

Reserved by God: The Role of the Nacionalcatolicismo and Falangistas Songs in the Building of a Censored Identity in the Spanish Female Body

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Resumen. Al acercarse a las nociones de identidad y de valoración del cuerpo, es necesario evaluarlas en términos de tiempo y espacio, porque el cuerpo humano es, fundamentalmente, una representación del yo mismo en los sucesos de la vida cotidiana. El cuerpo humano se evalúa en tiempo y en espacio, pero también se evalúa por medio de las estructuras del poder dominante en el que funciona. En el ámbito político español de la postguerra de la Guerra Civil, en el que el acceso a todas las formas de capital estaba restringido por la censura, la ideología dominante impuso un credo político único, una religión unitaria forzada y estrictas reglas morales, para controlar a la población y para promover sumisión. En este contexto, la ideología política y el credo religioso se convirtieron en herramientas de propaganda para la regulación de los posibles agentes y disposiciones disidentes, que se encontrasen en todos los estratos sociales. En medio de este proceso, junto al factor del *Nacionalcatolicismo*, el papel jugado por la música y las canciones *Falangistas* –y sus connotaciones sensoriales e históricas- demarcaron las fronteras socio-políticas, que definieron categóricamente la identidad de género y todas sus ramificaciones. El diferencial de género en España a raíz de la Guerra Civil estuvo dominado por roles contruidos artificialmente, basados en existencialismo biológico, y la determinación de género –en particular el género femenino- estuvo también definido por las presiones de las circunstancias históricas que negaban la iniciativa individual.

Palabras clave. *Falange Femenina*, Identidad Censurada, Cuerpo Social, Soberanía, el Cuerpo Femenino *Español*, *Nacionalcatolicismo*, Canciones *Falangistas*, Identidad Femenina, Semiótica, Música, Guerra Civil Española, República.

Abstract. When approaching notions of identity and body evaluation it is necessary to assess them in time and space as the human body is, fundamentally, a representation of the self in daily life events. The human body is evaluated in time and space, but also by the structures of dominant power wherein it functions. In the Spanish political milieu of post- Civil War, wherein access to all forms of capital was restricted by censorship, the ruling ideology imposed a single political credo, an enforced unitary religion and strict moral rules to control the population and promote submission. In this context, political ideology and religious belief became propaganda tools for the regulation of any possible dissenting agents and dispositions found in all social strata. Gender differential in Spain in the aftermath of the Civil War was dominated by artificially constructed roles based on biological essentialism, and the determination of

gender – in particular feminine gender- was also defined by the pressures of historical circumstances that denied individual initiative.

Key words. *Falange Femenina*, Censored Identity, Social Body, Nationhood, Spanish Female Body, *Nacionalcatolicismo*, *falangistas* songs, Female Identity, Semiotics, Spanish Civil War, Republic.

The end of the Spanish Civil War on 1st April 1939 was the starting point of nearly forty years of dictatorship and the beginning of what is now defined as the *genocidio franquista*, a transitional period of ultra-repression exercised by the Regime on dissenting individuals because of political difference that lasted well into the 1950s. In the international arena, as WW2 ravaged Europe, Spain found itself in absolute isolation from other countries and suffering from the devastating consequences of a civil war: inflation, destroyed industrial infrastructures, diaspora, high death-toll, lack of housing, social disarray, food shortages and lack of medical supplies. In addition to those factors, as a primary consequence of the war, its citizens were also caught in the midst of a re-adjusting to social life by means of political repression. An historically proven factor that happened during the Civil War throughout the length of the conflict was that the death of civilians in Republican areas mostly occurred because of populace doing; whilst in the Nationalist side, the issue of death orders was mostly organised by the authorities themselves, a pattern of conduct that intensified once the Civil War was over. In 1942, the implementation of the *Ley de responsabilidades políticas* (law applicable until 1966) played the most important role in the dismembering of family nucleus structures and decided the fate of individuals whose activities were condemned as opposite to the new Regime. As the *Generalísimo* Francisco Franco, new absolute Head of State, moulded his position into a comfortable shape via a methodological militarism, his main force - military repression - had to be efficient and systematic in contributing to the building of a new society.

The systematic building of a social future by the new Regime was structured upon the formation of a censorship body and by the delineating of a new concept of Nationhood supported by the prevailing political ideology and by the teachings of the Catholic Church. Fundamentally created from above, the definition of the ideological boundaries of *Nación* was intimately linked to the formation of a new Nationalistic credo in which collective memory was replaced by state-promoted ideology. In fact, the demarcation of meaning in the idea of national identity in the aftermath of the Civil War could only happen if changes occurring in the daily life of the Spanish people were fundamentally transformed. After the instability of the Second Republic and the horrors of the Civil War, the “political and national units” had to coincide to provide a comprehensive “administrative and educational infrastructure”¹; hence, the importance of the gist of Nationhood to be formally demarcated within a comprehensive new set of shared beliefs.

¹ HOBBSAWN, Eric: *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 9-11.

