

INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.
2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.
3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.
4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.
5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

Xerox University Microfilms

300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

74-20,352

DE MOLA, Sister Yolanda T., 1922-
CASTILLO-PUCHE AND THE THEME OF CONFLICT.

The City University of New York, Ph.D., 1974
Language and Literature, modern

University Microfilms, A XEROX Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan

© 1974

SISTER YOLANDA T. DE MOLA

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CASTILLO-PUCHE AND THE THEME OF CONFLICT

by

SISTER YOLANDA T. DE MOLA

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in Spanish in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University
of New York.

1974

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Spanish in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

March 7, 1974
date

Martin Nozick
Chairman of Examining Committee

March 7, 1974
date

Emilio González
Executive Officer

Professor Emilio González López

Professor Martin Nozick

Professor Ildefonso M. Gil
Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

PREFACE

At the present there exist three studies touching upon the fictional work of the Spanish post-war novelist, José Luis Castillo-Puche. The first, Los temas existenciales en la literatura española de postguerra by Gemma Roberts was a Columbia University doctoral dissertation (1968) and was published by Gredos in 1973. In one chapter Dr. Roberts discusses Castillo-Puche's novel, Con la muerte al hombro. The second study, Testimonio de la novela contemporánea is an unpublished doctoral dissertation by Thomas Oguiza of the University of Milwaukee (1968) and includes Castillo-Puche's fiction as part of the works of contemporary Spanish novelists. There is, finally, the recently completed thesis, Contribución al estudio del vocabulario español moderno según la obra de Castillo-Puche by Emilio González Grano de Oro which was defended at the Universidad Complutense of Madrid in May, 1973. Professor González, who teaches at the University of St. Catherine in Ontario, Canada, analyzes the author's vocabulary in all his writings, fiction and non-fiction.

The purpose of the present study is two-fold: first, to situate Castillo-Puche in the context of the post-war novel by exploring his life and influences as well as the literary trends of the years following the Spanish Civil War; secondly, and most important, to consider the theme of conflict in Castillo-Puche's fictional characters as

symptomatic of an anguished existentialist generation, for whom such conflict does not point either to any element of hope nor to any effort at finding solutions.

In the process of my research in preparation for this study, the author himself, as well as his wife, the former Julia Figueira, placed at my disposal their files of articles and book reviews collected over the years. More valuable, however, was the time each gave to answer questions on the life and work of the author as well as on the current state of the Spanish novel. All the opinions and observations expressed by the author himself in this work, therefore, were given during interviews in the summer of 1972 in Madrid, with the exception of those otherwise indicated in footnotes. The information and insights gained that summer together with an analytical reading of Castillo-Puche's fictional work as well as the conversations shared with the author during his four year stay in New York, together have resulted in collection of facts which, it is hoped, have been incorporated into this study in such a manner as to provide some understanding of the post-war Spanish novel and one of its more interesting exponents.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface.....	3
 <u>Chapter I: Introduction</u>	
I. Biography	
1. Yecla: the early years.....	7
2. The Civil War: disruption and death.....	10
3. Seminary: the secular decision.....	11
4. The Writer: journalism and the novel.....	14
II. Influences, literary and philosophical	
1. Spanish heritage: Yecla and the Generation of '98	
a. Gabriel Miró.....	19
b. Azorín.....	22
c. Pío Baroja.....	27
d. José Gutiérrez Solana.....	36
2. The foreign writers	
a. Seminary searchings.....	41
b. Ernest Hemingway.....	42
3. Castillo-Puche and Existentialism.....	48
4. Castillo-Puche and the Post-Civil War Novel.....	57
 <u>Chapter II: Conflicts of Vocation.....</u>	 69
I. The Catholic Novel.....	70
II. <u>Sin camino</u>	77
III. <u>Como ovejas al matadero</u>	88
 <u>Chapter III: Conflicts with External Forces.....</u>	 109
I. <u>Hicieron partes</u>	109
1. The heirs.....	115
2. Cosme.....	127
3. Epilogue.....	132
II. <u>Paralelo 40</u>	134

<u>Chapter IV: Conflicts within Characters</u>	150
I. <u>Con la muerte al hombro</u>	150
II. <u>El Vengador</u>	159
III. <u>Oro blanco</u>	168
<u>Chapter V: De dentro de la piel</u>	170
I. <u>El perro loco</u>	171
II. <u>Misión a Estambul</u>	176
III. Short Stories:	
1. Una mosca en Manhattan.....	178
2. ¡Con lo que cuesta criar un hijo!.....	181
3. Una historia en pedazos.....	183
4. El superviviente.....	184
5. Carta de Judas Iscariote.....	186
<u>Chapter VI: Conclusion</u>	189
<u>Bibliography</u>	
I. Primary Sources.....	195
II. Secondary Sources.....	197

CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY

Yecla: The Early Years

From the pinnacle of a nearby mountain, the site of a majestic and ancient basilica, one looks down on the sun-bleached Murcian town of Yecla with its well-kept cemetery and its rows of houses huddled together as though to protect one another from the incursions of the outside world. In its physical reality and in its role as literary symbol, Yecla is an archetypal place, nurturing an intransigent conservatism and a close-minded rigidity in the areas of social mores and religion. Writers and painters not native to Yecla, among them Azorín, José Gutiérrez Solana and Pío Baroja,¹ have grasped and utilized the town's singularly powerful ambiance. It is the quintessential Spanish town, a blend of Castile and Levant, veiled and resistant, with its silent streets, its black-clad women and its houses barricaded against sun and intrusion. Of Yecla, Antonio de Hoyos writes:

Es una de las ciudades más interesantes de la provincia y el pueblo más literario. Desde La

¹Only Arozín called Yecla by its actual name; Baroja fictionalized it as Yécora (Camino de perfección) and Castillo-Puche uses its original Latin name, Hécúla, in both Con la muerte al hombro and El Vengador.

Voluntad de Azorín hasta la novela Con la muerte al hombro de José Luis Castillo-Puche, la ciudad de la iglesia vieja sigue dando oportunidad a la narrativa novelística con altura e interés... Es una mezcla de ciudad castellana, abierta y severa, con rasgos de ciudad siglo XVIII. En el invierno y la primavera el viento sopla con una fuerza increíble, y cruzar alguna de sus calles es una aventura. El otoño es plácido... La vendimia tiene en Yecla el interés de las estampas antiguas; la llegada de la noche en las viñedas es un espectáculo de color suave, de rosas finas y de grises perlas en un cielo transparente. El verano es duro, ciega el sol y las casas se quedan de color de tierra. Las noches de agosto, azules, hondas y llenas de estrellas, suavizan la dureza de los días estivales.¹

His native town was to exert a permanent influence on Castillo-Puche. Not only would it remain, for him, the epitome of "La España Negra", but the personification of a force very nearly demonic. He writes:

A veces la sola palabra Yecla me trae a la conciencia y hasta a la cara como un fuerte manotazo del viento, un latigazo de aquel viento inclemente que más de una vez me hizo castañetear los dientes de pequeño y aún ahora, al acordarme, me entran ganas de cubrirme la cabeza con la manta, como en aquellas noches inmisericordes en que el alarido del viento me hacía temblar dentro de la cama.²

José Luis Castillo-Puche was born in Yecla on July 4, 1919. His father, Francisco Castillo-Puche, was a cabinet-maker; his mother, Conchita Martínez, was a second cousin to José Luis Martínez Ruiz (Azorín). Several children were

¹Antonio de Hoyos, Murcia: Pueblos y Paisajes (Murcia: Ediciones del Patronato de Cultura, 1956), p. 243.

²José Luis Castillo-Puche, "La Voluntad, Yecla y Azorín," Correo Literario, October 15, 1953, p. 9.

born to the pair, but only four - José Luis, a sister and two older brothers- were to survive infancy. The family was middle class, respected and well-educated. A notable early visitor to the Castillo-Puche home was the Levantine novelist, Gabriel Miró, whose books, eagerly read by the two elder brothers, were the subjects of discussions not forgotten by the younger boy.

The loss of his father when he was but four years of age seems to have given the impressionable boy the feeling that death and funerals in Yecla were events of far greater importance than weddings or other joyful events. To this day, he does not seem able to equate his native town with the lighter, happier hours he surely must have known at home, but rather with the somber, serious days of mourning, of strict religious observances and of rigid social mores.

In 1926 Castillo-Puche began his formal education at the boarding school in Yecla run by the Piaris Fathers. This was the very school described at length, and with passion, by Azorín in Confesiones de un pequeño filósofo. The older writer had, of course, preceded Castillo-Puche as a student for many years, but the same stern discipline and all-embracing authority that seemed to have bruised Azorín apparently still obtained. Nevertheless, the young José Luis experienced great pride in being educated in the same halls of learning as the much-respected Azorín.

These, then, were the elements that constituted Castillo-Puche's "formation": the introverted, rite-ridden

town, the death of his father, the excessive piety of his mother whose three brothers were priests and the boarding school with its pervasive religious influence. It was not surprising that by the time he was seventeen, Castillo-Puche had decided privately to pursue a priestly vocation. But his plans were necessarily deferred. The events that were to convulse all of Spain were at hand: it was 1936 and the youth, together with his entire family, was swept into the current of the Civil War.

2. The Civil War: disruption and death.

At the outbreak of the war the three brothers joined the armed forces and were stationed in Valencia. As was the case with so many participants, they were torn by doubts. Strongly religious men, they hated Communism. At the same time, they rejected the position supported and sustained by the fascist regimes abroad. Consequently, Castillo-Puche, choosing what he felt to be the lesser of two evils, espoused the Republican cause although in actual fact, and according to his own testimony, he spent no time in actual combat but in minor clerical duties. It was only when his two brothers were taken prisoners and mistreated that the war became for him a personal tragedy. The author asserts that through the intervention of their uncle, General José Puche, they were released and removed to a hospital. It was too late; both young men died after the war's end of ailments resulting from exposure and malnutrition.

These, in brief, were the war years for Castillo-Puche,

and clearly they left an indelible impression. The theme of death, as concept and fact, is an old and familiar one in Spanish thought and art, but never before, in all the peninsula's history, had so many experienced its violence first-hand. A striking number of Castillo-Puche's novels and short stories bear the marks of his three years' proximity to wholesale killing, and of the personal loss he sustained. Juan Alborg remarks that "Los recuerdos de la guerra son muy vivos en toda la producción de Castillo-Puche,"¹ but, Eugenio de Nora is more explicit, citing the war as one of the salient elements in Castillo-Puche's novelistic work,

... el recuerdo sangrante de las terribles enormidades de la guerra, que no retrocede ante lo espeluznante y lo macabro (mutilación del cadáver de un cura o bombardeo de Játiva en Con la muerte al hombro; detalles de los asesinatos en la familia de El Vengador, o represión subsiguiente, etc.); un sentimiento permanente y casi enfermizo de la muerte (que adquiere en todas estas novelas categoría de protagonista activo);...²

3. Seminary Years.

With the end of the war in 1939, Castillo-Puche, again free to pursue his own goals, entered the Jesuit-directed Pontifical Seminary at Comillas near Santander (since relocated in Madrid). As preparation for the priesthood, he plunged into philosophy, theology and metaphysics. The

¹Juan L. Alborg, Hora actual de la novela española (Madrid; Taurus, 1968), p. 320.

²Eugenio de Nora, La novela española contemporánea (Madrid; Gredos, 1970), (Vol. III), p. 161.

young seminarians were encouraged to aim at Jesuitical clarity in both written and oral expression: their mentors emphasized that a good sermon must be delivered with both force and persuasiveness. This emphasis on language was entirely congenial to Castillo-Puche, whose literary leanings were already strongly developed; but it also proved to be his undoing in terms of his sacerdotal vocation. Looking back on his seminary years, the author admits that it was writing and literary discussions that preempted his time and energies. His talents and predilections were contagious: he held literary tertulias and pointed out fresh literary directions to one Manuel González, an older student who is now Archbishop of Toledo and Cardinal Primate of Spain. Other seminary comrades with whom the author remains on intimate terms include José María Cirarda, now Bishop of Córdoba, Emilio Benavent, now Archbishop of Granada, and José Antonio del Val, presently Bishop of Santander. Castillo-Puche wryly remarks that had he stayed within inner Church circles, surely he would be a member of the episcopacy by now.

But in 1944, just one year before his scheduled ordination, he decided to withdraw from the seminary and to become a writer. It is important, however, to stress the fact that this decision had nothing whatsoever to do with the proverbial religious crisis: he experienced nothing of the kind. The seminary years, in retrospect, appear to have been happy and fruitful. Moreover, they were to provide

him with first-hand information for a trilogy, as well as one other novel,¹ all devoted to the theme of religious vocation. In them he examines the dilemma and ambivalence of the would-be priest who, lacking the authentic "call", cannot make the decision to quit his vocation, whether because of an inherent psychological flaw, or because of an external pressure of some kind. It is significant that in these fictionalized treatments, as in his own case, there is no problem of religious faith per se, but rather a crisis in vocational direction, as we shall see.

The seminary, by his own reckoning, concluded the third major formative phase in Castillo-Puche's development. "Impacts" is the word he uses (see below), and indeed each of the three phases had enduring psychic force: the "latigazo" of Yecla and his death-shrouded childhood; the religious adolescence that bore delayed fruits in his seminary studies; the security-shattering trauma of the Civil War. Writing of himself as novelist and of the forces that shaped him, he states:

Para mí la novela es un modo, un instrumento, el único que poseo, el único que manejo para ayudar a esclarecer el pavoroso misterio de la existencia. Tres impactos, creo yo, se pueden considerar en mi primera etapa de escritor: mi pueblo, o impacto de niñez; la vocación religiosa, o impacto de adolescencia; la guerra, o impacto de desencanto. Son cosas que uno lleva dentro y tiene que soltarlas o revienta.²

¹El Cíngulo: Como ovejas al matadero; Jeremías el Anarquista; (third title not decided at this writing); Sin camino, (Buenos Aires, Emecé, 1956).

²José Luis Castillo-Puche, "Conferencia", Panorama español contemporáneo (1954), a separata; no pages indicated.

Castillo-Puche was only twenty-five when he left the seminary and turned to the uncertainties of a secular literary career. He was young, but his novelistic course was set, and the themes, the "final questions" that inform all of his fiction had already been emphatically posed by his life.

The writer.: journalism and the novel

After leaving Comillas, Castillo-Puche returned for a time to Yecla, where renewed contact with the ambiance of his youth confirmed anew his literary aspirations. There, too, he would gather material for his first published novel, set in Yecla, Con la muerte al hombro. That the town had not altered in its various severities is indicated by the degree of outrage it experienced when the book was published in 1954: the yeclanos were violently antagonized by the portrayal of bleakness, intransigence, backwardness and obsession with death that, as depicted by Castillo-Puche, constituted their salient characteristics. He was virtually ostracized by his fellow-citizens, and was not to return for fourteen years. In any case, his last intimate family tie with Yecla was severed with the death of his mother in 1947.

Upon his return to Madrid, Castillo-Puche studied at the official School of Journalism, and, having already taken courses in philosophy at the University of Murcia, he studied further at the University of Madrid from which, according to his own testimony, he received his licenciatura. During those same years of the late forties and early

fifties, Castillo-Puche began working on a doctoral thesis which he never completed, entitled "La psicología de conversión," began to build up a reputation as a creative and perceptive journalist, and became interested in the art of the novel. In 1954 he married Julia Figueira who was at the time an assistant to Dámaso Alonso under whose direction she began but did not complete a dissertation on the subject of the Galician dialect. Three children, two girls and a boy were born of that union.

Con la muerte al hombro, published in 1954, won "El Premio Bellas Artes" in 1955 and was a runner-up with several others for the Premio Nadal in 1956¹; Sin camino, completed in 1947, was published in Argentina in 1956; El Vengador, published in 1956, was a final contender for the "Premio de la Crítica", while a fourth, Hicieron partes, received the "Laurel del Libro" for 1957 and in 1958, the "Premio Nacional de Literatura: Miguel de Cervantes."

The completion of these first four novels also marked the start of a new and fruitful phase of Castillo-Puche's life. As we shall see, his friendship with Hemingway gave impetus to a series of travels: in 1957 he spent several months on the European continent and in Africa. His reportage of the latter trip appeared as a series of articles in El Español. Then in 1958, at Hemingway's instigation, he was invited by the State Department to visit the United States

¹In December of 1972 Destino of Barcelona published a new edition of Con la muerte al hombro; the 1954 edition had been published by Almagro, Madrid.

and he combined the trip with sojourns to Cuba and South America. In the United States he lectured and conducted seminars at numerous major colleges and universities, among them Middlebury in Vermont and the Universities of Boston, Wisconsin, Washington, California and Stanford. From this first American visit emerged a set of anecdotal memoirs and factual accounts of his experiences on both continents, first published in the Madrid daily, Pueblo, and later compiled into a book entitled América de cabo a rabo.¹

For the next few years Castillo-Puche was hard at work on his longest novel Paralelo 40, published in 1963 and on his shortest, El perro loco which appeared in 1965. In 1967, together with his family, he returned to the States and took up residence in New York City as correspondent and United Nations observer for the Madrid daily, Informaciones. During the course of the ensuing four years, he again visited colleges and universities, giving lectures and holding seminars on a variety of Spanish literary topics, among them "El resurgimiento de la Picaresca," "La presencia de la mujer en la literatura española," "Intento de la novela católica en España," "Tendencia actual de los jóvenes novelistas españoles," and (this his most recurrent subject), "Evocación e influencia de Baroja en la novela actual."

Since 1946, in addition to his activities as novelist and writer of short stories, Castillo-Puche has been active as editor and journalist. A disciplined and prolific crafts-

¹América de cabo a rabo. Madrid: CID, 1959.

man, he was contributed regularly to the ABC of Madrid, and to the magazine Signo, the national review of the "Juventud de Acción Católica"; he has also been editor of El Español and editorial supervisor of another magazine, Mundo Hispánico. The most recent and absorbing of these labors have been as editor of the magazine Doctorama during the year 1972 and since December of that year until the present, of a similar review entitled Tauta. Subsidized by the pharmaceutical firms of Spain, Tauta, following in the tradition of Doctorama, is a bi-weekly publication containing articles on a wide variety of topics, social, literary, medical, philosophical and religious, and is intended primarily for doctors. Among the cover stories in the early issues of 1973 are such topics as ecology, socialized medicine, truth and fiction in famous personal memoirs, social security, demography and birth control. Beginning with the March 20, 1973 number, each issue has been monographic, focusing attention on a topic of current vital interest. As editor, Castillo-Puche announced the new thrust in the March fifth number:

Estamos en el número siete de nuestra revista y lo primero que tenemos que anunciar hoy es que las páginas y el ámbito de cada número comienzan a resultar estrechos para dar cabida y cauce a nuestros propósitos de hacer TAUTA no sólo la revista capaz de canalizar todas esas inquietudes, aficiones, problemáticas que, al margen del puro ejercicio clínico tanto afectan, preocupan y entusiasman a nuestros médicos, sino una clara vitrina para las repercusiones del entra-

mado medicina-sociedad que es el lema de nuestro título y el imperativo de nuestra tarea.¹

Since his return to Spain in 1971, Castillo-Puche has resumed residence in Madrid and is immersed in novel-writing and journalism.

The fact that this biographical outline is both brief and sketchy is by no means singular. Castillo-Puche, in his fiction, has written his own life, and continues to do so. We have already noted that for him the writing of novels is the unique, the necessary means of recounting, absorbing, distilling and expressing his own existence, his life and his reactions to life. More relevant than bare biographical data, then, would be a somewhat more extended examination of the literary and philosophical forces that constitute the second aspect of his full orientation and development.

INFLUENCES: Literary and philosophical.

It is a truism that most writers are "influenced" by their personal lives and circumstances; by their encounters with the external events of their particular time; by the intellectual, social and political climate of their epoch, whether it be unified or fragmented; and finally, depending on special predilections and personal affinities, by those writers a young author might prefer, as models and mentors.

In the case of Castillo-Puche, (although the bulk of his work is related to at least some trends to be observed

¹José Luis Castillo-Puche, "Editorial", Tauta: medicina y sociedad, VII (1973), 9.

in the post-war Spanish novel) no one was his single mentor and he belongs to no school. Yet, according to his own testimony, it would be a considerable oversight not to indicate those writers and attitudes which, together with the crucial events of his early environment, his heredity, and his history both personal and national, have molded his particular contour as novelist. Such a discussion must necessarily relate to the salient events of his life outlined earlier; and correspondingly, certain literary and philosophical currents warrant some examination at this juncture since they will serve as points of reference and departure for what follows.

1. The Spanish Heritage: Yecla and the Generation of '98

a. Gabriel Miró

Gabriel Miró (1879-1930), it will be remembered, appeared early on Castillo-Puche's boyhood scene as a visitor to the family home. In later years the younger writer, according to his own recollections, met Miró's daughter, Clemencia when he visited Orihuela, the small town near Yecla where the distinguished alicantino has spent his student years. From 1886 to 1891 Miró had been a boarding student at the School of Santo Domingo in Orihuela, a Moorish-looking town on the banks of the Segura, which he recalls in his Libro de Siguenza (1917) in the rich, sensuous style so warmly admired, but never imitated, by Castillo-Puche. Of Miró's character, Benito Varela writes: "un hombre reconcentrado, introvertido, melancólico,

afectuosamente bondadoso,"¹ of his artistry, he adds: "La percepción mironiana del paisaje levantino está determinado por dos elementos transformadores: la atmósfera y la paz."² A passage from the Libro de Sigüenza may underscore Miró's ability to the senses and to create that atmosphere of peace which is largely absent from most of the novelistic proce of Castillo-Puche:

Pasaba ya el tren por la llanada de la huerta de Orihuela. Se iban deslizado los cañamos altos, apretados, oscuros; los naranjos tupidos; las sendas entre ribazos verdes... los caminos angostos, y a lo lejos la carreta con su carga de verdura olorosa... las sierras rapadas que entran su costillaje de roca viva, yerma, hasta la húmeda blandura de los bancales...; una ermita con su cruz votiva, grande y negra...; humo azul de márgenes quemadas;... y, a la derecha, reposando en la sierra, obscuro, macizo, enorme, con su campanario cuadrado como un torreón, cuya cornisa descansa en las espaldas de unos hombrucitos monstruosos, sus gárgolas, sus buhardas y luceras, aparece el Colegio de Santo Domingo de los Padres Jesuitas.³

While Miró does not set a precedent for Castillo-Puche in his style, at least he does so in the subject matter touched upon in two of his novels of religious thesis, namely: Nuestro Padre San Daniel (1921) and its sequel, El obispo leproso (1926). Here, Miró engaged concretely in criticizing church dogma, specifically clerical celibacy, also a central theme, as we shall see, in two of Castillo-Puche's novels, Sin camino (1956) and Como ovejas al matadero

¹ Benito J. Varela. Renovación de la novela en el siglo xx. Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1967, p. 130.

² Ibid., p. 135.

³ Gabriel Miró, Obras completas. (Madrid: Biblioteca nueva, 1943.) p. 505.

(1971). Miró, however, remains somewhat detached from the conflicts and struggles of his characters; in this regard, Dendle points out: "... time passes... characters do not develop... they merely grow old."¹ In contrast, Castillo-Puche approached the issue as one who had grappled with it at first hand wither personally or through the experiences of companions in the seminary.

Although the landscape of Yecla and Orihuela are similar, Miró tends to humanize it in its fictional counterpart, Oleza in Nuestro Padre San Daniel, while Castillo-Puche's Yecla is depicted in more austere terms. It is in El obispo leproso that the stark Levantine landscape of Orihuela (Oleza) is presented as an extraordinary example of a provincial town with all its density of pain, misery and human passions played out against a background not unlike Castillo-Puche's Yecla. There is no doubt that Miró seemed very pleased to be rooted in this land; he said: "Hay que echar raíces en un rincón del mundo y desde allí irradiar hasta donde sea posible."² It is, then, with great affection that Miró has written of Orihuela while Castillo-Puche's evocations of his native Yecla are, as we shall see, tinged more with an aura of sadness and pity.

The "influence", therefore, of Miró is essentially one of nostalgia begotten of a common place of origin and of

¹Brian J. Dendle, The Spanish Novel of Religious Thesis (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1968), p. 142.

²Vicente Ramos, El mundo de Gabriel Miró. (Madrid: Gredos, 1964), p. 45.

childhood associations; in ABC, Castillo-Puche writes:

¿Cuánto tiempo ha durado esta visita a Orihuela? Ni se sabe... sólo se sabe que hemos tenido al lado a Gabriel Miró y que hemos pasado bajo escudos famosos, bajo fachadas renacentistas, bajo un calvario cristiano, en esta Orihuela, reencarnada para Miró en Oleza.¹

There are those, then, who have admired the human warmth, the exquisite tenderness, and the masterful metaphors so characteristic of Miró's style even as literary critics in general, have not been kind to him owing, perhaps, to a kind of mental myopia that failed to discern his psychological insights and his verbal skill. In his book on Azorín, José Alfonso compares his subject's style with that of Miró praising the metaphors of the latter: "en El obispo leproso dice Miró de uno de sus personajes que 'se ordeñaba la barba'"² Further on, Alfonso adds: "(Miró) nos descubre la cumbre rota del monte Panach y termina: 'Por allí pasaba toda la gloria y todo el cansancio del firmamento.'"³

Azorín

As was the case with Miró, José Martínez Ruiz (Azorín) became a part of Castillo-Puche's literary heritage through both geographical and personal ties. Azorín's father had been a Yeclano related to Castillo-Puche's mother while the

¹José Luis Castillo-Puche, "La Palmera, el río y las abejas," ABC, May 13, 1961. n.p.

²José Alfonso, Azorín: en torno a su vida y a su obra (Barcelona: Editorial Aedos, 1958), p. 149.

³Alfonso, p. 151.

elder writer himself was, like Miró, an alicantino and had attended the same Piarist school in Yecla that was to receive Castillo-Puche as a seven-year old student many years later. Yecla, as we know from Azorín's La Voluntad and Confesiones de un pequeño filósofo made a powerful but ambivalent impression on him as it did on Castillo-Puche; its somber, almost obsessive religiosity both repelled and attracted him. On the one hand, Azorín observes: "Era un pueblo triste; la vida no era grata, y no era posible ser optimista;"¹ and in the same context, he adds: "Yo amo a Yecla, a este pueblo de labriegos que tienen la fe de los antiguos místicos."² His remarkable descriptions of the ambiente yeclano give further evidence of the enormous impact that the place exerted on him and, later, on Castillo-Puche. In the fourteenth chapter of Confesiones we read:

'Yecla - ha dicho un novelista - es un pueblo terrible.' Sí que lo es; en este pueblo se ha formado mi espíritu. Las calles son anchas, de casas sórdidas o viejos caserones destartados; parte del poblado se asienta en la falda de un monte yermo; parte se explaya en una pequeña vega, que hace más horrible la inmensa mancha gris, esmaltada con grises olivos, de la llanura sembradiza... En la ciudad hay diez o doce iglesias; las campanas tocan a todas horas; pasan labriegos con capas pardas, van y vienen devotas con mantillas negras... Y esta tristeza, a través de siglos y siglos, en un pueblo pobre, en que los inviernos son crueles, en que apenas se come, en que las casas son desabrigadas, ha ido formando como un sedimento milenario, como un recio ambiente de

¹José Luis Castillo-Puche, "La Voluntad, Yecla y Azorín," Correo Literario, octubre 15, 1953, p. 4.

²Ibid. p. 5.

dolor, de resignación de mudo e impasible renunciamiento a las luchas vibrantes de la vida.¹

This was the town that would form the setting for the first two novels that Castillo-Puche was to publish in Spain.

Like Miró, Azorín manifests sensitivity of style in his prose while, at the same time, eschewing the metaphors and adjectives so characteristic of Miró, and replacing the latter's tenderness with a typical terseness. Verbal condensation and synthesis are the cornerstones of Azorín's writing and are traits which Castillo-Puche admired but did not emulate in his novels which tend to be, in general, verbose and repetitious. It is only in his journalistic essays that one occasionally catches a glimpse of the master's polished and succinct phrasing.

Beyond the area of style and subject matter, the influence of Azorín remained ongoing and personal since 1944 when Castillo-Puche, having left Comillas, came to Madrid. From that time until Azorín's death, the latter according to Castillo-Puche's own testimony, liked to refer to the younger writer as "mi Puche", an allusion to the character in La Voluntad to whom he had given the name. Azorín had in his early years worked as a journalist whose numerous articles had appeared in such periodicals as Revista nueva, Juventud, El Globo, El Imparcial and ABC among others. This pursuit he had in common with Castillo-Puche whose articles

¹Azorín, Confesiones de un pequeño filósofo, OBRAS, Tomo II, (Madrid: Aguilar, 1947), p. 54.

have appeared in a continuous stream in newspapers and magazines for the past twenty-five years.

The autobiographical element is evident to a marked degree in the novels of both writers. In his study of the novels of Azorín, Martínez Cachero observes:

Lo autobiográfico suple en el cuerpo de las novelas de Azorín el vacío por la falta o suma atenuación del elemento 'fantasía' y, por otra parte, confiere a los libros así constituídos un acusado carácter de personales epopeyas del autor, las cuales sería posible denominar 'epopeyas.'¹

Through the mouth of his famous character, Antonio Azorín, the author comments on a variety of topics just as in Confesiones de un pequeño filósofo he relives his school days in Yecla. And today, although Castillo-Puche insists that he does not consciously seek to present autobiographical details in his novels, he admits that, since he writes largely from experience, that much more of himself is revealed than he intends.²

A final element of resemblance between both writers centers around an awareness of death, a theme suggested most probably by life in Yecla, a provincial town of which Azorín observes in Confesiones: "... pueblos opacos y sórdidos donde el constante estribillo de que 'siempre es tarde' se convierte luego en la idea fundamental de mi vida."³

¹José María Martínez Cachero, Las novelas de Azorín (Madrid: Insula, 1960), p. 288.

²Interview with Castillo-Puche in Jávea, Spain, August 12, 1972.

³OBRAS, II, p. 82.

The corollary, of course, of this "time" with which Azorín is obsessed is the awareness of death's imminence.

Azorín died on March 5, 1967 - the last of the great men of letters of '98; the following day, the newspaper La Mañana of Lérida, carried the following tribute by Castillo-Puche:

Creo que hoy es un día de luto para todos los escritores españoles y para mí en mayor medida puesto que yo me he sentado en el mismo pupitre escolar de Azorín y desde allí he visto los olmos, las tierras y el paisaje que él vió de niño y es el paisaje mío, de mi obra. Fue por vía de la sangre casi, puesto que no puedo olvidar que algunos personajes suyos llevan mi apellido. A mí no solamente se ha muerto un maestro; se me ha muerto un familiar. Azorín puso azogue en mi sangre y me ha hecho escritor, viajero y novelista de mi tierra.

Clearly, then, Castillo-Puche felt that the example and inspiration of a shared heritage and common early environment had fanned an adolescent literary ambition into flame.

The question, moreover, of influence, attitudes and continuity that exists between Castillo-Puche and his two Levantine forerunners must be seen in the perspective of time. The anguish felt by the Generation of '98 because of the almost mortal wounds their country received in the wake of the Spanish American War have a parallel in the post-Civil War generation of which Castillo-Puche is a member. The literary men of both post-war periods dreamed of a Spain that might one day recapture some of its past glory. The first generation sought solutions by searching into the former artistic worlds of an El Greco or Cervantes while the later generation sought in their tortured existential present the

solution to a more stable and fulfilling future. Each from its own perspective of time has left its literary heritage to the twentieth century.

Pío Baroja

Of all the writers of the Generation of '98, none has exerted a more direct and tangible influence on Castillo-Puche (and, indeed, on most novelists of this century) than Pío Baroja. The impact of Miró and Azorín is real but oblique; Baroja approached the role of model, for he was Castillo-Puche's favorite 20th century novelist. There are numerous ways, indeed, in which both writers are more alike than different, as we shall indicate.

Just as Azorín revealed something of his early thinking through the protagonist of La Voluntad and Castillo-Puche recalls his seminary days in Sin camino, so does Baroja philosophize and criticize through the doctor, Basterreche in El cura de Monleón and another physician, Hurtado, in El árbol de la ciencia. Furthermore, the priest in the first novel has a sort of diary that serves to convey the author's views on religion from a socio-historical and ethical standpoint. Baroja had practiced medicine and a greater authenticity attends his descriptions of medical school and of medical problems in provincial towns, but, as Professor Patt has indicated in her study on Baroja, since he was so indifferent to all organized religion, he was incapable of imagining the agonies of incredulity inflicted on the truly religious and so "the dark night of the soul is as alien to

the author as a sustained period of exhilarating exuberance."¹ The comments, therefore, of his medical characters have a sincere ring while those of the clerics do not.

Baroja and Castillo-Puche approach the subject of religion from very divergent standpoints: the first, an agnostic, manifests disdain for a Christianity which fails to foster brotherhood and peace and, while expressing admiration for the lower clergy, has no use for the hierarchy; the latter, an avowed Catholic, respects sincere religious fervor and dedication while deploring, as we shall see, mere external observance disassociated from interior sincerity. The subject of religion was one that often came up between Baroja and Castillo-Puche. Interviewed in 1957, the latter recalls:

He discutido muchas veces con él sobre temas religiosos y trascendentales y por lo mismo que alabo su cortesía tengo que recriminarle aquella vasca tozudez de buey que no quiere pasar el puente; sin embargo, creo que a Baroja le faltaron ejemplos católicos, los que se encontró delante fueron o muy teóricos o muy pillos y casi nunca el afecto leal de diálogo que necesitaba.²

And thus, when both writers bring their religious convictions into their fictional creations, they do so from varying frames of reference. In El cura de Monleón (1936) the priest, Javier Orlarán, is a very real Basque and a lover of all things Basque: the countryside, the customs, the spirit distinctive of his people. Brilliant in his studies and

¹ Beatrice Patt, Pío Baroja (New York: Twayne Publ., 1971) p. 152.

