

Spanish Historical Memory as Archive in Carme Riera's *La meitat de l'ànima*

Collin S. Diver
University of Minnesota

Un escritor que
todavía sabe cómo se llaman las cosas
tiene salvada la mitad del alma...

Gabriel García Márquez

1. Introduction: the archivization of Francisco Franco's corpse

On 24 October 2019, Francisco Franco was exhumed from his burial site, moved, and reburied in a different cemetery, El Pardo-Mingorrubio. The former dictator of Spain had been buried in the Valle de los Caídos, a controversial monument constructed during Franco's regime, which he purposed as a monument that recognized and reconciled the conflict known as the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939. Indeed, the website of the Valle de los Caídos attests to as much (Abadía de la Santa Cruz del Valle de los Caídos 2020, n.p.). Nevertheless, *RTVE* describes his reburial as the close of “un capítulo de la memoria histórica” (2019, n.p.). Why would it be necessary to move Franco's remains from a site meant to reconcile the conflict between *los nacionales* and *los republicanos*?¹ This is because the Valle de los Caídos is for many an effacement of the past, feigning to be a monument of reconciliation. In truth, it was intended to celebrate Franco's victory in the Guerra Civil, as Paloma Aguilar Fernández refers to in a subsection of her book entitled “Monumentos de los vencedores”. El Valle de los Caídos is among these monuments.

This article does not concern itself so much with the exhumation and reburial of Franco, but rather emphasizes the traces left behind by these figures of the past. For example, Aguilar Fernández demonstrates that the true intentions of the Valle de los Caídos can be unearthed by exploring the historical and cultural context in which the monument was produced. I consider this investigation as reading archives along with and against the archival grain, terms coined by Ann Laura Stoler. While reading an archive along the archival grain considers the documents and knowledge

¹ These two categories describe the two fronts that opposed each other during the Spanish Civil War. In reality, these groups were coalitions of convenience comprised of several different factions. Payne discusses the consolidation of right-wing forces in the run-up to the coup (2012, 64–8). Left-wing forces had somewhat united with the Popular Front in January of 1936 (2012, 29–32), although the more radical left began participating in the war after realizing their fortuitous chance to bring about their revolutions (2012, 93–102).

production within an archive (2002, 100), reading against the grain investigates any omissions and misinformation within the archive so as to reveal the histories of the marginalized (2002, 99–100).² In turn, Aguilar Fernández reads the monument along the grain by referring to contemporary documents produced by Franco and his ministers before the pivot toward national reconciliation, a move intended to appeal to the United States and the anti-communist NATO bloc. However, she also reads Franco’s construction against the grain by considering, for example, the placement of José Antonio Primo de Rivera’s grave next to Franco’s corpse. Burying the darling of the Spanish Falange next to the *caudillo* seems to summon up the memory of thousands of regrettable losses from the “Republican terror” and subsequent war; moreover, given Primo de Rivera’s proximity to Franco, these martyrs are redeemed through Franco’s glory. Their supposed redemption was only possible through Franco’s total victory in 1939.³ In this way, Aguilar Fernández demonstrates two differing narratives that explain the purpose of the Valle de los Caídos. Spanish society has disputed over the monument’s purpose since its construction.

Removing Franco’s body, as a video published by *El País* declares, “...es el primer paso para convertir el Valle de los Caídos en algo distinto de lo que Franco quiso que fuera” (“Anatomía de la exhumación” 2019, n.p.). As such, although one chapter of this historical memory narrative closes, another begins, and now Spain at large must contend with what the former dictator leaves in his wake. As Elizabeth Jelin notes, traces of the past unto themselves do not constitute memory per se; instead, societal actors imbue them with meanings (2003, 18); as such, the traces left behind within and around the Valle can be interpreted in such a way that challenges Franco’s account of the past, while simultaneously explaining the controversial past of this monument. Since the traces do not speak for themselves, Jelin develops the concept of “memory entrepreneurs” that interact with these traces in order to “seek social recognition and political legitimacy of *one* (their own) interpretation or narrative of the past” (2003, 33–4; emphasis in original). In this way, memory entrepreneurs in Spain mount their own projects that interpret the past around the flashpoint of the Valle de los Caídos. By exhuming Franco, the Pedro Sánchez government concludes an effort led by hundreds of thousands of such memory entrepreneurs that seek a means of being able to question the state’s “master narrative” (2003, 27), which heretofore emphasized national unity under the Franco era.

² Stoler further explores the implications of these terms in *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*.

³ Indeed, Primo de Rivera and other Falange leaders were imprisoned in March 1936 for “unlawful assembly” given that the group had been stoking the flames of political violence (Casanova 2010, 133–4). He was executed in November of the same year (2010, 200). Thus, the image of the once-promising leader became an ideal martyr figure for Franco as the war developed.

Other memory entrepreneurs battle over meaning at the Valle de los Caídos, however. Xavier Casals has studied the far right extensively in history (in Spain and in Europe at large⁴) but has continuously weighed in on the significance of the Valle de los Caídos before and after the exhumation of Franco. In a blog post, Casals features a small photo of protestors displaying the *saludo fascista* on the steps of the monument (2018b, n.p.); he also published the same text in *El Periódico* without such an alarming photo, noting that the mausoleum “encarna la vigencia de las ‘dos Españas’” (2018a, n.p.). Contrast these memory entrepreneurs, neofascists honoring Franco’s victory and subsequent rule, with the efforts of other such memory entrepreneurs, such as Joan Pinyol. The remains of Pinyol’s grandfather, Joan Colom, had been forcibly removed and placed in a *fosa común* within the Valle de los Caídos, and access to recover Colom’s remains has been made impossible. By attempting to pinpoint the traces of his grandfather and recover them—in a way, reading the Valle de los Caídos along and against its archival grain—Pinyol seeks justice for Colom as well as his family, a struggle which is depicted in *Avi, et trauré d’aquí!*, a documentary made by Montserrat Armengou and Ricard Belis in 2013, but also described in a book of the same name that Pinyol himself wrote and published in 2019. The case of Pinyol and Colom intends to demonstrate the stark difference between two memory narratives in Spain that stem from the same site of memory. When one considers the fate of Franco’s remains, it seems that the past can be dug up and later reframed. On the other hand, for Colom and others buried within tombs containing several decomposed bodies, the past remains sealed, obfuscated, and beyond the reach of the present.

Considering the vast difference between the archivization of Franco’s and Colom’s remains, the Spanish state has (up until its relocation of Franco’s body) maintained a master narrative that elevates the mythical Franco, all while neglecting other people that lied with him. Walter Benjamin once praised the chronicler of history whose narrative “recounts events without distinguishing between the great and small” because this mode “accounts for the truth” (1955, 254). Given that Franco’s government suppressed access to Colom and others buried at the Valle de los Caídos, is it possible for present-day observers to follow Benjamin’s suggestion and account for small figures of history, like Colom? It is worrisome to think that the experience of these small figures has been prohibited and effectively lost, because traces of their past are necessary for memory entrepreneurs to reinterpret other narratives of the past, like that of the state’s master narrative. Despite lacking access to Colom’s physical remains, *Avi, et trauré d’aquí!* in both of its forms creates accesses a small

⁴ Casals has written two historical texts treating Spain’s far right: *Neonazis en España: De las audiciones wagnerianas a los skinheads (1966–1995)* (1995), as well as *Ultrapatriotas: Extrema derecha y nacionalismo de la guerra fría a la era de la globalización* (2003).

account of the past by constructing the experiences of the deceased. Then, by making new access to this experience via non-material traces, such as the act of writing, the story that had once been lost to history is reassembled and made public. Jelin—following Todorov—theorizes “exemplary” or “good uses of memory” (2003, 42), which I ascribe to the archives used to summon up the past that intend “to learn from it, drawing from it the lessons that would make the past the guide for action in the present and the future” (2003, 42). In other words, alternate archives exist which allow memory entrepreneurs in the present to access that which remains of their loved ones, a chance to listen to the lost voices of history. While accessing these familiar memories changes the experiences of those searching in the present, the practice of remembering also serves a larger purpose of conscientizing society of what is just and what is unjust while considering what happened to these people.

This essay, thus, turns away from the state narrative of Franco’s legacy—which, compared to the remains of Colom and thousands of others, has been literally preserved, while Colom’s and others’ bodies decomposed with the passage of time—and confronts alternative memory practices when access to the deceased’s remains is impossible. In this way, this reading agrees with the metaphor of accessing historical memory as an exhumation of the past;⁵ however, it also complicates these archaeological attempts when an exhumation is simply not possible. Instead, the present reading emphasizes Jacques Derrida’s understanding of archive in order to ontologically (indeed, hauntologically) deconstruct the memory practices that stem from attempts to recover the past. In agreement with readings like that of Samuel Amago (2011), this article deconstructs the epistemological conceptualization of H/historical truth, but also emphasizes the subjective nature of assembled memory narratives when considering these traces of the past. By reading Derrida’s *Archive Fever*, I look beyond cultural factors that forestall access to the past in contemporary Spain and instead emphasize the inaccessibility of historical fact from the present given obstacles such as forgetting, which Derrida considers a function of the death drive. I then consider these two dynamics in conjunction in order to conceive of the effects of these obstacles on memory entrepreneurs in the present. Those engaging memory and seeking alternate ways to exhume possible explanations of the traumatic past do so in an attempt to ground their own identities, a self-reflexive process which—as Derrida notes—is a kind of archive fever. I also contemplate what impact the desire of (and sickness from) archives has on Spaniards that engage in memory practices today.

