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PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SPHERES: HISTORY, SOCIETY, AND
CULTURE IN THE NOVELS OF JESÚS FERNÁNDEZ SANTOS

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UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

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Nieves Wise-Cantero

ABSTRACT

The Spanish novelist Jesús Fernández Santos (1926-1988) published twelve novels and four collections of short stories between 1954 and 1988. Over the years his work has been the subject of many articles and five monographs which have, overwhelmingly, studied his fiction in terms of changing narrative modes, constant themes, geographical determinism in rural communities, and existential anguish.

However, an important and valid approach to analysing his work involves the assessment of Jesús Fernández Santos as a dissident voice within the system, a serious critic of the main ideological tenets of the Francoist regime. From his belief that man is a product of historical circumstances, he explored the consequences of the socio-economic and political structures of the country and the prevailing culture on the lives of his characters, exposing the negative effects in terms of lack of sense of personal worthiness, alienation, inability to communicate with others, lack of community spirit, and so on. In so doing, he challenged the triumphalistic myth of the regime: that the Spanish individual and national identity constituted an eternal essence that Franco was helping to safeguard and develop. Thus, Jesús Fernández Santos's narrative can be viewed as a counter-discourse.

In my thesis I study three aspects of the narrative of Fernández Santos that have been particularly neglected in previous studies. First, the theme of challenging social values by making individuals aware of the injustices of the system and presenting the transformation of social and political relationships as a valid goal in life. The author maintained that the personal is always political, that we are all part of the system. Second, I examine his perception of Catholicism as a negative influence on the development of the self and his criticism of the Catholic Church as an institution that colluded with Franco's regime in order to maintain the political and social status quo. A third aspect

of Jesús Fernández Santos's narrative that I have studied is the author's attitudes to women and feminist issues. Although Fernández Santos's sympathetic approach to women has been acknowledged in general terms by others, I have undertaken a more detailed analysis. In my thesis I have studied how the author includes women's voices to present their perspective within the general framework of society and culture.

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INTRODUCTION

Jesús Fernández Santos's literary career spans the period from the 1950s to the 1980s and in this study I shall concentrate on the twelve novels that he wrote during those decades: *Los bravos* (1954), *En la hoguera* (1957), *Laberintos* (1964), *El hombre de los santos* (1969), *Libro de las memorias de las cosas* (1971), *La que no tiene nombre* (1977), *Extramuros* (1978), *Cabrera* (1981), *Jaque a la dama* (1983), *Los jinetes del alba* (1984), *El Griego* (1985) and *Balada de amor y soledad* (1987). Fernández Santos is classified as a member of the 'Generación del Medio Siglo'.

Fernández Santos (1926-88) studied History from 1943-48 at the University of Madrid where he met other members of that generation, including Ignacio Aldecoa, Medardo Fraile, Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio and Carmen Martín Gaité. When *Revista Española* was founded in 1953 by Ferlosio, Aldecoa and Alfonso Sastre under the patronage of Antonio Rodríguez Moriño, he contributed material. It was with the help of Rodríguez Moriño that Castalia published *Los bravos*. In 1952 Fernández Santos enrolled at the Escuela de Cinematografía where he met amongst others, Carlos Saura. Fernández Santos directed one film *Llegar a más*, but a large part of his professional career was dedicated to making documentaries. When *El País* was first published he worked as a film critic. Throughout his life Fernández Santos combined his career as a documentary maker with that of a writer.¹ His novels were awarded many Spanish literary prizes: Premio Gabriel Miró (1957) for *En la hoguera*; Premio de la Crítica (1969) for *El hombre de los santos*; Nadal (1971) for *Libro de las memorias de las cosas*; the Fastenrath prize awarded by the Real Academia Española de la Lengua (1977) for *La que no*

¹ For a detailed biography of Jesús Fernández Santos see Jorge Rodríguez Padrón, *Jesús Fernández Santos* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 1981).

tiene nombre; Premio Nacional de Literatura (1977) for *Extramuros*; Premio Planeta (1982) for *Jaque a la dama*; Premio Ateneo de Sevilla (1985) for *El Griego*.

Many of Fernández Santos's novels reflect the evolution of Spanish literature from the 1950s to the late 1980s, both in terms of form and content. However, classifying his novels has been problematic ever since the publication of his first one, *Los bravos*, which produced a variety of readings concerning its implicit political message and debate as to which literary current it belonged. Some critics pointed to characteristics that would define it as Neo-realist or an as 'objectivist' work, and some considered it the first *novela social*, whilst others regarded it as a precursor to this movement.

Broadly, there are two distinct periods in Fernández Santos's career. The first period, in the author's own words, ends in 1969 with *El hombre de los santos*, and critics usually describe this as the *novela social* phase of his writing. The second period covers the novels published from the 1970s onwards. The fact that there is no general classification of Spanish literary production after 1975 increases the difficulty of classifying Fernández Santos's post-1970 works.

The evolution of the different forms of his narrative through the decades has been studied by David Herzberger, Ramón Jiménez Madrid, and Spencer Gordon Freedman.² However, the analysis of themes is very restricted in these studies. Herzberger highlights geographical determinism as the main ideological tenet in Fernández Santos's vision of the world. Freedman considers Fernández Santos a conservative writer concerned with

² David K. Herzberger, *Jesús Fernández Santos* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983); Ramón Jiménez Madrid, *El universo narrativo de Jesús Fernández Santos (1954-1987)* (Murcia: Secretariado de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Murcia, 1991); Spencer Gordon Freedman, 'Jesús Fernández Santos: The Trajectory of his Fiction' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts, 1972).

the disintegration of society and lack of religious faith, who was not particularly experimental in terms of form. Jiménez Madrid dismisses Fernández Santos's later novels as of lesser value, but without providing a thorough analysis in terms of content and form to justify his opinion.

Concha Alborg, having acknowledged the impossibility of classifying his works, does, however, study common themes and stylistic traits in the novels.³ Her approach has merit, but the strong social criticism in the novels is somewhat diluted in her study of war, religion, women, and literary motifs, and there is no assessment of the criticism of Catholicism and the Catholic Church in the novels.

Others have addressed what constitutes a common theme in his works, the underlying existential aspects. Daniel J. DiNubila identified a common thread in Fernández Santos's works - a sense of nothingness in the characters. But although he provides a valid description of symptoms, he fails to analyse the reasons given by the author to explain such existential anguish.⁴ Georgie Pauline Mubareck provides a detailed analysis of four novels from the perspective of four characters facing their existential dilemmas, but once more the political and social aspects are not taken into account.⁵ Constance Thomas Zahn limits her dissertation to three novels, looking at the effects Of the Civil War on the individual and society, emphasising the 'disintegration' of the fabric of society as a result of the 'moral debasement' that the war brought about.⁶

³ Concha Alborg, *Temas y técnicas en la narrativa de Jesús Fernández Santos* (Madrid: Biblioteca Románica Hispánica. Editorial Gredos, 1984).

⁴ Daniel J. DiNubila, 'Nothingness in the Narrative Works of Jesús Fernández Santos' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Graduate Faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, 1978).

⁵ Georgie Pauline Mubareck, 'Negativity and Self: Characterization in Four of Jesús Fernández Santos's Existential Novels' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1990).

⁶ Constance Thomas Zahn, 'Devitalization in Three Novels of Jesús Fernández

It is not surprising that some of these studies have been undertaken from the perspective of existentialism since existentialism highlights the individual's responsibility to make choices in the private and social spheres as a means of developing the 'self'. Indeed, in all of Fernández Santos's novels there is a clear division between the private and the public sphere, but what he emphasises is that the personal is always political. The archetypal situation in Fernández Santos's body of work is one that demands the social engagement of the individual characters. The archetypal character in his fictional world is a man or woman who develops his or her social consciousness in terms of engaging with society through personal interactions with others; thus developing a public identity, and simultaneously, an intimate sense of selfhood. Although many of the above critics describe the negative personal and social symptoms, such as the lack of communication, the alienation, and the lack of communal spirit in the specific context of Spain, they do not explain the reasons that give rise to those symptoms. Probably this happens because although they recognise the singularity of the context, the philosophy they apply, namely existentialism, encourages them to present their analysis in terms of universal themes. Mubareck implicitly acknowledges this when she concludes that: 'The fiction of Jesús Fernández Santos, in particular the four existential novels of this study, exemplifies the author's ability to create characters which are both deeply rooted in Spanish society and symbols of universal themes' (p. 194). In fact, there are key aspects in my study, such as 'consciousness', 'alienation', and 'commitment' that echo these studies. Nevertheless, my approach emphasises the dilemmas in terms of society and

Santos' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Graduate Faculty of the University of Virginia, 1976).

politics which are peculiar to Spain, and the potential consequences that the choices taken may have in the context of the country. This is an aspect that is missing in these studies, despite the fact that, in an implicit way, they acknowledge the interaction between the individual and society.⁷

I believe that Jesús Fernández Santos saw the beginning of the Franco regime as an abrupt ending of a historical process that had initiated the transformation of the social structure of the country in order to establish a more just balance of power. Franco's regime presented the Republic as a deviation from the true national historical path as designed by God, and justified itself as its restorer. Thus the myth of *el destino nacional* was created.⁸ The regime explained the historical process in terms of the notion of essence, and the essence of being Spanish was that of being Catholic.⁹ This kind of

⁷ This is the case of Georgie Pauline Mubareck when she notes, regarding the first three novels, *Los bravos*, *En la hoguera*, and *Laberintos* in relation to the later ones, that: 'The role that negativity plays in interior speech reflects the author's awareness that a society is a collective personality that is also formed by individuals. The responsibility that was shared in the earlier novels by society as a whole becomes that of the individuals who have made or make choices that affect their role within society', p. 25. Also, she observes that: 'Another aspect that must be considered is the characters' understanding of their place in the world and their interconnection with others. Their self-concept proceeds from the consciousness of their relationships and is expressed through language. As the characters abandon the exterior world in their search for meaning to their existence, they each choose a different way in which to resolve their particular dilemma', p. 14.

⁸ 'Es el verdadero ser del destino nacional lo que se configura como elemento mitificado. El mito del totalitarismo español se asemeja al del Hijo Pródigo. Se es plenamente, insuperablemente, cuando se es fiel a la línea histórica trazada por Dios al país, a la comunidad española.' Fernando Morán, 'Explicar una limitación', in *La destrucción del lenguaje* (Madrid: Editorial Mezquita, 1982), p. 19.

⁹ 'El principio esencial desde el cual se elabora una explicación del proceso histórico es el de *esencia*. Había una España esencial, un hombre esencial, unos arquetipos, una manera de ser propiamente católica, española o europea. De manera que, por ejemplo, el verdadero curso europeo se quebró cuando, en el Renacimiento o, en todo caso, en la Reforma, el europeo dejó de ser fiel a sí mismo, es decir [...] a su universalidad, a su catolicidad.' Fernando Morán, p. 172. For a discussion of the concept of essence as a Nationalist myth, see Jo Labanyi, *Myth and History in the Contemporary Spanish Novel* (Cambridge:

rhetoric capitalised on the controversy generated by the Republic's attempts to limit the power of the Catholic Church in education and its attempts to create a secular society. The abuses against churches and priests during the Civil War made this possible. Another myth created was that of *la soberanía del campesinado*, whereby the peasants were the repositories of this Spanish essence. Fernández Santos's work functions as a counter-discourse to the official rhetoric of mankind and history as a projection of the spiritual world, pointing out, instead, that ideological beliefs originate from the need of those in power to justify their control of society. This critical stance is also evident in his historical novels, where he contradicts the prevailing official interpretation of History during the Franco regimen, thus vindicating the past.

Because they do not see him as an opposition writer, presumably, critics have not analysed Fernández Santos's work to demonstrate how his standpoint influenced his literary creation. As a result, some crucial aspects of his works have been overlooked, particularly those concerning religion and the means of changing society. I intend to show how Fernández Santos was critical of both Catholicism and the Catholic Church. This led him to analyse the negative effects of Catholicism on the individual's sense of selfhood, as well as the collusion between the official Church and the State in the implementation of a rigid social-class structure in a society divided for many years after the Civil War into the victors and the defeated. The changing of society as a major theme has also been neglected, and this restricts the understanding of those novels more critical of Franco's regime and its origins, the Civil War. I will study how the theme of the changing of society manifests itself in each of Fernández Santos's works through a variety of themes such as

power relationships within the community, the importance of the commitment of individuals to the cause of changing society, personal relationships, and so on.

From the beginning of his career, critics have considered Fernández Santos as a politically moderate writer, and this firmly held view of the author has not been modified in later critical studies. Even a highly respected critic such as Barry Jordan, who in his study of the origins and initial development of the *novela social*, *Writing and Politics in Franco's Spain* (1990), makes very valid and useful observations that can help to assess Fernández Santos's contribution to this movement, reflects this view.

Among the major factors that contributed to the formation of this literary movement Jordan points out the relationship of these novelists with the Falange, and also with Marxism as an alternative ideology in the formation of a political and cultural opposition to the regime. As Jordan explains: 'A major feature of the ideological transition from *falangismo* to Marxism is that the Fascist idea of a revolution from above is replaced by a notion of revolution based on class. Thus, crucial to the process of ideological conversion is the acceptance of a view of society based on class inequalities and class struggle.'¹⁰ However, in the case of Fernández Santos, Jordan questions whether the author embraced Marxism, stating that he seemed 'to adhere to a vague anti-Francoism, but one which has not quite detached itself from a socially-aware *falangismo*', as opposed to other members who were already 'attached to some form of Marxism'. These included: Manuel Sacristán, Alfonso Sastre, José María Quinto, Jesús López Pacheco, and 'probably' José María Castellet (p. 52). He adds that in the different classifications regarding the *novela social* offered by the critics Gonzalo

¹⁰ Barry Jordan, *Writing and Politics in Franco's Spain* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 46.

Sobejano, Pablo Gil Casado, and Santos Sanz Villanueva, Fernández Santos, together with Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio and Ignacio Aldecoa, are regarded as politically only moderately critical and certainly concerned with aesthetics (pp. 17-20).

This view needs to be re-evaluated. The problem may stem from the reviews of Fernández Santos's first novel. I believe that in his study of *Los bravos*, Jordan fails to appreciate Fernández Santos's critical stance regarding the Franco regime when he argues that Fernández Santos ultimately blames the villagers' character for their destiny. Jordan argues that the novel demonstrates the accuracy of the quotation from Wasserman that 'the destiny of people is a function of their character', even though Jordan asserts that 'only in this case it is a character forged in the inexorable, unchanging cycle of rural underdevelopment' he does so without elaborating on it (p. 161). If Fernández Santos had argued that Wasserman was right, he would have played into the hands of the regime by reinforcing the notion of essence as the ideological principle to explain the historical process, the very excuse used by the regime to justify its policies. On the contrary, he pointed his accusing finger at the regime for such manipulative rhetoric, highlighting, instead, the 'situations' created by the regime and endured by certain social groups. Because of the misinterpretation of Wasserman's quotation, an understanding of history rooted in the belief of 'essence' (which a close reading of his novels reveals as misplaced) was attributed to Fernández Santos from the beginning of his career. Consequently, Jordan reaches the conclusion that the villagers are unable to leave behind 'the cyclical repetition of ancestral antagonisms' which will make them antagonise the *cacique* and the doctor (p. 161).

This analysis fails to take account of the fact that it is the *cacique* who puts forward such a notion of cyclical repetition, and that the author is revealing it as a fallacy. Regarding this matter, although Jordan argues that in Spain Barthes's theories on language were not influential, particularly in

comparison to Sartre's ideas on engagement, Fernández Santos seems to have assimilated Barthes's notion that literature should not limit itself to revealing the real world as it is, but should concern itself with the way the real is constructed. Another misplaced notion about the author is what Jordan sees as 'a deep-seated pessimism on the part of Fernández Santos, concerning the effects of social and geographical determinism, the idea that the structural backwardness of rural Spain at the time of writing was simply too powerful a determinant to be modified by goodwill alone' (p. 160). Here Jordan echoes David Herzberger, who argued that Fernández Santos had declared in an interview that he believed in geographical determinism and interpreted some novels accordingly. This needs to be re-evaluated. Also, by attributing a pessimistic attitude to the author in terms of social determinism, many studies, particularly those taking an existential approach, underline the anguish created in individuals by this social framework whilst failing to note the many indicators that the author includes both to convey the message that society can be changed, and how it can be changed.

It is because of misconceptions like these that I intend to analyse Fernández Santos's novels following a close reading and without preconceptions as to his political sympathies. After all, it has been documented that Fernández Santos moved in the circles of intellectuals close to the Communist party, so when it comes to political sympathies one could equally emphasise the influence of Marxism.¹¹ Overall, I see Fernández Santos as a dissident voice whose criticism of the regime loosely follows the general concept of society from a Marxist perspective of socio-economic and

¹¹ Thanks to the list of members and sympathisers of the Partido Comunista de España provided by Ricardo Muñoz Suay and included by J. Estruch Tobella in *Actas del simposio de profesores de Enseñanza Media* (Valencia: Castalia, 1983), p. 143, it has been documented that Fernández Santos was among the intellectual sympathisers with the PCE. This piece of information is included in many critical works such as R. Jiménez Madrid, p. 20.

political infrastructure, with culture as a vehicle of ideology. His first two novels testify to this. Unfortunately, *En la hoguera* (1957) was classified as just another *novela social* that described the poverty of rural Spain, when it should have been considered on its own merits as an attack on Catholicism and the Catholic Church. What is open for discussion is how the author assimilated Marxism. As Ignacio Soldevila Durante observes, one cannot criticise Fernández Santos for having only basic notions, because what counts is that thanks to him and to others like him, the generation that read such writers became readier to welcome more radical changes in society at a later stage.¹²

It is also my intention to analyse Fernández Santos's novels on the basis of how they interact with each other thematically. This way of grouping his novels will make it possible to appreciate how the author develops his notion of History as a linear process in time in which humanity strives to achieve progress in terms of social justice and political fair play. His vision of the world is rooted in a strong sense of the chronological development of social and political structures, as well as the development of the cultural elements that define and frame human interactions. Within this framework, he is interested in analysing how individuals develop their sense of identity. It is this notion that underlies all of his literary production. This idea is not new. Concha Alborg states that this notion of man as a historical being is

¹² Soldevila Durante states: 'Pero ¿qué marxista del setenta osará reprochar a Fernández Santos o a Aldecoa haber tenido del marxismo unas nociones tan vagas y mitológicas como la del Preste Juan? Estamos del todo convencidos de la inutilidad de la novela social como instrumento de transformación de la sociedad española de aquellos años. Con independencia de la pobreza ideológica de este vasto conjunto de obras, representan la única manifestación de inquietud y de insatisfacción de una parte más o menos importante de las minorías, y sin duda gracias a ello la generación que se nutrió de su lectura estuvo años después en disposición de acoger animosamente los proyectos de transformación radical de la sociedad española que generaciones mejor nutridas y mejor preparadas empezaron a proponer a fines del sesenta.' Ignacio Soldevila, *La novela desde 1936*, 2 vols (Madrid: Alhambra, 1980), I, 239.

present in all of his works: 'En toda la narrativa de Fernández Santos existe una dinámica entre el individuo y la sociedad que está determinada por el momento histórico en que viven.'¹³ However, she does not analyse it in her study, preferring instead to outline common themes across his works. Jorge Rodríguez Padrón also acknowledges Fernández Santos's historical approach to his narrative when he evaluates the evolution of the author's narrative up to *La que no tiene nombre* (1977).¹⁴ However, Rodríguez Padrón is more interested in studying how this historical approach is reflected in literary aspects such as the motifs of space and mythological ambiance, than in studying how the historical content conditions the structure of the novels, restricting himself to very general comments in this respect. Furthermore, when later on he reviews *Los jinetes del alba* (1984), he dismisses the novel arguing that the presentation of historical contents in this novel and in others has become a constant repetition in Fernández Santos's narrative that shows the author's limitations.

Taking into account the time-setting of his novels, they will be assessed in two groups. Thus, Chapters 1 to 4 examine those novels that deal with contemporary times and the recent past, from the period of the Second Republic through to the 1980s: *Los bravos* (1954), *En la hoguera* (1957), *Laberintos* (1964), *El hombre de los santos* (1969), *Libro de las memorias de las cosas* (1971), *Jaque a la dama* (1983), *Los jinetes del alba* (1984), and *Balada de amor y soledad* (1987). The last two chapters are dedicated to Fernández Santos's historical novels that are set in a remote past: *La que no tiene nombre* (1977) is set at the time of the Catholic Monarchs, while the action of *Extramuros* (1978)

¹³ Concha Alborg, *Temas y técnicas en la narrativa de Jesús Fernández Santos*, p. 17.

¹⁴ Jorge Rodríguez Padrón, 'La narrativa de Jesús Fernández Santos: notas de situación', a preliminary study to *La que no tiene nombre* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1982).

and *El Griego* (1985) takes places during the Golden-Age period. The historical setting for *Cabrera* (1981) is the War of Independence.

This way of grouping the novels will also show the evolution of Fernández Santos as an experimental writer, trying different literary modes through the decades. In order to develop this aspect of his fiction I have started each chapter with reference to the study of the novel published previously. His later works have often been dismissed as of lesser literary value, which is perhaps a fair criticism, but what is needed is a detailed study of where the author fails, and why, in the context of what he is trying to do, as well as pointing out the positive aspects of these novels. Finally, in the conclusion I shall offer a provisional classification of his works.

CHAPTERS 1-4: THE CIVIL WAR, DICTATORSHIP, AND POST-FRANCO SPAIN

The first two chapters include four politically orientated novels: *Los bravos*, *Los jinetes del alba*, *El hombre de los santos*, and *Balada de amor y soledad*. These four novels are set during the period which spans from the years preceding the Civil War, the Civil War itself, the Francoist regime, and the young democracy after Franco's death. Thematically, they all deal with characters who reflect on their own level of political commitment to influence the shaping of society in the specific historical circumstances they live in. The underlying message in these four novels is that the individual cannot avoid engaging with society, regardless of whether he or she adopts an active or passive attitude to what happens around them: in other words man is a political being.

In *Los bravos*, a liberal-minded character becomes involved in the shaping of society, hoping to transform it. Through him, the author deliberates on how the country could move forward politically, elaborating on the role that the professional middle class could play in this process. He clearly

underlines that the new regime has not solved the economic and social problems that led to the Civil War. In *Los jinetes del alba*, the author looks into those factors that led to the Civil War. The novel is written from the perspective of the peasants that backed the Republican government.

In terms of form these are very different novels. *Los bravos* (1954) has been hailed as the novel that initiated Social Realism as a literary trend in the 1950s, as the first novel that relied upon an objective presentation of reality. But, as will be pointed out later, the novel already includes the seed of future narrative development towards a more intimate mode through the inclusion of the main characters' thoughts, delivered in the manner of free indirect speech. The 1980s was a decade when Fernández Santos continued to experiment with new narrative modes, with uneven results, and *Los jinetes del alba* (1984) is representative of this experimentation. Imagery, polyphony of voices, and elements of a popular form of literature, particularly the *novela rosa*, become important. The action is set in the same geographical area as *Los bravos* and *La que no tiene nombre*, and through the use of particular kinds of imagery a common mythical space is created. *Los jinetes del alba* is a novel written in a third-person narrative mode, but from the point of view of three different characters and their experiences. Elements of the *novela rosa* are integrated into those chapters that trace the life of the female protagonist.

In *El hombre de los santos* (1969) and *Balada de amor y soledad* (1987), two politically conservative middle-class characters adopt an individualistic attitude, allowing the author to elaborate on the theme of the personal as political. In *El hombre de los santos*, the author makes the point that social class is the main factor in the shaping of both the notion of selfhood and political attitudes. The protagonist is a representative example of a middle class for whom the preservation of class privileges supersedes any sense of social justice. In *Balada de amor y soledad*, he elaborates on the need for political commitment in a situation where there is a new framework of neo-liberal

socio-economic politics and where the interests of commercial companies come before those of the nation as a whole.

El hombre de los santos marks for most critics the beginning of a new period in Fernández Santos's career, with a novel in which the main character tries to understand and explain from his own perspective his personal history in the context of the times through which he has lived. *Balada de amor y soledad*, the last novel written by the author, marks the return of the author to contemporary times as the backdrop to his novel. The novel, written in the fashion of a political thriller, conveys a political message in the manner of a *novela social*, and creates some suspense.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine those novels that deal with cultural issues: *En la hoguera*, *Libro de la memoria de las cosas*, *Jaque a la dama*, and *Laberintos*. In *En la hoguera* (1957) Catholicism is considered as the main factor contributing to a negative sense of selfhood. This is the second novel published by the author and, unfortunately, it has been classified as another objectivist *novela social*, a judgement that ignores the experimental inclusion of fragments from religious and other texts to investigate the relationship between religion and selfhood.

In *Libro de las memorias de las cosas* (1971), Fernández Santos continues his study of the negative effects of religion upon the individual's sense of selfhood, depicting religion as repressing sexuality. He also questions the validity of any ideology that interprets the world in absolute terms and the right of any institution to appoint itself as the custodian of the truth. The author experiments with metafiction in a simple manner, with a reporter making a short appearance both at the beginning and the end to present his case, but having no involvement in the plot. The inclusion of fragments from religious texts is used in the same way as *En la hoguera*, to highlight the message contained in this type of text. The narrative, however, relies mainly upon a third-person narrator.

With *Laberintos* (1964), the lack of any cultural life other than that under the control of the State is attributed to the lack of vision of the intellectuals of the time -- to their servile attitude to money and position. The extensive use of dialogue as a way of portraying reality shows the limitations of its use as a narrative mode in the objective portrayal of characters. This limitation is overcome by the use of irony.

Jaque a la dama (1983) is a memoir-narrative, with a protagonist who looks back on her life, mainly her sentimental liaisons. Through this character, the author studies the cultural factors (other than religion) that shape people's sexuality. Although it is a conventional linear narrative, the novel incorporates psychoanalytical elements that are aimed at penetrating the main character's inner world, something new for Fernández Santos.

CHAPTERS 5-6: THE HISTORICAL NOVELS

In the 1970s, with *La que no tiene nombre* and *Extramuros*, Fernández Santos developed the historical novel successfully before it became fashionable in the 1980s. However, his purpose in producing historical novels was not to create period pieces or exotic backdrops for atemporal themes. His aim was to continue with his criticism of the regime, but, this time, focusing on its main cultural legacy: the distorted view of the past. Some historical periods were regarded by the Franco regime as paradigmatic in the configuration of the so-called 'Spanish essence', among them the period of the birth of the nation, with the Catholic Monarchs fighting the infidel occupiers, and the years of the struggle against the French invaders in the War of Independence. In these novels Fernández Santos sets out to destroy such a mythical interpretation of history.

La que no tiene nombre (1977) is a good example of the author's attempt to renew his career, both in terms of narrative form and content. It is the first of his historical novels and it shows clearly the author's concept of history as a

linear development in time. It traces the evolution of the concept of nationhood in three historical periods that are juxtaposed in the narrative. The past and the present periods are given different narrative forms that epitomise each period, particularly the main one which draws on the old ballads in content and style

In *Cabrera* (1981), the author destroys the Francoist myth that in 1808 the nation rose united against the foreign invaders in a heroic act of nationalism. Instead, he presents the masses as lacking a political ideology, since they are always concerned with mere survival. *Cabrera* is written as a classic picaresque novel, an example of the author's attempt to renew Spanish literature by looking for inspiration in past forms.

The triumph of Catholicism in the Golden Age was celebrated by the Franco regime. However, in *Extramuros* (1978) Fernández Santos emphasises the moral decline in society during that period, while in *El Griego* (1985) he presents the painter, regarded as the genius who best captured the spirituality of the period, as an ordinary man for whom his religious masterpieces were nothing more than means to earn a living. In terms of form, *Extramuros* questions the validity of a single narrator, whilst *El Griego* suggests that any voice has equal relevance in providing an account of facts and a vision of the world.

CHAPTER 1

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE POST-WAR AND PRE-WAR PERIODS: *LOS BRAVOS* AND *LOS JINETES DEL ALBA*

Los bravos (1954) is set in the late 1940s, when Franco's dictatorship was well established politically, but was still struggling economically in the aftermath of the Civil War. This change from a democratic society to a dictatorship manifests itself in the novel by the absence of characters openly expressing any awareness of power relations, partly because the characters are afraid to speak out, but also as a result of the successful process of 'normalisation' of the new regime. In the novel, one of the characters, Pepe, uses the expression 'cuando las cosas se normalizaron' to indicate the return of the village to the control of the victorious Nationalist band.¹⁵ As José Diego Santos explains, in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War the term 'normalisation' was regarded as an ugly word by the Nationalists since it implied the return to the situation that existed before the war -- the legally-elected Republican government.¹⁶ But in the 1940s, at the time of the novel, the Republican

¹⁵ Jesús Fernández Santos, *Los bravos* (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1994), p. 19. All further references to the novel will be to this edition and will be given in the text.

¹⁶ José Diego Santos, *Léxico y sociedad en 'Los bravos' de Jesús Fernández*

period had come to be regarded as exceptional in the Spanish historical process, a deviation from the rightful historical path initiated by the Catholic Monarchs, a period to be erased from the country's memory, and 'normalisation' meant a return to the status quo before the Civil War. In 1954, with *Los bravos*, Fernández Santos attempts to reveal how 'abnormal' the situation in which the country found itself was. As Fernando Morán explains: 'El lector es perfectamente consciente de que la elementalidad de la vida política e ideológica de la época que nos ocupa tiene una doble incidencia sobre el novelista [...] las carencias de la sociedad en que vive le conducen a tratar de corregirlas desde su obra [...] aparte de estos factores [...], la misma estructura de la novela queda afectada por la situación' (p. 169). With regard to this point, I believe that the attitude that the third-person narrator shows towards two of the main characters: Don Prudencio and Pepe, when conveying their inner thoughts in free indirect speech, illustrates how careful the author had to be when putting forward his criticism of society. In the case of the former, my reading is that the narrator treats this character as a negative archetypal representative of the dominant class and that the narrator includes markers in the novel that question his discourse. This contrasts with other interpretations of the novel which describe the discourse as if it reflected the author's own thoughts, and therefore conclude that Fernández Santos believed in social determinism. In the case of the latter, the ironical treatment of the character by the narrator has not been, in my opinion, previously identified. This has led to an interpretation of the character as a role model, as the only person in the village who is not aboullic and who escapes poverty by emigrating to the town.¹⁷

Santos (Alicante: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante, 2001), p. 49.

¹⁷ For a general discussion on the role of the narrator in *Los bravos*, including a summary of different critical opinions, see Ramón Jiménez Madrid, pp. 56-64. For a study of narrative techniques in *Los bravos* and other novels see Daniel

Los jinetes del alba was published in 1984, well after Franco's death and when censorship constraints had disappeared. This allowed Fernández Santos to present his observations in an open way. This novel is set in the years preceding the outbreak of the Civil War, from 1933 to 1936, focusing on the failed Asturian revolution of 1934. The underprivileged peasants are presented as challenging the authority of the time, the Republican government, in the Revolution of 1934. Franco's victory in the Civil War is seen as the crushing of the peasants' aspirations -- a hardening of the political and socio-economic structures which put an end to any attempt to readjust the balance of power. The structure of *Los jinetes del alba* rests precisely upon this idea. The end sees the hero transformed into a submissive citizen, happy to be part of the very system he fought to change in return for mere survival in the new political regime.

It is this chronological setting that makes the novel so relevant to the study of *Los bravos*. If *Los jinetes del alba* concentrates on a historical and political process, *Los bravos* is an attempt to portray, in an objective manner, the end-result of that process, and points at a way out of it. In *Los jinetes del alba*, Fernández Santos deals with the complexity of human acts and history, with dialectics. In *Los bravos* he deals with the passing from history to nature in the interpretation of reality, with the notion of essence, and with the hidden contradictions in a dictatorial society.

In these two novels, I intend to study how the political views of Fernández Santos shape both the structure and the imagery in the works, and I will analyse the structure of the two novels with respect to the theme of power relationships within the community.

LOS BRAVOS

In *Los bravos*, Fernández Santos attempts to undermine the Francoist myth of the essence of being Spanish. The epigraph by J. Wasserman, 'El destino de un pueblo es como el destino de un hombre. Su carácter es su destino', has conditioned the general interpretation of the novel in a way that I believe is incorrect.¹⁸ Some critics have taken the quote at face value and believe that the author is trying to define the character of the Spanish peasant as lacking in willpower. This explains why they resign themselves to their dire living conditions.¹⁹ Others have considered that the author is trying to challenge the concept of the essence of the Spanish people promoted by those writers who supported the regime and who proclaimed the peasants to be the repositories of such essence, which was defined by the values propounded by Catholicism. In the novel, the shepherd recounts a religious parable that tells the story of the village of Isoba, up in the mountains, and which was pro-Republican during the war. Lake Isoba lies over the area where once lay the village of the

¹⁸ Jakob Wasserman (1873-1934) was a German novelist and essayist. His biography of Columbus was popular in Spain. César M. Arconada reviewed it and noted: 'Para Wasserman, Colón era un aventurero. Pero un aventurero con grandeza, con carácter con genialidad. Era un soñador, un hombre que como don Quijote, vivía fuera de la realidad. Era un hombre iluminado de la fe católica'. *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana*. (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1933), Appendix 10, 1227.

¹⁹ See, for example, Daniel DiNubila, for whom 'a character, which [is] abulic, will condemn the village to perpetual isolation and all of its people to constant frustration and misery', p. 9. He adds: 'It is a passive enduring cluster of men and houses, shut in on itself, impervious to outside influence, inhabited by beings who accept their wretched lives with silent resignation', p. 35, n 34. David K. Herzberger mentions: 'The principal thematic preoccupation: that is, that the destiny of people (as Wasserman affirms) stems directly from their character. Because of their abulia the villagers are indeed doomed to remain under the economic and psychological domination of Prudencio or a figure like him', p.17. For a summary of how the character of the villagers has been understood by the main Spanish critics and the consequences that derive from this apparent lack of will power at a political level, see Ramón Jiménez Madrid, pp. 65-76.

same name, a village which was condemned by Jesus, according to local legend, because no one there except a woman of ill repute would give him lodgings: 'Húndete, Isoba, que no quede en pie más que la casa del cura y la pecadora' (p. 191). By interpreting this legend as an example of the villagers' meanness of spirit, and by reading it together with the epigraph, the conclusion some critics reached is that Fernández Santos suggests that such intrinsic meanness would explain the historical process as a curse that will lead to a cyclical repetition.²⁰ Others believe that the author uses the epigraph to remind his countrymen of the need to interact more humanely, more charitably, like the doctor in the novel.²¹ However, I read this religious legend as an example of the collaboration between Church and State in the construction of a discourse of condemnation of those who fought on the other side. Reflecting the new alliance of Church and State at an institutional level, the discourse of political destruction is shrouded in religious overtones. It is no coincidence that, just as the doctor and the shepherd look at the lake, the latter remembers the dead bodies he helped to dispose of: 'Quemamos con gasolina lo menos veinte' (p. 188). This religious parable is important because it shows the Church fostering negative notions of identity in the villagers: 'El médico sorprendió un tono de unción en sus palabras. Era algo más que respeto; era el miedo al rayo, al río, a la oscuridad de la iglesia, al agua negra que bajo las tapias del cementerio rezumaba' (p. 191). This sort of discourse

²⁰ Jo Labanyi, pp. 45-46.

²¹ For Michael D. Thomas, for whom the doctor 'ejemplifica la caridad en la novela' and who concludes that the message of the novel is that people should follow the doctor's example and act humanely, the epigraph condenses this main theme: 'El epígrafe de la obra nos da una idea inicial de la tesis central [...] La España de posguerra, llena de odio y venganza, fue guiada por estas emociones negativas. El carácter del médico, sugiere Fernández Santos, da la clave de un futuro positivo para el español y, también, para su país.' See 'Penetrando la superficie: Apuntes sobre la estructura narrativa de *Los bravos*', *Anales de la Narrativa Española Contemporánea*, 5 (1980), 83-90 (p. 89).

fosters superstition, and when three tourists die while bathing in the lake the accident is taken as a confirmation that the place is damned. Drawing a parallel between Church and State: just as the villagers feel under the constant vigilance of the civil guard, this lake, described in the following terms, seems to keep an eye on them: 'Aquel ojo azul, acuoso, cristalino, debía atraer el respeto y las historias de todos los que cerca o lejos alentaban a su sombra' (p. 191).

Also, with regard to the epigraph, I believe that the author sees no need to define anybody's character. On the contrary, what he is claiming is that talking about essence is nonsense because what actually defines these peasants is the situation in which they find themselves. As Fernando Morán explains, there were several factors at that time that contributed to the new generation of writers developing an attitude opposed to essentialism, ready to replace the concept of essence for that of situation. This generation was influenced by existentialism, Marxism, the introduction in Spain of British social science and a new historiography that uses precise techniques at a time when positivism was becoming widespread.²² The epigraph is therefore used ironically. It is an irony that cuts through the very fabric of Spanish culture. At a popular level, the 'genio y figura hasta la sepultura' is nothing but a version of the tautology of the quote by Wasserman within the sphere of personal, individual lives.

²² 'Recepción de la ciencia social anglosajona, lectura de autores que utilizan la terminología, si no el método marxista y conocimiento de las nuevas escuelas filosóficas operan en ámbitos bastante restringidos. En uno más amplio que influye en los novelistas que comienzan ahora su carrera, se extiende de una manera casi natural la sustitución del concepto de *esencia* por el de *situación* en lo que se refiere al análisis cultural e histórico', Fernando Morán, p. 197.

THE OUTSIDE WORLD: POWER RELATIONSHIPS

Unlike Herzberger, I do not believe that geographical determinism and its impact upon the villagers is the ideological principle upon which Fernández Santos constructs his novel.²³ Indeed, I believe the author's critical view of the political system shapes the content and structure of the novel. Power relationships in *Los bravos* are dependent on the degree of wealth possessed (Don Prudencio), or political authority held (Amador, the municipal president). Society is depicted as stultified. Furthermore, I will show that the implicit message of the text is that of the need for social solidarity, of necessity for the population to break with the norms imposed by the system at all levels. Ignacio Soldevila Durante also comes to this conclusion when he summarises the spirit that prevails in most of Fernández Santos's works as that of hope, as opposed to Baroja's nihilism.²⁴

One of the definitions of Spain in Franco's days was that of 'una

²³ According to David K. Herzberger: 'Fernández Santos familiarity with this isolated area, as well as with several other remote regions of the Peninsula, has led him to view the Spanish character as shaped by a kind of geographic determinism. Thus, for example, he characterizes the Asturians as extroverted and carefree (they lead a hard life as miners), while the Leonese are portrayed as introverted and cautious (they are farmers in a hostile climate). In nearly all of his fiction the intensity and depth of the narrative result from the commingling of character and environment', p.10. Herzberger insists upon this point: 'Fernández Santos has admitted on several occasions that he believes strongly in geographical determinism. He reaffirmed this belief to me in a personal interview, 26 April 1978', p. 122, n3. For Herzberger: 'the author affirms in this novel the influence of geographic determinism and submerges his characters in an atmosphere of tedium and abulia from which they cannot hope to escape', p. 12.

²⁴ 'La idea esencial que se desprende es que la frustración y el fracaso de los hombres procede del deterioro o la ausencia de solidaridad, de comunicación y que, restablecidas éstas, sería posible esa sociedad en la que no sólo los valores degradados recuperarían su mítica limpieza original, sino que darían lugar a nuevos valores que hasta entonces sólo el sueño y la utopía han sido capaces de concebir. El fracaso de los personajes se debe siempre a hechos poco significantes, y da la impresión de que los impulsos iniciales hubieran podido lograrse si el contexto humano no hubiera sido el que es.' Ignacio Soldevila, *La novela desde 1936*, p. 234.

unidad de destino en lo universal', fostering the illusion that there were no real divisions within society; a myth of social cohesion.²⁵ Fernández Santos questions this myth by giving his own perception of reality. In *Los bravos*, the villagers link Prudencio's and Amador's wealth with their political sympathies towards the new regime. This is made clear in a conversation between the doctor, Manolo, the bar owner, and Antón, the 'representante del secretario del Ayuntamiento':

-¿No es el presidente [Amador]? -preguntó el médico.

-Sí

-¿Desde hace mucho?

-De la guerra para acá. Él y don Prudencio son los únicos que tienen algo en este pueblo. Los demás lo perdimos todo en la guerra.

-¿Y él?

-Él [Amador] se repuso en seguida - Antón hizo un gesto ambiguo con la mano y terminó el vino del vaso. (p. 48)

This cannot be read simply as proof of the suspicious or envious nature of the characters. On the contrary, I believe that the author is clearly pointing to the fact that collaboration with the new system guaranteed financial advancement, since Amador occupies a political position, as representative of the civil authority in the village, and in a dictatorship such as Franco's such positions were only occupied by staunch supporters of the regime. Furthermore, Amador applies the law and when the law is broken he demands the due penalties, as is the case when the horses, frightened by a summer storm, come down from the mountains and gallop along the road. In a case like this, when there is only one car in the village and nobody ever

²⁵ See José Diego Santos, pp. 47-48.

comes to the village by road, he could very well have turned a blind eye. But he does not, putting more financial pressure upon those already hard pressed: 'Ya puso hoy tres multas Amador' (p. 153) states Antonio's sister. Amador seems keen to show to the villagers that he is in power.

Don Prudencio's power over the villagers is economic since he is the main money-lender to the peasants and therefore benefits from the villagers' hard times. As Pepe notes: 'Aquí hay que acordarse de él más a menudo de lo que parece. En estos últimos años, con las cosechas que vienen, hubo quien se empeñó con él en más de mil duros' (p. 18). The doctor thinks that this is good enough reason to dislike him: 'Pues esa ya es buena razón' (p. 18).²⁶ Besides, as Pepe says, in a community forced to work hard for survival it is easy to dislike those who do not need to work: 'Puede que sea porque en la vida le hemos visto trabajar en nada' (p. 18).

Although the villagers reported Don Prudencio to the Asturian revolutionaries during the war, he managed to escape alive and save his hidden money. After Franco's victory he did not take revenge on those who reported him and, in the context of the Spanish Civil War, his magnanimity is regarded as a gesture of his almighty power over the villagers. As the doctor concludes: 'Ahora le querrán menos por eso' (p. 18).

This *cacique* may be in physical decline, shunned by his own family (p.132), considered a 'nobody' by some villagers (p. 85), and about to become

²⁶ 'Son aldeas minúsculas donde no existe jerarquía de ninguna clase, donde las diferencias económicas son muy pequeñas'. In this quotation from the author's lecture at the University of Salamanca in August 1971 (in Spencer Gordon Freedman, p. 42), there may appear to be a contradiction between the author's comment and what he seems to be reflecting in the text. My understanding is that the author is putting emphasis on how things are perceived by the members of the community and not by outsiders. Outsiders, enjoying a much higher standard of living than even the wealthier villagers, may dismiss these economic differences as non-existent. But, in the closed world of this village what counts is that the money lent, however small the amount may be, creates dependency on the money-lender, who therefore has a power that he otherwise would not have.

extinct as a dominant figure in rural life. Nonetheless, even in his last days, and to the annoyance of the villagers, he enjoys his prerogatives. He seems to have the right to use the only car in the village to travel alone, even if that involves cancelling other people's trips: 'En la vida se ha visto orgullo así. ¿Es que se va a hacer de menos porque vaya otro con él?' (p. 113). The doctor first meets him on his way to visit Amador's son and Don Prudencio asks him to stop to look at his housekeeper. The doctor reflects upon his manner: 'Obedeció. Seguramente el viejo estaba acostumbrado a mandar en los hombres de aquel pueblo, y a que se le obedeciera prontamente' (p. 50).

At a time when there was no freedom of speech, Fernández Santos criticises the status quo by using its main representative in the novel to voice its prejudices. Don Prudencio attributes the workings of social relationships to unchanging human qualities, his discourse is one of human essence, and he refuses to consider the possibility that social structures can be changed. Consequently, in his view, each generation of peasants will predictably react in the same way to him. During one of his strolls through the village he encounters some little girls cleaning and decorating the church for Antonio's wedding, and he thinks to himself: 'Con toda seguridad, dentro de unos años, se volverían malas y rencorosas como sus padres, le saludarían a medias, hoscamente o bajarían los ojos al suelo para que no viera el malquerer de sus miradas, pero ahora se mostraban amables' (p. 95). As I mentioned in the introduction care should be taken when interpreting Don Prudencio through the narrator in free indirect speech. Unlike Barry Jordan I do not believe that the narrator is expressing through this character the author's views on the 'ancestral antagonism' embedded in society that will make the villagers antagonistic to both the cacique and the doctor. On the contrary, I believe that the narrator is trying to expose this sort of discourse as merely self-serving of Don Prudencio. Firstly, he lets the reader feel some sympathy for Don Prudencio, the apparently sad old childless man hated by everyone on account

of his social status. Then, he unveils the character's hatred of the villagers, hence destroying the first impression created. Significantly, Don Prudencio's train of thought ends with his recollection of how clever he was during the war, hiding his money when the Asturian revolutionaries searched his house after the villagers had reported him to them, whilst these hard-working villagers are about to assemble in the school to give their money away to the fraudster. At this point, in my view, the narrator is exposing Don Prudencio's real character: by keeping quiet he is taking revenge on the villagers. The narrator makes sure that the reader is not misled about the nature of this man because of his forgiveness for those who reported him during the war-- instead he presents him as capable of revenge elsewhere in the narrative: 'La nota que para el médico le habían extendido no había salido de su cartera; a él si lo odiaba, no con el compasivo desprecio que Antón y sus compañeros le inspiraban, sino más profundamente, pleno de rencor que en otro tiempo [...] le hubiera arrastrado a tomar venganza' (p. 206).

This *cacique* lives in a self-imposed isolation. Although he has been invited by Antonio to his wedding he has no intention of going. The only person in the village that he is willing to mix with socially is Amador, the municipal president, but Amador, as well as working, has an invalid bed-ridden child and has no spare time to socialise. Don Prudencio sees himself apart and dismisses those who mix with the villagers: 'Pensó en el médico, un médico que ayudaba a Pepe a desmontar el motor del coche' (p. 97).

Fernández Santos thereby shows that the root of the discourse about 'unchanging humanity' is actually upper-class prejudice.²⁷

²⁷ Spencer Gordon Freedman, on the other hand, expresses a radical and negative view about the villagers' feelings towards Don Prudencio when he states: 'In their material and spiritual poverty, the townspeople are infected by greed and feelings of jealousy towards the few inhabitants who possess wealth. Don Prudencio, the village patriarch, is despised because of his superior financial position', pp. 45-46.

Don Prudencio's detachment from his fellow men stems from his belief that people's worth derives from their social origins and position. He therefore sees nothing wrong in his attitude to others. He believes that his position is unchallengeable and refuses to understand relationships in terms of a balance of power between the interests of the different parties. Even in the case of his mistress, he finds it normal for a girl of humble origins to be both housekeeper and lover of a wealthy and aged employer. Indeed, he talks in terms of the girl's right to aspire to such a position on the grounds of her being poor but beautiful and without ever considering her disadvantaged position in the relationship. Masterfully, the narrator manages to convey his condemnation of this character by including in the same paragraph all of Prudencio's contradictions in his perception of this arrangement:

Le gustaba verla por el pueblo, desde su balcón [...] siempre al alcance de su mano, de su voz, dócil a la primera llamada que llegara de arriba. Verla erguida pasear con las demás le hacía sonreír para sus adentros, complacido. Ella sola valía por todas las otras, y lo sabía porque él se lo había dicho muchas veces, cuando la quiso convencer de que la muchacha más guapa del Ayuntamiento tenía derecho a vivir también en la mejor casa de los cinco pueblos. (p. 86)

Furthermore, it is in this context of the pleasure that he gets from knowing that he owns the most beautiful girl in the area, that he has the kind thought of buying Socorro the dress she wishes to have, a luxurious silk one.

But the narrator is making clear that he, and Socorro for that matter, do not share Don Prudencio's view. Although the old man tried to convince her ('la quiso convencer'), he did not succeed. That Socorro does not see things in the same light is made obvious by the narrator right from the

beginning: 'Alguien más despierto que el secretario hubiera hallado un agudo contraste entre la jovialidad y complacencia un poco absurda del viejo y la monotonía de la muchacha' (p. 16). Her subsequent liaison with the doctor, with whom she shares sexual desire, and most importantly, what she says when Antonio, about to get married, asks her if she is thinking of getting married herself, leave the reader in no doubt. Antonio realises that he has put his foot in it by asking such a question of someone who, according to society's rules, has no real chance of finding herself in such a situation. To his astonishment she answers: '-Cuando encuentre con quién' (p. 89). The reader cannot ignore such a remark: the narrator is presenting an individual well aware of her underprivileged social status, and aware that only a brave man can break the rules by marrying her.

Because direct power over people, particularly if sexual, is the most obvious form of power, Don Prudencio is utterly humiliated when he is deserted by his housekeeper and lover, Socorro, the sexual symbol of his power. He then avoids being seen by the villagers: 'Ya no se aparecía en el balcón como antes; se escondía de sus vecinos' (p. 204). And when he is visited by Antón, who now dares to make patronizing comments such as 'A usted lo que le hacía falta era olvidarse de Socorro y traerse una sustituta' (p. 205), Don Prudencio reflects upon his loss of power: 'Viendo aquellas libertades que en otros tiempos ni hubiera soñado siquiera' (p. 205), and: 'Veía en aquel hombre al pueblo entero presenciando atento su agonía' (p. 205). Elsewhere, Amparo criticizes the village for turning a blind eye to Don Prudencio's sexual imposition on Socorro: '-¡Si yo fuera secretario de este Ayuntamiento le echaba del pueblo!' (p. 23). Indeed, she is particularly sensitive to other women's sexual disadvantages because she is partly in the same predicament. Since her father's disappearance during the war she is the breadwinner in her family and she is also in charge of an ailing mother and

has little or no financial security at all.²⁸

Amparo's personal circumstances, then, do not make her particularly attractive as a potential wife. She engages in casual sexual relationships, for example with the fraudster when he lodges at her home. He, incidentally, seems to believe that a woman who rents rooms to earn a living routinely provides sexual favours (p. 70). In fact, Amparo knows very well that because of her many sexual liaisons nobody will ever marry her. As she says when Antón questions her about her marital intentions: 'Yo ya estoy muy vista' (p. 155). The tragedy here is that she herself seems to believe that she is worthless. This double standard in the moral stereotyping of personal conduct between the sexes -- Don Prudencio's behaviour is seen as what is expected of a man: 'los hombres tienen tan poca vergüenza como él, y si no hacen otro tanto es porque no pueden' (p. 24) -- reinforces Amparo's sense of entrapment, as reflected when she thinks about the swindler: 'Lo mismo que los otros. La vida valía poco; era preciso seguir el curso de la rueda: girar, girar...' (p. 228). Life seems meaningless in these circumstances and Amparo describes hers in terms of alienation: 'Un pausado encaminarse hacia la nada, entre ecos de dolor, aburrimiento y deseo' (p. 227). This sense of alienation at the deepest personal level brings about a desire for annihilation: 'Dejaba su cuerpo al sol, que lo quemaba hasta sumergirla en una sensación de aniquilamiento y vacío' (p. 227).

Ownership of the land determines the social and economic status of most villagers (the exception being Don Prudencio, the doctor, Manolo, and Pepe) and work occupies most of their time in summer. At the very bottom of

²⁸ As José Diego Santos observes: 'Había mujeres que habían perdido a sus maridos pero que oficialmente no eran viudas ni tenían derecho a nada. Esta situación se prolongó durante demasiado tiempo, incluso hasta la muerte de Franco, como síntoma indeleble de que el país seguía dividido entre vencedores y vencidos', p. 50.

the scale we find the shepherds, who work for the big southern landowners who in summer, from May to San Miguel (29 September), send their large flocks to the greener pastures of the north. The land where their flocks graze belongs to the council and they negotiate its use with the municipal presidents (p. 181). The shepherds are given flour and are paid at the end of the summer: 'Diez o doce mil reales y dos borregas' (p. 181). The two sheep are then shared with the villagers during the festivities of 'Nuestra Señora' (p. 182). Most villagers seem to own some land, but the amount is so small that it only allows for a subsistence type of economy. Indeed, in this novel Fernández Santos underlines that although the physical characteristics of the land are not favourable, they do not determine the quality of life as much as the system of ownership of the land.

The village of *Los bravos* sits high up in the mountains and there are stones in the soil that need clearing (p. 20). The topography makes it difficult to use machines here in clear contrast to the villages on the plain: 'Aquí viven bien, pueden meter máquinas limpiadoras' (p. 20). Accordingly, the contrast between the village of *Los bravos* and the one on the plain is startling: 'Aquel era un buen pueblo: una iglesia nueva, una ermita, juzgado, dos bailes, fonda y farmacia [...] estación' (pp. 20-21). But the fact that they have bought a sulphating machine indicates that 'los bravos' have as much initiative as anybody anywhere else to increase production. As Pepe notes to the doctor: '-¿La sulfatadora? La compramos entre cinco. Por eso le meto prisa; esta tarde le toca el turno a mi hermano' (p. 221). However, when Pepe collects Don Prudencio from his trip to the city, he engages in a conversation with people from other villages and the quality of the land in different areas is compared. It is made clear that the land of 'los bravos' is not as fertile an area as 'la Ribera', further south in the province of León, with its 'pueblos ricos' (p. 81). On the contrary 'eran malas tierras y que a pesar de que las abonaban todos los años estaban muy agotadas' (p. 136). But the explanation of what is at the

heart of the problem is shown by the outsider's astonishment: '¿No las dejan descansar ningún otoño?', and with Pepe's reply: '¡Ca! - repuso Pepe -. Si hiciéramos eso tendríamos que ayunar ese año' (p. 136). The size of the piece of land that 'los bravos' own is so small that they cannot afford to leave land fallow, which in turn leads to it gradually becoming barren. Of course, these peasants dream of buying more land as soon as they can afford it. As Pepe observes: '¿Qué cree que hacen aquí cuando tienen reunido algo? Pues comprar más tierras para trabajar más; eso es lo que hacen' (p. 19). Those with the smallest pieces of land are forced to work the communal land on the outskirts of the village, in strips perched on the mountains where access is restricted and dangerous. This is the case with Antón, who runs the village forge (pp. 149-50).

In *Los bravos*, written in the aftermath of the war, but when the country was just beginning to recover economically (as indicated by the prosperous city that Don Prudencio describes when he goes to see a doctor and to visit his brother), Fernández Santos is keen to remind his readers that the State has failed to improve the conditions of the underprivileged peasants. These peasants find themselves abandoned by those in authority. We are given indications of this abandonment in the novel. Many of these relate to the role of the doctor, because the villagers, aware that this newcomer is more sympathetic to them, feel free to make comments or to ask him for the help they feel has not been provided before. Amparo approaches the doctor regarding her mother: 'Una persona no es un animal para dejarla morir de esa manera' (p. 162); Manolo confides that although the previous doctor thought that his wife had a heart condition and was seriously overweight, he never tried to do anything about her condition (p. 49); the doctor is told by Alfredo that the previous doctor only stayed in the village for a year, while waiting to get a job in a hospital and studied all day: 'Maldito el caso que nos hacía' (p. 159). In this last particular case, Alfredo mentions the geographical location of

the village, its isolation, as a reason for the doctor not wanting to stay: 'De todos modos, con una carrera no venía a meterme yo aquí - y señaló con un ademán las dos cadenas de montañas, flanqueando el pueblo' (p. 158).

Manolo, however, criticises the previous doctor's attitude towards his patients as simply lazy: 'A ése tenían que traerle los enfermos aquí, si no, no se movía como no le mandaran el coche' (p. 183). It is in this context that we must understand the scene where the villager takes his sick cow to the vet in the neighbouring village (instead of calling the vet to come to the village) and the dialogue between Alfredo and the new doctor:

-Aquí nunca sube.

-¿Le llamasteis alguna vez?

-¿Para qué? No iba a subir... (p. 158)

This sense of abandonment is also expressed with regard to the Church. There is no priest based in the village although there was one before the war. When Martín's wife inquires about when they are going to get a new priest, Don Manuel, the priest who comes to officiate at weddings, baptisms, and funerals, answers that it is difficult because money is needed to 'hacer una nueva casa y arreglar la iglesia' (p. 126). When she replies that a new priest could be appointed first and the house could come later, he replies that there is nowhere in the village to accommodate a priest temporarily: '¿Y dónde iba a vivir, suponiendo que lo mandasen? Ni donde dormir tendría' (p. 126). Thus it seems that the physical comfort of the priest comes before the spiritual needs of the villagers and, since visitors to the village stay at Amparo's house, we are led to believe that the accommodation available in the village is not good enough for the social status of a priest. The author is clearly indicating the institutionalised Church's abandonment of its parishioners on the grounds of

their poverty, and not because of the lack of financial resources.²⁹ He even elaborates this point further by providing the reader with an insight into the mind of the priest: 'El café era malo. Se preguntó qué habría bueno en aquel pueblo, entre aquella gente pobre y mezquina. Se acusó mentalmente de despreciar a sus semejantes y ofender a Dios' (p. 123). Fernández Santos takes away any sense of dignity in this priest by portraying him as more interested in food than in officiating at mass: 'Don Manuel acostumbraba oficiar de prisa, y más aquel día que llevaba muchas horas sin probar bocado' (p. 121).³⁰

The author is underlining the strong association between the State and the Church in the new regime by providing another example of the priest's and villagers' mutual disregard. The Church is preaching that the villagers should resign themselves to their fate of poverty on this earth and understand this in religious terms as God putting them to the test: 'Volved los ojos a Dios, que es el único que puede ayudaros; rogadle a Él, y vendrán de nuevo los buenos tiempos, o, al menos, si en sus secretos designios está que habéis de sufrir por vuestros pecados, Él, que todo lo puede, os dará fuerzas para que las penas de este mundo os sean más llevaderas' (pp. 123-24). The villagers, however, refuse to accept such an interpretation of their situation: 'Pero todo seguía igual [...] leía idéntica desconfianza en el corazón de los hombres' (p. 124). The villagers' answer to the priest's discourse comes in their refusal to receive the sacrament of Extreme Unction, thereby according to the Catholic faith denying themselves the opportunity of repentance and going to heaven:

²⁹ Citing the historian Domínguez Ortiz, José Diego Santos observes: 'La ayuda estatal pasó de 66.899.000 millones en 1940 a 270 en 1951-52 y a más de 3.000 en 1970 [...] Enseguida comenzó la tarea de reconstrucción de templos, seminarios y colegios religiosos, y por eso llama la atención que la iglesia de Cerulleda permaneciera ruinosa y abandonada', p. 52.

³⁰ I agree with José Diego Santos when he notes that: 'No podemos olvidar la fecha de publicación de esta novela, 1954, fecha en la que [...] de ningún modo era posible la crítica religiosa. Sin embargo sí apreciamos una actitud irónica y de menosprecio hacia lo religioso', p. 53.

‘Recordó que nunca le habían llamado para auxiliar a un difunto’ (p. 123). As far as the villagers are concerned they have been left standing on their own, secular, two feet, in contrast to the past that is defined as: ‘Un tiempo en que los hombres aún no esperaban todo de sí mismos’ (p. 105).³¹

Indicative of the alliance between the new State and the Church, is the fact that the villagers are forbidden to work on Sundays. However, this is not respected, even by the local authority official, Amador: ‘Y los que tenían tierras fuera de la carretera, donde no llegaban los ojos de los guardias, echaron la hoz al cinto para aprovechar el tiempo segando un poco también’ (p. 103). The author reinforces this notion that the new State exercises its repressive power against the villagers by describing the civil guards patrolling the countryside: ‘-Esos en verano suben todas las noches [...] suelen subir hasta el puerto’ (p. 69). Whether this is simply to control any illegal trade, or to stop any attempt at revolt by any remaining *maquis* in the area, is not specified. All in all, it is not surprising that the villagers manifest their rebellion in religious terms, and not political ones.

The voice of protest against this state of affairs comes from Amparo. Within the context of the plot it is understandable that it is Amparo’s voice that is raised against a life dominated by work since she has become the breadwinner: ‘El mundo valía poco. Trabajar, trabajar siempre en invierno y

³¹ Spencer Gordon Freedman links the lack of faith of the villagers to greed, to a desire to possess material wealth: ‘The physical deterioration of the church well reflects the deterioration of the villagers’ faith [...]. The novelist seemingly implies that a village without faith is also one without compassion and charity. In their material and spiritual poverty, the townspeople are infected by greed and feelings of jealousy towards the few inhabitants who possess wealth. Don Prudencio [...]; Amador’, pp. 45-46. Freedman later links the doctor’s attitude to the villagers with religious reasons: ‘The doctor comes to act finally as a voice of compassion, of Christianity, and of justice in a faithless and uncompassionate world’, p. 49. This interpretation of the text suggests, once more, social prejudices on the part of the critic. In his view of the peasants and sympathies for the wealthy, the critic projects his bias onto the text.

en otoño, ver desde la cosecha, desde la cocina, en la era, cómo la vida transcurría' (p. 155). What is revealing here is that the underprivileged do not seem able to decide whom to hold responsible for a situation that they themselves have not created: 'Año tras año. A la noche se acostaba maltrecha, cansada, sin saber contra qué o contra quién rebelarse, luego de moverse hora tras hora todo el día, como el asno a la noria, en torno a un provecho que no acababa de ver claro' (p. 155). Amparo is not able to see beyond her family framework: 'Se acabaron los juegos, empezó la rueda, sin apartarse un ápice de la voz que desde la cocina la llamaba' (p. 156). The reason for Amparo's alienation is indicated. She belongs to the young generation of Spaniards that were children during the war, who were brought up in the context of a single-political party state, at a time when the democratic political experience of the Republican period had been wiped out of the collective memory. As the intelligent woman that she is, Amparo is able to point out what is wrong: Don Prudencio's sexual imposition on Socorro, her mother being abandoned by the doctors, a life of subsistence dominated by work, the hypocrisy of society regarding sex. But she cannot see a way out. Amparo is a product of the new regime: she is not apolitical, she points the finger at the civil authority for allowing Don Prudencio to enjoy sexual privileges. But in the absence of a political framework that allows for the existence of any type of opposition, and lacking the ability to organize one, Amparo turns her frustration and anger inwards, against herself. Given the circumstances, the abnormal situation of a dictatorship is starting to be accepted by most people as the normal way of life. Amparo's social awareness results in a personal anguish, a lament that leads her nowhere but to a wish for self-destruction.

THE INNER WORLD: PERSONAL COMMITMENT

The characters of Pepe and the doctor are complementary since they perceive

the relationship between individuals and groups in opposite terms. Whilst the doctor has as a goal in life to belong to a community and play an active role in it, and is committed to changing social attitudes, Pepe's ambition is to do well for himself in terms of financial status and to leave the community he belongs to in order to achieve his personal dream. Accordingly, in terms of plot development the novel ends with the planned departure of Pepe to the city, and with the doctor deciding to stay, in spite of the difficulties he faces. Although some critics have assumed that the author presents Pepe as a positive character who takes responsibility for his own destiny and tries to do something about it by migrating, I believe that the author intends quite the opposite, criticising such an individualistic attitude, since it is the likes of Pepe who could have a positive effect on the life of their communities if they put their hearts and efforts into it.³² In contrast, the author presents the positive example of those city professionals who sacrifice their personal ambitions, financial and professional, for the good of the rural communities which have been abandoned by the State to their own fate. Through these young male characters, the author is trying to convey to a young generation of educated readers the message that the social and economic reform of their country lies in their hands. The novel aims to awaken the social consciousness of the reader, presenting social commitment as a noble challenge in life.

The author presents the reader with a community that is not devoid of communal spirit, that enjoys sharing Sundays together (p.106), that celebrates communal festivities (p. 226), that even shows some business enterprise such

³² 'Es la historia de un pueblo pequeño, una pequeña aldea en trance de desaparición en la inmediata posguerra y en unas condiciones sociales pobres y duras, hecho explicable por la emigración y porque a causa de ésta, tales aldeas a punto de morir, se convirtieron en pueblos ganaderos y así lograron sobrevivir'. These are the author's own words in conversation with Francisco Martínez García, *Historia de la literatura leonesa* (León: Everest, 1982), p. 1055.

as buying equipment (the sulphating machine, p. 221), but whose members lack the determination or the skill to organise themselves on crucial occasions. The author deliberately includes two incidents in the plot that would not have happened if those aware of the potentially disastrous consequences had taken action to prevent them: Alfredo being shot by the guard and, in particular, the bogus bank representative. Manolo and his wife occupy a privileged position in terms of gathering information because the bar is the place where the villagers socialize and outsiders such as the guard responsible for catching the poachers call in when passing by. They both know that the guard is going to be at the river that night and that he is determined to catch somebody to make up for the destruction of a shoal of fish a few nights before. They also know that it is very likely that Alfredo is going fishing that night. However, they choose to do nothing as they are tired and they do not want to waken Pepe, who is asleep, to alert Alfredo (p. 28).