²V. Marrero, "Un novelista: José Luis Castillo-Puche," Punta Europa (1957), Vol. XVIII, p. 151

strongly nationalistic, Orlarán is weak in his faith and when, because of his opposition to the liberal socialists who he has actively opposed, he is exiled to Álava, he suffers a religious crisis exacerbated by the marriage of his sister to the divorced socialist Doctor Basterreche. In his exile, the priest spends his time reading and meditating and ultimately relinquishes the priesthood. The priests and seminarians of Castillo-Puche's Como ovejas 'al matadero (1971) suffer crises that are more solidly based on religious convictions than in the crisis of the curate of Monleón. Obviously, this fact stems from the familiarity that Castillo-Puche has had with the subject both while in Comillas and through his relationship with former classmates, now priests.

In his excellent study of the narrative art of Pío Baroja, Professor Emilio González, underscores the existential aspects of his novels as manifested in the trilogies: "... las trilogías constituyen su aportación más original a la novela española contemporánea... en sus últimas trilogías, compuestas en el período de entreguerras (muestra) la nueva forma de novela-reportaje que señala un nuevo paso en la evolución del arte narrativo español hacia una estética existencial."¹ It is precisely in those elements characteristic of the existential novel that Castillo-Puche has taken his cue from his venerable friend and mentor: the tortured,

¹Emilio González López, El arte narrativo de Pío Baroja: las trilogías (New York: Las Américas, 1971), p. 20.

restless protagonist, a bitter, pessimistic view of past and present a radical individualism, continual conflict between the individual and society, preoccupation with death, a sense of the meaninglessness of life and the agonies of religious doubts. Let us consider each of these briefly in the novels of both men.

The protagonist of El árbol de la ciencia, Andrés Hurtado, is typical of the uneasy, anguished existential figure, never rooted to a place, never at peace within himself or with others, unfulfilled neither by God nor man. His negative views of life and his neurotic fears ineluctably lead to only one end, death by his own hand. Another medical student of whom Baroja wrote much earlier in his career and one who exhibits rootlessness and disquietude of soul and body is Fernando Ossorio of Camino de perfección (1902). There are critics who consider this Baroja's best novel while they consider Hurtado his best drawn, most realistic protagonist. In 1899 Baroja had become familiar with the philosophy of Nietzsche which depressed him considerably; three years later he created Ossorio who, from medical student, became artist and hysterical degenerate, although at the end of Camino Baroja, apparently not won over by nihilism, restores a certain vigor and integrity to his formerly tortured character. A suitable parallel between Baroja's two characters here mentioned may be made with Castillo-Puche's anguished protagonist, Julio, of Con la muerte al hombro and with Enrique of Sin camino; the first,

like Hurtado, dies as an indirect result of his morbid fears if not exactly by his own hand and the latter only succeeds in integrating his own personality by withdrawing from the seminary, the place where he was always at conflict with himself and his temptations.

Although there are moments of light, lyricism and humor to relieve the blackness of human existence in Baroja, nevertheless for him life is not any great pleasure but merely a sad and tiresome necessity. A similar spirit of futility permeates a great portion of the work of Castillo-Puche whose protagonists, notably the four bewildered seminarians of Como ovejas al matadero, are totally absorbed in the implications of that existential present moment of their priestly ordination and the crushing responsibilities they are about to assume. In their rugged individualism, they distrust the help of their companions; in their distrust of self, they cannot even turn to Divine assistance. Similarly in Baroja, Hurtado rejects the consolation of God and man when his wife and child die, and he despairs. The existential hero, then, is totally caught up with the present moment and only occasionally by a proximate past. Even Baroja, though he wrote historical novels, was no great lover of history but was concerned instead with settings from the recent past for the background of most of his novels.

The existential man, moreover, views society, the state, the Church as so many monstrous creations of men which in a very real sense threaten his liberty and his notion of

himself as an alienated, closed-off microcosm happy to live within himself and to suffice for himself. Hence, Baroja distrusted political institutions and organized religion; his individualism is existentialist and metaphysical but not political. The protagonist of Castillo-Puche's Con la muerte al hombro flees the society of his native Yecla with all its time-honored institutions and its eagerness to encroach upon his life. In closing in upon himself, he nurtures his paranoid tendencies and finally makes a futile attempt to kill the doctor whom he imagines is disdainful of him. Baroja, for his part, betrays through the character of Arcelu in El mundo es así (1912) his disgust at the callousness and indifference that lie at the root of human relationships. It is no wonder that a feeling of vacuity overwhelms the protagonist who has given up on God, on society and, at the end, on himself; for him only death remains as the ultimate absurdity. And so, Hurtado dies by his own hand; Julio is killed while fleeing in despair and the most tortured seminarian of Como ovejas al matadero has gone completely mad by the end of his ordination day and is taken away to a mental institution. Finally, then, death is a constant theme of the existentialist novelist, but death viewed gloomily and pessimistically as the ridiculous close to an equally absurd existence.

From the viewpoint of style, Castillo-Puche's prose is imitative of Baroja's in its spontaneity, sincerity and lack of elegance. One can likewise perceive a restless, abrupt,

almost jerky pace in both writers, although, in frequent passages, that of the younger novelist is slowed up by a tendency to over-explain rather than imply, whereas Baroja sets a more rapid pace. Both, however, possess descriptive power and their humor, which is infrequent, is grim and satiric. Neither is inclined to take up the cudgels of a reformer and so their novels are not principally novels of social criticism nor primarily of religious thesis. Their style, in fact, is profoundly personal and both intellectually and sentimentally subjective. It is not difficult to trace passages of pure lyricism in either writer, but it is, to find too much order and harmony in their uneven, careless prose. Yet great energy exudes from the pen of each.

In one case, both Baroja and Castillo-Puche wrote on the same subject; the former devoted an entire series of novels based on the alleged memoirs of one of his distant relatives, Eugenio Aviraneta, an adventurer who participated in the War of Independence and in the subsequent Carlist Wars. The reading of this series of novels, Memorias de un hombre de acción, aroused Castillo-Puche's interest in the protagonist, and he wrote his own version in Memorias íntimas de Aviraneta. But his approach is quite different from Baroja's and in his prologue to Castillo-Puche's book, Gregorio Marañón writes:

Castillo-Puche tiene quizá razón al decir que Baroja ha sido absorbido por su héroe; e incorporándolo a sí mismo, sin darse cuenta, le ha

mixtificado.¹

Yet, according to Castillo-Puche, Baroja would not have taken umbrage had he lived to read what he would have regarded as controversial treatment of his subject; for Baroja had great respect for the opinions of others, no matter how sharply they differed from his own. This gracious tolerance, so at variance with the crusty, irascible pseudo-image commonly held of Baroja, was stressed by Castillo-Puche in one of his lectures. He stated:

Reconozco a don Pío como el primero de mis maestros en novela y estoy en todo de acuerdo con esta frase suya: 'en novela los personajes se inventan, los ambientes se copian de la realidad'... Muerto don Pío, tenía la apariencia de lo que en realidad era: un hombre humilde, sencillo, pacífico.²

During March of 1973, the writer of this study was given a tape recording of an interview which two of her students had just had with Castillo-Puche at his home in Madrid, and, while the questions put to the author were all answered thoughtfully and sincerely, there was an unmistakable enthusiasm and warmth in his voice when he spoke of Baroja. He seems most grateful to the older writer as he recounts the help he received in the publication of his first novel, Sin camino.³ Discouraged by the negative reaction of

¹José Luis Castillo-Puche, Memorias de Aviraneta o manual del conspirador, (Madrid: Biblioteca nueva, 1952), p. xviii.

²Conferencia de José Luis Castillo-Puche en Buenos Aires, 1957: Revista de Asociación Patriótica Española, XXVIII, no. 287, p. 11.

³Sin camino was written in the late forties but was refused publication in Spain which is why Con la muerte al hombro, written later, was published first (1954).

the censors, Castillo-Puche demurred in the writing of his next novel, Con la muerte al hombro, but Baroja knew the importance of encouraging a young writer and felt that just as Pérez de Ayala had had to recount the story of his education by the Jesuits, so also Castillo-Puche needed to tell his story of Comillas, and later, of the Civil War. Baroja seemed to foresee that some day Sin camino would see the light of day, whether in Spain or out of it; in the meantime he would ask Castillo-Puche to retell an isolated episode which fascinated him, saying, "Vuelve a contármelo otra vez." Those days of close communication are recalled by Castillo-Puche in a most compelling manner:

Yo recuerdo que las cosas más graciosas que han sucedido en mi vida, han sido en mi vida literaria al lado de Baroja; han sucedido por discusiones y discrepancias con Baroja porque yo era un atrevido, un insolente, pero lleno de honradez y de sinceridad y él entendió que yo era un tipo vital, cosa que él no era; que yo era un hombre lleno de aventura, cosa que él no era; que yo era un hombre ávido de experiencias de todo sentido; hombre de viajes y de fuga, de idas y venidas, de un mundo que para él parecía atractivo, fascinante... El me tenía a mí como un bicho raro, un hombre joven, insensato, que se complicaba la vida yéndose a este lado o al otro...

Me gustaba visitar a Baroja en las horas solitarias cuando estaba solo y descubrí no el Baroja del impropio y del sarcasmo sino el hombre no seguro de sí mismo, no conforme con nada, insatisfecho, pero un hombre que producía muchas carcajadas pero que daba también pena y lástima. Entonces yo creo que él sabía que yo le era fiel y leal y que siempre que venía de mis viajes iba a verlo. Me dedicaba sus libros con una devoción que creo no es corriente, aparte de que él era muy poco ceremonioso... Yo tuve, pues, una lección humana en don Pío, que era un gran hombre... un hombre de un gran talento y de una visión de águila... Sabía los

que venían a adularle...¹

Finally, the town of Yecla, so persistent a link between Castillo-Puche and his literary forebears, figured in the Barojian context as well. It became the Yécora of Camino de perfección, symbolizing the "vía purgativa," as for Azorín it had been the summation of Spain's ills and the austerity of its mores.

José Gutiérrez Solana

The peculiar fascination exerted by Castillo-Puche's birthplace on artists and writers keenly interested in the essence of Spain was not lost on another figure: José Gutiérrez Solana, a lone and intensely Iberian writer who, like his friends Azorín and Baroja, was a wanderer over the Spanish earth, a vivid essayist in addition to being a painter. Like Baroja, Solana was totally and uncompromisingly committed to reality: "hay que pintar todo, sin engaños." But his "España negra" is not that of Azorín or Baroja; it has another dimension, one that has given rise to various and opposing interpretations, and is vividly described by Ramón Gómez de la Serna:

Solana, borracho de la realidad no ha dejado de ver el camaranchón de su pueblo, acusado de realidad - como si eso no fuese responder al mandamiento de Dios -, fruto de realidad. Por eso los que suplantán y sobredoran la realidad no quieren pasar por esta lección apretada y cruda de Solana... Solana ve las cosas con tan implacable realidad que aterroriza, como aterroriza la vida en esos días en que la vemos sin vaguedad.²

¹Taped interview, March, 1973.

²Ramón Gómez de la Serna, "Palabras sobre Solana." Solana, Obra Literaria (Madrid: Taurus, 1961), p. 13.

Both his paintings of Yecla, and his writings, depicted the town in its unidealized reality. Solana felt and betrayed through his work his own constant awareness of death, and Juan Ramón Jiménez salutes his "poderosa podredumbre estética, de extrañas perspectivas comprobables."¹ Gómez de la Serna, again referring to Solana's "reality," interprets it as seen in the light of death itself, and says: "Se mueve con una visión apasionada y dramática, como alucinado por un trasluz entrevisto, la realidad de este mundo desde un más allá sombrío." (italica mine).

Solana's work is generally characterized as distorted, macabre; these same charges have been levelled against Castillo-Puche as we shall see. It is therefore relevant to a study of the latter, heir in part to many of Solana's fundamental preoccupations, to note two significant statements made about Solana. When Camilo José Cela was admitted to the Real Academia on May 26, 1957, his discourse was on "La obra literaria del pintor Solana," the substance of which became the introduction to Solana's collected writings published four years later. In the section entitled "Aquel espejo caminante," Cela discusses the nature of Solana's realism as follows:

Toda la obra de Solana podría adscribirse a uno u otro realismo: el inquietante o el misterioso. ... Es evidente que nuestro autor deja muy atrás lo que se venía entendiendo por reflejo de lo natural o por reflejo de lo real. Hay todo un mundo por encima y por debajo de lo natural y de lo real que es también natural - puesto que

¹Ibid., Jiménez, "Retrato lírico," p. 10.

en él no hay artificio - y real - ya que no existe. Puestos a afinar declararíamos, sin reserva alguna, que identificamos lo real con lo natural, es más: que llamamos natural - o real - a todo lo que desde lo subreal llega hasta lo sobrenatural. Inmerso en esa realidad - inquietante y misteriosa realidad- está el mundo literario de Solana, ese mundo que se posa ante sus ojos, lo taladre y lo adivine.¹

Later on, developing a highly imaginative construct regarding "el triple mundo" of Solana's characters, themes and backgrounds, Cela remarks: "Imaginemos la trayectoria de Solana - como realmente fue - caminando a contrapelo, sinestrorsum, en inverso sentido al de las agujas del reloj."² Hence the term sinestrismo, subsequently used to refer to the peculiar vision of an artist whose "actitud fue jamás caminadora por la senda florida e incierta de lo bello. Lo bello, como lo cómodo, fueron dos posturas ante la vida que Solana, más preocupado por lo cierto - aunque lo cierto fuera, como de hecho suele venir a ser, doloroso e inhóspito -, rechazó."³

On this occasion of Cela's admission to the Real Academia, we are informed, Gregorio Marañón challenged Cela's own (alleged) tremendismo as "un gesto artificioso, superficial y casi siempre insincero, hecho de deliberada batahola para impresionar a los demás,"⁴ an appraisal shared by Castillo-

¹ Introduction by Camilo José Cela to Solana, Obras Literarias (Madrid: Taurus, 1961), p. 47.

² Ibid. p. 28.

³ Ibid. p. 25.

⁴ These words of Gregorio Marañón together with Cela's discourse upon admission to the Real Academia are contained in a booklet a copy of which was given to Castillo-Puche.

Puche (see below). Marañón's disparagement on this occasion is particularly interesting in view of what he has written about Solana:

Siempre me ha parecido... que la vena profunda de la pintura de Solana es la religiosidad... De los museos se suele salir con la impresión de que la tierra está poblada de santos gloriosos... La otra verdad terrible, la que quisiéramos olvidar, surge sólo de cuando en cuando. Case todos los que se atreven a recordarla, acaso sin darse cuenta de lo que se hace, son españoles.¹ (*italics mine*)

This saving, mitigating grace of compassion, essentially religious in Solana, is emphasized also by Gómez de la Serna: "Es el ángel de lo destartalado... Tiene esa condición angélica cubierta por su palurdismo y su barbarie - que a la legua se ve con disfraces."² These insights were important to Castillo-Puche in clarifying his own orientation: opposed to Cela's tremendismo, he claims the sinestrismo associated with Gutiérrez Solana, is closely akin to his own aesthetic. Castillo-Puche associates sinestrismo with the esperpento of Valle-Inclán, as well; clearly (and quite correctly, one feels) Castillo-Puche embraces both these special distortions as part of his Spanish heritage and, to the extent that he espouses them, he reaffirms the lineage that links him to "los del '98":

El sinestrismo es más una actitud filosófica de profundo pesimismo que puede rastrearse durante toda la Edad Media, aún entre los autores modernos. Contra lo que dice Marañón se puede encon-

¹Manuél Sánchez Camargo, Solana, Vida y Pintura (Madrid: Aldus, S.A. de Artes Gráficas, 1945), p. 24.

²Gómez de la Serna, "Palabras sobre Solana," p. 16.

trar en Goya y hasta en Baroja, pero principalmente en Solana. El sinestrismo no es solamente esa visión unilateral de lo siniestro, macabro y feo, sino que puede ser la denuncia o la intencionalidad hecha sarcasmo y figura grotesca.

El sinestrismo se relaciona con el esperpento. La crítica hecha caricatura y deformación de la realidad, también puede ser sinestrismo. El sinestrismo va a la esencia y tiene intención moralizante y reformadora; establece el contraste interior, su vacío, su nulidad, su aspiración de belleza, de bondad incluso. Por su intención reformadora, se detiene en la violencia del cuadro como presentación siniestra de una situación siniestra, un ambiente, una sicología. Pretende destacar el desequilibrio existente en el mundo, lo absurdo, lo injusto, lo feo de la existencia y ese algo podrido que hay en cualquier situación que pueda parecer hermosa. Es una actitud filosófica y moral que presupone cierta búsqueda con visión purgativa y perfectiva.

De la descripción de lo macabro el hombre puede sacar consecuencias ideales y morales. Es como una careta para presentar la realidad en el límite justo de lo humano. El espectro descubre la anormalidad de las cosas pero, de hecho, es una estética vital que permite ir de lo feo, macabro y horroroso hacia orbes más elevados.

If Castillo-Puche, then, came by his literary métier in part through the influence of his Levantine predecessors, Miró and Azorín, and if Baroja served as model for his concept of the novel as such, it was the essayist-painter Solana who perhaps more than anyone suggested to Castillo-Puche a special cast of realism, a philosophical aesthetic, that he was (at least as he saw it) to incorporate into his own work.

¹Castillo-Puche made these notes for me during the summer of 1972 but he seems to be in error in part: Marañón, as is clearly shown in the quotation cited on the previous page, was entirely aware of Solana's traditional orientation and of its frame of reference.

2. The Foreign Writers.

a. Seminary searchings

Castillo-Puche's seminary years constituted a period of intense literary exploration combined with equally intense self-searching. His reading, although inevitably within some sort of religious context, was wide and, although largely Catholic, genuinely catholic as well. We have, of course, only his own testimony in this area, and he tends not to quote chapter and verse in discussing where he found formative forces and congenial inspiration. An early favorite was the great English convert to the Roman church, Cardinal Newman; not surprisingly, he found other English converts equally attractive: Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene and G. K. Chesterton. But he seems to have turned even more eagerly to French writers of the period. He was an avid reader of André Gide, of Bernanos, especially of the latter's Journal d'un curé de campagne, Paul Claudel and Jacques Maritain. Julien Green's spiritual autobiography, his Journal was particularly appealing to Castillo-Puche; he would later emulate it through a different genre, namely the novel in Sin camino, Paralelo 40 and short stories like El Perro loco that reflect in great part his own personal experiences. Another French-man Jean-Paul Sartre, and the Danish philosopher, Sören Kierkegaard, were to exert powerful influences as well, but they are best considered in the discussion of existentialism that appears later. A lone American, Thomas Merton, belongs among these seminary

readings, for his The Seven-Storey Mountain, translated into nearly every modern tongue, entranced the young seminarian. Like Julien Green's work, it was a spiritual odyssey, a pattern that would remain a constant in Castillo-Puche's work, however novelistically disguised. Never comfortable with the English tongue, Castillo-Puche read works of that language in either their Spanish or French versions.

b. Ernest Hemingway

With the exception, perhaps, of Pío Baroja, the author whose influence, personal and literary, was to affect Castillo-Puche most directly and forcibly was the American, Ernest Hemingway. In fact, the two men knew each other for only seven years; their friendship was abruptly terminated by Hemingway's death in 1961. Yet their common interests and attitudes transcended the brevity of their actual years of contact.

This singular relationship was based on a deep affinity of interests and responses, despite obvious differences in culture and background. It was initiated by the American writer who, in 1954, clearly experienced Melville's "shock of recognition" when he read Castillo-Puche's first published novel. When as a journalist for Informaciones, the Spaniard arrived for an interview with Hemingway in his suite at the Palace Hotel in Madrid, found him immersed in a book. "¿Se puede saber lo que está leyendo?" queried the reporter. Hemingway replied, "Un amigo taurino me ha regalado esta novela y ya llevo leídas este montón de páginas de un

tirón. No sabía yo que se escribiera en España con esta fuerza y esta espontaneidad."¹ The book was Con la muerte al hombro and Hemingway became its self-appointed publicist, praising it fervently in Paris, New York and Havana. But it was not until three years later, in 1957, when Castillo-Puche's Hicieron partes appeared, that a genuine intimacy developed between the two writers. Hemingway, who himself had just been awarded the Nobel Prize, again commented enthusiastically on the new novel and said to its author, "Desde ahora vamos a tratarnos de tú."²

It was Hemingway's influence and recommendations that were directly responsible for Castillo-Puche's voyages abroad, and for his first visits to Cuba and the United States. Their actual contact was renewed whenever Hemingway was in Spain, where he shared many more active and dramatic pastimes with his young colleague: hunting, boxing matches, and above all, the corridos. The quotations that follow, (as with the preceding), all drawn from Castillo-Puche's own introduction to the book he would write about his friend, illustrate how many-faceted was the relationship. On the simplest level, he recalls, "Siempre que llegaba a España me llamaba y juntos hicimos viajes y salidas inolvidables."³ But Castillo-Puche was to know Hemingway in deeply complex ways as well:

¹ José Luis Castillo-Puche, Hemingway, entre la vida y la muerte (Barcelona: Destino, 1970), p. 12.

² Ibid. p. 12.

³ Hemingway, entre la vida y la muerte, p. 13

... y en momentos de debilidad, rabia o simplemente humor, tuve la suerte y la pena de escucharle tal y como era, tal y como no era fácil conocerle desde el abismo de su carcajada.¹

It would seem that Hemingway, in his own contradictory and enigmatic personality, exemplified a precept he often reiterate as a major tenet of his literary canon: a literary creation should be based on the familiar iceberg image. An exposed one-seventh must serve to show what lies beneath the surface: "La solidez y la firmeza deben estar debajo," he would tell his Spanish friend.

But of prime concern here is the deepest stratum of the relationship, described above as a close affinity, Castillo-Puche writes:

Creo que hubo también algo más: una afinidad casi biológica, un acorde temperamental, ciertas coincidencias de espíritu nos dieron aquel clima de amistad en que muchas veces no hacía falta hablar para sabernos compenetrados... Caprichoso e intuitivo como era Ernesto, lo que abonó el terreno de nuestra amistad fue la sugestión que le produjo el título de mi primera novela.²

For Hemingway, who courted death constantly, the fascination exerted by Castillo-Puche's Con la muerte al hombro is readily understood (starting, as the Spanish writer has just pointed out, with the title itself, reminiscent of Hemingway's own Death in the Afternoon). If many facets of the protagonist, Julio, and of his vacillations "entre la vida y la muerte" are drawn directly from Castillo-Puche's own shattering encounters with death, both as the inevitable

¹Hemingway, entre la vida y la muerte, p. 14

²Hemingway, entre la vida y la muerte, p. 15. (Castillo-Puche refers here to his first published work.)

mortality to be experienced by everyone and as a violent intrusion, they also bear an uncanny resemblance to the entire psycho-physiognomy of Hemingway himself. Yet, at the time he wrote his book, Castillo-Puche knew nothing of Hemingway, having neither met the man nor read his novels.

Hemingway, of course, knew the Civil War at first hand, having visited the front lines in his capacity as journalist: death during the Civil War was the dramatic focus of The Sun Also Rises. Moreover, Castillo-Puche tells us that Hemingway was obsessed, as well, by the suicide of his own father, and was convinced that one day, he too must terminate his own life when he felt it had run its appropriate course. And such a death was the subject of conversation between both men whenever Hemingway visited Spain. One day during his years in New York, Castillo-Puche told the writer of this study that there was never any doubt in his mind that the American novelist would indeed carry out his determination to die by his own hand.

Thus, the news of Hemingway's death served less as a shock than as a tragic confirmation of much that the Spanish writer knew of his friend, and he immediately began working on the notes and memoirs that would eventually become Hemingway, entre la vida y la muerte, published in Spain nine years later.¹ The very title selected by Castillo-Puche for this biography of his friend refers us unmistakable

¹At this writing, we are informed that Doubleday will publish an English translation of this biography in early 1974.

and conspicuously back to Con la muerte al hombro, the novel that brought the two men together originally. The essence of their compenetración, to use Castillo-Puche's almost visceral term, was an instinctively shared attitude as to the relationship between life and death - a theme that must reappear many times in this study. Like Castillo-Puche, Hemingway believed that a full and constant consciousness of one's own mortality, far from indicating morbidity or pessimism, is the only reasonable and realistic attitude, in contrast with the folly of modern man who, finding the idea of death both menacing and intolerable, resorts to every conceivable subterfuge rather than confront its inevitability and omnipresence, American; one reverts immediately to the comment made by Marañón, cited above in reference to Solana, to the effect that those who do fully face "la verdad terrible" are usually Spaniards.

Hemingway himself assumed an almost casual posture towards death; he had had the unusual experience of reading his own "false-alarm" obituary on no fewer than three occasions: once when he was on an African safari; again after he had set sail, alone and into turbulent seas, on his yacht, the Pilar, and, earlier, during his front-line exposure during the Spanish Civil War. Constantly wooing death, yet defying it, he never ignored it, and if anywhere there persists a literary, artistic and philosophical tradition of such awareness and acceptance surely it is in Spain. For all his flamboyant Americanism in his choice of

themes and in the qualities of his style, Hemingway found himself oddly at one with the deepest of Spanish mainstreams.

Yet another powerful and ambiguous affinity bound the two writers, one apparently at odds with their more superficial characteristics. The writing of both men is characterized by vigor of expression - Hemingway's, terse and staccato; Castillo-Puche's perhaps more blunt, even ponderous. But a closer reading reveals a strong vein of gentleness and tenderness, a vulnerability that bespeaks a concealed insecurity about which, in Hemingway's case, much has been written and speculated. And both writers were drawn to the similar blend and contrast of realism and acute pathos in the painting of Francisco Goya; Castillo-Puche tells us that Hemingway never passed a morning in Madrid (if one may believe him!) without visiting the Goya room in the Prado.

Finally, each was a passionate admirer of Pío Baroja, whose influence on Castillo-Puche was discussed above. On October 9, 1956, shortly before Baroja's death, Hemingway was introduced to don Pío by Castillo-Puche. The American, who had just been awarded the Nobel Prize for his The Old Man and the Sea, told the dying Baroja that it was he who should have received the award. He went on to say that, had Baroja been less insular, had he traveled more extensively and made himself better-known internationally, the honor (which according to Hemingway, was awarded arbitrarily and often won as a matter of luck), would have been his. After

Baroja's death, Hemingway, according to Castillo-Puche was invited to serve as honorary pallbearer, but he declined stating that so great a privilege ought to be reserved for Spaniards only.

Hemingway and Baroja, then, emerge as Castillo-Puche's two literary models and precursors; the critic Gonzalo Sobejano states:

Es indudable que Castillo-Puche ha aprendido mucho de Baroja y de Hemingway, sus amigos y maestros. La exasperación de sus criaturas, enloquecidas y vaciadas de dirección por la sacudida de la guerra, tiene mucho en común con la que muestran tantas figuras creadas por el novelista norteamericano.¹

The quality of the conflicts experienced by Castillo-Puche's protagonists must also be seen, as we shall now attempt to show, in the light of his powerful existentialist orientation within the framework of the fracturing and bewildering after-effects of the Spanish Civil War.

Castillo-Puche and Existentialism

It can, of course, be argued that all novels, of whatever period, are "philosophical," for they are set within the context of a particular life-view. The fact remains that it is a far cry from the dilemmas of Jane Austen's private, intrapersonality involved protagonists or even the socio-psychological sagas of Pérez Galdós to the far more ambiguous and intellectualized conflicts that prevail in the

¹Gonzalo Sobejano, Novela española de nuestro tiempo (Madrid: Prensa española, 1970), p. 125.

novel of the twentieth century from the thirties on. Much of the major fiction of this period is primarily philosophical in its fundamental orientation, as Julián Marías affirms:

Si se quiere hablar... de filosofía, hay que hablar de literatura; y, a la inversa, si se quiere hablar en serio de las novelas se tropieza con la filosofía.¹

If any philosophical movement can be singled out as a basic component of Castillo-Puche's work (a component fully consonant with his religious orthodoxy), it is Existentialism. At least four of his novels convey the sense of alienation, anguish, frustration and pessimism typical of the existential novel: Sin camino, Con la muerte al hombro, El vengador and Como ovejas al matadero. We recall that the seminarian Castillo-Puche claims to have read both Sartre and Kierkegaard with interest; the latter, he maintains, most shaped his thought. The author makes frequent mention of a small handbook on Existentialism intended primarily for the lay reader, Historia del Existencialismo by Jean Wahl, a book which to this day he keeps close at hand in his study in Madrid for ready reference. There are, of course, as many different interpretations of the philosophy of existence as there are exponents of the same, but all of them seek a realignment of perspectives upon the basic issues: religious experience freed from intellectual proof, of immortality, of the Incarnation and of the self. All forms of existen-

¹Julián Marías, "La novela como método de conocimiento," (Revista de Occidente), en OBRAS, Vol. V, p. 481.

tialism, furthermore, try to explain the critical experience of doubting, which is characterized in many ways but it is in every case the reaction to a loss of certainty. Sartre, who epitomizes the non-theologically oriented dilemma of "To act or not to act," and, if so, why, creates characters whose agonies are typically placed against a backdrop of intellectualized dialectic, with politics, particularly of the Marxist-oriented variety, viewed as a substitute for religion. But, as has been noted, it is with the Christian Existentialism of a Sören Kierkegaard that Castillo-Puche finds common ground, and this on two points.

First, the novelist includes to a view of life that never loses sight of death - the más allá. Stated briefly, the Kierkegaardian view sets forth the proposition that as existence is finite, as we are destined to die, it is useless to profess hope and confidence in life per se. Such reasoning appears to run counter to contemporary post-conciliar theology which encourages man to celebrate life and rediscover the virtue of hope, but it does bring man to consider the reality of his mortality; the foreknowledge of death uniquely defines the self, as distinguished from the other, if only because one's death is a uniquely individual experience. "No one can die my death nor can I die anyone else's," writes Frederick Hoffman.¹ As a uniquely personal experience, the expectation of death qualifies and

¹Frederick Hoffman, The Mortal No: Death and the Modern Imagination (Princeton: University Press, 1964), p. 430.

differentiates each self, and remains a continual challenge to it, to make of its life what it can. This is the major "essence" to which all existentialism must refer: I exist, that is, in the sense that I am a being that will sometime cease to exist. Both the Danish philosopher and existential writers, such as Castillo-Puche, therefore, see death, as terminus, to be an insufferable fact, a fact, indeed, that even the pious priest of Unamuno's San Manuel Bueno, Mártir (1933) finds overwhelming. It likewise absorbs the consciousness of many of Castillo-Puche's characters, as we shall see.

In the second place, life viewed in the light of death does not mean life without choice. Existentialism cannot be confused with determinism. At every turn man is confronted with a profusion of possibilities and the consequent necessity of choice. How does the individual respond to these possibilities, and, more importantly, on what bases does he make his choices each step of the way? Not certainly, in terms of Sartre's analytical dialectics and ideational abstractions, and this brings us an added point of coincidence with the Danish theologian: Kierkegaard accords a role of prime importance to the subjective elements in the human personality. Intensity of feeling becomes an actual factor in choice-making, and Kierkegaard insists on anguish as a means towards the revelation of the possible. If this appears paradoxical or obscure, it is nonetheless pertinent, even central, to an understanding of Castillo-Puche's

treatment of conflict: the peculiarly 20th century perception of anxiety or angst, as "a psychological state requiring no external misfortune but an anxiety caused by man's freedom"¹ introduces the possibility of a special kind of internal conflict in which the metaphysical is inextricably intertwined with the psychological. Without reference to this omnipresent existentialist premise, at once so strong a current of his time and, simultaneously, so consistent with his Christian orientation, it is impossible to enter into an informed consideration of the problem of conflict as experienced by Castillo-Puche's protagonist.

The reality of the Civil War which, in one way or another, touches the lives of some of Castillo-Puche's characters, such as Julio of Con la muerte al hombro and Luis of El Vengador, make the existential themes of pessimism and death natural concomitants of their daily existence. They preclude, moreover, the ability of these men to make the "leap of faith" which Kierkegaard regards as essential to a final resolution of doubt. Caught up with imminent death, on the one hand (Julio) and the need to avenge death, on the other (Luis), they cannot reconcile their temporal existence with the eternal. And yet, each of the self's moments of existence must involve both its temporality and a transcending eternity which resides within it. This is a vision of the progress of self from doubt to a renewal of

¹Hilda C. Graef, Modern Gloom and Christian Hope (Chicago: H. Regnery, 1959), p. 8.

religious certainty. The failure to reach out for such a certainty results in man's inability to bring unity and meaning to his life and to ascertain just what the essence of that life consists of. Indeed, all existential thinkers, however disparate their postures, refuse to detain themselves solving just one department of life, but address themselves to essence. Camus and Sartre, for example, while they were friends and had much in common (even after Camus broke Sartre in his political orientation) refuse to detain themselves, as Pollmann tells us, with partial aspects of life: society, religion, action, nature etc., but rather tries to seek the essence of existence itself and "the basic solution for the problems of this existence."¹

If the pessimism of the Castillo-Puche novel owes much to his existential leanings, it is not unique among the novelists of the epoch: Indeed, writers endeavoring to find new motivation for their literary pursuits after the war, found that the added frustrations of censorship, political pressure and the impossibility within the peninsula to deal openly with certain themes, served to augment their basic negative feelings. Hence a new realism was born, as the

¹Leo Pollmann, Sartre und Camus: Literatur der Existenz (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1967), p. 111. re. Camus and Sartre he writes: "es verbietet sie etwas noch Tieferes, das sie zu geistigen Geschwistern, freilich ungleichen, werden lasst: ein gewisser radikaler Ansatz an dem, was dem Menschen des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts Existenz ist, der Versuch, sich nicht bei Teilaspekten (Gesellschaft, Religion, Aktion, Natur, Familie und was immer es sei) aufzuhalten, sondern das Wesen der Existenz selbst anzugehen und eine grundsatzliche Losung fur die Probleme dieser Existenz zu suchen."

critic, Ponce de León observes: "Terminada la guerra, y después de unos años de pasmo, la novela renace en España bajo el signo de realismo, al extremo opuesto de los novelistas del período 1920-1936."¹ The new kind of realism was not to be photographic as in Fernán Caballero, nor in the naturalist fashion of a Pardo Bazán, nor even with the psychological dimensions of Lazarillo de Tormes, but one that may most accurately be termed "neo-realism" which consists of a pessimism typical of the existentialist. It is almost a distortion of life for, as Joseph Lenz explains: "Todo aparece sin esperanzas, problemático, inhóspito; no se ve más que vacío, soledad, abandono y desamparo ...las vivencias se repiten en sentimientos de tedio, de melancolía, de desesperación."² Such is the obsessive literature that Castillo-Puche offers us both through the evasive anguish of the protagonist of Sin camino as through the apparent magnanimity of the hero of El vengador.

