



## Representaciones de masculinidad en dos relatos de Carlos Casares

*Representations of masculinity in two stories by Carlos Casares*

Ana Carballal <sup>1</sup>.@

<sup>1</sup>Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

@ Autor/a de correspondencia: acarballal@unomaha.edu

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### Resumen

El estudio de la masculinidad y su representación es especialmente fascinante en las literaturas española y gallega de mediados del siglo XX. En los dos relatos a analizar en este ensayo: *“O xogo da Guerra”* (“*El juego de la guerra*”) y *“Agarda longa ao sol”* (“*Espera larga al sol*”) —ambas escritas por Carlos Casares (Ourense 1941-Nigrán, Pontevedra 2002)— las versiones de masculinidad mostradas por los personajes masculinos pueden considerarse como denuncias del modelo que Franco intentaba imponer: hecho a su imagen, disciplinado, frío y violento. La virilidad en Casares se caracteriza por la habilidad de aceptar el inconformismo y asumir una realidad que entra en conflicto con la epistemología masculina reconocida. El hombre nuevo está preparado para sumir una nueva identidad y liberar a una sociedad consumida por el odio, propulsándola hacia la democracia y el entendimiento. Galicia y su gente son los principales protagonistas de estas transformaciones.

**Palabras clave:** Casares, masculinidad, dictadura, Vento Ferido, Galicia.

### Abstract

The study of masculinity and its representation is especially fascinating in Spanish and Galician literature of the mid-20th century. In the two stories to be analyzed in this essay, *“O xogo da Guerra”* (“*The War Game*”) and *“Agarda longa ao sol”* (“*Long Wait under the Sun*”) — both written by Carlos Casares (Ourense 1941-Nigrán, Pontevedra 2002)—the versions of masculinity displayed by male characters can be considered as denunciations of the model that Franco wished to impose: made in his image, disciplined, cold, and violent. Manhood in Casares is characterized by an ability to accept nonconformity and to assume a reality that conflicts with masculine epistemology as it is known. The new man is ready to absorb a new reality and free a society consumed by hatred, pushing it towards democracy and understanding. Galicia and its people are the main protagonists of these transformations.

**Keywords:** Casares, masculinity, dictatorship, Vento Ferido, Galicia.

## INTRODUCTION

The study of masculinity and its representation is especially interesting in Spanish and Galician literatures of the mid-20th century. During this period, the figure of man was pressured to conform to specific boundaries and models. In Franco's dictatorship, one of the regime's objectives was to establish a new definition for male identity. The new standards for being a man and the distinctiveness of his behavior served the aim of personifying those characteristics of the dictator. Schools and civic organizations<sup>1</sup> fell in line to implement and follow the new model, and at the end of four decades, it was very clear that the Spanish man was:

*"...the image of the frontline soldier as a sharp contrast to the feminized politicians who led the nation to defeat and disorder...Spanish conservatives often contrasted the moral and sexual superiority of the armed forces with the effeminate weakness of their revolutionary enemies..."* (Bunk, 2007: p. 91)

Similarly, Mary Vincent (2006) states how the soldier came to personify the ideal of virility. Men had to be aggressive. They were called to transform society, to modify their political circumstances and to establish historical and familial hierarchies: *"...the soldier became the masculine archetype. Aggression was intrinsic to contemporary understandings of masculinity: the 'new Fascist man' would be the agent of political and social change"* (Vincent, 2006: p.135).

Along the same lines, Inbal Ofer (2006) argues that one of the objectives of the *"Sección Femenina"* ("Women's Section") was to limit women to the roles of wives and mothers and to separate the genders in such a way that: *"The very core of their existence rested on the adherence to a strict gender division, which glorified virility and man's active and public contribution to the nation. While men worked to produce a 'new nation,' women were called upon to reproduce its future sons"* (Ofer, 2006: p. 991)

Galicia, in the northwest region of Spain, situated north of Portugal, was not immune to this construction of gender roles. The region, like other areas such as Extremadura and Andalucía, suffered extreme poverty and

abandonment during the dictatorship and after it. This poverty and abandonment reinforced the idea that the nation needed strong men, able to support their families and the national institutions in order to save them from economic collapse. Galicia can be considered one of the lesser known areas of Western Europe, always trailing behind history, only recognized for the failure of all its attempts to modernize and the stunted progress of its infrastructure, economic as well as political (Hooper, 1995: pp. 410-427). That is why the forces of Francoism concluded that the region needed an even stronger and firmer kind of manhood. This manhood needed to be established upon the representation of the dictator, and it had to resemble his objectives and fortitude. Peter Pierson agrees that Galicia, along with Catalonia and the Basque Country, was one of the first regions to get an Autonomic Law. Nevertheless, it did not achieve the economic and social prowess of the other two regions and was always relegated to a very distant third place (Pierson, 1999: p.99). Michael Richards and Tony Morgan, each contend that Galicia, after Franco's death, effectively assumed its role of autonomy with a very unmistakable national identity. This identity was cemented in a history and society that, in spite of all obstacles, preserved its cultural and linguistic heritage (Morgan, 2000: 90) (Richards, 2000: 39).

## MATERIALS

The reason Galicia was never a particularly well-known leader of change and reform is also the reason why many Galician authors attempt to reflect this stagnation while upholding change. One of these authors is Carlos Casares (Ourense 1941-Nigrán, Pontevedra 2002). In the two stories to be analyzed in this essay, *"O xogo da Guerra"* ("The War Game") and *"Agarda longa ao sol"* ("Long Wait under the Sun"), Carlos Casares selected topics that mirrored the relegated condition of Galicia and characters who push the limits of reality. His characters are always looking for a change, sometimes even choosing a road to annihilation. Poor, mad, invalid, and old, his characters represent the fight against the powers of oppression, the determination to reaffirm their identities, and their right to exist. The versions of masculinity displayed by his male characters can be considered a denunciation of the model that Franco wished to impose: made in his image, disciplined, cold, and violent.

