

THEATERS OF WAR: COMBATANT DRAMA DURING THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

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When civil conflict engulfed Spain in the summer of 1936, intellectuals and writers throughout the nation aligned themselves with either the Republic's defense of democratic government and socialist values or the National Movement's 'crusade' against Marxism and secularism. Both groups sought to utilize education and the arts as essential elements in their cultural campaigns to justify and legitimate their respective ideological positions, particularly through the art form most accessible to the greatest number of people: theater. While the Republican and Nationalist militaries fought for control of the nation's physical territory, playwrights and intellectuals from each side contested the cultural space of Spain through critical articles on the theater and propagandistic plays. Perhaps the most surprising or paradoxical aspect of this cultural battle being waged simultaneously alongside actual warfare arises from the striking similarity in the rhetorical and discursive strategies employed by writers affiliated with ideologically and philosophically opposed political factions.

During the Civil War, both the republican and nationalist governments took steps toward creating official organizations to disseminate cultural instruction and to circulate theatrical works to their citizens and soldiers. In the Republican zone, these efforts were in large measure extensions of the *Misiones pedagógicas*, founded in the Second Republic earlier in the decade. A series of decrees creating a number of cultural institutions followed the founding of the Second Republic in 1931 and the outbreak of the war in 1936 (Plaza Chillón 7-8).¹ The Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas created a theater wing during the war that included several smaller groups: *Nueva Escena*, *Teatro de Arte y Propaganda* and the *Guerrillas Teatrales*, in which participated such esteemed writers as Rafael Alberti, Ramón J. Sender, María Teresa León, and Max Aub. In the opposing zone, a series of government institutions were founded to serve similar purposes. For example, Eduardo Marquina directed the *Junta Nacional de Teatros y Conciertos* after its founding in December of 1938, an organization that relied on the services of writers such as José María Pemán, Manuel Machado, and Luis Escobar (García Álvarez 199-200). Although this process of institutionalization occurred more slowly in the Nationalist zone than in Republican territory, it is highly significant that both sides recognized the need to establish formal organizations to circulate cultural instruction within the parameters of their respective ideological programs.

The dedication of resources within the governmental framework reveals the importance that each side placed on the development of an internal theater infrastructure for ideological or

propagandistic purposes. But what exactly is the relationship between theater as an artistic endeavor or literary genre and the socio-political stances that each side wished to articulate? An analysis of two essays, both written during the tenure of the Second Republic, will shed light on the role of theater within the general cultural program of both Republicans and Nationalists during the war, as well as begin to establish a foundation for their comparison. Ramón J. Sender's *Teatro de masas*, written in 1932, provides insight into the role of a new, political theater in the revolutionary plans of the Republic's radical left. In contrast, Ernesto Giménez Caballero's *Arte y Estado*, published in 1935, discusses the subjection of Art to the exigencies of the State within the social program of the radical right, particularly the *Falange Española*.² Although Communism and Fascism present themselves as diametrically opposed worldviews and irreconcilable foes, strikingly similar images and themes appear time and again in each of these essays' treatment of art in general and theater in particular.

In *Teatro de masas*, Ramón J. Sender offers a wide variety of comments and observations on the current state of Spanish theater during the early twentieth century and argues for the development of a political theater that will serve the needs of social revolution and justice. At the beginning of the essay, Sender criticizes the three "minorities" that dominate the Spanish stage of the time period: commercial interests, old realists, and young practitioners of poetic theater (7-8). In many ways, Sender's statements on the need for theatrical innovation fall within a larger context in which Avant-garde writers and thinkers in Spain and the rest of Europe clamored for a renovation of the theater.³ Ramón Pérez de Ayala argued that the Naturalist mode that controlled Spanish theater had run its course and now stood in the way of further aesthetic development or creativity (Pérez Bowie 2245).⁴ Although Sender's comments tend to reflect his political goals for a renovated theater more than artistic or aesthetic concerns for the state of the art form, his desire to renew the Spanish stage through technical and thematic innovation places him squarely in the context of the contemporary vanguard movements.

This connection with the Avant-garde is a major point of comparison between Sender's essay on the theater and Giménez Caballero's *Arte y Estado*. Whereas Sender dedicates his entire study to the topic of the theater, Giménez Caballero places his comments on the genre within a more general discussion of art, artists, and their relationship to the State. Nonetheless, the language he employs implies a vision of a theater that is renewing itself through a recuperation of its "true" essence: "Yo creo que el Teatro se encamina, más cada día, hacia su esencia originaria y permanente. Que no es otra sino la del misterio, la de lo mágico. La 'representación de la vida humana' como fenómeno religioso" (164). Such a vision of the historical specificity of theater coincides strongly with the Avant-garde movements, a point of contact that José-Carlos Mainer has observed in the work of Giménez Caballero:

Seguramente era también el más lúcido de todos los jóvenes de 1927 con respecto a la significación política y moral de la posición vanguardista: en primer lugar, por lo que su obra tiene de tentativa de politizar la rabiosa contemporaneidad del movimiento (que para el concluirá en una adhesión absoluta y precursora al fascismo); en segundo lugar, por su preocupación de hallar un lugar histórico a la promoción que se definió a sí misma al margen de tal cosa, pero que Giménez Caballero entroncó acertadamente en la brecha de ruptura intelectual marcada a fin de siglo. (257)

In other words, Giménez Caballero's observations fall within Avante-garde beliefs in the need to overcome the commercial and frivolous theatrical production of the day, and at the same time demonstrate a critical vision of the movement itself and its place within wider historical or political concerns.