The case of the bogus bank representative is the best illustration of the lack of commitment to the community of its more alert members, and of the dire consequences of the prevailing individualistic philosophy of life: ‘- Allá cada cual’ (p. 100). As usual, most villagers go to the bar to exchange opinions: ‘La cantina, por donde habían pasado antes a enterarse de los propósitos de los demás para tomar una determinación de acuerdo con las circunstancias’ (p. 99). But neither Pepe nor Manolo’s wife express their misgivings to the others: ‘Al más tonto se le ocurre que nadie da duros a peseta’ (p. 100), not even to Manolo who risks his money. Isabel, Alfredo’s daughter, asks the doctor for his opinion on the matter and he expresses his view that: ‘No me parece un negocio muy seguro’ (p. 66). But somehow nobody raises the alarm. It is up to the reader, once more, to interpret the actions presented in the novel. It is likely that the readers’ preconceptions may influence their understanding of the motives behind the actions. According to the fraudster all he does is to exploit people’s greed: ‘Escarbar la codicia de la

gente' (p. 75). But Fernández Santos is presenting a situation in which the persuasive ways of the fraudster manage to get the better of the trusting nature and desire for improvement of the desperately poor peasants. These are two examples, like didactic parables, of the need of the population to communicate in order to take the necessary action as a group.

Luis Miguel Fernández Fernández argues that the writers of Fernández Santos's generation chose as protagonists of their novels rural communities in an attempt to counteract the regime's myth of 'la soberanía del campesinado'.³³ He argues that Franco's regime acted in an openly contradictory way in that a policy of migration from the countryside to the cities was being implemented in order to provide much needed labour to the industrial areas. Yet, at an ideological level the regime was constructing a triumphant myth of country life as a superior way of life, not only because it safeguarded the essence of racial and national virtues, but also as the principal economic driver that would support the prosperity of the country as a whole. The writers of this generation, on the other hand, focused upon the peasants not only to reveal that the economic conditions in which they lived were in stark contrast with the idealization of the official propaganda machine, but also to point out that the peasants were, at this time in history, the sector of the population with the lowest developed social consciousness, which is typical of underdeveloped countries.³⁴ Fernández Santos's message in this novel is precisely that.

As was mentioned earlier, the author does not present Pepe in a

³³ Luis Miguel Fernández Fernández, *El neorrealismo en la narración española de los años cincuenta* (Santiago de Compostela: Servicio de Publicacións e Intercambio Científico de la Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 1992), pp. 200-05.

³⁴ 'El protagonismo no está en una clase determinada sino en el "pueblo", representado por los sectores más retrasados y con menos conciencia social; algo típico de las sociedades subdesarrolladas, en las que la clase obrera apenas tiene consistencia'. Luis Miguel Fernández Fernández, p. 201.

positive light. The only action that proves his superior intelligence with respect to the rest of the village is the fact that he does not trust the fraudster. But even this is conditioned by the fact that he does not feel tempted to invest money because he simply does not have any, and he is in any case thinking of leaving. Throughout the rest of the novel he is described as lacking the positive qualities of a bright youth. He appears to lack business acumen. He is told in the neighbouring village that he would get more money by investing in a van in which he could accommodate more passengers. Also, he could at least get hold of a bigger container for his petrol, instead of the cans he uses that spill and give out an unbearable smell.

Pepe could also have taken a stand against Don Prudencio by refusing to allow him to travel alone in the car, as, after all, it is his car and therefore he could have established and implemented rules to regulate how it is used. But he avoids taking responsibility and states that it is a problem for the villagers to resolve with Don Prudencio: ‘-Todo eso no me lo contéis a mí; a él, a él, que es quien tiene la culpa’ (p. 114). Yet as one of the villagers replies: ‘Tú también la tienes por consentírselo’ (p. 114). Pepe’s reluctance to take responsibility for his action and its implications, his contribution to the maintenance of Don Prudencio’s status within the community, would suggest that he has chosen not to consider actions in any context other than personal. Pepe’s approach to life is individualistic. And his alienation is so great that he considers that his detachment from the community he belongs to is the ‘clever’ thing to do, although he is simply playing into the hands of the regime by believing that the city is the land of opportunities. Fernández Santos is providing his readers with examples of the negative consequences that such an individualistic attitude entails for the whole of the country.

Certainly, the author does not construct this character in depth and it is therefore difficult to judge in a definitive manner his function within the novel. Some critics have said that Fernández Santos uses Pepe to represent, with his

dreaming of emigrating to the city, a valid alternative to life in the village. However, the ironic way in which Pepe's ambitions in life are presented does not support such an interpretation. Pepe is hardly an example of the hard-working, self-made migrant. He only considers leaving when his brother lends him enough money to open his *chigre* (p. 215), and the narrator dismisses his dreams of prosperity with fine irony: 'Anchos bulevares, dinero y sitios donde poder gastarlo, trato con gente fina, volver al pueblo por las fiestas con un traje nuevo y camisa de seda a holgar unos días relatando sus hazañas. Y al final, casarse y, a ser posible, enganchar un buen pico de fortuna propia' (p. 209). He is therefore also morally flawed and motivated by the thought of easily acquiring money. But despite all these clues in the text, some critics still consider that the author presents Pepe in a positive light.³⁵

Emigration from the village to the city is presented as an alternative that does not necessarily offer a better future for the villagers. Baltasar's daughter ended up working as a prostitute and dying from syphilis; an unnamed villager did not find work and had to return; and even those who start their own business find that business owners from the city make it particularly difficult for those from the villages to establish themselves by refusing to do business with them.

It is the doctor, without doubt, who is portrayed as the example to follow. The doctor is the character who reveals how the author links personal existential anguish to a lack of purpose in life. The doctor seems to indicate that the purpose one should aspire to in life is to belong to a community one can identify with and interact with. This unnamed doctor does not identify

³⁵ 'There is admiration [...] for young Pepe [...] who possesses sufficient courage to leave the stagnant *pueblo* [...] it is evident that the youth represents an affirmative, active, and optimistic thrust towards freedom and self-esteem'. Spencer Gordon Freedman, p. 51. Also: 'In contrast to most other characters in the novel, who perpetuate the status quo, Pepe escapes the deterministic elements of his milieu by asserting his will'. David K. Herzberger, p.16.

with, nor share, the purpose in life that the social group he was born into proposes as an ideal or as the goal to achieve: the perpetuation of the group and its social and economic status through the exercise of a profession and by marrying within the social group. He thinks about this on his way to see the shepherd, when he reflects on the short stay of the previous village doctor and he compares his life to that of his friends: '¿Por qué se habría marchado el otro? Era evidente: la buena vida. Pensó en sus compañeros ayudando en las consultas; con el tiempo, la clientela de sus patrones pasaría a ellos, podrían casar con sus hijas para perpetuar la estirpe, la buena raza' (p. 179). The irony in the choice of words is exquisite since it mocks the obsession with race in the official discourse of the regime. And the irony continues when considering the honourable purpose of having a profession, so if one happens to end up in a village: 'Tú tienes tu carrera y ya habrá alguna que ponga su capitalito. Te casas y en paz a descansar. Que si un poquito de brisca por las tardes [...] los congresos en Madrid' (pp. 179-80). However, the doctor had always felt alienated within the social group he had belonged to in previous years: 'Siempre que aquella hora le sorprendía en pie, a la luz dudosa de la madrugada, se sentía extraño, extranjero, en cualquier lugar que se hallase, aun en la ciudad, en su propia casa, asomado a la ventana de su cuarto, sobre la calle que conocía desde niño' (p. 193) .

What makes him an outstanding person in the social framework of that period is that he is willing to step out of the existing social system and redefine his social relationships. Two principles lie at the heart of his attitude. Firstly, by practising his profession where he considers he is most needed, he pursues a social objective. It is then that he seems to be able to find that 'una paz singular se apoderó de su alma' (p. 193). Secondly, he follows his instincts, as opposed to the principles culturally transmitted by the regime. For example, even at the very end of the novel when he is being ostracised he states that he has been drawn to the local people and their way of life: 'Un amor animal le

atraía a su vida, como al río, a la tierra, a los vientos' (p. 212).

The main dramatic thread in the novel consists of the interaction between the doctor and the villagers. Initially, as an outsider, he finds it difficult to identify with them, and he feels alienated: 'Todo el rencor que pudiera ver en torno a sí, todas las suspicacias no le conmovían. Su suciedad, su rudeza o mezquindad no podían rechazarle, y, sin embargo, cada vez que oía su voz, cuando el rumbo de sus pensamientos le rozaban, sentía como su alma se replegaba en sí misma, encerrando al corazón en el frío límite de su propio ser' (p. 185). In order to succeed in his aim to be integrated into the group he needs to develop not just sympathy towards them, but understanding.³⁶ The incident when the villagers want to lynch the swindler highlights their different values. The peasants are still looking at life in terms of 'you are either with us or against us', which echoes the war, and they obviously mistrust the justice system, suspecting that the swindler will not be punished.³⁷ The doctor has tried to allow justice to follow its course, because he trusts the system. But whilst the doctor clings throughout to his notion of being a professional providing services to whoever needs them, regardless of what they have done, by the end of the episode he admits that he almost regrets having followed his course of action in preventing the lynching:

³⁶ In a way, the doctor, in his efforts to understand what guides the actions of the villagers, acts as an alter ego of the author, who has admitted that this was his intention when he decided to write this novel: 'Escogí para escribir mi primera novela una región, un país, un pueblo que yo conocía bien y que sentía, porque conocer sólo, en este oficio no es bastante... Los sentía también y tal y como los sentía procuré enfrentarme a ellos, quiero decir que no desde arriba, con paternalismo, más o menos consciente, sino a su nivel, tal y como había vivido y vivo a veces con ellos'. Lecture at the University of Salamanca in August 1971. A copy of the text of this lecture was sent to Spencer Gordon Freedman, who reproduces many fragments from it in his dissertation, p. 42.

³⁷ As José Diego Santos reminds us: 'La mayor parte de las fechorías permanecían en silencio ante el temor de que estuvieran vinculados a entramados del poder, de tal manera que el temor se convirtió en el mejor arma de impunidad', p. 62.

‘Renegó de sí mismo y del viajante; desde que lo había encontrado no cometía sino torpezas’ (p. 204). Although the doctor describes the peasants in negative terms, he is not trying to define them in terms of essence. On the contrary, he is connecting those negative qualities to the circumstances in which they find themselves, as on this occasion when they have been robbed of their savings: ‘Qué fácil era pensar en un buen corazón cuando no se había perdido nada en el asunto’ (p. 199). The title of the novel itself indicates a circumstantial roughness, a lack of cultural sophistication that needs to be addressed in order for the villagers to move forward in the new society.³⁸

The doctor is bringing to the village a democratic approach to human relationships, and therefore politics: the personal as political. But Fernández Santos highlights the limitations of this approach as a way of changing society through the inconsistencies in the doctor’s behaviour and the villagers’ own prejudices towards the doctor that prevent them from appreciating the political advantages of his approach. The doctor wants to be accepted on equal terms with the rest of them: ‘Ahora venía la ocasión de irrumpir en su mundo, obligándoles a aceptarle de igual a igual entre sus hombres, entre las causas de sus penas o alegrías’ (p. 212). Later, the reader is informed: ‘Sólo quedaba esperar, abandonarse al curso de los días acechando la primera ocasión de acercarse un poco a la otra orilla’ (p. 220). But in the meantime, those watching the confrontation from afar express the situation in terms of crude power: ‘Ése en menos de dos años se hace el dueño del pueblo’ (p. 217). This again reveals a frame of mind still adhering to the values of the war. The outcome is for the reader to guess and elaborate upon.

³⁸ Concha Alborg indicates that in an interview with the author on 1 July 1980, he explained what he intended to convey with the title *Los bravos*: ‘*Los bravos* ha sido mal entendido sobre todo por los críticos que lo interpretan como “los valientes”, cuando la intención declarada del autor era la de implicar “silvestres” con el significado de rústicos aunque tampoco eran cobardes’, p. 155.

At a personal level, the doctor's challenge is whether he will have the courage to break the circle of exploitation by marrying Socorro, or whether he will perpetuate it by keeping her as his mistress. He admits that the sexual happiness he has found with Socorro helps him to make sense of life:

'Recordaba el tiempo anterior cuando no la conocía antes de llegar al pueblo [...] y aunque aquel estado de cosas terminara -- la imagen de don Prudencio fue y vino en su mente como un viento --, ya no seguiría en la insatisfecha, dolorosa soledad de antes' (p. 190). So far, he has learned that once one gets involved with somebody else, one has to take responsibility for the consequences for that person of such a relationship. When they are both being ostracised he talks of himself only, but she reminds him that they are both in the same predicament:

- ¿Y qué quieren? ¿Que me vaya ?

- Quieren echarnos.

Se llamó bruto y egoísta porque en su frenesí la
había olvidado. (p. 211)

If the doctor genuinely acted according to the principle that the personal is political then he should marry Socorro in the future. A gesture of this kind would indicate to the villagers that he treats them as equals.

Luis Miguel Fernández Fernández notices some common ground between the political attitudes espoused by the 'falangismo de izquierdas' that prevailed in the Spanish universities of the 1940s, which, up to a point, influenced some of the authors of this generation, and the political attitude of the doctor in this novel.³⁹ As a result of the influence of Ortega y Gasset,

³⁹ Luis Miguel Fernández Fernández, p. 197.

political changes were expected to derive not from the political action of the masses, but from a select minority. For this critic the doctor could be regarded as a representative member of that minority, by settling down with Socorro he is challenging Don Prudencio and showing the villagers that nobody is omnipotent. The ascetic attitude displayed by the doctor, choosing to give up a more comfortable life in the city to live in the village, was also typical of the ideology of the 'falange crítica'.

But it should be noted that Fernández Santos also constructs the character of the doctor with a penetrating observation of the character's contradictions. The doctor's good intentions towards those below him in the social scale bring out his inherent limitations as a middle-class man in a situation where he is out of his depth. He is certainly not a revolutionary leader who confronts head-on those who hold power. The way he proceeds with Socorro and Don Prudencio is characteristic. He acts surreptitiously. A brave approach would have been for him and Socorro to explain to Don Prudencio, face to face, that they wanted to settle down together, and that therefore she was leaving her job as a housekeeper. An indication of the way the doctor understands how an individual is to behave in the context of power relationships is given when he passes judgement on Pepe and the way he runs his car service. He agrees that it is not up to Pepe to confront Don Prudencio by insisting that he travels alone, it is for the villagers concerned. His approach to life is based upon personal ethical principles, as a professional, not on social or political ideas. He is representative of a new generation of middle-class professionals who will contribute to the economic development of the country, without belonging to any political party.

As the author has pointed out, the novel is open for the reader to interpret.⁴⁰ The author leaves it to the reader to ponder on the best way

⁴⁰ 'Puis on vous parlerait de "littérature objectivée" [...] Je crois que, dans

forward for the country politically. By seemingly replacing Don Prudencio, the old *cacique*, with the doctor as the figure that dominates the sphere of public life in the village and imposes the rules of social conduct, Fernández Santos is replacing one myth, the *cacique*, with another, the minority elite. The obsolete symbols of power may be there but the doctor is not a *cacique* in the old sense. It is for the villagers to accept or dismiss this representative of the intellectual elite. The reader is encouraged to consider that the country needs professionals like the doctor to move the country forward politically, thereby the novel reinforces the myth of a much needed elite. On the other hand, the reader may consider that the country needs the peasants to take the initiative politically, although given that the right of political association was non-existent, this would require them to join forces with the professional class and find a compromise in order to change society.

LOS JINETES DEL ALBA

Los jinetes del alba has not received much critical attention apart from a few general reviews in newspapers at the time of publication. Whilst José García Nieto considers the novel an example of the high quality narrative that

certaines circonstances, il est plus utile d'exprimer simplement la réalité et de laisser au lecteur la soin de conclure. C'est le cas des *Fiers*, la raison de la prétendue "objectivité" de mon roman'. From Claude Couffon, 'Rencontre avec Jesús Fernández Santos', *Les Lettres Nouvelles*, No 62 (July-August 1958), 127-32 (p. 131). Quoted by Daniel DiNubila, p. 8.

characterises the writer throughout his career, Jorge Rodríguez Padrón considers it symptomatic of the writer's decline. For this critic the novel is a mere repetition of what the writer has done before in terms of themes, characters, and narrative techniques.⁴¹ Ramón Jiménez Madrid studies the novel in his thesis and dismisses it on the same grounds as Jorge Rodríguez Padrón. Although I do not consider *Los jinetes del alba* one of the better novels written by the author, I disagree with these general evaluations in the sense that they do not take into account the political aspects of its content, which in my opinion explain the novel and give it its distinctive characteristics. I believe that this critical disregard of the political content of this and other novels stems from a view that Fernández Santos believed in a 'concepción cíclica de la historia' (Jiménez Madrid, p. 248) when, in my opinion, a close reading proves otherwise. For DiNubila, Herzberger, Alborg, Rodríguez Padrón and Jiménez Madrid, Fernández Santos presents war in his novels as a cyclical event in history. But these critics fail to take into account that in *Los bravos*, *Los jinetes del alba* and *La que no tiene nombre*, Fernández Santos presents war as connected to the historical problem of land ownership, which is the major theme.

Jiménez Madrid acknowledges that 'la cargazón ideológica de la obra viene dada por su presencia [the revolutionaries Quince Libras y Ventura] y por la antítesis que suponen frente a los propietarios del balneario' (p. 245), but fails to relate the ideological content of the novel with its structure and imagery. Accordingly, for this critic the novel does not go beyond showing how ordinary individual lives evolve in the historical framework of cyclical destruction by war: 'Como sucedía en *Jaque a la dama*, el personaje femenino acapara la atención pese a mediar el signo bélico. La guerra desde los fogones,

⁴¹ José García Nieto, 'Los jinetes del alba', *ABC*, Sábado Cultural Section, 10 March 1984, p. 43. Jorge Rodríguez Padrón, 'La recuperación de un espacio novelesco', *El País*, Libros Section, 11 March 1984, p. 2.

desde la perspectiva doméstica, interesa más que la del frente de batalla' (p. 243).

I, on the other hand, believe that in *Los jinetes del alba* (1984) Fernández Santos attempts to provide a more balanced version than that put forward by the Franco regime of the historical events of the period 1933-1936. Thus, he constantly underlines that those who took part in the Asturian revolution of 1934 were the poorest in the country, miners and landless peasants such as the character Martín, and that their aim was to achieve a fairer distribution of wealth. During the dictatorship, this period of the nation's past had been reduced to an example of former, troubled times, with the emphasis on the anticlerical attitudes of those who took part in the troubles and the violence they engaged in. In *Los jinetes del alba*, however, what is emphasised is the high degree of repression exercised by the authorities.

For Rodríguez Padrón the fact that the historical events are presented through the life of the different characters and 'la inestabilidad de sus conciencias' is a virtue that becomes a flaw because:

Los personajes siguen siendo los mismos de siempre [...] su existencia se reduce a un ir y venir sin norte, abandonados al azar de los acontecimientos, divididos -- sin convicción alguna -- entre un lugar que los justifica sentimentalmente y una ilusión por cambiar su destino frustrada una y otra vez.

Por eso la perspectiva de la narración -- y su propio tiempo -- se hallan mediatizados en extremo por el ritmo interior que agita las conciencias de estas criaturas (sólo esporádicas intervenciones del narrador insinúan una distancia capaz de objetivar la peripecia).

I disagree with the argument that the characters 'siguen siendo los de siempre'.

This is a novel written with the intention of paying tribute to the peasants who were part of the Republican forces and the author gives them a voice by recounting their version of this historical period. The narrator weaves into the body of a novel the stories transmitted orally from generation to generation.⁴² Also, the narrator captures the character and mentality of these people by adopting their way of expressing themselves. This works particularly well in the case of Martín, where the constant alternation between the factual details and the insights into his mind helps to reproduce the tension created by the fast pace of the historical events and the quick reactions demanded of the character. This is particularly true in the period that ends with the failed revolution of 1934, as Martín is developing his political consciousness. I would agree, however, that the changes in focus of the narrative in respect of the three main characters disrupt the development of the plot by including too much information about the past of each character. The problem with the criticism offered by Rodríguez Padrón and Jiménez Madrid is that they reduce the complexity of the novel's contents to a simple narration of ordinary lives, and I believe that this has become a commonplace attitude among critics of Fernández Santos that needs to be questioned. Consequently I intend to highlight how, in *Los jinetes del alba*, the personal is treated as political and the political is treated as historical. The novel presupposes that the reader is familiar with the historical background and that he/she can establish the connection between the plot of the novel and the historical events.

I also disagree with Rodríguez Padrón's criticism of the novel regarding the role of the narrator and the novel's scope. I will argue that *Los jinetes del alba* is more than the narration of the lives of characters and the

⁴² 'Algunas -dice- las viví muy de cerca; otras las oí [...] hay personajes en los que me he inspirado que viven todavía'. 'Conversación con Carmen Fuentes', *ABC*, 25 February 1984, p. 41.

description of their political consciousness by a third-person narrator that adopts the point of view of those characters. The novel is an ambitious historical melodrama where a third-person narrator provides a picture of human relationships across the different classes in the Republican period without glorifying that period as a social paradise about to be lost. Furthermore, the narrator provides a general picture of the social, economic and political problems that were unsolved by the regime established following the uprising of July 1936, and how these problems affected the lives of the peasants. In *Los bravos*, Fernández Santos chooses a community of small landowners for whom the problem of land ownership was still extant. In *Los jinetes del alba*, he selects two landless peasants as principal characters. In both novels Fernández Santos includes as a main character the figure of the *cacique* and he develops the theme of power relationships based upon the interaction between the *cacique* and the villagers. In my opinion this is the main theme of the novel and the third-person narrator presents it with considerable distance to the point that, I believe, the amount of historical information included restricts the flow of the novel.

However, one could criticise the way in which the major theme of power relationships is developed. The backbone of the novel relies greatly upon the confrontation between the *cacique* and the villagers. To enhance this aspect of the theme, Fernández Santos uses imagery based on the native horses of the region. This aspect of the novel is, in my opinion, successfully developed. However, parallel to this, the theme of power struggles is also developed by focusing upon sexual relationships. This aspect is delivered in the style of the popular *novela rosa*, creating a romantic interest that may explain the commercial success of the novel, but it diminishes its artistic value, reducing it at times to sheer melodrama.

In my opinion, *Los jinetes del alba* is not a brilliantly written novel. Most of the language used in the chapters dedicated to the lives of both Martín and

Ventura is functional, serving the purpose of illustrating to the reader the grim reality of their lives. Fernández Santos must have been aware that he needed to liven up the contents and he accordingly introduced those episodes about the alms collector and his sexual exploits in which an earthy sense of humour prevails. However, the contrast between this down-to-earth and colourful language and the passages written in a poetic style gives the effect of a disjointed narrative. In the case of Ventura, Fernández Santos tries to create suspense in the plot, as in the episode of Ventura's stay in jail -- although in this case it does not work, it merely breaks the thread of the narrative. Rodríguez Padrón also points out, and I agree, that the mythological aspects of the novel, the horses at the beginning and end of the work and the character of the *infanta* are not successfully integrated in the story line.⁴³

As in *Los bravos*, Fernández Santos introduces an epigraph that conditions the interpretation of the novel. The epigraph, from Rainer Maria Rilke, is taken from a letter to Rodin dated 31 December 1912 and represents a typical view of a dismissive attitude towards the Spanish masses and their revolutionary dreams. Indeed, it is so stereotypical that it seems to indicate that it is actually inherent in the Spanish character to be so *quijotesco*.

Se diría que un heroísmo sin objeto y sin empleo ha formado
a España: se levanta, se yergue, se exagera, provoca al cielo,
y éste, a veces, para darle gusto, se encoleriza y contesta con
grandes gestos de nubes, pero todo queda en un espectáculo

⁴³ 'Fernández Santos parecía haber encontrado una salida a lo que amenazaba con derivar en estereotipo literario transfigurando ese mundo en territorio mítico [...] (es el caso de *La que no tiene nombre*) [...]. Sin embargo, esa posibilidad no se explota en esta última novela y los elementos míticos (los caballos que periódicamente bajan a las Caldas o la historia de la infanta con su halo romántico y trágico) no se implican en la peripecia de modo suficiente'. *El País*, 11 March 1984, p. 2.

generoso e inútil.

The reality presented in this novel rebuts such a view. The question of land ownership is at the root of many social revolts in Spanish history, and was the main reason why the peasants backed the Republic. Fernández Santos, through his character Ventura, constantly reminds the reader that the redistribution of land is the 'objeto', to use the epigraph's words, of the revolutionary heroes. If that 'heroísmo [...] queda en un espectáculo generoso e inútil', then one needs to look for the reasons. The author points in two directions. On the one hand, this is the lack of real commitment to the cause -- or commitment to the very end, in the case of many peasants such as Marian and Martín. On the other, there is the lack of real leaders. The Spanish left is presented as ineffectual at crucial times because of internal divisions: 'Estando faltos de orientación definitiva y pensando cada cual distintas iniciativas, es preciso reunir las fuerzas de los diversos sectores para salvar entre todos la República'.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the revolution leads to the slaughter of those who take part because those in government, including well-intentioned Republicans, will crush any radical attempts to alter the main economic structures: 'No hay peor burgués que el pobre en cuanto levanta la cabeza' (pp. 190-91).

THE OUTSIDE WORLD: THE CIVIL WAR

Ramón Jiménez believes that there is no relationship established between historical circumstances and the characters of the novel.⁴⁵ I could not disagree

⁴⁴ Jesús Fernández Santos, *Los jinetes del alba* (Barcelona: Editorial Seix Barral, 1984), p. 215. All further references to the novel will be to this edition and will be given in the text.

⁴⁵ 'Los sucesos bélicos no influyen en demasía en los personajes', and: 'Este

more strongly. Although at the beginning of the novel Martín may be considered an idealistic landless peasant, by the end of the work he has become one of the future silent majority for whom survival will demand not just the abandonment of their political ideals but also a tacit collaboration with the new authorities. I have paid particular attention to his evolution since it involves a detailed account of the author's belief that what defines a man is the historical process of the time in which he lives and the part he plays in it. This account is especially relevant since it seems to explain that the majority of people did not have any choice, given the repression exercised by the new authorities, but to submit.

The stages in Martín's personal evolution coincide with the historical one: first we see his awakening to social consciousness and his subsequent participation in the revolution of October 1934; then in the period after the failed revolution we see the hardening of economic, social, and political conditions and Martín assessing the degree of his personal commitment to future revolutionary actions; and then, finally, the election of February 1936 results in political attitudes becoming more radicalised until the uprising of July 1936 eventually brings about the final submission of the population to the new regime that will safeguard the interests of the country's rich.

Martín's awakening to the ideology of the revolution stems from his own consciousness that he is being sexually exploited by his employer. The author deliberately chooses to elaborate upon Martín's sexual exploitation as the first episode of the novel, establishing from the beginning that he is giving

permanente ritornello, esta visión de España como inagotable campo de lucha es constante en esta obra donde los sucesos históricos se articulan con dificultad en las vidas de los personajes'. R. Jiménez, p. 247.

voice to the oppressed, and that the reader is going to be offered an explanation of the world from that point of view. Martín hears for the first time miners and cattle-owners talk about 'un nuevo gobierno, de pistoleros y duras represalias, de sindicatos libertarios, de lanzar al país a una revolución que cambiara la norma de las cosas' (p. 63). On one of these occasions, a member of the guerrilla forces tells him that the aim of the revolution is for a redistribution of the ownership of the land: 'El día que lleguemos a mandar [...] Habrá pan y tierra para todos' (p. 64). Martín is puzzled by it and has: 'La cabeza llena de insólitas palabras y rencores que no sabía contra quién iban' (p. 64). He hears about what is happening in Asturias: 'Amenazas de huelgas, [...] comités y represalias, incluso de traer moros a combatir contra aquellos que tomaran las armas' (p. 84), and when October 1934 arrives Martín is already in Asturias where he has been sent to recruit new men for the front (p. 113). Eventually, though, the military failure of the revolutionary army ends with the atrocities committed in the war: 'Noticias de represalias y torturas, de cadáveres sin reconocer, sordas palizas y reos colgados para después ser enterrados en fosas comunes; todo ello por simples sospechas y denuncias, sin pruebas, ni testigos, ni juicio' (p. 120).

From Chapter 17 to Chapter 37, well over half the novel, the narrator chronicles the period between the failed revolution of 1934 and the elections of 16 February 1936. At a political level, we see the increasing role of the right in the government of the coalition of the radicals and CEDA, elected in November 1933, until the end of 1935.⁴⁶ In the spring of 1935, the reader is informed: 'El correo volvía a traer noticias desde la capital que hablaban como siempre de pobres que seguían siendo pobres, de ricos cada vez más ricos, de canónigos pendientes de reparar las ruinas de su dorada catedral' (p. 125). At

⁴⁶ Ramón Tamames, *La República. La era de Franco* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1988), pp. 120-21.

a local level, the reader sees how the village begins to move towards isolation and the gradual domination of a *cacique* in the making, a microcosm of the future regime. The narrator uses a bitter, ironic choice of words to describe the village as a paradise: 'El mundo parecía detenerse al otro lado del río, más allá del baño de la infanta. Guerras y muertes, hambres, huelgas, temidas represalias, se borran cerrando el paso hacia aquel tranquilo paraíso en torno a las nuevas Caldas. Eran otro país regido por el hermano del ama' (p. 125). In this paradise, whilst the members of the guerrilla force are in hiding waiting for a promised amnesty, priests collaborate with the authorities revealing the whereabouts of those in hiding, special troops patrol the mountains in order to suppress any new attempt at revolt, and the torture of prisoners goes on.

A possible future dictatorship is mentioned by conservative members of society, two anonymous clients at the spa, as the solution to the current ills of the country:

-Cada día que pasa hace falta un hombre que sea capaz de meterlo en cintura.

-Pues algo habrá que hacer si no quieren que acabemos todos como Caín y Abel.

-Habría que enseñar desde chico que ha habido siempre ricos y pobres, que en esta vida hay que apenar con lo que toca.

(p. 184)

This conversation is representative of the language used in the fabrication of myths: it is the language of proverbs. There are three myths typical of the Francoist ideology contained here. Firstly, the myth of the nation as organic. In this case the nation as a whole, the body, is straying from the appropriate political path, which needs to be corrected by a strong man: the future saviour

or dictator. The second myth is the biblical one of humanity divided between good and bad, the inevitable essence of human beings which leads to fraternal strife or fratricide: the future Civil War. The third myth is that the division between the haves and have-nots is a natural one, and that, consequently, this has always been the case historically. In this context the bad ones are those have-nots who refuse to resign themselves to their destiny. This type of reasoning reinforces the notion that the dominant social group is not responsible for the social situation. The two characters talk very openly about what lies at the root of the revolution but fail to understand why the have-nots do not accept their destiny. The reference to Cain and Abel will reappear in *En la hoguera* where the association between Cain and the have-nots is once more established. The younger Rojo brother, the poor miner suffering from silicosis and desperate for money to pay for his treatment, sees himself as Cain after robbing and leaving for dead the wealthy Doña Constanza.⁴⁷

It is at this time that Martín feels unwilling to participate in any future historical events. There is mention of this in terms of: 'Propósitos de quedar esta vez al margen de la próxima guerra que ya se perfilaba en el gris horizonte' (p. 188). It is the period of repression, when Martín and others are

⁴⁷ 'The regime's cultural apparatus was founded on two simple principles: the 're-Spanishification' and 're-Catholicization' of society. [...]. And Catholicism became an essential element in reconstituting a social order eroded by the levelling policies of the Republic [...]. The new social order was based on the notion of the natural inequality of human beings, and their inherent wickedness as a result of original sin. Such notions served to justify class division'. Alicia Altet, 'Cultural Control', in *Spanish Cultural Studies* ed. by Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 196-201 (p.197). '[Abel] was killed by his elder brother Cain out of jealousy because God found Abel's offering of a lamb more acceptable than his offering of grain (Gen 4:1-8). The story probably reflects a feeling among traditionalists that the Jews had been corrupted by the agricultural civilisation of Canaan and were less acceptable to God than when they had been shepherds'. Pears Cyclopaedia (1997-1998), ed. by Christopher Cook (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. S4.

waiting for an amnesty that would put an end to their being in hiding, and when 'las tropas especiales recorrían el monte dispuestas a cortar de raíz cualquier intento' (p. 188). It is also a time of reflection: of deciding the degree of commitment that one is willing to lend to the revolutionary cause or whether abandon it altogether and try to lead an uninvolved life. Martín feels inclined to do the latter.

By the end of the period we see the villagers in the bar reflecting upon the changes in the government and the consequences of their policies:⁴⁸

-Ahora los buenos son los malos de ayer - solían comentar en el bar tras lanzar una ojeada a las noticias - . No hay peor burgués que el pobre en cuanto levanta la cabeza. El mundo va al revés.

Sin embargo, se decía Martín, no era difícil entender aquel cambio repentino de las cosas. En aquellos remotos caseríos, como el que el padre tuvo que vender para bajar a vivir a la villa ... (pp. 190-91)

The peasants feel betrayed by their political leaders because the devolution of land to the peasants has been halted. But Martín knows that the isolated peasants up in the mountains are still hoping for a redistribution of land and that no Republican government will ever meet these expectations. However, there is a shift here in the way that Martín perceives the situation. He now appears to be more understanding of the government and its policies. He is, after all, tired and disillusioned. His participation in the Asturian revolution seems to have taken its toll at a personal level. He is now willing to

⁴⁸ The government reshuffle of 6 May 1935 included more CEDA ministers, five out of thirteen. Stanley G. Payne, *La revolución española* (Barcelona: Argos Vergara, 1977), p. 172.

compromise. Meanwhile, the owner of the spa is becoming a *cacique*:

El afán, el trabajo de los otros, le hacían alzarse apenas
rompía la mañana para echar una ojeada a sus prados, a sus
tierras arrendadas, tomando nota de las paredes rotas, de sus
pasos y lindes. Las primeras nieves no impedían sus
continuos viajes a la capital en busca de notarios y abogados
con los que defender en un constante ir y venir de papeles que
sin duda escondían oscuros intereses. (p. 193)

This man's preoccupation with his property and rights reflects the changes that had been introduced in the law regarding the ownership of the land.⁴⁹ With the elections of February 1936 soon to take place the owner of the spa is trying to put pressure upon those dependent on him in order to influence their vote: '- Debe pensar - murmuraba Martín que esta vez también van a ganar. A la hora de la verdad veremos a quién votan. No todo se compra, aunque dicen por ahí que hasta se paga por matar' (p. 194). Also, attitudes are becoming radicalised and the peasants refuse to work for him: 'Era un odio [...] crecido poco a poco desde que le faltaron manos dispuestas a trabajar sus tierras o servicio en las Caldas con que sacar partido de ellas' (p. 250).

It is this worsening of the social and political circumstances that encourages Martín, once more, to commit himself to fighting with the guerrilla force. His friend Ventura is away in the town working for the

⁴⁹ 'El 25 de julio de 1935 fue aprobada una ley para retocar la de la reforma agraria. Se revocó la confiscación de grandes propiedades y la separación de las "tierras vecinales" cercanas a los pueblos para una expropiación más inmediata [...]. En lo sucesivo se permitió a los poseedores de grandes propiedades vender, dar a sus hijos o alterar de otro modo el status de tierra excedente que podría estar sujeta a expropiación [...] el equilibrio del poder en el campo se había inclinado claramente en dirección contraria. Los hacendados dominaban los organismos locales'. Stanley G. Payne, p. 173.

'Asociación', which is most likely the communist party, but Martín is in the village without work and therefore dependent economically on his wife, who is working at the spa for the *cacique*. Although the author is placing his main character in what, according to the villagers' gossip, is a love triangle, the author is not yet undermining the moral status of Martín, who, consumed by doubts, decides to confront his wife. She denies any infidelity (p. 247). The author is also conveying in this case how, in these remote areas of the country, the political aspects of life were so deeply intertwined personal matters that they made the future fratricidal tragedy almost unavoidable.

After the villagers celebrate the victory of the Frente Popular in 1936, the author once more points out how, in this isolated part of the country, history develops at a slow pace:

Mas aquella revolución tan temida y esperada sólo llegaba
sobre el papel que hablaba de presos libres y tierras yermas
que en el Sur ocupaban cuadrillas de improvisados
labradores.

Allí, en cambio, cada cual trabaja la suya. Todo tenía
su dueño al pie. (p. 255)

It is Ventura, the revolutionary hero of the novel, who voices the ever-present issue that successive governments failed to solve and which was the biggest threat to the rich, the redistribution of land: 'Mientras la tierra esté en las mismas manos, nadie puede decir que adelantamos algo' (p. 256).

We next hear of the military uprising and it is soon noted that the peasants felt hopeful at that stage: 'De ahora en adelante -- explicaba Ventura -- todo será de todos' (p. 276). However, the language used to describe the war in this area leaves the reader in no doubt that although the revolutionary ideal was worth fighting for, the war itself was simply a

massacre of the under-equipped peasants: 'La Comisión Gestora montó una comandancia encargada de defender un frente que no existía, pero que mantenía un centinela en la ermita. Era un guardia inútil' (p. 276). But the author does not elaborate further on the historical events, noting: 'Mas la guerra en el fondo del valle se redujo a unas cuantas escaramuzas en las que Ventura y los suyos llevaron la peor parte' (p. 279).

Martín, who is saved because his wife is on good terms with the owner of the spa, feels humiliated. It is then that the image of the wheel appears, as it had in *Los bravos*, to symbolise submission: 'Su destino, como el de Marian, quedaba al fin a merced de aquel aval que ahora pesaba como una espada sobre sus cabezas. Tal como adivinaba había entrado a formar parte de aquella rueda que, años atrás, a tantos unía a cambio de un modesto pasar' (p. 282). That these two characters feel, like the majority of the population, that their destiny is beyond their control is made clear: 'Ahora el trabajo de Marian [...] se había reducido a esperar también el final de la guerra [...] del que en cierto modo dependía su suerte' (p. 283).⁵⁰ And when in a grenade accident Martín loses part of one of his hands and is blinded, the physical handicap makes him even more dependent upon his wife, who has by now inherited some land from her boss. In the last scene Martín appears as a witness in the investigation of the murder of the owner of the spa and his final words, addressed to the judge, are symptomatic of his submissive attitude towards the new regime: 'Usted me llamó y aquí estoy; lo que conté es la pura verdad. No sé si servirá o no, pero yo cumplí como debía. A sus órdenes' (p. 289).

⁵⁰ The author has indicated that he and those around him experienced similar feelings during the war: 'Lo que recuerdo es una inseguridad constante en las personas que me rodeaban; se sabía que el destino de la familia y el tuyo iban unidos a la parte que ganara [...] la guerra nos trajo una vaga sensación de miedo y humillación [...]. Era una guerra en la que nada contábamos, salvo, claro está, para sufrir las consecuencias.' J. Rodríguez Padrón, *Jesús Fernández Santos*, pp. 11-12.

Within this context of power relationships, and particularly in the confrontation between the *cacique* and the peasants, the horses of Leon acquire a fictional mythological status within the novel. This reflects the real-life mythological status of the native horses. The doctor who works at the spa is used by the author to provide the reader with the information required to appreciate this. The horses were regarded as gods by the Romans and archaeological remains of burials have been found (pp. 19-20). The novel reflects how the locals consider them as a symbol of their pride in their land, to the point of challenging the decision taken by the owner of the spa, who also owns a large herd, to mix them with foreign breeds to encourage meat production. This *cacique* uses the issue of the horses as a way of imposing his will on the villagers. The villagers take up the challenge and ‘su decisión alzó un debate tan recio y encendido, que fue preciso llamar a concejo’ (p. 192). The villagers argue that the short-term benefits would have negative consequences in the long term: ‘A la larga acabarían debilitándose, no aguantarían la vida del monte ni la falta de pasto, ni el frío, ni la sequía’ (pp. 58-59).

Furthermore, the horses mirror the villagers, *los bravos*, in their resilience. It is not surprising, then, that the author creates a metaphor in the title based upon these creatures. The metaphor is twofold. On the one hand, the *jinetes* are the Asturian revolutionaries that cross the frontier between the two regions, spreading their ideology. They are the ones referred to at the end: ‘Los jinetes del alba no cruzan ya los pasos de la sierra’ (p. 289). Also, the symbol of the new dawn, the *alba*, was fashionable both on the right and left of the political spectrum from the early 1930s to the 1940s.⁵¹ On the other hand, the riders seen at the opening of the novel evoke those of the Apocalypse, as

⁵¹ Juan Carlos Ballesta, *Las estrategias de la imaginación: Utopías literarias y retórica política bajo el franquismo* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1994), pp. 21-54.

in the film version of *Los cuatro jinetes del apocalipsis*. And since in the story told at the beginning of the narrative, the third rider, death, is holding his fist up threatening the sky 'el postrero, sin rostro ni color, blandía un puño amenazando al cielo' (p. 9), one interpretation is that this could symbolize communism. As we have seen, the Communist party, the *Asociación*, is portrayed by Fernández Santos as split by sectarian infighting, to the point of sacrificing its members, as Ventura's stay in jail illustrates. María Dolores de Asís believes that the three riders mentioned at the beginning of the novel are an omen of the Civil War.⁵²

THE INNER WORLD: SEX AND POWER

Fernández Santos also explores the phenomenon of power through the sexual liaisons between the *cacique* and his sister, the owners of the spa, and the two main characters, Marian and Martín, their employees. The main characters' evolving sexual relationship reflects their political attitudes. A third-person narrator provides the reader with a detailed account of the thought processes of both Martín and Marian, as they develop their political consciousness during the three years of political turmoil.

From the beginning, Martín describes his relationship with his *ama* as one where he is 'esclavo de sus juegos' (p. 21). Martín's employer, on the other hand, has no qualms about saying that it is her privilege to expect such favours: '-¿Te cansaste de mí? Pues has de saber que más de uno y de dos tengo yo dispuestos a servirme antes que tú' (p. 31). Indeed, she is described as a predator who swoops 'sobre su presa bebiendo hasta saciarse con brío' (p. 32). Martín complies, and his repayment comes in the shape of much needed

⁵² María Dolores de Asís, *Última hora de la novela en España*, Ediciones de la Universidad Complutense. 2nd edn rev. (Madrid: Eudema, 1992), p. 127.

nourishing soup. The degree of the employer's exploitation seems heightened, in this case, by the fact that Martín is physically weak and came to the spa to recover from a bone complaint. That the owner of the spa considers the bodies of her employees and their sexuality as her possessions is made even clearer when she makes a deduction, as if claiming her commission, from the salaries of those female employees that have offered sex in return for money to some of the clients of the spa. This is 'una buena propina que el ama consideraba parte del sueldo' (p. 72).

Fernández Santos attempts to analyse power relationships through the romantic liaison between Marian and her boss at the spa during the historical process through which they live. The sexual intrigue in the plot rests upon a powerful male and a reluctant and powerless female. It is unfortunate that the chaotic development of this thread of the plot, together with the style used, presents the theme of power in a way that allows a superficial reading. There is a risk of dismissing this section as both an over sentimental account of the terrible lives that these peasants led, and as a commercial story of a love triangle. This is partly due to the fact that passages with a strong realistic tone, such as those concerning Marian's sister, alternate with others concerning Marian's sentimental life -- where the tone and style are reminiscent of the *novela rosa*. Whether or not Marian is willing to provide sexual favours is never revealed to the reader. However, despite its failings, the theme of power is one of the foundations of the novel's structure.

Fernández Santos focuses upon the ordinary, apolitical people that make up the majority of the population. What the author is trying to convey, through Marian, is the sense of hopelessness that the ordinary citizen, of humble origins and with no political orientation, feels within the social system due to a lack of opportunities. Marian has nobody to turn to. It is in this context that the author condemns the Catholic Church as an organisation that reinforces the ills of society. As a child Marian had first-hand experience of

the charitable work carried out by the Church. She is sent to a school run by nuns recommended by the owner of the spa, who gives donations for its maintenance. There, the social structure is clearly reflected with those who do not pay carrying out manual work and never mixing with the ones who pay a fee (pp. 74-77). Thus, even as a child, Marian feels alienated in this religious institution, the falseness of which is reflected in her reaction to and rejection of the figure of Christ (pp. 74-75). Taking into account the above, it is then significant that at two crucial stages of the plot development Marian encounters Raquel, the daughter of the owners of the mill who is a member of the Protestant community based in the village. This young girl relies both on the financial support and the network of acquaintances and friends within the Protestant community to help her achieve her professional goal of becoming a nurse. Marian reflects upon the unfairness of their different destinies: 'A Marian le parecía injusto. Bendita Raquel. Tan sólo por ser protestante se le brindaba una oportunidad que ella, en cambio, perseguía en vano' (p. 163).

Marian's perception of the Protestant community is that of a group whose members may be united in their religious belief, but which in practice functions more like a lay association protecting the personal interests of its members. At the time of the onset of the Civil War the villagers will criticize this community for not taking sides. Later on in the narrative, it is a chance encounter with Raquel, who is now training in a hospital in Madrid 'gracias a la recomendación de los amigos' (p. 221), that makes Marian think of her boss as a way out of poverty. She dreams of him: 'Aquella noche vio en sueños al amo sobre su lecho blando, con los ojos cerrados y un palpitante corazón en sus manos que la ofrecía bañándola toda de sangre' (p. 222). The imagery used echoes the popular religious iconography of the figure of Jesus with an open heart. If the boss has replaced Jesus, then the Freudian dream can be interpreted along the lines that Marian is now expecting to receive from her boss the protection that she never got from the Catholic Church when she

was sent to the boarding school run by nuns. The imagery and interpretation of the dream complement another powerful image of Marian feeling alienated from the Church and rejecting the crucifix in the dormitory when she was at the boarding school: 'Lo que más le asustaba [...] era el gran Cristo que a la noche parecía dispuesto a abrazarlas en la penumbra fría de la alcoba. Cuando se hacía el silencio [...] aquella falsa carne parecía viva, taladrada por los clavos enormes [...] y [...] su corona de espinas. Por ello apresuraba el paso cada vez que se cruzaba con su sombra' (pp. 74-75). Henceforth, Marian will use her boss's sexual desire to establish herself as the manager of Las Caldas.

Until the failure of the revolution of 1934, Marian represents women with a strong sense of dignity who aspire to earn a living from their work. After the failure of the revolution she becomes a more accommodating type. The stages of this evolution correlate with the political events that take place in the country. It is not coincidental that her boss first approaches her in the spring of 1935, after the Revolution of October 1934 had failed. The consequences for the landless villagers of Las Caldas are accordingly grim, as they are once more isolated and in the hands of the owner of the one industry where they can find employment: 'Tal y como la madre aconsejaba. "Debes obedecerle en todo - escribía a Marian en una de sus cartas, aludiendo al nuevo amo - ; la señora le habló de ti y a poco que te portes bien, seguro que te nombran gobernanta"' (pp. 125-26). Now Marian is standing on her own two feet for the first time in her life, with her lover away with the guerrilla fighters and her mother living in the town. It is then, once the spa closes at the end of the summer, that Marian's boss calls her into his office to offer her employment as his housemaid and suggest sexual involvement. In love with Martín, Marian refuses to consider such an arrangement and, to avoid it, she decides to move to the town to work as the maid of one of the prostitutes who visits the boss occasionally, Doña Elvira. When Marian's second encounter with her boss takes place, it is clear that Marian sees him as her way out of

poverty. She suspects that what he wants from her is: 'Lograr conseguir aquello que en las Caldas no pudo conseguir' (p. 159).

After the failed revolution of 1934, the owner of the spa tries to get the villagers to become dependent upon him by offering them loans to survive the winter. We are presented here with the making of a future *cacique* worried about the outcome of the next general election. Marian's social awareness allows her to recognize this man's desire to control everybody in the village with his offer of employment: 'Y Marian [...], se preguntaba a poco si aquel afán de dominar a los demás no habría renacido con su imprevista presencia aquella mañana'(p. 197). The shifting of attitude in the personal sphere is intertwined with the shifting of perception of what life has to offer and, in the changing political circumstances, some, in order to survive, will adjust their moral stance to the grim reality of the situation. Marian is desperately seeking economic security and she is beginning to question her own attitude towards her boss's sexual advances: 'Tal vez ella misma se deseaba víctima o presa de quien Martín desdeñaba o temía' (p. 197). It is at this point in the historical process that Marian and Martín begin to drift apart, adopting different attitudes. Marian is now thinking in terms of her own individual destiny, whilst Martín, like his friend Ventura, is still committed to the dream of a better life for the community: 'Marian sólo deseaba quedarse a solas [...], incluso de Martín, que sólo piensa ya en ese camino a cuyo fin Ventura tal vez trabaja, a favor de ese mundo distinto que supone su razón de ser' (p. 20). Their sexual relationship reflects the ideological drift: 'Así, solos los dos, se hallan náufragos en la cama, que ahora apaga todo apetito, sus cuerpos no se buscan como antes' (p. 210).

As the Civil War approaches, Marian and her boss are becoming closer: 'El tiempo, aquel nuevo trabajo, se diría que la hace madurar día a día. Ahora ya no huye como en aquel primer encuentro, ni tampoco desvía la mirada cuando la suya se desliza a lo largo de su cuerpo, incluso cuando los

dos se rozan en el recodo angosto del pasillo' (p. 240). Here, there is undoubtedly irony in the use of *madurar*. Meanwhile, Martín grows suspicious and gossip in the tavern abounds. More than his reputation or the possibility of being betrayed by his partner, what is really worrying Martín is that he understands such a relationship in terms of the power that it will give the owner of the spa over him and his wife. He recalls his own sexual experience with the *ama* when he tries to surprise the supposed lovers in Las Caldas by getting into the house without being noticed, and when he confronts his wife about it, she denies the affair.

It is when the government loses the election to the coalition of the Frente Popular and the newspapers 'anunciaban la fuga sucesiva de mando y gobernadores' (p. 253), that the owner of the spa confides in Marian that he trusts her and wishes to put the title deeds of his property in her name. Marian once more links sexual desire with power: 'Nunca Marian sabía si lo tenía decidido o hablaba por hablar, por sentirla más cerca cada día' (p. 255). But the boss's idea is clear: 'Tampoco sería mala solución. Cuando esto pase me las devuelves, y en paz' (p. 255). She is looking for a protector, while he is looking for an ally to protect his financial interest. We are never told whether a sexual liaison takes place. What is of relevance here is that, at this stage in the novel, Marian represents the highly individualistic approach to life: those who through their harsh experiences decide to associate themselves with those in power instead of fighting them.

Near the end of the novel, the narrator describes how Marian feels about herself: 'En ocasiones se sentía inocente, otras frío verdugo de sí misma, incapaz de ir más allá de su propia ambición' (p. 272). We find Marian listening to the radio, not to find out what is going on in the country, but to escape from reality, falling asleep and taking refuge in her dreams. And when the radio stops, her busy life protects her from facing herself: 'Así los días transcurrían defendida del mundo y de sí misma, con Ventura y Martín

unidos como antaño, siempre a la espera de noticias, imaginando un porvenir que nunca parecía al alcance de sus manos' (p. 272). Previously, Marian had expressed the thought that history does not mean progress, but rather a cyclical process of constant repetition of historical events of the same nature: 'Marian se preguntaba si aquella guerra no sería la de siempre a través de los siglos [...] nuevos pobres contra los privilegios de otros ricos. A fin de cuentas, según opinaba el doctor [...] todo se repetía' (p. 148). Care is needed when interpreting this because one could conclude, as Ramón Jiménez does, that Marian reflects Fernández Santos's own understanding of the historical process of the country.⁵³ I doubt this very much. Marian is not portrayed in the novel as the author's heroine, nor his mouthpiece. On the contrary, she is a negative role model, who embodies an acerbic individualism that the author condemns. Her pessimistic perception of history stems from her own political stance, from her lack of faith in the possibility of changing the political system, which stems from her own lack of solidarity with others.

However, the narrator fails to convey her ambivalent attitude in terms of her personal ethical dilemma by not providing insights into her consciousness, choosing instead to describe her reactions to her boss in the *novela rosa* mode. By doing this he deprives the character of her sense of dignity. I do not think that he uses the *novela rosa* mode in an ironic way to reveal Marian as duplicitous, because apart from the one scene mentioned there is no irony. It is possible that Fernández Santos may have been seeking erotic titillation, which cheapens his otherwise genuine sympathy for women. Prostitution is also studied in this novel within the context of power relationships. It is presented as a widespread practice among peasant girls, who engage in it as an extra source of income. Thus, the house of Doña

⁵³ See R. Jiménez, pp. 247-48.

Elvira in the town gets its steady supply of young girls from the nearby villages. There, they work as maids, but are expected to entertain clients.

There is no attempt in this novel to glamorise or idealize the relationships among the members of the working class. On the contrary, it is made clear that the harsh conditions they live in allow no room for loving feelings or a sense of responsibility for the young or weaker ones. Several examples are provided. As was mentioned earlier, Marian finds herself standing on her own two feet, with her mother refusing to help her once she has moved to live in the town (p.133). Marian's mother also has a mentally retarded daughter whom she keeps in the cellar because she does not want to be made the object of her neighbours' pity. Eventually this girl is gang-raped by the villagers and dies, forgotten by mother and sister, in a charitable institution. Elsewhere in the narrative, Martín fails to get any help from his family when he writes to them after the spa closes in the autumn and he is unwell, and receives no reply to his letter. And when, after years of not seeing them, he pays them a visit, they all feel like strangers. Yet, there are a few instances provided in the novel of good comradeship within the community: when the sheep falls down the mountain they all share the meat and the poorer people help themselves first; at the village canteen people discuss political events and their repercussions, and they also discuss the implications of accepting loans from the owner of the spa: ' - Antes muerto que pedirle un duro' (p.192).

CONCLUSION

In terms of form, *Los bravos* and *Los jinetes del alba* are two very different novels that reflect the evolution of Fernández Santos's narrative from the Social Realism mode to his later experimental exercises with literature. Overall, *Los bravos* was written in the 'objectivistic' manner that marked much of the

literature of the 1950s. It also contains symbols, mainly the wheel, as a means of conveying the basic and fundamental message of oppression, typical of an era marked by the lack of freedom of speech. Nonetheless, it deviates from the canon. It includes in free indirect discourse the thoughts of the main characters and above all it engages the reader in an interactive response to the text, so that the interpretation of it relies upon a particular interpretation of the epigraph. This ambiguity also applies to the interpretation of the meaning of the title. Both features: the inclusion of the main characters' inner life, their consciousness, and the inclusion of additional texts like the epigraph, will become two major characteristics of future works.

When thirty years later, in 1984, almost a decade after the death of Franco and enjoying the freedom of expression of a young democracy, Fernández Santos goes back to the Civil War as a theme, he writes an epic novel that is largely about the Civil War itself. *Los jinetes del alba* is a historical novel that deals with the recent past in the manner of a substantial historical melodrama. Yet, the project is probably too ambitious, and fails to amalgamate in a successful way the many components of the narrative. But the novel does have its strengths. In terms of content it offers a valuable historical insight into the period and an insight into the psychology of certain types of people at this time. And a particular artistic achievement is the imagery deployed, which in the case of the horses gives the novel the ambiance of a mythological universe.

At that stage of his career, Fernández Santos was keen to experiment with imagery and this feature of the narrative helps to create a cohesive fictional world shared by the rural setting of these two novels, a setting also common to *La que no tiene nombre*. In *Los jinetes del alba*, the pride that the inhabitants have in their land is illustrated. Although they recognize that Nature poses real difficulties to economic development they never blame the land for being the main cause of their economic struggle, which they blame

on political causes.

In terms of imagery, he pays tribute to the natural resources of the land by using water for one of his main images. Water, both as a life-giving natural element and as an element of destruction, is present in both novels. In *Los bravos* the river is a provider of a much needed source of food, but reflecting the repressive political situation, the river becomes the site for a confrontation between the forces of the law and an impoverished peasant who fishes illegally. In *Los jinetes del alba*, before the outbreak of the Civil War, water is presented in a positive light as a valued source of health that can also lead to wealth through the spa. The spa illustrates the problems of land ownership that led to the revolution of 1934, in that it benefited just the one family and not the whole community: 'El hombre sin codicia no se tiene por hombre, y un nuevo modo de medrar vino a anidar [...] aunque esta vez sólo beneficiara a una familia' (p. 10). While the water used by the spa could be used to irrigate the agricultural land, due to the existing land ownership laws it can be appropriated by the owners of the land through which it flows for their exclusive use, creating or contributing to the droughts. But despite the summer droughts the peasants' faith in their land is touching: 'Mas el agua no se agotaba; el baño de la infanta mantenía vivo su canal' (p. 19).

However, after the Civil War, water becomes an element of destruction in the hands of the new regime. In *Los bravos*, as we have seen, Lake Isoba is used by the regime as a tool for religious propaganda, but for the villagers, who refuse to forget the past, the lake is also a reminder of the atrocities of the war. In *Los jinetes del alba*, the economic and geographical reasons for choosing the village as the location for a new reservoir are not mentioned. However, the narrator cleverly hints at political punishment by the new regime as a reason by allowing Martín, his antihero, to mention water as an agent that will erase the village and its recent rebellious stance from history: 'Ahora puede que el agua lo borre todo' (p. 289). This is an aspect particularly dear to Fernández

Santos for whom writing novels about the Civil War is a way of recovering for the collective memory those aspects of the past that the regime tried to confine to oblivion. The tragic tone of the short epilogue leaves no doubt about the author's feeling of sorrow for such destruction. The water of the reservoir is not presented as a life-giving element that will guarantee the fertility of the land, putting an end to the threat of drought. On the contrary, it is lifeless: 'Un gran espejo de agua estancada y sucia' (p. 289). Furthermore, the peaceful surface of the reservoir, like the whole country, rests upon such destruction: 'La brisa anima en las ventanas algas y mimbres que rizan la tranquila superficie' (p. 289). The humiliation of the village as a community could not be greater, because if as proud poor peasants they fought for the Republic in the hope that a new political system would bring about a new society where they could earn a living through their work, and with dignity, now in Franco's new society the vestiges of their Republican past have been reduced to a mere tourist attraction, the most profitable industry developed by Franco: 'El tiempo de sequía da cita en torno a multitud de turistas que miran el fondo de limo y ramas donde aún pueden adivinar las ruinas perdidas de las Caldas' (p. 289).

Also, in *Los jinetes del alba* Fernández Santos mocks the use of religion and religious imagery by the new regime with his earthy sense of humour. When digging to rebuild the church, Martín finds the sculpture of the *infanta*, but since nobody recognises her she is soon believed to be a God-sent image to protect them all in future and happier years. The bishop names her with the magnificent name of 'Nuestra Señora de la Buena Muerte'. The irony of the situation is, of course, that the *infanta* is the beloved and respected iconic figure of a local historical figure who gained the noble status of *hidalguía* for all the inhabitants of the area. In these new times, however: 'La infanta disfrazada de Virgen, mira y calla en torno' (p. 289). This is a humorous and perverse travesty of reality. As we shall see in *La que no tiene nombre*,

Fernández Santos will rehabilitate this historical figure.

Los bravos and *Los jinetes del alba* are complementary novels in another way. In the 1950s, as a writer critical of the dictatorship, Fernández Santos revealed the contradictions in the regime's discourse that tried to justify the establishment of the dictatorial regime and its subsequent treatment of the population as victors and defeated, on the basis of the concept of man as essence. In the 1980s, Fernández Santos takes it upon himself to recover for the collective memory the Civil War (a period whose interpretation had been manipulated by the regime), providing a new version of it. The ideological basis of *Los bravos* and *Los jinetes del alba* is the argument that the Civil War was a war fought on the grounds of a social class struggle whose aim was the readjustment of the balance of power. This is implicit in *Los bravos* and explicit in *Los jinetes del alba*. But if in *Los bravos* Fernández Santos reveals the fallacy of the myths used by the regime, in *Los jinetes del alba* he reveals the fallacy of the myth of the political Left, that in the Civil War a united political Left led the passionate politicised masses in the fight for a just political and social system.

It is in terms of deconstructing political myths that Barthes's ideas are useful in the interpretation of these two novels. These two complementary works serve as examples of the two main premises in Barthes's notion that:

In passing from history to nature, myth acts economically: it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essence, it does away with all dialectics, with any going back beyond what is immediately visible, it organizes a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth, a world wide open and wallowing in the evident, it establishes a blissful clarity: things appear to mean

something by themselves.⁵⁴

This is particularly relevant in the case of *Los bravos*, where Fernández Santos sets out at the beginning, as the epigraph indicates, to expose the vested interest of the regime in reinforcing the notion of man as essence. This concept of essence replaces the concept of society as social classes with different interests and presents it as a homogeneous group, the nation, which in the regime's rhetoric was known as 'una unidad de destino en lo universal'.⁵⁵ The novel denounces this 'false Nature' created by the regime whereby any social interaction is explained in terms of unchangeable human qualities. Fernández Santos unveils the profound alienation that takes place if such a concept of society is accepted.⁵⁶ Instead, through 'los bravos' the author reminds the reader that the defeated Republicans hold a different view of society, that they reject the myth of social cohesion propagated by the regime and have not forgotten the historical division of society into social classes, as well as the new regime's division between victors and defeated.

If the rhetoric of the regime did away with dialectics, when in 1984 Fernández Santos published *Los jinetes del alba*, he brought dialectics to the fore as the principle upon which to understand the historical process, presenting

⁵⁴ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*. Trans. by Annette Lavers (London: Vintage, 1993), p. 143.

⁵⁵ 'The bourgeoisie become absorbed into an amorphous universe, whose sole inhabitant is Eternal Man, who is neither proletarian nor bourgeois.' Also: 'Politically, the haemorrhage of the name "bourgeois" is effected through the idea of nation [...] even if it has, in order to do so, to exclude from it the elements which it decides are alien (the Communist). This planned syncretism allows the bourgeoisie to attract the numerical support of its temporary allies, all the intermediate, therefore "shapeless" classes.' Barthes, pp. 140, and 138-39.

⁵⁶ Fernández Santos is attempting to perform the task that Barthes describes as the objective of a mythologist: 'Mythology [...] attempts to find again under the assumed innocence of the most unsophisticated relationships, the profound alienation which this innocence is meant to make one accept. The unveiling which it carries out is therefore a political act: founded on a responsible idea of language, mythology thereby postulates the freedom of the latter.' Barthes, p. 156

the Civil War as a class struggle. Not only that, but he presents the class struggle from the point of view of the landless peasants, reproducing their way of thinking and their language. In this sense this novel could be regarded as an example of what Barthes considers to be writing as a political act when he observes:

Whenever man speaks in order to transform reality and no longer to preserve it as an image, [...] myth is impossible [...]. Revolution is defined as a cathartic act meant to reveal the political load of the world: it makes the world; and its language, all of it, is functionally absorbed in this making. It is because it generates speech which is fully, that is to say initially and finally, political, and not like myth, speech that is initially political and finally natural, that Revolution excludes myth. (p. 146)

Through the characters of Martín and Ventura, Fernández Santos reveals the political perspective of the landless Republicans, a suppressed voice during the regime. But the author does not avoid reflecting the political compromises that the elected Republicans had to make, or the divisions of the Left as a political grouping during the military confrontation. Thus, Fernández Santos does not glorify the Republicans. Neither does he glorify the popular struggle, since Martín is no hero.

In *Los jinetes del alba* the language used by Martín and Ventura is explanatory, it puts forward arguments and reasons, it reflects the thought processes of the characters, and implicitly of the social group they belong to. In contrast, the language used by the characters that represent the political establishment is stultified: it is the language of proverbs. The two elderly gentlemen at the spa exemplify this use of language. They also exemplify how,

by avoiding explaining history and society in terms of class struggle, it excuses them from taking responsibility for their own actions.⁵⁷ It presents, instead, the prevailing social and political order as the 'natural one', which as Barthes observes is the biggest myth ever used by a political regime: 'Myth hides nothing and flaunts nothing: it distorts; myth is neither a lie nor a confession: it is an inflexion [...] driven to having either to unveil or to liquidate the concept, it will *naturalize* it' (p. 129).