These two stories are taken from Casares's work *"Vento ferido"* ("Wounded Wind"). Written in 1967, this was Casares's first published book, a collection of twelve stories in which characters fight against their tenebrous and tormented existence to find new and invigorating identities. In these stories, the protagonists, all males, suffer from disillusionment and hopelessness against the backdrop of a society that misunderstands them and the circumstances that they cannot overcome. They believe themselves to be alone and worthless. Considered part of the *"Nova Narrativa galega,"* *"Vento ferido"* is characterized by a *"Concepción obxectalista do ser humano que aparece cousificado, como unha cousa entre cousas, nun mundo gobernado polas leis do mercado e no que todo ten un valor de cambio"* ("A quantified conception of the human being who appears as an object, a thing among other things, in a world governed by market laws in which everything has an intrinsic value"

1 Adauto Pérez (2016) names three youth organizations that were the basis for the indoctrination of youth during Franco's regime: the *Pelayos*, the *Flechas and the Cadetes*. These groups resembled others formed under fascist governments such as the *Jungen* in Germany and the *Balilla* in Italy. They all had as a purpose the indoctrination of youth in the ideals and objectives of the dictatorship and to bring up men who reflected the dictator's image and objectives. In Spain, young males had to follow a series of twelve points in which they had to promise, among other things, that they would obey and love their leader, the *Caudillo*; that they would maintain a strong body and a healthy soul; that they would remain loyal to the land and be close to its people; and that they would live like soldiers, keeping the strength, persistence and discipline of a soldier.

For Clair Bernard-Pallas (2006), two other very influential organizations, the Catholic Boy Scouts and the Organización Juvenil Española ("Spanish Youth Organization") would substitute for these first groups and:

*"Le Frente de Juventudes a pour mission d'embrigader la jeunesse dans l'esprit du "Nouvel État". La Delegación Nacional de la Juventud "veille" ainsi sur le temps libre des jeunes. Il s'agit de les encadrer et de les former au service de la patrie."*

("The Youth Front had as a mission to bring youth into the spirit of the "New State." The National Youth Delegation watched over the youth's free time. It had as a mission to supervise and conform them to serve the country" Bernard-Pallas, 2006: p. 130).

Vilavedra, 1999: p. 256).

In "*Vento Ferido*", many characters in the stories frustrate the mold of the new man; they break with the dictator's image. While masculinity is illustrated in some characters through their strength and their capacity to be violent, for the majority of characters, masculinity opens the door to new perspectives. Manhood in Casares is characterized by an ability to accept nonconformity and to assume a reality that conflicts with masculine epistemology as it was known. The new man was ready to absorb a new reality and free a society consumed by hatred, pushing it towards democracy and understanding. For Casares, Galicia and its people are the main protagonists of these transformations.

In many of Casares's works, the individual is an object that can be bought and sold, subjected and manipulated. An individual's existence may be exploited as a representation of the perfect man or woman, an example that serves the interests of a particular political stratum. Masculinity and the masculine body are examined and even distorted in order to display a social system whose impositions and expectations lead many of its members to a complete breakdown, driving some so far as to commit suicide or murder.

## ANALYSIS

### ***A True Betrayal of Franco's Demanding Masculinity: O Xogo da Guerra***

In the first story to be analyzed, "*O xogo da guerra*," the protagonist Rafael is a child put in a reformatory after having assaulted one of his friends and leaving him for dead. "*O Rata*" ("The Rat"), the bully of the gang, had ordered Rafael to go to Zalo's house, lie to him, and, under false pretenses, bring him to a field outside the village to be tortured by the other gang members. At first glance, the masculine body appears to be represented by Zalo. However, the strongest influences on the construction of masculinity come from Rafael and Rata, whose physical appearances and behaviors reflect the period's expectations. In the text of the story, the masculine body is primarily observed as the center of a social order that recognizes the traditions and interests of a particular political class.

Following Foucault and his claim that "*the body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated Self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration*" (Foucault, 1977: p. 148), Casares uses the body to depict this disintegration by means of varied discursive parameters. One of these discursive parameters is that of the ruling class. Casares uses the eternal and immutable discourse of the ruling class to create a context of control and subjugation. However, this discourse will give way in time to a multifaceted and complex dialogue.

This control by the ruling class is based on Francoist social regulations. At the same time, the model for these social regulations was based on the morals and social standards established more than five hundred years earlier by the Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella. This period, according to Brian Bunk, constitutes the starting point for the recovery of forms and medieval heroes. The most important

of these heroes, the Cid Campeador, represented the moral stature of the medieval knight and became the base upon which the political forces of Franco's regime built the new masculine figure. According to Bunk, the construction of this new man started with the October Revolution of 1934 and remained unchanged until the end of the dictatorship in 1975.

Conservative as well as liberal parties possessed their own masculine imagery. Nevertheless, while the liberals promoted an image of the man as protector of women and household and defender of the country and the weak, Franco's morality machine extolled the virtues of man as a soldier, with a cult leaning towards violence, death, and misogyny. True men, according to Franco's view, achieved absolute discipline and defended traditional and historical values. The goal of Franco's regime was to cleanse the country of any subversive element or sign of weakness—features only attached to minorities.

