

"Roza Eskenazi" and "On the Island of Skyros," however, bring forth in unexpectedly positive formulations a theme present in Christianopoulos's work from the very beginning. In the former a truck driver from Corinth "moves Heaven and Earth" to locate the now impoverished and deranged Roza—in more fortunate days, before the Second World War, the singer had helped him out in some way or perhaps even had loved him—and takes care of her until her death. "All by himself he served and nursed her . . . he washed her, combed her hair, took her out for walks, and whenever he had to leave on long trips entrusted her to the women in the neighborhood. . . . When you hear such stories," concludes the narrator, "you gain faith in man" (p. 22). In the latter a girl, a foreign tourist, chooses to walk all night back to town with her Greek boyfriend—they had apparently made love in the countryside, then on the way back their motorcycle had been damaged—rather than to accept a ride with the narrator and his friend. Because of the late hour the narrator and his friend have not been able to make their "pilgrimage" to the grave of the English poet Rupert Brooke, but now they are struck with an equally revering admiration for the girl's love. In the work of Dinos Christianopoulos such faithfulness, whether to others or to oneself, is rarely depicted as leading to anything but a "catastrophe."

Rather than as turning points, however, these two cautiously optimistic stories should doubtless be viewed as adding but additional facets to the complex image of human love which Christianopoulos has been constructing in his work, poem by poem, story by story, over the past forty years. What the short narratives in *I rebetes tou downia* confirm, after the longer stories in *I kato volta* (1963/1980) and the prose poems in *Nekri piatsa* (1981/1983), is that Christianopoulos indeed is a master, not only of poetry, but also of prose. One is moved by the same stylistic simplicity, sometimes charming, sometimes brutal; by the same acute emotions; by the same forthright expression of the protagonist's desire—whether he be Hippokleides or the poet himself—"to be" when he is not able "to become."

O Silencio Redimido: a New Perspective on the Spanish Civil War

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The Spanish Civil War has been the theme or has appeared incidentally in many of the novels written in Spain during the last forty years. In Castilian literature, events of the Spanish civil conflict provide the background to numerous important novels such as Arturo Barea's *La forja de un rebelde* (1951), Ana María Matute's *Los hijos muertos* (1957), Juan Goytisolo's *Duelo en el paraíso* (1955) and José María Gironella's *Un millón de muertos* (1961). Galician literature also offers an interesting and fascinating novel, not as well known as the other works, but deserving of recognition: *O Silencio Redimido* (1976) by the Galician writer Silvio Santiago.¹ This novel develops the theme of the Spanish Civil War in a new and significant manner.

¹Silvio Santiago, *O Silencio Redimido* (Vigo: Galaxia, 1976). All references are to this edition; all translations are mine.

The structure of *O Silencio Redimido* is indeed unusual, and is used to project the writer's particular vision of the Spanish Civil War. The fictitious publisher was an acquaintance of the protagonist when both were in exile in Bogota. The latter had used the name of Carlos Aranda and had left Colombia when his true identity was revealed. Since he was falsely accused of being a *Falangista* spy, Carlos (he wishes to continue to be known by that name) writes his old friend from another Latin-American country enclosing his life story in two parts. This biographical account represents his vindication against the slanderous charge of which he was the victim. The first part of Carlos's papers describes his life from the time he leaves the jail of a small town in Galicia (in March 1937) until he departs from Lisbon to his Latin-American exile. This part of the novel reveals the typical difficulties of Republican sympathizers in a region controlled by Nationalist forces and their friends. Like many Spaniards who faced the same situation in real life, Carlos is assisted by a group of Portuguese sympathetic to the Loyalist cause. With their help, he is able to elude the Portuguese police who seek to return him and other exiles to Spain. *O Silencio Redimido* depicts vividly the dangerous situation of these Spaniards living in a country ruled by a rightist dictatorship which was cooperating with the Spanish Nationalists.

The story takes an unexpected turn when Carlos receives some final decisive help in leaving Portugal from a member of the Portuguese secret police. Alfredo Guerra, the agent, decides to help Carlos in exchange for the Spaniard's promise to assist him in getting out of Portugal once he has reached a safe destination. Guerra is a former Communist sympathizer who has been captured by the Portuguese police. Forced to serve as a spy in order to save his life, he has entered the secret police ranks because he wants to stop leading a double life. The situation from which he is trying to escape is ironic: "The Communists, to whom I feel the closest, consider me a despicable traitor. And rightly so. But the truth is that I still like them as much as before" (pp. 139-40). Since Guerra had wanted to know Carlos's real identity and background, Carlos gives him, before leaving Lisbon, a package containing the story of his life in Spain.

