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## **Myth and Literature as Political Ideology**

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Political ideology plays a crucial role in the development of the nation-state and the basis of that ideology often lies in *apriori* mythic knowledge. Scholars such as Joseph Campbell, Myron Aronoff, Ernst Cassirer, and many others credit myth with helping structure and establish political ideologies. Myth helps create the fundamental self-image and purpose of the state and provides a sense of the past as well as a direction for the future. Traditional myth operates not only as a construct in which to view one's environment, but as a driving and motivating force for action. Successful myth must unify and create a national entity greater than the sum of its political parts. It must serve not only as a result of action, but as a catalyst.

Drawing upon the works of noted scholars, this study examines the myth of the state and its role in unifying a people and forging a sense of nationalism that extends across the divisions within a society and maintains control. This analysis also contends that states may house competing ideologies that threaten and even transform them. The

belief system of a united opposition may pose a critical danger to that of the state as it strives to overcome and replace the dominant ideology of the regime. To succeed, either ideology must forge a unity among the disparate groups within the state and shape a nationalism powerful enough to conquer the opposing belief system.

This article focuses on the use of myth by dissident political forces in competition with the dominant regime. Five literary texts from the Franco era in Spain provide a context for these arguments. An analysis of these works clarifies the battle for control between the ideologies of the Francoist state and its opposition emerges by analyzing the myths and beliefs at their core. Finally, it explores how the opposition used popular literature to disseminate its contraband ideology, and ultimately, prepare for political change.

### **Myth of the State**

Ernst Cassirer addresses the importance of myth to a nation in his 1946 book, *The Myth of the State*. He states that “. . . myth lays the basis for nationhood. It is behind the feeling of nationality, and gives it its force” (1946, p. 280). In his discussion of Cassirer's *Myth of the State*, Ivan Strenski adds that myth is inextricably entwined with the creation of a nation as a unified entity. Strenski describes myth as not only significant but imperative in the formation and maintenance of a nation, stating, "It is inconceivable that a nation should exist without a mythology” (1987, p. 16).

According to Cassirer, the myth of a nation tends to emerge in times of crisis, replacing rational and logical thought. In the midst of a natural crisis, society forsakes those logical, incremental, bureaucratic processes that have been perceived to fail for the comfort of the traditional myth that offers the hope of some mystically originated

solution. A return to mythic leadership then:

Appears when a collective desire has reached an overwhelming strength and when, on the other hand, all hopes of fulfilling this desire, in an ordinary and normal way, have failed (Cassirer 1946, p. 280).

Cassirer explains this process as man's "primal stupidity" which replaces logic and rational thought processes with myth (1946, p. 298). Although man creates myth to bring order to the incomprehensible chaos of the world, these very myths, if unchecked, can bring about their own chaotic results. Cassirer states that the powers of myth, particularly the Myth of the State, are so great that humanity must temper them with rationality or face disastrous political and social consequences, for:

As long as these forces, intellectual, ethical, and artistic, are in full strength, myth is tamed and subdued. But once they begin to lose their strength, chaos is come again. Mythical thought then starts to rise anew and to pervade the whole of man's cultural and social life (Cassirer 1946, p. 298).

Unlike early scholars who contended that myth was a manifestation of solely primitive peoples, Cassirer warns that this dangerous return to myth may emerge at any time of national crisis, even in modern advanced states, because it has become part of man's mythic past; it provides a bond of common heritage, and even solace. He contends that:

In all critical moments of man's social life, the rational forces that resist the rise of the old mythical conceptions are no longer sure of themselves. In these moments the time for myth has come again. For myth has not been really vanquished and subjugated. It is always there, lurking in the dark and waiting for its hour and opportunity (Cassirer 1946, p. 280).

