

Staging Armed Resistance: The Maquis in the Theater of Antonio Martínez Ballesteros

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Regarding the role of Spain's stage practitioners in squaring historical accounts with the nation's collective memory, the publication of *Tiempo de guerrilla* by Antonio Martínez Ballesteros in 2000 constitutes a singular landmark in the vast field of collective cultural enterprise. Overtly critical of the established order, this work offers patent testimony to the playwright's longstanding commitment to notions of the stage as venue and vehicle for denouncing injustice and resisting authority. The breadth and depth of Martínez Ballesteros's commitment in this regard is represented best by his so-called "Ciclo contra la Dictadura" (Cycle against the Dictatorship), a twenty-year project that spans various social and political contexts from the middle regime up through the first democratically elected government, including a prologue and epilogue—*Orestiada-39* (1960); *La utopía de Albana* (1979)—and a core "Trilogía contra la opresión": *En el país de Jauja* (1961), *El héroe* (1965), and *El juego de la medalla* (1975) (Méndez Moya, "Trilogía" and "*Orestiada*"). As to the maquis, it bears noting that this figure makes its cameo appearance, as it were, in the first play of the trilogy, at a time when the maquis was appropriated in Spain, if at all, as a gesture toward reconciliation in the spirit of the regime's "25 años de paz" (twenty-five years of peace) public relations campaign. Against the backdrop of such "topical and schematic" portrayals as Emilio Romero's *Casa manchada* (1974) (García Ruiz and Torres Nebrera 81), the maquis becomes a cornerstone in Martínez Ballesteros's carefully sustained denunciation of the abuse of authority and, as such, an essential element in his revisionist treatment of Spanish history.¹ In light of recent less-conciliatory appropriations of the maquis by other Spanish writers and artists, the figure has become something of a barometer for tracking efforts,

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both individual and collective, to redress the residual influence of totalitarian practices on Spain's cultural production. This is forecasted in 1963 by Martínez Ballesteros's *En el país de Jauja* and it is fully realized by the dialogue that plays out over time between his earlier works and *Tiempo de guerrilla*, the later work operating as a capstone for Martínez Ballesteros, holding the distinction of being one of the only plays published in Spain to date to offer a more or less systematic representation of the maquis.

The prominence of the maquis within this dialogue is as significant as the absence of a meaningful consideration of this figure within the field of post-war or post-Franco Spanish theater.² Tempting though it may be, any effort to posit incompatibilities between the maquis experience (transient and collective by nature) and its stage representation based on formalist or unitary conceptualizations of dramatic action, according to either Aristotelian precepts or post-Hegelian notions of modern drama and individual self-consciousness (Szondi 7), would fail to account for the very strategies adopted by Martínez Ballesteros to facilitate the staging of such experiences. Rather, it seems useful to focus on the extraordinary nature of Martínez Ballesteros's attention to the maquis within his own field, precisely when the maquis was beginning to congeal as a cultural icon in Spain and, as such, as a significant locus in emerging culture wars. The author's apparent willingness to bear the consequences of a "subversive" profile, like others of his generation and temperament, emerges here as a crucial factor.³ It bears noting that Martínez Ballesteros's ostracism from the hegemonic loci of cultural production was particularly severe, for it was both editorial and scenographic. His trilogy has never been performed and it was published belatedly in 1997, nearly three decades after its conception. Only his farces and comedies, not his political dramas, have reached the stage, and only in theater festivals or abroad, almost never in Madrid or Barcelona's commercial or public circuit (González-Calero; Méndez Moya "Invitación"; Reck).⁴ Scholars and critics abroad, meanwhile, were actively embracing the so-called "desconocido Martínez Ballesteros" as the *bête noire* of a repressive regime.⁵ This interest is shown through translations of his works (Wellwarth, "*The New Wave*") and scholarship (Wellwarth, "*Underground*") or through invitations extended to "Pigmalión," the Toledo-based avant-garde independent theater troupe that Martínez Ballesteros directed for over 35 years (1974–2009), staging plays by the authors—Bertolt Brecht, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Max Frisch and Antonio Buero Vallejo—most influential on his own writing (González Calero 68).

The marriage of formal experimentation and political commitment associated with these playwrights is *the* hallmark of Martínez Ballesteros's writing for the stage as it develops between 1960 and 2000. This marriage provides a key for understanding how this playwright meets the challenges of staging armed resistance and how an author banished to the gulag of "desconocimiento" (the unknown) came to sharpen his focus on the prime

cultural icon of his own circumstances.