⁵ Archaeology as exhumation is literally and metaphorically present in Carlos Jerez-Farrán and Amago’s *Unearthing Franco’s Legacy: Mass Graves and the Recovery of Historical Memory in Spain* (2010) and Ofelia Ferrán and Lisa Hilbink’s *Legacies of Violence in Contemporary Spain: Exhuming the Past, Understanding the Present* (2017). Additionally, Amago uses the terms “archaeological impulse” and “archival impulse” interchangeably in his later “On the Archaeological Impulse in Contemporary Spanish Narrative Fiction” (2011), which is a notion that I refine herein.

To do so, I refer to Carme Riera's *La meitat de l'ànima* (2003) as an articulation of how one might understand the archives assembled and interpreted traces in order to approximate the lost lives of loved ones and their experiences during the Spanish Civil War as well as during the resultant Franco regime. The novel is informative for contemporary debates regarding the Valle de los Caídos given that it takes up archives as the sole remains of victims of historical injustice, the violence of Franco's regime. By thinking of this novel as emblematic of the Spanish historical memory movement and its accounts of the past, it is clear that—although some archived accounts may provide traces of a historical past—no one definitive origin can exist in the present, nor can it be unproblematically exhumed. The contemplation of the lack of historical fact is especially relevant given Francoist repression of dissidents and suppression of alternate explanations of the regime, as well as the subsequent government's commitment to not discuss the past with the *pacto del olvido*. Instead, to conceive of some origin requires interpretation, assumptions, and perhaps even a leap of faith in order to be understood. Riera's narrative illustrates the trouble at the heart of Benjamin's contention that "[é]s una tasca més àrdua honorar la memòria dels éssers anònims que la de les persones cèlebres. La construcció històrica es consagra a la memòria dels que no tenen veu" (2003, 237): it is necessary to bear witness to the *lack* that these voices share, which in turn reveals more about commitment to justice in the present than the treatment of Franco's remains. In a way, *La meitat de l'ànima* subversively challenges the silence of the post-Franco era (and the cultural consensus of Transition Culture)⁶ by providing potential voices to the voiceless.

As such, this article centers on *La meitat de l'ànima* and its criticism, but also draws out its connections with ghosts of the past and Derrida's spectral archive. It will demonstrate how the narrator-protagonist of the novel peruses alternative archives in order to form her own archive, as well as the catastrophic crisis in identity that this process causes. Ultimately, it is the contingency of these archives that serves as the only referent that the narrator-protagonist can rely upon, and this becomes the basis upon which she reconstructs her life. Arguably, this instability from a disparate collection of recollections, documents and belongings is a similar experience to that of so many Spanish people today. All in all, the gaps and assumptions undergirding the archives of Spanish historical memory inform and haunt contemporary Spanish identity. Also relevant to this discussion, then, is precisely how the narrativization of archive informs political power and its manifestations today in Spanish identity politics.

⁶ Transition Culture, a term developed by Guillem Martínez, et. al., in *CT, o, la Cultura de la Transición* (2012), seeks to normalize a cultural industry of Spanish consensus by repressing any cultural dissent, since such dissent could threaten the nascent Spanish democracy (2012, 14).

2. Text, ghost, archive

Riera's text features a protagonist only known as C, a played-out author and journalist that briefly meets one Lluís G. during the book festival of Sant Jordi while attempting to promote her latest book. During the hubbub, the curious Lluís G. furnishes C with a small portfolio and a business card, informing her that the contents of the file might be of interest to her. C unknowingly goes on to dispose of the business card and cast aside the portfolio, but she later discovers that the portfolio is of interest. Within it are photos and correspondence of her mother, some forty years deceased in suspect circumstances. Throughout the narrative, C proceeds to hunt down whatever documents, memories, or remains that she can find of the enigmatic Cecília Balaguer; indeed, her search becomes an obsession, given how distant the two were in C's early life, and she doggedly tracks every lead that arises from the documents provided by Lluís G. Mysteries for both C and the reader abound: who was Cecília Balaguer, and why was she also known as Celia Ballester? Did Cecília Balaguer have a secret lover? Is it possible that C's father is not her biological father? If so, could it be that C's biological father is Albert Camus? C also attempts to discern whether her mother acted as a secret agent for the Spanish Republican government in exile, for Spain's dictatorship, or some combination thereof as a double agent. Although C sheds light on some of these questions, others remain completely unanswered, given the challenges that she encounters during her search. Some notable complications are C's attempts to reconcile her scant documents against testimonials by her mother's contemporaries and friends. She finds that some of these affirmations have little to do with one another, while some are completely contradictory.

The search subsumes C. She describes it as an obsession to figure out who her mother was and the circumstances of her death because this story would inform her own story. Eventually, she seeks psychiatric help at the point of going mad and is admitted for a brief stay to a mental institution. With self-reflection and recommendations by her doctor, C picks up the pen once more to write a book tracking the inaccessibility of Cecília. While C implores readers by means of her novel, *La meitat de l'ànima*, to submit any information that they might have that she has not yet reviewed, her foremost intent is actually to publish a widely-received book in order to re-establish her lost contact with Lluís G. (who, she speculates, could have any number of roles within her mother's mystery, ranging from that of a simple messenger to potentially even her secret lover). In this way, the title, *La meitat de l'ànima*, is exactly what C hopes to find by locating her mother's memory. By asking for the reader's input, the novel enters the metafictional fray, resounding with several other texts that have since come to define the historical memory movement, such as Javier Cercas's *Soldados de Salamina* (2002).⁷

⁷ For more regarding metafiction and Spanish novels, refer to Amago's *True Lies: Narrative Self-Consciousness in the Contemporary Spanish Novel* as well as *La memoria*

In *La meitat de l'ànima*, C's novel exists both within its own frame and in this reality, since it is the novel that C writes outlining the search for her mother as well as it is Riera's book. It is even teased that they might be the same thing, since the unspecified "C" christening the protagonist could plausibly refer to Riera herself ("C" for "Carme"). Moreover, Riera has dedicated the book to her mother, which aligns to the hypothesis that C is also Riera.⁸ Despite the correspondence between the two, C is not Carme Riera, which means that her search begins and ends, just as her novel. And, despite asking for the help of Lluís G., the protagonist cannot respond to any of the reader's potential contributions. As such, Cecília will remain lost forever (or, her story for C remains unresolved), and fiction is fiction. Even so, the ambiguities that Riera develop in the text as well as other paradoxes have inspired a good deal of scholarship. Much attention has been given to the presence—or lack thereof—of Cecília and her spectral impact on the novel, and Maryellen Bieder even hints at the complications cathected with "presence", writing that "[a]t the heart of Riera's fiction lies the problem of language: meaning and how it is produced, reader expectations and how they shape readings, in short, language as collaboration between author and reader" (2008, 173). These readings of the novel suggest an approximation of Derridean deconstruction.

For example, Derrida proposed a "hauntology" as alternate means of understanding "ontology." Whereas ontology posits a variety of logocentrism present in the being itself, this ontology quickly expands in scope when the signified also inherently suggests what it is not. For example, a book is a book, but the term "book" itself also connotes "not blu-ray disc" and "not magazine". According to Derrida, this same blurring of an object's ontological self and that which it is not can also apply to a moment in time; indeed, hauntology arises with an event that is "repetition *and* first time, but also repetition *and* last time, since the singularity of any *first time*, makes of it also a *last time*" (1994, 10; emphasis in original). Hence, a moment or event escapes the bindings of time, both new and curiously familiar. This phenomenon is most present in his reading of *Hamlet* and the idea of "time out of joint" uttered in the presence of the Ghost of the elder Hamlet to convey haunted moments. Perhaps this sense of haunting informs the multiple appearances of time outdone: in one case, in an Electra Complex-tinged dream that C has about her father, she hears a song lyric that croons "Reloj, no marques las horas" (2003, 128); consider also a letter that Cecília writes to her lover, "Tot el que no marqui

novelada: Hibridación de géneros y metafiction en la novela sobre la guerra civil y el franquismo (2000-2010), an edited volume by Hans Lauge Hansen and Juan Carlos Cruz Suárez. The latter notably features a conference presentation by Riera herself, "Sobre la memoria y la autoficción", where she sympathizes with Hayden White's postmodern stance that literature displaces history as the actual source of historic truth (2012, 266); and, moreover, works like her novel have the ethical obligation of recuperating the past so extensively censored under Franco's government (2012, 263).

