

# Portugal in Unamuno's view of Iberia as a dialectic unity

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*“Yo no sé en qué consiste; pero en esta tierra portuguesa, casi todos aquellos con quienes cruzo me parecen antiguos conocidos: tienen caras que he visto en alguna otra parte.”*

(Miguel de Unamuno, “Braga”)

Much has been written about the relations of Miguel de Unamuno (Bilbao, 1864 - Salamanca, 1936) - novelist, philosopher, essayist and an important member of the Spanish *Generación de 98* - with Portugal.<sup>1</sup> For the critic João Medina (2004, p. 7), the professor of the university of Salamanca who visited the north of Portugal several times in the first decades of the twentieth century and befriended Portuguese intellectuals like poets Guerra Junqueiro and Teixeira de Pascoaes is “a true icon of the most pronounced Lusophilia amongst as many as we could identify in the panorama of Spanish views of the fate of Portugal”. José V. de Pina Martins, in his “Foreword” to *Epistolário Português de Unamuno* (Dios, 1978 p. vii), states that Unamuno is “one of the most distinguished Lusophiles of all times”, and a young Vitorino Nemesio, a confessed “disciple” of Unamuno, wrote the following in 1929 to the man with whom he exchanged extensive correspondence:

Of all the great Spanish intellectuals, Unamuno is the only one who we [the Portuguese] can approach without fearing a sideward, pitiful glance. With him we can, without risking our individuality as a people, exchange anxieties about the future and agree on a redemptive action. (Letter of May 14, 1929; Dios, 1978, p.242)

These views, although marked by a certain hyperbolic tendency that the Basque writer seems to arouse in his interpreters, seem well-founded to us. Portugal actually bewitched Unamuno, inspiring a series of landscape reflections and criticisms about the country, its language, its literature, and its people - many of them compiled in the volume *Por tierras de Portugal y de España* (1911) - and leading Unamuno to read a considerable amount of Portuguese books and offer

a number of very favorable opinions about their authors.<sup>2</sup> Unamuno was specially attracted to the authors of nineteenth-century Portugal, having deemed Camilo Castelo Branco's *Amor de perdição*, "*La novela de pasión amorosa más intensa y más profunda que se haya escrito en la Península*", and praising Antero de Quental ("*La más trágica figura de nuestra literatura ibérica*") and Oliveira Martins ("*El único historiador artista de [la península]*") ("*La literatura portuguesa contemporánea*" [1907]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.191; "Sobre una sentencia de Quental" [1912]; v.4, p.1329). Summarizing his attraction to the neighboring country, Unamuno wrote: "*¿Qué tendrá este Portugal – pienso – para así atraerme? ¿Qué tendrá esta tierra, por de fuera riente y blanda, por dentro atormentada y trágica? Yo no sé: pero cuanto más voy a él, más deseo volver*" ("Guarda" [1908]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.241).

If critics concerned about the "Lusitanian" dimension of Unamuno's career and work have already documented the contacts between him and his Portuguese pen-pals, besides affirming the intensity of writer's attraction to Portugal and speculating about his position on the ever-controversial topic of Iberian union,<sup>3</sup> it comes as a surprise that those interested in the topic of Unamuno and Portugal have not delved *deeper* into Unamuno's work to analyze the various thematic connections and disjunctions between the Salamanca rector and his Portuguese correspondents, both human and textual. It would be very interesting, for example, to read a comparative study on the evolution of the idea of life as *agony* in Unamuno and Antero de Quental - with the Azorean having profoundly influenced Unamuno's metaphysical writings, namely *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida* (1913) - or a study of Unamuno's reading by Oliveira Martins and the issue of artistic historiography. Extending this comparative look to the Brazilian literary production, a comparative analysis of the themes of sibling rivalry and biblical symbolism in the novels *Esaú e Jacó* (1904), by Machado de Assis, and *Abel Sánchez* (1917), by Unamuno himself, would also be of great interest.

Another aspect of the Portugal-Unamuno relationship which, for whatever reason to date does not seem to have aroused the interest of critics, is the issue of the place Portugal holds in Unamuno's conception of Spain (and by extension of Iberia) as a dialectical unity, i.e., a geographic, historical identity space and whose higher unit, far from being threatened by its various tensions and internal contradictions (linguistic, political, cultural, etc.), would be precisely the product thereof. This discrepancy is somewhat ironic, because of the prominence in the criticism of Unamuno's theme as an exegete of Spain.<sup>4</sup> Aiming to rectify this gap, the problem of Portugal's place in Unamuno's view of Iberia as a dialectical unity will be the focus of this study, which will look at the various *carne y hueso* (flesh and bone) images spread across Unamuno's work, considering them as the metaphorical vocabulary through which we will be able to understand his conception of Iberia as a dialectical unity, i.e., "*categoría histórica*,

*por lo tanto espiritual, que ha hecho, en unidad, el alma de un territorio con sus contrastes y contradicciones interiores. Porque no hay unidad viva si no encierra contraposiciones íntimas, luchas intestinas*” (“Hispanidad “[1927]; Unamuno, 1966 to 1971, v.4, p.1081).<sup>5</sup> Is it appropriate to clarify, as an aside, the use of the word *Spain* by Unamuno. Like Antero de Quental and Oliveira Martins in their writings about the peninsular issue, Unamuno gives a dual meaning to *Spain*, accepting on the one hand the distinction between Portugal and Spain as “Iberian” nation-states, and on the other defending the extension of the *Spain* category - or rather, the *Hispania* of Roman memory - to the entire peninsula, as synonymous with *Iberia*.<sup>6</sup>