Franco's government imposed restriction on potential dissenting attitudes by means of bestowing repressive powers on to politically indoctrinated individuals actively involved in eradicating Republican principles, opinions, and attitudes. The Church in particular presented a Catholic order that linked in an absolute manner the behaviour and spiritual creed of the individual to the Regime, its members consequently collaborating to the moulding of an identity rescued from the secularism promoted by the Second Republic. Franco, with the help of the Catholic Church, articulated and codified a set of rigid rules to manage all areas of society. In this process of legitimating control, particular emphasis was bestowed on to the position of women in society and in the limitation of feminine roles. The drastic effectiveness of this process nullified all of the women's civil rights achieved since the Constitution of 1931, as the social progress made during the Second Republic effectively disappeared giving way to an ideological and autocratic structure controlled by the *Sección Femenina* of the *Falange*.



Image 1. Sección Femenina de la Falange (texts)

In Franco's Spain, a family unit was a microcosm of society at large; in other words, an obedient and quiet family was an obedient and quiet nation. The panoptic control exercised by the Regime superseded the old dichotomy of difference between the public and private's spheres. However, the fomenting and fostering of a new domestic sphere, according to the rules of the Regime, proposed a secretive privacy in which women's position veered from a constricted female reality to playing a pre-set role aiming at fulfilling traditional male fantasies of submission. In this context, masculine virility was deeply rooted in a repressive social hierarchy that presented the male body as mesomorph, a man in action, relegating the female body to a passive category in which its biological definition became the reason behind any possible discourse on

female gender. The social management of these bodies aimed to educate them in such a way that indoctrination could –as the process developed- change them from being bodies “restraint by others, to self-restrain”². And the nexus between all these factors dominating historical politics and the ideological attributes attached to it was the Catholic Church. Hence, the Catholic Church at large provided the Regime with the spiritual justification needed to argue structured control in all areas of daily life. As a consequence, the Church’s moral teaching made significant ideological and practical contributions –in the shape of members of the clergy as censors- to the operating of the censorship boards because their legislation was based on a rigid interpretation of elements found in the Catholic dogma: restrain, obedience, atonement and punishment. In this world, spiritual fulfilment and happiness could only be attained if the agents followed controlled rules based not on self-identity, but on condemnation of disparity.

In the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, the need for creating a social span relevant to the Nationalist ideology was especially important as it contributed to reaffirm social roles with shared performing characteristics that spoke the same language. The collective type of female identity was already highly regulated since the expansion of the *Sección Femenina*’s duties during the Civil War and at the end of the war it crafted the readjusting of the role played by women in society. The brutal economic and demographic consequences of the Civil War had a bearing in the relegation of women towards the definitive core of family life: *el hogar*. Home became the space wherein the female body mutated from being an individual property to a mediator between the issues of self-identity and social identity. This merging is what Goffman called the ‘morally act of civil inattention’ in which the body is managed in such a way that it blends with other bodies, becoming a non-threatening presence. This “bureaucratization of the spirit” regulated the non-threatening interaction of individuals³. Actively fostered by the *Falange*’s principles, the planning of how to establish a female censored identity was borrowed by Franco’s Regime to set a rigid gendered discourse.

² KUZMICS, H: «The Civilizing Process», in KEANE, J.: *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives*, Verso, London, 1988, p. 154.

³ SHILLING, Chris: «Society as Objective Reality», in *The Body and Social Theory*, Second edition, Sage Publications, London, 2006, p. 74.



Image 2. Sección Femenina de la Falange (texts)

The pattern of gendered discourse applied to any issues and positions related to the establishment of social norms and roles defined woman as object complementary to the Fascist masculine model, ignoring her functions and needs as individual subject per se. In particular, any form of action estimated it as fomenting women's position in society as independent entities, had a particular hostile reception. Like in the totalitarian Fascist regimes of Germany and Italy, the crucial role of the family unit in re-constructing a social reality was circumscribed by the imposition of traditional gender roles ruled by conservative social norms. These social norms were intimately concerned with how bodies moved in time in social spaces and in how they performed actions and functions assigned by the State and the Church to regulate response and actions. Consequently, the Regime's gendered discourse cultivated the homogenization and physical-spiritual sanitation of gendered bodies, with a particular emphasis on the function and finality of the female body. The legitimation of the State relied heavily on the Spanish Catholic tradition that had the figure of the matriarch as the effective base upon which the male figure could fully accomplish and fulfil his role as an active dominating body participant in the new Regime. Hitherto, the imposed polarization of gender was the making of the construction of a female censored identity and the initiation of a pattern of relationships based on segregated gender's roles that did carry on to all fields, from international politics, to the social sphere, to women education. The role of *la mujer* -as defined by her grammatical article- was meant to signify in terms of semiotic activity; but, it produced instead only signs recognised as notions of the "feminine" because those signs were defined by male's imaginary. Hence, the role played by women in the disciplinary environment of a family -and society at large- was fundamentally reduced to reproduce standards of conduct and to instil an awareness of self-restrain in her circle based on the practicing

and propagation of accepted social codes. The Spanish female body in the aftermath of the Civil War suffered the imposition of social control, indoctrinating ideology and fear of reprisal, consequently generating the base of a civilized body whose intrinsic characteristics were enmeshed in a social and historical process that delineated a recognisable censored identity.