⁸ Schumm treats these metafictional intersections more extensively (2008, 152–3), as does Bieder (2008, 180–1; 183–4).

la nostra hora és fora del temps” (2003, 10). This recurring theme marks instances of time out of joint, all spectral conditions resultant of hauntology.

With consideration of Jo Labanyi’s discussions regarding the figure of the ghost in Spanish postmodernity, critics of Riera’s novel have focused primarily on studying Cecília as another one of these ghosts. In Labanyi’s analysis, “ghosts are the return of the repressed of history—that is, the mark of an all-too-real historical trauma which has been erased from conscious memory but which makes its presence felt through ghostly traces” (2002, 6). And, moreover, “[h]aunting requires the present to correct the past at the same time that it establishes an affiliative link with it” (2007, 113). The fact that C’s searches to rediscover Cecília through few remaining clues in order to rehabilitate a voice that had been lost to history falls in line with Labanyi’s remarks. For Sandra Schumm, C’s search for her mother is one meant to “reconstruct her concealed maternal heritage” (2008, 141), which, she notes, was a common tendency in Franco’s regime. Schumm continues to note that Cecília (and other lost mothers) seek reparations by haunting the Spanish present (2008, 153). However, Kathleen Glenn expands her analysis beyond a postmodernist understanding of the ghost by engaging Derrida’s formulation of *différance*, saying that “[e]ach discovery that C makes about her mother is placed under erasure by successive discoveries which cross it out. Knowledge is deferred in an endless chain of differing versions of events, and questions about Cecília remain unanswered” (2007, 48). Not only does the narrator wonder who Cecília is and what happened to her, but she also must confront her double, Celia Ballester. Already, it is apparent that the trace of Cecília (what she is, but simultaneously that which she is not) has been opened by her other identity, suggesting with it a whole new set of questions and, within itself, troubles with trace. I agree that Derrida’s deconstruction unlocks key meanings of the novel, but I pursue these phenomena of trace and *différance* to explore what other messages are present in Riera’s novel. I believe that Derrida’s theories regarding the archive and human psychology can reveal more about the meaning of *La meitat de l'ànima*, and that these dynamics may also resemble Spanish and Catalan societies at large.

There is a tension in criticism about the novel, since Bieder’s explication of Riera’s interwoven paradoxes explains that the “[the narrative] tracks a life that left no archival *trace*” (2008, 172; emphasis mine). However, Glenn writes that “the daughter sets out to *retrace* her mother’s footsteps” (2007, 47; emphasis mine). How can no archival trace exist, and yet C is still somehow able to trace her mother’s life? I use these examples to demonstrate a counterintuitive conceptualization of the archive, inasmuch as an archive need not consist of documents and records. As mentioned, alternate archives have informed the Spanish historical present, such as testimonies, or fictional engagements with the past. These archives provide the traces which consist of C’s search, and she experiences archive by literally following her mother’s footsteps, walking

down the same city blocks, and staying in the same hotels in the likes of Paris, Portbou, Fornalutx, and more. Likewise, she thinks through archives when she encounters old, marked-up books among her mother's forgotten belongings or when she attempts to reconcile against her letters many contradictory testimonies from old family friends or relations.

Despite the fact that Cecília and C are fictional characters, their plight is not entirely dissimilar from the experience of Pinyol as he attempts to recover his grandfather's remains, since these alternate archives come to represent the lost life. As such, C's search—despite its specificities—can also resemble the searches of so many other Spaniards. This aligns to Labanyi's contention that Spanish post-modernity manifests its suppressed forms of expression as “adapting to changed circumstances” (2002, 12), or, that past hauntings recur in unexpected ways in the present. C's story is, accordingly, one narrative that corresponds to many others, since Cecília's past and what she could have been haunts C's present. Labanyi also discusses that “haunting, which elides direct representation of the past in favor of the representation of its after effects, stresses the legacy of the past to the present: a legacy which—as in most ghost stories—is one of injustice requiring reparation” (2007, 113). *La meitat de l'ànima* is similarly a search to mend the injustice of not knowing who this lost person was; all the while, this unknowability also troubles C as she attempts to discover who exactly she is and if she can live with this trauma.

Studying these traces alongside Derrida's idea surrounding trace not only conjures Cecília's ghost, but also how C tracks her mother's ghost throughout the narrative. The search recounted in the narrative also reveals how C tracks her own soul, or even her own ghost. I evoke these souls because, inasmuch as they inform and compose the novel, ghosts inform a certain fluidity to the narrative and even its very form. After all, Derrida writes that “the archive is *spectral* [...]: neither present nor absent nor ‘in the flesh’” (1995, 54). C realizes as much when she visits the Hotel Esmeralda, one of her mother's haunts: “vaig arribar [...] amb la il·lusió que pogués guardar als llibres de registres o, si més no als arxius, les còpies dels fulls d'inscripció dels seus hostes, sense imaginar, gran imbècil!, que això és precisament el que mai no es fa en aquesta mena de llocs” (2003, 57). The ghost of her mother encircles C, tantalizingly close, yet ultimately inaccessible. Moreover, instead of haunting one locale or place, C encounters haunting clues throughout her day-to-day life, obliging her to track the ghost by meticulously keeping track of her discoveries. C does so with “... una plagueta, que vaig comprar a posta, vaig anar apuntant tot el que recuperava de cada un [que tenia informació sobre la Cecília]—eren quasi una vintena—perquè d'aquesta manera imaginava que em seria més fàcil poder-m'hi adreçar després de tant de temps, amb l'esperança que sabessin més de la meua mare que jo mateixa” (2003, 65–6). Glenn concludes that, in Riera's corpus, “[w]riting is, in a sense, a salvage operation” (2007, 49), and C proves to be no exception to the rule.

Yet, try as she might, C's attempt to salvage the past with her *plagueta* also becomes amorphous as she tracks down more clues. Eventually, C struggles with conflicting accounts of her mother, and she finds "... dos punts de vista distints sobre la meva mare, més aviat oposats, discordants amb el meu. Per això crec que no els puc passar per alt" (2003, 66). If anything, C's work to uncover the past slips away from her as she reproduces her own archive. Counterintuitively, while it might seem that more facts would help C render a cogent narrative about her mother's life, C encounters the opposite to be true because more perspectives create a narrative that is impossible to reconcile. But this impossibility is exactly what Cecília needs in order to be conjured up: the *plagueta*, another spectral archive, forms the basis of what C has ultimately written for the reader, *La meitat de l'ànima*. Intriguingly, then, *La meitat de l'ànima* relies on and is archive, haunted by its ghost. This archive manifests itself in different ways, detailed below.

3. The moment (and tense) proper to archive

Part of the spectrality of the archive in Derrida's treatment is the fact that the "moment *proper*" (1995, 22; emphasis in original) of archivization varies because it is so unstable. He discusses an example featuring his composition of his very treatise, in which he presses a "Save" button which then impresses a document to be stocked or accumulated. It is worth considering, however, what pressing the "Save" button entails for previous drafts, or for words that had been typed out but were later deleted. It seems that the new version overwrites the older draft. This example from Derrida's discussion demonstrates that an archive betrays a transience in its very composition, revealing instability as to when it gets saved, how it gets saved, and what fails to be saved. Beyond this, Derrida notes that even the removal of something from an archive—or, for example, an extraneous phrase or sentence—signals a kind of inscription, for often a trace is left of this omission. Hence, even these omissions (either consciously made or unconsciously made) represent, in some way, part of the archive even though the archive in its current state may not reflect these changes. Not only does this question the moment proper of archivization, but it also troubles the exteriority of the archive.

In *La meitat de l'ànima*, C speaks to the reader from different moments in time in her narration of the novel. Frequently, she uses the present tense to address Lluís G. and her other readers. But C also recounts moments in her narrative in the retrospective past tense, typical of literary convention. Overall, the narrative technique motivating the novel is C's recollection of the past, transcribing her events that had occurred in her search and placing them on the page in her process of some fifteen days of writing in Portbou. However, this ambivalent act of remembrance slips between past and present. The act of remembering occurs in the present as

it recalls something from the past, which explains the natural tendency in spoken language to narrate a past story as if it were presently occurring.