The twentieth century, rather than inhibiting the re-emergence and proliferation of Myths of the State, may encourage the growth of such myth. Although myth originally emerged in primitive eras, advanced knowledge, modern communication, and technology

have enabled mankind to manipulate myth much more precisely and effectively. Cassirer advises that:

The new political myths do not grow up freely; they are not wild fruits of an exuberant imagination. They are artificial things fabricated by very skillful and cunning artisans. It has been reserved for the twentieth century, our own great technical age, to develop a new technique of myth (Cassirer 1946, p.282).

Myron J. Aronoff supports this view of the power of myth. He contends that myth forms the basis for shared meanings and perceptions among humanity, thereby influencing political behavior. Aronoff asserts that humankind abhors chaos and disorder, and therefore creates myth to impart structure and order to an otherwise anarchical environment. He cites Leslie White, noting that myth is of such great significance to humanity that “man is the only creature capable of being killed by a symbol; but even more striking is the fact that he is capable of voluntarily sacrificing himself for a symbol” (Aronoff 1980, p.3).

Aronoff argues that the quest for social order causes mankind to create habitual activities and processes. Over time, these habits become institutionalized, becoming accepted and socially appropriate behaviors within a context of shared knowledge and meanings. To systematically transfer such knowledge, societies develop educational processes that ultimately integrate society and the institutional order into a universe of meaning that provides a framework of reference for all human experience. According to Aronoff, “it integrates marginal realities, discrepant meanings, order and legitimates everyday roles, and puts them in perspective of the general frame of reference” (Aronoff 1980, p.5-6). Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966) refer to these systems as “machineries of universe maintenance” that provides order to society through complex

structured beliefs, such as myth or science.

While these shared meanings and normative behaviors are capable of providing order to a society, Aronoff agrees with Clifford Geertz' contention that these views must be enforced by powerful groups within a society to have any serious effect. Geertz argues, "Someone must revere them, defend them, impose them. They have to be institutionalized in order to find not just an intellectual existence in society, but, so to speak, a material one as well" (1973, p.314). As the dominant political power, the state wields the greatest ability to promulgate and institutionalize specific myths through established channels.

### **Myth and Unity**

These shared beliefs are of particular importance to the state in that they provide a powerful tool for unification. Within a society or among its competing groups, the function of myth is a unifying one; it establishes consensus and unites sub-groups. As beliefs emerge, myths spread and unify them. As Stephen Ausband notes:

Once again myth is seen as the key to wholeness, prized because it means nothing in particular but everything at once (1983, p.12). The emphasis on 'unity' -- which in practice meant the suppression of regional separatist movements -- is entirely in keeping with the appeal to myth as a source of its wholeness (1983, p.37-38).

Joseph Campbell classifies this power of traditional myth into four categories: mystical, cosmological, sociological, and psychological. Myth is mystical or metaphysical in that it portrays "an originally good creation corrupted by a fall" (Campbell 1970, p.139). The Judeo-Christian tradition of the expulsion from Eden and original sin form the basis of this belief in Western society, establishing specific norms and beliefs in myth, religion, and philosophy. The cosmological image embodies the

universe and all things within it as components of a single integrated creation. As units of this image, these individual parts lead back to the mysticism of the first function, acting as “vehicles and messengers of the teaching” (Campbell 1970, p.140).

The sociological purpose of myth validates and maintains “some specific social order, authorizing its moral code” (Campbell 1970, p.140). The mystical, or even divine, approval of the current order protects it from human criticism. Any attack upon the authorized societal order translates to an attack upon its mystical origins. The psychological role of myth operates by “shaping individuals to the aims and ideals of their various social groups” (Campbell 1970, p.141). Campbell contends that while cosmological and sociological views may change over time, the psychology of mankind remains more or less constant, and maintains a fundamentally consistent core of mythic belief.

This myth-based attitude can be altered to reflect any "truth," as seen in the myth of a Paradise Lost that may refer to any idealized period. National myths are particularly susceptible to such manipulation because they unite a people of a common heritage and can be rationalized with patriotic rhetoric. Ernest J. Yaranella and Lee Sigelman assert that:

Because national myths take on the character of collective representations that reconcile and unite many contradictory aspects of the past, over the course of several generations, they come to form parts of a national identity and a common heritage (1988, p.4).