One difference between the neo-realism here described and tremendismo as seen in La familia de Pascual Duarte is that the latter contains humorous elements, even if it be black humor, whereas one cannot find much humor in the fiction of Castillo-Puche. He seems, rather, to submerge his characters in a world of unmitigated anguish tinged by the bitterness found in some of the writers of the Generation

¹J. L. Ponce de León, La novela española de la guerra civil (Madrid: Insula, 1971), p. 37.

²Joseph Lenz, El moderno existencialismo alemán y francés (Madrid: Gredos, 1955), p. 31.

of '98 notably Baroja. The extremes to which such anguish can go may be perceived in the latest novel by Castillo-Puche, Como ovejas al matadero. There is not here the externally repulsive, almost clinical detail of a Pascual Duarte, but instead, what may be more disturbing, a certain internal tremendismo which is how one may categorize the extreme emotional reactions of the protagonist-seminarian. It is our opinion that his sentiments are depicted in a manner every bit as grotesque and bizarre as the overt behavior of the primitive Duarte. Julian Palley aptly sums up this type of character: "We have the vision of man standing on the edge of nothingness which, along with his absolute freedom of choice, produces in him anguish."¹

In the same manner, therefore, as romanticism perhaps best describes the world of the nineteenth century, and the enlightenment that of the eighteenth, so our age, particularly in Germany, France and Spain, may be said to be characterized to a greater or lesser degree by those preoccupations born of existentialist modes of thought. Among these preoccupations are those which Sobejano lists as "situación, desesperación, nada, libertad, opción, responsabilidad, angustia, 'el otro'"² In Spain, following in the wake of the Barojian vision, and more exactly after the

¹Julian Palley, "Existentialist Trends in the Modern Spanish Novel," Hispania, vol. XLIV, #1, (1961), p. 22

²Gonzalo Sobejano, Novela española de nuestro tiempo (Madrid: Madrid, 1970), p. 22.

Civil War, art and literature became impregnated with the aimless, senseless, directionless nada of the existentialist. Perhaps no writer anticipated more perfectly the obsessive, anguished novel than Miguel de Unamuno whom some consider the first existentialist novelist and his Abel Sánchez (1917) the first existential novel of Spain. Writers in this tradition reflect the attitude of men who sense the gravity of a situation and the weakness of the character within that situation. The character, moreover, seems not to exist since the decisive factor is the situation which is what dictates solutions. Modern man seems rarely free of some psychological trauma that tends either to form or deform him, and the novelist is free to provide symbolic expression to that trauma transforming its effects to the fictitious character.

So recurrent are certain themes of existentialism in the novels and short stories of Castillo-Puche that, in closing this section, it would be well to sum up these common motifs or focal point of contact as listed so succinctly by Julian Palley in his article previously cited: 1. Existence precedes essence: the existentialist refuses to describe the world in abstract terms, but instead described man's situation in the world; man, who makes his own essence, day by day; living it; 2. Despair: caused by the struggle between reason and life; 3. Nothingness: the nada; 4. Freedom: man is free and must create his own future by crossing nothingness; 5. Choice: because man is free, he must

choose continually; 6. Responsibility; 7. Anguish; 8. Absurdity; man is at times the victim of irrational forces; 9. The other: according to Sartre, the presence of the other disturbs our world, endangers the unity we feel, and threatens to absorb our consciousness or freedom in his, that is, to make of us an object. We shall observe below how the novels of Castillo-Puche make contact, through their characters, plots and development with these signposts of existentialism.

IV. Castillo-Puche and the Post-Civil War Novel.

Although the country had only recently emerged from civil conflict, the first two novels to create a literary stir in Spain: Cela's La familia de Pascual Duarte and Carmen Laforet's Nada did not directly deal with the war theme. Ignacio Soldevila-Durante points out that "entre 1939 y 1941 siguen apareciendo mediocres novelas de escritores de segundo orden y espontáneos inspirados - si podemos abusar el término - en el tema de la guerra civil... Es prácticamente imposible hallar novelas que traten el tema de la guerra entre 1942 y 1950."¹ Gironella's widely diffused novel, Los cipreses creen en Dios appeared in 1953, loosing a wave of novels dealing with the Civil War. There had been, of course, a war literature between 1942 and 1950 published outside of Spain: Arturo Barea wrote La forja de un rebelde, first published in London in the early 1940's and in Buenos

¹ Ignacio Soldevila-Durante, "La novela española actual," Revista Hispánica Moderna, enero-abril, (1967), xxxiii, p. 98.

Aires in 1951: Max Aub's Campo cerrado (1943) and his Campos de sangre (1945) were both published in Mexico as was Masip's Diario de Hamlet García (1944). These may be considered the war literature of exile for, when a war novel did achieve Spanish publication (Cipreses), it had to be, "de marcada inspiración nacionalista."¹

If one can categorize the classic war novel as one that deals principally with the combatant and only secondarily with the spectator, then El vengador in which Castillo-Puche's protagonist has been a combatant may be said to fall into that category. But with this author as with Goytisolo, Matute, and a host of others, there is a tendency to interiorize the war experience. It is not the field of battle, not the burning political issues of the times, that concern them as much as the anxieties of living through uncertain days and, most especially, the emptiness of the aftermath. To Castillo-Puche and others who were young and impressionable at the time, the subject became, and perhaps may always remain, an obsession. Soldevila-Durante confirms this view: "Sin temor a exagerar se puede afirmar que en la novela española actual, por alusión, sombra o ilusión, la guerra civil está siempre presente."² Only Gironella with his trilogy, especially Un millón de muertos, deals directly with the actual combat, but others allude constantly to the war,

¹ Ignacio Soldevila-Durante, "La novela española actual," Revista Hispánica Moderna, enero-abril, (1967), xxxiii. p. 96.

² Soldevila-Durante, p. 108.

however obliquely, not in an effort to forget it, which they never could, but rather to deliver themselves of the pent-up feelings they may still experience concerning that period of their lives.

The post-war novelists to which we have thus far alluded are associated with Castillo-Puche by the fact that, like him, they were born between 1910 and 1925 and, considered by some critics as the post-war generation, they began publishing during the first few years following the war. Just as the Generation of '98 tended to dwell upon the disaster of the Spanish-American War and its effect on Spain, so too did this new generation of post-war writers explore the meaning of the conflict with all its social and psychological ramifications. They exhibit a sincere restlessness and healthy vitality, qualities which may compensate somewhat for what may be termed (with few exceptions) immaturity both in technique and ideological concepts. Castillo-Puche shares these weaknesses with them in the two novels that refer to the war (and in the short story, El perro loco) even though most observers think of him as a writer concerned more with writing about priests, seminarians and Yecla than about war. Yet he shares with his contemporaries a human concern and an awareness of injustice that impart to his work a strong sense of realism of a newer thrust. A recent study of this period¹ lists Cela, Delibes,

¹Guillermo & Hernández, Novelística de los sesenta (New York: Eliseo Torres (1971), p. 15.

Laforet, García Pavón, Castillo-Puche, Agustí and Gironella as outstanding members of a generation whose realism is described in such arbitrary terms as "realismo crítico", "realismo pueblerino", "realismo social," and "neorrealismo." Each phrase suggests a unique vantage point from which one may consider the post-war novels as they were written by three groups: firstly, the men personally involved in the war and able to give first-hand testimony of their participation; secondly, the writers who were children at the time but who experiences the deprivations and fears of those crucial years; thirdly, those whose general emphasis is less autobiographical but who wish to reflect upon and explain how and why it all could have happened.

Since only when viewed from a distance both of time and of space does an event gain true perspective, it is not surprising that the writers who were geographically farthest from Spain were the first to make use of the war theme. In Mexico Manuel Benavides published Los nuevos profetas (1942), a novel fraught with a sense of deep pain. The following year the first of a cycle of six novels by Max Aub appeared in Mexico under the general title of El laberinto mágico. Clearly reflecting the influence of Joyce and of Galdós, (and almost unknown in the península), they form a sort of episodios nacionales of the Spanish Civil War. And taking his cue from Baroja and the latter's love for trilogies, Arturo Barea published in Buenos Aires in 1944 the first novel of his very autobiographical trilogy, La forja de un

rebelde. Initially it appeared in English even though the author had written the novels in Spanish but in 1951 the Spanish version was published. Ambitious in scope, it became a best-seller in many countries, presenting as it does, a panoramic view of the years of pleasant bourgeois existence in Madrid during the author's boyhood (La forja); then the years of the wars in Morocco, a prelude to the conflict in the peninsula (La ruta); finally, the years between 1935 and the war's end (La llama). Two more trilogies followed close upon Barea's novels, one in Mexico and one in Spain: the former by Virgilio Botella Pastor is called Porque callaron las campanas (1953), and the latter, published the same year and destined to gain immense popularity both at home and abroad, is the initial and voluminous first part of José María Gironella's trilogy, Los cipreses creen en Dios. Written in a nineteenth century style and without any effort at innovation, it focuses on the lives of one family and the few people whose lives touch theirs as they reflect in capsule-like form the sum total of all the fears, tensions and ambiguities of all Spaniards before the war, and later: of the war years in Un millón de muertos and the years following in Ha estallado la paz. The human interest engendered by the re-appearance of the same family throughout, in the tradition of Galsworthy's Forsyte Saga, is probably one of the causes of its great popularity. Gironella plans to continue his story of the Alvear family in ensuing novels until the present regime will have ended.

Preoccupied as they must have been with the recent dismal past and its somber effects on the present, the post-war novelists focused on the war theme as a sort of catharsis, yet it was not the only subject that claimed their attention. An ambiance of pessimism, nevertheless, appears quite consistently in the novelists of this epoch, as for example, in the 1951 novel by Ildefonso Manuel Gil, La moneda en el suelo wherein the ill-fated protagonist suffers one misfortune after the other. The seeming inability of these novelists to view life once again in more rosy hues, is partly explained by this author when he speaks of his novel: "No es una novela de la guerra civil pero... no hubiese podido ser escrita sin los trágicos sucesos que comenzaron en 1936."¹ The war, therefore, serves as a backdrop, for most of the novels of this period and certainly plays a central role in the fiction of José Luis Castillo-Puche. This is particularly true in the case of the writers who lived their most impressionable years in a land at war. Their protagonist are generally children through whom they relive their unforgettable memories. The first to win national recognition with the Premio Nadal in 1944 was Carmen Laforet for her novel Nada, based on her own adolescent years in Barcelona shortly after the war. Juan Goytisolo in his novel so reminiscent of Lord of the Flies, Duelo en el paraíso (1955) portrays the inhumanity of war through its nefarious effects

¹Rafael Bosch, La novela española del siglo XX. New York: Las Américas, (1970), p. 136.

on children whom it can arouse to such a degree of barbarism that they kill one of their peers. Ana María Matute in Primera memoria (1960) recalls, with her customary use of sensorial images and rich adjectival structure, her girlhood in Mallorca during the war when both she and her protagonist were fourteen years old. Most of the characters are described in terms of evil and corruption, indeed, even the island itself is viewed from the same perspective at times. The novel moves along at different levels: local political intrigues, far-away events from the war-torn peninsula, the island children imitating their elders' tensions and, finally, the interior thoughts and struggles of the young adolescents. In a continuation of this novel, Los soldados lloran de noche (1964), Ana María Matute studies in an indirect manner an imprisoned leftist agitator through the words and actions of two women, his wife and his sister, while the protagonist himself never appears. The use made of the dimensions of time and space is quite ingenious.

We have discussed some of the novels dealing with the lives of Spaniards during the war that have been written by novelists within and without the peninsula, but there are some fictional works by Spaniards that tell us about those of their compatriots living in exile. Among these are La luna de los perros (1962) of Ramón Sender whose bohemian protagonist lives in France and Hemos perdido el sol (1964) by Angel María de Lera about an emigrant living in Germany. The former novel reminds one of Camus' L'étranger; the

latter evokes the loneliness of exile.

The alienation characteristic of modern times likewise typified the atmosphere in which the post-war novelists found themselves. This separateness from one another militated against their sharing insights that might have mitigated their confusion; thus, when they came to write, their themes lacked transcendence. The very titles of their novels betray their sense of emptiness, of frustration and of search: Nada, El laberinto negro, El camino, La Colmena, La isla y los demonios, Esta oscura desbandada, La noria, Sin camino, El hombre solo, La raíz rota, Este tiempo amargo, and No sé. One gets the feeling that these writers have lost sight of their goal because of the pain of the journey. And in such a situation imagination can run wild: the depressing events and morose protagonist in Con la muerte al hombro, for example, seem exaggerated and overdrawn, as we shall see later. Perhaps the reason why these novelists cannot find answers is that they are not asking the right questions. As Sobejano suggest, "Han preguntado el '¿por qué y el '¿cómo?' pero no el '¿para qué?'"¹ And in the same context he adds very perceptively, "Ir el hombre hacia sí mismo no es una orientación sino un encierro."

The post-war novelista (with the exception of Delibes, Goytisolo, and Cela) are not very innovative in their technique. Although their chapters, usually untitled, are divided into fragments and although they employ italics or

¹Sobejano, p. 210.

lengthy parentheses to indicate a change of time element, generally the novels tend to fit into traditional molds. Their settings vary very little: a prison cell, a hospital or convent, a café or tavern, a simple room of a poor dwelling or provincial home. Often spatial limitations form an inherent part of the theme itself and become, at times, the imagination of a character under great stress as, for example, Mrs. Caldwell, the sick in the pavillion of Pabellón de reposo and the island of Marta Camino of La isla y los demonios. There is likewise a tendency to reduce the time of the action to a few hours, a single day or a few days: Como ovejas al matadero of Castillo-Puche takes place in a few hours; so do Duelo en el paraíso (although the flashback is expertly utilized here), Cinco horas con Mario, and El camino.

The narration, generally in the first person, makes frequent, use of the interior monologue, especially when the protagonist-narrator is, at least in part, the author himself as in Nada, Con la muerte al hombro, El Vengador, and two of lena Quiroga: La Enferma and Escribo tu nombre. And in accordance with the stress placed on individual anguish and indecision, the novels highlight a single individual around whom all the action gravitates and who, in turn, intimately influences the reactions of all who surround him; La Colmena with its collective protagonist is the sole exception.

Stylistically, and in comparison with the anti-bellum novels, the language of the post-war novelists is more

functional than artistic, except perhaps in the case of two novels by Miguel Delibes, Cinco horas con Mario and Las ratas and one by Cela, La Catira, which are models of perfectly executed dialogues, colloquial and natural. This general absence of stylistic polish has resulted in excesses of crudeness in some cases, from the obvious indelicacies of Pascual Duarte to the more recent Tiempo de silencio (1962), although it can logically be alleged that more "genteel" terms would not be appropriate in describing scenes of human degradation, shame and despair.

Sociologists of the past decade might be pleased with the social thrust made by younger members of the post-war generation. Ignacio Aldecoa, for example, betrays a marked degree of human empathy and a gift for linguistic control in his novels of social preoccupation such as Con el viento solano (1956) and Gran Sol (1957). Other social novels present reality in a very concentrated form with an authentic artistic vision, and rather than revert to classic realism, they prefer a selective reality. Witness of this emphasis is El Jarama (1956) of Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio in which the use of the popular idiom is faithfully employed throughout. Fragments of ordinary, every day life, imperceptibly betraying social criticism, are also to be found in Carmen Martín Gaité's short novel, El balneario (1954). A more sarcastic view of reality is given in the celebrated novel of the late José Martín Santos, Tiempo de Silencio (1962). Since the action of the novel takes place in 1945,

it may be said to reflect an historic and sociological view of the Spain of the time, specifically of some persons living in the outskirts of Madrid. The complex style, with psychopathological and incoherent interior monologues as well as the sense of alienation felt throughout, seem to derive directly from Joyce and Faulkner.

To sum up, almost all of the post-war novels are in a sense situational, but more precisely they present extreme situations in which existential thinking is expressed with the maximum of tensions, whether the stress be a sense of emptiness, of boredom or of nausea as in Nada, La Colmena or La Noria or guilt, suffering and combat as in Pascual Duarte and El Vengador. Above all, it is the subject of death that prevails in many post-war novels: characters feel an urgency to kill as in Duelo en el Paraíso, are tempted by suicide as in Nada or are threatened by extinction through delirium or madness as in Hicieron partes. Situations, to deadening boredom or to become hopelessly lost within themselves as they are haunted by the past or troubled by the present. The word death appears explicitly in several titles, as in El barco de la muerte (1945) of Juan Antonio Zunzunegui, Con la muerte al hombro (1954) of Castillo-Puche, Los hijos muertos (1957) of Ana María Matute, Muertes de perro (1959) of Francisco Ayala and Un millón de muertos (1961) of Gironella; it is suggested symbolically by means of the cypress tree as in La sombra del ciprés es alargada (1947) of Delibes and Los cipreses creen en Dios (1953) of

Gironella. Moreover, in two well known novels, namely, Algo pasa en la calle (1954) by Elena Quiroga and Delibes's Cinco horas con Mario (1966), the protagonist has recently died as the novels begin and those at his wake reflect upon their past relationships with the deceased and their remembrances compose the entire story.

As a member of that segment of the post-war generation who were teen-agers at the time of the Civil War, Castillo-Puche shares with them their pity for Spain, their preoccupation with the death theme, the social changes going on within the peninsula, especially in Madrid, and the moral-ethical tone of the country. It is difficult to predict whether in his case as in that of his peers, the atmosphere of pessimism and despair will or will not be replaced with hope and optimism as the last quarter of the century approaches and the war becomes a remote memory.

CHAPTER II

CONFLICTS OF VOCATION

In 1939 when Castillo-Puche was entering the seminary, a small book appeared which, by 1965 had reached its 25th Spanish edition and had been translated into almost every written language: its title, Camino and its author, Monsignor José María Escrivá de Balaguer. Its spiritual admonitions, written in a compellin style, include a great variety of subjects and total in number 999. They are intended as a guide to all members of the Opus Deis Society founded by Escrivá, but are read and meditated upon by many Christians the world over. It certainly must have come to the attention of Castillo-Puche and must have represented for him, as it has for many, a collection of guide-lines to help keep one's feet along the "way", as the title implies, of certain salvation. And so when he entitled his first novel about a man who, presumably, strays from the "way", he called it Sin Camino. Delibes, on the other hand, when he chose to write about a priest who remains faithful to his calling entitles his novel El camino (1950). The situation of priests and seminarians who experience, not so much crises of faith, as conflicts about the authenticity of their calling, is also the subject of Castillo-Puche's new trilogy: El Cíngulo: the

first part is Como ovejas al matadero and the second is scheduled for publication in 1974 and is entitled Jeremías el Anarquista; the third is in preparation. With the completion of the trilogy, Castillo-Puche insists he will have done with the priest theme, having said all that his ruminations, observations and experiences over the past thirty years touching on the theme, have impelled him to express. Yecla, as we have seen, evokes memories of childhood; the Civil War, of boyhood; but, the seminary was an experience of early manhood when, to make a wrong decision, might have resulted in utter frustration for himself in his personal life.

The Catholic Novel

The Madrid publishers, Escelicer, established an award in 1956 for the best Catholic novel of the year; the following year it gave the prize to José Castillo-Puche for his novel Hicieron partes. It was felt that in this book, the author had highlighted the virtue of detachment from material preoccupations and had dramatized the evils caused by exaggerated concerns for money and all the things it can provide, all within the context of accepted Catholic morality as practiced in Spain. It is curious that Castillo-Puche should have been chosen for the award since he considers himself a "novelista religioso" rather than a "novelista católico." In addition, on more than one occasion, in private conversation, he has pointed out that Gonzalo Sobejano in his valuable book Novela española de nuestro tiempo, has explained better than any other critic that the novels of Castillo-Puche should

be called "religious" rather than "Catholic", and, more exactly, "existential":

... creo que las novelas de Castillo-Puche pueden calificarse, si acaso, de 'religiosas,' pero no de 'católicas'. En propiedad sería más justo calificarlas de 'existenciales' siempre que se precise que el sentimiento existencial presente en todas estas novelas arranca de una actitud moral (exploración del modo de conducta más auténtico) y no de posiciones intelectuales o filosóficas.¹

These observations made by Sobejano and the attitude of the author regarding them become even more interesting in light of a rather comprehensive article by Castillo-Puche entitled "La novela católica en España."² Because the novels discussed in this chapter concern themselves primarily with the sacerdotal vocation as it is defined and structured within the Catholic Church, it seems relevant to consider here some of the thoughts expressed by Castillo-Puche in this article.

There are several definitions given of what the Catholic novel is and of what it is not; first what it is:

Novela católica será aquélla en la que pesa lo eterno, pero no de modo vago y panteísta, sino con perfil reformista y penetrador... también es novela católica aquélla que, dejando a un lado adversarios hipotéticos, se dedica a la noble tarea de la autocorrección y la autocrítica, la que inventa e instaure caminos de perfección... Quiero decir que es novela católica de primera calidad aquélla que, sin miedos ingenuos, se dedica a hacer expedito, eficaz y exigente el clima del propio catolicismo.³

¹ Novela española de nuestro tiempo, p. 195.

² José Luis Castillo-Puche, "La novela católica en España," Punta Europa, diciembre, 1956, #36, pp. 3-15.

³ "La novela católica en España," p. 8.

In this category Castillo-Puche places three novels which, in his opinion, are authentically Catholic novels: La mujer nueva of Carmen Laforet (the novel is based on the author's sudden re-conversion to Catholicism), La frontera de Dios of Martín Descalzo and San Fernández of José María Valverde. All three novels, however, are of an apologetic and doctrinal nature with an occasional miraculous intrusion, all of which Castillo-Puche tends to reject because such a presentation of life is not faithful to normal existence, singularly free of those rare moments of either great tragedy or sublime exultation.

Yo soy más partidario de que en la novela católica no aparezcan revelaciones sorprendentes ni curaciones fulminantes... pero interesa más ese catolicismo de día tras días, que es sacrificio, lucha, violencia, ideal reñido con la vida misma, pero que tiene en su heroicidad momentos de serenidad¹ y hasta de felicidad humanamente inigualables.

Within the spectrum of that more measured and realistic representation of which the author speaks, and yet within the Catholic framework, Castillo-Puche places Miguel Delibes' early novel Mi idolatrado hijo Sisi (1953), Gonzalo Torrente's even earlier novel, Javier Mariño (1943) and his own novel Hicieron partes. The latter is listed because of the judgment made of it by the publishers who gave him the aforementioned prize and not because he feels he himself would classify it as Catholic.

What does Castillo-Puche say the Catholic novel is not?

¹"La novela católica en España," p. 11.

Contrary to other Catholic writers, and many readers, he believes that injecting a miracle or two in a novel does not per se make it a Catholic novel: "¿Es que para que una novela sea Católica necesariamente ha de relatar o contener algún milagro, o varios milagros, como si el milagro fuera cosa cotidiana?"¹ For the thinking individual, he continues, all of life is a miracle and every individual life, properly viewed, contains touches of the divine. Another type of novel which he does not feel should be called Catholic is the pious, sentimental kind which, if it bears witness to anything, it is not to evangelical Christianity, but to an ignorant, lachrymose piety far removed from the serene, joyous, yet virile faith of which the Gospels speak. Historically, according to Castillo-Puche, this type of novel has done a great deal of harm since it represents an adulteration of what is authentically Catholic.

The novel, therefore, even when written by a Catholic for Catholic readers ought not to be a forum for catechesis. That function, explains Castillo-Puche, is better fulfilled by the essayist who presents the Catholic viewpoint on such topics as art, education, theatre and labor unions (some, according to Castillo-Puche, have on occasion manifested the eternal problem of Spanish intolerance): José Luis Aranguren, Lorenzo Gomis, P. Félix García, Manuel Lizcano, Manuel Alonso, Lily Alvarez and Muñoz Alonso among others. And Castillo-Puche's clinching point is that the Catholic novel should

¹"La novela católica en España," p. 10.

offer moral alternatives and imperatives through its characters, and not through sermons or catechizing.

Nine years after Castillo-Puche's article on the Catholic Novel, García Viñó, in his perceptive work, Novela española actual, expressed very similar feelings on the same theme. Initially, he distinguishes between what might ideally be a "novela católica" and what the reality is:

Es decir, propiamente, novela católica podría llamarse con perfecto derecho a toda aquélla que sea producto de un novelista católico y que responda en definitiva a una concepción católica del mundo y de la vida.

Sin embargo, el hecho real es que éstas son novelas que quedan fuera de la atención cuando se alude a la 'novela católica' como género...

La existencia de una novela católica responde a una intencionalidad o, en último término, a la relevancia en ella de un problema... que expresamente tenga en cuenta el lastre inicial del pecado original y la meta final de la eterna salvación o condenación. En último término, se trata de la existencia o no de visión sobrenatural.¹

García Viñó assures us that narrative literature in the Spain of our day is predominantly social and documentary and when we do occasionally find a novel that conforms to the definition of "Catholic", it is mediocre, lacking the depth found in the social or thesis novels. What reasons can one adduce to explain this phenomenon in such a traditionally Catholic nation?

One critic claims that the lack of religious liberty as well as a certain habitual submission to ecclesiastical

¹Manuel García-Viñó, Novela española actual (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1967), p. 62.

authority have militated against the production of truly creative works in this area. He concludes:

De este paternalismo brota un clima poco propicio a la presentación de la problemática religiosa desde posiciones arriesgadas, en cuyos dominios la ortodoxa se hace también problemática.¹

But García-Viñó thinks that the real explanation is much more obvious:

... la falta de una actitud intelectual seria frente a los temas y problemas del mundo y el hombre contemporáneo que es enfermedad casi común de nuestros novelistas.²

Whether it be from fear of taking a risk or simply from a certain unwillingness to sustain throughout the length of an entire novel the testimony of Christian witness, the fact remains that few have attempted it. Leopoldo Rodríguez Alcalde ascribes the absence of Catholic novels of any significance to the peculiar religious psychology of the Spanish people: their peculiar type of religious observance, characterized by deadening routine, does not lend itself, in his opinion, to the drama one might look for in the novel:

La novela católica ha de brotar, naturalmente, de problemas y cuestiones que afectan directamente a los combates del alma y a las soluciones que el catolicismo brinda, o que la fe plantea, a la conducta humana: y en España, donde todo el mundo se alimenta de la fe del carbonero, sencilla e infinitamente sólida, los graves problemas de conciencia o las duras batallas que libra el alma en su noche oscura, cuando no brillan por su ausencia, carecen de las sutilezas psicológicas o de las preocupaciones trascendentes que pueden inyectar a aquellos conflictos de dolorosa dimensión que les haga aptos para servir de materia artística.¹

¹ Leopoldo Rodríguez Alcalde, Hora actual de la novela en el mundo (Madrid: Taurus, 1959), p. 87.

Finally, Professor Aranguren suggests that the death of Catholic novels may well be the result of a mentality that considers all problems of a religious nature to have already been solved and, consequently, since no conflicts exist, no novels are needed to depict them: "...nuestros escritores no 'ven' que exista ningún problema en la realidad religiosa, porque lo consideran, de una vez y para siempre, resuelto."¹

García-Viñó is in agreement with Sobejano in his classification of Castillo-Puche: he may indeed be a Catholic novelist, but he is not an author of Catholic novels. He may do a great deal of moralizing in Hicieron partes and may indeed betray the fact that he is a believing and practicing Catholic, but Castillo-Puche himself does not consider the presence of priests and nuns in a novel a reason for calling it a Catholic novel. None of his novels, according to García-Viñó, "traspasan la esfera de la moral, los límites de lo estrictamente humano."² Even in the novels that treat specifically of seminarians and priests, his characters seek to resolve some immediate, human problem; never do they reflect on the question of their eternal salvation. Any loss they fear is a human one: "esa pérdida existencial en que, en definitiva, consiste todo error vital."³

¹Jospe Luis Aranguren, "¿Por qué no hay novela religiosa en España?" in Catolicismo día tras día (Barcelona: Noguer, 1955), cited by García Viñó, p. 65.

²García-Viñó, p. 70.

³Ibid., p. 70.

Sin camino

The second in order of publication but the first novel to be written, Sin camino is undoubtedly more person-centered than any of the other novels of Castillo-Puche. This emphasis which Alborg calls "más hombre y menos circunstancia"¹ might suggest a more penetrating psychological study than future novels would contain, but such is not the case as we shall see later for, taken in its totality, Sin camino is the weakest of the novelist's works. We agree with Alborg when he states: "Lo que prefiero de Castillo-Puche es esa atmósfera que envuelve a los personajes y los amasa y condiciona con una fuera de dramática fatalidad."² Although no character in real life or in fiction lives in a vacuum, in Sin camino, the protagonist, Enrique, appears to function at times almost oblivious of his surroundings and the events external to him.

Written in the third person, the narration centers around Enrique who, having fought in the Civil War, decides at its close, to embark upon studies for the priesthood. He is somewhat older than his fellow-students, a belated vocation. Since one of the scenes takes place in Santander, it is supposed that the setting is the well-known seminary of Comillas, for five years the home of Castillo-Puche as it is for the fictional Enrique. According to the author, the novel is not otherwise at all autobiographical although its theme was

¹Juan Luis Alborg, Hora actual de la novela española (Madrid: Taurus, 1958), p. 307.

²Ibid., p. 308.

suggested by much that he observed while in Comillas. Enrique, therefore, is a composite of several seminarians whom the author knew, for it becomes quite evident that the author had to have first-hand knowledge of seminary life. The complicated inner drama of the main character as he struggles with the frustrations caused by his awareness that he is in the wrong place but lacks the will to leave, is the essential theme of the novel. Unlike the priests of Graham Greene, Enrique's is not an anguish of faith, but rather, an awesome quandary arising from his own indecisiveness. He is, therefore, living an hypocritical existence as long as he chooses to persevere in a state to which he knows he is not called and, conversely, he is justified only when he determines to leave and does in fact walk out into a world which may at first seem "sin camino."

Viewed from the standpoint of Enrique's peculiar circumstances as well as the religious attitudes of the Spain of the forties, the seminarian's position becomes more understandable. Frequent letters from his pious mother reiterate the words: "lo único que quiero es que seas un sacerdote santo."¹ He knows, then, what his withdrawal from the seminary would do to his mother. Moreover, his departure would run counter to all the advice and encouragement he has received from the spiritual guides at the seminary who have consistently believed in the authenticity of his calling.

¹José Luis Castillo-Puche, Sin camino, (Buenos Aires; Emecé), 1956, p. 39.

Among them, as well as among his classmates, he has met men whom he has grown to admire and respect and whose ecclesiastical office he wishes he could in sincerity one day share. He fears, moreover, that he will lose face with former friends and, above all, with the girl he left behind back home and who through the years has encouraged him to pursue his studies and return an ordained priest. The emotional and psychological stress that Enrique suffers are somewhat reminiscent of that experienced by some of the characters created by Pérez Galdós and Juan Valera.

Some interesting comparisons and contrasts might be made in this aspect of a clerical theme: in the case of Luis de Vargas of Valera's Pepita Jiménez (1874), the young seminarian is wholly oblivious of his lack of vocation in spite of the fact that every letter he addresses to his priest-uncle makes his true situation abundantly clear. Enrique, on the other hand, is well aware of his absence of calling and almost wishes he might be expelled from the seminary and thereby be relieved of having to leave by his own volition. Enrique, moreover, has constantly to struggle against his attraction for the opposite sex; indeed, on a trip alone into town he actually has an affair. Luis talks constantly of his admiration for Pepita but never takes the initiative; it is only when Pepita sets the stage for Luis' seduction "para demostrarle que hay en él más de galán que de verdadero varón piadoso."¹

¹ José A. Balseiro, Novelistas españoles modernos (New York: MacMillan Co., 1933), p. 28.

that he is shocked into a realization of his true feelings.

Pérez Galdós, like Valera, takes as his point of departure, when dealing with clerical themes, more of a social than a psychological slant. Moved by old prejudices, he sets forth conflicts between those who are fanatically religious as, for example, the intransigent Doña Perfecta, and those who espouse common sense moral goodness disassociated from institutional religion. Always the tensions end tragically with the Catholic sector bearing the blame for its shortsightedness. It is the same kind of fanatical posture that is held by Enrique's mother in Sin camino, and by her neighboring townspeople. What is more, whenever religious conflicts are considered in the novel of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they tend, in the tradition of Galdós to draw a line between two worlds that have been considered as diametrically opposed: on the one hand, the obsessively religious that disclaims intellectual curiosity and countenances social oppression as well as class distinctions, and, on the other the liberal camp which espouses progress through scientific research and hard work, placing always a high premium on tolerance, love and mutual respect. The distinction in real life may not always be that clear cut but they are, for example, in the world of Galdós's Doña Perfecta (1876), Gloria (1877) and La Familia de León Roch (1878).

