Memory as Disruption:
Entanglements of Memory and Crisis in Contemporary Spain

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Memory, Dissensus, and Disruption

Memory belongs to the present, not because it seems to be an essential component of our contemporary *Zeitgeist*, but because memory is concerned as much with the present and the future as it is with the past. Spanish memory studies have yet to fully embrace this principle, with the majority of studies remaining backward-looking (Ferrán 2007, Ryan 2014). Even so, contemporary entanglements of memory and protest in post-crisis Spain offer an excellent illustration of the ways in which an opening up of discussions of historical memory has brought with it an opening up of discussions about the nature of Spanish democracy and the future of the society it serves. That memory cannot be consigned to history, in the sense of being left to deal only with historical matters, is a disruptive notion. It upsets common-sense views of chronology, installing variable temporalities within the bounds of the present moment. Memory is, then, inherently disruptive. It creates dissensus and disagreement, but it also creates new perspectives via a rethreading of the entangled fibres of the past into the warp and weave of the future. This is what makes it invaluable and potentially enriching at moments of upheaval.

Since 2007, Spain has endured its severest economic contraction since the 1930s. This followed several years of civic debates about the legacies of the Civil War and Franco dictatorship, the recognition of previously ignored victims of Spain's violent history, and calls for redress for historical injustices that were to some extent recognized in the 2007 Ley de Memoria Histórica. This 'memory boom' (Ryan 2014: 8-10) would seem on the face of it to have gone bust along with Lehman brothers,

pushed off the stage by the economic crisis. A country that can barely pay its nurses and teachers, and that has an excessively high rate of unemployment, should surely have no time or money for the luxury of memory (Muñoz Molina 2013: 14). Or should it? I propose here that memory has neither been elided from Spanish civic debate nor is it irrelevant to economic concerns. Rather, its disruptive effects have become entwined with a more thoroughgoing dissatisfaction within Spanish society, feeding into an apparent melting pot of issues that underline the presentist and futurist nature of memory discussions and point towards a new configuration that we might term 'disruptive memory'.

Rothberg recently proposed that memory is 'multidirectional', that is, that different memories interact via a productive intercultural dynamic that cannot be pinned down or reified, as they are 'subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing and borrowing' (2009: 3). This is what is occurring with memory in Spain, the driving factor being a productive dissensus or Rancèrean upsetting of the consensus of the transition to democracy symbolized by the 1978 Constitution. This new radicalism spiraled into massive youth protests and mortgage *escraches*, dislodging two decades of bipartisan politics with the rise of new groupings and challenging the very composition of the nation itself. This relationship between dissent and memory might seem to recall earlier protest paradigms. The 1968 protesters, for instance, were:

> a future-oriented generation whose members yearned to replace what they saw as the hopelessly conservative political and economic order with a radical, left-leaning program of social and political change. Yet while this generation largely pursued its radical goals via concrete action in the present—through campus sit-ins, street demonstrations, and eventually revolutionary violence in the fateful year of 1968—it also mobilized the buried past to challenge the hated status quo. (Rosenfeld 2009: 130)

Nevertheless, the aftermath of 1968 in Spain, with the Franco Regime still in place, played out rather differently than in the US or northern Europe. Spain experienced

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years of acute socio-economic difficulty during the early 1970s oil crisis, a 'pacted' transition after the death of Franco in 1975, economic stability agreements in 1977, and a period of political consensus and seeming cultural hedonism until roughly the mid 1990s. Although their rejection of rational political ideologies is very different (Mitchell, Harcourt and Taussig 2013: 50), memory is used by contemporary protesters across the world, as it was by the '68ers elsewhere, to 'fight for social and political justice in the present' and to foster 'a growing effort to confront the sins of the past' (Rosenfeld 2009: 131). The sins may have changed but the protesters still seek to hold the establishment to account for a prevailing politico-socio-economic order that either excludes them or condemns them to precariousness in Butler's sense of the term (2004).

The driving political position behind this most recent upheaval in Spain can be analysed through the lens of Rancière's notion of *dissensus*, which can be defined as 'an activity that cuts across forms of cultural and identity belonging and hierarchies between discourses and genres, working to introduce new subjects and heterogeneous objects into the field of perception' (Rancière 2010: 3). Rancière's proposition is that in the West we do not live in democracies, but oligarchies in which an elite composed of 'experts' not only speaks on behalf of society, but also determines who is permitted to speak and whose voice is recognized as carrying a valid point of view within the public sphere. Such is, for Rancière, our contemporary 'police order', which renders unintelligible and invisible whoever does not conform to or abide by the established sense of propriety. This chimes with certain views of the legacy of the Spanish transition as a stifling consensus that must be disrupted in order to rethink the future for Spanish society.

Rancière's notion of the 'partage du sensible' (a partition or distribution of the

sensible or intelligible; 2010: 36) as both the structuring principle of the police order and the means to disrupt it ('partager' meaning both a sharing or recognition, and a splitting) is especially pertinent in this context. For Rancière, politics is not, *qua* Habermas, constituted by rational debate in the public sphere, but by the struggle to be recognized as a legitimate partner with whom to debate (a process that Rancière designates 'part-taking'; 2010). Politics is, then, a fracture that signals a crisis of representation, in which the oligarchy is brought to awareness of both its presumption to speak and its failure to speak for the *demos*. Democracy, thus envisaged, is a process – a 'subjectification' – that leads to a reconfiguration of the field of experience. May explains (2010: 78-9), 'As a democratic political movement begins to take hold, a *we* emerges that was not there before'. And he continues,

> In that sense, the social field of experience is reconfigured. It is reconfigured for those who have a part, since they are forced to see others they have not seen before, or at least not in that particular way. And it is reconfigured for the *demos*, who see a social order in which they may have a part. As a result, within the *demos* people begin to feel empowered. This empowerment is not individual but collective. Rather than seeing others among the *demos* as competitors for the same scarce goods (whether those goods be material or abstract – beauty, for example, in the case of women), one begins to see them as just like oneself, engaged in the same struggle, confronting the same adversary.

