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**NATIONAL IDENTITY IN POLITICAL SONG  
DURING THE SPANISH TRANSITION: VÍCTOR  
MANUEL, ANA BELÉN, JOAQUÍN SABINA.**

**ESTHER PÉREZ VILLALBA**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
of The Nottingham Trent University for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

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## ABSTRACT

Spain saw the birth of an important anti-Francoist politically oriented musical genre at the beginning of the 60s. Such a genre was labelled as *canción protesta* and *canción de autor* while its authors/singers/performers were popularly known as *cantautores* and *cantantes políticos*. These singers, who were often associated with socialism or communism, consolidated their popular status later in the 60s, and particularly in the 70s, especially among (politically committed) left-wing audiences. *Cantautores* defied censorship in order to communicate their pro-democracy political message through their work. Their songs, however, were much more than statements for political democracy: often they also constituted attempts to create new versions of the Spanish nation and national identity that would suit the changing historical circumstances and their democratic dream. This thesis explores such a politics of identity in works by popular male singer-songwriters Víctor Manuel and Joaquín Sabina and in those by well-known female political singer Ana Belén between the years 1968 and 1982. It examines the connections that existed between their works and the broader Spanish context of the Transition to democracy. It also explores the representations of Spanish national identity – with special reference to gender differences – that appeared in their texts between 1968 and 1982. It compares the relationship that existed between representations of the nation and national identity in their musical work and Francoist notions of Spain and Spanishness as constructed in different hegemonic discourses. Finally, this thesis examines some of the most relevant roles that Spanish *canción de autor/a*, *cantautores* and *cantantes políticos* fulfilled at the time of the Transition, especially among different anti-Francoist collectives.

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# INTRODUCTION

## CONTEXT

Francoist Spain saw the birth of an important anti-Francoist – mainly left-wing - politically-committed musical genre at the beginning of the sixties. Such a genre received different names. For example, it was often labelled as “canción protesta” (“protest song”) and “canción de autor” (“singer-songwriting”) and its authors, singers and/or performers were usually popularly known as “cantautores” and “cantantes políticos” (Torrego Egido, 1999: 42, 43; González Lucini, 1998: 32). As its very name indicates, singer-songwriting was often associated with musical authorship and creation, and frequently *cantautores* wrote the lyrics and/or composed the music of the songs that they later performed (Torrego Egido, 1999: 44). This was not always the case, however. In fact, different scholars note that giving a rigorous definition of what *canción de autor* entailed is rather difficult (Torrego Egido, 1999: 44). Moreover, there are no completely satisfactory terms to denote the realities to which *canción de autor*, *cantautor*, *canción política* and *cantante político* referred (González Lucini, 1998: 32). The definitional complexities and terminological limitations of all these words should not be taken as a drawback, however, but rather as a sign of the plurality, diversity and richness that characterized the *canción de autor* of the time (Torrego Egido, 1999: 17). This thesis will therefore avoid terminological and definitional controversies and will continue to use all these terms to refer to the musical genre and artists under study here - with an important difference: it will draw attention to the gender dimension of the terms, for they seemed to equate singer-

songwriting and political singers with 'maleness'. Therefore, in this thesis *canCIÓN de autor/a*, and *cantante político/a*, for example, which are sensitive to both the masculine and feminine gender, will be systematically used.

Generally speaking, these – often left-wing - pro-democracy *cantautores* and *cantantes políticos* were well-known in the sixties but became especially popular in the seventies. This happened throughout Spain, including in those peripheral areas of the Spanish state which were especially restrained by Francoism because of their nationalist aspirations (e.g. Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia); in fact, these areas contributed significantly to this musical genre's development and success and were cradles of, for example, important movements and artists that became icons of the genre.

*Cantautores* and *cantantes políticos* defied censorship in order to communicate their political messages – for democracy and freedom - through their musical work. Their songs, however, were overall much more than statements for political democracy. Many of them were born out of the need to create a new Spain able to consider the crucial historical circumstances of change and progress that the country was experiencing at many different levels at the time. In fact, as this thesis will show, many of these songs seemed to respond to the country's need for creating new versions of the Spanish nation and national identity during the transition from dictatorship to democracy in Spain.

## SUBJECTS OF RESEARCH

In this scenario of the Transition male singer-songwriters Víctor Manuel and Joaquín Sabina, from Asturias and Andalucía respectively, and the female political singer Ana Belén - from Madrid - made their appearance and became very well-known<sup>1</sup>. This thesis will be devoted to the study of these three artists and their work. It will explore their politics on nation and national identity as shown mainly in their musical works during the Transition period to democracy. The particular choice of artists adopted here responds to a number of reasons. It initially obeyed a question of personal taste: I am a fan of these three artists. More importantly, they were chosen because they were very well-known during the Transition period, and especially in the mid to late 70s and early 80s. In fact, they were some of the most popular ones among those politically committed artists who sang in Spanish (in “castellano”). As Sierra i Fabra noted (2000), for example, “la generación de los setenta tuvo en Víctor Manuel y Ana Belén a su pareja oficial” (“the generation of the 70s had in Víctor Manuel and Ana Belén its official couple”). This choice of artists also aimed to allow the examination of the works of male and female artists, which seemed a more democratic option than exploring only songs of male artists or female ones. These three artists were also chosen because they allowed space for difference in other interesting ways – in terms of career dates, authorship, and musical style, for example. This variation seemed appealing in order to explore whether or not - and if so how - these differences affected their particular constructions of Spain and Spanishness.

Víctor Manuel was chosen for his relevance and popularity in the scenario of the *canCIÓN de autor/a* of the Transition, and because he started his serious musical career

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<sup>1</sup> For practical purposes here I will often refer to these singers as Víctor, Ana and Sabina, respectively, as they were – and are – usually known as such in Spain.

quite early in time (1968). Unlike Joaquín Sabina and Ana Belén, he seemed to respond in some ways to a fairly ‘traditional’ and conventional image of the Spanish *cantautor* of the Transition. Ana Belén, who released her first album in 1973, was chosen because she was one of the best-known female singers of the time. She was not a singer-songwriter in a strict etymological sense, but rather a political singer: she did not write or compose her own songs, but sang other people’s songs instead. This should not be seen as problematic for this research, however - some of the singer-songwriters who were described as epitomes of the genre were not always best-known for songs that they wrote themselves; some of them were better known for their musical versions of poems, or for singing other authors’ songs (e.g. Paco Ibáñez and many of his songs from *Paco Ibáñez en el Olympia* - 1969). It should also be noted that many of Ana Belén’s songs were written expressly for her. Moreover, this singer was the author - or at least co-author - of her songs in the sense that she performed them and provided them with specific meanings. She is also relevant here because she was a very significant public figure at the time, and this research is interested in exploring the role and significance of these artists as public performers of politically-committed songs, as symbols and icons of cultural and socio-political anti-Francoist resistance. Joaquín Sabina was chosen because he was different from Víctor Manuel and Ana Belén in interesting ways. He started his musical career in Spain significantly later than the other two artists – in 1978. Moreover, he was a transitional figure who stood between the *canción de autor/a* of the Transition and the musical trends of the *movida madrileña*. He soon became “el mejor representante en España del cantautor eléctrico norteamericano” (“the best representative of the electric North-American singer-songwriter in Spain” (Uribe, 1987)<sup>2</sup>; he was “el puente ibérico entre la rebeldía

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<sup>2</sup> In <http://guitarra.net/sabina/cronica.htm> [Accessed 5th July 2003]. Similar views are offered by

de la canción de autor que puso la banda sonora al final de la dictadura y el despertar creativo del pop español a principios de los ochenta” (“the Iberian bridge between the rebelliousness of the *canción de autor* that played the soundtrack of the end of the dictatorship and the creative awakening of the Spanish pop of the beginning of the 80s”)<sup>3</sup>.

### AIMS OF RESEARCH

This project will deal with the Spanish Transition and with the Spanish *canción de autor/a* of the Transition – mainly through an analysis of the works and lives of the artists mentioned in the previous section (i.e. Víctor Manuel, Ana Belén and Joaquín Sabina). The main aims of this thesis are the following: first, to examine and understand what the Spanish Transition was and entailed at different levels, as well as highlight some of the most relevant agents that participated in this transitional process to democracy in Spain. This thesis is especially interested in examining the connections that existed between this historical period of contemporary Spain and the *canción de autor/a* and *canción política* at the time. This research project also aims to explore the representations of Spanish national identity – with special reference to gender differences – that appeared in different texts by singer-songwriters Víctor Manuel and Joaquín Sabina and political singer Ana Belén between 1968 and 1982. A third related aim of this investigation points to the need to compare representations of the nation and national identity in texts by the given artists and Francoist notions of Spain and Spanishness as constructed in different hegemonic discourses. Finally, this thesis aims to consider reception issues concerning *canción de autor/a* and

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Turtós and Bonet (1998: 79, 80), and in Menéndez Flores (2001: 62).

<sup>3</sup> In <http://www.mp3.lolatio.com/joaquinsabina.html> [Accessed 15th December 2001].

*cantautores* of the Transition. It is concerned with the examination of the responses of audiences to gendered discourses on national identity in this musical genre. It also finally aims to explore and analyse some of the most relevant social and political roles that Spanish *canción de autor/a*, *cantautores* and *cantantes políticos* fulfilled in Spain at the time of the Transition, especially among some anti-Francoist collectives.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Theoretically speaking this thesis is informed throughout by Gramsci's ideas on the relationship between politics, culture and education, and other related issues (Gramsci, 1971, 1985, 1988, 1999). It is also informed throughout by a feminist position that has framed all the research carried out and presented here. Such a position has drawn different elements from various feminist trends (Tong, 1989); it is especially importantly informed by some post-structuralist feminist concerns and theories (Riley, 1988; Butler, 1993, 1990). In its analysis of the concepts of nation, nationalism and national identity this thesis adopts a constructionist theoretical framework. It claims that nations are human constructions, rather than natural and necessary entities (Anderson, 1991; Gellner, 1994a, 1994b; Billig, 1995; Fox, 1998; Fusí, 2000), and that nationality, nation-ness and nationalism are cultural artefacts (Anderson, 1991: 4). It also claims that gender and sexuality play a crucial role in the formation of these very complex categories of nation and national identity at many different levels and that these should be therefore examined (Yuval-Davies and Anthias, 1989; Yuval-Davies, 1997; Mosse, 1985; Parker et al. 1992; Johnson, 1993). This thesis similarly embraces a constructionist theoretical framework in other important respects. For example, in its approach to history, which is influenced by

Ricoeur's (1981) and Johnson's (2001) theories, as well as in its views on the meaning of music and song: this thesis adopts an ethnomusicological position and claims that the meaning of music and songs does not reside fully in the musical texts themselves, but is rather greatly socially and contextually constructed (Blacking, 1973; Longhurst, 1995; Frith, 1996; Negus, 1996; Swiss, Sloop and Herman, 1998; Stock, 2003a, 2003b). This constructionist theoretical framework is also embraced in the audience reception part of the thesis, which emphasises that ethnographic knowledge is always mediated and constructed, rather than neutrally reflected and transmitted (Oakley, 1981; Stanley and Wise, 1993; Haraway, 1991).

## **ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS**

The specific organisation of this thesis aims to show the mental processes that I underwent as a researcher as the project developed, and the logic behind these experienced processes. It is divided into three main parts and has eight chapters in total. Both Part I and Part II have got three chapters each, while Part III is made up of two chapters.

Part I of the thesis sets out the theoretical, contextual, and methodological basis of the investigation as a whole. Chapter One considers different theoretical issues that inform the development of the following chapters. It first discusses the adequacy of adopting a Gramscian theoretical framework for the study of the Spanish Transition, of the *canción de autor/a* of the time, and of the existing connections between the two. It also highlights my decision to adopt a feminist perspective throughout the whole thesis. It then goes on to suggest that *canción de autor/a* could be studied as a

cultural practice that helped in the construction of the Spanish nation and national identity at the time of the Transition. Chapter Two considers the context of research of this thesis in light of the theoretical tools presented in Chapter One. It reflects on the conceptual and chronological boundaries of the Spanish Transition and pays attention to some of the anti-Francoist pressure fronts that acted as agents in the democratisation of Spain. Special emphasis is placed on singer-songwriting and political singers as cultural pro-democracy agents. Chapter Three pays attention to research methodology considering the theoretical discussions offered in Chapter One and the specific context of research presented in Chapter Two. It reflects on the adequacy of choosing historical contextualisation, song analysis and research on audience reception as investigative methods and, ultimately, as means to achieve the aims of research of this thesis. It also considers in detail different epistemological and practical issues concerning the use of these three research methods in the specific context of research of this thesis.

Part II, which is made up of three song analysis chapters, constitutes the core of this thesis. This second part of the project explores how the works by Víctor Manuel, Ana Belén and Joaquín Sabina addressed the need to create (a) new Spanish nation(s) and national identity(/ies) through their works between 1968 and 1982. These three chapters focus on the issues that they addressed in their songs, as well as on the evolution that these underwent between the years 1968 and 1982. Gender representations are especially considered in all these song analysis chapters. Chapter Four explores representations of history and considers its significance as a nation-building element in their songs at the time of the Transition. It also examines in some detail how Spanish singer-songwriters and political singers more generally

approached the complex multi-national and multi-regional nature of the Spanish state. Chapter Five analyses constructions of class and pays attention to the importance of this category in the construction of the Spanish nation and national identity in the works by the three artists under study here. It also examines briefly some of the implications behind these three singers' stress on formal education. Chapter Six turns to consider love and sexuality in these artists' works mainly – but not exclusively – as constructed in their love songs. Issues of gender are especially significant and conspicuous in this sixth chapter and are therefore examined in detail. These three song analysis chapters also place special attention on the critical examination of the differences and similarities that existed between these artists' versions of Spain and Spanishness and those of Francoist hegemonic discourses of the time.

Part II of this thesis is complemented by the ethnographic-based audience research carried out with real audiences of *canción de autor/a* of the Transition and presented in Part III. Chapter Seven focuses on the audiences' responses offered in relation to the gender dimension of Víctor Manuel's, Ana Belén's and Joaquín Sabina's public *personae*. It also concentrates on the respondents' views on representations of gender and sexuality as they saw it in this musical genre more generally at the time of the Transition. Finally, Chapter Eight reflects on the specific peculiarities and relevance of the three singers as politically-committed artists of the Spanish Transition. This chapter, which is essential to answer one of the key questions of this thesis, also considers a more general level: it explores some of the ways in which Spanish singer-songwriting and political singers as a whole were relevant and influential during the Transition period, especially among some circles. Special emphasis is placed on their

socio-political roles, impact and significance as it showed in the ethnographic-informed fieldwork undertaken.

**PART I**

**THEORY, CONTEXT, AND METHOD OF  
RESEARCH**

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **THEORISING THE NATION: GRAMSCI, FEMINISM AND POPULAR AGENCY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This first chapter sets the theoretical basis of this thesis. In order to do so, it borrows some key concepts and ideas from the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937). It also highlights the need to democratise Gramsci's theories through the addition of a feminist perspective that was generally absent in his writings. Following on the theories and arguments noted above, I suggest that *canCIÓN de autor/a* may be studied as a cultural factor that contributed to the re-construction of Spanish national identity at the time of the Transition. Finally, I discuss the theoretical stance adopted in this thesis regarding issues of the nation, nationalism and national identity.

### **GRAMSCI'S THEORIES, THE SPANISH TRANSITION, AND SPANISH SINGER-SONGWRITING AND POLITICAL SINGERS**

Gramsci's theories have been used in a good number of Cultural Studies-based works (Labanyi, 2002: 17; Herman, Swiss and Sloop, 1998: 5; Strinati, 1995, 160). In the field of popular music studies particularly, Gramsci's theories have been re-appropriated by a number of scholars. For example, outside Spain, Watson (1983: 52, 57) and Mattern (1998: 26) have explicitly made use of a Gramscian theoretical framework and have applied it to the study of popular music texts in different national

contexts. In Spain, Gramsci has found a follower in Torrego Egido (1999). This scholar's research on Spanish *canción de autor* between 1960 and 1980 is broadly embedded within a Gramscian model (1999: 137-139), although most of the time this is not explicitly stated. Here different Gramscian concepts and ideas - many of them not considered by Torrego Egido or even Mattern - will be introduced in an attempt to understand and explain theoretically this thesis' research topic and context.

A number of broad similarities become apparent when comparing Gramsci's life, ideas and the historical context that he experienced, with the lives, experiences and history of the research subjects and the socio-political context under study here. For example, Gramsci lived in a country ruled by Fascism (Forgacs in Gramsci, 1999: 20), while the subjects of research also experienced the hardships of a dictatorial regime - Franco's dictatorship, in this case. The philosopher lived through a period of socio-economic and political turmoil, which made him a theorist of transition, of change, of crisis, of 'revolution' (Forgacs in Gramsci, 1999: 30). He saw himself as living through "a preparatory phase, of transition [...] a phase of agitation [...] and organization" (Gramsci, 1999: 140). Similarly, the Spanish Transition was a period that witnessed the materialisation of crucial changes of various kinds; like Gramsci's Italy, the Spain of the Transition was characterised by severe labour conflicts, by the strengthening of the labour movement, as well as by an unprecedented increase in strike action (Forgacs in Gramsci, 1999: 76), for example. Moreover, Gramsci was a theorist and political activist of the political left (Forgacs in Gramsci, 1999: 29), just like the singer-songwriters studied here.

The Italian philosopher may be of great interest here especially because of his theory of agency and other related issues. He is also extremely relevant because, as Forgacs notes, issues of education and culture were always central to his thought (Gramsci, 1999: 53). It should be noted, however, that Gramsci did not conceive of culture in a traditional elitist way. While he considered both 'popular' and more 'high-class' artistic artefacts to be manifestations of culture - e.g. all types of literature, and folklore (Gramsci, 1999: 324) -, he also understood culture in a broader, much more complex way. He stressed that "we need to free ourselves from [...] seeing culture as encyclopaedic knowledge, and *men* as mere receptacles to be stuffed full of empirical data" (Gramsci, 1999: 56-7) [emphasis added; the neglecting of the feminine gender should be noted]. He highlighted that, instead, a more complex, critical, wide-ranging approach to culture needs to be adopted, for culture is anything involving and comprising a "set of standards", "psychology", and "ways of feeling, thinking and living" (Gramsci, 1985: 41). It is, among other things, the

organization, discipline of one's inner self, a coming to terms with one's own personality; it is the attainment of a higher awareness, with the aid of which one succeeds in understanding one's own historical value, one's own function in life, one's own rights and obligations (Gramsci, 1999: 57).

This broad notion of culture should be borne in mind at all times because it will inform many of the ideas presented in the coming paragraphs - and throughout this thesis. Thus, while 'culture' and 'cultural' will sometimes be used here in their narrow sense in order to refer to cultural/artistic practices like *canCIÓN de autor/a*, they will also be used in their broader sense, with the meanings expressed in the above quotations.

I now turn to examine some of those specific Gramscian ideas and concepts that are used by this thesis; namely, 'agency', "hegemony", 'counter-hegemony', the

“national popular”, “intellectuals”, “organicism”, “philosophy”, “common sense”, “passive revolution”, “war of position”, and “war of manoeuvre”. In his texts Gramsci identifies agency with active work. As he puts it, an agent is “a historical person, a protagonist”, somebody who “is no longer resisting but [...] [is] necessarily active and taking the initiative” (Gramsci, 1999: 336-7). In Gramsci’s view, (collective) agency is necessary in order to achieve “hegemony”. This term, a very complex concept, covers different nuances of meaning in the different writings by Gramsci (Forgacs in Gramsci, 1999: 423). Overall, it often refers to “political leadership” (Gramsci, 1999: 194). This political leadership expressed by hegemony is achieved through “coercion” and, more importantly, through “consent in the life and activities of the state and civil society” (Gramsci, 1999: 194). In other words, the achievement and exercise of hegemony entails the presence of agents using brute force or “domination” (Gramsci, 1999: 224) but also, and more crucially, granting concessions of various kinds to the groups and collectives under their command (Gramsci, 1999: 211, 306; Williams, 1977: 108, 110). Such concessions help the hegemonic power and dominant agents to perpetuate themselves (Gramsci, 1999: 307). Hegemony, however, “is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own” (Williams, 1977: 112). In fact, the existence of hegemonic forces often presupposes the presence of ‘counter-hegemonic’ powers and agents; of opposing forces that challenge the hegemonic discourses and dominion (Williams, 1977: 113). In Gramsci’s writings counter-hegemony seems to be more than ‘resistance’, for the latter is merely a corporate strategy, rather than a hegemonic one. Counter-hegemony is indeed more radical; it aims to become capable of governing and in order to do so it “must strip itself of every residue of corporatism” (Gramsci, 1999: 174); it must

transcend corporate limits “and can and must become the interests of other subordinate groups” (Gramsci, 1999: 205).

It is significant that, in the West, “it is in the concept of hegemony that those exigencies which are national in character are knotted together” (Gramsci, 1999: 231). In fact, the national is often an aspect of hegemony, and achieving hegemonic power in a particular setting usually involves working successfully at the level of the national. As Gramsci puts it, managing to forge a national-popular alliance, “a strong popular or national political movement from below”, is essential to achieve political leadership (1999: 367). In this context the notion of “the national-popular” proves especially significant. This is because being national implies being popular; being successful in addressing large numbers of people – Gramsci equates the people with the nation (1999: 367). The successful creation of a national-popular movement capable of reaching hegemony involves the agents’ deep knowledge and understanding of the nation’s – of the people’s – “needs, aspirations and feelings” (Gramsci, 1999: 367). As Gramsci puts it, those agents that manage to create a national–popular alliance or culture are those that have managed to satisfy

the intellectual needs of the people precisely because they have [...] known how to elaborate a modern ‘humanism’ able to reach right to the simplest and most uneducated classes, as was necessary from the national point of view (1999: 369).

In Gramsci’s view, culture plays a crucial role in the construction of the national-popular. As he notes, cultural practices and authors are agents that can contribute importantly to the critical enlightenment of the masses. This enlightenment marked by the acquisition of culture is necessary to change the pattern of socio-political and economic organization structuring a certain historical context at a certain time

(Gramsci, 1999: 57, 70). In fact, when exercising hegemony, the cultural front necessarily goes alongside the economic and political ones (Gramsci, 1999: 194).

Therefore, any group attempting to reach a hegemonic status,

[t]ogether with the problem of gaining political and economic power, [...] must also face the problem of winning intellectual power. Just as it has thought of organizing itself politically and economically, it must also think about organizing itself culturally. (Gramsci, 1999: 70)

In other words, the creation and successful implementation of a new political order “presupposes the formation of a new set of standards, a new psychology, new ways of feeling, thinking and living” (Gramsci, 1985: 41)<sup>4</sup>; it presupposes the creation of a new culture, both in its narrow and broader sense. In fact, in Gramsci’s view (1999: 58), “every revolution has been preceded by an intense labour of criticism, by the diffusion of culture and the spread of ideas amongst masses of *men*” [emphasis added]. Therefore, the cultural factors that help individuals to prepare mentally for the arrival of these socio-political shifts deserve full attention and should not be underestimated (Gramsci, 1988: 58).

Those cultural elements that trigger “rebellion and social reconstruction” do so through the raising of a consciousness which was achieved thanks to “intelligent reflection, at first by just a few people and later by a whole class” (Gramsci, 1999: 57-8). Those individuals who first reflect critically upon their situation and that of fellow class members as historical persons are what Gramsci calls “intellectuals”. This term, another very important concept in Gramsci’s philosophy, is especially interesting here. Gramsci importantly revised and expanded traditional notions of the intellectual to adopt a much more democratic understanding of the term. In Gramsci’s view, “all

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<sup>4</sup> In Gramsci’s text, ‘a new political order’ actually stands for the “proletariat revolution” and the implementation of the “philosophy of praxis” or Communism. As Strinati notes, however, although Gramsci’s theories tend “to be applied to class struggles,” they have been welcomed in other contexts because they can “be applied to other arenas of conflict” (1995: 174), as it happens in this research.

*men* are intellectuals [...] but not all *men* have in society the function of intellectuals” (Gramsci, 1999: 304) [emphasis added]. According to this philosopher, the function of intellectuals is that of being “organizers and leaders” (1999: 334), and “[t]he mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, [...] but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organizer, ‘permanent persuader’ and not just a simple orator” (Gramsci, 1999: 321).

In this context the Gramscian concept of “organicism” also deserves attention. In his writings, Gramsci uses the term organicism to refer to the quality of intellectuals that makes them part of the organic structure of a social group; organicism makes them intrinsic to the organization and ‘normal’ development of any collective (Gramsci, 1999: 306). As Gramsci puts it, it is central to see “the distinction between intellectuals as an organic category of every fundamental social group and intellectuals as a traditional category” (1999: 309). The latter, embodied by “traditional intellectuals” such as, for example, ecclesiastics, “scholars and scientists, theorists” and “the *man* of letters” (Gramsci, 1971: 7, 9) [emphasis added], fallaciously present themselves as independent from all social groups (Gramsci, 1971: 1). Regardless of their own class origins and background, however, traditional intellectuals are often attached to current hegemonic socio-political and economic groups and are therefore organic to the needs and interests of those hegemonic collectives. In this context, the concept of “organic intellectual” becomes especially significant. According to Gramsci, organic intellectuals are those who articulate coherently and philosophically the ideas and interests of those very groups (social class) to which they belong, represent and/or sympathise/identify with (Gramsci, 1971: 339). They serve the purposes and needs of that group; they make it

homogeneous and give it an awareness of its own function in the political, social and economic spheres (Gramsci, 1971: 5). Intellectuals organic to the needs of particular collectives help the individuals belonging to those collectives to become intellectually autonomous. This is essential because, as stated earlier in different words, intellectual autonomy is necessary in order to reach hegemony and act as a ruling class (Forgacs in Gramsci, 1999: 53). As Gramsci put it

[o]ne of the most important characteristics of any group that is developing towards dominance is its struggle to assimilate and to conquer 'ideologically' the traditional intellectuals, but this assimilation and conquest is made quicker and more efficacious the more the group in question succeeds in simultaneously elaborating its own organic intellectuals (1999: 304-5).

In Gramsci's view then intellectuals organic to a particular group are important because they can decisively participate in the creation of a new "philosophy" that coherently justifies the needs and interests of that particular collective (1999: 348). In other words, the relevance of organic intellectuals derives from their potential to become elaborators of a new "conception of the world"; from their philosophical activity, which potentially gets involved in a cultural battle capable of transforming people's mentality by presenting philosophical innovations as universal givens (Gramsci, 1999: 325). This is plausible because "'spontaneous philosophy' is proper to everybody" and "all *men* are philosophers" (Gramsci, 1999: 325) [emphasis added], and because philosophy - the different conceptions of the world -, is embedded, for example, in language itself, in popular religion and in "common sense".

In opposition to philosophy, which is homogeneous, systematic and coherent (Gramsci, 1999: 343), common sense refers to "the diffuse, unco-ordinated features of a generic form of thought common to a particular period and a particular popular

environment” (Gramsci, 1999: 331-2). It refers to those truths that have been uncritically accepted by the people as unequivocally right and natural but which are rather fragmented and incoherent. In Gramsci’s own words, common sense is

the conception of the world which is uncritically absorbed by the various social and cultural environments in which the moral individuality of the average *man* is developed [...] It is the ‘folklore’ of philosophy [...] and [i]ts most fundamental characteristic is that it is a conception which [...] is fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential (1999: 343) [emphasis added].

In spite of its fragmentary condition, common sense is important because a certain philosophy - a certain coherent and homogeneous conception of the world -, can only succeed when it manages to act satisfactorily at the common sense level (Gramsci, 1999: 332). A new philosophy

[f]irst of all, [...] must be a criticism of ‘common sense’, basing itself initially, however, on common sense in order to demonstrate that ‘everyone’ is a philosopher and that it is not a question of introducing from scratch a scientific form of thought into everyone’s individual life, but of renovating and making ‘critical’ an already existing activity (1999: 332).

It is the intellectuals’ responsibility then to connect new philosophies to practical life so that they become common sense truths but retain the coherence of philosophy (Gramsci, 1999: 332). By working at the common sense level, intellectuals organic to a particular collective can create a new philosophy, a new coherent and homogeneous conception of the world that may serve the needs of that collective. This new philosophy may ultimately bring about a “war of manoeuvre”, a “passive revolution”, or a “war of position”. War of manoeuvre or movement involves a violent frontal attack on the state (Gramsci, 1999: 228). The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 exemplifies well this type of revolution (Gramsci, 1999: 229). Passive revolutions often occur peacefully, but they also involve socio-economic and/or political changes. Unlike wars of manoeuvre, however, passive revolutions do not involve major shifts;

rather, they are strategies of containment. They often reinforce “the hegemonic system and the forces of military and civil coercion at the disposal of the traditional ruling classes” (Gramsci, 1999: 267). This is so because they are often managed from above (Gramsci, 1999: 267). In Gramsci’s view, 19<sup>th</sup> century liberalism and 20<sup>th</sup> century fascism exemplify well this notion of passive revolution (1999: 266, 267). Like war of manoeuvre, war of position ultimately involves deep socio-political and economic shifts (Forgacs in Gramsci, 1999: 223). However, war of position also differs from war of manoeuvre in crucial ways. A war of position “is not, in reality, constituted simply by the actual trenches, but by the whole organizational and industrial system which lies to the rear of the army in the field” (Gramsci, 1999: 226). In Gramsci’s view, war of position is of special potential in the West (1999: 229), where civil society has become a very complex structure (1999: 227). This is because war of position involves non-violent counter-hegemonic activity; it entails working with the people (Gramsci, 1999: 230), with civil society institutions; it demands non-violent ideological struggle and the building of a mass democratic movement (Forgacs in Gramsci, 1999: 223) in order to achieve hegemony.

Considering all the theoretical issues addressed here, a number of crucial interrelated questions arise when approaching this thesis’ context, topic and research aims. For example, could the Spanish Transition be seen as a war of manoeuvre, as a war of position, or merely as a passive revolution? What agents – if any - worked to constitute counter-hegemonic fronts at the time? Did anti-Francoist agents seek to create a new hegemony, expanding on the basis of a wider version of the people, for example, or did they simply aim to achieve a corporate defence? Given the potential socio-political relevance of cultural manifestations, what was the actual importance of

singer-songwriting at the time of the Transition? To what extent and in what ways was this musical genre a counter-hegemonic force? If political singing and singer-songwriting were important then, why, who for, and in what ways? Could the Spanish singer-songwriters of the time be called intellectuals in the Gramscian sense? If so, who were they organic to, whose needs and interests did they (aim to) serve? Did they actually contribute to the elaboration of a new philosophy or coherent conception of the world for Spain at the time? If so, in what ways was it counter-hegemonic in relation to Francoist discourses? How far did singer-songwriters want to go in their counter-hegemonic transgressions? Did they successfully bring to the fore the constructedness of well-established Francoist common sense truths? If so, what hegemonic common sense truths did they deconstruct? What alternative, counter-hegemonic realities did they help to become common sense truths, if any? To what extent did they manage to work successfully at the national-popular level? Did this musical genre and authors/performers become part of the cultural baggage of the national-popular in the Spain of the Transition? Did any of their – perhaps counter-hegemonic - claims become hegemonic? This thesis will address and develop – and hopefully answer satisfactorily and in depth - these and other related questions that emerged as the investigation proceeded.

### **ADDING A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**

In spite of their enlightening potential, Gramsci's theories are overall rather problematic from a feminist perspective. As noted earlier, Gramsci only seems to consider the masculine gender in his writings. He systematically addresses men, rather than men and women, and the referents of his writings are most often male.

This linguistic male-centeredness points to a deeper more serious neglecting of women and femininities in his works. Strictly speaking, it implies, for example, a continuous absence of women in the world of politics. Women are not present in his writings and therefore there are no references to female intellectuals, for instance. Consequently, women's role as (revolutionary) political agents is also neglected. At a deeper related level, Gramsci can be also criticised for his narrow approach to hegemony, for example. He is especially concerned with class and its triggering potential in the struggle for hegemony. He seems to forget, however, that gender is also decisive in this respect, for hegemony is not only a class issue. It is also inevitably gendered. Thus, while Gramsci supports the achievement of working class hegemony, the new working class leadership that he envisages is still conceived in exclusively masculine and male-centred terms. In fact, in Gramsci's writings, this new working-class hegemony still seems to contribute to the maintenance of male hegemony to the detriment of women and femininities. The same could be said about Gramsci's understanding of organicity and the national-popular, for example. They have an important and complex gender dimension that he – either consciously or not – neglected and systematically equated with and reduced to the masculine gender.

Feminist theory offers the tools to overcome Gramsci's male-centeredness. Among other things, adopting a feminist perspective implies locating theoretically the subjects who are being studied and whose interests are being defended by feminism. Traditionally, feminism has fought for the defence of women, a label which was considered for long as conceptually unproblematic. However, recent theoretical debates have questioned the conceptual validity of the apparently innocuous and simple categories of "woman" and "women". Some feminist scholars have noted that

these labels are both inadequate and “troublesome” (Butler, 1990: 3), for they refer to anything but stable, natural essences<sup>5</sup>. As Riley (1988) and Butler (1990: 5, 10) put it, these categories are “historically, discursively constituted” (Butler, 1990: 2), and “there is very little agreement after all on what constitutes, or ought to constitute, the category of women” (Butler, 1990: 1). Both “woman” and “women” mark “a dense intersection of social relations that cannot be summarized through the terms of identity” (Butler, 1993: 218). They are contextually produced in the very interaction taking place between a myriad of interrelated categories such as nationality, gender, sexuality, class, age, and religion. As a result, it seems impossible to separate the category “women” “from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained” (Butler, 1990: 3). In fact, while collectivities operate through a gender order, this is variable in form. Therefore, this thesis will refer to “femininities”, to the context-situated deployment of different femininities (and masculinities) – some of which will be hegemonic or counter-hegemonic, for example -, and will not make use of an essentialist understanding of “woman”.

Behind this questioning of essentialist understandings of “woman” lays what Tong (1989: 217) calls a postmodern feminist position – just like there are different femininities, “feminist theory is not one, but many” (Tong, 1989: 1)<sup>6</sup>. According to Tong (1989: 174), one of the distinctive characteristics of postmodern feminists is their stress on the fact that women’s experiences differ across national, class, and

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<sup>5</sup> Fuss notes that the category “women” has not only been naturalised by society in general, but also by some feminist circles. As she highlights, some feminist trends seem “to take for granted among its members a shared unity, some special point of commonality” (1989: 23-4). Similar observations are supported by Butler (1993: 188, 191; 1990: 1).

<sup>6</sup> Tong herself believes that the boundaries existent between different feminisms - liberal, Marxist, radical, social, psychoanalytic, etc - are not always so clear. In fact, their limits are often rather artificial and far from clear-cut. “But even as we recognize that these categories can be both limiting and distorting, I continue to believe that they serve a useful analytic purpose” (Tong, 1989: 8).

cultural lines, for example. The feminist perspective adopted here, however, does not only draw on some postmodern feminist stances. It is also informed by my own personal experiences as a young Spanish feminist woman. It similarly arises from my reading of different feminist literature, as well as from the consideration of its applicability to this thesis and its specific context of research. Thus, this research borrows some concerns from liberal feminism, for example. This branch of feminism is seen as empowering here and some of its tenets are welcomed because liberal feminism is especially concerned with women's rights and with the "customary and legal constraints that blocks women's entrance and/or success in the so-called public world" (Tong, 1989: 2). Its emphasis on legal equality gives liberal feminism special groundbreaking relevance in the context of the Spanish Transition. Some issues especially addressed by socialist feminism are also taken on board here: for example, the need to explore the complex interaction taking place between gender and class (Tong, 1989: 173). Finally, this thesis will place special emphasis on gender-aware approaches to sexuality, this being an area especially covered by different radical feminist groups (Tong, 1989: 41, 71).

## **THE SPANISH NATION AND NATIONAL IDENTITY DURING THE TRANSITION: A FEMINIST GRAMSCIAN APPROACH**

As Smith stresses (1991: vii), nations, national identity and nationalism are not simply "an ideology or form of politics". These categories are frequently incorporated in different cultural practices and texts (Hobsbawn, 1994), and this is often done in a "banally mundane way [...] [in] the familiar terrain of contemporary times" (Billig, 1995: 6). As Keating points out (2001: 11),

[c]ultural activities may or may not be explicitly political or make reference to identity and nationalism. Even where they do not, they continue to shape national identity by framing the issues and interpreting daily life [within a national context] [My addition].

This thesis will examine how Spain and Spanishness were presented in the cultural (i.e. musical) work created and/or performed by Víctor Manuel, Ana Belén and Joaquín Sabina at the time of the Transition. Special attention will be paid to the differences and similarities existing between their versions of Spain and Spanishness and those supported by hegemonic Francoist discourses from around 1960 onwards. Emphasis will be placed, for example, on the examination of those alternative, counter-hegemonic “emergent” (Williams, 1977: 122, 123) elements that appeared during the Transition and were adopted by the three singers in order to distance themselves from Francoist versions of Spain and Spanishness<sup>7</sup>. “Residual” (Williams, 1977: 123) elements of Spanishness formed by Francoist discourses but still active in these artists’ versions of the nation and national identity will also be highlighted when necessary.

It should be noted that a constructionist view of nation, nationalism and national identity is being adopted here. Following scholars such as Anderson (1991), Gellner (1994b), Hobsbawn (1994), Billig (1995), and Fusí (2000), this thesis assumes that “nations are creations, constructions, not natural givens” (Gellner, 1994b: 63-4), and that “nationality [...], nation-ness as well as nationalism are cultural artefacts” (Anderson, 1991: 4). In spite of their constructedness, however,

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<sup>7</sup> Following Raymond Williams, here “emergent” is being used in a strict sense, rather than with the general meaning of “novel”. It should be clear, however, that for Williams “emergent” is not necessarily synonymous with oppositional. He notes that when referring to the emergent “it is exceptionally difficult to distinguish between those which are really elements of some new phase of the dominant culture [...] and those which are substantially alternative or oppositional”. Ultimately, “definitions of the emergent, as of the residual, can be made only in relation to a full sense of the dominant [or hegemonic]” [my addition]; (Williams, 1977: 123).

modern nations and all their impedimenta generally claim to be the opposite of novel, namely rooted in the remotest antiquity, and the opposite of constructed, namely human communities so 'natural' as to require no definition other than self-assertion (Hobsbawn, 1994: 76)<sup>8</sup>

As Johnson notes (1993: 184), adopting essentialist views of the nation and national identity is "a familiar tendency on Left and Right". By presenting the "invented permanencies" (Billig, 1995: 29) of the nation and national identity as natural, given essences, nationalism – of any kind - becomes a powerful "political strategy", to borrow Bhabha's phrase (1994: 310); it powerfully legitimates and reasserts its existence and significance, as well as that of the nation and national identity on crucial philosophical, emotional, political and practical grounds. This thesis will explore whether essentialist notions of Spain and Spanishness were supported in Francoist hegemonic discourses and/or in the works by Víctor, Ana and Sabina. It will also examine the implications behind the singers' systematic or occasional use of essentialist or non-essentialist constructions of Spain/s and Spanishness.

When analysing constructions of nation, nationalism and national identity a gender-sensitive perspective also seems both necessary and analytically enlightening. As different scholars have noted, gender and sexuality often play a crucial role in the creation of the nation and national identity (Yuval-Davis and Anthias, 1989; Yuval-Davis, 1997; Mosse, 1985; Parker, Russo et al. 1992). In fact, "constructions of nationhood usually involve specific notions of both 'manhood' and 'womanhood'" (Yuval-Davis, 1997:1). Moreover, in many contexts, nationalism has proved to have "a special affinity for male society and together with the concept of respectability legitima[tes] the dominance of men over women" (Mosse, 1985: 67). Therefore, it is important to "introduce a framework for discussing and analysing the different ways

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<sup>8</sup> Similar arguments are offered, for example, by Gellner (1994b: 63).

in which the discourse on gender and that on nation tend to intersect and to be constructed by each other" (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 4). Similarly, Mosse notes (1985) that nation and sexuality should not be treated as separate independent constructs. Instead, attention to how these categories of sexuality and nation "interact with, constitute, or otherwise illuminate each other" should be paid (Parker, Russo et al. 1992: 2). Then it will appear clear that the construction of specific nations and national identities often demands particular notions and deployments of ('respectable' and 'normal') sexuality/ies (Parker et al. 1992: 2). These specific notions of normal and respectable sexuality/ies often also work at the level of hegemony and serve the purposes of the - often male - hegemonic powers.

Here both gender and sexuality are seen as constructions. Gender "refers to personality traits and behavior patterns associated with the cultural constructs "masculinity" and "femininity" respectively" (Tong, 1989: 28). As Yuval-Davies points out

[g]ender should be understood not as a 'real' social difference between men and women, but as a mode of discourse which relates to groups of subjects whose social roles are defined by their sexual/biological difference (Yuval Davies, 1997: 9).

Similarly, the naturalness of biological difference, the 'normal' dichotomous opposition between male and female, are rather problematic and have been questioned by different scholars in different ways (e.g. by Foucault, 1979: 11; Butler, 1990: 70; 1993: 85; Sedwick, 1990: 87-8; 1994: xii-xiii; Yuval-Davis, 1997: 9). In fact, the historicity and discursively constructed nature of both sex and sexuality should be noted (Foucault, 1979: 97; Butler, 1990: 98). As Wittig highlights

[s]ex is taken as an "immediate given", "a sensible given," "physical features," belonging to a natural order. But what we believe to be a physical and direct perception is only a sophisticated and mythic construction, an "imaginary

formation”, which reinterprets physical features (in themselves as neutral as others but marked by a social system), through the network of relationships in which they are perceived (Quoted in Butler, 1990: 114).

When referring to sexuality, Foucault similarly stresses that it

must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries gradually to uncover. It is the name that can be given a historical construct: not a furtive reality that is difficult to grasp, but a great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement of discourse, the formulation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power (1979: 105-6).

These constructionist views of gender and sexuality should be borne in mind here. They will inform the thesis as a whole, and especially the investigation carried out in the song analysis chapters, where the interaction between nation, national identity, and gender and sexuality will be examined, both in relation to Francoist hegemonic discourses and to the works by Víctor, Ana and Sabina.

Finally, it should be stressed that, as the previous paragraphs suggest, the articulation of nation and national identity requires different processes of selection of various kinds and at different levels. As Gellner puts it (1994b: 65), “nationalism has its own amnesias and selections”, and different nations are often created through careful processes of selection, inclusion, [exclusion, subordination] and (re)transformation of different categories and cultural resources. In the Spanish case, and considering Francoism and the Spanish Transition as narrated in the musical works by the three singers studied here, history, class, love, gender and sexuality seemed to play an especially crucial role in the construction of both Spain and Spanishness - in turn, history, class, love, gender and sexuality also constituted themselves and operated through the exclusion and inclusion of different elements.

Given the quantitative and qualitative relevance of these categories in this particular research context, the song analysis chapters will be devoted to the detailed exploration of all these constitutive dimensions of the Spanish nation and national identity during the Transition. It should be noted that all these categories were often intimately linked with each other and that they frequently operated together. For practical academic purposes, however, this thesis will overall address them separately in different chapters. In any case, references to their specific intertwining and mutual interaction and/or interdependence in actual particular cases will be made whenever it is considered appropriate.

## **CONCLUSION**

This first chapter has provided the theoretical framework necessary for a coherent and critical understanding of this thesis. Such a framework has been largely inspired by Gramsci's theories on agency, popular culture and other related issues. Gramscian concepts such as agency, hegemony, counter-hegemony, the national-popular, organic intellectuals, philosophy, common sense, passive revolution, war of position, and war of manoeuvre have been introduced for their potential applicability to this research. These enlightening Gramscian concepts have generated a number of questions which will inform and shape the research presented in the chapters to come. For example, they have raised the question whether the Spanish Transition could be read as a war of manoeuvre, as a war of position, or as a mere passive revolution. They have also further stimulated an interest in the examination of some of the fronts that acted as counter-hegemonic forces at the time. Significantly, they have encouraged the

analysis of the actual role, power, and significance of Spanish singer-songwriters and political song of the Transition as potentially counter-hegemonic cultural agents.

This chapter has also highlighted Gramsci's neglect of gender, as evidenced in his writings by a systematic failure to question a masculine/male-centred hegemony. It has similarly criticised, for example, his narrow approach to hegemony and the national-popular: he understood both in relation to class, but ignored their also crucial gendered dimension. In order to make up for Gramsci's neglect of women and gender, this chapter has highlighted the convenience of adopting a feminist position. Such a position has been informed by different feminist movements and concerns. It has drawn on some theoretical parameters from postmodern feminism, but it has also been shaped by different theoretical and practical issues addressed by, for example, socialist, liberal and radical feminist groups. The existence of different femininities dependent on variables such as nationality, class, age, religion or marital status, for example, has also been reasserted here.

Drawing on some of the issues addressed above, the chapter has finally approached various theoretical aspects concerning the categories of nation, national identity and nationalism. It has stressed that, as a cultural practice, Spanish singer-songwriting of the Transition must have shaped "national identity by framing the issues and interpreting daily life [within a national context]", even when it may have not been overtly political or made reference to identity and nationalism (Keating, 2001: 11). Following scholars such as Anderson (1991), Hobsbawn (1994), Billig (1995) and Fusí (2000), this section has highlighted the need to understand the nation, nationalism and national identity as "creations, constructions, not [as] natural givens"

(Gellner, 1994b: 63-4). It has similarly highlighted the need to note how all these categories have importantly mobilised – the also constructed (Foucault, 1979; Butler, 1990) - categories of gender and sexuality, for example. Finally, it has stressed that, overall, nations and national identities are constructed through processes of inclusion, subordination and exclusion of different categories and elements (Gellner, 1994b). All these theoretical insights will inform the content of the coming chapters, and will set the basis for the analysis of the ways in which Francoist discourses, and especially the works of Víctor, Ana and Sabina constructed the Spanish nation and Spanish national identity at the time of the Transition.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

# **THE SPANISH TRANSITION: CONCEPT, DATES AND AGENTS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter examines various issues concerning the Spanish Transition to provide an essential historical contextualisation. This historical period is approached here from a feminist Gramscian perspective, along theoretical lines discussed in chapter one. This chapter is especially interested in cultural struggle and popular counter-hegemony, and aims to establish the rationale for the content of the coming chapters. Among other things, it reflects on the concept of Spanish Transition and on its chronological boundaries. It also considers feminist anti-Francoist groups and some anti-Francoist popular cultural practices and artists, namely singer-songwriting and political singers.

### **SOME THEORETICAL NOTES ON HISTORY, HISTORICAL CONTEXTUALISATION, KNOWLEDGE AND TRUTH**

“Against the positivist conception of the historical fact, more recent epistemology emphasises the ‘imaginative reconstruction’ which characterises the work of the historian” (Ricoeur, 1981: 289). In fact, history should not be perceived as an objective discipline which innocuously presents past facts and events. Instead, it should be noted that historians are subjects who inexorably speak from particular positions. These positions inevitably shape their informative agendas. Thus, among

other things, historians' backgrounds, personal circumstances and positions consciously and/or unconsciously inform their determination to select, subordinate, prioritise, and exclude different historical material.

Given this inevitable partiality of history as a discipline and, by extension, of historical contextualisation as a tool of analysis, a self-reflexive, honest and explicit positioning of the researcher when approaching them seems both ethical and necessary. In this thesis it will appear clear that the approach to history adopted has been informed throughout by different feminist concerns. It has also been shaped by a strong Gramscian democratic belief in the potential power of popular culture and ordinary citizens in the active making of history. These two convictions have not only informed the approach to history presented here; they have also informed and shaped the development of this thesis throughout.

A conscious and explicit self-positioning of the researcher when approaching history and, by extension, when doing research more generally, is not enough, however. The constructivity and inevitable partiality of truths referred to above have obvious and significant consequences for the presentation of historical and other types of truths. A radical interpretation of constructivism could equate the partiality of knowledge with the impossibility of knowledge. This thesis aims to avoid such a pessimistic position of radical relativism. Instead, it wants to reassert the validity of epistemology; the possibility of knowing and of knowledge, or rather, knowledges. It asserts the feasibility and necessity of constructing and apprehending different, partial, and subjective historical and other types of knowledges and truths that will empower and serve the political needs of different (especially subaltern) collectives and individuals.

As Haraway puts it (1991: 184), “for political people, social constructionism cannot be allowed to decay into the radiant emanations of cynicism”<sup>9</sup>. As she continues, “the alternative to relativism is partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology (1991: 191)”.

All these ideas are especially relevant here because, as Haraway stresses (1991: 187), feminist research has

to insist on a better account of the world - it is not enough to show radical historical contingency and modes of construction for everything. [...] Feminists have stakes in a successor science project that offers a more adequate, richer, better account of the world, in order to live in it well and in critical, reflexive relation to our own as well as others' practices of domination and the unequal parts of privilege and oppression that make up all positions.

In Haraway's view, this new project which potentially leads to more comprehensive accounts of the world can materialise by practicing “feminist critical empiricism” (1991: 188)<sup>10</sup>. Its practice demands an understanding of “knowledge as situated conversation” (Haraway, 1991: 200). It

requires more than self-acknowledged and self-critical partiality. We are also bound to seek perspective from those points of view, which can never be known in advance, which promise something quite extraordinary, that is, knowledge potent for constructing worlds less organised in axes of domination (Haraway, 1991: 192).

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<sup>9</sup> Haraway's work (1991) addresses especially issues of knowledge in traditionally “[s]cientific” disciplines that have been presented as objective, non-interpretive and solely empirical (e.g. biology). Many of her arguments, however, are perfectly applicable here and in many other contexts.

<sup>10</sup> Haraway links this idea of feminist critical empiricism to the achievement of “a doctrine of embodied objectivity” (1991: 188) or “a feminist version of objectivity” (1991: 186). She explains that “feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledges” (1991: 188); that “feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence” (1991: 190) and that she is thinking of “a usable, but not an innocent, doctrine of objectivity” (1991: 188). However, even if useful for political reasons, her re-assertive return to issues of objectivity – “feminist objectivity” – seems problematic at different levels. Among other things, this term seems inadequate because of the strong connotative links that it has with positivist epistemologies. Labels like “feminist subjectivities” seem therefore more appropriate.

This is exactly what this research project aims to do at different levels. It is an attempt to construct knowledge which is “less organised in axes of domination”, to use Haraway’s phrase. Thus, throughout this thesis, and more explicitly in this chapter, alternative, more democratic historical knowledges that have not found a (significant) place in much mainstream Spanish historiography so far will be drawn upon. The wide variety of both primary (e.g. Otero, 1999a, 1999b, 2000; Sánchez Navarro, 1998; Álvarez, 1998; González, 1979) and secondary sources consulted and used for the reconstruction of the Spanish Transition also responds to this desire of establishing a conversation (Haraway, 1991: 200) between different speakers with sometimes different – even opposed - points of view and interests. The special emphasis placed upon new critical publications on Francoism similarly responds to this desire to reassert the validity of alternative historiographies of the period under study (e.g. Powell, 2001; Moradiellos, 2000; Gracia García and Ruiz Carnicer, 2001). Different feminist sources (e.g. Asociación “Mujeres en la transición democrática”, 1999) have also proved of crucial importance here. They have added a vital feminist dimension that was often absent in these more alternative accounts of the Spanish Transition. At a different level, the conversations established with audiences of *canción de autor/a* of the Transition also revealed interesting historical aspects related to daily life issues which were absent in manuals and critical literature on the Spanish Transition. All the information gathered thanks to these and other consulted sources has informed the account of the Spanish Transition that I now introduce.

## THE SPANISH TRANSITION: CONCEPTUAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL BOUNDARIES

*La transición española* or *La Transición* are labels that have been used by historians, politicians, journalists, and ordinary citizens alike. In fact, there is generalised consensus in the use of these names, both in Spain and abroad. In spite of this overall terminological homogeneity, these labels are problematic conceptually speaking. In fact, what these labels actually mean and stand for has been extensively debated. For example, many scholars understand the Spanish Transition in exclusively political terms; they see it as the period that ran between Franco's death in November 1975 and the official installation of political democracy in late 1977- early 1978.

Here a wider-embracing understanding of the Spanish Transition will be supported. Such an understanding is inspired by Gramsci's theories on the potential relevance of culture – in its narrow and broader sense - at a political level. Thus, generally speaking, the Spanish Transition is seen here as the historical period that witnessed the debilitation and death of Franco's dictatorship and the emergence and consolidation of the system of liberal democracy that is still present in Spain today. To put it in Gramscian terms, the Transition is being understood here as a period of change that saw the struggle of different agents and powers for the achievement of hegemony in different domains (cultural, economic, political, social, religious, philosophical, etc), and which culminated in important hegemonic shifts at a political level.

If the actual concept of Spanish Transition is difficult to apprehend fully, its chronological limits are not easy to establish either. These vary depending on the

criteria one is especially considering to refer to it (e.g. strictly political, economic, social, and/or cultural) - understandably, there is a very close relationship between the Transition's conceptual and chronological boundaries. As noted earlier, in much - not always mainstream - literature there is a strong tendency to rely solely upon strictly political factors when establishing the chronological boundaries of the Spanish Transition (e.g. in Soto, 1998: 85; Sánchez Navarro, 1998: 34, 47; Mestre Campi, 1997: 5; Tusell, 1997: 119, 162). Different authors, however, often put their stress on different political events, consequently arriving at different periodisations. For example, Moradiellos (2000: 201) sets the political transition in Spain

entre el 22 de noviembre de 1975 y el 6 de diciembre de 1977: desde la proclamación como rey de don Juan Carlos I hasta la aprobación de una nueva *Constitución* previamente elaborada y votada por unas Cortes democráticas y constituyentes elegidas el 15 de junio de 1977 [emphasis in the original].

between 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1975 and 6<sup>th</sup> December 1978: from the proclamation of don Juan Carlos as king up until the ratification of the new *Constitution* through a referendum. This Constitution had been previously elaborated and voted by a democratically elected parliament on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1977.

Similarly, Powell asserts (2001: 127-129) that the crowning of King Juan Carlos marked the beginning of the Spanish Transition. However, he states that

la transición quizá no deba darse por concluida hasta el 25 de octubre de 1979, fecha de la aprobación mediante referéndum de los primeros estatutos de autonomía, correspondientes a Cataluña y el País Vasco.

perhaps the transition should not be seen as finished before 25<sup>th</sup> October 1979, the date when the first statutes of autonomy for Catalonia and the Basque Country were ratified via referendum.

Overall, these types of strictly political and therefore chronological understandings of the Spanish Transition seem both limited and limiting. This is because, as conservative ex-vice president Suárez González noted (2002), “la transformación económica social y cultural de España conllevaron a la democracia” (“the economic,

social and cultural transformations that took place in Spain together brought about democracy”). Or, rather, the formal political changes that took place in Spain at the time often resulted from the interaction of significant previous economic, social, cultural, religious and philosophical shifts at both domestic and international levels. These changes were the seeds that flourished and translated into a political system of liberal democracy. In this sense ex-president Adolfo Suárez’s speech before the *procuradores* of the Francoist *cortes* is enlightening. In this speech from June 1976, Suárez, one of the elite engines of the Spanish Transition, highlighted the need for real and deep political changes; the need for the configuration and implementation of political democracy in order to keep up with Spanish reality at street level. As he suggested, the existent Francoist political structures were obsolete and outdated, and overall they lagged well behind Spanish social, economic and cultural reality:

[e]n el nombre del Gobierno os invito a que, sin renunciar a ninguna de vuestras convicciones, iniciemos la senda racional de hacer posible el entendimiento por vías pacíficas. *Este pueblo nuestro pienso que no nos pide milagros ni utopías. Creo que nos pide, sencillamente, que acomodemos el derecho a la realidad*, que hagamos posible la paz civil por el camino de un diálogo, que sólo se podrá entablar con todo el pluralismo social dentro de las instituciones representativas.

A todo eso os invito. Vamos, sencillamente, a quitarle dramatismo a nuestra política. *Vamos a elevar a la categoría de política normal lo que a nivel de calle es simplemente normal*. Vamos a sentar las bases de un entendimiento duradero bajo el imperio de la ley [emphasis added]. In Sánchez Navarro’s anthology of official texts (1998: 261).

[i]n the name of the Government I invite you to initiate the rational path of making understanding possible through pacific means, while not abandoning any of your convictions. *I do not think that this people of ours is asking for miracles or utopias. I think that it is asking, simply, that we accommodate law to reality*, that we make civil peace possible by means of dialogue, dialogue which will only be possible with full social plurality within the representative institutions.

I invite you to all of this. Let us, simply, take drama out of our politics. *Let us normalise in politics what is simply normal at street level*. Let us set up the bases of a long-lasting consensus under the rule of law.

In his speech Suárez also implicitly emphasised the active role and mature behaviour shown by the majority of Spanish citizens during the Transition period. As he implied and the following sections – and chapters - will show, the Transition was not a mere passive revolution carried out from above. In fact, it could perhaps be seen as being closer to a war of position because that it was greatly promoted and partly shaped from below; it was a process in which different civil society groups and individuals actively participated in a non-violent way. In this context, Gramsci's emphasis on the power of culture – in its broad and narrow senses – seems again enlightening: relying upon political but also economic, social and cultural grounds when approaching the study of the Spanish Transition seems both adequate and sensible. This is why here this historical period is seen as happening between 1960 and 1982, inclusive. The following subsections will explore different aspects that, at different levels, seemed to mark the beginning of the Spanish Transition around 1960 and its end in 1982.

### **The 1960s: the beginning of the Spanish Transition**

A multi-layered process of transition towards a different type of reality already started to be felt in Spain in the early 60s. Overall, these transitional processes strengthened and became more apparent as the decade progressed. The different changes that took place throughout this decade set up the basis for the political changes that materialised more conspicuously especially after Franco's death in 1975. Some scholars see in this decade of the 60s a period of a mainly economic and socio-cultural "pretransición" ("pre-transition"). As they see it, this "pretransición" occurred before the "proper" political transition materialised (Morodo, 1984: 84; Cañellas, 2002). The latent idea behind this notion of pre-transition seems to be a belief in the hierarchical supremacy of the strictly political domain. However, in the particular case of the Spanish

Transition a presumed supremacy of the political field seems unsustainable. As stressed earlier, without the interaction of those prior and simultaneous cultural, social, religious, economic and philosophical changes that started to be evident in the early 60s, the so-called proper politico-legal transition would have not succeeded. Consequently, the validity of the label 'transitional', rather than 'pre-transitional' when referring to the decade of the 60s in Spain needs to be reasserted.

### Economy and society

Economically speaking, the beginning of the 60s broadly marked the start of a new era in Spain (Fusí, 1983: 9, 11). It was the beginning of a phase of economic modernisation and general development which lasted until the mid seventies (Barciela, López et al. 2001: 10)<sup>11</sup>. Such an economic growth was helped by an important increase of foreign tourism in the country. This big economic expansion was accompanied by the industrialisation and infrastructural modernisation of the country (Barciela et al. 2001: 239, 242).

Socially speaking, from the beginning of the sixties Spain saw an important intensification of workers' strikes. These strikes often incorporated both economic and political demands (Moradiellos, 2000: 123; Powell, 2001: 54; Barciela et al. 2001: 333, 336). Similarly, university students demonstrated intensively throughout the sixties for political, academic and economic reasons (González Lucini, 1998: 133). The 60s also witnessed other important social changes in Spain: between 1960 and 1970 an important number of women became involved in the then expanding

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<sup>11</sup> Although all Spanish regions benefited from this economic boom, some areas were especially receptive of this economic progress. Barcelona and Bilbao underwent great economic expansion, while Extremadura and Andalucía were the regions in which this economic progress was less notable (Video collection: La Transición española - Vídeo 2: "El espíritu del 12 de febrero").

sectors of production and education (Moradiellos, 2000: 146)<sup>12</sup>. Also in the sixties, class structures underwent important changes which resulted in an important increase in social mobility (Gracia García and Ruiz Carnicer, 2001: 275, 276; Díaz, 1995: 284). Moreover, the impact of tourism was not only economic, but also social and cultural. Tourists introduced, among other things, foreign music, new clothing fashions and styles – e.g. the bikini -, new traditions and customs, and new more open and liberal approaches to sexuality. All these elements had a great impact in a country which was starting to leave some of its provinciality behind. In the religious order, important shifts also took place (Moradiellos, 2000: 178, 197, Lannon, 1995: 276, 279, 282; De Riquer I Permanyer, 1995: 266). For example, the celebration of the Second Vatican Council in 1962 meant that the Catholic Church started to carry out from a leftist position the work of political socialization that it had traditionally developed from the Right (Carbáyo-Abengózar, 1998: 77).

### Culture

In the world of art and culture a good number of significant changes also occurred from the beginning of the 60s. Early in that decade a group of mainly left-wing painters and sculptors introduced new formal and experimental techniques in their artistic productions. This formal experimentation, which often re-explored pre-war avant-garde traditions, was in many cases “accompanied by political theorization” (Dent Coad, 1995: 299). The early sixties also saw the birth of the “New Spanish Cinema” (Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, 1998: 19). For example, in 1961 Buñuel’s polemical film *Viridiana*, which presented a “heady mixture of religion and eroticism [...] which so enraged the Vatican and the Spanish Authorities” (Edwards, 1995: 26)

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<sup>12</sup> Soto (1998: 134) and Gracia García and Ruiz Carnicer (2001: 291) offer similar information on the subject.

was released. The revolutionary novel *Tiempo de silencio* by Martín Santos saw the light in 1962 (Tusón and Lázaro, 1995: 165). “Also crucial was the publication in Spain, from 1962, of the new Latin American novel” (Labanyi, 1995: 296).

When considering more popular (=more widely consumed by ordinary citizens) cultural manifestations, a number of issues need to be stressed. For instance, overall, the beginning of the sixties witnessed the popularisation of culture (Tusell, 1997: 188). With the beginning of a new phase of economic development more and more citizens had greater access to different (popular) cultural manifestations. This was mainly so thanks to the availability of new commodities such as the television and the radio. The sixties also witnessed the flourishing of the “cine de barrio”, of numerous popular Spanish-made cinematographic productions which were often approved of/supported by Francoist authorities. As the last part of this chapter will stress, in the world of popular music the early sixties also marked the beginning of a new period. Singer-songwriters and political singing appeared then and became more and more popular (Boyle, 1995: 291; Turtós and Bonet, 1998: 22, 26). Also at the beginning of that decade, new pop and rock Spanish and foreign-led groups appeared, became extremely popular among young Spaniards (Oró, 2001: 25) and contributed to the birth of the fan phenomenon in Spain around 1960 (Román, 1994: 245, 251-53). This phenomenon was one more element within the broader Spanish youth culture that was being built up at the time and that would prove subversive at sexual, social and political levels<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Here ‘young people’ describes those who at the time were in their late teens or in their early to mid twenties, rather than those who were teenagers (fourteen and fifteen years old).

## 1982: the end of the Spanish Transition

As the coming subsections will show, 1982 seems a reasonable closing date for both the Spanish Transition and this study more particularly for a number of mainly political and socio-cultural reasons.

### Politics

In 1982 the PSOE (Spanish Socialist Party) won the general election. Their victory marked, at least apparently, a real break from institutional Francoism – it should be remembered that the first democratic party in power after Franco's death in 1975 was mainly made up of Francoist politicians: many of the most outstanding members of the UCD (Union of the Democratic Centre), including the *presidente de gobierno* Adolfo Suárez, had previously been *procuradores* of the Francoist *cortes*. In this sense the PSOE brought a breath of fresh air to the political scene of the time<sup>14</sup>. Also, like Soto (1998), Mestre Campi (1997: 5) and Tusell (1997: 162) note, although

[a]lgunos autores dan por finalizada la transición política con la aprobación de la constitución [...] parece más acertado prolongarla hasta la victoria del PSOE el 28 de octubre de 1982, ya que en esos años se producen hechos propios de un período de transición, como el fracasado golpe de estado del 23-F y el hundimiento de UCD, junto a la construcción del Estado democrático, y el desarrollo del proceso autonómico (Soto, 1998: 85).

[s]ome authors believe that the political transition finished with the ratification of the constitution [...] it seems more appropriate to prolong it until the

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<sup>14</sup> Some more radical critics and scholars, however, deny the fact that a deep, *real* transition from dictatorship to democracy ever took place in Spain. They see the Spanish Transition as a theatrical dramatisation which “allowed the same dogs to wear different leads”, to explain it using a popular Spanish saying. To put it in Gramscian terms, they see the Spanish Transition as a passive revolution, rather than as close to a war of position. These ideas are supported by, for example, García Trevijano (1996: 17), and artist Miguel Ángel Pacheco (in Rico, 2003: 52). On the other extreme, some very reactionary sectors – which existed at the time and even later in time - saw the Spanish Transition as a chaotic process that brought about the loss of important values established and supported by Francoism. A good example of this view is offered in Abella, de Alvear et al. (1986). This book clearly reveals that Francoist ideology did not die with its leader. Many of its essays are either implicitly or explicitly pro-Francoist. Some of them openly support the failed coup d'état of 1981 (e.g. Iniesta Cano, p. 13-23); some others show little respect for women's sexual liberation, homosexuality or prostitutes. To summarise, this book written ten years after the dictator's death constitutes a nostalgic living proof of an important stream of reactionary thought that survived the Spanish Transition.

PSOE's electoral victory on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1982, because in these years events concomitant to periods of transition occurred, such as the failed coup d'état of 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb [1981], the shrinking of UCD, together with the construction of the democratic State, and the development of the autonomic process.

## Culture

Culturally speaking, around 1982 the short but intense *Movida Madrileña* consolidated its role as the leading cultural force in Spain. The *Movida Madrileña* was a heterogeneous cultural movement which encompassed new approaches to music, film-making, fashion, painting, comics (Gallero, 1991), and even TV programming (Rico, 2003). In the field of cinema, director Pedro Almodóvar and his "postmodernist parodies" (Evans, 1995: 326) were the best representatives of this cultural turn of *La Movida*.

Musically speaking, around 1982, new young pop, rock and punk groups consolidated their popularity and came to dominate songwriters' music in Spain. These new artists' music, lyrics, concerns and aesthetics, which followed mainly the trend of the *Nueva Ola* (New Wave), were importantly different to those of songwriters and political singers. These new musical trends made many singer-songwriters and political singers sound and look old-fashioned and out of date. In fact, after the formal political consolidation of a democratic Spanish state in 1982, a new phase of the "nueva canción" or *canción de autor/a* started in 1983 (González Lucini, 1998: 268; Shea, 2002: 232). The comments made by Aragonese singer-songwriter Joaquín Carbonell are very telling in this respect:

[m]e retiré desde el 82 hasta el 95. Estaba desconcertado, no entendía por dónde iban las cosas. No estaba dispuesto a arrastrar por los escenarios un concepto musical que había que renovar profundamente. Lo que habíamos hecho ya no servía. España se movía con "la movida". Había que retirarse a

los cuarteles a descansar, mirar, salir a la calle de forma anónima, cargar pilas, escuchar mucho y cantar poco<sup>15</sup>.

I retired from 1982 until 1995. I was confused; I didn't understand which way things were going. I was not prepared to drag myself on stage with a musical concept that needed deep renovation. What we had done was not useful anymore. Spain moved with "the *movida*". We had to withdraw to our quarters, watch, go out in the street anonymously, recharge our batteries, do a lot of listening and little singing.

It is then not surprising that the relationship between the groups of the *New Wave* and singer-songwriters were often complex and rather full of tension and even disdain, as different sources show (e.g. Gallero, 1991: 42, 62, 150; Turtós and Bonet, 1998: 139-140; Joaquín Sabina in "Las mil músicas de la Constitución", 2003).

### **1968-1982: Víctor Manuel, Ana Belén, Joaquín Sabina and the Spanish Transition**

To conclude this second part of the chapter, it is crucial to note that, when considering the works by Víctor Manuel, Ana Belén and Joaquín Sabina together, 1968 and 1982 seem to be very crucial dates. This is why these dates have been chosen here to mark the specific period of study of this research project. The chronological point of departure of this study is set in 1968 because it marks the beginning of Víctor Manuel's serious artistic career as a singer-songwriter – Ana Belén's and Joaquín Sabina's singing careers started later in time. 1968 was the year in which Víctor publicised the provocative and polemical singles "El cobarde" and "El tren de madera" and started to be known among a fairly wide public. When considering their works as a whole, 1982 also seemed an important date. In fact, this politically significant date also marked important shifts in these artists' works: in 1981, Sabina,

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Joaquín Carbonell in Uribe (2003). I would like to thank Joaquín Carbonell for giving me access to this interview while Uribe's book was still on press.

together with Javier Krahe and Alberto Pérez released the already classic *La Mandrágora*, a very good example of acid and sarcastic political and social singer-songwriting. His next album, *Ruleta rusa*, released in 1984, was very different in terms of music, topics and concerns. Lighter in tone, it was a much more commercial rock album that was not politically charged in a strict sense, but rather socially committed. In 1983 Ana Belén and Víctor Manuel released *Víctor y Ana en directo*. This work was a compilation of very popular songs from previous albums which somehow announced the end of an old era and the beginning of a new artistic period for both artists.

#### **COUNTER-HEGEMONIC AGENCY DURING THE SPANISH TRANSITION**

In terms of agency, rather elitist interpretations of the Spanish Transition still prevail in much mainstream literature (Blakeley, 2000). As Blakeley notes “[m]ost observers now agree that the Spanish transition to democracy is the classic example of a pacted transition between elite actors (Linz, Stepan and Gunther 1995: 98)” (Blakeley, 2000: 2). It is undeniable that certain Spanish political elites played a decisive democratising role at the time of the Transition. As Pereira Castañares points out (2002), the Spanish Transition was also very much shaped by international elites, mainly from the United States, Europe (e.g. Germany, Portugal, France) and some countries in Latin America (e.g. Chile).

However, the Spanish Transition was not only designed and carried out by political elites. It was not “una operación de despacho de cuarta, fue un clamor popular de libertad” (“a second class office manoeuvre, it was a popular clamour for freedom”)

(Guerra González, 2002). Thus, when studying the process of democratisation of Spain, adopting a much more democratic view of agency seems sensible. Some critics, however, suggest that this idea of the active Spanish people as a fighting whole should not be mythified. Haubrich (2002) affirms that only a minority of Spanish society was actively involved against Francoism. In his view, a vast majority of Spaniards waited upon the outcomes of the changes that they were witnessing. In any case, Spanish civil society in general showed signs of maturity throughout that would enable the successful configuration and implementation of a democratic system:

[l]a sociedad civil, deseosa de un cambio político en sentido democratizador, no evitó el conflicto, sino que lo moderó y racionalizó cuando fue necesario, y supo resistir las provocaciones de los sectores inmovilistas, el nacionalismo radical y la extrema izquierda. En ocasiones se tuvo la percepción, muy real por otra parte, de que las élites políticas se encontraban por detrás de las demandas de los ciudadanos, lo que obligó a las direcciones partidistas a cambiar su discurso y a adaptar su práctica política (Soto, 1998: 22).

[c]ivil society, wishing a political change oriented towards democracy, did not avoid conflict, but moderated it and rationalised it when necessary, and managed to resist the provocations of reactionary sectors, radical nationalism and the extreme left. Sometimes there was the perception, very accurate indeed, that the political elites were behind the citizens' demands, and this obliged the parties' leaderships to change their discourse and adapt their political practice.

Even if, as Haubrich (2002) affirms, part of the Spanish society of the time adopted a rather passive and expectant attitude, different civil society collectives played a crucial active role in the democratisation of Spain (Carrillo, 2002; Blakeley, 2000; Domínguez, 2000; Soto, 1998; Vilar, 1983; Preston, 1983). In fact, as noted earlier, the Spanish Transition could be read as being close to a relatively non-violent war of position which achieved important political changes, and which was largely promoted, and in some respects importantly shaped and carried out by different

counter-hegemonic civil society agents. The anti-Francoist pressure groups whose pro-democracy role is usually acknowledged in more recent historiography on the Spanish Transition are the following: workers, university students, and some voices within the established Catholic Church (Barciela, López et al. 2001: 336; Moradiellos, 2001: 123, 163, 164; Powell, 2001: 47-57; Fontes, 2000: 36; Mestre Campi, 1997, 23; Vilar, 1983: 73, 74, 77-80; "La Transición española", Vídeo 2). In fact, some scholars believe that workers, university students, and a renovated – often grass roots - section of the Catholic Church were the three key anti-Francoist pressure fronts that worked actively and effectively for the achievement of democracy<sup>16</sup>. These more democratic studies, however, are often problematic when considered from a feminist perspective. Often in this literature religious staff, workers and university students systematically stand for male religious staff, male workers and male university students, respectively - e.g. in Vilar (1983: 61-88) and Preston (1983: 89-129); as if subversion among certain nuns, among women workers and female university students had never existed. It is clear nonetheless that, in any case, Left-wing religious staff, workers and university students were generally led by male figures.

Some sources extend this three-member list of anti-Francoist pressure groups to acknowledge the role of other collectives. This wider list includes, among others, the Catalan and Basque nationalists (Moradiellos, 2000: 165), as well as some of the political parties and trade unions that remained illegal up until 1976-7 (e.g. PCE, PSOE, UGT, CCOO) (Powell, 2001: 57-68). Very little (mainstream) literature, however, pays any attention to the important role that other groups such as feminists, neighbours' and youth associations and ecologists also played in the process of

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<sup>16</sup> This idea was persistently supported by some speakers at the conference "1977: La democracia llega a España. Elecciones y Transición". (El Escorial, Madrid. 2<sup>nd</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> September 2002. Sponsored by the *Fundación Instituto de Estudios de la Transición Española* -Universidad SEK-Segovia).

democratization of Spain at different levels. Moradiellos (2000: 188) to a certain extent, and especially Soto (1998: 151) and culture-based work by Gracia García and Ruiz Carnicer (2001: 354-56) constitute three gratifying exceptions. The following sections will pay attention to two of those anti-Francoist pressure groups that have not received much attention in much mainstream historiography, namely, Spanish feminist associations and some popular cultural practices such as the *canCIÓN de autor/a*.

### **Feminist counter-hegemony: Spanish women-led organisations and the fight for democracy**

A number of feminists have and are currently working hard to make public the important role that many groups of Spanish women had in the process of democratisation of their country. The works by Threllfall (2002, 1985), Falcón (2001), Asociación "Mujeres en la transición democrática" (1999), Alcalde (1996), Ortiz Corulla (1987), and González (1979) are good examples of these feminist studies on the Spanish Transition. Often, this literature is written by some of the protagonists themselves. Their research is often the result of the work

de un amplio grupo de mujeres que, sintiéndose olvidadas en la historia que sobre la transición española se está escribiendo, han querido dejar constancia documental de que ellas *también* estuvieron allí y colaboraron muy activamente para que aquello llegara a buen puerto<sup>17</sup>. (Emphasis added). Mary Salas, in Asociación "Mujeres en la transición democrática" (1999: 21).

