

THE PHENOMENON OF *FÚTBOL* IN SPAIN: A STUDY OF *FÚTBOL* IN SPANISH
POLITICS, LITERATURE AND FILM

Dissertation

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Abstract

This investigation serves to demonstrate the multifaceted connection that the sport of *fútbol* has with certain aspects of Spanish society, namely, this cultural phenomenon's long relationship with Spanish politics, literature and film.

Since the formation of Spain's very first club teams, the sport of *fútbol* has always demonstrated a strong connection with Spain's historical socio-political disputes. These disputes have become essential elements in making up the very fabric of Spain and range from questions of nationhood, to questions of identity, culture, politics, ideologies and economy.

Throughout this study, I address the dispute that has been taking place between the intellectual classes and the *fútboling* community and defend that although the relationship between intellectuals and *fútbol* has not been as public as *fútbol's* relationship to politics, it has however existed throughout the entire history of the sport. Many intellectuals have deemed the sport of *fútbol* as an unsuitable topic for intellectual areas such as literature and artistic mediums like film. In this study, I uncover that some of Spain's most highly praised literary figures had a passion for the sport which they alluded to, sometimes on numerous occasions, as central themes in their work. This genre of literature, which I call "kick-lit", is experiencing a recent growth not only in acceptance, but also in popularity in Spain, Latin America and throughout the world.

There has been a similar distrust among the intellectual classes when it comes to films dealing with the sport of *fútbol*. In this investigation I prove that films covering the sport of *fútbol*, which I have labeled “kick-flicks”, also have a long standing tradition in Spain – stemming back to the era of silent film. I address a number of polemic issues pertaining to the difficulties that films dealing with the sport of *fútbol* have experienced over the years, and I highlight a variety of possible solutions to sidestep these problems until they are resolved. The “kick-flick” genre is also experiencing a resurgence in popularity in Spain, and its future looks bright. *Fútbol* and film are the two most powerful and fastest growing social phenomena of the past one hundred years; it seems natural that the two should go together.

Through this investigation I hope to draw attention to the multifaceted avenues through which the sport of *fútbol* can be investigated. *Fútbol* is a social phenomenon that has been proven to be capable of captivating the masses since it is now the most intense passion of the Spanish people.

Dedication

Dedicated to all my kin

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I'd like to thank my family for all their support over the years. Without their help, this would have never been possible. I'd like to thank Professor Amell for the countless ways in which he has helped me since the first day I stepped into his office. He was an exemplary advisor, mentor and friend. I cannot thank him enough – he made this possible for me. I'd like to thank the members of my committee: Professor Corona and Professor Viscarri for their support, guidance and patience in helping me see this project through. They served not only as role models in the field, but they are also great friends. I'd like to thank the Spanish and Portuguese Department at Ohio State for their support. The SPPO Department created a family-like atmosphere that was conducive to learning and working. I'd like to thank my friends for their support and encouragement over the past few years. I'd like to thank Jorge Valdano, the “Philosopher of *fútbol*” as well as the *fútbol* historians and scholars Liz Crolley, Vic Duke, Duncan Shaw, and others who provided me with a framework from which to model this project and for documenting key historical facts. I'd like to thank all the kick-lit writers that have broken the taboo and written about *fútbol* in an effort to combine two of the passions of my life – *fútbol* and literature. Finally, I'd also like to thank Cindy Phelps and the BGSU Spanish Department for helping me begin this journey almost ten years ago.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

El fútbol es popular porque la estupidez es popular.

–Jorge Luis Borges

Toda la filosofía de la vida puede aprenderse dentro de un campo de fútbol.

–Albert Camus

Since its inception roughly 150 years ago, the sport of association football has proven to be one of the modern world's most enigmatic cultural phenomena. It is phenomenal in many ways; one in particular is its unique ability to capture the passions and dreams of millions of people around the world. This unique ability is closely linked with the sport's capacity to represent and strengthen different cultural identities and ideologies throughout the world. The sport has therefore played an enormous role in globalizing the world's community and economy. Its enormous capacity to captivate the masses has been exploited by the world's most powerful institutions, and the sport itself has in turn exploited its connection to these same institutions. This helped catapult association football into the globalizing community and established it as one of the modern world's most important and prevalent cultural phenomena. The sport of association football, since its inception, has proven to be one of the modern world's fastest growing and most solidified representations of globalization.

Since so many languages are spoken throughout the world, this sport, commonly called “the world’s game”, has a variety of different names around the globe. It is referred to as *football*, *association football* and *footy* in England and other countries, *calcio* (meaning kick) in Italy, *soccer* (a derivative of association football) in the United States and either *fútbol* or *balompié* in Spanish speaking countries. Throughout this study, which focuses on the sport’s role as a cultural phenomenon that has crossed over into politics, literature and film in Spain, I will use the popular Spanish term of *fútbol* in an effort to avoid confusion when referring to “the world’s game”.¹

There has been an ongoing clash of ideals between the intellectual classes and the *fútbol* community ever since the sport of *fútbol* began being embraced by the planet. *Fútbol*’s enormous popularity with the masses has caused many prominent intellectuals, not only in Spain but also throughout the world, to proclaim it an activity for the common/uncultured individual. One of *fútbol*’s earliest and most outspoken antagonists was the Argentinean author and philosopher, Jorge Luis Borges, who stated in an interview that *fútbol* is “*una cosa estúpida de ingleses... Un deporte estéticamente feo: once jugadores contra once corriendo detrás de una pelota no son especialmente hermosos*” (in Alejo). This was like a knife to the chest of many *fútbol* supporters and for years it seemed that, as Miguel Alejo stated in his article “*Fútbol y Literatura: Romance intelectual con la pelota*”, “*los escritores desdeñaban el fútbol y los futboleros huían de la literatura*” Although this seemed to be the popular school of thought, after some investigation, it has become very clear that there has been a long-standing tradition of

¹ A similar declaration and explanation for the terminology used throughout this study can be found on page 34.

literature and *fútbol*. The popular negative stereotype of the sport has recently caused a great number of *fútbol* supporters to either stand up and defend the sport's legitimacy through literature, or draw attention to the vast number of intellectuals that have done so throughout their careers. Many of the individuals to defend the sport's legitimacy, interestingly, are associated with the intellectual classes as writers and philosophers or are prominent figures of the *fútbol* community. These individuals broke the taboo by crossing into what had come to be considered the opposite field. By creating works that encompass the two, they shed light on the fact that they also are captivated by both the sport of *fútbol* and literature. In another capacity, many have addressed the dispute head-on and demonstrated that the sport can be dealt with on an intellectual level just like any other social or cultural phenomenon.

One of the first intellectuals to embrace the sport of *fútbol* as a topic for a novel was the famous Argentinean/Uruguayan writer, Horacio Quiroga, who in the early 1900's published the tragic true story, "*Suicidio en la cancha*", which was an account of a Latin American *fútbol*er who committed suicide on the center-spot of a *fútbol* field. Quiroga's tale now appears in Omar Prego's compilation of short stories about the sport of *fútbol* titled *Cuentos para patear*. Another intellectual to write about the sport was a Frenchman of noble descent named Henry de Montherlant who prior to becoming a notable essayist, novelist and playwright, was a goalkeeper in France. Montherlant wrote one of the first fictional tales dealing with *fútbol* titled, "*Los once ante la puerta dorada*". Years later, the famous French philosopher, Albert Camus, who had also spent time as a goalkeeper in France, recognized the role the sport of *fútbol* had played on his intellectual formation

as a philosopher. Camus made reference to the sport throughout his career as a philosopher, and in one article in particular titled “*Lo que debo al fútbol*” he wrote, “*Pronto aprendí que la pelota nunca viene hacia uno por donde uno espera que venga. Eso me ayudó mucho en la vida, sobre todo en las grandes ciudades, donde la gente no suele ser siempre lo que se dice derecha*” (in Galeano *Su majestad el fútbol* 10).

Although the defense of *fútbol* as a legitimate topic for intellectual and artistic mediums, such as literature and film, has been an effort fought worldwide, some of the movement’s most prominent advocates hail from the Spanish-speaking world. Some of these defenders of *fútbol* have conducted cultural, political and economic studies dealing with the sport of *fútbol* while others have composed works of fiction that use the sport as the central theme. There is a long list of prominent figures of Spanish literature that have composed works using the sport of *fútbol* as a central theme. It contains the names Camilo José Cela, Rafael Alberti, Miguel Hernández, Francisco Umbral, Miguel Delibes, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, Rosa Regàs, David Trueba, Soledad Puértolas, Rafael Azcona, Vicente Verdú, Javier Marías, Ana María Moix, Juan Manuel de Prada, Manuel Hidalgo, and Fernando Fernán Gómez, along with many others. The list of Latin American advocates of the genre includes the names Eduardo Galeano, Mario Benedetti, Juan Villoro, Osvaldo Soriano, Roberto Fontanaroso, and many others. Some of these literary figures included *fútbol* as a topic in their work because of their overwhelming passion for the sport, while others did so because they recognized its role as a cultural phenomenon. There are still others that have compiled works of literature that deal with the sport of *fútbol* in an effort to draw attention to the presence of the genre and at the

same time justify its legitimacy. Two such individuals are Jorge Valdano and Julián García Candau.

Jorge Valdano is primarily recognized as a figure of the world of *fútbol*. His successes in the *fútbol* arena include scoring a goal to help Argentina win the 1986 World Cup Final alongside the famous Diego Maradona. Valdano began his professional career playing for the Argentinean Club, *Newell's Old Boys*, before entering the Spanish league where he played for *Deportivo Alavés*, *Real Zaragoza* and *Real Madrid*. He later became the manager of *Club Deportivo Tenerife* and *Real Madrid*. After his playing career came to an end, Valdano began working to dispel the stereotype that *fútbol* and intellectualism are not compatible. In defending *fútbol's* legitimacy, Valdano has written articles, books and newspaper columns as well as taken part in countless interviews, always defending the sport as an intellectually profound contribution to society.

Since beginning his mission in the defense of *fútbol*, Valdano has earned the nickname, "The Philosopher of *Fútbol*". Two of his books that approach the sport from an intellectual standpoint are titled *Apuntes del balón* (2001) and *El miedo escénico y otras hierbas* (2002). *Apuntes del balón* is a compilation of the conclusions of profound thought that Valdano had recognized, pertaining to the sport of *fútbol*, that he had written over the years for his column in the Spanish *fútbol* newspaper, *Marca*. *El miedo escénico y otras hierbas* is another contribution by Valdano that defends the sport as an intellectually stimulating contribution to society that, among many things, serves to mold our youth and prepare them for adulthood. He defends that it is also a realm where all of life's lessons can be learned and where differences in social status can miraculously

vanish. In one section of the book Valdano describes these aspects of the game by writing:

La primera cooperativa de la que formé parte fue un equipo de fútbol: había que poner el esfuerzo al servicio de un colectivo. Como jugar nos hace auténticos, los partidos que improvisábamos en los baldíos de mi barrio nos ayudaban a conocernos mejor. Cuando la pelota se ponía en movimiento, empezaba, al mismo tiempo, una batalla y una fiesta en donde había patadas alevosas y jugadas gloriosas. Todos terminábamos mostrándonos tal cual éramos. Resultaba fácil descubrir al generoso y al egoísta, al valiente y al cobarde, al envidioso, al altruista, al inseguro, al melancólico y a todos los que forman la compleja fauna humana. Como el fútbol no distingue más que entre buenos y malos jugadores, en los equipos convivían gordos, flacos, altos, bajos, fuertes que chocaban, débiles que regateaban y, ahora que lo pienso, el juego no hacía diferencias entre los chicos con zapatillas nuevas y aquellos que jugaban descalzos (277-78).

In his work, Valdano makes a point to address the dispute between the intellectuals and the *fútbol* community to demonstrate that the two supposed contrasting areas of society are in fact compatible. In *El miedo escénico y otras hierbas*, he addresses and describes both sides of the argument by defining certain aspects of the sport when he writes:

El fútbol: trivial, sospechoso y indiscutible peso social, fue siempre utilizado y manoseado. La respuesta de los intelectuales a esta fuerza popular es parcelable. En buen número creen que mancha. Por prejuicios culturales (juego para analfabetos), políticos, (trampa capitalista), sexuales, (un mundo de hombres); o por el comprensible espanto que les produce hacer soluble lo individual a la gran masa. Lo cierto es que entre este tipo de sabios y el fútbol hay una relación frustrada que el origen; un divorcio prematrimonial con dos efectos: unos lo ignoran y otros lo desprecian. Simpatía hostilidad era la de Jorge Luis Borges, quien el día del debú de la selección argentina en el Mundial 78 dictó una conferencia en Buenos Aires a la misma hora del partido. Trataba sobre la inmortalidad. [...] De cuando en el mundo había polos ideológicos, podemos extraer otras diferencias. La izquierda se entretuvo en un análisis crítico-ideológico, político-económico y socio-psicológico del fenómeno, un enorme esfuerzo intelectual para acabar despreciándolo. La derecha, siempre tan eficaz, fue más concreta: usó el fútbol en beneficio de sus intereses de dominación. El pensamiento progresista seguía reflexionando: el fútbol era un dique de contención de la subversión necesario; obstruía, por perversión la solidaridad colectiva; reproducía el mundo laboral capitalista. Concluido lo cual, la izquierda se desinteresó (274-75).

In 1995, Valdano took a bold step and entered into the dispute between intellectuals and the *fútbol* community by publishing a book that compiled twenty-four short stories written by some of the Spanish-speaking world's most reputable literary figures. Each of the stories deals with the sport of *fútbol*. The book, titled *Cuentos de Fútbol*, quickly garnered a great deal of attention because it combined these two contrasting realms of society (*fútbol* and literature). Three years later, Valdano compiled another book using the same parameters titled *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*. *Cuentos de Fútbol 2* consists of twenty-three *fútbol* stories written by different literary figures of the Spanish-speaking world than those included in the first publication with the exception of Mario Benedetti, who had stories that appeared in both *Cuentos de Fútbol* and *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*. Valdano's use of different authors in these publications verifies the vast number of famous literary figures and intellectuals that have created works of literature focusing on the sport of *fútbol*. Since Jorge Valdano is one of the foremost advocates of intellectualism and literature as they pertain to the sport of *fútbol*, I will make reference to his many contributions throughout this study. His contributions, that overlap each of these fields, serve as evidence in my defense that proclaims the taboo of *fútbol*, as a legitimate literary topic, has been lifted and that it is now not only an acceptable theme among intellectuals, but a theme that is regarded favorably. Two sections of this investigation are dedicated to analyzing the stories that appear in both *Cuentos de Fútbol* and *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*.

In 1996, the Spanish sports journalist, Julián García Candau, published a book dedicated to uncovering the long tradition of Spanish poetry dedicated to the sport of

fútbol titled, *Épica y lírica del fútbol*. From the opening sentence of the study, García Candau acknowledges that the on-going dispute between intellectuals and the *fútbol* community is actually not as it seems when he wrote, “*El fútbol no ha logrado entre la intelectualidad del mundo adhesiones inquebrantables, pero tampoco ha sido despreciado como podría parecer si recurriéramos a ejemplos de escritores que aún hoy lo consideran un espectáculo aliente y casi perseguible de oficio*” (7). In 1980, sixteen years before publishing *Épica y lírica del fútbol*, García Candau published a book concerning the intervention of politics in the sport of *fútbol* in Spain titled, *El fútbol, sin ley*. One of the sections of this fundamental study, “*Intelectuales y políticos ante el fenómeno futbolístico*”, was dedicated to this dispute. The opening lines of this section addresses the clash taking place in Spain between the world of *fútbol*, Spain’s leftist intellectual community and Spain’s right-winged politicians,

Hasta la muerte de Franco muy pocos intelectuales se atrevieron a afirmar públicamente su predilección por el fútbol. Hasta la muerte de Franco los intelectuales de izquierda ocultaban su afición incluso a sus correligionarios. El fútbol en aquellos años era un deporte-espectáculo aliente. Era el opio del pueblo. La vieja filosofía del pan y toros había sido sustituida por pan y fútbol (39).

Since the masses have been so intensely drawn to the sport of *fútbol*, the most popular team from any given region of the world often comes to represent that region’s cultural and political ideologies. Politicians have recognized *fútbol*’s ability to capture and embrace these ideologies and have used the sport to promote their beliefs and/or

minimize the beliefs of the opposition. This has been one of the key factors of the intellectual classes effort to nurture a lack of appreciation for the sport, claiming it has been associated with the individual who does not “think for himself”. For this reason, many intellectuals that have approached the sport as a topic for study have done so in an effort to diminish its value and highlight it as a less than fruitful aspect of popular modern culture. They often call *fútbol* the world’s “new religion” or a “social drug” that is manipulated by the economy and the government to control the masses.

The second chapter of this study deals with how the sport of *fútbol* has been manipulated by different cultural and political ideologies throughout Spain, and how certain Spanish *fútbol* clubs have manipulated their connection with these ideologies to establish themselves as some of the most heavily consumed commodities in Spain. Some of the most important studies that reveal the link between politics and *fútbol* in Spain are Duncan Shaw’s *Fútbol y franquismo*, Carlos Fernández Santander’s *El fútbol durante la Guerra civil y el franquismo*, Vic Duke and Liz Crolley’s *Football Nationality and the State*, and Liz Crolley and David Hand’s *Football and European Identity* and *Football Europe and the Press*, Alex J. Botines’ *La gran estafa del fútbol español*, Felix Martialay Bernardo de Salazar’s *Las grandes mentiras del fútbol español* and Julián García Candau’s *El fútbol, sin ley*.

The second chapter of this study follows the format of a chapter in Vic Duke and Liz Crolley’s book, *Football Nationality and the State*. The chapter is titled “Storming the Castile: footballing nations in Spain”. Following their format, I will give a brief overview of the historical background to Spain’s state of autonomies. I will make the

connection between these historical, political and ideological disputes of culture and identity throughout Spain and later demonstrate how they have been linked with the sport of *fútbol* since the sport was formally introduced to the country. Like Duke and Crolley, I will demonstrate how during the formative years of Spanish *fútbol* – the Pre-Civil War Period (1900-1936) – Spain’s *fútbol* clubs were associated with the regional and political ideologies of the times. This added a dimension to the game beyond that of simply a sport in the traditional sense and gave all those involved in *fútbol* responsibility beyond that of simply their *fútboling* duties. These extra-*fútboling* duties are discussed in the next section titled “Spanish *Fútbol* during the Civil War (1936-1939)”. The following section, “Spanish *Fútbol* during the Franco Regime (1939-1975)”, like many other studies dealing with Spanish politics and *fútbol*, demonstrates how the Franco Regime used the sport of *fútbol* to both manipulate the Spanish people and promote the ideologies of the regime. At the same time, in this section I will uncover how the groups that opposed the Franco Regime used the sport of *fútbol* as a vehicle through which they could communicate their opposition to the Franco Regime. The next section, “Spanish *Fútbol* during the Transition (1975-2000)” demonstrates how certain Spanish clubs have exploited this connection to historical disputes (involving region, nation, culture and identity in Spain) to nurture the intense *fútboling* rivalries throughout the country. This, in turn, enabled their clubs to become some of the country’s most profitable commodities and most powerful institutions. The final section of this chapter, “Spanish *Fútbol* moves into the 21st Century”, demonstrates how certain Spanish *fútbol* clubs have launched themselves into (and successfully captured a sizable piece of) the global market after consciously taking

steps to achieve this result. This chapter uncovers the recent efforts these clubs have made to capture an even larger portion of the world market by making their more local historical ideologies applicable to the ideologies of individuals and cultures throughout the world. This chapter also highlights how a number of social changes that have occurred in Spain, which demonstrate the country's development toward becoming more modern, are communicated through the sport of *fútbol*. One example of this is that women are now accepted and openly participate in the sport of *fútbol*, which until recently had been an area of society designated strictly for men. Throughout all sections of this chapter reference is made to the ever-evolving image of the Spanish National Team – *la seleccion* and how the historical, regional, national, cultural, political, ideological and identity disputes in Spain have affected the team's success and image both in Spain and internationally. Finally, the *seleccion*'s present situation is addressed and hypotheses are formed about the *seleccion*'s possible future as it pertains to the Spanish people's collective self-image.

The third chapter of this study, “The Phenomeon of Spanish “Kick-Lit”” is dedicated to demonstrating how the sport of *fútbol*'s connection to politics in Spain initially caused the aforementioned dispute between intellectuals and the *fútbol* community. It then documents how a number of literary figures in Spain and throughout the world have ignored the supposed taboo and made very rich and respectable contributions to the world of literature that use the sport of *fútbol* as a central theme. In this section I define “kick-lit” – the term I have given to this literary genre – which is currently growing in popularity and respect. The next section of the chapter, “The Early

Years of Spain's "Kick-Lit" Phenomenon" gives a brief overview of some early references to the ancestors of the sport of *fútbol*. The first is Lucio Anneo Séneca, the ancient Roman philosopher from Córdoba, who described this activity in writings as a phenomenal cultural aspect of the Roman Empire. The next reference involves the medieval comedic writer, Juan Ruiz "*El Arcipreste de Hita*", who made a comical reference to an early form of the sport in his masterpiece, *El libro de buen amor*. I then move into the Golden Age of Spanish Literature and reveal how Juan Ruiz de Alarcón referred to this early form of the sport in his play titled, *Las paredes oyen*. The next examples document a number of famous literary figures that dedicated poems to the sport of *fútbol* during the early part of the 20th Century, after the formalized sport had officially been introduced to Spain. Two of the most famous poems were Miguel Hernández' "*ELEGÍA-al guardameta*" and Rafeal Alberti's "*Oda a Platko*". Hernández' contribution was a eulogy dedicated to Lolo Sampedro, a goalkeeper from his hometown. Alberti's "*Oda a Platko*" was dedicated to the heroic effort, witnessed by the young poet, of *FC Barcelona*'s Hungarian goalkeeper during the 1928 final of the *Copa del Rey* against *Real Sociedad de San Sebastián*. Later in the section, the Nobel Prize Winning Spanish author, Camilo José Cela's interest in the sport of *fútbol* is documented and references to a number of his works are made. I then give a brief analysis of *Once cuentos de fútbol* – Cela's children's book that uses the sport as a point of departure to teach his narrator's implied youthful audience a number of morals and values. Throughout this section, light is shed on a number of other early contributions that combined the passions of literature

and *fútbol*, demonstrating how the genre began and was able to grow into what it is today.

The next section of Chapter 3 is dedicated to analyzing Spain's most recent "kick-lit" novel, *Saber perder. Saber perder*, written by David Trueba is a complex novel with an Argentine *fútbol* star as one of the central characters. This *fútbol*er plays for one of Madrid's most important clubs. The novel touches on the most common and polemic themes of contemporary Spanish society. It also offers a behind-the-scenes vision into the life of a professional *fútbol*er, the controversies that he is faced with and the manipulation of the individual in the enormously powerful industry of professional *fútbol* in Spain.

