sentiments and anarchist turmoil fomented, among other factors, by the comeback of Russia in the Spanish political and cultural panorama, after being long ignored by the *Promoderrivesista* dictatorship.

Capital of the Nineteenth Century," as a way "to glorify the exchange-value of commodities" (152). World fairs in fact create "a framework in which commodities' intrinsic value is eclipsed. They open up a phantasmagoria that people enter to be amused" and through which they are themselves commodified (152). The same tendency to obfuscate the underlying cultural premises and values behind the Museum of Man is noted by Clifford: "What was not displayed in the Musée de l'Homme was the Modern West, its art, institutions, and techniques. Thus the orders of the West were everywhere present in the Musée de l'Homme, except on display. An important impact was lost in the well-classified halls, for the museum encouraged the contemplation of mankind as a whole, seen, as it were, from the distance, cool, tolerantly" (145).

Similarly to how Rivet's Museum of Man put on display an idealized version of humankind from which the Western imprint had been removed, so too did the World Fair put on display a mythologized version of the city that was meant to appear as if 'naturally' sprung from the surrounding landscape, therefore concealing the fissures of its urban texture from the foreign observer as much as from the domestic one. In the same publication of the *Sociedad de Atracción de Forasteros* we read that "A través del espacio y del tiempo, el recuerdo de la Exposición de Barcelona surgirá como una fantasía sobrehumana, una de esas visiones de leyenda que sólo imaginaciones privilegiadas lograron adivinar en el mundo del ensueño" (3). Unlike the retouched advertisements, which deceive the tourist into expecting unrealistic beauties, the landscape of the exhibit has retained, according to the same publication, its authentic natural splendor, albeit 'stylized' by "sabias pinceladas" (3). The main objective appears to be that of correcting the "idea imprecisa" that many held of the city, in the words of the President of the same *Sociedad* (5), and to foster something much more transcendental than the 'futuristic' water and light shows (one of the main tourist attractions), namely

> algo que se eleva por encima de las contingencias del espacio y del tiempo y es el triunfo de Barcelona, la ciudad que pletórica de vida, en dinamismo arrollador, avanza, crece, se extiende, Cataluña adentro, con el afán de que el Tibidado sea para la ciudad de mañana lo que el Taber fué para la ciudad primitiva y la Plaza de Cataluña para la de nuestro padres—que hoy el centro se desplaza hacia la montaña—el centro de una urbe en que toda iniciativa tenga amplio y sólido fundamento porque no ha brotado al azar, no es una arquitectura o una ingeniería, sino algo vivo, imperecedero, un espíritu que tiende al infinito con la fuerza ancestral de millares de generaciones. (3)

As a living organism, Barcelona transcends the technological identity exemplified by the sophisticated modern mechanisms that make possible the fountain spectacle and becomes the heiress of a millenial tradition which inscribes the natural landscape in the eternal progression of the capitalist flow. From the Taber to the Plaza de Cataluña to the Tibidabo, profit is connected to the transformation of the entire city into a spectacular tourist site.[147]

But whereas the *Anuario* of the *Sociedad de Atractión de Forasteros* aimed at reinforcing civic pride and the idea of an imperialistic Barcelona as the icon of a Catalan cultural and national identity, no mention of Catalonia or of the World Fair as a Catalan event was made in the official catalogue of the exhibition, in which Barcelona was clearly labeled as a Spanish city (Fabre and Huertas 68). This particularity demonstrates that, in the eyes of the central government of Primo de Rivera, the Barcelona exhibit fulfilled a very different objective, namely the symbolic assertion of a Spanish-Castilian national identity through the grandeur of those

[147] In a recent collection of short pieces on the city of Barcelona entitled *Odio Barcelona* (Barcelona: Editorial Melusina, 2008), Javier Calvo published a segment entitled "Ríos perdidos" in which he criticizes the "museificación" of Barcelona (etymologically *Diosa del Manantial*) according to the trend of "embalsamar el centro histórico de la ciudad, recomponerlo con piezas falsas y entregarlo al turismo," like it happened with the Monte Taber transformed into the touristy Barrio Gótico.

types of megastructures and megaevents. It was not by chance that two of the major structures built for the event were the neo-Baroque Palau Nacional (National Palace) and the Poble Espanyol (Spanish Village), a proto-version of a theme park in which (a commodified vertsion of) Spain was inscribed in the heart of the modern Catalan city. One may argue that the discrepancies between the two texts speaks to the way struggles for power work at the symbolic level, that is to say that they point to a fissure in the totalizing discourse of the center, as well as to the attempt of marginal or subaltern individuals and groups to negotiate their relation to the center. However, the manner in which Sagarra depicts the social and political ramifications of the exhibit undermines that latter interpretation, pointing instead in the direction of a deep contradiction between the general perception of the event as a climactic point of Catalan life and culture, and the reality of a pauperized and politically inconsequential Catalan leadership, a gap that is grotesquely mirrored in, and magnified by, the pompous vacuity of the event.

For Sagarra the Catalan cultural decadence begins with the 1888 Fair. Pilar de Romaní, a symbol of the Catalonia that once was, has a "personalidad barcelonesa anterior a la exposición del ochenta y ocho, sensible a los olores coloniales, al aceite de las fábricas, a la eficacia de las hilaturas de algodón y a las comedias de Pitarra" (118). Although the 1888 Fair stimulated employment and established Barcelona as a major Spanish city, it was an economic failure and increased the city's public debt by 6 percent (from 13 to 19), which, nevertheless, was nothing compared to the 58.8 percent increase in debt accrued as the result of the 1929 Fair (Fabre and Huertas 71). It is critical to stress the different political stakes underlying the two events. While the visitors to the 1888 Fair were for the most part Spaniards, and the Fair therefore aimed at reinforcing the image of Spain as a cohesive nation, the 1929 Fair primarily targeted foreign tourists and served as an international stage from which to flaunt Spain's technological

modernity and its dream of being established among the leading European nations. While Sagarra roots the decadence in a distant past prior to 1888, he also singles out the Dictatorship as being responsible for the "resurrección de pompa grotesca, de exhibición y compraventa de títulos nobiliarios" that were exhibited in the "infinitas fiestas públicas y privadas que por entonces tenían lugar en Barcelona" (*Vida* 155). The 1929 World Fair only ended up reinforcing this parasitic system as it became the logical occupational outlet for the older generation's offspring: "Muchos hijos de aquellas familias ocupaban puestos en la burocracia parasitaria creada en Barcelona con motivo de la Exposición a punto de realizarse" (155).

Sagarra presents the exhibit as a false capitalist venture, funded with public money and perpetrated with the complicity of the Barcelona leading classes at the expenses of the lower classes. Thus, he has a hypothetical working class man wonder about who will be ultimately funding this spectacle:

> "¿De dónde saldrán los millones para pagar todo este despilfarro?", se decía el hombre de la calle, con un crío en cada brazo y un perrito asomando la cabeza por el bolsillo del chaleco. El hombre de la calle sacaba el pecho para que el azul, el verde, el rosa y el misterio de la fuente del Palacio Nacional le salpicasen la corbata de ballets rusos, lágrimas de nereida y espuma ultraterrena. (*Vida* 187)

And as it wasted the money of the taxpayers, the exhibit did nothing to advance the conditions of labor in Catalonia:

> Los murcianos trabajaban en las obras públicas a un ritmo de java. Los murcianos, negrísimos, con sudor hasta en los huesos, ni tenían tiempo para pensar en huelgas; los jefes sindicalistas que habían escapado a las balas de Martínez Anido estaban en el extranjero; los que consiguieron quedarse se

> dedicaban a contemplar piernas en el Paralelo y a beber agua con anises que les regalaba el jefe de policía. Barcelona había olvidado la existencia de las pistolas. Había olvidado la existencia de la virilidad. (188)

The narrator makes no effort to temper his disdain for the current state of Catalan cultural and political ways. The cosmetic change carried out in connection with the World Fair had managed to give Barcelona a modern look, but also contributed to inscribing class divisions in space, as the poorer classes were being pushed toward the margins of the city. Behind the project of the *cases barates* there was in fact the real objective of demolishing "the *barracas* of Montjuïc, which marred the view of visitors to the lavish palaces that housed the 1929 Exhibition" (Ealham 8). Tellingly, the presence of the slums did not prevent the *Sociedad de Atracción de Forasteros* from describing the area as a 'natural' landscape and, therefore, as the ideal site for the new constructions. Although it managed to blind many, as Sagarra suggests in the novel, this lavish coat did not cover for the lack of social and political modernization. The grotesque spectacle of the Dictadura is fully conveyed in the first of the two parties at the house of the obese Hortensia Portell, in which the swollen limbs and abdomens of the guests are a synecdochic allusion to the putrefied social and political national scenario: "Aún no se había establecido la moda de la falda larga…Entre las piernas de gran estilo, se hinchaban lamentablemente como los globos grotescos que se regalan a los niños, algunas extremidades artríticas o piernas puramente sedentarias y deformes por una maternidad excesivamente continuada. Otras llegaban a la elefantiasis" (151-52).[148] The "hombre alto, de escaso cabello blanco, sofocado, fatigado, vulgar, mezcla entre inspector de policía y jugador the siete y medio,

[148] See Brad Epp's "The Cadaver of Progress" for the treatment of death, putrefaction, purity, and corruption (and its link with progress and gender) in earlier Modernist Catalan novels.

y con algo de eclesiástico y de domador de tigres" is the General Primo de Rivera, who makes his entrance at the end of the evening and is compared to a "mona" by one of the guests (162).