Keeping this in mind, Casares's characters Rafael and Rata could be viewed as the true portrayals of Franco's demanding masculinity. Rafael's behavior covers his vicious temperament and his tendency towards violence as well as his susceptibility to manipulation through fear. Under the excuse that Rata is the leader of the group, Rafael carries out his orders, lures Zalo from his home, and gives him a beating. Rafael's body is structured according to the premise of the "other". He presents himself along the margin and portrays the role of the victim. He wants to convince the reader that he is not as cruel as Rata, but is merely forced to follow Rata's orders. On the other hand, following the assertion that the body is "*the locus of a dissociated Self*" (Foucault, 1977: 139), Rata behaves as if he is in charge of inscribing the rules of what a man is, and seeks to demonstrate his behavior in enforced reflections in the bodies of his subordinates.

Rafael, despite presenting himself as a victim throughout the story, could be regarded as the epitome of cowardice according to the Francoist system. He takes advantage of the system's flaws to fulfill his own despicable urges. He excuses himself, indicating that because of bad luck, he had no choice but to pick up Zalo, give him a beating, and leave him for dead: "*Botaron a sortes e tocoume a mín. Eu penso que fixeron trampa pero calei*" ("They drew straws and it was my turn. I thought they had cheated but I kept quiet" Casares, 1967: p. 15). However, he admits that he made a detour so that he did not have to pass by his father's shop. He also admits to being afraid, but he gives as an excuse that it was very hot and he did not want to stay at home. Pages later, in the reformatory, he confesses that he likes being alone. He refuses to play with other children even if the guards punish him. At night, when everybody sleeps, he enjoys himself by torturing insects in the bathroom.

Cowardice is a feature that one can observe in many other scorned literary characters from Shakespeare's Falstaff<sup>2</sup> to Mio Cid. Cowardice in a man, as understood in

<sup>2</sup> Regarding the trait of cowardice, the relationship between masculinity and bravery are as prevalent in the 21st century as they were in Shakespeare's times (Dutton and Howard, 2003: 231). In old Greece, cowardice was considered the opposite of manhood:

*"As opposed to fears that were seen as conductive to masculinity or as deserving of sympathy, others were routinely and severely condemned. They came under the category of cowardice (anandria, malakia, deilia, or*

the hypermasculine cultures of the western world, has always being disallowed. Authors utilized the trait to scorn characters, reveal their hidden flaws, and criticize their moral standings. However, as happens in *Henry IV* and *The Poem of the Cid*, many of the characters who are clearly set up as good models of conduct at the beginning of the story, end up exposing themselves, at times, as the opposite. In the past, many works of literature linked the traits of fear and cowardice to the weak, the fragile, and the feminine. These characteristics are not accepted in the fascist man who “*based masculinity on political disillusionment and membership in a virile political group*” (Schue, 2001: p. 4).

In spite of this rejection, there were instances in which Fascism would acknowledge the feminine and the weak in order to appeal to the rest of the population and assume a religious and moral stance despite the atrocities they were condoning. Jo Labanyi has surprisingly discovered how, in Francoist Spain (where the feminine was considered inferior, and many men considered feeble and unmanly were taken to reformatories and prisons), there were still instances, such as the mission movies, in which the regime wanted to show a kinder view of masculinity. In these depictions, the male figure depicted as less violent and more Christ-like. He could be shown as self-dominant, gentle, and even feminine (Labanyi, 1997: p. 215). However, after the Civil War, the Francoist regime needed to substitute the image of men as warriors and soldiers for the image of gentler men: “*...this served as a way of helping men negotiate the transition between the ‘tough guy’ of wartime to the family man of peacetime...the corollary of the strong woman of late 1940s’ Spanish cinema is the ‘feminine’ man*” (Labanyi 2000: p. 164).

In the same manner, Rafael lives in conflict with these two expectations of masculinity. On one hand, he does not want the responsibility of others’ decisions; he does not want to be blamed for what Rata wanted to do. On the other hand, when he does have the power to make his own decisions, he opts to follow orders instead of taking the opportunity to escape or dissent. This fluctuation between timidity and excessive show of power enables us to observe another possibility in the relationship between the bullies and the bullied in “*O xogo da guerra.*” There are bully and victim cycles that regard both from very close and similar perspectives. Both have authoritarian father figures, both are in poor physical condition, and neither one is struggling for social power but rather a thirst for revenge (Ma, 2001: p. 352). Seen through this lens, the figure of Rafael is ambivalent. On one hand, Rafael presents himself as a victim, being pressured, following orders. On the other, his approach to violence and his satisfaction and morbidity towards killing animals and hurting others transforms him into an oppressor equal to, or even more vicious, than the bully.

When Rafael is in the reformatory, he spends time catching flies and putting them in a box of matches so that they cannot fly. At night when everyone else sleeps, he goes to the bathroom and plays what he calls the “war game” in which he puts the flies in the sink, turns on the water and observes how the flies drown. Although Rafael is one of Rata’s

henchmen, the reader cannot empathize with him because of his sadism and thoughtlessness. He reveals himself as a merciless killer. The nature of his comments in reformatory, comments such as: “*...Se non fora pola guerra podrecía de noxo*” (“...If it were not because of the war (game), I would be rotten with sickness” Casares, 1967: p. 19), reveal an obsession and sadism deeper and more repulsive than Rata’s, which brings readers to conclude that Rafael himself is an equal or worse bully. In the same way, his decision to follow Rata’s orders does not have to do so much with being powerless as it does with wanting the reader to believe that he feels powerful while enjoying brutality and suffering.

Wilhelm Reich affirms that sadism is an intrinsic part of fascist governments that is based on the suppression of basic needs of individuals by authoritarian and inhibited societies. That suppression makes individuals fulfill those needs in alternative possible ways. Many times, they turn to violence and the oppression of other human beings (Reich, 1971: p. 120). When Rata ordered Rafael to pick up Zalo, Rafael had many opportunities to defy this order and impede the group’s plan. He could have run away to his house and sounded the alarm to his family or any other adult; he could have warned Zalo, and between the two of them they might have come up with an alternative plan. He could opt not to associate with Rata’s gang that day. Nevertheless, Rafael expresses very clearly how he was afraid, and he chose to follow Rata’s plan because of that fear and instead of suffering the summer heat at home.

