

**Visualizing an Aesthetics of Resistance: The Role of Sight in 19th and 20th Century
(Neo)Realism on the Iberian Peninsula**

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Romance Languages and Literatures: Spanish)
in the University of Michigan
2014

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Sonnetten voor Cynara (XIV)

Rebel, mijn hart, gekerkerd en geknecht,
die aan de tralies van de al-dag rukt;
weest om uw tijdelijk lot geenszins bedrukt,
al zijn de kluisters hard, de muren hecht.

Want in de aanvang werd het u voor-zegd,
dat het aan enkelen steeds is gelukt
het juk te breken, dat hun schouders drukt,
laat dus niet af maar vecht en vecht en vecht.

Breekt uit en blaast de dove sintels aan,
die zijn verdoken onder 't rokend puin;
vaart stormgelijk over de lage tuin,
die Holland heet; slaat doodlijk toe en snel,
opdat het kwaad schrikk'lijk zal ondergaan,
o hart, mijn hart, o bloedrode rebel.

Jan Campert, 1942

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A Erika, la felicidad de mi resistencia

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to have had my dissertation research supported financially by the following institutions: the Department of Education's Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Rackham Graduate School and the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at the University of Michigan.

Cristina Moreiras-Menor has been my advisor from the first day of my program at Michigan. She taught me to read critically and believe in myself, that the best projects involve taking risks, being willing to expose yourself and even make a mistake.

Fernando Arenas's enthusiasm for all things Lusophone and my project in particular has kept me going on the days when it seemed impossible to make the pieces fit together. To him, also, I owe the pleasure of meeting and sharing with someone whose scholarship on Portuguese literature I admire: Ana Paula Ferreira. Last but not least, my thanks to Michèle Hannoosh who has been with this project from its inception and who gave me my first bibliography on 19th century art and photography.

Beyond Michigan, I would be remiss not to mention Joyce Tolliver at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, who believed in me long before I had any idea what I was getting into. Her kindness both personally and professionally continues to astound me. Also, Cynthia Slagter who introduced me to Spanish history and literature.

In Ann Arbor, I thank Barbara Alavarez at the UofM library for her help acquiring materials over the years and Peggy McCracken for her support with fellowship applications. Also, Katie Hayes for helping me with the minefields of bureaucracy. Within and beyond the

walls of academe, I am grateful for conversations with Javier Entrambasaguas, Pedro Aguilera, Roberto Robles, Roberto Vezzani, Aaron Boalick and other moments shared with Fede (and Jenny, Luna and Iris), Marce (and Leyre and Nico), Tali, Alejandro, Christian, Mara, Silvina, Francheska, Iván and countless others.

In Portugal, I thank everyone who supported my research at various moments at the *Museu do neo-realismo* especially David Santos (and, by extension, Maria Jose Palha). Also the family of César Oliveira along with Fernando Rosas and Paulo Felipe Monteiro at the *Universidade Nova* as well as everyone at the *Cinemateca Nacional*.

My thanks to Anna Mester, whose passion for the Lusophone world and critically engaging the status quo challenges me to push my thinking harder. And to Emily Thomas who, along with Jacob Canfield, is a person who makes me more thoughtful and aware. Additional thanks to Maria Canal and Angelica Serna for sharing tea and so much more.

Thanks to Ashley, Danielle and, especially, Lauren Heidemann for becoming my family when I needed one and to my parents, William and Karen, and my brother, James, who sometimes meet me halfway.

Mostly, none of this would have been possible without Erika my fiercely loyal best friend and *complice*. For the surprise that you continue to be, I am endlessly grateful.

Preface

As I write these words, I am separated from the person who first taught me the meaning of resistance: my father, William M. ten Haaf. Born into a life where he had every reason to become an embittered statistic, he repeatedly chose kindness over violence, service over avarice and love over rejection. Over the past year, I have watched him battle a cancer he knows he will eventually lose with a dignity that is heartbreakingly inspiring. Despite excruciating pain, he has been grateful, patient and, at times, humorous. Although he has no interest in political protests or campaigning and will never see The Old Man and the Sea as anything more than a dreary book about a man on a boat, there would be no dissertation without his constant encouragement, willingness to face his own mistakes and challenges for me to confront my own blindspots. Through his respect for everyone he meets, he has taught me about the equality of human beings regardless of race, gender, class or physical challenges.

Thank you for always believing me and believing in me.

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the ways that realism and later, neo-realism, functioned as a means of aesthetic resistance on the Iberian Peninsula by questioning the role sight played in organizing and controlling perception. In order to address this, I concentrate on two specific moments: the Napoleonic invasion of 1807-8 and the contemporaneous rise of realist aesthetics, and the lengthy twentieth century dictatorships of Spain's Francisco Franco and Portugal's Antonio de Oliveira Salazar (and the *Estado Novo*).

I contend that realism became the dominant method of aesthetic resistance because it was linked to a historical moment of resistance, that of the Spanish uprising against the Napoleonic invasion. It was, thus, uniquely capable of exposing and destabilizing the tension between sight as a means of oppressing society through organization and control and as a means of resisting that control by making it visible. In my first chapter, I explore the way Goya and Galdós depicted the events of the 2nd of May Spanish uprising against the Napoleonic invasion in such a way as to question how reliable observation could be in building a national consciousness. In my second chapter, I examine the rise of the *corrida* as a metaphor for Spanish legitimacy under the regime of Francisco Franco. Through readings of Ignacio Aldecoa's short stories "Los pozos" and "Caballo de pica" alongside Carlos Saura's film, Los golfos, I argue that sight becomes the way of undoing this same discourse. Finally, in my third chapter, I look at the way optics functioned as a means of resistance against the Portuguese *Estado Novo* in the texts of Alves Redol (Gaibeus) and Carlos de Oliveira/Fernando Lopes's versions of Uma Abelha na Chuva.

Introduction

“Only the awareness of the actual power conditions would enable someone to stand up against the patrons’ wishes...Yet goodness knows what it requires, said Coppi’s mother, to translate knowledge into action.”

--Peter Weiss, The Aesthetics of Resistance (62)

The eighty-two prints that make up the Desastres de la Guerra by Francisco de Goya y Lucientes were created over a period of ten years (1810-20). They detail the violent events surrounding the Napoleonic invasion of Spain in early 1808 and the subsequent Spanish uprising. Entitled by the author himself as, “Fatales consecuencias (sic) de la sangrienta guerra en España con Buonaparte (sic), y otros caprichos enfáticos,” they graphically portray beheadings, piles of corpses and the chaos that ruled the streets, emblemizing, “the sober truth about human conflict, that it kills and kills again” (Hughes 289). The etchings together with their captions stand at the intersection between visual and written text as what some call the beginnings of modern photojournalism because they offer “vivid, camera-can’t lie pictorial journalism long before the invention of the camera” (Hughes 272). This connection is vital because it links each piece together while simultaneously allowing for a singular reading.

One particular plate, the forty-fourth in the series is captioned, “Yo lo vi.”¹ The representation in this plate is at the heart of this dissertation because, as the title indicates, it is a particular meditation on seeing and, in this case, the relationship between visibility

¹ Figure 1.1

and violence. In this sense “Yo lo vi” can be read as a harbinger of what I argue in the following pages: that throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, while the sense of sight became the primary way for interpreting and controlling the world, simultaneously, the act of seeing through representation began to be tied to acts of resistance.

Returning to the plate, “Yo lo vi,” the viewer is offered a scene of chaos through a series of miscues that demand that s/he pay close attention in order to understand what is being represented. The background is of a mountain barely distinguishable from what could easily be mistaken for piles of stones or possibly shrubbery. Looking closely, however, the “stones” become a mass of faces and eventually it becomes possible to identify human beings, including one on horseback and one wielding a type of sword. The foreground is dominated by figures in flight from the violent charge. In what can easily be read as a critique of the abandonment of the general populace by those who ostensibly were meant to protect it, the left—dark—side of the plate portrays a priest and a well-dressed gentleman, presumably of one of the higher classes, fleeing towards the edges, escaping the chaos. Meanwhile, alongside them, illuminated by the contrasts of light on dark, a woman stops her flight and attempts to rescue a child. While her back is to the viewer, the child’s face is one of terror as s/he looks at something we are unable to see, something outside the edges of the plate.

The question of seeing, then, is central to this representation of the anti-Napoleonic uprising. Seeing is a complex act as this plate indicates, but an important one. On the one hand, it is impressed upon the viewer that the person representing the events saw them—and stands as a type of eyewitness who reveals something the viewer cannot see after the fact. However, it also suggests something will always be missing. While we clearly are “seeing” the events being depicted through the eyes of a presumed eyewitness, the seeing remains incomplete. While the

mother and child are fleeing from the hoards on horseback or with weapons, they are also fleeing something that hovers outside the plate. This something our eyewitness cannot or does not choose to represent is seen all too clearly by the child and the well-dressed gentleman.²

What makes this plate so crucial to what will begin to be developed in this dissertation is twofold. For one it performs a radical act of equivalency, showing groups of many social classes united in flight from a nebulous enemy force. Additionally, it implicates members of the dominant class in acts of cowardice, while indicating that common individuals were also capable of acts of valor. In so doing, it marks a change in thinking about representation. Furthermore, this something unseen, this defiance of representation breaks with the logic of the depiction that shows “Yo lo vi,” suggesting the incompleteness of sight, the space where the viewer of representation is asked to complete the image to perform an act that I will call here resistance.

Breaking with Representation

The resistance I read in “Yo lo vi” is partially due to its realism³ and of what the philosopher Jacques Rancière has described as a revolutionary change that took place surrounding the way representation functioned—one that is, not coincidentally, tied to the beginning of the 19th century. For Rancière, up to this point in time, representation held to the Classical Age’s insistence that there was a “relationship of correspondence at a distance between speech and painting, between the sayable and the visible, which gave ‘imitation’ its own specific space” (The Politics of Aesthetics 16). At the beginning of the 19th century, however, Rancière insists that a new way of understanding representation began to emerge. This conception saw art

² There is also the question of what exactly Goya saw in the first place since a plate is created after an event, not while it is taking place. Thus, what is being “witnessed” is based, at best, on the memory of a past moment.

³ Although defining Goya as a “realist” is sometimes a contentious claim, given the link frequently made between photojournalism and the Desastres de la guerra there are obvious realistic tendencies at play.

as a locus for transforming the relationships between what was said and what was visible, one that broke with the notion that mimetic imitation had a particular place allocated to it within society. This new view of representation as it relates to *mimesis*, therefore, “identifies art in the singular and frees it from any specific rule, from any hierarchy of the arts, subject matter, and genres” (23). Freed from hierarchies, art began to be linked to the distribution of the sensible instead.⁴

The change aesthetics experienced in the early days of modernity and what Rancière calls the representative regime was joined by the aesthetic regime, is fundamental to the reason why this dissertation explores realism and neo-realism instead of other movements within art. As Rancière marks the aesthetic transformation to the move from Romanticism to Realism, so he marks the new possibilities for aesthetics to play a role in what he terms “literature” and what I develop here as resistance.

Part of the reason why Rancière is occasionally misread is due to how he subverts terminology for his own purposes. Fundamental to Rancière’s theories on art is that there is a difference between political action (what he calls “disagreement”) and the politics of aesthetics—a term that is linked to what he deems to be “literature.” Although both types of politics involve the question of counting (or miscounting), of making those outside the groupings of society count by being made visible, they do so in different ways. In both cases we are confronted with a question of excess, of the introduction into a balanced society that is divided into parts of “another count that spoils the fit between bodies and meanings” (Politics of Literature 41). However, political disagreement outside of the text consists in showing a

⁴ “The distribution of the sensible” refers to the way the world is divided and managed through perception (which, in turn, is linked to the senses). The allocation of who is allowed to participate in the common spaces and how they do so is tied to this distribution and controlled by “the police” or that which controls the distribution.

miscount by naming a group that has previously not been counted, thus throwing the count off whereas literature consists in dismantling a whole, in showing that there are more bodies than words/meanings to describe them.

Resistance

My use of the word resistance in the context of the two art movements I explore here is linked to Rancière's notion of "dissensus" which he opposes to the "consensus" imposed by the police. Unlike conventional usage of the word, Rancière's police are not people but rather, "the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of systems and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution (Disagreement 28). In other words, the police is the body that controls the realm of perception, allowing or disallowing appearances in the common space. The police is intricately intertwined with questions of visibility. Politics, then, is whatever interrupts this order, whatever makes visible the invisible (Disagreement 30). In this sense, we might say that politics has much in common with an aesthetics of resistance although it is not the same.

Dissensus is what occurs at sites/sights of tension, and is inextricably linked to the way aesthetics was liberated from the restrictive confines of the representative regime in the early 19th century. When aesthetics can exist anywhere and interact in any number of ways with society, a singular work can contain within it a multiplicity of tensions any of which could lead to a moment of dissensus or what I am calling here "resistance."⁵

⁵ As Rancière elaborates in his "The Art of the Possible," he prefers the term "dissensus"—but given the frequency with which the word "resistance" appears in various of his texts, I use the latter term in part because, for Rancière, dissensus would be opposed to consensus. This, in the Portuguese case, could become confusing because consensus in that context was a political project as much as an aesthetic one.

My use of the term resistance is due to my desire to link the acts taking place in aesthetics to a particular socio-historical context of physical resistance that is tied to representative resistance. Rancière's conception of aesthetic dissensus is a broad one that covers a variety of contestatory practices within aesthetics. However, here I am interested in a specific type of dissensus, resistance to oppressive contexts, particularly dictatorial ones. While the word resistance implies a certain type of opposition to forces that could be personal or communitarian, I consider this in a social-communal context.⁶ In this sense, I am influenced by scholarly work on both "resistance literature" as well as "protest literature."

Resistance literature was proposed by Barbara Harlow in the context of colonial oppression. I, therefore, use the term cautiously although I believe the oppression faced under dictatorship, especially, by those in opposition to it can have some commonalities to a colonial resistance. Harlow links resistance to an "active engagement" with the past (96) that takes place, paradoxically, in the here-and-now, a vital piece of what I consider to be neo-realism's work. Nonetheless, while this conception is helpful, it is also incomplete since challenging the historical record is, as I demonstrate, only one type of resistance.

The concept of protest literature goes beyond the idea of historically-embeddedness and, for this reason, can be helpful. John Staufford has defined this as "the uses of language to transform self and society" (xi). Staufford indicates the importance of milieu, and how protest is "inextricably linked to time and place. But it also stands at a remove from prevailing social values, offering a critique of society from the outside" (xii). Additionally, he links times of social unrest, "upheaval and discontent," to the chance for the populace to "abandon the existing order" (xiv). This conception is helpful to a point but it is also contradictory in the sense that he claims

⁶ I am not, therefore, arguing for anything related to psychoanalysis which is a particular, individual conception and unrelated to the social conception I explore here.

protest literature aims to convert (xiii) but “does not lead directly to social change” (xv). I am hesitant to claim the idea of conversion. Beyond this, protest literature in general has been mainly developed in the context of North America, and, to some extent, Europe, with no mention of the context I explore here.

In general, while there are many studies that use the moniker “resistance,” there are, in fact, few that tie an exploration of what it means to discuss aesthetics as resistance, how it differs from political action, how we can “evaluate” a piece of art/literature as resistant alongside an investigation of a particular socio-historical context and its creative production. This is an area this dissertation seeks to address.

To return to Goya’s, “Yo lo vi,” then, I argue that it becomes a site of resistance in a plural sense by depicting a historical moment of a popular uprising. On the one hand, it could be a documentary representation of real events, but it could also be a form of dialogue between representation and viewer, because it exploits another tension: that of the phrase “Yo lo vi.” This is both a declarative and strange prompt to the unnamed “tu” viewing the print, seeing what Goya saw and, therefore, also able to say “Yo lo vi.” This play on seeing, then, is a fundamental piece of understanding resistance.

Visuality

Exploring the rise of sight as a means of knowing the world is important for a variety of reasons, not least because it allows us to understand the world we live in today. As Nicholas Mirzoeff noted, if we say postmodernism is the crisis of modernism, it “implies that the postmodern is the crisis caused by modernism and modern culture confronting the failure of its own strategy of visualizing” (*An Introduction to Visual Culture* 2). However rapidly changes in seeing the world have occurred, as Mirzoeff implies, it is directly linked to modernity’s inability

to cope with visuality. This problem is directly linked to the changes that began to rapidly occur with the rise of industrialization and what Jonathon Crary notes as the differentiation between the way sight functioned in the 17th (and 18th) centuries versus the 19th. Previously to the 19th century, sight was just one of many senses and functioned in conjunction with them, especially with that of touch (19). By the 19th century, however, sight became “autonomized,” because of the “unloosening of the eye from the network of referentiality incarnated in tactility.”⁷ This ocular centrality, along with “the technological reproducibility of lithography and, more significantly, photography, forever altered our connection to such fundamentals as materiality, experience, and truth” (Schwartz and Przyblyski 4).

Empirical knowledge was at the center of cognitive activities and the reproductive process of the printing press made visual representations available across society reflecting “the ubiquity of vision as the master sense of the modern era” (Jay 3). As a consequence of this overwhelming shift to ocularcentricity, the visual was not only seen as related to but began to be conflated with cognition, obscuring the way the practice of seeing is culturally configured (Jenks 1).

The problematic nature of the modern relationship to the visual is nowhere more clearly seen than in the work of Michel Foucault who saw Western European society as a model of Jeremy Bentham’s perfect prison, the so-called Panopticon. According to Foucault, sight was interlaced with social control through a process wherein an individual is deftly isolated and controlled not necessarily by violence but by psychological means in which he does not know

⁷ Crary’s argument is based on what he sees as the end of the reign of the camera obscura—in which seeing equals knowing the truth—and the rise of new forms of optical technology that complicate the issue. This particular point of his study is contentious, but does not affect the overall mapping of the question in regards to representation as a parallel line to what Michel Foucault sees as the rise of the visual as a means to control society.

when he is being watched and when he is not. This prevents him from acting against regulations because, at any time, he could be observed and later punished. Thus, the individual in the panoptic society, “is seen, but does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject of communication” (Discipline and Punish 200).⁸

While vision, what Hal Foster defines as “sight as a physical operation,” played a central role in nineteenth century society, it was not a monolithic one (116). Rather, it was tied to the concept of visuality, or “sight as a social fact” (116).⁹ From the beginning the question of seeing was considered to be a multifaceted one, one that functioned as a means of control in the Foucauldian sense and one that also opposed this control. As Mirzoeff notes, visuality is, “both a mode of representing an imperial culture and [...] a means of resisting it by means of reverse appropriation” (“On Visuality” 54). Visuality, then, from its conception, was joined with questions of domination and questions of resistance to the same.

If resistance was imbricated in the concept of visuality and, to a great extent, vision, it also played a fundamental role in the socio-historical events underway on the Iberian Peninsula, making Spain and Portugal fertile soil for investigating the connections between visuality and resistance. This is based on the fact that the nineteenth century on the Peninsula saw the

⁸ While Foucault’s understanding of surveillance in society is crucial to my thinking in this chapter, I would be remiss to not mention that, while he emphasizes the social control exerted by vision, this does not, by extension mean he is completely against the possibilities of visuality to be a positive force. Rather, as Gary Shapiro has convincingly argued in his work on Foucault and Nietzsche, for Foucault, “it is not a question of denigrating vision; it is rather a question of being alert to different visual practices, often quite conflicting, that operate in the same cultural space and sorting out their specific structures and effects” (9).

⁹ According to Foster, while vision and visuality are not synonymous they are also not antagonistic. While vision focuses on the “mechanism” of sight, visuality involves, “its historical techniques [...] its discursive determination” (116). What this indicates is that the question of how one sees in the nineteenth century—the period in which the term visuality was coined in the work of Thomas Carlyle--was already tied to a question of outside forces, historical, structural and social.

Napoleonic invasions and the Spanish uprising against the same which, as leading military theorist Carl von Clausewitz notes, inaugurated a new era of “resistance.” If the rules of warfare can be thought of as a grammar, the Spanish resistance, subsequently referred to as *guerilla* fighting, rather than play by the rules set by the invaders, invented a new grammar, a new set of rules for armed conflict, one that played on the margins and functioned through surprise and unpredictability (Caygill 26). As Caygill indicates regarding the portrayal of the Spanish uprising and subsequent French repression, what Goya’s Desastres de la guerra emblemize is the importance of “the display of horror in the actualization of the new warfare” (22). Visualizing the events of the day through representation would become Goya’s way of thinking through this new warfare based on striking fear through “an aesthetics of terror” (22). Representing the visual nature of the carnage was intricately bound to understanding what had occurred.

Visible Resistance

For both Foucault and Rancière, the question of visibility is at the heart of social organization, and, thus, must be at the center of disarming the current state of affairs. Rancière insists that art becomes political when it starts to reorganize visibility, rupturing with the *status quo*. In a social system in which everyone and everything has a particular place and role, art begins to unveil those roles and change them. Rancière places active resistance, such as that of social activism, in a parallel and complementary category to artistic resistance whose principal goal is that of interruption, prompting the spectator/viewer to act in some way that is never prescribed by the artist him/herself. Resistance in art, as he puts it, involves trying “to create some breathing room, to loosen the bonds that enclose spectacles within a form of visibility, bodies within an estimation of their capacity, and possibility within the machine that makes the ‘state of things’ seem evident” (“Art of the Possible”). While this seems, initially, eerily similar

to Barthes's notions of how to see correctly and, therefore, de-naturalize myth (a popular point of view within Spanish cultural studies for good reason) especially insofar as images are concerned, it is quite different in terms of the viewpoint from which we understand a text.¹⁰

While Barthes focuses nearly exclusively on the viewer/spectator, on the affective relationship that he later defines in Camera Lucida as the *punctum*, Rancière's investigations are undertaken with regards to the object itself. He is often at odds with Barthes, insisting that a Barthesian reading of images, "erases the very genealogy of the *that was*" (or its historical markedness) by allowing the affective response of the spectator to obliterate the images' relationship with history or anything other than sheer aesthetics (The Future of the Image 15). What Rancière's discussion of the image and of the role of artistic production in general allows me to think about is the object itself, how it functioned in a particular set of historical and social circumstances, and its potential apart from the pure and individually unique *punctum* (as would be the case with Barthes and his winter garden photograph). This liberates understanding the political function of a text from the quagmire of judging a work only if it is "successful" at prompting some unspecified social change rather than seeing within a particular object the potential for interruption.

This liberatory reading becomes especially relevant when exploring an art movement vocally linked to committed political change through representation as was the case with mid-twentieth century neo-realism. Although acclaimed in the Italian context, on the Iberian Peninsula it is often dismissed for its overly zealous program adhering to what in Spain was a

¹⁰ While Rancière is often at odds with Barthes, his work on imagery is nevertheless indebted to Barthesian concepts, which is why I develop them here. Additionally, critical work by Hispanist scholars such as Jo Labanyi and Barry Jordan on the topic of resistance within literature show a particular bent towards Barthes-inspired readings that focus on literature's ability to debunk social myths.

“compromiso con la búsqueda de la verdad” (Serna 73) and in Portugal was art and writing “para melhorar al ordem social” (Garcez de Silva 25). My purpose in this dissertation is not to argue with the political commitments of the neo-realist authors and artists, but rather to provide a new way of seeing their work within a framework that insists on the resistant potential of the works without dismissing the fact that they did not, perhaps, work in the way they were originally designed to by their creators. I argue these works deserve scholarly attention precisely because they demonstrate the problem in reading through (and for) authorial intent rather than taking the works themselves as objects apart from their creators’ desires. Additionally, while both strains of neo-realism are indebted to the works that came before them, I locate within them different types of resistances than what might be found in their predecessors, ones that respond to their particular socio-historical contexts of dictatorship and oppression.

The ties between realism (and neo-realism) and visuality are inherent in their conception. Realism, as Linda Nochlin has pointed out, was a philosophically based movement that prioritized observation more than convention (14). It focused on analyzing through depiction, on mimetic representation, and on veracity to the point that William J. Berg claimed that the “nineteenth-century [French] novel is, in many respects, a visual art form” (1). In the case of Spain, as Rebecca Haidt indicates, the Enlightenment paved the way for “scenes of observation” to become the foundation of fictional forms, through “interest in observation” that is “achieved through depiction of the act of seeing” (42). Similarly, neo-realism drew on the notion of depicting by “showing things that happen every day under our eyes, things we have never noticed before” (Zavattini 221). This visual showing of everyday things would form the basis for resisting the overarching projects of the Iberian dictatorships on the Peninsula in the twentieth century.

Peninsularity

Choosing to focus on the Iberian Peninsula as the site for this particular investigation is not random. Instead, since I locate the origins of resistance within the Napoleonic invasion at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it allows me to explore the particular way in which resistance is adaptive to the particularities of Western Europe's most long-standing dictatorships of the twentieth century: that of Spain's Francisco Franco (1939-75) and Portugal's *Estado Novo* under António de Oliveira Salazar (1933-74).¹¹

Despite the longstanding nature of the relationship between these two regimes, it is often overlooked in favor of other, more prominent, political ties. The most famous of these collaborations would be that between the Spanish and the Axis forces during World War II. This particular relationship turned deadly for the town of Guernica that Franco offered up to the German and Italian warplanes for target practice, effectively earning him good will abroad and conveniently dispensing with the Basque opposition that had ties to the Spanish Republican forces by destroying a symbolic location and helping “the dissemination of terror and chaos of the Republican rearguard” (Preston Francisco 244).

The devastation and inflammatory nature of the attack—coupled with its memorialization by none other than Pablo Picasso—is perhaps, the reason why another long-standing political relationship receives little attention: that between Franco's regime and António de Oliveira Salazar's *Estado Novo* in Portugal (1933-74). Although far less blatantly violent, the Salazar-Franco alliances played a key role in supporting the repressive policies of both regimes since

¹¹ António de Oliveira Salazar's control of the *Estado Novo* ended with his illness and subsequent death in 1968. Marcelo Caetano, however, stepped up to continue the legacy until the regime was overthrown in 1974.

inter-Peninsular warfare that allowed their respective oppositions more room to maneuver was in neither dictatorship's best interest.

In fact, before Franco's regime was actually established in Spain in 1939 at the end of the Civil War, the *Estado Novo* was a strategic ally in the rise of Nationalist rebellion. Due to the Spanish *Segunda República*'s communist/anarchist affiliations, it represented a threat to the authoritarian policies in the *Estado Novo* as correspondence from the British foreign secretary, Anthony Eden, indicates in a report on a conversation with the Portuguese foreign minister, Armindo Monteiro. According to Eden, Monteiro expressed the conviction that there were ties "between the present Spanish government, with its communist tendencies, and the communist party in Portugal" (qtd in Ribeiro de Meneses 195). Ending this tacit support from just across the border, not to mention possibilities of outright support meant not only ending the threat of Spanish communism but also neutralizing the *Estado Novo*'s own communist opposition. Thus, while not being directly involved, the Portuguese territories offered technical support to the Nationalist forces in Spain, facilitating the transfer of materials, enlisting the press as propaganda against the *Segunda República*, even imprisoning Republican refugees who crossed the border seeking refuge while simultaneously allowing Nationalist refugees to go free.

The Portuguese role of intermediary continued beyond the Civil War years and extended to mediating the ties between Franco's new regime and the rest of the conservatives in Western Europe who were far less certain about Franco. They deemed Franco a problematic ally since he "did not meet the aesthetic and intellectual standards these groups were looking for: he had come to power on the back of a violent civil war, and had more blood on his hands than was tasteful to countenance" (Ribeiro de Meneses 175). The Luso-Hispanic relationship between dictatorships was strengthened by accords in both 1939 and 40 that agreed to "friendship" and "non-

aggression” between the countries. These accords functioned on a multiplicity of levels, because, in a twist that can only occur in politics, they allowed Salazar to feel the Iberian Peninsula was presenting a strong front to the Germans, while Spain felt bolstered in regards to the British. Meanwhile, the Peninsular collaborations made Axis and Allied forces alike to feel their respective positions were strengthened (Preston Franco 369).

In light of scholarly work that exposes the underlying visual apparatuses at the heart of the dictatorial regimes, on both the political and representational level, I contend that resistance occurs in the works of neo-realism precisely through operations that either challenge visibility or use it as a means of penetration. Accordingly, my first chapter, “Reality, Revenge and Revelation> Galdós, Goya and “El dos de mayo” explores the historic underpinnings of resistance on the Peninsula during the 2nd of May of 1808 uprising of the Spanish populace against a Napoleonic invasion. In the early depictions of Goya, El 2 de mayo (and later El 3 de mayo), and two works by one of Spain’s foremost realist writers, Benito Perez Galdós, “Dos de mayo de 1808, dos de septiembre de 1870” and El 19 de marzo y el 2 de mayo, I argue that sight works as a means of undermining the heroic underpinnings of the legend of the 2nd of May. Additionally, I argue that Galdós, following Goya, presents sight through representation as a viable, and more powerful, alternative to the violence of physical resistance.

The two following chapters trace the way twentieth century neo-realism, informed by the realism of the previous century, developed as a reaction to the dictatorial control apparatuses under the regimes of Francisco Franco and António de Oliveira Salazar’s *Estado Novo*. Accordingly, in my second chapter, “The Reality of Seeing: Interruptions in the Twentieth Century Spanish Dictatorship of Francisco Franco,” I explore the metaphor of the *corrida* in Spanish history and identify it as a site upon which Franco and his ideologues such as Ernesto

Gimenez Caballero attempted to build a continuous Spanish history that legitimized their regime following a bloody civil war. I argue that what works as a spectacle of unity and historical right to power for the dictatorship, however, becomes a site where neo-realist influenced writers of *literatura social* (exemplified in Ignacio Aldecia's short stories "Los pozos" and "Caballo de pica") and the filmmaker Carlos Saura (Los golfos) challenge the complicity upon which the regime was built and suggest that only by identifying alternate sites of perception can any understanding of life under the dictatorship be "seen."

Moving across the border, my final chapter explores the way the ocular regime of the *Estado Novo*—a dictatorial order that revolved around the notion of consensus—began to be penetrated by Portuguese writers and filmmakers. Through readings of Alves Redol's Gaibéus, Carlos Oliveira's Uma abelha na chuva and Fernando Lopes's cinematic remake of the same, I suggest that in the moments where the unity/consensus of the text is penetrated, new spaces are opened into which subjects previously elided by the dictatorship appear.

What each particular example allows is for an exploration of the multiple ways resistance works. By tying it to the particular context and individual particularities of the major nation states of the Iberian Peninsula, I investigate how visibility is an integral part both of projects of control and domination but also of resistance to the same.

Chapter 1

Reality, Revenge and Revelation: Galdós, Goya and el 2nd of May

Introduction

*Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!*

--Sir Walter Scott "The Lay of the Last Minstrel"

The Spanish painter Francisco de Goya y Lucientes's oil on canvas masterpiece, El 2 de mayo de 1808 en Madrid,¹² is among the most well-known Spanish paintings of all time.

Temporally, it depicts a key moment in the Spanish struggle against the French invasion of 1808: May 2, when the populace of Madrid took to the streets, taking up arms against Napoleon's Mamluk fighters. Unlike other paintings from the same period that depicted a historical moment as an exemplary display of homeland heroism, such as that of Jacques-Louis David's Napoleon at the Saint-Bernard Pass (1801),¹³ Goya's depiction of the events of the 2nd of May, "resists any neatly deterministic interpretation" (Tomlinson ix). As previously explored, Goya's Desastres de la guerra can be a helpful cipher for understanding the changing role of visuality as it relates to resistance in the 19th century. His first painting of these resistance moments, El 2 de mayo, offers a window into the way seeing would function as a locus for what Frederic Jameson

¹² The more descriptive alternate title by which the painting is known is, La lucha de los mamelucos. Figure 1.2

¹³ David's work bridges the Neoclassic period and the beginnings of Romanticism compositionally. As Michelle Facos indicates, this particular painting was meant to legitimize Napoleon's regime (60). The Napoleonic image on horseback creates a noble, legendary figure who dominates the canvas and contrasts sharply with Goya's Mamluk fighter.

called the realist movement's project of cancelling illusions through either demystification or defamiliarization (Antinomies of Realism 4).

Compositionally, the action of the El 2 de mayo takes place in the bottom two-thirds of the painting, rather than dominating the entire canvas. The blurred, nondescript buildings in the upper third serve as placeholders, indicating to the viewer that the action is occurring in an urban environment without revealing much more. As a monument to the Spanish resistance, it lacks much of the clear iconography that would have marked a typical historical painting, despite having been commissioned by the Spanish monarchy in 1814 to honor the Spanish cause.¹⁴ Unlike most historical paintings,¹⁵ the only easily identifiable figure (to the mind of a 19th century viewer) would be the Mamluk rider on the horse and the uniformed French officer's corpse in the lower left-hand corner. Nonetheless, neither of these figures can be linked to a particular individual in an established historical narrative. Rather than having a central historical figure (such as Napoleon), we have the non-heroic, anonymous men and women, "whose lives are exemplary only insofar as they are shared by an immense mass" (Licht 74), a radical break from the expected. Thus Goya elevates the unexpected and unsung to the level of heroic protagonist.¹⁶

Despite the rise of the everyday man to heroism, even that is suspect on some level upon a closer look at the figures in the painting, because the question of what makes a hero becomes more evident. The suspended action of El 2 de mayo revolves around a mass of blurred humanity

¹⁴ Georg Traeger refers to the El 2 de mayo as a "rebellion against the structural foundations of Napoleonic state painting" (qtd. in Werner Hofmann 184).

¹⁵ A history painting was a painting with an elevated subject matter (heroes, kings and so forth) and served the public function of reflecting an important moment. For more on what Goya is reacting against, see Charles Harrison's An Introduction to Art 105-108.

¹⁶ Goya, in his letter to the court requesting support to paint these particular works, specifically mentions his wish to portray "notable and heroic actions" from "our glorious insurrection against the tyrant of Europe" (Goya, a Life in Letters 276).

that gradually develops individual characteristics. Splashes of colour draw the eye to the centre of the work wherein a circular act is taking place and chaos reigns. Reading vertically, the head figure of the Mamluk on horseback with dagger in hand seems in the middle of a downward thrust towards someone. While one might read in that a suggestion of French dominance, on a closer look, following the line visually towards its supposed endpoint, horizontally, the viewer sees that the dagger in the hand of the Mamluk is paralleled by a similar dagger in the hands of a Spanish civilian. Both are heading in the direction of another Mamluk who is in the process of falling off of his horse. The strength of the Mamluk force is failing, which is confirmed by the figure bleeding on the bottom left of the painting, a figure in French uniform.

Reading horizontally, then, the mass of the Spanish citizenry (identified merely by their civilian apparel) is outnumbering the troupes significantly. The French emissaries seem to be confused, chaotic and possibly doing damage to their own comrades. Nevertheless, the Spanish citizenry are hardly any better off, working *en masse* with insignificant weapons and seemingly no organization. Further undoing a clear winner or a clear hero in the narrative, a close examination of the individuals serves to highlight the parallels between beast (the horses) and human bestiality (of the Spanish as well as the French if one looks closely at the conniving face of the man about to stab the horse in the side).

Thus, the painting breaks with the heroic narratives typical of this type of painting. Additionally, it breaks with typical viewer positioning in regards to a historical painting whose purpose is exemplary or even didactic on some level. Rather than being a distant viewer, temporally situated following the narrative, observing in order to understand the past, s/he stands barely outside of the work, on street-level, placed in the melee. As such, s/he is partially a

participant, caught in the chaos without any indication as to how to read the painting in a “correct” way, due to the chaos and lack of overarching narrative with clear symbolism.

While past knowledge of the historical narrative might suggest the events taking place were in the *Puerta del Sol* or some other significant location, in reality, there is no such indication in the painting itself. Rather, as Fred Licht indicates, what makes the El 2 de mayo so disturbing to the viewer, then, is the way it, “introduces us into the thick of a battle without giving us any assurances that we are at the culminating center of the fight around which all the rest revolves” (Goya 164). In other words, the viewer has no way of identifying the importance of what s/he sees. Sight, then, becomes a less-than-dominant way of understanding the world.