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<sup>17</sup> The following anecdote corroborates that the democratising role of Spanish feminists has been often neglected by many: at the conference "1977: la democracia llega a España. Elecciones y Transición" I had the opportunity to have an informal chat with ex-Christian Democrat D. Fernando Álvarez de Miranda y Torres. A key elite figure in the process of transition to democracy in Spain, he was one of the politicians to participate in the *Contubernio de Munich* in the 60s. He later on became president of the *Congreso de los Diputados*. I expressed to Miranda my surprise that throughout the conference no keynote speaker had ever mentioned the important role that associations of (feminist) Spanish women had played in the process of democratization of the country. His reaction was surprising: no opinion was expressed in response to my comments. Instead, Miranda immediately diverted my attention to the fact that workers and university students had been key active pro-democratic groups during the Transition period.

of an ample group of women who, feeling forgotten in the history that is being written on the Spanish Transition, want to give documental evidence of the fact that they were *also* there and that they collaborated very actively so that events would follow the correct course.

One of their aims is to

dejar constancia de la importancia que, para una sociedad como la española de aquellos años, tuvo la participación de las mujeres en grupos, asociaciones y partidos políticos. Cómo su presencia hizo posible la creación, en ocasiones, de un clima de opinión favorable a determinadas cuestiones que, durante la dictadura franquista habían estado revestidas de prohibiciones y tabúes (Asociación “Mujeres en la transición democrática, 1999: 25-6).

give evidence of the importance that the participation of women in groups, associations and political parties had in a society like the Spanish one at the time [of the Transition]. [Show] how, sometimes their presence made possible the creation of a favourable environment which facilitated dealing with certain issues that had been surrounded by prohibitions and taboo under Franco's dictatorship.

The ensuing paragraphs will devote some attention to some of those feminist groups that existed in Spain between 1960 and 1982. The fields of political action that they covered will be highlighted, as well as some of their most relevant achievements. However, only a very brief overview of an extremely complex scene will be presented here. A wider and more detailed picture can be found especially in “Españolas en la transición” (Asociación “Mujeres en la transición democrática”, 1999). In spite of its sometimes rather centralistic tendencies – geographically as well as politically speaking -, this source is one of the most detailed and comprehensive guides on the subject currently available.

### Spanish feminists and their field of action between 1960 and 1982

The Spanish feminist groups of the Transition were clearly pro-democracy and were sensitive to the general socio-political scenario of their time. In fact, these organisations generally participated in numerous pro-democracy events of various

kinds (Asociación “Mujeres en la transición democrática”, 1999). They publicly declared their solidarity with other marginalised individuals and collectives. They openly supported political amnesty, condemned the Francoist death penalty and sympathised with oppressed male workers’ collectives, for example (Asociación “Mujeres en la transición democrática”, 1999: 29, 30, 43). In fact, many of them saw feminism and democracy as parts of the same fight (Asociación “Mujeres en la transición democrática”, 1999: 30).

As many of these feminist collectives saw it, democracy could not materialise in Spain without the achievement of progress for women. Such a belief made much sense in the context of the Francoist dictatorship: Spanish women as a whole experienced serious discrimination during the Francoist period because of their sex. Such discrimination operated through the legal system and affected a number of levels that ranged, for example, from the world of labour to that of sexuality (Threlfall, 2002; Montero, 1995: 382; Brooksbank Jones, 1995: 386). Some of these discriminatory Francoist regulations - implemented as late as the 70s -, were inspired by the Napoleonic-like *Código Civil* (Civil Code) ratified in 1889 (Gracia García and Ruiz Carnicer, 2001:355; Formica, 1986: 160; Asociación “Mujeres en la transición democrática”, 1999: 50). Thus, for example, legally speaking,

until 1975, the date of Franco’s death, a married woman in Spain could not open a bank account, buy a car, apply for a passport, or even work without her husband’s permission. And if she did work with her husband’s approval, he had the right to claim her salary (Montero, 1995: 382).

The fact that Francoist legislations discriminated against Spanish women as a whole does not mean, however, that all Spanish women were in practice equally affected by these laws or responded to them in the same way. As Graham notes (1995: 183) and

the previous quotation suggests, Spanish women's experiences were mediated by "the usual factors - wealth, status (including marital status), socio-economic class (whether or not they had to work for a wage), and religious belief". The complex interaction of other elements such as age, approach to motherhood, political orientation, place of residence (urban/rural), or educational level also seemed to determine Spanish women's experiences during the Francoist period and the Spanish Transition.

In this especially repressive socio-political, legal, sexual, economic and labour context a good number of pro-feminist groups and associations were set up in Spain. These groups were led by women who reflected on Spanish women's situations, and who organised and led their militant political activity; they were led by intellectuals – in the Gramscian sense – organic to the needs and interests of different Spanish women. Their main aim was to organically address Spanish women's problems and improve their situation at different levels<sup>18</sup>. Some of these organisations appeared as early as 1960 (Asociación "Mujeres en la transición democrática", 1999: 27-45). In that decade a good number of Spanish feminist groups were made up of mainly educated middle-class women (Asociación "Mujeres en la transición democrática", 1999). In the 70s, as the regime slowly but progressively weakened and oppositional forces strengthened, more and more women-led feminist groups and associations appeared in Spain. Significantly, as the decade progressed, "there was evidence of a further spread of feminism into sectors of working women" (Threllfall, 1985: 51). In the early 80s, Spanish feminism was institutionalised to a certain extent through the creation of "the Instituto de la Mujer, set up by the socialists in 1983" (Montero,

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<sup>18</sup> Only feminist pro-democracy organisations and groups are being considered here. It should be noted, however, that some legal improvements concerning women specifically originated from the openly anti-feminist and pro-Francoist hegemonic *Sección Femenina* (Gracia García and Ruiz Carnicer, 2001: 355; Carbayo Abengózar, 1998: 79; 2001: 88).

1995: 383). At a more theoretical level, the beginning of the 80s marked in Spain the birth of the “feminism of difference” and “independent feminism”. The first one considered the biological and cultural differences between women and men and made them the focus of its political action; the second one carried out its feminist activism outside of the political institutions of the time (Asociación “Mujeres en la transición democrática”, 1999: 116).

As the above paragraph suggests, Spanish feminist and women’s associations between 1960 and 1982 were very varied and heterogeneous (González, 1979: 143-215). This heterogeneity logically shaped the theoretical and practical approaches of different collectives to the feminist cause(s) both in scope and radicalisation. This ideological and consequently programmatic and practical heterogeneity enriched the Spanish feminist movement, but it also caused important friction among different groups (Alcalde, 1996: 164; Asociación “Mujeres en la transición democrática”, 1999: 79, 93)<sup>19</sup>.

In any case, generally speaking, most of these groups’ demands were wide-ranging and touched upon a variety of fields. Most of them were concerned with the situation of Spanish women in the world of labour and education and culture, as well as with issues of sexuality and family planning. In the 60s most Spanish feminists seemed primarily concerned with achieving the same legal status and rights as their male counterparts, with promoting women’s access to education and mixed-sex education, as well as with obtaining the legalisation of contraceptives. In the 70s, some more

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<sup>19</sup> There was also a dark side to the behaviour of some members in these groups. Sometimes hostilities appeared between members of different groups. Sometimes they were present even within the same collective. As Alcalde acknowledges (1996: 164), often some of the women involved in these associations were victims of power structures and personal ambitions, just like their politically-committed male counterparts.

radical groups inspired by socialist politics appeared. While the demands of the previous decade remained, issues of sexuality and class became more apparent in the late 70s and early 80s. Moreover, the polemical pro-abortion debate was introduced by some groups at the beginning of the 80s (Threllfall, 2002, 1985; Falcón, 2001; Asociación "Mujeres en la transición democrática", 1999; Alcalde, 1996; González, 1979).

### Spanish feminisms and their achievements

Spanish feminist groups and organisations - like those of workers, university students and communist priests, for example - played a very important role in the process of democratization of the country. As Threllfall puts it (2002), these feminist groups worked effectively on a number of fronts. For example, they crucially helped to improve the legal situation of Spanish women under Francoism. They also enlarged the reach of opposition circles, as most often the opposition - from the left, centre and right - had never thought of working with women<sup>20</sup>. By so doing, they raised awareness about issues of equality both within the opposition and in broader contexts that involved the general public. Therefore they also increased the scope of opposition activity while they prevented this male-led opposition from hijacking, at least theoretically, those issues of equality that particularly affected and interested many Spanish women (Threllfall, 2002).

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<sup>20</sup> Alcalde (1996: 56) criticises that, since the 30s, deep-rooted sexist positions have existed within the different Spanish political parties. As she puts it "todas las militantes falangistas, las comunistas, las anarquistas, las socialistas, todas, sin distinción política, consciente o inconscientemente, tuvieron que sufrir la afrenta de su condición de "segundo sexo" ("all the female falangist militants, the communist ones, the anarchists, the socialists, all of them, regardless of their political position, had to suffer the outrage of their condition as "second sex".)

The active pressure exercised by these women at different levels culminated legally in the elaboration of the 1978 *Carta Magna*. Without their persistence and resolution the Spanish Constitution may have not recognised some of the problems that affected more than half of the Spanish population (Asociación “Mujeres en la transición democrática”, 1999); it may have emerged in less democratic terms. In most cases these legal achievements transformed many Spanish women’s lives gradually. Consequently, Spanish men’s everyday lives were also affected in significant ways, even if culturally some deep-rooted customs, expectations and assumptions were not altered significantly in the short-term. In fact,

[l]a contribución del movimiento feminista a la democracia, que tuvo que aceptar algunos de sus presupuestos, fue innegable y lo que se consiguió es hoy patrimonio de todas las mujeres. Es más, es patrimonio de todos los españoles (Asociación “Mujeres en la transición democrática”, 1999:125).

[t]he contribution of the feminist movement to democracy, which had to accept some of its positions, was undeniable and what it achieved is today all women’s heritage. More than that, it is all Spaniards’ heritage.

All the information provided in this section regarding the situation of women in Francoist Spain, and feminist counter-hegemonic agency during the Transition will be useful for the song analysis chapters: it will allow a critical examination of the ways – if any – in which the musical works by Víctor, Ana and Sabina were sensitive to (some of) the particular situations and realities experienced by Spanish women at the time. It will also allow an analysis of the ways – if any – in which these feminist groups’ requests informed the works by these artists between 1968 and 1982.

## Counter-hegemonic cultural agency: popular culture, political song and the democratisation of Spain

La cultura en los años 70 jugó un papel importante en el cambio político (Francisco Cánovas, winner of the Premio Nacional de Historia [National History Award]<sup>21</sup>).

Culture in the 70s played an important role in the political change

The role of opposition culture in this period was vital for paving the way to the transition to democracy [...] (Graham and Labanyi, 1995: 258)

En este contexto de cambio político [de la transición], la canción juega un papel decisivo (Sierra i Fabra, 2000).

In this context of political change [of the Transition], songs played a decisive role

*la 'nueva canción' [la canción de autor] se fue introduciendo poco a poco, transformando la vida pública y privada y llegando a influir decisivamente - y así hay que decirlo, porque así fue - en la configuración de nuestra democracia ( my addition; emphasis in the original) (González Lucini, 1998: 59).*

*canción de autor became popular, little by little, transforming public and private life and influencing decisively - and it must be said like that, because it was like that! - the configuration of our democracy.*

As the above quotations suggest, the role that cultural agents played in the democratisation of Spain has received some scholarly attention. This interest has largely emerged from Cultural Studies-based works like that edited by Graham and Labanyi (1995). In Spain, some Cultural Studies research has focused upon singer-songwriting and political song more particularly. In this context, the critical, well-

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<sup>21</sup> In TV program "La aventura del saber" (Broadcast on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1999, TVE1, Canal Internacional).

structured and thorough work by Torrego Egido (1999) is very significant. Although much less analytical and more descriptive, González Lucini's attempt to reflect upon his own experience as a listener to *cantaautores* is also interesting (1998). More importantly, his four-volume research piece on *cancion de autor/a* (1984a; 1984b; 1986 and 1987) constitutes a comprehensive guide to the many topics and issues that this musical genre covered.

As noted earlier, and as happened with feminism and women's associations, however, the role that culture in general and certain popular cultural texts more particularly played in the Spanish Transition as vectors of democratisation has received little or no attention in much 'serious' well-established historiography. In fact, some historians affirm that culture was a very tangential element in the process of democratization of the country. That was the case of prestigious historian Tusell (1997). He believed that the political and cultural transitions that took place in Spain were independent phenomena that happened at different points in time (1997: 186). Such an affirmation is over-generalising. Some popular cultural forms had a closer relationship with politics than this scholar wanted to acknowledge. That was the case, for example, with political song and singer-songwriting. Some transformations affecting this musical genre run parallel to changes taking place in the broader socio-political scenario of the Transition, as this thesis will show throughout. An inverse process of influence also took place in the terms that will be analysed especially in the audience reception chapters. In order to set the basis for a deep understanding of this musical genre and, ultimately, for the chapters to come and the thesis as a whole, this last part of the chapter now turns to examine in some detail relevant aspects concerning the *canción de autor/a* of the Transition (1960-1982).

### Spanish *canción de autor/a* between 1960 and 1982

Helped partly by economic development at different levels, the fairly homogeneous Spanish musical scene of the 50s diversified to become very varied and rich in the 60s<sup>22</sup>. *Coplas*, the most popular musical genre of the 40s and 50s, survived into the 60s - and beyond - and still found a place among different media and audiences. Also in the 60s and 70s a good number of Spanish artists whose musical work could be labelled as *canción ligera* or *canción melódica* (“light song”, “melodic song”) became extremely popular (Román, 1994: 245). Overall, *coplas*, *canción ligera* and their performers had an unproblematic relationship with the establishment and, with some exceptions, they were generally well accepted by the Francoist regime. Another very important musical trend in the Spain of the 60s and 70s was that of pop-rock. It was especially popular among the younger generations (Román, 1994: 258, 267; Oró, 2001). As some critics have noted (e.g. Oró, 2001), the relationship of many of these pop-rock works and artists with the political establishment was often far from easy and unproblematic. This was partly due to the emphasis that pop-rock placed on issues of sexuality.

In this varied musical scene, *canción de autor/a* made its appearance: around 1962 Catalonia saw the birth of a cultural movement closely linked with popular music and a desire to spread the Catalan language (Román, 1994: 339, 340). The musical side to this cultural movement was called the *Nova Canço* (New Song), and its main representative was the heterogeneous group *Els Setze Jutges*. This “The Thirteen Judges” group included very popular figures like Lluís Llach, Quico Pi de la Serra,

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<sup>22</sup> For practical purposes, only an oversimplified version of an extremely complex musical landscape is being presented here. Román’s *Canciones de nuestra vida* (1994), and Vazquez Montalbán’s *Cancionero general del franquismo* (2000), and *Crónica sentimental de España* (1998), for example, offer more detailed information on the subject.

Guillermina Motta, and Joan Manuel Serrat. The well-known Valencian artist Raimon, and María del Mar Bonet from Majorca also had strong artistic links with *Els Setze Jutges* (Sierra i Fabra, 2000; Román, 1994: 340, 342). Later in the 60s, other movements arose in different areas of the Spanish state. For example, *Voces Ceibes* ("Free Voices") was born in Galicia around 1968 (García Villar, 1996: 11; 1997: 261, 263). Among its members were Xerardo Moscoso, Benedicto García, Vicente Araguas and Bibiano. These artists, like their Catalan counterparts, were especially interested in preserving their Galician language, while echoing and denouncing social problems (Turtós and Bonet, 1998: 22). The linguistic recovery of *Euskera*, a language fiercely suppressed by Francoism, was also a main concern for the Basque members of *Ez Dok Amairu* ("There Aren't Thirteen"). Among the best well-known artists of this movement were Benito Lertxundi, Mikel Laboa and Lourdes Oriundo (Turtós and Bonet, 1998: 25). Also in the 60s, Castile saw the birth of two important movements of *canción de autor/a*, namely *La Nueva Canción Castellana* ("The New Castilian Song") and *Canción del Pueblo* ("The People's Song"). *La Nueva Canción Castellana* was represented mainly by Luis Eduardo Aute and, at least at the beginning, by Massiel and Manolo Díaz. *Canción del Pueblo*, overall closer to an orthodox political commitment, was represented by Elisa Serna, Hilario Camacho, Julia León and Adolfo Celdrán, among others (Turtós and Bonet, 1998: 30).

In the 70s, Aragón contributed importantly to the flourishing of *canción de autor/a* thanks to singer-songwriter Joaquín Carbonell, the group *La Bullonera*, and the very well known and important singer-songwriter José Antonio Labordeta. In this decade, Andalucía also gave light to the committed work of important individual figures such as Carlos Cano (Turtós and Bonet, 1998: 30).

There were many other artists who in the 60s and 70s did not belong to a particular musical movement and whose work is difficult to label and classify. Ana Belén, Víctor Manuel and Joaquín Sabina are good examples of this list of unclassifiable political artists (González Lucini, 1998: 119). In Turtós and Bonet's view (1998: 27), other popular cases include the independent work by, for example, Rosa León, Paco Ibáñez and Luis Pastor. The work by Amancio Prada, Luis Eduardo Aute to a certain extent, and Miguel Ríos is often similarly difficult to classify and seems to equally respond to this independent mood of creation. Other authors such as Cecilia and Mari Trini, who could also be called *cantautoras*, were equally quite unique in important respects. In fact, they were quite different from most other singer-songwriters and did not respond to the typical politically-charged concept associated with the label *cantautor/a*. Overall, unlike most of the others, these artists did not use/conceive their musical works as overt public political interventions. Their songs were often more intimate in tone and addressed mainly the 'private' world of feelings and relationships. This does not mean, however, that these women's songs did not contain an important potentially subversive facet in terms of gender, for example (e.g. Cecilia's "Un ramito de violetas")<sup>23</sup>.

These are then some of the most well-known *cantautores* and *cantantes políticos* of the Transition. It should be clear, however, that *canCIÓN de autor/a* was a genre which flourished significantly both qualitatively and quantitatively at the time of the Transition throughout the Spanish state (González Lucini, 1984a, 1984b, 1986, and 1987). However, only a few *cantautores* made it into the national music scene and

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<sup>23</sup> "Un ramito de violetas" tells the story of a couple whose relationship seems rather distant. The husband, an apparently moody and not very thoughtful man, makes his wife believe that another man is interested in her and sends her flowers and loving letters with a different name. This makes his wife feel happy and attractive, and she carefully keeps it secret from her husband, who pretends not to know anything about it.

market of the time. As the ethnographic-based fieldwork carried out here showed, many others were active then, although they were often only known regionally or even merely locally. This made their subversive role even more daring and courageous, as they could not rely upon their wide popularity as a redeeming condition when confronting censorship, fines or even imprisonment. As a female informant noted,

hubo muchos que sin ser excesivamente famosos [...] dieron mucha guerra y se saltaron todo lo establecido [...] conocí a varios de los que no recuerdo el nombre en Carabanchel que se jugaban el tipo continuamente (Ávila, September 2003; e-mail interview).

there were many who, without being especially famous [...] caused loads of trouble [to the authorities] and broke all the rules [...] I met some of those in Carabanchel [a working-class area in Madrid] whose names I can't remember but who risked their necks all the time.

### *Spanish singer-songwriters' music*

Most sources agree that, musically speaking, Spanish *canción de autor/a* of the Transition was overall mainly inspired by three foreign musical movements (Aute - in *El Mundo*, 2003: 58; J. Sabina - in Boyero, 2000, and Menéndez Flores, 2001: 62; Gracia García and Ruiz Carnicer, 2001: 360; Sierra i Fabra, 2000; Turtós and Bonet, 1998: 12; Boyle, 1995: 292; González Lucini, 1984a: 173; Plaza, 1983: 32)<sup>24</sup>:

la canción francesa [...] en voces como la de Brassens, Leo Ferré, Ferrat o Jacques Brel; [...] el folk norteamericano, con Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger o Joan Baez, y en tercer lugar, la canción latinoamericana con dos voces hermanas de una extraordinaria sensibilidad: Violeta Parra y Atahualpa Yupanqui (González Lucini, 1998: 57).

the French song [...] through voices like that of Brassens, Leo Ferré or Jacques Brel [...] North American folk music, with Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger or Joan Baez, and third, Latin American song with two sibling voices of extraordinary sensitivity: Violeta Parra and Atahualpa Yupanqui.

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<sup>24</sup> Aute interviewed by Ortega Bagueño for *El Mundo* (9 November 2003, page 58).

However, these are only useful generalisations. A closer look at different artists and their work reveals a much more complex picture. As Gómez observes in his epilogue to González Lucini's work (1984b: 340),

[e]n la canción de autor española no ha existido nunca una homogeneidad formal, de estilos o influencias, pese a que se puede hablar de grandes líneas que han influido más o menos decisivamente en los diversos movimientos que se han dado. Reducir no obstante los esquemas musicales a cada una de estas corrientes o movimientos y no tener en cuenta las variantes que cada autor ofrece con su obra, sería una simplificación reductora de la riqueza musical que han aportado. [...] Temas todos ellos que deberían estudiarse y profundizarse antes de lanzar juicios gratuitos sobre el caduco concepto de cantautor con guitarra, tan denostado. (It should be noted that this text's referents are systematically male).

[i]n Spanish *canción de autor* there has never been formal homogeneity, of style or influences, in spite of the fact that we can talk about broad lines of greater or lesser influence of foreign music upon different Spanish musical movements. In any case, reducing musical patterns in Spanish *canción de autor* to each of these influential movements, not taking into account the variants that each particular author offers in his work, would be a reductive oversimplification of the musical richness that these Spanish artists have offered. [...] All these topics should be studied in depth before making gratuitous judgements about the so often abused, worn-out concept of the singer-songwriter with his guitar.

These aspects of foreign musical influence upon Spanish *canción de autor/a* of the Transition point to a more general issue that is especially interesting here. The fact that Spanish *canción de autor/a* incorporated foreign musical elements in its compositions did not come as a surprise. As Wade points out (1998), musical hybrids made up of diverse mixtures of local, regional, national and international elements are very common. As Frith also puts it (1989: 3), “[i]f nothing else, popular music study rests on the assumption that there is no such thing as a culturally ‘pure’ sound”. What is particularly interesting here then is the analysis of the ideological implications behind many *cantautores*' often conscious and obvious use of foreign musical elements, rather than a mere acknowledgment of their presence in a particular musical piece. In Wade's words (1998),

[w]hat matters, then, is not [solely] where these things come from, but what is being done with them by whom for what purpose. We need not [only] a politics of origins, but [also] a politics of intentions (my additions).

As Friedman points out (1999: 249) when talking about culture more generally,

[a]ll populations, no matter how bounded, are culturally mixed in terms of the genealogies of the meanings that they use. [...] It follows [...] that the problem of hybridity, as of purity, is a question of practices of identification. Who so identifies, when, and how? [...] The rise of a discourse of hybridity, [...] etc. is a social phenomenon and not the reflection of a neutral fact that has finally been discovered.

The application of Friedman's ideas to this specific case study is particularly enlightening here. Thus, the following questions arise: what is the meaning of Sabina's, and especially Víctor's and Ana's musical evolution between 1968 and 1982? What is behind the quite certainly conscious and conspicuous incorporation of foreign musical elements in their songs? What lied behind Ana's use of Chilean music in her 1977 album *La paloma de vuelo popular*, or her incorporation of Brazilian rhythms in later albums? How was Sabina's North American-inspired electric rock interpreted and received in Spain at the time of the Transition? The song analysis chapters will offer answers to these and other related questions.

#### *Audience typology*

This subsection will consider particularly audiences that attended recitals and concerts, and those who listened to *canción de autor/a* communally at friends' houses, for example. This is so because communal listening to this musical genre was especially relevant during the Transition period. But there is also a more practical reason for this special focus on communal listening: accessibility to those listeners who were an exception and always listened to this music individually, exclusively in

private settings – and perhaps did not fit the ‘typical’ images of listeners of *canCIÓN de autor/a* of the Transition - is rather difficult.

The ethnographic-based fieldwork carried out suggested that, especially before 1978, this musical genre did not reach audiences as wide and numerous as those reached by, for example, different mainstream pop-rock musical trends and artists. In fact, especially in the 60s, this genre was popular only among particular collectives which to a certain extent constituted minorities. This was partly due to the war that Francoism, fearing this genre’s contesting potential, exercised against it, especially through different types of censorship.

The ethnographic-based fieldwork undertaken also showed that the audiences of the *canCIÓN de autor/a* of the Transition were mainly made up of young, politically aware and/or committed left-wing individuals. This was especially the case before 1978. In terms of gender, audiences seemed to be fairly evenly balanced. Numerically speaking, both male and female university students and urban workers were among the most relevant type of audiences. However, other collectives also attended their recitals and concerts (Mainer, 1977: 14, 102, 133). Generally speaking, these artists’ audiences broadened as time went by and Francoism weakened. A recital review from the cultural magazine *Andalán* from 1975 reports that recitals in Aragón by Raimon, Labordeta and others often had

asistentes compuestos por ancianos, obreros del campo - mayores y jóvenes - y mujeres de éstos. Luego estaba la inevitable chiquillería y la juventud estudiantil (emphasis added; the particular gender treatment present in the text should be noted here; *Andalán*, 1<sup>st</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> October 1975: 10).

a public made up of older people, rural workers - both older and young - and their wives. Then there was the inevitable crowd of kids and student youth.

As an interviewee also noted, he recalled seeing in these recitals and concerts

[m]ucho joven universitario, mucho obrero, patillas, gafas de pasta, pantalones de campana y pelos largos. Y muchas consignas y gritos. Gente de clase obrera y clase media, pero también de media alta, intelectuales, profesores, profesionales liberales, curas,...yo creo que de todo, vaya (male participant; Zaragoza, December 2002- April 2003; e-mail interview).

many university students, many workers, sideburns, plastic-rimmed glasses, flares and long hair. And a lot of mottos and shouts. Working class people and middle class people, but also upper middle class people, intellectuals, teachers, liberal professionals, priests, ... a bit of everything, I would say.

To summarise, as Gómez notes in his epilogue to González Lucini's work:

[l]a canción de autor tuvo, por razones obvias, un público muy determinado. En primer lugar un público de afinidades generacionales, el que se encontraba entre los veinte y los treinta y cinco años [...]: universitarios de clase media, profesionales, obreros jóvenes directamente integrados en la lucha política. El sector de población que nutrió los partidos políticos de izquierda, los movimientos sociales que se enfrentaron con la dictadura, las organizaciones sindicales clandestinas. Las personas que creyeron en un cambio radical e inmediato a la caída de la dictadura, que pusieron todo en esa lucha y que se encontraban representados por la canción de autor, los contenidos que expresaba, las formas de vida que propugnaba [...] (1984b: 336).

[f]or obvious reasons, *canción de autor* had a very specific type of public. First, a public of generational affinity, that of those who were between twenty and thirty five [...]: middle class university students, young workers directly integrated in political struggle. The population sector that fed the left-wing political parties, the different social movements that confronted the dictatorship, the clandestine trade unions. The people who believed in a radical and immediate change after the fall of the dictatorship, [those] who put everything into that fight and who found themselves represented by *canción de autor*, [by] the contents that it expressed, [by] the ways of life it supported and encouraged [...]

#### Canción de autor/a and the political establishment between 1968 and 1982

The relationships between singer-songwriters and the *status quo* changed with time.

When considering the responses of the political authorities towards *canción de autor/a* between 1968 and 1982 two broad phases can be distinguished. The first period includes the years 1968 to 1977. The second phase runs from 1978 to 1982.

Before 1968 censorship affected singer-songwriting and political singers intensively. However, broadly speaking, the Francoist authorities did not seem to appreciate fully their threatening potential. From 1968 onwards, however, censorship and suspicion against this musical genre and its authors increased and strengthened enormously due to a variety of factors. Important events involving political singing occurred that year. Such events significantly popularised this musical genre and its performers and turned them into topics of discussion for both the Francoist authorities and the general public. For example, in 1968 Víctor Manuel participated in the *Festival del Atlántico* in Tenerife with his polemical songs “El cobarde” and “El tren de madera”. His choice of songs did not please the Francoist authorities, which tried hard to prevent their spread (Vázquez Azpiri, 1974: 58). That year Serrat also got involved in a very polemical incident which enraged the government: he defiantly refused to represent Spain at the Eurovision contest after he was banned from singing the entered song in Catalan. Also in 1968 Raimon gathered more than six thousand people at his recital at the Faculty of Politics and Economics in Madrid (González Lucini, 1998: 133). According to González Lucini,

[e]l recital de Raimon supuso, sin duda, un nuevo impulso para el desarrollo de la “nueva canción” en castellano, pero, a la vez, sirvió también para alertar, aún más, a las autoridades gubernamentales sobre el impacto y la repercusión revolucionaria que podía tener la canción respecto a la ruptura de la estabilidad del sistema. A partir de aquella fecha, la represión y la censura dirigidas, en particular, hacia la celebración de recitales, fueron cada vez mayor. (1998: 134).

Raimon’s recital gave, without a doubt, a new impulse to the development of the “new song” in Spanish, but, at the same time, it helped governmental authorities become even more aware of the impact and revolutionary after-effects that this new song could have in undermining the system’s stability. From that date onwards, repression and censorship grew significantly, and were especially directed against the celebration of recitals.

One more factor may have conditioned the authorities' more strict response towards *canción de autor/a* from 1968 onwards: the revolutionary events that took place in France that year, especially among young university students, put the Francoist authorities on alert. They were concerned that similar incidents could occur in Spain among students – as actually did happen, even if on a smaller scale<sup>25</sup>. They seemed especially concerned that this music, which was very popular among (politically committed) university students, could become a mobilising trigger for an already politically agitated youth.

Thus, broadly speaking, between 1968 and 1977 singer-songwriters and political song underwent a period of official persecution. It is not surprising that 1977, rather than the year of the dictator's death, is the date around which this first phase ends. As Fusi states, after Franco's death in November 1975, there was often a mismatch between the important progressive laws that were being introduced and ratified and the old habits that prevailed, especially among the police, the *guardia civil* (civil guards) and the army<sup>26</sup>. In this first phase of *canción de autor/a* running between 1968 and 1977 *cantautores* hardly ever appeared on TV and their work was rarely broadcast on the radio (Torrego Egido, 1999: 28, 292). Similarly, between 1968 and 1977 recitals by these artists were often, although not always, (semi-)illicit. As Sierra i Fabra (2000) puts it,

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<sup>25</sup> Even newspapers, which were censored, leaked the news of students' revolts taking place all over the country. In 1968 newspaper headlines and news like the following became commonplace in Spain: "Los estudiantes se manifestaron" ("Students demonstrated") (*Heraldo de Aragón*, 1968, 5<sup>th</sup> March. p. 22); "'Sentada' de los estudiantes frente a la Facultad de Medicina" ("Students organise sit-down protest opposite the Faculty of Medicine") (*Heraldo de Aragón*, 1968, 2<sup>nd</sup> April. p.6); "Varios centenares de estudiantes se encerraron en el aula 6 hasta las siete y diez de la tarde" ("a few hundred students locked themselves up in classroom 6 until ten past seven in the evening") (*Heraldo de Aragón*, 1968, 4<sup>th</sup> April, p.2). Plaza (1983: 65) also offers more information on this subject.

<sup>26</sup> Fusi in *La pelota vasca*, a film by Julio Medem (2003).

(l)os conciertos de cantautores son siempre una incógnita, y el público nunca sabe a partir de qué momento deberá abandonar sus sillas para ponerse a correr delante de los grises.

(c)oncerts by *cantautores* are always incognito, and the public never knows when they will have to leave their seats to start running in front of the *men in grey* [police].

Consequently, these recitals often took place in relatively small 'subaltern' venues such as university campuses, faculty halls (Gracia García and Ruiz Carnicer, 2001: 360), parishes, university halls of residences, *ateneos* and cinema-clubs (Fabuel Cava, 1998: 108).

1978 marked the beginning of a new phase for *canción de autor/a* and *cantautores*. By that year censorship had officially disappeared and different formerly illegal parties and trade unions had been legalised. Moreover, the arrival of a real system of liberal democracy seemed imminent thanks to the democratic ratification of the Spanish Constitution by the majority of Spanish citizens in December 1978. All these political and social changes had important effects upon singer songwriting and political singers. Their official status changed significantly. They were not persecuted by the establishment anymore and, as a result, concerts and recitals often changed their venues to adapt to the new circumstances and to a public that grew significantly in number: some of their performances took place at football stadiums and even bullrings (Villena, 2002: 70). These politically-committed artists also started to appear in magazines, newspapers, on legal radio stations and even on official television.

Especially interesting here is the relationship that was established between different singer-songwriters and political song and left-wing political parties and collectives especially from 1977-8 onwards. Different sources agree that left-wing political

parties and groups - sometimes opportunistically - used singer-songwriters and their work in public events in order to attract a larger public, and, ultimately, potential supporters and/or voters (Gómez in González Lucini, 1984b: 337; Torrego Egido, 1999: 32, 33, 39; Villena, 2002: 71).

The relevance of singer-songwriters and political singing as described so far decayed as the years passed and democracy consolidated. By 1982, The Movida, born in the wake of the democratic explosion, the punk movement and the English new wave (Fabuel Cava, 1998: 133) invaded the Spanish cultural (e.g. musical) terrain and left many singer-songwriters in the background. Scholars like Gómez believe that this crisis of the genre was not only due to the historical circumstances and to the *cantautores* themselves; he asserts that the opportunistic work of critics and that of the music industry also caused their decay (González Lucini, 1984b: 338).

## **CONCLUSION**

Informed by the theoretical feminist Gramscian framework adopted in chapter one, this second chapter has offered a historical contextualisation of the Spanish Transition. Such a contextualisation has aimed to establish the chronological limits of this thesis' context and topic of research, and to set the basis for an understanding of the coming chapters. This second chapter has first reflected upon current theoretical debates regarding issues of History. Following Ricoeur, "positivist conception[s] of the historical fact" (1981: 289) have been criticised and constructivist notions of history have been supported instead. The possibility of and need for "partial" and "locatable" [historical] "knowledges" (Haraway, 1991: 184), however, have also been

stressed. Such knowledges have been presented as emerging through “situated conversations” with different sources (Haraway, 1991: 200).

This chapter has also considered the difficulties of apprehending the Spanish Transition fully, either conceptually or chronologically. Inspired by Gramsci’s theories, it has reflected upon the appropriateness of relying upon a wide range of factors – political but also cultural, social and economic, for example - in order to understand better this historical period and to be able to set its chronological limits. Here the Spanish Transition has been described as a complex process of change that involved different agents at different levels. It was a struggle for hegemony that brought about important cultural, social, economic, religious, philosophical and political shifts that culminated in the establishment of a political system of liberal democracy. This chapter has also stressed that the Transition could be analysed as being close to a war of position in which different civil society agents and institutions played a crucial role. Chronologically speaking, it has been seen to run between 1960 and 1982, inclusive – although this thesis will focus more specifically upon the period 1968-1982, for the former date was the year in which Víctor Manuel started his career as a political singer-songwriter – Ana Belén and Joaquín Sabina started later in time.

This chapter has also considered counter-hegemonic agency during the Transition period (1960-1982). It has first criticised rather elitist accounts of agency which prevail in much mainstream literature on the subject. Following scholars such as Blakeley (2000), Domínguez (2000) and Soto (1998), for example, this chapter has supported the idea that different civil society collectives played a crucial role in the democratization of Spain (e.g. workers, university students, and some voices within

the established Catholic Church). Special emphasis has been placed upon two relevant counter-hegemonic agents that have received little or no attention in much mainstream historiography: namely, feminist anti-Francoist pressure groups, and some popular culture practices and artists – notably singer-songwriting and political singers. This alternative account of agency has not aimed to underestimate other already existent accounts, but to add new perspectives and shed some more light upon issues concerning counter-hegemonic agency during the Spanish Transition.

The section on feminist anti-Francoist pressure groups has stressed that, overall, these groups fought publicly for democracy in different ways (Asociación “Mujeres en la transición democrática”, 1999: 30). It has also highlighted that Spanish women as a whole were marginalised in relation to Spanish men. For example, they were legally discriminated against on a number of grounds (Falcón, 2001; Threlfall, 2002). In this marginalised context a number of contesting feminist groups and associations were set up in Spain. These feminists fought for legal equality, for the right of Spanish women to access secondary and higher education, as well as for sexual freedom and for the right to family planning, for example (González, 1979). These feminist groups’ actions were crucial, for instance, for the achievement of legal equality for Spanish women, as well as for the enlargement of democratic oppositional circles and demands at the time of the Transition (Threlfall, 2002).

This brief examination of the situation of Spanish women during Francoism, as well as of the role played by Spanish feminisms/ts between 1960 and 1982 answers different purposes. For example, it has aimed to set the basis for a later examination of the ways – if any - in which the works by Víctor, Ana and Sabina were concerned

with the particular realities of Spanish women of the time. This contextualising overview will also prove useful in other respects: it will allow for an analysis of the ways – if any - in which these feminist groups' requests informed the works of the artists under study here during the Transition.

Finally, this chapter has introduced issues of cultural struggle and popular counter-hegemony as related to *canCIÓN de autor/a* of the Transition. This musical genre and its performers have been presented here as cultural anti-Francoist agents. This chapter has also stressed that Spanish *canCIÓN de autor/a* of the Transition ran parallel to broader socio-political developments in important ways. Some aspects concerning this specific musical genre which will prove relevant in the coming chapters have also been addressed here in some detail: namely, its music, its audiences, and the evolution of its socio-political status between 1968 and 1982. Musically speaking, the existence of important political implications behind the – surely most often conscious - use of 'typically' 'national' but also 'international' music in singer-songwriting has been highlighted. In terms of audience typology, this chapter has noted that many of those who listened to this genre were – often young - left-wing, politically-committed men and women. Finally, it is worth noting that, in terms of its relationship with the establishment, Spanish *canCIÓN de autor/a* underwent two main phases. Francoist authorities persecuted singer-songwriting officially between 1968 and 1977. Between 1978 and 1982 the status of singer-songwriters normalised to a certain extent: they were officially tolerated, and were openly used by different left-wing parties for political purposes - these singers were very popular then and potentially influential among different individuals and groups.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS: SCOPE AND RATIONALE

#### INTRODUCTION

This third chapter turns to consider in detail the main research methods of the thesis. Overall, it is informed by the theoretical issues discussed in chapter one and the context of research presented in chapter two - it aims to create a research method sensitive in the broader sense to this thesis' specific topic, context of study and aims of research. It pays attention to historical contextualisation, song analysis and qualitative research into audience reception as investigative methods. Attention paid to these three methods of research - and in that order - responds to a desire to observe and explain the mental processes that I underwent as a researcher in the development and subsequent presentation of this thesis.

#### HISTORICAL CONTEXTUALISATION

Out of the three artists under study here, Sabina was the one whose work I first became acquainted with. It was in the early to mid nineties, while I was still nearly a fresher at secondary school, that a good friend of mine gave me a copy of this artist's first album (*Inventario*, 1978). I enjoyed listening to it and discovering that his songs escaped the stereotypical lyrics present in many of the musical works that were popular at the time. However, it was not easy to understand. I remember listening carefully to "1968" but missing most of the information, for it talked about historical

events that were unknown to me at the time. Then I did not really understand either why anyone in the late seventies would want to speak about things that apparently had happened ten years earlier. I also remember noting some of its phrases, and trying to decipher its meanings and references by looking them up in an Encyclopaedic Dictionary. Then it made more sense. Something similar happened to me when I first listened to his “Mi vecino de arriba”. I had heard of Franco and Francoism then, but phrases like “unidad de destino en lo universal” completely escaped my understanding. Moreover, I did not quite understand why Sabina would want to sing about that issue then. It was only after I checked in a history book that it all started to come together.

These early experiences with *canción de autor/a* made me realise that history was bound to play a crucial role in this thesis at different related levels. As chapter two showed, history is here part of the research setting itself: this project deals throughout with the struggle for hegemony that was the Spanish Transition and therefore a thorough approach to it seemed necessary for the development of the thesis. Hence the importance of chapter two. But here history is also a main research method. As I noted when I was only a teenager, songs have a context that needs to be considered. As I had also experienced, historical contextualisation could go beyond the restrictive and sometimes misleading possibilities offered by merely textual analytical approaches to songs. Thus, when I started this thesis, historical contextualisation was immediately adopted as a research method. Potentially, its consideration would allow sensitive, perceptive and grounded interpretations of the songs to be studied here. That is why historical contextualisation will appear again embedded in the song analysis chapters. The presentational technique used for introducing historical

contextualisation in such chapters will entail the use of both Francoist and oppositional, discourses together. They will be compared and the differences and similarities between them will be highlighted. At a different but related level, historical contextualisation also seemed a key element for the analysis of the role and significance of singer-songwriting in the context of the Transition: it would allow, for example, an examination of the effects of this musical genre and its authors and/or performers in the historical setting under study here. At yet another different - but still connected - level, history will appear in this thesis as an important topic present in the actual songs by the singers under study, as Chapter Four will show.

## **SONG ANALYSIS**

As noted above, knowing the historical context of the Transition well seemed very important in order to approach sensitively the study of the Spanish singer-songwriters of that period. When engaging in the study of political popular song of the Transition as represented by Víctor Manuel, Ana Belén and Joaquín Sabina, it was also obvious that paying attention to the actual songs by these artists had to be a prime concern. Taking into consideration their songs entailed observing a number of issues and elements that will be explored in some detail in the following subsections.

### **Criteria for song selection**

The musical work by Ana, Sabina, and especially that by Víctor between 1968 and 1982 is vast. Between those years Víctor released fifteen albums which contained over 140 songs. Ana produced eight albums which included more than a hundred musical pieces, and Sabina released three LPs which contained 33 songs in total. It

would be impossible to explore all these songs in a document like this. For practical reasons, an important task of song selection has therefore been carried out in this thesis. This song selection process has responded mainly to an attempt to address the intricacies of the research questions posed in the Introduction. It has also aimed to show the richness and complexity of the works by these three artists, for, in some circles, it has not been always fully known and/or appreciated. Thus, this thesis has not only considered those songs by the three performers that present similar, coherent and straightforward approaches to history, class, love or sexuality, for example. On the contrary, it has also considered those works which introduce tensions, ambivalences, ambiguities and/or contradictions within themselves and/or paradigmatically in relation to other songs by these same artists. Paying attention to these works has in turn facilitated the exploration of the mechanisms that operate at the core of such complexities, ambivalences and contradictions, and how these relate to the broader historical and socio-political context.

One of the main aims of this thesis has been to explore the influence of singer-songwriting upon certain audiences and collectives in the cultural and socio-political scenario of the Spanish Transition. That is why popularity has also appeared here as a relevant criterion for song selection. It seems logical to think that, in principle, the most popular songs by these artists may have influenced a wider audience in one way or another. However, as scholars such as Williams (1983: 236-8), Middleton (1995: 3,) and Frith (1996: 15) have explained, 'popular' and 'popularity' are very complex terms. Among other reasons, they are problematic because of the multiplicity of denotative and connotative meanings that they have acquired with the passing of time. They are also problematic because of the shifting nature of what and who is popular

in different temporal and spatial contexts. Here popularity will be mainly determined by recurrence: this thesis will carefully examine some of those songs that are recurrently mentioned and/or commented upon in different sources when referring to the years of the Transition. This recurrence seems to suggest that perhaps these works were special and/or important for these sources for different reasons.

The sources upon which this thesis relies in order to identify the most recurrent songs are varied and different in nature. I first relied upon the information received from the women and men that participated in this research project as interviewees. In many cases, these participants were followers of these artists and/or *canción de autor/a* more generally at the time of the Transition. Thus, they were able to provide first-hand information about which songs by *cantautores* were most widely-known then. Other sources that proved relevant in this respect were the available biographies of the artists: that about Víctor by Vázquez Azpiri (1974), those on Sabina by De Miguel (1986) and Menéndez Flores (2000), and Villena's (2002) and Rodríguez Marchante's (1993) work on Ana. Other published written material and different web sites devoted to these artists also proved significant. Finally, I also relied upon recurrence as shown in the albums released by these three artists. Thus, some of the songs that recurrently re-appear, for example, in their Greatest Hits albums, were chosen.

The song selection process carried out yielded a corpus of 18 songs for detailed analysis, namely, Víctor's "El cobarde", "La planta 14", "María Coraje", "Quiero tener la sombra de tu cuerpo", "Sólo pienso en ti" "Esto no es una canción" and "Quién puso más"; Ana's "Voy por todo tu cuerpo", "La muralla", "Tengo" "Agapimú", "Me matan si no trabajo" and "Los amores de Ana"; and Sabina's

“1968”, “Mi vecino de arriba”, “Pongamos que hablo de Madrid”, “Tango del quinielista”, and “Adivina, adivinanza”. Due to their relevance, Ana’s “La muralla”, Víctor’s “La planta 14”, and Sabina’s “Mi vecino de arriba” received special attention: they will be introduced as case studies at the end of each song analysis chapter and their analysis will combine my own interpretation of the songs with explicit references to the findings gathered during the audience fieldwork carried out. This process of song selection also provided a body of 41 songs for close analysis of particular themes. Such a list of songs includes, for example, Víctor’s “El viejo coronel”, “El abuelo Víctor”, “Quiero abrazarte tanto”, “Buenos días, Adela mía”, “Asturias”, “Soy un corazón tendido al sol” and “Ay amor”; Ana’s “Lady Laura”, “Soy yo mi amor”, “Te besaba la arena en la playa”, “Si te quiero es porque somos”, “Calle del Oso”, “Julián Grimau”, “Desde mi libertad” and “El hombre del piano”; and Sabina’s “Inventario”, “Palabras como cuerpos”, “Canción para las manos de un soldado”, “Calle Melancolía” and “Qué demasiao”. Specific allusions to other pieces by these artists which are not part of this 41-song list will be also made whenever it is considered appropriate.

### **Method of song analysis: scope and rationale**

For obvious practical reasons, the songs analysed in this thesis are versions recorded on vinyl; not those performed and audio-visually recorded in different concerts or recitals given by the artists subject to study<sup>27</sup>. More concretely, the song analysis offered here relies upon digitally re-masterized copies of the original vinyl versions of the songs that were sold on LP format at the time. This needs to be stressed because,

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<sup>27</sup> There are two important exceptions here: Víctor Manuel’s *En directo* (1976) and Sabina’s *La Mandragora* (1981). Both albums were recorded live at a concert and a recital, respectively. Examining audio-visual material of these artists’ performances is very difficult: especially before 1976 these singer’s recitals were often banned in Spain, and public TV did not record them.

strictly speaking, every different performance of a song potentially constitutes a different text (Potter, 1998: 165)<sup>28</sup>. Moreover, it should be noted that song perception and understanding is profoundly situated – e.g. physically located - (Longhurst, 1995: 23; Swiss, Sloop et al. 1998: 3). For example, listening to music at home, replaying the same song over and over again in order to decode its meanings for a thesis is not the same as singing that same song in a *mítin-concierto* organised by a political party in the middle of the Spanish Transition. This is an inevitable drawback for which I will try to compensate throughout this thesis. Thus, as noted earlier, in the song analysis provided, the broader historical context of the songs will be considered, both as constructed in the available written literature and by those participants who helped in the development of this research project.

### Inspiring models

The method of song analysis adopted here has been loosely inspired by Gray's (2000) and to a lesser extent Day's (1988) work on Bob Dylan. Gray's work especially seemed a useful guide because of its wide-ranging nature, although reservations about some of his philosophical stances and his overall neglect of, for example, issues of gender could be posed. In his analysis of Dylan's work, this scholar does not only consider lyrics; he also notes other elements of the musical text such as, for example, the artist's "vocal delivery" (2000: 377). Moreover, although he does not explicitly reflect upon the rationale of his method of song analysis, he knowingly integrates biographical, literary and other contextual elements that help provide more rounded interpretations of Dylan's work and significance. The works by Pilkington (1994) and Ryback (1990), and especially that by Mattern (1998) have also proved inspiring for

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<sup>28</sup> Rubidge offers a discussion on some of the theoretical positions adopted by scholars today when reflecting on the relationship performance-text (1996: 220). As she hints out, some researchers suggest that, strictly speaking, every performance of a text constitutes a different text altogether.

their insightful analysis of the connection between specific types of songs and their broader socio-political contexts. My background as *Licenciada en Filología Inglesa* (Bachelor of English Philology) has also largely influenced the method of song analysis carried out here, both at a strictly textual level (the text being here the song itself) and at a more extra-textual one. For instance, I have borrowed a good number of concepts and tools of analysis especially from literary studies, but also from narratology (broadly informed by, for example, Barthes, 1977: 111-12), and even linguistics.

### The textual and extra-textual analysis of songs

In order to provide more rounded and adequate interpretations of the works by the three singers the song analysis provided here will be 'textual' as well as 'extra-textual'. It will be textual because it will consider different meaningful elements of the songs (=texts) themselves such as lyrics, music, and the singers' vocal performance on vinyl. It will also be extra-textual because it will equally take into account other more contextual layers: it will consider the artists' biographies and, as noted earlier, the broader socio-historical and cultural context in which these songs were created and/or received.

#### *1) The textual analysis:*

The more strictly textual level of analysis encompasses the consideration of different elements of songs that play an important role in the construction of meaning, namely music, the singers' voices in performance on vinyl, and lyrics. All these elements interact with each other in songs in order to create complex structures of meaning, some of which will be examined in the song analysis chapters.

-Music

When considered appropriate, explicit references to music as such will be made in the song analysis chapters. Special emphasis will be placed on highlighting some of the ways in which music interplayed with words in subtle ways. I will highlight how, in specific cases, this continual interplay between music and lyrics, or rather, “lyrics in performance” (Frith, 1996: 166) enabled the latter to be “reinforced, accented, blurred, belied, [and/or] inspired to new meaning [, etc.]” (Booth 1981: 7-8) [my additions]. As Frith highlights (1996: 186-7), music is better studied in its integration with lyrics. As he sees it, what is interesting is “the relationship between the two different sorts of meaning-making, the tensions and conflicts between them”. This is especially so here: as will be discussed later on, music was often subordinated to lyrics as message(s) in Spanish singer-songwriting of the Transition. In the particular cases of Víctor and Ana this was especially true in their work prior to 1978; in the case of Sabina his first three albums also share this characteristic overall. Thus, with some notable exceptions, music in a good number of these artists’ songs – as in many other songs by numerous *cantautores* of the time - is not very catchy, and it is definitely not appropriate for dancing in a Spanish cultural and musical context<sup>29</sup>.

The fact that this music was not very catchy in some cases especially before 1978 is significant. It seems to implicitly point to the connections existent between this type of song and politics: as time went by and the arrival of democracy seemed more tangible, more catchy celebratory music regained prominence. From 1979 on, some songs by Ana and Víctor especially made use of often foreign and more likeable rhythms. Ana’s techno-pop in “Agapimú” (1979) or her reggae tunes in “Banana

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<sup>29</sup> Today this genre is often more strictly musically driven. Unlike in the Transition, today it is easy to find Spanish songwriters whose songs have “a strong sense of driving rhythm which encourage the audience to get up and dance” (Shea, 2002: 237).

Republic" (1981) seem to respond to this more overtly musically-oriented trend. Víctor's calypso in "Luna" (1980) and his electric rock in "Esto no es una canción" (1981) are also good examples of this revitalised interest in music *per se*<sup>30</sup>. This revival of strictly musical concerns, however, did not translate into neglect of lyrics. For different reasons words still remained highly significant, as the section on lyrics will show.

### *-Voice*

As many scholars from different academic fields have noted, voice is also a crucial element in the making of meaning at different levels (Sapir, 1972: 75, 77, 80; Laver, 1994: 2). Drawing upon the knowledge of disciplines such as phonetics, the importance of the voice as a meaning-making component of songs has also been explored by well-known scholars in the field of (popular) music (for example, by Middleton, 1995: 53; Frith, 1978: 178-9, 1988: 120 and 1996: especially 185-199; as well as by Barthes – especially 1977 -, 1985: 254-5, 279; and Booth, 1981:14).

As Potter puts it (1998: 88) the voice is crucial because it invests "the performance with a reconstructed reality which allows the performer to offer the listeners many layers of potential meaning". These layers of potential meaning are determined by elements such as, for example, voice qualities, intonation, tone of voice or accent. Their interaction creates meanings that can be taken as, among other things, signs of emotion and mood, or marks of character, personality and/or membership of particular intellectual and/or socio-economic groups (Laver, 1994: 2, 14). All these meanings are, of course, largely historically, socially and culturally constructed

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<sup>30</sup> Sabina's electric rock will become especially prominent later in time, in 1984, with *Ruleta Rusa*.

(Sapir, 1972: 77). When considered appropriate these issues on the meaning of voice will be explicitly addressed in the song analysis chapters.

### *-Lyrics*

Lyrics, or rather, “lyrics in performance” (Frith 1996: 166), were also very relevant elements in Spanish *canción de autor/a* of the Transition. In fact, performed lyrics as conveyors of messages and ideas (rather than as aesthetic artefacts) were probably the most crucial elements in this type of songs and will therefore receive special attention in the song analysis chapters. There are a number of elements in these songs that point to this crucial status of their lyrics (Carbayo Abengózar and Pérez Villalba, 2003). It is significant, for example, that many of the performances given by *cantantes políticos* in Spain at the time, and especially before 1977, were often presented and understood as recitals, rather than as concerts<sup>31</sup>. The term “recital” is etymologically significant here, as it suggests the importance that words, lyrics, as conveyors of messages, had in such a type of performances: Spanish “recital” derives from “recitar”, which in turn originally comes from the Latin verb “recitare”; “recitare” meaning “to read (poetry) aloud or in public”.

There were other relevant links between singer-songwriting and political singers and especially Hispanic poetry and poets. In the Spanish and Latin American contexts, poetry was often approached from two different perspectives. A good number of poetic movements showed a special concern with wording for aesthetic purposes, rather than with questions of message (e.g. Spanish and Latin American modernism).

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<sup>31</sup> Broadly speaking, recital often technically refers to a musical performance given by an artist using just one instrument, at a relatively small venue for a numerically relatively small public. Concerts are usually larger-scale performances which often involve the use of different musical instruments. These differences, however, do not always map easily onto real life situations.

Many other poetic trends, however, were equally or primarily concerned with wording in its role of transmission of ideas (e.g. Spanish social poetry of the 50s and the early 60s). For different reasons, generally speaking, Spanish singer-songwriting of the Transition was structurally and philosophically closer to the latter than to the former. As Sierra i Fabra pointed out (2000) when referring to *cantautores* of the Transition, “la canción y la poesía caminan de la mano en la obra de muchos trovadores modernos que optan por un compromiso con su tiempo” (“song and poetry walk hand in hand in the work of many modern troubadours who decide to commit themselves to their times”). Mainer’s description of the work by singer-songwriter José Antonio Labordeta (1977: 7) is also telling in this respect:

Labordeta concibe su tarea musical como un aspecto más de su vocación literaria - a medias entre lo “artístico” y lo “social”, muy típica del momento en que empezó a escribir - y, en consecuencia, la proyecta al público con la misma conciencia de autoría con la que un poeta o un novelista ordenarían una antología comentada de sus obras completas.

Labordeta conceives his musical work as one more aspect of his literary vocation – between the “artistic” and the “social” – so typical of the moment in which he started writing. Consequently, he projects his work to the public with the same consciousness of authorship as a poet or novelist who organises an annotated anthology of his complete works.

In the particular cases of Ana, Sabina and Víctor this connection between politically-committed poetry and song was also clear and recurrent in some of their works: for example, the lyrics of Ana’s 1977 songs “Tengo” and “La muralla” were originally poems written by socialist Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén. In the case of Sabina, most songs in his first album *Inventario* (1978) first reached the public as poems published in his *Memorias del exilio* (1976) (Menéndez Flores 2000: 39). This clearly reveals the importance that words and ideas expressed in “Tengo”, “La muralla” and in the songs in *Inventario* should be given. The connections that Víctor established between his songs and poetry are also interesting: he often presented himself - explicitly or

implicitly - as a (politically-committed) poet, with all the implications that derive from this identification. This happened in “Mis canciones” (1970), as well as in other songs from his 1971 album *Dame la mano* such as “Siempre estoy empezando tu poema”. In “Estos versos escritos con dolor”, from his 1975 album *Canción para Pilar*, the identification of the narrator-author with a politically-committed poet is also clear. In some cases Víctor even guided his audiences in their reading of his songs by explicitly reflecting on the meaningfulness of words through his own musical work. An evident example appears in the already mentioned “Mis canciones”. In this song, the narrator, who can be easily identified with Víctor’s public *persona*, leads the listener in her/his understanding of the song:

trabajo en un rincón y me siento feliz  
si encuentro la “*palabra*”  
para *contaros* todo  
lo que quiero y me dejan  
aunque todos sepáis lo que el silencio encierra [italics added]

I work in a corner and I feel happy  
if I find the “*word*”  
to *tell you* everything  
that I want to and they let me  
although you all know what silence contains

These lines are very important: the author is here highlighting that lyrics in his songs are not arbitrary. Instead, they have been carefully chosen for the meanings that they convey. These lines are also suggesting that songs are not only musical pieces; more importantly, they carry ideas and tell stories. For example, the use of the word “contaros” – “tell you” - instead of “cantaros” – sing to you - should be noted here. This choice is especially significant because choosing “cantaros” instead of “contaros” would have altered neither the stress in the word nor the number of syllables in the verse. Again, this suggests a very conscious political use of words.

Another structural feature that linked *canCIÓN de autor/a* with poetry relates to issues of verse length. Many songs by these artists resembled poems following classical poetic conventions in their use of particular verse length structures. For example, all the lines/verses in Víctor's "La Planta 14" (1969) were fourteen syllables long, while those in his "Quiero tener la sombra de tu cuerpo" (1975) were eleven syllables long<sup>32</sup>. In Sabina's "Tratado de impaciencia número 10" (1978) all verses – except one – were nine syllables long, while his "40 Orssett Terrace" (1978) was mostly made up of eleven-syllable-long lines.

At a different level, the formal structure of many of these songs also pointed to a conscious attempt on the side of the artists to emphasize lyrics. This emphasis on lyrics was achieved through the use of different formal strategies. For example, unlike other variants of popular song, a good number of songs by *cantautores* did not have a chorus; some of them did not even repeat a single line/verse. In fact, these songs were often narratives with a beginning, middle and end. This occurred in a good number of songs by the artists studied here; for example, in Ana's "Calle del Oso" (1975) and "Tengo" (1977); in Víctor's "El cobarde" (1969), "La planta 14" (1967), and "María Coraje"; and in Sabina's "Tango del quinielista" (1978), "Mi vecino de arriba" (1978), and "Adivina, adivinanza" (1981), to name just a few.

Potentially, this lack of repetition has two effects: it prevents the listener from relaxing and letting her/himself be carried away by the music and its rhythm while listening to these songs. It also often creates the impression that the stories being sung

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<sup>32</sup> Poetic conventions and parameters in English and Spanish are rather different. Poetry in English is especially concerned with the combination of accented and unaccented syllables in a verse. Rhythm in 'classical' poetry in Spanish works rather differently: poets are often mainly concerned with the number of syllables that verses have in a poem.

are not only part of entertaining musical constructions. Instead, they seem to be narrations or descriptions of events that happened - or could happen - in 'real' life. In other words, the feasibility of those stories is enhanced because structurally and semantically the texts usually have a beginning, middle and end. Having said that the specific formal structure of many of these songs asks for their lyrics to be listened to does not imply, however, that this feature is in itself a marker of their political nature. Rather, there is an intervening stage: it is what the songs then convey that confirms their status as politically committed interventions.

While many songs by *canción de autor/a* presented these structural peculiarities, others were more conventional and followed the pattern of many other types of popular song. For example, Ana's "La muralla" did have a chorus. In fact, a good number of interviewees noted that the popularity of this song – it was a favourite in meetings at friends' houses, demonstrations, and other public political events - largely depended on its recurrent lyrical simplicity - its lyrics are relatively easy to memorise, they claimed<sup>33</sup>.

The importance of lyrics in *canción de autor/a* was also emphasized and determined by some genre conventions and expectations. For example, the public performance of *canciones de autor/a* often entailed the presence of a seated public. This physical position encouraged an attentive listening to the song lyrics. The *a priori* political meanings that were often attached to these musical pieces should not be underestimated either. Most listeners approached these songs with certain expectations and assumptions because of who they were performed by - it was well

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<sup>33</sup> This idea was defended by, for example, different participants from the Ávila focus group meeting (September 2003).

known that the artists performing these songs were politically involved in different ways. For example, everybody knew that Víctor and Ana were communists at the time. Consequently, their public and their detractors expected to find particular political messages in their songs. In other words, a naïve lyrically-harmless song could have potentially acquired strong political significance in a particular context because of the political aura that surrounded its performer. That is why those musically speaking more-catchy songs by Víctor and Ana released especially after 1977 were still perceived by many at the time as political, and their lyrics were still very much considered by many listeners. These later songs carried an important socio-political baggage that determined their understanding and significance.

All the formal strategies, genre conventions and expectations mentioned in the previous paragraphs seemed to work as expected, at least with some audiences. That is what the fieldwork carried out suggested: when asked what element(s) of *canción de autor/a* they paid more attention to, virtually all the participants corroborated that, for them, the message/s in the lyrics was/were the most important element/s in these type of songs<sup>34</sup>.

Having said that lyrics most often seemed to attract a great deal of attention among many members in the audience does not mean, however, that this was always the case in a simple way. In fact, apparently paradoxical situations occurred sometimes. For example, particular musical pieces sung in Catalan, such as Lluís Llach's "L'estaca" and Raimon's "Al Vent" and "Diguem no" became real milestones of Spanish protest song throughout Spain. Even the non-Catalan speaking *pueblos* of the Spanish state

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<sup>34</sup> For example, almost all those who participated in the written interviews agreed that lyrics as messages were especially important for listeners to *canción de autor/a* of the Transition (Zaragoza, March- July 2004).

dearly adopted them as theirs. While these songs lyrics in Catalan could be given a strong political reading, many Castilian Spanish speaking audiences did not understand (all) the words in the song, even when many of them could grasp the gist of it. The fieldwork carried out showed that some non-Catalan speaking audiences participated by word of mouth in translating and explaining to one another the meaning of these songs' lyrics<sup>35</sup>. This fieldwork also suggested that these works often transcended the meanings constructed through their lyrics to become icons of political resistance throughout the Spanish state.

## 2) *The extra-textual analysis*

Realities like those exposed in the previous paragraph reasserted that, as noted earlier, a wider-ranging approach to song analysis was needed here. As scholars such as Negus (1996: 192, 194-5), Swiss, Sloop et al. (1998: 3) and Frith (1996:250) point out, the meanings of music and songs do not reside fully in the texts themselves, for "the detail of social context can have a great effect on meaning and form of appropriation of a text" (Longhurst, 1995: 23). Thus, "a context sensitive analysis of the music in culture" and society seemed both enlightening and necessary (Blacking, 1973: 17-18).

That is why here, ethnomusicology, or rather, some ethnomusicological concerns, seemed particularly useful theoretical and practical tools of analysis. Ethnomusicology is a broad discipline which deals with a variety of issues. For example, it engages with "the comparative study of musical systems", with "the comprehensive study of all sorts of music and musical phenomena" (Nettl, 1983:

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<sup>35</sup> This was noted by, for example, different participants from the Ávila focus group (September, 2003).

358), as well as with “the problem of defining music” (Nettl, 1983: 15)<sup>36</sup>. An ethnomusicological account seemed enlightening here especially because this discipline considers “not just the musical sound structures themselves”, but also - or rather, in this case - some of the different processes “and contexts through and within which music is imagined, discussed and made”; ethnomusicology is relevant here because it aims to relate music to its “broader social, cultural and political contexts” (Stock, 2003a); because it aims “to discover what music means to particular groups of people - what part it plays in their lives” (Stock, 2003b), and in particular spatial and temporal contexts. As Nettl (1983) and Zamora Pérez (2000: 34) similarly point out, “music must be understood as a part of culture, a product of human society” (Nettl, 1983: 9) because both society and music, “however distinct, cannot be independent, since they are coexistent manifestation of the world we live in” (Frith, 1991: viii).

This situated and situating knowledge of ethnomusicology proved decisive in different ways for the development of this thesis. It importantly conditioned both the criteria for song selection and the method of song analysis adopted here and previously discussed (e.g. its special emphasis on lyrics in performance). At a different but interrelated level, it also affected my determination to consider the artists’ biographies, and reasserted my initial decision to embrace historical contextualisation as one of the main methods of research. As the previous subsection stressed, an examination of the social, political, cultural, and economic contextual peculiarities in which Spanish singer-songwriting of the Transition originated and was

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<sup>36</sup> Nettl’s *The Study of Ethnomusicology* (1983), for example, offers a detailed holistic approach to this discipline. His comprehensive work is still considered today one of the founding pillars of ethnomusicology, in spite of his - sometimes even self-acknowledged - western ethnocentrism (e.g. 1983: 7, 10, 19).

received seemed both useful and necessary, especially when considering the aims of this thesis.

## QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON AUDIENCE RECEPTION

The situating awareness of ethnomusicology noted above also proved crucial when deciding to adopt qualitative research on audience reception as an investigative method. Given the aims of this thesis, the detailed textual exploration of the three artists' works in their broader historical context seemed insufficient. Or rather, such an analysis needed a new perspective: this thesis aimed to explore the role/s played by singer-songwriters and political singing during the Transition period. It was interested in knowing the specific ways – if any - in which these cultural agents affected some people's lives and/or moved them to action at the time of the Transition. It also aimed to start an analysis of how *canción de autor/a* was understood and perceived at the time. In order to achieve both related objectives, research on audience reception appeared as a relevant tool of analysis: asking actual audiences<sup>37</sup> of *canción de autor/a* of the Transition to reflect on how they used, perceived, received and were influenced by this musical genre and its performers at the time seemed potentially enlightening.

### Why consider audiences

By paying attention to audiences, this research project opened up a new and enriching line of investigation based on more democratic and poly-vocal principles: potentially,

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<sup>37</sup> Ang criticises (1991: 13, 162) that thinking of 'the audience' in the singular, as a whole, is very misleading. It is deceptive because the same text is usually received by often very heterogeneous and different audiences. More importantly, different actual members of such audiences interpret, and enjoy texts in different ways and use them for different purposes.

this research could provide grounds to establish a dialogue between the analysis of the songs in context, the relevant available literature, and the participants' valuable first-hand testimonies as citizens who experienced the Spanish Transition themselves and listened to this musical genre at the time. This dialogue did take place and this research on audience reception proved very useful and enlightening. I learnt a lot from the participants. In fact, their experiences and stories greatly enriched and influenced this research throughout, and they will be conspicuously present, for example, in Part Three of this thesis and in the case studies introduced in the song analysis chapters.

It should be clear, however, that the notion of 'audience' is far from simple and unproblematic. There are many different approaches to the notion and study of audience(s). Critics such as James A. Anderson (1996: 75) point out that audience is after all "a discursive subject; too large to be apprehended directly in experience, it is a construction of our research and theorizing". Tincknell and Raghuram (2002) consider "the idea of audience as a set of relations with a text, rather than a fixed and determining social category to which we may or may not belong". Allor's approach to issues of audience is especially enlightening and relevant here. As he points out, audience is a very complex nineteenth-century term designating collectivity. Its complexity lies in the fact that it can

designate a range of traits and levels, including (but not limited to): the interpretive competencies of individuals; the co-presence of individuals in a reception situation; an active social relation of collective interpretation; the "market" for a particular commodity; the "imaginary" constructions of cultural creators; the "public" of a particular genre; and the totality of potential receivers of a given media form (Allor, 1996: 213).

In real life all these conceptions of audience to which Allor refers often intermingle in complex ways. This thesis will make extensive use of this term. Here 'audience/s'

will be often used to express simultaneously some of those nuances noted by Allor. Especially important here are the meanings of audience/s as “co-presence of individuals in a reception situation”, an “active social relation of collective interpretation”, a “‘market’ for a particular commodity” and a “‘public’ of a particular genre” (Allor, 1996: 213). Whenever the word audience appears in this research project the context will clearly determine its specific contextual meaning/s.

The underlying assumption behind the partial study of audience reception presented here is that receivers are key figures in the construction of meanings of texts (Fiske, 1989: 122). They are essential because, potentially, audiences participate actively in the utilization of popular (musical) texts (Middleton, 1995: 57, 60; Frith, 1996: 203; Longhurst, 1995: 13; Graham and Labanyi, 1995: 5; Martin, 1995: 56). The theoretical stance adopted here then rejects the already widely criticised position defended by Adorno<sup>38</sup>, who systematically equated the reception of popular musical texts with passivity on the side of the receiver. He considered popular music to be an entertainment which only demanded and generated inattention and distraction in the listener (Adorno, 1990: 305, 309-10)<sup>39</sup>.

Adorno’s over-generalising position is unsustainable if applied to Spanish *canción de autor/a* of the Transition. This musical genre did not aim to get the audience “distracted from the demands of reality by entertainment” (Adorno, 1990: 309-10). On the contrary, its *raison d’être* was very much directed at triggering the audiences’ attentive listening to its often politically significant song lyrics. As pointed out earlier,

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<sup>38</sup> Longhurst offers a useful compilation of some of the criticism that Adorno’s classical “On Popular Music” has generated (e.g. in 1995: 11, 12, 20, 21).

<sup>39</sup> As some critics have noted, this position seems partially understandable when considered in the context full of turmoil, anxiety and uncertainty in which it originated: it was written in 1941, during World War II. Adorno wrote it in the United States after escaping the atrocities of Nazi Germany.

this apparently conscious attempt on the side of the artists to activate their audiences' critical and intellectual senses shaped importantly this musical genre's formal and thematic structure. These strategies were often successful, at least among some audiences, as the audience reception chapters will show. The audiences' active interpretation of songs meant that different individuals sometimes understood the same texts in (slightly) different ways. This diversity of understanding, however, should not be seen as incompatible with the ethnomusicological approach adopted earlier: different individuals belonging to a particular group or community can understand, enjoy, use, etc. the same text differently. However, as members of that particular group they are likely to share the same cultural codes and, consequently, understand such texts within the context of those particular cultural parameters:

there are patterns or regularities to what viewers and readers [and listeners] bring to texts and media messages in large part because they acquire specific cultural competencies as a consequence of their particular social location [my addition; Radway (1987: 8)].

The idea of active audiences, however, should be approached carefully (Ang, 1996: 139). When referring to audiences we should not uncritically and happily "equate 'active' with 'powerful', in the sense of 'taking control' at an enduring structural and institutional level" (Ang, 1996: 140)<sup>40</sup>. Without aiming to naively overestimate the

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<sup>40</sup> A critical, substantially different approach to the idea of active audiences is offered by Walkerdine (1997). She criticises what she sees as an exoticised and fetishistic construction of the working class by left-wing intellectuals, who systematically construct the (British) working class as a group of subjects who are either conformist dupes or unequivocally "part of a politicized working class [...] making its continually resistant readings" (1997: 21). Drawing upon her own experience, Walkerdine draws attention to the politics of *survival* involved in the consumption of popular culture texts (1997: 23). Walkerdine's view converges with Radway's perspective. Drawing upon Morris' arguments, Radway critically suggests that by presenting the receiver of a text as an active subject "the cultural studies scholar is also narcissistically offering herself and her own work up as a fuller realization of political opposition, constituted therein somewhat narrowly and very literally, as "oppositional reading"" (1996: 239).

Both Walkerdine's and Radway's self-critical reflections are important. However, it should be noted that in this research context most of the participants involved actually belonged – in different degrees – to a counter-hegemonic, actively politically and/or socially committed Left. It is therefore not surprising that the emphasis here lies in examining how these audiences made use of singer-songwriting/ers as tools of socio-political and cultural subversion.

significance of the *canción de autor/a* and *cantautores* of the Transition, however, two important related issues deserve some attention in this respect: as Chapter Eight will show, the fieldwork carried out suggested that this musical genre at least encouraged some of its audiences in different ways to enter the public world of politics at different levels<sup>41</sup>. Moreover, the power of “micro-politics”, to use Fiske’s term, should not be underestimated. As the fieldwork carried out suggested, in some cases this music was one of the means that helped some individuals gradually change some of the ways they saw the world. Thus, some of them changed some of their everyday practices and relationships with people in their most immediate surroundings. They did so in order to suit their new views of relationships, society and politics. This was of great significance because, as Fiske affirms (1989: 193), “this micropolitics that maintains resistances in the minutae of everyday life maintains a fertile soil for the seeds of macropolitics without which they will inevitably fail to flourish”.

### **Epistemological issues regarding audience reception**

Epistemologically speaking, the approach to research on audience reception adopted here shares the constructivist concerns discussed earlier in the thesis. This is understandable because “a cultural studies use of ethnography would bring a set of understandings from postmodernism and poststructuralism to the project” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 6). This research considers that, in general, and in the social sciences in particular, “researchers do not reflect reality, they always construct knowledge because their subjectivity is always inevitably present in their study” (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 58, 157, 159). The researcher “constructs what is actually a

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<sup>41</sup> For example, in the case of some participants from the Alcalá de Henares focus group meeting (January, 2004).

viewpoint, a point of view that is both a construction or version and is consequently and necessarily partial in its understandings” (Stanley and Wise, 1993:6-7).

This means that, as Oakley highlights, “all research is political” (1981: 54), and, therefore, in the social sciences

the mythology of ‘hygienic’ research with its accompanying mystification of the researcher and the researched as objective instruments of data production [needs to] be replaced by the recognition that personal involvement is more than dangerous bias - it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives (1981: 58)<sup>42</sup>.

Moreover, as Oakley herself (1981: 58) and Raghuram et al. note, to “argue that knowledge is constructed rather than being a collection of objective ‘facts’ [is] a fundamental feature of feminist approaches to research” (Raghuram et al. 1998: 39). As argued earlier, these constructed knowledges emerge by engaging in “situated conversation” with others (Haraway, 1991: 200); by practising what Haraway calls “feminist critical empiricism” (1991: 188). In the particular case under study here, this knowledge developed from the dialogue established with all those individuals who participated directly in the research project. As the next subsection will show, such a dialogue was in turn informed by an exploration and context-sensitive application of mainly Anglo-American ethnographic literature to the Spanish setting<sup>43</sup>.

Other issues typically observed when doing feminist research were also considered here. For example, ethical issues, a major concern in feminist investigations

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<sup>42</sup> Ribbens and Edwards (1998: 4), Walkerdine (1997:59), Wolf (1992: 2), Clifford (1986: 6) and Rubin and Rubin (1995: 14, 18, 38) offer similar theoretical approaches to ethnographic research. There are still some scholars, however, whose epistemological position shows some important reminiscences of positivism. Silverman, for example, states his discomfort at the “belief that a particular, partisan moral or political position determines how we analyse data” (1993: ix).

<sup>43</sup> As Valles’ research (2000) shows, there is not much Spanish literature leading critical approaches to ethnography. In fact, most ethnographic(-based) research carried out in Spain encompasses the practical application of foreign literature to different Spanish contexts.