The occupation of the Puerta del Sol in Madrid in 2011, to which I shall turn in due course, was arguably an effort of subjectification in a Rancèrean sense. It aimed at generating a collective subject which, highly fragmented and embracing of diversity, sought to fracture the police order through a 'part-taking' or assertion of the validity of unrecognized views and voices in the face of oligarchic consensus on how to confront the effects of the 2008 economic crisis. To stress, this was not a 'part-taking' that is akin to taking part, or partaking in or of debate; it was a claim to a new order through a radical reconfiguration of the elements that are permitted to enter debate in the first place. This Rancèrean view of politics is timely: 'In a period in which we are

encouraged to become passive, to expect rather than to act, to shop rather than to organize, there are fewer theoretical tasks more urgent than that of reminding us that for politics to become *our* politics, we cannot be its audience; we must instead be its actors.' (May 2010: 79)

Rancière conceives of political action as an aesthetic activity involving a reconfiguration of the notion of propriety, or proper order. This latter is laid down by the circulation of words and images according to the norms of what is accepted as intelligible ('sensible' in French; 2010: 36). But such norms can be disrupted by an emancipated spectator, a crucial notion in Rancière's theory of dissensus (2009). If passive spectatorship implies an acceptance of propriety, a fluid circulation of media, and a smooth communication of message, active spectatorship has the potential to disrupt this and to reconfigure both media and message. Politics emerges through such agency, recalling Ahmed's analysis of how the 'stickiness' (2004: 46) of words and images can at times impede their circulation, creating both new effects and new affects as a result. Politics thus involves moments of intensity that have a strong demonstrative and affective dimension able to disrupt conventional looking, hearing, and understanding. For Rancière (2000: 125), 'Politics revolves around what is seen, and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the properties of time'. A key principle of Rancière's thinking is thus that the production of knowledge is closely related to the production of silence, but that literature and art – word and image – are democratic in their openness to all, and thus in their scope to disrupt the oligarchic order. Democratic politics and aesthetics are thus equated with an 'ontological disorder' (Deranty 2007: 245–6), in which fixed hierarchies and categories of identity are disputed and transformed. Rancière's position suggests that disruptive practice is

always shifting and undefined: its nature will be determined by the regime it exposes and the possibilities of particular situations to offer space, time, media, and methods for dissensus.

On the basis of Rancière's view of dissensus as necessarily context-specific in both temporal and spatial terms, I examine below three stagings of dissensus against hegemonic memory and the oligarchic socio-political order in contemporary Spain. Although they are quite different in nature, they are all staged in or around the Puerta del Sol, a central square in Madrid, and they can all be read in terms of an imbrication of the political and the aesthetic.[1] The first is Jerónimo López Mozo's play, *El arquitecto y el relojero*, which imagines a renovation of the Real Casa de Correos, one of Sol's key buildings; the second is the occupation of Sol by the *indignados*, or 15-M movement, as they prefer to be known, in the summer of 2011; the third is Jorge Galindo and Santiago Sierra's short film, *Los encargados*, which portrays the parade through central Madrid of portraits of the nation's leaders since the death of Franco. Underpinning my analysis of each of these apparently unconnected performances are dialogues between space, place, and embodiment, whether it be the embodied memory and emancipated spectatorship that I argue is opened up by López

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[1] The Puerta del Sol is the cartographic centre of Spain, the 'kilometre zero' from which road distances are measured. It is home to the Real Casa de Correos, whose clock traditionally strikes the arrival of each New Year. This square has witnessed several historical upheavals. Completed in 1768 under Charles III (with the addition of the clock in 1866), the Casa de Correos was originally designed with a dual role: to offer postal services, and to house a military presence that would keep order in the city. Spanish resistance to the War of Independence began outside the Casa de Correos on 2 May 1808. Spain's 1812 constitution was proclamed in the Puerta del Sol, which was also the focus of celebrations on the declaration of the Second Republic in 1931. More recently, Sol became the focus of Spain's anti-austerity *indignados*, bringing back for some the memory that during the regime public congregation for the purposes of protest was impossible. Of particular relevant in this regard is the work of Feinberg (2013, 2014) on the role of urban space and cultural spectacle, and in particular the importance of urban history in the construction of socio-political order.

Mozo's play, or the 15-M protesters' restructuring of politics via an embodied resignification of public space, or still yet the incorporation of bystanders into a topsy-turvy and ambiguous film installation. By examining the intersections between cultural memory and political protest, my objective is to demonstrate the respects in which entanglements of memory and crisis in contemporary Spain point towards a new, disruptive paradigm of memory politics. Furthermore, in putting together three such different moments of *dissensus* – one theatrical, one mass activist, and one artistic interventionist – my aim is to enact a bridging of the political and aesthetic in the manner that Bennett calls for in *Practical Aesthetics* (2012: 3) when she speaks of 'aesthetics-at-large' and discusses the workings of art as 'an aesthetic operation (a way of *doing*, as opposed to an *object of* philiosophy)'. The ultimate goal of this article, then, is to work through three distinct but related moments of dissent in order to underline the role of aesthetics within political discourses today, as well as the role of aesthetics in exposing and critiquing the assumptions underlying, in Rancière's terms, political 'part-takings' or constructions of the intelligible.