This ambiguity of the complex role visuality would play in interrogating both position and interpretation is a fundamental marker of much of the work of Goya. It is also a characteristic of what *La Guerra de Independencia* and the events in 1808 would come to represent throughout the rest of the century. El 2 de mayo marks the contradictory role the events of that day would play in the development of a Spanish national consciousness. Beyond this, Goya’s choice in representation, including the ambiguous positioning of the viewer and the denial of any clear cut reading, becomes symptomatic of the way representation itself would question and, therefore, resist the imposition of the same understanding of Spanish national identity that can be identified by the Spanish State’s narrative—one that Goya, himself, employs—through questioning to what extent sensibility, especially the visual, could be trusted.

Institutionalizing Independence

The 19th century was an important one for understanding what we now view as the Spanish nation. It saw the fall of the *Ancien Régime*, the beginning and abrupt endings of liberal governance, three civil wars of varying degrees of intensity and the loss of a once powerful

empire. By 1898, the Spanish concept of itself as a nation, not merely a geographical or political entity would be radically altered. Social class, especially the rising middle class, would take on a new importance, and would be reflected in the rising role not only of literature in general but in the artist as creator of community.

The question of Spanish nationalism is a critical issue of contemporary relevance, both because of the fractious relationship that Castilian Spain maintains with Catalan, Basque and Galician cultural and political forces as well as the integration of Spain into the European Union and its subsequent economic crises. The validity of current discussions on the question of Spanish governance, however, obscure that the Spanish “nation” as such is a relatively new phenomenon. Historian José Álvarez Junco contends that “for five centuries there has existed in Europe a political structure that has responded, with slight variations, to the name of ‘Spain’.” (Spanish Identity 2). By the beginning of the 19th century, however, this political structure was beset with difficulties despite its former imperial glory. As Charles Esdaile indicates, at the turn of the century, “If Spain cannot be said to have been in decline, her great-power status was at least precarious. Still worse, between 1788 and 1808 there occurred a series of events that shattered it beyond repair, plunging the elites into confusion and uncertainty and large sections of the populace into untold misery” (9).

The arrival of Napoleon Bonaparte’s troops on the Peninsula, therefore, was the culmination of a much longer process of political decay. Although part of the larger European Peninsular Wars against Napoleon Bonaparte’s imperialist designs, in Spain, the French incursion into Spanish territory was deemed *La Guerra de la Independencia* and, with the call by leaders such as Alcalá Galiano to “hacer a la nación Española una nación” (qtd in Álvarez-Junco, Spanish Identity 126), 1808 became “year zero” for the refashioning of Spanish nationality as

nation (Burdell 19). As Álvarez-Junco notes, the importance of 1808 is that it marks the moment of rupture between the *Edad Moderna* and the contemporary of Spanish history (Mater Dolorosa 129). On the one hand, the events of that day served as a symbol of the way a former Empire had fallen from power. On the other, as previously mentioned, they crystallized the image of Spain in the national consciousness as an entity capable of resisting the imposition of foreign power, of inventing “a new grammar of warfare” through what we now know as guerilla tactics (Caygill 21).

Political instability created “a growing need to reinforce patriotic sentiment and ideas, to clarify what it meant to be Spanish [...] to *see* it and *touch* it in illustrations and public statues” (Álvarez-Junco, Spanish Identity 126). The events of the 2nd of May, then, would become a focal point for constructing the Spanish nation as a political and affective entity. The importance, especially of the 2nd of May as a marker of Spanish cohesion and popular unity, cannot be overemphasized since it became the locus of “a halcyon memory of supposed national unity and unanimity against the foreign aggressor” (Lawrence 454). In a century filled with civil unrest between the conservative monarchy and the liberal factions, it was particularly important that this historical moment be imagined and re-imagined as a time of bipartisanship where the Spanish national essence transcended party lines, making that particular day, “una *epopeya nacional* por encima de objetivos políticos partidarios” (Espada Burgos and Urquijo Goita qtd in Demange 23).”¹⁷

Recent scholarship indicates that the supposed heroic resistance of that day was decidedly less important in the overall push against Bonaparte dominance than its invocation and

¹⁷ Recent scholarship has effectively demonstrated that, in fact, the supposed heroic resistance of the 2nd of May is more myth than reality. Nonetheless, the power of the myth is what gave rise to national sentiment. For more on the question of the myth, see work such as Christian Demange’s 2004 El dos de mayo: Mito y fiesta nacional, 1808-1958.

representation might indicate. However, the reality of the situation was of far less importance than the role it was allocated as a site of myth.¹⁸ Thus, although “La sublevación de 1808 inició la historia del nacionalismo español contemporáneo” (Álvarez Junco, Mater Dolorosa 144), it did so because it became the locus for the creation of a myth that would hold strong and bolster Spanish patriotic sentiment until the 20th century.

In order for the myth to be created, however, the efforts had to extend beyond a purely political level. The collaboration of the artistic and intellectual elites was also harnessed to the task, leading to the overwhelming production of historical paintings and, in many ways, to the rise of Romanticism as a literary movement and, in consequence, prompted a backlash in the form of realism. As Derek Flitter indicates, in Spain (as elsewhere), the Romantic movement was underpinned by a deep reliance on “the historical sense,”¹⁹ a pull to draw on a sometimes imaginary, historical past, on traditions as a way to bind a nation together through aspiring to something greater in a century fraught with instability. While historical paintings could visually commemorate past events, the Romantics could infuse the past with patriotic sentiment. The historical novel, inspired by England’s Sir Walter Scott, was of great importance in presenting a new, romanticized version of the past in which Spain was strong and noble. In the quintessential Romantic historical novel by Enrique Gil y Carrasco, El Señor de Bembibre, for example, the reader is catapulted back to the 14th century, to the expulsion of the Moors from the Peninsula. Elsewhere, in the work of the so-called *costumbristas*, the importance of conserving national

¹⁸ For more on the facticity of events in question, see the work of Álvarez Junco in general as well as F. Toldano González’s article “La Guerra de la Independencia como mito fundamental de la memoria y de la historia nacional española” as well as Christian Demange’s El dos de mayo: Mito y fiesta nacional, 1808-1958.

¹⁹ By this, Flitter refers to Herder’s insistence that humanity be evaluated within its particular temporal (and spatial) context. As Flitter indicates, “The immediate outcome of such a trend was nationalism” (5).

habits and pastimes dominated as seen in the writing of Mesonero Romanos and the painter Valeriano Domínguez Bécquer.

As Jürgen Habermas contended, literature in general rose to a place of public importance within society during the long 18th century (29). The circulation of literary works became an essential way of contributing to public issues and was essential to the Romantic project of constructing national sentiment, a task greatly aided by the rise of both a reading public, print journalism and the accompanying ability to circulate materials thanks to the printing press. As Benedict Anderson has suggested regarding print-languages, being able to share ideas with others (as well as receive ideas from them), became a key way of building what we now understand to be a “nationally imagined community” with its accompanying sense of belonging (44).

In part because of the integral part the printing presses played in reaching a wider public, “All Spain’s leading novelists were also journalists” (Labanyi, Galdós 7). They wrote opinion pieces, worked as critics, circulated their novels in portions published in either the paper or other *folletín* formats. These writers were also politically involved in one way or another since events of the century, “no permite nunca un distanciamiento radical entre literatura y política” (Ferrerías 13). This was no different in the case of one of Spain’s most important authors, Benito Pérez Galdós, who worked for several papers as critic and editor throughout his career, including *La Nación*, *Las Cortes*, *Revista de España* and *El Debate* among others. Nonetheless, as this chapter argues, Galdós’s early work, while clearly marked by his time, functioned in a different, what I term “resistant” manner to much of the other work of the time period. As one of the foremost proponents of realism, Galdós’s early works harness visuality to explore the ways in which seeing is linked to experiencing the world. This is not a simple project, however, since he

simultaneously suggests that, while seeing helps understand the world, interpreting what one saw can be a much more complicated endeavor, as is the case with his questioning of what was witnessed on the events of the 2nd of May and how it relates to contemporary understanding of that particular moment. Beyond this he explores the way representation can be a different, sometimes even clearer, way of “seeing” the world.

Realizing the Nation

You've got the key of the street, my friend.

--Charles Dickens, Pickwick Papers

A people makes a poem, a poem makes a people.

--Jacques Rancière, Mute Speech (69)

Born in 1843, Galdós was neither participant nor witness to *La Guerra de la*

Independencia, nor the 2nd of May, the moment that would come to encapsulate his generation's understanding of Spanish national unity. Nonetheless, the events that shaped his present can be seen throughout his publications. Although most well known as a fiction writer, Galdós was deeply invested in historical research, especially at the beginning of his career, and writing styles similar to reportage and documentation, publishing stand-alone novels such as El audaz (1870) and La Fontana de Oro (1871) that deal with important historical developments early in the century as well as five serial sets of “national episodes” in which he set out to chronicle the beginnings of the Spanish nation starting with the defeat of the Spanish naval fleet by the British in the battle of Trafalgar of 1805. The publication of his earlier novels coincides with two key events that bear mentioning: *La Gloriosa*, the revolution of 1868, that deposed Queen Isabella II for a short-lived liberal government and directly led to the Third Carlist War (sometimes known as the Second) that re-established the monarchy; it also coincides with the rise of the Spanish realist novel of which Galdós was a leading figure.

Realism in general was, as Lilian Furst has noted, an “actual confrontation with a serious unidealized embodiment of concrete experiences, events, customs and appearances characteristic of one’s own epoch” (112). It focused on issues of contemporary significance, on the everyday, and following these premises, on the average citizen, on the populace. Spain came to realism later than the rest of Europe in part based on the isolation that was only ruptured with *La Gloriosa*. Following in the footsteps of the French writers Balzac and England’s Dickens (above all for Galdós), Spanish realism was also shaped by important Spanish literary and visual figures such as Cervantes and Velasquez whose insistence on observing the world around them, a principle characteristic of Realism as well, was noted by Galdós in his 1870, “Observaciones sobre la novela contemporánea en España.”²⁰

While indebted in many ways to its antecedents Spanish realism profited from coming late to the scene since, as Jo Labanyi indicates, it allowed them to move beyond the typical postulates of Realism and “have a double focus, placing them simultaneously inside and outside realism” (Galdós 4). Thus, while emphasizing observation as an important way to represent the world, they were aware that a “real” could not come into existence by a mere process of mimesis that accurately reflected something true and real. Rather, as Harriet Turner has demonstrated, they were aware that “The ‘true’ and the ‘real’ arise within intermediate spaces between pieces and parts, parts and wholes,” (“Benito Pérez Galdós” 398). Nowhere is the particularity of Spanish realists more clearly exemplified than in their use of the trope of the mirror so famous in Stendhal’s realism which, in the Spanish version, becomes a different type of mirror, one that “could be tilted and the slice taken at an angle” (Wood qtd in Turner “The Realist Novel” 81).

²⁰ In this important piece, Galdós condemns contemporary novels for preferring imagination over the “la cuáldad de la observación” in Cervantes and lauds Velásquez as a model to follow for being “el pintor que mejor ha visto y ha expresado mejor la naturaleza” (“Observaciones” 106).

Thus, the question of depicting “reality” was far from a simple matter. Rather, as Labanyi has argued, a realist novel goes beyond copying and instead “functions as a forum for critical debate, airing issues of contemporary concern” (Gender and Modernization 4). Realism, “deals with what happens when things go wrong” in society (Gender and Modernization 5).

The question of righting (or writing) wrongs is a particularly relevant one in the context of reading Galdós’s national episodes, works that are inarguably anchored to the narration of concrete historical events (and, one might argue, mired in scholarly debates on the question of historical relevance).²¹ This is, of course, not particular to Galdós since the “nineteenth-century realist novel is founded on a bedrock of history” (Ribbans 102). What is unique to the episodes, however, is the way they dramatize key events in Spanish history. The tendency is to read this history-telling as Galdós inciting lost “patriotic values” (Dendle 28) and defining nationality in order to construct “a patriotic *pueblo* for a reading public” (DuPont, “Modernity” 625). This reading ties Galdós’s episodes less to his later realist contemporary novels and more to a Romantic tradition.²²

When looking at the context of Galdós’s short stories, particularly that of “Dos de mayo de 1808, dos de septiembre de 1870,” however, the invocation of patriotic sentiment (an

²¹ The question of how historical the novels are was of great import to scholars in the past. However, thanks to the work of Aikiko Tsuchiya and Diane F. Urey among others, at this point, literary scholars agree that reading Galdós as historical writing or fiction is an invalid dichotomy since, following Hayden White’s Tropic of Discourse, historical writing has been shown to be a type of construction as much as we understand fiction to be. Urey states unequivocally that the idea that one can read Galdós’s historical novels differently to his fictional novels is a “misconception” (Novel Histories 9). Similarly, Tsuchiya reads the episodes as a form that “by dramatizing the inseparability of ‘history’ and ‘fiction’ in the text, questions the notion of accurate historical recreation” (107).

²² In fact, Denise DuPont has argued in her Realism as Resistance that realism in general was infused with romantic desires. Contrarily, one might also see in her argument the fact that acknowledging a debt does not constitute a split allegiance but rather a countering of, as my reading of the short story, “Dos de mayo de 1808, dos de septiembre de 1870” indicates.

exceedingly Romantic preoccupation) is far less certain within the early *Episodios nacionales*. Instead, as Harriet Turner has pointed out regarding Galdós's work in general, these works "register collective anxieties" ("Benito Pérez Galdós 396) by looking at the foundations on which mid-19th century Spanish nationalism had been built, questioning them, resisting an overarching historical narrative that elided contradictions in its narrative. This resistance is multi-layered and goes against a totalizing imposition of nationalism (and patriotism), setting up binaries only to destroy them and exploiting the tensions that lurked underneath the nationalizing project. They do so in part by drawing on the already established conventions of the visual in order to destabilize, especially the difference between visual observation and a total sensible experience.

Revenge as Resistance

"The aesthetic can have its revenge upon ideology by revealing a power to complicate that is also a power to undermine."

--Murray Krieger, *Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign* (258)

Galdós's short stories have received far less scholarly attention than his novels which may be unsurprising since he saw the short story as a precursor to a larger work, or, in his own words, "el primer albor de la gran novela" ("Observaciones" 113). Because of this, however, his short stories offer a unique insight into understanding the way aesthetics in Galdós's larger episodes work as resistance, especially the early works.²³ This is most clearly seen in the

²³ I examine the early work of Galdós as part of a particular state of affairs that would no longer exist when he wrote his later corpus since understanding resistance within aesthetics starts with accepting that reading a work of art, "concerns the sensible fabric of experience within which they are produced. These are entirely material conditions – performance and exhibition spaces, forms of circulation and reproduction – but also modes of perception and regimes of emotion" (Ranciére *Aisthesis* x). I read this to mean that artworks are tied to their particular contexts, and especially in the case of a century such as the 19th, the amount of radical change that could occur in a relatively brief period such as the *Trienio Liberal* suggests that reading resistance in Galdós intelligently means narrowing one's scope temporally as well.

“inédita” short story, “Dos de mayo de 1808, dos de septiembre de 1870,” which questions and undoes a past that has already been written into the national project.

Written in 1870,²⁴ “Dos de mayo de 1808, dos de septiembre de 1870” reflects back on the events of the 2nd of May through the perspective of the 1870 defeat of the French in the Battle of Sedan that effectively ended the Franco-Prussian War in favour of the Prussians. The only major study to mention this particular story grants it importance only within the greater corpus of Galdosian narrative, reading it as, “una novelización miniaturizada de los mismos temas que luego aparecerán, proyectados a mayor escala, de obra en obra, y de serie en serie a través de los Episodios nacionales” (Hoar 316). While it is undeniably a signal of what was to come, unlike the later episode into which it would be incorporated, this particular story, because of its brevity and the particular context in which it was written, is far more a work of aesthetic vengeance and a brutal rupture with the romantic strains circulating around realist writers than any of the following national episodes.

“Dos de mayo de 1808, dos de septiembre de 1870” retells the events of the 2nd of May within a framework of a conversation between an elderly, widowed mother, Margara, and the narrator to whom she relates her story. Margara recounts how the events of that historic day altered her life. That this is not only a national but an individual story is clear from the care Galdós puts into having Margara narrate her personal context to the listener before she describes any historical events. She is an ordinary woman, the widow of a shoemaker who prefers to stay at home, in contrast with her sister, an intrepid woman who prefers to be in the streets (and eventually dies there). Margara is charged with caring for her niece and for her only child, a 10-

²⁴ It only appeared in publication in 1896, however, in the madrileña *Apuntes*.

year-old named Remundo, to whom she refers throughout the story symbolically either as *mi Mundo* or just *Mundo*.

The plotline is deceptively simple. Margara narrates how, upon hearing of the French invasion, and seeing the danger outside, she locks her son and her niece in the pantry to protect them from danger, despite accusations by her neighbour that, in doing so, she lacks patriotism. Her fears, however, come to fruition despite all of her attempts to evade them when *Mundo* manages to escape out a window and disappears into the streets, never to be seen again. Following the loss of *mi Mundo*, frenzied by terror, she heads out into the streets, facing French troops fearlessly, searching in vain for her son, until, weak from exhaustion, she collapses and is placed in the hospital. Although she never finds her son, she calls for him in the streets every morning before heading to work, and no one finds this unusual because they all lived those events with her, “Nadie me tiene por loca, ni la soy; pero conserva la monomaía de aquel día terrible” (Galdós, “Dos de mayo” 126).

“Dos de mayo de 1808, dos de septiembre de 1870” is a story about spaces of visibility, and symbolic parallels between domestic and national spaces.²⁵ Even if only partially narrated by a female voice, it stands alone in Galdós’s corpus for its narrative point of view and, as such, is significant on a variety of levels. By narrating through the voice of the domestically conformist Margara who is forced onto the streets, Galdós narrates the inevitable collapse of

²⁵ This is hardly a surprising trope, and one is reminded here of Ernest Renan when he insists that, “One loves the house that one has built and that one has handed down” (“What is a nation?”). Jo Labanyi has explored the general question of space within Galdós, noting that the European realist novel was preoccupied by boundaries between spaces precisely because they were beginning to collapse (*Gender and Modernization* 31). She does so in the context of Habermas’s contention that modernity created new definitions of public/private. This leads her to suggest that there is a question of overlapping between the two. Nevertheless, as I read here, it is less an overlap in this particular story as a violent collapse. This collapse occurs through literature itself both because it is a public/private sphere and also because literature drags the private reader into the public sphere.

boundaries between Peninsula and Continent that are mirrored in the collapse of the space between public and private that became, in part, synonymous with modernity itself, since, as Seyla Benhabib reminds us in her study of the same, “for moderns public space is essentially porous” (79).

Although Margara’s insertion into public space initially seems a critique to the “angel del hogar” whose identity as an ideal of womanhood is defined by her insulation from the public space, Galdós indicates that this collapse was inevitable since no one escapes the dangers of the street.²⁶ Observing, in a real sense, becomes participation. However, it does not necessarily lead to violence and, actually becomes a possible way to avoid violence. Margara’s sister, Rafaela (alternately known as *La Carbonera*), lives her life outside the home, fights in the streets and dies at the hands of the French invaders. The same occurs with Margara’s neighbour, D. Jesús Cuadrado, who scoffs at Margara’s fears and accuses her of anti-patriotism, only to die himself in the streets. Remundo, having escaped the confines of his home, dies in the streets. Even Margara who does not desire anything beyond her domain, home and hearth, ends up wandering the streets, calling aloud for her lost child. In fact, Margara’s experience is directly correlated with her isolationist tendencies that feed on her fears rather than on reality.

The porous region between spaces that allows the collapse to take place is conceptualized by the window, a way of observing and also the site of danger and loss. It is here that the spaces of appearance, of political action,²⁷ collapse into the domestic spaces (and vice versa).²⁸ Despite

²⁶ I refer here to Bridget Aldaraca’s now well-known study on the role of women in 19th century Spain where, “The ideal woman is ultimately defined not ontologically, not functionally but territorially, by the space which she occupies” (27). I am not making a claim for reading this story as a “feminist” piece by any means, but rather that Galdós recognizes that the brutality of the events made all “normal” distinctions irrelevant since no sphere was immune.

²⁷ I use this terminology following Hannah Arendt’s discussion of the public space as differentiated from the private. The “space of appearance” is unpredictable since, while it

being locked in the pantry, it is through a window, a *tragaluz*, that *Mundo* manages to find a port of escape heading out of the house across the rooftops and to the action on the streets. The significance of the window at the centre of the short story cannot fail to be significant to any understanding of the way it functions as a commentary on political resistance and aesthetics.

Perhaps the most obvious significance of the window is in its gesture towards the symbolism of the text as a window into another world. Within the context of the literature of the nineteenth century, and Benedict Anderson's "imagined community," novels become a way to understand nations and its peoples; as Deidre Lynch and William B Warner indicate, through reading (looking through the window), a social act takes place in which the reader feels a part of what is occurring (4). In "Dos de mayo de 1808, dos de septiembre de 1870," however, the act of observing through the window is a double-edged sword, because it is a dangerous act. Looking through the window endangers the privileged space away from the public sphere and inexorably pull the observer into the streets where the action (and loss) is occurring. In a sense, observation leads to participation

Closed inside her house, upon hearing distant shots, Margara moves to her window, anxiously searching for the children. A woman at the window, looking outward bridging the inside and outside spaces is a key piece of romantic imagery. Here, however, an iconic romantic reference is shown to be false, because what she sees out the window works against her. What she sees through the window is a scene that cannot be real because it defies the laws of physics, of rational thought. Through the window, Margara, "creía ver volar las torres de las Iglesias, y

"comes into being wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action" (199). It is only a potential, unpredictable and ephemeral, however since, "it does not survive the actuality of the movement which brought it into being, but disappears." Margara had refrained from entering the space of appearance for lack of interest in political activity but it is denied her.

²⁸ As Rancière reminds us, politics is precisely about re-partitioning, blurring boundaries ("The Thinking of Dissensus" 4).

caerse las casas patas arriba, y rodar las nubes por el suelo envolviendo montones de ruinas” (Galdós, “Dos de mayo” 122). What she sees occurring outside is chaos and her ability to observe anything correctly is impaired, a fact she admits to her listener that she knows it is unreal, that her fear, “debió de trastornarme el sentido” (122).²⁹ With this admission on the part of the narrator, this surrealist vision of the world outside becomes less a condemnation of emotions over realistic observation than an acknowledgement that the unspeakable may sometimes defy rational representation.

Part of what makes this representation of the unspeakable interesting is that what propels Margara to enter the space of appearing is not a sense of patriotism or desire to be politically involved but rather maternal love, an indication that this story is not about fueling national sentiment, but an attempt to represent a traumatic moment in a nation’s history. Not only do all the patriotic characters die in the story (and Margara in no way seems castigated for not being one of them), but their deaths are violent scenes, especially in the case of D. Jesús, whose childlike displays of heroism with a broom in Margara’s home earlier end with his body on the street, his face “envuelto en un velo de sangre endurecida” (“Dos de mayo” 125). As Margara stands beside D. Jesús, he slowly turns into a cadaver, his only remaining eye becoming “una cuenta de vidrio.” D. Jesús, because he chooses to participate in violence, loses his ability to observe and, thus, his life; this, however, does not occur with Margara.

²⁹ Interestingly enough, within scholarly literature, notwithstanding a few studies such as an unpublished talk by Gerald Gillespie in 1967 entitled “Galdós and Positivism,” Galdós’s embrace of positivism in his early works tends to be accepted even now if the 2003 Catedra edition of *Marianela* by Francisco Caudet is any indication. What this brief episode points out is that Galdós’s embrace of positivism even early on was far from wholehearted. In fact, while it is true that Margara’s emotions cloud her ability to see what is going on, she remains objective, aware that what she sees cannot actually be the truth.

This disinterest in invoking emotional national sentiment becomes even more clear at the end of the story when the frame of Margara's narration closes and the listener reveals himself as the actual narrator. Although he sympathizes with Margara's pain, rather than heap invectives on the French or praise the actions of that day, he suggests pardon. "Los agravios del Dos de mayo deben ser generosamente olvidados. Las naciones viven más que los individuos, y tienen tiempo de expiar aquí sus errores" (127). Just as Margara lost her *Mundo*, the French have lost their "Mundo" in the battle of Sedán so the score has seemingly been settled.

What this ending suggests is a type of personal/national project of forgiveness that simultaneously reacts to a moment of vengeance and acts as one itself. While the word "forgiveness" suffers from a religious, particularly Christian, significance, what Galdós seems to be advocating here is not of this type at all. Rather, this advocacy for forgiveness is an act of power in itself since invoking the 2nd of May in the context of the fall of the French at the Battle of Sedán becomes a way of setting things straight. This act is along the lines of what Jacques Derrida called the "violence" of forgiveness, the "I forgive you" that is "sometimes unbearable or odious, even obscene" because it "is the affirmation of sovereignty" (On Cosmopolitanism 58).

Keeping in mind that the conversation between the narrator and Margara takes place in a public space, a park, what the narrator is suggesting is a type of public "forgiveness" that releases the endless remembrance of a traumatic moment of national defiance, while simultaneously affirming superiority. By writing of the defeat of Sedán and placing it in the context of the 2nd of May it becomes a public act of vengeance that is not violent. The narrator serves as a foil to D. Jesús who did not observe but plunged into the violence. Because he did not observe first, like Margara, he perished. The narrator, however, displays the wrongs of the

French in the public/private forum of literature, but he does so judiciously, not from a place of anger or violence but from one of detached observation. Because of this, the narrator is able to choose a less violent path by controlling the historical narrative and fitting the French loss into a larger story of their violence towards others. The vengeance of the narrator occurs through representation, giving him ultimate power.

Episodic Resistance

*“Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched,
we cannot know ourselves.”*

--Adrienne Rich, “When We Dead Awaken”

In the light of the questionable “nationalism” evidenced in “Dos de mayo de 1808, dos de septiembre de 1870,” and the way it is undone through the power of visual observation, looking at the third episode of the first series of Galdós’s *Episodios nacionales* offers yet more insights into how Galdós’s writing both functions within a particular national tradition (and moment) and resists it. Generally overlooked in comparison to other national episodes, particularly its predecessors, Trafalgar and El corte de Carlos IV, El 19 de marzo y el 2 de mayo initially seems to follow the logic of the entire set of national episodes, five separate series of novels (forty-five in total) whose purpose, “was to portray Spain’s struggles to break free of the *ancien régime* and absolutism, and assert a modern identity as a national and constitutional state” (Hamnett 52). The first series, composed of ten episodes, is mainly narrated in the first person; we meet Spain and its people through the eyes of a now-elderly Gabriel Araceli who recounts the exploits of his youth to old friends in a café.

The entire series is an in-depth exploration of temporality and spaces, a preoccupation of particular interest to the 19th century; due to the arrival of industrialization and especially railway travel, as Wolfgang Schivelbusch has noted, space and time were “annihilated” (33). While a study of either question in and of itself in the context of Galdós’s work is an interesting

proposition,³⁰ the way in which Galdós uses binaries in order to undermine them is of particular interest for an understanding of how El 19 de marzo y el 2 de mayo functions as a work of resistance, especially as it relates to disturbing the normative distribution of the sensible.

El 19 de marzo y el 2 de mayo is a text that juxtaposes a temporal binary: the *Motín de Aranjuez* that took place in March of 1808 and the 2nd of May from later the same year.³¹ As Urey and Tsuchiya have repeatedly demonstrated, Galdós is always aware of the power of language to present the world “to create the illusion that this world is real” (Tsuchiya 5). Both call attention to the primacy of historical writing in the 19th century and place Galdós as its questioner, and the national episodes as going against “the traditional notion of historical discourse as transparent language by calling attention to their identity as a conventional system of signs” (Tsuchiya 108). This, in and of itself, is a resistant act since it refuses to surrender to the conventional understanding of a particular historical event and shows a deep understanding of the process whereby history is written, of, one might say, Galdós functions to “brush history against the grain” as Walter Benjamin would advocate is the role of someone who can see the conflicts inherent within historical narratives (Illuminations 258).

The resistance I find here, however, occurs at the intersection of politics and aesthetics; it is based on the way, “politics comes about solely through interruptions” (Rancière, Dissensus 21).³² This reading of interruption is especially relevant in the context of a novel written at a time when literature had become, in and of itself, a “new regime of writing, and another way of

³⁰ In regards to space, Labanyi has already written on the subject in her book Gender and Modernization. Temporality as something other than “writing history,” however, is a far less explored question.

³¹ The spatial question here is implicit since, as discussed earlier, the Spanish imaginary had already built a memory shrine to the uprising of Madrid in May.

³² As I elaborate in the introduction, for Rancière, politics is fundamentally a question of space and visibility.

relating to politics” (161).³³ In Galdós’s novel, while the visual becomes the means whereby his protagonist is either given access to the world or denied it, the text offers a series of interruptions whereby the visual disturbs the narrative. The interruptions, on the one hand, demonstrate how seeing can be a powerful way of interpreting the world. On the other, they also problematize how seeing occurs, what it means to see and what socio-historical barriers are placed on seeing.

Speaking Time

Temporality within the work of Galdós has not been studied nearly enough to do it justice. For example, in the context of this particular novel, we might ponder its function as a type of “post-memory,” what Marianne Hirsch has described as the relationship a second-generation has to a traumatic, collective event that, while not actually experienced, begins to constitute a memory of its own (22). This is certainly a consideration since Galdós’s narrator remembers events he, Galdós, never actually experienced. We might also discuss the temporality within the narrative itself: Gabriel does not narrate as he experiences but as an old man, in a café (another binary being oral versus written).

The temporality I invoke here is related to these questions of temporality but focuses on how temporality appears in the text itself, how the narrative progression, despite mirroring the progressive forward-march of the chronological events in which Gabriel finds himself entangled, comes to a halt, interrupting the narrative, refusing to allow the reader a seductive experience of completeness, instituting a different configuration of “the sensible”.

That the question of temporality is of key importance in this text is signaled before the reader even opens the novel since El 19 de marzo y el 2 de mayo is the only one of Galdós’s

³³ The power of the political in realism, above all, is related to the newfound ability to ascribe “mute speech” to ordinary things, thus reconfiguring what was made visible (Ranciére Dissensus 163). As Harriet Turner reminds us, this thing centered-ness is also found at the heart of the Spanish realist novel (“The Realist Novel” 81).

episodes to invoke clearly a binary opposition by counterposing two events of the same year, 1808: the *motín de Aranjuez* from March and the subsequent 2nd of May. Whereas the 2nd of May had stood apart as a particular event pulled out of history, as previously discussed, the positioning of the events, while chronological, has the effect of diminishing the importance of the heroic events of the 2nd of May by making it equal with another event, placing it in a series of events that, while important, are part of an endless succession of events. From the beginning, its singular importance is already questioned.

The events in the novel chronicle how Gabriel experiences the two events, both on a political and on a personal level. Although employed as a typesetter in the Madrid during the week, Gabriel spends his weekends in Aranjuez visiting his beloved Inés and her elderly guardian, D. Celestino. Their idyllic interactions on the outskirts of Madrid are abruptly curtailed not by the *motín* but by the arrival of her supposedly long-lost relatives, the Requejos, to whom D. Celestino relinquishes guardianship, believing they can provide her with a better life than an elderly cleric is capable of. Acting on his suspicions that the Requejos are not what they purport to be, Gabriel finds a job working in their home, discovering that his instincts were correct and Inés is being treated as a servant, kept away from windows, spending her days sewing for the Requejo's tailoring business. After an aborted attempt at rescue, the events of the 2nd of May are what allow Gabriel to spirit Inés away from the home, an enterprise that turns out less successful than he hopes since Inés and Gabriel are separated, she is captured by the French and Gabriel, desperate to find her, ends up confessing to crimes he did not actually commit just to be jailed with her. As the novel ends, Gabriel is unconscious on the floor of a holding facility while Inés is about to be freed by his rival for her affections.

In each section, both the *motín* and the uprising of May, there are moments in which the chronological progression of the narrative is derailed and an alternate temporality is offered, one that fragments off of the narrative time. In these moments, the visual sense (either in its absence or presence) plays a key role in reconfiguring Gabriel (and, thus, the reader's) understanding of the world.

The first example of this reconfiguration occurs in the first half of the novel, in the context of the *motín* of Aranjuez that brought down Manuel Godoy, a once lowly secretary turned Prime Minister and, “the dominant figure in Carlos IV’s reign” (Herr 192). The driving forces behind the *motín* were political and economic as Esdaile indicates (33).³⁴ The entirety of Aranjuez was dependent on the monarchy for its livelihood and when rumors that Carlos IV and his queen, at the prompting of Godoy, were set to flee the French by heading to the Americas just as their Portuguese counterparts had, it was enough to incite a riot.

At the center of the *motín* is the question of appearance, of people who see themselves as that which they are not. Carlos IV is a monarch who, rather than lead his people, is considering fleeing the country, and his son, Fernando VII, as D. Celestino points out, is no beloved heroic figure—“¿no es indecoroso y humillante, e indigno que un Príncipe de Asturias arranque la corona de las seines de su padre, amedrentándole con sus ladridos de torpes lacayos, de ignorantes patones, de bárbaros chisperos y de una soldadesca estúpida y sobornada?” (Galdós, El 19 de marzo 289).

³⁴ Esdaile points out that the *fernandinos*, or individuals who wanted to replace Carlos IV on the throne with his son, Fernando VII, were strong in the outlying areas of Madrid. Additionally, the entire town of Aranjuez was supported by the king’s palace located there (and Godoy’s homes), a fact that the novel subtly indicates when Inés and Gabriel walk through the *jardín del Principe* (Godoy).

Godoy, while technically imbued with a great deal of power, is hiding (ostensibly like a coward) while those who hunt him are either soldiers whom the narrator mockingly describes as, “Grandes, invencibles, héroes,/ que en los ejércitos diestros/ de borrachera, rapiña,/ gatería y vituperio,/ fatigáis los faltriquerros...” (266) or the *pueblo* that imagines itself to be great but is actually full of individuals who, like Lopito, are children, “de esos que prematuramente se quieren hacer pasar por hombre” (265).

In fact, in some ways, it is precisely the fall of the veil of appearances that Galdós indicates led to the chaos. The populace is not heroic, but full of ingratitude, exemplified in the man who, despite help from Godoy to set up a shop, decided that what he really wanted from the Prime Minister was a *destino* “donde con descanso y sin trabajar me ganase la vida” (282). Like animals who sense weakness in their leaders, it attacks. When the bystanders that previously would have waited eager for an audience with Godoy see Godoy captive, they avenge themselves senselessly by throwing stones and Lopito, the boy-man, “Ebrio de gozo” announces “He sido más listo que todos porque me escurrí por entre las patas de los caballos, y le pinché con mi navaja” (283).

Gabriel finds himself in the middle of the ransacking of Godoy’s home, a bystander who is dragged into the affair, not out of a political impetus but a contingent one: he was in the right place at the right time. Amid the chaos, under orders to toss everything out the window to the bonfire on the ground, lest he, too, fall prey to the mob, Gabriel’s hands touch a watch and the progression of time ceases as he ponders it:

Tras la armadura cogí un reló (sic) de bronce, y al llevarlo sobre mí sentía el palpitar de su máquina. El pobrecillo andaba, vivía; aquel artificio que tanto se parece a un ser animado, aquella obra de los hombres que parece obra de Dios, y que ha sido inventado

por la ciencia y adornada por las artes para uno de los más útiles empleos de la vida, iba a perecer a manos del hombre mismo, sin haber cometido más crimen que de marcar las horas. (276)

As time stands still, the watch comes alive, and the past collapses into the present, Science/utility and Art fuse, man and god are intertwined, the inanimate comes alive and the reality of the situation in which he finds himself is impressed on Gabriel. In this moment, the watch becomes what Walter Benjamin would call a “dialectical image” that works against the vagaries of history and, in reading the watch as an image, Gabriel experiences an interruption, an alternate history. In his clearest passage regarding this concept, Benjamin posits that a dialectical image collapses past and present, creating an image in language, an image:

wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: it is not progression but image, suddenly emergent.—Only dialectical images are genuine images (that is, not archaic); and the place where one encounters them is language. (The Arcades Project 462).³⁵

³⁵ The parameters of a “dialectical image” is a topic of much debate within studies of Benjamin’s work, at least in part because, as Max Pensky has indicated regarding the same, Benjamin’s own discussion of the idea is elusive and presents a black hole of sorts that can absorb “any number of attempts at critical illumination” (178). The most thorough studies of the concept by both Susan Buck Morss (The Dialectics of Seeing) and Michael Jennings (The Dialectical Image: Walter Benjamin’s Theory of Literary Criticism), make this evident. The key facet relevant to my discussion here is the link between language and visibility, what Sigrid Weigel defines as “thought-images” or “dialectical images in written form, literally constellations-become-writing (*Schrift-gewordene Konstellationen*) in which the dialectic of image and thought is unfolded and becomes visible” (48). These dialectical images are linked to Benjamin’s overall project of questioning history.

