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Gender Discourse and National Reconstruction. The Narrative of Historic Debt in *Raza*

Abstract

This article analyses the construction of gender in *Raza* (José Luis Sáenz de Heredia, 1942) from an interdisciplinary perspective that considers the contributions of both semiotics theory (analysing the narrative and rhetorical devices of the filmic text) and gender studies (which provide a critical understanding of the discursive constructions of femininity and masculinity). We start from the premise that gender works as a social technology that must be understood in relation to other sources of identity, such as race, class, religion and national identity. From this perspective, *Raza* emerges as a propagandistic text designed to justify the military uprising and implement a socio-sexual model based on a discourse of national reconstruction. Discourse analysis was applied to study the processes of meaning-making and meaningful communication established in the film's staging of the dictatorship. The conclusions of this analysis show the connection between national/patriarchal discourse and the film's narrative structure, which constructs its discourse on gender based on the structure of mythical tale and the particular rhetorical device of melancholic interpellation. In parallel, the film defends such anachronistic figures as the angel of the house and the soldier as role models that define Spanish identity and serve as guarantees of national reconstruction.

Keywords

Francoism, filmic discourse, melancholy, gender construction, national identity, socio-sexual imaginary

1. Introduction

The Spanish autarky period under Franco came with a discourse on national identity constructed around the recovery of a mythical imperial past and the destruction of the democratic values established during the

Second Spanish Republic. The rhetoric of the dictatorship was developed around the idea of Spain having been knocked off course towards a supposed national destiny by the Republic, whose social model was based on foreign and Europeanist ways. Faced with the apparent loss of symbols of national identity (Catholicism, traditionalism, imperialism), the national movement justified the military uprising and fabricated a discourse of recovery which relied on two main strategies: melancholic interpellation, in relation to the historic recovery of a distant past, and establishing a mythical discourse around the definition of an essential origin of the Hispanic people. These two strategies worked as a discursive framework around which Francoism constructed a social model based on the recovery of obsolete gender role models: the national soldier and the angel of the house.

It is in this context that *Raza* (Saenz de Heredia, 1942) emerged, a film conceived and delivered from deep within the Francoist State with the aim of setting out the official version of the Spanish Civil War. Previous studies (Gubern, 1977; Alberich, 1997; Sevilla Listerri, 2007) have already analysed the film as a paradigmatic example of Francoist propaganda to justify the military uprising and implementation of a new social order. However, they do not specifically address the issue of gender as a key element of the dictatorship project.

This research considers the need to study this aspect, analysing the film's representation of gender, starting from the premise of gender as a social technology (De Lauretis, 1984) that must be understood in relation to other sources of identity, such as race, class, sexual identity and nationality. We have adopted an interdisciplinary perspective that considers the contributions of both semiotics theory (analysing the narrative and rhetorical devices of the filmic text) and gender studies (which provide a critical understanding of the discursive constructions of femininity and masculinity). Our analysis considers the relationship between the ideological discourse of the dictatorship and the representation of gender in *Raza*, studying the narrative form (that of a mythical tale) and key rhetorical device (melancholic interpellation) used to introduce the figures of the national soldier and angel of the house as the preferred gender role models of official state discourse.

2. Methodology

Our starting premise posits *Raza* as a propagandistic tool developed to justify the military uprising and imposition of a socio-sexual model based on a discourse of national reconstruction. From this perspective, the film serves as gender technology where masculinity and femininity are constructed according to other sources of identity: national identity (Spanish), religion (Catholicism), sexual identity (heteronormative), racial (white) and class (bourgeois). To test this hypothesis we have used discourse analysis, considering the text as a specific part of a wider ideological discourse (the gender discourse manufactured by the dictatorship) which adopts a particular rhetorical device (melancholic interpellation) to present said discourse.

To analyse the film we used the three-step framework proposed by Casetti and Di Chio (1990): decomposition, recomposition and interpretation. For the first two steps, we adopted three well-established analytical perspectives in film semiotics: narrative analysis, the study of the story's structure; representation analysis, with a view to identifying the formal processes of meaning-making; and communication analysis, which addresses focalisation and interpellation in the filmic text. For the third step (interpretation) we compared the above film analyses to the construction of gender discourse under Franco, in order to establish appropriate connection between the text and its context.

