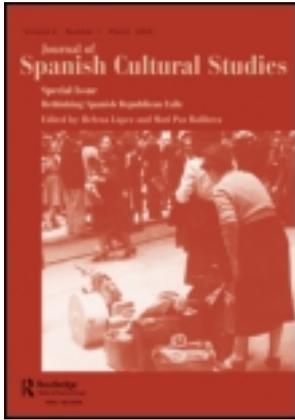


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# Ignacio Fernández de Mata

## SO THAT WE MAY REST IN PEACE: DEATH NOTICES AND ONGOING BEREAVEMENT

MARTÍN VARELA DEL RÍO

fue fusilado por el régimen franquista en agosto de 1940,  
en Talavera de la Reina, sin ser juzgado.  
Sus hijos perdonan, pero no olvidan.<sup>1</sup>

In October 2000, the first exhumation of a mass grave conducted with forensic experts and media coverage offered its remains to a shocked Spanish public.<sup>2</sup> Six years and dozens of exhumations later, the Spanish Parliament commemorated the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Second Spanish Republic, and the 70th anniversary of the start of the Spanish Civil War, by declaring 2006 the Year of Memory and proposing a Law of Historical Memory.<sup>3</sup> The conservative Popular Party (PP), the main opposition party, was the only one to vote against the measure. Its representatives proposed instead that 2006 be declared the Year of Concord; the implication was clear: in contemporary Spain, remembering and social harmony are mutually exclusive, even in death.

Struggles regarding memory in contemporary Spain do not only involve the revision of Francoist History. They encompass the continued silent and not-so-silent grieving of tens of thousands of Spanish families whose loved ones “disappeared” or were assassinated without trial, buried together with others who shared their fate in unmarked graves. This grieving has found no peace in forgetting, because mourners have not been allowed to freely experience nor express the emotions that death generates in their culture: sorrow, loss, need for sympathy and support, and the compulsion to care for their dead.

### Death in culture

Although modern societies operate as if they could cast out death, disease and old age, the sick and the old stay among us, and so do the dead. Some people believe that they can keep the departed alive in their hearts and minds; others believe that the spirits of the dead wander, unseen, above the earth. But beyond either belief is the almost universal fact that societies retain their dead. The symbolic space of most social groups is peopled by both the living and the dead. The seemingly opposing stages of selfhood—being alive and being dead—represent the overall identity of every social

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subject, and both phases—life and death—configure the imaginary timeline of a culture.

Spanish culture, like others in the Judeo-Christian tradition, conceives personhood as having a dual nature, according to which each human being is formed by a body and a soul. The body is imagined as the physical and mortal vessel of the spiritual and immortal soul. The soul, as an incorporeal principle, lacks form and is invisible, but in its eternity it is our “true” self. The cultural construction of this body-soul dyad fulfills individual as well as collective needs, for it allays the intimate distress over the loss of our own life and the lives of our loved ones; and it undergirds the pretense of permanence that society as a whole seeks for itself.

But death brings forth the contradictions of this most basic cultural construct of our society: personhood. And so, when it matters the most to believe that a dead person’s soul is immortal, and that the body that is buried or cremated is not really the person at all, the boundaries between the seemingly unconnected body and soul become blurred. We conceive the soul as bearing the image of its former body, the only morphological representation within our reach. And we lavish care and attention on mortal remains that no longer contain the true self of the deceased: their soul.

Precisely because it exposes the fissures in the construction of personhood, and therefore, raises the possibility that our individual and collective lives may come to an end, fear of death does not seem to be dissipated by belief that the soul is immortal. Death and dying are surrounded by ritual to ease us into a less traumatic coexistence with our unavoidable finitude and corruptibility. These rites mark the culmination of the vital human path that begins at birth and ends in the grave, allowing the dead to “rest in peace.” They rest, therefore they exist: the living go on living in the certainty that the departed are located within the human cycle of life and death, and not merely disappeared; and that when their time comes, they too will rest in peace.

### **“Bad death” and unfinished mourning**

It is not uncommon to hear a person describe another’s death as “good” or “bad.” A bad death usually refers to a painful, agonizing demise, whereas a good death overtakes a person without much physical suffering. According to Manuel José de Lara, however, a good death means that death is “orderly” and “domesticated,” “the disorders caused by anguish” are drowned out by ritual, and the person waits for the end mentally, emotionally, and ritually prepared. “[S]ubmitted to a norm, channeled through tradition, [such a] death no longer incites horror, because the horror death causes comes not from its inevitability, but from the possibility of surprise and turmoil” (De Lara 84–7).

But regardless of the quickness or painlessness of dying, if the deceased does not receive the last rites, the homage of grieving relatives and friends, and/or proper burial, the death is not considered good but bad. Such deaths and the conflicts they cause among the departed’s surviving relatives have been explored in literature and folklore, and constitute a great source of personal and collective distress in times of

warfare and epidemics, natural disasters and shipwrecks. If the necessary rites, which symbolically procure a restful peace, are not followed; if the dead are not (re)located in their proper places, where the living can mourn and visit them; if the living cannot bid farewells, and thereby, their acknowledgement to “their dead,” individuals are not (re)inscribed in the cycle of life and death that characterizes personal and group existence. In such cases the dead are often believed to be restless, at large or ubiquitous, contrary to the supposition that they should be present only relatively speaking; that is, their presence should be circumscribed to specific spaces where they can indeed “Requiescat In Pace,” or “rest in peace.”

Much of the ritual associated with death in Western (and other) cultures is meant to support bereaved friends and family members. Mourners are expected, and allowed, to deal with their emotional and psychological distress and the changes and displacements in their social selves. Alfonso M. di Nola points out that when the group “comforts the individual and participates intensely in the process through various cultural interventions,” surviving relatives’ anguish is alleviated, facilitating their recovery. On the contrary, when survivors are isolated from the group, their liberation from grief is complicated, hampering “the solution to the conflict, [which] can result in neurosis and so-called ‘unresolved mourning.’ In such cases, bereavement assumes a permanent state that torments memory” (Di Nola, 8). One can only surmise how severe “unresolved mourning” has been for those whose loved ones were assassinated and thrown in unmarked mass graves by the Francoist regime in Spain during and after the Spanish Civil War. Not only were their corpses treated as uncomfortable refuse, disposed of secretly and without ceremony, but bereaved relatives were forbidden from public displays of grief over them.

By establishing moments and places where closeness is possible, proper ritual practice makes it possible for the bereaved to distance themselves from their deceased loved ones in (all) remaining time and space. Ceremonies that are culturally articulated throughout the year to prevent forgetting also alleviate the duty of remembering, by making it collective and commemorative instead of individual and constant. But for the relatives of victims of the Francoist repression, there were no memorial masses for the dead souls, no wakes or prayers, no interment in consecrated ground. The intimate grief of loss was compounded by the inability to perform the appropriate death rites and the annual commemorative rituals, adding a sense of guilt and impotence that kept their grief forever fresh.<sup>4</sup> For them, there was no particular place to visit their dead on specific dates of remembrance, allowing closeness—and subsequently distance—to be achieved. Their unresolved mourning became ongoing bereavement. With no mortal remains to bury, no social or communal honors, and no sanctioned spaces of closeness, remembrance becomes permanent: the departed could not depart, and the living must symbolically “carry the dead” with them. In the words of an elderly woman whose father’s remains, exhumed and identified, were finally buried in the cemetery at Aranda de Duero in 2005: “This is finally over. A death that has lasted for so long!”<sup>5</sup>

This preamble is necessary to understand the conflicts experienced by the surviving victims of the Francoist repression whose relatives suffered “bad deaths” and who have themselves endured unfinished and isolated mourning. The exhumations of mass graves that began in the year 2000 thus unearthed more than a mere ideological

debate between Left and Right: they unearthed a deep emotional and psychological trauma with profound cultural roots.