The Republic, however, is not immune to that same spectacularization that Sagarra describes in connection with the Dictatorship. Just as the World Fair 'killed' tía Paulina, meaningfully, the advent of the republican state coincides with the death of don Tomás and the 'coming of age' of individuals with the same "moral cancerosa"—Guillermo, Concha or María Luisa (Federico will emblematically die of tuberculosis a few years later). Sagarra's implicit criticism is that, despite the nominal change, the same political mechanisms are at work in the two regimes: the same disconnection between (local and regional) reality and its (national) representation that is displayed in the spectacle of the World Fair is embedded in the constitutional structure of the new state, a criticism that is evident in the metonymical relation established in the narrative diegesis between Dictatorship and Republic, with the World Fair of 1929 acting as the spatial and ideological ground where the former morphs into the latter, as Sagarra seems to suggest. Let us recall that that same year, a constitutional draft was redacted with the ultimate objective of counteracting a national or popular sovereignty and of channeling the new popular forces under the banner of the conservative values sanctioned by the Dictatorship, namely corporatism and anti-individualism.

While the draft of 1929 aimed at strengthening the corporatist nature of Spanish politics, the constituents of the Second Republic saw in the 1931 Constitution an opportunity for democratizing the access and participation of the citizens in the public life of the country. But even though the Constitution of 1931 left no traits of anti-individualism, anti-parliamentarism, anti-political party and authoritarianism, the proclamation of regional autonomy and the promulgation of the Estatut Català by the Generalitat did not correspond to a political autonomy

de facto. The *"pacto de San Sebastián"* was supposed to find a solution to the problem of Catalan separatism, the "tercer gran problema de la República" (alongside anarchism and the Catholic Church) as Ferdinanco Díaz-Plaja puts it (*España* 79). Nevertheless, the absence of a written document materialized in the form of divergent expectations regarding the concrete political outcome of Catalan autonomy and its relation to the Spanish State. Therefore, when in April, in the name of the newly formed Catalan Republic, Francesc Maciá called "los otros pueblos de España" to collaborate "en la creación de una Confederación de pueblos ibéricos" (Díaz-Plaja 81), Madrid immediately dispatched three ministers to Barcelona (Luis Nicolau d'Olwer, Marcelino Domingo and Fernando de los Ríos) to oversee the situation—including the dispute over the creation of an autonomous Catalan university—, a move that Maciá diplomatically phrased a "privar[se] por breve interinidad, de una parte de aquella soberanía a la que tenemos derecho" (81).

Sagarra did not pass up the chance to criticize this 'representational gap' and to parody "El nostre avantprojecte de Constitució" in one of his *Poemes satirics* published in *El Be Negre*, a satirical magazine printed in Barcelona between 1931 and 1936. Although a moderate democratic Catalanist, Sagarra did not support a draft that, in the words of Araquistain (who was part of the *Comisión de Constitución*), "no respondía a las aspiraciones de la nueva España republicana" that were outlined by the Cortes Constituyentes (in García Canales 198).[149] Besides accusing the government of perpetuating the same political malpractice, of disregarding the law in favor of compromise, and of suggesting that the national structure was a brothel in which political views were overridden by a common biological drive, Sagarra added a tenth title to the

[149] Given the particular makeup of the Government, there was no possibility for political agreement on a "composición de la representación política" in which bicameralism and organic representation were coupled by principles of inorganic and ideological representation, and that would bypass the Cortes (Canales 196). Despite the enthusiasm of the participants (195), the draft was not well received by "la izquierda mejor representada en las Constituyentes" (197).

nine-titles draft prepared under the supervision of that same Fernando de los Ríos, Minister of Justice, who was sent to Barcelona after Maciá's declarations, which meaningfully frames the constitutional project as a spectacle:

> *Títol X*
>
> *Explicació que dóna El Be Negre*
>
> I aquesta Constitució,
>
> de la qual em vanaglòrio,
>
> aniria molt millor
>
> que el projecte de l'Ossòrio.

Sagarra connects the fate of the Constitution to that of the project of architect Aníbal González Álvarez-Ossorio for the *Exposición Iberoamericana de Sevilla* of 1929, which included the "Pabellón Mudejar," the "Pabellón de las Bellas Artes" (today, respectively, the Museo de Artes y Costumbres Populares and the Museo Arqueológico), and the "Pabellón Real"—all of them situated in the Plaza de América—and the monumental Plaza de España, the most ambitious project of the entire exhibit. As in the Barcelona exhibit, thousands of workers were involved in the 15-year construction of the Plaza de España, the exorbitant cost of which was at odds with the difficult economic situation of Sevilla at the time. Aside from the cost, the project was criticized for a supposed lack of civic and environmental vision: the Academia de Bellas Artes protested the fact that the towers would rival the Giralda in height, while Forestier (who designed the Parque de María Luisa) pointed to the contradiction of creating a tidal inlet around the square, given the notorious scarcity of water in Sevilla (Rico y González 46). It is unclear why Ossorio resigned from the project; in any case, its completion was in the end assigned by Primo de Rivera to Valencian architect Vicente Traver y Tomás.

Apart from regionalist concerns that would certainly be relevant in this circumstance, the overt parallel established by Sagarra between the Exposición Iberoamericana and the Republic echoes a similar gesture that is made explicit in the novel when the narrator, following the inauguration of the stadium presided over by the Royal family and Primo de Rivera, goes on to describe the 'spectacles' that (filtered through the imagination of don Tomás) took place at the onset of the Republic: "las iglesias y los conventos quemados en España…los eclesiásticos martirizados en la plaza de Cataluña por los de la FAI y los de *Estat Català;*…el diputado Companys paseando a cuatrocientas mujeres desnudas por la Rambla, que proclamaban el amor que libre y otros vilipendios…" (199). The politico-institutional significance of the shift from Monarchy to a democratic State is erased by the spectacular contiguity among these different events: sport, politics, amusement and tourism collapse in the bi-dimensional nature of a national spectacle that appears to be aloof from the needs of local social and political realities.

The spectacularization taking place in the public domain metonymically reaches the private spaces of domesticity, shaping the lives and perceptions of those who use them. As with the 1888 and 1929 Fairs, the exoticization of certain areas of Barcelona speaks of its progressive transformation into a commodity for tourists. Thus, for instance, the geographic and moral descent to the "Barrio Xino" which is described in *Vida privada*—and here it is important to notice the phonetic rendering of the Castilian word emphasizing cultural and economic foreignness—epitomizes the coalescence of the spatial, the social and the political dimensions within the spectacular, while the contiguity established between the 1929 Exhibit and Hortensia Portell's private party (which emblematically opens the second part of the novel) leaves no doubt that, while everything that happens outside is contemplated as a spectacle (*Vida* 206), the spectacle is also established at the core of the household.

On Stuffed Bodies and Hollow Skins, or the Doubtful Three-Dimensionality of a Decorative National

"No se puede negar," the narrator of *Vida privada* concludes after a number of slashing commentaries about the World Fair, "que Barcelona tuvo un momento brillante, maravillosamente decorativo" (190). Just as the city of Barcelona shows off its modern coat, so too the characters of the novel are repeatedly described as inhabiting a skin, or as wanting to change skin. Thus, on one side of the spectrum, recently arrived from the island, "la piel de Concha Pujol era el producto más ultramarino y más ensoñado que se paseaba en Barcelona" (157); the women of the modern Barcelona are observed while toasting in the sun and converting "la piel en un producto que recordaba la semilla de cacao y los muebles de jacaranda" (124); Pilar de Romaní, the symbol of the old aristocratic Barcelona, has a "piel arrugada de arrinconar aventuras y conservar allí lo que no se ve y sólo se respira: el perfume de la historia" (131). On the other side of the spectrum are the priest, doctor Claramunt, whom Federico perceives as "un ser inhumado" and "un personaje mal cosido" (80), and the *damas* at Hortensia's party who are described as showing the skin of their swollen legs, and faces that are "positivamente horribles y atortugadas" (154). More a social construct than a biological element, the skin constitutes a "territory of the self" (to use a term introduced by Goffman) and, according to the novel, of a mostly corrupted self. Be it sensual or wizened, the skin is a sheath for the body and as such it "can function as the least of all possible personal spaces, the minimal configuration in that regard, but it can also function as a preserve in its own rights, the purest kind of egocentric territoriality" (Goffman *Relations* 38). In *Vida privada* the skin has at least three basic functions: it is the surface onto which the desire for a commodified body concentrates (Concha, the sunbathing women); it is the mirror of lived experience (Pilar); and it is a residual element that

lingers when all bodily functions that support the living body are (metaphorically) extinguished (doctor Claramunt and the *damas*).

Although the skin is always set up in relation (harmoniously or not) with the "fondo secreto" of the individual, and although as an outer sheath the skin contains and separates the physical body from what is other, it is not in terms of a dichotomy between surface and depth or inside and outside that I intend to analyze the quasi-somatic dimension of the novel's characters. Rather, I understand the skin as the most liminal space attached to the individual, and as a surface that is impacted by, as much as it reflects, the interiority and exteriority of the individual. As a thin membrane that mediates between the inside and the outside, without aseptically separating them (as we saw in Cajal), the skin points to the problematic status of the body with respect to the process of subjectivization. In *Volatile Bodies*, Elizabeth Grosz focuses on the complex nature of "the relations between the inside and the outside of the subject, its psychical interior and its corporeal exteriority, by showing not their fundamental identity or reducibility but the torsion of the one into the other, the passage, the vector or uncontrollable drift of the inside into the outside and the outside into the inside" (xii). Sagarra's novel challenges the dichotomy inside-outside or private-public by showing how the spectacle creates an osmotic relation between the two realms, when it does not collapse them altogether. A similar objective is also achieved by Lorca by resorting to the radiographic image. Physiologically, as Juan Fernández discovered, the skin is neither impermeable nor homogeneous, and comprises a multiplicity of heterogeneous elements that become immediately (and problematically) visible when magnified. Phenomenologically and socially, the skin is also the spatial extension of the body into its surroundings, and as such it speaks of the "ability of bodies to always extend the frameworks which attempt to contain them, to seep beyond their domains of control" (Grosz xi).