Martínez Ballesteros's Maquis in Context: From the "Ciclo contra la dictadura" (1960–1979) to *Tiempo de guerrilla* (2000)

JUAN.—¿Tampoco sabes lo que es sentir compasión de un hombre cuando se le ve indefenso, como un náufrago, sin nada a qué agarrarse? ¡Claro que no lo sabes! ¡De otro modo no habrías sido tan sanguinario con tus enemigos! ¿Ya no *te acuerdas de la masacre* que hiciste con *los vencidos*? ¿*Y del exterminio sistemático de los que se refugiaron en la sierra, a los que perseguiste como alimañas*?

DICTADOR.—¿*Te refieres a los maquis*?

JUAN.—*Sí, esos a los que llamasteis los maquis*, con cuya *cacería*, como solíais decir, hacíais con frecuencia un *espectáculo* para divertirlos.

DICTADOR.—*¡Los maquis eran terroristas!* ¡Y con el enemigo terrorista no se puede tener compasión! Peligraría el poder.

JUAN.—(*Con desprecio.*) ¡El poder! Por conservarlo eres capaz de todo. (Martínez Ballesteros, "Trilogía" 92–93; italics added in the dialogue for emphasis)

(JUAN.—And you don't know what it means to feel pity for a defenseless, shipwrecked man who has nothing to cling to? Of course you know! Otherwise you wouldn't have been so bloodthirsty with your enemies. You no longer recall how you massacred those whom you defeated? Or your calculated slaughtering of the ones who took refuge in the hills, the ones you sought out like wild beasts?)

DICTADOR.—You mean the maquis?

JUAN.—Yes, the ones you called maquis, the ones you would "hunt down," as you used to say, for the pleasure of the spectacle.

DICTADOR.—The maquis were terrorists! And terrorist enemies are unworthy of pity! That would jeopardize our rule.

JUAN.—[*Disparagingly.*] Your rule! You would do anything to hold on to power.)

The maquis emerges thusly in Martínez Ballesteros's writing in the first of the three plays comprising his "Trilogía contra la opresión"—*En el país de Jauja* (1961)—in strikingly suggestive circumstances.⁶ The dialogue cited appears in scene eight, whose title—"El sueño de Juan Pobre"—locates the action squarely within the protagonist's subconscious. As a framing device, the scene's title is rendered ironically ambiguous, however, in that while designating difference—such a confrontation with the Dictator would

obviously be unthinkable in the “real” context referenced in the other scenes—it fails to frame out events that, due to the effects of satire and farce, resemble those rooted in Juan’s subconscious. In keeping with his widely acknowledged “expressionistic” and “absurdist” tendencies (Méndez Moya, “La ‘Trilogía’”), Martínez Ballesteros portrays reality as sharing the logic of a dream. The maquis and his context thus both undergo the effects of Brechtian alienation, a strategy that is signaled throughout the play by the use of titles, by key references—[Juan] “¡Lógico! En estos tiempos que vivimos es lógico lo que no lo sería en otras circunstancias” (53) (Of course! What’s logical in today’s world would not be so in other circumstances) — and by the metatheatrical foregrounding of the category of the “spectacular” as such (“hacíais con frecuencia un *espectáculo*” [you were given to making a *spectacle*]). How can the true face of institutionalized terrorism (“masacres” [massacres], and “exterminios” [exterminations], veritable “cacerías” [hunting parties]) and of the mastermind that propagated it be apprehended at all, the author seems to suggest, if not by its own self-generated, dream-like projections?: [Juan, to the Dictator] “Yo de ti sólo conozco la imagen que habéis fabricado” (95) (I know you only by the image you and your allies have constructed).

So that his audience will experience the full impact of the *pacto de silencio* (pact of silence) that stymied efforts to produce bona fide public—social, political, or artistic—representations of the Civil War and its consequences, Martínez Ballesteros forces the issue by flaunting his own representative apparatus as afflicted by a parallel “crisis of representation,” as rooted similarly, that is, in the destabilized semiotics of the unspoken and unintelligible.⁷ Hence, the confusion created by identification processes—“esos a los que llamasteis los maquis . . . eran terroristas” (those whom you called maquis . . . were terrorists)—in which foreign names (“maquis”) supplant native terms (“guerrilla”).⁸ The perlocutionary effect of the rhetorical “¿Ya no te acuerdas . . . ?” (You no longer recall . . . ?) places remembrance at the heart of this Orphic quest for hidden truths and intelligible systems and reveals it—memory—to be a doubled-edged sword as well. As representation’s handservant, memory is harnessed by the oppressors while it becomes a primal weapon of the oppressed for resisting the type of virtual exile or death—“desconocimiento” (unknowing)—which totalitarian regimes impose upon their discontents.

