

Article

'As voces interfírense': A Chronotopic Reading of Two Novels

Sharon R. Roseman
Memorial University of Newfoundland

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Abstract

This article undertakes a chronotopic reading of two Galician novels about the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship published in the 1990s: Xosé Luís Méndez Ferrín's *No ventre do silencio* and Manuel Rivas's *O lapis do carpinteiro*. Mikhail Bakhtin developed the concept of the chronotope or time-space to think through how narrative could render time 'palpable' and events in space 'concrete'. These two novels are examined comparatively in terms of two chronotopes. The first comprises ghosts, portents of death, and other spiritual signs. This motif collapses and re-erects boundaries between moments in time, challenging readers to imagine the variety of visual images, soundscapes, and other sensory cues for the spectral that inscribed the geographical locations being described. The second chronotope, that is a strong thread in the novels, reminds readers of the cosmopolitan mixture of ideas, sounds, tastes, smells, sights, and textures that interrupted the cultural and political insulation employed as part of Francoist repression. The article concludes that a chronotopic approach to the analysis of fictional texts can enrich understandings of material found in other genres, including testimonial accounts.

Resumo

Neste artigo realízase unha lectura cronotópica de dúas novelas sobre a Guerra Civil española e a ditadura de Franco publicadas nos anos 90: *No ventre do silencio*, de Xosé Luís Méndez Ferrín, e *O lapis do carpinteiro*, de

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Manuel Rivas. Mikhail Bakhtin desenvolveu o concepto do cronotopo ou tempo-espazo para explorar a maneira en que as narrativas poden facer o tempo 'palpable' e os eventos no espazo 'concretos'. Estas dúas novelas son analizadas comparativamente a través de dous cronotopos. O primeiro comprende as pantasma, os presaxios da morte, e outros sinais espirituais. Este motivo fai colapsar e reconstruír as fronteiras entre os momentos no tempo, pedindo aos lectores que imaxinen a variedade de imaxes visuais, de paisaxes sonoras e doutras pistas sensoriais para o espectral que gravan as localizacións xeográficas descritas. O segundo cronotopo, que constitúe un fío forte nas novelas, recorda aos lectores a mestura cosmopolita das ideas, sons, gustos, cheiros e texturas que interrompían o illamento cultural e político empregado como parte da represión franquista. Este artigo conclúe que unha visión analítica que examina os cronotopos nos textos ficcionais pode enriquecer a comprensión de materiais atopados noutros xéneros, incluíndo os testemuños.

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In a 2003 interview, Rivas argues that more such work continues to be needed. He notes, for example, that ‘ni la generación de mis mayores ni yo ni mis menores han podido ver nunca en una televisión en España imágenes de cárceles del franquismo, de campos de concentración o de campos de trabajo de la dictadura’ (Rivas cited in Tejada 2003).

2

To make the text less dense and thus more readable, all specific references in the paper are to these versions of the books with *No ventre do silencio* written VS followed by page numbers when relevant (e.g. VS: 36). Similarly, *O lapis do carpinteiro* is written with LC. The Castilian and English versions are Méndez Ferrín (2002) and Rivas (1998b, 2001).

3

It won eight María Casares Awards and three Mestre Mateo Awards, for best feature-length film as well as best actor and actress. This follows the feature-length film adaptation of another of his novels, the prize-winning *La lengua de las mariposas* (Cuerda 1999).

4

The Premio Eixo Atlántico de Novela (1998), Premio Asociación de Escritores en Lingua Galega (2000), and Premio da Crítica Española (2000).

5

On literary motifs, I am following Freedman (1971).



Introduction

Alongside historical prose, testimonial literature, drama and other genres, late 20th century fiction has played an important role in inscriptions of the contested memory of the Spanish Civil War and Francoism (Colmeiro 2011; González García 2009: 182–184; Labanyi 2006: 90). The participation of Galician novelists such as Xosé Luís Méndez Ferrín and Manuel Rivas in this process has fulfilled the mandate that Bourdieu and others have outlined as part of the

obligation of public intellectuals — in this case, to challenge both selective silencings and articulations about Galician experiences of these painful periods (Bourdieu 1998; Boyer and Lomnitz 2005; González García 2009: 182–184; Martínez-Risco Daviña 2004; Nichols 2006; Rodríguez Suárez 2015: 317; Tasende 2001, 2004; Vilaverde Fernández 2011).¹

This article employs Mikhail Bakhtin’s (1981) concept of the chronotope to examine two novels: Xosé Luís Méndez Ferrín’s *No ventre do silencio* (1999) and *O lapis do carpinteiro* by Manuel Rivas (1998a).² Both of these novels have had a major impact on public understandings of the Galician experience of the Civil War of 1936–39 and the Franco Dictatorship (Vilavedra Fernández 2011). *O lapis do carpinteiro* was adapted into a prize-winning play by the group Sarabela and a prize-winning film directed by Antón Reixa (2003).³ *No ventre do silencio* won three prizes and has been printed in numerous editions.⁴ These novels communicate the consciousness of previously suppressed experiences and memories to the members of a public who might or might not have lived in the times of broad uneasiness, intense fear, imprisonment, censorship, and violence depicted (Colmeiro 2011: 29). They keep alive a 19th century tradition of the ‘realist-nationalist’ novel (Hooper 2011: 277), while drawing in elements of naturalism, the allegorical and the fantastic, and ‘Bakhtinian dialogic fiction’ (Rodríguez García 2013: 22–23; Steen 2006).