What is more revealing is his admission that to get to Zalo’s home, he had not taken the regular path for fear that his own father could have discovered him. Instead, he says: “*Tiven que dar un rodeo para non pasar por diante da zapatería do meu pai. Pensei: escapo para a casa e xa está. Pero collín medo. Ademáis facía calor e na casa no vrau non se para coas moscas*” (“I had to make a detour in order not to pass in front of my father’s shoe shop. I thought: I run home and that’s all. But I got afraid. Besides, it was hot and at home in the summers one cannot put up with all the flies” Casares, 1967: p. 15). Avoiding his father’s shop shows Rafael’s fear of being found out, and the fact that he knows that what he is going to do is wrong, but he does not have the capacity to change his mind and opt out.

Rafael is an example of that disassociated and contradictory being that is a victim of his time, suffering from his own disintegration as a human being. He is afraid of Rata but does not know what to do in a situation such as this. He does not know how to behave, and then he acts according to what he thinks will be in his best interest in order to survive. To obey Rata without any excuses assures him that he will not have any problems, at least in the immediate future. This type of masculinity as imposed by dictatorship suffers from what many critics have named the homophobia of masculinity.

According to Michael Kimmel, manhood is the eternal fight against fear, a fear not only of women, but more importantly of men. It is not a concern about being feminine, but a worry that other men may see them as not completely separated from the mother figure, that other men will consider them weak and without power. To prevent that: “*The boy has come to identify with his oppressor; now he can become the oppressor himself*” (Kimmel, 1996: p. 185). The

*kakia*), and were ascribed to men who put their own safety and interests ahead of the common weal or their own honor...As the primary meaning of *anandria* and *malakia* (softness) connoted, cowardice meant lack of manhood” (Roisman, 2005: p. 188).

only escape for Rafael is to mimic Rata, to identify with him, with his cruelty and his thirst for revenge. Only in this way will Rafael feel safe, his manhood cleared, his masculinity attested. Rafael's masculinity concords with that of the bully; nevertheless, it is the bully's masculinity that leads him to the final downfall of internment in a reformatory.

It is in this instant when the narrator of the story, Rafael, starts losing credibility and realizes that, even if he were not at fault directly for Zalo's beating, his explanations are not proof of his innocence and good intentions. His will to torture his comrade was influenced not only by the influence of the bully, but by his desire to prove his power. For example, Rafael confesses that he lied to Zalo to convince him to go with them to the campo da bomba ("the field of the bomb") where the group was waiting. In a similar way, Rafael displays his coldness and indifference when he reveals his antisocial tendencies in the reformatory from where he tells the story: "*Din que non se pode andar soilos, que hai que xogar...A puta que os pariu a todos. Eu quero andar soilo pra pensar. A min non me gusta xogar ó fútbol nin ó frontón. Gústame xogar no lavabo*" ("They say that we cannot be alone, that we have to play...Sons of a bitch! I want to be alone to think. I don't like playing soccer or ball. I like playing in the sink" Casares, 1967: p. 18).

While Rafael initially presents himself as an innocent victim, his relationship with others and his viciousness in Zalo's beating is only overshadowed by his enjoyment in drowning the flies in the bathroom sink and his pleasure in setting up a plan to kill Rata as soon as he can leave the school. His detailed plan consists of inviting Rata to swim in the river, convincing him to play submarines, and trapping him between his legs under the water until he drowns: "*I entón, hala, cando pase, pecho as pernas e queda preso polo pescozo. Pouquiño a pouco. Paseño. Como as moscas da pileta*" ("And then, Zas!, when he goes through, I close my legs and he gets trapped by the neck. Little by little. No rush. Like the flies in the sink" Casares, 1967: p. 20). This passage, though, may imply that Rata could be viewed as another victim, which he is not: "*...cando o Rata decía vai, había que ir*" ("...when Rata would say 'go,' you had to go" Casares, 1967: p. 15).

For Rafael, Rata is fully acquainted with human nature, and he would use this knowledge to destroy others. According to Rafael, it was Rata who made the decision regarding Zalo. Although Rafael took part in the humiliation and near killing of the child, Rata is shown as a coward, using others to do his dirty work, hiding in the anonymity of the group to perpetrate his crimes. He consecrates himself as the leader of the group, setting his own rules, and as a consequence also creates his own discourse of masculinity based in violence. Violence is sometimes a vehicle for something else, normally the formation of an identity, and masculinity can be seen at times as that goal through which violence is operated (Friday, 2003: pp. 9-10).

The masculine discourse in "*O xogo da guerra*" is based on the behavior and parameters of the three masculine figures: Rata, Zalo and Rafael. Rata and Rafael, in spite of their hostility towards other human beings, show signs of both multiplicity and contradiction. Rata's actions reject the physical organs of masculinity themselves. The torture implemented by Rata does not reach total castration,

but his predisposition to humiliation. His spitting on that part of Zalo's anatomy most clearly identified with his maleness reveals that his physical as well as mental understanding of masculinity contradicts that of Zalo's. Once Zalo is naked and tied to a tree, and before Rafael starts beating him, Rata approaches him to spit on his genitals while threateningly stroking his body with a stick. Rata not only wants to destroy Zalo but, more importantly, he wants to destroy Zalo's identity as a man. This fact can be considered through different perspectives.