De-Pathologizing Memory, Emancipating Spectatorship: *El arquitecto y el relojero*

López Mozo's play *El arquitecto y el relojero* was written in 1999 and first performed in Madrid the following year, just as civil-war and dictatorship memory debates were gaining traction in Spanish civic discourse. It returned to the stage in 2007, the year of the 'Ley de memoria histórica'. Here I offer a two-stage interpretation of the play: first, the work's entangling of emplaced and embodied memory; second, its transformation of spectatorship into embodied and emancipated action in a Rancèrean sense. Given that Rancière's starting point for his theory of the emancipated spectator as dissenting voice is precisely a discussion of spectatorship

within the theatre, my analysis of López Mozo's play provides an appropriate context against which to later discuss the 15-M camp in Sol as the embodiment of political dissensus in action.[2]

López Mozo's highly self-conscious work dramatizes the battle of wills between an architect charged with renovating the Casa de Correos and intent on a rather 'bland makeover' (O'Leary 2011: 155), and a clockmaker who, charged with maintaining the clock on the façade, is highly attentive to that past. The play, whose action is set some time between 1995 and 1998, explores the question of a symbolic erasure of vestiges of the past as a result of the architectural transformations that occurred across Spain following the economic expansion and associated construction boom from the mid 1990s to approximately 2007 (Snyder 2015: 27). López Mozo's architect, looking out from the clock tower of the Casa de Correos onto the Puerta del Sol, draws attention to Spain's contentious history: 'Todo, en la plaza, mira hacia este símbolo del poder. Del poder democrático. Aquí, todavía, cuando se habla del poder, hay que aclarar a qué clase de poder nos referimos' (2001: 24). The architect's objective is to renovate the building for the 21st century, 'sin borrar las mejores huellas del pasado' (2001: 26), a subjective judgment that raises the question of what constitutes (un)acceptable history. The traces of the past to be preserved include the commemorative plaque, unveiled in 1908, remembering the beginning of the Peninsular War, but not the declaration of the Second Republic in 1931, as this is judged too recent. Nor can the activities of Franco's political police be remembered, as this would turn the Casa de

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[2] López Mozo does broach the subject of the 15-M protests in later play, *José Barbacana* (2015), which focuses particularly on the poverty of contemporary orthodox political language. I discuss *El arquitecto y el relojero* here since it permits greater attention to the intersections of emplaced memory and embodied protest that are the nub of my argument. The Puerta del Sol also apprears in *Ahlán*, López Mozo's 1997 exploration of immigration to Spain, and in *Puerta del Sol*, a 2008 theatrical adaptation of the third of Pérez Galdós' *Episodios nacionales*.

Correos into a 'parque temático de la represión franquista' (2001: 49). During the renovations, the building is to be covered by 'un panorama transparente que ofrecerá una visión espectral de la piel de la fachada' (2001: 28).

Throughout the theatrical discourse, López Mozo uses key words to weave metaphorical allusions to a more concealed history, one that, as many have commented with regard to the legacies of the Civil War and dictatorship, returns in ghostly or spectral form to haunt the present (Labanyi 2007). López Mozo's observes that the hoarding around the building, in the form of a huge screen that permits some glimpses of the work behind, in fact establishes an intersection between contemporary building practices and urban renewal as a form of false, unsustainable, construction. The point is both literal and metaphorical: concealing the work of renovation conceals civic dissensus, projecting the image of a consensual, uncritical, 'zombie' society. The Casa de Correos is personified throughout the first three scenes, having a 'piel' and 'entrañas' but being 'enfermo'. It has been subjected to 'un estudio de patalogía', and the architect will proceed to 'amputar las partes dañadas' since the building has 'profundas […] heridas' that can only be repaired with the addition of 'prótesis' (2001: 37). Some of these terms are naturalized metaphors to which López Mozo draws attention, defamiliarizing them. Through this insistent personification, the dramatist turns the Casa de Correos into the embodiment of its sombre past and brings to light again its role as a centre of torture under the Franco Regime. Quite specific references to scenes of torture, which are reenacted and projected in on backcloth in scene 5, are then followed by a scene in which the architect takes a hammer to the clock's wheel mechanism, knocking off some of its teeth. López Mozo thus literalizes and stages his metaphors of memory, turning the architect into a figure whose desire

not to remember the past is itself a form of secondary violence against forgotten victims.

El arquitecto y el relojero thus entangles emplaced and embodied memory. It also marks the emergence of a discourse critical of capitalist and consumer amnesia of 1980s and 1990s Spain. Although much of López Mozo's language points to binaries such as surface and depth, revelation and concealment, the importance of his contribution to cultural memory debates resides in the manner in which he presents history as pathological, and then self-consciously examines the rhetorical artifice of such a discourse. López Mozo displays a highly self-conscious use of theatrical space, accompanied by multimedia effects such as the projection of images onto the backcloth, and the breaking down of the 'fourth wall' (O'Leary 2011: 162). In his piece, 'escenario y platea son una misma cosa' full of 'farsas, comedias, dramas' (2001: 41). This collapsing of stage and auditorium is highly significant, for López Mozo's theatre has generally been interpreted as manifesting a contradiction between a practice of denunciation, associated closely with realism, and one of formal experimentation (O'Leary 2011: 158-9).