(Raghuram et al. 1998: 42-44; Arksey and Knight, 1999: 12), were present at all stages in the research process. Thus, the anonymity of the participants was kept at all times, for a good number of them did not want their identities to be made public in this written document. This feminist approach also translated here in the use of abundant direct quotations in order to “let the researched ‘speak for themselves’” as much as possible (Raghuram et al. 1998: 37).

Equally important is that a “non-hierarchical” relationship with the participants was encouraged (Oakley 1981: 41) and an “approach to research which challenges power inequalities between the researcher and the researched” (Raghuram et al. 1998: 42) was adopted. As Chapter Seven will show, such a decision entailed revisiting my own position as a – feminist - researcher. It required reflecting about my own stance and particular experience as a western, early-twenty-first-century, feminist woman born and educated in democratic Spain, and in England. It also demanded being genuinely ready to understand the participants, to learn from them, to be surprised by them, and even to risk (some of) my initial theoretical premises – as actually happened and Chapter Seven will show. Thus, from the beginning, I introduced myself to the participants as an individual and student who, for age reasons, had not lived through the Spanish Transition herself and who therefore had much to learn from their stories and experiences; I made it clear that I had much to gain from dialoguing with them. More obviously in the case of oral interviews, this openness seemed crucial in the achievement of the relaxed atmosphere that prevailed when carrying out the fieldwork. In turn, this comfortable aura encouraged the active participation of the informants in the research. In fact, overall, they showed themselves very receptive to

my noticeable enthusiasm and interest in their experiences and views and reacted very positively to the research undertaken.

### **Ethnographic-based investigation as a method for audience research: qualitative one-to-one interviewing and focus groups**

Considering the stress of this investigation on audience reception, and the ethnomusicological and feminist constructivist theoretical framework adopted to approach it, the use of ethnographic-based research seemed both appropriate and useful. As Ang points out, ethnography is potentially useful for studying audiences because

what ethnographic work entails is a form of 'methodological situationalism', underscoring the thoroughly situated, always context-bound ways in which people encounter, use, interpret, enjoy, think and talk about [...] media in everyday life. The understanding emerging from this kind of inquiry favours interpretive particularization over explanatory generalization, historical and local concreteness rather than formal abstraction, 'thick' description of details rather than extensive but 'thin' survey (1996: 70-1)<sup>44</sup>.

Given the aims of this study, and considering economic and time limitations, using a combination of qualitative research methods, namely individual interviewing and focus group meetings, seemed the most appropriate option<sup>45</sup>. The paragraphs to come will address in some detail some of the most important issues considered here when using both techniques as research methods. For practical reasons, however, only some of the most salient aspects of the complex research processes involved in this ethnographic-based research will be presented here. It is also crucial to note that this ethnographic-informed research is obviously very limited quantitatively speaking and

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<sup>44</sup> In his work Ang is mainly concerned with television audiences. However, his views are applicable to the study of other types of public, such as for example, that involving listeners of popular music.

<sup>45</sup> Arksey and Knight (1999: 4-7) and Valles (2000: 43), for example, offer general and flexible overviews of what qualitative and quantitative research usually entail.

that it is partial. Consequently, it only aims at re-constructing limited, partial knowledges - although it manages to observe some spaces for difference (e.g. geographical, as well as of gender, age, and, less conspicuously, of political tendency).

### Individual qualitative interviewing

Individual qualitative interviewing seemed a potentially useful tool because it “attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of people’s experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations” (Kvale, 1996: 183). Carrying out this type of research entailed the preparation of an interview guide (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990: 61) with relevant questions. Such questions aimed to examine the participants’ experiences as listeners to the political song of the Transition. The interview guide designed for this purpose fell somewhere along the line between semi-structured and structured interviews. In this way it was felt that some of my time and especially economic limitations could be overcome, while making the most of the available resources in order to reach as many potential participants as possible. Thus, this interview guide was structured and specific enough for people to answer it via e-mail or by writing their answers in the interview paper provided. It seemed that a very general and loose interview would probably discourage busy potential informants from answering it. On the other hand, this guide was flexible enough to welcome alterations and improvisation when conducting the interviews face-to-face. This face-to-face interaction allowed more flexibility and probing while leading the discussions in less structured, more context-sensitive and productive ways.

In fact, as Stewart and Shamdasani (1990: 62), Rubin and Rubin (1995: 43, 44) and Valles (2000: 77, 78) had anticipated in their work, flexibility proved to be a golden rule for the success of the interviews carried out here – both individual and group ones. The fieldwork undertaken showed that every interview situation was different from the previous one and that tactful adaptation to particular settings was essential to accomplish productive interviews. Thus, the more formal and respectful “usted” used in written interviewing became “tú” in most focus group meetings and individual formal and more informal face-to-face interviews. Most of these more direct face-to-face events seemed to require this specific adaptation in order to tactfully achieve a relaxed atmosphere of proximity able to encourage the interviewee’s trust in the interviewer.

The widely-advised use of open-ended questions also proved essential for the successful design and implementation of the interviews. This was so because open-ended questions aim to minimise the conditioning of the participants’ answers (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990: 65; Krueger, 1994: 19, 57; Krueger, 1998: 31; Arksey and Knight, 1999: 5, 110). When designing and carrying out the interviews some other useful guidelines offered by, for example, Stewart and Shamdasani (1990: 61-65, 95), Krueger (1998; 1994: 19, 55-57), and Arksey and Knight (1999: 93-95) were followed. For its clarity, simplicity and coherence, Krueger’s (1998) general guidance on focus group interviewing was especially useful here, both for individual and group interviewing. His analysis of the different “categories of [interview]

questions” (1998: 22), his logic for the arrangement of these questions (e.g. 1998: 39, 40), as well as his format for probing (1998: 46) proved enormously helpful<sup>46</sup>.

A good number of the interviews carried out here materialised thanks to the help offered by some of my personal contacts. Some of my Spanish colleagues-friends at work lived the Spanish Transition themselves and had friends of their generation who listened to *canCIÓN de autor/a* at the time. They acted as middle-women and kindly helped me get in touch with those who later on became - especially via e-mail - informants. All the written-on-paper interviews used here were handed out to a friend of mine’s mother. She kindly distributed and collected these interview samples among her friends/colleagues who were audiences of this musical genre at the time of the Transition. Internet forums also proved relevant and helped in contacting different informants (<http://boards1.melodysoft.com/app?ID> was especially useful). Another participant I first met at a conference while I was giving a paper. She listened to my personal analysis of Sabina’s “Mi vecino de arriba” and seemed interested in the research. As she explained, she had been especially keen on Sabina, Ana and Víctor at the time of the Transition, and she generously offered to be my “sujeto antropológico” (“anthropological subject”), as she put it.

It is then clear that the interviews carried out here materialised in different ways. Some of these interviews were answered via e-mail; some written on paper; some carried out on an individual face-to-face basis (the chart at the end of this section offers details of all these interviews). Finally, it should be noted that focus groups

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<sup>46</sup> The general categorization of interview questions - “categories of questions” (1998: 22) - offered by Krueger is theoretically useful. However, although useful as a guide, the fieldwork designed and carried out here suggested that everything is much more complex in real life, and that in practice the differences that he established between different types of questions is not always easy to establish - e.g. the differences between “transition questions” and “key questions” (1998: 25).

meetings also used the questions in the interview guide in an embedded form. As expected, using these different modes of communication had different effects. For example, generally speaking, participants in oral interviews offered more detailed explanations and answers to the questions, while written (e-mail) responses were often more succinct. This was probably partly so because face-to-face interaction allowed immediate probing, while via e-mail and written-on-paper interviewing often did not. Also, face-to-face interaction created a more intimate and open environment that translated into more detailed conversations. On the other hand, time restrictions suffered by busy long-distance, e-mail participants seemed to generally translate into more concise answers. This underlined the coherence and appropriateness of the fieldwork carried out: a less structured interview guide would have probably achieved very little written responses from potential informants.

#### Focus groups meetings

Broadly speaking, a focus group is a “group depth interview” (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990: 9) used for in-depth discussions of specific topics or issues. Often, “the hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group” (Morgan, 1988: 12) [emphasis in the original]. For this reason, focus groups also seemed an appropriate research method for this thesis<sup>47</sup>. In fact, given the aims of this research project, these group meetings seemed especially appropriate, in spite of

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<sup>47</sup> According to Albrecht, Johnson and Walther (1993: 54), some fairly recent research suggests that “opinions frequently arise through group interaction [...] Given that focus groups are social events involving the interaction of participants and the interplay and modification of ideas, such a forum for opinion gathering may render data that are more ecologically valid than methods that assess individuals’ opinions in relatively asocial settings”.

Both individual interviews and focus group meetings or group interviews have theoretical and practical weaknesses, as well as advantages. Therefore the use of one of these research methods should not automatically translate into the rejection of the other. In the particular case that occupies me here both seemed useful and enriched this research in different but complementary ways.

their potential artificiality (Morgan, 1988: 16, 20, 21): they broadly allowed the recreation of those meetings at friends' houses that a good number of listeners of *cantaautores* used to attend at the time of the Transition. As some participants informally explained before these group interviews materialised, these meetings at friends' houses took place regularly. Often, they were an excuse for them to sing along, guitar in hand, with protest songs, discuss what this or that other song meant, and talk about politics.

Considering the specific topic and context of research of this thesis, carrying out a variant of traditional standard focus groups seemed especially appropriate. Like most standard focus groups, the meetings carried out here would entail answering some interview questions – those referred to in the previous sub-section. However, introducing some innovative context-sensitive elements also seemed pertinent. Thus, their organisation would also entail listening to some songs by the artists studied here and engaging in discussion of them<sup>48</sup>. This listening exercise seemed appropriate in order to articulate how, looking back in time, some audiences remembered experiencing these and/or other political musical works at the time of the Transition. Obviously, these recollections were inevitably bound to be present reconstructions of past constructions. Personal changes (vagueness of memory, change of ideas with ageing, etc.), as well as environmental changes (transformations of the broader socio-political, cultural and economic context, for example) were rather certain to condition the way participants received those musical texts at focus group meetings. In any case, their answers were likely to reveal powerful memories of their past (collective) experiences and seemed therefore potentially very useful and enlightening.

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<sup>48</sup> I would like to thank my supervisor Martin O'Shaughnessy for this idea.

Most relevant literature on focus groups warned of the importance of organising them carefully and in advance in order to minimise the presence of potentially uncomfortable situations for certain participants. Most scholars highlighted that the members in each group should broadly share similar cultural and socio-economic backgrounds (Knodel, 1993: 39; Krueger, 1993: 66; Krueger, 1994: 14, 77). This rule seemed especially sensible and was therefore observed here: these cultural and socio-economic similarities aimed at lowering the risk of putting certain participants in real or imagined embarrassing situations due to apparent differences of power and status. Observing these similarities also aimed at maximising the potential success of the focus group meetings, for “interaction is easier when individuals with similar socio-economic backgrounds comprise the group. Similarly of abilities, intelligence and knowledge tends to facilitate communication at the same wavelength” (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990: 38).

Other guidelines offered by some mainstream literature on the subject, however, did not seem so appropriate in this specific context of research: some scholars advise researchers to make focus groups out of strangers. They seem to believe that gathering people who know each other may negatively affect some participants’ responses. They affirm that some group members may feel shy when talking about certain issues in front of non-strangers. Similarly, this literature suggests that some might feel that they have to agree with what others have to say (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990: 97; Morgan, 1988: 48). As Morgan and Krueger stated in a later piece of research, this is “a myth about focus groups”; “a good example of a useful rule of thumb that has become an overly rigid restriction on when to use focus groups” (Morgan, 1993: 6). As expected, in the particular case that occupied me here, making up groups of people

who knew each other made much sense. In fact, it seemed much more appropriate than gathering a group of complete strangers. This is so because, in a way, these group meetings aimed to reconstruct the type of setting and atmosphere in which *canción de autor/a* was often experienced at the time: in private houses and among groups of friends<sup>49</sup>. Moreover, the fieldwork carried out showed that gathering people who know each other does not necessarily translate into a compulsory consensus of ideas, as some scholars mistakenly affirm (e.g. Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990: 17)<sup>50</sup>.

In order to test the contextual adequacy of all the issues discussed in the previous paragraphs, as well as that of many other practicalities, carrying out some pilot-testing focus groups seemed reasonable (Krueger, 1998: 57). These materialised thanks to the help of some friends, who kindly participated in the groups and/or put me in touch with other people who did. These pilot-tests took place in Nottingham, and Zaragoza (Spain). In every case all the participants were Spanish. These meetings were very useful and helped me improve the interview questions in terms of style and content. For example, they showed that a few questions in the interview guide were too long and needed to be shortened in order to facilitate their comprehension. These pilot meetings were also important because they helped me adjust the scope of research in order to suit time constraints. For instance, they showed that the original idea of analysing two songs by each artist, rather than one, as we finally did, was impossible due to time constraints. These pilot meetings were also extremely useful because they

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<sup>49</sup> As Chapter Eight will show, recitals and concerts were also crucial settings for the reception of the *canción de autor/a* of the Transition. In fact, any communal reception of this genre seemed to have special significance at the time.

<sup>50</sup> In fact, sometimes participants within the same groups brought about interesting discussions and debates in which significantly different views were explained and supported. This happened, for example, in the Ávila focus group when discussing Ana Belén's "La muralla" (Ávila, September 2003).

allowed me to establish important contacts that were later vital to the realisation of the Ávila and the Zaragoza focus group meetings respectively.

The knowledge and experience acquired with the realisation and analysis of these pilot tests was used to arrange and carry out five focus group meetings. In all cases these were arranged through snowballing: as happened with individual interviewing, the focus group participants were reached with the help of different personal contacts who helped me enter significant audience networks - i.e. different friends-colleagues at work, personal friends living in Spain, and my friends' friends became my middle-women and men. These personal contacts were also important because they offered important information in advance about the participants' background. Such knowledge often proved crucial to lead the discussions in the different groups tactfully and skilfully. For instance, I had been advised that some of those who were kindly going to participate in the Lincoln focus group meeting shared rather conservative political views. That is why changing the order of examination of the three songs under analysis seemed appropriate. Starting with Sabina's politically incorrect and in some respects radically left-wing "Mi vecino de arriba", as I had done and would do in most other group meetings, did not seem very appropriate or even respectful. Doing so could have made some participants feel uncomfortable and/or upset, which in turn could have jeopardised the interview's success.

These focus group meetings took place in Ávila, Lincoln, Bilbao, Zaragoza and Madrid, respectively. On average, they were made up of five people, although in

some cases this figure was slightly higher and in some others smaller<sup>51</sup>. Some of these focus group participants were in their late thirties or early fifties. Most of them, however, were in their early to late forties. At the time of the Transition a good number of these participants belonged to lower middle class or working class backgrounds, and many of them were university students. Some of them were also working in order to help their families economically or pay for their studies. Some of them lived in big urban areas at the time of the Transition, but some others lived in towns and small cities (e.g. most participants from Ávila and Zaragoza). Most of the informants belong today to an economically well established, educated middle-class. Some are currently civil servants, while many others are professionals devoted to teaching and lecturing. The following chart offers more detailed information about all the ethnographic research carried out for this research project.

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<sup>51</sup> Different scholars offer different views on the ideal size for focus group meetings. Krueger highlights that “[f]ocus groups are typically composed of 6 to 10 people, but the size can range from as few as 4 to as many as 12” (1994: 17).

**TABLE I: ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH ON AUDIENCE RECEPTION**

	Location	Date	Approx. Duration	No. Women	No. Men	Average Age	Total no. participants
<b>Events</b>							
<b>FIRST VIA INTERNET INFORMANTS</b>	Informants From Dominican Republic; Zaragoza, Madrid, Seville, etc.	December 2002- April 2003	4 months	2	4	30	8
<b>FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS</b>							
1 <sup>st</sup> Informal Interview	Nottingham (informant from Alcalá de Henares, - Madrid)	12/04/2003	30 minutes	1	0	43	1
2 <sup>nd</sup> Interview	Nottingham (Informant from Madrid)	06/11/2003	2 hours 30 minutes	1	0	40	1
<b>FOCUS GROUPS MEETINGS</b>							
1 <sup>st</sup> Pilot Focus Group Meeting	Nottingham	28/05/2003	4 hours	8	0	35	8
2 <sup>nd</sup> Pilot Focus Group	Zaragoza	30/08/2003	3 hours	4	3	22	7
3 <sup>rd</sup> Pilot Focus Group	Sabiñán (Zaragoza)	03/09/2003	3 hours	4	1	22	5
1 <sup>st</sup> Focus Group Meeting	Ávila	06/09/2003	3 hours 15 minutes	2	4	45	6
2 <sup>nd</sup> Focus Group Meeting	Lincoln	12/10/2003	1 hour	4	0	47	4
3 <sup>rd</sup> Focus Group Meeting	Bilbao	27/12/2003	2 hours	3	2	35	5

4 <sup>th</sup> 'Mini' Focus Group Meeting	Zaragoza	03/01/2004	2 hours 30 minutes	3	0	43	3
5 <sup>th</sup> Focus Group Meeting	Alcalá de Henares	04/01/2004	2 hours 45 minutes	3	2	40	5
<b>'TELE-INTERVIEWING'</b>							
<b>1) FORMAL E-MAIL INTERVIEWS</b>							
Singer-songwriter Joaquín Carbonell	-	25/04/2003	-	0	1	-	1
Informant from Ávila	-	24/09/2003	-	1	0	45	1
Informant from Salamanca	-	28/01/2004	-	1	0	45	1
Informant from the Basque Country	-	04/02/2004	-	1	0	43	1
<b>2) 'WRITTEN-ON-PAPER' INTERVIEWS</b>							
Interviewees from Zaragoza	-	15/03/2004-07/07/2004	-	12	7	45	19
<b>3) TELEPHONE INTERVIEW</b>							
Interviewee from the Basque Country	Communication Nottingham-London	26/11/2003	15 minutes	1	0	70	1
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:</b>							<b>77</b>

As the above chart shows, 77 people in total participated as informants in one way or another in the ethnographic-based fieldwork undertaken here – Appendix A shows the interview guides for the individual interviews and the focus group meetings carried out. I now turn to consider in some more detail different issues concerning some of the data provided in the chart:

*First informants:*

Different women and men kindly participated in informal ways in the development of this project. They did so via the Internet - mainly through opinion forums - and via e-mail. These informants were followers of Víctor, Ana, and/or Sabina and offered useful information about these artists and their work. In fact, their contribution was especially important at an early stage: their knowledge was illuminating and helped me focus and narrow down the research in a productive way. On certain occasions enlightening discussions about the meanings and significance of particular songs by these artists and other *cantantes políticos* also took place. The information obtained in a good number of e-mails written by a male informant from the Dominican Republic proved especially enlightening. This informant, in his early thirties, was a faithful follower of Víctor Manuel from 1973 and he carefully tracked his entire artistic career, both in Spain and abroad. The different e-mails sent by, for example, another male informant from Zaragoza in his early thirties also proved very useful.

*Pilot focus group meetings:*

These pilot testing groups served three main purposes: they were important sources of inspiration for the analysis of Sabina's "Mi vecino de arriba", Ana's "La muralla" and Víctor's "La planta 14". They also served to test the contextual appropriateness of the designed interview guide. On the other hand, they became important sites for establishing contacts and creating relevant networks of future crucial relevance.

### *'Teleinterviewing'*:

With the help of two friends I managed to contact singer-songwriter Joaquín Carbonell via e-mail. I asked him to answer the questions of an interview that I had prepared for him. He explained that these questions were very similar to the ones that critic Matías Uribe had asked him a while ago for a book that was going to be published soon, so he sent me the answers to that interview via e-mail. On 15/03/2004 I handed out 20 printed interview samples to one of my friends from Zaragoza - his mother knew people who used to listen to singer-songwriting of the Transition and he offered to talk to her and help me. My friend returned 19 completed interviews to me on 07/07/2004. Finally it is worth mentioning that an informal telephone interview with a Basque exile was carried out on 26/11/2003. This informant had been a member of the London-based Club Antonio Machado in the late 60s and early 70s and had met Sabina on a few occasions at that club.

## **CONCLUSION**

Informed by the issues and ideas raised and presented in chapters one and two, this third chapter has reflected on the research methods used for the development of this thesis. It has considered in detail historical contextualisation, song analysis and research on audience reception as investigative methods – in an attempt to design an appropriate Research Method in the larger sense sensitive to the specific topic, context of study, and aims of investigation of this thesis.

The first part of this chapter has noted that history appears as a crucial protagonist in this thesis in different interrelated ways. It is part of the research setting itself: the

Spanish Transition is one of the indisputable protagonists of this thesis. Historical contextualisation will also prove relevant as an extremely useful research method necessary for the development of the song analysis chapters. Furthermore, historical contextualisation appears in the project as a key element for the analysis of the role and importance of singer-songwriting/ers during the Transition period. At yet another different but still related level, history is crucial here for its importance as a recurrent topic and concern in the works by Víctor, Ana and Sabina.

When dealing with song analysis the usefulness of adopting a wide-ranging method of song examination has been highlighted. Such a method has been based on a 'textual' and 'extra-textual' study of songs. At the more textual level, the importance of music and vocal performance, for example, has been stressed. The messages conveyed by "lyrics in performance" (Frith, 1996) have been granted special relevance because of a variety of structural, generic and contextual factors. When considering the study of songs at a more extra-textual level ethnomusicology has appeared as a useful theoretical tool. This is because this discipline considers, among other things, "the contexts through and within which music is imagined, discussed and made", and how it relates to its "broader social, cultural and political contexts" (Stock, 2003a). Thus, my extra-textual analysis of songs will observe biographical aspects of the artists under study, the particular socio-historical context in which their songs originated and were received, and how these were received by some audiences at the time of the Transition.

This chapter has finally introduced some of the theoretical and practical issues that have informed the partial and limited ethnographic-based qualitative research on

audience reception carried out here. The underlying assumption behind this study is that audience members are key figures in the construction of meanings of texts (Fiske, 1989, 122). This study on audience reception, approached from a feminist perspective, has also highlighted the unavoidable constructedness of ethnographic knowledge (Oakley, 1981: 58), which inevitably arises as the communicative interaction between the researcher and the researched takes place. This last part of the chapter has also reflected upon the appropriateness and contextual adequacy of the two main research techniques adopted here, namely, individual interviewing and focus group meetings with relevant informants. In spite of their drawbacks, both seemed the most appropriate ethnographic tools of analysis, given the aims of this thesis.

## **PART II**

# **SONG ANALYSIS**

## CHAPTER FOUR

# “SOY DE ESPAÑA”: CONTESTING FRANCOIST HISTORIOGRAPHY<sup>52</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter opens the song analysis part of this thesis. It pays attention to representations of history in the musical works by Víctor, Ana and Sabina between 1968 and 1982, and examines its evolution and relevance in constructions of nation in their works. It examines critically the differences and similarities existing between their approaches to history and those present in Francoist hegemonic discourses as shown in a range of primary and secondary sources. Francoist discourses are taken as points of reference here because these singers' work seemed especially concerned with official articulations of national identity; in fact, the main intertext in their works seemed to be hegemonic discourses. This chapter also examines how some singer-songwriters, and particularly Víctor, Ana, and Sabina, dealt with the regional and national complexity of the Spanish state. Finally, Ana's "La muralla" is analysed in light of the audience research material gathered from ethnographic-based fieldwork carried out.

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<sup>52</sup> "Soy de España" ("I am from Spain") is the title of an ironic anti-Francoist song written by Víctor Manuel (1976).

## HISTORY IN WORKS BY VÍCTOR MANUEL, ANA BELÉN, AND JOAQUÍN SABINA

The articulation of the national past is often necessary in order to reach and/or retain hegemony. It is then not surprising that, as Smith notes (1991: 78), in nationalist ideologies history often plays a central role in the construction of the nation and national identity (Smith, 1991: 78). This was definitely the case in Franco's Spain (Núñez, 2001: 720): the dictatorship showed a special interest in using particular versions and episodes of Spanish history in order to construct the Spanish nation and national identity. In fact, although Francoism evolved and was a time full of ambiguities and silences that cannot receive mechanical or simple interpretations (Gracia García and Ruiz Carnicer, 2001: 11), it systematically relied upon relatively stable and long-lasting versions of Spanish history that shaped Spain and Spanishness.

This use of history for the construction, legitimisation and (re-)assertion of Francoist nationalism, nation and national identity was fully conscious and well-planned, as the following extract from a 1960 'manual' for teachers shows:

[l]a escuela ha de crear patriotas. El instrumento más eficaz para cultivar el patriotismo nos lo proporciona la enseñanza de la Historia, merced a la cual podremos [...] engendrar en la juventud confianza en sí misma y en la misión histórica de España. [Nuevas contestaciones al cuestionario oposiciones a ingreso al Magisterio Español - quoted in Otero's facsimile anthology of 'pro-Francoist' texts (2000: 73)].

[t]he school must create patriots. We are given the most useful instrument to cultivate patriotism with the teaching of History, thanks to which we will be able to [...] engender in our youth self-confidence and trust in the historical mission of Spain [New answers to the 'public-competition' questionnaire necessary for entering the Spanish Teaching Profession Association]

This conscious emphasis on Spanish history in order to construct Spain and Spanishness was not exclusive to Francoism. History was also present in significant

ways in the works by the singers studied here at the time of the Transition. It was used then as an important tool for the *reconfiguration* of long-established Francoist discourses on the Spanish nation and national identity. To put it in Granscian terms, these artists tried to rework the Spanish national past in significant ways in order to challenge hegemonic constructions. Moreover, these artists' approach to history evolved significantly between 1968 and 1982. In general terms, and leaving aside some understandable overlap, in this respect their work underwent overall a fairly systematic and traceable evolution between those years that can be separated into two main stages: the first phase, which comprises the years running between 1968 and 1977/8, was mainly concerned with revisiting different aspects of Spanish history. The second stage, which started around 1979 and finished in 1982, was marked by a weakening of history as a recurrent political tool.

### **1) Revisiting Spanish history (1968-1977/8)**

This first period seemed to finish around 1977/8, just a few years after the dictator's death in late 1975. Overall, there was a strong tendency in the works by the three singers between 1968 and 1977/8 to approach history using what could be called 'personal histories'. This interest in the personal seemed to aim at authenticity. Such a tendency did not seem to be as recurrent and strong in 'pro-Francoist' (musical) texts, which often seemed to be more 'impersonal', general, and grandiloquent both in terms of content and style. Nonetheless, although less frequent, 'personal histories' were still present in some popular culture texts traditionally associated with Francoism - e.g. in many *coplas* (Carbayo Abengózar, 2003, 2004).

The label 'personal histories' refers to those narrations which offer an insight into history through the lives of particular citizens. This happens in a significant number of songs by the three singers - e.g. in Ana's "Lady Laura" (1973), in Víctor's "El cobarde" (1968, 1969), "El viejo coronel" (1970) and "La alemana" (1974), and in Sabina's "Mi vecino de arriba" (1978). All these musical pieces refer to concrete often male – and in fewer cases female - individuals, to ordinary citizens whose lives have been affected in one way or another by different historical events of the present or near past. For example, in "La alemana" (1974), Víctor introduces listeners to the world and tragic life of a Spanish woman who "hizo la guerra/ por su cuenta, en retaguardia" ("waged the war/ for herself, in the rearguard") and who suffered in her own flesh and mind its consequences: during the war she "luchó a brazo partido/ por ser virgen y un brigada/ la perdió junto al convento" ("fought hand to hand/tooth and nail / to remain a virgin and a brigadier/ "spoilt" her [raped her/seduced her] next to a convent"). After that, she lost control of her own life and, following a series of sad episodes, she found death "a manos de un camionero" ("at the hands of a lorry driver").

This personal and personalised treatment of Spanish history seems significant in two ways: it first obeys democratic principles by showing an interest in the lives and experiences of common people, of ordinary citizens. It suggests that, in part, his story plus her story plus everyone's stories make history. This emphasis on individuals, however, does not neglect more general issues concerning structural aspects, such as, for example, those of class. These individuals whose stories are narrated are usually clearly placed in particular socio-political, economic and cultural scenarios and circumstances and these are often presented as partly/greatly shaping these

individuals' lives. In a number of songs these scenarios or circumstances are presented as potentially modifiable, which leaves a door open to political action and improvement. It is also worth noting that the use of 'personal histories' may have been of great emotional potential for (some) audiences: they offered an insight into the tragedies, concerns, difficulties and feelings that history provoked in the lives of ordinary men and women who could be or were just like any of the members of the audience. This 'normality' of the song characters, together with the realism of the song topics were likely to awake in the listener a strong sense of identification, empathy, sympathy - or dis-identification in cases like Víctor's "Buenos días, Adela mía" (1974) - towards what was being sung. In fact, this approach to Spanish history may have been more powerful and touching for audiences than more abstract and general discourses on Spanish history and/or well-known Spanish historical figures distant in time and/or space.

It is also significant that the songs belonging to this first period of historical revision seemed to be mainly driven by two related impulses: first, by a desire to centre and normalise categories that had been hidden, marginalised, dehumanised and/or demonised by Francoist discourses on Spanish history. Secondly, by an attempt to displace and 'other' those categories that were central to official discourses on Spanish history. These categories included historical events, famous historical figures, ordinary individuals marked by different historical eventualities, as well as different long-established historical political, social, economic, religious and/or cultural truths.

### a) Centring and normalising the margins

New approaches to (the civil) war and its participants, and the rejection of imperialism

Víctor's "El cobarde" (1968, 1969) is set in a bucolic scene in rural Spain. This song gives unabridged voice to Juan, a young Spanish man who tells his own life story. He explains how, with the beginning of the civil war, he was unwillingly recruited by Francoist troops and obliged to serve in their army. He soon realised that emotionally and psychologically he neither wanted nor was able to fight in the conflict:

tiembla el fusil en mi mano, cerrando los ojos  
disparo al azar,  
bala perdida que mata cualquier inocente  
con ansias de paz.  
¿Por quién lucho yo?  
Si en mi corta vida no existe el rencor [...]  
no, no quiero matar

the rifle shakes in my hand, and closing my eyes  
I shoot at random,  
stray bullets that kill any innocent person  
who yearns for peace.  
Who am I fighting for?  
For in my short life there is no place for rancour [...]  
no, I don't want to kill

He also explains how, due to his "cowardice", he was imprisoned up until the end of the war. Once free to return to his village, he found that he was not accepted by his fellow villagers, who had internalised important official discourses of the time: "la gente sonríe y murmura al pasar.../ "Mira aquel joven cobarde que vuelve la espalda/ en vez de luchar"" ("people smile and whisper when they see me.../ "Look at that cowardly young man, who turns his back/ instead of fighting"). Thus, he found himself forced to leave everything in the village and live "arriba en el monte soñando que un día/ pueda regresar" ("up in the hill dreaming that one day/ I will be able to return").

Significantly, Juan's narrative account makes use of the simple present tense throughout. This is done in spite of the fact that he is talking about historical events that happened a few decades before this piece was received by an audience or even written. This points to the contemporaneity and presence of the song's historical concerns in the Spain of the late 60s and early 70s, period in which the army and other armed bodies still had a clear predominance in the country's socio-political life. Its recurrent allusions to the civil war and its tragic consequences should also be understood in that light. In fact, the ethnographic-based fieldwork carried out suggested that this historical event was a large part of the collective memory of many people at the time of the Transition: it was still very vivid and fresh in many Spaniards' minds, and especially among those belonging to the generation of the participant's parents.

Here the "lyrics in performance" (Frith, 1996: 166) are coherently accompanied by the music, which, always considered from an ethnomusicological perspective, seems to set and reinforce the meaning of such lyrics: the rural scene is musically recreated with the use of specific percussion instruments at the beginning of the song. Their sound is evocative of northern Spanish folk music with Celtic reminiscences - this type of music being traditionally typical of Asturias (the singer's birthplace) and other areas in northern Spain. The militaristic atmosphere of the civil conflict is recreated musically through the use of military-like rhythms with trumpets and drums as the narrator sings how "[e]ra la tarde un suspiro y aquellos soldados/ llegaron acá/ ¡Quietos los niños y viejos! La gente más joven/ tendrá que luchar..." ("[t]he afternoon/evening was a sigh and those soldiers/ arrived here/ Children and old men

stay there! Younger people/ will have to fight...”). The more moving reflections on the uselessness and unfairness of violence and war, as well as the sadness experienced by Juan as a result of his social marginalisation are emphasised by the use of violins, which recreate an emotionally charged and nearly intimate atmosphere.

Listeners are quickly drawn to sympathise with Juan and his pacifistic and antimilitaristic ideas, as we hear his story/history with his own words and from his own perspective. The main ideas underlying the song are similarly likely to put its potential audience on the side of the narrator: it is a piece against violence and war, as well as against social intolerance and ignorance. Juan, who is nicknamed “cobarde”, and who calls himself so, is, in the context of the song, a very strong-minded and firm man. It is significant that (probably echoing his fellow villagers) he directly associates being a coward with a determination not to use violence. He does so in such a way that he dignifies his own position as a pacifist, as he directly links being a coward with not killing and therefore with preserving life: “[I]legan los años de cárcel, yo soy un cobarde/ no, no quiero matar” (“Years of imprisonment arrive, I am a coward/ no, I don’t want to kill”). By establishing the connection between not killing and being a coward, he challenges traditional, “common sense” meanings of both “coward” and “cowardice” – which were systematically related to extremely negative and antiheroic patterns of masculinity in Francoist discourses: “[e]l cobarde es un ser en extremo despreciable” (“[c]owards are despicable in extreme”) (Ruiz Romero and Muncunill, in Otero, 2000: 174), these discourses read. In the context of the song, then, Juan proves to be a very courageous Spanish man, as he firmly stands for what he believes

in and resists powerful hegemonic (gender-bound) discourses and practices, gaining many enemies in the process and facing complete social isolation<sup>53</sup>.

In order to understand this song's counter-hegemonic potential, the context in which it was created and received needs to be examined. It is significant that this song was fiercely and recurrently banned by Francoist authorities. This can be understood through an examination of Francoist discourses on Spanish history. Throughout its existence, Francoism and Francoist historical discourses greatly relied upon a militaristic understanding of Spain and (male) Spanishness. Franco himself was a military man, and Spanish men were often - problematically and contradictorily - depicted as "mitad monjes, mitad soldados" ("half monks, half soldiers") (Otero, 2000: 137). In Francoist discourses this military perception of Spain was consistently historically justified and often linked to a historically transcendental, religious and imperial view of Spain. As Montero highlights (2000: 19),

[e]l Ejército encarnaba al patriotismo y garantizaba la unidad nacional, dentro de un esquema que idealizaba la España imperial.

[t]he army incarnated patriotism and guaranteed national unity, within a framework that idealised imperial Spain.

Empires need armies and soldiers willing to kill or be killed in order to impose their power over others. This imperial, all-for-my-patria ethos pervaded multiple official texts of various kinds. For example, it was present in teaching manuals and textbooks for children:

¡España es eterna! ¡Y yo soy una parte de España! [...] Y si España necesita mi vida, mi vida tengo que darle [Agustín Serrano de Haro, inspector de enseñanza primaria. In Otero (2000: 17)].

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<sup>53</sup> Some other notes on nation and gender as present in "El cobarde" will be briefly considered in Chapter Six.

Spain is eternal! And I am part of Spain! [...] And if Spain needs my life, my life I must give her [Agustín Serrano de Haro, primary school inspector].

España es nuestra Patria. Nuestra patria es la unión espiritual de todos los españoles. Ella nos une en una empresa universal que tiene voluntad de Imperio. [Pla-Dalmáu, *Enciclopedia escolar Estudio*, libro colorado, 1962. In Otero, (2000: 251)].

Spain is our *Patria*. Our *patria* is the spiritual union of all Spaniards. She unites us in a universal enterprise of imperial will.

Considering these parameters, “El cobarde” constitutes a frontal attack against both Francoist militaristic and imperialistic historical accounts of Spain and Spanishness: Juan is neither literally nor symbolically the “half soldier” (Otero, 2000: 188) Spanish man that Francoism would expect. As a consequence, he is not the imperial conqueror so loved in Francoist discourses, but rather a sensitive, but strong-minded pacifist.

This song is also interesting because it uncovers a reality experienced by many (mainly male) Spaniards of my grandparents’ generation. In both the republican and Francoist armies many Spaniards actively fought in the war willingly and out of conviction. In many other cases, however, Spaniards were not politically involved and were ‘caught’ in a conflict that did not speak to them in any way. In not a few cases, Spanish people had to fight on the ‘wrong’ side just because their villages, towns or cities had been taken by a particular faction, and they were obliged to join the occupying force. This seems to be exactly what happened to the protagonist of “El cobarde”. By introducing this reality, Víctor gives realistic evidence of the artificiality and simplistic nature of Francoist discourses on the civil war. In the 60s and 70s these discourses still supported the idea that the Francoist army was fully made up of ideologically and emotionally convinced “patriots” (Navarro Higuera, 1964 – in Otero, 2000: 116). They claimed that these dedicated patriots willingly liberated

Spain from those who, poisoned by foreign doctrines alien to Spanishness like communism, socialism, anarchism - a long list could be written here - were traitors to the Spanish spirit.

Víctor's also chorus-less "El viejo coronel" (1970) introduces the figure of the old colonel as its main and only protagonist. Although it is not explicitly stated, the listener comes to understand that this protagonist was a member of the anti-Francoist army before and during the civil war, and that he "perdió la guerra" ("lost the war") and had to go into exile: "[y] que vivió en América/ los años de posguerra" ("[a]nd that he lived in America/ during the post-war years"). But there are more indirect references to his Left-wing political convictions, as censored civil war victims Antonio Machado and Miguel Hernández are his favourite poets. All these references are used here to introduce another other of Francoist official discourses on the civil war, and this is done in very positive terms. In this particular context, Víctor's vocal performance, his deep and low pitched voice, suggests deference and dignifies the old colonel. He is also treated very seriously, respectfully and sympathetically at the level of the lyrics: he is presented as a courageous, uncorrupted and incorruptible man with a great heart:

si a las doce no llega [a la taberna],  
echarán en falta su presencia;  
todo el mundo le quiere  
por su fe y su bravura,  
quizá si se "vendiera"  
sería un simple objeto en la taberna.

if he does not arrive [at the bar] at twelve,  
everyone will miss him;  
everyone loves him  
for his faith and bravery  
perhaps if he "sold" himself  
he would be just a simple object in the bar.

This positive depiction of the old colonel is of great subversive potential, as an analysis of the context of this song's creation and its original reception suggests. In the 60s and 70s Francoist official discourses still offered manichaeic accounts of different historical events. This continued to be very much the case in explanations of the Spanish civil war. This event was still presented by Francoist propaganda as a fight between good and evil. Francoism presented itself then as the "inevitable", "necessary", "just" and "providential" saviour of Spain and the Spanish spirit (Álvarez, 1998: 381, 384). Thus, it did not refer to the civil war in such terms, but rather constructed it as the "Alzamiento Nacional" ("National Uprising") (Álvarez, 1998: 384) of the "national troops" and "good Spaniards" against the "de-naturalised" enemies of the Spanish *patria*:

España caminaba a pasos agigantados hacia el comunismo, y para impedir su ruina, el 18 de julio de 1936, Franco se puso al frente del ejército y del pueblo español y, mediante la Guerra de Liberación, limpió a España de sus enemigos [(Álvarez, 1998: 383); original from 1962].

Spain was quickly moving towards communism, and in order to prevent its ruin, on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1936, Franco became leader of the Spanish army and people and, by means of the War of Liberation, cleansed Spain from its enemies.

Republican soldiers, sympathizers and supporters were systematically dehumanised, demonised and presented as traitors and, especially in the case of men, cowards. As noted earlier, this historical (and also gender-bound) negative construction of Spanish republicans is invalidated in "El viejo coronel": the old republican colonel of the song is loved by everyone for his goodness, as well as for his "bravery" - the latter being an especially interesting term from a gender perspective. In fact, this song constitutes an attempt to return dignity to the Spanish males who had lost the war.

The allusions to the civil war, as well as the approach to different others of Francoist discourses present in “El cobarde” and “El viejo coronel” are doubly significant when censorship is considered. As Cisquella et al. point out (1977: 74), censorship was present in all media, and the civil war continued to be a taboo issue (1977: 127). This argument could be nuanced to suggest that the civil war and other related topics were still censored and continued to be total taboo areas outside the official treatment of Francoist discourses. And this is exactly where both “El cobarde” and “El viejo coronel” are located and from that emerges part of their strength and contextual relevance: they challenge both Francoist censorship and propaganda in order to voice long silenced truths.

#### Spanish women and history

It is interesting that many of the song characters whose public roles in society – as pacifists, Republican soldiers, etc. - are considered and dignified, are male<sup>54</sup>. Víctor’s not very widely-known “Aída Lafuente” (1977) constitutes one of the few existing exceptions. This song refers to Aída Lafuente, a female Spanish left-wing activist who played an important and active role in the proletarian-based Asturian Revolution of 1934. Víctor’s attempt to publicise her name and heroism are laudable. However, his treatment of the figure of Aída Lafuente is significantly different to that received by the male pacifist of “El cobarde” and the Republican senior colonel of “El viejo coronel”. In the latter the coward and the old colonel respectively are really the main characters in the songs. Their lives and deeds are central to both musical pieces. In

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<sup>54</sup> Ribbens and Edwards point out (1998: 8) that “‘public’ and ‘private’ are tricky and ambiguous concepts which cannot simply be identified by reference to physical locations [...], nor can they simply be mapped straight onto gender identities”. Ribbens and Edwards also stress, however, that public and private “also, of course, have strongly gendered implications” (1998: 8). That was the case in the songs analysed here. Consequently, the traditional physical and gendered distinction between public and private still seems to be a useful theoretical position from which the works by these artists can be understood and analysed.

contrast, “Aída Lafuente” actually tells very little about this historical figure, her life and role in the 1934 Revolution. In fact, the character of Aída appears as rather tangential in the song. Her presence is in part a pretext to introduce the topic of the miners’ Revolution of October 1934.

In the few other cases in which Spanish women appear as protagonists of songs with a historical dimension, the emphasis often lies exclusively on an examination of the consequences that different historical events had on these women’s private lives. This is significant and can be analysed in different ways. For example, this prominence of the personal seems to reassert rather traditional and conservative links between the feminine and the private. However, this emphasis on a private dimension may also respond to a more progressive attempt to ‘make the personal political’ or, at least, to recognise Spanish women as part of Spanish history – even if only as agents working in the private sphere.

This link between history and Spanish women’s private lives is present, for example, in the already mentioned “La alemana” (1974). It also appears in “Lady Laura” (1973). As in “El cobarde” and “El viejo coronel”, there are relevant direct allusions to the Spanish civil war in Ana’s “Lady Laura”. However, here this dramatic event is approached overall in a slightly different way: the song places an exclusive stress on the more emotional, personal and private effects of the war upon Lady Laura. The civil war is presented as the main source of her past and present misfortunes, and these are too hard for her to cope with – the song seems to suggest: after losing her “imposible pero tan tierno” (“impossible but so tender”) love during the war, she “perdió el gobierno” (“lost her senses”). The song implicitly suggests that she never

recovered from that loss and was therefore never able to establish another love relationship. As she grew older, she held on to memories so strongly that she experienced desperation and ended up preparing her own death and committing suicide:

[c]omo vivió murió, siempre previniendo;  
[...]  
con su mejor vestido, firme la espalda,  
se llegó despacito a la funeraria  
y ordenó “me preparan la mejor caja”,  
sabía que en dos horas se moriría.

[s]he died as she lived, always taking precautions;  
[...]  
in her best dress, her back straight,  
she walked slowly to the funeral home,  
and she commanded, “prepare the best coffin for me”,  
she knew she would be dead in two hours.

As can be seen, this song again strongly contests Francoist historiography of the Spanish civil war and the Francoist regime more generally. The so-called “national uprising of liberation” which was positively presented as a historical must, as “necessary”, “spontaneous”, “popular”, and “fair” (Álvarez, 1998: 384) is, in “Lady Laura”, more realistically depicted as a source of unspeakable ongoing human pain and tragedy. As the song suggests, its consequences were so dramatic that in some cases they even led individuals to madness and/ or suicide. This veiled allusion to suicide is especially significant in this context. Suicides were not totally infrequent during and after the civil war, but Francoist censorship worked especially hard to cover their existence (Sinova, 1989: 246)<sup>55</sup>. It is not surprising that a regime that presented itself as the saviour could not tolerate the publication of news about

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<sup>55</sup> General information about Francoist censorship can also be found, for example, in Labordeta (2001: 53). Carbonell’s interview (Uribe, 2003) and Silva (2000: 48) offer more details on how censorship affected singer-songwriters and political singers more specifically. Miguel Ríos’s intervention in *Estravagario* is also enlightening in this respect (*Estravagario*, TVE2, broadcast on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2005).

suicides. For people who have been freed from chaos, decadence and all kinds of poverty do not end up killing up themselves.

### The goodness of socialism

“Asturias” (1976), a poem by Pedro Garfias set to music by Víctor Manuel, also manages to revisit Francoist historical accounts in important ways. Mainly due to its mining industry, Asturias had traditionally been a very consciously politicised area with a strong and active socialist tradition. As Chapter Five will discuss in more detail, socialism was for Francoism one of the greatest evils in the world and Francoist activists fought intensely to exterminate it. In this historical conjuncture Asturias was of great actual and symbolic political significance. The falangist Girón de Velasco used to refer to this region as “la rebelde Asturias” (“the rebellious Asturias”) (Moradiellos, 2000: 84). This left-wing historical tradition of Asturias, which Francoism tried to conceal at all costs, recurrently emerges in Víctor’s song in a positive way. Here Asturias is personified - using the feminine gender (“*negra de minerales*”) - and addressed directly by the singer/performer as he sings “*Dos veces, dos, has tenido ocasión para jugarte/ la vida en una partida y las dos te la jugaste*” (“*Twice, you have had the chance to risk your life twice,/ and twice you risked it*”). These lines/verses seem to refer to the socialist Asturian revolution of 1934, as well as to the strong Asturian left-wing opposition and resistance that the Francoist armies encountered during the civil war. In fact, in the song, Asturias - presented as naturally integrated within the national context of Spain - appears as the unbeatable socialist fighting model to follow in the international context:

¿Quién derribará este árbol, de Asturias, [...]?  
Que corre por toda España crispándonos de coraje  
mirad obreros del mundo, su silueta recortarse.  
Contra ese cielo impasible, vertical, inquebrantable,

firme sobre roca firme, herida viva su carne.

Who will knock down this tree of Asturias [...]?  
It runs throughout Spain stiffening our resolve.  
Look, proletarians of the world, her silhouette standing out  
vertical and unbreakable, against that impassive sky  
solid on solid rock, an open wound her flesh.

In spite of its subversive material and content, in terms of form and tone “Asturias” is not completely different from those texts that supported Francoist discourses on history. Like Francoist historiography, this song makes use of essentialism in order to boost its power and efficiency. Asturias is constructed and presented here as an essence, as a natural given. Moreover, the language used in this homage is anthem-like, emotionally moving, solemn, glorifying and rather traditionally masculine - hence its allusions to “coraje” (“courage”), and “muerte cobarde” (“coward death”), for example. These traditionally masculine lyrics are coherently accompanied by the singer’s vocal performance and by the music. In terms of vocal performance it is noticeable that he uses a loud voice, as well as one of the lowest and deepest pitched tones of his range. In the context of the song, both qualities can be associated with fierce masculinity, strength and power. Moreover, musically speaking, this song introduces an *in crescendo* anthem-like rhythm of an almost military-like quality that resembles some Francoist anthems. In spite of the presence of all these rather stereotypically masculine and more traditional emotional strategies, the poem-song “Asturias” pays homage to socialist Asturias. Therefore it constituted a significant subversive political act in itself at the time of the Transition. It was a clear attempt to reclaim an alternative left-wing Spanish history that Francoism systematically tried to silence and annihilate.

## **b) 'Othering' the Francoist center**

In some songs by the artists studied here the centring and normalising of the other of Francoist discourses noted above gave way to the 'othering' of categories that were central to Francoist hegemonic discourses on Spanish history. At times, both occurred simultaneously. That was the case, for example, in the already analysed "Lady Laura" and "El cobarde": as noted earlier, these songs significantly questioned Francoist accounts of the civil war which created specific heroes and villains. Both a centring of anti-Francoist categories and a decentring of Francoist ones was also present in Víctor's "Canción de la esperanza" (1978) and in Sabina's "Mi vecino de arriba" (1978), for example. In Víctor's song, Franco, who is unnamed but addressed with "tú" rather than with the expected more formal and respectful "usted" is 'othered' in different ways. This 'othering' of Franco and his politics is accompanied by a normalisation of the narrator's Left wing philosophy of life. Similarly, in Sabina's "Mi vecino de arriba" the ridiculing of the Francoist neighbour and his often historically-oriented discourses runs parallel to the normalisation of the anti-Francoist young man.

The tendency to 'other' different central categories of Francoist historiography was the predominant one, for example, in Víctor's "Buenos días, Adela mía" (1974), "Soy de España" (1976), "Estos versos escritos con dolor" (1974); in Ana's "Calle del Oso" (1975); and in Sabina's "1968", "Mi vecino de arriba" and "Adivina, adivinanza" (1978). As the following analysis will show, these attempts to 'other' the Francoist centre were of great contextual importance at the time of the Transition.

Mocking Franco's bureaucrats and supporters, and rejecting the excesses of militant patriotism

The ironic “Buenos días, Adela mía” is narrated by a senior bureaucrat working for Franco’s government – he calls himself “un importante” (“an important one”). Significantly, it is a monologue throughout and it is apparently addressing Adela, the narrator’s wife, although its main referent is actually the narrator himself. In fact, this self-regarding narrator’s monologue is unequivocally uni-directional and allows no interaction. He uses his speech to either directly or indirectly allude to different aspects of his life and thought. Thus, the listener gets to know that he is an *ex-combatiente* (“yo me batí en la guerra” – “I fought in the war”) who enjoys his powerful political position: “desde este auto *controlo* al pueblo;/ moviendo masas soy un artista” – “I *control* people from that vehicle;/ I’m an artist moving masses”) [emphasis added]. This Francoist diplomat also shows his fondness for a strict understanding of discipline and hierarchy. He complains that

¡[h]ay que ver cómo está el servicio  
no demuestran solicitud!  
Ya no son como antiguamente,  
que servir era su virtud.

[i]t’s incredible with domestic staff these days  
they are not very thoughtful!  
Nothing like those in the old days,  
for whom serving was a virtue.

In fact, although this character is the narrator, he manages to conceal neither his laziness and incompetence in his job, nor his over-traditional, narrow-minded, authoritarian and reactionary philosophy of life: he trivialises war – he refers to it as “no son asuntos de vida o muerte” (“not a matter of life and death”); he also reveals his hypocrisy by noting that in his job he is mainly concerned with appearances, “pues

la foto es fundamental” (“for the photo is crucial”); furthermore, he is far from capable and efficient in his job:

[p]resiento un día agotador,  
tengo visita de embajador;  
[...]  
y sigo sin saber de qué voy a hablar.

I feel this is going to be an exhausting day,  
an ambassador is visiting  
[...]  
and I still don't know what I'm going to talk about.

His relationships with those who disagree with him are not easy either. For example, when he refers to his youngest son, he complains that

[...] el tercero es un gran \*\*\*,  
que no estudia y dice que yo  
tengo un cargo por mi pasado  
y por mi color de camaleón;  
lo que no piensa esa oveja negra  
es que yo me batí en la guerra  
esclavo soy de la incomprensión  
de esta perdida generación.

[...] the third one is a big \*\*\*,  
who does not study and says that I  
have a post because of my past  
and because of my chameleon colour;  
what that black sheep does not consider  
is that I fought in the war  
I am a victim of the lack of understanding  
of this lost generation.

The detachment that this narrator awakens in the audience with this textual self-characterization is emphasized musically by the use of an ironic music-hall type of tune throughout the song. The combination of all these elements allows the singer to make obvious a reality that was officially silenced and disguised by Francoism, and by so doing, he rewrites history: the regime was not a historically needed saviour. Rather, it was a source of political authoritarianism and corruption: the above

quotations suggest that it tried hard to surround itself exclusively by those who fanatically and uncritically showed blind faith in the “national uprising” and its resultant regime.

The ironic but painful approach to history of “Buenos días, ...” is abandoned in Ana’s “Calle del Oso”, which adopts a more serious and nostalgic tone. This song is presented as an autobiography, as its very title suggests: Ana herself lived in “Calle del Oso” – Madrid - as a child. Its narrator, who can be identified with the singer’s public *persona*, uses the first person singular in order to impressionistically introduce some of the aspects and events that marked her childhood. From a historiographical perspective this song is relevant for its allusions to different real and fictional national and foreign characters. For example, the narrator emphasizes that “nunca llamó mi atención/ Agustina de Aragón” (“Agustina of Aragon/ never attracted my attention”). This allusion is of special significance. In Francoist historiography Agustina of Aragon was presented as one of the Spanish female heroines *par excellence* (Otero, 1999a: 20). Her patriotism and resolution had led her to fire cannons against the French invaders during the War of Independence (1808-1814). Furthermore, her active role in the war had decisively helped Spaniards in their victory against the French tyrants, Francoist historiography read<sup>56</sup>. As different sources show (e.g. Álvarez, 1998: 374, 376), the War of Independence won by Spain was of crucial importance in Francoist historiography: it was presented as an event in which the greatest displays of Spanish patriotism and Spanishness materialised and successfully flourished<sup>57</sup>. In this context, Ana Belén’s indifference towards/detachment from

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<sup>56</sup> Álvarez Junco (1996: 89), for example, offers less simplistic interpretations of the ‘War of Independence’ between Spain and France (1808-1814).

<sup>57</sup> This epic significance of the War of Independence against Napoleon’s invasion was not exclusive to Francoist historiography. In fact, it was already present in the Spanish liberal historiography of the

Agustina - and by extension from the War of Independence and its outcomes - becomes ideologically significant. Her autobiographical position in the song denotes an explicit, politically charged detachment from Francoist historiography, as it only seemed to accept a radical, excessive and fanatical traditional type of patriotism. In fact, this song seems to support a more internationally open version of the nation. Hence its nostalgic allusions to different foreign myths of the narrator's childhood - Marilyn Monroe, Tarzan, and Snow White. These decidedly apolitical Hollywood-associated characters - and especially the first two - were probably evocative of, among other things, exotic sensuality and exuberant romance and adventure. These sexually-charged legends were overall far from those 'asexual', over patriotic, sober, restraint, and/or demure Spanish heroes, heroines and 'role-models' that invaded many Francoist publications for children and young people from 1936 up until the 1970s - e.g. in "Enciclopedia Infantil" (Otero, 2000: 71) and "Manual del acampado" (Otero, 2000: 164).

In the ironic and playful "Mi vecino de arriba" Sabina introduces a near-caricature of the typical Spanish man who lives, thinks and acts in a way perfectly integrated within the parameters of Franco's regime. Again, there are direct references to the civil war and a direct attack on the authoritarianism of the victors:

[m]i vecino de arriba  
hizo la guerra y no  
va a consentir que opine  
a quien no la ganó.

[t]he neighbour above me  
made the war and will not

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second half of the nineteenth century (Fox, 1998: 39). The same can be said about the relevance that some historical figures were granted - e.g. the Catholic Monarchs and Christopher Columbus: they were glorified by Francoist and 19th century-liberal historiographies (Fox, 1998: 40).

allow anyone who didn't win it  
to express an opinion.

The young hippy-like, anti-Francoist narrator also points out that this Francoist *vecino de arriba* believes “que es una unidad de destino/ en lo universal” (“that he is ‘unity of destiny’/ in the universal”). This phrase, a recurrent favourite in Francoist historiography throughout its existence, is a centralising and imperialistic maxim. It refers to the indissoluble quality of the Spanish nation-state, fanatically supported by Francoist discourses. It also refers to the imperial will of Francoist historiography that was examined earlier in the analysis of “El cobarde”.

Sabina uses different strategies in order to mock the discourses supported by the Francoist *vecino de arriba*. His vocal performance and choice of music are vital in this respect. The performer/narrator's tone of voice is ironic when he reproduces his Francoist neighbour's direct speech. This vocal performance powerfully interacts with the cabaret-like music of the song: they operate together to enhance the absurdity and danger of the *vecino de arriba*'s outdated and intolerant discourses. The narrator takes revenge on his Francoist neighbour and his grandiloquent historical maxims by subverting Francoist discourses on gender and sexuality. It is also important to note that, in spite of its comic and apparently slightly frivolous character, this song does not conclude in a trivial manner. The reality revealed in its final lines is rather serious, realistic and not too optimistic: pro-Francoist individuals were still numerically significant and politically powerful in Spain in 1978. Hence the use of the spatial metaphor “de arriba/ de abajo” (above/ below), which aimed to express the unequal power relations that still existed in Spain between pro-Francoist and anti-Francoist individuals:

[m]e he cambiado de casa,

de nacionalidad,  
pero, a pesar de todo,  
todo ha seguido igual;  
los vecinos de arriba  
inundan la ciudad,  
si tu vives abajo,  
no te dejan en paz.

I have moved house,  
I have changed my nationality  
but, in spite of all this,  
everything is still the same.  
The 'neighbours above'  
dominate the city  
if you live below them,  
they don't leave you in peace.

### The evils of Catholicism

Sabina tried to include his acid “Adivina, adivinanza” in his 1978 album *Inventario*. However, his wish to record this song on LP format was not satisfied until 1981, due to censorship (De Miguel, 1986: 86). In spite of this initial veto, Sabina’s public became familiar with “Adivina, adivinanza” quite early on, as it was often included in his live performances prior to 1981. Although the dictator’s name is completely absent, this song obviously refers to the funeral of Franco, who “[m]il años tardó en morirse,/ pero por fin la palmó” (“took a thousand years to die,/ but at last kicked the bucket”). The song recreates his wake in an unrealistic, farcical and excessive manner which does not always escape Francoist macho discourses – in its references to “el coño de la Bernarda” (“Bernarda’s cunt”), for example<sup>58</sup>. “Adivina, adivinanza” cynically enumerates those (well-known) past and present personalities and groups that, according to the narrator, attended the dictator’s funeral service. This unbelievable, incongruous and comic listing is used by the performer to highlight

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<sup>58</sup> This widely-used vulgar expression refers to the genitals of a so-called Bernarda, a woman who – the legend says – was a prostitute. This expression implied that Bernarda’s sex was ‘public property’, for she was considered only as a prostitute, rather than as a person.

some of the most extreme and fanatical aspects of Franco's regime. By so doing, it ridicules Franco, his regime, followers and historiography, and creates a "carnavalesque" scene in the Bahktinian sense (Bahktin, 1994: 226) which was already present in a less prominent way in "Mi vecino de arriba" – the presence and significance of the "carnavalesque" in Sabina's work will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Eight.

At the plot level this systematic "carnavalesque" inversion of Francoist versions of history in "Adivina, adivinanza" affects a number of areas. Especially interesting here is its approach to religion. Faithful to Sabina's taste, this song offers a recurrent and merciless attack on Catholicism and the Catholic Church. There are ironic allusions to "Torquemada" and "la Santa Inquisición" ("the Spanish Inquisition"), both praised in Francoist historiography (Álvarez, 1998: 358)<sup>59</sup>. The cynicism of Francoist religious discourses is ironically taken to the fore, especially through Sabina's vocal performance – which awakens the audience's laughter -, as the song comically stresses that Franco, the cruel dictator historically supported by the Catholic Church, is surely "en el Cielo a la derecha de Dios" ("in Heaven, by God's right side") and that "[m]il quinientas doce monjas pid[en] con devoción al Papa/ santo de Roma [su] pronta canonización"( "[o]ne thousand and twelve nuns devotedly ask[...] the holy Pope/ of Rome for [his] prompt canonization"). This irony is enhanced as the narrator explains – in a sardonic tone of voice which reveals some of his pain - how all those who opposed the dictator (e.g. "muertos de asco y fusilados" ["those killed by

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<sup>59</sup> Tomás de Torquemada was a well-known Spanish priest who became General Inquisitor in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. He gave *la Santa Inquisición* its especially fanatic and repressive character. (*Diccionario enciclopédico Espasa I*, 1992: 1653).

desperation and those executed”]), with whom he obviously sympathises and makes the audience sympathise, are surely dwelling “en el infierno” (“in hell”).

This frontal attack against Catholicism is of great contextual importance. As Fox (1998: 188, 189), and Núñez (2001: 720) point out, Catholicism, or, as some scholars rightly nuance (Moradiellos, 2000: 20), a rather extreme institutionalised version of it, constituted one of the main pillars of Francoism and Francoist national identity throughout their existence. There was a strong alliance between the regime and the established Catholic Church, and Catholicism was presented as the premise without which Spain and Spanishness could not exist (Otero, 2000: 153). It is then not surprising that Catholicism played a crucial role in the construction of Francoist historiography, as an examination of different primary and secondary texts suggests (e.g. Álvarez, 1998: 356, 357; Álvarez Junco, 1996: 101)<sup>60</sup>. This National-Catholic component of Francoist historiography was mostly taken from Menéndez y Pelayo’s work (Álvarez Junco, 1996: 101; Fox, 1998: 188; Balfour, 1996: 116). He became a favourite author in Francoist accounts of Spanish history. Curiously enough, he is also one of those attending Franco’s funeral in “Adivina, adivinanza”:

Santa Teresa iba dando  
su brazo incorrupto a Don  
Pelayo que no podía  
resistir el mal olor.

Saint Teresa was giving  
her uncorrupted arm to Mr  
Pelayo, who couldn’t  
stand its bad smell.

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<sup>60</sup> The presentation of Catholicism as essential to Spanishness was not a Francoist invention (Fox, 1998: 189). Historiographies with *componentes nacionalcatólicos* were already present in Manuel Ferry y Colom’s and Saturnino Calleja’s work, in 1882 and 1886, respectively. Catholicism was also used as a political weapon of national unity before Franco came to power (Álvarez Junco, 1996: 100). It was used “[d]uring the second half of the nineteenth century [by] traditional Catholic thinkers” who presented “Catholicism - or, to be exact, ‘Catholic unity’ - as the foundation of Spanish nationality”.

These lines sarcastically echo a popular story spread by official Francoist propaganda aiming to emphasize Franco's own Catholicism: apparently, the dictator kept Saint Teresa's "uncorrupted arm" as a protecting relic in his own room. In the song, this "carnavalesque", fetishist and grotesque scene is obviously ironic and ridicules Pelayo and his ultra-Catholic historical view of Spain. It also mocks the dictator's almost idolatrous belief in the physical incorruptibility of Saint Teresa's arm: as the above quotation shows, in the song, the smell of her decomposed arm is unbearable for those who, like "Don Pelayo", stand near her.

As hinted out earlier, the comic, sarcastic and at times cynical 'othering' of Francoist versions of history that this song presents in its narrative is enhanced both musically and at the level of vocal performance. In fact, these three levels operate together to create a farcical and "carnavalesque" whole that is especially relevant in the recorded live version from *La Mandrágora* analysed here. The use of a guitar solo in order to play a fragment of a well-known *pasodoble* melody responds to this comic intention of the piece – *pasodobles* were inevitably associated with Francoism and Francoist Spain and Spanishness at the time. The same can be said about the fast guitar *punteado* ('finger-picked') played by Sabina as he sings the first eight lines of the song. The suspense that this particular guitar performance apparently creates is conspicuously ironic: as the audience's laughing suggests, as soon as the first line of the song is sung ("It took him a thousand years to die") the song's referent is already known and there is no need to continue with the guitar *punteado*. This musical irony goes hand in hand with Sabina's mocking vocal performance. Improvised sarcastic *aflamencados* comments like "música con raíces" ("music with roots") – pronounced

with an exaggerated southern accent - should be understood in this context<sup>61</sup>. His brusque changes in volume and speed (for example, when singing “[s]urely he is in Heaven, by God’s right side”) seem to equally respond to this “carnavalesque” intention of the song.

Both “Mi vecino de arriba” and “Adivina, adivinanza” could be criticised for their dichotomous simplification of reality. As Francoist discourses had previously done with anything or anyone opposing the regime, the narrator in these two songs seems to systematically demonise and homogenise the Francoist other. Equally, an over-valorisation of the ‘I’ and ‘us’ is present in both songs, both explicitly and implicitly. Mattern points out that “a strictly oppositional [...] stance [...] may be counterproductive when it [...] further fractures communities” (1998: 26). In this particular case, it could be argued that a “strictly oppositional stance” might have caused a “further fractur[ing]” of the already divided Spanish national community of the Transition. Sabina’s fierce oppositional stance in these two songs, however, must be understood in the historical conjuncture in which they were created and first received. Both were the by-products of the Spanish Transition, a period that for many demanded taking sides – rather than recognising complexity. In fact, Sabina’s simplification of reality is typical of periods and stages of self-assertion. Critical nuanced approaches to both ‘us’ and ‘the other’ often come later in time, when one’s individual and group identity has reached some strength and power. This singer’s strictly oppositional stance also needs to be interpreted in light of his radical – nearly romantic – view of the Transition as a necessary and total break with the Francoist past.

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<sup>61</sup> *Ritmos aflamencados* are musical patterns that take up some elements from *flamenco*. *Flamenco* was first associated with Andalusia and southern Spain and then, by extension, - and greatly due to Francoism - with Spain as a whole.

Víctor Manuel's later option: looking for a consensual Spain

A less radical and more self-critical and nuanced position towards the Spanish Transition was supported, for example, in some later works by Víctor - in his “Hace tres años que he vuelto a nacer” (1978), for example. In this song the ‘I’ of the narrator can be easily identified with that of the singer’s public *persona* – hence the references to his active political fight against Francoism and his identification with “la vida truncada de ayer/ que ha conseguido ponerse de pie” (“yesterday’s truncated life/ that has managed to get up”). This song shows the narrator’s acknowledgement of and coming to terms with Spain’s past, as “no hay una Historia que vuelva hacia atrás” (“there is no going back in History”). This historical awareness is presented as painful but necessary and useful for the attainment of a harmonious and peaceful present. On the one hand, this song shows well the narrator’s inner and external fight in order to remain loyal to his ideas and identity/ies: he sings “tengo memoria y recuerdo el ayer” (“I have got memory and I remember the past”) and celebrates that “hace tres años que he vuelto a nacer” (“I was reborn three years ago”) (1975 marked the ‘official’ death of Francoism), and that “[c]ambian los tiempos y se oye la voz/ de los que nunca vivieron al sol” (“times change and you can hear the voice/ of those who never saw the sun”). On the other hand, this song introduces an honourable, conciliatory attempt to respect and be respected by the pro-Francoist other:

[y]o le respeto, respéteme *usted*  
con la pistola no hay nada que hacer.  
Eh, eh...eh, eh...

No piso a nadie y no quiero aprender [emphasis added. The sense of – respectful - distance created by the use of ‘usted’ should be noted].

I respect you, so please respect me  
there is nothing to do or gain with a gun.  
Eh, eh,... eh, eh...

I do not walk over anyone and I do not want to learn to do it.

Such a conciliatory attempt - also present in his "Camaradas" (1977): "hay que volver a empezar/ vencedores o vencidos/ salvamos la libertad" ("we need to start again/ victors or defeated/ we save freedom") - originates from an all-inclusive desire to overcome the damaging historical division of the two Spains through dialogue and cooperation:

[s]on necesarias todas las manos  
para crecer son necesarios  
todos los brazos crecen de abajo,  
barro y futuro nos moldeamos.

[a]ll hands are necessary  
in order to grow all arms  
are necessary, they all grow from below  
out of mud and future we shape ourselves.

## **2) The weakening of history as a recurrent political tool (1978/9-1982)**

After the ratification of the Spanish Constitution and the official inauguration of a democratic system in 1978, history lost much of its presence and relevance in the works by the singers studied here. This can be interpreted in different ways: perhaps it showed the artists' overall confidence in the democratic achievement that was taking place: (some of) these singers probably felt that they had (largely) succeeded in their attempts to publicise, normalise, and integrate past and present Spanish left-wing identities within the broad and diverse Spanish historical and socio-political scenario of the time. This relaxation in the use of history may also have obeyed the artists' conscious attempt to initiate, and encourage the period of social integration, concord and cohesion of the two Spains necessary for the peaceful implementation of the recently born democratic system. In this context, Ana, and especially Víctor may have served an important role moderating different extreme left-wing positions at the time of the Transition – overall, Sabina seemed to remain more radical, ironic, and

sceptical; in fact, considering his case especially, a different interpretation suggests that this weakening of history may (also) have been linked to issues of disillusionment with the socio-political outcomes of the Transition.

In Ana's work prior to 1978 history was not used in a quantitatively prominent way. After that date, however, history became even less relevant in her works as a tool for the construction of national identity. If anything, it became significant for its absence. We will have to wait until 1984 to find her well-known and critical historically conscious "España, camisa blanca de mi esperanza".

#### Reasserting the need for a progressive understanding of *patria*

In Víctor's works, history also lost much of its prominence after 1978. While old songs like "El cobarde" were still performed in this period, none of his newly created pieces approached history, with the significant exception of the popular "Esto no es una canción" (1981). As its title suggests, this song "[was] not a song", or rather, it was not *just* a song (Pérez Villalba, 2004). In fact, it was a very politically conscious declaration of intentions with an important historiographical component. Its narrator, who makes use of the first person singular in his speech, could be easily identified with the singer's politically committed public *persona*. This narrator describes what the achievement of the ideal *patria* entails for him. Spain is not explicitly mentioned in the song and therefore its content is general and ambivalent: in principle, it is applicable to any national setting within or outside Spain. It is likely, however, that a good number of listeners associated the *patria* in the song with Spain, for different reasons: this singer had previously shown a special concern about Spain in his works,

rather than about any other national setting<sup>62</sup>. Its context of creation and reception, and its allusions to different elements of Francoist history similarly made of Spain its likely referent.

In this song there are some similarities between the singer's approach to the (Spanish) nation and that offered by Francoist historiography. In both cases the 'normality' and 'naturalness' of the concept (Spanish) nation is taken for granted. Furthermore, they both use the emotionally-charged notion of *patria*, rather than the more neutral term *país*, for example. This systematic use of *patria* is accompanied by different direct allusions to the narrator's feeling of love for his motherland. This deep and passionate love for his *patria*, however, is also very different from Francoist patriotism in significant ways: like many other public expressions of nationalism and national identity (Breuilly, 1993: 64; Anderson, 1991: 145; Smith, 1991: 111), late Francoism obsessively promoted the use of different paraphernalia and ceremonials as public expressions of Spanishness and Spanish "patriotism"<sup>63</sup>. Such a display often adopted flamboyant and grandiloquent forms (Casero, 2000). This Francoist affectedness is criticised in this song, where a much more privately-oriented, humble, discreet and unpretentious form of patriotism is encouraged:

[c]uando hablen de la patria  
no [...]  
tachen de traidor

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<sup>62</sup> There are a few cases in which this was not entirely the case: "Al presidente de Chile, Salvador Allende" (1976), and "El niño que volaba" (1978), for example. The first one was a poem by communist poet Rafael Alberti set to music by Víctor Manuel. In this song Chilean reality is the main concern, although there are some references to the Spanish context as well. The second one, written by Víctor and set in Spain, implicitly criticises the imperial and disempowering policies adopted by the United States in relation to other national contexts.

<sup>63</sup> In late Francoism, just as in early Francoism, there was a strong emphasis on the use of different paraphernalia and cultural practices in order to display and re-assert Spanishness and Spanish nationalism. These practices of late Francoism, however, were in some cases different to those used earlier in the regime: e.g. Fascist greetings were largely left aside after 1945. Other rituals and cultural practices such as the regional dances of the *Sección Femenina* gained more support in official propaganda from the sixties onwards (Casero, 2000).

*al que la lleva dentro  
pegada al corazón  
y no anda por la calle  
con ella en procesión [emphasis added].*

[w]hen you would speak about the/our *patria*  
don't accuse of treachery  
that [*man*] who carries it inside  
stuck in *his* heart  
and does not walk in the street  
showing it in a procession.

The neglected gender dimension of the lyrics quoted above should be noted: their referent is systematically male. The sense of distance created by the use of 'usted' (e.g. in "hablen" and "tachen") also deserves some attention: in this way the narrator is showing his detachment from those who understand their love of Spain and Spanishness as the public deployment of different rituals and paraphernalia.

It is also important to note that, as different sources show (e.g. Álvarez, 1998: 389; Otero, 2000: 20), Francoist historiography used religious discourses in order to present Franco and his regime as saviours of Spain and Spaniards, as providentially chosen and divinely inspired. In this song the implied narrator/Víctor's public *persona* shows his frontal opposition to such a position. Instead, he reminds audiences that

[c]uando hablen de la patria  
no olviden que es mejor  
sentirla a *nuestro* lado  
que ser su salvador [emphasis added; the emotional closeness created by the use of the possessive "our" should be noted].

[w]hen you would speak about the/our *patria*  
don't forget that it's better  
to feel it by *our* side  
than to be its saviour.

This song does not accept Francoist 'masculinised' and militaristic views of Spain either: "[c]uando hablen de la patria/ no me hablen del valor/ no jueguen con el sable"

("[w]hen you would speak about the/our patria/ don't tell me about courage/ don't play with the sabre"). Nor does it approve of the also very stereotypically masculine Francoist discourses on the civil war and their socially divisive potential – the indirect reference to the Falangist anthem "Cara al sol" needs to be remarked upon here<sup>64</sup>:

[c]uando hablen de la patria  
no me hablen del *honor*  
*no me cuenten batallas*  
*ganadas cara al sol* [emphasis added]

[w]hen you would speak about the/our patria  
don't talk to me about *honour*  
*don't tell me about battles*  
*won facing the sun.*

Instead, this song seems to adopt an integratory and conciliatory position, for "aquí cabemos todos/ o no cabe ni Dios" ("here there is room for everybody/ or there is no room for anyone, not even God"). It apparently supports a new *patria* in which ethnic, gender and political differences are accepted and welcomed: "no importa el color,/ el sexo ni la raza/ o el bando en que luchó" ("colour doesn't matter/ nor does sex or race/ or the band in which [s/he] fought")<sup>65</sup>. This apparently all-embracing and gender-aware position, however, is somehow contradicted in the next paragraph of the song, as the Spaniard who carries the *patria* "adentro/ pegada al corazón" is indisputably male. Hence the song references to "traidor" rather than to "traidores", and to "al que" rather than to "a los que", for example.

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<sup>64</sup> "Cara la sol", created in 1935, was the Falangist anthem *par excellence*. Its lyrics were written by some poets and by José Antonio Primo de Rivera - founder and leader of the *Falange Española*. Its music was composed by Juan Tellería. "Cara al sol" was often used officially in Francoist times as a greeting song (e.g. in schools, parades, etc.), especially before 1945. In [http://www.rumbos.net/cancionero/ant\\_001.htm](http://www.rumbos.net/cancionero/ant_001.htm) and <http://www.himnonacional.org/caralsol.html> [Accessed 10th April 2005].