Richard Slotkin agrees that nationalism is strongly linked to myth:

The mythology of a nation is the intelligible mask of the enigma called the "national character." Through myths the psychology and worldview of our cultural ancestors are transmitted to modern descendants, in such a way and with such power that our perception of contemporary reality and our ability to function in the world are directly, often tragically affected

(1978, p.3).

Eric Gould points out that myth is not necessarily an ultimate truth. Rather, it functions as a tool or instrument with which the artificial constructs of society become normal or right: "Under the effect of mythical inversion, the quite contingent foundations of the utterance become Common Sense, Right Reason, the Norm, General Opinion, in short the *doxa*" (1981, p.117).

Gould contends that myths are dynamic and changing in accordance with developing reality. Instead of a fixed and static truth upon which humanity establishes its belief systems, myth reflects the perceptions or worldviews generated by a changing reality and the accompanying belief systems. He states:

Contemporary myth is discontinuous. It is no longer expressed in long fixed narratives but only in "discourse" . . . Men do not have with myth a relationship based on truth but on use: they depoliticize according to their needs (1981, p.117-119).

Myth can be used for any purpose, not merely to define some ultimate, undeniable truth.

Cassirer elaborates on the idea of unity and extends the concept of unification to the nation's relationship with the external world, stating, "Myth unifies the nation by grounding it in the wholeness of nature; in doing so it legitimizes international rivalries and divisions (1946, p.8). Samuel Huntington refers to this phenomenon as the creation of "the other" (1970). External threats, real or manufactured, aid in the unification process of a society; states commonly employ this practice in preparation for conflict. Lowell Dittmer adds that the most successful "mass movements have been based on the definition of a positive objective by means of a negative counterpole" (1974, p.301). Each side of myth persists because it exists in opposition to the other. For the negative to survive, the positive must be maintained.

### **The Role of Myth in Franco's Spain**

Unity has been an integral part of Spanish tradition and myth since the fifteenth-century merger of the two kingdoms of Castile and Aragon under Ferdinand and Isabela and this mythic foundation provided the perfect tool for the Franco regime to promote nationalism and mobilize peninsular Spaniards as a people. Those who rejected the dominant political discourse threatened Spain's unity and cohesion from within and drew the distinct displeasure of the current regime.

This competition between the myth of the state and the myth of the opposition emerged very clearly within Spain during the Franco regime. Generalissimo Francisco Franco's Nationalist forces defeated the Republican troops in 1939 after a three-year civil war. Although Franco, like many dictators, was careful to enforce censorship of popular literature and other authoritarian control mechanisms, the struggle between the myth of the regime and that of the opposition continued until his power ended with his death in 1975.

Jo Labanyi suggests that Franco's Nationalist regime used myth as a way of "denying history" (1989, p.53). Rather than a linear progression of time, history exists as a cyclical phenomenon; society advances and comes full circle to embrace the ideals of a mythic past:

Just as Mussolini appealed to Imperial Rome, so Hitler -- in addition to his predilection for Wagner -- staged the 1936 Berlin Olympics in an attempt to revive the Greek ideal. Charles Maurras, founder of the French fascist organization Action Française, likewise pleaded for a return to classical culture (Labanyi 1989, p.14).

Immediately following the postwar era, both sides seized upon the mythical theme of Genesis and a Paradise Lost. Although this current runs through both the discourse of

the ruling Nationalists and that of the defeated Republicans, the:

Difference is, of course, that the Falange identified the Fall with progress and looked back to the Paradise Lost of traditional values, whereas the novels of the 1950s identify the Fall with Nationalist victory and look back to the Paradise Lost of the Republic . . . . Rather than reject the mythical view of history instilled into them at school, the generation brought up after the war . . . simply inverts the terms of the Nationalist version of Genesis, idealizing as Paradise Lost what the latter regarded as the Fall (Labanyi 1989, p.44).