The literal meaning of chronotope is borrowed from the ‘time-space’ of mathematics and ‘Einstein’s Theory of Relativity’ (Bakhtin 1981: 84). As Holquist explains, Bakhtin develops the idea of a chronotope as ‘an optic for reading texts as x-rays of the forces at work in the culture system from which they spring’ (Holquist 1981: 425–426). Bakhtin notes that: ‘Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope’ (Bakhtin 1981: 84). He is interested in how novelists use details from spatial locations to move events along, and thereby represent historical time. Chronotopes make time ‘palpable and visible’ and events ‘concrete’ (Bakhtin 1981: 250).

There are strong similarities in the two novels examined here in terms of the chronotopes that the authors use to frame and push forward their central story lines. I discuss two major chronotopic motifs in this essay.⁵ These novels both portray and represent counter-points to the erasures and silencings imposed during the war and the regime that followed. By outlining these processes of domination and simultaneously depicting some of the countervailing voices that supported as well as contended with them, these works respond to what Rivas emphasizes about the period: the ‘intimidación, el miedo para todo, [...] robarte las

palabras; que te amargaban la vida' (Rivas cited in Tejada 2003). His own response is personified in part with characters such as Herbal in *O lapis do carpinteiro* who, as Folkart (2006: 310) notes, while 'defined by his silence' when the novel begins, 'increasingly speaks about, and acts on, his desire to express himself and be understood'.

The first of the chronotopic motifs discussed below comprises the sounds and other sensory indicators of death and danger coming from the spiritual world that accompanied people living in Galicia during the war and the dictatorship. This forms a powerful link between the novels, providing an existential challenge to the limitations of the spatialities and temporalities defined by empirical realism (Jackson 2005). The second chronotopic motif is an equally strong element in *O lapis do carpinteiro* and *No ventre do silencio*. It encompasses the cosmopolitan mixture —fed from both the left and the right— of ideas, sounds, tastes, smells, sights, and textures people were exposed to alongside a litany of sometimes pompous strivings for an insular and insulating Spain. As a chronotope, cosmopolitanism collapses the physical and other borders encasing Spain under the war and dictatorship. Like the first chronotope, it also reinforces links among the past, present, and future. The use of these two motifs creates a shared imaginary universe for a wide range of readers: those who have and have not experienced the time periods and the type of events that are described. They do so by juxtaposing what is known and unknown, what is remembered and forgotten, what has been experienced directly and heard about by the characters in the novels, the authors, and the readers alike. In the remainder of this essay, I illustrate how these two chronotopic motifs operate in the novels and conclude by considering how such readings of fiction can inform analyses of other cultural materials about the same period, including ethnographic interviews, testimonial literature, and biography.

The Spiritual Chronotope: Spectral Signs of Death and Disaster

In both novels, the silence, sounds, and other sensory projections of Francoist forces are interrupted by ghosts or restless spirits of the dead, portents of impending death, and other spiritual signs. This is a very effective chronotopic motif as it collapses, erases and then re-erects boundaries between moments in time, challenging readers to imagine the variety of countervailing voices, cries, images, and other perceptual elements that, for many Galicians, inscribed their experiences of the war and dictatorship as much as more 'worldly' sensations (Feld 1996). This chronotope thus serves to question the way in which lucid memories can be confused with dreams and nightmares, spiritual visions, and half-remembered experiences.

The *Santa Compañía* is a well-known classic topic in examinations of popular religion or vernacular spirituality in works of Galician folklore and ethnography. In *Etnografía galega: cultura espiritual*, for example, Xesús Taboada Chivite describes the tradition of leaving out meals for the souls of the dead and the famous 'nocturnal procession of souls in pain' (Taboada Chivite 1972: 153). The classic configuration of this *Santa Compañía* is of a figure holding the cross and a dog announcing its arrival. Departing from a stone cross, they create a 'sacred space' or 'magical circle' (Taboada Chivite 1972: 154). María do Cebreiro Rábade Villar notes that the 'spectral' and

the ‘hauntological’ have, therefore, ‘perhaps, been a privileged object of analysis for some mystical-essentialist readings of the Galician imaginary’ (Rábade Villar 2009: 237). But she goes on to discuss the spectral’s equally ‘subversive potential’, including as a way to comment on ‘the condition of the community that those very figures metonymically represent’ (Rábade Villar 2009: 237–238; also see Labanyi 2000, 2002b).

