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**GALIZAN CIVIL WAR NOVELS: RECUPERATING HISTORICAL  
MEMORY FOR (RE)BUILDING DEMOCRACY IN THE PRESENT AND  
FORGING A NATIONAL IDENTITY**

by

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Dedico este tese a minha mulher, Silvina Simao-Valente, e também a Marie (minha nai que ja nom está conosco) Jim (meu pai), Linda (minha madrasta) e Elizabeth e Margaret (minhas irmás).

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## INTRODUCTION

In this study I examine four of the thirty-three novels that deal with the Spanish Civil War written by Galizan authors in the Galizan language.<sup>1</sup> My analyses attempt to shed light on the role these novels play as transmitters of historical memory, as well as discourses of national identity construction, primarily within three historical-political problematics. The first constitutes the growing general movement in Spain to recover the memory of the crimes of the Civil War. As counter discourses to the official version of “todos tuvimos la culpa,” the novels strive to counteract the effects caused by the pact of oblivion made in the democratic transition by the political élites, which granted amnesty to the criminals of the Franco dictatorship. This pact left a wake of reactionary institutions and ideology, which form part of mainstream Spanish society, and, while the last witnesses are passing away (in a decade they will almost be gone), the new generations tend to be alarmingly ignorant about Spanish fascism. The Galizan Civil

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<sup>1</sup> I have chosen to use “Galiza” and “Galizan,” as opposed to the official English spellings, “Galicia” and “Galician,” given that English obtained the name for this community from Spanish. “Galiza” is found in the initial texts written in the Luso tongue, but was gradually replaced by “Galicia” as this kingdom was ruled, practically since the beginning of its existence, by the Leon-Castille crown. Though “Galicia” has been the name in the official orthographic standard (“o galego oficial”) since its institutionalization in the early 1980s, a group of nationalist-sympathizing intellectuals has recently succeeded in making “Galiza” accepted (as an alternative to “Galicia”) by the “galego oficial.” This group’s objective behind promoting the use of “Galiza” is the same as mine for using it in English, which is to draw attention to the linguistic and cultural differentiality of this community (or nation) within the Spanish State. In Rodrigues Fagim’s book, which analyzes the linguistic proximities between Galizan and Portuguese, the author alludes to a valuable study by Montero Santalha, which shows the progressive replacement of “Galiza” by “Galicia” in judicial texts beginning in the Middle Ages: “O estudo de Montero Santalha documenta Galiza de forma sistemática nos textos literários que vam de meados do s. XIII a fins do século XV. Polo contrário, naqueloutros de carácter jurídico aparecen 30 Galiza e 7 Galicia no período entre os séculos XIII-XIV. No segundo período, séculos XV-XVI o panorama é outro: 5 Galiza e 34 Galicia. Isto é, simplemente, um reflexo fidelíssimo do que sócio-culturalmente se passou naquela altura. Nos séculos seguintes, a Galiza só lhe restou desaparecer” (168).

War novels are contributing to the creation of an anti-Francoist culture among these young generations, which, as Vicenç Navarro affirms, is indispensable for Spain's democratic future: "[n]o puede haber en España una cultura auténticamente democrática mientras no haya una cultura antifranquista, para la cual se requiere una viva memoria histórica" (213).

The second problematic derives from Galiza's relative invisibility in the context of the Spanish Civil War and how the Galizan Civil War novels are attracting attention to this Autonomous Community's role in the war. Despite the plethora of bibliography (both Spanish and foreign) produced on this event, very little has been dedicated to Galiza—an ironic phenomenon given, on the one hand, the political leadership from this community during the Republic, and, on the other hand, its fundamental role in Franco's winning the war. Galiza, it is agreed, symbolized the Republic in that certain key political figures of all ideologies were Galizan: Daniel Alfonso Castelao, a Partido Galeguista member, embodied the motor behind Galiza's statute of autonomy; Santiago Casares Quiroga, a member of Izquierda Republicana, was the president of the Council, the second highest political position after the President of the Republic; Portela Valladares was a prominent centrist figure; Calvo Sotelo, the highest ranking member of the reactionary party Renovación Española, became the fascist proto-martyr when assassinated shortly before the military uprising in a state-organized crime; and, finally, Franco himself was from Ferrol. Galiza, as the saying went at the time, brought to the Civil War traitors, martyrs and saviors.

Once the uprising triumphed in Galiza (within five days it had fallen completely into rebel hands), this community became the rear-guard of the fascist forces and served Franco, in the words of General Cabanellas, as “despensa y criadero,” providing food, as well as soldiers. Between 1936 and 1939 Galiza suffered a dirty war in which Falangists murdered approximately 5000 political dissidents,<sup>2</sup> silenced most of the living witnesses and destroyed most of the written testimonies. It is most likely because of this factor that Galiza has remained, until recently, relatively invisible within the Spanish Civil War. In other words, the absence of battlefronts during the war in this community seems to have obstructed the transmission of historical memory much more than elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

The negative effects that the war and dictatorship continue to have on society comprises the third historical-political problematic that I examine in this study. While some of the Civil War novels depict exclusively the war and the horrors of fascism (mostly within Galiza but sometimes in other parts of Spain as well), some of them—such as those I analyze in this dissertation—portray the democratic achievements of the Republic and implicitly invite the reader to juxtapose this lost democracy with the current political status. They attempt to explain the effects of fascism in modern day Galiza. As the Galizan historian Fernández Prieto claims, the war

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<sup>2</sup> This is the number Bieito Alonso quotes in *Historia de Galicia* (271). Fernández Prieto also uses Alonso’s figure in “Represión franquista . . .” (51).

<sup>3</sup> Marc Wouters describes the information void that inevitably kept Galiza outside the post-war common research ground: “Con movementos de tropa e subministro de munición, roupa e patacas non se describe unha guerra. O sufrimento non queda reflectido debidamente nas poucas fontes de que dispomos” (8).



tiene consecuencias que llegan hasta el presente en la mentalidad colectiva y que contribuyen a explicar la actual relación del gallego con la política o las formas de su manifestación pública. Porque aquella represión modificó actitudes sociales aprendidas como normales y connotó negativamente, casi como enfermedad social peligrosa, lo que antes no lo era: la asociación por ejemplo. (“La represión” 51)

Many of the Civil War novels try to lay bare, as it were, the continuing political struggles that hide themselves under an apparently functional political system, which society as a whole seems to accept. That is, these novels intend to provide more than cathartic experiences of uncovering past trauma and describing the horrors of fascism; in addition to this, they create a praxis for Galiza’s political present and future by presenting the lost Republic as a valuable conceptual framework. They help explain why Galiza is where it is at today. For example, why has it lost the position of leftist and centrist political prominence it had during the Republic? Or why does a large part of the population continue to be alienated from using its native language? The Civil War novels hark back to the Republic as the moment in which a democratic Galizan and Spanish civil society were cristalizing and setting the ground for an egalitarian society.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The historian Herminio Barreira also endorses the Republic as a model for the present: “Estamos a falar sen dúbida dos cinco anos máis fondos, modernizadores e determinantes do século XX español. Visto dende hoxe, a setenta anos de distancia daquel 14 de abril esplendoroso e magnífico, agrándasenos o seu significado, a súa memoria, o seu peso histórico. ¡Todo pasou naqueles anos!. . .E, se queremos mirar cara adiante e proxectar un futuro aceptable, apetecible, vivible, precisamos retornar a aqueles anos aurorais, inmarcescibles, plenos” (58).

In telling stories of the war, the Galizan Civil War novelist can either recount events that have been documented orally or through written testimony, or s/he can reinvent the events that never made their way into society's common repertoire of knowledge because, for instance, of destruction of documents. A logical question to ask is whether novels, and fiction in general, comprise the appropriate medium for transmitting historical facts. Does it not seem unethical to tell history (and especially history of trauma and genocide) through a genre conventionally considered non-truthful? Hayden White has produced some interesting studies on this question. As this scholar explains, only in the early nineteenth century did historians begin to consider fiction as the opposite of truth: "Prior to the French Revolution, historiography was conventionally regarded as a literary art. More specifically, it was regarded as a branch of rhetoric and its "fictive" nature generally recognized" (123). He claims that "[w]hat should interest us in the discussion of "the literature of fact" or, as I have chosen to call it, "the fictions of factual representation" is the extent to which the discourse of the historian and that of the imaginative writer overlap, resemble, or correspond with each other" (121).

Thus, fiction, according to White, can be as dedicated to "objective" facts as the historical discourse, and both modes of telling are dependent upon embedding their discourses in a subjective authorial style. James Young, a scholar of Holocaust studies, examines a similar dynamic between direct testimony and that which is fictionally constructed. He uses White's theories explained above, and claims that the testimonial illusion which Holocaust docu-fictions employ does not make these fictions less "true" or

“objective” than direct testimonies. I quote a passage in which he disagrees with Alvin Rosenfeld, who defends direct testimony as the only way to reach the facts:

Rosenfeld also suggests that if documentary evidence is the aim, the reader might prefer to turn directly to the “actual historical testimonies we do have.” But this is to imply that the primary difference between fabricated and “actual” testimony is a matter of actual documentary evidence—when, in fact, neither may actually be evidence but only the persuasively constructed illusion of evidence. (60)

Young further remarks: “For “knowing” something about the Holocaust may have everything to do with the inescapably literary character of historical knowledge” (7).

Fernández Prieto, a Galizan historian who has done important work on the Galizan rural society during the Republic and after the fascist takeover in 1936, echoes this same idea. He not only defends fiction’s capacity to transmit historical truth, but goes so far as to claim that fiction can depict realities which historiography cannot. He stated: “A guerra civil em Espanha é mui histórica mais nom historiográfica.”<sup>5</sup> This very accurate description implies that literature (and art in general) is capable of going into the depths of our history of feelings; it can reflect what the historical events provoked in peoples’ souls, the emotions they experienced. Indeed, this feature of literature is what makes it, in my view, such an essential component of a democratic society because

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<sup>5</sup> Personal interview, July 25, 2002.

literature helps us feel and experience emotions in a world that tends to prize, above all, utilitarian values. Thus, the Civil War novels not only transmit the truths of the past, but they also help us stay in touch with our emotions and allow us to empathize more profoundly with the victims of historical injustice.

A worthy example, in my opinion, of fiction's ability to penetrate into our history of emotions can be found in Manuel Rivas' short story "A lingua das bolboretas," which tells a story from the last period of the Republic and the first days of the Franco-Falange takeover.<sup>6</sup> "A lingua das bolboretas" depicts masterfully the psychology of people who are forced to betray their loved ones in order to save themselves. Though the main characters love the Republican teacher, they feel compelled to insult him at the end when he is hauled off in front of the townspeople to be murdered. The sadness, despair and absence of comprehension depicted through the boy narrator-focalizer, Pardal, the teacher's student, is a reality known to have occurred countless times during the war and dictatorship, but it is a type of reality seemingly untellable through the historian's discourse. As is correctly portrayed in this short story and its cinematographic adaptation, Galiza, unlike other parts of Spain that were able to organize battlefronts against Franco's forces, fell within five days to fascism. Rivas' story captures very effectively, in my view, the suddenness of the tragedy.

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<sup>6</sup> "A lingua das bolboretas" comprises one of the sixteen short stories in *¿Que me queres amor?* (1996), which, like most of his writings, has been translated into Spanish. José Luís Cuerda made a very successful movie of "A lingua" in Spanish (entitled *La lengua da las mariposas*) that was released in September of 1999. Its title in English is *Butterfly*.

It is relevant to point out that Galizan scholars of literature and cultural studies have yet to produce thorough analyses on the implications of these fictional realities of the Civil War, of the intricacies and possible drawbacks of fiction that purports to transmit historical truth of the trauma. In this sense, Galizan and Spanish Civil War studies are many steps behind those of the Holocaust, which have been generating insightful analyses of this type for years. The absence of this critical prism in Galizan and Spanish studies stems, in my view, from the amnesia that has impeded Spain's remembering the crimes of the Civil War and forty-year dictatorship. The voices that wanted Spain to remember its trauma were silenced during Franco's regime, and have been censored, on the official level, since the transition until the last few years. Only in the artistic realm (and recently in historiography) have they been able to flourish. Therefore, in contrast with those who in the field of holocaust studies deem fiction an immoral medium of representing Nazi genocide, it seems that in the Galizan and Spanish spheres, critics are hesitant to question in any shape or form the fictional representations of fascist trauma, given that they consider that any voice that denounces fascism should be left intact in the struggle to promote a democratic reconciliation.

Young explains at the beginning of his study that his objective in analyzing Holocaust testimonies and docu-fiction is not to focus on the factuality of the told events, but on how they are told:

Until now the historians' concern with Holocaust narrative has often been to unravel its myths and tropes in order to excavate the "historical

actuality” of events. . . . In addition, like many of the traditional exegetes before them, some critics have viewed themselves as much the guardians of these texts as their interpreters. In this view, the critical task has included protecting—even privileging—texts like the Holy Scriptures and survivors’ testimony from “heretical” readings that undermine these texts’ authority. (5)

Later he advises: “Rather than coming to Holocaust narrative for indisputable “factual” testimony, therefore, the critical reader might now turn to the manner in which these “facts” have been understood and reconstructed in narrative” (10). What Young implies, I believe, in these statements is that critics no longer need to stress the factuality of *Shoah* horror told in narrative, because these truths are the official and dominant ones. Hence, his focus falls more on trying to understand the consequences that writing, reading and interpreting Holocaust fiction has for the present and future. Though in my analyses I also explore the possible consequences that writing and reading Galizian Civil War novels can have in society, I am inevitably obligated, as well, to focus, when relevant, on the facts concerning the fascist repression and takeover, given that they have yet to become part of the dominant version. Unfortunately, many of the truths told in the Galizian Civil War novels do not form part of society’s dominant memory. For instance, facts such as the active resistance of thousands of Galizans to the military uprising have still not replaced the Francoist stigma of the passive and tamable Galiza that embraced totalitarianism. Likewise, the fascist-fabricated stereotype of the stingy, individualist and

anti-leftist Galizian farmer continues, as well, to hold clout in the minds of many (if not most) Galizans and Spaniards. The pact of oblivion, which I explore in chapter one, has suppressed many of the facts of the Civil War and Franco regime. Indeed, the recent uncovering of common graves (begun in June, 2002) provides proof that the facts of the Franco-Falange extermination policies have yet to be reckoned with on the official level.

In addition to exploring what is told and how it is told in the Civil War novels, I also analyze the phenomena these novels manifest by virtue of being products of a diglossic society. As fictional works of a peripheral community, they contain linguistic and identity-related factors, which are not present (at least in the same way and amount) in the Civil War novels written elsewhere in Spain (except, of course, for those written in the native languages of the other peripheral communities). The main factors, which I deal with on several occasions throughout this study, comprise, on the one hand, the novels' inescapable role in affirming and recreating a Galizian national identity,<sup>7</sup> and, on the other, the elements of distortion that often interfere in reading and interpreting the aesthetic text.

Galizian literature, since the *Rexurdimento* with Rosalía de Castro, has taken on the role of affirming the existence of the Galizian nation, which has lacked

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<sup>7</sup> Note that I write "a Galizian national identity" as opposed to "Galizian national identity": In my dissertation I reject any essentialist concepts of nationalism as workable and desirable for a democratic society, and I point out those expressions used by the critics that manifest such ideas. My idea of a democratic nation is one that is invented by a multiplicity of social groups with different demands and orientations. A pair of categories, which I think can help analyze the Galizian national question are those of marginality (of the periphery) and that of locality: Through the former, one can examine the Galizian discourse as a reaction to the historical situation of an excluded nation, and, by means of the latter, one can explore the ways in which the locality of Galiza can act the norm within the Spanish State.

representability throughout its history. Though today there no longer exists the overt repression that Franco exercised against Galizan otherness, the language and literature of this community continue to totter in a precarious state due to the political forces in power that refuse to endorse legislation for normalizing Galizan's linguistic and cultural status. Hence, writing in Galizan still entails an anti-hegemonic stance that inevitably influences the signifying potential of the literary text. Antón Figuerola claims that the mere use of Galizan

aparece nestas situacións cun valor de por si mesmo, cunha certa  
significación permanente, constante en liñas xerais . . . Isto, como é obvio,  
non sucede nunha situación de lingua normalizada, ou vai deixando de  
suceder na mesma medida en que a lingua se vai normalizando, pero en  
situación de diglosia aparece esta significación suplementaria do código  
como factor de nivelación ó ser compartida por todo tipo de discursos,  
literarios ou non, e como causa constante da perda de poder significativo  
no caso do texto literario. (Diglosia e texto 22)

Furthermore, Galizan writers, readers and critics—who are inevitably conditioned by a consciousness of belonging to a threatened community—are more likely than those of consolidated communities to make the literary text useful for the Galizan nationalist cause. Thus, literary texts produced and consumed in Galizan contain an added *militancia*, which acts as a double-edged sword in that if, on the one hand, it can



contribute to reinventing a Galizan national identity, on the other hand, it can limit the autonomy of the aesthetic text.

In the first chapter of this study I explore more in depth this feature of militancy in the writing and reading of Galizan literature, after having analyzed the following questions: I begin by explaining the historical causes behind the fascist rebellion in this community, the carrying out of the coup and the reasons behind Galiza's rapid fall to Franco. I also examine the consequences of the fascist repression in Galiza and its traces in the present. I then explain the effects that the pact of oblivion, imposed by the political forces of the Spanish transition, has had on collective memory of the Civil War and dictatorship, and how the Galizan Civil War novels act as anti-hegemonic forms of symbolic resistance against this forced forgetting. Like the uncovering of the common graves in the Bierzo region (which finally broke the official barrier of silence in June, 2002), the Civil War novels also function to uncover the crimes of fascism. Finally, in the last section of the chapter, I explore the diglossia-related phenomena, which I briefly outlined above, of Galizan literary production and consumption. Here I also explain recent thematic and stylistic evolutions that have taken place in the Galizan literary system; namely, the passage from politically militant texts that proliferated during the dictatorship years to the more experimental and less explicitly committed works that have opened an autonomous path for the Galizan literary system; from the predominance of poetry to that of narrative fiction; and from the proliferation of allegorical novels to that of historical novels.

Anxo Angueira's novel, Pensa nao (1999), constitutes my object of study in chapter two. This narrative's Civil War story goes a step further, both thematically and stylistically, than most of the others. Apart from portraying the atrocities caused by the fascist takeover, the novel also presents a radically new political-historical version of the pre-Franco Galizan rural community. The dominant version, which depicts this community as passive, individualistic, and anti-leftist is closely related to the fallacy of the submissive Galiza, which the earliest Francoist historians, such as Moure Mariño and Silva Ferreira, began to fabricate during the war. Indeed, both of these fallacies have been used as deterministic concepts in the service of, on the one hand, upholding right-wing regimes in Galiza, and, on the other, undermining Galizan nationalist affirmations. Angueira has remarked that despite having grown up under this dominant version of the Galizan rural world, he was able to gather oral testimonies from the elders of his village that contradicted this negative version. Though none of these elders wanted to talk about the war and repression suffered during the war and dictatorship, they were eager to talk about rural life before the fascist takeover, about the technological advancements that took place during the 1920's and 1930's until the Franco-Falange uprising.<sup>8</sup> Pensa nao, more than any other Civil War novel, strives to debunk this fascist fallacy, which still forms part of most Galizans' and Spaniards' active understanding.

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<sup>8</sup> See his published interviews with Carme Vidal, Sandra Penelas and Rosé Carrera. He also discussed these matters in his interview with the author.

In chapter three I examine Scórprio (1987) by Ricardo Carvalho Calero, the only one of the four Civil War novels dealt with here whose author lived the war. Like other Galizans who wrote novels on their experiences in the war, he also waited many years, until 1987, before finally writing.<sup>9</sup> The protagonist of the novel (named Rafael and nicknamed Scórprio), serves as one of the author's alter-egos in the narration, and the stylistic originality of the novel consists of depriving the protagonist of his own voice. Furthermore, the narration has no third person narrator, but rather a varied selection of characters who speak about Rafael-Scórprio in monologues. The other original aspect of the novel consists of it being written in the *lusista* orthographic norm, which is very close to the peninsular Portuguese orthographic norm. The *lusista* movement proposes a practical project for (re)integrating the Galizan language and culture into the rest of the lusophone world, and yet despite this reality, the movement is still marginal in Galizan society. In my view, the reason for the marginality of the *lusista* proposal is the group mentality that characterizes a substantial part of its adherents. In my analysis of Scórprio I focus on the critiques written by the *lusista* critics and attempt to show a common mentality that guides their interpretations and limits them.

The novel I analyze in chapter four, Amor de tango (1992) by Maria Xosé Queizán, offers an original perspective of the Civil War, which is missing from the other

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<sup>9</sup> Of the Galizan Civil War novelists who lived the war and wrote in Galizan, only one of them, Ramón de Valenzuela, published his novel (*Non agardei por ninguén* (1957)) before the fall of Franco. The others—Del Riego, Alonso Ríos, Fernández Pérez and Santiago—waited until close to the end of their lives to write and publish their novels.

thirty-two Galizian Civil War novels. A full-fledged feminist theoretician and the pioneer of Galizian feminism, Queizán's docu-fiction introduces into the Civil War sub-genre new horizons that center on the hardships of women during the Republican years, as well as on the catastrophic effects that fascism had on female emancipation. Like Angueira's novel, Amor de tango explores the past in ways that lead the reader to reconceptualize his or her present. But Queizán's focus on the repressive elements of a patriarchal society make this novel a unique heuristic instrument for creating a feminist consciousness today. Apart from analyzing the interstices of the novel's pedagogical project, I also explore the author's unorthodox and radically feminist conception of Galizian nationalism, which makes Queizán a type of "heretic" within the Galizian literary establishment.

The last novel I examine in this study is Manuel Rivas' O lapis do carpinteiro (1998), whose sales have quintupled those of most of the other Civil War novels (as well as of most Galizian novels). For a literary system that has yet to reach a consolidated status, Rivas' massive success—achieved through the ensemble of his literary and essayist creation—constitutes a landmark phenomenon. In the first part of this chapter I examine the contextual factors (such as the author's strategies) that have helped him reach stardom in both Galiza and Spain, as well as achieve recognition in the international sphere. In my analysis of O lapis I first explore the novel's federalist vision that transcends the isolationist conception of Galiza defended by some sectors of the Galizian nationalist community. I then spend the rest of the chapter examining the mosaic

of medical, meta-physical, and magical metaphors that invites the reader to visualize in a more tangible fashion the beneficial effects of living historical memory in the present.

My primary goal in this study consists of bringing to light the conceptual effectiveness that some of these novels can offer for the recuperation of the repressed memory of the Republic and its destruction by fascism. At stake in this complicated (and idealistic?) project of using the past as lessons for crafting the present and future is not only the transmission of the facts concerning these historical landmarks, but especially, the ability to invite the reader to feel these traumatic events. The novels give, as it were, felt life to the abstractions of the traumatic events that did not end with the war, but continued throughout the dictatorship. Through the vicarious experiences provided by the novels, readers can become more sensitized to the importance of recovering the lost knowledge, ideals and symbols of the Republic. In the last analysis, I conceive of this study as a contribution to the growing movement in Spain to make the facts of the Civil War, which continue to remain unorthodox in the official realm, part of the hegemonic version and a determining element in future policy making.

## **CHAPTER # 1**

### **THE CIVIL WAR IN GALIZA, THE PACT OF OBLIVION, AND THE PECULIAR PHENOMENA INVOLVED IN GALIZAN LITERARY CREATION AND CONSUMPTION**

#### **The Military Uprising and Its Rapid Subduing of Democracy in Galiza**

Galiza did not host a war in the conventional sense of a well defined battle front and two armed forces in conflict. What took place constituted what we would call today a dirty war, such as those during the 1970's and 80's in Latin America. The stigma of Galiza as passive and tamable had long existed before July of 1936, but the almost immediate overtaking of this nation at the outbreak of the war provided the Francoist propaganda apparatus a prime example for re-fueling their stereotype of a people whom they claimed to be inherently docile and even thankful for the intervention. The two main Galizan Francoists who first wrote about the war when it ended were the Falangist Luis Moure Mariño and the churchman, Silva Ferreiro. The former claimed that “. . . uno de los mayores méritos de Galicia fue la naturalidad con la que se sumó al Movimiento . . . se sumó al alzamiento de una manera espontánea, sencilla y reposante de naturalidad” (qtd. in Fernández 2: 731). This perception still holds clout in many a politician's and layman's ideology despite the fact that studies have proven that this community, by and large, did not willingly accept the Franco-Falange takeover. The Frente Popular had

decisively won the elections on February 16, 1936, and more than two-thirds of Galizans had voted in favor of the Statute of Autonomy on June 28 of that same year, less than a month before the uprising.<sup>10</sup>

The military coup triumphed quickly in Galiza (it began on July 20 and by the 26th the community was under Franco's rule) because the mayors and top officials of the main Galizan cities—governed by members of Frente Popular—refused to distribute arms to the unions (the main ones being the socialist UGT and the anarcho-syndicalist CNT).<sup>11</sup> These mayors and *gobernadores civiles* had taken orders from Frente Popular politicians in Madrid, and especially the president of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Defense, Santiago Casares Quiroga. It is not known whether these orders were given because of the president's inexperience or his failure to take the uprising seriously; or whether they were given because of the Republican government's fear of compromising its power with the unions, who might have declared revolution, as did their counterparts elsewhere in Spain. According to the different studies on this question, both factors figure into the picture.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Fernández Naval's *O bosque das antas* provides a passage that describes the pre-Statute period in which, Republicans, such as the character Claudio Naval (who represents the author's grandfather), handed out propaganda entreating people to vote in favor of the Statute: "Logo dos discursos, dos eslogans entusiastas, de toca-lo himno que ninguén coñecía e que algúns tentaban bailar, el repartía oitavilas que chamaban ás urnas e a votar "SI", como medio para conquistar un novo país, e Asún prendía bandeiriñas que ela mesma facía, coas cores azul e branca nas lapelas da xente. Gañou rotundamente a vontade de se autogobernar, mais de pouco valeu. Os poucos días uns militares con ambición histórica, iniciaban en África unha aventura que remataría nun tráxico e inútil enfrontamento civil. En Galicia non houbo fronte de batalla. Entregada ós golpistas, desencadeouse unha represión animal, causante de mortos, exilios e fuxidos" (50).

<sup>11</sup> Practically all scholars agree on this point. Concise is Bieito Alonso's description in *Historia de Galicia*: "A ambigüidade amosada polos representantes do goberno republicano, moi cautelosos na descalificación dos golpistas e moito máis aínda na organización da defensa militar, contribúe de xeito decisivo á eliminación dos focos de resistencia." (270)

One of the first to write on the fascist subjugation of Galiza was the Galizan nationalist Daniel Alfonso Castelao, the most prominent representative of the Partido Galeguista (PG) in Madrid at the time of the coup. He wrote in 1940 at the beginning of his exile in New York an article that later became the “libro segundo” of his Sempre en Galiza (first published in Buenos Aires in 1947), a book to which Galizan nationalists refer affectionately as “the Galizan bible.” Castelao claimed that the lack of Galizan autonomy from Madrid was the crucial factor in the fascist squelching of this community. He accuses Casares Quiroga of having delayed the referendum for autonomy, which could have taken place in 1932. Had this delay not been imposed, argues Castelao, Galiza could have resisted the coup and organized a front, as did Catalonia and Euskadi. He posits that had the three peripheral communities obtained complete autonomy by July, 1936, not only would the Civil War have not occurred, but neither would have the reasons that caused it. He then reinforces his argument by quoting Pi i Margall, a prominent Catalanian Federalist (who also sympathized with anarcho-syndicalist ideology):

[P]ero se a nosa creencia fose endeble podémola reforzar con verbas de Pi i Margall, que veñen a xeito e dende moi lonxe: “Aspiramos a formar poderosas entidades políticas (refírese aos Estados da Federación

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<sup>12</sup> Santiago Casares Quiroga, a Galizan politician of Izquierda Republicana, was appointed on May 10, 1936, as president of the Council by Manuel Azaña. Though a staunch Republican, Casares defended a centrist structure of Spain based on the French model, while opposing the federalist idea defended by Castelao and his party. Scholars unanimously claim that Casares Quiroga dismissed the uprising as another “pronunciamiento” spasm that would be promptly smashed, as had that of General Sanjurjo in August of 1932.



hespañola), capaces de oporen invencibles obstáculos aos pensamentos de dictadura ou de tiranía que poidan xurdir dentro da República.” (160)

Castelao contends that, contrary to Casares, the President of the Republic, Manuel Azaña, viewed the autonomous nations of Spain as the bulwark of democracy. A few lines after the above passage, he briefly describes the meeting that took place (on July 17th, before anything was known about the military uprising in Africa) between Azaña and the Galizan commission that traveled to Madrid with the Statute for the president to sign it. (For the Statute to be enacted the referendum was not enough—the president of the Republic’s signature, as well as the consent of the Council, were also obligatory). Castelao writes that when he spoke to Azaña, he assured him that the president’s signature would lead to the creation of another bulwark of the Republic. The president’s response to him was agreeable and affirmative. Castelao quotes the response and then blames the president for having supported Galiza’s autonomy too late in the political process:

E o Sr. Azaña, Presidente da República, asinteu con estas verbas: “*Tengo fé en el resultado de las autonomías regionales y cada vez estoy más convencido de que las regiones autónomas serán los mejores baluartes de la democracia republicana.*” ¡Tarde piache! O Sr. Azaña está no desterro e non tivo tempo de firmar o Estatuto galego. Hoxe en Hespaña manda Franco. (160)

The first targets of the fascist rebels were A Corunha, considered the epicenter of the uprising, and Ferrol. The former contained the industrial complex, while the latter had the navel base. It seems logical to assume that the government feared the danger of compromising the Republic's power with the revolutionary sectors of society. Manuel Astray Rivas, who became an anti-Francoist guerrilla in the post-war, explains in his Síndrome del 36 that the Galician mayors and *gobernadores civiles*<sup>13</sup> did not disagree with Casares Quiroga's orders, for they "tienen temor de que si se arma al pueblo, la autoridad del gobierno iba a quedar muy mediatizada" (27). This author then claims: "El panorama era el mismo en toda Galicia. Las autoridades temían más al pueblo armado que al contagio, lo concebían como algo superior a una peste" (27). As an example of this fear of the proletariat, Sr. Suárez Ferrín, mayor of A Corunha, is quoted as having said: "No puedo tolerar que los explosivos caigan en manos de irresponsables. Podrían producir mucho daño a la Ciudad" (Astray 19).

Regarding the government's reaction to the fascist uprising, Astray posits that there had existed a plethora of signs indicating that a military conspiracy to overtake the Republic was looming on the horizon, but the politicians downplayed the seriousness of the uprising in North Africa and continued to trust the army officials' allegiance to the democratic State. One of these signs was General Mola's three communiqués, the first of

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<sup>13</sup> The figure of the "gobernador civil" and the administration that depends on him/her are institutions that exist at present. They are an example of Madrid's control over the different autonomies. The national police and the *Guardia Civil* form part and take order from, as they did during the Republic, this same administration. Contrary to the *alcaldes*, the *gobernadores civiles* are not elected by the people, but appointed by the governing party of Spain.

which was transmitted on May 30, 1936. This initial one outlined the “alzamiento, que se entendía como un golpe de Estado de rápido desenlace” (19). The second communiqué on June 1 “resalta que todos los amantes de la Patria tienen que organizarse para la rebeldía con la que se alcanzaría el poder” (20). In the last one on June 5, he claims to defend the Republic, but argues that in order to put an end to the chaos created by the Frente Popular victory, some form of military intervention is needed. Evidently, the government, apart from feeling apprehensive about arming the radicals, underestimated the threat in Mola’s declarations, although the first two communiqués clearly manifest a violent and anti-democratic intention. Astray affirms that the plotting was also evident in the fact that, in the months previous to the coup, important army officials traveled on highly transited trains, and met in stations where they exchanged information, so that even the most incompetent espionage service would be capable of detecting the true cause behind the military’s stirring about. He concisely expresses this scenario as such: “O sea que conspiraban ante todos y nadie veía nada, y no se hizo lo que era necesario para evitarla” (19).

In agreement with Castelao, the Spanish politician Largo Caballero, the most prominent representative of the leftist sector of the Socialist Party (PSOE) in the Frente Popular government, went as far as to say that Casares Quiroga’s ineptness and irresponsibility (manifested in his orders to the Galizian mayors and *gobernadores civiles*) were the reason why the Republic lost the war. This is what Carlos Fernández explains in his article on the *gobernador civil*, Francisco Pérez Carballo, of A Corunha at the time

of the coup. This *gobernador*, writes Fernández, was young, 25 years old, and inexperienced, and because of his obeying Casares' orders: "pagou coa vida a súa defensa da República, pois foi fusilado o 24 de Xullo de 1936" ("O gobernador Pérez Carballo" 23).

But, in all fairness to Casares Quiroga, Manuel Azaña and the Galizan city officials who followed orders, it is true that the general feeling in society was one of complacency, even after the media had announced the uprising in Morocco. As Astray explains in the above mentioned book, the event took place on a summer Saturday, the temperature was in the 30's (centigrade), and many folks were on their way to the beach to take advantage of the weather, which in Galiza is very unpredictable. But more influential in this collective lethargy, was most likely the fact that Spain was a country used to violence as a legitimate tool of negotiation, employed by both the right and the left; therefore, many deemed the events in Africa harmless, at least on a scale that would affect them. Scholars mostly agree that no one, except for the plotting army officers, really knew what was ensconced in their ultimate agenda. Alonso Montero explains how even some of the most conservative sectors of society were agog as to what the generals had in store:

Con Franco, co Alzamento, están sectores e individuos que non eran antidemocráticos se ben respiraron o día en que un sector do Exército se alzou contra os "desmáns" do Frente Popular. Non sabían que esa foi a primeira consigna pero que o paso seguinte, aínda con pronunciamentos

ambiguous, foi masacra-los partidos de centro e de esquerda, os  
sindicatos, as institucións autonómicas e os círculos de cultura presididos  
pola palabra crítica: afundi-la Democracia. (As palabras 25)

The newspapers also reflected an undisturbed attitude towards the uprising, as María  
Carne Pérez Pais describes:

Nos periódicos do día 18 e nos poucos que saíron o día 19 non hai aínda  
unha idea clara da dimensión do golpe militar. Proporcionaron unha  
mínima información e incluíron as declaracións oficiais de que o Goberno  
controlaba a situación e que a insurrección tiña sido dominada. (36)

In accordance with this widely accepted theory claiming that a crucial factor in  
the rebels' smashing of Galiza was the naiveté of the people and the politicians, the first  
historical text written on the war in Galiza, by Luís Seoane, expresses a similar view.  
Seoane (the central figure of Alonso Montero's book cited above), was a leftist  
nationalist artist and writer who worked hand in hand with Castelao in the Partido  
Galeguista (PG). Caught in Galiza at the time of the uprising, he hid out in a friend's  
house in Montrove until October when he obtained a false passport and escaped to  
Lisbon, where he embarked for Argentina, a country that today hosts as many Galizans as  
those back home. From the beginning of his exile he involved himself in political  
activities aimed at ousting the dictatorship in Spain. The first of his political projects  
consists of testimonial style descriptions of the fascist atrocities in the provinces A  
Corunha and Vigo. Naturally, he did not directly witness the events he tells, but from his

hide-out in Galiza he was informed secondhand. These writings became one of the world's first renowned anti-fascist books, Lo que han hecho en Galicia, and, translated in French, La Galicie sous la botte de Franco. The passage I quote comes from a translation from the original Spanish into Galizan:

Non é que os homes da Fronte Popular se amedoñasen e entregasen o pobo atado de pés e mans para salvaren así as súas vidas. É que coidaron até o último momento que contaban coa lealdade das forzas de orde pública, a Garda civil e a Garda de asalto, que lles mostraran probas firmes de adhesión á República e, por se manteren dentro da máis estrita legalidade, resistíronse a dar armas ao pobo. Se as tivesen dado, a rebelión tería fracasado en vinte e catro horas. Non o quixeron facer. Pagárono inexorabelmente coas súas vidas. (O que fixeron 24)<sup>14</sup>

Like Seoane, Alonso Montero also underscores the ingenuousness of leftist figures vis-à-vis the coup (including Seoane himself), who well knew that the Spanish military concealed anti-democratic plans, but never imagined the extent of violence it was to carry out: “Seoane, sen embargo, non ten idea precisa, como tantos homes e mulleres de boa fe, da natureza do golpe político-militar nin da súas consecuencias premeiras. Non sospeitaba que se ía sementar tanto terror na poboación” (24).

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<sup>14</sup> The A Nosa Terra group published the translation from Spanish into Galizan in 1998 and titled it O que fixeron en Galicia.

Another relevant figure of the Partido Galeguista, Lois Tobío, gives a different perspective, less critical of the key politicians involved in decision making, such as Casares. Tobío—who, along with Seoane, Castelao, Carvalho Calero (the author of Scórpio, which I analyze in chapter three) and others, participated in the crafting of the Statute for Galizan autonomy—claims in a published interview that Galiza was doomed to be subdued, given the lack of urban concentrations, which he considers indispensable for organizing mass resistance. Surprisingly for a Galizan nationalist politician, he seems to exonerate completely both the Galizan city officials and Minister of Defense Casares Quiroga:

En Galiza non se podía facer mais do que se fixo. E moi difícil que nun país sen grandes concentracións urbanas, con pouca industria e sen grandes masas proletarias pudesese facerse unha resistencia como a que se fixo en Madrid ou Barcelona ou Bilbao. Naturalmente non se pode. Ali o poder militar, axudado polos outros sectores, esmagaba doadamente a calquer rebelión e defensa dos sectores espargallados e minoritarios da nosa xente. (“Luis Tobio” 55)

Once the uprising ousted democracy in Galiza and in half of Spain, explains Carlos Fernández, Casares resigned and, in a passionate rage and dressed in a “mono de miliciano que le debía de sentar como a un Cristo dos pistolas” (Alzamiento 2: 899), volunteered to fight for the Republic in the sierra of Guadarrama. But, explains Fernández, his health, weakened by tuberculosis, kept the ex-president from carrying out

his wish. In those areas that fell immediately to Franco, leftists were condemned to suffering extermination policies aimed at decapitating the civil society, which in Galiza had been cristalizing since mid eighteenth century. In the next section I explore the peculiarities of the fascist repression in Galiza immediately following this community's fall to Franco.

### **The Dirty War and Galiza's Tribute of Blood**

Scholars and witnesses agree that what happened in Galiza was a dirty war of the most horrific kind possible, “unha guerra xorda,” in the words of Ramón Villares.<sup>15</sup> Besides the immediate triumph of the Franco forces, another crucial factor contributing to the massive repression was the community's geostrategic situation. Unlike other regions, where the instability of the borders during the beginning stages of the conflict (as in Northern Castile and those of western Andalusia), allowed anti-fascists to escape the repression, Galiza was completely sealed off: the ocean did not provide an escape for many; the western strip of Asturias, which extends north and south along Galiza's eastern border, fell immediately in Franco-Falangist hands; to the southeast in the Bierzo, the military rebels had also triumphed; and to the south, Salazar's Portugal, loyal to Franco, also impeded politically committed exiles from seeking asylum (although many, such as Luís Seoane mentioned above, did manage to flee to America through this country).

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<sup>15</sup> Ramón Villares, personal interview, July 17, 2002. The adjective “xordo” (in Spanish “sordo”) signifies both the silenced aspect of the repression, as well as the sordid (the English cognate of “xordo”) nature of it.



Fernández Prieto describes how this geostrategic enclosure and the military takeover in Galiza “convierte al país en una ratonera sobre la que se ceba una represión que tiene diferentes fases y adopta variadas formas, de las más evidentes y brutales a las más sutiles y administrativas” (“Represión franquista” 50-51).

In this article, Fernández Prieto (whose innovative analyses I use for elucidating Angueira’s Pensa nao in chapter 2) accounts for the peculiar characteristics of the fascist repression in Galiza, and more important, how this repression still manifests itself today in the collective consciousness. According to this author, the immediate triumph of the fascist forces in Galiza left deeper scars on Galizans than those left in the parts of Spain that resisted the initial fascist uprising: “Las condiciones de esta guerra confieren, por lo tanto, unas características peculiares a la represión en Galicia, haciendo que su reflejo en la mentalidad colectiva y sus consecuencias sociales a largo plazo sean más radicales y profundas” (“Represión franquista” 51). In accordance with this idea, Luca de Tena and Carballa describe this immediate post-war in Galiza as “(o)s *corenta anos* foron para Galiza *corenta e tres anos*, con particularidades raramente atendidas na bibliografía do caso” (4).

But in addition to the systematic killings of leftists is the tribute of blood shed by the soldiers drafted for the Franco side and the famine that spread because of the repeated food requisitions. As General Cabanellas put it, Galiza was to serve the fascist army as a “Despensa y criadero” (qtd. in B. Maíz 63). Fifteen drafts (*quintas*) were carried out during the war, and those men born between 1908 and 1923 were forced to

enroll in the army (thus, boys as young as 16 years old were eligible). This “man de obra marcial,” in Marc Wouter’s words, was to be sacrificed out of Galiza, while the interior was starved from having to feed the army (8). Bernardo Máiz states that 26,000,000 pesetas in food supplies and provisions, clothes, gold and money from fines and donations were collected in just the first six months (63). Therefore, the three main elements of repression and destruction responsible for Galiza’s tribute of blood were the extermination and incarceration of anti-fascists, hunger, and the deaths of soldiers outside the community; or as Fernández Prieto effectively and concisely states: “[S]ólo se vivió la guerra como terror, hambre y noticias de muertos en el frente” (“Represión franquista” 51).

Bernardo Máiz underscores the role of the military authorities, who “exerceron o poder directo durante a guerra e a inmediata postguerra” (64). They were responsible for carrying out the “legal” repression, while the *patrullas del amanecer* (also known as the *escuadróns da morte*), composed mainly of Falangists, handled the “illegal” form. According to Bieito Alonso, between July and December of 1936, 800 people were executed “legally,” while 5,000 were murdered “illegally” (271). Bernardo Máiz claims that between the same dates 2,324 were killed in the Ferrol area, which, as was mentioned earlier, comprised along with A Corunha the main target for the fascist repression (65). The terror unleashed was not, writes Bieito Alonso, *ex promptu* or a result of a last-ditch decision, but one that had been planned and calculated scientifically: “Pero o terror non resultou un factor irreflexivo, antes ben serviu de xeito implacábel e

sistemático como verdadeiro laboratorio para aquelas teorías da represión e do exterminio que, poucos anos despois, atoparían a súa exacta dimensión nos reximes fascistas europeos” (271). This idea of a pre-planned terror was explained in some depth by Xusto Beramendi. This historian claims that the Gestapo had instructed the Francoist police to “ter fichada e controlada toda a populaçom; daí o Documento Nacional de Identidade, de nom deixar fisuras, de combinar a repressom ilegal com a legal; é dizer “passear” a gente ou utilizar o conselho de guerra no que qualquer condena tinha umha fasquia de legalidade.”<sup>16</sup>

Once the war was over, Franco’s regime never granted amnesty to Republicans. In fact, the regime acted, as Paul Preston argues in The Politics of Revenge, as if Spain “were a country occupied by a victorious foreign army,” and this army were prepared “for action against the native population rather than an external enemy” (42). Carlos Fernández also explains this politics of revenge and draws a comparison between Spain’s civil war and that of the United States:

Franco no hizo como en la Guerra de Secesión norteamericana, cuando el genral Ulises Grant dijo al sudista Robert Lee el mismo día del fin de la lucha: “De parte del presidente Lincoln, todos los soldados de su ejército pueden regresar a sus casas a partir de mañana mismo, para que, todos juntos, contribuyamos a la reconstrucción del país”. Franco aplicó desde

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<sup>16</sup> Personal interview, July 25, 2002.

el primer momento la ley de la venganza. Siguió la frase de su compañero Mola, dicha ante los micrófonos de Radio Castilla: “Esta es una guerra sin cuártel. Yo veo a mi padre en las filas contrarias y lo mato. (11)

Many had hoped that the fall of the Franco regime would have allowed the democratic system to try the criminals responsible for the repression that lasted throughout the dictatorship. But those who ushered in democracy had other agendas in mind. Many of the agents of the transition had been a part of the dictatorship and they feared that another civil war would break out. The solution they agreed upon comprised the creation of a pact of oblivion, which I now proceed to analyze.

### **The Pact of Oblivion**

Recuperating memory of the Civil War and the Francoist dictatorship has not been a political priority in Spain’s post-dictatorship democracy, to say the least. After Franco’s death in 1975, political figures, affiliated for the most part with the dictatorship, instated (or imposed in many critics’ view) the current constitutional monarchy and parliamentary system. The crafters of the transition, who were publicly portrayed as representatives of the different political formations, agreed to accept equal guilt for the tragedy of the Civil War. The expression “todos tuvimos la culpa” and the maxim of “nunca más” became institutionalized slogans, depicted to symbolize all Spaniards’ desire to move forward in peace and bury the past division between the right and left. In addition to this mutual acceptance of equal guilt, the agents of the transition granted amnesty to the criminals of the fascist regime, and consented to the creation of a pact of

oblivion with regard to the Civil War and dictatorship. The pact consisted of silencing open public debate on the Civil War and Franco's regime, not only at the political level, but also in major media. Only in the artistic realm, in the non-institutionalized left, and in peripheral nationalist formations did historical memory survive and proliferate.

Until the present, all governing parties in Spain have obeyed the pact of oblivion, including Felipe González' social democratic PSOE, which rose to power in 1982 and governed for fourteen years. It seems logical to consider that this pact would be attractive, above all, to the rightist sectors of Spain, who would benefit from not having to deal publicly with the specters of their collaboration with fascism. But, interestingly enough, most of the institutionalized left also embraced this collective forgetting. Indeed, not an insignificant number of intellectuals, who sympathized with the PSOE, have defended the pact of oblivion because in their view it comprises the only solution for Spain to break its curse of social and political conflict and achieve a state of peace. Santos Juliá and Paloma Aguilar are perhaps the most famous of these *intelectuales orgánicos* of the PSOE. While Santos Juliá fervently defends the need for Spaniards to forget its past in order to achieve peace, Paloma Aguilar endorses what I would call a contained type of historical revisionism. Her book Memoria y olvido de la Guerra Civil española (1996) was the first in Spain to carry out a rigorous analysis of historical memory of the war and dictatorship. The bulk of her book examines the ways through which the dictatorship distorted and manipulated memory of the Civil War, and how this distorted memory helped create the collective desire of "nunca más" once the transition

began. She claims that by the time of the transition, Spaniards' main preoccupation, despite their differences in regard to the war, was that the violence of the past never repeat itself. Though she admits that the reconciliation that took place was unjust for the victims of fascism, she claims that there was no other solution. Oblivion, in her view, comprised the only outlet for overcoming the deep rift caused by the war and dictatorship.

A steadily increasing number of intellectuals have denounced the pact. Some of them are Gregorio Morán, Vicenç Navarro, Joan Ramón Resina, Eduardo Subirats, Nicolás Sartorius and Cristina Moreiras.<sup>17</sup> In contrast to Aguilar's positive conception of the transition, which she endorses as a model for other countries emerging out of dictatorships, these scholars view the transition and the pact of oblivion as a defeat of democracy. They contend that the transition constituted a top down imposition, which went against the desire of a large proportion of the population that wanted a non-monarchical democracy and political justice for the victims of the dictatorship. Morán, for example, analyzes the non-democratic backgrounds of the key political figures of the transition, such as the king himself, and denounces the legendary and mythical aura with which the political officials have ordained this political process.

The psychological consequences of fascist terror of the war and the dictatorship are especially dramatic in villages, where the remaining witnesses of the war are still, by

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<sup>17</sup> See their individual works in the bibliography.

and large, frightened to talk about the repression they, or others they know, suffered. The pact of oblivion and the taboo it imposed on reviving historical memory has not helped this situation at all. In the eyes of many rural Spanish folk—most of whom do not have access to the artistic realm which, as I said above, has kept the memory alive—the democratic system has not changed significantly from the fascist regime. Most of these rural people, as testimonies have revealed, are still afraid to talk about the war and denounce the past crimes because they fear that the authorities of the present will harm them and their loved ones.

Fortunately, this blanket of fear is beginning to disintegrate thanks to the uncovering of common graves, which the Association for the Recuperation of Historical Memory has been undertaking for over two years now. Emilio Silva, one of the Association founders, had spent years searching for his disappeared Republican grandfather, and finally discovered his body in October, 2000, in a common grave in the Bierzo region in León. But this event did not break the media's inclination to suppress historical memory. It took until last June, 2002, when the Association began uncovering another common grave in the same region, which holds over thirty corpses, for the media to cover the event. Finally, after more than twenty years of democracy, the pact of oblivion has begun to dissipate, and images of bullet-shattered skulls and skeletons piled on top of each other are showing Spaniards and the rest of the world that Spain's tragedy caused by fascism has yet to be reckoned with.<sup>18</sup>

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The Association is now trying to find out where every grave is located in order to uncover them and give the disappeared dignified burials. They have located over forty throughout Spain and estimate that there are over thirty thousand unidentified bodies. Although this event has catalyzed the progressive sectors throughout Spain to begin facing the past (including the PSOE, which until recently showed little interest in revisiting the past), the rightist party, El Partido Popular (PP), and its affiliates are very unwilling to continue exhuming the historical truth. Indeed, I discovered last July 2002 when I was in Spain doing research for my dissertation that not all media dealt with these events of the common graves. When I arrived in Compostela at the beginning of July, I immediately related this question to the Spanish Civil War novels, and thus decided to carry out a mini research project on these exhumations. I read the different main Spanish and Galician daily newspapers during the month of July in order to see how they covered, if they did, these events. I discovered that while the more progressive newspapers, such as El País and the Galician paper La voz de Galicia covered the exhumations regularly, the main newspapers associated with the right (ABC and El Mundo at a national level, and El Correo Gallego of the Compostela area) neglected them completely. ABC was even as bold to publish—on July 5, when the exhumations were extensively covered in progressive media—an article on the discovery of *homo erectus* skulls in Dmanisi, Georgia. The article, which displays photos of the skulls at different angles, must have

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<sup>18</sup> These events have been covered here in the States by National Public Radio in December 2002 and the New York Times in the article “Spaniards at Last Confront the Ghost of Franco” published on November 11, 2002: A3.



had the intention of either deviating the attention of the public from the images of skulls of the Bierzo common grave, or perversely attempting to make the reader associate the skulls of the victims of fascism with those of the *homo erectus*, which, incidentally, as the article points out conspicuously, did not have as big a brain as *homo sapiens*.

The United Nations is helping the Association for the Recuperation of Historical Memory achieve its goal of uncovering the graves, but its jurisdiction is restricted to those cases of atrocities after 1945 when this entity was founded. Though the governing Partido Popular finally condemned the Franco dictatorship last November, 2002, it has rejected a proposal from the opposition to allocate a million euros to the uncovering of the graves. However, the Partido Popular gives generous economic support to a foundation managed by the Franco family, which—as Scilino and Daly affirm in “Spaniards at Last Confront the Ghost of Franco”—“is accused of restricting the access of historians to some 27,000 public and private documents” (A3). These examples of the right’s disinterest in facing the past show that Spain is far from overcoming its political divisions, and that fascist ideology has not yet been surmounted. In Galiza the president of the Autonomous Community, Manuel Fraga, not only continues to be an outspoken admirer of Franco, but also wrote an epilogue of acclaim for the book La mentira histórica (1994), which denies

the Holocaust and Spain’s genocide in the Americas.<sup>19</sup>

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The artistic realm has constituted the bulwark of memory of the Civil War. Artists, movie producers and novelists have systematically disobeyed the pact of oblivion. Those who write Civil War novels seem to be realizing, as time passes, the vacuum that is opening up between, on the one hand, the witnesses who will soon be gone, and, on the other, the young generations who are alarmingly ignorant of their country's recent history of fascism. This is the idea that Dulce Chacón, who recently published the Civil War novel La voz dormida (2002), expresses in Sciolino and Daly's article. She is quoted as saying: "Perhaps my generation feels it must tell the story now because if we don't, our children will never hear it, and because those who remain to tell it are getting old and if we don't get their testimony now, we never will" (A3). As transmitters of this memory the Civil War novels offer praxis-oriented conceptual frameworks that can help the Galizan community transform its future. Indeed, the projects of these novels consist of representing history in a genealogical fashion, and also in an imaginative way that inevitably projects the forgotten and unorthodox fragments of history onto the present and into the future.