⁵⁷ 'Myths tend towards proverbs [...]. Bourgeois aphorisms [...] belong to metalanguage [...]. Their classical form is the maxim. Here the statement is no longer directed towards a world to be made; it must overlay one which is already made, bury the traces of this production under a self-evident appearance of eternity: it is a counter-explanation, the decorous equivalent of a tautology [...]. The foundation of the bourgeois statement of fact is *common sense*, that is, truth when it stops on the arbitrary order of him who speaks it'. Barthes, pp. 154-55. Also: 'This miraculous evaporation of history is another form of a concept common to most bourgeois myths: the irresponsibility of man.' Barthes, p.151

CHAPTER 2

THE REGIME YEARS AND THE POST-FRANCO PERIOD: *EL HOMBRE DE LOS SANTOS* AND *BALADA DE AMOR Y SOLEDAD*

In the previous chapter, I have outlined how a general political conclusion could be discerned in both novels. My reading of *Los jinetes del alba* is that, in the Spain of the 1930s, it was unrealistic for the general population to hope for a drastic change to the social class system and its economic foundations to come from above, from those working within the political system. The reason for this was also examined: the unwillingness of the ruling class to share their power, which led to the failure of the political representatives of the masses in the Republican government to gain support for the implementation of reforms. This brought about the subsequent polarisation in politics that resulted in the Civil War. I also suggested that in *Los bravos*, set during the dictatorship, the case was made for the need for a change in social relationships, both from the perspective of a potential elite and from the grassroots. Throughout the novel, the significant impact that an individual who breaks away from the restrictive code regulating personal and social relationships could have on the group as a whole is hinted at. The implication here is that a change in the social system could be brought about by the actions of an individual.

The role of the individual in the changing of society is explored in *El*

hombre de los santos (1969) and *Balada de amor y soledad* (1987). In these novels, the themes of the personal as political and the need to develop social awareness are developed. What is emphasised is that the individual cannot afford to regard his actions as only affecting the isolated context of his private life in a constantly changing country where the power structure in society is shifting. As DiNubila states, *El hombre de los santos* belongs to a new type of social novel, an outgrowth of the social novel called the 'structural novel' by Sobejano, 'critical or dialectic realism' by Ramón Buckley, José Ortega and José Corrales Egea, and 'whose intention it is to analyse the function carried by the individual within the social context. Indeed, social problems continue to figure prominently, but only as a point of departure in the individual's search for his unique identity within collective Spanish society'.⁵⁸ In the two novels to be discussed here much attention and space is dedicated to the thought processes and feelings of the main characters, since the tone of these novels is more intimate than the previous ones.⁵⁹ The theme of the alienation of the individual as a result of his unwillingness to regard his personal actions in a broader context dominates these two works and the two main characters illustrate this as negative role models.⁶⁰ As with the doctor in *Los bravos*, the

⁵⁸ DiNubila, pp. 124-25.

⁵⁹ Ramón Buckley in 'Del realismo social al realismo dialéctico', *Ínsula*. No. 326 (January 1974), 1-4, attributes this new subjectivism as a means of conveying a vision of Spanish reality in the novel of the 1960s to the influence of *Tiempo de silencio*. DiNubila mentions other novels published between 1961-62 as influential: *El borrador* by Manuel San Martín, *Las llaves del infierno* by Carlos Roja, *Homenaje privado* by Andrés Bosch, and *Nos matarán jugando* by Manuel García Viñó, p. 124.

⁶⁰ Both DiNubila and Freedman consider alienation as the main theme in *El hombre de los santos*. DiNubila understands alienation as 'neither simply geographically-inspired or socially-engendered. Rather, it is precipitated either by a combination of these factors or merely by one of them', p. 131. He adds that: 'Emptiness, loneliness, incommunication, and tedium are both causes and manifestations of this estrangement', p. 132. On the other hand, different Spanish critics disagree as to what constitutes the main theme. For a summary see Ramón Jiménez, p.113. Ramón Jiménez himself describes the novel, and most of

characters in *El hombre de los santos* and *Balada de amor y soledad* are professional members of the bourgeoisie, a social class that could play a major role in the transformation of the country, but which declines to do so.

The novels provide relevant criticism for the readership of the time. Thus, in *El hombre de los santos*, written in the late 1960s when the autocratic Franco regime, in order to facilitate its integration in the European community, was under pressure both from outside and inside the country to implement internal reforms, the criticism was directed towards the collusion of two main institutions, the Church and the State, in the destruction of the artistic heritage of the country.⁶¹ In *Balada de amor y soledad*, written in the 1980s, in a new democratic political system, private companies and their destruction of the environment become the new target of criticism.

EL HOMBRE DE LOS SANTOS

The main character in this novel is an ordinary man, for whom work and marriage are the big events in his life. However, he is also representative of a middle class that, in order to safeguard its economic status and class interest, has turned a blind eye to the wrongdoings of the system. His inner world, his

Fernández Santos's works, as *barojianas*: 'El contrapunto de acciones, personajes, núcleos, situaciones y lenguajes, determinan unas fórmulas abiertas y una concepción barojiana del género', p. 112.

⁶¹ 'After 1960 the "liberalising" trends were reinforced by the exclusion of Spain from the new European Economic Community on account of the nature of its political regime. Spain made an application for membership in February 1962. Its rejection, confirmed later, emphasised the incompatibility of Franco's regime with the principles of liberal democracy which inspired the EEC. Thereafter the regime was obsessed with the idea of attaining that minimum of democratic credibility which might win it legitimacy in the eyes of Europe'. Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, *Spain: Dictatorship to Democracy*, 2nd edn (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), p. 175.

ethical principles and social consciousness are scrutinised by the narrator and play a major role in the development of the plot and the theme of the novel. At times the tone is sympathetic and understanding, but ultimately it is condemnatory.⁶² Indeed, the end of the novel is charged with sardonic irony and is the main key to deciphering the moral judgement that the author is making. It will be seen that irony is the most effective rhetorical device in the novel. Georgie P. Mubareck believes that in Fernández Santos's works 'an ironic view is expressed the more the characters themselves are unconscious of their existential dilemma. A sympathetic view is established as greater consciousness is reached' (p. 3). Consequently, with regard to *El hombre de los santos*, she observes that the use of irony decreases as Antonio gains a greater degree of consciousness. Mubareck observes that, in Chapter 1, 'Antonio's thoughts are ironically integrated to reveal that his present life lacks existential substance' (p. 36), so that the different modes of narration 'quoted monologue, narrated monologue, and third-person narrator enhance the irony of these meditations' (p. 37). In Chapters 2 and 3 'Antonio expresses an existential self-awareness', and his thoughts 'elicit a sympathetic response from the reader. Conversely, the more the thought is rendered through the omniscient third-person narrator, the greater the irony' (p. 47). In Chapters 4 and 5 irony 'gives way to the character's awareness of his loneliness as it becomes increasingly apparent to him' (p. 59). Mubareck, however, fails to

⁶² Most critics agree that Don Antonio is a representative member of the middle class. For instance, José Domingo in 'Análisis de una sociedad conformista', *Ínsula*, No. 274 (September 1969), 7, describes it in these terms: 'Si lo que pretendía Fernández Santos al crear su personaje era darnos un símbolo de cierto tipo de español actual: el español despolitizado, conformista, que acude a las urnas -- cuando se le llama a ellas -- por miedo a perder su estipendio laboral, no cabe duda de que su don Antonio es verídico'. Both José Domingo and Ramón Jiménez remark on the similarities of Don Antonio with Baroja's characters, in the latter's words they share two traits: 'El carácter abúlico y, especialmente, el solitario', p. 114.

point out the irony contained in the ending of the novel.

It is with a sense of irony that Fernández Santos chooses a wedding as the main factor that triggers the stream of consciousness that constitutes the narrative presentation of this novel, since marriage can be considered a bourgeois institution par excellence. The main character, Antonio Salazar, regards his own wedding as the defining moment of truth in his life, a fact that is revealed towards the end of the novel and represents its climax. Accordingly, the novel is structured around the wedding of Anita, Antonio's daughter, and his recollections of the circumstances surrounding his own marriage.⁶³ In Chapter 1, Antonio learns about Anita's planned wedding while working in a parish church near the Pyrenees; Chapter 2 covers the preparations for the event; Chapter 3 is the celebration itself; Chapter 4 finds Antonio working in the convent, and, as a short epilogue, in Chapter 5 we see Antonio's attempt to give himself a second chance with the love of his life, his cousin Tere. The time frame of the action in the novel is more or less a year, from the end of summer to the August of the following year. However, Antonio's memories span a period from before the Civil War to the 1960s.

THE INNER WORLD

The novel is a confession, a 'mea culpa' exercise. The plot itself lacks much eventful excitement, but the reader is offered a psychological adventure, a journey, not so much of self-discovery as of self-acceptance.⁶⁴ The moment of truth for Antonio is an act of humility: the acceptance of his own limitations

⁶³ For Georgie Mubareck 'the character creates a nexus in his unconscious confusion of these two weddings', p. 50.

⁶⁴ For a more detailed analysis of the structure of the novel based on stylistic resources see Ramón Jiménez Madrid, pp. 108-14, and Concha Alborg, pp. 128-30 and pp.169-76.

as a human being. After years of trying to justify his actions on the grounds of circumstances beyond his control, principally the war, Antonio finally admits that ultimately he has chosen his own path in life. The climax of the novel is this moment of truth, when Antonio confesses to himself that the principle underlying the crucial decisions he has made in his life had nothing to do with any personal ethics of behaviour, political ideals, or any other high objective in life, nor even had anything to do with trying to earn a living working at what he considers his vocation, painting, but was solely to achieve comfort. After the acknowledgement of his materialistic motivations for marrying a well-to-do woman, Carmen, he attempts to rebuild his life with the person he believes he has always been in love with, his cousin Tere, the young mistress of a Republican general during the war whose help he had asked for in order to avoid being sent to the front (p. 65).

However, it is the way that Antonio interacts with the outside world in the context of his circumstances, as well as the degree of his awareness of his own reactions and motivations, that form the backbone of the structure of the novel.⁶⁵ In the novel, the author offers a vivisection of the ethics of a middle-class man through his memories.

As in *Los bravos*, Fernández Santos again contrasts two opposite attitudes to life: one guided by instinctive empathy for human beings, the other by class interests. And, once again, the author uses sex as the means by which to expose these two contradictory sets of values in the main character. In *Los bravos*, although the doctor clings to values imparted by his profession (which are, in theory apolitical, since as a doctor he cannot be partisan as to

⁶⁵ DiNubila agrees with this point: 'In *El hombre de los santos*, rather than describing alienation as a static condition as in his earlier novels, Santos depicts it - by means of the characters' interactions and by their interior thoughts, reactions, memories and feelings -- as an operative force which grows throughout the novel', pp. 147-48.

whom he attends) and is not inclined to get involved in the affairs of others, his instinctive empathy leads him to be part of a community where he has to learn to judge the socio-political repercussions of his actions. Consequently, he learns to revise his own values when confronted with those of the villagers and tries to find a compromise that will allow some positive social interaction between all parties. He also discovers that sexual happiness leads to personal fulfilment and, having settled down with the *cacique*'s mistress, at the end of the novel he seems willing to discuss with his partner the terms of their relationship. In sharp contrast, Antonio Salazar, 'el hombre de los santos', chooses to follow his class interest, by marrying the woman who guarantees the continuation, or even betterment, of the material comfort in which he is used to living, and finds out later in life that this decision has contributed to his sense of estrangement.

Antonio is aware of the different materialistic values that he attaches to Carmen and Tere from the beginning of his relationship with them: 'Antonio se entretenía mirando [...] a Carmen y comparándola con Tere. Entornaba los ojos y se veía a sí mismo como un pacífico sultán en un palacio [...] con dos mujeres, una como la prima por la noche y la otra como Carmen para el día, como Carmen, que sin saber por qué le hacía sentirse más seguro que en las secretas visitas a casa de la tía.'⁶⁶ He is not, however, an unscrupulous, cold-blooded, ambitious person, and by benefiting from both women he loses his sense of dignity, of self-worth. In order to examine Antonio's inner world I will analyse his relationship with these two women.

Fernández Santos shows that in such a stultified society the middle class failed to develop a new concept of humankind or a new set of values upon which to base social relationships. By choosing a Republican family as

⁶⁶ Jesús Fernández Santos, *El hombre de los santos*. (Barcelona: Editorial Bruguera. 1981), p. 241. All further references to the novel will be to this edition and will be given in the text.

the main characters, Fernández Santos reinforces the point that social class is the main factor that shapes an individual's sense of selfhood. Antonio's sense of class precedes the war. His father, a council employee, is against his son pursuing a career in art and puts pressure on him to become an engineer in the hope that he can enjoy a good standard of living (p. 260).⁶⁷ We also learn that after his father's death in the war, his penniless mother tries hard to keep up appearances (p. 177). But it is Antonio himself, free of any direct parental influence, who shapes his own identity by seeking comfort at all cost. Antonio feels drawn to Carmen because in her family's home there do not seem to be any worries about the outcome of the war and there is a sense of security. This is in stark contrast to his own family's situation, where his Republican parents live in permanent panic as they listen to the news on the radio. Antonio is desperate to move away from the family home, to bid 'un adiós definitivo al piso' (p. 65). Antonio has not idealistic thoughts, even as a young man. In order to avoid being sent to the front, he volunteers to join the army in the hope that he can choose where he will be posted (p. 243).

The characters are not defined by their political ideology, but by their psychological make-up, as shaped by their social-class interests. Fernández Santos implicitly, but clearly, distinguishes between the Republican middle class as a political force fighting in the war in defence of liberal policies and social reforms that would eradicate the extreme abuses of the system, and the Republican middle class as a segment of the class system, keen to defend its own financial status. Antonio is never able to transcend this limitation. And, as a father, he contributes to the perpetuation of the status quo by not instilling

⁶⁷ DiNubila points out that alienation is present in Antonio's life since his youth, in his family's home: 'As his memories make clear, this condition has its origins in his youth during which no communication existed between him, his wearisome mother and his hostile sister', p. 133. Freedman also remarks that Antonio's father is a cold 'distant' man, p. 108.

new values regarding human relationships in his daughter. She, therefore, follows middle-class priorities when choosing a husband.⁶⁸ Antonio feels that Anita has made a mistake in marrying Agustín, referring to 'la trampa de Agustín' (p. 312). The reader is aware that Anita has married, not out of love, but in compliance with what society expects of a woman, that she marry well. As a justification for his lack of action, Antonio can only think of the weight of society in the shaping of family life, since it reinforces gender stereotyping and fosters difficulties in communication between father and daughter: 'Anita [...] se distanció a la sombra de la madre' (p. 47). As with other decisions, Antonio blames his wife.

As a young man, Antonio places great importance on social position and economic power as defining elements of an individual's worth. Through this character, Fernández Santos explores how, when cultural values impose a superficial notion of identity based on belonging to a social class, alienation results. It is the financial security that Carmen's family offers that makes her such a good future wife in Antonio's eyes.⁶⁹ But it is precisely this financial aspect of the relationship that makes him feel unworthy, since he has little to offer in return: 'El noviazgo [...] que a él le pareció algo raro, inmerecido, [...] sobre todo tratándose de una chica [...] con padres que, en el Madrid de entonces, vivían de las rentas' (p. 243). Feeling uncomfortable about it, he consequently gives up his studies to become a painter, his life's ambition: 'Y por hacer esa ayuda más decorosa, se dedicó a hacer copias' (p. 284). The

⁶⁸ As Janet Díaz notes: 'Personifying the conformist mentality, the Spaniard without political opinion or social conscience, lacking idealism in youth and maturity, Antonio is the opposite of existential engagement, what Unamuno called "un paseante de la vida."' Janet Díaz, '*El hombre de los santos*', *Hispania*, 53 (1970), 340-41 (p. 340).

⁶⁹ The character of Carmen is hardly developed in the novel since it is a symbol, and matters only for what she represents for her husband. In an interview with Concha Alborg, Jesús Fernández Santos stated that there was no reason within the novel for us to learn about her. Concha Alborg, p. 107.

purchase of a house that reflects the couple's middle-class status ties Antonio to work rather than studying in order to pay the bills (p. 284).

At this point in the novel, Antonio feels the same sense of inadequacy towards Tere as he does towards Carmen, because he has no potential benefits to bring to a relationship with either woman. Passing by the house where the general involved with Tere lives leaves him feeling diminished because he cannot offer her the comfort the general can as a result of his status: 'Lo que más odiaba era sentirse ajeno a ello [...] sentir que todo ese mundo de soldados y oficiales [...] giraba solo, por sí mismo, bien entramado pero lejos de él, encerrado en los cuatros lienzos de aquel muro' (p. 161).

The period before the wedding, while the house is being finished, is a period of self-doubt for Antonio during which he reflects upon the possible consequences of the marriage. It is then that he decides that he is unwilling to give up the financial gain that such a marriage would bring. This is the climax of the novel, the spelling out of the 'mea culpa': 'En realidad se daba cuenta entonces, casi tanto como ahora, las veces que se molestaba en recordarlo, de que Carmen era para él una defensa, igual que una muralla, frente a las tinieblas del piso de arriba, frente a aquel tiempo del hambre eterna y bolsillos vacíos, de tener que vender los libros del padre para comprar a veces materiales' (p. 285). This passage tells us, firstly, that Antonio deliberately avoids looking back at a past that he has kept repressed for most of his life: 'Las veces que se molestaba en recordarlo' (p.285), and secondly, and most importantly, that he knew perfectly well what he was doing when he decided to marry Carmen.

Having accepted responsibility for the shaping of his life, Antonio stops blaming his wife, whom he describes as the archetypal shallow middle-class type, a 'niña sin problemas' (p. 284). He then admits to his own shortcomings: 'Carmen era su vida y su defensa, y para prescindir de ella era preciso una razón más fuerte y distinta, capaz de transformarle, porque él

mismo con el tiempo, acabaría pareciéndose a ella' (p. 285). This process, he admits, does not take long: 'A la noche, pensando en la casa, reconocía que no era sincero. Aunque el chalet acabara devorándole también a él, le agradaba y eran tiempos difíciles -- decía --, tiempos de colas, de una guerra tras otra que acostumbró a la gente a preguntarse qué sucedería en un mes, en un año, a la semana siguiente. Y la casa, en cambio, creciendo como los niños, indiferente a todo, frente a la Casa de Campo, cerrada todavía' (pp. 285- 86). The house is Antonio's private cocoon, but the price he pays is the loss of his individual identity.⁷⁰

Antonio is aware that he has sold his soul. His sense of shame surfaces when he is with his friends from the Escuela de Bellas Artes, the ones that openly criticised him for giving up his aspirations in life (p. 285). His reaction is a defensive one: '¿Qué eran, a fin de cuentas? ¿Adónde llegarían? A nada, a pobres, a lo que son ahora. Estando ebrio era aquella su defensa, pero luego, de día, les admiraba más, se sentía -- se sentiría siempre ya -- incómodo ante ellos' (p. 287). This pricking of his conscience when confronted by his friends will happen again when, by chance, he encounters them in a gallery when he is with Anita. Her father's reaction is one of her most vivid memories and this episode is a time when she feels closest to him.

The narrator mentions the war as a major contributory factor in reinforcing, in Antonio's mind, the idea that social class is always the main element that defines an individual's position in any given circumstance. When he is in the army and Máximo teases him for being one of the general's protégés, he ponders: 'En eso sí sentía que la guerra le iba cambiando.[...] En

⁷⁰ David Herzberger sees the wall that separates Antonio's house from La Casa de Campo as a symbol of Antonio's isolation from the world around him. When the wall is demolished at the end of the novel, after his attempt to communicate with Tere, Antonio starts to see what there is around, p. 49. See also Constance Thomas Zahn, p. 186.

aquel momento no odiaba a Máximo ni a ella, ni a aquel desconocido general [...] La guerra era así, quien más podía, más alto llegaba, y él podía poco, su vida era eso: cavar, dormir, marchar' (p. 149). The brutalisation of human beings that the war brings about is well described in the scene where the soldiers scavenge amongst the remains of a German aircraft which still has its dead crew on board. This debasement of values, when survival becomes the only aim in life, will condition a whole generation, reduced during the war to: 'Acabar centrando todo el deseo en el apetito' (p. 239). Consequently, it comes as no surprise that, in the aftermath of the Civil War, Antonio will marry Carmen to safeguard his status.

The narrator also presents a circumstantial 'mitigating' historical context to help the reader understand the factors that contributed to Antonio's decision. His dependency upon Carmen's family will increase in the aftermath of the war since, as a member of a Republican family, he will find it almost impossible to find a job. He cannot count on the help of his deceased father's friends who have vanished from the public arena, and furthermore, as a Republican widow, his mother is now left with no income, not even a war widow's pension. It is only through his father-in-law's contacts that he gets his job as 'el hombre de los santos', removing frescoes from churches.

David Herzberger applies an existentialist approach to the novel, taking as a premise Sartre's philosophical tenet that: 'Man is nothing else but what he purposes, he exists only in so far as he realizes himself, he is therefore nothing else but the sum of his actions.'⁷¹ Herzberger, therefore, concludes that Antonio has never challenged the world to make it conform to his own vision, either in his aspirations to become a painter or in his decision to marry Carmen when he is in love with Tere. His life is consequently always what

⁷¹ *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, ed. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: World Publishing, 1956), p. 300. Cited by Herzberger, p. 123.

might have been.⁷²

It is important to note, however, the point that Fernández Santos is trying to make regarding Antonio: he is a character who can never transcend his psychological make-up, which is strongly underpinned by class values and, in a sense, class benefits. Antonio never has a 'vision' of life based upon new ideological principles. The character that Fernández Santos is painting cannot be construed as an existentialist hero or anti-hero. His stature is much more humble: in the review that Antonio is undertaking of his life, he never reaches a sufficient awakening of his consciousness to be able to perceive his life in existentialist terms. Fernández Santos explains Antonio's attitude in terms of the character refusing to accept his existential responsibility, accepting circumstances passively, and resisting communication with others.⁷³

Fernández Santos never presents alienation as an ontological condition, a metaphysical matter, as defined by Hegel. Like most Spanish writers, he favours the Marxist perspective that explains alienation in terms of social problems.⁷⁴

Fernández Santos stated that the theme of this novel was solitude: 'Yo me acuerdo que cuando empecé a escribir *El hombre de los santos*, yo quería escribir una novela sobre la libertad. Y no ha salido un libro sobre la libertad, sino sobre la soledad.'⁷⁵ But as we have seen, Fernández Santos does not define solitude as an intrinsic characteristic of human beings, but as the direct consequence of a soulless, rigid society that reduces everybody in all domains, even the most intimate, to people that simply perform functions and roles. The

⁷² Herzberger, p. 45.

⁷³ For an existentialist interpretation of this work, see Spencer Gordon Freedman and Daniel J. DiNubila.

⁷⁴ See Gemma Roberts, *Temas existenciales en la novela española de posguerra*. Serie Biblioteca Románica Hispánica (Madrid: Gredos, 1973), pp. 57, 58, 62.

⁷⁵ Interview in Madrid on 26 April 1978, between David Herzberger and Jesús Fernández Santos, *Anales de la Novela de Posguerra*, 3 (1978), 117-21 (p. 120).

family environment is the best example of this. As a mature man, the lack of human attachment, of human warmth, frightens Antonio. He has come to realise that this is what makes life worth living. An existential vacuum is reflected in the faces and expressions of several characters who have failed to cultivate a loving relationship with their relatives, mainly because they all had different social aspirations: the lonely priest's mother, as the priest follows his vocation against his father's wishes, but with the backing of his mother for whom the son's vocation is a way of venting her spleen on a husband she does not love; Antonio's mother, forever worrying about keeping up appearances; Carmen leading a shallow life by merely being what a woman of her social class is expected to be. Antonio himself wonders about his own appearance: 'Era un rostro vacío [...] parecido a otros muchos [...] quizá como el de él ahora mismo' (p. 288).

Empathy between human beings based on instinctual attraction is presented as the root of happiness and the defence against alienation. Antonio visits his cousin until he gets married, because somehow she makes him feel better: 'Y siempre las últimas palabras de Tere le llenaban de una esperanza alegre' (p. 181). However, he does not find a valid reason for never pursuing her. Among the many possible explanations he considers are the strict social moral values. Tere represents a sublimated possibility of sexual happiness but her pursuit would entail a challenge to society's morality that he is not willing to take on, because, after all, he shares those moral values: 'La palabra pecado siempre arrastra la imagen de la tía y la prima' (p. 62). Antonio's desire for Tere is also presented as a way of gaining self-knowledge through an awakening of social consciousness. Antonio sees himself reflected in Tere when he is feeling diminished by begging favours from her and her mother: first to avoid the front-line and, later, to be appointed assistant handyman in the workshop and thereby avoiding fighting altogether.

Whilst he is avoiding the hardship and dangers of the war, Tere

has become a kept woman. Antonio wonders whether she is prostituting herself of her own accord or whether she is under pressure from her mother to use her body to make a living in times of economic hardship (p. 151). He is certainly ashamed of begging favours: 'El cuerpo de la prima y su limosna le humillaban' (p. 154). It crosses his mind to: 'Abandonar, huir, ver la luz de la calle, respirar...olvidar aquel cuarto y a Tere y a la tía' (p. 153), but, in the end, he does not act with such dignity. Consequently, Tere's body serves as a reminder of his own ethical dilemma: 'El cuerpo de Tere capaz de destruirle en un instante, capaz de hacerle sentirse otra vez sucio, cobarde y solo' (pp. 160-61). Carmen, on the other hand, turns out to be the numbing of his desire and a reason for his alienation: 'Esa forma de hablar, mitad novela de amor y mitad clave [...] Esa forma de hablar que llega hasta la cama cuando dicen "Soy tuya", cuando ya no lo son y se está, de nuevo, separados, a mil años luz de distancia' (p. 158).

At Anita's wedding, when Antonio meets Tere again, she represents the possibility of communicating with another on an intimate level: 'Muy cerca sus ojos de los otros ojos, en ese juego que es como si quisiera leer allá dentro de las pupilas que le miran' (p.183). She also represents the joy of life: 'Esos ojos que tan bien recuerda y en donde para Antonio se resume ahora la fiesta toda'(p.195). Therefore, he considers giving the relationship a second chance: 'Retornar al pasado y las visitas' (p.196), and giving himself a second chance in life: 'Tere es joven aún [...] hace pensar a Antonio en lo que pudo ser su vida' (p. 195).

This notion of sexual desire as a vital force that helps human beings make sense of life had already been formulated by Jesús Fernández Santos in his first novel, *Los bravos*, when the doctor admits how he feels about Socorro. In *El hombre de los santos*, the idea is developed more explicitly through the relationship between Tere and Antonio. Their 'failure to fulfil desire' and the 'existential vacuum' are two notions that crop up together several times in the

novel. Indeed, their first encounter, an example of this, is a constant motif in Antonio's dreams. He dreams that he is in the lift going up to Tere's flat. The dream reflects his failure to establish contact as he misses Tere's floor and comes out through the roof instead, falling into a void, an existential void that is visually represented by the empty pavement opposite Tere's flat. In real life Antonio stands outside her flat on several occasions without daring to call in to see her. On the night of Anita's wedding, on the way home, as a result of the lightning, Antonio sees, for a second, the empty pavement opposite Tere's flat, the symbol of the void in his life. Aware of the failure to rekindle his love with Tere on their date at the end of the novel, Antonio feels the void again: 'Y de nuevo en el taxi, ese vacío' (p. 309). The theme of void is also present in his recollection of coming back from the war and being unable to establish contact with Carmen, his future wife, who is standing in the hall opening the door to her flat. This gap between them seems impossible for Antonio to erase from his memory: 'Ese umbral incapaz de traspasar, tras el cual hay tan sólo un grande y melancólico vacío' (p. 211). Most importantly though, he admits that, even if frustrated in real life, his desire for Tere has helped him to fill his sense of emptiness: 'Ese deseo que ha llenado tantas horas vacías, le ha ayudado a salvar, en cierto modo, tantas decepciones, que a ratos, cuando mira hacia atrás, le parece lo único que perdura desde el día en que la conoció, allá en el lejano cuarto de las lilas' (p. 313). Herzberger argues that Tere 'functions as a persistent fantasy that sustains Antonio over the years', a sublimation of desire that justifies, in Antonio's eyes, him remaining passive as regards his own marriage.⁷⁶

El hombre de los santos is a very well written novel where stylistic motifs underscore main themes and reinforce the structure of the novel. This is the

⁷⁶ Herzberger, p. 45.

case with a series of farewell scenes that, as Concha Alborg notes, represent 'la incomunicación entre seres que conocen sus sentimientos, pero no los pueden verbalizar'.⁷⁷ The scenes where Antonio says farewell to his daughter and to his friend Max are representative. Antonio feels that he has missed his chance to establish a genuine relationship with his daughter, but he is not capable of suggesting a last meeting before her wedding. When he is looking forward to meeting his friend Max, whom he has not seen since Max's daughter's wedding, Antonio has high personal expectations of the reunion, but his farewell on this much anticipated occasion leaves the reader in no doubt that they will never see each other again.

Antonio's last farewell is to Tere. He is presented as desperate to get back together with her, but lacking the ability to communicate emotions: 'Es preciso luchar, romper esa barrera, ese cauce que encarrilla su vida desde tanto tiempo, es preciso romper ese silencio de ahora, aunque sea con las necias palabras de siempre' (p. 312). However, with disguised irony, the narrator is keen to underline all the contradictions in Antonio's psyche. Thus, even though in the opening pages the narrator has described how this fortysomething man is starting to be sincere with himself, including being honest about his feelings towards his wife and family: 'Por primera vez no sintió ganas de volver, no sintió esa falsa añoranza' (p. 21), in the last few pages, the narrator presents Antonio as unable to transcend the social stereotypical parameters by which he himself judges people. Antonio focuses on Tere's possible reasons for not being interested in him in terms of her financial situation (she seems financially independent) and in terms of gender stereotypes: 'Una mujer sola, una mujer de su edad, soltera, sola, con algún

⁷⁷ Concha Alborg, p. 129. Alborg also remarks on the silent farewells from Antonio to Anita and viceversa as a stylistic motif that reinforces the structure of the novel: the first one takes place in the first part, the second in the second part, p. 128.

dinero. Una mujer así siempre quiere casarse. Una mujer así, aún con familia, flota, no es nadie, no pinta nada' (pp. 309-10). And his good intentions end farcically. At a romantic dinner, holding hands with Tere, and in the middle of a stereotypical lovers' dialogue (she seems to be waiting for his declaration of love), the narrator introduces Antonio's recollection of the sexist words he heard the day before his wedding: that all women are the same once you actually get them into bed, that the excitement comes beforehand as a man imagines what they are going to be like sexually. This is a dramatic ploy of great impact because it destroys all previous notions the reader may have of any moral stature or depth of character in Antonio.

As in *Los bravos*, Fernández Santos finishes the novel in an open-ended manner, leaving the reader unsure of the outcome. He also introduces, in the final pages, a passage the interpretation of which could drastically modify the reading of the whole novel. The final two lines include a pseudo-metaphysical thought: Antonio compares his life in solitude to the ephemeral life of a cigarette end. One could argue that the intention of the author is to reflect the humility of a man who realises both the insignificance of his life and his sense of desperation at being unable to transcend his limitations.⁷⁸ But it also could reflect an escapist reaction to those limitations. Antonio has come to realise that he needs to alter his conduct, that he needs to engage in dialogue with those he wants to interact with. But the end indicates that he has accepted failure in his attempt to communicate with Tere without questioning his own values.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Most critics interpret the end in this manner. See Herzberger, pp. 49-50.

⁷⁹ Mubareck agrees that 'Antonio's final thoughts reveal him to be incapable of creating an existence that is authentic; he compares his life to that of a flickering flame at the point of disappearing in the darkness', pp. 186-87.

THE OUTSIDE WORLD

The theme that the personal is political, that our personal actions do not take place in a vacuum but within a framework of power relationships, reappears in this novel in the shape of Antonio's relationship with his work -- very much in the way that, in *Los bravos*, the use of Pepe's car reinforced Don Prudencio's status in the community. Both Pepe and Antonio are representative of an individualistic approach to labour relationships. Antonio argues that he does what he is asked by his employer and that it is not for him to get involved when those affected by the removal of the frescoes do not receive what had been promised to them. This is illustrated in the case of the isolated priest. Antonio not only refuses to provide a copy of the frescoes until the ministry instructs him to do so, but he also refuses to support the priest with the ministry when the priest claims his long overdue copy. Once more, the author is conveying the message that society will only change if individuals make changes in their behaviour, in their relationships with others. This aspect of the novel has been neglected by critics.

I believe that Fernández Santos is commonly interpreted as an implicit social critic and, consequently, there is no analysis of the many aspects of society that the author explicitly criticises in his novels.⁸⁰ My argument is that the author is openly critical of society and that although, like other writers of his generation, he had to resort to stylistic subterfuges when the control of censorship was stringent in the 1950s, he became more explicit when censorship was less severe from the 1960s onwards. In my opinion, this can be seen in *El hombre de los santos*.

In *El hombre de los santos*, Jesús Fernández Santos presents a situation in

⁸⁰ For example DiNubila argues: 'Indeed, this work is distinct from the new Spanish novel in only two senses: (1) in that in the latter, social criticism is explicit (i.e. Martín Santos and Juan Goytisolo), while here, Fernández Santos remains an implicit social critic', p. 128.

which both Church and State collude in the destruction of the country's historical heritage. He is unequivocally outspoken regarding the flourishing trade in religious objects that end up in the hands of wealthy nationals or foreigners. In fact, the timing of the publication of the novel was most appropriate. 1962 saw the inauguration of the Second Vatican Council, which would revise the relationship between the Church and the political powers. In the novel, Fernández Santos highlights how in Spain the Church authorities not only remained close to the State, thereby going against the resolutions of the Second Vatican Council, but that the Church also showed a great degree of discrimination towards its own employees, reducing those considered of lesser importance to poverty.⁸¹ Due to abandonment by the Church authorities, the nuns in the convent presented in the novel see themselves forced to sell the pieces of furniture that they brought into the convent as dowries when they joined the order. As Mother Aurea states in her impressive monologue, being deprived of the most basic human comforts is not necessarily equated with serving God: 'Como si servir a Dios -- y que Él y la Virgen me perdonen --, fuera sólo eso.[...] Ahora son otros tiempos y no hay por qué sufrir tanto, hay que servir a Dios en su punto debido' (p. 246). In addition, she gets into trouble with the bishop for making the comment that:

⁸¹ 'When Pope John declared in his opening speech to the Council that the Church in the past had been harmed by too close a relationship with "the princes of this world"', his words were taken by many as the funeral oration for the Constantinian period of the Church. But this was to a certain extent wishful thinking: the universal Church was not able or willing to release itself entirely from the embrace of such princes, the ruling political regimes and the dominant economic elites [...]. Even so, Vatican II took a great step forward, both by distancing itself to a certain extent, when it declared that "economic development must be kept under the control of mankind. It must not be left to the sole judgment of a few men or groups possessing excessive economic power[...]", and by reconciling itself with what it called "socialisation", some form of "Christian socialism", as opposed to "really existing" that is, Soviet-type socialism.' Audrey Brassloff, *Religion and Politics in Spain: The Spanish Church in Transition, 1962- 96* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 13.

‘En la orden no tenemos santos por pobres, porque para eso, allá en Roma hace falta dinero’ (p. 279). We see the convent in the most dire of situations, with a leaking roof and cracks in the walls which put the nuns’ health at risk (p. 244). The nuns are left to their own devices for survival and, amongst other things, they rent parts of the buildings, sew, try to get the frescoes priced at the highest value possible, and beg for donations. Jesús Fernández Santos could not have been more outspoken in his denunciation of the Church’s abandonment of its own members.

Antonio works for the *Patronato*, an organisation funded by a State ministry, and his work involves the removing of frescoes. The reader is left to guess what happens to them. In exchange for the frescoes, the priests or nuns of the religious communities are promised some improvements to the buildings where they live, some money or a copy of the frescoes. In the novel, we see the Church abandoning a small parish church in a remote area near the French border, which results ultimately in its disappearance since the frescoes are the only reason outsiders, who contribute money, visit it. In behaving this way, the Church is also endangering the future economic survival of the town, since French tourists come to the area not only because of the natural beauty of the mountains and to fish, but also because of the appeal the small local churches have. The tourists provide a means of income for those who live in the area, such as the canteen, and through the sale of religious paraphernalia.

It is not as if Antonio is not aware of what is going on at a national level. Towards the middle of the novel, in the chapters dedicated to the convent, the narrator discloses to the reader that, in the aftermath of the war, when Antonio was looking for a way to earn a living, he considered joining the ranks of those restorers or antiquarians dealing in artefacts plundered from churches and convents. But he chose not to, mainly because he did not see himself managing to get clients and he did not like the types of people he would have to deal with in such a world (pp. 237-38). Also, it is not that

Antonio lacks a sense of what is morally right or wrong. Towards the end of the novel he admits that saving the frescoes is a more dignified way of earning a living than taking part in the plundering of religious art: 'En tanto el secretario durara como amigo, aquellas salas capitulares, las ermitas rotas [...] eran su reino, un reino pobre [...] pero entregado a él. Salvar aquellas siluetas era quizá inútil, tonto, vacío, pero mejor que desguazar altares, sillerías, retablos' (p. 237).

Jesús Fernández Santos is once again presenting to the reader the major dilemmas that arise from the interaction of the individual with other members of society, and also with the social and political system within which he exists. Antonio is never painted as a cold-blooded character, but as one who, within the boundaries of his sense of identity (strong middle-class orientation in this case) has to take decisions and make choices regarding the degree to which he collaborates with, or confronts, the system. The interest in this character lies in the fact that he is both exploited, as well as being part of the system that exploits others. In the aftermath of the war Antonio has the choice of either remaining on the fringes, benefiting from the racketeering (allowed by the authorities) of buying the art objects that the members of religious communities are forced to sell, or becoming an integrated member of the system. He chooses the latter and he finds himself earning enough to maintain his status. But, in return, he must put up with the difficult conditions in his work removing the frescoes. He knows that any expenses he may incur in order to improve them will be hard to recover; he has to negotiate the payment of each single project that he undertakes with a *secretario* who tends to underestimate the length of time needed; and he has to bear in mind that if he complained about these conditions there are others who would do the work for even less.

However, the narrator is keen to point out and underline that Antonio, by apparently adopting a neutral attitude towards the way the

system treats the parish churches and convents, is indeed co-operating actively with that system instead of doing anything that would mitigate its effects. The main idea that the author is presenting is that we are all part of the system, that we are all implicated in it, that we all take sides even when we wish to remain neutral and simply do our job, because being passive merely reinforces the system. Fernández Santos makes this point very clearly. The isolated parish priest has agreed to have the fresco removed without negotiating in advance what he is going to get in return. It seems that sometimes such an important aspect of the deal is left for Antonio to discuss with the priest concerned, but Antonio does not always bother to inform those involved: 'A veces lo decía, a veces no, según el ambiente o la ocasión. Lo decía al principio, en los primeros días y luego se olvidaba hasta que alguien, el párroco o el alcalde, por ejemplo venían a recordárselo' (p. 46). That Antonio does not bother to help this poor priest is clear, as is the fact that he could have made a difference by being more sympathetic. While Antonio is removing the frescoes the priest decides to have a copy done and Antonio agrees to do the administrative side of the deal when he gets back to Madrid, but he does nothing. The priest writes a letter to the *Patronato* demanding the copy. When Antonio is in Madrid and is told that the priest has been admitted to a mental hospital he replies, indifferently, that this has nothing to do with him.

It is this callousness and indifference to others that Fernández Santos is identifying as the root of what maintains the system as it is, since it fosters a sense of alienation in individuals that prevents them from coming together to act against it. Indifference to others is an attitude that prevails in all social environments and filters down to the family.⁸² The priest has always

⁸² For Constance Thomas Zahn: 'The disintegration of family ties about which don Antonio reflects without any apparent sadness, is just a natural extension of the disintegration of the social structure and its institutions', p. 128.

been alienated from his family, a family that hardly ever visits him and to which he has never belonged because he has chosen a path in life that does not match his father's social expectations. His mother has used him as a pawn in her feud against her husband. The lack of affection at home, together with the death of his only friend and the harshness of life up in the mountains, has produced an insecure man who does not know how to get what is due to him from the system: the copy of the fresco. As with Antonio, he has been brought up in the belief that the worth of a human being is measured in terms of social achievement. He leads a solitary life that eventually will result in his going mad. It was earlier shown how Antonio feels detached from his family and is happy with the fact that he is away from home and works in isolation. He epitomises the alienation that society breeds. The author is emphasising strongly that it is up to particular individuals to break away from the soulless way in which society has trained them to behave. Constance Thomas Zahn bases her dissertation upon this idea, in which she studies *En la hoguera*, *Laberintos*, and *El hombre de los santos*, and concludes that: 'In the case of Celia [Laberintos] and Antonio, Fernández Santos offers hope for his characters and perhaps hope for Spanish society in those processes of soul-searching and re-evaluation when accompanied by the courage to act' (p. 194). For Thomas Zahn this alienation or 'moral bankruptcy' was a legacy of the Civil War, which reduced men to focussing on survival, and therefore 'could not devote themselves to looking after their fellowmen. Thus a devitalization of the society came about. The bonds, institutions, and sense of moral obligation that held society together and gave it its vitality and strength disappeared. Even family ties withered. Every person had to look after himself and his own well-being first' (pp. 12-13).

Fernández Santos develops the theme of the personal as political even further by focusing upon the way in which Antonio understands how his work fits in with the fate of religious art. At work Antonio is trying to live in a

private cocoon. When he enters his workplace: 'Se sentía defendido, seguro, más firme dentro y fuera de sí, a medida que el sombrío interior se iba llenando de su afán, de sus cosas, de sí mismo' (p. 22). He has chosen to be oblivious to the implications of what he does. He has never had the courage to admit that he is an active agent of the destruction of Spain's artistic heritage. Since there is a multiplicity of points of view in the novel -- the omnipotent third-person narrator, the narrator's own opinion, and those of the character -- this makes the reconstruction of the process of self-acceptance more complicated, but at the same time more intriguing, to decipher. The narrator's choice of words to describe how Antonio feels about his work leaves the reader with no doubts as to the former's condemnation: 'Nunca volvía a sus iglesias, una vez concluido su despojo' (p. 78). And elsewhere the narrator notes: 'Era un pequeño triunfo, como un descubrimiento y un expolio también a la vez y se sentía siempre una vaga sensación de victoria' (p. 28). However, in the opening pages, the narrator seems to indicate, in an ironic tone, that Antonio is changing, that he is eventually coming out of his cocoon and is willing to admit that those who complain about the removal of the frescoes are right to do so, allowing the voice of his social conscience to flow: 'En el fondo siempre pensaban que era un expolio más o menos razonado. Quizá tuvieran su parte de razón. Al menos eso pensaba ahora el de los santos, [...] al cabo de tantos años de llevar a buen fin el mismo trabajo' (p. 14).

An awareness of his own personal alienation, however, is developing in Antonio. Early in the novel, when he notices that his young helper does not take much interest in the frescoes, he expresses the thought that his work may be meaningless, not because he thinks that the frescoes are not worth saving, but because nobody seems to appreciate their beauty. But it does not seem to affect him deeply: 'Quizá el suyo no fuera un auténtico trabajo sino un juego. Un juego fatigoso, rudo a veces y siempre solitario' (p. 39). Indeed, the aesthetic aspect of his work satisfies Antonio's appreciation of

all artistic things and his desire to preserve them: 'Era preciso resucitar, volver a su vida verdadera, arrancar de su muerte de basura que era toda su edad, devolverle a lo que alguien diría después que fue su primitivo aspecto' (p. 219). Nevertheless, he is always disappointed with the quality of the frescoes.

However, it is the encounter with the doctor who discovered the frescoes in the convent that awakens Antonio to reality and to his isolation. The doctor, a man of similar age to Antonio, has not lost his interest in what goes on in life, he keeps up with the news, and is excited about how things are changing in the country: the left-wing discussions among students, the doctors and students on strike, the priests speaking openly about politics, and so on. Antonio's cocoon, exemplified by: 'No leo los periódicos' and 'Salgo poco de casa', begins to crack. The doctor, in contrast to Antonio, feels alive. It is this sense of vitality, of energy, that endears him to Antonio and that makes Antonio look forward to sharing his company. Indeed, for the first time Antonio expresses his need for such a vital presence, even if in negative terms: 'Continuó maldiciendo el recuerdo del médico [...] pero aquel hombrecillo [...] amigo y compadre de una sola noche, no se había vuelto a dejar ver, y a no ser por el hijo del hortelano, el trabajo allí, como el resto de sus horas, habría transcurrido, como siempre, en silencio' (p. 271).

In the final pages, after the fire in the convent, the nuns are not interested in carrying on with the removal of the fresco and we see Antonio worried that he may not even get paid for the work he has done there. But what really concerns him is that he now sees himself as a pawn in a system that is indifferent to everyone and everything. These are his last thoughts: 'Lo que más molesta y desconcierta a don Antonio, no son [...] el dinero que quizá nunca cobre [...] sino saber que su trabajo es casi inútil allí, algo que solamente interesa a él, que en él comienza y en él termina. Esa idea de lujo, de cosa artificial, inútil, le vence mucho antes que su actual apatía cada vez que emprende un nuevo viaje' (p. 306).

BALADA DE AMOR Y SOLEDAD

This last novel of Jesús Fernández Santos was not very well received by critics. Ramón Jiménez Madrid describes it as 'obra sencilla, fácil, asequible, sin destellos estilísticos ni intensidad psicológica', and an 'obra sin pulso' that 'no hace sino señalar los comportamientos técnicos y temáticos de obras anteriores'. He mentions the author's poor health as a reason for such a poor novel.⁸³ However, I believe that this novel should not be dismissed so categorically. In terms of content it serves to corroborate the view that right to the very end of his literary production, Fernández Santos considered the theme of man as a historical being worth exploring in depth. It also serves to indicate that he was as sharp in his observations of Spanish society of the 1980s as he had been in the 1950s and 1960s. In *Balada de amor y soledad* (1987), he approaches man as a historical being from two perspectives. First, there are the deep unresolved contradictions obvious in some Spaniards of that time as a result of the tension between long-held cultural tenets and new attitudes developing regarding human relationships. And second, there is the perspective of the increasingly complex role of the individual in the political sphere at a time of a shifting balance of power between public and private forces.

Here, as in *El hombre de los santos*, the novel is structured on two main aspects of the protagonist's life: marriage and work. The narrative conveys a political message: the corruption of private companies and their collusion with the State. The novel creates a certain pace mainly by keeping the reader

⁸³ Ramón Jiménez Madrid, p. 260.

guessing about Víctor's potential conversion into a politically committed man, whilst at the same time littering the way with clues, with tell-tale signs, of the huge gap between what he actually does and his supposedly good intentions. This incongruity succeeds in intriguing the reader. The betrayal at the end of the novel has a dramatic impact. The plot reads like a thriller, with hardly any dialogue, just action, and it includes a crucial dramatic moment, an apparent moment of conversion when Víctor sees the effects of political corruption on the miners.

This is a story told in a simple linear way mainly through a third-person narrator, with well delineated sections each time the narrative voice changes. *Balada de amor y soledad* is a good example of the problems that Fernández Santos faced when experimenting with new narrative modes later in his career. As a thriller, the novel, in my opinion, would have benefited from having a single voice, that of Víctor, which would have given the narrative a more intense feeling of personal drama. The thrust of the novel is an attempt to draw a parallel between the supposed evolution of the main character at a personal and political level -- and it is successfully done. But Fernández Santos was to remain, throughout his career, a writer bent on social criticism and he could not resist offering a panoramic view of society at the time his novel was set. In this novel the voice of Víctor's wife, Raquel, complements that of Víctor in terms of personal dilemmas, marriage in particular. But by introducing Raquel's voice into the narrative, even if this does not interfere with the pace of the events taking place in the plot, the novel loses its dramatic intensity. The portrayal of Raquel is nonetheless realistic and believable and a very valid one as representative of a particular type of woman of the time, torn between two role models of womanhood: professional or housewife. In the case of Víctor, if the character development does not reach a high level of subtlety or rich nuances regarding his psychology, this is presumably partly intentional, with Fernández Santos

calling attention to the fact that unresolved contradictions lead to shallowness of spirit and, ultimately, alienation, an alienation so deep that Víctor seems almost inhuman. In this novel, the author presents alienation as the main obstacle to transforming society, since it plays into the hands of those in power, helping to perpetuate the status quo.

THE INNER WORLD

In the 1980s, when divorce had been legalised in Spain, Fernández Santos singles out for criticism in *Balada de amor y soledad* the long-held conservative cultural tenets of marriage and gender stereotyping because even though the new democratic political regime was promoting liberal legislation, those tenets were still shaping people's lives. It was still a period of transition, of adjustment between the traditional and conventional way of understanding human relationships and new notions gradually filtering through from the more progressive members of society to the more conservative ones. In *Balada de amor y soledad* the author explores in his characters the contradictions between the attitudes that those traditional tenets foster and the characters' attempts to change their lives by adopting new attitudes to relationships. The focus of his attention is placed upon an individual who apparently believes that he has left behind those tenets and assimilated alternative ideas of human behaviour.

The third-person narrator that prevails in most of his novels never explicitly comments on the nature of marriage. He never states openly whether marriage is the right institutional framework for a male-female relationship. He never suggests whether it is doomed to fail because of the polygamous nature of human beings, what it should be based upon, or if it is meant to last for a life, and so on. He usually restricts himself to pointing out that married partners lose sexual interest in each other after a while. He

confines himself to reflecting tension between the two partners because one of them has come to realise that their understanding of life is different, even if they both shared similar views at the time that they got married. This is the moment that dissatisfaction sets in and sexual contact becomes infrequent.

In *Balada de amor y soledad* it is the voice of the wife, Raquel, that conveys that society's expectations of marriage do not fulfil the individual's expectation of life. The time spent dating is itself described as boring because routine soon sets in, and even if sex takes place it is not enjoyed as it should be owing to a sense of guilt.⁸⁴ She has a conventional wedding and soon her married life has an established sexual pattern. She participates in social gatherings. However, after four years together the couple feel distant and they even discuss marriage as having the sole purpose of avoiding solitude. Raquel does not find the fulfilment that she expected in marriage, and the lack of children makes it more difficult for her to remain committed. The two drift apart since they do not find in each other the soul mate they were looking for. Indeed, their differences lead them to misunderstanding each other and Raquel finds the understanding she needs in a female friend (p. 97). Given the fact that the couple live in a narrow-minded provincial environment, Raquel shows some courage in taking the initiative and moving out of their home, and so they separate. The challenge for her in the future is, apparently, to become an independent woman who supports herself by working, as her girlfriend encourages her to do. Raquel is one among a group of female characters who break social conventions and look for personal development, thus risking their comfortable position.

It is the husband's reaction, however, that makes for the most interesting reading because of the many contradictions embodied in him. The

⁸⁴ Jesús Fernández Santos, *Balada de amor y soledad* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1987), p. 19. All further references to the novel will be to this edition and will be given in the text.

narrator treats the character of Víctor with the same ironical approach as he used with Antonio of *El hombre de los santos*, in order to outline how difficult it is for an individual to break free psychologically from the culture that has shaped him. The unnamed girl who is organising the campaign against the pollution of the river plays a double function in the novel: she presents Víctor with a personal challenge (to establish a sexual relationship different from the one in his marriage) and a political challenge (to shift his loyalty from the company he works for to the community he lives in, and to protect the environment). Víctor will fail in both instances. Sex and politics are intertwined. The reasons for Víctor's double failure are presented in both by the narrator's account of his actions and in Víctor's own thoughts in free indirect discourse.

At a personal level, the relationship between Víctor and the unnamed ecologist starts as a one-off sexual encounter. The sexual pleasure Víctor experiences will encourage him, during the days he spends lost in the mountains and during the separation process, to consider trying to establish some sort of steady relationship with her. He does not take the initiative until the girl is in hospital, after having been raped by a shepherd. The rape underlines the great gap between a section of the country that is moving forward in its sexual attitudes (the girl is an independent and politically-active woman) and the brutal and backward male section that still considers women as prey. Víctor suggests to the girl that they move in together. Taking into account that Víctor is a separated man who is openly living with such an alternative type of woman in his home town, the reader could get the impression that Víctor is a 'new man'. After all, during the separation process he has expressed the thought that the potential harm to his reputation that could arise in such a conservative provincial environment is not going to influence the way he behaves: 'Su destino era asunto suyo no de ellos, ni de nadie dispuesto a dar su opinión' (p.158). Also, he seems unconcerned about

the implications that living with the organiser of a campaign against the chemical company he works for, could have on his employment situation: 'Maldito lo que me importa' (p. 165).

But the narrator soon reveals that appearances are deceptive, that even if the character genuinely believes that he has overcome his own limitations, things are not quite like that. As with Antonio in *El hombre de los santos*, the novelist goes deeper into the character's psychology to reveal unresolved contradictions. Two moments of truth, two critical situations, are used to prompt the revelation: before he began the affair Víctor was asked by his boss at the chemical company to find out if there were any political parties involved in the campaign. Then (by which time he was living with the girl) he was asked to collaborate in implicating an innocent man as responsible for the pollution of the river.

Víctor does not seem to be aware that his new romantic relationship works well while the girl is recovering from her traumatic experience simply because she is fulfilling Víctor's very conventional expectations of a woman. She is at home during the day and is a good sexual partner at night: 'Fue un tiempo bueno aquél, con la chica haciendo el amor cada noche y de día esperando su vuelta' (p.165). The narrator describes how Víctor feels that he is in love and that his love is reciprocated: 'Habían pasado unos cuantos meses [...] El amor de la muchacha se vertía en Víctor que lo devolvía en la misma medida [...] Los dos sabían que su vida sin la del otro no era nada. Sólo hastío, un cansancio que resultaba difícil de evitar' (p. 168).

However, as soon as she hears that he is to see a solicitor about a problem with the company, she moves out. The cause and effect of her moving out is not made explicit by the narrator, but the temporal coincidence leads, inevitably, to such a conclusion. She alleges that she has realised that she is not in love with him. Víctor has, after all, reduced the girl to a sex object. Once they have become sexually involved he has forgotten the fact that

she is an ecological campaigner and, accordingly, he has never discussed his conduct at work with her. She has not forgotten, however, who she is. It is clear that she thought that Víctor had a genuine interest in the anti-pollution campaign.

Right from the beginning, the girl is a challenge for Víctor as she embodies alternative attitudes to life that have tempted him, but which he has never explored, preferring instead a more conventional path in life. He had been curious about these new ecological organisations but he never even dared to approach them because of the way their members dressed. It is the girl's sex appeal that entices him to attend the first meeting organised in the village. Once he has had sex and feels attached to her, he hesitates about his co-operation with his boss: 'Quizás desde que la conoció estuviera cambiando y no dispuesto a colaborar con el director' (p. 74). Equally, when lost in the mountain he encounters a couple living in an isolated house, with no jobs or commitments, and thinks of her: 'Se dio cuenta de cuanto la deseaba, de cuánto le hubiera gustado vivir con ella, tal y como la pareja decía. Cada cual a su modo haciendo de su vida lo que mejor le parecía' (p.129).

But despite Víctor's good intentions and his declaration that the relationship with the girl is what gives meaning to his life, the girl leaves without any discussion taken place between them. Fernández Santos seems to indicate that Víctor's life is sheer alienation. Víctor's self-alienation results from the polarization that takes place between his thought-processes and his actions. Víctor never deals with the concrete situations that he faces in real life, he lacks the ability to analyse since he never considers the hows, whys and wherefores, and concentrates on ineffective abstract objectives that result in actions that defeat those idealistic objectives. In the end, Víctor acts as an agent for his boss and, therefore, betrays the girl. Significantly, it does not cross his mind to reconsider his own actions. Instead, he decides to go to the mountain and he is never heard of again.

The mountain is a metaphor in itself. There are moments in the novel when Víctor, lost on the mountain, meditates on the meaning of life. At that time of his life the mountain symbolises for Víctor the possibility of a new beginning in Nature. The idea of rebirth, a new beginning, is clearly indicated: 'Arrancar de raíz cuanto hasta entonces había deseado y cambiar de oficio, lo mismo que de piel' (p.75). The notion that the stimulus for rebirth must come from within, from inner strength, is formulated by Víctor: 'Lo que me lleva adelante no es ese barrio húmedo donde está la chica, ni tratar quizás el divorcio con mi mujer, o darle explicaciones al director, lo que deseo es olvidarlo todo, dejarlo todo como los de la casa que quedaba atrás, perdida en la montaña' (p. 136).

Víctor's experience on the mountain has elements of a religious experience, a cleansing of the soul through self-confession, and this is reflected both in his walking in the river, which can be interpreted as a baptism, and in the way that he addresses the river as if he was praying. In my opinion, the religious undertones are used ironically to indicate that this experience of purification of the soul is actually alienation. At one point in the narrative the road to Rubayer is described as a *via crucis*, but at the same time it is described as a place so peaceful that it is tempting to stay, as in heaven. The name Rubayer reminds Víctor of a philosophical treatise that suggests finding the meaning of life in love and pleasure. Significantly though, the narrator next places Víctor in a real situation where he arrives in Rubayer and hears about an accident in a mine. His first impulse is to offer to help, postponing his return to work, which has been his main preoccupation. This is a spontaneous reaction that surprises him and he starts to wonder if 'algo en él estaría cambiando para bien' (p. 145). The narrator is leading the reader to believe that a real transformation has taken place in Víctor, who has now developed a sense of social consciousness. But once back in town, Víctor does not behave according to his new-found good intentions.

At the end of the novel, the narrator does not elaborate on the meaning of Víctor going back to the mountain. One can only speculate about the intended meaning. I disagree with José García Nieto when he states, in his otherwise positive review of the novel, that the previous episode of Víctor on the mountain is too long when one takes into account the brevity of the novel.

⁸⁵ In my view the reader can only understand the ending by drawing a parallel with that episode. I believe that the final image is also charged with irony because for Víctor the mountain means the possibility of living like a hermit, escaping the responsibilities and challenges of living in society. The mountain is his escapist dream. Víctor is not even presented as taking such a decision after serious analysis of what is wrong with society and a conscious decision not to be part of it.

THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Fernández Santos constantly provides a relevant, contemporary criticism of society for his readership. In the 1980s, when a democratic political system had been established, his attention turned to the role that companies play in society, and their power in a country that was becoming an increasingly well developed industrial society, with the help of a State that followed the international trend of *laissez-faire*. Indeed, Víctor M. Pérez Díaz explains how in the Spain of the 1980s 'there was a limited diffusion of neoliberal arguments, policies, and institutions through Europe [...]. Deregulation and privatisation as well as the introduction of market principles in the public sector were policies gradually adopted in [...] socialist Spain'.⁸⁶ In *Balada de*

⁸⁵ José García Nieto, 'Balada de amor y soledad', *ABC*, ABC Literario Section, 19 April 1987, p. 49.

⁸⁶ Víctor M. Pérez Díaz, *The Return of Civil Society: The Emergence of Democratic Spain*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p.

amor y soledad, Fernández Santos introduces a green issue, the contamination of the environment, as the main thread in the development of the theme that shows how, in the Spain of the 1980s, the State was turning a blind eye to social and ecological abuses committed by private companies. Other abuses committed by private companies are mentioned, mainly those in the mining sector, indicating that the State and the private sector collude in the neglect of the workforce and that workers' associations are powerless to improve health and safety at work. The relevant ministry acknowledges the lack of safety but does not put pressure upon the company to implement any improvement in conditions or, at least, to insure the workers in case of accident. In showing this, the author indicates what little progress there has been in matters of social policy in the country under different governments.⁸⁷

Fernández Santos is dealing once more with the theme that what defines a person is his or her reaction to the political and social events that take place in their lifetime. He is emphasising that the personal is always political whether the political framework is a civil war, a dictatorship, or a democratic government. In the 1980s, he is calling attention to the fact that after a dictatorship as long as Franco's, a democratically-elected government could be expected to be seen as a political panacea. The novel reflects how the attitude of expecting decisions to be taken in Madrid is well established. Victor himself expresses it: 'Si algo había que hacer era en la capital o en Madrid donde debían decidirlo. Allí poco había que hacer salvo aceptar lo que viniera' (p. 16). But if the citizens trust the system unquestioningly, and entrust

93.

⁸⁷ 'Training improvidence and further deterioration in working conditions are probably the background to the UGT claims of a 46 per cent increase in the number of industrial accidents in 1988; CCOO (the Communist Union) registers that the increase in fatal accidents was 30 per cent.' Juan Lalaguna, *A Traveller's History of Spain* (Adlestrop, Moreton-in-Marsh: The Windrush Press, 1990), p. 23.

decision-making to the central government, they may find out, too late, that the political system has not really changed as much as they expected, particularly in a country where 'los poderes fácticos' such as the press collude with the political establishment: 'La prensa, pronto acallada, publicó unos pocos artículos' (p. 36). Democracy is breeding an apathetic attitude in the average citizen and even though operating under a veneer of fairness, the political system is not changing its corrupt practices.

Parallel to the apolitical attitude of ordinary people, there is another development in the country that the narrator presents as worrying because it reinforces this gradual alienation taking place at all levels of an individual's life: the detachment of the new generation from their place of origin, their uprooting: 'Jóvenes que estudian lejos de la aldea a la que apenas conocían ya' (p. 32). This is the period of internationalisation of the economy that brought about detachment from the traditional communal organisations (political parties, trade unions, church, local communities, and so on). In the case of Spain, its economic integration in the EC (1986) put pressure upon the government to take a neoliberal direction. As Pérez Díaz remarks: 'People had to take a new look at, and to decide on their commitments to, the core institutions of a liberal democracy and a market economy. At the same time they had to face up to the task of redefining these commitments, as well as the solidarities and collective identities that might be connected to them' (pp. 99-100). However, as Pérez Díaz concludes: 'These experiments in institutional design of a neocorporatist or a neoliberal sort [...] permitted more and more responsibility to lie in the ultimate units of society, namely, individuals. These individuals might belong to organizations. [...] however, [...] in today's world of organizations the links between individuals and their organizations are increasingly loose' (p. 94).

But Víctor is a well integrated member of his community. The villagers appreciate him because, among other things, as an individual he has

done favours for others. So when he goes missing a search party is organised to look for him. He repays their affectionate concern by celebrating his return with a meal. So, how is it possible that such a man ends up becoming a traitor, a collaborator? By choosing an individual who does not belong to any political party or union, who does not express any strong views on any issues, Fernández Santos is representing the so-called silent majority. The reader is informed of the economic circumstances of the area where the protagonist lives: mining is the main industrial activity in the area and there is this one chemical company where Víctor works. Víctor, to please his wife, works for the chemical company as it is 'cleaner' than mining. The fact that the labour market elsewhere in the country does not offer many job opportunities explains his submissive loyalty towards the company he works for. Pérez Díaz clearly explains the situation in Spain when he states that: 'Attachment to the firm might reflect satisfaction with it, but it also reflected perceptions of the labour market.'⁸⁸

At the beginning, Víctor asks his boss for an explanation for the pollution of the river and is told that the matter will be investigated and action taken: 'No faltaría ayuda técnica' (p. 27). However, a little later when asked by his boss about the campaign that is being organised in the village with the aim of finding the culprit responsible for polluting the river, Víctor does not hesitate to accept the mission of identifying any political organisations that may be backing the campaign. Because of his interest in the girl and also as a supposedly responsible citizen, Víctor has already become involved in the campaign by attending meetings and joining the march in the provincial capital. However, when asked to collaborate in the betrayal of the

⁸⁸ As Pérez Díaz observes: 'This perception of difficulty [in getting jobs] corresponded to an obvious fact: the rate of unemployment, between 8 and 11 percent from 1978 to 1980, jumped to 20 percent in the mid-1980s, and fell to about 15 or 16 percent in the early 1990s', p. 249.

campaigners he does not seem to find any contradiction between these two facets of his behaviour. The two-faced character carries on as usual, with not an instant spent on self-examination. Betrayal of the girl and of the community comes 'instinctively' because Victor will always choose to support the hand that feeds him: his employer. It is just this personal attitude that the author shows as being at the root of the social problem of the country: whilst the citizens consider safeguarding their personal welfare as a morally valid criterion to justify their actions, they will always ally themselves with those who have power over them.

In *Balada de amor y soledad* it is observed that the Government is not acting quickly enough to prevent the potential environmental damage resulting from an increasingly industrialised country: 'Se sabía que quizás fuera necesario crear una red en España capaz de supervisar tales vertidos' (p. 26). The locals mistrust the chemical company and suspect that there may be some sort of corruption: 'A pesar de que el agua bajara limpia [...] A saber si no había por medio algún interés en cierto modo por echarles de allí y quedarse con sus tierras' (p. 38). At the same time non-governmental groups are starting to demand action and to organise the masses. The locals lack the experience of being politically organised, of taking the initiative: 'Ni siquiera una vez que amenazaron con construir una presa movieron un dedo' (p. 21). But once encouraged to do so they react positively: a protest march is held in the provincial capital and analyses of the water are carried out (p.41). As in *Los bravos*, Jesús Fernández Santos appears to be placing his faith in the actions of the ordinary man at the local community level to achieve real political change. Both in that novel and in *Balada de amor y soledad* an outsider is used as a means to reveal the dilemmas confronting the community, the doctor and the ecologist-campaigner. The big difference is that whilst in *Los bravos* the open ending leaves the reader wondering about the role that the doctor could play as an agent of change, in *Balada de amor y soledad* there is no

doubt that Víctor is dismissed and ridiculed.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, for Fernández Santos the sense of belonging to a particular social class shapes an individual's notion of selfhood and the way he or she interacts with others and with society as a whole. In these two novels he focuses upon two members of the bourgeoisie and exposes them as negative examples of both personal and social behaviour. Privately, Antonio and Víctor retain the concept of social status as determined by those with whom they associate themselves and they both follow prevailing gender stereotypes. Socially, as their conduct at work shows, they both seek to maintain their social status and decline to contribute to the changing of society. With irony, Fernández Santos exposes their contradictions and their lack of ideals. Personal alienation is presented as the direct consequence of refusing to engage with the social and political dilemmas of our times. Accordingly, those who refuse to engage end up being isolated like Antonio, or delude themselves into finding meaning to life in futile personal challenges, like Víctor and his mountain.