We shall begin our analysis with a discussion of dialectics in Unamuno and its contribution to his view of the fate of Iberia and Spain. We will then move on to an analysis of Unamuno’s understanding of Portugal in the Iberian context, a relationship that gains metaphorical resonance through the *carne y hueso* (flesh and bone) vocabulary used by the author, and conclude with a brief comment on some implications of the integration of this vocabulary into the dialectical structure through which Unamuno understands his country, its relations with Portugal, and the fate of the Peninsula. It would now be appropriate to specify which part of Unamuno’s work we will be discussing in this study. As it is known, Unamuno was a very prolific author. His *complete works* cover nine thick volumes and are divided into texts on metaphysical speculation, fictions, numerous poems and landscape reflections on virtually every corner of the peninsula, and many essays - a high number of these also dedicated to the Spanish or Iberian theme. We will refer in this article almost exclusively to his essays and landscape writings - such as the parts of his work in which he directly confronts the issue of Portugal and its relation to Spain - without excluding some references to other texts of special relevance.

### **Iberia as a dialectical unity**

The writing of Miguel de Unamuno is deeply marked by *dialectics*, a versatile term that is frequently referred to - even abused - in the critical and philosophical discourse. Dialectics in its Hegelian sense can be understood as a predicate in the clash of two desires, ideas or beings, and in the overcoming or elimination (*Aufhebung*) of its contradictions. In this sense, dialectics gives us, according to Alexandre Kojève (1980, p.174, my translation), a “dual Reality, which is [...] due to the equal reality of its two aspects.” Unamuno’s favorite themes are almost always presented in his work as dialectical oppositions, in apparent contradiction but expressing a necessary connection: man/world, faith/reason, history/folk tradition (or intra-history), author/literary character, and regionalism/cosmopolitanism - plus flesh/bone and Portugal/Spain, as we shall see. Unamuno identified himself openly as a dialectical thinker, explaining his affinity with the method in his first volume of essays *En torno al casticismo* (1902): “*Es preferible, creo, seguir [el] método [...] de afirmación alternativa de*

los contradictorios; es preferible hacer resaltar la fuerza de los extremos en el alma del lector para que el medio tome en ella vida, que es resultante de lucha” (“La tradición eterna” [1895]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.784). And more: “La dialéctica está llena de contradicciones íntimas, y por eso es fecunda. La dialéctica es el proceso de las antinomias y las antítesis. La dialéctica es lo menos dogmático que cabe, y por muy apasionada que sea, siempre, en el fondo, es escéptica. La dialéctica supone el diálogo” (“ni lógica ni dialéctica, sino polémica” [1915]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.3, p.747).<sup>7</sup> It seems meaningful to us that Unamuno considered dialectics as being of *particular relevance* to the study of Spain and Iberia, by virtue of its contentious history, as he explains in a commentary on Fidelino de Figueiredo’s *The two Spains* (1932), a study that shows, according to our Basque thinker, a “*profunda comprensión de que nuestra íntima historia espiritual estriba en nuestro carácter contradictorio, o si se quiere dialéctico y dilemático, en que somos un pueblo de contradicción*”. More: “[E]sa dualidad – mejor: contrariedad – que es espíritu de lucha lo llevamos cada uno de los españoles dentro de nosotros mismos y cuanto más nos ensañamos con el adversario es que estamos peleando con el otro que llevamos por dentro, con uno de los dos” (“El soñar de la esfinge” [1933]; Unamuno, 1985, p.277-8; emphasis mine).

Speaking of dialectics in Unamuno’s work, requires clarifying the dialectical or broader philosophical schools (Platonic, Hegelian, Kierkegaardian, etc.) within which our writer operates. We will accept, in general, the distinction provided by Ciriaco Morón Arroyo between two types of dialectics found in Unamuno’s work: the aforementioned *Hegelian* dialectics, which is “*el movimiento mismo de la realidad*”, effected by the elimination of categorical oppositions and guided by historical reasons, and the Kierkegaardian dialectics, in which the oppositions remain unresolved, in agonizing tension. However, we disagree with his conclusion that all types of dialectics are present in Unamuno’s writing “*menos la hegeliana*” and that “[l]as huellas del pensador alemán en [Unamuno] no [sean] muy visibles” (Sánchez-Barbudo, 1974 5, p.174, 178). Despite his doubts about the rationalism of the German philosopher and his strong attraction to the apparent irrationality of the Danish, there is much of Hegel in Unamuno’s thought.<sup>8</sup> We recall Unamuno’s statement, contained in a letter of 1901, that “[a]prendí alemán en Hegel, en el estupendo Hegel, que ha sido uno de los pensadores que más honda huella han dejado en mí. Hoy mismo creo que el fondo de mi pensamiento es hegeliano” (apud Sánchez-Barbudo, 1974, p.151, emphasis mine). We see in Unamuno, besides the dialectical structures which we will discuss in the next paragraphs, an interpretation of self-consciousness that is very similar to that observed in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in which full self-consciousness is a product of the primordial encounter between two desires and presupposes casual mutual recognition. Says Unamuno: “[N]o llega a conocerse uno a sí mismo de otra manera que llega a conocer a sus prójimos, [...] [N]o hay la magia de un espíritu que se refleja sobre sí mismo sin algo mediane-

ro” (“¡el español...conquistador!” [1915]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.3, p.750). And about *Sentimiento trágico de la vida*: “[E]l hombre ni vive solo ni es individuo aislado, sino que es miembro de sociedad [...] La razón, lo que llamamos tal, es conocimiento reflejo y reflexivo, el que distingue al hombre, es un producto social” (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.7, p.124).<sup>9</sup>