<sup>65</sup> This reference to "race" should be understood in the Spanish context of the early 80s: the notion of "ethnic group" was largely unknown in Spain at the time. The use of "race" in this song does not seem to denote or even connote an ethnocentric position on the side of the performer. On the contrary, it seems to be a critical allusion to the racist discourses that were present in Francoist historiography (e.g. in Álvarez, 1998: 360- 362).

### Sabina's *desencanto*

The scarce presence of history in Sabina's work after 1978 is also relevant. Between 1979 and 1982 only the already analysed "Adivina, adivinanza" addressed historical issues explicitly. Like Víctor and Ana, after 1978 Sabina seemed to shift the focus of attention in his musical texts: he abandoned his former concern with recent Spanish history and engaged instead in a critical examination of the Spanish society of the early eighties. His extremely popular "Calle Melancolía" (1980) and "Pongamos que hablo de Madrid" (1980, 1981) contain an important social dimension that can be analysed in this light. The pessimism that pervades both songs seems to express the *desencanto* and disillusionment that Sabina - and many others - experienced about the outcomes of the Spanish Transition. As Graham and Labanyi put it (1995: 312, 313), "the term *desencanto* (disenchantment/disappointment)" was a label frequently used in some circles "since the end of the dictatorship" (1995: 312);

[m]ost usually it denotes a general sense of disappointment with the reality of the liberal democratic system in action. Partly this has been the result of impractically high popular expectations that democracy - for so long the striven-for, almost mythic goal - would provide a panacea for all national problems.

The left's *desencanto* was rooted in an awareness of the discrepancy between the enormous energy invested over the long years of the anti-Franco struggle and the minimal concessions to levelling social and economic reform gained as a result of the transition (Graham and Labanyi, 1995: 312-3).

In Sabina's songs the *desencanto* caused by those still remaining social inequalities is expressed in an intimate, sensitive and rather gloomy manner. "Calle Melancolía", and "Pongamos que hablo de Madrid" more explicitly, use the Spanish capital city as a "metonymic space", to use Crang and Thrift's phrase (2000: 13): their portrait of Madrid seems intended to be a portrait of any reasonably populated Spanish city of the early 80s and thus of the country itself - by then Spain had largely become an urban country. In fact, both songs constitute a social critique, as they place a crushing

and almost exclusive emphasis on the most sordid aspects of Spanish urban reality: the city shelters poverty and death, drug abuse, madness, disenchantment and solitude.

### **SINGER-SONGWRITING, POLITICAL SINGERS AND (THE DIFFERENT PUEBLOS OF) SPAIN IN THE WORLD**

In Francoist times as today the Spanish state was a very complex amalgam of identities. It resulted from the union of individuals with different single or multiple regional and/or national identities with at times competing interests. It was a space in which very rigid and conservative views of Spain and Spanish unity coexisted with radical voices that supported the total separation of the peripheral nations from the Spanish state. More moderate positions that were open to dialogue also existed on both sides. In other cases individuals celebrated their double or even multiple national and/or regional identities (for example, being Catalan and Spanish). Francoist responses to this complex regional and national 'identitarian' reality of Spain were clear and remained fairly steady throughout the regime. Different primary texts (e.g. Álvarez, 1998: 384, 385, 446) suggest that one of the biggest obsessions of the Francoist regime was that of asserting and imposing Spain's unity at all levels. The existence of other nationalities within the Spanish state was constantly denied (Moradiellos, 2000: 22), and attempts to materialise any of those peripheral national identities (e.g. Basque, Catalan, or Galician) were fiercely repressed and punished. Only regional particularities were acknowledged (Álvarez, 1998: 267, 383) and at times officially promoted (Casero, 2000). This supposedly natural indissolubility of

the Spanish nation-state was justified historically and remained throughout a main concern in Francoist historiography (Álvarez, 1998: 356, 357).

The following section will examine in some detail how some singer-songwriters and political singers addressed the complex multi-national and multi-regional nature of the Spanish state during the Transition period<sup>66</sup>. It will explore briefly how and to what extent these artists followed and/or detached themselves from the Francoist position expressed in Francoist historiography pointed out above. In order to do so different textual and extra-textual elements and factors will be considered. Special attention will be paid to the works by Víctor, Ana and Sabina between 1968 and 1982. This time their works will not be considered chronologically, however. Diachronic classifications will be avoided here because the research carried out suggested that overall, in terms of content of lyrics especially, these issues were not addressed following a clear evolutionary pattern between 1968 and 1982.

### **Spain as the sum of Iberian identities<sup>67</sup>**

For a number of radical peripheral nationalist singer-songwriters the Spanish nation-state did not seem to be a valid category. This rejection of Spain and Spanishness partly arose as a reaction against Francoist nationalism and its very rigid, centralised and excluding terms. In many other cases, however, singer-songwriters did not apparently see a necessary incompatibility between the existence of the Spanish

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<sup>66</sup> This is an extremely complex issue that cannot be discussed in full detail and depth here. In fact, it could be the main focus of a different thesis altogether – it would be quite an original line of investigation that has not received scholarly attention so far. The main aim of this section then is simply to provide this thesis with some critical remarks on issues that, although not totally central, seem of some importance to this investigation.

<sup>67</sup> M. K. Flynn notes that “[t]he category of Iberian identity includes national identities within Spain, Portugal and Latin America” (2001: 703). Here, however, only those within Spain are being considered.

nation and Spanishness and that of other regional and national Iberian identities within the Spanish state. To a certain extent that seemed to be the case of Sabina, and especially that of Ana and Víctor. Overall, they do not seem to question the validity of the categories 'Spanish nation' and 'Spanishness' as such between 1968 and 1982. In their works both Spain and Spanishness are in general still constructed as natural givens, and thus approached in highly emotional terms, especially in Víctor's case. Some of these artists' love of Spain, of the nation, needs to be understood in context. Spain had been after all 'stolen' from the Republic, and the dictatorship had pushed many dissidents to exile. In this historical scenario some of these politically committed artists saw themselves as links between the present of the Transition and the past Left-wing tradition of the Second Republic. This essentialism present in some works by singer-songwriters shows that, as Fuss points out (1989: xi, xii), essentialism is not intrinsically conservative and should not be rejected *a priori*.

Víctor's "Estos versos escritos con dolor" (1975) supports Fuss's theory in some respects. This song "que podría [...] hablar de cualquier parte,/ pero que habla [...] de una *tierra* vieja y miserable" [emphasis added] ("that could [...] speak of anywhere,/ but talks [...] about an old and wretched *land* [...] explicitly refers to his "querida España" ("dear Spain"). The Spain of this song, although not challenged as a category, is very different from that constructed in Francoist historiography, however. Spain seems to be conceived here as a fairly loose and inclusive entity. The systematic use of the word "tierra" rather than the more politicised and nationalistic "nación", "patria" or even "país" is significant. This allusion to "land", to merely geographical space, rather than to geo-political territory is relevant: it is perhaps aiming to address even those individuals who do not feel Spanish but still consider

themselves represented by any of the other Iberian identities of the Spanish state. By having any of these identities, - the song seems to suggest - individuals are bound to suffer the consequences of those historical events that Francoist historiography praised and this song condemns:

[e]sta tierra que se gastó en Imperios,  
en mitos y leyendas,  
organizó Cruzadas y aborreció la Ciencia.  
Esta tierra de Quijotes y Sanchos,  
que manejan cuatro Sanchos con bigote. Esta tierra brutal,  
donde puedes comprar felicidad en una lata.

[t]his land that wore itself out  
this land that spent its strength on Empires,  
on myths and legends,  
that organised Crusades and abhorred Science.  
This land of Quixotes and Sanchos,  
handled by a few Sanchos with a moustache.  
This brutal land,  
where you can buy happiness in a can.

This song seems to be an implicit call for the emotional unity and cohesive action of those individuals who, embodying any of the Iberian identities, detest the imperialist, anti-democratic, anti-scientific and religiously fanatical Spain embodied by Francoism and supported by Francoist historiography. Despite the general progressive tone of the song, some problematic ideas of gender seem to be still at work here: by dedicating the song to the unequivocally *male* comrade (“compañero”) “[q]ue trabaja, que cae, que se levanta,/ siempre caminando,/ que inevitablemente morirá” (“who works, falls, who stands up,/ always walking,/ who will inevitably die”) for that “tierra vieja”, “miserable” y “brutal”, the narrator seems to suggest that it is mainly males who made/ke and wrote/write the history of the Spanish state. The very traditionally masculine idea of dying for one’s patria defended here (and contradicting the message of the earlier “El cobarde”) is also interesting from a gender perspective:

it resembles that sustained in different Francoist discourses prescriptive of Spanish masculinity (Otero, 2000: 17).

I now turn to consider briefly the three singers and their approach to the complexity of the Spanish state as shown by different extra-textual elements and factors. Again, overall, they publicly adopted a respectful and all-inclusive position that retained the validity of the category 'Spanish nation' while respecting and welcoming the regional and national plurality of this multi-regional/national Spanish nation-state. Leaving aside economic interests, this is perhaps explained by the fact that their artistic and personal relationships with the different regions/nations of the Spanish state seemed smooth and fruitful overall, and by the fact that they travelled a lot around the country to sing in well-attended concerts and recitals. As some of the Basque informants interviewed pointed out, Madrid-born Ana and her "La muralla" were generally well received in the Basque Country, even in radical nationalist circles<sup>68</sup>. It is also significant that these artists' concerns about the national and regional complexity of the Spanish state were well-known. Víctor systematically publicised and defended the peculiarities of Asturias, his beloved region; and he often publicly declared his

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<sup>68</sup> Bilbao focus group meeting, December 2003.

Future research offering a detailed study of the different relationships that singer-songwriters established with the different regions/nations of the Spanish state would most likely prove very enlightening. It would probably take to the fore the complex and at times problematic relationships that different regions/nations established with one another. Such a study would probably reveal that historical, political, cultural, economic and geographical circumstances conditioned the relationships between the different regions and nations of the Spanish state. I noticed the potential of this line of research as I investigated Aragonese singer-songwriting/ers in some detail. Different sources showed (e.g. Andalán, 1975; Uribe, 2003; Labordeta, 2001: 168) that, overall, the relationships between Aragonese and Catalan singer-songwriters were more intense than, for example, those of Aragonese authors and their Andalusian counterparts. This also became clear in the fieldwork carried out. For example, a male participant from Zaragoza noted the following when asked about the influence of Galician, Basque and Catalan singer-songwriters in the more 'Castilian' areas of Spain: "Catalanes mucha [influencia]. Vascos no sería capaz de citar ninguno. Gallegos sólo Amancio Prada. En cambio podría nombrar casi todos de la Nova Cançó (soy aragonés)" ["Catalans [were] very important. I wouldn't be able to mention any Basque ones. Galicians [I can] only [think of] Amancio Prada. However, I could name nearly all from the Nova Cançó (I'm Aragonese)"]; written interview, Zaragoza, March- July 2004.

interest in knowing about the Basque cause<sup>69</sup>. Sabina's early active involvement with the pro-independence cause in the Basque Country and his subsequent political exile (Menéndez Flores 2000:26) can also be understood in this light<sup>70</sup>.

Other singer-songwriters also seemed to construct Spanishness through the acknowledgment and celebration of different regional and national Iberian identities. This complex multi-national and/or multi-regional Spanishness was achieved both textually and extra-textually. Many artists' attempts to reflect and integrate the linguistic richness of multi-regional/national Spain can be understood in this light: Labordeta's "Canto a la libertad" was recorded and often sung with its chorus in Euskera and Catalan; Catalonia-born Serrat recorded "Eduarne" in Castilian Spanish and Euskera. Also, the fact that most singer-songwriters travelled all over the Spanish state (e.g. Labordeta, 2001: 187, 193) to sing their politically committed anti-Francoist songs is significant: although Valencia-born Raimon sang many of his songs in Catalan, he was generally very welcome in Madrid, as different newspapers later reported (in Torrego Egido, 1999: 39), and one interviewee who attended, for example, his famous 1968 concert at the Universidad Complutense noted<sup>71</sup>. It is also significant that political singers from all over the Spanish state participated in events like the "Festival de los *Pueblos Ibéricos*" ("Festival of the *Iberian Pueblos*") [emphasis added] celebrated in Madrid in 1976 (Torrego Egido, 1999: 198; Labordeta, 2001: 161) – the choice of words for the festival's name is significant: "Iberian Pueblos" probably aimed at not being offensive for peripheral nationalists and at being as wide-embracing as possible.

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<sup>69</sup> In <http://usuarios.lycos.es/soyuncorazon/54aniv.htm> [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> December 2002].

<sup>70</sup> More details about Sabina's exile will be offered in Chapter Eight.

<sup>71</sup> Male participant from the Ávila focus group; September 2003.

All this can be explained because, as the ethnographic-based research carried out here showed, solidarity among the diverse regions/nations of the Spanish state was often a prime concern during the Transition. Many people at the time saw themselves as united in their fight against Francoism, and regional and even national differences were generally respected and even welcomed. In fact, different left-wing circles and individuals – including some singer-songwriters - wanted Spain to become a federal republic made up of the union of the different Iberian *pueblos* of the Spanish state<sup>72</sup>. However, these different regional and national identities did not always interact with each other harmoniously. In some cases intransigent, centralistic and/or exclusionary positions appeared, both among Castilian-based nationalists, as well as among those defending their peripheral national identities in radical and excluding ways. This explains why bilingual Serrat, who sang in Catalan and Castilian Spanish, was seen as an intruder in some radical Catalan and Castilian-speaking circles. This also explains why Castilian speaking Labordeta was marginalised by Catalan speaking Raimon when the former tried to release his first album with the alternative Catalan record company Edigsa (Labordeta, 2001: 160). In some other cases these rigid and intolerant positions materialised in concerts and recitals. For example, some interviewees noted that in Belchite (Zaragoza), in the early 80s, some Basque groups were on one occasion booed by some members in the audience when the group turned to sing some of their songs in Euskera<sup>73</sup>.

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<sup>72</sup> This position evolved with time in some Left-wing circles and became more conservative. That was the case in the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE), which won the general elections of 1982 by a majority. Initially, this party's discourses referred to the "Spanish state"; later in time this label was abandoned and "by the mid-to-late 1970s the party once again referred to the Spanish nation rather than state" (Smith and Mar-Molinero, 1996: 25-6).

<sup>73</sup> Female participants from the Zaragoza focus group; January 2004.

## Plural Spain open to foreign influences

The Francoist historiographical emphasis on the unity of the Spanish nation-state was often accompanied by an exaltation of Spain's great qualities (Otero, 2000: 220, 226, 240) and a vilification of foreigners and foreign elements (e.g. in Álvarez, 1998: 374, 377). In fact, although Spain opened itself to foreign influences from the sixties onwards (e.g. to tourism) it was mainly for economic reasons; many official discourses still despised foreign influences as potentially contaminating and corrupting for Spain - the country which they described as "the moral reserve of the western world" (Otero, 2000:44).

### Ni coplas ni pasodobles

Francoism systematically supported musical genres that were presented as purely Spanish and as embodiments of the Spanish spirit. Most *coplas* and *pasodobles* were especially well received by the regime, for they were explicitly (exploitatively) taken as materialisations of the Spanish essence. Greatly due to these Francoist excesses, these and other genres were often ridiculed in the works by the singers studied here between 1968 and 1982<sup>74</sup>. This happened, for example, in Ana's "Los amores de Ana" (1979). In this song the use of elements typical of Francoist folklore - its use of melodies typical of music by *tunas* - acquired comic effects<sup>75</sup>. Its use of *bandurria* and castanet rhythms typical of songs by *tunas* contributed, together with the singer's mocking vocal performance and critical lyrics, to the creation of a humorous piece:

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<sup>74</sup> It took these three artists a while to publicly come to terms, accept and reuse *coplas*, *flamenco* and other musical manifestations traditionally associated with Francoism. For example, it was not until 1990 that they participated in the recording of *Tatuaje*. In this album these three artists sang traditional *coplas* previously performed by, for example, Franco's idol Concha Piquer.

<sup>75</sup> *Tunas* were and are musical groups made up of (mostly male) university students who aim/ed to earn some extra money. These groups wore/wear old-fashioned black costumes with hanging coloured ribbons and black cloaks. *Tunos* used mainly *bandurrias* (type of mandolin) and tambourines for their musical performances. They learned a fixed repertoire of traditional and often chauvinist love songs - often with some sexual content. They were paid for by individuals who wanted them to serenade their (potential) girlfriends, for example.

the traditional and male centred *tuna* music comically clashes with the female narrator's conspicuously feigned naïve tone of voice and her half-veiled references to her unstoppable sexual appetite.

As noted earlier, music associated with Franco's regime was also used comically in Sabina's "Adivina, adivinanza" (1981). Something similar happened in Víctor's "Soy de España" (1976)<sup>76</sup>. Like in Sabina's song, here the use of *pasodoble* rhythms was ironic. This irony was achieved by musical exaggeration: humorous strangeness was produced by an overuse of drums, atypical in canonical traditional *pasodobles*. The vocal performance of this song also relied upon comical excesses. As different scholars have noted, Francoism constructed Spanishness "metonymically"<sup>77</sup>. Great emphasis was placed on Castile (Gracia García and Ruiz Carnicer, 2001: 40) and Andalusia (Smith and Mar-Molinero, 1996: 15). Both regions were often considered to represent and embody Spain and Spanishness. The narrators' exaggerated and ironic imitation of an Andalusian accent and overacted *aflamencado* singing style in both songs becomes then relevant. In fact, in Sabina's case particularly, issues of accent were generally very relevant in his work. Between 1978 and 1982 his southern origin was rather absent in his songs. In his early works, as well as in many of his public interventions (e.g. in the live recording of *La Mandrágora*), his pronunciation does not reveal his Andalusian roots – unless comic effects are consciously searched for. This peculiarity acquires significance when his work is considered diachronically. Interestingly enough, in some of his recent albums and public speeches his Andalusian accent is still present - e.g. in *19 días y 500 noches* (1999). This is

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<sup>76</sup> This song was already present in Víctor's musical "Ravos" (1972).

<sup>77</sup> Billig (1995: 27) noted that nations often have a metonymic quality and that "[t]he battle for nationhood is a battle for hegemony, by which a part claims to speak for the whole nation and to represent the national essence". This is exactly what happened in Francoist Spain.

apparently contradictory: why is his southern accent still noticeable today, after so many years living in Madrid, while it was rather absent/less conspicuous in his earlier works – when his southern past was more recent? Perhaps his early neutral accent could be given a political reading: he probably consciously tried to conceal his Andalusian origin in his work and speeches. He may have done so in order to detach himself from the *flamenquismo* typical of an important trend of Spanish popular culture of the time, which was inevitably associated with Francoism during the Transition period.

In “Adivina, adivinanza” this ironic vocal and musical performance was accompanied by and interacted with the very critical anti-Francoist lyrics discussed earlier. The same can be said about Víctor’s “Soy de España”. Its narrator appears as provincial, and uneducated: he did not know that Paris and the city of Rome are not on the coast and therefore he was forcefully (and ironically) right when he affirmed that “lleno de orgullo/ yo afirmo que en Roma,/ París o Estambul/ no hay un mar tan azul” (“filled with pride/ I affirm that in Rome,/ Paris or Istanbul/ the sea is not as blue”) as in Spain. Like many *coplas*, this song made Spain its main protagonist and subject. However, its purpose was not to uncritically idealise the country, like, for example, Manolo Escobar had done in his “Y viva España” and “Mujeres y vino”. Instead, “Soy de España” aimed, for example, to comically stress and criticise Spain’s lack of freedom and backwardness. Hence the ironic line “como en España, ni hablar” (“Nowhere like Spain [in a positive sense]” – my addition), which recalled a post-war *copla* of the same title<sup>78</sup>.

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<sup>78</sup> Its lyrics can be found in Vázquez Montalbán’s *Cancionero General del Franquismo* (2000: 7).

### Welcoming foreign musical influences

This general disdain towards musical elements that Francoism used as representatives of Spain and Spanishness was often accompanied by a conspicuous musical integration of foreign rhythms, styles and linguistic elements. This happened in a good number of songs by these artists, and it is especially evident in Ana's work from 1977 onwards. Foreign influences are clear in her well-known "Banana Republic" (1981) and in her "Balancé" (1982), for example. "Banana Republic", with its English title, presents a mixture of pop and some reggae tunes, while "Balancé" makes use of pop and Brazilian samba and introduces its chorus in Portuguese.

These artists' recurrent and almost certainly very conscious musical opening to foreign influence probably partly responded to marketing and sales issues: in Spain mainstream pop (used by Víctor and Ana especially from 1978 onwards) was becoming more and more popular and constituted an important source of potential profit. Something similar was occurring to Sabina's electric rock – which he started to use around 1980: it was becoming popular thanks to different groups from *La Movida*. But their choice of foreign music and other clearly non-Spanish elements went probably beyond merely economic interests: in the context of the Transition it possibly also constituted a conscious attempt to make obvious the need for Spain and Spaniards to remain open especially to Europe and Latin America. It was the musical welcoming and support of internationalism that Spain and Spanishness were acquiring at the time of the Transition, especially since Franco's death in 1975.

## SOME AUDIENCE REACTIONS TO ANA BELÉN'S "LA MURALLA": A

### CASE STUDY

#### La muralla

Para hacer esta muralla,  
traíganme todas las manos:  
los negros, sus manos negras,  
los negros, sus manos negras,  
los blancos, sus blancas manos.  
Una muralla que vaya  
desde la playa hasta el monte,  
desde la playa hasta el monte,  
desde el monte hasta la playa,  
allá sobre el horizonte.

#### *Estribillo:*

-¡Tun, tun!  
-¿Quién es?  
-Una rosa y un clavel...  
-¡Abre la muralla!  
-¡Tun, tun!  
-¿Quién es?  
-El sable del coronel...  
-¡Cierra la muralla!  
-¡Tun, tun!  
-¿Quién es?  
-La paloma y el laurel...  
-¡Abre la muralla!  
-¡Tun, tun!  
-¿Quién es?  
-El alacrán y el ciempiés...  
-¡Cierra la muralla!  
Al corazón del amigo,  
abre la muralla;  
al veneno y al puñal,  
cierra la muralla;  
al mirto y la yerbabuena,  
abre la muralla;  
al diente de la serpiente,  
cierra la muralla;  
al ruiseñor en la flor,  
abre la muralla...

Alcemos una muralla  
juntando todas las manos;  
los negros, sus manos negras;  
los negros, sus manos negras;  
los blancos sus blancas manos.  
Una muralla que vaya

#### The wall

In order to make this wall,  
bring me all the hands:  
blacks, their black hands,  
blacks, their black hands.  
whites, their white hands.  
[We will build] a wall that goes  
from the beach up to the mountain,  
from the beach up to the mountain,  
from the mountain down to the beach,  
there over the horizon.

#### *Chorus:*

-Knock, knock!  
-Who is it?  
-A rose and a carnation...  
-Open the wall!  
-Knock. Knock!  
-Who is it?  
-The colonel's sabre  
-Close the wall!  
-Knock, knock!  
-Who is it?  
-The dove and the laurel...  
-Open the wall!  
-Knock, knock!  
-Who is it?  
-The scorpion and the centipede...  
-Close the wall!  
To your friend's heart,  
open the wall;  
to venom and the dagger,  
close the wall;  
to the myrtle and to mint,  
open the wall;  
to the serpent's tooth,  
close the wall;  
to the nightingale on a flower,  
open the wall...

Let us raise a wall  
bringing together all the hands;  
blacks, their black hands;  
blacks, their black hands;  
whites their white hands.  
[We will build] a wall that goes

desde la playa hasta el monte,  
desde el monte hasta la playa,  
allá sobre el horizonte.

*Estribillo*

(poem written by Nicolás Guillén in 1958).

from the beach up to the mountain,  
from the mountain down to the beach,  
there on the horizon.

*Chorus*

In the context described in the last paragraphs of the previous section, Ana's "La muralla" (1977), one of the milestones of the *canción de autor/a* of the Transition, deserves special attention<sup>79</sup>. Music traditionally taken as Latin American (e.g. *boleros*) entered the Spanish mainstream musical scenario quite early (Román, 1994: 87-129). In spite of this active Latin American influence on Spanish music and culture more generally, Francoist historiography always approached Spain's relationships with Latin America in very paternalistic and patronising terms which defended the myth of *la hispanidad* (Otero, 2000: 210, 211)<sup>80</sup>. This historiography systematically presented relationships between Spain and "the new world" in unidirectional terms: Spain, the mother, always the superior referent, had provided backward Latin America with its language, religion, culture and civilization (Álvarez, 1998: 360-362, 453).

Bearing in mind these imperialistic accounts of Francoist historiography, Ana's decision to sing "La muralla" becomes politically significant in the context of the Transition. This song, set to music by Chilean group Quilapayún, was originally a poem written by socialist Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén in 1958. Its music was conspicuously non-Spanish, and it made use of Latin-American 'folk' rhythms. The

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<sup>79</sup> Table I (Chapter Three, pages 108-109) offers details about the interviewees whose response to questions is being used here.

<sup>80</sup> The very broad and rather inaccurate term "Latin America" is being used here for merely practical purposes, and with no othering and/or homogenising intentions.

pronounced foreign character of these elements, together with the relevance of the song lyrics in the context of the Spanish Transition were significant and could be read as an attempt to rewrite Francoist history: “La muralla”, whose content and ideas were perfectly applicable to the Spanish setting of the Transition, was suggesting that Spain and Latin America had real, complex and dynamic *reciprocal* links at social, political, and cultural levels. It brought to the fore the social and political similarities between the two and was highlighting the fact that both Spanish and different Latin American identities had historically influenced – and were influencing - each other in their construction and evolution.

In terms of its construction of nation “La muralla” is also interesting when its spatial setting is considered. It does not refer to its temporal or spatial location, which leaves a door open for different interpretations. For some listeners, it was singing about Cuba and/or Latin America more generally. Some of the interviewees pointed out that its assertive call to the socio-political cohesion and cooperation of “los negros” y “los blancos” (“blacks” and “whites”) needed to be understood within the reality of the Cuban context. The same could be said about the song’s reference to “el sable del coronel” (“the colonel’s sabre”), which some listeners interpreted as a critical allusion to Batista’s military coup d’état and dictatorship.

Many other members in the audience, however, thought that “La muralla” was clearly referring to Spain and the Spanish context of the Transition. Unlike Francoist versions of history, however, this song was apparently approaching Spain in very fluid, receptive and internationally open terms. The fieldwork findings gathered suggested that

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entonces esta canción lo que representó fue la unidad de la izquierda (male participant; Ávila focus group, September 2003 ).

what this song represented then was the unity of the Left.

Many listeners saw in this song a reminder of the need to fight united, with “todas las manos” (“with all the hands”), as a *pueblo*, in order to destroy any surviving remnants of Franco’s regime. It is then not surprising that it became extremely popular and was used in different contexts:

[y] esta canción... había por ejemplo mítines que la gente improvisaba, que no sé qué, “¡abre la muralla!”, y se aprovechaba el latiguillo de abre la muralla y cierra. Diciendo esto nos conviene, esto no (male participant; Ávila focus group, September 2003).

[a]nd this song... there were for example [political] meetings in which people improvised, this and that, “open the wall!”, and you used the catchphrase open the wall and close the wall. Meaning this is convenient for us and this is not.

[la importancia de esta canción es] inmensa, inmensa... es un símbolo grandísimo, en mi círculo, en el círculo en el que yo estaba, en la gente del PC y la gente que militaba y que dirigía las huelgas estudiantiles, [...] esa canción es un himno, es como el himno republicano para la república, un himno, completamente, la típica canción que la cantaba la gente espontáneamente en manifestaciones [...] (female participant from Madrid; Nottingham; November 2003)

[the importance of this song is] huge, huge... it is a great symbol, in my circle, in the circles in which I moved, among people from the PC [Communist Party] and among [those left-wing] militant people who led students’ strikes and demos, [...] that song is an anthem, it’s like the republican anthem for the republic, an anthem, totally, [it’s] the typical song that people used to sing spontaneously in demos [...]

In the context of the Spanish Transition certain elements in the song probably acquired symbolic meanings that they were not intended to have when it was originally written. That may have been the case of the “rosa”, which in “La muralla” appears as a positive element. The rose was the logo of the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) and some audiences may have well associated the positive symbol of the rose

in “La muralla” with that of the PSOE. The same could be said about the also positive “clavel” (“carnation”) of the song. When the poem “La muralla” was written in 1958, the carnation was probably just a natural element, a flower that, like the rose, was likely to have been associated with the goodness of nature, for example. When “La muralla” was received as a song at the time of the Transition, however, the carnation probably acquired – accidentally - a new meaning for some listeners: they may have associated it with the Portuguese “Carnations Revolution” of 1974.

Some other participants offered yet another interpretation of the song. As they saw it, it was neither referring to Latin America nor to Spain. In fact, they pointed out that it was not talking of specific national contexts, but was addressing the world as a whole. Generally speaking, they saw “La muralla” as a song against war, (represented by “el sable del coronel” [“the colonel’s sabre”]), and against evil (symbolically embodied by “el diente de la serpiente” [“the serpent’s tooth”]). “La muralla” was seen by these participants as a song for peace, unity and friendship – hence its symbolic welcoming of “la paloma y el laurel” (“the dove and the laurel”), and “el corazón del amigo” (“the friend’s heart”). In fact, the content of “La muralla” is so open and ambivalent that it could be referring to virtually any temporal and spatial context and situation. As the previous lines suggest, it may even be talking about any type of grouping, not necessarily dependent on regional, national or international parameters. This ambivalence and ambiguity are reinforced by the physical limits of the wall itself. The (probably human) *muralla* of the song is very loosely established by natural geographic borders: it runs from the usually very high “monte” (“mountain”) to the often much lower “playa” (“beach”). This image gives the idea of a big and

apparently all-embracing group, nation, country, union of nations, etc, in whose construction “todas las manos” (“all the hands”) have participated.

Regardless of the different contextual interpretations offered by different listeners, the apparently simple “La muralla” potentially leads listeners to engage in the analysis of very serious matters. As one of the interviewees noted, behind this apparently musically and lyrically cheerful and catchy song there seemed to be a rather pessimistic view of humanity – this interpretation was not shared by a wide number of informants, however<sup>81</sup>. As this interviewee pointed out, this song seemed to be after all a sad acknowledgment of the need for *murallas* and subjects who – using the imperative mode! - say “¡abre la muralla!” and “¡cierra la muralla” (“open the wall” and “close the wall”) to different subjects, objects and ideas. Walls join individuals in a group, but they also irremediably separate and divide different groups and collectives. As he noted, the very choice of the term *muralla* is very telling: this word, often used on military grounds is related to ideas of defence and protection. The song seems to imply that “murallas” are necessary because, while there are “amigos” (“friends”) to whom one should open one’s heart, there will always be enemies (“serpiente”, “alacrán”, “veneno” [“serpent”, “scorpion”, “venom”]) that will jeopardise one’s life, principles, and life style and will need to be fought and exterminated. A rather pessimistic line of thought potentially follows this already gloomy argument: the possibilities of mutual human understanding and harmonious coexistence on a broad scale are minimal. And this has obvious negative consequences in the construction of large communities apparently based on similar identity/ies such as nations, and supra-national entities. Considering Ana Belén’s

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<sup>81</sup> This critical and rather pessimistic interpretation of “La muralla” was offered by a male participant from the Ávila focus group (September 2003).

political preferences and this song's context of reception during the Transition, "La muralla" seemed to be an implicit acknowledgment of the need to close the wall on those remaining Francoist forces that were incompatible with the configuration and realisation of the Spanish democratic dream. But this had to be done at the expense of leaving certain individuals outside. The words by the interviewee mentioned above summarise well the complexities underlying "La muralla" and any attempt to successfully build democracy – or any other socio-political system:

yo lo asocio [el contenido de la canción] con la lucha por la libertad, y para eso hay que hacer murallas, aunque no nos guste [...] está reflejando un poquito la paradoja de cualquier modelo social, [...] para conseguir una sociedad libre tienes que poner ciertas barreras para que los **otros**, los que quieren otro modelo no te lo impidan, esa es la terrible paradoja; queríamos una sociedad sin violencia, [...] y tenemos que tener una fuerzas que defiendan ese modelo, las cuales se reproducen y terminan siendo un ejército; resultado, ¿no hay solución? Yo me resisto a pensar que no hay solución... [speaker's emphasis; male participant; Ávila focus group, September 2003]

I associate it [the song's content] with the fight for freedom, and in order to do that you have to build walls, although we don't like it [...] it's reflecting a bit the paradox of any social model, [...] to achieve a free society you have to put certain barriers so that the **others**, the ones that want a different model, will not prevent you from doing so, that is the terrible paradox; we wanted a non-violent society [...] and we have to have forces to defend that model, and these forces reproduce themselves and end up being an army; the result, is there no solution? I find it hard to believe that there is no solution ...

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has stressed that Francoism greatly relied upon history, upon specific versions of Spanish history, in order to construct the Spanish nation and national identity (Núñez, 2001: 720). It has also claimed that – at least some - Spanish singer-songwriters and political singers of the Transition – i.e. Víctor, Ana and Sabina - similarly used history in planned and conscious ways in order to construct Spain and Spanishness at the time. Both Francoism and these artists approached these notions of

nation and national identity in essentialist terms. In spite of these similarities, however, there were also many significant differences between these artists' approach to history and Francoist historiography: the three singers often used alternative versions of history in order to drastically distance themselves from Francoist versions of Spain and Spanishness, while they asserted the need for a new progressive Spanish nation and national identity. In fact, these artists, like Francoist authorities, seemed to be well aware of the importance of reconstructing the national past in order to work successfully at the level of hegemony.

Significantly, these authors' engagement with Spanish history evolved and seemed to run parallel to changes occurring at the broader socio-political level. Overall, their works between 1968 and 1982 seemed to go through two main phases. Between 1968 and 1977/8 their historical songs mainly responded to an attempt to revise critically Francoist historiography, as well as to recuperate and recreate alternative Spanish left-wing historical accounts that Francoism systematically tried to silence and annihilate. Thus, these artists' historical revision was mainly driven by two related impulses: first, by a desire to centre and 'normalise' categories that had been hidden, marginalised, dehumanised and/or demonised by Francoist discourses on Spanish history (e.g. the republican soldier, different left-wing historical figures such as Aída Lafuente, socialist Asturias, or anti-militaristic and anti-imperialistic Spanish young men). Secondly, their historical revision was marked by an attempt to displace and 'other' those categories that were central to hegemonic Francoist discourses on Spanish history (e.g. the so called 'National Uprising of Liberation' – the civil war -, Franco himself, his bureaucrats and historians, or the established Catholic Church, to name a few). In this first period some songs by Sabina, and notably Ana's "La

muralla” as understood by some audiences, seemed to adopt radical positions which supported frontal opposition to Franco’s followers and their anti-democratic discourses. It is also significant that in 1977 and 1978 a few songs by Víctor introduced an honourable conciliatory attempt to respect and be respected by the pro-Francoist other.

Especially from 1979 onwards these artists’ approach to history changed significantly. This second phase was characterised by an overall weakening and loss of relevance of history in their songs as tool for the construction of Spanish national identity. Significantly enough, this shift started after the official installation of a democratic system took place in late 1978. Such a weakening was probably a response to different realities: on the one hand, it showed confidence in the newly gained status of Left-wing collectives at the time – or serious disappointment with the socio-political outcomes of the Transition. On the other, this overall absence of history probably obeyed a felt need to cooperate in a voluntary state of temporary historical amnesia that would help to initiate a period of social and political harmony necessary for the successful implementation of the newly born democratic system. This weakening of history was accompanied overall by an emphasis on more social issues in the works by these three artists. In some cases – e.g. in Sabina’s work -, this social preoccupation was in fact a critical expression of the author’s *desencanto* with the outcomes of the Spanish Transition.

Finally, this chapter has examined in some detail how some singer-songwriters, and especially Ana, Víctor, Sabina and their works, addressed the complex multi-national and multi-regional nature of the Spanish state between 1968 and 1982. Overall, these

three artists – and especially Víctor - seemed to accept the validity of the notions ‘Spanish nation’ and ‘Spanishness’. Their recognition of Spain and Spanishness, however, was ideologically very distant from Francoist historiography: in general terms, they maintained an all-inclusive position that retained the validity of the category ‘Spanish nation’ while – very much unlike Francoist historiography - they fully respected and welcomed the regional and national plurality of multi-regional/national Spain. Moreover, they ridiculed some of the most stale and artificial versions of Francoist Spanishness (e.g. its excessive use of Andalusian features to construct the Spanish character). As the analysis of “La muralla” suggested, they also distanced themselves from paternalistic Francoist accounts of *la hispanidad* and presented Spain and Latin America as equals that mutually influenced one another. Similarly, they acknowledged, welcomed and celebrated other foreign influences that shaped, and would shape the construction of both Spain and Spanishness.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# **“ME MATAN SI NO TRABAJO, Y SI TRABAJO ME MATAN”: REWORKING THE FRANCOIST FALLACY OF CLASS HARMONY<sup>82</sup>**

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter turns to analyse constructions of class in works by the three singers between 1968 and 1982. It examines its importance in the construction of the Spanish nation during the Transition, and pays particular attention to the development of class representations in their works. It also explores some of the implications behind their emphasis on formal education, and analyses how class and gender interacted in their songs at the time. Finally, it offers an ethnographic-based analysis of Víctor Manuel's “La Planta 14”.

### CONSTRUCTIONS OF CLASS IN WORKS BY VÍCTOR MANUEL, ANA BELÉN AND JOAQUÍN SABINA

Partly due to the Francoist abandonment of autarky, in the 60s there were important structural changes in the Spanish class system. Overall, the very marked class differences that existed in Spain in the 40s and 50s became less marked in the 60s

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<sup>82</sup> “Me matan/ si no trabajo/, y si trabajo/ me matan” (“They kill me,/ if I don’t work,/ and if I work/ they kill me”) are verses from “Me matan si no trabajo”, a poem by socialist writer Nicolás Guillén sang by Ana Belén (1977).

(Fusi, 1983: 28; Soto, 1998: 21)<sup>83</sup>. Moreover, social mobility appeared in the latter period as a real and fairly frequent phenomenon (Gracia García and Ruiz Carnicer, 2001: 275-6; Díaz, 1995: 284). These changes occurred, for example, due to emigration, to the rise of an increasingly sizeable middle class, and to the appearance of a large working class which tried to emulate the middle classes through consumption (Gracia García and Ruiz Carnicer: 2001: 275-6).

Despite these structural changes, different forms of exploitation appeared in the 60s and Spanish society remained importantly fed by class differences (Fusi, 1983: 29). These class differences were often a source of serious social problems and inequalities. In fact, the socio-economic and industrial development that Spain started to experience already in the 50s and that the regime used to legitimise itself (Barciela, López et al. 2001: 12; Otero, 2000: 56) was partly achieved through the exploitation of different collectives and individuals of the working class. From 1961 onwards labour conflicts became more acute and visible overall (Barciela, López et al. 2001: 328). Many workers then experienced more severe working and safety conditions, as well as more intensive exploitation of their labour, often for miserable salaries. A good number of them often had to become *pluriempleados* in order to make a living<sup>84</sup>. Workers fought this labour exploitation in different ways. One of the most disruptive measures that they adopted was going on strike (Barciela, López et al. 2001: 336). This practice became fairly common in Spain in the 60s and 70s (Fusí, 1983: 35; Vilar, 1983: 70), and it was severely punished by Francoism (Barciela, López et al. 2001: 333, 334).

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<sup>83</sup> These changes, however, did not occur homogeneously throughout the Spanish state. In areas like Andalucía or Extremadura the agrarian nearly feudal *terratendiente-campesino no propietario* system of the 40s and 50s still operated powerfully in the 60s and beyond.

<sup>84</sup> The term *pluriempleo* refers to the practice of having two or more jobs at the same time. Being *pluriempleado/a* was a fairly common phenomenon in Spain in the 60s and 70s.

The corporatist position of Franco's regime towards class structure operated in two different ways: Francoist authorities tried hard to censor any sources informing Spaniards about existent social problems or clashes between the classes –conflicts, strikes, etc. - (Cisquella et al. 1977: 74). Furthermore, hegemonic discourses systematically presented Spain as a paradise of social harmony in which there were no socio-economic tensions or conflicts between the different social strata (Álvarez, 1998: 388, 446). This fallacy of socio-economic justice in Spain reiterated that “la lucha de clases ha terminado”, for, thanks to Franco and his regime, “la justicia social ha sido implantada” (“class struggle has finished” because “social justice has been introduced”) (Álvarez, 1998: 385). Franco tried to show this apparent social harmony and mutual understanding between the different social strata through different public performances. This happened, for example, in the nearly-circus-like spectacles of the “Festivales Anuales del Trabajo”. In these festivals apparently happy workers performed different shows (dances, etc.) in front of their employers, Franco and members of his cabinet in a top-down deliberate attempt to sweeten, misconstrue and misrepresent the Spanish socio-economic reality of the time.

In this context, the counter-hegemonic potential of *cantautores* and *cantantes políticos* in relation to class deserves full attention: singer-songwriters in general, and the singers analysed here in particular often introduced class-related issues and problems in a good number of their works at the time of the Transition. In fact, many *cantautores* consistently constructed Spanishness upon class consciousness and upon critical awareness of the inequalities of the Spanish class system of their time. Like Gramsci, singer-songwriters saw class as a main factor through which hegemony operated. Consequently, they had a great interest in showing the inequalities of the

Spanish class system, and tried to encourage class struggle from a progressive perspective.

To judge by the fieldwork findings, it was these singers' apparently socialist-oriented emphasis on class questions that especially attracted many of their audiences and gave *cantautores* much of their identity as "political artists" - 'atypical' cases like that of the rather conservative María Ostiz are being left aside here. It was well-known that *cantautores* wanted a democratic system, but their interventions were almost always also in favour of a more just and egalitarian socio-economic system. Generally speaking, both democracy and socialist claims went hand in hand in their songs and public interventions. This happened in the works of the three singers studied here, although their approach to class changed markedly with time. In terms of class representations, two main stages can be distinguished in their musical works between 1968 and 1982. Significantly, these were linked to events of socio-political relevance that took place in the broader context of the Transition. Their first period of class representation, which started in 1968 and finished around 1978, was marked by an insistent emphasis on class issues and class struggle as a means to achieve a socialist-oriented society. The second phase (1978/9-1982), less radical, was characterised by a weakening of the previous socialist claims, as well as by the rise of social disillusionment.

### **1) Class struggle and the fight for a socialist-oriented society (1968-1977/8)**

This first phase finished in 1977 in Víctor's and Ana's case, and in 1978 if Sabina's work is considered. Significantly, this period finished when the implementation of a Spanish democratic system started to be a reality: in 1977 the different political

parties were legalised, and Spain held a democratic general election; in 1978 the Constitution, the - at least in theory - guarantor of democracy, was democratically ratified by the majority of Spaniards.

The works by these singers belonging to this first period often adopted a strong socialist-oriented framework<sup>85</sup>. Given the socio-political context of the time, these singers' pro-socialist commitment had great subversive potential. As different primary and secondary sources show (e.g. Álvarez, 1998: 382, 384, 446; Otero, 2000: 18, 20), there was a real State obsession with and fear of Socialism and Communism, which were seen as "anti-Spanish" and "foreign influenced". In fact, Francoism systematically showed throughout its rule great hostility against communism and its "accomplices and partisans" – socialism, anarchism and all other Left-wing tendencies (Moradiellos, 2000: 22).

As Cisquella also notes (1977: 74), taboo issues for Francoism included

todo lo relacionado con el marxismo (teoría, práctica, ensayos sobre experiencias socialistas, movimiento obrero, Revolución Soviética, Revolución Cubana, Revolución China, Mayo francés de 1968, guerrillerismo urbano y rural, etc.) y el anarquismo.

everything related to Marxism (theory, practice, essays about socialist experiences, workers' movements, the Soviet Revolution, the Cuban Revolution, the Chinese Revolution, the French May of 1968, urban and rural guerrilla fighting, etc.) and anarchism.

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<sup>85</sup> Such a framework had already been adopted in other cultural forms in the 50s. It had appeared, for example, in the "novela social". This literary social realism of the "social novel" was popular in Spain especially between 1954 and 1962. Social realist novels were consciously politically committed works which critically denounced poverty, misery, social inequalities, etc. In order to achieve their aims these works generally made use of simple and direct narrative techniques. In terms of subject matter, they usually dealt with issues like the hard life of peasants in rural Spain, the world of labour, the world of a selfish and self-centred Spanish bourgeoisie, or the terrible effects of the civil war, among others (Lázaro y Tusón 1988: 335-6).

### For a socialist-oriented society, rather than for Communism

The analogies that Francoist discourses established between Spanish Communism and Soviet Communism were totally exaggerated. They were part of the official propaganda devoted to destabilise Franco's political adversaries. While radical minority groups supported the politics of figures such as Lenin and Trotsky, larger and more important groups had softened their overall political positions considerably. For example, by the mid 70s, the crucial PCE had moderated its former more radical discourses – partly in order to ensure its own survival. Its leader Carrillo introduced the *doctrina del Eurocomunismo*, which accepted important principles of liberal democracy and caused him considerable tensions and conflicts with Moscow (Carrillo, 2002)<sup>86</sup>.

Overall, ideologically, the works by the three singers between 1968 and 1978 seemed to be closer to the PCE's communism than to more extreme versions of it. They criticised class inequalities and (especially male) workers' exploitation in what seemed an honest, firm and acute manner. However, they did not seem to be calling for the creation of an orthodox Marxist state in Spain. In some of their songs there were direct or indirect allusions to national contexts in which communism was being implemented (e.g. Cuba, China). Generally speaking, these references showed respect and/or admiration towards such communist regimes. This happened, for example, in Ana's not very widely known "En el 49" (1977). In a sense, this very short and nearly surrealist song seemed to be an apologia for Mao Tse-tung's regime: it celebrated the

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<sup>86</sup> Carrillo himself has noted that, at the time "el PC no era comunista estricto como en la Unión Soviética". Spanish Communists "no pedían una revolución social, pero sí una ruptura democrática" (Carrillo, 2002) ["the PC was not strictly Communist as in the Soviet Union"; "they did not ask for a social revolution but did ask for a democratic break"]. According to Carrillo (2002), his *Eurocomunismo* and the PC's demands included the recuperation of the 1936 statutes for Euskadi and Catalonia, amnesty, freedom of association and the right to go on strike, the legalization of political parties, and the convocation of "cortes constituyentes".

conviction that with Mao – as he is familiarly called in the song - no Chinese citizen would ever face extreme poverty again. In spite of these positive references to communism abroad, there are no evident textual signs suggesting that these artists wanted a Soviet or Chinese type of Communism ruling Spain. In Sabina's "1968" (1978), for example, the attempt to implement democracy in the Soviet-dominated former Czechoslovakia is praised: "en medio de Praga crecían amapolas/ como un reto rojo al gris hormigón" ("poppies grew in the centre of Prague,/ like a challenge against concrete's grey"). This liberalising movement known as 'The Prague Spring' finished after tanks and soldiers from the Soviet Union forcefully entered Prague. Such an event is presented in "1968" as entirely negative: "[p]ero no pudimos reinventar la historia/ [...] pisaban los tanques las flores de Praga" ("[b]ut we couldn't reinvent history/ [...] tanks crushed Prague's flowers"). Examples like this suggest that these artists did not want Soviet Communism for Spain. Rather, they seemed to support the arrival of a western-type system of liberal democracy that considered the most disadvantaged classes and addressed their problems from left-wing positions.

#### Early attempts to get around censorship and show the existence of class inequalities

A good number of Víctor's early songs could be broadly understood within this socialist-oriented framework. Probably due to his attempt to escape censorship, in many of these songs textual allusions to class problems were often brief and/or subtle. But they were equally sharp and firm. This happened, for example, in his famous "El abuelo Víctor" (1969). Audiences knew well that this song paid homage to the singer's own grandfather, an Asturian ex-miner who died of silicosis, an occupational illness (Vázquez Azpiri, 1974: 36). Most likely set in rural Asturias, this song is

*intimista* ('intimist') and *costumbrista* ('dealing with local customs'). It describes a normal day in the life of its main and only character: the singer's old grandfather Víctor. Apparently, there are not many allusions to class issues in the piece and the song is fairly innocuous; listeners get to know how the singer's grandfather sits outside, "en el quicio de la puerta" ("by the doorjamb") reading and smoking, or how he ends up "siempre murmurando/ que María le esconde su tabaco" ("always mumbling/ that María hides his tobacco"). Curiously enough, however, the chorus - the part of the song which is easier to memorise and remember - introduces a firm critique of the bad working conditions that miners faced in their workplace. It stresses the harshness of the mining profession, which is presented as the main cause of grandfather Víctor's present poor health condition:

[e]l abuelo fue picador,  
álla en la mina  
y arrancando negro carbón  
quemó su vida.

[my] grandfather was a digger  
there in the mine  
and pulling out black coal  
he burnt his life away.

"Paxarinos" (1969) and "El tren de madera" (1969) can also be included in that group of songs by Víctor which contain certain - often subtle - socialist touches. Both songs make use of 'Spanish' northern folk, a musical style supported by Francoism. Again, this musical choice was perhaps partly conditioned by the singer's attempt to overcome censorship - it was used in both songs with transgressive lyrics which emphasised the fallacy of the image of class harmony constructed by Francoist discourses. In "Paxarinos", there are again brief, latent allusions to the miners' bad working conditions. Such precarious conditions did not seem to worry employers, for

“de aquellos mozos que hay en la mina/ [...] sólo vela por ellos la mi santina” (“regarding those lads in the mine/ [...] only my Virgin [Mary] cares for them”) – the positive and populist allusion to religion offered in these lines may have also aimed at avoiding censorship and achieving the authorities’ approval for publicising the song.

In “El tren de madera”, the old wooden train has “sólo tres vagones, hasta rebosar,/ uno de los ricos con otros dos más” (“only three coaches, completely full,/ one for the rich and then two more”). In the context of the song this was a critique of the sharp real breach still existing between rich and poor people. It also called the audiences’ attention to the fact that, numerically speaking, poor people significantly outnumbered rich ones – that is why the latter only needed one of the coaches. There were also other veiled critical allusions to representatives of one of the class-privileged *poderes fácticos* (‘de facto powers’) of Francoism: the “cura gordo” (“fat priest”), who is well fed and, unlike most of the other travellers, not poor. In spite of its relative subtlety, “El tren de madera” annoyed some Francoist authorities, who saw its critical dimension and ‘advised’ its author not to sing it live anymore<sup>87</sup>.

#### Singing openly for socialism and praising the role of socialist leaders

A good number of later works by Víctor prior to 1978 also adopted a strong socialist framework. In fact, these later songs presented a radicalisation in their approach to class issues. These new class-related works grew significantly in number: his albums *En directo* (1976), *Víctor Manuel 10* (1976), *Canto para todos* (1977) and *Spanien* (1977) were full of songs with socialist content. Moreover, most of these new songs became very explicit in their approach to class. In fact, some of them displayed a

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<sup>87</sup> In <http://usuarios.lycos.es/soyuncorazon> [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> December 2002].

near-pamphlet-like quality which probably explains why, commercially speaking, they were not as successful as most of his previous works. As the singer himself admitted, especially between 1975 and 1977, his great popularity and public prominence was not accompanied by commercial success<sup>88</sup>. “[L]os obreros podían venir a vernos en los mítines, pero yo creo que luego se compraban los discos de Rafaella Carrá”, he joked (“workers may have come to see us to the meetings, but then I think that they bought Rafaella Carra’s albums”) (Víctor Manuel in Villena, 2002: 82)<sup>89</sup>.

His “Canto para todos” (1977) is one of these nearly-pamphlet-like songs which obviously calls for the union of (male) Spaniards – his enumeration of jobs in very interesting from a gender point of view: miners, fishermen, bricklayers, railwaymen - in order to achieve a socialist society. Its narrator sings:

[h]oy Caperucita  
se merienda al lobo,  
dentro de la cesta  
lleva el libro rojo.  
Dos y dos son cuatro,  
tres y dos son cinco,  
voto sobre voto  
llega el socialismo.

[t]oday Little Red Riding Hood  
is eating the wolf,  
inside her basket  
she is carrying the red book.  
Two plus two is four,  
three plus two is five  
socialism comes  
vote upon vote.

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<sup>88</sup> In <http://usuarios.lycos.es/soyuncorazon/54aniv.htm>. [Accessed 20th December 2002].

<sup>89</sup> Italian born singer Rafaella Carra was and is still popular in Spain for her ‘canciones del verano’ (‘summer songs’): these are often catchy, frivolous and trivial love songs very appropriate for dancing.

Ana Belén also experienced a process of political radicalisation in her treatment of class-related issues. Such a process reached its climax in 1977, with the publication of her album *La paloma de vuelo popular*. From that year are, for example, her “Tengo”, which will be analysed in some detail later on, and “Son más en una mazorca”. The latter, a 1964 poem by Nicolás Guillén was set to music by Cuban musician Amaury Pérez and was in praise of Fidel Castro’s socialist revolution. Her song “Julián Grimau”, from 1977, is also relevant for its approach to class and its depiction of its left-wing leader.

This song, ‘loud’ and solemn musically speaking, was political because it was a homage to Julián Grimau, a member of the Central Committee of the Spanish Communist Party. Grimau lived clandestinely in Spain from 1959 and soon became the main leader of his party inside the country. In 1962 he was detained and tortured by Francoist forces. Later he was taken before a court-martial to be judged for crimes which he had allegedly committed during the civil war. He always denied all charges and asserted his innocence; in fact, his participation in these crimes was never proved. On 20th April 1963 he was executed. His heroic death generated fierce protest against the dictator and his regime in Spain, other European countries and Latin America.<sup>90</sup>

Ana’s song stresses Grimau’s solidarity, firmness, generosity and thirst for freedom and social justice. In fact, his death is nearly presented here as a martyrdom caused by his unbreakable and conscientious political commitment: “tu sangre generosa/ que se derramó”; “árbol de la libertad, la savia generosa [...], que te alimentó./ Tu cuerpo

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<sup>90</sup> More information about Julián Grimau is offered, for example, at [http://www.pce.es/foroporlamemoria/julian\\_grimau/pirenaica\\_julian\\_grimau.htm](http://www.pce.es/foroporlamemoria/julian_grimau/pirenaica_julian_grimau.htm) and <http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/averroes/iescasasviejas/cviejas1/histo2/hecho5.htm>, [Both accessed 3rd August 2004].

roto en mil pedazos/ el precio que te costó” (“your generous blood/ that was spilt”; “tree of freedom, the generous sap [...], that fed you. Your body broken in a thousand pieces/ [is] the price that you paid”). This death was not in vain, however - the narrator claims: this narrating voice, which could be identified with that of Ana herself for her political commitment and ideological orientation, believes that Grimau sowed “una semilla/ que fructificó,/ que fructifica día a día/ [...] que brota en tierras oprimidas” among “los que aquí/ juramos proseguir tu lucha/ que sólo la muerte venció” (“a seed/ that produced fruit,/ that produces fruit day by day/ [...] that springs up in oppressed lands” among “*those of us* who here/ swear/swore to continue your fight/ that which only death defeated”) – emphasis added; the narrator’s political and emotional involvement implicit in the use of the first person plural should be noted. The potential position of closeness and inclusion that this “juramos” (we swear/swore) creates for the listener is also noteworthy.

Víctor’s “Carta de un minero a Manuel Llانةza” (1976) also praises the role of a left-wing leader and stresses his enduring influence upon class-conscious left-wing Spanish citizens. In this – rather male-oriented - class concerned song the implied narrator, an Asturian miner, visits the tomb of the male Asturian trade union leader Manuel Llانةza at the local cemetery<sup>91</sup>. This visit is narrated in a very realistic manner. This realism is partly achieved through the narrator’s use of linguistic regionalisms (e.g. “muyer”, “guaje”, “trabayar” – terms in Bable meaning “woman/wife”, “child/son” and “work”, respectively), vulgarisms (“pa” rather than the correct “para”), and slang terms (e.g. “tajo” meaning “trabajo” - “work”). These denote the miner’s humble socio-economic position and educational level. This miner

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<sup>91</sup> In <http://usuarios.lycos.es/soyuncorazon> [Accessed 20th December 2002].

describes Llaneza as an honest, peaceful, and strong leader who worked hard to defend miners and their rights. His work as a trade unionist is praised and his death is presented as a tragic loss, for miners still feel that

[...] nos falta tu mano para guiarnos.  
Desde que tú te fuiste Manuel Llaneza,  
desde que tú te fuiste sólo hay silencio.

[...] we need your hand to guide us.  
Since you left, Manuel Llaneza,  
since you left there is only silence.

The existence of social problems suggested in these lines soon acquires a combative dimension: “hay que [...] / luchar cada día para que las cosas cambien su estado” (“we must fight every day so that the state of things change”). This song supports the fight of miners against labour oppression and oppressors, against those “viejos perros/ que anteayer se pusieron collares nuevos” (“old dogs/ who the day before yesterday put on new collars”). This class struggle for social justice is supported because

al minero si no le pinchan nunca es guerrero,  
[...] gritamos porque estamos cansados de ser pequeños [emphasis added].

if the miner is not aggravated, *he* is never a warrior  
[...] we shout because we are tired of being small

#### Highlighting the existence of labour exploitation and stressing the need for an active fight against class inequalities

The existence of a suffering working class and the need to be aware of labour exploitation becomes even more insistent and explicit in Ana's “Me matan si no trabajo”. Significantly, this song's lyrics are those of a poem by communist poet Nicolás Guillén. This poem/song is especially interesting because of its counter-hegemonic stress on labour exploitation. Its very title takes to the fore an almost irremediably difficult situation that especially the (Spanish) working classes were

forced to face. Or rather, that the (Spanish) male working classes were doomed to encounter – the song seems to imply; the references to “niño” (“boy”) and “hombre” (“man”) are telling in this respect.

Its narrator, who speaks in the first person singular and therefore includes her/himself in the working class collective, emphasises an apparent paradox:

[m]e matan, si no trabajo  
y si trabajo, me matan,  
siempre me matan, me matan,  
ay, ay siempre me matan.

[t]hey kill me, if I don't work  
and if I work, they kill me  
they always kill me, kill me  
ow, ow, they always kill me.

The two situations expressed in these lines can be understood within a socialist theoretical framework. “Me matan si no trabajo” seems to be an ambivalent reference to different realities: individuals need to work in order to fulfil themselves as humans. At a more practical and mundane level, the working classes need to work in order to earn a living – these verses suggest. But such lines are especially likely to refer to the fact that workers are made to work, often in jobs that do not satisfy them. The narrator also denounces the fact that “y si trabajo, me matan”, which seems to suggest that the working classes also face harsh labour exploitation at the workplace; in fact, they are presented here as the victims of an unfair class system. This song also denounces the fact that, unless prevented, these class-related exploitative power relationships are bound to continue, for (male) children are repeating the oppressive and abusive behaviour patterns of their parents:

ayer vi a un niño jugando  
a que mataba a otro niño:  
hay niños que se parecen

a los hombres trabajando.  
¡Quién les dirá cuando crezcan  
que los hombres no son niños!  
que no lo son,  
que no lo son,  
¡que no lo son!

yesterday I saw a boy playing  
at killing another boy:  
there are children who are just like  
men when they work.  
Who will tell them when they grow up  
that men are not boys!  
they are not,  
they are not,  
they are not!

Considering the scenario described in this song it is not surprising that Sabina's "Tango del quinielista" (1978) and "Canción para las manos de un soldado", for example, encouraged an active and rather combative left-wing position in relation to class inequalities. In "Tango...", which partly resembles works of Spanish literary social realism, the listener is presented with the story of a young Spanish working class man. This young man wagers money on football pools every week. And he faithfully expects to win these *quinielas*, which he thinks will change his entire life: once he becomes a winner, he believes that he will be able to say goodbye to his miserable economic condition, and will have the money to buy a flat and marry his girlfriend. This girlfriend, the other character in the song, is totally secondary. She is not given a direct or even mediated voice to express her feelings or ideas. The apparently omniscient narrator does not give access to her inner thoughts either. Therefore, listeners ignore her concerns, anxieties and dreams as a Spanish working class citizen.

The narrator stresses that the story narrated could be that of any male (Spanish) worker, for “[e]sta es la historia de un hombre cualquiera” (“this is the story of any man”). This is where some of its social critique and counter-hegemonic potential resides. As the song suggests, socio-economic problems affected a good number of Spaniards in the 60s and 70s, although official discourses tried to conceal it – this song had already appeared as a poem around 1970; it was first published in a magazine for university students called “Poesía 70” (De Miguel, 1986: 29-30). Like the *quinielista*, many working class and lower middle-class Spaniards encountered major economic difficulties concerning, for example, “la entrada del piso” (“the initial deposit for a house”).

The narrator’s attitude towards this *quinielista* is a little ambiguous. He shows some sympathy towards the one whom he calls “quinielista *pobre*” [emphasis added]. In this context, and considering Sabina’s vocal performance, it seems that “poor” is ambivalent and refers both to his economic misery and more generally to his bad luck and wretched life. In spite of these sympathetic touches, the narrator also keeps a certain detachment from the *quinielista*, or rather, from his naivety. With his at times slightly ironic performance, the singer emphasises the *quinielista*’s ingenuousness: he is convinced that he will win a football pool and that this will radically change his life. His very improbable and unrealistic dreams never materialise, however. The final verses highlight the poverty, and decay that surround this *quinielista*, as well as the pessimism that invades him when he forcibly returns to his daily reality. He “tendrá/ que volver a la fábrica de nuevo/ el lunes a las ocho/ como cada semana” (“will have to/ return to the factory again/ next Monday at eight/ like every week”), and he will inevitably continue to sleep “en aquel viejo cuartucho de pensión/ [y en] la misma

cama de la manta amarilla” (“in that old and horrible lodging room/ [on the] same bed with the yellow blanket”).

By stressing the futility of unrealistic and implausible dreams, the song seems to suggest that in order to achieve better socio-economic conditions another type of conduct is needed. Class-related problems are not solved with *quinielas*, but rather with active political commitment – the songs seems to imply. The symbolic political importance of *quinielas* should also be noted here. *Quinielas* were a Francoist invention of the 50s (Gracia García and Ruiz Carnicer, 2001: 206) which soon became very popular. They wittingly encouraged a popular interest in the already well-liked and escapist sport of football. Some have noted that *quinielas* were used by the establishment as an apparently escapist money-maker which distracted many *quinielistas* from analysing the real sources of class oppression and from fighting actively to eliminate it.

Active class struggle was also encouraged in “Canción para las manos de un soldado” (1978). In fact, considering Sabina’s early musical repertoire, this seemed to be his most radical and conspicuously class-oriented and concerned song. It was of great subversive potential because, as Otero notes, hegemonic discourses systematically demonised worker’s struggle for social equality:

[d]urante los cinco años que duró la república [...] hubo huelgas y conflictos sociales de todas clases, llenándose el país de “sangre, fango y lágrimas”. (from Ediciones S.M. Historia de España, grado elemental, 1961. In Otero, 2000: 19).

[d]uring the five years of the republic [...] there were strikes and social conflicts of all kinds, and these filled the country up with “blood, mud and tears”.

This song is interesting because it critically stresses the sharp socio-economic gap that divided the working classes from the bourgeoisie and the upper classes and that Francoism tried to conceal at all costs, and because it supports active working-class struggle as the key to overcome socio-economic injustice - its allusions to the need for “standing up” against the hegemonic oppressors need to be understood in this light. Like “El cobarde” and “El tren de madera”, this song makes use of folkloric elements that were often associated with Francoism. This is done in order to subvert their more traditional value and express oppositional ideas of a socialist-oriented character. Its use of Castilian folk rhythms and a vocal performance which broadly reproduces the *deje final* (‘final drop’) typical of Aragonese *jotas* could be understood in this light<sup>92</sup>.

This pamphlet-like song is set in a rural environment and offers a clear distinction between the exploited working class and the exploiting bourgeoisie and bureaucratic classes. This sharp class contrast potentially arouses irritation in the politically committed listener, and/or a desire to fight against those inequalities that translated into suffering for the working classes. In the song the “labrador” (“peasant”) spends his life “cavando de sol a sol/ con lluvia, nieve o calor” (“digging from dawn until dusk/ in rain, snow and heat”); the “parado”, “sin jornal y sin historia”, “llena de angustia sus manos” (the “unemployed”, “without a salary and without a story/without history”, “fills his hands with anguish”), while the “obrero” (“worker”) is a victim of forced emigration and “sus manos amasan pan para otros pueblos lejanos” (“his hands knead bread/ for a faraway town”). In contrast, the “alcalde” (“mayor”) carries an “orgullosa bastón” “proud walking stick” with his fine hands while he “preside la procesión” (“leads the [religious] procession”) and boasts about

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<sup>92</sup> The *Jota* is part of Spanish folklore; it is the traditional dance and song of certain Spanish regions. *Jotas* from Aragón were especially popular in Francoist times. The musical instruments most commonly used in Aragonese *jotas* are certain types of mandolin, Spanish guitars and castanets.

his economic affluence and power. The village “cacique” (“chief”), who “no vive tampoco allí” (“does not live there either”),

con el sudor de mi pueblo  
se compró un piso en Madrid  
con lo que su mano tira  
cuántos podrían vivir.

bought a flat in Madrid  
and paid for it with my fellow villagers' sweat,  
so many people could make a living  
on what he throws away!

In spite of these socialist politics, the previous quotes reveal that this song is problematic in terms of gender: the narrator seems to be considering only the male Spanish working classes. There is no allusion as to how working class women were oppressed directly as workers and/or indirectly as relatives of male workers.

#### A history lesson from an internationalist, class-conscious, left-wing perspective

Sabina's “1968” retains the serious tone present in “Canción...”. It also includes an important historically-oriented educative dimension that was absent in the latter. In “1968” a piano imitates the sounds typically emitted by barrel organs. This gives the piece an almost nostalgic feel, as well as a French, bohemian and cosmopolitan touch very adequate for the topic of the song and its emphasis on the symbolic resonance of May 1968. This musical piece could be read as a broad socialist-oriented history lesson with an important didactic dimension. Defying Francoist ultra-national(ist) discourses, this internationalist song constituted an ode to 1968 (De Miguel, 1986: 85), to different mainly foreign left-wing activists, and to many of the revolutionary events that took place that year and the following years worldwide.

In terms of content, this piece is not as easy to understand as other songs by Sabina. It alludes to a number of relevant (historical) figures – some of them significantly related to the world of popular culture –, and to many important historical events that took place in 1968 and later. A number of these allusions are not simple or transparent, but rather metaphoric and ambiguous. In fact, some of those listeners who in 1978 were too young and/or politically unaware to have lived entirely consciously the late 60s may have been unfamiliar with some of these references. This may have been the case with the already cited lines “en medio de Praga crecían amapolas/ como un reto rojo al gris hormigón” (“poppies grew in the centre of Prague,/ like a challenge against concrete’s grey”). They are a positive reference to “The Prague Spring”, the program of liberal reforms that was introduced by Alexander Dubcek, head of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and that challenged the strictness of Communism ruling the Soviet Union<sup>93</sup>.

The succession of events narrated in the third person is selective, and very subjective. This is suggested by the use of different evaluative elements such as qualifying adjectives: “Marx prohibió a sus hijos que llegaran tarde/ a la *dulce* hoguera de la insurrección” (“Marx told his children not to be late/ for the *sweet* bonfire of insurrection”) [emphasis added]. The use of “sweet” is very significant: it reveals the narrator’s fondness for left-wing politics. In fact, it could be taken as a personal political positioning of Sabina himself: he was keen on progressive revolutionary politics, as he often publicly declared, and therefore the narrator in “1968” could be identified with his own public *persona*. The author/performer’s positioning is especially clear when the 1<sup>st</sup> person is used in order to take a clear political stance in

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<sup>93</sup> More information on “The Prague Spring” is offered, for example, at *World Book 1999* [digital encyclopaedia] (1998) IBM Corp.

favour of socialist policies (e.g. when he laments Che Guevara's death). Often, this 1<sup>st</sup> person is used in the plural. This creates a very specific position for the listener, who is presented as likely to share the narrator's left-wing orientation and is therefore included in the 'us' group. This expected affinity between the narrator and the implied listener is clear when the former celebrates with his audiences that

[l]a poesía salió a la calle  
reconocimos *nuestros* rostros  
supimos que todo es posible  
en 1968 [emphasis added].

[p]oetry went out into the street,  
we recognized *our* faces,  
we knew that everything was possible  
in 1968.

The fact that "[t]he times they [we]re a changin'" for the Left, to borrow Dylan's phrase, is seen in "1968" as very positive. In fact, this internationalist song's main purpose seemed to be to defend, glorify and/or show respect towards characters and episodes that, as noted at the beginning of the chapter, were demonised and 'othered' by Francoist discourses for their socialist orientation and supposed anti-nationalism. The narrator celebrates here that "[a]quel año mayo duró doce meses", that "París era rojo", that the initially socialist-oriented Portuguese "Revolution of the Carnations" was successful ("los claveles mordían a los magistrados"), that Czechoslovakia was opening itself to democracy, and that Left-wing "Jean Paul Sartre y Dylan cantaban a dúo" and influenced many of the revolutionary events that took place at the time ("[t]hat year May lasted twelve months"; "Paris was red"; "carnations bit the magistrates"; "Jean Paul Sartre and [Bob] Dylan sang as a duet").

"1968" similarly laments that, in the end, "no pudimos reinventar la historia" ("we couldn't reinvent history"), and that the socialist dream that was apparently reachable

in May 1968 ended up dead. The attempt to democratise Czechoslovakia was aborted by Soviet armies that “crushed Prague’s flowers”. Symbolic revolutionary hero Che Guevara, adored by many left-wing politically committed Spaniards, died on duty and “cavaba su tumba en Bolivia” (“dug his own grave in Bolivia”). In “México lindo tiraban a dar” (“lovely Mexico they accurately shot their targets”) and different collectives, especially left-wing university students, faced police repression and violence for their involvement in socialist politics. In Spain, “cantaba Massiel en Eurovisión” (“Massiel sang at the Eurovision contest”) – replacing the much more politically subversive Serrat -, and many workers became or continued to be tamed, forgot about the revolution, and made sure that they “llegaba[n] puntual[es] al trabajo” (“[were] punctual for work”). The last lines sadly reflect upon the fact that, by the time this song was created and first received, the revolutionary ideas, spirit and energy that moved part of the world in 1968 had already disappeared or weakened enormously. In a way, the pessimism of this song was symptomatic of the disenchantment that many singer-songwriters would experience especially from 1978 onwards. Their disappointment – bitterness in some cases - translated into new approaches to issues of class in their musical work, as I will now show.

## **2) The weakening of socialism and the rise of social disillusionment (1978/9-1982)**

The official establishment of democracy in late 1978 brought about important changes in Victor’s, Ana’s and Sabina’s approach to class. In their works this second phase was mainly characterised by an overall softening of their previously salient and recurrent socialist-oriented content, and by a renovated interest in rather socially-oriented concerns. In general terms, the evolution of class-related issues in their works ran parallel to that of historical construction. Overall, this second period of class

construction corresponded to the second phase of historical representation examined in the previous chapter. This broadly parallel evolution is also likely to have obeyed extra-musical reasons like those mentioned in Chapter Four. For example, as noted above, it may have been related to issues of disappointment with the outcomes of the Transition. However, it may have also obeyed some artists' measured decision to offer a relatively moderate position tailored to the needs of time.

In any case, these artists' moderation in their approach to class seemed to follow the general direction of Spanish society of the late 70s. After Franco's death in 1975 the Spanish working class underwent a period of radicalisation that marked a significant increase in the number of strikes, strikers, and working days lost – they all reached levels not seen since the 30s (Soto, 1998: 151). Sociological studies also prove that, with the official arrival of democracy in 1978, the Spanish working class importantly restrained its position (Soto, 1998: 156). This establishment of democracy also translated into the moderation of formerly more radical political parties. This happened to the PSOE, for example. Around those dates, this party “moved to the centre of Spanish politics, and dropped its old class-based Third Worldist rhetoric for a social-democratic programme of economic and social modernisation” (Smith and Mar-Molinero, 1996: 25-6)<sup>94</sup>.

This general moderation should be understood in the context of the historical conjuncture that Spain had been living since the dictator's death. Political consensus – which implied moderation of all factions - was seen by many as necessary in order to avoid a national disaster similar to the one that occurred in 1936. There was a greatly

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<sup>94</sup> More information on the subject is offered, for example, by Mestre Campi (1997: 38).

felt general need to achieve democracy in a country that had been largely polarised in many ways for nearly forty years. In this sense, Víctor and Ana especially may have contributed with their works to an important process of de-radicalisation of some collectives and individuals. It is also important that, in general terms, the weakening of socialist demands in the works by Víctor, Ana and Sabina between 1978/9 and 1982 often paved the way for different types of claims and concerns.

#### The remnants of socialist politics. New times, old songs

Only a very few songs by these three artists retained the socialist politics that characterised their works in the previous period. Among these rare exceptions were Víctor's "Canción de la esperanza" (1978) and "De Cudillero" (1981). In the first one the narrator reflects on the need to look after and feed recently born democracy. This song also invites the listener to carry on "con la lucha siempre viva/ en la oficina o el taller" ("with our fight always alive/ in the office or the garage"). In the context of the song these lines are likely to refer to the citizens' active involvement in the new democratic process, but they also seem to contain a more strictly class-related component in support of working-class struggle.

"De Cudillero", a song about a fishing village in Asturias also addresses the problems of the Spanish (male) working class<sup>95</sup>. The protagonist - a fisherman - is a victim of the class system in operation. He has been "[p]eleando veinte años para al fin/ llegar a nada" ("[f]ighting for twenty years/ to get nothing in the end"): he pessimistically stresses that fish are scarce and that often he is not allowed to go fishing. He denounces the fact that nobody considers his need to earn a living while he cannot

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<sup>95</sup> Carlos Hidalgo highlighted that Cudillero is a real fishing village in Asturias. [In <http://usuarios.lycos.es/soyuncorazón>; accessed 20th December 2002].

work and that his employers, buyers and/or trade union representatives are trying to take advantage of him:

[h]ay gente que negocia  
con torpeza tan extraña  
como si no supieran  
o escondieran otras cartas.

[s]ome people negotiate  
with such strange clumsiness,  
as if they didn't know how to do it  
or were hiding other cards.

For these reasons the fisherman complains that if that situation continues he will have no option but to give up his job, which, in some ways, is his life, for he has lived “criándose entre redes de la mar” (“brought up among fishing nets from the sea”):

[y] al cabo nada debo,  
si no hay pesca prendo fuego,  
y salgo al mar y quemo  
hasta el último aparejo.  
Carguen a su espalda  
y su conciencia un hombre menos  
hoy siete de febrero sello  
y firmo en Cudillero.