Fernández Santos takes as a premise that in a society such as the Spain of his day, real change could be initiated by those individuals who allow themselves to be guided, in matters of personal and social conduct, by their instinctive sense of social justice. These are the role models he proposes as worth following, such as the doctor in *Los bravos*. Fernández Santos is certainly no radical, however. He never suggests that the solution to the country's problems lies in strong left-wing parties and strong trade unions. Also, he never suggests that the future of the country is in the hands of the working class; on the contrary he seems to focus upon members of the middle class. If we take into account his criticism of the Communist party and the

inability of the left to act together during the Civil War in *Los jinetes*, one could conclude that Fernández Santos came to mistrust a nationally-organised opposition along the traditional lines of political parties and strong trade unions as much as he did the political establishment and the right-wing ruling parties. It is worth remembering that the author had acquaintances in the Communist party but was never a member. In his novels there is also an implicit feeling that politics are always corrupted, that political parties forget their electoral pledges once they are in power -- for example the Republican government and its land reforms. As a result, his political stance, as reflected in his novels in the 1950s and 1960s, may be partly explained by a certain degree of disillusionment with the traditional parties. It may also be partly explained by the fact that, since left-wing political parties were illegal, he was promoting in his novels alternative strategies that could be effective within the legal framework. What he indicates is that in order to be effective, individuals need to join together. The kind of associations he seems to support are those that stem from the grass roots. For example, in *Los bravos* he shows the peasants sharing equipment to improve production, an embryonic idea of some sort of co-operativism. In that novel he also presents the need for the rural community to establish new rules of social interaction between the different social classes: the peasants and the middle-class doctor. Without the leadership of any party, this is more like a spontaneous action.

How should Fernández Santos's position be judged? One could argue that he was politically moderate and condemn him as an ineffectual writer who wrote for the already converted liberal middle class. In this sense, it could be argued that he followed the long-established literary tradition best represented by the writers of the Generation of 1898. Equally, one could argue that he was a profound observer of where the real power in society lies, in the social structure, and that he tried to alter it by challenging individual members of the middle class and the upper segment of the educated working class

(presumably his potential readers and those who could become politically involved) to overcome their own class interest and develop a sense of social commitment. Before reaching a conclusion on Fernández Santos's political position one needs to assess how he develops the themes of social commitment and the personal as political. These are the two principles that he presents as defining human beings and which he sees as characterised by their historical nature. On the whole, developing a personal sense of social consciousness is presented as a first step in the process of changing society: to be able to see one's actions in the general context of politics is the logical consequence. And even if the author does not spell out that belonging to a political association is the next step to be taken by any responsible member of society, it is implicit in the situations presented in his narrative and in the way in which he concludes his novels: by showing that individual actions contribute towards change, but that in themselves they are not enough.

Fernández Santos was critical of how politics were practised in the country by whoever was in power. In the 1950s, with *Los bravos*, he felt that it was important to criticise how the State and the Church colluded in reinforcing a stultified society, established on the basis of strong class divisions and, even more, on the basis of the divide between losers and winners. This historical context created negative notions of selfhood, even self-destructive ones (for example Amparo), or individuals desperate to escape the role imposed upon them by society (Socorro). Therefore, he indicates as models those like the doctor who try to break away from such a negative view of the concept of humankind and social progress. Although the doctor has no problems in admitting to himself that he wants to break free from his middle-class sense of identity, he clings to the notion that his actions are not political when they are: settling down with Socorro is a challenge to the power of the *cacique*. Exercising his service to humanity as apolitically as possible cannot exclude him from taking sides (with the villagers or the authorities) in the case

of the swindler. If he refuses to accept the political implications of his actions, then his good social intentions may be deemed ineffective and he may end up being perceived as just another *cacique*. He needs to discuss with the villagers, when things cool down, the benefits of using the legal system to their own advantage. In the 1960s Fernández Santos was still insisting upon the importance of awakening social consciousness. In *El hombre de los santos* Antonio refuses to see his work in the broader framework of the State and Church colluding in the destruction of religious art. However, he eventually admits that he is a pawn in the political system.

In *Los jinetes del alba*, Marian embodies the individualistic type as a negative role model. Martín's commitment to the Republic as a means of bringing about the redistribution of land withers as the repression increases, whilst Ventura's commitment is unaffected. In fact, Ventura is the only character in the novel with links to left-wing parties, so one could conclude that the implication is that at the time of the Civil War, at least, only those who became members of political parties were committed enough to achieve political goals. In *Balada de amor y soledad*, Víctor refuses to acknowledge that his spying for his boss is an act of treachery against his community, his lover, and the country as a whole. He also refuses to understand that it is because of individuals like himself that companies can make large profits without spending the smallest fraction of them on preventing the destruction of the environment. Consequently, in the 1980s, with *Balada de amor y soledad*, Fernández Santos presents the ecological organisation as the effective way of practising politics. Despite the lack of information provided regarding the territorial scope of the ecological organisation the girl belongs to, one could guess that since she is an outsider and there is talk of a march in Madrid, the organisation is nationally based. Furthermore, the way he presents the miners' conditions at work, with no protection from the State, clearly suggests that, if anything, the trade unions need to become stronger in the prevailing situation

of economic *laissez-faire*. Since *Los jinetes del alba* was published in 1984 and *Balada de amor y soledad* in 1987, when the country enjoyed freedom of association, it seems likely that Fernández Santos felt free to endorse political parties, trade unions, and ecological organisations as effective in the changing of society. It would therefore appear that Fernández Santos never denied the validity of political parties and trade unions as agents of change, but he assessed which political strategy might be most effective in the differing circumstances the country found itself in as it evolved from the military uprising of 1936 to democracy.

CHAPTER 3

RELIGION AND CULTURE: *EN LA HOGUERA* AND *LIBRO DE LAS MEMORIAS DE LAS COSAS*

The influence of existentialism as a philosophy upon some writers of the post-war period has already been the subject of considerable study.⁸⁹ Among the novels written by the Generación del Medio Siglo, Ignacio Aldecoa's *Con el viento solano* is considered to be an example of a novel from the genre of Social Realism that incorporates many of the philosophical concerns of existentialism.⁹⁰ Jesús Fernández Santos's *En la hoguera* also incorporates many existential concerns, particularly those of an ethical nature. He emphasises the need for the individual to be truthful to him- or herself, the need to discover the authentic reasons behind his or her motivations when interacting with others, and the need for each individual to reassess any ethical tenets they have imbibed from society, which depend on his or her own experience of life. Fernández Santos also puts forward existentialism as an alternative to Catholicism, as it was during the Franco regime, through his characters elaborating upon metaphysical problems such as the temporal nature of human life. But overall, the author seems to be more interested in

⁸⁹ See, for example, Óscar Barrero Pérez, *La novela existencial española de posguerra*. Serie Biblioteca Románica Hispánica (Madrid: Gredos, 1987).

⁹⁰ See Gemma Roberts, *Temas existenciales en la novela española de posguerra*.

highlighting the negative influence of Catholic tenets upon the individual's notion of selfhood, and the social limitations that the individual encounters when trying to exercise his or her freedom to choose a path in life. Even the characters' metaphysical speculations are restricted by their being linked to Catholic notions such as the meaning of suffering, and the focus of attention soon shifts to the effect that these tenets have on the specific circumstances in which the characters find themselves.

Fernández Santos uses the history of a Protestant community as a backdrop to develop the theme of sexual repression in *Libro de las memorias de las cosas*. Instead of Catholicism, he uses a Protestant community which is only of interest to the author in that it shares with Catholicism a similar approach to sexuality.⁹¹ Furthermore, the Protestant community is presented as a poignant example of the failings of all religious groups: the fact that they believe themselves to be the custodians of the Truth and that their Truth is atemporal.

Ángel R Fernández has studied the use of intertextuality in the works of Fernández Santos following the theoretical approach of Julia Kristeva and the taxonomy established by Gérard Genette.⁹² Fernández y González notes that quite often Fernández Santos includes fragments from other texts in his

⁹¹ Gonzalo Sobejano, who studies Fernández Santos from the perspective of *apartamiento*, agrees with this view: 'Por debajo, no obstante, de esta problemática religiosa, hay un segundo plano de conflictividad pura y generalmente humana [...] Es más, creo que el autor mismo no debió de sentirse movido a componer esta novela por semejante género de preocupación: la labor y la conducta de los Hermanos de las Misiones están presentadas con respeto pero sin calor.' Gonzalo Sobejano, *Novela española de nuestro tiempo (En busca del pueblo perdido)*. Serie El Soto. 2nd edn rev. (Madrid: Editorial Prensa Española, 1975), pp. 339-40.

⁹² Ángel R. Fernández y González, 'Función y expresividad del intertexto en las novelas de Fernández Santos', in *Actas del Congreso Internacional sobre Semiótica e Hispanismo*, 2 vols (Madrid: June 1983), II, 649-57. For a study of intertextuality in other Spanish authors see: *Intertextual Pursuits: Literary Meditations in Modern Spanish Narrative*, ed. by Jeanne Brownlow and John W. Kronik (Cranbury, NJ and London: Associated University Presses, 1998).

novels. In relation to this type of intertextuality he remarks:

El texto intercalado tiene, por sí mismo, una autonomía precisa significativa, pero al formar parte de un texto más amplio queda asumido en él y modifica su significación por relación a ese contexto en el que está situado. El análisis literario no puede ya considerarlos como fragmentos independientes sino imbricados en la unidad total (de estructura y contenido) del discurso, y debe indagar los nuevos matices que producen y reciben: tipificar el discurso, elevar la expresividad, condicionar el sentido global. (p. 649)

It is in this way that the fragments included in *En la hoguera* and *Libro de las memorias de las cosas* are used by the author and taken into account by myself when interpreting their meaning.

EN LA HOGUERA

En la hoguera (1957), the second novel published by Jesús Fernández, is the work in which the author, in order to further his understanding of man as a historical being, first develops the major theme of how the culture of the country, principally religion, was shaping the lives of Spaniards at the time the novel was written. This is an aspect that critics have neglected.

Fernández Santos has said of this novel: 'La idea básica se halla en la frase que define la vida como un gran deseo de vivir y a la vez un gran deseo de morir. Se me ocurrió estructurar una narración sobre estos dos deseos

fundamentales, pero sin personaje colectivo ni escenarios cerrados, como en el libro anterior. Aquí el paisaje, el ambiente se iría presentando a lo largo de un viaje en el que influyeron las obras de Baroja y aún más cercanamente las andaduras pintorescas y literarias realizadas por Cela.⁹³ In order to explore this idea, Fernández Santos analyses it from two different angles: the meaning of life and the relationship of the individual with his or her body. He chooses two characters whose physical circumstances justify their having opinions on the matter, making the situation believable: Miguel, who suffers from tuberculosis, as well as being an orphan whose best friend in childhood has died and whose insane, beloved uncle dies during the course of the novel, and Inés, a single woman expecting a baby.⁹⁴

The theme is soon placed within the framework of the Catholic religion, as it was being defended by the Catholic Church in Spain during that period, using Miguel's meditations, and in a social context through the reaction of different characters to Inés's predicament. Miguel, a believer who goes to the countryside from March to September (when he visits the specialist), reads *Los padres del Yermo* by Abbé Henri Brémond, and by alternating quotes from the book and Miguel's reactions to them, a dialogue is

⁹³ These similarities with Baroja are once more noticed by critics. DiNubila finds echoes of Andrés Hurtado, of *El árbol de la ciencia*, in Miguel, p. 43, and Spencer Gordon Freedman describes the main character in these terms: 'Miguel is a Barojian figure -- itinerant, *abúlico*, and haunted by a personal sense of failure', p. 63.

⁹⁴ David Herzberger fully agrees with this point of view: 'Miguel is burdened by his family's history of disease, and often worries about dying at an early age [...] Miguel's preoccupation with death and loneliness is rationally motivated', p. 26. And Herzberger adds: 'It is precisely the possibility of death that compels him to examine his life, to reflect on the passing of time, and to identify the meaning that he has forged for himself', p. 27.

established.⁹⁵ This intertextuality also includes a prayer, the Creed, and allusions to biblical scenes. As he reads the work during the time leading up to the celebrations of Holy Week the Catholic framework is reinforced. In Inés's case, the subject of religion is brought in through her confession but her situation serves primarily to highlight social attitudes. Other threads in the plot expand the religious content from different perspectives. The theme of sex as sin figures strongly in the character of the widow Constanza and her relationship with Zoilo. The priest, Don Julián, criticises the lack of genuine religious faith in a society with strong social divisions.

The structure of the novel has been criticised. The first seven chapters trace the separate stories of the two main characters, with the stories merging in Chapter 7 when Miguel arrives in the village. For Juan Luis Alborg, neither the different length of the chapters, nor their position within the general framework, contribute to the character development of the two protagonists, in sharp contrast to the group of popular characters, who are well defined. Santos Sanz Villanueva, on the other hand, has mentioned the apparent lack of connexion between the alternating chapters dedicated to Miguel (1, 3, 5, 7) and Inés (2, 4, 6) as an indication of the complexity of the work.⁹⁶ Spencer Gordon Freedman also criticises the lack of unity and an 'arbitrary and looser control of episodic shift'. Freedman also remarks that: '*En la hoguera* may indeed hold the seeds for two novels, and as such, does not truly excel as

⁹⁵ Henri Brémond was a priest and a writer born in Aix, France, in 1865. He was awarded several literary prizes and became doctor *honoris causa* of Oxford University. *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1931), Appendix 9, 551.

⁹⁶ Juan Luis Alborg, *Hora actual de la novela española*, 2 vols (Madrid: Ediciones Taurus, 1962), II, 379. Santos Sanz Villanueva, *Historia de la novela social española*, 2 vols (Madrid: Alhambra, 1980), I, 342-43.

either, for the work attempts to present both a composite of village life and a psychological and philosophical portrait of these two individuals.⁹⁷

Nevertheless, I think that the narrative form is well constructed in so far as it copes with the need to develop the theme from the two angles of culture and society. However, the boundaries could overlap a little more to give greater complexity to the characters. This is particularly true with Inés in matters of religion, making it difficult to assess the degree of influence that it exercises upon her. There is only one occasion when she remembers the words pronounced by the priest during her confession. This is in sharp contrast to Miguel, whose religious meditations are plentiful. Inés has the function, to an extent that could be criticised, of prompting the revelation of social attitudes of other characters. This does not allow much scope to analyse her psychology, which only gets full attention in the first few chapters set in Madrid, where she is described by her cousin and aunt.⁹⁸ The reader is left to reconstruct her psychology from her actions.⁹⁹ The other characters are well defined,

⁹⁷ Among these shifts Freedman remarks: 'The shifting of setting from the *pueblo* to Madrid [...] proves to be distracting. The episodes that concern Miguel's uncle [...] are too far removed in space and in spirit to form an integral part of the novel's core. The violence introduced by the *Rojos*' crime against Constanza and by the rape of Soledad by Alejandro seems gratuitous [...] Miguel's chance meeting with young *Rojo* in the streets of Madrid is much too coincidental to be credible', pp. 80-81.

⁹⁸ For Concha Alborg 'Inés es un personaje redondo; sus acciones nos sorprenden constantemente', p. 98.

⁹⁹ Spencer Gordon Freedman harshly criticises the way these two main characters are constructed: 'They remain rather colorless and less vivid and convincing than many of the novel's minor figures. Both Miguel and Inés are largely one-sided characters -- characters that merely incarnate a conflict; they are not viewed in their totality as human beings. Moreover, the passions, the anguish, and the indecision of the protagonists are unsubtly and tediously rendered by the novelist; the reader soon tires of their sole and all-pervading obsession involving their ambivalent life-death wish', pp. 79-80.

particularly Soledad, Lucas's mother, Doña Constanza, and so on.

The use of intertextuality creates an interactive relationship between the reader and the novel: that is the reader needs to establish the effect that the contents of the extracts from either *Los padres del Yermo* and the *Creed* have on the thoughts and reactions of the main character in the novel. The intelligent juxtaposition between the different discourses enables the author to present to the reader a critical view of religion that would probably have been censored if presented in a more direct manner. Also, as a recognisable trait in Fernández Santos's works, the beginning and end of the novel are key to the interpretation of the message. The prelude is the description of a children's cemetery that Miguel visits. Later, Miguel remembers this cemetery when elaborating on the notion that our lives are defined by the temporal brevity of our existence on earth. This is the main philosophical notion that the author is putting forward as an alternative to the notion of afterlife as proposed by Catholicism. The epilogue describes Miguel going into the operating theatre, conveying the notion that life on earth should be our main preoccupation.

Miguel is presented in a positive light. He shares with the doctor of *Los bravos* an inherent inquisitiveness that leads them both to question the situations they are immersed in and how they fit. They also have in common a strong vital impulse that encourages them to forsake those cultural tenets that would have led them to personal stagnation. As a man who wants to take control of his life by setting his own principles and objectives, the doctor of *Los bravos* questions the implications for his personal development of remaining within the boundaries of his social class. Miguel questions his faith, both in order to formulate his personal notion of selfhood based upon his own

intuitive understanding of his body, and in order to find an instinctive meaning to life on earth aside from any religious principles.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, I believe that Miguel's self-questioning is a precedent for the journey of self-discovery that Antonio of *El hombre de los santos* engages in.¹⁰¹ I believe that with his first two novels, Jesús Fernández Santos was trying, in loose Marxist terms, to offer his readers an explanation of the effect on their lives of both the infrastructure of the regime, its social and political structures, in *Los bravos*, and the superstructure, religious ideology, in *En la hoguera*. Also one could suggest an interpretation of any metaphorical meaning in the titles along these lines. In *Los bravos*, as the author indicated in his interview with Concha Alborg, the title evoked both an unsophisticated, rudimentary state of political consciousness and, at the same time, a strong and dignified stand for what the characters consider to be right. In *En la hoguera*, the metaphorical title evokes the physical, unbearable heat of the plain and the all-consuming anguish that the Catholic notion of life as meaning suffering fosters, as well as the burning in hell and the Inquisition's fires for those who dare to question their

¹⁰⁰ Constance Thomas Zahn ignores the religious criticism in the novel, which leads her to conclude that Miguel is presented as a negative character: 'He is a representative example of the devitalized man who is unable to escape the spiritual devastation of the world around him or break out of the sterile isolation which imprisons him,' p. 189.

¹⁰¹ DiNubila also notices, when comparing the use of space between *En la hoguera* and *Los bravos*, that the author 'is concerned with the portrayal of a personal odyssey, a journey in search of self discovery', p. 52. Mubareck observes that: 'The individual may be subordinate to society in these earlier works, yet the author's focus reveals clear, if limited, evidence that *El hombre de los santos* stems from prior ideas and narrative techniques in *Los bravos* (1954), *En la hoguera* (1957), and *Laberintos* (1964). As Fernández Santos matures as a writer, he relies more on the characters' independence as the narrator of his or her interior speech to progressively reveal the authenticity or inauthenticity of his or her existential life', pp. 14-15.

faith. This is an image that reappears in the closing pages of Luis Martín Santos's *Tiempo de silencio*, with similar irony.¹⁰²

In order to analyse the novel I will take into account the author's declaration regarding the way he structured the novel around the two desires, 'vivir y morir'. I will demonstrate how Jesús Fernández Santos maintains that the individual finds a desire to live when he or she pays attention to the dictates of his or her body and how the desire to die originates from a combination of a religion that sublimates death and the repressive social attitudes derived from such a religion.

THE INNER WORLD

With a main character who is a middle-class young man suffering from tuberculosis and a secondary character who is a young miner suffering from silicosis, the author is able to pass critical judgement on the health care system of the 1950s, and the social inequalities inherent in it.¹⁰³ Two institutions that

¹⁰² The title has been interpreted in different ways. For Gastón Gáinza, in 'Vivencia bélica en la narrativa de Jesús Fernández Santos', *Estudios Filológicos*, 3 (1967), 91-125, the *hoguera* symbolises the aftermath of the civil war: 'Ha sido la guerra el origen y la causa de la hoguera en que se consumen los pueblos, como se consume Miguel con la fiebre de su tisis [...] chisporretean las brasas de la hoguera que la guerra civil encendió: vida que devino muerte', p. 119. For DiNubila: 'The very title, [is] connotative of a holocaust that burns, consuming itself slowly, leaving ashes as its only remains, but which, at the same time, insinuates a flame which is alive, although dying in the very act of living, the intersection of life and death', pp. 60-61. This is an interpretation that echoes that of Gonzalo Sobejano, pp. 328-29.

¹⁰³ As DiNubila points out, tuberculosis is a disease that appears in many novels of this period: Cela's *Pabellón de reposo*; Camus's *La Peste*; Delibes's *La sombra del ciprés es alargada* and in Aldecoa's *Espera de tercera clase*, p. 64, n10 and p. 66, n28.

provide treatment are mentioned in the novel: the hospitals and the sanatoriums. The poor conditions in the hospitals are such that, even if the patient does not die from his illness, he will die on account of the poor diet he will have to endure while he is convalescing. The sanatoriums are regarded as of better standard, but are only accessible to either those with connections, which is why the young miner asks Miguel to request a letter of recommendation from his cousin Antonio, or to those who can pay. The inequalities of the system are even more stark because Miguel benefits from a cure, a course of injections, available only to those who can afford it. Furthermore, the village does not have a doctor or a priest. Surgery is available in Madrid and Miguel has access to it through his cousin's connections.

Miguel and the young Rojo represent opposite attitudes to life. The uneducated miner has a strong instinctual desire to survive and in desperation agrees to his brother's plan to rob the wealthy Doña Constanza to pay for the treatment in a sanatorium. Miguel, the middle-class man with the means to get treatment, needs to go through a process of meditation, since he has assimilated the Catholic way of understanding life that reinforces a resigned acceptance of suffering and death.

The author never questions the religious explanation of the suffering of Jesus, the redemption of humanity from its sins through His sacrifice, that is celebrated during the festivities of Holy Week. What he attempts to show is that such a notion cannot be transposed to ordinary human beings. Fernández Santos does not criticise Christianity, rather the Catholicism preached in those days in Spain, presenting suffering as sublime, as if it had a purpose, and

for presenting the afterlife as giving meaning to life on earth – the transition period during which the individual's moral worth is on trial. Chapters 13 and 14 are dedicated to discussing this notion through the rhetorical device of establishing a dialogue between Miguel and the religious concept of suffering, using various means of intertextuality: quotes from the book *Los padres del yermo* by Brémond, the praying of the *Credo* at mass, and even a picture of a saint.

Quite often critics state that Fernández Santos's characters are lacking in vitality, that they are aboullic, as if this were inherent in them. As outlined in Chapter 1 of this thesis, this observation is unjust. In the case of *Los bravos*, it is the characters' abandonment by those in authority, together with the political repression that they are subjected to, that determines their seemingly passive behaviour. In the case of Don Antonio in *El hombre de los santos*, the author points to social attitudes as the reason. In *En la hoguera*, Miguel explains his 'abulia gris, la gran apatía que ahogaba todas sus acciones' in terms of a lack of affection and emotional support. His parents died when he was at an age where he was regarded by his relatives as 'un hombre', when in fact he was not, and although he was offered support he did not take the offer up soon enough, which resulted in his becoming detached: 'Y, al final, le olvidaron' (p. 46).¹⁰⁴ The idea that what gives meaning to life is the way we relate to others is postulated for the first time in *En la hoguera* and developed in *El hombre de los santos*. Miguel believes that with his parents' affection 'hubiera adoptado una actitud distinta ante la vida. Incluso con el tío Antonio en su

¹⁰⁴ Jesús Fernández Santos, *En la hoguera* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1975). All further references to the novel will be to this edition and will be given in the text.

sano juicio es posible que su vida hubiera tomado un derrotero distinto' (p. 46). Constance Thomas Zahn presents the breaking down of traditional family ties as a symptom of a 'spiritually bankrupt society' and Miguel's detached attitude to his uncle as symptomatic of his own insularity (p. 27).

The only person who tries to get Miguel to see life in a different way is his cousin, who reminds him that to give life meaning and dignity one needs to have a purpose. Although the cousin's psychology is not developed in the novel, he represents those able to move with the changing times: he is less influenced by religion and tries to enjoy the materialistic and cultural aspects of life, including looking after his body by going for regular medical check-ups, and broadening his horizons by travelling abroad. Miguel, on the other hand, is isolated. He reads religious books, resists being influenced by his cousin, and consequently represents those who maintain the traditional tenets of the country's culture. Miguel's experience of physical suffering through his illness makes him question the validity of those religious tenets. His meditations are primarily concerned with the great contradictions between the dictates of the body and the dictates of religion. This is a progressive process. This feature of the novel, which constitutes the main element of my analysis, has been neglected by critics.¹⁰⁵

When Miguel first hears about his illness, we learn that he has been considering ending his life: 'Los sentimientos que él creía olvidados surgieron con más fuerza que antes. Intentó pensar en la nada, en su muerte, como en el

¹⁰⁵ Even Concha Alborg, who studies the religious aspect of this work, limits her comment to a mere: 'Miguel, el protagonista [...] indirectamente se analiza a través de sus lecturas religiosas [...]. Pero tampoco él es capaz de encontrar consuelo en la religión', p. 52

descanso tantas veces deseado, como en la solución final de una serie de días sin objeto, inútiles' (p. 51). Paradoxically, physical pain is the factor that makes him question his negative attitude to life: 'Pero bastaba un golpe de tos para echar por tierra todos sus razonamientos' (p. 51). This is because Miguel also has a strong desire to be healthy: 'En su ciego deseo de sentirse sano sólo deseaba una palabra de aliento, de ánimo, cualquier asidero' (p. 51). It is his fear that makes him cling hopelessly to the remedies prescribed by his old fashioned doctor at the first symptom of his illness, which appear a few months prior to the start of the novel, in March. However, knowing deep-down from the beginning that such treatment, calcium and rest in the countryside, will not be effective in his case, he agrees to see the specialist in September. The initial phase of his rebellion against the Catholic notions of passivity and resignation is prompted when he thinks about his youth -- 'Pero su juventud no podía haber surgido de la nada' -- and this makes him question his previous approach to life on earth, life without a sense of meaning: 'Debía existir algo, una pequeña convicción, una fe en sí, en el mundo, que aun sin saberlo hubiera dado algún sentido a su paso por la vida, y ahora pudiera infundírselo a su muerte' (p. 51).

When Miguel arrives in the countryside, he forces his body to endure a daily exhausting walk, as if the body will submit to the mind's will: 'Él lo maltrataba [...] intentando aniquilarlo, dominarlo en aquellas penosas caminatas, como si quisiera matar en él un indómito, tenaz miedo a la nada' (p. 98). But his exhausted body is sending a very different message, and although he finds that 'no era difícil castigar el cuerpo', the notion of sacrifice is harder to accept: 'Lo difícil era encontrar a qué dedicar ese sacrificio' (p.

98). In this way the dilemma is presented in terms of what constitutes a human being -- the traditional dichotomy between the flesh as rotting matter and the soul as eternal spiritual matter. And whilst Brémond is preaching that the fear of death can be overcome by a believer having faith in God, thereby inducing a peaceful state of mind, Miguel finds that he cannot resign himself to accepting suffering and death as his fate: 'Y el espíritu se rebelaba, y el cuerpo maltrecho, le seguía prolongando las horas de dolor' (p. 99). Rather than achieving a peaceful state of mind, he experiences desperation: 'Un aniquilamiento, una tenue calma, un encontrarse a solas en el mundo, y era imposible amarse a sí mismo, a su propio espíritu, a su propio cuerpo' (p. 99).

Miguel is claiming for himself happiness on earth, the very thing he has never had. So, when contemplating a picture of a saint with an 'estúpida expresión' that reveals in his eyes 'el fuego de una pasión sobrenatural', Miguel rebels: 'Miguel no soñaba con ángeles, como el ermitaño del lienzo. Veía a menudo a su niñez, su juventud [...] soñaba con sus padres' (p. 97). His concern with life on earth surfaces again during mass, when he is saddened as he notices that the sarcophagi are empty with not even 'una sola ceniza que recuerde su paso por la tierra' (p. 97).

Even though the novel cannot be considered a religious novel as such, since it deals mainly with those religious notions concern with the body, suffering, and sex, it does contain a certain number of metaphysical considerations on the meaning of life. The intention is subversive because it suggest that the way to understand life is not in the religious terms of an afterlife, but in philosophical terms of the temporality of human existence: 'La vida, la edad, el tiempo, el dolor nada existía sólo las diminutas estrellas que

se iban desvaneciendo, y el negro vacío tras ellas. Un vacío, una nada infinita donde nace ese soplo que anima el corazón del hombre. No temía a la muerte en aquellos instantes, porque vivir y morir eran una misma cosa' (p. 145).¹⁰⁶

And this idea that human life does not form part of a great universal scheme under divine control is developed even further. What transpires is the notion that there is no cause-effect relationship in the course of events, that most things are due to chance, such as the Rojo brothers' impatience in deciding to rob Doña Constanza instead of waiting to get a place in the sanatorium, or Miguel's illness: 'A él también, sin saber por qué, le había tocado el lado duro de la vida' (p.154).

The inconclusive way in which Fernández Santos develops this notion allows the reader to speculate about which philosophical school of thinking he might be following. One could argue that his understanding of life was nihilistic, as DiNubila does. However, what matters in terms of ideology is that the author was postulating a way of understanding life on earth that went against, or at least questioned, the view held by the Spanish Catholic Church, the institution that was monopolising intellectual discussion on that very matter. It is clear that a religion that holds the belief that the suffering of the body is a test by God of one's faith can be used by those ruling the country to justifying the fact that they are not offering the same access to treatment to all

¹⁰⁶ DiNubila understands this very passage as the manifestation of an understanding of life in nihilistic terms. He states: 'Such a nihilistic profession leads Miguel (the preceding thoughts are his) to discount the efficacy of effort, to despair, to lose hopes of recovery and physical and emotional compenetration with another human being. As a result, his final and definite reaction is to withdraw more deeply into himself'. DiNubila then provides his own definition of nihilism: 'The significance of the term is this: the protagonists understand life as if nothing really existed, as if having no meaning or purpose. Such an attitude easily leads to estrangement and withdrawal', p. 50.

citizens, thereby reinforcing social inequalities. Miguel's decision to have his operation is presented as the right thing to do. If he had decided otherwise, an obsolete religious notion would have triumphed over a more progressive understanding of the importance not only of preserving life but of demanding the enjoyment of a better quality of life. The paradox is that the wider triumph of the religious notion of suffering contributed to the imposition of a nihilistic understanding of life that resulted in people enduring physical suffering when they should have demanded better health care.

It should be emphasised that Fernández Santos is not a pessimistic author, but an optimistic one in most of his works, as he clearly is here. Whether Miguel survives his operation is open to speculation, but his mental victory in overcoming a pessimistic understanding of life imposed by religion is a personal triumph.¹⁰⁷ We should remember that the novel was written in the 1950s, when the Church and State in Spain were closely entwined in the running of a Catholic State. The Rojo brothers make the case for equal access to health care as a universal human right. Miguel underlines the need to revise the religious notion of suffering that fosters passivity. Fernández Santos, without actually accusing the Church of deliberately supporting a regime that neglects the poor, nonetheless points out that the Church is contributing to that neglect by preaching acceptance of physical suffering. This is an obsolete notion and a backward attitude in view of the medical advances available. As Miguel's cousin states: 'Hoy ya no se muere nadie. Todo es cuestión de coger las cosas a tiempo. Un poco de voluntad' (p. 144).

¹⁰⁷ Constance Thomas Zahn disagrees: 'Whether he lives or dies does not matter since neither life nor death have any sense for him', p. 78.

The novel's ending is as open to interpretation as in *Los bravos* and later novels. In Chapter 21, as summer arrives and with it the unbearable heat, Miguel, in bed at dawn, meditates once more about death, prompted by a vision of the infants' section of the cemetery where his cousin was laid to rest. This is the same scene that opens the novel. The comforting belief in the afterlife, in being reunited with the deceased members of one's family, is once more emphasised: 'La gozosa seguridad de despertar un día y encontrarlos de nuevo' (p. 188). Previously, when listening to the passage about the resurrection of the dead in the Creed, Miguel admits how tempting it is to believe in it, in contrast to admitting that there is nothing awaiting us: 'El Infierno, la Gloria [...] cualquier cosa antes de volver a esa nada, a ese infinito, oscuro vacío, de donde el hombre nace' (p. 116). Whether the author is trying to convey that Miguel does indeed believe in the afterlife, even if he has doubts, or that it is an idea that he does not believe in but clings to in desperation, is a matter of speculation. It does not matter whether we choose to interpret it one way or another, because what counts is that Fernández Santos has managed to introduce, at a time of censorship, an alternative philosophical understanding of the meaning of life that subverts the religious one, the only one the regime endorsed. Any philosophical interpretation of human life based on its temporality, whether it echoes the existential approach of philosophers such as Heidegger, or has nihilistic innuendos, was subversive. Fernández Santos was certainly not new or alone in this, for his philosophical approach is not dissimilar to that which had already appeared in the work of Antonio Machado.¹⁰⁸

The final meditation on eternity provides a different vision from that of an ethereal, intangible world beyond death. In the penultimate chapter,

¹⁰⁸ See Juan Carlos Ballesta, *Las estrategias de la imaginación: Utopías literarias y retórica política bajo el franquismo*, pp. 1-9.

Miguel, in a dreamlike state, sitting in the main square on a quiet evening at sunset, meditates again about the meaning of eternity. He realises that it is here on earth: in the fields, in ever-changing Nature and man's intervention to overcome its limitations, like the new reservoir. It is also in the urban landscape, in the buildings, and mainly in the future generations. Since the novel ends on this optimistic note, with Miguel overcoming his fear of the operation and doing all that is available to him to stay alive, one could argue that this is the sense of vitality that Fernández Santos is endorsing, a sense of perpetuity that is to be found in humankind and its relationship with planet Earth, not in that of religious beliefs of the afterlife and resurrection of the soul.

This notion is reinforced throughout the novel by means of an imagery of the natural world. At dawn Miguel feels at one with Nature, a renewal of life that makes him want to be integrated back into the cosmos: 'Había deseado borrarse, fundirse en el mundo que a sus pies surgía, con los olivos, con el agua, con la tierra perenne, y no pasar nunca, como ellos, como aquel luminoso amanecer que cada mañana venía. -- Vivir, vivir un poco más, vivir siempre' (pp. 67-68). Instinctively, Miguel feels that perpetuity is to be found in the landscape into which we are integrated after death, dust to dust. For Spencer Gordon Freedman this echoes the philosophical approach of Miguel de Unamuno.¹⁰⁹

It is not coincidental that Miguel formulates such a perception of the meaning of eternity on the same day that the oldest character in the novel, Soledad's grandfather, reminds the young ones of two basic beliefs of popular wisdom: firstly, that elderly people have less of a problem in accepting death, since the body is looking forward to rest; secondly, and principally, of the

¹⁰⁹ 'Like Miguel de Unamuno's well known fictional figure, San Manuel Bueno, Miguel also would seek an eternal life through his own fusion with nature', Spencer Gordon Freedman, p. 65.

power of humans to rectify the damage caused to Nature, helping it to regenerate, such as in the rebuilding of the reservoir. As Inés has also reminded Miguel in this chapter, the village used to be prosperous until the excessive felling of trees led to the disappearance of the forests, and consequently to droughts (pp. 194-95).

Furthermore, water constantly appears as a symbol of life in the novel. Miguel's moods are determined by the weather: the heat makes him feel down, whilst the rain elevates his mood. Although Miguel leaves the village feeling a sense of emptiness, the image within which this feeling is incarcerated is representative of hope, of life renewal within the life-death dichotomy that the author has been developing throughout the novel. The fountain may be dry, but the sky is overcast, signifying that life will continue.¹¹⁰ Previously other examples of natural imagery which leave the reader with a sense of optimism are included: of fish hibernating in the river, of life lying dormant during the summer waiting to resurge in the autumn: 'Las grandes carpas [...] excavaron su lecho entre el cieno. Inertes en su sueño estival, esperaban la llegada del otoño' (p. 109). Another example of Fernández Santos's optimistic tone is the cypress, a symbol of death when associated with cemeteries, but, in the village, it is a symbol of life as it provides a home for the birds. It is also a symbol of endurance and this makes Miguel feel happy: 'A Miguel le gusta el ciprés de Baltasar porque en la planicie abrasada, en los alrededores del pueblo moribundo que el polvo entierra paulatinamente, es el único hito de vida que perdura' (p. 89).¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ For DiNubila though: 'The poignant image of the dried fountain as the novel draws to a close signals the death of the land and the village as a collective unit', p. 57. Freedman also interprets this image as a sign of death: 'Water diminishes in supply as the days pass. The end of the novel marks the virtual death of the village; the village fountain dries up and most of the residents abandon their *pueblo* to labor at the construction site of a reservoir in an outlying region', p. 67.

¹¹¹ However for DiNubila the cypress tree is a symbol that enhances negation, p. 60. He provides examples of other works where it has been used as such a symbol:

It is also significant that Miguel enters the operating theatre thinking that there is still hope that the life of the villagers will improve. This is not just an optimistic thought, but a revealing manifestation of his affection for and attachment to the villagers -- even if Miguel realises that he does not fit in amongst them, or does not wish to share his future with them. He does not feel alienated, contrary to what other critics argue.¹¹²

Spencer Gordon Freedman notes of the development of this theme in the novel: 'Rather pretentious philosophising makes it a less convincing picture of Spanish life and decreases its artistic value' (p. 81). I do not share his view. I also believe that Freedman is mistaken when he concludes: 'The problem of lost faith and the lack of religious ideals is again a concern of the novelist' (p. 68). The author is not concerned with 'an essentially faithless, atheistic pueblo' (p. 75), or if Doña Constanza's 'fornication with Zoilo marks the death of her faith and once consoling spirituality' (p. 68), or with 'a faithless audience' (p. 70) that attends the puppeteer's show, or if 'their God is a fear-inspiring figure whom they may hypocritically venerate as they continue to sin against their fellow man' (p. 70). On the contrary, what concerns Fernández Santos is the negative effect of religion on people, which is the main ideological point put forward in the novel.

Delibes's *La sombra del ciprés es alargada* and *El camino*; Gironella's *Los cipreses creen en Dios*; and Juan Goytisolo's *Fin de fiesta*, p. 68, n36. For Herzberger the symbolism of the cypress is two fold: 'On the one hand, it offers refuge for the birds [...], but at the same time serves as a constant reminder that Elena is unable to bear children'. This is the case because for Baltasar the singing of the birds sounds like the voices of children, p. 25.

¹¹² DiNubila thinks otherwise: '*En la hoguera* chronicles Miguel's journey in search of well-being. Seeing life in terms of weakness [...], he attempts to find a reason for living. Yet, the combination of circumstances [...] psychologically enervates him, leaving him depressed and withdrawn', p. 59. Constance Thomas Zahn also mentions: 'The pathetic figure of Miguel lying in his hospital bed, spiritually alone and dead', p. 194.

THE OUTSIDE WORLD: CATHOLICISM AND SOCIETY

Miguel's meditation is a progressive process which draws the conclusion that our lives are here for us to take control of. He comes to believe that we are the sole masters of our destiny on earth, regardless of whether human life fits in with a cosmic destiny. When asked for money by the younger Rojo brother, who is on the run after robbing Doña Constanza, Miguel proposes that instead of trying to escape (he believes they would not succeed), the brothers ought to turn themselves in. He even makes a phone call to a contact in the police to find out what the punishment would be. And when he sees the two brothers detained at the police station he reflects upon his interventions in the course of events -- providing the letter for the sanatorium, his trying to decide what the Rojos should do -- and concludes that it is not for him to decide for others. He wonders: 'Por qué cada cual no podría mantenerse dentro de su pequeño mundo' (p. 143). He complains about his cousins trying to 'sembrar en su alma un deseo de vivir, un deseo de gozar de acuerdo con la idea que de la dicha, de la vida, se habían forjado' (p. 142). He then justifies the need to keep his distance from people and the narrator mentions 'la barrera que Miguel había extendido en torno suyo' (p. 143).

It is because of this conclusion that Miguel changes his attitude to Inés, the pregnant single woman he has gradually come to feel attached to: he even contemplates settling down with her. He now keeps his distance from her, not getting involved sentimentally, not trying to help. Inés perceives this change: 'A veces ni se atrevía a mirarla con franqueza [...] parecía que su breve ausencia hubiera creado una barrera entre los dos [...] hora tras hora [...] hablando de su niñez, de su vida, como si su anterior tiempo en el pueblo no existiera' (p. 171).¹¹³ He then decides on his own problems and, as a result,

¹¹³ DiNubila understands this reaction differently. For him Miguel is becoming more alienated as the novel progresses: 'Inés [...] also falls in love with Miguel, only to see her love wither because of the latter's total alienation from himself and

Inés's hopes vanish.

This may seem a heartless attitude and even one that, on the surface, contradicts the view that Fernández Santos expresses elsewhere in his works -- that what gives meaning to life is the affection others show towards us. It may seem extreme, but what Fernández Santos is doing is presenting an attitude to others in which what ought to guide our actions is the authenticity of our feelings, authenticity here being positive responses to others' worth, not as a result of our magnanimity when others are in trouble. He highlights the need to value people for what they are, and not as an 'opportunity' for us to practise the Catholic/ Christian values inculcated in us.

The authenticity of feelings as the only justifiable motivation for our actions is the principle upon which Miguel judges people. Miguel admires Inés, but he does not think that the pity he feels for her ought to be the foundation upon which to base their potential relationship. Accordingly, he then tells the younger Rojo brother that the reason why his brother has planned the robbery has more to do with his own desire to emigrate to Mexico than a desire to help his brother.

The time that Miguel and Inés share together is only a few months: six months at the most, taking into account the pregnancy. In terms of real life, this is not long enough for a relationship to develop, particularly given the fact

from all around him', pp. 43-44. I do not see how DiNubila can reconcile his notion of the novel as an odyssey of self-discovery and his understanding of this character as an alienated human being. DiNubila forces an understanding of the novel in order to make it fit in with his premise that what prevails in Fernández Santos's works is a sense of nothingness.

that both characters are uncommunicative and have no serious conversations. In fact, critics have afforded too much relevance to their mutual influence, even talking about them falling in love.¹¹⁴ Miguel certainly likes Inés, mainly her composure in adverse circumstances. However, his reaction to her is complex. As a man considering what the implications of marrying Inés would be, Miguel is portrayed as ordinary and 'sensible'. He takes into account that social prejudices will fade: 'El hijo no tardaría en nacer. Los prejuicios pasarían' (p. 148). But the prospect of settling down in the village puts him off.

Yet the main aspect of his attraction to her is not that she is a woman he admires and desires, but that she is, because of being pregnant, the embodiment of his metaphysical preoccupations. He is projecting his own dilemmas onto her. Her pregnant body becomes repulsive to him, a symbol of life and death, the futility of being born to die. This is a concept that he finds difficult to come to terms with, but the acceptance of which he understands as his intellectual challenge to overcoming the Catholic concept of life as a trial before the afterlife. Being comfortable in her presence signifies an acceptance of the insignificance of human life on earth due to our temporal nature: 'Aquel cuerpo que comenzaba a desmoronarse le asustaba, le repelía. Sin embargo, se obligaba a verla [...] porque, a pesar de todo, encontraba placer a su lado, en vencer esa secreta repugnancia' (p. 188). To reinforce this idea of the insignificance of our lives, so brief in cosmic terms, the next thing that Miguel

¹¹⁴ For Concha Alborg: 'La callada determinación de Inés es la inspiración de Miguel, quien por fin decide operarse para salvarse de su enfermedad. Y también para Inés la presencia de un hombre preocupado por ella a pesar de su estado la anima a ser valiente. Ambos se sienten atraídos, pero tímidos y cargados de problemas, no llegan a encontrarse', p. 99. For Spencer Gordon Freedman: 'The young man falls in love with Inés and hopes some day to be the father of her child [...] a child that now represents for both protagonists the force of life and the continuity of existence. Tragically, Inés suffers a miscarriage and the hopes of the two are abruptly terminated', p. 66.

thinks of in this passage is the children's cemetery described in the prelude, which leads him to the conclusion that: 'Su misma brevedad les salvaba del tiempo, otorgándoles la eternidad perfecta, la eternidad del que nace y muere casi a un tiempo' (p. 188).

Within the fictional boundaries of the novel, it is Miguel's attitude to Inés, together with other events (her sister's insistence on her going to Madrid, and her father's silence) that make Inés realise that she cannot expect the solution to her problem to come from others, that it should come from herself. If, in getting pregnant she acted of her own accord and shaped her own destiny deciding to keep the child, so she does not need now to be redeemed by getting married, or by anyone else's actions. Inés is a victim-turned-heroine who does not need anybody's pity. Her developing baby becomes the main reason for her desire to live: 'Iba surgiendo lento, fatal, el deseo del hijo, que, como el hijo mismo, vivía en ella con más fuerza cada día. Un niño sólo de ella. El padre, María, Agustín, nada valían ya a su lado. Desde que lo quería, los insomnios eran más cortos, y la cabeza permanecía serena durante días enteros' (p.171). She then plans her future, relying only on herself.

The reaction of different characters to Inés's being pregnant out of wedlock serves to develop the criticism of social attitudes based on selfishness, lack of solidarity, and a repressive morality -- and an obsolete sense of honour in the case of her silent father. What leads her to attempt suicide is the lack of support she receives from those around her. Agustín starts the affair thinking that he could always control Inés, a woman he regards as 'un ser mudo y débil', 'sin determinación dura' (p. 26). He insists on her having an abortion because he never intended to marry her, and he worries about losing his job. María, her sister, does not want a scandal when she herself is about to get married and Doña Fe, Agustín's mother, is relieved when Inés goes back to her village because she sees that Inés's has a strong will and cannot be easily manipulated. Finally, Inés's father's silence, and the sadness in his

demeanour, makes his daughter feel unwanted, rejected.

The reactions of two other characters are also of interest. Lucas, the misogynistic ugly suitor with an emasculating mother, believes that he has a chance to make Inés his wife now that she is in trouble. But, unable to relate to her, he expresses his own frustration in aggressive gestures, and later fails to negotiate a deal with her father. And most shockingly, under a veneer of sympathy, Elena and Baltasar, the childless couple, hope that Inés will eventually give her child up for adoption, thereby giving them the chance to get a baby.¹¹⁵

What Fernández Santos is depicting here is the lack of solidarity in the community, the extreme individualism that emerges when someone dares to go against convention and break the rules. He reveals a meanness of spirit in the community. It is no wonder, then, that Inés soon places her hopes of a happy future in Miguel and hopes that: 'Junto a Miguel podría volver la serena confianza. El niño nacería bien' (p. 128).

Religion is the other factor that contributes to Inés's sense of rejection. She feels tempted to commit suicide once again after Lucas looks at her in anger and then remembers her confession after her previous attempt and what the priest told her. The confession reveals to the reader the notions about the body inculcated in Spaniards of the time and which have been developed in the novel through Miguel: that neither our lives nor our bodies belong to us and that our body is given to us either to honour God, for reproduction, or to endure suffering to prove that we are worthy of Him. Here, Fernández Santos leaves it to the reader to establish the cause-effect relationship between that

¹¹⁵ Constance Thomas Zahn provides a detailed study of the different reasons that explain the characters' reactions to Inés. Thomas Zahn puts her emphasis not on religion but on the general spiritual deterioration of the post-war years, which in this novel manifests itself in the 'painful loneliness born of each one's psychological isolation', which leads to a lack of communication and consequently to a lack of action, p. 17.

religious tenet and the character's behaviour. This is no doubt a problematic aspect to the novel since we do not know if Inés is really afraid of going to hell, or, more importantly, if she feels that she has indeed committed a sin by having sex. It could be that the author deliberately does not include Inés giving the matter any thoughts because what he was trying to convey was that she represents an innocent approach to sex, one free of guilt and shame, born out of love, in contrast to her cousin who just takes advantage of her. But what is clear is that such notions about our bodies do not contribute to a positive approach to life and the passage ends with Inés still thinking about suicide as a way to escape her circumstances.

The case of Doña Constanza leaves no doubt, however, as to the critical stance of the author towards a religion that he considers to be repressive. Since this is an aspect which the author develops in more detail in the novel I will be studying next, *Libro de las memorias de las cosas*, I will discuss it only briefly here. Doña Constanza lives in constant anguish, fearing that God may punish her carnal passion with such cruel measures as, for example, depriving her of her son. Her regular visits to her husband's tomb, as if to apologise for her lack of respect towards his memory, indicate a sense of social and moral conduct that reinforces the idea of religious repression. Here, the author is presenting the huge gap between the tone and content of Catholic apocalyptic preaching, and a real person's sexual needs. Resorting again to intertextuality, the author introduces in the novel a fragment of the 'Sermón de las Siete Palabras' broadcast on the radio on Good Friday. He is also pointing out that the hypocritical social attitude that derives from a repressive morality is as threatening as the notion of hell in the afterlife, since the punishment inflicted by the community on those caught sinning -- loss of respectability and being cast out -- is severe.

The society he presents here is one that sways from one extreme to the other, from the likes of the repressed Doña Constanza to the excesses of

those living on the margins of society: Don Ferrer and Alejandro the gypsy. The world of the travelling comedian and the gypsy is one of men treating women as objects to trade for other commodities. Ironically, Don Ferrer makes his living by staging religious plays. Since the village does not have a priest and Don Julián only comes on a few occasions, the reader is led to believe that the villagers receive some religious education as children, probably at school, and as adults are totally left to their own devices. Occupying a whole page, the inclusion of the theatrical programme makes a mockery of the role of the Catholic State in religious matters. Religion is reduced to entertainment and meaningless public acts such as the Holy Week procession, or to the apocalyptic and ominous strong language used in sermons, such as the one broadcast on the radio. The programme also serves to underline the futility of those biblical examples of behaviour in the present times. The younger Rojo brother may be fascinated by the story of Cain and Abel, but his crime will be motivated not by an innate envy but by sheer poverty. With these huge contrasts, Fernández Santos introduces an *esperpéntica* vision of the country.

Soledad's rape contributes to making the case for the urgent need to educate the population in sexual and gender matters and to adopt a more liberal approach thereby ending the prevailing stereotypes reinforced by biblical examples, such as Adam and Eve, which justify any male wrongdoings on the grounds that women are temptresses. Lucas voices this misogynistic attitude: 'Todas lo mismo, siempre tras de lo mismo' (p. 71), whereas the social reality the author is presenting is that of women as exploited members of society. There had been rumours about Alejandro ill-treating his wife, but nobody ever intervened, the implication being that Alejandro, as the head of the family, could impose his rule upon his dependents as he pleased. No one ever questioned him. For Alejandro, women are just there for the taking. He offered Don Ferrer food for his horses

in exchange for sex with his female companions. He could not understand that a man like Zoilo could have a relationship with the wealthy Doña Constanza without benefiting from her money. However, no one ever regarded him as a potential danger to other women in the village, so they did nothing.

The priest, Don Julián, introduces another critical aspect of the way in which religion was practised in those days. He remarks on the changes that have taken place since the war, with the rich being less generous and charitable towards the less fortunate, among whom he finds himself, than they used to be. He is forced to cycle in the scorching heat, because he cannot afford to buy a horse, which nobody, including the congregation, offers to buy for him. He observes how the rich are now more interested in helping the Church in ostentatious ways to reinforce their status in the community, for example Doña Constanza paying for the replacement of the church's bell.¹¹⁶ Indeed the Rojo brothers comment on the fact that with half the money she has spent, the younger one's illness could have been treated.

LIBRO DE LAS MEMORIAS DE LAS COSAS

This novel, published in 1971, represents the strongest condemnation by Fernández Santos of certain religious tenets which deal with human sexuality. Of the three narrative threads that form the structure of the novel, the stories of Molina and Margarita are dedicated to that major theme. My contention is that as the tenets held by the Protestant community echo those of the Catholic Church (since they both have the Bible as the sacred book of knowledge), the

¹¹⁶ However, for Spencer Gordon Freedman the priest is a: 'Ludicrous figure who [...] resents the fact that they have not donated him a horse to facilitate his infrequent journeys to the *pueblo*. Less righteous than the itinerant priest of *Los bravos*, don Luis is openly envious of doña Constanza's wealth', pp. 68-69.

novel ought to be read not as a rejection of this particular Protestant community but as a rejection of any religion that preaches sexual repression as a moral stance.¹¹⁷ This will form the core of my study of the novel. The approval in 1966 of a new *Ley de Prensa*, amid a climate of relative political openness, contributed to some extent to a renewal of many Spanish cultural activities.¹¹⁸ It also made it possible in 1970 for Fernández Santos to elaborate unambiguously on the repercussions of a strict religious upbringing, to which the majority of the citizens of the country had been subjected, and Spanish readers can easily draw parallels between the lives of the fictional characters and their own.

The third narrative thread, provided by the unnamed interviewer and writer of the book, provides the history of the Protestant community in the village of Ribera de Negrillos, from its origins to the present day, and its relationship with the Catholic majority.¹¹⁹ This thread introduces the other

¹¹⁷ Concha Alborg sees similarities between Margarita and Montse Claramunt, the protagonist of *La oscura historia de la prima Montse* by Juan Marsé (1970). Both characters are victims of the group they belong to: 'La diferencia de religión -- Montse es católica y Margarita, protestante -- no altera el contenido del mensaje de los autores: los efectos de una religiosidad exagerada pueden ser fatales.' Alborg also observes that: 'Se puede interpretar a la Comunidad protestante como un microcosmos de la España católica. En una conferencia en Salamanca, el autor admite al hablar de los Hermanos: "Tienen sus miembros parecidos problemas que los católicos, agudizados precisamente por su condición de minoría"', pp. 77-78.

¹¹⁸ Carr and Fusi note: 'Thanks to the flexibility of the Ministry of Information under Fraga Iribarne (1962-69) Marxist literature began to appear in Spanish bookshops'. This made it possible that: 'The Marxism of the new realists was the most evident sign of their militancy in the anti-Francoist opposition'. However: 'If imported Marxism was the main philosophy of rebellion, the culture of the exiles was seen as a similar radical alternative to the "sclerotic" official culture, more intransigent in its rejection of the regime than the domestic liberal tradition. It was the left-wing opposition that, in the sixties, steadily recovered the culture of exile in magazines like *Triunfo* [...]. The luminaries of "National Catholicism" were neither read nor remembered', pp. 126-27.

¹¹⁹ There has been some disagreement as to the identity of the community. Spencer Gordon Freedman identified it as the Plymouth Brethren in his doctoral dissertation in 1972, p. 131. Concha Alborg also identifies it as the Plymouth

thematic interests in the novel: the fact that any set of beliefs inevitably has a historical basis and the role of the contemporary Church.¹²⁰ Critics have noted both themes and there have been no major differences in the interpretation of the novel.

The tone of the novel is tragic. The author describes, with deep sympathy for his characters, processes of individual self-destruction that arise from the refusal, or inability, of the Protestant community authorities to revise the moral principles they put forward as fixed rules of conduct in a constantly changing world. This leaves each believer with no guidance which will enable them to make sense of the major contradictions in the contrast between the religious and secular worlds: a religion that preaches sexual repression and a modern secular world that encourages hedonism. Their capacity to reconcile these two worlds by creating a personal set of values and acting accordingly is what defines the main characters in the novel. Alongside this thematic line, which is focused upon the individual, the novel outlines the gradual decline of the community and its isolation, as its members recall happier times in elegiac tones.¹²¹

As in some of the works already studied, Fernández Santos introduces

Brethren, p. 69. Alborg adds that it is mentioned in the novel as the most numerous Protestant community in Spain, a fact that she notes is corroborated by Ramón Tamames in his *La República. La era de Franco*, p. 57. David Herzberger, though, points out that there is 'no specific evidence within the novel 'to support that claim', p. 123. He prefers to define the community as 'fictional', p. 54. However, I do not think that the argument is relevant to an understanding of the novel.

¹²⁰ Concha Alborg remarks on the timing of this novel: 'Vale también destacar el contexto de la obra ganadora del Premio Eugenio Nadal de 1970, y la oportunidad de su aparición. En el Concilio Vaticano II, convocado por el Papa Juan XXIII en 1967, se declaró la libertad religiosa de cultos [...] Era natural que una novela sobre este asunto despertara gran curiosidad', p. 68.

¹²¹ DiNubila describes the tone of the whole novel as 'elegiac', p. 178.

the rhetorical device of irony to encourage the reader to understand his point of view. As his attitude to his subject matter is always respectful, his use of sharp irony is not patronising. For example, when in the first few pages the unnamed interviewer/researcher visits the chapel and remarks how impossible it is to practise the code of conduct displayed on its walls, the simplicity of the language used to give instructions reveals an inhuman, unrealistic, and nonsensical notion of the body, which provokes a sense of hilarity as well as sadness.¹²²

Similarly, the last paragraph of the epilogue contains a sardonic irony regarding the title: 'Ese otro Libro de las memorias de las cosas'. The book mentioned in the Bible condemns sex outside marriage in the most threatening manner imaginable, but also positively celebrates sex within marriage. However, this text is a tragic account of the implementation of a narrow-minded interpretation of such sacred scriptures. The eroticism of the biblical text contrasts painfully with the clinically brutal language used by the head of the community, Sedano, to describe sex of and the deep desperation of Margarita's reflections on her wasted life. Once more, as he did in *En la hoguera*, Fernández Santos uses intertextuality and leaves it to the reader to establish the cause-effect relationships between the two different discourses in the two books of memories. Fernández Santos does not criticise Christianity and its tenets as reflected in the Bible, but rather the way in which a group of believers -- Spanish Catholics in *En la hoguera*, a Protestant community in *Libro de las memorias de las cosas* -- interpret those religious principles and the dire consequences that follow. The main implicit criticism is that of historical context: the Bible was written in response to the particular circumstances of

¹²² Concha Alborg notes: 'Cada una de estas reglas [...] están seguidas de un comentario irónico del narrador, quien comenta la dificultad de su cumplimiento estableciendo una dialéctica entre los principios religiosos y su práctica, que da el tono a toda la obra', p. 70.

the time when it was written and, consequently, the biggest mistake a believer can make is to consider it as a timeless sacred revelation.

Within the confines of a solid structure, the author engages the reader in a game of reconstructing the intended meaning of the novel by providing clues in the fragments he extracts from other texts. Used in this way, intertextuality livens up the whole reading process in an otherwise grim narration. The placing of the two epigraphs at the start is a good case in point. They reflect a contradiction. The novel deals with temporality, with the notion of life as a time-process. However, in the idea of The Word of God as it is recorded in the sacred scriptures, from where the community draws its beliefs, we find the notion of atemporality. These two notions are irreconcilable for the community. Therefore, the author introduces the novel to the reader by presenting two juxtaposed epigraphs that highlight these two notions. Only as the reading progresses can the reader throw some light on the way epigraphs and narration are intertwined. The title of the novel itself, *Libro de las memorias de las cosas*, 'The Chronicle of Daily Events', is from the original Book of Esther, Chapter 6, mentioned in the first epigraph but there is a segment missing:

Aquella noche se le fue el sueño al rey, y dijo que le trajesen el
Libro de las memorias de las cosas de los tiempos; y leyéronlas
delante del rey.

The omission of *de los tiempos* possibly denotes that the characters in the novel have neglected the particular concept the author is highlighting: historicity as the very nature of things, the key to understanding the significance of our lives and without which religious beliefs do not make sense. Furthermore, the reader cannot help but notice that the interviewer omits dates from his account of the history of the community. And although

some events are easily dated, others are not, thus producing a hazy effect. The reader gets an impressionistic overall view of their history, but not a linear, cause-effect explanation. Why should the interviewer bother with chronology when his subjects of study do not? This is particularly relevant when the events recorded in the Bible are interpreted without considering them in their historical context.

The second epigraph, a quote from Chapter 19 of Exodus, introduces the notion of God's chosen people:

Ahora, pues, si diereis oído a mi voz y guardaréis mi pacto, vosotros seréis mi especial tesoro sobre todos los pueblos; porque mía es toda la Tierra.

Y vosotros seréis mi reino de sacerdotes y gente sana.

The repetition of an obsessive 'mi' hints playfully at there being one single interpretation of religion for those who rightly follow God's commandments. It is only later that the reader realises the ironic relationship between the text and reality: in Spain there are ninety-nine non-catholic religious communities, each one of which believes that they are the only ones who interpret the text correctly and are consequently the chosen ones. This is reinforced as the reader realises that this particular community defends their isolation from the others on the basis that they follow the biblical example: '¿Cuando se mezcló con los demás el pueblo de Israel? ¿No fueron independientes los primeros cristianos? ¿No les vino de ahí, su gloria y grandeza?' (p. 120).¹²³

As has been said, the structure of the novel relies heavily on intertextuality. Besides the biblical texts, we find the inclusion of fragments of

¹²³ Jesús Fernández Santos, *Libro de las memorias de las cosas* (Barcelona: Destino, 1982). All further references to the novel will be to this edition and will be given in the text.

different types of documents such as letters, Church documents, answers to the interviewer, dialogue, and so on. This diversity of narrative techniques emphasises the diversity of voices, as does the absence of an omnipresent narrator-author. Critics have regarded the style and technique of the novel as typical of a certain narrative of the 1970s.¹²⁴ Freedman finds that some passages are superfluous and that the novel could have benefited from some 'judicious pruning and tightening'.¹²⁵

THE INNER WORLD

The action in the novel takes place over twelve months, from October to October, with key references to the passing of time: in the opening page there is a mention that we are in the first days of autumn (p. 7); there is a reference to Christmas mass (p. 295); May is mentioned (p. 320); the unbearable heat of the summer in Margarita's room (p. 375), and the return of the October rains (p. 388). During this time we witness Margarita, as a believer and human being, constantly questioning her long-held principles and tempted to adopt those of what, in the restrictive world of her community, are described as 'the outside world'. Margarita's age gives an edge to her personal situation, a sense of now or never. This sexually inexperienced woman, in her early

¹²⁴ According to David Herzberger: 'Fernández Santos is able to establish a rhythmic flow that closely aligns his prose with the peripatetic style of much of the new Spanish narrative of the 1970s', p. 62. Freedman finds the technique 'reminiscent of Juan Goytisolo's *Señas de identidad* (1966)', p. 133.

¹²⁵ Among the episodes Freedman finds superfluous are Adele's discussion of university life, the visit to a prison by Sedano, and Molina's work at the mine. Freedman concludes that: 'The many disparate threads of *Libro de las memorias de las cosas* (social, historical, ideological, and psychological) woven through the many pages do not achieve an effect of total unity. In the end, the reader may sense that the novel's multiple fragments have not formed a unified mosaic, and that the final impression is one of an admixture of diverse and only partially cohesive elements', pp. 160-61.

thirties, wonders about her chances of ever finding a husband. The event that triggers the onset of her depression will be her first sexual experience, the subsequent condemnation by her sister (who represents those who never question the community authorities and the religious principles they implement), and her male friend's total retreat from her with no explanation after that first encounter. In the end, Margarita commits suicide because of her own inability to abandon the principles imbibed in her as a child, finding herself lost and distraught by the sexual conduct she observes in the modern world, and ultimately unable to formulate her own personal principles. Her process of self-destruction is presented with an abundance of detail.

The concept of pleasure is at the root of the argument. As in *En la hoguera*, Fernández Santos is calling attention to the rigid cultural tenets that are shaping human lives in negative ways. In that novel he dealt with the religious sublimation of physical pain as sacrifice. Here he deals with the repression of sexual pleasure as ethical personal conduct. In order to develop this argument he concentrates on three different spheres: pleasure and marriage; pleasure and women, and the pursuit of pleasure as objective in life.

Muñoz, the new leader, clearly states that the survival of the community relies upon its members marrying other members, being 'casados dentro de ella' (p. 154). But the younger generation of members is developing a notion of identity based upon a sense of personal freedom, where being true to oneself as an individual comes before loyalty to the group. This manifests itself in the choices of spouses, threatening the community's survival as the numbers diminish. Muñoz's own daughter is romantically involved with a Jehovah's witness to whom she gets married. Margarita and Virginia are accused by an unnamed person of having social pretensions as regards potential husbands, of aspiring to marry well, and of dismissing the community's members on those grounds. Yet the reality is that they do not

seem to find suitable partners with whom they have an affinity.¹²⁶ And, although Margarita worries at the beginning of the novel that their circle of male acquaintances is becoming even smaller, now that she and her sister have fallen out with some community members over the expulsion of Molina she refuses to regard the members as the best potential husbands solely on the grounds of their being members.