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<sup>19</sup> I quote from Fraga's epilogue the third paragraph, part of the fourth, and last paragraph: "No se ha aprovechado el 500 aniversario y la Exposición de Sevilla para hacer una gran reflexión colectiva sobre todo ello. Ha sido una nueva ocasión perdida. Por ello, hay que agradecer y felicitar a los que sí están dispuestos a hacer su propia reflexión, como el autor de este libro. . . . Los juicios sobre el pasado han de ser esperanzas de futuro, y autocríticas para mejorarlo. Creo en el futuro del mundo hispánico, no en un futuro utópico, sino realista, en este valle de lágrimas. . . . Nos une el cristianismo, una gran lengua universal, un sentido profundamente humano de la vida. Por supuesto hemos de aprender de todos, pero ha pasado la hora de los complejos. En la era de la postmodernidad podemos enlazar mejor que otros con los nuevos tiempos" (591). For interesting critiques of this book and Fraga's epilogue see Gustavo Luca, "Fraga felicita," 5; González Gómez, "Fraga, Beceiro," 6; and Núñez Seixas, "O Holocausto," 46-53.

The pact of oblivion was designed to suppress memory of the war and Franco regime, but also inherent in this pact was forgetting the Republic. In accepting equal guilt, the representatives of the left were, in fact, admitting that this political system was defective and, in part, responsible for the Civil War. That is why the crafters of the constitution in 1977 avoided almost superstitiously copying anything from the previous Republican constitution; and that explains why, though many of the fascist names and symbols of Franco's regime have been gradually removed (though not all by any means), the Republican ones have not been put back into place. Where is the Plaza de Azaña in Madrid or in any other city? The pact of oblivion has erased any commemoration of this key Republican figure. There also exists an amnesia vis-a-vis Galiza's democratic political role on the Spanish national level during the Second Republic (a role that this community has drastically lost in the present) with two strong leftist parties (Izquierda Republicana and Partido Galeguista), and prominent figures such as Casares Quiroga (the most prominent representative of IR), Castelao (of PG), or centrist figures like Portela Valladares. Furthermore, of the three peripheral historical nations, Galiza is today the only one with the double anomaly of, on the one hand, not having a center-right nationalist party, and, on the other hand, never having had a nationalist formation in power.

Some of the Civil War novels, apart from recounting the fascist atrocities, contradict the imposed fallacy of the defective Republic and depict this political system as the most progressive moment in Spain's history. In the case of the Galizan novels,

they strive to debunk the official discourse, which claims that never has Galiza lived as peaceful and progressive a moment as now. Indeed, the Partido Popular in Galiza presents itself as having delivered this nation from its past hardships through modernization. For example, just before the last Community elections in November, 2002, the government-controlled newspaper, El Correo Gallego, published two pro-PP articles on the *opinión* page. The first one is titled “Ningún tiempo fue mejor” and the other one is written by president Manuel Fraga. In this article Fraga praises his community for having overcome the primitiveness of its past history, as if the past were all one amalgam of backwardness.<sup>20</sup>

The Civil War novels I analyze in this study—and especially Pensa nao by Anxo Angueira and Amor de tango by Maria Xosé Queizán—strive to reveal this fallacy of “there never was a better time than now.” These two docu-fictions dedicate most of their text to depicting the democratic achievements of the Republic with its social and political effervescence, and they portray the arrival of fascism not only as the destruction of people, but also of a system, which, despite its defects, provided the foundation for an egalitarian and democratic society. They attempt to show that the years of the Republic were, in many respects, more progressive than present society. In Pensa nao, for

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<sup>20</sup> He declares at the beginning of the article: “[P]ara os que coñecemos-la Galicia da primeira metade do século XX non resulta difícil apreciar los cambios a esgalla que viviu esta terra, que agora encdara con ilusión unha etapa apaixonante.” Towards the end he is as bold to proclaim: “Galicia ten unha lingua, unha historia e unha cultura de seu, e acadou o máis elevado volume de autogoberno que ningún devanceiro foi quen de imaxinar. Recuperámo-la fachenda que nunca se debería ter perdido e dispoñemos de instrumentos cos que crea-las condicións máis favorables para afronta-lo futuro.” He then ends by affirming that the bases for this progress are already set in place: “Os alicerces sobre os que se edificará esa puxante realidade están xa construídos” (3).

example, the author—who used recent historical research on the rural community during the Republic—describes through his third person narrator the technological and agricultural advances that Galiza was undergoing. The novel portrays a society that is opening up to the world and embracing progress. The fascist takeover is then described as reversing all of these technological and democratic achievements. Amor de tango, which presents the progress of the Republic from an urban point of view, offers a feminist perspective by depicting the hardships of working women in a patriarchal society. By presenting the lost Republic as a valuable conceptual framework for recovering in the present, these two novels create an additional praxis for Galiza's political present and future. Especially with Angueira's novel, the reader is left with the idea that the Galizan community has the potential to be self-sustaining and autonomous from Spain. The idea of rebuilding the Galizan nation by using the lost Republic as a utopian concept becomes, at least in appearance, a possible reality.

Last June when the uncovering of the common grave in the Bierzo shattered the silence imposed by the pact of oblivion, I believe that the Civil War novelists saw their collective dream begin to materialize: their written memory was finally overflowing into the public sphere in literal images of skulls and skeletons. The exhuming of history through words and concepts is now taking place in physical actions that reach those who do not read. But reading is the essential key for learning about democratic successes of the Republic and the horrors of Francoism; and novels allow the readers to experience the past vicariously and enter in the realm of emotions, which is seemingly absent in the

historical text. The Civil War novels act, one could argue, as time machines for travelling to a historical period, which the powers that be have tried to sweep under the rug. Perhaps the recent uncovering of the graves will incite larger proportions of the population to read, especially the younger generations.

### **Galizan Civil War Novels Written in Spanish**

As was stated in the introduction, this study analyzes the Galizan Civil War novels (with a special focus on four of them) written in Galizan, as opposed to Spanish. Part of my interest in those written in Galizan stems from my appreciation of this language (with its obviously essential role in the re-building of this nation), and its capacity to act as the linguistic medium for transmitting the memory of the Civil War. Whether or not the Civil War novels written in Spanish (or any other literary creation written in this language by a Galizan) should be considered a part of Galizan literature constitutes a complex polemic which I will not explore in this analysis. Recently, Silvia Carballido of the Universidade de Lugo published a study on the Civil War novels written in Spanish by Galizans titled Novela en pé de guerra: A guerra civil vista polos novelistas galegos en castelán (2001). Her mentor, Claudio Rodríguez Fer, who has written a substantial amount on the literary production in Galiza during the war, wrote the prologue for Carballido's book.<sup>21</sup> In it he does not take a stance in the polemic of

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<sup>21</sup> Apart from several articles, the most extensive study is found in his book A literatura galega durante a guerra civil. (1994).

whether these novels should be considered Galician or Spanish, but he does nonetheless firmly justify the historical and ethical necessity for analyzing them:

Unha vez adoptado o criterio histórico de considerar a literatura en relación cun fenómeno como a guerra civil, debemos ter a coherencia e a xenerosidade de considerar todo a literatura escrita por galegos—en Galicia ou fóra de Galicia—á marxe de calquera prexuízo fundamentado na exclusión ou na segregación. E isto tanto por razón da esixencia científica como da xustiza histórica, pois sería absurdo que por considerar como lle corresponde unha produción galega que foi reprimida con intolerancia imperialista e desestimada con desinterese etnocéntrico desprezásemos unha produción castelá desatendida por impura polo integrista galego e esquecida como periférica polos canons centralistas españois. Esa terra de ningún, non reivindicada por ningún poder nin por ningún contrapoder, dos escritores absolutamente periféricos, que non están no centro de ningún sistema, non pode nin debe ser unha terra maldita ou tabú para o investigador e moito menos para o investigador que parte da historia para achegarse aos feitos literarios. Porque se lamentable foi que durante anos non se puidese tratar ou, polo menos, non se tratase, dos escritores en galego nos medios oficiais do centralismo establecido, tamén o é que non se poida exhumar a obra en castelán de escritores galegos polo feito de non estar en galego. (7-8)

Carballido's analysis covers those novels whose authors offered more or less direct testimonies of the events. She furthermore classifies the authors into what she has discerned as two distinct groups: First, those who lived the war as adults and had had previous literary experience (namely, Francisco Camba, Wenceslao Fernández Flórez, Salvador de Madariaga and Julio Sesto). She also analyzes the novel that Franco himself wrote titled Raza (1942) and published under the pseudonym Jaime de Andrade. In the second group she includes those authors who were born around 1910 and who, because of their young age, did not have former literary experience and, hence, began their literary career after (and to a much lesser extent, during) the war. Some of these authors are Concha Castroviejo, Camilo José Cela, Eugenio Granell and Gonzalo Torrente Ballester.

The novels written on the war in Spanish date, for the most part, to the pre-democratic period, while most of those in Galizian have appeared since the death of the dictator. The total number to date of novels written in Spanish by Galizian authors is twenty-eight,<sup>22</sup> while in Galizian thirty-three all together have been produced. From 1980 until the present only five novels written by Galizian authors in Spanish have come out, while twenty-seven in Galizian have been published (the last one, by Conde, appeared in 2002).<sup>23</sup> The initiative for writing on the war and the popular demand for this subgenre

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<sup>22</sup> The last Civil War novel by a Galizian written in Spanish—La cruz de San Andrés by Camilo José Cela—was published in 1994.

<sup>23</sup> To access a complete bibliography of Civil War novels by Galizans written in Spanish, see Carballido 143-45. For a complete and chronological bibliography on the Civil War novels written in Galizian, see Appendix.



have become more and more intertwined with Galizan ethnosensitivity, a phenomenon that is inevitably connected to the precarious situation of Galizan because of the fascist regime that repressed the use of this language. In the next section I explain the peculiar phenomena of Galizan literature that derive from the diglossic situation in which Galizan is the weaker of the two languages in conflict. These phenomena inevitably affect the production and consumption of the Civil War novels written in Galizan.

### **Symbolic Resistance and Galizan Literature's Path To Autonomy**

Since its rebirth in 1863 when Rosalia de Castro published her Cantares gallegos, Galizan literature has functioned more heteronomously than literatures of consolidated nation states because of its inescapable role in affirming the legitimacy of the Galizan language and nation. Writers and readers of Galiza are inevitably conditioned by a consciousness of belonging to a marginalized culture whose history and identity have been expropriated. If in the rest of Spain Civil War novels act as counter-discourses to the official versions, in Galiza (as well as in the other national communities of the periphery) these novels perform an additional function that is absent from the Spanish novels. Given the situation of diglossia in which Spanish is the dominant language and culture, practically any Galizan novel that recounts events of the past does so in a way that also uses the past in terms of a negative imagination, which, in González-Milláns' words, projects "unha diferenca imaxinada como fórmula vicaria para a recuperación do protagonismo na constitución e reprodución da semiose social" (Silencio 54).

Literature has acted, according to González-Millán, as a privileged social space for the production and reproduction of Galizan ethnosemiosis, and, thus, has played a fundamental role in forging a national conscience, which determines significantly:

[A] formulación dunha resistencia simbólica que atopa no discurso literario a mellor representación da súa irrealidade histórica. E explica ao mesmo tempo a difícil configuración discursiva da apropiación da razón histórica galega que, dende o Rexurdimento e sobre todo coa Xeración Nós, se converteu nun dos *leitmotifs* da nosa historia literaria. (Silencio 16)

During the *Rexurdimento* and the *Xeración Nós*,<sup>24</sup> producing literary texts written in Galizan constituted political position takings, which were heterodox within the Spanish political field. These texts articulated, almost invariably, forms of symbolic resistance either through verisimilar representations that showed the injustices of Spanish centralism or through fantastic and mythical worlds, which expressed utopian desires for the recuperation of Galiza's golden medieval ages or its Celtic origins. Galizan literature has been obligated, in González-Millán's words, to "narrar o inenarrable, e a historiar imaxinariamente os espazos sociais reducidos ao silencio pola cultura oficial" (Silencio 64).

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<sup>24</sup> The *Rexurdimento* is considered to have taken place between 1863 and 1874. It constituted the artistic manifestation of the *Provincialismo* movement, which began in 1846 when General Solís, a Galizan nationalist, carried out a *pronunciamento* in Lugo. The *provincialistas* objected to the dividing up of Galiza into four provinces and defended the Roman concept of province, which considered the whole area of Galiza as one province. The *Xeración Nós* began in 1923 and ended with Galiza's fall to Franco.

The political freedom and the institutionalization of the Galician language achieved through the Republic set in motion what could have led to the eventual autonomy of the Galician literary field, but the victory of fascism stymied this process. During the Francoist dictatorship Galician literature was limited to carrying out the political functions it had realized since the mid-nineteenth century, and production and consumption were reduced to a small sector of nationalist intellectuals, who canonized only those texts that produced a poetics of resistance. With the death of Franco and subsequent fall of the dictatorial regime, the Galician literary system began its difficult (and still incomplete) journey towards autonomy. Literary production after 1975 began to free itself from the thematic and ideological restraints exercised by nationalist sectors mostly affiliated with *A Unión do Pobo Galego*, a party which integrated into the *Bloque Nacionalista Galego* in 1982.<sup>25</sup> González-Millán encapsulates this evolving process from complete heteronomy to more autonomy in this concise phrase: “[F]álase cada vez menos de literatura ‘galega’ e máis de ‘literatura’ galega” (*Silencio* 13). He refers to the ideological mode of writing literature, along with the reductionist reading of it, as *nacionalismo literario*, while he terms the more autonomous way of writing and reading the literary text as *literatura nacional*.<sup>26</sup> This new literary production, which is less

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<sup>25</sup> The *Nova Narrativa* of the 1960's, explains González-Millán, represented a possible path of renovation in the Galician literary corpus, but the different collectives (authors, critics, publishing business, readers, etc.) “carecían da articulación institucional capaz de transformar nun campo social autónomo o conxunto das prácticas relativas ao fenómeno literario. Esta conquista . . . faríase posible . . . unha vez recuperadas as liberdades sociais e políticas” (*A narrativa* 45).

<sup>26</sup> “Esta tensión entre unha consagración autónoma e unha lexitimación heterónoma tradúcese, no caso de literaturas como a galega, na dificultade de dar o paso do nacionalismo literario a unha literatura nacional” (*A narrativa* 28).

subjected to social-political parameters and to the task of reproducing the imaginary reserve of *galeguismo*, has generated a variety of other subgenres (the detective novel, intimate poetry, science fiction, etc.), as well as other less verisimilar forms of representation. Galizan literature since the death of the dictator has become more national because it does not have to constantly affirm its own existence.<sup>27</sup>

The persistant influence of *nacionalismo literario* does, nonetheless, continue to hinder the autonomy of Galizan literature. For example, Francisco Rodríguez, who is one of the three Bloque Nacionalista Galego (BNG) *deputados* in Madrid, wrote in his Literatura galega contemporánea (1990): “Do ponto de vista dos contidos—aproximación ao real sociolóxico—e do ponto de vista das formas—intelixibilidade, pensamento e sentimento, como expresión determinante—, o realismo é o grande momento da cultura literaria galega e tamén o elo caracterizador” (20). González-Millán describes the perception of nationalists, who, such as Rodríguez, view non-committed forms of writing as treason to the Galizan cause,<sup>28</sup> and argues that these militant positions comprise (“paradoxically” in his words) an obstacle to the Galizan literary field’s autonomy:

A oposición a determinadas fórmulas literarias, pola súa suposta  
“inoperancia” reivindicativa e contestataria, e o rexeitamento a

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<sup>27</sup> As Luis Gauvin affirms: “Une littérature nationale devient nationale lorsque précisément elle cesse de se poser le problème de son existence” (qtd. in Vilavedra, Sobre narrativa, 27-28).

<sup>28</sup> “[O] abandono de determinados mundos imaxinarios (tradicionalmente asociados coas reivindicacións do nacionalismo galego) é interpretado nalgúns círculos críticos como unha traición á identidade nacional da que o fenómeno literario fora durante moito tempo un discurso privilexiado” (A narrativa 44).

instrumentalizar o galego para configurar mundos simbólicos cada vez máis diversos e distantes do “real sociolóxico,” paradoxalmente engade un obstáculo máis á recuperación e lexitimación social da lingua e á institucionalización do sistema literario e do espacio discursivo que o sostén. (Literatura 31-31)

These stances that continue to demand that Galizan literature be in the service of the Galizan nationalist movement(s) will exist, affirms Figueroa, as long as this community does not reach full normalization of its language and culture.<sup>29</sup>

The renovation of the Galizan literary corpus, which became especially manifest after 1975, stemmed from the political, social and cultural dynamics that began to take place in the new system of parliamentary democracy. The social and political legitimization of the Galizan language allowed the Galizan literary text to enter spaces that had previously been off-limits, and the agents involved in the literary processes multiplied. Publishing houses and bookstores specialized in Galizan books became more numerous and consolidated, professional organizations of writers were founded, magazines specialized in literature appeared and official subsidies were granted to writers and publishing houses. The intervention of literary criticism, especially in the university system, also helped consecrate the literary phenomenon and prizes and contests contributed decisively to its social legitimization: “[O]s premios e certames convértense

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<sup>29</sup> “Algo que me parece patente é que non se pode en realidade pensar nunha autonomía plena do campo literario en relación co campo político galego sen que este á súa vez dispoña de autonomía real” (Nación 116).

nunha peza fundamental da nova lóxica do fenómeno literario galego, pola súa triple condición de instrumento de comercialización, de canonización estética dos textos e de lexitimación social do sistema literario mesmo” (González Millán, “A reconfiguración” 24).

Doubtless one of the main factors involved in the consecration of Galizan literature comprised its entrance into primary and secondary education, as well as into the university system. The educational system, as González-Millán states, has had profound consequences “non só para o sector da recepción senón tamén para o da produción mesma” (*A narrativa* 33). Indeed, the teaching of Galizan literature in schools has caused, on the one hand, “unha crecente correlación entre a configuración do currículo e a canonización de determinados textos” (*A narrativa* 33), and, on the other, “un efecto multiplicador nas tiraxes medias dos textos seleccionados como libros de consulta e lectura” (*Literatura* 79). A high percentage of writers are themselves teachers of Galizan language and literature, and frequently these writers act as literary critics, as members of juries for literary prizes and/or as advisors of publishing houses (*Literatura* 52).<sup>30</sup> Of the four novels I analyze in this dissertation, three of the authors come from the educational sphere: Angueira and Queizán are high school teachers and Carvalho Calero was a university professor.

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<sup>30</sup> This inter-dependency between the agents of the literary field and the institutions that legitimize the literary practices often results, according to González-Millán, in the “vivencia dunha ambigüidade entre a vocación anti-institucional do escritor como individuo e a súa actitude corporativa” (*Literatura* 52).

The evolution from *nacionalismo literario* to *literatura nacional* constitutes, as I mentioned above, a process that is still in progress. The path of gaining autonomy must not be seen as perfect and complete, for *nacionalismo literario* still characterizes a substantial amount of Galizan literary production, and some form of a resistance repertoire will continue to exist as long as this Autonomous Community's native language and culture do not achieve the normality required for the consolidation of a Galizan nation. That is why Antón Figuerola points out in Nación, literatura, identidade (2001) that González-Millán's concepts of *nacionalismo literario* and *literatura nacional* must not make the reader think "en estadios prácticos absolutamente distintos, totalmente excluíntes; non debe impulsalo tampouco a simplificar e clasificar os autores ou as obras sen máis nun estadio ou noutro" (103). The concepts, according to this scholar, are useful as historical indicators of the general evolution that aesthetic texts in Galiza have undergone, but they become slippery and deceptive when applied mechanically to any given work. To serve as effective indicators, they need to be viewed as transchronological.

Indeed, though the post-Franco regime has opened many doors for the legitimization and institutionalization of Galizan literature, the political forces that have governed Galiza since the first elections in 1977 have not taken the necessary measures to normalize the linguistic situation. Bieito Alonso argues that had it not been for the Basque and Catalanian nationalists, Galiza would have been left as a simple region: "[A] incorporación de Galicia á categoría de "nacionalidade histórica" debeuse en moita maior

medida á presión exercida polos nacionalismos vasco e catalán na defensa dos seus intereses nacionais que ao labor realizado polos representantes galegos en tal proceso” (278). In comparison to the situation of Galizan literature during the dictatorship, the scenario has improved insofar as the number of writers and readership has increased substantially and the repertoires have expanded beyond the nationalist poetics of resistance; but Spanish continues to be the dominant language while the Galizan language and literature are far from reaching a consolidated and normalized stage.<sup>31</sup>

Figuerola also points out that the path to autonomy for Galizan literature depends not only on its moving beyond the parameters imposed by the nationalist sectors, but also on freeing itself from constraints that originate from outside of Galiza. He explains that when González-Millán describes the progressive autonomy of Galizan literature, he refers to the “autonomización en relación con postulados políticos que viñan—e veñen—dados pola estreita participación da literatura na construción política do país e que supuñan unha intromisión daqueles nas normas literarias” (49-50). But this heteronomy, contends Figuerola, is not the only one possible even if in the Galizan field it was the most visible:

Creo que se pode dicir que a esta subordinación ou heteronomía que vén do propio campo nacional fóronse engadindo outras (con intereses

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<sup>31</sup> Luís Martul explains the Galizan government’s role in promoting this community’s language and culture in these terms: “Ponen en práctica . . . una actividad artificial de concesión de premios y realización de actos con declaraciones al sentimiento de galleguidad, con el objetivo de crear la ficción de que la cultura está en una condición no amenazada. En realidad, no existe un mínimo proyecto sistemático de resistencia por parte de las autoridades” (190-91).



distintos) como poden ser o poder autonómico que impón determinados criterios a cambio do seu mecenado, os criterios económicos externos, as razóns de prestixio da literatura ou da arte galega, que tamén imponen os seus pareceres e teñen as súas consecuencias: a necesidade de prestixio externo impón tamén razóns internas que condicionan a evolución autónoma do campo. (Nación 50)

Hence, Figueroa adds an essential component to González-Millán's conceptual framework of autonomy by eliciting the factor of external prestige, which originates, naturally, from the Spanish literary field.

Novelist Suso de Toro, one of the main writers who has spearheaded the renovation process of the Galizan literary corpus, explained more in depth what these external factors constitute. I quote a passage from my personal communication with him in which he first speaks of the *nacionalismo literario* canon against which he fought, and then the new canon, which, stationed in Madrid, exercises its influence through the media:

Nos últimos anos fun introducindo en textos, entrevistas, o asunto de quen establecía o canon na literatura galega. Porque no comezo dos oitenta, cando empezo a escribir, o canon establecíase dentro da Galiza; era un canon literario perverso, pois partía de ideoloxemas, de doutrinarismos e de complicidades faccionais. Ese canon era o dunha literatura de resistencia, anana, encerrada, e era construído por un mudiño reducido de

profesores nacionalistas, militantes do galeguismo en xeral. Sen embargo desde o principio dos noventa hai outro canon alternativo creado desde os medios de comunicación, e estes teñen unha estrutura de poder ideolóxico o centro da cal é Madrid. E aínda mais, o centro verdadeiro é o xornal El País e o grupo de comunicación e edición *Prisa*.<sup>32</sup>

*Prisa*, as De Toro mentions in the last sentence, is a multi-national media conglomerate, which exercises an enormous influence on the canonization of authors throughout the Spanish State. The effect that this element has on Galizan writers could be described as a boomerang effect given that the consecration they receive from Madrid boosts their consecration within the Galizan literary field. Indeed, De Toro, who after Manuel Rivas is the most widely published writer in Galizan, has obtained his success and prestige, to a considerable extent, through the translations of his novels into Spanish, as well as through the Spanish criticism published on these translations. Like De Toro, but much more so, Manuel Rivas has benefited immensely from the *Prisa* canon. When I analyze Rivas' Civil War novel in chapter five, I explore more in depth this question of *Prisa*'s influence on the Galizan literary system. For the rest of this chapter, I continue explaining other specific phenomena of Galizan literature and evolutions that accompanied the transition from *nacionalismo literario* to *literatura nacional*.

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<sup>32</sup> Suso de Toro, e-mail to the author, Apr. 9, 2003.

### **From Lyricism To Novels and From Allegorical Novels to Historical Novels**

Galizan poetry has historically occupied the throne in the hierarchy of literary genres. But beginning in the 1970's, narrative fiction gained prominence, because of what González-Millán perceives to be a tension, on the one hand, between "formas discursivas monolóxicas e dialóxicas," and, on the other hand, between "unha codificación mítica (condicionada poéticamente) e unha proposta discursiva capaz de codificar a heteroxeneidade" (*Silencio* 46). During the Franco era, poets insistently created totalizing and mythical images that allowed the reader, in many cases, to vicariously experience a more palatable reality than that in which s/he lived. Francisco Rodríguez contends that lyricism constituted the ideal medium for shattering the deterministic stereotypes imposed by the centralist power:

Nesta loita individual do escritor por abranxer a realidade, con dialécticas e perspectivas diferentes, existe un certo esnaquizamento dos estereotipos provocados pola españolización. A verdade hai que percurá-la detrás das apariencias. Loxicamente, nunha situación así, o xénero lírico ten que ser preponderante, pois os estereotipos escomenzan por ser discutidos en franxas pequenas e contraditoriamente situadas da sociedade. (13)

But by the time the dictatorship collapsed, the rapidly transforming Galizan society presented new complexities that confronted the writer with the need for more heterological spaces and heuristic possibilities, which narrative fiction, and especially novels, could afford more effectively than poetry. Novelistic production has continued to

increase, and today the number of novels produced per year is approaching that of poetic creations.<sup>33</sup>

The other fundamental reason behind the rise of the Galizan novel consists of the transformation of Galizan literature into a consumerist industry. González-Millán claims that in the 1980s the novel became the “fórmula literaria máis rendible e [o] xénero privilexiado polos editores” (Literatura 95). Furthermore, the preference for the novel on part of the publishing houses does not signify, argues González-Millán, that:

este xénero estea nun momento de especial esplendor; máis ben habería que concluír que as leis do mercado están transformando a situación na que ata hai pouco se movía o libro galego, un mundo no que os criterios de rendibilidade económica pesaban moi pouco, ou eran practicamente inoperantes, á hora de decidir a publicación dun manuscrito determinado. (Literatura 100).

The decrease in poetic production and increase of novelistic production seems to occur not only in Galiza, but throughout Spain as well.<sup>34</sup>

The distinction between poetry and narrative fiction might not appear as evident in Galizan literature as it does in literatures of consolidated nation states. This is what González-Millán argues in Silencio while analyzing the allegorical novels of the 1980s:

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<sup>33</sup> El Correo Gallego/O Correo Galego online declared that “(a) narrativa parece que está soportando mellor ca poesía os vaivéns do mercado editorial galego.” 29 novels were published in 2000, according to the article, and, in poetry, 68 titles were published in 2000. (“A novela incrementa lixeiramente o seu volume,” Apr. 2, 2002).

<sup>34</sup> For an explanation on this phenomenon in the rest of the Spanish State see González-Millán, Literatura 97-100.

Aínda que máis estabilizadas as relacións interxenéricas, o espacio literario galego actual amosa aínda a tensión discursiva entre poesía e narrativa que reflexa unha dobre preocupación inscrita nas novelas: por un lado, a necesidade de universalizar a experiencia colectiva galega, como única fórmula redefinidora das posiblidades de resistencia e supervivencia; por outro lado, a esixencia, nacida da experiencia de marxinalidade, de representar dende múltiples perspectivas de codificación antidiscursiva a inestabilidade e as contradicións da realidade histórica galega. (Silencio 47)

Hence, according to this scholar, the blurring between the two genres is due to Galiza's marginal and pre-national status in which novelists feel the need to create epic worlds in their fictions. This explains why, in González-Millán's view, Galizan novels, especially since the 1970's, have frequently hosted a confluence of narration and poetry. The above quote refers to the Galizan allegorical novels of the 1980s (which I explain more in depth shortly), but this interpenetration of prose and poetry is apparent elsewhere in Galizan narrative fiction, including some of the Civil War novels. The non-normalized status of the Galizan language, connected to the still precarious state of survival of the Galizan nation, appear to constitute the causes behind this inter-generic phenomenon. On the one hand, writers see the need to represent the complexities of their world in a heterological fashion, and, on the other, they still feel the impulse to resort to images created in poetry, into which they condense ideas of an alternative nation.

Anxo Angueira's novel Pensa nao (the first of the four case studies in this dissertation) constitutes the best example of this ambiguity between poetry and narrative fiction. He admits to this in published interviews, where he alludes directly to the mixing of the genres. In A Nosa Terra he admits: "A narrativa volveu á poesía galega actual e tamén a narrativa en moitos autores se fixo lírica."<sup>35</sup> In Faro de Vigo he declares: "[N]on creo que haxa unha separación tallante entre poesía e prosa . . . *Pensa nao* é unha historia de certa envergadura que necesitaba un formato distinto ó que se entende por poesía, por iso me metín nesta primeira novela."<sup>36</sup> The author, thus, finds in narrative fiction the most apt model for aestheticizing the experience of the Civil War, but, simultaneously, he allows himself to lyricize to a considerable extent his prose, because of what seems to be his desire to create tropes and symbolisms that express an alternative Galiza.<sup>37</sup> This use of poetry as a channel for generating totalizing and mythical images of a non-existent and utopian form of society<sup>38</sup> appears also, as was mentioned above, in the Galizan allegorical novels.

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<sup>35</sup> Interview with Carme Vidal (24)

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Sandra Penelas (3).

<sup>37</sup> Original in this author's novel writing is the way in which he masquerades verses into his prose from Galizan poets, who date back as far as Rosalía de Castro. These verses, hidden within the prose, become cryptic and only detectable by the "leitor/a entendido/a."

<sup>38</sup> Manuel Rivas also refers to this mixture of poetry and narrative fiction in his interview with Eugenio Pontón: "En el fondo, creo que nunca me cuestioné la separación radical de géneros. La poesía no es para mí un formato, sino que tiene mucho que ver con el espíritu con que se mira la vida . . . me interesan sobre todo aquellos escritores en los que se produce un encuentro milagroso entre la pura narrativa y la narrativa poética, que en Galicia está muy presente. Cunqueiro, ¿cuándo deja de ser poeta? ¿Es menos poeta cuando escribe sus cuentos?" (7).

The first half of the 1980's gave rise to four novels that have the common characteristic of depicting utopian and unreal worlds, which invite the reader to imagine a Galiza different from the real one.<sup>39</sup> These novels retain remnants of *nacionalismo literario* insofar as they uphold a poetics of resistance; they constitute an ethnopoeitics, which consists of an instrumental way of writing that strives to arouse in the reading community the sense of its difference within the society to which it belongs (in this case, Galiza within Spain). But, at the same time, these narratives question, in a less dogmatic and Manichean fashion than the narratives representative of the *nacionalismo literario* repertoire, the complex and unstable Galizan reality. They break with verisimilar modes of representation and indulge in polyphonic discourses.

The consciousness of the inexistence, and hence irrepresentability, of a stable Galizan nation constitutes the main factor that spurred the novelists of these allegorical narratives to produce fictions representing, in microcosmic imaginaries, the totality of Galizan reality. In this encyclopedic endeavor, the authors act as demiurges, whose purpose is to craft alternative realities, and the texts they produce serve as foundational imaginations of a new and more consolidated community. This demiurgic desire on behalf of the authors—which they translate into allegorical type imaginaries—dates as far back as to the foundational texts of the *Rexurdimento*, and to Vicente Risco's and Otero Pedrayo's novels (of *A Xeración Nós*), and is also manifest in the *Nova Narrativa* of the

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<sup>39</sup> These novels are *A vila sulagada* (1981) by Daniel Cortezón, *O triángulo inscrito na circunferencia* (1982), *Beiramar* (1983) by Martínez Oca, and *Xa vai o Griffón no vento* (1984) by Alfredo Conde.

1960's. The novelists embroider fantastic worlds out of the threads of their frustration of belonging to a community that is poorly articulated on all levels.

The Civil War novels, though present in the early 1980s alongside the allegorical novels, began to replace the demand for them, and by the 1990s they have become, along with novels that deal with the Francoist period, probably the most widely read subgenre in Galizan narrative fiction. But, as is the case with all delimitations of historical processes, the transition from the successful allegorical fictions to the historical ones must not be seen in rigid terms, but rather as a gradual and never perfect or complete shifting. In fact, we should conceive of these different subgenres as transchronological, recalling Figueroa's view of *nacionalismo literario* and *literatura nacional*. Indeed today, though the Civil War enjoys the limelight in narrative sales, allegorical fictions continue to emerge: for instance, those that the Ourensean novelist Xosé Luís Caneiro has produced in the last decade, his most famous one being *Évora* (2000).

This shift of demand in the second half of the 1980s to the verisimilar depictions of the historical novels does not imply a relapse into the thematics of *nacionalismo literario* because the counter-discourses of these novels do not overly dwell on Spain's subjugation of Galiza; they do not dramatize (exclusively, at least) the relation of domination in which Spain is the colonizer of Galiza. The stories of the Civil War novels—that are rescued from the silenced reality of history—seem to offer, more than the allegorical narratives, an effective praxis for constructing a Galizan future. They help



(re)invent the Galizian nation through the massive trauma that has yet to be reckoned with.

As I stated earlier, since 1980 the production of Galizian Civil War novels written in Galizian outnumbers that written in Spanish by Galizians twenty-seven to five. Confronting this historical crux by using the Galizian language, as opposed to Spanish, underscores the intention of recuperating Galizian identity, as well as memory of the Civil War. Identity and the memory of the war seem intertwined in an inseparable project for democratizing the future and removing the remnants of reactionary elements that continue to paralyze the community. As long as the Galizian language remains in a non-normalized state, literary production from this community will continue to contain an element of political commitment regardless of whether this element is intended by the author. In the final section of this chapter I examine some of the specific diglossic phenomena that hinder the signifying potential of the Galizian literary text. These phenomena exist because of the current social-political status and will disappear only when the social-political context assures the survival and normality of the Galizian language and culture.

### **The Aesthetic Text In Diglossia—The Temptation of Fetishism**

In Diglossia e texto (1988) Figueroa analyzes the functioning of the Galizian language as an aesthetic praxis. He explains that in a social-cultural situation like that of Galiza in which the language of the community is subjected to a process that leads to its disappearance “os textos estéticos que se producen no interior desa dinámica vense

afectados por unha serie de condicionamentos que tamén conducen á súa desaparición como tales textos, ou, o que é o mesmo, á súa in-significancia dentro do seu ámbito social natural” (18). In diglossic situations the mere use of the linguistic code ineluctably involves a consciousness which conveys a meaning independently of what is said. This permanent militant and ideological supplementary meaning interferes in the normal functioning of the aesthetic text and makes it less productive of meanings. The Galizan literary work, therefore, “será así unha *opera* menos *aperta* poderíamos dicir, utilizando a coñecida terminoloxía de U. Eco, e as posibilidades evocativas do texto veranse reducidas e interferidas por unha especie de sentido constante que actúa coma unha perpetua neurose obsesiva na relación literaria, neurose de lectura e de escritura” (25). In the reading of Galizan literary texts there exists, to use a Bakhtinian expression, a lack of noise in the interpretative process.

The consciousness of belonging to a threatened community fomenta a collective cohesion that manifests itself, vis-a-vis the literary text, in what Figueroa terms “lecturas de grupo”: “A precariedade sociocultural da situación fai que se tenda a escribir e a ler dende o interior do grupo e para el. Todo isto leva consigo un certo funcionamento antropoloxicamente “primitivo” que se manifestará no feito de que tódolos textos tenden a ser lidos en clave épica, é dicir, como textos de grupo” (54). Within this mentality readers tend to perceive of the literary text as a magical object that represents and reproduces repertoires and imaginaries that they expect to read. The literary text, therefore, neither innovates nor transgresses the reader’s apperceptive background but

rather recycles the received knowledge of the group with its ideology of resistance. I explore more in depth the nature and implications of “lecturas de grupo” in my analysis of Carvalho Calero’s Civil War novel Scórpio in chapter three.

Related to this group mentality, Figueroa also analyzes what he perceives as a fetishist mentality common in societies whose language and nationality teeter on a non-consolidated status. This mentality originates from the peoples’ awareness of the precariousness of their literature (language, culture, etc.) and prompts them to collect books as if they were museum artifacts. Despite most likely not reading the books, the person who collects them feels, nonetheless, that he s/he is saving Galizan literature; in reality, this person conceptualizes Galizan literature as something almost dead and whose only purpose is to represent the past as something sterile and incapable of producing new meanings. The consequences of this common mentality, instead of helping the situation of the Galizan aesthetic text in this situation of diglossia, actually contributes to its extinction. In Figueroa’s words:

Estamos nun país onde se “recollen” e “salvan” cantidade de fetiches, mentres a historia corre por outro lado. Parece que neste país todo o mundo se dedica a excavar para logo gardar; continuamente estamos asistindo á presentación de alfaías de todo tipo que “de non ser polo esforzo de X, se perderían para sempre . . .”. Nunha situación coma esta, iso é lóxico, e mesmo ás veces necesario. O mais grave de todo é que se pense que iso é o mellor e o único que se pode e debe facer. Cando a

excavación se converte na única posibilidade de cultura, o que en realidade se fai é enterra-las posibilidades que quedaban. (Diglosia 13)

Marcial Gondar, an anthropologist at the University de Compostela, also alludes, in several of his writings, to this fetishist or “archeological” attitude; but he analyzes the phenomenon more in relation to nationalism and Galiza’s folkways, and as a superstructural behavior (or imposition). In “A Unión Europea desde Galiza,” he criticizes the politics of both the Xunta and the EU and Council of Europe for giving lip service to their vow to help preserve the weaker and non-represented nations when, in reality, what they do is convert Galizanness into a mere “espectáculo de consumo” (157). UNESCO, he contends, is guilty of the same practice:

A propia UNESCO cando fala da “salvagarda” do patrimonio (“salvagarda” é salvar para *gardar*) non deixa de participar desa visión do pasado como algo que hai que *gardar* sinón en formol, si nas vitrinas dos museos, ao modo que os vellos de antes gardaban os aforros no calcetín ou no colchón na vez de investilos na construción do futuro. (157)

In other words, Gondar deals with the same concept that operates at different levels in a society that struggles to keep its nationality afloat.

Throughout my analyses of the four Civil War novels, I revisit these diglossia-related peculiarities. The novel I examine in the next chapter, Pensa nao by Anxo Angueira, is especially prone to interpretative distortions given that it is written in a variant of Galizan. Through making this dialect a legitimate literary voice, the novel

frames the Galizan rural community within a progressive and artistic context that goes against the deterministic versions fabricated by the Franco regime. The novel contributes to the creation of a praxis for rebuilding Galizan rural society, as well as a new Galizan nation.

## CHAPTER # 2

### **PENSA NAO: A REVISION OF THE GALIZAN RURAL COMMUNITY AND A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE**

Anxo Angueira Viturro was born in 1961 in the village Manselhe, which is located on the mouth of the Ulha river, just before the *Torres de Oeste* that look out to the *Ria de Arousa*, one of the *Rias Baixas* on the western Galizan coast. He became known through his poetry and his essays, and his first attempt at writing prose with his short stories in Bágoas de facer illas won him, in 1996, the *Premio Café Dublin*. His poetic works include Val de Ramirás published in 1989, and the epic O valo de Manselle in 1996. This last work acted as a seed of inspiration for his first (and thus far only) novel, Pensa nao (1999). Both the author's epic poem and his novel depict the spirit of the Galizan community's solidarity and the people's altruistic will to make the world a better place for everyone. Both works enact a symbiotic relation between writer and society.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> A very interesting project would be to analyze O valo de Manselle's concepts of rebuilding the decadent present as a *sine qua non* for paving the way for the future, as well as the poem's epic features. Initially I had planned on dedicating part of this chapter to such analysis, but the breath of the topic (which would entail having to explore the concept of epic in its traditional and its more modern adaptations) became too large. Though thematically different—O valo's five poems do not deal with the Republic or the Civil War, but rather describe the efforts of a present day village to rebuild its community—the epic language of the poem, as well as its themes of recuperating historical memory and presenting the Galizan rural community as dynamic, carry over to Pensa nao. Worthy of quoting is the dedicatory, which the author wrote in my copy of O valo: "O vale de Manselle é unha aberta pétrea, poderosa, feita coas mans xenerosas dos que procuran un mundo mellor desde a raíz."

Pensa nao achieved prominence in the Galizan literary domain thanks to winning, in 1999, the yearly *premio Xerais de novela*, considered the most prestigious of prizes awarded to novelists. The importance of winning this prize was expressed the day after in an article from El Correo Gallego: “O narrador e poeta Anxo Angueira conseguiu onte o Premio Xerais de Novela con Pensa nao que, automaticamente, o converte nunha das grandes promesas da narrativa galega para o vindeiro século” (“Unha revisión” 71).

From an economic standpoint, *Xerais* is the strongest Galizan publishing house, and it is also the one that publishes the most titles per year. Winning the *Xerais* novel prize, therefore, usually guarantees some form of success for authors because the house offers to publish their novels and provide the marketing muscle necessary for promoting it.<sup>41</sup>

Interestingly enough, the prize jury is composed not of professional readers (i.e., professors, writers, etc.), as is the case with the other relevant prizes, but rather of common readers from all ranks of society: “Só pedimos que sexan bos lectores,” remarks Celia Torres, the director of press and promotion in *Xerais*.<sup>42</sup> In nations of consolidated

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<sup>41</sup> To date, 2,351 copies of Pensa nao have been sold, which is not spectacular, especially in comparison to the two most sold Civil War novels: Manuel Rivas’ O lápis do carpinteiro has sold a little over 60,000 copies (in its original version written in Galizan) and Xosé Fernández Ferreiro’s Agosto do 36 has sold 13,000 copies. Both of these novels are also published through *Xerais*.

<sup>42</sup> Personal interview, July 27, 2002. One of the questions I asked Torres was how a beginning novelist goes about getting published. She responded that in *Xerais* they always tell the aspiring novelist to take part in a prize competition (be that of *Xerais*, the *Blanco Amor* prize or that of *Torrente Ballester*) because winning a prize comprises the best guarantee for the novelist’s future success. She then explained more in depth the way the jury is formed and how the decision-making process is carried out. I quote from the interview: John Thompson: “Como fazedes para unha pessoa nova que queira publicar?” Torres: “Se nom conocemos essa pessoa nova sempre lhes alentamos ao que tenhem que fazer é presentar-se aos prêmios literários: porque isso lhes dá um aval. Outra alternativa é que nos deixem um manuscrito. A novela nom tem que ganhar necessariamente; por exemplo, o ano passado falhamos o prêmio *Xerais* em Viveiro; o jurado dixo que merecia publicar, aparte da que ganhara, outra que non ganhara. Os nossos jurados nom som profissionais; o que pedimos é que sejam bos lectores; e isso dá frescura; gente que nom está sujeita a determinadas regras para premiar unha obra. Hai novelas que ganharon o prêmio *Xerais* que se cadra un jurado de profissionais nom tivesse premiado. E a gente nom repete dum ano para outro; em

languages, novel prizes would seemingly derive their prestige from the professional reputation of the readers involved in the decision making; but in Galiza, where fewer people read in Galizan than in Spanish, and the future of the Galizan language is uncertain, what seems to bestow prestige on a novelist is the amount of readership s/he can attract. (Manual Rivas' mass popularity and prestige, which I examine in chapter five, are testimony to this.)

In my analysis of Pensa nao I attempt to explain the novel's historical value and the praxis it suggests for the present and future. I begin by summarizing the novel's story and plot, and situating it within contemporary Galizan literary production. I then proceed to analyze the various elements (both content and style-oriented) that cause the novel to intervene in the present and provide a liberating conceptual framework for the future: first of all, the novel's historical re-examination, which the author based, to a large extent, on recent historical studies; second, the narrative's combination of realist and avant-garde styles, which, surprisingly, produce verisimilar impressions. In the following section I explore the narrative's use of the Galizan dialect of Dodro as the dominant voice in the novel (along with the narrator's testimonial authority and role in "transporting" the reader to Semanselle's micro-world). I briefly explain, as well, the narrative's insertion of different "languages" (or "socio-lects," i.e. jargon used in different professions, such

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cuestión de dous meses tenhem que ler entre vintecatro e trinta obras (vintecatro ou vintecinco é o habitual). Com dous meses de antelación deixamos-lhes os originais; eles preparan e unha semana antes de que se fale o premio, reúnem-se e deixan catro ou cinco finalistas que saen na prensa. E fazemos igual para o *Merlín* (here she refers to the prize for the best childrens' novel); hai tres nenos ou nenas e dous adultos. E funciona de marabilha. Essa gente toma-o como unha experiencia de vida, lem todas as obras, traballan-as. E fai-no gratuitamente . . . fazemos-lhes um regalo pero é simbólico . . .".



as stonemasons and the farmers) and discourses (namely, the popular, the academic, the religious and the poetic). In the last part I analyze the novel's use of metaphor and meta-literary references, and then conclude the chapter with some additional thoughts on the novel's potential for intervening in present political praxis. I try to predict, in the last analysis, what Pensa nao can do as far as contributing to the creation of a more collective democratic conscience in Galizan society. In addition to analyzing these questions, I examine throughout the chapter (as I do in the others), when relevant, the critics' reading practices and how their discourses can relate to the Galizan national-linguistic predicament.<sup>43</sup> Except for the case of O lapis do carpinteiro, which has been translated into Spanish, the critics for the rest of the novels are almost invariably Galizan.

Pensa nao is a fictional re-creation of historical facts, a narration of what could have been the story of the author's home village Manselhe—Sernanselle is its *trasunto*, “fictional name,” in the novel—during the last eight months of the Republic and the days that followed the Franco-Falange takeover. The author, who obtained the novel's factual base from oral testimony, as well as from academic sources, portrays the economic and social progress his town experienced during the Republic: the mechanization of agriculture, automobiles, the paving of the town's streets, the building of a milk factory, the growing democratic conscience and spirit of solidarity of the community, etc.. And he shows us the destruction of this “cosmos in construction” by the fascist takeover. In

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<sup>43</sup> Though the number of Pensa nao sold copies remains unimpressive (2,351), the critical reception of the novel has been unanimously acclamatory and abundant. I use critiques that come from newspapers—which tend to be short—and more extensive essays from scholarly journals.

contrast to the long-standing stereotype of the backward and passive Galizian farmer, this novel's story shows Galizian country life on the forefront of republican progress. The story of *Pensa nao* could be described, in a nutshell, as the communal effort of a myriad of characters, who, representing the progressive spirit of the village (and even that of Galiza), are subdued by a minority of reactionary characters. The bulk of the narration covers the pre-fascist stage (from the beginning until page 149), while the chaos and murder are told in only the 40 final pages. The chaos, as I analyze frequently throughout the chapter, is not transmitted as something that concludes with the novel's ending. Rather, the idea the reader is left with is that it still lingers in the present.

A multi-voiced narrative (*um romance coral*), the novel's selection of characters is vast and varied. The narration is linear and commences on the day of San Martinho, November 24, 1935—historically speaking, this is during the *bienio negro* years, shortly after the *Revolución de Octubre* in Asturias had been crushed by the army forces, led by Franco—and ends on July 20, 1936, the day the uprising had taken almost complete control of Galiza. Amaro is the youngest of the characters, most likely 18 or 19 years old. He studies archeology and is a part of *A Unión Cooperativa dos Produtores de Leite*, “The union of the milk producers.” Maria, the president of *A Unión*, is a bright and politically influential character, who, at the beginning, is torn between her affection for Camoiras (a bachelor, about 40 years old, who has a reputation of womanizing) and Amaro, who is in love with Maria from the beginning. Early on in the narrative, she chooses Amaro, and their relationship becomes one of the key subplots of the novel.

Their love story, it could be argued, counterpoises the epic love story of the community. Maria and Amaro's dialogues tend to be lyrical, in contrast to the epic mode that often characterizes the dialogues between the community's harvesters, stone masons, etc.; or the passages that describe (in the voice of the third person narrator) the village's communal labors and exchanges.

Camoiras and Roiz are returned emigrants (*indianos*) from Buenos Aires, who have brought their capital and enterprising ideas to invest in their home village's economic and political life. They both have the dream of seeing their community become democratic and technologically advanced. The friction that the reader would expect to occur between Camoiras and Amaro, because of their competing for the same woman, is overcome by both men's respect for each other and their commitment to work hand in hand for *A Unión* and the community's well being. Ismael da Pedra, a vegetarian anarchist, is also a returned emigrant, but his presence throughout the story is peripheral. Through these *indianos* characters, the novel attempts to debunk the Francoist-reinforced fallacy of the greedy and arrogant *indiano*, which, as is also the case of the stereotype of the passive and reactionary rural person, currently holds clout in many Galizans' perceptions. The returned emigrants, as I explain later, were perhaps the main figures who made Galizan rural society advance technologically and grow democratically. They brought back from America many of the ideas and projects that helped the rural world blossom during the Republic.

Maria's mother speaks, for the most part, through the letters she dictates for her "querido fillo Ramón," whom she believes to be in America. Her letters (all together she dictates six throughout the novel) serve as the foundation, as it were, of the narrative and perform the function of, in Xosé Manuel Enríquez' words, "intermezzos" that "se intercalan ó longo do relato e dividen, acompasan e marcan o "tempo" narrativo a xeito de moi particular metrónomo literario" ("Anxo" 230). They also express the historical point of view of an illiterate older woman. While she mentions political events that affect the community, she explains them from a Galizian rural vision and scheme of life, which can come off as humorous or innocently traumatic. The example of this happens at the end when she dictates her last letter—which describes the coming of the fascists as the coming of the wolves—to no addressee, given that her daughter, Maria, who usually writes what she dictates, has had to flee from the fascist rebels. During the course of the novel, the reader discovers that her son Ramón is, in reality, Roiz (thus Maria's brother), but the mother has felt betrayed by him for some reason—it is insinuated in one of her dictations that she is against his marrying the woman he loves. As a result, she has psychologically erased his existence from Semanselle and believes that he is still in America. The mother's futile longing for a son to return from the Americas can be viewed metaphorically as the longing of millions of Galizans who have been in the same traumatic situation of being separated from their loved ones.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Since the nineteenth century Galiza has been *um pais de emigrantes*.

O Señorito is the conservative doctor of the village and a member of *A Cooperativa Católica*, the rival of *A Unión*, whose members are *Frente Popular* supporters. In the early part of the story, he is portrayed as the conservative influence that disagrees with the revolutionary changes that are reshaping his village; for example, he does not initially accept Camoiras' proposal for the town to pool its capital for purchasing a *malladora*, "a corn husking machine," which, like the other technological advances that the *indianos* introduce, promises to increase the community's production and improve working conditions. But his empathy for others and loyalty to the community lead him, ultimately, to participate in the buying of the *malladora*, as well as helping the leftist characters escape at the end when the Falangists begin their *paseos*. The character of the Señorito, who at beginning reminds the reader of the typical *doctor-cacique* interested only in power, challenges yet another fascist-fabricated fallacy (still upheld today in dominant memory), which claims that all conservatives invariably supported the fascist takeover.