The remaining sections of Chapter 3 are dedicated to analyzing the stories that appear in Jorge Valdano's *Cuentos de Fútbol* and *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*. My analysis of the multitude of stories written by Spanish authors in these books is designed to uncover the variety of avenues through which the genre can be approached. My analyses consist of offering a general summary of all but four of the stories written by Spanish authors before I dedicate individual sub-sections to the books' remaining four stories written by Spaniards. Each of these four stories was selected to highlight the distinct ways through which the genre has been approached. I focus on *Cuentos de Fútbol* and *Cuentos de Fútbol 2* because, of the hundreds of "kick-lit" novels and short stories that have been written over the years, these two books offer the widest variety of "kick-lit" contributions. The wide variety of stories that compose these two books defends the genre's legitimacy since they offer the reader an all-encompassing vision into the

multifaceted capabilities through which the genre of “kick-lit” has been and can be approached.

The fourth chapter of this study is dedicated to analyzing the existence of the sport of *fútbol* in Spanish cinema, which I have labeled as “kick-flicks”. Much like the situation with literature that focuses on *fútbol*, films dealing with *fútbol* as the central theme have also gained a bad reputation. The intellectual classes have been less accepting of films focusing on the sport of *fútbol*. However, the argument that “kick-flicks” offer a poor representation of the sport of *fútbol* holds true. This is because few, if any, fictional *fútbol* tales portrayed on the big screen have been able to properly capture the beauty of the sport on film. The most important study covering films that deal with the sport of *fútbol* is Carlos Marañón’s *Fútbol y cine: el balompié en la gran pantalla* (2005). In the study, Marañón highlights the fact that the sport of *fútbol* and the world of cinema are two of the most powerful cultural phenomena of the past 100 years. He questions, if both elements of culture represent and encompass every aspect of our society, why do the intellectual classes readily accept one, and not the other? He goes a step further and questions why these two cultural phenomena are viewed as incompatible. The prologue of the book was written by the famous Spanish sports journalist, Santiago Segurola, who addressed the difficulties of properly depicting the beauty of the game on the big screen. He compares the task as being equivalent to conquering Mount Everest – it might seem impossible, but once it is achieved, many will follow. Segurola offers a variety of explanations as to why this might be such a difficult task. One of his explanations is that the world’s leading film industry – Hollywood – is in a country that has struggled with

understanding and fully embracing the sport of *fútbol*; unlike so many other countries around the world that have done so effortlessly. Segurola concludes that The United States' lack of understanding of the sport might play a part in the difficulties filmmakers have had finding cinematographic techniques to properly portray the sport through film. He also points out that some of the most successful sports films, and “kick-flicks” for that matter, were successful in their approach to tackling the sport, which he describes as “*desde una posición lateral*” (11). Segurola's prologue begins by stating:

Siempre he pensado que el fútbol es un animal que se resiste al cine, sin saber muy bien las razones que repelen a los dos grandes elementos de ocio y cultura de nuestro cultura de nuestro tiempo. Es cierto que en los últimos años se ha producido un renovado intento por reconducir las difíciles relaciones entre los dos universos. El fútbol ha perdido definitivamente su condición de pasatiempo de la clase obrera y ha sido abrazado por los intelectuales, especialmente en Inglaterra, donde no hay escritor o cineasta que no proclame su pasión por un juego que ahora resulta chic (11).

This quote makes it clear that Santiago Segurola also recognizes that the conflict between the intellectual classes and the *fútbol* community has now been resolved, and as with many things once considered “out of style”, since it has been reconsidered in the right frame of mind, it is now regarded as *posh*.

The opening section of Chapter 4 covers the aforementioned struggles that the cinematographic world has had in properly depicting the beauty of the sport. In this

section, attention is drawn to the many ways in which the sport can be approached through film. As with literature dealing with *fútbol*, films that focus on *fútbol* can simply incorporate the sport into the already established schematic parameters of the artistic medium. Therefore, any genre of film (or literature) that has not yet used the sport of *fútbol* as a central theme has the capability of doing so successfully. In this section, light is shed on the fact that, as with the growing popularity of literature dealing with *fútbol*, there too has been a newfound respect for sport films. This encompasses the many possible varieties of sport films, such as traditional sport films that focus directly on the sport itself, sport documentaries, narratives of historical sports figures, teams or events, and films that approach the sport “*desde una posición lateral*”. The recent addition of a category dedicated to sport films at the Tribeca Film Festival is a testament to this newfound respect for sport films.

The next section of this chapter, titled “The early years – *Saeta Rubia*” gives a brief overview of some of the first attempts in Spain to mesh *fútbol* and film, two of the most powerful social phenomena of the time. Spanish cinema saw the opportunity to take already existing stars of *fútbol* and incorporate them into the world of cinema, using their already established stardom to draw a wide audience (much like Hollywood’s star system in the United States). The first *fútbol* star to double as a star of the big screen was the legendary Spanish goalkeeper, Ricardo Zamora. This was in the 1930’s during the era of silent films. From the 1940’s to the 1960’s a wave of Spanish films used stars from the *fútbol* arena to attract an audience. Many of these films were designed to reinforce the morals and values of the Franco Regime, such as *¡Campeones!* (1943), *Once pares de*

botas (1954), *Los ases buscan la paz* (1955), *Saeta rubia* (1956) and *La batalla de domingo* (1963). The rest of this section is dedicated to analyzing *Saeta rubia*, which stars *Real Madrid*'s legendary superstar, Alfredo di Stéfano. In my analysis, I defend that *Saeta rubia* was designed to portray the sport of *fútbol* as a positive aspect of Spanish society since through the sport the youth of the nation could learn what it is to be upstanding citizens and good men. The morals and values presented throughout the film coincided with what the Franco Regime considered respectable behavior of young men. This behavior was demonstrated using *Real Madrid*'s and the Franco Regime's poster child, Alfredo di Stéfano.

The next section of the chapter is dedicated to analyzing Gonzalo Suarez' award winning film, *El portero* (2000). The film's success was not due to Suarez' depiction of the sport, but rather to his ability to demonstrate the sport's capacity for attracting the political and ideological tensions of Spain. The political and ideological tensions represented in *El portero* were those of the post-civil war era in the region of Asturias. Suarez did a remarkable job of recreating the different dimensions of the political era with a relatively small cast. He demonstrated one of the most phenomenal aspects of the sport of *fútbol* in Spain and revealed how these aspects all came to a head on the town's *fútbol* field. This served as a portrait of the sport of *fútbol* as being the all-encompassing Petri dish of Spanish society. *El portero* is also relevant to this study because it was inspired by Manuel Hidalgo's short "kick-lit" story with the same title.

The next section of this chapter is dedicated to analyzing David Serrano's 2002 film, *Días de fútbol*. My analysis demonstrates the film's success as a well-made parody

of contemporary Spanish society that is closely linked to the most famous novel in Spanish history – Miguel de Cervantes’ *Don Quijote de la Mancha*. The fact that the story was a parody of contemporary Spanish society served Serrano and his cast well in their approach to filming the *fútbol* scenes. Rather than attempting to “conquer Everest”, as Santiago Segurola described, they tackled the sport “*desde una posición lateral*” and made a parody of the men’s *fútbol* dreams, skills and abilities. The film relates the story of a man with a delusional “Quijote-*esque*” vision, who like Cervantes’ famous hero, becomes involved in Spanish society’s obsession of the era. In doing so, those around him enter into the alternate reality he has created, which helps him achieve his ultimate goal in the same roundabout manner as Don Quijote achieved his.

The next section of Chapter 4 is an analysis of *El penalti más largo del mundo*. This film was also based on a work of “kick-lit” written by the famous Latin American writer Osvaldo Soriano. The title of his short story is “*El penal más largo del mundo*” and it appears in Jorge Valdano’s *Cuentos de Fútbol*. The cinematographic version of the story, directed by Roberto Santiago, offers a variety of additions to Soriano’s tale in order to satisfy the needs of an audience of a feature length film. Like *El portero* and *Días de fútbol*, Santiago tackles the sport of *fútbol* “*desde una posición*” lateral and offers his audience a situation comedy “kick-flick”. Like Soriano’s tale, Santiago’s film tells the story of an over-aged goalkeeper who uses his recent stardom, which resulted from the Spanish people’s passion for *fútbol* to attract the girl of his dreams. In the film, we see Fernando go from being the laughing stock of the neighborhood to the neighborhood hero. Through the sport of *fútbol* he is afforded the opportunity to prove himself as an

individual, and in doing so he achieves what he wants from life. In both versions of the story, the protagonist must stop the opposing team's penalty kick to win a chance at the girl. Since the Spanish people's social lives and *fútbol* are so closely connected, the goalkeeper, in both the short story and the film, realizes this is an opportunity he must make the most of, because as in life, these opportunities do not come often.

Since its inception approximately 150 years ago, the sport of *fútbol* has grown in popularity and become a phenomenal aspect of both Spanish society and the world. The phenomenal aspects of the sport can be argued from many angles, but chief among them is the sport's ability to embrace and connect with almost every other aspect of culture. This study demonstrates exactly how that has happened in Spain with regard to the areas of Spanish politics, literature and film.

Spanish *fútbol*'s relationship to politics has been a popular theme for academic investigation since the two have been so closely linked from the very start. This investigation uses these studies as its foundation to demonstrate that the sport of *fútbol* (at the professional and international levels) in Spain involves much more than twenty-two individuals coming together to compete in a *fútbol* match. Rather, within the game there are many other implied social struggles with which the people of Spain identify. Many of these struggles that relate to the sport of *fútbol* in Spain, have been communicated through literature and film. However, there are also countless other works of literature and film that approach the sport from a very different angle and leave the political implications involved in Spanish *fútbol* aside. Regardless, the enormous body of literary and cinematographic work that has been produced is so impressive it seems

incomprehensible that the genre does not yet have a solidified title, which I offer as “kick-lit” and “kick-flicks”. The fact that very few academic investigations exist covering analyses of Spanish “kick-lit” and “kick-flicks” demonstrates the lack of appreciation that the intellectual classes have for literature and films of this genre. The theme of *fútbol* (whether it be the formalized sport we know today, or its vulgar ancestor from the Middle Ages) has been covered throughout the entire history of Spanish literature by a number of Spain’s most revered authors. The body of Spanish literature has become enormous over the years, demonstrating that many writers share a passion for literature, *fútbol* and the combination of both. Likewise, the connection of *fútbol* and Spanish film has been apparent since the arrival of cinema to Spain. During the 1940’s, 50’s and 60’s a number of Spanish films were closely connected to the world of *fútbol*, and currently films in Spain dealing with the sport of *fútbol* have experienced a resurgence in popularity. Through this study, I aspire to help those who are passionate about Spanish literature and film to gain an appreciation for literature and film focusing on the sport of *fútbol* (if they are not already inclined toward this genre). But more importantly, I hope the readers of this dissertation come to recognize and respect the enormous body of Spanish literature and film centered around the sport of *fútbol* as legitimate, diverse, and fruitful contributions to the Spanish Arts worthy of further academic investigation.

Chapter 2: Tackling Spain's National Identity Crisis:
A Study of How Spanish Identity Conflicts are Repressed and Reinforced through the
Sport of *Fútbol*

The notion of Spain as a unified nation was first conceived with the marriage of Isabel of Castile to Fernando of Aragon in 1469. Since that political merger of these two Iberian kingdoms, the idea of Spain as a single identity has been both vehemently supported as well as viciously disputed. Over the years, advocates from both sides have taken advantage of a wide range of opportunities to either support this notion or oppose it. This chapter will serve to demonstrate how, since its introduction to Spain, the sport of association football has been utilized as a vehicle for individuals and communities to express their beliefs as to whether Spain is a single nation with a strong national identity, or a conglomerate of nations with a variety of cultural identities.

The historical and contemporary links between football and the socio-political fabric of Spain are complex. Some themes in the game today predate Spain's major twentieth-century upheavals of the Civil War (1936-1939) and subsequent periods of Franco's dictatorship (1939-1975). The balance swings from football being used to promote a single national identity (in the 1940's, during the early Franco years) to becoming a vehicle for nationalist/regionalist expression particularly during the late

Franco period and early phase of the transition to democracy (Duke & Crolley, 24).

This chapter will explore the ways in which some Spanish association football clubs have emerged as symbols that represent the ongoing social and political disputes within Spain that, depending on the political climate of the era, have varied in context. In order to provide a better understanding of exactly how the underlying socio-political background over the past century has come to so strongly affect the Spanish lifestyle, and in turn the sport of association football within Spain, it is necessary to first understand the historical developments resulting in the formation of Spain's state of autonomies. After this is established, the chapter will be divided into five key political phases of contemporary Spanish history (as shown below) and each will be analyzed as they pertain to the state of Spanish *fútbol*.

“Tensions Flair”: Spanish *Fútbol* during the Pre-Civil War Period (1900-1936)

“The Struggle to Survive”: Spanish *Fútbol* during the Civil War (1936-1939)

“The Opiate of the Masses”: *Fútbol* during the Franco Regime (1939-1975)

“Hoping to Bury the Hatchet”: Spanish *Futból* during the Transition (1975-2000)

“A New Day Dawns”: Spanish *Fútbol* moves into the 21st Century

2.1: Background to Spain's State of Autonomies

*España está hecha desde hace cinco siglos,
y lo que a algunos parece interesante es deshacerla
y volver a los reinos de Taifas y a Babel.*
–Julián Marías

After Isabel and Fernando's marriage in 1469, it was decreed by the newlywed monarchs that their motto for equality, *Tanto Monta, Monta Tanto* (meaning: they amount to the same) be written throughout the land in an effort to reinforce the notion of one united kingdom. Unlike many other mergers of the era, all aspects of power within their newly formed kingdom of Castile were to be distributed equally between the Catholic Monarchs. By all accounts this promise was faithfully held throughout their reign.

The fusion of these two kingdoms was one of the most powerful political mergers the world has ever witnessed and its achievements are still relevant to this day. Isabel and Fernando were known as *los reyes católicos* (the Catholic Monarchs) because they joined forces principally to fight against the Moorish occupation of the Iberian Peninsula. Their consolidation subsequently led to the Catholics officially "re-conquering" the land in 1492. Following is a photograph of one of the Catholic Monarchs' engravings, designed to demonstrate this vow of equality, that were displayed after successfully conquering the Moorish empire fortress, the *Alhambra*, in 1492.



Figure 1. *Tanto Monta*

Coincidentally, 1492 is the very year that explorer Christopher Columbus is recognized for having discovered America – at least in the eyes of Europe. Columbus did so in the name of Castile, for his voyage was funded by the *reyes católicos* – Isabel and Fernando. These two monumental victories for the Catholic Monarchs, although both extremely controversial and complex, were instrumental events that *almost* molded Spain into the single solitary nation that Isabel and Fernando so greatly desired. But while these triumphs may have enabled Spain to be recognized as a unified nation in foreign lands, this sentiment may not have been completely shared by all the kingdoms within the Iberian Peninsula.

Although the Castilian effort played an enormous role in re-conquering the Iberian Peninsula for the Christians, much of their success was due to the Catholic Monarchs' ability to unite forces very quickly. This fast unification of forces was possible because of the high degree of autonomy the Catholic Monarchs granted to Catholic kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula. These kingdoms are known today as the

“Historic Nationalities” or “Former Kingdoms”. The irony of this situation is that while the Catholic Monarchs’ very allowance of this high degree of autonomy (within the Former Kingdoms) played an enormous role in the Christian’s re-conquering of the Iberian Peninsula over the Moors, it also caused many of the people of these Former Kingdoms never to feel particularly “Spanish”. Consequently, the concept of Spain never truly existed for many of them. For this reason, the people from the Former Kingdoms (which are essentially on the geographic periphery of Spain – Galicia, Catalonia, Valencia) maintained their own sense of identity and nationality, preserving their own traditions, languages, and institutions. The Basques and the Catalans even sustained their revered *fueros*: their ancient fiscal and legal systems.

Since they maintained their traditional lifestyles, it was easy to distinguish between the different kingdoms and cultures throughout the land. The varying aspects of everyday life of these kingdoms, especially in the north where the Moorish occupation was much less prevalent, served to strengthen each of these kingdoms’ unique sense of culture and community. This caused many members of the Historic Nationalities to never fully consider themselves as “Spanish” as the Castilian Monarchs would have desired. The Castilian Monarchs’ vision/quest was not only to unify the country, but also to globalize and catholicize the world in the name of Spain. At this same time they were very concerned with bringing foreign riches back to the motherland – for it had recently been discovered that there was much gold to be had in the Americas. Clearly, at this point, the Catholic Monarchs’ focus and overall attention had shifted from “re-conquering” the Iberian Peninsula for the Catholics to conquering, catholicizing and

controlling foreign lands. Meanwhile, since the Historic Nationalities were Castilian allies, they were essentially left to continue cultivating their already existing cultures, lifestyles and institutions. Even though the Historic Nationalities greatly supported almost all of the Castilian/Spanish efforts of the time, many of the people from these regions still valued their homeland, their language and their culture over that of Castile. (Duke & Crolley, 25)

Although the identity crisis within Spain is very complex and has taken many turns over the course of its history, this overview serves to demonstrate that Spain's struggle with identity stems back to the country's very foundation. Many of Spain's leaders have tried to resolve this crisis and to solidify the country into a single nation but essentially all have failed. For example, during the seventeenth century King Phillip IV's advisor, the Conde-Duque de Olivares, worked to promote political, administrative and legislative unification in an effort to solidify the nation. King Philip IV was unable to achieve this goal and consequently the Catalans continued to officially use their own language and maintain their own local institutions. The Basques also managed to maintain what they considered, both then and now, essential elements of their identity – their language and their system of *fueros*. (25)

After the death of King Fernando VII in 1833 and the onset of the Carlist Wars, regionalist and nationalist issues once again came to the foreground in Spain. The “Carlists” supported Carlos – brother of the deceased King Fernando VII, as heir to the throne – and opposed the idea that the Monarchs be put in the hands of Fernando VII's daughter, Isabel II. Carlist issues were the dominating theme of Spain's political scene

during the nineteenth-century. Carlism was supported mainly in the regions of Spain that had their own political institutions and language, i.e. The Historic Nationalities: Catalonia, Galicia, Navarre, the Basque Country and Valencia. Therefore, Carlism nourished these recognizable differences in ideologies between central Spain and the periphery. Many of these unresolved disputes of the Carlist Wars eventually culminated into the Spanish Civil War and some of these disputes are still unresolved today. (25)

During the nineteenth century in Catalonia, a literary movement known as the *Renaixença* (the rebirth) was on the rise. This movement embraced the distinguished cultural and historical identity of the Catalan people and became very popular within the Catalan Bourgeoisie who in turn used it to promote their Catalan vision of the world. Shortly thereafter, the *Renaixença* came to influence much of the Catalan lifestyle and even gave rise to political parties, such as *la Lliga* – a uniquely Catalan political party that is still in existence. (25)

The aim of this movement was the full restoration of Catalan as a language of culture, not only through the promotion of various forms of art, theatre and literature in this language, but also attempting to establish a normative standard for the language [...] after the Nueva Planta decrees suppressed Catalonia's traditional institutions, privileges, and *fueros* beginning January 16, 1716 (“*Renaixença*”).

Catalonia’s newfound desire to cultivate their unique culture led them to push even harder for regional autonomy so they could continue developing themselves without interference from the rest of Spain.

While the Catalans had the *Renaixença*, the Basque Country and Galicia had very similar renovating cultural movements that were also designed to strengthen their culture and community. The Galician form was called the *Rexurdimento* and the Basque's was called, *Eusko Pizkundea* – each meaning “rebirth” in the respective region's language. This desire for a fresh start had been building over the years, largely due to their frustration from having lost the Carlist wars. But it was after the infamous disaster of 1898 that the people from the historic nationalities seized the opportunity to push for self-governance. The disaster of 1898 occurred when Spain was defeated in the Spanish American War and consequently lost her last remaining colonies outside of Europe: Cuba, The Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam. With this loss, the Spanish empire that previously proclaimed itself, “*el imperio en el que nunca se pone el sol*” (the empire on which the sun never sets) had officially crumbled. Moreover, this meant that Spain's prestige as a world power, was no longer. Many Spaniards viewed the disintegration of their empire as a terrible embarrassment and caused the country to question its grandeur in the first place. Many artists and writers of the era addressed these issues head on and this newfound insecurity throughout Spain essentially lead to the rise of its most recognized literary movement since the highly praised Golden Age, “The Generation of ‘98”.

The new turn-of-the century artists and writers were called “the generation of '98,” a group who responded to El Desastre [of '98] by seeking to analyze and redefine the newly diminished Spain. Through paintings, novels, poems, and essays, they searched for the essence of Spain in

Castilian landscape, in the history of the golden age, in critical examinations of classic literature such as Cervantes's *Don Quixote de la Mancha*. The pivotal question was: How can Spain undergo a regeneration? [...] Curiously, this search for the soul of Spain was led by Basques. Experiencing the Spanish simultaneously as both "us" and "them" is essential to discovering the soul of Spain. Castilians, for whom Spain is only "us," are the exception. [Basque native, Miguel de] Unamuno was a central figure in the generation of '98, as was San Sebastián-born Pío Baroja (Kurlansky, 172-73).

The disaster of '98 humbled Spain, causing a depression and a general pessimism to take over the country that many believe still plagues the Spanish national psyche today. Since the country was in a state of weakness, those who did not support the notion of Spain as a single nation with a single identity, much less as having a national psyche, saw this as an opportunity to strengthen their own community's identity and further diminish the notion of Spain as a single nation. Soon leaders rose that had the desire to spark regionalist/nationalist movements designed to separate themselves from Spain. This obviously caused supporters of a unified Spain to respond. Tensions soon grew, and violent measures were taken.

By the early twentieth century, both Catalonia and the Basque Country were demonstrating a certain level of elitism over the rest of Spain as they claimed themselves to be the only Spanish regions that were developing into modern industrial societies. Impressively, they managed this development while maintaining their strong economic

roots in agricultural production. When the centralist government opposed certain policies that would have favored their industrial efforts, many people from these regions came to distrust the politicians in Madrid even more. The peripheral region's frustration with the central politics of Madrid, mixed with Madrid's resentment of the northeastern elitist attitudes, was simply fuel to the fire of animosities that were growing within the Iberian Peninsula. (Duke & Crolley, 25- 29)

It is clear why the Catalonians and the Basques considered themselves more advanced than the rest of Spain; they had strong agricultural production and an up-and-coming industrial revolution. This provided them with economic proof that they possessed a modern vision of the world and a "roll-up-your-sleeves" work ethic that in turn produced more than most other regions of the planet at the time. Not only did Catalonia prove itself to be extremely advanced economically, agriculturally and industrially, it was also the home of some of the world's most celebrated artists of the era. One fine example would be the world's most ambitious architect, Catalan born, Antoni Gaudí. Gaudí's work shows a strong sense of Catalan identity and marked the character of Barcelona as a modern city. Other world-renowned modernists who profited from this Catalanian vision for the 20th century were surrealist painters Salvador Dalí and Joan Miró. Dalí was born in Figueras and Miró in Barcelona and although Pablo Picasso was not born in Catalonia, in 1900 he held his first exhibition at a small Barcelona café named *Els Quatre Gats* (The Four Cats).

Born in Málaga in 1881, Picasso moved to the throbbing Catalanian capital at the age of 14. Here he attended art school and spent several

formative years before moving to Paris. His *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907), depicting a group of Barcelona whores, is cited as the first important Cubist painting, a major milestone for modern art (Williams, 182).