In *Vida privada* the skin and the body participate in a moral aesthetic (65) that cuts through individuals as well as domestic and public spaces, and that is inflected by the degree of artificiality, affectation and spectacularization that is displayed by each. The skin may function as a cinematic screen onto which images of desired subjectivities are projected. The description of Concha's sensual tropical skin or of the young women basking in the sun echo those movie scenes that Sagarra used to watch during the Thursday outings when, with his friend Josep Barbey, he would escape (unlike Guillermo) "la famosa gàbia que els Jesuïts tenen al carrer de Casp" in order to "tocar el cel amb un dit" at the sight of sexily dressed women on the screen ("Film 1906" *Obra completa* 513). But the skin also becomes a kaleidoscope that refracts pre-construed images and invites one to question their naturalized status in the collective imaginary, which is what happens in the excursion to the Barrio Chino.

Among the exotic and freakish population of the Barrio—"chinos, negros, invertidos truculentos y mujeres extraídas de la sala de disección del hospital" and dressed like gypsies who were supposed to entertain the tourists of the Fair (165)—are also women who "se veían…vivas y enteras, pero que habían pasado por un instituto de desarticulación y deformación de los miembros" and "pederastas con labios pintados, con Costras de yeso en las mejillas y los ojos cargados de rímel," and all kinds of individuals who, according to the narrator, receive in these neighborhoods "un *maquillaje especial*" that in turn gives "color al barrio" (165-66 emphasis mine). The artificial appearance of the residents of the Barrio is explicitly connected to the urban cosmetic transformation carried out on the occasion of the World Fair, therefore stressing the spectacular character of both places and the concrete effect that this has on the bodies of the urban residents and users, which are molded and transformed into commodities for the gigantic cultural market that Barcelona has become.

As suggested in the very first scene of the novel, the skin is also a hollow sheath that can be stuffed in order to create the appearance of three-dimensionality in a world that displays the same flatness of a cinematographic screen. Slowly opening his eyes, Federico incorporates himself to reality only to be looked at by Rosa Trenor's "perro disecado," which dominates the scene from the top of the closet. As in an impossible cinematic angle, we see Federico as through the glass eyes of the stuffed animal, another blind focalizer. Or we may also picture the image of the Lloberola looking at his own reflection in those glass eyes. In any case, the stuffed animal is established as a paradigmatic foil for more than one character of the novel. Besides this specular moment between the dog and Federico, Leocadia, the matriarch of the Lloberola, is said to have "un gran lazo de terciopelo celeste" tied around her neck "como un collar de perro" (58), which calls to mind the old-fashioned garter adorning the neck of Rosa's dog; the priest, doctor Claramunt, is described as "inhumado" and "mal cosido" (80), as if he had been stuffed by the same cheap taxidermist who stuffed the dog; and the old, too tight uniform of the Real Maestranza of Zaragoza used for burying the corpse of don Tomás de Lloberola that had to be cut in the back to fit the body and tied with "unas cintas" that make the dead man look like a "muñeco espantoso" or a "corista en las zarzuelas de época" (201). As Fernando de Lloberola disturbingly remembers at one point, the "figura de cera" of his grandfather laying in the coffin starkly contrasts with the corpse of the young criminal he sees killed in the Rambla, a corpse which is instead dreadfully "auténtico" with the eyes open and the hair soaked in blood (298).

These uncannily shriveled and swollen bodies seem alive only because they retain an illusory three-dimensionality that makes them look like taxidermic specimens, be those of an ethnological museum where the 'mummified' couple de Falset would belong (65), or of an anatomic museum where the face of doctor Claramunt could pass for a specimen of desiccated

viscera (80), or of a wax museum as in the case of the corpse of don Tomás. With few exceptions (Pilar de Romaní and Bobby Xuclà) the skin hides or betrays an inside that is helplessly 'corrupted,' in one way or another. the barren "entrañas" of aristocratic women such as Tía Paulina, whose intestines cannot digest anything (192, 197); the frigidity of Federico's wife, María, hidden behind a "cutis agradabale" (97); the "vísceras disecadas de museo anatómico" evoked by the shriveled face of doctor Claramunt (80), the tuberculosis spreading inside of Federico's body; the corrupted morality and sexuality of María Luisa hidden behind the fresh appearance of a young woman. Though retaining their three-dimensional appearance, these bodies are physically and symbolically decayed or hollowed inside, like "los muebles de don Tomás, todos ellos…tubercolosos, minados por la carcoma" which in the ordinary house of the Carrer Mallorca, just like most of these decrepit characters in the Barcelona of the 1930s, "resultaban de una incongruencia recargada" (72).

Since the skin is the only thing holding together a decomposing inside, the seams visible on these poorly sewed beings (e.g., the dog, doctor Claramunt, don Tomás) inevitably betray the absence of any real anatomical (and moral) structure. In this respect, more than the dog they recall the "esponja flotando como una tripa en remojo" in Rosa's kitchen (46). Many of the characters appear in fact as 'cuerpos hinchados': don Tomás is "hinchado" (73) like the legs and abdomens of Hortensia's guests (151-52), and the putrefying leg of the gypsy (173), all of which exemplify what Hortensia symbolically calls "el pus de las heridas de la sociedad" (173). Holding on to an outdated self-representation, the unimaginative aristocracy of Barcelona "se fue desinchando" (51) like the "gata exangüe" at Rosa's house (47) or Leocadia and her "montocito de carne y huesos…y…dientes a la deriva" (57), only to reappear falsely 'hinchada,' like Dalí's

donkeys, among the crowd of the World Fair, where the "gran vientre" of Primo de Rivera "rozaba con las americanas del pueblo" (188).

If skin can be hollowed and stuffed again, it can also be changed, or at least retouched. As it turns out, women appear to be the most actively chameleonic characters in *Vida privada.* Rosa Trénor reinvents herself as a kind of entrepreneur taking advantage of the personal connections she cultivated during the Dictatorship. Allured by pornographic showings, a number of well-to-do individuals of Barcelona gather at Rosa's apartment to gamble, an entertainment that had been prohibited by the dictatorship. María Luisa, on the other side, after an initial flirtation with an empty anticonformism, finally settles for marrying Bobby Xuclá, therefore falling into the most conventional role at her disposal. Following the fashion and the perception that a Republican affiliation looked more intelligent, Hortensia takes on a pseudo-republican sensibility. The most symbolic makeover, however, is that of Concha Pujol. Described as a young "bestia tropical" with "una imponderable piel de fruta" (101) who has recently arrived from Cuba, Concha immediately becomes the object of everyone's gaze. Through her marriage to cotton merchant Antonio Mates, now baron of Falset, she achieves an enviable social position and a considerable visibility. After the suicide of the baron following Guillermo's blackmailing, Concha decides to marry the young Lloberola, who had by then become her lover. The proposal is tantalizing for Guillermo; it promises to be a blood transfusion for the both of them: Concha would legitimize her own visibility by forcing the new husband upon the eyes of their milieu, while Guillermo would gain a socio-economic position that his "moral cancerosa" could never grant him. The resurrection and its motives, however, are doubtful. The marriage does not lead to a new beginning nor does it challenge the social norm, since it replaces an unconventional relation that mixed old and new social forces for a situation "clara y a pleno sol…por medio de

una ceremonia grotesca, presidida por la religión católica y el Código Civil en vigor que le daba [a Guillermo] cierto asco" (291). Likewise Concha, "a despecho de su sangre de piratas y criollas, estaba intoxicada por el aire acobardado de sus relaciones y…quería…convertir unos mordiscos de prostíbulo en una satisfacción de misa de doce y de banda musical" (291).

If the marriage was received "como una bomba" in the elegant world of Barcelona, it was certainly not for its destabilizing effect given that it was like "tapar con la tapadera más correcta las locuras de una viciosa y un desengañado" although, granted, in "una época en la que…todo importaba un comino" (291). No longer the sensual and spontaneous girl who had 'democratic' relations with the black fishermen on the island, "Concha se entregó a la democracia privada" (103). First she shed her youthful "piel ultramarina que era cómplice insustituible para conseguir lo que conseguía Concha" (103) and ultimately accepted Guillermo's proposal "de dejar la piel maquillada para la adoración de todos los que saben que usted es la baronesa de Falset" and "entrar en la piel de una vulgar prostituta, dentro del mundo más opuesto al de usted" (221). Taking on a "papel pasivo…en el juego de la admiración" (202), Concha has turned into just another "muslo" or "pierna" of this decadent society. She has abandoned the productive world of commerce—her grandfather made his money trading slaves (!) and her former husband was a successful cotton merchant—in order to enter a parasitic world. She has bought a husband, a reputation for both of them, and a modern apartment to be noticed by all in Barcelona.

But as Concha was becoming "más tierna, más femenina, más inferior; a la inversa, Guilllermo se sentía más dueño de sí mismo, recuperaba el aplomo, la frialdad, la dureza…Después de la embriaguez, Concha no tenía fuerzas ni para juzgar ni para analizar…probó los amargos efectos de los celos y conoció toda la gama de las lágrimas" (229). In the end, the (familiar) exotic and socio-economic forces have been 'successfully'

(self)assimilated by a failed sector of the Catalan society, with all the consequences that this assimilation entails from an imperialistic perspective and for our discussion on representation. The national project has failed, according to *Vida privada*: the democratic and conservative forces are equally willing to compromise all in order to get a place in the sun while individuals are flattened by a visual economy that prefers appearance to essence and in which sexuality, disciplined by a bourgeois morality and limited to monogamy, becomes a monstrous perversity.

Although Sagarra grants women a superior capacity for historical receptivity and for observation (e.g., Pilar de Romaní, Rosa Trénor, Concha), we cannot ignore the fact that none of the female characters in *Vida privada* are immune to the "momentos de visión desértica" from which don Tomás de Lloberola is said to suffer in the beginning of the novel (58). The fact that these women retain or acquire certain visibility is not a sign of social emancipation. Concha Pujol, who appears to embody the possibility of injecting a decaying society with fresh vigor and capital, is not the Teresa envisioned by Ors. Her social ascension is not the auspice of a spiritual, economic or cultural rebirth of Catalonia from its own ashes, nor does she bring from overseas the political legitimization that the aristocracy is lacking at home. At best she is able to keep the appearance and to prolong the agony of a doomed aristocratic elite long enough to survive the Republic and to take another grotesque breath under the regime.