As we shall argue in the next paragraphs, Unamuno extends this preference for the dialectical method and structures to the reality of the Peninsula, understanding Spain/Iberia as a dialectical entity and seeking to overcome the oppositions and contradictions inherent in the category, so as to affirm its superior unity. The tendency to affirm the Iberian unity as a function of its internal tensions and differences is clearly seen in Unamuno. Although the faith of young Unamuno in reshaping the Spanish national spirit from the point of view of *nationalities* diminished over the years while his defense of Castile and Castilian as privileged agents of the peninsular unity became fiercer, the Basque thinker always insisted on the superior unity of the Peninsula, which he embodies in the idea of a “*común espíritu ibérico*”, a kind of peninsular *Volksgeist*, and which he understands as being the product of struggles and tensions between different regional Iberian personalities - including the Portuguese one (“La literatura portuguesa contemporánea “ [1907]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.192).<sup>10</sup> In the book *En torno al casticismo* (1902), in which he exposes the problem of how to create an authentic national conscience for Spain, Unamuno believes that “*toda unificación procede al compás de la diferenciación interna y al compás de la sumisión del conjunto todo a una unidad superior a él*”, and that “*todo cuerpo se sostiene del juego de la presión externa con la tensión interna*” (“La casta histórica. – Castilla” [1895]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.802-3). He goes back to the topic at the conference “Lo que puede aprender Castilla de los poetas catalanes” (1915), in which, referring to the First World War, he says:

*[La guerra] puede llevarnos a plantear de una manera más clara el problema de nuestra personalidad colectiva nacional, el problema de la personalidad de España. o más bien el de sus varias personalidades regionales en lucha unas con otras, en lucha por integrarse [...] cada uno de nosotros ha sido varios, y una vez tuvo la hegemonía uno de nuestros yos y otras veces el otro. Y así en un pueblo, así en España. Que es una personalidad colectiva compleja en interna lucha. El alma común española, concebida y elaborada en controversia, en contradicción, en guerra civil, se está siempre haciendo.* (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.9, p.318, emphasis mine)

For Unamuno, this Spanish and peninsular integration process through the dialectical clash of regional personalities necessarily leads to the replacement of regional languages – among which Portuguese is included despite being the official language of a sovereign country - for a genuinely Spanish and, by extension, Iberian language, based on Castilian but taking advantage of the contributions of the other languages spoken in the Peninsula, besides the variants of

Castilian and Portuguese spoken in the former American colonies.<sup>11</sup> As Unamuno explained in his controversial “Discurso en los Juegos Florales celebrados en Bilbao el día 26 de agosto de 1901”: “*Del castellano, pronunciado y construído por distintos pueblos que habitan en ambos mundos dilatados dominios, surgirán, no distintas lenguas [...] sino el sobre-castellano, la lengua española o hispano-americana, una y varia, flexible y rica, dilatada como sus dominios*” (Unamuno, 1966 to 1971, v.4, p.242, emphasis mine). This project implies, somewhat paradoxically, the duty of every peninsular intellectual to learn to express themselves in three major Iberian languages: Castilian, Catalan and Portuguese. Unamuno always advocated, despite his vigorous defense of the language of Castile, that Castilians should be able to read the other two languages - “*lenguas, hermanas de la nuestra castellana*” (“Diccionario diferencial Catalán-Castellano” [1916]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.4, p.545, my emphasis).<sup>12</sup>

His argument speaks volumes about his conception of the peninsula, within which the Castile/Catalonia and, especially, the Castile/Portugal or Spain/Portugal distinction would carry a high dialectical potential. Unamuno follows the example of two prominent members of the Portuguese ‘70s Generation, namely Antero de Quental and Oliveria Martins, by affirming a common spirit, conscience or “genius” for Iberia,<sup>13</sup> which would be enriched by the efforts of conscious peninsular people to overcome the contradictions internal to the peninsula, including the linguistic divide between Portuguese and Spanish - languages which, according to our Basque “*en rigor y en el fondo son una misma*”, and whose differences are more apparent than substantial (“Español-Inglés” [1914]; Unamuno, from 1966 to 1971, v.4, p.527).<sup>14</sup> Unamuno regrets, in this sense, the “*absurda ortografía etimológica*” of the Portuguese language as a misguided effort to “*diferenciar la lengua portuguesa de la castellana mucho más de lo que se diferencian [en la realidad]*”, and sees the ever increasing popularity of anti-Spanish and anti-Portuguese jokes, the so-called ‘Spanishness’ and ‘Portugueseness’ as symptomatic of the mutual alienation of the two peoples (“sobre el criollismo: a guisa de prólogo “ [1903]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.4, p.579; “el pueblo español” [1902]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.3, p.716). To state (or reaffirm) this superior unity of the Iberian language and personality, Unamuno believes that “[l]os españoles debemos leer a los portugueses en su propia lengua, y no traducidos. El esfuerzo para ello necesario es pequeñísimo y se lo debemos a nuestra común madre Iberia o Hispania” (“Prologue to Eugenio de Castro’s *Constanza* [1913]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.8, p.1016, emphasis mine). Furthermore:

*Hasta en lo escrito he propugnado que no hay por qué traducir del castellano al portugués y viceversa. El esfuerzo [...] se compensa con que en el portugués [los castellanos] encontraremos rincones y recovecos de nuestro idioma que no los descubrimos directamente. Aprender portugués es un buen recurso para enriquecer nuestro castellano. (“Nueva Vuelta a Portugal [Iv]” [1935]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.4, p.1362)*<sup>15</sup>

That is, Portuguese and Castilian should be opposed, so that in their confrontation the manifestation of their current similarities and historical differences can not only to overcome the first, but also to possible synthesis - a hypothesis that Unamuno recognizes in the “Español-Portugués” text (1914): “*todo choque entre ellas acabaría – o acabará, ¿quién sabe? – en una penetración mutua; el español se aportuguesaría más o menos, el portugués se castellanizaría. Sería una obra de integración*” (Unamuno, 1966 to 1971, v.4, p.528).