Both writers display a tendency to seek the "true" essence of theater, viewing the bourgeois of their time as a contamination of the permanent nature of theater. Sender sees that the theater "que responde más fielmente a su propia consigna de origen es el que llega antes y con mayor fuerza a la conciencia de un número más crecido de espectadores" (50-1), explicitly connecting the "true" nature of theater with his own ideological desire to involve the proletarian masses in national cultural and political life. Likewise, Giménez Caballero relates theater to the precepts of Falangismo, focusing on the theater in particular as an "arte de acción" and the arts in general as "fieras en libertad" (163), implicitly linking artistic expression with the idealism and vitalism that were fundamental cornerstones of Fascist philosophy (Payne 8). Of course, Sender agrees with Giménez Caballero on this aspect of theater, also pointing out the importance of a theater in which action and movement are central aspects of the drama instead of psychological portrayals and verbose dialogue (50). Each writer seeks to correlate what they view as fundamental characteristics of the genre to the specific socio-political or philosophical tenets of their respective ideological positions.

Perhaps paradoxically, both Sender and Giménez Caballero speak of the need for a return to traditional models in order to carry the innovation project to its ultimate consequences. Sender suggests that symbols and symbolic interpretation populates all of Spanish history in an attempt to infer the inherent inclination of the Spaniard toward theatricality: "La pasión de materializar, de hacer de la idea una realidad viva y plástica y tangible ha traído esa profusión de símbolos que constituye nuestra Historia" (13). Sender also connects the political theater of which he speaks to the Spanish and French theater of the seventeenth century—specifically the autos sacramentales and the "mysteries" that were two elements of popular theater during the time period—in order to emphasize their affinity for the representation of ideas and concepts in a tangible representation (95). Giménez Caballero also calls for a

return to the Golden Age tradition, looking to Lope de Vega in particular as a point of inspiration for the renewal of the Spanish stage: “Se necesita la audacia de un Lope para romper con la rutina e innovar” (167). Sultana Wahnón argues that this elevation of the figure of Lope de Vega was a general characteristic of the Falangist cultural program (198). Likewise, Giménez Caballero refers to a return to the symbolism and “mystery” of the *auto sacramental* as the key to creating a vitalist theater of action and ideas that can reach all the social strata within the national-sindicalist system (174).⁵ This necessity to claim Spain’s cultural past for one’s own is an important rhetorical strategy within the ideological program of both the Republic and the Nationalist Movement, and will serve as a major cultural battleground during the years of the Spanish Civil War.

The most striking similarity between Sender’s *Teatro de masas* and Giménez Caballero’s *Arte y Estado* is that each writer reads the tradition of the *corrida de toros* both as an indication of the organic, native Spanish sense of theatricality and, as such, as a model for the theatrical renewal each proposes. For Sender, the *corrida* is the Spanish theatrical form par excellence because it is an anti-literary theater, which fits within his overall framework of rejecting literary culture, which he claims deforms the tastes of the spectator by imposing Bourgeois values. Within the anti-literary theater of the *corrida de toros*, sentimentality and lyricism find no place because the theatrical act only seeks truth (18). Within the bullring, the matador is both author and actor, improvisationally creating the drama through the text of his own body, a statement that in many ways anticipates more contemporary ideas about performativity. Sender also affirms that “La luz implacable de las plazas envuelve por igual a actores y espectadores” (20), thereby connecting the *corrida de toros* with the theater of the masses.⁶ In effect, actors and spectators participate equally in the spectacle, creating a space where the free exchange of concepts, symbols, and ideas occurs in a theoretically egalitarian fashion. Rather than a passive spectator in the Bourgeois theater, Sender demands the active participation of the spectator in the same manner as Brecht, creating a theatrical experience that leads to self-analysis and social or political engagement.