Just as we saw in the chapters on Cajal and Lorca, the feminine and deviant body is the marked body and also the site of negotiation for thorny issues of individual and collective representations. While granting visibility to the female body may have been a strategy to co-opt its subversive potential, as we discussed in Cajal's short story when Elvira's image is reconstructed at the Teatro Real, and while Lorca attempted a different route to visualize deviant bodies that would account for their materiality and imperfection as guarantors of their specificity,

the putrefying society described by Sagarra deals in visibility and representations, and has transformed itself into a gigantic screen where people and things only retain an illusory three-dimensionality. As the next section will show, modern technologies of representation inflect Sagarra's view of this flattened world and his actors. Considering the impact of cinematography and the cinematographic representation of reality and the body will address many of the essential changes that new technologies of representation brought to our understanding of reality and the way we inhabit it, and why Sagarra would say, contrasting the Federico to the older generation of the Lloberola that Federico lacked the theatricality of don Tomás. The contrast between the two generations, I argue, is inscribed in the progressive spectacularization of culture and in that oscillation between the materialization and dematerialization of the body that we have been discussing this far, and that became the focus of a debate on theatrical versus cinematic representation, which would have not been unknown to Sagarra the playwright.

Although some mentions are made in the novel of film, cinema does not constitute a primary focus of *Vida privada.* Nonetheless, I argue, this new technology of representation affects the structure and thematic content of the novel and constitutes the photographic negative for the discussion on the false three-dimensionality of the characters. The flatness of this world and its actors becomes an indirect commentary on cinema and cinematic representation, but also introduces the concern expressed by many at this time regarding the role that spectacle, cinema and cinematic "poetic emotion" (André Maurois) played in fascist ideology. Sagarra's concrete, commonsensical narrative style, a style almost "estomacal," if we were to use an adjective that recurs in the novel, constitutes in my view a conscious stylistic choice that, while laying bare their inevitable influence, aims at counteracting the poetic élan of cinematic imagination and representation.

The Cinematographic Restlessness

Remarking on the narrative technique of *Vida Privada* (1932), Marcos Ordóñez writes, "Nunca, que se sepa, condujo Sagarra un automóvil, y sin embargo nada se parece tanto a su prosa como un Hispano de cuatro cilindros: percibimos a cada párrafo chispazos de la ignición, los arranques a toda máquina, a los súbitos cambios de velocidad por nada, por jugar con las posibilidades del motor, para luego, de repente, detenerse un rato a contemplar el paisaje de una ruta que parece definirse a medida que avanza ese cochazo tan brillante, tan soberbiamente seguro de su potencial" (16).[150] Taking this visual analogy one step further, I suggest we substitute the Hispano with a Univex A-8, one of those small handcams built by the Universal Camera Corporation of New York in the 1930s, with which Sagarra might have rolled this iconic portrayal of a society on the verge of extinction. After all, as Ramón Pérez de Ayala put it, "Es el cine una forma estática del viajar, del navegar" (426).

According to Juan Marsé, *Vida privada* displays "una plasticidad y una resonancia casi teatral," in particular through a series of emblematic images that signify the end of an epoch and characterize this polemical novel "y su relación pertinente con el cine" (327-28).[151] The interest repeatedly elicited by the novel among screenwriters and directors (Leopoldo Pomés, Josep Maria Forn, Doménec Font y Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, Francesc Bellmunt and Rainer Werner Fassbinder) confirms its cinematographic texture which, far from being a mere borrowing or superficial reproduction of a fashionable aesthetics, is rather the result of a transposition of modern visual techniques to the literary domain. Unlike other intellectuals,

[150] In the introduction to *Vida privada*, Marcos Ordóñez describes in these terms the way Sagarra visually apprehends the world he depicts in the novel.
[151] Together with Jaime Gil de Biedma, Marsé worked on the adaptation of the novel for miniseries (a TVE-RAI co-production) direct by with Francesc Betriu and Gustau Hernández that aired in 1987.

Sagarra does not choose cinema as an object of representation. Nonetheless, key mentions are made to film in the novel that point to its significance in the diegetic economy of the text. Thus, we learn that Federico's ridiculous flirtation with Russia and communism began with the Russian movies shown in Barcelona, while the confiscated pornographic films that Rosa acquired through her connections with the dictatorship become the fitting accompaniment to her new gambling enterprise. Some of the characters in the novel perceive their life as if it were a trendy Hollywood movie, like María Luisa who projects Bobby as the perfect and understanding American husband and herself as Greta Garbo. Following the usual adjustment of scale to which Sagarra has accustomed his readers, the city itself is presented as a cinematic screen when Fernando witnesses the murder of a young criminal as if it were "proyectado sobre la móvil cortina de la Rambla, sobre aquel fondo de rostros mecánicos, de mejillas de caucho, de ojos de nebuloso destino, sobre la vida anónima, vulgar e inexplicable" (298).

Rather than an object of representation, cinematography appears in the novel in the way it inflects representation as part of the process of mechanization of modern culture that we have been tracing from Cajal's microscopic sight to Lorca's radiographic images and, now, in Sagarra's account of a spectacularized culture (world exhibits, stadiums, cinema, etc.).[152] As Benjamin noted, modern technologies of representation made it possible to capture aspects and details of reality that would otherwise escape the human eye.[153] As experienced firsthand by Juan Fernández and thematized in *El público* and *Vida privada,* visual prostheses made possible by modern technology transformed our way of apprehending reality by modifying the array of possible objects to be represented as well as the modes of representation. Moreover, in each

[152] The shift from considering technology as the object of representation to considering the effects of technology on representation is the topic of Friedrich Kittler's two influential studies, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* and *Gramophone, Film, Type*writer.

[153] The possibility of capturing and representing the minute details of reality that escape the human eye is at the root of Benjamin's notion of the "optical unconscious."

case, the specific technology of representation being at work in the text lays bare its own historical specificity along with, in Latour's words, its own socio-technical actants and mediators of historical change. Nonetheless, like Cajal and Lorca, Sagarra too appears to be wary of the way modern technologies of representation and reproducibility erased the opaque materiality of the body and, with it, the specificity of the individual.

The fascination with modern ways of visually apprehending reality informed avant-garde experimentation during the 1920s and 1930s, stimulating cross-pollination among different artistic domains and collaborative efforts to create the so-called 'total art.' In his 1924 phenomenological account of the contemporary artistic panorama, Ortega pointed to 'dehumanization' as the common denominator among an array of heterogeneous artistic phenomena which he grouped under the umbrella of *Arte Nuevo* which inaugurated a properly modern way of viewing reality (Ortega's "manera…de ver el mundo y las cosas"). In a similar intent of capturing the essence of the time, Guillermo de Torre spoke of a "común denominador espiritual de una serie de fenómenos contemporáneos que comprenden desde el psicoanálisis a la teoría de la relatividad, pasando por la deshumanización del arte, el monólogo interior, el subconsciente freudiano y la risa de Chaplin" (79). Albeit in different ways, the common denominator of Ortega's and de Torre's aesthetic worldviews are imbued with the perceptual transformations catalyzed by technology and the mechanization of society. Just as the clock altered the bourgeois perceptual field by extending perception beyond the realm of "the visible present to the invisible past and future**"** (Lowe 87), so too did the microscope, photography, radiography and cinema, as well as the machines and modern megastructures made possible by cement and steel, alter in significant (sometime unconscious) ways our understanding of reality,

therefore generating among artists and intellectuals the awareness of a new way of seeing and representing that was "Muy siglo XX."

According to Jorge Urrutia, "la inquietud fílmica" signaled the coeval birth of the century and of cinema, a twofold event encapsulated in Alberti's famous verse, "Yo nací – ¡respetadme! – con el cine," which becomes for the poet a definition of an epoch: "Yo pido una atención especial para los que hemos nacido en el siglo, con el cine, que tanta influencia ha tenido y sigue teniendo en la visión de las cosas" (in Urrutia 45). Avant-garde artists began to flirt with cinematic techniques and to experiment with the new media (e.g., Dalí, Buñuel, Lorca). The boom of the filmic medium in Spain is also confirmed by the peak reached by documentary by the end of the 1920s and the 1930s, as documented by Jordana Mendelson. Concurrently with the development of the Spanish modern nation, she argues, "[d]ocumentary images were enlisted by institutions for the authentication of history and embraced by avant-garde as a challenge to these same institutional claims" as part of larger "modernist debates on the politics of form" (xxii).[154]

The particular appeal of cinema for 20th-century culture resided in its power of giving life to stillness and in creating an astounding reality effect, but also in its capacity for thematizing the act of seeing itself, something that absolutely fascinated modernity. Juan Marsé's initial hesitations concerning the filmic adaptation of *Vida privada* speak of the way the novel connects with modern concern about vision and visuality:

> Inútilmente, en esa primera relectura, me esforcé en aplicar sobre el texto el "ojo de la cámara": la fuerza de la prosa anulaba cualquier disposición previa del lector

[154] It is important to notice, however, that the response of the *vanguardias* to "technological innovation, national identity, and ideology" was in Spain much more heterogeneous than critics and historians have traditionally maintained; a difference that may be relevant in order to reconsider the traditional views on the European avant-garde (Mendelson xxiv).

> que no fuera su entrega total y absoluta…la radiografía de esta Barcelona y de esta fauna social posee tanto rigor visual y verbal—pecando a ratos de excesos, pensábamos—, la dinámica narrativa opera con tanto ímpetu y eficacia…que el talento, la lengua y ocasionalmente la mala uva de Sagarra para hacernos "ver" lo que cuenta son tan poderosos y convincentes, que lo que hay que hacer es sencillamente un trasplante lo más limpio y fiel posible del libro a la película. (328)

Marsé's description of the visual dimension of the novel unintentionally, but felicitously, bridges our discussion on Cajal, Lorca and Sagarra. Like the "ojo de la cámara" that Marsé already sees at work in the "rigor visual" with which Sagarra penetrates the Catalan contemporary society, so too the upsetting visions of a fragmented world displayed through microscopic eyes in Cajal, and the radiographic images and the gigantic eye laying on the stage at the end of Lorca's *El público*, speak of a shared systematic intent of thematizing and problematizing the act of seeing ("ver") reality, but they also, as we have been suggesting all along, root vision in the corporeal reality of physiological bodies. The emphasis placed by Marsé on the impetus of the novel's narrative dynamic reinforces instead the connection with the acceleration ensuing from the influence of modern technology to all spheres of life.