Figure 2. *Les Femmes d'Alger*, Picasso (1907)

At the turn of the 20th century, Barcelona also saw a music explosion that soon worked its way through Spain. This movement's most influential and its most recognized leader was the famous Barcelona composer, Felipe Pedrell. Another world-renowned Catalan musician was Pablo Casals. Many consider Casals to be the greatest cello virtuoso of modern times. The musical contributions of these men, as well as a number of other Catalonian musicians, gave rise to the Catalan saying, "If you pinch a Catalan, he or she will always cry out in perfect pitch"(182). This adage demonstrates that Catalonia was not only experiencing a very rich musical and cultural explosion, but that the Catalan people were conscious of it and were not afraid to let the rest of Spain know it.

Recognizing their wide range of cultural and economic achievements, the people of Catalonia came to consider themselves as more advanced than the rest of Spain. Many Catalonians and Basques continued to feel that the central government jealously took advantage of any and all opportunities to hinder their advancing efforts. This was the case in many aspects of Catalan and Basque life and eventually spilled over into the arena of association football (*fútbol*). In the following pages I will give examples to demonstrate how the sport of association football (*fútbol*) within Spain has, over the years, been used as a vehicle to either promote the idea of Spain as a single unified nation, or staunchly oppose this notion.

2.2: “Tensions Flair”: Spanish *Fútbol* During the Pre-Civil War Period (1900-1936)

The formalized sport of association football was introduced to Spain just before the turn of the 20th Century by British mariners and steel workers living in the country. Spanish students who had returned home from Great Britain also played an important role in the sport’s introduction to the Iberian peninsula. Many of them returned home with a newfound excitement to teach their friends and family this game, which in England was called “football”. As the sport gained popularity, the Spaniards attempted to phonetically mimic this pronunciation within the confines of the Castilian alphabet and came up with the spelling “fútbol”. *Fútbol* is what the sport is still called in most Spanish speaking countries today, although purists of the Spanish language prefer the term “*balompié*”.²

Soon after *fútbol*’s introduction to Spain, thanks to the help of the aforementioned English immigrants working in Spain, a number of notable clubs formed as outlets for the sport, such as: The Basque Country’s *Athlétic de Bilbao* in 1898, Catalonia’s *F.C. Barcelona* in 1899 and *Sociedad Española de Football* (or, *Español*) in 1900. Shortly thereafter came representatives from the central state: *Madrid* in 1902 (to be named *Real Madrid* in 1920) and *Atlético de Madrid* in 1903. During its formative years, Spanish *fútbol* was politicized by each club’s respective region. This was essentially due to the

² *Balompié* –a compound word that directly translates as “ball-foot”. In order to avoid confusion among the many sports throughout the world that are commonly called “football”, as well as the many names that are commonly used throughout the world to describe the sport that the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA) officially recognizes as “association football”, I will use the Spanish term “*fútbol*” throughout this paper when referring to Spain’s most popular sport –FIFA’s association football (also commonly called “*calcio*” in Italy, “soccer” in the United States of America, and “*fútbol*” in Spain).

fact that during this period there was no need for the centralized government to intervene in the politics of *fútbol*. Therefore, the clubs, along with the *Real Federación Española de Fútbol (R.F.E.F.)*, which was founded by the clubs themselves in 1902, enjoyed nearly complete independence from the authorities in Madrid; something that, as we will see in the next section of this chapter, would not always be the case. Upon the *R.F.E.F.*'s formation, its first point of business was to organize a Spanish Championship, for which King Alfonso XIII graciously accepted the role of patron. In doing so, *La Copa de Su Majestad el Rey* (The King's Cup) was born. *La Copa del Rey* went on to serve as the only *fútbol* championship within Spain until the formation of *La Liga de Fútbol Profesional* in 1928, which brought professionalism to the players, coaches, and administrators of the sport for the first time in Spain. (Shaw, 20)

This regionalism/nationalism issue had also been planted within the sport of *fútbol* in Spain. For example, the club *Athético de Bilbao* was officially formed after two early Basque clubs, *Athletic Club* and *Bilbao FC* merged under the name *Club Vizcaya* and won the inaugural *Copa del Rey* in 1902. In 1903, they changed their name to *Athletic de Bilbao* and immediately the club presented itself as an organization designed to represent the city of Bilbao, the province of Vizcaya and the region of The Basque Country³. This idea of representing the community, culture and region through the *fútbol* club became so strong that in 1919 *Athletic de Bilbao*'s directors implemented a cast system for the players on the club. The cast system excluded all players except those of purely Basque blood. This idea of a cast system was supported and then mimicked (to an

³ The terms "province" and "region" here have been given vague English translations simply because these notions are precisely what is under dispute.

extent) by other Basque clubs such as *Real Sociedad* from San Sebastian. The major difference between *Real Sociedad's* and *Athletic de Bilbao's* cast systems was that *Athletic de Bilbao* abided by Sabino Arana's (the founder of the Basque National Party) definition of true Basque heritage. Arana claimed, "for people to be considered Basque, their four grandparents must all have been born in Euskadi [The Basque Country] and have Euskera [Basque] names"(Kurlansky, 170). While *Real Sociedad* simply required its players to have been born in the Basque country, *Athletic de Bilbao* took this notion of Basque purity so seriously it required that each of its players not only be born in the Basque country but provide proof that both of the player's parents and all four grandparents had Basque names and were also born in the Basque Country. *Real Sociedad* abandoned its cast system in 1989, but *Athletic de Bilbao* has stayed surprisingly strong and has accepted only a few players over the years that did not fully comply with Arana's criteria of "Basqueness". While critics of these cast systems consider them a sad demonstration of xenophobic tendencies, they are a testament to the quantity and quality of athletes, coaches and administrators that a region as relatively small as that of the Basque's has been able to produce, maintain and succeed with over the years in such a competitive field.

While these Basque clubs chose not to look beyond their region of Spain for players, other clubs have taken a very different approach in this regard, such as Catalonia's *Football Club Barcelona*. *FC Barcelona* (also known as "*Barça*") does not only accept players from all over the globe as members, they welcome them with open arms. Since *F.C. Barcelona's* founding in 1899, the club has continually sought to serve

as a symbol for the Catalan people. This is demonstrated in the initial crest the club chose for its own, which was identical to that of the city of Barcelona, as seen below in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Historic Crest of the City of Barcelona & *FC Barcelona*

Clearly, *FC Barcelona*'s decision to adopt the city's coat of arms as their own was in an effort to pay homage to the city and stake their claim as the city's faithful representatives. The city's coat of arms was the club's crest until 1910 when the decision was made to create a crest that was different from that of the city. The club held a competition among its members to design a new crest. The winner of the competition was a medical student who also played for *FC Barcelona* named, Carles Comamala. Comamala was well aware of *FC Barcelona*'s desire to be linked with the region and city and therefore he combined the most representative symbols of Catalonia and Barcelona with the club. Obviously, he incorporated the City of Barcelona's Flag (Figure 6) which contains the "bars of Aragon" that also appear on the Catalan Flag (Figure 4), called the *senyera*. These "bars of Aragon" are also the traditional four red stripes of the Catalan Coat of Arms (Figure 5) and historically represent the four regions of the kingdom of

Aragon. The Barcelona city flag also contains the Cross of St. George, which throughout the world serves to represent bravery in the face of the enemy. The City of Barcelona's Coat of Arms has varied over the years but as one can see in Figure 7, it has never abandoned these two symbols. Comamala's crest for *FC Barcelona*, which is essentially the same as *FC Barcelona*'s current crest as seen in Figure 8, combined the "bars of Aragon" with the Cross of St. George on the top half with the club's easily recognizable blue and claret stripes (modeled after the *senyera*) on the bottom half with a drawing of a ball in the foreground. The initials F.C.B. (*Football Club Barcelona*) connect the upper half of the crest (that represents the city and region/nation of Catalonia) with the lower half (that represents the club). Clearly, since its conception, this crest was designed to symbolically reinforce the union between the Catalan region, the City of Barcelona, their history, government and *F.C.B.*

The Region of Catalonia



Figure 4. Catalan Flag (*senyera*)



Figure 5. Catalan Coat of Arms

The City of Barcelona



Figure 6. City of Barcelona's Flag



Figure 7. City of Barcelona's Coat of Arms

FC Barcelona



Figure 8. *FC Barcelona's* crest

The notion to mesh the ideals of the club with those of the city of Barcelona and the region/nation of Catalonia was officially documented in the club's statutes by its President, Joan Gamper, in 1908. It was, and is still, written in Article 4, that the club's second objective is:

The promotion and participation in social, cultural, artistic, scientific or recreational activities that are adequate and necessary for maintaining the public representation and projection that the club enjoys, the fruit of a permanent tradition of loyalty and service to club members, citizens and Catalonia ("A Historic Slogan.").

Many of the people of Catalonia agreed with "Article 4" because, as previously mentioned, through the *Renaixença*, they were concerned with nourishing the Catalan culture in any way possible. Therefore, many Catalans, from the intellectual classes to the middle/lower classes, to left wing politicians became *Barça* supporters and recognized its role in defending Catalonia's democratic rights and freedom.

Barcelona is Catalonia's largest metropolis and therefore it naturally embraces, nourishes and exports many Catalonian ideals. Over the years, both Barcelona and Catalonia have gained the reputation of possessing an international outlook. This is the case with regard to basically every aspect of life that deals with progression toward the modern. The reputation that Catalonia and Barcelona possess an extremely modern vision of the world holds especially true when compared with other parts of Spain. Their international outlook may be in part due to Catalonia's geographical location: tucked in

the north-eastern corner of Spain on the Mediterranean coast near France and Monte Carlo, making it closer to the rest of Europe than Madrid, for example.

Madrid, on the other hand, is often stereotyped as possessing a collective/conservative ideology. Madrid's stereotypical vision is centered around the notion that Spain need not look beyond her borders for the key to modernization. For this reason, people from Madrid have the reputation of embracing the notion that Spain, in and of itself, possesses all the necessary elements of a well-rounded and diverse culture with sufficient manpower, know-how, and natural resources to modernize itself as a single nation. This is considered a "centralist" ideal. The centralists believe that by overcoming, accepting and embracing their cultural differences to modernize together, the concept of a single Spanish culture, community, identity and nation will truly establish itself and flourish into the future. The problem lies in the fact that many people from the Historic Nationalities, such as the Basque Country, have little or no desire to form part of this globalizing community and culture. Rather, they prefer not to participate in central Spain's mission of catching up to the rest of the modernizing world and simply look inwardly to their unique history and culture to find the path to their future.

Fútbol clubs throughout Spain have always served to represent the ideals of their specific city or region. Some clubs do this more than others, but these existing rivalries between many regional ideologies are more often than not expressed in part through their *fútbol* clubs. This is the case since any given match will bring large numbers of representatives of two contrasting ideologies to the center stage. At times these political and ideological rivalries are simply underlying themes. Other times they play a central

role in the game itself. But most often it is the spectators who express these political rivalries, sometimes passively and unfortunately, other times violently.

A great example of how conflicting notions of community and culture have been expressed through *fútbol* in Spain can be found at the very root of the intercity rivalry between *F.C. Barcelona* and *Reial Club Deportiu Espanyol de Barcelona*, commonly known as simply, “*Español*”⁴. This intercity rivalry first took shape upon *Español*’s very conception, primarily because *Español* initially chose to name themselves *Sociedad Española de Football* and therefore openly recognized and embraced their “Spanishness” rather than their Catalan heritage. Supporters of the already existing *F.C. Barcelona* considered this a blatant attempt to antagonize them and mock their ongoing struggle to not only reinforce all things Catalan but to also reject the centralist ideals of Madrid. Through their name alone it is easy to see that *Español* chose to express their support for the centralist ideals of Madrid and to promote the notion of Spain as a single nation with a single identity. *Español* actually chose this name to distinguish themselves from the other clubs. Unlike the majority of the other clubs of the era, *Español* was formed exclusively by and of Spaniards.

Shortly after *Español* was founded, the club’s administrators took an even bolder step to further demonstrate their desire for all that is Spanish, and like the aforementioned Basque Clubs they also implemented a no-foreigners policy. Although, while the Basque Clubs excluded participation of players that were not from the Basque Country,

⁴ *Español* has gone through a number of name changes over the years but is officially known today as *Reial Club Deportiu Espanyol de Barcelona*.

Español's no-foreigner policy only excluded participation of players born outside of Spain. While both systems demonstrated similarly strong desires to nurture their community and culture, the difference lies in their contrasting notions of community and culture. In 1912, King Alfonso XIII added fuel to the fire of dissention and granted *Español* the patronage of the Spanish Crown. *Español* was therefore entitled to use “*Real*” in their name and the image of the Spanish crown on their crest, as seen below in Figure 9.



Figure 9. *RCD Espanyol de Barcelona*'s Crest

Patronage from the Spanish Crown is something that many clubs throughout Spain have sought and been granted. It is no surprise that *FC Barcelona* has never sought such patronage from the peninsula's Monarchy. Clearly, *Español*'s unrelenting desire to be connected with central Spain coupled with their no-foreigners/Spaniards-only policy, gave *F.C. Barcelona* supporters the opportunity to denounce their “narrow-minded” intercity rivals and label them “xenophobes”.

One of *F.C. Barcelona*'s first stances in this regard occurred in 1901 when they boycotted a tournament that did not permit the participation of foreign players (from

outside of Spain). At the time, *FC Barcelona*'s squad was made up of 19 non-Spaniards. This causes one to question whether *FC Barcelona* simply was not permitted to play or whether they refused to play, illustrating the complexity of these issues. Surely, *FC Barcelona* could have fielded a team made up strictly of Spaniards, but that squad would not have represented the ideals that the club and the people from Catalonia were striving for: an international outlook toward modernizing in the face of what they considered central Spain's oppressive, traditional vision.

Although, *Español* is historically *FC Barcelona*'s fiercest interstate rival, the mutual hatred between *Real Madrid* and *FC Barcelona* is considered to be much stronger. *Real Madrid* is regarded as the polar opposite of *FC Barcelona* and it is widely considered that *Real Madrid* is the embodiment of Spain's oppressive centralist thought. This oppressor-resistor relationship is widely recognized throughout Spain. These animosities came to a head in the Spanish *fútbol* arena on June 14, 1925, during the centralist/conservative dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera when the crowd at an *FC Barcelona* home game whistled and jeered throughout the playing of the Spanish National Anthem. Primo de Rivera's regime accused Joan Gamper, *FC Barcelona*'s president, of promoting Catalan nationalism and as punishment it closed *Les Corts*, *FC Barcelona*'s *fútbol* grounds, for six months.



Figure 10. *La Guardia Civil* closes *Les Corts*

They later reduced the closure to three months. But more importantly they forced Joan Gamper to resign his position as *FC Barcelona*'s President, and expelled him from Spain entirely. While exiled in his mother country of Switzerland, Gamper committed suicide. Many consider this to have been the culminating result of the economic demise, mental anguish and personal struggle that Primo de Rivera's severe punishment caused.

Many consider the closing of *Les Corts* and the banishment of Gamper to be one of the earliest active expressions of the centralist government's oppression of *FC Barcelona*. The consequences of this punishment led not only to the death of Gamper but also to a notable period of decline in *FC Barcelona*'s success on the field of play. During this era of Spanish history, political unrest typically overshadowed sporting ventures, but as is also the case in a great number of countries, politics and *fútbol* became intertwined. "*En América Latina [...] la frontera entre el fútbol y la política es tan tenue que resulta casi imperceptible*" (Kapuscinski in Manrique).

However, due to Spain's centralist dictatorship, *FC Barcelona* faced a crisis on a variety of levels. First, the number of members, who supported the club and were

essentially responsible for its very existence, had drastically dropped and caused a social and financial crisis that undoubtedly led to a lack of success on the field. *FC Barcelona* was eventually able to overcome this crisis and after a championship with *Real Sociedad* (that took three games to establish a winner)⁵, *Barça* took home the 1928 *Copa del Rey*. In this three game championship, *FC Barcelona*'s Hungarian goalkeeper, Franz Platko, had recently been assigned the task of replacing the legendary Ricardo Zamora. Platko's performance in the final game was instrumental in the club's victory and quickly established him as a hero in his own right. An article in *Sport Cantabria* described his heroic effort as the following:

Cuando la Real estaba achuchando la portería catalana, su delantero centro Cholin, en una posición envidiable, avanzó hasta la portería. Cuando el gol parecía inevitable, el guardameta Platko realizó una gran estirada y se arrojó sobre el pie del jugador donostiarra conteniendo así el tiro, pero a cambio de recibir en la cabeza el golpe destinado al balón. La patada fue brutal, Platko quedó conmocionado y tuvieron que retirarle del campo para aplicarle 6 puntos de sutura en la herida ensangrentada (“75 años de la Oda a Platko, de Alberti.”).

After being stitched up, Platko returned to finish the match with a bandage around his head that was eventually knocked off in another series of dramatic saves. Fortunately, the famous Spanish poet, Rafael Alberti, was in attendance at the match. Alberti was so impressed by Platko's performance that he was inspired to write a poem titled “*Platko*” in the goalkeepers honor. The poem was published on the cover of the local newspaper, “*La*

⁵ In 1928 the use of penalty kicks was not yet installed to determine a winner.

Voz de Cantabria” on May 27, 1928. In the poem, the elements of nature – earth, wind, fire and water – join together to help Platko defend the *FC Barcelona* goal. This poem is now famous among Spanish *fútbol* and literature *aficionados*. It serves not only as one of the first examples of Spanish “kick-lit”⁶, but as a great example of how well the elements of *fútbol* can be expressed through literature. Thanks to Rafael Alberti, Franz Platko is now immortalized in the annals of both Spanish literature and *fútbol* as a hero.

PLATKO

(SANTANDER, 20 DE MAYO DE 1928)

A José Samitier, capitán

Nadie se olvida, Platko,

no, nadie, nadie, nadie,

oso rubio de Hungría.

Ni el mar,

que frente a ti saltaba sin poder defenderte.

Ni la lluvia. Ni el viento, que era el que más regía.

Ni el mar, ni el viento, Platko,

rubio Platko de sangre,

guardameta en el polvo,

pararrayos.

No, nadie, nadie, nadie.

Camisetas azules y blancas, sobre el aire,

⁶ “Kick-lit” is the term I use to refer to the genre of literature that deals with *fútbol*, soccer, association football, or *calico*, respectively. This genre is currently garnering respect among literary critics and is rapidly becoming popular with readers and authors around the globe.

camisetas reales,
camisetas, contra ti, volando y arrastrándote,
Platko, Platko lejano
rubio, Platko tronchado,
tigre ardiendo en la yerba de otro país. ¡Tú, llave,
Platko, tú, llave rota,
llave áurea caída ante el pórtico áureo!
No, nadie, nadie, nadie,
nadie se olvida, Platko,
Volvió su espalda el cielo.
Camisetas azules y granas flamearon,
apagadas, sin viento.
El mar, vueltos los ojos,
se tumbó y nada dijo.
Sangrando en los ojales,
sangrando por ti, Platko,
por tu sangre de Hungría,
sin tu sangre, tu impulso, tu parada, tu salto,
temieron las insignias.
No, nadie, Platko, nadie,
nadie, nadie se olvida.
Fue la vuelta del mar.

Fueron
diez rápidas banderas
incendiadas, sin freno.
Fue la vuelta del viento.
La vuelta al corazón de la esperanza.
Fue tu vuelta.
Azul heroico y grana,
mandó el aire en las venas.
Alas, alas celestes y blancas, rotas alas,
combatidas, sin plumas, encalaron la yerba.
Y el aire tuvo piernas,
tronco, brazos, cabeza.
¡Y todo por ti, Platko,
rubio Platko de Hungría!
Y en tu honor, por tu vuelta,
porque volviste el pulso perdido a la pelea,
en el arco contrario el viento abrió una brecha.
Nadie, nadie se olvida.
El cielo, el mar, la lluvia, lo recuerdan.
Las insignias.
Las doradas insignias, flores de los ojales,
cerradas, por ti abiertas.

*No, nadie, nadie, nadie,
nadie se olvida, Platko.
Ni el final: tu salida,
oso rubio de sangre,
desmayada bandera en hombros por el campo.
¡Oh Platko, Platko, Platko,
tú, tan lejos de Hungría!
¿Qué mar hubiera sido capaz de no llorarte?
Nadie, nadie se olvida,
no, nadie, nadie, nadie (Albertí, *Antología Poética* 45-47).*

After even a single reading of this poem one can recognize the respect that Alberti had for Platko as a foreigner in Spain, calling him a “*tigre ardiendo en la yerba de otro país*” in the seventeenth verse.⁷ Alberti expressed his praise for Platko’s bravery and level of play through metaphor and hyperbole. These techniques gave Platko superhuman qualities; in the tenth verse Alberti calls him a “*pararrayos*”. In the eleventh stanza, Albertí connects *FC Barcelona*’s heroism in defeating *Real Sociedad* to the colors of the teams’ uniforms – *FC Barcelona*’s heroic blue and claret vs. *Real Sociedad*’s celestial white – as being representative of their efforts on that day.

*Azul heroico y grana,
Mandó el aire en las venas.
Alas, alas celestes y blancas, rotas alas,*

⁷ Albertí was not from Catalonia, but the sentiment he expresses in this stanza obviously coincides with the Catalanian respect for foreigners on Spanish soil.

Combatidas, sin plumas, encalaron la yerba (45).

Alberti could not have made the point more clearly or have been more poetically correct than when he repeated that no one will ever forget Platko – *nadie, nadie, no nadie, se olvida, Platko*. Alberti made this point more than twenty-five times throughout the poem. He was correct in doing so because through this poem, Platko, as a hero of Spanish *fútbol*, achieved immortality.

Although *FC Barcelona* managed to defeat *Real Sociedad* in the 1928 *Copa del Rey*, during these early years of Spanish *fútbol* it was the Basque clubs that most often dominated play; winning more than half of the King's Cups before 1936. The Basque club's direct style of play was recognized and admired throughout Spain. They used tall and strong attackers who had a knack for getting their heads on balls that were strategically and repeatedly lofted into "the area", resulting in many of the goals they scored each game. The Basques were big and fast, they played very aggressively and in turn were extremely successful. This "Basque style" was so successful within *La Liga Española* that the Spanish *selección* (national team) adopted this style of play and prepared themselves for when they took the field in the 1920 Olympic Games in Antwerp, Belgium. After they won the Silver Medal (which was in no small part due to this style of play), it quickly became recognized throughout the world as the "Spanish style" of play and thus gave rise to the Spanish *selección* being labeled "*La furia española*" (The Spanish Fury). According to Félix Martialay, the French journalist, Henri Desgrange is most likely responsible for coining the term because it first appeared in an

article he wrote for *L'Auto* covering the Antwerp games. The title of the article translates as, “Denmark was beaten by the Spanish Fury” (Martialay in Crolley & Hand, 99).