The religious overtones of this myth were no accident. As a nation that is ninety-nine percent Catholic, Spain provided a populace well acquainted with biblical knowledge and the teachings of the Church. The abiding presence of the Catholic doctrine maintained a strong link with religious and mythic tradition. As Stanley Hoffman notes, "The closer a country comes to have one -- [a single common faith] -- the less disconnected it is from the past" (1981, p.217).

Franco drew upon this common faith to his advantage. He proclaimed himself on all Spanish coins as "Caudillo by the Grace of God" (Wellwarth 1972, p.15). If this claim to divine rule was not enough, Franco also "saw himself as a second Cid come to drive the political infidel out of the land as the first had driven the religious [Moslem infidel] out" (Wellwarth 1972, p.7).

The romance of tradition and mythic heroes, like El Cid, fortify not only those who believe them, but those who know them as well. One need not believe in the literal interpretation of a mythic account to agree with its underlying doctrine. In this way, even those who devoutly believed in neither Catholic dogma nor traditional myth became socialized to a specific perception of the world and their place within it. According to Hoffman:

Romantic history was symbolic with the nation-state; it was indeed a form

and an agent of nationalism. It showed how the modern nation emerged from the tribes and tribulations of the Dark Ages or triumphed over the machination and oppression of foreigners (Hoffman 1981, p. 217)

### **Myth of the Opposition**

Aronoff supports this view of the political power of myth, arguing that the institutional order is continually threatened by the myths of the opposition. Both the regime and its opposition employ mythic concepts to lend a certain order to the naturally chaotic society. Because the goals of each side differ, the definitions of reality as expressed through myth will differ. The myth of the opposition, therefore, poses particular danger as it challenges the socially shared cultural meanings of the dominant society. Aronoff states, "Rival definitions of reality can inspire, guide, and give legitimacy to groups challenging dominant definitions of reality and the groups that defend them" (Aronoff 1980, p.6-7)

Georges Sorel agrees, proposing that myths cannot be held to any standard of factual accuracy or rationality; the myth simply provides a motivating force for change. He extends this argument, adding that the myths of opposition movements need not indicate a goal, nor even be factual; they function as an "activating image," preparing the people for rebellion (Meisel 1951, p.265). As James Joll contends:

These myths cannot be analyzed; they are not utopian descriptions of a future state of affairs, but moral beliefs acting on present conduct . . . It does not matter if they are symbols of a state of affairs that will never be realized (1964, p.210).

Sorel argues that these myths need not be rational any more than they need be true. In fact, he indicates that irrationality is actually preferable, for improbable goals are often not only the most promising, but also the most difficult to disprove. Sorel cites the success of the Roman Catholic Church, with its promise of an unseen afterlife in reward

for enduring life's hardships, as an example. In his analysis of Sorel's work, Joll states:

The organizations that survive in history, the causes that triumph, are those inspired by irrational belief in their own destiny and mission, and not those based on intellectual constructions and rational analysis. The most successful example -- and Sorel comes back to it again and again -- is the Roman Catholic Church (1964).

In fact, much of the myth present in both the opposition literature and that of the Franco regime, originated in the Catholic Church. While the opposition used the Church as a rich source of myth for its own political purposes, the Church acted as a primary partner of oppression with the regime. Although opposition literature often alludes to Christ-like heroes and martyrs of the opposition, it rejects and criticizes the organized bureaucracy of the Church as a hypocritical and highly political arm of the regime.

The opposition literature also presents negative religious or mythic references. While morally or philosophically supported characters tend to represent the opposition, characters who cling to the superficial ritual and trappings of their religion provide metaphors for the regime and its followers. To demonstrate these manipulations of myth, this study examines five literary texts from the Franco era in Spain: *Marks of Identity* by Juan Goytisolo, *The Hive* and *The Family of Pascual Duarte* by Jose Camilo Cela, *School of the Sun* by Ana Maria Matute, and *Five Hours with Mario* by Miguel Delibes.