From this we can see how forty years prior to the birth of the *Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica*, Martínez Ballesteros launched a major project of historical revisionism—his “Ciclo contra la Dictadura”—that is grounded in interlocking considerations of the maquis, memory, and theatrical representation. The semblance of a chronological alignment of the works comprising the cycle suggests a historical framework that reinforces the author’s revisionist aims. Starting in the prologue, where the war’s proximity is measured in the *mythically tragic* dimension of a

trauma that consumes both sides—“vencidos” (vanquished) and “vencedores” (victors)—of the Spanish family (*Orestiada*-39), we proceed through the triptych (“Trilogía contra la opresión”) that portrays, in strikingly diverse styles, social and political realities identifiable with Spain’s post-war culture at its distinct stages: the *farce* of extreme hunger that *Jauja*’s citizenry endured in the early post-war years; the *drama* of decade-long dissention pitting diehard rebels (maquis, presumably, although unnamed as such) against those who assimilate in order to survive (*El héroe*); the *absurd* exploitation of the working classes (*El juego*) such as it was denounced by the more obstreperous playwrights at the time of Spain’s so-called “economic miracle” (late 1950s and early 1960s).⁹ The *desencanto* (disenchantment) signaled by *Utopía*’s subtitle—“Todavía imposible *fábula*” (A Still Impossible Allegory)—and that afflicts the citizenry of the Roman republic of “Albana” in this historical allegory (“*fábula*”), the playwright’s first democratic-era play, closes the frame as it emphasizes the cycle’s paradoxical Janus-like appearance. Memories and representations of the past are encoded to refer, in the present, to failed hopes for the future.

This is the paradigm that generally informs Martínez Ballesteros’s cycle, the stage for the maquis’s first postwar appearance, and it is revived by the author in *Tiempo de guerrilla* nearly two decades later in markedly distinct historical circumstances, in a work in which the representation of the maquis, for reasons pertaining to both text and context, acquires an aura that could be described as both revelational and monumental. At a time when testimony has become a dominant mode within historiography related to the Civil War and its aftermath, a historical reality that was heretofore represented as either hidden away in the innermost recesses of society’s repressed imagination (*Jauja*) or left unidentified by name (*El héroe*) now emerges uncensored, in full detail and complexity. In *Tiempo de guerrilla*, the maquis becomes Martínez Ballesteros’s point of sharpened historical focusing, the condensed prism through which the diverse and wide-ranging hues of historical reflection that transect the cycle are gathered and refracted. It is to the structure and meaning of this prism that we now turn.

One of the most significant tools adopted in *Tiempo de guerrilla* for centering and unveiling the maquis involves the arrangement of scenes in reverse chronological order. The technique is suggestive of a movement from effect to cause, of a return to the source or peeling away of the outer layers of appearance in search of the inner kernel of essence—parable, in effect, for the historical soul-searching that prevailed in Spain at the time of the play’s composition. The image of absence that dominates scene one—a mother and daughter recall the dead (the husband/father) and disappeared (the son/brother)—forms a telling point of departure for such a journey. These recollections propel us backwards in time through the remaining eleven “proyecciones” or scenes that are sequenced like shots—lighting is used to signal shifting episodes and enhance the cinematographic effect—

from 1945, the veritable beginning of the “tiempo de guerrilla” according to Francisco Moreno Gómez, the playwright’s mentor, to 1939 and to the same setting featured in scene one.¹⁰ The play’s final image—the children reading the last letter from the father mourned in scene one—plus the portrayal of the children’s anxieties about their future show absence and despair to be, at once, a *terminus ad quem* and *a quo* in a play whose first and final scenes signal both a beginning and an end. In a nod to the Western canon that heavily influenced Martínez Ballesteros’s earliest writing (*Orestiada-39*, for instance), the family, portrayed by the author as embracing all that transpires in the interim, becomes the *terminus* itself for projecting global issues locally and for giving intimate texture to the play’s wide-ranging ideological concerns.

The family’s role in this regard is linked directly to the representation of place in this work. The historical specificity signaled by the scene titles—they indicate the year in which each episode occurs—contrasts with an impressionistic treatment of location that, in turn, counters expectations regarding location created, potentially, by Martínez Ballesteros in his forward. His declared indebtedness to Moreno Gómez’s *Córdoba en la posguerra* notwithstanding, the sites of refuge (hills, caves, pastures, and farms), trials (taverns), torture and death (prisons and cemeteries) appearing in the play are decidedly generic and not innately Andalusian. Additionally, the characters’s speech patterns do not reflect any desire to localize the tragedy through dialect. The pattern of movement “up to the hills” and back again, which may certainly be taken as conventional in a play treating the maquis, becomes here a symbolic structural element that serves the work’s underlying city/country dialectic. As the locus of the first and last scenes, the city is foregrounded along with the family as part of the generic—collective, Spanish—here and now of remembrance. In its association with the city, the *act of remembrance* is conceived of as a rational or Apollonian undertaking, as linked to the realm of appearances, exteriorities, and social interaction. As suggested by Juan’s dream in *Jauja* and by the maquis’s role as the *remembered* or *imagined* protagonist within the field of the nation’s repressed memory, the hills, farms and fields of *Tiempo de guerrilla*—the maquis’s habitat—acquire something of a subliminal quality that is highlighted by the structuring function of the city. By implication, the maquis’s habitat becomes a Dionysian hinterland that is interior and psychological, a pre- or preter-rational antechamber of national reverie, where the family’s (Spanish society’s) inner kernel of essence lies. It becomes the final destination on the spectator’s Orphic journey that is structured as progressing backwards in time as it moves deeper into the terrain of forgotten truths and buried memories. The maquis is exposed, meanwhile, as the protagonist of that quest as it pertains to Martínez Ballesteros’s own lifetime search for truth unfolding over three decades of writing.