### The obituary war

On 17 July 2006, *El País*, Spain's most widely read newspaper, published a brief obituary which commemorated various deaths that took place on 17 July 1936 in what was to become the first battle of the Spanish Civil War.<sup>6</sup> This unprecedented obituary was followed by dozens of memorial death notices that announced and remembered the demise of persons assassinated by insurgent troops and their sympathizers during the war and in the early postwar years. Soon, the conservative press started to carry "counter" death notices of victims of Republican repression. Thus, coinciding with the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, local and national newspapers became the ground upon which "the obituary war" was fought.

Understanding this phenomenon and its social significance requires paying attention to a complex social–personal context which has become increasingly more complicated with the passage of time—and a lot of time has passed. The post-mortem politicization of the dead and the ideological issues that surround the war and its aftermath do not annul their cultural implications.<sup>7</sup> Obviously, there are politics in the obituary texts—and many of them are above all political texts—but from an emic point of view, for a significant number of their originators the main motivation was to intervene in a cultural conflict. In such cases, politics is embedded in the emotional/cultural claims. It cannot be otherwise: the familial affections and obligations generated by the death of a loved one were transformed by the Francoist Regime into a cruel political mechanism of repression. Because those who had been excluded from cemeteries were also excluded from their communities, from their nation, and from history, the obituaries attempted to reinstate deceased loved ones as members of the social body, interspersing political critiques in the texts. The obituary war was born from the attempts of dozens of individuals and families to finalize processes of ongoing bereavement.

The phenomenon is undeniably a part and product of the so-called movement for the Recovery of Historical Memory (*Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica*, or RMH) that gave visibility and voice to the pain of the Spanish Civil War's "losers" more than six decades after the war had ended. The public debate generated around the RMH movement has been bitter, with biting comments and dismissals postulated in a number of books and articles by "revisionist" intellectuals, such as Pío Moa and César Vidal, who describe the issue as an ideological conflict produced by vindictive individuals who are trying to revive ghosts of the past (Reig Tapia *Anti Moa*). Many have greeted these bereavement notices published by mourning relatives seven decades after the event with dismissive scorn and no attempt to understand the profound cultural and personal factors motivating their publication. Some relatives were not even allowed to publish their notices in the journals of their choice: Tomás Mijá Expósito's grandfather and son were told by the Ferrol edition of *La Voz de Galicia* that for "ethical reasons" the paper would not publish the death notice of the

retired military musician who was murdered by the insurgents on 16 September 1936.<sup>8</sup>

The texts and mortuary morphology of the necrological notices involved in this war reveal some of the multiple and interrelated elements of death, mourning and personhood discussed above. Their contents and dispositions make up one aspect of the process of making visible the traumatic experiences of repression suffered by the Spanish civilian population during and after the Civil War. Narratives of personal dramas, these bereavement notices register in writing the pain over losses that went unnoticed, in a society that reveres both the written—and published—word and the traditions that signal respect and social recognition (Goody). Even if they “announce” deaths that took place 70 years ago, they are often the first step in the performance of rituals and duties of bereavement that are to bring peace to the living and the dead.

### Death notices: objective, morphology, and conflict

According to James and Mary Crissman, “one of the most important messages communicated in human societies has always been the notification that one of their members has died . . . A death notice announces a void in the social fabric and the survivors’ entry into the bereavement role” (Crissman and Crissman). Among most Spanish families, the publishing of a bereavement notice in the local press is today the most common method of transmitting the news that somebody has passed away. Even in small towns and villages and among poorer families, where word-of-mouth communication, aided by the telephone, plays an important role, written notices are used, either posted in public spaces or hand-delivered.<sup>9</sup> Besides fulfilling a practical need—providing information on the place and time of the wake, funeral mass, burial, and other related activities—the community of the newly deceased learns about and assumes his departure through this edict-announcement. Published written notices have become informal social death certificates, while the official Civil Registry death certificate is a private, bureaucratic matter. They constitute an important aspect of the culmination of the individual’s social identity, a last appearance, as it were, in a public space, before he “passes away” to his definitive relocation to the cemetery and for some, the afterlife.

The Spanish Civil War “Republican” memorial death notices analyzed in this paper did not deviate much from the customary formal features of “regular” bereavement notices. Using the formal obit apparatus, which is immediately recognized by the reading public as a proper appeal to honor a deceased member of society, they were used to inform Spain—and the world, at a more abstract level—of the undeniability of their loved ones’ unjust and violent death, and implicitly, of the end of their own silence in regard to it.

The announcements of death analyzed in this paper differ from regular ones in many significant respects. First, they inform of deaths that took place as much as 75 years earlier. Second, most do not speak of funerals, wakes, masses, or burials, nor do they complement a private, official death certificate, as relatives of executed “Reds” were either not given official certificates at all, or were given false certificates produced long after the death had occurred.<sup>10</sup> And most do not include the *names* of

the bereaved friends or relatives, but refer to surviving widows or widowers, children, siblings, and so on. Finally, almost all commemorative announcements provide information on the nature of the death itself, with a more or less detailed account of the events, as well as the deceased's profession, political affiliation, and/or adherence to the country's legal institutions. The majority describe the executioners collectively—Falangists, Francoists, *golpistas*, etc.—as bloodthirsty hordes, murderers, criminals, and the like.

The commemorative notices display a hybrid character that breaks with the ritual language employed in customary death or bereavement notices. They are death notices insofar as they replicate the usual image—brief text enclosed by a frame, the name of the deceased printed in bold letters and usually larger print—and they are located in the obituary pages. Their content integrates other journalistic forms—the detailed obituary, eulogies, editorials or commentaries, brief news pieces—but their representation as death notices amplifies their impact: these texts were published by bereaved relatives acting as such, not by Leftist journalists, academics or politicians. But in order to do so, the relatives had had to investigate, ask questions, dig through archives and registries, and find out “the truth” which they then relayed, and in that sense, reported.

### Printed and handwritten antecedents

Although it is not uncommon to publish a yearly memorial bereavement notice for a brief period after a person passes away and on certain “special” anniversaries (the 5th anniversary, the 10th anniversary etc.), a yearly memorial announcement of death is atypical. Therefore, the 2006 necrologies cannot be considered the first death notices that used the seemingly neutral text of the brief necrological announcement as political galvanizers of historical memory. Since its first appearance in November 1937—a year after his death—until the present, the conservative newspaper *ABC* has carried the annual memorial death notice of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the founder of the Spanish fascist party *Falange Española*. A yearly memorial notice of the death of General Francisco Franco commissioned by the Fundación Francisco Franco has appeared in conservative newspapers since 20 November 1976 (Franco died on 20 November 1975). Both notices usually include an invitation to the respective memorial mass and ceremony held each year at the chapel of the Valle de los Caídos.