Goytisolo expresses the significance of Spanish unity, or disunity, in his *Marks of Identity*, in which the protagonist's efforts to document the suffering of post-Civil War Spain are censured all the more because of his identity as a Spaniard. Representatives of the regime address him as, "you who have been one of us and have broken with us" (Goytisolo 1969, p.7). Goytisolo uses the concept of unity to his advantage however, in his creation of a dissident character that represents a Christ figure. In *Marks of Identity*,

Goytisolo briefly but purposively interjects the character of Jeronimo, a Spanish dissident evading the regime by posing as a farmhand, who befriends the protagonist, Alvaro.

Despite the brevity of his appearance and the lack of description -- or perhaps because of it -- the martyred everyman has a profound effect on the young Alvaro and his perceptions of moral right and wrong, as well as political right and left. Goytisolo writes:

[M]aybe . . . he was lying in a nameless grave in some corner of your -- your? -- Spanish geography. You told yourself then that your homeland was quite base and deaf if as you were inclined to believe sometimes his rich offering had been useless . . . Jeronimo, or whatever his name was, the one who had awakened your moral sensibility with his pure conduct, had died for each and every one of you, as you knew -- with such pain, my God, such shame -- that he had died, in the same way, for you (1969, p.39).

By introducing the reader to his protagonist's childhood, Goytisolo reveals the power of a mythic and dogmatic culture in the poignant memory of his attempted martyrdom, instigated by his devout nursemaid:

[Señorita Lourdes] had announced to you with a quavering voice the arrival of the anti-Christ. The poorly dressed men crowded into trucks that were driving beneath your window were special envoys of the devil, hardened agents of the Evil One. The fabulous world of persecutions and tortures, of executioners who slavered like wolves. . . "I'm not afraid to die, Secorita Lourdes." It was a sentence you had learned from the book [on child martyrs] . . . what do a few years matter if I lose my soul? (1969, p.19)

Later in the novel, Goytisolo's narrator recounts the details of a sacred religious celebration, using the adjectives and imagery of an evil, demonic bacchanal:

You vaguely remembered the festival of the Octave of Corpus Christi -- the year 1956, . . . an atrocious choir of little vampires dressed as altar boys; . . . heading toward the [altar] with the mystical compunction of some of De Sade's adolescents on their way to a sacrilegious, demented, fabulous orgy (1969, p.62).

Goytisolo also relates a passage of a pro-regime speech, which quotes Fray Luís de León, a Renaissance mystic, cleric and biblical scholar, well known in the Golden Age

literature of Spain. Clearly, this allusion attempts to associate Franco with another sacred hero of national tradition and religious dogma (Goytisolo 1969, p.308).

While lacking a religious foundation, the use of the bull as a metaphor draws on the Spanish tradition of the bullfight and its mythic significance as a representation of Spanish society. The use of a familiar and understandable metaphor to organize unfamiliar information and explain complex events and phenomena surfaces throughout Goytisolo's *Marks of Identity*, in which the metaphor of the bull identifies and describes the country of Spain. Similarly, he likens the behavior of its people to that of a bullfight. Goytisolo describes the Civil War using the vivid imagery of a mad bull, while also drawing on a primitive past of demons and sacrifice, as he writes:

For the period of three years a madness had blown across the skin of the bull -- that is what some people call your barren and ancestral home, the ambit of your present conglomeration of petty kingdoms . . . the incubus and succubus of their hateful appetites and dreams, they had proceeded with order and detail toward the cruel and inexorable self-pruning, toward the expulsion and extermination of their inner demons, without stopping for a reason or consideration of any kind, destroying in turn, on the altars of an impossible exorcism, commerce, industry, science, art (1969, p.128).

In contrast to the passionate and vital image of this mythic bull that was Spain, Goytisolo presents the image of Spaniards under the yoke of the Franco regime as gelded bulls, domesticated and compliant, deprived of their passion and will, and accepting of the regime's paternalistic authority. As the dissident character, Antonio, tells the exiled protagonist, Alvaro, these bulls are even less than the bulls of the ring because though the latter are killed, at least they fight:

Bulls themselves and not even that, happy tame bulls who spoke with arrogance about what could be talked about and letting themselves condemn what was condemned, sad herd of oxen without bells, eating the fodder of those who took advantage (Goytisolo 1969, p.192).