Ethnographers who are contemporaries of the novelists have reported on the same phenomena as Taboada Chivite and his forebears, on people having told them of seeing souls wandering around alone as opposed to being in processions with others, of making themselves known to humans through the sounds of chains, odd lights, and bitter cries or lamentations: ‘laios amargurados’ (Taboada Chivite 1972: 155). These materials in ethnographic accounts are an indication of Galicians having been willing to share the many forms of palpability that make up their historical consciousness (Gondar Portasany 1989; Mariño Ferro 1984; Roseman 2002; also see Badone 1989 on Brittany). As Labanyi (2002b: 10–12) argues, it is helpful to think about the cultural worlds of both rural and urban Spain as hybrid, as being formed by ongoing ‘recycling’ processes: the clear or implied presence of unsettled spirits of the dead as well as the active presence of animals, lights, smells, or sounds indicating spiritual foreknowledge of death. The smell (*cheiro*) of death is another enduring sign, sometimes called ‘o aire de morto’ (Taboada Chivite 1972: 143). An array of animals signifies impending death or other trouble. The serpent is one of the ways in which the Devil is incarnated, with other animals including the donkey also being diabolical and sometimes the guise used by witches to visit the Devil (Mariño Ferro 1984: 93–94). Crows, like flies and wolves, feed on dead bodies and are classic creatures that announce the arrival of impending death (Mariño Ferro 1984: 100–101, 103–104; Taboada Chivite 1972: 141).

The hints of possible signs of death and other intimations of the other world in *No ventre do silencio* are woven throughout the narrative. Alluding to the novel *La casa de la Troya*, published in 1915 by Alejandro Pérez Lugín (2008 [1915]), which describes student life at the end of the 19th century, *No ventre do silencio* provides a rendition of the city of Santiago de Compostela in the late 1950s, peopled by university students, their professors, priests, the political elite of the Franco machine as well as landladies, prostitutes, seamstresses, maids, waiters, and disabled veterans of the war. This novel followed two earlier works in a trilogy: *Antón e os inocentes* (Méndez Ferrín 1976) and *Bretaña, Esmeraldina* (Méndez Ferrín 1987). Together with other earlier works *Arrabaldo do norte* (Méndez Ferrín 1964) and *Retorno a Tagen Ata* (Méndez Ferrín 1971), these form part of a ‘series of political novels that gradually eschewed the conventions of realism’ (Rodríguez García 2013: 22; also, González Gómez 1995).

In addition to attending lectures, the students spend many more hours walking the streets of Santiago de Compostela, drinking and talking in bars, and frequenting brothels. The locations are as much protagonists as the individuals are. Portents of death arrive in Santiago de Compostela’s cobble-stoned streets and smoky bars. In his detailed accounts of the physicality and interior experiential perspective of the various characters who people this world in the 1950s, Méndez Ferrín also refers to the mysterious, elusive, and spiritual qualities associated with certain places such ‘Unha rúa pantasma’ (vs: 143). A description of a *tuna* [group of student musicians] refers to the ‘pandeiretas chicheando coma serpes no medio da

Acuña (2002: 276) notes that Narda is the main character from *Antón e os inocentes* (Méndez Ferrín 1976).

xungla' (vs: 163). This parallels another scene describing a passing funeral cortège —an occasion when the character Brétemas calls out 'O morto e o músico' (vs: 176), alluding to the Galician image of the procession of the souls of the dead or Santa Compañía. The students Comesaña and Narda⁶ see a disabled veteran one rainy night singing 'marchas republicanas' to 'unha multitude fantasmal' that turns out to be 'dous da Policía Armada e un de paisano, con chapeu e gabardina' (vs: 35). In another passage, the student Príncipe sees 'unha aparición', a young woman wearing a scarf in a long past fashion (vs: 127).

As with the other novel, *O lapis do carpinteiro* includes extraordinary depictions of the sensory experiences of those who lived and died in Galician localities during the war and Franco dictatorship. Various authors have written about the centrality of ghosts (or phantoms) and the spectral in this novel and other works of Rivas's (e.g. Folkart 2006: 304, 307, 311; Rábade Villar 2009). The main spectre is the ghost of a prisoner that the guard killed early on in order to protect him from 'the torture and sadistic games that the other guards would impose' (Folkart 2006: 307). This ghost is the painter who speaks to the character Herbal through the carpenter's pencil of the book's title. The repeated appearance of the dead painter through the pencil connects the stories that people tell each other about the past with the work of visual artists and novelists such as Rivas himself: 'O pintor quería retratar as feridas invisibles da existencia' (LC: 35). There are animals, lights, and smells similar to those discussed in other accounts of spiritual signs. In jail, Herbal listened to the prisoners' talking. The painter, amusing himself, addresses the physician Da Barca: 'O que non comprendo, [...] é como ti, sendo tan materialista, podes crer na Santa Compañía' (LC: 27). Pushed to do so by another prisoner, Dombodán, he explains further:

Creo na Santa Compañía porque a vin. Non é un tipismo. De estudante, unha noite, fun rebuscar na oseira qu hai na beira do cemiterio de Boisaca [...] Escoitei algo que non era ruído, coma se o silencio cantase un gregoriano. E velaí ante os meus ollos a fileira de lucernas. Alí estaban [...] as frangullas eclasmadas dos defuntos. (LC: 28)

The others asked what happened next: 'Nada. Tiña a man o tabaco, por se mo pedían. Pero pasaron de largo como motoristas silenciosos [...] / creo que ían para Santo Andrés de Teixido, onde vai de morto quen non foi de vivo' (LC: 28). Another prisoner, Maroño, tells about two sisters called Life and Death (LC: 29-30). When Life ends up fleeing home with an accordionist who had almost drowned in the ocean, her sister Death never forgives her: 'Por iso vai e vén polos camiños, sobre todo as noites de treboada, [...]' asking if people know 'dun mozo acordeonista e da puta da Vida? E a quen pregunta, por non saber, lévao por diante' (LC: 30).