Image 3. Sección Femenina de la Falange (propaganda poster)

In terms of composing ideology, the new Regime had plenty to support it. Franco was a prolific writer of propaganda texts that were circulated, proliferated and distributed in the same way the *Mein Kampf* performed as an ideological sacred book to the German people. Franco's speeches and writings articulated a new world vision constructed on three premises: a rupture from the (Republican) past, the construction of a new Spain, and the implementation of a strict social code of behaviour helped by the Catholic Church's teaching. Hitherto, national identity in Spain after the Civil War was moulded as equal to the Regime's identity since it fostered the idea that both were one and the same. In the aftermath of the war, all issues related to patriotism (singled out as Nationalist) and religion (unified as Catholic) ushered a new definitive environment for a reproduction of human agency that encouraged refusal to anything secular or Republican. In this context, hegemonic Spain had a mission: to fight the anti-Catholicism which had contributed to the contamination of all things deemed pure, patriotic and fundamentally Spanish.

Already by 1938, the Cardenal Enrique y Tarancón, in his *Curso de Acción Católica*, published in Burgos, had thanked God for the suppression of all political parties and the apparition of the *Falange Española Tradicionalista* and the *J.O.N.S.* as the single political course endorsed by Franco with the words: "*La Acción Católica debe mirar*

con simpatía esta milicia, y aún debe orientar hacia ella a sus miembros"⁴. As such, the Catholic Church and Franco shared ideology in many ways and both helped each other to cement their own positions. To justify this positioning in an emotionally fragile Spain, Franco stated that "*Dios concedió a España la Victoria*" because the Nationals "*pusimos el brazo y la intención*"⁵. Hence, as the Church vouched for the new Regime, all legislation and social developments implemented by the Republican government had to be eradicated and substituted by rules encompassing the principles of the proposed idea of Nationhood. Censorship played a fundamental role here, as social and cultural life was essentially based on very simple rules: anything against the Regime was considered non-patriotic and anti-clericalism in any form -from disbelief of dogma to the questioning of how bodies could move and interact in social life- was severely condemned as seditious. This last factor was particularly relevant in the moulding of a female censored identity, as intrinsic elements to human development - like sexuality- were controlled to profile the Spanish family, and woman at its core, as the essential unit of society.

The infrastructure of censorship was originally initiated during the Civil War by Serrano Suñer, a pro-Fascist *falangista* known for its conservative's views. In 1941, after the Republican structures and legacy were totally and finally dismantled, Gabriel Alvarez-Delgado, in his new position as Minister for *Prensa y Propaganda*, began to instigate the fusion of the two worlds upon which the Regime was based on -National State and Catholic Church- into a single denominative term: *Nacionalcatolicismo*. The ramifications of this joint unit were specific and effective, as the censors chosen to put into practice its rules with the purpose of controlling dissenting ideas were either party members or clergy members; although the Catholic Church also had its own controlling body with its own system for classification of any published text. The coining of this term proposed an unified ideology, in which the factors of collective memory and historical memory were secondary to the rules imposed by the operating ideology and political hierarchy. Its practice put the *Nacionalcatolicismo* at the core of Nationhood, as the Regime's identity mutated into an ideal of moral, social and physical perfection that vindicated the restoration of values and traditions, formally under-evaluated during previous years by the radicalism found in the defunct Second Republic.

This nomenclature positioned Spain's desire for control in terms akin to the authoritarianism and repression found in the dynamics of other Fascist regimes. However, it was the contributing role played by the Church what crafted the differentiating element that set Spain's censorship apart from its Fascist contemporaries by means of one single element: religion. As a consequence, the *Nacionalcatolicismo* permeated every single field: social, cultural and political whilst

⁴ "The Catholic Action must look with sympathy to this militia, and even more, it has to orientate its members towards it". From the *Publicaciones del Consejo Superior de la Acción Católica*, Burgos, 1938, p. 237. Reprinted copy: *La Iglesia en España (1936-1975) Síntesis Histórica. Separata de "Boletín Oficial del Obispado de Cuenca"* Núm. 5. Mayo 1986.

⁵ "God gave Spain the Victory... put their arms and heart into it": FRANCO, Francisco: *Pensamientos*. Vol I, Centro de Estudios Sindicales. Organización Sindical Española, Madrid, (1937) 1942, p. 47.

functioning as an independent field by itself. In Franco's *Pensamiento Católico* (Vol.1 and Vol.2)⁶, the constant references to *Dios, Iglesia, Catolicismo, Guerra Santa*, or the handling of terms such as *moral, alma* or *espiritual*⁷ mirrored the building of a psychologically controlled Spain wherein merging ideologies (*Falangistas, Carlistas, Tecnócratas* and *Católicos tradicionales*) were confluent on the figure of Franco. To validate this representation of Franco as *Caudillo Universal por la Gracia de Dios*, an educational process was essential to configure the ramifications spreading through all areas of society. Codes and identity were taught and encouraged across the Peninsula, from schools to institutional affiliations, and in this area the powerful *Sección Femenina* -run by Pilar Primo de Rivera- formally took on the direction of the Spanish women in order to follow the principles of the *Falange* movement as imaged by its founder -her brother, Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera- after the Civil War ended. Indeed, despite the role played by Franco's writings in the demarcating of the *Franquismo*, it would be the ideology imagined, created, written, circulated, promoted, and put into practice by the *Falange* and by its members – the *falangistas* men and women - what formed the opus of the primary *Movimiento Nacional*.