Giménez Caballero also utilizes the *corrida de toros* as a fundamentally Spanish art form within his general vision of the social and moral role of art in society and in relation to the State. He even goes so far as to state that “La *Corrida de Toros* es el único espectáculo verdaderamente clásico, grandioso y auténtico que se conserva en el mundo” (173), clearly attempting to establish the individuality of the Spanish spirit so crucial to the nationalistic intentions of Fascist movements in general. From here, Giménez Caballero associates the *corrida de toros* with the fundamentally religious nature of the theater: “El Teatro por eso nació siempre en torno a un sacrificio, a un altar. El altar de Dionisos o el altar de Cristo...El Teatro auténtico siempre ha tenido ese fondo litúrgico, hierático, místico, es decir, *misterioso*”

(173). For Giménez Caballero, the *corrida de toros* exemplifies the ultimate purpose of the theater, which is to create a series of symbols that inherently lead the spectator to the absolute truth of the divine. This aspect of Giménez Caballero's conception of the theater inherently links his ideas to the tradition of the Spanish *auto sacramental*. The *auto* is a sort of theatrical sermon that utilizes all the resources and tools of drama in order to explicate and illustrate the universal significance of the Eucharist, typically during the feast of Corpus Christi (Arias 9-10). Within this theatrical aesthetic, every object, character, and trait portrayed in the work functions on a symbolic level to point to the absolute truth of Catholic doctrine. For Giménez Caballero, this mode of theater serves the purposes of the Church and the State, as well as establishing an interpretive paradigm through which it is possible to read the Falangist cause as symbolic of God's divine plan, a strategy that the nationalist movement will co-opt during the unification of its various political factions during the war.

Of course, the fascinating aspect of all these similarities between Sender's essay and Giménez Caballero's text is that the two writers arrive at completely different conclusions using many of the same concepts, themes, and images. While Sender portrays the theatrical work as a collective moment in which the leftist ideals of social justice are enacted, Giménez Caballero views the theater as a reaffirmation of the intrinsic, natural hierarchy of humanity. Whereas Sender's leftist social revolutionary ideas lead him to search for a drama that emerges spontaneously from the popular classes, Giménez Caballero pursues in theater the fusion of the elite with the masses along the lines of the revolutionary ideals of the radical right. Giménez Caballero offers a model for this fusion from Spanish Golden Age theater: "El *Teatro culto, humanista*, del Quinientos, tuvo la consecuencia "social y religiosa" más insospechada: *Lope de Vega y Calderón*" (170). In other words, the theatrical expression that unifies the elite with the masses originates in the cultural production of the elite, rather than in the spontaneous expression of the popular classes as posited by Sender. Behind this interpretation of Spanish literary history is Giménez Caballero's desire to apply the Fascist ideals of social hierarchy to the arts, the primary mode in which he distinguishes the Fascist theater from the social theater in Russia.

The confluence of themes and images in these theoretical texts illustrates the discursive and cultural battle in which many writers and intellectuals engaged during the Spanish Civil War. In the same sense that two opposing military forces struggled to secure control of a single geographic space, writers from the corresponding ideological factions battled to gain cultural supremacy over the concepts and symbols of Spanish tradition and heritage. In both groups, socio-political goals and ideological programs exercise a decisive influence over interpretations of Spain as a nation and cultural entity in both the present and the past.

During the Civil War, both nationalists and republicans struggled for control over the tradition of early modern Spanish theater. Each side sought to present itself as the legitimate heir of this dramatic heritage by reading the playwrights and their texts according to the principles of their socio-political positions. By uniting their modern political and social perspectives with widely recognized cultural icons and literary figures, each group demonstrated their own cultural continuity with the past while simultaneously implying the illegitimacy and unnaturalness of the other group's claim to Spanish cultural inheritance. Also, such a rhetorical gesture was intended to lend credence and authority to the ideology being upheld, in much the same way that Alan Sinfield has observed in modern appropriations of Shakespeare in the Anglophone world: "Shakespeare is a powerful cultural token, such that what you want to say has more authority if it seems to come through him. That is how Shakespeare comes to speak to people at different times: the plays have been continuously reinterpreted in attempts to coopt the bard for this or that worldview" (11). In an essay on the Falangist view of Golden Age literature, Kessel Schwartz cites an article from the Seville *A.B.C.* dating from October 26, 1937,⁷ which states "Nuestros Garcilaso, Cervantes, Lope, Ercilla[...]son miembros de nuestra Cruzada Nacional de hoy" (206). In essence, invoking the name of Lope, Calderón, or Cervantes serves as a strategy of establishing authority and justification within the realm of culture that implicitly spills over into the world of politics.

Both sides in the Civil War facilitated and supported performances of dramatic works from the seventeenth century in an effort to spread cultural information to the masses that implicitly supported their socio-political message. The founding of the theater group *La Barraca* in 1932 under the auspices of the *Misiones pedagógicas* by Federico García Lorca exemplifies this preoccupation with the dissemination of Spanish cultural heritage under the Second Republic. *La Barraca* presented both classic works from the Golden Age tradition and modern works in the rural communities of the Spanish countryside, particularly in Andalucía. During the Civil War, the *Guerrillas teatrales* continued this work by presenting classic plays and works of *teatro de urgencia*—short propagandistic or didactic plays about the war—at the front and in the towns of the rearguard. In the Nationalist zone, a touring company similar to Lorca's *La Barraca* emerged under the direction of Luis Escobar, named *La Tarumba*. This group shared many of the goals and objectives of Lorca's group, presenting works from the classic tradition and more modern pieces, but with a more direct ideological focus, selecting works that explicitly treated themes related to the nationalist movement's rhetoric and discourse (García Álvarez 200). Clearly, the two combatants in this cultural warfare wished to make Spanish cultural heritage relevant to the modern masses through their own filtered ideological visions.