What-has-been in this particular moment is represented in the timepiece Gabriel holds in his hand that is simultaneously Carlos IV and his forebearers.³⁶ Read in this light, Galdós's reading of the watch is a reflection not only on the question of temporality (which is not a "natural" concept but rather a man-made one), but also the cessation of sovereignty, which has occurred because the people believed the King had ceased to be such. I say this in the context of the functioning of sovereignty according to Thomas Hobbes,³⁷ who suggested that the one way that the contract between monarch and society could be invalidated was when the monarch ceased to function as such, effectively abdicating his role.³⁸ The failure of the social contract here, however, is a collective one. Fernando VII, as previously mentioned, sought to steal sovereignty based on popularity rather than succession. Godoy also does not escape blame since

³⁶ The importance of timepieces to the Spanish monarchy would be well known to Galdós as it is to anyone familiar with the passions of the monarchy of the time. While time-keeping became important with the rise of the Industrial Revolution, the keeping of timepieces as decoration began with Felipe V in the 17th century and continued through to Carlos III who set up his own son, Carlos IV, with a studio for tinkering with timepieces and whose passion for them was second only to his passion for hunting. The *Patrimonio Cultural* controls the collection of over 700 pieces and pieces of it have been exhibited at both the palace in Aranjuez and the *Palacio Real* in Madrid.

³⁷ My conceptualization here of "sovereignty" is based only on Hobbesian conceptions of the term (and preference for monarchical sovereignty). Expanding only slightly on Bodin's earlier conceptualization, his sovereign is, "One Person, of whose Acts a great Multitude, by mutuall Covenants one with another, have made themselves every one an Author, to the end he may use the strength and means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their Peace and Common Defence" (Hobbes).

³⁸ I refer here to Thomas Hobbes's lengthy discussion of the way monarchical rule functions in *Leviathan* Part II. The Hobbesian monarch, though absolute sovereign, is such only because the people choose him to be, and, as such, represents his people. The only way the contract can be broken is if the Monarch abdicates his sovereignty. "The Obligation of Subjects to the Sovereign is understood to last as long, and no longer, than the power lasteth, by which he is able to protect them [...] The end of Obedience is Protection; [And though Sovereignty, in the intention of them that make it, be immortall; yet it is in its own nature, not only subject to violent death, by foreign war; but also through the ignorance, the passions of men, it hath in it, from the very institution, many seeds of naturall mortality]" (Hobbes). I argue here that natural mortality occurred in the moment Carlos IV ceased to function as monarch and protect his people, which the people seized as the natural dissolution of their social contract with the succession.

it is he who committed the final blow: in seeking to protect Carlos IV, he pushed the monarch to abdicate his responsibilities by fleeing the country, thus effectively demoting him.

The effect of this dialectical image is two-fold. First, it collapses the entirety of the events in the episode into a reflection on the history of the *ancien régime* and the complexity of its death throes, since the *motín* effectively marked the end of the old temporality (Herr 196). Thus, as Gabriel stares into the watch, he notes the end of the old order, and suggests that it was brought about not by something outside but by the same people who instituted it. He reflects on the purposelessness of the entire exercise and, in fact, dispassionately observes his own participation in the destruction, although, “me daba lástima del relojito, y lo estrechaba contra mi pecho escuchando su latido que iba a extinguirse, arrojelo al fin, y las mil piezas de su máquina ingeniosa repercutieron sobre el suelo” (Galdós, El 19 de marzo 276). The timepiece, symbol of the *ancien régime* and an entire period of history, becomes nothing more than the rest of the items on the floor, perfumed gloves, some maps of Asia and so forth. This dialectical image is a reflection of a period in which things begin to speak, in which history becomes less about “telling” didactic histories and more about reading objects, where intelligibility is no longer a question of a greater “end” but of something else. In the timepiece in Gabriel’s hands, we see a new type of “politics” occurring, one that Rancière pinpoints as the upending of intelligibility as had previously been defined through causal rationality, orations and militancy, the conception of “politics as a struggle of wills and interests” (Dissensus 163). Instead, meaning is understood only through reading bodies, through seeing “the historicity written on the body of ordinary things” (163).

What Galdós novel offers, then, is a new way of reading a “historical” narrative, suggesting that this episode is not a chronicle of the passage of time but a reading of signs, an

example of the inauguration of a new era in which the silent (the “mute” as Rancière would say) speaks.³⁹ In this “speaking” of a timepiece, we find a suggestion that understanding history and historical events is a purposeless quest when seen as a way of identifying a particular meaning in the end results of something, in the actions of human participants. The hidden truth that is borne witness to in the nearly inaudible ticking of the timepiece is that a historically significant moment, the *motín* of Aranjuez, was nothing more than an unintelligible moment of chaos that had no particular purpose or meaning other than destruction itself.

Speaking Resistance

The second occurrence of temporal collapse occurs in the second half of the novel, and revolves around a human/animal binary. Following the events of the *motín*, Gabriel returns to Madrid, both for work and because his beloved Inés now lives there as well since D. Celestino has relinquished guardianship. Thus, she finds herself in the home of the Requejos, a brother-sister couple, who purport to be her long-lost relatives. The Requejos function within the space left between the dead *ancien régime* and the new seeds of modernity.⁴⁰ On the one hand, they are obsessed with financial gain, a particularly modern preoccupation in their case since it involves owning not only a store, but also a shirt-making enterprise and a lending business. On the other

³⁹ This is particularly relevant given that Rancière pinpoints the 19th century, and realism, as the beginning of a radical new understanding of literature as a space of tensions that are revealed through the examination of previously “irrelevant” things, such as a watch. These “silent things take on a language of their own, meaningless objects become a system of signs” and, thus, produce a form of what he calls mute speech (*Mute Speech* 14).

⁴⁰ The Spanish development of modernity in economic terms is one that is sometimes termed “backwardness” in that the first half of the 19th century was characterized by a decline that turned into a stall in the second half (Tortella Casalles 3). While the terminology of “backwardness” is problematic in the sense that it constantly compares the Peninsula to the Anglo-French context which is, perhaps, unfair, the major economic developments by the middle of the century were the establishment of the Madrid Stock Exchange in 1831, the Bank of Spain in 1856 and the establishment of the national currency of the *peseta* in 1868, all events that had occurred by the writing of the novel.

hand, the Requejos have not completely moved into the present since, despite their financial security, their home still clings to the past, a dead one, exemplified by its deathly cleanliness:

era la limpieza propia de todos los sitios donde no existe nada, *exempli gratia*, la limpieza de la mesa donde no se come, de la cocina donde no se guisa, del pasillo donde no se corre, de la sala donde no entran visitas, la diafanidad del vaso donde no entra más que agua. (Galdós, El 19 de marzo 294)

In this dead space live not human beings but creatures who have lost their humanity. They are obsessed with financial gain yet live in poverty, sharing nothing with anyone. They sleep in dark spaces, in *cuevas*. Doña Requejo rules the home as a serpent (293) while Don Requejo is an entrapped bear---trapped by his sister (291). The Requejos do not innovate, do not renovate. Instead they live in a home whose window is graced with “una mugrienta cortineja” and impede Inés from even approaching it, from having contact with a world that is human, unlike them (291).

If the Requejos are bestial, both in mannerisms and in the way they treat others,⁴¹ their live-in servant, Juan de Dios is a particular type of beast, the beast of modernity: an automaton.⁴²

un hombre cuajado, quiero decir, que parecía haberse detenido en un punto de su existencia, renunciando a las transformaciones progresivas del cuerpo y del alma. Juan de Dios ofrecía el aspecto de los treinta años, aunque frisaba en los cuarenta.[...] Era en sus modales lento y acompasado; su movilidad tenía límites fijos como la de una máquina, y

⁴¹ This lack of human sentiment goes far beyond Inés as indicated by the fact that, unconcerned about possible war, the Requejos are mainly interested in uniform contracts and the possibility of making money from selling to the French (320).

⁴² As Adam Crabtree indicates, the question of automism was of heavy debate early in the 19th century both scientifically and philosophically (55).

si el método puede llegar a establecerse de un modo perfecto en los actos del organismo humano, Juan de Dios había realizado este prodigio. (295)

Juan de Dios, raised in a monastery in France, survives the space of the Requejos because he functions as an automaton, with even less consciousness than anyone else.⁴³ Perhaps because of this, Juan de Dios is the only person who has the trust of the Requejos, even being involved in bookkeeping for them (although not given the key to the vault in which they store their savings).

Although initially appearing to be a minor character at best, Juan de Dios takes on a vital importance in understanding how resistance functions in the novel since he is the only character in the Requejo's home who is transformed from an unconscious state to one of conscious action, eventually becoming the hero of the novel. This transformation, however, occurs not from a sense of patriotism or self-preservation but because of a newfound love for Inés (mirroring the maternal love in the short story). Although previously Juan de Dios appeared to be “una máquina cubierta con la piel humana” who functioned impeccably and mechanically day in and day out, he begins to make mistakes (314). His accounting fails; he loses weight. He ambles aimlessly through the store. He even begins to connect with Gabriel out of a desperation to share his sentiments with someone.

As Gabriel begins to become a less-than-noble figure who lies and manipulates others, Juan de Dios begins to awaken and function as a thoughtful, caring human being, with a desire to protect Inés, to free her from her masters.⁴⁴ While Gabriel uses Juan de Dios's love against him,

⁴³ Automatism was under investigation already early in the 19th century by physiologists (Crabtree 51). It would eventually become a favourite exploratory technique of surrealists, but here it already functions as a critique of modernity.

⁴⁴ As Urey indicates, Gabriel has a duality of character in the novel since “in order to realize his objective—the possession of Inés, daylight, freedom—he must lie, betray trusts, spy, and manipulate others” (“Death and Decay” 159). While Urey's reading is markedly more harsh on Gabriel than my own reading is (she proposes he is trying to absorb Inés into himself), her point

pretending to function as a go-between while doing nothing of the kind, endlessly failing at his rescue attempts, Juan de Dios is able to not only rescue Inés (and Gabriel) from the Requeos, but also, at the end, to rescue Inés from death at the hands of a French firing squad.

It is precisely at this moment that the second interruption occurs, another suspension of temporality, this time as Gabriel is incarcerated by D. Requejo in the same stone vault-like room where she locks her money away. There, “la oscuridad era absoluta y el silencio también, excepto cuando pasaba algún coche” (330). Hallucinations begin to torment him, “figuras y formas de esas que no pertenecen al mundo visible, ni a la humanidad” (330). While it is, of course, possible to interpret this as a metaphysical experience that brings him closer to the divine—he thinks of god, after all—this seems unlikely since it is Juan de Dios, the machine slowly turned human through the love of a woman, who saves Gabriel. The name “Juan de Dios” is, in this sense, ironic rather than a religious symbol.⁴⁵

In the vault, a space marked by the domination of capital accumulation, Gabriel is separated from his senses, unable to see or hear. In this moment, he becomes alienated from himself, “era posible llegar al convencimiento de no existir, existiendo” (336). The issue of sensuality was crucial in the first half of the 19th century in Europe, and it was linked to the question of industrialization (and capitalism). Thus for example, Ludwig Feuerbach would claim that the senses were intricately linked to understanding an object, “only through the senses is an object given *in the true sense*, not through thought *for itself*” (§32). Karl Marx would echo this in

about his fundamental lack of certain qualities makes it clear he is no exemplary figure to Galdós since she, as she indicates, this novel is full of “covert strategies which create ambiguity and devalue the patriotic ideal. The process of idealization subverts its own effects in the narrative” (168).

⁴⁵ Urey has also read this scene as a reflection on the way Gabriel invents his story just as he invents in the vault, a reasonable interpretation but, as so often is the case with Galdós, not the only one (“Death and Desire” 164).

his Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, claiming that “man is affirmed in the objective world not only in the act of thinking but with *all* his senses” (45).⁴⁶ In fact, the entire foundation of Marx’s theory of the alienation/estrangement effect that arose out of the capitalist mode of production has to do with broken relationships, especially between humans and their senses. The most commonly cited effects of alienation/estrangement due to capitalist production methods are the breaks between worker and product of labor and the act of production to the labor process that brought it about. However, other relations are also broken, that between humans--“*estrangement of man from man*” (“Estranged Labour” 32)--and even a human from himself, “It estranges man from his own body, as well as external nature and his spiritual aspect, his *human* aspect” (32).

Here, in the heart of the financial production in the home of the Requejos, Gabriel loses contact with himself, with his senses, and thus, he becomes incapable of comprehending anything happening around him. Separated from his senses, especially the ability to see—he can still occasionally hear sounds of cars passing by--Gabriel can no longer understand the reality in which he lives (as Feuerbach suggests above), unlike previously. From this moment forward, Gabriel’s narrative unravels as he is rapidly enveloped in the chaotic events of the 2nd of May, unable to keep track of Inés, of himself.

Although there is a nationalist/patriotic tinge to some of the moments during the uprising, it is mainly due to his older self, as that same self admits. While he sees the uprising as an example of how, “*más poderoso genio de la guerra es la conciencia nacional, y la disciplina que da más cohesión el patriotismo,*” in reality, Gabriel-the-elder knows he was completely unaware of any of this configuration since, “*no estaba mi ánimo para consideraciones de tal índole,*

⁴⁶ Here Marx is reacting against Hegel’s claim that being is about spirit, not materiality.

mucho menos en presencia de un conflicto popular que de minuto en minuto tomaba proporciones graves” (340).

Freed from the home of the Requejos (along with Inés), Gabriel heads to the streets, and his experiences there become the opposite of those in the vault, overrun with “excitación” rather than conscious thought (336). He barely comprehends what is happening outside his home until he is accidentally involved by acquaintances.

Although he is eventually infected by patriotic fervor, it creeps in slowly. Finally, infected by D. Celestino’s speeches, it is not patriotism that impels him to fight but a sense of shame, because “Me avergoncé de reconocerme cobarde espectador de aquella heroica lucha sin disparar un tiro, ni lanzar una piedra en defensa de los míos” (352). Imposed patriotism pushes him out into the streets, but it is not rewarded by heroism. Rather, he is punished for his actions since, on leaving the safety of his home, Inés is left unprotected and is taken by the French.

What occurs after Gabriel loses Inés is a slow descent into oblivion—and coincides not with the events of the 2nd of May but the 3rd: the French response to the uprising. Desperation compels him to act irrationally (and fruitlessly), His grief, at witnessing the firing squads killing strangers he identifies as Spanish coupled with his inability to locate Inés causes him first to demand that the French shoot him as well, “¿Por qué no me fusiláis? ¿Por qué no entro, para que me maten con mis amigos?” (362). His frustration notwithstanding, Gabriel is unable to get incite the French soldiers to action against him, and even when he manages to locate Inés, his only way of entering the holding space to liberate her is by making the French consider him dangerous because he has with him a weapon, a *navaja*, that once belonged to another. When words will not work, he turns to violence. However, this does him absolutely no good. Now imprisoned, he cannot free Inés either, and it is Juan de Dios who facilitates her release. He is

able to do so by reason of his estrangement from his own country in his early years, in the French monastery. Because Juan de Dios controls the language of the French soldiers, not merely violence, he is the only one who has the power to liberate.

When seen in the light of the success of Juan de Dios in comparison with the failure of Gabriel we can read the ending of the novel in a different light. As Inés is torn from him, leaving with Juan de Dios, Gabriel begins to lose contact with the world around him, with his own body, collapsing into oblivion and unconsciousness:

después la inconsciencia de tener cabeza, la absoluta reconcentración de todo yo en mi pensamiento; después unas como ondulaciones concéntricas en mi cerebro, parecidas a las que forma una piedra cayendo al mar; después un chisporroteo colosal que difundía por espacios mayores que cielo y tierra juntos la imagen de Inés en doscientos mil millones de luces; después oscuridad profunda, misteriosamente asociada a un agudísimo dolor en las sienes; después un vago reposo, una extinción rápida, un olvido creciente e invasor, y por último nada, absolutamente nada. (366)

By failing in his task of liberation, Gabriel's loss is a commentary on what was supposedly a great moment in Spanish history: the uprising of the 2nd of May. Gabriel, by being unable to mobilize language, in turning to violence, has rendered himself useless and in so doing has lost control of himself and the possibility of saving anyone or anything. Thus Galdos, in a novel supposedly dedicated to chronicling the beginnings of the Spanish nation, questions the fundamental premise that, in the violence of the 2nd of May, something positive occurred. Rather, he seems to be suggesting that it accomplished the opposite: more violence and, in the end nothing. As Hannah Arendt once noted, "Violence does not promote causes, it promotes

neither History or Revolution [...] The practice of violence, like all action, changes the world, but the most probably change is a more violent world” (“On Violence” 176-7)

It can hardly be a coincidence that Gabriel’s descent into violence and failure is linked to the moment when, deprived of his senses, and especially his ability to see the world around him clearly. If, like the narrator of the short story, Gabriel had observed and “participated” in a rational, nonviolent way it would not necessarily have ended in nothing. Galdós blames the populace for their inability to avoid falling into violence, for their inability to hold onto rationality through observing before acting, or even attempt to do so. Furthermore, he suggests that, only in the act of representation can the events of that moment be truly “seen,” because it offers the possibility for the mystique of the 2nd of May to be undone.

Conclusion

Galdós’s text, in its use of sight, echoes the way Goya’s painting, El 2 de mayo, offers a way that seeing—through representation—can function as a way to undo and resist heroic, mythic narratives. Nonetheless, in Goya’s second representation of the Spanish popular resistance to the French invasion, the role of seeing changes dramatically, foreshadowing the way the visual emphasis as a means of understanding the world in 19th century realism will be transformed by 20th century neo-realism to question the very foundations of sight itself. Goya’s second piece, El tres de mayo en Madrid (Los fusilamientos),⁴⁷ was painted in the same time-period as its chronological predecessor, but displays interesting shifts in his representation of both violence and the Spanish populace during those key moments. In it, we see dead bodies once again piled on the lower left-hand corner, but this time they are bodies of the Spanish citizenry rather than a French foot soldier. While the action also occurs in the lower two thirds of

⁴⁷ Figure 1.3

the painting, the upper third tells us the action has moved to the countryside as indicated by the buildings now in the distance and the hilly countryside surrounding the subjects of the paintings. This work, however, is surprisingly serene given the violence of its subject matter. While the circular representation draws the eye, once again, to the centre, the eye finds no chaos in the El tres de mayo de Madrid. Rather, the sides are clearly drawn, Spanish resistance on the left, French soldiers on the right with muskets pointed towards the chests of the men lined up for the firing squad. What appear to be Spanish observers stand behind the action with their faces hidden in their hands, apparently from horror at what is about to occur. Perhaps the only “heroic” figure of this painting is the man who stands slightly higher than the rest, hands outstretched in what has been suggested to be a Christ-like image.⁴⁸ If we are to accept this slight nod to the iconography of the church and the resurrection of its saviour, the only way to read this painting is to accept that the “resurrection” indicated here will occur only when the French are again driven out of the Peninsula (something Goya could already predict from his vantage point in 1814).

Most interesting, however, is the vantage point of the viewer. No longer are we placed in the centre. Rather, a slight spatial shift has occurred, now placing us solidly on the French side of the painting, weapons aimed at the citizenry. This positioning has the effect of shocking the careful viewer who, at this point in time, would be aware of a temporal distance from the events being depicted. In a sense, then, we can say, that one of the major themes of the El tres de mayo en Madrid is not that chaos of revolution but the complicity of those who supported the invasion or who failed to stand against it, ostensibly pointing weapons at their own people.⁴⁹ Seeing, in

⁴⁸ While it seems obvious, for a slightly deeper analysis of how this functions, see the text by Rose-Marie and Rainer Hagen.

⁴⁹ While Licht is somewhat contradictory in his position, he also reads this positioning as an indication that “To survive is to be guilty of complicity” (Goya 168). This seems at odds with his

this case, involves accepting one's own complicity in a violent moment. This complicity that Goya suggests becomes, unwittingly a foreshadowing of the way sight will begin to function nearly 100 years later in a Spain no longer under threat of outside invasion but of oppression from its own government.

later contention that we, the modern day viewer, are somehow the audience Goya wants to reach (204) but is nonetheless provocative.

Chapter 2

The Reality of Seeing: Interruptions in the 20th Century Spanish Dictatorship of Francisco Franco

Introduction

*Naciones de la tierra, patrias del mar, hermanos
del mundo y de la nada:
habitantes perdidos y lejanos
más que del corazón, de la mirada.*
--Miguel Hernández, "Recoged esta voz"

The now famous opening scene to Alain Resnais's 1959 film, Hiroshima, mon amour, is not only a questioning of Western processes of remembering but a reflection on the role of sight in the twentieth century, a critique of what Michel Foucault referred to as modernity's "unimpeded empire of the gaze" (The Birth of the Clinic 46). Overlaid by the voices of the always unnamed protagonists, the French actress, "She," and her Japanese lover, "He," a lengthy montage takes the viewer through the sights of memory built in the aftermath of the atomic bomb drop (the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, the Shima Hospital, Peace Square) as She tells He how she has seen the photographs, the representations, the newsreels, informing him that, "J'ai tout vu. Tout." For every repetition of what she has seen, however, he gently insists, "Tu n'as rien vu à Hiroshima." As one of the most grotesque insertions from a newsreel graphically affirms, in Resnais's film, sight is an illusion.⁵⁰ She may believe she sees, even to the point of suggesting she has the gift of seeing that others lack when she informs him that, "de bien regarder, je crois que ça s'apprend," but his constant interrogation of what she thinks she knows

⁵⁰ Figure 2.1

from what she has seen underscores the point that her seeing, itself, is suspect. Utterly convinced of her ability to discern reality from illusion, to understand through seeing, She cannot grasp that seeing reconstructions is not enough for her to comprehend what happened at Hiroshima, that what she believes she has seen is mere illusion. This, then, forms the basis for Resnais's critique of both the limitations of representation and of the act of seeing. The film reveals and interrogates the increasing importance of what visual studies critic, Christian Metz, termed the "scopic regime" that defines modern cinematography (Imaginary Signifier).

The rise of the scopic regime can be considered to be the natural outgrowth of what was previously explored regarding the rise of ocular apparatuses such as the telescope and the microscope that led to a new, visually dominated, control of society. Nowhere is the question of ocular control more relevant than in the context of Spain under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco (one that lasted from 1939-75). Robert Spires has suggested that the domination of the visual on the part of the governing bodies of the regime ran parallel to Foucault's conception of the Panopticon (Spires 17). Following Spire's contention, Spain, particularly in the years following the Civil War, functioned through a similar mechanism as the regime was consolidated.⁵¹ Cultural production was no exception to this rule since, as critics have noted, the visual played a particular role in upholding the dictatorship, as the regime became aware of the capacity of the visual to reinforce the image it wished to project. A prime example of the role of the visual in the operation of the dictatorship can be seen, for example, in the newsreels of the

⁵¹ Spires's case is brief, but his evidence stems from speeches made early on in the dictatorship and the punitive measures taken by Franco after the end of the war. With the opening of Spain to the outside, as well as the need to assuage foreign concerns, as several historians have noted, the type of government changed. For more on this see Stanley Payne's A History of Fascism or Paul Preston's The Politics of Revenge.

NO-DO (*Noticiarios y Documentales Cinematográficos*) produced by the regime,⁵² which have been referred to as spectacles that “emphasize cohesion, unity, continuity, and sameness”(Keller 83).⁵³ Other venues in which the visual became a means of upholding the dictatorship include the world of sport,⁵⁴ and, especially notable, that of fictional cinema.⁵⁵

While, on the one hand, the visual was becoming the means of controlling society, seemingly paradoxically, it also became the locus of resistance when, about a decade into the dictatorship, neo-realism, an artistic and literary movement inspired by Italian resistance to fascism, became influential in Spain. This movement, inherently linked to the idea of showing/portraying reality as one perceives it through experience and the senses, became one of the major strains of resistance to the dictatorship. The way in which it deployed the rhetoric of

⁵² See here studies by Sheelagh Ellwood, who never, it should be noted, refers to these films as spectacles, and, especially, that of Patricia Keller who makes the case that the NO-DO should be seen as spectacles that “emphasize cohesion, unity, continuity, and sameness”(83).

⁵³ I use the word “spectacle” in this chapter with caution. On the one hand, there is most assuredly a spectacle at work both in the *corrida* and at times in other contexts with pertinent observations regarding the characteristics of a spectacle as per Guy Debord. I am not, however, making a case for a “society of the spectacle” under Franco as others have made for the post-dictatorship in Spain in which consumption and spectacle dominates every area of life. Similarly, when I use the word “spectator” I am using it not as Debord would, since his spectator is a passive consumer of spectacles. Instead, I am invoking Brecht’s spectator, a person more linked to theatre than to consumer society. Brecht’s spectator is someone who is “instead of being enabled to have an experience, is forced as it were to cast his vote” (39). My reasons for using the word this way is grounded in the temporal fact that Debord’s treatise appeared after the works I examine here were published. Therefore, while Brecht’s notions of the spectator are, indeed, relevant to understanding how these authors and artists considered their works, Debord’s is not.

⁵⁴ See John London’s “The Ideology and Practice of Sport” along with *El fútbol durante la guerra civil y el franquismo* by Carlos Fernández Santander among others. All make the case that the regime saw *fútbol* as a way of unification through the visual.

⁵⁵ An example of this can be seen in Kathleen Vernon’s reading of the film *Raza* in which she states that in it the director (and Franco), “goes beyond a participant’s view or rehearsal of the war to re-write the period within the frame of his own family story and to fuse the two in a glorifying myth of recent Spanish history as the triumph of the *raza* (27).

sight, however, was fundamentally different to the way sight functioned under the regime.⁵⁶ Rather than being an all-powerful means of interpreting the world (and controlling it), in the works of being considered here, sight was shown to be easily confused and untrustworthy, to be the means whereby society promised what it could not (and would not) deliver. Paradoxically, then, the resistance to a sight-dominated regime came through the visual.

Although there are any number of objects that might function for exploring the way artistic and literary objects become resistant in the Spanish context under Franco, it can most clearly be seen in the way neo-realist texts employed a long-standing symbol: the *corrida*, that quintessentially Spanish custom of pitting man against bull for a captivated audience. As Dorothy Kelly has pointed out, not only was the *corrida* used as the ultimate symbol of Spanish identity under the dictatorship, but it continues to retain this significance currently even outside of the Spanish context (30).⁵⁷

This chapter investigates how the insistent deployment of the long-standing metaphor of the *corrida* under the regime takes on a Janus-like nature. On the one hand, due to the tacit, culturally specific codes embodied within the *corrida*, it served as a visual representation and, at times, a re-enactment of life under the past-focused dictatorship. On the other hand, this same metaphor is re-appropriated and transformed by texts of resistance, making this tacit

⁵⁶ I emphasize Spanish here because I believe what is occurring in Spanish neo-realism is a questioning of sight itself in a way that does not occur in Italian neo-realism and, in fact, either develops alongside (if not in dialogue) with the French New Wave work of filmmakers such as Resnais. Mark Sheil in *Italian Neorealism. Rebuilding the Cinematic City* that the philosophy of neo-realism was that of a “disposition to the ontological truth of the physical, visible world” (1). Spanish filmmakers, as this chapter demonstrates, have no such illusions.

⁵⁷ One need only look at the 2012 newspaper coverage of the barring of bullfighting in Catalunya to see its current relevance, linked as it was to another push for separation from the Spanish state and the 2013 push back that currently seeks to give bullfighting a protected, cultural status, thus disallowing it to be illegal. This suggests that the *corrida* is still quite bound up in either affirming or denying national identity.

understanding visible and, therefore, an object for questioning. As Rancière suggests, the means whereby this questioning occurs takes place through a series of interruptions that disallow complacency on the part of the spectator/viewer/reader and ask him/her to re-examine reality.

Co-opting the corrida

*No te conoce el toro ni la higuera
ni caballos ni hormigas de tu casa [...]
Porque te has muerto para siempre,
como todos los muertos de la Tierra, [...]
No te conoce nadie. No. Pero yo te canto.*
--Federico García Lorca, "Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías"

The corrida as metaphor

In one of the most well-known elegies of Spanish poetry, Federico Garcia Lorca (1898-1936) laments the loss of his friend, the matador, Ignacio Sánchez Mejías (1891-1934), who was gored to death in the bullfighting ring. For those who find the spectacle more akin to the Roman gladiator fights than art, this intermingling might seem surprising, but the official name, *Tauromaquia*, means the art of bullfighting. While controversial, *Tauromaquia* in its golden age from 1914-20 was celebrated not only by Spanish artists, but by foreigners as well, most notoriously in the Anglo-Saxon world, by Ernest Hemingway in his 1932 novel, Death in the Afternoon which details for an unfamiliar audience the rituals of this, "Spanish institution" (8). Hemingway refers to it as an institution because the relationship between *Tauromaquia* and Spain is a long one, dating back at least as far as 1133 AD.

As legend goes, the Iberian Peninsula always had bulls, even before the first mentions of bullfighting itself. Originally associated with the nobility (similarly to the sport of jousting, for example), it drew in the lower classes to the point that the Spanish priest and writer, Fray Luis de León, in 1572 in a letter to Pope Gregorius VIII, defended the right of the clergy to attend

corridas because, he asserted, they were “en la sangre del pueblo español, y no pudieron ser suprimidas sin enfrentar una seria reacción” (qtd in García Añorevos 328).

While Fray Luis de León was not alone in his understanding of the connection between Spain and the bullfight, beyond being a mere form of entertainment, over time the *corrida* began to hold a symbolic potential that was consolidated over time. Articulated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by such important Spanish philosophers as Miguel Unamuno and José Ortega y Gasset, the *corrida* was employed as a metaphor for understanding the Spanish nation state and as a means to gauging its relative weakness or strength.⁵⁸ Ortega y Gasset, writing around the turn of the century, was one of those who most clearly articulated the connection between Spanish identity and the *corrida*.⁵⁹ He insisted that, “No puede comprender bien la historia de España quien no haya construido, con rigurosa construcción, la historia de las corridas de toros” (588). Understanding the history of the *corrida* “revela algunos de los secretos más recónditos de la vida nacional española [...] de otro modo, no se puede definir con precisión la peculiar estructura social de nuestro pueblo [...] estructura social que es, en muy importantes órdenes, estrictamente inversa de la normal en las otras naciones de Europa” (Ortega y Gasset 588).

This ability to not only enjoy bullfighting in general but to understand Spain as mediated through the *corrida*, according to Ortega y Gasset, is due to the notion of *majismo* or Spanishness that sprang up in the face of the Napoleonic invasion during the eighteenth century. Under threat, by laying claim to an essential identity, the population was able to unite against outsiders.

⁵⁸ See Rosario Cambria’s extensive study of the writings on the *corrida* as well as the polemic surrounding it in her book, Los toros: tema polemico en el ensayo español del siglo XX.

⁵⁹ Interestingly enough, in this same passage, Ortega y Gasset insists that the Spanish are not capable of understanding their history because they fear to investigate the history of the *corrida*, deeming it a triviality that for being a “tema no consagrado” is one of “los perpetuos lugar-comunistas” (588).

As Alberto González Troyano convincingly demonstrates in his study of Spanish literary representations of the bullfighter, prompted perhaps in part by Ortega y Gasset's analysis, understanding what was perceived to have gone wrong with Spain, culminating in a loss of the colonial empire, began to go hand-in-hand with analyzing the rise and fall of the *corrida* (13).

Given the importance of the *corrida* to understanding (or debating) Spain's state of being, it maintained an important symbolic role throughout the twentieth century and was incorporated into the discourse of the regime headed by General Francisco Franco.⁶⁰ Imposed at the end of a bloody three-year long Civil War, Franco's dictatorship (especially during the early period which was influenced by the politically fascist-inspired Falange⁶¹) came to power through a military *coup d'état* that brought an end to the democratically elected Second Republic (1931-36) and, after the end of the war, consolidated itself under a regime that has been characterized as anything but democratic.⁶² This use of the metaphor became so enmeshed in the dictatorship that

⁶⁰ The exact symbolism of the *corrida* is difficult to define as it is a tacit one. The terminology used to describe its symbolism is often cloaked in essentialisms—for example, Andrés Amorós, in his book length discussion of the links between bulls and culture, refers to them *as* culture, as “modo excepcional para conocer nuestra psicología colectiva” (15). He does not, however, ever describe what this psychology is. Less mystical treatise can do no more than link it to traditional Spanish ideals (Carrie B. Douglass claims it as a totem in her book-length anthropological study) and to essential characteristics of “Spanish-ness” such as pride, individualism, emotionalism, and a mix of life and tragedy (Gannon and Pillai 517). As such, it functioned well in a regime that wished to create an origin in this traditional, Spanish-ness.

⁶¹ The Nationalist coalition that supported the dictatorship's rise to power was comprised of a coalition of forces, from the monarchists who wanted to restore the military monarchy that had reigned under the first dictator of the twentieth century, Miguel Primo de Rivera, to the Carlists who sought to restore the Bourbon dynasty to the throne, and the Falange that had strong ties to Germany's Third Reich (and one of whose chief proponents happened to be the son of Miguel Primo de Rivera, José Primo de Rivera). As Paul Preston explains, Franco was able to leverage all these groups both separately and together to form a coalition of parties who, for lack of any one undisputed leader and with somewhat similar interests and fears, could be convinced to believe supporting Franco's leadership was in all of their best interests (Francisco 252).

⁶² Franco's regime has been characterized as “a Spanish variant of fascism” by Paul Preston (The Politics of Revenge xv) and as a “conservative or praetorian bureaucratic national regime” by Stanley Payne (A History of Fascism 469).

it eventually manifested, “una cierta connotación política que durante algún tiempo se añadió a la ya excesiva carga simbólica y cultura que la fiesta arrastraba (González Troyano 333).

Going hand in hand with this long-standing deployment of the metaphor of the *corrida* as part of a larger process of understanding, and supporting, the nation-state following the Civil War (and to some extent during it), the dictatorship’s use of both of the physical manifestations of *corrida* as well as the metaphor was first part of an internal-facing strategy of erasing the signs of division that still plagued the country and of legitimating the rise to power of the right while, later on in the dictatorship, the strategy was turned outward. This shift in perspective, nonetheless, still used the *corrida* as part of a strategy of projecting a unique and undivided Spanish essence, no longer to legitimate the existence of the regime, but rather to sell it to the world outside of Spain.

The Discourse of Legitimacy

Historical precedent renders it unsurprising that the metaphor of the *corrida* was again put into play by the Falange ideologues, Giménez Caballero and José Antonio Primo de Rivera, as part of a rhetorical support for Franco’s rise to power.⁶³ In fact, the symbolic importance of the *corrida* took place within a discursive strategy that began even before the technical end of the Civil War that was meant to save the *patria* from the threat of the Communist-leaning, short-lived Spanish Second Republic (Preston Francro 145).

Crucial to the Franquista rhetoric was a temporal folding (or even collapsing) of the past into the present. Only by setting up himself as heir to the *Reyes Católicos* (Fernando de Aragón and Isabella de Castilla) could Franco legitimize his arrival to power since, in his own words from September of 1962, “Este régimen no lo hemos conquistado con papeletas, sino a punta de

⁶³ In a series of 12 drawings about Spain, Giménez Caballero in España nuestra compares Spain to several different themes, among them one entitled “España como piel de toro”.

bayoneta” (Franco, Ayuntamiento de Palencia). In this declaration, we find the underpinnings for the entire regime: a denial of the need for democratic elections and an emphasis on the winning of the Civil War as the basis for power. By erasing a period of history, Franco obliterated the present in favor of the Spain of the past, a Spain ruled by kings who were appointed by divine right rather than one appointed by the people. In so doing, Franco was able to de-legitimize the democratically elected Second Republic and legitimize his own regime that could be read as coming to power by some mystical and inherent rite of passage.