In the first instance, our narrative analysis consisted of identifying the hierarchy of actions (nuclei or catalysts, depending on their importance to the narrative) and how this relates to the roles played by the characters in the story. We should state here that in this

case this analytical approach works well with the narrative form of *Raza* as a text focused on storyline development and the construction of roles or stereotypes. Secondly, the roles identified were considered in relation to the traits of the characters who embodied them: gender, race, social class, nationality, religion and sexual identity. The actantial model was applied as an analytical tool, allowing us to understand the positions of each figure within the story as a whole. The roles identified include the subject of the action (hero), the object of value (the thing that is desired), the sender (the person who assigns the quest), the receiver (the person assigned the quest), the helper (of the hero), the rival (who desires the same object of value as the hero), and the giver and receiver of the sanction (who give and receive, respectively, recognition or punishment).

In regards to representation, we analysed the specific expressive and narrative systems of the film's rhetoric: the staging (shots, lighting, sound effects and music), the editing (camera movements, film grammar and temporality) and the framing (space, objects). Finally, our analysis of communication consisted of studying focalisation (Gaudreault and Jost, 1990), that is, the discursive footprints of the filmic text: the narrators and narratees in their various forms and the communicative attitudes derived from them.

Given our starting hypothesis, the interpretative analysis was carried out by bringing text and context together. We revisited the implications of the discourse on national reconstruction (Herzberger, 1995; Medina Domínguez, 2000) and the fabrication of gender under Francoism (Nash, 1996; Roca i Girona, 1996; Barrachina, 2003) and observed their relationship to the narrative and rhetoric of the filmic discourse. The idea of melancholy as the rhetorical strategy adopted by the dictatorship is what links the ideological discourse and national/patriarchal representation in the film.

3. Discursive legitimisation of the military uprising

3.1. Melancholic interpellation

The film *Raza* was released in an immediate post-war context, a point in history in which the Regime felt the need to legitimise itself, using a strongly belligerent rhetoric to do so. Its strategy to justify the military uprising was based on the idea of a national destiny from which the Spanish people had lost their way during the Second Republic. It deploys a discursive apparatus designed to restore a lost imperial past and recover traditional values that are touted as defining national identity. This discourse of recovery works on two interconnected levels: at the level of the micro, of everyday life and the defining of habits and practices; and at the level of the macro, of collective history, of the events that had seen Spain emerge as an empire in global geopolitics. The interpretations offered by Herzberger (1995) and Medina Domínguez (2000) of the dictatorship's recovery of a past glory are particularly revealing. Both authors describe it as a melancholic process whereby a mythical ideal is constructed as a means of remaining strong in the face of loss, of denying it even, on which official discourse can establish its argument of national reconstruction.

The concept of ideological interpellation is useful to understanding how the discourse of recovery works, drawing primarily on melancholy as a means of inspiring a kind of sentimental identification among members of a community with an official discourse. Ideological interpellation appears for the first time in a text by Althusser (1970), in which he defends the idea of ideology as closely linked to the discursive power of the ideological state apparatuses (ISA), apparatuses he associates with the different social institutions (education, family, law, medicine, politics and information) and which set the tone of the dominant discourses. In this context, the ISA work through the mechanism of ideological interpellation, serving to naturalise the dominant ideology in a process whereby the subject

recognises him or herself as the receiver of the interpellation, submitting to and identifying with the ideology being promoted and assuming the values it conveys.

In Butler's (1997) reading of Althusser (1970), she considers the problematic relationship of adherence that the subject has with power in terms of subordination/formation, and the psychological effects that this relationship entails. This act of receiving on the part of the subject, an act that can be understood in coercive terms, is thus seen from a new perspective, one that must be kept in mind if we are to understand the intricate relationship between power/pleasure in the construction of subjectivity. In this understanding of the introjection of the law, the individual is rewarded with an identity, something that will identify and define him or her as a social subject within a general framework, the specifics of which will manifest in the various aspects of identity (nationality, race, religion, culture and gender).

The scene of interpellation, as described in the aforementioned texts, is crucial for critically analysing the construction of the socio-sexual imaginary (Colaizzi, 2007), which emerges discursively in the different apparatuses that give it structure and which defines the identity processes to which the social subjects are called. These reflections help us to better understand the importance of ideological interpellation, especially one which appeals to affective communion, not only for determining the psychological make-up of the social subjects, but also in terms of the use of melancholy as a key device in the construction of national identity under Franco. With this in mind, the concept of melancholy takes on a new meaning, becoming part of the general workings of the Regime.