[a]t the end of the day I owe nothing to anyone,  
if there is no fishing I set everything on fire,  
I go out to sea and burn  
even the smallest fishing tackle.  
They can shoulder  
and bear on their conscience  
one less man  
today seventh February I conclude  
and sign in Cudillero.

It is also significant that between 1978 and 1982 Víctor continued to include in his repertoire old songs with a strong socialist component – e.g. “La planta 14”, “El abuelo Víctor” and “Asturias”. These pieces were generally loved by audiences and so they were continuously recycled. This almost nostalgic reuse of old songs was

probably a means for both artist and audiences to publicly reassert their past (often more radical and optimistic) commitment to class-equality. It may have also been used by the artist and his audiences in an almost therapeutic manner: recycling these songs may have helped them become convinced that their class claims were the same as before and had not lost strength.

#### Class concerns: gone with the wind?

In spite of the rather exceptional cases examined in the previous subsection, Víctor's new musical creations between 1978 and 1982 often abandoned some of his previous socialist concerns quite drastically. In fact, when considering the three singers together, Víctor's evolution in this respect seemed especially sharp and significant - the fieldwork carried out suggested that he was associated with communism, with the claims of miners, and with class struggle more generally much more than Ana or Sabina had been.

Overall, between 1978 and 1982, class was rather secondary in Víctor's works. Moreover, when present, class issues were often approached from a milder socially-concerned (rather than openly socialist) position. In fact, in this second period, class oppression did not appear explicitly in his works as a problem to be defeated adopting a socialist position. In the already discussed, "Esto no es una canción", different variables are considered in the construction of a new all-inclusive Spanishness: "el color, el sexo [...] la raza [...] [y] el bando en que luchó" ("colour, sex [...] race [...] [and] the side on which s/he fought"). However, direct allusions to class are significantly absent.

The apparent radicalism that characterised Ana's album *La paloma de vuelo popular* (1977) also disappeared in her *Ana* (1979), *Con las manos llenas* (1980) and *Ana en Río* (1982). In fact, only the latter contains a song with some implicit references to class: "Caminando" (1982) alludes to "el campo, los barcos, [...] [y] la construcción" – these allusions to the labour collectives of fishing and building are interesting from a gender perspective, for they refer to jobs traditionally associated with and dominated by men; moreover, the implied addressee in the song is apparently exclusively male: "si te sientes perdido" – the song reads. This (apparently masculine-centred) class consciousness of "Caminando" has lost the militancy present in previous songs. Instead, class awareness is introduced here as a unifying tool in order to "luchar por la paz" ("fight for peace") and show opposition "a la guerra, las armas, [y] la ley del cañón" ("to war, arms, [and] the law of cannons"). When this fairly popular song was released in 1982, it was most probably read as an anti-NATO song: around that year Spain's likely entry into the Atlantic organisation caused a lot of distress and anxiety among many Spaniards, and most politically committed left-wing singers – the three studied here among them -, publicly declared their strong opposition to Spain's membership of NATO, both musically and extra-musically.

#### Sabina's social disillusionment

Between 1979 and 1982 class-related issues were still relevant in a good number of songs by Sabina. However, his approach to class in these later works was quite different from that offered in the earlier "Canción para las manos de un soldado", for example. While these later songs still introduced a strong social critique and implicitly presented class-related factors as sources of human suffering, their tone was far from pamphlet-like and they did not appear as openly socialist. Overall, like

Víctor's slightly defeatist "De Cudillero", Sabina's later works seemed to lose part of the combative temper that characterised his earlier songs. Some of this combativeness seemed to be replaced by a more pessimistic and apparently powerless attitude of *desencanto* (Graham and Labanyi, 1995: 312, 313). As noted in the previous chapter, this attitude of disenchantment was fairly frequent among different left-wing individuals, who saw with disappointment the economic and socio-political outcomes of the Spanish Transition.

This *desencanto* and even powerlessness is present in "Calle Melancolía" (1980). In this song, the rage and belligerent power that marked "Canción para las manos de un soldado" has turned to imposed solitude and loneliness. The disorientation, sadness and emptiness experienced by the narrator after losing his love merge chameleon-like with the critical description of a depressing and impersonal urban space which could well be Madrid. This urban landscape, a "desolado paisaje de antenas y de cables" ("desolate landscape of aerials and cables"), is full of poverty, crime and death: "[p]or las paredes ocre se desparrama el zumo/ de una fruta de sangre crecida en el asfalto" ("[o]n the ochre walls splashes the juice/ from a fruit of blood grown on the asphalt/in the city"). In this city "[l]as chimeneas vierten su vómito de humo/ a un cielo cada vez más lejano y más alto" ("[c]himneys spill their vomit of smoke/ into an ever more distant and higher sky/heaven") – here "cielo" seems to symbolically refer to "heaven", which is "cada vez más lejano", as well as to the most obvious "sky". In this actually and metaphorically polluted landscape the narrator symbolically presents himself as unavoidably living "en calle Melancolía" ("in Melancholy Street"). His solitude, pessimism, and emptiness seem incurable, as he is surrounded by a bleak,

unwelcoming and depressing scenario full of social problems which only seem to worsen his own personal difficulties.

Sabina's hit "Pongamos que hablo de Madrid" (1980) is similar to "Calle Melancolía" in its tone and approach to the topic of the city. However, the former places a much greater and clearer emphasis on social critique, and relegates the narrator's world to a secondary position. Unlike "Calle Melancolía", which presents a nearly-symbiotic fusion between the city and the narrator, this song stresses the narrator's important psychological and emotional detachment from the urban space that he is describing. Like in "Calle Melancolía", however, the implied narrator could be easily identified with Sabina's public *persona*, to judge by the comments in the last paragraph of the song and Sabina's own presentation of it in his live version for *La Mandrágora* (1981).

The title "Let's say I'm talking about Madrid" suggests that while the song content is referring to Madrid it could well be alluding to any other reasonably big urban Spanish (or even western) space of the early 80s. This song focuses critically upon some of the most sordid aspects of Madrid and by extension of other Spanish cities. Some of this sordidness is implicitly presented as caused by class-related problems and inequalities. However, like in "Calle Melancolía", Sabina's social – rather than socialist - critique is presented in a pessimistic and disenchanting way which differs significantly from the earlier and highly combative socialist-oriented "Canción para las manos de un soldado". Madrid – or any other big Spanish urban space - is presented as an impersonal, polluted and decadent space in which "las estrellas se olvidan de salir" ("stars forget to come out"), probably both in an actual and more

metaphoric sense. The city is presented as shelter for crime, drug addiction, death and insanity. It is the place “donde regresa siempre el fugitivo”, where “hay una jeringuilla en el lavabo” and “la muerte pasa en ambulancias blancas”, and even where “[l]os pájaros visitan al psiquiatra” (“where the fugitive always return to”; “there is a syringe in the toilet”; “death travels in white ambulances” and “[b]irds visit the psychiatrist”). It is the place which feeds social inequalities and therefore marginalisation. In this context it is understandable that among the most marginal classes

[l]as niñas ya no quieren ser princesas,  
y a los niños les da por perseguir  
el mar dentro de un vaso de ginebra.

[g]irls do not want to be princesses anymore  
and boys try to reach  
the sea inside a glass of gin.

This city is so alienating that the position of the narrator towards this troubled environment seems to be one of hopeless defeat. Hence his final desire to be taken to the south when he dies:

[c]uando la muerte venga a visitarme,  
que me lleven al sur donde nací,  
aquí no queda sitio para nadie,  
pongamos que hablo de Madrid.

[w]hen death comes to visit me,  
take me to the south where I was born,  
here there isn't room for anyone,  
let's say I'm talking about Madrid.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> In later versions of the song Sabina's own position towards Madrid will permanently change. In *Joaquín Sabina y Viceversa* (1986) and in later albums this last paragraph will become: “[c]uando la muerte venga a visitarme,/ no me despiertes, déjame dormir,/ aquí he vivido, aquí quiero quedarme,/ pongamos que hablo de Madrid”. [“When death comes to visit me,/ don't wake me up, let me sleep,/ I've lived here, and here I want to stay,/ let's say I'm talking about Madrid”]. This change of attitude towards Madrid was already emerging in *La Mandrágora*. In this album Sabina introduced his ode to Madrid as “una historia de amor y de odio a una ciudad invivible pero insustituible” [“a story of love and hatred towards an unliveable but irreplaceable city”].

The socio-economic marginalisation experienced by the lowest urban classes and implicitly denounced in “Pongamos...” is critically taken to the fore in “Qué demasiao” (1980). This piece tells the story of a criminal adolescent who ends up dead, “desangrao” (“bleedin’ to death”), after being shot “seis disparos descaraos” (“six shameles’ shots”). Like “Pongamos...” and unlike “Canción para las manos de un soldado”, this song does not seem to call audiences to carry out a socialist revolution. In fact, Spain is not presented as exclusively resulting from the clash between the working classes and the bourgeoisie as it happened in “Canción...”. Instead, the hero, or rather, anti-hero, is a marginal character who seems to stand below the Spanish working classes socio-economically and culturally speaking – his linguistic register, which is temporarily borrowed by the sympathetic narrator who tells his story, seems to be that of a young and not very educated urban subject influenced by the ‘cool’ and ‘easy-going’ vocabulary of *La Movida*. There are slang references to “[l]a pasma” (“cops”), “canuto” (“joint”), “vacilón” (“joker/tough guy”), and “chorizo” (“petty thief”). The use of words pronounced in an almost vulgar way also point to the protagonist’s deficient educational level: “desarmao”, and “ordena”, for example, substitute for the more formal and correct “desarmado” and “ordenado”. This linguistic characterisation of the protagonist offers even more interesting data: he may be a gypsy, as his “vieja” (mother) refers to “parné” - a typically *caló* (gypsy slang) linguistic form - rather than to “dinero” or “pasta” (money), for example. This reference is important, as different gypsy communities were frequently marginalised in Spain and often faced extreme poverty.

Although this song does not seem to call for a socialist plan of action of the type encouraged in “Canción...”, it still contains a strong and corrosive critique of an

unequal, selfish and unfair society which feeds criminals like its protagonist. This critique gains even more relevance and strength because Sabina often emphasised that the song was based on real facts, on the real life of *el Jaro*, a young criminal who, like his protagonist, was killed in the street for his involvement in different types of crimes (Menéndez Flores, 2000: 54). *El Jaro* is described as “macarra” and “pandillero” (“loutish” and “gang member/hooligan”). However, from the beginning, a sympathetic narrator presents his behaviour and attitude as partly understandable: the first lines in the song are strategically devoted to explaining his marginal origins. *El Jaro* is then mainly presented as a victim of the system and his surroundings and family background – his mother seems to be an alcoholic who “apura el vino que has mercao/ y nunca ha preguntao:/ ¿De dónde sale todo este parné?” (“finishes up the wine that you’ve bough’/ and she’s never ask’:/ Where does all this dosh come fro’?”). Moreover, he is

hijo de la derrota y el alcohol,  
sobrino del dolor,  
primo hermano de la necesidad

the son of defeat and alcohol,  
the nephew of pain,  
first cousin of necessity

He is a “[c]horizo y delincuente habitual/ contra la propiedad/ *de los que no [...] [le] dejan elegir*” (“habitual petty thief and criminal/ against the property/ *of those who do not let [...] [him] choose*”) [emphasis added]. In the context of the song, poverty and all that it carries with it seem to be the original causes of the troubles of *el Jaro*, who only had “por escuela una prisión” and “por maestra una mesa de billar” (“a prison as school” and “a billiard table as teacher”).

## CLASS AND EDUCATION

The references to schooling and education present in “Qué demasiao” were not an isolated phenomenon in the musical works by the three singers between 1968 and 1982. In fact, references to learning and to – often formal - education were frequent in their works between those years, especially between 1968 and 1977/8. These were often connected to issues of class and deserve some attention. In Ana’s class-concerned left-wing “Tengo” (1977), for example, references to education are conspicuous. Its narrator positively stresses that

[t]engo, vamos a ver,  
que ya aprendí a leer,  
a contar,  
tengo que ya aprendí a escribir  
y a pensar

I’ve got, let’s see,  
that I already learnt to read, to count,  
I have got that I already learnt to write  
and to think

In these lines the connection latently established between reading, counting, writing and “learning to think”, between formal learning and education and critical thinking is significant. Formal education is presented here as highly positive; Juan, the protagonist and narrator, acknowledges its crucial role in the achievement of the socialist-oriented society in which he claims to be living. He presents formal education as the empowering tool that has helped the working classes to liberate themselves from the hegemonic discourses of the well-educated and powerful. The importance of formal education in class struggle is also highlighted in Víctor’s “Carta de un minero a Manuel Llana” (1976), where it is presented as an element of hope; it is the only way in which working class families in mining areas will find an alternative to work in the mines. That is why the miner-narrator emphasises that while

in the workplace he only thinks of his son “y trabajar como burros para estudiarlo/ pa’ que no baje al pozo si yo lo puedo,/ que para eso su padre ya fue minero”(“and work really hard so that he will be able to study/ so tha’ he doesn’t go down the mine,/ for his father was already a miner”).

These three singers’ emphasis on education in general recalls some of Gramsci’s theories and thought<sup>97</sup>. Like Gramsci - and also from a left-wing position - these artists placed great importance on the acquisition of culture as a means to successfully activate and lead class struggle and challenge hegemonic structures. Their systematic attempts to reach the people, to teach large audiences about the importance of education may have also responded to their awareness of the need to work at the national-popular level in order to become successful counter-hegemonic fronts.

Their special stress on the importance of formal education and learning also seems to be in some respects similar to that present in the pre-war, 19<sup>th</sup> century-created liberal *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*. As the above quotations show, like this institution’s intellectuals, these artists placed great emphasis on formal learning as a means for achieving the socio-economic improvement of the Spanish people and by extension of Spain as a whole (Fox, 1998: 32). An important difference, however, is that singer-songwriters in general and Víctor, Ana and Sabina in particular, seemed to be using these ideas with more socialist-oriented intentions than those elitist intellectuals from the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, at least before 1978.

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<sup>97</sup> Education was also a main concern for other *cantautores* - e.g. for Labordeta (2001: 109).

Nevertheless, the formal type of education that these artists valued so dearly was, like that supported by the *Institución*, still partly shaped by middle class standards and taste<sup>98</sup>. These artists' emphasis on poetry, for example, may be read in this light – even when this was inspired by socialist politics. Apparently, this is a contradiction: these singers seemed to support the use of formal education – this being partly understood in middle class terms - among the working class and the most marginal individuals; they seemed to support the use of the oppressors' tools in order to subvert them and/or the oppressive system that fed them. But, can the oppressors' tools defeat their own masters and operating system? To put it in Gramscian terms, can apparently hegemonic tools be used with genuine counter-hegemonic potential? Or is their use inevitably linked to the political leaders' strategy to retain hegemony through consent? These are debates that have generated a lot of controversy in different circles – e.g. in some feminist groups - and different scholars have often supported sometimes opposite and apparently irreconcilable views.

In the specific context of the Transition, this emphasis on formal education may have been of actual – but limited - subversive potential in class terms. As Gramsci noted (1971: 344), it is important to evaluate and understand your adversaries' position in order to combat them philosophically and free oneself from them practically. In this

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<sup>98</sup> Graham and Labanyi (1995: 9) note that in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Spain “[s]ocial improvement was being impelled not to promote some abstract ‘general good’ but to protect the fortunes of the particular class most closely linked with the expanding capitalist development of the time: the bourgeoisie. Liberalism’s stress on education and culture was integrally linked to emergent ideologies of nationalism, through which the ascendant bourgeoisie sought to integrate the rest of the population within the national territory into its own project. By establishing common symbols of identity (in reality, its own) it would be able to cement diverse interests in an apparent collectivity, thus deflecting social discontents and the threat of revolution. Education - undertaken by the state - was crucial both as a producer of labour and as an agent of nation-building/homogenization to ensure the consolidation of the bourgeois social order and state. In Spain, the successive generations of teachers, artists and political reformers educated by the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* were the bearers of this liberal modernizing project.”

particular context of research, the access to formal education may have proved subversive for the working classes in different ways. For example, it may have helped moderate gaps between the different social classes and may have also encouraged social mobility. The artists themselves, and especially Víctor and Ana, were the living examples of the possibility of change through formal education. Originally from humble upper-working-class environments, they became self-taught and helped others to become so and fight the oppressors using their very same tools – it should be remembered that a good number of these artists' audiences were working class citizens at the time of the Transition. Significantly, as the partial fieldwork carried out showed, a number of these listeners were then and/or are currently engaged in progressive politically-committed teaching and lecturing<sup>99</sup>. This suggests that, as happened to Víctor and Ana themselves, if nothing else, formal education worked at a micro-political level: in some cases it became a subversive weapon that helped individuals to achieve a better socio-economic position. In turn, many of these newly educated individuals seemed to spread their left-wing ideas and helped others to become educated. In other words, these new intellectuals in the Gramscian sense often also helped others to become so. While these changes were certainly not those of a revolution, they may have helped undermine - from within - some of the class norms in operation at the time, even if it was in a partial way and mainly operated with individuals rather than with groups.

Finally, it should be noted that, while formal education partly shaped by middle-class terms was supported and promoted, the three singers also showed a lot of respect, sympathy and even admiration for those individuals who – often linguistically -

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<sup>99</sup> E.g. many participants from the Ávila focus group (September 2003).

revealed their poor academic instruction. This happened, for example, in Sabina's already mentioned "Qué demasiao" (1980), in Víctor's "Carmina" (1970) and in his already analysed "Carta de un minero a Manuel Llaneza" (1976). In these songs the speech of the illiterate urban "macarra", that of the untaught rural male farm labourer and that of the uncultured miner are respectively reproduced with respect, and there is no sign of irony or paternalism towards them.

### **CLASS AND GENDER BETWEEN 1968 AND 1982**

As suggested in the previous sections, class and gender did not always interact harmoniously in the works by Víctor, Ana and Sabina. In fact, the relationship between these two categories in many of their songs was rather problematic: almost systematically their musical pieces referred to or addressed male Spaniards and neglected women and femininities. Overall, this was a recurrent and steady feature of these artists' songs between 1968 and 1982.

Most of their class-related songs only showed how class inequalities affected the lives of male working-class Spaniards. That is clear, for example, in Sabina's already analysed and male-centred "Canción para las manos de un soldado" (1978). In those few cases in which Spanish women were shown as affected by the Spanish class system, they were usually presented as suffering its consequences indirectly, as wives, mothers, sisters, or girlfriends of male working class Spaniards, rather than as workers themselves. This happened, for example, in Víctor's "María Coraje" (1970). Its old working class protagonist, a housewife called María, reflects on some of the episodes that marked her life. She remembers with special pain the fact that "[t]uvo un hijo

minero y una tarde sangrienta/ envuelto en sangre y lodo se lo trajeron...” “one of her sons was a miner and one bloody evening/ they brought him covered in blood and sludge”). In spite of its title, in Víctor’s “Ya nun tien quien’ i cante” (1970) the real protagonist is not the girl who seems to have no choice but to stay in the village, but rather her boyfriend, who at least has the possibility to leave his community and earn a living in the city. While the song emphasises that she will have no one to sing to her if her boyfriend leaves, nothing is said about (other) really crucial issues affecting her life: unlike her boyfriend, she will inevitably face boredom and dullness, as she is doomed to stay in her half-empty and intellectually impoverishing village. Moreover, she will be unable to start a career outside the house. However, none of this seems to be an issue in the song, as it only focuses upon the extremely hard-working conditions that her boyfriend faced while working as a farm labourer in the village.

These examples show that Spanish female workers were rather absent in many of the works by these artists at the time of the Transition<sup>100</sup>. While in the Spain of the 60s, 70s and early 80s the labour market was mainly dominated by male Spaniards – workers and entrepreneurs -, there was a considerable number of women workers too. In fact, a good number of scholars (e.g. Gracia García and Ruiz Carnicer, 2001: 291, 292, 355; Moradiellos, 2000: 146; Montero, 1995: 382; Fusí, 1983: 28) agree that from the 60s onwards there was an important increase in the number of – especially young - female Spaniards who found paid labour outside the home (Soto, 1998: 131-135). As Moradiellos notes (2000: 146), 20% of the Spanish working population was constituted by women in 1960. In 1970, a significant 24% of the Spanish labour force was represented by female Spaniards.

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<sup>100</sup> Sabina’s “Caballo de cartón”, which sympathetically dealt with the problems encountered by a female office worker living in Madrid, appeared on LP format later, in 1986 (in *Joaquín Sabina y Vicerversa en directo*).

Considering these data, the overall absence of Spanish female workers in most of the songs by Víctor and Sabina between 1968 and 1982 is significant and problematic. Also in this historical context, Ana's artistic position regarding the interaction between class and gender deserves some attention. Gender representations in "Me matan si no trabajo" and "Tengo" (1977), two of her most obviously class-concerned songs, are especially relevant here. As noted earlier, the former reflects on unemployment and labour exploitation as problems frequently encountered by the working class. However, the song is apparently rather masculine-centred. Linguistically, its referents are unequivocally male and the working class is automatically identified with the male working class.

"Tengo", also a poem by revolutionary Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén, constitutes an apologia for a socialist society in which socio-economic, ethnic and cultural equality seem to be a reality. Like "Me matan...", however, it does not consider gender differences at the level of lyrics. The protagonist is the indisputably male "Juan sin Nada no más ayer,/ y hoy Juan con Todo" ("Juan [owing] nothing just yesterday/ and today Juan [owing] everything"). Similarly, other gendered references in the song systematically point to male referents (e.g. "*el* administrador", "compañero" [emphasis added]).

Like Víctor's and Sabina's works, "Tengo" appears to forget the existence of Spanish women workers between 1960 and 1982, as it systematically seems to equate the (Spanish) working classes with the male (Spanish) working classes. However, there is a key difference here which rests on performance and opens up a space for completely

different interpretations: Ana's apparently and traditionally feminine voice seems crucial to understand both "Me matan..." and "Tengo" and their ambiguous significance. Her strong and passionate but stereotypically feminine voice potentially gave both texts a gendered dimension that many class-related songs by the other singers lacked. In fact, performance opens up the possibility of different readings. For example, a superficial and pessimistic - but plausible - reading points to the singer's potential self-effacement, unawareness, vague interest in and/or lack of concern for the interaction between class and gender (in her works). However, other interpretations are also possible. Considering her obviously feminine vocal performance a different reading more empowering for women also gains plausibility. Her voice potentially drew attention to the gap existing between the male-centred text-poem - already given and therefore difficult to modify -, and her traditionally 'feminine' vocal treatment of the text. This gap may have caused an estrangement in some audiences who, by listening to this singer's 'feminine' voice singing "*yo, Juan sin Nada*" [emphasis added] may have finally noted the originally masculine-centred dimension of the poem/song. Her performance of these songs may have led some audiences to reflect on the fact that Spanish women workers actually existed and that they equally faced problems similar to those encountered by their male counterparts. At least, this may well have been the artist's original intention, for she was well aware of her condition as a woman of working-class origin and had first-hand knowledge of some of this collective's problems, as she publicly declared on numerous occasions.

**SOME AUDIENCE RESPONSES TO VÍCTOR MANUEL'S "LA PLANTA  
14": A CASE STUDY**

La planta 14

En la planta 14; en el pozo minero;  
de la tarde amarilla tres hombres no volvieron;  
hay sirenas, lamentos... acompasados "ayes"  
a la boca del pozo; dos mujeres de luto  
anhelando dos cuerpos y una madre que rumia  
su agonía en silencio: es el tercero...

A las diez la luna clara se refleja en las sortijas del patrón  
recién llegado, con sombrero, gravedad y su aburrido gesto;  
él ha sido el primero, vendrán gobernadores,  
alcaldes, ingenieros; tratarán de calmar

la presentida viuda que se muerde el pañuelo; no sabrán acercarse a la madre que les mira  
con los ojos resechos... A las doce el patrón  
mirará su reloj, los otros ya se fueron,  
y en un punto y aparte esbozará un fastidio  
mientras piensa: ¿pero dónde están éstos?  
Ha llegado otro relevo de bomberos  
y a la una menos diez verá la noche:  
el primer muerto.

Sentados en el suelo los mineros se hacen cruces  
y reniegan de Dios... ¡quien diría les pillara de sorpresa  
la tragedia repetida!; a veces el más bravo,  
se le queda mirando fijamente al patrón  
con dientes apretados, y el patrón con sombrero,  
tiene dos policías a su lado: no hay cuidado.

Tres horas lentas pasan y a la luz de las linternas asustadas,  
el cura con los ojos arrasados  
al segundo le va uniendo sobre el pecho las manos.

Y un chaval de quince años mientras llora impotente  
se abraza contra un árbol. Y el chófer del patrón  
con su gorra de plato, se siente desplazado,  
es un hombre prudente, ¡bien domado!

El rocío ha calado hasta los huesos

Cuando sale el tercero,  
le recibe con sonrisa gris-azul la madrugada  
y con voces los mineros, mientras se abrazan todos  
y uno de ellos, el más fiero,  
por no irse al patrón, llora en el suelo.

(Written by Víctor Manuel in 1967)

Level 14

On level 14; in the mine;  
from the yellow evening  
three men didn't return

there are sirens, lamentations; rhythmic sighs  
 at the head of the mine; two women in black [are]  
 yearning for two bodies and a mother who ruminates about  
 her agony in silence; it is the third one...  
 At ten the bright moon shines on the 'boss' rings  
 [he has] just arrived, wearing a hat, gravely with his bored grimace;  
 he is the first one, governors, mayors, engineers  
 will come; they will try to calm  
 the widow's premonition while she bites her handkerchief;  
 they will not know how to approach the mother who is looking at them  
 with dried out eyes... At twelve the employer  
 will have a look at his watch, the others have already left,  
 and then he will give a hint of his annoyance  
 while he thinks: 'Where the hell are they'?  
 another shift of firemen has arrived  
 and at ten to one the night will see:  
 the first corpse.  
 Sitting on the floor the miners cross themselves  
 and denounce God as though this repeated tragedy  
 caught them by surprise! Sometimes, the bravest one  
 stares at the 'boss'  
 gritting his teeth, and the boss, wearing his hat,  
 has two policemen by his side; doesn't need to worry.  
 Three slow hours go and by the light of the frightened lanterns,  
 the priest with eyes filled with tears/satin-like eyes  
 joins the hands of the second corpse on its chest.  
 And a boy of fifteen, whilst crying impotently  
 holds onto a tree. And the boss's driver,  
 in chauffeur's cap, feels out of place;  
 he is a cautious man; domesticated!  
 The dew had soaked them to the skin  
 when the third one is taken out;  
 he is received by dawn with a blue-grey smile  
 and the miners' voices, they all hold each other,  
 and one of them, the most courageous one,  
 does not move towards his boss but cries on the floor.

The masculine-centeredness of many of the class-related songs analysed earlier is particularly conspicuous in "La planta 14" (1968, 1969, 1977). In this song women appear only as long-suffering mothers and wives of the missing miners. This was stressed, for example, by a female interviewee. In her opinion this song shows

un papel muy desagradable que siempre le toca a las mujeres, que es la de ser, no protagonistas, sino audiencia de todo lo que le pasa a los hombres, no [...] cómo decirte, centro emocional de la familia y que ella es la que tiene todas

las emociones y que es ella la que chupa el dolor de todos los demás [...] y la madre, esposa, hija de mineros es la 'epítome' de esto que te digo (participant from Madrid; Nottingham, November 2003)<sup>101</sup>.

a very nasty role that women always have to perform, which is that of being, not protagonists, but audiences of everything that happens to men, you know [...] how shall I put it, [she is the] emotional centre of the family and she is the one who has all emotions and it is she who absorbs everybody else's pain [...] and the mother, wife, daughter of miners is the epitome of all this that I'm telling you about.

According to some audiences, however, this song's emphasis on men was understandable, as it was aiming to show the reality of the time in mining Spain:

[a] mí me parece que aquí las mujeres están en las casas, son los hombres los que trabajan fuera... es normal en el caso... de... de las minas, porque es un trabajo muy duro que normalmente no, no es para mujeres, entonces no creo que pueda sacar consecuencias de este hecho [...] (female participant; Lincoln focus group; October, 2003)

[i]t seems to me that here women are at home, it is men who work outside the house... it is normal in the case... of... of mining, because it is a very hard job, isn't it, it's not for women, so I don't think you can draw conclusions from this fact [...]

This song is of especial relevance here because, as Torrego Egido noted (1999: 91),

[f]orma [...] parte, sin ningún género de duda, de la personalidad cultural y sentimental de la generación que vivió la época de la transición.

[i]t is undoubtedly part of the cultural and sentimental personality of the generation who lived the transition period.

Significantly, it distanced itself from most other early songs by Víctor in its approach to class issues: far from treating class questions discretely, it entirely devoted its lyrics to addressing and exploring class-related problems (as noted above, affecting mainly - or at least directly - some collectives of the male Spanish working class). It is set in a mining area, probably in Asturias. More concretely, it is set "at the head of the mine"

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<sup>101</sup> Table I (Chapter Three, pages 108-109) offers more details about all the participants whose information is being used here.

where different people anxiously wait for the rescue of the bodies of three miners who suffered a fatal accident inside the mine. This chorus-less song is constructed in such a way that its lyrics and the story narrated are constantly brought to the fore. In the early version analysed here, this song is extremely simple musically speaking: it only makes use of a Spanish guitar and, at specific times, of some violins<sup>102</sup>. With this guitar only a few chords are played and repeated throughout. The violins are coherently and movingly used when the more dramatic and emotional moments of the story narrated are taking place. The singer's very serious, deep and stereotypically masculine tone of voice and his particular way of 'reading' – rather than singing - also coordinate to lead all the listeners' attention towards the lyrics: sometimes, it seems that he is speaking with a certain musicality rather than singing. His voice engages the line on the melody. However, at times, there is a simultaneous atonal separation from the music which creates a conspicuous tension between the music and the singing voice. Such a tension draws attention to the narration presented in the lyrics. This emphasis on lyrics is also enhanced because the song narrates events which observe a formally and semantically coherent, linear cause-consequence structure with a beginning, middle and an end. All these strategies worked together successfully to give this song an important realist dimension that different audiences admired:

- participant 1: es una historia, un relato, como si contara hechos reales, un accidente en la mina
- participant 2 interrupts: y esto no se sabía [...] yo creo que aquí está diciendo una realidad que él habría visto más de una vez
- participant 1 interrupts: pues sí
- p. 2: yo es que me lo creo a pies juntillas... porque a otros niveles en todos sitios pasa

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<sup>102</sup> Later versions of "La planta 14" are more complex musically speaking. For example, in the album *Mucho más que dos* (1994) more musical instruments are used in its performance. These new musical arrangements create a more powerful whole altogether. The sense of anxiety created by the lyrics is reinforced then by the use of recurrent notes played on a keyboard. Such repeated notes resemble the noise of a clock, which in turn points to the inevitable passing of time. This passing of time increases the impatience and uneasiness of the characters in the story, as the chances of finding the miners alive diminish.

-p. 3: no es que me lo pueda imaginar, es que esto es lo que pasaba... esto lo que hace es contarnos realmente lo que está pasando. Nosotros teníamos una vecina que era asturiana y nos lo contaba, o sea, estas cosas son lo que pasaba... y eso pasaba en la mina pero lo de la autoridad pasaba en cualquier tipo de trabajo... pero claro, ellos allí eran mucho mas luchadores... por las condiciones de trabajo que tenían que soportar... para mí es que nos cuenta lo que realmente está pasando... (female participants, Zaragoza focus group meeting; January 2004)

-p. 1: it is a story, an account, as if it/he was narrating real facts, an accident in the mine

-p. 2 interrupts: and we didn't know about this [...] I think that he is telling us here about a reality that he probably saw more than once

-p. 1 interrupts: surely

-p. 3: the thing is that I believe it [the story] literally, because this is the kind of stuff that happened... what this story actually does is to tell us what is really happening. We had a neighbour from Asturias and she told us about this, I mean, these things happened [in real life]... so that happened in the mine, but the stuff about authority happened in any job, but of course, they [miners] were much more militant... because of the working conditions that they had to endure... in my opinion it/he is really telling us about what's going on...

This song can be interpreted within a socialist framework. It presents an 'us'/'them' division which is equated with a working class/bourgeoisie distinction typical of some socialist discourses. It presents a sharp contrast between victims and victimisers which is clearly directly linked to class issues. The miners – and by extension their families - represent the oppressed working class who suffer the consequences of a merciless capitalist society ruled by an equally merciless bourgeoisie - embodied here by the "patrón" and other authority figures. Moralistic adjectives such as 'good', 'evil' or the like are never used to describe the characters in the story. However, other more subtle impressionistic descriptions and textual strategies are introduced in an attempt to clarify who the narrator supports and whom the listener should identify with.

This positioning of the audience is partly achieved through the use of an omniscient third person narrator who witnesses the scene of the recovery of the miners' bodies and apparently provides the narrative with objectivity. This objectivity, however, is superficial rather than real. The use of the politically charged "patrón" instead of the more neutral "jefe" responds to this attempt to position audiences and shape their interpretation of the story narrated. The Spanish word "patrón" was often used in Communist and Socialist discourses with negative connotations suggesting labour exploitation exerted by the employer upon the employee. The reiterative use of this word is therefore significant.

The descriptions of the characters potentially create a similar positioning effect on the audience. The narrator, who, like the singer himself, seems to be well acquainted with the mining world, presents a despicable wealthy employer who insensitively "will look at his watch" and will show "his bored grimace" while the accident victims are still inside the mine. This indifferent and uncaring "patrón" only seems to worry about the fact that he is forced to stay so late. In fact, at no stage in the story does this patron wearing his hat and shiny rings try to sympathise with the victims, their families or workmates. He keeps an emotional and physical distance from them at all times, only to think about his own safety - that is why "tiene dos policías a su lado" ("has two policemen by his side").

This *patrón's* lack of sensitivity and frivolity contrasts with the actual suffering, anguish, impotence and powerlessness experienced by the dead miners' friends and relatives:

hay sirenas, lamentos... acompasados "ayes"  
a la boca del pozo; dos mujeres de luto

anhelando dos cuerpos y una madre que rumia  
su agonía en silencio: es el tercero...

there are sirens, lamentations; rhythmic sighs  
at the head of the mine; two women in black/ in mourning [are]  
yearning for two bodies and a mother who ruminates  
her agony in silence; it is the third one...

Y un chaval de quince años mientras llora impotente  
se abraza contra un árbol.

And a boy of fifteen, whilst crying impotently  
holds onto a tree.

All these working-class characters also experience a good deal of restrained anger and indignation towards the “patrón”. This fury seems to be motivated because he is partly to blame for the tragedy affecting the miners: he is not investing (enough) money to keep the mines as safe as possible for his workers – the song implies:

[s]entados en el suelo los mineros se hacen cruces  
y se acuerdan de Dios... *¡Quién diría les pillara de sorpresa  
la tragedia repetida!; a veces el más bravo,  
se le queda mirando fijamente al patrón con dientes apretados* [emphasis  
added].

[s]itting on the floor the miners cross themselves  
and denounce God *as though this repeated tragedy  
caught them by surprise! Sometimes, the bravest one  
stares at the ‘boss’  
gritting his teeth*

This restrained rage against the oppressor is so zealous because there is a committed sense of solidarity and bonding among all the miners, who appear as a very close collective with strong class identity:

cuando sale el tercero,  
le recibe con sonrisa gris-azul la madrugada  
y con voces los mineros, *mientras se abrazan todos  
y uno de ellos, el más fiero,  
por no irse al patrón: llora en el suelo* [emphasis added].

when the third one is taken out;  
he is received by dawn with a blue-grey smile  
and the miners' voices, *they all hold each other,*  
*and one of them, the most courageous one,*  
*does not move towards his boss but cries on the floor.*

As this quotation suggests, and the fieldwork carried out showed, emotionality is of crucial importance here. As a female participant noted, its

letras ponen los pelos de punta por su emotividad tan cercana a todos  
[Salamanca, January, 2004; e-mail interview]

lyrics are spine-chilling because of its very emotional side [which is] close to everyone.

This piece was appealing especially to the audiences' feelings and emotions; to the most combative side in them that was willing to fight in order to prevent situations like that narrated from happening again. The solidarity, respect and sympathy that the miners and their families are likely to awaken in (some) audiences are probably intended here to be the potential mobilising forces that will lead the oppressed to fight their oppressors. In fact, much of this piece's power seems to reside in its ability to realistically focus on individual cases, on particular personal tragedies rather than on more general and abstract de-personalised mining problems<sup>103</sup>.

This song's emotional strength and power are even more salient when the context of its creation and initial reception are considered. As mentioned earlier, this song seems to be set in Asturias, the singer's own birthplace. As noted in Chapter Four, mining Asturias was of great symbolic and actual importance, both for its strong socialist past traditions, as well as for its inhabitants' working-class activism during Francoist times (Vázquez Azpiri, 1974: 34, 35; Villena, 2002: 80)<sup>104</sup>. Moreover, the actual mining

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<sup>103</sup> This idea connects to the 'personalised' treatment of history discussed in Chapter Four (p. 116).

<sup>104</sup> The Asturian Revolution of October 1934 is very important in this context. In 1933 Asturias became the most troubled region of the Spanish state. Strikes then became a fairly frequent phenomenon and

profession was in itself of symbolic and actual relevance at the time. As some informants noted, miners faced extremely arduous working and safety conditions at the time. Consequently, for many they were the epitome of the fighting (male) working class, or rather, of a desirable subversive Spanish (male) Working Class. Therefore, “La planta 14” could be read as a powerful and emotional praise for the Spanish (especially male) working class and their fight as a whole – which greatly explains why Francoist authorities fiercely censored it for many years. In one of the participants’ words, this song was a

[c]anto a la clase trabajadora, un canto profundamente emotivo a la clase trabajadora y a la lucha de la clase trabajadora (female participant from Madrid; Nottingham, November 2003).

[c]hant for the working class, a deeply emotional chant for the working class and for the fight of the working class.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has stressed that class constituted a main concern in many songs by the singers analysed here during the Transition period. In fact, their works often constructed Spanishness around the category of class and upon an awareness of the inequalities of the Spanish class system of the time. Moreover, this class awareness

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many workers were mobilised. In fact, a very significant number of them were affiliated to different trade unions and were actively involved in their activities. The defeat of this working class revolution brought about a long and intense campaign of repression exerted upon the most combative sectors of the working class - by the end of 1934 there were around 18000 detainees (in <http://www.el-caminoreal.com/historia/historia12.revolution.htm> [Accessed 3rd August 2004].

More information on the subject is offered at

<http://perso.wanadoo.es/agusromero/docs/guerra/guerra2.htm> [Accessed 3rd August 2004].

Detailed information on the labour exploitation experienced by miners from Asturias can be found in Moradiellos (2000: 86, 121, 123, 143). This source also offers interesting accounts of how, by means of strikes, miners fought the system in the 40s, 50s, and especially in the 60s. Pages 287-292 are especially interesting: they reproduce real reports of labour problems experienced by miners in Mieres – Víctor Manuel’s birthplace - in 1962.

was often accompanied by a defence of the interest of the most disadvantaged individuals and collectives. To put it in Gramscian terms, singer-songwriters saw class as a main category through which hegemony operated. Hence their emphasis on class inequalities and on the need to fight them from a progressive perspective.

This chapter has also emphasised that it was these artists' apparently socialist emphasis on class questions that especially attracted many of their audiences and gave them much of their identity as politically-committed artists. By stressing the existence of class differences and struggle, and by adopting declared left-wing class politics, they importantly reworked different Francoist discourses on class – Francoism deeply hated and persecuted different left-wing ideologies and always presented Spain as a conflict-less society that had overcome class struggle (Álvarez, 1998: 388, 446). Moreover, Francoist authorities tried hard to systematically censor those sources that informed Spaniards of existing social problems and clashes between the classes (Cisquella et al. 1977: 74).

This chapter has also emphasised how the works by the three singers between 1968 and 1982 followed an interesting evolution in their approach to class. Interestingly, generally this evolution ran parallel to that observed in their treatment of history. These shifts seemed to be informed by different socio-political events that took place in the broader context of the Transition. Between 1968 and 1977/8 many class-related works by these artists often adopted a strong socialist framework. In these, the (often male) working class was usually presented as an oppressed sufferer while the bourgeoisie was depicted as a merciless oppressor. In many of these works there was also a latent or overt call for political action in order to eliminate the inequalities of

the class system, as they proved to be a source of unspeakable human suffering and sorrow. The role of different socialist leaders and citizens was also celebrated in some of these first period songs. A different second phase of class-construction started to be felt in the works of Víctor and Ana around 1978, and in the case of Sabina after the release of his more militant *Inventario* (1978). This second phase was much more moderate and less belligerent. In the case of Sabina, his former socialist combativeness was replaced by a more pessimistic and apparently powerless attitude of *desencanto*. This second period was mainly characterised by an overall weakening of these artists' previously salient and recurrent *socialist*-oriented content, which rather became *socially*-oriented. This change seems to have followed the milder, moderate and moderating general direction that Spanish society as a whole started to adopt with the arrival of democracy and the ratification of the 1978 Constitution. Especially in Víctor's and Ana's case, this moderation probably obeyed their considered decision to support new positions which they probably thought were sensitive to the needs of consensus of the very late 70s and early 80s.

I have also stressed that aspects of class were often related to issues of formal education in a number of works by the singers, especially between 1968 and 1978. Formal education was conceived and presented as necessary and highly positive, as an empowering tool that could be used by the working and marginal classes against the oppressive, knowledgeable and therefore powerful bourgeoisie. These singers supported the use of the oppressor's tools in order to challenge the oppressor and/or the oppressing system that fed that very oppressor. Their emphasis on formal education was in some respects similar to that present, for example, in the liberal 19<sup>th</sup> century-created *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* – although their perspective seemed

overall less elitist and more radical. Nevertheless, these artists' emphasis on formal education remained importantly shaped by middle-class standards and only seemed partially useful as a counter-hegemonic tool at the level of micro-politics.

This chapter has finally examined how the categories of class and gender interacted in the works by the singers between 1968 and 1982. The male centred-ness of class constructions generally present in the works by Víctor and Sabina especially has been criticised. In most cases their works only showed how class inequalities affected the lives of male working class Spaniards. In those few cases in which Spanish women were shown as affected by the class system they were presented as indirect victims, as wives, mothers, sisters or girlfriends of Spanish working class men, rather than as workers themselves. I have also stressed that Ana's stereotypically feminine vocal performance of, for example, "Tengo" and "Me matan si no trabajo", two poems by socialist poet Nicolás Guillén, may have (intentionally) provided the songs with a gendered dimension beneficial for women that the original texts were lacking.

## CHAPTER SIX

### “LA REDENCIÓN QUE BUSCO ENTRE TUS MUSLOS”:

### LOVE AND SEX AGAINST FRANCO<sup>105</sup>

#### INTRODUCTION

This last song analysis chapter examines gender representations in the singers' works in contexts other than those specifically related to class and/or history. It considers gender in relation to love and sexuality between the years 1968 and 1982, mainly as constructed in their love songs. It also examines the similarities and differences existing between these artists' gendered constructions of love and sexuality and those present in Francoist hegemonic discourses. Finally, it analyses Joaquín Sabina's "Mi vecino de arriba" (1978) in light of the fieldwork findings obtained.

#### GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN LOVE SONGS BY VÍCTOR MANUEL, ANA BELÉN AND JOAQUÍN SABINA

Francoist Spanishness – like that supported by the three singers – did not only rely upon specific gendered approaches to history and class. Gender also played a crucial role in the construction of Francoist Spanishness on other grounds. It was especially significant, for example, in relation to constructions of love and sexuality. Certain approaches to love introduced in different popular music texts were legitimate in Francoist Spain. Francoist discourses were keen on parental, fraternal, and filial love, and, unlike singer-songwriters, they also welcomed songs that talked about people's

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<sup>105</sup> "La redención que busco entre tus muslos" ("The redemption I search for between your thighs") is a line from Sabina's song "Inventario" (1978).

love for God, for example. In fact, those musical pieces in which orthodox Catholicism, traditional family structures and values, and other pro-Francoist arrangements were validated were supported by Francoist authorities. Thus, songs like Manolo Escobar's "Madrecita María del Carmen" or Juanito Valderrama's "Su primera comunión" were well accepted by the regime.

When considering love between couples, Francoism accepted certain mild songs of heterosexual romantic love between *novios*; it often allowed – although not always without problems – the existence of love songs telling about formal and serious relationships between boyfriends and their girlfriends. Thus, pieces like the jolly, trivial and male-centred "Niña bonita" by Manolo Escobar were not looked at with suspicion by the establishment. Those pieces which presented love relationships in more explicitly physical, sensual and/or sexual terms did not achieve official approval and were often censored in different ways. However, this did not mean that – for various reasons – originally sanctioned sensual and passionate songs like the coplas "Tatuaje" and "Ojos verdes", and many uninhibited and sexually explicit pop songs did not reach the public, especially from the 60s onwards. In fact, many of these songs reached an audience and even became (very) popular among a wide public at the time.

*Amor de pareja* and sexuality were also approached from particular gendered perspectives in the works by Ana, Víctor and Sabina between 1968 and 1982. In fact, both issues played a very important role in their works during the Transition period. To put it in Gramscian terms, as Franco had done earlier, these artists seemed to be aware of the importance of gender in relation to love and sexuality as a nation-building element. Therefore, their contribution to counter-hegemony entailed their

consideration of the interactions taking place between gender, love and sexuality, and their decision to rework Francoist discourses on them.

These artists' approach to love and sexuality changed significantly with time. The evolution of their works in this respect ran parallel to that noted earlier in relation to both history and class. This similar evolution is likely to have followed from those broader socio-political shifts that occurred and were already noted in Chapters Four and Five. Thus, when considering the interaction between gender, love and sexuality in these artists' works, two main phases can be distinguished: the first phase (1968-1977/8), more radical overall, placed a special emphasis on sexuality and presented love relationships in rather unconventional terms. The second phase (1978/9-1982), at least apparently more conservative in some respects, embraced romance, while it also supported other more innovative and progressive approaches to love.

### **1) Playing subversive: politicising sexuality and 'unconventional' love (1968-1977/8)**

This first phase can be said to conclude around 1977 – when considering the works of Víctor and Ana - or in 1978 – when paying attention to Sabina's songs. There is not a large number of love songs by these artists between 1968 and 1977/8. That is especially true for Víctor's work between those years. Significantly, love songs will become more numerous in these artists' repertoire from 1978 onwards.

It is also significant that between 1968 and 1977/8, only a few songs by these artists constructed love in fairly mild, traditional, and romantic terms along lines accepted by Francoist official discourses. Víctor's "Carmina" (1970) – a mixture of folk rhythms

and *música melódica* which is significant for its anti-Francoist support of interclass marriage -, is one of the few cases to present some reminiscences typical of more traditional romantic love songs. “Carmina”, which seems to borrow some elements from of the tale of Romeo and Juliet, tells the story of a couple who are prevented from seeing each other because of their socio-economic differences. The obstacles to this love story are to be found in Carmina’s father, who does not approve of his daughter’s relationship with her boyfriend because he does not match her family’s high socio-economic and cultural standards – e.g. as the song reveals, he speaks Bable, an Asturian dialect, rather than ‘proper’ Castilian Spanish. Like Romeo and Juliet, this young couple is helped by a sympathetic priest, who plans a secret marriage for them. Like many other songs which approach romantic love, however, “Carmina” is rather problematic in terms of gender. It does not ultimately challenge Francoist discourses on masculinity and femininity which stated that men are born leaders that should always be obeyed by women:

*[a] través de toda la vida, la misión de la mujer es servir. Cuando Dios hizo el primer hombre, pensó: “no es bueno que el hombre esté solo”. Y formó a la mujer, para su ayuda y compañía [...]. La primera idea de Dios fue “el hombre”. Pensó en la mujer después, como un complemento necesario, esto es, como algo útil. [Sección Femenina, Formación Político-Social, primer curso de bachillerato, 1962; emphasis added. In Otero (1999a: 17)].*

*[t]hrough all her life, a woman’s mission is to serve. When God made the first man he thought: “it is not good that man be on his own”. And then he made woman, for his [man’s] help and company, [...]. God’s first idea was “man”. He thought of woman afterwards, as a necessary complement, that is, as something useful.*

In Víctor’s song, Carmina’s future seems to be entirely decided by men: by her father’s prohibition to see her boyfriend, by her boyfriend’s decision to marry her – he is the narrator and does all the talking; Carmina’s voice is totally absent in the song -, and by the priest’s acceptance to marry her and her boyfriend without her explicit

consent. Leaving aside exceptions like “Carmina”, however, love songs by Ana, Víctor and Sabina between 1968-1977/8 often presented rather unconventional, intellectualised, more progressive, and in some cases even fairly radical approaches to love empowering for women.

#### Love between left-wing politically-committed partners

An important trend in love songs by these artists between 1968-1977/8 presented love as indissolubly linked to left-wing politics and political action. Significantly, that was especially the case in Ana’s work. Her songs often introduced love relationships between progressive, politically-committed partners and these were presented in very positive terms. Sometimes she even introduced apparently autobiographical elements, which conferred explicit support on the politically committed type of relationship presented in the songs. This politically-committed love was present in her “Voy por todo tu cuerpo” (1977) and in “Si te quiero es porque somos” (1977), for example. In both songs, the ‘I’ repeatedly disclosed by the unequivocally female politically-committed narrator, can be identified with the singer’s own public *persona*. The type of love relationship that she describes also resembles that that she and her husband Víctor Manuel publicly displayed as theirs at the time. This type of heterosexual love relationship between apparently equal, politically-committed partners also existed and was in vogue at the time amongst some relatively small circles; it was especially appreciated by the young Spanish *progresía* of the late sixties and the seventies.

These love relationships presented in Ana’s songs were transgressive at different levels. For example, they were especially significant because they approved of the intervention of Spanish women in politics. This was a frontal attack against the

Francoist maxim which maintained that “el lugar de la mujer está en la casa” (“the place of woman is in the house”) (in Casero, 2000: 14), never in the political arena.

The everything but catchy “Voy por todo tu cuerpo” presents an atonal separation between music and the vocal performance of the lyrics which potentially stresses the latter. These lyrics semantically emphasise that the relationship between the narrator and her male partner is solid because they are concerned with the suffering of the world that surrounds them:

[t]odo está muy claro entre nosotros  
pues sabemos que no existe un mundo de color,  
que nos levantamos cada día convencidos  
que la vida no puede ser la unión de dos  
ajenos y distantes con la vida alrededor.

[e]verything is very clear between us  
because we know that a rosy world does not exist,  
that everyday we wake up convinced  
that life cannot be the union of two people  
aloof and distant from the world around them.

This politically-committed declaration of intentions is also present in “Si te quiero es porque somos”. Like in “Voy...”, here the narrator/Ana Belén’s public *persona* directly addresses her partner, who also shares her political orientation, stands by her in her political struggle and equally believes in the importance of collective fighting in order to achieve democracy and socio-political justice:

[s]i te quiero, es porque hacemos  
fuerza desde nuestro sitio,  
rodeados de compañeros  
para alargar el camino.

[...]

Si te quiero es porque espero  
que todo sea distinto  
cuando nos multipliquemos  
sin trabas y sin distingos.

[i]f I love you it is because we  
resist from where we stand,

surrounded by our fellows  
to make the path longer.  
[...]  
If I love you it is because I expect  
everything to be different  
when we multiply ourselves  
without obstacles and without favouritism

Both songs, which express the thoughts, concerns, and desires of women narrators (in “Voy...” the singing voice talks of “descubriéndome [...] yo misma” and in “Si te quiero...” of “me siento segura”) are also potentially empowering for women in other ways. In both of them the narrators are presented as strong and, especially, as very independent women. For example, in “Si te quiero...” the narrator addresses her partner to remind him that

[t]e quiero porque me siento  
segura de que yo vivo  
fuera de ti [...]

I love you because I know  
for sure that I live  
outside you [...]

This proud self-reflection on female independence contrasts significantly with a good number of Francoist discourses, which demanded and expected Spanish women’s subjugation in relation to men at many different levels, especially when they were involved in a relationship. That was the case of *La Sección Femenina* and other official sources. These often endorsed the idea that (Spanish) women were ontologically and teleologically inferior to (Spanish) men and therefore needed their guidance, and necessarily depended on them (in Otero, 1999a, 1999b). The female narrator of “Si te quiero...”, however, is far from being and behaving like the mere “useful complement” of her partner (Otero, 1999a: 17) expected by official discourses on ‘proper’ Spanish femininity. Instead, she is a resolute, mentally strong and fairly

emotionally and intellectually independent individual able to think, take her own decisions and put them into practice.

### Mocking Francoist discourses on women's domesticity

The previous paragraphs suggest that Ana disagreed with those traditional Francoist discourses that presented women as feeble creatures inevitably dependent on those men with whom they have a relationship. This idea was also present in her "Soy yo mi amor" (1972, 1973) - written by Víctor. This love song gives voice to a young middle-class Spanish woman who, in an over-idealised manner, addresses her future husband to tell him about all the qualities that make her a 'good' Spanish woman. She perfectly embodies many of the characteristics of Spanish (middle-class) femininity advocated by *La Sección Femenina*: she has all the qualities to become a good housewife ("sé cocinar y sé planchar,/ freir un huevo y ordenar") ("I can cook and iron, fry an egg and tidy things up"). She is a pious and virginal Catholic lady sent by her father to study with "las monjas de la Anunciación" ("The nuns of the Anunciation [order]"). She seems to know just enough "para saber estar en sociedad" ("to know how to behave in public"). Moreover, she has important connections with Francoist authorities: as she acknowledges, her "pedigrí es el mejor", for she has "un abuelo gobernador" ("her pedigree is the best" "a grandfather [who is a] governor").

It is important to pay attention to music here to realise that the whole musical piece is ironic. This is especially clear in the use of a piano solo at the beginning of the song. This piano playing resembles that practised by some genteel Spanish upper-middle-class women of the Francoist period. The singer's vocal performance is also crucial to the irony in the song. She makes use of different strategies in order to distance herself

from the *pacata* female middle class narrator: her tone of voice is especially high-pitched – stereotypically over-feminine - and therefore mocking; and she suddenly and unexpectedly changes her voice pitch and loudness throughout the song, creating a nearly-comic effect in the process. She also achieves this estrangement and detachment between the character and her view of the world on the one hand, and the singing voice/Ana Belén's public *persona* and her audiences on the other, through the imitation of the implied narrator's sighs and nearly hysterical laugh. By so doing, this song mocks - among other things – official Francoist discourses which demanded Spanish women's domesticity and servility to their husbands and/or husbands-to-be.

### Love and existentialism

Some other love songs by the three singers introduced important elements present in existentialist philosophy. These existentialist concerns were totally absent in those popular music texts welcomed by Francoism. The transcendental – and pessimistic – tone of some trends of existentialism is tangentially present, for example, in Ana's "En realidad" (1973). In this song the narrator reflects on her relationship with her lover to note that "[e]n realidad/ tú y yo nos encontramos/ para estar algo más solos/ todavía,/ juntamos soledad,/ pena con pena..." ("[i]n fact, you and I met/ to feel even more lonely/ we joined our solitudes,/ sorrow with sorrow...". Existentialism becomes even more apparent and central in Víctor's well-known "Dame la mano" (1971) and in his "Quiero tener la sombra de tu cuerpo" (1975)<sup>106</sup>. In the former, a

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<sup>106</sup> Different singer-songwriters of the Transition, like many other – often Left-wing - intellectuals of the time, were influenced by existentialist philosophy, and especially by Sartre's existentialist political commitment. In this particular research context this was especially conspicuous in Víctor Manuel's case. Some of Sartre's doctrines were echoed in some of his love songs, but also in other songs which were not related to love (e.g. in "Nuevas oraciones n.2" – 1970 -, and in "Por eso estoy aquí" – 1971 -). Existentialism was also important in some songs by Ana Belén; for example, in her very popular "De paso" (1977), written by Luis Eduardo Aute, and in other less well-known pieces like "Hay días" and "Nos liberará", both from 1973.

transcendental rather pessimistic view of the ephemeral and futile human condition is expressed, for “los *hombres* somos pura vanidad, fuego en el mar, un paso atrás” (“we *men* [humans?] are pure vanity, fire in the sea, a step back”). The futility and hypocrisy of many human acts is also emphasised here: “Y el *hombre* que inventó la caridad/ inventó *al* pobre y le dio pan” (“and the *man* who invented charity/ invented the *poor man* and gave him bread”) [emphasis added; the masculine gender explicit in the use of the words in italics should be noted].

In this scenario the narrator expresses his insecurity, as well as his determination to continue fighting for what he believes in (“Mi canto va buscando la verdad”), for “si no hablas no serás” (“My song is looking for the truth”; for “if you don’t speak you will not be”)<sup>107</sup>. Love is presented then as provider of the strength and power needed by the narrator to fight for his cause; his beloved is the “libertad” (“freedom”) and “trigo” (“wheat”) of his “pan” (“bread”). That is why he addresses her/him – it could be either female or male, for there is no grammatical gender indicating the sex of the addressee - and asks for her/his support and understanding: “[d]ame la mano y contigo se hará más corto el camino” (“[g]ive me your hand and with you the path [to walk] will become shorter”).

“Quiero tener la sombra de tu cuerpo” is also rather philosophical and transcendental. There are allusions to life and death, as well as to the constructedness of love. Its philosophically concerned narrator reflects on the difficulties that arise when trying to express affection beyond the limits of already existing discourses on love:

[q]uiero tener la sombra de tu cuerpo

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<sup>107</sup> These lines’ combativeness and resolution to remain politically committed were equally present in these artists’ class-related works prior to 1978/9, as Chapter Five showed.

inventar mil abrazos y abrazarnos,  
aprendernos, fundirnos, olvidarnos,  
recorrer los caminos, embriagarnos.  
Quiero inventar palabras y cantarte  
pero todo está escrito desde antes,  
'abrazo', 'amor', 'te quiero como a nadie',  
inventado está cómo explorarse.

I want to have your body's shade,  
to invent a thousand embraces and hug one another,  
learn one another, merge into each other, forget one another,  
walk the roads, intoxicate each other.  
I want to invent words and sing to you  
but everything has already been written,  
'embrace', 'love', 'I love you more than anything',  
how to explore each other has already been invented.

As in "Dame la mano" love is presented here as an answer to the narrator's daily life problems and existential doubts and anxieties. This narrator, whose vocal performance sounds typically masculine in terms of loudness and pitch – e.g. the singer seems to be using here one of the lowest pitch tones of his vocal register –, addresses his beloved in the following terms:

[q]uiero [...]  
cobijar mis fracasos en tus besos.  
Quiero tener tus dedos en mi frente,  
y saludar la muerte cuando llegue.

I want [...]  
to shelter my failures in your kisses.  
I want to have your fingers on my forehead,  
and greet death when it comes.

In spite of its apparently subversive philosophical approach to love, this song is very ambivalent in terms of gender and can be interpreted in very different ways. The implications underlying the gender-based power relationships established between the narrator and the addressee/his (most likely female) partner deserve some critical attention. Some gender representations do not fully escape rather traditional male-centred discourses supported by Francoism. As shown earlier, many of these

discourses expected women to systematically serve men and fulfil their needs with abnegation (Otero, 1999a: 17). This partly occurs in “Dame la mano” and “Quiero tener...”. These songs are fairly one-sided and unilateral; in both of them the entire emphasis lies on the male narrators and their thoughts and feelings. Nothing is known about their - quite probably female - partner’s worries, problems or desires. In fact, love seems to be conceived here as a one-way process in which receiving, rather than receiving and giving is what the male narrators expect from their partners.

By absence and omission, “Quiero tener...” also seems to implicitly echo other Francoist discourses which affirmed that

[l]as mujeres nunca descubren nada; les falta, desde luego, el talento creador, reservado por Dios para inteligencias varoniles; nosotras no podemos hacer nada más que interpretar, mejor o peor, lo que los hombres nos dan hecho (Pilar Primo de Rivera. In Otero, 1999a: 15).

[w]omen never discover anything; they lack, of course, the creative talent, reserved by God for men’s intelligences; we cannot do anything apart from interpreting, better or worse, what men give us already done.

In “Quiero tener...” there is a marked contrast between the male narrator and the probably female addressee: the former seems to be the philosopher, the one who reflects on life, love and death, while the latter is mainly presented as the physical body where the narrator recovers from his failures in life. Nothing is known about the addressee’s moral or intellectual aptitudes. All the stress is placed upon her body and physicality. In fact, in this very visually sensual and sexual song the narrator’s excited and determined speech borders on a linguistic and semantic aggressiveness which is stressed by Víctor’s loud, and passionate vocal performance. This is clear, for example, when he sings: “Quiero tener la sombra de tu cuerpo/ estrangular a golpes tu silencio,/ encadenarte a gritos y susurros” and “arañarte la piel [...]” (“I want to have

your body's shade/ strangle your silence with blows,/ chain you with shouts and whispers"; "scratch your skin").

### The subversiveness of fantasy

When "bringing my own subjectivity as part of my method" (Walkerdine, 1997: 8) of song analysis, however, the sensuality and physicality of "Quiero tener..." become more positive. In fact, they can even be seen as empowering for women. This is because this song may easily transport (some) - especially female - listeners to the world of fantasy and daydreaming<sup>108</sup>. Fantasy is relevant here because it is often linked to the symbolic fulfilment of desire (Walkerdine, 1984: 166; Laplanche and Pontalis, 1986: 166)<sup>109</sup>. Furthermore, fantasy is important because it "has utopian elements in it" (Kaplan, 1986: 153) which should not be ignored. As Modlesky notes, recalling Marcuse, the recreation of fantasies in texts may

encourage people to explore the sources of their repression and to discover in their dreams and fantasies the long-hidden wishes which ultimately constitute a critique of repressive civilization (1982: 30).

"Quiero tener..." is important in this context. This song sets an imaginary but realistic love-and-sex scene which is used by the narrator to explore love and sexuality in their

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<sup>108</sup> "Fantasy" is a very complex term which often refers to different "psychical realities" (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1986: 7). These realities are equally complex in their operation at different levels (1986: 19).

<sup>109</sup> Scholars have approached this issue from very different perspectives. Radway (1987), for example, has argued that the materialisation of fantasies in fictional texts (i.e. romances) is not really empowering for women. In her view, textual fantasies do not actually translate into concrete real changes, but rather lead to a conservative and conformist everything-is-fine-after-all attitude\*. Radway's negative view of fantasy has been challenged, for example, by Kaplan (1986), Walkerdine (1986: 195) and Ang (1996: 92-3). According to Kaplan, fantasizing and day-dreaming are signs of our humanity (1986: 150, 165) and should be seen as "crucial part[s] of psychic life, [...] [as] process[es] required for human sexuality and subjectivity to be set in place and articulated" (1986: 153). Moreover, fantasies are not good or bad *a priori*; in fact, the ideological and political implications of particular fantasies require individual examination (Kaplan, 1986: 153, 165).

\*Radway's implicit sharp and traditional separation between 'the world of fantasy' and 'the real world' has been partly blurred by, for example, Burgin, Donald and Kaplan (1986: 2) and by Mc Robbie (1984: 160).

connection to gender-based power relationships. The male narrator stereotypically presents himself as an intelligent, and physically powerful but simultaneously instinctual and sexually-driven subject. His emphasis on sexuality, however, does not obey a totally selfish and solipsistic aspiration. On the contrary, stress is also placed on how the probably female addressee enjoys her sexual encounter with her lover. Hence the potential visual strength and sensual beauty of the lines “[q]uiero tener la sombra de tu cuerpo/ [...] encadenarte a gritos y susurros” (“I want to have your body’s shade/ [...],/ chain you with shouts and whispers/ [...]”). These verses, spoken by the male narrator and directed to the probably female addressee, show the narrator’s concern for his partner’s sexual satisfaction and recreate positively the sexual pleasure experienced by her. And it is here where fantasy works. Through identification (Ang, 1996: 92; Walkerdine, 1984: 168), some heterosexual female listeners may adopt the subject position of the sexually open addressee, who, disobeying Francoist discourses, enjoys her sexuality fully and without inhibition. Even the more problematic “scratch your skin”, with which the narrator describes his lustful desire towards his lover, might be understood in light of theories of fantasy and its playful and disobedient counter-hegemonic potential. These scenes may trigger some (female) listeners’ imagination. Also, they may be materialising symbolically some of their ‘naughtiest’ and socially unacceptable – at least in Francoist standards - sexual fantasies: asserting the pleasure of being the subject – or perhaps, object - of men’s desire and lust, as well as enjoying fully and without taboos their sexuality. Moreover, the initial symbolic materialisation of sexual fantasies encouraged by “Quiero tener...” may trigger changes in real life: the critical awareness of the repressive Francoist sexual codes awakened by fantasy here may become an engine of personal, and ultimately social, cultural and/or political change in different ways.

These real changes may be prompted especially because this song – like many others by the artists studied here - introduces fantasies which seem plausible, rather than far-fetched.

“Quiero tener...” is also potentially empowering for women at a different level: the male narrator seems to be the one to hold power at the beginning of the song. However, power relationships shift as the song progresses and the addressee comes to participate in that position of power originally almost exclusively held by her lover: the narrator gradually discloses his weaknesses and openly speaks of his need for his lover. Also, there is an interesting step forward in the narrator’s egotistic initial position. His self-centred “quiero” (“I want”) ends up considering a much more participative, reflexive first person plural which acknowledges his lover’s agency in the relationship (“aprendernos, fundirnos, olvidarnos” - “learn one another, merge into each other, forget one another”). In fact, the female addressee seems to be combining here a more ‘passive’ - but still pleasurable - position as a subject of sexual desire with a more active role as the narrator’s lover and partner more generally.

#### When (love meets sex and) sex becomes politics

The sensual and sexual dimension of “Quiero tener...” is also present, for example, in Ana’s already analysed “Voy por todo tu cuerpo”. In fact, both sex and sensuality are significantly present in many other love songs by the three singers. Such a presence was of great subversive potential, especially when considered in relation to Francoist hegemonic discourses: as a good number of scholars note (e.g. Cisquella, Erviti et al., 1977; Sinova, 1989; Eslava Galán, 1997; García Curado, 2002), sex was a complete taboo in Francoist times and was subject to systematic state control and censorship

(Cisquella, Erviti et al. 1977: 81, 247; Sinova, 1989: 247). In Sinova's words (1989: 247), "[e]l sexo fue más que una obsesión: fue un objetivo" ("[s]ex was more than an obsession: it was an objective"). It was strictly regulated and, whenever possible, silenced. In fact, sexuality was a taboo issue that obstinately persisted throughout the Francoist dictatorship (Cisquella, Erviti et al. 1977: 116). These restrictive sexual norms and approach to sexuality adopted and supported by Francoism were often mainly governed by middle-class values.

These Francoist discourses that regulated sexuality were also systematically gendered. Thus, Spanish women and men were expected to approach sexuality in very different ways and were also supposed to fulfil very different roles as daughters and sons of their *patria*. These differences were normative and were supported by – among others - numerous hegemonic religious, medical, (García Curado, 2002: 110, 111; Eslava Galán, 1997: 304), legal and cultural discourses. However, these were also often ambiguous and highly problematic, and, at times, even contradictory and full of double standards. As García Curado notes (2002: 201), Spanish women especially were often the ones who bore the consequences of these sexual regulations:

[a]hí funcionaba descaradamente una doble moral. Aquella que nos permitía a los hombres toda una serie de comportamientos sexuales, incluso infringiendo lo prohibido, mientras que esos mismos comportamientos les estaban vetados a las mujeres.

[d]ouble standards shamelessly worked there. Those that allowed us men a whole range of sexual behaviours, even breaking bans, while those very behaviours were vetoed for women.

Some of these Francoist discourses, for example, expected Spanish men – regardless of their socio-economic condition - to be sexually responsible and controlled, and to approach sex within the officially approved framework of marriage (García Curado, 2002 115-6; Otero, 2000: 136, 139; Álvarez, 1998: 456; Eslava Galán, 1997: 275).

Some other official discourses, however, were much more permissive with them and their ‘natural powerful virility’ and they (tacitly) approved of their affairs with their “queridas” (“mistresses”) and with prostitutes, especially when these sexual encounters were approached with discretion (García Curado, 2002: 32; Eslava Galán, 1997: 196). This contrasted with the strict, moralistic and paternalistic attitude that Francoist official discourses systematically adopted towards these very “queridas”, and especially towards prostitutes, who were invariably seen as “abnormal” and “corrupted” (García Curado, 2002: 232).

In this highly sexually repressed and repressive historical juncture *cantautores* and *cantantes políticos* – as well as other (especially left-wing) artists and collectives – used sexuality as a tool of subversion in their work and/or field of action. This happened in Víctor’s and Ana’s case, and especially in that of the sexually explicit and transgressive Sabina. These artists seemed to believe that sex could be a political weapon of great radical potential. Like other politically committed individuals, they seemed to believe that “[l]a sexualidad era [una de] la[s] llave[s] que podía poner en peligro el sistema autoritario en el que se basó el régimen” (“[s]exuality was [one of] the key[s] that could endanger the authoritarian system upon which the regime was based”) – my additions (García Curado, 2002: 95). The following lines from Sabina’s “Palabras como cuerpos” (1978), which emphasise the highly political potential of sexuality in Franco’s Spain, should be understood in this light:

nosotros que queríamos  
simplemente vivir  
nos vimos arrojados  
a este combate oscuro  
sin armas que oponer  
al acoso enemigo  
más que el dulce lenguaje  
de los cuerpos desnudos.

we, who only  
wanted to live  
we saw ourselves thrown  
into this dark combat  
without weapons to use  
against our enemy's harassment  
but the sweet language of naked bodies

### Spanish women's sexuality

Sexuality is also politically significant in Ana's "Quiero vivir" (1973) and in her "Te besaba la arena en la playa" (1973), for example. Both are full of intricate images and metaphors whose complexity probably aimed at escaping Francoist censorship. These seem to express the female narrators' sexual desire toward their male lovers, and the feeling of fulfilment gained through their sexual and probably autoerotic and masturbatory activity. In the case of "Te besaba..." the rather voyeuristic and day-dreaming narrator notes that she "estaba en la ventana aquella madrugada" and that "yo te besaba la espalda/ desde casa" ("was by the window in the early hours of that morning" and that "I kissed your back/ from home") - the positive arguments on fantasy offered in the previous subsection are also useful to interpret this song. In "Quiero vivir" the narrator stresses the fact that

cada madrugada me despierta una sirena  
con un pez de colores entre las piernas  
con un pez de colores calma mis penas.

at dawn I am woken up by a mermaid  
with a coloured fish between her/my legs  
with a coloured fish she calms down my sorrows.

These veiled allusions to masturbation and autoeroticism transgressed Francoist Catholic-based discourses on sexuality, for, as García Curado notes,

[t]ocarse, mirarse, rascarse, pensar en eso y no digamos masturbarse (*masatisfacerse*), constituían todas ellas en sí material grave de las que te debías arrepentir o culpabilizar (2002: 96) [italics in the original].

[t]o touch, to look at and to scratch oneself, to think about that, and especially to masturbate [...], they were all serious sins in themselves for which you had to repent or blame yourself.

At a more general level, the positive emphasis on Spanish women's sexuality present in both "Quiero vivir" and "Te besaba..." was also very subversive when considered in context. Sexuality as such was a taboo at the time, but women's sexuality was even more dangerous and problematic for Francoist discourses. Spanish women were only supposed to practice marital sex and, even then, it was presented as an evil necessary for procreation (Gracia García and Ruiz Carnicer, 2001: 121). In fact, hegemonic religious, medical and legal discourses of the time joined their strength together to construct female desire and sexuality as sinful, immoral and even freakish. Even in the 1970s 'scientific-based' discourses like the following were not isolated phenomena in Spain:

[y]o he llegado a pensar alguna vez que la mujer es fisiológicamente frígida y hasta la exaltación de la libido es un carácter masculinoide, y que no son las mujeres femeninas las que tienen por el sexo opuesto una atracción mayor, sino al contrario [Doctor Botella Llusía, rector de la Universidad de Madrid y presidente de la Real Academia Nacional de Medicina, 1973. In Otero (1999b: 39)].

I have sometimes thought that women are physiologically frigid and that even the exaltation of their libido is a rather masculinised character, and that it is not feminine women who feel more attraction for the opposite sex, but rather the opposite [Doctor Botella Llusía, president of the University of Madrid and president of the National Academy of Medicine, 1973].

In such a context, it is not surprising that many Spanish women, very much unlike the narrators in "Quiero vivir" and "Te besaba...", could not enjoy their sexuality and believed themselves to be frigid:

[l]a mujer, deformada por una educación represiva que inculcaba la honestidad, es decir la “fuerte oposición al acto carnal” como virtud específicamente femenina, tenía grandes posibilidades de ser frígida (Eslava Galán, 1997: 192).

[w]oman, deformed by a repressive education that inculcated honesty, that is, “strong opposition to the lustful act” as a specifically feminine virtue, was likely to be frigid.

Celebrating the body. Spanish women and men as both sexually active and passive

Víctor’s “Canción para Pilar” (1974) and his folk song “Quiero abrazarte tanto” (1970) are also important for their explicit approach to sexuality, and particularly for their positive sensual emphasis on the human body. The former was written by Víctor and dedicated to his wife Ana - whose real name is María Pilar Cuesta<sup>110</sup>. Its narrator – the singer’s public *persona* - notes that:

[e]n medio del camino me senté,  
quemé las naves, me olvidé de pensar,  
y en el vacío nació esta canción para Pilar.

I sat in the middle of the road,  
I burnt my boats, I forgot to think,  
and this song for Pilar was born out of nothing.

Like in “Quiero tener la sombra de tu cuerpo”, in this song the implied addressee’s body – Ana Belén’s - is presented as the narrator’s saviour: “[en] tu cuerpo, mujer,/ está la luz y está mi fe” (“[i]n your body, woman,/ dwells light and my faith”). However, while sexuality is presented as positive and empowering, its gender implications are potentially problematic - unless they are understood as realisations of different fantasies. These may be problematic because the female addressee’s body is nearly presented as a military target to be symbolically and literally undermined by the narrator: “yo lo socavaré” (“I will dig under it”) - the narrator stresses when

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<sup>110</sup> In <http://usuarios.lycos.es/soyuncorazon> [Accessed 20th December 2002].

referring to the addressee's body. This idea of conquest is musically highlighted by the use of military-like rhythms played by drums throughout the song.

The physicality present in "Canción para Pilar" is particularly conspicuous and relevant in the very well-known "Quiero abrazarte tanto":

[s]iento tu mano fría  
correr despacio sobre mi piel  
y tu pecho en mi pecho y tu desnudez [...]  
Siento tu mano tibia  
que palmo a palmo besa mi piel  
y tus brazos se enredan hoy como ayer  
en este nuevo día vuelvo a creer.