This concept of fury is one that has remained with the Spanish national team to this day and is mainly viewed as a positive attribute. Since some of the words that can be associated with “fury” are: anger, ferocity, courage, rage, violence, and recklessness – it is no surprise that this style was first typical of the Basques since throughout history the Basques have been recognized as possessing a tenacious approach to their passions. Even in Miguel de Cervantes’ *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, the Basque character named the “Vizcayan” is depicted as a brutal warrior who carries a large sword and constantly insists on fighting. Mark Kurlansky points out at the beginning of his book, *The Basque History of the World*, that in one section of Cervantes’ masterpiece the Vizcayan states (in broken Castilian Spanish), “Me kill you or me no Vizcayan.”(3) This negative and brutal aspect of the concept of *furia* is what caused many Spaniards to desire a more technically advanced style of *fútbol*. The struggle for the Spanish *selección* to achieve a “Spanish style” of play was considered one of, if not *the* key factor in their lack of success in the majority of their international *fútbol* competitions. This inability to mesh on the *fútbol* field is no doubt a clear reflection of their inability to unify as a nation. Regardless, although some disapprove, the term “*furia*” has been reinstated and is used by many as a positive moniker for the *selección*. According to Crolley and Hand, “The concept [of fury] is perhaps the nearest the Spanish have come to a sense of Spanishness” (Crolley & Hand *Football Europe and the Press*, 111). This clearly reinforces the role the sport of *fútbol* plays in the formation of a national identity.

*El fútbol es cultura porque responde siempre a una determinada forma de ser. Los jugadores actúan como el público exige, de forma que el fútbol se termina pareciendo al sitio donde crece. Los alemanes juegan con disciplina y eficacia; cualquier equipo brasileño tiene la creatividad y el ritmo de su tierra; cuando apostaron por orden, fracasaron, porque si bien los jugadores aceptan la imposición, no la sienten. Argentina tiene un exceso de exhibicionismo individual y una carencia de respuesta colectiva así en la cancha como en la vida. Si esas fronteras se van haciendo difusas es porque el fútbol, además de parecerse al lugar donde se juega, no escapa a su tiempo, y ésta es época de uniformización. La selección española no tiene un estilo propio, quizá por las diversas identidades que hacen a sus autonomías y que tienen en el fútbol su correspondencia (Valdano *El miedo escénico*, 276).*

Spain's *selección* later reached the quarterfinal of the 1934 World Cup, but aside from these two instances had little success on the international scene. Shortly thereafter, the Spanish Civil War broke out and the Spanish *selección*'s momentum in the football arena was put on hold. Although Spanish *fútbol* historians tend to minimize the *fútboling* efforts and competitions that took place during the Spanish Civil War, the next section of this chapter will provide documentation that even though the country was in a state of turmoil, very meaningful *fútbol* matches were still being played and some of these matches had extremely meaningful political ramifications. The following pages will

demonstrate not only the effect that politics had on *fútbol* during the Spanish Civil War but the effect that *fútbol* had on politics.

2.3: “The Struggle to Survive”: Spanish *Fútbol* During the Civil War (1936-1939)

During the Civil War, Spain was divided into Republicans and Nationalists and after the Republicans were defeated in 1939 the Nationalist General, “*Generalísimo*” Francisco Franco captured the role of Dictator of Spain. The Spanish Civil War was a very deadly conflict, and like most men in Spain the majority of Spanish *fútbol*ers took up arms to fight. Some, however, left the country to continue their careers. Nevertheless, due to the extreme violence that took place over the course of the war, many of the players who stayed in Spain to fight were inevitably killed. The famous Spanish *fútbol* historian, Julián García Candau, recognized this and dedicated the first chapter of his book *El fútbol, sin ley* to the great number of losses that Spanish *fútbol* suffered during the Civil War. His chapter was titled, “*El fútbol también perdió la guerra civil*”.

In most books covering the history of Spanish *fútbol*, very little attention is given to *fútbol* during the Spanish Civil War due to the limited amount of competition that took place on Spanish soil. In this time of limited competition the majority of Spanish *fútbol* matches taking place were regional tournaments, but there were also a few international competitions including two friendly Spain-Portugal matches. Even so, political divisions within Spain continued to be represented through clubs. While *FC Barcelona* and *Athletic de Bilbao* represented the separatist ideals of Catalonia and the Basque Country, *Club Atlético Osasuna* from Pamplona, Navarre and *RCD Español* served as representatives of centralist ideals from within the Historic Nationalities. Clearly, *Real Madrid* and *Atlético de Madrid* served to represent the centralist ideals from within the

central state. Of particular interest with regard to the state of Spanish *fútbol* during its Civil War were the groups of players from the Basque Country and Catalonia that formed *selecciones* from their respective regions (or “nations”) that participated in international tours. These tours were primarily designed to gather funds that could be sent back home to support the war effort against General Franco’s rising Nationalist side. They also served to raise awareness around the planet of the atrocities taking place in Spain and gain sympathizers and supporters through their anti-fascist *fútboling* campaigns.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, *FC Barcelona*’s President was Josep Sunyol. He was a strong activist for Catalan tradition and heritage. He came from a long line of Catalan political militants and was a member of *Acció Catalana* and *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*; both left-winged Catalan groups. He also founded the leftist Catalan newspaper, *La Rambla*, which opposed the previous fascist dictator, Primo de Rivera’s regime. When Sunyol was elected as *FC Barcelona*’s president, clearly the tie between Catalan leftist ideals and *FC Barcelona* were brought to the foreground.

Approximately one month after the Civil War broke out, Sunyol was arrested by Franco’s troops and swiftly executed. The members of Sunyol’s *fútbol* squad avoided a similar fate because they had fortunately followed the lead of the recently formed Basque Country’s *selección* and left Spain to compete internationally.

When the Civil War became a reality, most players from the Basque Country set their *fútbol* careers aside and took up arms in the war effort. Their time on the front, however, was short-lived. The ex-*Athletic de Bilbao* central mid-fielder turned President of the Basque Government, José Antonio Aguirre, felt their talents would better serve the

Basque cause through an international tour on the *fútbol* field and made plans to send a *fútbol* team representing the Basque country to foreign lands, which again demonstrates the link between politics and Spanish *fútbol*. These players formed what many consider to have been a Basque “national” team called, *Euskadi*. Their mission was three fold and served as a model for *FC Barcelona* to follow: raise funds to be sent back home for the war effort, raise awareness around the world to the atrocities taking place in Spain and gain sympathizers for the anti-fascist movement. The members of *Euskadi* considered this assignment from Aguirre nothing short of a military mission and took it very seriously. They left Spain not to “play” *fútbol* but used the sport of *fútbol* to fight fascism.

Nos convertíamos en viajeros errantes –recordaría Zubieta años más tarde– y nuestra arma era la calidad deportiva. Éramos como una compañía de artistas sometida al mejor postor. Sí bien nadie podía quejarse de que faltasen contratos. Empezábamos, sin saberlo, una nueva vida, sin posible conocimiento del final y creo que cuando dejamos la frontera para adentrarnos en territorio francés, no hubo desaliento entre nosotros, pues esperábamos retornar pronto (Fernández-Santander, 27).

Euskadi played its first match in France on April 26, 1937, against *Racing* of Paris, which they won the 3-0. When they returned to the locker room to celebrate their first victory, they were informed that while they were playing, German planes had bombed the Basque town of Guernika. The bombing of Guernika is now famous for being one of the single most deadly and destructive attacks to take place during the entire

Spanish Civil War. Needless to say, all euphoric emotion was striped from the members of *Euskadi* who were quickly and coldly reminded of the importance of their mission.

Euskadi went on to play in Prague, Poland, Russia and Oslo. In Oslo the players learned of the fall of the city of Bilbao. Shortly thereafter they received orders from the Franco Regime to return to Spain. Only one player chose to return. The others decided to continue the tour and headed to the Americas, playing in Mexico and Argentina. For two years the players of *Euskadi* played on foreign soil and all profits were sent back to the Basque government. When the war ended, each player was given ten thousand *pesetas* by the Basque government and shortly thereafter the team dissolved. Although, most of the players from *Euskadi* decided to stay in exile in Mexico and Argentina where they could peacefully finish their careers as professional *fútbol*ers, two *Euskadi* players returned to Spain. (García Candau *El fútbol, sin ley*, 20)

FC Barcelona's American tour was also a modest success in that it managed to provide the club with sufficient funds to avoid financial ruin. In 1938, the fascists bombed *FC Barcelona's* social club causing serious structural damage to the building. A few months after that bombing, the city of Barcelona had been seized and was officially occupied by Franco and the fascist nationalists. At this point, hope for the Catalan people and inspiration from *FC Barcelona* (the symbol of Catalonia) was meager and caused the number of *socios* (members) to dwindle greatly. As a result of these setbacks and because Franco's mortal hand was unrelenting to anyone opposing his vision, most of the members of the team sought exile in other countries (primarily France and Mexico) where they could also continue playing *fútbol* professionally. The players from both

Euskadi and *FC Barcelona* are considered heroes of Spanish *fútbol* for the hardships they endured during their careers as *fútbolers* during one of Spain's darkest eras. They are also recognized for using the sport of *fútbol* to not only raise political awareness but to actually participate in fighting a war. The Mexican writer Juan Villoro refers to the heroic efforts of these men in his short story "*El extremo fantasma*" when he calls them, "*los vascos de mitología que estuvieron en México y aún llenaban las bocas de los conoedores*" (in Valdano *Cuentos de Fútbol*, 362).

Soon after the Civil War, Spain's national team was re-established in order to counter the propaganda of the Basque and Catalan tours. Their *fútboling* capabilities were limited since many players were no longer available, due to deaths and injuries from the war and disgruntled players who chose exile. Their political success was limited because many countries refused to even play against fascist Spain. Interestingly, in 1937, *la selección* had its uniforms changed from red shirts and blue shorts, to blue shirts and white shorts – discarding the red, as it was seen to sympathize with the Republicans and adopting blue, as it was the Nationalist's color. For this reason many *fútbol* historians, symbolically refer to the state of Spanish *fútbol* under Franco after the Civil War as the "blue period". (Duke & Crolley, 32)

2.4: “The Opiate of the Masses”: Spanish *Fútbol* During the Franco Regime (1939-1975)

After the Civil War had come to a conclusion, one of the Franco Regime’s first orders of business was to bring normalcy back to Spanish society and they saw the opportunity to do so through the sport of *fútbol*. Franco’s Regime looked to the old Latin phrase “*panem et circense*” (bread and circus) which was popularized by the Roman poet, Décimo Junio Juvenal, of the first century. Through this saying, Juvenal conveyed that the best way for a government to control its people was to offer them, “bread and circus”. Bread, (sustenance) to keep their bellies full, and circus (some sort of diversion) to keep their attention away from governmental endeavors. In 1812, a Spanish version of the phrase appeared in León de Arroyal’s pamphlet titled, *Oración apologética en defensa del estado floreciente de España* in which the final sentences proclaimed, “*Haya pan y haya toros, y más que no haya otra cosa. Gobierno ilustrado: pan y toros pide el pueblo. Pan y toros es la comidilla de España. Pan y toros debes proporcionarla para hacer en lo demás cuanto se te antoje in secula seculorum. Amen*” (in “*Pan y toros.*”). These final sentences illustrate the importance that the Spanish people placed on bullfighting. The expression “*pan y toros*” has been widely used in Spain since Arroyal’s publication, always depicting the same sentiment. One notable reference to the expression was made by the famous Basque writer and philosopher, Miguel de Unamuno, who addressed the state of Spanish society in the late 19th century by writing, “*¡Pan y toros, y mañana será otro día! Cuando hay, saquemos tripa de mal año, luego... ¡no importa!*” in his article, *El espíritu castellano*, which was published in an 1895 edition of *La edad Moderna* (in “*Pan*

y toros.”). The Spanish music composer Francisco Asenjo Barieri also wrote a Zarzuela titled *Pan y toros* in 1864.

As the Spanish people’s attention turned from bullfighting to *fútbol* the expression changed from “*pan y toros*” to “*pan y fútbol*” indicating that the times had changed and the “circus” that now captivated the masses was *fútbol*. Bulls and bullfighting have always been a symbol of Spanish culture, but soon after the Civil War ended, many believed that Spanish society’s passion for *fútbol* was turning into an obsession. Some even considered their fanaticism to be an epidemic they called, “*fútbolitis*”. Franco’s regime and many *fútbol* administrators (mainly placed by the Franco Regime) were well aware of this nation-wide epidemic and attempted to use it to their advantage. The true sentiments of club presidents supporting the regime can be seen in the following quote of *Real Madrid*’s Santiago de Bernabéu, who stated, “*Estamos prestando un servicio a la nación. Nosotros lo que queremos es tener contenta a la gente. Le digo que estamos prestando un servicio porque a la gente le gusta mucho el fútbol, y con el fútbol los españoles hacen mas llevaderos sus problemas cotidianas*” (Shaw, 106). This quote clarifies the connection that *Real Madrid* had with the Franco Regime as well as their conscious effort to use the sport of *fútbol* to help accomplish their goal of offering the people of Spain a way to forget about their problems. For this reason many people in Spain came to refer to *fútbol* as a “*droga social*”, a “*válvula de escape*” or claim it parallels Carl Marx’s reference to religion and call it the “*opio del pueblo*”.

The ploy of using *fútbol* as a means of keeping the masses ignorant to the happenings of the “real world” was even more boldly expressed by *Atlético de Madrid*’s

owner, Vicente Calderón, in an interview that took place in November 1969. When he was asked, “*No cree usted que el fútbol entontece al país?*” Calderón responded, “*Ojalá el fútbol entonteciera al país y ojalá pensarán en el fútbol tres días antes y tres días después del partido. Así no pensarían en otras cosas más peligrosas*” (Shaw, 106). The legendary goalkeeper, Ricardo Zamora, made it clear in his biography, written by Francisco Gonzalez Ledesma, that this truly was the sentiment among *fútbol* administrators. But Zamora also makes it clear that the people of Spain were well aware of this fact and that they chose to look to *fútbol* as an escape because the realities of the aftermath of the war were simply too much to withstand. Ledesma wrote that Zamora said,

Cuando la guerra civil terminó, el panorama de fútbol nacional era tan sombrío como el horizonte general del país... La gente ansiaba normalizarse, volver a la vida que la guerra parecía haber destruido para siempre, y especialmente deseaba olvidar. El fútbol siempre ha sido en este sentido una especie de opio que ha ayudado a pasar los malos tragos y ha hecho olvidar muchas situaciones que de otro modo hubiesen parecido insostenibles. Consciente de ello, los dirigentes del nuevo Estado dedicaron a la reorganización del fútbol buena parte de sus afanes, y no hay que dudar que tuvieron éxito. Durante casi cuarenta años, los españoles –en un sentido general de masas– nos hemos preocupado menos de las realidades de nuestro país que de saber cómo quedaría clasificado nuestro equipo favorito (Shaw, 107).

Through these quotes, it is easy to recognize that, because of its popularity, the Spanish authorities were exploiting the sport of fútbol in an effort to redirect the Spanish people's attention away from the harsh realities of the world. These citations also draw upon the fact that the Spanish people were aware of this, but still chose to use *fútbol* as an escape, similar to many drug addicts who know the negative repercussions of the drug but still choose to use it as a temporary escape from reality. Although, the Franco Regime's promptness in reinstating the *selección* and its role in getting *La Liga* back on its feet may have been considered by some as a legitimate offering of a peaceful and harmless escape to the people of Spain, to others it was viewed as a calculating effort to control and politically demobilize the working class. Julián García Candau clearly saw it this way when he proclaimed that, "*El anterior régimen aprovechó las transmisiones televisivas de partidos de fútbol para apartar de la calle a los ciudadanos en fechas tan específicas como el 30 de abril y primero de mayo*" (Shaw, 96).

When General Franco seized control of Spain in 1939, all of the political power within the country was subsequently centralized. Franco therefore came to symbolize all that was Spain's staunch conservatism. Upon winning the Civil War, he immediately began to follow through with the Regime's plan to push for Spain to come together as a single solitary nation with one language and one culture. He immediately prohibited any signs of regional autonomy and the use of any language that was not Castilian Spanish. Although, Franco was rather lenient in this regard when it came to an individual expressing support of, or a connection to his Historic Nationality if it was through the passion he held for his *fútbol* club.

[Franco] tried to get rid of all regional rivalries in Spain apart from in the [fútbol]ing context. He promoted [fútbol] as a healthy way for the regions to relieve their tensions. But with *Barça* the dictator made a mistake. As the Catalans had no political parties, or regional government, or any right to use their own language, they put all their cultural pride into *Barça*. At a *Barça* match, the people could shout in Catalan and sing traditional songs at a time when they couldn't do it anywhere else (Duke & Crolley, 37).

Franco did however prohibit the use of all historic/regional languages in all institutions and among all individuals in his attempt to unify Spain. He then passed a decree that all *fútbol* clubs within Spain comply with this rule and use Castilian Spanish names.

Consequently, *Football Club Barcelona* (as it was initially named by its expatriate founders) had to change its name to *Club de Fútbol de Barcelona*, as it would properly be written in the Castilian language. Likewise they were forced to change the initials on their crest from *F.C.B.* to *C.F.B.* accordingly, as seen in Figure 11.



Figure 11. *Club de Fútbol de Barcelona's* Crest during the Franco Regime

In the end, Franco's efforts to obliterate all regional symbols and languages were in vain because throughout his thirty-six-year dictatorship the members of the Historic Nationalities secretly maintained their culture and language under his radar. But more importantly, much of their success in maintaining their language and culture was due to the fact that they were able to publicly display their unwavering support for region/nation and culture through the sport of *fútbol*. Franco was aware of this, and looked to *Real Madrid* (the club that was most preferred by and also served as a symbol of Franco's Regime) and other clubs that shared his vision for Spain, to dominate the Spanish league and therefore reinforce the notion that the centralist vision was culturally superior. The fact that Franco used *Real Madrid* as a public symbol of centralist superiority, their success on the field was paramount. This in turn caused rumors to fly that less than fair tactics were being practiced in order to assure their success.

In Duncan Shaw's fundamental study *Fútbol y franquismo*, Shaw claims the relationship between football and politics during Franco's reign had primarily three political outlets – 1. as a vehicle to promote fascist attitudes and propaganda, 2. as a tool to better the unsavory image of Franco's regime in foreign lands, and 3. as a catalyst to spark regionalist oppositions fighting against the centralist regime of Franco. Clearly the Regime saw the opportunity to use the sport of *fútbol* to reflect their ideals in the public sector. According to Shaw, these three political outlets can be illustrated through three different events that took place during the years of Franco's reign.

The first, he claims took place on Sunday, June 25, 1939, when *Sevilla FC* and *Racing Club de Ferrol* played in the first *Copa del Generalísimo* (with the fall of the

Monarchy, the *Copa del Rey*'s patronage had been transferred from the King to the General "isimo" Francisco Franco). The match took place in the Montjuich stadium in Barcelona less than three months after the conclusion of the Civil War. In this anecdote, Shaw conveys (as many other Spanish *fútbol* historians have) that the two teams lined up before the start of the match and lifted their right arms to a 45 degree angle to appropriately make the fascist salute as the *falange*'s hymn, *Cara al Sol* played over the loud speaker. Shaw states that the players sang along enthusiastically as the entire crowd that filled the stadium (which Shaw claimed consisted of many military men) got to their feet and followed suit, singing as one. (Shaw, 17-18) Through the creation of this image, one can clearly see how during the Franco Regime, the sport of *fútbol* was used as a vehicle to promote fascist propaganda.

[*Fútbol*] had a dimension that was not simply to do with sport. It was the best catalyst for promoting Spanish nationalism. The [*fútbol*]ing victories against England in 1950 and Russia in 1964 were immensely important historical landmarks for official propaganda (Fussi & Carr in Fernandez-Santander, 34).

The second incident, according to Shaw, took place on Wednesday, October 21, 1959, after *Real Madrid* had beaten Luxemburg's *AS la Jeunesse d'Esch* 5-0 at the *Estadio Bernabéu*. Shaw states that after each home victory it was customary for *Real Madrid*'s administrators to invite their opponents to a lavish supper. The Regime's representative at this event was the Secretary Minister of the Movement, José Solís who at the commencement of the meal quickly got to his feet and addressed the players of

Real Madrid in front of the administrators and players of the Luxemburg club. Solis' speech was the following,

Vosotros habéis hecho mucho más que muchas embajadas desperdigadas por esos pueblos de Dios. Gente que nos odiaba ahora nos comprende, gracias a vosotros, porque rompisteis muchas murallas... Vuestras victorias les constituyen en legítimo orgullo para todos los españoles, dentro y fuera de nuestra patria. Cuando os retiráis a los vestuarios, al final de cada encuentro, sabed que todos los españoles están con vosotros y os acompañan, orgullosos de vuestros triunfos, que tan alto dejan el pabellón español (Shaw, 18).

This speech clearly demonstrates that Minister Solis seized this opportunity to use the sport of *fútbol* to improve the Regime's negative image in foreign lands which was initially what the Regime proposed to do through reinstating the Spanish *selección* after the Civil War. Their effort to use the *selección* in promoting Spain's national image abroad however was rather unsuccessful, because so many teams refused to compete against Spain due to her fascist government. For this reason, Franco's Regime looked to *Real Madrid* instead to better Spain's image abroad.

It should be noted that the Spanish *selección* was able to find at least a few competitions. But of particular interest in this regard is the way these matches were depicted by the Spanish press. According to Duke and Crolley, during Franco's regime,

All Spain's victories were presented as a victory for Franco and contributed to his glory. They were attributed to the Spanish national

character, to the *furia española*, and invariably achieved for patriotic reasons. They were achieved with the help of the Virgin and numerous Saints (34).

Carlos Fernandez Santander also noted in his book, *El fútbol durante la guerra civil y el franquismo* that after Spain defeated Ireland 4-1 in 1949, the Spanish press wrote,

El partido realizado por España es algo que puede tenernos orgullosos a todos los españoles, porque en él no solamente han prevalecido aquellas virtudes inherentes de la raza, como son la energía, la vehemencia y la decisión, sino que a esto ha unido una técnica que ha puesto de relieve el ímpetu y la excelente clase natural de los jugadores españoles (98).

From the opposing perspective, according to Duke and Crolley, during Franco's regime any losses by the Spanish *selección* were attributed to poor refereeing decisions or jealousy from outside Spain. (34) This expression through the Spanish media is founded on the notion that since the previously mentioned Disaster of 1898, Spanish society has suffered from a weakened national psyche and inferiority complex. Many call this Spain's sickness of "outrageous *victimismo*" and "pessimistic *fatalismo*". Spanish society's chronic state of *victimismo* was probably reinforced more through the Spanish National *fútbol* team's continual under achievements than any other aspect of Spanish society.

The third event Shaw points out took place on Saturday, February 18, 1974, when *FC Barcelona* embarrassed their mortal rivals, *Real Madrid*, defeating them 5-0 in Barcelona. Shaw notes that men and women, young and old alike made their way to the

streets to celebrate. Shaw also claims that there were more red and yellow *senyeras* waiving in the streets than blue and claret *Barça* flags. Shaw said that throughout *las Ramblas* (Barcelona's famous street center) and the *Plaza de Catalunya*, people continually sang the Catalan hymn, *Els segadors*. Many *Barça* supporters still celebrate the date, referring to it as, *mil novecientos cinco-cero*. This image, offered by Shaw, demonstrates that the sport also served as a catalyst for regional animosities against the centralist Regime. Shaw could not have been more correct that these three events graphically illustrate the level that politics played in Spain's professional *fútbol* sector from 1939 to 1975.