At this point it is worth mentioning the discursive specificity of the melancholic process, through reference to the reflections of Herzberger (1995) and Medina Domínguez (2000) on Freud's essay "Mourning and melancholy" (1990), published for the first time in 1917. In this text, Freud argues that the difference between mourning and melancholy lies in the way in which the subject reacts to loss. While mourning is considered a normal behaviour where the subject resolves his inner struggle by breaking ties, melancholy is defined as a pathological state in which the bond with the object is not broken but rather remains, becoming a narcissistic extension of the self. So, beyond the loss in the subject's external reality, the lost object persists in his or her psyche through this process of self-identification. The discourse of the melancholic subject resists abandonment of the lost object, incorporates it into the ego and returns to it over and over again.

In this same text, Freud argues that the lost object can take many forms: it can be a person or a loved one, but it can also be an idea. It is not inconsequential that among the ideas he mentions, that of nation is particularly emphasised, indicative of the close affective relationship between this concept and the subject's identity.

In accordance with the workings of melancholy, as described above, the idea of nation in Francoist discourse is associated with the historic imperial past, evoking a sense of loss. This idea is conveyed and implanted within the subject through discourse, causing him or her to identify with the lost object as a political strategy to legitimise the new national identity. As Domínguez states, Francoist discourse "sets forth a script of narcissistic identification with the lost object as a strategy for national reconstruction. The relationship between the self and the other does not admit externality. Anchored in an infantile state of 'omnipotence of ideas', the subject simply assimilates his or her surroundings, denying the limits of the self and internalising the lost object to the point of identifying with it" (2000: 44). In effect, the rhetoric of the Regime is driven by this presentation of the lost object as something to identify with, creating the illusion of a historical continuity that was interrupted by the liberal tradition, on which it blames the loss of a default Hispanic identity and national unity.

In this idea of continuity, history itself becomes symbolic and firmly rooted in the past, a static time when origin and destiny merge and are brought symbolically into the present

through the idea of repaying a debt of historic recovery. This reconstruction of the lost object is defined in terms of a sacrificial logic of the nation's subjects, in which the absent past becomes embedded not only within the present but within the future. The subjects' destiny is fused with this debt, for which they must make the sacrifice and pay off, in turn generating a debt for future generations. In effect, the logic of melancholy is taken to its ultimate conclusion in Francoist discourse, transformed into an endless hereditary process in the name of restoring a Utopian lost object, of a past essence that must be recovered in order to protect the nation's identity. The end goal of this idea of essentiality and permanence, imbued with the notion of searching for an original state, is the naturalisation of a particular national identity. As Herzberger (1995) argues, the discourse of recovery works rather like a myth; it is a discourse that tends to naturalise and eternalise something that is little more than the fruit of ideology. Presented as an essence, free of all historic conditioning, the myth is imperative, it draws on interpellation and calls upon the subject to respond. The myth structure and discourse of melancholy converge in the cyclical understanding of a noble, timeless identity of the Hispanic people.

3.2. The gender model within the discourse of national reconstruction

In the context of the discourse of recovery, the construction of a gender model that served the idea of national reconstruction took on unprecedented importance right from the outset, becoming one of the most powerful elements of the Regime's cultural imaginary.

Intent on bringing a halt to the modernising processes begun in the previous period, the gender politics practised by the new dictatorial state were aimed at stopping the feminist movement dead in its tracks. The Regime abolished all of the emancipation rights acquired during the Second Republic and brought into effect the 1889 Civil Code, a legislative framework that directly favoured the revival of a patriarchal and sexist society that placed women in a situation of extreme dependence and vulnerability. The implementation of this code was an act designed to establish a vast inequality between the genders in terms of legal, social and sexual rights and freedoms, and promoted a social model in which the division of tasks was clearly differentiated by gender, relegating women to the private sphere and making public life an exclusively male domain. This social construction of gender was established through the representation of a relationship of belonging to one of two complementary, though mutually exclusive categories: man or woman. The male role model was the warrior, the Spanish national soldier who fought to rebuild his homeland. His counterpart was the mother figure, devoted to the home and caring for the family. The idea of masculinity was necessarily based on aggression and violence, since, as Vincent (2006) points out, the discourse of recovery operated at all times in reference to the moral degeneracy permitted and encouraged by the Republic, and the need for a call to arms to restore the nation to a former glory. Female emancipation was seen as a threat and it was to be the male subject who, as the agent of national reconstruction, put women firmly back in their place within society, the family and the nation. In effect, women were politicised using an essentialist rhetoric that defined the female identity in terms of a supposed common destiny that rested on their reproductive capacity.