As historian Henry Kamen points out, conjunction of public apathy, lobbying by groups within the regime and the exclusion from power of dissenters, enabled Franco’s quest to re-write Spanish history so as to emphasize those pieces that he felt best supported the legitimacy of his regime and the goals he had in mind for the country (166). This strategy hinged on leveraging the legacy of the *Reyes Católicos*, placing the origin and naturalness of his regime within their recapture of the Peninsula from the Moors in the fifteenth century. In his 1947 *Discurso de unificación*, Franco called for Spain to unite and become a state, “donde la pura tradición y sustancia de aquel pasado ideal español se encuadre en las formas nuevas, vigorosas y heroicas que las juventudes de hoy y de mañana aportan” (Franco ha dicho 157).⁶⁴

Thus, manipulation of temporality was fundamental to the regime’s self-legitimization. This appeared not only in official discourse but bled into cultural venues as well. One need only look to the Franquista apparatus existing within the *Noticiarios y Documentales Cinematográficos* (NO-DO) whose news pieces were shown to the exclusion of all others in the

⁶⁴ This is not to say that this use of the past was unique to Franco since the Regenerationist movement had begun with the loss of Cuba in 1898 in the Spanish defeat in the Spanish-American War. As Paul Preston points out, the Regenerationist movement (championed by José Ortega y Gasset) was not confined merely to Franco but permeated the right in general (Preston The Politics of Revenge 13).

movie theatres throughout Spain from 1942 through 1975 in order to see this. As the study by Rafael R. Tranche and Vicente Sánchez-Biosca has demonstrated, the press and the propaganda machines of the regime were tied to these productions (13)⁶⁵ and fused both the auditory and visual in a way that “aspiró a un consenso entre los (sic) distintas fuerzas que constituían el franquismo” (242).

Through its co-opting and re-writing of the past, the regime recreated “Spain” as an essential and authentic entity characterized by, “el reinado de una fe, la existencia de una Patria y la unidad política de la Nación” (Franco ha dicho 109). That it took the form of a religious and historical narrative was no accident but a result of careful strategy on the part of Franco’s ideologues.⁶⁶ By linking itself to Italy (through the Falange’s ideological ties to fascism),⁶⁷ Germany,⁶⁸ and its own past⁶⁹ it set itself about creating a new mythology in which Franco’s regime was a continuation of a Spain that had always existed and could be traced back centuries,

⁶⁵ Sánchez-Biosca denies that the NO-DO was propaganda according to conventional definitions, but at no point does either author negate that the productions were meant to have some type of impact upon the Spanish populace, even if a secondary one (265). For the purpose of this chapter, the distinctions they make are interesting but not particularly useful since it is, in any case, symbolic of a type of thinking within the dictatorship.

⁶⁶ Key among the discursive strategists was Ramón Serrano Suñer, Franco’s brother-in-law and leader of the Falange during the Civil War who, together with Ernesto Giménez Caballero, was the author of the 1936 text that fused the Falange with the Carlists to form the *Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista (FET y de las JONS)*, a decisive move that “gave him total power within the new single party” (Preston Franco 266).

⁶⁷ In this, for example, Ernesto Giménez Caballero, the “Spanish D’Annunzio” led the way (Payne A History of Fascism 258)

⁶⁸ While D. W. Foard clarifies in The Revolt of the Aesthetes: Ernesto Giménez Caballero and the Origins of Spanish Fascism that Ernesto Giménez Caballero’s fascism was anti-Nazism, Giménez Caballero nonetheless in 1942 was eager to affirm that Germany and Spain shared “un mismo destino” due to their common enemies. He, however, placed the moral weight on the side of the Spanish since, “en términos religiosos: Alemania aportó la afirmación al problema de la vida en este mundo. Y España la solución al más allá de esta vida.” (“La Espiritualidad Española y Alemania” 51).

⁶⁹ Paul Preston discusses the links Serrano Suñer created between Franco, the Caudillo, the *Reconquista* and the heroes of Spain’s past (Franco 289). Giménez Caballero in España y Franco also took great pains to promote Franco as a modern day redeemer.

effectively erasing the Second Republic as an illegal aberration.⁷⁰ This mythology would serve the purpose of restoring the Spanish that disappeared through the degradation of Spain from the sixteenth century onwards, culminating in the Spanish Civil War, outwardly symbolic of the disintegration within according to Franco's ideologues.⁷¹

The Corrida as Symbol of National Identity

The desire to negate the disastrous effects of modernity by returning to the pre-modern, also insisted upon a return to a previously existing temporality, one in which the recurrent symbols and themes would have meaning once again. In its effort to unify the country, the regime harnessed the power of the mythologized past as well as that of folklore, what Carmen Ortiz in the case of Spain calls, “a legitimizing instrument because it was able to provide the system with a fundamental, timeless, and organic continuity that was deeper than that gained from history (483). Beyond folklore, other popular and mass forms of cultural expression were also co-opted as a way to bolster the regime since, according to Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi, “Nationalist intellectuals were well aware of the importance of culture as a tool of national unification and political ‘pacification’” (3).

Commercial popular culture was harnessed since “it was seen as pacificatory, offering malnourished and unhappy a form of—ostensibly depoliticized—‘escapist’ entertainment” (Graham 238). Among these forms of cultural pacification that Graham and others have studied were films, popular song (flamenco, for example), kiosk literature⁷² and spectator sports (particularly *fútbol* which began to rise in prominence in the 1920s and bullfighting). Graham

⁷⁰ Jo Labanyi cites the Falangist Rafael García Serrano from 1935 as pledging to “create a new mythology, which this time will be fullbloodedly romantic” (*Myth and History* 36).

⁷¹ See Jo Labanyi's *Myth and History in the Contemporary Spanish Novel* for a discussion as to how this particular idea of a longing for the original Paradise functioned in the Falangist mindset.

⁷² Gonzalo Santonja's *La novela revolucionaria del quiosco 1905-1939* is an interesting study on this particular literary genre.

points out that, despite the manipulation, there was a certain level of cultural resistance that can be seen in the failure of overtly propagandistic state-sponsored film and popular preference for types of entertainment, such as *fútbol*, wherein “it was possible to engage at levels unconnected with the overtly national-patriotic message” (238).

While this is the case in certain respects, other forms of less overtly nationalistic entertainment continued to be popular since what flamenco and bullfighting could offer to the regime (unlike a newer type of entertainment such as *fútbol*) was a constant, visible reminder of the past, a way to impose a pseudo-cyclical time that adapted to the present while imposing a pre-modern time so as to “*naturally* [reestablish] the ancient cyclical rhythm which regulated the survival of pre-industrial societies” (Debord 150).⁷³

Thus flamenco and *fútbol* could all be linked to the regime’s obsession with the mass spectacle, the spectacle or “sport” most integral to understanding the construction of Spanish unity was that of the bullfight. Not only did it hold a clearly symbolic link to the *Reyes Católicos* but it was directly employed by Franco as a means of unification. While there were *corridos* during the period of the Second Republic, they existed as part of general cultural expression rather than a particular symbol. In the case of the dictatorship, however, the role of the *corrida* was significant as can most clearly be seen in the state-sponsored *corridos de victoria*. In the short documentary by Rafael Gil entitled La corrida de la Victoria, the fusion between the regime and the *corrida* is clearly seen. Focusing on the May 24, 1939 fight featuring, among others, the

⁷³ Pseudo-cyclical (or spectacular) time, according to Debord, is a modern time that allows for the dead to continue to inhabit the living by reinforcing the time cycles of the past albeit based in a new, production-impelled form. The past functions as a veneer that overlays the capitalist nature underneath. While from the outside, it seemed as if the *corridos* were the same as those of the past, as Adrian Schubert’s study Death and Money in the Afternoon outlines, bullfighting was first and foremost “a commercialized leisure spectacle” (181). It involved agents, sponsors, fighters, the press and produced spectacle for financial gain.

famous matador, Pepe Amorós, the symbolic content is heavy, from the Fascist salute to the “Arriba España” mantra of the regime painted on the ring along with the Falange yoke and arrows. Additionally, as a symbol of commitment to the regime, the gate receipts were given to Franco afterwards (Shubert 214).

The Later Years: Changing to Remain the Same

As previously mentioned, the role of the *corrida* under dictatorship was dual, serving as an internal affirmation of Spanish unity from within (as an affirmation of a Spanish past that legitimated the dictatorship) early on but later changed to become an external affirmation of the dictatorship towards the outside. By the 1960s, as Spain struggled to re-insert itself into the global context it had previously sought to avoid through a complicated social and economic phenomenon often referred to as the *apertura* (in which Spain underwent a process of opening itself to the outside, of supposed liberalization and democratization) its symbols became a means of selling itself under the “Spain is different” slogan wherein tourists were invited to spend money in Spain to experience the Spanish difference. Underlying this presentation was the idea, yet again, that there existed a unified national identity that could be represented by customs, symbols, rituals that were uniquely Spanish, such as flamenco dancing, the *Semana Santa* traditions and, of course, the *corrida*.⁷⁴ Despite the popularity of the Second Republic during the war by those outside the Peninsula, as I discuss regarding photography, the presentation of Spain as an essence composed of certain elements was crystallized during wartime and continued afterwards, particularly in the years of the *apertura*. Commercially speaking, as the *corrida* became incorporated more fully into the capitalist logic of the dictatorship, the matador became a

⁷⁴ For more on this subject see both Dorothy Kelly, “Selling Spanish ‘otherness’ since the 1960s” and Justin Crumbaugh’s *Destination Dictatorship : The Spectacle of Spain's Tourist Boom and the Reinvention of Difference*. Both contend that selling the stereotypical, folkloric Spain was essential to promoting tourism.

central figure of celebrity with Manuel Benítez Pérez, better known as *El Cordobés*, used in a state campaign for the *Ley Orgánica del Estado*.⁷⁵ What once was a tool of legitimization of the existence of the state became a piece of propaganda that began to move towards what would eventually be consolidated in the *Transición española*, the supposed move towards democratization following Franco's death.

The opposite side of the corrida

As important as the *corrida* was to the regime, however, as a means of establishing its legitimacy, it also offered a site of resistance in a way no other popular medium could given the particularities of live, partially unscripted entertainment, because they provided a “setting intended to display its own blend of chaos and coincidence, chance and death” (Kennedy 14). The *corrida* is the site of a temporal conjuncture wherein an ages-old tradition complete with particular costumes and rituals confronts a present reality, of a collective joining together alongside the performance of a particular matador in a particular ring with a bull that has never been seen before and will never be seen again. Bullfighting is filled with rituals and procedures that lend it the appearance of controllability from the scripted arrival of the *cuadrilla* of bullfighters in the ring to the final decision regarding the death of the bull made by the President of the particular fight. This appearing is integral because a death in the plaza, the center of the *corrida*, is a clash of a binary in which death, a frightening prospect for most, always plays the primary role. Every *corrida*, thus, holds the singular and the collective, the past and the present, the pieces and the whole. It is this duel between opposites that unites the crowd with the man in

⁷⁵ This law, produced in 1967, together with seven other laws was part of a lengthy process of institutionalising the dictatorship by naming a successor upon Franco's death (Preston Francisco 710).

the ring. However, it is also this fusion that threatens unity should the bull, not the man, win out in the end.

In a seemingly civil fashion, the bullfight is often referred to as a “dialogue” between man and bull. This conversation only ends when the matador takes his sword, the *estoque*, and plunges it into the bull’s vertebrae, severing his spinal cord and bringing about the finale. In this way, unity in the crowd against an outside force (the bull) is supposedly maintained since chaos or uncertainty is avoided. Underlying the entire spectacle, however, is the frantic attempt to subvert its natural contingency. It is this uncertainty that made it a site of possible resistance against the same dictatorship that attempted to use it as symbol of its a-temporal reign.

The unveiling of contingency in the leveraging of the culturally laden *corrida*, then, becomes an essential location of resistance to Franquista discourse for the artists of Spanish neo-realism.⁷⁶ In this case, similar to what Walter Benjamin reads in his essay on Bertolt Brecht, “What is Epic Theatre?” what these works of art suggest to the spectators through their narration is the idea that history, in and of itself, is a product of contingency, “It can happen this way, but it can also happen quite a different way” (Understanding Brecht 8).⁷⁷

As rhetorically, the regime returned to the sixteenth century for inspiration, their insistence on collapsing temporality failed to take into account the way the *corrida*, despite being a symbol of empire in the Golden Age, had morphed into something else through the passage of the same temporality that the dictatorship was attempting to erase. In the pieces of opposition,

⁷⁶ While neo-realism in general functioned as a social critique, up to and including critiques of the devastation of the war (for example in Juan Antónion Bardem’s 1955 Muerte de un Ciclista or Jesús Fernández Santos’s 1954 Los Bravos), in the works in this chapter, the legitimacy of the Franquista regime itself is called into question through the use of the *corrida* metaphor.

⁷⁷ That this should be the case is not surprising given that Brecht was, himself, a source of inspiration for Italian neo-realism. For more on this topic, see the interview with Bernardo Bertolucci in the documentary film Neorealism from 1973.

there was a direct contestation of the way Franco's discourse naturalized the myth of its own legitimacy.⁷⁸ By harnessing the established symbolism of the *corrida* but for resistant purposes, neo-realist works turned the dictatorial logic in on itself. The origins of resistance come from two separate but crucial sources: the legacy of representations of the *corrida* as a social critique with 19th century realism, a style that focused on representation through detailed observation, and Italian neo-realism, a cinematographic style that emphasized representing the experience of everyday life through as realistic of means as possible.

Visualizing the Origins of 20th Century Neo-realism

*“...je sais voir
et voir comment voient les myopes,
jusque dans les pores des choses.”*
--Gustave Flaubert in a letter to Louise Colet

*“New styles, new ways of representing reality,
though always linked to old forms and styles,
never arise from any immanent dialectic within artistic forms.
Every new style is socially and historically determined
and is the product of a social development.”*
--Gyorgy Lukacs, “Narrate or Describe?”

The role of the visual is integral to understanding the realist style of representing the world since, as Christopher Prendergast reminds us, “realism invites us above all to look at the world” (4-5). This emphasis is clearly contained in the now often cited description of Benito Pérez Galdós, one of Spain's foremost realist writers insisted that the novel be “Imagen de la vida” (Bonet 159). Minute descriptions of life within a narration were meant to provoke what Erich Auerbach termed “memory-pictures” (471). In fact, realism's emphasis on the visual (pictorial) codes found in painting was what led Roland Barthes to question Flaubert's work,

⁷⁸ While the particulars of Franco's myth-making is not a central concern of this chapter, I refer here to the idea developed elsewhere by scholars such as Jo Labanyi drawing on Roland Barthes's contention that myth functions on the basis that it “transforms history into nature” (*Mythologies* 129).

when he said that it “consist[ed] not in copying the real but in copying a (depicted) copy of the real” (S/Z 55).

It is for this reason that, as Harriet Turner points out, “The realist novel in Spain places a special emphasis on [a] primary engagement with the things of this world” (“The Realist Novel” 81). This engagement, as she notes, works through the trope of the Stendhalian mirror and “expresses the mimesis of [a] visible, external reality” (81). For 19th century realist authors such as Galdós and Leopoldo Alas (Clarín), observation served as a means of documenting the condition of the world around them, a means whereby to critique it (Labanyi “Relocating Difference” 173).

Tied as it was to critique, it is no surprise, then, that the realist style of writing was seen as a viable alternative to the nostalgic, quasi-romantic discourse of Franco’s regime. The symbol of the *corrida*, however, is almost completely absent within the realist production from the nineteenth century. When it does appear, it takes place in more *costumbrista*-inspired sketches wherein a bullfighter is a generic character or as references to actual fighters that situate it in a historical-social context. In fact, the most important role played by a bullfighter in literary production of the time is not in that of a realist novel but is the case of Pepe Vera in the highly *costumbrista* (and, arguably, traditional) novel La gaviota (1864) by Cecilia Bohl de Faber (Fernán Caballero). The *corrida*, then, was not a source for social critique for the major realist novelists, nor, for that matter, much more than a marker of temporal/social position.⁷⁹

Seeing Goya

⁷⁹ As González Troyano demonstrates in a thorough survey of the apparition of elements of the *corrida* in the classic works of Spanish literature, if it appeared at all, it functioned as a way to mark social characteristics or to define village life, in other words, it served as “una mera referencia que, por su propia carga de significación, posibilita *situar*” (182).

Rather, it is in the visual arts that representations of the *corrida* take on a critical function, specifically in the paintings of Francisco Goya. Perhaps best known for his depictions of the Napoleonic invasion in the now iconic paintings, Goya also painted several series including ones featuring bullfighters and the *corrida* in which he, “capitalizes on bullfighting as a symbol of resistance to the dominant order, of a popular Spain battling tyrannical control” (Cropper 26). The Tauromaquia of 33 engravings plus 11 prints published in 1816 and the later set of four lithographs from 1825 entitled Los toros de Burdeos, center on the bullfight, but not as mere depictions of a favorite pastime. Rather, as some scholars have noted, similar to his other work, especially in aquatints, they contain critical content, “attacking the behaviour and nature of mankind” (Glendinning 127). Of note, while generally considered a realist painter, Goya’s work on this series has been claimed to be following a, “didactic and historical approach” (Glendinning 122) that was not meant to be clear-cut documentary, indicating, once again, that rigid adherence to mimetic representation was never particularly the case. It also clearly places representations of the *corrida* within a revolutionary practice of visual critique.⁸⁰

The last in the lithograph series, “Plaza partida” is a clear example of the critical content of Goya’s work on the bullfight.⁸¹ According to José María de Cossío in his multivolume work on bulls and bullfighting, the purpose of this lithograph, and in general in this series, is of showing the degradation of the Spanish essence. The faceless masses in the ring,

⁸⁰ My discussion of the way Goya functions as a means of critique is necessarily brief. For a more thorough overview of scholarship on Goya as well as the way his paintings function as a means of critique, see my previous chapter. In it, I explore how Goya’s work functions critically in a broad and unique sense to criticize the violence of war beyond national partisanship. I also examine how it is linked to the visually anchored project of realists like Galdós and also to a period of change where to see is to be complicit and seeing is critiqued, as occurs in Neo-realism. My purpose in invoking Goya here is to offer another example of how his work emphasizes the visual tradition of critique in Spain.

⁸¹ Figure 2.2

indistinguishable and lumped together, for example, are a demonstration of characters who give an overwhelming impression of, “visiones de una humanidad bestial e instintiva que sonr e ante la sangre y arriesga su vida con est pida indiferencia” (739). Coss o’s reading, however, does not go far enough in emphasizing the uniqueness of the critique. What is lost in an overly literary interpretation is the importance of the visual, and, most importantly, the spectator, in this lithograph.

If, as Michel Foucault suggests, the modern era in art is characterized by the rising importance of the spectator viewing the print,⁸² what “Plaza partida” exemplifies is the move beyond criticizing Spanish society and toward playing with perspective so as to imbricate the spectator in the critique. In the context of Goya’s work, critics such as Janice Tomlinson and Fred Licht have suggested that the modernity and novelty of Goya’s work was a break from the typical painterly relationship to the spectator (Tomlinson 71, Licht, Goya186). Goya, especially in the work done in Bordeaux, France near the end of his life (including the set in which we find “Plaza Partida”), plays with perspective and addresses the spectator. Rather than present a singular, central figure who represents the heroism of a particular event in order to send an artist-imposed message to the viewer, Goya’s shifts in perspective have the effect of involving the spectator, “He forces us to see with *our* eyes, not with his” (Licht, Goya186). In these particular paintings, Werner Hofmann has suggested the perspective of the spectator is one of being above, looking down, aloof (28). What this perspective offers is a representation of the crowd that is, indeed, a swarm of humanity whose presentation is not what one might expect to see but

⁸² In his reading of Vel zquez’s Las Meninas, Foucault marks the break from the Classical to the Modern regime to the movement from representation to the man who “appears in his ambiguous position as an object of knowledge and as a subject that knows: enslaved sovereign, observed spectator, he appears in the place belonging to the king, which was assigned to him in advanced by Las Meninas, but from which his real presence has for so long been excluded” (The Order of Things 312).

something akin to the grotesqueness of the *esperpento* tradition wherein we are meant to see the absurd and perhaps even smile, but it would be a bitter smile rather than an entertained one.⁸³ As Frances Weber suggested regarding the way the *esperpento* in Ramón de Valle-Inclán was conceived, the grotesque esthetic that so characterized this aesthetic was meant to function similarly to Brecht's "estrangement effect" that was mentioned earlier whereby things are recognized to be warped under the veneer which society imposes upon them.⁸⁴ This effect seems evident based on the position of the spectator him/herself and the use of light in "Plaza Partida." As the light in the center highlights the grotesque face of the torero, we discover that there is no particular inciting factor that prompted the chaos but rather that it is a consequence of the disturbing nature of the acts being committed, acts that extend beyond those of a singular person. The perpetrators of the chaos, however, are not any particular group but an anonymous mass of men and women, "whose lives are exemplary only insofar as they are shared by an immense mass of deprived and suffering humanity" (Licht, Goya 44). For this reason, we find them in the shadows.

The chaotic tone is pervasive in the print, with the little negative space creating intensity as one's eye focuses on the center of the painting, away from the dark corners, and into the emptiness in the middle that is illuminated by the light. As the title indicates, this is a divided ring with two separate *lidas* happening at the same time. This repetitive element creates a sensation of temporality, of an event that is not singular but part of a longstanding tradition of the same. This partitioning also adds a dimension of instability thanks to the figures scaling the wall,

⁸³ This assertion that the link between Goya and the *esperpento* tradition typified in the work of Ramón de Valle-Inclán was made by Valle-Inclán himself in his Luces de Bohemia when he stated, "El esperpentismo lo ha inventado Goya" (56).

⁸⁴ Weber actually claims that this is the aim of Valle-Inclán but that it fails. This, however, does not negate the argument in relation to Goya.

straddling it, as they go from one side to the other, constantly in motion but never fixed in one place. On either side of the divide are bulls, on the upper left, a bull being taunted by a figure that appears half man, half phantom (definitely not heroic or strong) and on the lower right, a stupidly smiling figure is poised to sever the bull's spinal cord with his *estoque*.

While "Plaza partida" clearly exhibits a critique of a society rife with violence and the subsequent degradation of humanity, the despair that permeates it is not a manipulative despair that seeks to force the spectator to feel as the artist does but a slightly grotesque, distanced one. This is not, however, a manipulative despair that seeks to force the spectator to feel as the artist does, but a distanced one.⁸⁵ The mirror in Goya that holds society up to itself is a concave one; it shows the distortions in society, exposing the absurdity of life.

In light of the work of Goya as a predecessor grounds 20th century neo-realism in the critical world of the grotesque and *esperpentino*, marking it as different to other neo-realisms as functioning less on an emotional level than on a rational one.⁸⁶

Moving Neo-realism

If Spanish neo-realism inherited the concave mirror from the esperpentine tradition, it inherits other important characteristics from the Italian one, although perhaps not what Félix A. Morlion considered the philosophical basis for Italian cinematic neo-realism, the "finestra magic" that somehow shows reality (98). In an age dominated by sight, the relationship between seeing and the cinematic style of filmmaking known as neo-realism is a paradigmatic one. While

⁸⁵ As explored in the introduction, in Los desastres de la guerra the lack of sentimentality seems to serve a purpose since in those depictions it "set forth the sober truth about human conflict: that it kills, and kills again, and that its killing obeys urges embedded at least as deeply in the human psyche as any impulse toward pity, fraternity or mercy" (Hughes 289). In the case of "Plaza partida," the senseless violence being committed in the ring critiques the participants in the ring but also those looking on in silence as spectators of the carnage.

⁸⁶ Marsha Kinder actually mentions the *esperpento* in relation to the neo-realist cinema but only briefly (115).

the influence of Italian neo-realism is readily acknowledged (for the most part) in regards to Spanish neo-realist film, as Luis Miguel Fernández points out, the significant event for literary neo-realism is, “la llegada del cine neorealist antes de la novela y el impulso dado por el neorealismo a nuestra cultura” (113).

Although this assertion of influences seems at odds with the accounts of writers such as Jesús López Pacheco, who denies being influenced by non-Spanish novels, as Fernández demonstrates, many others affirmed this, including J. García Hortelano (Nuevas amistades 1959) who insisted that, “Hoy un escritor desinteresado por el cine es como un escritor que no lee” (12). Juan Goytisolo, one of those to critically address the movement both in his novels and a critical discussion in Problemas de la novela (1959), made specific reference to the outside influences on the movement (5) and, in a later interview insisted on the role of cinema saying, “El prodigioso despertar cultural iniciado en este país después de la guerra ha llegada a nosotros a través del cine” (“Responde Goytisolo”). It should be noted that, as much as cinema influenced literature, this link between the visual and narrative was not a one-way street, however, as there was a fluidity between the media with the literary influencing the cinematic and vice versa. What this suggests is that understanding one medium during this period requires a nuanced reading that is not limited to one medium or the other, but rather that acknowledges the constant interplay between the two (or several). In fact, I would suggest that understanding this exchange is fundamental to understanding (and not minimizing) its political relevance to its time period since it allowed writers and filmmakers to use whatever artistic means were at their disposal to contest their dictatorial regime.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ It is, in fact, not a particularly Spanish feature that neo-realism crossed disciplinary boundaries as the criticism of Portuguese neo-realism discussed in my first chapter and other articles to the same in the Italian case, for example, indicate. For more on its occurrence in Italy, see Italo

Italian neo-realism, forged in the dictatorship of Benito Mussolini (1922-33), offered a way to tell stories that, although indebted to the realist idea, painting a picture that invited the viewer to look closely at everyday life. Its relationship with the documentary style that “presents life, life as lived and observed (Nichols 166), is no accident. Rather, neo-realism’s roots in documentary have been clearly demonstrated and suggested to be a direct response to the role that documentary played under fascism (Caminati 63). It is hardly surprising, then, given the role that documentary played in the Franco dictatorship, that neo-realism was adopted to the Spanish context and became the, “primary aesthetic model of Spanish dissident film in the 1950s” (Pavlovic 85).⁸⁸

Italian filmmakers such as Roberto Rossellini (Roma città aperta 1945) and Vittorio De Sica (Ladri di biciclette 1948) wanted “not just to record post-war society, but to suggest that events had meaning” (Wood 89). They did so through a variety of means, including using non-professional actors, choosing to shoot in the streets rather than in studios, avoiding unnatural lighting and showing concrete events.⁸⁹ The means whereby events were shown to have meaning took place often through a process of reflection that, Cesare Zavattini, one of the foundational critics for Italian neo-realism explained as, “People understand themselves better than the social fabric; and to see themselves on screen, performing their daily actions [...] to see oneself gives one the sense of being unlike oneself” (222). In this moment, in becoming other to him/herself,

Calvino’s “Il realismo italiano nel cinema e nella narrativa” from 1953 as a case in point wherein it is clear that even from the beginning of the movement in Italy that wended its way to Spain, there were cross-influences at work.

⁸⁸ This is not to say that it did not have similar success among less progressive groups. The Falangist, José Antonio Nieves Conde’s Surcos from 1951 holds a definite critique of the dictatorship but from the right rather than the left. This suggests the style may have been particularly useful for critique in general, but much depended on the intent of the director.

⁸⁹ In 1952, Films et documents in Paris published a set of ten features that a neo-realist film should have, although none of the films actually had all of these.

the person would be capable of perceiving reality. This effect was achieved through the use of handheld cameras and minimal editing of the films made on location rather than in studios that offered a photographic-style of filming that combined classical realism's attempt to capture the general laws underpinning reality and French naturalism's dispassionate observation (Marcus 10).

It has already been discussed that the work of Goya brought a particular strain of objective, unemotional distance to the viewing process that drew in elements of the *esperpento* tradition in order to avoid an overly melodramatic tone. The Italian neo-realist influence brought a cinematographic style of reportage similar to the documentary that also emphasized distance as a way to allow the spectator to see reality. Nonetheless, what characterizes Spanish neo-realism is a fusion of these two influences in a type of storytelling that represents reality as a social critique but shows its unnatural nature with the purpose of questioning the act of seeing, most especially the questioning of how one sees and whether or not seeing can be trusted. This questioning is at the heart of Carlos Saura's Los golfos from 1962, a film clearly influenced by Italian neo-realism and one that places the question of visibility at the heart of its critique of the dictatorship.

Seeing Reality in Film: Carlos Saura's Los golfos

*"We want to decipher skies and paintings,
go behind these starry backgrounds or these painted canvasses
and, like kids trying to find a gap in a fence,
try to look through the cracks in the world."
--Georges Bataille in Story of the Eye*

*"For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.
They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game,
but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change."
--Audre Lorde*

Although the Spanish cinematic scene before the arrival of neo-realism, according to one of the period's film critics, Ricardo Muñoz Suay, was, "aislado no sólo del mundo, sino de

nuestra propia realidad,” this all changed in 1951 with the arrival of the Italian Institute of Culture’s “Week of Italian Cinema” (qtd. in Fernández 97). Among the week’s offerings were important Italian neorealist films such as Vittorio DiSica’s Umberto D (1952) and Roberto Rossellini’s 1946 film, Paisá. Spanish directors such as Juan Antónío Bardem and Luis García Berlanga were participants in these viewings and seized on the neorealist style for the way it represented real life in all its grittiness, all its humanity. Bardem and Berlanga’s collaboration on Esa pareja feliz (1953) was the outcome of their enthusiasm for what they had witnessed onscreen during the week. Following the stylistic demands of Italian neorealism, Esa pareja feliz (and other films produced by directors similarly influenced)⁹⁰ included scenes shot in the streets, “escenas de multitudes, personajes identificables en su clase y sus comportamientos como contemporaneos, y con una preocupación por las personas y sus problemas más triviales” (Fernández 65-6).⁹¹

Despite the influence of Italian film week, the goal of the young directors was not to impose an Italian style on a Spanish context but to, “ver [en el cine Italiano] un acicate para crear un cine español” (Fernández 101). Rather than referring to themselves as Spanish neo-realists,

⁹⁰ While the two major directors of Spanish neo-realism are undeniably Berlanga and Bardem, the influence of the movement can be seen in many of the New Wave films, most notably those of Marco Ferreri (El pisito, 1958, El cochecito, 1960), Miguel Picazo (Tia Tula 1964), even Mario Camus whose Young Sanchez from 1963 is not only based on a neo-realist novel by Ignacio Aldecoa but features the working class of prize fighters, a surprising amount of street shots and crowds.

⁹¹ It is important to point out that, in fact, the showings of Italians were limited, confined as they were to two separate weeks (the first being November 15-21 of 1951 and the second in 1953 from the 2nd to the 8th of March). As Santos Sanz Villanueva has indicated, it may have been less the direct impact of the films themselves than the theoretical postulations surrounding the rise of neo-realism that were being promoted in magazines such as Objetivo or Cinema Universitario (Historia de la novela española actual 99). The 1955 Primeras Conversaciones Cinematográficas Nacionales de Salamanca were fundamentally important to the movement. It makes sense, in this case, to discuss how theoretical (rather than experiential) the influences of Italian neorealism were in the development of Spanish film, which underscores how, tied as it might be to an Italian inspiration, it remained something innovative rather than derivative.

they chose the moniker *Nuevo cine español* (NCE).⁹² Fusing inspiration with long-standing tradition led to what Pedro Almodóvar called, “a kind of neorealism that was far less sentimental than the Italian brand and far more ferocious and amusing” (qtd. in Pavlovic 86).⁹³

Considered generally to be the first film of the NCE, Carlos Saura’s occasional hesitancy to call his 1962 release, Los golfos, a neorealist film has suggested to stem from a desire to be considered a Spanish auteur (akin to Buñuel), although the influence of Italian directors on his production is widely accepted (Fernández 109).⁹⁴ This particular film, finished in 1959 but held up by censors until 1962, rises most clearly from the influences of neo-realism.⁹⁵ Nonetheless,

⁹² While the Spanish directors influenced by neo-realism used the NCE terminology, it covers more than this particular period. According to Marsha Kinder’s categorization in Blood Cinema, the films of the 1950s took place in what she terms the “first phase.” This period as Kinder, Sally Faulkner and Rob Stone (Spanish Cinema) have noted, was highly influenced by neo-realism, although technically part of the larger NCE. According to Faulkner in A Cinema of Contradiction: Spanish Film in the 1960s, other sources of influence for the films of this period were “a patchy knowledge of Marxism” as well as the Spanish Social Novel (11). While the influence of Marxism was undeniable (although it has yet to be demonstrably proven that this influence went above and beyond its already existing influence in Italian neo-realism), as this chapter seeks to demonstrate, the influence with novels was more complex and intertwined.

⁹³ Despite this, it is important to note that even Italian neo-realism is not considered to be a particularly stable, purely Italian style, as much as a combination of influences that “acquired an exclusive passport only briefly during the war and the anti-fascist resistance” (Denning 11). For more on this, see Millicent Marcus in Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism and Saverio Giovacchini and Robert Sklar’s introduction to their book-length edited volume on the influence of neo-realism in Global Neorealism: The Transnational History of a Film Style. This clear discussion of the Italian movement can be used in the context of the Spanish movement to sidestep what Steve Marsh in Popular Spanish Film Under Franco indicates is a contentious (and unproductive) debate over whether the NCE was wholly Spanish or a mere derivation of other influences.

⁹⁴ I refer here to Saura’s clarification that, “Cuando digo que Los golfos no es una película neorealista, pues no sé, quizás no debería decirlo porque lo que sí es verdad es que todos nosotros estábamos influenciados en esa época de una forma decisiva por el movimiento neorealista” (qtd in Fernández 109).

⁹⁵ Although scholars have complicated the inheritance as Marsha Kinder places Los golfos somewhere between neo-realism and Hollywood styles (39) and Maria Delgado indicates the influence of the French New Wave (42), its indebtedness neo-realism is obvious. Scenes are shot out of doors with grainy, grey stock; it uses almost completely non-professional actors (except for Visi the prostitute, which is somewhat ironic), natural settings that are emphasized at the

through the metaphor of the *corrida*, it portrays not only everyday life under dictatorship but questions the fundamental way whereby the dictatorship controlled its populace: sight. While the role of the visual within Saura's work has already been established as one that involves what Marvin D'Lugo terms a "practice of seeing,"⁹⁶ I would like to suggest that at the heart of this particular film is not only a practice but an interrogation of how and what we see, of seeing itself. Beyond mere representation of the dynamics of the dictatorship, it offers a serious critique of strategies of opposition, suggesting that resistance is a varied proposition that requires more than a simple unveiling of what is "really" there. By using a cinematic style fundamentally tied to the idea of representing reality as it is seen, Saura's film perversely foils the power of sight, intimating that, although sight may seem to be the means whereby one accrues power, this sort of power is only given to a particular group of people and attempting to incorporate into that same scopical regime is not only not the answer but is also doomed to failure.

The premise of the film seems straightforward but, upon closer look, Los golfos is a psychological portrait wrapped in a neo-realist style; an ontological investigation into the life of a group of men who belong to the *lumpenproletariat*. Living in the margins of society in Legazpi, the young men survive by theft (or, in the case of the secondary and only female protagonist, Visi, by prostitution). Longing for something other than this existence, the group pins their hopes on Juan, a young man who works by day as a stevedore but aspires to become a

beginning of the film when we are told explicitly that it used "escenas naturales." Even the staging metaphors of the Italian neo-realist tradition are evident; using stairs to transition between worlds, employing panoramic shots of the city from above and so forth.