I can feel your cold hand  
running slowly on my skin  
and your chest/breast on my chest/breast and your nudity [...]  
I can feel your lukewarm hand  
kissing my skin inch by inch  
and your arms net me today, like they did yesterday  
and [this makes me] believe in this new day.

This song's sensuous and visually powerful emphasis on the body was subversive when considered in context. The same could be said about its celebration of the sense of touch. Both contested Francoist hegemonic discourses which, as noted earlier (García Curado, 2002: 96), were mainly inspired by reactionary versions of Catholicism and presented the human body as a potentially dangerous source of sin.

In terms of sexuality and gender Víctor's "Quiero abrazarte tanto" also contains important transgressive elements when considered in relation to Francoist discourses. It offers an interesting and fluid blurring of some stereotypical gender roles endorsed by official discourses on sexuality: the narrator and the addressee adopt both traditionally 'masculine' and 'feminine' behaviours which allow them to dynamically alternate active and passive roles in their practice and enjoyment of sexuality. For

example, the narrator addresses his/her beloved and lover directly to remind him/her that s/he actively “seguía tus pasos, tu caminar,/ como un lobo en celo desde mi hogar” (“I followed your steps, your path,/ from home, like a wolf on heat”). This narrator also adopts a more passive position which allows him/her to enjoy the caresses and attentions of his/her beloved and feel her/his hands touching all his body, for example.

#### Ambiguity and the possibility of a gay reading

But “Quiero abrazarte tanto” is also potentially subversive for a different reason. Like in his “Dame la mano” and in Ana’s “Todas las cosas van hacia ti” (1975), for example, the gender of the narrators and addressees is grammatically unclear and therefore, strictly speaking, semantically ambiguous: they could be either both male or both female. This means that, although these pieces may have been understood within a heterosexual framework, they also opened up the possibility of a gay reading. A reading in which both the implied narrator and addressee are male or female and talk of their homosexual love-and-sex relationships in positive terms – homosexuality and its subversive potential in Francoist times will be examined later in the chapter.

#### Sabina’s sexual overindulgence and coarseness

In some cases, Sabina’s celebration of sexuality resembled that offered by Víctor and Ana: he sometimes constructed sexuality in a rather elegantly eroticised and poetical manner. This happened, for example, in his “Palabras como cuerpos” (1978). This song establishes a direct relationship between transgressive politics and the enjoyment of sexuality. It regrets that those who followed Francoist laws only seemed to have “manos que no acarician,/ dedos que no se tocan” (“hands that do not caress/ fingers

that do not touch each other”). It celebrates “los nombres entrañables/ del amor y los cuerpos” (“those dear words [that speak]/ of love and bodies”) and explicitly refers to the narrator’s desire and determination to look for “nourishment and shelter/warmth” under his lover’s skirt. He becomes even more sexually explicit when he compares his lover’s skin with the “coast” and his tongue with “a wave”. It is then obvious that this song rejoices at the fully conscious use of the sexually seductive power of the human body. And it is here where part of its potentially subversive dimension lies, for, according to Francoist discourses, seduction was evil (Otero, 1999a: 49) and anti-Catholic and, therefore, anti-Spanish.

But sexuality was not always poetically eroticized in his works. The other two singers’ celebration of human anatomy and sexuality was often bolder, more conspicuous and relevant in Sabina’s works. Unlike them, Sabina sometimes adopted a rather ‘naughty’, ‘coarse’ and even scatological - and consequently also subversive - position towards the human body and sexuality. This happened to a certain extent in “Inventario” (1978). In this almost nostalgic piece about lost love the narrator recalls and enumerates different memories of one of his own past love stories. Here sexuality is a key issue for its explicitness, insistent recurrence and not always romanticised representation. There are allusions to “el hueco de tu cuerpo entre las sábanas”, “*el denso olor a semen desbordado*”, “*las bragas que olvidaste en el armario*”, “los oscuros desvanes del deseo”, “la redención que busco entre tus muslos” or “*el sexo rescatándonos del tedio*” and “el grito que horadó la madrugada” (“your body’s hollow underneath the sheets”, “*the dense smell of spilt semen*”, “*the knickers you forgot inside my wardrobe*”, “the dark lofts of desire”, “the redemption I search for

between your thighs”, “*sex rescuing us from tediousness*”, and “the scream that drilled the night”) [emphasis added].

These sexually-charged references are especially significant because their protagonists are not married: there are explicit allusions to “los papeles que nunca nos unieron” (“the documents that never joined us together”). The positive – or at least neutral and normalised – representation of a sexually active single Spanish woman is especially significant when considered in context. All the sources consulted agree that official discourses were throughout especially concerned with the preservation of unmarried Spanish women’s virginity and purity (e.g. Otero, 1999a: 49; García Curado, 2002: 201; Eslava Galán, 1997: 151). This emphasis on virginity was so obsessive throughout Francoism that we could even talk of an “*enfermiza valoración de la virginidad*” (“sickly appraisal of virginity”) (Eslava Galán, 1997: 150)<sup>111</sup>. Isla notes that, for example, as late as 1977 there was still a notorious difference between Spain and Britain regarding social attitudes towards women’s virginity (Isla, 2002: 103-4). This almost obsessive concern with women’s virginity was greatly due to Catholicism, which “*elevó el virgo a los altares al impulsar el dogma de la Purísima Concepción*” (“elevated virginity on the altar by promoting the dogma of the [Virgin Mary’s] Pure and Holy Conception”) (Eslava Galán, 1997: 149). This powerful and very widespread mania for the preservation of Spanish women’s – not only physical but even mental! - virginity became apparent in a good number of texts of the time:

no creas en la ‘culpa’. Consérvate pura. No peques, ni de pensamiento, contra la pureza. Guarda intactos, según el mandato del Señor, tu cuerpo y tu alma;

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<sup>111</sup> Eslava Galán (1997: 351, 352, 353) notes that by the end of the 60s and during the 70s some isolated voices within the Catholic Church lightened up their discourses on female virginity. Thus, while pre-marital heterosexual relationships between “formal boyfriends and girlfriends” were not encouraged, they were not demonised either. However, as Eslava Galán also notes, these more liberal and open-minded views on female sexuality were far from the norm even in late Francoism; they were just isolated exceptions to the rule that continued to vilify Spanish women’s premarital sexual activity.

guárdalos para el futuro compañero de tu vida [...]. Créeme; únicamente así podrás ser [...] mujer honrada, mujer feliz, mujer de carácter [...] [1965. Tihamér Tóth. *Pureza y hermosura*. Edición nº 15. Quoted in Otero (1999b: 134-36)].

do not believe in 'blame'. Keep yourself pure. Do not sin, not even with your thoughts, against purity. Keep your body and soul intact, as the Lord commands; keep them for your future partner in life [...]. Believe me; only in this way will you be able to be [...] an honest woman, a happy woman, a woman with character [...]

Considering these normative Francoist discourses as points of reference, the addressee in "Inventario" clearly appears as counter-hegemonic. Her sexual behaviour frontally opposes important Francoist discourses on Spanish femininity and sexuality: far from being virginal, cautious and demure, this unmarried woman is sexually active, uninhibited and open-minded.

## **2) Standing in between two worlds: the use of 'romantic' love and innovation in other love and sexuality issues (1978/9-1982)**

The beginning of political democracy in Spain and the ratification of the 1978 Constitution did not only bring about changes in these artists' approach to history and class. It also significantly affected their approaches to love. In Víctor's and Ana's cases 1978 was a turning point in this respect. In Sabina's case these changes came in general after his release of *Inventario* that year. It is politically significant that from 1978/9 love songs became overall much more numerous in Ana's and especially in Víctor's repertoire. This more recurrent artistic embrace of love to the (numerical) detriment of other issues probably obeyed important socio-political and personal circumstantial factors. (Some of) these artists may have felt confident that the process of democratization that had already started in Spain was going in the right direction. Thus, they could 'relax' and give more prominence to other apparently less political issues. Or perhaps they became disillusioned with the politics of the Transition and

decided to turn to more 'personal' and 'private' issues. In any case, there seemed to be another very important less altruistic factor that determined these singers' artistic change of direction: they understood that in order to ensure their own artistic survival they would need to adapt themselves to the new socio-political circumstances and recycle themselves and their work to manage to speak to audiences with a new lease of life. And so they did. Víctor Manuel himself put it in this way:

[d]espués de las primeras elecciones de 1977 me quedé un poco en el vacío y me preguntaba ¿Y ahora qué? Antes tenías un argumento muy sólido para tu música y ahora te quitaban ese argumento [...] Había que encontrar nuevos temas, otras motivaciones musicales. Y entonces yo empecé a hablar del amor, de los sentimientos. La verdad es que antes ibas como con orejeras. Yo tenía muchos pudores, asociaba hablar de amor con las canciones de siempre, ese tipo de canciones que yo repudiaba. Tuve que aprender que el mundo de los sentimientos es absolutamente noble y que es lícito hacer una canción sobre estos temas [In Villena (2002: 83)].

[a]fter the first elections of 1977 I felt a bit lost and I asked myself: and what now? Before, you had a solid argument for your music and now they were taking that argument away from you [...] You had to find new topics, other musical motivations. And then I started to talk about love, about feelings. The truth is that before it was as if you were wearing earplugs. I used to be prejudiced, I used to associate talking about love with traditional songs, those songs that I repudiated. I had to learn that the world of feelings was absolutely noble and that it is licit to write a song about these topics.

The gender implications underlying Víctor's comments are very significant. This is especially so when considering that, while he didn't seem to think of love as very important before 1978, in that period he actually wrote a good number of love songs for his wife Ana Belén. Perhaps he believed that while love as such was a "licit" issue for a left-wing woman in the agitated Spanish socio-political context prior to 1978, it was not so much so for a progressive politically-committed male artist like himself. It seems then that it was partly forced by the circumstances that Víctor matured in this respect and fully learnt to approach (romantic) love as such without inhibition; without necessarily linking it to existentialism, or political action, for example. By

learning to sing about love as separate from politics in a strict sense, he escaped some traditional, reactionary and limitative norms on Spanish masculinity which were working at the time among both right and left-wing circles. Among other things, these set a sharp contrast between the 'masculine' public world of politics and the 'feminine' and private world of love and feelings. This singer then found a formula that allowed him to mix both spheres and use romantic love with equally powerful but less obviously political – in its strict sense - ends, like he did with his early already analysed class-centred "Carmina".

#### The legitimacy of romance and the need for LOVE

An important number of songs by Víctor and Ana especially between 1978/9 and 1982 used apparently rather mainstream romantic approaches to love. Overall, unlike many of their works prior to 1978, a good number of their new romantic-love songs resembled in some respects those belonging to other well-known musical genres of the time. The use and validation of romance were present, for example, in Víctor's "Soy un corazón tendido al sol" (1978), "Ay, amor" (1981), in Ana's "Agapimú" (1979), "Qué será" (1981) "El hombre del piano" (1981) and "Balancé" (1982), and in Sabina's "Calle Melancolía" (1980).

Víctor's great hit "Soy un corazón tendido al sol" was musically fast and cheerful, and made use of catchy rhythms which seemed to celebrate the arrival of democracy in Spain. Significantly, unlike many of his earlier pieces, this song was, musically speaking, a good example of Spanish mainstream pop of the time. In terms of content, it was also notably different from most of his pre-1978 love songs. In fact, it seemed to be a 'transitional' love song: while it abandoned his earlier wary, grave,

philosophical and pessimistic tone and adopted a more combatively optimistic perspective towards love, it still reflected on the need to link love with a politically-committed position. Its male narrator (possibly a singer-songwriter like Víctor himself - to judge from his comments about “todo lo que escribo” [“everything that I write”]) acknowledges that fighting for peace is difficult and that “nuestra sociedad/ es un buen proyecto para el mal” (“our society is a good project for evil”). However, he also states that although he is just one insignificant individual (“un pobre diablo”), “se levanta el día y echo a andar/ invencible de moral” (“the day rises and I start walking/ with invincible morale”). This strength to fight for what he believes in is provided by his love/r, to whom he directly addresses himself to remind her/him that

[a] pesar de todo  
 tú me haces vivir  
 me haces escribir  
 dejando el rastro de mi alma  
 y cada verso es un jirón de piel<sup>112</sup>.

[i]n spite of everything  
 you make me live  
 you make me write  
 leaving traces of my soul  
 and each verse is a scrap of [my] skin

This transitional nature of “Soy un corazón...” is fully abandoned in his also very-well known “Ay, amor”. This song, probably unthinkable in his pre-1978 repertoire of love songs, is an ode to Love *per se*. Here *amor de pareja* is approached from a romantic perspective - and hence its allusions to “el desamor”. Unlike his “Dame la

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<sup>112</sup> “Soy un corazón...” can be understood as a typical romance between two individuals involved in a relationship. However, it is ambiguous and can receive a different interpretation. As Carlos Hidalgo argues – especially when considering this particular extract from the song – this song can also be understood as Víctor Manuel’s homage to his own fans, to those who loyally followed him and gave him the strength to continue with his work (In <http://usuarios.lycos.es/soyuncorazon> [Accessed 20th December 2002]). This interpretation would also explain why there are no explicit grammatical references to the addressee’s sex, who – like his own audiences - could be either female or male.

mano" (1971), for example, this song does not link love with political commitment or existentialist philosophy. Instead, all the emphasis here lies in stressing the human need for love in a romanticised way: "ay de aquel que no te sienta alrededor [...] ay amor tan necesario como el sol" ("wretched is the one [man] who does not feel you around [...] oh, love, [you are] as necessary as the sun"). This song also celebrates the beauty of romantic love and the happiness that it provides when one feels in love and is fulfilled by one's beloved: "[t]antas veces nos quitas las penas [...] Ay amor del jardín yerbabuena" ("[y]ou take away our sorrows so many times [...] oh, love, [you are the] garden's mint"). But romantic love also has a negative, darker less cheerful dimension that is equally acknowledged in the piece: Love can be thorny "como espina" ("like a thorn/fishbone") and often its flavour "es amargo" ("is bitter/painful"). "Ay, amor" also reflects on the huge and incontrollable influence of Love in our lives. Its potency is stressed through the use of the vocative "Ay, amor" and the poetic personification of the concept, which thus becomes the only addressee in the song: "Ay, amor que despiertas las piedras" ("Oh, love, you awaken the stones") [emphasis added]. In fact, Love is seen here as powerful as "inmenso es el mar" ("as the sea is") and nobody seems to have power over it. The male narrator himself acknowledges the influence that it recurrently exerts upon him: "Cuando llamas estoy, a la hora que tú digas voy" ("I am there when you call, I'm ready to go whenever you tell me to"). By so doing, he escapes some traditional views on Spanish masculinity, which used to overlook and neglect many of the effects that the private world of love and feelings had upon male Spaniards (Otero, 2000).

Love is also presented as nearly omnipresent and omnipotent in Ana's musically catchy and cheerful "Qué será" – although in this case its referent - romantic Love - is

not explicitly mentioned. Like in “Ay, amor” here *amor de pareja* is presented as so powerful and inescapable that “casi ni Dios mismo lo puede evitar” (“almost unavoidable for God himself”). In this ode, Love is also shown as deceitful, elusive, insensitive and even senseless: “porque jamás es cierto y no lo será” (“because it is never true/certain and will never be”), “porque no hay quien lo mida” (“because nobody can measure it”), “porque no tiene juicio” (“because it doesn’t have common/good sense”), “pues no tiene sentido” (“because it doesn’t make sense”).

Her also musically catchy “Agapimú” similarly chooses to talk about romantic love. This time, however, it does not reflect on romantic Love in general, in an abstract way, but rather focuses on the love relationship existing between two specific individuals. Musically speaking, this huge hit (Villena, 2002: 90, 130) is a good example of mainstream Spanish pop of the late seventies and early eighties – especially because of its use of an electronic keyboard. Thematically, in a sense this very popular song adopted a rather commonplace and idealistic approach to love, quite different from that shown, for example, in her earlier “En realidad” (1973) or “Si te quiero es porque somos” (1977). In the optimistic “Agapimú”, the unequivocally female narrator systematically romanticizes her lover, whom she calls “Agapimú” – a Greek word which means “my beloved”. She poetically and positively identifies her lover/addressee with different natural elements: “gota de rocío”, “lluvia”, “viento” (“dewdrop”, “rain”, “wind”), etc.

However, this approach to love is not so stereotypical and ‘decaffeinated’ as it seems. This song is textually complex and offers the possibility of different readings. For example, like other songs by these artists, “Agapimú” does not include linguistic

elements that help the listener determine the addressee's sex. In fact, this could be either female or male and therefore the possibility of a gay, or rather, lesbian reading, is opened up. Such a reading is possible especially if the following line is considered: "[n]ombras tú mi nombre como jamás lo dijo un hombre" ("[y]ou name my name like never a man did")<sup>113</sup>.

At a different level, "Agapimú" is also relevant for its (female-centred) erotic content and its explicit use of romanticised, poetical, highly sensual and sexual images. "Tocas mi cintura como la hiedra toca altura" and "[e]ntras en mi cuerpo como la lluvia entra en mi huerto" ("you touch my waist like ivy touches the heights"; "you enter my body like the rain enters my garden") [emphasis added] should be understood in this light. Considered in context this emphasis on (female) sexuality was still provocative and transgressive in 1979, the year in which this song was released. In 1979 the socio-cultural presence of "el destape" ("nude/uncovering") was already fairly strong throughout Spain (Eslava Galán, 1997: 370; García Curado, 2002: 209). This phenomenon, which often translated into the exhibition of (semi)naked women, mainly addressed men, as the viewing of different popular films of the 70s starred by, for example, Fernando Esteso and Andrés Pajares suggest. In a sense "el destape" helped in the achievement of a more open and uninhibited – but still mainly male-centred - approach to sexuality in Spain. However, a wide sector of the Spanish population of the time was still influenced by deeply-rooted socially alive Francoist discourses and remained overall conservative, traditional and full of prejudice in their approaches to sexuality. In this sense, and especially because of its

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<sup>113</sup> This sentence is ambiguous: if understood literally, it may be addressing a woman, opening up in the process the possibility of a lesbian reading. However, if understood in the also plausible sense of "you name my name like no man had done *before*" [my addition and emphasis], then a heterosexual interpretation of the song is likely to prevail.

positive and assertive emphasis on women's sexuality, when considered in context, the apparently naïve and apolitical "Agapimú" can be interpreted as a potentially transgressive piece in terms of gender and sexuality.

### Reflecting upon lost love

The strength of love is also highlighted in Sabina's "Calle Melancolía". This song, however, does not focus on the benevolence of romantic love. Instead, a rather pessimistic and gloomy view of how love affects particular individuals is shown. It introduces a mixture of interrelated love concerns and social issues, and stresses the loneliness experienced by the narrator as a result of having been abandoned by his lover. This lover is directly addressed by the narrator in a rather romantic and melancholic way:

me enfado con las sombras que pueblan los pasillos  
y me abrazo a la ausencia que dejas en mi cama.  
Trepo por tu recuerdo como una enredadera  
que no encuentra ventanas donde agarrarse [...]

I get angry with the shadows that live in the corridors [of my house]  
and I hug the absence that you leave in my bed.  
I climb for your memory like a climbing plant  
which does not find windows to hold on to [...]

Some of these negative sides to romantic love become protagonists in Ana's thematically sordid "El hombre del piano". In fact, this song focuses upon some of the potentially most destructive powers of romantic love. Its main character, a "master pianist", is depicted as an alcoholic "old loser" who lost his way when he was abandoned by the woman he loved. This pianist is treated sympathetically by the narrator, who perhaps feels identified with his position as a loser in the world of love.

The pianist's ex-lover, however, is also treated with respect and a certain sympathy, and her reasons for abandoning him are explicitly stated in the song:

[e]lla siempre temió echar raíces  
que pudieran sus alas cortar  
*y en la jaula metida la vida se le iba*  
y quiso sus fuerzas probar.  
[emphasis added]

[s]he always feared settling down  
and losing her wings  
*and imprisoned in her cage she was losing her life*  
and so she wanted to test her strength.

Far from being the submissive and self-abnegating (Otero, 1999a: 21) Spanish woman wanted by Francoist discourses, the pianist's ex-lover is rather depicted here as an independent woman who also cares about her own happiness and freedom. This song is also interesting for its revision of some traditional Francoist canons of Spanish masculinity. Like Víctor's "Ay, amor", it reflects publicly on how love and sentimentality affected men. The relevance of such a reflection lies in its public acknowledgement of love and the traditionally-considered 'feminine' private world of feelings as legitimate concerns for Spanish men. Thus, the master pianist is positively presented here as a very sensitive man to whom even "algunos [...] han visto llorar" ("some people [...] have seen crying").

#### 'I will survive': Spanish women's determination to overcome the loss of love

Lighter, more cheerful and/or optimistic sides to romantic love are introduced in Ana's "Balancé" and "Desde mi libertad". Like "El hombre del piano", "Balancé" talks about lost love. However, its approach is very different from that adopted in the former: "Balancé" is not permeated by desperation and/or defeat on the side of the

abandoned lover – in this case a female narrator. On the contrary, this female narrator presents herself as strong and ready to move on:

[m]i profesor fuiste un día  
más tarde me consolé  
de mis fracasos y de tus mentiras  
Oh balancé balancé.  
[...]  
Nunca dijiste lo siento  
nunca explicaste el porqué  
todos los males se curan a tiempo  
del balancé, balancé.  
Oh balancé balancé.

[o]ne day you were my teacher  
later I consoled myself  
over my failures and over your lies  
oh, balance, balance.  
[...]  
You never said sorry  
you never explained why  
all misfortunes heal before it is too late  
oh, balance, balance.

The narrator's optimistic strength, and her determination not to be overwhelmed by an unhappy love affair are stressed musically by the song's use of Brazilian fast samba rhythms typical of carnivals – some of the implications behind the use of carnivalesque elements in songs will be explored in Chapter Eight.

A more serious and self-reflexive but equally empowering attitude for Spanish women is adopted by the female narrator in "Desde mi libertad" (1979). In this very popular song the narrator reflects on her current position as an individual who has just come out of a failed love relationship. Due mainly to her dependence on her ex-lover – she confesses that "[s]iempre había sido/ una mitad sin saber mi identidad" ("I had always been/ just a half without knowing my identity") - this woman acknowledges that she is destined to face the future with uncertainty and some melancholy:

[s]entada en el andén  
mi cuerpo tiembła y puedo ver  
que a lo lejos silba el viejo tren  
como sombra del ayer.

[s]itting on the platform  
my body shakes and I can see  
that in the distance the old train whistles  
like a shadow from the past.

However, after initially admitting that “[n]o será fácil ser/ de nuevo un solo corazón” (“[t]o become again just one heart/ will not be easy”) the narrator shows great and admirable emotional strength. She publicly asserts her determination to become an independent Spanish woman and start anew:

[n]o llevaré ninguna imagen de aquí  
me iré desnuda igual que nací.  
Debo empezar a ser yo misma y saber  
que soy capaz y que ando por mi pie.  
[...]  
Nunca me enseñaron a volar  
pero el vuelo debo alzar.

I will not take any image from here  
I will leave naked as I was born.  
I must start to be myself and know  
that I am capable and that I stand on my own feet.  
[...]  
I was never taught to fly  
but I must now take flight.

#### New perspectives on love and sexuality: making a difference through innovation

It should also be noted that the three singers sometimes approached love from other perspectives. In fact, between 1978 and 1982 Víctor and Ana especially approached love and/or sexuality from perspectives which were genuinely ground-breaking at the time. Quantitatively speaking these pioneering songs were a minority in these artists' repertoire. However, when they were released, they soon became very well-known among the public. That was especially the case with Víctor's “Sólo pienso en ti” (1978) and his “Quién puso más” (1980).

### Love between differently-abled people

“Sólo pienso en ti”, one of Víctor’s most famous songs, was pioneering at the time because of its ground-breaking approach to *amor de pareja*. Like in “Ay, amor”, for example, traditional romantic love and many of its codes are broadly validated here. However, the protagonists of its love story are significantly different from those previously presented in most other love songs (by *cantautores*). The omniscient narrator in “Sólo pienso en ti” narrates the love story between two mentally-differently-abled people living at an institution. Its male protagonist “nació de pie” (“was born standing”), and this damaged his brain. There were no medical complications when his beloved was born. However, “cuando vio la luz su frente se quebró como cristal/ porque entre los dedos a su padre, como un pez se le escurrió” (“when she saw the light her forehead broke like glass/ because she slipped out from her father’s fingers like a fish”). Through the incorporation of this all-inclusive socially-sensitive material this song became innovative and transgressive. It did not only show the existence of categories that Francoist Spanishness did not seem to consider and silenced (i.e. that of the mentally-differently-abled Spaniard). It also dignified that category by normalising these individuals’ right to feel and experience love, just like anybody else. In fact, throughout the song, the narrator seems to treat this couple with respect, and in a non-paternalistic way. The account of these characters’ relationship, which according to Hidalgo was inspired by a true story, is presented in tender, romantic, idyllic and nearly platonic terms<sup>114</sup>:

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<sup>114</sup> According to Víctor Manuel’s fan Carlos Hidalgo, the artist found the inspiration to write “Sólo pienso en ti” when he read an article in *El País* in 1978. Such an article talked about different patients living at a mental institution for people with special needs in Cabra (Cordoba, Spain). In <http://usuarios.lycos.es/soyuncorazon> [Accessed 20th December 2002].

The relationship between the two protagonists is perhaps naively presented here as wholly innocent and purely romantic. This song does not address at all the more carnal and sexual dimension that usually accompanies love relationships between couples. This is probably because, given the protagonists’ special mental condition, doing so would quite likely open up very problematic and prickly issues and debates (e.g. its implications for pregnancy and reproduction).

[h]ey, sólo pienso en ti,  
juntos de la mano se les ve por el jardín,  
no puede haber nadie en este mundo tan feliz.  
Hey, sólo pienso en ti.

[h]ey, I only think of you,  
holding hands you can see them in the garden  
there can't be in this world anyone happier than them.  
Hey, I only think of you.

This song is also interesting for its inversion of some traditional gender roles and expectations. Through the protagonists Víctor brings to the fore the constructedness of certain gender-related social codes. Due to their special condition these protagonists are free from certain repressive social rules and expectations. This explains why they are ready to subvert hegemonic norms by inverting the roles that were traditionally considered proper and natural for their gender. Thus, “[e]lla le regala alguna flor y él le dibuja en un papel/ algo parecido a un corazón” (“she gives him some flowers as a present and he draws for her on a piece of paper/ something that looks like a heart”).

This song is also significant in terms of vocal performance: the singer's pitch is notably higher and less 'deep' here than in many of his pre-1978 love songs – included in his more apparently political albums. This difference in vocal performance becomes even clearer when we compare, for example, this version of the song from 1978 and that offered in *Mucho más que dos* in 1994. In the former, his vocal performance is rather soft and gentle. In the latter, however, the artist returned to a more stereotypically masculine vocal performance with a louder tone of voice and a lower pitch register. There may be a number of reasons for these vocal changes. Some of these may have reflected factors outside of the singer's control. Some others, however, may have indicated a fully conscious determination on the singer's side to express and communicate different ideas and sensations. Thus, his 'soft' vocal

performance in *Soy un corazón tendido al sol* (1978) may be read as contesting some traditional Francoist discourses on gender. It may be understood as an acceptance and assertion of his more 'tender' and sensitive side, that which hegemonic discourses used to describe as innately feminine.

### Love between gay men

Like "Sólo pienso en ti", "Quién puso más" also made use of rather mainstream Spanish commercial pop music of the 80s in order to introduce a topic which was far from mainstream at the time<sup>115</sup>. Again, this song can be considered a pioneer in Spain for its innovative approach to romantic love. Based on a true story and real characters, it focuses on the love relationship between two gay men who, after a thirty-year relationship, decide to break up because "se alza en sus vidas un tercero que no nombran/ pero que estorba y pone hielo en esta historia" ("in their lives there is a third one whose name is never mentioned/ but who is in their way and ices their story")<sup>116</sup>. Significantly, the listener does not actually explicitly know that this is a love story between two homosexual men until the last two lines of the last strophe are sung: "[d]os *hombres* solos y la gente alrededor,/ son treinta otoños contra el dedo acusador" ("Two *men* on their own and people around them,/ it's [been] thirty autumns [fighting] against the accusing finger") [emphasis added]. In fact, at first sight, this romantic love story seems quite commonplace and listeners are quite likely drawn to assume that it is talking about a heterosexual couple and their relationship, just to surprisingly discover, at the very end, that this is not the case. This late explicit allusion to homosexuality was probably very consciously planned: it probably aimed

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<sup>115</sup> Sabina's popular "Juana la loca", which deals with male homosexuality and transvestism, did not appear until 1986 (in *Joaquín Sabina y Viceversa en directo*).

<sup>116</sup> According to Carlos Hidalgo, Víctor Manuel sometimes highlighted that he found inspiration for his song in the love story between two homosexual old friends of him who broke up after a thirty – year relationship. In <http://usuarios.lycos.es/soyuncorazon> [Accessed 20th December 2002].

to lead audiences in a particular reading of the song that would eventually help normalise homosexuality. This song makes listeners realise that relationships between homosexual couples do not necessarily differ from traditional monogamous love stories between heterosexual individuals. Like in many heterosexual relationships, here there is love, warmth, tenderness, understanding, but also disillusionment, routine, reproaches, death of passion, etc. Homosexuals are presented here as human beings with many facets, both positive and negative. They are not presented as exclusively sexual beings who suffer from an abnormal condition. Instead, they are respectfully depicted as human beings capable of loving, feeling, getting angry, etc. and their sexual choice is equally respected.

This humanisation and normalisation of homosexuals and homosexuality becomes especially noticeable and positive when considered in relation to Francoist discourses. Even in late Francoism, homosexuality was 'othered' and never played a part in the construction of Spanishness. It was despised, demonised, pathologized, and even criminalised by different hegemonic medical, religious, and legal discourses (Eslava Galán, 1997: 81; García Curado, 2002: 136-7, 248). The homosexual condition was legally persecuted officially at least up until the dictator's death in late 1975. This was done through the implementation of a law with the following self-explanatory title: "Ley de Peligrosidad y Rehabilitación Social" ("Law against Dangerous Behaviour and for Social Rehabilitation"), which was ratified as late as 1970 (Eslava Galán, 1997: 372)<sup>117</sup>.

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<sup>117</sup> More information on Francoist discourses on homosexuality and on gay movements in the Spain of the Transition can be found, for example, in García Curado (2002: 247-258) and Eslava Galán (1997: 372, 373)

### Sex without love: opening spaces for sexually liberated women

Ana Belén's "Los amores de Ana" (1979) is also significant for its approach to sexuality. This song seems to leave behind romantic notions of love in order to focus explicitly and positively upon women's sexuality. It tells the story of Ana, a young beautiful woman who lives "[i]n a house opposite/ the university", on the ground floor. Male university students often see her by her window and "la llena[n] de piropos/ por lo linda y lo gentil" ("[they] fill her up with flirtatious compliments/ because of her beauty and graciousness") in order to get her attention. Ana welcomes these compliments and at night enjoys the company of those who flatter her. The men who praise Ana use discourses typical of romantic love which partly resemble the (often male-oriented) literary topic of the *carpe diem*:

"Ana, sal pronto por favor,  
Ana, sal no te dé rubor,  
Ana, que en tu ventana  
tú eres la flor de luz de amor.  
Ana, si a mi querer das fe,  
Ana, de noche aquí vendré,  
Ana, por tu ventana  
me colaré y mi amor te probaré".

"Ana, come out soon, please,  
Ana, come out, do not feel shy,  
Ana, by your window  
you are the flower of light of love.  
Ana, if you put faith in my affection,  
Ana, here I will come at night,  
Ana, through your window  
I'll sneak in and my love I will show you".

These students seem to think that Ana will believe their words of love and will finally succumb sexually to their seduction games. The intended seductive power of Ana's suitors is musically suggested by the use of *tuna* music throughout the song. The *tunas*, musical groups usually made up of male university students, used to serenade women, often in order to gain their sexual favours. In this song this *tuna* music,

played by a *bandurria* and an electric organ, is used with an important ironic and comic effect: this piece does not focus on *tunos* or men more generally and their numerous amorous conquests. Instead, it pays attention to “[l]os amores de Ana”, as its title points out. Moreover, its lyrics and the singer’s conspicuously light-hearted, naughtily naive and mocking vocal performance suggest that Ana is not deceived by these men who use love as an excuse to become sexually intimate with her. In fact, she is not as innocent and naïve as they seem to think. Rather, she pretends to be so in order to satisfy her strong libido without compromising her freedom. This explains why she “desoye sin temor” (“she ignores without fear”) when people comment publicly on her in their view too lively and liberated sexual life.

It is significant that the protagonist is called Ana, like the singer herself. This surely non-accidental coincidence of names probably deliberately gave yet another layer of meaning to the song. Audiences were likely to associate the singer’s public *persona* with the character in the story in one way or another. Thus, the former was probably seen as likely to approve of the latter and her sexually-liberated and open-minded behaviour. This argument gains strength when observing how positively the character of Ana is treated in the song. It is also corroborated when noting how the singing voice ironically recycles the students’ discourse of romantic love in order to subvert it and add a metaphoric but blatantly sexual dimension to it, just like Ana the character would probably have done:

Ana, fresca y lozana,  
como una flor  
*se abre* a de eso del amor [emphasis added]

Ana, fresh and vigorous,  
like a flower  
*she opens herself up* to love.

These lines show that Ana's approach to sexuality is unaffected by many of the restrictive hegemonic discourses of the time. She and the narrator seem to positively call for the fulfilment of women's sexual desire and fantasies. They seem to laugh at those who moralistically present Ana the character as promiscuous. This is evident when the singing voice reproduces Ana's confession to the priest:

"[a]ctúsome"- le dijo -  
"que en un curso no más  
desfiló por mi ventana  
toda la universidad".

"[m]yself I accuse" – she said -  
"because in no more than one academic year  
all the university [men]  
marched through my window".

This apparently pious confession is in fact full of ironic boasting, as the singer's mock naïve vocal performance suggests. Ana's and Ana Belén's irony continues up until the end of the song, when the latter reproduces the former's speech in a conspicuously theatrical, 'naughty' and affected way, implicitly suggesting thus that Ana the character could even be ready to try her seduction weapons with the priest:

Ana gemía "Ay yo pequé,  
pero culpa mía no fue,  
padre, pues mi ventana,  
tan baja está,  
*pase usted y lo verá*" [emphasis added]

Ana moaned "Oh, I sinned  
but my fault it was not  
for my window, father  
is so near the ground  
*come in and you will see*".

This positive assertion of Spanish women's sexual liberation was noticeable in a country which had just come out of a dictatorship and which, as mentioned earlier, (had) obsessively promoted virginity among those Spanish women who, like this song's protagonist, were single. As also pointed out earlier, these repressive voices

often came from the Catholic Church. That is why Ana's veiled attempt to seduce her confessor acquires an especially resonant radical potential in the song.

## **GENDER CONSTRUCTIONS IN OTHER SONGS BY VÍCTOR MANUEL, ANA BELÉN AND JOAQUÍN SABINA**

The analysis provided in the previous sections has suggested that love songs by the three singers between 1968 and 1982 often constructed gender and sexuality in very complex and rather ambiguous and at times even contradictory terms: sometimes they did not escape fully Francoist discourses on gender and sexuality; many others, however, they opened up important spaces of freedom that challenged those hegemonic discourses. This section will briefly examine how gender and sexuality were addressed in other non-love songs by these artists between 1968 and 1982. In order to do so Víctor's "María Coraje" (1970), "La planta 14" (1969, 1977), "El cobarde" (1968, 1969) - and in the coming section Sabina's "Mi vecino de arriba" (1978) - will be examined in some detail.

### Representations of femininity

"María Coraje", which in its title significantly recalls *Mother Courage*, by German socialist author Bertolt Brecht, tells the story of María, a working-class Spanish woman who is 106 years old. An omniscient narrator tells her story in what seems to be an attempt to realistically reproduce what she says or thinks: the episodes mentioned are selective and relate to crucial emotional aspects in her life. These episodes are not included in a chronologically coherent way. Rather, their presentation follows a 'stream of consciousness' format. The song lyrics stress many

of the hardest moments in the protagonist's life: the fact that she lived through the Spanish civil war, or that she saw many of her children die, or exile, for example.

From a gender point of view this 1970 song is significant because it relates problematically to Francoist discourses. It maintains a tension between conservative and more subversive impulses towards Spanish femininity. In some respects, "María Coraje" does not fully escape some norms on Spanish femininity. Official discourses obsessively stressed Spanish women's duty to become mothers (Otero, 1999a: 76; García Curado, 2002: 23; Eslava Galán, 1997: 70), or, as Yuval-Davies and Anthias (1989: 7) would put it, to become "biological reproducers" of the nation. In fact, as Isla notes, [probably partly due to the influence of Catholicism,] in Spain the figure of the mother was "un mito nacional" (2002: 313) ("a national myth") [my addition]. Such an obsession with motherhood pervaded a number of well-known popular culture texts (e.g. the films *Marcelino, pan y vino*, and *Escucha mi canción*, starred by Pablito Calvo and Joselito, respectively, or Manolo Escobar's song "Madrecita María del Carmen"). This idealisation of motherhood seemed to be also uncritically present in "María Coraje". In fact, many of its lines are dedicated to speak about María's sons. She is, above all, a selfless and self-abnegating, loving and caring mother that "a todos cobija bajo su manto" ("shelters them all under her shawl"). That seems to be one of the reasons why the narrator presents her so positively and pays homage to her at different levels: the singer's vocal performance – his low pitch – suggests seriousness, gravity and respect towards the character. Musically speaking, solemnity is also achieved through the use of loud music played by a considerably big orchestra.

This song is also rather conservative in its apparently politically-unaware stress on the protagonist's domesticity. Both the character of María and the narrator seem to uncritically present Spanish women's domesticity as 'normal', just like many Francoist discourses had systematically done – many voices from *La Sección Femenina*, for example, often stressed that domestic work suited women's nature and destiny especially well (Otero, 1999a: 191).

However, "María Coraje" also transgresses Francoist hegemonic discourses in important ways. In fact, considering such discourses as frames of reference, María seems to embody both feminine and masculine characteristics. Francoist models of femininity highlighted women's physical weakness and their moral and intellectual inferiority when compared to men (Gracia García and Ruiz Carnicer, 2001: 92). However, María shows great physical and mental strength throughout: she has a "cuerpo duro" ("hard body"); moreover, she has outlived many of her family members – all of whom, significantly, seem to be male - and has found the mental firmness to overcome the loss of her dear ones. In fact, her mental strength is at times even 'virile'. This becomes clear, for example, in her reaction when she gets to know about one of her son's death in the mine. After he was brought up before her "envuelto en sangre y lodo", she "con el paso *tranquilo* subió el camino del pozo negro" [emphasis added] "y al llegar al portón extravió la mirada y *escupió al suelo*" ("covered in blood and sludge" "at a *calm* pace took the road up to the black mine" "and once at its head she let her eyes wander and *spat on the floor*") [emphasis added]. Her reaction was clearly far from that expected from women educated under Francoist norms of Spanish femininity. She did not shed a tear. Instead, she showed

anger, integrity and fortitude, just as would have been expected from any Spanish man modelled by Francoist discourses on Spanish masculinity.

Moreover, “María Coraje” is important because it deals directly and exclusively with women’s problems. More particularly, it refers to the issues and problems that have affected and are affecting an old working-class woman. For example, it tells about the hardships of working-class motherhood. What is especially significant here is that the song allows María herself to tell her own life story – as noted earlier, the events narrated do not follow a strict chronological order, but rather seem to be a ‘stream of consciousness’. The song then becomes her voice and allows her to transgress Francoist discourses which – the text suggests – condemned her to a life of silence: “[s]u condena fue siempre, siempre el silencio” (“[h]er burden was silence, always silence”).

### Constructions of masculinity

“La planta 14” and “El cobarde” are very important for their potentially subversive constructions of certain aspects of Spanish masculinity. As Otero sarcastically points out (1999a: 10), according to Francoism, “[l]os hombres no lloran [...] Y quien llora [...] no es hombre. Y si es hombre, no es español” (“[m]en do not cry. And whoever cries is not a man. And if he is man, he is not Spanish”). In “La planta 14”, like in a few other songs by *cantautores* (e.g. by Silvio Rodríguez), however, men do cry and show affection publicly, even though such a display of tears is caused by restrained fury rather than (solely) by the more ‘feminine’ feeling of unendurable pain. Interestingly enough, in “La planta 14”, the most “couragerous” miner is the one who

disconsolately cries on the floor when the bodies of his dead workmates are recovered from the mine.

Spanish masculinity is even more conspicuously and importantly reconstructed in “El cobarde”. As noted in Chapter Four, this song reconstructs the meaning of “coward”. Here a coward is not a man who does not want to handle weapons or kill others; instead, cowardice is associated with the lack of the strength to follow one’s conscience. Thus, the song supports an approach to male Spanishness which stands very far from the militaristic, aggressive and chauvinist versions of Spanish masculinity supported by Francoist discourses. Instead, here, sensitivity, pacifism, and independence of mind, are presented as values and characteristics that Spanish men should courageously show publicly in a consistent way.

#### **SOME AUDIENCE VIEWS ON JOAQUÍN SABINA’S “MI VECINO DE ARRIBA”: A CASE STUDY**

##### Mi vecino de arriba

Mi vecino de arriba  
don Fulano de tal  
es un señor muy calvo  
muy serio y muy formal  
que va a misa el domingo  
y fiestas de guardar  
que es una unidad de destino  
en lo universal,  
que busca en esta vida  
respetabilidad,  
que predica a sus hijos  
responsabilidad.  
llama libertinaje  
a la libertad  
ha conseguido todo  
menos felicidad.  
Mi vecino de arriba

##### The neighbour above me

The neighbour above me,  
Mr X,  
is a very bald,  
serious and formal gentleman  
who goes to mass on Sunday  
and observes other religious  
celebrations,  
who is ‘unity of destiny  
in the universal’  
who seeks  
for respectability,  
who preaches responsibility  
to his children.  
He confuses freedom  
with libertinism  
he has got everything  
but happiness.

hizo la guerra y no  
va a permitir que opine  
a quien no la ganó.  
Mi vecino es un recto  
caballero español  
que siempre habla ex-catedra  
y siempre sin razón.  
Mi vecino de arriba  
es el lobo feroz  
que va el domingo al fútbol  
y ve televisión,  
que engorda veinte kilos  
si lo llaman 'señor',  
que pinta en las paredes  
"Rojos al paredón".  
Al vecino de arriba  
le revienta que yo  
deje crecer mi barba  
y cante mi canción.  
Mi vecino de arriba  
es más hombre que yo,  
dice que soy un golfo  
y que soy maricón.  
Mi vecino de arriba  
se lo pasa fatal  
y que yo me divierta  
no puede soportar.  
Cuando me mira siente  
ganas de vomitar,  
si yo fuera su hijo  
me pondría a cavar.  
Mi vecino de arriba  
en la barra del bar,  
cuando se habla de sexo  
dice que es Superman.  
es una pena que su mujer  
no opine igual: "de sexo las mujeres  
no podían opinar".  
Mi vecino de arriba  
un día me pescó  
magreando a su hija  
dentro del ascensor,  
del trabajo volvía  
cuando reconoció  
la voz que me decía  
"Quítate el pantalón".  
Aún estoy corriendo,  
no quiero ni pensar  
lo que habría sucedido  
si me llega a alcanzar.

The neighbour above me  
fought in the war and will not  
allow anyone who didn't win it  
to express an opinion.  
My neighbour is a  
strict Spanish 'gentleman'  
who always speaks 'ex-catedra'  
but is never right.  
The neighbour above me  
Is the big wolf  
he goes to see the football match  
on Sunday  
and watches TV,  
he swells up  
if someone calls him 'sir',  
he paints on walls:  
"Death to reds".  
The neighbour above me  
really hates it  
when I grow my beard  
and sing my song.  
The neighbour above me  
is more of a man than I am,  
he says I am an urchin  
and a poof.  
The neighbour above me  
never enjoys himself  
and he can't stand it  
when I'm having a good time.  
When he looks at me  
he feels like vomiting.  
If I was his son  
he would teach me what life is  
all about.  
The neighbour above me  
in the bar [having a bar-side drink]  
when talking about sex  
says he is "Superman".  
It is a pity his wife doesn't agree;  
"women should have no opinion  
about sex"  
One day my neighbour  
caught me  
'groping' his daughter inside the lift.  
He was coming back from work  
when he recognised  
the voice telling me:  
"Take off your trousers".  
I'm still running,  
I don't want to think

Como hay niños delante  
no les puedo contar  
lo que con un cuchillo  
me quería cortar.  
Me he cambiado de casa,  
de nacionalidad,  
pero, a pesar de todo,  
todo ha seguido igual;  
los vecinos de arriba  
inundan la ciudad,  
si tu vives abajo,  
no te dejan en paz.

what would have happened  
if he had caught me.  
As there are children around  
I can't tell you  
what he wanted to chop off  
with his knife.  
I have moved house,  
I have changed my nationality  
but, in spite of all this,  
everything is still the same.  
The 'neighbours above'  
dominate the city  
if you live below them,  
they don't leave you in peace.

(song released in 1978)

“Mi vecino de arriba”, released in 1978, was clearly a product of the Spanish Transition. In this song a male left-wing narrator stresses the differences that in his view separated pro-Francoist individuals from those who like himself supported democracy and progressive politics. It focuses especially on the serious conflicts that arose as these two rather incompatible characters and their philosophies of life clashed. Like Víctor's “María Coraje”, for example, this song is especially interesting for its gender representations.

Overall, “Mi vecino...” discards important understandings of Francoist Spanish masculinity. This is partly achieved through the ridiculing of the character of the *vecino de arriba*, and of what he stands for. Taking Francoist discourses as points of reference, it becomes clear that this *vecino de arriba* is a caricature that embodies many of the ‘virtues’ of the perfect Francoist Spanish man. He is authoritarian - especially towards his wife and daughter -, as expected from any respectable head of

the family. He is traditional, imperialistic, serious, religious, politically docile towards the establishment, and sees himself as virile. In fact, he embodies a(n)<sup>118</sup>

[e]lenco de todos los tópicos de lo que la izquierda pensaba de la derecha, que si va a misa [...] “la guerra la hice yo”, ver la tele, eh, [...] hasta engordar, el divertirse como algo despreciable [...] amenazar con poner a trabajar a alguien [...] (male participant; Ávila focus group, September 2003)

[l]ist of all the clichés that the left applied to the right, that they went to church [...] “I fought in the war”, watching TV, eh [...] even about getting fat, about having a good time as something despicable [...] threatening people with sending them out to work [...]

As a different participant also noted, this song

[e]stá hablando de una acumulación de rasgos, porque los vecinos de arriba que se llamaban don fulano de tal, eran muy serios y muy formales, e iban a misa el domingo, esos no pintaban en las paredes [...] ni corría con la navaja detrás del tío que magreaba a su hija [...] hay rasgos que no encajan unos con otros, o sea, no es lo mismo el de derechas que pinta en las paredes que el de derechas que es calvo, muy serio y muy formal (male participant; Ávila focus group; September 2003).

is talking about a collection of features, because the neighbours above who called themselves Mr whatever, they were very serious and very formal, and they went to mass on Sunday, they didn't paint on walls [...] nor did they run with a penknife after the guy who groped their daughter [...] these are features that do not fit with one another, I mean, it's not the same right wing guy who paints on walls as the right wing one who is bald, very serious and very formal.

This characterisation of the neighbour above constitutes a source of laughter for the homodiegetic narrator, as well as for many listeners<sup>119</sup>. Overall, these are also led to sympathise with the narrator because he includes them in his group through an explicit grammatical use of ‘us’ or ‘you and I’ vs ‘him’. This *vecino de arriba* is also parodied through performance and musically speaking: the narrator's ironic vocal performance when talking about him, as well as the mocking cabaret-like music used, are crucially telling in this respect. In one of the participants' view,

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<sup>118</sup> More information about the different participants whose feedback is being used here is offered in Table I (Chapter Three, pages 108-109).

<sup>119</sup> A homodiegetic narrator is a narrator who is also a character in the story s/he is narrating.

[y]o creo que la música es muy adecuada porque es de tipo cabaret, música cabaretera, chacha, charara [...] que viene muy adecuada pues para hacer una descripción graciosa, porque la música de cabaret no es una música seria, es una música pues para divertirse, para hacer gracia (different male participant from the Ávila focus group, September 2003)

I think that the music is very adequate because it is cabaret-like, cabaret type of music, chacha, charara [...] it is very appropriate to describe things in a funny way, because cabaret music is not a serious type of music, it is music, well, to have fun, to be funny.

An apparently different type of masculinity is encouraged and celebrated in this song: that embodied by the narrator himself, a young, cultured, politically aware and transgressive, sexually uninhibited, rather bohemian man with a bearded-hippy-like look who, unlike his pro-Francoist neighbour, adopts a rather playful attitude towards life and publicly presents himself as a freedom-lover. Such an attitude was subversive at the time when considered in context. For example, politician Carrero Blanco expressed in this way his discomfort about those new masculinities – which often arose around circles of (university) left-wing Spaniards:

*[s]e trata de formar hombres, no maricas, y esos melenudos trepidantes que algunas veces se ven no sirven ni con mucho a este fin (...) Hay que borrar de los cuadros del profesorado de la Enseñanza General Básica y de la Universidad a todos los enemigos del régimen y hay que separar de la Universidad a todos los alumnos que son instrumento de subversión. [emphasis added; quoted in Moradiellos (2000: 177)].*

*[w]e want to bring up men, not sissies, and those horrible long-haired individuals that sometimes are seen around do not help much to achieve this aim [...] We have to get rid of the teaching staff of the EGB [equivalent to GCSEs] and of the University who are enemies of the regime, and we have to exclude from University all those students who behave subversively.*

As the above quote suggests, some Francoist discourses identified Spanish manhood with sexual virility. This explains why the ironic narrator of “Mi vecino...” mocks with his vocal performance his pro-Francoist neighbour’s discourse in these terms:

[m]i vecino de arriba  
es más hombre que yo,  
dice que soy un golfo

y que soy maricón.

[t]he neighbour above me  
is more of a man than I am,  
he says that I am an urchin  
and a poof.

It is significant here that the narrator can be easily identified with Sabina's own public *persona*. Both were similar in terms of looks and behaviour at the time: as the photo from "Inventario" shows, Sabina was long-haired and wore a beard then. Like the *vecino de abajo*, he also publicly spoke of his fancy for women, for example. This possible identification between the transgressive narrator and Sabina's public *persona* potentially gave this song a more apparently grounded subversive touch during the Transition: the narrator's fight against some Francoist stereotypes of Spanish masculinity was in fact the singer's own fight, many audiences probably thought.

In spite of these transgressive messages, this song did not seem to totally break with Francoist discourses in some respects. The song establishes an intimate relationship between the anti-Francoist narrator and his neighbour's daughter that, as such, is not negative. However, the narrator's account of it is. The narrator's performance reveals that he is showing off. His tone of voice is pretentious. He is behaving boastfully because he has managed to seduce his enemy's daughter (and his wife as well – it is implied). In this sense, his showy attitude does not differ completely from that of the *vecino de arriba*, that "macho español" ("Spanish male") who "when speaking about sex, / says he is Superman" and whom he abhors and ridicules. Like his pro-Francoist neighbour, the anti-Francoist narrator uses his sexuality, which he also presents as virile, powerful and masculine in a traditional sense, (as one of) the most important mark(s) of his new male Spanishness. This sexuality is used to seduce women in a rather self-interested way: by so doing, he expects to take revenge on his pro-

Francoist neighbour and annoy him with what seems to hurt him more: 'spoiling' his daughter's (and perhaps his wife's) 'decency', consequently 'staining' his own manhood. This idea was shared by a number of participants. As one of them put it, she did not like:

su sexismo, de meter mano a la hija en el ascensor [...] él lo usa como una rebeldía contra el padre, meter mano a la hija, porque él es libre, sexualmente libre, mientras que el padre no es sexualmente libre, el padre está sexualmente atado a una institución [...] sin embargo, aunque libre, abusa de una mujer, y abusa de, de... usa a esa mujer como objeto, pero él, en su rebeldía contra ese hombre de otra época, él mismo está cometiendo un acto de opresión (female informant from Madrid; Nottingham, November 2003).

his sexism, that of feeling the daughter up in the lift [...] he uses it in order to rebel against her father, feeling his daughter up, because he [the narrator] is free, sexually free, while the father is not sexually free, the father is sexually tied to an institution [...] however, although he is free, he takes advantage of a woman, he takes advantage of, of... he uses that woman as an object, but he, in his rebellion against that old-fashioned man, he himself [the narrator] is being oppressive.

One reading of the song suggests then that Spanish women's sexuality and sexual liberation are mainly considered by the narrator because they are advantageous for men. In spite of these male-centred aspects, however, this song still opened up important liberatory spaces that contested different Francoist discourses, especially those concerning Spanish women's sexuality. For example, the anti-Francoist narrator mocks his neighbour's echoing of some of these discourses. He ironically asserts that, while his pro-Francoist neighbour believes himself to be sexually powerful, that is not the case. His wife is given a mediated voice to complain about her unsatisfactory marital sexual life: "it is a pity his wife doesn't think the same". As a female participant noted

[1]o mejor es simplemente el tono sarcástico del otro [del narrador] para decir que probablemente la mujer no está satisfecha (Lincoln focus group, October 2003).

[t]he best is simply the other's [the narrator's] sarcastic tone [of voice] when telling that his [neighbour's] wife is probably not satisfied.

In fact, this pro-Francoist "señor" does not seem to know about his wife's sexual disappointment. However, even if he did, he would not really care, for, as the narrator ironically criticises quoting his speech, he believes that "[w]omen should have no opinion about sex".

This song is also interesting for its construction of the figure of the *vecino de arriba's* daughter. This character resembles many of the young (often left-wing) sexually liberated Spanish women of the 60s and 70s. Although single, she is sexually active and initiates and/or subsequently leads the seduction game with her sexual partner: "[t]ake off your trousers"— she commands the narrator. It is equally significant and positive that this character's sexual liberation is expressed in non-judgemental terms by the narrator; there are no moral judgements against her or her open-minded approach to sex. In fact, sexuality is presented here as also empowering for women in different ways. Like Víctor's "Quiero tener la sombra de tu cuerpo", for example, this song opens up spaces for the realisation of heterosexual women's sexual fantasies through the characterisation of the *vecino de arriba's* daughter and wife. Forbidden in real life in hegemonic discourses on sexuality, these transgressive fantasies may include, for example, being the subject of men's desire, being bold enough to practise sex in public places, or to 'spice up' one's alienating marital sex life with the excitement of a sexually more fulfilling affair.

## CONCLUSION

This last chapter of song analysis has stressed that gender and sexuality played a crucial role in the construction of Spanishness in the works by Víctor, Ana and Sabina between 1968 and 1982. These artists saw both categories as important in a struggle for hegemony. This was especially evident in their love songs, which also revealed the existence of two differentiated periods in their approaches to love and sexuality. As happened with representations of class and history, the differences between both periods reflected a number of factors, many of which seemed to be intimately linked to the evolution of events happening in the broader Spanish socio-political context of the Transition.

Between 1968 and 1977/8 these artists detached themselves strongly from a good number of Francoist hegemonic discourses on love, gender and sexuality in their love songs. Such songs were overall constructed in rather unconventional and intellectualised terms. Some of them presented love as indissolubly linked to left-wing politics and political action. That was especially the case in a number of works by Ana, who, defying Francoist discourses, apparently supported Spanish women's independence from men and their participation in politics. Another important trend of love songs approached love from (politically-committed) existentialist positions. This was especially clear in Víctor's case: he often presented love as the saviour of individuals – often men - who faced deep existentialist doubts and anxieties. In this period, love was also systematically approached from an explicitly sexual perspective, especially in Sabina's songs. In the context of the Transition, and when considered in relation to Francoist hegemonic discourses, this positive emphasis on sexuality was especially significant and subversive, for sexuality was a total taboo in Francoist

Spain (Cisquella, Erviti et al. 1977: 116). Considering gender, it is significant that while some aspects of these sexually-concerned songs remained rather conservative and echoed certain Francoist discourses, many (others) also distanced themselves importantly from them. In fact, they opened up important spaces of freedom for both Spanish women and men in terms of gender representations, roles and expectations. For example, Spanish women's sexuality was normalised in many of these songs. Some of them also blurred traditional Francoist notions of masculinity and femininity which allowed male and female characters to dynamically alternate active and passive roles in their approaches to sexuality, for example.

The beginning of the political democratization of Spain brought about important changes in these artists' approach to love, gender and sexuality. Between 1978/9 and 1982 love songs became much more numerous in Ana's and especially in Víctor's repertoire. When compared to their earlier compositions, important differences in their specific approaches to love also appeared. In this second period, a good number of them made use of rather romantic notions of love. In spite of this apparently more traditional turn, hegemonic discourses on gender and sexuality were still importantly challenged. Thus, these artists reasserted, for example, Spanish women's rights to enjoy their sexuality in a relatively free and open-minded manner. Moreover, they also subversively managed to introduce realities that had been long silenced by Francoism. Some of their songs constituted important attempts to, for example, consider romantic love between differently-abled individuals, or to normalise and humanise homosexuality.

In fact, generally speaking, the three singers managed to open up important spaces of freedom in terms of gender and sexuality, especially – but not exclusively - in many of their love songs. While some of their pieces did not seem to challenge, for example, Francoist models of Spanish motherhood and female self-abnegation, many others were transgressive in important respects. In fact, a significant number of songs – and especially those dealing with love and sexuality – could be read as empowering articulations and/or realisations of different (emotional, sexual, social, etc.) fantasies and desires present in the minds of different Spanish (heterosexual) women, for example. These fantasies, which most usually rejected the containments of Francoism, did not need to be logical, women-centred or even totally empowering for the dreaming subject, for women vary, and the self is often complex, multiple-faced and contradictory.

**PART III**

**AUDIENCE RESEARCH: IN DIALOGUE  
WITH SOME LISTENERS TO *CANCIÓN DE  
AUTOR/A* OF THE TRANSITION**

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## LISTENERS' VIEWS ON GENDER AND SINGER- SONGWRITING

### INTRODUCTION

This last part of the thesis introduces a new perspective on the study of singer-songwriting and political singers of the Transition. It complements the information presented in Part II, and sheds some more light on other related issues which are especially relevant for this investigation. It focuses on audiences, and on their views on this musical genre and its authors. In order to do so it refers to the findings uncovered in the ethnographic-based fieldwork carried out among real audiences of *canción de autor/a* of the Transition. This seventh chapter in particular follows on from and complements the information provided in Chapter Six. It examines the interviewees' general level of response regarding the gender dimension of the singers' public *personae*. It also analyses their views on gender – especially on femininity – and sexuality as they saw them constructed in the *canción de autor/a* of the Transition more generally<sup>120</sup>.

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<sup>120</sup> Appendix A (pages 371-374) gives details about the questions asked. TABLE I (pages 108-109) offers more information about the participants interviewed.

VÍCTOR MANUEL'S, ANA BELÉN'S AND JOAQUÍN SABINA'S  
GENDERED *PERSONAE*

Fieldwork participants were asked to reflect upon their past experiences as listeners of *canción de autor/a* of the Transition. For example, they were requested to consider how they perceived Ana's femininity and Víctor's and Sabina's masculinities at the time, not only as they projected them on their work, but also as they manifested them in any other aspects of their public *personae* (e.g. looks and appearance, non-musical public interventions, etc.).

Participants saw these artists' gendered dimension in different ways. In spite of the variety of responses obtained different ideas reappeared. For example, when referring to Víctor, a good number of female participants, and a smaller number of male ones, agreed that he embodied a new type of masculinity. In their view, he did not represent the masculinity of the *macho español* so favoured by various Francoist discourses. Instead,

V[íctor] M[anuel] ciertamente aporta otro modelo de hombre, pero en los ambientes universitarios y progresistas ya no se llevaba el estereotipo del macho ibérico (female participant; Salamanca, January 2004; e-mail interview).

V[íctor] M[anuel] certainly brings forward a new model of man, but in university and progressive environments the stereotype of the Iberian macho was not in vogue anymore.

Many both male and female participants agreed that the new model of masculinity that he embodied welcomed the public manifestation of sensitivity. It seems then that, overall, his public image coherently matched some of the ideas that he manifested in his works. In fact, as the analysis of, for example, "La Planta 14" or "Sólo pienso en ti" stressed, Víctor seemed overall highly sensitive to the suffering, hopes and joy of

some of the most disadvantaged groups and individuals (i.e. the problems of miners and the joy experienced by differently-abled individuals who are in love, respectively). A female participant also noted that Víctor “nos encantaba a las progres” (“we trendy lefty women loved him”)<sup>121</sup>. According to several other women this was so because he seemed to be a “hombre dulce y sensible” (“sweet and sensitive man”) who showed “respeto por la mujer y sus derechos” (“respect for women and their rights”)<sup>122</sup>. Another female participant also noted that,

[e]ra de esos chicos que eran sensibles y comprometidos con la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres (Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview)

[h]e was one of those sensitive young men committed to equality among men and women.

Some male informants also highlighted positively this singer’s apparent sensitivity. One of them wrote that “Víctor sobre todo es TERNURA, ese gran sentimiento que ya reivindicara Jacques Brel” (“Víctor is TENDERNESS above all, that great feeling that Jacques Brel had already previously claimed”) [capital letters in the original]<sup>123</sup>. This public display and acceptance of “sensitivity” and “tenderness”, which seemed to assert - at least partly - a new type of masculinity, were very relevant in the context of the Transition, for Francoism had associated both qualities with women, femininity and the feminine.

Generally speaking, the agreement that the meaning of Víctor’s masculinity awoke in some of his audiences disappeared in Sabina’s case. In fact, a significant number of both male and female participants noted that they did not know how to describe Sabina’s masculinity. Those who did offered slightly different views of it. They all

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<sup>121</sup> Bilbao, February 2004; e-mail interview.

<sup>122</sup> First quote: Zaragoza, March-July 2004; written interview. Second quote: different participant from Zaragoza, March-July 2004; written interview.

<sup>123</sup> Zaragoza, December 2002- April 2003; e-mail interview.

agreed that his masculinity was overall quite different from that supported by Francoist discourses. For some, he showed “sensibilidad, [era] vividor y libre” (“sensitivity, [he was] a bon vivant and free”)<sup>124</sup>. Unlike the perfect Francoist man - and as he seemed to present himself in “Mi vecino de arriba”, for example - he showed himself as rebellious and untidy in his ways and life:

la imagen de Sabina es la imagen [...] del desaliñado, sin afeitado, e incluso sin haber dormido, [...] con un vaso de güisqui, con su cigarro [...] su masculinidad es un poco más brusca [en comparación con Víctor Manuel], un poco más “raw”, de nuevo, pero no agresiva, yo no la veo agresiva, es más desgarrada que la de Víctor Manuel (female participant from Madrid; Nottingham, November 2003).

the image of Sabina is the image [...] of the slovenly [man], unshaved, and even [that of the man who] hasn't slept, [...] with his glass of whisky, with his cigarette [...] his masculinity is a bit rougher [when compared to Víctor Manuel's], a bit more “raw”, again, but not aggressive, I don't find it aggressive, it is more heartrending than Víctor Manuel's.

For a higher number of (especially male) interviewees, however, Sabina's masculinity did not totally break with the past. In fact, it preserved some of the ‘macho’ superiority implicit in many Francoist discourses – as my analysis of some gender politics present in, for example, “Mi vecino de arriba” also suggested. He was seen by several participants as “chulo” and “chuleta” (“cocky”). A male participant noted that

no me gustaba mucho a mí Sabina por entonces. Me parecía un poco chulito (Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview).

I didn't quite like Sabina then. He seemed a bit cocky to me.

Ana's femininity awoke even more different responses in the interviewees. A few participants saw her as partly ‘secondary’ and inevitably linked to her husband Víctor Manuel. A significantly higher number of male and female respondents, however, recurrently described her as “strong” and “independent”. A female participant noted

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<sup>124</sup> Female participant; Zaragoza, March-July 2004; written interview.

that she “daba la imagen de mujer independiente y vital” (“she gave the image of an independent woman full of life”) – as my analysis of, for example, “Si te quiero es porque somos” and “Desde mi libertad” also suggested<sup>125</sup>. Another participant also wrote that “era un ejemplo vivo de otra feminidad. Fortaleza, independencia, sensibilidad” (“she was a living example of a different femininity. Strength, independence, sensibility”)<sup>126</sup>. Some other participants stressed her sensuality – a dimension which, as the previous chapter showed, was also textually present in her “Te besaba la arena en la playa”, for example<sup>127</sup>.

Audiences also had very different views of this singer’s commitment to women’s issues at the time of the Transition. Some remembered her for her general public commitment to left-wing politics, rather than for a potential involvement in women’s struggles and/or feminism: “[p]ertenecía al Partido Comunista, pero no la recuerdo como abanderada de ninguna causa feminista” (“[s]he belonged to the Communist Party, but I don’t remember her as a standard-bearer of any feminist cause”), a female participant wrote<sup>128</sup>. A similar number of respondents, however, noted her public concern about women’s issues:

reivindicó públicamente ... te lo aseguro, sí, en la fiesta del PC... [posturas] feministas, digamos, digamos pro-mujer, siempre por el well-being, como se diga, no, o la evolución de las mujeres, sí, eso desde luego [...] siempre; por ejemplo, [...] contra la violencia contra las mujeres, eso sí lo he escuchado hablar, hasta hoy [my additions] (female participant from Madrid; Nottingham, November 2003)

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<sup>125</sup> Salamanca, January 2004; e-mail interview.

<sup>126</sup> Female participant from Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview.

<sup>127</sup> E.g. different female and male participants from the Basque Country (Bilbao, December 2003) and from Zaragoza (March- July 2004).

I will return to explore Ana Belén’s femininity in more detail in Chapter Eight because it seemed to be a crucial dimension of her *persona* during the Transition period. Pictures of Ana and of Víctor and Sabina can be found in Appendix B. Pages 375-377.

<sup>128</sup> Female participant, Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview.

defended publicly ... I can assure you that, yes, at the PC party... feminist [positions], let's say, let's say pro-woman [positions], always for the 'well-being', or however you call it, or for the progress of women, yes, of course [...] always; for example, [...] against violence against women, I have definitely listened to [her] talk [about it], up until today.

## GENDER IN SINGER-SONGWRITING

Participants were also asked to reflect upon their past views on gender as presented in the works by the three singers, and in the *canción de autor/a* of the Transition more generally. Special emphasis was placed on representations of Spanish femininity as shown in this musical genre and understood by audiences. Significantly, a statistically high number of long-distance participants did not answer these interview questions – while they answered (almost) all the others. For example, when considering the written interviews answered by participants from Zaragoza, it is noticeable that 7 women and 3 men, that is, 10 people in total – out of 19 – left these questions blank.

Those participants who answered these questions gave different views on gender and singer-songwriting. When asked especially about how they saw constructions of femininity at the time their responses were quite diverse and fell overall within three main groups. Some participants saw these representations as rather traditional and therefore negative. A higher number of (especially female) informants believed that this musical genre presented Spanish femininity in innovative and challenging terms, especially when these were considered in relation to Francoist notions of female Spanishness. Finally, a few other respondents stressed that gender – especially femininity – was constructed in very complex and often problematic, ambiguous, and even contradictory ways.

Those participants who saw representations of femininity in singer-songwriting as rather negative overall were numerically significant. They stressed the conservatism of such images, which in some cases recalled certain Francoist discourses, they said - as Part II showed, these interviewees' responses were sometimes well-founded, as some of the gender politics present in Víctor's "María Coraje" and Sabina's "Tango del quinielista", for example, suggest. A small number of informants stressed that these rather conservative and traditional representations simply mirrored the reality of the time:

era la realidad de la época, la mujer en la sociedad estaba relegada a papeles secundarios o de poca responsabilidad, y ya está (female participant; Zaragoza focus group; January 2004)

that was the reality of the time, women in society were relegated to secondary roles or low-responsibility ones, and that's it.

For a higher number of respondents, however, these constructions of femininity did not only 'mirror' reality. By being conformist and unchallenging in terms of gender, they also reasserted some of the rather traditional roles that Spanish women and men were expected to fulfil in Francoist Spain, they stressed. Sometimes Spanish women's secondary status in society was reasserted through omission and silence. A male participant noted that

mi respuesta es, no sé siquiera si están [las mujeres], no me acuerdo de ninguna canción que se refiera a ninguna mujer (Madrid focus group, January 2004)

my answer is, I don't even know whether [women] are there, I don't remember any song referring to a woman.

Other male participants also pointed out that gender in general and women's issues in particular were not prime concerns at the time for *canción de autor/a* and that, like in other less politically-committed genres, here women were important in love songs, often as victims:

casi me atrevo a asegurar que en estas canciones no se tocaba muy bien el tema de la mujer, no...la mujer era básicamente la que sufría los amores. (Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview).

I would nearly dare say that these songs did not tackle very well the question of women, no... women were basically the ones who suffered for love.

en todo caso [la mujer] era objeto pero de la canción amorosa, no de la canción política (Ávila focus group; September 2003).

at most [women] were objects of love songs, not of political songs

Some other male participants were even more critical of representations of femininity in these works. A participant noted that many songs by *cantaautores* often showed a

perfil machista, la mujer es con frecuencia la sufridora (Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview)

male chauvinist profile, women are often the ones who suffer.

A small number of male interviewees went further to stress that those progressive changes in gender politics apparently supported by *canción de autor/a* were simply a façade; in their view, behind these apparently new and progressive representations lay rather traditional views of gender in general and of femininity in particular. For example, a participant noted that while some songs apparently supported Spanish women's involvement in politics, such an involvement still implied the maintenance of men's power over women:

bajo la idea tónica de camarada luchadora o de espejo en el que se reflejan las vanidades de la opresión, alentaba y transparentaba la realidad histórica [...] en el fondo y aparte voluntarismos y honrosas excepciones poéticas que no ideológicas, había una realidad histórica embebida en la psicología del artista. Y se notaba (Zaragoza, March July 2004; written interview).

under the topical idea of comrade in the struggle or of a mirror in which the vanities of oppression were reflected, [these songs] supported and made transparent the historical reality [...] at the end of the day and voluntarism and laudable poetical but not ideological exceptions aside, there was a historical reality embedded within the artist's psychology. And you could see that.

Similar responses were obtained from a good number of women participants. Like their male counterparts, they stressed that the representation of female characters in *canción de autor/a* “pues fue bastante nula” (“well, it was rather worthless”), for “dónde se quedaba la mujer... en ningún sitio” (“where did women stand... nowhere”)<sup>129</sup>. According to these women, when present, “la mujer siguió en 2º lugar” (“women continued to stand in a secondary position”), and she continued to be uncritically presented as the epitome of the “sufridora” (“passive sufferer”)— as Part II showed, this was undeniably the case in some songs (e.g. in Víctor’s “La Planta 14”)<sup>130</sup>. Moreover, these participants thought that the roles assigned to women were often “machistas. Tradicionales. Ejemplo, “Te recuerdo Amanda”, “Penélope”. Tienen una visión tradicional” (“male chauvinist. Traditional. Example, “Te recuerdo Amanda”, “Penélope”. They have a traditional view [of women]”<sup>131</sup>. A different female participant also noted how problematic Sabina’s songs were for people who, like her, were concerned with women’s issues from a feminist perspective during the Transition period. She also recalls, however, that at the time she did not think much about this singer’s “slight male chauvinism”, as she called it:

no, en aquel momento te aseguro que no, y eso que yo estaba en el Partido Feminista, también. [...] en el Partido Feminista de España, pero todo... no militante porque era menor de edad, sino que estaba con los grupos así... allegados, no, y, y en, y con una conciencia feminista en el instituto y dentro de la militancia que hacía en el PC, no, pero te aseguro que en aquel momento yo no me paraba a escuchar las letras de Sabina y decir, joder, qué tío éste, qué

<sup>129</sup> First quote: Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview. Second quote: Madrid focus group meeting; January 2004.

<sup>130</sup> First quote: Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview. Second quote: Ávila focus group; September 2003.

<sup>131</sup> Female participant, Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview.

“Te recuerdo Amanda” was a very well-known song by Chilean singer-songwriter Víctor Jara. Amanda, presumably a housewife, visits her beloved Manuel daily at the factory where he is working. Manuel faces extremely arduous working conditions in the workplace, the song implies, and Amanda only has a few minutes to see him everyday. In the end, Manuel has an accident in the factory and dies. Penélope was the main character of a very well-known song by Serrat. This song reflected on Penélope’s solitude and faithfulness, as she tirelessly waited for her departed lover’s return. For years she visited the train station daily, expecting to see her lover again. Once he returned and came back to her, she did not recognise him and did not accept him.

machista...o qué...o qué chovinista, no, realmente no, porque podía más lo que a mí me gustara Sabina y su conciencia **social** que su actitud ligeramente machista, que es esa típica actitud machista [...] no, no me hubiera parado a analizarlo en aquel momento como lo analizaría hoy [speaker's emphasis] (participant from Madrid; Nottingham, November 2003).

no, not at the time, I can assure you that, and I was in the Feminist Party also [...] in the Spanish Feminist Party, but everything... not as a militant because I was under age, but I was with these groups sort of... [that were] close [to the party], you know, and, and in, and with a feminist conscience [that I acquired] at secondary school and also as an activist in the Communist Party, but no, I assure you that at the time I didn't stop to listen to Sabina's lyrics and say, bloody hell, what a guy, what a male chauvinist... or what... or what a chauvinist, no, not at all, because the fact that I liked Sabina and his **social** conscience was stronger than his slightly male chauvinist attitude, which is the typically male chauvinist attitude [...] no, I wouldn't have stopped to analyse things then the way I would do now.

In spite of these gender-related critiques posed by some audiences, all participants agreed - including those women with stronger feminist convictions - that, as a whole, at the time of the Transition, they never felt that women were displaced, not addressed or despised in the works by *cantautores*. It is also noticeable that a good number of the women interviewed saw these representations of Spanish femininity as positive overall and empowering for women in different ways. In fact, positive responses from women participants slightly outnumbered negative ones - in contrast, only a few of the interviewed men openly shared this positive view and thought that these songs presented a "visión progresista de la mujer" ("progressive view of women")<sup>132</sup>.

Those women listeners who saw representations of femininity positively noted that, given the historical context of the Transition and taking Francoist notions of Spanish femininity as points of reference, many singer-songwriters did open up important spaces of power for women at different levels: they "offered a progressive view" of

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<sup>132</sup> Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview.

women and “presentan una mujer en vías de liberación” (“present woman on the way to being liberated”- as my earlier examination of Ana’s “Balancé” and “Los amores de Ana”, for example, had also suggested”<sup>133</sup>. Such a “visión progresista [...] [fue] principal dentro de una sociedad mayormente conservadora” (“progressive view [...] [was] crucial within a mainly conservative society”), a different informant stressed<sup>134</sup>.