Given the importance of birth rate to national reconstruction, the female body was politicised by the various institutions (education, religion, medicine, family, etc.), instituting a moral order that controlled female sexuality (Barranchina, 2003). Similar steps were taken by the Regime to impose the restoration of a traditional family model with the mother figure at its centre (Nash, 1996). Indeed, the State went so far as to establish an entire politico-ideological apparatus that exalted the mother figure as part of a national Catholic rhetoric that went hand in hand with the traditional ideals that Francoism sought to recover. This

ideology was based on the idea of the intrinsicity of the Hispanic being and Catholicism, generating a very specific national identity that would be iterated discursively and symbolically in many areas of daily life, from socialisation in schools to the texts of the Women's Section of the Falange, radio series and period cinema (Roca i Girona, 1996).

The feminine ideal that Francoism sought to revive was based on the idea of the angel of the house, a bourgeois model of femininity that had been well-developed throughout the nineteenth century. This figure was defined by her eminently sexless and ethereal nature, her devotion to the family, her honour, her decency and her strict moral code. Under this model, women were responsible not only for their bodies and sexuality (in so far as these are treasures to be saved until marriage), but also, in her role as wife and mother, for establishing balance, well-being and moral order within the family home, despite depending economically and legally on her husband or, if she was single, her father for anything beyond this. The mother figure was the true centre around which all things related to morality in the home revolved. The discourse on motherhood was closely tied up with the Catholic religion: the woman, as the first sinner, was guilty of the original sin and was therefore to present herself as the most willing penitent in order to achieve salvation (Roca i Girona, 1996). The image constructed was that of the selfless, long-suffering woman making the ultimate sacrifice in her role as mother and wife.

The inferiority of women in relation to men was pronounced through an essentialist discourse, along with the duty of the woman to limit herself exclusively to the remit of motherhood. Raising children for the homeland was one of the roles assigned to women, an idea based on a set of psychological and biological characteristics considered intrinsic to femininity (emotionality and spirituality) as opposed to the male identity (rationality and intellectualism).

4. *Raza* in the context of reconstruction

4.1. National/patriarchal logic

The film *Raza* emerges as a perfect example of the use of melancholic rhetoric in the pursuit of national recovery, a specific formulation of what is known as the crusade model: a "set of rhetorical operations by which a film's fictional narrative, not through its plot line but rather through the construction of a cultural and historical imaginary, justifies the arrival of civil conflict in the name of defending a whole body of traditional values" (Sevilla Listerri, 2007: 36). From this perspective, the film constitutes a clear attempt by the Regime to legitimise the Civil War, in terms of both its authorship (it was written by Franco¹) and its production by the State.

The film² tells the story of the Churruca family from the end of the nineteenth century through to 1936. The first part of the film focuses on the heroic death of Major Churruca in the Cuban War, following a set of sequences showing the hero's perfect family setting, which also serve to introduce the characters of his wife, Isabel de Andrade, and four children (three boys and a girl). The second part portrays the different destinies of his three sons, recounting the heroic deeds of his son José (Franco's alter ego) in the Civil War; the

¹ The text on which the film is based was written by Francisco Franco under the pseudonym Jaime de Andrade and was published in 1942 with the title *Raza: anecdotario para el guión de una película* (Race: collection of stories to form the script of a film). Gubern (1977) has interpreted the film as Franco's own autobiographical fantasy, in which he idealised his family in order to erase his father's public image as an alcoholic and a womaniser.

² In 1950, with the title *Espíritu de una raza* (Spirit of a race), a reedit of the film was premiered in which certain sections were deleted and parts of the soundtrack changed. A comparative analysis of the two versions, carried out by Alberich (1997), considers how the Francoist regime introduced changes not to the plot line as such, but to the story's social and political background, reflecting the changing political interests of the time.

martyrdom of Jaime who, having become a priest, is executed by the Republicans; and the political reconversion of Pedro, who goes from being a member of the Republican parliament to a fully-convinced Francoist. His daughter, meanwhile, practically disappears from the narrative once she has fulfilled her social function of getting married and having children.