Before the first of the notices in the obituary war was published in *El País*, a pro-Republican commemorative notice had been published on 18 October 2003. The notice announced the reburial of the remains of Mr. Emilio Silva Faba, and was written by his grandson, Emilio Silva Barrera, founder of the Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory (ARMH) and prime mover of the related memory movement. After sharing a mass grave for decades with 13 other bodies in Priaranza del Bierzo, the remains had been exhumed and identified thanks to Silva Barrera's persistent investigation and activism. The published notice described the collective character of the execution.

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**EMILIO SILVA FABA**

**Fusilado el 16 de octubre de 1936, en Priaranza  
del Bierzo, junto a otros 13 hombres.**

---

*Por aquellos que fueron más valientes y aciajos  
por guardar su memoria, por labrar su camino  
por hacer que sus lagos sean mares de historia,  
por sembrarle al destino las veredas que abrieron.*<sup>11</sup>

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Su funeral se celebrará hoy, sábado 18 de octubre, en el cementerio de Pereje (León), a las 12 horas. Sus restos reposarán junto a los de su mujer, Modesta Santín, que pasó más de 60 años llorando su ausencia.

Despite the symbolic significance of this notice, it was not followed by others, unlike the one dedicated to Virigilio Leret in 2006. On one hand, by including information on the burial—delayed for almost seven decades—this notice had a “normal” rather than commemorative function: it set out to inform readers about a memorial funerary service, not to rectify history. Moreover, being written by the spokesman for what would become the first expert exhumation team in the country, a co-founder of the ARMH, journalist and published author, Silva’s bereavement notice for his grandfather did not need to tell a personal, intimate story the way the notices of more anonymous citizens did. Finally, the environment in which Silva reburied his grandfather’s remains was very different from that which surrounded the memorial obits published in and after July 2006. By then, there had been dozens of mass grave exhumations and diverse public and institutional commemorations of the victims on the Republican side; the Ley de Memoria Histórica was under discussion; and there was a different public representation of, and attitude towards, the victimized families.

Before 2006, spontaneous expressions by anonymous citizens had in fact been posted in different public spaces throughout the country. Positioned somewhere between memorial death notices, eulogies, and denunciations, handwritten, or printed notices were posted on trees, walls, and poles in significant places or on significant dates. Two of these “informal bereavement notices” posted in the province of Burgos are particularly relevant to this paper. The first, reproduced below, was found nailed to a tree beside the main road on All Saints Day in the northern Valley of Mena in 2004:

¿?  
**¿DONDE LE  
 PONEMOS LAS  
 FLORES A NUESTROS  
 MUERTOS?**

FAMILIARES DE DESAPARECIDOS EN  
 1936. POR LA MEMORIA HISTÓRICA  
 EN MENA

---

The question mark at the top of the notice added a sense of defamiliarization to this interrogative denunciation directed at the “rest of society” which on that day of the year took to the roads to visit cemeteries, honoring departed friends and relatives with flowers and prayer.

The second notice was a handwritten placard placed on a tree at Monte Estépar in 2005. Since the time of the war it was widely known that *paseados*, prisoners abducted by guards and Falangist parapolic groups, were brought to Monte Estépar from the Burgos penitentiary to be shot and buried in unmarked mass graves. The placard was posted publicly, during a ceremony celebrated annually since the transition to democracy in the early 1980s to honor the dead whose remains are still buried there. Entitled “HISTORICAL MEMORY” and subtitled “NOT TO HATE, BUT TO REPAIR,” a first block of text poetically addresses the honored individual, telling him that his death was not in vain. Challenging the anonymity and invisibility of the mass grave that still holds his body, the deceased is fully identified, with a large photograph; written below is his name, “Don Balbino LOPEZ PUENTE,” and a description of his life and the circumstances of his disappearance: he was a schoolteacher, 50 years old and father of 7, when he was “detained by the seditious officers” along with other men and taken to the Burgos prison. The text ends by asking the reader/society, “How many more lie with them in this sinister landscape? How many sinister landscapes still chill our hearts? Will their remains be recovered so that they can be honored?” (Anonymous handwritten placard, 2005. Monte Estépar (Burgos))

A year later, on 12 October 2006, Don Balbino’s “official” death notice was published in *El País*, with an even more detailed account of the circumstances of his and other prisoners’ deaths. Although it starts customarily enough, with “In memoriam/70th anniversary” at the top, followed by the man’s name and profession and the indication that his relatives remember him with affection and grieve his loss, this commemorative notice becomes a journalistic chronicle that not only informs the reader in detail about what happened and how the family found out, but ends by stating that reliable documents exist that attest to the information relayed. López Puente’s obituary thus clearly represents the hybrid character of notices written and published in the context of the obituary war as well as the mixed feelings of anger, grief, and desire for the rectification of a situation that has dragged on for decades.

## Case studies

The following analysis is based on 51 death notices which memorialize 75 deceased individuals, published in *El País* between 17 July 2006 and 3 June 2007, at the height of the “ink war.”<sup>12</sup> The circumstances of their deaths are as varied as the dates of their assassinations, including summary and illegal executions committed during the first days of the war by insurgent officers; purges in communities controlled by the insurgents; mass assassinations of political and allegedly political prisoners at any given point during the war; and illegal executions and disappearances that took place months and years after the war was over.

Published on Monday, 17 July 2006 in the obituary section of *El País*, the first Spanish Civil War “Republican” memorial death notice did not directly commemorate the anniversary of the death of the man it honored (who was shot on 18 July 1936), but the 70th anniversary of the unofficial beginning of the coup d’état.<sup>13</sup> The notice is reproduced as follows:

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*In Memoriam*

de

**VIRGILIO LERET RUIZ**

COMANDANTE DE LA BASE DE HIDROAVIONES DEL ATALAYÓN DE MELILLA

y de los alféreces

**ARMANDO GONZÁLEZ CORRAL**

y **LUIS CALVO CALAVIA**

suboficiales, clases y tropas bajo su mando, que el 17 de julio de 1936 libraron la primera batalla de la Guerra Civil, en defensa de la Constitución y del Gobierno legítimo de la República, contra las fuerzas regulares indígenas al mando del comandante Mohamed Ben Mizziam. Estas víctimas del terrorismo franquista fueron asesinadas, después de su rendición, al amanecer del 18 de julio de 1936, sin que, hasta la fecha, se conozca el paradero de sus restos. Como producto de un pacto de silencio inaceptable en cualquier sociedad democrática, España sigue estando en deuda con la justicia, la verdad, y la memoria de las víctimas de esos grupos sediciosos.

Sus hijas, y sus nietas.