The contrast between individual freedom and loyalty to a group has been presented to the reader in other works. The doctor of *Los bravos* declined to perpetuate his social class by marrying and confining the practice of his profession to the middle classes. Antonio of *El hombre de los santos* meditates on the price he has paid in terms of personal and professional development for choosing to remain within the comfort of his social class. Víctor of *Balada de amor y soledad* chooses the security of his profession and loyalty to his employer instead of developing his political consciousness -- and ends up lost in the pursuit of nonsensical individualistic challenges. In these novels, those who conformed to the demands of their group ended up feeling alienated.

Margarita is a discreet rebel, a reserved yet inquisitive type who tries to reconcile within herself the different cultural influences she has been exposed to and thereby make sense of herself. Her problem is that she differs from the community in respect of her views of what should constitute the basis for marriage. Making sense of what sex/love is about occupies most of her thinking process. Margarita remembers her father's definition of sex:

El sexo no era ni más ni menos que un instante, un acto más
de la ley natural, santificado luego dentro del orden de la

¹²⁶ Freedman, however, believes in their social pretension: 'Both Margarita and her older sister, Virginia, [are] condemned to spinsterhood because of their superior social position in their village that will not allow them to marry beneath their station', p. 137.

Iglesia. Tal se lo había explicado a sus dos hijas [...] tan sólo unos instantes, borrados después, sin huella, a no ser que se deje dominar uno por él, a menos que se le permita entrar en la cabeza. Entonces se convierte en un animal salvaje, peligroso. Si se le deja en paz, él os dejará en paz. Si se le excita, acabará por devoraros. (p. 190)

An intertextual dialogue (with biblical references) is immediately established as Margarita explains her own notion of what should be the basis for marriage. It is revealing that Margarita replaces the word 'sex' with the word 'love', marking the great difference in her concept of the union. For Sedano, his union with his wife was above all based upon a shared objective in life: the expansion of the community. Margarita, though, feels that it ought to be based on an instinctual and romantic attachment as in the examples she provides us with: missing the young boy she felt attracted to as a young girl, the loving look of Muñoz's wife, Virginia's jealousy of Molina's partner, boys and girls strolling hand in hand, and so on (p. 190). And above all, the anticipation of sharing sexual pleasure which she projects onto Cecil, her father's first wife, in a passage where Cecil's anticipation is punctuated by extracts taken from the Bible in straightforward, delightful, erotic language. This does not imply that the community believes that married partners are not to enjoy sex, simply that the enjoyment of sex should not be considered as the first priority. Indeed, Sedano himself expresses desire for his wife.

Virginia, on the other hand, introduces the concept of a human being as it was explained to her by her father, the leader of the community. That is, as a mechanical apparatus, encapsulated in the metaphorical figure of a clock whose pendulum (equilibrium), representing faith and religion, relies upon the correct functioning of two weights that symbolise the natural bodily passions. This is the conventional, long-held concept of human beings as an

irreconcilable dichotomy, the body giving rise to animal passions, the soul as the guardian of human morality that will keep passions at bay. Morality is therefore understood in terms of religious tenets.

Margarita is looking for someone who can open up her restricted intellectual world, someone who can help her make sense of her wearisome life, a life that makes her feel alienated. This explains her attraction to the more liberal members of the community who have experiences of life outside the community's environment -- Emilio and his friend Agustín: 'Su risa, de pronto y sin proponérselo, le hace ver ante sí, para su bien o para su mal, qué cosa tan pequeña y limitada es su vida y qué poco sentido tiene preocuparse por lo que piensan Virginia o los hermanos' (p. 239). Also, she fantasises about her father and his first wife, Cecil, a role model of a relationship since, in her eyes, it combined both a passion for each other with a shared commitment to a cause. The strong influence of this role model manifests itself in her choice of men. Margarita first feels attracted to Emilio because in a Freudian way he reminds her of her own father. But when she realises that the attraction is not mutual, she starts to feel attracted to Agustín, because, again, he reminds her of her father, and, in addition, he reminds her of the first boy she ever felt attracted to and has his name. However, Agustín's principal attractions are that his outgoing personality is different from the rest of the introverted men she knows and his views are not those of the community, which he regards as stuck in the past. In fact, it is never revealed which religious community he belongs to. If Margarita's father was the hero of his time, the strong-willed man that opened up the chapel despite the difficulties he encountered, Agustín and Emilio could be, in her eyes, the strong leaders of today who reform the community. And if Cecil, the foreigner with the unlimited passion both for her husband and the community, was the ideal companion, Margarita could be as committed a companion if she found her man. This is an idea that is also expressed in biblical verses (p. 176). But not

having found a suitable partner, and having doubts about her faith and the community, Margarita is on the point of breaking down, as her first invocation to Cecil reveals: 'Di, Cecil, ¿Cómo es ese miedo, o ese valor que yo apenas tengo para nada, que me hace temer de todo cada vez más, no estar segura nunca?; ¿ese valor que tú tuviste, que dicen que tenías, esa voz que te dice en la noche, en la hora peor "tu vida es importante y sirve para algo"?' (pp. 96-97). And later on: 'Así a oscuras, se piensan cosas que nunca ocurren, cómo morir y así, cómo acabar la vida, una vida que es peor si se enciende la luz' (p. 140).

The struggle between nature and culture is presented unambiguously. As a healthy and vital individual, Margarita refuses to resign herself to letting life pass her by, to ending up a virginal spinster. Her age gives her a sense of urgency to rebel, to find her own identity on her own terms, and a partner to complement it. The first step she takes is in respect of her physical appearance, which begins to seem important to her. She wonders whether she could have the courage to update her obsolete wardrobe, and wear miniskirts. Indeed, at one point she even considers having a face-lift. Ultimately, her way of rebelling is to have sex with Agustín before establishing a relationship that would end in marriage, thus giving priority to sexual pleasure over commitment. As she meditates before taking the decision to have sex, what matters is to establish what she really wants to do with her body, of her own free will: '¿Qué quiere? ¿Dónde vamos? Y, sobre todo ¿qué es lo que quiero yo?' (p. 241). Once she takes the decision, she is willing to face the consequences, including the fact that she means nothing to Agustín, who does not bother to contact her again, for which she feels no resentment. Yet she keeps dreaming of his return, of being able to transform what she understands as an affectionate sexual relationship into a permanent marriage.

Fernández Santos soon places in the general framework of the Bible, and implicitly in the cultural context of the Western world, his observations

on women's sexuality and women's role in the group as guardians of sexual conduct. In order to develop this aspect, he chooses a passage from 'The Chronicle of Daily Events', which, by providing the novel's title, draws attention to the theme:

Tus pechos te brotaron, tu pelo te creció, mas tú estabas desnuda y descubierta. Y pasé junto a ti y te miré, y he aquí que tu tiempo era tiempo de amores. Extendí mi manto sobre ti y cubrí tu desnudez y entré en concierto contigo y fuiste mía. Mas confiaste en tu hermosura y fornicaste a cuantos pasaron y derramaste tus fornicaciones a cuantos pasaron suya eras [...] Por tanto, he aquí que yo te juzgaré por las leyes de los que derraman sangre y te castigaré en sangre de ira y de celo. Porque no en vano tu hermana mayor es Samaria y tu hermana menor es Sodoma. (pp. 221-22)

The representation of woman as temptress, the seed of evil, the originator of sin, is archetypal and needs no further comment. But what is of particular interest here is that the author focuses upon the destructive effects of such a notion on women themselves. Since the belief is that recognition of one's beauty is what encourages women to seek pleasure, Margarita and Virginia are encouraged to ignore their own beauty, not to appreciate it. They are advised to keep away from the mirror, the devil's instrument of temptation that would make them see themselves as desirable. Therefore, the seed of self-destruction is planted in a woman's mind. In order to become an integrated member of the community she has to forgo an appreciation of her own body, developing instead a cultural notion of herself as a non-sexual being until she is needed as a companion to her husband. This is the reason why Virginia and Margarita, as young girls, are indoctrinated into regarding masturbation as

sin, preventing them from considering their bodies as their own property and developing the notion of pleasure for pleasure's sake. The end that this preaching pursues is the prevention of premarital sex. The irrational conclusion is drawn that, once a woman finds out about her capacity for pleasure, she will inevitably lose control over her body and will make herself available to whoever wants to enjoy her sexually -- or she herself will pursue different partners. This sin is, it is suggested, regarded in the Bible as deserving the harshest of punishment and this notion of having multiple partners will haunt Margarita for life. Margarita remembers the apposite biblical passage when she wants to get closer to Agustín, and her sister Virginia recalls it when Margarita comes back in the early hours of the morning after spending the day with Agustín.

At different stages of her life, Margarita rebels in different ways against this imposed denial of her sexuality. Since her mother had assumed the responsibility of passing on to her daughters the moral values of the group concerning their role within it, Margarita's mother reads the biblical passages to her as a young girl. Margarita's subconscious reaction is to dream of strangling her mother and replacing her in the marital bed. Through the eyes of the girls, the mother exercises a repressive power by trying to remove any manifestation of sensuality and is a contradictory figure who preaches absolute abstinence from any type of physical pleasure, while enjoying sex herself. The author simply presents Margarita's reaction as a rebellious act against the moral authority that her mother embodies. Margarita projects onto Cecil her need for a more sympathetic motherly figure. Cecil was after all, a feminine woman in a stereotypical way. She brought from England the beautiful dresses that she would wear in the evening after a hard day, and she was criticised for that. Margarita's mother would dispose of those clothes and erase any sign of Cecil, such as photographs. Other women within the group assume the role of guardians. Virginia first smacks her sister as a child when

Margarita shows affection for a boy who does not belong to the community. And Virginia definitely assumes the role of guardian of the group's moral values when she hits her sister after her date with Agustín. Margarita finally distances herself from Virginia by cutting off any verbal communication between the two of them, making it clear that it is a matter of authority: '¿Quién es para tratarme así? ¿Con qué derecho? ¿En nombre de qué cosa tengo yo que darle cuenta de lo que hago, de dónde voy, con quién salgo, a qué hora, de dónde vuelvo?' (p. 252). This repressive guardian role that designed women's play results in a lack of bonding and Margarita resents her mother: 'Díme, madre, tú que nunca sacaste la cara por mí, tú que en vida tan poco me quisiste' (p. 252). Margarita also resents her sister's authority, which is based on the hierarchical principle of her being the eldest, which entitles her to impose certain rules such as not having television at home, not talking about sex (even if it is in the context of films), and having the last word on matters such as whether or not to go to the conference in Barcelona.

Margarita is desperate to get out of the claustrophobic and intransigent environment in which she lives. But having attempted to break free by following her own judgement, she finds herself with no way out, isolated and spiritually torn between her innermost contradictions. As her way of rebelling against a religion that means nothing to her anymore she refuses to attend the meetings with the brothers, which are considered compulsory. On several occasions she expresses doubts about her own faith. Furthermore, she is regarded by the brothers as: 'Quien, consciente y voluntariamente, se separa del Señor' (p. 346). She is isolated, stuck at home with her sister, with no news from Agustín, obsessively hoping that he will come one day. In her last days, the only support she receives is from the librarian at work with whom she spends time.

Spiritually, her final challenge is to overcome the notion of sin, a notion so embedded in her psyche that each time she judges herself as a

sinner she feels like vomiting in self-disgust. The biblical book will always be the reminder of sin: 'Se alzaban aquellas páginas del Libro de las cosas [...] despertó con palpitaciones, pensando, sospechando que había pecado en sueños y las veces que después pecaría sin proponérselo, unas veces dormida y otras veces despierta' (p. 222). She will always find herself torn between the feeling of normality that comes from her instinctive actions, and her sense of morality. Indeed, she wondered about sin when she was considering sex with Agustín: 'Sería pecado o no dejar que la besara, abrazarla [...] De nuevo esa náusea, esa angustia terrible por la angustia en sí y también por el miedo al ridículo' (p. 242). But having had sex, she challenges the notion of sin attached to it: '¿Quién dice, quién puede asegurar que es pecado lo que hicimos? ¿Quién puede saberlo sino el señor o yo o Agustín, que seguro a estas horas ya se olvidó durmiendo?' (p. 254). And although she does not show remorse for her sexual conduct, she has doubts again at the Christmas mass, when the priest points out how easy it is for the faithful to fall into temptation in the atmosphere of freedom that is filtering in from the modern world. Yet even though she has had some kind of sexual contact with Agustín, she cannot come to terms with the practice of masturbation. Unable to overcome the notion of sin, she remembers the women in a prison her father visited some time before, mainly prostitutes, as the type of women who would indulge in it.

Trying to comprehend the new sexual code of conduct that she observes in the outside world proves a challenge that drives her into desperation and suicide. During the heat of the summer, as she watches two naked female neighbours (mother and daughter) relaxing in the night breeze, she wonders how anybody can feel so relaxed with their own body and achieve such a degree of intimacy. This is something she has been unable to establish with her sister. She, instinctively, considers them normal, but she knows that such behaviour is condemned in the Bible. Intrigued, she keeps an

eye on them. When she notices that they are visited by a male, with whom, she gathers, they both enjoy sex, she finds herself fantasizing about them, guessing that they are prostitutes. Ironically, she remarks that they probably belong to a hippy church then in fashion in places such as California. The irony is even more biting when she concludes that they would be forgiven by God if they are members of a church, as if there were churches, philosophies, or sets of beliefs to justify any individual's whims. As a result of all of this, she finds herself vomiting once more. Trapped between extremes, unable to develop her own code of conduct, she commits suicide: 'Así llegó un día, una noche en que no pude aborrecerme más' (p. 380).

The figure of the *demonio*, the woman Molina lives with after becoming a widower, adds to the depiction of women's sexuality within the novel. What is of interest about this character is her own understanding of sexuality. As a young girl she was forced by her employers to provide sex as a condition of keeping her job, following which she decides to live off men by becoming their mistress. The author sympathetically justifies her becoming a prostitute on the grounds of the poverty of her background, and her decision is presented as indicating someone who is taking control of her life. Furthermore, she dismisses marriage as another type of employment for women. What she cannot understand is how the new generation of women can have the same approach to sex as men: sex as a way of escaping boredom. She believes that sex as a commodity to trade is a justifiable option for women, whilst women pursuing hedonistic sex deserve to be judge harshly. In a way, her opinion on young women's attitude to sex echoes the biblical message contained in the passage from 'The Chronicle of Daily Events': 'Pero no fuiste ramera, porque a ellas dan dones, y tú, en cambio, diste dones a tus enamorados y les diste presentes para que entraran a ti' (p. 222). In fact, it is difficult to deduce from the novel the author's attitude to modern women in respect of their sexual behaviour. But in general, regardless of the character's

gender, Fernández Santos presents hedonistic sex as a symptom of alienation as we shall see in the next chapter when *Jaque a la dama* is discussed.

The character of Molina also illustrates sexual repression and its dire consequences. Since his marriage to Virginia, the symbol of unbreakable faith and fierce loyalty to the group, ends the novel it is important to understand the relevance of this character in terms of the general message of the work. Having been a practising member of the community, Molina undergoes a personal crisis triggered by the death of his wife. And since, as we have seen, loyalty to the group is reaffirmed by choosing a partner within the group, in order to express his anger towards such a repressive environment, Molina chooses a partner who makes a living out of becoming the mistress of the men she works for as a housekeeper. The selection is made without thinking, instinctively, but he himself admits later on that: 'Era él quien la había buscado [...] quizás en un esfuerzo por librarse definitivamente de los Hermanos o puede que del recuerdo de su mujer o quizá de sí mismo' (p. 204). Molina is also aware that he was looking for self-destruction: 'Como una muerte, lo mismo que una ruina anticipada. Porque al día siguiente de conocerla [...] había vuelto sabiendo que posiblemente elegía su fin, imaginando un poco lo que a través de ella llegaría' (p. 204). And his purpose is nothing less than to give in to his passions, to immerse himself in the enjoyment of sex, and to be disgusted with himself for doing so: 'Le llenaba, al despertar, de un odio, de un rencor hacia sí mismo que era preciso expulsar, vomitar, echar fuera de sí' (p. 130). In common with Margarita, Molina is torn between his contradictions and, indeed, finds himself often thinking about suicide: 'Yo pensé tantas veces en matarme' (p. 54). He expresses the need for liberation through the dreamlike image of being transported by the river to the unknown: 'Oía la voz de ese río que en la noche le llamaba, que le arrastraba, en sueños, a lugares desconocidos y remotos, a aventuras angustiosas, alegres, obscenas' (p. 131). But in the end, Molina finds

himself with a partner who has been trying to pair herself with both Molina's brother and nephew (which Molina does not mind) and robbed and abandoned by this *demonio*. Unable to cope outside the community, he returns to it and marries Virginia. This marriage is a powerful example of the inability of people brought up in such repressive, closed environments to overcome their limitations, and who are condemned to remain within the group for good.¹²⁷

THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Libro de las memorias de las cosas was published in 1970, a few years after the summoning of the Second Vatican Council in 1962 by Pope John XXIII. In its wake, the freedom to practise any religion became a civil right in Spain, marking the end of the era of 'National Catholicism'.¹²⁸ This made it possible for Fernández Santos to investigate and present to his readers a picture of

¹²⁷ Concha Alborg does not remark on the self-destructive tendencies that Molina shares with Margarita, but nevertheless she observes: 'Molina es un personaje oscuro, y lo más incomprensible es su matrimonio al final con una mujer por la que no sentía ningún afecto. No se puede interpretar esta unión sino como indicación de la futilidad de su adaptación al mundo circundante; es más, se imagina que este matrimonio será tan estéril como el páramo donde habitan', p. 75. Although David Herzberger misses the self-destruction aspect in Molina: 'The motivations for his rejection of the community and his attraction to the demon are never made clear', he agrees with me on what his marriage to Virginia means: 'Fernández Santos, however, does not depict their marriage as the triumph of good over evil, but rather as the union of two anguished individuals who have turned to one another out of existential solitude and necessity', p. 61.

¹²⁸ 'Concretamente el Concilio Vaticano II [...] en su declaración sobre libertad religiosa aprobada el 7 de diciembre de 1965, estableció sin lugar a dudas que el derecho a esta libertad "fundado en la dignidad misma de la persona humana, ha de ser reconocido en el ordenamiento jurídico de la sociedad, de forma que llegue a convertirse en un derecho civil" '. This brought about the 'Ley 44/1967, de 28 de junio, reguladora del "derecho civil a la libertad en materia religiosa". El artículo central de esa ley es el número 3, en el cual se declara que "las creencias religiosas no constituirán motivo de desigualdad de los españoles ante la ley" '. Ramón Tamames, pp. 287, 288.

what had been a taboo subject, the existence of the Protestant communities. The conclusion Fernández Santos reaches is one of disappointment. In the novels discussed earlier, Fernández Santos had remarked on the repressive nature of the teachings of the Spanish Catholic Church and the Catholic Church as an organisation. In this novel he discloses how other religious groups are equally repressive. The tone becomes sorrowful because there are still religious communities refusing to move forward: '¿Resistir a qué? Resistir al mundo, esperando en Él. Es la eterna respuesta. Es inútil intentar sacarles una palabra más. Quizá no quieren, quizá no saben' (pp. 336-37). The paradox of the situation is based on the fact that Protestantism had been seen as a threat to Catholicism. Now it becomes clear that this is not the case. The real threat for any religion is now the secularisation of society.¹²⁹

Two main themes are developed. First, the role of any Church within the social and political context in which it finds itself. Second, the notion that there is no one Truth, with the consequent need to abandon absolute beliefs and to accept a plurality of voices. By focusing on the community's relationship with temporal powers, Fernández Santos underlines that no religious organisation is ever apolitical, even if it claims to be so. He does this without distorting the history of the Protestant community. Indeed, the Catholic Church was at the time favouring 'some disengagement from secular powers in a marked, but not complete, reversal of centuries-old tradition. As to the specific form of secular power, the Church denounced totalitarianism

¹²⁹ 'Al no tropezar ya con grandes resistencias a sus prácticas y difusión, se puso de manifiesto que en sus programas los protestantes españoles brindaban escaso interés real a la juventud. El protestantismo, tan temido durante lustros como foco potencial de posibles problemas políticos y como antagonista de la Iglesia católica, quedaba prácticamente en nada. El agnosticismo, el ateísmo y -- sobre todo -- la creciente secularización e indiferencia religiosa de la sociedad española, se revelaban como el problema fundamental del catolicismo'. Ramón Tamames, p. 288.

and supported democracy'.¹³⁰ This was going to put pressure upon Franco to reform his regime, a regime that had counted on the Vatican's moral endorsement in the Concordat signed in 1953. Of course, the Vatican itself has frequently played a role in international politics.¹³¹

The community is presented as always keeping itself to itself, adopting an accommodating and complacent attitude towards the different governments that it had to deal with in Spain. The narrator summarises the community's development during the twentieth century. This reads like a short history lesson on religious freedom in the country. We learn that the Republic, according to article eleven of the constitution, allowed the practice of other religions, both in private and public, on the condition that public activities had to be authorised by the governor of the local area. But despite the religious freedom that the community enjoyed, the community's hierarchy was not happy with the political situation. The then leader, Sedano, expressed his opposition to the laicism in society promoted by the Republic as the biggest threat to their existence. He was also critical of the left-wing pastors who sympathised with the Republican cause and of the priests who joined the political parties on the left of those in government. During Franco's regime, under article six of the *Fuero de los Españoles*, only private religious acts were allowed, and the members of the community provide numerous instances of different kinds of abuse perpetrated by Catholics, stressing the atmosphere of religious intolerance prevailing in the country. But it is revealing that no member of the community ever utters a single criticism of Franco's regime.

¹³⁰ Audrey Brassloff, p. 12.

¹³¹ 'It [the Concordat of 1953] was eventually signed in 1953; in the same year, the United States gave a certain respectability to the dictatorship by entering into a defence agreement with Franco as part of its Cold War policy, thus effectively ending the post-World War II international boycott of the regime. The two accords were not unrelated: Franco, Pius XII and President Eisenhower shared a visceral anti-communism and hostility to the Soviet bloc.' Brassloff, p. 7.

After all, the community thrived during this repressive government. Being, as it was, a time of economic underdevelopment with the agricultural sector employing most of the population, the community's way of life fitted in well with that of the rest of the population. Also, the community's rules of moral conduct were similar to those of the most conservative Catholics. Finally now, after the Second Vatican Council, Protestants could enjoy total freedom as long as they registered themselves with 'Asociaciones Religiosas no Católicas'. The atmosphere of tolerance enjoyed by the country is reflected in the fact that those same Catholic villagers in the novel who, a generation earlier, saw the Protestant community as enemies, now do not regard them as that different from themselves.

The community's apolitical stance during the Spanish Civil War and World War II is somehow explained by the fact that the community's founding members are of foreign nationality. The founding Church on which the Spanish community depends for financial support is based in England and the community follows the British ruling council's stance in matters of international conflicts. So, during the Spanish Civil War, the foreign members remain neutral, allowing Spanish members to decide for themselves which side to support (in *Los jinetes* we saw the locals resenting the fact that the community members were neutral). Later, during World War II, the British members are advised to be ready to leave the country in the event of Spain becoming involved. The Spanish members have always wanted to put an end to their dependence upon the British hierarchy. The leaders have always defended being dependent because without the financial support they receive the community could not survive, but the leaders have never revealed this reason to the community. Margarita discloses this aspect when explaining why the hierarchy has never considered any alliance with other Spanish Christian churches, refusing at one point to join the Iglesia Cristiana Española.

The community's apolitical stance becomes a contentious matter. Confronted with a younger generation that demands the involvement of the community in social and political matters, the hierarchy of the community is divided. Mr Baffin represents those that want to perpetuate their traditional stance as an atemporal institution, dedicated to practising the moral code laid down in the Bible and committed to continuing the same type of organisational structure as that of the primitive Christians. As he explains at the congress in Barcelona: 'La única salida del Cristianismo [...] está en volver a lo que fueron sus primeras Comunidades [...] sin jerarquías que les ordenen lo que deben hacer para salvarse' (p. 88). His comment is a direct attack on the Catholic hierarchy's engagement with modernity, and also on the revisionist Protestant leaders who have organised the congress in Barcelona under the banner of peace. The Spanish reader of the 1970s can draw a parallel between the *Consejo de Ancianos* and the more conservative sector of the Catholic church hierarchy, always opposing any changes.

Muñoz represents those members of the hierarchy who are aware that they cannot live for ever as if the outside world did not exist. He often observes how his two children, who are studying in Madrid, are changing and have become a constant reminder of his confinement within the boundaries of the community: 'Le da vergüenza, casi como un poco de miedo a conocer un mundo ya tan lejos para él como ese abismo sin fondo del que habla en sus sermones' (p. 157). But Muñoz is afraid to take the initiative to change: 'Quizás el problema de su Iglesia, de su propia confesión sea el de pasar esos cerros, ese río, ese puente sin perderse a sí mismo' (p. 158).

The paradox is that there are members within the community who are aware of the fact that everything to do with humankind, including Christianity, is defined by its historical nature. The idea is expressed by Emilio who cites Courtney Murray's affirmation that: 'El hombre perdió su contacto con el Señor al pasar a este mundo urbanizado y técnico, porque lo

imaginó a semejanza de una cultura, una civilización que, al dejar de existir, arrastró la imagen de su dios consigo '(p. 235). He goes on to reiterate this idea: 'El cristianismo, al imponer su fe al arte, a la política y hasta a la economía de una cultura concreta, no se dio cuenta de que hizo al Señor formar parte de esa misma cultura, y al cambiar el mundo cuando esa cultura desapareció, la imagen del Señor quedó minada' (p. 235). But even this representative of the more liberal-minded members of the community believes that the solution is to reproduce in their communities the same conditions as those in which Christianity was born: a rural environment, no hierarchies, no unmarried couples, natural methods of birth control, no drinking, no discos, and so on.

In a rapidly changing world this results in the community becoming an anachronism: 'Estamos fuera, como encerrados en una bola de cristal, que vamos para atrás, que no contamos' (p. 105). As a result of this lack of direction, of meeting with the real world, young people are leaving the community. Muñoz's children are representatives of this new generation. Adela marries a Jehovah's witness, Claudio. Alfredo reminds his father that in a world that has experienced the atrocities of human conflicts, such as the concentration camps, there is little point in inculcating a fear of hell in the congregation based upon the obedience or disobedience of the community's rules (pp. 298-99). In sharp contrast, the author presents the Jehovah's witnesses sympathetically for their active stand in society, particularly their refusal to take part in any military activities, which results in them being sent to jail for not doing their military service (p. 137). He also mentions how 10,000 of them died during Hitler's rule (p. 138).¹³²

¹³² 'La reacción de las confesiones no católicas frente a las posibilidades abiertas por la nueva ley, fue más bien fría. En el primer plazo de seis meses que se les dio para inscribirse solamente lo solicitaron los Testigos de Jehová (el 12 de diciembre de 1967), siendo la confesión que más dificultades encontró para su

The dilemma the new generation needs to solve is what makes a good Christian, faith or good deeds? For the old generation, faith was essential and, as long as the individuals kept to the very simple rules of personal conduct (mainly regarding cult and sexuality), the believer was considered a good practising Christian. The new generation cannot accept such a narrow view. For them there is no absolute faith: as Alfredo tells his father, doubting is precisely what keeps the faith alive. That has never been the case with the elders, with each Protestant community in Spain constantly arguing that they are in possession of the only truth: ‘Todos se lamentaban de no formar un bloque unido como los católicos, más al tiempo, ninguno estaba dispuesto a transigir; todos pensaban encerrar la verdad en su mano’ (p. 195). The reader of the 1970s will have seen the similarities between the attitudes of the community authorities, the *Consejo de Ancianos*, and the official Catholic Church, with both insisting that they are the repositories of the truth.¹³³

For the community’s hierarchies to have the monopoly of religious interpretation implies that they have the monopoly of the interpretation of humanity, that they can impose a moral code of conduct in matters such as sex, and have absolute power over the individual -- power that is not easy to relinquish.¹³⁴ Indeed, the community authorities are aware that in affluent

inscripción, que finalmente se realizó el 10 de julio de 1970’. Ramón Tamames, p. 288.

¹³³ ‘Most of the Spanish bishops were themselves hostile towards religious freedom and cautious in the extreme over ecumenism. At stake for them was the survival of the Catholic Church’s spiritual and moral monopoly and its control of “what is truth” [...]. Later, when the Spanish government had passed a Religious Freedom Law (1967), the bishops continued to emphasise the “Catholic reality” of Spain’. Audrey Brassloff, p. 15. Concha Alborg also remarks on this point: ‘Jesús Fernández Santos sugiere en *Libro de las memorias de las cosas* que tanto los católicos como los protestantes cometen injusticias y tienen prejuicios. Dentro de su “libertad” los Hermanos censuran otras sectas’, p. 78.

¹³⁴ ‘After the publication in July 1968 of Pope Paul’s encyclical *Humanae Vitae* condemning “artificial” birth control, which provoked “rebellion, reservation and upset in many Catholic quarters”, the Spanish bishops had issued a document showing their full support of the Pope’s teaching. They now reminded theologians

times people move away from religion, looking for the pursuit of pleasure. To accept freedom of conscience in such bodily matters could result in ethical relativism, whilst insisting upon obedience to all of the tenets could result in opposition to authority and, in the case of the community in the novel, the younger members abandoning the community .¹³⁵

As far as social issues are concerned, the community authorities were aware that the country's poor moved away from religion towards left-wing political parties during the Republic in the hope of improving their conditions. But the members of the small community do not seem to have problems of poverty, and therefore it is not an issue that they deliberate on. It is Margarita who puts this problem in context when she listens in astonishment to Agustín and wonders whether it is possible that deeds are so important that one's religious beliefs are secondary: '¿Será verdad que hay cristianos ateos [...] que sólo buscan dar testimonio, acabar con el mal en el mundo y con la desigualdad y la injusticia?' (pp. 140-41).¹³⁶ By focusing on a religious organisation that does not get involved in the matters of the wider world, Fernández Santos was engaging his readership in the discussion taking place at the time about the role of the Catholic Church in the process of looking for

that the authentic teaching authority was not invested in them but in the hierarchy'. Brassloff, pp. 39-40.

¹³⁵ 'Vatican II, by admitting freedom of conscience, had opened the possibilities of à la carte Catholicism, apparently allowing a choice of tenets to be held or rejected, according to individual taste. On the other hand, insistence on the full menu of tenets came up against a resistance to authority which had increasingly characterised life especially since the 1960s both inside and outside the Church'. Brassloff, p. 40.

¹³⁶ For the Vatican hierarchies 'there was going to be a dialogue between Catholics and atheists whenever they shared the same wider humanistic goals. This spirit of détente and optimism hovered also over international diplomacy; despite ongoing Cold War confrontation, the United States under Kennedy and the Soviet Union under Khrushchev appeared to be groping their way towards some kind of coexistence'. Brassloff, pp. 12-13.

solutions to the social problems of the country. Oddly enough, this new line of encouraging church members to engage in social issues was to be called in official circles *temporalismo*,¹³⁷ defined as a way of practising the Christian values of helping the poor and powerless of the land.¹³⁸

CONCLUSION

With these two novels, Fernández Santos complements the vision of the Spanish Catholic Church offered in the novels examined previously, both as an institution that plays a role in the country's social and political spheres and as a spiritual leader of its congregation. The depth of feeling with which he carries his criticism is impressive. It reveals a man who realised how much damage the Church was doing to the country as a whole by reinforcing the most socially unfair aspects of the dictatorship and helping to maintain the status quo. It also reveals a man extremely concerned with the psychological damage that the Church was doing. We need to remember that even those Spaniards that came from non-religious families were under the direct influence of the Catholic Church through its monopoly of the education system. Religion was a compulsory subject in primary and secondary schools. The critical insight into Catholicism's shaping of the individual's psychology is moving and Fernández Santos's observations on the implications of Catholicism's negative interpretation of the body is penetrating and accurate. The description of the alienation and self-destruction that it breeds is entirely perceptive and sensitive. Fernández Santos's criticism of the Spanish Catholic

¹³⁷ Ramón Tamames, p. 288.

¹³⁸ 'Whereas since Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* the over-riding concern of the Church had been to defend certain personal rights, especially that of private property, against the growing socialist threat, with John XXIII came a shift in emphasis to a concern for the poor and the powerless, and a critique of the structures that kept them so.' Brassloff, p. 12.

Church as a corrupt institution is blunt and corrosive, but his criticism of the psychological damage it causes is done in a delicate way, with a sympathetic approach to the dignity of the individual he portrays.

En la hoguera and *Libro de las memorias de las cosas* focus mainly on a negative concept of the body. Both novels reclaim the body as a source of pleasure. Catholicism as preached during Franco's regime is presented as a faith of self-destruction, a negative philosophy of humanity with a perverted emphasis on going to heaven as its aim, whilst neglecting life on earth as a process of self-fulfilment, of developing human potential to the full. Miguel's hesitation and reluctance to get better by using the resources available to him and Margarita's suicide as a result of the repressive sexuality that has been inculcated in her testify to this.

En la hoguera, written after *Los bravos*, has the appearance of a second social novel that expands the vision of a rural Spain still struggling economically. But the social content disguises the attack on Catholicism as an essential component of the regime's ideology. This attack is the thrust of the novel. Extracts from Henri Brémond's *Los padres del yermo* are quoted as an example of the type of religious books read by Spaniards at that time, and the cause-effect relationship between the alienating message contained in those extracts and Miguel's thoughts show the distorted vision of one's body that that type of literature gives rise to. The preaching of suffering as a Catholic virtue is also presented as having social consequences, as contributing to the submissive attitude of the population towards the lack of a decent public health service available to all. The reader can easily conclude that the Catholic Church colluded with the State by emphasising the aspects of Catholicism that helped to maintain the status quo. The treatments are available to those with money and connections, while those without them are expected to resign themselves to believing that their physical suffering will be rewarded by their going to heaven. Furthermore, the preaching of the Biblical story of Cain and

Abel is presented in the novel as reinforcing an understanding of human nature along the lines of stereotypical roles of behaviour, based on the notion of the human being as essence: the good and bad, and so on. As we have seen, the author will return to this topic in *Los jinetes del alba* with the two old gentlemen explaining the forthcoming civil war as an inevitable outcome of the evil nature of the peasants. When Fernández Santos wrote *Libro de las memorias de las cosas* criticism of some religious tenets was not novel. The relaxation of censorship allowed Fernández Santos to be open about his criticism of the Bible and its negative presentation of womanhood. Yet, the criticism of the Church as a temporal institution that interacts with other earthly powers and religion in general was presented under the veneer of the Protestant community in order, presumably, not to offend Catholic sensibilities. The novel is a frontal attack on Christianity's concept of sexuality as the animalistic side of human beings and justifies sexual pleasure as a basic human right, a right that, if repressed, leads to mental instability and self-destruction.

In its portrayal of sexual repression, the novel may be considered as of little contemporary relevance, as it deals with a situation not likely to occur in the twenty-first century Western world. However, Fernández Santos's approach to the Church as a temporal institution, a power to be reckoned with, has not lost its relevance in today's world. He never makes the statement that the best thing that could happen is for the Church to dissolve. His contention is that the Church, as represented in the Spanish Catholic Church or the Protestant community of Ribera de Negrillos, does not fulfil its Christian mission to look after the weak in society, that it does not practise what it preaches. On the contrary, he suggests that it associates itself with the powerful in society. This is the same theme that Fernández Santos had been developing, (as much as he could, taking into account censorship) in previous novels. In *Los bravos* he criticised both the priest's class prejudices which

stopped him from serving his parishioners, as well as the Church itself for allowing the State to manipulate religion in order to develop a culture of condemnation and submission of the Republicans. In *Los jinetes del alba*, he portrayed a Church that reinforced the prevailing social system in its charitable organisations. Furthermore, it is clearly stated that the local priests collaborated with the political authorities by revealing where the Asturian revolutionaries were hiding. In *El hombre de los santos*, the author made it very clear that the Church authorities abandoned some of their own priests and nuns, as depicted by the levels of misery endured by both the nuns of the convent and the priest in the isolated village, that it fostered a social division within its own ranks. Finally, with *En la hoguera* the priest states how, in post-war society, faith has become a matter of showing off one's wealth through donations to the Church, while nobody helps the poor. Through these novels, Fernández Santos offers a constant criticism of the class division that was endemic in the Church during Franco's era and the collusion between the Church and the Government in perpetuating the divisions in the country.

CHAPTER 4

FORSAKING THE CULTURAL INHERITANCE: *LABERINTOS* AND *JAQUE A LA DAMA*

Each of the two novels discussed in this chapter has a positive ending: the female protagonists abandon the environment they have been part of in search of their own destiny. In a metaphorical way, the two female characters are used to convey the message that the best way to evolve as human beings is to cut any links with a stagnating environment which may hinder individuals in developing their own sense of selfhood. These two works, together with the more politically-orientated novels studied in Chapter 1, place the emphasis upon the need of the individual to evolve as a person as a precondition to changing society as a collective entity.

Marta of *Jaque a la dama* (1982) and Pedro of *Laberintos* (1964) adopt opposite attitudes. Marta eventually learns to leave behind both the cultural inheritance and the traumatic experiences of her life in order to move forward and evolve, whilst Pedro cannot escape his own cultural background and becomes stuck, going around in circles. The titles themselves refer to this theme. The word *jaque* presumably refers to the many challenges in life that Marta has to overcome in order to become the woman she is. *Laberintos* refers to the character losing his own way in life, unable to formulate his own values

and see a way forward.

The role of memory, both personal and collective, gains relevance as a theme in these works. Marta avoids recollections of the past. Since for her the past is nothing but a series of negative experiences, she erases it. Wounded as she is by life, she takes refuge in her garden, an environment inhabited by birds and cats, but no humans. Protected in that way, 'la viuda del jardín' ignores the present, and escapes reality through sublimation, waiting to be awakened to life by 'true love', the only experience in life she regards as worth experiencing. Pedro, on the other hand, clings to his past, his childhood, as a kind of paradise lost. Pedro's attachment to his past is also a sublimation that prevents him from engaging with the present and its problems.

LABERINTOS

Having presented the social and political aspects of Franco's regime in a rural environment in *Los bravos*, and the consequences of a religious education in *En la hoguera*, Fernández Santos centres his attention on the country's cultural establishment, as experienced by a group of young people who wish to form part of it, in his third novel, *Laberintos* (1964).

As with his more politically orientated novels (*Los bravos*, *Jinetes del alba*, *El hombre de los santos*, and *Balada de amor y soledad*) Fernández Santos focuses on the interaction between the individual and the system. The novel works well at this level, with events presented directly and objectively, and with an extensive use made of dialogue to define the characters. Indeed the novel has been viewed as a behavioural study of a collective reality.¹³⁹ But, as

¹³⁹ Spencer Gordon Freedman rightly remarks that: 'The novelist has virtually placed a tape recorder up to life in *Laberintos*, faithfully recording the tone and nuance of his characters in speech', p. 94. Subsequently, Freedman compares the

in *Los bravos*, the voice of the narrator is used to provide an insight into the psychology of the main characters. One aspect that needs to be highlighted is the use of irony. With reference to this work, Fernández Santos stated that: 'Intenté una vertiente nueva, una sucesión nueva: la ironía, pero en la ironía, como en toda figura retórica, lo importante es el matiz y, o yo me quedé corto, o los lectores de entonces no estaban para tales figuras'.¹⁴⁰ The use of irony is particularly obvious in the way he describes how the members of the young group of pseudo-intellectuals behave in the presence of the Boss, how he portrays their male bravado in, for example, the fight that takes place, and when he describes Pedro's uncle.

Where the novel is less successful is in the study of the main male character, Pedro. In this case the theme of alienation is not developed in as much depth as it could have been. The social and historical factors that foster alienation are hinted at but are never made explicit. The author relies heavily upon his readership sharing the same perception of political reality as himself. The reader, supposedly, is able to fill in what is not made explicit. But at a more personal level, the narrator suggests that Pedro has felt alienated from his relatives since childhood but without providing enough information to establish a cause-effect relationship.¹⁴¹ This allows the reader to understand

novel to *El Jarama*: 'Following a pattern already established in his earlier novels, and in a vein similar to Sánchez Ferlosio's *El Jarama*, Fernández Santos allows much of the dialogue in *Laberintos* to touch upon trivial matters, with the effect of both giving authenticity to the work and of emphasising the insignificance of the character's activities', p. 96.

¹⁴⁰ A statement included in 'Fondo y forma en mi obra literaria', an unpublished conference script that Fernández Santos made available to Jorge Rodríguez Padrón. Rodríguez Padrón quotes from it in his preliminary study, 'La narrativa de Jesús Fernández Santos: notas de situación', to *La que no tiene nombre*, p. 23.

¹⁴¹ David Herzberger is particularly harsh in his criticism of this aspect of the novel: 'Without background information about the characters, however, [...] the narrative becomes a series of scenes that represent again and again the mediocrity of individuals who are essentially uninteresting people with little of value to do or to say. The reader senses this at the beginning of the novel, but never discovers what it is about the characters (or society) that determines their vacuous

alienation in the existential sense, that is: as a condition inherent to humanity. As I discussed earlier in relation to *En la hoguera* and *El hombre de los santos*, this is not typical of Fernández Santos, an author who is mainly preoccupied with indicating the wrongs of the country and society. Any psychological probing of this character is therefore limited. Nonetheless, the author is successful in portraying the other main characters: Julio, Pablo, and Celia. Finally, it should be mentioned that the novel was not well received by the critics, with José Batló in particular accusing the novelist, as well as his generation, of having exhausted the literary formula that had become its trademark.¹⁴²

THE SOCIAL WORLD

In this work, Fernández Santos targets the prevailing system of nepotism that rules the country's cultural life as his main focus of social and political criticism.¹⁴³ He dismisses the artificial construction of an official cultural-elite as a group of second-rate intellectuals willing to sacrifice their sense of integrity in order to make a meagre living. Indeed, he is keen to outline the overwhelming pettiness of the individuals who move in those circles.

The date of publication, 1964, is important. By then, Fernández Santos had already been recognised as a promising literary figure in a

existence', p. 35.

¹⁴² José Batló, 'Jesús Fernández Santos: "Laberintos"', *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, No. 177 (September 1964), 451-55. This article is included in Jorge Rodríguez Padrón's *Jesús Fernández Santos*, pp. 132-38. For a selection of other criticism see Ramón Jiménez Madrid, pp. 92 -95.

¹⁴³ The social criticism of the novel goes unnoticed by David Herzberger who applies a very limiting notion of what constitutes social criticism when he argues that: '*Labyrinths* is much less a social novel than *The Untamed* and *In the Fire*, since Fernández Santos does not examine in it the problems of poverty and social injustice', p. 38.

developing movement defined by its critical stand towards Franco's regime. He now felt confident to openly criticise the establishment and in this novel, set around the end of the 1950s and early 1960s, he concentrates his attention on the young intellectuals of the time whose ideology was akin to that of the regime.¹⁴⁴

Fernández Santos also presents to his readership a culture which is at a crossroads. For a start, the regime is gradually opening up politically to the international community, and is eager to project an image of liberal modernity -- which is one reason why it helps less controversial cultural movements, such as this fictional group of painters, to participate in exhibitions abroad. In addition, the regime is eager to develop the tourist industry. In order to promote the country abroad as a tourist destination, the Government is marketing not only the cheap living and sun to be enjoyed, but also its cultural heritage as exotic, with the well known motto 'Spain is different'. Accordingly, age-old cultural traditions such as Holy Week, *Los Sanfermines*, *Flamenco*, and *La feria de Sevilla* have degenerated into commercial tourist attractions to sell abroad. Traditional culture is thus transformed into a commodity.

In *Laberintos*, Fernández Santos depicts a country undergoing a national identity crisis and also questions the role culture can play in a changing society. He depicts a country divided between the masses and an educated young generation. The masses keep alive the traditional forms of

¹⁴⁴ The novel has been compared by Spencer Gordon Freedman to others that focus on young educated men: *Juegos de manos* by Juan Goytisolo (1954), and *Tiempo de silencio* by Martín Santos (1962), p. 83. See also Ramón Jiménez Madrid, p. 97. Sobejano mentions even more novels published either before -- *Juegos de manos* (1954), *Nuevas amistades* (1959), *Tiempo de silencio* (1962), *Las mismas palabras* (1963) -- or after -- *Últimas tardes con Teresa*. For Sobejano, Fernández Santos agrees with Juan Goytisolo, García Hortelano, Martín Santos, Luis Goytisolo, and Juan Marsé in presenting their young intellectuals as self-involved, pp. 331-32

culture based upon public displays of religious faith, popular dances, and songs. However, the young generation has moved away from religion and is only interested in the material vestiges of this religious legacy from an artistic point of view. The young are beginning to travel abroad, to France and Italy. Thus they read foreign literature, for example Steinbeck's *Tortilla Flat* and are trying to adopt a more liberal approach to sexual relationships (and so her husband and, indeed, everyone in the group, consents to Celia's affair with Pablo). The particular group he focuses upon are the sons and daughters of the regime, those who experienced the war as children and who were brought up in the ideological framework of the regime after the uprising of 18 July. However, although they realise that the prevailing cultural tenets are no longer of any use, they are incapable of coming up with any new values to replace them. They are a minority trapped in the regime's networks of power -- which keep them financially afloat -- and who refuse to take on the role of leading the country towards change. The power the regime has fosters *abulia* and its official representative, the Boss, has reflected in his eyes 'todo el tedio del mundo'.¹⁴⁵

In *Laberintos*, Fernández Santos depicts a country in which the State has an overwhelming control over the labour market. Access to teaching posts in the state system, by far the largest in the country, is based upon passing an examination, *las oposiciones*. Daniel has failed this examination and has to resign himself to teaching in an *academia*, a type of private institution well known for its poor pay and lack of career prospects. He is the only male character in the group who seems to have some sense of dignity and who tries to make a living out of his own skills, without relying upon any favours. Pedro, on the other hand, lives on a grant that his mother has managed to get

¹⁴⁵ Jesús Fernández Santos, *Laberintos*, 2nd edn (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1982), p. 144. All further references to the novel will be to this edition and will be given in the text.

for him through connections in Government ministries.

With few private art galleries, the young painters rely on exhibitions organised by the State to display their work. It is here that Fernández Santos uses his corrosive irony. The governmental officer in charge of the Biennial exhibition, Vicente Jordán (alias the Boss) is surrounded by his group of cronies, the young painters. The colourful antics they display in order to become his favourites and enjoy his favours constitute most of the narrative. Their petty actions, the tricks they play on each other, which they consider as clever strategic moves, convey a pitiful image of the so-called young intellectuals. The novel has an air of parody, achieved through both the direct presentation of dialogue together with the narrator's insights into their minds. The tone is similar in vein to that of Ramón Pérez de Ayala's *Troteras y danzaderas* (1913).¹⁴⁶

Julio, the meanest individual in the group, is the most stereotypical of these young men. He has been trying to become an art critic and has written the catalogue for a major exhibition by the group, known as *Grupo 60*. He is also trying to write a monograph on the main painter and leader of this group of abstract painters. The narrator mocks his limited intellect by presenting him as someone who lacks artistic sensibility, in whom the paintings do not inspire any response. And although he borrows others' ideas, he envisages a future writing articles and giving lectures abroad. In addition he is hoping to replace Pablo as a sort of secretary to the director (when Pablo is driving the boss to dinner, Julio refrains from giving directions, hoping that Pablo will get lost and irritate his superior). He also manages to be seated next to the boss at the table. Despite such self-seeking ploys, his dream comes to nothing when his health breaks down and he has to be nursed by his parents. The novel ends

¹⁴⁶ Gonzalo Sobejano also mentions this novel, p. 331.

on this note, highlighting the author's view that these so-called intellectuals are no more than very immature young people trapped in a system that values servility above talent.

There is no paternalism in Fernández Santos's attitude towards his characters but rather condemnation for the willingness with which these people work for and within the system.¹⁴⁷ Therefore, he is once again expressing his notion that the personal is political, particularly in a dictatorship. As a group of abstract painters who reflect in their paintings the vague concept of the anguish of modern man in relation to the universe, the group is apolitical. Indeed, this makes it easy to market them as exports. On this particular point, Fernández Santos has observed: 'Yo seguía de cerca y conocía personalmente a la mayoría de los pintores y grupos que iniciaron el arte no figurativo y a los que la Administración enviaba a certámenes internacionales para mantener fuera de España una imagen decorosa, como ha sucedido más tarde con el cine en los festivales.'¹⁴⁸ Equally, the figurative painters are apolitical, dedicated to depicting pleasant landscapes and portraits, and are well known for chasing girls. In effect, the author makes it clear how difficult it is for any artist not to be assimilated, and discarded, once used, by the system. At first Fornell, the leader of this group of painters, is depicted as someone with initiative: he organises the first exhibition, markets

¹⁴⁷ Freedman misses this main political point when he rightly criticises the art world: 'The artists and writers of the novel recognise the vacuity, the intrigue, and the disillusionment inherent in their trade, but are trapped by a lack of alternatives in their lives [...] they are victimised by the instability and the whims of their vocational life', p. 93. Freedman also seems to misunderstand the intention of the author when creating these characters: 'The artists and writers are at times the author's spokesmen in their recognition of Spain's rupture with its national heritage; but they are also the object of the novelist's implicit denunciation -- a denunciation directed against those who actively and often unwittingly contribute to widen this rupture', p. 87.

¹⁴⁸ Fernández Santos in an interview with Jorge Rodríguez Padrón, cited in *Jesús Fernández Santos*, pp. 25-26.

it, and makes it successful. However, once included in the State network, he reaps the financial benefits with profitable sales abroad but finds his glory is short-lived when he is soon replaced by another member of the group. In a world of marketing and image fabrication, novelty is a valuable commodity, and the State is not interested in creating a cultural movement, only in using the group to promote its image abroad as a 'liberal' State. Accordingly, it is willing to promote those regarded by national critics as 'juventud enferma, titubeante, ambiciosa, sin justificación, que no puede sentirse orgullosa de sus afanes anormales' (pp. 27-28).

By extensive use of dialogue to expose the vacuity of their intellectual concerns, the author makes it clear that the group is made up of second-rate intellectuals. The official elite is nothing but a trivial chimera. As Fernández Santos himself declared in a lecture at the University of Salamanca, this novel is: 'Una novela sobre cierta juventud que yo conocí al margen y como complemento del café Gijón y de mis amigos escritores, una cierta juventud de pintores y gente inquieta que corre paralela a los pequeños cenáculos del arte y que al final desaparece sin dejar rastro de sí, ni en su vida, ni en su obra.'¹⁴⁹ He is implying that the only way out of a stagnant culture is for artists and intellectuals to work independently of the circles of power. In *Laberintos*, in order to underline his case, he creates the character of Pedro.

Pedro epitomises the young intellectual trapped in the labyrinthine network of the system. Yet Fernández Santos does not ridicule this character. Rather, he presents Pedro to the reader with compassion (although this is not the case with Pedro's uncle, who is treated with sarcasm). Pedro is a product of the regime. During the war, as a young boy, he feels part of the community

¹⁴⁹ Quoted in Freedman, p. 82.

of refugees in Segovia and he identifies with the cultural traditions of the country. His uncle, a writer, figures in his imagination as a role model, and Pedro memorises passages from a book published by him, the title of which clearly hints at the glorified history fed to the masses by the new regime: *Sueño y compás de la América Española*. His uncle also has a mythical aura as a passionate man of the world. As a young man, Pedro gives up his studies at university in order to pursue a career as a writer and participate in his uncle's *tertulia*.

Through Pedro's own journey of discovery of the reality of his uncle's world, the author reveals the vulgarity of this circle. The ironic parody is unmissable. Its members are the failures of the past, those who have never made it. They are those who, when the Generation of 1898 was at its peak, were writing novels of erotic interest, 'asunto cama' (p. 20), or even *zarzuelas* (p. 134), claiming that the attention given to the Generation of 1898 forced them to be in the shadows: 'Nuestra generación [...] se la comieron Baroja y Valle-Inclán y Azorín' (p. 134). The sarcasm reaches its height when the uncle criticises the very author that Fernández Santos hails as an example to follow: 'Nuestra generación podía haber sido precisamente una generación de grandes narradores, lo que otras no fueron. Porque en la de Baroja, ¿dónde están los novelistas?' (p. 134). To this, Pedro assents 'por inercia' (p. 134). These are the writers who had no qualms about changing when Franco came to power and implemented a new conservative morality. As Pedro explains regarding his uncle and these other writers: 'Hoy abres uno de sus libros y te mueres de pena, y si coges uno de los otros, de los que hizo después de la guerra, cuando se volvió moral, y cambió de chaqueta, como tantos, no te digo' (p. 20). They are writers who pontificate about national cultural matters and heritage without having read enough or being bothered to go and see the paintings in El Prado. They have always relied upon their good connections at ministerial level to get jobs and find themselves later in life begging their connections for

little jobs which will enable them to survive and to keep up appearances.

These writers constitute a vindictive group that is trying to stop young writers from replacing them.

Although afraid of ending up like his uncle, Pedro is unable to distance himself from this environment. And this is the main point of the novel: those young writers working within the system are bound to become absorbed into the stultifying spirit of the regime. In the case of Pedro, he is portrayed as paralysed both in his private and intellectual life. He has written his first novel, and is thinking of writing a second one, but it is clear that his career prospects are not good. As the narrator explains through Julio's train of thought: 'Había publicado, años atrás, un libro que pasó sin pena ni gloria. A muchos les sucedía igual. Unos lo superaban y otros insistían, pero Pedro no trabajaba, ni por lo visto quería olvidarlo. Su orgullo, su abulia le perdían' (p. 27). It also turns out that he is isolated from other writers.

Pedro has sought some inspiration by staying in Paris. But his *abulia* has always been stronger than any desire to change. So, when in Paris with his wife, Pedro spends days reading newspapers and chatting in *tertulias* with Spanish emigrants, or going to galleries to see exhibitions. At the end he does not even bother to do that. Pedro and his wife never join courses. There is never any discussion on current political issues, such as the unfolding war in Algeria, or on philosophical matters. Pedro is a compulsive newspaper reader, but he never takes any action. Back in Spain, he spends his days in trivial *tertulias* at the café, where others gather around an intellectual who has fallen out of favour with the regime. Furthermore, Pedro's marriage is on the rocks and he makes no effort to attempt to rectify matters. He dreams, instead, of things sorting themselves out. All he does is hope that his stay in Segovia, the very place where as a child he dreamt of doing great things in life, will mark a new beginning in his life.

It is with great irony that Fernández Santos dismisses this group of

young artists with humour based upon one of the so-called inherent traits in the Spanish character, so marketable abroad: the Spanish passionate *macho*. Celia, Pedro's wife, has been having an affair with one of the painters, Pablo, for a year and a half. This is known within the group and accepted. Pedro suspects it and has arguments with Celia about it, but never confronts her directly. During the Holy Week in Segovia the attention of a third male will provoke a fight. A journalist, Fidel, having witnessed harsh words between the spouses, tries his luck with Celia by proposing that he write an article on Celia's work and take some photographs of her paintings. He suggests that they meet in Madrid and expects her to start showing her gratitude sexually. Fidel's advances towards Celia do not go unnoticed by Pablo who calls him to order. Julio tries to separate them but ends up getting involved in the fight when Pablo insults him. This fight epitomises a pattern of behaviour, endorsed by a regime born out of violence, where problems are never discussed, where instead everyone is trying to impose his will on others. After all, Pablo does not care for Celia and he will eventually take advantage of her by convincing the Boss to give him a grant that Celia was counting on getting with Pablo's support. There is no passion whatsoever here. What matters for Pablo is that nobody challenges his position in the group as the *macho*.

As the fight ends, the group meets a procession of penitents carrying heavy crosses with chains attached to their ankles. Once more, Fernández Santos points at the extremes in Spanish society, at its innermost contradictions. On this occasion, the irony regarding the sublimation of violence as a religious practice is corrosive, since the suffering of the 'animalistic' body is used as a means to cleanse the 'divine' soul. Self-mortification as penance reinforces the notion that the degradation of the body is a means to glorify the soul. This disregard for the suffering of the body, this denial of the body as a repository of the dignity of the individual, potentially establishes a dangerous moral vacuum, where the degrading of the body for

more earthly purposes such as torture could be endorsed, as indeed it was in the Inquisition's jails.

THE INNER WORLD

In his behaviour, Pedro embodies many negative qualities that the environment in which he has grown up has fostered. He is an archetypal alienated man. In fact, the war figures strongly as the main factor that has shaped his attitude to life. It is made clear that Pedro felt part of the right-wing refugee community in Segovia: 'Ni Celia, ni Julio, ni Daniel podían comprender lo que significaba aquel aire de la ciudad entonces, la sensación de caminar por la misma plaza, al compás de la multitud que la llenaba' (p. 136). It was the only time when, despite the fear, Pedro felt part of a national project, something that gave a meaning and an aim to his life, a project that could founder if the war was lost to the Republicans: 'El miedo de algo que no acababan de entender, pero que llegaría si la guerra llegaba a perderse' (p. 35). This is a time which is idealised in his mind, to which he returns when unhappy in his present. Childhood is a paradise lost and it is his inclination to return to the past that makes him feel more insecure about himself: 'Aquel deseo de volver atrás le hacía desconfiar de sí, incluso en la ciudad que tanto deseaba' (p. 135).¹⁵⁰ At the present time (the novel is set in the 1950s) the country, isolated from the world, does not seem to have any grand project other than opening its doors to hordes of tourists. It is left to the reader to make a judgement about what has happened between 1939 and current times: the fulfilment of the Nationalist project or its failure? Pedro is aware that in other countries people are more committed to social or political causes, but

¹⁵⁰ David Herzberger remarks on how much 'the circumstances of Pedro's youth frequently run parallel to those of the author's own life', p. 33.

then he has never considered joining any clandestine organisation in his own country.¹⁵¹

It is hard, though, to pin down what exactly makes Pedro unable to feel attached to people. With regard to his uncle and his mother, the narrator observes: 'Les molestaba su aire ausente, su afán de vagar a solas. Parecía eternamente ajeno a ellos. Aquella prolongada soledad le había perseguido al cabo de los años, aún después de la boda' (p. 131). We are provided with too little information about the nuclear-family environment and we know nothing about his relationship with his brother or his father, who dies when he is still a child. Possibly, the author has assumed that his own negative view of the typical upbringing children had, modelled upon the regime's ideology, was shared by his readers, and that therefore there was no need to elaborate on this topic. In any case, Fernández Santos presents Pedro's family as caring and Pedro's mother is happy to support Pedro and his wife by allowing them to live at her home. So the reason why from the beginning Pedro is unable to feel close to his wife, Celia, remains a mystery:

En los primeros meses, viendo a Celia dormida a su lado [...] le parecía su relación con ella como lejana, artificial. Se preguntaba si para Celia también sería así, o, como la madre aseguraba, la vida era una cosa tan simple que cuanto más importancia se la daba, menos se la entendía. Pero la vida, estaba seguro entonces, no era así y el amor otra cosa que los deliquios de su tío. (p.132)

For DiNubila, this psychological estrangement, this general or individual

¹⁵¹ For Constance Thomas Zahn, Pedro 'senses that the *engagement* lacking in his life is lacking too in the general national character, and it is only "por ahí fuera" that a vital world thrives', p. 88.

alienation has its roots in the social class of the bourgeoisie: 'This alienation has as its overriding cause the inauthenticity, hypocrisy, deception, and conflict that figure as constituent factors in the existence of this social coterie in which words have no meaning'.¹⁵² He sees *Laberintos* as an example of the 'anti-bourgeois literary movement in Spain during the 1960s'.¹⁵³

The only event in Pedro's private life that seems to have an effect on him is the idealisation of his uncle and his later discovery that his uncle is an unpleasant person. The uncle's womanising is a family secret and the books he writes are forbidden to Pedro as a child. The obvious factor that could explain Pedro's disengagement from people is his realising that people are not what they seem, that they are not to be trusted. Yet, Pedro becomes disenchanted with his uncle some time after he has got involved with Celia, when the narrator has already described his cold nature. Once married, and having found out that his wife is unfaithful with Pablo, the discovery may have reinforced in him the sense of people's duplicity. But the reader is left to draw conclusions, since there is no passage included in which the character explains himself or where the narrator discloses the reasons.

During the course of the narrative, the reader is presented with a series of occasions when Pedro is either being abusive to his wife or trying to make up and reconcile by having sex. But what never takes place is a conversation between them. Thus, the author is clearly developing the theme of lack of communication at a personal level: 'Se habían acostado en la incómoda habitación del hotel, sin decir palabra, encerrado cada cual en su mutismo,

¹⁵² DiNubila, p. 107.

¹⁵³ DiNubila includes in this movement the following narratives: Juan Goytisolo's *Juegos de manos* (1954), *La isla* (1961), *Fin de fiesta* (1962); García Hortelano's *Nuevas amistades* (1959), *Tormenta de verano* (1962); Luis Goytisolo's *Las mismas palabras* (1963) and Juan Marsé's *Encerrados con un solo juguete* (1960), pp. 107-08.

fiando al silencio, la solución que no eran capaces de hallar con las palabras' (p. 23). Silence is presented as a phenomenon that brings about alienation and exacerbates differences: 'El silencio no acabara agriando hasta los más nimios incidentes' (p. 80). Since Pedro and Celia live with Pedro's mother and brother, Pedro feels that in such circumstances the couple need to pretend that there is no problem, when in reality everybody knows that things are not working between them. This anxiety to preserve an appearance that all is normal reflects a society where tensions are kept concealed. Whenever Pedro makes veiled accusations concerning his wife's infidelity he never actually utters a direct condemnation: 'Todo le echaba en cara menos lo que ella temía. Era como si temiera hacer cara a la realidad' (p. 64). And when he finally tries to confront his wife he does not demand an explanation for the relationship she has with Pablo but insists, instead, on how much importance he attributes to appearances, to what others may see: '-!Lo único que quiero es que no te vuelvan a mirar así!' (pp. 26-27). Her response is a refusal to discuss matters.

The reader is presented with a society that discourages its members from analysing their emotions. These are people who just content themselves with acting out the roles expected of them and who are reduced to performing functions. Pedro and Celia can identify their incapacity for loving each other but they never go as far as analysing what makes them the way they are.

Pedro's contradictions are also obvious in his work-related ethics. He is being supported by his mother and has a grant thanks to her connections. But when it comes to his wife he reacts like an ascetic. He criticises Celia for deliberately trying to get an article published through help from Fermín, taking advantage of his sexual interest in her. He also criticises her for trying to get a job, through the director, which involves going to Italy to make copies of famous religious paintings. She sees this as an opportunity to develop her career, not in an ambitious and glamorous way, but as a realistic way of

earning a living through her profession. However, Pedro tries to undermine Celia's confidence in her ability to do this job so that she will feel obliged to stay in Spain.

In effect, Pedro is trapped. The relative cosiness he enjoys thanks to economic handouts makes him feel uncomfortable as the 'perenne hijo de familia' (p. 18). But he is unwilling to work to earn a living, preferring instead to allow his mother to get grants for him through her connections, and waiting for the inspiration to write his second novel. And his ill-placed romantic notions about life prevent him from taking steps to solve his personal problems, illustrated in his belief that going back to the place where he was once happy as a child will enable him to bring happiness to his unhappy marriage.¹⁵⁴ As the narrator discloses: 'Aquel viaje era una droga benigna, un remedio colmado de recuerdos familiares, de jornadas cercanas a su mejor edad: la infancia' (p. 11).

Celia is the other side of the coin. Here Fernández Santos creates a heroine of her time, with her own flaws and limitations, and develops the character with enough care so as to convey a clear message.¹⁵⁵ Celia has realised that she has chosen the wrong partner and that her marriage will never work. With no divorce available in Spain in the 1960s, Celia gets involved with Pablo, hoping that they can settle down together. She proposes this to him during the trip to Segovia and Pablo's reaction makes her realise that she never meant much to him. Indeed, the narrator provides a profile of Pablo as a serial womaniser, something that Celia is obviously not aware of. Celia also realises that Pablo has always been duplicitous when she finds out

¹⁵⁴ As Freedman notes: 'Pedro's professional and domestic failure seems rooted in a previously self-created ideal and romantic notion of life that the real world will constantly defeat', p. 91.

¹⁵⁵ Freedman's own moral values lead him to consider Celia as: 'Undoubtedly the novel's prime cynic', p. 90. Herzberger, though, agrees with my assessment of this character. See Herzberger, pp. 38-39.

that Pablo has secured for himself the very job she had asked him to help her to get. One could argue that Celia is deceitful, since, after all, she does not move out of the home she shares with Pedro, although she does threaten Pedro with separation when he becomes physically abusive. But then, none of them is financially independent.