By now, the reader should have clearly perceived the structural strength in Unamuno of the Iberia, understood as dialectical unity, a unity in which Portugal would necessarily participate, precisely because of its organic connection to Spain as its counterpoint and mirror image. As proof of this dual dialectical function of Portugal in relation to Spain, Unamuno confesses in a letter to Teixeira de Pascoaes that “*Portugal me interesa mucho porque me interesa España*” (apud Garcia Morejón, 1971, p.363). In the next section we shall explore the nature of the Portugal-Spain binomial within the dialectical Iberia, and propose that the corporeal language to which Unamuno resorts so frequently is used by him to explain the role of Portugal as a counterpoint and complement to the Spain he loved so dearly.

### Portugal and Spain, flesh and bone

The semantics of *carne y hueso* has a privileged place in Unamuno’s work since his famous statement at the opening of *Sentimiento trágico de la vida* that the “*hombre concreto, de carne y hueso, es el sujeto y el supremo objeto a la vez de toda filosofía*” (Unamuno, 1966 to 1971, v.7, p.109). Here, the man of flesh and bone, the subject of the book according to its author, contrasts with the apparent artificiality of abstract humanity, i.e., *humanitas*. But the *tropoi* of *carne y hueso*, sometimes combined into one idea (*hombre de carne y hueso*, i.e., the real man),<sup>16</sup> and others dialectically contrasted, appear numerous times in Unamuno’s work - almost obsessively, as the critics have noted, at least in the case of the first term - and carry with them a host of other meanings, also binarily or dialectically structured, some with direct application to the issue of Portugal’s participation in the Iberian group.<sup>17</sup>

If the word *carne* in Unamuno suggests something like substance, the material that gives full meaning to things, as in his warning that “*hay que mirar-la [i.e. una idea] por de dentro, viva, caliente, con alma y personalidad*”, *hueso* refers to the basic architecture of the living being, to the human or human community reduced to its essential minimum, something like the image of the “*faca só lâmina*” (knife all blade) in João Cabral de Melo Neto, a writer whose *huesuda* poetics and strong attraction to the Spanish landscape bring him close to the Basque-Salamanca writer (*En torno al casticismo* [1902]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.784). For Unamuno, the Castilian land serves as a backdrop to illustrate the way of being we have just described. It is important to note here the metaphorical potential of the landscape in Unamuno, to whom “*el campo*

*es una metáfora*".<sup>18</sup> Our writer, who devoted several texts to the description and interpretation of his adopted region of Castile, describes it as "*una tierra en esqueleto*" and as "*mar petrificado*" ("Campaña agraria" [1914]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.7, p.557; *En torno al casticismo* [1902]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.809). This difficult and cadaverous climate and land generate a certain way of being and a certain human type whose historical fortune resided in giving expression to the Spanish unity.<sup>19</sup> Unamuno describes the Castilians as follows:

*Allí dentro [de la llanura castellana] vive una casta de compleción seca, dura y sarmentosa, tostada por el sol y curtida por el frío, una casta de hombres sobrios, producto de una larga selección por las heladas de crudísimos inviernos y una serie de penurias periódicas, hechos a la inclemencia del cielo y a la pobreza de la vida.* ("En torno al casticismo" [1902]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.811, emphasis mine)

It is significant that the qualities described by Unamuno as inherent in the Castilian land and experience also appear in his descriptions of his language which, as mentioned before, should form the basis for a renewed Spanish national language. The following description, taken from a text that carries the suggestive title "Sobre la dureza del idioma castellano" (1899) demonstrates the application to the Castilian language of a number of qualities already linked by Unamuno to its people:

*Muchas veces se ha dicho que la lengua castellana es una lengua rígida y ósea, sin matices ni cambiantes [...] una lengua que por su estructura misma propende a los vastos periodos oratorios, campanudos y resonantes, o a cierta concisión angulosa y seca; pero que resiste las caricias ondulantes, las veladuras penumbrosas, la sutil ironía [...] todo lo que el castellano toca se cristaliza al punto; todo lo que él dice se hace dogma. Como en los vastos páramos castellanos o como en los cuadros de Ribera, no hay en él medias tintas; todo es claroscuro, todo adquiere ese relieve duro que da el sol al separar, con las sombras que les hace proyectar, a los objetos. Cada uno de éstos adquiere una individualidad decisiva y firme; no hay envolvente nimbo que los una y armonice en superior conjunto.* (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.4, p.332, emphasis mine)<sup>20</sup>

Having read the above passage, it should become clear to the reader that, despite its good qualities, for Unamuno Castilian is not self-sufficient; it *lacks* something and therefore must seek qualities that are inherent in other peninsular languages, but are not present in Castilian, to complete it and correct its excessive rigidity and alleged inability for nuanced expression. Only then Castilian will become a true Spanish and Iberian language, as Unamuno argues in the conference "Lo que puede aprender Castilla de los poetas catalanes" (1915): "*Nuestra lengua es seca, monorrítmica, pobre en modulaciones. Ayúdale, además, al catalán para cierta máscula energía, su abundancia en monosílabos*" (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.9, p.322, emphasis mine). The linguistic confronta-



tion, in this case between Castilian and Catalan, allows to establish the contrasts between the supposed rigidity of Castilian and the greater flexibility of Catalan and between the “poverty” of Castilian and the “abundance” of Catalan, besides enabling the postulation of a future synthesis between the two languages. As we shall see, the Portuguese language is also used by Unamuno as a dialectical counterpoint and an idiomatic resource for Castilian. To summarize what we have said so far, we can assign a number of meanings to the word *hueso* as used in Unamuno - *essence, dryness, hardness, stiffness, sobriety and severity* - and connect these meanings topographically, culturally and linguistically to Castile. If we continue to insist on the dialectical unity of the term-ideas of flesh and bone in Unamuno, and on his concern about affirming a superior unity for Spain and Iberia, it would be logical, then, to list the antonyms of the above mentioned ideas - *substance, humidity, softness, flexibility, expansion and tenderness* - organizing them under the sign of the word *flesh* and locating them in another part of the peninsula. It is not hard to guess where we will find this geographical and conceptual counterpoint to Castile: in Portugal, the alleged “country of gentle customs.”



*Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936), Spanish writer.*

Let us see, then, the Portuguese and carnal side of the Iberian dialectics constructed by Unamuno, beginning with the Portuguese and, by extension, the Galician landscape: in an article from 1908 in which our Basque-Salamanca writer recounts his visit to the city of Braga, he gives us a very suggestive description of the Minho region, which presents an implicit contrast between this and Castile, already qualified as cadaverous land:

*Y allá fui, atravesando tierras de esa mimosa provincia del Miño. Verdura por todas partes; las vides enlazadas a los chopos entre maizales; más allá suaves lomas cubiertas de pinos, y a lo lejos las colinas expirando entre niebla. Tierra de verdura y de niebla. Tierra sin huesos. (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.224, emphasis mine)*

The comparison between a soft, smooth and explicitly boned Minho (a description common in Unamuno's view of northern Portugal and extended at other times to the Portuguese language, as we shall see),<sup>21</sup> and a harsh, severe and bony Castile becomes explicit in the text "Junto a las rías bajas de Galicia" (1912), in which Unamuno describes a visit to the *low estuaries* in the Galician region immediately north of the Portuguese Minho:

*La tierra toda del Miño, de un lado y otro de la ría, por España y por Portugal, se abre a los ojos como una visión de ensueño que nos ata a la tierra. La he visto entre llovizna, recibiendo resignada el jugo fecundante de las nubes, y es como mejor sentimos su significación íntima toda. Es un paisaje carnal y crepuscular a la vez [...] Los montes del horizonte languidecen entre neblinas. Por dondequiera el verdor vela al esqueleto rocoso de la tierra, que acá, en esta ósea castilla, asoma por dondequiera sus juanetes [...] Recorbada aquella magnífica descripción de la tierra y el hombre del Miño que Oliveira Martins nos dejó en la descripción de Portugal con que su Historia de Portugal se abre. (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.383, emphasis mine)<sup>22</sup>*

It is interesting to note that the qualities attributed to the Portuguese land (especially Galicia) also apply to its people, its culture and its language, and are often structured as binary (and dialectical) comparisons with Castile - a territory which, in this sense, is a perennial point of reference for Unamuno. Let us see, in a rather politically incorrect example, Unamuno's view of Portuguese women. To the Salamanca rector, "[t]iene la portuguesa algo que sólo se expresa con una palabra, portuguesa también, y es meiguice, blandura [...] No es la rígida majeza de la española" ("Braga" [1908], Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.227-8, emphasis mine). Portuguese Catholicism is also described as less rigid, less austere and less severe than that practiced across the border:

*El cristo español – me decía una vez Guerra Junqueiro [...] jamás se aparta de la cruz, donde está lleno de sangre; el cristo portugués juega por los campos con los campesinos y merienda con ellos, y sólo a ciertas horas, cuando tiene que cumplir*

*con los deberes de su cargo, se cuelga de la cruz.* (“Las sombras’, by Teixeira de Pascoaes” [1908]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.197)

As for the language, one of the most direct comparisons found in Unamuno’s work between Portuguese and Spanish is based on an alleged quote from Miguel de Cervantes often repeated by Unamuno and which, although apocryphal (we were unable to find it in any of Cervantes’ texts), has enjoyed some success in the academic or pseudo-academic discourse about Portuguese-Hispanic relations. Unamuno writes in “In Las Sombras, de Teixeira de Pascoaes” (1908), Unamuno writes in a way that reveals the reversibility and mutual dialectical dependence of the Portuguese/Spanish distinction: “*Dijo Cervantes del idioma portugués que es el castellano sin huesos, y, retrucándole, cabría decir que el castellano es el portugués osificado*” (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.194, emphasis mine).<sup>23</sup> While Portuguese is “sweet” (a partial synonym for “gentle” or “soft”, and suggests a certain modesty and deference), Castilian is “indented”- something lofty and hard, and perhaps assertive or impatient.<sup>24</sup> In poetry, too, in which the Castilian verses of Unamuno contrast (in the opinion of their author ) with the Portuguese verses of his friend Pascoaes:

*No hallaréis en sus composiciones esas estrofas densas, compactas, de espesísimo cristal, esculpidas, diamantinas, tales como se encuentran en [el poeta italiano] Carducci y como yo me he esforzado por hacer en mis propias poesías; las de Teixeira de Pascoaes se alargan y desvanecen como sombras de crepúsculo.* (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.195)

After so many examples, we believe to have sufficiently illustrated Unamuno’s articulation - in his landscape meditations and in his essays on the fate of the peninsula - of two major conceptual sequences or currents, each arranged under an element of the *carne y hueso* binomial, and located in a specified region of the Iberian Peninsula, namely:

*Bone // Essence / Dryness / Hardness / Rigidity / Sobriety / Severity // Castile*

*Flesh // Substance / Humidity / Smoothness / Flexibility / Expansion / Softness // Portugal*

Finally, it should be explained, briefly, how this corporeal vocabulary operates *as a function* of Unamuno’s understanding of the Iberia entity as a dialectical entity, a space whose superior unity depends on confronting and overcoming its internal divisions.