Caracas, 17 de julio de 2006

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The text extols the military principles of honor and esprit de corps, especially those of the commanding officer, who comes across as a man who would have wanted his

men, who shared his fate, to share his memorial. Briefly described in the memorial notice, these very first crimes of the Civil War reveal an important subtext that links the apparent dishonor of the subversives, the moral superiority of the righteous victims, and patriotism and Spanish identity. First of all, the executed military personnel died doing their duty, given that soldiers and officers swear loyalty to the government and the constitution and are bound to defend them regardless of their personal opinions and political ideology. The insurgent troops that attacked the men at the base were, therefore, attacking what, had they been dutiful soldiers, they should have defended. This argument, which reallocates to the defeated the genuine patriotism and love and defense of Spain claimed by the victorious rebels, recurs in many of the Republican memorial notices that followed. It is an emotionally charged response to one of the central tenets of Francoism that “othered” the Reds, placing them outside the nation by decrying their adherence to the Soviet Union and/or foreign ideologies, and their attack on everything Spanish: traditional national values (such as patriarchy, adherence to a hierarchical society and culture), Spanish religiosity (an exclusivist Catholicism with a politically active clergy), and so on. In Leret’s death notice, this symbolic transfer of true “Spanishness” leaves no room for doubt as to who were legitimate, honorable Spanish patriots and who were illegitimate, anti-Spanish outsiders. The obit makes it clear that the rebel armed uprising was carried out by North African troops (officially called “Regulares”), commanded by a “Mohammed Ben Mizziám.” The attackers were the incarnation of the quintessential Other of Spanish history: Moors. Although nothing else is said about this, the implication is evident: the coup and the insurgency, self-styled as a Crusade for (a Catholic) God and Spain, was built on the disreputable support of non-Christian (and un-Christian) Moors.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, the bereavement notice ends with various elements that represent the past in terms of the present day context in which remembrance takes place. First of all, it refers to Francoist “terrorism,” evoking the global enemy of the West today (one to which the Spanish right is especially sensitive) in order to underscore the illegitimacy of Francoist politics and ideology. Second, the “pact of silence” it mentions refers to the *de facto* consensus upheld by all the major political parties during the transition to democracy (roughly 1975–1982) that spilled over to the post-transition governments of the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) under Felipe González (1982–1996), and predictably continued throughout the conservative Partido Popular’s governments under José María Aznar (1996–2004). By its mere publication the notice is hoping to break that pact of silence, explicitly stating that for as long as Spain maintains this pact and refuses to attend to “justice, truth, and the memory” of its citizens who were victimized by seditious extremists, it is not a true democracy.<sup>15</sup>

If I have given an extensive analysis of one of the hundreds of obituaries and notices of this kind, this is not only because this obit was the first to open fire, as it were, but because it starkly reveals something which underwrites all Republican memorial bereavement notices: the desire to clear the names of the deceased beyond the shadow of a doubt; to highlight the unjustified and abominable nature of their deaths and/or the suffering inflicted upon them and their families; and to dignify them as individuals with socially significant roles and identities. This latter aspect is revealed in the custom of specifying the departed’s profession (something often done in regular death announcements), the definitive marker of belonging

that underlines their former social usefulness and participation in the community. Respect for legality and the political order, love of country, a sense of honor: the deceased are represented as embodying these values in the notices published by their relatives because these were values abrogated by the Francoists and denied to their victims. Other, the tragedy of their deaths is transcended by their heroism: they were killed for adhering to an ideal, fighting for justice, defending their nation.

Many of the notices in which the political ideals of the deceased are explicit seem to correspond to middle-class sectors.<sup>16</sup> Thus, a soldier died “por defender la legalidad republicana y la Constitución”<sup>17</sup> a teacher, “por defender a la República;”<sup>18</sup> two policemen and a mayor, “defendiendo la libertad y la República.”<sup>19</sup> A lawyer turned civil governor, a university librarian, and a representative were “[...] represaliados por defender la legalidad republicana;”<sup>20</sup> another representative, “por defender los ideales del socialismo, la democracia y la república;”<sup>21</sup> a lawyer turned mayor, “por sus convicciones democráticas y su lealtad a las legítimas instituciones de la República;”<sup>22</sup> and the mayor of Seville, “por permanecer leal al Gobierno legítimo de la II República Española.”<sup>23</sup>

Most of the Republican memorial notices analyzed are secular. None contain explicit religious references (to resting in peace, to heaven, to prayer) or mention the performance of religious services or funerary rituals, not even the two that are headed by a small cross.<sup>24</sup> The expression “in memoriam,” in memory of, offers a double discourse, a political and a ritual invocation. It alludes directly to the memory conflict that is taking place at a societal level by using the normalized form of necrological language. It also speaks to the personal, culturally constructed process of remembering departed loved ones in a public space that calls upon the rest of the community to join in the remembrance. Of the 51 bereavement notices analyzed, 22 are headed by the expression “In Memoriam,” while others include the word “memory” or “history” in more elaborate constructions: “El paso del tiempo mitiga el dolor, pero no obnubila la memoria. Vives en nuestro recuerdo;”<sup>25</sup> “Reivindicar tu memoria es creer en nuestro propio futuro, que será mejor, más justo y más libre;”<sup>26</sup> “Que sus nombres no se borren en la historia.”<sup>27</sup> All but four make explicit reference to memory (or *memoriam*), remembering, and particularly, not forgetting. Of those four, one speaks of revindicating the name of the deceased and feeling proud of him;<sup>28</sup> and another, of paying homage that “tras tantos años de impuesto silencio e ignominia, tiene aún pendiente un hombre bueno.”<sup>29</sup>

This last example brings us to the multiple discourse of remembrance, commemoration, and homage, which is particularly present in those notices that refer to the 70th anniversary of the death. The essence of the conflict—not just the conflict over the obituaries, but the deeper conflict of memories, and the dilemma of unfinished mourning—is condensed in those three terms. They embody the memory and memorializing of the dead; the public evidence that they are not forgotten; and the need to achieve ritual and dignified conclusion. Many of these notices are ends in themselves, particularly those that self-identify as homage and remembrance: “Sus hijos [...] le tributan públicamente este recuerdo en el 70 aniversario de su muerte;”<sup>30</sup> “Sirva esta nota como público reconocimiento de su sacrificio;”<sup>31</sup> “sus hijos [...] le dedican este homenaje con admiración y cariño en el

70° aniversario de su muerte;”<sup>32</sup> “os quieren recordar con este acto simbólico de puesta de flores periodísticas en esa lápida que todavía no tenéis y ruega a todos sus familiares, amigos, conocidos y personas de buena voluntad les recuerden y rindan homenaje a los 70 años.”<sup>33</sup>

Although collectively the notices make ideological historical judgments and reflect the particular political position of their writers (on the Spanish Left), they are much more than political or ideological documents. It was their interpretation as politicking scripts by members of the press, particularly the conservative media, as well as by relatives of victims of the Republican repression, that motivated the obituary war. But these texts should be understood primarily as exactly what they appear to be: memorial bereavement notices, public announcements of a death and mourning in a family. Invoking the deceased’s political inclinations is not a clever propaganda device by relatives who share the same politics, nor an under-handed provocation aimed at victors who are now on the politically incorrect side of history. It responds to the desire to once and for all shift the guilt and the responsibility for the death away from the victims and onto the perpetrators. In conservative circles, militancy in Leftist politics or sympathy for any ideals associated with the Left have long been considered legitimate causes for repression during the war and the regime. The implication has been that the victims were partly to blame for choosing to pursue antiestablishment politics, as much or more than the people who pulled the triggers. The clear and public declaration of the deceased’s politics is meant to shock a contemporary public: tens of thousands of Spanish people were assassinated, their remains concealed from their families, for ascribing to ideas that today constitute normal aspects of democratic, modern politics. But the form used to make this public declaration—the obituary—speaks to the intimate cultural and emotional aspect which the Right—and those who argue that “everything is political”—seemed unable (or unwilling) to see.