Under Franco, basically every aspect of Spanish public life was subjected to a tremendous level of governmental intervention. This was clearly the case with regard to *fútbol* as well, and as soon as Franco had control he began appointing military figures (that had helped him win the war) to run the country's major institutions. A military man named Colonel Troncoso, was appointed to the position of president of the *Real Federación Española de Fútbol* and the position of Minister for Sport was given to General Mascardó. Upon receiving his new appointment, in his inaugural speech Mascardó explained how he considered the position to be a part of his military responsibility stating, "*soy un soldado y acepto lo que se me ordena*" (Fernandez-Santander, 54). The most prominent example demonstrating military intervention in the sport of *fútbol* was the preferential treatment of *Atlético de Madrid*.

When *La Liga Española de Fútbol* resumed play in 1939, *Atlético de Madrid* merged with *Aviación Nacional* from Zaragoza. *Aviación Nacional* had recently been

founded by members of the Spanish Air Force and was promised a place in *La Liga*'s *Primera División*. When the *R.F.E.F.* later denied them the position in the *Primera División* that they had been promised, the *R.F.E.F.* decided that as a compromise, *Aviación Nacional* could combine with *Atlético de Madrid* (who had lost eight players in the war) and compete in the *Primera División*. The new club was named *Atlético Aviación de Madrid* and due to their connection with the military they were awarded the right of first refusal to any players that had been in the military and they also received free transportation and gasoline along with other subsidies. The positive results that came from this semi-militarization of the club caused many to consider it an underhanded effort by the central state to offer one of the clubs that paralleled their vision, an enormous advantage. This uneasiness was based on the fact that *Aviación Nacional* was initially promised a place of their own in the *Primera División*. Many other clubs had also suffered casualties in the war and struggled to field a team, so, of all the clubs in this situation, why was *Atlético de Madrid* awarded such a great advantage in such desperate times? The answer lies in the fact that *fútbol* authorities were under the control of Troncoso and Moscardó (as well as other military figures). It is no surprise that *Atlético Aviación de Madrid* dominated play and won the first two *La Liga* championships that took place after the war.

Political divisions and regional animosities that existed during the Franco era were obviously represented and reinforced through *fútbol*. *FC Barcelona* and *Athletic de Bilbao* represented the ideas separate from the central state that supported their respective nations/regions – Catalonia and The Basque Country. On the other hand, *Osasuna* from

Navarre and *Español* of Catalonia were representatives of Franco's Spain from within these Historic Nationalities. A similar example of the Franco Regime expressing favoritism toward clubs that were supportive of the Regime is the case of *Osasuna*, who after the war should have been relegated to the 2nd Division but were given permission to continue to play in the 1st Division. After the decision was contested, a playoff game was set up to determine who would ascend to the 1st division; *Osasuna* was defeated 3-1 and rightfully relegated to the 2nd division after all. (Duke & Crolley, 32)

Clearly, the *fútbol* club that optimally represented Franco's Spain was *Real Madrid*. For political reasons Spain is divided between allegiance to either *Real Madrid* or *FC Barcelona*. While Spaniards are passionate about other clubs, nothing compares to their support for these two teams. This obsessive concern for and popularity of these two clubs gave rise to the expression, "*Real Madrid y Barça; lo demás, puro relleno*". The Spanish journalist, Alex Botines, even used this expression as a title for one of the chapters of his book, *La gran estafa del fútbol español*.

The importance that *FC Barcelona* held for the people of Catalonia began with the club's conception and grew throughout the Franco years. This sentiment was best captured by Narcís de Carreras in 1968, after being voted in as the club's president. In his acceptance speech, Carreras wisely highlighted the club's social importance in Catalonia and proclaimed that "*Barça es quelque més que un club de fútbol*". In 1973, Agustí Mantal i Costa adopted Carreras' statement to make it the slogan for his *FC Barcelona* presidential campaign. The slogan has since been changed to, "*més que un club*" and is used to promote the club and reinforce its connection to the people of Catalonia, its

international supporters and its political stance as a staunch supporter of what they consider democratic rights and freedom. As is the case with any symbol or political slogan, the meaning behind “*més que un club*” is open-ended and serves to encompass a multitude of aspects. The slogan is now written within the seats of the *FC Barcelona Stadium, Camp Nou*, as seen below in Figure 12.



Figure 12. *Camp Nou – més que un club*

On November 27, 1974, before the game that marked the end of the club’s 75th anniversary celebrations, 3,600 fans gathered on Camp Nou’s field to offer all those in attendance the club’s new anthem, *Cant de Barça*, as seen in Figure 13.



Figure 13. *Cant de Barça*'s premier – 1974

The *Cant de Barça* was written entirely by natives of Catalonia that made a point to emphasize Catalonia and *FC Barcelona*'s coinciding social values within its lyrical content. The song's lyrics wholeheartedly reflect the importance that the region and club place on accepting outsiders into Catalan society and nurturing an international culture. The *Cant de Barça* was quickly embraced by fans and it has since become a tradition that before every home match the song is played over the loud speaker and sung by all Barcelona supporters. The lyrics are as follows:

'El Cant de Barça'

Tot el camp

és un clam

som la gent blaugrana

Tant se val d'on venim

si del sud o del nord

ara estem d'acord, ara estem d'acord,

una bandera ens agermana.

Blaugrana al vent

un crit valent

tenim un nom el sap tothom:

Barça , Barça, Baaarça!

Jugadors, seguidors,

tots units fem força.

Son molt anys plens d'afanys,

son molts gols que hem cridat

i s'ha demostrat,

i s'ha demostrat,

que mai ningú no ens podrà torcer

Blaugrana al vent

un crit valent

tenim un nom el sap tothom:

Barça, Barça, Baaarça! (“El Cant de Barça.”).

As it is expressed within the *Cant de Barça*, an individual does not necessarily need to have been born in Catalonia to form part of the Catalan culture. Rather, a person may come to form part of the Catalan culture if his or her actions and ideals support and coincide with those of the people of Catalan. The story of the Dutch *fútbol*er, Johan Cruyff is a great example of the Catalan people truly accepting a foreigner as one of their own. In 1973 Cruyff left his hometown club of *Ajax* in Amsterdam and came to play for

FC Barcelona. He immediately found himself in good standing with *Barça* fans when he stated to the press that he chose *FC Barcelona* over *Real Madrid* because he could not play for a club that was associated with Franco. Throughout his career his actions demonstrated his support of Catalan ideals. However, Julián García Candau claims that Cruyff truly won over the hearts of the people of Catalonia when he was unjustly expelled from a match in Camp Nou. García Candau explains that the *Barça* fans were furious with the referee's decision, and as Cruyff left the field he took off the captain's arm-band, which consisted of the yellow and red stripes of the *senyera*, and kissed it. Cruyff embraced all things Catalan. He learned and spoke the Catalan language and also gave his son a Catalan name: Jordi. After his career as player for *FC Barcelona*, Cruyff became the manager of the club. His tenure as manager lasted longer than any other coach of the club. During this time, Cruyff also accumulated more trophies for the club than any other coach, giving him the honor of being considered the most successful manager in *FC Barcelona* history. After two consecutive years without a trophy and a falling out with Josep Lluís Núñez, the club's chairman, Cruyff's tenure as manager came to an end. Cruyff vowed he'd never coach again, but he played an important role in helping Joan Laporta become the club's new president. Cruyff continues to serve as an advisor to Laporta even though he does not hold an official position within the ranks of the club. This unwavering support of *Barça* demonstrates that Cruyff truly held the club and its vision extremely close to his heart. (García Candau *El fútbol, sin ley*, 22)

While *FC Barcelona* celebrates Johan Cruyff as an example of the club's commitment to accepting foreigners into their culture, *Real Madrid* has done the same on

a variety of occasions. An early example of this would be the case of the Argentinean born, Alfredo di Stéfano. Although di Stéfano arrived at *Real Madrid* from foreign lands, the club's success under his leadership quickly established him as the embodiment of *Real Madrid*. He therefore became a symbol of the Franco Regime's superiority.

Di Stéfano's arrival to *Real Madrid* was highly controversial. In 1953, while on loan from Argentina's *River Plate* to the Colombian club, *Millonarios*, he signed a new contract with *FC Barcelona* and FIFA. However, FIFA was unaware that *River Plate* owned his rights through 1954, and that consent from both *Millonarios* and *River Plate* was necessary before he could sign with anyone else. The Spanish Federation (made up mainly of Franco's men) did recognize this and refused to acknowledge the trade. *Millonarios* contacted FIFA and informed them of the problem, but FIFA washed their hands of their mistake and ordered the Spanish Federation to resolve the situation as quickly as possible. During the clubs' discussions with the Spanish Federation concerning how to resolve the issue, *Real Madrid's* president, Santiago Bernabéu, seized his opportunity and convinced di Stéfano to sign with *Real Madrid*. While controversy surrounded the issue as to whether *Millonarios* and *River Plate* did or did not agree to release di Stéfano, *Real Madrid's* administrators somehow were able to negotiate his release from the clubs. This infuriated *FC Barcelona* because they claimed that they had properly negotiated the player's release. They accused the Spanish Federation of not recognizing what was from the beginning a perfectly fair trade. Unable to decide whether *FC Barcelona* or *Real Madrid* was in the right, in early September the Spanish Federation announced their resolution to the problem and declared dual proprietorship for

the clubs. This resolution had been agreed to and signed by both club presidents – *FC Barcelona*'s Carreto and *Real Madrid*'s Bernabéu. The contract allowed di Stéfano four seasons in Spain in which he would alternate between *Real Madrid* and *FC Barcelona*. Carreto's agreement to this deal created such an upheaval among *FC Barcelona* fans that he resigned the following week. *FC Barcelona*'s interim board of directors, who took over after Carreto submitted his resignation, decided that *Real Madrid* could have the player indefinitely for the exchange of four million pesetas.

The reasons behind exactly why and how *FC Barcelona* allowed the star to be snatched away by their rivals is still under dispute. While *Real Madrid* has always maintained that *FC Barcelona* voluntarily turned di Stéfano over, others claim that their decision was influenced by pressure from the Franco Regime. Still others claim that *FC Barcelona* lost interest after watching di Stéfano's poor play in friendly matches during the negotiations and decided that they would be better served if they took the money. Regardless, just days after di Stéfano became official *Real Madrid* property, the two clubs met and he seemingly used the match to break out of his slump, tallying three goals to secure *Real Madrid*'s victory. Whatever the case *FC Barcelona* never forgave *Real Madrid* or the Spanish Federation for causing them to lose one of the greatest players of all time to their most bitter rivals.

FC Barcelona's failure to lock di Stéfano down is considered by many as the clubs greatest failure because not only did di Stéfano's tenure with *Real Madrid* lead to years of dominance in Spain's *La Liga*, it also won them five consecutive European Championships from 1956-1959. *Real Madrid* became the *fútboling* envy of Europe and

the Franco Regime's symbol of fascist Spain's superiority. Di Stéfano has often stated that his affiliation with the club had no political basis. All politics aside, the matches that took place between *Real Madrid* under di Stéfano and *FC Barcelona* under the Hungarian super star Ladislao Kubala produced an extremely technical brand of *fútbol*. Fans recognized it as a new approach to the sport and quickly embraced this highly skilled style of play as "*fútbol espectáculo*". With the Spanish *selección*'s lack of success, many were becoming unconvinced that "fury" was the most positive attribute or successful tactic. Instead, *fútbol espectáculo* was deemed as the best attribute, because it embraced technique and skill over the reliance on fury. The introduction of *fútbol espectáculo* added another aspect to the make-up and evolution of Spanish *fútbol*. Each of these attributes (*fúria*, *victimismo* and *espectáculo*) has played an important role in Spanish *fútbol*'s evolution and is a key element in the foundation and evolution of the Spanish *selección* and the Spanish "style" of play. The Spanish national team's lack of success has most commonly been attributed to their inability to have a solidified style of play or a cohesive vision of the game. An example of this was expressed in an article in the Spanish newspaper *ABC* which stated, "Spain must define its identity... It needs to know whether it is the bullfighter or the bull" (Crolley & Hand, 108).

During di Stéfano's professional *fútboling* career he became a naturalized Spanish citizen and played for the *selección* on numerous occasions but never competed in a World Cup. After his retirement in 1966, he coached a variety of teams and eventually found his way back to *Real Madrid* from 1982-1984. In 1999, di Stéfano was recognized in a poll to determine the "*Fútboler* of the Century" conducted by the renowned *fútbol*

magazine, *France Football*. He was chosen fourth, behind Pélé, Maradona, and Cruyff. Today he serves as *Real Madrid*'s honorary president.

Although Jorge Valdano came to *Real Madrid* after the years of Franco's dictatorship, he serves as another example of a foreign player who has been embraced as a Spaniard through his affiliation with the central state's most representative club. In describing Valdano, Carmelo Martín claims, "*Su patria es el fútbol, pero con el pasaporte en la mano es también argentino y español*" (in Valdano *Sueños*, 9). To many, Valdano is to *Real Madrid* what Johan Cruyff is to Barcelona. Valdano played for *Real Madrid* and among the many accolades garnered during his tenure are two UEFA Cup championships. Cruyff later became manager of Barcelona, Valdano later became manager of *Real Madrid*. Cruyff was named European *fútbol*er of the year three times in 1971, 1973, and 1974. In 1999, he was named European *fútbol*er of the century. Jorge Valdano scored a goal in the 1986 FIFA World Cup Final to give Argentina the edge over Germany 3-2.

The role of *fútbol* in Spain during the years of the Franco regime was unique in that it was heavily influenced by politics, adored by the masses, and infiltrated by foreign super stars. Spanish *fútbol* from 1939-1975 was used by the Franco regime in two ways: as a vehicle to promote Spanish nationalism, both within Spain and abroad; and as an opiate to sooth the Spanish peoples' pain from the atrocities caused by the Civil War and to distract them from concerning themselves with the country's political endeavors. Although, since politics and *fútbol* were so closely linked, in many ways *fútbol* during the Franco era raised people's political awareness rather than sedate it, especially in the

Historic Nationalities because after the Civil War *fútbol* was the only outlet permitted to release pent-up political frustrations.

2.5: “Hoping to Bury the Hatchet”:
Spanish *Fútbol* During the Transition (1975-2000)

Muerto Franco, era aconsejable enterrar también la “furia española”, una seña de identidad arcaica. La transición diseñaba un nuevo modelo de país.

–Jorge Valdano

When Francisco Franco died in 1975, his would-be successor, Juan Carlos de Borbón, defied Franco’s wishes and turned the political power of Spain over to the people, making her a modern day democracy. When the 1978 Spanish Constitution was written, the people from the Historic Nationalities saw the inclusion of a liberating new policy that granted varying degrees of regional autonomy to each of them – each was now considered a *Comunidad Autónoma*. The second article of the constitution recognized the differences between “regions and nationalities” within Spain and their right to self-governance and proclaimed “indissoluble unity of the Spanish nation”. The people from the *Comunidades Autónomas* were not only granted the freedom to openly celebrate their distinct culture, language and history, they were encouraged to do so. Through the Constitution of 1978 the *Comunidades Autónomas* were also granted control over their own health services, the right to have their own television channels and almost complete control of their educational systems. The Basques were able to reinstate their legal and fiscal system, called the *fueros*, that had been abolished during the Franco years and both the Basques and the Catalans were granted the right to have their own police forces. (Duke & Crolley, 40)

While some considered the granting of these differing levels of autonomy to the newly recognized *Comunidades Autónomas* very accommodating to the citizens and governments of these regions, others felt that there should be no ties between the central government of Spain (which resides in Madrid) and their Historic Nationality. But overall, the long-time frustration of the people from these *Comunidades Autónomas* seemed to have been sedated. For many, all they ever wanted was the recognition that they are comprised of peoples from a different culture and the right to openly express their uniqueness.⁸ This viewpoint, however, has been disputed for centuries. In the following pages I will demonstrate how, since Franco's dictatorship, the sport of *fútbol* in Spain has been reshaped in ways that reflect the government's transition from dictatorship to democracy, as well as a new approach to exploiting the connection between club and the historical-political ideologies.

The liberties granted to Spain's newly recognized *Comunidades Autónomas* resulted in an increase of expression from these cultures. While Franco was in control any expression of cultural difference was strictly prohibited in all aspects of Spanish life with the exception of *fútbol*. Therefore, with the arrival of the constitution, the *fútbol* arena was no longer the only outlet for expression of cultural differences or political frustrations. With the introduction of infinite avenues through which an individual could express his cultural identity and political beliefs the previously tumultuous use of the *fútbol* arena began to somewhat dissipate. The transition to democracy was taking place in all facets of Spanish society and in all of Spain's institutions, including *fútbol*. One of

⁸ One major difference between the Basque and the Catalan struggle is that the Basque's claim an ethnic and cultural difference while the Catalans simply claim a cultural difference.

the first changes to occur regarding *fútbol* administrations was the reinstatement of the democratic structure that had previously existed at the club level before the Civil War – allowing *socios* (members of *fútbol* clubs) to elect the president for their club's.

The newly granted freedom of expression to the *Comunidades Autónomas* resulted in these regions developing a stronger sense of identity than they had during the Franco years. *Fútbol* clubs throughout Spain are viewed as representing not only the city from which they hail but the entire *Comunidad Autónoma*. Many club colors represent regional flags: *Real Betis* from Sevilla wear the green and white stripes of Andalusia, *Las Palmas* wear the yellow and blue of the Canary Islands and *Celta de Vigo* wear the sky blue and white of Galicia. This heightened sense of regional solidarity (along with the Spanish *selección*'s lack of success) caused many to be more concerned with the well-being of their local team and the rivalry between *Real Madrid* and *FC Barcelona* than with the Spanish *selección*. Due to the political differences regarding their identity many did not consider the Spanish *selección* as representing their nation. This sentiment is most felt in Catalonia and the Basque Country where regionalist/nationalist disputes have historically been more polemic. Many consider *FC Barcelona* to be the Catalan *selección* and *Athletic de Bilbao* to be the *selección* of the Basque Country. Although others have claimed this idea with more conviction, in a conference in London in 2005, *FC Barcelona*'s president Joan Laporta is quoted as saying, “*Barça* is a bit like the Catalan National Team” (in Crolley & Hand, 125).

With this increased interest in local clubs, many officials recognized the potential of their *fútbol* club to promote their region. As Franco did with *Real Madrid*, politicians

from the *Comunidades Autónomas* began to use the success of their local clubs as a vehicle to foster their region's sense of identity and pride. For example, in 1994 when Zaragoza won Spain's *Copa del Rey* and then in 1995 won the Cup Winners' Cup over Arsenal, the Aragon government stressed the connection between club and *Comunidad Autónoma* by proclaiming, "A victory for Zaragoza is a victory for Aragon" in their self-promotional campaign. (Duke & Crolley, 41) Spain's transition from dictatorship to democracy led to increasing value being placed on regional identity and the *Comunidades Autónomas*, causing less concern for the well-being of Spain as a whole. This sentiment was evident in many areas of Spanish life, including their regard for the Spanish *fútbol selección*.

Although much of the turmoil throughout Spain had lessened with the formation of the *Comunidades Autonomas*, the situation was by no means resolved. The rivalry between *Real Madrid* and *FC Barcelona* was still very heated throughout the transition to democracy. Each club remained aware of the socio-political animosities that had been historically represented through their clubs, but Spain's transition to democracy caused these hostilities to become more tamed. *FC Barcelona* is still considered one of Catalonia's most important and representative institutions and *Real Madrid* is considered to represent centralist Spain's repressive nature – although to a lesser degree than during the Franco years. Many Spaniards support *FC Barcelona* simply because they view it as the opposition to Madrid and all that Madrid represents. Other Spaniards support *Real Madrid* because they agree with central Spain's vision of a unified nation, and detest *FC Barcelona* for their separatist ideals, which can be seen in the following popular chant:

*Somos españolistas
de la corona,
de la corona,
somos especialistas
en dar palizas
al Barcelona (García Candau *Épica y lírica*, 218).*

Clearly, throughout the transition to democracy the underlying ideals of the various clubs were still prevalent. After Franco's death in 1975, *FC Barcelona* immediately changed its name from *Club de Fútbol de Barcelona* (as was demanded by the Franco Regime) back to *F.C.B. – Fútbol Club Barcelona*. The Catalan *fútbol* institution holds its slogan “*més que un club*” very close to its heart. The slogan is still representative of the beliefs of the people of Catalonia. *FC Barcelona*'s official website describes the connection between the club's slogan, outlook, and supporters as the following:

The slogan “more than a club” is open-ended in meaning. It is perhaps this flexibility that makes it so appropriate for defining the complexities of FC Barcelona's identity, a club that competes in a sporting sense on the field of play, but that also beats, every day, to the rhythm of its people's concerns. FC Barcelona is “more than a club” in Catalonia because it is the sports club that most represents the country and is also one of its greatest ambassadors. Also, for different reasons, FC Barcelona is “more than a club” for many people living elsewhere in Spain, who see *Barça* as a staunch defender of democratic rights and freedom (“History of the FC

Barcelona.”).

The Catalan vision of embracing an international culture also remained intact through the transition to democracy. With Johan Cruyff as *FC Barcelona*'s manager he assembled what became known as the “Dream Team” named after the United States men's Basketball team that won the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona. Cruyff's “Dream Team” consisted of Catalonia's own Josep Guardiola and Basque players: José Mari Bakero, Txiki Begiristain and Ion Andoni Goikoetxea. *FC Barcelona* also obtained international superstars: Romania's Gheorghe Hagi, Bulgaria's Hristo Stoichkov, Holland's Ronald Koeman, Denmark's Michael Laudrup and Brazil's Romario. With these international superstars, *Barça* was spending enormous amounts of money importing players, not only to assure success on the *fútbol* field, but also to promote the club as an international ambassador. Many of these players quickly adapted to Catalan society and formed part of the Catalan vision and culture and are now legends of Catalan society. The approach of recruiting international players to seize a portion of the global market was not possible to *Athletic de Bilbao* because it was written in the club's statutes that they only accept players of Basque heritage.

The influx of blue chip foreign players to the Spanish league in the 1990's resulted in many people referring to the Spanish first division as “*La Liga de las Estrellas*”. Liz Crolley claims that it was in the 1980's that *fútbol* clubs in Spain began marketing themselves as a commodity. Before satellite television, few Spanish clubs were profitable. Their social position was that of a local institution and they did not necessarily focus on the bottom line or profit margins. In the 80's *FC Barcelona* took its

slogan “*més que un club*” and began using it as a tool to effectively catapult the club into the international market. In doing so, people around the world have become more aware of *FC Barcelona* and Catalonia’s mission. *Real Madrid*, *FC Barcelona* and *Athlétic de Bilbao* are the Spanish clubs that have had the most success in marketing themselves within Spain and are also the clubs that most strongly represent Spain’s various historical and political viewpoints. Many who support centralist ideals support Real Madrid, those who do not will often support *FC Barcelona* or *Athlétic de Bilbao* simply because they represent “anti-*madridismo*”. In this sense these clubs have exploited their connections to the historical and political struggles of “centralism” versus “decentralization” in their marketing campaigns and are essentially reinforcing the issue and perpetuating one of Spain’s most problematic struggles.

While *FC Barcelona* held strong to its initial doctrine during Spain’s transition to democracy, other clubs made a variety of modifications in an attempt to shape their image to more politically suit the times. *RCD Español* took steps to alter its image from one that supported centralist Spain and opposed all that is Catalan, to a more regional image. They attempted to change their name to *Real Club Deportivo de Cataluña* and began focusing their recruiting efforts on players from within Catalonia, hoping to gain more Catalan sympathy and support. The large number of *Español* supporters that disapproved of these changes, however, left the club no option but to abandon these efforts. During Franco’s dictatorship, supporters of the Regime that were assigned to work in Catalonia adopted *Español* as their local club (since they had been distanced from their primary club – *Real Madrid*) and they did not approve of this “new image” the

club was trying to establish. For this reason, many consider *Español* to be an extension of *Real Madrid*, since both clubs represent the same ideals.