First, this scene may be viewed as a type of ejaculation. In some countries of Africa, the fluids of the body (semen, saliva, blood, sweat, urine and feces) are considered unifying elements, containing the energy and power to bond human beings (Wise, 2006: p. 30). Saliva can be regarded from two different perspectives: as a sign of intimacy and as a symbol of negative feelings that a person tries to get rid of when he or she spits (Livingston, 2008: p. 297). The relation between the production of saliva and ejaculation can even be used to unify two beings (Reeder, 1995: p. 149). In "*O xogo da guerra*," this similarity is not very clear.

First, there is the viewpoint of the protagonist, Rafael, who affirms: "*Eso non se lle fai a ningún e menos a traición*" ("You don't do that to anybody and less in such a treasonous way" Casares, 1967: pp. 16-17). Rafael's statement clarifies that Rata's actions were not to imply some type of unity with Zalo but to humiliate him. Second, Rata is the one who chooses how they are going to punish Zalo; however, he does not carry out the punishment. He forces somebody else perform the torture. Third, after the beating, Rata abandons Rafael with Zalo. The spit is clearly not a symbol of ejaculation's unity but rather, when coupled with the beating, should be regarded as a symbol of overcoming and power, of submission by another human being, even as a symbol of castration (Freud, 1956: p. 34).

Although castration never occurs, spitting on the genitals expresses the rejection of Zalo's masculinity. Zalo is depicted as weaker. He collects butterflies. When Rafael goes to pick him up, Zalo has his guard down. Rafael comments that he had just woken from a nap. When he arrives at the river, Rata's gang assaults, strips and ties him to a tree. As Zalo cries, he is seen as weak, fearful, and defenseless. These actions illustrate that feminine identity rejected by the fascists.

In the story, Rata leaves the fight and the beating of Zalo to his gang. He only participates in spitting on the victim and choosing the stick used to beat him. Still, these actions reveal a rejection towards the "other" a fellow human being. Zalo's brand of masculinity represents a threat to the establishment, in this case embodied by Rata and his gang. Spitting on the genitals is a symbol of castration, of destroying a type of identity that is a threat to Rata's masculinity. In this sense, castration, in the Freudian sense, does not have only to do with the feminine but with a transgression of the rules as well (Miyasaki, 2003: p. 294).

Castration is a process through which the "other" is created; his masculinity is challenged, and he is submitted to the will of the leader. Rata has to humiliate, and even psychologically castrate Zalo, to reaffirm his own masculinity and his condition as a subject able to impose his own reality. One can even interpret the relationship between these two

characters as the rejection of a type of masculinity that is considered weak and feminine (Hausmann, 2004: p. 141).

Rata is searching for the affirmation of his own identity in the other; he wishes to see himself reflected in Zalo and in the other members of the group. He needs the others to emulate him and share his vision of society, which is why Rafael states that Rata's orders have to be followed to the letter. When he says "jump," they ask "how high". When he whistles, everybody jumps on Zalo and strips him naked. This type of masculinity, however, is not shared by Zalo: "*O Rata chuspiulle alí, naquel sitio e chamouille caguetas. 'Non se chora', dixo*" ("Rata spit on him there, on that place, and he called him coward. 'Don't cry' he said" Casares, 1967: p. 17).

Through this act of psychological castration, the group overcomes every other type of masculine vision in order to impose their own. Zalo and his body become representations of an alternative type of masculinity. Zalo is shown as delicate and weak, but above all, as a representation of the innocent, those unable to assimilate to the culture of the group and incapable of assuming the pressures of violence and oppression. Throughout the violence perpetrated against him, and in spite of the fact that he cries, Zalo should not be seen as weak. However, he cannot fight against everybody: "*...entre todos botáronse a Zalo. Espírono e atárono a un amieiro*" ("...They rushed towards him. They got him naked and tied him to an alder tree" Casares, 1967: p. 16).

His body is a weak link, an organism on which pain can be inflicted, which also serves as the focus of sarcasm and ridicule. Zalo's body does not possess any intrinsic or representative value. It does not represent strength or superiority as expected of any masculine entity during Franco's era. However, it is a metaphor for the rejection of the political and social power of the moment. This is the reason why Rafael shows remorse when he is beating on Zalo: "*E sentía o sol dentro da cabeza i os chiídos do Zalo que se me espetaban nos ouvidos*" ("And I could feel the sun inside my head and Zalo's screams were stuck in my ears" Casares, 1967: p. 17).

Casares's "*O xogo da guerra*" is a study of the formation of masculinity during Franco's dictatorship. The three main characters each offer a different example of masculinity. In the first place, there is a desire to mimic the behavior and follow the desires of the father figure that in many ways could be equated with Franco but which, in the story, belongs mainly to Rata. Additionally, the desire to forge a new identity that abandons the patterns of the past and enables a new form of masculinity to emerge is exemplified in Rafael. The seemingly weakest link, Zalo, represents a true alternative masculinity.

Zalo's masculinity confronts others with who they are; their masculinity is challenged by Zalo's submission to the punishment. The others cannot find reaffirmation in their treatment of Zalo making them weak links. They depend on him to reaffirm their masculinity, their only result is surrender and compliance to Rata's orders. Zalo's type of masculinity can be witnessed in another text written by Casares: "*Agarda longa ao sol.*"

### **Strength in Dire Circumstances: A New Type of Masculinity in "Agarda longa ao sol"**

In this story, an old and disabled grandfather awaits the visit of his grandsons every afternoon. He sits in a wheelchair on the balcony and watches the people in the street, coming and going. He is depicted as an almost dead body. The flies are picking at his face, and he cannot walk or move around. He can only shift to make himself more comfortable in the chair. Some critics establish an equivalency between old men and the old masculinity on one hand, and the intergenerational fight between old and new masculinity on the other, as a contradiction between two visions of gender roles and interaction (Moore, 2002: pp. 107-108). Nevertheless, in Casares, the old man's masculinity is very similar to that of Zalo, the child in the previous story.