The characters' social and sexual roles are set in stone in the film, promoting the feminine and masculine ideals of the angel of the house and the national soldier, embodied in the characters of Isabel de Andrade (in the role as helper) and José Churruca, a prototype of the individual hero and the character through which the plot advances. It is not by chance that the film's opening sequences are used to present the Churruca family setting, thereby establishing gender differences in terms of the social functions of each character. In the first sequence, Isabelita is shown picking flowers in preparation for her father's return. Meanwhile, her mother, guardian and angel of the house, is in her element, busying herself with domestic chores, overseeing the coordination of the help, and caring for and educating her children. Her functions include intervening in possible family conflicts, as shown in this first sequence, where she settles the childish dispute between Pedro (who has bought a bird) and Isabelita (who wants to free it). The selfish and materialistic behaviour of Pedro³ is portrayed as an early sign of his later Republican political leanings and is presented in juxtaposition to the morally superior dispositions of the other children. He is angry at the money he has lost when the bird is set free and when, given the imminent arrival of the Major, Isabel steps in to scold her son, she reproaches his lack of empathy and warns him that he had better be on his best behaviour in front of his father. In line with a patriarchal ideology, the home is understood as the warrior's place of rest. So, unlike the mother figure, the father is only ever passing through, and his educational role is limited to stern lessons about the army (emphasising the significance of the soldier's heroic death) and their duty to their forefathers (framed in the general history of the Almogavars).

In accordance with the ideology of nationalism-Catholicism, the film imposes a rhetoric of national debt based on the telling of history according to a national/patriarchal logic. In this way, the restoration of that lost, a former imperial glory, is not only equated with the fulfilment of the national destiny, the restoration of an essential national identity, but also the repayment of a debt to the dead. This debt is inherited by each generation and justifies the sacrificial vision of the human being as conceived by nationalism/Catholicism, while at the same time defining the superiority of the Spanish race. The children of the nation must repay this debt which, according to the patriarchal ideology of Francoist discourse, was contracted with those who constructed history, that is, the male heroes, the soldiers who fought to defend the homeland.

This discourse on family debt obeys a sacrificial logic (the heroic death for the homeland), expressed in one of the film's first sequences. In it, the whole family gathers in the garden for afternoon snack, denoting an idyllic scene. Major Churruca takes up the role as all-knowing homodiegetic narrator, with all the trustworthiness that privileged position within the narrative offers him, to tell his sons (the narratees) about their family's glorious past. While hearing the voice of Major Churruca, the camera sweeps right, showing Jaime's cradle, to pause momentarily on the image of Isabel, who is doing some embroidery in the garden, representing the idealised portrait of a happy housewife, wife and mother (image 1). Finally, the camera stops on the group, made up of the father and his other three children, José, Pedro and Isabelita (image 2). The father finishes his history lesson with a mention of his ancestor Cosme Damián Churruca, the Spanish admiral who died at the Battle of

³ Pedro's materialistic nature is presented in a later sequence when, following his father's death, and much to Jose's astonishment and indignation, he is the only child to claim his part of the inheritance.

Trafalgar, showing his sons (and spectator) the oval portrait of the marine officer (image 3). Then, a long flashback takes us back to Trafalgar, where we see the battle in which Churruca dies and his final order: “Plant the flag, plant the flag”. The link between past and present is expressed not only through the narrator’s voice, that of Major Churruca, heard over the images of the past, but also in the shot of the flag, which links both scenes (the war of the past and the present in the garden). The dying face of Cosme Churruca moves to a close-up of the Spanish flag which, in turn, gives way to another close-up of the face of Major Churruca (image 4).

In this way, the different geographic spaces occupied by the two Churruucas are united not only by the image of the flag that appears in this sequence, but also by the fact that the death of Cosme at Trafalgar will be reproduced later in the story in the death of the major in the Cuban War.