During the transition, *Español*'s fan base became divided between sympathizers of the more politically correct ideologies tolerant of the Catalan vision and supporters of ultra-right-winged ideologies who held strong to Franco's fascist doctrine. These champions of fascism, having become a minority after Franco's death, needed to unite with others who shared their vision. Like so many others, they used the *fútbol* arena as a vehicle to express their political ideologies to the masses. *Español*'s ultra-right-winged group calls itself *Brigadas Balnquiazules* and continues to express its desire for a unified Spain. (Duke & Crolley, 45)

After Franco's death, Spain saw the rise of a great number of extreme right-winged political groups. They used *fútbol* as a platform or outlet to express their extreme nationalism, racism, or xenophobia. Neo-fascist groups using the *fútbol* arena to express pre-World War II ideologies exist throughout Europe, especially where fascism once reigned, and are therefore not unique to Spain. In Spain there is evidence of neo-fascist groups and extreme separatist groups called *cabezas rapadas* (skinheads) such as the *Brigadas Blanquiazules* from *RCD Español*. Some other examples of these groups are the *Boixos Nois* of Barcelona, the *Ultrasur* of *Real Madrid*, the *Frente Atlético* of *Atlético de Madrid*, the *Ultras Mujica* of *Real Sociedad* and *Herri Norte* of *Athletic de Bilbao*. A number of extremist groups have also risen in *Comunidades Autónomas* less commonly associated with turmoil than those of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Madrid. There are now groups such as *Celterra* of *Celta de Vigo* and the *Raizor Blues* of *Deportivo de la*

Coruña, both from Galicia, and the *Ultra Boix* of *Sporting de Gijón*, from Asturias.

Supporters of the Basque Country's most recognized and violent separatist (or terrorist)

group, *ETA*, have also used the *fútbol* arena as a public stage to mount a protest.

Although *fútbol*'s return to democracy produced a number of positive changes, it has created a variety of complex issues. Since *socios* have once again been granted the right to vote for their club's president and administrators, the undeniable presence of these ultra-right-winged groups has played an important role in many of these clubs' elections.

With the transition from dictatorship to democracy, the need to express nationalist viewpoints through *fútbol* decreased. The constitution afforded alternative avenues for people to express their sentiments besides simply through *fútbol* – as was the case under Franco. Although many of the ideologies still remain, a number of clubs took steps to modify their approach during the transition. For example, the Basque clubs – *Athletic de Bilbao* and *Real Sociedad* kept their Basque-only policies, but began to re-think their definitions of “Basqueness”. They opened their doors to players with looser ties to Basque heritage than had previously been the policy and began accepting players of Basque heritage who were born outside of the Basque Country and players from the French Basque region. (Duke & Crolley, 46) When Luis Fernandez was appointed as *Athletic de Bilbao*'s head coach, the definition of Basque heritage became even more flexible. Under Fernandez, anyone that had either Basque ancestry or spent time in the Basque Country's youth development system (known as the “*cantera*”) could play for the club. This approach proved a bit more successful and even though *Athletic de Bilbao* was still in the shadow of *Real Madrid* and *FC Barcelona*, under Fernandez *Athletic de Bilbao*

saw its most successful era. In 1998 the club achieved second place in *La Liga Española* and qualified for the UEFA Champions league. Regardless of *Athletic de Bilbao*'s success on the field, many of the club's supporters feel that its identity is more important than its success on the field.

While Spanish *fútbol* at the club level went through a transition from dictatorship to democracy, the Spanish *selección* also went through a transition of its own. People saw the need for the *selección* to reassess its approach to international competition and many felt the first step was to do away with the notion of "*furia española*". These people considered *furia* a characteristic representative of the Franco era and a trait of those with less ability, lacking in skill and talent that needed to rely on rage and brute force to compete. Many felt the emphasis placed on *furia* during the Franco era bred a less than sophisticated brand of *fútbol*.

En España existen identidades regionales, pero no una personalidad futbolística nacional; por eso es más fácil sentirse representado por un club que por la misma selección. La furia es sólo un estado de enojo y rabia que puede dar una satisfacción momentánea pero nunca favorecer la expresión de valores futbolísticos. La furia es ciega y suele servir para ocultar un estadio, es fugaz y puede disimular la potencia, no es patrimonio de nadie y puede, por ejemplo, ser checoslovaca y ser utilizada, además, contra España. Satisfactoriamente (Valdano Miedo escénico, 207).

It was, however, during the Franco years that *La Liga Española* saw the arrival of a number of international *fútbol* stars, such as the Hungarian Ladislao Kubala to *FC Barcelona* and Alfredo di Stéfano to *Real Madrid*. These international *fútbol* stars played an important roll in changing the face of Spanish *fútbol* and their contribution laid the foundation for what would become Spain's alternative to *furia* – "*fútbol espectáculo*". The attraction to *fútbol espectáculo* was the opportunity to witness a more beautiful, skillful, technical and artistic form of the sport. *Fútbol espectáculo* embraced the qualities of a bullfighter: poise, patience, swagger and talent. Spain, as the cradle of *fútbol espectáculo*, enjoyed an influx of international superstars signing lucrative contracts to play in *La Liga Española* that established itself as one of the most powerful professional *fútbol* leagues in the world. In 1990, when Spain established various private television channels namely *Antena 3*, *Telecinco*, and *Canal+*, Spanish *fútbol* clubs were able to amass much larger revenues due to the deals they made with these channels to more extensively broadcast the games. This new avenue for income provided many clubs in Spain's premiere division the ability to sign even more of the world's greatest players than before and *La Liga Española* soon became known as "*La Liga de las Estrellas*". Some of the best players to arrive in Spain during the nineties were Bulgaria's Hristo Stoitchkov and Brazil's Rivaldo and Ronaldo at *FC Barcelona*, Argentina's Diego Maradona at *Sevilla FC*, Denmark's Michael Laudrup at both *FC Barcelona* and *Real Madrid*, Brazil's Roberto Carlos and Sávio Bortolini at *Real Madrid*, Argentina's Fernando Redondo at *CD Tenerife* and then *Real Madrid*, Chile's Ivan Zamorano at *Sevilla FC* and then *Real Madrid*, Brazil's Romario at *FC Barcelona* and *Valencia CF*,

Colombia's René Higuita at *Real Valladolid*, Holland's Patrick Kluivert at *FC Barcelona*, Brazil's Djalminha at *Deportivo La Coruña*, the Cameroon born Samuel Eto'o at *Real Madrid*, England's Steve McManaman at *Real Madrid*, Holland's Phillip Cocu and Frank de Boer at *FC Barcelona*, and Brazil's Darío Silva at *RCD Espanyol*, among many, many others to make *La Liga Española* a social and marketing phenomenon as it headed toward the 21st Century.

Another interesting aspect of Spain's modernizing social efforts occurring during the transition to democracy that was demonstrated through the sport of *fútbol* was the introduction and acceptance of the involvement of women in the game. Prior to the mid-late 1970's, *fútbol* was an area of the Spanish society designated for men. Traditionally, *fútbol* in Spain was an activity that embraced "un-feminine" characteristics, such as: competitiveness, aggressiveness and fury. As the face of the sport in Spain began to transform and change to a more democratic institution it embraced the aspect of "espectáculo" which caused female interest in the sport to grow. Women began participating in *fútbol*, not only as spectators, but also as players. Spain's first women's league was formed in 1980 and has since grown into a multi-level system with *La Superliga Española* (founded in 1988 by the *Real Federación de Fútbol Español*) at the top. Spain also saw the formation of their *Selección femenina* in 1983. Clearly, the acceptance of women in the *fútbol* arena in Spain is indicative of the changing gender roles that have occurred throughout Spanish society since Franco's death and is also evidence of Spain's modernizing efforts.

While *fútbol* at the club level (both masculine and feminine) was experiencing the effects of democratizing and modernizing and *La Liga Española* was flourishing, the Spanish *selección* was struggling. Eventually, the *selección* began to adopt *fútbol espectáculo* as a style of play. In González Ramallal's article "*La configuración del fútbol español como deporte espectáculo*", he claims that *fútbol espectáculo* came to flourish in Spain in the 1980's and 1990's and that the *selección*'s efforts to transform their game to a more modern, progressive style was first noticeable during the 1982 World Cup, which coincidentally was hosted by Spain.

La que podemos denominar la "espectacularización" del fútbol español en un sentido moderno se configura en pleno proceso de transición política, teniendo como referencia inicial el Campeonato Mundial de 1982 que se celebró en España. En ese momento las propiedades estructurales tradicionales de nuestro fútbol [i.e. furia] pasa a coexistir con otras de carácter moderno y, paulatinamente, las sustituyen. (González Ramallal)

Although Ramallal indicated that the *selección* substituted *furia* for *espectáculo*, many considered the *selección* to have added *espectáculo* as a new dimension to their style that still included *furia*. The *selección* is most commonly characterized as possessing and embracing both styles – as positive traits. However, too much *espectáculo* is often ineffective and *furia* used the wrong way is a disadvantage. This is a complex style of *fútbol* because it is difficult to be graceful and artistic while at the same time infuriated, and tumultuous. However, when the chemistry of these two elements properly combine, it is a nearly lethal combination for the opponent to withstand.

A great example of a Spanish team that successfully incorporated fury with spectacle is *Real Madrid* in the 1980's. During the 80's one of *Real Madrid's* youth players, Emilio Butragueño – “*El Buitre*” used both his skill and tenacity to come up through the club's ranks and eventually play for *Real Madrid's* first team. Along with Butragueño, four of his youth-level teammates arrived to *Real Madrid's* main stage: Manolo Sanchís, Martín Vázquez, Michel and Miguel Pardeza. *Real Madrid's* coach at the time, ex-*Real Madrid* superstar Alfredo di Stéfano, brought these youngsters in from the very beginning and the chemistry felt between the five soon became recognized as “*La Quinta del Buitre*” and the engine behind *Real Madrid's* first team. Under *La Quinta del Buitre*, *Real Madrid* took Spain and Europe by storm, winning *La Liga Española* five consecutive times and two UEFA Cups. Unfortunately, *La Quinta del Buitre* will always remain in the shadow of *Real Madrid's* greatest success stories since they were unable to win a single UEFA Champions League title. The club had won five consecutive UEFA Champions League titles, between 1956-1960, with di Stéfano at the helm as a player.

Although from the transition until the turn of the 21st Century there have been conscious efforts by the Spanish *selección* to incorporate the successful attributes of teams from *La Liga Española*, the Spanish people still demonstrated a certain level of indifference toward the *selección*. This is a complex issue. Some feel that their local clubs serve as better representatives of their notion of nationhood than the Spanish *selección*. Others feel that *fútbol* at the club level is of a higher caliber than that of national *selecciones* since national *selecciones* are forced to select players from within specific geographical and political boundaries. Another important factor in the Spanish

people's lack of interest in the *selección* lies in what the Spanish people consider their continual lack of success in international competitions. Since the Spanish Fury's 2nd place finish in the 1920 Olympics (their first international competition) the *selección* has been largely considered an underachiever. The *selección*'s lack of achievement and *La Liga*'s overwhelming success has left many supporters of the Spanish *selección* frustrated and perplexed. However, the definitions of success and failure are a matter of opinion. For example, through the year 2000, the Spanish *selección* had qualified for nine of the sixteen World Cup Final Tournaments and six of the eight European Championships – both impressive feats considering the strength of European *fútbol*. Their consistency in qualifying for these tournaments shows a very strong *fútboling* foundation, but with *La Liga* being recognized as a world powerhouse the Spanish people expect the *selección* to bring home awards from these competitions on a regular basis, which has not been the case. Spain's highest achievement in World Cup play is fourth place in 1950, and aside from this, they have only reached the quarterfinals twice: in 1986 and 1994. Spain did, however, win the European Championship in 1964, and in 1984 they reached the final match again but were defeated by France. Since Spain has the reputation of being a *fútboling* hotbed with a world renowned professional league, the *selección*'s inability to consistently achieve positive results in international competitions has led many to consider Spain an underachiever. This has resulted in the *selección* being overshadowed by the success of Spain's international club teams.

The conscious effort by both the Spanish *selección* and *La Liga Española* to add the dimension of *espectáculo* to the Spanish style of play demonstrates a desire to draw

fans and make the *fútbol* experience an entertaining event for spectators. This also has ties to the notion of “*panem et circenses*” and could be considered a reflection of certain archetypal aspects of Spanish culture, such as the arts of flamenco dancing and bull fighting. This concern with the crowds’ enjoyment might represent to an extent, a lack of concern with the final result. Jorge Valdano, who played at *Real Madrid* with *La Quinta del Buitre* and who many refer to as “*el filósofo del fútbol*” for the philosophical approach through which he analyzes the sport, addresses this on-going dispute in his book, *Aputnes del balón* by writing:

¿Si prefiero jugar bien o ganar? No se puede elegir entre cosas de distinta naturaleza. Querido lector, si multiplicamos cinco manzanas por tres ositos el resultado es nada. ¿De acuerdo? Pues yo quiero todo: las manzanas y los ositos (15).

Many *fútbol* enthusiasts have tried to find the answer to why the Spanish *selección* seems to be plagued by “lack of success” in the European Championship and the World Cup. Many consider the country’s lack of solidarity to be directly related to the team’s lack of unity, chemistry and identity. Others believe that players on the *selección* are more concerned with the success of their club than they are with the success of the *selección*. Some claim the Spanish *selección* has been jinxed, along with Spain, since the Disaster of 1898 and the collapse of the Spanish Empire. Whether any of these issues play a roll in their lack of success, one thing is certain, as Ariel Burano (the professional *fútbol* playing protagonist in David Trueba’s recent novel, *Saber perder*) points out, “*cuando pierde sobran excusas*” (112). On the other hand, winning resolves a lot of

problems. In Spain, however, a country very concerned with *fútbol* and very critical of failure, it would be nearly impossible to please the masses. *Fútbol* at the international level is extremely competitive and consistent championships are unlikely. The “magic” of *fútbol* lies in the fact that there is no scientific equation to guarantee success. In Trueba’s *Saber perder*, Ariel’s mentor, Dragón reminds him of this by saying, “*el fútbol es para humildes, porque es el único oficio en el que puedes hacer todo mal en un partido y ganarlo y puedes hacer todo bien y perderlo*” (71). Intangibles such as these are what make both *fútbol* and life beautiful and interesting. Some claim they would rather be lucky than good. Others believe an individual creates his own luck. Whatever the case, luck plays a factor in both life and *fútbol*. If during the transition Spain had been “lucky” and won the World Cup, would the skepticism and Spain’s polemic theories of identity within the *selección* (and the country) still exist? Would Spain’s chronic *fatalismo* have ended there? Would the nation have begun to come together as one? Would it have led to even more success in international competitions and molded Spain into a *fútbol* powerhouse and further develop the country’s solidarity?⁹ Jorge Valdano addresses the question of the sport’s complexities in *Apuntes del balón* by stating:

⁹ I often ponder as to what extent the world of *fútbol* and the world itself would be different if the referee in the 1986 World Cup quarterfinal had witnessed Diego Maradona’s intentional handball against England. – Red Card. No “goal of the century” later in the match. No World Cup trophy. Not a living god, but a low down dirty underhanded cheater, a waste of talent and a failure that is to blame for ruining Argentina’s chances at the World Cup. England, on the other hand, might have advanced and turned out to be the champions. The change of events would have been enormous. In the end, Maradona was in the wrong, it was illegal, and intentional, and in doing it he disregarded the primary rule of *fútbol*. Maradona’s teammate, Jorge Valdano has said that those who cheat do so because they are not good enough to win by competing within the rules of the game. If Maradona had been caught and punished, he might be somewhere now speculating how his life might have turned out if he hadn’t been caught. – Like many others, he might speculate that he could have scored the “goal of the century” later that very game, become a World Cup Champion, and subsequently a living god. In the end, this is one of life’s (and *fútbol*’s) most interesting phenomena. The defining moments that sneak up on us through which our dreams can be either realized or lost. These moments can catapult us into greatness or lead us to our demise. We can recognize

Ustedes dirán que en el fútbol actual la paciencia es imposible. Mentira. Antes y ahora el fútbol solo vence al tiempo desde la organización y el estilo. Que hay que ganar, claro: ¡qué novedad! El error es que en la búsqueda desesperada del triunfo nos alejamos de las cosas simples y vamos dejando del triunfo nos alejamos de las cosas simples y vamos dejando jirones de credibilidad. Los dioses del fútbol, mientras tanto, se mueren de risa porque saben que no hay nada más sencillo que este juego
(16).

A simple twist of fate for Spain could surely change all the elements considered to be Spain's Achilles' heel, to be deemed as the keys to her success. Focusing on the negative (in anything) brings negative attitudes, outlooks, and results. In *Saber perder*, Ariel's mentor, Dragón, reminds him of this by referring to an old Chinese proverb that says, "*Cuando las cosas te van mal tu bastón se convertirá en serpiente y te picará*" (Trueba, 123). Spain's problem lies in the fact that many Spaniards consider anything short of a Championship to be a failure. *Fútbol* (like life) is a funny game; those most deserving do not always prevail. There are an infinite number of factors that play a very important role in the outcome of any given match that are completely out of the control of

the consequences (or the multitude of possible consequences) of the opposite outcome, but we can never return to relive that defining moment. Manú Chao has a song about Maradona that expresses this idea titled, *La vida es una tómbola*. The case of Maradona is unique in that it was the referee's negligence that decided his fate. Although, I feel that character will override and endure anything gained or lost from these defining moments, although these defining moments can either make or break our character if we allow them to. Maradona's character was on display when he resorted to cheating to win and it has revealed itself in other ways since. These phenomena are not unique, however, to Maradona, but they exist in all walks of life. The Spanish *selección* has simply been waiting for some of these defining moments to come their way and for the "ball to bounce" their way, until then their character will lie dormant for people to question. When things begin to go their way Spain will be considered geniuses of the game (look to the case of Italy). The sad fact is that supporters of a team would often rather an underhanded victory than no victory at all.

the players and coaches (even when the contest is played fairly and not plagued with corruption). If these outside factors did not exist, there would be little need to play the game because the outcome would be more predictable. The only way for Spain to eliminate this “curse” is if the *selección* can achieve an acceptable result (first place) in either the FIFA World Cup or the European Cup Championship and then begin building a reputation as winners rather than underachievers. With this in mind we are left to ask a variety of questions concerning the Spanish *selección*’s future, such as – Would a World Cup or a European Cup championship provide some closure to Spain’s inferiority complex? Would a victory on the *fútbol* field help speed the process of Spain seeing itself as a single unified nation, or are Spain’s disputes too deeply rooted? Whatever the future holds for Spain, it is clear that a country’s achievements, or lack thereof, in international *fútboling* competitions plays an enormous role in that country’s collective self-perception. The negative side of this phenomenon is very clearly evident through the case of Spain.

2.6: “A New Day Dawns”: Spanish *Fútbol* Moves into the 21st Century

The arrival of the 21st century marked the modern world’s entrance into the “Age of Communication” which produced a number of changes to the face of Spanish *fútbol*. Affiliates of *La Liga Española* saw the opportunity to use the sport’s ever-growing international popularity to launch “*La Liga de las Estrellas*” into the world market. This was made possible by relying on the Spanish league’s reputation for producing “*fútbol espectacular*”, securing even more of the world’s most famous players and marketing the heated club rivalries within Spain to the international audience. Today, *La Liga Española* is one of the most lucrative and prestigious professional *fútbol* leagues in the world. This prestige and marketability attracts many of the world’s greatest players. *La Liga*’s craving for superstars is almost as pressing as many of the superstars’ craving to play in *La Liga* – it seems that for a player to be considered one of the world’s greatest, he needs to have spent time in “*La Liga de las Estrellas*”. Much of the league’s marketability and international appeal relies on its success in obtaining these international superstars. Their ability to “sell” in the international market not only attracts viewers and fans to *La Liga*, it raises a worldwide awareness of Spain and its historical and present day social and political issues. The connection between certain *fútbol* clubs throughout Spain and their historical and political affiliations, whether real or symbolic, still exist today. These historic political/*fútbol* rivalries now play a very important role in many of these clubs’ marketing campaigns, both throughout Spain and internationally.

After being selected by FIFA as the “Most Successful Club of the 20th Century”, *Real Madrid* continued to prove itself in the 21st Century as an international juggernaut both on the field and in the marketplace. The new century saw *Real Madrid* win *La Liga* in 2001, 2003, 2007 and 2008, as well as the UEFA Champion’s League in both 2000 and 2002. In 2000, under the presidency of Florentino Pérez, *Real Madrid* made efforts to become the world’s richest professional *fútbol* club and began by selling part of its training ground (to eliminate the club’s debt) and pave the way for what came to be known as the “*Era Galáctica del Real Madrid*”. In this era, Pérez managed to sign a new international superstar to the club for the next four consecutive years. He began by obtaining Portugal’s Luis Figo in 2000, then France’s Zenadine Zidane in 2001, Brazil’s Ronaldo in 2002, and England’s David Beckham in 2003. When these newcomers combined with the club’s veteran “galactics”: Raul and Casillas; both from Spain, as well as Brazil’s Roberto Carlos, *Real Madrid* became an international marketing phenomenon. The club went on to sign England’s Michael Owen in 2004 and Holland’s Ruud van Nistelrooy in 2006. The approach of recruiting international superstars was intended not only to lead *Real Madrid* to greatness on the field, but the worldwide popularity of these superstars helped the club grab an enormous portion of the international *fútbol* market. The downfall of the *Era Galáctica del Real Mardid* was that while the conglomerate of international superstars ruled the *fútbol* market, the team’s chemistry suffered and the *Galácticos* lost a number matches that, on paper, were “sure things”. The difficulty to gel as a team could have been due to the variety of different cultural backgrounds represented on the field at any given time, ego problems, differences in style of play, or simply bad

luck. Whatever the case, the final result was often not equivalent to the value of all of the team's parts.

In 2005, *Real Madrid* followed in the footsteps of its archrival, *FC Barcelona*, to further its international marketing campaign and launched its own television channel. *Real Madrid TV* now broadcasts twenty-four hours a day and is accessible through both satellite and digital mediums. The station provides its subscribers with coverage of *Real Madrid's fútbol* matches, news reports, interviews, game summaries, analysis and debates. *Real Madrid TV* serves to market the club in Spain and internationally as a household name brand.

The first Spanish television channel that was owned by and dedicated to the endeavors of a *fútbol* club was *FC Barcelona's*, "*Canal Barça*". The groundbreaking *fútbol* channel was launched in 1999, and *FC Barcelona* again put the Catalan progressive and modernist vision on display for the rest of Spain and the world to follow. The channel, now called *Barça TV*, airs twelve hours a day, is broadcast through *Televisión Digital Terrestre* in Catalonia and can be subscribed to through satellite transmission or accessed on-line for those not living in Catalonia. *Barça TV* airs in the Catalan language but subscribers of the channel have the option to select a simulcast translation in Castilian Spanish. *Barça TV Online* was launched in 2007 and is offered in Catalan, Castilian Spanish and English.