Daniel Da Barca becomes one of those who would survive a firing squad. When the doctor is not killed like the others who were placed in the sight of the rifles, Herbal is instructed by the ghost of the painter to lift him [Da Barca] up (LC: 55). Throughout the novel, Rivas develops the theme of the relationship between the guard Herbal and the dead painter who accompanies him, speaking in his ear seemingly from the thick red carpenter's pencil, but also at times leaving his side: 'Ás veces o defunto descabalgaba da montura da orella, marchaba da cabeza e tardaba en volver

[...] o pintor dáballe conversa nas horas de vixía [...] E aprendíalle cousas' (LC: 73). The pencil had been passed down among various men, having been owned by three carpenters before the painter (Tasende 2001: 214).

When, at the end of his story, a prostitute named Maria da Visitação asks the now old man Herbal if the dead painter is still with him, he lies (LC: 146-147). He steps out of the brothel for air, looks out and 'viuna vir por fin. A Morte cos seus zapatos brancos. Por instinto, palpou na procura do lapis de carpinteiro. ¡Ven, cabrona, xa non teño nada!' (LC: 147).

We are told that this is not the first experience that Herbal has had with spiritual danger and Death. When he was a young boy, 'colléralle un aire' (LC: 41). After visiting his uncle Nan, a carpenter, he left on his bicycle and

De fronte vén unha figura estraña. Leva túnica e vai tan maqueada que semella unha máscara. Faille un sinal para que se deteña. Herbal tenta pedalear con forza pero a cadea sae do piñón / Ola, Herbal querido. Eu son a Morte. ¿Sabes onde van o sorrinte mozo acordeonista e a puta Vida? / Pero entón Herbal, que busca unha arma, algo con que defenderse, bota man ao lapis da orella. Alóngase coma unha lanza vermella. O grafito da punta escintila coma un metal brunido. A Morte abre os ollos con espanto. Esváese. Só fica unha mancha de gasóleo na pucharca do camiño. (LC: 78)

When they see a wolf looking at the 'phantom' 'Special Transport Train' (Tren de Transporte Especial) (LC: 114) that carried the prisoners with tuberculosis to the sanatorium, the painter stops Herbal from shooting it: 'Outro, señor, dille un garda ao tenente. No vagón nove' (LC: 113). This passage employs the figure of the wolf as foretelling the death of one of the prisoners on the train who has died of complications from tuberculosis.

Ghostly and other sensory projections of the fantastic play a key role in both novels. The use of this first chronotope by Rivas and Méndez Ferrín powerfully places individual victims and others' experiences of their victimhood at the centre of Galician social memory of these horrifying years of the 20th century. As Louzao notes about *O lapis do carpinteiro*, this novel not only 'procura a redención das moitas vítimas' but 'fai unha homenaxe á dignidade' (Louzao 2001: 273-274).

By providing powerful examples that evoke the pervasiveness and depth of people's experiences of spiritual signs of supernatural power, the novels simultaneously remind readers of the visceral and lasting impacts of dread and violence and their unspeakability. This unspeakability derives from the extent of people's wounds and the political repression that pushed for an explicit later silencing of memories (Colmeiro 2011: 24, 26). This first chronotope communicates the layers of trauma that people experienced; this trauma included foretellings of impending disaster that, in some cases, were perhaps easier to remember and share than what followed them.

The emphasis on the phantasmal is an effective way to reinforce the difficulties as well as the importance of recuperating memories of the period. Spirituality and the fantastic have played prominent if distinctive roles during other difficult historical periods. For example, Carmelo Lisón Tolosana refers to how the 'proyección mítica' was one of the only ways people knew of to try to 'equilibrar la balanza' against the 'megamáquina inquisitorial temible, absoluta' of the tribunals during the Inquisition

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See Badone 1990 on the distinction between 'popular' and 'orthodox' religiosity.

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Its early usages were frequently applied to mobile populations such as sailors, seaports with international traffic such as Antwerp, and were both positive and negative. In the 19th century revival of the word, a cosmopolite 'citizen of the world'; one who regards or treats the whole world as his country' was often reviled, associated with refugees and other marginalized people, and contrasted with a positive definition of loyal 'patriots' (Oxford English Dictionary 2008).

in Galicia (Lisón Tolosana 1987 [1979]: 31). Essentialist conceptions of rural, working class social worlds in Galicia and other parts of rural Europe associate popular spirituality with 'traditional,' 'folk' culture. The appearance in these novels of the phantasmal and other spiritual signs in cities and the countryside and to people of diverse social, economic, and educational backgrounds undoes such essentialism.