Strategies that are used in *Tiempo de guerrilla* to center the maquis as a fundamental icon within the national *imaginaire* serve to underscore the importance of the collective experience in the author's democratic era writing. Genealogical ties that bridge discrete episodes of hardship and cruelty—a cousin in one scene becomes the father in the next, for instance—contribute to the cohesiveness of a play that might otherwise seem disjointed. The metaphor of a family tree of intertwining limbs is suggested through twelve interlocking “shots” (“proyecciones”). It is a family rendered asunder along the conventional lines of the tragic myth—“vencidos y vencedores” (vanquished and vanquishers)—that shapes Martínez Ballesteros's early plays, as indicated above in our discussion of *Orestiada-39* and *Jauja* (“¿Ya no te acuerdas de la masacre que hiciste con *los vencidos*?”), and that dominates postwar cultural production in general, with both sides—workers, farmers, peasants, union members, and Republic soldiers as the persecuted; landlords, caciques, *Falangistas*, and Francoist military commanders as the persecutors—represented along the lines of their respective internal hierarchies of authority as determined by status, gender, social class, and age. Yet rather than highlight opposition, this mirroring effect seems devised to suggest a certain interrelatedness or symbiosis with boundaries being set up only to be transcended. Individuals appearing in one scene as victims of state terrorism unleashed in the name of official justice appear in another as perpetrators of unofficial terror who murder in the name of their own code of justice. Soldiers serving Franco are severely punished by the very system they support. If such a blurring of boundaries can be taken to represent salient, albeit problematic, points of interaction between divided worlds, discrete units of action within the play, and seemingly contradictory meanings, then the infiltrator or informer (*delator*) becomes the quintessential sign of this lability. This figure stands in strict opposition to individuals who, faithful to their ideals, remain squarely within the confines of their own zones of interest and meaning. As such, the informer resembles characters, semiotically speaking, who don figurative or literal masks (Enrique disguises himself as a Falangist, Pedrote as a shepherd) in order to hide their authentic identity (teacher, maquis) and thereby survive within a hostile landscape.

Such cases of deception, along with dissent, despair, and resignation, serve to give emotional texture (in *Tiempo de guerrilla*) to the collective dimension of what is, in essence, a psycho-social study of the effects of isolation and oppression on a besieged community. In the end, the potential ethical implications of such duplicity are kept in abeyance, neutralized not only by the perceived inevitability of these effects in shaping the behavior of citizens—references to the “ley de fugas” and Franco's deceptive use of amnesty to corral Republican soldiers are crucial in this regard—but, more importantly, by the understanding that the moral bases of judgment, which include representation itself and its “trusted” (“fiable”) mechanisms of

interpretation, are the supreme victims of a system dominated by terror: “Gente que creíamos que estaban con nosotros. Ahora delatan para congraciarse. Por eso *no debes fiarte* de nadie” (67, emphasis added) (People we thought were with us. Now they squeal for favors. That’s why *you shouldn’t trust* anyone). The tragic resonances of this situation are patent. In what constitutes yet another important metatheatrical beat, Martínez Ballesteros reminds us that social relations and language are parallel sign systems that become unintelligible in an atmosphere of mistrust.¹¹ The blurring of boundaries that complicates our parsing out the discrete constituent units in the various socio-political equations—the internal and the external, the official and unofficial, authority and subject—is basic to this strategy. Such is Martínez Ballesteros’s understanding of the status of community, one surmises, when he published the play six decades after the Civil War and, ironically, on the 50th anniversary of the United Nation’s “Declaration of Human Rights.”¹² With the maquis at the center of such a prismatic gaze, it is not surprising that in the year 2000 the playwright should come to see oral history and personal testimony not only as a portal to intelligibility and justice but a path to salvation from the paradigms and strategies of his past.

The Synergism of Cultural Discourses: Testimony on Stage

The stimulus provided by an oral history—Moreno Gómez’s *Córdoba en la posguerra*—for prompting Martínez Ballesteros to move the maquis into the limelight (literally and figuratively) and out of the shadows of his own imagination (“latente en mi imaginación” [*Tiempo de guerrilla* 35]) is a significant landmark within the field of contemporary Spanish cultural studies. The stage adaptation of a historical text would be a matter of considerable interest in and of itself, but the centrality of personal testimony in Moreno Gómez’s study makes its stage adaptation all the more compelling. A formal analysis of the methods by which Martínez Ballesteros dramatizes testimony will shed light on the ideological implications of his undertaking, especially in relation to the historical conditions that facilitate this development.