More immediate to our purpose here, however, is the striking similarity of attitude on the part of Pérez Galdós and Castillo-Puche towards what might be called the essence

and the accidents of Christianity. Neither author finds the authentic Christian message of the Scriptures wanting, but both object to the institutional interpretation of that message which, they believe, has vitiated its original spirit and intent. In his conversations with colleagues and students, Castillo-Puche has often reiterated these sentiments. In the case of Galdós, his critics have often failed to make this distinction and have ascribed to him an anti-clericalism not justified in any of his religious novels. Balseiro sums it up well when he writes:

La crítica clerical se ha negado a distinguir que Galdós atacaba a la clerecía no por religiosa, sino por anticristiana; no por celosa de su culto, sino por intransigente; no por su prédica en la eterna salvación, sino por su intromisión en los problemas temporales y terrenos, de carácter familiar y político. Galdós hubiera perseguido el fanatismo y la superstición donde quiera que hubieran hecho sombra al anhelo de amor humano que movía su pluma. Galdós amaba a Jerusalén, no a Roma. Y se apoyaba en el Sermón de la Montaña, no en encíclicas ni en pastorales.¹

Read in the light of the post-conciliar Catholic Church, these words make Galdós appear to have been much ahead of his time. Be that as it may, they do express succinctly the mentality of José Luis Castillo-Puche.

Faith and love are the supreme values in the novels of Armando Palacio Valdés. His pages, while impregnated with heart-felt beliefs that stand in strong contrast to the harsh and bitter tones of his contemporaries of the Naturalist school, degenerate at times into sentimentality, especially

¹Balseiro, p. 173

in matters of religious themes as in Marta y Marfa (1883) and La fe (1892). In the latter, Palacio Valdés reflects upon the problem of authentic religiosity, a question with which Castillo-Puche and many of his contemporaries are likewise concerned. Finally, in the case of Ramón Pérez de Ayala, we find a classic anti-Jesuitical posture, bitter to the point of exaggeration. His novel A.M.D.G., like James Joyce's Portrait of an Artist, deals with life in a school conducted by the Jesuits. Pío Baroja, on the other hand in spite of his anti-clerical bias and his poor treatment of most priests, speaks well of the Jesuits since their founder was, like himself, a Basque. Of Ramón Sender, however, in his Siete domingos rojos (1932), it has been said, "Here anti-clericalism and blasphemy can go no further."¹ Castillo-Puche who studied in Comillas where the Jesuits train men for the secular priesthood, does not let the opportunity pass without an ironically humorous passage at their expense during a presentation of an Auto Sacramental at the seminary. Eugenio de Nora writes:

La actitud del protagonista frente a los Jesuitas es muy matizada y expectante, pero en general no muy respetuosa. La reserva se convierte en caricatura burlesca - tanto más siendo glosa de sucesos reales - al describir la trascendental representación del "Auto" (Auto sacramental, que los seminaristas llaman "Camión", visto que dura seis horas) titulado Los desposorios de España, del P. Rosado, cuya acción histórico-alegórica se inicia el 12 de octubre del 1492 y

¹John Devlin. Spanish Anti-clericalism. New York: Las Américas, (1966), p. 177.

termina el 1 de abril de 1939.¹

Enrique, as we have said, has no doubts concerning what to do about his situation; his problem is how to do it. He can find no ready answers in his theological studies, not because they are not there but because he lacks the will to act. His love of that liberty of action he experiences on his occasional trips to the city, does not seem to motivate him sufficiently to break the bonds that hold him back from leaving the seminary. And ironically enough, the very men who cause him frequent annoyance by their pettiness at the same time provide a measure of security and sense of direction. Yet, whatever the seminary holds that is precious and appealing cannot silence the insistent clamors of the flesh which, in their growing strength, are incompatible with a life of celibacy. Of his earliest days at the seminary, we read:

El maestro de novicios les había dicho siempre que el mar era como una fiera enjaulada, igual que las pasiones en el corazón. Y algo se movía, también, en su alma, con temblores de ola voluptuosa. ¿Sería el recuerdo de aquellas muchachas que había visto en el coche, con aquellos vestidos blancos, casi transparentes...?²

Such reactions, of course, are in themselves human and normal, but when they become a constant preoccupation to a seminarian, they might indicate that he has indeed set his feet upon the wrong path. Furthermore, Enrique's abulia prevents him from

¹Eugenio de Nora, La novela española contemporánea (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1970), vol. 3, p. 162.

²Sin camino, p. 13.

taking precautions to safeguard himself from the obvious interest that Inés, a young lady from the village, has manifested in him by her frequent and meaningful glances at daily Mass. Evidently a coquette, she soon tires of his hesitant manner towards her and stays away altogether. Unfortunately for the confused protagonist, none of his spiritual mentors knows how to caution him against the opposite sex; one priest advises him: "Estás sobre el abismo, Enrique. La mujer es el lodo infame que todo lo mancha."¹

In his efforts to find reasons outside of himself for leaving the seminary, Enrique exaggerates in his own mind the foibles of those around him. He abhors, for example the insincere posture of Gerardo, a classmate, who counsels him:

No es suficiente ser bueno; hay, sobre todo, que parecerlo. A ti te faltan sólo algunos detalles, los matices, las apariencias, ciertas pequñeces... menos sinceridad, más prudencia.²

And later, Enrique observes to himself:

Allí abundaban los tipos pacíficos, vulgares, alegres, pero ¿No sería porque eran almas simples, sin complicación? También abundaban tipos groseros y ruines para los que la vocación era casi una mercancía o una pingüe oposición. Como los había despóticos, soberbios, que daban a entender que tenían las pasiones domesticadas en jaulas herméticamente cerradas.³

Increasingly, then, do the shortcomings of others assume a disproportionate importance in his life as he refuses to act upon the clear fact of his own lack of commitment.

¹ Sin Camino, p. 34.

² Ibid., p. 34.

³ Ibid., p. 35.

One of the defects in this first work of Castillo-Puche is that we do not know much about Enrique's past and this omission makes his present crisis less credible. Alborg calls it

...la falta de "historia" en su carácter, la carencia de rasgos que lo definan con anterioridad a los hechos que centran la novela. Lo que fuera antes, importa mucho para comprender el proceso de su vocación y su posterior ruina. Pero el autor apenas si nos lo muestra en aquella etapa anterior, quizá por no engrosar el relato, y nos lo entrega "in medias res", virtud esencial en el teatro pero no siempre en la novela.¹

A further weakness is the effect that the passionate affair between Enrique and the woman, Isabel, has on him. Earlier we spoke of his passing flirtation with Inés which he could have understandably forgotten soon after, but a prolonged, intimate relationship with a cabaret beauty is not a minor occurrence in the life of any seminarian nor one which he is likely to forget very quickly. Enrique, however, does not interpret this very compromising involvement as any sort of crisis vis-a-vis his vocation, and returns to the seminary not perceptibly more disturbed than before. In connection with this same affair, de Nora remarks that it is stretching one's credibility a bit to tell us that a young man who had formerly been an officer with the Republicans during the war is only now (and as a seminarian) having his first "aventura carnal."²

¹Alborg, p. 311.

²de Nora, p. 162.

The indecision of the protagonist is reflected not only in his thoughts and impressions, but in the restlessness of his actions. For example, when he has a day off in the city, we read: "se subió a un tranvía y al poco tiempo se bajó."¹ Likewise, in the ebb and flow of the tides of the sea that spreads out alongside the seminary grounds, he sees reflected the instability of his character and the cowardliness of his behavior. And when the time comes for his return to the seminary after a day out, we read "su alma se sentía dividida, atormentada, confundida."² His vacillations are, finally, aptly described in these words: "como siempre, se escondía en sí mismo, huía de afrontar las situaciones y se dejaba llevar de una manera pasiva y desconsoladora... No tenía la valentía suficiente para dejar por propia iniciativa el sacerdocio."³

Oddly enough, his final decision to leave the seminary is not determined by all the reasons he has agonized over, but by an external event: Enrique is in Santander when a fire breaks out, and when he is saved, he somehow sees with new clarity the path he must take:

Había llegado el momento de tomar una determinación y hacerse responsable de ella hasta el fin ... Con la poca (voluntad) que le quedaba debía entrar en el mundo y empezar una vida nueva... recordaba, ahora mejor que nunca, aquellos años, meses, semanas y días en los que había vivido

¹ Sin camino, p. 152.

² Ibid., p. 189.

³ Ibid., p. 195.

feliz, completamente feliz, dentro del seminario.¹

A critic from Santander comments on this episode:

Una novela... testimonio vivo de aquel episodio impresionante que fue el incendio de la ciudad. .. un acontecimiento de carácter decisivo y explosivo en la vida del personaje. (Este) es un undivido que está viviendo la vocación religiosa falsamente y el choque del incendio, la presencia de una mujer (que es como un complemento romántico) motivan el sacudimiento de su complejo místico. Tales circunstancias le ponen en la vía de la sinceridad y acaba encontrándose a sí mismo.²

Enrique's years of hesitation come to an end with his departure, but, as another critic has suggested, the reader is left to wonder how he could have waited five long years:

Si Castillo-Puche quiso mostrar cómo la sal de la tierra pierde su sabor, le hubiera hecho falta arriesgarse más en su empresa, porque la verdad del proceso no está dicha y se la deforma, sin que nunca la intensidad dramática llegue a la tensión requerida. Adivinamos en Enrique una incapacidad para asumir responsabilidades y entonces el drama que debió tener ecos teológicos se reduce a un conflicto psicológico, a un problema de inadaptación que se arrastra, pero cuya única solución está en la voluntad firme de asumir una decisión definitiva que convenga a ese individuo hasta entonces en disponibilidad para cualquier cosa. Enrique siempre espera algo que lo libere, y que, como una ayuda mágica, lo transforme desde fuera de él mismo en lo que no es.³

It may be recalled, however, that Castillo-Puche conceived the novel and began to write it while still a seminarian

¹Sin camino, p. 259.

²Anon., "Una novela sobre el incendio en Santander", Alerta, Santander, agosto 17, 1956.

³Eugenio Guasta, "Sin camino", SUR, Buenos Aires, #250, 1958, p. 81.

himself, and completed it three years after leaving the seminary. While he may not yet have had the skill of the novelist he was to become later, he did have enough daring to upset the censors and become a controversial figure. He says of the letters he received about the novel:

Si algún día publicara, cosa que nunca haré, la correspondencia recibida sobre este libro mío, sería más importante que la novela en sí, que doy por bien empleada por la satisfacción íntima que me han producido tantas cartas adversas y conversas.¹

COMO OVEJAS AL MATADERO

If the publication of Sin camino aroused considerable criticism from censors and readers alike, the appearance of Como ovejas al matadero fifteen years later caused an even greater stir. The first part of a trilogy called El Cíngulo which had been in the planning stages for about eight years, was permitted publication, after some deletions, in 1971. Of all of Castillo-Puche's novels, this is the most painful to read, principally because the awesome emotional and psychological agony of the protagonist, Alfredo, is so clinically described. Undoubtedly, the novel is the fruit of what has been termed "una larga y lenta tarea de maduración"² and the result is a theses exposed with crude reality and naturalistic overtones bordering on the morbid.

The title of the novel is taken from the book of Isaiah:

¹V. Marrero, "José L. Castillo-Puche," Punta Europa, 1957, núm. 18, p. 151.

²José Domingo, "Del seminario a la isla," Insula, #302, p. 6.

Como el cordero elevado al matadero
 Como oveja muda ante los trasquiladores..
 -Isaiah 53;7.

And lest one lose patience with the repetitious and gloomy details with which the author tries to convey the full impact of his protagonist's struggles, he warns us ahead of time with verses taken from La Celestina:

Por ende si vieses turbada mi mano
 turbias con claras mezclando razones
 deja las burlas, qu'es paja, y granzones
 sacando muy limpio de'entrellas el grano.

The novel is set in a seminary of Murcia a few days prior to the outbreak of the Civil War in July, 1936, and, even though there are no political allusions, the atmosphere of the entire novel seems electrified, as if on the verge of an impending disaster. The action takes place in a single day: the day of ordination to the priesthood of four seminarians. In each man, the author represents not only the virtues which traditionally are expected in a priest, but also the weaknesses that can frustrate his mission. In Ramiro, a member of a distinguished family and son of an agnostic father - a famous physician - there exists a strong apostolic spirit impelling him to see Christ everywhere and in everyone; "en las calles, en un enfermo que se bambolea con la mano puesta en la pared, en un obrero que tose y que suda estertores de agonía en el andamio..."¹ In Fulgencio, come to the seminary from a Protestant family and under the patronage of a Duke and duchess, there may be found a stubborn dogmatism, the

¹José Luis Castillo-Puche, Como ovejas al matadero (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1971), p. 72.

result, probably, of his family roots and a tendency towards the heroic: "un heroísmo que quería ser silencioso y normal, lo más natural y humano posible"¹. Cosme is a man capable of sacrificing his homosexual instincts for what he hopes will lead to a brilliant administrative position within the hierarchy of the Church. And, finally, "entre la bondadosa vehemencia de Fulgencio, el alegre dominio de Ramiro y el optimismo un tanto falso de Cosme",² there stands the fatalism of Alfredo, a case of repressed sexuality that leads to actual insanity and brings into sharp focus one of the most controversial topics of Catholicism today, namely, the question of clerical celibacy. Of Alfredo, Castillo-Puche writes "en la raíz misma de su naturaleza latía la patología del sexo, una angustia, una curiosidad, una enorme debilidad."³

By means of flash-backs and interior monologues, the author describes in almost three hundred pages what he considers authentic and false vocations. According to the appraisals made by most of its critics, the novel is the antithesis of the so-called novela rosa; several critics, in fact, and many readers, are shocked by its explicitness even as they praise its technique. A New York City Spanish daily highlights the sense of urgency in the novel:

Estemos o no de acuerdo con todas las conclusiones que se translucen en esta novela de carácter

¹José Luis Castillo-Puche, Como ovejas al matadero (Barcelona: Ediciones Detino, 1971), p. 158.

²Ibid., p. 95.

³Ibid., p. 186.

polémico, hay que admitir que su autor hizo lo que recomendaba Nietzsche: 'Di tu verdad y rómpete.' En algún momento, quizás mucho tiempo antes, hay que vencer prejuicios y escrúpulos dogmáticos para lanzarse a decir su verdad. Y lo ha dicho en una forma vibrante con singular franqueza y con un estilo que va haciéndose cada vez más personal.¹

This feverish drive on the part of the author was also apparent to Gómez Ortiz when he wrote his review of the novel in El libro español:

Castillo-Puche no practica la cháchara insulsa y facilona, sino que se arranca, como un dolor, lo que lleva dentro y quiere expresar matizándolo, dándole vueltas.²

It is curious that a novel which had passed through such a long period of gestation should, in its initial stages, seem to come pouring forth like an unbridled river that has overflowed its banks. The first seminarian about whom Castillo-Puche wrote in Sin camino, while weak-willed, was a product of a distorted religious background but his indecision did not lead to madness; Alfredo, on the contrary, is a tragic character whose peculiar pathology is difficult to grasp. But precisely because he is so sick emotionally, his true condition could only be drawn in the nervous, frenetic manner which the author assumes. In his article about the novel, Dámaso Santos employs the same evocative vocabulary as the two critics cited above to convey the pace set by the author in his efforts to create a most unusual situation and a uniquely

¹Gemma Roberts, "Autor dice su verdad en Como ovejas al matadero," El Diario-La Prensa, New York, June 12, 1972.

²Manuel Gómez Ortiz, "José Luis Castillo-Puche como un torrente," El Libro Español, num, 171, marzo, 1972, p. 122.

pathological situation:

Lo que más domina es la fuerza peculiar de este escritor, destacadamente barroca, violenta, entre el sarcasmo y la emoción, la búsqueda delirante, incandescente de la situación límite, en crescendos y pianos, con realismos brutales, popularismos soeces, creando vibrantes, adjetivaciones verbales, unas veces por falta del adjetivo justo, otras por dinámica necesidad...¹

As the day of their ordination dawns, there is unmistakable joy in the hearts of the three of the young seminarians: in the case of Cosme, the happiness is described as "tranquilidad" and for Ramiro and Fulgencio it is called a sense of "serenidad." For Alfredo, however, the day brings nothing but an acceleration of the tensions and fears he has felt for the past six years. As one follows him step by step through the principal stages of the day, one becomes aware of the gathering momentum of the conflicts that will bring him from relative sanity to complete irrationality.

As he is awakened by Ramiro on ordination day, Alfredo asks him: "Tú crees que esto saldrá bien?"² Ramiro assures him that it is natural to be somewhat apprehensive on such an important day in their lives. Alfredo had been so often absorbed in his own thoughts that what were really his inner doubts and struggles were taken to be a nervous and overly scrupulous temperament rather than an emotional illness. And although not brilliant in his studies, he was of such a

¹Dámaso Santos, "Los misacantanos de Castillo-Puche," Pueblo, Madrid, 15 de Diciembre, 1971., p. 32.

²Como ovejas al matadero, p. 9.

domineering dispositions that he could exert an influence on his fellow students not commensurate with his talents. From the very beginning of his career at the seminary, a curious inconsistency seemed to mark his words and behavior: "La vocación había consistido en vivir descoyuntado y dividido."¹ Unfortunately for him, there were not too many perceptive people around to detect this, or else, he was able successfully to conceal this duality in his personality. Now, during the process of vesting for the ceremony, he suddenly feels that he has forgotten something in his room (this might be interpreted as an unconscious desire to escape), but when he returns to his cell, he finds all is in order and he has not forgotten anything: "Y se quedó parado, vacío, irresoluto, incontrolado."² Someone goes to get him and he returns to continue vesting. The long white, flowing alb must be held together by a cincture, the symbol of chastity. It is from the name of this symbolic cord - el cingulo - that the author has taken the title of the entire trilogy. With trembling hands Alfredo ties it around his waist for it stands for the celibate condition he has embraced and with which he has struggled these many years. As he is about to put on the other vestments, Alfredo suddenly finds his feet entangled in the folds of the alb; the knot on the cincture has loosened and this detail, indifferent in itself, becomes fraught with meaning to a mind already distorted with morbid fears.

¹ Como ovejas al matadero, p. 13.

² Ibid., p. 17.

It is essential at this juncture to consider the role of women in Alfredo's life since it has been his relationship with them that in great measure has engendered his present apprehensions. As the novel puts it: "...la aparición de la mujer en su vida siempre había sido catastrófica."¹ Here, as we saw in Sin camino, the maternal influence is very strong, Even as she was about to die, Alfredo's mother struggled to say beseechingly, to her son: "Pero tú serás sacerdote, tú mejor que nadie tienes que absolverme, tú que estás bendecido por Dios desde que naciste, tú...". Rosa, his sister, is pitifully hunchbacked and tended always to spoil him (as we learn from the flashbacks). Both mother and sister had sacrificed their every resource in order that he might have the education and training necessary for eventual admission into the seminary. Present now at the ordination ceremony is the frail and unprepossessing Rosica, as he calls his sister. Perhaps the woman to affect him most adversely, but the one to whom Alfredo is in some perverse way most grateful, is a farmer's daughter named Tomasina with whom he had a passing affair while in his third year of philosophy. In the quiet of the Church on his ordination day he reflects: "Ella me salvó porque me creí esta repugnancia a todo lo que en los sentidos nace y en los sentidos muere,"² and again, he thinks to himself in anger: "de aquella traidora de su alma más que de su cuerpo, que le había descubierto el ansia escondida

¹Como ovejas al matadero, p. 186.

²Ibid., p. 65.

allí dentro, en lo más oscuro de su ser."¹ In short, Alfredo's experiences with women have not been positive nor constructive and have left him, at best, with ambivalent feelings.

And now as the dignataries and the four ordinandi take their places within the sanctuary precincts, the eyes of the invited guests are focused primarily on the four young deacons. The difference between the three others and Alfredo is unmistakable: "... en Alfredo se notaba una contracción, una rigidez, una tensión que por fuera producía escalofríos, incluso en los fieles."² At the crucial moment of no return in the ceremony when the bishop calls each man by name, Alfredo mounts the steps trembling. Yet, whether by a kind of conditioned reflex or in imitation of his companions, he responds in accordance with the rubrics and with a clear voice: "Adsum." Within him, however, accusing voices and a crushing sense of guilt are slowly destroying his sanity although he knows from experience that it would be useless to confide his agony to another. He thinks: "Ojalá hubiera podido hablar con alguien de aquel turbión almacenado Dios sabía en qué cloacas."³ The master of ceremonies is the first person to become aware of Alfredo's more-than-usual abstraction. the erratic behavior which indicates that all is not going precisely as rehearsed. Both he and the other

¹Como ovejas al matadero, p. 66.

²Ibid., p. 95.

³Ibid., p. 130.

three deacons try to assist Alfredo with whispered directions and a strategic tug of the elbow. Finally they are able to propel him in the direction of the ordaining prelate, the unsuspecting bishop. Here Alfredo's state is described with an apt image: "Al acercarse al obispo, Alfredo ha caído ante el pontífice, como un náufrago al llegar a la orilla."¹ And as he is about to withdraw, we read: "Se ha levantado, indeciso, perplejo, como derrotado."² The gradual movement away from the world of reality to a realm of utter fantasy and chaos begins to gather momentum for Alfredo. "Si él pudiera definir su angustia la llamaría 'vértigo hacia la nada', 'sumergimiento en el fondo sin fondo.'"³

As the long and impressive ceremony is about to end, the sorry condition of the protagonist is patently clear: "Alfredo sudaba copiosamente y las gotas de sudor le resbalaban desde la frente a la nariz y desde las patillas, las orejas y el cuello."⁴ The final ceremonial act of kissing the bishop's ring is followed by the pathetic words: "Alfredo una vez besado el anillo ansiosamente se quedó parado, distante, más incontrolado, más disuelto, más desconexionado que nunca."⁵ The pressure of the years of tension and guilt-feelings has taken its toll and now Alfredo, always somewhat of a loner,

¹ Como ovejas al matadero, p. 180.

² Ibid., p. 180.

³ Ibid., p. 182.

⁴ Ibid., p. 226.

⁵ Ibid., p. 239.

begins slowly to separate himself from the rest and walk as if in sleep toward the sacristy; at the door he turns, stares disdainfully at the people, and then directing his gaze at the red sanctuary lamp. begins to divest himself of the robes he is wearing. All efforts at dissimulation on the part of the others are useless; everyone in the Church becomes aware that something is very wrong. Mumbling incoherently in Latin, Alfredo has on only the alb tied with the cincture. He turns and disappears into the sacristy where he removes the cincture, then holds it tightly in his hands. It will serve this demented man as a lash to strike out against anyone who tries to approach him. His hidden resentments are about to burst forth. To his spiritual director who exclaims, "En nombre de Cristo," he responds: "No pronuncies ese nombre, cerdo, hipócrita."¹ When the rector tries to remonstrate with him, he answers: "Cállate tú también, tetudo, mamón, que te pareces a Caifás..."² And finally to the master of ceremonies he screams his final insult: "Cierra el pico, fariseo, castrador."³ Alfredo can be controlled now by no one. Obviously in need of professional care, he is put into the hands of the psychiatrist, Dr. Jiménez, who is Ramiro's father and is present in the Church. During all these tragic events, the sanest words are uttered by the parish priest from Alfredo's home town: "Lo que no comprendo es cómo no se han

¹Como ovejas al matadero, p. 242.

²Ibid., p. 242.

³Ibid., p. 243.

dado cuenta antes. Eso es lo que no comprendo."¹

While Castillo-Puche's characters seem to experience conflict more profoundly, than most, it is usually the protagonist who does so to a most agonizing degree. Briefly, let us reflect upon the three companions with whom Alfredo shared this fateful day, especially since each is to figure in the other books that will one day complete the trilogy. The corrupt and unlikeable Cosme is described as "...blando, dulzón, exageradamente devoto, habildoso en toda clase de menesteres."² He is stout, rosycheeked and very careful to dissimulate his homosexual tendencies: Every opportunity he gets to show signs of affection to Comilín, one of the youngest students, he takes eagerly. His glances toward that youth as he sings in the choir during the ordination ceremony are frequent (and they are frequently alluded to in the novel). Cosme himself places great emphasis on externals, and the inner conflicts that disturb Alfredo are foreign to him. His mother, who had been widowed young in life, has remarried, much against Cosme's wishes, and had other children whose attitude toward their half brother, Cosme, is succinctly described in these words: "De él apenas hablaban, pero se notaba que mantenían cierta burla sobre su vocación."³ Alfredo's idea of Cosme was not any more flattering: "...fofo,

¹Como ovejas al matadero, p. 256.

²Ibid., p. 109.

³Ibid., p. 199.

blando, absurdo."¹

The family of the serene and gently Fulgencio lived in Mexico, and his godparents, a duke and duchess, had showered upon him every manner of love, support and kindness.

Although he missed his immediate family, he was known in the seminary as "el consolador,"² for his call to the priesthood was to him a challenge and one to which he responded in a mature, authentic manner. His interior monologues during his ordination are the most sincerely real and hauntingly beautiful in the book. We quote his prayer so full of common sense and so free of pietistic sentimentalism:

¡Qué no me contente nunca con la moral quieta del providencialismo ni me adormezca con devociones consoladoramente fraudulentas! La iglesia no es una compañía de seguros contra robos, incendios y muertes. La iglesia debe ser el gran compromiso y el riesgo total, y por eso el mayor sacrificio y la penitencia verdadera será anteponer la verdad a todo y descubrir la injusticia aunque se esconda o refugie en el mismo confesionario...³

Ramiro, too, although at times given preferential treatment because of his father's distinction, appears to have a very authentic vocation:

Para Ramiro, el sacerdocio no había sido, como en tantos casos, una liberación de la pobreza, sino más bien lo contrario, un abrazo con el riesgo y la soledad de los desheredados, precozmente aburrido de la rutinaria y engañosa felicidad en que vivía su familia.⁴

¹ Como ovejas al matadero, p. 173.

² Ibid., p. 88.

³ Ibid., p. 90.

⁴ Ibid., p. 143.

Although in his student days he had been just as skeptical about religion as his father remained always, almost overnight he had exchanged his more profane studies at the university for Latin, scholastic philosophy and canon law. From his first days at the seminary he endeavored to change himself, not those around him. We read of those days:

Evidentemente, en el seminario, hasta cierto punto, había resultado un rebelde a la disciplina, pero un rebelde intocable porque su rebeldía era creadora de otra clase de obediencia distante y superior a la mansa indiferencia habitual en el seminario. Y todas sus ideas de cambio y de reforma las soltaba sin orgullo, tímidamente casi. Por eso, no había resultado peligroso en el seminario.¹

The change in Ramiro, then, from a spoiled child to a thoughtful young man: from a convinced atheist to a dedicated man of God (whose conversion was as sudden and as complete as that of the biblical Saint Paul) was one of those unusual occurrences that happen in real life perhaps more rarely than in fiction.

Both he and Fulgencio, then, seemed most truly to have chosen their authentic paths in life. At the close of the novel however, it is through their mouths that the author (true to the tradition of constructive criticism of the Catholic Church of a Mauriac, and a Graham Greene) manifests his opposition to a type of false piety based on a denial of one's human nature. Shocked and saddened by the violent insanity of his classmate, Ramiro remarks: "Pero este pueblo nuestro nos va a dar cualquier día algo más que una sorpresa.

¹Como ovejas al matadero, p. 38.

.. está en el aire." Fulgencio answers pensatively: "Está sobre todo dentro de los corazones que es mucho peor."¹

Because of the nature of Alfredo's pathology in the novel, some critics have raised the question of the degree of humanity perceivable both in the training of the ministers of the Word and in the end product which is, of course, the minister or priest himself living among other men. Pedro Corbalán has written: "Como ovejas al matadero es un testimonio vivido... (de) unos hombres cuya vocación conduce a un enfrentamiento con su íntima condición humana... ni la vocación religiosa ni la gracia anulan al hombre; es frente a la vocación y la gracia cuando la condición humana se exagera con todo lo que ésta significa de impureza ante la voluntad de pureza, ante la corriente que aparece como purificadora y tan difícil es de seguir."² The traditional type of religious formation common in pre-Vatican II days was too often guilty of ignoring both the physical and psychological needs of men; now in this postconciliar novel, Castillo-Puche focuses on the evils of such systems when carried to extremes. Granted that Alfredo's case is not typical, it is nevertheless meaningful, and one commentator affirms: "Las vocaciones al chocar con la naturaleza humana de cada uno, da lugar a un resultado diverso... son los cuatro representantes de un

¹ Como ovejas al matadero, p. 294.

² Pablo Corbalán, "Castillo-Puche entre la liberación y la fé," Informaciones, Madrid, 1^{ero} de Julio, 1971.

símbolo protagonista - el sacerdocio."¹ According to this same critic, it is the priesthood itself that is the real protagonist in this novel, and the novelist, in keeping with the polemic being waged in Church circles today, is asking some very pointed questions: can the church continue in its present form within the context of a rapidly changing social and economic structure; how should those who aspire to it be educated to become more mature, realistic, human and dedicated men? Castillo-Puche admits he is raising the question but has no answers. In an interview by Gómez Ortiz, he tells him: "Hablar del hombre con sus injusticias, sus miedos, su carne, no es desmontar el héroe, por otra parte, sino hacerle de carne y hueso."² Castillo-Puche rejects the viewpoint that holds that every hero in the novel must be completely noble, admirable, almost super-human; this, to him, is creating myths. Rather does he prefer a hero or protagonist, in conflict perhaps, but with normal human weaknesses and doubts.

Castillo-Puche has made some interesting statements relative to his trilogy, and specifically to this novel. In one place he expresses his aim in these words:

El Cíngulo es un intento de desnudar el alma del catolicismo español comenzando por su Iglesia para ver hasta que punto sus virtudes externas han podido desorientar sobre sus vicios internos. Se puede saber morir por la fe y no saber vivir

¹Antonio Valencia, "El sacerdote, drama y problema," Arriba, 20 de Julio, 1971.

²Manuel Gómez Ortiz, "José Luis Castillo-Puche, como un torrente," El Libro Español, núm. 171, marzo, 1972, p. 123.

según la caridad; se puede ser casto y ser un monstruo; se puede ser muy leal y fiel a la llamada jerarquía y ser un monumento vivo y circulante de egoísmo o un emblema obsesivo y obsesionante de injusticia social. En El cingulo reviso el sacerdocio español desde fuera y desde dentro, hacia abajo y hacia arriba, no sólo con los problemas del celibato, sino desde otros conflictos más profundos de la conciencia. Se trata de analizar todo un proceso de sinceridad, o mejor dicho, de insinceridad en la Iglesia, desde la formación misma de los sacerdotes. Sinceridad y autenticidad han sido mis motivos y mi cuestionario. Y si me he metido en la temática religiosa ha sido porque creo sinceramente que vivimos un momento histórico en que lo religioso - no la religiosidad -, lo cristiano incluso, se han convertido como nunca en conflicto y drama para el hombre. Se dice que la Iglesia Católica está cruzando un periodo de crisis lo más novelable. Mi novela no presenta el sacerdocio católico como triunfo sino como impotencia.

Los sacerdotes católicos, sobre todo en determinados países, están en el trance de volver al principio - a la nada casi, al lado del pueblo, o a quedar como fantasmas medio estáticos, medio itinerantes a los cuales si Cristo bajara a la tierra le costaría reconocer. Se han apartado - a veces no sólo como rebaño, sino como pastores - de lo que fue el mensaje de Pentecostés.

La contradicción no está solo en eso que se llama la lucha de la carne y mi novela, que comienza con esto, va cubriendo en sus tres partes todo el sabor del fraude, el extravío y la adulteración que se ha adueñado el espíritu.¹

Castillo-Puche, moreover, is searching for some sort of logical liberation from fetishes he sees in some of the old religious practices, all too externalized and lacking in spirit. To find a balanced middle road, he feels, a novelist must be a lover of humanity, or perhaps, at first, one who hates, but above all he cannot be indifferent. It is precisely this indifference or complacency, he submits, that:

¹Baltasar Porcel, "José Luis Castillo-Puche o la vida a borbotones," Destino (Barcelona) num. 1765, 7 de Julio, 1971, p. 12.

brought the Church to an historical moment when it was out of tune with the rest of the world - a world which continued advancing in so many ways while the Church stood still. Castillo-Puche admits: "me interesa todo lo que es renovación, ensayo, experimentación, pero nunca como simple alarde y artificio."¹ This novelist, then, continues through this trilogy and, it would seem, plans in all his future novelistic production, to be in tune with the times, to keep his finger on the pulse of what is happening within his own country and around the world. The impressions he has are quickly translated into expression through his many articles that appear almost daily in the newspapers and magazines of Madrid, but they eventually appear later in fictionalized version through his novels. His last published novel is certainly what Corbalán calls it: "áspera, tremenda, apasionada, revuelta y torrencial y provocará polémica."²

JEREMÍAS EL ANARQUISTA

Castillo-Puche expects the second novel of the trilogy to be published during the summer or the fall of 1974 depending largely on the reaction of the censors. Initially the book was to be entitled La Misa Negra, but when word got out, the author realized that this title would give rise to considerable controversy in view of the fact that there is currently so much interest in the occult and terms become

¹Pablo Corbalán, "Castillo-Puche contra los tabúes," Informaciones, Madrid (Suplemento de las artes y las letras), diciembre, 1971.

confused. Originally a Black Mass referred to what is now known as an underground Mass, that is, usually a Mass offered by a suspended priest but the current connotation is a Mass involving devil-worship. The new title refers to the protagonist, Jeremías whose political ideology (or lack of it) is central to the theme.