The close relationship between this family’s story and collective history is clearly represented towards the midpoint of the film through the use of a series of dissolve shots, in which clips from the country’s current political news are superimposed with different moments in the lives of the Churruca family. In a circular structure, the sequence opens and closes with the successful political career of Pedro. In between we are shown different images that tell of the birth of Isabelita’s first-born son, the death of Isabel, and Jaime’s ordination ceremony. The family legacy left by the father, Major Churruca, is reflected in the scene in which Isabelita and her husband appear with José, who is playing with their son on his lap, showing him how to raise his hand to give the Fascist salute. In this brief shot we see how José has taken over from his father in the Falangist education of future generations of the Churruca family (image 5). It is not unrepresentative that Luis, Isabelita’s husband, is positioned within the scene behind his brother-in-law if we keep in mind the character’s faint-heartedness. In Isabelita’s wedding sequence we already learned that Luis was from a bourgeois family with a liberal tradition (though conservative), in contrast to the military family tradition represented in the Churruucas, more worried about the future of the nation than material goods. In the scene mentioned, Isabel becomes representative of the militarising and nationalist ideology, defending the military profession against accusations of martial laziness made by Luis’ bourgeois and capitalist uncle, pronouncing that “if the homeland was in danger one day, it would all be in danger, including that bit of it that belongs to you”. Once the Civil War began, the cowardly nature of Luis, who wants to abandon the trenches to return home to his wife and son, appears in contrast to the valiant and self-sacrificing spirit of José, the national hero, who tells him how horribly disappointed his sister would be if her own husband revealed his weakness to her.

4.2. Gender and aestheticization of violence

The connection between sacrificial logic and national reconstruction, where both are understood in terms of a willing surrender of one’s life to the nation, is conveyed in *Raza* through the aestheticization of violence, observed to some extent in the treatment of the death of the male hero. This discourse appears from the outset in the words of Major Churruca, who, in response to the question posed by his son José: “Dad, so is it true... that marine officers and soldiers put on their dress uniform when they are going to die?”, offers the following response: “That’s right, they dress in full uniform for all big events, so why wouldn’t they do it on the most solemn day of their glorious death? When it’s a person’s time to die, they die bravely, at ease and with grandeur”.

The soldier becomes the ultimate symbol of the essence of the male Hispanic being, as Di Febo has indicated: “The soldier’s body becomes a metaphor for gigantism, the concentration of heroic and aesthetic values like nobility, honour, sacrifice, extreme courage, and moral and physical vigour” (1979: 24).

Through this exaltation of the military figure, death itself becomes a fetish loaded with erotic, spiritual and mythical connotations, as observed in the deaths of the three brothers. The first death, that of José, is a death and resurrection, since even after being shot in the head, he lives and is brought back to life by a Falangist doctor. In the sequence immediately after his execution, we see the inert body of a soldier lain on the bed under the speechless gaze of his beloved, Marisol. In this sequence, the framing closes in gradually from a general overview of the room (where we see Marisol, a child and the helper, carrying the body of José wrapped in a sheet) to a medium shot of the girl in which, kneeling before José, she uncovers his face, for the image to end on a close-up of the couple's faces. In a matter of seconds the scene becomes very intimate: Marisol brings her cheek affectionately to that of José in a way that completely aestheticizes the moment, with careful lighting making the actors' faces glow beautifully, to create a shot which is a long way from what would be a terrible and monstrous representation of death (image 6). In line with this idealised and fetishized representation of the body of the dead soldier, the execution of Jaime at the beach is shown with a medium close shot in which we see his face expressing the serenity of a mystical surrender, underscored by the extradiegetic sound of celestial music and the religious symbolism of the sea with which the sequence is drawn to a close (image 7).

Almost at the end of the film, we see this sacrifice of the body expressed through a triumphant logic of exaltation of the ideal: specifically, through a succession of scenes linked by dissolve shots beginning with Pedro's nationalist declaration and culminating with the military parade by national troops. Pedro who, having been a civil servant in the Republican information services, and tormented by the thought of not having done enough to save his brother José, who he believes is dead, helps a nationalist spy, the wife of a soldier, and ends up being shot for it. In this sequence, the Republicans enter Pedro's office, where they find him reading a letter. His face is lit up at all times which, in contrast to the faces of the Republicans, gives him an air of superiority and protagonism (image 8). In the face of the accusations of the militiamen, Pedro confesses and shows pride at belonging to the "triumphant race". Sentenced to death he turns to the Republicans with contempt and, as the camera slowly moves closer to him until his face is framed in a close-up, delivers a final triumphalist and apologetic speech on the Hispanic race.

A dissolve shot unites the face of Pedro with a shot of the fluttering flags, suggesting a close relationship between the subject and the ideal, as well as the link between the individual and the community. The next image shows Pedro's execution, strongly aestheticized in a shot in which his shadow is shown falling to the ground (image 9).