Image 4. Sección Femenina (Textos Falange)

The *Sección Femenina* was a vast organization configuring all issues related to women education: political, cultural, social, and religious. It was founded in June 1934, its Patron was *St. Teresa de Jesus* and was originally formed as a scion of the male *Falange*. Yet, it was during the years of the Civil War when the *Sección Femenina* truly found its pivotal role as a full member of the *Falange*: the task of assisting the families of Nationalist prisoners and also in helping those families whose husbands had died in the battlefield, the *caídos por Dios y por España*⁸. The task of these women was extraordinary in a particular period of Spanish history and contributed to ease the

⁶ In Vol.1 there are 517 “thoughts” written between 1937 and 1957 assembled under the name of *Pensamiento Católico*.

⁷ (God, Church, Catholicism, Holy War, moral, soul, spiritual).

⁸ “The fallen for God and Spain”.

urgent basic needs caused by a state of civil war. Although the help was primarily dedicated to those fighting on the National side, the actual social role played by the *falangistas* women was also a very powerful propaganda tool, as the image of female bodies feeding, cleaning and nurturing those in distress circulated freely in the Nationalist zones, mushrooming in the whole of the Peninsula as the fighting changed borders. On 19th April 1937, the *Decreto de unificación* on the Nationalist side proposed the *Movimiento Nacional* as the only political party in Spain, establishing the *Delegación Nacional de la Sección Femenina* as the one and only institution whose sole purpose was the mobilisation and education of the Spanish woman. To bring women to the same level of conscription than men were experiencing during the war, the *Decreto* of 7th October 1937 issued a compulsory *Servicio Social* encompassing all non-married Spanish women between the ages of 17 to 35 who were not already working in a public institution. This organization was the *Delegación Nacional de Auxilio Social*, and its infrastructure would play a central social and educational role in delineating the borders of a censored identity since 1937 up to the final dissolution of the *Sección Femenina* in 1977 via a diversity of citizenship initiatives: from the running of the *Hogares infantiles* to their pivotal role as part of the *Frente de Juventudes*.



Image 5. Magazine Sección Femenina 1940

Teaching of the *falangistas* was structured depending of the age group and was aimed to the specific formation of the *Flechas* (Arrows), the female members of the *Falange*. Once they joined, women were split as members into Sections and Groups, becoming part of a vast organization promoting a restoration of traditional values that preached

a discourse of the feminine based on the principles postulated by José Antonio Primo de Rivera himself, whose *ideario* resonated with a vision of the feminine idyllic already proposed in 1934: “El verdadero feminismo no debería consistir en querer para las mujeres las funciones que hoy se estiman superiores, sino en rodear cada vez de mayor dignidad humana y social a las funciones femeninas⁹”. In this particular political milieu, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, with the help of the Catholic Church, contributed to define and delimit the Spanish woman identity as the “*fin esencial de la mujer, en su función humana, es servir de perfecto complemento al hombre, formando con él, individual o colectivamente, una perfecta unidad social*”¹⁰.



Image 6. Sección Femenina de la Falange (texts related to women professions)

The traditional role adjudicated to women -as wife, mother, homemaker, *repose del guerrero*- became part of a carefully crafted process. For instance, any woman wishing to progress into further education after finishing school had to complete a *Cursillo de Formación Espiritual* before she could register in any university. Women were encouraged to function on the professional arena within adjudicated gendered roles: primary school teacher, secretary, nurse, shop assistant... For a woman, to continue working on a job after marrying was discouraged, although there was a social pressure placed upon women to take on voluntary work related to the *Sección Femenina*'s activities and to promote its ethos beyond the family circle. In the event of being able to keep a job after marrying, professional prospects were reduced by work conditions and statutory rules, as the pay gap between sexes was wide and changes for better

⁹ “True Feminism should not consist in wishing for women functions that today are consider superior, but to surround them instead, each time, with more human and social dignity, to the feminine functions”. José Antonio Primo de Rivera (1934).

¹⁰ “The essential finality of woman, in her human function, is to serve of perfect complement to man, forming with him, individually or collectively, a perfect social unit”. *Sección Femenina* of FET and the JONS, Madrid: 1933-1937.

positions non-existent. Indeed, even after the legal changes introduced during the 1960s to better women rights and work conditions, legislation still uphold wage differential and allowed job segregation. Another important factor contributing to the relegation of women to the family sphere was that the Regime denied any state help to married working women, effectively rendering worthless any attempt to progress professionally. Per se, the loss of all civil rights ushered by the *Constitución* of 1931 left women functioning in restricted spheres, abolishing along the way legislation in force during the Second Republic, such as the right to partition of patrimony between husband and wife, the right to cohabitating without marriage, the right to vote, the right to voluntary abortion and the right to divorce. On a professional level, the reduction of qualified roles for women put those of wife and mother at the core of the new Regime's stratified society. The rupture with Republican values marshalled the negation of women rights essentially considered as disparate to the fundamental Spanish values of tradition and religion, looking instead at evaluating the position of women in society as receptacles and distributors of memes capable of spreading ideas and rules of behaviour. It was in this area that the *Sección Femenina* was best able to transmit shared belief operating as an unifying force within society.