When Celia decides to leave both husband and lover the reader is informed that 'un nuevo sentimiento de libertad nacía en ella' (p. 203). It is this action that gives the character some sense of dignity.¹⁵⁶ Her action has a double meaning within the novel. On the one hand, the author conveys the feminist message that Spanish women need not rely upon men when these are undeserving, that they have the right to live life on their own terms: 'El tiempo de cordial sumisión estaba caducando' (pp. 167-68). For DiNubila it also represents a break from the middle-class ethics of keeping up appearances.¹⁵⁷

JAQUE A LA DAMA

In *Jaque a la dama* (1982) Fernández Santos continues his explorations of how Spaniards develop their sense of selfhood in response to the cultural influences of the period in which they live. He now centres upon the notion of love as the main defining factor, from the perspective of a generation of women who grew up during the Civil War. The war is presented here, as in *El hombre de los*

¹⁵⁶ Concha Alborg considers this character 'una mujer cínica, amargada en su matrimonio', p. 101. Nonetheless, Alborg agrees that: 'Su decisión final le hace cobrar dignidad. Es ella la única que se escapa del laberinto de una vida sin amor y comprensión', p.103.

¹⁵⁷ DiNubila contrasts this ending to those works by Juan Goytisolo: 'A solution radically different from the couple of *Fin de fiesta* and *La isla* who remain together in spite of their meaningless relationships', p. 120, n19.

santos, as a historical circumstance that stripped individuals and society of ethical values. But whilst Fernández Santos's study of Antonio was based upon the interaction between a sense of selfhood and a sense of belonging to the middle class, here the study of Marta is focused upon the development of a sense of selfhood within the context of gender relationships. The characters are provincial middle-class women brought up with the objective of becoming wives and mothers. Fernández Santos pays tribute to these women for developing their own liberal definition of love despite their puritanical upbringing. Once more, he highlights the need for the individual to consider their own bodily impulses as guidance to their actions. It is an intimate psychological study of Marta, the protagonist, and to a lesser extent of Sonsoles, the secondary character.

The novel has been treated harshly by Spanish critics. Ramón Jiménez Madrid attributes the lesser quality of the novel to the author's poor health, as well as his willingness to meet the requirements of what the critic considers a questionable prize, the Premio Planeta, which Fernández Santos won in 1982 under a pseudonym.¹⁵⁸ The whole meaning of the novel has been questioned and the creation of the main character has been dismissed as almost capricious and fanciful. However, I believe that these observations merely express the frustration of those critics who are unable to see the deeper layers of the

¹⁵⁸ According to Ramón Jiménez Madrid: 'La consecuencia de tal premio suponía por una parte, prescindiendo de la jugosa compensación económica, un lanzamiento comercial en toda regla que no había tenido en obras anteriores. F. Santos había tenido el reconocimiento de la crítica y profesionales, pero nunca había entrado en el circuito popular. El premio, que lleva aparejado casi siempre el propio descrédito, le supuso tener que afirmar que él nunca había hecho concesiones y que en *Jaque a la dama* tampoco las había hecho'. Shortly after, Jiménez Madrid notes that: 'El autor, en cuanto al estilo, ha bajado la guardia y hace uso de un estilo meramente funcional, sin lustre y desmayado que denuncia al escritor de pulso enfermizo. Compuesta la obra en el sanatorio catalán en buena parte, convalesciente de una hemorragia interna', pp. 227, 238.

work.¹⁵⁹ Only Rafael Conte has offered some positive insight into the main character when he states that: 'Cierta sonambulismo preside la existencia de esta mujer que atraviesa la vida -- o es atravesada por ella -- como si durmiera, como si soñara [...] Como si la vida al final la estafara.' This perception allows Conte to conclude that the novel is a: 'Secreto canto de amor a la dama, el eterno femenino, que a pesar de todo prevalece.'¹⁶⁰ Georgie Pauline Mubareck, on the other hand, provides a good study of the novel from the perspective of a woman facing her existential dilemmas (pp. 151-88).

Fernández Santos creates a romantic heroine in a novel that has the appearance of a *novela rosa*, but delivers much more. The novel can be read as an alternative *novela rosa*, a love story with the implicit messages that love can be found with those of your own sex and that women should struggle to change the balance of power in male-female relationships. This latter point is implied at the end of the novel, where the author seems to endorse the women's movement. As Ramón Jiménez Madrid notes, Fernández Santos treats 'la libertad femenina como indicador del acontecimiento político del país. La posibilidad de una nueva sexualidad y de un amor heterodoxo queda justificada si, pese a los perjuicios morales, existe solidaridad y amor entre las partes'.¹⁶¹ And Georgie Pauline Mubareck notes: '*Jaque a la dama* is not only the portrayal of Marta's life from childhood through to middle age, but also her struggle to achieve true independence of self' (p. 153).

In respect of the author's views regarding sexuality, Fernández Santos

¹⁵⁹ See R. Ayerra, 'Oh tristeza tienes nombre de mujer', *Diario 16*, 21 November 1982. Ayerra dismisses the tone of the novel as unnecessarily sad. A. Amorós in 'Grisalla', *ABC*, 4 December 1982, criticises the tone as 'peligrosa grisura'. Both Ayerra and Amorós are cited by Ramón Jiménez Madrid, who describes Marta as 'quebradiza figura que va dando saltitos continuos sin fijar concepto alguno en ningún momento', p. 229.

¹⁶⁰ Rafael Conte, 'El Premio Planeta se encuentra con J.F.S.', *El País*, 21 November 1982, p. 6.

¹⁶¹ Ramón Jiménez Madrid, p. 233.

openly stated in an interview with D. DiNubila that, in his opinion, any sexual practice is acceptable if it is motivated by love.¹⁶² Accordingly, in his novels we find lesbianism and even incest presented from a perspective of respect towards the partners in the relationship. This attitude is well represented in his works and *Jaque a la dama* is not an exception.

In his continuous effort to accommodate form to content, Fernández Santos experiments here in two ways. He delivers a novel of the kind that gave rise to many films adapted in the 1930s and 1940s and in this sense it can be regarded as a tribute to a formula that is typical of the cinema of that time. However, he experiments in a playful way. In the third chapter he includes a vision of sexual relationships in the present, contrasting the pursue of hedonism by the young generation in the 1980s with the ideal of love pursued in the 1930s and 1940s by women like Marta. He also adds a twist at the end: the romantic heroine joins the women's movement. The novel is not merely commercial, as has been claimed. After all, what Fernández Santos reflects in this novel, the modes of sexual conduct of the war and post-war generations, was retold in essay-manner by Carmen Martín Gaité some years later, in 1987, in *Usos amorosos de la posguerra española*. For this work she also won a

¹⁶² D.D.: El amor también es un motivo muy frecuente en sus obras, incluso el amor homosexual como, por ejemplo, en 'Los caracoles' y en *Extramuros*.

J.F.S.: Sí, exactamente.[...].

D.D.: Entonces, ¿se puede entender que su posición respecto del amor es que éste en cualquier forma es lícito, legítimo?

J.F.S.: Sí, es de las pocas cosas que dan sentido a la vida. Eso se ve muy claramente en *Extramuros* [...].

D.D.: Y, ¿el amor incestuoso tal como se ve en 'Viaje de vuelta' y en *La que no tiene nombre*?

J.F.S.: Sí. Bueno, son variaciones sobre el amor. Yo considero que el amor, en cualquiera de sus variantes o formas, enriquece la vida del individuo y le da sentido, sobretudo en el mundo tan disparatado en que vivimos. El amor yo creo que no existe en aberración. Creo que todos son variantes más o menos'. DiNubila 'Entrevista con Jesús Fernández Santos', *Anales de la Narrativa Española Contemporánea*, 5 (1980), 171-75 (p. 172).

prize, the XV Premio Anagrama de Ensayo.¹⁶³

Gonzalo Sobejano has suggested that in the post-war years the North American cinema conditioned the predisposition of Spanish readers to this type of novel: 'Las intrigas policíacas, los complejos freudianos divulgados en la pantalla, aparte las "latas" históricas, acarrearón en los medios de la burguesía un gusto absorbente por cuanto fuese tensión, enredo y conflicto pagados a precio módico y servidos en hora y media de grata escapada.'¹⁶⁴ In the psychological portrayal of Marta there are certainly observations along Freudian lines, as well as observations based upon the influence of cultural factors. However, in my opinion, it is when we pay attention to the cultural factors that the character becomes believable. Sobejano mentions among the popular foreign writers of those days the likes of Daphne du Maurier, Louis Bromfield and W. Somerset Maugham, and the films *Rebecca*, *Vinieron las lluvias*, and *Al filo de la navaja*.

Jaque a la dama is an inconsistent piece of work, with both flaws and merits. The flaws are mainly stylistic. There is even some carelessness with, for example, a paragraph that is almost a copy of one to be found in *Balada de amor y soledad*: 'Lo peor de los hombres era que nunca llegaban a comprender' (p. 183).¹⁶⁵ Nonetheless, the main problem is the narrative structure itself. Narrated predominantly in omniscient third-person, with a linear development of time, the novel is divided into three major parts that broadly coincide with three historical periods. These periods correspond to three stages in the life of the protagonist and her psychological development as a person.

The first part covers the years before the Civil War, the outbreak of the

¹⁶³ Carmen Martín Gaité, *Usos amorosos de la posguerra*. (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1987).

¹⁶⁴ Gonzalo Sobejano, pp. 43-44.

¹⁶⁵ Jesús Fernández Santos, *Jaque a la dama* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1982). All further references to the novel will be to this edition and will be given in the text.

Civil War, and the end of the conflict. It is the most eventful period in Marta's life and includes her childhood, which is dominated by the illness and death of her mother, and her initially conventional relationship with Pablo. During the war Marta starts to work, becomes sexually involved with Pablo, has an abortion, and finally sees herself abandoned by him without explanation. He changes political sides. She starts a second relationship with Mario, and at the end of the war they marry and emigrate to Italy. The second part covers World War II in Italy under Mussolini and ends with Marta returning to Spain, escaping likely persecution as a Jew. This part also includes the failure of her marriage, her husband's death, and her lesbian relationship with her cousin Rosa.

In these first two parts the author succeeds in maintaining a balance between the fast pace of the action and Marta's reflections on her experiences. Consequently, the reader can easily establish the cause-effect link between events and Marta's changing attitudes to love. This section of the novel is very similar to the part where the character of Martín is developed in *Los jinetes del alba*.

The third and final part of the novel covers the post-war years in Spain up to the time of the publication of the novel in 1982. The protagonist leads a quiet and withdrawn life in the safety of her beloved house and garden, until Pablo's daughter, Ana, appears and Marta becomes infatuated with her. Through Ana the reader is presented with a picture of the youth of the time. It ends with an unexpected visit from Rosa followed by Marta joining her in Italy.

This third part exhibits a certain structural weakness, in particular Chapter 24. It contains the revelation, in a flashback sequence, that Marta and her brother engaged as children in erotic games in which she played the submissive role of pleasing her brother:

Y así los juegos empezaban: esconderse, buscarse, escuchar la carrera veloz del corazón, intentar sosegarlo, entre ruinas que parecían de pronto cargadas de pasión.

La penumbra se hacía más densa y pálida sobre los rostros cuando el hermano, tomando entre las suyas las manos de Marta exigía aquel tributo en el que un común pecado los unía. Por entonces lo hubiera escrito con letras de azufre y fuego en el diario [...]. En vez de ello, callaba, salía desde el húmedo interior a contemplar la fuente de dos caras, una de hombre, la otra de mujer. (pp.172-73)

This is a crucial piece of information as it identifies the origin of Marta's understanding of sexual relationships. Whilst there is no elements of power in the erotic games the girls play amongst themselves there is in the games between brother and sister. So, as a young girl Marta assimilates the notion that sex is a tribute that a woman pays to a man. This is a notion that dominates both her understanding of her own sexuality in her relationship with Pablo, and of women in general. It also explains why the brother is so possessive towards her when she starts to go out with Pablo. It clarifies one confusing aspect of the novel for the reader: why, at the beginning of her relationship with Pablo, she feels desired by the two competing males: 'Se los imaginó frente a frente, disputándose sus labios, la doble tentación de sus tibias coronas recién nacidas a la luz o su pequeño bosque bajo el vientre apenas brotado' (p. 131). If this piece of information had been disclosed at the beginning of the novel, it would have contributed to a deeper understanding of the main character and would also have made the first two chapters more interesting. Placed in part three as an element of surprise, it acquires too much relevance, as if the novel was above all a psychological study along Freudian lines of incest, and that this piece of the puzzle was the key to understanding

Marta. I do not think that this is the case. On the other hand, one can forgive the author for revealing this piece of information at this point in the novel.

Marta is a character who does not want to look back on her life and who is defined by her ability to take decisions as challenges come along. But in this quiet and uneventful phase of her life some degree of reflection must have taken place and for her to realise and admit how important her brother has been is a logical step. Yet the narrative here demands a different technical device, such as an interior monologue or stream of consciousness.

In the remainder of the novel, the author focuses on the life of Marta's friend, Sonsoles. The narrative traces her life back to childhood, highlighting both her male-female role-playing games with Marta in those days and how close she felt to Marta, together with her sense of guilt for taking part in those games and her subsequent confessions. This flashback also brakes the pace of the linear narrative. But overall, this shift in favour of a secondary character works well because the characters complement each other. Sonsoles, trapped in an unhappy marriage, decides to have an affair, aware that, in this case, sex is simply a way of killing time and making her feel alive. She will eventually find fulfilment in the setting up and running of a *casa de cultura*. On the other hand, Marta, being the romantic heroine, waits for the possibility of finding someone she can truly love.

The reason why Fernández Santos develops the novel with Ana turning out to be Pablo's daughter is a matter for speculation. One possibility is that it is a Freudian clue for the reader to interpret the relationship as incestuous. However this is too basic and crude. I believe that it simply reiterates the fact that, in the imagination of a woman who has lived her whole life clinging to the dream of true love becoming reality, Ana's resemblance to her father makes her the embodiment of a new chance of true love, as Pablo was in the past: 'Tal como Sonsoles creía, era inútil buscar en la memoria la razón de un presente que se negaba a caminar a solas' (p. 212).

For Marta, fate brings along with Ana the possibility of a rebirth, of suppressing the previous years and erasing the sentimental failures. But this twist in the plot muddles up the psychological portrayal unnecessarily.

The end of the novel also merits another point of criticism. Ana abandons Marta and marries her boyfriend. At this moment, Rosa, on a quick visit to Madrid as a representative of a women's rights organisation, appears briefly and encourages Marta to join her. The novel ends with Marta being reunited with Rosa, supposedly to join the cause. So, at the end Marta, like Sonsoles, finds fulfilment in a social context and not in the private realm of romance. But Rosa's appearance, out of the blue, in the very last ten pages of the novel is too abrupt and gives the impression of a last-minute improvisation.

However, Georgie Pauline Mubareck finds no flaws in the structure of the novel or in its narrative techniques. On the contrary, she praises the author for it. Accordingly, she observes that: 'The apparent abruptness of her choice reveals the protagonist's determination to forge a future, unclear though it may be. Throughout the narrative of Marta's search, the techniques for rendering her interior speech reveal the character's struggle to articulate her existential dilemmas. The predominance of psycho-narration underscores the character's lack of authority for the presentation of her thoughts and parallels her search for independence. The moments of greatest insight are rendered in narrative monologue, while quoted monologue infuses her thoughts with emotional expression' (pp. 187-88).¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ Also, in terms of the protagonist's psychological development, Mubareck notes that: 'Her thoughts show her greater understanding of her existential search through the change in technique. Her youth and adolescence are characterized by the predominance of psycho-narration, whereas narrated monologue becomes the preferred technique for rendering her later thoughts', p. 159.

THE INNER WORLD

The novel's main achievement is that Fernández Santos succeeds in portraying a generation of women in the historical period they lived through. He does this with his usual capacity to perceive human behaviour in depth. The cultural factors taken into consideration are: religion, romantic literature and cinema, the prevailing male dominated approach to sexual relationships, the consequences of the Civil War, and the changing attitudes to love and sex in the 1980s. Since studying these factors one by one would result in excessive repetition, I will indicate how they interact as a whole.

The author presents the notion of sin in a sexual context as a cultural construction, something that needs to be inculcated. Marta instinctively feels uneasy with the priest, having a strong dislike for the touch of his hand, sensing repression. In childhood the girls are indoctrinated with the notion of sexual experimentation as sin. However, the apocalyptic tone of the potential punishment for masturbation -- being unable to conceive as an adult -- does not stop the girls from experimenting by themselves or as a group. And although, as good Catholic girls, they soon get into the routine of sinning, confessing, repenting and sinning, they grow up free from any deep-rooted negative sense of either their own bodies, or of experimenting with those of their own gender. As adults, none of these women shows any feelings of religious guilt.

In *En la hoguera* and in *Libro de las memorias de las cosas*, Fernández Santos highlighted the negative effects of religion on the individual sense of selfhood. In *Jaque a la dama* he clearly states that only those who escape such an influence can engage in relationships that may enable them to become more fulfilled human beings. Also, in this work he targets another negative cultural influence, but one he feels more sympathy for: the romantic cinema of the period.

As always, Fernández Santos stresses opposing cultural influences. The grim tone of religious education is counterbalanced by the cultural escapism provided by romantic comedies, both in novel form and at the cinema. This influence is a main factor in the girls' lives. From the cinema the girls learn about female role-models that subvert the prevailing accepted figure of the conventional wife and mother. Understandably, the priest regards the cinema as the worst influence the girls could be under. This influence is twofold in the case of Marta. On the one hand, it encourages her to see herself as an individual on equal terms with the males in her circle and she dreams of becoming as independent as her brother. On the other hand, her fascination for the fictional characters 'con sus amantes galantes y sus maridos aburridos' (p. 17) shapes her expectations of future relationships with men, as she dreams of passion and adventure.

However, with a confined circle of relatives and friends, the prevailing male-female role-model of relationships does not allow much scope for a young girl to develop her sense of independence, and this gives rise to conflicts and contradictions in the young Marta. In sexual matters, at the beginning, Marta sees herself as secondary in relationships. Her relationship with her brother reinforces a submissive sexual attitude to men, and, as a typical young girl of her time, Marta understands her role (in her first relationship) as serving her boyfriend's needs. Marta's diary plays an important role in the process of her coming to terms with what being a woman is all about. After her mother's death, she starts her diary in order to record the dates of her periods. This is an act that reflects the dual forces at play in the shaping of her personality: fantasy and reality. She copies what she sees in the cinema: 'Aquello diari que por entonce solían guardar bajo la almohada las heroínas de las películas de moda' (p. 11). But she finds her periods diminishing. It is 'una servidumbre más que era preciso esconder y callar' (p. 110). This shows the lack of a positive cultural attitude towards what could be

considered as a celebration, as a rite of passage from childhood to womanhood. It is also significant that Marta never writes in her diary about her brother:

Por entonces lo hubiera escrito con letras de azufre
y fuego en el diario que nunca llegó a terminar y al
que el padre, de cuando en cuando, echaba una
ojeada, a pesar del candado dorado.

En vez de ello, callaba, salía desde el húmedo
interior a contemplar la fuente de dos caras, una de
hombre, otra de mujer. (pp. 172-73)

Marta's desire to be valued as an individual manifests itself in resentful feelings towards her mother. When ill, her mother requires everyone's full attention, making Marta feel very much of secondary importance. Marta's longing to occupy the centre stage becomes overwhelming and she feels she is capable of replacing her mother even in the marital bed. Rather than a Freudian reading of this, I suggest a cultural reading along the lines of the influence of the cinema. Marta is desperate for recognition of her own value, since she sees herself as a potential heroine, like the ones on the screen. So when her mother dies, Marta, dressed in her first suit, has a sense of gained freedom that outweighs her sorrow: 'Era como iniciar una de aquellas bodas tan prodigadas en el cine, como casarse convertida en mujer' (pp. 21-22). And: 'No podía menos que sentirse protagonista por primera vez, tal y como aseguraban las amigas' (p. 22).

The war makes Marta believe that her opportunity to gain independence has come and she dreams of attaining the freedom her brother enjoys: 'Seguramente le hubiera gustado ser como el hermano, campar a su voluntad, dueña de sí, tal y como en sueños se veía. Charlar con el padre de tú

a tú [...] borrar para siempre en derredor aquel mundo que, entre la alcoba y el jardín cada día se le antojaba más tedioso y mezquino' (p. 27). But despite her boyfriend's encouragement to carry on working in hospitals after the war, she does not see this as a prospective career because women usually occupy minor positions.

The consequences of a stereotypical approach to sexuality in society are magnified by the brutality of the war. There is a proliferation of brothels, a rise in the number of the rapes, and a general male understanding that: 'Las mujeres estaban obligadas a pagar un tributo especial de guerra. Los hombres bastante tenían con morir en el frente' (p. 41). The conflict reinforces in society the notion of women as worthless human beings. Women become commodities and Marta feels constantly exposed to male demands for sex. To make things worse, her visit to a women's jail, where Pablo can save the life of those women who are pregnant, triggers a depression in Marta that makes her dependent upon pills, and even more dependent on Pablo for moral support.

Later on, in Italy, Rosa expresses the low esteem in which women are held in society, not just because of the debasement of values brought about by the war, but also because of ideology. The Duce is the example to follow for men. Trying to guess the reasons for their husbands' lack of sexual interest in them, Rosa argues that mistresses are readily available and that women are regarded as cattle and are easily replaced: 'Para nuestro Duce sólo los hombres cuentan; las mujeres somos poco más que ganado. Si estuviera en sus manos nos cambiaría por un puñado de escuadristas o un nuevo campo de deporte' (p. 112).

In *Jaque a la dama*, Fernández Santos presents the influence of the cinema of the time as beneficial in the development of the girls' psyche in the sense that it opens up their minds to possibilities other than a conventional marriage. Here, he is keen to explore how the notions of passion and adventure are the foundations of relationships that affect their lives. What he

seems to be indicating is that the combination of the repression preached by religion, the notion of being a commodity, secondary to men, and the fantasy fed by this type of cinema leave the girls ill-equipped to deal with real-life situations. Marta will base her relationship with Pablo upon 'una pasión alzada como razón de vida' (p. 202) and her relationship with Mario upon a sense of adventure. Needless to say, Marta's relationships with these two men end in failure.

After a conventional start to their relationship -- cuddles and kisses but no intimate physical contact -- the outbreak of the war alters the development of the relationship between Pablo and Marta. Faced with his potential departure to the front, Marta has intercourse with him. This is the beginning of what, in her mind, Marta considers her heroic attitude to love -- but an attitude that later on in life she comes to regard as having been submissive. Whilst others visit prostitutes and do not expect their girlfriends to engage in sex before marriage, Pablo expects it and from now on she follows him, working as a volunteer in the hospitals where he works as a doctor. But her love story soon ends when Pablo disappears with no explanation. When months later she has an abortion and he reappears, she realises that the relationship is over: 'Su amor reducido a unos cuantos encuentros furtivos. Ni siquiera sentía aquel vacío repentino de su huida, ni tedio, ni rencor, sino un deseo de escapar, más allá de reproches y lágrimas' (p. 63). As time goes by, Marta feels 'una nueva indiferencia, un poso amargo donde enterrar pasiones y esperanzas' (p. 75). And when she hears that Pablo is now on the Republican side, she reflects on his attitude towards her: 'Su cobardía venía [...] de sus dudas constantes y su estéril egoísmo tan agradable para sí como difícil para los demás' (p. 76).

From this disillusionment with love, Marta adopts a practical approach to sexual relationships. She takes refuge in an affair with Mario, who works as a war reporter and is sent to different places, including

Mallorca, where she witnesses how people engage in sexual experimentation. The narrator soon places this romance in the land of cinematic make-believe: 'Viendo en lo alto la muestra del hotel, sintió aquel vago temor de tantas heroínas en las sesiones de cines de tarde. Le pareció que pisar el umbral era como pasar al otro lado, dejar atrás a Sonsoles y las demás amigas con sus amores realizados a medias' (p. 81). But Marta keeps her feet on the ground. Disappointed with Mario's lack of affection, she reflects on the possibilities of finding what she understands to be true love: 'El verdadero amor capaz de alejar para siempre aquella ingrata sensación de quedar en el umbral, eternamente a solas' (p. 86). Once the war is over, her decision to stay with Mario is a pragmatic one in the context of what life has to offer her. Between the choices of going back home, going to work in a hospital, or following Mario as a reporter, she chooses the last option. With sex already reduced to merely a habit, she considers her feelings for Mario: 'Un reflejo, una sombra de su vieja pasión por Pablo, difícil de borrar a lo largo de aquellos tres monótonos años' (p. 97). Her brother helps Mario to get a job in Italy, but only on condition that he marry Marta. However, her marriage to Mario ends in indifference, with little sex taking place between them and, unsatisfied, she takes refuge in masturbation and fantasy. Subsequently, Mario's death will leave her unaffected.

It is then that she starts a sexual relationship with her cousin. Both women are looking for companionship and affection, as both are left to fend for themselves, with Rosa estranged from her husband. This is a love the narrator describes as an 'amor amargo, apenas florecido junto al mensaje amargo de la radio' (p. 135). It is love in despair: 'Buscar cómo llenar el tiempo de un amor diferente, alzado en el húmedo cuarto, en el calor estremecido de los cuerpos temblando' (p. 135). Marta now learns to understand love as something real, something to be explained on the basis of human needs. She reflects upon what keeps them together and why Rosa is

not that keen to help her to go back to Spain, thereby avoiding persecution as a Jew: 'Sintiéndola tan vecina por la noche se preguntaba si a la postre aquel cerco que se negaba a intentar romper no sería sino un pretexto para no perderla' (p. 152). Aware of her own needs, Marta 'parecía buscar amparo en aquellos pechos ahora cálidos, un refugio donde escapar del miedo y del dolor de aquella breve muerte que sentía cada vez más cercana' (p. 153). Finally, faced with the prospect of a concentration camp, she leaves Italy.

In the third part of the novel, by shifting the focus of attention to Sonsoles, the author contrasts two different attitudes to love. Sonsoles, who is going through a personal crisis -- a failed marriage and a dependency on sleeping pills -- engages in an affair with the painter she knew as a child and whom she idealised as a passionate man. Through sex she is trying to find fulfilment in life, but she finds that her anguish does not subside: 'Después, con el momento de vestirse, vino aquella nueva sensación de hostil vacío' (pp. 182-83). Feeling no closeness or bonding with the painter, she soon realises that the relationship is merely a pastime and ends the affair admitting that: 'Se sintió ridícula con su remedo de pasión ante aquellas puntuales visitas' (p. 185). Sonsoles will eventually find fulfilment in her life, not within the framework of her personal life but in society, by setting up and running the town's *Casa de cultura*: 'Un nuevo sentido a su vida lejos de su marido y de sus sobrinas sobre todo' (p.199).

Marta and Sonsoles express opposing attitudes to life. Marta is the romantic who lives for an ideal. Although her past experiences have proved that such ideal love is elusive, she nonetheless spends her life in her garden, a metaphor for her inner world, hoping in vain to find it. It is with some irony that the narrator describes her buying things for her trousseau. Sonsoles, on the other hand, is the realist. But, as we have seen, Marta and Rosa get together at the end of the novel. What Fernández Santos seems to be suggesting is that affection, human warmth, is the only valid foundation for a

successful relationship. The only positive sexual relationship that his heroine has is with her cousin Rosa in Italy. Although at the time of the affair Marta understood this relationship as born out of the need for human company in desperate circumstances, and not as the love of her life, the reunion signifies Marta's acceptance of their feelings as valuable.

It has already been noted how much emphasis Fernández Santos places on this notion of affection as an antidote to the threat of alienation that society breeds. The novelist seems to understand sex as a means for human beings to establish bonding relationships, whether it be heterosexual or homosexual; marital or extramarital; a short affair or steady relationship, and he seems to condemn any practice that in his eyes trivialises or vilifies it.

In *Jaque a la dama*, Fernández Santos presents a hedonistic society -- which has lost the ideal of love but which at heart is just as conventional as it was before -- as a reason for the alienation of modern youth. Ana moves in a circle of friends and acquaintances who take drugs, risking their lives, and practise casual sex. But after a period of experimentation with alternative ways of life, Ana (to Marta's disappointment) will marry and settle down, fulfilling her parents' expectations. Recreational casual sex is presented here, as in the scene of the party the *Demonio* goes to in *Libro de las memorias de las cosas*, as contributing to people's alienation. Ana remarks that some young girls will exchange sex for a few drinks as a weekend pastime, reducing sex to a commodity. Elsewhere, in *El hombre de los santos*, Anita engages in an affair with her boss, a character whom Fernández Santos ridicules as a shallow, serial womaniser.

What Fernández Santos seems to condemn is how, in a society that breeds alienation, people do not try to resolve their personal problems, choosing escapism instead. Escapism is presented here in two extreme manifestations: sublimation of true love, and sex as a panacea for all modern angsts. Marta's notion of true love may be puerile, but the author seems to

present the ideal of finding love as a dignifying goal in life and he rewards Marta by giving her a real second chance by bringing Rosa back into her life. Finally, what is likely to be frustrating for a contemporary readership is that Fernández Santos never analyses the attitudes of the younger generation, he merely describes them with a minimum of detail.

The theme of memory and identity is also relevant in the novel. The main trait in Marta's character is her immense capacity to remove both people and experiences from her memory, in order to move forward. The author does not judge this trait morally, he presents it as part of the need to survive and evolve. Emotional survival is the key concept.

Marta is a survivor, and since her mother cannot fulfil Marta's need for affection and protection (on the contrary, she requires her needs as a convalescent to be met), Marta wishes that she would disappear to make way for her. Cruel as it may sound, that is how the narrator presents Marta's childhood psychology: more instinctive than reflective, children as egocentric. After her mother's death, Marta dislikes the many photographs of her displayed throughout the house because, as she understands it, her mother's presence inhibits her father from treating her as a grown up. The photographs become a reminder of her position in the family structure (that is second in the female hierarchy), although in her opinion her mother's illness, and her subsequent death, rendered her non-existent.

This need to blank people out of her memory once Marta regards her relationship with them as negative, is a constant feature. This is the case with both Pablo and Mario. By the time she goes to Italy with Mario the reader is informed that: 'Pablo había muerto en el río fugaz de su memoria' (p. 102). And after Mario's death she hardly remembers him: 'Marta se sorprendía en ocasiones de su capacidad de olvido' (p. 133). Once back in Spain, Rosa is always present in her memory. She often thinks about writing to Rosa or escaping to Venice, although she never does.

Marta refuses to look back. Instead she looks forward to a future when she will find someone she can love. When looking at a new portrait of herself in which 'un gesto amargo parecía borrar pasadas ilusiones' (p. 165), she does not recognise herself because she knows that the expression on her face reflects her past rather than her present features. She refuses to look at it and hangs it in an empty room because 'tampoco ella quería volver la vista atrás' (p. 166).

Marta's attachment to her past manifests itself through her attachment to places and material objects as depositories of those things in life she considers worth rescuing from oblivion -- and she insists on keeping them as they are, without alterations. When the ground floor of her house is beginning to be transformed into the *Casa de cultura*, Marta feels deeply threatened: 'Toda la infancia de una Marta niña iba quedando arrasada por aquel frenesí' (p. 210), and: 'Es como suicidarse' (p. 210). In fact, Marta takes refuge from her traumatic experiences in her garden and is known as 'la viuda del jardín, dueña y guardiana de un cerrado paraíso abierto sólo a los pájaros y a los gatos' (p. 163). Indeed, there are numerous references to her garden throughout the novel, from her childhood onwards. It is in this garden that the author places a fountain with a male and female face looking in opposite directions, symbolising the eternal problem of male-female incommunication. Rosa argues that Marta needs to come out of her garden, that the time of spiritual healing is over, and that she must come out into the world and find her place.

Marta's father is an example of someone who submerges himself in memory, taking refuge there to ignore the grim present. He spends most of his time reading history books about his own race, the Jews, and he ends up isolated, talking to himself, living in a past he never even experienced: 'Paisanos de Belén y de Mallorca debían de reñir batallas dentro de su mente luchando por [...] escapar de una de tantas guerras parecidas a aquella que

pretendía ignorar. Era inútil hablarle sino de su vieja fe, ni siquiera obligarle a coger el teléfono' (p. 71). In fact, the narrator likens Marta's garden to her father's wandering mind: 'Volver [...] a casa, con la guerra concluida, [...] a la sombra de un padre hundido para siempre en el jardín amargo de sus sueños perdidos' (p. 92). Both Marta and her father are representative of the generation that suffered the war and subsequently blanked it out, trying to get on with their lives.

THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Fernández Santos studies the implications of Marta's refusal to acknowledge belonging to a social class. There are only two occasions when the author presents Marta and Sonsoles in relation to members of other social classes, emphasising that they live in a cocoon, in a realm of their own. But in contrast to other novels such as *El hombre de los santos*, the author does not overly criticise this aspect in his characters, he merely presents it as a fact of life. The middle class is presented here as a boundary, a milieu, a framework within which the lives of these women take place.

As young girls, Marta and her friends are advised by her parents to keep away from the town's working-class boys. And on the eve of the Civil War, as the girls watch a group of impoverished and angry landless peasants going back home with no money because of the lack of work, one of the peasants makes the threatening comment that next time they come to this town they will cut off the girls' heads. This brief scene serves the purpose of outlining the protected existence the girls lead until the outbreak of the war. The war forces them to behave like adults, performing manual duties as members of the land force, bringing them suddenly out of their cosy environment and into the real world. However, after the war the young women go back to their usual way of life. Marta and Sonsoles are presented as

unable to relate to the social concerns of Italian neorealist films, whereas they miss, instead, the old fashioned romantic comedies of their youth. Mubareck elaborates upon this point: 'Marta's awareness of the changes that have occurred through the years following the civil war crystallizes in her thoughts as she and Sonsoles leave the movies. These newer faces are not the heroes and heroines of the Thursday films. These films reveal a world which is based on the reality of their present time, rather than past fantasy. [...] Marta's consciousness of time and change anticipates the return of her youthful rebelliousness' (p. 181).

The blocking of memory as an instinctive mechanism of survival is also analysed in the novel with regard to politics, though as a secondary theme. Marta blots out what is going on in the country: 'Misericordias ajenas, huelgas, hambres, amenazas de guerras que no llegaban a estallar navegaban por el horizonte sin detenerse nunca, resbalando sobre la muralla para ser arrastradas río abajo como jirones de una vida que la memoria se obstinara en rechazar' (p.163). When she sees a convoy of buses carrying supporters of the regime she sees herself reflected in the faces, and to avoid thinking about it she remains at home for the rest of the day: 'Ni siquiera alteró la calma del jardín o de los miradores aquella caravana de autobuses camino de Madrid para protestar o celebrar un acontecimiento que no recordaba [...] y como huyendo de un espejo múltiple, aquel día no salió de casa' (p. 191). Other members of this generation that went through the war adopt the same attitude: 'Nadie quería volver la vista atrás' (p. 164). So, when graffiti appears on the walls demanding freedom, Marta's old administrator answers: '¿Libertad? ¿para qué? ¿Para volver a enzarzarnos en otra guerra?' (p. 164).

But this survival instinct is presented by the narrator as a willingness to turn a blind eye to what is going on when self-interest is concerned. In her quiet post-war years Marta enjoys a good standard of living thanks to her brother's involvement with the regime, a fact that she tries to ignore but which

the narrator makes sure the reader notes. The tone used is as ironic as the tone which the narrator presents Antonio's awakening of his social consciousness at the very beginning of *El hombre de los santos* :

Pero hubiera sido preciso aparentar ser ciega [...] para no comprender que [...] la ciudad se había convertido en fuente de oscuros negocios que el hermano y un puñado de amigos manejaban desde sus despachos de Madrid. Él no dejó pasar en vano aquellos años encerrados en un rincón del jardín, había hecho presa en ellos tal y cómo el padre preveía, atento siempre a un porvenir que a buen seguro acabaría con una boda memorable.
(p. 180)

In the case of Marta, Fernández Santos criticises the typically middle-class attitude of living in a cocoon, but because Marta is of interest to the author for her idealistic notion of romantic and sexual relationships as a means for human beings to communicate, her traits as a typical middle-class woman in matters regarding social issues are, if not completely ignored, at least seen from a distance.

It is worth noting that for the members of the new generation such as Ana, the war and the past in general have no meaning: 'Marta, oyéndola, se decía que aquel tiempo al que se refería nunca le dio tal sensación de lejanía' (p. 195). This deliberate disregard for the past is a trait in the new generation that worries the author and, two years after *Jaque a la dama*, he will write *Los jinetes del alba*, emphasising for this new generation how the past is linked to the present: how current unresolved social issues have their roots in the past. Indeed, at a more intimate level, *Jaque a la dama* is a reminder to this new

generation of how hard it was for the members of the older generation to develop a sense of personal freedom as regards their own sexuality, given the repressive way they were brought up and the convoluted times they lived through. It is also a reminder of the importance of the intrinsic value of an individual's worth in any kind of relationship, something the idealistic female members of the older generation like Marta dreamed of, and which seems to have been forgotten in these apparently more care-free but deep down extremely conservative times.

CONCLUSION

As has already been noted, from the very beginning of his career as a novelist Fernández Santos was well aware of the limitations inherent in an objectified representation of reality. This explains his experimenting with intertextuality in his second novel. In his third novel, *Laberintos* (1964), the author makes extensive use of dialogue, a typical narrative device to represent reality objectively, to expose the shallowness of the group of artists. However he also uses irony and parody to convey the social reality of the country, which works so well in the novel. But *Laberintos*, nonetheless, clearly shows the shortcomings of that type of literature in terms of portraying the characters' psychology, even when a third-person narrator offers insights.

El hombre de los santos (1969) marks a definite departure from objective realism to the beginning of a new and more intimate phase in Fernández Santos's career as a novelist. He experimented with the presentation of subjectivity in the 1970s and early 1980s in the novels *Libro de las memorias de las cosas* (1971), *Extramuros* (1978), *Cabrera* (1981), and also in the collections of short stories *Las catedrales* (1970), *Paraíso encerrado* (1973), and *A orillas de una vieja dama* (1979). In 1982, when the author wrote *Jaque a la dama* he was clearly trying new narrative modes. Fernández Santos may have failed to

successfully introduce elements of psychoanalysis to the narrative of *Jaque a la dama* but he succeeds in creating an alternative and modern variation of the *novela rosa*. Like *Los jinetes del alba* (1984), *Jaque a la dama* (1982) is a novel that goes back to the Civil War to complement the vision of the period offered in other novels. Furthermore, with *Jaque a la dama* Fernández Santos expands his vision of women.

The author's sympathetic approach to women permeates many of his novels. However, being sympathetic is not the same as being radical, and if Fernández Santos shows some degree of radicalism in gender issues it stems from his left-wing stance regarding the social and political structure of society. This can be seen particularly in his novels set during the Civil War and at the beginning of the post-war period, in which the sense of social class prevails both in male and female characterization, and where Fernández Santos points his accusing finger at the rigid social structures that dehumanised people, forcing them to become stereotypes. Among others, this is exemplified in the characters of Socorro (condemned to be a mistress) and Amparo (condemned to be a casual prostitute) of *Los bravos* (1954). It is also true of Miriam and Martín of *Los jinetes del alba* (1984), who were expected to provide sex for promotion at work. Of these characters, Socorro and Miriam are portrayed as independent thinkers who can understand their predicament as women within the general political framework. After moving to live with the doctor, Socorro expects different treatment: a relationship of equals. Although politically conservative, Miriam attempts to better her financial standing aware that to give in to her boss's sexual advances will be submitting to his desire for power over people. Nonetheless, it is with his third novel, *Laberintos*, that, as early as 1964, Fernández Santos bluntly proposes in his fictional work that the future for women lies in being independent and that this independence rests upon obtaining an education that would allow them to compete in the labour market. Celia can separate from her husband because

she can hope to make a living for herself as a painter, something she has trained to be. Within the context of the traditional society of the 1960s, Celia stands out as a glamorous role model, a positive example for the young female readership of the day. Unhappily married, she dares to engage in an affair; then realising how petty and manipulative both her husband and lover are, she starts a new life on her own.

As the dictatorial regime evolved, Fernández Santos presented failed male-female relationships due to the characters' desire or willingness to fit in with the conventional expectations of society, or adherence to stereotypical notions of the roles of male and female within a relationship. Fernández Santos had no qualms about depicting negative male examples. Antonio and Víctor are the most representative. Antonio of *El hombre de los santos* (1969), who married to keep his social status and did nothing to educate his daughter to behave differently, and Víctor, who was unable to break free from his deeply rooted, macho self-centred view of relationships. In contrast, in *Balada de amor y soledad* (1984) Fernández Santos includes two positive female examples: a modern woman involved in politics and sexually free, the ecologist campaigner, and Carmen, Víctor's wife, a traditional woman, who having made the mistake of abandoning her university studies still dared to separate from her husband and earn a living, giving up her comfortable middle-class life.

Perhaps because Fernández Santos reflected the reality of Spanish society of his day, where the masculine realm was the public sphere, and the feminine realm was the private one, gender issues were never presented as the main thematic preoccupation in his more politically-orientated novels. Consequently, in none of the novels mentioned above does a female character come to the fore as the protagonist of the novel. He certainly does not break new ground here.

However, the author's sympathy towards women also acquires a

degree of radicalism when he deals with religious themes, in which he again applies a blunt criticism and takes an unequivocally radical stance. *Libro de las memorias de las cosas* (1971) is the best example of this and the abundance of detail in the analysis is remarkable. Fernández Santos's defence of the innate right of women to enjoy their sexuality and become the masters of their own destinies is remarkable, given the strong Catholic emphasis on repressing female sexuality. One can trace his defence of women's sexuality back to *En la hoguera* and his portrayal of Doña Constanza, the widow. Also, his portrayal of Inés shows how hypocritical the supposedly religious society of the 1950s was, in that abortion was considered a valid solution as long as it was concealed, not only because it was a criminal offence but also because of the importance of maintaining appearances.

In 1984 gender issues become the main theme in *Jaque a la dama*, but although Fernández Santos seems to endorse the women's movement, by not elaborating in detail on ways of changing the second-class status of women in society he does not seem to endorse radical measures fully. He adopts instead an intimate approach to the understanding of the character's psychology outlining cultural and historical factors. In this sense it is a remarkable novel that shows the author's deep knowledge and understanding of the women of his generation. But in terms of feminist concerns, although the novel is sympathetic to women, radical it is not. And although the novel explains in detail the cultural factors that shaped women's lives in the past, it only mentions in passing some of the factors that are shaping their lives in the 1980s. Furthermore, romanticism, as presented in the novel, could hardly make a claim as an antidote for hedonism.

CHAPTER 5

THE HISTORICAL NOVELS (I)

HISTORY, POLITICS, AND SOCIETY: *LA QUE NO TIENE NOMBRE* AND *CABRERA*

Set in the remote past, the four historical novels studied in this and the following chapter (*La que no tiene nombre*, *Cabrera*, *Extramuros*, and *El Griego*) accurately depict the customs and mentality of the times in question and attempt 'a serious study of the relationship between personal fortunes and social conflicts'.¹⁶⁷ Beyond this, these novels also comply with the general criteria of what constitutes a historical novel in the canon created by Sir Walter Scott, as established by Georg Lukács in his study *The Historical Novel*.¹⁶⁸ These criteria will help in the evaluation of the four novels.

The novels are consistent with Lukács's understanding of history in two main aspects: the nature of any class struggle and the role played by the individual. When Lukács explains 'the historical basis upon which Sir Walter Scott's historical novels arose', he highlights the new interpretation of human

¹⁶⁷ Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 99-100.

¹⁶⁸ Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. by Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (London: Merlin Press, 1962).

progress as essential, pointing out 'the increasing historical awareness of the decisive role played in human progress by the struggle of classes in history' (pp. 28, 27). Lukács also remarks on the importance of Hegel in a new understanding of history, for in contrast to the 'Enlightenment's conception of man's unalterable nature [...] Hegelian philosophy draws all the inferences from the new progressive historicism. It sees man as a product of himself and his own activity in history' (p. 28). As we have seen in *Los bravos*, *Los jinetes del alba*, *El hombre de los santos*, and *Balada de amor y soledad*, Fernández Santos's interpretation of Spanish history is based upon an understanding of the link between the social class his characters belong to and the political ideology they fight for, as well as the link between a sense of belonging to a social class (and acting accordingly), and a sense of personal identity. He clearly dismissed the Franco regime's concept of man as an unalterable nature, as an essence. These same themes reappear in his historical novels. Furthermore, like Sir Walter Scott, Fernández Santos understands the past as a prehistory of the present, and in his historical novels he shows the interactions between the different social classes in the past in order to explain how the present has been configured.¹⁶⁹ We will see this clearly in *La que no tiene nombre*, *Extramuros*, and *Cabrera*. These novels present the evolution of the history of the country as a linear process of social class struggle and political confrontations moving towards a democratic present. As Lukács explains, in the fight against Fascism 'the humanism of the democratic opposition [...] view[s] the events of the present and the paths that have led to them with a searching historical vision'

¹⁶⁹ 'Scott gave expression to a new, historical attitude on the part of society which arose from life itself. His historical themes emerged organically, by themselves as it were from the development, spread and deepening of historical feeling. They simply give expression to this feeling -- the feeling that a real understanding for the problems of contemporary society can only grow out of an understanding of the society's prehistory and formative history.' Lukács, pp. 230-31.

(pp. 262-63).

Lukács strongly condemns as escapist literary exercises, those modern historical novels that, in the manner of Flaubert's *Salammbô*, merely transpose the problems of the present into the past, reducing the past to a mere decorative and exotic framework. This has become the more popular type of historical novel written nowadays.¹⁷⁰ Fernández Santos's statement that his historical novels, 'en realidad no son propiamente novelas históricas. Yo siempre digo de este tipo de narraciones que son historias de hoy contadas desde otro tiempo', can be misleading, suggesting that he follows the fashionable trend.¹⁷¹ However, as we shall see, his novels prove otherwise. There is only one case, the nun in *Extramuros*, that stretches historical verisimilitude by forcing the reader to think that a Golden-Age nun would accept her lesbianism without a sense of guilt in terms of sexual deviation. However, Lukács, regarding the characters' psychology, argues that 'Scott [...] *never modernises*' (p. 60). But apart from this isolated case, with Fernández Santos's characters, as with Scott's, 'both the great human qualities as well as the vices and limitations [...] spring from a clearly embodied historical basis of existence. It is neither by analysis, nor by psychological explanation of its ideas that Scott familiarises us with the peculiar historical qualities of the inner life of an age, but by a broad portrayal of its being, by showing how thoughts, feelings, modes of behaviour grow up out of this basis' (p. 50).

It is worth noting that Fernández Santos started writing historical novels well before they became fashionable once more and it is clear that he never followed literary fashion. On the contrary, his works may be regarded as

¹⁷⁰ See Germán Gullón, 'La novela histórica: Ficción para convivir', *Ínsula*, No. 641 (May 2000), p. 3.

¹⁷¹ Interview with Milagros Sánchez Arnosí, 'Fernández Santos: La coherencia de un estilo', *La Estafeta Literaria*, No. 54 (May 1983), p. 59. Cited by Ramón Jiménez Madrid, p. 221.

the forerunners to the rebirth of the genre in its classical form. As Santos Sanz Villanueva writes, the historical novel as a subgenre flourished in the 1980s, perhaps because it had become popular through the translations of foreign authors such as Robert Graves, Marguerite Yourcenar and, above all, Umberto Eco, but also because it allowed an evasive attitude towards the problems the country faced. Medieval times and the War of Independence became favourite settings. Santos Sanz Villanueva also states that, overall, the historical novels of the 1980s differ in quality. Whilst some novels are limited to an imaginative recreation of a historical period, others provide a critical analysis of the past that encourages a discussion of current issues. And regarding Fernández Santos, Santos Sanz Villanueva states:

Toda última narrativa, por ejemplo, de un Fernández Santos se decanta por el empleo de alejados marcos temporales, pero esos libros suyos recientes tienen algo de pioneros, en este sentido, y se publican antes de que la historia se convierta en moda.¹⁷²

In terms of the relationship between the writer and his times, the writing of historical novels and the form that these take, Luckás points out with regard to the fight against Fascism:

When realism declines the spirit becomes abstract and evaporates, and the problems of the present, its people and its destinies are conceived metaphysically. The modern social novel is as much a child of the classical historical novel as the latter is of the

¹⁷² Santos Sanz Villanueva, 'La novela', in *Los nuevos nombres: 1975-1990: Historia y Crítica de la Literatura Española*. Eds. Francisco Rico, Darío Villanueva and others, 9 vols (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 1992), IX (1992), 249-84 (p. 261).

great social novels of the eighteenth century. The decisive question of the development of the historical novel in our day is how to restore this connection in keeping with our age. (pp. 343-44)

Although the four novels covered here were written after the death of Franco in 1975, in terms of content they can be considered as examples of novels that follow the canon of the classical historical novels. They attempt to eradicate the legacy of historical distortion left by the Franco regime: a regime that had presented the Civil War of 1936-39 as a restoration of the true path of Spanish history, a return to the Golden Age and the defence of Catholicism as the very essence of the Spanish soul. Fernández Santos, on the other hand, presents the past in terms of class struggle and political confrontation, reducing Catholicism to a mere ideological tool used by the political establishment. These novels also present the problems faced in the present and indicate a path towards the future, taking into account the lessons learnt from the past. However, the form of these historical novels presents problems, and one has to bear in mind that Fernández Santos saw them not only as developing the realist trend in literature in terms of content, but also as revitalising its form by looking for inspiration in Spanish tradition.¹⁷³ It is this latter ambition that makes his historical novels deviate from the canon as defined by Lukács, particularly in matters of language. For Lukács 'archaism must be ruled out of the general linguistic tone of the historical novel as a superfluous artificiality. The point is to bring a past period *near* to a present-day reader' (p. 195). As we shall see in *Extramuros*, recreating archaic language creates problems. Nevertheless, these are all successful classical historical novels in different ways.

¹⁷³ Jorge Rodríguez Padrón, 'Estudio Preliminar', in *La que no tiene nombre*, p. 58.

There is one final aspect of realism that Lukács highlights, that of 'necessary anachronism': 'Scott's "necessary anachronism" consists [...] simply in allowing his characters to express feelings and thoughts about real, historical relationships in a much clearer way than the actual men and women of the time could have done. But the content of these feelings and thoughts, their relationship to their real object is always historically and socially correct. The extent to which this expression of thought and feeling outstrips the consciousness of the age is not more than is absolutely necessary for elucidating the given historical relationship' (p. 63). This is the case in all four historical novels.

LA QUE NO TIENE NOMBRE AND CABRERA

As I have indicated, in most of his novels Fernández Santos conveys the inner world of his characters, providing testimony of the dilemmas faced by people who experience a constant change in the external circumstances affecting their lives. Whatever narrative mode is used, the characters try to comprehend how the world is changing and how the changes affect them, and they always show an element of awareness of the role they play in society, and how they have come to be what they are. In *La que no tiene nombre* and *Cabrera* these aspects are explored with respect to the concept of nationhood. Furthermore, at the heart of Fernández Santos's approach to his historical novels there is also the implicit message that the interpretation of history has been distorted, whether intentionally to manipulate its meaning and justify actions, or simply by the passing of time. The author takes it upon himself to provide his own version of history on the premise that he intends no distortion or manipulation, but merely clarification and understanding of the meaning of individuals' lives and the period they lived in. He particularly likes characters who have had

traditionally received less attention, or who have been represented in a negative light, in order to counterbalance the mainstream representation of these people. His purpose is to vindicate a period of history and to recover it for the country's collective memory .

There is also a didactic intention, since Fernández Santos selects themes that have relevance for present times. In this sense, he continues the line of classical historical novels such as those written by Galdós, who tried to educate the reading public. Fernández Santos has stated that in *La que no tiene nombre* (1977), he wanted to vindicate the historical character of Juana García, La Dama de Arintero, as being a precursor to feminism in Spanish history.¹⁷⁴ Juana García's memory has been reduced to the anonymous female warrior in a medieval romance that is represented as a *paso* on Easter Sunday in some villages in the mountains of León, and in autumn her death is re-enacted in La Cándana, the village where she was killed. Her relevance in the historical process of the country, however, has never been acknowledged.¹⁷⁵ Her coat of arms, where she appears on horseback and dressed for battle, has been erased by the passing of time: 'Ese escudo que nada dice, que nada aclara linajes, ni fechas, ni fuerza de sangre, cuya única figura armada cabalga apuntando con su lanza al camino que la casa defiende'.¹⁷⁶ It is not the case that the country does not hold female historical characters as heroines, for example during the

¹⁷⁴ 'Se refiere a la aventura de una mujer precursora y a su vez víctima del feminismo a su manera.' Fernández Santos, *El País*, La Cultura Section, 11 May 1979, p. 29.

¹⁷⁵ 'No llegó, sin embargo, a símbolo nacional, aunque sí a heroína popular, como lo prueban los múltiples romances en los que su persona y aventura aparecen y esa especie de auto histórico o drama en el que cada año su sacrificio se repite. Aparte de todo ello, hoy por hoy, tan sólo da su nombre a un restaurante.' Fernández Santos, "Retrato de una dama." *El País*, Opinión Section, 31 August 1979, p. 9.

¹⁷⁶ Jesús Fernández Santos, *La que no tiene nombre*. Colección Ancora y Delfín, 58 (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1977), p. 13. All further references to the novel will be to this edition and will be given in the text.

Franco regime a female warrior was held as an iconic figure: Agustina de Aragón who fought against the French in the War of Independence. However, the country ignores those who challenged areas of the political and social system which are still problematic today . For example, one could say that in modern times women still struggle to get to the top of their professions on grounds of gender. The case of Juana García has not lost its relevance for the modern reader.

In *Cabrera* (1981), Fernández Santos dedicates many chapters to the living conditions on the Balearic island where the protagonist stays, which Fernández Santos likens to a concentration camp. The use of concentration camps in different periods of history is well documented, and the issue is topical now as Al-Qaida terrorist suspects are being held at Guantanamo Bay. This novel also offers a pertinent interest for the Spanish readers of the early 1980s, when the integration of Spain into the European Union was an issue, since it delves into the theme of Spain in Europe in the period of the War of Independence.

LA QUE NO TIENE NOMBRE

La que no tiene nombre (1977), winner of the Fastenrath prize awarded by the Real Academia de la Lengua, condenses, in one work, Fernández Santos's notion of history as a linear development of time. It also encapsulates his negative view of the history of the country in an elegiac tone, but without sentimental overtones. This is not, however, a novel full of historical information: a general knowledge is presumed and the two main narrative threads focus upon the tribulations of characters who assume the status of mythological beings.

The style is very different in the two narrative threads as Fernández

Santos accommodates the form of each narrative to the historical period that it covers. In the first narrative thread, set during the fifteenth century, he adopts a ballad style for the voice of the Dama's servant who relates her deeds. The introduction of fragments of ballads, in addition to some verses written by Fernández Santos himself, contribute to enhance the style of the narrative. In the second narrative thread, whose fictional time spans from the aftermath of the Civil War until 1977, the narrative mode adopted is that of a multiplicity of voices to allow the development of plot and introduction of new characters. I agree with Herzberger when he notes that these two threads are intertwined so closely in terms of motifs, plot development, and narrative structure, that the reader is able to follow both stories simultaneously without perceiving the alternation of stories as causing fractures in the narrative line. David Herzberger provides good examples of this 'pseudoserialization of plot'. For instance, on at least two occasions the theme is intensified by the juxtaposition of scenes, firstly when the Dama's father kills a poacher for mentioning the name 'dama' (young fallow-deer) that evokes his daughter when he is trying to forget her, while in the next scene we see the son-in-law killing his wife's lover. Second, the Dama's confinement to the tower is followed by the scene where the inn girl, confined to living in the *venta*, has to give in to her master's demands and become a prostitute, which in terms of plot development anticipates what is going to happen to the Dama.¹⁷⁷ In fact, Jorge Rodríguez Padrón points out that an antecedent of this technique is to be found in his collection of short stories *Paraíso encerrado*.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Ramón Jiménez Madrid seems to dismiss the wealth of stylistic resources as distracting from the plot and as a factor that does not make up for what he regards as a lack of plot substance, when he states that: 'La aparición de secundarios personajes [...] la mezcla de tiempos verbales y temporales, las distintas voces y, muy especialmente, el escaso argumento, ayudan a que el lector esté más atento en ocasiones a los virtuosismos formalistas que a la ya mencionada magra sustancia narrativa,' p. 159.

¹⁷⁸ Jorge Rodríguez Padrón, '“Cuentos completos” de J. Fernández Santos: Una

There is, nonetheless, a major theme running through the novel that provides a main source of cohesion to the work itself. Beyond the tribulations of the private lives portrayed and the historical considerations included, the work offers, as a kind of superstructure to the narrative, a far-reaching metaphysical deliberation on the nature of death, on our lives as being transient. The presentation of this theme is late Middle Age-early Renaissance in its imagery in both stories, using a skeleton-like female figure. In terms of content, in both periods, late Middle Age-early Renaissance and Civil War, the general concept of death is modern in nature since it is conceived both as a superior force beyond the control of human beings, and also as an instinctive seed that we all carry within ourselves that gives us an awareness of our individual destiny, an integral part of the individual psyche, a recurrent preoccupation that shapes our crucial decisions. However, Fernández Santos reflects the cultural differences between each period. He reflects through the character of the Dama, how, in the Renaissance, there was a genuine preoccupation with leaving a record of one's deeds for posterity, leaving an account of what one considered to be one's own achievements, as a way of gaining immortality. In contrast, Fernández Santos reflects through the character of the old man in the second narrative thread, how, in the twentieth century, a whole generation that experienced the bloodshed of the Civil War lived their lives without thinking that there was anything worth leaving for posterity. On the contrary, they experienced their lives as wasted time, waiting to die, to put an end, with their deaths, to a period they considered best-forgotten, erased from the memory of future generations.

The awareness that the characters in both threads have of personal

destiny as limited time is the key aspect of this theme of the nature of life and death. This brevity of our lives, a linear development in time, is made even more dramatic by contrasting it with Nature, which appears to be eternal, indifferent to historical events and the succession of generations. Nature regenerates itself perennially and cyclically, and survives despite its appearance constantly being altered by man as a result of economic development. In this sense, the presentation of death is similar to that of *En la hoguera*. For DiNubila and Herzberger, the presentation of time and death as cosmic forces is the central theme of the novel.¹⁷⁹ DiNubila, nonetheless, emphasises that the brevity of time is the key concept explored in the novel.¹⁸⁰ For both of them, Fernández Santos is a writer with a sense of the circular nature of history, as if each period were the same as the next and the previous one. They link this sense of history to supposed geographical determinism, the characteristics that the mountains of León-Asturias spawn on their inhabitants. For Herzberger, the novel is, accordingly, a metaphysical meditation, and in his opinion the end of the novel, where the image of death seems to take control over the valley, confirms this.¹⁸¹ A reading of this kind

¹⁷⁹ DiNubila analyses the way time is presented in the novel. Firstly it is 'a cosmic, omnipresent, autonomous power, seemingly possessing a life of its own'. Then, he continues: 'Metaphysically, it is unending, perpetually self-renewing aspect of reality which has and will always impose itself upon all earthly existence. Yet, in its more visible repercussions, time is not a permanent, non-changing aspect of reality. On the contrary, in its unending passage, it is a destroyer of all present moments which leads every man on a journey towards death,' pp. 240-41. His definition of death is expressed in similar terms, see pp. 244-45.

¹⁸⁰ For DiNubila, this fugacity is expressed in the use of tenses that break the barriers between past and present, creating a sense of temporal confusion. Also, for him, the use of the impersonal reflexive *se*, divests the figures of their individuality, marking the implacable passing of time. See DiNubila, pp. 232-33. Herzberger and Rodríguez Padrón agree on the use of the infinitive to create atemporality. See Herzberger, p. 71 and Rodríguez Padrón, p. 46. For DiNubila this concept of the fugacity of time is typical of the Baroque, and he finds similarities between some passages in the novel and some passages in Quevedo, p. 259.

¹⁸¹ 'In *The One Who Has No Name*, death and time converge into a cosmic force

renders the characters as 'archetypal figures representative of the particular mythology of the mountains. Each is consumed by a cosmic emptiness that is reified by the oppressive physical milieu' (Herzberger, p. 73). Furthermore, he compares the setting of the novel, the valley of Las Hoces, to Juan Rulfo's Comala or Juan Benet's Región .¹⁸² I disagree with this view and, as I have already mentioned, one of my aims in this study is precisely to show how, for Fernández Santos, history means linear development of time.

LINEAR DEVELOPMENT OF TIME: THE NATION IN HISTORY

In this section I shall consider two aspects: the changing concept of nationhood, and patriarchy. At the heart of *La que no tiene nombre* lies the concept of the nation as an essential constitutive element of both individual and collective identity. Fernández Santos covers three defining periods: the time of the Catholic Monarchs; the Civil War; and the time of publication, two years after Franco's death in November 1975. This enables him to elaborate, as a historical theme, people's experiences from the birth of the country as a single political entity through to the 1970s in terms of well defined periods, each with its own dilemmas to resolve. In the late fifteenth century it was the unification of the country under the Catholic Monarchs, in the 1930s the division of the country into two irreconcilable parts during the Civil War and the consequences of the conflict until the end of Franco's regime. After 1975, at the end of the dictatorship, the nation found itself at a

that defines the essence of existence in the mountains. This is explicitly affirmed in the final segment of the novel by a mythical coalescence of Dama/Death and time', Herzberger, pp. 70-71.

¹⁸² Herzberger, p. 69.

new political crossroads, with the Bourbon monarchy restored, the efforts to establish a democracy, and the decision whether or not to join the European Economic Community. Fernández Santos implicitly presents this evolution of nationhood as negative: the past is not idealised and the future looms as a threat that will erase the best of what the country has achieved.

Both periods, the fifteenth and twentieth centuries, have civil war as a common factor, but the consequences of the wars in terms of historical progress are very different in Fernández Santos's interpretation. The battle of Toro of 1476, where the Dama de Arintero excels as a warrior, puts an end to the war of succession in Castile (1475-79), with Princess Isabel securing her throne against the wishes of her brother Henry IV, his daughter Juana la Beltraneja, and their Portuguese ally, Afonso V.¹⁸³ The narrator does not provide an overall judgement on the Catholic Monarchs, but what he does do is to present their project of forming a modern State in a positive light, as the right decision to take at that particular time in order to progress towards a more civilised political and social system in a viable, larger territorial framework. This idea is put forward by presenting the feudal system that they were trying to overcome in as negative a light as possible through the figure of the Dama's father, whilst the Dama, who fights for the new monarchs, becomes the embodiment of a new type of nobility that, having secured their own status (land, title, privileges), can start considering the interests of the country as a political entity.

The Civil War of 1936-39 is presented as a negative period by looking at its dire consequences: a country divided in two halves that embody two concepts of nationhood, the prevailing one being the dictatorial one. By introducing the dispirited group of *maquis* (guerrilla fighters), the point is

¹⁸³ J. H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain: 1469-1716*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), pp. 15-24.

made that the idea of a revolution that would topple the regime was never feasible, that the country was gradually changing due to economic development. Finally, the 1970s are presented as a period when, despite some political action being taken to improve society, what prevails is an extremely individualistic approach to life, a generation that has no notion of nationhood, as embodied in the character of the unnamed grandson.

In the context of the fifteenth century, it is the conquest of land that gives a man a measure of his own value. The Dama's father, however, is not a descendant of a lineage that made its fortune fighting against the Arab invaders and was then recompensed with land and titles. He is a recent economic migrant: 'Lo que no dice la canción es que el padre llegó a estos valles, al igual que tantos, con siervos y ganado, esperando encontrar tierras mejores, pastos más abundantes. Sólo halló laderas de cascajo' (p. 67). Unable to thrive, he seizes his chance to become the lord of the land by imposing his authority upon later migrants from the south by sheer use of force: 'Fue entonces cuando el castillo comenzó a alzarse [...] el padre de la Dama, les fue empujando cada vez más arriba, a los espacios menos ricos. Todavía se resistieron durante un tiempo [...] [de] escaramuzas y batallas' (pp. 29-30). He is a self-made warlord unable to see beyond his own personal interest within the primitive feudal system, and unable to envisage any political project. He even lacks the political vision to organise his territory within a legal framework that could allow for economic prosperity. He is a bloodthirsty warlord whose power over others is based on systematic annual raids in Spring. When The Catholic Monarchs call on the lords of the land to join forces against the Portuguese invader, he dreams of gaining better land: 'Soñaba nuevos predios más allá de las Hoces [...] a la orilla de ríos no encrespados y estériles, sino tranquilos, lentos' (p. 81). It never crosses his mind that this particular war is being fought to consolidate the Kingdom of Castile and the new alliance between Castile and Aragón .