Goytisolo returns to this metaphor in the arrest of the dissident, Enrique. During his arrest and brutal interrogation, the reader learns that his torturers, officers of the Guardia Civil, are nicknamed after famous bullfighters (Goytisolo 1969, p.212). The representatives of the regime have become those who will kill the bull, while Enrique and the people of Spain have become the doomed beast.

To emphasize the savagery and brutality of the regime, Goytisolo presents a passage whose subject is intentionally oblique -- animal or nation? He states:

Custom forbids killing him with one thrust: the game must be prolonged up to the limit, his death throes must be drunk down to the dregs . . . Reduced, the beast witnesses his own downfall, as if in a violent and overwhelming nightmare (1969, p.122).

To Goytisolo, this is the pure, elemental Spain of his ancestors; only the cast of characters in the drama of the bullfight has been changed.

In *The Hive* and *The Family of Pascual Duarte*, Cela presents the cyclical interpretation of history that Labanyi describes, in which life is "structured in a series of overlapping circles" (Labanyi 1989, p.42). Cela's cyclical perspective, or "a historical attitude is made explicit . . . [when] he expresses his cynical amusement at the eternal recurrence that constitutes human behaviour" (Labanyi 1989). In the memoirs of Pascual Duarte, the condemned criminal recalls the series of events in his life that have led to its end. Not only does this narrative take the reader through the "cycle" of the protagonist's life, but the moral tone of the work represents a return to the picaresque novel, characteristic of Spain's Golden Age. The life of Duarte and the literary work itself are, therefore, both cyclical in nature.

Cela also uses myth to express the pre-logical mindset discussed by Cassirer in which myth actually supplants rational thought. Cela presents this pre-logical, or perhaps

alogical, mindset in *The Family of Pascual Duarte* through "numerous references to fate, destiny, [and] predestination" (Jones 1985, p.19). Duarte's criminal actions follow a primitive code. With "the exception of the mother's death, each crime is instinctual, and directly related to vengeance or personal honor" (Jones 1985) Margaret E.W. Jones contends:

Constant references to fate also help to remove the novel from its specific social setting to an atemporal, mythic plane where behavioral codes are less conditioned by time and culture. Pascual cannot escape his bad luck (1985).

In Duarte, Cela creates a character who completely and absolutely relinquishes his free will and any responsibility that it entails. He continually refers to the futility of defying fate or destiny, foregoing all accountability for his actions. The concept of free will and choice exists as a central theme of the traditional Catholic doctrine of Spain, yet Duarte forfeits this cherished aspect of humanity in an affront to Spain's religious and mythic past. Like the followers of the regime, Cela's misbegotten protagonist has yielded his most precious right, that of the will to act in accord with his conscience and the subsequent responsibility that it carries. His character states:

But since we are not given a choice, but rather destined -- even from before birth -- to go some of us one way, some the other, I did my best to accept my fate, which was the only way to avoid desperation . . . My mother . . . would tell me that it was no use learning anything if I was never to rise out of poverty anyway (Cela 1964, p.26).

Like Goytisolo, Matute bases characters from her novel, *School of the Sun*, on mythic and religious figures of Spain. The young protagonist, Matia, befriends an honest and forthright young man, Manuel, whose family the Taronji brothers, representing Franco's Nationalist forces, persecute continually. Rather than flee to available sanctuary, Manuel chooses to stay and confront the consequences of his stepfather's death, saying,

"My place was here, among the bitter ones, among all this misery . . . When the trouble came, I had already decided to stay. But you already know: they've killed him" (Matute 1963, p.139).