However, one cannot assume that just because a character is old, he is going to guard the ideas of the past. In fact, this character is only described as old in his physical body, not in his mental capacity. He perceives what is going on around him, thinks about the future, and appreciates what that future may have in store for him. The old man enjoys company, which is why he is always awaiting a visit from one of his grandchildren. His liveliness, though not apparent in his physicality, may be seen in the fact that he is constantly paying attention to what is going on around him.

He knows that the day on which the story takes place is his birthday and that all the family are there to celebrate it. He keeps track of time and is aware that his grandsons left ten minutes prior. He observes the movement of the clock's hands. He hears the voices of people and listens to the noises coming from the street. He recognizes and identifies sounds even if he cannot see anything: the cars, the bicycles, the beating on metal coming from a car shop. He is so interested in his surroundings that he can even understand the deceit of those who should be caring for him the most but fail to do so.

This character rejects the violence and complacency embodied in gender roles of the past. He rejects the concept that a man must behave violently or underhandedly to demonstrate his power. On the other hand, he sees that the new type of masculinity forged by the new generations is not a development that he may accept either. The new generations were not alive during the first decades of the dictatorship. They were not influenced by Francoism and its objective of transforming men into soldiers. Young men are not aware of the impact and trauma of the past. The new generations seem not to care about the construction and importance of masculinity inside society. The new generations' main characteristic is their ignorance and indifference towards the past and particularly towards the experience of men from older generations.

This dissatisfaction is what the protagonist cannot accept. When his family assures him that he will see his hundredth birthday, but he can see through their lies: "*As cen...Deciano por dicilo. Pero as súas voces soaban a falso*" ("One hundred (candles)... they were saying that to say something. But their voices sounded false" Casares, 1967: p. 46). That new way of understanding social relations and underlying masculinity is also criticized in a very direct way.

In opposition to Zalo's story, in which men have all the power and are liable to exercise it, "*Agarda longa ao sol,*"

shows men as less than all powerful. The protagonist has had to share power with others, including his wife. Sitting on the balcony, the protagonist remembers his life with his late wife as a loving and sweet experience. In "*O xogo da guerra*," Rata and Rafael represent (in different degrees) the Francoist masculinity, resembling the characteristics of the dictator, and inferring the rejection of all femininity. There is another type of masculinity in Casares's stories represented by Zalo and the old man. This second type is what Brian Bunk explains as the Republican concept of manhood (Bunk, 2007: p. 97).

Under the Francoist model of masculinity, a man has to be the protector and the provider for his wife. In this sense, the old man remembers how he and his wife would sit together in the balcony and watch people pass by. He remembers the times she would whisper in his ear and squeeze his hand. He describes these moments as "*o pensamento de que fora feliz naqueles intres*" ("*the thought that he was happy at that time*," Casares, 1967: p. 47). Masculinity is described as human fulfillment; it is a complete and comprehensive relationship with another human being. It is described as peace and happiness and gratification, a state of being that the old man must fight to regain now that he is alone.

The protagonist in "*Agarda longa ao sol*" values his own characteristics of masculinity. These are companionship, happiness, able-bodiedness, compassion, and understanding. These are the characteristics that he no longer possesses. In his old age, he has lost his sense of masculinity as he is trapped in an environment of loneliness, sadness, disability, and incompatibility. Regarding loneliness, the extent of the protagonist's alienation is not measured by the number of people he has around, but for the disappointments and isolation to which he is submitted by those people.

According to Anthony McMahon, the human male has always been psychologically categorized as "*non-relating and non-nurturing*" (McMahon, 1993: p. 678). Furthermore, relationships and nurturing are not the same for females and males. While the former take care of the children and their more basic needs of feeding and clothing, males see relationships based on the degree of "the more pleasant and playful activities, activities with a high relational content, over practices of routine or mundane care" (McMahon, 1993: p. 680).

Males may value family more than anything else; however, they demand a family devoted to them. This is the case for Casares's protagonist in "*Agarda longa ao sol*." He is a social person and likes to be surrounded by people. He needs company. He misses his wife terribly. Traditionally, men not only need a family to maintain good health and good social relationships, but they cannot even survive without them; this explains how loneliness in Casares's story is not so much the problem of the protagonist as it is due to the decisions of those who live with him.

First, as described in the scene of the birthday, the old man does not believe in the sincerity of the gestures that his family extends towards him. For him, they are false, revealing that maybe he should question their motives. The narrative also introduces contrasts between the period in which his wife was alive, the day she died, and the time afterwards. With his wife at his side, the protagonist describes himself as

happy. On the day of her death, he remembers that everybody was in the house; his granddaughter Tate was playing with him, and she was trying to keep him entertained: "*Xogaba con il. Preguntáballe cousas*" ("*She was playing with him. She would ask him about things*") (Casares, 1967: p. 47).

Nevertheless, everything changed when the summer came, and he had to stay alone at home while everybody went to the beach and camping. That isolation is also demonstrated by his fondness for listening to the noise from the street, people's voices and how they disappear when the night comes. He shows himself as genuinely interested in others: "*men caring not for the family but about it*" (McMahon, 1993: p. 681). On the other hand, it seems that at this point his family is composed of only one person, Susa, who helps him to get around and whose loyalty saves him from complete abandonment: "*Ven sempre a vella Susa... E lévao collido do brazo*" ("*The old Susa always comes... and she takes him from one place to the other by the arm...*" Casares, 1967: p. 48).