⁹⁶ D'Lugo further contends that this seeing takes place throughout Saura's work via a "restaging of spectators within the narrative" (7) such that we can locate a practice of seeing that empowers the spectator to interrogate the world around him/her (11). In the case of Los golfos, however, the question of empowering the spectator is much less obvious. Rather, I argue that this film is less about empowering the spectator and more about making him/her complicit in what is occurring onscreen.

bullfighter. The film unrolls as the group attempts to scrape together enough money to sponsor and promote Juan's first public fight in the hopes that it will grant him instant recognition (and sponsorship), the seemingly only viable possibility for changing their lives since, "in the context of the period, one of the most brilliant and rapid channels for their hopes would be bullfighting" (Braso qtd. in D'Lugo 34). Unfortunately, the plans go awry. In their quest to raise the startup fees, they assault and rob a taxi driver, a detail that comes back to haunt them. As the group begins to promote Juan's debut, his fight draws attention, but not the kind the gang hoped for. Rather than drawing in the crowds to see him fight, it draws the gang to the attention of the municipal police. After a lengthy chase scene, desperate to avoid capture, one member of the group, Paco, jumps down a manhole. We later discover that he does not survive. He drowns in the sewer system and washes up onto the riverside. The film concludes as the police arrive at the same bullfighting ring where Juan is about to fight his first bull, and it is clear that they will apprehend him for the assault. As the final credits begin, it is clear no riches will save these boys from their rags.

As relatively unembellished and straightforward as the storyline may be, the depth of Saura's film comes from its acknowledgement and portrayal of the complexities of everyday life. The film offers up a dizzying array of real life protagonists, but never individually. Juan's story may technically be the center of the film, but the viewer never forms a particular attachment to him. Rather it is a story of a gang, of an entire subset of the population, all of whom represent the moral ambiguity of the everyday. Unlike Franco's discourse that placed the true Spanish, the victors of the Civil War and defenders of the Catholic faith as the only important (and heroic) members of society, the protagonists of this film defy monolithic notions of Spanishness. On the one hand, the situation of those living on the outskirts of the city is clearly depicted as difficult.

The camera shows us the rundown shacks where the group and their families live and elsewhere unveils the dehumanization of workers in a “productive” society who, like Juan, haul produce as if they were pack animals.

On the other hand, while we are meant to understand the difficulties facing these protagonists, there is a refusal to adhere to the “heroic” underclass notion so prevalent in the Italian films. Although the end of Rossellini’s Roma città aperta is hopeful, despite the deaths of the protagonists, there is no hope for Juan, or his group, at the end of the film. In fact, Juan, while presumably the center of the story, is a particularly anti-climatic figure who has less time on screen than supposedly secondary characters and his eventual failure in the ring merely intensifies the sense of hopelessness in the film since there is no one to save them.

Additionally, while the character of Antonio Ricci in De Sica’s Ladri di biciclette is a brave figure who struggles against all odds to save his family, the *golfos* are precisely what their name suggests: hooligans/delinquents. Unable to strike at those who have put them in this miserable position, they resort to attacking those who are just as marginalized as they are. We see them rob a blind woman and steal a crutch from a cripple. Solidarity with their fellow humans is a luxury they cannot afford. This presentation refuses to allow the characters to be, “reduced to the condition of an object or a symbol that would allow one to hate them in comfort without first having to leap the hurdle of their humanity” as André Bazin insisted must be the case in a neo-realist film (What is Cinema? 2 21).⁹⁷ The reality of these protagonists, then, comes as a result of their ordinariness rather than their exceptionalness.

That sight is at the center of the society portrayed in the film is made clear from the first scene. The opening camera shot is of a lottery sign with the camera panning down to reveal a

⁹⁷ This is one of the reasons why Bazin stipulates in his discussion of neo-realist cinema that, “everybody in the film is overwhelmingly real” (What is Cinema? 2 21).

woman wearing dark glasses and selling lottery tickets. This woman would have been easily recognizable to a Spanish audience familiar with the ONCE (*Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles*). As the blind woman sits in her booth, a young man enters and robs her of her earnings. This scene seems, then, to demonstrate what is intuitive to most viewers: blindness makes you powerless. The one who sees has control.

Nonetheless, in the light of the following scene and the rest of the film, Saura seems to be problematizing this assertion by assigning the sight/control dynamic to only one sector of the population as will soon become clear. Following the robbery, the camera cuts to what appears to be a completely incongruent location: a practice bullfighting ring. While at first the viewer is confused as to the relevance, it is clarified at the end of the scene, as Ramón appears, and we recognize him to be the same person who robbed the blind woman. The earnings from theft will go to pay for Juan, the aspiring *torero*'s practice session.

Additional scenes following these first seem to affirm the idea that seeing is connected to power. The young men are able to filch from trucks full of goods, pickpocket and commit other petty acts of theft without being noticed which allows them to survive. It might well be that this could have continued on indefinitely, were it not for one factor: their desire to rise above their situation and become something through Juan making a name for himself in bullfighting. Being seen is, in fact, at the heart of their downfall since, had they never attempted to rise above their level, but continued to function within the relatively easy and obscure realm of pilfering and its relative invisibility, they would never have been physically marked by the system as criminals. As part of their series of crimes, they assault and rob from the wrong person, a taxi driver whose description of them makes them visible for the first time in their lives.

On the day they begin to promote Juan's upcoming debut in the *corrida*, this same taxi driver comes across them with their promotional posters in a public plaza and recognizes some of the boys from the group that assaulted him. In what is almost a perfect representation of what Louis Althusser coined as interpellation,⁹⁸ the taxi driver recognizes Paco, saying suspiciously, "Y tú, ¿de dónde te conozco chaval?" Startled, Paco takes flight as the taxi driver shouts for the police, "A ese, ¡el ladrón! ¡El ladrón!" As we watch from an angle high above, at a distance, Paco runs through the streets, desperate to escape until he finally plunges into a drain, never to see the light of day again. Unable to control the way his image has circulated among the police, Paco loses his life.

The act of being made visible is what marks them all. Even after Paco's death, as Juan enters the bullfighting ring, we notice the police alongside, watching. It is made clear to the viewer that the police know Juan is one of the boys they are after, but that they will wait until after the fight to apprehend him. Juan is a marked man, even before he steps into the ring. His dismal failure in the actual fight can actually be anticipated since, as Foucault states regarding the delinquent is that, according to the system, he is bound to be what he is since is, "not only the author of his acts (the author responsible in terms of certain criteria of free, conscious will) but is *linked to his offense by a whole bundle of complex threads* (instincts, drives tendencies, character)" (*Discipline and Punish* 252-3).⁹⁹

Thus, his failure in the ring is merely an echo of a previous scene wherein Juan's young brother helps him dress in his uniform. His brother, with pride, tells Juan, "pareces alguien."

⁹⁸ By this I refer to Althusser's 1970 essay, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)" in which he first discusses the act of a policeman (sic) hailing a suspect as a specific means of marking a suspect.

⁹⁹ What I am suggesting with this link to Foucault's argument regarding delinquency is not that Saura is stating a delinquent can never be more than a delinquent but that, once the system marks a person as belonging to a certain group, regardless of personal aspirations, he is doomed to fail.

While, of course, this is just a saying, the events in the following scene suggest that it is more than that, that is a critical indication that there is a distinct difference between appearing to be something and actually being, that, as far as the onlookers are concerned, Juan could never be more than what he was because he was a delinquent. While Juan might try to look like someone other than what he is, he will never be allowed to be that: appearance and reality are not the same. As much as Juan might wear the uniform, he goes into the ring and proves that he is not a heroic figure, but rather doomed from the beginning. He is a terrible bullfighter, so abysmal that the audience begins to leave in disgust as he repeatedly fails to deliver the final blow. As the film ends, we see the death throes of the bull that Juan has finally managed to dispatch and the camera closes with a still of the head of the now-dead creature, his eyes completely closed.

This final scene is crucial to understanding the function of sight within the film, or, perhaps more precisely, blindness. Los golfos presents various levels of blindness, from the blind woman who is robbed by the delinquents to the delinquents themselves. This suggests that blindness operates on many levels, because it is systemic (with those who see slightly more taking advantage of those who see less). It also suggests that, in part, the blindness is a chosen one. The boys encounter problems not only because of their social status but because they make the mistake of thinking that, by incorporating into the regime that is oppressing them, they will succeed when, in fact, it was never a possibility in the first place as they were marked to fail from the beginning given the parameters of the society they live in.

If, then, the entire society is characterized by a blindness to the reality that society is regimented in such a way as to allow no one to rise above his/her particular location, we cannot speak of the storyline itself showing how resistance might function in society. Resistance comes from outside, not by making an example of a possible resistance for the spectators to follow but

through the spectators themselves via the technical features of the film. While Franco's narrative was characterised by creating a cohesive story out of the past, as seen earlier, Saura denies this type of storytelling by piecing together his scenes with more fluidity.¹⁰⁰ What this type of montage accomplishes is what Bertolt Brecht called the "smoking-and-watching" effect in his discussion on the way theater could function as a means of political action (Brecht on Theatre 44). In this film, one cannot remain within the confines of the film, understanding the world as constructed by the filmmaker and achieving a sense of complacency. Rather, Saura uses camera angles and cuts between scenes that force the spectator to piece together what is happening on his/her own.¹⁰¹

For example, camera angles are sometimes used to conflate characters. Early on in the film we meet the character of Visi, a woman who lives in the neighborhood. We eventually figure out that she is a prostitute although it is never explicitly stated, because she is often gone overnight and will only spend time with Julian, one of the gang, if he pays her. In one scene, as she steps out of the taxi from an overnight stay, the camera shows us the street above. She pauses before she descends the stairs into the neighborhood. We see ample evidence of the clothing she is wearing, with the camera placed behind her, looking out at the overpass that divides the two worlds.¹⁰² Several scenes later, we see a woman who is strikingly similar but in a different context, this time in a closed space, with the camera framing her claustrophobically, trapping her

¹⁰⁰ Stylistically speaking, this is a trademark of neorealism. As Kristin Thompson and others have pointed out in regards to the Italian phenomenon, the "reality" of the events becomes amplified by means of fragmentation (215-17). Or, in the words of Rossellini, "The logical thread of the story is my enemy" (qtd. in Wagstaff 86).

¹⁰¹ Interestingly enough, this effect is one that Brecht championed as a way to make theater more like sport.

¹⁰² Figure 2.3

in our gaze as she is caught in the gazes of the men around her.¹⁰³ Only after a few moments do we start to suspect she is not the same woman, from her gait, and eventually our suspicions are confirmed when we see her face inside the bar. Before this, however, we have no way of knowing one way or the other, because our sight is purposely limited. The camera forces the viewer to question who is being filmed, what is occurring, to stay alert in order to follow the storyline.

Not only does this film suggest that the camera limits our sight,¹⁰⁴ just as the characters in the film have limited sight, but what the montage refuses to give us in the form of a linear or coherent storyline is sometimes only able to be pieced together by other senses, especially the sense of hearing. This occurs most clearly in a scene in which, with Paco, Manolo and Julián as lookouts, Ramón and António set about nonchalantly stealing equipment from underneath a truck parked outside a restaurant. As António and Ramón are underneath the truck, the camera cuts to two middle-aged women holding *folletines* and singing a song. With no idea where these women came from, nor any clue as to how to place the wall they are standing against within the film's frames of reference, we are forced to focus on the lyrics of the song, a "declaración" against a criminal they identify by name who killed a "matrimonio joven" and their "criada." Although the camera eventually reveals that the women are standing outside a furniture store by slowly widening the focus of the lens, it is only by the appearance of Chato and António from the gang that we begin to realize that this particular store is a location where the young men sell their stolen goods. The women continue singing as the deal is concluded between the young men

¹⁰³ Figure 2.4

¹⁰⁴ María Delgado contends that in post-Franco films, Saura often interrogated the medium of film (375), but it seems that Los golfos was already doing this long before.

and the store owners and the women, as oddly as they appeared, disappear again into the camera's memory.

This musical interruption is an exemplary moment of the Deleuzian cliché that marks what he termed the new-image of film (Italian neo-realism and French New Wave) since it bridges the gap between two scenes in the film but is one of those “events which descend on the characters and which do not belong to those who undergo or provoke them” (Cinema 1 208). It is a confirmation and exemplification of the contingency underscoring everything in life, of the random pieces that form no coherent part of a typical storyline but always of a typical life. The effect of this moment on the viewer is similar to that of the disparate camera angles: it separates the viewer from the world in which the film is taking place, moving him/her to another location, defamiliarizing the situation and effectively blinding the spectator. This, even if only for a moment, places the spectator in the same situation as the characters in the film. It does not, however, leave the spectator blind as they are. Rather, it offers a way out via audio clues that allow the spectator to have an idea of what is occurring. This indicates that, despite the blindness at work, there may be ways to conceive of another way of understanding the world, one that is not co-opted by social norms of blindness.

Los golfos is not a mere matter of defying an oppressive government structure through portraying reality. It is, rather, a complicated display of how power functions. It reveals the economic structure of delinquency in which an entire stratum of society is deemed “delinquent” while another is not, merely because of the forms it takes. So, although we see the gross exploitation on the part of the marketers of bullfighting, they are not the ones punished by the system but rather the boys who, desperate for a way to escape, buy into the dream and are punished far more than their crime deserved (theft leads to death). While Foucault writes that the

punishment of delinquency is a means of showing state power by pathologizing the delinquent subject, in this film, that attempt is unveiled because the delinquents become humanized for the viewer through their struggles and even all too real faults (Discipline and Punish 277).

The point of view of the viewer is key in this film. While it may seem problematic, through most of the film, that it is functioning on a level of scopophilia¹⁰⁵ such that the viewers are privy to the lives and suffering of strangers in a way that, while not erotic, could be seen as overly intimate, the ending scene erases that pleasurable distance for the viewer and reveals his/her complicity in what has just occurred, similar to what Laura Mulvey pinpoints as Hitchcock's implication of the spectator in his film, Vertigo, "the spectator, lulled into a false sense of security [...] sees through his look and finds himself exposed as complicit, caught in the moral ambiguity of looking" (14).¹⁰⁶ This same moment of exposure as complicit occurs for the viewer at the end of Los golfos. Having been able to keep a certain amount of distance throughout, the viewer is suddenly reminded not only that s/he might also be under surveillance but that s/he is part of the system of surveillance, of passive watching.

As Rancière reminds us, members of society function in complicity with the controlling entities when the police says, "Move along! There is nothing to see here!" and the person complies with the order, effectively blinding him/herself. "The police says that there is nothing to see on a road, that there is nothing to do but move along" (Dissensus 22). In Los golfos, the viewer is brought face-to-face with his/her own complicity in the social injustice developed in

¹⁰⁵ This psychoanalytic term, extrapolated to film theory, was used by Laura Mulvey as early as 1975 to critique the power relations between viewer and film because the, due to the effects of lighting and distance, according to Mulvey, the viewer is allowed to experience a pleasure that is basically voyeuristic and, in her view, often reinforced patriarchal social patterns (8).

¹⁰⁶ While I am aware that Mulvey uses this particular example as a way to illustrate how a spectator is implicated in erotic voyeurism, there is a question of power in all discussions regarding this issue (who has the right to look and who has to be looked at) that goes beyond eroticism and is pertinent here as well.

the film. This complicity, however, is not empowerment, because seeing what has occurred does not seem to be enough given the ending of the film. Nonetheless, what Saura seems to be taking is the first step toward un-blinding society, toward erasing passive acceptance of whatever one is told to think. Recognition, then, seems to be a method of, or at least a step towards, resistance for Saura.

Reading Resistance: Ignacio Aldecoa and the Short Story

“This triviality made him think of collecting many such moments together in a book of epiphanies. By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments.”

--James Joyce in Stephen Hero (211)

“...there is no such thing as silence. Something is always happening that makes a sound.”

--John Cage on 4'33”

If Saura's suggestion in Los golfos is that the only way to counter a visually dominated empire is by questioning the visual and the spectator's relationship with it, it is in the writers of the same period that we see a questioning not only of the influence of sight but a clearer example of how other means might be encountered. The employment of the *corrida* as a metaphor in these cases pushes to the forefront how this type of resistance might occur.

Termed the *generación puente* by the writer and literary critic, J.M. Castelet, or, more colorfully, the *generación de la berza* by Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, works by Spanish writers during the 1950s and early 1960s were part of a movement of a “highly intentional mode of writing” that David Herzberger defines as one in which there dominated:

The belief that objective reality exists and is translatable, the perceived coincidence between sign and referent; the notion that a literature committed to social action is able to transform the world into something other than it is (Herzberger 40).

Referred to as “social realism” by some, especially early on in the movement,¹⁰⁷ an alternate moniker has been the *novela social*, most likely because the works that are generally considered to form a part of it are all novels, such as Jesús López Pacheco’s Central eléctrica (1958), La mina (1960) by Armand López Salinas as well as Juan García Hortelano’s first novel. Perhaps more well-known given their extensive production and circulation comparatively speaking (and the literary criticism surrounding it) are Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio (El Jarama 1955), Jesús Fernández Santos (Los bravos 1954), Ignacio Aldecoa’s El fulgor y la sangre and Juan Goytisolo’s earlier work, Juegos de manos (1954), Duelo en el paraíso (1955) and the trilogy written from 1957-59 comprised of El circo, Fiestas, and La Resaca.¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, despite its wide appeal in criticism, as Barry Jordan has pointed out in Writing and Politics in Franco’s Spain regarding the use of the term, *novela social*, there is “no originary, pure, stable meaning to which we can all refer as a starting point” (17).¹⁰⁹

Although this lack of cohesion may be considered problematic by some, it seems fairly ingenious given that these works were attempting to counter an ideology of an originary, stable

¹⁰⁷ Not to be confused with “socialist realism” which had similar roots but became a propaganda mechanism for the Soviet state.

¹⁰⁸ Despite this extensive list, as Brad Epps has pointed out, only El Jarama appears in most lists of canonical works from this period which he posits may be due to what is often perceived as a break from the “typical” style of a social novel. For more, see “Spanish Prose, 1975-2002.”

¹⁰⁹ The majority of critics follow the early definitions set forth for the *novela social* by Pablo Gil Casado and Gonzalo Sobejano in the late 1960s and early 1970s. A few, such as Hipolito Esteban Soler and Santos Sanz Villanueva, attempt to separate the works into stages based on their social commitment with Sanz Villanueva going so far as to propose that there is a difference between what he deems neo-realist literature and social realist. Given that my interest here is in noting the influence of the visual, I have chosen to focus only on writing after the 1950s since the eruption of neo-realist cinema is clearly at work after this point.

and unified Spanish nation. Additionally, grappling with the notion of writing as a means of engaging the world in a meaningful way cannot be condensed to certain, easily-defined parameters, as Bertolt Brecht points out in a response to Lúkacs (who in Brecht's reading set forth an overly strict criteria for the style).¹¹⁰ Brecht advocated for a broader understanding of realism in works that does not insist on copying exactly previous works (and, therefore, stripping a work of its political agency) since "Literary works cannot be taken over like factories" ("Against Georg Lukács" 81).

Aldecoa's work is an exemplary case for studying the works of neo-realism because of his prolific production, particularly in the case of the short story. Although his novels were successful,¹¹¹ he flew in the face of contemporary understanding of the role of the short story in which it was generally seen that, "el relato corto es un paso que da el joven escritor, camino de mayores empresas narrativas" (Rodríguez de Aldecoa 12). Aldecoa, by contrast, wrote short stories throughout his career, over one hundred of them between 1947-70, publishing at first in magazines such as La hora, Juventud and Correo literario, later moving on to collect his stories in anthologies. Fitting with the 20th century aesthetic of abbreviation, Aldecoa's collection of short stories is worthy of attention because of the way it harnesses the realist aesthetic.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ In point of fact, Frederic Jameson problematized this assumption of Lukács in 1977, asserting that, while Brecht was right to claim that Lukács's critiques were overly invested in labeling everything, "abuse of class ascription should not lead to over-reaction and mere abandonment" of his ideas ("Reflections in Conclusion" 201). However, given that I am working with ideas that Brecht proposed here, I am citing his response to Lukács.

¹¹¹ His novel, El fulgor y la sangre, lost the prestigious Premio Planeta by one vote.

¹¹² Walter Benjamin, in his lament over the end of the oral tradition of storytelling, cites Valéry's contention that, "Modern man no longer works at what cannot be abbreviated" (Illuminations). Benjamin suggests that this and the subsequent rise of the short story has taken away the ability to reveal a "slow piling one on top of the other of thin, transparent layers which constitutes the most appropriate picture of the way in which the perfect narrative is revealed." While Valéry (and Benjamin)'s contentions are valid, in the light of Brecht's insistence that, "Realism is not a mere question of form," a specific rebuttal to Lúkacs's preferences for the novel ("Against Georg

Among his many stories, the two in this chapter embody the neo-realist aesthetic in that they focus on everyday, non-glamorous, anti-heroic characters who are part of a larger collective. The subjects are, however, treated from a specific point of view, one that reflects Aldecoa's commitment to narrative worlds filled with "los oficios de riesgo y la frustración; los toros y el boxeo," depicting protagonists who, "humildes, fracasados, acceden al oficio sabiendo o temiendo de antemano que nunca llegarán" (Rodríguez de Aldecoa 30). The endings of the stories are open, just as the neo-realist model predicts they should be.¹¹³ "Caballo de pica" from 1961, contains a similar critique as that of *Los golfos* whereas "Los pozos" from 1963 goes even further, to suggest what other possibilities might be available.

"Caballo de pica"

"Caballo de pica"¹¹⁴ begins with a narrative description of what appears to be a normal evening in an everyday neighborhood complete with drunken singing and a fight between a woman and her "caballerazo" (Aldecoa 181). The neighborhood is older and closely placed house's roofs block out the stars. Visibility is already a question, as the "luz del colmado castizo apenas se filtraba a la calle." As filtered through the buildings, the lack of light produces a distorted view of reality that continues throughout the story.

While "Caballo de pica" portrays one evening in Toledo, the multiple currents flowing underneath it stand in for much larger social problems and insights into human thinking that

Lúkacs" 82), what I would like to suggest in examining several short stories is to show the way they can work together to reveal this same, layered, picture in a modern form.

¹¹³ Zavattini specifically insisted that open endings were preferable because "from a practical point of view [...] 'this is reality'" (223).

¹¹⁴ A *caballo de pica* is the horse used by the *picador* in the ring. The *picador* carries a long stick, with a pointed, metal end (the *pica*) that he uses to injure the bull. As Robin Fiddian points out, these "horses are exposed to the physical onslaught which may end in fatal injury, but there is no appreciation of their role, no acknowledgment of their suffering" (114). The bullfighter in the story, just like the horse, has never had his suffering acknowledged and his role as a member of society is completely devalued until he eventually becomes the comic relief.

offer the reader, “more and more knowledge, precise and simple of human needs and the motives governing them” (Zavattini 227). Thus, the reader is introduced to Juan Rodrigo, Andalusian flamenco singer and frequenter of the local bar. What moves the storyline along in a strongly realist-inspired style is its focus on narration over description, using dialogue to propel the story forward. For example, the narrator does not just inform us that Juan Rodrigo speaks “con dejuelo andaluz, derrochando máximas y consejos cazurros” (Aldecoa 182) but Juan Rodrigo’s speech is peppered with the same. It is as much from his conversation as from the descriptions of him that we come to understand that the singer has a certain wealth and status, as indicated by the deference paid to him by the bartender and the way he orders drinks for, “un banderillero viejo, de la pandereta de los pueblos, blancos de sol, de cal y de heladas o con el tueste de los esqueletos abandonados en el desierto” (182). We also learn that the relationship between the singer and the *banderillero* is one in which Rodrigo is generous not out of kindness, but because the old bullfighter serves a purpose. Rodrigo uses him as the comic relief to his vocal performances. The *banderillero*’s role is to “hacer palmas, gracias y recados,” to serve as the butt of his jokes (184).

The society portrayed in the novel is a hierarchical one based on financial status and the ownership of private property. The *banderillero* ranks at the bottom, ailing and “sin clavel y al amparo de los amigos” (184). Rodrigo, by virtue of owning “parneses y casas” is somewhere in the middle, in service to the upper class, “el señorito Alberto” who, hyperbolically or not, is said to own half of Toledo (186). The disparate class system sets the scene for the *banderillero*’s suffering and his eventual loss of life since, lacking financial value (no property), he has no human value.

It is in the final scene that we see most clearly both the narrative emphasis of the realist style of the story as well as its cinematic influence. Arriving at the party of Alberto and his rich friends, Rodrigo and the *banderillero* encounter a scene somewhat reminiscent of a feudal court with the king surrounded by his knights and musicians, the old bullfighter as the court jester. The *banderillero*, however, fails to be funny enough for the audience and gets too drunk on the free-flowing alcohol, prompting Ramirín, one of the courtly cadre, to decide that the most exciting course of action would be to make sure that he gets as drunk as possible, that “se agarra la toña de su vida” (189). To this end, Ramirín finds a funnel, shoves it down the *banderillero*’s throat and proceeds to pour alcohol into his body, effectively drowning him to death. The story unravels quickly from there, with the *banderillero*’s aged body turning into a corpse before anyone realises or even thinks of stopping it. There ends the narrative.

What gives this final scene its cinematographic quality, however, is the effect created by the writing style. The use of narrative over description and the ironic tone collude such that the reader experiences a feeling of distance akin to that alienation effect (*Verfremdung-effekt*) that Brecht advocated in theatrical writing. For Brecht, the best way to present a political play was to write, “in such a way that the audience was hindered from simply identifying with the characters in the play” (Brecht on Theatre 91). In a Brechtian play, the spectator would remain conscious of what was happening onstage, always capable of accepting or rejecting what was being seen instead of allowing emotional empathy to cloud his/her understanding.

In the context of “Caballo de pica,” this same effect occurs through the narration. While we see the social disparity, the narrator refuses to allow us to identify with any particular character. As abhorrent as Rodrigo may seem, for example, he is no more disgusting than the bartender who serves drinks with “una dinámica de ratón” (182). Even the old *banderillero*

evinces a minimal amount of sympathy since he has no dignity whatsoever. Pepe pretends to be an expert, an important former bullfighter, but Rodrigo calls him out, reminding him that, “en cuanto te ponían delante un becerrillo se te cortaba la circulación y te entraba el San Vito” (Aldecoa 183).

The divorce between the reader and the *banderillero* is maintained most clearly, however, in the way the narrator, having given a reasonable name to the other characters in the story upon introduction, purposely denies the old bullfighter this courtesy until midway through the story and only then when he introduces himself as “Pepe el trepa,” a despicable nickname that labels him just as servile as his attitude suggests.

The repetition of this name serves the same purpose at the end of the story despite the violence that would, normally, allow the reader to empathize strongly with the *banderillero*'s death. The youths sit the bullfighter down, “Pepe el trepa, extorero, enfermo del pecho, amigo de Juan Rodrigo” (189). Identified by a nickname, by his former occupation, by his health and even by his pertinent affiliations to more important people, Pepe is a no one, “de siete años, sin un clavel y sin amigos” as he begins to drown in the liquid being forced down his throat, too inebriated to even realise what is happening or to protest (189). In the precise moment when the reader should/could most empathize with the horror of the situation, Pepe is dehumanized again, by repetition of his disturbing name and the description that someone at the party jokingly gives, comparing him to “los caballos de la pica. El penco estira las patas” (189).

Despite the obvious comparison with the horse in a bullfighting ring,¹¹⁵ the gravity of the situation does not seem to register with anyone, since, after all, his *patas*, not his legs are flailing,

¹¹⁵ It was a well-known fact that under the Primo de Rivera dictatorship earlier in the 20th century (1923-30), after a particularly gruesome event in which the *caballo de pica* at a bullfight was gored to death in front of Primo de Rivera and his invited female guest, it became mandatory to

reducing him to the level of animal. Furthermore, as the narrator points out in what could be interpreted to be a sarcastic tone, “la cosa tenía gracia” (189). In the midst of their hilarity, Pepe falls down, dead, as silent as they wished him to be in the first place, no longer bothering them with the too real nature of his difficult life. The only people allowed to suffer, to speak of their sufferings, are those who by nature of their social status have no such problems to begin with. By denying the humanity of Pepe, the socialites are able to disavow any responsibility for his life.

Too late, Rodrigo comes to his senses and protests, but the men shrug it off, leaving the room as the guitarist needlessly points out, “Lo han matado” (190). Stripped of humanity in death, the “torero tenía la boca abierta y los dientes grandes y amarillos, como los caballos de la pica” (190). This comic/tragic ending is to be expected as, just like in the ring, “the death of the horse tends to be comedy while that of the bull is tragic” (Hemingway 6). To the spectators, Pepe’s death is comic just as the death of the caballo de pica’s death in the ring is comic, because neither of them matters much in the overall scheme and they are closer to animals than to humans. To the reader this repetition of his name has another effect as well. As Jacques Derrida writes in Glas, even though giving a name to someone is really nothing (or no/thing), it has a violent effect on the individual named, at once penetrating and paralyzing the person (Column 6B). In the context of “Caballo de pica” the naming highlights the fact that the bullfighter named himself such a negative name suggesting that he has some responsibility for the way he is treated in the world, for the fact that he is taken advantage of by others. This, then, serves as a critique of a class that allows itself to be treated as less than human.

protect the *caballo de pica*’s body with special equipment, a protection not afforded to Pepe (López Arnal).

Furthermore, the narrator not only paralyzes the bullfighter in *rigor mortis* through the use of his name, but implicates the reader in the act of murder, specifically in the passive viewing of the act. The reader is not fused with the figure of Pepe (and thus avoids minimizing the experience or, for that matter, creating a helpless victim out of Pepe), but rather, the alienation effect maintains a certain level of spectatorial empathy but not through identification so much as observation just like Rodrigo who stands idly by, participating by omission to act.¹¹⁶

This representation of Pepe functions on two levels, then. On the first level, it functions as a social commentary in the way which a certain sector of the population is dehumanized of its own free will but with its own consent while another sector looks on. On another level, it directly implicates the reader in his/her functioning inside of a system that encourages passive viewing of injustices. Similar to the argument by Laura Mulvey previously referenced regarding cinematic representations in Vertigo, the viewer is initially set apart from the story by the distant narrative, consuming it in its passivity, oblivious to his/her role in it, until becoming directly implicated via the textual operation at work that shows the human turned animal as such (7). Going beyond what was previously seen in Los golfos, seeing, in “Caballo de pica” becomes a criminal act and a pervasive one that extends throughout the various levels of society.

To a certain degree, then, the critiques in “Caballo de pica” and Los golfos are similar, scrutinizing the idea of collusion, of cooperating with a society whose government controls through seeing, turning it against its own populace. Both question attempts to resist a system by working within its own arbitrarily chosen parameters (especially as related to sight). They perform an act of redefinition, or recounting, that act that Rancièrè claims is the territory of the

¹¹⁶ In Brecht’s explanations of the differences between Western and Chinese theatre, the spectator identifies with the actor as actor/observer whereas here the function seems yet more radical by identifying the viewer as the observer rather than as a co-participant.

work of literature as politics (Politics of Literature 40). There are no longer two groups, the victim and the victimizer, but three, the victim, the victimizer and the onlooker (who is tied to the victimizer but is not the same since s/he is a passive participant). This onlooker is implicated as much if not more as those who commit the crimes as someone who sees and understands the injustice occurring but who does nothing. This passive *looking at* becomes a crime and in both “Caballo de pica” and Los golfos, the act of seeing is interrogated and implicated in the social dynamics of inequality and even violence lurking underneath Spanish society. In both texts, however, the act of resistance, one might say, is a revelation: making visible the third body, that of the viewer/reader and implanting in him/her a sense of uncomfortable complicity. In this way, seeing makes one a participant despite not participating. In Aldecoa’s 1963 “Los pozos,” however, it is not the act of seeing as a passive spectator that is as much the issue as how to see what is not there to be seen.

“*Los pozos*”

Ignacio Aldecoa’s 1963 “Los pozos”¹¹⁷ is a story whose central theme revolves around death: the death of illusions of reclaiming a long-disappeared past, and, above all, the persistence of the tangible deaths of a resistance that paved the way to the Nationalist victory. It is also a story about seeing, or, more precisely, about the collusion to avoid seeing anything that would challenge the *status quo* in a society that depended on the numbing effects brought about by a constant repetition of the spectacle of its existence. What lies beneath the superficial layer of the narrative, however, insists that, much as the visual might be pushed aside, the voices of the dead demand to be heard.

¹¹⁷ On the one hand a *pozo* was a word used to refer to the ring in which the *corrida* was held, but it is interesting to note that many of the “desaparecidos” from the Nationalist victory were actually buried in wells such as that of *Llano de las brujas* or the *Pozo del Tenoya*. As recently as 2012, groups committed to preserving *memoria histórica* were petitioning funds to unearth bodies from wells where the Nationalists had left them in order to give them a proper burial.

The narrative occurs in the brief period of hours leading up to a *corrida* and offers us a glimpse into the life of bullfighting before a performance in the ring. As previously discussed, the choice of the *corrida* cannot be seen as an accident, but rather a quintessential location that transformed a rite that could be endlessly repeated for public consumption so as to preserve “congealed past culture” (Debord 192) into a critique of a system of governance that depended on the tacit acceptance by its populace of the myth of the foundations and legitimacy of its regime.

The perspective offered by Aldecoa is not one of the ring itself, as, for example, was the case in Goya’s paintings, but rather the period of beforehand preparation. Once in the ring, the bullfighters are no longer individuals but, rather, become bound up in the performance. By temporally preceding the events in the *corrida* itself, the narrator undoes the final illusion that the audience expects to see: a show of domination, heroism and death. This glimpse into the world behind the curtain is an effective means of creating Brecht’s distancing effect so as to divorce the reader from the spectacle that is the *corrida* since it is an unfamiliar world, unlike the spectacle normally seen by the audience. While the reader may expect to see yet another narrative of victory in the ring, this stripping away of the spectacle itself is tinged with the violence of the shattering of an illusion, of a type to reveal the moments that lead to its creation, reminds him/her that the performance is itself but the culmination of a series of less glamorous parts.

“Los pozos” centers around Migas, the matador, and his cadre of fighters, Chato la Nave and Perucho. In the few hours leading up to the fight we see them prepare, reminisce about past fights and, in the case of Migas, battle anxiety. Once called to begin, they step out past the throngs of people cheering them on and into the silence of ring to face the bull.

The relationship between the cadre of fighters contains a clear questioning of the hierarchical ranking within society, as the *corrida* seems to mirror that within society itself. Here there is a reversal of the typical hierarchical structure normally associated with the bullfight. Once again, as in “Caballo de pica,” only one character is given a complete name, the figure with a more elevated position according to the ranking system of the *corrida*: Antonio Abanales (“Migas”). Nonetheless, his importance is diminished not only by having the majority of the story narrated more from the point of view of a supposedly lesser character, Chato la Nave, but also by the fact that it is Chato la Nave rather than Migas, the hero, who is shown to be the strength (and intuition) behind the group. While Chato la Nave steadily prepares himself for the fight, Migas worries over his wire swords, over the fact that they are being rushed to head out so that a *marqués* can see the show before he leaves for Madrid and eventually enters the ring repeating to his group, “Me lo quitáis de encima, ¿eh?” (147). It is up to Chato la Nave (and wine) to steady his nerves, to make him believe that his swords are strong enough to “matar un elefante” (146).

Migas’s fear stands in stark contrast to the mythical figure of the matador and is the first death that we witness: that of the illusions that underpinned the rhetoric of the regime. Throughout the narrative, there is a clear resistance to the idea that the everyday lives of the heroes of the spectacle are particularly glorious. The circumstances in which we find Migas, the matador and his cadre, Chato la Nave and Perucho, are ancient and degraded just as the myth of empire. Migas is portrayed not as valiant and fierce (like Pepe la Vera) but as an ordinary person, inheritor of an age-old tradition that has death written all over it. His “fundón de las espadas” is not even his own but bears the name of its original owner (145). In fact, he discovers they are not even real swords but made of wire, mere show swords whose capacities are most probably

limited. Even Chato la Nave, although sporting a long, white scar that might be construed as a heroic badge of survival, has not shaved in two days and has a uniform that no longer fits properly. Their job as bullfighters has taken them to many places, but none of these places are particularly impressive since, as Chato la Nave, points out, he has dressed for a fight in, “una cuadra con mulos zainos, y en un carro andando, y debajo de un Puente, y en un rincón tras de una sobrecama en la plaza Mayor de un pueblo, y bajo un tendido viendo las pantorras a las mujeres, y donde tú me digas” (144). Not only does this statement underline the less than glorious conditions of the *corrida*, it indicates that the bullfighters are treated not as heroes but almost less than human since people continue about their business as if they were not there.