Castillo-Puche draws greatly upon his four years in New York, particularly up his work as correspondent for Informaciones of Madrid at the United Nations. The fate of the priests presented initially in Como ovejas al matadero is found in this novel together with an authentic presentation of some of the inner workings of the international peace-keeping organization. From what the author tells us, there is evidently a much broader perspective in this work, not only geographically, but in its breadth, since it encompasses many aspects of contemporary society in New York and in Spain. Castillo-Puche claims he wanted to highlight many of the situations plaguing modern man in a technological society; whether or not he has done so remains to be seen. Of one thing we may be certain - because the author insists upon it - he is finished with clerical themes once for all.

Critique

There is in Sin camino, the earliest written work of Castillo-Puche, (and one which sets the pace for future novels dealing with a similar theme), a departure from what Dendle considers the defensive attitude of Catholic novels. Stressing here the primacy of feelings over ideas, the

author sets forth the social and moral imperatives which try to convince a man just where his future lies while he, aware of his own truth, cannot honestly accept those imperatives. The author's sincerity based upon what he knows to be a very probable situation is unquestionable; W.D. Howells has stated, a propos of this: "For the reader, whether he is an author too or not, the only test of a novel's truth is his own knowledge of life."¹ Hence, there is an element of verisimilitude here, even if it deals with a subject that traditionally makes Catholics squirm with discomfort, namely the disillusionment with, and subsequent relinquishing of, a Religious calling.

Castillo-Puche's pace here, while somewhat uneven, is restful and in a minor key if compared with the stridency of his latest novel about seminarians, Como ovejas al matadero. The sentences are shorter in length than in the later novel making the narration move more rapidly. The shift of scene in Sin camino to the city away from the seminary helps relieve the tensions and ambiguities suggested by the latter location whereas in Como ovejas, one is given no relief or change of mood. Artistically perhaps the latter is better conceived if the stress is placed on the interior changes in a character rather than in his external setting, yet, unfortunately, the irrational interior monologues of the tortured Alfredo are entirely too drawn out. The action

¹W.D. Howells, Novel-Writing and Novel-Reading (Ohio: Rutherford B. Hayes Lib. Press, 1948), p. 30.

occurs within a few hours span with numerous flashbacks made by the four principals during the brief hours they are in the seminary chapel mechanically going through the ceremony of their ordination. It is their existential moment and all the doubts as well as the dreams of all the years are crowding in upon them now: for two of the men it is a day of joy, for the protagonist, one of terror while the fourth rather accepts it all in stride.

There is a richness of language in Como ovejas al matadero which the earlier work lacks, but which is effectively employed here in the interior ruminations of the characters. Both novels, unlike others written in between, are in the third person and might have limited appeal (especially the later one) insofar as they presume the reader is at least fairly familiar with the Latin rite of ordination used in the pre-Vatical II church. The entire frame of reference, in fact, is very much that of Catholic Spain. The idealism of the true call to the priesthood expressed in some moving passages reminds one of the ecstatic songs of the early mystics, but these sections of the novel are buried under the overwhelming avalanche of anguish, insincerity, and terror expressed by the protagonist. Esthetically the novel might be spoiled for some by its morbid recounting of clinical details associated with a diseased mind as Alfredo is precipitated to his final state of lunacy by the end of the day.

Given the rapid changes that have taken place in the

Catholic Church in the past ten years, Como ovejas al matadero has become dated and the emotions and psychic stress of its characters may appear to future readers entirely overdrawn and unwarranted.

CHAPTER III

CONFLICTS WITH EXTERNAL FORCES

It is the tendency, as we have seen, for the post-war Spanish novelists to depict characters who are almost solipsistically engrossed in self-searchings and doubts caused by historical circumstances. The persons about whom these novelists write focus on the bleaker aspects of their lives and any interplay between them and the outside world, rather than helping them resolve their doubts and providing new insights, serves only to accentuate their inner anguish. In the two novels discussed in this section, however, we find a number of characters attempting to cope with forces external to them: in the one case with an inanimate object, namely money, and in the other, with an individual of a different national and racial background. The emphasis placed here on this relationship between man and the modifications wrought in him by his encounters with "another" or "a thing" make Paralelo 40 and Hicieron partes, respectively, somewhat different from the other novels and short stories by Castillo-Puche.

Hicieron Partes

The plot of this novel is uncomplicated and centers around a theme not uncommon in world literature, namely, the

effects that the sudden and unforeseen acquisition of wealth can have on human beings. In a review of the book, Fernández Almagro writes: "... el tema es viejo, de clásica antigüedad", for even in the fourteenth century, Juan Ruiz, Archpriest of Hita, in his Libro de buen amor underscored in an oft-quoted passage the power that money can have to influence and to corrupt.² Ascetical writers from the ages and in all nations have reiterated this point and, in keeping with their philosophy, Religious Orders of men and women have taken a vow of poverty so as to avoid entanglements that might restrict their usefulness to people and to the Church. Castillo-Puche claims that his aim in Hicieron partes¹ is to prove that only persons who make use of money with some measure of detachment can prevent being ultimately damaged to a greater or lesser degree by it:

El dinero, en general, entroniza un poder de corrupción y perversión del que sólo se salvan quienes lo aceptan sin egoísmo, sin esclavitud, sin servidumbre al poder que da.

The novel, divided into four parts, centers around the inheritance left by one don Roque Giménez de Espinosa of the town of Saruste (a town which Castillo-Puche assures us is Yecla, and it is the last time the author makes use of his

¹The novel received the Premio Nacional de Literatura "Miguel de Cervantes" in 1958. The edition used here was published by Destino, Barcelona, 1967.

²Juan Ruiz, El libro de buen amor, Vol. I (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1970), p. 188:

En suma te lo digo, tómalo tu mejor:
El dinero, del mundo es gran rrebolvedor,
Señor faze del siervo é del siervo señor,
Toda cosa del siglo se faze por su amor.

native town as setting for a novel). Don Roque is essentially upright and religious although a bit of a misanthropist; he has, by dint of economizing and adroit handling of funds, become a respected member of the nouveaux riches. Aloof by nature, there is just one distant relative who enjoys the trust of the old man, don Luciano, the archpriest of the town. It is he who, as friend and confidant, comforts and supports don Roque as he prepares to depart this life in the year 1931; it is he too who advises him concerning the disposal of his estate. The first section of this novel, therefore, is devoted to a narration of the passing of don Roque, but more extensively, to the legal aspects involved in filling a Last Will and Testament and, more humorously, to the speculation of the townspeople about who is likely to receive what of the decedent's estate.

The figure of paramount interest who, indeed, may be said to save the novel from becoming a series of disjointed episodes is the priest, don Luciano whose literary antecedentes might very well be the don Fermín of La Regenta (although certainly not as corrupt as he) or don Magín of Nuestro Padre San Daniel. Don Luciano continues to appear throughout the novel, even to the surprising dénouement; in him one sees the spiritual and human growth of a man whose innate sincerity saves him from continuing on the path of moral self-destruction which, at the novel's outset, he seems to be following. The reactions of don Luciano to the several contrettempts that

assail him and the decisions that all the other relatives and heirs of don Roque must make in respect to their new-found wealth, constitute, in essence the conflicts of this novel.

Of the somewhat controversial don Luciano, the critic de Hornedo has written:

Don Luciano era personaje intocable, pero respiraba y se movía como un hombre de carne y hueso, claro que de una carne y hueso de índole privilegiada y superior.

Tenía fama de hombre refinado y comodón... El falso misticismo, la ausencia de freno moral del magistral de Vetusta (Fermín) era en don Luciano, religiosidad verdadera y rectitud de conciencia hasta el punto de sentir en ello vanidad y complacencia interior.

... por lo que de él se dice y por cómo se conduce en la novela, saco la impresión que se le juzga con excesive severidad.¹

So trustful had the dying don Roque been of this man of the cloth, that he allowed him the liberty of setting any conditions he might consider advisable upon his heirs as prerequisites for receiving their share of the inheritance.

Accordingly, the executors of the Will are advised that two of the heirs are to be beneficiaries only "sub conditions." Should they refuse to meet the conditions imposed, the monies thereby forfeited are to be employed in the refurbishing of don Luciano's church. It is through this arbitrary technique that two of the heirs are summarily, albeit dramatically, disposed of.

The first to fall victim to these conditional arrangements is Trinidad, a distant relative of the deceased and a

¹Rafael María de Hornedo, "El Nuevo Premio Laurel del libro de novela católica", Razón y fe (julio-agosto, 1958), p. 96.

hard working farmer. For some time he had been active in a syndicate dedicated to the betterment of the farm laborers' lot by means of democratic processes. Such activities seemed to don Luciano to pose a threat to the status quo and to be entirely too liberal in nature; Trinidad must either withdraw from the syndicate or lose his share of the inheritance. He rejects the condition and the money, preferring his freedom of action to the capricious will of a cleric whose enemy he has now become; the hatred thus engendered is transmitted to Trinidad's son, Cosme, who, as we shall see, will prove to be the priest's undoing.

The other heir, who likewise shall choose to reject an encroachment upon his freedom of choice, is Lorenzo, a young and restless seminarian. Evidently don Luciano is aware of the youth's struggles regarding the authenticity of his calling; he notifies him, therefore, that he may not receive his inheritance until after he is ordained priest. Furious at the treatment thus accorded him, the youth hastens to the Church one day and, in a scene that scandalizes those present, physically attacks don Luciano as the latter emerges from his confessional. Not long after, Lorenzo opts to abandon the seminary and, adding insult to injury, flees the town with Rosarito, niece and ward of fon Luciano upon whom the latter had showered every material and spiritual benefit at his disposal and who, secretly, he had hoped would join the community of nuns who had been her teachers. Yet, from the following description, we can see that the well-laid

plans of the archpriest were truly frustrated in Rosarito:

En vez de inclinarse por la vida de las monjas, Rosarito se chiflaba por el cine, por las fiestas de las amigas ricas, por los vestidos caros. No es que fuera provocativa, pero engañaba... Pero don Luciano, que la tenía en su casa, la veía vivir distante, desagradecida, rebelde. No sabía explicar por qué, pero era así.¹

Certainly, the girl's rebelliousness and ingratitude hurt and disappoint her uncle, but what begins to bring him to his senses with regard to his own self-righteousness and close-mindedness is a letter from Lorenzo received a few days after their encounter. The ex-seminarian writes in part:

Ya podía haberse figurado que cuando me resolví a desenmascararlo en la propia iglesia fue, no sólo porque había decidido colgar las sotanas, sino porque quería demostrar públicamente el asco que me inspira su sacerdocio... No creo, de verdad, que Cristo viniera a la tierra para aposentar en lo sagrado a seres tan mezquinos y ruines como usted.²

Stunned by these words, don Luciano experiences a heretofore unknown sense of rejection, of shame. The author writes of him:

Entró en la capilla. Para él era una costumbre. Pero ahora no era lo mismo. ...Nada más caer de rodillas se cubrió la cara con las manos y sintió sobre su alma una confusión y una vergüenza.... No es que don Luciano fuera a cambiar radicalmente en nada; seguía siendo el mismo, con los mismos hábitos de comodidad, con el mismo apego a mandar, con sus perezosas rutinas. Pero en su interior algo había cambiado de raíz.³

¹José Luis Castillo-Puche, Hicieron partes (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1967), pp. 48-49.

²Hicieron partes, p. 94.

³Ibid., pp. 109; 128.

And he himself writes soon afterwards in his own spiritual journal the following words - words which a fortnight earlier would never have issued from his pen:

He llegado a la conclusión de que he fracasado en mi sacerdocio. No he fracasado estrepitosamente, ni externamente, pero he fracasado en los fundamentos... mi mal consiste en que las cosas externas me pueden y me arrastran.¹

While the presence of don Luciano may be said to be all-pervasive throughout this novel, nevertheless, his personal conflict is not specifically bound up with his share of the inheritance (as in the case of all the others involved as we shall subsequently show), but with his own overbearing behavior towards others as well as his self-indulgence and habitual indolence.

The heirs

The five chapters of the second part of the novel in question (and the section comprising more than half the book) recount the use each heir makes of his or her inheritance. This type of loose-knit structure (each chapter could in itself be a short story) in a novel demands less effort and planning on the part of the author, as Castillo-Puche has assured us, but when one reads what had preceded and what follows, one realizes that there is an inter-relation, perhaps more subtle, but almost as elaborate as in Paralelo 40 which shall be discussed below. Juan Luis Alborg comments on the common thread running throughout the work:

¹Ibid., p. 129.

A diferencia de los otros libros, prietos y cerrados en torno a un núcleo central, Hicieron partes se mueve en un ámbito más disperso y vario. En realidad se trata de un conjunto de relatos diversos, agrupados tan sólo por el hecho de ser común el origen de la fortuna, pues aunque sus vidas se cruzan luego nuevamente, la mayoría sigue su propia trayectoria.¹

Thus, as Alborg has noted, most of the heirs do go their own separate ways, but we would submit that because of the few whose lives touch and are affected by that of don Luciano, the novel possesses a much more evident cohesion than first meets the eye. The conflicts are not merely between a given personage and his use of money but, in truth, there exists a tension between material and spiritual values in general. Gonzalo Sobejano, who Castillo-Puche considers the best interpreter of his novels, sums up his impressions in the following words:

A primera vista puede parecer que la idea fundamental de Hicieron partes es hacer ver los trastornos y equivocaciones que en el destino de los hombres engendra el dinero no ganado por propio esfuerzo. Pero lo esencial es, más bien, el problema de la vida egoísta y materialista frente a la verdad de la llamada religiosa y del ansia de reconciliación con la Gracia... Castillo-Puche (está) interesado nuevamente por las vivencias conflictivas, los meandros del destino y los procesos de conversión desde la ofuscación a la lucidez.²

If we include don Luciano whose life, as we shall see again later, is irrevocably altered by his inheritance, there

¹Juan Luis Alborg, Hora actual de la novela española (Madrid: Taurus, 1958), p. 318.

²Gonzalo Sobejano, Novela española de nuestro tiempo (Madrid: Editorial prensa española, 1970), p. 194.

are three others among a total of seven heirs who are not, in a sense, destroyed by their own greed: they are Sor Paula, a Daughter of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul and head of a home for the poor and homeless, and the couple, Frasquito and Juana.

The person of Sor Paula is clearly reminiscent of that other stalwart woman of God, Saint Teresa of Avila. She not only supervises the asylum with efficiency and concern, but is also a keen observer of human nature: "Yo creo que el arcipreste acarrea más de lo que le pertenece en todo, en lo bueno y en lo malo."¹ As for herself, she is not given to fantasizing when informed of her inheritance of one hundred fifty thousand pesetas, (to one of her companions, she had once remarked: "Bien decía Santa Teresa que la imaginación es la loca de la casa."²) But rather draws up very practical plans for its use: the enlargement and improvement of facilities in the institution she heads. Consonant with her life of religious commitment, she does not ask for anything for herself personally but is dependent upon her Mother Provincial for permission to carry out her plans. Before long, Sor Paula receives a letter from the Provincial in response to her own: the enterprising superior may indeed put the money to the uses she saw fit, but she would also forthwith be transferred to another town and take charge of another institution. The conflict in the case of Sor Paula is,

¹Hicieron partes, p. 81.

²Ibid., p. 80.

therefore, unlike that of the others we shall consider. Far from destroying her either physically or morally, it deepens her sense of detachment and delivers her, perhaps, from any vanity that her inheritance and its use might have engendered - a sort of pride and arrogance heretofore foreign to her nature. And at the close of the vignette given us of this remarkable nun, we see a woman still very much aware of her capabilities, still very much in control of herself and her situation, still personally uncorrupted by material advantages:

Sor Paula, ya de pie, rezó las preces. Luego, con paso decidido, salió andando. Realmente, era una monja airosa. Había nacido para superiora. De aquel asilo o del que fuera. Ella sabía que terminaría en la capital. O más lejos.¹

The other heirs not adversely affected by their sudden and unexpected inheritance are Frasquito and Juana, a middle-aged couple. Simple, religious people, this childless pair have been left a sizeable and rich vineyard in an adjoining town. Fearful and indecisive by nature, they spend some anguished days trying to decide just how they will dispose of this land: they have no children and do not trust their nieces or nephews to oversee the land. Ultimately they decide to sell it.

Having located an agent in the nearby town where the land is located, they travel there anxious to bring home the sizeable amount the sale should gain for them, and excited at

¹Hicieron partes, p. 91.

the prospect of some unexpected comforts for their declining years. Their very naïve, unsophisticated behavior throughout the entire business venture reflects their humble, small-town mentality; the dialogues between them, moreover, underscore the fact that their relationship has worn thin, that they need a jolt of some kind to inject new enthusiasm, new meaning into their marriage. Presently, the couple close the deal, sign the necessary papers and set out for home in possession of their money. Characteristically they quibble as to which one shall carry the precious burden and Juana wins out, assuring her husband that it could not be safer than in a small pouch around her waist and hidden under her voluminous skirts. Frasquito agrees, and they board the train for home. There is one short stop en route during which the nervous wife repairs to a rest room from which, in a few moments, there issue cries of alarm. Frasquito hurries to the door and out comes his wife, pale, mumbling incoherently, and uncontrollably. The money has disappeared; they are utterly mystified. When they are able to collect their wits, they retrace their steps, but to no avail. Eventually they face the fact that they have been robbed, albeit mysteriously, and return home sadder but, as time will prove, wiser.

Hitherto, the husband-wife relationship between Frasquito and Juana had largely been conditioned by temperamental and/or religious inhibitions not unusual in a small backward town such as Saruste is made out to be. While evidently devoted to each other, this couple seems unable to communicate their

affection; their financial loss somehow begins to make them aware of each other in a totally new way. They realize, as they never could before, that in each other they have their most valuable possession: the land is gone; the money is lost, but they still have each other, and, up to now, they have not fully enjoyed each other. That night it is a new Frasquito who climbs into bed next to Juana:

Pensó que nada más entrar se iría derecho a la cama y la cogería de la mano fuertemente para decirle que no importaba nada que se hubiera perdido el dinero. Lo perdido, perdido estaba. ...Tampoco era necesario el dinero para ser felices los dos solos, los dos juntos, unidos y encerrados en aquella casa... Frasquito...quiso concentrar toda la atención de sus miembros en la posesión de su mujer...tenían que volver al comienzo de su matrimonio, como cuando tenían la ilusión del hijo... sería como empezar la vida de nuevo... (Estaban) sin dinero, pero tranquilos y felices...Juana suspiraba hondamente.¹

There are those who would claim that Sor Paula, the couple just described, and all the characters of this novel benefitting from fon Roque's estate were predestined to their respective fates and could not have done anything to change them. Such fatalists look upon Castillo-Puche, the novelist, as somewhat of a pessimist, a writer who draws his characters with broad, black strokes of the pen, highlighting at each step the tragic flaw, the anguished spirit. The author, on the contrary, considers himself rather a realist than a pessimist, although one his compatriots and a literary critic of note has observed the following:

¹Hicieron partes, p. 184.

Creo que los personajes de Castillo-Puche, excepto las admirables monjitas del convento, son criaturas predestinadas, y el dinero no es más que el motivo, quizá mejor, el resorte que pone en juego la fatalidad. Castillo-Puche da al dinero, a la riqueza, importancia decisiva en la resolución de la problemática humana de sus criaturas, lo cual parece actitud extremadamente pesimista.

José Luis Castillo-Puche es uno de los pocos novelistas españoles que ha logrado sustraerse al grotesco esteticismo que ha modificado entre rancios aromas a nuestra novela por una parte. Por otra se mantiene constantemente alejado de esa burla provinciana del "tremendismo"... todos sus personajes aparecen ante nosotros como "fuerzas", con la simplicidad de sucesos biológicos, y aquí estriba precisamente que una causa exterior, como es la riqueza, produzca entre los personajes de su último libro no problema, sino catástrofe.¹

Catastrophic indeed may be the fate of at least two of the heirs as we shall presently see; nevertheless there is an element of comedy at least in the case of Frasquito and his wife, Juana. In this regard, Alborg comments: "...las trágicas escenas al advertir el robo son de los más conseguidos del libro y patentizan la fresca gracia del autor..."²

A complete metamorphosis is brought about in the personality of Periquín, el Borreguero, one of the nearest of kin (his father was don Roque's first cousin) to inherit a goodly sum from the estate of the deceased. While humble of origin, he was astute enough to make his presence felt frequently during don Roque's last illness, thereby ingratiating himself with the rich man; yet, even this constant

¹ Carlos Luis Alvarez, "Hicieron partes de José Luis Castillo-Puche," Punta Europa, (abril, 1958), 122-123.

² Alborg, p. 320.

presence of his was largely overlooked by don Luciano and everyone else because "Periquín era de esas personas en quienes nadie se fijaba, porque siempre están formando parte del coro, nunca como protagonistas," and "porque Periquín, hombre pequeño y gris, tenía esa cualidad de no inquietar a nadie." Nevertheless, no sooner does he come into his inheritance, than he sets out to amass great fortunes; he buys farmlands which he works with incredible skill; sells the produce thereof and purchases more land on which he builds a comfortable house to which he can never seem to find time to move with his family.

Before inheriting his money, Periquín had wanted just enough to be able to live comfortably with his wife, Bernarda; while his children had been happy tending his animals. And well-liked by the townspeople, he shunned such controversial subjects as politics or religion, and had been, ostensibly, neither pretentious nor overly ambitious. The poor man is consumed now by an insatiable desire for more and more money, more and more possessions until he becomes utterly crazed. No longer able to struggle with the conflicts caused by his possessions, particularly the estates he calls La Vereda, he resorts to guarding them with a shotgun lest anyone threaten his ownership. Reduced to a state of incurable paranoia, Periquín takes a shot at a neighboring proprietor one day and is interned in a mental institution where he continues to rant and rave about his tomato fields and ends his pitiable existence by hanging himself.

Tenía unos cambios de humor tremendamente contradictorios. (p. 138)

Hablaba cada vez menos con los jornaleros y su actitud no invitaba tampoco a los vecinos a la conversación. (p. 139)

Se reconcentraba en sí mismo y, sin querer, accionaba y hacía números y números hasta lanzar con cajas destempladas a los que venían a interrumpirle. (p. 139)

...se mostraba cruel con sus hijos, a los que obligaba a trabajar duramente... Al mayor, que tenía catorce años, lo hizo sacar de la escuela para que trabajase en la finca. (p. 141)

Estaba lleno de manías y de mal humor. (p. 142)

Aunque no llegaba a emborracharse del todo, muchos días se los pasaba en un estado de tensión, agresividad y enajenación terribles. (p. 143)

Antes era muy religioso y, sobre todo, cumplidor puntual con los preceptos de la Iglesia. Ahora, con esto de los tomates y las lechugas y el pozo andaba tan ocupado que no tenía nunca tiempo ni de ir a la iglesia. (p. 143)

Hasta en cosas de las que, al parecer, nunca había oído hablar, Periquín se había convertido en una especie de sabio. (p. 143)

Most critics see in the reaction of the several heirs, as recounted in this second part, a classically existential treatment, and in his review of the book, Fernández Almagro has written:

...su tipo de inspiración se ajusta a línea radicalmente distinta a la realidad deformada caricaturescamente... arranca de un punto neorealista común a notoria variedad de direcciones, alguna de ellas influida por la más característica preocupación filosófica-moral de nuestros días: el existencialismo. Y ésta sí que es la filiación, a nuestro juicio, del autor de

Hicieron partes. Existencialismo católico es el de José Luis Castillo-Puche por la enseñanza moral del desenlace...¹

Since Periquín, in the case just described, had all of his life been notoriously religious, one cannot but wonder whether or not he had been simply going through the motions, so to speak, of external observance, so evident, particularly in small towns, or was he just a grossly ignorant man wholly insensitive to how he was destroying his family as well as himself. Of all the heirs of don Roque (and, as we shall see, the descendant of one of these), we would submit that Periquín alone seems somewhat unbelievable since one can only conjecture as to the "why" of his incredible decline.

Perhaps the most tragic figure among the heirs of don Roque is the one called Casimiro, el jabonero with whom the last and longest chapter of the second part of the novel is concerned. The conflicts of this man are multiple: his feverish desire for wealth and prestige tortures him day and night; his infidelity to his wife, Patro, causes him to suffer great remorse; the fear and anguish engendered by exposure to a country immersed in civil conflict (the action of the novel encompasses the years 1931 to 1940, but the characters who remain in relative seclusion in Saruste are not exposed to the dangers experienced by Casimiro whose business takes him on many trips to the capital.)

In contrast with the fine, lyrical quality in the story

¹Melchor Fernández Almagro, "Hicieron partes", ABC (8 de febrero, 1959).

of Sor Paula, we encounter here in the Casimiro episode an entirely different world, one of avarice, of intrigue, of deceit; yet no one takes Casimiro seriously and his friends humor what they consider delusions of grandeur. They are, nevertheless, not disposed to humor him when, in fact, he is declared one of don Roque's heirs. Since the people of a small town are more inclined to accept the wealthy rather than the nouveau riche, they reject Casimiro who, in any case, had never had, even before his inheritance, very much to recommend him. Of this small-town attitude, Fernández Almagro has said in the earlier cited review of the novel: "El pueblo acepta complacido la riqueza de don Roque. Lo que se resiste a aceptar es la riqueza de sus herederos, y si la aceptase colectivamente, no estaría dispuesto a hacerlo con cada uno en particular..."

As with the two novels to be discussed in Chapter IV, namely Con la muerte al hombro y El Vengador, Castillo-Puche sets this section about Casimiro against the backdrop of the Civil War, but the war assumes only a minor role.

If Casimiro's name may be said to be synonymous with any word, that word is money: even his attraction to the ladies rank second in his life. Not only had he dreamed all his life of owning a successful business and reaping its rewards, but never did he take into account the effects of such ruthless ambition on others: his wife, his friends, his compatriots. In the following excerpts we read:

Casimiro había dicho siempre que a los cuarenta pensaba ser rico. (p. 186)

Tenía fe absoluta en el dinero. (p. 190)

El dinero lo resuelve todo, incluso un hijo
tenido de mala manera. (p. 225)

(Casimiro had had an illegitimate child by his paramour,
Angelines).

Todo, últimamente, se le convertía a Casimiro
en dinero o en facilidad para lograrlo. (p. 226)

The fast-growing narrative style and, above all, the lively dialogue of this chapter captures the pace of Casimiro's life, the growing crescendo of greed, egoism, pride, deceit and ultimately, deep-seated hatred that will, in turn, fill the hearts of his employees. Castillo-Puche does not sermonize in any overt manner in this account of Casimiro's moral decay, but the latter's behavior and his ultimate fate are eloquent enough to place this novelette within the category of a religious if not Catholic short story. For we follow spiritual torments of the character as he oscillates between an awareness of his moral turpitude and his feeble efforts to begin an honorable life. Sensing, for example, the growing hostility that his tyrannical ways have instilled in the hearts and minds of his employees, he makes weak, sporadic efforts to gain their good will; but it is too late. Similarly, even as he makes love to Angelines, he realizes his infidelity to his own wife and children and cries out: "Perdóname, soy un tonto. Dios tiene que compadecerse. Yo no tengo la culpa."¹

Like the rich man described in the Gospels who gloried

¹Hicieron partes, p. 245.

in building more barns, in buying more properties, Casimiro was obsessed with visiting the factories and laboratories that made up his perfume-manufacturing enterprise. Proudly he struts about, master of all he surveys and disdainful of the workers he grossly underpays, until, one fateful day a terrifying scream pierces the air: "un grito inarticulado, un grito de terror que lo mismo podía haber sido la palabra 'no' que la palabra Dios."¹ Casimiro had been hurled into a cauldron or lye and destroyed by the men whose lives he had so callously oppressed. In face of such a horrible dénouement, we can more readily understand the viewpoint of one of the critics of this novel:

Quien haya leído no más que dos novelas de Castillo-Puche advertirá en seguida la ansiedad trágica de sus creaciones...marcadas siempre por el horror a la alegría... son almas trágicas.²

Cosme

In part three of the novel, we pick up the threads of don Luciano's life interrupted temporarily by the stories of the other heirs to the fortune of don Roque. Reminiscent of the technique employed by Camilo José Cela in his La Familia de Pascual Duarte, this section consists of a journal kept in prison by Cosme, who was the son of the same Trinidad who had been disinherited when he had failed to comply with the condition specified by don Luciano, namely, that he sever

¹Hicieron partes, p. 245

²Carlos Luis Alvarez, "Hicieron partes," Punta Europa, abril, 1958, núm. 28.

his connections with the farmers' syndicate. Cosme had grown up with the knowledge that his father had been arbitrarily defrauded of his inheritance. The father's hatred for don Luciano, with the passage of time, began to infiltrate the mind of his son, until the latter is driven to murder the archpriest. Sobejano calls this diary of the prisoner the most intense and dramatic part of the entire novel. He writes:

Precisamente la parte más intensa de la novela, y la más representativa del mundo espiritual de su autor, está formada por el cuaderno de impresiones y confidencias de Cosme, preso y condenado a muerte a poco de terminar la guerra civil. Su condena no se debe sólo al hecho de haber dado muerte al archipreste, sino a matanzas y desafueros perpetrados durante la guerra contra gentes de la retaguardia y a robos cometidos en un dinero destinado a las familias de los combatientes. Sin embargo, el prisionero sólo se siente abrumado por el crimen contra el sacerdote.¹

Once again we witness here how the events of the Civil War, always suggested but never described complicate the already complex existences of the heirs of don Roque. In the case of Cosme, however, what weighs most heavily upon his conscience as he languishes in prison is not his part in anti-fascist activities, as much as the death he dealt out to his father's enemy, don Luciano. And we wonder if it would have made any difference had Cosme known that the archpriest of Saruste had long since departed his native town in order to join a Jesuit community in Valencia; that the priest had, after much soul-

¹Gonzalo Sobejano, Novela española de nuestro tiempo (Madrid: Editorial Prensa Española, 1970), p. 194.

searching, admitted to himself that he was insufferably proud, overbearing and manipulative of others; and, finally, that he had, to the edification of many, set out upon a path of loving service to his fellow man, a service that did not exclude even the most menial tasks: making the beds of the sick and washing their dishes as well as visiting the prison. Cosme knew only that, for many years, he had had to listen to the recriminations of his mother as she berated his father for relinquishing his inheritance because of his foolish pride. When the added privations imposed by a country at war reduced his family to real misery, and Cosme's father, Trinidad, drowned his sorrows in alcohol, the boy became even more aware that don Luciano deprived them of the comforts they could have had.

In his journal, then Cosme recounts how he met don Luciano one day quite unexpectedly. The priest recognizes him and speaks quite kindly and warmly to him, but Cosme looks upon this attitude as another proof of the priest's hypocrisy. Now from his prison cell, Cosme laments the fact that don Luciano acknowledged his acquaintance with Cosme that day: why had he just not ignored him because then he would be alive today and Cosme not in death row: "...si a don luciano le hubiera dado por esconderse y simular, yo creo, estoy seguro, que se hubiera salvado. Pero él en seguida se destacó."¹ The pain of the years was too much for Cosme and

¹Hicieron partes, p. 281.

he decided what he must do since don Luciano visited the prison daily: it would be easy to determine an exact time and place for carrying out his nefarious deed. But his plans, while partly successful, were ruined by the fact that the priest did not die immediately after being gunned down by him but had time to forgive his murderer and thereby died a martyr.

Now, as Cosme fills up the notebook in his cell, he realizes that his crime has solved nothing; on the contrary, it has intensified his present torture - a torture born of his new appreciation of the value of human life, of even one moment of that precious and fragile commodity. Here Castillo-Puche characteristically reiterates through Cosme his hatred of wars in which men learn so easily to kill: "A mi me cegó la guerra, la maldita guerra... Era tan fácil matar."¹

More humiliating, perhaps, for the unhappy prisoner as he sits behind bars awaiting execution is the fact that his most frequent visitor and staunchest support now is the priest, don Tarsicio. It was he who suggested to Cosme that he keep a journal and it is he who tries in vain to have the prisoner's sentence commuted to life imprisonment. Finally, it is he who accompanies him to his death and imparts to him the courage to die like a man.

His months of incarceration had provided Cosme with ample time to reflect upon the question of the cursed inheritance over which his mother had so often angered his

¹Hicieron partes, p. 285.

father and had brought only discord to his home. He declares in his diary:

..si una vez quitado de delante aquel embrollo del dinero que nos había robado la paz, mi padre se hubiera puesto a trabajar como un negro, todavía; pero lo cierto es que se quedó hastiado y dolido contra todo lo que le era familiar y le dio por querer vivir como un auténtico señorito... La herencia, la dichosa herencia era para él y para todos una obsesión ... Parecía que don Roque, el famoso don Roque, más que dejar dinero, hubiera dejado sueltos escorpiones, sapos y culebras, y un servidor no culpa a nadie de todo más que al dinero, que es lo que tiene la culpa de todo lo malo de este mundo.¹

It is worthy of note here that only those heirs not corrupted by their inheritance come forth now to provide a measure of comfort to the young prisoner. Sor Paula visits him twice and imparts some of her own great moral and spiritual strength to him; Frasquito and Juana send him an occasional gift that expresses their concern for him and their understanding of his situation.