In their treatment of *Pensa nao*, the critics, for the most part, try to situate the novel within the Galizan literary system. Manuel Bragado, director of the *Xerais* publishing house, claims that the novel—having challenged the stereotype of the backward rural Galiza—is the first of a new genre, which he terms "a nova novela da aldea."<sup>45</sup> Others compare and contrast it to other literary genres; for example, Martínez Bouzas explains that the novel, despite its dealing with rural life, fits neither into the

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<sup>45</sup> He is quoted in the anonymous article entitled "Anxo Angueira percorre" (75).

categories of “costumismo,” nor “social-realismo” (“100%” 8). Xose M. Eiré explains precisely how this novel diverges from “costumismo”: “O clásico cadro de costumes ten como obxectivo a enxebrización, a perpetuación do estado, cousa que moitas veces aniña arredor da fosilización. O cadro de costumes de que Anxo Angueira bota man, non é este. Vólvese estrutura dinámica” (“Prelúdio” 27). This description of Pensa nao’s dynamic representation of Galizan rural life expresses the same idea as the other critiques, which agree that Angueira’s intention in the recreation of the rural life and people in Sernanselhe was to make it mobile, as opposed to the static “museum destined” worlds depicted elsewhere in Galizan literature.

Xosé Manuel Enríquez echoes this idea by positing that the novel depicts “un mundo en actividade (labregos escapados do tópico de gaitas, aturuxos e muiñadas),” and that the “paisaxe non se reduce á recreación dunha postal de viaxe ou unha reprodución estática de museo”; likewise, according to this critic, the portrayal of the characters and customs “consistúen un mosaico animado da vida campesiña, moi lonxe da enxebreza ou do tipismo” (“Anxo” 231). Angueira’s intention therefore goes against the tendency of what Antón Figueroa terms “arqueoloxización da cultura,” which consists of a “volta ó pasado mitificado e que intenta substituí-la carencia dun progreso real presente por un pasado fosilizado, pero que se intenta re-poñer como progresivo” (Diglosia 65).

The other genre that Martínez Bouzas contrasts with Pensa nao, apart from “costumismo,” is “social realismo.” I quote the definition of the latter genre from Baldwin:

A slogan adopted by the Soviet cultural authorities in 1934 to summarize the requirements of Stalinist dogma in literature: the established techniques of 19th-century Realism were to be used to represent the struggle for socialism in a positive, optimistic light, while the allegedly “decadent” techniques of Modernism were to be avoided as bourgeois deviations. (238)

If this is the definition Martínez Bouzas has in mind when employing the term “social-realismo,” his idea then coincides with that of the other critics, who claim that Angueira’s novel, though committed to leftist and nationalists ideals, does not follow the Manichean and preaching tendencies that characterize the Soviet proletarian novel. Furthermore, Pensa nao’s portrayal of both the individual and the collective psychology goes against the purely collective focus of a Social-Realist work. This focus is expressed by Sergei M. Eisenstein in a description of his filmmaking:

Our films do not center around an individual or a triangle. We want to develop the public, not the actor. This is a reflection of the spirit of collectivism which is abroad in the land. Nor do we attempt to excite vicarious participation in the lives of the persons of the drama; that is an appeal to sentiment. The cinema can make a far bigger contribution and a far stronger impression by projecting matter and bodies rather than feelings. (24)

Pensa nao's individual sub-stories go completely against this Social-Realist prescription. For example, the love story of Amaro and Maria, Maria's mother's insanity, Ventura's sobbing at the end when saying goodbye to his friends now endangered by the fascists—all this would be considered frivolous and "sentimental" by a Social-Realist like Eisenstein. But I believe that it is precisely this combination of the individual and collective which makes this novel so ideologically effective. By infusing varied emotions in his story, Angueira elicits all the more empathy from the reader, who identifies with the characters by experiencing their individual love, frustration, jealousy, and horror.

Perhaps a more useful set of terms for situating Pensa nao in the Galizan literary tradition are González-Millán's *nacionalismo literario*, and *literatura nacional*. As I explained in chapter one, *nacionalismo literario* (or *nacionalismo cultural*) characterizes Galizan literary and cultural production prior to around 1975. Up till this date the literary text was confined to a thematics that denounced the oppression that impeded Galiza from achieving autonomy and legitimizing its language and culture. Given that the power of canonizing literary texts was in the hands of the more dogmatic nationalist sector—which posited that the only literature capable of truly reflecting the *realidade galega* was that which upheld a poetics of resistance—Galizan writers were constrained from innovation and experimentation. But with the arrival of the Spanish transition new horizons opened up and Galiza witnessed the institutionalization and gradual legitimization of its language and literary system. The new political situation, which continues up through our present,



has allowed writers to break free from the parameters once imposed by *nacionalismo literario* and experiment with new repertoires as well as with formal innovations. It is this literature which Galizan writers begin to produce after 1975 what González Millán calls *literatura nacional*.

Pensa nao, argues Figueroa, represents a combination of both *nacionalismo literario* and *literatura nacional*. Its nationalistic and leftist content betrays a thematics of resistance common to *nacionalismo literario*. But at the same time its “art for art’s sake” formal experiments, its lyricism and fantastic components are manifestations common of those works belonging to *literatura nacional*. In his words:

En Pensa nao eu creo que queda moito de “nacionalismo literario” (temática de esquerdas e nacionalista) pero ó mesmo tempo dase unha especie de valoración do estilo e da fala, da fantasía, do xogo coa linguaxe, do “l’art pour l’art” que en certo modo queda fora dun “nacionalismo literario” “puro” e constitúe unha das causas da orixinalidade deste autor; o “nacionalismo literario” é reforzado e ó mesmo tempo superado ó superárense algunhas das súas normas como modelos de escritura.<sup>46</sup>

This scholar’s idea of the novel’s nationalist content being “reinforced” by overcoming some of the prescriptions imposed by “nacionalismo literario” reflects the same idea I

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<sup>46</sup> E-mail to the author, Nov. 20, 2002.

mentioned earlier regarding Social-Realism: Pensa nao, I believe, is more effective, from a political standpoint of transmitting a leftist-nationalist ideology, than the more straight-laced works that adhere to the “nacionalismo literario” repertoire.

Figueroa also views Pensa nao’s formal aesthetic as “ferriniano, anque os procedimentos non sexan os mesmos.” The adjective “ferriniano” refers to Xosé Luís Méndez Ferrín, a prominent Galizan writer, who is considered by some, including Anxo Angueira, as the Galizan national writer. Figueroa claims that Ferrín was one of the pioneers in breaking out of the strict norms of *nacionalismo literario*, without renouncing the use of a leftist-nationalist poetics. In a way that combines *nacionalismo literario* and *literatura nacional*, Figueroa invents the term “un estilo poético-fantástico-social,” which seems appropriate in identifying Angueira’s novel.<sup>47</sup> Later I analyze the avant-garde features of this novel’s style and their effect in making the voice of the rural masses dynamic and progressive, as opposed to “costumista” depictions, which, as I pointed out earlier, contain reactionary ideology by portraying the rural world as a static and isolated (if not extinct) part of society.

Now as far as situating Pensa nao within the context of the other Civil War novels, none of the critics give their opinions on this issue. Perhaps this is due to the fact, as I mentioned in the final paragraph of the introduction, that literary scholars have still not “institutionalized,” as it were, the Civil War novels as their own subgenre. If this is the case, it would explain why the critics do not tend to group the novels together, draw

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<sup>47</sup> E-mail to the author, Oct. 1, 2001.

comparisons among them, analyze how each one fits into the subgenre, and determine the peculiar features of each one. Though critics have written a considerable amount on the Civil War novels, a study that includes all of them and emphasizes their belonging to a defined corpus has yet to emerge. I would situate Pensa nao on the leading edge of this genre, given its feature of using the past for intervening in the present and defying various fascist fallacies, which are taken as truths for much of the Galizan and Spanish communities. This novel takes a big step beyond the rest of the Civil War novels because of this bridging, as it were, of the past and present. My focus for the rest of this chapter is on elucidating the novel's various features that lead the reader to re-historicize (and thus reconceptualize) his or her political, social, linguistic, cultural, and even economic present. I first explain the reasons and sources that led Angueira to re-examine Galiza's rural history, and the theses of historian Lourenzo Fernández Prieto, which were indispensable for Angueira's interpretation. Then, as I stated earlier, I analyze the novel's use of dialect, utopia and metaphor as part of a foundational imagination.<sup>48</sup>

### **Pensa nao's Historical Re-examination**

Angueira himself has argued that his novel is unlike the other Civil War novels because of his proposing a radically alternative historical-political version to the official one. He comments in his interviews that he began to have doubts about society's dominant interpretation of Galizan rural society after hearing stories from the elders of

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<sup>48</sup> By "foundational imagination" I am referring to an imagination that strives to create (to found) a Galizan identity and nation.

his home village, who spoke of the technological advancements the *aldea* experienced during the 1920s and 1930s. In his interview with Vidal, he explains that his novel fermented in his mind as he heard from these testimonies “vestíxios daquel tempo na miña aldea, na memoria popular, na arquitectura. Retallos dun pasado que non cadraban coa visión estereotipada que temos do mundo rural, asociada ao atraso” (24).<sup>49</sup>

In addition to realizing that the accounts of these witnesses did not correspond to the official version—which claimed (and still does) that Galiza has always been a dependent, economically unproductive community—he also noticed that none of the witnesses wanted to tell him about the fascist takeover and the repression of the post-war: “Nos testemuños orais da miña aldea notei como a xente non quere recordar o nome do alcalde porque aínda perdura o terror imposto daqueles días . . .”.<sup>50</sup> Angueira, thus, noticed through these testimonies that a crucial segment of the twentieth-century narrative of the Galizan rural world was being repressed, because both the dictatorship and the post-transition democracy had silenced the truth and created a version that suited their respective ends, and that this fallacy was still dominating the Galizan collective conscience.

Crucial in spurring Angueira to write Pensa nao was his reading of recent historiographical studies by Isidro Novo and especially by Lourenzo Fernández Prieto,

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<sup>49</sup> Angueira explained in regard to the novel fermenting over time in his mind: “Eu esta novela escrebin-a mentalmente polas entrevistas persoais até que un día rebentei porque xa tiña que escribir dunha vez; entón fisicamente elaborei borradores dos capítulos, da estrutura, anotacións . . .” (interview with the author).

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Sandra Penelas 3.

which verified empirically the testimonies he had been gathering years previously. In his presentation speech of his novel he spoke about Fernández Prieto's influence in his fictional creation:

Máis aínda que a pescuda na memoria das xentes da miña terra, foime decisiva a lectura de ensaios coma os de Lourenzo Fernández Prieto, Labregos con ciencia, que cuestionan cientificamente o estereotipo do atraso económico, tópico que tamén funcionou no literario, e que demostran que ata o 36 houbo unha profunda renovación agropecuaria. (3)

Indeed, both Angueira's and Fernández Prieto's objectives in their respective works are virtually the same in that they attempt to debunk the deterministic language regarding the Galizan rural society and people. They strive to popularize a new interpretation—which has persisted in the minds of older rural folks and has recently been supported by scholarship—that offers a positive vision of the pre-Franco rural society, and, more importantly, a praxis for recovering the progressive project (progressive from both an economic and democratic standpoint) that was uprooted by fascism. Through the reinterpretation of the past and the realization that the Galizan community does have the potential to be progressive and autonomous, the idea of rebuilding the Galizan nation appears a possible reality.

Through explaining the historical causes of the present stagnation, through connecting the past and present, Angueira and Fernández Prieto undertake a genealogical approach aimed at revealing the nearly lost fragments of the unorthodox history, as well

as an imaginary one that projects towards the future. Angueira stresses this double approach: “Neste sentido, a miña novela non é só un labor de arqueoloxía histórica senón tamén de actuación no presente.”<sup>51</sup> Likewise, F. Prieto contends that it is necessary to clarify Galiza’s recent history in order to reveal the fallacy of the current analysis, which is allowing, he suggests, the rural economy (and hence Galizan independence) to collapse:

Urxe clarexar algúns aspectos da historia máis recente de Galicia para desentolda-la análise da actual conxuntura do sector agrario, enfrontada a un proceso de cambio de enormes proporcións: a integración na CEE e o sometemento á Política Agraria Común van cambiar, radical e quizabes custosamente, a agricultura galega. (Labregos 17)

Both Fernández Prieto and Angueira stress the fact that the fascist destruction of the rural world’s progressive path entailed the subduing of the Galizan nation, along with democracy and the concomitant consequences of alienation. I quote another excerpt from Angueira’s novel presentation speech, which effectively expresses this idea:

Desde o meu punto de vista o alzamento fascista foi unha amputación global ao noso proxecto de progreso como nación, un proxecto vivo e dinámico, non exento de contradicións, evidentemente, pero altamente esperanzado naqueles anos. E esa ferida eu vina e aínda a vexo. A ferida

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<sup>51</sup> Interview with Sandra Penelas 3.

do medo; a ferida aberta aínda nas igrexas co laño manantío dos insoportábeis símbolos dos vencedores; a ferida vergoñenta de nomes que emporcan as nosas rúas; a ferida da covardía e da submisión; a ferida da alienación e da sobrealienación política e cultural; a ferida que aínda nos ten alleados, nalgúns casos a través dos mecanismos máis revirados, a respecto da nosa propia lingua, que é tanto como decer da nosa identidade.

(3)

Between Fernández Prieto and Angueira's projects there exists a symbiotic relation. The former supplies the *matéria prima*, as it were, and the latter dialogizes this empirical data. That is, Angueira takes the scholarly discourse of a historian and puts it in the mouths of a whole village, which populates his *romance coral*.

Fernández Prieto's line of research grew out of studies, which, since the latter 1970's, began to question the official version of Galizan rural life. One of the scholars on this new line of research was Ramón Villares, who directed Fernández Prieto's dissertation. This dissertation constituted the basis of Labregos con ciencia, which analyzes a broad spectrum of questions pertaining to the Galizan rural world from the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the fascist takeover. The author shows how Galiza opened up to capitalist production, and how this system, in turn, adapted to *a realidade galega*. That is, he attempts to analyze how the efforts of the State, on the one hand, and the open and experimental penchant in Galizan civil society, on the other, combined to improve and fortify Galiza's primary sector. The State, he contends, played a

fundamental role in promoting Galiza's agriculture industry and the necessary scientific research:

[F]oi historicamente fundamental o papel do Estado, impulsando a adopción de novos métodos e técnicas agrícolas que aumenten e racionalicen, no marco dun mercado progresivamente nacional, a produción agrícola. Así aconteceu en Europa e nos USA e queremos comprobar ata que punto e en que medida ocorreu o mesmo en Galicia.

(19)

This modernizing intention of the State was received with indifference by the class that had dominated for centuries, the *rendistas* and *fidalgos*. Apathetic and lacking an enterprising mentality, they preferred Galiza to remain backward. Therefore, it was *labregos parcelarios*, the farmers who owned parcels of land, who took the reigns of this adaptation process. Fernández Prieto analyzes in depth the variety of mechanical improvements, the introduction of fertilizers, as well as advances in animal husbandry, such as the crossing of different breeds of cattle. He studies the State-sponsored institutions that spearheaded the research, for example, *A Misión Biolóxica de Pontevedra* during the years of the Republic. But he emphasizes the agency of the farmers and their gradual emergence as the crafters of Galiza's political and social destiny:

A través do movemento agrarista, o campesiñado puido deste modo mediatiza-la penetración do capitalismo na esfera da pequena produción



agrícola, estratexia que formaba parte da súa tendencia á reprodución.

Por iso é pertinente concluír, como intento demostrar ó longo do texto, que o campesiñado protagonizou os procesos de transformación. (462)

In Pensa nao there are many references to both the state-promoted institutions that carried out the scientific research, and the participation of the *campesinhos*. I quote from the novel a passage, which condenses both of these complementary forces in action. And not in vain does the narrator explicitly mention at the end the title of Fernández Prieto's influential study:

Os coches da Unión veñen cargados de adubos nitroxenados e potásicos de Santiago e Vilagarcía. Xa trougueno a semente de millo híbrido seleccionado na Misión de Pontevedra para as leiras de gabea. O coche da Cooperativa, por imperativo económico da casa Cros que fomentan os sindicatos católicos e a súa prensa, trague de Padrón superfosfatos esgotadores do nitróxeno. Advírtнено os técnicos da Granxa que veñen a falar á Sociedade de Agricultores de Dodro Vello. Pasa cara Carril o comboio das once, o vello The West. Experimentan, os labregos con ciencia experimentan. (115)

This passage is quite representative of the duality of forces involved (that of the state embodied in *A Misión* and *A Granxa Experimental da Coruña*) and the civil society represented by *A Unión* and *A Cooperativa*. But it also depicts the two opposed ideologies of society (the progressives in *A Unión* and the conservatives in *A Cooperativa*)

working on the same common project. As I said earlier, the idea of two Spains (or two Galizas) in conflict does not exist in this novel, as it usually does in other representations, for example, in Antonio Machado's famous poem.<sup>52</sup> Pensa nao conveys the idea that fascist Spain was a minority force lurking on the sidelines and waiting to attack, while the majority of the country moved forward.

The state-sponsored institutions were politically progressive and enjoyed massive popular support. Fernández Prieto explains how in 1935 the conservative government (dominated by the CEDA) halted subsidies to *A Misión Biolóxica*. The director of this institution, Cruz Gallástegui, was a specialist in genetics and became famous for having greatly improved the Galizan cattle breed. Camoiras, one of the *indianos* in the novel, mentions the achievements of this figure: “¿E as vacas? ¿Viche-lo que mudano nos últimos cinco ou sete anos? ¡Moito está a facer Gallástegui na Misión polo país! ¡Qué non nos merece ese home! . . . ¡A nosa vaca rubia e cornuda, ciscada polos montes ou turrando de carros e de arados, competindo coas máis leiteiras...!” (18-19). Angueira has stated in another interview that he would have liked to make this genetic specialist more of a protagonist in the novel. He also comments on Gallástegui's genetic manipulation of corn: “Sempre tiven a idea estúpida . . . de que o millo do país era o auténtico e de que o híbrido era o francés, o estranxeiro. Cando investiguei na nosa historia e souben de Cruz Gallástegui deime conta de que el era a avangarda deste tipo de innovacións” (“A mazaroca no valo”). Angueira further attributes the success of these innovative

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<sup>52</sup> “Españolito que vienes al mundo / te guarde Diós / Una de las dos Españas / ha de helarte el corazón.”

enterprises to the openness of the Galician farmers, who embraced such opportunities of technological advancement.

The motor behind the rural community's adaptation to capitalism, according to Angueira, was the *indianos* ("A mazaroca no valo"). The author comments in a published interview that he wanted to recuperate the silenced history of these returned emigrants and their contribution to the Republic:

O diñeiro da emigración manexado por homes e mulleres de ideas filantrópicas axudou ó progreso cultural e económico do país. Co tempo foi cambiando e durante o franquismo rompeuse con esta dinámica. Eu quixen retratar a traxedia de moitos destes galegos que emigraron de novos, fixeron fortuna e voltaron con ideas de progreso, vinculados politicamente ó republicanismo e ó galeguismo, e como no 36 morreron, foron fusilados, foron paseados ou tiveron que fuxir e abandonar absolutamente todo. Tronzouse un proxecto que era tremendamente positivo.<sup>53</sup>

Historians have also analyzed the role of the *indianos*, although Angueira did not rely on historical documentation for recreating his *indiano* characters. "A lección dos indianos," he explained, "aprendina alí en Manselle e en Dodro, nos seus edificios, nos seus proxectos, na memoria que deixaran. A súa vinculación coa masonería veume tal vez da

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<sup>53</sup> Interview with Rosé Carrera.

lectura de La masonería y La Coruña . . . unha obra da que tirei tamén cousas que teñen que ver coa masonería na obra.”<sup>54</sup> The most extensive study on *indianos* is that by Núñez Seixas,<sup>55</sup> and Bernardo Maíz also discusses the topic. The latter explains the “mito americano” that proliferated throughout the community; or rather than community, says Maíz: “Nesta mesta sociedade de pequenas comunidades” (17). The myth, asserts the author, was clearly associated by everyone with transformation.<sup>56</sup> On a personal level, he continues, there were two personalities (or two personas), into which the *indiano* supposedly fit: The first type is the “rico, caritativo e fachendoso de chaleque branco e sombreiro “jipijapa” que tenta mimetizarse cos membros dos grupos dominantes clásicos facendo grandes mansións, de arquitectura colonial e construindo monumentos de dubidoso gusto” (17). The other *indiano* is he who returns with a politicized conscience from having participated in unions and/or political parties in America. In fact, Maíz writes that in the foundations of leftist parties and unions of American republics, there were always Galizan emigrantes involved (17). This is the *indiano* that invested his capital in Galiza, in schools and other communal projects and “exercía un labor de axitación” (17).

In Pensa nao Ismael da Pedra, the anarchist, fits into this second category, and so do Roiz and Camoiras, but not in the same way as Ismael. These two build innovative

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<sup>54</sup> E-mail to the author, Dec. 15, 2002.

<sup>55</sup> Xosé Nuñez Seixas, Emigrantes, caciques e indianos (Vigo: Xerais, 1998).

<sup>56</sup> This historian seems to use the word *myth* too loosely. Perhaps *legacy* would be a better choice.

and luxurious houses, such as that of the Señorito. In this sense they are enlightened *indianos* who cultivate both their community and their private spaces. Ismael is also enlightened, but is not interested in possessing a private space and lives in a run-down small house. He is more of a type-cast than the other two *indianos*, who have a certain rounded characterization. Camoiras and Roiz receive many of their characteristic traits at the beginning of the narration in an extended dialogue. The former tells the latter that he sold all his property and stock in Buenos Aires and plans to invest it in Sernanselle: “As cousas non están claras pero sonche dos que profesan unha fe cega no noso país e na República” (17). Later in the same dialogue, Roiz refers to Camoiras’ womanizing habits and suggests that he is somewhat hungry for power and wants to compete with the Señorito: “Ai, Camoiras. Se o meu vivir fose coma o teu. . . . Víame andando de aquí para alá e para acolá. Hoxe chegache de Mondariz cunha amiga, mañán apañas para o Carballiño ou para Caldas con outra. . . . Na aldea a túa única ansia é facerlle sombra ao Señorito.” (20).

Toward the beginning of the novel in the above-mentioned dialogue between Camoiras and Roiz, the two *indianos* discuss their respective projects of investing in the community, and then Camoiras criticizes the *Cooperativa Católica* arguing that its members will not approve of the *indianos*’ enterprising projects. Roiz agrees in part, but then defends Don Antonio (the Señorito). I quote an excerpt of their conversation. The first utterance comes from Roiz, the second from Camoiras, and the third again from Roiz:

--[O]s da Cooperativa Católica] [e]stán en mans dun par de caciques e, iso si, contan coa beizón de Súa Eminencia Reverendísima, que actuou de convidado de honor con moito boato cando inaugurano o local. !Fato de moneóns! Aos de aquí de Sernanselle que aínda non son da Unión mantenos o inmovilismo de Don Antonio. Caerán cando caia o Señorito.

--O Señorito, o Señorito . . . Axiña a República acabará cos señoritos.

--Acouga, non digas parvadas. Don Antonio é doutros señoritos. Si, a situación política cada vez ponse máis ensarillada. Iso é o único que me pode botar para atrás. Pero aínda confío en Saint-Just e na súa xente, a pesar das súas treidurías. (19)<sup>57</sup>

Through the character of the Señorito, the novel also tries to deconstruct the dominant version, which claims that all catholic and conservative *caciques* were against the project of the Republic. Angueira refers to this when claiming (again in his book presentation) that in Galizan aldeas:

había e hai máis que labregos e labregas, labregos propietarios, labregos a xornal: había xa unha economía simbiótica xerada pola emerxencia do proletariado rural, había americanos, masóns e republicanos, señoritos coma os de Otero Pedrayo, leberais, médicos case todos. Había un

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<sup>57</sup> Saint-Just, a character from the French Revolution and linked to Robespierre, was the nickname given to Santiago Casares Quiroga, who, as I explained in chapter one, is held responsible for not allowing the mayors of the major cities to distribute arms to the unions. Though Roiz does not completely trust this politician (he mentions "despite his betrayals"), he belongs to the same political party, Izquierda Republicana. His son, Amaro, is more critical and distrustful of Casares, and belongs to the Partido Galeguista.

intensísimo movemento cooperativo que era alicerce das directrices económica do Partido Galeguista” (3).

Don Antonio, who, as Roiz claims above, is not like other *caciques*, is unique among the rest of the characters in that he is the one who changes the most in the novel. Indeed, if he were given as much text time as the others, he would perhaps be the most complex character in the novel. During the first half of the story, his appearance is minimal. He initially comes off as conservative in one of the first scenes of the novel, in which Camoiras comes to his garage to drink his newly made *canha*. Camoiras asks him if he is interested in contributing to *A Unión*’s purchase of a *malladora* (a corn husking machine), and Don Antonio does not answer. He seems uncomfortable with the Camoiras’ proposal. Yet, at the same time, the fact that he shares his drink with Camoiras indicates a certain hospitality and openness.

As the narration progresses, the Señorito manifests traits that situate him in a more positive light. He gradually becomes an essential figure in the novel’s ethical project. The first explicit sign of this occurs in a conversation with his work-hand, Xacobe de Dominga. Xacobe tells Don Antonio about Mariño, the other Señorito’s work-hand, who is building a boat (which happens to be the *nao*, the boat on which some of the characters escape from the fascist terror at the end of the novel). Don Antonio’s spontaneous conservative impulse comes out: “!Pero esa xentiña está tola! . . . !Son o demo! !Estes pícaros son o demo!” (97-98). Xacobe then takes his boss’ remark a step

further: "Un día vai haber que pólos a andar." But Don Antonio disapproves of this aggressive remark and reprimands Xacobe: "¿Que rosmas Xacobe?" (98).

Two chapters after this incident, Don Antonio gathers another positive character-trait when he finds Amaro up in the hills close to the village. It is at the time when the honeybees are loose and swarming about the village and nearby. Amaro is examining a prehistoric construction, and the Señorito asks him about it and appears interested. A moment afterwards, Don Antonio becomes the focalizer (the first time in the novel), and it is at this point where his psychological evolution really begins to occur: "O Señorito olla o río pálido e lourido, fundido na braña pola baixamar, que el imaxina no socheo . . . Sería capaz de olla-los ollos dos sancristáns que fono morrendo. E os ollos dos curas vellos. Tréménlle as mans. Olla os ollos de Camoiras, de Camoiras. Unha abella revoa polo pescozo do Señorito" (104). The order of this train of thoughts spells out this evolution: first he imagines looking into the eyes of the priests (the metaphor of conservatism); then his hands tremble and he imagines looking into those of Camoiras. And at this moment the bees begin to alight on Don Antonio ("Pousan abellas, centos de abellas coa raíña no ombreiro do Señorito"), until he is completely covered by them (104). His hands also tremble as he observes the cars of *A Unión* and *A Cooperativa* drive into the village. He then hears "the swarm" of the children of the village running behind the cars and shouting the political slogans taught by their parents: "!Abaixo a Unión! !Morra a Unión! !Viva a Coorativa! !Viva a Unión! !Veña Unionciña! !Abaixo a Coomerativa!" (105). By allowing the bees to cover himself while he



imagines looking into Camoiras' eyes, Don Antonio seems to be opening himself up to the *indiano*'s swarm of revolutionary political ideas.

The climax of Don Antonio's evolution occurs fifteen pages later in chapter five. The passage commences with *Unión* affiliates in a meeting where they decide on purchasing the *malladora*. Ismael da Pedra (the *indiano*) is talking to the crowd. The final paragraph describes the Señorito coming to the meeting and offering to contribute to the purchase of the *malladora*:

A porta do norte da casa do Señorito renxe nas palmelas secas e oxidadas.

Todos miran. . . . sae Don Antonio, que se achega á reunión con paso firme. A xente cala e aparta. Sombra fresca de lata abrindo. Canta a fonte de frescura. E o Señorito achégase á porta do garaxe de Camoiras antre o espanto de todos. O sol quenta que queima na xugueira.

--Ismael, ¿estades no da malladora?

--Estamos, Don Antonio, niso estamos.

--Pois apúntame, se fa-lo favor. Antonio Sernanselle Abuín, médico, sesenta e sete anos, solteiro. (121)

With this small-scale democratic victory, the Señorito has embraced *A Unión*'s initiative. And his evolution is verisimilar because it is not really his ideology that has changed (he continues being a member of *A Cooperativa*), but rather, his empathy and good intentions have helped him see what is best for his village.

The underlying message that Don Antonio's character transmits to the reader is that many conservative Galizans like him did not welcome the Franco-Falange takeover. He did not fathom the extent to which fascist hatred would destroy the people and country. This idea is made especially clear near the end. The fascist forces have nearly taken control of Galiza, and Semanselle is about to fall within hours. Xacobe de Dominga has shot and injured Amaro, whose wound the Señorito tries to cure at his house: "O Señorito métese no despacho e consulta o tomo primeiro dos Elementos de Patoloxía e de Clínica Cirúrxicas do doutor Leon Moynac . . . Mira nas lesións traumáticas as feridas por armas de fogo. No apartado das complicacións atopa o estupor" (162).

He ends up helping Amaro and his mother and father (Roiz and Ilduara) escape to the ocean on Mariño's *nao*. He, like his work hand, Mariño (whose character performs a very similar function to that of the Señorito's), are horrified by the fascist terror and do everything they can to aid their friends. From this moment on, the narration recounts the sudden tragedy: Camoiras being murdered, *A Unión* people escaping, and the destruction of all the village's progressive elements. The narrator transmits the idea of this sudden destruction of decades worth of community work through recollective dissemination,<sup>58</sup> that is, he condenses in one paragraph the various progressive elements that have appeared throughout the novel (the new machinery, Roiz' busts of Rosalia, Murguia and

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<sup>58</sup> Note that I write "decades" of work and not just the five years of the Republic. Galiza had been forging a civil society and moving towards a democracy since the late nineteenth-century.

Curros, the *malladora* “que non houbo,”), followed by: “Semanselle, Semanselle, todo Semanselle tateixa un adeus cuberto para sempre no silencio e no terror” (181).

This idea of the destruction of years of success and democratic civil society in a matter of days is also emphasized by Fernández Prieto, whose ideas I now revisit before concluding this section. We had left off on his project in Labregos, in which he shows how rural Galiza had embraced the State’s project of developing and modernizing Spain’s economy, which included the peripheral communities. I now want to briefly explain the second stage of Fernández Prieto’s research, which focuses on the effects that Francoist repression had on Galizan economy and democracy. He succinctly discusses the repression and consequences at the end of Labregos, which acts as an announcement of his future project. The repression, he argues, provoked a social desarticulation that demolished all the organizational instruments that had been forged during four decades, and the once existing tension between the agrarian unions and the capitalists was broken in favor of the latter (463). The war and dictatorship, he claims, “fixeron máis que trunca-lo proceso, mudaron o seu sentido e os seus protagonistas e beneficiarios” (465).

Fernández Prieto carries out an in depth analysis of the repression and its consequences for Galiza’s rural economy and political life in “Represión franquista.” His focus of study does not constitute “tanto la represión franquista como eliminación física de individuos, más o menos militantes o significados social y políticamente, sino aquella otra que ataca al conjunto de la sociedad” (52). He also recognizes the difficulty of such a project, given that the social movement of rural society “desaparece con la guerra civil,

apenas conocemos el cómo y las circunstancias de esa desaparición” (53). For his analysis he studies documents kept in the *Gobiernos Civiles* of the *Sociedades* and *Sindicatos agrarios*. Through these documents, he shows how the *Sociedades* and *Sindicatos* were either eliminated or their leadership changed. Between 1936 and 1939, seventy percent of the *Sociedades* and *Sindicatos* were dissolved, and the hundred that remained were of a non-political type (or at least conspicuously so). But within these hundred remaining, the dominant ideology in these organizations, claims the author, was Republican and leftist: “Y se trata, claro está, de sociedades de carácter no directamente político, o de sociedades de inspiración conservadora, lo que de algún modo demuestra que la inmensa mayoría de los cuadros del movimiento societario, a la altura de 1936, tenían un compromiso o vocación, cuando menos, democrática” (59-60). This idea that even the *Sociedades* of “inspiración conservadora” upheld democratic principles parallels, of course, the idea expressed through the Señorito in Pensa nao.

Fernández Prieto then proceeds to show how, during the early 1940's, these remaining hundred organizations, the leaders of which were considered suspicious, were gutted and left in the hands of inexperienced and apolitical leaders. “Sobre ese medio social emprobecido e inerte,” concludes the author, “podrá fundar el franquismo su propia hegemonía” (64). The consequences of these “depuraciones” destroyed both the social structures that had been developing democratically over the previous decades, and it also generated “una pedagogía civil negativa sobre la asociación rural como fórmula de

intereses, recuperándose en los años cuarenta formas de resistencia campesina que habían sido desplazadas a lo largo del primer tercio de siglo” (65).

As I we have already seen, both Angueira and Fernández Prieto argue that the present is the inheritor of this repression and its consequences. Both in their respective projects work with history in a genealogical fashion, and also in an imaginative way that projects the unorthodox fragments of this history onto the present and into the future. Angueira, as I proceed to show, has more strategies to make his historical interpretation affect the present and challenge the reader’s apperceptive background. In the next section I analyze the novel’s blend of avant-garde and realist styles, along with its orchestration of various social languages and the use of dialect.

#### **Avant-Garde and Realist Representation. Dialect and Social Languages**

Through the dynamic representation of the rural world, as opposed to the stereotypical static depictions, *Pensa nao* employs a series of avant-garde tactics, which, nonetheless, do not stymie the narrative’s ability to produce verisimilar impressions. The structure of the novel, which forms a sort of mosaic, consists of seven chapters that break into mini-chapters, which act as individual fragments of the novel.<sup>59</sup> Méndez Ferrín alludes to this mosaic aspect: “[A] obra preséntase como unha narración colectiva, aínda

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<sup>59</sup> Both X.M Eiré and Xosé Enríquez refer to this aspect of the novel. The former claims that the fragmentary structure lends dynamism to the narration: “Os sete capítulos están construídos todos coa mesma técnica fragmentaria, cousa que tamén axuda para a sensación de dinamismo . . .” (“Preludio” 27). The latter gives this description: “[A]s persoas, as palabras dos oficios, os traballos estacionais, os costumes, as ferramentas, os tipos . . . constitúen un mosaico animado da vida campesiña, moi lonxe da enxebreza ou do tipismo” (“Anxo” 231).

que nin ao xeito tumultuoso de Ruedo Ibérico de Valle-Inclán nin tipo mosaico-puzzle como John Dos Passos” (“A novela” 2). Indeed, if we compare Pensa nao to Dos Passos’ USA, the former, despite its fragmentary layout, seems to have more cohesiveness between its various components. That is, as opposed to the often brusque changes from one part to another in Dos Passos’ novel, the different components of Angueira’s seem more integrated within the story line.

Another feature of the novel that draws attention to its production of meaning comprises the use of a Galizan dialect for telling the story. This dialect—which is that of the Dodro *comarca*—is not used as a sub-voice; it is not grouped under a more official voice that uses standard Galizan, but rather it is the dominant voice of the novel, the voice employed by the third person narrator (who occasionally shifts into the first person plural). In addition to the lexical differences of this dialect that can confuse the reader, the verb conjugations can also, at least initially, throw him or her off. For example, the third person plural of the present tense of “sair” in standard Galizan is “saen.” In the novel, however, the form “san” is used.<sup>60</sup> Nonetheless, the use of dialect also contributes to the novel’s verisimilar impressions. Once the reader gets used to the new code, the dialect then contributes to the testimonial illusion. The novel, therefore, demands from the reader an effort, but this effort also contributes to “living” the world and rhythm of the narration.

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<sup>60</sup> Likewise, the conjugation of the preterit changes. For example, instead of the standard “foron,” the Dodro dialect uses “fono.” Rosalía de Castro, who was from Dodro, used these dialectalisms in her poetry.

Also involved in Pensa nao's dynamic and fragmentary layout is what I perceive as the novel's dramatization of intertextuality. This aspect, along with the use of dialect, constitutes, in my view, the most original of the narration's techniques. It consists of introducing (or rather masquerading) into the narration verses or sentences of other artists. Hence, throughout the novel there are "cryptic" messages, as it were, which only the reader who has been exposed to the sources can detect them. The "meta-intertextuality" feature occurs not only with the "secret" bits and pieces of verses and sentences taken from other writers, but also with the sources the author uses for creating his world of fiction. This aspect of the novel fits the description Coward and Ellis in Language and Materialism give of avant-garde texts: "It is this aspect of intertextuality that is exploited in avant-garde texts: they throw together scraps of phrases, etc., but without a unifying, totalising position" (52-53).

Pensa nao further manifests features of indeterminacy through its theatricality. For example, in many of the dialogues (always, as in theater, "in praesentia") the positionality of the characters is undetermined. Only in those exchanges of two or three characters is it possible to distinguish who says what; and even in these parts the reader still struggles to designate origins.<sup>61</sup> Next to this formal indeterminacy, the novel also contains a certain thematic indeterminacy and open-endedness, which stems, to a large extent, from the narrator's low profile. He is at the top of the hierarchy of voices, as I

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<sup>61</sup> For example, in the section, or "mini-chapter" (14-23), the dialogues between Roiz and Camoiras—in which Roiz' wife Manoela intervenes at the end—are theatrical insofar as the third person narrator almost never indicates who speaks. For the reader it is difficult to always know who the speaker is.

show later when discussing the novel's realist impressions, but his voice seems no more legitimate than many of the other voices. Take, for example, Maria's mother's letter dictations. Her authority is derived from her seemingly autonomous and independent discourse, as if her presence were outside the narrator's control. Moreover, the lack of the narrator's intervention—along with this equilibrium, as it were, of voices—keeps this highly politicized novel from not falling into Manichean descriptions or depictions. Martínez Bouzas comments on this aspect; on how, for example, the Falangists and fascists in the novel “non están tratados dunha maneira claramente maniquea. Sinxelamente os delata a evidencia dos seus actos de morte” (111). Later he remarks that the narration:

non cae no folletinesco nin na demonización maniquea do círculo fascista, agás quizais cando entra en acción un clero partidista e belixerante, verdadeiros ministros da morte, que pinta nos vidros das igrexas a bandeira monárquica, lles leva aos fregueses papeletas da candidaturas da dereita e as misas son todas sermóns contra Rusia” (“*A Pensa nao*” 111-12).

So what are the other elements in Pensa nao that create realist impressions?

Besides the use of dialect, the other elements constitute the novel's testimonial effect and its rhythm. The former is created by the fragments of sources, which help construct the narrative's texture of truth. Examples of these sources include the letters that Angueira's great grandmother had written to her son in America (which the son had brought back



with him and left in the attic in a house in Manselle), old books on medicine and religion, magazines, as well as the oral and academic sources explained above. Angueira not only uses these sources for the testimonial information they provide, but he also inserts excerpts of them into the narration. Hence, Maria's mother's letters are, at times, literal transcriptions of the letters of the author's great grandmother; Mariño's fanatic preaching of a religious book comes from one of the books the author found in his village; or the fragments Don Antonio reads form his books on medicine, etc. In his Lestrove novel presentation speech, the author alludes to his use of different materials, including the "secret" literary fragments, and this collage-like creation:

Confeso que me foi fundamental para *Pensa nao* o ter recollido na miña aldea, a rusa do valo, ferida agora brutalmente por unha irracional Vía Rápida, toda a literatura que puideron daqueles anos. Houbo moitísimo máis pero o 36 queimouna nas casas de Roiz e de Camoiras. Como queimou a Editorial Nós ou o Seminario de Estudos Galegos. E esta literatura, que son cartas de emigrantes, libros de medicina, libros relixiosos, revistas, dei en xuntala e mesturala, integrála con diversas referencias ao noso sistema literario. (6)

The novel's mosaic effect, to which these sources contribute decisively, is thus saturated with testimonial fragments that, in my view, lend the narrative an aura of authenticity.

Another fundamental element that contributes to the narrative's testimonial illusion constitutes the narrator, who functions like a character-witness for two reasons:

first, his voice does not seem to be the origin of all the others; and second, he switches on occasions from the third person voice to the first person plural, and always tells the story through simultaneous narration.<sup>62</sup> Xosé Enríquez alludes to the narrator's non-dominating position and also to his testimonial interventions. He describes the narrator as the incarnation of the author, and by doing so he reflects, in my view, the novel's convincing testimonial effect at work. He defines the author, on the one hand, as objective and neutral insofar as he inserts the above-mentioned extra-literary excerpts and literary fragments. On the other hand, he describes what he views as the author's "impulso empático de intervención" ("Anxo" 230). He further argues that the author "non se oculta ou desaparece con discreción tras das súas creacións ou da historia. Non, el está presente—invisible, fantasmagórico—e transmítenos punto por punto o que se di, o que se fai e como vai caendo, maininamente a sobra do aire" ("Anxo" 230). This critic then claims that the author cannot be a "distante trasmisor, anónimo e imparcial, esterilizado" ("Anxo" 230), because the story he tells is, to a certain extent, his own. This makes the author, concludes Enríquez, "transparentarse . . . facerse evidente xa desde os primeiros momentos" ("Anxo" 230).

Martínez Bouzas also refers to the novel's testimonial authority, and like Enríquez, he claims that the story is the author's: "Escribiuna o seu autor sen necesidade

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<sup>62</sup> I quote a passage that exemplifies both simultaneous narration and the narrator's voice in first person plural. The passage describes, as many others, the *labregos*' working in the fields: "Tarde de sementeiro de Sernanselle na Senra. Estamos en leira de temperán que vai para restebo. Xa está labrada, esterçada e sementada. O arado de pao para o sementeiro é o rei . . . María vén detrás abatendo con sacho os regos das marxas e tapando a semente" (46).

de aclimatar-se a nada, porque o que narra, viviuno no oitenta por cento el mesmo desde cativo mergullado na vida aldeá . . .” (“100%” 8). It appears that both this critic and Enríquez confuse direct testimony with one that has been recreated (or re-invented). James Young, whose theories I explored in the introduction, refers to this type of confusion (which tends to occur in readers of Holocaust fiction) and claims that docu-fiction often “becomes the illusion of documentary authority generated by authentic eyewitnesses that sustains the putative factuality of these texts and, by extension, the power of this fiction” (Young 59). Thus, Enríquez and Martínez Bouzas seem to give more truth to the novel by imputing authentic eyewitness to the author.

The narrator’s telling the events as though they were happening at the same time probably constitutes the primary technique in creating the testimonial illusion. When asked why he chose to have his narrator speak in the present tense, Angueira responded: “Traballei sempre en presente, tamén aquilo estaba diante dos meus fuciños, estaba sucedendo cada vez que o eu escribía.”<sup>63</sup> Enríquez’ description of the author’s “impulso empático” seems to capture Angueira’s idea of imagining the events he told as occurring in the present before his eyes. Likewise, when Bouzas remarks that the author lived 80% of the story (or when Enríquez claims that the story is the author’s), both are expressing, I believe, the idea that the author submerged himself so much in the history of the fascist takeover in his village that he comes about as close to being a direct witness as possible.

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<sup>63</sup> E-mail to the author, Oct. 11, 2001.

But the use of simultaneous narration and the present tense also contribute to the novel's bridging the past and present. Méndez Ferrín seems to have felt this simultaneous narration as intervening in his present: "E todo escrito en presente. Nun presente, si, valle-inclanESCO, que nos fai ver os acontecementos e as cousas mesmo diante. Un presente que non cesa, que nos absorbe ao interior do relato, que nos rapta. *Pensa nao*, estoria que foi, que está agora sendo" (2).

Méndez Ferrín also describes the rhythmic effect of the narration, which, as I pointed out earlier, constitutes in my view the other factor involved in producing verisimilar impressions. The rhythm comprises the less perceptible component in the narration, and it counteracts the possible difficulties the reader may have (probably only initially) in mastering the dialect. The rhythm and poetic effects draw the reader into the events; they act as a hypnotizing mechanism, as it were, in maintaining the reader under the testimonial illusion. Méndez Ferrín describes the hypnotizing effect: "Novela musical . . . Sucédense as repeticións, a modulación dos temas, as frases dirixentes, o retrouso, as ideas guía, que van e veñen, abalándonos, compoñéndonos, hipnotizándonos aos lectores" (2). Xosé Enríquez describes his reading of *Pensa nao* in these terms: "O ollo lía e non daba acugulado do fulgor que desprendían as liñas, unha a unha; o corazón, pola súa parte, saloucaba coa emoción" ("Unha ferverza" 21). Though this critic does not explicitly mention it, the "fulgor" and the emotions he experienced were most likely elicited by the narration's rhythm.

Méndez Ferrín also writes that the narration of the fascist takeover, which takes place during the final forty pages of the novel, rhythmically simulates the events themselves: “Visualizamos con detalle o golpe . . . E o relato avanza aos golpes, aos choutos, como fixeran os acontecementos verdadeiros” (2). My experience was similar and in addition to Méndez Ferrín’s observation, I would say that the rhythm of the final forty pages is representative of the brusqueness, the suddenness with which the fascist rebellion swept through Galiza. The rhythm, thus, submerges the reader into the novel,<sup>64</sup> and, at times—especially during the final forty pages— makes the reader not only psychologically experience the rhythm, but also physically.

Sergei Eisenstein, whose comments we visited earlier when discussing Social-Realism, also stressed the importance of his movies making the spectator physically experience the events. His explanation on *Potemkin* can be applied, on the novelistic level, to *Pensa nao*’s rhythmic effects:

Take the scene in *Potemkin* where the Cossacks, slowly, deliberately walk down the Odessa steps firing into the masses. By consciously combining the elements of legs, steps, blood, people, we produce an impression—of what kind? The spectator does not imagine himself at the Odessa wharf in 1905. But as the soldiers’ boots press forward he physically recoils. He

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<sup>64</sup> Martínez Bouzas defines one of the main characteristics of the novel as “unha inmersión,” given that its story emerges from the roots of the *aldea*. As he describes: “a narración do mundo rural faise desde dentro” (“*A Pensa nao*” 110). He also explains that the novel submerges itself in its scenery, a feature I explore later when discussing the metaphoric force of the novel.

tries to get out of the range of bullets. As the baby carriage of the crazed mother goes over the side of the mole he holds on to his cinema chair. He does not want to fall into the water. (24)

Eisenstein further explains his editing method, which also helps in achieving these rhythmically felt effects: “[T]he movement of things and of machines in our pictures is not a part quickly to be passed over but one of absorbing interest. Mounting—the interlacing of close-ups, of side-views, top-views, bottom views—is the most important part of our work” (24).

Angueira achieves his “Potemkin” effects also through an “interlacing” of scenes, changes of focalizers and dynamic descriptions. For example, the first section of chapter seven, which begins the telling of the fascist takeover, weaves together what we might think of in cinema as different close-ups and perspectives. The page opens with the church bells ringing: “Repenican toliñas as campás da igrexa” (149). María and Amando Caride then drive by in the *A Unión*’s General Motors T Truck and ask themselves why the bells are ringing. Maria yells at the new priest (an openly declared anti-Republican): “!Cabrón! !Fascista! !Ímoste queimar!” (149). The priest, who does not hear Maria, then becomes the focalizer: “O cura novo de San Xián, a contraluz, olla pasa-las nubes de cínifes cara Sernanselle, a aldea rusa, coma se perseguisen o General Motors T Truck negro” (149).

The perspective then changes brusquely to a scene that supposedly happens hours later in the day when Amando and Maria return to Sernanselle in the *A Unión* truck, and

gather with the town people. Their discussion takes the form of a theatrical dialogue (with no indication of who says what), a literary technique that contributes to the uncertainty and hysteria of the moment. At this point the perspective switches over to Amaro, who has been spending the day in the hills on an archeological study. He becomes the focalizer and his unawareness of the situation (indeed, he believes that the church bells are ringing for some nearby village's festivities)<sup>65</sup> also adds to the mounting tension. The section then ends with Xacobe de Dominga appearing behind a mound and firing at him.

Alongside this succession of abrupt changes between scenes and focalizations (among which the last of Maria's mother's dictations takes place),<sup>66</sup> also crucial in the rhythmic intensification is the narrator's use of a series of short clauses, each beginning with the conjunction "e." An especially worthy example of this usage of polysyndeton is found in the depiction of Xacobe murdering Camoiras and Amaro attempting to save his once competitor for María: "O coche vénse outra vez contra Camoiras, no chan, inmóbil, e entón Amaro dispara contra o vidro, dispara. E o coche non se detén. E Amaro volve disparar. E o coche non se detén, non se detén e unha roda pasa por riba de Camoiras, por riba do pescozo de Camoiras" (186). The repetition of "e" in this passage contributes to the increasing tension and the testimonial illusion of the tragic suddenness of the

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<sup>65</sup> "Amaro foi ás albarizas de Espiñeira que lle dixeran Don Antonio e deu con máis petroglifos arriba dos outeiros de Mos e da Tomada, na Canteira dos Postes . . . Olla alá ao fondo a liña azul espléndida do Ulla cortando a braña, as espadas repenicando por non sabe que festa . . ." (152).

<sup>66</sup> She stares into the fireplace and declares in a soliloquy: "Non veñas. Non veñas nunca, Ramón. Non volvas a esta terra de lobos . . ." (182).

fascist takeover. Likewise, it seems to convey the notion of an irrevocable chain of catastrophic events.

The rhythm, therefore, along with the testimonial illusion, constitute two of the three main elements I see in producing verisimilar impressions. The third element, that of the novel's use of a dialect as the dominant voice, was discussed earlier as comprising both an avant-garde characteristic—in so far as it acts like a defamiliarization mechanism and draws attention to itself—and one that aids the novel in achieving its testimonial illusion. The dialect, as I mentioned, comes from the *comarca* of Dodro, where Manselle is located. It is the same dialect that Rosalia de Castro spoke and used in her poetry.

The use of the dialect comprises the formal manifestation of the author's affirmation of the Galizan rural world's penchant for progress. But using dialect in the literary text can cause, nonetheless, potential problems in the interpretation of the text. Though there is an officialized standard Galizan (called *o galego oficial* or *a normativa oficial*), there continues to exist a plethora of "linguas vivas," which contribute to the fragmentation of the language and set up potential obstacles of authorial control over what s/he wants to express. For example, if a reader who grew up speaking dialect Z comes across a literary text in which the author employs words and expressions from dialect Y, the reader will be surprised and view these words and expressions as a novelty. The reader, in other words, will pay undue attention to the strange words: "[O] lector non poderá menos de ver aí un feito estilístico, non poderá menos de *ler* un feito de estilo que por suposto o autor non controla" (*Diglosia* 28).