The complicated act of remembrance and consignment complicates the proper moment of the novel and of the archive. There are moments within one version of the narrative that fluidly mesh past and present tenses, despite the fact that this blending does not occur in the other version of the book.⁹ First, in the Catalan, C interviews a *maqui* by the name of Liberto Aramis about Cecília's potential role in the Republican war effort after Franco's victory: "No va sentir a parlar de la possibilitat que fos [Cecília] una espia de Franco?", *vaig preguntar-li*" (2003, 215; emphasis mine). Compare this same scene to the Castilian: "¿No oyó hablar de la posibilidad de que fuera [Cecília] una espía de Franco?", *le pregunto [sic.]*" (2004, 198; emphasis mine). Here, the Castilian features C asking Aramis questions in the past tense, but she recounts the conversation itself in the present, which differs from the total retrospective of the Catalan. Yet this mixture of verb tenses across versions demonstrates the instability of archive's moment proper, collapsing an ontological meaning into that which it is not, thus accenting the inaccessibility between the act of remembering and the act of writing. In fact, Freud makes an analogy in *Mystic Writing-Pad* and compares the memory act to writing (1925, 209–10); Derrida lifts this analogy and labels Freud's "perceptual apparatus [... as] nothing but a writing machine" (Derrida 1978, 278). In this way, the novel as written language could even be an instance of memory, further obfuscating the moment proper of archive. Indeed, does archive happen when one perceives a given moment, or when she converts it to text? Both versions of Riera's text demonstrate this ontological collapse.

4. Spectral "compendium" of other ghostly mothers

Schumm compiles the literary antecedents of *La meitat de l'ànima*, arguing that C's "mysterious quest for her mother's and her own identity becomes symbolic of the searches of many past female protagonists" due to the fact that the Franco regime effaced the role of women in its history, rendering them invisible (2008, 143). The inaccessibility of these women gives rise to the ghostly apparition, as they are "present but unseen" (2008, 139). For Schumm, the novel compiles allusions to other literary mothers so as to recuperate the mother's identity in Francoist Spain. She writes that "Cecilia [...] is an inventive compendium that invokes the ghostly mothers in Spanish fiction published after *Nada*" (2008, 153). Since Cecília is a

⁹ Does this minute difference in translation effectively give rise to two different stories? Bieder has more extensively treated the differences in languages and dialects among the two narratives, by demonstrating the ways that the two languages of the novel suggest "alternative readings of the narrator's relationship to the history of Barcelona, Catalonia, and Spain" (2008, 183). She also treats this issue in an article that precedes the publication of *La meitat de l'ànima*, "Cultural Capital: The Play of Language, Gender, and Nationality in Carme Riera" (2000).

compendium of ghostly mothers, she serves to highlight the roles of other Spanish women that were recounted during the dictatorship and thus pay tribute to them.¹⁰ Schumm also investigates references to Andrea in Carmen Laforet's novel, as well as to C in Carmen Martín-Gaité's *El cuarto de atrás*. The potential allusion to Martín-Gaité is revealing, since the "C" of this earlier novel works as a pseudo-autobiographical stand-in for Martín-Gaité herself, all while the C of *La meitat de l'ànima* engages in a similar game.

In agreement with Schumm's analysis, I add another ghostly mother to the archive that Riera creates via Cecília and C. Despite the fact that the protagonist in Mercè Rodoreda's *El carrer de les Camèlies* (1966) never conceives any children that survive childbirth, Riera reads and features her voice as well as Rodoreda's narrative as one of many voices to be recovered. Rodoreda's novel, published shortly after *La plaça del Diamant* (1962), features one Cecília Ce, an orphaned child christened with her seemingly incomplete name by means of a scrap paper attached to her person when she is given to her two bourgeois foster parents. As Cecília grows, she acts out against her foster parents as she becomes enthralled with the idea of locating her biological parents, particularly her father. Eventually, Cecília Ce conducts her search by leaving the confines of her foster parents' home and traverses the streets of Barcelona in its throes of decadence both before and after the Spanish Civil War. Specifically, she finds work as a lover and prostitute amongst the lower classes, and she struggles as a mistress to the privileged upper classes. She also suffers from a childhood preoccupation with bodies and their ailments, such as pimples or discolored skin. This informs Cecília's adult life, and she fixates on her own ears—often a site of punishment as a child—and she loses her sight during the pains of her stillborn delivery.

If Schumm's imagining of the ghostly mother is reworked, Cecília Ce—subjected to the violences of patriarchal oppression, ultimately realized in Franco's ascent to power—gives birth to ghosts, and eventually she is deemed infertile. All the same, toward the end of the novel, Cecília allocates enough means from her lovers to invest in her own apartment, permitting her to give up her lifestyle. This allows her to redouble her search for her parents. Although she cannot find them, she does successfully locate the man that had discovered her as an abandoned newborn and had brought her to her foster parents. Cecília and the old man reflect on her precocious childhood, and Cecília describes herself as becoming younger as if she were a child once more; thus, it seems that some facet of the mystery of her life has been resolved, and the novel closes shortly thereafter.

The similarities between C in Riera's novel and Cecília Ce are undeniable, given that both search for the parents that could explain the mysteries underlying their lives. And yet, paradoxically, it seems as if

¹⁰ Schumm draws other literary allusions, referring to Ana María Matute's *Primera memoria*, Ana María Moix's *Julia*, and Adelaida García Morales's *El sur* (2008, 152).

Cecília Ce lends each half of her name to the divided identities of *La meitat de l'ànima*. Even if C were to find her mother, her Cecília, it would seem that, even in a case where two halves do meet, some secrets remain unresolvable. I find it useful to refer to Cecília because Rodoreda's novel echoes Schumm's thesis: "By leaving the details about C's mother unresolved by the end of the novel, Riera suggests that the total reconstruction of the mother's history is not as important as the effort to make her more visible" (2008, 141). In fact, by modifying this statement and allowing it to speak to two parents, the same conclusion may apply to Rodoreda's text. Riera deconstructs literary history: even if one solves a H/historical mystery, it simply defers and slips into another such enigma. By the end of Riera's novel, the archive of the ghostly mother remains incomplete, but if scholarship to date serves as any indication, critics will continue to locate additional ghostly mothers and voices echoing Cecília's experience as the search of alternate Francoist archives continues. The example of Cecília Ce and her haunting of *La meitat de l'ànima* proves useful for theorizing the deferred gaps of genealogy that compose the Spanish present, as further explained below.

5. On archives and archivists

When the distinction between past and present blurs, or even when literary mothers manifest in the same figure, Glenn's reading of Derrida is informative. As she notes, "[k]nowledge is deferred in an endless chain of differing versions of events ..." (2007, 48). Readers suffer from the same phenomenon when, given the presentation of the narrative in an archival form, it is impossible to discern when or how one thing occurs, if it did at all. C too suffers from this troubling *différance* when Lluís G. presents to her a folder containing nine complete letters and two epistolary fragments (which C recognizes as her mother's handwriting), and five photographs of her mother (2003, 27). This very folder functions as an archive in the novel, the archive which inspires the *mise en abîme* of the entire text. Yet, later on, C suspects that the letters could be "només una mostra escollida entre el gruix d'una correspondència molt més abundosa que potser algú encara conserva" (2003, 55). C is aware that some outside actor has a role in her receipt of the folder, and she conjectures that Lluís G. or someone else had ordered them, and that this person (or people) probably chose these particular letters as a kind of sample. C knows full well that she received an archive, and with this archive all the archival trappings. In these pages, C speculates extensively about which documents were included and why, thus self-reflexively wondering who archived these materials, why they would have been important to this person, as well as what has been omitted. Subsequent pages reveal C's thought process in tracking hints or clues in what has been availed to her with infrequent success, although some contextual references do end up grounding C. For this reason, C visits the

Esmeralda for its record of check-ins, because it was where Cecília and her lover had met many years before. This record would yield a new line of investigation, which inspires C to travel there on a whim and emulate her mother's actions as described in the letter, as if to experience the same motives of "una Cecília Balaguer de ficció" (2003, 60).

Eventually, C cannot sustain the search for her mother in this experiential way, so she begins interviewing her mother's acquaintances, perusing her old belongings, and wracking her own memory. C also writes these different traces in a notebook, the writing of which eventually contributes to the writing of her larger novel, *La meitat de l'ànima*. However, at one point, C comes across two seemingly contradictory accounts of her mother that are so dissonant from her own that she decides to include both perspectives in her notebook. The inclusion of these two perspectives, of Esther Brugada and Rosa Montalbán, eventually inform the archival nature of the novel. C writes that their perspectives are so different that "[p]er això crec que no els puc passar per alt" (2003, 66). As such, C self-consciously constructs her narrative, since she has to parse through the testimonies of twenty interviewed people in order to determine whose accounts should be included as most relevant. Even if Brugada's and Montalbán's interpretations challenge C's imagination of her mother, and even if both testimonies could be of doubtful credibility, C includes them in her narrative, which reveals a judiciousness in discerning that which could contribute to Lluís G.'s projected reading. As such, after C receives an archive from an archivist, C herself also works as an archivist. She attempts to understand and explain the fictional mother that she reads in her letters; then, she hands off her understanding, her archive. This reading aligns with Melissa Stewart's analysis, in that "[the narrator] grants some reader the possibility of completing the unfinished text, or doing her job" (2006, 236), thus drawing reader-response theory to even higher implications. But the reliance on the reader further reinforces the present reading of *La meitat de l'ànima* as an archive of C's hand. As Derrida writes, "The archive: if we want to know what this will have meant, we will only know in times to come. Perhaps" (1995, 27). C does the same, since she speculates about a larger corpus of letters that someone may still conserve, but she also acknowledges that she solicits assistance from something deferred, something that may or may not happen: "Gràcies per endavant per l'ajut" (2003, 15).¹¹

With C's self-conscious construction of the archive, I purport that C understands and even accepts Lluís G. (or some other beyond him) as an archivist with a purpose, or with motivations to frame a certain "Cecília Balaguer de ficció." As Derrida notes in *Archive Fever*, an archive collected by an archivist works as "an anticipation of the future" but also

¹¹ Meri Torras argues that the quasi-epistolary format of the novel as directed to Lluís G. but also to a general audience thus implicates the identity and assistance of the Other. All the same, the Other—whether he or she responds—contributes to the originary identity of the Self (2011, 101). I return to this lack later.