Rancière's theory of emancipated spectatorship might assist in overcoming this apparent duality. Why, inquires Rancière (2009: 13), must the act of gazing be seen as passive, and why should it be set in opposition to acting or doing? If this binary is removed, actors and spectators occupy the same potentially active and emancipated space, where the communication of a message is not necessarily smooth or simple. For Rancière, the binaries of looking/doing and passivity/activity are simply the consequences of a particular set of values, or distribution of the intelligible. To disturb them by noting that viewing can be active and that spectatorship can be action – and thus political – is a means to subvert established positions from which to speak and to

protest.

This becomes all the more telling if we bear in mind that López Mozo also designates the Puerta del Sol an 'escenario' (2001: 41). Life and the drama constitute an opposition that is rendered irrelevant within the context of the community participating in the theatrical performance. As Rancière argues, it is not a matter of what the dramatist tells the audience, nor of how s/he might intend to configure the theatrical space in order to manipulate the audience, but of what happens in that 'third space' between the author and the spectator. This is a 'space' owned by no one where transmission may resist the logic of cause and effect, opening up the possibility of emancipation. 'The collective power shared by spectators does not stem from the fact that they are members of a collective body or from some specific form of interactivity,' argues Rancière. 'It is the power each of them has to translate what she receives in her own way, to link it to the unique intellectual adventure that makes her similar to all the rest in as much as this adventure is not like any other' (2009: 16-17). It is in this sense that I interpret López Mozo's allusions to and visual restagings of torture in *El arquitecto y el relojero*. The clockmaker, ever attentive to concealed histories, declares:

> en tiempos de silencio hay otro teatro. Es un teatro clandestino. Se representa en sótanos, en lugares sórdidos, sin público. Los actores son, casi siempre, poco conocidos, pero interpretan papeles importantes. Durante años, muchas, muchas sesiones, tuvieron lugar aquí, así que no era raro que, al mismo tiempo y a escasos metros de distancia, fuera se representara a bombo y platillo una comedia y dentro, una tragedia. (2001: 41-2)

This comment does not equate torture with performance, nor does it use self-reference in order to evade criticisms of staging violence. What the clockmaker's lines achieve, through their metatheatrical reference, is an erasure of the distance between actors and audience, turning the spectators into interpreters of the action. Similarly, the projection of images of torture behind the stage is not a dramatization of voyeurism,

but an eliding of established positions or spatial relationships (those of actors and spectators), of genres (for instance the proximal 'authenticity' of the theatre and the distancing of media reproduction), and of temporalities (the past of violence and the present of performance).

We might say that the clockmaker articulates the voice of the active, emancipated subject of Rancière's work, whereas the architect strives for the passivity of the police order. The architect is proud of the 'sensación de sosiego que transmite mi arquitectura' (2001: 69), whereas the clockmaker protests that new facades, which are often today of glass, can conceal as much as or more than they reveal: 'Deslumbra hasta convertir en invisibles los objetos que ilumina' (2001: 73). López Mozo thus stages not simply a debate about the past, but a drama about knowledge, about the norms that determine the visibility or invisibility of particular voices, and about the social and physical architecture of societies that perpetuate the silencing of heterodox positions. Memory is presented as a dialogue of embodiment and emplacement in *El arquitecto*, which interrogates a particular discursive construction of Spanish history as pathological in order not only to subvert it but also to create a space of emancipation in which the spectator can begin to construct his/her own narrative of history. All López Mozo would seem to demand of his audience is a mindful stance towards the past. Refusing this is akin, for the clockmaker, to 'hipotecar la memoria' (2001: 49), a limitation that points not only to the injustices of forgetting, but to the entanglement of Spain's post-millennial memory debates with the injustices of the 2008 economic crisis.

15-M: Memory and the Framing of Dissent

On 15 May 2011, thousands of protesters across Spain took to the streets, calling for more participatory forms of democracy. A decision to continue the protest by camping in the Puerta del Sol was the seemingly spontaneous decision of a small group of people (Martín Rojo and Díaz de Frutos 2014: 163), and their occupation of public space was quickly imitated across Spain. Slogans such as 'Democracia Real Ya!' appeared, accompanied by debates on the problems of contemporary democratic politics and calls for new approaches that cut across the bipartisan dominance of the PP-PSOE and refused to be contained by conventional political strategies. This movement was frequently linked to the earlier 'Arab Spring' (Romanos 2013: 205-7). The 15-M protesters themselves drew parallels between their activities and those of grass-roots movements elsewhere, and they have been identified as the originators of the New York grouping that became known also as 'the 99%' (Moreno Caballud 2015). The 15-M *acampadasol* constituted a resignification of urban space by means of a literal occupation and a renaming that personified the square (Martín Rojo and Díaz de Frutos 2014: 179). It became a space constantly in motion, with protest slogans displayed in a transitory manner on existing billboards, attached to street furniture, and worn on the T-shirts of the protesters themselves. In any uncanny reversal of López Mozo's metaphor of construction hoardings as a concealment of civic dissensus, the Sol protesters turned the netting covering a façade under renovation into a nodal point for the display of their own banners.[3] Much has been made of the role of social media in creating non-hierarchical forms of discussion and dissemination; Twitter's structuring around trending nodes has been seen as altering the alienating and passive nature of established political debate in favour of an empowered, deliberative democracy (Martín Rojo and Díaz de Frutos 2014: 180;

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[3] Taussig notes this as characteristic of the wider Occupy movement (Mitchell, Harcourt and Taussig 2013: 30).