Whereas the concentric structure of the first part of the novel, built around the central event of Guillermo blackmailing the baron of Falset, displays a strong narrative coherence and seems therefore to appeal to Sagarra's critics, the second part is decidedly more fragmented. This contrast, however, cannot be imputed to the impatience of Sagarra as narrator, an impatience that he supposedly acquires from being an avid reader of novels (Gustà 38-39), or as

the unfortunate outcome of the short gestation of the work, which some labeled as a *crónica.*[155] On the contrary, I suggest that the loose structure of the second part of the novel stylistically reflects the effects of those events that Sagarra situates in the chronological void between the two halves of the book and which are purposively left out of the narrative plot. Indeed, the "viure frenètic" mentioned by Gustà is thematized in the novel's structural organization as much as in the superficiality, flatness and hollowness of the new generation of Lloberola, all of whom lack in depth, just like the bi-dimensional protagonists of the cinematographic screen or the subjects on display at trendy cultural exhibits. The fragmentary structure, not always rigorous in the way it develops the subplots, constitutes in my view a sign of the novel's participation in modern debates on form and representation, rather than a lack of narrative coherence.

Although an *aficionado* of the cinematographer, and although cinematic imagination does filter through his novel, Sagarra was also somewhat wary of cinematographic aesthetics. Remarking on the fast pace at which films appear to age, Sagarra wrote on the *Mirador* in January of 1931 that the aesthetic décalage caused the audience to laugh at "la intensa comicitat d'un film [once] completament dramàtic":

> I en casos com aquests s'ha de convenir que la part absurda i desproporcionada a la manera de com avui sentim i veiem les coses no era solament deguda a una insuficiència tècnica ni al traball insostenible dels actors; era deguda també al perfum d'època; els barrets i els pentinats de les dones, i les solapes de les americanes dels homes, eren unes pessigolles excèntriques per al nostre sistema nerviós d'avui. ("Film 1906" *Obres* 513)

[155] Most critics, disoriented by the fragmentariness of its narrative structure, have read *Vida privada* more as a *crónica* than a novel, which prevented any serious analytic attempt; some (Doménec Guansé, Rafael Tasis, Manuel de Montliu) expresses their criticism with particular vehemence, others (Maurici Sarrahima) settled the debate over the genre of the text, but still underscored its loose narrative structure (Gustà 34).

By emphasizing the rapidity with which the aesthetic perception of reality changes ("la manera de com avui sentim i les coses"), which he calls the "perfume d'època," Sagarra also points to the paradoxical status of cinema as a medium that ends up freezing in time that which is self-professedly transient, namely the image. For this reason, Sagarra concludes that

> Potser la cosa mès adequada hauria estat que el film s'hagués destruït, com tot allò que vivia l'any 1906 en nosaltres mateixos, i, si no ho hem destruït materialment, hi hem anat superposant noves capes de greix, de banalitat, de tragèdia o de barrila fins a modificar-ho del tot. (513)

Narrative and theater offer themselves up for new imaginative interpretations in ways that allow them to endure the passing of time to a greater degree or with more elegance than film. In this respect, it is remarkable the resemblance between Sagarra's 1931 commentary and what Susan Sontag writes three decades later:

> But note: this youngest of the arts is also the one most heavily burdened with memory. Cinema is a time machine. Movies preserve the past, while theatres—no matter how devoted to the classics, to old plays—can only "modernize." Movies resurrect the beautiful dead; present intact vanished or ruined environments; employ, without irony, styles and fashions that seem funny today; solemnly ponder irrelevant or naive problems. The historical flavor of anything registered on celluloid is so vivid that practically all films older than two years or so are saturated with a kind of pathos…Films age (being objects) as no theatre-event does (being always new). (32)

Vida privada points to the paradoxical relation that spectacle and cinema establish with time: although manifesting the passing of time, they are themselves circumscribed to the temporal

domain of the present (something that we may trace in the "imprevisión" of Sagarra's modern Barcelona). As in a cinematographic spectacle, the decayed Catalan aristocracy is resurrected only like a dead world, devoid of any real depth or three-dimensionality, and is made present only as a phantasmagoria, similar to the one created by the world exhibitions which Benjamin connects to the fetishization of commodities, people and culture.

In 1966 Sontag wrote that "The history of cinema is often treated as the history of its emancipation from theatrical models" (24). Although simplistic (as Sontag points out), this view signals the complex relation that from the onset bound theatricality and cinema. It is meaningful to notice in this respect how Sagarra negatively characterizes Federico by saying that he lacks the theatricality of don Tomás. Whether theater embraced film in order to attract viewers, or saw it as a rescuer and means to create the '*obra de arte total,'* or understood that they both shared similar aesthetic concerns regarding vision and conceptualization, or whether it believed that its own survival depended on being 'other' than cinema, theater was never indifferent to the expressive potential of the new media. Likewise, initially films were mostly cinematic versions of theatrical plays or, tellingly, of dissections.[156] The reactions proceeding from the theatrical world ranged from the most enthusiastic embrace of this new technique (which was expected to solve the endemic theatrical crisis) to the unrelenting defense of the specificity and autonomy of theater. For some, film was to bring about a renaissance of theater by overcoming the latter's vassalage to realist conventions (Ramón Pérez de Ayala) and by harmoniously rendering the essential dynamism of the actor in a way that superseded the naïve artistic realism of theater (Vladimir Maiakovski).

[156] See Giordana Bruno's illuminating article entitled "Spectatorial Embobiments: Anatomies of the Visible and the Female Landscape," where she analyzes the fascination of early Neapolitan films with medical dissections. Camera Obscura 10, 1 28 (1992): 238-261.

Others saw in film an opportunity to break away from the mere reproduction of reality toward the production of the fantastic (Ramón del Valle-Inclán and Gabriele D'Annunzio).[157] Arguing for an alternative genealogy of cinema, there were those like Sergei Eisenstein who understood that cinematography owes less to theater than to other motionless forms of art, such as painting and photography, as well as to a certain type of novel: "The narrative techniques developed by certain nineteenth-century novelists, as Eisenstein pointed out in his brilliant essay on Dickens, supplied another prototype for cinema" (Sontag 27). Likewise, Urrutia argues that, by the time it acquired its own spaces, cinema "ha dejado, además de presentar conflictos concentrados para dedicarse a contar historias. Debe ya más a la novela por entregas que al melodrama" (48). Embedded in these commentaries is the relevance of the scale being deployed, of the manipulability of the medium, and of the audience reception envisioned by each genre or medium. Theater is necessarily bound to temporal narrative constraints and narrowly defined situations or conflicts, which suggests a closer resemblance to the synoptic structure of the short story, while cinema immediately appears to be better suited for telling the episodic, or for effortlessly spanning long periods of time, like the novel. Film is manipulable in ways that theater is not. Like a book, "the film is an object, it is totally manipulable, totally calculable…; making a film, like writing a book, means constructing an inanimate thing, every element of which is determinate" (Sontag 31).

A commentary by film critic André Maurois provides us instead with a fruitful way of understanding the distinct reception that is envisioned by narrative (and theater) and cinema. Despite the aesthetic osmosis that takes place among these media, Maurois identified a specific

[157] According to D'Annunzio "El cine debe dar a los espectadores las visiones fantásticas, las catástrofes líricas, las más atrevidas maravillas: resucitar—como en los viejos poemas caballerescos—lo maravilloso, lo maravillosísimo de los tiempos modernos y de lo espíritus de mañana. […] Compondré un gran mito moderno sirviéndome del truco que puede abolir los límites a la invención" (in Gian Piero Brunetta, *Letteratura e cinema*, Bologna, Zanichelli, 1976, 16).

cinematic way of telling a story which approaches "poetic emotion" and which he describes in a long illuminating passage quoted by Sigfried Kracauer in the opening if his analysis on experimental film. Remarking on a 1927 film screening Maurois wrote:

> In a moviehouse I visited they advertised *Larmes de clown* [Tears of a Clown] and showed a series of quite beautiful pictures which presented a circus ring, clowns rolling a big ball, a lion threatening a dancer; all this was beautiful, obscure, and suggestive like certain poems by Saint-John Perse. Next week I went to see the film. It was an honest, coherent, sentimental, and flat story. Its whole poetic charm was due to the fact that the film had been cut arbitrarily. In stripping the events of their excess of common sense, one relieves the spectator from the necessity of judging, bringing him closer to poetic emotion. In consequence, there is a conflict in film between intrigue and poetry. If the intrigue is too interesting, everything passes as in a novel; one would like to jump the description. If the film is designed to teach us a moral truth, it becomes as bad as a didactic poem" (in Kracauer 175-76).

Maurois is attracted by the way cinematic montage juxtaposes images through free association. His disappointment arises, therefore, from the discovery that the actual narrative structure of the film does not resemble that of the trailer, but approaches instead that of conventional story-telling. The discovery carries meaningful implications in terms of how the audience experiences these different aesthetic experiences. Whereas "stripping…the events of their excessive common sense" turned Maurois's initial critical viewing into poetic empathy, an excess of intrigue or story telling would have risked transforming the aesthetic experience into a merely didactic one. The distinction drawn by Maurois becomes pertinent to our thread-discussion concerning the

relation between an unmediated participation in the event ("poetic emotion" or direct presentation) and the need for a certain amount of mediation (i.e., representation) that ensures a critical partaking of the event. By rooting the cinematic élan in a commonsensical (even "estomacal") narrative that recovers the concreteness of story-telling, Sagarra restores a mediated and critical reception in opposition to what Maurois described as poetic emotion. As Kracauer observed, adding "an element of reality to the cinema…prevents it from setting the spectator dreaming" (157). This move, I believe, should be taken into account in order to reconsider how the narrator's quasi-didactic tone plays in the diegetic economy of the novel.