Tiempo de guerrilla is strewn in such a way with context-specific references that the play gains the appearance of a tapestry of historical facts, somewhat in the mode of traditional nineteenth and early twentieth century historical drama. The psychological development of the characters is subordinated, in fact, to their treatment as voices on the forgotten stage of national history that chronicle what has been eschewed from the official annals of Spain’s postwar experience: the state-sanctioned kidnapping of children born to Republican families; extortion, blackmail or the use of

incentives to turn neighbors into informers; the abuse—torture, murder—of mothers or wives of men suspected of being enemies of the state; the purging of Republican sympathizers from teaching positions. Memories of life in the regime’s concentration camps, a topic that has only recently received a public airing, are as fresh in the minds of the characters as the fears of veteran Republican soldiers who accepted the regime’s false promises of amnesty. Martínez Ballesteros’s appropriation of official proclamations used for these purposes in the 1940s—“Si no has manchado tus manos con delitos comunes, ven. Franco te ofrece la paz, trabajo, pan y justicia” (144; Moreno Gómez 27) (If your hands are clean of blood, come. Franco offers you peace, work, bread and justice)—augment the aura of chronicle that suffuses this play. The allusion to the government’s 1942–43 interventions aimed at propping up the failing shoe industry—a civil guardsman is reported as helping the local cobbler—exemplifies the degree of historical precision that applies.

The moral imperative that pulsates in the multitude of recovered stories—or, rather, in the many gestures of historical revisionism that shape this work—is obviously a question of justice for Martínez Ballesteros just as it was for Moreno Gómez in his assemblage of the reports that so inspired the playwright. The authors’s sense of justice in righting history by recovering forgotten facts is mirrored by the theme of justice that is presupposed by the injustices underlying many—if not all—of the experiences recounted. Justice functions, in short, as a structuring element for both and as a foundational link between the history text and its stage adaptation. The fear of reprisals shared by the many “vencidos” who appear in *Tiempo de guerrilla* is linked directly to the “Ley de responsabilidades políticas” (Law of Political Responsibilities), the propelling force—Franco’s “bagaje jurídico” (Moreno Gómez 22) (juridical baggage)—that lies at the heart of the pervasive system of surveillance and control that pitted neighbors and kin against one another and that effectively promulgated the extension of the Civil War well beyond the April 1, 1939 cessation of formal hostilities. Insofar as Moreno Gómez foregrounds this law in *Córdoba en la posguerra* in his detailed introduction, the many personal testimonies that follow, and that Martínez Ballesteros dramatizes in *Tiempo de guerrilla*, exemplify how the effects of this law managed to permeate Spanish society to its very roots:

Una característica acusadamente maquiavélica de la represión franquista fue la de llevarse a cabo en los pueblos de origen de los detenidos. La «justicia» de Franco no se concentró en las grandes cárceles de las capitales únicamente, sino que *se dispersó de manera minuciosa y múltiple*, siendo enviados los prisioneros a sus pueblos respectivos, allí donde las represalias estaban garantizadas de manera exhaustiva, y donde sería depurada sin escapatoria la menor veleidad izquierdista.

Durante año y medio (1939 y 1940) muchísimos pueblos españoles se convirtieron en *escenario de consejos de guerra, torturas y ceremonias de fusilamiento*. Los vencidos quedaron así expuestos a las iras y venganzas personales de sus propios paisanos falangistas o familiares de los «caídos» en 1936. Los odios de clase que se impulsaron así dentro de cada pueblo, dieron lugar a escenas y sufrimientos terroríficos. Y esto era lo que se pretendía: *la ejemplaridad del terror en cada localidad*, de manera que la dureza del castigo dejara *huella indeleble entre el vecindario*. (Moreno Gómez 21–22; emphasis added)

(The Franco regime was decidedly Machiavellian in its practice of applying its methods of repression in the hometowns of those arrested. Franco's «justice» was not confined solely to large prisons in major cities. Rather, *it spread in a minute and multiple fashion*, with prisoners being transferred to their respective towns, where retaliation was guaranteed to the fullest, where the hint of a leftist impulse would most certainly be purged. Over a year and a half (1939–1940) a great many Spanish towns became *stages for war tribunals, for torture and for ceremonies of execution*. The defeated were thus exposed to the wrath and personal vengefulness of their own Falangist countrymen or of relatives of the «fallen» of 1936. The class hatred that was propagated thusly within each town gave rise to terrible scenes and sufferings. And this was the objective: that *terror in every town would be exemplary* so that punishment would leave its *indelible mark within the community*.)