Next, a series of dissolve shots show various scenes of national victory, including images of the surviving members of the Churruca family in all their splendour. The film closes with the shots of the military parade in Madrid, the celebration of the individual (in this particular case Pedro, but the other two brothers before him, also) being sacrificed for the good of the nation, the ideal. Death, in this case, is symbolised by the sacrifice of the body, surrender of their own life in the name of the ideal of the nation.

But what of the sacrifice to be made by the women in *Raza*? We have already discussed the ideology of the angel of the house underlying the representation of the feminine ideal in the film. In this case, Isabel (the mother figure) is the example of the perfect woman: in her role as silent and self-sacrificing helper, she does not oppose the desires of the hero (even when these are to die for the homeland), but rather assumes her role as modest wife who does not interfere in the rightful destiny the national soldier. This destiny (national liberation), which God himself has given to the national hero, is much more important than family. This model is similarly represented in the character of her daughter Isabelita and her best friend Marisol. This latter also has the narrative privilege of being the beloved of the film's hero, which gives her certain protagonism. However, her character operates within the story at a discreet distance, as a mere support-giver for the hero, taking care of

him and receiving, in return, the much longed for union of matrimony. In parallel to the male sacrifice, the female sacrifice consists of a staunch defence of the homeland above even the institution of family. In this sense, where Isabel accepts the death of her husband as being for the good of the homeland, Marisol renounces her own personal happiness to support the hero in his heroic actions and accomplishments. Marisol's sacrifice⁴ is seen at two points in the film, in which she accepts her passive role waiting patiently in the home without interfering in the glorious destiny of her beloved. The first example is seen in the sequence where she visits Pedro in his office to ask him to intercede in the reprieve of his brother. When Pedro tells her that José has refused to accept his help, she accepts the death of her beloved in order to avoid undermining his dignity as a soldier committed to the national cause.

The second occurs in the sequence where Marisol, following the hero's resurrection and much surer of the love he professes for her, encourages him to return to the front to fight for the future of the nation, by doing so renouncing a possible life together. Her behaviour brings her closer to the feminine ideal represented by Isabel, the hero's mother, making her the perfect match for José.

Marisol's sacrifice is ultimately rewarded by her reunion with José. Her silent suffering and sentimental austerity are wholly in line with the gender model promoted by the Regime: that of the silent and devoted female who does not interfere, complain or get in the way. Towards the end of the film we see how, stunningly dressed at the military parade, Marisol's fate materialises in the form of economic, familial and social prosperity.

In the film, however, there is another female character with connections to the national bloc who stands out in so far as she represents a woman who resolves to participate in the reconstruction of the nation in the form of wartime actions. She is a secondary, anonymous character who, even in the cast of the film, is referred to simply as Francoist spy. Her motivation for making contact with Pedro and doing her bit to support the Francoist cause was the death of her husband or, rather, the legacy he left her: in her words, "He was all I had, and since his death I have decided to follow his lead, and not let a single day go by without offering up my life to Spain". The ultimate failure of her actions as a spy, intercepted by the Republicans just as she was about to execute her mission, allows a sexist reading that justifies social division of roles by gender, compounding the idea of female incompetence in the political sphere.

The inclusion of this female character in the film's political action is wholly unremarkable, given that her narrative function is, in this case, quite traditional and even stereotypical, existing to play the role of redeemer for Pedro, the wayward brother. Her death, unlike the heroic deaths of the Churruca brothers, is omitted from the text. She cannot be named; her death cannot signify the glorious act of the male characters' deaths, cannot become a fetishized image (like the photo of the ancestors) to be gazed upon.

The attempts at espionage of this character, who had hoped for the role as active helper, with the privileges of decision-making and movement, is simply discredited by the text, which punishes her with anonymity and death. It is evident that the film takes sides, endorsing the role of women as passive and silent helpers of the hero and making the angel of the house (she who has kept her place without usurping or stealing protagonism from he who is truly destined to change history) the preferred model of femininity. It is not for

⁴ The female figure is represented in other war films of the time as an obstacle blocking the soldier's path, showing the incompatibility of life in the army with a domestic family life. This is the case in *Harka* (Carlos Arévalo, 1941), where the soldier refused to marry his girlfriend, choosing instead a life in the army. In the case of *Raza*, however, family is presented as the epicentre of the national, Catholic project, as the origin and destiny of the hero in the defence and maintenance of a social model which, additionally, is supported by the rhetoric of debt at the level of the family.

nothing that the historic debt is passed from fathers to sons, and not from fathers to daughters or from mothers to daughters, thereby establishing a hierarchy which reduces women to mere instrumental roles (as mothers or wives) and places them firmly outside the construction of history.