According to other participants:

me parece una representación correcta. Casi siempre representan mujeres luchadoras y fuertes (Ávila, September 2003; e-mail interview)

I think it is a correct representation. They nearly always represent fighting and strong women.

yo creo que en algunas canciones se representaba [la mujer] como compañera de lucha; otros era objeto de amor o deseo, como ahora. En otras se animaba a la igualdad y a “salir de casa” (Zaragoza, March- July, 2004; written interview)<sup>135</sup>

I think that in some songs [woman] was represented as a partner in the struggle; at other times she was an object of love or desire, just like today. Other songs encouraged equality and [for women to] “get out of the house”.

It is also significant that most of those women who participated in the focus group meetings recalled accepting well the constructions of femininity – and masculinity – offered in “La planta 14” and “Mi vecino de arriba”. When listening to the latter, for example, some of them even remembered having identified themselves with the left-wing, politically and class conscious “vecino de abajo”: “éramos más como el vecino de abajo” (“we were more like the *vecino de abajo*”), one of them noted smiling with nostalgia<sup>136</sup>. Such an identification is interesting here because, as analysed in the

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<sup>133</sup> Quotes from different participants from Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview.

<sup>134</sup> Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview.

<sup>135</sup> It is noticeable that while this female participant thought that Spanish women were genuinely presented in these songs as comrades in the pro-democratic political struggle, the quotation offered earlier reproducing a male participant’s words, also from Zaragoza, showed a much more sceptical position on the subject. In his view, this equal-to-equal relationship was rather a façade, for generally these texts eventually continued to assert men’s dominance over women in this respect.

<sup>136</sup> Female participant; Ávila focus group; September 2003.

previous chapter, this *vecino de abajo* could after all be accused of taking advantage of his female lover's sexuality for his own benefit and out of spite.

Finally it is worth mentioning that a minority of respondents adopted a more complex position when reflecting on gender representations in singer-songwriting. They stressed the tensions, ambivalences, and both progressive and more conservative impulses that pervaded them – aspects which were already stressed especially in Chapter Six. They also noted – as I did in the previous chapter – that, despite the ambiguities, ambivalences and contradictions latent in some works by political singers, these still managed to present and support new notions of Spanish femininity and masculinity which at different levels significantly challenged certain Francoist discourses on gender and sexuality:

[d]esde mi p.d.v. [punto de vista] progresista me acuden a la mente “Conillet de vellut” y “La mujer que yo quiero” (Serrat). Sobre todo la primera es una declaración de principios en ese sentido. También “Samaritana” (P. Andión) y “La primera” (Serrat) hablan de una prostituta desde un aspecto totalmente nuevo en su momento y opuesto a la moralidad oficial. También hay una visión interesante en “El breve espacio que no estás” (P. Milanés). Eso no quiere decir que no se deslicen tics. P. ej. en “Vagabundear” (del propio Serrat) hay una estrofa infame. Pero en general creo que se acuñó una nueva mentalidad muy marcada. Ahora recuerdo “Aquell vaixell” (Llach) y “Fins que cal dir-se adéu” (Serrat). En ambos casos se rompe el modelo católico y tradicional de matrimonio. “Mare Lola” (Serrat) y “La tieta” muestra de modo muy crítico, aunque muy tierno, los dos tipos de mujer: el ama de casa y la tía soltera (male participant, Zaragoza; March- July 2004; written interview)<sup>137</sup>.

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<sup>137</sup> Serrat sang his “Conillet de Vellut” (1970) (“Little velvet rabbit”) in Catalan. This song presented positively a liberated woman and criticised the figure of the “hombre como es debido, ibérico, macho y cristiano” (“man as he should be, Iberian, ‘macho’ and Christian”). “La primera” (1973), also by Serrat and recorded in Catalan referred to the narrator’s first sexual encounter, which was with a prostitute. This narrator stresses that “Benévolamente/ le gustan vírgenes al adolescente,/ pero como usted,/ se come lo que se encuentra por la calle” (“Benevolently/ teenagers like virgins,/ but like you [addressing the prostitute]/ they eat anything they find in the street”). In “El breve espacio en que no estás” Pablo Milanés positively refers to a passionate and independent woman who never “habla de amores eternos” (“never speaks of eternal loves”). Llach’s “Aquell vaixell” (“That ship”) also refers to the need to escape from traditional love. Serrat’s “Fins que cal dir-se adeu” (1980) (“Until we have to say goodbye”) presents love as transitory and lovers – both male and female – as independent individuals with separate personalities: “Uno dentro del otro y cada/ cual en su sitio./ Pensar en voz alta y probarlo todo. [...] Amor valiente para ti,/ va donde va y dura lo que dura,/ no hay límites ni medidas,/ hasta que

[f]rom my progressive p.o.v [point of view] “Conillet de vellut” and “La mujer que yo quiero” (Serrat) come to my head. Especially the first one is a declaration of principles in this respect. Also “Samaritana” (P. Andión) and “La primera” (Serrat) talk about a prostitute from a totally new perspective opposed to the official morality [of the time]. There is also an interesting view in “El breve espacio que no estás” (P. Milanés).

That does not mean that tics are not let slip. E.g. in “Vagabundear” (by Serrat himself) there is an infamous verse. But in general I think that a new very strongly-marked mentality was formed. Now I remember “Aquell vaixell” (Llach) and “Fins que cal dir-se adéu” (Serrat). In both cases the traditional Catholic model of marriage is broken. “Mare Lola” and “La tieta” show in a very critical way, although with great tenderness, the two types of women: the housewife and the single aunt.

## UNDERSTANDING AUDIENCES' RESPONSES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE TRANSITION

Some of the responses obtained in the fieldwork carried out and presented in the previous subsection deserve some more critical attention. For example, the fact that a considerable number of participants did not answer those questions regarding gender in singer-songwriting is relevant for, as noted earlier, most of these participants answered (almost) all the other interview questions. Such questions seemed to be clearly and easily formulated, so the interviewees' responses, or rather, lack of them, could be interpreted in different ways. For instance, these audiences perhaps did not pay attention to gender in the songs at the time and therefore did not feel that they

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haya que decirse adiós” (“One inside the other and each/ one in his/her place./ Thinking aloud and trying everything. [...] Brave love for you,/ it goes where it goes and lasts as long as it lasts,/ there are no limits or measures,/ until we have to say goodbye”).

Serrat's “Mare Lola” sings to an uncomplaining woman with little ambition, while his “Vagabundear” (1971) despises women as almost useless: “No llores porque no me voy a quedar,/ me diste todo lo que tú saber dar./ La sombra que en la tarde da una pared/ y el vino que me ayuda a olvidar mi sed. / Que más puede ofrecer/ una mujer...” (“Don't cry because I will not stay,/ you gave me everything you can give./ The shade given by a wall in the afternoon/ and the wine that helps me forget about my thirst./ What else can/ a woman offer...”) [Serrat's lyrics obtained at [www.serrat.com/index2.html](http://www.serrat.com/index2.html) . Accessed 15th March 2005].

could give an opinion on the subject. Perhaps they found these representations 'normal', maybe approved of them, and found nothing to highlight. Possibly they did not even think of gender (representations) as an issue (at the time), and possibly felt unable and/or unwilling to answer those interview questions.

These reasons may well be valid, for, as a number of other participants acknowledged, they "did not have a clear idea" of *canción de autor/a* in its relation to gender. According to one of the male participants this was so because they did not consider such an issue during the Transition<sup>138</sup>. In fact, some men and a bigger number of women acknowledged that at the time they did not pay attention to gender representations in *canción de autor/a*:

es que nunca te parabas a analizar eso [...] no con respecto a la música, no, no.... (male participant; Madrid focus group; January 2004)

the thing is that you never stopped yourself to analyse that [...] not regarding music, no, no

yo creo que eso, que eso no tenía importancia, nunca me he fijado en eso (female participant; Zaragoza focus group, January 2004)

I think that these things, that these things were not important, I never paid attention to them

As this woman and two other participants noted, they did not even consider gender at a more general level:

-nunca te planteabas eso...

-yo tampoco...

-[interrumpiendo] en aquel tiempo no [...] hoy particularmente sí, en aquel entonces, no... pero en aquel momento, no... (three female participants; Zaragoza focus group, January 2004)

-you never thought about that...

-I didn't either...

-[interrupting] not at the time, [...] today you do, but at the time, no... not

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<sup>138</sup> Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview.

at the time, no...

A few of those especially female participants who, unlike those referred to above, did consider gender representations in *canción de autor/a* at the time did not see anything special and/or remarkable in these songs in this respect. For example, a woman wrote of singer-songwriters' musical pieces "yo creo que iban dirigidas a las personas, sin diferencia de sexo" ("I think that they were addressed to people, regardless of their sex")<sup>139</sup>. A different female participant also stressed that "[p]ienso que hablaban de personas y a todos nos llegaba por igual" ("I think they talked about people and reached us all in the same way")<sup>140</sup>.

Especially interesting here is the attitude of those participants who at the time adopted feminist perspectives towards gender. As shown earlier, these audiences were rather critical of gender representations in singer-songwriting. Still, they perceived political song very positively overall and continued to listen to it. This probably means that, as pointed out in Chapter Six, (some of) these musical works satisfied some of these women's needs as individuals and/or as pro-feminist subjects. For example, a female participant noted that, although she realised Sabina's problematic gender views, he still managed to appeal strongly to her thirst for social justice. Such an appeal made her 'forgive' and even 'justify' his occasional lack of sensitivity towards women at the time:

[e]s el humor ácido pero con un... es profundo el tío, tiene un sentimiento profundo... por eso se le perdona lo del coño de la Bernarda [refiriéndose a la frase de "Adivina, adivinanza"], se le perdona... yo se lo perdono [...] es como que se queda como una expresión anodina, casi [...] no sé, a lo mejor otra persona lo ve totalmente diferente, no, y yo me quedo con ese humor ácido y con ese sentimiento muy profundo, y lo demás es todo como una

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<sup>139</sup> Ávila, September 2003; e-mail interview.

<sup>140</sup> Basque Country; February 2004; e-mail interview.

reproducción de lo que hay ahí afuera, no es que lo diga él, es que así se habla, es que, es que refleja ese lenguaje en el que la gente está hablando en esa época...[speaker's emphasis] (participant from Madrid; Nottingham, November 2003)

[i]t's the acid humour but with a... this guy is profound, he's got profound feelings...that is why you forgive him about Bernarda's cunt [referring to the sentence in "Adivina, adivinanza"], you forgive him... I forgive him [...] it becomes like an almost anodyne expression, [...] I don't know, perhaps other people see it completely differently, you know, [but] I get that acid humour and that very profound feeling, and the rest is just like reproducing what is out there, it's not that it's him who says it, it's just that people speak like that, that is, it reflects the language that people spoke at the time...

Moreover, these artists also seemed to open up important spaces of freedom for pro-feminist audiences through, for example, the use of 'realistic' fantasies of great subversive potential in gender terms. When considered in relation to hegemonic discourses these songs probably offered more to women - including feminist audiences - than they took away from them. As these audiences noted and I stressed especially in Chapter Six, some *cantautores'* attempts to reconsider, for example, Spanish female sexuality were very significant. As some participants noted, some of these songs supported more sexual freedom for Spanish women. This was especially relevant in context because Spain was very conservative and male-centred in this respect and "era más fácil cambiar la opinión pública que la opinión en temas de comportamiento sexual" ("it was easier to change public opinion than people's opinion regarding issues of sexual behaviour") – a male participant stressed<sup>141</sup>. At a different level, a female informant also highlighted positively that, for example,

cuando representaban algunas situaciones de mujeres que se iban de casa eran muy avanzadas para lo que estábamos viviendo (Ávila, September 2003; e-mail interview).

when they represented certain situations involving women who left their homes they were very advanced for what we were living [at the time].

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<sup>141</sup> Ávila focus group; September 2003.

This participant's comments were also enlightening in a different way. Like many other participants, she continued to emphasize that gender in general and women's issues in particular seemed rather too specific questions at the time and that, in singer-songwriting like in society as a whole, 'more general issues' appeared as primary concerns. Like many others informants, she also stressed that class issues were then crucial and that they were always placed above those of gender during the Transition period:

[y]o creo que había tantas reivindicaciones de tantas libertades que la de la mujer en esos momentos era una más y era más importante las reivindicaciones de clase que de sexo. [...] Había en esos momentos asuntos más generales y trascendentales a nivel de personas en general.

I think that there were so many claims for so many rights that that of women at the time was just one more and class demands w[ere] more important than those of sex [gender]. [...] There were at the time more general and overriding issues concerning people in general

Similar answers reflecting on the need for general struggle recurrently reappeared throughout:

yo creo que no había mucho énfasis en el tema de la mujer como reivindicación política. El problema era más global y los autores iban por encima de eso, creo (female participant; Salamanca, January 2004; e-mail interview).

I think that there wasn't a lot of emphasis on women's issues as political demands. The problem was more global and authors went beyond that, I think.

[cuestiones de mujeres] eso da lo mismo, o sea, todo el mundo queríamos lo mismo, pues que las cosas cambiasen para mejorar todos, así en general... otra cosa es que veamos que las mujeres están un poco más... relegadas, o sea, en los trabajos y en todo, ahora sí, pero en ese momento, yo creo que pensamos vamos a mejorar y si mejoramos a todos hará bien, no... (female participant; Zaragoza focus group; January 2004)

[women's issues] that didn't matter, I mean, we all wanted the same, well we wanted things to change so that we could all improve, sort of generally... a different thing is realising that women are a bit... marginalised, that is, in jobs and everything, today we do [realise], but at the time, I think that we thought let us improve and if we improve, we will all benefit from that, you know...

Like these participants, many other informants agreed that political freedom as such was much more important and urgent for everyone at the time. Many of them also believed that gender equality at different levels would come automatically after the achievement of democracy:

había cosas, podríamos decir más prioritarias que era la libertad y tal, y cuestión de la igualdad de sexos, o de género, pues, nos parecía una cuestión que ya vendría por añadidura, más tarde, pero que en ese momento, pues no era fundamental, eh; como por ejemplo, el sentimiento medioambiental... sí, todo eso, pero era una cuestión posterior... (male participant; Ávila focus group; September 2003)

there were things, we could say [that were] more urgent, like freedom and all that, and issues about equality of the sexes, or gender [equality], well, we thought that this issue would come in addition, later, but at the time, well, it was not a core issue, eh; like for example, environment concerns...well, all that, but this was a subsequent/later issue...

el cambio político necesitaba un cambio para las mujeres, por género, y ese cambio de género suponía que iba a haber un cambio político general, es que tienen que ir juntos [...] el cambio político general tiene que ser primero (female participant from Madrid; Nottingham, November 2003).

political change needed a change for women, in terms of gender, and that gender change meant that there was going to be a general political change, because they've got to go together [...] the general political change had to come first though.

This does not mean, however, that, as noted earlier, these people were not critical at the time, at least verbally, of some of the (very) traditional gender dynamics that still prevailed within and beyond singer-songwriting. For example, a considerable number of them reflected especially upon the marginal position occupied by Spanish women in different areas. The following quotation is very telling in this respect. Its gender-related (self)criticism comes especially from men, who agreed that, generally speaking, and in the world of sexuality in particular, left-wing men, like their right-wing counterparts, continued to perceive their masculinity in terms of dominance. In the same vein, many left-wing women, just like many right-wing ones, remained

traditionally feminine and sought to protect themselves against the sexually uninhibited males that surrounded them – these participants thought:

-[en cuanto a género y sexualidad] [participante masculino] ahí hay que reconocer que la gente que eran o se consideraban de izquierdas eran en ese ámbito absolutamente conservadores, de un machismo... eh... profundísimo, y eso que es una gente de izquierdas, eh... yo creo que eso es una de las cosas donde menos cambios había entre gente de izquierdas y de derechas... aparentemente sí. La gente de izquierdas, en cuanto a que llamaba 'compañera' a la chica sí, [...] y el otro la decía "aquí mi señora"... solamente era eso [las dos mujeres del grupo asienten] pero en el comportamiento... [...] por ejemplo en las relaciones sexuales el que tenía que disfrutar era el hombre y la mujer, pues allá ella... también una mujer no se hacía hueco, o sea... tampoco exigía pero desde luego, una posición pasiva total

-[interrumpe una participante:] es que los padres te decían, que en los guateques tenías que tener miedo...

-[la otra mujer del grupo asiente y continúa, mientras algunos hombres del grupo se ríen] bueno eso daba igual que fueran de derechas o de izquierdas. Y hablaban de la chica facilota de entonces... (Ávila focus group; September 2003)

-[regarding gender and sexuality] [male participant] there we have to acknowledge that people who were or considered themselves to be left-wing were absolutely conservative in that respect, [they were] of a profound...eh...male chauvinism... and they were left-wing people, eh... I think that that is one of the things with less differences between left-wing and right-wing people... it would seem there were. Left-wing people, because they called the girl 'partner/companion', [...] while the other introduced her with 'this is my wife' ... only that was [the difference] [the two women in the group agree] but in their behaviour... [...] for example in sexual relationships the one who had to enjoy it was the man, and the woman, that was her problem...it is also true that women did not have room for much manoeuvre though...they didn't demand [anything], but definitely, [they adopted] a totally passive position

-[a female participant interrupts:] the thing is that parents told you to be afraid of 'house parties'...

-[the other woman in the group nods and starts speaking, while some men in the group laugh] well, them [men] being right-wing or left-wing, that didn't matter. And they also used to speak of the 'easy' girl of the time...

These participants' acknowledgement of their own conservatism when approaching sexuality is significant because it makes the transgressive content of the sex-related songs analysed in the previous chapter even more important and counter-hegemonic. This ethnographic-based fieldwork more generally has also been very enlightening in

other respects. For example, it has allowed an examination of the relationship existing between the participants' views on the relevance of gender during the Transition and their responses to representations of gender in the *canción de autor/a* of the time. In turn, all this knowledge has allowed a better general understanding of listeners to *canción de autor/a*; especially of those who being 'pro-feminist' did not react to gender representations in the songs more critically and radically. Their responses need to be understood in context. and always considering their uncomfortable position, first, as individuals ruled by a dictator, and then, as citizens who craved for democracy and experienced crucial socio-political changes which did not always run smoothly. On the other hand, however, the important role played by feminist collectives during the Transition period also needs to be finally reasserted here. Considering the data obtained in the fieldwork and remembering the information provided in Chapter Two, their significance becomes even greater. Spanish feminists organised in feminist collectives during the Transition showed great courage: they fought for democracy and different women's causes in a rather hostile historical, socio-political and cultural context in which even many of those women who practised feminism 'privately' remained at least partly indifferent to women's issues at a more public and strictly political level.

## CONCLUSION

This ethnographic-based chapter has introduced a new, complementary approach to the study of singer-songwriting and political singers of the Transition. It has focused mainly on audiences and their views on *canción de autor/a* and *cantautores*. It has concentrated especially on the analysis of the respondents' answers regarding issues

of gender as deployed through Víctor's, Ana's and Sabina's public *personae*, and – especially of Spanish femininity – as constructed in singer-songwriting of the Transition more generally.

The fieldwork carried out has suggested that these artists' masculinities and femininity were perceived as being very different from those supported by Francoist discourses. Audiences especially highlighted Víctor's sensitivity and tenderness. They also stressed, for example, Sabina's social sensitivity and his open anti-Francoist rebelliousness in his behaviour and aesthetics. Many audiences described Ana as very different from the perfect Francoist woman: she was often seen as strong, independent, and sensual.

When considering the informants' responses about gender in singer-songwriting, it is relevant that a statistically significant number of interviewees did not answer those questions. This lack of response seemed to point to some of these audiences' unawareness of gender in the songs, to their lack of interest in the issue and/or, to their acceptance of the gender dynamics present in these musical pieces. Some of their answers suggested that they perhaps saw these representations as common sense in the Gramscian sense and therefore did not think they deserved being highlighted.

A higher number of participants, however, stated that at the time they were aware of the gender dimension present in *canCIÓN de autor/a*. A significant number of interviewees stated that they saw representations of femininity as rather traditional and disempowering for women. A higher number of (especially female) participants, however, believed that, in general terms, Spanish femininity was presented in

progressive, innovative and transgressive terms, especially when considered in relation to Francoist hegemonic discourses on female Spanishness. A small number of participants also highlighted the fact that these gender representations – especially those of femininity - were very complex and often simultaneously supported both progressive and conservative gender politics, although the former seemed to prevail.

In fact, and in spite of the gender-related critiques encountered, all participants – including those with stronger feminist views – agreed that, overall, Spanish women listeners were respectfully addressed by the *canCIÓN de autor/a* of the Transition. Moreover, and in spite of its ambiguities, ambivalences and contradictions, this genre seemed to satisfy even some of the needs of the most feminist-aware listeners interviewed. Nonetheless, it should be remembered that most interviewees – among whom there were a significant number of ‘pro-feminist’ women – believed that the fight for democracy as a whole and class equality more particularly came above everything else during the Transition. As different participants stressed, the class-conscious, and pro-democratic content of *canCIÓN de autor/a* made up for its sometimes problematic gender politics, which at the time many considered secondary.

**CHAPTER EIGHT**

**“ESTO NO ES *SÓLO* UNA CANCIÓN”: THE ROLES  
AND SIGNIFICANCE OF SINGER-SONGWriters AND  
POLITICAL SONG DURING THE SPANISH  
TRANSITION<sup>142</sup>**

**INTRODUCTION**

This last chapter of the thesis analyses a number of related issues. It first examines some of the peculiarities of Víctor, Ana and Sabina as artists, and reflects on their specific contribution to the *canCIÓN de autor/a* of the Transition<sup>143</sup>. It also considers a more general level and explores some of the ways in which Spanish singer-songwriting and political singers as a whole were relevant and influential at the time of the Transition, particularly in some circles. It especially reflects on their counter-hegemonic socio-political role, impact and significance as revealed by the ethnographic-based fieldwork carried out. It finally explores some of the reasons behind their popularity and effectiveness among their audiences.

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<sup>142</sup> “Esto no es *sólo* una canción” (“This is not *just* a song” – my addition) is an allusion to Víctor Manuel’s already mentioned “Esto no es una canción” (1981, from *Ay, amor*). Chapter Three (page 144) offers more information about this song.

<sup>143</sup> TABLE I – in Chapter Three – offers details about the participants interviewed. Pages 108-109.

## THE SPECIFIC SIGNIFICANCE OF VÍCTOR MANUEL, ANA BELÉN AND JOAQUÍN SABINA AS POLITICALLY COMMITTED ARTISTS OF THE TRANSITION

This first section examines individually the specific socio-political and cultural relevance of Víctor, Ana, Sabina and their work at the time of the Transition - as understood by some audiences and different written sources<sup>144</sup>. Before engaging in such an analysis, however, an overall assessment of the significance of these three singers in the context of the *canción de autor/a* of the Transition needs to be offered.

Regardless of their geographical origin, most of the participants interviewed agreed that the three singers studied here were relevant artists in the world of singer-songwriting and political singing at a national level during the Transition period. A significant number of informants stated that, generally speaking, these artists had “medium importance” at the time. Many others, however, believe “que en esa época fueron **muy** importantes” (“that they were **very** important at the time”) [speaker’s emphasis]<sup>145</sup>. A few of them even stressed that, in the late seventies, especially Víctor and Ana “vamos, que esa gente arrastraba a las masas” (“my God, these people drew the masses”)<sup>146</sup>. In fact, for many of the participants interviewed Víctor’s “El abuelo Víctor” and Ana’s “La muralla” – also popularised by the Chilean group Quilapayún - were among the most important, powerful, and subversive songs of the Transition.

For a significant number of participants, however, none of these artists were amongst the most radical and revolutionary political singers of the time. In their view, Paco Ibáñez, José Antonio Labordeta, Luis Pastor, Raimon and Lluís Llach were some of

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<sup>144</sup> As noted in Chapter Seven, photos of the three singers can be seen in Appendix B. Pages 375-377.

<sup>145</sup> Female participant; Madrid focus group, January 2004.

<sup>146</sup> Female participant; Zaragoza focus group, January 2004.

the most subversive and radical *cantaautores* of the Transition. Unlike Víctor, Ana and especially Sabina, many of these artists are not very widely known by the mainstream public today. Musically speaking, they are not currently as prolific as these three singers either. In some cases their musical careers even died with the Transition: many of them did not manage – or did not want to manage - to evolve and adapt themselves to the changing circumstances. On the contrary, Víctor, and especially Ana and Sabina evolved musically in important, noticeable ways, while they skilfully seemed to maintain and/or rearticulate some old core ideals and concerns. Such an evolution was a – if not the - key to their professional survival and their current artistic and commercial - and consequently economic - success. This evolution, which at least apparently did not translate into a total detachment from their roots, ensured them a privileged place among many male and female, older and younger audiences alike. In fact, and going back to the Transition period, it is significant that although some audiences did not see Víctor, Ana and Sabina as some of the most radical singers of the time, the three remained highly popular and potentially influential then and, especially in the late 70s and early 80s, they managed to draw very large and diverse audiences – larger and more varied than other apparently more subversive artists.

**Víctor Manuel: the real voice of mining Asturias.**

en cierta manera ha sido un portavoz...[...] la ha hecho muy real a los madrileños y a los, al resto del público del estado español que la escucha, ha traducido esa lucha [...] de los mineros (female participant from Madrid; Nottingham, November 2003)

in a way he has been a spokesman... [...] for the people in Madrid, and for the, for the rest of the public of the Spanish state that listen to him, he has made very real, eh, he has translated that fight [...] of miners

Autobiographical elements were especially conspicuous and significant in the musical works by Víctor, and they were likely to have conditioned the audiences' reception of his songs. This was particularly so in his musical pieces about mining Asturias. It was well-known then that this artist was from Mieres, a mining area in Asturias, in northern Spain. It was also well-known that his grandfather Víctor, the protagonist of "El abuelo Víctor", one of his best-known songs, was a miner who died of silicosis, an occupational illness. His first-hand knowledge of Asturian mining reality and its problems was important in different ways. For example, it gave his songs an important touch of immediacy and realism which, together with the audiences' knowledge of the singer's biography, awoke in many listeners the reassuring feeling that the artist was singing about realities that he knew well. As two female participants put it when discussing "La planta 14":

-es una historia, un relato, como si contara hechos reales, un accidente en la mina

-[interrumpiendo:] y esto no se sabía

-[...] yo creo que aquí está diciendo una realidad que él habría visto más de una vez

-pues sí...

(Zaragoza focus group, January 2004)

-it is a story, a narration, as if he was telling real facts, an accident inside the mine

-[interrupting:] and nobody knew about these things then

-[...] I think that here he is telling us about a reality that he probably saw more than once

-yes, I think so too...

The presence of these autobiographical elements is likely to have triggered the building of a special connection between the author/performer and his/her text – i.e. between Víctor and his "La planta 14" or "El abuelo Víctor", for example. In turn, this emotional link (performer-text) may have helped the building of a special, very

emotional bond between Víctor, his (mining) songs, and his audiences. As a female participant wrote, there are

letras [que] ponen los pelos de punta por su emotividad tan cercana a todos. (Ávila, September 2003; e-mail interview)

lyrics [that] make your hair stand on end because of their emotive nature, so close to everyone.

This proximity author/performer-text-audiences partly especially explains why a good number of participants described this artist and his work as “close”, “real”, “honest” and “transparent”:

tenía una voz impresionante y las letras hablaban del pueblo y de la gente, de lo común (female participant; Ávila focus group, September 2003).

he had an amazing voice and his lyrics spoke of the *pueblo* and of the people, of things in common/everyday life things.

transmitía la imagen de alguien sencillo y sensible a las cosas cercanas y simples (female participant; Basque Country, February 2004; e-mail interview).

he projected the image of a simple person, sensitive to immediate and simple things<sup>147</sup>.

Both his choice of topics and his specific approach to them gave this singer and his work an aura of closeness and approachability that made an impression on many listeners. Critic González Lucini (1998: 376) described this artist's contribution in the following terms:

Víctor Manuel ha sido, indiscutiblemente, uno de los creadores que consiguió, ya a finales de los sesenta, que la “nueva canción”- sin perder nada de su identidad - fuera realmente una “canción popular”; una canción de calidad que calara en el corazón del pueblo, es decir, de todos - los intelectuales, los universitarios y la gente sencilla con capacidad de escucha y de silencio.

Víctor Manuel has been, indisputably, one of the creators who, already at the end of the sixties, transformed the “new song” into a really “popular song” –

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<sup>147</sup> Here “simple” is being used to translate “sencillo”. This means that it should not be understood in its negative, pejorative sense, but rather in its positive one.

without losing any of its identity -; a quality song that penetrated the *pueblo's* heart, that is, everyone's heart - those of intellectuals, university students, and those of simple people with capacity for quiet and attentive listening<sup>148</sup>.

### **Ana Belén: a communist with make-up making the personal political**

Ana Belén no era la imagen de una típica progre... (female participant; Salamanca, January 2004; e-mail interview).

Ana Belén did not have the image of a typical lefty...

Ana was an important public figure at the time for a number of reasons. First, because, as many of the interviewees agreed, she was one of the very few female political singers that enjoyed great popularity at the time of the Transition:

lo que si es verdad es que así como había varios hombres, de mujeres, prácticamente... así significada estaba ella [las otras dos participantes dicen "ella" al mismo tiempo]... la que más presencia tenía era ella, Ana Belén, era como la abanderada, o sea, la que estaba delante [...] porque ahí otras mujeres, vamos creo yo que no...que no han estado tan adelante...o sea, que ella ha estado en primera línea...(female participant; Zaragoza focus group, January 2004)

what is true is that, while there were a few men, women, well, really... well-known [women] it was only her [the other two participants say "her" at the same time] ...she was the one that appeared publicly, Ana Belén, she was like the spokes-woman, I mean, the one standing in front [...] because there other women, no I don't think that they...that they have been so far in front...I mean, that she has been in the front line...

In fact, while other women such as Rosa and Julia León, Marina Rosell, María del Mar Bonet, and María Ostiz - the latter on the conservative side - enjoyed a certain popularity, no one seemed to reach Ana's wide public acknowledgement among such large audiences.

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<sup>148</sup> Here "simple" is being used again in its positive sense.

This acknowledgement was often far from trouble-free: the fieldwork carried out suggested that a significant number of female participants often perceived her as complex and polysemic, especially when her public display of femininity was considered. Many admired her because, in their view, she supported women's independence and vitality, and fought for the defence of Spanish women's rights:

[e]n mi círculo, donde he estado, que es un círculo muy reducido yo creo que siempre la hemos considerado pro-mujer [...] tener la reivindicación de las mujeres siempre presente, sí, completamente (female participant from Madrid; Nottingham, November 2003).

[i]n my circle, where I have been, which is a very small circle I think that we have always considered her 'pro-woman' [...] always having women's claims very present, indeed, definitely.

Other female participants, however, did not see this artist's 'pro-feminist' dimension so clearly:

a nivel general puede ser, pero para mí era todo lo contrario (Salamanca, January 2004; e-mail interview)

at a general level, probably [she was seen as fighting for women's causes], but for me she was just the very opposite.

[i]ba más de roja-progre que de feminista [...] les gustaba mucho más a los chicos que a las chicas [...] Como decía les encantaba a los chicos.[...] Las chicas no lo entendíamos (Basque Country, February 2004; e-mail interview).

her image was more that of a lefty than that of a feminist [...] boys liked her much more than girls did [...] As I was saying boys loved her [...] We girls did not understand it.

This reference to 'understanding' is particularly relevant here. The fieldwork carried out suggested that some (especially female) audiences did not always fully understand and make sense of this artist's aesthetics, performance style, and/or some of her particular song choices. These fieldwork findings also suggested that, at the time of the Transition, many left-wing women consciously abandoned their more traditionally

'feminine' ways in terms of clothing style, for example. The new acceptable/advisable left-wing style encouraged the use of casual, 'hippy-like' clothes, and praised the natural beauty of women "con la cara lavada" and no make-up on. This fashion was followed by, for example, singer-songwriter

Rosa León, con sus gafitas, y su guitarra, y su pelo lacio, es decir, aquí estoy yo señoras y sin maquillaje (female participant from Madrid; Nottingham, November 2003)<sup>149</sup>

Rosa León, wearing her little glasses, and with her guitar, and her lank hair, that is, here I am ladies and gentlemen, and without any make-up on.

This aesthetic canon, however, was not adopted by Ana Belén, who partly remained an exception in this respect, especially in the 70s. In fact, not many politically committed left-wing women of the Transition seemed to share Ana's aesthetic codes:

como Ana Belén no, para nada, más como Rosa León, y yo también, bueno, yo a caballo [...] pero mis amigas, yo pienso en mis amigas de la época [...] son chicas sin maquillaje, de pelo lacio, vaqueros rotos y la estética de Rosa León y peor, más exagerada, quiero decir, no peor (female participant from Madrid; Nottingham, November 2003).

like Ana Belén, no, not at all, more like Rosa León, and me too, well, I was somewhere in between [...] but my friends, I think about my girl friends at the time [...] they are girls with no make-up on, with lank hair, worn-out jeans and Rosa León's style or worse, I mean, more exaggerated, not worse.

In fact, while Ana sometimes adopted some of the fashionable 'hippy-like' looks of the time, she also added some very personal elements to it: she combined this apparently free-and-easy hippy-like style with a more formal, careful and tidy touch. She always used cosmetics and appeared as a very feminine and slightly vain woman who proudly looked after her physical appearance and style. As film director García

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<sup>149</sup> Fabuel Cava (1998: 109) wrote the following about Rosa León: "era como la vecina de la escalera, algo bonita, progre y *engagé*, ligeramente obstinada en los temas de parejas modernas y el reparto de las tareas domésticas, en realidad toda ella era un arquetipo de las chicas progre de la época (las tías "concienciás", que decían) su pelo, sus gafas, sus faldas largas, sus tics" ["she was like your flat neighbour, somehow beautiful, lefty and *engagé*, slightly obsessed with topics about modern couples and the sharing of domestic chores, in fact everything in her responded to the archetype of lefty women of the time ("committed" girls, as they used to say) her hair, her glasses, her long skirts, her tics"].

Sánchez noted, her combination of glamour and political activism made her different from many other Spanish left-wing women (in Villena, 2002: 77). She was 'a communist with make-up', which, in the context of the Transition was rather innovative and challenging in left-wing circles. Overall, different left-wing discourses suggested that only politically conservative women manipulated by the hand of the *Sección Femenina*, and women with no political awareness/interest looked after and publicly promoted their femininity. Progressive Spanish women were often expected to overlook these trivialities in order to focus exclusively on the political struggle - which was often shaped by very traditional rather stereotypically masculine terms and standards. Ana seemed to be very conscious of this. Therefore, her decision to publicly show and reassert her stereotypically feminine beauty is significant and should be read as a meditated and conscious political act in itself. As she confessed to her biographer Villena (2002: 78-9),

se miró en el espejo italiano del PCI. En sus viajes a Italia contemplo cómo los comunistas unían las reivindicaciones sociales con las revoluciones domésticas, cómo aparecía un nuevo tipo de mujer militante que compaginaba un estilo elegante o el atrevimiento en el vestir con la radicalidad en las ideas. A nadie le llamaban la atención en el PCI por llevar minifalda como ocurría en reuniones de la célula de los comunistas españoles. "Camarada, así no vengas a las asambleas", solían decir algunos responsables, incluso en organizaciones universitarias. Porque la libertad que muchos veteranos luchadores reclamaban en sus fábricas, no la concedían a sus mujeres o a sus hijas. "A las nueve en casa y la cena preparada", parodia con energía Ana a muchos militantes con esa teatralidad que salpica sus conversaciones. "Desde luego, mi modelo era el PCI por esa actitud global ante el mundo que exigía las libertades colectivas pero también, faltaría más, las individuales".

she borrowed the model of the Italian Communist Party. In her journeys to Italy she realised that Italian communists combined social claims with domestic revolutions, and that a new type of woman activist appeared. This new woman activist reconciled an elegant or bold clothing style with radical ideas. Nobody in the Italian Communist Party was told off for wearing a mini-skirt, as it often happened in the meetings of their Spanish counterparts. "Comrade, do not come to the meetings like this", some organisers used to say, even at university organisations. Because many veteran fighters did not grant their wives or daughters the freedom that they claimed in their factories. "At home by nine and dinner ready", [says] Ana parod[ying] many

Communist militants with energy, with that theatrical fashion which is common in her conversations. "Without a doubt, the model that I followed was that of the Italian Communist Party, for its global attitude towards the world, which demanded collective freedoms but also, of course, individual ones".

One of the participants suggested that this artist's public emphasis on her own physical beauty and looks was conditioned by her commercially-oriented public image as a well-known actress. While this may be a factor to consider, her decision to enact a particular type of femininity was unlikely to respond to commercial interests only. As the above quotation suggests, she seemed to be well aware of the on-going debates of her time regarding politics (Rodríguez Marchante, 1993: 77), gender roles, femininity and style. And she consciously embraced a 'syncretic' aesthetic option which she knew could be problematic among Spanish left-wing circles of the time. In this sense, she was a courageous pioneer; she was far ahead many other Spanish left-wing women of the time, who did not always fully understand her playfulness. She was the living proof of the compatibility between political commitment – which brought her serious threats and accusations from the extreme right (Villena, 2002: 58) - and a more personal attention to one's own femininity and beauty in a rather traditional sense.

In this context it is significant that, as noted in Chapter Six, a good number of her best-known songs presented love-related topics. This insistence on love issues was probably due to a complex variety of factors and agents. Some of these factors are likely to have been alien to the singer's own decisions and probably responded to marketing strategies designed by record companies. However, as Villena highlights (2002: 91), Ana also had a say in choosing the topics and styles of her songs and she always "ha apostado por canciones de amor" ("committed herself to love songs").

Again, she may personally have been partly driven by commercial interests. However, her choice of songs should not be seen as totally conditioned by commercial and economic concerns.

In fact, her determined and conscious personal investment in love songs could be interpreted in different ways. For example, an obvious negative reading suggests that, by putting a special emphasis on her love songs, this singer reproduced the stereotypically feminine view and role of women in Spanish society, a role which condemned them to remain attached to the world of love, relationships, feelings and emotions. However, a much more positive interpretation is plausible, especially when considering her critical awareness of the 'masculinisation' of politics during the Transition period. In this context, the potentially subversive content of many of her love songs acquires special significance: many of them could be read as attempts to politicise the world of love, relationships and emotions; as attempts to broaden the rather narrow masculine and 'masculinised' scope of traditional right- and left-wing politics in the Spain of the Transition. For politics is not only achieving a democratic government through an election; politics should also mean achieving certain laws and attitudes towards gender differences and sexuality, for example. Politics is singing "La muralla" and other songs by socialist poet Nicolas Guillén, but it is also singing "Soy yo, mi amor" and "Los amores de Ana", for example. In other words, this artist seemed to suggest - both through her public *persona* and works - that a more comprehensive, holistic understanding of and approach to politics was needed.

## **Joaquín Sabina: publicising overseas the lack of liberties in Spain. Sabina and his world: carnival and the carnivalesque**

Daba la imagen de alguien sensible y como bien definieron después en un disco “algo canalla”. Sobre todo muy sincero en reconocer la parte oscura que todos tenemos sin ningún pudor (female participant; Basque Country, February 2004; e-mail interview).

His image was that of a sensitive person and, as he was later on well described in a song, “a bit of a swine”. [He was] especially very honest in acknowledging without inhibitions the dark side that we all have.

Like Ana’s and Víctor’s, Sabina’s public biography was rather intense and probably influenced the way in which audiences engaged in the understanding of his works during the Transition period. The years running between 1970 and 1977 - the period that preceded the beginning of his formal career as a *cantautor* in Spain - is especially relevant here. In 1970 Sabina threw a Molotov cocktail inside a bank (De Miguel, 1986: 34). It was his way of protesting against the *Proceso de Burgos*, by which some ETA activists were going to be executed. In order to avoid arrest, he fled the country and arrived in the UK with the help of a false passport (Menéndez Flores, 2000: 26, 27). Different Spanish newspapers reported his ‘crime’ and escape. The headlines of the pro-Francoist *Ideal* read “un separatista vasco... de Jaén”, while those of *Ya* presented him as a “[p]ropagandista del separatismo vasco” (“a Basque separatist...from Jaén”; “[p]ropagandist of Basque separatism”) (Menéndez Flores, 2000: 28). However, some of his influential personal friends also managed to publicise his case in London for a very different purpose. He was presented to the media as a young Spaniard forced into exile because of his active fight in support of the Spanish democratic cause<sup>150</sup>. His lawyers

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<sup>150</sup> De Miguel (1986: 35, 36) points out that behind Sabina’s exile there were both political reasons and motivations of personal development. Although that was probably the case, from the outside it was likely to have been read exclusively as a political exile.

convocaron una rueda de prensa para poner a la opinión pública de su parte, acudiendo a la misma distintos diarios británicos que, tal y como habían previsto, recogieron y difundieron las perfectamente calculadas declaraciones del estudiante español (Menéndez Flores, 2000: 28).

called for a press conference in order to put public opinion on his side. Different British dailies attended this conference and, just as they had expected, they picked up and spread the perfectly calculated statements of the Spanish student.

All this publicity helped him obtain a twelve month residence permit. His public interventions also acquired political significance at a more general level. Sabina and his lawyers reminded the British public about Franco's dictatorship and Spain's lack of freedom. It was one more blow against an already internationally unaccepted dictatorial regime. In the meantime, Spanish authorities could do nothing but watch in rage how this subversive '*anti-español*', as they called him, darkened even more their already very negative international image and reputation. But Sabina did not only help to publicise the unsustainable political situation that Spanish people were facing. His political activism continued in London in different ways: he attended demonstrations demanding democracy for Spain. Moreover, he remained close to Spanish political exiles and, with his various artistic talents, he helped them recreate a sense of community with common ties and goals. He became a regular collaborator in different artistic and cultural activities organised by the communist-oriented Club Antonio Machado (Menendez Flores, 2000: 30)<sup>151</sup>. He also started to be fairly well-known as a

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<sup>151</sup> The Club Antonio Machado, based in London, was founded and mainly attended by Spanish political exiles ideologically close to Communism.

As Isla points out (2002: 321-23), there were two main groups of Spanish exiles in London from the thirties up until the late seventies. The first one was that of political exiles, many of whom were the so-called *niños de la guerra* (children of the Spanish civil war). Many of these political exiles were regular visitors and/or collaborators of the Club Antonio Machado. The other group of Spanish immigrants in London was that of the economic exiles, which overall arrived in London later in time, in the 50s and 60s. As Isla points out - and I could confirm from a conversation with an old member of the Club Antonio Machado - the relationships between both collectives were not always easy and smooth and, overall, they avoided interaction with each other. According to this former member of the Club, there was a strong, politically significant element of identity that prevented these two collectives from establishing productive dialogues with each other. As this informant also stressed, there was a

singer-songwriter among left-wing circles and sang in different politically oriented recitals. For example, in 1974, the *Boletín de Información Española* echoed the news that “Joaquín Sabina y Carmen y Jesús pusieron música a la lucha y los problemas de España y Sudamérica” in a festival for exiles (De Miguel, 1986: 49) (“Joaquín Sabina y Carmen y Jesús put music to the fight and problems of Spain and South America”)<sup>152</sup>. In 1976 Sabina sang in London as a supporting singer for Paco Ibáñez, Lluís Llach, Pi de la Serra and Elisa Serna in front of the colony of Spanish exiles<sup>153</sup>.

However, as De Miguel points out (1986: 50), Sabina’s political activism in London should not be mythologized: in parallel to his active political commitment with the Spanish democratic cause he enjoyed a much more frivolous and easy-going life style, as he himself acknowledged. In fact, Sabina always belonged to the “izquierda traviesa” (“naughty left”) rather than to the “ultraizquierda” (“ultra left”) or the “izquierda de boina” (“beret left”), for example (De Miguel, 1986: 14)<sup>154</sup>.

Sabina’s “naughty” public ways did not only affect the projection of his public *persona*. They also recurrently impregnated his musical work in important ways. In fact, his at times frivolous but most often deeply sensitive and painful “naughtiness” was an essential element of his musical work. His choice of topics, as well as his peculiar treatment of and approach to them were relevant in this respect: his songs

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third group of Spanish visitors in London: that formed by often young, middle-class university students who went there “for a weekend” in order to watch films banned in Spain and/or to have access to and bring into Spain forbidden books. According to this informant, sometimes these young Spaniards who visited London for short periods of time often got in touch with the Club Antonio Machado.

<sup>152</sup> More information on this and other related issues is offered, for example, in Menéndez Flores (2000: 32, 46, 47) and at <http://www.paisvirtual.com/musica/rock-pop/sabina/biografia1.htm> [Accessed 26 January 2001].

<sup>153</sup> “Biografía de Joaquín Sabina”. In <http://www.fut.es/~gbc/rosa.htm> [Accessed 14 June 2002].

<sup>154</sup> The expression “beret left” is ambiguous and could be referring to either a rural and folkloric musical left or to a more sophisticated ‘cool’ French-style left-wing trend.

were often scatological, sexually and politically provocative, polemical, and/or clearly politically incorrect at different levels.

In this sense, his work could be said to include certain elements of what Bakhtin (1994) called the “carnavalesque”: as the song analysis chapters showed, his celebration of realities in which different Francoist moral, political, sexual, historical and/or religious principles have no room often entailed not only discrediting these intellectually and/or emotionally, but also laughing at them coarsely. In fact, he took great - sometimes painful - delight in behaving rudely and in being conspicuously politically incorrect and even nasty. This happened, for example, in the already analysed “Adivina, adivinanza” (1981). In a similar vein, in “Inventario” (1978) he sings about “el denso olor a semen desbordado”, “el beso que se pudre en nuestros labios” or “la mierda que arrastramos sin remedio” (“the dense smell of spilt semen”; “the kiss that rots on our lips”, “the shit that we hopelessly drag behind us”)<sup>155</sup>. As these quotations suggest, Sabina’s work embodied the “carnavalesque” in Bakhtin’s terms (1994: 199) in the sense that it “celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions”. For Bakhtin (1994: 226), these “carnavalesque” elements are politically significant because they rely on awareness “that established authority and truth are relative”.

However, Bakhtin’s theories on the subversive potential of “carnival” and the “carnavalesque” have met strong criticism. According to some scholars, these theories

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<sup>155</sup> Other examples of this “carnavalesque” mood of expression can be found, for instance, in other songs from *Inventario* (1978). In “Tratado de impaciencia numero 10” he sings “ardiendo juntos en la hoguera/ de piel, sudor, saliva y sombra” [“burning together in a fire of skin, sweat, saliva and shadows”]. In “40 Orssett Terrace” he playfully chants “hago gárgaras”; “me rasco”; “tengo granos”; “escupo” [“I gargle”, “I scratch myself”, “I have spots”, “I spit”].

are not empowering in real life: there is no point in celebrating carnival's temporary subversion of the established order, for its end marks the return to reality and the reappearance of the status quo - which eventually prevails and remains untouched, they claim (Sales, 1983: 169; Eagleton: 1981: 148). In fact, for some scholars, carnival and the carnivalesque are a conservative 'letting off steam' that helps secure the established order. To articulate it in Gramscian terms, some would say that carnival and the carnivalesque are forms of consent that help secure the hegemonic order.

As Stallybrass and White note (1986: 14), these negative approaches to the political significance of carnival rely on false *a priori* de-contextualising and essentialising premises:

[i]t actually makes little sense to fight out the issue of whether or not carnivals are intrinsically radical or conservative, for to do so automatically involves the false essentializing of carnivalesque transgression (1986: 60).

In fact,

the politics of carnival cannot be resolved outside of a close historical examination of particular conjunctures: there is no *a priori* revolutionary vector to carnival and transgression (1986: 16).

“[F]or just as transgression is not intrinsically progressive, nor is it intrinsically conservative” (1986: 201). Therefore, the most that can be said about the transgressive power of carnival in the abstract is that “given the presence of sharpened political antagonism, it may often act as a catalyst and site of actual and symbolic struggle” (1986: 14). Bearing in mind these considerations in the context of the Spanish Transition, the potentially politically transgressive and progressive value of Sabina's “carnavalesque” songs needs to be reasserted here. As Chapter Six especially showed, many of his songs were frontal attacks against Francoist sexual discourses,

for example, and they contributed to an awareness of (some) listener's unspeakable sexual fantasies. They also addressed the audiences' most daring self and invited them to follow the steps of the singer's public *persona* and his unrestrained and unprejudiced approach to sexuality. At a different level, many of his more strictly political songs also included important politically transgressive and progressive elements. For example, his exaggerated and grotesque recreation of Francoist realities often produced *extrañamiento* ("estrangement") in the listener, who probably tended to distance her/himself from that caricatural reality depicted<sup>156</sup>. In fact, in Bakhtin's terms (1994: 226), many songs by Sabina did show the historicity, constructedness and relativity of hegemonic truths. By so doing, they may have helped lay the basis for the conscious subversion of those truths that Francoism presented as natural, normal and invariable.

## THE ROLES AND SIGNIFICANCE OF SINGER-SONGWRITING AND POLITICAL SINGERS DURING THE SPANISH TRANSITION

Torrego Egido (1999) highlighted some of the roles that *canCIÓN de autor/a* in general fulfilled in Spain between 1960 and 1980. His emphasis lay especially on the educative aspects of these musical manifestations – 'educative' should be understood here in its broad, Gramscian sense. For example, he noted that some important 'movements', groups and individuals within the world of *canCIÓN de autor/a* helped greatly in the normalisation of Catalan, Galician and Euskera. He also pointed out that

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<sup>156</sup> Some Spanish literary works (e.g. Valle Inclán's plays) have been analysed in the light of the theories of "el esperpento" and "extrañamiento" ["the grotesque/the caricaturesque" and "estrangement"]. Critics have paid special attention to the effects that these writing techniques based on exaggeration produce on the reader/viewer. These theories seem broadly applicable in the context of some of Sabina's works. They are especially relevant when examining those songs in which Francoism is covertly and/or overtly attacked. In fact, some of his songs clearly present a grotesque reality that potentially encouraged the audiences' critical detachment from it.

this musical genre educated some audiences' emotional side. It similarly assisted the new generations in their political socialisation, he claimed (1999: 22). This second part of the chapter will develop some of these ideas further. It will also introduce new and often related ideas that became apparent in the ethnographic-based fieldwork carried out.

### **Educating audiences: transmission of ideas, ideological formation of listeners and socio-political awareness raising**

-[Víctor Manuel] creo que dio a conocer todo eso que nosotros no teníamos idea, pues de Asturias, no... pues, con los mineros, porque aunque los hubieras oído, pero parece que con **éste**, te llegaron más, ...los dio a conocer más [otras dos mujeres del grupo asienten]...

-y lo mismo con los de Jaén no, lo de los aceituneros y decías, pero oías esas canciones, pues esa gente, como que aquí no..., hasta entonces no oías si había problemas en Andalucía [...] si vivían bien, si vivían mal... de esas cosas no se habló -[la primera participante interrumpe diciendo:] no se sabía...

-sí, no se sabía, no se hablaba y a lo mejor al escuchar esas canciones decías, pues mira, pues en Andalucía pues...

-[la participante que interrumpió anteriormente continúa:] los aceituneros no están tan bien como... dicen, que ganan cuatro pesetas...

-que a lo mejor pues eso fue un poco pues tomar conciencia a lo mejor de la situación -[la misma participante vuelve a interrumpir:] general...

-que a lo mejor estaba por toda España y a lo mejor sólo conocías lo tuyo.

(Speaker's emphasis; two female participants; Zaragoza focus group; January 2004).

-[Víctor Manuel] I think that he taught us about all that that we knew nothing about, well, you know, about Asturias, with the miners, because, although you had heard about it, but I think that with **him**, these stories reached you better...he made them more public [other two women in the group agree]

-and the same with the ones from Jaén, about the olive pickers and you said, but you heard those songs, well, these people, we didn't really know them..., until then you didn't really hear if there were problems in Andalucía [...] whether they lived well or badly... nobody really spoke about those things...

-[the first participant interrupts] no, you didn't know...

-yeah, you didn't know, nobody spoke about it and often when listening to these songs you said, look, see what is happening in Andalucía...

-[the participant who interrupted before continues:] the olive pickers do not live as well... as people say...they earn a misery...

-yes, so in a way with these songs you became aware of the situation...

-[the same participant interrupts again:] yes, of the general situation...

-yes, because it was probably similar all over Spain and you only knew about your place and your own business...

As noted in Part I of the thesis, some structural and generic features of *canción de autor/a* were strategically used to highlight the songs lyrics. The fieldwork carried out suggested that these strategies were very successful overall. Nearly all the respondents interviewed claimed that, for them, lyrics as messages were the most important elements in these types of song:

todos prestábamos atención al contenido de la letra [...]... las letras en cuanto significado (male participant; Ávila focus group, September 2003)

we all paid attention to the content of the lyrics [...] the meaning of lyrics

sin duda a la letra en cuanto al mensaje. De hecho muchos aspectos de mí se desarrollaron, pero no mi sensibilidad musical (male participant; Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview).

the lyrics as message, without any doubts. In fact, many aspects of my self developed [thanks to these songs], but not my musical sensibility.

[I]o fundamental era la letra y descifrar mensajes semi-ocultos con referencias casi siempre a la falta de libertad y la necesidad de ruptura (female participant; Ávila, September 2003; e-mail interview).

[t]he most important thing was the lyrics and deciphering semi-hidden messages referring nearly always to the lack of freedom and the need for a break.

-a la letra...[...] a lo mejor luego a otras cosas, pero de momento ibas a lo que te decía la canción

-pero era la letra, lo que se te quedaba era la letra...

-sí, yo creo que más el mensaje, aparte de que la música te gustaba, que era bonita, [...] pero primero lo que decía la canción, te imaginabas qué decía, o que quería decir...era la letra... (dialogue between three female participants; Zaragoza focus group, January 2004)

-the lyrics...after that maybe other things, but first you checked on what the song was telling you

-but it was the lyrics, what stayed in your head was the lyrics

-yes, I think that the message was the most important thing, apart from the music, that you also liked, and it was nice [...] but first the message, what it

was telling you, you imagined what it was telling you, or what it wanted to say...it was the lyrics...

This emphasis on lyrics, on the linguistic – thematic and ideological - content of songs, responded to the author/performer's desire to articulate and communicate ideas. In turn, this relates to a crucial aspect of singer-songwriters and political singing that was already mentioned in Part I: the potential relevance of *cantautores* and *canción de autor/a* as ideologically-charged, cultural phenomena with socio-political significance. In fact, it can be finally concluded that both accomplished an important task of “spread of ideas” among certain circles (Gramsci, 1988: 58). They became important “correas transmisoras” (“transmission belts”) of particular ideas, as one participant put it, and the song analysis chapters showed<sup>157</sup>. The role of *canción de autor/a* and *canción política* as cultural and socio-political “teaching material”, to use another participant's label, gained special relevance in the context of the Transition<sup>158</sup>. Also, the figures of the singer-songwriter and the political singer as educators of certain groups became especially significant (Gramsci, 1988: 58).

The fieldwork carried out suggested that this educative purpose of *canción de autor/a* and *cantautores* was overall successful. As the quotation at the beginning of the section suggests, through these songs *cantautores* taught different audiences about different Spanish realities with which they were not acquainted. For example, they publicised all over Spain the existence of problems in mining Asturias or the troubles experienced by Andalusian olive-pickers. In fact,

muchas cosas así de la situación del país las vas descubriendo a través de las canciones (female participant; Madrid focus group, January 2004).

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<sup>157</sup> Male participant; Madrid focus group, January 2004.

<sup>158</sup> Female participant from Alcalá de Henares; Nottingham, April 2003).

many of those things about the situation of the country you got to discover through these songs.

This spread of ideas carried out by *cantautores* mainly – but not exclusively - through their songs had a very important critical dimension. As the song analysis chapters showed, it often entailed a counter-hegemonic, “intense labour of criticism” (Gramsci, 1988: 58) of powerful long-established Francoist truths:

yo creo que estamos pensando que un cantautor político es un cantautor que reivindica la caída del régimen y no necesariamente, porque la caída del régimen se reivindicaba de muchas maneras en una canción, una canción como “El cobarde”, por ejemplo, no es una canción que hablaba de un régimen, pero sí que hablaba de... de una guerra, de un no ir a la guerra, o sea, y quizás esas ideas sí que eran mucho más... **peligrosas**, que meramente decir “fuera el régimen”. [...] a mí me parecía que determinadas canciones de Víctor Manuel, **de verdad** que eran peligrosas, porque ese tipo de canciones calaban en la gente y ese tipo de canciones transmitían unas ideas verdaderamente, que no eran precisamente obediencia a un régimen militarista, etc. etc. a un régimen que se apoyaba básicamente en el ejército... claro, era ir contra los pilares de un régimen basado en eso, en el ejército, en la iglesia, etc. (speaker’s emphasis. Male participant; Madrid focus group, January 2004)

I think that we are thinking here that a political singer-songwriter is a songwriter who demands the fall of the regime and it is not necessarily so, because the fall of the regime was demanded in many different ways in a song. A song like “El cobarde”, for example, is not a song that spoke of a regime, but it spoke of ... of a war, of a decision not to go to war, I mean, and perhaps these ideas were certainly much more... **dangerous** than merely saying “down with the regime”[...] it seemed to me that certain songs by Víctor Manuel, **really**, they were dangerous, because that type of songs touched people and that type of songs actually transmitted ideas that did not precisely support obeying a militaristic regime, etc. etc. a regime that basically relied on the army... of course, it was going against the pillars of the regime, which relied on the army, the church, etc.

As this quotation suggests, *canción de autor/ a* was concerned with successfully spreading ideas that attacked the core pillars of Francoism. The song analysis chapters showed that, in the particular cases of Víctor, Ana and Sabina, this problematisation of hegemonic truths especially implied a critical approach to different Francoist

discourses on Spanish national identity as shaped by history, class, love, gender and sexuality. As those chapters also showed, these counter-hegemonic musical revisions of Francoist discourses often also offered alternative versions of Spain and Spanishness: they encouraged the normalisation of mainly progressive realities and ideas previously demonised by Francoism (the Spanish left-wing past and the fight of the Spanish working class, for example). This attempt to normalise the other of Francoist discourses was successful overall, at least among some audiences. For example, two female participants noted that these songs often made them see the complexity of reality, a reality which had often been oversimplified by Francoist propaganda, they claimed. They recalled, for example, how these songs and artists made them aware of the humanity of the members of the Spanish Communist Party, a collective that had been fiercely and unequivocally demonised by Francoist propaganda:

-y claro, cuando antes de oír a éstos te hablaban de los rojos, te creías poco menos que... y claro, entonces con éstos y eso pues empiezas a oír de Carrillo, de la Pasionaria, y te das cuenta, pues esta gente pide cosas normales

-claro, descubres que es gente normal, **no tienen ni rabo ni cuernos...**

-sí, y aun encima tienen razón...y te das cuenta de que lo malos no son ni unos ni otros sino todos y ninguno (speaker's emphasis. Zaragoza focus group, January 2004)

-and, you know, before listening to these [singers], when people used to talk about communists, you nearly thought that...and then, you know, you listen to them and all that and hear of Carrillo, and of La Pasionaria, and then you realise, well these people are demanding normal things

-yes, and then you discover that they are normal people, that **they don't have a tail or horns** [like the devil]...

-yes, and on top of that, they are right...and then you realise that the villains are not one or the other, but everyone and no one.

As the above quotations suggest, this “intense labour of criticism” (Gramsci, 1988: 58) carried out by *cantautores* often allowed the audiences' acquisition of ample socio-political awareness of their surroundings. The previous quotation also reveals

that, in some cases, this newly gained socio-political consciousness altered some listeners' preconceived thoughts. In some other cases, they reinforced preconceived ideas and/or opened up a whole new world for some audiences, especially for those who had previously remained completely alien to a political and politicised reality:

-pues un poco [la canción] te ayudó a identificarte con los problemas que había

-[otra participante interrumpe:] es que hasta entonces no te habías parao a pensar en los problemas que había.

(female participants; Zaragoza focus group, January 2004)

-well in a way [these songs] helped you identify yourself with the existing problems

-[a different participant interrupts] yes because before that you hadn't really stopped to think about those problems.

In many participants' view, this awareness-raising activity triggered by singer-songwriting/ers played an important role in the ideological and emotional formation of its listeners. It had

mucha importancia en la concienciación política y en la conformación de la mentalidad de mi generación (male participant; Zaragoza, March- July, 2004; written interview).

great importance in the formation of the political consciousness of my generation and in the shaping of their mentality.

It was so important that

una buena parte de la sociedad desarrollamos nuestra sensibilidad, nuestra opinión y nuestra conciencia cívica a partir de ella (aunque no exclusivamente) (different male participant; Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview).

a good part of society developed our sensibility, our opinions and our civic conscience through it (although not exclusively).

In fact, *canción de autor/a* is likely to have helped (some) audiences shape their views of Spain, as well as their identity as Spanish and/or Catalan, Basque, Galician, Aragonese, etc. citizens. As the first quotation of the subsection suggests, it also

helped some people shape their 'civic conscience' in solidarity with others, for example. These songs made audiences aware of those realities that, although in some cases not immediate to them, affected other people and areas of the Spanish state. This encouraged the creation and/or reinforcement of a strong sense of solidarity and sympathy between different Spanish people and regions; it created an ideological and emotional bonding in the audience at different levels that was of crucial importance at the time of the Transition, as I will now examine.

### **United in the democratic fight: group identity and group creation and/or cohesion**

[la canción "La muralla"] la escuchábamos en las reuniones de amigos, es decir, en mi círculo teníamos unos discos y unas cintas y las escuchábamos y las poníamos para cantarlas nosotros, o sea, era para reforzarnos, eh, es decir, la identidad, es decir...nos identificábamos...[...] ésta no es una canción de baile, [...] la poníamos para escucharla y para cantarla (male participant; Ávila focus group, September 2003).

[the song "La muralla"] we listened to it in meetings with friends, that is, in my circle we had LPs and tapes and we listened to them and played them so that we could sing along to them, that is, it was to reinforce ourselves, um, you know, our identity, that is, we identified ourselves... [...] this is not a song for dancing [...] we played it to listen to it and sing along to it.

Singer-songwriters and political song provided their audiences with grounds for the acquisition and/or re-assertion of specific identities. This explains why some of the participants interviewed believed that, generally speaking, *canción de autor/a* and other musical genres clearly "[t]enían públicos diferentes" ("had different publics")<sup>159</sup>. That is also why a good number of listeners to *canción de autor/a* felt especially well represented by this musical genre. As one of them noted,

[s]í escuchaba otro tipo de música, pero ésta era de mayor identidad (female participant; Salamanca, January 2004; e-mail interview).

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<sup>159</sup> Female participant; Basque Country, February 2004; e-mail interview.

I also listened to other types of music, but this one was more relevant for me in terms of identity.

The identity created and/or reinforced by this musical genre relied upon a variety of premises. Among those premises were the audiences' broad identification with certain left-wing/progressive politics and the defence of democracy. The fieldwork carried out also showed that the presence of a sense of community, of belonging in a group, played an especially crucial role in the shaping of this identity (Pérez Villalba, 2004). It is then not surprising that, as many informants noted and I will later show, this vital 'identitarian' sense of community was particularly strong when recitals and concerts were held. One of the participants expressed her experiences of these events in these terms:

sal de trabajar, estás cansada, era un esfuerzo tremendo, y después volver al pueblo a casa a las tantas, pero eso, que te sentías, como, como muy unida a la gente y muy reforzado (Ávila focus group; September 2003).

you leave work, you're tired, it was such a big effort, and then you had to come back home to the village, really late at night, but you know, you felt, like, like very close to the people and really reinforced.

This 'identitarian' sense of community awoken, and/or reinforced by singer-songwriting and political singers fulfilled a very important role: it helped immensely in a process of group cohesion. In fact, singer-songwriters and political song encouraged a sense of closeness and community among members of different but relatively homogeneous and small groups of friends, workmates, neighbours, etc. with (apparently) similar interests. They often powerfully stimulated feelings of group attachment and belonging and strengthened "la emoción de la cercanía de los amigos,

de los compañeros” (“the emotion of closeness among friends, among workmates”)<sup>160</sup>.

Singer-songwriting and political singers also played a very significant role on a broader level: they importantly helped in the creation and cohesion of macro-groups made up of collectives informed by different - at times even conflicting - interests. For example, they united students and workers, who were probably the main followers of *canción de autor/a*. These two collectives gathered as one in recitals and concerts - and other political events - at the time of the Transition in order to fight for the general cause of democracy. As De Miguel noted (1986: 30), however, these two groups were often also inspired by different objectives, at least in the sixties and early seventies:

lo cierto es que unos otros y otros tuvieron, como siempre, objetivos diferentes. Similares arrojos pero objetivos cualitativamente diferentes. ¿Cómo iba a aceptar de buen grado un piquete de sudorosos trabajadores, “con conciencia de clase”, que un intelectualillo imberbe les viniera con que la historia acabaría dándoles la razón y se quedara tan fresco? ¿Cómo iban a entender que la lucha de fondo era la de la cultura contra la barbarie y el oscurantismo? Pues en éstas estaba buena parte del sector estudiantil comprometido. Reivindicando la libido freudiana, el sexo libre, frente a todo sentimiento de culpabilidad y la idea de pecado, una década antes de militar abiertamente en la izquierda y convertir sus clases en asambleas permanentes, encierros y concentraciones para el debate de la situación política del país y la protesta.

the truth is that these and the others had, as always, different objectives. A similar resoluteness but qualitatively different objectives. How could a picket of sweating workers “with class consciousness” happily accept the naïve little intellectual’s argument that history would end up showing they were right, just like that? How were [workers] going to understand that the real fight was that of culture against barbarity and obscurantism? These were the concerns of a good number of politically committed students. They were defending the idea of the Freudian libido and free sex, against any feeling of guilt and the idea of sin. They were doing so a decade before they openly became left-wing militants and made of their classes permanent assemblies, sit-in and gatherings

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<sup>160</sup> Male participant; Ávila focus group, September 2003.

in order to debate about and protest against the political situation of the country.

The fieldwork carried out showed that singer-songwriters and political singing achieved the creation of (a) macro group(s) across differences of, for example, geographical origin, class, gender, educational background, and age. In fact, in some ways singer-songwriting and political singers acted as important 'agents of cohesion' of the then fragmented pro-democratic Left. They united different individuals and groups - rationally and emotionally - in their similarities, in their desire to achieve democracy, instead of separating them in their differences. As a participant eloquently put it,

en mi opinión [la canción de autor] , fue, fue importante, fue el principio de la democracia, ¿por qué?, porque aunque había un movimiento anterior contra el franquismo, de izquierdas contra el franquismo, latente y perseguido, pues en la clandestinidad, por una parte en mi juicio la música de cantautor fue eje, un referente... que sirvió para que una serie de gente, jóvenes y no tan jóvenes, que habiendo militado o no militado contra el franquismo se unieran y tuvieran como una correa transmisor, una serie de ideales... eh... únicos...eh, y digamos que aglutinó a todo un movimiento de gente, que luego hizo posible, pues que la transición, en cierta medida también, fuera como fue, no... ese para mí es el... el valor de la música de cantautor...(male participant; Madrid focus group, January 2004)

in my opinion [singer-songwriting], it was, it was important, it was the beginning of democracy, why?, because although there was already a movement against Francoism, [a] left-wing [movement] against Francoism, latent and persecuted, you know, in secrecy, in my view songwriter's music was an axis, a referent...that managed to unite a group of people, young ones and not so young ones, some had been anti-Francoist militants and some others not... this music was the transmission-belt that united them and made them have a series of...um...shared ideals...um, and let's say that it cemented together a whole movement of people, and made it to a certain extent possible that, well, that the Transition, run the way it did... that is for me, that is... the value of singer-songwriting...

In fact, singer-songwriters and political song created a powerful illusion of unity at different levels (Pérez Villalba, 2004). They created a sense of homogeneity among audiences actually made up of different collectives and individuals with common but

also different concerns and pursuits. As a couple noted, this music “creó un espíritu de “clase” entre distintos colectivos” (“created a “class” spirit between different collectives”)<sup>161</sup>. In the particular context of the Spanish Transition, this perceived sense of unity among different collectives was of crucial importance: it provided a ground of understanding necessary for the apparition of coalition politics (Pérez Villalba, 2004) – this idea will be explored fully later in the chapter. As Martin – recalling Heritage - would probably put it (1995: 54), such a sense of unity was crucial because, when communal action is necessary, “what matters above all is not whether people in fact do ‘share’ meanings or display a ‘reciprocity of perspectives’ but that they believe themselves to do so”.

Both the conviction of sharing similar interests and fights and a passionate sense of unity beyond difference appeared as relevant in many of the interviewees’ answers. The following quotations are two examples of this. In the first one, the participant shows how he took for granted, *a priori*, the existence of high degree of understanding between him and the rest of the members in the audience at the time. In the second one, a different participant recalls his experience as a frequent recital goer at the time of the Transition. His retrospective account does not focus upon gender, age or class differences, for example. It rather stresses the joy that he experienced when he discovered that many other people shared his left-wing, pro-democratic views at the time:

pues sabías que la gente que ibas a encontrar, pues te entendías bien con ella (male participant; Ávila focus group, September 2003).

well, you knew that the people that you were gonna find there, well, you got on well with them.

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<sup>161</sup> Male and female interviewees; Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview.

yo recuerdo un concierto en Plasencia, de esos, de Jarcha, y sólo les pedíamos canciones de Miguel Hernández y tal, y y todo el público, y yo diciendo ¿Es posible que haya tanta gente de izquierdas? [...] allí lo que la gente pedía a aquellos grupos eran las canciones más comprometidas, bueno, y se sentía uno realmente muy, muy reforzado (different male participant from the Ávila focus group; September 2003)<sup>162</sup>.

I remember a concert in Plasencia, by those people, by Jarcha, and we only asked them for songs by Miguel Hernández, and all that, and, and all the public and I were saying, are there really so many left-wing people around? [...] what those people there were asking these groups for were the most committed songs, well, and it really made you feel much stronger.

This high affinity presumably shared by the members of the audience also had an impact upon the authorities. In the eyes of Francoism, singer-songwriting and political singers and their audiences were subversive and were therefore watched over in different ways. For Francoism they constituted a coherent potentially dangerous entity, a numerous, threatening whole that fought against the established order (Pérez Villalba, 2004). This was especially so when these collectives got together in recitals and concerts, as I will now show.

### **Recitals and concerts as actual and symbolic meeting points: public transgression and the establishment of a dissident public voice and identity**

y luego también, como sabías que el ir a un concierto de éstos era un poco como... rebeldía, ir contra, ir contra lo establecido, porque sabías que allí, pues eso, se cantaba eso, se gritaba, se hablaba, y era un poco de hacer semilla... (female participant; Zaragoza focus group, January 2004)

and then also, as you knew that going to one of these concerts was a bit like...rebelliousness, going against, going against the established rules, because you knew that there, you know, you sang that, you shouted, you spoke, and it was a bit like sowing the seed...

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<sup>162</sup> Miguel Hernández was a very well-known Spanish poet traditionally considered a member of the *Generación del 27* 'movement'. He was imprisoned at the end of the Spanish civil war and died in jail in 1942. His work opened the path for Spanish post-war social poetry. He became an icon for left-wing intellectuals of the Francoist period and the Transition, and a symbol of anti-Francoist resistance.

Concert and recital venues were physical meeting places of great actual and symbolic importance at the time of the Transition. They were gathering spaces in which musical performances with strong counter-hegemonic political significance took place. As Part Two showed, the actual songs by many *cantautores* contested many old Francoist truths and supported different alternative realities and Spanish national identities. As a participant put it, these songs themselves were “importante[s] porque reclamaba[n] libertades y denunciaba[n] la situación política del franquismo” (“important because [they] claimed freedom at different levels and denounced the political situation of Francoism”)<sup>163</sup>.

But the significance of these musical events went far beyond the use of politically transgressive songs. The mere existence of recitals and concerts by singer-songwriters was seen as political and subversive. In Francoist times there was no freedom of expression, reunion or association; the authorities persecuted any communal gatherings that, like these recitals and concerts, were suspected to have political aims. Thus, attending these performances often constituted in itself an actual and symbolic act of anti-Francoist resistance. In fact, participating in these events at the time was potentially dangerous for both audiences and performers: they risked being fined and/or even imprisoned, and, especially in the case of audiences, being physically assaulted by the *grises* or the *guardia civil* (police and “civil guards”).

The political aura that Francoist authorities saw in the celebration of these recitals and concerts did actually exist. For many audiences these events were oases in the desert of Francoist repression. Especially until 1977-8, they often constituted informal

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<sup>163</sup> Woman participant; Salamanca, January 2004; e-mail interview.

political meetings with friends, workmates, party and trade union members, and neighbours:

enmascarado en concierto eran las reuniones políticas que había (female participant; Madrid focus group, January 2004).

disguised as concerts they were the political meetings of the time.

Many participants noted that recitals and concerts were important

porque ese fue el catalizador, no había reuniones de partido, porque el partido no podía organizar reuniones, y los conciertos de los cantautores... era la reunión política de entonces. Era, era donde se **reunía** todo el grupito ideológico [...] y se transmitían las consignas en el concierto... (speaker's emphasis; male participant; Madrid focus group, January 2004)

because that was the catalyst, there were no party meetings, because the party could not organise meetings, and singer-songwriters' concerts... it was the political reunion of the time. It was, it was where the ideological group **met** [...] and in the concert orders/slogans were transmitted...

For some audiences these recitals and concerts were also crucial in a different way.

According to some participants, they could similarly be seen as actual political demonstrations against Francoism and for democracy:

yo creo que fueron las primeras manifestaciones que hubo, los conciertos de todo el mundo que iba a escuchar estos cantautores, eran las primeras manifestaciones, no había otra manera de manifestar lo que tú pensabas, sino cantando sus canciones...(female participant; Madrid focus group, January 2004)<sup>164</sup>

I think that they were the first demonstrations of the time, these concerts to which everyone went to see these songwriters, they were the first demonstrations, there was no other way of showing what you thought, but by singing their songs...

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<sup>164</sup> Although this participant considered these events to be the first demonstrations of Francoist times, this was not strictly so. Different small, illegal demonstrations took place in Spain as early as 1941 (Barciela et al. 2001: 334-36). It is then perhaps more accurate to suggest that these recitals and concerts were some of the first numerically relevant political 'demonstrations' that took place in Spain in the 60s and 70s.

Often these recitals-‘demonstrations’ constituted real and symbolic spaces of considerable political freedom; they were counter-hegemonic political sites of resistance in which many strict Francoist codes of behaviour were temporarily suspended:

-aprovechando el concierto, que no se podían sacar banderas... allí se sacaban banderas de todas las clases, se gritaba de todo que no podías, vamos...

-[otra participante interrumpe:] que era la única oportunidad que había para hacer algo así...

-sí, de libertad de expresión

-en la calle no lo podías hacer, y sin embargo en esos sitios sí...

-yo creo que era un poco la única forma de expresión así... (female participants; Zaragoza focus group, January 2004).