The journal, then, serves to pull together, as it were, the tangled threads of the lives of all the surviving heirs of the late don Roque. Reflecting upon these lives, one critic of the novel writes:

Las consecuencias principales que parece sacar el autor son dos: que no debemos ser providentes en extremo, al modo de don Luciano, sino dejar más llanamente las cosas en manos de la providencia, y otra - aunque no aparezca expuesta con tanta escueta claridad - que quien no tuviere herederos forzosos, si quiere estar más

¹Hicieron partes, p. 254.

seguro del buen uso de su fortuna, hará bien dejarla a una obra benéfica.¹

But above all else, the journal reveals much about the one who is writing it, although unwittingly: Cosme had begun his writing in a cynical mood; at its close he is a deeply serious, mature human being, realistic about his situation and ready to accept his fate.

Epilogue

The fourth and final part of the novel serves as a postlude both to the war and to the fortunes of several heirs we have been studying. Don Tarcisio returns to Saruste to impart whatever consolation he can to the bereaved family that Cosme has left behind. It is this priest alone who realizes the incredible change Cosme has undergone because, during the weeks of his imprisonment, don Tarcisio had been sole confidant from whom the condemned man had kept nothing of his notorious past. Not only had Cosme killed don Luciano, but he had also availed himself of the confusion engendered by the war to rob, at every opportunity, both money and previous jewels. In his childhood, he admits, he had felt cheated of an inheritance; when the chance came, he yearned to compensate for the earlier injustice. And thus do we return once again to the permeating theme of the novel the role of material goods in the life of men:

¹Rafael Ma de Hornedo, "El nuevo premio Laurel del libro de novela católica," Razón y fe, julio-agosto, 1958.

Una de las cosas que más le había impresionado de él (Cosme) era su pasión por el dinero, aquella alusión constante a la herencia. Nunca podía haber presentido don Roque la catástrofe que había de desencadenar su testamento.¹ A continuación le contó (a don Tarcisio) que en Alicante, antes de que lo prendieran, había tirado al puerto un maletín con joyas robadas y un montón de billetes de mil.²

Don Tarcisio finds that in Saruste, the townspeople had followed with interest the events associated with the imprisonment and execution of the young Cosme. But now in the post-war period they have but one concern - to rebuild their lives and improve their fortunes. The past seems quickly forgotten. Perhaps Cosme's mother (her husband has died) is the only one who will never forget. As she reads the letter that her son has sent her through don Tarcisio, she laments: "Le digo, como si me estuviera muriendo, que la perdición en esta casa entró por el dinero."² To this the priest responds: "Pues lo único que no puede comprarse con dinero es el cielo, y su hijo lo ha conseguido."³ Therefore the priest becomes a staunch support of the fatherless family and is especially helpful to Rafaelín, the youngest son for whom the Civil War, and all that preceded it, is but a blurred memory. Meanwhile the new arch-priest of Saruste discusses with don Tarcisio all that has transpired in the town since the death of don Roque. In retrospect, he admits

¹Hicieron partes, p. 304.

²Ibid., p. 305.

³Ibid., p. 308.

that the only heirs of don Roque who have survived happily are Juana and Frasquito:

...esa pareja, como dos figuras de Belén, siempre caminan cogidos de la mano y parece que vayan a vivir más que Matusalén. Son los únicos a los que el dinero no les ha roto su vida anterior. Siguen viviendo como vivían siempre, sin separarse el uno del otro.¹

Hicieron partes deals, indeed, with an age-old theme, but it is recounted with a spontaneity and earthiness that keeps faith with the mood of the town in which it is set. The conflicts of its characters are real, human, indeed universal in their implications. In spite, then, of the relative simplicity of its plot, Alborg maintains that it is no less a work of art than the two novels of Castillo-Puche that preceded it and which are discussed in Chapter IV. Alborg writes:

...la nueva novela de Castillo-Puche conserva el nivel de los otros libros y confirma la maestría del autor, su desparpajo y su agudeza humorística. El autor nos hace vivir la anécdota de sus personajes con una llana naturalidad que constituye una de sus mayores excelencias: nunca vemos el esfuerzo de su trabajo, ese artificio - de cómico en escena - que se prepara para producir el impacto sobre el lector y que en tantos otros autores se desprende como un tufillo desagradable, porque revela lo que hay en ellos de truco, de treta de oficio, de habilidades de taller.²

PARALELO 40

This novel, running to about 500 pages and published in

¹ Ibid., p. 308.

² Juan Luis Alborg, Hora actual de la novela española (Madrid: Taurus, 1958), p. 319.

1963, was inspired by the lives of those Spaniards and Americans who inhabit a barrio known as Tetuán located in the northern part of Madrid near the Stadium of Bernabéu. Because the Americans living here were officers of the Air Force recently returned from Korea, the section was baptized Corea by the Spaniards, a name which it has not yet lost. Writing about this locale, Eduardo Tijeras has said:

Con el nombre de 'Corea' se ha bautizado la zona de Madrid donde vive la mayor de los americanos adscritos a la base conjunta de Torrejón de Ardoz, zona localizable por la plaza de Castilla, y en la que ha brotado una serie de hermosos rascacielos, cafeterías, cines, cooperativas, anuncios luminosos, todo lindando con el campo.¹

This is the neighborhood to which Castillo-Puche brought his bride in 1954 and where they now reside with their three children. As one walks along those streets today, one sees numerous fashionable shops and sidewalk cafés as well as tall, well-kept apartment houses. Geographically, this section is on the 40th parallel, but the title of the book has another more subtle meaning which, according to the author, refers to an equally unseen line of demarcation that, during the fifties, seemed to divide the Spaniards of the area from the newly-arrived Americans.

Just as Castillo-Puche had suffered considerable resentment from his fellow-yecanos when he had depicted some of their characteristic foibles in Con la muerte al hombro, so once again did he meet with suspicious glances

¹Eduardo Tijeras, "La Corea Madrileña de Castillo-Puche," Cuadernos hispanoamericanos, 1963 (LVI) #178, p. 679.

from those of his neighbors who felt they recognized themselves in this novel. One of those offended was the porter of his apartment building whose name, Genaro, is the name of the protagonist in the novel. To this objection, the author has answered:

Lo que puedo asegurar solamente es que mi protagonista es un personaje totalmente inventado por mí... un personaje de novela está hecho con datos, retazos, reflejos, intuiciones, gestos tomados de aquí y de allí, de éste y del otro, fundidos luego por el novelista en un ser nuevo, distinto, pero igual real, pero imaginado, vivo y palpitante, pero incorpóreo.

Gradually the complaints became less vociferous and eventually died away, but the author, in retrospect, places them in proper perspective; he says: "Me ha proporcionado algunos disgustos, pero, puestos en balanza los disgustos y las satisfacciones, creo que ganan las últimas."¹

It has been said that this is the novel par excellence of Americans in Spain, yet the Americans in this book constitute a unique group who serve as catalyst for a series of typical reactions on the part of Spaniards in general. In addition, the Americans here described, and the terrorist activities of some of the Spaniards, together fulfill the function of helping to reveal some of the ideas of the writer. The latter attests to the verisimilitude of his setting and action in these terms:

... lo que quisiera destacar es la fidelidad y la lealtad que hay en esta novela mía a un momento histórico y a un choque sociológico de

¹ _____, "José Luis Castillo-Puche, novelador del testimonio humano," El libro español, septiembre, 1964., p. 449.

la trascendencia de los grandes encuentros de los pueblos en la historia.

Enlarging upon this point, Castillo-Puche believes that even after readers may have lost interest in the novelistic aspects of this story, in its form or literary value, the novel will continue to serve as an indispensable source of information to sociologists concerned with the interaction of two quite distinct social entities at a given historical moment. Moreover, the analysis of the racial question as seen from the Spaniards' viewpoint, adds to its sociological value. In short, Paralelo 40 paints a dynamic and absorbing picture of a world composed of Americans, both white and black, of Spaniards, proletariat and communists, and of prostitutes, shopkeepers, gamblers, street-cleaners and brick-layers.

Against the background of this motley society one finds a group of Leftists, malcontents who for some twenty years had been unsuccessfully trying to overthrow the regime and effect political change by revolution. They see in the newly-arrived Americans a possibility for fomenting strife and confusion, perfect conditions for revolution. Furthermore, if they can exploit the racial issue, they feel their plans will be more certain of success. Carefully they plot to have a black American Air Force officer, Tomás by name, accused and convicted of raping a white girl so that the Spaniards will be properly incensed, thus setting the stage for the kind of political change they feel is needed in Spain. They do not know, however, that a deep friendship has sprung up

between Tomás and Genaro, one of the part members; it is a friendship tried and strengthened by sorrow and joy, and it extends beyond any limits of time and place. The awful conflict that Genaro must face, then, is not whether or not he ought to save his friend, but whether he can do so without putting his own life on the line. Ultimately, friendship triumphs as Genaro pays with his life for having sold out his fellow-travelers in the Communist party and Tomás returns to the State unaware at the time of the sacrifice made for him. Of the Novel's main theme, García-Viñó has pointed out: "...un canto, no de los más recios y más conmovedores que se han hecho, a la virtud de la amistad."¹

The lively, earthy dialogue of the lower classes, the well-drawn delineation of character and the scenes unfolded in a cinematographic style, make Paralelo 40, in our opinion, the best conceived novel of Castillo-Puche to date. From its first page on which we meet Genaro at noon on a Saturday drinking at a local pub with his companions (notably the gently Emiliano), as they comment on the latest news, a growing interest is generated in the human relationships within the book. This is much more than a journalistic account; it is a multi-faceted world of human beings striving to earn a living, to find a practical political ideology, to enjoy the small pleasures of the poor with vigor and good humor.

Let us trace here some of the relationships that make the

¹M. García-Viñó, Novela española actual (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1967), p. 58.

book a social commentary. Emiliano, a brick-layer working on yet another building for the newly arrived American air men and their families, has come to take for granted the insistence of the newcomers on every comfort possible. We read:

Era también una casa para americanos. Eran los únicos que podían pagarlos. Hasta tenían aire acondicionado, como sus coches. Al principio los americanos se había metido donde habían podido, en casas bastante farfulleras, en las que apenas había hueco en el ofice para empotrar las neveras, las altas, las casi redondas, las grandísimas y suntuosas neveras que eran el mueble más importante para ellos. La nevera para los americanos, más que un objeto doméstico, es una especie de ídolo sagrado. Hubo que ir eliminando las cocinas de fogón porque los americanos no las querían. Ahora todas estas las tenían eléctricas o de gas butano... Y los pisos llevaban parquet de verdad y no la chapucería de antes. Toda esta zona había surgido al olor del dólar y era preciso dar gusto a los americanos. Inmobiliarios, contratistas, arquitectos, ingenieros, habían visto en seguida el negocio: construir casas de lujo para los americanos. Estas casas llevaban armarios empotrados y hasta terrazas con trozos de jardín.¹

Thus, one can see in these words the initial reaction of the lower class Spaniard to the newly arrived Americans. With the passage of time and the development of relationships a new understanding was to grow which would, in part at least modify initial impressions.

Genaro, recently released from prison to which his political activities has consigned him for a time, is a brick-layer but he is far more interested in his underground political connections than in earning a living by honest labor. He

¹José Luis Castillo-Puche, Paralelo 40 (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1963), p. 15.

deplores the political institutions of his country, both civic and religious. It is the Christmas season when first we see the mingling of Spaniards and American and as Genaro looks up at the windows of the Americans which are bright with Christmas lights and decorated with Nativity scenes, he becomes irritated because he cannot countenance the same kind of observance on the part of his own countrymen. He is consumed with his socialist ideas and bent upon a coup d'état. Although his cronies respect his audacity, he is at this time a crude and rather insensitive creature:

Genaro tenía la fea costumbre de escupir, pero sus escupitajos eran algo más que desahogos fisiológicos. Genaro llevaba dentro un veneno poderoso y fuerte. El ansia de exterminio y de revancha consumía su rostro en palideces y magruras.¹

Moreover, Genaro is annoyed that his neighbors have so blithely accepted the intrusion of the Americans without a word of protest, he criticizes their complacency:

No lo comprendía y hasta sentía deseos de gritar para que todo el mundo se inmovilizara ante aquel espectáculo. El pueblo no piensa... Así es España, esta patria que Dios o el diablo nos dio. ¿Pero es que no hay gente capaz de pensar. .. El pueblo español, con contar un chiste ya duerme tranquilo.²

Genaro has many sides to his character: surly and rough in presence of his male companions, he appears gentle and sensitive when he visits Elena, his mistress. He respects her, shares his problems with her and trusts her judgement:

¹Paralelo 40, p. 17.

²Ibid. p. 20.

Existían entre ellos relaciones de algo más que novios. Y ni siquiera se había pronunciado nunca entre ellos esta palabra. Pero Elena se imponía para Genaro como algo imprescindible, lo mismo en días de peligro y desaliento que en los de euforia y esperanza. Era algo que estaba más allá, y también acá, del amor... El mismo amor era entre ellos silencioso y tácito...

Ella era como un misterio para él, cuando la esperaba distante, la encontraba cercana, y cuando esperaba que la encontraría íntima, tenía que sufrirla severa y reservada como un juez. Era admirable como una simple muchacha de pueblo, sin posición y sin estudios, estaba dotada de tan indomable energía y de tal inteligencia y sensibilidad.¹

Several altercations between Spaniards and Americans convey the general hostile mood during the early days of the period shortly after the Korean War when both occupied the same neighborhood in northern Madrid. One particular episode witnessed by Genaro as he peers through a restaurant window was especially infuriating to him. A Spanish cab driver had entered waving a bill of one thousand pesetas requesting that the cashier change it for him. A tall, swaggering American, seated at the counter turns amusingly toward the driver, pulls the bill out of his hand and with a flourish proceeds to tear it into small pieces which he throws up into the air as so much confetti. The infuriated cabbie lurches at the American several times, only to be repulsed with blows, yet no one in the restaurant intervenes. Genaro feels a personal affront, more because of the passivity of his fellow-Spaniards than at the injustice of the American. Finally the infuriated cab

¹Paralelo 40, pp. 133-4.

driver dashes out into the streets to get a rock which he promptly throws through the glass window while at the same time, he shouts angry epithets at his indifferent countrymen. Scenes such as this are calculated to heighten the effect of the deep friendship that is to develop between Genaro, the lazy, pleasure-loving, Spanish liberal and Tomás, the black, gentle, generous and idealistic American pilot. Let us explore in detail the genesis, process, and culmination of this relationship.

Paralelo 40 is essentially, as has been noted, a story of the power of friendship between two very different men, a friendship which, when put to the test, reveals traits formerly unsuspected in Genaro, the somewhat complicated protagonist. He had early in the novel been described as: "... un ser desventurado, lleno de odio y de resentimiento... y si Genaro quiere ser símbolo de algo es de la impotencia, la amargura, y la esterilidad de los que no saben olvidar."¹ One critic asserts:

El nudo del problema de Genaro es el dilema entre su odio y el afecto hondo que llega a sentir por Tomás.²

Like many men just released from prison, he looks upon his fellow-man with distrust and upon society with bitterness. The rancor he experiences as a "have-not" towards those apparently more privileged, is expressed in these words:

¹Paralelo 40, p. 8.

²Marcelino Peñuelas, "Paralelo 40", Asomante, San Juan, P.R. Num. 2, 1965. (p. 85).

... qué bien los que viven bien; qué bien comen y beben los que tienen dinero para comer y beber todo lo que quieren y se les antoja; qué buenos pisos y qué buenas mujeres tienen los que viven bien...¹

The vagaries of life, then, have led Genaro to this moment of time when, more than ever before, he is imbued with zeal for the overthrow of what he considers a corrupt regime. He is, of course, no more representative of all Spaniards of his class than Tomás is of all the Air Force sergeants of the United States. Nevertheless, Genaro remains basically an individual with some elemental prejudices about society and with a degree of sensitivity to injustice: in sum, a rare combination of timidity and violence. This is the man who meets Tomás one day at a roulette wheel. Genaro has been losing heavily and Tomás gently urges him to withdraw from the game, manifesting for him a concern hitherto unknown by the Spaniard; that anyone should care about him amazes him. Tomás seemed to be aware of the resentments gnawing at the heart of this man and, abstracting from Genaro's swaggering and sarcastic manner, he sees beyond to the aching, lonely and restless self-styled anarchist. That night as he walks home, Genaro's heart is filled with some joy, with a warmth that even the cold snowy day could not cool, and we read:

Quería disimular su alegría. Iría con Tomás hasta el fin del mundo. Iría con el negro Tomás a donde él quisiera llevarle. Iría con el negro Tomás.²

¹Paralelo 40, p. 20

²Ibid. p. 72

Genaro keeps his political affiliations very much to himself and, while Tomás may have suspected something of his friend's ideas, he never brings up the issue in conversation. Tomás accepts Genaro as he finds him, without questions or rebukes. But this may not have been too difficult since the Spaniard manifests some ambivalence about his own ideology. When asked by other Spaniards if he is a Communist, Genaro answers:

Yo no soy más que un trabajador del pueblo...
 Yo no quiero saber nada de política. La política
 me asquea. Los políticos son todos unos cerdos.
 .. Yo no sé lo que soy.¹

Of course, these words are partly a ruse to hide his membership in a very active Communist cell to which he belongs.

Early in their relationship Tomás uses his influence at the local PX to secure a job for Genaro and although the latter has no intention to remain long at any job, he cannot help appreciating his friend's concern for him. Later when Tomás realizes that Genaro is less than responsible at his job, he does not become angry with him, but continues encouraging him to regulate his life somewhat for his own good.

There are several situations in which Tomás traits of generosity and unselfishness are made clear both to Genaro and to some of his Spanish companions of the barrio. On one occasion Emiliano is in desperate need of some unusual medication to save his child's life and he solicits Genaro's help.

¹Paralelo 40. p. 278.

²Ibid., p. 206.

The latter unhesitatingly turns to Tomás knowing that if the rare drug can be found at all, his American friend will find it. And his trust is not misplaced; Tomás drives many kilometers to procure it, and the child's life is saved. So grateful is the child's father, that he tries to manifest his feelings every way he can:

A Emiliano sólo le faltó ponerse de rodillas delante de Tomás a besarle las manos... Pero Tomás no parecía darse cuenta de nada. Parecía que su única obligación en aquellos momentos fuese atender y hacer feliz a aquella sufrida familia."¹

Moreover, there are instances when Tomás more benign attitude towards life becomes apparent, as, for example, when Genaro takes him on a visit to the Spaniard's mother in the small town of Olapesa. All along the way Genaro is finding fault with the close-mindedness of the people in the town, their lack of interest in any progress, and of the Church control over the minds of the people, all of which serve to highlight his anti-clerical bias. Tomás, on the other hand, sees the town quite differently, and remarks: "¡Pero si es un pueblo estupendo!"² It is understandable, then, why, after a series of such experiences with Tomás, Genaro should begin to undergo some changes in his attitude and behavior.

In his own unobtrusive manner, furthermore, Tomás tries to inspire Genaro with a disposition towards peace rather than agitation and violence. He tells Genaro that he chose to be

¹Paralelo 40, p. 206

²Ibid. p. 278.

radio man on the planes rather than have to use weapons on the flights, even though he has logged more than five hundred hours in the air. But for the moment Genaro cannot see any political changes possible in Spain without revolution, and he cannot now relinquish a cause to which he has dedicated so many years of his life. And in their attitude towards women they differ in many ways: Genaro is willing for the sake of his underground activities to establish a rather compromising liaison with an American officer's wife even though, at the same time, he professes to love only Elvira; Tomás, on the other hand, is entirely respectful of women and at the end of the novel, returns to the States to marry the woman to whom he has remained faithful while in Spain.

Although there is scarcely any work by Castillo-Puche which is not heavily suffused with a type of Barojian pessimism, Paralelo 40 is unique in that it does not paint an entirely black picture. Its pessimism, furthermore, is not at all of the agonizing, neurotic cast of his previous novels, notably, Con la muerte al hombro and El Vengador. Any negative or dismal aspects are the natural outgrowth of the sordid conditions in which the characters find themselves. Their language tinged with vulgar expletives, while it offends some critics, is true to the persons portrayed: humble, ignorant, rough men. Eduardo Tijeras gives a succinct and colorful description of the ambiance in which this less than cultured speech is found:

Es la España de siempre, pero con coca-cola,
negros y rascacielos. Las circunstancias de que
Genaro sea en realidad un anarquista afectivo y

lógico... de que participe en juergas tristes y estúpidas, juegue a los dados entre negros, y por las páginas de la novela transite la hez de la sociedad (prostitutas, invertidos, chulos, resentidos), así como americanos con el lastre de la discriminación racial, su civilización de máquinas y latas de conservas, haciendo el oso en los cabarets, gastando el dinero ofensivamente... serían más que suficientes para probar la aseveración de novela pesimista.¹

The term pessimism as applied here, however, might better be called an offensive realism such as one might find in the picaresque genre or in Hemingway. It would appear that Marcelino Peñuelas accurately reviews this novel:

Paralelo 40 es un plato fuerte condimentado con la salsa picante y amarga de rencores, prejuicios, envidias y 'complejos' cuyas raíces se pierden en el espíritu de los personajes.²

Jaime Magriña's review in which he compares the crudeness of the violence to that drawn by Zole in his tract J'accuse seems to us overdrawn, especially when he refers to "bestialismos sexuales y bacanales de alcohol."³

Much more has been written specifically about the language in Paralelo 40. Originally about eighty pages had to be deleted by the author because of the offensive dialogues and the publication of the novel was delayed, but to these charges, the author responds: "Soy, creo más que sincero; si no escribiera con sinceridad, no escribiera ; ni una

¹Eduardo Tijeras, "La Corea Madrileña de Castillo-Puche," Cuadernos hispanoamericanos 1963 (LVI) num. 178, p. 679

²Marcelino G. Peñuelas, "Paralelo 40", Asonante, II, 1965, p. 83.

³Jaime R. Magriña, "Paralelo 40" Anales, México, 1964, n.p.

dedicatoria."¹ Somewhere between the two positions lies the truth of the language of Paralelo 40 and, while we submit that some dialogues are not only unnecessary and even repetitive, others lend much to the credibility of the story.

All is not sordid or crude in the novel, however; there are humorous asides and lighter moments as well. When the Americans, for example, become aware that they are beginning to emulate some of their Spanish neighbors in such a laudable custom as the afternoon siesta, they decide that early rising makes no sense and give it up altogether. The Spaniards, on their part, modify their habits to the extent of pausing for long coffee breaks as do the Americans and by assuming some of the more relaxed ways of the newcomers to their shores. Unlike the American tourists who pass through the Iberian peninsula as so many "aves de paso", those whose assignment calls for a more permanent stay, find before returning home, that they have unconsciously and greatly modified their thinking and their habits.

Finally, we find that the action of Paralelo 40, sustained as it is by shifting scenes and lively dialogue, is a far easier novel to read. The developing friendship between Genaro and Tomás holds the threads of the story together and the sense of mounting conflict within Genaro's heart, torn between his loyalty to his socialist companions and the love he has for Tomás, absorbs the interest of the

¹B. Mostaza, "Paralelo 40," Ya, junio 18, 1963, p. 17.

reader curious to know the final outcome. López Anglada observes: "La novela está escrita con valentía y entusiasmo; tiene todos los elementos precisos: imaginación, dibujo de caracteres, interés argumental, pasión y ternura."¹ It seems, in short, to be a welcome relief from the awful inner turmoil in which so many other protagonists of Castillo-Puche find themselves: here there are no great and profound preoccupations with death, no struggle about one's vocation in life, no atmosphere of small-town narrowness. Certainly the author could have been less verbose, but the novel, as it stands, is generally lively, true to an historical moment in Spain and fairly consistently absorbing.

¹Luis López Anglada, "Paralelo 40", El Español, June 29, 1963. p. 7.

CHAPTER IV

CONFLICTS WITHIN THE CHARACTER

Con la muerte al hombro

The theme of death, as we have seen, has been frequently treated by many of the post-civil war Spanish novelists writing at the same time as José Luis Castillo-Puche who in his first published novel, Con la muerte al hombro (1964), presents one of the most tortured protagonists of contemporary fiction. Neither in him nor in his troubled surroundings can the reader perceive a single note of tranquility, joy or hope. The anxieties of Julio, the main character, are suggested by the very apt words taken from Franz Kafka's diary with which the author introduces his narrative: "Escribo esto francamente desesperado por mi cuerpo y por el porvenir que me espera con este cuerpo."

The novel begins with a letter supposedly sent by Julio to Castillo-Puche and dated March, 1945 in which he advises the author that he is sending him a package containing two notebooks replete with autobiographical data that might serve the writer as possible material for a novel.

Julio writes his letter hurriedly because he expects that the authorities will come in a short while to arrest him for a murder he thinks he has committed. At the same time he is

~

quite aware of the pessimistic tone of his personal recollections since he warns Castillo-Puche: "Si no puedes llegar hasta el final y te asquea, rompes las dos libretas y en paz."¹ In the course of the brief communication, furthermore, Julio makes a few references to death which betrays his philosophical and psychological leanings as he nears the end of his life. He writes: "De algo hay que morir y cada uno muere de lo que puede."² Yet he admits he lacks the courage to commit suicide: "Nacer de nuevo no es fácil, y matarse es más difícil de lo que parece."³ Julio would prefer to die at the hands of another but as quickly and painlessly as possible: "Me gustaría que me mataran, pero corriendo, mientras me escapaba. Un tiro por la espalda... y me quitaban de golpe la muerte que llevo sobre el hombro."⁴ By means of this letter from his protagonist, Castillo-Puche reveals a fact about himself, for Julio writes in closing: "Sé que eres muy religioso..." (p.14) After this follows the first person narrative which Julio has supposedly begun to write in September, 1943.

By Julio's own admission, the diary is the means he uses to relieve somewhat the oppressiveness of his own neurosis, and it is only when he believes circumstances will prevent his

¹José Luis Castillo-Puche, Con la muerte al hombro (Madrid: Biblioteca nueva, 1954), p. 13.

²Ibid., p. 12.

³Ibid., p. 13.

⁴Ibid., p. 13.

continuing it that he decides to send it to his friend. The fact that his native town of Hécúla looms large in the protagonist's imagination becomes evident as he describes it at great length at the beginning of his diary. He recalls that the town is evoked frequently in literature whenever an author seeks a setting that may be called terrible; he claims that the town seems anchored in eternity and the thought of progress is more repellent to it than the fear of pestilence; he laments that a town once so aristocratic, so full of vitality has become desolate, silent and stagnant; and surprisingly, he observes that peasants have lost faith in civil and religious leaders and trust doctors only when they find themselves in extremis. Briefly, the town serves as a satisfactory scapegoat for Julio who, unable to accept his own immaturity, or even to recognize it, constantly shifts the blame for his misery to the place he sees as unstable without even fixed geographical roots: "Hécúla no está ni en Levante ni en la Mancha, tampoco está exactamente en Castilla... es un pueblo raro." (pp. 23-4) In this town, then, plunged in almost perpetual mourning, a town in which funerals were better attended than weddings, Julio is born, attends school, witnesses with mounting sorrow the physical decay of parents and siblings from tuberculosis, and endures the dark days of the Civil War.

A sensitive and romantic temperament, Julio is deeply affected by the words and actions of his fellow hecúlanos be they teachers, neighbors or strangers. Don Sergio, one of his

teachers, is typical of the clerical mentors who overreact to the child's youthful pranks or adolescent mishaps. When the priest hears the crashing sound of a jar which Julio has accidentally knocked over, he reprimands the youth very severely and tells him he has sinned, thereby incultating in the boy an unhealthy moral sense. If then Julio expected guidance and understanding in school, he was dissapointed. The neighbors and other townspeople likewise assume a negative attitude toward Julio whose life, they suspect, seems to be ruled by some blind determinism in view of the fate to which he seems destined. Their morbid, prying glances reenforce his feeling that he cannot indeed escape from his inscrutable fate and so the entire town becomes, in a sense, a tragic chorus bemoaning and prognosticating his inescapable illness and death. Logically Julio is led to a kind of despair described by Kierkegaard:

The determinism or fatalist is in despair and in despair he has lost his self, because for him everything is necessary... The self of the determinist cannot breathe, for it is impossible to breathe necessity alone, which taken pure and simple suffocates the human self.¹

In an effort to breathe more freely, Julio goes to live in Madrid, where he takes up residence in a small garret in the Gran Vía. There he meets a scrupulous youth named Evaristo who is indecisive and restless. Above all he is a young man whose sexual conflicts prevent his developing a well-integrated personality able to choose his vocation in life. Together they

¹Soren Kierkegaard, The Sickness unto Death (Princeton University Press, 1951), p. 137.

lead quite a bohemian existence in the capital. Julio feels somewhat liberated from the people of Hécula who used to come uninvited to his home to comment, advise and judge: his new-found privacy is a luxury even while the certainty of a specific and immanent death weighs heavily upon him. And the inner tensions occasioned by that certainty are aggravated the longer the protagonist refuses to handle them in a rational manner as, for example, by consulting with doctors. They had failed to help his family in the past and now he dismissed them with these words: "Ni oír quiero la palabra médico. Ninguno será capaz de sacarme de esta incertidumbre fenomenal."¹

Throughout his written account, Julio's background emerges: it indicates a tendency toward conflict within himself while in conflict with outside forces. On one occasion, for example, he stops to stare at his own reflection in a shop window as he dwells upon his own existence. Studying his appearance, he cannot decide whether he looks ill, sad or unbalanced but this is not as important to him as his ruminations concerning his existence: "Existo, luego pienso que existo. Pienso que existo, luego existo. Existo, éxito, exitus... y lancé una carcajada tremenda."² There are not the preoccupations of a philosopher as much as they are the free associations of a terrified man. The pleasurable act of taking

¹Con la muerte al hombro, p. 89.

²Ibid., p. 131.

some wine or cognac becomes for him a worry as he recalls the words of caution of the people of Hécúla constantly warning him to be careful of what he ate and drank. Hence, if his compulsive behavior is not entirely determined by early influences, it is at least aggravated by them. Julio's neuroticism becomes such a burden to him that he almost wishes the nation were once again at war because then with the greater calamity to think about, he would be less absorbed with the ridiculous tasks of taking his pulse, gargling or watching his temperature.

The character with whom Julio has the most prolonged relationship during the time spent in Madrid is Elvira, a woman whose emotions range from tenderness to hatred, from seriousness of purpose to frivolity. She had spent the war years living in a poor fishing village in France and is now in Madrid following the death of a child born out of wedlock. Julio is surprised that Elvira, after her earlier experiences with men, can still retain a measure of affection for them. When, however, he discovers that to earn money to assist an ailing brother, Elvira resorts to professional prostitution, Julio tries to dissuade her from that life, but failing in his effort, he terminates their relationship. Hence, neither Elvira nor Evaristo seem able to provide the kind of human compassion and support needed by the anguished protagonist.

One final character contributes to the development of the neurotic Julio. It is Doctor Val, who in Hécúla had ministered to the members of the family, and now in Madrid represents to

Julio a tangible reminder that he too must fall victim to the same disease. Beyond that, Julio recalls that the doctor's attitude towards him had always appeared to be one of utter disdain and humiliating pity and now as a result he studiously avoids meeting him. One day, however, Julio learns that Elvira has become intimately involved with Dr. Val and in spite of the fact that Elvira and he had agreed to go their separate ways, Julio, in his usual illogical manner, resents her attentions to the man who had never once treated him with any semblance of respect. In anger he goes to the doctor's home carrying with him a small dagger with which he intends to frighten the doctor. He is infuriated, however, by the latter's jibes and insulting manner and stabs him. Thinking him dead, Julio runs home to await the police. It is during this time that he writes the letter to his supposed "friend", the author of the novel and encloses his diary.

There is an epilogue in which Castillo-Puche reveals to the reader the incongruity of the final outcome: Doctor Val had been only superficially wounded and had refused to implicate anyone, while Julio, having waited in vain to be arrested, left the following morning for Segovia where he is ingominously killed at the hands of robbers. A subsequent autopsy reveals that Julio's had been a perfectly healthy organism. Such a melodramatic dénouement weakens the structure of this novel and detracts immeasurably from the fact that its protagonist is a well-drawn figure of tortured modern man. His abrupt, unexpected demise strains the

reader's credibility and is therefore artistically deficient, a throw-back, moreover, to 19th century arbitrariness.

The author does not follow a lineal direction in the development of the plot but rather describes the events in backward and forward leaps alternately. Thus the scenes shift from Hécúla to Madrid, a technique that not only lends dynamism to the novel, but what is more important for our consideration, reflects the anxiety of the protagonist who seems unable to focus completely on his present life in Madrid but is constantly harking back in imagination to his native town and his traumatic boyhood. His recollections are as harbingers of future disaster, and combined with his restless and purposeless life in the capital, compound his psychic desequilibrium. All his inner turmoil is captured by the oscillations in time sequence.

Castillo-Puche's novels, in general, contain more dialogue than descriptive passages, but in Con la muerte al hombro there are a few interesting metaphors and brief lyrical passages:

Por encima de la torre del Hotel Capital se quemaban las últimas retamas del crepúsculo (p. 121)

El fuego rosado de las atardeceres me recordaba únicamente las encendidas mejillas quemadas por la fiebre. (p. 121)

... se desbocó el miedo como un toro bravo.. (p. 73)

And of criminals he writes:

Están allí royendo sus crímenes, masticando sus injusticias. (p. 144)

Moreover, to sustain the macabre mood, the author never refrains from direct allusions to death; words like calavera, cráneo, esqueleto, agonía, gemidos, sangre, and pavor are frequent. Several critics are also of the opinion that the second chapter of the novel which recounts the death of Julio's father is the most pessimistic piece of writing that the author has produced. García Luengo writes: "El capítulo titulado 'La muerte de mi padre' resulta muy característico de una tendencia al detalle grotesco, de rasgos abultados, de notas eternamente desagradables."¹

The existential character of the novel is made clear by the tenor of the protagonist's reflections as well as by the many situations in which human beings become acutely aware of personal limitations and impending disaster. Time and again Julio states that he tends to flee from closeness to God because it brings the thought of death even closer than it already is and he speculates about life hereafter: does it mean God, or nothingness? He wants to be able to recount to another his own death and is distressed because this is impossible. Perhaps Castillo-Puche reveals here through his protagonist that the greatest questioning of faith comes from a sense of the injustice on one's own death.