The film's final sequence blends various archival images showing the fall of Madrid, the victory of the military and Franco's rise to office with images from the film itself showing the reunion of Marisol and José. The lavish military parade, framed in the present time of the story, is superimposed by images from the past. The action pauses on the figure of José on horseback and the voice of the ancestors can be heard once again, referring back to the garden scene in which Mayor Churruca explained the significance of the Almogavars. The scene chosen is suggestive of the presence and weight of the Law of the Father on José, who has fulfilled his mission and settled his debt with his forefathers.

Finally a long tracking shot returns us to the Churruca family's central role in the story and the importance of the female model in national reconstruction, a figure represented by two women: Marisol, the self-sacrificing beloved who waits patiently for the return of the national hero, and Isabel who, in her maternal role, responds emotionally when one of her sons asks her about the spectacle they are watching, essentially summarising the ideological basis of the film: "This is what we call race, my child". Tying in with this idea, and superimposed onto the images of the parade, the final images present a summary of the film's content, from the death of Captain Churruca in Cuba to Pedro's conversion, even recalling the ill-fated plans of the would-be Francoist spy. This ending consolidates the logic of debt (family and national), the will to reconstruct the nation, symbolised in the identification established between the fluttering Spanish flag and the pompous expansionist imaginary (images 10 and 11), in which the gender discourse of the victors takes the form of a dichotomy between the triumphant figures of the soldier and the angel of the house.

The dimensions of the narrative in relation to the actantial roles correspond perfectly with the film's mythical tale structure: the national hero (the soldier charged with the mission) is presented as he who moves towards the object (nation) in order to conquer it (dimension of desire), and at the same time as he who, in moving towards the object of desire, acts on it and on the world around it (dimension of manipulation), demonstrating his ability to overcome obstacles (jail and death) on the path to overcoming the final test (winning the Civil War), to be ultimately recognised by the sanction giver (Franco, forefathers, destiny). The national hero and, by extension, Spanish society are placed within this narrative as the receiver of the sanction (reward) and, given the divine intervention, the narrative is configured as a mythical tale: the journey of the hero (individual) as a metaphor for the journey the Spanish nation (community) is destined to take. Race as an intrinsic and essential characteristic of the soldier and therefore the Spanish people.

5. Conclusion

As we have shown throughout this article, the convergence of the ideological discourse of Francoism and the filmic discourse of *Raza* in terms of the construction of a national and gender identity confirms both the validity of our starting premise (of gender as a social technology) and our hypothesis (the film as a propagandistic tool created by the Regime).

Both discourses present the idea of the recovery of a past imperial glory and its reinstatement in the future of the nation thanks to the fact and the efforts of the dictatorship. The discursive strategies used in the film can be summarised in terms of the configuration of a mythical narrative and the systematic use of melancholic interpellation, where this latter derives from a cyclical understanding of national identity, presented as noble, timeless and intrinsic to the Hispanic being.

Meanwhile, in line with the justification of the military uprising instigated from within the State, the film asserts the need to impose a new social order based on the recovery of traditional values and obsolete gender models that apparently define the Spanish identity. In this context, the dichotomous figures of national soldier and angel of the house are represented in the film as the defining models of race and, as such, the guarantors of national reconstruction. The narrative and gender roles are cemented towards the end of the film, where the male role presented is that of hero, he who leads both the story and history, while the female role is defined as that of selfless helper (who must not overstep her function as bit player), definitively denying the possibility of an active female model outside of the home (through the failure of the Francoist spy and her ill-fated intervention in the transcendently political sphere of military action).

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Appendices



Image 1. The mother in her role as angel of the house



Image 2. The father gives a history lesson to his children



Image 3. Photograph of the family's forefather, Cosme Churrua



Image 4. Dissolve shot of the flag and the face of the major



Image 5. Shaping the next generation of Falangists



Image 6. Maribel brings her cheek to José's lifeless face



Image 7. Jaime's mystical surrender



Images 8 and 9. Conversion and execution of the wayward brother



Images 10 and 11. Triumph of the expansionist nation