Image 7. Republican posters (Milicianas)

During the Second Republic, the use of images and songs helped to create a script of feminism that advocated and promoted the active participation of the Spanish woman in the roles bestowed by the Republican laws and by the needs arising from the circumstances of the Civil War. This occurred because music could bridge the gap between ideology and language, creating a sensorial landscape that reinforced notions of womanhood. As it also did for the Nationalists, the forever etching found in ideological songs was a three dimensional experience, transmitting information that reverberated with meaning, as association plays a role in musical landscape and its intrinsic features. Within the cultural and political confines that the Second Republic,

the Civil War and the first years of the Dictatorship created, there was an intersensorial link that unite them all: the use and practice of ideological songs and the use of specific female referents. Songs were capable of creating ephemeral forms of expression charged with lasting feelings and could link experience to specific acts of action. In all the lyrics of any political song there are specific verbal ideological discourses and -ultimately- specific concepts of discourse itself. Indeed, in Spanish language, *la canción* (the song) is a noun defined by its feminine article, like in the case of *la mujer* (the woman). Hence, many of the songs employed during the Republican and Fascist periods referred to the feminine not only as the subject of a song embodying ideology (like in the case of the popular Republican song *!Ay Carmela!* or in the Nationalist song of *La Pepa*) but also as the main referent undelaying action and cause.

In the song *!Ay Carmela!* the main subject is the telling of the bloody *Batalla del Ebro* in 1938, the longest battle of the Civil War that was fought in-between two areas of the lower course of the river Ebro, in the *Terra Alta* of Catalonia. The dramatic telling was punctuated by the music of the song, a *rumba* whose *up-tempo* delivered rhythm in twelve beats, crafting a relentless score of descriptive dramatic lyrics: “*!El Ejercito del Ebro, rumba la rumba la rumba la, el Ejercito del Ebro, rumba la rumba, la rumba la, buena paliza le dio!*”¹¹. During the Battle of the Ebro, despite the warfare superiority of the Nationals and the eventual defeat of the Republican front, the *milicianos* fought to the end, and the lyrics paid tribute to the idealism and heroism of the Republicans on the battlefield: “*...donde sobra corazón, !Ay Carmela! !Ay, Carmela!, donde sobra corazón, !Ay Carmela!*”¹². The impact of this battle was such that it is because of this song that the female image of the Republic itself, depicting a woman wearing a flowing white robe, draped in a red cape, her mane covered with a Phrygian cap, was known as *Carmela*, effectively making of a recognizable female body the embodiment of the whole of the Republican beliefs.

For the Republicans, the imaginary was visually supported by an aesthetics constructed by suggestive pictures of women in control, whilst the music and lyrics of revolutionary songs contributed to foster the role of Republican women as fundamental to the fighting. Hence, in a song like *A las mujeres*, a rousing song originally from the film *Ramona* (1928), the lyrics encouraged women to “*romper las cadenas de la esclavitud*”, urging a course of action clearly articulated in the chorus: “*Debeís las mujeres colaborar, en hermosa obra de humanidad, mujeres, mujeres, necesitamos vuestra union, el día que estalle nuestra gran revolución*”¹³. In this song, the position of women was proposed as essential to the idea of revolution, and female identity was presented as an active participant in the fight against Fascism. Indeed, the combination of language and music employed in the Republican songs was intrinsically enmeshed in the ideological value permeating all forms of demonstrations in support of the Republic.

¹¹ “The Army of the Ebro, rumba la rumba.... A good beating they gave them! Rumba la rumba”.

¹² “!Ay Carmela!, where there is plenty of heart, !Ay Carmela!...”.

¹³ “break the chains of slavery...You women must to collaborate, in a beautiful work of humanity, women, women, we need you united, the day that our big revolution will erupt”.

The Nationals songs also employed feminine referents to identify cultural memes, like in the song *La Pepa*. In Spanish culture, during the Civil War, the name of *Pepa* and its feminine article (*la*) became the nickname of the death penalty (*la pena de muerte*). In the popular *copla* originated in Madrid -as the reference to the *gachí* or popular Madrid character makes it clear-, the non-formal musical structure, originally from the eighteenth-century, punctuated explicit lyrics: “*Es La Pepa una gachí, que esta de moda en Madrid, y que tiene predilección por los rojillos*”¹⁴. In these lyrics, *La Pepa*, as the death penalty in a female form, is very much in fashion in Madrid -capital of the State- and it has a penchant for the *rojillos*, a derogative referent to the *rojos* or communists. Beyond any possible academic analysis of the song itself, in 2015, this unsettling song presents a disturbing casual background to the so far (recorded) 177.000 summary court cases that occurred in the aftermath of the Civil War, proven by different institutions working under the umbrella of the *Ley de la Memoria Histórica*. On a semiotic level, it represents the use of feminine referents, charged with a new Nationalist evaluating set of capital -specifically social and cultural- across borders.