“as wager [...] the archive has always been a pledge, and like every pledge [...], a token of the future” (1995, 18). In this way, an archivist wagers that something will have happened or will be of importance, and thus uses the archive to reflect that understanding. However, this means that archivists have a purpose in the creation of an archive, and that they must anticipate which documents will be relevant and which will not. C also engages in this process by judiciously framing different possible instances of Cecília that could reach Lluís G., as well as a larger reading public.

However, C later seems to contradict herself. She says that “no descarto cap possibilitat però que no en puc triar tampoc una de determinada. Em falten dades que m’ajudin en aquest sentit” (2003, 233). For Bieder, this evidence clearly shows that C desires an “irrefutable knowledge of the facts and passions of her mother’s life, [as it] reflects her need to know her own identity” (2008, 175). How is it that C depends on some idea of a definitive historical fact despite her keen attention to the unstable archive that she received from Lluís G. (and, indeed, her very construction of an archival narrative)? Bieder argues that part of Riera’s purpose in writing the novel is to show that “H/historical truth is fragmented, open to interpretation(s), always in pursuit of elusive information, and replete with the inevitable gaps” (2008, 175). Within the narrative’s logic, however, I hope to explain the appearance of this paradox due to a phenomenon inherent to human nature, archive fever.

6. *En mal d’archive: C between Eros and Thanatos*

Archive Fever existed first as a plenary address that Derrida presented upon the conversion of Sigmund Freud’s estate in London to a Freud Museum. Appropriately, the text reflects on the father of psychoanalysis and how he may have merged his work with the concept of archive, as well as the state of the academy post-Freud. By dialoguing with a complex moment in history—the occasion of Freud destroying his manuscripts before fleeing from the Nazis and emigrating from Vienna—Derrida contemplates the themes of institutionalization and preservation in Freud’s work. Here, the museum becomes a site that preserves the civilizing processes of Eros, “whose purpose is to combine single human individuals [...] into one great unity, the unity of mankind” (Freud 1930, 755). Eros begets civilization, hence a kind of continuity from primitive man to his highest pinnacle. But Eros’s counterpart is Thanatos, or the death drive, that which opposes the “programme of civilization” (Freud 1930, 756) by inspiring aggression in mankind. Freud’s production had always been interested in the effects of war—for example, “shell shock” was an early attempt by Freud and other psychoanalysts to describe traumatized soldiers returning from combat as especially witnessed after the First World War—but, instead of confronting the effects of war, Freud ambitiously theorized Eros and Thanatos as potential causes thereof.

The Spanish Civil War followed shortly after Freud wrote *Civilization and its Discontents*, and the Second World War after that, all of which seemingly embody this conflict of Eros and Thanatos in 1936. For example, when José Millán Astray shouted “¡Viva la muerte!” and “¡Muera la inteligencia!” on the “Día de la Raza” in Salamanca in 1936 (2010, 187), it seems that the *sublevados* embodied this death drive in their desire to exterminate the Republican hordes; indeed, Derrida writes that the death drive “works to destroy the archive ...” (1995, 14; emphasis in original), wherein the archive represents the traces produced by Eros. After hearing this, Miguel de Unamuno, the rector of the Universidad de Salamanca and present for the festivities, publicly broke support with the *sublevados* and declared to the Francoist camp: “Venceréis, pero no convenceréis” (2010, 187). This anecdote merely hints at the Francoist project to not only harness a war effort (the death drive) in order to gain power, but to then restrict this deadly desire and begin to *convencer*. To convince requires messaging and propaganda; in short, the archives of the life drive. As early as 1936, Franco was already concerned with how, in the event of successfully overthrowing the state, he would present himself. In short, Franco’s management of this tension between Eros and Thanatos would eventually develop into the “master narrative” of the Spanish state (which Unamuno denounced).

But, to return to Derrida’s interpretation of Freud, the death drive endangers life in other ways. Since the death drive exterminates archives (and, moreover, the archives that it itself produces, thus demonstrating no trace that it had ever acted at all—such is the case of forgetting a memory, for example), Derrida clarifies that the “archive drive” (1995, 14) comes about as a human preoccupation to counteract the silent destruction of the death drive. This “archive drive” also manifests as “archive fever”, a desire to make and retain archives. This informs his expression “*mal d’archive*”, that one is troubled by archive, and in want of archive.

In Spain today, any person engaging with the past of the Spanish Civil War or Franco’s rule must deal with the lack of access to Francoist archives. An opinion piece by Julián Casanova from 2006 states as much, that “Sin archivos, no hay historia”, since the legacy of Franco’s politics forecloses access to the actions (and potential crimes) of the state that could explain alternate explanations aside from that which the state publicly offered (2006, n.p.). In the Spanish present, those suffering from archive fever must contend with reading alternate archives in order to supplant that which the government could clarify.¹²

¹² Casanova wrote his article in 2006. However, recent changes in Spanish law have widened access to the state’s archives—for example, there is more access to military archives (such as the invaluable *Guía de archivos militares españoles*), even though records from the Church remain largely unavailable. Although the 2007 Ley de la Memoria Histórica was written to guarantee the open access to archives concerning the Spanish Civil War, it also conflicts with the 1985 Ley del Patrimonio Español, in which information that could “entrañar riesgos para la seguridad y la defensa del Estado” need not be made publicly available. Given these obstacles, to consult alternate archives

This is the case of C, who is troubled by archive from the very beginning. Well after having initially received the folder and business card from Lluís G., C re-discovers the blue folder and realizes that she had unknowingly destroyed his business card. She only encounters it again when she confuses it for the work of another friend. At this point, C realizes the gravity of her initial error, a mistake that put her life on pause as she desperately searches for her mother. She writes that “[d]esconeixia fins a quin punt cometia una errada de la qual em seguec penedint [...] una errada de la qual ha depès la meva vida els darrers temps i qui sap si no en el futur” (2003, 23). As such, she is troubled by what she had destroyed—a potential example of the death drive—which accordingly fuels her desire to track down Lluís G. by means of the text. With this reestablished contact, she ultimately hopes to discover anything else of interest. The *mal d'archive* also provides for her want of archive.

The complex inheritance of the book eventually implicates the reader (readers of this reality as well as the hypothetical Lluís G.). Moreover, just as the narrative inscribes itself by printing what is known alongside what is not known of Cecília as well as C's search, the archive also inscribes circumcision, that which has been omitted (Derrida-Prenowitz 1995, 12). This lack that accompanies inscription causes one to question what has been lost. Indeed, just as the archive of *La meitat de l'ànima* contains an archive within it, so too does C's archive fever beget the reader's archive fever. Bieder finds that the attraction for readers in this reality “comes [...] from occupying the place assigned the narratee within the text and the freedom to imagine an extra-textual playing out of the narratee's response” (2008, 177). But even this behavior has a precedent in the text when C fantasizes about “una Cecília Balaguer que gens no havia envellit [...] abaixaria la veu per confiar a la seva filla, que era a punt de casar-se, el secret de la seva vida” (2003, 53). C wonders at all the different possibilities, at times enchanted by their infinitude, but also occasionally sickened. The archive haunts her so much that C, unable to cope, eventually seeks assistance in a mental institution. Readers of the text also suffer *mal d'archive*, for her two-month stay brings her to an old woman, both deaf and blind, that grips her hand tightly as they sit together. An attendant informs C that the woman normally prohibits any kind of company, and that perhaps C endearingly reminds the old woman of her deceased daughter (2003, 132–3). She then asks the old woman, “... saps qui és, Cecília?” (2003, 133). This uncanny coincidence—the old woman sharing the name of her mother—causes C to desperately flee. Afterward, C reflects that she could not endure any more: “No desitjava de cap manera incorporar aquella ombra a la meva vida, ni incloure cap altra espurna de dubte en la meva *història* ...” (2003, 134; emphasis mine). The discovery of this Cecília threatens C's sense of self, so she abandons the lead. Thus,

remains necessary. See also Miguel González's commentary on the legislative changes in his 2018 article for *El País*.

in order to retain some sense of self (albeit confused), C cuts out this possibility of self-knowledge.