The absurdities and deep tragedy of this novel lie buried beneath the actual events recounted and certainly beneath the contrived dénouement. Ostensibly, Julio's death completely

¹E. García Luengo, "Con la muerte al hombro," Indice, Madrid, (1954).

disproves the dire predictions of the people of Hécúla and make his exaggerated fears appear absurd, but the true existentialist absurdity for him is that, had he ever learned that he was his own worst enemy, he might have found some relief. As it turned out, he sacrificed himself for nothing because of his ridiculous obsession with his own death and his gross ignorance of himself. Never recognizing his own weaknesses, he became his self-executioner; neither people nor his heredity destroyed him ultimately; it was he himself - and here, we believe, lies the real irony and tragedy of Con la muerte al hombro.

El Vengador

Several Spanish novelists of the past thirty years, particularly those referred to as the "promoción del '45 al '55," have produced works in which the Civil War is used, not prominently, but as a sort of backdrop against which lifes dramas are played out. In his study of the Spanish Civil War Novel, José Luis Ponce de León admits that these novels vary greatly in quality: several are very poor, many more may be termed discreet and only a few very good.¹ Furthermore, whether because of fear of the censors, or timidity in handling a sensitive subject, or from a motive of charity, the fact remains that a long silence on the subject followed upon the end of the war in 1939, especially within the peninsula.

¹José Luis Ponce de León, La novela española de la guerra civil (1936-1939) (Madrid: Insula, 1971), p. 13.

It was mostly Spaniards living in exile, or "España peregrina," as they are sometimes called, who wrote the first novels that dealt with the war theme. Prominent among them are well-known names such as Ramón Sender, Max Aub and Francisco Ayala. Ayala tells us that there was very little communication for many years between the two Spains as each remained ignorant of what the other half was writing; he refers to them as "españoles separados por el tajo de la guerra civil."¹ But about 1957 literary critics began to manifest some knowledge of and interest in novels written outside of Spain.

While the general tendency among the members of the Generation of '98 as well as of the following generations up to the time of the war was toward brevity (as in the case of Unamuno, Valle-Inclán (Sonatas), Miró, and Gómez de la Serna, to name a few), the long novel of four hundred pages or more does not come back to Spain until after the Civil War with the novels of Zunzunegui, Gironella and others. And since almost all the post-war novelists who refer to the war in their writings had some personal experience of its impact on themselves, their families or their country, their novels have been termed novels of testimony. Such nomenclature may sound arbitrary at first sight but it is accurate insofar as these writers have been witnesses of what they describe (unlike those who write what is known as social novels), but may never have personally experienced the social conditions they write

¹ José Luis Ponce de León, La novela española de la guerra civil (1936-1939) (Madrid: Insula, 1971), p. 13.

about. Be that as it may, critics are agreed that the best "war" novels have one characteristic in common: they place the blame for the national tragedy on the shoulders of those men in top levels of government whose injustices brought about the conflict. Obviously, to risk stating this one would have to be living abroad or writing with sufficient subtlety to be inoffensive.

Two techniques are usually employed by those whose themes touched upon the war: the first-person narrative which makes the account more personal and vivid, and the diary or epistolary form such as we see in El diario de Hamlet García by Paulino Masip. The cessation of hostilities, moreover, signified for some people the creation of a new front: the difficult front between justice and vengeance. It is explored by two novelists through their tortured protagonists: in Víspera de odio (1959) by Concha Castroviejo and in Castillo-Puche's El vengador (1956). The main characters bent on vengeance are an obsessed lot very much in the Graham Greene tradition for almost all of the English writer's characters are driven by an uncontrollable passion that produces extreme unrest and turbulence of spirit. Like the Luis of El Vengador, they have a great need for peace of mind and heart.

The setting of El Vengador is once again in Hécúla (Yecla) and the time, shortly after the end of the war. The soldiers of the victorious side are coming home eager to forget and to take up their ordinary tasks once again. There is one among them, however, who is returning home to seek out and to take

revenge on those who murdered his mother and two brothers at the outset of the war. The latter had been dragged from jail by the Republicans, taken to the town plaza, stoned and left to die with a sign reading "Fascist" on their bodies: his mother's death was even more reprehensible and Luis recounts it in these words:

Bien mirado, lo de mi madre fue una canallada de las grandes. Ya habíamos salidos los tres y mi madre había quedado sola. Entonces fue cuando ellos decidieron la gran hombrada. La siguieron. Ella, al parecer, se dio cuenta y aceleró el paso. Ellos iban echándole el resuello encima. Ella corrió más. Por fin, pudo alcanzar la puerta de la casa y metió la llave. Pudo entrar antes de que llegaran hasta ella. Ellos empujaron la puerta. Ella echó con toda su fuerza la aldaba. Y cuando la aldaba estaba echada dispararon sobre la puerta. Y le dieron.¹

Rosica, his saintly mother, had been respected and loved by the townspeople and now Luis, upon his return, finds a good deal of support for his plans of revenge among friends and neighbors; only the parish priest and his cousins, Micaela and the blind Apolonia, counsel forgiveness. Of these two women in whose home he now lodges, Luis says he will never look for support since they are inflexible, very religious and stubborn.

During the first few days after his return home, the protagonist-narrator seems, like most returning veterans, somewhat anesthetized in his feelings, or as he terms it: "... desanimado, vacío, triste, desconcertado... Mis nervios estaban agotados, consumidos... Quería soledad a toda costa. .. que nadie hablara fuerte. Estaba por pedir a gritos un

¹ José Luis Castillo-Puche, El Vengador (Barcelona: Destino 1956), p. 74.

poco de silencio."¹ And not even the adulation of the populace for the returning victor nor the advances of attractive women, all of which pleases his confreres, can bring him pleasure or distract him from his avowed purpose of seeking revenge. Therefore he regards Hécula with a mixture of attraction and repulsion, for he is not basically a violent man, yet circumstances have cast him in a role for which he is temperamentally ill-suited.

One episode bordering on the macabre, and often commented upon by critics, is the one in which Luis has the family grave opened. His mother's remains are there but so also are the remains of an unknown man, without a coffin and apparently hastily buried. The search now assumed an added dimension of mystery. To the grave-keeper Luis pretends that the stranger is his brother, for he will reveal his secret to no one. To those who have seen in this cemetery episode echoes of tremendismo, Castillo-Puche has answered in an interview:

La palabra tremendista me revienta porque la mayoría de los que no han sabido penetrar en el drama de las situaciones y de los personajes se han inventado un estilo acre, cargado de trucos. La realidad puede ser amarga, pero hacernos sonreír.²

Sainz Robles seems to agree with the author in this regard:

"Humanismo original, ambicioso cristianismo, es el tema de El

¹José Luis Castillo-Puche, El Vengador (Barcelona: Destino, 1956), p. 12.

²Ernesto Salcedo, "Castillo-Puche y su última novela," La Estafeta Literaria, XXV, Enero (1957). p. 57.

Vengador. Su realismo es tremendo, pero no es tremendista."¹

Eventually the protagonist learns that the stranger in the family grave was in fact a victim of Luis's own brother who, together with some friends, had killed the man because he had threatened to reveal their dereliction of duty. Forced to dispose of their victim as quickly and as clandestinely as possible, they placed the body in the family grave of one of the perpetrators of the crime; no one, they feel, is likely to look there for the missing man, at least until such time as they are able to find a better place. But Luis's brother, as we have seen, is now dead too and the stranger remains unmoved from his place of burial. To the sensitive nature of the protagonist his discovery is indeed a startling one and the whole idea of revenge takes on a totally new meaning. Several conflicting considerations enter his mind: is the wholesale and almost anonymous mass-killing of warfare any more justified than a single homicide committed for a subjectively rational motive; if it is not, then he should forget his revenge, but if it is, then perhaps through more "faceless" killings, he could just as well avenge the three family deaths and not feel he has any personal guilt.

After much painstaking investigation and exhaustive questioning of many persons (and the help of friends) Luis discovers the identity of the assassins he seeks: they were soldiers of the opposition, and most are now dead. But

¹Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles, "Al margen de los libros," Madrid, abril 18, 1957.

his discovery has come to a very different Luis from the angry soldier who first returned to Hécula. He realizes that his hands are not innocent of the blood of his fellow-man because of his part in the Civil War and he realizes too that the peace he seeks will not be found, as he had thought, in killing the murderers he has sought in cold blood. And so he makes the only decision which he is convinced will solve his dilemma even as he must recognize it is somewhat of a compromise; he will rejoin his regiment for any military duties still remaining and he leaves Hécula saying: "Me quedé tan tranquilo. La paz había entrado dentro de mí y no me importaba lo más mínimo coger de nuevo las armas."¹

Castillo-Puche has created in Luis a character called in a most poignant manner to wage a war within himself; he does so conscientiously and sincerely according to one critic:

Sus escenas nos traen la sensación de las mejores páginas de Remarque. Más que la aventura guerrera o la presentación externa de los hechos, asistimos a una extraordinaria odisea interior.²

But the protagonist also serves as a perfect example of classic indecision at the precise moment when action before oneself and before the world, is clearly indicated. Luis had the support of the people of Hécula and his own determination, but his vacillation made his plans abortive. Internally he is constantly rejecting the revenge that externally he seems

¹El Vengador, p. 302.

²René Golo Pérez, "El Vengador," El Comercio (Quito, Ecuador), enero 1, 1958, p. 5.

to be seeking. Such an attitude appears cowardly at first glance, but, on reflection, one realized that for this man revenge would have constituted one more cruel and inhuman act in a long series of similar atrocities committed during the war. His Christian ethic triumphs as Luis reflects that even those nearest to him by family ties have not been above criminal acts themselves.

Critique

One of the most apparent facts that strikes one in the two novels considered in this section, namely Con la muerte al hombro and El vengador is that the town of Yecla, Castillo-Puche's patria chica is a second protagonist:

... en ellas el pueblo es marco y nada más que eso, sin que le preocupen los aspectos sociológicos del mismo, que por entonces tanto llamaban la atención de los realistas críticos.¹

Thus Yecla is omnipresent, anong with death. Gemma Roberts, in her study of this novel, explores this overriding fixation on death; it literally pervades both novels and almost becomes a third protagonist. Ironically enough, it actually acts as a destructive force of the protagonist's mind, rather than of his body, crippling his ability to face life creatively. As Dr. Roberts has proven this is the contemporary Spanish novel par excellence in its treatment of the existential theme of death but its protagonist does not personally espouse any esoteric abstruse philosophy:

¹Santos Sanz Villanueva, Tendencias de la novela española actual (Madrid: Cuadernos para el diálogo, 1972), p. 101

Creemos que Castillo-Puche no ha hecho a su personaje seguir la senda trillada de una boga filosófica. Las congojas de Julio nacen de sí mismo, de una angustia personal y espontánea.¹

In the discussion of this novel we have already noted its epistolary style, the flashbacks which are somewhat abrupt, but, as Baquero Goyanes has said, are very characteristic of modern prose: "El desorden cronológico se ha convertido en uno de los rasgos estructurales más característicos de la novela actual."² The protagonist is one of the best drawn of Castillo-Puche's characters in that his complexity is believable and not overly analyzed. In addition, there is a strength here reminiscent of a Baroja or a Hemingway. Esthetically it is a logically conceived of all of Castillo-Puche's novels to date.

Written with great sobriety and in measured language, it seems to carry the leitmotiv of "judge not and you shall not be judged." For this reason, it is, ironically enough, considered by many critics as Castillo-Puche's most religious novel. And, in the first person, it conveys the same sense of individualism as Con la muerte al hombro, as well as the same sense of alienation on the part of its protagonist. But the author, we feel, fails to maintain the reader's interest in the so-called avenger, since from the outset, his interior monologues reveal his true character, incapable of violence.

¹Gemma Roberts, Temas existenciales en la novela española de postguerra (Madrid: Gredos, 1973), p. 238.

²Mariano Baquero Goyanes, Estructura de la novela actual (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1970), p. 135.

The action, furthermore, moves slowly at the very juncture in the story when it ought to be arriving at its logical dénouement, and thus we have a somewhat dragged out conclusion. Although Iglesias Laguna signals out one major failing: "la morosidad argumental que a veces merma el interés casi detectivesco."¹ It is nevertheless, the novel in which the war seems closest to the characters, and the war is, as we shall recall, a theme of great interest to Castillo-Puche.

Oro blanco

In this 1963 novel reminiscent of the repertorial technique of Ignacio Aldecoa in *Gran Sol* (1957), Castillo-Puche describes the pastoral existence of Basque shepherds working in Western United States. A long, third-person narrative, the work never approaches the level of personal anguish and tensions so characteristic of the author's other novels: Iglesias Laguna has written in this connection: "se advierte que Puche no puso en ella su alma, su individualismo feroz, su angustia existencial."²

The bulk of Oro blanco concerns itself with the long journey of the shepherds from northern Spain to New York (where they act as typical wide-eyed tourists), their trip to Boise, Idaho where they will work for a large company, and their gradual, and sometimes painful, adjustment to their new surroundings. It is only in the last quarter of the work when the protagonist, Chemari is convinced that he must denounce the dishonesty of Chaume, his friend and countryman, that

there is any evidence of internal conflict. The story itself unfolds very much in a nineteenth century tradition with abundant details and a certain sameness of sentence structure and slowness of pace throughout. It proceeds at a leisurely pace underscoring the deep and persevering devotion which the true shepherd has for his flock. Such devotion is typified by the protagonist, Chemari. His high moral character, ethnic pride and fidelity to duty make the perfidy of his companions doubly reprehensible to him.

Unlike many of Castillo-Puche's characters who seem paralyzed in their ability to solve their doubts, Chemari seeks and follows the Counsel of wiser heads in the person of an elderly shepherd. His bewilderment, concerning, the ethical operation of the company for which he worked and his nostalgia for the homeland constitute the two aspects of his internal conflict; neither is presented in a morose or exaggerated manner. The author's tendency, however, to inject vulgar expressions is apparent in Oro blanco as it is in Paralelo 40 and Como ovejas al matadero and in our judgement detracts from the esthetic value of the novel.

Castillo-Puche does not consider Oro blanco to be in the tradition set by his other fictional work. It is a simply told saga of the Basque shepherd determined to earn money in America and to return to many and settle down in his own country. It is an unpretentious story which is included in this study for the sake of completeness even though it backs the vigor of Castillo-Puche's other novels.

CHAPTER V

DE DENTRO DE LA PIEL

In June, 1972 Castillo-Puche's latest published work to date, De dentro de la piel appeared in Madrid. The sub-title is "narraciones cortas" since the book is composed of two short novels which comprise 230 of the book's 285 pages, and five short stories. Both novels and stories had previously been published: the former as individual books and the latter in magazines, but the author explains in his prologue to this new edition that, having recently passed the half century mark of his life, he wanted to look back upon some of his earlier fiction and gather it into what he calls "esta especie de antología desordenada y desjerarquizada."¹ And he continues:

Aunque uno pudiera sentir rubor, y sobre todo porque los sueños siguen teniendo la misma fuerza de los comienzos, y uno siempre espera que lo que ha de venir ha de ser lo mejor, uno no renegaría nunca de los primeros hijos literarios... Quizás éstos no son más que pequeños reventones, desahogos, sueños, delirios... algo que brotó un día de dentro de la piel.²

The contents of the book appear in inverse chronological order, that is, the most recently written work appears first, since

¹ José Luis Castillo-Puche, De dentro de la piel (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1972), p. 12.

² Ibid. p. 13.

the author believes that one should look back upon one's earlier works from the vantage point of the most recent.

El perro loco

In 1965 Castillo-Puche published the short novel, el perro loco whose general tone and setting recall his first published full length novel, Con la muerte al hombro. In place of the tortured Luis, however, one finds Lilí, a family dog gradually driven mad by the atmosphere of injustice, cruelty, and death prevalent in a country at war. When asked why he chose a small dog to underscore his country's anguish, the author explained:

El perro es un testigo mudo y excepcional de una contienda entre la falta de razón y la pérdida de los sentimientos más humanos como es la piedad y la compasión. El perro assiste al desafuero estúpido de unas muertes que condena, ya que su lengua lamiendo a los fusilados es como una parábola de lo que podría ser la confraternidad y la caridad si los hombres no se portaran como perros rabiosos.

Lilí's disorientation begins after the political elections of 1931. Her young master, Pepico, together with his family, had to flee the town rather abruptly for a few days and, in their confusion, left the dog in the street, relying on the charity of neighbors. In spite of this temporary abandonment, we are assured that Lilí held a central position in the family:

Lilí formaba parte de la familia, y aún más parte que muchos miembros de la familia con los que no nos tratábamos, o nor tratábamos a medias y de mala gana.¹

¹De dentro de la piel, p. 28.

Within fifteen days the family returned to find Lilí dirty and thin but alive and leaping with joy at the sight of the people she loved. Pepico (who narrates the story) observes that possibly the reason why Lilí showed no resentment was that she could not think, only feel. And it was precisely because she could feel that she was becoming aware of the cares and growing tensions of the people around her.

Pepico remarks that there were a few carefree days during those years immediately prior to the Civil War and that gradually he began to detect a change in the dog's eyes - a look of bewilderment at first and then one of hurt and confusion. Soon the boy noticed how a certain cause and effect pattern was emerging: Lilí inevitably senses any misfortune about to befall anyone in the town, or even to the town collectively, and becomes restless and upset before it happens. The dog's demeanor, therefore, provides a warning to all who observe her closely. Lilí is ever cautious, listening and observing, especially since she has come to realize that the family disappears periodically for a few days leaving her to fend for herself. These absences make Lilí feel alienated and insecure since formerly she has experienced the warmth and affection of a loving household.

As the years pass and the day dawns when Pepico's older brothers must set out for war, Lilí curls up at the feet of their mother commiserating with her in her grief. Pepico observes that while his mother was weeping externally, he felt sure that Lilí was also crying deeply within her.

As news from the various fronts trickles back to the town, Lilí reacts by imitating the family: she leaps about excitedly when things go well, and curls up in a corner despondantly when the tide of battle favors the enemy. Moreover, she demonstrates intelligence beyond her canine condition at the most critical moments: observing that the family is forced to dissimulate their true political ideology before strangers, Lilí becomes an expert at the same ruse and patronizes those persons whom she distrusts for her own and the family's safety. In fine, she can with equal aplomb play the role either of meek lamb or ferocious beast.

Before the war, Lilí had often accompanied the family to Church and remained quiet for three and four Masses. Thus, one day when she sees from the balcony a priest being dragged down the street, she becomes very ill for the first time. From that day her sleep becomes disturbed and she seems to prefer to keep vigil while the family sleeps. Even in her sleeplessness she benefits other because she barks at the approach of a person, usually a refugee, and thereby awakens the family who can then offer assistance. While there are moments, then, of mutual support, of sharing and passing joy, the prevailing mood is quite depressing. Lilí begins to eat less and refuses to play as she seems to be asking Pepico, with rage and indignation, how men could be so cruel, so inhuman. There are definite echoes here of the sickly, despairing Kafka who in his three major novels, especially in The Trial, and in many of his criminal stories, depicts the

life of man as a nightmare.

Too young to go to war, Pepico is permitted to distribute the Eucharist to priests in prison and in the hospital. He admits feeling useful, almost heroic, yet when he caresses his pet, he realizes that the small animal, by her fidelity and compassion, is contributing more to the morale of the family and of the town. Again, when Pepico begins to feel attraction for the opposite sex and suffers an occasional rebuff, it is Lilí who sits at the foot of his bed offering, as it were, the consolation of her presence.

Eventually food becomes scarce in the town and people are forced to stand on long lines to procure it. It is then that Lilí suffers her first attack of madness which had been preceded by a phase of depression and erratic behavior. Presently it is Pepico's turn to put on an army uniform and everyone realizes it marks the beginning of the end of Lilí: she growls ominously, runs about scratching walls and furniture, her only ways of registering protest. A decision is made to hide Lilí in a corner of a passing train in the hope that someone may take pity on her and feed her. This done, Pepico leaves for the front.

Here Castillo-Puche reflects, through the mouth of the young soldier, on the causes of wars, of their meaning and their goals. This is a digression which detracts from the narrative since it expresses opinions which could have more effectively been conveyed by means of the action in the story, and actually had implicitly and more convincingly been

made manifest by Lili's behavior.

Incredibly enough (and here the author stretches the reader's imagination even more) Pepico, after surviving a terrible bombing episode, is reunited with Lili at the front. His joy, however, is short-lived: a few days later Pepico's closest friend, Jaime, is killed and when an officer orders that the body be taken away, Lili, infuriated, attacks him and is, in turn, shot by the officer. Pepico and his companions are stunned by the dual tragedy and they bury Jaime and Lili side by side.

Either because this novel is more compact or because of the unusual device of using a dumb animal's poignant grief to convey a sense of war's irrationality, El perro loco is a powerful story. One feels, that although the author identifies with Pepico (whose age he was before the beginning of the Civil War), this character in himself cannot contain all the disgust the author feels for that period of his country's history. Hence he projects the overflow of his emotions on to the small animal.

Lili's story, set again a background of darkness and melancholy, reflects Spain in its most anguished hour even as the poet from Moguer and his donkey, Platero, reflect the days of sunshine and the peace of provincial existence during the pre-war years. Castillo-Puche's short novel, however, suffers from the author's tendency to editorialize and from the contrived and sudden appearance of the dog at the end of the novel, a coincidence too great to be believable.

Misión a Estambul

The second novel included in this anthology is an unusual mixture of impressions and fantasies based on a trip to Istanbul which Castillo-Puche made with other Spaniards who, like him, had been sent to repatriate their countrymen of the so-called Blue Division whom the Russians were to set free at the port of Odessa. The story is entirely fictional, however, and reads like a popular spy thriller in which the author tries to recreate the aura of mystery and intrigue suggested by the atmosphere of the Turkish city. In setting and thrust, the story is reminiscent of two full-length "entertainments" novels by Graham Greene, (whom Castillo-Puche still reads with admiration), namely Stamboul Train (1932) and The Confidential Agent (1939).

First written in 1954, Misión a Estambul concerns the adventures of a secret agent sent from Madrid to the exotic Eastern city with no more information than that someone would eventually take from him the belt he was wearing and, in return, would give him another object which he was to bring home. Accustomed to working with the minimum of information, and in blind obedience, the agent (who recounts the mission in the first person) tells in detail about the three or four people he meets who are anxious to gain his attention during the journey by land and by air en route to Istanbul via Rome and Athens. While suspense is maintained by the intrusion of these persons whose exact role vis-á-vis the agents is unknown, the pace set is unfortunately too slow for this type of story.

The profusion of details and a contrived dénouement weaken the novel and rob it of much of its artistic value.

Having finally arrived at his destination, the agent meets a beautiful young woman who invites him to her suite, but he, ever alert to foul play, suggest she come to his room after one in the morning. While waiting for her, he falls asleep and awakens at four A.M. to find the belt gone and his personal effects in disarray. He feels humiliated by his stupidity at having failed to elude the woman, especially after he had eluded many a stranger before reaching his hotel. Later in the day he received word to return home immediately. Upon his arrival in Madrid, he learns that the belt had fallen into the right hands and that the compact left in his pocket by the mysterious lady contained the information for which he had been sent to Istanbul; he need not, therefore, regret having succumbed to a drugged sleep which, he learns, had been induced by a drink prepared for him by the lady's accomplice.

The agent in this story stalks about the city for long hours each day before fulfilling his mission and it would appear these walks are bit a ruse for the author to evoke his memories of Istanbul:

En Estambul, lo que se fabrica solo, sin más intervención que la del suelo, es la intriga... (p.142)

Era difícil seguir calles rectas. Todas eran cortas, confusas, sinuosas, secretas, misteriosas... (p. 159).

Estambul olía a azúcar muy tostada y a lana sudada. Estambul no era una ciudad firme y real.

Era como una fantasmagoria. No había dos cosas en el mismo plano ni dos luces de igual intensidad. De las menudas tiendecillas salían corriendo las mujeres con pañuelos a la cabeza, en los amplios cafés se apelotonaban los hombres en una atmósfera de humo irrespirable. (p. 164)

This tendency to direct reporting tends to vitiate the narrative flow which is generally absorbing. An acting-out of the sinister and overwhelming aspects of the city would have been more effective. Castillo-Puche, however, has written many books and articles based on his travels and it would seem to be a type of writing he relishes more than any other. During the summer of 1973 he spent several weeks in Venezuela and in the jungles of Brazil. This trip will be the basis of a number of articles to appear in the fall of the same year.

Una mosca en Manhattan

The setting of this short tale, in which death is symbolized by a fly, is the New York City apartment in the East seventies of Manhattan where Castillo-Puche and his family lived from 1967-1971. The protagonist-narrator awakens from a sound sleep in time to see his children go off to school. While still in that twilight zone between sleep and total wakefulness, he gradually becomes conscious of the usual "day" sounds: the lady next door leaving to walk her dog; the shuffling steps of a delivery boy; his wife running the water in the bathroom; pigeons cooing on the cornice outside the window; a helicopter flying overhead; and fire engines at a distance. He gazes sleepily at the ceiling and detects a rather large fly which he is certain was not there the

previous evening. Presently he fall asleep.

Upon awakening once again, the man is surprised to find the fly in the same spot. He rises, calls to his wife to inform her about the fly and she answers that they had never had any in the apartment. Exactly a woman's logic, he observes to himself: because they do not see a thing, they disclaim its existence. His curiosity gets the better of him and he stands on the bed to get a better view of the insect: its wings and legs are in perpetual motion, its diminutive body trembles and it is only from a distance that it appears to be motionless. From the ceiling the insect flies abruptly to the mirror over the bureau where the sight of its own image seems to frighten it so that it flies away, apparently disappearing. At that moment the man's wife enters the room, asks where the fly is and, when her husband cannot tell her, replies: "Creo que lo has soñado."

The man now decides to work at his desk, feeling that eventually the fly will reappear in its own good time. After several hours of work, he is tired and proceeds to lie on the bed, somehow knowing unconsciously that he will find the insect. The fly is indeed back on the ceiling, and now a strange camaraderie is established between the man and the insect. Here Castillo-Puche uses the insect á la Kafka, in an eerie, quasi irrational manner. The world, for Kafka, is essentially turmoil, something that is not rational, and its essence therefore, only a fantastic tale can express. Castillo-Puche's preoccupation with the theme of death brings

him here to what many might consider an exaggerated, fantastic symbol.

The fly somehow senses the fascination it has caused and moves to the doorknob as if urging the man to follow to the living room. There it alights on the typewriter and prevents the man from writing; when he pours himself a cup of wine, the insect rests on the brim as if to share the libation. Abruptly it makes a few sporadic landings on cactus plant, newspapers, bookcase, wax candle, and flies rapidly out the door. Mesmerized, the man follows, opens the door and accompanies the fly towards the elevator. The fly opts for the staircase but catches up with the man on the main floor. So absorbed has the man become now with the fly's antics, that he almost ignores the doorman's greeting. The fly alights on the pane of glass of the door leading to the street, apparently unwilling to go out into the inclement weather. At about the same time an ambulance pulls up to the door and presently a stretcher is borne out accompanied by a young couple and a child. Distracted by this human drama, the man momentarily forgets about the fly: it is too late when he remembers because it has by now flown out into the great metropolis never to return.

If the fly is death and the man in the story represents "everyman", the author is evidently suggesting several interesting truths about the relationship between the two: the fly (death) appears in the most unexpected place and time (in the apartment and in the morning); from a distance it

seems quiet and unobtrusive, but is an active entity when viewed closely; it cares not to dwell upon itself (as the fly repulsed its image in the mirror), but is on the lookout for men whenever their hour has come; it has the power to mesmerize so that even amid the most casual tasks as typing, drinking wine etc., man may suddenly recall its reality; and finally, man may choose at a given moment to want to pursue it, but if it chooses not to be overtaken, it will elude man who can so easily be distracted. The man in the story pursues the insect with interest, wonderment and growing fascination, but also with a measure of indifference (as when the fly hides) and peace. Perhaps this is the attitude suggested by the author as best for man in face of the inevitable.

¡Con lo que cuesta criar un hijo!

Written in 1958, this story sketches a narrow escape experienced by a young man who narrates the account in the first person. He and his friend, Agustín, stop one evening at a small bar near the Gran Vía in Madrid. Shortly after their arrival they sense a tension in the room as furtive glances are directed toward the entrance by several patrons. A tall, heavy-set, unshaven individual struts into the room, walks directly to the bar and offers to buy the young man a drink. Agustín motions to his friend to accept as it is evident that the newcomer is not to be trifled with. Meanwhile, the stranger is staring at a blond, gaudily attired woman standing by a staircase with a cigarette dangling from her red lips. Turning again to the young man, the gruff

intruder asks: "¿Qué te parece esa flor de alhelí?" His voice was threatening and left little doubt as to the answer expected. "Pues sí", comes the half-hearted response. Suddenly the youth feels the breath of the older man hot and heavy upon his face and hears the menacing question; "¿Y le gusta mucho o poco?" The young man demurs and immediately the other brandishes a knife as Agustín leaps between them. In the ensuing fracas, the youth escapes as the other men subdue the attacker. At a safe distance, the narrator awaits his friend and together they take a taxi home.

Safely at home, the youth feels angry with himself for having run away and, after making certain that his companion has gone home, decides to return alone to the bar. As he approaches it from the corner, he sees a bleeding body being carried out followed by the police who have the troublemaker in custody. The latter had been his attacker and the youth realizes that had he not run away, he might now be dead. At that moment he becomes aware of a lady standing by selling cigarettes who is bemoaning the turn of events as she shakes her head murmuring: "¡Con lo que cuesta criar un hijo!" Evidently she is a mother recalling all the trials and tribulations involved in the bringing-up of children and is lamenting the fact that in one brief, senseless moment a life can be snuffed out, a life that is bestowed, nurtured and sustained with the love of a mother. The narrator is touched and returns home determined to write his mother.

Despite the limit-situation described here and the melodramatic, sentimental twist introduced at the end a la O. Henry, Castillo-Puche in the brief pages of this tale, captures the gruff irrationality of the culprit with the same force as he does the justifiable fear and puzzlement of the young man. The mood somehow is broken by the intrusion of the woman, an unexpected character ignorant of events preceding the dénouement. It seems to us that, while the situation may be true to life, a more subtle device for achieving the same end might have been more artistic and less abrupt.

Una historia en pedazos

The protagonist in this story is a surgeon very reminiscent of Andrés Hurtado of El árbol de la ciencia: he has a deep distrust of life, of man and of God. Struggling with the disharmony he perceives around him, he remarks: "Yo creo que mi existencia es absurda." He speaks of the loss of his mistress to another man, the breakdown of his marriage, the meaninglessness of his work. The rest of the story is told by other persons: the maid who discovers the body of the surgeon after his suicide; the lawyer who is to manage the affairs of the deceased; the priest who writes some thoughts about Emilio. Perhaps the priest's notes highlight the poignancy of events because they imply that if someone had only taken the time to show some understanding and sincere warmth toward Emilio, he might not have despaired of life. But in a big city, the priest observes, there is no time for the human touch; perhaps in a small town where one is not overwhelmed

with weddings, funerals, baptisms and all the many tasks of the clergy, one might have time to help resolve the problems of a tortured man... yes, in a town but not in a city.

The theme of the alienation of modern man, the anonymity of life in the cities, and the pressures of adjusting to rapid changes, with all their ramifications, have become so commonplace in literature that one would have to approach these themes obliquely and creatively if one would stimulate thought. This brief story provides but tiny snatches of a life in crisis and the outcome is predictable. Whatever others had to say after the doctor dies a suicide is simply begging the question and there are no surprises but only a feeling of déja vu.

El superviviente

Written in 1951, El superviviente was in embryo all that Con la muerte al hombro would be some years later: the depiction of the existential, yet romantic agony of a man. It tells in the first person of the thoughts entertained by an ailing man as he strolles along the streets of Madrid. Realizing all the beauty about him, the youth reflects morbidly about the development of the disease that is consuming his life, and like Julio, is neurotically obsessed with the death fermenting in his decaying lungs. He seeks in war a more respectable and heroic death, but this too eludes him since he is not even wounded. Returning home, he says: "Cada muerte tiene su agonía especial y el significado de la enfermedad acaso no es más que un signo visible para demostrar

la conformidad o rebeldía que existe entre la muerte biológica y la muerte espiritual."

It is with a sense of relief that after six years of waiting, the protagonist suffers a serious hemorrhage. He now wonders if he should allow events to run their course or hasten his death by his own hand. He chooses to wait but indulges in excesses that he knows will bring death closer. The decision to wait, nevertheless, affords him a measure of peace, and symbolically: "Ya cesó de llover..."

Castillo-Puche claims that this story as well as the one entitled Una historia en pedazos are considered reminiscent of the work of Hemingway even though at the time they were written the authors had not met as yet nor was the Spaniard familiar with the American's novels. Speaking of their mutual preoccupation with the theme of death, Castillo-Puche said he would alter Hemingway's saying: "¿Cómo hemos de vivir, puesto que tenemos que morir?" to "¿Para qué hemos de vivir, si tenemos que morir?" Both men enjoyed going to bull fights because each felt to a greater or lesser degree what Hemingway tells us in Death in the Afternoon: that now that wars were over, the only place one might witness violent death was at the bull rings; but they wanted to see death, not the complications of death by disease nor the death of friends or even of those one has hated.