In 2006, *FC Barcelona* took its motto of being "*més que un club*" beyond the region/nation of Catalonia and Spain to the global market. Realizing *fútbol* as a global phenomenon, *Barça* has recognized its opportunity to seize an international fan base,

which it has achieved, and now markets itself as “more than a club around the world”. In 2006, *Barça* demonstrated itself as a philanthropic institution and pledged to contribute 0.7 per cent of its income to the FC Barcelona Foundation. The foundation set up international cooperation programs for development and support of the UN Millennium Development Goals and donated 1,500,000 Euro’s over five years to Unicef’s humanitarian aid programs. Until joining with UNICEF, *Barça* had been one of the few European *fútbol* clubs that continually refused to wear a sponsorship logo on the front of their jerseys. Sponsors offer clubs the size of *FC Barcelona* multimillion dollar/euro contracts to wear their logo in this space, but the *Barça* administration always felt that this sort of business deal did not fit the institution’s ideals. In 2006, for the first time in club history, *Barça* agreed to put a label in this space of their jersey, but instead of receiving money, *Barça* donated to the foundation’s humanitarian aid program. This was a strategic decision that fit the parameters of the club’s historical and modern vision. It is an effort to give back to the club’s fans, promote a good cause and raise awareness while at the same time gain support around the globe for taking a humanitarian approach to their “sponsorship”. *FC Barcelona*’s alliance with UNICEF demonstrates the club as an international business that recognizes its potential of globalizing as an institution that is supported worldwide.

However, the turn of the century saw *FC Barcelona* suffer a number of setbacks when compared with the club’s success of the late 1990’s. In the 1996-1997 season, *FC Barcelona* won Spain’s *Copa del Rey*, the *Supercopa de España* and the UEFA Cup Winners Cup under the direction of the newly appointed manager Bobby Robson. He was

appointed after Johan Cruyff had been ousted for failing to accumulate any trophies for two seasons and losing 4-0 to AC Milan in the UEFA Champion's League final. Despite Robson's success, he was always considered a short-term solution to the problem. After one year *Barça* replaced Robson with the Dutchman, Luis van Gaal, who had been extremely successful as manager of Holland's *Ajax*. With van Gaal, a new group of heroes emerged for the club: Portugal's Luis Figo, Spain's Luis Enrique, Holland's Patrick Kluivert and Brazil's Rivaldo. This unit won both *La Liga Española* and the *Copa del Rey*. In 1999, the club celebrated its 100th year of existence by winning their 16th league championship and seeing their striker Rivaldo become the club's fourth player ever to be crowned European *Fútbol*er of the Year. Despite *Barça*'s success within Spain, they were unable to match the international success of *Real Madrid*. *FC Barcelona*'s inability to win the UEFA Champion's League led both van Gaal and *Barça*'s president, Josep Luís Núñez, to resign in 2000. But when *Barça*'s Portuguese vice-captain, Luis Figo, (who had come to be considered by many Catalans as one of their own) left the club and joined their archrivals, *Real Madrid*, it was as if he had personally poured salt in the wounds of millions of *Barça* fans. It is no surprise that Figo was greeted with extra hostility at his subsequent visits to compete at *Camp Nou* as a member of *Real Madrid*. While *Real Madrid* began forming its "Era Galáctica" from 2000 to 2004, *FC Barcelona* suffered and went through a period of decline.

In 2003, *FC Barcelona* started its comeback by naming the young and vibrant Joan Laporta as the club's new president and ex-Dutch international and *AC Milan* superstar, Frank Rijkaard as the club's new manager. With Laporta and Rijkaard at the

helm, *Barça* recruited a number of international stars such as Brazil's Ronaldinho and Deco, Argentina's Lionel Messi, Sweden's Henrik Larsson, France's Ludovic Guily, Cameroon's Samuel Eto'o and Mexico's Rafael Márquez. They combined with the club's Catalan and Spanish superstars Carles Puyol, Xavi Hernández, Victor Valdés and Andrés Iniesta to lead the club back to the road of success. *Barça* won *La Liga* and the *Supercopa de España* in both 2005 and 2006. In 2005, Ronaldinho was voted as the FIFA World Player of the Year and his Cameroonian teammate, Samuel Eto'o, was third in the voting. Rijkaard also became the first *FC Barcelona* manager ever to defeat *Real Madrid* in the Santiago Bernabéu more than once. The second defeat was a decisive 3-0 victory that came in November of 2005. In 2006, *Barça* achieved the international success it had been looking for and won the UEFA Champions League for the first time in fourteen years.

Despite being one of the most favored clubs in the world heading into the 2006-2007 season, *FC Barcelona* saw themselves fall short in almost every category. Although they started strong in *La Liga Española*, they were eventually overtaken by *Real Madrid* for the championship. *Barça* reached the semi-finals of the *Copa del Rey* but were ousted by *Getafe CF*. *Barça* was defeated in the final of the 2006 FIFA Club World Cup by a late goal from the Brazilian club *SC Internacional* and in the UEFA Champions League the club was knocked out of the round of sixteen by England's *Liverpool FC*; the eventual runner-up. In 2007-2008 *FC Barcelona* finished third in *La Liga Española* and reached the semi-finals of the *Copa del Rey* as well as the semi-finals of the UEFA Champions League. After being defeated 4-1 by *Real Madrid*, Joan Laporta announced

that Rijkaard would be replaced as the club's manager by the ex-*Barça* captain and member of Cruyff's "Dream Team" – Josep Guardiola.

At the turn of the century, *La Liga Española* saw the arrival of new challengers for the "The Big Two" (*Real Madrid* and *FC Barcelona*). While *Athlético de Bilbao*, historically one of the most important and successful clubs in *La Liga Española*, continues to suffer in the 21st Century (when compared with their past), new Spanish clubs have emerged to compete for the title of *La Liga* such as *Deportivo de la Coruña*, *Villarreal CF*, *Real Sociedad*, *Sevilla FC* and *Valencia CF* (who won *La Liga* in 2002 and 2004 and finished second in the UEFA Champions league in both 2000 and 2001).

Surprisingly, neither *Real Madrid* nor *FC Barcelona* has won the *Copa del Rey* in the new millennium. *RCD Espanyol* won the Kings Cup in 2000, *Real Zaragoza* won it in 2001, *Deportivo de La Coruña* in 2002, *RCD Mallorca* in 2003, *Real Zaragoza* again in 2004, *Real Betis* in 2005, *RCD Español* again in 2006, *Sevilla FC* in 2007, and *Valencia CF* in 2008. The 2009 *Copa del Rey* will be played between *FC Barcelona* and *Athlético Bilbao* who is making an effort to compete in "*La Liga de las Estrellas*". *La Liga Española* is currently ranked second in the UEFA rankings of European Leagues, ahead of Italy's *Serie A* and behind the English Premier League.

Despite *Athlético Bilbao*'s difficulty succeeding within "*La Liga de las Estrellas*", the club, which is one of *La Liga Española*'s founding members, continues to be a pioneer when it comes to breaking new social ground through the sport. Although *Athlético Bilbao*'s men's team has struggled, their women's team has dominated play in the newly formed *Superliga Femenina*. *Fútbol Femenino* has been growing in numbers

and popularity in Spain since it was founded in 1983. The *Superliga*, which was founded in 2001 contains sixteen teams, most of which are affiliated with already existing men's clubs. The *Superliga Femenina* is run by the *Real Federación Española de Fútbol* and like the men's league, the bottom two teams are relegated to the lower division after each season. In the case of the women's league, the second level of competition is the *Primera Nacional de Fútbol Femenino*, which is the equivalent to the men's *Liga BBVA* and consists of six groups of fourteen teams for a total of eighty-four teams. Since the formation of the *Superliga* in 2001, *Athletic Club Emakumeen Fútbol Taldea* (commonly known as *Athletic de Bilbao*) has won the title four times, in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2007 and very much like their masculine ancestors, the dominant club during the league's formative years. Although *Athletic Club* dominates in league play, *Levante Unión Deportivo Femenino*, from Valencia, possesses the majority of *Copas de la Reina* (the equivalent to the *Copa del Rey*) with six, all coming since the turn of the century, in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005 and 2007.

The Spanish woman's *selección* of *fútbol* debuted in 1983 and has suffered much of the same lack of success that the men's *selección* has struggled with over the years. This might be due to the fact that Spain is somewhat new to the sport of *fútbol femenino* when compared to northern European countries, North American countries and other stereotypical leaders of modernity. Spain's *selección femenina* is still yet to qualify for the Women's World Cup, and their highest finish in an international competition was to reach the semifinals of the *Eurocopa Femenina* in 1997. Although, they have struggled with the competitiveness of northern European countries, they are, however coming of

age. Interestingly, the Spanish *selección femenina de fútbol* proudly looks to their masculine equivalent's historical image for inspiration and have adopted the nickname – “*La furia*”.

Spanish women's interest in the sport of *fútbol* both as participants and spectators has grown exponentially over the past twenty-five years. There are now over 1,800 female players in the top two divisions of Spanish *fútbol femenino* alone. If in the next hundred years the women's league grows to even a fraction of what the men's league has become, there will be an even more stable place for women in the arena of *fútbol*. The sport of *fútbol* is a beautiful game that is capable of inspiring passion in all of us, male and female alike.

Since the year 2000, the men's *selección* has competed in three European Cup tournaments and two World Cup Final tournaments. In the *Eurocopa* of 2000, Spain started strong by winning their group, which was comprised of Norway, Slovenia and Yugoslavia, but fell short when they met France, their long time rivals, in the quarterfinals, losing by a score of 2-1. The *selección* perpetuated its reputation as underachievers when Raúl missed a penalty kick late in the game that could have led them into overtime.

The Spanish *selección* more than overcame its negative stereotype in the 2002 World Cup in Korea/Japan qualifying for the tournament with ease. Spain looked very strong in Group Play by winning their group with three victories, defeating both Slovenia and Paraguay 3-1 and South Africa 3-2. In the second round, Spain met Ireland, and after giving up a goal late in the match they found themselves in a penalty shootout. The *Real*

Madrid galactic goalkeeper, Iker Casillas, saved three penalties and sent Spain into the quarterfinals against the host country, South Korea. Spain and South Korea were tied 0-0 after regulation time, and in the penalty shootout South Korea defeated Spain. This caused many Spaniards to recount the various “refereeing favors” that South Korea received throughout the tournament. Some claim that South Korea benefited from a number of home field advantages, which again perpetuated Spain’s reputation of inevitable victims.

In the *Eurocopa* of 2004, Spain found themselves in a group with the host country, Portugal, along with Greece, and Russia. Determined to overcome their curse of bad luck, Spain came out strong and defeated Russia 1-0, but then had a disappointing 1-1 tie with Greece. This put Spain’s back against the wall, needing a win over their neighboring country, historic rivals and the host country, Portugal, to advance to the next round. In the end Spain lost to Portugal 0-1, which again brought up the claim that Spain suffered the disadvantages associated with having to play the host team. Greece, the team Spain tied in their second game, went on to win the *Eurocopa*. This elevated Spanish frustration for the *seleccion*’s lack of ability to overcome narrow circumstances and bad luck. Many wondered if Spain would ever break this streak of bad luck, or if they were destined to always be unfortunate victims.

In the 2006 World Cup in Germany, Spain found themselves the favorites of their group, which consisted of the Ukraine, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia. In Group, Play Spain lived up to this consensus and defeated the Ukraine 4-0, Tunisia 3-1 and Saudi Arabia 1-0. In the Second Round, the Spanish *selección* was faced with the defending World Cup

Champions, neighboring country and historical rival, France. France, captained by *Real Madrid's* galactic, Zinedine Zidane, defeated Spain 3-1. Although the score would imply Spain was handily defeated, they played well and were strong through most of the match giving up their last two goals late in the game. France went on to reach the World Cup's final match but was defeated by Italy in a penalty shootout. This again caused Spain to feel they were dealt an unfortunate hand since they faced the eventual finalist in the Round of Sixteen, as well as for the fact that they competed well against France before eventually being overtaken. Although Spain still felt they were the victims of unfortunate losses, they had the confidence that they were competing on the level and that if they kept on this path their bad luck was bound to change at some point.

In the *Eurocopa* of 2008 in Austria and Switzerland, Spain found themselves paired with two members of their group from the *Eurocopa* of 2004, Russia and Greece, the latter having been the defending European Cup Champion. The fourth team in the group was Sweden. Spain again came out strong and handily beat Russia 4-1, then took Sweden 2-1, before defeating Greece 2-1 to advance as the winners of the group. In the quarterfinals Spain again found themselves against an international powerhouse and the 2006 World Cup Champions, Italy. Italy played their stereotypical defensive minded game, but Spain was very conscious not to give anything up on a counter attack. The game ended in a 0-0 tie, and in the penalty shootout Spain's superstar goalkeeper, Iker Casillas, again came up big and saved two penalty kicks. Spain advanced over Italy 4-2 in the penalty shootout. In the semi-final match Spain met Russia again, who turned out to be very strong throughout the tournament since the first game when the two teams met.

Nevertheless, the Spanish style was too much for Russia, and Spain outscored them 3-0 to advance to the final match for the first time since 1984. Spain won the 2008 *Eurocopa* over Germany 1-0. Many saw this success as evidence that Spain had finally overcome what seemed to be a never-ending curse. This success could help unify the country and help establish it as a cultural powerhouse of the 21st Century. Julián Ramos best described this in his article titled “*Unión, pasión, afición, España campeón*” which he wrote after Spain’s 2008 *Eurocopa* championship:

Hoy España es un país diferente, una nación unida, sin divergencias. Las líneas fronterizas entre comunidades autónomas se difuminan y forman un todo uniforme, con un color homogéneo. Los diversos dialectos se transforman en un idioma único, el lenguaje del sueño común (Ramos).



Figure 14. Spain – Champions of the 2008 *Eurocopa*

It is clear that since its introduction to Spain, the sport of *fútbol* has served not only as a vehicle to express certain national and cultural ideologies within Spain, it has also served to mirror Spain’s cultural, political, and social preoccupations. These preoccupations have played such a vital role in the history and make-up of Spain that it

seems impossible to imagine Spain without this enigmatic identity crisis. Only time will tell if Spain comes to see itself as one country, with a single (although complex) national identity. However, until some other cultural phenomenon comes along that is of greater relevance, the sport of *fútbol* will surely play an essential role in the identity of Spain.

Chapter 3: The Phenomenon of Spanish “Kick-Lit”

El fútbol es de las pocas certezas que existen dentro del relativismo que lo invade todo. Un juego que se nos fue poniendo serio como negocio, como fenómeno social, pero también como sentimiento en el que arraiga nuestra identidad. Un juego infinito que la literatura explora cada día con menos desconfianza y más atrevimiento.

–Jorge Valdano

It would be difficult to prove, but not outlandish to claim, that the sport of *fútbol* probably occupies more newspaper space on a daily basis across the planet than any other topic. This enormous amount of coverage is due to the sport’s extreme popularity around the globe. Few intellectuals have the confidence to confess to reading the newspaper as the famous Irish writer Samuel Beckett did. He claimed to always “make a quick pass of the world’s disasters before meticulously studying the table of goal scorers”. (in *Umbral*, 3) Needless to say, there is no lack of *fútbol* coverage in the press, or reception of the coverage, for that matter.

In recent years there has been a growing appreciation of and respect for literature where the central theme is the sport of *fútbol*. The topic of *fútbol* was viewed unfavorably until very recently – possibly with the arrival of the 21st Century. There have been countless numbers of literary works throughout history that have either referred to the

sport of *fútbol* or have directly used the sport as a point of departure. As to why the sport of *fútbol* was considered to have been a taboo subject for the field of literature is a difficult question to answer. Could it have been that many intellectuals considered *fútbol* an activity for the commoner and felt they needed to elevate themselves above participating with the masses? Was it because *fútbol*'s presence had been overly emphasized through the mass media? Possibly those intellectuals were only focusing on the negative aspects of the sport. Maybe they were simply unfamiliar with the realities and profundities of the game. Or was it simply because those intellectuals possessed a snobbish insecurity and feared what they were unfamiliar with? Jorge Valdano describes his frustration with regard to this topic as follows,

En este medio el cuerpo sigue siendo más importante que la mente. Esa misma absurda dualidad –físico/mente– fue la que distanció al intelectual del fútbol. A mí me duele entender que la pasión de la que vivo genere desconfianzas injustas. Culturalmente despreciado, políticamente utilizado y socialmente reducido a una expresión popular de menor cuantía, el fútbol sigue atrapando la emoción dominguera de aficionados de todo el mundo, convertido en un cautivante fenómeno de movilización masiva que debería ser merecedor de una atención más respetuosa (Miedo escénico, 252).

Whatever the case, more people have probably played the sport of *fútbol* than any other sport in the world. Ironically, many of the game's participants have become writers and intellectuals. In turn, many of them were, and are aware of the sports profundities

(both negative and positive) and therefore an incredible amount of intellectuals, writers, philosophers, poets, and playwrights have dedicated a considerable amount of work to the sport of *fútbol*.

Today the growing demand for literature about *fútbol* is a worldwide phenomenon. It is especially popular in the Latin world. There is an immense body of work that has been accumulating “underground” for years but that only recently is experiencing a breakthrough of mass recognition. The only thing this genre lacks is a proper name. Since this boom is most strongly felt in Spanish speaking countries, some have referred to it as, “*Literatura de la pelota*”, “*Literatura del balompié*” and “*Literatura del fútbol*”. I, however, refer to this growing literary phenomenon as “kick-lit”. I use the English word “kick” for three reasons. 1.) Because English is the planet’s *lingua franca* and as the genre grows it will be used for generations to come in all countries throughout the world. 2.) The sport of *fútbol* is already anglicized in its foundation 3.) Because it coincides with the present trend of labeling literary and cinematic genres, like “brit-lit”, “chick-lit” or “chick-flicks”, and like these other genre’s “kick-lit” also rhymes, is catchy and is also easy to pronounce for people around the world. Aside from all this, the body of work using the sport of *fútbol* as a point of departure is too large, the literary styles covered are too vast, and the genre’s popularity is growing far too rapidly for it not to have an immediately recognizable name.

Although we are presently experiencing a “kick-lit” craze, literature dealing with *fútbol* was not always accepted among literary critics or intellectuals. It took a considerable amount of time and persistence from its supporters for the genre to emerge.

Some of “kick-lit’s” most notable pioneers that defended its legitimacy and patiently spent years waiting for its recognition are: Uruguayan writers Eduardo Galeano and Mario Benedetti; Mexico’s Juan Villoro; Peru’s writer, Vargas Llosa; Colombia’s Gonzalo Medina Pérez, Spain’s Javier Marías, Julián García Candau, and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán; and Argentina’s Roberto Fontanaroso and Osvaldo Soriano. While there are many others deserving of mention on this list, there is one individual who stands out for playing the most important role in having “kick-lit” recognized throughout the world of literature. He is the modern day Renaissance man – Jorge Valdano. Among his many achievements, Valdano scored the second goal against Germany to help Argentina win the 1986 World Cup. He also won multiple UEFA and Spanish *Liga* championships as both a player and a coach of *Real Madrid*. He is now wisely using his celebrity and his poised intellect to promote the “kick-lit” genre to both the masses and the intellectual classes. Thanks to the persistence of these pioneers, promoters and defenders of “kick-lit”, the world of literature has gained another genre worthy of exploration. Jorge Valdano, who many consider to be the philosopher of *fútbol*, addresses this very issue in the prologue of *Cuentos de Fútbol 2* when he writes that he admires authors who were prepared to break the taboo. “*Pero lo proyectos sólo triunfan cuando duran y los prejuicios sólo se vencen insistiendo*” (12).

On June 4, 2006, an article titled, “*El libro da cancha al fútbol*” appeared in the Spanish newspaper *El País*. The article, written by Winston Manrique, was dedicated to the enormous presence of “kick-lit” at the 65^a *Feria del Libro de Madrid*. In the article, Manrique discusses the typical “kick-lit” arguments but shows that against the objection

of many intellectuals, the sport of *fútbol* has now established itself within the field of literature. He notes that even the sport's most outspoken philosophical opponents (i.e. Jorge Luis Borges) can't escape the power or the passion that the phenomenon of *fútbol* encompasses. Manrique pokes fun by claiming:

El Aleph ya está aquí. Es en lo que se ha convertido el Mundial de Fútbol. En centro del universo cada cuatro años, muy a pesar de Jorge Luis Borges, creador de ese relato sobre esa mítica esfera literaria-existencial que llamó Aleph, cuyo centro está en todas partes y que contiene todo el universo.

A recent study titled *La pasión según Valdano*, by the Argentinean journalist and “kick-lit” writer Ariel Sher, recognizes this growing genre and explores four of its key aspects in the chapter titled, “*Fútbol, intelectuales y literatura*”. First, the chapter explores the many ways intellectuals have rejected the sport of *fútbol* over the years citing Jorge Luis Borges’ ironic scorn of the sport as well as the aggression in José Sebrelli’s *La era del fútbol: a comparative study of fútbol and theatre*. The second aspect of Sher’s “*Fútbol, intelectuales y literatura*” covers how the sport has been considered by many as a social phenomenon that has been expressed in the work of a number of highly recognized authors throughout the world. The third aspect that Sher covers is how the “*fútbol* dream” is nourished through different forms of journalistic expression when accompanied by works of great quality such as those written by journalists Osvaldo Ardizzone, Borrocotó, Dante Panzeri and others that have appeared in the Argentine *fútbol* magazine *El Gráfico*. The fourth aspect deals with the belief that the sport of *fútbol*

serves as a metaphor of life. Sher contends that *fútbol* serves as a vantage point from which one can observe the social, enterprising, cultural and anthropological realities of the world. This idea is expressed in many works of “kick-lit” and appears in Martin Casariego’s story, *El fútbol y la vida* when a veteran on the club tells a youngster, “*Al final, o muy pronto, te darás cuenta de que el fútbol y la vida son la misma cosa*” (in *Cuentos de Fútbol* 2, 134).

The writers and consumers of the “kick-lit” genre hold one thing in common – a passion for two of the world’s most popular phenomena: literature and *fútbol*. Why these two extremely powerful cultural phenomena did not popularly intersect earlier is yet another phenomenon in and of itself. Jorge Valdano describes it as, “*El juego es, como la literatura, una recreación de la realidad. Si los dos universos tardaron en confluir debe de ser porque sus caminos fueron siempre paralelos*” (*Cuentos de Fútbol* 2, 12). The double-barreled passion of “kick-lit” enthusiasts can be experienced on a variety of levels, such as: reading or writing about playing the sport; watching the sport; experiencing success or failure through the sport; cheering for it; crying about it; hating it; being frustrated or embarrassed by it; or any other emotion that the sport provokes. On the other hand, “kick-lit” enthusiasts can tap into the genre to ignite their literary passions. Again, either through reading or writing, an individual can focus on the language, structure, tone, narration, characters, storyline, and any other literary aspects that are also capable of provoking a wide range of human emotions. “Kick-lit” enthusiasts can also approach the genre from an academic standpoint, and analyze it, write about it, and have conversations about it endlessly. The fountain for personal

satisfaction and pleasure that can be derived from “kick-lit” is endless – more so than most genres of literature. “*Dentro y fuera de la cancha, el fútbol es un juego infinito que nunca se logra abarcar ni desentrañar*” (Castañón Rodríguez “*La pasión del fútbol infinito.*”).