Both nationalists and republicans labored in the treasure troves of Golden Age literature and theater to rediscover invaluable texts that they could exalt and praise as symbolic of true Spanish national identity and indicative of their own legitimacy as heirs of the national tradition and spirit. Kessel Schwartz examines how intellectuals such as José María Pemán and Concha Espina appropriated the work of writers such as Lope, Tirso de Molina, Cervantes, and even Góngora for their worldview of Spanish identity and their justification of the nationalist rebellion. For example, “Of all the Golden Age dramatists treated during the almost three years of the Seville *A.B.C.*, Lope de Vega attracted the most attention. The falangists found in him their concept of the state, nation, and religion, and his *Fuenteovejuna* came to be a symbol of their ideology” (Schwartz 207). In similar fashion, intellectuals on the Republican side such as Max Aub, María Teresa León, and Rafael Alberti claimed the Golden Age theatrical and narrative traditions for their own. Alberti even went so far as to ‘update’ Cervantes’s *Numancia* during the war in order to make the points of contact between the work and the reality of the war even more explicit. He justifies his changes in the prologue of the work:

Sí; adaptación y versión actualizada, de circunstancias; pero como las actuales son las más grandes y difíciles por que atraviesa la historia de España, creo que Cervantes, poeta y militar, se hubiera sentido orgulloso de asistir a la representación de su tragedia en el viejo teatro de la Zarzuela, de Madrid, a poca distancia de las trincheras enemigas. (*Numancia* 9)

Not only does Alberti seek to defend his “updated” version of a classic work of literature, he even goes so far as to assert that the author himself would be pleased to view the updated work if he were able to attend the show. These statements by Alberti demonstrate the important role of cultural appropriation within the ideological and intellectual articulations of the Spanish Civil War on both sides of the conflict.

Remarkably, in spite of the vast number of plays and texts at their disposal, many republican and nationalist writers and critics chose to use the same works for this process of cultural justification. Along with Lope’s *Fuenteovejuna*, Calderón’s *La vida es sueño* and Alarcón’s *La verdad sospechosa* were also viewed as containing the essential imperial spirit of the eternal Spain within nationalist discourse, and the *Teatro Nacional de Falange* presented both works during the war (Rodríguez-Puértolas 256). On the republican side, in his plans for the *Teatro español* under the direction of the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas*, Rafael Alberti includes both *Fuenteovejuna* and *La vida es sueño*, along with Tirso’s *La venganza de Tamar* and Quevedo’s *Los orinales*, in his plans for the repertoire to be performed (*Prosas* 187). Instead of choosing vastly different pieces from the early modern period, intellectuals from both zones see in *Fuenteovejuna* and *La vida es sueño* the cultural justification of their ideologies.

But how are such widely divergent uses of the same text possible? I would like to suggest two possible explanations for the conflicting readings of *Fuenteovejuna* and *La vida es sueño* posited by the two factions during the Civil War. First, each group functions in a manner similar to that described by Stanley Fish's concept of interpretive communities. Fish has defined this notion as a group of readers who possess similar cultural and linguistic information, and who, when presented with an utterance embedded in similar circumstances, will interpret the utterance in more or less the same manner. Fish justifies the point by arguing that interpretive strategies are inherently social. In the Spanish Civil War, two mutually exclusive interpretive communities exist that read texts using very different interpretive strategies. Whereas the leftist revolutionary may see in *Fuenteovejuna* an act of social revolution against the tyranny of bourgeois oppression, the fascist may see the fusion of the elite and the masses in the reconciliation between the monarchy and the popular classes. In the second place, both groups of intellectuals were very conscious of the activities and cultural initiatives of the opposing group, and therefore it is extremely likely that the selection of certain texts or authors were reactionary in nature. For example, in an article in the Seville *A.B.C.*, Concha Espina reacts vehemently to a Republican presentation of *Fuenteovejuna*, arguing that the 'reds' have mutilated Lope's work with their perverse interpretations (Schwartz 207). This is one of the more poignant aspects of the cultural, discursive warfare during the war, in which writers attack the use of classic works by writers on the opposing side in an attempt to reclaim control over temporarily "lost" cultural territory from the domain of the ideological enemy.