The subsequent section turns to the second chronotope, which extends further the first chronotope's challenge to assumptions of bounded experiences during the 1930s civil war and Franco dictatorship. While the first chronotope refers to mystical elements that attended traumatic experiences, the second chronotope used in these novels involves the introduction of detailed descriptions of the cosmopolitan material culture, people, ideas, and cultural practices that also formed an important part of Galician experience from the 1930s to the 1970s. Together, they challenge an idea of bounded worldliness rather than spiritually rich and complex ethnoscaapes (Appadurai 1991). Therefore, while each of these chronotopes is important in itself, they are made even more effective through their conjunction in each of the two novels. They function in an effective combination by undermining in more than one way essentialist ideas of Galicia as having been characterized by a rural universe dominated by specific cultural beliefs and practices, including those relating to popular religiosity as well as orthodox Roman Catholic institutions.⁷ The two chronotopes are therefore more effective in tandem than they would be individually, by juxtaposing a complex portrayal of unorthodox spirituality with the cultural boundary crossing as a major aspect of life in Galicia even in the face of repressive pressures for insularity.

The Cosmopolitan Chronotope: Cultural Contact Zones in Galician Society

The two novels remind readers of the contradiction between the censoring and somewhat isolationist Franco régime and the various sources of cosmopolitanism that continued to form Galicians and other Spaniards' experience of the mid-20th century. Since the 17th century the adjective 'cosmopolitan' and the noun 'cosmopolite' have referred to people, things or ideas 'belonging to all parts of the world; not restricted to any one country or its inhabitants' (Oxford English Dictionary 2008).⁸ Homi Bhabha's (2001) idea of 'vernacular cosmopolitanism', that results from convergences of migrant populations including subaltern laborers carrying a myriad of personal and national histories and sets of ideas with them when they arrive at points of confluence, is important here. So too is Kwame Anthony Appiah's idea of 'rooted cosmopolitanism', that includes a strong connection with one's homeland as well as an embracing of global influences (Appiah 1996; Pi-Sunyer 2008). A relevant recent ethnographic account of sophisticated 'urban cosmopolitanism' in Spain is Urla's discussion of Basque language activists in Bilbao (Urla 2008). These ideas about the 'cosmopolitan' concept are counterpoints to more restrictive ideas that situate cosmopolitanism with cultural and political élites who can be 'worldly' by 'participating in many worlds without becoming part of any of them', embrace 'hybridity', be 'betwixt and between without being liminal' (Friedman 1997 [1995]: 78; Werbner 2008).

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Mary Louise Pratt (1991: 33) defines these as 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power'.

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Such contact zones were also linked to international networks set up before and during the war, and maintained afterward. There is a large literature about this aspect of the war, from classic works such as Orwell (1952) to more recent treatments (e.g. Carroll and Fernandez 2007; Mates 2007).

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The term *vixilias* is effective here in drawing an implicit parallel between Herbal's guard duties and Dr. Da Barca attending to patients with tuberculosis who, like him, are prisoners in the sanatorium.

This section incorporates Mica Nava's idea of a 'visceral', 'vernacular' cosmopolitanism which accounts for 'emotional, inclusive features of cosmopolitanism, on feelings of attraction for and identification with otherness' (Nava 2007: 8) as well as pointing to 'a cosmopolitanism that takes place *at home*, in the family, in the neighborhood, in the interior territories of the mind and body' (Nava 2007: 12). Despite the 'folklorization' of Galician language, culture, and historiography that marked an aspect of official elite political culture during Francoism and into the post-Franco period when these novels were written, these two works are among numerous examples recounting a portrait of a diverse, cosmopolitan Galicia (Figueroa 1988 cited in Louzao 2001: 263-264; Labanyi 2002b: 4-5). The history of this 'Other Galicia' is marked by people coming and going to its shores and mountains; by artistic and literary creation linked to similar work being done elsewhere in the world; by labour migrants returning or newly arriving with novel merchandise, ideas, religious beliefs, languages, and companions. The history of Galicia is one of global interconnections. As Xerardo Pereiro and Manuel Vilar (2008) have argued, this is something that those who run institutions such as ethnographic museums do not reflect when they make the choice to focus instead on an essentialist idea of a Galician folk culture that is encased by delimited cultural influences.

In telling their stories, the novels by Rivas and Méndez Ferrín contrast the fundamentalist discourse and repressive actions of state agents with repeated references to a picture of a Spain that is ideologically, culturally, and linguistically multifaceted, both as part of and in the face of fear. Detailed descriptions of cosmopolitanism allow the two novelists to demonstrate the embodiment of differences and constitution of 'contact zones' (Pratt 1991)⁹ in rural and urban Galician spaces as well as in prisons, during the war and throughout the Franco dictatorship.¹⁰ In this way, these works parallel Gramsci's recognition of the 'remarkable cosmopolitanism of popular literature' found throughout Spain (Gramsci 1991: 342-385 cited in Labanyi 2002b: 4).