An author in a diglossic society, argues Figueroa, does not have the same amount of control over his or her readers' reactions as does a writer of a consolidated nation and language:

Un escritor nunha lingua normalizada estándar pode en cada caso escolle-lo grao de imprevisibilidade que quere, e intentar conscientemente provocar no lector determinados efectos estilísticos, en relación precisamente co uso normal da lingua; isto, como vemos, na situación á que nos referimos presenta problemas, e resulta que o feito dialectal, que, en condicións normais, constitúe unha fonte innegable de posibilidades para o texto, resulta aquí un factor de distorsión. En relación con isto, e como proba do que dicimos, é fácil constatar como hai unha tendencia evidente en certos textos que hoxe mesmo se escriben a intentar producir “poeticidade” mediante elementos do código só usados en determinadas áreas e de uso restrinxido, ós que se dota automaticamente dunha ambigüidade (debida ó simple descoñecemento), que nada ten que ver coa ambigüidade estética producida esencialmente polo traballo textual. (91)

Thus, given this lack of control on part of the author to produce the effects s/he desires, composing literary texts in dialects (or using dialecticisms therein) is a risky business. Angueira, in this sense, confronts this risk face on and not only uses random dialectalisms, but also constructs the novel's dominant discourse in a dialect. The critics unanimously applaud him for this risky endeavor. X. Valcárcel comments that Angueira

makes his language the protagonist of the novel, and then states: “Aposta forte Angueira e sae con éxito” (“Pensa nao” 4). Ferrín claims that Angueira’s novel is “monumento e homenaxe lingua literaria nacional,” and that the author “perfecciona a lingua e o proxecto lingüístico de Eduardo Pondal, que é o que debemos acatar como modelo” (“A novela” 2). I view Angueira’s linguistic project as acting as an antidote, as it were, to this distortion that happens in Galizan literature because of its non-standardization.

The narrator’s voice in dialect presides over (very non-intrusively, as I pointed out earlier) and organizes the various discourses that appear in the novel, as well as the different socio-languages. Hence, the recurrent passages that describe the village’s technological advances, the academic discursive fragments that appear when O Señorito reads his medical books, the appearance of political texts (such as a fragment of an A Nosa Terra newspaper in Roiz’ house), Mariño’s feverish religious recitations, etc. are all governed by the narrator’s voice in dialect. Likewise, the different socio-languages that appear throughout the novel (such as that by the stone masons) are also subservient to the authority of the discourse in dialect. Therefore, in the same way that Angueira makes an unorthodox interpretation of Galizan rural history the correct version in his fictional world, so he also makes a local, marginal dialect the norm. In this sense, the novel intentionally functions as a centrifugal force against the *normativa oficial*.

But Angueira does not oppose the *normativa oficial*, as one might expect. Indeed, he fervently supports it and aggressively attacks those who defend the *normativa lusista*, in which Galizan is written like Portuguese. Currently there are three *normativas*, one of

which is the *normativa oficial*. The defenders of the other two, a *normativa dos mínimos* and a *normativa lusista* (also called a *normativa reintegracionista*) are battling to make their respective *normativas* also official. The difference between the three, *grosso modo*, is that the *normativa oficial* is the most “Spanish” of the three insofar as it uses Spanish orthography and punctuation. The *normativa dos mínimos* uses Spanish orthography, while its punctuation and certain morphological features are Portuguese. The *normativa reintegracionista* employs Portuguese orthography and punctuation and also incorporates certain Portuguese words and expressions, while maintaining some Galizan as well.

When Galizan was institutionalized in 1977, the *normativa oficial* was that of *mínimos*, but in the early eighties prominent linguists succeeded in debunking this *normativa* and officializing what is now the current *galego oficial*. Their argument is that their *normativa* reflects daily speech much better than the other two, and that written Galizan has never in its history imitated Portuguese orthography. The defenders of the *mínimos* and *lusista* norms, on the other hand, claim that the Galizan language can benefit from approximating Portuguese. While the philosophy behind the *mínimos* norm is one of gradual evolution toward Portuguese, the *lusista* endorsers claim that their norm should be institutionalized now so as to enable Galiza’s reintegration into the Portuguese sphere.

Anxo Angueira, as a university student, had been a *lusista*, but he became deeply disillusioned with the people within the *lusista* movement and so began to endorse the current *normativa oficial*. I have found in my interviews with him that he is not against

the idea of Galiza becoming integrated within the Portuguese speaking world, but his resentment of the common dogmatic *lusista* mentality has led him to take a very *anti-lusista* stance. He claims, and I agree with him, that the *lusistas* tend to have haughty elitist attitudes and despise Galizan literature, while they consider that only literature written in Portuguese is worthy of praise. Angueira comments on this aspect in his interview with Penelas:

Moitos escritores galegos teñen complexos ó respecto da ortografía galega e . . . eu estou moi orgulloso de utilizala porque me parece perfecta. O que pasa é que desde posturas reintegracionistas hai un odio hacia a nosa comunidade lingüística e búscanse soucións escapistas adoptando a ortografía do portugués. Pensar que o galego se salva porque se fala no Porto é absurdo. (3)

In all of his published interviews he makes similar comments that reveal deep resentment towards the *lusistas* (indeed, one could argue that he is the most *anti-lusista* Galizan writer alive today). In his interview with C. Vidal he claims that his linguistic project of using a dialect in Pensa nao would be considered vulgar by the *lusistas* and not representable in their *normativa*. He argues that the *normativa oficial*, on the other hand, allows him to transgress it by reflecting the dialect: “queria manifestar o meu orgullo por empregar a normativa vixente que me permite mesmo trasgredila nun sentido, ao mellor, totalmente inverso ao reintegracionismo” (24).

This question of the *normativa* and Angueira's prejudice against the *lusista* norm, therefore, cannot be separated from his linguistic project. Nevertheless, his *anti-lusista* crusade has not found much of a response among the critics. Of all the them—who all acclaim his use of the dialect—only one, Martínez Bouzas, has openly endorsed the author's stance. The others simply do not mention the question, whether they agree with the author or not. Martínez Bouzas discusses the flexibility offered by *norma oficial* in allowing Angueira to transgress it, and then contends: “Desde esta perspectiva, *Pensa nao* é unha achega importante cara a atoparmos ese verdadeiro paradigma para o futuro do galego, que outros teiman en pescudar lonxe de nós, extramuros da nosa lingua” (“A *Pensa nao*” 113).

Martínez Bouzas' comments regarding his staunch defense of the *galego oficial* furthermore betray a purist and isolationist stance, which is quite common among *oficialistas*. Indeed, this polemic functions in a very political way in that the voices that resonate the most usually belong to the dogmatic factions of each position. That is, if on the one side the hard line *lusistas* despise Galizan literature because it is written in the Spanish-like standard, the other side also falls into dogmatic purist fantasies. For them Galiza is a nation all of its own; they do not want to feel a part of either Spain or Portugal. (And again I want to emphasize that Angueira does not endorse this agenda, although his recurrent attacks on the *lusistas* would make one think so.) In addition to Martínez Bouzas' idea of the *galego oficial* as the “verdadeiro paradigma,” he also reveals an essentialist concept of the Galizan nation: “Un romance de fondas resonancias

sociais e políticas que narra a construción dunha forma de convivencia, esnaquizada ao final. Un cambio de realidade, unha recuperación da memoria e da identidade, da verdadeira identidade nacional” (111). It is not clear whether this critic would defend an isolationist stance, but his idea of a “true national identity” smacks of dogmatism.

Because the novel I analyze in the next chapter, *Scórpio*, is written in the *lusista* norm, I dedicate part of that analysis to flesh out further some of these intricacies. Now let us turn to other relevant features of Angueira’s novel: Utopia, metaphor, and the already discussed “meta-intertextuality.” Given that they all blend together on all levels of the novel, it is not an easy task to separate each of these features and describe them disembodied, as it were, from each other and from the other semantic features of the narration. As an introduction to this section, I discuss the instability of the Galizan literary system and the mixing of different genres and codes in a single work as a manifestation of this instability.

### **Utopia, Metaphor and “Meta-intertextuality”**

In chapter one I explained the evolution in Galizan literature from the proliferation of allegorical novels—which represented unreal utopian worlds—in the first half of the 1980’s, to that of the Civil War novels (and historical novels in general), which today very likely constitute the most prevalent subgenre in the Galizan literary field. But I also emphasized the transchronological facet of allegorical and utopian works in Galizan literary production, given that these subgenres offer authors an ideal framework for carrying out their demiurgic desires of crafting an alternative Galizan

reality. Because of this community's historical dependence on Spain and its concomitant non-normalized cultural and linguistic status, Galizan narratives that use allegory, utopia, and epic manifest, in general, a tension between the text and the world. That is, the texts of these fictions manifest, through their recreations of alternative realities, the authors' rejection of the actual world s/he lives in and the desire for one in which the Galizan language and culture are consolidated.<sup>67</sup>

Moreover, these representations of alternative realities reveal the instability of the dominant language and culture; they act as heterodoxic representations of those of the Spanish metropolis. The mythical, utopian, and epic worlds can be projected to either the past or future, and they are, in the case of the aforementioned allegorical novels of the 1980's, ahistorical. I quote Figueroa's comments on this question:

Nas sociedades diglósicas dáse de feito como solución imaxinaria da precariedade constatada unha saída cara ó mítico, unha saída a outro espacio e a outro tempo á vez, que envolve tamén miticamente o "rural" e o etnográfico, pero que se diferencia destes dous aspectos. Créase un espacio e un tempo ideais no que a lingua se integraba sen dificultades no conxunto da sociedade idealizada. (Diglosia e texto 93)

Angueira's novel, as I explained earlier, is historical insofar as it depicts a real historical event in Galizan and Spanish history. But it does, nonetheless, employ a series

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<sup>67</sup> For an explanation of this problematic Text/World, see Silencio 39-40.

of strategies that attempt to totalize Galician reality. This aspect, along with its use of a complex web of metaphors and its utopian and epic qualities, reveals a certain escapist quality and desire to overcome the unpalatable present and “found” an alternative social order. In this sense Pensa nao, like the aforementioned allegorical novels, constitutes a foundational narrative.

In his interview with Vidal, when asked “Como se pode intervir a meio dunha novela?,” the author comments at the end of his response that his objective is to “[c]onverter, en fin, a literatura nesa fantasía que ten os pés na terra” (24). A very revelatory statement, which reflects, on the one hand, the novel’s concreteness (its “feet on the ground”), and, on the other, its recreation through fantasy and emotion of this historical narration. Angueira, when asked what emotions he experienced while composing his novel, provided a response that reflects the role that fantasy and emotion played in his writing of the novel:

Igual che parece unha parvada pero o novelar (con moita fantasía, claro, e moito invento) parte da miña familia, personaxes que eu sentía moi vivos (¡as cartas da miña propia avoa e bisavoa!) deume moita forza para transmitir que aí, na República, na Liberdade e na Esperanza estaba tamén a familia, a raíz de todos nós (galegos e galegas) como colectividade. A emoción final como escritor, con bágoas que nunca coñecera, era probabelmente a de despedirme do mundo que eu mesmo creara e no que xa non ía poder entrar endexamáis. ¿Entendes? Eu edificara aquilo con



moito esforzo e moita paixón, gobernáralo con dúbidas, con angustias, con satisfacción inexplicábel, con horror.<sup>68</sup>

Also important to point out from this description is the author's concept of the roots of society as part of the larger entities like the Republic, and even abstract ones such as Hope and Freedom. It is this binary of the concrete and the abstract (or the objective and the fantastic), that places Pensa nao in contrast to the allegorical novels of the 1980's. These novels, which also function as foundational texts, lack the interaction of historical and objective material, on the one hand, and spirit and abstraction on the other. They lack, in the last analysis, the praxis which Angueira's novel creates. Hence, though escapist in the sense of recreating a utopian past that contrasts with the alienated and backward present, Pensa nao's world is radically historical and dynamic insofar as it attempts to show how history weighs on the present and determines a society's and peoples' destiny.

But the fantastic elements created by the author must not be viewed as untruthful fabrications. They consist, rather, of the narrative and poetic strategies that help make the story meaningful to the readers. The first of these, the use of the utopian form, provides a heuristic model with which the reader experiments vicariously what Galizan reality was like, and what it can become in the future. As González-Millán argues, the

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<sup>68</sup> E-mail to the author, Oct. 11, 2001.

utopian code comprises an optimum strategy for contextualizing marginal voices in a community's historical trajectory:

Nunha situación semellante, na que a representación heterodoxa dun espacio cultural diferente está marcada pola experiencia dunha violencia simbólica multiseccular, é inevitable ler a intencionalidade utópica coma unha forza crítica que reinstala as visións marxinais na contextualización histórica, intensificando deste xeito a conflictividade producida pola copresencia de dúas propostas ideolóxicas irreconciliabes. (Silencio 36)

The novel's open ending (what will happen to the escaping characters?) brings forth to our present the interrupted utopia depicted throughout the narrative. The destruction of the democratic experiment in Sernancelhe cannot hinder the memory of it, and the reader's desire to live vicariously this utopian society may lead him or her to desire this type of society in the present.

In the same way that the novel's use of dialect relates to its dynamic rural thematics, the very progression of the narration can also be understood as a metaphor of Galiza during the Republic and its abrupt fall to fascism. Indeed, some of the critics express the novel's story as the movement from cosmos to chaos. For example, Méndez Ferrín describes the part of the novel that precedes the fascist take over as "(t)odo quedo, organizado e ben. Paz antes da tormenta" ("A novela" 2). He then describes the end from the point at which the rebel takeover occurs: "O ceo, a terra, a xunqueira, o mar, confóndense nun caos calculado: sangue e terror. Fin da novela de Angueira" ("A

novela” 2). Xulio Valcárcel states that the author “recrea un cosmos propio e traslada a súa experiencia, por vía da imaxinación . . .” (“Pensa nao” 4). Xosé Eiré refers to “ese cosmos traballador e activo que se poñerá a construír . . .” and earlier affirms that the novel is “denunciadora do caos e da morte que virán, como é homenaxe, como é épica da sociedade que mutilan” (“Prelúdio” 27). Martínez Bouzas depicts the novel as “[u]nha metáfora condensada, cun antes e un despois” (“A *Pensa nao*” 110). Abuín de Tembra describes the novel as a metaphor of all the villages in Galiza: “O Sernanselle, en que se desenvolve a conxectura de *Pensa nao*, é un trasunto das trinta mil aldeas de Galicia. Todas viviron e sufriron un drama tan atroz e salvaxemente sanguinario” (“Anxo” 2).

The title of the novel itself can be interpreted as metaphoric of Galiza during the Republic. In Galizan the substantive *nao* signifies *boat* (usually a riverboat), and the adjective *pensa* is a dialecticism meaning *slanted*, *crooked* or *bent*.<sup>69</sup> I mentioned earlier that the character Mariño, who along with Xocobe de Dominga is the Señorito’s work-hand, begins to build a *nao* early on in the story. Initially, the *nao* comprises one of many other activities the village people carry out, but later on in the story it begins to gain prominence.<sup>70</sup> In chapter five, another character who is helping Mariño build the boat, O da Couta, becomes the focalizer, and while he is working in the fields spreading

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<sup>69</sup> In Galizan, the synonymous adjectives of “penso/a” could be “inclinado/a,” “pandeado/a,” “pendido/a dun lado.”

<sup>70</sup> Méndez Ferrín argues that once the fascist rebellion takes place, the narration moves from the initial disorientation of the characters to a focusing on the boat: “Desconcerto inicial. No interior do conto os personaxes accionan, móvense sen centro. Vai concentrándose todo nun punto. Unha barca ou nao ou gamela “pensa,” isto é: Mal feita e pandeada para un costado” (“A novela” 2).

manure, his thoughts are on the *nao* and he even imagines rowing it: “O da Couta ten o plano da gamela na cabeza, enteiriño, perfecto. E xa remou” (116). Later, the third subchapter of chapter six portrays several of the village men contemplating and discussing about the almost finished *nao*. Silvestre, who is also helping build the boat, examines it closely and notices that it is bent: “Silvestre move a gamela enriba dos cabaletes. Encrequénase no couso e dá o veredicto. –Esta gamela . . . Demo de chafullas. !Esta gamela está pensa!” (134).

Later when the uprising occurs, Mariño—whose most conspicuous trait is to recite fragments from a dogmatic religious book—becomes horrified by the uprising and offers his *nao* to the politically progressive characters. Amaro and his parents escape on the boat towards the ocean and the last sentence of the novel, “E a pensa nao vai avante, fuxindo cara o mar” (190), is really the moment, in my view, when the reader grasps the boat’s metaphoric function. The critics tend to agree that the bent (or imperfect) boat represents the imperfect Galiza in the Republic. In the author’s words, it represents “país en marcha pero eivado, non. País en marcha a pesar de estar eivado, a pesar das dificultades.”<sup>71</sup>

Through these metaphoric features, Pensa nao condenses a vision of totality of Galiza, which helps create the illusion of an alternative world. In this respect, Angueira’s fiction comprises a meta-narrative, as opposed to the micro-narratives common to

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<sup>71</sup> E-mail to the author, Oct. 17, 2001.

identity-affiliated subaltern narrations.<sup>72</sup> The idea of Sernanselle representing the Galizan totality from a geographical point of view is made possible by this village's transitional location between the interior and exterior with the Ulha River as the connecting element. The novel, as I showed, depicts the common labors of farmers, which constitutes a reality mostly associated with the interior. But the novel also tells of the ocean tides that reach as far as Sernanselle, and the vendors of *berberechos* (an ocean clam) who come in from the ocean to sell their products. Xosé Eiré captures this dual geographic situation in claiming that the characters who “moran en Sernanselle ou na sua contorna, son a vida como a vida é a terra e o mar, que esta é unha novela de terra que sempre mira ao mar” (“Prelúdio” 27). In his Lestrove presentation speech, Angueira describes the Ulha's ubiquitous aspect in these words: “Desde as antas do corazón de Galicia ata as Torres de Oeste onde se arrecende o salseiro do mar da Arousa, desde a Ulloa dos castelos e das donas pintadas no ousó do Vilar ata as escovellas sen fondo das nosas brañas, por fervezas, pazos e mosteiros abaixo, o Ulla é o máis grande mar dos nosos ríos pequenos” (4). It is thanks to the Ulha that Amaro and his parents are able to escape to the coastal town Ribeira, which resisted the fascist takeover long enough (both in the fiction and in reality) to allow some political dissidents to flee across the ocean.

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<sup>72</sup> González-Millán explains the difference between the discourses of micro social movements and nationalist ones: “A diferencia radical entre estes movementos sociais e a dinámica reivindicativa dos movementos nacionalistas está precisamente na imaxinación totalizante que modela as manifestacións discursivas destes últimos” (*Silencio* 29).

This transitional location not only represents the rich metaphoric potential of the village, but it also stands for the duality of the local and the universal, the roots of a society and its openness to the world. The author described in his interview with Carrera his idea of the Ulha as a artery of communication with the world: “Agora desapareceu practicamente a navegación, pero eu sempre a asociei desde pequeno ó comercio e á apertura. Na novela tamén tento plasmar que tamén é o río da comunicación, das ideas e do progreso” (10). He also refers in his book presentation to the institutional negligence of the present: “Falo do meu Ulla, do mesmo que defende Abuín de Tembra diante da negligencia escandalosa das institucións.” He describes the river as a witness to Galizan history: “Falo do Ulla que navegaron os cousos celtas, romanos, suevos, Prisciliano, vikingos e mouros” (4). And in so doing, he personifies it: “Aínda agora polo Ulla soben e descen, enchen e devalan, as marés vivas do noso corazón” (4-5). Throughout the novel, the river is often personified. In fact, the last sentence of chapter six—immediately before the section that begins the narration of the fascist rebellion—describes the river as being prepared to carry on its back the boats to the ocean: “Púxose de néboa a braña e o Ulla grande baixa ensaiando, preparado para levar ao lombo as naves cara o mar” (148).

Thus, the two main metaphoric functions of the Ulha seem to be its capability to totalize a vision of all of Galiza, and its dual dimension of the local and the global. Furthermore, the Ulha, as well as the Sar River, take on sexual connotations in the two scenes in which Amaro and María have sexual intercourse. The first one takes place in

Padrón where the lovers get held up because of the flooding Sar River and the second occurs right before chapter seven (which begins telling of the fascist takeover). Here Amaro and María, on the fields that look down to the Ulha, open several irrigation channels and make love in a ditch as the water gushes over them:

Non para, a auga non para e vaise por riba do arrendo cara os regos do lado, silandeira, e métese negra e morna polos furos do mutuo medio que non hai de María e Amaro na lama.

—Amaro, ¿onde estás?

—No medio do río.

—Pois voga, Amaro, voga. !Voga canto poidas! (147)

When the flood subsides, the lovers finish: “A enxurrada perdeu forza e María déixase caer enriba de Amaro. Fican en silencio” (147). María’s imploration of “voga,” has, as do many of the words used during scenes of sexual intercourse, a double meaning. In this case, “voga,” which would usually mean “row,” takes on here a sexual connotation. In the closing paragraph of the novel when Amaro and his parents escape on the *pensa nao*—given that the boat only fits three, María volunteers to try to escape on foot over the Barbanza hills to the ocean—María’s imploration reappears:

E entón Amaro volve a vista cara Cal de Barcas e Contemunde. Xa non se ve Sernanselle, non. Pero Amaro ve a María polo Castro de Mouras, na Barbanza, one estea o bico da infinda moitedume de luciña que lostrega nos montes, como unha bátega.

—!Voga , Amaro! !Voga!

E a pensa nao vai avante, fuxindo cara o mar. (190)

Here, of course, the “voga” seems to refer more to Amaro’s rowing, but the erotic connotation remains. Indeed, one could argue that the world of Sernanselle, as a microcosm of Galiza during the Republic, is fraught with erotic overtones. Amaro and María’s love provides the main source of this eroticism, but Camoiras’ sexual prowess also adds to the idea of the Republic as a fertile and free-loving society, in contrast to the castrating traits given to the fascists.<sup>73</sup> Amor de tango, which I analyze in chapter four, also eroticizes the Republic in a similar way to that of Pensa nao.

The other feature of the novel that critics view as metaphoric, concerns what I termed the narration’s “meta-intertextuality.” The author purposely disseminates throughout the narration verses, sentences or references of a myriad of mostly Galizan writers, both past and contemporary. They include Rosalía de Castro, Eduardo Pondal, Curros Enríquez, Otero Pedrayo, Manoel Antonio, Valle-Inclán, Méndez Ferrín, and even references to Julio Cortázar’s Prosa del observatorio. Méndez Ferrín describes this technique in these words: “Por todas partes agroman as mensaxes crípticas, para desconcertar e intrigar. Mensaxes masónicas, só para entendidos. Citas de un cento de

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<sup>73</sup> Before murdering Camoiras, Xacobe da Dominga yells at him: “-!Ímosche corta-los collóns, fodedor!” Camoiras replies: “Téstollos á túa muller de recordo” (186).



autores camuflados” (“A novela” 2). In other words, the reader, unless s/he is very well read in Galician literature, is most likely not to notice these quotes.<sup>74</sup>

I provide an example to show how these insertions work in the narration. One paragraph begins thus: “A esa mesma hora vén de Santiago a Padrón, nun chover que é arroar, o General Motors T Truck” (66). The passage recounts the trip María, Amaro and Amando Caride make from Santiago (where they attend a union meeting) to Padrón, which is about 10 kilometers from Mancebo (Sernanselle). But the sentence—until “o General . . .”—is actually a verse taken from a poem by Rosalia de Castro in her book Follas novas. The poem is “Miña casa, meu lar,” and the verse goes as follows: “Vin de Santiago a Padrón/nun chover que era arroar.” Like this example, there are many others dispersed throughout the novel and integrated in a disguised fashion into the narration.<sup>75</sup>

One reference that the readers are likely to grasp comes from one of Castelao’s anti-fascist etchings published in Galicia Mártir, which he created during the Civil War in

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<sup>74</sup> Martínez Bouzas briefly alludes to these “cryptic” messages when speaking about the dialecticisms that have “resonancias dos nosos grandes escritores perfectamente integrados no seu texto, de xeito que semellan de propia colleita” (“A Pensa nao” 113).

<sup>75</sup> For example, a passage with two verses and a reference to a verse from Manuel Antonio’s poem “Navy bar” appears when María and Amaro are in Padrón. The name of the poet, who was from this town, is mentioned at the beginning of the paragraph; thus, the reader is given a hint, unlike the other references elsewhere which are more difficult to detect. The passage reads: “Na casa de Maneol Antonio entra o lamacento mar subindo polos banzos do patín. Nas tabernas as pipas nadan e tódolos vasos están cheos. Pero, tecedeiras, aínda traquetean as altas máquinas do téxtil na de Ramos” (69). The stanza from “Navy bar” reads: “Nas tabernas as pipas nadan / e todos os vasos están cheos.” The reference comes a half of page later and reads: “E tódolos da Falanxe e das J.A.P. repiten envoltos nas bandeiras que nunca serán políglotas” (69). The verse from “Navy bar” reads: “E tatean as pipas / co ademán políglota das bandeiras.” Otero Pedrayo’s Devalar (1935) is referred to by Amaro, who reads a novel entitled As palmas de Herbón (126). Two sentences, among other references, appear from Méndez Ferrín’s short story “Episodio de caza,” from Crónica de nós (1980): “unha man de cinco corvos” (152); and “unha man de cinco garzas” (188). Ferrín also wrote about Dodro Vello in his Amor de Artur (1982), and Angueira took from this book the following sentence: “Tacholado de luces o ceo é en Dodro Vello” (145).

Catalonia.<sup>76</sup> These etchings consist of a series of depictions of fascist atrocities with captions. Angueira chose to use the etching “A derradeira lección do mestre,” a depiction that consists of a dead teacher lying on the side of a road with two young boys at his side (see figure on next page). The gist of the message shows that the murdering of the teacher by the fascists constitutes, for his disciples, the last of his lessons. Angueira channels this message through Camoiras right before Xacobe is about to kill him and the teacher of Sernanselle. The teacher begins to shout anti-communist propaganda:

—Deixo muller e fillos . . . Eu arrenego da República, eu arrenego do comunismo e do separatismo. Eu non son destes traidores e criminais, destes cabróns de Camoiras. ¿Pero non vedes? ¿Non vedes que estou coa Falanxe e co Alzamento? ¡Arriba Hespaña! ¡Arriba Hespaña! ¡Arriba Hespaña!

Camoiras then responds to the teacher: “Cale, señor mestre, cale. Non estrague a derradeira lección desta maneira” (185). This ironic inversion of the teacher, who in the

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<sup>76</sup> Daniel Alfonso Castelao, as I explained in chapter one was one of the two representatives in Madrid of the Galizan leftist nationalist party. When the rebellion took place he was in Madrid, and thus escaped the immediate persecution and trauma that occurred in Galiza.

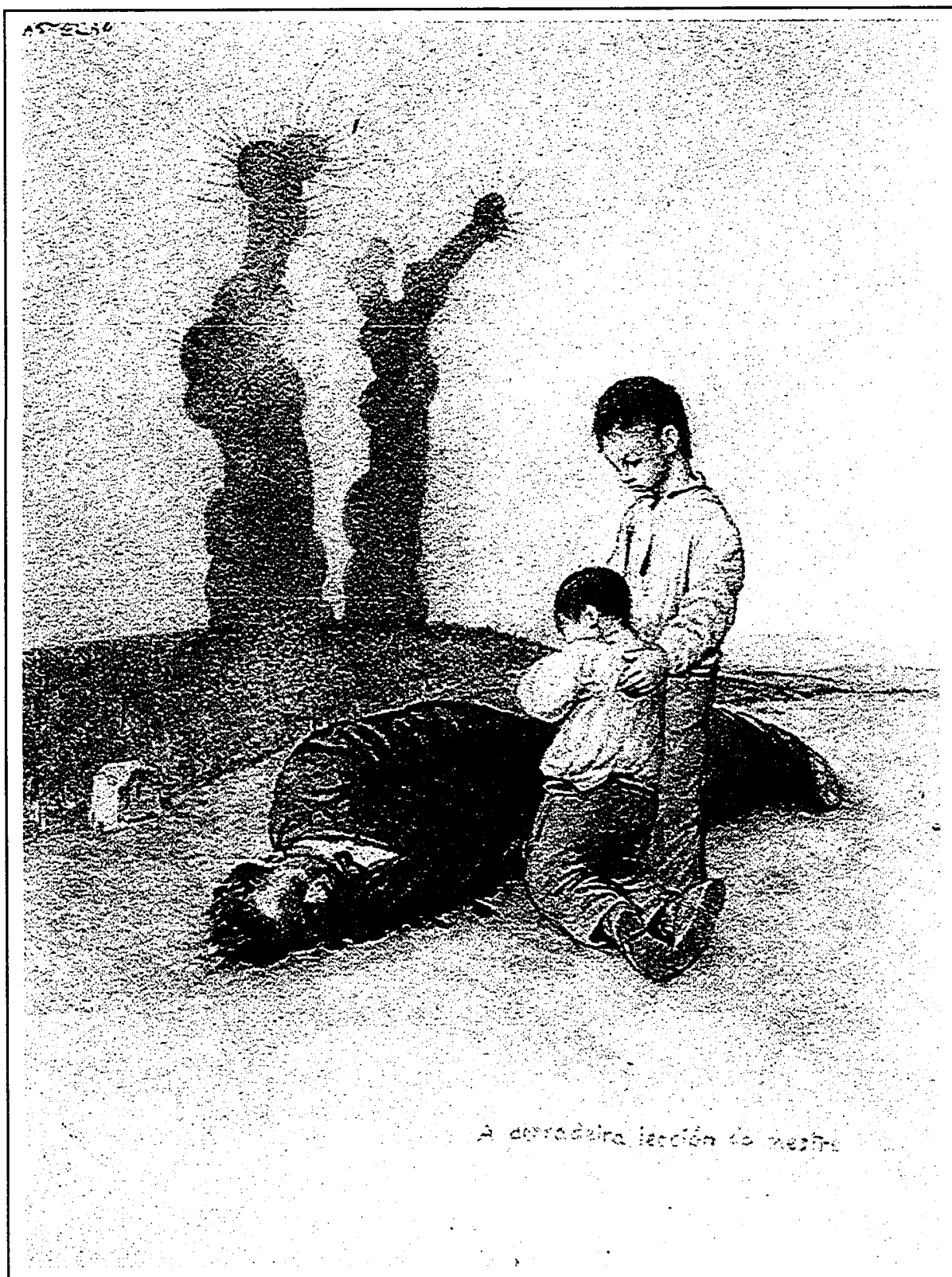


Figure 1

novel loses his dignity before being murdered, reminds the reader of the teacher's friends in "A lingua das bolboretas" who betray the teacher out of despair.<sup>77</sup>

Angueira also uses, in addition to the sentences and references from Galizan writers, some from Julio Cortázar's Prosa del observatorio. The author latched onto the Argentine's description of eels and the massive migration they have in their lifetime from the depths of the ocean to inland rivers, and then back again to the ocean where they die. The first of the references, which appear at the beginning and the end of the novel, is elicited through María's thoughts as she looks at her mother (who is dictating a letter to her) make an *empanada* with eels:

María escribe e olla para as serpentiformes descabezadas que o vello  
Rosende pescou do regato de Sernanselle e que aínda parece que rebolen  
na empanadeira. María imaxina o alfabeto sideral que as trague de  
distantes profundidades do Atlántico en ríos fusiformes deica aí abaixo, a  
Albariña, e que as volve levar en noite roxa e ritmo cósmico ao útero  
inicial dos sargazos para desovaren e morreren nas tebras. (13)<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Angueira explained his motive behind including the Castelao message: "A derradeira lección do mestre de Castelao era a de morrer pola República e as Liberdades (os meniños víano morto). Non todos somos heroes. Nun libro sobre a represión en Nigrán (cerca de Vigo) lin unha historia similar a esta, a dun mestre, casado e con fillos, que quixo salva-la vida con donativos ó Alzamento e á Falanxe. Non lle serviu de nada. E humano o seu comportamento e eu non quería caer en heroísmos demasiado prototípicos para salvar unha causa. Por outro lado, aí está elevado por contraste o papel de Camoiras" (E-mail to the author, Oct. 17, 2001).

<sup>78</sup> Another reference appears at the beginning of the same sub-chapter in which Camoiras and the teacher are murdered. The "A iaugua coría polo seu camiño. Noite roxa . . ." (184). In this case, the first sentence is from a Rosalía de Castro poem, while the second belongs to Cortázar. This combination could very well be another manifestation of the duality mentioned earlier concerning the author's local-universal philosophy.

When asked why the eel's migration interested him so much, he replied that for him these migrations are metaphorical of Galizan emigrants: "O mundo da emigración e do exilio, o ir e volver ó mar das anguías é o ir e volver de moita xente desde o río da infancia. Expulsos da súa terra por circunstancias económica ou políticas (guerra civil)—realmente son todas políticas—senten sempre o desexo de volveren."<sup>79</sup>

As I commented above, the ensemble of the references and verses (the author's intentional "meta-intertextuality") reflects, in my opinion, the desire to create an encyclopedic cultural vision of Galiza.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, many of the critics view this technique as responsible for creating the novel's metaphoric quality (in the sense of totalizing the whole of Galizan reality). Xosé Enríquez interprets the abundant quotes as if they were the ghostly representations of the writers themselves:

Iso é *Pensa nao*. Unha obra comunalista, plural. Un ser múltiple posto en pé a partir dunha estrutura ósea e mental alimentada por un circuío amplo de sangues comunicados, onde todos son responsables e non hai identidades singulares, senón un protagonismo extenso, colectivo, ramificado. Ao que tamén contribúe con xenerosidade outros autores desa época e ou zona, "debidamente apropiados," e que funden a súa voz e a

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<sup>79</sup> E-mail to the author, Dec. 22, 2002.

<sup>80</sup> This desire seems to be most likely unconscious. Angueira wrote in regard to his masquerading of verses and literary references: "Moitas citas non son premeditadas, saíronme cando escribía. Sobre todo as de Rosalía e Manuel Antonio" (E-mail to the author, Oct. 17, 2001).

súa figura nun “continuum” histórico de elaboración da identidade de todos” (“Anxo” 230).

A few sentences later his description becomes an extended metaphor: “Como se dun palimpsesto se tratase, *Pensa nao* escíbese sobre as liñas, aínda vivas, dos vellos pergamiños que edificaron a nosa personalidade, metáfora dun país onde as máis notables realizacións son as que non se esquecen de aproveitar (mesmo <sup>2</sup>arquitectonicamente) as antigas pedras” (230).

The critic’s description in these two quotes elicits another idea worth contemplating: the novel as a live entity, a bone structure with a common blood circulation system, and a messenger whose messages gathered from the past are “aínda vivas.” In accordance with this observation, I conceive of the author’s “meta-intertextuality” as yet another technique in making the static become dynamic. Just as he takes the historiographical discourse and dialogizes it, inserts it into a world of conflicting ideologies and three dimensionality, so he also dialogizes the poetic verses and references from the Galizan and other literary systems.<sup>81</sup> Worthy of quoting in regard to this idea is Bakhtin’s explanation of the non-dialogic nature of poetry:

In genres that are poetic in the narrow sense, the natural dialogization of the word is not put to artistic use, the word is sufficient unto itself and does not presume alien utterances beyond its own boundaries. Poetic style

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<sup>81</sup> I think that Angueira’s including Cortázar in this totalizing concept of Galiza connects to the cosmopolitan part of the Ulha metaphor, which, as we saw, can be viewed as encompassing both the local and the universal.

is by convention suspended from any mutual interaction with alien discourse, any allusion to alien discourse. (285)

By inserting non-dialogized fragments of Galizan poetry, the author resuscitates them, as it were, from the static boundaries that their genre imposed on them. The novel, as the Russian critic defended, has overcome all other genres not only because of its dialogizing feature and its ability to account for our modern world, a world in the making, unfinished and composed of conflicts; but also because of its capacity to ingest all the other genres. The author's masquerading of verses in Pensa nao only accounts for a fragment of the novel's poetic resonances. Angueria's poetic vein (he is, above all, a poet) shows through consistently from beginning to end in this novel. Indeed, this poetic facet contributes, perhaps, to making its use of dialect overcome the signifying obstacles analyzed above.

### Concluding Thoughts

All of these features I have fleshed out—and I have only covered the tip of the iceberg—contribute to Pensa nao's ability to question readers' apperceptive backgrounds and provide a conceptual framework for rebuilding Galiza, a community and nation weighted down by certain remnants of fascist ideology. Angueira, perhaps more than any of the Galizan Civil War novelists, shows that memory is a powerful force for reconceptualizing and rehistoricizing the present. Through myriad sources (historiographical texts, intrahistorical documents, such as his step-grandmother's letters, etc.) and techniques (testimonial and realist effects achieved through the use of dialect, a

discreet narrator who speaks in the present tense, avant-garde and dynamic descriptions, etc.), he opens up new horizons on all levels of society. Indeed, Pensa nao enters society on all levels: the cultural, the ideological, the political-social and even the economic. Furthermore, Angueira's totalizing and encyclopedic endeavor does not seem to diminish any of the multiple micro-worlds depicted (for example, the love stories). My only criticism would be of Maria's and Amaro's dialogues (during their sexual encounters), which become cloying, overly lyrical and somewhat unreal.

To conclude, I would like to focus on the inconclusive ending of the novel, which I find essential in leading the reader to connect the past and the present. Given that this comprises perhaps the most important facet of the narrative, I think it is appropriate to end my analysis by revisiting this aspect. In Pensa nao there is nothing textually explicit that prompts the reader to make the connection, nor is there a physical bridge between the two temporal dimensions. The two main factors in the narrative that, in my view, lead the reader (instinctively as it were) to feel the story as a part of the present comprise the submersion effect or illusion, and the novel's incomplete ending.

Regarding the first element, I have explained the realist and dynamic effects the narration achieves through its use of dialect and diverse sociolects, its rhythm, its metaphoric force, leftist-nationalist ideology, etc.. Likewise, the use of the present tense contributes decisively to drawing the reader into the story. Méndez Ferrín alludes to this immersion effect: “[N]unha aldea da que chegamos os lectores a sermos veciños, iso si invisibeis” (“A novela” 2). Indeed, my experience reading this novel, captivating in all



respects, made me think of a time machine transporting the reader to the past. The emotional intensity really begins to grip the reader near the end when the micro-world of Seranselle, metaphor of Galiza, is lost. Angueira's description of his feelings show that he too was especially moved toward the end:

Cando marchan de Manselle, Amaro e seus pais e Maria se vai polo monte; a despedida de Amaro de Manselle, que eu sabia que era definitiva, era tamén como a minha despedida de Manselle, daquel mundo. Non todo sae cunha paixón así. No momento en que vén a recolección de todo o que ese mundo lograra: "E a fabrica, a casa, a nogueira, Murguía, Curros e Rosalía en cerámica celta . . . o Minerva azul M-4 1934, os garaxes da Unión . . ." (180-81), seguido por "Sernanselle, Sernanselle, todo Sernanselle tatexa un adeus cuberto para sempre no silencio e no terror." E chorei enormemente cando escribín todo iso. Pero dei-me de conta cando estaba escribindo que era tamen o meu adeus como autor, escritor a este mundo.<sup>82</sup>

The last two scenes of the novel, in which Amaro witnesses the murdering of Camoiras and then gets back on the boat with his parents and rows into the narration's incomplete ending, set the ground for what I see as the metaphoric decapitation of Galiza and the Republic and the final escape. In the second to the last scene, Amaro leaves his parents on the boat close to the shore because he sees the two Falangists about to murder

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<sup>82</sup> Personal interview, July 15, 2001.

the teacher and Camoiras. After his futile attempt to save his *indiano* friend (he is able to shoot and kill Ventura, but Xacobe escapes into the night), he approaches Camoiras and contemplates the decapitated corpse: “E olla o corpo decapitado de Camoiras. Olla ao luar os seus ollos abertos de neno morto, fóra de cacho, vertendo en silencio horrorosos fíos mouros de sangue. Fíos cos que ningún ha nunca tercer nada, nada, nada” (187). The idea of the threads of blood that come out of Camoiras’ eyes (remember the passage where the Señorito, covered with bees, looks metaphorically into Camoiras’ eyes), the threads with which no one will ever weave anything, is emphasized by the repetition of “nada.”

The last scene begins with Amaro realizing that the boat has drifted down stream. He runs down the shore and, exhausted, falls down and seems to give up. But he tells himself that he has to get up (which I read as the metaphorical call to resistance) and while he runs and swims to reach the boat, Camoiras’ eyes accompany him:

Fura Amaro por antre a folla da cana que cega o lume dos cemiterios en  
fogueira e corta os ollos, os ollos abertos de neno, os ollos mortos de  
Camoiras.

Cunetas e cunetas e cunetas.

Bate na cana Amaro exhausto das insuas e cae no rumor do  
tremedoiro. Non ve nin sente Amaro pasar, baixando polo río, de  
Prisciliano a compañía, compañía longa en marcha cara Abrente, a volta

eterna, sen cabo nin comén. Pero érguese, ten que erguerse . . . na noite roxa e corre (189-90).

Amaro, like Galiza, is condemned to the eternal “noite roxa” of Cortázar when the eels are expelled from their native land and forced to live elsewhere. His last surge of effort to resist, despite the barbarianism (the “cunetas e cunetas e cunetas”) and his exhaustion, fuse into the open horizon of the ending. He rows the boat towards the openness of the ocean, and here the novel ends. This unfinished ending with a young resisting character (accompanied by Maria’s courageous sacrifice and her erotically laden invocation “!Voga Amaro voga!”) constitutes, in my view, the main facet of the narration, which invites the reader to reach out to this character and feel his existence in the present; the reader feels the desperate need to grab on to the threads of Camoiras and the Republic, and not let go of them.<sup>83</sup>

The openness of the story entertains a certain parallelism with the avant-garde features of the narration. The difficulties of the fragmentary style, the use of dialect and diverse socio-lects, etc., demand that the reader construct much of the narration’s meaning. Much of the novel’s democratic ideology and its praxis reside, I believe, in this making the reader an agent of meaning. Just as it exhorts the reader to construct the meanings, so it also invites him or her to do the same with reality. That is, like the

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<sup>83</sup> The description on the back side of the novel’s cover also captures this metaphoric meaning of a Galiza that resists up until our present: “*Pensa nao é a metáfora dunha Galicia aberta e en marcha, que onte e hoxe se adapta e resiste na dura travesía en procura da súa supervivencia cultural e política.*”

characters who craft their own destiny, who open up their own horizons through their labor and solidarity, so does the reader of Pensa nao open up his or her new horizons.<sup>84</sup>

The novel I examine in the next chapter—Scórpio by Ricardo Carvalho—also employs a fragmentary structure which has the objective of presenting the reader a different perspective of the Civil War. A significant part of my analysis of this novel focuses on the different interpretations that critics have produced on it. My special interest in the interpretations on the novel stems from this novel's use of the *lusista* orthographic standard, which, as I explained earlier, is very similar to standard peninsula Portuguese. Of the thirty-two Galician Civil War novels Scórpio constitutes the only one written in this *normativa*, and, naturally, the novel has attracted, more than any other Civil War novel, the attention of several critics who defend and write in the *lusista* norm. These *lusista* critics, who form part of a threatened group, manifest a group mentality, which, in my view, conditions their interpretations of the novel.

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<sup>84</sup> Some of the critics claim that this novel could be easily converted into a movie, but I disagree with this idea because a movie would very likely not demand as active of a role in making the text signify on part of the spectator. Xosé Enríquez is one of them who believes that the visual aspect of the novel makes it an ideal candidate for a cinematographic production: "Este é un texto que entra dobremente polos ollos: lese e vese. . . Hai, pois, unha visualidade pretendida, un tratamento áxil, dinámico, vivo da historia: tanto como para ler este é un texto para ver. Facilmente se podería converter en guión de cine ou obra teatral" ("Anxo Angueira" 231).

## CHAPTER # 3

### **SCÓRPIO AND GROUP READINGS: THE *LUSISTA* PREDICAMENT**

The Civil War novel I examine in this chapter constitutes the only one in this study written by an author who lived the war and experienced the recounted events first hand. The author, Ricardo Carvalho Calero (1910-1990), had one of the most amazing life trajectories of any Galician of the twentieth century, and he waited until the end of his life to make his experiences public. He first spoke about his biography in interviews in 1983 and 1986,<sup>85</sup> and then recreated parts of it in his second novel Scórpio (1987). This novel is not strictly autobiographical because no one character in the fictional creation completely represents the author. Rather, Carvalho Calero chooses to fragment himself through several characters, who recount the events, both personal and social, of the author's life from his birth until the defeat of the Republic in 1939.

In my analysis of Scórpio I explore the problematics concerning the lionizing of the protagonist, Rafael-Scórpio, and the novel's endorsed misogynist content, which the diverse analyses on the novel overlook. I first provide a biographical background of the author and a summary of the novel, while also addressing the narrative's meta-literary element and testimonial relevance for the war. In the second part of the chapter I analyze

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<sup>85</sup> His interview in 1983 is reproduced in the article "A fala con Catelao," and that of 1986 was made into the book by Fernán Vello and Pillado Mayor entitled Conversas en Compostela con Carballo Calero (1986).

various examples in the narrative that manifest the novel's endorsed sexist ideology; and then in the third section I examine the different studies written thus far on the novel. For this section I use Figueroa's theories on consensual "group readings," which help elucidate the content of the novel's critical reception. My thesis is that the different critics ignore certain problematics (such as the misogynist ideology) because of a group mentality, which commonly exists in a community that feels threatened by the dominant culture. This group mentality can lead Galizan literary critics to interpret Galizan literary texts as epics, as texts that represent and defend the Galizan nation; and, likewise, this mentality can impede the critics from discerning certain problematics of a work.

After he began his university studies in 1926, Carvalho Calero became a relevant figure in nationalist and leftist Galizan politics, and participated in several political and cultural organizations. He also participated in other small political groups, which gradually coalesced into the *Partido Galeguista*. As a member of this party, he participated in the writing of the Anteproyecto de Estatuto da Galiza in 1931. On the cultural level, he collaborated in the avant-garde magazine Nós in 1928, and played an important role in the *Seminario dos Estudos Galegos*. Though he studied law and used his expertise in his political duties, his real vocation was writing literature, and by 1934 he had become a known poet in Galiza.

When the fascist uprising took place, he was in Madrid preparing for exams to become a secondary school teacher.<sup>86</sup> He joined the *Félix Bárzana* battalion in Madrid and fought for the Loyalists until the end of the war. Soon after his enrollment in the *Félix* Battalion, he moved to Valencia to train to become an official, and then was assigned to the Army of Andalusia, where he served as first lieutenant. At the end of the war he was captured by Franco's army and sent to a prison in Jaén, Andalusia, where he received a sentence of twelve years, two of which he served. Released on probation, he then returned to his home in Ferrol, Galiza, to join his wife and meet his daughter, who was born while he was in Madrid. Though stigmatized by the Franco regime as a "red" separatist and barred from both the public and the official sphere of society, he, nonetheless, continued to participate in Galizan culture, and became an important figure of the *Recuperación Cultural Galeguista*, which began in the 1950s. From 1960 to 1965 he worked in a private school in Lugo, and, finally, in 1965 he was allowed back into the public education system. He taught at the high school *Rosalía e Castro* in Compostela until 1972 and then became *catedrático* of Galizan language and literature at the University of Compostela.

In the last stage of his life, Carvalho Calero embraced the *lusista* movement, which, as I explained in the previous chapter, conceives of the Galizan language as part

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<sup>86</sup> The author, explains Carmen Blanco, "concorría ás probas para Profesor Encargado de Curso de Institutos de Bacharelato na asignatura de Lingua e Literatura Española." ("Da vida" 8).

of the Portuguese linguistic system.<sup>87</sup> As president of the *Comisión Lingüística* in 1979 (dependant on the *Xunta de Galicia*), he officialized the orthographic norm, which comprised a mixture of the *lusista* proposal and the Spanish-like norm (which later received the name of *A normativa dos mínimos*). But this *normativa* was soon replaced in 1982 by the more Spanish-like orthographic standard, which has lasted until present (and is thus called *A normativa oficial*).<sup>88</sup> After his retirement in 1980, Carvalho distanced himself from the official institutions and focused more intensely than he ever had on the intimate side of his literary creation. He continued to defend his *lusista* stance, and also corrected his earlier texts (written before he embraced the *lusista* position) changing them to the *normativa lusista* (while also making other stylistic corrections). Carvalho's endeavor to correct his past literary production led Carmen Blanco to posit: "podemos dicir que o propio autor se preocupou por deixarnos un legado cerrado e ordenado baixo a óptica do último Carballo" ("Da vida" 12).

Because Carvalho Calero is one of the main "founding fathers" of the *lusista* movement, those who defend the *lusista* orthographic standard have, almost invariably,

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<sup>87</sup> Certain defenders of the current *norma oficialista* claim that the author of *Scópio* chose to endorse the Portuguese-like orthographic standard out of spite for not having been designated president of the *Real Academia Galega* in 1977. The *lusistas* rebuff this accusation as slander and argue, convincingly, that Carvalho Calero had taken a staunch pro-*lusista* stance on the orthographic norm by 1975.

<sup>88</sup> Ramon Suevos claims that the *normas ortográficas*, which Carvalho Calero defended while on the *Comisión Lingüística*, were of "concordia que afinal non seriam aceitas por quem hoje acusa á corrente reintegracionista de intransigência e de introducir conflitos laterais no ensino galego, por quem hoje nos impom um "decreto de unificação" de obrigado cumprimento e se justifica falseando a história real dos acontecimentos" (29). Montero Santalha argues that "[e]stas normas significavan, naquela altura, um entendimento entre as duas tendências, reintegracionistas e anti-reintegracionista. Logo de aprovadas pela Comissão, o Governo Galego assumiu-as primeiramente, mas pouco depois deixou-se embaucar pelo sector anti-reintegracionista e veio a desautorizá-la na prática, e, finalmente, a substituí-las por outras elaboradas" (37).



considered him an idol. This constitutes the reason why, in my view, the *lusista* critics who write on Scórpio unanimously acclaim the novel, despite its seemingly evident stylistic and ideological shortcomings. Moreover, the *lusista* critics overlook, for the most part, crucial questions, such as the importance of the novel as a testimony of the war. Their critiques, as I later discuss, go into complex analyses on the possible webs of symbolism in the novel and other abstract realms that have little to do with the novel's explicit content. The critics who write in the *norma oficialista* also overlook the novel's reactionary ideology vis-a-vis women, but they at least focus on the novel's role in transmitting historical memory of the war.<sup>89</sup> The concept of "group readings," explained by Antón Figueroa in Diglosia e texto, is applicable, as I try to show, roughly to all the critics of the novel, but more specifically to the *lusista* critics. Before examining the different critiques and summarizing the various interpretations, I offer my own perspectives on the novel. In the first section I give a brief summary of the novel and discuss the lionization of the protagonist, as well as the meta-literary component and the novel's capacity to transmit historical memory.

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<sup>89</sup> As I explain later in part three, my differentiation between the *oficialistas* and *lusistas* is, by no means, perfect. For example, one of the three critiques written in *galego oficial*, by Darío Villanueva, resembles more the *lusista* critiques in that it ignores the relevance of the Civil War and the novel's role in transmitting historical memory.

## **A Summary of Scórpio: Lionizing of the Protagonist, Meta-literature and the Novel's Relevance as a Civil War Testimonial**

This novel attempts to act as a window, as it were, into intimate and social-political life during the first third of the twentieth century. Perhaps the most original characteristic of Scórpio is that the protagonist, Rafael, who is nicknamed in high school Scórpio (his astrological sign), is deprived of his own voice in the fiction. He is the protagonist because most of the other characters talk about him throughout the novel. Furthermore, there is no third person narrator, but instead 136 vignette-like monologues or soliloquies (each headed by the name of the character) disclosed by 35 different characters. Two of these characters are historical (Franco and Largo Caballero), and five are anonymous. This kaleidoscope of voices is ordered in a chronological fashion and divided into two parts: The first, composed of 78 vignettes, covers from 1910 to 1936, at the time the war begins; and the second (58 vignettes) finishes at the end of the war, shortly after the death of Rafael.