Romanos 2013: 211). This 'networked citizen politics' was characterized in one study of the Spanish experience by 'swarm-like action and an intensive use of information exchange and communication technologies' (Peña López et al, 2014: 189). We might, however, view these interpretations with caution. As Gerbaudo notes, the somewhat utopian metaphors of networks and swarms, understood to signal radically new, horizontal forms of communicative action, may owe more to their origins in the anti-globalization movement's hopes for itself than they do to scholarly analysis of the internal workings of more contemporary protest movements (2012: 24). Indeed, these metaphors give rise to a series of tensions, since they stress the digital, the disembodied, and the global at the expense of the importance of locatedness, and hence of materiality, within protest activism. Gerbaudo thus asks (2012: 26), 'how are we to understand the Arab Spring, the indignados, or Occupy, if we do not retain a sense of the importance of place in contemporary societies?' Similarly, we should not minimize the role of do-it-yourself material creativity that characterized the make-shift, highly personalized posters of Occupy and other 2011 grass-roots protests (Mitchell, Harcourt and Taussig 2013: 27). There is, then, a certain tension between the materiality of protest work and the digital, networked backdrop against which it may occur. Similarly, there is a tension between the rhizomatic diffusion of the digital and the continuing importance of protest as embodied and emplaced. In the ensuing discussion, I follow Gerbaudo in underlining the material, affective, and located nature of the 15-M protests, although it is not my intention to sideline the role of international networks and social media platforms.

Martín Rojo and Díaz de Frutos illustrate the 15-M's international networking with their study of the languages used in Sol, which included English, a wide range of European languages, Arabic, and Greek. These 'cadenas intertextuales' had the effect

of extending the space of Sol to other occupied squares, creating a feeling of global solidarity through the linking of different places and diverse issues (Martín Rojo and Días de Frutos 2014: 177). This was particularly evident in the use of the word 'revolution', which certainly recalled the 'Arab Spring'. Revolutionary language was associated with the name of the square itself: 'Sol' became the origin of a new 'Despertar'; the Sol Metro station was temporarily renamed 'Solución – revolución'. Sol thus became a counter-site, a contestation of established uses of public space. Public urban space was not simply occupied but *engaged* by activists in order to imbue its very fabric and structures with a Rancèrean redistribution of the sensible via an upsetting of established ways of doing politics. The role of affective intensity in the creation of a radically new, relational mode of interaction has been remarked (Romanos 2013: 206). As Timm Knudsen and Stage state,

> The political is, and always has been, a bodily, affective affair. It is felt in the surface of our skin when we feel indignation over injustice, enthusiasm to take part in positive change, or fear of political marginalisation. But such an understanding of the political is at odds with the ideal of political space as inhabited solely by liberal (and somehow bodiless) subjects engaged in rational contestation—a space that needs shielding from the instability caused by too much affect and too much bodily investment. (2015: 1)

Affectively shared experiences of vulnerability and suffering thus make bodies 'permeable to each other' (Tumm Knudsen and Stage 2015: 2). In the case of *acampadasol*, one might say that the protesters used their bodily occupation, their hand-made posters, and their reorganization of space to prize open fracture lines in an oligarchic, police order so that they could then speak.

The Puerta del Sol was therefore organized into zones, which varied from discussion spaces to libraries, medical supports, poster-making areas, and spaces devoted to particular causes such as animal rights, feminism, environmentalism, as well as media outlets. As a reaction to the threat of police intervention, the protesters

also designed a parodic counter-cartography entitled *acampada policía* which included, for instance, a zone for an 'incineradora de derechos civiles'.[4] The protesters' reactions were not, however, simply the articulation of a counter-position conceived as univocal opposition to a single enemy. As Bonet i Martí indicates in his analysis of the composition of the 15-M, a multiplicity of groups, actors, issues, and objectives fed into the wider movement, from the bloggers of 'Democracia real ya!' and the youth activists of 'Juventud Sin Futuro'; to the opponents of house repossessions in V de Vivienda and a variety of neighbourhood and Christian Associations; to the more traditionally organized radical left of Izquierda Unida and the trades unions (2015: 127). The movement also operated on multiple scales from the local to the transnational. A shared approach to protest was thus given variable expression and issues were often local in resonance; in Madrid, for instance, electoral reform was a more dominant concern than in Cataluña, where cuts to local services took centre stage (Bonet i Martí 2015: 136).

Nevertheless, underpinning the protests was a common objective to resignify public space and reconfigure the nature of political discussion and debate itself. As Butler notes (2015: 85), recent popular mass protests have used the materiality of public places and repurposed public architecture with the aim of 'remaking history in the midst of its most concrete and sedimented artifices'. The 15-M's multifarious reconfiguration of the relationships between politics, protest, and space might thus be seen as a rejection of what Thrift has called the 'logic of propensity', in which 'the agent is not surrounded by a situation which (s)he attempts to control but, rather,

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[4] The layout of the camp is illustrated on the 15Mpedia page, https://15mpedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Mapa_acampadasol.jpg; the counter-cartography is available at: https://centrodenoticiasalternativas.wordpress.com/2011/08/05/15m-nopararemos-dry-acampadapolicia-madridsinmiedo-1p/ (both accessed 30 January 2017).