The desire to appropriate literary tradition for cultural justification in the present not only affects the manner in which writers and intellectuals viewed the past, but also shaped their propagandistic vision of the theater in the present. For the nationalist, the didactic mode of medieval literature served as the foundation for the literary articulation of ideology. As such, the *auto sacramental*, so heavily influenced by medieval thought, became a preferred method of portraying the synthesis of the political situation of the time with the universal truth of Catholicism.⁸ This "rediscovery" of the *auto sacramental* led Dionisio Redrujo to announce a national prize in 1938 for the best modern *auto*, a prize that would continue to be awarded for a number of years (Rodríguez-Puértolas 256).⁹ Writers on the republican side also adopted the didactic capabilities of the *auto sacramental*, although understandably eliminating the religious aspects of the genre. Their works of *teatro de urgencia* also reveal significant influences from the various genres of brief theater, particularly the *entremés*. Unlike the *entremeses* of the Golden Age, works of *teatro de urgencia* were presented on their own, without the presentation of a longer work. For example, Rafael Dieste clearly adapted the *entremés* tradition in his *Nuevo retablo de las maravillas*, which transforms the preoccupations of the nobility with the *limpieza de sangre* in Cervantes's original *Retablo* into anxiety over

secretly being a communist in the nationalist zone. The limited length and complexity of works of *teatro de urgencia* was primarily a consequence of the conditions in which they were presented, but also suggests further connection with the medieval and Golden Age *teatro breve* tradition. Technical and logistical difficulties during the war made the use of elaborate sets, large casts, and complex costumes both undesirable and impractical.¹⁰ What I would like to emphasize here is that both sides incorporated traditional technical, structural, and didactic elements into their theatrical works that attempted to portray the Civil War and its ideological tensions or divisions.

Many of the contemporary works written and produced during the Spanish Civil War attempt to participate directly in the events taking place within the country. On both sides of the conflict, this type of theater seeks to intervene in conceptions and attitudes toward the war, molding the citizens of each zone to perceive and understand the purpose, consequences, and goals of the conflict through particular lenses. In the prologue to *Teatro de urgencia* (1938), Santiago Ontañón introduces an anthology of republican pieces by admitting that ““La prisa, la necesidad de variar de programas, la “urgencia” política del momento hacen que a veces estas obrillas sean literariamente descuidadas. No importa. Tienen eficacia teatral y política. No pedimos más ni menos al joven teatro de urgencia” (9). Rather than literary expressions of the time period, these works seek candid political involvement in the events unfolding throughout Spain. Within the nationalist zone, many writers adopted a similar attitude, although the production of original theatrical works during the war by supporters of the nationalist cause was minimal (Rodríguez-Puértolas 251). For example, in a review of Sotero Otero del Pozo’s *¡España, inmortal!*, Dionisio Ridruejo comments: “En estos momentos trascendentales en que se debate el porvenir de la Patria, el teatro debía surgir como beligerante en el campo de las ideas[...]para recoger las explosiones de patriotismo que han llevado a una gesta de reconquista, al glorioso pueblo español” (151). Both groups of intellectuals required a theater that would engage in the discursive battle of defending the political or moral superiority of their respective worldviews.

The theatrical works produced during the Spanish Civil War provide insight into the major ideological divisions that produced the conflict, as well as the internal tensions within the two major factions. These works display a striking number of similar characteristics, both in terms of their discursive strategies to denigrate the enemy while supporting their own ideological position and with respect to the thematic issues addressed through the use of characterization, symbolism, and allegory. In much the same way that each group used the same Golden Age plays for completely opposed ideological purposes, writers on both sides incorporate similar aesthetic and thematic elements to produce poignantly different statements on Spain and the Civil War. A brief comparison of Rafael Alberti’s *Radio*

Sevilla and Sotero Otero del Pozo's *¡España, inmortal!* will demonstrate this confluence of techniques and divergence of purpose.

In *Radio Sevilla*, Alberti attacks the nationalist enemy through a ferociously satirical portrayal of Queipo del Llano's radio broadcasts from Seville.¹¹ The scene to which the spectator is granted access in *Radio Sevilla* satirically portrays Queipo del Llano as a man with an extremely inflated sense of his own purpose and supposed role as the "Savior" of Spain. His pretentious speech regarding his own importance and authority harshly contrasts with the self-degrading actions he performs at the behest of others, such as crawling about on his arms and legs while singing. The nationalist general's degradation heightens even further when a German and an Italian officer arrive and begin giving orders to everyone. Queipo begs his fellow Spaniards to obey the foreigners, for, he claims, nationalist victory without their assistance is impossible.

Otero del Pozo's *¡España, inmortal!* relates the political and ideological divisions of the Civil War to a romantic story. Conchita's love for Federico, a young falangist, is threatened by the involvement of her parents, Rita and Blas, with communism. The Golden Age *comedia* provides a structural model for the play, divided into three acts that portray Madrid both before and after the military uprising of July 1936. As the story continues, Conchita and her godmother must remain steadfast and faithful in the face of adversity at the same time that Rita and Blas begin to question their political affiliation as they witness and experience countless acts of cruelty committed by other communists. In the third act, the family is reunited both physically and spiritually when Conchita's parents decide to support the nationalist movement after a process of socio-political conversion effected through religious rededication and repentance.