In *O lapis do carpinteiro*, there are multiple indications of cosmopolitanism. In the descriptions of both the past and the novelistic present, the characters are from various places in Galicia or from outside Galicia. Others are Galicians who have spent time in other countries. The novel begins with the young journalist Carlos Sousa visiting Daniel Da Barca, an aging and ailing physician, 'un vello roxo irreductible' (LC: 11) who, we are told, had been forced to leave Galicia for Mexico. Dr. Da Barca himself is said to have 'dobre nacionalidade', Cuban and Spanish, and this circumstance, along with the miraculous story of his having survived the firing squad, apparently resulted in 'unha campaña internacional para acadar o seu indulto' (LC: 60). Another story-telling encounter occurs between Herbal and the prostitute Maria da Visitação, who has recently arrived 'dunha illa do Atlántico africano' (LC: 18). The character Herbal refers to Da Barca's broad knowledge of medical and world history, observing that: 'Ninguén sabía moi ben cando durmía o doutor Da Barca. As súas vixilias eran sempre de libro na man' (LC: 12).¹⁵ The prisoners often talked about all manner of things they had read, thought about, and experienced. As a leader of the resistance, Daniel Da Barca was feared by the régime and sought out for punishment by death because his words could traverse borders: 'era un arquivo vivente. Tiña todo na cabeza. Os seus textos, con testemuños da represión, publicábanse na prensa inglesa e mais na americana' (LC: 133).

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La Pasionaria (Dolores Ibárruri Gómez) was a communist and feminist Basque activist (1895-1989). At this historical moment referred to in the novel, she would have likely been broadcasting from Moscow.

We learn that Dr. Da Barca engaged in lengthy debates with Mother Superior Izarne during his time in the prison sanatorium. They talked about the existence of God, the stars, the planets, and life on other planets (in which they both believed), and St. Teresa’s poetry:

No *Libro da vida* ela [Santa Teresa] di: Doíame o corazón. E era certo, doíalle o corazón [...] Tiña anxíña de peito e sufriu un infarto [...] / Iso é unha grosería, doutor. Estamos a falar de poesía, duns versos sublimes, e vostede, vostede fálame de vísceras [...] / Escoite, Izarne. Madre Izarne. Eses versos son excepcionais. Ningún patólogo podería describir así unha doenza. Ela transforma esa febleza, a morte transitoria [...] nunha expresión de cultura ou, se o prefire, do espírito. Un suspiro feito poema. (LC: 128-129)

These discussions that the Mother Superior and prisoner/prison doctor both loved are parallel to those that Herbal has with the dead artist who comes to talk with him, although the relationship between this man and the ghost is not in the same sort of egalitarian spirit as the relationship between Da Barca and the nun. The ghost teaches the guard, cajoles him, and sometimes gives him orders. In these teachings, Herbal learns about all sorts of things, the same sort of diverse themes to which he is exposed when he chats with prisoners such as Da Barca, or listens in on their conversations:

Pouco antes de morrer, dixo o pintor [...] pinteí esta mesma estampa, o que estamos a ver. Foi para a escenografía do *Canto Mariñán* da Coral da Ruada no Teatro Rosalía de Castro. / Gustaríame telo visto, dixo o garda con sentida cortesía. / Non era nada do outro mundo [...] O mar era a penumbra [...] Pintalo é imposible [...] Houbo un pintor, un inglés, Turner se chamaba, que o fixo moi ben [...]. (LC: 74)

In *No ventre do silencio*, we are given the most frequent and detailed examples of cosmopolitanism. Those living in Santiago de Compostela smoke Lucky Strikes, Pall Malls and Chesterfields (vs: 51, 105), dance to the sounds of the American swing jazz musician Glenn Miller and the Cuban ‘King of Mambo’ Dámaso Pérez Prado (vs: 134), and drink imported whiskey and vermouth. The characters read literature by the Hungarian Lajos Zilahy, the French Pierre de Ronsard, the Romanian Mircea Eliade, and Rainer Maria Rilke —the German-language writer born in Prague (vs: 116, 69). As well, they read the philosophers Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Teilhard de Chardin, and Søren Kierkegaard (vs: 119, 123, 61, 101, 103). They write in other languages, such as the secret poems that the student Narda Miguez (with the pen name Violenza Goterres) writes in French for the professor Maître Obscur (vs: 35, 133). They recite Shakesperean sonnets (vs: 145) and sing songs in other languages, whether these are Brazilian songs a *tuna* performs from door to door (vs: 155) or a Portuguese verse of farewell to the school year that the student Sarandeses sings, a song that his father ‘trouxera dunha das clásicas viaxes que outrora as tunas xiraban a Coimbra’ (vs: 116). The family of the student Leira Pazó, whose father was shot by the Falangists, would listen quietly to the radio: ‘para coller Londres, o Padre Olaso e Madariaga, a Radiodifusión Francesa, de novo Jorge Marín na BBC, Moscú, falando Pasionaria’ (vs: 47-48).¹² The intertextual references

*As voces interfirenses':
A Chronotopic Reading
of Two Novels*
Sharon R. Roseman

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The mention of this event helps place the novel in time, as this celebration was reinitiated in 1956.