weaves in and out of it, detecting factors that display promise and putting them to work, exploiting them as they become available, accepting the situation when they are not' (2008: 90). This suggests that processes of adaptation, transposition, and contextualization were occurring, akin to what Thrift terms 'neuroeconomic learning', so that the 'worlding' of Sol became a radical, redemptive act. 'Active spaces […] act as doors, allowing entry into new worlds'; they also convey a sense of enchantment, since 'space itself becomes vibration, vibration which acts to charm' (Thrift 2008: 93-4). This is, for example, conveyed in the reaction of Labrador Méndez, who reflected on the sensation of following the *acampadasol* online, thanks to streaming from a traffic-monitoring camera (itself an ironic indication of a police order disrupted by the harnessing of control mechanisms to spread dissensus):

> resultaba semejante al de un paisaje inundado en el que desapareciesen las marcas del territorio (anuncios, pasos de cebra, carriles de coche, escaparates, comercios). El espacio emergía entonces limpio de rastros como escenario de una nueva potencialidad política. (2014b)

Sol is reimagined here not only as a fluid space in motion but as a flooded landscape, washed clean of the trappings of neoliberal economic activity. It has become a virgin territory ready for a new politics. This allies natural catastrophe to a redemptive narrative, naturalizing the actions of the protesters as a reversal of the disaster of the construction boom: 'Esta marea constructiva, al retirarse, nos ha dejado ciudades inhóspitas de casas sin gente, infraestructuras ultramodernas sin uso alguno, los rascacielos más altos de Europa inconclusos a la orilla del mar, como las marcas del mar sobre la arena, o como extrañas conchas de nautilos' (Labrador Méndez 2014b). Such a narrativization embraces the language of the 15-M protesters, who used such terms as 'mareas' and swarms, borrowed from the context of anti-globalization protests in the late 1990s (Arquilla and Ronfeldt 2001), to describe a rhizomatic approach to street protest. Unfortunately, it also distorts the Rancèrean potential of

acampadasol. While Labrador Méndez does stress the protesters' aim to 'crear y de compartir una nueva lengua […] mientras los viejos significados se vuelven opacos e indescifrables' (2014b), the metaphors deployed neither step outside recognized discursive norms nor disrupt accepted meanings through new implications and significations. In spite of the fact that Labrador Méndez does strive for an interruption of the status quo, declaring that in Sol 'lo personal y lo macroeconómico se entendían articulados por una misma relación entre tiempo, deuda y consumo que, en las plazas, se veía, de pronto, interrumpida' (2014b), his discursive framing of the protests, like that of the protesters themselves, is melancholic and Biblical. To the notion of redemptive flood Labrador Méndez, for instance, adds that of a Biblical exodus (2014): 'Los movimientos sociales vagan por el desierto del presente, siempre idéntico a sí mismo, con la promesa de que un día, cuando menos nos lo esperemos, habremos llegado de pronto a la tierra prometida de la República del 99%'. With familiar cultural metaphors of exclusion and catastrophe, renewal and rebirth, we find ourselves not in new discursive territory in which old ideas become defamiliarized, but confronting an age-old formulation of social tension. Indeed, what we find is an aestheticization of experience that also extends to the intersections between protest and memory in the iconography of the 15-M activists.

If the *indignados* employed the term revolution for their protest, their understanding of this was neither purely contemporary in scope nor internationalist in resonance. The use of the hash tag, #spanishrevolution, also evoked the Spanish Revolution of the 1930s (Snyder: 2015: 95), crushed by the Francoist victory in the Civil War. Not without humorous echoes of Month Python, one poster read, 'Nobody Expects #The Spanish Revolution To Be Continued…'. A communal art project in Sol was titled 'Gernika de Sol', alluding to Picasso's famous canvas for the

Republican pavilion in the 1937 Paris World Fair (both images in Rojo and Díaz de Frutos). The display of the Republican tricolour (Sanz Sabido 2015) was also common in demonstrations and online fora protesting against the government's austerity policies in these years. Equally resonant were hand-made posters evoking Goya's *Saturno devorando a su hijo*, with one – affixed to the Sol hoarding mentioned earlier – carrying the slogan, 'capitalismo salvaje'. As Labrador Méndez has rightly pointed out (2014a: 256), this suggested that a savage capitalism, 'a sovereign and cannibal power', was devouring society at the expense of community, solidarity, and individual wellbeing.

This Goya echo is significant in two senses. First, Spanish opposition to the War of Independence began at the Puerta del Sol, as a plaque on the Casa de Correos today proclaims and as López Mozo's play reminds us, and the executions depicted in Goya's famous *Tres de mayo* took place nearby. Second, Goya's cannibalistic Saturn was a visual point of reference in Guillermo del Toro's 2006 film on the immediate post-Civil-War period, *El laberinto del fauno*. Ofelia's encounter with the Pale Man is replete with Goyesque echoes, and a visual parallel is also drawn between this scene and Vidal's dinner with Francoist officers. In suggesting that Vidal is not only as voracious and terrifying as the Pale Man, but also as cannibalistic as Goya's Saturn, del Toro echoes a specific discourse of Spanish history viewed as a battle between two visions – two Spains – in which one attempts entirely to consume and erase the other. While the narrative of two Spains is a well-known frame for the Civil War, in the *indignados*' contemporary version only one Spain is intent on destruction. In contrast, medical metaphors of the need to eradicate a poisonous enemy in fact characterized the discourse of both sides during the 1936-39 conflict. These discourses of catastrophe and exclusion from the body politic – whether positively

viewed as a redemptive flood, or negatively conceived as an all-consuming force – in fact threaten to reinscribe a pathological narrative of history at the heart of Spanish conceptions of the body politic. In this sense, the 15-M reconfiguration of political agency risks defeat by a discursive construction that cannibalistically devours both the achievements of practical engagement in Sol and the insights of memory works such as that by López Mozo. Memory and a sense of the past thus become crucial for conceptions of the 'new'.