In spite of the noteworthy difference of tone in the two works in question, both Alberti and Otero del Pozo utilize a number of similar rhetorical strategies in order to portray the ideological enemy in a negative fashion. Probably the most noticeable of these is a fundamental dehumanization of the enemy. In *Radio Sevilla*, Alberti intensely distorts the figure of Queipo del Llano, and other characters to a lesser degree, through grotesque farce. For example, the nationalist general—presumably a title of authority and respect—pretends to be a horse at one point so that Catite can ride him in order to act out a bullfight. Otero del Pozo uses a similar technique of animalization of the enemy when Servando refers to the communists in the following manner: "Son como las fieras / que no saben dónde muerden" (68). Of course, the manner in which each writer dehumanizes the supporters of the enemy differs greatly. Alberti chooses to focus intensely on a small number of individuals, presenting their unique flaws and ridiculous foolishness. In contrast, Otero del Pozo repeatedly alludes to the enemy *en masse*, denying

them individual identities much in the same way that the falangist writer Agustín de Foxá portrays supporters of the republican cause in his novel *Madrid de Corte a checa* (1937). Clearly, this variation of technique within the similar rhetorical strategies of dehumanization originates in the critical vision each writer wishes to establish. Alberti implicitly attacks the exalted individualism of Fascist ideology while in contrast Otero del Pozo condemns the collective mentality of communism; consequently, each writer incorporates elements of the enemy's ideology into their derogatory portrayal.

Along with the dehumanization of the enemy, writers from both sides of the conflict present their enemy as foreignized and, consequently, as having questionable legitimacy as a citizen of the nation. Although both sides engage in this rhetorical practice, the nationalist cause focuses more intensely on the question of *españolidad* and national legitimacy. Otero del Pozo, Foxá, and other Nationalist writers center their critiques of Republican Spain on the influence of international communism and the Soviet Union over the proletarian militia and labor unions that formed such a powerful sector of the wartime Republic. In *¡España, inmortal!*, republicans are all but absent, universally replaced by the “hordas rojas,” which in turn are time and again associated with the Soviet Union. For example, at the end of a long passage in which he emulates a speech by Francisco Largo Caballero, Eugenio exclaims “Viva Rusia,” a clear attempt on the part of the playwright to equate a leader of the republican government with a foreign power (43). Later in the first act, Federico refers to the communists as “Extranjeros, / esclavos de extraña raza” (59), further emphasizing their foreignness in racial terms. The most poignant example of this process of foreignization occurs in the second act, when Doña Concha cries out in prayer to God: “¡Qué plaga, ¡oh Dios!, trajiste a nuestro suelo! / Invasión de funestas demagogias / que con sus centros, sindicatos, logias, / asentaron sus reales bajo el cielo / de esta España católica y bendita / postrada ayer por tan pesada carga” (75). In the mode of an Old Testament lamentation, Doña Concha mourns the invasion of Spain by foreign, heretical powers.

A similar foreignizing tendency occurs in Alberti's *Radio Sevilla* and Germán Bleiberg's *Sombras de héroes*. In *Radio Sevilla*, Queipo del Llano begs his compatriots to submit to the will of the Germans and Italians, tacitly insinuating that a nationalist victory would in effect be the triumph of a foreign cause. In a much more grim portrayal of the nationalist cause, *Sombras de héroes* renders the devastation after the bombing of Guernica on April 26, 1937, presenting a scene in which a German and an Italian officer abuse a young woman who desperately searches for the body of her mother. The officers only see in the woman an object of sexual pleasure and remain completely unmoved by her cries of sorrow, in the end sending her away to be an “amusement” for their Moorish soldiers. Not a single Spanish nationalist appears in the entire scene, insinuating the fundamental foreignness of the Republic's enemy. In much

the same way that the use of grotesque, farcical representations appear much more acutely in the republican *teatro de urgencia*, the tendency to foreignize the enemy is more pronounced in the nationalist wartime theater.

An important thematic confluence between republican and nationalist wartime drama arises from the treatment of the theme of deception and reality. In *¡España, inmortal!*, Rita and Blas are continually described as good people who have been misled by the lies and deceit of communist machinations. On a number of occasions, Doña Concha refers to how the leaders of the workers' unions and syndicates exploit the ignorance and naiveté of the popular classes. Conchita explains to Federico that she believes her parents are fundamentally good, and that “los malos son sus viles dirigentes, / que explotando sus cerebros / siempre en simplismos cercados / hacen unos desgraciados / de estos seres inocentes” (49). In effect, the republican leaders are portrayed as immoral tempters that lead the faithful astray, a religious connotation that Doña Concha establishes in the sixth scene of the first act. By way of contrast, in republican plays such as Max Aub's “Por Teruel” and Santiago Ontañón's “El bulo,” groups of secret nationalist supporters abiding in republican territory are portrayed as ignorant and foolish for believing nationalist propaganda. In “Por Teruel,” the characters rejoice in the imminent invasion of Madrid by Franco's soldier, only to suffer tremendous disillusionment when they discover that, in reality, Teruel has been taken by the Popular Army. The characters of “El bulo” suffer an even more violent moment of deception: the nationalist bombardment they expect to liberate them from the tyranny of the communist actually ends up killing them all.