Loneliness is not part of the protagonist's masculinity; it is a rejection of his identity as an old man. In the story, the family dismisses him and his background. They put him aside to continue with their lives, to engage in what they think are their future, more relevant relationships. They treat him as if he were already dead. This feeling of desertion and seclusion is multiplied at the end of the story when the character is waiting for his grandson Milo's visit. According to the narrative: "*Agora, nas vacacións, ven caseque tódalas tardes por aquí, a falar co abó*" ("*Now, on vacation, he comes almost every afternoon to speak with his grandfather*" Casares, 1967: p. 49).

The hope of seeing his grandson and the help of his aide Susa seem to be the only two events that provide him with a connection to the outside world. That is why it is so symbolic that Milo does not show up for his visit. He instead calls the grandfather on the phone at the end of the day to say that he is going to the movies with his friends: "*Di que non pode vir, que está invitado a ir ó cine*" ("*He says that he cannot come. That he has been invited to go to the movies*" Casares, 1967: p. 52). Similarly to "*O xogo da guerra*," as Rata and Rafael beat up Zalo and abandon him at the end, the figure of the old man in the story of "*Agarda longa ao sol*" is also forsaken.

The ages of the characters are very different. Zalo is a child and the character in "*Agarda longa ao sol*" is an old man. Nevertheless, in both stories, the depiction of manhood is one of gentleness, independence, and solitude. Manhood has stopped being defined by violence and savage solitude. In the case of "*Agarda longa ao sol*," the man is the one looking for relationships, trying to serve others and being let down at the end. This isolation and rejection also directly connect with his state of disability.

The character's disabilities accompanying old age affect his sense of masculinity. Age is associated with the lack of understanding he suffers: "*Ninguén agardaba que il chegara ós cen anos*" ("*Nobody was expecting him to reach one hundred years old*" Casares, 1967: p. 46). The indifference and assurance of the rest of the characters as they leave him alone and go about their own business serve to expose once more the fact of his insignificance. According to Cheryl Laz, individuals learn to assume their age in the same way

they assume their gender, through socialization and through conforming to the rules dictated to them by society regarding how they are expected to behave (Laz, 1998: p. 94).

The protagonist in the story does not behave in his old age as others want to see him. He remembers his wife, he likes being with and listening to people, and he is a sociable person. On the contrary, his family just wants him to conform to their view of what the elderly should do and how they should behave—that is spending time silent and alone in a wheelchair on the balcony. In this sense, it could be said that society sees old age as a type of incapacity. In fact, according to another sociologist, Anne Marie Guillemard, in many Western societies, the age of retirement has been lowered or been changed so that the milestones that a person would expect in his or her lifetime have been tampered with. This leaves them unable to cope with the new transitions and even causes them psychological trauma. Men, in particular, can see themselves as very suddenly useless to society: “*The chronological thresholds used both to determine personal identities throughout the life course and to organize the transition to old age have been torn up during the last fifteen years*” (Guillemard, 1996: p. 180).

In this context, the grandfather of the story has been tossed aside, and he regrets that “*marchaban. Il quedaba sentado na súa silla, no balcón, agardando a noite.*” (“They would leave. He remained seated in his chair, in the balcony, waiting for the night to come” Casares, 1967: p. 47). Regarding the physical limitations of the grandfather, several factors influence his relationship with his family. According to Garrido Garduño et al. (2007), when one of the members of the family is incapacitated, a consequence for the family may be the separation between those members who accept and assume the incapacity and those who do not (Garrido Garduño et al., 2007: p. 123). Blanco López goes further, affirming that Spanish masculine hegemony is still so pervasive today that any state or condition departing from this can be considered as a disability:

“...si no entendemos,...las “*discapacidades*” que el modelo de masculinidad hegemónica, o en palabras de Bourdieu, la dominación masculina, produce tanto en el sujeto dominado como en el dominador, el esfuerzo por acercarnos a una sociedad de iguales se convierte en inocuo.”

(“...if we do not understand...the incapacities that hegemonic masculinity, or in the words of Bourdieu, masculine domination produces on the dominated as well as the dominating subject, our effort to achieve an equal society will fail” Blanco López, 2007: p. 5)

Besides being old, the grandfather is confined to a wheelchair: “*O ano pasado inda se valia soilo. Pero polo Nadal caíu polas escaleiras abaixo e partiu a columna. Dende entón quedou inútil*” (“Last year, he still could do things for himself. But, at Christmas he fell downstairs and broke his spine. From that moment on, he became disabled” Casares, 1967: p. 48). Taking into consideration the understanding of hegemonic masculinity as necessarily being free of disability, it is important to point out the vocabulary used to describe this event.

First, the narrator says that before that moment, he could do things on his own, using the word *valer* meaning that he was still valid, that he was still useful as a member of society. In the final sentence, the narrator uses the word

*inútil* that can be translated as “invalid,” but for more direct translation, we could use the word “useless”. This is very revealing of the consideration of masculinity, not merely from the point of view of disability, but also from the point of view of “usefulness.”

Within this context, one may conclude that in Galicia, during Franco’s time, it was not only expected that a man be aggressive and strong, but if by any chance the man could not live by himself, he was considered a burden to society, and he was gradually dismissed and isolated. This level of inutility is emphasized by the tasks that the members of the family have to do for the protagonist: “*Ven a Kai, a filla loira, a vestilo. Despois axúdao a ir hasta o balcón. I alí queda hasta a hora do xantar*” (“Kai, his blonde daughter, comes to get him dressed. Then, she helps him to walk to the balcony. He sits there until lunchtime” Casares, 1967: p. 48).