Even the room we find them in is filled with spiders and lit by a naked lightbulb that highlights the debris of past trainings. This representation runs directly counter to Franco’s contestation that his purpose was to “devolver a España una vida española, librándola de caer en la degradación” (Franco ha dicho 9). These figures are hardly the symbolic representatives of a heroic tradition, or of a rebuilding that was supposed to have occurred after the Civil War. Tired out by the demands of the spectacle, they would prefer to “Quedarse en casa. Ni ansias, ni varices, ni canguelo; sopa de ajo” (Aldecoa 144). Thus, the first half of the story is characterized by a sensation of weariness and endless repetition of the same scene, of the insertion of pieces of the past, such as the *fundón*, that belong to no one in particular but that are forced to serve in a contemporary narrative, but do not have the capacity to perform the task required of them.

Beyond the challenge of the dictatorial rhetoric, however, is an insistence on bringing to light what was dismissed by the same, on challenging the tacit silence that, in its very silence, spoke to what lay underneath the spectacle: the real deaths of those opposed to the dictatorship. The specter of relics of the past haunts the entire story, from the articles of clothing worn by the

fighters and the fighters themselves to even their supposed enemy. Though the bulls are supposed to be youthful and full of fighting force, the bull they walk out to face is “viejo y negro” (Aldecoa 148). If Franco identified himself with the historical Spain, then, the reader can assume that his government is the old bull who under the “torre de la iglesia” walks out and fills the plaza with his shadow. It is precisely this past represented in the shadow of the bull that cannot be escaped that perpetuates the sensation of fear that is best exemplified in the character of Migas, the matador who, typically, would be thought to be the bravest of the group, but, in fact, is the weakest, terrified by the possibility of death rather than elated at the chance to be turned into a mythic hero should he not survive.

Additionally, the use of vision to perceive the true state of things is completely dismissed early on. The story begins by sidestepping vision, by announcing to the reader that, “Todos los ayuntamientos huelen a muerto...” (143). One cannot help but note that it is not the village that smells of death but the *ayuntamientos*, the public governing bodies; and all of them are the same. The switch back to vision is abrupt then, when we move back to sight as we are told an unknown someone (who we later learn is el Chato la Nave), “Contemplaba el muro blanquañil” (143). The scene and its subsequent disruption, juxtaposes a first sensory impression with one that undermines it. While we are told the location smells of death, seen through the eyes of Chato la Nave, the wall appears white, and not merely white but *blanquañil*, signaling that it is almost unnaturally white, suggesting that a procedure of whitewashing has occurred.¹¹⁸ Again, abruptly,

¹¹⁸ It could be suggested that it is also referring to what Spanish historiographers such as Payne, Preston, Pierre Broué and Émile Témime call the “White terror,” a period of fierce repression during and following the Civil War in which Republican supporters were slaughtered by Nationalists. I hesitate to ascribe too much to this terminology within this particular story, as interesting as the association may be, for the mere fact that, while Nationalists such as General Emilio Mola referred to the need to wipe out opposition through terror (Preston The Spanish Civil War 103), the term “White terror” seems to have been first employed by British and French

the sense of smell is interjected, telling us that it is “un tufo que da mal sabor de boca y que no te lo saca la cazalla” (143) before we are moved back to viewing the wall whose unnatural whiteness is so strong that it can even erase shadows. As we watch, “El espectro de paisaje se borró sobre el muro,” disappearing into “simples manchas de humedad” (143).

This narrative seems to be referring to the numerous amounts of mass executions that took place within bullrings, one of which Paul Preston’s chronicles in his account of the struggle in Badajoz wherein the Nationalists entered the Republican populated town:

As night fell, drunken Moors and Falangists were still entering houses in the working-class districts, looting, raping women, dragging men out either to shoot them on the spot or to take them to the bullring [...] machine-guns were set up on the barriers around the ring and indiscriminate slaughter began. On the first afternoon and evening, eight hundred were shot in batches of twenty [...] No names were taken, no details checked [...] The screams of the dying could be heard many streets away. Accounts by survivors indicate that soon the firing squads were manned by Civil Guards (The Spanish Holocaust 318).

Nonetheless, while this can legitimately be read as a critique of the Franco regime that committed mass crimes and covered them up in the wake of their victory, it is far more a critique of those who not only allowed this to happen but, more importantly, refuse to admit it. Just as quickly as this moment of illumination of something beyond the white wall occurs, it fades away, as Chato la Nave becomes distracted by his preparations to enter the spectacle of the *corrida*. Not only does his mind wander from the possibilities of remembering, he actively chooses not to return to that possibility a mere few paragraphs later, when one of his companions

academics rather than the Spanish themselves. This makes ascribing knowledge of this particular terminology to Aldecoa in 1963 somewhat problematic.

asks him what he is thinking as he stares out the window. He denies his previous assertions by stating, “Que no huelen a muerto, Perucho, que huelen a gallinas...” (Aldecoa 144). Chato la Nave, then, is just as complicit in the spectacle as the crowd that is completely oblivious, filled with excitement, yelling to the toreros as they walk into the ring, “A ver si os arrimáis...A ver si lo matáis bien, que son buen ganado” (147). In fact, as they enter the ring, he is the one who steadies the group, repeating over and over, “Tranquilos” (148). He allows himself to become the Debordian agent who integrates into his assigned role and obeys the command to not see despite evidence to the contrary.

The sense of smell, persists, nonetheless, to remind us that there is something amiss in this town, that it is not only the governing center but the sacristy where they are dressing that smells like “un fiambre que se lo han llevado hace un rato. Un olor como a polvo meado, a papelotes, a ropa sucia,” a smell that you cannot escape (144-5).¹¹⁹ As Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno remind us, while sight functions as a means of separation and personal control, since “In the act of seeing one remains oneself, in smelling one dissolves” (Dialectic of Enlightenment 165).

If, as Walter Benjamin suggests in his reading of Freud, “consciousness comes into being at the site of a memory trace” (Illuminations 160), the visual trace in this case has been erased by the whitening of the wall, but it remains elsewhere. What this story suggests, then, is that, first and foremost, the attempt by the dictatorship to erase its violence has not succeeded since traces remain. It also suggests that, as much as someone might resolutely push away what he can see, the traces of the dead are brought into contact with the living through the sense of smell that cannot be evaded. This indicates that there is a double operation at work in “Los pozos.” On the

¹¹⁹ It can be no coincidence that the two locations associated with the smell of death and decay are the *ayuntamiento* and the church, the two bastions of Franco’s regime.

one hand, there might quite literally be a smell that suggests the presence of the dead as suggested by the events that occurred throughout the war. On the other, given that it was written in 1963, it might also be a projection from Chato la Nave's mind, perhaps because he took part in one of the killings (on either side), perhaps because he happened to be aware of the truth that the regime sought to erase. These traces, here seen in the realm beyond the visual, can most assuredly be read as a means of resistance since they refuse to keep the past buried as the regime would have preferred. The making visible of the traces, however, does not occur through the eyes, since the visual trace has been erased. It can only occur through the other senses since the visual is inherently compromised.

Resistance in *Aldecoa*, then, occurs on multiple sites, but all of them disavow the possibility that vision offers any type of resistance (unless it is to be read as a subversive resistance through reading the opposite of what vision supposedly offers). This distrust of sight, however, not only permeates the literary and filmic versions of neo-realism but also the photography of the period.

Conclusion

At the conclusion of *Hiroshima, mon amour*, He and She return to the hotel room where their love story began in earnest. As tears roll down her face, She demands that He look at her, that he acknowledge that she will forget him. As he peers into her tearful eyes, she renames him, "Hiroshima, c'est ton nom" and he responds in kind, naming her "Never." As the credits roll, the spectator is struck by the fact that, despite all of her attempts to see the reality of Hiroshima, to understand what occurred, it (just as She) will remain a Never. Seeing representations, then, will never lead to an actual knowing. What Resnais and the other texts suggest, then, is that we take resistance to be a multiple-sited endeavor, one that functions on a myriad of levels to undo the

way we are programmed to think we understand the world; that a fundamental distrust of the visual is the first step to really knowing anything. Rather, it is in not seeing that something can occur. When our conventional understanding of the role of sight as a means of power and domination is undone, the occupation of sight itself is stolen, and a reconfiguration takes place in our understanding of the way roles and senses are distributed in society. In this rupture, then, is its resistance.

An Interruption. Iberian Intersections

*“Two things can be separated by an enormous amount of space,
and yet not have a fully independent existence.”*
Brian Greene, The Fabric of the Cosmos (122)

Salazar’s Optical Regime

While authors and filmmakers in Spain resisted the visual control of the Franco dictatorship, Franco himself sought to consolidate his control through a series of political ties with other nations, particularly with the neighboring Portugal. Although political allies, the dictatorships in and of themselves functioned differently given their socio-historical contexts. In the case of Spain, as previously explored, the dictatorship hinged on military conquest, a fact that can easily be seen in the types of metaphors that were employed to bolster the regime’s image among the populace. Salazar, however, came to power in what appeared to be a much less violent way since he had nothing to do with the coup d’état that laid the foundations for what would become the *Estado Novo*.¹²⁰ This, in turn, shaped the way the optic regime needed to function to promote Salazar’s vision for the country, one that would exemplify Portuguese particularities.

Similarly to Franco’s optical regime that controlled the populace by offering it a national vision of past glory, of unity, Salazar’s optical regime used similar mechanisms, although not to elide the illegitimacy of his regime since he was, ostensibly, chosen to serve by a process of consensus. The importance of “consensus” to the politics of the *Estado Novo* is integral. Its institutionalized character was a direct result of the military dictatorship being supported by various factions who felt it was a better option. The Portuguese Constitution of 1933, “irá

¹²⁰ In fact, Salazar’s general image was developed to show him as “a human figure, but one condemned, by a sense of duty, to a life of politics that he, ultimately, did not want” (Ribeiro de Meneses 370).

legitimar a prática ditatorial que já vinha sendo seguida” (Moreira 153). Its consolidation through “um compromisso entre as diversas correntes políticas da direita e os vários sectores de interesse das <<forças vivas>>, a partir de uma base comum de rejeição do liberalismo herdado da I República e da apologia de um Estado política, económica e socialmente forte e interventor” (Rosas “O Estado Novo” 285).

Salazar’s control of the visual, then, was invested in projecting the notion of Portuguese greatness, unity and a general sense of popular consensus that Isabel Capelo Gil indicates was “fundada na inocência, na consciência patriótica, na piedade religiosa, na harmonia familiar e submissão patriarcal” (166). One of the major ways in which the idea of national consensus was promoted was through the office of the *Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional* (SPN). The SPN promoted information that favored the state, embodying Salazar’s belief that something only exists politically if the public knows it exists, and, conversely, what the public is unaware of does not, in effect, exist (Sapega 10). As director of the SPN, António Ferro was well aware of the role art and literature played in controlling “existence” through public visibility. Public festivals emphasized traditional values, the rural life, the family, a sense of timelessness (Sapega 15). While this might seem similar to the Spanish case, it differentiated itself in that the public spectacles of Portuguese greatness, as Ellen Sapega explores, are directly linked to Portuguese colonization or the *descobrimentos* and created, “an ideologically specific image of the Portuguese nation as a rural paradise that history had prepared for imperial greatness” (3). This image spread not only through official discourse but through artistic representation, especially, as Sapega asserts, through the contest to find the “most Portuguese village in Portugal” and the Exposition of the Portuguese World in 1940 as well as in architectural projects and public art.

Given the importance of artistic projects to the visualization of Portuguese imperial destiny, then, it also became important to protect it. This preoccupation extended to the relationships between the two countries of the Peninsula. While Franco seems to have been mainly in favor of currying favor with the Portuguese, historians note how Salazar expressed “the greatest misgivings about so-called cultural interchange” which he appeared to see as yet another chance for Spain to carry out a “peaceful penetration” (qtd in Ribeiro Meneses 203). The disparity in sentiments regarding Iberian relations seems reasonable since in the history of Luso-Hispanic relationships, not only had geographic territory long been a source of contention between the two, but Spain had a track record of invading Portugal when it saw fit, from the 7-year-long siege in the 18th century to the French and Spanish Treaty of Fontainebleau in 1807 in which France offered Spain a part of Portugal in return for their assistance in invading Lisbon.

The anxiety of foreign penetration is clearly demonstrated not only on the level of governance but even in Portuguese literary representations from the nineteenth century, perhaps most clearly in the work of the Portuguese realist, Eça de Queiros. As Alan Freeland notes, not only is the topic of a possible Spanish invasion expressed in the novelist’s major work, Os Maias (1888) in a series of conversations regarding political matters, but, in two separate works, the short story “A Catastrofe” (around 1879) and the projected plot to what remained an unwritten novel, A Batalha do Caia, Eça Queiros explicitly explores the way contemporary Portuguese society is vulnerable to invasion. In A Batalha do Caia the invading force is, in fact, Spanish.

If Salazar’s policies and tendentious relationship with his Iberian counterpart echoed this fear of penetration that remained from the 19th century¹²¹—and perhaps even further in the past—this was not the case for those in opposition to his regime. In fact, although it might

¹²¹ It is interesting to note that António Eça de Queiroz, son of the noted realist writer, was the deputy of António Ferro at the SPN.

initially seem simple to draw a line between the opposition to Salazar that came from the neo-realist movement of the 1930s, 40s (and, to some extent 50s) and the Portuguese realism of the 19th century as exemplified in Antero de Quental, Eça de Queiros and others, given their similar nomenclature, there is, in fact, far more that separate the two than join them.¹²² While the realism of Eça de Queiros and others sought to reshape what they felt to be a degraded Portugal through critiquing what they observed in society, what I suggest in the following chapter is that the neo-realism of the 20th century used the optical sense to interject techniques, storylines, ideas that penetrated their texts and, consequentially the dominant vision of life under the ideologies of the *Estado Novo*. This, then, is a break from the function of 19th century realism as a way of representing the world.

In the past, as seen in the case of the previously explored Galdós's Gabriel Arceli, Carlos IV's pocketwatch is one those things that, "bear on their bodies the testimony of their history" (Rancière, The Politics of Literature 14). Gabriel observes the history the watch bears causing a break with established temporal and historical understandings. This is the type of new politics of literature that the 19th century realism of Zola, Balzac, Galdós and Eça de Queiros enact. What the texts of Portuguese neo-realism show, however, is a different type of relationship between thing and observer. In these texts, both literary and cinematic, we observe a new way in which things function, how they show a new relationship with humans. This new relationship has much in common with what Rancière reads in the work of Hungarian Béla Tarr in whose 1988 Damnation, he posits that the things play the active role—rather than, we might

¹²² For a fairly clear synthesis of the ideological and, to some extent, aesthetic differences between the two movements—and a strong opinion as to why they are so distinctive—see Roberto Pontes's article, "Realismo de 70 e Neo-realismo Português." Ana Paula Ferreira, in fact, traces the relationship to other influences, including that of utilitarian art, "uma das vitórias mais salientes e perduráveis da revolução romântica" (25).

say, the passive role they played for realist texts by bearing their testimonies on their bodies, waiting to be read. In Tarr's film, "it is not the individuals who live in places that make use of things. It is the things that first come to them, that surround, penetrate, or reject them" (Béla Tarr, The Time After 27).¹²³

¹²³ In the previous paragraphs, Rancière makes a differentiation between Flaubert's ways of seeing and those that occur in films, especially those of Béla Tarr. This, however, does not negate the possibility that the same can occur in literature, merely that the ways in which is created technically is different between media.

Chapter 3

Seeing Spaces: Penetrating the 20th Century Portuguese Dictatorship of António de Oliveira Salazar

Introduction

*“Os vi como pessoas separadas da lógica aparente do mundo,
e assim precisamente me sinto eu.”*

--José Saramago, *A Jangada de pedra* (61)

In his novel, *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino tells the story of Marco Polo who, journeying through the Far East, encounters Kublai Khan. Using the Khan’s atlas as a guide, Polo recounts his travels and describes the various cities he visited. At a juncture near the end of the novel, Polo concludes that every city on the map is an unjust city, an “inferno where we live every day, that we form by being together” (165). He suggests that, for all people living in this inferno, there are only two possibilities for dealing with their situation:

The first is easy for many: accept the inferno and become such a part of it that you can no longer see it. The second is risky and demands constant vigilance and apprehension: seek and learn to recognize who and what, in the midst of the inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, give them space. (119)

For Calvino, giving space is a way of resisting the inferno of communal society, and his writing is one such space that represents cities, worlds. In this chapter, I turn to the works of Portuguese neo-realism in the mid-twentieth century, examining how art worked as resistance against the oppressive dictatorship of António Salazar by opening spaces in which to rethink a society configured by the dictatorship’s mandates. I argue that this occurs through acts of

penetration that disturb the text, create spaces where the marginalized, the invisible, become visible and, thereby clashed with the homogenizing forces of dictatorial norms. By reading these works in a new way this chapter seeks a different understanding of key texts from Portuguese neo-realism, one that recognizes the variety of ways the visual penetrates the spaces of the text as a means of resistance.

Neo-realism and Resistance

“Si tu veux voir le monde, ferme les yeux, Rosamonde”

--Jean-luc Godard, Le Gai Savoir

Following a century that saw Portugal survive an invasion, crises of governance and the possibility of the loss of overseas colonies, the early 20th century followed the same pattern of instability. Formed in the larger context of a Europe rocked by economic crisis in the wake of the Great War, Portugal limped through the 1920s with a fragile liberal government that, similar to other leftist governments elsewhere on the continent, fell “como solução inevitável, a regimes autoritários e antiparlamentares” (Rosas, Portugal e o Estado Novo 11). Desperate to find stability, the toppling of the First Republic by the military dictatorship in a *coup d'état* in 1926 reflected a desire to, “colocar o poder em situação de prestígio e força contra as arremetidas da desordem” (Salazar 20). Nonetheless, what was welcomed as an escape from the precariousness of a foundering republic in the form of a temporary military dictatorship eventually became the Estado Novo that, under the leadership of economist António de Oliveira Salazar was to last into the 1970s.

The *Estado Novo* is not considered to be as brutal as its counterparts elsewhere at the time such as Francisco Franco's Spain or Benito Mussolini's Italy. The Salazar regime was, undoubtedly of a different stripe from its more precisely defined fascist brethren elsewhere in Europe, not least because of Salazar's unique position as a former university professor and

economics minister who was only tangentially linked to the military forces that brought down the First Republic. As historians are quick to note, Salazar, steeped in the traditional Catholic values and juridical and financial education that distinguished his dictatorship from others, presented himself as forced by duty to serve rather than out of any innate desire to do so.¹²⁴ Additionally, the *Estado Novo*, unlike its counterparts elsewhere, was ruled less by the military or a political party (although the *União Nacional* existed) and more by a highly educated elite base of ministers that some have referred to as “technicians.”¹²⁵ Nonetheless, despite the existence of a President (who served mainly as a figurehead with limited power), the administration of the government was highly centralized, with all ministers reporting to Salazar who was “a master whose manipulation of a perverted rational-legal legitimacy” diminished the need to resort to stronger measures (Costa “Elites” 431).

Despite the particularly Portuguese features that distinguish Salazar’s dictatorship from elsewhere, it was a regime characterized by oppression of opposition, “a thoroughly repressive atmosphere and a comprehensive system of control over the population” (Raby 3). The secret police, PIDE, ferreted out opposition, employed torture and even used the Portuguese colony of Cape Verde as a concentration camp (Gallagher 392).¹²⁶ There was one political party, no free trade unions, ongoing censorship, and the existence of groups in evidence in more typically fascist contexts such as the Youth Movement (*Mocidade*) (Raby 3). This, along with:

Portugal’s very low level of development by European standards, and its lack of

¹²⁴ See Felipe Ribeiro de Meneses’s substantial biography on Salazar for a thorough study of the Salazar’s presentation of himself as reluctantly forced to serve.

¹²⁵ For more on this subject, see António Costa Pinto’s discussion of the different features of the Southern European dictatorships in his article, “Elites, Single Parties and Political Decision-making in Fascist-era Dictatorship” or his book, Salazar’s Dictatorship and European Fascism: Problems of Interpretation.

¹²⁶ The secret police went by PVDE (*Policia de Vigilancia e de Defesa do Estado*) from 1933-45 whereupon its name was changed to the PIDE (*Policia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado*).

major proletarian concentrations in mining and or heavy industry such as existed in Spain and in some Latin American countries, inhibited the growth of organised mass resistance. (Raby 3)

Unhappy with the authoritarian control of Salazar, those politically opposed to the policies of the *Estado Novo* attempted a variety of means of resistance, from unauthorized militarization,¹²⁷ to the formation of political parties of opposition, to the creation of artistic works.¹²⁸ This multiplicity of resistances occurred because, harbouring the delusion that the Salazar regime was due to fall at any moment as had already occurred with Mussolini at the end of WWII, “the opposition tended to favor passive resistance over open conflict” (Chilcote 43).¹²⁹ In fact, feelings about the dictatorship in general were mixed since the Republican government that was toppled in a coup d’état in 1926 did not directly establish the *Estado Novo* nor was Salazar, himself, in any way involved in these events.¹³⁰ This, coupled with the bloodless transition whereby Salazar came to power, made the situation seem to many to be of a less threatening nature such that, “a policing operation by the Army was enough [...] no Duce, no elite, no doctrine, no revolutionary faith born and cemented in the battlefield had filled the soul

¹²⁷ Militant opposition was found in the ranks of those who advocated a military populism, as seen most especially in the coup attempts and the outspoken opposition of Captain Henrique Galvão and Humberto da Silva Delgado whose oppositions consolidated in the form of the MFA (*Movimento das Forças Armadas*). Of additional import, furthermore, was the opposition taking place in the Portuguese colonies such as the 1961 uprising in Angola. The necessity to control resistance inside and outside its borders sapped resources from the mainland and also was linked to the role of communism in resistance. For more on this see Gallagher and Raby.

¹²⁸ The role of the Communist Party (the PCP, *Partido Comunista Português*) should be emphasized. Although its strength diminished as the dictatorship continued, it remains the only major political apparatus of opposition. For more on this see Raby and Gallagher. Additionally, and of great importance to this chapter, the PCP was the formative entity ideologically for much of the artwork of opposition.

¹²⁹ This seems to not necessarily be the case in the colonies.

¹³⁰ Compare this, for example, with the fall of the Spanish *Segunda República* in which General Francisco Franco took part, setting the stage for him to later become the head of the Spanish dictatorship.

of the people from the very start” (Costa Problems of Interpretation 165). Thus, of all the European dictatorships that began in the early twentieth century, the Estado Novo became “the most institutionalized and the one that lasted the longest” (Costa 205).

However, while outright resistance might have seemed less imperative to some and, quite possibly, more risky, given the lesser severity of the situation, historian D.L. Raby points out that Portugal nonetheless “experienced patterns of repression and resistance essentially similar to those found in more dramatic cases” (3). Raby indicates the difficulty in dislodging a regime once it has been embedded in institutions while Fernando Rosas insists that the non-linear form the resistance movements took through the years accounts for the scarcity of studies on the subject within historical or political science (Rosas, Portugal e o Estado Novo 11). This non-linearity is significant because it opens the door to consider how, in the absence of a cohesive and effective project from within a particular political structure that one might deem “resistance,” a plethora of smaller oppositions occurred from within the world of art, ones that penetrated the project of building national consensus. Perhaps for this reason, the guiding principles of Portuguese neo-realism are clear: no more art for art’s sake but rather, “a arte deve servir também para algum proveito essencial [...] para melhorar a ordem social” (Garcez de Silva 25).

Portuguese neo-realism, while drawing its name from the Italian movement that grew out of resistance to Mussolini’s fascism is not a mere continuance of the same. In fact, the original terminology promoting the movement tended to favour the term *Realismo Humanista*, emphasizing its congruity with previous realisms, with social realism, while defining itself as a separate entity that was most interested in its ideological emphasis on portraying real people and their commonplace lives especially in regards to social inequality (Pinheiro Torres 40).

Influences on Portuguese neo-realism ranged from Marx and Sartre to the French *nouvelle vague* all the while insisting on its message of social justice and “à urgência e à brutalidade de o transmitir na sua nudez e imediatismo” (Pinheiro Torres 14).

This socially conscious impulse would propel the movement forward while simultaneously setting it up to be criticized by some scholars as being more political propaganda than art. Unwittingly lending strength to this critique are those scholars, such as Fernando Namora and Alexandre Pinheiro Torres, who separate neo-realism into *fases* wherein the first phase was focused on social content while the second, “sem reúnunciar à consciência social marxista [...] preocupou-se mais seriamente com os problemas de estilo e de construção da obra” (Santos 31).

In her book on Alves Redol, Ana Paula Ferreira underlines this problematic division, proposing that it is reductive since neo-realism is more than just “um <<programa>> político anterior ou exterior ao próprio fazer literário (14). This is important when considering how neo-realism worked against the dictatorship through multiple resistances, even those that diverge from a particularly ordained program. In fact, I will argue, the works that adhered most strongly to a prescriptive program failed to penetrate to the same extent as others that were less so. In order to do this, I examine three different texts from three different moments in the movement: Gaibéus (1939) by Alves Redol, generally considered to be the first Neo-Realist novel, Uma abelha na chuva (1953) by Carlos de Oliveira, from the supposed second wave, and the subsequent adaptation of this novel into a film by director Fernando Lopes.¹³¹

¹³¹ What I would like to emphasize by taking screenshots of various points along the way is how the movement evolved, thereby avoiding the same reductive reasoning that Ferreira contested. This allows me to explore how the movement shifted as an adaptive mechanism to a changing political and social context rather than see it as static and hold each piece up to a fixed set of criteria.

My purpose in looking at these works in particular is to conceive of neo-realism as an ever-evolving movement that retained the spirit of resistance proposed by its founders but was flexible enough to adapt to the changing political climate.¹³² This reading allows for a more nuanced understanding of the resistant potential in works that came later in the movement. More importantly, I propose that the later works were not only faithful to the original tenants of the movement but should be read as just as resistant only in different ways, no longer depicting universalizing phenomena or collectives as much as focusing on the potential of the individual.¹³³ Drawing on the unique power of art, Oliveira and Lopes's later creations reflect on society from a micro-level, taking apart what we assume to be given, offering the opportunity to conjure up new possibilities. Thus, in these neo-realist works, resistance comes not from a political project imposed from outside, well-intentioned as it may have been, but from inside the works. In my readings, I locate moments when the cohesion of the text—its consensus if you

¹³² General guidelines for what constituted a neorealist work were proposed in 1936 at a conference in Vila Franca de Xira under the ambitious title “Arte,” whereby Alves Redol, one of the principle voices at the beginning of the movement, proposed that all neo-realist artwork should serve humanity, have a conscience and exist for the betterment of humanity (italics retained from original text):

- a. A arte pela arte é uma ideia tão extravagante em nos-nos [sic] tempos como a de *riqueza pela riqueza*, ou de *ciência pela ciência*;
- b. Todos os assuntos devem servir em proveito do homem, se não querem ser uma vã e ociosa ocupação; a riqueza existe para que toda a humanidade goze; a ciência para guia do homem; *a arte deve servir também para algum proveito essencial e não deve ser apenas um prazer estéril*;
- c. A arte deve contribuir para o desenvolvimento da consciência e *para melhorar a ordem social* (Pinheiro Torres 37).

¹³³ My argument counters that of Colin Hignett's, for example, who suggests that later works written by Oliveira proposed a mystical elite of the intelligentsia that would replace the incapable proletariat. It is also based on Rancière's assertion that the way art is resistant is precisely through its ability to work at the micro, not macro, level. Avoiding the tendency to expect art to perform a task it is not equipped to perform (configuring collectives to perform other actions more usually deemed political), it harnesses its particular ability to work with the individual, to take apart supposedly obvious linkages between things and their meanings, thereby reconfiguring the way we see the world (Politics of Literature 43).

will—that which portrays the social order under the regime, is penetrated, opening a space for reflection on the part of the reader/spectator. In these moments of penetration, there occurs a type of subjectivation on the part of those who were not previously allowed subjectivity.¹³⁴ Reading the texts with this more fluid understanding reveals a liberating potential embedded in the works that grants them a much greater significance. This, in turn, is also liberating to criticism of the Neo-Realist movement since it grants the texts a relevancy beyond understanding how they adhere to a specific political project and instead suggests ways that we can contemporarily conceive of the idea of art as resistance.¹³⁵

Alves Redol's Gaibéus: Restoring Neo-realism

Before looking at later texts in the movement, however, one must understand the works that founded it, those that set the standard. Integral to this exploration is the, “pioneiro do Neo-

¹³⁴ As Rockhill indicates in his reading of Rancière, the only way the invisible and nameless penetrate the police order is through a process of subjectivation (3). Rancière links subjectivation to the moment when the previously disallowed in the order—those whom he calls the poor or those who are not subjects yet—are seen and, thus, enter it (Dissensus 32). What he seems to suggest is that, while art does not create subjects (although it seems possible one might claim subjectivity through art in certain contexts), it shows the capacity of subjects to exist where they might not have been considered to exist before. I say this in the context of Rancière's contention that art functions by “reframing [...] the field of subjectivity as an impersonal field” (“Art is Going Elsewhere”).

¹³⁵ The choices for investigation in this chapter are not arbitrary. While the cinematic pieces were chosen for their obvious ties to the novel of the same name, alongside the importance of its director, the particular literary works chosen stem from their place within the Portuguese canon of Neo-realism. While both Soiero Pereira Gomes and Alves Redol wrote novels in 1940 that kicked off the movement, Redol's was the guiding voice in setting forth a set of elaborate principles that came to define the movement. Carlos de Oliveira, one of several important writers (along with Fernando Namora, Manuel da Fonseca and Mário Dionísio) whose works also featured in the poetic movement, highlights most obviously the link between both the Realism of the 19th century embodied in Eça de Queiroz, but even more its link with the Romanticism of Camilo Castelo Branco, thus making special assertions in regards to the place of Neo-realism within a much larger national tradition. See Ana Paula Ferreira and Reinaldo Francisco Silva for more on this subject.

realismo,” Alves Redol’s *Gaibéus* written in 1939 (Reis 37).¹³⁶ This first book took on the previous literary currents by offering a new focus. Redol and neo-realism confronted the prevailing *Presencista* movement that marked the second phase of Portuguese Modernism.¹³⁷ Fernando Namora, one of the neo-realist writers, exemplified the neo-realist position against *Presencismo* by defining it as a school of thought that indulged in:

obsessões de mórbida sondagem psicológica, de flagelação emocional, de definição minuciosa do indivíduo, de virtuosismo afastado do homem como representante de uma colectividade, não podia já corresponder às realidades instantes de um mundo que acabava de ser experimentado na Guerra de Espanha para mergulhar numa outra Guerra ainda mais reveladora da urgência de certos problemas e do quanto todo o homem neles participava. (6).

With its strongly humanitarian emphasis, Redol’s *Gaibéus* constituted a rejection of *Presencismo*’s principles and a, “redimensionamento estético-literário” that emphasized social themes linked to a narrative distance from the subjects and a documentary style of narration (Reis 37). This purpose is made clear from the beginning of the novel as its opening epigraph states that the novel is, “um documentário humano fixado no Ribatejo” (Redol 31). While Redol does subsequently acknowledge the vagaries of interpretation, since “depois será o que os outros entenderem,” the intention is clear: to document the lives of the *gaibéus* as realistically as

¹³⁶ Looking at the previous note regarding the purposes of neo-realism, it can be said that the political purpose of this particular novel was to chronicle in a highly descriptive fashion the difficulties faced by those living in the Ribatejo region so as to provoke some type of social change. The Ribatejo region is located in the middle of Portugal and is known for its agricultural production.

¹³⁷ *Presencismo* is the term generally used for the second half of Portuguese modernism that lasted from 1927-36 and was based on the journal, *Presença*. It was characterized by its emphasis “literatura psicológica” and a rejection of art that was subject to anything but itself (art for art’s sake). Jose Regio and João Gaspar Simões were two figures in this movement.

possible. Redol's precision with the use of the term "gaibéus," the name for the seasonal workers "[d]o Alto Ribatejo e da Beira Baixa" who "descem às lezírias pelas mondas e ceifas," is important since it imbues the narrative voice with a quase-testimonial authority (33).

This desire for documentary factuality is born out not only of the type of content elected as subject matter but in the stylistics of telling as well. By dividing the novel into nine mostly autonomous parts labelled with their subject matter (e.g. "Rancho" or "Malária"), the novel's structure is one of "sequências de situações ou de momentos típicos" (Óscar Lopes 9). It begins in *media res* and marches forward mercilessly through the rest of the harvest, paralleling how "[a] ceifa, porém, não parava, e ainda bem – a ceifa levava o seu tempo marcado" (Redol 159).

Despite the cyclical nature of agricultural time, Gaibéus presents the harvest as linear by focusing only occasionally on the repetitive aspects of harvesting and on the fear of the harvest ending too early both for the landowners who profit from it and the workers who need payment for daily labour. The fact that time is progressing too quickly is underscored by repeated references to timepieces that are inevitably in the hands of those in charge of controlling production such as the *capatazes* who are in the fields always with "os relógios na mão" to make sure no one falls behind schedule (Redol 94).

The sensation that time is erasing all individuality within the ranks of the *gaibéus* is supported by how, "o protagonista da acção é claramente colectivo" (Óscar Lopes 10). The day labourers live together in a *rancho* [bunkhouse], their accommodations more animalistic than human. The cacophony of the frogs in the novel represents the indistinguishable voices of the collective; they are a nameless, sexless labor force, even when they sleep, "sem divisões de sexo, vencidos pelo torpor que o trabalho lhes deixa nos corpos" (Redol 67). They march and sing in unison or as a form of communal conversation between collectives/groups about *o vinho* (Redol

61), *o rapaz do chapéu* (72) and *a morte* (309). These songs are sung by unidentified voices as the *rancho* moves along and works in the field.

The workers are symbolized as two different but equally collective entities: either a mechanical collective or an animalistic collective. Often, the *gaibéus* are described as similar to the giant, thoughtless machines that aid them in the harvest. As they work, “os peitos arfavam num ritmo de máquinas velhas saturadas de movimento” (Redol 159). The distinction between man and machine is blurred since, “Não param as máquinas – não param os homens. Ali não há homens – há máquinas. Só máquinas!” (Redol 235). To further complicate the parallel, not only is it necessary that the *gaibéus* work like machines, but they are also portrayed as preferring it that way, because eventually, upon returning to their state as men, they wish this had not been the case since, “gostariam de ficar máquinas para sempre – as máquinas não pensam” (Redol 238). Blending into a collective, into a thoughtless state, is a means of escape. Paradoxically, then, the furthering of the problem of the mechanization of humanity becomes the supposed solution.

When the *gaibéus* are not being characterized as machines, their collectivity takes on the form of collectives in nature. Frogs live in ponds and croak as a collective, just as the workers live in *ranchos* and sing as a collective (Redol 99). “Os homens comem palha e respiram palha,” just as their horses (Redol 234). Unlike the example of the mechanization of humans, however, when the lines between humanity and animal blur, the human suffers in comparison since, although frogs are beasts, they are able to “coaxam a sua liberdade,” an option denied the human/machine (Redol 99). The animals not only have more freedom, but are often portrayed as morally superior, as the comparisons between *gaibéus* and the birds show. The *gaibéus*, due to their seasonal worker status, share their *rancho* with birds, but do not behave in the same way. At

the moment the birds are under attack in the novel, they band together to escape a predator. Not so with the *gaibéus* who work as one but tend to lack any type of solidarity beyond this. A sick woman falls alone in the field, an orphaned girl has no one to defend her from the lascivious advances of a foreman, and as punishment for their misbehavior, three boys are left outside the rancho to fend for themselves all night long. This group of boys might dream about no longer being *gaibéus* such that, “ninguém mais lhes daria esse nome feio” (Redol 135). While they venture into the world and have a coming of age experience by smoking their first cigarettes and drinking their first *ginebras*, it is not their peers who reach out to them in friendship but the *rabezanos*, a different group of people with whom the *gaibéus* rarely get along. This is the only instance of camaraderie in the novel, and it takes place between two different groups rather than within the *gaibéus* community. Despite the particular nature of this last experience, this narrative comes to nothing as the characters enter the story only to disappear back again into the community in which “o futuro deles não difere do passado” (Redol 293).