-concerts were a good excuse, you were not allowed to take banners out...well, there you took every kind of banners out, you shouted all you were not allowed to, you know...

-it was the only available chance to do something like that...

-yes, to have freedom of expression

-and you couldn’t do that in the street, but you could in these places...

-I think it was a bit like the only way you had to express yourself...

For all the reasons highlighted above, recitals and concerts by *cantautores* and *cantantes políticos* became very important symbols of anti-Francoist struggle. This happened for performers, audiences and outsiders alike. Moreover, for many members in the audience these performances constituted important public affirmations of group identity. They were public demonstrations of their dissident, pro-democratic, left-wing voices “acting in concert”, to use Mattern’s polysemic phrase (Mattern, 1998: 4). This “acting in concert” motivated by *canCIÓN de autor/a*, however, went beyond the celebration of recitals and concerts, as I will now show.

### **Singer-songwriting/ers, political singing/ers and political activism beyond recitals and concerts**

tengo primos, de esa época, no, entonces, [...] estaban en los conciertos de Víctor Manuel, y en los conciertos de Raimon, y se iban a Valencia, todo esto,

y eran chavales que estaban en el PSP de Tierno Galván, y estaban en el Partido Comunista... todo esto, que en esa época tenían veinte años, veintiuno, veintidós, diecinueve...para esa gente fue importante [esta música] (male participant; Madrid focus group, January 2004).

I've got cousins who lived that period, you know, then, [...] they attended the concerts by Víctor Manuel, and those by Raimon, and they travelled to Valencia [to attend his concerts], and all that, and they were guys who were in the PSP led by Tierno Galván [Popular Socialist Party], and in the Communist Party... all that, they were twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two, nineteen at the time... for these people [this music] was important.

*Canción de autor/a* was not only a protagonist in recitals and concerts. It was also crucially present in many other politically-charged contexts. For example, a good number of participants highlighted that specific songs by *cantautores* were often used in politically-oriented meetings at friends' houses, in demonstrations and in political party and trade union meetings (Pérez Villalba, 2004). Many of the interviewees agreed that Ana Belén's "La muralla", for instance, was one of their favourite songs in this kind of political events:

"La muralla" y la fiesta del PC van juntos (female participant from Madrid; Nottingham, November 2003).

"La muralla" and the festival of the Communist Party go together

es un símbolo grandísimo, en mi círculo, en el círculo que yo estaba, en la gente del PC y la gente que militaba y que dirigía las huelgas estudiantiles, [...] esa canción es un himno, es como el himno republicano para la república, un himno, completamente, la típica canción que la cantaba la gente espontáneamente en manifestaciones [...] (female participant from Madrid; Nottingham, November 2003)

it is an extremely important symbol, in my circle, in the circle in which I was, for the people of the PC [Communist Party] and for political militants and for those who led student demonstrations, [...] that song is an anthem, it is like the republican anthem for the republic, an anthem, without a doubt, the typical song that people sang spontaneously in demonstrations [...]

nos la aprendimos de memoria, la cantamos en reuniones, la cantamos en el trabajo (female participant; Ávila focus group, September 2003)

we learnt it by heart, we sang it in meetings, we sang it in the work place

y esta canción había por ejemplo mítines que la gente improvisaba, que no se qué, “¡Abre la muralla!”, y se aprovechaba el latigillo de abre la muralla y cierra. Diciendo esto nos conviene, esto no (male participant; Ávila focus group, September 2003).

and this song, there were for example political meetings and people improvised, this and that, “Open the wall”, and you used the phrase open and close the wall. Meaning this is convenient for us, this is not.

These quotations suggest that the relationship between anti-Francoist political activity and singer-songwriting was very close overall and strong in a significant number of contexts. It is then not surprising that singer-songwriter Joaquín Carbonell admitted that, especially in the seventies, *cantautores* and *cantantes políticos* “era[n] personajes políticos más que músicos” (“were political characters rather than artists/musicians”) (Uribe, 2003). This relationship between politics and singer-songwriting is especially interesting here because the fieldwork carried out showed that *canción de autor/a* successfully encouraged some audiences’ political activism outside the physical limits of concert and recital venues, and politically-oriented meetings in private houses, for example.

As Eyerman states (1999: 118), music can “serve as [a] resource [...] upon which social movements can draw in mobilizing and organising protest”. This is what Spanish singer-songwriting and political singers achieved at the time of the Transition. The fieldwork carried out showed that these singer-songwriters and political songs encouraged (some) audiences to take their political commitment to the

streets. For some audiences this music was an incentive to participate in different public activities organised by different political parties, trade unions and other pro-democracy groups and organisations. Thus, *canción de autor/a* and *canción política* stimulated the participation of some audiences in pro-democracy demonstrations and political meetings, for example:

despertó y animó principalmente a los jóvenes a participar en manifestaciones y actos políticos (female interviewee; Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview)

[they] stirred up and encouraged mainly young people to participate in demonstrations and political events.

-yo creo que esta gente movió a que... a que la gente saliera a la calle  
-a pedir tus derechos, tus necesidades [...] y que tenías que pedir, no, pedirlo, exigirlo (female participants from the Zaragoza focus group; January 2004)

-I think that these people moved... moved people to take the streets  
-[they encouraged people] to ask for your rights, for your needs [...] and the fact that you had to ask for things, you know, ask for them, demand them

A different participant explained her experience and views in the following terms - the emphasis that she placed upon the emotionally touching potential of *canción de autor/a*, or its moving “energy”, as she called it, should be noted:

[e]sa música ayudó mucho a movilizar a la gente [...] esa satisfacción humana, o ese deseo, esa energía que produce el hecho cultural, no... [...] que estas canciones, y también otras manifestaciones culturales, como el teatro, teatro de calle y cosas así, que eran las canciones las que creaban esa energía, ese “torrente de energía” que luego movilizaba a la gente a ir al hecho político y a trabajar en el hecho político. Entonces son, son inseparables, la una de la otra, la canción era política, y creaba la energía suficiente como para seguir con el trabajo político [...] Nosotros escuchábamos a Ana Belén cantar “abre la muralla, cierra la muralla”, y cantábamos eso en las manifestaciones (female interviewee from Madrid; Nottingham, November 2003).

[t]his music importantly helped to mobilise people [...] that human satisfaction, or that desire, that energy that the cultural work produces, you know... [...] these songs, and also other cultural manifestations, like theatre, like street theatre and things like that, these songs were the ones that created that energy, that “energy avalanche” that later mobilised people to go to the political fact and work on the political. Then they are, they are inseparable, the

one and the other, the song was political, and created enough energy to keep on working on the political [...] We heard Ana Belén sing “open the wall, close the wall” and we sang that in the demonstrations.

As another informant noted, *canción de autor/a*, made use of

canciones que a la gente le hacían ponerse de pie diciendo, sí señor, tienes razón [...] y decías, pues es verdad, te tienes que mover... y, y te movías (female participant; Zaragoza focus group, January 2004)

songs that made people stand and say, yes, man, you’re right [...] and you said, it is true, you have to act... and, and you did.

Other interviewees also highlighted these songs’ moving potential. One of them explained that singer-songwriting/ers strengthened her determination to act politically outside recitals and concerts. She highlighted how she found the arguments in many of these songs rationally convincing and emotionally moving and passionate. In her view, these two characteristics of *canción de autor/a* strengthened her beliefs in class equality and democracy, and encouraged her to attend particular public gatherings and demonstrations with her friends. She recalled in particular the time in which she participated in a pro-democracy gathering that took place in Madrid in 1977. She stressed that music was a protagonist of the act and that it magically eased her fears, even if momentarily:

yo me acuerdo la noche antes de las elecciones antes de que saliera Suárez, yo estaba en el... esto universitario, y allí lo único que se oía era “Al alba”, “Al alba”, todo el mundo con las cerillas y todo, yo decía, nos van a pegar una ensala’ de hostias... que nos van a, no sé ni por dónde vamos a salir, yo iba con muchísimo miedo, y sin embargo... pues fue algo... bastante, bastante bonito... y era la canción “Al alba”, “Al alba” (female participant; Madrid focus group, January 2004).

I remember the night before the elections, before Suárez was chosen as president, I was at the university campus thing, and there the only thing that you could hear was “Al alba”, “Al alba” [“At dawn”], everybody holding matches and all that, and I said, they are going to bloody beat us up so badly, for sure... they are going to, I don’t even know how we’re going to get out of

here, I was so scared, and however...well it was something...quite, quite beautiful...and it was the song "Al alba", "Al alba".

Generally speaking, pro-democracy parties, trade unions and organisations were well aware of this mobilising potential power of singer-songwriting and political singers and made good use of them. This explains why, for example,

el VIII congreso del PCE, reunido desde el verano de 1972 en las afueras de París, aportó como gran novedad teórica la alianza de las fuerzas del trabajo y de la cultura que venía a sustituir a la tradicional unión de obreros y de campesinos representada por la hoz y el martillo (Villena, 2002: 74).

the VIII conference of the Spanish Communist Party, which started to meet on the outskirts of Paris in the summer of 1972, provided as a great theoretical novelty the alliance of the working forces and those of culture. This came to replace the traditional union of workers and peasants represented by the hammer and sickle.

This political mobilising power of singer-songwriting and political singers became more conspicuous outside traditional recitals and concerts from 1977-8 onwards. With the official disappearance of censorship, many singer-songwriters and political singers started to be called then by different political organisations and were asked to participate in their political meetings. Such organisations knew of these artists' 'poder de convocatoria' (power to attract great numbers of people) and saw in their presence and help the possibility to increase their votes significantly. Thus, for example, in 1978 Sabina played in electoral meetings for the PSP (Popular Socialist Party), UGT (General Union of Workers) and for the PCE, in premises that belonged to the PSOE and to the labour union CNT (National Headquarters of Workers) (De Miguel, 1986: 82, 107)<sup>165</sup>. According to different critics, this electoral strategy was generally successful and, as Villena asserts quoting the critic Ricardo Cantalapiedra (2002: 76),

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<sup>165</sup> More information on the subject is offered, for example, at <http://www.mp3.lolatio.com/ioaquinsabina.htm> [Accessed on 15th December 2001];

“[a]sí, figuras como Ana Belén cosecharon más votos entre las gentes de izquierdas de aquella época que los discursos apolillados de los dirigentes”.

“[i]n this way, figures like Ana Belén harvested more votes among left-wing people at the time than the mouldy discourses of political leaders”.

## **SOME KEYS TO THE SOCIO-POLITICAL SUCCESS OF SINGER-SONGWRITING AND POLITICAL SINGERS**

This last section turns to explore some of the reasons behind the socio-political success of singer-songwriting, especially in some groups. It examines some of the strategies and factors that probably conditioned the effectiveness of this genre in general, and that of the works by Víctor, Ana and Sabina more particularly at the time of the Transition. In order to do so, it develops some of the ideas sometimes latently presented earlier in the chapter, and also introduces some new but related arguments.

### **The power of music and song: listening to song as a potentially powerful physical and emotional experience**

*[l]a música llega con más facilidad a la gente que la literatura o los discursos, sobre todo a la gente más joven y las hacía reflexionar sobre la realidad en que vivían (emphasis added; female participant; Zaragoza, March-July 2004; written interview).*

*[m]usic reaches people more easily than literature or speeches do, and especially with younger people, and it [music] made them reflect about the reality that surrounded them.*

“Al alba” se lleva la palma de oro [...] en la cantidad de conciertos en los que he estado y él [Aute] ha empezado a cantar “Al alba”, ha empezado a cantar “Al alba” y se ha hecho un silencio... de estos silencios que puedes así, que puedes cortar el silencio, no... que puedes meter la mano en el silencio y sacar ahí de todo... es desgarró puro, pero en silencio... y lo sé porque yo lo he

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<http://www.isabina.net> [Accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2003]; and  
<http://freehost10.websamba.com:81/isabina/sabina.html> [Accessed on 14th April 2003].

vivido en mi corazón, porque lo he visto en la gente que ha estado conmigo, porque lo he visto en él, porque lo he visto en otros artistas [...] está cantando cualquier cosa, cualquier cosa, y de repente [cantando] “si te dijera amor...”, y todo el mundo, sepulcral, sepulcral es la única palabra que puedo encontrar para describir ese silencio, una cosa como que ahí está el desgarró emocional de tanta gente, y es una canción de amor, que por eso tiene ese toque emotivo, por el amor, y es una canción profundamente política porque ese ‘al alba’ era la esperanza de que al alba, mañana, las cosas iban a ser mejor; y cuando todo el mundo juntaba las manos, sacaba los mecheros... y cantaba “Al alba”, y mucha gente llorando, yo la primera, bueno, era esa sensación de decir, el futuro es nuestro... (female participant from Madrid; Nottingham, November 2003).

“Al alba” [“At dawn”] just carries the day [...] in the many concerts that I have been to and he [Aute] has started singing “Al alba”, he has started singing “Al alba” and an incredible silence has fallen... this kind of silences that you can, you can cut that silence, you know... you can put your hand in that silence and take out a bit of everything... it is a pure tearing, but in silence...and I know because I have lived it in my heart, because I have seen it in the people who were with me, because I have seen it in him, I have seen it in other artists [...] he would be singing anything, anything, and then suddenly [singing herself:] “if I told you, my love...”, and everyone, sepulchral, sepulchral is the only word I can find to describe that silence, something like, there it is, the emotional tearing of so many people, and it is a love song, and that is why it has that emotional touch, for the love thing, and it is a deeply political song because that ‘at dawn’ was the hope that at dawn, tomorrow, things were going to be better, and when everybody put their hands together and took out their lighters... and he/they sang “Al alba”, and with many people crying, I was the first one to cry, you know, it was the sensation of saying, the future is ours...

Different studies (e.g. McClary, 1991; Storr, 1992; and Martin, 1995) have explored music and its effects on the human mind and body. According to some scholars, music per se and in general, systematically provokes (particular) physical and emotional responses on listeners. This idea has been defended, for example, by psychiatrist Storr (1992). By drawing on different theories, he asserts that

music causes increased *arousal* in those who are interested in it and who therefore listen to it with some degree of concentration. By arousal I mean a condition of heightened alertedness, awareness, interest and excitement: a generally enhanced state of being [...] arousal manifests itself in various physiological changes (1992: 24-25) (emphasis in the original)<sup>166</sup>.

<sup>166</sup> Although he regrets the “established distinction between ‘classical’ and ‘popular’ music in the western world” (1992: xi) he is here and throughout his study focusing “on classical music, rather than on popular one” (1992: xi). In fact, Storr still works implicitly within the traditional distinction between

Storr's arguments are overgeneralising and rather context insensitive. As Martin points out, stating that musical stimuli inevitably cause (particular) physical reactions and emotional responses on listeners is deterministic and rather simplistic (Martin, 1995: 161) In fact, Storr's arguments are on the whole incompatible with the ethnomusicological position adopted in this thesis. Moreover, they also ignore that "the whole matter of the effects of music is not well understood" (Martin, 1995: 161).

However, drawing on my own experience as a listener, I can assert that music *can* (rather than *does*) awaken certain emotions and feelings in listeners; it can be a very important and powerful weapon able to stimulate, strengthen and/or weaken a wide range of emotions in different individuals. Such feelings and emotions triggered by music are often greatly determined by the concrete cultural parameters that inform the different contexts in which music is received (Martin, 1995; Frith, 1996). As Martin notes (1995: 63, 64),

the meaning of music is neither inherent in it nor grasped intuitively by 'the' human mind; rather meaning is created in the process of social interaction which mediates all our experience of the world [...] Socialisation leads us to interpret the music we hear in particular ways, and the ways that we invest it with meaning reflect our cultural conventions, rather than intuition or the decoding of its inherent meaning.

Consequently, "the comprehension of music cannot be intuitive" (Martin, 1995: 46) and listeners' emotional responses to it are not given *a priori*; instead, they are importantly conditioned by culture and society. Thus, while there is always room for personal interpretations of music, "it is people's socially acquired knowledge and experience of the operative conventions which enable artists to produce an 'emotional

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"high" and "low" culture, or, more particularly, between "serious" and "non-serious" music. In any case, his statements on the physical power of music are also applicable to popular music.

effect' in their audiences" with their music - Martin recalling Becker pointed out (Martin, 1995: 201).

Being acquainted with Spanish musical conventions and culture, singer-songwriters of the Transition managed to speak to and touch (some) people with their music in important ways. The fieldwork undertaken also showed that, overall, works by singer-songwriters were not only potentially emotionally powerful and moving at a strictly musical level. Rather, a number of factors interacted with one another in their songs in complementary and complex ways and created potentially powerful, thrilling and moving wholes. As a female participant observed:

pero también...no es sólo la música, o la voz, es cómo transmiten... escuchas "Al Alba" cantada por Aute y **es que te llega**, o sea, da igual que le salga un gallo, o tres, o que se quede sin voz... es que te lo dice de una manera, que te llega...(speaker's emphasis. Madrid focus group, January 2004).

but also...it is not only the music, or the voice, it is how they communicate... you listen to "Al alba" sung by Aute, and the thing is that **it touches you**, I mean, it does not matter if his voice cracks once, or three times, or even if he loses his voice...the thing is that he tells you in such a way that it touches you...

In fact, it was the combination of many different elements and factors that created especially emotional works for receptive listeners. Audiences' emotions were aroused, for example, by a powerful interaction of music, politically committed lyrics - or lyrics understood as political -, and the artist's emotive vocal and body performances. The sense of community that the communal experience of these songs generated, especially in recitals, concerts, and political meetings-concerts was also emotionally relevant in this context of the Transition:

recuerdo como uno de los conciertos más importantes de la Transición el concierto de la campaña electoral del PSOE que culminó en el año 82, no recuerdo qué mes, era verano, pero la campaña política del PSOE culminó en la ciudad universitaria de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid con un

**gigante** concierto en el que cantaron todas esas personas que acabamos de nombrar, desde Paco Ibáñez, Ana Belén, Víctor Manuel, Luis Eduardo Aute, creo que estuvo Lluís Llach y todos esos, [...] Sabina... todo el mundo [...] fue un concierto **apoteósico**, realmente inolvidable, con Felipe González haciendo un discurso-mítin después de todo, [...] Aute, o sea, cuando Aute cantó “Al alba”; o sea, las connotaciones políticas de esa canción eran impresionantes, no, y no se me olvida que, había miles y miles de personas y en medio había una bandera muy grande con el símbolo nuevo de la Constitución, con el de la monarquía parlamentaria, no... y recuerdo Felipe González viendo la bandera y, y gritando a la multitud, “¡qué se alce la bandera constitucional!”, nunca se me olvida...y la gente con una emoción... con una emoción indescriptible... (speaker’s emphasis; female participant from Madrid; Nottingham, November 2003)

I remember the concert of the PSOE electoral campaign in 1982 as one of the most important ones of the Transition. I can’t remember what month it was, it was summer, but the political campaign of the PSOE reached its peak at the campus of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid with a **huge** concert in which all the people that we have just mentioned sang, from Paco Ibáñez, Ana Belén, Víctor Manuel, Luis Eduardo Aute, I think that Lluís Llach and all those people were also there, [...] Sabina [was there]... absolutely everyone [...] it was a **tremendous** concert, absolutely unforgettable, with Felipe González conducting the speech after everything else, [...] Aute, I mean, when Aute sang “At dawn”; I mean, the political connotations of that song were amazing, you know, and I remember that, there were thousands of people and right in the middle there was a very big flag with the new symbol of the Constitution, with the one of the parliamentary democracy, you know...and I remember Felipe González looking at the flag and, and shouting to the crowd “let the constitutional flag be raised!”, I never forget that, and the people, so emotional... with indescribable emotion...

As it can be inferred from this quotation, part of this genre’s socio-political success resided in its capacity to touch people’s sensibility and awaken their emotions. In fact, such a capacity was crucial during the Transition and was often linked to political activism. For political actions are not only driven by ideas; political commitment is often also fed by emotional impulses, by feelings and passionate reactions that sometimes take individuals (far) beyond their more rational inclinations. This is what happened to some audiences of *canción de autor/a*. For example, a female participant explained that, among other things, it was the emotional power of these songs, “la cosa...o sea, los sentimientos que te despierta la canción” (“the thing...I mean, the

feelings that the song awakens in you”) that eased her fears in demonstrations<sup>167</sup>. She also recalled that, on a few occasions, it was mainly this sentimental component of songs that touched her more resolute self and triggered her attendance at certain political acts with her sister and friends.

Many political singers were well aware of the importance of emotions at the time. They realised that the transmission of ideas carried out by this musical genre should not rely solely on an appeal to the audiences’ logic and intellect. In order to be successful, it also had to make the most of its emotional potential and reach people’s sensitivity. As singer-songwriter Luis Eduardo Aute put it in an interview with Menéndez Flores (2001: 43),

[u]na canción debe entrar a través de los sentidos, de la emoción, y después reflexionar acerca de ella.

[a] song must enter through the senses, through emotion, and then you can reflect on it.

**“Solo/a no puedo, con amigos sí”: the importance of the collective experience of music<sup>168</sup>.**

acudir a estos recitales era una especie de baño, de inmersión en un lugar distinto de todo lo que había y te sentías muy reforzado pues... yo me quedaba más seguro de las razones que había y de que todo esto iba a cambiar y tal... (male participant; Ávila focus group, September 2003).

going to these recitals was like having a bath, like immersing oneself in a place different to everything that was available at the time and it made you feel so reinforced...I was left feeling sure about our goals and about the fact that it was all going to change and so on...

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<sup>167</sup> Female participant from Alcalá de Henares; April 2003.

<sup>168</sup> “I can’t do it on my own, I can with friends”. I have borrowed this phrase from “La bola de cristal”, a Spanish TV program of the 80s that I used to watch as a kid. I have slightly modified the original logo (“Solo no puedo, con amigos sí”) in order to add the gender dimension that the original one lacked.

As noted earlier in the chapter, the fieldwork carried out suggested that feelings of group belonging were especially important for pro-democracy individuals at the time of the Transition:

en aquella época le dábamos mucha importancia a, al momento colectivo, el momento de, de la unidad, y le dábamos muy poca importancia a la especie de...individual. Lo que importaba era el grupo, el grupo [...] que había que hacerlo entre todos, no (different male participant from the Ávila focus group; September 2003).

at the time we gave loads of importance to, to the collective moment, the moment of, of unity, and we didn't really give much importance to the sort of... individuality. What was important then was the group, the group [...] that we had to do things together, you know.

To put it using Mattern's terms, the creation of "communities" was crucial for pro-democracy individuals at the time of the Transition. "Community" is a complex notion which

represents a theoretical and practical means through which disparate individuals come to recognize and act upon common concerns and interests, negotiate differences, and assert themselves in public arenas (Mattern, 1998: 4-5).

"Communities" are important because

[w]hile community is justified on various grounds, its principle political justification is this need for collective political action. A political conception of community links community to collective action by providing a framework for recognizing and acting upon shared interests and for negotiating and contesting divergent interests. Community is here conceived of as a social basis for political action but not as political action per se. [...]

The key challenge lies in finding or creating some semblance of unity in diversity that, however temporary, uneven, and slight, enables individuals to engage in collective political action to address shared interests and to negotiate divergent ones. Although community is partly constituted by diversity, it also helps avoid a situation in which diversity produces social disintegration and failure to act on pressing problems and concerns (1998: 11).

Mattern also noted that music can play a very significant role as a community builder.

In his view,

[t]he communities that musicians have helped to form and sustain provide the social basis for political action that would be difficult or impossible among individuals who are not tied together in this way (1998: 5).

As noted earlier, this potential of music materialised in the case of the *canción de autor/a* of the Transition. Spanish singer-songwriters actually created “communities” among different collectives of listeners at the time. As Boyle put it (1995: 294), *canción de autor/a* “was not only an act of artistic expression, it was an act of community”<sup>169</sup>. To put it in Gramscian terms (1999: 174, 205): singer-songwriters produced and maintained counter-publics that bridged different groups. This cross-group alliance was the result of a struggle within civil society, and was of crucial anti-Francoist, counter-hegemonic importance during the Transition. This was especially evident, strong and significant in concerts and recitals: these events provided the practical and psychological grounds necessary for cooperation and potential joint political activism in favour of democracy. They set the basis for “acting in concert, which is a metaphor for community-based political action through music” (Mattern, 1998: 4). As a male participant noted, by attending these concerts they realised that large numbers of people were craving for political democracy and that

para poder conseguir una serie de objetivos que queremos conseguir, que todo cambie, tenemos que estar unidos (Ávila focus group; September 2003).

in order to achieve a series of aims that we want to achieve, [that is,] that everything changes, we have to stay together.

As a different male informant also said, they realised that it was the practical materialisation of “ese sentido de hermandad, de unidad” (“that sense of fraternity, of

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<sup>169</sup> In her article Boyle refers specifically to the Nova Canço. However, her argument is perfectly applicable to the *canción de autor/a* of the Transition more generally.

This important communal side to Spanish *canción de autor/a* and *canción política* of the Transition resembled that of African(-American) music. Like the latter, *canción de autor/a* was especially lived at a social level; it agglutinated members of society in order to share common past and present experiences and often presupposed the interaction of the singers with the group as a chorus (Southern, 2001: 18, 31). Some of these characteristics will be explored in some detail later in this section.

unity”) that they experienced in concerts and recitals, that could take them further politically speaking, given the historical situation of the country<sup>170</sup>.

The fieldwork undertaken also showed that this power of *canCIÓN de autor/a* to fulfil the needs of group belonging of its listeners – especially through recitals and concerts was one of the keys to its success and popularity. Different factors combined to turn these concerts and recitals into very special and powerful events. For example, their success relied on an important quantitative aspect. The fact that they were attended by large numbers of people – often by a few thousand - was of practical and psychological importance for artists, audiences and outsiders alike. For many artists, being successful in attracting large numbers of listeners became a mental – and often also economic - incentive to continue their artistic and political efforts<sup>171</sup>. Sharing concerts and recitals with so many ‘comrades in arms’ often also gave audiences important support and determination to continue their political struggle. For Francoist authorities and supporters, these numerically significant dissident forces appeared as dangerous. They realised that

when the individual can associate himself [or herself] with all the other individuals who want the same changes [or believe to do so], [...] the individual can be multiplied an impressive number of times and can obtain a change which is far more radical than at first sight ever seemed possible [my additions] (Gramsci, 1971: 353).

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<sup>170</sup> Ávila focus group, September 2003.

<sup>171</sup> According to many of the participants interviewed, especially in the sixties and up until 1976-7, recitals and concerts were often either free, or cheap and affordable. As some participants said, often audiences were only requested to pay a “symbolic” amount of money to help cover the organisers’ costs. In fact, in many cases artists participated in these events altruistically. As a participant from the Basque Country highlighted “[c]reo recordar que en algunos simplemente se pasaba la bolsa para echar la voluntad” “[i]f I remember well, in some of them they only passed a bag around for you to give what you wanted” (female informant; Basque Country, February 2004; e-mail interview). Especially from 1978, however, recitals and concerts often came to be held in big commercial venues. In many of these cases, audiences had to pay the average price of concerts and recitals of the time. Such a price often depended on the particular artists’ cachet. After that date, however, many *cantautores* and *cantantes políticos* still continued to offer their work in events for which they often received no economic remuneration (e.g. in numerous electoral meetings-concerts).

Other factors also determined positively the success of these recitals and concerts. Singers often made use of a number of strategies that built and enhanced a special, often emotionally charged relationship between them, their works, and the members of the audience. As the song analysis chapters showed, this happened at the level of lyrics and vocal performance, for example: both were often clearly oriented in particular ideological directions.

These strategies also affected the ways in which recitals and concerts were led as a whole. A number of LPs recorded live in recitals and concerts showed that singer-songwriters recurrently encouraged interaction between themselves and their audiences at the time of the Transition. This was clear, for example, in Víctor's *En directo* (1976). This album reproduced many of the artist's comments as he repeatedly addressed his audiences and was answered by them. This atmosphere of complicity performer-text-audience was also well captured in Paco Ibáñez's *Paco Ibáñez en el Olympia* (1969), as well as – in a different way - in Sabina's *La Mandragora* (1981), for example. On these and other LPs, the performers often explicitly introduced their songs and 'guided' listeners in their understanding. These LPs also clearly reproduced the audiences' voices as they clapped and sang along with the artists. These particularities partly blurred the sharp boundaries that usually divided artists and audiences in other types of musical performances. In fact, they were a good example of what Southern would call "communal participation" (2001: 220).

These particularities became especially significant when later live recordings by *cantautores* were examined. These later recordings did not incorporate some of those elements that had encouraged interaction between performers and their audiences

earlier in the Transition. This happened in Víctor and Ana's *Mucho más que dos* (1994), as well as in the video of their musical tour *El gusto es nuestro* (1996), for example. The fact that this interactive dimension was completely absent in these recordings does not necessarily mean, however, that it did not actually take place live in one way or another. However, it does point to the relevance that this close relationship of complicity, this special bonding established between performers and listeners was likely to have had at the time of the Transition.

Audiences also engaged in practices that helped to create a special atmosphere of group identity and cohesion in recitals and concerts. The use of "ritualized practices", to use Eyerman's phrase (1999: 119), positively influenced the relationships between the different members of the audience and the performers. As many participants pointed out, attending these recitals often entailed singing along with the singers in what could be read as a mass chorus. At other times audiences sang the lyrics of the songs that artists were playing but were not allowed to sing<sup>172</sup>. Other "ritualised practices" included holding hands while singing, and lighting up candles and cigarette lighters. A participant highlighted how

si estás sola es distinto a cuando te pillas con un grupo de gente, no, allí todo el mundo cantándolo, o sea, con esas velitas, esas cosas que... que te llenan de otra forma (Madrid focus group, January 2004).

if you are on your own it is different to when it gets you with a group of people, you know, there everyone singing along with the songs, with the little candles, those things that...that fill you up differently.

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<sup>172</sup> The artists' decision not to observe the official orders given by censors often had immediate police response: the recital/concert was often automatically cancelled and the artists could be fined and/or taken to the *calabozo* (prison).

As Eyerman notes (1999: 119-20), and the above quotation suggests, “ritualized practices” are important because “in and through” them “meaning and significance [are] embedded”. In fact, they are “central to the construction of meaning”, even though “the meaning of ritual performance is not given” (Eyerman, 1999: 122) but rather socially and culturally constructed. “Ritualized practices” are very important because they often

help mark the significance of an occasion and, in the process, solidify a group through creating a sense of common experience. Rituals, Durkheim argued, are central to the constitution of social solidarity [...]. Rituals perform a similar function in social movements, in that central process of the formation of a collective identity (Eyerman, 1999: 122).

In the context of the Transition, the “ritualized practices” noted earlier worked in all the ways cited above. For example, they undoubtedly helped mark the enormous significance of concerts and recitals. In fact, for some audiences these events became rituals that acquired (quasi-)religious significance:

[r]ecuerdo varios [recitales], por la noche, con las velas encendidas, hoy los recuerdo como místicos (female informant; Ávila, September 2003; e-mail interview).

I remember some [recitals], at night, with the candles burning, today I remember them as mystical.

A male participant also explained that participation in these concerts/rituals

[e]ra una ceremonia, una religión. Era parte de una misa (Ávila focus group, September 2003)

[i]t was a ceremony, a religion. It was part of a mass.

The fieldwork carried out also showed that these ritualized practices of concerts and recitals were read by audiences, artists and outsiders alike as, among other things, symbols of communal complicity, solidarity and left-wing resistance. As Boyle put it (1995: 294) and the participants interviewed confirmed, these practices also expressed

the audiences' hope for the victory of democracy over authoritarianism in the near future.

### ***Canción de autor/a and micro-politics***

[After listening to Sabina's "Mi vecino de arriba": what do you think of the narrator in the song – the anti-Francoist *vecino de abajo*?

- puta madre...(risas de los hombres) somos nosotros [...] es que en el 75 y en el 78 todo esto nos parecía de puta madre, éramos anti-fútbol, muy anti-televisión, yo me jactaba de no leer el *Diario de Ávila*...(male participant; Ávila focus group, September 2003)

- f\*\*\*\*\* great (the men in the group laugh) he's like us [...] the thing is that in 75 and 78 all these seemed f\*\*\*\*\* great to us, we were against football, very much against TV, and I even boasted about not reading the *Diario de Ávila* [local newspaper].

Like the previous section, this chapter as a whole has mainly focused on macro-politics and the public significance of *canción de autor/a* of the Transition. It has stressed the political – in a strict sense – roles that it fulfilled at the time. The fieldwork carried out also showed, however, that singer-songwriting had a crucial micro-political dimension at the time. In fact, the findings suggested that for many participants both the macro- and micro-political dimensions of the genre were related to one another in a complementary way. This became clear, for example, in the comments made by one of the male interviewees:

-la influencia en la política fue importantísima porque movieron lo que era muy difícil de mover. -la influencia en los comportamientos cotidianos de los jóvenes y no tanto fue decisiva: vestimenta, pelo, libros y lecturas, relaciones con la familia,...

Ayudaron a forjar el carácter de millones de personas jóvenes!  
(Zaragoza, March- July 2004; written interview).

-their influence on politics was enormous because they moved what was very difficult to move. -their influence on young people's and not so young people's daily behaviours was decisive: dressing and hair style, books and readings, relationships with the family...

They helped shape the character of millions of young people!

Many participants also stressed that this genre was one of the elements – though not the only one - that helped them shape their engagement with politics – in a broad sense - on a daily micro-scale. As the song analysis chapters showed, many songs by *cantautores* often addressed issues that belonged to this micro-political dimension (e.g. love relationships). Some male participants explained that these songs and their authors/performers encouraged and inspired them to, for example, teach the history of the workers' movement at university, or grow their beards (like many *cantautores* and revolutionary hero Che Guevara, for example, had done). They also encouraged some women to show their most rebellious side: to wear hippy clothes – with all that it implied at the time – and, in those cases in which they lived with their families, arrive home later than they were allowed to, for example. All these rather rebellious and potentially subversive behaviours probably made a difference in their most immediate surroundings, however small that might have been. This successful appeal to micro-politics was also crucial at a different level. In fact, it is probably safe to assert that this genre's overall ability to adopt a holistic approach to politics, to combine macro- and micro-politics, to speak to the listeners' public, but also more private and personal lives, interests, emotions, anxieties and concerns was one of the keys to its success and popularity.

### **Biographies that matter: singer-songwriters practising what they preach**

te enteras que Serrat fue desterrado, que Serrat quiso cantar en catalán en el Festival de Eurovisión, que Víctor Manuel tuvo miles de problemas con la policía... (male participant; Madrid focus group, January 2004)

you hear that Serrat had to go into exile, that Serrat wanted to sing in Catalan at the Eurovision Contest, that Víctor Manuel had thousands of problems with the police...

In a significant number of cases, singer-songwriters' public biographies seemed to have a considerable impact upon (some of) their audiences<sup>173</sup>. The fieldwork carried out suggested that some listeners' active political commitment was motivated and/or strengthened by these artists' work but also – and often as importantly - by their knowledge of these artists' public biographies. In fact, part of the power, strength and popularity of this genre seemed to emerge from the artists' ability to include touching autobiographical elements in their songs, as well as from their determination to lead a conspicuously political artistic career. Their more 'personal' commitment to the debilitation of Francoism and the achievement of democracy beyond singer-songwriting was also very important in this respect.

These artists' determination to overlook official recommendations and commands in public performances other than recitals and concerts often acquired a subversive political character. This was the case with many of Víctor Manuel's performances. For example, in 1969, TVE chose him to represent Spain in an artistic event to be celebrated in Zurich. He was told what to sing well in advance. However, he did not stick completely to the official program and in his live performance he added "La Planta 14" and other 'forbidden' songs to his repertoire. His attitude deeply annoyed the Spanish authorities, which 'advised' him not to sing these songs in public

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<sup>173</sup> In spite of Francoist censorship – and, sometimes, contradictorily, thanks to it\* - particular news concerning singer-songwriting/ers reached the general public and especially their audiences, as the quotation at the beginning of the section suggests. In fact, many biographical aspects concerning *cantautores*, for example, became "vox populi", as a female participant from the Zaragoza focus group put it (January, 2004).

\*The fact that Serrat did not accept to represent Spain at the 1968 Eurovision Contest because he was not allowed to sing in Catalan was very much publicised by the media. For example, newspapers like *Heraldo de Aragón* – probably bending to official interests - used Serrat's decision to condemn and demonise Catalan nationalism (*Heraldo de Aragón*, 26<sup>th</sup> March 1968, page 27; 27<sup>th</sup> March, 1968, page 5).

anymore. In spite of these warnings, he defied Francoist orders once again and sung “La planta 14” in a different contest in Lieja (Vázquez Azpiri, 1974: 69)<sup>174</sup>.

These artists’ political commitment beyond their artistic careers also affected the ways in which many audiences saw their work. This commitment in real life gave their public *personae* the touch of truthfulness and honesty that people grant those individuals who, at least in some ways, practice what they preach. Víctor and Ana’s activism in the Spanish Communist Party should be seen in this light. As a male participant noted:

entonces, todos los cantautores que estaban muy significados con el Partido Comunista, se nota... Víctor Manuel y Ana Belén estaban muy significados con el Partido Comunista [...] y otra gente pues era mucho más política, como Ana Belén, como Víctor Manuel, como Pastor, [...] entonces, Víctor Manuel y Ana Belén, aunque estaban dentro del sistema, eran problemáticos por su significación política, gente, pues que se movía en aquellos círculos, pues los conocían... y de ahí expresiones como las de los padres de M que decían, “¡ay éstos la que van a liar! [intentando imitar la voz de esos padres] (Madrid focus group, January 2004)

at the time, you could note all those singer-songwriters who were related to the Communist Party... Víctor Manuel and Ana Belén were very much related to the Communist Party [...] and other people, well, like Ana Belén, Víctor Manuel, Pastor, well, they were very political, although they were within the system, they were problematic because of their political significance, people, well, you know, people living in those circles, knew all this... and that is the reason for expressions like those said by my M’s parents, things like “oh, god, those people are gonna mess things up!” [trying to imitate M’s parents’ voice].

Many other ‘extra-artistic’ autobiographical aspects may have also shaped both the audience’s understanding of and their responses towards these artists’ works. Sabina’s active involvement against the 1970 *Proceso de Burgos* should be understood in this light. The same could be said, for example, about Ana’s and Víctor’s decision to

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<sup>174</sup> On a different occasion Víctor Manuel was nearly imprisoned for singing “El cobarde” at the Festival del Atlántico” (<http://www.victormanuel.es/homevictor.html> [Accessed on 14th Feb. 2001]). More significant anecdotes can be found at <http://usuarios.lycos.es/soyuncorazon> [Accessed 20 December 2002].

marry in Gibraltar in a civil ceremony celebrated in 1972 (Villena, 2002: 67). At the time this was provocative in two ways. As different sources show (e.g. Otero, 2000: 228, 229), Francoist authorities were particularly obsessed with the recuperation of Gibraltar for Spain. Getting married in Spanish territory invaded by foreigners was most surely read by those in power as disrespectful and antipatriotic, to say the least. At a different level, celebrating a civil ceremony rather than a religious one was also quite daring in the Spain of the Transition, for Catholicism was still deeply rooted in society. This marriage was therefore a defiant act that could be interpreted as a public defence of religious freedom, for example. Moreover, it may have encouraged some audiences to approach marriage in less traditional ways.

To finish, it is worth noting that an inverse process of influence also took place: the artists' own counter-hegemonic artistic and extra-artistic political commitment seemed to have been triggered by the support received from their wide and enthusiastic audiences. As Carbonell puts it, in spite of the difficulties that *cantautores* faced at the time with Francoist authorities,

[r]ealmente los cantautores gozábamos de cierto respeto por parte de las autoridades. No les convenía maltratarnos [...], porque de inmediato se iba a producir una respuesta popular. Y nosotros nos aprovechábamos y éramos un poco chulillos, osados, siempre rozando el límite (Joaquín Carbonell interviewed by Uribe, 2003).

[i]n fact we singer-songwriters enjoyed some kind of respect from the authorities. To treat us badly was not in their interest [...], because it would awaken a sudden popular response. And we made the most of it and we were a bit fresh, bold, always pushing to the limits.

## CONCLUSION

This ethnographic-based chapter has explored some of the ways in which Spanish singer-songwriting and political singers were socio-politically significant and influential at the time of the Transition. Víctor Manuel was especially relevant for his attempts to publicise the problems of Asturian miners all over Spain. The conspicuous autobiographical content of many of his songs gave his work an important sense of immediacy and veracity, and much of its emotional and socio-political strength. Ana Belén was also a salient figure because she was one of the very few female political singers that achieved high popularity among large audiences. Moreover, her gender politics were pioneering in some respects: both her public *persona* and work seemed to support less ‘masculinised’ and more comprehensive understandings of politics than the Francoist establishment, or even than many of her left-wing colleagues. Sabina was also significant because he publicised overseas the lack of liberty that ruled in Francoist Spain. His works, always provocative and often bordering on coarseness, were often politically transgressive and progressive, and could be understood in the light of Bakhtin’s theories (1994) on “carnival” and the “carnavalesque”.

This chapter has also considered the role and significance of singer-songwriters and political song of the Transition more generally. It has reasserted the adequacy of the Gramscian model adopted in Chapter One. As shown, *cantautores* and *cantantes políticos* of the Transition were educators and mobilisers of different collectives, and therefore intellectuals in the Gramscian sense (1999: 321, 334); they were intellectuals organic to some of the needs and values of workers, of a progressive educated middle-class, and of the pro-democratic Spanish Left more generally. In

fact, many of these artists could be called “democratic philosophers” (Gramsci, 1971: 350) in two main ways: they believed in and fought for a system of liberal *democracy*. Moreover, they seemed to be

convinced that [their] personality is not limited to [them]sel[ves] as [...] physical individual[s] but is an active social relationship of modification of the cultural environment (1971: 350)

This chapter has also shown that their songs became important cultural tools that acquired significant socio-political relevance at the time of the Transition. To put it in Gramscian terms (1988: 59), *canción de autor/a* was one of those important “cultural factors that helped to create a state of mental preparedness for those explosions in the name of what was seen as a common cause” - for the arrival of democracy, in this particular case. This musical genre acted as an important educational device that helped in the critical transmission of ideas and realities hidden and/or denied by Francoism, for example (Gramsci, 1988: 58). It also worked at the national-popular level and had an important role in the creation of alternative versions of Spain and Spanishness (Gramsci, 1985: 41). It similarly succeeded in awakening and/or enhancing (some) audiences’ Left-wing socio-political awareness. Singer-songwriting and political singers also helped in a politically significant process of group identity building. They created and/or unified small groups made up of individuals with (apparently) similar interests. More importantly, they helped cement more heterogeneous collectives: they often succeeded (even if temporarily) in the creation and cohesion of macro-groups across differences of geographical origin, class, gender, educational background, and age, for example. To put it in Gramscian terms (1999: 174, 205): an important part of their counter-hegemonic dimension lay in their ability to produce counter-publics that bridged different groups. By so doing, they helped provide a ground of understanding necessary for the appearance and effective

implementation of coalition politics. In this context, recitals and concerts acquired special political significance, as they were actual and symbolic sites of resistance in which the audiences' and artists' dissident public voices and identities were established and heard. These events did not only harbour the performance of lyrically subversive songs. They often also acquired extra-musical significance and frequently sheltered the celebration of embedded, overtly political practices such as informal 'political meetings' and 'demonstrations'. Moreover, the fieldwork carried out showed that singer-songwriting sometimes encouraged audiences to act politically outside recital and concert venues. For example, they encouraged some audiences to participate in pro-democracy demonstrations and political meetings. This mobilising power of *cantautores* was consciously exploited by different political parties and trade unions, especially in the late seventies and early eighties, when there was a very close identification of singer-songwriters and political song with left-wing politics in a strict sense.

This chapter has finally examined some of the plausible reasons behind the socio-political success of the *canción de autor/a* of the Transition. One of the keys to its significance seemed to lie in its capacity to touch and move people emotionally: receptive listeners' emotions were inflamed by a powerful interaction of music, politically committed lyrics, and the artists' moving vocal and body performance. The politically significant feeling of unity generated by the communal experience of these songs, especially in recitals and concerts, was also emotionally relevant in this context of the Transition. In fact, this genre's ability to fulfil the needs for group belonging of its listeners was another key to its socio-political success: concerts and recitals provided the opportunity for the formation of "communities" (Mattern, 1998: 4-5),

necessary for “acting in concert”, to use Mattern’s polysemic metaphor (1998: 4). The successful creation of communities that took place in concerts and recitals was often helped by the performers’ and the audiences’ conscious observance of different strategies and “ritualized practices”, to use Eyerman’s phrase (1999: 119). Part of this genre’s success also lied in its ability to speak successfully to the audiences’ public political anxieties but also – and as importantly - to their more private selves: this genre was successful partly because it engaged in and connected macro- and micro-politics. Moreover, the artists’ autobiographical involvement in their works, and their political commitment in their lives more generally also granted this genre much of its socio-political influence and significance at the time of the Transition.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has approached the study of the Spanish Transition and its *canción de autor/a* from a Cultural-Studies-based perspective. It has been informed throughout by Gramsci's theories on culture and its relationship with politics (Gramsci, 1971, 1985, 1988, 1999), and by different feminist ideas and concerns – at theoretical (epistemological), methodological and practical levels (Tong, 1989; Riley, 1988; Butler, 1990, 1993; Oakley, 1981; Haraway, 1991). It has been mainly concerned with the works of singer-songwriters Víctor Manuel and Joaquín Sabina, and with those of political singer Ana Belén in their close relationship with the Spanish Transition and with the need of Spaniards to reconstruct Spain and Spanishness in this crucial historical period of convulsion and change.

It has stressed that the Spanish Transition did not solely involve political changes, but was a much wider-ranging process that involved a number of shifts at many different interrelated levels: social, cultural, political, economic, religious, and philosophical, for instance. In fact, the strictly political Transition may have not succeeded in Spain if socio-cultural, economic, and religious changes, for example, had not previously and simultaneously occurred in the country. The Spanish Transition has been therefore seen to happen between 1960 and 1982. It has been presented as being closer to a “war of position” (Gramsci, 1999: 226, 227, 229) than to a “passive revolution” for two main reasons: first because some deep changes actually seemed to take place in Spain at different levels at the time, and these actually eventually led to a

highly significant weakening of Francoism and some of its hegemonic discourses. Secondly, because, as this thesis has shown, this process of Transition involved quite a large popular mobilisation – of which singer-songwriters were a part: many civil society members and institutions (Gramsci, 1999: 230) had an important counter-hegemonic role in this process of democratisation of Spain (Carrillo, 2002; Blakeley, 2000; Dominguez, 2000; Soto, 1998; Vilar, 1983; Preston, 1983). (University) students, workers, some left-wing priests, feminists and different neighbours associations, among others, were especially significant in this respect. In fact, regarding the question of whether the Spanish Transition constituted a real break from Francoism (Preston, 1986: 112) or rather a mere ‘reformed’ continuation of it (García Trevijano, 1996: 17), the answer is that this process seemed to fall somewhere in between both options (Powell, 2001: 627)<sup>175</sup>. In many ways it did not mean a total break with the past. Important “residual” (Williams, 1977: 123) elements of Francoist discourses remained hegemonic: for example, many rights of workers continued to be subordinated to the laws of the market and powerful entrepreneurs, while some of the important feminist claims mentioned in Chapter Two remained unanswered (e.g. Spanish women’s rights in the world of labour). However, crucial changes also took place then – although these have been interpreted by some (e.g. García Trevijano, 1996) as *formulae* of consent (Gramsci, 1999: 307) used by Francoism to retain hegemony. Nevertheless, Spanish democracy became comparable to other Western European democratic systems (Powell, 2001: 627) and expanded popular participation in many important ways; it approved of freedom of expression and association, and improved women’s legal situation, for example. In fact, although “triumphalism” and “self-indulgence” should be avoided, “sería mezquino e injusto no reconocer que lo

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<sup>175</sup> Powell (2001: 627-646) offers a very thorough account of the different positions adopted by different people – scholars and citizens alike – regarding the debate Transition=break *versus* Transition=mere reform. Powell’s personal position seems to be close to the one adopted here.

conseguido constituye un indudable motivo de orgullo colectivo” (“it would be mean and unfair not to acknowledge that what was achieved then was an unquestionable reason for collective pride”) (Powell, 2001: 646).

In this struggle for democracy different cultural manifestations also became important for their counter-hegemonic potential. *Canción de autor/a* and *canción política* and their authors and/or performers became especially relevant in this scenario. They seemed to fulfil different roles at different often related levels: they emerged in an attempt to fight the Francoist regime and support the arrival of democracy. Their anti-Francoist struggle entailed working at the national-popular level (Gramsci, 1999: 367) in order to rework Francoist notions of Spain and Spanishness. Their attempts to reconstruct the Spanish nation and national identity were plausible because nations, national identity and nationalism are not simply “an ideology or form of politics” (Smith, 1991: vii), but are categories which are often importantly constructed in everyday life (Billig, 1995: 6), through different cultural practices and texts (Hobsbawn, 1994; Keating, 2001: 11).

Between 1968 and 1982 singer-songwriters Víctor Manuel and Joaquín Sabina, and political singer Ana Belén, aimed to reconstruct Spain and Spanishness through their works mainly by considering history, class, love and sexuality. They seemed to consider these dimensions because of their potential to act at the level of hegemony. Significantly, these three artists’ approaches to love and sexuality, and especially to history and class presented overall similar thematic patterns and evolution: in general terms, their works underwent two main phases which seemed to run parallel to the socio-political evolution experienced by the majority of Spanish society at the time.

Like Francoist authorities and intellectuals, these three artists were well aware of the importance of reworking the national past in order to work effectively at the level of hegemony. Thus, their reworking of the Spanish past entailed challenging important aspects of Francoist historiography: it involved refuting and/or mocking hegemonic versions of the national past and present and its historical figures (criticising Francoist interpretations of the Spanish civil war as a “liberation” battle, and ridiculing Francoist bureaucrats, for example). It also involved offering alternative truths: validating left-wing versions of the Spanish past that Francoist hegemonic discourses had demonised - centring and normalising the figure of the republican soldier and the 1934 Asturian Revolution, for example. In general terms, however, this reworking of history did not involve a deep consideration of gender: female historical figures, for instance, often remained in secondary positions. These artists’ emphasis on Spanish history was particularly significant until 1978. After that date, it lost much of its presence and predominance in their works. This weakening of history seemed to obey, among other things, their desire to initiate a period of socio-political harmony with those who still sympathised with or supported the Francoist other. This was done in order to facilitate the successful running of the newly-born democratic system of the time. It is also significant that between 1968 and 1982 – and unlike Francoist centralising discourses - these artists seemed to support the idea that Spain was the complex sum of different Iberian regions and nationalities with different particularities and personalities. They also contested Francoist ultra-nationalist discourses and remained consciously open to foreign influences and elements. An essentialist understanding of Spain, however, did not seem to be challenged to the core in their works.

The three singers also appealed to class in an attempt to challenge Francoist national identity and offer alternative versions of Spain and Spanishness. In fact, their commitment to class issues – from left-wing positions – was for many audiences a sign of their political nature and an important element of their ‘essence’ as *cantautores* of the Transition. For these artists – very much unlike for Francoist discourses – being Spanish meant being totally aware of the class system in operation – which in turn implied getting an education and becoming critically aware of one’s surroundings (Gramsci, 1999: 57); it also entailed adopting a combative left-wing position to fight its inequalities and injustices – and this usually meant supporting actively the working classes and their struggle. This socialist position was overall especially strong and relevant in their works until 1978. From 1979 onwards they seemed to become more conservative and less belligerent in class terms – significantly, this process of moderation was also experienced by an important number of Spanish citizens and social collectives at the time (Soto, 1998: 156). These artists’ new position translated into an overall abandonment of their formerly conspicuous *socialist* politics and into their adoption of more *socially*-oriented concerns. Again, this process of moderation seemed to partly obey the artists’ – especially Víctor’s and Ana’s – desire to reach consensus or at least some understanding with the class-conservative (pro-Francoist) other. Generally speaking – and with some noticeable exceptions (e.g. Ana’s conspicuously traditionally ‘feminine’ performance of Nicolás Guillén’s class-related poems) – these artists approached class from rather male-centred positions: women were often simply presented as indirect victims of the class system in operation, as mothers, sisters or girlfriends of male workers. Moreover, women workers were nearly totally absent in their works.

The three artists also revised and reworked important Francoist discourses on national identity through their appeal to love and sexuality. They left aside Francoist fraternal and filial love, for example, to focus on *amor de pareja*. This 'love between couples' was often approached from challenging new perspectives. For example, its physicality was stressed, and sexuality, one of the greatest taboo issues for Francoism (Cisquella, Erviti et al. 1977: 81, 247; Sinova, 1989: 247), was de-vilified and presented as very positive and even necessary. It was often linked to left-wing political activism and was presented as an empowering political weapon in itself, for it was totally against the Francoist system in operation. Thus, for these artists, being Spanish seemed to entail enjoying one's sexuality without fearing social conventions and hegemonic discourses – generally speaking, however, there were still some gender differences here: in some of these artists' works women's position in relation to sexuality remained overall more problematic and less empowering than that of men's. This – often blatantly conspicuous - stress on sexuality was especially relevant until 1978. After this date, more stereotypically romantic approaches to love were adopted – although sex remained important and new progressive approaches to love and sexuality were also supported: there were some attempts to normalise (male) homosexuality and love between differently-abled people, for example. Nevertheless, when considering gender between 1968 and 1982, these artists' works seemed to be overall more progressive in their approach to love and sexuality than in their gendered representations of history and class. In spite of the contradictions, ambiguities and ambivalences that their songs presented in terms of gender in their love- and/or sex-related works, they overall opened up important spaces of freedom for women, who became 'entitled' to, for example, appear as individuals with an important sexual

dimension that should be explored and – not always un-problematically - fully enjoyed.

This positive view of the works by Víctor, Ana and Sabina in relation to gender was overall shared by many of the audiences interviewed. A good number of informants also referred positively to gender representations in the *canción de autor/a* of the Transition more generally. Some participants, however, stressed that some songs by *cantautores* were problematic for feminist positions – they claimed that sometimes women were absent in their works, and that at other times they were presented as secondary figures standing behind men, for example. Most of the participants, however, seemed to agree that at the time these songs were appealing to both left-wing men and women in important ways. In fact, they seemed to serve many of their personal and socio-political needs at the time of the Transition (Pérez Villalba, 2004). The ethnographic-based fieldwork carried out showed that singer-songwriters and political singers acted as educators and organisers of different collectives mainly through their work. Therefore, they could be called intellectuals in the Gramscian sense (1999: 321, 334) - they were intellectuals organic to some of the needs and ideals of workers, of a learned progressive middle class, and of the pro-democratic Spanish Left more generally. This research also showed that - to use Gramsci's terms (1988: 59) - *canción de autor/a* was one of those important "cultural factors that helped to create a state of mental preparedness for those explosions in the name of what was seen as a common cause"; in other words, they prepared some people's minds for the arrival of liberal democracy in Spain. For example, as noted above, *canción de autor/a* acted as an important educational tool that helped in the critical diffusion of ideas and realities vetoed by Francoism. In fact, *cantautores* made use of

the democratic and at the time illegal right to freedom of expression (Gramsci, 1988: 58). As noted above too, it also worked at the national-popular level (Gramsci, 1985: 41) and had an important role in the creation of alternative versions of Spain and Spanishness. It similarly succeeded in awakening and/or reinforcing (some) audiences' Left-wing socio-political awareness. Singer-songwriting and political singers also helped in a politically significant process of group identity formation. They established and/or consolidated small groups made up of individuals with (apparently) similar interests and concerns. More importantly, they operated as unifying forces of more heterogeneous collectives: they often succeeded - even if temporarily - in the creation and cohesion of macro groups across differences of, for example, geographical origin, class, gender, educational level, and age. This counter-hegemonic dimension of singer-songwriters which allowed them to bridge different counter-publics was especially important during the Transition: it provided a fertile soil of understanding between different groups which ultimately affected positively the - temporary - appearance and effective functioning of anti-Francoist coalition politics. In this context, recitals and concerts acquired special political relevance, as they were actual and symbolic *loci* of resistance in which the audiences' and singers' dissident public voices and identities were established and heard. In fact, these communal musical events did not only shelter the performance of songs with subversive lyrics. Often, they also acquired extra-musical significance and harboured the celebration of explicitly political practices such as informal 'political meetings' and 'demonstrations'. In fact, in these events artists and audiences alike defied Francoist laws and authorities to exercise the democratic right to associate and demonstrate freely. Furthermore, singer-songwriters and political singing sometimes encouraged audiences to get involved in different public activities organised by

different political parties, trade-unions and pro-democracy collectives and organisations – these were well aware of this genre’s mobilising potential and made conscious use of it, especially in the late seventies and early eighties, when *canCIÓN de autor/a* became closely associated with left-wing political activism.

Having highlighted that Víctor, Ana, Sabina and singer-songwriting of the Transition more generally played very significant counter-hegemonic roles in the re-working of Spain and Spanishness, and as anti-Francoist mobilising forces, for example, does not mean that their projects did not have limits. In fact, their counter-hegemonic plans had important limitations. As shown especially in the song analysis chapters, these singers’ counter-hegemonic dimension, like that of the Spanish Transition itself, diminished significantly after 1978. This was evident, for example, in their approach – or rather ‘non-approach’ - to class. It can be inferred from different sources (Villena, 2002: 83, 90; Menéndez Flores, 2000: 43) that, in the three cases, their musical ‘reorientation’ was well-planned and was importantly linked to issues of artistic – and consequently economic – survival. However, there seemed to be other reasons for that. Víctor’s and Ana’s biographies – their political affiliation to the PC (Villena, 2002: 70), which followed quite a moderate line from 1974 -, as well as the general tone of optimism of many of their songs – at the level of music and lyrics in performance - seems to suggest that they were relatively happy with the outcomes of the Spanish Transition, and that they moderated their formerly more radical discourses mainly because they were primarily concerned with a process of social conciliation between ‘the two Spains’<sup>176</sup>. Sabina’s case seemed somehow different.

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<sup>176</sup> Ana and Víctor were members of the Spanish Communist Party between 1974 and 1982 (Villena, 2002: 70). Villena notes (2002: 73) that Santiago Carrillo, the leader of the PC, tried hard to attract intellectuals to his party, especially “cuando la muerte de Franco se atisbaba en el horizonte y cuando las nuevas generaciones de españoles, que no habían conocido la guerra ni la posguerra, buscaban

The relative 'depolitisation' of his works after 1978 and his turn to more personal politics seemed to be mainly motivated by the 'desencanto' (Graham and Labanyi, 1995: 312, 313) that he apparently experienced with the socio-political outcomes of the Transition. That seems to be one of the main reasons why after 1978 his songs lost much of their former class combativeness, for example; instead, they overall became sad in tone, melancholic, painfully acid, cynical and sarcastic, and even defeatist at times.

To conclude, I would like to suggest possible new lines of investigation for future research on *canción de autor/a* of the Transition. The partial ethnographic-based research carried out here has been very enlightening and useful, although it has not been – nor has it intended to be – as extensive and detailed as that offered in the song analysis chapters. I would therefore like to suggest here that this ethnographic-based line of analysis could receive further attention in future research. A number of questions arise that could complement the ethnographic-informed findings presented here. For example, this audience research could be widened up in order to explore meticulously whether Spanish singer-songwriting and political singers served (slightly) different purposes for Spanish women and men, and whether these male and female listeners of *canción de autor/a* made different use of these cultural texts at the time of the Transition – the fieldwork carried out here, which aimed to work at a

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nuevos modelos a imitar, *rostros jóvenes que mantuvieran el compromiso de izquierdas al tiempo que hicieran olvidar las batallitas de la contienda civil*" ("when signs of Franco's death began to be detected and when the new generations of Spaniards, who did not live through the war or the post-war period, looked for new role-models to imitate, *for young faces that managed to keep left-wing political commitment while they also made people forget about the stories of the civil war*") [emphasis added]. Carrillo's speech in one of the Party meetings, for example, is also relevant in this respect: in such a meeting he found some opposition among some of the most radical members of his party, who defended the idea of a Republican Spain at all costs. He passionately replied: "los que silban no saben que no hay color morao que valga una nueva guerra civil entre los españoles" ("those whistling at do not know that there isn't a purple colour worth a new civil war between Spaniards") – in reference to the purple colour of the Republican flag [In <http://www.vespito.net/historia/transi/voces.html>]. Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> May 2005].

rather more general level, did not suggest the existence of significant differences in this respect. However, they might have well existed and may appear if further research is carried out in this direction. The analysis of the implications behind the gender-based differences and/or similarities to be found in this new research would logically deserve attention too. A different – still ethnographic-based – line of investigation could explore in detail whether singer-songwriters and political song of the Transition fulfilled different roles and/or had significantly different degrees of importance in different geographical areas of the Spanish state. Again, the – especially partial in this respect – research undertaken here did not suggest so, but a more extensive examination of the issue with a higher number of participants and locations may perhaps prove differently – investigating further in the Basque Country, and setting up new research in Catalonia and Galicia, for example, may prove interesting.

Another promising – this time ‘text-based’ – line of investigation could consider the study of other singer-songwriters and/or political singers and their works - the song analysis chapters offered here dealt almost exclusively with the work of Víctor, Ana and Sabina. New research could extend the number of artists to be studied and explore whether history, class, love and/or sexuality were also relevant in other artists’ work for the construction of Spain and Spanishness. My general knowledge of Spanish *canCIÓN de autor/a* of the Transition suggests that, at least in a good number of cases, these categories were significant – at least apparently. History was used, for example, in Jarcha’s “Libertad sin ira” (1976), in Labordeta’s “Aragón” (1974) and in Paco Ibáñez’s “Un español habla de su tierra” and “España en marcha” (1969), to name just a few. Relevant allusions to class and the economic system in operation were made in

Joaquín Carbonell's "Doña Peseta" (1976), in Carlos Cano's "La murga de los currelantes" (1976), in Serrat's "Manuel" (1968), in Patxi Andión's "Una, dos y tres" (1973), and in Paco Ibáñez's "Lo que puede el dinero" (1969); while referentes to love and sexuality appeared in Pablo Guerrero's "Hoy que te amo" (1975), Amancio Prada's "Libre te quiero" (1979), Joan Baptista Humet's "Terciopelo" (1978) and Serrat's "Poco antes de que den las diez" (1968), for example. New research could then entail an in-depth analysis of representations of history, class, love and/or sexuality in these and/or other works of the Transition. It could also involve a detailed examination of other relevant issues and categories that may appear in them. As anticipated in Chapter Four, future research could also consider how artists other than Víctor, Ana and Sabina addressed the regional and national complexity of the Spanish state. This could be done both at a textual and extra-textual level through the analysis of their songs and their public interventions as politically-committed artists of the Transition.

## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

-En su opinión, ¿qué importancia tuvo la música de cantautor, la música política, en la Transición española?

-Si piensa que fue importante, ¿en qué sentido fue importante y para quién?

-Si escuchaba a los cantautores entre 1968 y 1982 ¿Cómo se introdujo en el mundo de la música de cantautores?

-¿A qué elemento/s de las canciones de cantautores prestaba más atención?

-En su opinión, ¿qué cantautor/a o cantante político/a fue más subversivo/a y rompedor/a; en definitiva, más peligroso/a, para el régimen franquista?

-Si tuviese que elegir las dos canciones más importantes de la música de cantautores en la Transición (entre 1960 y 1982 aproximadamente), ¿cuáles elegiría? Primero..... segundo.....

-Los cantautores gallegos, vascos y catalanes principalmente ¿qué aceptación tuvieron en la España “castellana”?

-Los cantautores más “castellanos” ¿qué aceptación tuvieron en Galicia, País Vasco y Cataluña?

-¿Cómo actuaba la censura con los cantautores?

-¿Dónde se escuchaban las canciones de los cantautores?

-¿Conoce de la existencia de alguna emisora de radio “alternativa” que radiara sus canciones?

-Si ocurrió, ¿Cuándo y cómo cambió el papel de los cantautores y su reconocimiento público entre 1968 y 1982?

-¿Qué tipo de gente escuchaba la música de autor? (sexo, edad, nivel económico, clase social, orientación política, nivel educativo, población urbana/rural, etc.)

-¿Recuerda algún concierto de cantautor/a al que asistiera en los 60, 70 o principios de los 80? ¿cómo fue la experiencia? Por favor, descríbala con el mayor número de detalles posible.

-¿Cómo se representa a la mujer en las canciones de cantautores de la Transición (1968-1982)? Por favor, enumere canciones específicas en las que aparezcan personajes femeninos y descríbalos o comente lo que considere pertinente.

-¿Hasta que punto era importante y/o prestaron atención a cómo se representaban las mujeres y personajes femeninos en las canciones de cantautores de la Transición (1968-1982)?

-Si en algún momento le disgustó la representación de la mujer presentada en alguna/la canción de cantautores, ¿Cómo reaccionó?

-La gente que escuchaba a los cantautores ¿escuchaba también otro tipo de música?

-En los 60, 70 y principios de los 80, ¿Qué grado de popularidad tuvo en España la música de cantautores en comparación con otros géneros de música popular?

-En los 60, 70 y principios de los 80, ¿qué grupos y/o cantantes extranjeros se escuchaban en España? ¿En qué idioma cantaban?

*Sobre Víctor Manuel, Ana Belén y Joaquín Sabina:*

-En su opinión, ¿Cuál fue la importancia de Víctor Manuel, Ana Belén y Joaquín Sabina en el mundo de la canción política de la Transición (1968-1982)?

-Con respecto a Ana Belén, ¿Qué conoce sobre su participación en organizaciones o movimientos feministas entre 1968 y 1982?

-En su opinión, ¿hasta qué punto reivindicó en sus intervenciones públicas posturas feministas o a favor de la mujer durante la Transición (1968-1982)?

-¿Qué imagen pública daba Ana Belén de su feminidad por aquel entonces?

-En la biografía que Miguel Ángel Villena ha escrito sobre Ana Belén describe a ésta como 'musa de la Transición' ¿Hasta qué punto piensa que esa descripción se corresponde con la realidad?

-¿Hasta qué punto fueron distintos los papeles ejercidos por Ana Belén y Víctor Manuel como cantantes políticos y comprometidos durante la Transición (1968-1982)?

-¿Qué imagen pública daba Víctor Manuel de su masculinidad entre 1968 y 1982?

-¿Qué imagen pública ofrecía Sabina de su masculinidad hasta 1982?

-Por último, puede señalar cualquier aspecto sobre los cantautores y/o sus canciones en el contexto de la Transición española (1968-1982) que no haya sido mencionado en las preguntas y/o respuestas expuestas arriba y que usted considere relevante.

¡MUCHAS GRACIAS POR SU COLABORACIÓN!

## FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS QUESTIONS

In the focus group meetings carried out in Ávila, Bilbao, Zaragoza and Madrid the questions formulated in the above interview guide were asked. In addition to that, the following much more specific questions concerning their interpretation of Joaquín Sabina's "Mi vecino de arriba", Ana Belén's "La muralla" and Víctor Manuel's "La planta 14" were also posed:

### *Joaquín Sabina's "Mi vecino de arriba"*

- 1) ¿Dónde y cuando habíais escuchado esta canción antes?
- 2) ¿Qué recuerdos os trae esta canción?
- 3) ¿Podríais resumir la historia que cuenta esta canción?
- 4) ¿Qué os gusta más de esta canción?
- 5) ¿Qué os gusta menos de esta canción?
- 6) ¿Qué os parece el "retrato" de la España de 1978 que presenta esta canción?
- 7) ¿Cómo os cae el vecino de arriba de la canción?  
Probing – if necessary:
  - \*comportamiento y actitud hacia la vida
  - \*su visión política
  - \*su relación con su vecino de abajo
  - \*su relación con su mujer y su hija
  - \*su fisonomía, su aspecto exterior
- 8) ¿Cómo os cae el vecino de abajo de la canción?  
Probing – if necessary:
  - \*su actitud hacia la vida
  - \*su visión política
  - \*su relación con el vecino de arriba
  - \*su relación con la hija (y con la mujer) de su vecino
  - \*su fisonomía, su aspecto exterior
- 9) Si tuvieseis que identificar al vecino de abajo con alguien, ¿con quién lo identificaríais, qué cara le pondríais?
- 10) ¿Cómo os cae la hija del vecino de arriba?
- 11) ¿Qué os parece la relación existente entre el vecino de abajo y la hija de su vecino?
- 12) ¿Cómo os cae la mujer del vecino de arriba?
- 13) ¿Con qué personaje de esta canción os identificáis más?
- 14) ¿Con qué personaje de esta canción os identificáis menos?
- 15) Si tuvieseis que describir esta canción en pocas palabras, ¿qué palabras utilizaríais para hacerlo?
- 16) Algún aspecto de la canción que os haya llamado la atención y que no hayamos comentado o algo que queráis comentar sobre la canción que no hayamos mencionado.

### *Ana Belén's "La muralla"*

- 1) ¿Dónde y cuándo habíais escuchado esta canción antes?
- 2) ¿Qué recuerdos os trae esta canción?
- 3) ¿Podríais resumir el contenido de esta canción?

- 4) ¿Qué os gusta más de esta canción?
- 5) ¿Qué os gusta menos?
- 6) ¿Qué creéis que es o simboliza “la muralla” en esta canción?  
Probing –if necessary:  
\*un muro real/metafórico que separa/une qué  
\*un muro real/metafórico que une, un muro de protección de qué
- 7) ¿Cuál creéis que es el escenario de esta canción? O dicho de otra manera, ¿De dónde creéis que está hablando esta canción?
- 8) ¿A quién/es creéis que va dirigida esta canción?
- 9) ¿Es política esta canción? Si es así ¿en qué sentido lo es?
- 10) ¿Qué relevancia tuvo esta canción dentro de la canción política española de la Transición?
- 11) Si tuvieseis que describir esta canción en pocas palabras, ¿qué palabras utilizaríais para hacerlo?
- 12) Algún aspecto de la canción que os haya llamado la atención y que no hayamos comentado o algo que queráis comentar sobre la canción que no hayamos mencionado.

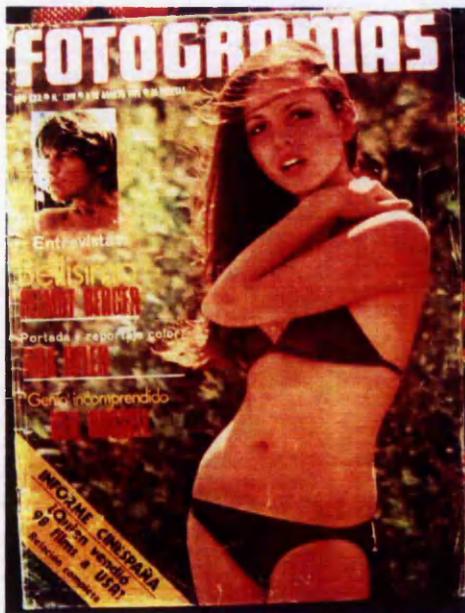
*Víctor Manuel's “La planta 14”*

- 1) ¿Dónde y cuándo habíais escuchado esta canción antes?
- 2) ¿Qué recuerdos os trae esta canción?
- 3) ¿Podríais resumir la historia que narra esta canción?
- 4) ¿Qué os gusta más de esta canción?
- 5) ¿Qué os gusta menos de esta canción?
- 6) ¿Cuál pensáis que es el escenario de esta canción?
- 7) ¿Cómo os sentís al escuchar esta canción?
- 8) ¿Cuál es vuestra actitud hacia los personajes de la historia que narra la canción?  
Probing – if necessary:  
\*el patrón  
\*el chófer  
\*el minero que llora  
\*el hijo del minero atrapado en la mina  
\*la madre del minero atrapado  
\*la esposa del minero atrapado
- 8) ¿Qué os parece la reacción del minero que “por no irse al patrón llora en el suelo”?
- 9) En vuestra opinión ¿Cómo es la sociedad que describe esta canción si se considera el papel que juegan en ella hombres y mujeres?
- 10) ¿Por qué pensáis que esta canción molestó al régimen franquista, tanto que la vetó durante muchos años?
- 11) Si tuvieseis que describir esta canción en pocas palabras, ¿qué palabras utilizaríais para hacerlo?
- 12) Algún aspecto de la canción que os haya llamado la atención y que no hayamos comentado o algo que queráis comentar sobre la canción que no hayamos mencionado.

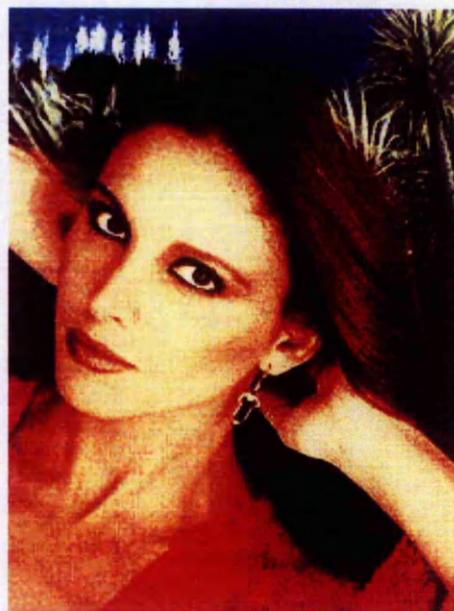
## APPENDIX B



Ana Belén. Picture from her album *Tierra* (1973)  
[From "Nada sabe tan dulce como su boca". <http://anabelen.iespana.es/>]



In *Fotogramas*, a well-known magazine (1975)  
[From "Lorquiana Belén". <http://lorquiana.iespana.es/>]



Picture from her album *Con las manos llenas* (1981)  
[From "Nada sabe tan dulce como su boca". <http://anabelen.iespana.es/>]



Víctor Manuel in 1971  
[From "Soy un corazón tendido al sol"  
<http://www.victormanuel.tk/> ]



Víctor in 1974  
[From [www.circulum.org](http://www.circulum.org)]



Picture from his album *Luna* (1980)  
[From [www.victormanuel.solomp3.com](http://www.victormanuel.solomp3.com) ]



Ana and Víctor in the early 70s  
[From [www.circulum.org](http://www.circulum.org)]



Ana and Víctor live (1977)  
[From "Lorquiana Belén". <http://lorquiana.iespana.es/>]



Joaquín Sabina. Picture from his first album *Inventario* (1978)  
[From "Joaquín Sabina. Página No Oficial". <http://www.fut.es/~gbc/>]



Sabina singing live in *La Mandrágora*  
(1980)  
[From "Joaquín Sabina. Página No Oficial"  
<http://www.fut.es/~gbc> ]



Sabina in the early 80s  
[From [www.joaquinsabina.net](http://www.joaquinsabina.net)]

All sources were accessed on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2005

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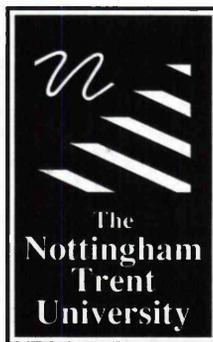
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