It is his daughter who learns to reconcile private and national interests by listening to other lords in the army. She soon realises that the battle is not a raid like her father's (pp.192-93). We hear through the servant's voice that many lords have a well developed sense of belonging to a nation: 'Entonces aprendí a distinguir los que estaban dispuestos a dejarse la vida por aquellos nuevos reyes, por odio al portugués, que de vencer vendría a esquilmar nuestros predios y los que se alistaban por conseguir hacienda cerca de las ciudades libres, por medrar de algún modo, lejos de sus mezquinas tierras' (p. 139). Both servant and Dama realise the isolation and confinement of their small territorial domain. They learn about national problems such as the formation of *Hermandades* to fight against the payment of the tribute paid to the lords, the *diezmo*, and how other lords from the north are fighting the Arab invasion deep into the south. They learn to situate their domain in the context of the formation of the nation. They learn the meaning of politics. As Fernández Santos states in the previously mentioned newspaper article, Juana García was a clever negotiator who managed to gain privileges for her family and those under their jurisdiction, who became *hidalgos* and were therefore exempt from paying taxes to the crown.¹⁸⁴

In the second narrative thread the deep sense of belonging to the land where one was born in is a fundamental element of identity. This sense of belonging is presented here as a complete fusion of man and environment. The old man is described at one point as resembling a bear. The two men live in total harmony and synchrony with their natural, inhospitable, mountainous environment, refusing to migrate to more hospitable lands with their relatives.

¹⁸⁴ 'Y tampoco fue parca en pedir favores la reciente heroína, para sí y para los suyos, desde un escudo de armas, a declarar hidalgos a todos los de su aldea y valle, aparte de otras prebendas capaces de llenar casi por entero el único documento que sobre su vida y muerte se conserva', *El País*, 31 August 1979, p. 9.

The old man's effort to dig a path in the snow between his home and the spot where the road sign bearing the name of the village stands may seem futile, but as he explains that name is his name, that place is both him and his son-in-law. Without that name they do not exist in the world and he does not want his village name to disappear as others have done on other signs, when erased by the wind. This fusion of man, local identity, and natural environment is further developed in the character of *barba florida*, the *maqui* who hides in a cave in the mountains and soon forgets about his political objectives, happy to stay near the woman he has started an affair with but, more important, in the land where he belongs. He consequently resents the arrival of a new *maqui* from France who is hoping to carry out some guerrilla action and bring all the *maquis* together in order to participate in revolutionary political action.

A generation later, the whole concept of nationhood has changed, if not disappeared. The grandson and son of the two main characters in this story represents a new breed of Spaniard: detached and individualistic in his outlook on life. His only interest in the two *solitarios*, father and grandfather, is their inheritance: the land. He has been waiting for some years for his grandfather to die so that he can convince his father to move to an old people's home, thus enabling him to close a business transaction by selling the land. Frustrated with his grandfather's resilience, he considers putting pressure upon the *Diputación* to force the two old men to leave. After all, the provincial government spends money trying to keep the roads as far as their farms open and also by sending a helicopter to check that the mountain inhabitants can survive the winters. It is through this character that the author illustrates a new economic development: the free-for-all attitude of the new government which is demonstrated by the opening up of the country to foreign investors, with the son negotiating with two foreign businessmen in order to develop the family land as a ski resort. This new international state of financial affairs is presented as corrupt, with businessmen turning out to be

criminals pursued by the police for dealing in the currency black market and 'evasión de capitales'. As in *El hombre de los santos*, Fernández Santos criticises the selling of antiques to foreigners through a character who sells pieces of religious art, collected with the help of marginal members of society, the gypsies. Within the country the new state of affairs is mentioned on several occasions. We learn that a change of government is expected; there are rumours of an amnesty for political prisoners; there are demonstrations and strikes in the provincial capital to pressure the central government to include the province in the new economic plans to industrialise, and negotiations relating to the new autonomies are ongoing.

David Herzberger and Daniel DiNubila understand the importance of land in the novel in a different way. For Herzberger, Fernández Santos constantly outlines the geographical determinism of a barren land and the effect on its inhabitants, manifested in their *abulia* and sense of fatalism.¹⁸⁵ DiNubila, on the same line, outlines the effects on people in terms of a sense of nothingness.¹⁸⁶ It is true that in an interview with Herzberger, Fernández Santos admitted to believing in both geographical determinism and racial characteristics.¹⁸⁷ However Fernández Santos never stated that this was the main underlying argument in his novels. I believe that Herzberger read too much into this statement and made it appear that this was the basis upon

¹⁸⁵ 'Also important in both *The One Who has No Name* and earlier novels is the central role of geographical determinism', Herzberger, p. 65. Herzberger also observes that: 'Fernández Santos not only links the three stories by recurrent use of specific descriptions of the mountains, but affirms the influence of geographical determinism from the Middle Ages to the present', p. 69.

¹⁸⁶ 'The immutable natural environment which, dominating and victimizing mankind, has determined both the history of the region and the existence of each of its inhabitants', DiNubila, p. 231. See also pp. 233, 235.

¹⁸⁷ 'D.H.: ¿Cree Ud. que el paisaje español puede determinar el carácter de la gente? F.S.: Sí, yo siempre he creído en el determinismo geográfico. Aparte de una serie de influencias de raza. Claro ya, los catalanes son distintos porque forman una raza distinta. La gente de Levante no tiene nada que ver con la gente de Castilla', *Anales de la Novela de Posguerra*, 3 (1978), 117-121 (p. 121).

which the author constructed the literary world he set in the mountains between Asturias and León. My reading, focusing upon the historical and political aspects, serves to put into perspective the argument about geographical determinism. The land is certainly described as poor, as in *Los bravos*: 'Eran tierras de poco pan, de vino áspero, a las que era preciso dejar descansar demasiado a menudo, hasta quedar abandonadas definitivamente' (p. 67). However, it is a social factor, the feudal warlord in this case, that is presented as the main problem hampering economic development. It is not coincidental that the author presents the area in the 1970s as still trying to negotiate with the central government for its inclusion in the national plans for industrialisation. As in *Los bravos*, there is a sense of the area having been abandoned by the central government, albeit for different reasons in the different historical periods.

Even the sense of time being motionless, of time that has no meaning, for example the time spent in the perpetuation of the love-hate relationship between the grandfather and son-in-law, serves in the novel to reinforce the feeling of a historical period that the nation needs definitively to move away from. The treatment of time in this story is similar to that of *Los bravos*. In *Los bravos* the period covered was a short time in Summer, in this novel the period of the beginning of the snow falling until its melting in Spring is covered. In *Los bravos*, the stagnation of time was symbolised by the church clock lying on the floor, signalling the time when the village was attacked during the war. Here, the image reappears in the watch that the grandson takes from his mother's lover, a watch that symbolises a time of paralysis that envelopes the country and from which the country needs to break free. Rodríguez Padrón agrees that the novel reflects the present as a crossroads.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ 'Puede ser significativo que *La que no tiene nombre* aparezca en el año 1977 y que, en ella, se hagan repetidas alusiones a una situación inicial, confusa todavía, de una sociedad que intenta recuperar un tiempo perdido en la

In this work, Fernández Santos paints a grim picture of a patriarchal society in which personal and political aspects of life are closely intertwined. Control over another's sexuality is presented as a desire for power, as a means of imposing one's will upon others. Both the feudal landlord and the husband of the lover of *barba florida* are dominant characters that allegorically represent authoritarian political attitudes.

Fernández Santos could have explored more profoundly the tension that a woman becoming a noble by her own deeds created within the political establishment in the fifteenth century. But he chooses instead to concentrate upon the sexual abuses of the patriarchy. Perhaps because this is, after all, a literary recreation of a character, it does not pretend to be a conclusive historical account of Juana García's deeds. In fact, Fernández Santos draws his inspiration from several ballads and merges them: 'Delgadina', 'Una fatal ocasión', 'La doncella guerrera', 'La mal casada'.¹⁸⁹ In this way, Fernández Santos constructs a single character who embodies the various issues that the female protagonists of those ballads raised. Through fiction, he vindicates real female figures that were sexual victims of a patriarchal society. Also, Fernández Santos attempts to vindicate Juana García's place in the history of the nation, focusing upon those very aspects that the original ballads underplay. In order to do that he uses a measure of poetic licence: he adds his

incertidumbre, el silencio y la falta de libertad; puede ser significativo que *La que no tiene nombre* lleve implícita una moraleja por la que cruza, recurrente, el fantasma del odio, de la intransigencia irreprimible, mostrados ambos como retornos a los cuales los personajes no pueden sustraerse', J. Rodríguez Padrón, 'Estudio Preliminar' in *La que no tiene nombre*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁸⁹ Concha Alborg, 'El uso de los romances en *La que no tiene nombre* de Jesús Fernández Santos', in *La Juglaresca: Actas del I Congreso Internacional sobre la juglaresca*. (Madrid: Edi-6, 1986), pp. 503-14.

own verses and he changes the end of those ballads in which the woman, if judged by today's criteria, adopts a submissive attitude. This is the case when the Dama goes to a wedding and kills a man who attempts to rape her. In the original ballad the female character repents and retires to a convent.¹⁹⁰ In 'Delgadina', on the other hand, the female character dies the very moment that her father enters her bedroom, so that incest is not committed.¹⁹¹ In the ballad 'La doncella guerrera', the female figure cannot conceal her gender because her eyes, being the mirror of her soul according to medieval tradition, give her away and she marries her protector.¹⁹² For Concha Alborg La Dama 'es una figura arquetípica que representa a las mujeres del Romancero [...] Todas ellas son capaces de forjarse su propio destino sin someterse, necesariamente, a las convenciones establecidas. Es particularmente significativo para la mujer de hoy descubrir que el germen arquetípico de una mujer independiente y fuerte ya se puede hallar en el Romancero tradicional español' (p. 514).

Both as a historical character and as a literary construction, La Dama, Juana García, stands out as a feminist. There are numerous examples that illustrate her feminism: her interest in horses and hunting as opposed to an inclination for clothes and jewellery as a young girl; her challenge to her father's authority; her killing those who try to rape her (as happens on her way to a wedding; on her way to battle when bathing in a river, and with her protector); her bravery in battle, and her political intelligence in negotiating her privileges.

The male characters represent the ills of authoritarian patriarchal societies. In the case of the Dama's father, his background is at the root of his personal problems. He is frustrated with what he has achieved and how he has

¹⁹⁰ Concha Alborg, p. 506.

¹⁹¹ Alborg, p. 508.

¹⁹² Alborg, pp. 510-11.

achieved it. Later on in life, he will reflect that his life has been spent not in glorious battles, but in keeping an eye on the valley of Las Hoces to stop any potential trespasser or even invader. His vassals bear the brunt of his personal frustrations, as is shown when he kills one of them for mentioning the name of a prey he is hunting, a fallow deer or *dama*, and which evokes his daughter's name (for whom he feels an incestuous passion that he is trying to control). On a personal level, he is ruled by his own basic appetites, which know no boundaries. His sexual desire for his youngest daughter is presented as both the genuine, uncontrollable passion of an ageing man and as an indication of his power over people. And it is this perception that prevails, emphasising the wrongs of a patriarchal society in which women are reduced to seeing themselves as enemies of one another in a fight to gain the patriarch's favour. The Dama's mother and sisters blame her, on account of her beauty, for awakening her father's sexual desire. Nobody ever blames the patriarch.

By the time of the battle of Toro, her father is too ill to demand sex from her and he does not ask her to join in the battle. It is she who chooses to go, seeking the chance to rebuild her life.¹⁹³ When her true gender is discovered, she is murdered. She herself considers the possibility of being murdered for rejecting the sexual advances of a lord who had become her mentor in battle. And through this mentor's comments we learn about the general misogynistic attitude towards women as sinful creatures, and how those women who trespassed the boundaries of their gender were not to be regarded as women of virtue and could therefore be expected to provide sexual favours willingly.

¹⁹³ This is a personal interpretation of the author since the ballads that mention this character allege that the reason was to please her father: 'Nos cuenta la leyenda ampliada, refundida y deformada en gavillas de versos torpemente asonantes, el triste desengaño de su madre al no tener hijos varones que enviar a la guerra hasta que Juana García se ofrece a marchar vestida de hombre', Fernández Santos. *El País*, 31 August 1979, p. 9.

As a literary construction, La Dama's transformation into a male character replacing her father in going to fight in the battle of Toro, and her final transformation into 'la que no tiene nombre', are the two aspects through which Fernández Santos elaborates upon the theme of a dominant patriarchy that means the death of those females that oppose it. The 'masculinisation' of the Dama is a sort of death for her, for she has to renounce her gender to survive. The gradual transformation into a male figure begins as a mechanism of self-defence against her father's sexual advances. She challenges him by becoming as good a horse-rider as he is. When, on one occasion, she exhausts a white horse, a present from her father, she looks at him in defiance, and he does not beg her for sex that night. And since she sits astride her horse like a man, her servant mistakes her for her father on one occasion. It is the only way she can challenge him. By becoming Oliveros, 'hija del Conde Mayor' (p. 95) and going to war the process of 'masculinisation' is completed. Impersonating a man and destroying her father's letters of commendation, she gains her freedom: 'Era como si ardiera el recuerdo del padre, como quedar solo los dos [her and her servant], en desamparo' (p.122). The king's recognition of her as a noble woman with privileges vindicates her gender. But it is a short-lived triumph and her murder soon follows .

Even if there is no way of validating the actual events, which are a matter of historical speculation, Fernández Santos offers his own version, vindicating the Dama's role in the historical process. Since some noblewomen occupied places of prominence, such as the queen herself, it is quite possible that it was partly the fact that the Dama was climbing the social ladder by her own deeds in battle that particularly upset the nobles. It is certainly not the case that there were no other women warriors in those days; the nobles themselves mention Juana de Montfor in France as well as those who joined their husbands on the crusades to Jerusalem. But as the Dama informs the reader, the conspiring Spanish nobles could not come to terms with allowing

women to gain a noble title and privileges by proving themselves in battle: 'Decían que era una gran injusticia, hacer tal merced a una mujer, cualesquiera que fueran sus méritos' (p. 226). It is through the servant that Fernández Santos places Juana García's murder in a wider patriarchal context, when he considers that it might have been on the king's orders, the king having given in to pressure from the nobility: 'La Dama muerta, nunca se supo, si por el rey arrepentido de sus mercedes, por el caballero o por el odio de los nobles' (p. 238).¹⁹⁴

It is also in terms of the abuses of a patriarchal social system that the Civil War of 1936-39 and its aftermath are considered in the novel. This is exemplified by the killing of a married woman's lover, the *maqui* known as *barba florida*, by her husband in the immediate years after the war. The married woman later dies in desperation. The hatred this engenders between the two male protagonists, the husband and the father of the woman, is used allegorically to symbolise the legacy of hatred inherited from the two warring sides in the Civil War.¹⁹⁵ The husband is the defender of an authoritarian model of behaviour and bent on violence as a means of solving problems, obsessed with hunting for the sheer pleasure of killing, whilst the other, the father, is a defender of a more liberal society and dislikes violence. It is curious that Fernández Santos avoids presenting these two characters as being on opposite sides in the Civil War. The reason for this is a matter of speculation. It might be that he is trying to avoid the left-wing historical stereotyping of right-wingers as violent and dictatorial, and left-wingers as democratic, since as we know, violence was practised by both sides. In this case, the intention

¹⁹⁴ Fernández Santos reiterates this point of view in *El País*, 31 August 1979, p. 9.

¹⁹⁵ Ramón Jiménez Madrid takes this view when he states: 'Son muy diversas las lecturas que pueden hacerse de ese par de personajes [...] y que bien podrían representar el rencor de las dos Españas', p. 159. See also Jorge Rodríguez Padrón, 'Estudio Preliminar' in *La que no tiene nombre*, pp. 39-40.

may be conciliatory. Or it might be that he is trying to emphasise that violent behaviour in private life was part of the legacy of the war. After the death of the woman, the two male protagonists spend their lives watching each other, resenting each other, desiring each other's death, in a silent war. The old man is unable to reconcile himself with his son-in-law, a man whose sense of selfhood rests on his power over and control of others, as his compulsive hunting seems to demonstrate. On the other hand, the younger man looks down on his father-in-law, who is a peaceful man content to survive on a few chickens as a source of food. The author's sympathies are with the old man, and in a seeming case of poetic justice the hunter ends up shooting himself accidentally.

The girl working at the inn reinforces this portrayal of a patriarchal society. She works there both as maid and prostitute, as others have done before her, with the profits going to the owner. In addition, the theme of a patriarchal society is also presented through the son. He is unwilling to have a monogamous relationship with his girlfriend, resorting to violence when criticised by her for his womanising. He is disaffected, his only aim being to have an easy life, indulging in sex without commitment. Indeed, he dreams of retiring with a young prostitute he has met, someone willing to provide sex and ask no questions.

THE INNER WORLD: DEATH, DESTINY, AND HISTORY AS COLLECTIVE MEMORY

The theme of death permeates the whole novel. However, the overall presentation of this theme in *La que no tiene nombre* is different from the way it was presented in *La hoguera*. In the latter, the message was social in intention and existential in tone as a reaction against the preaching of Catholicism. It emphasised the importance of life on earth and the conditions in which that

life is lived. Those who died prematurely were those unable to pay for medical treatment, or those who, due to religious beliefs that regard the endurance of suffering as a trial of faith, lack the impulse to safeguard their health and life. *En la hoguera* also presented the concept of human life as the duration of an individual's time on earth, an individual who must take responsibility for the shaping of his or her life, a time, and indeed experience, that had little to do with any divine plan, or the timeless nature of the cosmos. In *La que no tiene nombre*, death is mainly presented in terms of individuals who are aware that their lives are a limited period of time on earth, a time that each will shape through their actions. And above all, death is presented as yet another transient phase, not the end, since we live on in the memory of others. The shaping of that memory as legacy is the key concept here. It is this aspect that I will focus on.

In the novel, the concept of death expressed in the story of the Dama has been compared to Jorge Manrique's *Coplas a la muerte de su padre*, and it does indeed reflect the preoccupations with mortality of that period.¹⁹⁶ Basing my comments on a study of Manrique's *Coplas* by Enrique Moreno Báez, I will highlight how that era's notion of death is reflected in this story through the characters of the Dama and her father.¹⁹⁷ It is she who best represents those preoccupations, mainly in the sense that certain individuals of that period felt the need to leave behind a record of themselves, an account of their deeds for future generations. This is encapsulated in the concept of *fama*, the notion of eternity as a perpetuation of one's memory in future generations.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Carmen Martín Gaité 'La renovación intrínseca', in Jorge Rodríguez Padrón, *Jesús Fernández Santos*, p. 156-58

¹⁹⁷ Enrique Moreno Báez, 'El Gótico nominalista y Las coplas de Jorge Manrique'. *Revista de Filología Española*, 53 (1970), 95-113.

¹⁹⁸ 'La fama, vida intermedia entre la mortal y perecedera y la que verdaderamente es eterna, es la propia de los héroes antiguos a quien aquella época no creía capaces de haber alcanzado la salvación', pp. 107-08.

Manrique's father, like Juana García, also took part in the civil war and in the battle of Toro.

The feudal lord is a man frustrated by his previous deeds who attempts to reshape his life in his later years according to his own will. The fact that his coat of arms has not got any inscriptions on it, 'el escudo ciego de la entrada' (p. 60), hints at his being a man of no worth or status according to the values of the time. He has not taken part in the great event of the period, the Reconquista. As a mature man he reflects on his life and finds himself dissatisfied. His passion for his daughter will become the reason for his existence, he chooses to interpret his fulfilment of his passion as his own destiny, in an attempt to regain control over a life on earth that he feels he has wasted. And, as the daughter departs for battle, he genuinely feels his own life slipping away: 'La tomó entre sus brazos como si a su propia vida abrazara' (p. 96). Not only does he not hide his passion but he even makes sure that it is recorded for posterity by burying his wife in a corner of the family chapel and not, as she herself had requested and was the rule, near the altar next to him: 'No en la iglesia junto al altar como dispuso un día, sino en un rincón [...] olvidada' (p. 69). The place next to him has been reserved, as the Dama imagines, for his daughter (p. 64). This is the time of the Renaissance, when the sense of individuality manifests itself in an abundance of portraits, busts and life-size sculptures.¹⁹⁹ The sarcophagus usually had a life-size sculpture of the deceased. The Dama saw some on her way to a wedding: 'Tal vio a damas y princesas reales en sepulcros solemnes' (p. 63). In fact, that is how she

¹⁹⁹ 'También el deseo de coleccionar bustos y esculturas de cuerpo entero, ya sentido entre nosotros por don Alfonso V el Magnánimo, servía indirectamente para subrayar lo ejemplar y arquetípico de tales figuras, lo que lo mismo justifica la galería de Manrique que el posterior gusto plateresco por medallones con cabezas de hombres ilustres que se ven en la fachada del Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, en el claustro del Arzobispo de Salamanca o en el monasterio de Lupiana', Moreno Báez, p. 108.

imagines herself, next to her father: 'Tendida, inmóvil, nunca veía a su lado otro hombre armado sino el padre con sus manos cruzadas sosteniendo su gran espada enmohecida' (p. 64).

The incestuous passion that the feudal lord feels for his daughter is explained as a desperate attempt to regain his youth. The effect of his passion on his daughter is, however, a wish for death. This totally ambivalent meaning is expressed in a poetic image, when the capercaillie's mating song is identified with the Dama's solitary singing on her way back home: 'El canto solitario de la Dama y su gallo sonaban [...] no como un amor tranquilo, sosegado, lento, sino grito iracundo, roto como un afán desesperado de dominio y muerte que recordaba al padre en el lecho, horro y vacío esperando su juventud en vano junto al otro cuerpo' (p. 82). For him, this is a genuine passion that at first he tries to understand and resist, but to which he succumbs. However, the author makes it clear that such a passion is a distorted perspective of reality, a delusion. For whilst the father projects his own vision of the situation upon his daughter, fooling himself that the girl feels privileged to be in such a situation, 'segura de su nueva condición sobre las demás mujeres de la casa' (p. 33), the author juxtaposes a fragment of ballad to describe how fearful the daughter really is of her father and how ashamed she is of her condition:

Una muchacha venía [...]
y miraba a un lado y otro
por ver si alguno veía. (p. 33)

This is even more dramatically illustrated in a paragraph where the Dama sees herself not as a lover but as an objectified body, used by the father as a measure of his virility: 'Medida por sus pies y manos, por sus pechos [...] y sus muslos valientes donde el padre nacía, para morir después, de pronto, boca

con boca, espasmo contra espasmo' (p. 69). Aware of his transgression, the father will die, unafraid of death, but fearful of God's judgement. This is quite the opposite of how an archetypal lord should die, proud of having demonstrated his virtue by his good deeds, and welcoming death with 'serena dignidad' since heaven is waiting and his fame is secured.²⁰⁰

It is through the Dama's own vindication of her name and future fame that the fifteenth-century concept of death as *fama* is reflected in this novel. If Jorge Manrique wrote his poems to vindicate his father as a historical figure and to guarantee his survival ('su fama') in the collective memory, likewise Fernández Santos vindicates Juana García and her *fama* through the novel. For an author who hardly ever names his characters, it is significant that he creates *La que no tiene nombre* to vindicate Juana García's place in history, in the collective memory. For a name is not just a name. One exists in others' consciousness through name and a name is an emblem of self. This theme is reflected in the novel on several occasions. As the Dama is locked in the tower for refusing to give in to her father's sexual demands, she worries that nobody cares about her future, that nobody even remembers her name: 'Nadie ya [...] debía recordar su nombre que para siervos y parientes debía ser como el escudo ciego de la puerta' (p. 63). She worries that, as was the case with most women, her destiny is to remain anonymous, unknown to future generations, as women were known only in relation to the male family members -- in her case, her father: 'Su destino tal vez se hallara en un grave silencio, altivo y a la vez anónimo' (p. 63). As she is being chased by her killers, aware of her imminent death, she suggests the significance her killing has for her murderers: 'Su afán por borrar hasta mi nombre' (p. 228). For they want her to vanish from history. But she hopes that in death she will live on in the memory of others through her coat of arms: 'Mi vida ya no me pertenece;

²⁰⁰ Moreno Báez, pp. 108-13.

está arriba bajo el escudo que me retrata jinete armado de todas las armas' (p. 224). But as we know, the nation has neglected her coat of arms, time has erased her real name, and she is known either as 'la que no tiene nombre', or simply 'la Dama'. Nobody knows of Juana García.²⁰¹

The awareness of the brevity of life as something that sharpens our sense of destiny is developed through the Dama's period of confinement in the tower. As her wrinkled skin, a result of her near starvation, mirrors the passing of time spent in a life of oblivion, the Dama considers becoming her father's concubine. The servant himself wonders if she took that decision as a way to escape death, a piece of advice from 'the nameless woman': 'Por propia voluntad o siguiendo el consejo de la que no tiene nombre' (p. 69). Once her father's concubine, she is aware that she is living on borrowed time and, above all, that this is not a life chosen of her own free will: 'Callada como siempre, el trote de su cabalgadura no era ese paso alegre de los días ganados, sino un viaje vacío, ensimismado' (p. 82).

In the second narrative thread, the concept of death has a different meaning. Death is considered in relation to the atrocities of war, and the killing of *barba florida* is considered a consequence of the conflict: 'De aquel tiempo en que la muerte estaba allí, entre todos, en que la vida se mantuvo al filo de mezquinas venganzas y denuncias secretas, queda ahora esta otra muerte diferente y definitiva, sin testigos, a no ser por el viejo' (p. 66). This is a generation familiar with violence and the two male characters have a different understanding of death. Death for the gentle grandfather is a way of being reunited with his ancestors in the land he belongs to, a welcome state. The imagery used reinforces this, and death appears to him resembling the figure of his own mother as he remembers her as a child, reading stories to him, such

²⁰¹ Ramón Jiménez Madrid provides a bibliography on this historical character, p. 158. See also, Francisco Martínez García, *Historia de la literatura leonesa* (León: Editorial Everest, 1982), p. 1058, n982

as the story of the Dama. It is in relation to this character that the concept of the brevity of life is introduced, as 'la que no tiene nombre' asks him: 'Después de todo [...] sin los días contados, ¿qué sentido tendría la vida?' (p. 197). It is also part of our psychological make-up: 'No me conoces porque no miras dentro de ti; si lo hicieras allí me encontrarías, allí verías el tiempo de las cosas que ni vuelve ni tropieza, el paso leve de la vida' (p. 196).

The son-in-law is as much the embodiment of meaningless death as the Dama at the very moment when she turns into Death and is described as the butcher in her castle in Las Hoces. His obsession with killing for killing's sake is a ritual that mimics his killing of his wife's lover. He spent a month watching his wife and lover before killing the latter, and his hunting replicates the pleasure of imposing his will upon the prey. He is a disturbing character. Unhappy with himself, he considers suicide in the same ritualistic manner in which he likes to kill his prey, a shot in the head. But even he is aware that he is living in a historical period of paralysis where time stands still: 'Aquella muerte que era su propia muerte sobre un tiempo cancelado ya, sobre unos días inútiles, vacíos' (p. 105)

The Civil War weighs heavily in the collective psyche of this generation, with the whole community trying to blank it out. A measure of the scar left on the villagers by the war is the fact that although they heard the shot that killed *barba florida*, nobody reported it to the police, fearing that it might start a new period of vendettas. They deliberately chose to ignore it and hoped to forget: 'Nadie habló ni denunció' (p. 40). As the years pass by and time heals wounds, the villagers fill in the details of this event by imagining how it might have happened: 'Cuando al final quisieron recordarlo, muchos tuvieron que inventarlo de nuevo' (p. 42). In recalling the incident, it becomes more of a legend than an account of a real event. The same happens with the sexual abuse suffered by the inn girl: 'Nadie quiso saber de aquellas noches en la venta, quizás porque invocar la justicia fuera llamarla para todos, desenterrar

de nuevo tras los días no lejanos de la guerra, un recuerdo de muertes, ejecuciones, represalias que de nada servía repetir' (p. 70).

For the grandfather the only thing that gives meaning to his life is the hope that his son-in-law somehow gets punished for the murder. He considers turning his son-in-law in, setting the record straight, but eventually he decides that the past is best left alone: 'Ya todo sucedió ya nada vale si entonces lo calló, ahora hablar es inútil' (pp. 83-84). The grandfather represents the desire of a whole generation to blank out the atrocities of the Civil War, a desire not easily achieved, for it demands a renunciation of one's deepest principles. By keeping quiet, he not only allows a crime to go unpunished, he also allows the memory of his daughter to pass into the collective memory as another unresolved mystery, whereas she could be vindicated as a woman who paid dearly for her challenge to a patriarchal society by daring to be unfaithful. As already mentioned, it is a case of poetic justice that the son-in-law eventually shoots himself. The son-in-law also thinks constantly of the murder he committed, but in this case he can only think of killing his father-in-law, the only witness, in order to blank out his dark past.

In contrast to the recent past, the heroes of the distant past, especially the Dama are recalled with affection, as a point of reference for judging one's actions and understanding their meaning. For instance, when the *maqui* fails to rob a bank and retreats to the mountains leaving behind his dead companions, he remembers her: 'Se sentía a veces despojo de sí mismo como la Dama en la historia que tantas veces contó a sus alumnos [...] y cuyo cuerpo no está en ninguna parte si no es la leyenda o en la fosa común de los libros de Historia' (p. 186). Also, as the dying grandfather hears the children reciting the ballad of the Dama on Easter Sunday, the very day the novel begins, he meditates on the cultural legacy of the land: 'Ese compás de versos monótonos a los que sólo ellos son capaces de dar un sentido de historia verdadera, la historia de la Dama que fue a servir al rey por no haber hijos

varones en la casa' (p. 84).

The grandson embodies a generation of children who, at the time of the war, witnessed atrocities in silence and, as adults, try to understand the meaning of what really happened by asking questions of the older generation. The grandson witnessed the killing of his mother's lover by his father. His sense of alienation seems to stem from being unable to reconcile himself with his father: 'Aquel modo de flotar entre los demás [...] le hacía sentirse fuera de juego desde siempre, desde el día en que decidió confrontarse con el padre, en que le abandonó en su encierro de hielo y nieve' (p. 224). And from that sense of alienation he evolves into a cynical character for whom the past is a bloody period, best forgotten. But his life is still marked by the past and, symbolising that one cannot escape from one's past, his time is being measured by the very watch that belonged to his mother's lover and which he took, as a child, from the dead man: 'Miró el reloj donde latía el corazón del muerto' (p. 223). His sense of entrapment is reflected in the fact that he sees his life as a circle, an image that Fernández Santos uses to indicate entrapment and doom: 'Esperar a que todo acabase o no acabase nunca y el círculo siguiera girando en torno, hundiéndole cada vez más' (p. 148).

The message that the imposed silence concerning the war must be broken is implicit. But unfortunately, this generation is not interested in the past, immediate or distant. This is illustrated on several occasions. Once, when the grandson contemplates the many religious wooden sculptures that one of his business associates, Paul, deals with on the black-market, the grandson thinks of the Dama: 'Puede que aquel jinete tan tieso, tan despegado de los otros no fuera el tal San Jorge, sino la Dama de la función en el porche de la iglesia, la que bajó a luchar vestida de varón contra quién sabe quién muerta a su vuelta' (p. 126). Also, the cemetery is for the old man a place that keeps the past alive: 'Esmaltes rotos que, hasta hace algunos años, conservaban rostros, siluetas, nombres, miradas de otros tiempos' (p. 20).

Whereas for the grandson, the cemetery is an obstacle to his planned development of the plot of land as a ski resort, something he needs to do away with: 'Será preciso enmascararlo de algún modo o trasladarlo' (p. 91). Above all, though, the two *solitarios* are dismissed by members of this generation because of their strong identification with the land. In the first few pages, two men taking pictures of a theatrical representation of the Dama's life regard the two *solitarios* as an oddity and describe them as vain, obstinate, and proud, for living in an inhospitable environment when they could be living somewhere else. Later in the novel, others such as the helicopter pilot and those responsible for taking food to the inhabitants of the mountains, reiterate that opinion: 'Se empeñan en quedarse donde no queda nadie si no los rebecos o los muertos. Allá ellos' (p. 93). A whole new generation looks back at a disappearing world, which is almost as remote as the fifteen century to them, without being able to grasp its meaning. The novel amply elaborates upon this theme. For it does matter what others make of these pivotal characters once they are gone, how they pass into the collective memory. This is a disappearing world Fernández Santos feels compelled to give testimony to before it vanishes completely. The implicit message is that no generation can find a path into the future unless it takes responsibility for its national past and assimilates it. Otherwise it becomes alienated and loses its way.

CABRERA

As with *La que no tiene nombre*, in *Cabrera* (1981) Fernández Santos continues his explorations of man in society and history by exploring the concept of nationhood. The period chosen, the War of Independence and its aftermath (1808-13), is another turning point in the history of the country. This is a period that has been reflected in many literary works. According to Madeleine

de Gogorza Fletcher, Galdós and most writers of his generation 'considered the resistance to Napoleon the act of an awakened modern Spanish nationalism', and, quoting Raymond Carr, she adds that Galdós particularly contributed in this way to creating the myth of a 'nation *sui generis*'.²⁰² During Franco's regime, the popular uprising against the French invasion was chosen as a paradigm of the very essence of the Spanish people: monarchic (or by implication needing a strong, single, leadership), Catholic, highly independent, and opposed to liberal, foreign cultural influences. According to this Francoist myth, the whole country backed the popular uprising with the exception of a minority of traitors who were *afrancesados* and liberals.

Fernández Santos demythifies this approach to the period and presents it as antiheroic. He subverts the myth by presenting both the *afrancesados* (those who backed Napoleon's brother, Joseph), and the liberals (those who did not see eye to eye with the politics of the new king), as people genuinely trying to install the best political system for the country to replace an absolutist monarchy that protected the privileges of the few. He makes it clear that the *afrancesados* were taken by surprise when Napoleon decided to invade the country: 'Napoleón nos engañó, nos ha invadido',²⁰³ and even though they backed the French army, they did it in the belief that Napoleon was only trying to help them install a liberal regime. He also makes it clear that the Spanish liberals felt that, despite his liberal reforms, King Joseph was a repressive king: 'Napoleón nos traicionó [...] ha suprimido conventos y comunidades. Hasta han sido abolidos derechos señoriales [...] Nos equivocamos, de nada sirve firmar decretos liberales que luego borra

²⁰² Madeleine de Gogorza Fletcher, *The Spanish Historical Novel: 1870-1970* (London: Tamesis, 1973), p.19.

²⁰³ Jesús Fernández Santos, *Cabrera*. 3rd edn (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1981), p. 26. All further references to the novel will be to this edition and will be included in the text.

degollando españoles. Nuestra revolución ha de ser obra de nosotros mismos y bien distinta de la suya' (p. 14). But above all, Fernández Santos is keen to present the masses as having no political ideology at all, people for whom there is no difference, or political conflict, between fighting in the *afrancesado* band at the time of the Napoleonic invasion in 1808, or in the absolutist band with the help of the '*Cien mil hijos de San Luis* ', the army sent by the Holy Alliance in April 1823 to restore Fernando VII's absolutist rule.²⁰⁴

THE OUTSIDE WORLD: THE ROLE OF THE MASSES

Christopher Eustis, with reference to the picaresque novel in contemporary Spanish fiction, states: 'Largely ignored has been any consideration of the ideological underpinning of such works, of the key role politics frequently have played in determining their form and function as an expression of present-day concerns'.²⁰⁵ According to Eustis, the picaresque form has been used as a model for two different purposes, both motivated by politics: first, when the novelist has been at liberty to criticise 'the socio-economic and political structures of Spanish society', in which case the novelist has continued 'the traditional satirical function of picaresque fiction' (p. 164); and second, when the novelist has tried to emphasise the more 'existential aspect of the picaresque novel; that is to say, its traditional concern with the solitary, alienated social outcast' (p. 164). In this case 'existential' is understood to be, as defined by Sobejano, a term with the meaning of 'la existencia del hombre contemporáneo en aquellas situaciones extremas que ponen a prueba la condición humana' (p. 178, note 2).

²⁰⁴ Anonymous, 'Jesús Fernández Santos presenta su novela *Cabrera*', *El País*, 27 October 1981, p. 10.

²⁰⁵ Christopher Eustis, 'Politics and the Picaresque in the 20th-Century Spanish Novel', *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*, 18 (1984), 163-82 (p. 164).

Cabrera fits in well with the latter purpose and shows a 'more philosophical than material orientation, and an unaccustomed narrowness of critical focus' (Eustis, p. 164). However, it must be said that 'narrowness' translates in this novel as 'generalizations', to the point that it is even difficult to determine what the main theme is, particularly if one pays attention to the author's statements regarding the work. Fernández Santos declared to *El País* that *Cabrera* was the first concentration camp documented in history.²⁰⁶ He read the diaries of the prisoners when researching the novel and, indeed, the character of the older noble *afrancesado* was inspired by a real case. In *El País*, Fernández Santos seems to hint that current international affairs make the issue of concentration camps more relevant. Whether or not there was an incentive to write about this issue in particular, and against war in general, at the start of the 1980s, when the Iranian revolution was in progress, American hostages had been taken, and Ronald Reagan had just been elected president, is a matter of speculation. Certainly, the novel is openly critical of the conditions in which the *afrancesados* were held prisoner on the island of Cabrera, and many chapters are dedicated to describing these conditions. Furthermore, any explicit criticism contained in the novel is directed towards the behaviour of the army (particularly the high-ranking officers and their greed in pillaging places that they had conquered, such as Córdoba), towards the bloody horror of war, and even towards the way Napoleon treated the Spanish regiments in Europe -- as a force of labourers rather than soldiers.

However, the novel is equally critical of the political ignorance of the masses, who are reduced, because of their perennial poverty, to thinking of ways of survival and to following the political line of those they work for -- the hands that feed them. The last few pages of the novel contain the main message in metaphorical language. The unnamed protagonist sees himself as a

²⁰⁶ 'Jesús Fernández Santos presenta su novela *Cabrera*', p. 10.

slave, in chains from birth, destined to a life in which others decide for him, and all that is expected from him is to obey and be quiet. And, once more, the image of the circle, a trademark in Fernández Santos's imagery of oppression, appears: 'Como asnos en torno de la noria, damos vueltas con los ojos cerrados sin saber nunca donde empieza o termina nuestro destino miserable' (p. 246). It is this theme that is of interest in this study since it links the novel to the rest of the works studied. This is particularly the case because what Fernández Santos is stating in the context of the early 1980s, when the novel was published, is that the Spanish masses need to be educated in order for them to participate in the political process. The problem of apolitical masses has always been present, for Spain has always been ruled by minorities, minorities that were divided in their opposition to absolutism as they were divided in the Civil War of 1936-39 against fascism. As in *Los jinetes del alba*, where Fernández Santos highlights the divisions in the opposition, in *Cabrera* he points out that the liberals who developed the Constitution of 1812 soon separated from the *afrancesados* and excluded them, instead of trying to integrate them. This is exemplified in the novel when, once the war is over and the process of repatriating the prisoners begins, the liberal character is one of the first to depart from the island, not worrying about the fate of his old friend, the young *afrancesado*. But Fernández Santos, once more, does not make the point in an explicit way, he merely implies.

Apart from the above two general themes, the novel does not contain much detailed social or political criticism, at least not at the level we have been used to. Even if one considers the issue of the two Spains, the novel is short on analysis. In the early nineteenth century, the notion of the two Spains materialised in the two different political projects of liberalism or absolutism, in a country that was divided into two warring bands.²⁰⁷ Fernández Santos

²⁰⁷ See Antonio Dominguez Ortiz, 'Reflexiones sobre "las dos Españas"',

limits himself to summarising the political principles of each faction. The protagonist learns about the *afrancesados* from his young companion in the French army, and their political argument is included in the novel: 'No dejar escapar esta oportunidad de cambiar el destino de la patria, de sacarla de su miseria y su ignorancia' (p. 83). There is also a passing comment on the liberals' disappointment with the repressive policy of King Joseph, despite his legal work leading to social reforms such as the abolition of some privileges. The liberal priest introduces in his sermon the cultural argument that the country is falling behind the rest of Europe, where reason is the basis of any cultural or scientific development. The liberal friend puts forward the argument that Spaniards of that time wanted the country to 'join' Europe and put an end to its isolation. The protagonist learns about the absolutist position from his last master, and the argument that absolutist nobles are trying to preserve their privileges is mentioned. The text hints but does not elaborate. In particular, it avoids elaborating upon the link between political attitudes and social and economic interests, something that is found in most of Fernández Santos's previous works .

The novel is best read as a work that has some didactic intention in so far as it provides a version of the past worth bearing in mind in the present political environment. In this respect, the author himself declared in 1983 that: 'Cualquiera que ha leído *Cabrera* ve que hay una serie de acontecimientos que se repiten actualmente, que se han repetido hace poco; campos de concentración, la primera constitución española atacada, las luchas fratricidas ... en fin las dos Españas que es un tema muy actual.'²⁰⁸ And indeed, at this political level it is not difficult to draw parallels between the period in which

Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, No. 242 (1970), 42-54.

²⁰⁸ Interview with Sánchez Arnosí, cited by Jiménez Madrid, p. 221.

the action of the novel is set and the early 1980s. The liberals managed to establish their Constitution in 1812 as a new framework for political and social reforms. The Constitution of 1978 did the same in the 1980s. There are, of course, certain differences: thus Fernando VII opposed the reforms, whereas in 1978 King Juan Carlos was in favour. Nonetheless, both in 1808 and after 1975 the country was divided in general terms between progressive and reactionary forces. It is worth remembering that in February of the same year that the novel was published, there was an attempted military coup, led by Colonel Tejero of the Guardia Civil and supported by some army members. Furthermore, the issue of joining the European Economic Community was broadly understood in political terms as a choice between joining a political liberal Europe as a guarantee that the country would not go back to a dictatorial regime, or remaining a marginal and isolated conservative country.

Anything more than this is mere speculation. If one tries to establish a correlation between the time when the novel was written and the historical period it deals with in terms of social criticism, one could be reading too much into the novel with the risk of drawing simplistic conclusions. The allegorical image that closes the novel is ambiguous enough to allow for various kinds of interpretation. It is highly suggestive. But if on this occasion Fernández Santos pursues a didactic aim, his analysis does not reach the depth and complexity of other novels. One could conclude that the end indicates the need for the working class or the peasants of the 1980s to develop a class sense and defend their own interests. Or one could conclude that the end indicates that only those who have a job not linked to any sort of political allegiance can have dignity. But the reader can come to his conclusion more effectively by taking into account the political message of previous works than by analysing the novel itself.

It may be that Fernández Santos is assuming a readership well versed

in history and politics. But I cannot help feeling that he risks a populist approach in which the presentation of human tragedy *per se*, particularly in those chapters dedicated to the concentration camp, becomes the thrust of the novel. Furthermore, the episodes of erotic content (such as the protagonist's adventure with the character called Virago and his homosexual partner, his affair with his liberal mistress, the love story with María in Cabrera) all contribute to a populist approach. Jorge Rodríguez Padrón also criticises the novel for not being as deeply analytical as others.²⁰⁹

As literary creation, *Cabrera* can be regarded as a good novel that accommodates form to content. Fernández Santos stated just after the publication of *Cabrera*: 'Puesto que hay que renovar la novela y el lenguaje español, en vez de hacerlo desde Hispanoamérica, ¿por qué no hacerlo desde nuestra cultura y nuestra historia?'²¹⁰ It is correctly justified from a historical point of view that, in his effort to accommodate content and form, Fernández Santos chooses the picaresque mode, since the picaresque genre developed during those centuries that saw the birth and consolidation of modern centralised monarchies.²¹¹ During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, at the end of the Habsburg dynasty, picaresque novels reflected a preoccupation with social honour and conventionalism, for appearances, in a society obsessed with lineage. But towards the end of the eighteenth century, centralised modern States, with their costly monarchies and a landed nobility

²⁰⁹ 'La perspectiva delegada del autor en esa primera persona -- por su parte -- tampoco es capaz de hurgar mucho más allá de la superficie de los hechos ni de arriesgar ese análisis más profundo de los acontecimientos que el lector espera durante toda la novela', Jorge Rodríguez Padrón, 'Estudio Preliminar' in *La que no tiene nombre*, p. 38.

²¹⁰ Cited by Jorge Rodríguez Padrón in 'Estudio Preliminar' in *La que no tiene nombre*, p. 38.

²¹¹ 'De nuevo, como en libros anteriores, fue necesario crear un modo de expresión capaz de ser comprendido hoy, y a la vez vivo en el siglo en que la acción sucede [...] es posible que haya resultado a la postre una moderna novela picaresca', 'Jesús Fernández Santos presenta su novela *Cabrera*', p. 10.

exempt from taxes, found it impossible to meet national expenses without new resources. Then, those in power faced the double challenge of potential revolutions headed by the bourgeoisie, as well as the need to find a new ideological principle on which to organise the State, to replace the notion of loyalty to a dynasty with that of national consensus.²¹² *Cabrera*, set at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the War of Independence (and the liberal Constitution of 1812) marked the beginning of the end of the *Antiguo régimen*, reflects those preoccupations.

THE INNER WORLD: THE *PÍCARO*

As a literary type, the unnamed protagonist of *Cabrera* resembles Guzmán de Alfarache and not Lázaro de Tormes. This is clear from the point of view of personal ethics. Lázaro's life ends with him justifying his position as a husband who consents to his wife cohabiting with the archpriest on the grounds that he has no alternative since that is the way society works: the poor can only conform to what the wealthy impose. Lázaro has learnt to be as cynical as the society he lives in. On the other hand, the unnamed protagonist of *Cabrera* ends his autobiographical account feeling morally uneasy as to the course his future is taking: switching political bands. The moral uneasiness is even more remarkable since the protagonist has eventually achieved his professional dream. He has found a position he regards as comfortable and desirable: serving his noble masters, who act as substitutes for the parents he always dreamt of. That his masters happen to be absolutist is something irrelevant for him, for he is apolitical. But at the end of his trajectory, when he finds himself being asked by his master to join the army assembled to topple

²¹² See Josep Fontana, *La quiebra de la monarquía absoluta 1814-1820*, 3rd edn (Barcelona: Ariel, 1978), pp. 23-25.

the liberal government in power (1820-23) and secure the throne for Fernando VII, something pricks his conscience. For in order to keep his job he will have to obey his master's wish. This enforced switching of sides awakens his political consciousness. He has finally come to realise that beyond sheer survival there is something else: becoming a man of opinion, a man of principles. And he wishes that circumstances would allow him to become the master of his own destiny. As Francisco Rico states, Mateo Alemán 'subraya la libertad del hombre e individualiza a Guzmán (el individuo se impone al tipo, no viceversa)'. Following up Rico's observations, it is worth mentioning that it is after Mateo Alemán that one finds 'un modo de cobrar conciencia de sí mismo' becoming a trait of the picaresque autobiographical narrative.²¹³

The interpretation of the final chapter conditions the reader's interpretation of the general account of the life of the unnamed protagonist of *Cabrera*. Like Guzmán, he relates his story to the reading public 'por afán de ejemplaridad' (Rico, p. 132). For me, his cry at the end is poetical in tone since what he is asking is for society to allow him to have some sense of dignity, a dignity based upon holding a job that does not depend upon political allegiance.

For most of his life the protagonist turns a deaf ear to all the political arguments he hears, as if politics has nothing to do with him. He judges people only on the basis of how they treat him at a personal level. Since none of the different political representatives treats him badly, he does not hold a grudge against any. Yet, at the same time, their personal ethics and behaviour towards one another leave, in the protagonist's eyes, much to be desired. The young noble *afrancesado* excuses the excesses of his army. His father dithers as to which band to belong to as the Napoleonic army experiences defeat after

²¹³ Francisco Rico, *La novela picaresca y el punto de vista*, 6th edn (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2000), pp. 112-13.

defeat. The liberal friend of the young *afrancesado* is happy to leave his friend behind in Cabrera once the war is over and the liberal government is bringing prisoners back to the Peninsula. Despite this, which is something the protagonist feels to be wrong, he remains sympathetic towards this liberal man because he treats him with some respect. However, right at the end, when he realises that the liberal man behaved in such a courteous manner towards him because he wanted to recruit him to do the risky job of distributing leaflets, he changes his view.

As in *Lazarillo de Tormes* and *Guzmán de Alfarache*, the autobiographical narrative tries to explain the final situation the protagonist finds himself in, so the whole content of his memoirs is conditioned by the point of view of the protagonist (Rico, p. 124). In *Cabrera*, the protagonist has managed to move from an understanding of life limited to a personal framework where personal conduct in relation to others is all that matters, to a broader understanding of life in terms of society and politics and how one fits in. The picaresque mode must have been particularly attractive to explore for a writer so rooted in a social-realism tradition of literature and, in addition, the autobiographical nature of the narrative fitted so well with the confessional tone of those of his works that probe an individual's psychology. The best example of a character who refuses to accept any personal responsibility as regards the historical time in which he lives is Don Antonio of *El hombre de los santos*.

In *Cabrera*, the whole autobiographical account of this early-nineteenth-century *pícaro*'s life relates this process of transformation from not thinking to having a point of view. For Rico this is the main theme with *Lazarillo* and *Guzmán*, 'la formación del propio punto de vista' (p. 160). But it is only at the very end that the transformation occurs. In the meantime, we witness the process as that personal point of view is formed, starting with his humble origins (that brings about a desire to achieve social status), then through his

experiences with a series of masters.²¹⁴ The political education the protagonist is offered has no effect on him. His actions are always explained by personal motivations, never by political ones.

From the hospice, when he dreams of being rescued by wealthy parents who will ensure he enjoys an idle life, to his current job, where he feels that the noble couple are his surrogate parents, we see him dreaming of a dignified job. He joins the French army dreaming of 'grado y nombre' (p. 15). But he soon comes under the protection of a woman, Virago, who asks for sexual favours. When he befriends the noble *afrancesado* he quickly reckons that if he falls out with Virago, the noble man could become his next master. It is during his time spent with the French army that he is exposed to the political arguments of the period. He learns about mercenary soldiers in both armies, and civil servants who, in order to preserve their jobs, are willing to work under any type of government. This reinforces his impression that there is no room for a noble ideal, such as being a patriot, for those who need to make a living, only for those with an inherited fortune, such as his noble *afrancesado* friend. He logically concludes that: 'Yo era tan sólo mi persona. Mi país, mi edad, nacían y terminaban ni más allá, ni más acá de la sombra de mi manta' (p. 21). As he is constantly exposed to arguments about the notion of *patria* and loyalty, he meditates upon his attitude and concludes that since he was abandoned by his parents, he has no obligation towards anybody but himself (p. 50). When, after the defeat at Bailén (July 1808) and the installation on the Spanish throne of Napoleon's brother, the young *afrancesado*'s father hesitates about whether the honourable thing to do is to fight the invader or to back him, since his policies will be liberal ones. The protagonist excuses his own

²¹⁴ '(La serie de amos es un hilo conductor de la trama, la genealogía orienta a un desarrollo coherente y motivado de la figura y del argumento, ambos suponen una dialéctica de estímulos y reacciones), implican (o más bien hacen posible) una determinada construcción, identifican a la picaresca como novela', Rico, p. 119.

attitude on the grounds that no honourable answer can be expected of an uneducated man such as himself, when even educated men cannot quite decide the right thing to do. After the defeat at Bailén, when he finds himself being stoned as a traitor, he refuses to accept any responsibility for his actions and wants to escape: 'Yo procuro pensar que nada va conmigo ya que soy español, ajeno a la guerra, mas [...] viendo aquel odio amasando [...] ganas me dan de huir, lejos de todos' (p. 64).

After Bailén, he finds himself a new mistress, a noblewoman, and during this time he hears the liberals arguing their case in their meetings. Through the liberal priest, the argument is advanced that the country is backward in comparison with European standards: 'Feliz día en que dejando la oscuridad que nos invade, demos paso a la luz de la razón. La providencia nos ofrece un nuevo rey compasivo y prudente' (p. 86). And in the concentration camp he meditates again about his political attitude without being able to find a position he is comfortable with. All the political factions and their ideologies constitute a 'laberinto' he cannot make sense of (p. 133).

With the constitution of 1812 approved in the Cortes de Cádiz, and a new government in power, the absolutists began recruiting an army to secure the throne for Fernando VII. Since the narrator's master is an absolutist supporter, he feels forced to join in, and it is then that he questions his attitude. For a man who has claimed that fortune has been the main factor to shape his life, and since he never has taken any decisions, this is a huge step. He becomes aware that joining the absolutist army will contribute to determining the future of the country and realises that, even as an individual, he has a political responsibility to accept.

Cabrera complies with all the requirements of a picaresque novel. In terms of the author's intention, one could speculatively suggest that Fernández Santos even does what the anonymous author of the *Lazarillo de Tormes* did: rescue for the novel with the category of dignified protagonist, a character

that has been traditionally shunned as a character with no dignity (Rico, p. 149). And this *pícaro* 's voice contains a modern message: that the dignity of man is underpinned by his right to have a job, and that this aim should be every government' s priority. It is worth mentioning that the figure of the *pícaro* was also used by Galdós in his *Episodios nacionales* related to this period, specifically with the figure of Juan Bragas de Pipaón. Galdós's *pícaro* represented the most negative aspect of the Restoration, since his *pícaro* is a rogue who climbs the social ladder by switching political allegiance.²¹⁵ In this sense, Galdós continued the Lazarillo tradition, as opposed to Fernández Santos, who continued the Guzmán de Alfarache tradition, 'emphasizing the reflective dimension of his work'.²¹⁶ It is this dimension that Fernández Santos has pursued throughout his literary career. The picaresque tradition that began with Guzmán de Alfarache fitted the author's purpose perfectly. The conclusion that Ulrich Wicks reaches regarding Guzmán de Alfarache encapsulates this purpose:

As it portrays an often starving outsider in a predatory world, picaresque fiction becomes an epic of hunger in a third sense: Guzmán is spiritually hungry. That hunger is eventually satisfied, first by the conversion he undergoes, and second, by his act of narrating. [...] The lack of spiritual substance slowly emerges into consciousness and conscience until the conversion [...] This is a quintessential baroque theme [...] But in a secularized form, it transcends its time and becomes,

²¹⁵ 'Pipaón represents the exaltation of private greed at the expense of public interest and all the administrative sins Galdós continually criticized', Madeleine de Gogorza Fletcher, p. 21.

²¹⁶ Ulrich Wicks, *Picaresque Narrative, Picaresque Fictions* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989), p. 185.

in different shapes and variations, the dominant theme of all picaresque. (Wicks, p. 189)

CONCLUSION

Fernández Santos had a liberal understanding of Spain's history, different from preconceptions based upon notions of the very essence of the character of its people, as explained by historians such as Ramón Menéndez Pidal who were so popular during the Franco regime. As in the more politically orientated novels set in the present or recent past (*Los bravos*, *Los jinetes del alba*, *El hombre de los santos*, and *Balada de amor y soledad*), in the historical novels Fernández Santos also focuses upon the power element in relations, relationships between the individual and the political establishment -- vassals-lord, lords-king, Dama-nobles, Dama-king -- society -- Dama-father, wife-husband-father, old man-his-son-in-law, girl at the inn-employer -- between the masses and the political elite -- pícaro- different sectors of society -- and between the different forces that form the establishment -- nobles-King, *afrancesados*-liberals-absolutists.

In *La que no tiene nombre* Fernández Santos concentrates upon both the transformation of the nobility from feudal warlords to leaders of a new modern State, and upon the entrenched misogynistic attitudes of that social group. In the same novel, he also focuses upon the divided country following the Civil War and the need to reshape the State after Franco's death. He points out that the population's attitudes of extreme individualism and indifference to the political process, together with an official economic approach of a 'free-for-all' economy in an international capitalist context, could lead to the destruction of the country. In *Cabrera* he presents the reader with a reminder of past times when Spain, as in the 1980s, needed to move forward by putting an end to its isolation from the outside world and

integrating itself into Europe. He also reminds the reader of the acute need to educate the masses politically so that they can participate in the political process. The historical matter is presented in terms relevant to the time of the writing of the novel, revealing the political preoccupations of the author at that period, which seems to be a general characteristic in this type of novel.²¹⁷

In terms of literary creation, these two historical novels are pieces of work in which the content is perfectly accommodated within the form. *La que no tiene nombre* is a more ambitious project in terms of experimentation with the narrative structure, the ideological scope, and the creation of characters. *Cabrera* is much less ambitious, with a simple linear development of the plot, a general and ambiguous theme, and no psychological penetration of the characters. Although both novels contain 'characters that are types who can represent the various elements in conflict',²¹⁸ the complexity of the characters of *La que no tiene nombre* is absent in *Cabrera*. *Cabrera* is no doubt a more commercially orientated work.

Fernández Santos does provide a critical analysis of the past in both these novels, even if *Cabrera* is a lighter novel than *La que no tiene nombre*. The novels are addressed to the young generation, encouraging its members to reconsider their detachment, their lack of a common aim, and their lack of an idea of nationhood.

²¹⁷ Gogorza Fletcher, p. 5.

²¹⁸ Gogorza Fletcher, p. 5.

CHAPTER 6

THE HISTORICAL NOVELS (II)

RELIGION AND CULTURE IN THE GOLDEN AGE: *EXTRAMUROS* AND *EL GRIEGO*

In both *Extramuros* and *El Griego*, Fernández Santos demythifies the Francoist glorification of the imperial past as a prosperous and magnificent period when the foundations of a modern national culture were laid on the basis of a strong Catholic faith shared by the nation as a whole. This Francoist interpretation saw the Counter-Reformation as the crucial period when Spaniards first defined themselves as orthodox Catholics.²¹⁹ In these two novels, however, Fernández Santos underlines how the Golden Age was basically a period of economic hardship for the majority of the population and how Catholicism was imposed upon the population by the State and Church with the aid of the Inquisition. Above all, Fernández Santos links the political, social, and economic aspects of the society of that period to its cultural production.

With regard to *Extramuros*, published in 1978 and awarded the Premio Nacional de Literatura, the author has stated that: 'Indudablemente, la vida española no se entiende sin la religión. Y, sí, en el siglo XVII, la

²¹⁹ See, for example, Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, *Spain: Dictatorship to Democracy*, pp. 107-10.

influencia a todos los niveles de la Iglesia era importante desde el punto de vista social, místico, relaciones entre sí y político incluso. Entonces, esa importancia múltiple que abarca toda la vida nacional es lo que he intentado dar allí.²²⁰ The importance of the Church as the main institution that shapes the country's culture is highlighted in both novels. However, there were also unorthodox religious communities and in *Extramuros* Fernández Santos emphasises how those that existed towards the end of Philip II's reign were a result of the dire circumstances people lived in and also a response to the corruption inherent in the Church. In this novel he focuses mainly on the heresy of the *iluminados*, and the work of the Inquisition. In *El Griego*, which is set in a slightly later period, at the end of Philip II's reign and the period of his succession by Philip III, Fernández Santos describes the transition period in which the resolutions of the Council of Trent were gradually being implemented, and their effect upon the life of ordinary people. Here religious paintings are presented as instrumental in the creation of a mass-culture shaped by the Church, with the full backing of the State.

As in all the other novels already studied, Fernández Santos places the individual in a social context and he analyses the degree of awareness displayed by the characters. This is particularly the case with *Extramuros*, the whole novel consisting of the meditations of one of the two protagonists. *Extramuros*, like *Cabrera*, continues the author's experimentation with the first-person narrative mode, and attempts to accommodate the contents to a form that would produce an effect of verisimilitude in the reader's perception of what is historically an appropriate canonical form. If *Cabrera* was written in the picaresque style, *Extramuros* is written in a confessional style, in the manner that St Teresa, encouraged by her confessors, wrote her meditations. The novel is complex in the scope of its form and the reader is forced to

²²⁰ DiNubila, 'Entrevista con Jesús Fernández Santos', p. 173.

question the validity of the single voice as an objective and impartial narrator of the events involving the two protagonists. *El Griego*, on the other hand, is a straightforward narrative, a pleasing exercise in the recreation of an historical period. Despite its limited scope, it has merits both in terms of content and form. *El Griego* includes valid considerations of the role of the artist in the creation of a culture he does not agree with, considerations which are implicit in the seemingly casual comments made by different characters regarding the artist's paintings. As a literary exercise, *El Griego* experiments with multiple first-person narratives but, in effect, presents the reader with no literary challenge.

EXTRAMUROS

According to the author, his interest when writing *Extramuros* was to explain 'una parte de la historia de España que nadie había explicado porque sobre el amor homosexual entre mujeres no existen noticias absolutamente en nuestro Siglo de Oro'. But he also states in the same interview that he considers the historical background as important as the love story:

Yo creo que es tan importante el amor de las mujeres como todo lo que hay en el trasfondo. Porque, en realidad, es un momento crucial de la historia de España, momento en el que se inicia el declive del poderío español. Y, al mismo tiempo, es una época en que la mística y las aberraciones de las religiosas se dan por toda la península. Es la gran época de los iluminados, de los grandes milagros tal y como se

explica en la novela.²²¹

I will explore both these aspects of the novel. Most of the novel is presented by a first-person narrator who looks back at the sequence of events that led her and her lover to become prisoners of the Inquisition. It is in jail that she writes her own account, as the use of the present tense indicates. The events that took place in the past are described either in the imperfect tense or the indefinite simple past. Occasionally, in this past context, we find passages in a historic present when the narrator stops to reflect upon particular aspects. This same narrator writes in the present tense a sort of epilogue to close the novel. Apart from the principal narrator, we find some sequences narrated by a second character, a lay sister, who informs the reader about what takes place in the convent while the main narrator is in jail. There is also a third-person narrator who describes the procedures followed by the Inquisition during the case. In *Extramuros* this reliance upon a principal narrator becomes both a virtue and a flaw, and I will describe the problems that it presents.

Another important aspect of the novel is the issue of verisimilitude. Fernández Santos, in his interview with DiNubila, states that when dealing with the past, as in *Extramuros*, he not only evokes the past but he creates his own world, using his imagination, and tries to make the novel of interest for a modern readership.²²² Thus what he does in *Extramuros* is explore a case that

²²¹ DiNubila, 'Entrevista con Jesús Fernández Santos', p. 171.

²²² '*Extramuros* es un puro distanciamiento, un ejercicio literario. Es crear un mundo tal y como te lo imaginas que debió ser, como pudo ser, como te hubiera gustado que hubiera sido. En realidad, el problema de *Extramuros*, más que nada y por encima de la anécdota era crear un estilo que pudiera evocar un mundo del siglo XVII pero que, al mismo tiempo, fuera afín a nosotros, que comprendiéramos, que siguiéramos, que nos interesara y emocionara.' He also adds: 'En el caso de *Extramuros* en que las protagonistas son dos mujeres enamoradas -- , ya entra dentro de la pura imaginación, de la pura fantasía', p. 171.

serves to illustrate how our modern way of thinking about our bodies and also about intellectual authority began to be formed. Here Fernández Santos is trying to find a compromise formula between past and present, and he walks a thin line in trying to keep a balance between a verisimilar historical recreation of the psychology of the characters and an approach to the themes of love and knowledge, or absolute truths, that is relevant for the modern reader. The theme of love is developed around the character of the main narrator, that of knowledge around the second main character who is the main narrator's lover and who fakes the stigmata; she is referred to by the main narrator as 'my sister'. However, there are contradictions that occur in the narrative's themes and I will highlight these.

Fernández Santos's use of language also represents a compromise formula. The form of language used is modern, making it easily accessible to the modern reader, but the general suggestion is that it is a language that shares many of the characteristics of the Spanish of the Golden Age. The use of intertextuality as a source of inspiration in some episodes reinforces this suggestion, such as when the gardener makes a speech, based upon a historical document, about the injustice of the tax system.²²³ Concha Alborg finds many similarities between the language used by the main narrator and that of St Teresa: expressive, simple, and spontaneous.²²⁴ But by borrowing the language of the mystics, which is rich in metaphor, the author occasionally makes it difficult to pin down the intended message of some of the passages.

²²³ See Ramón Jiménez Madrid, p. 178.

²²⁴ Concha Alborg, 'El lenguaje teresiano en la obra de Jesús Fernández Santos', in *Santa Teresa y la literatura mística*, ed. by Manuel Criado de Val (Madrid: Ediciones, 1984), pp. 793-99 (p. 794).

THE OUTSIDE WORLD: DECADENCE AND POWER STRUGGLE

In *Extramuros*, Fernández Santos not only recreates the Golden-Age period, but explores the cause-effect relationship between social, political, and economic conditions and the cultural manifestations of the period.²²⁵ The religious crisis the country experienced is presented as the direct result of a disintegrating social, political, and economic system that was taking place towards the end of the seventeenth century. He also presents through the different characters the power relationship established between the members of that system.

At the top of the hierarchy we find the king engrossed in a foreign policy that is exhausting the country with constant demands for new taxes to pay for imperial campaigns. He is a king who is not concerned with the proper rule of the country. We are reminded that sometimes a whole province rose in arms, refusing to pay the taxes due to the Crown to finance religious wars abroad.²²⁶ Many who refused to pay their taxes simply abandoned the land and formed armies (p. 121). Others chose to beg (p. 118-19). The nobles were also allowed to exploit those who lived on their land by introducing more taxes and increasing the payments due which led to peasants' revolts. The duke in the novel is often engaged in suppressing these revolts (pp. 192-93). In the narrative, several characters (the nun, the sister, the doctor, and the gardener) inform the reader of how the great famines of the Golden Age were not simply the result of severe droughts, but also of speculation, with growers, middle men and merchants withholding grain stocks to push prices up and forcing people to take loans that eventually led to the loss of property and

²²⁵ For Herzberger, the author 'is able to offer the most direct social criticism of any of his novels to date', p. 82.