Although perhaps unexpectedly, the theme of appearance versus reality, or truth versus deception, lead to a thematic interest in the notion of conversion in the theater of both sides. In the republican zone this conversion tends to be primarily political, whereas in the nationalist zone politics and religion unite within the conversion process. The theater and narrative of both sides follow a general pattern based on that of the Biblical story of the prodigal son, who allows himself to be tempted by the pleasures of the world, but in the end returns to the path of the straight and true. Quite clearly, the trajectory of Rita and Blas in Otero del Pozo's *comedia* reflects this general storyline. A number of republican works display this conversion either through a physical journey from the nationalist zone to the Republic, such as in Bleiberg's *Amanecer*, or a moral journey from inaction to action, as in Aub's *Pedro López García*. In all three works, the conversion in question is primarily a process of political purification that implicitly equates the enemy ideology with condemnation and the supported ideology as political and moral salvation. Although the republican theater lacks the overtly religious focus and terminology present in the nationalist theater, both retain the underlying logic of religious conversion.

Nonetheless, the theme of appearance versus reality produces a sense of ambiguity and uncertainty in these works that in some ways works against the very ideological premises the pieces are intended to promote, particularly in the nationalist zone. Republican theater tends to address the Nationalist view as mistaken or misguided due to the influence of foreign powers, but does not dismiss conservative political views as inherently anti-Spanish. In contrast, the nationalist theater presents leftist views ranging from communism to socialism as fundamentally contrary to the identity and character of the Spanish nation and, as such, an eternal danger and mortal enemy. However, such as vision of leftist views is problematized by certain aspects of Otero del Pozo's play. Namely, Rita and Blas have the possibility to repent of their past misdeeds and return to the path of political and ideological righteousness, whereas characters who had professed communist beliefs do not share this opportunity. While Rita and Blas were welcomed with opened arms by Federico and Rafael, representatives of the nationalist movement, Eugenio, their former ideological companion, is unapologetically condemned. Federico says to him: "No mereces compassion, / ni hoy el castigo te asombre. / Levanta. Tú de rodillas / infamas la posición. / Tú, colgado, por ladrón..." effectively barring any hope of redemption for Eugenio. The play offers no criteria for establishing who deserves mercy and compassion, thus propagating an ambiguous and exclusivist vision of the redemptive process. In general, republican theater avoided this problematic stance by positing foreign influences as the primary guilty party behind the nationalist uprising.

The theater provided both ideological camps an avenue through which to address internal problems and tensions within their own territory. A number of historians have noted the intense ideological divisions within the republican zone and their devastating effects on the war effort, but also have observed that similar tension existed between the various components of the nationalist zone as well (Carr, Beevor, Thomas). As Carr observes, the militarization of the nationalist zone from the beginning allowed Franco the possibility of imposing order from above at a relatively early point during the war, thus preventing the continual power struggles that plagued the republican zone (197). Theatrical works in both zones contribute to a general discourse of internal reconciliation and unity in the face of the danger that the other side, the 'true' enemy, represented. Aub's *Las dos hermanas* argues for unity between the anarcho-syndicalist CNT (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo) and the socialist UGT (Unión General de Trabajadores), groups whose differing opinions on revolution and the state frequently led them into violent conflict. In the nationalist zone, Jacinto Miquelarena's *Unificación* addresses the need for unity between the *Falange* and the *Requetés*, the two most important politicized militias that supported the nationalist cause. A similar unifying gesture can also be found at the end of Otero del Pozo's *¡España,*

immortal! in the interactions between Federico, a falangist, and Rafa, a member of the *Requetés*. All of these works, regardless of their particular ideological messages, recognize and address the pragmatic need for cohesion and unity on each side in order to maintain a concerted effort to win the war.

The notion of theatricality in the theater of the Spanish Civil War seems a fitting metaphor for the consideration of this conflict. More than just a confrontation of armies and tactics, the Civil War was an ideological crucible in which the major worldviews of the time period were played out and enacted by both sides. The concepts of loyalty and belonging to the national body were constantly interrogated and put into doubt by both sides, a major aspect of the national trauma of the war that is apparent in the theatrical works I have studied in this analysis. The young man who grants access to the scene in Alberti's *Radio Sevilla* is dressed as a falangist, but reveals the communist salute to his female interlocutor in a gesture intended to portray his true allegiance to the Republic, claiming that he finds himself among the ranks of the nationalist supporters only as a disguise until he can escape to the 'true' Spain. Young Federico in *¡España, inmortal!* similarly disguises himself as a communist militiaman after escaping prison in order to arrive safely at Conchita's home. In both cases, theatricality plays a major role in the establishment and confusion of "true" political—and therefore national—identity.

In the final analysis, the points of convergence and divergence between the theaters of the nationalist and republican zones during the Spanish Civil War provide a critical vantage point for the study of this important event in contemporary Spanish history and the cultural responses it elicited. Just as these two ideological coalitions fought for control of a single national territory, they engaged in a discursive or rhetorical battle for the right to define the nature of Spanish identity and cultural heritage through literature and the arts. The theater played a crucial role in this confrontation of ideas because of its function as an avenue through which the centers of political or ideological power sought to reach the public they wished to persuade, truly transforming the drama into a theater of war.