14

The English is used in the novel.

15

From the city of Coimbra, Portugal.

16

The Italian is used in the original text.

17

See Labanyi (2002b: 2-8) on the popularity of foreign film and other examples of popular culture in mid-20th century Spain.

include those to popular film: 'cun ombro ao ar, como Charles Laughton a facer de senador romano' (vs: 148); or standing in the manner of Ingrid Bergman: 'ponse en pé sobre as súas pernas á Ingrid Bergman' (vs: 136; Acuña 2002: 275-276).

As described in other novels set in Santiago de Compostela including *No ano do cometa* by Xoán Bernárdez Vilar (1987), Suso de Toro's 2002 *Trece badaladas*, *Crime en Compostela* by Carlos Reigosa (1984), and *Unha noite con Carla* by Aníbal Malvar (1995), we learn of people from all over the world living in the city, along with those born and raised in Galicia (Acuña 2010: 70). People are almost always identified by where they are from. The student Santiago (or Santi) Amezaga is from Bilbao. There are Puerto Ricans playing a game of poker with others in a bar (vs: 171), a Polish architect named Pacewicz designing houses in Vigo (vs: 38). The novel demonstrates the senses of alterity as well as the companionship and conflict that occurred among these students, their professors, and others with whom they had regular contact. These conflicts include those between Galician nationalists and some anti-cosmopolitan 'estudantes forasteiros que non toleraban de modo ningún que se falase galego' (vs: 144).

We are also told about a form of fascist cosmopolitanism closely aligned with the dictatorship, the 'intelectuais falanxistas' of the university (vs: 151). We learn as well about the presence in Santiago of recently arrived 'refuxiados políticos que a Universidade, o Cabido ou os Colexios Maiores protexían', such as the German Carl Schmitt and 'o matrimonio Bousquet, que se facía perdoar a súa amizade con Drieu La Rochelle e a súa activa participación nas depuracións de intelectuais xudeus na Francia de Pétain facendo intervencións nas revistas orais do SEU sobre Paul Valéry, Andrei S. Popescu' (vs: 151).

Similarly, on the night of the literary competition Festas Minervais,¹³ one student assures another that he looks fine in his rented 'smoking':¹⁴ 'Mesmamente consegues un aspecto bohemio, estudantil, coimbricense,¹⁵ troiano, gratamente *controconvencional*' (vs: 105).¹⁶ However, alongside these students and writers, are others in attendance: 'A sociedade político-escolar estaba alí, disfrazada de grande mundo,' 'as xerarquías do Movemento Nacional reconvertidas en figuróns de super-producción musical de Hollywood,¹⁷ que os militares de alta graduación afectando nos seus traxes de etiqueta civís [...] poses leves de Fred Astaire' (vs: 105, 106).

Méndez Ferrín describes how the university classrooms spill over into the students' free time in the city, both criss-crossed with cosmopolitan references. Groups of students converged with artisans in a tavern where they enjoyed having 'contacto coa lingua cotiá,' entering into vigorous debates transferred over from their lectures. On one day, it was about whether 'Heidegger está actuando en tanto que líder e referencia da intelectualidade galeguista de hoxe' (vs: 122) and the topic of the censors stopping publication of texts of his that were translated into Castilian. Comesaña says that it is important to know whether 'debemos cualificar a filosofía de Heidegger como nazi ou non' (vs: 123). He goes on to state that Galician thinkers such as Ramón Piñeiro, who embraced aspects of this German philosophy, 'equivócanse: a dirección política e intelectual correcta sería a de J. P. Sartre, o existencialismo marxista. Comunismo práctico, digo, e con sitio nel para a subxectividade' (vs: 123).

We are also given a sense of the diversity in the ranks of society that supported the régime. In one vivid scene, the same priest and professor who had lectured on Heidegger holds forth in a bar on the

novela do futuro. O modelo é Faulkner. As voces interfírense, [...] os seres humanos son tan incompletos como na realidade [...] Os monólogos deben [...] [lanzar] o lector a un baleiro de liberdade, para que el constrúa a historia por si mesmo. Dicia Crego Frías. (vs: 115-116)

On one occasion, the cosmopolitan chronotope provides a way to communicate how such moments could lead to the collapsing of time and space in a dissociative way, as when the student Príncipe

Perdera as palabras, os nexos [...] Axiña o Café vai desaparecendo, desaparece. As falas, as luces [...] Daquela o tempo, de modo absolutamente impensado, volta funcionar [...] unha viaxe. A figura de Wells socialista. Un pub en Vigo Street, esquina con Regent Street [...] co ademán políglota das bandeiras. (vs: 101-102)¹⁸

18

The line 'c'o ademán políglota d'as bandeiras' is found in Manoel Antonio's poem 'Navy Bar' published in the collection *De catro a catro* (Manoel Antonio 1979: 50).