The aspects of these death notices that confer the greatest dramatic effect are the personal details of the deceased and their surviving relatives. Those who died were barbers, teachers, mayors, laborers, librarians, soldiers, policemen, lawyers, dentists, journeymen, education inspectors, representatives, cooks, bakers, farmers, masons, electricians, cobblers, etc. The age of the departed and the details of their relationship to those who memorialize them make the loss more tangible: they are members of a family, something that all readers can identify with. The juxtaposition of these personal details, which help us see and feel the person—be it a 40-year-old farmer, the father of three, now orphaned, children; or a 15-year-old activist who still lived with his parents, etc.—with words such as “murdered” (used 27 times), and “shot” (10 times), generates a strong reaction in readers. Who can disregard the touching grief expressed by the man who wrote “in memory of” three men aged, 55, 27, and 26, “killed at km. 5 on the road from Cabra to Monturque [. . .]. After 70 years, we don’t know where they are buried. They were my father and my two brothers. I am 84 years old.”<sup>34</sup>? Who can tell that man, who was 14 when he lost his father and brothers and has yet to bury them, to forget and keep quiet?

## The war is on

It is perfectly understandable that these commemorative notices open wounds and awaken discomfort, especially in communities where such crimes took place, where shame and opprobrium—the feelings of “guilty consciences”—envelop the material authors as well as those who actively or passively participated in the marginalization of surviving “Red” relatives. It makes sense that such people would want to continue denying, concealing, silencing, or forgetting what they did, pretending that “the past” is water under the bridge. But the bereaved relatives see no reason they should have to make perpetrators feel better by indulging such wishes.

Not long after the first commemorative memorial notices were published in *El País* in 2006, death notices “from the other side” made their appearance in the conservative press: relatives of men and women who had been assassinated by representatives of the Republican government or violent Leftist militants in 1936 sent memorial death notices for *their* dead. Their authors did not see the death announcements of those killed by the Francoist insurgent or regime as manifestations of grief, ongoing bereavement, unspoken indignation, or legitimate vindications of deceased members of society who were yet to have proper burials and receive the traditional “respect for the dead.”

Most, if not all, of the conservative memorial notices bear the trappings of religious necrologies, with a cross heading the text and other religious references. They often do not simply pray for the deceased: they actively seek the involvement and solidarity of the readers, asking *them* to pray. This is rooted not only in the traditional language and ritual of Catholic bereavement notices, but in the long-established support received by the relatives of those “Fallen for God and Spain,” who have been assuming that the rest of society shares both their grief and their religious beliefs. Many notices repeat the discourses of the dictatorship which identified Spain and Spanishness as the patrimony of Franco’s supporters, the enemy as barbaric and anti-Spanish, and Catholicism and Spanish nationalism as naturally bound together. Thus, we read that Pablo Ruiz was “vilmente asesinado junto a otros españoles (emphasis added) por las hordas rojas”;<sup>35</sup> and the family of a 29-year-old farmer who was “asesinado por las hordas rojas,” “ruega una oración por su alma y por la de todos los mártires que dieron su vida por Dios y por España.”<sup>36</sup>

Some conservative notices contain references to the identity of their loved ones’ executioners by name, unlike the more collective references of Republican memorial notices. Thus, although bereaved victors saw those responsible for the crimes committed against their loved ones punished with prison, torture, and/or death, some still feel the need to publicly scorn the perpetrators and/or their accomplices, reproducing the Francoist practice of publicly repudiating the “Reds.” The most vivid example is the memorial notice reproduced below:<sup>37</sup>

## 70 ANIVERSARIO

## JESÚS MARÍA Y ARROYO

## SACERDOTE

19-20 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE 1936

Delatado por Gregoria G.G., que condujo a los milicianos hasta su detención, fue llevado a la terrorífica “checa de fomento” el 19-9-1936. El día 20-9-1936 informaron que “lo habían puesto en libertad”. Fue imposible entonces encontrar su cadáver.

Terminada la guerra, Gregoria G.G., y su madre Leonor G.E., fueron juzgadas por proceso sumarísimo de urgencia n.º 5.237, el 19-2-1940 hay sentencia condenatoria a Gregoria, convicta y confesa, a 30 años de reclusión mayor y accesorias y su madre Leonor fue absuelta.

Indultada el día 28-6-1949, se casó y enviudó sin hijos, en su pueblo la llamaban “la kiosquera” por tener un kiosco de periódicos. Murió en Burgos el 22-8-1998, a los 92 años, 7 meses y 28 días de edad.

Es imposible encontrar el cadáver de Jesús, ahora perdido en la relaciones interminables que hacían las autoridades de las demarcaciones donde aparecían los cadáveres, torturados y tiroteados, antes de darles sepultura. A la inmensa mayoría les enterraban sin identificar.

Todo esto se puede comprobar en el archivo histórico nacional, causa general,  
Legajos 1.502 al 1.563.

Elevo oraciones por la víctima, mi querido tío Jesús, por las víctimas todas, sean del bando que sean, y por sus verdugos, deseando que este dolor sin sentido, que ahora está siendo removido sin piedad, no sea padecido por nadie nunca más.

Tu sobrina CARMEN, de 85 años, que recuerda horrorizada los tres años de terror que se vivieron en Madrid.

Beyond the content of the notice itself—the length and detail regarding the life of the informer who led to the death of Jesús María, the informal syntax, the archival data that lend unquestionable veracity—this notice raises various noteworthy issues. First, like the relatives on the “other side” who are in a similar situation of ritual incompleteness, Carmen has done a lot of research into the death of her uncle, whose body she has never been able to find and mourn properly. The notice reveals that despite the swiftness of Francoist justice—Gregoria’s trial, conviction, and punishment—the terrible threads of trauma and death that tie her to her uncle’s perpetrator remain unbroken. It also reveals the desire of the notice’s author to silence the demands of the bereaved families who publicly accuse Francoists of repression, by providing undeniable proof of the Reds’ own repressive actions. The prayers for all of the victims and all of the executioners is in line with “apologist” discourses that whitewash the Francoist repression by pointing out that abuses were committed by both sides; that such extremes happen in all wars; and that since we are all to blame, nobody is to blame (except perhaps the Reds for “starting it”—Gregoria is publicly exposed, etc.). Carmen does not come over as a knee-jerk apologist; such discourses permeated all of Francoist society and were internalized by its members. This is

evident in her dismay at the “stirring up” of pain that, by implication, was better left alone: another apologist discourse.

Various counter-memorial notices insidiously claimed to “recover historical memory,” basing their right to this discourse on their experience of trauma and the repression of their loved ones at the hands of political rivals. One such notice is headed by the phrase “HISTORICAL MEMORY” under the cross at the center-top. Another begins with “70th anniversary/Recovery of the Historical memory of . . .”<sup>38</sup> Both of these notices end with identical conciliatory closings, soliciting a prayer for the deceased’s soul, “for the forgiveness of those guilty of the crime, and for the reconciliation of Spaniards.” This appropriation of a concept that is central to the claims of the relatives of the men and women buried in Francoist mass graves all over the country is not accidental. Counter-notices seek to drown out the claims “of the other side” in what they perceive as a struggle over the representation of the past.