### **Dialectical unity, corporeal ties**

If one of the basic principles of the Hegelian dialectics is that the affirmation of a superior unity (in our case the Iberian Peninsula) operates by the elimination (*Aufhebung*) or overcoming of the differences between two desires,

beings or ideas (retroactively understood as the two sides of the binomial), it can be concluded that the terms brought into dialectical confrontation should maintain a relationship of mutual dependency and contamination, and that the two will carry in themselves some traces of their opposites. If we apply this principle to the conceptual sequences mapped in the previous section, it should be possible, as proof of the integration of Unamuno's *carne y hueso* vocabulary into the dialectical structure through which he understands the peninsular fate, to find moments in Unamuno's work in which the term-ideas *carne y hueso* and Portugal and Castile are presented as mutually dependent or contaminated.

An example of this imagistic integration is found in the text "País, paisaje y paisanaje" (1933), in which Unamuno depicts the peninsula as a human hand (formed, as we know, by flesh and bones), in which its five major rivers – four of them running through Portuguese territory – represent the fingers:

*[E]sta mano tendida al mar poniente [...] es la tierra de España. Sus cinco dedos líquidos, ¿Miño-pulgar? ¿Duero-índice? ¿Tajo-el del corazón? Guadiana y Gualquivir [...] Y, sobre ella, sobre esa mano, la palma azul de la mano de Dios, el cielo natural.* (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.705)

To Unamuno, the superior Iberian unity sanctioned here by none other than God, is reflected both in its *paisaje* as in its *paisanaje* (human landscape), which reinforce one another, like the "flesh" (here the rivers) and "bones" (mountains) of the peninsula:

*En esta mano, entre sus dedos, entre las rayas de su palma, vive una humanidad; a este paisaje le llena y da sentido y sentimiento humanos un paisanaje. Sueñan aquí, sueñan la tierra en que viven y mueren, de que viven y de que mueren unos pobres hombres [...] El espíritu, el pneuma, el alma histórica no se hace sino sobre el ánima, la psique, el alma natural, geográfica y geológica si se quiere.* (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.706)

It is curious to note that in Unamuno the geographical (and by extension conceptual) connection of Portugal with the rest of Iberia is usually due to flesh (rivers) and bone (mountains) factors. He writes in one of his last essays on Portugal, "Lisboa y Toledo" (1935), that Portugal "*está unido al resto de la Península Ibérica por sus espinazos rocosos en parte, mas sobre todo por los grandes ríos que enlazan ambos países, atravesándolos*" ("Lisboa y Toledo" [1935]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.717). This is not to say that Portugal and Castile are equally defined by their "fleshy" rivers and "bony" mountains: the dominant tone of the Portuguese landscape and character, for Unamuno, is still fleshy, as much as it is bony for Castile. It just happens that, according to the structure of the Iberian dialectical, Portugal is linked to its opposite (Castile) by the meeting of the *two* images, flesh and bone. Furthermore, Portugal needs the tonic provided by the qualities opposite to that of its conceptual sequence (softness, flexibility, expansion, etc.), qualities such as hardness, stiffness and simplicity, which should be understood as intrinsically Castilian.

Like the operation of the Hegelian dialectical, which aims at the confrontation of opposite terms, desires or beings, leading to mutual recognition and to a synthesis that will result in the mutual contamination of the two original terms, the qualities linked initially to Castile should also be found in Portugal, but as discordant notes, in opposition to the general tone. Examples are found in Unamuno's reflections on the Portuguese landscape and its literature: a visit to the Marão Mountain Chain led Unamuno to "*recorda[r], sobre todo, aquella* austera, noble, huesuda, y solemne Castilla, *que es todo menos un jardín*", and the sonnets of Antero de Quental seemed to him "*algo huesoso y duro con frecuencia: el elemento conceptual y abstracto aparece muy descarnado, no siempre bien recubierto por la fantasía*" ("O Bom Jesus do Monte" [1908]; "La literatura portuguesa contemporánea" [1907]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.190, 232, emphasis mine).<sup>25</sup> Here the descriptions of Marão and of Antero's poetry serve to connect Marão to Unamuno's adopted land through characteristics of identity and to indicate the exceptional nature of the aforementioned characteristics within a Portuguese scope defined mostly by the smoothness of its landscape and the hazy lyricism of its poetry.

Since we have tried to show the integration of Unamuno's corporeal vocabulary to the dialectical structure through which he understands the fate of the Peninsula, it would now be appropriate to ask, and to conclude, about the consequences of the mutual alienation and mistrust that have historically marked Portuguese-Hispanic relations - or translating this problem into Unamuno's vocabulary - about the consequences of breaking the Portugal/Spain binomial, of not asserting a superior unity for the Iberian Peninsula, and of "removing" either the flesh or the bones from the peninsular body.

For the Salamancan professor, the implications are clear and overwhelmingly negative. In a letter dated December 19, 1907 to his friend, the Catalan writer Juan Maragall, Unamuno provides the following view of Portugal: "*[E]se pobre país está perdido; está purgando, a mi juicio, su independencia. Se desprendió del hueso y ahora en carne pura, y en carne floja aunque sonrosada, empieza a marchitarse*" (Unamuno & Maragall, 1951, p.78, emphasis mine). Although the comment refers to the immediate context of the last years of a Portuguese monarchy in full agony, it has a greater resonance: a Portugal that does not come into dialectical confrontation with Spain will be, for Unamuno, like a body without bones, condemned to death, as headless and gutted sardines which he describes as debris from fishery in Espinho.<sup>26</sup> likewise, a Castile or Spain that refuses to recognize Portugal as an Iberian sister (and not as an inferior territory) will be refused access to the *flesh*, the substance, of a country whose linguistic and cultural resources can provide Spain with the material needed for the reform of national - and peninsular - conscience, always coveted by the great Spanish Lusophile.