The same manuscript later appears as the second part of Carlos's complete biography. It gives details of the protagonist's early life until he is freed from jail in March 1937. *O Silencio Redimido* presents here not the heroic activist appearing in many other novels of the Civil War, but a mere Republican sympathizer who becomes disillusioned when the regime he has longed for becomes an imperfect reality: "The Republic finally arrived, became seriously ill and collapsed. I realized that something was dying inside of me, that the old longing for the Republic was more beautiful than the real thing, and I did not feel that pervasive happiness with the same intensity as the others" (p. 162). When the Nationalist forces take over the Galician city where he is living in July 1936, Carlos flees to his native village. He has always been apolitical and does not expect to have any problems. Nevertheless, he is arrested and sent to prison. Carlos's murder at the hands of Nationalist henchmen is only prevented by the timely intervention of a friend of his family. Months later, with good luck and through the persistence of his girlfriend and relatives, Carlos finally wins his release from prison.

The fictitious publisher's explanation for publishing Carlos's biography illuminates the novelist's intention and the particular vision of the Spanish Civil War represented by his novel. By publishing the manuscript, he redeems the silence of many unfortunate men who had not made their stories known. The fact that we never learn Carlos's real name is not mere chance, but is indeed related to the novelist's purpose of linking his story to the mass of anonymous sufferers of the war: "The two parts . . . serve to redeem the silence of many unfortunate men and women who did not make their sorrow public: the silence of so many people who were anonymously torn by heartbreaking anguish and who did not leave written

testimony of their painful experiences, because of lack of opportunity or capability" (p. 18).

One of the most important themes in *O Silencio Redimido*, and one that runs through all its pages, is the idea of silence. The title of the novel, "redeemed silence," is in itself significant. Alfredo Guerra's silence is redeemed by revealing the painful dilemma of idealistic youths captured by a repressive police force that compels them to choose between instant death and a life of degradation. Carlos's silence is redeemed by showing how an innocent man can be deprived capriciously of his freedom and basic human dignity during the lawless days of a civil war. The silence of many guiltless victims who suffer and die through senseless violence is redeemed in Carlos's account of their individual tragedies. Finally, in a symbolic manner, the collective sin brought forth by the war is redeemed by valiantly exposing its nefarious character.

The novel's structure also contributes effectively to presenting the novelist's vision. Chronology and reader enlightenment appear inversely related in Santiago's book. The reader arrives at a more complete understanding of the protagonist's personality and the way in which his destiny was forged by reading last the account of the first part of his life. The second part of the manuscript, although portraying events that precede those described in the first, narrates the most interesting and dramatic episodes in Carlos's life. The progressive increase in dramatic interest goes hand in hand with the progressive enlightenment of the reader.

O Silencio Redimido represents a notable achievement in the contemporary Galician novel as well as a new vision of the Spanish Civil War. Its protagonists are history's unsung victims, the unimportant, unheroic sacrificial lambs in a time of violent upheaval of the common rules of legal and civilized behavior. Ultimately, *O Silencio Redimido* is a quiet but dignified warning to avoid the depths of degradation, injustice, and cruelty brought forth by civil war.

A Failure to Love: A Note on F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Rich Boy"

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It has been argued that "In *The Great Gatsby*, as in 'The Rich Boy' written immediately after, Fitzgerald clung stubbornly to his point of view, the mature view of a disinterested observer gifted with an acute sense of the 'fundamental decencies'.¹" But on this point there are important differences between the novel and the short story. The unnamed narrator in "The Rich Boy" (1926) is far less involved with Anson Hunter than Nick Carraway is with *Gatsby*, and also less critical and more indulgent towards the hero. The distance between author and narrator is greater in the story than in the novel, so that there is more room for the author's point of view than in the novel, where Nick's perspective is dominant.

¹James E. Miller, *F. Scott Fitzgerald: His Art and His Technique* (New York: New York University Press, 1964), p. 118.