Two key scenes in *Vida privada* show this dual movement towards and away from poetic emotion, both scenes framing a significant stage in the process of the spectacularization of Catalan culture and both signaling a shift in scale, from the public to the private dimension in the first case and from the collective to the individual in the second. The first scene opens the second part of the novel:

> Habían pasado cinco años desde el día en que el barón de Falset se agujereó la cabeza de un balazo. Durante esos cinco años la vida pública del país cambió considerablemente. En Barcelona hubo sucesos de brillante trascendencia. La Exposición de Montjuic marcó el momento de más lustre. Todo el plantel de almas que el lector conoció en casa de Hortensia Portell se inclinó ante el gran pavo real; lanzó cohetes por los ojos y confeti por la boca. (187)

The last image winks an eye to cinematic imagination, both for the visual imagery it evokes and for the abrupt way in which it supersedes the narrative description, as in a cinematic jump cut. It was not uncommon, in fact, to compare the experience of the cinematographer to spectacular

fireworks.[158] The contiguity established between the "Exposición de Montjuïc" and the party at the house of the widow of Falset frames '1929' as the apex of the Spanish society's decadence on the one hand, and the coalescence of public and private under the modern spectacle as an overall aesthetic interpretative key for the novel on the other. At the same time, however, the cinematic explosion suggested by the firing of missiles ["cohetes"] and confetti out of hollow orifices on the faces of the characters is contained by the cold-blooded irony with which Sagarra displaces the "poetic emotion" elicited by the image by recreating an utterly uneventful banquet in which the guests, namely the same grotesque swollen legs and abdomens of the earlier party, are leaning forward on the table absurdly mimicking the fan of the peacock that awaits to be eaten.[159] In the swift and clever alternation between diegetic and cinematic diegesis and imagination, Sagarra manages to balance poetic emotion and story-telling, without slipping into didacticism but, most importantly, without relieving the reader from the necessity of judging.

The second scene that displays a similar tension takes place just a page later and describes the inauguration of the stadium. It may help to recall the passage:

> La inauguración del Estadio constituyó una sublime fusión entre aristocracia y democracia. Nunca se había visto una cosa semejante. Los sombreros de copa del rey, de sus hijos, de su cuñado, de sus gentilhombres, de toda la chusma municipal y provincial de toda la burocracia parasitaria del momento, se convirtieron en las chimeneas del humo del entusiasmo. (188)

The kinetic quality of the image is emphasized in the ebullient atmosphere and the upward movement of the exulting masses suggested by the vertical shape of the chimneys. The poetic emotion is immediately contained by the metonymical relation that chimneys hold with the

[158] As we will see, Rosa Chacel describes the cinematographer in very similar terms, using for instance the word "cohetes" to illustrate how images were shooting from the light beam onto to screen.
[159] It is tempting to make the connection with Buñuel's scene in *The Discrete Charm of the Bourgeoisie* from 1972.

factory as well as by the parallel established between entertainment, politics and exploitation. A few lines down, the narrator reinforces the parallel with the description of the "murcianos negrísimos" employed in the construction of the spectacular megastructure: "con sudor hasta los huesos, ni tenían tiempo para pensar en huelgas" (188). One may argue that this last image leans toward a documentary aesthetics, which reinforces the tension between poetic emotion and didactic diegesis.

Sagarra successfully plays poetic emotion and story-telling against each other in such a way that the filmic texture functions as an antidote for a disaffected pedagogical reading while the fragmentary story-telling prevents the jump into "poetic emotion" without erasing the cinematic élan. [160] The tension suggested by Maurois in the dichotomy poetic emotion-story telling, which we have traced in *Vida privada*, reenacts the tension between presence, representation and mediation that we have been examining all along, and counteracts the summoning of the perceiving subject as a blind participant to the aesthetic event. The increasingly spectacular Catalan culture and politics, on the contrary, requires and reproduces non critical observers and participants, as Sagarra criticizes speaking about the Republican political entourage in an article of 1931 (one year into the Republican experiment) which he tellingly entitled "Fotomuntatge." Here, he equates politics to a cheap circus show or *music-hall* in which the random sequence of squalid impressionistic scenes disguises the lack or bad faith of the underlying narrative ("Fotomuntatge", *Obras* 563).

Representations of the body were also inflected by modern technology in fundamental ways. Sagarra's false three-dimensional bodies directly question the status of corporeality

[160] I want to clarify that I am not arguing that the qualitative difference between poetic abstraction and story-telling intrinsically entails a difference in value between the two; rather, I am interested in the fact that each narrative creates an option that entails a distinct observer position and triggers a different set of critical and interpretative questions.

envisioned by cinema and the spectacle. As we discussed in the chapters on Cajal and Lorca, theatricality brings into focus the materiality and specificity of the human body through the opacity of its medium and the mediation entailed in representation. As Sagarra points out, theatricality is what distinguishes don Tomás from the new generation of Lloberola:

> Federico, *el hereu,*…era la misma estampa de su padre, con todos los vicios familiares, pero *sin la teatralidad* ni el "trémolo" de don Tomás, sin su gracia; porque don Tomás, bien mirado, tenía cierta gracia. (55 emphasis mine)

Theatricality refers here to a certain old fashioned manner, which the narrator repeatedly praises in characters such as Pilar de Romaní. As Sontag reminds us, whereas films were "acclaimed as the democratic art, the art of mass society" and cinema was "cast as the art of the authentic," theater, on the other hand, was often equated to "dressing up, pretense, lies. It smack[ed] of aristocratic taste and the class society" (26). Undeniably, by inverting the relation between theater and cinema and by associating authenticity with theater, Sagarra makes a class statement at the same time that as he critiques the homogenizing nature of a spectacular democracy. The two characters differ in that don Tomás has lost what Federico never had and will never be able to gain, namely a moral depth and a real presence. Moreover, associated with the tremor of the body, theatricality underscores the corporeal dimension of don Tomás and even a certain fragility and vulnerability that Federico's bi-dimensional personality lacks. Let us recall that the only mention to Federico's physiological body is to the spreading tuberculosis that is silently corrupting it from the inside, which in turn reinforces the idea that the skin (i.e., a surface or a screen) is the only things that holds his body together.

As modernity brought into focus the body and the question of its status and its representation, it did not do so in an uncontroversial fashion. Indeed, Cajal stressed the tension

between an increased scientific and medical ability of imaging the body and its heterogeneity and the difficult path to grant deviant bodies socio-political visibility. Lorca, on the other hand, thematized the necessity of mediation and representation through the opacity of the theatrical medium understood as the only form of preserving the specificity and heterogeneity of bodies. At the same time, he took issue with the dematerialization of the body promoted by cinema and the spectacle, which would be successfully exploited by fascist ideology. Spectacle and cinema both did without the body of the participants: the spectacle because aimed at the sublimation of the individual into a collective libidinal experience, as in the fascist ritualistic understanding of performance and event; and cinema, because it allowed for the manipulation of the image (a bi-dimensional, immaterial body) in ways that theater clearly could not, and because mechanical reproducibility denied "the uniqueness of every reality" (Benjamin "Work" 222). Such an art work lacks "its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be" (220), which takes the vulnerability of performance and bodies to the unforeseeable and the audience out of the equation.

But some thought that the body could be saved by cinema. In 1923 Hungarian film critic Béla Bálazs anticipated that film would rescue the body from anonymity by becoming "the herald of a new 'visual culture' that will give us back our bodies, and particularly our faces, which have been rendered illegible, soulless, un-expressive by the centuries-old ascendancy of 'print.'" (Sontag #)[161]

Whereas film liberated the body from the invisibility to which it had been relegated by the printed text, the cinematographic representation of the body seemed to pose a new set of troubling questions. By separating the voice from the body, cinema reduced the latter to an

[161] As Sontag goes on to say, "An animus against literature, against 'the printing press' and its 'culture of concepts,' also informs most of the interesting thinking about the theatre in our time" (36).

immaterial or ghostly appearance. Sagarra's false three-dimensional bodies speak precisely of the anxiety produced by the increasingly two-dimensional cultural spectacle, which is encapsulated in the moving image. A few passages form Rosa Chacel's 1928 short story, "Chinina Migone," will help us put into focus the questions raised by the invention of cinematography and its impact on the body. Talking about the daughter's fascination with cinema, the narrator says that

> Nuestra ciudad…se llenaba de aquellos pálidos acuarios, que eran como agujeros en la vida,…al hervidero de las imágenes, de todo lo bullente, de todo lo que en silencio fraguaba su vitalidad, para un día saltar a invadirnos. Y la dejábamos acercarse a ellos, porque en un principio no parecían temibles. La barraca atraía con su alegre órgano, y era tentador entrar a ver el nuevo invento. La ciencia moderna tenía allí su guarida de hechicera. (156)

According to the narrador, the speed at which images supersede each other overwhelms the viewer: "todo cambiaba con demasiada velocidad para nuestra atención...Nunca pudimos distinguir el juego de la lucha. A un tiempo llovían las más desgarradas muecas y las más plácidas risas. El cielo culebreaba de balas como cohetes, que hacían de la noche verbena de explosiones. A veces se cortaba la cinta, y un momento de silencio ciego era como una irrupción de la muerte" (158). The realization that the cinematographic medium produces a kind of alienation comes when they see their own daughter (now an actress) on the screen and sadly understand that "sólo dejando nuestras vidas podríamos seguirla" (156).