The ebb and flow of characters into and out of the narration underscores the collective nature of the *gaibéus* but simultaneously prevents the reader from forming an attachment to any particular character rather than to the collective as a whole as each character is an every(wo)man, representative of an entire caste of people. The readers are asked to see the *gaibéus* rather than Rosa or Tia Maria, to notice the young children who lurk on the edges of the ricefields, their “faces sujas de terra” and their “bocas rebentadas de feridas, onde as moscas pousam” as they wait for their mothers to be allowed a break to feed them (Redol 99).

What ties the children, the boys, the mothers, the every(wo)men together is that they are part of a group denied control of their lives and struggling for survival. Thus, Rosa, a young orphan, grows up at the mercy of more powerful men in the area, ever aware that her fate is to

only be able to escape them for so long before eventually falling prey to someone more powerful, in her case, one of the foremen. She, just like all the rest, is aware of her fate. This fatalist strain in the novel is embodied perhaps best of all in the example of the character of Ti Maria do Rosário. Elderly, Ti Maria falls ill with malaria, the “tributo sagrado a pagar todos os anos” (Redol 129). Despite a desperate need for quinine, one treatment costs half a day’s work; she knows she cannot stop to get medical attention since that would stop work and, “Nem para ela nem para os companheiros a ceifa pode parar – a ceifa é o pão” (Redol 164). As her illness progresses, she is no longer able to keep up with the harvest and retreats to the communal dwelling where she becomes weaker and weaker until she dies. No one accompanies her in her struggle, however, as they need to work in the fields to survive. While they hear her agony, they are focused on their task and are afraid to dwell on her suffering, since they recognize in Ti Maria their future: working until they die, most likely in intense agony just as she does since her comrades leave her behind as they head into the fields somberly since, “conhece nela o futuro que lhes baterá à porta um dia” (Redol 165).

Nonetheless, while the emotional impact of this story has the potential to elicit sympathy on the part of the reader for the misery in which the *gaibéus* live, Redol’s journalistic style of briefly zooming in on a particular character, then quickly moving elsewhere, denies any type of deep emotional attachment to a particular character or deprivation. Adding to this cultivation of emotional detachment is a constant narrative distance that places the reader in the role of onlooker rather than participant.¹³⁸ In the case of Ti Maria, for example, the reader is told next to nothing of her background, of her life, but rather sees death come upon the woman from a distance as one might read a newspaper story on children dying of hunger in East Africa. The

¹³⁸ See Carlos Reis for more on the idea of narrative distance in *Gaibéus*.

punctum of the story is brief. The *punctum*, that dangerous prick that Roland Barthes would say, “arouses great sympathy in me, almost a kind of tenderness” yet “shows no preference for morality or good taste” (Camera Lucida 43) is diverted to the safer *studium* which is the encounter with the intentions of the author, with the “contract arrived at between creators and consumers” (28).¹³⁹ In this sense, the penetration of the text is curtailed since the narrator deftly avoids the possibility that the reader might be moved by compassion, might identify with the human element in the narrative by making him/her a co-observer who does not emotionally connect with the symptoms the woman suffers from, the way her body shudders, the delirium that causes her to yell out, “eu não sei” to some delusion we are unable to enter into (Redol 258).

This style of storytelling from the perspective of an objective narrator is effective in that Redol’s stated goals for the novel were for it to be “consciência alertada antes de ser romance” (54). By remaining at a distance, the reader is forced to maintain a rational distance, consider the collective state in the *Ribatejo* and is, therefore, more impressed with the “accuracy” of the story being told even if it is still a fictive narrative, thus fulfilling the call to create art with social content rather than art for art’s sake.

Nonetheless, this focus on preserving documentary properties is problematic since, while it is obvious that the reader is meant to sympathize to a certain extent with the plight of the *gaibéus*, it removes the reader from the human element, portraying the *gaibéus* as somehow wishing to be like machines or being parallel to nature. The end result of this oftentimes is presenting the *gaibéus* as subjects of diminished capacity for emotional connection or collective action. This robs them not only of the possibility of rising to the level of becoming subjects but

¹³⁹ While this terminology is generally used for the impact of photographs, it is my opinion that it can be extended to understanding brief narratives in the journalistic style.

of being understood to have any type of possibility for control over their destiny, effectively stripping them of agency in the same way the as dictatorship.

Even the death of one of their own depresses them only to the extent that they recognise the inevitability of suffering a similar fate not because of the inhumanity of the situation, but because of fear. If any dreams are mentioned, they are those of having a tiny bit of land for themselves or free wine, not freedom from repression. By comparing the *gaibéus* to machines or to animals, the author dehumanizes them, as in the case of the story of the birds who are capable of communal action in a way the *gaibéus* are not; it occasionally seems like a castigation of an already downtrodden population. Thus, since the *gaibéus* are helpless and incapable of envisioning a collective act of resistance, they require the intervention of someone else, leaving the narrator free to present an alternative: a savior.

This savior is embodied in the figure of the *Cefeiro Rebelde*. While the *gaibéus* are an indistinguishable collective, this character stands out from the mass. Despite having his hand to the scythe like every other worker, “não é gaibéu como os companheiros de jornada” (Redol 294). He is unique, because he has two special tools: a watch that indicates his understanding of the importance of time and his “bússola que marca um norte” that causes him to, “olha a terra com olhos diferentes” (Redol 94). The rest of “os camaradas ainda não encontraram bússola” (Redol 161). Because he is different, he is capable of responding in ways denied the *gaibéus* in the narrative, to feel “mais abatido do que os outros, porque compreende as causas da angústia do rancho e sabe que os outros sofrem mais” (Redol 161).

Possessing the tools needed for clarity, the *Cefeiro*'s ability to envision alternate possibilities in life comes from having travelled outside of Portugal, to the African colonies. This outsider's perspective opens the *Cefeiro Rebelde*'s mind to the fact that there are other ways of

existing outside of the insular dictatorial vision of Portugal being taught. Keeping in mind that this novel was written before the colonies were given their independence and that Redol himself had travelled extensively, specifically to Angola, the *Cefeiro Rebelde* serves as an autobiographical representation of the author who wishes to share a social message with the reader. Additionally, the *Cefeiro Rebelde* functions as a bridge between the distant narrator and the reader that simultaneously offers a way to circumvent the documentary journalistic quality and present a more humanistic narrative that appears to the reader's rational mind. Unfortunately, with the insertion of a special character from the outside, it also elevates the *Cefeiro Rebelde* (and thus, the author) to an elite status as a holder of knowledge inaccessible to the *gaibéus*.

Similar to the other characters, the *Cefeiro Rebelde* appears and disappears at opportune moments. However, he is never part of the collective since he does not interact with the *gaibéus* but ponders their situation (note the use of "their" situation not "his"). He has no story to tell of his own but only thoughts to share with the reader. This distance is so great that it is not until nearly the end of the story that the *Cefeiro Rebelde* has an actual exchange with two other characters. Nonetheless, during this exchange, rather than integrate him more into the community, he is distanced further and transformed into a Messianic figure who inspires a select few *gaibéus* to consider following his path to different shores via emigration.

The exchange between the *Cefeiro Rebelde* and the unnamed *gaibéus* who have the dream to immigrate unveils for the reader that the *Cefeiro Rebelde* is a visionary who is capable of imagining alternate realities to the system he inhabits, of having "um sonho-certeza" because within every man is "África e Brasil" (Redol 294). This assertion is complex. It affirms that the colonies (or ex-colonies) reside within the Portuguese in some essential way, that this residence

allows for the possibility of imagining a different life. Thus, Redol is clearly making a gesture that includes the colonies. Nonetheless, although it seems to intimate the potential for any one *gaibéus* to imagine something else for himself, this process of envisioning and creating change does not occur within the story itself. Furthermore, the only apparent possibility for achieving this dream seems to be through travelling elsewhere, outside of Portugal itself, a fairly difficult process for the average person (not to mention, the exclusive domain of the young, strong male who could work for a ship passage). Additionally, and even more troubling, while on the one hand, the colonized space represents the potential for liberation, thus intimating that there is much to learn from life in the colonies, that somehow they embody a possibility of climbing out of the stagnation in Portuguese society through confronting an other that is part of oneself and yet radically different, it empties the same of the actual humans that live there in a way that undermines its liberating potential. It suggests, once again, that the colonies exist only for the sake of the colonizers (we free ourselves through you rather than freeing you).

One is compelled to remember here that this novel was formed in the land of Pessoa's projected *Quinto Império* and the debates sparked by Gilberto Freyre's lusotropicalist assertions. The rhetoric being employed, then, is reminiscent of Pessoa's (under the heteronym Álvaro de Campos) both in the invocation of the famous line from "Tabacaria" (1928), "Tenho em mim todos os sonhos do mundo" that resonates with Redol's "sonho-certeza" as well as the suggestion that Portugal as an entity encompasses more than a tiny piece of the Iberian Peninsula, one that includes Africa and Brazil. In an inversion of the Freyrian discourse of miscegenation and

adaptation,¹⁴⁰ later appropriated as lusotropicalism by the Salazarist Regime,¹⁴¹ Redol posits that the same can be said of Portugal. We are also stronger because we have within us the colonies.

Thus, the *Cefeiro Rebelde* mysteriously returns from the colonies where he has learned a new way of thinking. Like a dream of a distant other, however, the *Cefeiro Rebelde* is not meant to be with the *gaibéus* forever and disappears again, leaving only a trace of himself behind in the two companions he interacted with along the way. He came in a messianic capacity and, once it is fulfilled, he leaves again.

I use the word “Messianic” consciously since not only is the *Cefeiro Rebelde* a heroic figure but there are clear parallels between his final scene and that of the biblical story of Christ on the road to Emmaus. In that narrative, the recently resurrected Christ encounters two men walking toward the city of Emmaus. Falling into step with them, even though they are unaware of his identity, Christ explains the relevance of recent events and their significance to the purpose of life. Eventually the two men’s eyes are opened to see the true nature of their companion, and just as rapidly as he appears, he disappears again, leaving them to share the news of what they have learned.¹⁴²

This same sequence of events occurs with the “dois emigrantes” who encounter the *Cefeiro Rebelde* and become his temporary roadside companions on their way to a new place (Redol 294). While the men might harbour dreams that other possibilities for their lives might exist, it is not until the *Cefeiro Rebelde* confirms this possibility that they begin to believe. By

¹⁴⁰ I refer here to Gilberto Freyre’s works that began with the 1933 *Casa grande e sanzala*, translated as *The Master and the Slaves*. Freyre argued that cultural and racial miscegenation were not to be decried in Brazilian society but rather celebrated as having formed an ideal society.

¹⁴¹ For more on the links between lusotropicalist discourse as employed by the Salazar Regime see Cláudia Castelo’s *O modo português de estar no mundo: o luso-tropicalismo e a ideologia colonial portuguesa (1933-61)*.

¹⁴² See Luke 24 for more.

the time that the *Cefeiro Rebelde* disappears into the distance, the men are aware that, “corria para eles uma vida nova que os faria homens” (Redol 297). Following their new revelation, they are able to embrace a new path and to say along with the *Cefeiro Rebelde*, “Vou-me embora, deixo o campo” (Redol 296).

This revelation is limited, however, since, “embora os outros viessem falar na tal palavra que o companheiro dissera e eles não compreendiam” (Redol 297). Thus, the two immigrants achieve the level of understanding that the *Cefeiro Rebelde* has only after he enlightens them, but the rest of their companions are incapable of understanding what they now know.

That this scene is key in understanding how to achieve, “a superação do drama,” of the *gaibéus* was made clear in 1965 by Redol himself who claimed change would be achieved (as occurs in the novel) through a belief in the possibility of change, through immigration and through the building of a collective (as seen by the bond forged between the *rabezanos* and *gaibéus* adolescents in a night of mischief) (48). Thus, the *Cefeiro Rebelde* is a curious figure in the novel. He serves a dual role as both pseudo-mythic liberator and voice for a narrator who cannot interfere in the story directly. The *Cefeiro Rebelde* is unique, given access to certain information that the rest lack. His privileged position in the text is not one of social or monetary superiority over his fellow human beings but an intellectual one. Due to this, despite setting itself forth as a human documentary, *Gaibéus* succeeds only partially in its goal since it ultimately fails to imbue its subject matter with subjectivities of their own.

While Oscar Lopes claims the *gaibéus* take hold of their subjectivity through their “contemplação dos montes visíveis a distância, e em outros contrastes inexplicáveis,” this point seems hard to maintain when virtually no character other than the *Cefeiro Rebelde* takes advantage of his/her reflective capacity (22). If escaping the circle “is to start from different

presuppositions,” then suggesting the possibility of a subjectivation for the *gaibéus* is a more complicated process than merely showing that the *gaibéus* are occasionally capable of contemplating their situation (Rancière, The Emancipated Spectator 48). Unless they are capable of reflecting and moving from that reflection to changing their lives in some way, it is hard to label this as containing the potential for politics to occur.

At the basis of Redol’s novel, then, seems to be the somewhat paternalistic and flawed belief that a subject is given agency by those outside rather than achieving it for him/herself. Therefore, the novel attempts to make a claim for art that is unsustainable.¹⁴³ That type of “dissent” succeeds only in doing what it sought to free itself from: setting up a tyranny of an outside prescribed life. This confusion between political equality and artistic equality is problematic since, rather than understand that the power of art is precisely in its ability to take apart the relationships between things and their meanings, it attempts to force art into the political arena, an area that is not its territory, rather than focus on that which it can offer: the creation of a space where those who are not the inferno can be seen. Its function as “resistance” then, is questionable because it retains vestiges of a salvation narrative and denies any interruption (be it in reality or in the narrative). This denial forces a particular viewpoint that does not allow the reader or any outsider to think beyond the boundaries of what is presented in the text itself.

Carlos de Oliveira’s Uma abelha na chuva: Reforming Neo-realism

¹⁴³ I draw, once again, on Rancière whose idea of “politics” is completely different to the way art attempts to seek equality since political disagreement works against unequal distributions and functions on the collective level to form different, more equal, groupings. What Redol is attempting to do is foster a collective distribution within a text. However, it is doomed since literature is not interested in redistributing shares within a community. Its role is to question the way we interpret the world, to dismantle previously established links between things. According to this conception of art, the last thing a novel should do is come in from outside to dictate the way relationships and collectives should function.

$$dU = TdS - PdV$$

--The Fundamental Thermodynamic Relation

If Gaibéus is, as Redol put it, a “livro típico de uma atitude,” then it is the subsequent works that, learning from their predecessors, fuse stylistics and content in a different way that seem to most embody the spirit of resistance and the potential of neo-realism (52). For this reason, this chapter now turns to a reading of a novel written in 1953: Uma abelha na chuva by Carlos de Oliveira to examine how, even if art does not resist in the same way that political action does, it can avoid universalizing or generalizing and work to open up possibilities for new ways of conceiving of the world in the minds of the reader.

Oliveira holds an interesting place in the chronology of neo-realism. On the one hand, he, along with Fernando Namora, Mário Dionísio and others, was one of the pre-eminent poets of the movement. His book of poetry, Turismo, was among those featured in 1942 in “a primeira grande manifestação colectiva do neo-realismo português, the Novo Cancioneiro (Pinheiro Torres 11). On the other hand, while he also took part in the novelistic part of the movement that occurred after the poetic emphasis began to dwindle, Oliveira’s production in that area takes Neo-realism down a different path that emphasizes the social conscience of art over rigid adherence to a specific set of stylistics (namely distance in narrative voice and over objectivity that avoids any affective links to humanity).

As one of the writers who successfully navigated between the poetic and prose forms of neo-realism, Oliveira’s Uma abelha na chuva captures all of the major themes of his other novels, especially that of the decay of the aristocratic and bourgeois classes, mirroring the “ambience of stagnation, frustration, oppression, and quiet despair in Portuguese society during

the dictatorship (Reinaldo Silva 191).¹⁴⁴ Similar to his other writings, Uma abelha na chuva works as “a crítica e condenação implícita da ditadura salazarista” and attempts to “desmascarar e denunciar um sistema social perverso” (Reis 32). While working in the same vein as its neo-realist predecessors, Oliveira’s text goes further to undermine their elitist tendencies and, by understanding the way resistance from within art diverges from political resistance, it impersonalizes subjectivity, working from its particular areas of strength, to dissent. Uma abelha na chuva presents the reader with a de-stabilized temporality, dethrones the omniscience/moral authority of the narrator and equalizes the knowledge-holding capability of all characters in the novel, regardless of class, gender or intellectual status.

The story revolves around the Silvestres in the village of Montouro, somewhere to the north of Lisbon. Their marriage is one of convenience, he for a title and she to save her titled family from penury, leaving Álvaro and Maria dos Prazeres trapped in a loveless and sterile relationship. Around them float other characters, the most important of which are Jacinto, the Silvestre’s coachman, and Clara, a housemaid. Jacinto and Clara’s relationship is as alive and fertile as the Silvestre’s is not, setting up an important binary that lies at the heart of the novel. The illicit relationship between the two servants of the Silvestre household eventually leads to Jacinto’s murder at the hands of Clara’s father and his assistant, Marcelo. Complicit in this death is Álvaro Silvestre who, nonetheless, escapes judgment because of his position in the town (or, more precisely, his wife’s position).

While the storyline initially seems straightforward and chronological, in actuality, unlike the “folhetins do Século” that one of the characters (D. Cláudia) is particularly fond of, the novel

¹⁴⁴ Not only was Carlos de Oliveira an important figure in the literary world, but Reinaldo Francisco Silva claims that this is due mainly to Uma abelha na chuva, a work that came on the heels of a four-part series of novels on the Gándara region of Portugal (191). For this reason, I chose to consider this particular novel in my chapter.

constantly frustrates the reader's expectations that it follow a conventional linear format (Oliveira 39).¹⁴⁵ The first chapter begins with a nod to the realist mechanism of time-keeping by indicating that it is five o'clock in the afternoon on a, "tarde invernososa de outubro" (Oliveira 7). Nonetheless, this is the only point in the text wherein time is mentioned, and it quickly becomes apparent that contemporary notions of time progression are less important than those of seasonality.

As the novel begins, an unnamed man (who we later learn is Álvaro Silvestre) arrives at a café where he orders a brandy. Outside is windy and rain is on the horizon, an ominous beginning. Rain, storms and wind are constant features of this novel, and "o vento que arrastava no chão as folhas quase podres dos plátanos" (Oliveira 8). That the first chapter ends with this image is echoed and magnified in the last when the bee struggling to fly free fails and "a voragem acabou por levá-la com as folhas mortas" (Oliveira 132). Fall is an appropriate season to mirror the society that is portrayed in the novel since it is a season mired in death and decay, just as the main protagonists are past their prime, sterile, living in conditions that are "(u)m pouco antiquado" and filled with the past rather than any hope for the future (Oliveira 16). They are the epitome of a society in the autumn of its life.

Structurally, then, as the previous example indicates, the novel is told in a circular way rather than linearly which emphasizes the return to agricultural time and the role that entropy plays in society.¹⁴⁶ We begin with a man drinking brandy before attempting to publically confess to a life lived in a repetitive pattern of having, "passado a vida a roubar os homens na terra e a Deus no céu" (Oliveira 10). Despite his apparent remorse over this act, it fails to stop Álvaro

¹⁴⁵ O Século was one of the major newspapers of the day.

¹⁴⁶ Salazar was adamant about building up Portuguese agriculture and working inward on production and consumption (Ribeiro de Meneses 91).

from returning to his previous condition and committing an even worse act: being the initiator of the murder of another human being. At the end of the novel, the same group gathers in the home of Álvaro and Maria dos Prazeres as was there at the beginning. In Álvaro's head run snippets of his earlier confession and, "ferido pela compreensão confusa mas brutal de que tinha voltado ao ponto de partida, traçando um círculo vão com o sofrimento daqueles dias," he sinks himself back into the same brandy he was drinking before (Oliveira 127).

While the narrative might be circular, then, it is not a constant cycle but rather more of a downward spiral traced back to purposeful ignorance on the part of those who should have known better. Thus, by returning to the beginning at the end, the characters in the novel live, experience the possibility of change, but ultimately fail, at which point their microcosm returns to its original state but worse for the wear.

The entropic nature of the text is most evident in the representation of the bees from which it takes its name. The symbolic nature of the bees as representatives of the members of Portuguese society is clear from the dialogue between Dr. Neto, representative of the intellectual elite, and Padre Abel, representative of the religious elite. Speaking of life and death, the Father, as could be expected, insists that life and death belong to God while the Doctor draws a comparison between the life of people and the bees, the males of which die after fertilization, a clear comparison with the case of Jacinto who dies after fathering a son. Padre Abel makes the comparison even sharper when he scolds the doctor, telling him, "Não aplique aos bichos a medida dos homens," intimating that the doctor, and perhaps the intelligent reader, will (Oliveira 44).

Nonetheless, the doctor cannot help but make comparisons to nature as a man who is interested in "as coisas vivas e criadoras" (Oliveira 40). Just as he tends the members of the

village community, he grows sunflowers and roses for his “comedores de pollen” and takes pride in painting each hive a different colour to identify each particular *cidade* (Oliveira 40). Dr. Neto eventually comes to realize, though, that all his tending is for naught since fixing the outside with paint colours that make its appearance more palatable does not address the structural weaknesses riddling it; his work only “tinha ajudado, anos e anos, aquela obra de pintar, repintar, a colmeia dos Silvestres, sem atender a que lá dentro o enxame apodrecia” (Oliveira 131).

Dr. Neto is a key character in understanding the most important equalizing function the novel performs. In Oliveira’s representation of the social structure of the village, he questions any binary understanding of the microcosm that would elevate a certain class, occupation or gender above the rest by denying the existence of an elite either of a particular social class or of intellectual status. In *Uma abelha na chuva*, no particular occupation or intellectual status is shown to be more elevated than the rest. While the character of Dr. Neto seems to be more self-aware than some of the other characters, this in no way means that he is spared from a negative critique since he is represented as part observing scientist, part coward.¹⁴⁷

An expert in local agriculture, the doctor is an avid observer of nature, especially that of bees. His philosophical approach to the world, however, is, “nascida de três ou quatro jeiras de quintal, assente em realidades vivas, botânicas e animais” (Oliveira 40). Dr. Neto’s understanding of human nature is based on that of animals, watching bees extract pollen and create honeycombs since, “só daí é que partia para as abstracções, simbologia camponesas em que o mel, por exemplo, quase alcançava o teor da suma perfeição” (Oliveira 40). This direct observation of the natural world allows him certain insights into life, into the lack of empathy

¹⁴⁷ Possibly a critique on the objective distance stance taken by some neo-realist writers as well as a general critique of science.

that exists within humanity, when he observes, “muito pouco pode ainda o homem pelo homem” (Oliveira 43).

This same observational skill is what allows him to observe certain features of the upper class in the town that are hidden to others. By the flickering light of candles, he notes, “uma recôndita sensualidade nos lábios de D. Maria dos Prazeres; a palidez de Álvaro Silvestre a resvalar num amarelo de cidra e idiota” (Oliveira 123). The doctor, alone among the upper crust, seems to see the hidden sexuality behind Maria dos Prazeres’s proper appearance and Álvaro’s drunken debauchery, to see the indicators of degradation underneath.

However, while Dr. Neto’s insights are important, this knowledge of the upper crust of Montouro is far from complete especially since he is incapable of recognizing his own failures. He lacks a level of self-awareness, refusing to see the truth about his own behaviour or that of his fiancée, D. Cláudia. Despite being intimately connected with life and death, he hides from intimate relationships with the help of questionable science, creating, “razões de ordem absolutamente material, científica” for why he has yet to marry his intended (Oliveira 40). Instead he embraces what he terms a “puro amor” supposedly until “a ciência possa garantir-me uma sã descendência” (Oliveira 41). While he is not speaking of pure love inspired by the gods or other such romantic notions, there is more than a little romanticism in his argument, but a type cloaked in the rhetoric of science. In this case, science does not offer visibility but rather blindness and becomes a haven for those who wish to avoid the reality of everyday life and their own inabilities.

This blindness extends to his understanding of his fiancée. Instead of seeing D. Cláudia as a woman afraid of the baseness of her nature, the “cruza asfixiada sob cândidos folhetins ou girassóis imaginários,” he sees her as pure and incorruptible (Oliveira 39). Thus their

relationship functions on the basis that, despite having different reasons for it, they are both afraid of their humanity, of that which they cannot control or explain in the world. She avoids thinking about her humanity while he explains it away so as to not have to deal with it.

The intellectual figure of the doctor, then, despite being a supposedly educated character in the novel and presumably possessing a semi-rational mind, is no stand-in for Redol's *Ceifeiro Rebelde*. There is no liberating dimension to Dr. Neto since the novel begins and ends with him living in the same village and incapable of doing anything else. Additionally, there is the suggestion that he might lose his post in the new medical system. Dr. Neto's knowledge, then, only endows him with the capacity to see the futility of his efforts to save Jacinto and Clara, to do more than keep up the façade built by the Silvestres. His self-awareness is limited to realizing that he somehow managed almost to "admitir que a morte de Jacinto é tão importante como as janelas estilhaçadas" (Oliveira 126). As the novel ends, despite his slight enlightenment, he is unable to do more than continue observing as a solitary bee struggles against an onslaught of rain to free itself from the collective only to fail miserably at the end.

Additionally, despite having some knowledge that others in the village lack, Dr. Neto is far from unique since Jacinto, an uneducated coachman and Álvaro, a murderer, are equally capable of intelligent insights into human nature. In what is a radical departure from what was seen in *Gaibéus*, the proletariat in *Uma abelha na chuva* is presented not as lacking in an ability to understand their situation and in need of someone else's guidance but as being all too capable of seeing both the desperateness of their plight and of imagining something better for themselves.

So it is that Jacinto plans to run away to search for "terra por aí fora que é um louvar ao céu" since he has "os braços que, graças a Deus, são dois e bons," Clara and *um filho*. As this

portion of the novel indicates, in the relationship with Clara, there exists an equality wherein Clara is allowed to insist that she is “alguma coisa, Jacinto” and he affirms this to be the case (Oliveira 70).¹⁴⁸

Not only is Jacinto not blinded to the faults of the upper classes but neither does he fall for a desire to assimilate into the same structure that is making his life with Clara an impossibility. Rather he seeks to leave the entire system, unlike Clara’s father, Mestre António who, in his zeal to marry his daughter to *um lavrador* ends up being the agent of her death.

What this narrative does, then, is deny the binary that hierarchizes a particular individual as being better than another by mere virtue of belonging to a certain group (although, as Rancière once put it, there definitely exists a better type of police than another).¹⁴⁹ Instead, it is those trapped in the vices of capitalism that are problematic. While Jacinto might be capable of escaping the repressive system he lives in, it is a member of his own social class that murders him, for financial reasons. In this society, then, individual gain prohibits the collective from working properly and leaves one to fight against the rain alone. Oliveira, then, shifts the focus from the misery of a particular class within the system that his predecessor seemed to be interested in, to the problem of the system as a whole, to the uncritical acceptance of capitalism as an eternal condition, as an “inviolable natural law on which society in the abstract is founded” (Marx *Grundrisse*). Members such as Clara’s father fall into the trap of working with the system, leaving those who wish to break with the system to fight alone. By refusing to morally elevate one group over another and focusing on the individualities so as to equalize them, Oliveira’s

¹⁴⁸ I am not asserting that the novel is a feminist novel necessarily but that it does contain seeds of equality between the sexes as well as between the classes to a certain extent.

¹⁴⁹ There is no citation for this as it was an offhand remark made during a dinner conversation in April, 2011 with Rancière in response to the question of whether there would always be a police at work within a collective.

novel critiques capitalism as a whole rather than locating the blame within one class.¹⁵⁰ It is in this shift that the novel's critique comes to be.

While Oliveira's novel ruptures with the collective assignation of guilt or innocence in such a way as to refocus the reader's attention on systemic problems existing within the Portuguese economy, it still does so within a mainly conventional narrative structure that seeks to invoke the need for collective action against the systematic oppression of capitalism rather than individualist preoccupations. It spares no one, not even the intellectuals from taking part in the system, but it does so by setting itself up as the arbitrator of knowledge. There is no one character who holds the key to understanding what is at work in the narrative, but there is an answer underneath it all that the reader is being asked to unlock, to see those who, within the inferno, are not the inferno. While it identifies those who are not the inferno, however, it does not create a space for them to exist but rather identifies a solution for the reader: create a collective that supports those who are trying to break with the system, create solidarity. In so doing, it fails to represent the reality it so desperately wants to change by insisting on a particular logic based on the author's particular point of view, limiting the possibility that change can actually be envisioned, especially on an individual level. Because of this failure, this chapter now turns to another work that does address the way in which a work of art can represent reality without imposing a certain interpretation on it: Fernando Lopes's cinematic remake of Oliveira's novel.

Fernando Lopes's Uma Abelha na Chuva: Remodeling Neo-Realism

"There are no dangerous thoughts for the simple reason that thinking itself is such a dangerous enterprise."
--Hannah Arendt, The Last Interviews and Other Conversations

¹⁵⁰ This is not to say that the critiques against certain classes or occupations are not much harsher, but that no particular group is deified.

In 1972, Fernando Lopes, one of the major participants in the cineclubista circuit of film directors who spearheaded the New Cinema¹⁵¹ movement in Portugal, took on the task of adapting Oliveira's already canonical work to the screen. Initially attempting to work with Oliveira on the script, the two parted amicably when Lopes decided to take the film in another direction and create something that went beyond being, "uma mera <<cópia>> do livro" (Costa 132). Due to this re-creation, it provokes, "a discussão do paradoxo entre cinema esteticamente inovador, porém, pouco político" (Overhoff 115).

While, according to Leonor Calvet, "muitas obras do neo-realismo literário tenham sido transpostas para o cinema [...] não podemos apelidá-las de cinema neo-realista," based on the earlier discussion regarding the merits of "second wave" neo-realist novels, this chapter contends that looking at Lopes's Uma abelha na chuva, without recognizing its heavy influence from its neo-realist novelistic origin is problematic (330).¹⁵² What makes this film so interesting is that, on the one hand, the film is, "a mais avançada ruptura formal do novo cinema e antecede diversos filmes que considero de plena ruptura poética e formal" (Pina 13). On the other hand, however, as one critic points out, by dismantling the novel and removing certain pieces, what "nos parece ter acontecido foi a atenuação do que, no livro, é um dos soportes neo-realista: a precisão do quadro social" (Costa 132). Unlike, for example, the 1965 adaptation of Fernando Namora's Domingo à Tarde, Lopes's film diverges from its predecessors, but it retains

¹⁵¹ Alternately referred to as *Novo Cinema* or *Cinema Novo*, the distinction is made at times to differentiate Brazil's *Cinema Novo* from that occurring in Portugal. To avoid this confusion, I am merely referring to it in English.

¹⁵² Calvet's provocative thesis goes so far as to limit the definition of Portuguese neo-realist films so severely that the majority of the films generally considered to fall into this category are also dismissed. I contend that it is this type of overly-categorical thinking that prohibits many critics from appreciating Neo-realism's resistant potential.

characteristic elements of neo-realist filmmakers such as the incorporation of documentary elements (Monteiro 822).¹⁵³

The tension between the innovative aspects of the film and its neo-realist inspiration is problematic since the same criticism as that surrounding the neo-realist fictional production exists also in regards to the films with the same a tendency to impose a binary upon the films wherein artistic innovation precludes the possibility of political resistance. In other words, change in form preempts the possibility of social content. For this reason, this chapter concludes with a critical look at Fernando Lopes's adaptation of Oliveira's novel, exploring it not as a complete break with the novel that inspired it but as an extension of the Neo-Realist movement that, similar to Oliveira's novel, questions supposedly established parameters for cinematic storytelling which, in turn, destabilizes the act of storytelling, especially as it relates to historical narration and tradition. This film, then, helps expand the possibilities of art as a means of resistance.

The resistance that functions within the film is, of necessity, different to that of the novel, but it is precisely this difference that causes the film to become resistant in its own right since,

¹⁵³ Portuguese *Novo Cinema* or *Cinema Novo* as it is occasionally also called arose out of the cineclubista movement of 1955 as a backlash against what was considered to be the death of cinematic production in Portugal following a great deal of important work done in the 40s, including films by Manoel de Oliveira, Arthur Duarte and others. *Novo Cinema* drew heavily on neo-realism from Italy but, due to differences in social contexts (minimal involvement in WWII, a calcified dictatorship that disposed of opposition), was not exactly the same. However, Leonor Calvet's asserts that the fundamental quality of Portuguese neo-realism, be it in film or fiction was the "intenção descritiva, crítica e transformadora da consciência social ou, sinteticamente, por um *humanismo concreto*" (372). The way in which this occurred, however, was as different as the different directors were, important among these being António da Cunha Telles, António de Macedo, Paulo Rocha and Fernando Lopes. While it is true that a cinematic remake of a neo-realist novel does not necessarily imply that the film itself is neo-realist, it is my contention that, although Lopes's remake of Oliveira's novel comes at what Luis del Pina, a historian of the movement, considers to be the tail-end of the movement, its innovation of technique coupled ruptures with established stylistics without denying an underlying humanism at its core, thus keeping with the spirit of its origin and making it just as neo-realist.

“the new work contradicts the expectations born by the subject matter of the story, or reviews, rereads and rearranges the elements of old works (Rancière, *Film Fables* 8). Through this reworking, the film is rendered as politically resistant as its predecessor via a penetration of the aural into the visual elements in the film. This disorients the spectator. Additionally, there is a penetration of other media that succeeds in disrupting the continuity of artistic form in the film. These actions serve a different yet still equalizing principle than that performed in Oliveira’s novel. Due to this, the social critique made in the film changes but does not become, for this reason, less resistant.¹⁵⁴

Resistant Penetration/Confusion

The storyline in the film is similar to that in the novel. Set in a small Portuguese village, we see the story of the Silvestres in their unhappy marriage compared to the relationship between Clara and Jacinto. The extra characters of Padre Abel, Dr. Neto and the rest, however, disappear. While Mestre António and Marcelo act at the instigation of Álvaro to dispose of Jacinto, we are given no clue as to what happens afterwards. The cinematic conclusion is left open-ended. Additionally, much of the psychological musings and flashes of memory that Oliveira uses to narrate his story completely cease to occur. We are rarely given any insight into the thinking of particular characters, and, at those few points when it does occur, it comes across as practically dreamlike with the voice-over of a narrating third character.

The resistance within the film, then is of a different nature, focused not on equalizing the individual merit within class collectives through an equalizing of the characters but through a questioning of the act of interpreting life through telling stories, through narration. Refusing to

¹⁵⁴ Also, contextually speaking, the situation in Portugal was quite different between original and adaptation. Resistant potential is a product of its point in time, of its socio-historical context, and thus must be reflected in the works in question. Otherwise, the film would just be a recreation rather than resistant. For more on history and art, see Rancière in *The Politics of Aesthetics*.

adhere to conventions of storytelling, Lopes's Uma abelha na chuva speaks to the impossibility of a mimetic representation of reality, of telling a story of a life through a tightly prescribed narrative structure. Going to the heart of a genre that claims to represent reality, Lopes posits that the storytelling of his predecessors is at odds with a representation of reality which seems to echo what Rancière notes regarding storytelling, that it "has nothing to do with dramatic progression, but is instead a long and continuous movement made up of an infinity of micro-movements" (Rancière, Film Fables 2). Representing reality for Lopes is representing chaos, resisting by undermining the *Estado Novo*'s project of bringing order to society by exemplifying the ways in which life is far from orderly. Rather than fill in the gaps and offer all the answers so the spectator is able to grasp some over-arching social message, Lopes throws pieces of life at him/her, asking the spectator to make as much sense of the confusion as possible, knowing all the while that this is an impossible task.