We must not confuse the bereaved relatives who felt the need to publish these angry counter-notices with the perpetrators of the Francoist repression:<sup>39</sup> as the loving relatives of men and women murdered by agents of Republican repression, the politics of counter-notices are born from an intimate, traumatic experience of loss similar to that suffered by bereaved Republican families. But their coordinates are very different: while the losers of the Civil War use strong language, rude adjectives, and accusatory tones as a reaction to decades of stigmatization, marginalization, and lack of ritual conclusion, the victors’ similar recourse to aggravation comes from frustration at losing the symbolic preeminence conferred upon them by the Franco regime. If the murdered Reds are accepted as victims who were also fighting for Spain (rather than anti-Spanish miscreants who provoked the war); the Reds’ relatives redefined as wronged; the Francoist violence redefined as criminal; the Crusade labeled an illegitimate insurgency; and the glorious regime termed a vile dictatorship, then the Fallen for God and Spain died for nothing. The lack of ritual resolution of the bereaved victors has (apart from those who, like Carmen, have not recovered their loved ones’ remains) been *institutionally constructed* by the Franco regime. Their dead were a *perpetuum mobile* used by the state and the Church for political capital and legitimacy. Following the institutionalization of the political category “Fallen for God and Spain” and the identification of the Civil War and the dictatorship as “the Crusade,” many were declared martyrs by the Catholic Church (Raguer; Casanova; De Febo). The blood of these “Fallen” men and women, so the story went, compelled General Francisco Franco and his supporters to rid the country of socialism, anarchism, Republicanism, communism, masonry, atheism, and all other “false doctrines,” and to establish an intolerant, dictatorial regime founded on a narrowly-defined Spanish nationalism, Catholicism, and conservative social and political tenets.<sup>40</sup> The Fallen were constantly invoked in speeches and images; there were public homages to them; plaques with their names were installed in every parish church (mandatory by law); and the massive Valle de los Caídos (under construction for almost 19 years) was established as a site where relatives could honor their loved ones’ remains.<sup>41</sup> It is not surprising then, that these mourners, whose bereavement was perpetuated for political ends, should have misunderstood the general re-signifying of the past coupled with the Republican memorial death notices as the products of rancor.

Both Republican and the conservative memorial notices reflect an “experiential nucleus” that, although different for each particular family, shares the sense of

ongoing grief woven around a traumatic experience of loss. None of these notices commemorates deaths in battle, but individual assassinations or massacres. It is simplistic to argue that, unlike the Republicans, the relatives of those who “fell for God and Spain” at the hands of the Republican repression have had their time and space for mourning. They certainly have had public support, but their deceased loved ones have not been allowed to rest in peace, for they were transformed into active political figures in the national pantheon of Francoism. If the fallen victors’ families did not carry their traumatic memories with them, an obituary war would not have taken place. And yet, apparently unaware of how the regime manipulated their grief, their reactions are mostly concerned with preserving their position as the Civil War’s real victims.

### Memory equations

The personal suffering endured by families that lost one or more members to assassinations and experienced other types of violent repression outside the battlefield at the hands of the contending sides is only one aspect of the experiential nucleus that forms traumatic memories. Originating in a similar process for conservative and Republican families, the traumatic memory of each bereaved home is the fruit of the interaction between their private experiences and the public representation of the process that generated those experiences. During the Francoist regime, the victims on the victorious side were honored and glorified for having taken part in the terrible, albeit necessary, crusade for national salvation (Reig Tapia *Memoria de la Guerra Civil*). In democratic Spain, where the Civil War is increasingly interpreted as the nefarious result of an illegitimate insurrection that preceded a dictatorial regime, the victims on the losing side are attracting positive public attention. So does that mean that “both sides” have legitimate “historical memories” to recover?

In this politically charged arena that transforms memorial bereavement notices into “darts” (Greciet), it is necessary to differentiate between two contending public representations that have aspired to articulate the personal experiences of repression on each side of the political spectrum, instead of referring to both of them as “historical memory.” The Francoist representation of its violent past has constituted a Kantian *Memoria Rerum Gestarum* (MRG). Kant distinguished between *res gestae*—historical events, or, what actually happened—from *memoria rerum gestarum*: the organization and representation of historical events and processes according to a general plan or ideology.<sup>42</sup> The movement for historical memory seeks to redefine official history by forcing society and academia to acknowledge the losers’ experiences of repression and condemn Francoism, *precisely because* such experiences were concealed and/or justified by the state and the hegemonic segments of society. Historic Memory shares some characteristics of the MRG, for its historical contextualization partakes of an excessive idealization of the Second Republic as an Arcadian opposite to the absolute evil of Francoism.

Understanding how a family’s affiliation to a political side has conditioned the ways in which it handles its traumatic memories will allow us to get at the experiential nucleus of repression that frames, among other things, the war of memorial

bereavement notices. More simply stated, the Experiential Nucleus (EN) is comprised by a Personal Experience of Trauma (PET) and the hegemonic representation of the trauma-generating process. For nearly 40 years, this representation was the Francoist MRG; but during the last decade, there has been an increasingly ascendant representation which can be referred to as *Historical Memory* (HM).

### Personal Experience of Trauma and *Memoria Rerum Gestarum*

Beyond the “official history” taught in schools, the Francoist MRG included popularly relayed facts, assumptions, images, symbols, topics, clichés, and sayings. These mechanisms, which universally help people grasp the complexities of their existence and the entirety of their surrounding environment, condition the reality that is interpreted; but in open, democratic societies, they are wont to change in response to the introduction of new facts and knowledge, changing circumstances, contact with other cultures, and so on. The lasting reproduction of particularly incongruent or contradictory constructs as part of “national culture” often characterizes totalitarian regimes, thanks to such regimes’ control over the institutions that generate public opinion. In the Spanish case, the work of Francoist socialization done by schools, universities, and the media was complemented by the Catholic Church, official censors, and international isolation. All over the country, Spaniards traversed a geography that visibly and loudly celebrated the regime and its victory: street names and school names, obelisks, statues, plaques on churches, monuments that dotted the countryside. The calendar sacralized Francoist milestones. Only certain movies, television programs, books, and radio shows could be seen, read, or heard. People who were uninterested in and/or afraid of politics assimilated such reality as “normal;” and those who were ideologically opposed to the regime, including survivors of repression, were forced to view their experiences through the MRG lens. Bereaved orphans, nephews and nieces of “Reds” had to sing the hymns of the Falange at school; they had to learn that their departed relatives were to blame for the war and for the hardships endured by all. It is not surprising that many ended up internalizing the Francoist MRG’s representation of Leftist politics, with some becoming staunch supporters of the regime.

For those families whose victims became the Fallen for God and Spain, deceased loved ones were transformed into personal crucified saviors as well as patriotic burdens that they and everybody else had to carry in perpetual remembrance. Surviving relatives’ social identities were reconfigured around their Christ-like dead whose immolation “at the altar of the nation” honored them. The Fallen’s violent deaths were constantly recalled and retold in painful detail.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the Francoist authorities often reinterred the remains of victims of Republican repression, whom they socially and politically revered, without identifying them or notifying their bereaved relatives. For many, the constant remembrance of the *death* of their loved ones ended up suffocating memories of their lives and personalities. It is useful to recall Jesús María y Arroyo’s death notice, in which his niece retells the life-story of Gregoria, condemned as her uncle’s executioner, but offers no information on Fr. María y Arroyo himself. What the regime has made memorable in Carmen’s eyes is

how a “Red” woman ratted on her uncle, a priest, and caused his death, and then went on with her life. Her notice thus reveals that personal memories of trauma and loss have been configured by a political imperative to remember the Other’s evil and the blood they shed, impeding the intimate imperative of closure and healing.