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Notes

¹ For example, the Junta Nacional de la Música y Teatro in 1931, the Junta Nacional de la Música y Teatros Líricos in 1935, the Consejo Nacional del Teatro and Consejo General de Música in 1937, and the Comisión del Teatro de niños in 1938. The names of these institutions infer the general tendency to reaffirm the connection between the nation and its cultural heritage.

² I use capitals for the words Art and State here in order to mirror the stylistic choices of Giménez Caballero in his text. This is a standard typographical convention of many Falangists designed to treat artistic and nationalistic concepts with a certain sense of reverence and awe, as well as implicitly attributing a sense of fundamental or essential truth to the Nation—another oft-capitalized term—as both political and cultural identity.

³ Italian Futurism is widely regarded as the first of the Vanguard movements to espouse this program of theatrical renovation in an organized manner. As Günter Berghaus has noted, “The Futurists despised the traditional theatre both as a social institution and as a marketplace for the presentation of mediocre and regurgitated wares. They fought the commercialism of the enterprise and the intellectual mediocrity of its representatives” (8).

⁴ The work of Ramón del Valle-Inclán realizes many of the aesthetic or theoretical longings of these Avant-garde thinkers of the 1910s and 1920s, as Mariano de Paco has noted: “Valle-Inclán resuelve con la genialidad de su obra lo que es una necesidad ampliamente sentida entre intelectuales, autores, críticos, directores y gentes de teatro, la de configurar un teatro opuesto al modelo realista entronizado en los escenarios” (294-5).

⁵ Perhaps unexpectedly, such a vision of the theater implicitly links Giménez Caballero’s desire to return to traditional modes of dramatic expression to the contemporary concepts of the Avant-Garde. As Mariano de Paco has noted, for many Avant-garde thinkers of the early twentieth century, “El teatro ha de desprejarse de la realidad diaria, de los problemas burgueses, de los tópicos moralizantes y vulgares, ha de entrar en el mundo del misterio, del sueño y del subconsciente; para ello ha de superar las formas escénicas imperantes: la comedia y el drama benaventinos, el teatro poético de Marquina o el teatro cómico de los Quintero o de Muñoz Seca” (295). This ambivalent relationship between tradition and modernity, or heritage and innovation, is a fascinating aspect of the literary expressions of many nationalist writers and ideologues.

⁶ Such a desire to produce a sense of equality between actors and spectators also serves as another point of comparison between Sender’s notions of the theater and the Avant-Garde movements. As Berghaus observes, the Futurists sought to destroy the traditional barriers between actors and audience in order to shake the public out of its “passivity and torpor,” as well as to create “an atmosphere and environment which united actors and spectators in a common experience” (8).

⁷ During the Civil War, journalists who worked on the staff of the Madrid-based national newspaper *A.B.C.* fled to Seville and established a rival version of *A.B.C.* that supported the Nationalist cause. The Seville-based *A.B.C.* was published between July 23, 1936 and April 5, 1939 (Schwartz 206).

⁸ Ana María Martín Contreras has noted a similar tendency to fuse the sacred and the political in the *autos* of the Golden Age, specifically in those by Mira de Amescua (368). For Martín Contreras, the blending of the sacred and politics arises from the fundamental logic of the *auto sacramental*, in which a metaphor or symbol is examined throughout the work and then show to shed light on the universal presence of the Eucharist. Just as the symbol under examination is revealed as a momentary sign of eternal truth, the socio-political situation of Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is seen to symbolize the eternal struggles between divine truth and worldly heresy.

⁹ Gonzalo Torrente Ballester won the first of these prizes with *El casamiento engañoso* in 1938. The piece allegorically demonstrates the debilitating effect of modern technology and capitalism on man's ability to preserve his liberty and classic virtues. The suspicion with which the play treats the notions of modernity and technological innovation are indicative of its traditional, conservative ideology.

¹⁰ Rafael Alberti wrote in the "Boletín de Orientación Teatral" that a theatrical work destined to be presented at the front "no puede plantear dificultades de montaje ni exigir gran número de actores. Su duración no debe sobrepasar la media hora. En veinte minutos escasos, si el tema está bien planteado y resuelto, se puede conducir en los espectáculos el efecto de un fulminante [sic]" (*Prosas* 156).

¹¹ General Gonzalo Queipo del Llano's broadcasts from Seville, known as "Radio Sevilla," could be heard throughout the Nationalist and Republican zones due to the arrival of a Lorenz radio transmission plant in Vigo from Hamburg, a form of assistance from Germany (Thomas 504). These broadcasts included news reports and ideologically friendly music, but also consisted in large measure in Queipo del Llano's personal remarks about the war and the glorious character of the nationalist cause. Alberti's familiarity with the radio broadcasts forms the basis for his farcical representation of the nationalist leadership.