#### Notes

- 1 The best and most comprehensive study on the topic is still *Unamuno y Portugal*,

- by Julio Garcia Morejon (1971). *Epistolário português de Unamuno* and *Escritos de Unamuno sobre Portugal* (Unamuno, 1985), edited by Ángel Marcos de Dios (Dios, 1978) are also essential.
- 2 Appendix II of *Epistolário português de Unamuno* lists almost three hundred Portuguese books (by Portuguese-Brazilian authors or on Portuguese topics) in Unamuno's library (Dios, 1978, p.363-74).
  - 3 Unamuno's position with respect to the Iberian union is more contradictory than it is usually admitted. In a letter from 1908, he stated that “[l]a única redención de Portugal [sería] ser conquistado por España – por castilla más bien – ser conquistada y nada de unión ibérica”, criticizing, nine years later, in the article “Portugal independiente” (1917), the desire of “*muchos trogloditas [...] de que nuestra patria se anexiona por la fuerza la república portuguesa*” (Unamuno, 1991, p.248, emphasis mine; 1985, p.246). It seems reasonable to say that these views represent the extremes of Unamuno's position and we take the following sentence as indicative of his true position - that would favor a cultural dialogue and a collective Iberian conscience, as well as to political merger only by general consensus: “*La unión moral ibérica sólo puede establecerse bajo un régimen de voluntad nacional, de soberanía popular*” (“Deber de España para con Portugal” [1917]; Unamuno, 1985, p.249).
  - 4 “*El tema de España, su pasado y su porvenir, su azaroso presente, es motivo que aparece con machacona insistencia en las obras de Unamuno; él inspiró buena parte de su labor de publicista*” (Granjel, 1957, p.132). Unamuno almost gets to the point of parodying his deep *españolismo* in the novel *Niebla* (1914), in which Unamuno (character) states that he is “[e]spañol de nacimiento, de educación, de cuerpo, de espíritu, de lengua y hasta de profesión y oficio; español sobre todo y ante todo, y el españolismo es mi religión” (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.2, p.669).
  - 5 This is his definition of *hispanidad*, as he explains in the first sentence of the article: “*“Digo Hispanidad [...] para atenerme al viejo concepto histórico-geográfico de Hispania, que abarca toda la Península Ibérica”* (Unamuno, 1966 to 1971, v.4 , p.1081).
  - 6 See this clarification of the article “¡San Pablo y abre España!” (1934): “*na Espanha? ¿En España? Y entiéndese aquí por España lo que empezó siendo: Hispania, la Península ibérica toda ella*” (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.4, p.1357, emphasis mine).
  - 7 The title of this article is somewhat misleading. Far from being a criticism of the dialectical method, it should be understood as a critical comment on the intellectual climate of Spain.
  - 8 See *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida* (1913) (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.7, p.111-2).
  - 9 Compare with the discussion in paragraphs 166-196 (p.104-19) of *Phenomenology*. See also Unamuno's view that “[u]n pueblo, como un individuo, cree en sí mismo a medida que los demás creen el él” (Letter to Luis de Zulueta, March 22, 1906; Unamuno & Zulueta, 1972, p. 139), and the critical discussions of François Meyer (1962, p. 94-5) and Mario J. Valdés (1973 p.xxvii).
  - 10 See also references to “*nuestra eterna patria [...] la Iberia celestial*”, “*la eterna Iberia*”, “*unión espiritual [ibérica]*” e “*unión moral ibérica*” (Unamuno, 1985, p.187-8, 246, 249). It seems significant that Unamuno's understanding of *Volksgeist*, as illustrated in *En torno del casticismo* allows - and assumes - the internal contradiction: “*cuando se afirma que en el espíritu colectivo de un pueblo en el Volksgeist, hay algo más que la suma de los caracteres comunes a los espíritus individuales que lo integran, lo que se afirma es que viven en él de un modo o de otro los caracteres todos de todos sus*

componentes; se afirma la existencia de un nimbo colectivo, de una hondura del alma común, en que viven y obran todos los sentimientos, deseos y aspiraciones que no concuerdan en forma definida, que no hay pensamiento alguno individual que no repercuta en todos los demás, aun en sus contrarios, que hay una verdadera subconciencia popular” (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.867, emphasis mine).