The autobiographical component of the novel is original in that no one character constitutes the exact projection of the author. The author refracts his fragments of self through different characters, who are mainly Rafael, Salgueiro, Sagitário, Barreiro and Casado. Sagitário, Rafael's high school and university colleague, appears frequently during the first part of the novel, while Barreiro and Casado are the protagonist's soldier

companions during the second part.<sup>90</sup> Many of Rafael-Scórpio's character traits coincide with Carvalho Calero's (which inevitably leads the reader to identify, above all, this character with the author), such as the date of birth, the depiction of Rafael's childhood in Ferrol, Galiza and his Civil War experiences, etc. But other significant traits do not coincide; for example, Rafael is an illegitimate child and orphan at birth, while the author was not; Rafael's physical traits (blond hair and blue eyes) contrast with the author's dark features; and Rafael dies at the end of the war unlike the author.

Rafael, born and raised in Ferrol, is depicted from the beginning of the novel as a mysterious and bright baby, who brings bliss to his adoptive parents, Francisco and Aurélia. Francisco thinks that Aurélia loves him even more than her own children, and Aurélia believes that Rafael is the most intelligent of her children: "Rafael . . . é, polas traças, o mais lesto, e o que mais há adiantar na vida" (17). Once he reaches the age of twelve, Mercedes, once a neighbor of Rafael's parents and now a member of the household, dreams about Rafael marrying her daughter Chéli, who grows up with Rafael in the same family. As the story progresses, both Fernando and Aurélia embrace the idea of Rafael marrying Chéli. Chéli also dreams about marrying Rafael, and her hope finally comes true shortly before he leaves to Madrid to take his examinations. Chéli is a traditional woman, whose devotion to Rafael overcomes the constant flow of news she and her family receive of his womanizing in Compostela.

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<sup>90</sup> Salgueiro and Casado are the only characters that appear in both parts.

From early on the novel adopts characteristics of the *novela rosa* which makes Rafael the romantic hero. The novel focuses insistently on the sexual adventures of Rafael, whom the diverse characters also acclaim unanimously for his intellectual superiority. This *novela rosa* feature permeates the whole novel, although the second part gives more space to the political experiences of the war, especially between vignettes XXXIV and XL. For this reason, the novel (though broadly considered a historical novel) is, in reality, less about the Civil War than about Rafael, his intellectual capacities, and feats of womanizing. I proceed to examine some examples of recurrent allusions to Rafael's irresistible charm of seduction.

Throughout the novel most of the female characters speak about Rafael and disclose their desires for him, but they all become frustrated because of his seeming indifference to their flirtations. For example, his classmate Júlia (nicknamed Cleo), a mulatta daughter of an *indiano*, confesses: "Todas gostariam tanto coma mim de que o ditoso Scópio as cortejasse" (33). Indeed, he seems oblivious to not only her attentions, but also to his other female classmates like Cleo, who shows her frustration and comments on the irony of Rafael's nickname, Scópio, which is a name that "faria esperar aometividade, agressividade da sua parte" (33). But despite his apparent nonchalance towards these women, the reader discovers that Rafael beds dozens of women, some of whom are married, such as his professor's wife. This trait of Rafael as the quiet gentleman, whose discretion acts like a magnet for women, repeats itself throughout the

rest of the novel. In fact, this characteristic of him forms part of his “enigma,” which all the characters (and *lusistas* who critique the novel) strive to reveal, but never can.

Sagitário, Rafael’s main extoller in first part, describes his friend’s sexual achievements as part of his success as a poet, as well as part of his enigmatic nature: “Mas permanece sereno, tranquilo, quase frio perante os seus éxitos, sem revelar o segredo da sua hierática personalidade. No entanto, é indubitável que hoje é o poeta moço mais celebrado de Galiza, e se cadra o home mais admirado polas mulheres da nossa terra que o conhecem” (120). Sagitário later describes his frustration of not having the charm Rafael possesses for seducing women: “Scorpio quase nom fala, nunca di um galanteio, parece indiferente á opiniom que del se poda formar. E . . . polos cravos de Cristo, nenas e maduras, solteiras, casadas, viúvas, burguesas ou artesás, parece que estan esperando a ocasiom para oferecer-se-lhe como escravas” (130).

Only once throughout the novel does a male character mention what could be perceived as a defect of Rafael. Salgueiro admits that Rafael is too mysterious for one to be able to trust completely in his friendship: “Polo demais, Scórpio é demasiado misterioso para que ninguém poda estar seguro da sua amizade. Sagitário passava polo seu amigo mais íntimo. Mas duvido que fosse um verdadeiro confidente de Scórpio. Tenho a impressom de que este vive estranhamente só, sem entregar-se deveras a ninguém” (145). But eight lines afterwards, Salgueiro seems to exonerate Rafael from any doubt of his integrity by considering him a super-human, god-like figure: “Quiçá Scórpio é um espírito profundamente religioso e se apoia num ser que transcende o

mundo e no qual cre como de neno se cre no pai” (145). Close to the end of the novel after Rafael’s death, Salgueiro addresses his lost friend in a panegyric and marvels on his irresistible allure for women:

Que classe de home eras? Por que elas te buscavam com tal teima? Nom parecias desejá-las; mas nom refugavas os braços que se che tendiam. Eras ocultamente umha chama que adivinhavam elas com feminino instinto? Ou havia em ti o mínimo fervor, o suficiente para oferecer á pobre, á desvalida sensualidade delas, a necessária base, o apoio indispensável no mundo real para fazé-las sonhar com um mundo ideal onde se realizavam idealmente, onde eram plenamente femininas? (377)

The encomium reaches the a peak when Salgueiro declares that Rafael was perhaps what everyone wanted to be: “Foste talvez o que todos quigéramos ser. Para as mulheres, umha felicidade sonhada. Para os homes, o arquétipo de cada um . . . Se os sonhos som realizaçõs de desejos, talvez nom sejas ti outra cousa que um sonho que eu e outros muitos seres, mulheres e homes, temos sonhado juntos” (377).

The only character who criticizes Rafael’s Don Juanism is Merche, who admits, after lambasting him on different occasions, that she secretly desires him and is jealous of his success with other women. She sleeps with Rafael the night before he gets married with Chéli, and while contemplating the bride and groom at the wedding, she describes Rafael as a scorpion whose “poisonous stinger” infected her with passion: “Agora termina a cerimónia. Os noivos avançam para a saída. Scórpio, venenoso aguilhom,

insidiosamente cravado nas minhas entranhas. . . . Avanças, levando do teu braço umha sombra branca. . . . Scórpio, peçonha fatalíssima, dolorsíssimo bem” (188).

Rafael, through the monologues of the diverse characters who dream about him and envy him, becomes, in my opinion, an allegorical figure of the Republic, of free love and resistance to fascism. His elusive and enigmatic nature can be seen as emblematic of the short-lived political experiment, while the characters of the novel (both male and female), who are all captivated by Rafael’s charm, seem to represent Spaniards’ longing for a free society. Everyone wants to be Rafael, as Salgueiro remarks, and since nobody can—just as no one can save the Republic from the fascist takeover—Rafael remains a dream waiting to be reenacted and recuperated. As I stated earlier, Rafael represents only part of Carvalho Calero, who fragments himself and his experiences through other male characters, one of whom is Salgueiro.

Salgueiro—who after accompanying Rafael during the university period in Compostela, meets up with him in Valencia towards the end of the novel—occupies a privileged position in the novel because he becomes, at times, the author’s mouthpiece for discussing the creation of his novel. In other words, in his various interventions throughout the narrative Salgueiro carries out a meta-literary function, which acts as *mise en abyme* within the novel. He declares, early in part one, that he is going to write a novel about his friend Rafael, and he explains how he intends to construct his fiction. He begins by announcing that he wants to write a novel that respects Rafael’s enigma:

Eu, autor do romance de Scórpio, respeitaria a sua problematidade, nom trataria de explicá-lo todo; mais bem reuniria testemunhos diversos a propósito da sua personalidade, que confluíssem e alumiassem de distintos ângulos a figura central. Nunca me meteria directamente no interior do protagonista. Este nunca falaria de si mesmo. Seriam os demais, os seus parentes, os seus amigos, os que nos falariam del. (82)

After this description, he remarks that all the characters would narrate the events from their point of view and that none of their disclosures would be entirely objective or subjective.

Then in the following sentences, he states that he would make his novel polyphonic, but that he would not try to reproduce the characters' different ways of expressing themselves:

Seria umha composição polifónica, umha narrativa em que houvesse muitos narradores. Mas nom pretenderia que estes nos falassem com umha linguagem decalcada em cada caso da realidade pessoal que lhes atribuisse. Nom pretenderia apresentar um documento social que reproduzisse fotograficamente muitas figuras, muitas mentalidades, muitas formas de expressom. Procuraria exprimir com fidelidade o carácter de cada personagem, carácter que eu mesmo criaria; mas nom me esforçaria em evitar giros sintácticos ou vozes concretas que a condição social da personagem faria improváveis na realidade . . . Na forma, pois, nom se



trataria de umha narraçom documental. Essa mulher que fala, nom fala exactamente como falaria umha mulher real da sua condiçom. Seria-me indiferente que me fisessem críticas deste tipo. Eu traduziria a umha linguagem que pretenderia ser eficazmente literária o discurso polifónico que constituiria a forma do romance. (82-83)

And, finally, he declares that he is not interested in making the characters' monologues seem verisimilar. He wants to make them disclosures that he summons at his will:

Nom me preocuparia de justificar esses depoimentos do ponto de vista da verosimilitude material. Por que se produzem esses depoimentos? Simplesmente, porque o autor decide que se produzam. As diversas personagens foram testemunhas de determinados acontecimentos, ou reflexionaram sobre determinados feitos; e o autor dispom do poder necessário para transmitir ao leitor em forma de solilóquios—nalgumha ocasiom, em forma de carta ou alocuçom—as vivências que lhe interessam . . . Eu sei o que eles sabem, eu sei o que eles pensam; eu tenho registrados os seus saberes e os seus pensamentos num disco—mas traduzidas as palavras ao meu discurso literário--, e fago girar o disco perante o leitor. (83-84)

Throughout the rest of the novel Salgueiro discusses his novelistic project and the process of writing it. His fragmentary approach—a series of monologues unconnected by an all-encompassing voice, which attempt to reflect the reality of Rafael and society—

stems from his desire to create a modernist-style narrative that not only leaves intact Rafael-Scórpio's enigmatic nature, but also makes it the center of attention, the novel's *raison d'être*. He achieves this by depriving the protagonist of his own voice and by making most the characters talk about Rafael, as well as desire him and dream and wonder about him. The characters' monologues, as Salgueiro expresses through his image of the record player, happen because he wants them to happen; and it does not concern him that they seem verisimilar or not.

Thus, Salgueiro (Carvalho Calero) carries out a novelistic project that breaks with the conventional molds of narration, and attempts to create in his fiction what might appear as a semantic openendedness vis-a-vis Rafael and everything he symbolizes (namely, the Republic, "free love," etc.). Indeed, the critics, as I later show, uphold this idea of the novel's openness and indeterminacy, which contrasts, in their view, with more traditional narratives that employ a dominant third person voice. But if we accept the possibility, which all the critics ignore, that the author of this novel carries out a self-aggrandizing project through his semi-identity with Rafael, the seeming indeterminacy and openness appears more like a formal disguise rather than a true semantic feature. For by sealing Rafael off from the narrative, by respecting his impenetrability and enigmatic nature, he becomes an epic figure removed from scrutiny. Could it be that the author, who wrote this novel shortly before his death, wanted to leave a legacy of himself and be remembered as a symbol of the Republic and as one (the most important?) Galizan "founding father"? Of course, my opinion is that this constitutes a very likely possibility,

and the fact that the critics do not entertain, in the least, this idea stems from, I believe, the mentality of a threatened community (and more specifically of the *lusista* group) that tends to ignore any of its possible shortcomings.

Carvalho Calero must have had some concern, vis-a-vis the reader, about the narrative's profuse attention to sexual adventures because Salgueiro addresses this question in his second meta-literary intervention. He asks: "Estou a escrever umha novela rosa" (126)? He justifies this feature of the novel by claiming that this aspect is inevitable given that most of the characters are young: "Mas a gentes de dezasseis, dezassete, dezoito, vinte . . . que som os que até agora tenham os mais dos meus heróis, sendo como eles som gentes da classe média, que lhes vai ocorrer senom o que no meu romance lhes ocorre" (126)? He claims that his characters insistently talk about *rosa* events because they are conditioned by the ideology of their social class: "Essa é a filosofia da sua classe social, e os mesmos que se crem emancipados dos prejuízos da sua condição social, estão sujeitos a eles. Mesmo os que se creem revolucionários, ou rebeldes, ou inconformistas . . . e ainda que vivam umha vida negra, como a podem viver os mesmos estudantes, pensam-na em termos de novela rosa" (126-27). But what Salgueiro does not try to justify is the incessant lionization of Rafael and his innumerable sexual exploits, which in reality comprise most of the novel's *rosa* content. The reason for this, I believe, is to try to deviate attention from his (Carvalho Calero's) possible narcissistic projection.

In the same way that the novel sets up, in my view, a disguise of inconclusiveness and indeterminacy regarding the protagonist (and his symbolic function), its claim of being polyphonic also constitutes a disguise; because the novel, in reality, is very monological. Though Salgueiro states that he wants his novel to be polyphonic, he obliterates that possibility by then remarking that he is not interested in reproducing the different social languages of the characters. He prefers to gather the different points of view and subsume them under his own literary voice. This tactic, as Bakhtin would agree, would extirpate a novel's heteroglossia:

The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized. The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities . . . this internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre. The novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of the social diversity of speech types and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions (262-63).

The lack of a multi-linguaged consciousness in Scórpio makes the plethora of voices, which are hard to distinguish because they all sound the same, melt together in a monologic discourse.

The novel's lack (or rather absence) of intra-language dialogue and the flatness of the characters also debilitate the novel's capability to transmit the historical experiences of the Republic and Civil War. Unlike Pensa nao's dialogized historical project, that of Scórpio is presented in a mechanical fashion that makes the different testimonial sections seem disembodied from the characters. The success of Angueira's historical novel derives from the impression it gives the reader of the characters living the history. The depth of the characters, depicted through their individual languages, engulfs the reader in the historical experience. The reader feels empathy towards the characters and thus also experiences their emotions that the historical events provoke. The historical sections in Scórpio, on the other hand, seem too often like passages taken out of a text-book and mechanically inserted into the narrative. Though some of the history is interesting and helps reconstruct the Civil War and pre-war experience, it does not evoke emotions as in Angueira's novel (and in many of the Galizian Civil War novels).

A prime example of this non-dialogized, mechanically inserted history occurs when the author tries to include non-Republican viewpoints; for example, those of Manolo and Jesus, who are Rafael's step-brothers; and Miguel, who is Salgueiro's cousin. The appearances and disclosures of these characters seem, on the one hand, intentional and non-spontaneous (in the sense that one could have the impression that the

author stuck them in the narrative solely to fulfill the objective of presenting conservative view-points, as opposed to, for example, Angueira's Señorito, whose existence seems like a natural part of the community); and, on the other hand, simplistic because they do not reveal anything new, from a historical standpoint, or interesting from a personal point of view (i.e., how the war affects the characters emotionally).

Manolo and Jesus become navy officers, following the path their father opened up for them. The former appears twice in the first part, while the latter appears only once at the end of part one. In his first monologue (vignette LXI) Manolo speaks about politics and applauds Lerroux for making Spain more moderate, and repeats the stereotypes of a Spanish right-winger (anti-Communist, anti-separatist, anti-atheist, etc.).<sup>91</sup> The author seems to try to give him some depth by having him talk—at the end of his first monologue and in his next appearance—about Rafael and Chéli, and his desire for them to get married. But he remains a flat character who fades into the series of indistinguishable monologues. Jesus' appearance is caricaturesque like Manolo's. He denounces the burning of convents, the violent strikes, assaults against rightists and worries about a communist plot to convert Spain into a Soviet republic.

Another non-Republican view point that appears belongs to Francisco Franco, the historical figure inserted into the narrative. His disclosure constitutes a speech, which he gives shortly after the uprising. He praises the *nacionales*, denounces the Republican

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<sup>91</sup> A part of his monologue reads: "Com Azanha e os socialistas, caminhávamos para a dissolução do país. A reforma agrária trastornou toda a vida na maior parte de Espanha. Isso levava-nos ao comunismo libertário. Toda Espanha ia ser Casas Viejas" (162).

traitors and assures a rapid victory. His final words declare: “O movimento é esmagador, e já não há força humana que o contenha. O abraço mais forte e mais grande. Viva Espanha! O General Franco” (239). Franco’s appearance is contrasted in a later vignette with Francisco Largo Caballero, the Republican minister of defense, who denounces in a speech the barbarism of the fascists and exhorts the Republican soldiers to respect the fascist prisoners (272). By including these two politicians in his narrative, the author of *Scórpio* seems to have wanted to create a Dos Passos’ “newsreel” effect, whereby the novel includes official history (or historical information from the high ranks of society) that maintains a tension with the intra-history of the ordinary individuals.

But perhaps the more relevant function of these two characters in the novel resides in the symbolism of their first names. Garcia Soto argues that these two Franciscos represent fatherly figures who, like Rafael’s step-father also named Francisco, determine the destiny of the country:

[O] pai conta e, em certo sentido, como “nome,” muito. É todo um signo dos *tempora et mores* romanceados. Assim, o “patronímico” Francisco atinge com ocasião do alçamento do 36 uma magnitude desmesurada, invadindo a esfera pública, dominando a sociedade inteira e gravitando sobre a existência toda: os personagens te(rá)m de escolher, na Espanha dividida, entre dois Franciscos. (197)

Soto also explains, in a confusing manner, that Rafael’s step-father (from Ferrol as the dictator) represents an authority that, like the two political Franciscos, divides his

offspring; for Rafael remains faithful to the Republic while Manolo and Jesús adhere to the *nacionales*. Soto, as the reader can see from the above quote, writes in the *normativa lusista*. His article is similar to the other *lusista* critics in that he analyzes extensively the symbolic possibilities of the novel, while ignoring most of the works' explicit content, such as sexism.

### **Women in Scórpio: The Novel's Endorsed Sexist Ideology**

Women in Scórpio are predominantly portrayed as less intelligent and less useful than men. The novel's approval of these sexist portrayals stems from the fact that they are not seriously contradicted or criticized by other challenging voices. Of the thirty-five different characters (who speak through the 136 vignettes in the novel), seventeen are men, thirteen are women, and five are anonymous. The diverse female characters are stereotyped and ventriloquized by the dominant (authorial) masculine voice.

Salgueiro's girlfriend Sagrário, for example, plays the role of the mindless reactionary. She has no voice and thus we learn about her through her boyfriend, who explains in one of his monologues that at the beginning of the relationship he truly loved her, but because her reactionary family was determined to make him a conservative, he had no choice but to leave her:

Quijo converter-me, arrependida da alegre inconsciência com que me  
aceitara ao princípio no meu liberalismo inocente, pois a moda entre os  
estudantes era ser liberal, e ela seguia a moda. Mas as férias de verão  
foram decisivas. Sagrário enfrentou-se abertamente com a minha liberdade



de pensar, exigindo-me umha abjuração formal que eu rejeitei irritado.

Afastamo-nos mutuamente hostis. Hoje ela estará casada ou prometida com qualquer carlistom do vale de Lemos, ou esmorecerá num solteirismo sem solução, apesar da sua beleza. Lembro-a sem saudade. (154)

Worthy of note is his prediction of Sagrário's future: either she will marry someone reactionary or remain alone "incurably" despite her beauty. And even more worthy of note is that there is never an instance in the novel where a female character rejects her boyfriend because of his reactionary ideology. In Scórpio the males tend to be progressive, while women are mostly apolitical—or passively accepting of the Republic—or reactionary. (There are some minor exceptions, which I bring to light later).

The novel's sexist ideology becomes most alarmingly obvious through Rosário, the mistress, who appears close to the end of the novel when Rafael is in Valencia. She tells about her reactionary husband, whom the revolutionaries killed at the beginning of the war, and then attacks the revolutionary women who criticize her for being the mistress of a Republican lieutenant. She introduces herself *in medias res*: "Eu bem sei que muitos me olham com xenreira. E mais que muitos, muitas. Muitas que se fã mui revolucionárias, mas no fundo das suas almas som mais reaccionárias do que dim que o era o meu marido" (348). She then tells about how she was introduced to Lieutenant Pascual and that he agreed to help her and her two children. She explains how thier relationship began:

O tenente Pascual já passara a viver no Parador, mas como eu lhe caíra bem, visitava-nos todos os dias, e cando a minha sobra morreu, continuava vindo por casa, e graças ás suas influenças podem seguir vivendo nesta casa, que de nom mediar el, teriam-me botado á rua. Pascual era mui carinhoso cos nenos, e traía-nos que comer da Intendência do Exército, e socorria-nos com dinheiro para que nos governássemos sem demasiados apuros. Claro que tinha que passar o que passou. Um home novo nom pode estar dia trás dia visitando a umha mulher e protegendo-a contra o infortúnio sem pensar em fazer algo mais que falar. (349)

Hence, Rosário views Pascual's exploitation of her as normal and she defends her integrity by claiming that the revolutionary women, who criticize her, are, in reality, reactionary, and even more so than her dead husband. Her discourse is then reaffirmed in the following vignette in which Pascual boasts about her submission to him and confesses that she may not love him: "Nom creio que esteja tola por mim, mas é submissa e respeitosa, com aquela submissom ao home que tanto se estima por aqui e que nunca atopei . . . Rosário é umha fêmea magnífica, e se nom morre por mim, isto nom lhe impede vibrar como umha guitarra cando a tenho entre os meus braços." (356). This type objectifying description of a female character constitutes the norm throughout the novel.

Another female stereotype in the novel is the traditional woman, who belongs either to the working class or to the middle class. The representatives of the former are Rosa, Carminha and Luzia, whom Rafael, Sagitário and Salgueiro court respectively

during the summer they spend in Compostela doing their obligatory military service. In contrast to the temptresses,<sup>92</sup> these women—referred to by the men “as artesás do forno”—are extremely vigilant in protecting themselves from premarital sex. Rosa, who appears once in the first part of the novel and then once again in the next to last vignette of the novel, introduces herself by talking about her sickness, which, as the reader discovers later, is tuberculosis. She then asks herself why Rafael speaks to her every night at her window when he knows that she will not allow him to have sex with her: “Mas se nada consegue de mim, nem é ousado a prendé-lo, por que vem dia trás dia? Algo lhe importarei. Beĩm ve que som pobre, umha aprendiz de xastra, e que nom tenho boa saúde” (108). Sagitário also wonders why Rafael spends so much time with Rosa without being able to “conquer” her: “E Scórpio, para que tinha aquelas conversas platónicas com Rosa se havia abandonar a sua conquista coas maos baleiras?” (113). But the three men soon get tired of their “artesás” and forget them. Perhaps the author included this anecdote of Rafael and Rosa in order to show the reader that the protagonist’s relationships with women are not exclusively sexual and that he mingles with the poor. Whatever his intention may have been, Rosa, like all the other women who enter in Rafael’s sphere throughout the novel, dreams about him and desires him.

Chéli, Rafael’s wife, represents the traditional middle-class woman. She, as I mentioned earlier, dreams about marrying Rafael from a young age and centers her life

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<sup>92</sup> The temptresses—i.e., the women actively seek out Rafael—who appear in the novel are Eugénia, Merche, Helena, the woman from Salamanca, and Amália, the wife of Guillermo Maluquer, Rafael’s professor.

around the protagonist. Her characterization is emblematic of the novel's phallic-centered experience. The news of Rafael's womanizing in Compostela disturbs her, but it does not hinder her devotion in the least. It is not made clear how often Rafael and Chéli see each other during Rafael's university years in Compostela, but it appears that it is not often. One time she visits Rafael in Compostela and describes her passion during the time they go to the cathedral; while she kneels before the Virgin, Rafael recites verses from Rosalia de Castro:

Ajoelhada ante a Virgen da Soledade, e ouvindo os versos de Rosalia  
recitados por Rafael, entrou-me umha emoçom mui grande, e nom podem  
reprimir os soluços. Sentia-me moi feliz de estarmos os dous ali como se  
fóssemos casar-nos, e pensei que ditosa seria se isso chegasse a realizar-  
se. Mas ao mesmo sentim a angústia que tantas vezes sinto, e as dúvidas  
que me atormentam ao pensar que todo pode ser um sonho. Porque  
Rafael, quere-me ou nom me que? . . . Necessita-me como eu o necessito?  
(59)

Rafael in this passage appears as a Master of Ceremonies, whose performance crazes his devout fan. Chéli's kneeling down before him underscores her devotion and his power over her.

The last female character-type in the novel is the intellectual, and the only character that plays this role is Artemisa. She is the only woman in the novel who receives acclaim for her intellectual capabilities. Though aspects of her characterization

can be considered an exception to the novel's general endorsement of sexism, the fact that the characters who speak about her continually deify her (and thus dehumanize her) makes her general characterization sexist. She appears at the beginning of part two in Madrid taking exams, like Rafael, Casado and Barreiro, to become *catedrática* of high school in Spanish Language and Literature. Casado begins describing Artemisa like a goddess: "... me evoca a esbeltez divina e virginal de Diana Caçadora," while he dismisses another woman (a friend of Artemisa) who is taking the exams as insignificant: "Som duas madrilinhas que estudaram juntas. Umha parece-me insignificante como mulher, ainda que demonstra estar moi ao dia em matéria de poesia espanhola contemporânea" (215). Interestingly enough, he also compares Artemisa to Rafael: "Artemisa e Rafael tenham de comum, além da sua superior inteligência, a sua prestância física e a sua imperturbável serenidade" (216).

Casado then provides, in the following vignette, a positive portrayal of Artemisa by applauding her competence in an oral presentation she gave on verbal formations: "Um tema árido avondo, mas que Artemisa expujo, ao meu juízo, com grande habilidade" (217). He also paraphrases her speech in favor of the Republic's pedagogic reforms: "Artemisa respondeu que coas reformas pedagógicas introduzidas pola República, a formaçom dos alunos de Bacharelato superasse o atraso que por erros de método vinha afectando ao estudantado" (217). This positive depiction of Artemisa—which contrasts his deifying her or his description of the "insignificant" woman—constitutes, in my view, the least sexist depiction of women in the novel.

Barreiro also admires Artemisa's intelligence, but he deifies her, even more so than Casado, and shows resentment towards her intellect. He uses Artemisa as an example to develop a misogynist theory on female university students, who, according to him, use their status as intellectuals to tantalize men and force them into marriage:

Artemisa é de umha modernidade surpreendente, que se afirma como superior á moda, como anunciando a moda de umha época por vir, na qual a mulher, emancipada das sofisticações a que a força umha sociedade ainda fortemente patriarcal, alcance—ou recupere—a suprema distinção natural que apomos ás deidades antigas. A maior parte das rapazas universitárias de hoje tenham, se som feitas, um encanto que nasce da tensão existente entre a sua femineidade normal, que no mundo em que vivem tenham que proteger das liberdades masculinas, e a sua condição de mulheres intelectuais, que não lhes permite beneficiar todos os prejuízos que conformavam o arsenal de armas ofensivas e defensivas constituintes da panóplia com que as mulheres de ontem praticavam a sua guerra erótica—dentro das burguesas canles da conveniência codificada. Aparecem assi como objetos de desejo fortemente protegidos por umha couraça de rígidos convencionalismos. Só o compromisso matrimonial as faz definitivamente acessíveis. Som princesas alongadas, que te chamam e to fogem. Vivem perpetuamente em perigo. Não podem renunciar a suscitar em ti o desejo, mas têm evitar que as consigas se não pagas o

alto preço que fixa o seu interesse social. Se esta situação é um pouco a de toda mulher “honesta,” na universitária está potenciada a tensão entre as forças opostas. Possui maiores recursos de sedução, porque é superior em cultura, e a sua defesa do desconsiderado ardor masculino não pode ser tão compacta e fechada como a da burguesa inculta, pois ninguém daria crédito na sua boca aos tópicos que fundamentam a moral amorosa ao ignorante. Nesse sentido, acha-se sempre em perigo perante o varão, e essa situação perigosa exige-lhe um jogo de elasticidade tática que multiplica o seu atractivo. (230-31)

But Barreiro exonerates Artemisa from sharing the same characteristics as the other university women, given her goddess-like nature: “Mas Artemisa parece de outra casta, a casta das deidades homéricas, demasiado formosas e sábias para rebaixarem-se a qualquer sorte de garridice. Assim, o seu encanto excede o da mulher sofisticada como o divino excede o humano” (230). As is the case with the other passages that express misogynist ideology, this pseudo-sociological theory of intellectual women is never questioned.

Another sexist aspect that continually appears throughout the novel consists of the objectifying descriptions of women’s body parts. Both the male and female characters indulge in this process of dissecting the female body. Men objectify women and women do the same to themselves. Even in the second part of the narrative, where the hardships of the Civil War take the foreground, the author continues to dedicate an exaggerated amount of space to fetishistic descriptions. Towards the end of the novel when the

Republic is losing the war, one of Rafael's lieutenant companions, Flores, spends a whole vignette, five pages long, talking about the legs of Júlia (nicknamed Cleo), who was Rafael's colleague in Compostela and reappears coincidentally in the novel as the wife of the army commander. Flores realizes in Cleo's legs the power of women's seduction over men: "Se o jogo das pernas de Júlia nos privara de voz, a suprema manifestação de femineidade com que a dona respondeu ao nosso pasmo, acabou de libertar e revelar a nossa dependência masculina" (343).

Also worth citing is a passage that trivializes women's role in the defense of the Republic. Toward the end of the novel when Rafael, Barreiro and Casado are in Valencia acting as lieutenants, Barreiro tells about women who go into the bars with signs and music trying to recruit young men for the war. Barreiro explains that while some men feel uncomfortable with the women, because they feel harassed by the recruiters, he, Rafael and Casado remain calm because of their status as veterans: "Nós, enfiados nos nossos uniformes co aspecto marcial de veteranos defensores de Madrid permanecemos mui tranquilos nos nossos assentos, sorrindo talvez ás rapazas que recitam os seus papéis" (305). The women, who belong to the CNT, the UGT or the *Unión de Mujeres Anti-fascistas*, are viewed less as comrades than as troublemakers and intimidators. That is why when they leave the bars, the non-veteran men feel relieved: "Mas algúns paisanos nom demasiado maduros sentem-se inquietos como aludidos pola representaçom, e aliviados cando as nenas . . . se retiram ao fim para ir coa sua música a outra parte" (305). Except for this brief passage, which in my view belittles women's



role in defending the Republic, the novel completely ignores the contribution of women in the war. As impossible as it seems that the author would not have at least heard of *milicianas* fighting alongside men in the trenches, women, as important agents in the anti-fascist resistance, are invisible in this novel.

One part of the novel that could possibly trick the reader into thinking that the author takes an anti-sexist stance occurs in the depictions of Amália (the wife of Rafael's professor) and the wife of the dean of law school. Amália, who enters the story early on in part one begins by describing her body and her attraction for Rafael—which fits in with the regular sexist and narcissistic tone of the novel—and then she criticizes the conservative wives of other professors in Compostela: “Estas damas filhas de catedráticos, coma mim, mas criadas á sombra das torres da catedral, reúnem-se em sombrios e húmidos palácios em tertúlias salpicadas de escuitados cónegos coa cruz de Santiago sobre o peito, ou assistem a devotas novenas em igrejas conventuais cheias de mofo e sombra” (66). Three vignettes later, the character who speaks is the wife of the dean of law school. The reader immediately realizes through her discourse that she is one of the conservative women, who would fit into Amália's previous diatribe. This conservative character, who criticizes Amália for acting too liberal in her rapport with Rafael, becomes the butt of irony between the author and the reader:

Se umha mulher como a senhora de Maluquer (Rafael's professor) se permite tanta familiaridade com um moço, nom é estranho que el chegue a propassar-se. Nom o culparia a el. Os homes já sabemos como som. Mas

para isso está o matrimónio, que é sagrado. Essa senhora nom se comporta coa devida prudência. Terá ou nom algo mais que ver que o que se ve com esse rapaz. Mas o que se ve, já nom é para visto. (74)

Her conservative idea of marriage and her sexist view that men are the way they are, and thus women have the moral obligation to not incite them are held in irony between the author and reader. But, as ridiculing of conservative ideology as this passage may be, the fact that the object of irony is a woman as opposed to a man makes the anti-conservative statement far from being a pro-feminist stance.

The final vignettes of the novel (beginning with Flores' monologue discussed above) really drive home, in my view, the novel's demeaning conception of women. After Rosário's and Pascual's appearances, Salgueiro tells about the deaths of Rafael and Cleo (who seduced Rafael) in the hotel bombarded by the Nazis. He decides to not disclose Cleo's identity, for fear that Chéli and her family will discover her deceased husband's infidelity: "Nom quigem revelar a personalidade da formosa crioula. Convencido de que se achava com Scórpio no momento em que a morte lhes sobreveu, pensei que nom seria de utilidade para ninguém que eu tomasse a iniciativa de revelar a identidade de Cleo" (370). This decision to not disclose Cleo's identity functions, in my opinion, as a symbol of the effacement of women from the Republican project; and this final effacement is contrasted with the lionization of the protagonist and the recognition of his martyrdom in the final vignettes. Regarding Rafael's death, could not this be a manifestation the author's desire to make himself a living martyr (as oxymoronic as this

expression may be)? This question, which suggests once again the possibility of authorial narcissism, is not raised by the critics whose texts I analyze in the following section. But before examining the individual critiques, I explore the concept of group readings.

### **Group Readings: Between Depression and Megalomania, Primitivism and Cosmopolitanism**

In the previous chapters I have discussed certain aspects of Galizan literature that are characteristic of a literary system in a situation of diglossia. The various players (writers, readers, publishers, critics, etc.) of the Galizan literary system—which, like the Galizan language, is in a position of disadvantage vis-a-vis the Spanish literary system and the Spanish language in Galiza—tend to act like a collective under the imperative to protect its literary and cultural heritage. In order to eliminate the diglossic conflict, explains Antón Figuerola, “faise necesaria unha acción social de grupo, do grupo como tal, unha acción colectiva importante que, ó mesmo tempo, se produce nun espacio reducido, e onde a ameaza externa é permanente, o mesmo, de feito, que en moitas das sociedades onde apareceu a épica” (*Diglosia* 80).

Hence, in Galiza, as in other communities that have the disadvantage in diglossic situations, the different agents involved in the production and consumption of literature tend to manifest an extra-sensitive awareness of the precarious situation of their language and community: “O texto participa entón dunha problemática xeral que afecta a todo o proceso, dende o autor que se decide a escribir, pasando pola editorial que se decide a

publicar, ata o lector: autores, editores, libros e lectores adquieren un carácter militante e consciente” (Diglosia 51). As citizens of a threatened cultural and linguistic system, Galizan writers, readers, literary critics, etc., are very likely to make the literary text useful and pragmatic, and thus excise from the text a good part of its possible meanings. This dynamic of resistance is necessary, but it can become dangerous, argues Figueroa, “sempre que esa dinámica se xeneralice ata converterse nun feito da mentalidade e da cultura colectiva, e, polo tanto, pase a formar parte dos presupostos estéticos conforme os cales os textos se interpretan e se escriben” (Diglosia 83).

In addition to this pragmatic use of the literary text,<sup>93</sup> Figueroa describes another tendency of writing and interpreting in Galiza, characteristic of a community threatened by the dominant language and culture. This tendency consists of using the aesthetic text as an escape from reality into dream-like and fantastic worlds. Figueroa posits that in order for Galizans to normalize their writing and reading tendencies, they must find an equilibrium “entre dúas posicións extremas pero moitas veces asociadas en situacións de conflito: unha lectura unicamente militante (pendente do real inmediato) ou unha lectura-soño, evasión de todo real” (Diglosia 78). Thus, Figueroa views as militant those writings and interpretations that seek the pragmatic of the “real inmediato,” while the dream-like spatial and temporal evasions comprise the other extreme. But do not fictions that depict utopian and fantastic worlds also conform a type of militancy?<sup>94</sup> As I pointed

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<sup>93</sup> The Galizan literary text, as González-Millán asserts, “é o único reducto, polo momento, no que pode instalarse a produción e representación da semiose galega” (Silencio 50).

out in chapter one, the allegorical novels that flourished during the 1980s do carry out a type of militancy insofar as they create totalizing imaginaries of the Galician community and transmit a consciousness of belonging to an irrepresentable cultural space. González-Millán, whose theories I used for explaining this question, claims that narratives that project fantastic worlds act as a national foundational force:

Irrepresentabilidade e inexistencia son dúas fórmulas que poden reducirse ao silencio, se están propostas dende o poder hexemónico, pero no contexto dunha estratexia de marxinalidade, coma a suxerida polos textos narrativos identificados, aquiren unha dimensión imaxinaria que, en ausencia doutras institucións discursivas, se transforma nunha forza fundacional. (33)

González-Millán praises the allegorical novels for breaking free from the restraints of “nacionalismo literario,” whose paradigm values only those texts that create verisimilar and pro-nationalist depictions of the “real inmediato.” But both forms of writing and reading are manifestations of a group that feels threatened by the hegemonic power. This group mentality constitutes, in my opinion, the motive that leads the critics of *Scórpio* to overlook the novel’s endorsed sexist ideology and the possibility of authorial narcissism. Readers conditioned by a group ideology, Figueroa argues, tend to interpret aesthetic texts in ways that meet their expectations, as opposed to seeing what

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<sup>94</sup> Figueroa, I am sure, also views escapist novels as conforming to a militant thematics, but the way he describes them in the above quote makes the novels seem like they do not at all.

objectively exists in the text. In his explanations, Figueroa employs Jauss' concept of horizon of expectations and *écart esthétique*:

O texto, ó contrario de innovar, limitarase a reproducir as expectativas do grupo, pero sobre todo a mentalidade lectora tenderá a non ver no texto nada distinto do que espera: o texto así non romperá ningún horizonte de espera e non dialogará polo tanto con nada distinto del mesmo. Esta mentalidade incidirá probablemente nalgúns dos textos, pero sobre todo funcionará na lectura independentemente do carácter dos textos en si mesmos, que, aínda non sendo explicitamente épicos, tenderán a ser lidos como se o fosen e polo tanto, e en definitiva, en función do seu valor práctico para o grupo; esta utilitariedade destrúe obviamente o texto como tal. Isto fai que se tenda a valoralo texto como obxecto, moitas veces como obxecto máximo, de acordo tamén co propio da mentalidade primitiva. (80)<sup>95</sup>

The literary text is thus used to represent the values that reaffirm the legitimacy of the community's existence. Figueroa contrasts what he denominates the "opinión" of the group (which tends to be narrow-visioned and impermeable to new interpretations) to that of "opinión pública," which, in his view, is non-existent in this type of circumstance.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> According to Jauss, literary communication consists of a dialogue between the producer and receiver, and this dialogue exists only when the interpreter recognizes in the literary text the alterity within his or her horizon of expectations.

<sup>96</sup> "A grande cohesión do grupo crea ó mesmo tempo no seu seo unha "opinión" que nada ten que ver por suposto co que ás veces se chama "opinión pública"—algo do que precisamente nesas circunstancias se

This mentality and critical practice—which are not confined to the literary sphere, but infuse all of Galizan cultural studies<sup>97</sup>—become counter-productive to the success of the Galizan literary system because they impede it from evolving, from improving its repertoires and overcoming its weaknesses. In sum, there exist two main distinguishable dynamics in group readings: On the one hand, the group tends to reject innovations that transgress its horizon of expectations, and, on the other, it tends to not criticize the defects a literary text may have. In my examination of the different studies on Scórpío, I focus on the manifestation of the second dynamic.

While Figueroa's concept of group mentality refers to all Galizan writers, readers, and critics, in my analysis of the critical documentation of Scórpío I distinguish between two different sub-groups: one includes the critics who write in the *normativa oficial*, and the other comprises the critics who write in the *normativa lusista* (which, as I explained before, is very similar to Portuguese orthography). The interpretive dynamics that result from a group mentality are manifest in both groups, but they become especially apparent in the *lusista* critics, who all seem to share the same ideology and carry out similar analyses. As I mentioned above, the *oficialista* critiques (with one exception which I soon discuss) are more insightful, in my view, than those of the *lusistas* because they

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carece—, que actúa como censura de todo aquilo que non corresponde ás expectativas do grupo, o cal incide moi seriamente na configuración dos “horizontes de espera” e que unha vez máis tende a anula-lo valor estético dos textos” (Diglosia e texto 80).

<sup>97</sup> González-Millán addressed this matter in Resistencia: “Un dos grandes problemas e contradictorios obstáculos cos que se enfrontan os *estudios galegos*, é dicir, os distintos ámbitos disciplinares que teñen como obxectivo prioritario a análise dos diversos fenómenos sociais que caracterizan a Galicia como unha formación social específica, é que os investigadores utilizan modelos teóricos condicionados por uns presupostos que, paradoxalmente, silencian a complexidade e a especificidade dos fenómenos en cuestión, ou ben son de dubidosa efectividade á hora de demostrar a vixencia da súa universalidade” (14).

explore the relevance of the novel's testimonial content concerning the Civil War. The *lusista* critics do not completely ignore the importance of the war in the novel, but they give priority to symbolic or sub-textual readings, often very turgid and abstract, which evade the explicit content of the narration. In other words, the *oficialista* critics see the text more for what it offers objectively and explicitly, while the *lusista* critics seem to seal the novel's world off from the present and project it onto an idealized epic plane.

In addition to the group mentality, which I attribute mostly to the *lusistas*, but also to the *oficialistas*, to a certain extent, I believe that there exists yet another group-fostering influence operating on the whole of the Civil War narrative. Given the subaltern quality of these pro-Republican narratives (in the sense that they are still unorthodox from an official standpoint), it seems only logical that pro-Republican critics, be they *oficialistas* or *lusistas*, would tend to manifest an unfaltering protective attitude towards narratives that, in some shape or form, denounce fascism. Indeed, I believe that this is could be a crucial factor that leads the *oficialista* critics of *Scórpio* to be uncritical of the novel's evident technical and ideological deficiencies. Especially in the case of Alonso Montero (a notoriously virulent anti-*lusista*),<sup>98</sup> this factor seems very likely to have conditioned his very positive vision of the novel.

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<sup>98</sup> Between September 1999 and January 2000 (roughly) the different Galizan newspapers hosted a debate on the conflict between the different *normativas*. This debate was opened thanks to Camilo Nogueira, the *euro-deputado* from the *Bloque Nacionalista*, who began using Portuguese in the European parliament. (The BNG's objective in using Portuguese in the European political sphere is to acquire for Galizan the status of an official language within the EU). Alonso Montero, when asked his opinion concerning the use of the *lusista* standard, was quoted by Ana Rodríguez in *La Voz de Galicia* as having remarked: "aproximarse ás posicións dos lusistas sería o tiro de gracia para a causa da lingua galega" (48). The title of the article reads: "Alonso Montero aboga por el inglés como lengua oficial antes que un gallego lusista" (48).



These group dynamics must not be understood as happening in a perfect and programmed sense, but rather as detectable tendencies that are never homogeneous and absolute. Likewise, my differentiation between the *oficialistas* and *lusistas* is not absolute either for two main reasons. First of all, one of the critics, Martínez Pereiro, writes in the *normativa dos mínimos*, which, as I explained earlier, comprises a mixture of the *normativa oficialista* and the *normativa lusista*. I include him, however, in the *lusista* group not only because his critique resembles, from a thematic standpoint, those of the *lusistas*, but also because those who use the *normativa dos mínimos* are, for the most part, considered “*lusista* leaning” and “heretics” by the defenders of the *galego oficial*. The other exception to my *oficialista-lusista* differentiation regards Darío Villanueva’s critique, which is written in the *normativa oficialista*, but resembles those of the *lusistas* in that it does not explore the novel’s Civil War content or its role in transmitting historical memory. In my following analysis I begin by examining the three critiques of the *oficialistas*, and then the four critiques by the *lusistas*.

Alonso Montero, in “Carballo Calero e algúns dos seus camaradas na guerra civil: vida e literatura,”<sup>99</sup> reflects on the testimonial value of *Scórpio*, which, in his view, helps fill in the void of silence left by other Galizans who fought in the war and remained in Galiza. In the first part of his study he focuses on those Galizans who fought on Franco’s

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<sup>99</sup> Very worthy of note is Montero’s use of *oficialista* orthography in writing the author’s name. Indeed, while the *lusistas* (including Martínez Pereiro) employ Portuguese orthography for writing his name (which is the way the author wanted it to be), the *oficialistas*, all three of them, use the orthography of the *norma oficial*.

side; Galizans who were not Francoists, but, given their previous affiliation to Galizan nationalist organizations, enrolled in the fascist army to save their lives, and possibly those of their families. Three of these men, Ramón Piñeiro, Xaime Isla and Francisco Fernández del Riego (who is still alive), became the key figures involved in *Operación Galaxia* (*Galaxia* is the name of the publishing house), which acted as the key organ of the Galizan cultural recuperation in the 1950s. Indeed, the main agents of *Operación Galaxia*, claims Montero, were ex-Francoist combatants, while those who had fought on the Republic's side, such as Carvalho Calero, had a more marginal role.

The critic, while applauding Carvalho Calero for having disclosed his experiences in the conflict (even if the amount of testimonial information he left was not abundant), laments the silence manifested by the three leading figures of *Operación Galaxia*. He wonders what emotions these men experienced, the problems of conscience they must have suffered when having to fight against their previous colleagues.<sup>100</sup> Montero also wonders if any of the three ever had the intention of crossing over to the Republican side, as did, for example, Ramón de Valenzuela:

Nada nos teñen contado dos seus peculiares problemas, da dura traxedia que os caarakterizou. Nin sequera sabemos se nalgún momento da contenda tiveron a idea de pasárense á zona republicana, o que, si, fixeron entre outros . . . ¿Foi o medo á represalia que a barbarie franquista podería

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<sup>100</sup> Del Riego and Carvalho Calero were close friends during the Republic and corresponded while Carvalho was in jail.

exercer contra as súas familias residentes en Galicia? ¿Houbo outros medos? Sobre isto, cando menos, deberían terse pronunciado e, polo que fose, nunca o fixeron. Estamos, pois, ante unha moi importante lagoa historiográfica, o que nos obriga, ós demais, a movérmonos no problemático terreo da conxectura. (86)

This critic's observations on the silence of these *Operación Galaxia* figures led me to consider some of the Galizan Republicans who went into exile after the war, such as Castelao, Seoane and Ramón de Valenzuela, and left very valuable Civil War testimonies.<sup>101</sup> I have wondered, furthermore, why Carvalho Calero stayed in Spain, as opposed to going into exile, such as Castelao and Rafael Dieste. In fact, this question is approached in the next analysis I examine by Rodríguez Fer.

In the second part of his article, Montero focuses on Scórpio and applauds the novel both from both a technological and thematic point of view. He describes the novel as polyphonic, and claims that the multi-voiced narrative represents the author's intellectual breadth: "Eu creo que moitas das voces e dos perxonaxes presentes en *Scórpio* representan a riqueza intelectual do ser humano Recardo Carballo Calero, obstinado na tarefa de achegarse—desde unha diversidade de ópticas—á complexidade dun acontecemento" (92). He then explores the reflections of Barreiro, who, like Rafael,

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<sup>101</sup> Castelao published his anti-fascist drawings in *Atila en Galicia*, *Galicia Mártir* and *Milicianos* during the war and wrote *Sempre en Galiza* in exile. Seoane wrote *Lo que han hecho en Galicia* also during the war, and Valenzuela published one Civil War novel in exile, *Non agardei por ningún* (1957), and one after returning to Galiza, *Era tempo de apandar* (1980).

enrolled in the *Batallón de la Federación Española de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza* (FETE) and participated in the defense of Madrid. Barreiro imagines what he would have done had he been in Galiza—as opposed to Madrid where he enlisted in the Batallón—during the uprising:

Pode que se o 18 de Julho me achasse en Pontareias em troca de me achar em Madrid, estaria agora cos moços da minha quinta servindo no exército insurrecto; e seguramente aturaria, e nom tencionaria desertar. Mas entom nom seria por razom de honra polo que nom desertaria nem me sublevaria. Aceitaria tristemente o meu destino, como agora o aceito. (271)

Montero argues that this reflection belongs to Carvalho Calero himself, who, like Barreiro, was in Madrid at the time the uprising occurred. Moreover, Montero believes that Carvalho Calero's use of fiction for recounting his experiences (or possible experiences) enhances the testimonial information and makes it more revealing:

Esta reflexión de Barreiro subscribiríaa “o mesmo Rafael” ou sexa, o mesmo Ricardo Carballo Calero. Unha reflexión semellante sería, creo, a esperable en Ramón Piñeiro, Fernández del Riego e Xaime Isla, ós que a Guerra sorprendeu cando se achaban “em Pontareias”. Pero só a formulou, nese texto cheo de matices, Carballo Calero, un intelectual que, nos últimos anos da súa vida, decidiu contar unha experiencia tantas veces silenciada por outros. Fíxoo nas páxinas dunha novela, estatuto (o da

ficción) quizais máis rico, máis revelador có do ensaio ou o do estudio histórico. (93)

Montero then comments on Carvalho Calero's silence during the Civil War as a writer. Unlike Castelao, Dieste and others, who wrote many anti-fascist articles—for example, in magazines such as Nova Galiza and Nueva Galiza—Carvalho Calero did not use his pen at all to fight fascism. This silence on his part perplexes Montero, especially given his close contact with Castelao during the war: “Sorprende, sobre todo, que, tendo contactos importantes con Castelao, non colaborase en *Nova Galiza*, revista por el fundada e por el dirixida nos primeiros anos” (94). Writers in Republican territory, explains the critic, were often obligated to write against Franco's cause. Such was the case of Ramón Cabanillas, who published two anti-fascist poems, but defected to the fascist side as soon as he could.

In the last part of his critique, Montero explores Carvalho Calero's writings during the two years he spent in jail in Jaén. He states that the author wrote 100 sonnets in Spanish, but he did not publish any of his work in the volume Musa redimida. Poesía de los presos en la Nueva España (published in Madrid in 1940), which collected pro-Francoist and fascist poems from Republican prisoners. This volume, as the critic explains, allowed prisoners to reduce their sentences: “A golpe de versos, pois, algúns dos reclusos reduciron os seus longos anos de prisión” (95). Inevitably having had the opportunity to publish at least some of his poems in this volume, Carvalho Calero, notwithstanding, decided not to collaborate with it. Hence, his silence as a writer during

the Republic—which Montero subtly criticizes—is redeemed by his refusal to publish in the fascist volume of poems, which Montero applauds.

This article, as I mentioned earlier, contains, in my view, the most perceptive analysis of Scórpio. By focusing on the value of the novel as a source for transmitting historical memory of the Spanish Civil War, Montero reflects on the bigger picture, as it were, of testimony and memory. The critic's praise of the novel (despite his very anti-*lusista* prejudice) stems probably from his deep Republican sympathy. This same characteristic is what, I believe, lured Claudio Rodríguez Fer—the other critic who writes in *galego oficial*—to applaud the novel and author. He discusses in his article, “O tenente Carballo,” the biography of Carvalho Calero as reflected in his literary production, and focuses on the period of the author's life beginning from the time he went to Valencia, where he trained to become a lieutenant, until his joining the Andalusian front. His article is not as long and exploratory as Montero's; he does not go beyond the biographical information and ponder on the transmission of historical memory, which is what makes Montero's article, in my view, especially insightful. In his critique Rodríguez Fer maintains a tension, as it were, between Carvalho Calero's literary texts (Scórpio being the main one, but not the only one) and the documented history. His objective consists of, for the most part, in verifying the historical events told in the author's fiction.