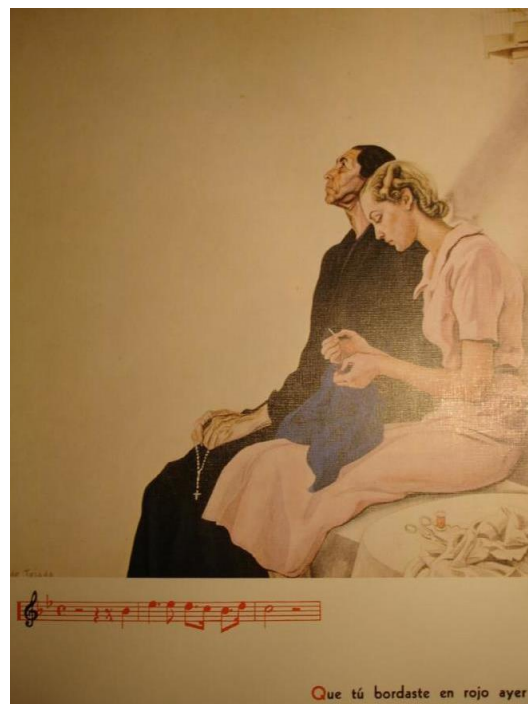


Image 8. Lyrics and propaganda image for the song “*Cara al Sol*” (Falange)

In the same way that *!Ay Carmela!* mutated from being just a song to embodying the Republic itself, the use of songs in the Nationalist side was also saturated by ideology and propaganda. The song *Cara al sol*, the anthem of the *Falange*, was composed in 1935 with rousing music by Juan Tellería and Juan R. Buendía and had stirring lyrics written by José Antonio Primo de Rivera himself. Composed with the objective of offering a song capable of uniting men and women in the same way that the *Himno a Riego* (the official anthem of the Second Republic) did to the Republicans, its popularity was forever sealed after the death of José Antonio Primo de Rivera by a

¹⁴ (“It is *La Pepa* a “*gachí*”, who is very much in fashion in Madrid, and who has a penchant for “*rojillos*”).

firing death squad in the prison of Alicante in 1936. In this song, woman was an intrinsic part of a male world, but as complement to it, not as protagonist herself. The lyrics refer to female identity as a passive agent, in opposition to the Republican songs, in which women were presented as actively involved in the fighting. For this particular song, an image created by the *Falange* was distributed to create a clear visual referent to the lyrics, defining along the way a social corporeality accepted by the party. The visual female referent was qualitatively distinct from the mesomorph male suggested by the lyrics, as gender differential was explicit in defining which role women played in it: “*Cara al sol con la camisa nueva, que tú bordaste en rojo ayer*”¹⁵. In the picture employed by the *Falange* (*Image 8*) the younger woman is seen embroidering the blue shirt of the *falangistas* with the red yoke and five arrows, the symbol of the *Falange* referred to in the song as “*y traerán prendidas cinco rosas las flechas de mi haz*”¹⁶. In this image, his mother, a rosary in hand, prays for his heroic son to come back home from battle alive, her almost spiritual face turned upwards as she is praying to God. Her face and her whole body, dressed in black (a colour that suggests that death has already visited her household before), her face showing an expression that shows neither anger nor resentment, but heroic resignation, as the lyrics mention the possibility of her son’s death; himself announcing his last commitment to the fight: “*me hallará la muerte si me lleva y no te vuelvo a ver*”; the absent man offering counsel to his beloved with the words “*Si te dicen que caí, me fui al puesto que tengo allí*”¹⁷: a post in the eternity of the *caídos por Dios y por España*.

The younger woman, his wife, dressed in a pale pink dress –suggesting purity of soul and youth, but not virginity as she has already been taken by a hero- has her head bent, absorbed in her embroidery, her fair hair gleaming against the older woman. The production of this intimate picture linked the public space –filled by the reverberation of the told battle and by the absent man- and the private space, populated by female bodies whose presence was just a background for his heroic absent presence. These two female figures, their body imaginary conduct delineated by emotional restraint, were exact products of social and political changes occurring in precise time and space. The example of the image of these two women in their main roles in life – mother and wife- sustained the role of the *Falange* in propagating visual referents of a social constructionism, in which a civilizing process was proposed via an ideology that merged self and society as one.

¹⁵ (“Facing the sun in my new shirt that you embroidered in red yesterday”).

¹⁶ (“... and they will bring five roses on my lapel, the arrows of my bundle”).

¹⁷ (“...That is how death will find me if it takes me and I won’t see you again’. ‘If they tell you I fell I went to the post that I have there”).