Instrumentalized with such malice of intent, justice becomes the fault line along which the Spanish family splits apart according to the “vencidos y vencedores” paradigm, something that Julia recognizes explicitly in her dialogue with Enrique—“Usted confía en la justicia de los suyos, claro . . .” (53) (You believe in your own peoples’s justice of course . . .)—in yet another exchange cast metatheatrically. Consciousness of what Julia identifies here—that, as mentioned, justice, a system of interpretation, is divested of its universal basis of understanding and has therefore fallen prey to the aforementioned “crisis of representation”—is portrayed throughout *Tiempo de guerrilla* as the force that drives individuals to determine where to situate themselves and that motivates many to take up armed resistance. For both Moreno Gómez and Martínez Ballesteros, the maquis movement in the 1940s is (as much as the authors’s own quests to represent it in the 1990s is), in the deepest sense, a question of coming to terms with the dictates of “inverted justice” (Ruiz 6, 224) in a new order, then and now.

The scenes depicting the Francoist military trials in *Tiempo de guerrilla* are crucial in this regard and are a significant point of linkage between Moreno Gómez’s history and Martínez Ballesteros’s staging of the maquis. The spectacle of oppression and terror (“*ejemplaridad del terror*”) that, as

mentioned, permeated Spanish society (“*se dispersó de manera minuciosa y múltiple*”; “*escenario de consejos de guerra, torturas y ceremonias de fusilamiento*”) and became the regime’s prime weapon of indoctrination is replicated on stage in scenes three and seven, titled respectively “La Guardia Civil” (The Civil Guard) and “El juicio” (The Trial). In the former, a Lieutenant Colonel sets up his “tribunal de emergencia” (emergency tribunal) after the maquis ambush the local tavern demanding that the mayor and civil guardsmen treat their innocent relatives fairly. (The anecdote of El Lobo’s cousin having been cruelly deprived of his land and tools of subsistence—his ferret and shotgun—derives from oral testimony included in *Córdoba*.) Scene seven portrays the cursory judgment imposed upon Republican soldiers during the enactment of a military tribunal similar to those set up in 1941 to enforce both the “Ley de Responsabilidades Políticas” (February 9, 1939) and its offshoot, the “Ley contra la Masonería y el Comunismo” (March 1, 1940). In both scenes, language in and of itself turns protagonist within the “exemplary spectacle” of abusive authority. In what is the quintessential gesture of power on stage, the Lieutenant Colonel monopolizes speech as he harangues his subordinates for their presumed negligence—despite their denials the accused are ultimately executed off-stage—in a monologue infused with the “hábitos arbitrarios y actitudes venáticas” (95) (arbitrary ticks and maniacal impulses) described by Moreno Gómez’s informants.¹³ If in this scene Martínez Ballesteros exposes his audience to the spectacle of the Fascist rhetoric that dominated public discourse in postwar Spain, in scene seven he dramatizes the source of supreme power from whence such speech and authority emanate, in the grotesque satire of the regime’s official, messianic, rhetorical self-representation—the “sublevación divina” (divine rebellion) guided by an “hombre providencial” (providential man) righted an essentially Catholic nation gone awry (“República delincuente” (delinquent Republic), “nefastas doctrinas” (harmful doctrine)—in the voice of the judge and both attorneys, for the prosecution and defense. The latter’s insincere request for clemency is pivotal in this courtroom spectacle of “inverted justice” such as it is chronicled by Moreno Gómez and, more recently, by other historians (Anderson; Ruiz).

With language acknowledged as the primordial battleground where culture wars ultimately rage, personal testimony is framed as the supreme weapon of resistance against totalitarianism. Martínez Ballesteros achieves this by turning totalitarian language against itself in his portrayal of the representatives of the regime (scenes five and seven). Their mockery of justice is exposed for the grotesque farce that it is through the use of satire. His supreme tribute to the liberating and democratizing effect of Moreno Gómez’s excavation for lost truth corresponds, however, to scene eight, “Los fusilados y su historia” (The Shot Ones and Their Story), the play’s most stunning episode in terms of its climactic force and visual effects.

Three men and a woman—the “fusilados” (shot ones) in the preceding scene—await their execution here in prison, their hands tied behind their back, torture wounds afresh, a shaven head and sign (“Por roja” [For being a red]) identifying the female prisoner and her crime. In the darkness broken by a solitary beam shining on a crucifix, the prisoners are spotlighted in sequence as they testify to experiences of deceit, terror, and violence (“su historia” [their story]) similar to those that fill the pages of *Córdoba en la posguerra*. As the playwright suggests throughout, justice becomes a matter not of reporting second hand but rather of using the tools of drama to *disinter* the victims—the metaphor is reinforced by the reverse chronology that takes us from their death to their reportage—and thereby reinstate in them the power to speak (“proyectar”) their memories of oppression via their own unfettered voices. In a scene apparently aimed at portraying *true* heroism, the epic mode prevails over the ironic while the act of unmediated utterance, framed as a dramatic event in and of itself, becomes the playwright’s tool not only for squaring historical accounts but, since their triumph is in the telling, for transcending the “vencidos-vencedores” myth that, as mentioned, weighed heavily in earlier paradigms of representation—Martínez Ballesteros’s included—of postwar Spain.