The neglect of C's attention to her own ontology gives rise to a hauntology from this spectral manifestation of Cecília. Moreover, when C uses the term *història*, she presumably refers to her own history, signifying that she fears adding other doubts that would compromise her sense of self. On the other hand, *història* can translate to "story", and this double entendre also troubles the reader, causing her to wonder who this shadow is and whether she could have contributed any information to C's archives. And, recalling the addition of Rodoreda's Cecília Ce to the compendium of ghostly mothers, one may wonder if this deaf and blind Cecília could actually be Cecília Ce, whose past unresolved traumas have manifested hysterically in her old age.¹³ And, if this is the case, it could even be that she would contain some manifestation of the other half of C's soul, Cecília Balaguer.

This unknown lead that C neglects to pursue reveals a circumcision to the archive (Derrida-Prenowitz 1995, 19), but the act of circumcision itself leaves a kind of mark on the narrative, causing one to speculate. C too is troubled, and struggles with knowing who she is, and how her never-ending search for her mother leaves her identity open-ended. The archive always troubles in this way, ontologically questioning C's own *ser* as well as the ontological meaning of the narrative. The archive's contents contain so many meanings referring to lost pasts and presents, meanings that only remain accessible to those ghosts contained within the archive. Despite the potential loss of these referents, archive fever inspires the reader to later fill in the gaps in order to attempt to understand what the archive may have meant.

In this way, C provides one example that can be understood writ large as the Spanish historical memory movement's desire to access the past in order to understand its implications so as to correct the present. Obviously, as C's search demonstrates, this process is not straight-forward when a voice has been silenced, and often leads to other mysteries. Of course, there are other ways of opening up the voids of the past. For example, Aguilar Fernández, reads the Valle de los Caídos (among other monuments) along and against the archival grain in order to present and later question the assumptions made in their construction. From this vantage point, she concludes that the monument is not what it purports to be, and instead celebrates Franco's victory (2008, 152–153). With this access, it is possible to interrogate the foundations of these monuments in order to make them something new (2008, 157). Others still seek to remedy

¹³ I use the term "hysterically" here as construed by Freud, most notably in his "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria ('Dora')" (1905, 192–3), although he had also referred to hysteria in "The Aetiology of Hysteria" (1896). Contemporary medical science conceives of hysteria today as conversion disorder, a subset of functional neurological symptom disorder. Refer to its entry in "Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders" in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (American Psychiatric Association 2013).

the injustice of the past by deciding justice through legal means, thus attempting to force the state to submit its knowledge (in essence, its documentation) regarding human rights abuses during the dictatorship. From there, these rulings can determine whether Spain is culpable for its alleged crimes, and if the victims are entitled to reparation.¹⁴ No matter the avenue, there is an intense fever to take up these archives, since—if they even exist—they can help to represent the injustices experienced by so many.

7. “Stones talk”? Archaeology versus archive

As aforementioned, Amago also suggests the reading of historical memory texts as archival. To do so, he takes up Benjamín Prado’s *Mala gente que camina*, a novel that features a professor and his literary studies of Laforet’s *Nada*. Yet during his work, he encounters passing references in antiquated publications to an unknown author named Dolores Serma and her novel, *Óxido*. Given Serma’s friendship to Laforet, the narrator pursues this same line of inquiry in his narrative. His search entails Serma’s identity and fate, the reason motivating her disappearance (which in fact relates to the regime’s practice of stealing children from its dissidents, primarily *republicanos*, and selling them to the regime’s adherents), and inquiries about the regime’s continuing effects in the present. But the protagonist does not solely study Serma throughout the narrative. Along the way, the text treats his inane dealings at the institute, his mother and her idealization of the past, his ex-wife Virginia and their experiences throughout the Movida, his colleagues at conferences, his favorite Uruguayan restaurant, and more.

At times humorous, and at times a “mezcla mareante” (Amago 2011, 341; quoted in original) of information, Amago defends the perverse narrativity of *Mala gente que camina* as a “functioning part of its archival impulse” (2011, 341); and, moreover, that this structure allows “Prado [to] more authentically refle[t] the heterogeneous array of information available in the archive” (2011, 341). The same applies to Riera’s novel, since C judiciously informs her readers directly of her leads, her rationale in interviewing one person or why she indeed seeks the help of her psychologist, cathecting her personal present with the shadowy past of Cecilia Balaguer. Amago’s reading of *Mala gente que camina* emphasizes the narrator’s assertion that “lo que se pactó en España con la Transición fue echar tierra encima de demasiadas cosas” (Prado 2006, 278). As a result, Amago writes that “[t]he novelist’s task, then, is to dig those things out again, to make them visible, and to reflect on their importance for the

¹⁴ The “Querella Argentina” uses international law in an Argentinian venue to determine whether the Franco regime committed crimes against humanity (Amnistía Internacional 2012, 30–34). It has also been represented in the 2018 documentary, *El silencio de otros*, directed by Almudena Carracedo and Robert Bahar.

democratic present” (2011, 338). The inner-workings of *Mala gente que camina*, then, dig up not only the past of Franco’s regime, but also the Transition’s past, all while exposing his present for future studies. The crux of Amago’s argument amounts to a representation of an archaeologically exhumed past wherein the narrator uncovers Serma’s life, while the rest of the narrative archives the narrator’s thought process and surroundings in the present.

Does archaeology unify with archive the same way in *La meitat de l'ànima*? To answer this question, I first refer to the “tension” between archaeology and archive for Derrida. He writes that the two “will always be close the one to the other [...] yet radically incompatible” as they are “*different with regard to the origin*” (1995, 58; emphasis in original). Amago’s analysis of *Mala gente que camina* accordingly renders the past completely excavated, its origin exposed—however, the fictional Madrid of present-day works as a testament for the future, preserved in its archival form. Derrida labels the aim of archaeology to be “[a] moment and not a process, this instant does not belong to the laborious deciphering of the archive [...] *the origin then speaks by itself*. The archaeologist has succeeded in making the archive no longer serve any function. It *comes to efface itself*, it becomes transparent [...] so as to let the *origin* present itself in person” (1995, 58; emphasis in original). In other words, archaeology digs up the past so completely in order to permit that “stones talk” for themselves.

Both *La meitat de l'ànima* and *Mala gente que camina* differ precisely in their presentation of origin. Eventually, the narrator of the latter addresses his readers to declare that his novel nears completion, and that “[d]entro de unos minutos sabrán hasta qué punto estaban o no en lo cierto: para eso sirven los últimos capítulos de las novelas, para encargarse de que el relato se cierre igual que un círculo. En este caso, un círculo de fuego” (2006, 419). Amago’s contention demonstrates a completed archaeological impulse when the circle of the novel closes, for the narrator has solved his literary mystery and discovers what exactly has happened to Serma (as well as her relations) and why.¹⁵ In this respect (and unlike C’s experiences in *La meitat de l'ànima*), the narrator enjoys a kind of distance away from this (hi)story in the past inasmuch as his discoveries do not directly impact his own life, although they do affect those of his familiars.

For this reason, it seems that the archaeological impulse as it appears in *Mala gente que camina* skirts around the issue of “empathic unsettlement” as coined by the historian Dominick LaCapra. He advocates for historical inquiry to “understand traumatic events and victims” in order

¹⁵ Prado’s text seems to echo *Nada* when Andrea listens to Gloria’s almost-happy love story with her uncle, Juan: “‘Si aquella noche —pensaba yo— se hubiera acabado el mundo o se hubiera muerto uno de ellos, su historia hubiera quedado completamente cerrada y bella como un círculo.’ Así suele suceder en las novelas, en las películas, pero no en la vida. Me estaba dando cuenta yo, por primera vez, de que todo sigue, se hace gris, se arruina viviendo” (1945, 181).

to then question “fetishized and totalizing narratives that deny the trauma [...] by prematurely (re)turning to the pleasure principle, harmonizing events, and often recuperating the past in terms of uplifting messages or optimistic, self-serving scenarios” (2001, 78). It could even be possible that the narrator of *Mala gente que camina* ends up creating a totalizing narrative in his understanding of Serma’s life by representing it in this rigorous archaeological way, that stones would talk (although it is true that Dolores Serma’s dementia prevents her from contributing to the narrator’s conclusions by the end of his novel). Of course, I do not neglect that *Mala gente que camina* provides an archival impulse by depicting a verisimilar Madrid as well as events that fall outside of the novel’s confines, which seem to fall to a mutual future to-come. The last pages of the book discuss how the narrator’s book has not yet been published, that he may likely be sued upon its publication, and that he plans to furnish the first copy to Dolores Serma.