Image 8. Sección Femenina de la Falange (physical activity in the Servicio Social)

The prerequisite to construct a social body, based on a progressive civilizing process occurring in Spain in the aftermath of the Civil War, was because of the need to reconstruct a socially and economically ravaged country. In this context, the role of propaganda was absolute. As political ideology worked in ensemble with the Catholic Church's teachings, the role of the *Nacionalcatolicismo* in defining gender identity and body image was framed by interlocked systems of beliefs. The need for a censored identity of the social body was due to two reasons: first, to create a social identity which would embody the Regime's rules, and second, the legitimating of those rules through practice of identity. The Regime was exact in recognizing the need for educating bodies, as this allowed for the safe labelling of agents as legitimate or dissident. In the educational process initiated and put into practice by the *Sección Femenina*, political ideology and Catholic dogma contributed to establish borders formulated by strict rules of decorum and social behaviour that were applied to exercise control and correction. The set of social rules created by the *Sección Femenina* proposed recognisable external classifications that separated those bodies that comply with them, from those whom were stigmatized by their refusal. External social classification was dependent on accumulated capital (cultural, social, economic), but propaganda images used in the books of the *Sección Femenina* demonstrated that identity was also subject to additional factors: expected conservative looks, educated and chaste manners, impeccable female behaviour and devote religious belief. But although graphic propaganda was heavily stereotyped and specific, the main impact on the building of a censored identity in the female body was based upon the written texts published and distributed via the compulsory *Servicio Social*.

In the mandatory *Sección de Economía Doméstica para Bachillerato, Comercio y Magisterio* (1942), Pilar Primo de Rivera, Chief of the *Sección Femenina*, announced that: "*Las mujeres nunca descubren nada; les falta, desde luego, el talento creador,*

*reservado por Dios para las inteligencias varoniles*¹⁸. Living in a Regime that promoted national awards like the *Premio de la natalidad* and encouraged the *familias numerosas* (as proof of non-practicing birth-control), giving *puntos* that provided a monetary complement to the head of the household's salary depending of how many children the family had, the fostering of a censored identity in female bodies contributed to create meaning in a physical and social world existing in time and space. The resulting values created by women following the principles of the *Falange* resonated of social constructionism, as the significance and use of their bodies was entwined with social forces. Indeed, the creation of a censored identity within a civilized body was due to a process of "socialization and rationalization" (Shilling: 2006, 132) based on fear and discipline.



Image 9. Sección Femenina. Texts on political and Nationhood teaching

In the aftermath of the Civil War, a lengthy process of education of the female social body was implemented to eradicate all previous teaching corollary to preceding Republican governments. This educational process conducted by the *Sección Femenina* was extended to all social areas of life and provided an environmental censorship built around the family unit. This environmental censorship taught their *Flechas* how to set up a table before lunch, but it also taught them what they should talk about while eating. If in traditional etiquette's rules all conversations veering towards religion, sex or politics should be avoided, the *Sección Femenina's* teaching was more succinct in its demands, as it asked from the Spanish woman to avoid at mealtimes "las discusiones violentas y disputas por disparidad de criterio, recuerdos dolorosos, emociones vivas, etc. Perjudican a la digestión"¹⁹. Yet, the most disturbing

¹⁸ *Formación política. Lecciones para las Flechas. Sección Femenina de la F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. Octava Edición*, Madrid. ("Women never discover anything new. They miss, of course, the creative talent, reserved by God, for the virile intelligence").

¹⁹ "Violent discussions and disagreements because of different criteria, painful memories, raw emotions, etc. They are harmful for the digestion", p. 37. *Manual de Cocina para Bachillerato, Comercio y Magisterio*. Sección Femenina de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. Capítulo 10 y 14. 5. Curso de Bachillerato.

teaching involved the private sphere because it encompassed sexual register. This teaching was even more invasive, as the supposed autonomy of the female body was institutionally regulated in its most intimate way in an imperative form with the following words: “Si tu marido te pide prácticas sexuales inusuales, sé obediente y no te quejes... Si sugiere la unión, accede humildemente, teniendo siempre en cuenta que su satisfacción es más importante que la de una mujer. Cuando alcance el momento culminante, un pequeño gemido por tu parte es suficiente para indicar cualquier goce que haya podido experimentar”²⁰.



Image 10. Sección Femenina. Texts on domestic teaching

As a result of this totalitarian orchestrated indoctrination process, a demarcated set of rules offered a censored female identity, fabricated by the Regime to produce what an agent ought to be in the dystopian social framework of post-Civil War Spain. The creation of this censored female identity was formed by a set of normative expectations based on religious enforced belief and ideological sanitation. Consequently, these factors configured Spanish human female agency's formative context as postulated by the *Sección Femenina*, and were supported by an institutionalised Catholic recognizable discipline to restrict, control, justify and ultimately, delineate the corporeality of the female body through a process of education, atonement and servitude. This process in turn made social phenomena a product of time and place, as its meaning derived from social context. In the aftermath of the Civil War, anything that impeded the full integration of any individual

²⁰ “If your husband asks you for unusual sexual practices, be obedient and do not complain...If he suggests the union (intercourse), accept with humility, bearing always in mind that his satisfaction is more important than the one of the woman. When he arrives to climax, a small whimper from yourself is sufficient to let him know that you know of any pleasure he may have had”. From *Economía doméstica de Bachillerato. Sección Femenina de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S.*, 1958.

into the collective meant the possibility of actual political reprisal or the option of becoming a victim of a process of stigmatization. As such, the fear of being accused of any form of deviance from the Regime's rules operated upon any dissent wish that could break the rules in any sphere of social life. Effectively, the absolute qualities found in the straightforward teaching of the *Sección Femenina* created a female phenotype bred in a virtual world-view constituted by fictitious notions of reality and social order.