Armed Stages of Remembrance in 2000

The commemoration of the maquis that comes to fruition in *Tiempo de guerrilla* signals in Martínez Ballesteros a willingness to defy openly the post-Franco legacy of silence, reflecting a commitment to the notion of remembrance as justice that transcends his oeuvre and that begins to congeal early on in the bitter juxtaposition of conflicting heroisms that is central to *El héroe* (1965), the second work in his trilogy. José’s ironic transformation into a postwar hero is capped in this play by the fit of rage that drives him to accidentally kill his ex-comrade in arms (David), and it is predicated on José’s eventual acceptance of the inverted logic of the new order: “[prestarse]—in *silence*, Rosa implies—a la farsa [que] falsea la Historia y, por desgracia, con el paso de los años, queda como la verdad” (114–15) ([give in to] the farce [that] falsifies History and, sadly, over time, remains as the truth). The irony inherent in such a transformation is reinforced by David and Rosa’s futile efforts to rekindle in José the idealism that lead them, ten years prior, to sabotage the ceremonial inauguration of a monument erected in honor of the mayor’s brother, a fallen war hero, and, subsequently, and that ended in incarceration (José’s) and exile (Rosa and David’s). *El héroe* represents a world, in short, in which fallen monuments commemorate false idols, in which heroism is equated with silence and rebels flee. The staging of José’s trauma, the product of incarceration and

torture, culminates, meanwhile, in a scene that sparks the tragic finale (his killing David) while it foreshadows *Tiempo de guerrilla*'s scene eight ("Los fusilados y su historia") in terms of its formal strategies and dramatic force. The unwanted voices that converge in José's mind (David's; the prison guard's) taunting him to remember (the rebels's cause; the names of his accomplices) bifurcate the action along intertwining planes of reference (past and present). José's impassioned plea for deliverance from the torment of recollection, a thread that unifies the work, is thus staged as the national dilemma of a collective silence that bridges past and present and is enshrined as triumphant, ironically, in *El héroe*'s iconography of absence and hollowness: heroes divested of their ideals and a nation founded on false idols. This iconography of silence, by which remembrance is equated to torment and torture, yields in *Tiempo de guerrilla*, along with the irony to which it is wedded, to the epic reincarnation of the would-be heroes of the past as the forgotten rebels of today, through whose utterance and remembrance the playwright defies the legacy of the Franco era: the wanton destruction of logos and the systems of interpretation that support it.

The foregone conclusion that the act of remembrance constitutes a reality unto itself, one that supersedes the past experience from which it issues, has special meaning at the dawning of Spain's twenty-first century. It is highly significant that Martínez Ballesteros should now choose to center his interrogation of national identity, and the historical memory in which it is rooted, on the maquis; of all icons relegated to the *fosas comunes* (common graves) of collective thought, the maquis is among the most charged and, at once, the most representative of a period characterized by burial, banishment, and silence. His strategies for staging resistance illustrate the struggles that have recently intensified, pitting those who unquestioningly—"silently"—accept models of exclusion and distortion against those who do not. The staging over the past decade of incisive works by a cast of young playwrights, such as *Presas* (2005) by Ignacio del Moral, and *Los niños perdidos* (2007) by Laila Ripoll, suggests that the willingness to confront openly the ghosts of the regime and the limitations of democracy is, to a certain degree, a matter of generational sensibility as much as anything else.¹⁴ The trajectory mirrored by his move from the "Ciclo contra la Dictadura" to *Tiempo de guerrilla* shows moreover the extent to which Martínez Ballesteros participated in—even anticipated—this shift of sensibilities.

As Gabriel Motzkin argues, different cultures value memory distinctly, and any given culture may do so to different degrees and in different ways at distinct historical junctures. "All cultures have some form of remembering," Motzkin adds, "but the conscious decision to increase the cultural energy devoted to memory takes place in a context of both available technologies and available ways of remembering in the surrounding cultures" (280). The interrelatedness of Moreno Gómez's and Martínez Ballesteros's respective

enterprises exemplify the synergism that, in turn, characterizes cultural discourses of remembrance that have become contextual, thanks to—among others—the playwrights mentioned above. These discourses have also become necessary, as Wolfgang Iser affirms, for a generation in search of new and more democratic ways of translating the past into the language of the present. To the extent that Martínez Ballesteros, like other playwrights, reconfigures his works as paradigms of national memory, one may take the metatheatrical impulse that emerges in his writing for the stage as a strategy for reminding us that, more than memory itself, it is the mechanisms of remembrance and representation that are in dire need of being recast if new understandings of national identity are to prevail.