Yet empathic unsettlement drives the narrative of *La meitat de l'ànima*, for C’s discoveries (or lack thereof) about her mother ultimately inform her own identity. By the book’s end, C gives no uplifting message about the past, but rather gestures toward the future which (perhaps) could come to inform Cecília’s unknown past. C writes that Lluís G.’s records could help “completar la història de Cecília Balaguer i la de mi mateixa” (2003, 238). In considering Derrida’s archive, this example demonstrates the deferred process of archive in the present and its investment in the future as opposed to a “harmonizing” point in which the origin speaks by itself.

However, the paradox remains because, by the end of the novel, C is as uncertain about her mother’s identity as she was at the beginning of her search. In this way, the novel resolves itself by remaining unresolvable,¹⁶ which in itself seems to represent the circle complete (indeed, C may even feel a sort of closure inasmuch as she ends her term at the mental hospital and successfully publishes her book). This ambiguous positioning of the novel approximates Julia Kristeva’s circular time in “Women’s Time”, an alternate chronology surrounding the idea of woman that deviates from linear history; in this way, constructs around womanhood double back on themselves (1981, 16). This cyclical unresolvability informs C’s identity, thus becoming fixed. Even so, it may still be furnished with more information for the archive. I compare this to

¹⁶ The criticism works through this same tension as well. For Bieder, “the narrator’s reliance on her narratee to provide the missing links in her narrative conflicts with the evidence presented in the narrative itself that negates a single, unquestioned interpretation” (2008, 185); Glenn maintains that “[u]ncertainties [about Cecília] in the intratextual realm spill over into the extratextual realm, and the ultimate truth of history proves as unknowable as the identity of the narrator’s mother. Although C acknowledges that she will never be able to reconstruct with exactitude her mother’s past or that of her country, that recognition does not diminish the value of her efforts” (2007, 49). All in all, Torras concludes that “no s’entén [...] la una [la identitat personal] sense l’altra [la identitat de l’altre]” (2011, 101).

Kristeva regarding pregnancy, an opportunity for a woman to completely experience “love for an other” (1981, 31). The archive too shares a disposition toward the other, something which could completely change its ontology. Of course, “we will only know in the times to come. Perhaps” (Derrida-Prenowitz 1995, 27). Structuralist readings of these postmodern experiences often falter precisely because of this open or double identity—an identity which multiplies back on itself when considering different archives of the narrative, and even different archives of these narratives according to different extratextual readings.¹⁷

8. ¿Salvar la mitad del alma?

During C’s search, she debates with her sister-in-law, Diana, about the efficacy of attempting to recover the lost Cecília. At first, C maintains that “sense memòria som morts. La memòria és l’ànima de les persones i tal vegada és per això que jo segueix cercant la meitat de la meua ànima” (2003, 169). Later, Diana, an “argentina atípica” (2003, 169), defends her rationale for forgetting parts of her past in order to emphasize other key memories that inform her identity. She cannot erase the trauma that she experienced, but Diana recognizes that “de la meua experiència algú en pot treure algun profit” (2003, 171), seemingly consoled that she was able to productively remember her trauma in order to make a meaningful connection with C. In other words, Diana backgrounds the contingencies of her traumatic experience and instead prefers to let them manifest when they seem useful. C, inasmuch as she writes a book addressing the contingency of her own identity, seems to have accepted the fact that her identity will never be complete. Even though she would like to discover her mother’s story—“No sé si també suposava que jo intentaria demanar-li a vostè l’ajut [...] per acabar de completar la història de Cecília Balaguer i la de mi mateixa” (2003, 238)—C embraces memory as that which provides her identity as the half of her soul. In want of Cecília’s story, C uses the eponymous novel and its outline of Cecília’s possible stories to be her own archive of Cecília. Although she does not find her mother’s ghost by the novel’s end, the search and its recording stand in as half of C’s soul.

Riera refers to this open-ended search in an allusion to a eulogy written by García Márquez after Rodoreda’s death. Published as “¿Sabe usted quién era Mercè Rodoreda?”, García Márquez memorializes the late author’s work by venerating her unique attunement to physical reality (1983, n.p.). He attributes this to how she used her unique style and Catalan prose to evoke the essence of that which she describes, declaring that “[u]n

¹⁷ Criticism on Riera’s literary mother, Mercè Rodoreda, has also attempted to reconcile itself on this point: for example, structuralist readings of *La plaça del Diamant* have found themselves challenged by a postmodern spectrum of possibilities. For example, compare Neus Carbonell’s Lacanian reading of the novel in her “In the Name of the Mother and the Daughter” (1994) and Jaume Martí-Olivella’s “The Witches’ Touch” (1987).

escritor que todavía sabe cómo se llaman las cosas tiene salvada la mitad del alma, y Mercè Rodoreda lo sabía a placer en su lengua materna” (1983, n.p.). Here, García Márquez opines that writing saves—“saves,” or even “remembers” or “archives”—the writer’s essence.¹⁸ C writes the archive that evokes her mother’s ghost and in turn finds her own identity (her own half of the soul), despite the fact that the Cecília remains irrecoverable.¹⁹

This tension has received many different interpretations by critics of the novel. Bieder dubs this the paradox of recovering historical memory, since, “[i]n the absence of incontestable ‘facts’ [...] no single, stable identity of subjectivity is possible” (2008, 182). C knows that her Cecília as depicted in Lluís G.’s archive frames a fictional Cecília, and she continues to archive Cecília’s life in a similar fashion. Despite knowing that this conceptualization of Cecília must too be fictional in some way, her findings provide the basis for her identity. Bieder demonstrates historical memory’s paradox in writing that C “pursues a similar fantasy of recovering a ‘unified identity’ for her mother, thereby enabling the narrator herself to fashion her own ‘unified identity,’”—which is to say, her own half of the soul—“a project that Riera’s novel simultaneously records and undermines” (2008, 182). In the present reading of the text, it seems that the basis of unification between Cecília and C in Rodoreda’s *El carrer de les Camèlies* through Cecília Ce also precludes any definitive conclusions about the protagonist’s hereditary identity.²⁰ The paradox demonstrates that, although historical memory refers to events that can never be completely exhumed, this instability is precisely what grounds the identities of many Spaniards today. Even if identity at times depends on

¹⁸ Riera’s “Sobre la memoria y la autoficción” makes explicit reference to García Márquez: “Para escribir se necesita recordar. ...Cuando un escritor —y ese sería el caso de García Márquez— se queda sin memoria deja de escribir” (2012, 261). This seems to refer to García Márquez’s struggle with dementia in his later years.

¹⁹ This reading of García Márquez’s eulogy, which suggests that a writer’s work contains her soul, aligns with some of Riera’s final thoughts in her symposium: “Narrando afianzamos nuestra identidad, las historias que nuestros libros desarrollan nos garantizan...” (2012, 269). Here, writing reveals the essence of who the writer is, which is what García Márquez suggests of Rodoreda’s style.

²⁰ This conclusion mirrors that which other critics have said in Bieder’s wake. Glenn writes that “[the narrator’s] (hi)story is indeed one of ‘buits’ [empty spaces] and ‘foscor,’ [darkness] of secrets not revealed, of blank spaces, of contradictory evidence” (2007, 48). Despite the fact that “H/historical truth is fragmented [and] open to interpretation(s)” (Bieder 2008, 175), C writes through her own “salvage operation” (Glenn 2007, 49) and deploys her recollection of her mother as the establishment of her own identity. Likewise, Leggott extends the language of trauma theory and Ferrán’s idea of a “meta-memory text” (2007) that then bears witness to the traumatic memory of the past; she concludes that, in the novel, C conducts a salvage operation by engaging her traumatic experience through scriptotherapy (Leggott 2015, 84). C then “re-examine[s] her own identity, discovering the extent to which identities are inevitably complex and shifting [...] Riera’s novel reminds us that, ultimately, the recovery of a ‘true’ history, whether individual or collective, is impossible” (2015, 88). Everly, reflecting on Riera’s larger corpus, similarly notes that “... the writing subject grapples with meaning and memory and ultimately does not recover truth as fact, instigating a change in how notions of history are perceived, recorded, and transmitted” (2017, 218).

unverifiable facts, this does not deter Schumm in her position that the “total reconstruction of the mother’s history is not as important as the effort to make her more visible” (2008, 141). Schumm’s analysis can also apply to the reconstruction of past lives in the wake of Franco’s government, which evokes a past using traces—whether or not they are accessible—that can then apply justice to the present. Such reconstructions include the desired exhumation of Joan Colom, the “Querella argentina”, and generally anything that can commemorate “la memòria dels que no tenen veu” (Riera 2003, 237). *La meitat de l'ànima*, then, demonstrates the paradox of identity accessed through the archive, as well as the archive’s role in the haunting of the Spanish present (Labanyi 2002, 6). Also notable are C’s struggle to bear witness to her mother’s past and come to terms with her present, all posited on the preoccupation of archive fever. Hence, if C can represent a whole society, she demonstrates that Spain’s future will be equally haunted by the archive, and that there is no guaranteed method that can bear witness to this past without intense research and self-interrogation. If Spaniards conduct this search and avoid becoming overwhelmed by this trauma—as C almost does—then it is possible that a larger archive fever can help determine what Spain will be. For C, her archive fever manifests as the novel itself, which can open her experience and then dialogue with others in order to address other traumas. Ideally, a Spanish society would also open their experience, and in this way allow for the possibility of justice—even if there exists no way to recuperate Cecília or what happened to her.