As Benjamin points out, Luigi Pirandello was among the first to diagnose the transformation of the actor as a result of the advent of film in his novel *Si gira.* This is Benjamin quoting Pirandello:

> The film actor feels as if in exile—exiled not only from the stage but also from himself. With a vague sense of discomfort he feels inexplicable emptiness: his body loses its corporeality, it evaporates, it is deprived of reality, life, voice, and the noises caused by his moving about, in order to be changed into a mute image, flickering an instant on the screen, then vanishing into silence…The projector will play with his shadow before the public, and he himself must be content to play before the camera. ("Work" 229)

As Benjamin notes, the problem of the dematerialization of the body will not be solved by sound film.[162] In response to the 'infatuation' with sound cinema, Pirandello observed that "dare meccanicamente la parola alla cinematografia" did not prevent cinema from being a degraded copy of theater since "la voce è di un corpo vivo che la emette" while "le immagini non parlano: si vedono soltanto; se parlano, la voce viva è in contrasto insanabile con la loro qualità di ombre e turba come una cosa innaturale che scopre e denunzia il meccanismo" ("Se il cinema").[163] And even when technical progress will make it possible to supersede the unnatural sound of the gramophone, the dramatist concludes, the "sgradevolissmo effetto d'irrealtà" will not be erased since "le immagini resteranno immagini e le immagini non possono parlare" ("Se il cinema"). When asked if she would ever make a *película parlante* or *hablada,* Spanish actress Raquel Meller denied it forcefully, stating that "La película parlante nació muerta. Ha quitado al cine su idealidad y llena la cabeza del espectador de una porción de ruidos desagradables. Sonora, sí. Parlante, no. En la parlante se mixtifica la voz y se asesina el ritmo. ¿Y la

[162] Another event that Sagarra obscures in the chronological fade out that separates the two parts of the novel is the premier on June 19th of 1929 of *El misterio de la Puerta del Sol* by Francisco Elías, the first Spanish sound film shown in the cine-club of *La Gaceta Literaria* in Madrid, which had just recently replaced Barcelona as the major film industry center in the country.

[163] From "Se il cinema parlato abolirá il teatro" published in the *Corriere della sera* on June 16 of 1929.

sincronización? El divorcio entre el gesto y la palabra es un bache formado por el ridículo en que cae el artista" (Díaz-Plaja 143-44).

The fact that many regarded movies as "advancing from theatrical stasis to cinematic fluidity, from theatrical artificiality to cinematic naturalness and immediacy" (Sontag 24), also meant that cinema was perceived as superseding the 'old' in the teleological account of modernity and progress, and praised as an experience of the *newness* and *nowness* that fascist art and ideology celebrated, a presentness that, unlike that of theater, maintained no physical ties with bodies and space. Concerning the reception of such an aesthetic experience, Benjamin noted that the identification of the spectator with the camera also meant that he or she took the position of the critic (the examiner), one that requires no attention and that is judgment-free (??). Unlike theater which flaunts its illusory reality, cinema disguises the mediation of the mechanical equipment (cutting) behind the illusion of immediacy:

> In the theater there one is well aware of the place from which the play cannot immediately be detected as illusionary. There is no such place for the movie scene that is being shot. Its illusionary nature is that of the second degree, the result of cutting. That is to say, in the studio the mechanical equipment has penetrated so deeply into reality that its pure aspect freed from the foreign substance of equipment is the result of a special procedure, namely, the shooting by the specially adjusted camera and the mounting of the shot together with other similar ones. The equipment-free aspect of reality here has become the height of artifice; the sight of immediate reality has become an orchid in the land of technology. ("Work" 233)

The Barcelona of the 1930s exposed by Sagarra is like a cinematographic show; its inhabitants distracted moviegoers. Not so in the theater of the Barrio Chino. Reflecting (on) the impact of modern technologies of representation this world constitutes a powerful commentary on the progressive spectacularization of the national landscape and the subsequent dematerialization of its historical actors.

Spectacular Democracy

Vida privada describes the decline of the Lloberolas and the aristocratic Barcelona following three generations that have survived the changing times like an ostrich, by hiding their head under the wing. The one depicted by Sagarra is a shallow world: fortunes are made and lost rapidly; the value of an individual is established "por la raya de unos pantalones o la calidad de unas medias" (269). The novel ends with an emblematic and rather nostalgic reflection on the end of an epoch, which may be the reason why this last scene is also the most cinematic and the one that brings us closer to poetic emotion, as the final ellipsis further suggests:

> En la Rambla se percibía un olor mezcla de noctámbulos, de excursionismo y de democracia. Los taxis amarillos se llevaban a dormir los restos de la tristeza y de la prostitución.
>
> Entre las rosas rojas caminaba, un poco inseguro, un hombre gris, de mejillas indefinidas, de edad indefinida, con el estómago lleno de whisky y con el corazón lleno de rosas rojas… (322)

As if slowly shifting from an extreme wide shot to a close up, the narrator zooms in on this middle-aged man, Bobby Xuclá, who appears to be suspended between two epochs. Like Baudelaire's (and Benjamin's) flâneur he too is a transitional figure, symbolically walking down the Rambla, the urban threshold between the old and the new Barcelona. Resembling more Juan Fernández's grotesque strolling along the kaleidoscopic streets of Madrid than the exhilarating city encounter of Baudelaire's flâneur, Sagarra's character walks stumbling, drunk, possibly looking at the blurred city with the same "visión desértica" with which don Tomás remembered the past after drinking too much. The rose stands alongside the road no doubt are a dodge for

prostitution; in a city that never sleeps and that is equally devoted to sex, tourism and democracy, the roses in Bobby's heart speak of lost times.

There is certainly a fair amount of the past and of an aristocratic world long gone in Sagarra, both of which are encapsulated in the countess of Romaní and evoked, by contrast, in the irony with which the narrator of *Vida privada* contemplates the 'hormiguización' of the modern world through the spectacle of the World Fair:

> La flamante Plaza de España vio como multiplicada su humanidad el día en que se inauguró la Exposición, como si los hombres fuesen hormigas, o como si todas la hormigas del país se hubieran hecho hinchar por una bomba de aire y hubieran ido a robar las americanas y las faldas de los establecimientos dedicados a su venta. (188)

The modern multitude, as an army of ants that have been inflated to human size, populates this special "momento decorativo" of Barcelona (190). Holding on to the Republic "de un modo maravillado e infantile, sin sangre, sin venganza" (191), the naïve new Spain, like Catalonia, is blindfolded and unable or unwilling to settle scores with the past. The bloodless transition does not seem promising to Sagarra. In the meantime, the cultural life of Barcelona shows the effects of this preposterous democratization: fashion and the Hispano, the narrator remarks, "lo habían igualado todo" (123). The same homogenization is displayed in the urban layout of the new Barcelona, in that "geografía uniforme propia de los pisitos de Barcelona" (48)—where don Tomás de Lloberola has been forced to move after losing his immense fortune. The anonymous apartment in the Carrer Mallorca, like Federico's house in the Carrer Belén that "apest[a] a caldo de gallina" (96), has nothing of the "majestad del domicilio"(159) of the *can* [family house] Lloberola in the Baja de San Pedro, which, alone, was the sign of actual social and economic

power.[164] Located in a "barrio *standard,* con unas casas pensadas según unos criterios geométricos sin imaginación," don Tomás's apartment is cluttered by dissonant objects, like a "*bric-à-brac* de la tradición" (71) in which stands out the yellowed family portrait of the Lloberola, another empty sign of power, like the famous *tapiz* and like the family's invented past. It is therefore emblematic that the *tapiz* of the Lloberola is in the end bought by Concha Pujol as a gift for her new husband, Guillermo Lloberola, whom she has also 'bought.'

The same contradiction between image and actual socio-economic power of individuals is mirrored on a larger scale in the spectacular Barcelona of the 1929 World Fair. That of the second generation of the Lloberolas was an epoch in which "las protestas eran efímeras y el talante de la gente tenía una postura acomodaticia, en la que todo importaba un comino" (291). What is manifested in the change of scale is not so much the emergence of unruly masses as much as the lack of leadership. In the few passages devoted to the description of the working classes, the narrador focuses on their industriousness as well as thier (idealized) sense of solidarity: "En nuestro país hay familias en plena eficacia y en plena actividad, en las que padres e hijos viven como poseídos por una fiebre de colaboración, de ayudarse los unos a los otros…son gentes que aún llevan la levadura obrera o el encogimiento menestral sobre la espalda" (259). Contrasting the working class to the artistocracy, the narrator goes on to say that "hay familias de mucha tradición, tan evaporadas, tan exprimidas, de tan nula eficacia social, que sus miembros sienten un deseo fatal de disgregarse, de huir de la trayectoria paterna, de destruir el espíritu familiar. Los Lloberola y otras familias por el estilo estaban atacadas por este último microbio" (259). Although the disintegration is presented as the outcome of a contagious disease

[164] *Baja de San Pedro* was area in the *casco antiguo* of Barcelona where, beginning in the 17th century, the rural aristocracy built its residential homes. The *Eixample* [Ensanche] is created at the turn of the century as a new urban residential area for the middle class and high bourgeoisie. It is important to notice that Pilar de Romaní and Bobby never live the old Jewish neighborhood.

that attacks the biological core of the individuals, it is rather the degree of closeness to the source and means of income that warrants their morality or lack thereof. And while the industriousness of the working classes is the outcome of a natural calling (i.e., labor), the aristocracy has completely lost touch with the traditional source of their wealth, namely the land, which means that a pseudo-hereditary discourse actually conceals a reassessment of the spatial and economic relation to the means of production under modernity.