This last example is a powerful instance that juxtaposes well with the first chronotope. Similar to people's experiences of spiritual signs, the play with temporal-spatial boundaries in this urbane café uses the fantastic to challenge ideas of boundedness. However, unlike the symbols that appear as spiritual portents of death which take the form of imagery that has been a long-standing part of Galician vernacular culture, here we find symbols of Galicians' connection with multilingualism, with locations such as London, with international socialism, and a reference to the avant-garde poetry of Manoel Antonio. The second chronotope therefore also counters essentialist ideas of Galicia as a place that was mainly rural and somehow insulated from other parts of the world. Galician cities and villages alike have long been very much interconnected with the rest of the world —as a result of, among other things, rich histories of pilgrimage, the intellectual world of literature and higher education, migration, trade, tourism, and the arts (Hooper & Puga Moruxa 2011; Oca González 2013; Pereiro & Vilar 2008; Romero 2011; Roseman 2013, 2014).

Conclusion

Oriol Pi-Sunyer's pioneering work on the ethnography of authoritarian states reminded us that: 'It is very difficult today to evoke the atmosphere of those years because they have passed very rapidly into history' (Pi-Sunyer 1977: 180). This has a broad significance, and particularly in reference to people's retrospective and shifting consciousness of their own and their ancestors' life courses during periods of intense conflict and repression. Novelists face a similar dilemma. I follow others in arguing that their work should be a key resource informing our interpretations of material about the past gathered through the evoking and recording of oral testimonials, the study of biographical works, and of archival documentation (Alonso 1942; Bertrand de Muñoz 1987, 1996; Freixanes 1993; and Velasco Souto 1987 cited in Martínez-Risco Daviña 2004: 577).

This essay aims to demonstrate how a chronotopic approach to the analysis of fiction can further assist such research. In the novels discussed here, we see at play Pi-Sunyer's more recent prescription for 'memory research' to pursue, 'a concern for agency and the politics of place' (Pi-Sunyer 2006: 24; Roseman 1996). The chronotopes woven into these novels through representations of portents of death and cosmopolitanism

do just that. By introducing spiritual elements into their novels, the writers whose work is analyzed here insist on an important way, alongside social realism, of approaching many Galicians' historical consciousness of the Civil War of 1936-39 and the Franco dictatorship, a consciousness that included human and nonhuman protagonists. Their work disrupts dichotomous ways of categorizing experience, promoting an openness to all of the senses, to dreams, memories and the fantastic (Stoller 1992: 195-220). Relevant as well is Jo Labanyi's persuasive argument to approach 'the inventiveness of popular and mass culture' in Spain (Labanyi 2002b: 10, 12-13; also see Labanyi 2006). The emphasis in these novels on the details of the visceral multi-sensory traces of difficult experiences are a significant contribution to the ongoing 'genres-in-the-making' (Bakhtin 1981: 11) of contemporary Galician fiction and other communicative practices that shape the Galician public memory of the 20th century.

Fulfilling what I have termed 'ciudadanía patrimonial' (Roseman 2014: 21), Manuel Rivas employs 'folkloric' elements in his novel while not 'descending into folklorism' (Mouré 2002: 64; translation mine). So, too, does Méndez Ferrín. Their evocation of signs of death and the spirits of the dead place those who were killed during the war and afterward at the centre of memory. It adds to other important memory acts that inscribe the victims of the period by publishing the lists of the names of those who were imprisoned and killed, explaining when possible where they were from and what they did in life, thereby recording who they were and are connected to. In the chronotope constituted by the world of the dead and the spirits, those who were killed are transformed from members of categories into unsettled, unresigned, uneasy characters alongside those who in the novels' plot lines are still living. Talking about ghosts and the spiritual world of the *Santa Compañía* is a way of talking about the people who came before, not solely as victims of war and sometimes of state-authorized terror but also as individuals with agency, the key example being the artist who gave Herbal the carpenter's pencil. Thurston-Griswold argues that this character serves as 'una metáfora para la empatía humana' in Rivas's effective melding of 'lo real y lo fantástico' (Thurston-Griswold 2004: 9, 10; also see Labanyi 2000, 2002b).

Equally problematic is the use of dichotomous frameworks that would essentialize Galicia's 'folk' as having been comprised of populations that were somehow bounded in space and time, easy to dominate because they were not in contact with the myriad of influences that crossed the paths of other populations (Pereiro & Vilar 2008; also see Lass 1989). By introducing a chronotope of cosmopolitanism, these novels communicate the heteroglossia of a Galicia under Franco, one that included Nazis from Germany as well as Puerto Rican workers and students from the Basque Country. Through the use of fictional or fictionalized accounts, both of these prominent Galician authors are able to communicate a shared political message to their readers: we should not ignore the unsettled spirits of the dead. Nor should we ignore the social, cultural, linguistic, and political diversity that existed in the midst as well as in the face of repression. The two chronotopes that this essay identifies in these novels remind us, above all, that people's agency and the places which they continued to inhabit and transform through years of conflict are accessible not just through verbal language but also through the visual imagery and other sensory clues that make up people's memories.



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