He focuses first on Carvahlo Calero's being selected for the school of officers in Valencia while he was a *miliciano* in Madrid. He quotes a passage in Scórpio that

explains the moment in which certain bureaucrats came to their positions in Madrid to recruit possible future officials,<sup>102</sup> and then alludes to a historical text, which verifies this event.<sup>103</sup> “Carballo,” then affirms Rodríguez Fer, “cumpría todos os requisitos para poder realizar os cursos: pertencía á F.E.T.E.-U.G.T. e ao Partido Galeguista, levaba máis dun trimestre como miliciano no fronte de Madrid e recibiu o aval do seu comisario. Polo demais, unha vez en Valencia, o exame de ingreso tivo que ser para el moi fácil de superar, tendo en conta ‘el nivel enormemente baixo’” (15-16).

After exploring Carvalho’s experience in Andalusia (which is not included in Scórpio—Rafael and his colleagues remain in Valencia), Rodríguez Fer examines the author’s relationship with Castelao. This constitutes the most interesting part of the study, in my opinion, because it leads the reader to speculate on the reasons behind Carvalho’s remaining in Spain, as opposed to going into exile, which he apparently could have done through Castelao. This possibility of going into exile with Castelao is not mentioned in Scórpio (although Rafael’s relationship with Castelao is mentioned twice),<sup>104</sup> but Carvalho revealed in an interview (“A fala con Castelao”) in 1983 that,

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<sup>102</sup> Barreiro explains that “chegarom ás posiçons que ocupávamos no bairro de Usera . . . uns burocratas militares que foron anotando os títulos académicos que posuíamos. O exército regular da República, sucesor das milicias populares dos primeiros momentos, necesita oficiais, e formará como tais as persoas cultas que lle mereçam confianza por terem acreditado a súa lealdade lutando como voluntários contra os facciosos” (305).

<sup>103</sup> The critic quotes from Michael Alpert’s El ejército republicano en la guerra civil: “El requisito de que los candidatos a las escuelas de oficiales tuvieran que demostrar su pertenencia a un sindicato u organización política republicana, a no ser que formaran parte del ejército en 1936, se mantuvo durante toda la guerra y para todas las escuelas. Un servicio de tres meses en el frente era necesario para el ingreso y el comisario político de la unidad debía avalar la lealtad al régimen del candidato” (161).

<sup>104</sup> The first mention of Castelao occurs in Casado’s monologue: “Rafael levou-me a ver o deputado Castelao” (248), and the second one takes place in one of Salgueiro’s disclosures. This character tells about Castelao’s offer to write letters of recommendation for Rafael, so that Rafael can leave his position as

indeed, Castelao had invited him to accompany him to Buenos Aires. The critic quotes from the above mentioned interview with Carvalho: “Castelao pensara nessa pessoa porque tinha formaçom jurídica, era o seu correligionário e o tratava formalmente. Queria tamém facilitar-lhe a possibilidade de reunir-se na Argentina com a sua mulher, que vivia em Galiza, e a filha que nacera do seu matrimónio, a quem nom vira ainda, e havia tardar vários anos em conhecer” (qtd. in Rodríguez Fer 17).

Rodríguez Fer’s comment on Carvalho’s use of the third person impersonal in this interview merits commentary. “Evidentemente,” remarks the critic, “o correligionario en cuestión era o propio Carballo, que polo seu extraordinario sentido do pudor non se menciona a si mesmo” (17). But what is this “extraordinario sentido do pudor” on behalf of the author, I ask myself? This idea spurred me to wonder whether Carvalho, who projects at least some of himself onto Rafael, did not give the protagonist his own voice in *Scórpio* because of this supposed “pudor.” Furthermore, I ask myself why would Carvalho avoid mentioning himself when discussing the Civil War both in his novel and in the interview? Is it perhaps that he feels disconnected from the events? Could it be that the author, after surely being humiliated in jail by the fascist authorities and then marginalized afterwards by society, developed a self-censuring personality in regard to his Republican experiences? These questions concerning the author’s testimonials, as well as others of his generation—questions which I believe are fundamental for studying

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a soldier and work in the *Ministério*. But Rafael, remarks Salgueiro, refused the offer because he did not want to “aproveitar nengumha vantagem que lhe pudessem proporcionar as recomendaçons” (358).



Carvalho Calero and his novel—are for the most part ignored by the *lusista* critics and by Darío Villanueva, whose essay, written in the *norma oficial*, I now proceed to analyze.

Villanueva, Dean of the Universidade de Compostela between 1987 and 1990, and then again between 1994 and 2000, specializes in Spanish contemporary literature and is a renowned literary theoretician. His motive for writing on *Scórpio* appears to be linked to his professional relationship with Carvalho Calero (both being *catedráticos* at the university in Compostela) and his friendship with the author.<sup>105</sup> His article, entitled “Lectura de *Scórpio*,” coincides more with the *lusista* interpretations not only because it ignores the Civil War content and the novel’s role in transmitting historical memory, but also due to its focusing on the distance between the novel’s “aura autobiográfica” and the author’s real biography (329). Villanueva, like the *lusista* critics, emphasizes the distance between the author and Rafael in a way that eliminates any possible question of authorial narcissism. He claims that the novel, which in his opinion is multi-perspective and “sumamente dialóxico,” (329) uses ellipses that open up areas of indeterminacy and allow the reader a wide margin of interpretative possibilities:

Acerta, ademais esta estratexia narrativa cunha das grandes virtualidades  
do romance modernista (no senso europeo da verba, non o

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<sup>105</sup> Villanueva recounts the author’s asking him to present his novel in the “acto que o editor de Sotelo Blanco estaba a organizar” (328): “[D]on Ricardo veu dicirme que cometera o “pecado de velhice” de escribir un romance titulado *Scórpio* e que aloumiñaba a arela de que “o meu decano”—esas foron xustamente as súas verbas—fose quen o presentase no acto” (328). Villanueva then expresses his admiration for the author: “Sempre admirei en Carballo Calero a súa cortesía, que facía compatible coa discrepancia en temas intelectuais, políticos ou universitarios, pero naquela conversa inesquecible para min tiven a oportunidade de sentila fondamente, como algo máis aló do puro protocolo” (328).

hispanoamericano): o emprego maxistral da elipse que, reforzando o carácter esquemático que toda obra literaria ten fenomenoloxicamente considerada, permite axiliza-la narración propiamente dita e deixar espazos baleiros, puntos de indeterminación, que en vez do dogmatismo omnisciente do narrador decimonónico, confiren unha ampla marxe para o exercicio da súa liberdade hermenéutica por parte do lector. (330)

Villanueva argues, furthermore, that the novel's autobiographical project constitutes but an ironic play between the author and Rafael ("sempre cunha faciana irónica que o desdobraemento interno do relato e o metarrelato constrúen cabalmente" (332)). He appears to consider as inferior those novels in which the author projects an unambiguous image of him or herself:

[A] estratexia con que o escritor aproveita esta "aura autobiográfica" está moi lonxe da desprestixiada "falacia intencional ou xenética" que os new critics anglosaxóns malsinaron. Carballo xoga creativamente coas lóxicas e desexables ligazóns entre vida e literatura, pero faino inspirándose quizais naqueles coñecidos versos da "Autopsicografía" pessoana: O poeta é um fingidor./ Finge taõ completamente/ Que chega a fingir que é dor/ A dor que deveras sente. (329)

He also underscores the differences between the author and Rafael: their different physiques, Rafael having studied in Salamanca (unlike the author), and Rafael's death, which for this critic breaks "de xeito radical toda posible identificación" (329). He then

refers, once again, to the supposed ironic play between the protagonist and the author by affirming that Carvalho surmounts the autobiographical trap (in his words) through his ironic portrayal of Rafael: “Moi salientable pareceume desde un principio este artellamento cheo de autenticidade e de ironía con que o profesor Carballo Calero saía victorioso diante da trapela do autobiografismo” (329). Villanueva does not, however, explain of what this “ironic portrayal” consists. In my view, Rafael-Scórpio is never held as an object of irony between the author and reader—despite his exaggerated womanizing and intellectual facet—and, thus, the critic’s insistence on this irony appears more like an excuse for Rafael’s (and the novel’s) sexist ideology than a coherent argument.

The critic furthermore suggests that the ambiguity produced by the never resolved enigma of the protagonist “transmítese ó lector non tanto como unha limitación senón como un achado positivo, de forma e de significado, para o conxunto da obra, e axuda resoltamente a sobreancear a trampullada autobiográfica xa comentada” (320). The novel’s meta-literary element (introduced through Salgueiro)—which also helps create, in his view, the indeterminacy and autobiographical ambiguity and irony—resembles, according to this critic, that which the arch-famous Modernists generated:

[N]on somente Carballo Calero esnaquiza a posible confusión individualista da súa propia identidade coa de Scórpio senón que introduce na obra a dimensión metanarrativa, a “mise en abyme” cervantina que os modernistas—Aldous Huxley e André Gide á cabeza, Unamuno coa súa

inconfundible orixinalidade, e tantos e tantos máis—converteron en  
alicerce dalgunhas das máis sobranceiras novelas contemporáneas. (331)

Villanueva also praises Salgueiro's decision—when this character encounters, close to the end of the novel, the cadavers of the two lovers—to not reveal Cleo's identity (which in my analysis symbolizes the novel's erasure of women from the Republican project). His description of Salgueiro's behavior is redolent, in my opinion, of the traditional "pacto de caballeros": "E será el o que o día 18 de marzo de 1938 identifique o cadáver do seu amigo esmagado polas trabes do cuarto no que estaba acompañado pola que fora a súa primeira noiva, Julia-Cleo, noticia que o Salgueiro se coidará ben de ocultar" (333). The fact that Cleo's identity is effaced does not impede this maneuver from constituting, in the critic's view, a commendable feat.

Indeed, concerning the depiction of women in Scórpio, Villanueva's analyses warrant careful examination. He discusses the "destacada presencia da muller" (331) in two senses: One stems from the "visión masculina," which, in his view, reaches "un punto cenital" in the second part when Flores describes, during five pages, Cleo's legs (331). I commented earlier on this passage, which constitutes the epitome, in my opinion, of the objectifying of women in the novel. The critic, on the other hand, interprets Flores' monologue as an "*epifanía*, tal e como xustamente empregaron esta verba—ou o concepto que lle corresponde—James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Marcel Proust e o Valle-Inclán de *La media noche*: *epifanía* como a revelación súpeta de algo

trascendente a partir dun feito cotián” (331). The other sense of the “destacada presencia da muller” in the novel resides, explains Villanueva, in the women’s vision:

Pero aínda máis destacable ca esta visión masculina da muller, abondosa na literatura de tódolos tempos, paréceme a contraria, especialmente agora que a teoría feminista está a traballar arreo sobre isto. A misteriosa identidade do protagonista maniféstase de xeito especial na súa relación coas femias, pero o máis importante é que Scórpio non ten voz no texto, e son dezasete as mulleres que falan sobre el, cada unha delas coa súa propia perspectiva e dotadas todas dunha grande verosimilitude naquilo que hai de fundamente diferencial entre os dous sexos e as súas respectivas sensibilidades. (332)

These analyses of the representations of women in Scórpio comprise, in my view, the most erroneous of all the studies I analyze, although, in all fairness, most of the other critics do not even mention the question of women. If Villanueva were to argue that the novel offers a verisimilar portrait of women during the time of the Republic and war, that would seem more logical. But to affirm that the novel’s verisimilitud resides in its showing what is “deeply differential between the two sexes” implies that the critic endorses the novel’s misogynist ideology.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> In seeming agreement with Villanueva, Carlos Quiroga—in his brief *recensión* on Scórpio (written in the *normativa lusista*) entitled “Scórpio, Historia rosa e narrador polifónico,”—mentions the admired “capacidade do autor de sondar a “psicología feminina”” (448), and posits that this “capacidade” “é marca da sensibilidade do poeta” (448). Quiroga describes the novel as refreshing and innovative: “A historia está impecavelmente bem contada, e de forma novidosa: talvez, quando o conjunto de vozes cala e o romance conclui, o leitor ache que degustou algo refrescante e raro, apesar do rosa-poético-fantástico (ou

The next analysis written in *lusista* Galizan is that by Carlos Martínez Pereiro, who, as I stated above, writes in the *normativa dos mínimos*, which comprises a mixture—a middle ground, as it were—of the *norma lusista* and the *norma oficial*. I have included him in with the *lusista* camp because, on the one hand, the *mínimos* standard, as with the *lusista* norm, is also deemed unofficial by the Galizan establishment, and, on the other hand, this critic's article resembles very much those of the *lusistas*.<sup>107</sup> In his article entitled “*Scórpio* ou a moi intelixente caza-cruzada dun fantasma,” he praises the author and novel in a much more insistent way than do the critics who write in the *oficialista* standard. While the latter simply applaud the author for his commitment to the Republic, anti-fascism and Galizan culture, the *lusistas* idealize Carvalho. For example, while Rodríguez Fer compliments the author with these closing words of his article: “A nosa nación comenzaba a recuperar, paulatinamente, a un coloso da súa cultura” (17); Martínez Pereiro asserts that Carvalho is one of those intellectuals “en que *todos* podemos recoñecer e en quen *todos* podemos estar recoñecidos” (71). This critic seems to manifest more of a group mentality than Rodríguez Fer because of his idea that the author acts as a representative of “*todos*.”

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precisamente mercé a isso?), na articulação verbal, no plano narrativo seguido” (488). He concludes asserting that the novel “será umha obrigada referência nos modos narrativos; para a literatura galega, menos abastada na narrativa que na poesia, e para a literatura em geral, apesar do enorme grau de experimentalismo contemporâneo” (488).

<sup>107</sup> Significant is that fact that he spells the author's name with Portuguese orthography, unlike Montero and Rodríguez Fer, who use the oficial orthography.

Moreover, his use of italics in “*todos*” seems to emphasize the unambiguous and homogeneous nature of his implied readers.<sup>108</sup>

Furthermore, Martínez Pereiro, like other *lusista* critics, portrays the author as a victim and dramatizes his marginal status as a writer.<sup>109</sup> He accuses the Galizan official institutions for lacking ethics and making Carvalho invisible within the Galizan cultural establishment,<sup>110</sup> and attributes two additional factors to Carvalho’s marginality: One stems from Carvalho’s supporters, who, in his opinion, have created a “culto á sua personalidade cívica (cando non case exclusivamente ao seu *idearium* lingüístico) que relegou a sua obra de creación a unha posición ancilar, a unha *res nullius*” (72). The other factor, according to this critic, derives from the lack of attention to Carvalho’s literary work, while critics tend uphold the author for his essays and erudition.

After his denunciatory introduction, Martínez states that his objective in his analysis of *Scórpio* consists of “reflexionar en voz alta sobre a confesada ficción e especialmente, a encoberta escrita do “eu” neste texto híbrido” (72). In his endeavor to

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<sup>108</sup> Ramon Suevos, whose article explores Carvalho’s linguistic project, describes the author as an essentialistic pure entity: “Era um nacionalista radical, um nacionalista quimicamente puro” (28). And at the end of his essay, he warns against any future manipulation of Carvalho’s figure and affirms: “Que fiquem sabendo: *Carvalho Calero é nosso*” (30). Both of these comments illustrate clearly, in my view, the *lusista* group mentality. Moreover, his first remark on the author’s “chemically pure nationalism,” reveals, implicitly, his conception that non-*lusistas* are not true nationalists.

<sup>109</sup> Ramon Suevos also victimizes the author: “Um proscrito na sua própria terra. Era alvo de todo tipo de ataques, de quem nom perdoava que umha mente especulativa assi estivesse ao serviço da liberdade de Galiza” (30).

<sup>110</sup> Indeed, he launches into a diatribe against these official institutions: “Ora ben, unha tal falta de institucionalización na esquizofrénica “cultura oficial,” que, sen dúbida, el tamén non tería asumido con agrado, mantivo-o felizmente lonxe dos forenses e exiptólogos literários (talvez os axentes institucionais que mais se aproximan ás fronteiras da morte e do embalsamento dunha obra de creación), evitando-se así coa libre alegría de ler, a meditación empobrecedora e o consabido magma de lugares comuns dos que len e escriben ao ditado” (71-71).

unveil, it seems, an autobiographical essence of the novel (or to hunt down a ghost, as states the title of the article), Martínez' essay becomes confusing at times. He describes Scórpio as a memorial novel (or introspective novel) which also enters the “esvaídos límites dos ‘escritos íntimos’ e da ‘escrita narcisista’” (73). He claims that the novel does not consist of an “auto-xustificación encomiástica,” but rather a “procura do auto-coñecimento” (76), and he justifies the novel’s “tema narcísico” and *rosa* quality, arguing that they act as a formal device for the author’s search of himself. In his references to the novel’s narcissism (of all the critics analyzed here, Martínez is the only one who even mentions this word), he seems to try to ward off any possibility that the author could be carrying out a self-aggrandizing fantasy:<sup>111</sup>

Xa que a escrita de esencia autobiográfica permite un desprazamento do punto de vista (pois para cambiar a visión é preciso cambiar a perspectiva), impón-se para o que se quer relator (e tamén descubridor) da súa intimidade un descentrar-se, que en *Scórpio* se formula en correspondencia coa imaxe do seu tema narcísico, reflexando o íntimo nun xogo de espellos paralelos e contínuas máscaras finxidas. (74)

Thus, Martínez implies that the significance of Carvalho Calero’s auto-biographical novel, lies not in what the novel says explicitly (in the novel’s *rosa* and narcissistic content), but in the author’s displacement of his intimacy (his “descentrar-se”) from these depictions:

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<sup>111</sup> Worthy of note is that though Martínez does, more than the other critics, try to justify the novel’s narcissism, he does not mention (or let alone try to justify) the novel’s approved sexist ideology. None of the critics fathom this possibility.



“Desta maneira é a comunicación en moldes romanescos a que pasaria a ser ficticia, mentres o íntimo comunicado procuraria a verdade através do relativo distanciamento empático con que Carvalho se aborda plural” (76).

The critic also downplays the author’s narcissism by arguing that he (the author) constitutes the first addressee of the text, as if the author, not interested in the reader’s interpretation, wrote the novel only for himself. This element, posits Martínez, is derived from the fact that Carvalho Calero “a respeito dos tempos recuados que (re)inventa desde o presente, pretende ser menos un advogado de si mesmo do que un testigo da fluente verdade do seu interior” (76). But Martínez then claims that the author’s “experiencia de coñecimento persoal non se quer, porén, de uso privado no moito que representa de síntese da experiencia común” (76). In other words, the author, affirms Martínez, was not interested in making his narcissism public, but since he (unwillingly) represents a “síntese da experiencia común,” the reader cannot help but see him or herself reflected in the novel.

At the end of his essay Martínez underscores—in line with the other *lusista* critics (and Villanueva)—the author’s and novel’s supposed indeterminacy and relativity. He asserts that if there are writers who deserve to be read and reread “no contexto actual do pret-à-porter ideolóxico” (76), these writers are the “detentores da verdade relativa que resulta da fusión entre a vida vivida, a vida soñada e a vida expresada, proceso catártico plenamente consciente en grande parte da obra de D. Ricardo Carvalho Calero” (76). This line of interpretation, which I continue to explore in the other critics, exonerates the

novel and author from carrying out an explicit exercise of authorial exhibitionism and upholding a sexist ideology, which, as I showed above, can take even take the form of treatise-like misogynistic declarations.

A similar interpretation is made by Delgado Corral in “Salgueiro: A voz de um autor de ficção.” This critic focuses on the novel’s meta-literary aspect, which, according to him, contributes to making the narrative open-ended and indefinite. Salgueiro’s perspectivist approach elicits, in his view, a variety of relative truths: “Salgueiro busca a “verdade” através de Scórpio. Para isto propom um perspectivismo, que distintas personagens falem de Scórpio. Salgueiro, como um ponto de vista mais, questiona a “verdade” dos outros. A conclusom é que as distintas consciências conduzem a distintas verdades relativas” (340). Delgado conceives of Scórpio’s meta-literary facet—which, in his view, confuses reality and literature and displays the conception of literature as a process in which the reader is a participant—as completely innovative in Galizan literature, and he compares Salgueiro’s role to that of Tristram Shandy and Henry James.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, he claims that through Salgueiro and the “multi-perspectives,” “o narrado fai-se mais objectivo, presentando-se nos o mundo da ficção mais limitado e polo tanto mais ‘real’” (337). Salgueiro, in Delgado’s view, constitutes “o grande acerto do romance” (338) because this character, through his “técnica de

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<sup>112</sup> On the former he writes: “Fai-nos partícipes dos problemas que lhe cria o fazer um romance, ao jeito dum Tristram Shandy, fala dumha certa impotência ante a possibilidade de escrever um romance longo” (333); and on the latter he remarks: “Seguimos a Salgueiro como guia indiscutível do ponto de vista literário por umha espécie de “Caderno de notas,” em que, ao jeito dum Henry James, expom problemas e propom soluções no seu possível romance” (337).

estranhamento” (339), brings to the novel a new dimension “que pretende chegar á outra realidade, á surrealidade” (339).

Elvira Souto, in her essay entitled “A viagem heróica: Scórpio,” also interprets an “outra realidade” of the novel, but her analysis constitutes, by far, the most complex and elaborate of all the *lusista* critics who write on Scórpio.<sup>113</sup> She elaborates a thorough and well-documented essay on what she discerns as the deep structures that underlie the surface story. These deep structures, or hidden texts, contain, in her view, the basic elements of a traditional heroic (more tragic than epic) narrative: “[N]om podemos deixar de sentir que, sob epiderme da escrita, flui, com a sua própria lógica estrutural, outro discurso. Um discurso outro, de forma e conteúdo ‘arcaicos’” (72). In addition to organizing the surface narrative of Rafael’s existential trajectory, this “outro discurso” is also responsible for elevating the protagonist to a heroic condition. Furthermore, Souto also draws, in the last part of her critique, analogies between these latent structures of “umha trajectória de essência estrutural heróica” (73) and the trajectory of the “comunidade patriótica cujas expectativas sociais mais imediatas foram frustradas pela vitória militar que abriu as portas á ditadura franquista” (73).

Souto states that this hidden sub-narrative was probably not consciously intended by the author (72). The sub-narrative contains, she claims, four of the five key elements

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<sup>113</sup> García Soto, whose ideas on the symbolism of the name Francisco I used above, also carries out an elaborate analysis of the novel in his article “Scórpio e Tauro ou o goze e o sublime, Barthes e Kant com Carvalho.” Like the rest of the *lusistas*, he praises and idealizes the author (beginning with the title!), but his arguments are, to a large extent, confusing; hence, I have decided to leave his work out of my study.

of a traditional heroic narrative: the first element comprises “as fantasias do nascimento” (74); the second consists of the early on recognized superiority of the protagonist; the presence of a masculine companion<sup>114</sup> and two antagonistic women that entice and tempt him constitutes the third; the fourth consists of the carrying out of deeds and surmounting obstacles that reveal the protagonist as a savior; and, finally, the fifth element comprises the final conquest of the treasure and return home. This fifth element, adds Souto, exists in those heroic cycles that are complete and “culminados de maneira satisfatória,” but it does not always occur, as in the cases of some ancient epics, such as those of Gilgamesh and Oedipus (74). The hidden sub-text of Scórpio belongs, of course, to the “incomplete” mythic-heroic narratives, given that the hero dies before he can fulfill the final conquest and return home.

Regarding the first of the elements that appear in traditional mythic-heroic narratives, the critic comments on the mystery that surrounds Rafael’s birth (his unknown father, the death of his mother, his hypnotizing effect on his adoptive mother, etc.), and explains that in heroic narratives a protagonist’s enigmatic birth acts quite often as an omen for his catastrophic ending. Rafael’s adoptive family, she explains, provides the necessary environment for the hero’s future deeds and also recognizes his superior quality, the second of the above mentioned elements:

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<sup>114</sup> Jorge (Sagitário), and to a lesser extent Salgueiro, fulfill this function in part one, while Casado and Barreiro act as Rafael’s male companions in part two.

[E]ste futuro herói de origens incertas ingressa logo no seio de um agregado familiar sem mistério nem excepcionalidade que lhe há de proporcionar o entorno quotidiano de que necessita para o desenvolvimento do primeiro período da sua formação e que lhe há de garantir igualmente o reconhecimento, desde o primeiro dia sem qualquer hesitação, do carácter singular da sua condição (convém não esquecer que uma das funcionalidades semânticas da prematura emancipação dos laços de sangue é a de permitir ao herói aparecer como filho das suas próprias obras). (76-77)

An additional aspect, crucial in Souto's view, that makes the protagonist of Scórpio enigmatic is his double name, Rafael-Scórpio, which confronts two irreconcilable elements: On the one hand, the archangelic name of Rafael (which symbolizes his transparent and godly like qualities), given to the protagonist at his baptism; and, on the other, the dark and mysterious Scorpion side, which originates from Rafael's astrological chart:

[É] hora de recordar que o protagonista desta história antes de ser Rafael por baptismo era já Scórpio por conjunção astral. Alma portanto irremediavelmente complexa em que aninha, sob a superfície luminosa e aprazível do dia, a violência de uma paixão nocturna que conduz à auto-destruição. Região volcânica, vermelha e negra, de clima tormentoso e geografia trágica. (78)

The internal confrontation between the representative forces of Rafael and Scórpio comprises, in the critic's view, the main motive of the narration.<sup>115</sup> For Rafael's tragedy is a consequence of the duplicity that hides behind the "exterior luminosamente sereno e equilibrado" (78), and the "desencontro entre a aparência solar que insistem em mostrar-nos os narradores e a essência obscura" (78). On the metaphoric level this confrontation manifests itself as a struggle between "as aspirações do herói—e as aspirações do grupo que nele se reconhece" and the limitations of the hero and group; limitations that are "próprias da condição humana" (78). And it is in this discord between the aspirations and limitations, argues Souto, "que se forjam os destinos trágicos" (78).

Only by reducing the distance between the two opposing forces can the final catastrophe be avoided, and for this the hero would either have to desist from his heroic project, which would mean that he would have to "permanecer no espaço que o identifica renunciando às provas da viagem e às honras da conquista;" or he would have to overcome the dangers that lie in his path during these heroic travels (79). These dangers in the novel, argues the critic, consist of the "perigo que a tentação da mulher representa pois devemos recordar que os heróis de Carvalho Calero raramente são seduzidos pelo ouro, é sempre a ameaça fêmea que os perde" (79). This "female threat" and the general role of women become a focal point in the critic's analysis. Of all the women who cross

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<sup>115</sup> The critic also develops a complex theory on Jorge-Sagitário, who, according to her, acts as both the reverse and complement of Rafael-Scórpio. Sagitário is born in the "período zodiacal imediatamente posterior ao de Rafael," and his presence carries out the following function: "[T]rata-se . . . de mostrar, pelo desdobramento actancial . . . a polarização das forças que comovem internamente o próprio Scórpio. Trata-se de facilitar ao protagonista, e de facilitar-nos a nós os leitores, uma imagem reflexiva desse outro ser que habita o interior apenas entrevisto cujo segredo, directamente, nunca se revela" (80-81).

Rafael's path, argues Souto, there are only two who affect his formation, and each of them represents an opposite and irreconcilable nature. On the one hand, there is Chéli, who "encarna a imagem da mulher doméstica e maternal," and, on the other, Eugénia (Cleo's sister who had seduced Rafael during his university years in Compostela), who synthesizes "os perigos do caminho (ou, vem ser o mesmo, os perigos da difícil auto-exploração que é confronto com o outro)" (87).<sup>116</sup>

Chéli, explains the critic, cannot restrain the hero from carrying out his deeds. It would be aesthetically unimaginable "um herói das características de Rafael, de tam pouco entusiasmo activo no terreno amoroso, de ánimo tam sereno e circunspecto, iniciando-se nos segredos de Eros (despertando o escorpiom interior) com umha mulher angelical e paciente como Chéli" (88). Rather, these sexual enterprises,<sup>117</sup> affirms the critic, must be carried out by "espíritos mais empreendedores, alentos mais vigorosos, ánimos metaforicamente (e só metaforicamente) mais viris, como confirmam . . . os resultados do comportamento audaz de Eugénia" (88). Eugénia is the character who opened up the fissure in Rafael's "courage aparentemente impenetrável," which throughout the rest of the novel "alarga-se permitindo que o antes embrionário Scórpio se robusteça e poda assomar a superfície" (93).

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<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, Souto posits that the oppositional duality between Chéli and Eugénia serves the role of symbolizing the contrasting forces in Rafael (86-87).

<sup>117</sup> Regarding Rafael's gentlemanly code of never telling about his sexual adventures, Souto claims that this characteristic is typically that of a hero. Why does a hero have this characteristic? She explains that perhaps it is because "os afãos guerreiros e construtores, ou o exercício de um intelecto superior, esgotam umha energia que descobrimos nom ser ilimitada; ou talvez, como querem alguns autores, porque a dura coragem da condição heróica esconde sempre umha ánima sonhadora e pouco decidida" (88).

Cleo (Eugénia's sister) becomes, in part two, the extension, as it were, of Eugénia. This character, whom the critic considers the most metaphoric in the novel,<sup>118</sup> reappears in Rafael's life like an "Amazona de pele morena irrompendo na cena escoltada por um grupo de militares" (99). The vignette in which Flores, one of Rafael's lieutenant companions, describes Cleo's legs in an "epifania" constitutes, in Souto's opinion, the scene of the novel with the most "pregnância simbólica" (100). According to the critic, Cleo represents an "aranha ocupada em tecer—com o rítmico, cadencioso movimento das suas pernas—a teia em que apresa os homens que a rodeiam" (100). Rafael's indifference to Cleo's legs (while the other men are captivated by them) and his getting up and leaving the room announces, posits the critic, the imminence of the final catastrophe. Souto also adds that Rafael's apparent rejection in this scene of Cleo is necessary for aesthetic reasons because it makes the reader think that the hero will escape the final tragedy (100).

Elvira Souto's analysis carries out, as I stated earlier, the most allegorical analysis of the novel. What I find especially indicative of a group mentality in her study comprises her uncritical stance towards the novel's misogynistic content, which is present in both a non-figurative reading of the novel as well as in her deep-structure reading. Her acceptance of the novel's sexist ideology becomes especially apparent in a passage in

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<sup>118</sup> The fact that Cleo, a very relevant character, disappears and then reappears in the story confirms, in the critic's view, the heroic substance of the protagonist's travels (96-97).



which she explains Carvalho's philosophy of the "íntima condição" of women in Scórpio:

Como bem sabemos, é ás personagens que encarnam as duas visões antagónicas do feminino codificadas pela tradição que corresponde revelar ao iniciante as diferentes fases (o plural) dessa lua sempre umha, invariavelmente singular, que é, no dizer de Carvalho Calero, a íntima condição da mulher. Condição funesta para as suas aspirações solares pois nela habita, latente ou manifesta, umha ameaça á sua identidade que põe em perigo a realização dos seus projectos (lembramos mais umha vez aqui que é indefectivelmente a mulher, nunca o ouro, o perigo que espreita no caminho os heróis deste Autor). (86)

The "female threat" of the protagonist appears in Souto's interpretation more like a set of allegorical structures than as real sexist ideology that reproduces society's patriarchal hierarchy. By projecting the author's—or the "Author," as she writes it here—vision of women onto a symbolic plane (that of the heroic sub-text embedded in the novel), she seems to exonerate the novel (and author) of its reactionary ideology vis-a-vis women.

At the end of her analysis she explains more in depth her theory of Rafael-Scórpio representing the community. She contends that if the protagonist represents the group "que o identifica," and his trajectory constitutes a metaphor of the "trajectoria política comum" (102), the reader must conclude that

[O] dilema que está na base desse conflito—a dualidade que o herói se nega a admitir—alicerça também, simbolicamente, a frágil estrutura que suporta o edifício das mais genuínas reivindicações deste povo hesitante e contraditório que somos todos nós. E não temos porque não imaginar que o autor textual, pela via oblíqua da imagem literária, atribui o reiterado fracasso de nossos projectos colectivos à parcialidade esterilizante com que as forças patrióticas encararam e encaram a conquista do futuro. (102-03)

Hence, if earlier Souto explained that the cleavage between Rafael and Scórpio represented the confrontation of the aspirations of the group/hero and its limitations, now she claims that the rift within the protagonist is symbolic of the “sterile partiality” of the patriotic forces. She then argues that it will not be “pela exclusão, a fractura, a cisão esquizoide, pela expulsão de Caim, que adquiriremos a condição superior de seres livres” (103), but rather “pelo reconhecimento da nossa condição irremediavelmente plural—bimorfa e bicolor—que poderemos vencer a difícil prova que nos espera no fim do caminho, e evitar assim o perigo de auto-destruição que de antigo nos ameaça” (102).

Then in the last paragraph she seems to contradict herself by claiming that the solution to resolving this metaphorical Rafael-Scórpio opposition lies in the expulsion of those who harm the community. She expresses this when affirming that the novel offers a “horizonte irrenunciável” (104), which consists of “o da defesa inequívoca do lar herdado, o da expulsão sem ambages nem subterfúgios dos pretendentes que nos

cobiçam a casa e destróem sem dó as suas riquezas, o da re-instauraçom da genealogia própria nesta Terra pequena que Recardo Carvalho Calero tanto amou” (104). Souto’s contradiction leaves the reader confused as to what Rafael-Scórpio really represents in her interpretation, for she first claims that the solution to the opposing forces lies in not expulsing “Caim,” but then she asserts that those who covet the “casa” and destroy its riches should be expelled.

Souto’s study discerns perceptively, in my view, the epic aspect of Scórpio that manifests iteself through deep structures. As I explained in chapter one, epic-oriented works in Galizan literature consititute manifestations of this community’s prenatal status. Until Galiza achieves sufficient recognition from both within Spain and without; until political measures are taken for normalizing the language and culture, the Galizan nation will not exist as a consolidated entity. Souto’s interpretation, however, does not explore enough, in my view, the implications of this epic reading vis-a-vis Galizan nationalism and the Civil War. She describes thoroughly the possible meanings of the novel’s “hidden subtexts,” but she does not explore the relevance of such meanings for writing and reading Galizan literature. Instead of going beyond the boundaries of the novel, she seems more interested in trying to discover the protagonist’s “enigma.”

The idealization of Scórpio and Carvalho Calero, which is evident especially in the studies by the *lusista* critics and Villanueva, manifests itself, broadly speaking, on two different levels. On the one hand, the critics exaggerate the brilliance of the author and the artistic value of his novel by comparing them with world-famous authors and

works; Villanueva, for example, names Aldous Huxley, André Gide, Unamuno, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Marcel Proust and Valle-Inclán as the author's equivalents; Delgado Corral claims that Scórpio is similar to Lawrence Sterne's Tristram Shandy and resonant of Henry James' narrative style; and Garcia Soto seems to place Carvalho Calero on the same level as Kant and Barthes. On the other hand, the critics seem to evade the novel's endorsed misogyny (and never raise the possibility of authorial narcissism) by trying to convince the reader that the real value of the novel lies not in what is literally expressed, but rather in what lies beneath the text or in the "distance" between the author and the text: While Martínez Pereiro emphasizes the authorial distance from the text, Villanueva focuses on the novel's ellipses and indeterminacy, and Delgado and Souto explore the "outras realidades" that the novel offers.

This exaggerated praise of Carvalho Calero and his novel constitute, in my opinion, manifestations of what I have explained as a group mentality. As a threatened group (much more threatened than those who defend the *galego oficial*), the *lusistas* cannot afford to be critical of a creation by the modern predecessor of their orthographic (and reintegration into the Luso-speaking world) movement. Suso de Toro refers to the tendency in Galiza to over praise this community's literature in this terms:

"Comparativamente para a poboación que somos, a literatura está sobredimensionada. Pero a trampa de ser o colonizado é a trampa de vivir entre a megalomanía e a depresión" ("A creación" 68). And Figueroa explains this same dynamic as thus: "Isto é o que explica que haxa tendencia no noso país a confundir aquilo que se imaxina como valor

autónomo sen máis, con aquilo que é estrictamente progresista, que se tenda a refuxiarse nun certo narcisismo melodramático que substitúe ó real progreso cultural” (*Diglosia* 84).

These observations refer to a group mentality characteristic of interpretative practices in Galiza in general, but, as I stated earlier, these tendencies are much more pronounced, in my view, among the *lusista* camp. As I have tried to show in this chapter, the *lusista* critics, more than the *oficialista* critics (with Villanueva as the exception), reduce the dialogue between their horizons of expectations and the text.

These limited readings of *Scórpio* are representative, in my view, of the critical practices of the *lusista* movement in general. Hence, this movement manifests a paradox consisting of, on the one hand, their cosmopolitan vision of Galiza (re)integrated into the Lusophone world, which could occur if the *lusista* orthographic norm were officialized. But this project is counteracted, on the other hand, by a mentality that hinders the *lusista* cause from advancing, evolving, and, most importantly, appealing to the general population.<sup>119</sup> Would the *lusista* critics who wrote on *Scórpio* have written these critiques had the novel been published in the *normativa oficial*? My guess is that they would not have. This militant group mentality—through necessary in the beginning for the group’s *prise de conscience*—turns counter-productive when it becomes a censoring mechanism of innovative thought and self-criticism. In this context, the predicament of

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<sup>119</sup> The example of Anxo Angueira’s anti-*lusismo* is paradigmatic, in my view, of the rejection that much of Galizan society feels towards the *lusista* movement. Angueira, as I stressed in the previous chapter, is not against the integration of Galiza into the Portuguese-speaking world, but he stopped endorsing the *lusista* cause because of the dogmatic mentality that characterizes a large part of this group.

the *lusistas*, who still remain on the margins of society, will most likely not improve unless a new non-monolithic and innovative spirit takes root within the movement.

One Galizan writer who has systematically gone against the grain of group readings is Maria Xosé Queizán, whose Civil War novel, Amor de tango, I analyze in the next chapter. This author—who incidentally supports the *lusista* cause even though she publishes her works in the *normativa oficial*—has introduced into Galizan literature new horizons that invite society to rethink its national project. Her feminist vision, articulated in her novels and essays, strives to debunk the patriarchal elements of Galizan nationalism, which continue to act in mainstream nationalist thought as unquestioned referents. In Amor de tango the feminist national project she envisions reveals itself through the novel's focus on the hardships of working women and the disastrous effects the fascist takeover had on women's emancipation, which had only begun to ferment during the Republican years.

## CHAPTER # 4

### **AMOR DE TANGO: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE OF THE CIVIL WAR IN GALIZA**

In Amor de tango (1992) Maria Xosé Queizán frames the Republic and Civil War within a perspective that does not exist in any of the other Galizan Civil War novels, including the three by the other female authors.<sup>120</sup> This perspective can be viewed as feminist insofar as the novel pays special attention to masculine violence and the struggle of women to liberate themselves in a patriarchal society. Considered a pioneer of Galizan feminism, Queizán has produced works in a variety of literary genres: theater, poetry, narrative fiction (both novels and short stories), as well as essays. She is also a Galizan nationalist in that she writes exclusively in Galizan and defends Galiza's autonomy from Spain. But her nationalist philosophy is very critical of Galizan mainstream nationalist doctrine, which has inherited a very patriarchal tradition. My two main objectives in this chapter consist of, on the one hand, explaining Queizán's feminist perspective regarding Galizan nationalism, and, on the other, analyzing Amor de tango's feminist pedagogical project. This project offers a heuristic model through which readers can acquire a new ideological framework (which is feminist at heart) for transforming

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<sup>120</sup> Helena Villar co-wrote with her husband, Xesús Rábade, Morrer en Vilaquinte (1980), Marina Mayoral is the author of Tristes armas (1994), and Margot Chamorro wrote Tempo rachado (1999).

reality. But before focusing in on these two questions, I provide a brief biography of the author and a summary of the novel.

Born in Vigo, Galiza in 1939, Queizán is the posthumous daughter of Xosé Queizán, a republican lawyer who was murdered by the fascists two years after the uprising. She became a political activist early in her life, and was one of the founders of the Marxist-nationalist *Unión do Pobo Galego* (UPG) in 1964. She studied *galego-portugués* (Galizan and Portuguese literature and language) at the University de Compostela and was a member of the first graduating class of this branch in 1979. Her interest in feminist theory began in the 1970's at the time when the feminist movement began to develop in the rest of Spain, and also during the period she separated from her husband, Xosé Luís Méndez Ferrín, the famous Galizan writer. Since 1980 she has worked as a high school teacher of Galizan language and literature in Vigo.

Multi-faceted as she is, Queizán's dedication to the liberation of women has consistently combined theory and practice. Her disenchantment with the sexist ideology dominant in society and Galizan nationalism has led her to participate in and found several feminist organizations and magazines,<sup>121</sup> as well as produce a variety of theoretical books and essays. Published in 1977, her A muller en Galicia constitutes the first feminist theoretical text written by a Galizan. In this book she outlines what has constituted until the present the base of her theories on feminism and nationalism. I

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<sup>121</sup> In 1976 she helped found the *Asociación Galega da Muller*, she participated in *Feministas Independentes Galegas* beginning in 1978. In 1983 she founded the feminist magazine Festa da palabra silenciada, which she continues to coordinate in the present.



discuss some of her ideas in A muller for my explanation of her feminist-nationalist proposals, but focus mostly on her latest theoretical text entitled Misoxinia e racismo na poesia de Pondal (1998). This study explores the reactionary ideology vis-a-vis women and race in the poetry of Eduardo Pondal, who was one of the main figures that emerged from the *Rexurdimento* movement initiated by Rosalia de Castro in 1863. Queizán argues that the canonization of this Galizan nationalist—upheld as an ethical model by the Galizan literary establishment—endangers the future of a democratic Galiza. By revealing the misogyny in his poetry, she strives, as she does in all her literary creation, to introduce new progressive horizons into Galizan nationalist ideology.

Queizán's writings, as one might imagine in a literary system heavily dominated by men, do not receive much attention by the critics. This became especially apparent to me in the summer of 2001 when I was in Galiza trying to compile a list of all the Galizan Civil War novels. For some time I had marveled at the almost complete absence of women writers in the Civil War subgenre. I knew of Marina Mayoral's and Helena Villar's novels, but I was unaware of Amor de tango, despite having read some of Queizán's feminist writings. When I called her that summer of 2000 to ask her for an interview—I was interested in hearing her views on the Civil War novels and Galizan nationalism—she interrupted me while I was explaining my dissertation topic: “Mais eu também escreví um romance sobre a guerra!” It was difficult to believe that during all the time I spent searching for each and every Galizan narrative on this conflict, I never heard mention of the book. Not even in Fernández Santander's Bibliografía de la novela

de la guerra civil y el franquismo—which comprises the most complete compilation of the novels—does her novel appear. My difficulty in discovering the novel, notwithstanding, does not mean that Amor de tango has been silenced, for it has sold well in comparison to other Civil War novels,<sup>122</sup> and a few critics have written on it.

Though becoming more recognized for her literary talent and feminist-nationalist theories,<sup>123</sup> Queizán remains a kind of “heretic” within the Galizan literary establishment. Her uncompromising attacks on the patriarchal aspects of Galizan nationalist ideology and her sometimes shocking ideas<sup>124</sup> seem to scare off a substantial amount of critics, who most likely feel Queizán as a threat to the group. But as radical and staunch as her feminist approaches may be, her writings possess the virtue of not diminishing or excluding, in any way, men from her nationalist project. This is the case of all her literary production (even of her essays in which her attacks on male domination are more aggressive), and it is especially the case of her novel, Amor de tango. Indeed, this novel seems to appeal to all readers be they female or male, old or young.

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<sup>122</sup> As of July, 2002, 6,400 copies of the novel had been sold. It appears that a good proportion of its sales derives from the high schools in Vigo, which commonly assign the novel as required reading.

<sup>123</sup> On 24 October, 1998, a park in Vigo was named after her and she received from the *Asociación de Escritores en Língua Galega* (AELG) the prestigious prize, “Letra E.”

<sup>124</sup> Queizán claims that penetration constitutes an aggression against women. Coitus will cease to exist, she posits, the more society becomes democratic and non-patriarchal. (personal interview, July 12, 2002)

## A Summary of the Novel, the Function of the “Tango Love,” and the Novel’s Testimonial Illusion

The story of Amor de tango takes place in Vigo (Queizán’s home city), the major fishing and shipping port of northwest Spain. The narration is told mostly through the eyes and thoughts of Margot, who is in her late fifties at the time of the transition to democracy. In the beginning passage, the narrator describes her waiting in line to see the first showing of Bertolucci’s Last Tango in Paris, which before could only be seen in France, due to Francoist censorship. She decides not to see the movie (which is a cultural marker of the Spanish transition) because she suspects that it will have nothing in common with the “tango love” she had lived in the summer of 1936: “Prefería non ver a película. Sospeita que o erotismo do argumento desas escenas das que todo o mundo fala, non teñen nada que ver co seu, coa súa paixón” (6). So instead she takes a walk through the old quarter of Vigo (which looks out to the *Ria de Vigo*) and remembers her growing up in the pre-Republican years, her experiences in the short lived Republican period, and the trauma of the fascist uprising with its tragic political and personal consequences. She ventures this stroll despite the rainy and windy storm, which acts throughout the novel as a metaphoric mirror of the passionate and tragic emotions she elicits from her past joys and frustrations. The bulk of the novel, therefore, consists of flashbacks to the 1930s during which Margot is usually the focalizer.

Margot (called Margarita as a child) comes from a bourgeois Catalanian family that has owned, for at least two generations, a large fish cannery. Some of the

Catalonians in Vigo, as the novel recounts, descend from those who, fleeing from the Napoleonic invasions, arrived in Vigo in the early nineteenth century. The Catalonians who settled in Vigo helped forge the city's bourgeoisie and led it to become the metropolis of Galiza. Towards the beginning of the novel, the narration provides a positive description of their role in the city: "Margarita era de familia catalana, daquelas que chegaran a Vigo chamadas pola riqueza pesqueira, instalaran as fábricas e enriqueceran . . . Os cataláns eran, xa, vigueses por dereito propio. Participaban nos proxectos para engrandecer a vila, na Liga de Defensores de Vigo, no goberno e na administración da cidade" (26). This favorable account of Catalonians, nonetheless, is later nuanced by depictions of Margot's father, the boss of the fish cannery, who is known to sexually abuse his female employees. I discuss this aspect in depth later when analyzing the novel's pedagogical model.

Margot's family, like those of her close friends Chelo and Alma, are pro-Republican and send their daughters to secondary school, which was a rarity in Galiza at the time. Indeed, the three girls are the only ones in their high school class. Just as these girls are becoming women, developing a political conscience and discovering love and sex, the war intrudes and destroys their aspirations of liberating themselves. At the beginning of the novel, Margot reflects on how the war stymied her dreams:

Agora volvía a apertura, a democracia. Pero xa era tarde para ela. Aos seus anos . . . Colleuna a guerra no mellor da vida e truncáralle as esperanzas, as ilusións, incluso o despertar do seu corpo que se abría á

plenitude . . . E ela menos mal, polo menos tiña os recordos, e aínda o  
podía contar . . . Outras nin iso, outras perderan a vida. ¡Maldita guerra!

Cantas vidas rotas, cantas esperanzas, cantos proxectos . . . (7)

Margot at least possesses her memories, unlike Alma and Chelo. Alma is murdered by the fascists because she and her husband Ubaldo are revolutionary political activists.

Chelo, after her father is murdered by the Falangists, ends up marrying a Falangist, who may have been responsible for her father's death. Soon after the marriage she goes insane and is hospitalized.

Throughout the novel Margot's memories traverse between the individual and the political. As to the first element, the main story line of the novel, which begins in chapter five, consists of her "tango" love with her uncle Chinto (her father's younger brother), who returns from Argentina to visit. Kathleen March refers to this love relationship in these words: "The 'tango love' which narrowly misses being incestuous is the other melody establishing the tone of intimacy and female perspective that offsets political and masculine violence" (806). María Xesús Pato, in her poetic critique of the novel, alludes to the incestuous element as such: "O incesto como metáfora da creación literaria. Os setargos, a entraña" (132). The other critics do not comment on the incestuous aspect, perhaps because this form of relationship is not as scandalizing as it may be in other cultures (remember Maria and Amaro's—aunt and nephew—love in Pensa nao, and Rafael marrying Chéli, his step-sister, in Scórpido).

Chinto (whom his family calls the *gaucho*, a derogatory term in Galizan) is characterized as a very caring and passionate man. He becomes the victim on two occasions of his family's hypocrisy. In chapter five—when the reader is told that he is returning from Argentina—the narrator discloses that his departure from Galiza years earlier was due to his falling in love with a French *cupletista* singer named Amelia Jonny. When Chinto's father discovered his son's love, he threatened to disinherit him. He demanded that his son marry a woman of decent standing: "Somos unha familia seria e traballadora, fillo. Así xa o sabes. Esas mulleres son para un día. E mesmo así son un perigo. Traen o vicio, a enfermidade e a morte (73). But Chinto disobeyed his father and passionately proposed marriage to Amelia, who unexpectedly died shortly after Chinto's proposal, probably murdered by her jealous brother Carlos. After the incident, which caused scandal for the family, Chinto's father and family forced him to leave. After his departure, Chinto's mother (Margot's grandmother) reveals her pain of having to see her favorite son leave.<sup>125</sup>

Soon after his return to Vigo, Chinto and Margarita become close. His changed accent, his American expressions, his smell of leather<sup>126</sup> and poignant stories of his experiences in Buenos Aires captivate Margarita. Though she is much younger than he

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<sup>125</sup> Her reflection manifests the loving and caring characteristics of Chinto: "Doíalle o corazón velo partir, pero sabía que non había outra saída para el, que alá podía facerse un home de ben, que o seu Chinto non era ruín, era un mala cabeza pero tiña un corazón que non lle cabía no peito, que sempre fora o máis cariñoso dos seus fillos, o máis simpático e tamén o máis guapo, que non era raro que tivera gancho para as mulleres . . ." (75)

<sup>126</sup> Chinto's smell of leather intoxicates Margarita: "O olor non se pode separar da evocación que produce. O coiro podía ser fedorento para moitas persoas, para ela era un perfume embriagador. Porque con Chinto o cheiro a coiro apoderouse de toda a casa" (80).

(she is probably sixteen and he in his late forties), Chinto talks to Margarita as if she were a grown adult, and his stories are very down to earth. For example, he debunks Margarita's mythical idea of the heroic *gaucho* by telling her that some of them end up as owners of bordellos. At this point the narrator reveals that Margarita's "aguerridos gauchos caeran polo chan, dexeneraran no máis abxecto" (84). Later, when he introduces her to tango music and dance, which opens Margarita to eroticism, she also begins to solidify her political convictions: "as amigas pensaban que estas novas opinións eran unha extravagancia máis de Margot, que estar, estaba descoñecida. Ademais de descarada andaba feita unha comunista" (102). Indeed, it is through her "tango love" that Margarita transforms into the adult Margot:

O tango mudáralle incluso o nome. "Antes eras Margarita, agora te llamas Margot," dicía a letra daquel tango. Xa non consentía que ninguén lle chamara Margarita. Ese nome quedara enterrado como a infancia, como as nonadas da vida anterior, banal e insulsa. Agora era Margot, outra rapaza, mellor dito, unha percanta. (101)

But this love, discovered by Margarita's mother,<sup>127</sup> is short-lived. Horrified by her brother-in-law's seduction of her sixteen-year-old daughter, the mother commands Chinto's mother (Margarita's grandmother) to force him to leave Vigo. Against her deep love for her son, she implores him to depart by alleging that he will make Margarita

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<sup>127</sup> The narrator describes the mother's discovery as inevitable: "A nora, a nai de Margarita, descubriu o amor entre Chinto e a súa filla. ¡O que se lle escape a unha nai . . . !" (157).

unhappy because of their age difference. Chinto obeys his mother and leaves once again, this time forever, for America. Margarita begs Chinto to take her with him, but he coldly rejects her. The narrator describes Chinto's sacrifice using a verse from a tango song: "Chinto, ademais de renunciar a Margot, tiña que facerse pasar por traidor. "Para salvarte, sólo supe hacerme odiar," soáballo nos ouvidos o tango de Homero Mancini. Debía partir como un paria, como un malandra. Un sacrificio de tango" (156). Margot is left heartbroken and convinced that Chinto betrayed her until her grandmother, right before she dies, confesses to her the truth that Chinto was madly in love with her, but obeyed his mother's orders to depart. The novel ends with Margot (in the present) remembering her finding out the truth about Chinto's leaving her. This knowledge has allowed Margot to reconcile with her lost "tango love" and use her memory of it as a positive force in her present.