While unscrupulous white-collar criminals, who turned themselves into great industrialists and small businessmen, increased their capital by investing in the construction boom, the old aristocracy, unable to reinvent itself, looked for a way out in some arranged marriage or, like the Lloberolas, merely waited to be annihilated.[165] It is not difficult to find a correspondence between Sagarra's criticism of the social structure of modern Catalonia and the view expressed by Ortega in *España invertebrada* (1921), especially considering that the narrator compares many of the characters in the novel to taxidermic specimens. Taxidermy aims not only at the preservation of specimens, but also at giving these specimens the appearance of being alive, in order better to comply with its didactic purpose. Most importantly, while entomological practices and embalming are used to preserve invertebrates, taxidermy can only be practiced on vertebrates because only vertebrates can be skinned and their anatomical structure reconstructed.[166] By likening the characters of *Vida privada* to grotesque taxidermic specimens, however, the narrator underpins the fact that they lack any physiological and moral structure of their own: they are reduced to mere skins that can be peeled off and placed over an

[165] Contrary to her previous marriage with cotton merchant, Antonio Mates (baron of Falset), the marriage between Concha and Guillermo is not intended to modernize the Lloberola but rather to legitimize the aristocratism of Concha, who happily gives up her 'democratic' youth for a status consecrated by religion and the law. Furthermore, the capital that Concha brings into the marriage conflates the one left to her by the ex-husband who killed himself following Guillermo's blackmail with the one accumulated by her slave-trader grandfather who, in the end, ended up trading "el negocio en piel color de café por el café auténtico" (101).

[166] Etymologically, the word "taxidermy" means 'the movement of the skin,' from the ancient Greek "taxis" (movement) and "dermis" (skin).

artificial skeleton; what is supposed to be lifelike turns out to be lifeless. Thus constructed, the characters of *Vida privada* echo Ortega's diagnostic of the "carencia de minorías egregias y el imperio imperturbado de las masas" (*España invertebrada, Obras III* 87).[167] Where Ortega and Sagarra would part ways, however, is on the chronology of this decadence; not an endemic problem for Catalonia as it appears to be for the rest of Spain but, rather, one that is connected to the ambivalent relation established between the region and Castile following the Restoration and the centralized national design. Let us recall, in fact, that '1888' (the year of the first World Fair in Catalonia) is the landmark chosen by Sagarra to signal in the novel the beginning of a real Catalan decadence, although the slow process of '*castellanización'* that took place throughout the 19th century prepared the way for the separation between the aristocracy, the land, and the autochthonous traditions. Sagarra does not impute the decadence of Catalan society to the masses themselves (they have been essential to Catalan industrial booming) rather to the complicity of the leading classes in the political, intellectual and cultural homogenization.

Modern technologies of representation and new mechanical instruments played a crucial role in the process of political and cultural democratization. In different ways, cameras, typewriters, radios, gramophones, steel and cement revolutionized the way we perceived and represented reality along with the way we disseminated these representations. For instance, following the cultural and linguistic repression of the Dictatorship, the Second Republic widely used the radio to disseminate the Catalan language and information in Catalonia (Casasses 111). Among these technologies, photography and cinema, in particular, were perceived as democratic both because they were almost accessible and affordable to everyone, but also because they

[167] Ortega's essay initially appeared as a series of articles in *El Sol* in 1920, the same year when Sagarra was contributing to the same magazine as a foreign correspondent from Berlin. *España invertebrada* was Ortega's own contribution to the so called "problema español" and addressed the problem of the political, social and cultural decadence of Spain.

brought art closer to life and erased the aura of the art work. Yet, as *Vida privada* shows, democracy is more a cultural practice than a proper government system: in the novel democratization spreads to the fashion, the costumes, the urban space and the entertainment but not so much to the citizenry. Moreover, while modern technologies of vision and representation extended the reach and array of representative possibilities, they also played an essential role in the spectacularization and homogenization of culture, a phenomenon that cuts through the private and public domains.

As we have discussed, the novel traces the progressive transformation of the national into a form of spectacle through the changes that affect both the characters and the city of Barcelona around the years of the 1929 World Fair. Yet, there is one other way in which this process can be outlined, namely through the references that are embedded in the text to a certain evolution of the technologies of representation. The novel moves from references to museums to the Rambla being described as a "móvil cortina" and, finally, to the exhibition as a total spectacle. This sequence roughly corresponds to the artistic and aesthetic progression from panorama through photography to cinema. Objects are framed in a museum in much the same way as a painting. And despite the fact that some of these specimens are supposed to seem alive (e.g., taxidermic specimens or wax figures), stillness betrays their lifeless condition. As Benjamin argues, panoramas outgrow painting in the way they strive "to produce deceptively lifelike changes in their presentation of nature" and already "point ahead beyond photography, to films and sound film" ("Paris" 149). The scene of the murder, perceived by Fernando as if it were "proyectado sobre la móvil cortina de la Rambla, sobre aquel fondo de rostros mecánicos, de mejillas de caucho, de ojos de nebuloso destino, sobre la vida anónima, vulgar e inexplicable" (298), shows

the effects of mechanization on the perception of reality by likening the scene to a moving panorama or a quasi-cinematic sequence.

The successive stations of the World Fair, instead, are experienced by the visitor, who is strolling along, as a filmic sequence more properly. The images appear with such rapidity as to discourage attention, evaluation or judgment.[168] The dispersal of attention thus produced is similar to the one felt by Freud being "spellbound in Roma," as Johnatan Crary recounts. It is the disorientation of a subject subsisting in the temporality of "a dehistoricized perpetual presence wavering between boredom and absorption, between self-extinguishing immersion in the crowd and unbearable social solitude" (*Suspensions* 369). The reiteration of the experience (in the recurrence of the images, the fair itself, of analogous experiences at the stadium, etc.) points to the obliteration of historical consciousness identified by Guy Debord in the society of the spectacle and "is inseparable from the modern production of amnesia" (Crary, *Suspension* 369). For these very reasons spectacular democracy and democratic citizenry are not contiguous, and this is also why, according to Benjamin, cinematic aesthetics would appear to be contiguous to fascism.

The tension between opposite subjective dispositions, which Crary identifies in his account of Freud's experience, leaves room to the possibility that "this spectacular society is not irrevocably destined to become a seamless regime of separation or an ominous collective mobilization" (370). A particular scene in *Vida privada* brings into focus how the distracted reception generated by the spectacle can be indeed interrupted. It is the excursion to the Barrio Chino. Meaningfully, this scene takes us back to the theatrical paradigm. The "calaverada" (!),

[168] Curtis M. Hinsley stresses the cinematic quality of the aesthetic reception of the Chicago World Exposition of 1893 in "The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893". *Exhibiting Cultures.* Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Eds.). Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution, 1991.

as the participants call it, can be understood as an unrehearsed theatrical play staged by the inhabitants of the neighborhood for the local and foreign tourists, one that brings class clash to the fore. The whole barrio is setup as a stage: the narrow arch of Carrer Arc de Teatre is the entrance, the Rambla the exit. Like the exhibit and the stadium, the barrio appears to be populated by deindividualized inhabitants and structured as in successive stations (cf. the "cuadros" showing live sexual performances), just like the fair. Nonetheless, although repeatable night after night, this performance is always subject to the possibility of an unforeseeable event as, for instance, when the large transvestite pursues the elegant group asking insistently for "un cigarillo para la Lolita" (170) and making the group run away. Pronounced in Castilian (and reported in Castilian in the original text) for the sexual tourists who might not speak Catalan, the phrase signals that the 'actor' is aware of the presence of a specific audience and that this audience has a bearing on the situation. However, the scene also revelas that the audience can be interpellated, be forced to abandon its comfort zone, and be demanded that they pass a judgment. The tranvestite's question concretely elicits an answer regarding the cigarillo, but it also elicits another judgment that would have not been possible had the distracted reception not been interrupted: "—Ante algo así –dijo Emilio Borrás –uno no sabe qué hacer; se te seca la garganta y te quedas tan avergonzado que te dan ganas de echarte a llorar…" (170).

Conclusion: A Glance from the "noche sabática"

Our journey through Spain's Silver Age, one of many, has finally come to an end. Each in his own way, Cajal, Lorca and Sagarra attempted to respond to what was generally perceived to be a crisis of representation, both in the aesthetic and political domains. By questioning the foundation of representation, and above all the element of mediation, they all showed that unmediated presence is not possible under modernity, nor is it desirable. As Jorge Luis Borges playfully and brilliantly demonstrated, full presence or presentation generates a paradox: if we were to elect the same number of representatives as there are individuals in order to ensure full representativity, "El congreso" would coincide with the world and no action would ensue; likewise, what use would we make of a map that coincides with the territory? (cf. "Del rigor en la ciencia"). Although modern technologies of vision and representation fashioned their appeal around a putative production of presence, as we saw, modern reality and its experience are always already mediated, reproduced. Against the alluring promise of presence, Cajal, Lorca, and Sagarra rescued theater and theatricality as a way of reinstating mediation, representation, and the materiality of the body at the core of human activity. The theatrical presence is in fact always haunted and cut through by the materiality of architecture as well as by bodies, which are enmeshed in a relation of "reciprocity," always exposed to the unforeseeable, always vulnerable. Unlike photography and cinema, theater did not promise to produce reality, realism or presence.[169] On the contrary, it consecrated illusion, mediation and corporeality as modern epistemological devices. From the frozen present of the Francoist "noche sabática," Martín-Santos glances back at a time marked by deep contradictions, but also by political and artistic

[169] The idea of a "livng presence" put forth by theater theorists and practictioners such as Antonin Artaud (the Theater of Cruelty) and Jerzy Growtoski (Poor Theater) in the 1950s and 1960s rested on a qualitatively different assumption and was mostly the reaction to a precise use (or abuse in their mind) of technological mediation.

ebullience. In answering his emergency call, we have retraced the questions identified by Cajal, Lorca, and Sagarra in connection with the reassessment of the notion of representation and have outlined some of the challenges posed by the democratization of the Spanish state up to the advent of the Second Republic. The fall of the Second Republic and rise of fascism will dramatically halt the process of democratization, though artists and intellectuals will continue to plead the cause of democratic representation from exile and within Spain, despite censorship. The transition to the democratic regime and a new '98 will revive the debates on representation, as will the socio-demographic changes generated by immigration in an already plurinational Spain. This investigation may help better to grasp the contradictions outlined by Martín-Santos and to spark a proleptic attempt at bridging the questions and challenges raised today by a plurinational and increasingly multi-ethnical Spain.

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