Nevertheless, if we bear in mind our earlier discussion of the imbrication of the aesthetic in the political, and thus focus on the affective resonances of what is a growing use of biomedical terms within political discourse, we may arrive at a more nuanced conclusion. In *Cloning Terror*, Mitchell takes up Derrida's description of contemporary terrorism as an autoimmune disease. Immunity, Mitchell argues, derives from the Latin *immunitas*, meaning exemption. He observes:

> The whole theory of the immune system, and the discipline of immunology, is riddled with images drawn from the sociopolitical sphere – of invaders and defenders, hosts and parasites, natives and aliens, and of borders and identities that must be maintained. In asking us to see terror as autoimmunity, then, Derrida is bringing the metaphor home at the same time as he sends it abroad […] The effect of the 'bipolar image' is to produce a situation in which there is *no literal meaning*, nothing but the resonances between two images, one biomedical, the other political. (Mitchell 2011: 47-48)

For Mitchell, we are thus caught in a dialogue between two images, 'dancing the alternating current between two realms of discourse' (2011: 48). Etymologically, this complexity is perhaps understandable, given the dual reference of the prefix 'bio-'. It designates, first, 'life' or a 'manner of life', in direct derivation from the Greek *βio-*, and, second, 'organic life' pertaining to the domain of the life sciences, a usage that arises from post-classical Latin *bio-* (OED online). Discursive entanglements of the material body and the socio-political body would seem to inhere in the very words themselves (Barad 2003: 802). Furthermore, if *bio-* was originally broader in scope, a

meaning retained in such words as biography (the story of how a life was lived), then the more prevalent designation of 'organic life' (in a field such as biomedicine) has, since Foucault, become allied to a particular view of the operations of the structures of power within society. In short, it is not that one should or should not use biomedical and pathological discourses to analyse contemporary socio-political phenomena, but that one should be self-reflexively aware of the mutually constituting nature of the images of the material body and the body politic that structure our discourse. Indeed, the prevalence of such metaphors in the language of radical conservatives or the so-called contemporary 'alt-right' as well as the radical left underscores the importance of a self-reflexive awareness of the multifarious affective impacts created by images conjuring up 'floods' and 'swarms' of individuals overturning the status quo. One has only to think of US President Donald Trump's January 2017 tweets in reaction to legal challenges to his immigration policy in which he evoked fears of the USA being overcome by immigrants, or the UK Independence Party's anti-migrant poster in the final weeks of the 2016 EU referendum campaign, to see that these visions may be deployed by various political actors for very different ends. Motivation, objective, audience, and reception are thus more important than the choice of language, for it is not the choice of words but their aesthetic resonances and affective deployment that shapes the means of doing politics.

Acampadasol quickly moved into a 'post-camping era' ('#Acampadasol'), and has now become the subject of intellectual reflection and academic study. A year after protesters left Sol, Martínez published a critique of the Spanish transition, which he presented as a culture of homogenizing forces that had erased discussion and dissent:

> La Cultura de la Transición (CT) es el paradigma cultural hegemónico en España desde hace más de tres décadas, que se dice pronto. Son treinta y cinco años en los que, más que un tapón generacional, ha habido un tapón cultural. Acceder a la cultura ha supuesto – y, me temo aún supone – acceder a ser

taponado, acceder a una determinada y asombrosa serie de reglas-tapón que empequeñecen y determinan el reconocimiento de un objeto como cultura. El resultado es una patología singular, la cultura más singular, la cultura más extraña y asombrosa de Europa. (2012: 11)

Such a comment rearticulates a pathological relationship to history and culture as the mark of Spanish exceptionalism, without any apparent authorial awareness of the figurative nature of such a discourse. Martínez labels the transition an aberration that enacted a form of vertical control via the 'desactivación' of culture in favour of neoliberal consumerism and political consensus. His language is emotive and directly evokes the Francoist dictatorship: the absence of freedom suggests intellectual censorship, and verticality recalls not only the hierarchical social order by which the regime repressed dissent, but more specifically the Sindicato Vertical, the only permitted labour organization during Franco's rule. Martínez's rhetoric also taps into that centuries-long tradition of commentary on Spanish society and the nation's ills, which have, from time to time since the early modern period, been read as ailing and in need of cure. Such a pathologization of history has, since the *fin de siglo* and through the years of the Civil War and dictatorship, interpreted Spanish experience under the twin signs of exceptionalism and belatedness. Peck and Ticknell have noted the tendency of critics of neoliberalism to resort to metaphorical language and its naturalization as an all-powerful, culturally undifferentiated process (2002: 381, 383). In contrast to this tendency not to reflect on the figurative implications of their own discourse, keenly evident in recent critiques of the transition by Delgado, Fernández Savater, Labrador Méndez, Moreiras Menor, and Snyder, I conclude with a discussion of disruptive memory in Jorge Galindo and Santiago Sierra's 2012 short film, *Los encargados*. In it we find aesthetic strategies akin to Rancière's call for the interpellation of the spectator in order to establish a meaningful self-reflexivity around medium, message, and reception. In this sense, Galindo and Sierra's work

offers a valuable example of the power and ambiguities of the artistic articulation of political dissent in urban space.