Notes

1. *Casa manchada* is the stage adaptation of *Todos morian en casa manchada* (1969), recipient of the Premio Planeta's "best novel" award for 1971.
2. It is important to acknowledge here José Bergamín's ground-breaking contribution to the repertoire from exile, *La niña guerrillera*, published by Manuel Altolaguirre in Mexico City in 1945.
3. Martínez Ballesteros is often compared with José Ruibal, Lauro Olmo, José María Rodríguez Méndez, and José María Martín Recuerda, playwrights who, like Antonio Buero Vallejo and Alfonso Sastre before them, faced similarly the consequences of censorship for their critical attitude toward the Franco regime.
4. *Pisito clandestino* and *Matrimonio para tres* ran at the Teatro Fígaro in 1990 and 1991 respectively and are the only plays by Martínez Ballesteros to reach Madrid's commercial circuit (Portl 63–64).
5. "Como reseñan los estudiosos de su obra, ésta es más conocida fuera que dentro de España. Su producción es muy abundante y en nuestro país apenas se ha editado la mitad de la misma y se ha representado en mucha menor proporción, lo que hizo que el también dramaturgo Fermín Cabal le llamara 'el desconocido Martínez Ballesteros'" (González Calero 68) (As his critics have affirmed, [Martínez Ballesteros] is known abroad more than in Spain. Of his abundant production, barely half is in print in our country and only a miniscule portion has been staged, a fact that brought the playwright Fermín Cabal to refer to him as 'the unknown Martínez Ballesteros').
6. The 1966 English translation of this play, *The Best of All Possible Worlds* (Martínez Ballesteros, "*The Best*"), was eventually included in Wellwarth's anthology of Spanish "underground" theater (Wellwarth, "*New Wave*").
7. Butler discusses the "crisis of representation" as it applies to Greek tragedy (1–24).
8. Moreno-Gómez reminds us that the term *maquis* was borrowed from the French (349). It is significant to note that the American translators of *Jauja* excised the term altogether. They refer to the "maquis" as either the dictator's "enemies" or "the men who fought for their freedom" (Martínez Ballesteros, "*The Best*" 189). The anonymity plaguing the Spanish *maquis* clearly has a transnational dimension.
9. Prime examples include Carlos Muñiz's *El grillo* (premiered in 1957) and *El tintero* (premiered in 1961) and Lauro Olmo's *La camisa* (published in 1963).

10. “Nota del autor: Aunque el tema de esta obra estaba desde hace años latente en mi imaginación, su redacción definitiva debe mucho a la lectura del libro *Córdoba en la posguerra (La represión de la guerrilla, 1939–1950)*, de Francisco Moreno Gómez” (Martínez Ballesteros, “*Tiempo de guerrilla*” 35) (Author’s Note: Although for years I had been ruminating on the theme of this work, the impulse to actually write it owes a great deal to my reading *Córdoba en la posguerra [La represión de la guerrilla, 1939–1950]*, by Francisco Moreno Gómez).
11. “When the study of kinship was combined with the study of structural linguistics, kinship positions were elevated to the status of a certain order of linguistic positions without which no signification could proceed, no intelligibility could be possible” (Butler 20).
12. The title page includes the following: “Escrito en el 50 aniversario de la declaración de los Derechos Humanos” (Written on the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights).
13. “La actividad de estos jueces franquistas aparece revestida, según numerosos testimonios orales, de toda suerte de hábitos arbitrarios y actitudes venáticas, dejando una memoria de terror en muchos pueblos. El mismo régimen puso empeño en que estos jueces estuvieran emparentados con víctimas de derechas, a fin de que las represalias fueran exhaustivas e implacables” (Moreno Gómez, “*Córdoba*” 95) (Franco’s magistrates were given to certain behavior that, according to oral testimony, seemed inflected with all kinds of arbitrary ticks and maniacal impulses, a fact related to the memory of terror in many towns. The regime itself saw to it that these magistrates were linked by kinship to right-wing victims, so as to guarantee that retaliation would be exhaustive and merciless).
14. Martínez Ballesteros’s allusions to the tragedy of state-sanctioned kidnappings in scene three of *Tiempo de guerrilla* anticipate Ripoll’s expansive treatment of the theme in *Los niños perdidos*. Widely acknowledged as the doyen of this younger generation, José Sánchez Sinisterra portrays the figure of “El topo” in *Terror y miseria del primer franquismo*. He completed the play in 1979 but it was not staged, it is significant to note, until 2002.

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