²²⁶ Jesús Fernández Santos, *Extramuros* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1985), p. 125. All further references to the novel will be to this edition and will be given in the text.

patrimony (p. 27). Indeed, both the nun and the sister come from families of *hidalgos* that become impoverished in this way.

The Inquisition also contributed greatly in creating this atmosphere with its policy of keeping at bay the continuation of non-orthodox Catholic practices by the *cristianos nuevos*, those Jews who had recently converted. The principle of silence upon which the Inquisition operated, protecting the names of those who reported the crime, made people live in constant fear of being reported under suspicion of heresy if Jewish or Muslim antecedents were disclosed. The punishment could also include loss of assets, which led to the system being abused as a means of gaining wealth and engaging in personal vendettas. This obsession with the purity of the blood, *pureza de sangre*, is reflected in the novel when the narrator, on her way to visit her dying father, and passing outside the city walls, reflects upon a past time of economic prosperity and when there was no heresy: 'Las casas de linajes, de hidalgos labradores, tal como fue la nuestra, sin trazas de judíos o moros, de sangre limpia y solar conocido' (p. 59).

By choosing a convent dependent upon a duke, the comment is implicitly made that there was a struggle between the monarchy and the Church regarding the ownership of land, with the crown eager to confiscate the Church land and pass it on to the aristocracy. This aristocracy then became deeply involved in the running of these religious communities and even interfered in religious matters. It is well documented that in the Golden Age many nobles became patrons of religious figures, or were involved with religious communities.²²⁷ In *Extramuros* the convent's economic dependency

²²⁷ For example, la Beata de Friedrahita 'fue especialísima protegida del duque de Alba, que la dotó sobradamente para la fundación de conventos.' Juan G. Atienza, *Guía de los heterodoxos españoles* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1985), p. 139. Maybe the best known cases are those of St Teresa and the *alumbrados*. See Arsenio Rey Tejerina, 'Teresa de Jesús y su carnet de ortodoxia según su epistolario', in *Santa Teresa y la literatura mística*, pp. 109-15 (pp. 110, 112).

on the duke is used by his daughter as a stepping-stone to her future career, when she plots to become the convent's prioress and even asks her father to intervene in the Inquisition's tribunal concerning the fate of the current prioress.²²⁸ Furthermore, being financially dependent upon a noble who could reduce his contribution at any time meant that the convent's community was inclined to mirror the social system that existed outside. In other words, each nun occupied her place in the hierarchy of the convent depending upon the dowry that she brought with her. When the duke's daughter comes to the convent, she brings her own maid and ostentatious clothes and jewellery, an indication of how lenient the prioress was applying the convent rules at a time when it greatly depended on the financial help of the duke for survival (p. 144). Also, the principal narrator, who is a conventional woman in most matters apart from her sexuality, tells the reader how from the beginning she felt at ease in the company of her sister because they are both members of families of *hidalgos*, which guaranteed both purity of blood and social status (p. 35). The financial management of the convent rested in the hands of the prioress who became responsible for the management of the land and property of the convent, as well as the collection of taxes and rents paid by those who lived on the land (pp. 16-17). In the novel, the dire situation the convent is in is due to the bad management exercised by the old prioress. The sister who fakes the stigmata threatens to reveal this if the old prioress presents charges against her.

The droughts and plagues exacerbated the sense of desperation among the population, creating a feeling that they were living in an apocalyptic time,

²²⁸ 'Profesar de monja puede significar abrirse camino en sociedad, convertirse en eje de sus atenciones como nunca se habría alcanzado desde el discreto estrato del recibo familiar, protagonizar y hasta dirigir dimes y diretes, decisiones transcendentales y hasta, si se tercia, asuntos de estado; recordemos a sor María Jesús de Agreda, que llegó a influir en la política de Felipe IV más que el propio conde-duque de Olivares,' Juan G. Atienza, p. 134.

which made them easy prey for false prophets, false miracles, stigmata, and heresies. The religious deviations were not confined to the masses. Indeed, the queen herself is mentioned in the novel giving a portrait of herself to a nun-turned-saint as a result of her stigmata, the very source of inspiration for the main protagonist (pp. 14-15).

Against this background of decline, Fernández Santos creates the character of the false saint, a woman fully aware of the workings of power relations both at a political and spiritual level, who decides to stay within the system in order to improve the living conditions of the convent. The sympathies of the author are with this sister who deliberately pretends to have been given the divine grace of the stigmata. Neither she, nor her lover and accomplice, the narrator, can agree with the view that this physical suffering is the way that God is testing them (pp. 12-23). The author has already indicated criticism of this Catholic preaching in *En la hoguera*, while in *El hombre de los santos* he made clear his sympathies for the community of nuns who, depending upon the Church in supposedly modern times, also see themselves abandoned to endure inhuman living conditions.

THE INNER WORLD: LOVE AND SPIRITUALITY

For Fernández Santos 'el amor yo creo que no existe en aberración. Creo que todos son variantes más o menos'.²²⁹ As we have seen in other novels set in modern times, Fernández Santos thinks highly of love and of sex within love, but he does not sympathise with current attitudes regarding the seeking of sexual pleasure as an aim in its own right. This, in his opinion, fosters alienation.

In *Extramuros*, the character of the narrator is presented as a complex

²²⁹ DiNubila, 'Entrevista con Jesús Fernández Santos', p. 172.

human being and does not become a mouthpiece for the author's notions of love. However, she undoubtedly understands love in a way that the author endorses. This narrator distinguishes very clearly between sex as a physical manifestation of love and sex as lust. She does not hesitate to condemn the sexual practices of the *iluminados solicitantes* that the lay sister joins for a while and considers them as heretics because they use religious arguments to justify sheer lust. She never endorses pleasure for pleasure's sake. Her understanding of love is very much in accordance with being a nun in the Golden Age. She has been indoctrinated against the notion of physical pleasure, and the novel reminds us that the nuns wore cilices to mortify their flesh. Accordingly, some times she and her sister punish themselves after having sex, flagellating each other because they agree that to seek and enjoy the pleasures of the flesh is sinful (p. 111). In her eyes, sex is only justified as a manifestation of love, love understood as spiritual union. So the narrator describes her carnal desire for her sister as a desire for union and employs the language the mystics of that period used to describe the union with God:

El ansia apresurada de mis pulsos y sienes [...] parecía romper sus cauces naturales al son oscuro de su respirar, al compás de su dulce y tenue roce. Mi alma enferma de amor buscaba en el templado refugio de sus brazos, su habitual medicina, su razón principal que la elevara de los otros amores terrenales [...]. Cuerpo y alma se unían, regalaban, en un juego secreto que como duro dardo, nos alzara y uniera de por vida. (p. 110)

But somehow the prioress's insistence that the hunger and illnesses they are enduring are to be understood as God's test awakens a sense of rebellion. This

is intensified when they learn that the prioress's neglectful management of the convent's resources (land and taxes) has made things worse for them. It is then that the narrator begins to distinguish clearly between sacrifices arising from poor physical conditions due to human shortcomings, against which she rebels, and sacrifices in the form of physical pain inflicted upon oneself as a voluntary offering to God, as penitence.

Her rebellion goes further. When the prioress surprises the narrator having sex with her sister, she decrees the established punishment of public flagellation on the already ill sister (pp. 90-91). Fernández Santos often indicates that the personal is always political and he presumably creates this situation to develop that theme. The narrator and most of the nuns rebel against this punishment by voting against the incumbent when the election for a new prioress takes place. In this sense, the abuses of those in power and who exercise moral authority make the nuns question the prohibition in the convent rules of any open manifestation of their sexuality (p. 86). One can conclude that Fernández Santos, taking into account the obvious restrictions of the moral culture of that period, creates in *Extramuros* a character through whom he celebrates the sexual component of love as the originator of a new way of thinking and expressing oneself. Sex is presented as pushing the intellectual boundaries of the prevailing religious culture. By believing in her sexual impulses as a manifestation of love, the narrator questions and challenges through her sexuality the prevailing religious preaching. She fails to see what God can have against any physical expression of love: '¿Qué ganaba con robármelo?' (p. 33). This concept of sexual impulses as an essential part of a human being's make-up, and acting on them as a natural human activity is no doubt a modern concept. So too is the concept that one learns about oneself and life by acknowledging these impulses and by taking them as a guide to the formulation of our own system of values and our personal ethics.

Her rebellion now takes place at an intellectual level. The narrator's

need to justify her practising lesbianism leads her to argue that when she examines her conscience she never sees herself as a sinner because, as a cloistered nun, she spends her life praying to God. And since she surrenders her free will to God when praying, there is nothing she does that can be sinful:

Una vez entregado al Señor nuestro albedrío
¿cómo se puede resistir las tentaciones? En
oración perpetua ¿cómo se le puede llegar a
ofender, siendo el amor entre sus criaturas
más santo que las demás virtudes? Como mi
hermana aseguraba, las almas perfectas no
tienen por qué llegarse al tribunal de la
Penitencia, porque Dios suple los efectos
del Sacramento, concediéndoles su gracia
para siempre. Así cuando tocaba confesarse
mentía. (pp. 85-86)

Inadvertently, she is explaining herself in the same terms as the *iluminados*.²³⁰

The Church always defended praying in a public, under the direction of a priest, in churches full of paintings and sculptures that inspired and stimulated the faithful. But those who criticised the Church for reducing praying to a meaningless social event, proposed a more personal approach

²³⁰ 'En los Países Bajos se había desarrollado una poderosa corriente pietista la *Devotio Moderna*, que tendía a valorar la oración mental y la interioridad a expensas de rituales externos, formalismos y ceremonias [...]. Los disidentes españoles [...] predicaban la completa pasividad durante la oración mental, la identificación del alma con Dios, el abandono, el "dejarse al amor de Dios", lo que conducía a la imposibilidad de pecar y lo que les permitía, sobre todo a los alumbrados de Extremadura y Andalucía, el llevar una vida desarreglada y licenciosa.' Pedro Santoja, *La herejía de los alumbrados y la espiritualidad en la España del siglo XVI* (Valencia: Biblioteca Valenciana, 2001), p. 19.

that involved only the individual and God. The *iluminados* endorsed this and the Church authorities prosecuted those who claimed to have established direct contact with God while praying. It is for this that the prioress reports the sister to the Inquisition. According to the old prioress, when the sister was convalescent she affirmed, while speaking aloud in one of her dreams, that she had been in the presence of God. Indeed, St Teresa was questioned by the Inquisition in this respect.²³¹ But ironically, the narrator, who is suspicious in the extreme of her sister's theological arguments to justify her false stigmata, seems to be unaware that the argument she uses to justify the sexual component of her love for her sister, as part of a mystical union with God, shares characteristics with the argument used by the heretical *iluminados* to justify their sexual practices, which she herself condemns when she comments: 'Aseguraban que no pecaban los humanos, si tal les sucedía una vez alcanzado el éxtasis, en el cual, anulados los sentidos, la razón no contaba estando libre el cuerpo de cualquier falta grave o compromiso' (p. 43). She is not aware of her own contradictions.

For Gonzalo Navajas, one of the virtues of the novel is precisely that by setting a loving lesbian relationship in a period when such a relationship was not thought of as possible, or would have been suppressed and silenced, the author manages to present love as a transcendent human quality to a modern world in which love has been trivialised. In this sense the novel can be excused for taking some liberties with its historical accuracy, for the perfect

²³¹ 'Nada nos extraña que los inquisidores se alarmaran cuando en el *Libro de la vida* se enfrasca [Santa Teresa] en el arduo tema de la oración [...] Este "sentimiento de la presencia de Dios" intranquilizaba a los teólogos del Santo Oficio, porque ya había precedentes entre algunos alumbrados que afirmaban ver a Dios en esta vida. Esta cuestión ha sido siempre motivo de disputas en todos los tiempos: ¿puede el hombre llegar, en este mundo, a ver a Dios cara a cara tal como Él es? La pregunta se planteaba a propósito del pasaje de la *Segunda carta a los corintios*, en la cual el apóstol san Pablo cuenta que fue elevado hasta el tercer cielo y que oyó las palabras inefables.' Pedro Santoja, p. 116.

historical re-creation of the period is, from a narrative point of view, of less interest than the sexual relationship described here.²³²

In his study of the novel, Gonzalo Navajas argues that the nuns' love reflects a modern concept of sex in so far as it is understood as both a way to self-knowledge and as a way to achieve the fulfilment of the self. Here I should like to highlight those of Navajas's comments that I consider valuable in that they provide a helpful reading of the novel and also because they show the difficulties that arise when we interpret the past from a modern perspective.

Navajas follows Foucault when he states that sex is considered as a way to define our identity, a way to discover unknown aspects of our personality and to structure it in a coherent way. For Navajas, the nun gains through her sexuality a knowledge of herself, and through her confession a degree of consciousness of who she is, though the death of her lover leaves her process of coming to know herself uncompleted, for she has not yet overcome the stage of subordination to her lover. In this sense, the confession is not addressing the reader, with the purpose of establishing the truth about the events that have occurred, but addresses her lover. Thus the confession becomes a therapeutic exercise for the narrator, like that established between psychoanalyst and patient. Navajas also sees in this a confirmation of the power relationships that exist, with the narrator as always subordinate to her lover.

I agree that the narrator has a sense that she is subordinate to her sister. She makes this clear when she affirms that it was her sister who initiated the

²³² 'La deshabitualización de la percepción invocada por Shklovsky como un principio general de la novela, alcanza aquí un modo de realización. El que los sujetos de la relación homosexual sean dos hermanas de un convento no hace sino incrementar la peculiaridad de la situación, dando una prominencia nueva a lo presentado, devolviendo a la sexualidad su carácter de realidad fundamental, no trivializada.' Gonzalo Navajas, 'Confesión, sexualidad, discurso: *Extramuros* de Jesús Fernández Santos', *Hispania*, 68 (1985), 242-51 (p. 243).

sexual relationship and that she planned it in the same way as she planned the false stigmata: 'Al igual que en aquella primera ocasión, tan urdida y preparada a tesón, celo y sabiduría, de igual manera ahora, me hizo que la ayudara a sus propósitos' (p. 41). Furthermore, the constant affirmation that she agreed to back up her sister with regard to her false stigmata after her love had been reassured by having sex, corroborates her submissiveness (p. 111). But one cannot fully accept that the nun reaches an understanding of herself through her sexuality. She certainly goes as far as accepting her sexuality. But as Navajas himself admits, the narrator never resolves her own contradiction regarding her sexuality. She never resolves the conflict between accepting Catholicism, that forbids her sexuality, and her practising lesbianism: 'No querria [Dios] privarnos de nuestro único regalo y deleite, capaz de curar nuestras llagas del alma' (p. 32). Resolving her conflict would have forced her into questioning Catholicism as a whole. As Herzberger states, she does not change all through the process.²³³ It is her sister who questions the whole basis of Catholicism.

The second point made by Navajas is that through sexual pleasure the individual not only achieves the self-fulfilment, a sense of unity and cohesion within oneself. He notes that in addition: 'Cuando el sujeto se comprende en el otro, consigue la unidad de su vida y, con ella, la dicha. La sexualidad se hace el único modo con el que el yo puede superar la amenaza y la agresión del otro, que es uno de los focos centrales del pensamiento moderno, como se observa en numerosos pensadores desde Lacan a Laing.'²³⁴ However, I find this statement flawed with regard to the novel. I would suggest that in this case

²³³ 'In terms of self-characterization, however, the progression of the narrative does not represent a movement from blindness to insight. The narrator never reaches a crucial moment of self-recognition in which she suddenly gains new perceptions into her own psyche or that of the saint.' Herzberger, p. 80.

²³⁴ Gonzalo Navajas, p. 245.

sexuality fails to overcome the differences with the other. The narrator cannot reconcile the fact that she is experiencing a physical passion for her sister whilst she is being spiritually disgusted by her. She simply outlines her intellectual limitations, indicating that she has never been able to understand the religious arguments her sister puts to her to explain her motivations and justify her actions. If we trust the narrator, then we are to believe that she is just an intellectually unsophisticated person, living proof of the ignorance of some members of the Church in those days. But, as we have seen, her justification of her sexuality contradicts such a dubious assumption of intellectual limitation. She is simply a conventional woman who even shares the established wisdom that women are of a lesser intellectual capacity than men. Her sister is the authentic rebel, a confident and independent thinker.

Having a narrator who does not rebel against anything but matters concerning sexual restrictions poses a problem for the reader. For how can we trust this narrator in her account of the sister's arguments, a nun who, like the Lutherans and other heretics, applies her own interpretation of the Bible and dismisses the teachings of the Church. The reader only gets to know the sister from the perspective of a narrator who regards her motivations as arising from flaws in the sister's character, or even worse as flaws in her personal ethical stand. She accuses her of being proud, and of being '*orgullo disfrazado de devoción*' (p. 182). So it is essential for the reader to judge the reliability of the narrator. She refuses to acknowledge the sister's intellectual strength, claiming that the demon is tempting the sister, taking advantage of her pride, and so she advises her to consult her confessor (p. 37). Portraying her in this way explains the lack of space the narrator dedicates to her lover's reasoning. It engages the reader at an interactive level concerning the validity of the discourse we are presented with. But at the same time, it deprives the reader of an insight into a character who seems far more interesting than the narrator herself.

The sister questions the whole of Catholicism. Her way of thinking is also consistent with the religious context of the Golden Age. Her argument that what counts is faith in God and not good deeds was a crucial matter of debate in that period. She states: 'Sólo la fe nos salva por encima de nuestras buenas o malas acciones' (p. 140). Discussions of this nature were reflected in Golden-Age literature in plays such as Tirso de Molina's *El condenado por desconfiado*. Her trust in this belief makes her confident of her actions: 'El Señor ayuda a los que creen en Él, sencilla y llanamente' (p.183). She also questions a culture based on absolute principles, arguing the relativity of our knowledge, and observing: 'Lo que hoy es cierto, mañana no lo es' (p. 176). Accused by the old prioress of claiming to have established direct contact with God, on her release from the Inquisition's jail she postpones confessing her false stigmata to the convent congregation, such a confession having been imposed by the Inquisition as her first act of penitence, and dies without suffering the humiliation of a public repentance.

In terms of the single narrator, the timing of the writing of the narrator's account presents some problems since it stretches the reader's sense of credibility and historical verisimilitude. Navajas highlights the importance of the epilogue as a confession. But the account of past events takes place prior to the Inquisition's verdict and within the jail's walls, and it seems to be addressed to the general public, as indicated by expressions such as 'lo que contaré más adelante' (p. 32). It is likely that in solitude, and before being called by the tribunal to testify, the narrator reflects about her motives. It is also probable that since she feels she is being treated as only having a secondary role in the stigmata case, and has been forgotten by everybody, she feels confident that nobody will ever search her cell. But why take risks with her own safety and write at such a time, and in such a place? The narrator must have been aware that lesbianism was a punishable practice, so it cannot have escaped her attention that by declaring her love for her sister she was

putting herself at risk. Are we to interpret this as an act of defiance, the action of someone so strongly convinced that love is never sinful whatever form it takes that she does not mind taking responsibility for it if questioned by the tribunal? Is she a heroine? If the account had been written at the end, once back in the convent, and after the Inquisition's verdict, none of these questions would be raised. It seems that the nun wishes to leave an account of her life for posterity, justifying her actions in respect of the love she clearly feels for her sister. As it is, one wonders if the timing is deliberate, or whether this choice of structure was merely a lapse.

A single narrator works well in terms of plot and theme in the sense that this narrative mode conveys the passion felt by the nun and provides nuances of her moods and frames of mind so that the character appears alive and credible to the reader.²³⁵ The reader can tell how the development of the sexual relationship affects the narrator's sense of judgement of the sister. Once the sister comes to be regarded as a saint, the reader can detect how the narrator's judgement is clouded by her sense of abandonment (pp. 56, 58, and passim). This passion for her sister becomes the meaning of the narrator's life: 'Sin ella la casa se me antojaba valle triste y vacío. Ella era para mí causa y razón, hortelano de mi huerto escondido, sal de mi tierra, manantial de mi cuerpo' (pp. 46-47). It is at this level of portraying love as an all-consuming passion in the life of a young woman that the novel fully succeeds.

Within Fernández Santos's oeuvre, *Extramuros* is his ode to love. It is a traditional and conventional love story in which an individual sacrifices her life. The narrator becomes a symbol of the strength of love by joining her fate to her sister's and suffering the consequences. The only thing she can be certain about is that her actions have been motivated by love. But beyond that,

²³⁵ 'Es que en *Extramuros*, al tratarse de una historia de amor como "Los caracoles", naturalmente al utilizar la primera persona, da mucha más fuerza a la narración y a esa misma pasión.' DiNubila, p. 174.

Extramuros is also a study of the complexity of feelings that any relationship gives rise to, and it conveys the contradictions experienced by the protagonist in her intimate fight to keep a balance between her own individuality (what she is like when she first meets her lover) and her potential gradual fusing with her lover, which she fears. In this sense this love story is modern in its content, describing the clash between two very different characters: one young, conservative, and inexperienced, the other mature, progressive, and daring.

EL GRIEGO

El Griego, published in 1985 and awarded the Premio Ateneo de Sevilla that year, presents a new narrative mode in Jesús Fernández Santos's body of work. A linear development of plot is based upon a polyphony of voices, in which each single character narrates a certain number of chapters in random order, but each voice gives continuity to the action. The frustrated love story between El Greco's wife and his pupil, Francisco Preboste, gives cohesion to a novel in which there is no main story line. Here Fernández Santos exercises poetic licence to create the love story. He uses a historically documented fact, that Francisco Preboste suddenly disappeared from El Greco's workshop, as the inspiration for a work of fiction, as if he were providing a plausible explanation, a speculative 'might have been'.²³⁶

Although there is some discussion of El Greco's painting included in the novel, *El Griego* is not a novel about the life of the painter in that it assesses his artistic value and significance in the Golden-Age period. Fernández

²³⁶ '¿Qué sucedió? ¿Cuál fue la causa? ¿Fueron razones de trabajo o de pasión? Tal vez, solamente, cansado de un amor frustrado, decidió cambiarlo por otro más acorde con su edad.' Jesús Fernández Santos, 'El Griego', *El País*, 4 December 1985, p. 11.

Santos's object here is to present the painter as instrumental in the creation of a religious culture he himself did not necessarily agree with. The author is keen to portray the painter as trying to make a decent living out of his profession without compromising his sense of professional integrity. He portrays El Greco as an artist eager to receive commissions, keen on the financial aspects of the deal (his lawsuits were numerous), who despite having little freedom regarding the subject matter of his paintings, was determined to develop his own controversial style. This resulted in his getting few commissions to start with, until his style was eventually accepted and well regarded.

Above all, though, *El Griego* is a period recreation that relies upon picaresque tones to portray the general decline at the end of the reign of Philip II and with his succession by Philip III. The demythification of the period focuses upon the issue of national glory. The failure of the Spanish Armada (1588) signals the beginning of the end of the imperial dream, and reflects, at a national level, the further deterioration of the economic and social fabric. To develop this idea, Fernández Santos uses the figure of a rogue, the son of El Greco's household maid, and his circle of friends. These low-life characters make a living out of crime whilst claiming to have been soldiers in the glorious imperial army. The novel also focuses upon the end of an era that had been culturally diverse, but which was turning into a claustrophobic cultural desert under the control of a Church that was enforcing Catholicism in its most repressive and backward form.

The novel has not received much critical attention and has been regarded as a minor piece of work.²³⁷ However, it has its merits and is relevant

²³⁷ 'Decir que *El Griego* es una novela correcta -- lo es, pero sólo eso -- , que se lee sin pausa, que está bien construida, es decir muy poco cuando su autor se llama como se llama.' Luis Suñén, 'Cuatro pinceladas sobre la vida de El Greco', *El País*, 17 October 1985, p. 3.

within Fernández Santos's oeuvre. As well as being an entertaining novel of limited scope, a quick glimpse into the past, *El Griego* enables Fernández Santos to contribute to the demythification of the topic of the nature of the Spanish character and soul. As has been pointed out several times in this study, according to the Francoist myth this configuration of the national character in the Golden Age was a genuine cultural and political response to what was perceived as the aggressive foreign cultural invasion that was fostering values alien to Spanish culture, a heightened, nationalistic reaffirmation. In *El Griego*, we find in the background the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation as part of the foreign policy of the European states of the period, but Fernández Santos does not develop this aspect. What he emphasises is how the national culture that shaped that national character was highly directed by the religious and political establishment and how it was imposed upon the acquiescent majority through repression. With *El Griego*, Fernández Santos concludes his disquisitions on this theme, the development of which started with his first novel, *Los bravos*, in which the epigraph encapsulated the Francoist myth that 'El carácter de un hombre es como el carácter de un pueblo, su carácter es su destino'. His interest, then, was to point out the dire consequences of believing in the concept of a national character as something unchangeable, as an intangible quality, a spiritual essence. Without getting into philosophical arguments, he indicated that the behaviour of the villagers had plenty to do with the political, historical, social, and economic circumstances and little to do with peculiarities of character. He put forward the argument that Spaniards needed to let go of such cultural clichés in order to improve their situation. This theme reappears in his historical novels. His focus here is to reveal how that essence was nothing more than a cultural construct of the political and cultural establishment at the end of the Golden Age, a reactionary period at all levels.

In his approach to this novel, Fernández Santos echoes Unamuno when in *En torno al casticismo* (1895) he developed the concept of *intrahistoria*, an idea that includes the notion that what matters about the historical development is the everyday life of the majority of individuals, of ordinary people, where genuine tradition is to be found, in opposition to a history based upon the actions of a few historical figures.²³⁸ In *El Griego*, Fernández Santos surely applies this concept: not only does he present a multiplicity of ordinary voices, but he also treats the great painter as just another inhabitant of the city of Toledo, so that all voices are regarded as of equal value. Beyond the strictly literary, Fernández Santos also echoes Unamuno's preoccupations. In 1895, in *En torno al casticismo*, Unamuno was putting forward the need for the country to progress by opening up to cultural influences from Europe as well as going back to its popular roots.²³⁹

In *El Griego* Fernández Santos coincides with Unamuno in terms of purpose. In the context of the 1980s, when Fernández Santos wrote the novel, the return of the nation's culture to its roots meant the dismissal of the after-effects of National Catholicism, imposed by the Franco regime that had disappeared a decade earlier, and the embracing of Europe. It involved doing away with the legacy of a simplified and idealised vision of the national

²³⁸ 'La vida silenciosa de los millones de hombres sin historia que a todas las horas del día y en todos los países del globo se levantan a una orden del sol [...] sobre la inmensa humanidad silenciosa se levantan los que meten bulla en la historia. Esa vida intrahistórica, silenciosa y continua como el fondo mismo del mar, es la esencia misma del progreso, la verdadera tradición, la tradición eterna, no la tradición mentira que se suele ir a buscar al pasado enterrado en libros y papeles, y monumentos, y piedras.' Miguel de Unamuno, *En torno al casticismo* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1968), pp. 27-28.

²³⁹ 'El porvenir de la sociedad española espera dentro de nuestra sociedad histórica, en la intrahistoria, en el pueblo desconocido, y no surgirá potente hasta que le despierten vientos y ventarrones del ambiente europeo. Eso del pueblo que calla, ora y paga es un tropo insustancial para los que más le usan y pasa cual verdad inconcusa entre los que bullen en el vacío de nuestra vida *histórica* que el pueblo es atrozmente bruto e inepto', p. 141.

character, getting rid of the notion 'Spain is different' once and for all. In this novel, Fernández Santos clearly argues that the true roots of Spanish tradition are to be found in the humanism in Spain of the Renaissance, a liberal-minded country, a country still open to Europe. Unamuno had elaborated in depth on how the so-called essential national character, that unique, quintessential, Spanish culture, *el casticismo*, had come to be. For Unamuno, the consolidation of the *casticismo* at the end of the Golden Age had been the consequence of the isolation of the country from Europe. In practice, *casticismo* had become an accumulation of the most extreme cultural manifestations of the Golden Age which failed to take into account the reasons and circumstances that prompted them. It became embedded in the collective consciousness, as a self-image, the notion of being (by definition, essence, nature, and so on), a nation of extremes. These selected traits had apparently been determined by the moulding of Castilians by their recent extraordinary experiences: warriors or mystics, adventurers or idle *hidalgos*, Don Quijote or Sancho Panza, and so on.²⁴⁰

For Unamuno, the theatre of Calderón reinforced the stereotypes. What the intellectuals of the period did not do was to develop a reflective attitude towards experiences so that lessons could be learnt. As Unamuno says: 'Hay que matar a Don Quijote para que resucite Alonso Quijano el Bueno, el discreto [...] libre de las sombras caliginosas de la ignorancia que sobre él pusieron su amargura y continua leyenda de los libros de caballería' (p. 122). Against this fruitless stereotyping of strongly defined simplistic

²⁴⁰ 'Un mezquino sentido toma por la casta íntima y eterna, por el carácter de un pueblo dado, el símbolo de su desarrollo histórico, como tomamos por nuestra personalidad íntima el yo que de ella nos refleja el mundo. Y así se pronuncia consustancial a tal o cual pueblo la forma que adoptó su personalidad al pasar del reino de la libertad al de la historia, la forma que le dió el ambiente. Para preservarse, la casta histórica castellana creó al Santo Oficio, más que institución religiosa, aduana de unitarismo casticista.' Unamuno, p. 123.

characters, both Unamuno and Fernández Santos praise the silent majority of characters who go about their business reflecting on themselves and the times they live in. During the Franco regime, in his *España y su Historia* (1957), Ramón Menéndez Pidal interpreted the history of the country based upon his belief that Spain was, by essence, a nation of extremes, a nation with an inherent dualism. His conclusion was that the nation was destined to be divided into two irreconcilable sides due to this inherent dualism. This dualism primarily manifested itself as a division between religious orthodoxy and heterodoxy, a division that reached a crisis point during the reign of Philip II. The myth of *las dos Españas* was thus established.²⁴¹

THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Set in the same period as *Extramuros*, *El Griego* also contains comments regarding Philip II's foreign policy. In *El Griego* the characters that attend the *tertulia* at *El Cigarral* clearly distinguish between Philip II as an emperor and as the king of Spain. They criticise his foreign enterprises and his belief that Spaniards should contribute to his foreign policy by paying high taxes, particularly after the costly defeat of the Spanish Armada, and they ask him to put an end to his wars abroad (pp. 62, 76). However, they empathise with the king when he defends the national interest against foreign powers, so therefore they agree with the Spanish Armada offensive (p. 42). The exhaustion of the nation is also symbolized in the gradual deterioration of the monarch's health (he suffered from gout and was confined to a wheelchair in his later years). It is made clear that the Spaniards of the late sixteenth century saw it as the period that marked the beginning of the decline of the country, particularly as

²⁴¹ For a short discussion on the repercussions of Menéndez Pidal's interpretation of Spanish history, see Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, 'Reflexiones sobre "Las dos Españas"', pp. 42-54.

they had little faith in the future Philip III's ability to govern. Philip III (1598-1621) was more concerned with hunting than his country and was happy to delegate his duties to his *valido*. The relentless activity of the Inquisition in prosecuting Lutherans, and the expulsion of the *moriscos* towards the end of the novel, remind the reader that, with the new monarch, Spain definitively closes in upon itself under a weak monarchy and the omnipotent authority of the Church. With Philip III the *España de la pandereta* is consolidated. With the economy in tatters and hordes of beggars roaming the streets, the masses' potential political discontent was distracted by the continuous celebration of festivities: 'Incluso esos desamparados de que habla prefieren la fiesta a la comida'.²⁴² Not that there had not been any such excesses in the time of Philip II, but the novel indicates that then the mood had been different and the citizens of Toledo had in fact resented the financial cost of the festivities organised every time the emperor visited them: 'Entre fiestas de toros, bailes y torneos, se nos va el poco dinero que nos resta' (p. 75).

El Griego also reflects the marked cultural contrasts that the Counter-Reformation was trying to unify under an orthodox Catholicism since the beginning of the reign of Philip II (1556-98). In the field of painting, the emperor embodies these cultural contrasts. On the one hand he chooses Titian as one of his favourite painters for celebrating the joy of life in a sensuous style: 'Ama la alegría de vivir que aparece en sus cuadros' (p. 31). Yet he is also the patron of many religious painters that follow the dictates of the Council of Trent (three sessions, 1545-63) and depict, in a sombre style, saints punishing their bodies through sacrifice. Religious paintings are presented as instrumental in the configuration of this religious mass culture and the king fully supports this trend: 'Un monarca tan negro y grave, recién salido del

²⁴² Jesús Fernández Santos, *El Griego* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1985), p. 140. All further references to the novel will be to this edition and will be included in the text.

Concilio de Trento. Siguiendo su doctrina, ha comentado que la pintura ha de inspirar oración, no descubrir el arte' (p. 13). The novel starts with the emperor rejecting a painting he had commissioned from El Greco to hang in El Escorial's chapel, the *Martirio de san Mauricio y la legión Tebana*, a painting whose theme is the willingness to die for one's faith. An ironic comment is made by El Greco's assistant, Francisco Preboste, that the new cultural climate does not allow for light and colour to be used in religious paintings, that the Spanish Counter-Reformation, following Trent, celebrates death and abhors life (p. 17). Further comments are made on how the Counter-Reformation, even in paintings of secular subject matter such as still lifes, fostered a sombre reality, a reality deprived of sensuality (p. 31). And the novel indicates how, during the reign of Philip III, this attitude led to such extreme measures as the removal of paintings of secular subjects from churches: 'Acaban de prohibir las pinturas no sacras que pudieran llevar a error a los fieles' (p. 165).

Against this background, we find the central character in the typical situation in which Fernández Santos places his protagonists: an individual considering his place in society and his interaction with others. Fernández Santos describes the degree of awareness the individual displays regarding his position in society. The author clearly states that the painter was instrumental in spreading the religious preachings of the Counter-Reformation. Thus in words of the Dean of Toledo: 'El mismo Griego trabaja con nosotros [...] Cultivando en sus cuadros la fe católica, pintando santos que tanto aborrecen esos protestantes y el valor de la penitencia que justifica al hombre ante Dios' (p. 202). On the third and last occasion that El Greco expresses himself, the author conveys the message that the painter was happy to reflect the Catholic values of penitence, charity, and obedience in his saints and martyrs. What he did not believe in was eternity in the sense of the afterlife, believing instead in perpetuation through one's descendants and the work that the artist leaves for

posterity (pp. 184-85). In fact, the same notion is expressed by an elderly peasant in *En la hoguera*. The main argument presented here is that the painter is well aware of the need to please the Church, the main patron of the arts, in order to earn a living, but was adamant that he would not sacrifice his style, which for him was a matter of professional integrity. It is through his style that El Greco opposed the new concept of life, and of the body in particular, imposed by the Counter-Reformation. Indeed, not able to choose his own subject matter until later on in his career, El Greco showed his defiance by practising his controversial style from the beginning. He tried to reconcile spirituality with sensuality through the use of colour. This was precisely what Trent was trying to banish from religion:

Así en mi lienzo de Santo Tomé, mitad fantasía y mitad realidad,
mitad colores y mitad lo que entienden los pintores por alma de
las figuras. La mía es llama de color, éxtasis de los sentidos que
los españoles ignoran, siempre pendientes de sus manidos
bodegones. Ni la fruta ni el sol en mis cuadros importan
demasiado. No hacen falta; cada persona se ilumina por sí misma
con una luz interior que sólo los entendidos notan. Así se acercan
cada día más al Señor de todas las cosas. (pp. 45-46)

The key words here are 'éxtasis de los sentidos que los españoles ignoran'. They contain an implicit allusion to the dualistic vision, in force in that period, of man as body and soul, where the soul encapsulates the sublime, what man shares with God, and the body lesser, animalistic instincts. By choosing 'éxtasis de los sentidos' Fernández Santos associates two terms that belonged to the two different concepts. 'Éxtasis' was usually linked to the soul, as in the mystical experience of the union with God, while 'los sentidos' belonged to the physical domain, the lesser component that could lead man

away from God. By associating these two antagonistic terms, the unorthodox idea that one can reach God through the enjoyment of one's senses, that there need not be a divorce of spirituality and senses, is put forward. This went against the grain of the preachings of the Counter-Reformation. By standing by his own convictions, El Greco saw his chances of becoming a favourite royal painter extinguished, and he had to content himself with working for a provincial clientele whom he regarded as parochial and conservative in terms of art (p. 45).

It is in this context of the complete dissociation between the religious and the secular that the mystical literature of the period is placed. By associating the two worlds through the use of language it thus challenged the religious orthodoxy. As we know, and this novel reminds us, it was the use of this sensual language, charged with erotic metaphors of the union of two bodies to express the union of the soul with God, that brought the mystics under suspicion of heresy and to the Inquisition's tribunals. Indeed, verses from fray Luis de León's *El cantar de los cantares* are included in the novel to express the love of Francisco Preboste, El Greco's apprentice, for Jerónima.

This extreme dualistic approach to the notion of man was cited by Unamuno as the key factor in the psychological make-up of the Spanish character of that period, and one can see how it reverberated through the whole fabric of society. The kingdom of God or the realm of man; Catholic or heretic; nobleman or workman; sublime or grotesque; body or soul; faith or science; intelligence or senses, among others.²⁴³

²⁴³ 'A la disociación mental entre el mundo de los sentidos y el de la inteligencia, corresponde una dualidad de resoluciones bruscas y tenaces y de indolente matar el tiempo, dualidad que engendra, al reflejarse en la mente, fatalismo y librearbitrismo, creencias gemelas y que se complementan, nunca la doctrina del determinismo de la espontaneidad. Se resignan a la ley o la rechazan, la sufren o la combaten, no identifican su querer con ella. Si vencidos fatalistas; librearbitristas cuando vencedores. La doctrina es la teoría de la propia conducta, no su guía.' Unamuno, p. 75

Within the novel some of these aspects are reflected, often with an implicit irony. We find observations about the Spaniards' sense of fatalism, that nothing can be done to change things on earth: 'Dejando que su destino trace por ellos el rumbo de sus días' (p. 64), or suggestions that from the cradle to the grave everything has been decided: 'Desde que nacemos hasta que nos entierran, el destino decide por nosotros' (p. 27). The reader has been provided with enough information in the novel to link this attitude with the progressive impoverishment of the country due to high taxes, bad harvests and rising prices, high unemployment, and two successive emperors who forced Spaniards to bear the brunt of their foreign enterprises without ever developing the country's economic infrastructure. We find El Greco observing that nothing that depends on public institutions gets done in the country, that Spaniards resign themselves to this state of affairs, and he points the finger at the Church for this attitude: 'Así van las cosas en España pues, si como la Iglesia dice, vivimos en un valle de lágrimas, ¿para qué esforzarse y trabajar? Mejor fiarlo todo a otra vida más fácil que padecer una sacrificada aquí abajo' (p. 83). Also, we see Spaniards forever hoping that good luck may lead them out of their miserable existence: 'El mundo y la fortuna suelen cambiar con un golpe de suerte' (p. 34). Within this historical context, two reasons are given for this way of thinking. First, that the Spaniards were tantalised by the possibility of making a fortune in America and gaining fame and honour that way (p. 73), something which conditioned their attitude to work: 'El arado les quema las manos' (p. 64). Secondly, there existed a rigid class system that valued birth and titles more than the economic activity of the bourgeoisie, who carried the social stigma of being active. In this context the figure of the proud and hungry *hidalgo* who refuses to engage in work to earn a living is mentioned (pp. 66, 72).

THE INNER WORLD

In *El Griego*, the Counter-Reformation comes under criticism as a zealous religious movement, particularly in matters of sexuality. The novel does not argue that the Counter-Reformation put an end to an idyllic state of affairs. But in all the different aspects of morality that it reflects, the narrative hints that the solutions taken were not necessarily the most appropriate ones. *El Griego* reflects on this transitional period from the point of view of how the implementation of the dictates of the Council of Trent affects the life of the characters, and how they feel about the outcome. The novel contrasts the happy-go-lucky tolerant society enjoyed before the Counter-Reformation with the grim atmosphere that the repression brought about. Before Trent and the Counter-Reformation, the Inquisition had been actively prosecuting matters of faith, but now its powers were extended, penetrating the most intimate layers of everybody's life. The functioning of the Inquisition comes under criticism once again, particularly for the financial inducement to report others, since those who reported suspects could keep one quarter of the fortune of those found guilty (p. 215).

The novel criticises the Counter-Reformation movement for trying to impose a puritanical code of public sexual behaviour without tackling the economic problems at the root of prostitution. The law enforced the closing of brothels, which resulted in driving the business underground. The novel shows how, in the theatre, the implementation of the rule that actresses playing the roles of married women on stage had to be married in real life, led to actresses marrying out of convenience individuals who then acted as procurers. Indeed, the poverty in which actresses lived encouraged them to seek other types of work. We see how Cristinica, a maid, turned to prostitution and later, with the connivance of her pimp-husband, became an actress while still working as a prostitute. The point being made is that the Counter-Reformation concerned itself with appearances and that the end result was a hypocritical

society.

Furthermore, the Counter-Reformation reinforced the concept of sexuality as being limited to reproductive heterosexual practices, so that sodomy and homosexuality were punishable by burning at the stake, and celibacy was demanded as the normal state for clergymen. In fact, the novel opens with an example of the repression exercised by the Inquisition when trying to apply the resolutions of the Council of Trent, with a man being burned for his homosexuality (p. 15). The emphasis on the reproductive side of sexuality and the consequent rejection of any pleasures of the flesh at an intimate level, was mirrored at a public level in the representation of the body as a less important part of an individual's self, only worthy as an instrument of sacrifice to the glory of God. The novel reflects how religious paintings were used to instil this concept of the body: 'Los pintores españoles; los unos retratando la muerte; los otros peras y limones' (p. 31). Years earlier, when Fernández Santos wrote *En la hoguera*, he had elaborated in depth on the consequences of such a negative concept. *El Griego* hints at the absurdity of this inhumane approach to human beings, at the drastic separation of body and soul as two irreconcilable halves of human beings.

The Dean of Toledo is presented as having engaged in a sexual relationship with a woman. Now, with the Inquisition working actively he feels threatened. The novel, however, implies that such a relationship does not make the Dean a man less dedicated to God, or a lustful human being. In its drastic ways of trying to put an end to the sexual corruption of priests that kept concubines, the Council of Trent required that priests lived with their mothers or sisters (p. 44), refusing to consider other more humane options such as allowing the marriage of priests. As the Dean asks: '¿Y a quién ofendemos nosotros?' (p. 166). As the citizens of Toledo that enjoy their *tertulia* in *El Cigarral* inform the reader, the implementation of the dictates of Trent did not solve the problem of the promiscuity of the clergy, it merely drove it

underground. The case that illustrates this is that of the clergyman who paid the husband of a married woman in order to have sex with her. He was taken to jail and, so that he could escape, disguised himself as a demon. The episode clearly indicates that the new religious climate is encouraging superstition as people actually believed that he was a demon (p. 186).

The novel also criticises the Counter-Reformation for putting an end to ways of living that Fernández Santos does not condemn, such as settling down to a family life without getting married, or having affairs. El Greco and Jerónima never married but despite the close contact between the painter and the Church the situation was tolerated. Jerónima is presented as a feminist prototype as she not only defies her family's aspirations of seeing her marry well, but later in life she engages in a love affair with a live-in apprentice. Given the climate of suspicion that the *cristianos nuevos* found themselves in with the Inquisition, Jerónima could have been apprehensive that if she were to marry outside her circle she could be investigated (p. 19). But, in any case, her affair with the apprentice is justified on the grounds of sentimental female needs, since Jerónima feels lonely in a stable relationship with a man fully dedicated to his career, who is not particularly communicative with his partner. Moreover, both are seen to be losing sexual interest in each other.

CONCLUSION

Extramuros and *El Griego* represent different approaches to the historical novel. *El Griego* recreates the everyday life of the members of the painter's household and of the citizens of Toledo through the characters' actions and comments. Gradually a picture of the period is built up that attempts to be as true to life, and faithful as possible to the historical circumstances in which the characters lived. Equally, the novel attempts to portray the *intrahistoria* of these characters, how they understood life, their feelings and aspirations, their hopes

and disappointments. Within this scenario, Fernández Santos also highlights those attitudes to life that are relevant to the contemporary reader. This is particularly the case with the character of Jerónima, El Greco's partner, a woman who adopts an attitude to love and sex that shows a feminist attitude relevant to Spanish women of the 1980s. In the case of El Greco, his refusal to comply with the prevailing schools of painting serves as an enduring example of professional ethics. Although the novel is an easy, entertaining, and commercially-orientated piece of work, written in a simple style, its shallowness is deceptive since it offers significant insights into aspects of Golden-Age culture. The problem with it, however, is that it does not seem to break any new ground for Fernández Santos's faithful readers. As a literary exercise, the polyphony of voices is new but not challenging, the picaresque tone gives it colour but is not original, and the cultural insights were already old news in 1985.

Extramuros also recreates the historical period and the circumstances people lived in, but thematically it is more ambitious than *El Griego*. A lesbian relationship may not have been something uncommon at the time of publication, 1977, but it had not been widely and openly explored in modern Spanish literature until the death of Franco and the relaxation of censorship. In his short story 'Los caracoles' Fernández Santos had already dealt with the social pressures on those who engaged in unorthodox sexual relationships during the Franco dictatorship. With *Extramuros* he explores the theme at a different level, taking into consideration the constraints of the religious beliefs of a character who adopts a positive attitude towards her sexual needs and a belief in her innate right to fulfil them. The theme is that of the confrontation between the bodily impulses and the religious beliefs of an individual. This is a theme that Fernández Santos had carefully elaborated upon in *Libro de las memorias de las cosas* to show the dire consequences of religious repression upon an individual. But in *Extramuros*, by transferring a topical current theme

to the past, the message that sexual impulses and love can overcome any cultural repressive restrictions becomes enhanced. The presentation of the theme in *Extramuros* is modern in its approach to the point that it challenges historical verisimilitude, since the likelihood that a seventeenth-century nun would have come to accept her sexuality so readily seems remote, if not impossible. It is also particularly modern in its approach when the theme of the right to fulfil one's sexual needs is placed in the context of the right of members of religious communities to enjoy their sexuality in whatever form it takes, including homosexuality and lesbianism. As a literary exercise, *Extramuros* represents the culmination of the author's experimentation with a first-person narrative. Fernández Santos forces the reader to question the degree of objectivity of such a narrative mode. The account of events is narrated by a character who is both in love with the woman whose story she is narrating, and at the same time, repelled by her unorthodox attitude to religion. As well as providing an account of what she sees and knows, the narrator is also trying to understand her own motivation. After all, who is she writing for, and for what purpose?

CONCLUSION

In the 1950s, Fernández Santos wrote novels that reflected the influence of Sartre's ideas on commitment and the role of the writer expressed in *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (1948), published in Spain in 1950 by Losada. Accordingly, Fernández Santos aimed with his novels to develop in his readership a 'self-conscious awareness' of the world.²⁴⁴ His way of revealing the world was to abandon the omniscient author and to present the world more objectively, even if that involved leaving things unsaid and unexplained, requiring the reader's involvement as a 'co-creator' (Jordan, p. 87). The notion of the absent author was also an influence of the North-American realist novelists. But Fernández Santos was also interested in the inner life of his characters.²⁴⁵ In *Los bravos*, in order to provide insights into the characters' psychology, the author introduced the use of free indirect speech to characterise the self-analytical doctor, and to show irony in the case of the alienated character, Pepe. This way of using these two techniques can be seen in most of his novels. In *En la hoguera*, the inclusion of fragments from religious texts allows the reader to recreate the meditations of the protagonist. Fernández Santos also assimilated the documentary-style way of presenting reality from Italian Neo-realist films which is so apparent in *Los bravos*. In his first two *novelas*

²⁴⁴ As Barry Jordan explains, for Sartre 'literature [...] operated on the reader by converting a non-reflexive awareness of the world into a reflexive, self-conscious awareness, after which the reader could no longer take the world for granted. So by naming and revealing the world, the business of literature was to make the reader responsible for changing it', pp. 85-86.

²⁴⁵ Barry Jordan points out that with the award of the Nobel Prize to William Faulkner in 1950 Spanish critics introduced these writers onto the scene. Castellet's interpretation of the classic study of the American novel *L'Âge du roman américaine* (1948) by Claude-Edmonde Magny made this text a main reference. With regard to Faulkner, Jordan states that the writer became 'the paragon of the absent author though few people commented on his evident interest in character interiority and psychological motivation', pp. 119-26.

sociales Fernández Santos covered two main themes. In *Los bravos* he presents the stultified society created by the new regime and the unresolved economic problems of rural Spain. He elaborates upon the need for the peasants to organise themselves politically, on their own or together with the liberal middle class represented by the doctor.²⁴⁶ In *En la hoguera*, he questions Catholicism's ability, as a philosophy, to foster a positive concept of the 'self', and he questions why Catholicism as preached by the official Church, in collusion with the State, prevents the masses from protesting about the inequalities within public health services.

As Jordan explains, the failure of the PCE to organise inter-class national general strikes against the Franco regime in 1958 and 1959 would have had an impact upon the writers of this movement. These would have had to reassess their target readership if they wanted to raise the reader's social consciousness, by deciding if they wanted to concentrate on criticising the bourgeoisie or developing a 'proletarian realism' according to the tenets of a 'socialist realism' (p. 23).²⁴⁷ After *El Jarama*, Jordan notes a certain detachment from the movement by Fernández Santos, who turned to film-making, perhaps thereby expressing the author's doubts 'concerning the use of literature as an instrument to affect or help to transform social reality' (p. 21). In fact, in 1959 Fernández Santos expressed his boredom with the American writers.²⁴⁸ That same year, at the *Coloquio de Formentor*, the *novela social* was declared dead by foreign critics, and Castellet was now turning to Lukács's *realismo histórico* for inspiration. As we have seen, Fernández Santos's

²⁴⁶ For Jordan though, the *novela social* begins with *El Jarama* (1956) whilst for him *Los bravos*, *El fulgor y la sangre* and *Juegos de manos*, all published in 1954, precede the configuration of the *novela social* as 'a distinctive identity', p. 25.

²⁴⁷ Jordan sees *El Jarama*, *La mina*, and *La piqueta* as examples of this later development, p. 28.

²⁴⁸ Anonymous, 'Jesús Fernández Santos', *Ínsula*, No 148 (5 March 1959), p. 4.

historical novels take Lukács as a reference-point. *Laberintos* (1964) is undoubtedly an anti-bourgeois novel in which he points the finger at the lack of an intellectual class capable of creating an alternative culture to that promoted by the State. As a *novela social* it uses dialogue as the main device to portray the characters in an objectivist manner, and in doing so it shows the limitations of this type of novel. It also uses irony in order to criticise the characters.

Gonzalo Sobejano defines the *novela estructural* of the late 1960s as characterised by ‘el relieve de la estructura formal’, ‘la indagación de la estructura de la conciencia personal’, and ‘la exploración del contexto social’.²⁴⁹ This was a trend that, according to Sobejano, started with Martín-Santos’s *Tiempo de silencio* and was developed by Juan Goytisolo and Juan Benet. According to Sobejano, in the *novela estructural* there is a ‘self-dialogical mode of narrative discourse, articulated by the partial, even exclusive, use of the self-reflexive “you” (tú), equivalent to a split “I” (yo)’.²⁵⁰ But as Manuel Durán observes, the *novela estructural* presents different variations in the narrative mode, among others the use of irony, ‘la ironía crítica y corrosiva, no exenta de humor’, that he finds in Juan Goytisolo’s *Juan sin tierra*.²⁵¹ *El hombre de los santos* (1969), and *Libro de las memorias de las cosas* (1971) probe the psychology of two protagonists within their social context in a self-dialogical mode, and the structure of the novels and the use of irony become crucial for the interpretation of their themes. In *El hombre de los santos*, the

²⁴⁹ Gonzalo Sobejano, *Novela española de nuestro tiempo*, 2nd edn (Madrid: Editorial Prensa Española, 1975), p. 285.

²⁵⁰ Gonzalo Sobejano, ‘The Testimonial Novel and the Novel of Memory’, in *The Cambridge Companion to the Spanish Novel*, ed. by Harriet Turner and Adelaida López de Martínez (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 172-92 (p. 185).

²⁵¹ Manuel Durán, ‘Perspectivas críticas: Horizontes infinitos. “Así que pasen diez años”’, *La novela española de los setenta*, *Anales de la Narrativa Española Contemporánea*, 5 (1980), 91-106 (p. 92).

third-person narrative mode prevails over free indirect speech, indicating the reluctance or inability of the character to articulate his own consciousness. In this novel, social class is studied as the main defining factor in the configuration of the self and the formation of political attitudes. Fernández Santos introduces irony in the portrayal of the protagonist with his inability to overcome class and gender prejudices. The novel is also a frontal attack on the conservative middle class for perpetuating Franco's regime in order to safeguard its economic interests. José Carlos Mainer points out that it is at the end of the 1960s, particularly between 1966 and 1969, with the publication of Miguel Delibes's *Cinco horas con Mario*, Buero Vallejo's *El tragaluz*, and Camilo José Cela's *San Camilo* 1936, that the Civil War as a victorious crusade stops being a thematic concern from the point of view of the middle class and its guilty conscience.²⁵²

In *Libro de las memorias de las cosas* religion is studied as the main defining factor in the development of both a sense of selfhood and a social identity. Also narrated in a predominantly third-person narrative mode, it includes a metafictional device in the figure of a reporter who tells the story of both the religious sect and the protagonist, but the involvement of this reporter in the process of writing the text is practically non-existent, being reduced to a mere external framework. The inclusion of fragments from religious texts is used in a more creative way to expose the repressive nature of religion towards women's sexuality, the thrust of the novel being the dire effects of religion on women's sense of self. Christianity is portrayed as the ideological tool of patriarchal societies for controlling and subjugating female sexuality. It is in this novel that the theme of women as a second gender in society is studied in relation to the ideological source, the Bible, which is used to support this

²⁵² José Carlos Mainer, *De postguerra (1951-1990)* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1994), p. 119.

social reality. *Libro de las memorias de las cosas* represents a new direction in the career of Fernández Santos in terms of the nature and treatment of the content of his novels. This novel shows an author who is combining the analysis of current reality, the here and now of the *novela social*, with more comprehensive but abstract notions of how the world as a network of institutions and ideologies works and how they both evolve. Thus, the novel contains the notion that there is no absolute ideology capable of explaining the world, and organising the world accordingly, that ideologies need to be re-evaluated constantly as time passes as they are not atemporal. With a good dose of sardonic irony, Fernández Santos incorporates fragments from the Bible to convey his criticism of the use of the sacred text by any religion to justify its aspirations to become the custodian of 'the truth', and to establish a code of human conduct. He presents Christianity as an obsolete ideology in the modern world and provides a real and documented example to support his claim, the Protestant community.

Other novels follow a similar pattern. In *Extramuros* (1978) the thrust of the novel is a very specific Spanish historical religious problem: the *iluminados* and the crisis of Catholicism in the seventeenth century. However, the nun who fakes the stigmata introduces a more philosophical and abstract approach to the theme: the relativity of knowledge and systems of thought since 'what is true today is false tomorrow'. Sexual conduct as a source of intellectual challenge to any ideology that tries to regulate human conduct is also a major theme in the novel. *La que no tiene nombre* (1977), the first of the author's historical novels, traces the evolution of the concept of nationhood in Spain from its birth at the time of the Catholic Monarchs to the present time. It shows how the abstract concept of nationhood was born in the transition from feudalism to a modern State as a way of securing and extending the ownership of land by one group against other groups. Catholicism is implicitly presented in the emblematic figures of the Catholic Monarchs as the ideology

that leads to the amalgamation of the group under the one ideological banner. It also shows how in contemporary times, when economic interests are leading to an internationalisation of affairs, the notion of nationhood is being destroyed by individualistic interests. The reversion to nation-disintegrating attitudes is represented by the grandson's selling of his land to foreign investors: the implicit message being that the concept of nationhood needs to be redefined.

The death of Franco in 1975 is usually taken as a chronological reference point by critics intent on establishing a dividing-line in the evolution of the Spanish realist novel in the second half of the twentieth century. His death initiates a period characterised by many different trends that have resisted a persuasive classification of either authors or works due to an overlapping of categories, with the consequence that different critics mention the same author or piece of work in order to illustrate different trends. In terms of classifying Fernández Santos's works after 1975 we face the same problem.

In his essay 'The Testimonial Novel and the Novel of Memory', Gonzalo Sobejano states that the testimonial novel predominates before 1975, whilst the novel of memory, its successor, is dominant afterwards, a trend best illustrated by Carmen Martín Gaité's *El cuarto de atrás* (1978). Sobejano explains that 'the aim of this new novel, however, was not to raise the reader's consciousness of life after a now defunct dictatorship but to revisit and reassess one's experience during that difficult time' (pp. 184-85). According to Sobejano, although there is more than one narrative mode within this trend, a typical mode is the 'dual expression of the self into a dialogue between two different interlocutors' (p. 185). Within Fernández Santos's oeuvre, *Jaque a la dama* (1983) best represents this trend. Memory at a personal and collective level is thoroughly explored in this novel. Although the presence of a third-person narrator still predominates as the narrative mode, and there is no dialogue as such between interlocutors, the novel traces the main character's

process of self-knowledge by looking back at the circumstances in which her romantic liaisons took place in a life which spans the period from the Civil War to the 1980s. José Carlos Mainer also points out that this ‘interiorización de los fantasmas del pasado’ produced narratives as examples of ‘el síndrome de Estocolmo’:

Como el que dicen que sienten las víctimas con respecto a sus secuestradores: síndrome que aquí no sería de simpatía sino de un raro equilibrio entre la aversión profunda y un húmedo sentimiento de solidaridad irremediable con algunos casos de encierro [...] la causa real de esa piedad hacia el pasado -- y, por ende, hacia nosotros mismos -- es el sincero deseo de cancelarlo como llaga abierta.²⁵³

Jaque a la dama shares this climate with a protagonist desperate to break free.

The polemic between *la berza* y *el sándalo* in the 1970s marked the end of the presence of the *novela social* as such. But Santos Sanz Villanueva points to three trends within the *novela realista* after 1975 as a consequence of the positive repercussions of the publication in 1975 of Eduardo Mendoza’s *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta*. This novel ‘tenía como referente la constatación de un hecho social’ and although ‘su experimentalismo era más que comedido’, ‘incorporaba elementos formales de corte vanguardista que permitía entroncarla con la reciente moda experimental’.²⁵⁴ According to Sobejano, this novel started a new trend, *la novela negra*, and became the precursor of a

²⁵³ José Carlos Mainer, ‘Cultura y Sociedad’, in *Historia y crítica de la literatura española*, ed. by Francisco Rico, Darío Villanueva and others, 9 vols (Barcelona: Crítica, 1992), IX, 54-72 (55).

²⁵⁴ Santos Sanz Villanueva, ‘La novela’, in *Historia y crítica de la literatura española*, IX, 249-84 (254).

second trend, *la novela policiaca*. A third trend is that of the *culturalismo*, initially represented in Torrente Ballester's *La saga/fuga de J. B.* (1972). It is characterised by the inclusion of a text within a text, *la ficción metanovelesca*, and typically the narrator is a writer. Antonio Muñoz Molina's *Beatus ille* (1986), among others, is a representative example. Related to this trend, since it shares the interest for *la ficción metanovelesca*, Sanz Villanueva establishes a fourth trend, the *novela histórica*. It is here that Sanz Villanueva asserts that most of the later narrative of Fernández Santos fits in. Within this trend Sanz Villanueva distinguishes three variations: a critical analysis of the past that allows for a reflection on the present; the past as a framework in which the author meditates on general questions related to human nature; and finally those works dealing with the Civil War, but from a less ideological perspective, for example Julio Llamazares's *Luna de lobos* (1985).

Trying to fit Fernández Santos's historical novels within these suggested subdivisions of the *novela histórica* would prove too constraining and would not do justice to the novels. I would rather comment on how they reflect the literary preoccupations of the period, particularly the metafictional aspect. In his first historical novel, *La que no tiene nombre* (1977), the author implicitly involves the reader in considerations about the reconstruction and representation of the world either as history or literature, and the role of literature as popular culture interpreting history. The Dama of Arintero is a historical figure who appears in legal documents, but as a historical figure the Dama has been unheard of at a national level. In León her significance in the historical process has been kept alive as a popular legend and through theatrical representations in the village where she was killed. The version of the Dama de Arintero offered by the author through his *alter ego*, the Dama's servant and companion, and therefore witness to her deeds, draws upon ballads of the period when she lived to embellish her deeds and enhance her portrayal as a feminist. The text itself acquires the tone and rhythm of a

ballad. The poetic licence taken transforms a historical figure into a modern ballad's heroine, it mythologises her and in so doing it guarantees her survival in our modern consciousness. As a newly reconstructed heroine, the new icon is launched through literature as a feminist myth, a precursor of a role model for our modern times. However, the treatment of history as literary material raises questions as to how legitimate this procedure is. The author seems to be claiming that popular culture, the ballads, can legitimately interpret history. After all, if history is manipulated by political regimes to legitimise themselves, the masses can equally distort history to re-create their own heroes and heroines.

Other novels explore similar literary preoccupations. In *Extramuros* (1978), a confessional novel, and *Cabrera* (1981), a classic picaresque biographical novel, the very genre that epitomises realist literature, the author explores the notion of the reliability of the first-person narrator as producer of a text, an account of events. The reader needs to evaluate the narrator before judging the veracity of the text. In *Extramuros* the reader needs to assess the objectivity of a nun whose strong religious beliefs and the need to reaffirm herself as a believer filter in to her account of her sister's motives for faking the stigmata and her portrayal of her lover's personality. The time and circumstances in which the text was written, whilst she was in jail awaiting to be called before the Inquisition's tribunal, may also explain the narrator's true motives or at least her frame of mind at the time. In *Cabrera* the apparently innocent narrator switches political allegiance at the end of his account, and the reader needs to judge if he really had no choice in the matter, and how much one can believe a narrator that claims to be apolitical. By contrast, in *El Griego* (1985) the author explores the grade of objectivity achieved when the subject matter, the painter, is seen from different perspectives, different voices, all considered of equal importance. However, this novel lacks the subtlety or depth necessary to elaborate upon this theme.

In 'Cultura y sociedad' José Carlos Mainer also points out the effects on literature of the crisis of the ideology of the political and cultural left and the role played by the PCE in the fight against Francoism. As a result of a lack of a unifying ideology to interpret reality some magical interpretations of History become attractive, such as in Fernando Sánchez Dragó's novels (p. 61), but in general, the narrative of the 1980s and 1990s reflects a world where the individual and the intimate world of feelings prevail over a rational understanding of the world. This was not the case with Fernández Santos who in *Los jinetes del alba* (1984) vindicated a new voice in the representation of the Civil War, that of the Republicans, by shaping into a novel the oral accounts he had heard from the villagers of León. In this novel, he follows Lukács's approach to the historical novel more closely than in any other of his narratives and highlights how much the Civil War was a class struggle.

Nonetheless, Salvador Giner argues that although the disappearance of Marxism in the 1980s as an alternative ideology to Francoism led to the abandonment of the beliefs of the working class, this was replaced by a plea for single causes: feminism, pacifism, ecology.²⁵⁵ Fernández Santos's *Balada de amor y soledad* (1988) fits in well with this evaluation, presenting the case for ecological concerns. But it also represents a return to his origins, to the here and now of the *novela social* in its later development as *novela estructural*, presenting the Government's abandonment of the miners to the hands of their employers, and to a focus on the social consciousness, or lack of it, of the protagonist.

I believe that, at heart, Fernández Santos remained throughout his literary career a social realist who understood his role to be that of reflecting the reality of his country and the wrongs of society. In the novels studied, he

²⁵⁵ Salvador Giner, 'Final de siglo: La España posible', in *Historia y crítica de la literatura española*, IX, 46-53.

established a clear cause-effect relationship between political, and social structures, ideology and the individual on the one hand, and the community on the other hand. As we have seen, he reflected the changes in individuals and communities brought about by the passage of time, firstly from the Civil War to the post-war years and secondly after Franco. We can conclude that Fernández Santos had an understanding of history as linear time, in the sense that history is not circular, that it does not repeat itself (even if events like wars are recurrent), that politics and society evolve, and that even if social and political issues are never fully resolved, they present different aspects as time goes by. He believed that time brings about change, and that what is important is to comment in a detailed manner on changing circumstances. And above all, he believed that individuals need to be aware of those changes in order to be able to have an impact on issues by taking up the challenges that different times bring.

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