Disruptive Memory in the Streets: *Los encargados*

Sierra and Galindo's five-minute film, which was the central piece in an exhibition at Madrid's Galería Helga de Alvear, consists of billboard-size portraits of King Juan Carlos I and Spain's six Prime Ministers since the death of Franco – Suárez, Calvo Sotelo, González, Aznar, Rodríguez Zapatero, and Rajoy – mounted upside down on black Mercedes saloons and paraded funereally through Madrid's Plaza de Callao and along the Gran Vía.[5] One of the city's up-market shopping districts close to the Puerta del Sol, this location recalls Madrid's development in the early twentieth century. The Metropolis, Telefónica, and Grassy buildings are landmarks of a street whose centenary was celebrated in 2010. Nevertheless, the route followed by the Mercedes indicates the disruptiveness of Galindo and Sierra's intervention. Spain's Monarch and Prime Ministers are entirely disembodied, reduced to mere images or simulacra. Their highly formal and somewhat pompous portraits are satirically inverted, as are the filmic takes, which run counter to the flow of traffic. The piece begins with a reversed image of the large 'Schweppes' advert on the Carrión building, signaling to the viewer that the film's apparent representationalism must be closely interrogated. Sections of the Gran Vía are then filmed in a disjunctive manner, meaning that the cars do not parade along a coherent route, although there is at least one brief, non-reversed image early on, of the McDonalds restaurant beside the Tryp Hotel.

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[5] The exhibition, also entitled *Los encargados*, ran from 1 January to 2 March 2013; in addition to the film, it also included the billboard portraits used in its making; see: http://www.helgadealvear.com/web/index.php/santiago-sierra-jorge-galindo/ (accessed 13 February 2017).

Galindo and Sierra's humorously disjointed transpositions of image and space are matched by the temporal disjunctions that the accompanying music suggests. The soundtrack is the *Warszawianka*, which was adapted by Spanish Anarchists for their anthem, *A las barricadas*. Along with the parade of heads of government, it is this that brings issues of memory into dialogue with the impact of contemporary economic crisis. Sierra's work is known for its challenging contradictions, such as the employment of individuals on paltry wages to complete tasks that are 'useless, physically demanding, and on occasion leave permanent scars' (Bishop 2004: 71). The particular contradictions of *Los encargados* emerge from the staging of a motorcade through a Madrid that was not in fact greatly disrupted by the performance – filming occurred in the early morning, without explicit permission from local authorities (García 2013). Instead, the city's sparse traffic is incorporated into the artistic product, as Galindo and Sierra use split screens towards the end of their film to choreograph a procession that superficially seems to be in harmony with the surroundings.

Such harmony is, however, ironic, for the music recalls a political tradition – Spanish Anarchism – to which none of the Prime Ministers belongs. Furthermore, the Gran Vía was briefly in 1936 named the Avenida de la C.N.T., after the Anarcho-Syndicalist union. Galindo and Sierra contrast the graceful choreography of their film's conclusion with the disruptive effects of a soundtrack that evokes political dissensus and seems to act as a revolutionary call to arms. The central focus of the piece is thus Rancière's notion of that 'third' theatrical space into which the spectator may interpellate the individuals and voices that are starkly absent from the montage, thus exposing the arbitrary nature of both political expectation and tradition. Visually presenting a mere simulacrum of democracy, Galindo and Sierra allude all the more

effectively to those excluded from the Rancèrean police order. This point is crucial: although *Los encargados* certainly critiques the achievements of the Spanish Transition by leveling the accusation of political betrayal at the Monarch and six Prime Ministers, the 'encargados' entrusted with leadership of the country, their imbrication in the urban fabric of a seemingly topsy-turvy world impedes any simple interpretation. As Bishop argues, Sierra's work consistently does more than demand active spectatorship; it points to a productively disruptive 'imbrication of the social and the aesthetic' (2004: 78). The film ends with a siren, that stereotypical urban sound that signals possible danger and urgency, and yet is so often ignored by city dwellers. Whether this closing sound serves to naturalize Galindo and Sierra's aesthetic intervention or sharpen its message is undetermined.

The contradictory entwining of memory and commentary on politico-socio-economic crisis in Galindo and Sierra's film suggests a new paradigm that (in echo of, but also contrast to, Rothberg's notion of multidirectional memory) we might term 'disruptive memory'. It is an approach that begins with entanglements of the political and the social, the historical and the contemporary, the emplaced and the embodied, but explores the dynamics of their imagistic and discursive interactions self-reflexively. These entanglements produce 'disruptive events that testify to a shared reality between viewers and performers, and which defy not only agreed ways of thinking about pleasure, labour and ethics, but also the intellectual frameworks we have inherited to understand these ideas today' (Bishop 2012: 239). This is a Rancèrean harnessing of memory as a productive *dissensus*. It aims not only to examine the present, but to demand new ways of dissenting politically by envisaging a differently ordered world. As with the works of López Mozo and the protests of the 15-M, Galindo and Sierra challenge our ways of thinking about, and our ways of

doing, politics by using memory as a tool to engage the spectator and to orient her/him towards the need to imagine alternative futures. Ultimately, this is a vindication of aesthetics as central to the processes of contemporary memory work as well as the functioning of contemporary politics. As with the charge often leveled at the 15-M, Galindo and Sierra do not propose specific answers. Instead, their work interrogates the image itself, challenging the visual and aesthetic framing of experience and calling for the urgent posing of new questions about the political construction of the intelligible. Their work thus aims to recast the physical and discursive spaces within with dissensus can be articulated. In this sense, as with the work of López Mozo and the example of the 15-M, their imbrication of aesthetics and politics reveals the role of memory as disruptive, or rather as a productive disruption of seemingly self-evident assumptions with a view to imagining alternative vistas on the future.

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