9. Whither archive?

This reading overall advocates for the interpretation of alternative archives as fundamental to Spanish historical memory. It provides a novel means of understanding contemporary Spanish identities as compendia of different referents, which are in themselves secondhand accounts from more-or-less reliable sources. These archives always remain open to further documentation. Keeping these tensions in mind, as well as their effects on a larger archive of Spanish historical memory, may explain the desire of many Spaniards to discover meanings that can explain the contingencies of the past. Given the lack of access of common historical records, Spaniards today depend on other means of ascertaining the manifestations of historical trauma caused by Franco’s coup attempt, war, and later government. Just as C makes her search public by consulting Lluís G. and the reader, thousands of Spaniards today understand the past by taking up alternate sources of information. These means of understanding the past depend on the accounts of others as eyewitnesses, and then a later settlement of these accounts. Inasmuch as Riera’s narrative bridges the gaps between the memories of such witnesses, *La meitat de l'ànima* fits in line with that which Mario Santana refers to as “la demanda ética y

narrativa de Carme Riera” which consists of a “proyecto colectivo y ciudadano” (2011, 108). Here, the assembly of Cecília’s remains is the product of an individual’s search, but also the search of a larger collective that willingly engages in recalling the past. This is true for Riera’s text, but also with regard to archival practices and historical memory in Spain at large.

Even so, it would be too optimistic to say that these archives are sacrosanct and defy manipulation. Indeed, as seen in C’s narrative, *La meitat de l’ànima*, her identity and the archive that she compiles regarding her mother’s life inherently depend on gaps and conclusions leapt to. Bear in mind that C judiciously administers that which matters for the archive, and that which does not. These archives, then, rely on ethical choices, and one can only imagine what an unethical archive may consist of. In *Archive Fever*, Derrida does not hesitate to mention that “[e]ffective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and the access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation” (1995, 11). In this way, the *pacto del olvido* has clearly erased equitable access to Spain’s past and means of coming to terms with its violences. Furthermore, *CT, o, la Cultura de la Transición* develops the idea that Transition Culture (hereinafter “CT”) effectively continued the legacy of the *pacto del olvido*. For this reason, the manufactured CT ensured that cultural creations during this time period would not “salirse de la página”, and that “la cultura española realizara pocas formulaciones” (2012, 14). While Martínez and his collaborators deem 1978–2011 a period in which Spanish cultural production largely avoided dissenting with the establishment of the new Spanish state, there are exceptions to the rule.²¹ *La meitat de l’ànima*, if considered as one of such exceptions, shows how some examples of Spanish historical memory fiction can question the state’s “master narrative” and complicate narratives of the past, thus inventing its own means of creating and accessing archives, the very grounds for Derrida’s democracy. Of course, historical memory fiction is not the only field that displaces the state’s “master narrative”; archaeology, ethnology, and other fields that deconstruct the assumptions upheld by the state share a similar project. With the close of *La meitat de l’ànima*, C has arrived at a difficult place where she attempts to bear witness to the loss of her mother. Publishing her story may help C find some semblance of Cecília, but it may also illustrate the importance of searching through these archives for the reader (ultimately, aligning with the way that Diana bears witness to her own trauma). Overall, this novel—as well as other historical memory novels—open a space in which readers may learn from the difficult experience of engaging these archives, which can create memory narratives that are discordant with the state’s desired memory narrative.

²¹ Luís Martín-Estudillo calls attention to this fact as well, that the initial challenges to CT can be found in the work of several authors and critics writing during its regime; such people include Montserrat Roig, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, and others (2017, 136).

All told, this analysis may help illustrate the political significance of the exhumation of Franco's body from the Valle de los Caídos. Although this act does not accept responsibility for the injustices committed against Spanish people during and after the Spanish Civil War and offer reparations as a means of expressing culpability, this move demonstrates that the state has, just this once, thawed its generally dismissive response to the historical injustices of the Franco era. By moving his body, the Spanish state has opened a space at the Valle de los Caídos for rewriting the state's memory, which will continue to witness battles by memory entrepreneurs over meaning. Ferrán and Hilbink in their volume compile the reflections of Helen Graham, Leigh Payne, and Aguilar Fernández in order to state that "exhumations [of the past], and the social processes that they engender, do not produce a unified counter-narrative to that imposed by the Franco regime" (2017, 16); in fact, they invite further debates to be able to reflect on what had happened and how to explain it. A collection of individual memory narratives—and the discussion of their meanings—within a larger culture of memory can then serve "as the hallmark of a more secure and healthy democracy" (2017, 16–7). Even though critics like Casals think of the struggle over significance at the Valle de los Caídos as another manifestation of the seemingly eternal conflict of *las dos Españas*, it is more appropriate to think of this site of memory as one of many theaters in which numerous memory entrepreneurs fight to naturalize their preferred meanings; for example, that it is not appropriate to disturb monuments of the past, or that monuments like the Valle should be respectfully closed off, or that the monument can be converted into a kind of museum that explains its own history, that the monument become a place of memory and thus speak to those interred within... In short, opening debates of historical memory seems to suggest many more positions than those of only two Spains.

No matter the fate of the Valle de los Caídos, *La meitat de l'ànima* models how this discussion surrounding the future of this monument and its (dis)contents may take place—even when there is a lack of physical traces of the past. The text demonstrates the fragmentation of H/historical truth for an individual, and also discusses how such a person may discuss the reconstruction of these memories (and, accordingly, her identity as a person) by sharing the narrative with others. This aligns perfectly with Jelin's conceptualization of a "good" or "exemplary" use of memory: "it is necessary to learn from [memory], drawing from it the lessons that would make the past guide for action in the present and future" (2003, 42). After all, even if no definite historical truth can be found, what matters most is that Spaniards be able to openly attempt to recover their individual experiences of the past and potentially bear witness to the legacies of Franco's regime, together.

Even so, by allowing for an open debate between memory entrepreneurs and their political projects, "bad" uses of memory (which do

not bear witness to the past; they bear “false witness”²²) can also take place. Other instances of historical memory also work to create their own projects of justice, such as a Vox advertisement wherein Santiago Abascal rides on horseback toward Andalucía. This imagery alludes to certain conceptualizations of *el Cid* and a reversal of the *Reconquista* myth (@voxnoticias_es 2018, n.p.). Debatably, the *Reconquista* and its later culmination in the expulsion of Jews and Muslims from Spain is another historical violence which killed people or displaced them,²³ but, for Vox, this action should be venerated and even repeated. Here, the archives of Spanish historical memory can be and have been carefully selected; in this case, a national myth returns from beyond the veil to subsume other identities. In some cases, the pliability of historical memory can provoke Spanish constituents to engage their personal identifications, with the intent of then attaining certain political goals.

Reading *La meitat de l'ànima* demonstrates that identity is fallible, and so too are the archives that humans surround themselves with in order to sustain a sense of self. It will be impossible to know definitively who is or was Cecília—or even C herself—although readers can study and speculate in order to address this unknowability. Derrida notes that the “uniqueness” of knowing this past event “does not exist” in the present, although one can “dream of it after the fact” (Derrida-Prenowitz 1995, 62). This is why readers continue to wonder in *mal d'archive*. Even if a definitive truth cannot be known, all the same, one may wonder that which could have been. Thus, ghosts like Cecília and C—as well as others, such as the thousands exhumed or to-be-exhumed through the consultation of alternate archives—have increasingly haunted the Spanish reality, searching for answers to enigmas past and present. Hopefully, alongside such developments as the exhumation of Franco, Spanish people can continue to interrogate the grand narratives of H/history²⁴ and develop their own memories. These narratives and how they inform the identities of Spanish people today will eventually determine how Spanish democracy is remembered—for better or for worse.

²² This term as conceived of in trauma studies originates with Lifton's discussion of American soldiers killing Vietnamese civilians the day after a superior officer had been killed by enemy forces. Later known as the My Lai massacre, the American soldiers bore “false witness” to their trauma by attacking the civilians as if they were opposing Viet Cong forces. The soldiers attempted to productively bear witness to the traumatic loss of their commanding officer trauma, but they instead perpetuated trauma. See Lifton, chapter two.

²³ *Dins el darrer blau* (1994) is another one of Riera's celebrated texts treating this subject matter.

²⁴ Bieder refers to Lyotard's concept of “grand Narratives of history” and determines that Riera resituates them by “recognizing that history is ultimately irrecoverable and individual identity inchoate” (2008, 186).

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