On the other hand, hegemonic masculinity can trap its subjects underneath it until even the hegemonic male becomes incapacitated (Blanco López, 2007: p. 6). Masculinity may be undermined by the dominant masculine. In “*Agarda longa ao sol*,” the protagonist’s masculinity is undermined by the consequences of his old age and by the fact that his family has forced him into isolation. This level of isolation extends beyond any incapacity, however, when his family relegates him to the balcony. The balcony displaces the protagonist out of the life of the family, who continue their daily routine inside the house. In addition, for the old man, the balcony becomes the only means of communication with the outside world.

Every sound raises in him a glimmer of hope, a hope that he can still be relevant and useful. Maybe the noise is his grandson who is coming to see him or maybe Kai, his daughter, is coming to take him for a walk; he even fantasizes about the sounds that come out of the car shop and imagines the types of tools they are using to repair the cars. However, all this anticipation is useless. The steps on the street are never those of his grandson, and Kai leaves to go out to dinner without him. This frustration transfers to the reader, who recognizes the protagonist’s loneliness and even the futility of his life. These feelings enhance the sadness and lack of understanding to which the character is subjected.

Laura Asturias affirms that men have been robbed of the opportunity to express their feelings since childhood (Asturias, 1997: p. 2). Equally revealing, in many masculine societies and in those individuals who describe themselves as self sufficient and without deep personal relationships, the sadness factor is more repressed and not shown as clearly (Fernández Sedano et al., 2002: p. 9). Hegemonic masculinity is not recognized for promoting understanding; on the contrary, the traditional man must mistrust everybody, never opening himself up and fearing being labeled a coward, homosexual, or weak if he is going to be at all a man:

“*Por supuesto este entrenamiento para adecuarse al tipo de varón que el MMT (Modelo de Masculinidad tradicional) (desea) tiene un déficit, el déficit del aprendizaje de lo relacional afectivo sexual, del entendimiento con el otro, de la empatía, componentes básicos para el entendimiento igualitario y respetuoso con los demás.*”

(“Of course, this training to adapt oneself to the type of masculinity that the TMM (Traditional Masculinity Model) [demands] has a shortfall, the lack of learning how to form



a sexual affectionate relationship, the lack of understanding with the other, the lack of empathy, all basic components for an equal and respectful understanding of others" Bonino, 2002: p. 7)

Contrary to the general belief, however, the feeling of sadness is embraced by Casares's protagonist as something positive that allows him to remember his wife and even enjoy the emotions that he still has towards her: "*Gustáballe aquela tristeza que se lle metía no corpo*" ("He liked that sadness penetrating his body" Casares, 1967: p. 47). Sadness is a way to cope and feel alive. The fact that he is feeling sad for the death of his wife gives him an alternative to the life he is going through right now. He does not have to put up with the indifference of his relatives; instead, he can think about the tender moments he spent with his spouse and, as a result, try to validate his life.

Likewise, the expression of this feeling makes him human again against the objectification suffered at the hands of his daughter and grandson. This deep state of sadness attests to the life of an individual that is still alive, that still wants to live; but nobody is there to help him. In fact, this way of thinking makes his desires more genuine than those of the people around him who come and go without any real purpose, emphasizing their lack of understanding and indifference.

On the subject of understanding and indifference, nobody knows how the protagonist really feels; his family is not even aware of what he needs. This can be seen, for example, on the day of his birthday, when the family prepares a very shallow commemoration in which: "*Durante a comida houbo cantos, bailes. Xa se sabe. Il tuvo que apagar as oitenta velas da tarta*" ("During the reception, there was singing, dancing. The usual. Then he had to blow out the eighty candles on the cake," Casares, 1967: p. 46). His birthday is not as much an opportunity to celebrate his life as another obligation for the family to follow tradition, fulfill their duty, and run out of the door: "*Pola mañá estiveron os netos pra felicitalo. Inda non hai dez minutos que se foron*" ("His grandsons came in the morning to wish him happy birthday. They left just ten minutes later" Casares, 1967: p. 45).

This disinterest towards the grandfather concerning his feelings is even more evident in the attitude of his granddaughter, Tate, in whose voice the protagonist can hear the falseness of her statement that she is expecting him to reach the age of one hundred. The protagonist knows how isolated he is due to a lack of interest and involvement on the part of the family. The lack of understanding is the result of the assumption that he is not going to live much longer.

## CONCLUSIONS

The period after the Spanish Civil War was intended to promote the building of "the new Spain" and "the new man," following the example of the dictator. The new man was coming out of the military; he had to resemble the frontline soldier: daring, fierce, confident. He had to uphold the moral and cultural standards of the nation. Masculinity was characterized by the strength and decisiveness of the soldier and the paternalism demanded to reconstruct families and homes away from the violence. There was only one understanding of the masculine, and that was as

the soldier, sportsman, and head of the household. In this historical context, it is difficult to imagine how an author such as Casares could have dared to explore other types of masculinity.

Nevertheless, Casares's stories do not focus only on the violence and brutality seen after the war but pay attention to those characters who put traditional masculinity aside and opt to live their masculinity in a more accepting, patient, and welcoming manner. The first story, "*O xogo da guerra*," is a denunciation of the Francoist man who continues to use violence to settle his differences and lives the new reality of a Spain in peacetime. It is filled with characters very typical of Franco's era. These characters turn to violence and manipulation as, the only ways to survive society's demands because they see their manhood as constantly critiqued and attack

The second story, "*Agarda longa ao sol*," presents the opposite, a grandfather who lost the love of his life and continues to inspire his family and to be interested in their lives. In these two stories, Casares shows two different types of masculinities. The second story is much more lenient. Masculinity is not defined in terms of strength or aggression, but as the ability to be relevant and useful to society as well as to possess the capacity to feel and remember. This last characteristic offers the transformation that Casares was likely searching for. The future will carry with it a new way to understand gender roles and male interrelations.

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