### Personal Experience of Trauma and *Historical Memory*

Regardless of the veiled emotional disruption caused by its political use, the slow dismantling of the Francoist MRG by the work done to recover HM is much more disruptive for the Fallen’s surviving relatives. Their dead have gone from national heroes, to historical baggage whose sour smell of Fascism and dictatorship most Spaniards want forgotten. Despite their insistence on moving on and leaving old wounds and the past alone, their rejection of what is almost literally a historical “page-turning” (from the hegemony of Francoism to the growing importance of the so-called historical memory of the silenced others) is evidenced in the memorial bereavement notices published in *El Mundo* and *ABC*.

“Historical memory” as it is conceived by those who initiated the movement for its recovery in Spain constitutes today the near-hegemonic political and cultural construct that configures the traumatic memories of those who lost loved ones to the Francoist repression. It is precisely its near-hegemony and the increasing rejection of the Francoist MRG that framed and *provoked* both the obituary war and the so-called revisionist historiography that has sought to highlight Francoist achievements and soundness by underlining Republican failures. Not only is Spanish society today plagued by the horrors that Franco had defeated and kept at bay for forty years—increasing secularization and separation of Church and state, women’s liberation and equality, individual liberties (such as gay rights, divorce, etc.) according to this discourse but Francoists feel frustrated and scared that they are also losing control of the past. And they are.<sup>44</sup>

The concept of historical memory and its “recovery” was consciously adopted by Spanish activists from the Latin American process whereby the testimonies of victims of human rights violations were privileged as “historical memories” that revealed the brutality of the Cold War dictatorships.<sup>45</sup> Recovering historical memory did not mean finding lost memories (most survivors never could forget such experiences). Memories conceived as such are historical legitimations: by incorporating their experience as victims (their memory) into the country’s ordered, narrative versions about the past (history), victims would become historical subjects, transcending the objectification of victimhood.

In Spain, it is the so-called third generation, usually grandchildren of victims of the Francoist repression, that has been most active in the recovery of historical memory.<sup>46</sup> Raised in a democratic society, unlike their parents who grew up during the dictatorship, they have been less influenced by ideological control, fear, and silence. Moreover, they have had access to the historical research on the Francoist repression produced since the early 1980s, and many also participated in an academic environment transformed by the attention paid to so-called subaltern protagonists. The defeated of the Spanish Civil War shared in this subalternity, among other things, through the institutional and public silencing of their repression and the burial of their

dead in unmarked mass graves.<sup>47</sup> The primary objective of the great majority of Spain's own "relatives of the disappeared" has been to recover the remains of their loved ones. It has been in the struggle to accomplish this that they have developed the objective of reconfiguring national history or reviving republicanism.<sup>48</sup> The fact that they have been active historical subjects concerned with political and ideological legitimations and human rights issues does not cancel the fact of their having been victims of repression. The condition of victimhood does not preclude—in fact, it often encourages—activist commitment to right social or political wrongs.

There is an important difference between the cultural and political construct of HM and the previously hegemonic MRG of Francoism. Accordingly, the displacement of hegemonic representations goes beyond a mere war of versions. While the MRG denied historical facts—like the statistics of the Francoist repression—in a reorganization of meanings that humiliated and othered a large segment of society, HM seeks to broaden the meanings and historical accounts in circulation incorporating as much historical fact as possible. Although historical memory narratives are not apolitical and are affected by certain historical idealizations of the Second Republic period, they do not seek to control the thoughts or livelihoods of their political opponents; they are born from the legitimate demand for an inclusive, national narrative of the past that is not only concerned with human dignity, but also has a basis in historical truth.

## Final remarks

The memorial death notices published in both the conservative and liberal press have transcended the individual deaths that they commemorated, becoming a collective, popular notification of the death of silence. They "announce" the end of the period when the defeated had to keep their demands for justice for their dead quiet, while the victors could feel pride in their deeds and demand collective sorrow for their "Fallen" relatives. The flood of voices that were printed in the obituary section of the national press revealed that the social approval and political impunity that have sheltered perpetrators and insurgents is no longer tenable.

The so-called obituary war has also shown the social incomprehension that envelops the experience of Spanish victims of repression. Those of us whose families did not suffer directly from Francoist or Republican repression must strive to understand the sentiments beneath the obituary war before dismissing the Republican notices as a heavy-handed provocation by historical memory activists, and the counter-notices as typical right-wing warmongering. None of these notices commemorates deaths in battle, but individual assassinations or massacres. For four decades the dictatorship reaped political legitimacy from the Fallen and instilled a perpetual social fear of "another" civil war by keeping their relatives' wounds fresh. We must keep in mind the effects of such manipulation and the regime's construction of relatives' social identities as victims of an evil Left in order to value their need to publish notices that countered, and in so doing, cancelled, the pain and mourning of their political rivals. The victimization of the Fallen's relatives was as real as the deadly repression that took the lives of their loved ones, even though they obtained economic, political and social

benefits, and most became staunch supporters of the dictatorship. It should come as no surprise that Republican survivors of Francoist repression should be unaware or uninterested in the emotional devastation that these bereaved Francoist families must face in light of the recovery of historical memory. However, the strength and staying power of the Francoist MRG does not excuse or justify the Fallen's surviving relatives' desire to continue silencing and marginalizing their bereaved rivals.

The memorial death notices also reveal much about the anguish that thousands of surviving relatives of victims of repression underwent for decades under a political regime that did not let them achieve closure or make peace. The facts themselves were widely known by 2006, but the depth of the grief for countless personal tragedies that leave no reader untouched is what transforms the notices into important documents. Intimate tragedies generated by political repression are made palpable, given names and faces, in ways that should have encouraged the general public to understand the cultural drama suffered by neighbors and citizens: the latent, unsettling anguish over the violent and unjust end suffered by their departed father, uncle, brother, mother, son, daughter, etc.; the dehumanization of their assassinated loved ones and the concealment of their remains; the misinformation and denials surrounding their deaths; the further indignities heaped upon them as well as the dead; their representation as culpable for the war, its terror, and the economic maladies that tormented Spaniards of all political stripes, etc. All of these delicate aspects appear in the obit narratives. But journalists, commentators, political leaders, anonymous citizens who write in blogs and chats, as well as some bereaved families themselves, saw a settling of scores. Many read the death notices as ingenious political activism. Many others demanded that those bereaved who made their grief public and commemorated the death of their loved ones, "turn the page" and look to the future, leaving the dead to rest in peace. However, these publications were doing just that: they were helping survivors to cope with their grief by completing the cultural practices and demands necessary to move on and let us all rest in peace.

## Notes

- 1 *El País*, 1 February 2007.
- 2 The various exhumations performed by relatives of the deceased on the advent of democratic rule were done without any institutional or scientific support.
- 3 Presented in 2006, the "Ley de Memoria Histórica" became effective on 26 December 2007.
- 4 For an analysis of unfinished mourning, see Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich.
- 5 Personal communication, 1 September 2005, Aranda de Duero, Burgos.
- 6 Although 18 July 1936 is officially commemorated as the first day of the Civil War, the initial uprising against constitutional officials and soldiers took place on 17 July 1936, at Melilla.
- 7 For theoretical analyses of similar cases, see Verdery.
- 8 The anecdote, narrated by the grandson, as well as the text of the rejected bereavement notice are online on <http://www.amigus.org/web/archives/006115.php> (accessed on 30 March 2009). This newspaper was not the only one to reject memorial obituaries. In a personal communication, Carlota Leret revealed that when she had tried to place a second bereavement notice for her father in 2007 in *El*

*País*, the journal refused to publish it, for they had decided not to publish more such notices. A veiled threat to contact the European Court of Human Rights for the violation of her freedom of expression led the paper to reconsider their decision, at least in her case.