The crucifixion metaphor continues within the narrative as Matia compares her devious cousin, Borja, to Pontius Pilate. Matute closes the novel with the symbolic crowing of the cock that appears throughout the story:

There stood the cock of Son Major, with his angry eyes, like two buttons of fire . . . he shrieked -- dawn was breaking -- his horrible, strident song, which proclaimed, perhaps -- how do I know? -- some mysterious lost cause (1963, p.242).

Notably, the character Matute creates to represent the sanctioned clergy, Lauro the tutor, is a young man of far less integrity than Manuel. As the novel progresses, Matute reveals that the seemingly devout Lauro had entered the seminary seeking only the material and social benefits of the clergy, as well as a dispensation from serving in battle. Matute writes:

Of what God are you a prophet, renegade?" screamed Marine, his face red with fury. "Of what God? You don't believe in anything. They threw you out of there as an unbeliever. You only believe in your piggish belly . . . What is it that you're going to teach these innocents? . . . It's death you teach them! Dead men, nothing more. You don't know anything besides death . . . Go on, renegade, Judas (1963, p.103).

The dissident, Mario, in Delibes' *Five Hours with Mario*, presents perhaps the most consistent and powerful Christ metaphor. Each chapter of the novel begins with a biblical verse from Mario's bible, and throughout the novel, it grows increasingly apparent that Mario lived a much more Christian life than those of the Catholic regime, despite the castigation of the regime and the ridicule of his wife, Carmen, who states:

And please, don't come to me with tales about how we all crucify Christ every day, . . . if Christ came back to life you can be sure he wouldn't

come to pray with Protestants, or say that poor people ought to go to the university, or buy jumping jacks off good-for-nothings in Madrid, or let other people go ahead of him in shops (Delibes 1988, p.72).

Carmen lauds the crusading image of the Franco regime as she chastises her recently deceased dissident husband, "the war, which was a Crusade, everybody says so, seemed like a tragedy to you" (Delibes 1988, p.57).

### **Conclusion**

As Aronoff contends, the symbolic universe of myth presented in literature contains inherent contradictions, allowing a variety of interpretations based on different political contexts and actors. As the contextual reality develops and changes, the interpretation of the myths must change in accordance (Aronoff 1980, p.6). Campbell agrees, suggesting that all truths are relative, and therefore subject to constant revision based on the changing environment. He contends that "there is no longer any fixed foundation, Rock of Ages" (Campbell 1970, p.146).

Myth may change and develop as its environment changes, but myth does not exist in isolation from other factors in society. It is not simply an effect, but also a cause. According to Campbell, individuals and groups use myth as a mechanism through which to view their environment, and as Halpern suggests, as a tool with which to manipulate that environment. Competing factions may employ the same myths but interpret them differently to motivate opposing actions and generate different results. According to Sorel and Halpern, myths lead men to radical change in an attempt to destroy the existing system, not to merely repair the old (Halpern 1961, p.138).

Both the dominant political ideology of Francoist Spain and that of its dissidents bear out these contentions. Franco resurrected the myth of Spanish unity and a paradise

lost to destroy the democratic remnants of the Second Republic while Republican literary forces employed myth to combat the authoritarian oppression of the Franco regime. The mythical underpinnings of Spain's literary and religious society proved to be a rich resource that both sides manipulated to full advantage in generating a political ideology. As Ausband notes, it was the political ambiguity of myth that was, in fact, its main attraction (1983, p.37).

Although the opposition never overthrew the regime, its ideological foundation was sufficiently widespread that when Franco died in 1975, a shadow government was ready to step into position. Without the creation and underground promulgation of the opposition's ideology through myth-based literature, such a seamless transition would have been unlikely. Devoid of any alternative belief system or worldview, there would have been no ideological foundation for dramatic political change.

The very perseverance of democratic ideals under an oppressive dictatorship supports Halpern's statement that myths are "socially effective from generation to generation" (1961, p.130). Although the only Spaniards who had participated in a functioning democracy were at least sixty years old at the time of Spain's transition to democracy in the 1970s, the democratic myth had persisted. Myths are, in fact, important enough to actually change reality, as Halpern suggests (1961, p.131).

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