- 11 Unamuno defended the use of Castilian transformed into true *Spanish* language through the confrontation of all peninsular languages: “*El ideal es que hablemos todos los hombres una sola y misma lengua, pero que la hable cada cual a su modo, y el ideal en España que sólo se hable el español, pero empleándolo cada uno a su manera*” (“sobre la lengua española” [1901]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.1009).
- 12 “[S]i hemos de realizar la integración espiritual española, menester nos es penetrarnos no ya de las distintas lenguas, más de los distintos estilos. De las lenguas, desde luego [...] Es un deber hoy de todo español culto llegar a leer catalán y portugués sin que se los traduzcan. Y esto os lo dice uno que anhela y espera la integración de todas las hablas ibéricas en una sola” (“Lo que puede aprender Castilla de los poetas catalanes” [1915]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.9, p.329).
- 13 On the subject, see *Causas da decadência dos povos peninsulares* (1871) by Antero de Quental, and *História da civilização ibérica* (1879) by Oliveira Martins. The second text is mentioned time and again by Unamuno in his published and epistolary work.
- 14 About the artificiality of the differences between Portuguese and Spanish, see this comment on spelling: “[S]iempre he sospechado que en su empeño por diferenciar la lengua portuguesa de la castellana mucho más de lo que se diferencian, que es menos que lo que separa el castellano del catalán, siguen aferrados a su absurda ortografía etimológica para que la lengua escrita ofrezca otra fisionomía que la de la española” (“sobre el criollismo: a guisa de prólogo” [1903]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.4, p.579). And more: “Si en España se adoptara la ortografía portuguesa, los portugueses habrían de acabar adoptando la hoy nuestra” (“Acerca de la reforma de la ortografía castellana” [1896]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.928, note 2).
- 15 See similar judgments in “La literatura portuguesa contemporánea” (1907), “el sarcasmo ibérico de Eça de Queirós” (1917), and “El soñar de la esfinge” (1933) (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.188; 1985, p.252, 277).
- 16 This use of *hombre de carne y hueso* meaning “real man” appears in several other moments in his work, such as *Vida de Don Quijote e Sancho* (1905) (Unamuno, 1966 to 1971, v.3, p.53).
- 17 See article by R. L. Predmore, “Flesh and Spirit in the Works of Unamuno” and comments by José Ferrater Mora in “Unamuno hoy día” (Sánchez-bearded, 1974, p.53-4). The word “obsessive” refers to the opening of Predmore’s article (ibid, p.587).
- 18 We refer to the subheading “Paisaje teresiano: el campo es una metáfora”, undated essay included in the volume *Andanzas y visiones españolas* (1922) (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.494-7). Also of interest is the opinion of Julio Garcia Morejon (1971, p.97), according to which the landscapes described in *Por tierras de Portugal y de España* (1911) are a “[t]opografía espiritual, y no física”.
- 19 “Sería labor industriosa y útil la de desenmarañar hasta qué punto hicieron las circunstancias, el medio ambiente que hoy se dice, al espíritu castellano, y hasta qué punto éste se valió de aquélla. La obra de la reconquista, el descubrimiento del Nuevo mundo y el haber



*ocupado el trono de castilla un emperador de Alemania, determinaron la marcha ulterior de la política castellana; pero si las circunstancias hacen al espíritu, son modificadas por este mismo y recibidas en él según él es [...] castilla, sea como fuere, se puso a la cabeza de la monarquía española, y dió tono y espíritu a toda ella* (“en torno al casticismo” [1902]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.804-5).

- 20 Compare with the following description: “*Ha sido siempre, sin duda, la casta castellana una casta dogmática y enamorada de la unidad, poco capaz de sentir el matiz ni la media tinta, muy poco flexible*” (“Injusticia inútil” [1899]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.7, p.408).
- 21 “*Y allende el río saudoso, allende el río de lágrimas suspirantes, mansas colinas vestidas de olivos y de pinos, rebaños de colinas ondulantes, un mar de verdura. Y a lo lejos, el cabo mondego, perdido entre la bruma*” (“Coimbra” [1914]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.427-8, emphasis mine).
- 22 See the description of Minho and of natives of Minho in Oliveira Martins (1901, p.35, updated spelling): “*Habita essa região pingue uma população abundante, ativa, mas sem distinção de carácter, nem elevação de espírito: consequência necessária da umidade e da fertilidade. Falta essa espécie de tonificação própria do ar seco e dos largos horizontes recortados num céu luminoso e puro*”. (This fertile region is inhabited by an abundant, active population, but without distinction of character, or elevation of spirit: a necessary consequence of humidity and fertility. It lacks that kind of vigor typical of dry air and wide horizons chiseled in a bright and pure sky.)
- 23 A more elaborate version of this statement appears in an interview from the Portuguese writer António Ferro to Unamuno in 1930: “*O português – já o disse um grande escritor – é um castelhano sem ossos. Os portugueses encontram, nos castelhanos, por tanto, o que lhes falta. O castelhano, efetivamente, é todo em ossos, esquelético. Tem qualquer coisa de lagosta... O português, ao contrário, é como um polvo... Mas que a lagosta se acautele antes de lutar com o polvo*”. (The Portuguese - as already said by a great writer - is a Castilian without bones. The Portuguese find in the Castilians, therefore, what they lack. Castilian is actually all bones, skeletal. It has something of a lobster ... Portuguese, by contrast, is like an octopus ... But the lobster should be careful before fighting the octopus”). (apud Garcia Morejon, 1971, p.367; spelling updated). For another version, see “¡San Pablo y abre España!” (1934) (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.4, p.1358). Unamuno’s curious attribution of this statement to Cervantes and the implications of its popularity as an idea “sanctioned” by the authority of the author of Don Quixote merits a study.
- 24 See essay “Guarda” (1908) (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.242).
- 25 The first quote refers to the verse by the poet Tomás Ribeiro, who describes Portugal as the *garden of Europe, planted by the sea* - verse mentioned by Unamuno to characterize the overall tone of the country (“La pesca de Espinho” [1908]; Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.219).
- 26 “*Parte de la pesca va a la fábrica de conservas, y allí se les ve descabezando y destripando sardinas, cuyos sanguinolentos despojos quedan en la arena para las gaviotas*” (Unamuno, 1966-1971, v.1, p.222).

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*ABSTRACT* – While the topic of the Spanish intellectual Miguel de Unamuno’s relationship with Portugal has received a good deal of scholarly attention, this has focused on affirming Unamuno’s longstanding interest in Portuguese literature and history, and on confirming the existence of relationships of influence between Unamuno and prominent Portuguese writers. This paper, instead, will consider how Unamuno fits Portugal into his broader vision of Iberia as a dialectical unity, and will demonstrate how Unamuno’s use of a corporeal vocabulary, of *carne y hueso*, contributes to the fleshing out of his vision of a dialectical Iberia, in which Portugal plays an integral role.

*KEYWORDS*: Unamuno, Iberia, Portugal, Spain, Dialectical, Flesh, Bones, Hegel.

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