On a figurative level, Chinto's and Margot's "tango love" becomes a metaphor of the Republic, which was also short and ended in tragedy. But crucial in understanding Queizán's meaning of "tango love" is that though this love is tragic, it does not destroy the future.<sup>128</sup> That is why Margot, despite her loss of Chinto and the Republic, still has her memories, which make her an agent of the present and future. Her desire to remember and understand the past—as opposed to suppressing the past pain and anger,

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<sup>128</sup> The author alludes to this question in her interview with Fernando Franco (38).



which is what the pact of oblivion promoted—liberates her in the present and helps her reconceptualize her life in a positive light.

Queizán creates a testimonial illusion in this historical novel through her use of a verisimilar style of representation and abundant dialogues, aspects which I explain more in depth when analyzing the novel's pedagogical function. But she also employs another tactic in order to authenticate her docu-fiction by including herself and her close family members within the novel. First in appearance is her father, Xosé Queizán, who is a close friend of Ubaldo, Alma's future husband. The two young men, students in Compostela, have left on vacation to Vigo. The narrator describes them as studious and politically active: "Estudiar, estudiaban, que o Queizán era de matrículas de honor, pero tamén se movían politicamente. Eran da F.U.E. . . . Ubaldo explicou que Queizán tiña que dar unha conferencia para Xuventudes Agrarias de Lavadores" (92-93). A page after this description the narrator then describes Xosé Queizán through a flash-forward in which she refers to the author herself and the author's daughter Cristal: "Parecía estar pendente da figura de Queizán, alí no estrado, proporcionada, erguida, con aquel porte, que parecía un conde, como diría moitos anos despois, a neta, Cristal, ao velo en fotografía, ¿nai, ese señor é un conde? Non filla, é o teu avó" (93).

Near the end of the novel the author appears once again in a description that gives the reason behind her father's death: apparently he went too far out of his way—in his role as a defense lawyer—to save Republicans sentenced to death by the fascist rebels.

The narrator also describes the author's birth (which came after her father was murdered) as a disappointment for the family, who would have preferred a baby boy:

Remata a guerra e a penas pode sentir alegría. Chinto, perdido. Alma, morta. Chelo, casada cun caifás daqueles. Ubaldo e Queizán mortos. Todo amargura. Nin os nacementos son xubilosos. Conchita, a viúva de Queizán, vén de dar a luz unha filla póstuma, unha nena, “unha mexona,” para desgusto do avó que esperaba un varón que perpetuara a memoria do seu fillo ben amado . . . que defendera con tanta calor durante a guerra, que salvara tanta xentiña de morrer, setenta e tres casos, dicía o fachendoso pai, gañados á fouce fascista, salvados da morte. Demasiada calor puña nas defensas. Iso foi o malo. E agora que podía nacer o substituto do fillo, vén unha nena. A rapariga, a falta do sexo, puxéronlles o nome do pai, precedido do María caracterizador xenérico. (165)

The author, therefore, literally grafts herself onto her fiction in a way that, in my view, serves to persuade readers of the novel's testamentary character. By placing herself within the fiction, the events she tells seem authentic. James Young explores this same phenomenon in Holocaust docu-fiction and non-fictional testimonial:

[T]he diarists and memoirists intuit that in asking literature to establish the facts of the Holocaust—or evidence of events—they are demanding not just that words signify experiences, but that they become—like the writers themselves—*traces* of their experiences. Their impossible task is then to

show somehow that their words are material fragments of experiences,  
that the current existence of their narrative is causal proof that its objects  
also existed in historical time. (23)

Queizán's leaving "traces" of herself in Amor de tango also stems, I believe, from her desire to emphasize that she is a descendant of the war, ripped away from her father and the destroyed progressive political projects.

Her novel, as I mentioned earlier, provides a perspective that is missing from all the other Civil War novels. This perspective, which I have labeled feminist, reveals itself though the novel's focus on the hardships of women, who were only beginning to free themselves from the structures of a sexist society when fascism reimposed the traditional roles. Like Pensa nao, Queizán's novel also portrays the Republic as the golden moment in Spanish history when the democratic movements could have removed the long-standing repressive elements and made Spain a free society. But Amor de tango adds a new element by focusing on the victims of society who usually go unheeded; the victims that, as the narrator declares at the beginning of the novel, "non chegaron a colocar ante o muro dos fusilamentos pero que lles puxeron unha barraxe diante, cortándolles o camiño, un camiño que a penas puideron enxergar, que foi como unha miraxe, a pesar de que tiñan tantos impulsos para o percorrer" (8). In order to better understand the interstices of the novel's feminist project, I first explore the author's feminist conception of Galician nationalism and her critical stance against fiction that uses a rural thematics.

## Queizán's Feminist Conception of Galizan Nationalism and Her Negative Perception of the Rural in Galizan Literature

In contrast to the blind allegiance of many Galizan nationalists, both men and women, to their cultural heritage, Maria Xosé Queizán aggressively reveals the reactionary elements that this heritage contains and proposes a new nationalist canon, ideology, and praxis. In the 1970's when she became a feminist theoretician, she began to distance herself from the dominant nationalist line of thought upheld by the *Unión do Pobo Galego*, of which she was one of the founders in 1964. At this same time she also began to rethink the validity of Marxism vis-a-vis women's liberation. In an article published in 1996 she wrote that she had once believed that Marxist and feminist theories could work in harmony for the liberation of all humanity, but she changed her ideas upon realizing that dialectical materialism excludes, in her words, true materialism: "[X]a aprendín a non magnificar teorías . . . a distanciarme cada vez das dicotomías e a coñecer e reafirmarme máis no método feminista que, mesmo se puido tomar, e toma, características do materialismo dialéctico, introduce o materialismo verdadeiro (o corpo, o sexo, aspecto clave no feminismo posto que a explotación das mulleres é sexual)" ("Feminismo e marxismo" 358). As I show in the next section, the emphasis on the female body and sexual exploitation is central in *Amor de tango*'s feminist project.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> In her interview with Manuel Forcadela, she explains more of the shortcomings of Marxist theory vis-a-vis feminist analysis: "O marxismo, por exemplo, xoga co abstracto. O proletariado e o burgúes son termos abstractos. Entón o proletariado pode decidir exterminar á burguesía tranquilamente porque está a falar dun termo abstracto. Nós xogamos con cousas moi concretas porque concretos son os homes que nos rodean: os nosos pais, os nosos fillos, os nosos homes, os nosos amantes. Non podemos xogar coa exterminación. Só queremos eliminar un modo de ser, unha actitude" (2).

But Queizán's criticisms of Marxism and Galizan nationalism do not mean, in the least, that she lacks sympathy for a progressive Galizan nationalist project. Her pro-nationalist stance manifests itself not only in her exclusive use of the Galizan language, but also in her theories that draw comparisons between the dynamics that repress women and those that repress the Galizan language and nation. These analyses were first published in her book A muller en Galicia (1977), and then were republished in her essay "A lingua galega e a muller" in Evidencias (1989). When asked in her interview with Edurne Baines if she thinks the comparisons she draws are overly contrived, she answers:

A min paréceme que as equivalencias resultan moi evidentes. Eu non as invento. Tódolos tópicos que existen sobre a lingua galega son os mesmos que circulan sobre a muller . . . Dícese que as mulleres temos que ser bonitas e agradables e xeitosas e riquiñas; en troques, dos homes non se dicen nunca esas cousas como boas. Coa lingua galega pasa o mesmo. A ningún se lle ocorre decir: "O castelán ¡que lingua máis bonita é!" Iso non se escoita por ningures (18).

The same interviewer then asks the author if she believes that the difference between men and women resides in the potential of maternity. Queizán replies with yet another comparison between the repression of women and that of the Galizan language and community:

O que está claro é que a explotación sempre ven producida por unha potencialidade. Hai explotación porque hai algo que cobizar, o mesmo

que pasa nun país, nunha terra. Cando se produce unha explotación sempre é para conquistar algunha cousa. Resulta evidente que a explotación das mulleres faise porque temos algo importante que aproveitar. (18)

Her viewing Galizan nationalism and feminism as part of the same (or similar) struggle clearly reveals the author's sympathy for a Galizan national project, but her feminist perspective proposes a different kind of nationalist theory and practice from that which is used by the current nationalist formations.<sup>130</sup>

This different conception of nationalism, feminist to the core, is outlined more extensively in Misoxinia e racismo na poesía de Pondal (1998), which comprises an extension of her article "De florido poeta da raza a desflorador racista" (1986). Here Queizán strikes a blow to the Galizan nationalist canon. According to her, the poetry of Eduardo Pondal (1835-1917), one of the main figures of the *Rexurdimento* movement, can be viewed as a paradigm of misogyny: "Na súa obra, o desprezo polas mulleres e as consecuencias violentas dese desprezo son tan evidentes que pode ser esta considerada como un manual para explicar a condición das mulleres no sistema patriarcal" (9). Using the sexist logic defended by Aristotle, explains the author, Pondal's poetry consistently manifests the dichotomy of the positive values of men and the negative values of the other. But unlike Aristotle, who had slaves, "a voz poética pondaliana non ten máis que

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<sup>130</sup> She makes another pithy comparison between national autonomy and the liberation of women in "Nacionalismo e xustiza social (1)" (8).

rapaciñas en quen exercer o poder, en quen resarcirse da ausencia de poder” (33). The idea of Galiza that Pondal offers, argues Queizán, “correspóndese coa Polis aristotélica, ou sexa, unha asociación de varóns libres” (34).

Queizán also reveals in Pondal’s poetry the frequent apologies for rape and pedophilia, as well as the pornographic quality of his poems. Regarding the former, she analyzes a stanza of one poem that reads: “Espero un pouco, doce enemiga / se non ques que esto / saia de min” (56). Queizán explains that in Pondal’s time rape was habitual, and women feared not only the rapist, but also the “o que dirán” (56). Queizán argues that Pondal—who was an aristocrat with several women working under his power—used his position to sexually exploit them: “Hai, polo tanto, abuso de poder patriarcal unido, coma case sempre, ao abuso de poder social. Pondal tiña un harén nas gándaras; as rapaciñas da clase inferior, que nin sequera tiña que alimentar” (56). As to the poet’s penchant for pedophilia, Queizán remarks: “Insisten as poesía pondalianas na necesidade de des-follar ás mociñas cando son aínda nenas” (72). And regarding the pornographic quality of his poems, the author remarks that they endorse sexual terrorism and that “na medida en que estes textos non son xulgados e, pola contra, son introducidos e normalizados nos libros de texto dedicados á xuventude, estase reforzando o poder sexual e a pornografía como algo bo” (68).

Pondal’s idea of the nation originates from that of his contemporary, Manuel Murguía, who was Rosalia de Castro’s husband. Murguía—who followed the basic tenets of racist theories at the time—based his concept of the Galizan nation on the Celtic

race, which he glorified for its warrior ethics.<sup>131</sup> Pondal's extolling of the Celtic race reveals, in Queizán's words, "un galeguismo naturalista totalmente incompatible cos principios democráticos e xa non digamos socialistas" (45). She decries his use of myths and racist ideology and asserts that "a verdadeira razón da nosa nación, de nós como habitantes de Galiza, hai que buscala na inmanencia. Temos esta terra, unha realidade física con características propias, unha lingua que determina unha maneira de pensar e de expresarse, unha cultura que debe estar en permanente evolución" (48). She then asserts that being a nationalist today "non debe basearse nunha custión de fe, nunha vontade cega de acreditar en pasados míticos, nunha exaltación mística para conseguir catarses colectivas, nun sentimentalismo romántico . . ." (49).

At the end of her book, Queizán criticizes the current canonization and absence of criticism of Eduardo Pondal's poetry. She claims that his work constitutes a dangerous weapon against women, and the fact that he and his poetry are upheld and endorsed by the mainstream Galizan nationalist formations makes his sexist and racist ideology more pernicious: "Estes poemas causan dano ás mulleres galegas, un dano maior que o que pode causar unha revista porno ou un chiste obsceno porque veñen avalados polo prestixio literario dunha das figuras máis relevantes do Rexurdimento" (79). She then proposes two possible solutions for de-legitimizing his poetry: One consists of censoring the poems and the other of allowing the poems to be published but with critical

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<sup>131</sup> For a thorough study on Manuel Murguía's racist nationalist conception, see chapter four of Ramón Maíz' *A idea de nación* (1997).



commentaries alongside them. She then asks herself: “¿Que é preferible, envelenar primeiro e facilitar o antídoto despois, ou suprimir o veneno” (80)?

Queizán also views literature that deals with rural society as non-progressive. Unlike the majority of Galician writers, she is an urban writer and defends the city as the space of progress. In her interview with Carme Vidal, she proudly declares: “Son de Vigo e teño conciencia urbana. Defendo a cidade como espazo de liberdade e progreso. . . . Eu non tiven aldea e carezo dese mundo e desas lembranzas; nunca vin matar un porco nen ganas que teño. . . . Para min a contradicción é burguesía-proletariado e iso aparece xa en *Amor de tango*” (31). In a debate published in *Tempos Novos* she berated Galician novels that recreate rural thematics because, in her view, they reproduce conservative stereotypes and maintain Galician literature in a status of inertia. For her the *mundo rural* inevitably contains elements that counteract progressive ideologies:

A tendencia deste país é máis ben a de ir para atrás. . . . Penso, por exemplo, na literatura e nesa teima do mito, a volta ó pasado, a recreación constante do campo e da aldea, arqueoloxía pura, pero que se segue valorando por riba doutras moitas cousas, coma quen destapa de cando en vez as esenciais. Non hai máis que ollar os últimos premios literarios. (42)

In other words, she places in the same category of conservative literature narratives that recreate myths and those that deal with rural thematics. Both of these literary molds, in her view, hinder the Galician national project from evolving.

Worth noting in the quote above is the author's criticism of the latest literary prizes, which have been awarded to this "non-progressive" type of narratives. In making this criticism she is inevitably referring to, among other narratives, Pensa nao, which won the *premio Xerais* in 1999. In reading Queizán's comments in Tempos, Angueira confessed that he was deeply disappointed with her view of his novel. He believes that Queizán's vision of the rural world is narrow-minded and uninformed about the progressive elements that existed during the Republic, and still exist in certain places.<sup>132</sup> My opinion on this question seconds that of Angueira, for it seems evident—as his novel and other historical documents convincingly show—that Galizan rural society did, indeed, play an essential part in the democratic processes throughout the Republic.

In fact, as novels that transmit progressive values and open up new horizons of political praxis, I view Amor de tango and Pensa nao as very close in ideological intent, as if they were brother and sister of the same struggle. They are strikingly similar, for example, in the way they propose unorthodox readings of the past and lead the reader to connect these new versions with the present state of affairs. Stylistically, they both employ verisimilar modes of representation and offer a plethora of dialogues. However, Amor de tango sets into motion different tactics for transmitting its ideology to the reader. In the next section I analyze the different elements involved in making this

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<sup>132</sup> Personal interview, July 27, 2002.

novel's feminist project an effective heuristic model for encouraging readers to embrace feminist values.

### **The Formal and Thematic Components of Amor de tango's Feminist Project**

Kathleen March very convincingly describes, in my view, this novel's capacity for transmitting feminist ideology in a convincing fashion. She believes that Amor de tango carries out this endeavor more effectively than the author's essays: "But whereas her essays and several other works more forcefully present that perspective and denounce social injustice, her new novel simply trusts in the readers' belief in the importance of women's everyday lives to carry the narration forward" (806). March also claims that the novel "does not flatten out the male characters or sacrifice the political elements, specifically the Spanish Civil War" (806). Then in the last paragraph of her review she suggests that Queizán has matured as a writer and has softened her style: "Firm ideological convictions can sometimes render a work overly self-conscious, but this latest novel by an ever maturing María Xosé Queizán seeks and finds a balance between guiding readers to the conclusion she wants them to reach and allowing them to reach it on their own" (806). The critic then concludes by affirming that the author's feminist project takes the side of all members of society: "In no uncertain terms, this conclusion means taking a stand on the side of Galicia, its women as well as its men, and on the side of democracy. This stand, one the author has always taken, is gradually being recognized" (806).

In the following analysis I explore what I consider to be the most relevant strategies—both formal and thematic-related—which Amor de tango utilizes in its feminist pedagogical project. I first analyze the narrative's combination of an essayistic discourse (which constitutes the dominant style) and the abundant dialogues that disclose the *intra-história*<sup>133</sup> of anonymous female characters. I then examine the following components: the novel's connecting the intimate realm with the political dimension; the depiction of memory as indispensable for democracy and life; and the non-Manichean portrayals of men. These different components (or strategies) contribute to making Amor de tango an effective pedagogical project for transmitting feminist history and values, which are, of course, part and parcel of the novel's anti-fascist stance.

The voice of the third person omniscient narrator in Amor de tango oscillates between an intimate voice (i.e., one that reveals the psychological terrain of the different characters), and one that adopts an essayistic form of discourse which presents relevant information concerning the political and social life in Vigo during the Republic and the first period of the fascist uprising. What I want to analyze here regards the narrative's use of telling and showing for presenting different kinds (or perspectives) of feminist history (by "feminist history" I am referring to a historical representation that emphasizes the struggles of women). Through providing different perspectives, the narrative strives

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<sup>133</sup> This term refers to the history that common people live out, the history that does not enter text books nor reach the official realm of society.

to teach the reader a new historical version and invite (implicitly) him or her to sympathize with feminist causes in the present.

Interestingly enough, the other relevant analysis of *Amor de tango*—besides that of March—criticizes the novel’s pedagogical endeavor. In “Exceso de didactismo” Xesús González views the narrative voice as overly sociological and detached from the characters, and claims that it drains from the narrative complexity and novelistic substance:

A ollada que a autora, a meio dos seus personaxes, bota sobre a cidade, é a ollada dun sociólogo que observa e analiza a confrontación das clases sociais no seo do grande e complexo fenómeno da cidade moderna. Mais son estas páxinas de sociólogo ou de pedagogo, non de novelista, xa que a autora síntese preocupada pola condición humana, polos determinismos sociais, pero non acaba de darlle forma literaria—novelesca a estas preocupacións. Ao cabo non é mais que unha ollada desde fora . . . (21)

González does praise the novel for its poetic moments and for becoming the first one to “historicize Vigo,”<sup>134</sup> but he misses, in my opinion, the merits of the novel’s didactic project. I agree with this critic’s observation insofar as the novel could likely benefit from reducing somewhat the essayistic discourse, which at times becomes a little too

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<sup>134</sup> “*Amor de tango* é a primeira novela en que, conscientemente, se intenta historizar a cidade de Vigo a base tanto de documentos históricos como de historia oral” (21).

preachy;<sup>135</sup> moreover, there are moments in which the characters' thoughts seem eclipsed by the author's.<sup>136</sup> But, overall, *Amor de tango* succeeds—in my opinion and in March's as well—at telling a good story that opens new ideological horizons. The content of the narrator's political, social and historical descriptions constitutes an unorthodox and ignored perspective, which, in its own right, lends the docu-fiction a unique feature that is missing from the rest of the Civil War novels.

One example of this alternative history of Galician women that the novel brings to light regards the narrator's detailed description of the different feminist organizations that existed during the Republic. She explains, in the latter part of the novel, how one of these organizations, *Las Mujeres contra la Guerra y el Fascismo*, proposed to the mayor of the city that a street be named after Aida Lafuente, a young woman who had participated in the Revolution of Asturias in 1934 and was executed. The mayor, who accepted the proposal, was executed by the fascists in the uprising: "A solicitude foi atendida polo concello, presidido nesa altura polo alcalde Emilio Martínez Garrido, fusilado tres meses despois, ¡quen llo ía dicir!, en agosto do 36" (127). As she does in the above quote, the narrator frequently alludes—while describing people, organizations,

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<sup>135</sup> For example, in mid chapter three the narrator goes into semi-diatribes against the insensitivity of society towards abandoned children (45-46). Another example appears close to the end of the novel when Alma is in jail waiting to be murdered. This character reflects on the alienation of her fellow prisoners, who are not political dissidents. (149-50)

<sup>136</sup> A very evident instance of this occurs in chapter three. Margot is supposedly the focalizer, but, suddenly, the author's voice overshadows her: "Alí facían as festas e bailaban as nosas nais cos pais, cos pretendentes, mecidas polas ondas leves . . ." (33). Another incident regards the passages that deal with Alma in jail. Though she is assumed to be the focalizer, the essayistic discourse (with references to alienation, Bakunin, etc.) seems more like the author's voice. (149-50)

events, etc. of the Republican era—to the destruction of these elements after the uprising.<sup>137</sup>

These essayistic irruptions do not undermine, in my view, the novel's creativity or diminish the characters' depth, as González believes, because the narrator shifts constantly from the macro-realm (of political, historical and social description) to the personal sphere. For example, in the rest of the paragraph that follows the above quote, the narrator moves from the political description regarding the street named Aida Lafuente to explaining how this event affected Chelo's grandmother, who is a passionate opera fan: "A petición das mulleres antifascistas foi aprobada e púxose unha placa co nome de Aida Lafuente . . . Mentres durou, a avoa de Chelo, a cubana, que vivía nesa rúa, estaba encantada. Non tanto polo que significaba a revolucionaria asturiana como pola resonancia operística do nome, *Aida* de Verdi" (127). This humorous description of Chelo's grandmother confers a lovable trait (in addition to the previous positive ones that have already surfaced), while displaying the tension between the personal realm and that of history, politics and society.

Another interesting historical-social description by the narrator consists of the progressive role that sports played in women's struggle for equality. Unthinkable elsewhere in Galiza, the narrator explains how in Vigo women's participation in sports

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<sup>137</sup> Poignant, in my view, is the reference to the tramway driver, named Mareque, who makes fun of a woman on her way to mass. The woman, before stepping off the tramway, snaps at him menacingly and warns him that his days are numbered: "O conductor, o Mareque, meteuse con ela, ¡que!, a misa ¡eh!, beata . . . Non se me olvida a cara daquela muller, comentaba Chelo. Reflectía un odio africano. Díxolle con palabras como látegos na cara: "Poucos días lle van quedar." Foran unha maldición. Porque foi o Mareque o primeiro en caer. Apareceu morto na praia de Samil" (130).

gave them energy and instilled in them the desire to succeed intellectually. She describes, for example, the effect sports has on the three girls (Margarita, Alma and Chelo), and more specifically, on Chelo: “O deporte que practicaban desde nenas dáballes un feitío enérxico e flexible. Tamén contribuía a dar a sensación de enerxía a firmeza nos criterios que xa amosaba desde nena. Transmetía seguridade. Daba a sensación de saber sempre o que quería” (11). The narrator also recreates a female figure, María Antonina Sanxurxo, who was one of the figures who introduced sports into Vigo. After returning from studying abroad in the U.S., she introduces women’s field hockey: “As mozas viguesas, que xa eran expertas no tenis, natación e remo, acolleron con entusiasmo este novo deporte” (106).

These essayistic interventions contribute decisively to Amor de tango’s feminist pedagogical project, but equally important in this project are the dialogues. The dialogue most decisive vis-a-vis the novel’s endeavor to criticize masculine violence occurs in chapter three. Just previously, the narrator tells about a new-born baby whom someone has left on Margot’s family’s doorstep; the grandmother discovers the baby when leaving to mass: “Unha mañá, ao saír para a misa en Santiago de Vigo, encontrara un envurullo diante do portal cunha nota en letras grandes e con faltas de ortografía: “Coiden ven esa creatura. Élles do seu sangue” (39). Margot’s grandmother—characterized as an empathetic, humane, creative yet passive individual—wants to keep the baby, but her son (Margot’s father), very aware that the baby is probably his own, demands that the baby be taken to a shelter. Moments afterward, the grandmother overhears the family’s



employees conversing over the incident. They talk about their female companions being sexually exploited by their bosses (one of whom is Margot's father). The interlocutors (a *cociñeira*, a *niñeira* and a *lavandeira*) are anonymous; the *cociñeira* begins lamenting that all female employees must accept Margot's father's sexual advances, for if they do not he fires them: "¡Ai xesús! Porque o que é, dos patróns case ningunha se safá. Todiñas fusiladas. Nas fábricas, nas tendas, nas casas. Sempre temos que estar dispostas e achantar, ¡cuidadito!, que se non, vas para a casa e a ver de que vives" (40).

The *conciñeira* also tells about Margot's father having forced a crippled employee, who had thought that her physical disadvantage would save her: "A Rosariño, Cóxele-Cóxele, cando entrou nas conservas pensou que así como era, medio eivada e a boca un chisco torta, que parés que todo lle cheira mal, ía guiparse. ¡Xa, xa! Pasou polo aro, coma todas, que para iso non hai coxeira que valla" (40). The *niñeira* then tells about the *patrón*'s pedophile intentions: "Rita, a das Rachadas, ¿non sabes?, ten a súa rapariguiña, xa grandíña, que vai esperala á saída da fábrica . . . Pois o patrón xa lle botou o ollo. Foille cunha boneca, toma, guapiña, dáme un bico aquí . . ." (43). Rita, afraid of the boss' intentions, prohibits her daughter from returning to the factory.

March refers to these fragments of *intra-historia* provided by the novel in these terms:

For the women of Vigo, and indeed of all Galicia, Francoism meant the loss of rights they had begun to savor after their struggles to obtain them. It meant repression when they were only beginning to become

emboldened about the sexual abuse by factory owners of their women employees, a story well known and so silenced because of the realistic sense of economic survival: denouncing meant the loss of one's job, starvation for one's children. This is the little-known history, the *intra-historia*, that Queizán wants to tell, and she does so with little reticence.

(39)

I would replace the “tell” of the last sentence of this quote with “show,” given that this “intra-história” is conveyed through dialogue. After the above conversation the narrator makes no comments on its content, and thus allows the reader to draw his or her own conclusions. Indeed, the absence of the narrator's voice and the *in praesentia* effect of the dialogue create the illusion that this fragment of *intra-história* exists autonomously, as it were, emerging spontaneously from the *vox populi*. The content of this dialogue—probably the most critical of sexist violence in the novel—opens the reader's eyes to the hidden aspect of violence perpetrated by men against women. Furthermore, this violence contrasts with the narrator's characterization of Margot's father, whom she portrays as not only a pleasant man, but also one with pro-Republican convictions: “A familia de Margot era burguesa e, nese aspecto, progresista. Censuraba a aristocracia, que pretendía vivir de rendas, e valoraba o traballo e a produción . . . Prosperar era honesto. Esta era a concepción da vida que se respiraba na casa de Margot”(102).

Hence, one of the primary effects produced through the presentation of this silenced sexual exploitation consists, in my view, of encouraging the reader to distrust the

politically progressive façade of certain men and showing how sexual violence is hidden from society. Queizán deals with this question in her theoretical book A escrita da certeza (1995). In the chapter entitled “Escrita da transgresión” she writes: “Xa teño comentado en varias ocasións como a un home o ratificar determinada ideoloxía ou pertencer a grupos ou partidos políticos, etc, non o compromete en moitos aspectos persoais. É xa paradigmático o revolucionario de esquerdas que se comporta en familia como un dictador ou un fascista” (37). She also emphasizes the key importance of the intimate and sexual spheres in feminist analysis:

Hai moitos aspectos nos que o pensamento feminista vai máis lonxe que o que sustenta outros movementos de liberación. Unha das razóns radica no aspecto de implicación persoal do feminismo na medida en que cuestiona a propia natureza e a especie humana, as relacións persoais e sexuais, o afecto, o pracer e o máis íntimo, xunto co traballo (xenericamente dividido), a organización social ou a distribución da riqueza. (37)

As is evident in the dialogue of the house employees, Amor de tango’s feminist project strives to politicize the intimate and sexual realms. In the case of Margot, sex does not act as a repressive agent (thanks to her family’s social position she does not have to work in a factory), but—quite the contrary—as a liberating element, both sexually and politically. González aptly describes Margot’s rebellion as surging from within her body: “Margot rebélase por vitalismo (ou vitalmente; en certa maneira, e ao xeito existencialista, porque llo pede o corpo)” (21). Chelo and Alma become progressive

because their respective parents (mainly their fathers) are out-spoken leftists, but Margot's becoming a communist causes surprise because, though her father is pro-Republican, he is very conservative towards his family (and of course a tyrant with his employees, although this information remains hidden from Margot, as well as from society).

When one day Margot begins criticizing the upper class of Vigo, she befuddles Chelo and Alma, who do not grasp the reasons behind her new leftist convictions. They note that Margot has changed because of her relationship with her uncle, but they do not comprehend why her experiences with Chinto would bring about in her an ideological evolution:

Non comprendían, aínda non podían comprender, que no cambio que se estaba operando en Margot era indispensable a postura democrática, que fantaseaba con ambientes moi arredados dos que frecuentaba, con xentes, xa non populares senón marxinais e prostibularias, con ese mundo que lle descubrira Chinto e que ela asociaba á sensualidade que se lle estaba despertando. A crítica que facía da estirada boa sociedade viguesa . . . non procedía dun ideal, como o de Alma e o seu noivo, senón do propio material, do propio corpo, da presenza impositiva da carne. (102)

Hence, Margot's entry into the marginal spheres of society leads her to appreciate people in a more profound way than her friends, who remain, to a large extent, confined to circles of the upper-class.

In counterpoint to Margot and Chinto's "tango love," the narrator depicts Alma and Ubaldo's love as ideal and social. The contrast between the two forms of loving helps emphasize the centrality of the body and sex for Margot:

Alma e Margarita entraban no bosco do namoro case ao tempo pero por diferentes vereas. A de Alma era calma, sen precipicios nin silvas, pola que camiñaba descalza e sen coidado. Ubaldo e Alma unían a paixón amorosa coa rebeldía social. Serían felices loitando pola felicidade colectiva. Non concebían o seu amor illado do resto da humanidade, non querían encerrarse nunha morada escura para gozarse, senón abrirse ao mundo para contribuír a melloralo e disfrutalo colectivamente. A paixón estaba xustificada pola idea. (94)

But whether Alma and Ubaldo's love is based on an ideal and that of Margot and Chinto on passion and seclusion from society, both are destroyed by political forces.

The part of the narration which, in my view, unites most effectively the personal sphere and the political events occurs immediately after the description of Chinto and Margot making love for the first (and only?) time. Again, the description of their love focuses on Margot's body and her sensations:

Ao principio Margot sentía nos labios, na lingua . . . Logo a sensación foise desprazando e invadíndolle a carne, o corpo enteiro. Sobre todo a vulva parecía axitarse e abrirse e notaba unhas picadelas de pracer como cando se tocaba co dedo certas noites . . . Coa vehemencia alimentada en

tantas tardes de tango . . . Con ansia. Con fame . . . Porque na paixón hai como unha febre de devorar, de mastigarse, de aniquilarse. (133)

This erotic description continues for about a page until it is brusquely interrupted by the narrator's mention of the war: "Aquel verán foi espantoso. No momento en que ela descubría o amor, en que era totalmente feliz, foi cando se desatou o trebón da insurrección, do golpe militar dos fascistas. Entráballe a luz por un lado e fomentaban a escuridade por outro" (134). The irruption of this description conveys the notion that the war ended this loving experience.

Though the fascist takeover is not responsible for destroying Chinto and Margot's love—as is the case with Alma and Ubaldo—the narrative seems to make a subtle connection of cause and effect between the political catastrophe and Margot and Chinto's personal misfortune. This becomes especially evident close to the end of the novel in a passage in which the narrator employs a simile to compare Chinto and his departure with the hiding out of an anti-fascist in the mountains:

Ao principio aínda tiña [Margot] folgos para intentar convencelo. Pensou en marchar con el, mesmo en contra da súa vontade. Xa o convencería. Logo decatouse de que era inútil, de que el quería marchar só. Escapado. Como un fuxido dos que se refuxiaban no monte para librarse da insania fascista. Así marchaba sen ela. (161)

Margot is the focalizer here and, hence, it is she who draws the comparison between Chinto and a *fuxido político*. But, at the same time, these thoughts seem to also belong to

the narrator who, therefore, reinforces the comparison. Just as one can view Chinto and Margot's love as a metaphor of the Republic, perhaps one can also interpret the ending of their love as the ending of the democratic society.

Margot becomes a role-model because of her determination to remember the past tragedies caused by fascism; and her memories do not hurt her, but rather they fortify her and put her life into perspective. Through Margot the novel demonstrates the necessity of memory for life. Those who do not remember, or repress their life tragedies, become mentally ill, like the grandmother—who has to conceal her son's sexual exploitation and force her favorite son to leave—and like Chelo, who goes insane with persecutory delusions because of marrying the man who possibly murdered her father. Remembering for Margot is depicted not only as a way for her to maintain her mental health, but it is even portrayed implicitly as a force for defeating fascism in the present. Moreover, through Margot the novel demonstrates the positive consequences, the cathartic experience, of experiencing anger. To feel anger does not, of course, fix the past tragedies, but it gives one dignity. I quote two different passages that defend the experience of anger as a sign of self-affirmation. In the first one the narrator describes Margot's frustration of not having become what she would have wanted to because of the fascist takeover: “Volve ao pasado porque, no fondo, sabe que é unha muller truncada. Ninguén llo nota. Realiza o seu papel de nai e de esposa como é debido, pero no seu interior, é outra muller, a muller que puido ser e non foi. Por iso non esquece. Nunca

esquecerá a guerra, porque lles destrozaron a vida. ¡Maldita guerra!” (153-54). In the other passage Margot reflects on Chelo’s and Alma’s disgraces besides her own:

Non se pode, muller, non se pode, dixéranlle unha vez, non se pode estar toda a vida resentida, cismando no mesmo. A vida continúa. Hai que recuperar a alegría de vivir . . . Olvidar. Si, olvidar coma se nada pasase. ¡Non! Ela non podería olvidar nunca. Porque Alma xa non podía recupera a vida, nin Chelo a razón, nin ela o amor. (172)

Through the description of the destruction of the three elements—life, reason and love—the novel seems to epitomize the core objectives of the fascist takeover.

And finally, the idea of memory as power suffuses the novel from beginning to end. Though our bodies are subjugated by the political forces, our minds can govern our existence. The narrative transmits this concept most effectively through the metaphoric function of the weather. The storm that accompanies Margot throughout novel is portrayed as dominating the city, and Margot’s memories are the substance, the forces of the storm: “A natureza volve polos seus foros, cobra o seu tributo, señorea o espacio. Ela participa de todo iso, non sabe ben porque” (13). The weather becomes an extended metaphor of Margot’s remembering, and this metaphor ends the novel as an apology to memory and its liberating power:

Déixase asolagar como un navío á deriva. Porque o seu navío de sonhos non foxe da tempestade, non escapa dos arrecifes, non busca calas serenas nin agarimos portuarios. O seu navío de sonhos busca o alto mar.



Coraxoso. Como o amor. Margot rodéase de nostalixia como de mar. Os  
soños chéganlle como a travesía, salferíndolle a cara. Son o abrigo da súa  
liberdade. Liberdade íntima, profunda, contumaz. (174)

Memory as power, passivity and repression of memory as death and insanity constitute key concepts of Amor de tango's pedagogical endeavor. But there exists one last component of this novel, which I believe is crucial for making its feminist project viable. It regards the non-flattening and non-Manichean characterizations of the different male figures. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, one of the virtues of this novel resides in its appealing to readers of both sexes, and even of all ages. Not even Margot's father—whose sexual predation is made evident—is depicted as a thoroughly evil person. This is due to the fact that—apart from him being pro-Republican—the negative traits conferred on him reveal themselves through the perspectives of other characters, and the narrator never criticizes him for this behavior.

It is thanks, in large part, to these non-flattening characterizations that the novel, as March rightfully claims, does not “sacrifice the political elements, specifically the Spanish Civil War” (39). It is also worth mentioning the novel's indirect characterization of the poet Curros Enríquez (1851-1901), a member of the *Rexurdimento* movement along with Eduardo Pondal and Rosalia de Castro. Enríquez himself does not physically appear in the novel, but rather his daughter, whom he has abandoned. His daughter, named Sarita, arrives at Chelo's grandmother's house while Margarita, Alma, Chelo and Antonina Sanxurxo (the woman who helped introduce women's sports into Vigo) are

visiting. Chelo's grandmother, who is Cuban and had met Curros in Cuba, helps Sarita, who has tuberculosis. After Sarita leaves, the grandmother explains to her guests the girl's situation and criticizes her father for neglecting her. When Antonina remarks that poets "son así, un pouco bohemios," (109), the grandmother rectifies: "pero sendo así non debían crear unha familia nin teren fillas, mijita, porque a muller e as criaturas pasaron as súas" (109-10).

But the grandmother then nuances this criticism by showing that Curros himself is also a victim of society. She states that she is willing to pay for Sarita to go to a sanatorium and then alludes to the poet's economic and political difficulties:

A min non me importa pagarllo, que ademais de ser unha obra de caridade, é case unha obriga, en consideración co seu pai, tan magnífico poeta, que esta terra é unha desagradecida cos seus fillos máis ilustres. Curros xa tivo que emigrar por dificultades económicas, porque non lle facilitaron traballo e por riba amargáronlle a vida, condenárono por descrido e republicano. A Igrexa, sobre todo, botouse en riba del. E ninguén lle deu unha man. (111)

Curros, thus, is also portrayed as a victim of the conservative forces in society, who constitute the enemies in this novel's project.

An especially crucial piece in Amor de tango's conception of men regards the characterization of Chinto, for he is the one who allows Margarita to discover the liberating power of love—and to become Margot—despite his leaving her. Indeed, he,

like Margot, is depicted as a victim of society, whose family has the responsibility for ruining his relationship with his niece. He is a likeable character with pro-Republican convictions, but what makes him profound is his love and passion for Margot. This becomes especially evident when his mother implores him to leave, alleging that he is too old for Margot. Chinto responds despondently: “¿Outra vez, madre, outra vez? É a segunda vez que me metedes nun barco co corazón roto. A segunda vez que irei regando a baía coas bágoas” (158). He tries to convince her that the age difference does not affect their relationship, but the grandmother retorts by assuring him that “[a]gora non o é . . . pero máis adiante sería” (159). Chinto then retorts: “Máis adiante. ¡Quen sabe se hai máis adiante! Non temos máis que o presente. É o único co que contamos. Estadades vendo morrer a xente na flor da vida e aínda seguides programando o futuro . . . Eu, nós somos felices agora. ¿Por que me fas tirar todo pola borda?” (159). Chinto’s passion and his focus on the now constitute the positive traits that make his and Margot’s love so body-centered and intense.

Amor de tango carries out effectively what the author proposes, in a manifesto-type statement, at the end of her Misoxinia e racismo na poesía de Pondal. Feminism, she states, does not strive to reverse the hierarchy of male domination over women, but to remove the hierarchy all together:

O feminismo non é un asunto de simple oposición entre imaxes positivas e negativas. Non é un mero problema de inversión de xerarquías, de valores. Non propoñemos as feministas que se invirtan os poemas de

Pondal, e tantos outros, e onde pon muller que se poña home.

Propoñemos unha crítica do feito e un desprazamento de todos os termos  
desa oposición. (81)

But Queizán's feminist project—despite her statements of this kind and her non-Manichean portrayals of men and women in her fiction—continues to be, to a large extent, viewed as a threat to the Galizan nationalist movement(s). Her nationalist convictions are explicit insofar as she publishes only in Galizan and in her feminist theories she draws comparisons between the subjugation of Galiza and patriarchal dominance over women. But thus far she remains, vis-a-vis the nationalist community, a non-canonized writer.

Unlike Queizán—who depends entirely on the Galizan literary system for her promotion and consecration—the author whose novel I analyze in the last chapter of this dissertation, has acquired a large amount of his consecration through his relations with the Spanish literary field. In my analysis of Manuel Rivas' O lapis do carpinteiro I explore both the textual elements of his Civil War novel, as well as the contextual phenomena that have made the author the literary star he has become. Like Queizán and Angueira, Rivas has also introduced new horizons into Galizan nationalist thought. I analyze these new horizons in the second half of the chapter, while I explore the author's strategies behind his fame in the first half.

## CHAPTER # 5

### **O LAPIS DO CARPINTEIRO: UNSTABLE BORDERS, MEDICAL METAPHORS AND GHOSTS**

Manuel Rivas' commercial success and public visibility make him atypical in a literary system that relies heavily on government subsidies, literary prizes and the educational system for its survival. Practically all of his publications have sold well, but his Civil War novel, O lapis do carpinteiro (1998), made the author a literary star both in Galiza and Spain. Indeed, this novel has become the most successful bestseller written in Galizan and has been translated into over fifteen languages.<sup>138</sup> Moreover, it was made into a movie directed by Antón Reixa, and released in winter of 2003.

My first objective in this chapter consists of explaining the author's literary trajectory and exploring some of the strategies that have helped him obtain his stellar success. In the second section I analyze Rivas' consecration in the Galizan literary field vis-a-vis the boomerang effect of his success in the Spanish literary field. I examine, in the third part, the articulation of nationality and identity in O lapis, and in the last two sections I attempt to explain the metaphors in the narration that weave themselves into the novel's project of recuperating historical memory: the "dor pantasma," "engramas,"

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<sup>138</sup> Never before in the history of Galizan literature has such an aggressive marketing effort been carried out for launching a literary work. The first publication of the novel went out of print before arriving at the bookstores. On this question see Francisco Gil 4.

“realidade intelixente,” as well as the magical function of the carpenter’s pencil through which the character of the painter’s ghost haunts Herbal (the fascist guard who had murdered the painter) and transforms him into a humane person. Before undertaking these analyses, I provide a brief summary of the novel.

The narration begins, one assumes, in the reader’s present with a disenchanted journalist named Sousa, who goes to interview the old and ailing Daniel Da Barca, a Republican who miraculously escaped being murdered by the Falangists, and was released from a Francoist prison in the mid-fifties. But the scenario of this first chapter, which sets the stage for a more or less conventional narration of flash backs of Da Barca’s memories, is abandoned and left hanging because the third person omniscient narrator tells the rest of the novel through the eyes and memories of Herbal, an ex-fascist prison guard. Herbal—who had spied on Da Barca during the Republican years and then arrested him shortly after the uprising—has washed up as the pimp of a bordello near the Portuguese border and tells the story of Da Barca (from the reader’s present, or near to it, one assumes) to one of his recently hired prostitutes, Maria da Visitação, a black woman from an “*illa do Atlântico africano*” (18). He carries behind his ear a carpenter’s pencil, which had belonged to a painter, whom he shot in the head in a *paseo* during the first few months following the uprising. Since the moment Herbal murders the painter, the pencil he salvages and carries with him acts like a magic wand because it evokes the ghost of the painter, who accompanies Herbal throughout the novel. The ghost does not haunt

him in a vindictive fashion, but rather he gives Herbal advice, opens him to artistic sensitivity and enchantment, and brings out the humanity in him.

Herbal is portrayed as a victim of society, a poor and uneducated *labrego*, who, throughout his childhood, was humiliated by his father and did not have opportunities to study or see the beauty of life. As a teenager he fell madly in love with Marisa Mallo, the granddaughter of the politically influential Benito Mallo, an upstart who became rich and powerful through smuggling across the Galizan-Portuguese border. When Herbal discovers later that Marisa loves Doctor Daniel Da Barca, his jealousy of the doctor turns into a hate-filled obsession. But, at the same time, Herbal is fascinated by the doctor's philanthropy, his intellectual brilliance and his positive influence on everyone around him, such as his fellow in-mate prisoners, whom he helps and inspires. Da Barca represents everything that lacks in Herbal, who is situated, as Alex Nogueira correctly describes, "ideolóxica e intelectualmente nas antípodas do médico" (797).

The novel is fairly easy reading, although its pointillist style and chronological text order—which is very non-linear—can cause confusions at times. The story contains a considerable amount of action and the frequent changes in location lend it a dynamic rhythm. Once Da Barca is arrested after the uprising, he is incarcerated in the *Falcona* prison of Compostela. After a few months the authorities haul him off to the city prison of A Corunha, where he remains for several months and has his death sentence commuted to life sentence. At this point the Francoist authorities send him to the sanatorium in Valencia, where he stays until the authorities discover his subversive letter

writing. Because of this infraction, they punish him with an additional life sentence and ship him off to the Island of Sam Simom, which is off the coast fifteen kilometers due west of Vigo. Herbal, who is both hateful of and fascinated by the doctor, convinces his superiors to allow him to accompany Da Barca all along his itinerary until his departure to the Sam Simom island.

As the main focalizer, and at times the first person narrator, Herbal's account of Da Barca and Marisa Mallo—whom the doctor marries while in prison—is tinged with melancholy and repentance: “Eles foron o mellor que a vida me deu,” he confesses to Maria da Visitação at the beginning of the last chapter (145). His spiritual evolution occurs, as I mentioned, thanks to the painter's ghost, who visits him especially during dramatic moments in the novel. For example, when Da Barca is on the list to be shot in a *paseo*, the ghost urges Herbal to volunteer as a *paseador* and save the doctor. At the end of the novel the ex-guard offers the pencil to Maria da Visitação, who will, it is assumed, carry along with her the ghost (or ghosts) of the past, and learn and evolve with them. I explore this magical element of the pencil and its metaphoric implications for recuperating historical memory more in depth in the last section of the chapter. Now I examine what I perceive to be some of Rivas' key social and political strategies behind his literary success.

### **Rivas' Literary Trajectory and His Strategies**



Born in the city of A Coruña in 1957, Rivas went to Madrid to study journalism between 1974 and 1978, and during this period he established connections with the people who invited him years later to write for the newspaper El País, which is the most important media source of the multi-national media conglomerate, *Prisa*.<sup>139</sup> He became known in the mid-eighties through articles he published in the weekly El País Semanal. These articles, most of which dealt with Galician-related subjects, attracted a politically progressive audience throughout all of Spain.<sup>140</sup> Though written in Spanish and published by a Spanish media source, Rivas' writings were embraced by the Galician nationalist community because they explained Galician politics, culture and society in original ways that endorsed Galician autonomy and criticized right-wing mentality and politics. Rivas also tried his luck with the Galician media, but the deficiencies of the newspapers and regional media sources impeded the author from pursuing within this Autonomous Community the literary career he desired.

Rivas continues to write essays for El País and Galician newspapers (such as A Nosa Terra and El Ideal Gallego), but since the beginning of the 1990's his journalistic work has taken a backseat to his fictional writings. His *modus operandi* has always consisted of composing his works in Galician and publishing them in Galiza before

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<sup>139</sup> The domain of this enterprise—directed by Jesús de Polanco Gutiérrez with Juan Luís Cebrián as *Consejero Delegado*—covers press, radio, television, internet, the publishing sector and book stores. Its other newspapers (besides El País) are As, which covers sports, and Cinco Días, which deals with economy. It owns the radio station *Cadena Ser* and controls a substantial part of the company *Sogecable*, which runs *Canal +*. It publishes Claves de la razón práctica—a magazine that specializes in philosophical-related subjects—and owns two publishing houses, *Alfaguara* and *Aguilar*, through which Rivas has always published his work (both fictional and non) in Spain. *Prisa* is also owner of the bookstore chain *Librería Crisol*.

<sup>140</sup> Some of these articles appeared in the book Galicia, el bonsai atlántico, published by Aguilar in 1994.

having them translated and published by Spanish houses. Un millón de vacas, his first collection of short stories published in 1990, received positive critiques and staked out for him a solid position in the Galizan literary system. A year afterward he produced his first novel, Os comedores de patacas, which developed more in depth the ethnic project he had begun with his stories. This project consisted (and still consists) of converting, in Dolores Vilavedra's words, "a específica problemática do ser galego en núcleo xerador do universo literario, propóndonos unha vía autóctona para proxectar o individual e local cara ó universal" (*Historia* 301). More than any other Galizan writer, Rivas seems to have harmonized the local/universal—and, more specifically, the rural/urban—dichotomies. He is acclaimed for using elements of Galizan folk and rural tradition and making these elements evolve and adapt to modern times. Very indicative of this endeavor are the titles of the above quoted books: Un millón de vacas naturally evokes the rural world, but the fact that the author took this title from a verse of García Lorca's poem "New York: oficina y denuncia" indicates Rivas' intention of making the rural (and tradition) cosmopolitan, dynamic and evolving. The author manifests the same intention with Os comedores de patacas, which is the title of one of van Gogh's paintings.

Rivas received another boost of recognition with his second novel, En salvaxe compañía (1994), but the definitive work that brought Rivas fame was his ¿Que me queres amor? (1996), a collection of short stories in which the author demonstrates a mature mastery for this genre. Fernández Naval referred to Rivas' talent for creating short stories in these terms: "A súa calidade esencial vén sendo ademáis a capacidade que ten

para deslumbrar. Os seus relatos son coma iluminaci3ns e el semella un vidente, que esencializa a an3cdota maxistralmente.”<sup>141</sup> Indeed, in the most famous of the short stories from this collection, “A lingua das bolboretas,” the author seems to express something essential about the loss of the Republic to fascism. Perhaps this “essence” stems from the innocence and incomprehension of Pardal (the protagonist and focalizer), whose experience appears to synthesize the collective experience of those who cherished the short-lived democratic experiment and suffered the consequences of Franco’s “glorioso movement.” “A lingua das bolboretas” not only consolidated Rivas’ reputation as an expert short story teller, but also as a privileged transmitter of the Civil War experience, and this second factor inevitably contributed, in my view, to the massive success of O lapis, published two years afterward.

Though O lapis has been acclaimed by Spanish, Galizan, and international critics and has won several prizes,<sup>142</sup> many feel that it does not deserve the hype and critical appraisal that it has received. Those who hold this opinion usually consider Rivas an indisputably dexterous short-story teller, but claim that his novels lack the structure and complexity needed for this genre. Fern3ndez Naval expressed, very accurately in my view, Rivas’ shortcomings in his novelistic creations:

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<sup>141</sup> E-mail to the author.

<sup>142</sup> All together the novel as won the Premio Literario Arcebispo San Clemente (1999), whose judges are high school students; the Premio da Cr3tica Espa3ola (1999); the Premio Amnist3a Internacional (2001); and the Premio da Asociaci3n de Escritores en Lingua Galega (1999).

O problema da novela de Manolo, paréceme que é cousa da arquitectura. Non semella ter paciencia para artellar unha estrutura complexa e escribe novelas con rasgos de relatos, aínda que máis longos e velaí onde fallan. A lonxitude require estrutura, ordenar o labirinto. Unha novela non é só unha situación, algo que se anuncia e que dende o principio camiña cara o desenlace. ¿É O lapis unha novela tan importante como semella pola sona e a transcendencia que ten? Pois seguramente non, pero aí funcionou o factor publicidade. Hoxe Manolo vende o que escriba.<sup>143</sup>

This “factor publicidade” functions inevitably for every Galizan writer, who wants to reach a minimum amount of public, but in the case of Rivas publicity and promotion seem to constitute an inseparable part of his literary persona.