Focusing on how the diffusion of the *Sección Femenina* of the *Falange's* ideology functioned, we can argue that, as Paul Julian Smith's argues (based on Althusser's theories), ideology works "on reproduction: it silently creates those conditions" under which a prevalent system "will appear natural", consequently reconciling any dissenting forces 'to their alienation'. Smith enlarges Althusser's idea adding that ideology thus, "facilitates a spectral play of reflection that enforces homogeneity and disarms resistance"²¹. In the aftermath of the Civil War, this "spectral play of reflection" constituted the background for the delineating of female bodily conduct, moulded on techniques of self-discipline which configured the female Spanish body as "bearer of value" (Shilling: 2006, 131). This process of homogenisation of human bodies as unified recognizable force (identified as *Nacionalcatolicismo*) was an ideological and practical process triggered by a political need of mass control happening in time and space. As the process of embodiment was transmitted to the Spanish woman by means of graphic and written propaganda of social norms and via the indoctrination of the *Sección Femenina's* teachings, the ensuing result provided information to agents as to the appearance the final product -the female body-required, by means of a process of education and self-discipline, to be identified as correct.

As such, the female body, a physical constitutive element of social groups and groupings, needed "a lengthy process of education before it could be fully accepted in society" (Shilling: 2006, 131). Her position at the centre of family life meant her body had no purpose until it was transformed into a "temple of temperance, order and emotional control" (Shilling: 2006, 23) by means of the educational process of the *Sección Femenina*. The building of a female body to match this censored identity was essentially based on how women -whose compulsory process of indoctrination was State orchestrated- were constantly displaced from the possibility of individual needs (academic, cultural, social, spiritual) towards an annihilation of the self; in itself a subject already lost due to the erasing process of historical memory initiated by Franco. Per se, at the core of the delineating process of a female censored identity by the *Sección Femenina* and by the principles of the *Nacionalcatolicismo* we find two objectives: the repression of any wish for emancipation across social, cultural and political fields and the censoring of any individual dissenting initiatives. Any woman whose actions contested hegemonic social definition and bodily conduct moulded on panoptic practice and compulsory self-discipline was systematically punished as a

²¹ JULIAN SMITH, Paul: *The Body Hispanic. Gender and Sexuality in Spanish and Spanish American Literature*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992, p. 163.

process of social stigmatization ensued. Stigma²² was endorsed to individuals because they belonged to a potentially dissenting social collective, delimiting the social group whose practice of identity differed from the institutionalised distinctiveness. Arguably, the noticeable reasons and consequences of stigma were actually defined by the *Sección Femenina* to discredit the corporeal and ideological discourse propagated and fostered by the Second Republic. Hence, the strength of the brutality encoded in the texts of the *Sección Femenina* promoted submission without the possibility of the right of choice in any form of semiotic practice (verbal, writing, expressive or interpretative), that aimed to build individualistic communicative exchange. This stance functioned in restricted conditions, as biological difference was reinforced by psychological education. In this context, any female agent functioning in a social space embodied political belief and dystopian rules that made the role, function, and preferences of the *Nacionalcatolicismo* lasting hegemonic force. Yet, the very nature of female identity functioning in time and space did contribute beyond the boundaries of a fixed archetype within the rigid process of socialization, as the universality found in the motive of meaning conducting her actions defined female identity in the shape of a corporeal body recognised by the Regime.

In a universe wherein passivity is fostered –as the position of censored female identities during the Dictatorship suggested- the idea of the individual reduced by the constraints imposed upon them is very closely related to the idea of agency: people can be constructive in the making of their own destinies. However, any degree of will in Spain was fully affected by the discontinuity found in the broken events and consequences of the Civil War. Hence, the censored identity found in the Spanish female bodies was a product not only of indoctrination, but also of endurance, and - to a huge proportion of the population - of survival. Yet, the main flaw of the Regime was to adjudicate arbitrarily the homogeneous *Nacionalcatolicismo's* values as essential component of Spanish identity at large, without realising that in any specific social phenomena –such as the managing of female bodies emerging from the defined groups and groupings forming the mosaic of zigzagging social life- imposed homogeneity and ideological sanitation of human agency made by force encourages, reinforces, and legitimates dissident positions developing in time and space.

Indeed, the legacy of the *Sección Femenina* and its *Flechas* in contemporary Spanish female identity is a controversial issue, as its legacy touches factors related to body, language, space, time, memory, and identity. In the aftermath of the Civil War, Spain accepted the practice of the institutionalised educational absolutism of the *Sección Femenina* and the *Nacionalcatolicismo's* unmovable qualities of discipline, atonement and punishment functioning across all fields. Elements that sanctioned the Spanish female social body, whose actions, dreams, beliefs and thoughts, became in turn, compelling, submissive, and -ultimately- invisible during nearly forty years of dictatorship.

²² In Goffman's terms. (Note: Shilling develops the scope of stigma in *The Body and Social Theory*, 2006, Chapters 4 and 7)