The protagonist of El superviviente, then, truly "survived" his own death, as it were, by allowing it to come of itself unlike the surgeon, Emilio, who brought it into

being, unable to survive his own gloom. In each case death ceases to remain a mystery, but the question remains: in which case did the protagonist understand it better?

Carta de Judas Iscariote

In 1953 Castillo-Puche wrote this biblically inspired monologue in the form of a letter by the traitor-apostle, Judas, written supposedly before his suicide and after his betrayal of Christ. While fanciful, it projects the human ambivalence felt by Judas as he sees his life in retrospect. As viewed from his perspective of the moment, it seems to him to have been singularly devoid of any disinterested love: he has disdained the synagogue; he has always found fault with his fellow-apostles, admiring only the stubborn pride of Peter even as he envied his position of primacy; lastly, he considers the claims of Jesus untenable and incredible while, at the same time, laments that the so-called Messiah refused to save himself from his ignominious death. He writes:

Todo está de más... El nació y muere, yo nací y moriré. El podría no haber muerto si no hubiera querido y yo moriré por mi propia voluntad: ésta es la diferencia entre un justo y un réprobo, que El, sometiéndose a las criaturas, se libera, y yo, haciéndome dueño de mi ser, me entrego a la tiranía de la perdición. (p. 295)

While different in setting and mood from others of Castillo-Puche's stories, nevertheless, there is here too a preoccupation with the death theme. It is not death by disease nor in the heat of battle, but it is a seeking out of death as the only logical end to a man's absurd existence - an existence in which, once more, despair has taken over.

Yet it is a curious type of despair because the apostle insists that he is obliged to serve as witness before his fellow-men concerning the reasons for his suicide. He desires, moreover, to list his numerous transgressions against God and man. It is clear, then, that this man is not the classic example of the alienated man of whom existentialists speak. In his own bitter fashion, he cares about what others will think and say after he is gone even as he dreams about what might have been. He regrets that he cannot live a few days more to verify with his own eyes if indeed Jesus will rise from the dead as He had promised. Hence, even at the supreme moment of his life when he is planning his own mortal end, Judas maintains emotional ties with all who have comprised his world.

In ten pages Castillo-Puche evokes once again the figure of an anguished man and does so with credibility and compassion of what indeed must have been the sentiments of one such as Judas. Sentences are short, words well chosen and the mood is sustained throughout.

Critique of the collection of stories

In the discussion of the stories making up this collection, we have commented on the literary value of each. In general, however, one may observe that they are of uneven quality: from the well-conceived war story (if we except the contrived dénouement), El perro loco, to the somewhat banal and probably autobiographical scene depicted in ¡Con lo que

cuesta criar un hijo! Castillo-Puche gives evidence in the book of what had been his total orientation during the first two decades of his writing career. Like his later novels, the stories bear his peculiar literary traits: vigor of expression, colorful (if at times explicit) language, the ability to present with some authenticity a man's interior conflicts, an omnipresent awareness of death, and, finally, a compulsion for detail which may be an outgrowth of his autobiographical leanings. One of the stories, Una historia en pedazos is but the future, Con la muerte al hombro, in embryo.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In this study we have endeavored to explore the total fictional work of José Luis Castillo-Puche to date with special emphasis on the elements of conflict in those of his characters who are for the most part extraordinarily troubled and irresolute. In so doing, it was necessary to place him within the context of his geographical origins (since these play a significant part in his work), to discuss briefly the existentialism which has given direction to his work, and to consider those writers, both Spanish and foreign, who have influenced his thinking and shaped his literary expression. One of the principal conclusions one can logically draw at this juncture is that Castillo-Puche defies clear-cut classification.

The themes used by Castillo-Puche are closely allied with the Civil War, his native town of Yecla and the question of authentic and false clerical vocation. But they are themes developed within an existential context in which the protagonists search within themselves for meaning and solutions. They are alienated men removed by choice from all specifically social problems, and it is not always clear what truth it is they are seeking. In addition, they are so

completely absorbed by the doubts and fears tormenting them that they become symbols rather than real men, or else, their emotions appear to be overdrawn and distorted.

An atmosphere of gloom and pessimism pervades the novels: the emphasis on the sad, the sordid and the ugly. Yet, the abundant dialogue is natural and spontaneous; such passages outnumber purely descriptive ones, and reveal the author's ability to utilize skillfully the ordinary colloquial speech of townspeople. Some of the words used, however, may offend sensibilities because of their earthiness and crudity and they may not always be warranted by the situation. Other passages however are lyrical and so beautifully evocative that one wonders how they could flow from the same pen.

There is a tendency towards repetitiveness in the novels as well as a seeming need to explain rather than imply. The charge has been made that these characteristics flow from the author's journalistic profession. Perhaps it is best to allow the author himself to respond in his words spoken during a taped interview in March, 1973 in which he addresses himself to his dual vocation:

Creo que el periodismo es mi oficio, mi obligación... con ello he vivido...
Yo no quiero quitarme de encima este azote, esta especie de martirio del periodismo porque creo que es una esclavitud un poco digna y decente y me ha enseñado mucho de la vida...
Mi vida de escritor es una vida montada sobre aquella... una vida más profunda, más callada, más silenciosa, llena de soledad y llena de preocupación y de inquietud. Esta vida mía puede subsistir con la otra como el caracol sale a pasear por encima de la hierba, con los cuernos al aire, como si siempre viviera así. Pero

el caracol tiene momentos de su vida en que está encerrado y entonces es cuando se produce la obra mucho más profunda, penetradora, mucho más rigurosa, que es la obra literaria donde uno quiere encontrarse a sí mismo y donde cada vez que se enciembra es de una manera insatisfecha porque no ha terminado de encontrarse y siempre espera que en la próxima va a dar una solución... una especie de confrontación existencial consigo... la fiebre del escritor es algunas veces no despreciativa del periodismo pero sí muy condenadora por el aburrimiento, por el desprecio que le produce el entregarse a cosas un poco banales cuando él está emplazado a cosas mucho más graves y mucho más decisivas y trascendentes.

As for the characters themselves, although they live out their lives in different settings, one critic claims they are all one and the same: Julio, Luis, Enrique and Genaro:

"naturaleza vegetativa, impresionable, soñadora; toda ella fantasía, capricho, frescor. Carácter tímido, borroso, infantil, melancólico, pegado a los recuerdos; inteligencia sensorial, intuitiva...¹

Finally, we conclude with the greatest single influence on Castillo-Puche, don Pío Baroja. Although the latter's incisive, unaffected style has left its mark on the early Cela, on Zunzunegui, Delibes, Gironella and Aldecoa, it has most completely set the model for Castillo-Puche's fiction. There is a similarity in choice of themes, a preference for dialogue over descriptive passages, the presentation of introspective, protagonists, and the sensation of déja vu, at times overpowering in both writers and which Professor Patt has called in Baroja: "an outstanding example of literary

¹García-Viñó, pp. 54-55.

overkill".¹

The vigor of their language as well as their common themes may be demonstrated by two passages taken at random:

El mundo le parecía una mezcla de manicomio y de hospital; ser inteligente constituía una desgracia, y sólo la felicidad podía venir de la inconsciencia y la locura...

... la vida es una lucha constante, una cacería cruel en que vamos devorando los unos a los otros. ...el amor es un engaño como la vida misma...

(El árbol de la ciencia, Vol. V OBRAS, p. 16?)

A mí eso de la armonía de los cosmos y de la música de las esferas no me convence... a mí me parece que el desconcierto es universal... Siento que mi existencia es absurda... me siento como desplazado... la vida es inútil...

(De dentro de la piel, pp. 263-264)

Both writers tend to moralize, although Castillo-Puche does so more frequently, possibly because he remains a very fervent member of the Catholic Church while Baroja opposed all form of organized religion. In spite of the fact, however, that Castillo-Puche deals with certain religious themes, one feels he does not make religious faith particularly operative in his characters.

In the introduction of the first volume of his mammoth study, Literatura del siglo XX y cristianismo,¹ Charles Moeller speaks of the silence of God. We feel this expression best describes the impact that the mood set by both

¹Beatrice Patt, Pío Baroja (New York: Twayne Publications, p. 171).

²Charles Moeller, Literatura del siglo XX y el cristianismo vols. tras. by P. Riesco and García Yebra. (Madrid: Gredos, 19).

Castillo-Puche and Baroja conveys to the reader. Characters agonize within themselves as if they existed in a void. And again in volume two, Moeller speaks of fear in a chapter entitled, "El miedo no es la fe."¹ Thus, the characters depicted by these novelists, (especially the priests and seminarians of Castillo-Puche) cannot possibly ever have had a very strong faith if they can be so completely gripped by fear. We refer specifically to Como ovejas al matadero: the protagonist argues with himself, never with the God to whose service he is being ordained; here God, to him, is silent. Again the same young man is crushed by fear: if his faith were gone, there would be nothing by indifference; if he had any faith, it would cast out such extreme fear. To us, as to many other readers, this latest novel of Castillo-Puche raises more questions than it answers.

To sum up, the fiction of José Luis Castillo-Puche has earned its place in contemporary Spanish literature by its powerful evocation of the anguish of modern man enmeshed in a post-war alienated society. It is a flowing if somewhat rhetorical and exuberant phrase containing at times picturesque as well as macabre images. It will remain, we feel, as a testimony to the Spanish problematic of the twentieth century as well as to the ambiguity of the universal man during the same period - an ambiguity of his life: social, religious, political and personal. Of the future, Castillo-Puche observes:

¹Charles Moeller, Literatura del siglo XX y del cristianismo, vols. trans. by P. Riesco and García Yebra. (Madrid: Gredos, 19).

"Pienso con cierta tranquilidad que lo importante está por hacer." Given the time, we feel he may indeed achieve his goal.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

- Castillo-Puche, José Luis. América de cabo a rabo. Madrid: Ediciones Cid, 1959.
- _____. "A propósito de Paralelo 40." Barcelona: Destino, 1963.
- _____. "Autocrítica: Con la muerte al hombro." Ateneo, Madrid, 1 mayo 1954.
- _____. Como ovejas al matadero. Barcelona: Delfín, 1971.
- _____. "Conferencia." Revista de Asociación Patriótica Española. Buenos Aires 287, (1957), p. 1..
- _____. "Panorama español contemporáneo." Editorial Cultura Hispánica. Madrid, 1964.
- _____. El Congo estrena libertad. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1961.
- _____. Con la muerte al hombro. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1954.
- _____. De dentro de la piel. Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1972.
- _____. Diario íntimo de Alfonso XIII. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1960.
- _____. Guía de la Costa Blanca y la Costa Azul: Libro de viajes. Barcelona: Moguer, 1964.
- _____. Hemingway: entre la vida y la muerte. Barcelona: Destino, 1970.
- _____. Hicieron partes. Madrid: Escelicer, 1957.
- _____. "Hoy he vuelto a nacer." Clavileño, num. 30 (1954), pp. 52-56.
- _____. Memorias íntimas de Aviraneta o Manual del conspirador. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1952.
- _____. Misión a Estambul. Madrid: Ediciones Cid, 1954.

- _____. "La novela católica de España." Punta Europa num. 36. dic. 1956, pp. 3-15.
- _____. "La novela española que interesa en América." El libro español. num. 7 (1959), pp. 95-97.
- _____. Oro blanco. Madrid: El Cid, 1963.
- _____. "La Palmera, el río y las abejas." ABC, 13 mayo, 1961.
- _____. Paralelo 40. Barcelona: Destino, 1963.
- _____. El perro loco. Madrid: Novela Popular, 1965.
- _____. Sin camino. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1956.
- _____. "Sor Paula." Cuadernos hispanoamericanos. XXI (1957), pp. 355-365.
- _____. "Editorial." Tauta: medicina y sociedad. num. 7. 9 enero, 1973, p. 9.
- _____. El Vengador. Barcelona: Destino, 1956.
- _____. "La Voluntad, Yecla, y Azorín." Línea, Murcia, (1959), 25 pp. (separata).

SECONDARY SOURCES

A. Studies on each of the author's novels and short stories

1. Con la muerte al hombro (1954)

Arreita, Marcelo. "Primera novela de José Luis Castillo-Puche." Alcalá, Madrid. 1954.

Brent, Albert. "Con la muerte al hombro." Books Abroad. #4, XXX (1956).

Cabo, Pedro. "Con la muerte al hombro." Ateneo, Madrid, 1 marzo, 1955.

Campillo, Joaquín. "Con la muerte al hombro." La Mañana. Lérida, 22 sept. 1954.

Cerezales, Manuel G. "La religion relatada." La Estafeta Literaria. 281, 21 dic. 1963, p. 10.

Cirré, J. F. "Con la muerte al hombro." Pueblo, Madrid, 19 junio 1954.

_____. "Con la muerte al hombro." Verdad, Murcia, 30 oct. 1954.

Fernández Almagro, Melchor. "Con la muerte al hombro." ABC. 28 jun. 1954., p. 33.

Figueira, Julia. "Con la muerte al hombro." Entrevista." El Español, 2 mayo, 1954, p. 26.

García Luengo, E. "Con la muerte al hombro." Indice, 12-1954.

Garzo, Eugenio. "Con el libro al hombro." Cuadernos hispano-americanos. 1955 (XXIV) pp. 68-69.

Gich, Juan. "Con la muerte al hombro." Correo Literario, 6 junio, 1964.

González Ruiz, Nicolás. "Con la muerte al hombro." YA, 11 feb. 1954.

Muñoz, Alonso, Adolfo. "Carta a Castillo-Puche." Madrid. 23 mayo, 1954.

R. M. "Con la muerte al hombro." Ateneo. 15 mayo, 1954.

- Ruiz García, Enrique. "Las letras de Murcia en los escapara-
tes de Madrid." La Verdad. 18 mayo, 1954.
- Sánchez Moreno, José. "Con la muerte al hombro." Línea.
Murcia, 11 mayo, 1954.
- Valencia, Antonio. "Con la muerte al hombro." Arriba 25 sep.
1955.
- Vázquez, Zamora, R. "Crónica del Nadal." Destino, 9 enero,
1954.
- Villarta, Angeles. "Con la muerte al hombro." Domingo.
Madrid. 1 agosto, 1954.
- Yndurian, Francisco. "Castillo-Puche, finalista del Nadal."
El Noticiero. Zaragoza, 23 mayo, 1954.

2. Sin Camino (1956)

- Cerezales, Manuel G. "La religión relatada." La Estafeta
Literaria. 281, 21 dic. 1963, p. 10.
- Di Benedetto, Antonio. "Sin camino." El libro, Buenos Aires,
oct.-nov. 1956.
- Guasta, Eugenio. "Sin camino." SUR. Buenos Aires, 250, 1950.
- Neyra, Joaquín. "Sin camino." Vea y Lea. Buenos Aires,
1 dic. 1956.
- Rodríguez Monegal, Emilio. "Un documento a contrapelo."
Marcha, Montevideo, 1957.
- Sáinz de Robles, F. C. "Sin camino." Madrid. 14 marzo, 1957.
- Vilanova, Antonio. "La letra y el espíritu." Destino, 1956.

3. El Vengador (1956)

- A. D. "El Vengador." Cuadernos del Congreso por la libertad
de la cultura. 24 (1958).
- Cano, José Luis. "El Vengador." Insula, num. 125, pp. 6-7.
- Casamayor, Enrique. "El Vengador." Cuadernos Hispanoameri-
canos. # 85 (1957), pp. 155-157.

- Cerezales, Manuel G. "El Vengador." Informaciones, p. 7.
- Deleyto, José M. "El Vengador." El Español. 28 agos. 1957.
- Fernández Almagro, Melchor. "El Vengador." ABC. 13 nov. 1957.
- Golo Pérez, René. "El Vengador." El Comercio. Quito, 7 enero, 1958.
- Martín, J. L. "El Vengador." Diario Regional. Valladolid, 13 enero, 1961.
- Olano, Antonio. "Premio Miguel de Cervantes." Pueblo. 20 abril, 1958.
- Ortiz, Manuel. "El libro de hoy." La Estafeta Literaria. 31 mayo, 1958.
- Santos, Dámaso. "Nueva novela de Castillo-Puche." La Hora. Madrid, 1 mayo, 1958.
- Santos, Dámaso. "El Vengador." Pueblo. Madrid. 11 (1957).

4. Paralelo 40 (1963)

- Fabiani, Sardaña. "Paralelo 40." Ensayo, Madrid. num. 3, nov. 1963.
- Fernández Almagro, Melchor. "Paralelo 40." Ensayo, nov. 1963.
- Galindo Herrero, Santiago. "Paralelo 40." La Hoja del lunes, Madrid, 8 Junio, 1963.
- López Anglada, Luis. "Paralelo 40." El Español. Madrid, 29 junio, 1963.
- Magriña, Jaime. "Paralelo 40." Anales, 1964.
- Montini, Javier. "La vida de los americanos en Madrid." Domingo, Madrid, 9 junio, 1963.
- Montoro, José A. "Paralelo 40, crudo reportaje." El Diario Vasco. 30 mayo 1963.
- Mora, Jesús. "Paralelo 40 o una novela de situación." Madrid. 8 agosto, 1963.
- Mostaza, Bartolomé. "Castillo-Puche, novelador de testimonio." El libro español. VII (1964) pp. 445-450'

- Mostaza, Bartolomé. "Paralelo 40." YA 12 junio, 1963.
- Olano Antonio. "Paralelo 40." Juventud 1963. p. 16.
- Peñuelas, Marcelino. "Paralelo 40." Asomante, P. R. num 2 (1965), pp. 83-88.
- Pérez Piedra, Pedro. "Denuncia de los altos bajos fondos mundiales." La Estafeta Literaria. 22 junio, 1963
- Ridruejo, Dionisio. Escrito en España. Buenos Aires: Losada, 1964.
- Sáinz de Robles, Federico C. "Paralelo 40." Madrid. 8 Julio, 1963.
- Tijeras, Eduardo. "La Corea madrileña de Castillo-Puche." Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos modernos. (LVI) num. 178, (1963), pp. 679-682.
- Umbral, Francisco. "Paralelo 40." Agora (1963) num. 83, pp. 46-47.
- Valencia, A. "Novela de ambiente actual." Arriba. 9 junio, 1963.
- Valencia, A. "Una novela vista desde su perspectiva." Arriba. 9 sept. 1963.

5. Hicieron partes (1967)

- Alvarez, Carlos Luis. "Hicieron partes." Punta Europa. 28, abril, 1958.
- De Hornedo, Rafael M. "El nuevo premio laurel del libro de novela católica." Razón y fe. julio-agosto, 1958.
- De Montini, Javier. "La vida de los americanos en Madrid pasa por el Paralelo 40." Logos. Madrid 19 junio, 1963.
- Fernández Almagro, Melchor. "Hicieron partes." ABC. 1 agosto 1959.
- García Luengo, E. "Premio Nacional de Literatura." El Alcázar. 18 dic. 1958.
- González Ruiz, Nicolás. "Dos novelas muy distintas." YA, 13 enero, 1957.

- J. H. "Hicieron partes." Signo, Madrid, 14 nov. 1959.
- Ruiz Acosta, Juan. "Los premios Escelicer de Novela católica." Correo Literario. 1957.
- Silva Castro, Raúl. "Lo que dice un huésped." El Mercurio. Santiago de Chile, 19 enero, 1960.
- Valencia, Antonio. "Hicieron partes." Arriba. 20 abril, 1958.

6. Como ovejas al matadero (1971)

- Castellet, Enrique. "Castillo-Puche y su última novela." La Estafeta Literaria. Enero, 1957.
- Corbalán, Pablo. "Castillo-Puche, entre la liberación y la fe." Informaciones. 1 julio, 1971, p. 2.
- Diez Echarri y Roca Franquesa. "La Dimensión humana del sacerdocio." Diario. Barcelona, agosto 28, 1971'
- Domingo, José. "Del seminario a la isla." Insula, num. 302 (1972).
- Fernández Braso, M. "Como ovejas al matadero: primera novela de la trilogía El Cíngulo." Pueblo. jul. 1971.
- Ferrari Billoch, F. "El sacerdote en la novela y la novela de sacerdotes." La Estafeta Literaria. num. 78, p. 2. (1972).
- García Díaz, Santiago. "El Cíngulo." Reseña, Madrid, num. 50 dic. 1971.
- Iglesias Laguna, Antonio. "Como ovejas al matadero." ABC. 7 julio, 1971.
- Iglesias Laguna, Antonio. "Como ovejas al matadero se desarrolla en Murcia." Línea. 24 julio, 1971.
- Roberts, Gemma. "Un autor dice su verdad." El Diario-La Prensa. 12 junio, 1972.
- Santos, Dámaso. "Los misacantanos de Castillo-Puche." Pueblo. 15 dic. 1971.
- Seco, Carlos. "Como ovejas al matadero." El Norte de Castilla. Valladolid, 1 julio, 1954.

- Umbral, Francisco. "Una trilogía sobre los curas." La Región, Orense, 13 julio, 1971.
- Valencia, Antonio. "El sacerdote, drama y problema." Arriba. 29 julio, 1971.
- Vázquez Zamora, Rafael. "El Cíngulo." Destino. 28 agosto, 1971.
- B. Studies on the Contemporary Spanish novel.
- Agulló, M. "Escritores contemporáneos." El libro español, II. (1959), pp. 19-21.
- Alborg, Juan L. Hora actual de la novela española. Madrid: Taurus, 1968.
- Amorós, A. Introducción a la novela española contemporánea. Madrid: Anaya, 1966.
- Aub, Max. "Discurso de la novela española contemporánea." Jornadas, Sevilla, 1945.
- Balseiro, José. Novelistas españoles modernos. New York: MacMillan, 1933.
- Baquero Goyanes, Mariano. "Realismo y fantasía en la novela española actual." La Estafeta Literaria. 185, 15 enero, 1960.
- Bosch, Rafael. La novela española del siglo XX. New York: Las Américas, 1970.
- Burgos, Antonio. "La novela española." Madrid, 21 abril, 1963.
- Buckley, Ramón. Problemas formales de la novela española contemporánea. Barcelona: Península, 1968.
- Candel, Francisco. "Novela social." Prosa novelesca Actual. Madrid: Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo, agosto, 1968.
- Cardona, Rodolfo. Novelistas españoles de hoy. New York: W. W. Norton Co., Inc., 1959.
- Castellet, Enrique. "Veinte años de novela española." Cuadernos Americanos CXXVI. enero-febrero, 1958, pp. 290-295.
- Castellet, José María. La hora del lector. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1957.

- Cirré, J. F. "El protagonista múltiple y su papel en la reciente novela española." Papeles de Son Armadans, 98 (1964), pp. 159-170.
- Corbalán, Pablo. "Algo sobre libros y plagios." Noticiero Universal, Barcelona, 20 Julio, 1971.
- Corrales Egea, José. "Situación actual de la novela española." Insula. 282 (1970), pp. 21-24.
- Curutchet, Juan Carlos. Introducción a la novela de post-guerra. Montevideo: Editorial Alfa, 1966.
- Ferguson, Albert Gordon. "Spain through her novel: 1940-1960." D.A.T. (Nebraska) XXIV, p. 615.
- García-Viñó, M. Novela española actual. Madrid: Guadarrama, 1967.
- _____. Novela española de postguerra. Madrid: Publicaciones españolas, 1971.
- Gil Casado, Pablo. La novela social española. Barcelona: Siex Barral, 1968.
- Guillermo, Edenia & Hernández, J. A. Novelística española de los sesenta. New York: Eliseo Torres, 1971.
- Iglesias Laguna, Antonio. Treinta años de novela española, (1938-1968). Madrid: Prensa española, 1969.
- Marra-López, José R. Narrativa española fuera de España, (1939-1961). Madrid: Guadarrama, 1963.
- Martínez Cachero, José María. La novela española entre 1939- y 1969. Madrid: Castalia, 1971.
- Mostaza, Bartolomé. "Cuatro novelas con fondo de guerra." YA, 14 abril, 1957.
- Nora, Eugenio G. La novela española contemporánea 3 vols. Madrid: Gredos, 1970.
- Oguiza, Thomas. Testimonio de la novela contemporánea española. (unpublished thesis) Milwaukee University. 1968.
- Olmos García, Francisco. "La novela y los novelistas de hoy." Cuadernos hispanoamericanos. CXXIX (Julio-Agosto, 1963), pp. 211-237.
- Pérez Minic, D. Novelistas españoles de los siglos XIX y XX. Madrid: Guadarrama, 1957.

- Ponce de León, José Luis S. La novela española de la guerra civil. Madrid: Insula, 1971.
- Rodríguez Alcalde, Leopoldo. Hora actual de la novela en el mundo. Madrid: Taurus, 1959.
- Sanz Villanueva, Santos. Tendencias de la novela española actual (1950-1970). Madrid: Cuadernos para el Diálogo, 1972.
- Schraibman, José. "Notas sobre la novela española contemporánea." Revista hispánica moderna. enero-abril (1969), pp. 113-121.
- Sobejano, Gonzalo. Novela española de nuestro tiempo. Madrid: Prensa española, 1970.
- Torre, Guillermo. Historia de la literatura de Vanguardia. Madrid: Guadarrama, 1965.
- Torrente, Gonzalo. Panorama de la literatura española contemporánea. Madrid: Guadarrama, 1956.
- Tovar, Antonio. "Noticia de novelas." La Gaceta Ilustrada. Num. 781, 26 sept. 1971.
- Valbuena Prat, Angel. "Algunos aspectos de la novela humanizados de estos cinco ilustres." Arriba, 26 abril, 1963.
- Varela, Jácome, Benito. Renovación de la novela en el siglo veinte. Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1967.
- Vázquez Zamora, R. "Los temas candentes en la novela." España de Tanger. 23 junio, 1963.

C. Other Studies

- Allott, Kenneth & Farris, Miriam. The Art of Graham Greene. New York: Russell & Russell, 1963.
- Alfonso, José. Azorín: en torno a su vida y su obra. Barcelona: Editorial Aedos, 1958.
- Anderson Imbert, E. "Consejos a un escritor joven." Humboldt, 40 (1969), p. 80.
- _____. Crítica interna. Madrid: Taurus, 1960.
- Aragonés, Juan Emilio. "Un novelista: J. L. Castillo-Puche." Ateneo, Madrid, 1963, p. 40.

- Aranguren, José Luis. "Por qué no hay novela religiosa en España?" Catolicismo día tras día. Moguer, 1955.
- Baquero Goyanes, Mariano. Estructura de la novela actual. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1972.
- Baroja, Pío. Obras Completas. Madrid: Aguilar, Vol. II, 1947.
- Bilbao, Félix. "Castillo-Puche." El Correo Español. 20 julio, 1971.
- Blackman, H. J. Six Existentialist Thinkers. London: Routledge & Keegan Ltd., 1961.
- Cano, José Luis. "Dos Novelas." Insula, num. 102. pp. 6-7.
- Carrascal, José M. "Fin de la etapa neoyorquina." La Estafeta Literaria. 15 junio, 1971, pp. 10-11.
- Castellet, Enrique. "Castillo-Puche." Juventud, 22 abril, 1954.
- _____. "Castillo-Puche a América." Mundo Hispánico. X. (1957), p. 112.
- Cela, Camilo José. "La obra literaria del pintor Solana." Discurso ante la Real Academia, 26 mayo, 1957.
- Cepada Suero, Enrique. "El trotamundos de Yecla." El Adelanto, Salamanca, 26 nov. 1959.
- Chiari, Joseph. Realism and Imagination. London: Baine & Rockcliff, 1960.
- Corbalán, Pablo. "Castillo-Puche contra los tabúes." Informaciones (Suplemento de las artes y las letras.)
- De Hoyos, Antonio. Murcia: Pueblos y Paisajes. Murcia: Ediciones del Patronato de Cultura, 1956.
- _____. Yecla de Azorín. Murcia: Patronato de Cultura de la Excma. Diputación, 1954.
- Dendle, Brian J. The Spanish Novel of Religious Thesis. Madrid: Castalia, 1968.
- Devlin, John J. Spanish Anticlericalism. New York: Las Américas, 1966.
- Díaz, Janet. Ana María Matute. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971.

- _____. Miguel Delibes. New York: Twayne Publ., 1971.
- _____. Disertación del novelista, José Luis Castillo-Puche." Hispania, Buenos Aires, XXVIII, num. 287 (1957).
- Drew, Elizabeth. The Modern Novel. New York: Kenrikat Press, Inc. 1967.
- Evans, Robert O. (Edit.) Graham Greene: Some Critical Considerations. Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press. 1967.
- Fletcher, Joseph. Situation Ethics. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961.
- Gaos, Vicente. Temas y problemas de la literatura española. Madrid: Guadarrama, 1959.
- Gascó Contell, Emilio. "José Luis Castillo-Puche, Yeclano, novelista y trotamundos." Libro español. febrero, 1973. pp. 68-69.
- Gironella, Jos'e M. "El novelista ante el mundo." Ateneo, marzo, 1972.
- Gómez de la Serna, R. "Palabras sobre Solana." Solana: Obra literaria. Madrid: Taurus, 1961.
- Gómez Santos, Marino. "J. L. Castillo-Puche." Pueblo. 25 mayo, 1954, p. 5.
- González López, Emilio. El arte narrativo de Pío Baroja: las trilogías. New York: Las Américas, 1971.
- Goytisoló, Juan. Problemas de la novela. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1959.
- Graef, Hilda. Modern Gloom and Christian Hope. Chicago: H. Regnery, 1959.
- Hoffman, Frederick J. The Mortal No: Death and the Modern Imagination. New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1964.
- Humphrey, Robert. La corriente de la conciencia en la novela moderna. Santiago de Chile: Editorial Universitaria, S. A. 1969.
- Ilie, Paul. La novelística de Camilo José Cela. Madrid: Gredos, 1963.
- _____. "José Luis Castillo-Puche." España Hoy. sept. 1971, p. 59.

- _____. "José Luis Castillo-Puche, uno de los escritores más viajeros." Levante, 30 julio, 1971.
- Jones, Margaret E. W. The Literary World of Ana María Matute Lexington: Kentucky Univ. Press, 1970.
- Kern, Edith. Existential Thought and Fictional Technique. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1951.
- Kierkegaard, Soren. The Sickness unto Death. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970.
- Killinger, John. Hemingway and the Dead Gods: A Study of Existentialism. Lexington: Kentucky Univ. Press, 1960.
- Livingstone, Leon. Tema y forma en las novelas de Azorín. Madrid: Gredos, 1970.
- Lubbock, Percy. The Craft of Fiction. New York: Viking Press, 1957.
- Lukacs, Geor. The Theory of the Novel. (tr. Anna Bostock) Cambridge: MIT Univ. Press, 1971.
- Marás, Julián. "La novela como método de conocimiento." en OBRAS Vol. V. Madrid: Revista de Occidente, (1960)
- Martínez Cachero, José M. Las novelas de Azorín. Madrid: Insula, 1960.
- Martínez del Portal, M. "Yecla en Azorín, Baroja y Castillo-Puche." Monteagudo: Univ. Murcia num. 27 (1950) pp. 4-21.
- Martínez Ruiz, José. Confesiones de un pequeño filósofo. OBRAS Tomo II Madrid: Aguilar, 1947.
- Martínez Ruiz, José. La Voluntad. Madrid: Clásicos Castalia, 1968.
- May, Rollo. Man's Search for Himself. New York: New American Library, 1967.
- McPheeters, D. W. Camilo José Cela. New York: Twayne Publ., 1971.
- Miró, Gabriel. Obras Completas. Madrid: Biblioteca nueva, 1943.
- Moeller, Charles. Literatura del siglo XX y cristianismo. (tr. P. Riesco y García Yebra) Madrid: Gredos, 19 3 vols.

- Palley, Julian. "Existential Trends in the Modern Spanish Novel." Hispania. (Vol. XLIV) March (1961), pp. 21-26.
- Patt. Beatrice. Pío Baroja. New York: Twayne Publ. 1971.
- Peñuelas, Marcelino. Mito, literatura y realidad. Madrid: Gredos, 1964.
- Pérez de Ayala, R. Principios y finales de la novela. Madrid: Taurus, 1958.
- Piñera, Humberto. Novela y ensayo de Azorín. Madrid: Agesa, 1971'
- Pizarro, Narciso. Análisis estructural de la novela. Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, S.A., 1970.
- Pollmann, Leo. Sarter und Camus: Literatur der Existenz. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1957.
- Porcel, Baltasar. "J. L. Castillo-Puche o la vide a borbotones." Destino, 31 julio, 1971.
- Quesada, Luis. "J. L. Castillo-Puche o la inquietud." Cordillera. (1957) Num. VI. pp. 67-68.
- Ramos, Vicente. El mundo de Gabriel Miró. Madrid: Gredos, 1964.
- Roberts, Gemma. Los temas existenciales en la literatura española de postguerra. Madrid: Gredos, 1973.
- Sánchez, José. "Oro blanco." Hispania. (1965) XLVIII, pp. 182-183.
- Santos, Dámaso. "Castillo-Puche." Pueblo, 25 abril, 1958.
- Sokel, Walter. Franz Kafka. New York: Columbia Univ. press, 1966.
- Uriarte, Fernando. "Memorias íntimas de Aviraneta o Manual del conspirador." Anales de la Universidad de Chile (1956) CXIV num. 102 pp. 124-125.
- Valbuena Prat, Angel. Historia de la literatura española. Tomo III Barcelona: Gili, 1948.
- Valdés, Mario J. Death in the Literature of Unamuno. Univ. of Illinois Press, 1966.
- V. M. H. "Un escritor viajero." Levante. Valencia, 30 julio, 1971.

Wahl, Jean. Historia del existencialismo. Buenos Aires:
Deucalión, 1954.

Wellek, René & Warren, Austin. Theory of Literature. New
York: Harcourt Brace, 1949.

Welles, Benjamin. Spain: The Gentle Anarchy. New York:
Praeger, 1965.