In determining the reasons behind O lapis’ outstanding market success, the first and most evident one comprises Rivas’ impressive literary trajectory throughout the 1990s. But in addition to this, other factors must be considered, such as the strategies that the author has adopted (willingly or not) throughout his literary career. These strategies range from his personal ethics, social skills, and physical attractiveness to his political stances. Furthermore, an essential strategy that constitutes a *sine qua non* for

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<sup>143</sup> E-mail to the author. Disapproving comments of the novel can be found in Nogueira (1998), Lozano (1998) and Darriba (1998). The first of these critics states: “Pode que a novela de Rivas queira aparecer coma un relato exemplar, mesmo como o triunfo do amor, pero o resultado é unha historia sinxela que agacha no seu segundo plano unha clave non resolta, a penas desenvolvida” (800). Lozano rates the novel as “Bien” on a scale that runs as follows: Sobresaliente—Notable—Bien—Suficiente—Insuficiente. Darriba contends that the novel “ten unha prosa en exceso alambicada e en ocasión—isto é o peor—tan atrapallada que se perde o fío da narración” (3).

any Galizan writer to reach a certain level of popular recognition is his writing in the *normativa oficial* as opposed to the *lusista* standard or that of *mínimos*. Regarding the author's social skills and personal ethics, Suso de Toro shared the following observation, which seems to reflect the consideration that most writers (and people in general, I assume) would have of the author:

Rivas é un grande comunicador, capaz de establecer un lazo sentimental cos interlocutores. Isto débese a que é unha excelente persoa, con ideas xustas, e ademais a que instintivamente busca e consegue a simpatía dos demais. Manuel sempre lle cae ben á xente, iso é algo evidente. E sen dúbida esas cualidades persoais permiten que circule fluidamente polos “media” e se transformase no que é, unha estrela da literatura española. E de rebote, co favor do público lector da Galiza e dos medios, unha estrela da literatura galega sen dúbida.<sup>144</sup>

De Toro's mention, at the end of this passage, of the “rebote” refers to the boomerang effect, which, as I explained in chapter one, constitutes one of the peculiar features of the Galizan literary system's dependency on Spanish media and critics. Indeed, Rivas is not the only Galizan author who has benefited from Spanish media and literary criticism; so

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<sup>144</sup> Tucho Calvo and Antón Lopo made observations that parallel De Toro's. The former argues that in understanding Rivas' success “hai que engadir o seu propio coñecemento dese medio e, por enriba de todo, unha capacidade de comunicación e un encanto especiais. Requírese unha maxia que moitos escritores demostran non ter para—á marxe do traballo duro—poder manterse nos postos de privilexio” (47). The latter explains Rivas' ability to remain ethical and politically “radical” despite his commercial flair and flamboyance: “Tal vez, no de ‘radical’ está o segredo de Manuel Rivas que, prescindindo de riscos máximos, logrou manterse á marxe de polémicas e envexas sen perder píncoas do seu espírito rebelde e do seu compromiso . . . A capacidade súa de estar en todas partes e non desintegrarse” (76).

have others, the most significant one being Suso de Toro himself. I return to this question in the next section.

Regarding Rivas' physical attractiveness, worthy of mention are two of Matilde's articles in *Atlántico*, the newspaper of Vigo. This *maruja*-style<sup>145</sup> commentator, whose gossip-related columns appear daily in this paper, writes on two of the author's book signing sessions in *El Corte Inglés* in Vigo. In both columns she highlights the author's attractiveness and abundance of female readers. On June 22, 1998 she made the following comments: "[L]a cola de lectoras para hacerse con una firma y la dedicatoria del autor era interminable. Parece ser que desde las seis de la tarde hasta unas horas después, Rivas no pudo parar ni un momento para beberse un vaso de agua" (3). A month later, the day after Rivas gave another book signing session in *El Corte Inglés*, she writes:

También debo decir, para incentivarles más a la lectura, que el autor es muy atractivo. No es que eso tenga mucho que ver a la hora de escribir pero a la hora de vender créanme ustedes que ayuda un montón.

Imagínense por un momento que se encuentran firmando libros al médico de la serie Urgencia. Estoy segura, mis queridas matilderas, que aunque se tratara de un "tocho" de cinco mil páginas, hablando sobre la vida y

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<sup>145</sup> In Spanish a *Maruja/o* is someone who indulges in gossip (*marujeo* being the noun).

obra de las cucarachas, se lo comprarían. Qué les puedo decir, yo sería la primera en la lista. (3)

But she does not consider O lapis defective, in the least, for she concludes: “En cambio lo que escribe Manuel Rivas tiene poesía y belleza. Qué bueno eso de invitar a soñar” (3).

Matilde’s comments reveal yet another facet of Rivas’ massive success. Her audience, as the reader will have already figured, is Castilian speaking and probably, for the most part, non-intellectual. But in her columns she does not cite the Spanish version of the novel, but the Galizan one, which indicates that she, like thousands of other non-Galizan speakers and readers, have read the novel (or at least purchased it) in Galizan. Indeed, this novel’s exorbitant sales (as of 11 April, 2003, 60,102 copies have been sold in Galizan) can only exist thanks to those Galizans who normally read Castilian. Very few copies of the Castilian version are sold in Galiza, which suggests that Galizan national pride may be emerging from the reduced spheres of society and spreading across the general population. Damián Villalaín expresses this idea in a debate published in Tempos Novos: “No caso de Manuel Rivas xoga un papel moi importante o factor orgullo, que leva a moita xente habitualmente lectora de castelán a comprar e a ler, ou alomenos intentar ler, aínda con ese plus de esforzo lector que a moita xente lle supón a lectura en galego, ben porque non foi escolarizada en galego, ben porque non tivo acceso ó galego” (74).

Other crucial strategies that have helped Rivas obtain popularity and maintain his connections with *Prisa* (the media multi-national that endorses the PSOE) regard his political stances. The two most relevant of these concern, on the one hand, his very critical position against the Partido Popular and, on the other, his non-aggressive nationalist affirmations, which advocate a federalist-oriented model for Spain. Rivas' anti-PP articles and public declarations, which are arguably some of the most influential in Spain today, benefit *Prisa*, whose existence was threatened by the Partido Popular shortly after this party rose to power in 1996.<sup>146</sup> Rivas has never declared himself an adherent of either the PSOE or the BNG, but has endorsed both of them as a viable alternative to the Fraga regime. Recently he has acted as one of the most distinguished spokespeople of the platform *Nunca Máis*, which has protested against the government's ineptness vis-a-vis the sinking of the oil-tanker *Prestige* on November 13, 2002. On behalf of *Nunca Máis*, which encompasses all of the Galizan opposition, but mainly the PSOE and BNG, Rivas spoke several times on Cadena Ser, *Prisa's* radio station.

The author explains his federalist vision in an interview published in Tempos Novos. He emphasizes that to be a Galizan nationalist, one need not be anti-Spanish: "Non hai que ser nacionalista por ser anti-español, senón que hai que ser nacionalista

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<sup>146</sup> In what is known as "La batalla de la televisión digital" the hard-liners of the PP government (such as president Aznar, Álvarez Cascos and Rodríguez) joined with the right-wing media sources (the newspapers El Mundo and ABC, the radio station *COPE* and the magazine *Época*) and attempted to destroy *Prisa* and undermine the PSOE. Villalain explains that this battle existed well before the PP won the elections: "Todos estes medios levan anos e anos empeñados en dúas batallas que acabaron sendo unha soa: meter na cadea a Felipe González e destruír o poder do grupo Prisa, encarnado sobre todo polo diario "El País." E o goberno de Aznar parece que tamén anda coa mesma teima" ("O goberno obsesionado" 90).



porque es pro-galeguista . . . Para min, o ideal sería unha confederación que incluíse Portugal.” He also claims that it is absurd to use the term “Estado Español” instead of simply “Spain”: “Hai en Galicia unha especie de maldición coa palabra España, e eu négome a considerar malditas as palabras: eu podo dicir que a min non me gusta España, pero o que non podo dicir é que España non existe” (24). Also worth noting are his thoughts concerning those Galizian writers who compose (or have composed) their works in Spanish. Unlike many Galizian nationalists who believe that Castilian-written literature by Galizians should be excluded from the Galizian national project, Rivas seems to advocate the canonization of this literature within the Galizian literary system: He comments in his interview with Pontón:

[M]e gustaría mucho hablar de autores gallegos que escriben o escribieron en castellano. Hay que reivindicar a Pardo Bazán. Los gallegos que escriben en castellano tienen algo diferente, es como si escribieran en curvas. Unamuno decía que Valle-Inclán escribía en curvas. Y esas curvas están ahí en las líneas rectas de las obras de Torrente, de Valle, de Cunqueiro, que tienen como un ADN de la imaginación en la que los animales hablan y no nos extraña. (7)

Fundamental, as well, are the author’s denunciations—which he voices quite frequently in public appearances, essays and interviews—of the Basque terrorist group ETA and its political arm Herri Batasuna. In the above quoted Tempos interview he remarks: “Hai unha panda de burros en HB que é increíble. Eu intrevistei a varios deles e

hai tipos que non leron un só libro na súa vida . . . e hoxe pensan que isto é igual có franquismo, cando non teñen idea do que foi o franquismo.” But his criticism of HB does not lead him to adopt the common Spanish right-wing stance, which advocates authoritarian measures against ETA and its political outlet. Rivas’ stance on HB fits nicely into the ideology of the PSOE and that endorsed by *Prisa*: “[S]e eu fose concelleiro en Euskadi non compartiría goberno con alguén de HB, pero tampouco deixaría de falarlle con esa persoa, nin faría iso que se di de non mercar na súa tenda. Unha persoa non é criminal por votar unha opción: o criminal é un tipo que vai cunha pistola” (27).

Modesty comprises another relevant feature of Rivas that makes him well-liked. He never boasts about his fame and appears to be a down-to-earth person. When asked in the Tempos interview whether or not he feels like an “official voice” in society, he gave the following answer:

Iso, visceralmente, é algo contra o que teño unha especia de vixía no centeo. Ó mellor, nun momento determinado, podes deixarte levar pola corrente, pero eu nese sentido son moi chisgarabís. Para min, o xornalismo é parte da literatura, e iso axúdame moito, porque o escritor ten que ser sempre un anarquista, e iso exerce un bo influxo (24).<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>147</sup>When asked in another interview if he considers himself a successful writer, Rivas replied: “La palabra éxito es mejor vomitarla, la literatura no es un carrera de caballos o un partido de fútbol. No me gusta hablar de éxito aunque siempre es agradable que reconozcan tu trabajo. En las promociones y presentaciones me siento inquieto pero son necesarias y es mejor que vivir de las subvenciones” (Rivas, interview with Nacho Mojón 4).

He defends his position as a privileged writer for El País stating, on the one hand, that he does not exclusively write for this media source and that he has collaborated with many Galizan “alternative” sources, such as the magazines Bravú and Luzes de Galiza, the weekly A Nosa Terra and even the local publications of his *bisbarra* in A Coruña. On the other hand, he argues that El País is a liberal newspaper open to ideological plurality: “No *País* atopas un Haro Tecglen, que nun momento dado pode dicir xustamente o contrario á liña editorial do xornal. Para ser liberal hai que ser consecuente, ter principios, e sempre estamos xogando con marxes, e nese xogo *El País* é máis liberal ca outros medios” (25). He adds, furthermore, that the term “official culture” “é un termo perigoso, e tamén o de cultura alternativa. Esa formulación é un pouco anacrónica. Aí estou de acordo con Chomsky: o progresista ou non progresista, alternativo ou oficial, mídese polo que un fai, non pola etiqueta que se poida colocar cadaquén” (25).

From an objective standpoint Rivas’ voice does qualify as “official” given its prominence in major Spanish media, but the author’s stardom has not deteriorated his image within the Galizan intellectual community. Some Galizan authors have made semi-critical remarks concerning his success, but, by and large, the “fenómeno Rivas” is viewed as a positive element in contemporary Galizan literary culture. Unlike Bourdieu’s France where, in general, writers who obtain economic profit through their strategies and literary works lose their symbolic capital, in a non-consolidated community such as Galiza an author’s economic success can actually add to his or her symbolic capital. In the next section I explore more in depth the question regarding Rivas’

consecration in the Galizian literary field and examine, as well, the current dependency of this field on Spanish media.

### **The Boomerang Effect of Rivas' Success in Spain**

In chapter one I explained that in the process of the consolidation of the Galizian literary field and its autonomy from the ideological restrictions exercised by the nationalist sectors, other elements of heteronomy (or subordination), which originate from outside the Galizian community, have come into play. Today literature comprises a consumerist industry and the main forces of canonization are no longer the authors, critics and professors, but rather the Spanish media enterprises centered in Madrid. Suso de Toro, who since the 1980's has been on the leading edge in introducing non-nationalist repertoires into Galizian narrative fiction, argues that the Galizian literary system constitutes a subsystem of the Spanish literary system and that his readers are heavily influenced by the Spanish publishing industry. Indeed, De Toro admits that his own fame has come from the translations of his novels into Spanish, which, as he declares in "A creación," were made possible by the help of Manuel Rivas:

Se a miña obra está onde está foi gracias á traducción. É máis, houbo un momento no que, despois de editar *Caixón Desastre*, *Polaroid*, e *Land Rover*, estaba moi desesperado, pensei en abandonar. Eu sabía que tiña uns lectores, pero criticamente non me sentía aceptado neste sistema literario. Pero de súpeto, editan fóra *Land Rover*, e isto débollo agradecer a Manuel Rivas que lle falou da novela á súa editora, e o meu nome

comeza a soar primeira fóra e despois aquí, por un efecto de rebote. O mesmo público que lía o meu libro dicía “Ah, non é que me guste a min, ¡é que xa está contrastado pola crítica!” Ler libros meus deixou de ser un vicio solitario, era aceptado. (69)

De Toro observed in an interview with Belén Fortes that Galizan literature lives in a hostile environment because “a sociedade galega considera que os escritores de primeira son os que se marcharon de Galicia ou ben os que escriben en castelán, mentres que os escritores que vivimos aquí e escribimos en galego, facémolo porque non podemos xogar en primeira división” (60).

Figuerola has analyzed this *rebote* (or boomerang) effect and advises that it is important to know whether “ese *prestixio* cara a fóra, tantas veces invocado, non será en realidade un *prestixio* cara a dentro, non será unha maneira de combater o autoodio, de convencérmonos a nós mesmos da validez do noso proxecto” (*Nación* 14). Indeed, readers of Galizan literature (as well as the society as a whole) seem to need outside recognition from a normalized and consolidated literary system in order to appreciate the authors and their works fabricated from their own sphere. Figuerola argues that Galiza’s literary relations with Spain are necessary, given that Galiza’s existence depends (which is the case for all communities) on outside recognition. But these relations are risky because they can make this community a spectacle of folklore and bufoonery:

[O] problema pode residir en que sendo nós mesmos os que exportamos confundamos as cousas e que, cando cremos ofrecer arte, esteamos en

realidade exhibíndonos a nós mesmos nun espectáculo automático e penoso en realidade. Nese caso o receptor máis se parece a ese *voyeur* que a un receptor da ficción. (Nación 162)

In connection to this question concerning the *rebote* (or boomerang) effect of external prestige, Figueroa analyzes another peculiarity of the Galizan literary system, which regards the positive appreciation of economic profit. Unlike normalized literary systems in which economic profit tends to make authors lose their symbolic capital, in Galiza's precarious literary field economic gain is valued positively because it comprises a "síntoma de normalización, da necesaria e urxente normalización que se intenta facer mimeticamente mirando a outros sistemas que dende fóra xulgamos normais" (Nación 118). Damián Villalaín made an observation of the "fenómeno Rivas" that expresses this positive appreciation. He argued that in a peculiar socio-linguistic context such as that of Galiza, the market ends up comprising a criterion of validation. Hence Rivas' success, he claimed, should not be viewed as:

[U]n demérito, como si se pode considerar noutras literaturas. Este exemplo hase de analizar como un valor engadido, como unha plusvalía que amose ese efecto de ver ese gran éxito entre o público galego. Ademais, o seu éxito na literatura castelá reforza o seu éxito en Galicia. Os mecanismos de canalización son endóxenos e esóxenos. Ademais, creo que as fronteiras son cada vez máis lábiles e menos tallantes e taxativas. Coa globalización, estase a conformar unha especie de literatura

internacional. Cada autor ten a súa casa, a súa procedencia . . . pero autores como Paulo Coelho, Vargas Llosa, con independencia da nacionalidade que teñan, xa non son dun país, na medida que os consagra unha comunidade internacional de lectores. Manolo Rivas pode se-lo primeiro caso de escritor orixinariamente en lingua galega que pase a formar parte desa literatura internacional. (“Os camiños” 70)

This positive appreciation of economic profit manifests, affirms Figueroa, the Galizan literary field’s lack of autonomy, and in these contexts, as a consequence, the border between the subfield of large production and that of small production tends to blur.

Figueroa posits, nonetheless, that the distinction between the two subfields of large and small production in Galizan literature is beginning to appear, and that writers who achieve consecration from outside the Galizan literary field are ambiguously situated “por un lado, no campo de gran produción coa conseguinte perda de valor simbólico, pero ó mesmo tempo gañan un valor simbólico no campo nacional na medida en que cumpren unha función *politicamente* ortodoxa que os xustifica” (*Nación* 120). Indeed, this “orthodox political function” comprises an essential component in Rivas’ consecration within the Galizan literary field. As I explained earlier, the author’s progressive political stances, such as his recent role in *Nunca Mais* and his long-standing opposition to Fraga, make him well-liked among progressives in Galiza, a community that almost invariably identifies writers with leftist ideals. Similarly, De Toro, who has attempted throughout his career to escape the classification of an *engagé* writer, appears

to be growing in popularity because of his engagement in *Nunca Mais*.<sup>148</sup> On the other hand, Galizan writers who eschew this “orthodox political function” lose their symbolic capital. A prime example of this kind of writer is Alfredo Conde, who writes daily columns for the PP-controlled El Correo Gallego and is a representative of the PP on the Radio Televisión de Galicia (RTVG). Likewise, Carlos Casares (deceased in February 2002) diminished his symbolic capital by becoming president of the *Concello de Cultura*, an institution created by the PP government in the late 1980s. However, unlike Conde, Casares never embraced right-wing ideology (nor supported the PP), and thus maintained a certain amount of prestige in the Galizan literary field.

The authors and critics who offer less favorable appreciations of Rivas’ strategies and success dwell either on the self-exclusive nature of the author’s stardom or on what they perceive as his assimilation into the Spanish system. Fernández Naval’s opinion of the “fenómeno Rivas” is not globally critical, since he praises the author’s personal ethics and political stances. But, nonetheless, he considers negatively “ese exceso de imaxe,” which, in his view, “pode resultar unha trampa”; against his will, Rivas becomes, argues Fernández, “un burato negro do espacio, atrae e engulipa todo, provocando ás veces paradoxos e falsedades.”<sup>149</sup> Novelist Xurxo Borrazás makes a similar observation by

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<sup>148</sup> De Toro published a book on the *Nunca Mais* platform (titled *Nunca mais* (2002)), which, in his words, “lanzoume mediaticamente en toda España. De modo que agora asisto a un malentendido, eu quería ser recibido como escritor moi literario, ficción e ensaio, e estou sendo recibido como escritor “engagé” por antonomasia. E eu que sempre dixen que non era “escritor gallego” senón simplemente “escritor” son percibido agora como Manuel, como un “escritor gallego progresista” (E-mail to the author).

<sup>149</sup> E-mail to the author.



arguing that the “fenómeno Rivas” is “autoincluínte. El xera unha demanda que volve cubrir. Non creo que produza un fenómeno de arrastre que leve a fixarse noutros autores galegos. Limitase só a ese caso” (“Os camiños” 71). Other authors, such as Xosé Carlos Caneiro, claim that Rivas has become assimilated into the Spanish literary system. This novelist made the following observation: “En Madrid, é considerado un autor español, cada vez máis. En Alemaña estase a tratar como un escritor español e non coma un escritor galego” (“Os camiños” 75). Critic Joaquim Ventura also points out this aspect of assimilation and bemoans the fact that outside of Galiza (in Spain and elsewhere), one can find in bookstores only the Castilian version of O lapis (302).

I explained in the previous section that one of the key political positions—apart from the anti-PP stance—which helps Rivas appeal to progressive Spanish readers comprises his federalist vision of Spain. This idea sits well not only with *Prisa* and progressive sectors in Spain, but also with a substantial part of Galizan readers. Rivas articulates—in his interviews, essays, as well as in his novels—his idea of a new Spain that seems to aim at the unification of both Galizans and Spaniards in a common project. In O lapis this national conception reveals itself through an original conceptual framework, which I analyze in the next section.

### **Rivas’ Conception of Nation(ality) and Its Articulation in O lapis**

Rivas’ federalist vision of Spain and Portugal does not please the right wing’s homogeneous conception of a centralist Spain, but this vision does not find favor either with certain Galizan nationalist sectors that continue to advocate a literary canon

upholding only those texts with dogmatic nationalist agendas. Rivas—like other prominent Galizan writers, such as Méndez Ferrín and Suso de Toro—has been articulating in his fictional works notions of difference and national culture that transcend the militant poetics of *nacionalismo literario*, the phenomenon which I explored in chapter one. Cristina Moreiras claims that Rivas' narrations “tienden a quedar fuera de las narrativas nacionales históricamente constituidas pero no dejan por ello de ser en cierta medida profundamente nacionalistas” (“Emigración y retorno” 15). She also states that: “[l]a ‘diferencia’ se transforma en sus escritos como discurso sujeto a crítica, a deconstrucción, para proponer un relato de las identidades nacionales no sometido a los límites de las fronteras” (15).

Indeed, in *O lapis* the notions of nation(ality) and identity are forged upon the blurring of borders and the confluence of individuals of different nationalities and even ethnicities. The name of the area in which a large part of the novel takes place is Fronteira, an invented name, which is located in the south of Galiza and described briefly at one point as “unhas terras de marisma, con moito lamazal” (29). Most of the main characters of the novel come from Fronteira and this is where Herbal's bordello is located, as well. The first chapter of the novel introduces—through one of Da Barca's comments to Sousa, the disenchanted interviewer—the idea of the absurdity of borders. Da Barca asks Sousa if he lives alone, and Sousa replies that he lives with his *patroa da pensión*, who is Portuguese, and her husband, who is Galizan. When the two get angry at

each other, explains Sousa, they insult each other's nationalities. Da Barca then replies with the following reflection:

O único bo que teñen as fronteiras son os pasos clandestinos. É tremendo o que pode facer unha liña imaxinaria trazada un día no leito por un rei chocho ou debuxada na mesa por poderosos como quen xoga un póker. Recordo unha cousa terrible que me dixo un home. O meu avó foi o peor que se pode ser na vida. ¿E logo que fixo, matou?, pregunteille. Non, non. O meu avó por parte de pai foi criado de portugués. Estaba bébedo de bile histórica. Pois eu, díxenlle para amolalo, de escoller pasaporte, sería portugués. Pero, por sorte, esta fronteira irá esvaéndose no seu propio absurdo. As fronteiras de verdade son aquelas que manteñen aos pobres apartados do pastel. (12-13)

It is very significant that the tension displayed in this passage occurs not between the Spanish and Galizian border, but between that of Galiza and Portugal. Instead of dwelling on the power relation of Spain as the dominator of Galiza, *O lapis* articulates its nationalist project by focusing on the irrational rivalries that have existed between the Portuguese and Galizians. Da Barca's words illustrate the desire, which is very *lusista*-oriented, for Galiza and Portugal to overcome the hostilities that have existed because of the imposed border. Indeed, this statement—which echoes the underlying nationalist conception endorsed in the novel—advocates not setting up another border, such as one

between Galiza and Spain (which is what the dogmatic nationalist sectors of Galiza desire), but rather dissolving the existing one between Galiza and Portugal.

Another segment of the novel that articulates this tension between the two luso-phone communities (Galiza and Portugal) appears in chapter fifteen in which Marisa Mallo, Da Barca's fiancée, returns to her grandfather's manor house (located somewhere in the area of Fronteira) to ask him for help in releasing Da Barca from prison. The grandfather's wealth and power, which he derives from his smuggling adventures between Portugal and Galiza, are depicted as the sinister consequence of this border. The narrator describes the political power Benito Mallo, the grandfather, acquired after purchasing the manor house with the araucaria tree: "Unha regra non escrita dicía que quen tiña a araucaria tiña a alcaldía. E un dos avogados de confianza de Benito Mallo foi nomeado alcalde nos tempos da dictadura de Primo de Rivera. Non por iso deixou de gobernar o reino invisible da fronteira. Teceu un firme tapiz coa lanzadeira da noite e do día" (92-93). At the end of the chapter, we discover that Benito Mallo—a fascist sympathizer—makes fortunes by smuggling outlawed Republicans over the border to Lisbon.

In counterpoint to Benito Mallo, this same chapter portrays another character who embodies the tension and conflicts caused by the border. Alírio is the grandfather's Portuguese gardener and is the descendent of Benito's old employer. The narrator explains that once Benito got rich, he did not stop "ata poñer alguén da estirpe ao seu servicio, non tanto por gratitude senón por un arrevasado desquite coa historia" (100).

Despite the disdain that people of Fronteira have towards the Portuguese, Alírio seems like the freest of anyone there: “Nas leis non escritas de Fronteira non había peor estigma có ter sido criado dos da outra banda do río. Fose como for, naquel universo amurallado, Alírio semellaba o ser máis libre” (100-01). The narrator describes Alírio as a part of nature, and this nature seems to overcome the unnatural boundaries placed by people: “Vivía á parte da xente e movíase pola finca como a silueta dun reloxo de sol. De nena, Marisa pensaba que as estacións eran en parte unha creación daquel xardineiro tan calado que parecía mudo. Apagaba e prendía cores, coma se tivese unha mecha invisible baixo terra no xardín, unindo bulbos, árbores e plantas” (101).

Furthermore, the fog that envelopes Alírio both when he is introduced into the story and when he departs from it acts as a metaphoric blurring of the Portuguese-Galician border. After Marisa greets him, the narrator presents the gardener in this description: “Envolto na brétema dunha borralla de follaxe, o xardineiro alzou o brazo nun aceno lento, vexetal” (100). When he leaves the narration he disappears into the fog: “Alírio esváese agora na bruma da borralla” (102). Moreiras refers to the fog in Rivas’ fictions as a phantasmagoric element that distorts human geographies: “Galicia es, sobre todo, un país de geografías inestables, cambiantes, donde la bruma distorsiona y modifica fantasmagóricamente sus contornos. Es, sobre todo, lugar de saudades, de morriñas, cuyo efecto más contundente es oscurecer, incluso borrar, las geografías humanas que por ella circulan” (“Emigración . . .” 6).

The “geografias inestables” of O lapis are furthermore articulated through the hybrid characters of Da Barca and Maria da Visitação. The former, a son of Galizan *indianos* who emigrated to Cuba and returned, is a Cuban citizen and speaks Galizan with a Cuban accent. I quote a passage in which the narrator, who speaks through Herbal’s thoughts, describes the captivating political speeches Da Barca gave during the Republic: “Nos mitins das vilas falaba galego con acento de Cuba, onde nacera de familia emigrante, e tiña aquela prédica especial, co don da mecha prendida, que facía erguer os tolleitos e ata os mancos levantar o puño” (41). The presence of Maria da Visitação, a Portuguese-speaking emigrant from somewhere in Africa, is not as central to the novel as that of Da Barca’s, for she does not participate in the main story (that which comprises Herbal’s memories of the Civil War, Da Barca, etc.) and remains undeveloped. But her place in the novel takes on symbolic proportions in that, first of all, she constitutes the first addressee of the story and, second, she inherits the carpenter’s pencil, which, as I explore in the last section of this chapter, functions as a metaphor of the curative effects of historical memory.

### **Medical Metaphors and Traumatic Memory**

To serve its project of recuperating the traumatic memory of the war O lapis mobilizes a web of metaphors that have the virtue of making the slippery and evasive feature of historical memory more tangible and relevant for the present and future. When asked how he viewed his novel within the Civil War sub-genre in Galizan and Spanish literature, Rivas gave the following response:

É un libro que aínda que parece que trate da guerra defínilo así sería acotalo. Non me interesa a novela histórica, convencional nin tampouco estritamente a biografía, máis ben é un libro que chega aos nosos días cun sentido de fondo que ten que ver con nós hoxe, xa que está escrito coa dor pantasma, esa metáfora médica tan expresiva que é a dor da amputación. Pretende ser un pouco unha alerta, unha contribución fronte á supresión das consciencias.<sup>150</sup>

Thus, as other Galician Civil War novelists—such as Angueira and Queizán—Rivas’ intention also aims at connecting the past and present; at reconceptualizing and transforming the present and future through the vicarious experience of the past. But his tactic in achieving this differs substantially from the other novelists because of the medical and magical nature of the metaphors he articulates throughout his narration. I examine in this section two medical metaphors, which constitute the “dor pantasma—the phantom pain that remains after a member has been amputated—and “engramas” (engrams in English), which are scars on the brain. I also analyze the metaphysical theory of “realidade intelixente,” which claims that humans leave, throughout history, invisible traces that overlap and form a beautiful cloth.

The “dor pantasma” comprises, in my opinion, the most effective of the metaphors in the novel because it leads the reader to visualize traumatic memory as a

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<sup>150</sup> Interview, *La noche boca arriba*, Radio RSK, Barcelona, Dec. 10, 1998.

physical symptom, and hence as more present and real. It first appears at the moment when Herbal decides to denounce the doctor to the prison authorities (of the A Corunha prison) for possessing a radio and giving injections of morphine to suffering patients. Herbal explains to his prison director that Da Barca had given an injection one evening to an inmate, named Biqueira, who was complaining of sharp pains coming from his foot, which had been amputated. (Herbal had shot Biqueira in the foot when the prisoner tried to escape.) Herbal does not comprehend how the man's missing foot could hurt him and thinks that he and Da Barca are putting on a show. He later overhears the doctor explain to the other inmates that "o que tiña Biqueira era unha dor pantasma" (88). Shortly afterwards, Herbal asks the painter's ghost if he knows what this phantom pain is, and the ghost replies: "Algo diso sei. Explicáramo Daniel Da Barca. El fixera un estudio na Beneficencia. Disque é a peor das dores, unha dor que chega a ser insoportable. A memoria da dor. A dor do que perdiches" (90).

The mention of phantom pain appears once again at the end of the novel when Herbal—after he has given the carpenter's pencil to Maria da Visitação—goes outside the bordello to take some air. I quote the last lines of the novel that consist of dialogue between him and Manila, his companion (and *matrona* of the bordello):

¡Entra, Herbal!, dixo Manila abrigándoo co seu chal de encaixe negro.

¿Que fas aquí fóra só coma un can?

A dor pantasma, murmurou el entre dentes.

¿Que dis, Herbal?



Herbal—who has evolved from being a sadistic guard to an empathetic person—inherits, as it were, the phantom pain that had once tormented a Republican prisoner. The ex-guard becomes a model for dealing with past memories and using them for bringing out the humanity in even the most cruel of individuals. I explore this aspect of Herbal in the next section when elucidating the magical function of the carpenter’s pencil.

Similar versions of the phantom pain notion appear on several occasions throughout the narrative. An example worth quoting occurs toward the end of the novel when Herbal tells Maria da Visitação about the conversation Da Barca had with madre Izarne in the sanatorium in Valencia. The doctor and nun were observing the stars and debating whether there was life in outer space. In his recalling of the conversation, Herbal reflects on the same question and expresses his view to Maria: “A verdade é que cando ficas moito tempo mirando o ceo vaise poboando de máis e máis estrelas. Disque hai algunhas que as vemos pero que xa non existen. Que tarda tanto en chegar a luz que, cando chega a ti, xa están apagadas. Manda carallo. Ver o que xa non existe” (131).

The notion of seeing what no longer exists—like feeling the “*dor pantasma*” in a member that has been amputated—articulates, in essence, the whole purpose of the novel. For when Herbal recounts to Maria the events that he lived—and which no longer exist in the sense that they have been suppressed by society, the political forces, the pact of oblivion, etc.—he is seeing their effects and feeling the pain they cause in him.

The other medical metaphor comprises the “engramas” (scars on the brain), which appear in Herbal’s dream while he is accompanying the doctor on the train from Valencia to Vigo, from where Da Barca is to be shipped off to the prison on the Island of Sam Simom:

Cando volveu durmir, Herbal escoitou ao doutor Da Barca falando coa monxa aquela, a madre Izarne. Dícialle: os recordos son engramas. ¿E iso que é? Son como cicatrices na cabeza. E entón viu unha rea de xentes coa trencha de carpinteiro facerlle cicatrices na cabeza. E aos máis, el dícialles que non, que non lle fixeran cicatrices na cabeza. Ata que apareceu Marisa, a nena Marisa, e el díxolle: Si, faime unha cicatriza na cabeza . . . Pero logo, a súa cabeza estaba enlamada, nunha feluxe de carbón, en Asturias, e unha muller berraba, e o oficial dicía: ¡Disparen, hostia, me cago en diola! E el dicía: Non, non me fagades esa cicatriz.

(137)

Hence, Herbal desires those engrams that remind him of loving feelings (like those he feels towards Marisa Mallo), but dreads those that make him remember his murderous actions, such as his previous participation as a soldier in the repression of the Revolution of Asturias in October, 1934. Like the “*dor pantoasma*”—though more simplistic and less effective, in my view—the engrams materialize, as it were, the evasive and invisible nature of historical memory.<sup>151</sup>

The metaphysical conception of “realidade intelixente” also creates the notion that history lives into the present. Da Barca fervently defends this theory developed by Roberto Nóvoa Santos—the famous Galizan doctor and staunch Republican figure—who also appears in *Pensa nao*. In the first chapter, Da Barca asks Sousa if he has heard of Nóvoa Santos, and the journalist answers that he has not. Da Barca then explains the theory to him: “A realidade intelixente, si, señor. Todos soltamos un fio, como os vermes da seda. Roemos e disputamos as follas da moreira, pero ese fio, de se cruzar con outros, de se entrelazar, pode facer un fermoso tecido, un pano inesquecible” (13). Later in the narration Da Barca describes this theory to his inmates in the *Falcona*, the prison in Compostela:

Eu creo nunha realidade intelixente, nun ambiente, por así dicilo, sobrenatural. O mutante erecto devolveulle a risada ao chimpancé a rentes do chan. Recoñeceu o escarnio. Sabíase defectuoso, anormal. E por iso tiña tamén o instinto da morte. Era á vez animal e planta. Tiña e non tiña raíces. Dese trastorno, desa rareza, xurdiu o grande nobelo. Unha segunda natureza. Outra realidade. Iso que o doutor Nóvoa Santos chamaba a realidade intelixente. (27)

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<sup>151</sup> The last paragraph of the synopsis on the back side cover of the novel reads: “Esta excepcional novela ficará no lector gravada coma un engrama, coma o sulco dunha cicatriz que rescata o mellor da nosa memoria.” The reference of “o mellor da nosa memoria” does not appropriately describe, in my view, broadness of the engram metaphor, for I do not think that the barbarism of the war represents the best of Galizan memory. Evidently, the critic here is referring to the memory of the Republic, but he or she leaves out the horrific memory of the repression which the engram also encompasses.

Thus, according to Nóvoa Santos and Da Barca, humans leave traces of spirituality, which, though invisible, remain in a supernatural environment. Xosé M. Eiré describes this conception as “tan indefiníbel como necesaria, porque finalmente está constituída polo pouso que os nosos actos—conscientemente ou non—van deixando, humanizándonos . . . ese pouso inmorrente que as nosas accións van deixando no ar, nas cousas, enchéndolas de humanidade” (“Intelixente . . .” 27). This critic further claims that Herbal’s transformation into an empathic human being occurs thanks to the “realidade intelixente” of the carpenter’s pencil. This claim seems tenable, for the painter’s ghost describes to him—at one point in the novel—an image full of invisible traces: “Entre os prisioneiros do patio e as mulleres dos penedos tiña que haber fíos de luz que pasaban tendidos por enriba do muro, fíos invisibles que non obstante transmitían a cor dos indumentos e o enxoval da memoria” (81). This description evidently influences Herbal’s way of seeing, for when Marisa Mallo comes to visit the doctor, the guard imagines the following scene: “Un día viuna alí, entre as outras mulleres con vestidos pobres. O seu longo pelo roxo acaneado pola brisa, tendendo fíos co doutor no patio do cárcere. Fíos de seda invisibles. Non os podía rachar nin un tirador de precisión” (82).

A passage that parallels this supernatural conception of “realidade intelixente” appears in the telling of the painter’s visit—during the Republican years—to the insane asylum in Conxo. The narrator informs us that the painter wanted to paint “as paisaxes que a dor psíquica ara nos rostros;” (35) and he wanted to capture “as feridas invisibles da existencia” (35). The narrator, through the eyes of the painter, then makes the

following observation of the asylum inmates: “O escenario do manicomio era arrepiante. Non porque os doentes se dirixiran cara a el de xeito ameazador, pois só moi poucos o fixeran e dun xeito que semellaba ritual, coma se tentaran sacudir unha alegoría. O que abraiou ao pintor foi a mirada dos que non miraban. Aquela renuncia ás latitudes, o absoluto deslugar polo que camiñaban” (35). If interpreted figuratively, this renunciation of space and absolute nothingness the insane are walking through could very well represent the result of a society’s renunciation of remembering its history, which leads it to its disorientation (and perhaps even insanity). This interpretation seems all the more valid when the painter reflects on the expulsive reaction that mental illness causes in society and thinks that the reason for this reaction could lie in the possibility that “intuímos que esa doenza forma parte dunha especie de alma común e anda por aí ceiba para escoller a un ou outro corpo, segundo lle veñan dadas” (35). The notion that mental sickness is inseparable from society’s common soul constitutes yet another part of the novel that attempts to bring the reader’s attention to the connective nature of all society, or, as Da Barca describes, the crossing of invisible threads on a beautiful fabric. The painter, who during his life was fascinated by capturing the invisible wounds of existence becomes, after he is killed by Herbal, one of those wounds that haunts his executioner.

### **The Carpenter’s Pencil, The Painter and Herbal**

The carpenter’s pencil functions in a similar fashion to the “dor pantasma,” for like the pain that does not disappear, the ghost (“pantasma”) of the painter, whom the pencil conjures, does not resign itself to oblivion either. Through the pencil the living

and the dead come together in an ideal relationship that would not have been possible in real life. Rivas defines the pencil as “un obxecto real que funciona como amuleto . . . Simboliza o poder do amor porque transforma a sensibilidade do tipo máis miserábel.”<sup>152</sup> Encounters and interactions between ghosts and the living appears to constitute one of Rivas’ core interests in his fictional writings. In her article “Manuel Rivas, el discurso de un cazador de almas,” Emma Rodríguez recounts that in her interview of the author, “Rivas insistió una y otra vez en la transmigración, con la misma naturalidad con que otros jóvenes autores hablan de sexo, drogas y vivencias varias” (46). She also quotes the author’s following statement: “Consigues escribir cuando alcanzas esa transmigración de las almas, cuando logras unir a vivos y muertos en un esfuerzo común para prolongar *Las mil y una noches*” (46).

The pencil also represents the different men it has belonged to in the past. Raimundo García states that to follow the trace of the carpenter’s pencil “é facer, nun parágrafo, a breve historia do anarquismo galego” (28). In chapter five the narrator details the trajectory of the pencil until it ends up in the painter’s hands: First it had belonged to Antonio Vidal, “un carpinteiro que chamara á folga polas oito horas,” who then offered it to Pepe Villaverde, a “libertario e humanista” (31). Villaverde then gave it to his union friend Marcial Villamor, who before being murdered by the Falangists, gave it to the painter “cando viu que este tentaba debuxar o Pórtico da Gloria cun anaco de

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<sup>152</sup> Interview with Castro Erroteta (36).

tella” (31). The character of the painter represents Camilo Díaz Valiño, the father of Isaac Díaz Pardo, who, also an artist, is the current owner of *Sargadelos-Castro*, the Galizian ceramic factory located in Sada, A Coruña. Hence, in a way similar to Angueira and Queizán, Rivas also recuperates in his novel important political figures of the Republic, but, as I mentioned earlier, Rivas’ strategy differs from the other two authors in that he uses magic for evoking these figures (or rather some of them).

Immediately after Herbal kills the painter, the ghost begins to haunt him. But this *pantasma* is unlike the “*dor pantasma*” in that it represents not the painful and tormenting aspect of historical memory, but—just the opposite—the positive and curative consequences of evoking past trauma. Herbal becomes nostalgic when the ghost is away because “ao cabo o pintor dáballa conversa nas horas de vixía, nas noites de imaxinaria. E aprendíalle cousas” (73). I believe that one of the author’s intentions (very likely unconscious) in creating this fundamental aspect of the novel consists of his desire to show Galizians and Spaniards that they need not fear remembering their past traumas of the Civil War. In contrast to the defenders of the pact of oblivion, who always asserted (and still do so) that to dig up the rubble of the past could harm society’s peace and harmony, Rivas wants to show that the ghosts of the past are friendly and, of course, necessary for peace to prevail.

Herbal’s murder of the painter is recounted as a lesser of evils because he saves the painter from a gruesome and painful death. The narrator tells through Herbal that the *paseadores* “[t]iñan pensado algunha maldade. Quizais cortarlle os collóns en vivo e

meterllos na boca. Ou cortarlle as mans como fixeron co pintor Francisco Miguel ou co xastre Luís Huici. ¡Cose agora, dandi!” (23). The director of the prison, a friend of the painter, pleads with Herbal to volunteer as one of the *paseadores* and give him a painless death. Before shooting him, Herbal feels like his uncle, who traps foxes:

Entre o meu tío o trampeiro e a presa había o intre dunha mirada. El dicía cos ollos, e eu oín ese murmurio, que non tiña máis remedio. Iso foi o que eu sentín diante do pintor. Eu fixen moitas barbaridades, pero cando estiven diante do pintor murmurei por dentro que o sentía moito, que preferiría non facelo, e non sei o que el pensou cando a súa mirada se atravesou coa miña, un lampexo húmedo na noite, pero quero crer que el entendeu, que adiviñou que o facía para aforrarlle tormentos. Sen máis, sen tomar outra distancia, apoieille a pistola na tempa e rebenteille a cabeza. E logo acordoume o lapis. O lapis que levaba na orella. Este lapis. (21)

The painter’s ghost, who summons the humanity from Herbal, and even comforts him, is counteracted by the other ghost-like figure, O Home de Ferro, who also accompanies the guard and takes over his conscience when the painter is absent: “Nas ausencias do defunto, pugnaba por ocupar o seu lugar na cabeza do garda Herbal o Home de Ferro . . . O Home de Ferro encontrábao, pois, ben predispuesto para atender consellos que eran ordes” (76). The narrative shows that the guard’s sadism towards the prisoners, including Da Barca, derives from the orders of this Iron Man, who brings out the fascist, cruelty



and anti-humanity in Herbal. Through this evil spirit, it seems that the novel tries to show, in essence, the negative ideologies and tendencies to which all humans are prey. Herbal appears, thus, as a victim of this negative spirit, which like insanity (as the painter thought when he visited the insane asylum), forms part of society's "alma común" and strikes arbitrarily. The guard, in other words, could be any one of us.

In the same way that the novel avoids making Herbal an inherently evil and Manichean character, it also gives humane attributes to other characters on the fascist side, such as madre Izarne and Sergeant García. The former converses with Da Barca in the sanatorium in Valencia and manifests a Platonic love towards him; she also despises Herbal because of his sadism and vigilance over the doctor. Herbal, when explaining the nun's hatred of him to Maria da Visitação, confesses: "Non sei porque me odiaba tanto. Eu ao cabo era un vixía e ela a superiora das monxas que atendián o hospital penitenciario. Estabamos, iso pensaba eu, no mesmo bando" (125). García allows Da Barca to spend the honeymoon night with his newly wed wife, Marisa Mallo, in a hotel in Vigo before sending the doctor off to the prison on Sam Simom island. And even the sinister Sergeant Landesa is given a positive trait or two.<sup>153</sup> The novel, in fact, attributes positive characteristics to any fascist sympathizer who has a name and is developed to a certain extent, the exception being Herbal's brother-in-law. On the other hand, the

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<sup>153</sup> When Herbal wants to follow Da Barca from the Compostela prison to that of A Corunha, he asks Landesa for a transfer and lies to him by claiming that his reason for wanting the transfer is to protect his sister from her husband's abusiveness. Landesa grants him the transfer and remarks: "e déalle unha patada nos collóns [of his brother-in-law] da miña parte" (52). The sergeant's protective instinct of the woman beaten by her husband inevitably bestows a humane quality on him.

depictions of the fascists who are faceless and nameless, such as the *paseadores* and priests who accompany them in their murderous outings, deprive the characters of any humane trait whatsoever.

In analyzing Herbal's humane qualities, his evolution into a sensitive man and the message that this transmits to the reader, I have tried to answer the following questions: What are the limits that an author should respect for attributing humane qualities to a sadistic murderer? Does Rivas go too far in making this character transform into an empathic person? Is Herbal's evolution verisimilar? If so, how many ex-fascists have gone through a similar spiritual change? When I asked the author why he gave these positive traits to such a sinister character, he answered that he wanted to show that fascism constitutes not an external force that imposes itself on humans, but rather a perception that grows from within the people themselves.<sup>154</sup> Rivas, as Fernández Naval pointed out, seems to always try to see a positive side in people:

Manolo é o grande referente literario dese colectivo afectado sobre todo pola desfeita da emigración e do desclasamento provocado polo acceso ós cartos e, sen embargo, é capaz sempre de atopar un rasgo de tenrura e de salvar ós personaxes, xa que para el o importante é o ser humano, dentro dun contexto, si, pero ser humano sempre" (per. interview).

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<sup>154</sup> Personal interview, August 7, 2001.

Fernández Naval refers in this comment to Rivas' writings on emigrants and upstarts, but his idea is surely applicable to the author's portrayals of the fascists in O lapis.

In an attempt to answer the questions I listed above, I would like to elicit one of Adorno's observations in his article entitled "Commitment." Despite this scholar's overly harsh opinions on many works of fiction that attempt to convey the horrors of genocide and trauma, I believe that what he explains in the following quote, which reflects on Chaplin's The Great Dictator, is valid for analyzing the effect that Herbal produces in O lapis as a committed work of fiction:

The group which engineered the seizure of power in Germany was also certainly a gang. But the problem is that such elective affinities are not extra-territorial: they are rooted within society itself. That is why the buffoonery of fascism, evoked by Chaplin as well, was at the same time also its ultimate horror. If this is suppressed, and a few sorry exploiters of greengrocers are mocked, where key positions of economic power are actually at issue, the attack misfires. *The Great Dictator* loses all satirical force and becomes obscene when a Jewish girl can hit a line of storm-troopers on the head with a pan without being torn to pieces. For the sake of political commitment, political reality is trivialized: which then reduces the political effect. (194)

The danger, I believe, in the bonding and playful relationship between Herbal and the painter's ghost lies in the possible blurring of the executioner and victim. The ghost

of the painter acts as a double-edged sword in that if, on the one hand, it can constitute a metaphor of historical trauma (injustice, murder, genocide, etc.) that does not die and comes to haunt society in the present; on the other hand it can trivialize the death of the painter, as well as Herbal's murder of him. Indeed, this trivializing seems evident in a conversation between the two in which the painter acts and feels as if this horrible event never occurred: "Pouco antes de morrer, dixo o pintor, e díxoo coma se o feito de ter morto fora algo alleo aos dous, pinteí esta mesma estampa, o que estamos a ver" (74). Likewise, there exists a certain eliciting of enjoyment from the painter's ghost—for example, in the passages in which he nags (sometimes with a joking gesture) Herbal to not be so cruel—that also undermines, in my view, the novel's capacity to transmit the horror of fascism.

A problem with Herbal's character—vis-a-vis his effect in the story—derives from what I perceive as a very unconvincing evolution. By the end of the novel, it is clear that he regrets his past cruelty, and the act of his giving the pencil to Maria da Visitação makes him appear as a mentor of transmitting memory of the war, of sharing the ghosts of the past. In forgiving him and showing that he has become a good and caring person, the novel may leave the reader with the idea that all *paseadores* are, in reality, good people, and hence should be pardoned for their past atrocities. (Indeed, Herbal can function—depending on how the reader interprets him—as a metaphor of the criminals of Spanish fascism.) The novel, in my opinion, transmits the underlying notion that it was all right to grant amnesty to the murderers of the Franco government because,

deep down inside, they are good people who were victims of society (like Herbal) and may have even repented. Furthermore, it also seems disturbing how the novel makes a fatherly (mentor-like) figure out of an exploiter of women, a pimp, who uses, among others, an African woman who has no other choice but to sell her body for survival.

Nogueira contends that O lapis “querendo dicir unha cousa, di outra” (800), an observation which expresses what I consider to be a misfire in the author’s intention to transmit the traumatic memory of the Civil War. That is, it seems that in his goal to create a non-Manechean portrayal of the war and to show that all humans are vulnerable to becoming barbarian, the author trivialized, to a certain extent, the fascist horror. Notwithstanding this shortcoming, the other elements such as the “dor pantasama” and “realidade intelixente” create an original conceptual framework that invites the reader to visualize the effect of the past in the present, as well as the complexity of reconstructing the stories of the past. The metaphor of the engrams (scars on the brain) is effective insofar as it also converts the evasiveness of memories into a physical trace. But the way it is presented—in Herbal’s dream he wants those engrams that represent pleasing memories and rejects those that are traumatic—oversimplifies and even infantilizes the complexity, which the other metaphors achieve in representing. Another simplification occurs, I believe, in the good-bad opposition of the painter’s ghost and the Home de Ferro; or in Da Barca’s flawless character who is simplistically good. These portrayals undermine, in my opinion, the complexity and shades of meaning transmitted elsewhere in the novel.

The other original and innovative element I have analyzed in O lapis comprises the notion of nationality and borders, which introduces—not only into Galizan Civil War fiction, but into all Galizan literature—new articulations of Galizan nationality that emphasize the importance of improving relations with Portugal. Through the foggy figure of Alirio and the cruel character of Benito Mallo—as well as through Da Barca's reflections—the narrative creates a logical set of conceptions that, I believe, can serve as a template for forging a Galizan identity and idea of nation that moves beyond the dogmatic constrictions of *nacionalismo literario*.

## APPENDIX

### A Chronological List Of The Galizan Civil War Narrative Fiction

#### The novels

Valenzuela, Ramón de. Non agardei por ninguén. Buenos Aires: 1957. Madrid: 1976.

Vigo: Xerais, 1989.

Conde, Alfredo. Mementos de vivos. Vigo: Galaxia, 1974.

Santiago, Silvio. O silencio redimido. Vigo: Galaxia, 1976.

Neira Vilas, Xosé. Aqueles anos do moncho. Madrid: Akal, 1977.

Alonso Rios, Antón. O señor Afranio. 1978. Vigo: Promocións Culturais Galegas, 1996.

Valenzuela, Ramón de. Era tempo de apandar. 1980. Vigo: Promocións Culturais Galegas, 1996.

Villar, Helena and Rábade, Xesús. Morrer en Vilaquinte. Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 1981.

Fernández Ferreiro, Xosé. A ceo aberto. A Corunha: Edicións do Castro, 1981.

Caño, Xosé Manuel de. Lembranzas dun home. Compostela: Edicións do Cerne, 1983.

Gonsar, Camilo. A desfeita. Vigo: Xerais, 1983.

Fernández Ferreiro, Xosé. O bosque dos paxaros salvaxes. Vigo: Xerais, 1985.

Casares, Carlos. Os mortos daquel verán. Vigo: Galaxia, 1987.

Carvalho Calero, Ricardo. Scórpio. Compostela: Sotelo Blanco, 1987.

Guede Oliva, Manuel. Vísperas de claudia. Vigo: Xerais, 1988.

Fernández Naval. O bosque das antas. Vigo: Xerais, 1988.

Toro, Suso de. Land Rover. Vigo: Xerais, 1988.

Fariña Jamardo, Xosé. Golfaróns de sangue. A Corunha: Edicións do Castro, 1989.

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