- 9 Enrique Casas Gaspar describes various customs of announcing death in Spanish villages.
- 10 In the 1940s, the regime dealt with the administrative conflicts generated by countless widows and orphans who were not legally considered as such for lack of an official death certificate, by pressuring them to sign and accept certificates in which their deceased were declared “dead in warfare.” Such distortion of what had been crimes committed *outside* warfare has had lasting consequences in social memory, generating feelings of guilt among the survivors who signed, and of betrayal and anger among those who, as they say, refused to “sell” the truth for “a mess of pottage.” See Fernández de Mata “The Logics of Violence”, 2533.
- 11 This italicized fragment corresponds to the poem “Preposiciones de vida” written by Silva Barrera and published online.
- 12 All in all, more than a hundred memorial bereavement notices were consulted, mostly published in national newspapers (*El País*, *El Mundo*, *ABC*), but also in regional papers (*Diario de Ávila*, *Diario de Levante*, *El Heraldo de Aragón*, *Nueva Alcarria*, etc.). I focus on *El País* because it was the first and major publisher of these Civil War republican death notices.
- 13 See note 7.
- 14 The term “Moor” is derived from the Latin name of Northern Africa and its inhabitants (Mauritanian provinces). A pejorative notion which epitomizes “otherness” vis-à-vis Spanishness, it has been used in the Peninsula since the so-called Reconquista. It was re-semanticized from a geographic to a religious adjective which referred to all Muslims (i.e., the Philippine Moors). Invoked in the context of the Spanish Civil War, *moro* highlights a fundamental contradiction of the Francoist nationalist discourse, which represented itself as a (new) Crusade for Christianity and Spanishness, but relied on North African Muslim troops in its attacks against other Spaniards.
- 15 For detailed information on this case, particularly regarding the experience of the bereaved widow, see O’Neill. The notice’s author, Carlota Leret, confirmed this analysis in various personal communications, underlining her intention to honor her father and clear his name as the primary motive behind the obituary notice.
- 16 For an analysis of the repression of Spain’s middle classes, see Alted Vigil, 59–86.
- 17 Death notice, Antonio Yáñez-Barnuevo Milla and Juan Yáñez-Barnuevo Milla, *El País*, 6 August 2006. Juan, however, is identified as a “farmer and *azañista* republican” who was “murdered by the Francoist occupation forces.” Manuel Azaña was President of the Second Spanish Republic during the duration of the Civil War (1936–1939).
- 18 Death notice, Alberto Martín Pardo, *El País*, 8 August 2006.
- 19 Death notice, José Álvarez Moreno, Manuel Rubio Durán, and Francisco Grillo González, *El País*, 10 August 2006.
- 20 Death notice, Francisco Pérez Carballo, Juana Capdevielle San Martín, and Victorino Veiga González, *El País*, 18 August 2006.
- 21 Death notice, Manuel Aguilhouette Valdés, *El País*, 10 September 2006.
- 22 Death notice, Amado Viera y Amores, *El País*, 25 September 2006.

- 23 Death notice, Horacio Hermoso Araújo, *El País*, 29 September 2006.
- 24 Those of Antonio Méndez León (*El País*, 25 August 2006) and Juan Miguel Castaño Terraza (*El País*, 27 August 2006). Emilio Silva's notice, discussed earlier, announces a funeral service, but that one was published three years before the War of the Obituaries took place.
- 25 Death notice, Juan Toribio Bravo, *El País*, 19 August 2006.
- 26 Death notice, Mateo Gómez Díez, *El País*, 6 September 2006.
- 27 Death notice, Sofía Polo Jiménez and Arturo Sanmartín Súnier, *El País*, 10 September 2006.
- 28 Death notice, Agustín Pérez Rodríguez, *El País*, 16 September 2006.
- 29 Death notice, Amado Viera y Amores, *El País*, 25 September 2006.
- 30 Death notice, Tomás Miñambres Romero, *El País*, 6 August 2006.
- 31 Death notice, Diego Velázquez Sánchez, *El País*, 13 September 2006.
- 32 Death notice, Fortunato Carreras Trigo, *El País*, 11 November 2006.
- 33 Death notice, Juan José Berto Fernández y Dolores Morales Roma, *El País*, 18 May 2008.
- 34 Death notice, Agustín Castro Mansilla, Antonio José Castro Carrillo de Albornoz, and Rafael Castro Carrillo de Albornoz, *El País*, 8 August 2006.
- 35 Death notice, Pablo Ruiz, *El Mundo*, 3 September 2006.
- 36 Death notice, Manuel Benavente Gutiérrez, *El Mundo*, 23 August 2006.
- 37 Death notice, Jesús María y Arroyo, *El Mundo*, 29 August 2006.
- 38 These death notices, published on the same date, make reference to the same event, a "popular tribunal" in Murcia that led to the summary execution of 12 men. *El Mundo*, 15 December 2006.
- 39 Although it is possible that a given relative or victim of Leftist repression was also a repressor, the subject position from which Francoist death notices were written was not from that of defenders of the Regime—whether they were or not—but as families affected by Leftist repression.
- 40 For the construction of Francoist legitimacy, see Box Varela. See especially Chapter 2, "Teodiceas franquistas: mártires y caídos."
- 41 The Valle de los Caídos is today the most controversial Francoist memorial space. Although it was to be presented as a monument to all of the victims of the civil war, the gargantuan monument was conceived to glorify the Francoist "crusade" and its fallen heroes. Controversy surrounded it from the start, caused by the deaths and accidents suffered by its conscripted laborers, its costliness, the exhumation and transfer of thousands of bodies done without their relatives' permission, the disarray of its records, etc. During the dictatorship and still today, it undeniably constituted the most significant and prized symbol of Francoism for its adherents.
- 42 For a brief and interesting analysis of Kantian philosophy and historical theory, see Mate.
- 43 For an analysis of Francoist martyrologies, see Vincent, 68–89.
- 44 With the democratic consolidation, conservative parties sought to distance themselves from Francoism. Even though the PP, as heir of the Popular Alliance, constituted a space of sentimental continuity for Francoists, they could not represent themselves publicly as defenders or heirs of the dictatorship. Paradoxically, when faced with an increasingly stronger social movement for the recovery of historical memory—during the PP's government (1996–2004)—the

parliamentary right repeated the discourse that the Communist Party had publicly held during the Transition and even before then: “we were all guilty.” This was especially evident in the parliamentary condemnation of Francoism of 2002, with which the PP sought to end debates about the past. Francoists and neo-Francoists find no public support for their historical interpretations and representations of the Civil war and the dictatorship.

- 45 For analyses of Central American experiences, see Gaborit, 1021–37 and Binford. For the roles of memory in post-dictatorial politics in the Southern Cone, see Jelin, Schwarzstein, Sonderéreguer.
- 46 For the role of this “third generation” in the RMH movement, see Fernández de Mata “Mass Graves and the Emergence of Spanish”. See also Aróstegui, 57–92.
- 47 For an analysis of the socioeconomic subalternization of the Spanish Civil War’s defeated, see Fernández de Mata “The Logics of Violence”. See also Payne, Moreno, 277–395.
- 48 There are multiple studies and testimonies that analyze the history of the Movement for the Recovery of HM and that reveal this evolution, including the one by the movement’s de facto founder, Silva Barrera.

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