Thus, confusion is a primary element of Lopes's film, drawing on the already existent principle that art inherently is in conflict with itself (Eisenstein 49). In this case, cinema's conflict lies in the opposition between the spatial (visual, montage) and temporal (auditory) planes. The conflict between the two creates a tension within the spectator that cannot be resolved until the opposition abates. Lopes's film exploits this tension between auditory and visual, asking the spectator to upend conventional practices of understanding the world, his/her auditory senses to imagine the visual and vice versa. This displacement denies the spectator the possibility of accepting the story being presented as truthful and accurate, and thereby, "addresses the rules governing the circulation of appearances, of their visibility and audibility, and the proper distribution of bodies therein" (Panagia 299). The spectator cannot rely on his/her prescribed understanding of the world to interpret what is being seen, undermining his/her belief

in what is and is not the appropriate use of these senses. By questioning normative structures of distribution of the senses when viewing a film, Lopes upsets the foundations of how any narratives, cinematic or governmental, fictional or non-fictional, are understood.

The first displacement of the normative use of the senses occurs through the penetration of off-screen sound, an inherently less precise way of navigating a film since, “spatial anchoring of aural events is much more vague and uncertain than that of visual acts” (Metz, “Aural Objects” 367). Lopes locates the built-in confusion of off-screen sound and takes it a step further, refusing to make the common sense connection between sound and origin. The expectation is that the origin of the sound be presented immediately after the sound is heard, if not concurrently. However, Lopes denies this connection, oftentimes refusing any link whatsoever, as one of the opening sequences of the film exemplifies. The spectator hears the voice of an unknown woman repeating the name, “Álvaro.” Rather than showing the spectator the origin of this voice, however, the screen cuts to a spiderweb, stairs, a fountain and a woman who remains mute while the voice-over (that auditory clues later lead one to believe is the voice of the same woman walking, Maria dos Prazeres) says:

Avançava pelo braço do pai, toda de branco, entre um murmúrio de órgão e vozes sussurradas. Tinha a certeza de que ia a sorrir. Mas dentro de si nasceu um grito, um grito sempre reprimido, e agora, volvidos vinte anos, sentia bem que ainda não o soltara.

This voice-over is curious because, if we were to assume that the woman speaking is the woman proceeding down the hallway, it would be logical to assume that either she was speaking aloud or that she was speaking mentally in the first person. However, it is narrated in the third person, leading the spectator to wonder to whom the voice belongs. Keeping in mind that film,

unlike a novel, advances without offering the possibility to pause and reflect, while later piecing together allows the spectator to realize that the original voice was that of Maria dos Prazeres, this connection is far from simple to make. Additionally, Maria dos Prazeres's use of the third person to speak of herself indicates a disjunction within the film wherein a person narrates his or her own life to an interlocutor, important at the conclusion of the film when Maria dos Prazeres is narrating her life to specific interlocutors: women taking tea in her home.

This confusion between aural and visual and denial of the link between sound and origin occurs later in the film as well, with the appearance of a theatrical remake of one of the major works of Portuguese literature, Amor de Perdição (1862) by Camilo Castelo Branco.¹⁵⁵ In choosing to use a theatrical version of this novel rather than the novel itself, Lopes creates an alternate narrative which disorients by the use of dysfunctional sound continuing to deny the possibility of identifying sound with origin, this time through the use of an echo that repeats back dialogue selectively. Thus, the spectator hears, "O Teresa, Teresa, assim nos vamos separar. Quem sabe? Talvez para sempre," a key phrase in the novel, spoken onstage then echoed back through the playhouse. However, subsequent dialogue fails to echo.

The dysfunction in the representation of the play also occurs via the frequent panning of the audience rather than the stage, forcing the spectator to either imagine the action onstage or to forget what is happening altogether, making it impossible to follow the generally cohesive narrative of the theatrical presentation.

This forcing of the visual through the auditory becomes a type of penetration even more important in key sexual scenes. While it could be argued that part of the reason for the failure to

¹⁵⁵ The integration of Camilo Castelo Branco's most famous work of romanticism is no accident, given his overall influence on Neo-realism.

represent sexuality onscreen is due to a need to circumvent censorship, it has the additional effect of doing storytelling in a new way.

The first occasion on which this occurs takes place before the spectator is aware of the nature of the relationship between Jacinto and Clara. Following a sequence of marshes and wild horses, the camera finally enters the Silvestre home, shooting a close-up of a painting as we hear a woman's voice ask, "E se nos descobrem, Jacinto?" He responds, "Deixa-te estar. Ainda mal se vê." Just as the darkness of early morning keeps the couple's secret, the camera also coyly denies the spectator a view of the couple, cutting to the inside of the stables but not to the pair. The rustling noises and sighs of sexual activity sound over an image of a groom walking by a horse in his stall. Thus, the camera presents the spectator with the possibility of an image that is never resolved, asking his/her imagination to complete the picture.

During a subsequent conversation between the same lovers in the same stables, the disconnection again occurs. This time, however, the aural cues are even more displaced as sounds of sexual activity accompany the visual of a lake and the sounds of water rippling mingle with the sounds the couple is making.

While the previous examples are of the disconnection between sound and human origin, the same occurs with other types of origins. In one of the longest sequences of the film, the viewer is presented a landscape shot. The only clue that we are not staring at a still photograph is that the shrubs move slightly, giving the impression of a breeze. Although the visual is mostly static, the sound is that of a horse carriage, the jingling of reins, the clatter of hooves. While this premonition of a carriage through the use of sound is not particularly unusual—the sound of bells prior to the appearance of Santa's sleigh in a holiday film, for example—what is unusual is the prolongation of the sequence that unsettles the viewer. Nearly a full minute goes by before

even the glimmer of something in the distance appears. This incongruence between spatial and temporal creates a discomfort within the spectator that there is no way to alleviate.

By separating sound from origin and inducing a discomfort or confusion within the spectator, Lopes offers the spectator an opportunity to imagine something else. If subjects within a particular system are those who are accustomed to seeing the world around them in a particular way, “continue to operate with the same strands of visuality and aurality that have always been in place” (Panagia 299). This forcing apart of the visual and the aural challenges the spectator to consider a world where things are not as we are accustomed to seeing them, where the visual and the aural do not follow a previously circumscribed set of norms.

Although the separation of sound from origin is a key part of the resistance operation performed by the purposeful collision between visual and aural elements of the film within Uma abelha na chuva, Lopes goes even further, using these collisions to strip emotions from scenes that would normally be used to provoke a visceral response from the viewer, but in a different way to Redol.

Resisting Emotion

The first of these moments occurs in a confrontation between Álvaro and Maria dos Prazeres who demands to see the contents of what the viewer knows to be Álvaro’s confession regarding his past acts. Angered by the harshness of his refusal, she lashes out by reminding him of his working class background and how, “o meu pai tinha em Alva um cocheiro que falava assim.” Álvaro’s response is to slap her. Up until this point, the scene plays out as expected, but immediately following the slap, the dialogue between the two disappears and while we see what we assume to be Maria dos Prazeres’s insistence on seeing the note and Álvaro’s second response of slapping her, the only sound we hear is that of a loudly ticking clock. While a scene

such as this should be one that has a “percussive effect on the spectator,” in the words of Benjamin, this does not occur (“The Work of Art” 119). Instead, what should be a violent scene of matrimonial discord that draws the spectator into some sort of reaction turns into “the work of the image [that] captures social banality in the impersonality of art” (Rancière, The Emancipated Spectator 119). By erasing half of the dialogue and all exterior noises beyond the amplified clock, the spectator is invited not to see the scene as something extraordinary in its occurrence but to link it to an ongoing matrimonial struggle whose violence and anger are anything but unusual. Time ticking away becomes the constant, prolonging the violence endlessly while at the same time stripping it of its emotional power. Violence becomes as banal as the ticking of a clock.

Similarly, the second moment where this type of visual/aural play redefines viewer expectations occurs near the end of the film. After the murder of Jacinto, Mestre António and Marcelo are returning from disposing of the body, unaware that Clara, in their absence, has discovered Jacinto’s disappearance. As they call for Clara, a member of the Guarda-Civil arrives in the courtyard. Upon seeing him, Marcelo attempts to escape by climbing a nearby wall. Between the chickens blocking his path and the height of the wall in the way, however, he fails. The camera permits us to see the wall from the opposite side, his fingers slipping back down. At this point, however, rather than showing us the apprehension of Marcelo or any sort of conclusion to the murderous acts, we hear the sound of church bells followed by explosions as the camera focuses on the side of a blasted away mountain.¹⁵⁶

This scene performs two separate critiques that function as resistant. We have the identification of what is occurring in the village with the destruction of nature, the effect humans

¹⁵⁶ Figure 3.1

have on the natural world around them: destructive and violent.¹⁵⁷ Additionally, we have the same stripping away of emotion that happened earlier. The personal drama being enacted is linked not to individual consequences but to the scene immediately following the rock blasting, that of people in a community going about their daily routines. The documentary quality of those scenes is in stark contrast to the melodramatic moment of Marcelo's escape and pierces more starkly by the way the rocks being blasted shakes the viewer out of absorption into the story of Clara and Jacinto.¹⁵⁸ These two function together as the former invites the contemplation of human violence that becomes an everyday occurrence such that it is rendered banal.

As the visual/aural incongruencies function to destabilize the spectator's understanding of the world presented in the film as well as, possibly, the world outside of it, so too does the frequent insertion of other media forms into the film, in this case theatre, painting and photography (and photographs). By using the camera, the machine that, according to Rancière's reading of Jean Epstein, supposedly "wants nothing, that does not construct stories, but simply records the infinity of movements" Lopes forces the film to confess to the fact that cinema is to storytelling "what truth is to lying" (Rancière, Film Fables 1). Cinema cannot tell a story the way other media attempts to do because it records moments and strings them together, attempting to make logic of the pure illogicalness of life, telling the story of "substantial and beguiling shadows that have to be destroyed" (Rancière, Film Fables 40). The critique within the film, then, lies in the shadows that each medium represents; rather than destroying them, Lopes uses them to present an alternative narration.

¹⁵⁷ This calls to the human/nature parallel in *Redol* but for a completely different purpose, for the purpose of showing the disengagement of nature as a player (it, for example, is not free in the film) and the violence that is being enacted upon it by humanity.

¹⁵⁸ Figure 3.2

In the case of the paintings, the camera pays particular attention to each one as it hangs on the walls of the Silvestre home. The particulars of each painting are not significant, however, given that Maria dos Prazeres, via voiceover narrates how, “Tudo se foi. Os cadeirões forrados a damasco, os armários de talho, os guarda-louças de cristais finíssimos...as camas torneadas, os quadros das paredes, a prata dos talheres. Tudo se foi entre lágrimas.” Therefore, the paintings themselves hold no particular value since they would have been sold along with everything else otherwise. However, while the paintings themselves may hold no particular monetary value, their subject matter holds symbolic value.

The first painting to appear is that of a groom currying a horse at the precise moment that Maria dos Prazeres demands that Jacinto hitch up the horse-carriage to go into town to find Álvaro.¹⁵⁹ The same painting appears again in a later scene between Clara and Jacinto in the stables. It appears a third time, this time in conjunction with the painting of the solitary horse stallion rearing off the ground.¹⁶⁰ This last time, the paintings are coupled with the violent confrontation between Maria dos Prazeres and Álvaro after which she locks him out of the matrimonial bedroom. What the cuts performed by the camera suggest is that the paintings represent Maria dos Prazeres desires someone other than her husband: Jacinto. The unbridled nature of the horse, no longer held back by someone else, suggests the danger that lies within the walls, within the desire of a woman of the aristocracy desiring her coachman and within the working class itself.

The stallion is strong and resistant to being controlled; he is also virile, just like Jacinto. The stallion/Jacinto/others like him will proliferate while those such as Álvaro perish since Álvaro is sterile, a fact that Jacinto makes clear when he tells Clara, “Olha ao patrão. Não chega

¹⁵⁹ Figure 3.11

¹⁶⁰ Figure 3.12

para a mulher. Nem um filho se lhe atreveu a fazer.” The closed door between the Silvestres at night stands in marked contrast to the passionate scenes in the stables where nothing stands between Clara and Jacinto.

The repetitive return of the painting underscores the omnipresence of Jacinto and others like him in the Silvestre’s life. The lack of detail paid to Jacinto as an individual entity in the film—we know next to nothing about him other than his job and his sexual potency—makes this fusion even more evident. The working class is dangerous since, like the bees (which appear briefly in one scene) they are able to proliferate endlessly while the aristocratic and bourgeois classes fall apart. Their non-individuality is what makes them strong.¹⁶¹

The painting on the wall of the Silvestre house, then, is the spectre, “what one imagines, what one thinks one sees and what one projects” (Derrida, *Spectres* 125). Jacinto is the projection of the anxiety of a dying class, an anxiety that cannot be silenced with his death since it, “is a proper characteristic of the spectre, if there is any, that no one can be sure if by returning it testifies to a living past or to a living future” (Derrida, *Spectres* 123). In the case of this film, it seems that the paintings perform both functions since Jacinto’s continued existence on the walls of the home assure his presence long after his physical extinction in the form of others like him.

This painting-spectre remembers all and sees all. It silently watches the wars between the Silvestres, the closed doors between them. It is a witness to all that has occurred and sees everything just as the silent workers in the household do. In his capacity as observer, Jacinto is able to see through the façade to the reality of the Silvestre’s marriage, to Maria dos Prazeres’s desire for him. This sight and knowledge are the real reason why he is killed, as Maria dos

¹⁶¹ Compare this to the impulse to either save the collective as in *Redol* or the impossibility of resistance without a collective in *Oliveira*. Here, the collective *is* and in being it is strong. It will win in the end by virtue of its ability to procreate. However, the collective is still based on individuals like Jacinto who break the rules and, in so doing, assure their eventual triumph.

Prazeres reveals at the end of the film when she tells Álvaro that, “Mesmo agora depois do morto, odeio esse maldito cocheiro. Se te pode servir de algum consolo fica sabendo que o odeio, por ter dado conta do que sera só comigo, tão íntimo que o esconderia a minha própria alma se pudesse.” She, a member of the upper class, desires that which will eventually bring about the end of the class she was born into.

If the constant return of the paintings signals the omnipresent threat of annihilation at the hands of the working class and the impossibility of burying the past along with a body, the insertion of other artistic media call into question temporality in other ways.

The most blatant penetration of another medium into the film is of the reproduction of Camilo Castelo Branco’s Amor de Perdição. Coupled with music from Verdi’s 1862 La forza del destino, the parallels between the storyline of the novel and the film seem clear: frustration in love and the inevitability of escaping one’s unhappy destiny. The similarity ends there, however, since the story being told in the theatrical representation of the novel is a piece-meal version that performs a cut and paste operation of scenes from the novel to fit with the story taking place in the film. While it seems reasonable to assume that the average member of a Portuguese audience would be familiar with the novel to some extent, no context is provided for the theatrical piece as we enter in the middle and end in the same.

What is most unusual about this work, then, is not the story itself but what it references: a great “romance” in the dramatic and sentimental style that is the exact opposite of what Lopes’s film is creating. By chopping the work into pieces, Lopes pays homage to Castelo Branco as he demolishes his masterpiece, forcing it to serve the new narrative. Portuguese tradition so frequently invoked by Salazar is forced to serve the new, resistant, purpose. This brutal

intertextuality plays on past knowledge/tradition but subverts it in the service of a new narration that is chaotic and not cohesive.

Intertextualities of Resistance

Additionally, the theatrical stage is the first example of the intervention of yet another medium, that of still photographs.¹⁶² The still enters in the middle of the play onstage. The scene is of the confrontation between Teresa's family, who come to take her to a far away convent, and Simão, her lover, who wishes to spirit her away with him:

CLOSE-UP of Maria dos Prazeres

INSERT – Photo 1¹⁶³

TERESA'S FATHER

Vilão é desgraçado que me ameaça sem ousar avançar um passo.

INSERT - Photo 2¹⁶⁴

TERESA'S FATHER (CON'T)

Não te tenho feito entender isso? Castigando-te na presença de criados? Podes pôr-te com gente

suja, canalha!

INSERT – Photo 3¹⁶⁵

SIMÃO

Se assim é, espero nunca me encontrar de novo com a sua senhoria. É tão sem dignidade que o hei-de mandar a zurrar pelo primeiro mariola das esquinas

BACK TO stage

¹⁶² It is difficult to be certain if all of these are still photographs or camera stills turned into photographs, but given the blatant insertion of photographs into Lopes's other important film, *Belarmino*, it seems reasonable to conclude that these are, indeed, photographs.

¹⁶³ Figure 3.3

¹⁶⁴ Figure 3.4

¹⁶⁵ Figure 3.5

BALTAZAR

Ah canalha!

SOUND of gunshot

TERESA

Baltazar!

The interruption of photography occurs at the most crucial moment of the play, the moment when Simão shoots Baltazar, condemning himself to prison and a life without Teresa. Rather than show the action onstage as the music builds to a climax, however, still photos of what appears to be a totally different troupe in similar period clothing are interjected into the montage. Yet more confusing is that the actual shooting of Baltazar occurs after it has been shown in the third photograph, cutting back to the stage for the sound of a gunshot and Baltazar the actor falling to the ground onstage. By being warned of the violence to come, the spectator's attention is directed away from the violence of the scene when it occurs, this time by using a different medium to strip the power away from the violence being represented in the play. The film, then, is the story reinterpreted for a new time that strips away the sentimentality and emotion that seek to manipulate the spectator by reminding her of how this same violence seen onstage or in everyday life is neither unusual nor shocking. Reality and fiction have mingled just like violence and the everyday. This, however, does not have the same effect as elsewhere. The spectator is not completely removed by the distance, but inserted into the everydayness, into the banality that is both impersonal and personal at the same time. How it is to be understood, however, is not forced on the spectator.

Additionally, by the penetration of still photos of a different troupe performing the same scene when the audience is forced out of the narrative, a caesura is opened in the film, arresting

and immobilizing the storyline in such a way as to call into question the way in which we envision the act of reproduction. The film serves the paradoxical role of mediator and innovator at one and the same time. By interjecting photographs from a similar production elsewhere, the film reminds the spectator that the story it tells, a reproduction of another reproduction of another reproduction takes place in a lengthy tradition of storytelling, of history.

This motif occurs yet again in the final scene of the film. Maria dos Prazeres is doing needlepoint in front of the fire while two other women take tea. As we watch her needle go in and out of the cloth, she recounts the story of the passion between someone named Madame D'Argères and her admirer, Armand Tellier. The story sounds like something out of a *folhetim*, wherein a titled individual marries for money, denying the possibility of a love-match.¹⁶⁶ Maria dos Prazeres wistfully recounts how the unfortunate Cécile D'Argères finds “felicidade na renúncia,” of her love for Armand Tellier in her “casamento de conveniência” to a *marquês*.” The lovers accept their fate, understanding that a passion like theirs, “era grande demais para arder e consumir-se no amor comum.”

The parallels between Maria dos Prazeres's story and the situation between the Silvestres are obvious: one impoverished title marrying for convenience, destroying a romantic love affair that is made yet more heroic for that fact. Nonetheless, in this final scene, all the previous tools that sought to undermine the spectator's understanding of reality are present once again, colluding.

The scene opens with the shot of a painting—forgettable in its content—and as Maria dos Prazeres tells the story, both the theatrical rendition of Amor de Perdição and still photographs are interjected, mixing various media together at once. The curtain rises on the stage as

¹⁶⁶ Similar to the pamphlets that Clara read in Oliveira's work, larger works were circulated in parts and featured stories that were fairly tepid in nature although racy for their time.

Jacinto/Simão steps forward. One of the women taking tea exclaims, “E o cavaleiro sem uma palavra.” Armand, Jacinto and Simão are speechless, joined together in theatrical, novelistic and oral traditions through the common bond of muteness. Cinema is thus found to be the only way to construct “an *aesthetic* art, an art where the idea is no longer translated into the construction of a plot dependent on identification, fear and pity, but is directly impressed onto an adequate sensible form” (Rancière, Film Fables 24). Lopes’s film, unlike Oliveira’s novel, becomes the way to tell reality, to tell the truth when the stories become lies, and it does so by using every tool in its arsenal (save that of manipulation). It bombards the spectator with inversions of traditions, with a variety of media, all for the purpose of creating a story that insists that its truth is in the acknowledgement that it is a truth that cannot be told without the spectator.

As Maria dos Prazeres wistfully speaks of Cécile’s “suave renúncia” of the possibility of happiness, Álvaro abruptly enters the room, interrupting the story and preventing it from concluding as the heavy sound of a clock ticking recurs. His face in the door way turns into a photograph of the same, as the voice-over of his confession from the beginning of the film begins again. Álvaro’s photograph fades into Maria dos Prazeres’s photograph which eventually blurs into a photograph of her needlepoint project, a butterfly frozen in space and time, captured in the cloth just as the Silvestres are trapped along with their story.¹⁶⁷

The clashing of aural and visual and between media here serves the same function as earlier, refusing the spectator the possibility of peaceful acceptance of the finality of the film. By interrupting the narrative flow, it rips open a space in the middle of the story to acknowledge that the spectator is an actor, that viewing is “also an action that confirms or transforms” (Rancière, The Emancipated Spectator 13). The spectator is thus interpellated into the film, trapped

¹⁶⁷ Figures 3.6, 3.7, and 3.8

alongside the butterfly and the Silvestres, even, perhaps, jointly implicated with them in the tragedy that has unfolded in the film.

This interruption also calls into question the veracity of the story being told by Maria dos Prazeres, and the act of storytelling itself. What Maria dos Prazeres shares with the women in her parlour is a romantic version of her own stories that glorifies a love by elevating it beyond commonality. However, this is not a direct contradiction to the story the viewer watched unfolding in the film. At no point is it evident that Maria dos Prazeres had an actual affair with Jacinto but rather that she desired him, was torn between that desire and a hatred of him for knowing that he was desired. Jacinto, in love with Clara, and aware of Maria dos Prazeres's gaze, is killed for his insight. Unlike the new narrative Maria dos Prazeres is constructing, Jacinto not only suffers "o abandono" as Armand does but his body is abandoned to a lake, his lover left to fend without him. Also, while Cécile might have renounced her love in the happiness of self-sacrifice, Maria dos Prazeres not only did not renounce a love (unless one counts her imaginary love) but her unhappiness is palpable throughout the film.

In the clash between Maria dos Prazeres's narrative and the narrative that the film tells, the spectator is offered a space to reflect upon his/her reality, on the act of narration and on the way each narration inevitably differs from the previous one. The insertion of the still photographs and overlay of the ticking clock, time and the story are suspended, the ending circumvented which is what causes it to be a reflection on the nature of storytelling, of telling his particularly story, his history. Each re-counting is not a reproduction of the past (or of a past narration) but rather a new interpretation of the same. Thus, Lopes's film is not a mere reproduction of Oliveira's novel, but a new, subjective, reflection on the fiction/reality presented in the novel, which in and of itself is a reflection on the world Oliveira saw. This telling, then,

suggests that the basis for understanding Portuguese neo-realism and the act of resistance it offers is precisely in the failure of its narratives to objectively and accurately represent reality according to a set form. This, however, should not be interpreted as the failure of neo-realism as a movement but rather in suggesting that its potential lay in the way it reflected reality faithful to its interpreter's particular reality, stripped of its pretense to being something else. It included a broad range of the population, not only the preferred segments, always already aware that its own vision was frozen in its own particular point in time, in its own history and perspective, just as the butterfly is trapped in the needlepoint project.

While this is certainly a critique of the supposed objectivism of neo-realism, it should not be seen as a dismissal of its worth, but rather as a new interpretation of what neo-realism had to offer. Instead of reflecting a pure and incorruptible view of reality, what Lopes's reading suggests is that changing the world happens through the act of interpreting it, through the realist mechanism of making visible the everyday, the common, and using the imagination to suggest the capacities that everyone has within him/herself. As opposed to the closed postulations of Alves Redol regarding what neo-realist works should do, what Lopes's neo-realism offered was an interpretation of reality that focused on that which makes up every part of society, on the parts that the dictatorship tried to ignore, that those artists involved in Portuguese modernism rejected as subject-matter. In this sense, Uma abelha na chuva is a defense of neo-realism, albeit one that insists on a more fluid understanding of its principles and representations.

Conclusion

"The camera is an instrument that teaches people how to see without a camera."

--Dorothea Lange, A Photographer's Life (vii)

Lopes does, however, offer a new possibility to this understanding by adding another dimension, by suggesting that the resistance found within a text is not only in the telling and re-

telling of a story according to an artist's subjective viewpoint but also in the existence of the interpreters who, "will compose their own poems, as, in their way, do actors or playwrights, directors, dancers or performers" (Rancière, The Emancipated Spectator 13). This invocation of that which is outside of the text, the spectator, is seeded in the final interruption of photographs in the film. Following the argument with his wife and being barred from entrance into the matrimonial bedroom, Álvaro loses his temper, upsetting a bottle of brandy. His empty gaze wanders the room and comes to rest on a photograph hanging on the wall.¹⁶⁸ The photograph in question is of what appears to be a boys' school with the dark-robed boys of various ages seated around a dour-faced schoolmaster (distinguished from the others by his age, headgear and the book in his lap).¹⁶⁹ The unsmiling boys stare into the camera and Álvaro's gaze, along with the camera, focuses in on the face of one particular boy.¹⁷⁰ The boy looks out at the viewer for an interminably long interval, his shaven head and sunken eyes piercing the spectator.

What is most striking about this photograph, however, is not the photograph *per se* but the complete lack of context surrounding its appearance. With the paintings, the theatrical photographs or the ending sequence, their relationship to the film seems more obvious. This photograph, however, appears out of nowhere and retreats into nowhere. The boy comes into being as a presence, not an identity or a word. He invokes the spectator's attention but refuses to explain why he has appeared. Here, in the figure of the unknown boy, the film acknowledges that the spectator is always already a participant in the act of telling the endless story that is life. The boy demands that the reader pay attention, question his existence; he does not explain or retreat. He merely is, and in so being offers a space for the spectator to fill with his/her own

¹⁶⁸ This is not the only time this photograph will appear, but this is the longest interval and the second appearance is like unto the first in that it follows a marital dispute.

¹⁶⁹ Figure 3.9

¹⁷⁰ Figure 3.10

interpretation, a re-telling of his story. At this moment, Lopes erases the binary of filmmaker and spectator, storyteller and listener. He also interrupts the binary between artistic innovation and political commitment by announcing that the spectator/reader/viewer is, in and of him/herself, a passive interruptor, a penetration. In this penetration, Lopes opens a new space, one where different conceptions of life, different stories can be imagined. By presenting new spaces, ones where alternate subjects might emerge, Lopes offers a new way of thinking about what it means for a film, especially a neo-realist film, to be resistant.

The question of resistance, in Lopes, in Oliveira, in all the other texts explored here, then insists on being taken in their particularity, in the way they function together and apart. If resistance, as we know it, is a particular product of our times, the question of how it will develop in the future remains yet to be seen.

Conclusion

This dissertation is an initial step towards unraveling a series of questions that revolve around the nexus of resistance. While I have contended throughout that there exists no one Resistance but rather what Sartre would call in his 1961 essay, “An Unprivileged Painter,” a “play of resistances” (qtd in Caygill 2), there is still much work to be done regarding the particularities of resistance to these two dictatorships. This is especially relevant in the context of a larger exploration of how visibility functioned within the dictatorial regimes as well as the contestatory discourses that rose against them that I address here. While my preliminary goal was to reexamine the work of the neo-realists as something other than a failed experiment in aesthetic engagement, what I found was not only a deep indebtedness to other, similarly inspired movements, of the twentieth century but also to past aesthetic engagement in the nineteenth century.

Additionally, while the Iberian dictatorships physically ended over half a century ago, the question of the relationship between the arts and resistance to physical violence and oppression has not ended. Although the context has changed, resistance persists through changes, adaptations. It reappeared during the 1980s in the Rohtas Art Gallery in Islamabad, or among the Chilean *arpilleras* under Pinochet. In the 21st century, resistance art appeared in the wake of the Arab Spring and continues appearing in response to the violence of the genocide in Rwanda.

While resistance to invasion, to physical oppression is no longer a concern for the Iberian Peninsula, the legacy of those times has survived, but, true to the nature of resistance itself, in other forms. Following the financial crises faced on both Spain and Portugal in recent years, I

would argue the question is no longer one of opposition to a concrete oppressive regime but rather a more abstract one, one linked to the failures of capitalism. From artists burning their work outside the *Assembleia da República* in Lisbon to protest funding cuts, to tiny projects in Spain that involve selling music written and sold by the homeless on the streets, new forms of resistance are coming to be every day. These resistances, however, play out in a new, global era, where social media and visual imagery play an increasingly important role. For this reason, the question of the interactions between visibility and resistance will continue to be significant sites for study.

Beyond the question of aesthetic resistance, there remains one of resistance to current formulations of what it means to consider the Iberian Peninsula as a whole. Due to this, my dissertation is also a preliminary attempt to do a parallel exploration of two countries that, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, became monolithic examples of a national identity constituted in order to bolster faltering state apparatuses in an age of crisis. As I indicate, the Napoleonic invasion did not, in fact, solely affect the Spanish populace, but the uprisings in Madrid were quick to spread to Portugal, which was being held by the French troops after a betrayal by the Spanish. This intersection of influences continued into the dictatorial era and beyond.

While José Saramago suggests in his novel, *A Jangada de Pedra* (1986), that the problem of Iberian unity is one that can be transcended through mutual sharing and personal interactions, he does so in the context of an Iberian Peninsula cut off from the rest of its European community. The complexity of the relationship between these two former empires should—and will—be a subject of serious consideration in the future both for others and myself. While there are, of course, centuries old ties between the two, as I have suggested here, there are also links

particular to the modern age, ones steeped in uneasy truces and a common desire to move beyond the margins of European society. Thus, lurking beneath this entire project have been questions of Iberian identity, unity and disunity, ones that become even more relevant in light of both of their entrances into the European Union.

Figures

1.1



1.2



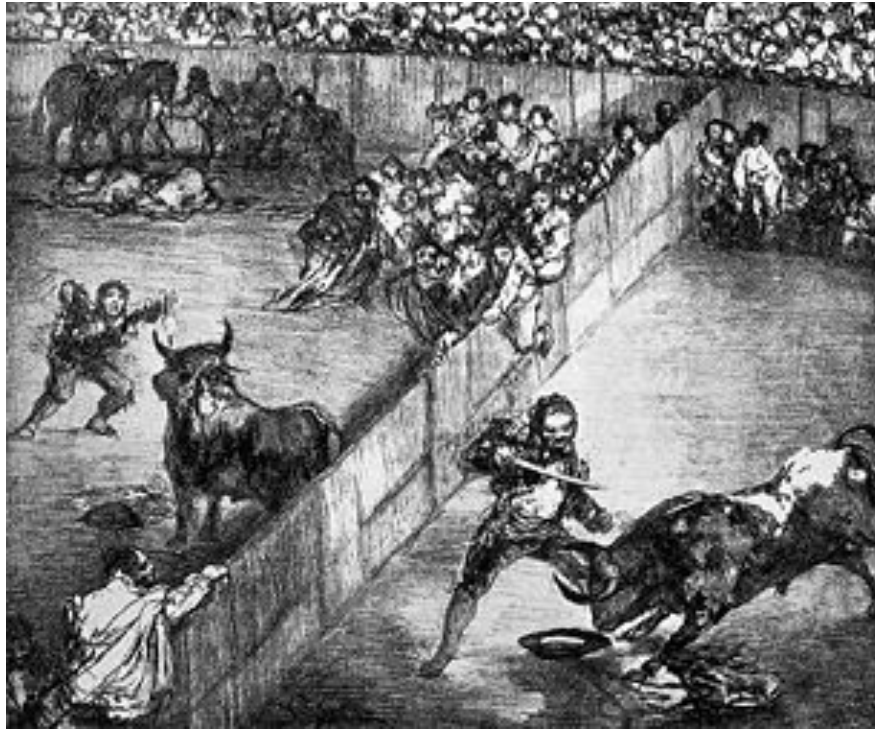
1.3



2.1



2.2



2.3



2.4



3.1



3.2



3.3



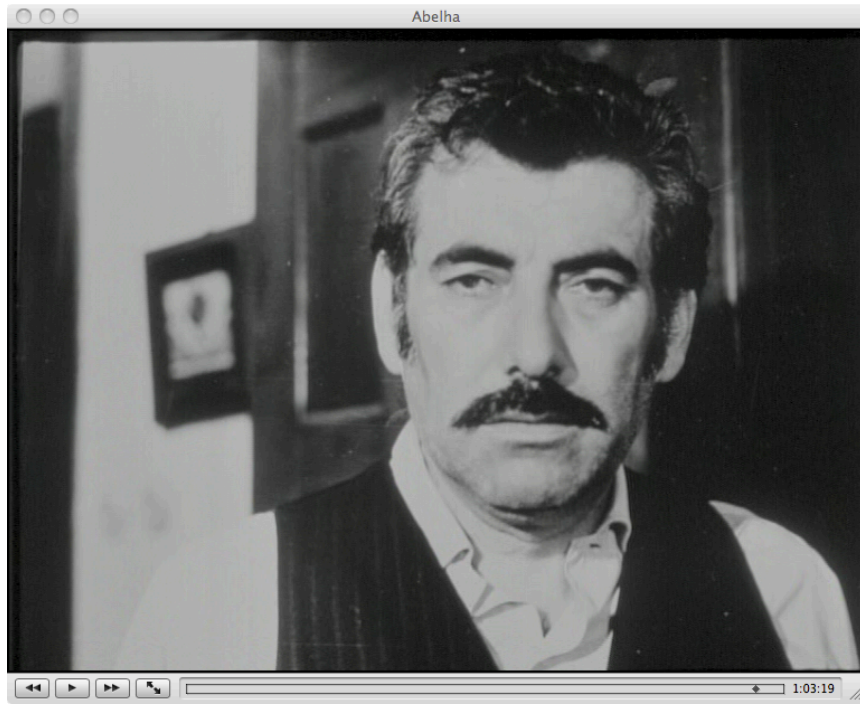
3.4



3.5



3.6



3.7



3.8



3.9



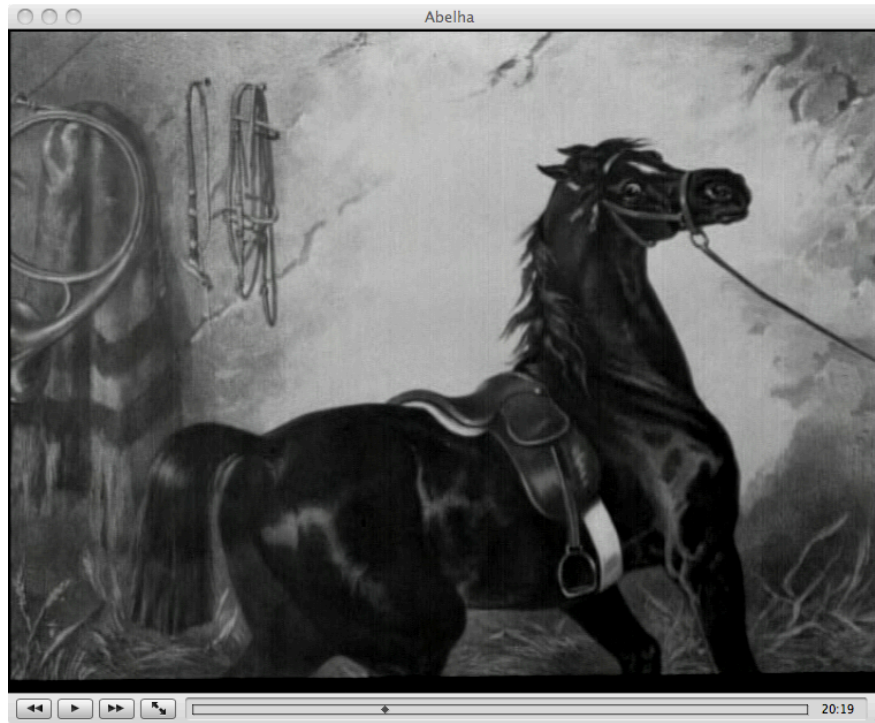
3.10



3.11



3.12



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