The phenomenon of “kick-lit” is very unique in that it perfectly fuses two of the world’s most dynamic cultural phenomena: literature and *fútbol*. Each phenomenon embraces the infinite aspects of life by itself. The painting in Figure 15 is titled “*Dinamismo de un jugador de fútbol*”. It was painted by the Italian futurist Umberto Boccioni in 1913 and currently is on display in New York’s Museum of Modern Art. The painting serves as a visual representation of the dynamic qualities of a *fútbol* player. Clearly, this dynamism becomes exponential when combined with 21 other players, coaches, media and a stadium full of fans that make up the *fútbol* arena.



Figure 15. *Dinamismo de un jugador de fútbol*

There is only one body of work, of which I am aware, that surpasses “kick-lit” in that it combines two cultural phenomenon of equal dynamism as those of *fútbol* and

literature and is as compatible as *fútbol* and literature. It is that of the love story. I feel the worldwide phenomenon of *fútbol* is second only to the age-old phenomenon of love. Many people's first love is *fútbol*. Many people's most profound dreams can only be achieved on the *fútbol* field. This idea is expressed in the following excerpt from Mario Benedetti's short story "*El césped*" when the protagonist Benja says, "*Nunca se lo he confesado a nadie, [...] pero a vos quiero contártelo. Tengo sueños, ¿sabes? Todos tenemos sueños, dijo Ale. Sí, pero los míos son sueños de fútbol*" (in Valdano *Cuentos de Fútbol*, 77). Surely this idea could be compared to the countless literary works that focus on art, dance, music, literature, and every other cultural phenomenon that people are passionate about. But the fact that these themes were never rejected by intellectuals as legitimate subject matter for literature, resulted in their never needing to be brought to the foreground as a group to have them recognized, as is the case with "kick-lit". There is also literature about every other sport that exists in the world, but because *fútbol* is the world's game and causes more craze than any other sport, it receives the majority of the attention and the brunt of the scorn of intellectuals who do not consider a sport so manically embraced by the masses as a valid topic for intellectual ground. The uniqueness of "kick-lit" lies in the simple fact that there are those who are passionate about *fútbol*, and those who are passionate about literature. When these two immensely dynamic phenomena merge, the possible avenues for exploration and reflection become boundless.

One of my favorite "kick-lit" poems encompasses the passion that I feel for both literature and *fútbol* and was written by the Argentinean international *fútbol*er turned

journalist and poet, Quique Wolff. Much to my envy, Wolff represented his country in the 1974 World Cup and later won two Spanish League Championships with *Real Madrid* in 1978 and 1979. This poem is inspirational for both *fútbol* and literature fans and taps into the main vein of the multifaceted passions that only “kick-lit” can provoke. Wolff describes the sport of *fútbol* as a metaphor for life, claiming that only through *fútbol* can an individual experience the purest form of all human emotions. In this sense, the *fútbol* arena could be considered the all-encompassing proverbial Petri dish of life – the place where one can go to experience all that life has to offer. This idea was also expressed in Luis Miguel Aguilar’s “*El gran toque*”, when the coach tells his players, “*El fútbol es como la vida. Lo que ocurra aquí les ocurrirá por siempre, allá afuera*” (Aguilar in Valdano *Cuentos de Fútbol* 2, 40). Quique Wolff encapsulates this notion into the form of a poem so that his ideas will be more powerfully expressed.

*¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es el amor?
Si nunca te hiciste hinchado de un club
¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es el dolor?
Si jamás un zaguero te rompió la tibia y el peroné
y estuviste en una barrera y la pelota te pegó justo ahí...*

*¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es el placer?
Si nunca diste una vuelta olímpica de visitante
¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es el cariño?
Si nunca la acariciaste de chanfle*

*entrándole con el revés del pie
para dejarla jadeando bajo la red*

¡¡Escúchame!!,

¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es la solidaridad?

Si jamás saliste a dar la cara

por un compañero golpeado desde atrás

¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es la poesía?

Si jamás tiraste una gambeta

¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es la humillación?

Si jamás te metieron un caño

¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es la amistad?

Si nunca devolviste una pared

¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es el pánico?

Si nunca te sorprendieron mal parado en un contragolpe

¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es morir un poco?

Si jamás fuiste a buscar la pelota dentro del arco

¡Decime viejo!

¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es la soledad?

*Si jamás te paraste bajo los tres palos,
a doce pasos de uno que te quería fusilar
y terminar con tus esperanzas*

*¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es el barro?
Si nunca te tiraste a los pies de nadie
Para mandar una pelota sobre un lateral*

*¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es el egoísmo?
Si nunca hiciste una de más
cuando tenías que dársela,
al nueve que estaba solo*

*¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es el arte?
Si nunca, pero nunca inventaste una rabona
¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es la música?
Si jamás cantaste desde la popular*

*¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es la injusticia?
Si nunca te saco tarjeta roja, un referí localista
Decime, ¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es el insomnio?
Si jamás te fuiste al descenso*

¿Cómo, cómo vas a saber lo que es el odio?

Si nunca hiciste un gol en contra

¿Cómo, pero cómo vas a saber lo que es llorar?

Si llorar, si jamás perdiste una final de un mundial

sobre la hora con un penal dudoso

¿Cómo vas a saber querido amigo?

¿Cómo vas a saber lo que es la vida?

Si nunca, jamás jugaste al fútbol.

–Quique Wolff (Yanover).

Wolff contends that in order to truly understand life, an individual needs to have played *fútbol* and experience all the human emotions that are so purely extracted through the sport. I, on the other hand, feel that through poetry's phenomenal ability to recreate life (similar to that of *fútbol*), one can simply swallow the pill that Wolff offers us in the form of a poem. Many *fútbol*ers that have experienced the feelings that Wolff relates, are probably unable to fully appreciate them or reflect upon them in the same light that Wolff offers, until of course, they read his poem that so perfectly describes these emotions that are experienced through *fútbol*. If an individual is unable to physically experience the world of *fútbol* he can simply enter the world of "kick-lit", that describes the world of *fútbol* so vividly, and have a nearly perfect substitute. This is just one example of the multifaceted and dynamic aspects that the phenomenon of "kick-lit" offers its readers.

While the primary focus of this study is on the phenomenon of “kick-lit” in Spain, it would be remiss not to at least make reference to some of Latin America’s “kick-lit” contributions. In the prologue of *De puntín*, a compilation of eleven short stories about *fútbol* with illustrations by Roberto Fontanarrosa, Jorge Valdano tackles the question of the relevance of “kick-lit” when he writes, “¿Cuántas cosas caben dentro del fútbol? El juego, el espectáculo, el negocio... ¿Cuántos juegos existen? El recreativo, el formativo, el profesional... ¿Qué produce el fútbol? Incertidumbre, pasiones, conversación... Un festín de letras” (Fontanarrosa *De puntín*, 9). On the back cover of the book is the following poem by Eduardo Galeano in which he addresses the reader directly and brings to the foreground “kick-lit’s” characteristics. The poem reminds the reader of the multitude of elements that merge in a work of “kick-lit” such as *De puntín*. In “kick-lit”, parallels about the games structure, technique and style are often made with literary technique, content, language, structure and the style of the book itself. Through this poem, Galeano also celebrates the books illustrations, and the enjoyment felt upon appreciating both the sport and literature when it is performed at a high level. Essentially, this is a “kick-lit” poem about “kick-lit” itself: the first of its kind, as far as I know.

Son once

*Juegan con palabras, en cancha de
papel, y los dibujos de Fontanarrosa
comenten el partido.*

*Cada cual se luce según su maña y
manera, pero los once forman,*

juntos, un lindo equipo.
Ojalá encuentren la hinchada que la
buena prosa, como el buen fútbol,
merece.

–Eduardo Galeano (in Fontanarrosa *De puntín*).

Two of Latin America's most well know individuals are Pelé and Diego Maradona. Both earned their fame through their success and the beauty with which they played the sport of *fútbol*. By dominating play and winning World Cup Championships, each has elevated his status to that of a mythological figure, in his respective country, in Latin America and throughout the world. Mario Vargas Llosa wrote the following regarding this phenomenon, "*Los pueblos necesitan héroes contemporáneos. [...] Es también el menos enajenante de los cultos, porque admirar a un futbolista es admirar algo muy parecido a la poesía pura o una pintura abstracta. Es admirar la forma por la forma, sin ningún contenido racionalmente identificable*" (in Manrique). In referring to the respect that even opposing players had for Pelé, "La perla negra", Eduardo Galeano wrote, "*cuando ejecutaba un tiro libre, los rivales que formaban la barrera querían ponerse al revés, de cara a la meta, por no perderse el golazo*" (in Manrique). This citation comes from Galeano's canonical "kick-lit" book, *El fútbol en sol y sombra*, which tackles a great variety of aspects from which the sport can be approached through literature. The famous Uruguayan writer, Mario Benedetti wrote the following poem dedicated to Diego Maradona after he lead Argentina to become the 1986 World Cup Champions. Through this poem, Benedetti expresses the notion that though Maradona's

beautiful style of play and subsequently becoming a World Cup Champion, “*El pibe de oro*” managed to transcend the natural world and become more than an idol, and more than a mythological figure, he became a living god.

Hoy Tu Tiempo Es Real

Hoy tu tiempo es real, nadie lo inventa

Y aunque otros olviden tus festejos

Las noches sin amos quedaron lejos

Y lejos el pesar que desalienta.

Tu edad de otras edades se alimenta

No importa lo que digan los espejos

Tus ojos todavía no están viejos

Y miran, sin mirar, más de la cuenta

Tu esperanza ya sabe su tamaño

Y por eso no habrá quien la destruya

Ya no te sentirás solo ni extraño.

Vida tuya tendrás y muerte tuya

Ha pasado otro año, y otro año

Les has ganado a tus sombras, aleluya.

–Mario Benedetti (Yanover).

In Spain, the first forms of “kick-lit” stem back to the Roman Empire: before Spain was Spain, and before *fútbol* was *fútbol*. Writings about *harpastum*; an ancestral form of *fútbol* that was played throughout the Roman Empire, first appeared in the writings of Lucio Anneo Séneca, the famous 1st Century philosopher from what later would become Córdoba. In *Los beneficios*, Séneca wrote the following excerpt explaining the cultural phenomenon that was taking place. It is easy to recognize the enjoyment that Séneca experienced while expressing this phenomenon through pen and paper. The reader easily feels his enthusiasm and awe of the activity.

Quiero servirme de una comparación que hace nuestro Crisipo sobre el juego de pelota: Si ésta cae no cabe duda de que es por culpa del que saca o de quien la devuelve, y que se mantiene en movimiento mientras el lanzada y recibida diestramente por cada jugador. Así también es necesario que el buen jugador la lance de manera distinta según que su contrario sea alto o bajo de estatura. La misma razón es válida en los beneficios si no se adaptan ambas personas, a quien los hace y a quien los recibe, no saldrán de manso de una y no llegaran a manos de la otra como debe ser. Si nos enfrentamos con un jugador ejercitado y diestro, sacaremos la pelota con más energía, pues, donde quiera que vaya, una mano ágil y dispuesta la devolverá; pero si jugamos como un novato ignorante, no la sacaremos con tanto ahínco y potencia sino más suavemente y con precisión a sus manos, y así podremos devolverla más fácilmente. Lo mismo se debe hacer en los beneficios; hay que enseñar a

algunos y mostrarnos satisfechos si se esfuerzan, si se atreven, si quieren
(in García Candau *Epica y lirica*, 38).

In the early 14th Century, when the phenomenon of Spanish literature first began to take shape, a game similar to that of *harpastum* was still being practiced. This activity's popularity was widespread and had become such a cultural phenomenon that it was recognized by a number of classical authors that deemed it as being culturally relevant enough to refer to it in their literary works. The medieval writer, Juan Ruiz, "*el Arcipreste de Hita*", made reference to this popular game in, *El libro de buen amor*. His reference to the sport is meant purely for the reader's amusement. He is trying to lure a woman back to his home on the pretense that should she accept the invitation, he will offer her the opportunity to play ball games and participate in other pastimes. Through his play-on-words it is obvious that he really has a sexual encounter in mind.

Verdad es que los placers conortan a las deveses:

Por ende, fua señora yd a mi casa a veses;

Jugaremos a la pella, e otros juegos rreheses,

Jugaremos, folgaremos, darvos he y de nuseses (Maldonado, 240).

During the Spanish Golden Age of Literature, a number of writers referred to the activities involving the Olympic Games in their works: Miguel de Cervantes in his *Los trabajos de Persiles y Segismundo*; Luis de Góngora in his *Las Soledades*; Agustín de Salazar in his *Los Juegos Olímpicos*. Others who alluded to sport in their works were Lope de Vega, Gaspar Gil Polo, Padre Mariana, Luis Pacheco and Tirso de Molina. Juan Ruiz de Alarcón also made reference to this popular activity (which was an early ancestor

of *fútbol*) in his 1628 play, *Las paredes oyen*. The following excerpt is a humorous discussion that two characters of the play have about their dislike for the game due to its physical difficulties.

BELTRÁN

*¡Que haya juicio
que del cansancio haga vicio,
y tras un hinchado cuero,
que el mundo llama pelota,
corra ansioso y afanado!
¿Cuánto mejor es, sentado,
buscar los pies a una sota
que moler piernas y brazos?
Si el cuero fuera de vino,
Aun no fuera desatino
Sacarle el alma a porrazos.
Pero, ¡perder el aliento
Con una y otra mudanza,
Y alcanzar, cuando se alcanza,
Un cuero lleno de viento;
Y cuando, una pierna rota,
Brama un pobre jugador,
Ver al compás del dolor*

Ir brincando la pelota!

DON JUAN

El brazo queda gustoso

Si bien la pelota dió.

BELTRÁN

Séneca la comparó

Al vano presuntüoso,

Y esa semejanza ha dado

Sin duda al juego sabor,

Porque no hay gusto mayor

Que apelar un hinchado.

Mas si miras el contento

De un jugador de pelota,

Y un cazador que alborota

Con halcón la cuerva al viento,

¿Por dicha tendrás la risa

Viendo que a presa tan corta

Que vencida nada importa,

Corre un hombre tan de prisa,

Que apenas tocan la yerba

Los caballos voladores?

¡Válgaos Dios por cazadores!

¿Qué os hizo esa pobre cuerva? (66).

Through this dialogue, it is clear that the famous Golden Age dramatist was not only familiar with the popular game, but that he had also played it and experienced its physical difficulties first hand. It was common for this activity to be represented negatively in classical Spanish literature, for it was a brutal, uncivilized game. But the simple fact that Alarcón chose to include this theme in his theatrical play, makes clear that the activity was popular enough among the masses that his audience would be able to identify with the character of Beltrán and therefore find the negative aspects of the game that he complains of to be humorous.

References to the sport of *fútbol* stem all the way back to Spanish literature's earliest phases. Although this form of *fútbol* had not yet evolved into what it is today, authors of the time still felt a need to express its role in the culture. As time passed, the sport was depicted in a negative light by many authors. During the European Renaissance and the Spanish Golden Age, European culture was focused on leaving the brutal past of medieval times behind and embracing more civilized activities. The sport of *fútbol* eventually civilized itself but this early reputation remained with the game, plaguing it for years to come. Although, there has been, and are now, a great number of Spanish writers that rejected this negative opinion and defended the sports legitimacy and their love for the game in their works. Many authors have come to not only refer to the sport of *fútbol* (as we know it today) in their works, but they have used the sport as a central theme. It is these works that I am most concerned with. Not particularly whether *fútbol* is represented in a positive or negative light, but whether or not one of the work's essential elements is

directly related to the sport of *fútbol*. In order for a literary work to fall into the “kick-lit” genre, it must meet this criterion. The next section of this chapter will be dedicated to analyzing a number of these texts that have appeared in both Spain and Latin America.

The first section of this chapter served two purposes: 1.) to proclaim “kick-lit’s” legitimacy as a genre and a present-day worldwide phenomenon 2.) to extract the root that helped establish a solid foundation for the genre in Spain and therefore legitimize it even further. With *El libro de buen amor*, *El Arcipreste de Hita* planted the seed for many literary genres and styles that would later take shape in Spanish literature. “Kick-lit” can now join that list. Although it is a genre that has been hindered throughout history by politics and intellectuals, it is finally coming of age.

3.1: “The Ball Begins to Roll”: The Early Years of Spain’s “Kick-Lit” Phenomenon

*Hasta la muerte de Franco muy pocos
intelectuales se atrevieron a afirmar
públicamente su predilección por el fútbol.
Hasta la muerte de Franco los intelectuales
de izquierda ocultaban su afición incluso a
sus correligionarios. El fútbol en aquellos
años era un deporte-espectáculo alienante.
Era el opio del pueblo. La vieja filosofía de
pan y toros había sido sustituida por el pan
y fútbol.*

–Julián García Candau

One example of “kick-lit” that was written during the Franco years came from the highly praised, conservative intellectual, José María Pemán. Pemán was one of the few well-known intellectuals to support Franco. Some of his duties and achievements include: being commissioned by Franco to rewrite the lyrics of Spain’s national anthem (that remained until Franco’s death); receiving a great number of literary awards and forming part of the *Real Academia Española*; serving as the personal advisor to the Count of Barcelona; being knighted to the Order of the Golden Fleece. The following poem is a good example of Pemán’s contribution to “kick-lit”.

*Dime, Poeta:
Si el mundo es como un balón
redondo por la ilusión
de llegar pronto a su meta:
¡Vale la pena jugar!*

*Silencio del altamar,
luna llena...
mar serena;
viejo amigo
en secreto te lo digo,
¡que lo que vale la pena
es ganar!*

–José María Pemán (in García Candau *Épica y lírica*, 174).

While Pemán’s poem serves as an example of “kick-lit” from the Franco era, two examples of early-contemporary Spanish “kick-lit” predate Franco’s arrival as dictator of Spain. They are poems by two of Spain’s most prominent writers from the era and are considered as key contributors to *La generación del ’27* – Miguel Hernández and Rafael Alberti. The works of Hernández and Alberti are canonic “kick-lit” texts because they gave “kick-lit” a presence during early-contemporary Spanish literature. Miguel Hernández broke the mold and became one of the first contemporary Spanish writers to be widely recognized for meshing the phenomenon of literature with the sport of *fútbol*. He wrote a eulogy in the form of a poem for a heroic goalkeeper named Lolo who was from the poet’s hometown of Orihuela, Alicante.

ELEGÍA-al guardameta

*A Lolo, sampedro joven en
la portería del cielo de Orihuela.*

*Tu grillo, por tus labios promotores,
de plata compostura,
árbitro, domador de jugadores,
director de bravura,
¿no silbará la muerte por ventura?*

*En el alpiste verde de sosiego,
de tiza galonado,
para siempre quedó fuera del juego
sampedro, el apostado
en su puerta de cáñamo añudado.*

*Goles para enredar en sí, derrotas,
¿no la mundial moscarda?
que zumba por la punta de las botas,
ante su red aguarda
la portería aún, araña parda.*

*Entre las trabas que tendió la meta
de una esquina a otra esquina
por su sexo el balón, a su bragueta
asomado, se arruina,*

su redondez airosamente orina.

*Delación de las faltas, mensajeras
de colores, plurales,
amparador del aire en vivos cueros,
en tu campo, imparciales
agitaron de córner las señales.*

*Ante tu puerta se formó un tumulto
de breves pantalones
donde bailan los príapos su bulto
sin otros eslabones
que los de sus esclavas relaciones.*

*Combinada la brisa en su envoltura
bien, y mejor chutada,
la esfera terrenal de su figura
¡cómo! fue interceptada
por lo pez y fugaz de tu estirada.*

*Te sorprendió el fotógrafo el momento
más bello de tu historia*

*deportiva, tumbándote en el viento
para evitar victoria,
y un ventalle de palmas te aireó gloria.*

*Y te quedaste en la fotografía,
a un metro del alpiste,
con tu vida mejor en vilo, en vía
ya de tu muerte triste,
sin coger el balón que ya cogiste.*

*Fue un plongeón mortal. Con ¡cuánto! tino
y efecto, tu cabeza
dio al poste. Como un sexo femenino,
abrió la ligereza
del golpe una granada de tristeza.*

*Aplaudieron tu fin por tu jugada.
Tu gorra, sin visera,
de tu manida testa fue lanzada,
como oreja tercera,
al área que a tus pasos fue frontera.*

*Te arrancaron, cogido por la punta,
el cabello del guante,
si inofensiva garra, ya difunta,
zarpa que a lo elegante
corroboraba tu actitud rampante.*

*¡Ay fiera!, en tu jaulón medio de lino,
se eliminó tu vida.
Nunca más, eficaz como un camino,
harás una salida
interrumpiendo el baile apolonida.*

*Inflamado en amor por los balones,
sin mano que lo imante,
no implicarás su viento a tus riñones,
como un seno ambulante
escapado a los senos de tu amante.*

*Ya no pones obstáculos de mano
al ímpetu, a la bota
en los que el gol avanza. Pide en vano,
tu equipo en la derrota,*

tus bien brincados saques de pelota.

*A los penaltys que tan bien parabas
acechando tu acierto,
nadie más que la red le pone trabas,
porque nadie ha cubierto
el sitio, vivo, que has dejado, muerto.*

*El marcador, al número al contrario,
le acumula en la frente
su sangre negra. Y ve el extraordinario,
el sampedro suplente,
vacío que dejó tu estilo ausente.*

–Miguel Hernández (316-18).

The sincerity and tenderness of Miguel Hernandez shines in this poem celebrating the life of one of his town's local *fútbol* heroes. As a poet, Miguel Hernández was able to identify, to a certain extent, with the goalkeeper. The prominent Spanish "kick-lit" contributor, Almudena Grandes, describes the position of the goalkeeper as the most literary and interesting, she says that the goalkeeper is, "*solo todo el tiempo. Piensa y sufre solo en el partido. Mientras los demás van de un lado a otro él debe esperar, y su reacción es crucial*" (Grandes in Manrique). This theory is legitimized because of all the players, the goalkeeper is the odd man out – he wears a different color shirt than his

teammates, and stands alone, isolated all by himself. The goalkeeper is also responsible for a different set of tasks than those of his teammates. The goaltender's role is essentially to defend the club's dignity. In this sense, the goalkeeper's role is similar to that of the idealized poet – to defend the dignity of humanity. According to this theory, Hernández's *Elegía a un guardameta* could be analyzed from the viewpoint that the role of the goalkeeper in the poem serves as a metaphor of the poet himself. Hernández's ability as a poet to identify with the goalkeeper might have inspired Rafael Alberti, a year later, to write a poem about *FC Barcelona's* goalkeeper Franz Platko. I previously covered Alberti's "*Oda a Platko*" in the Pre-Civil War section of this study to highlight *FC Barcelona's* combative spirit in the face of adversity. The poem also serves as a great example of the compatibility of *fútbol* and literature. Although, the "kick-lit" genre would largely be on hiatus during the Civil War, these two poets returned to a theme previously touched on by their medieval and golden age predecessors, and are largely credited for bringing "kick-lit" to the people of Spain during the 20th Century.

Interestingly, Spain's Miguel Delibes, Argentina's Che Guevara, and France's Albert Camus all spent time in their lives as goalkeepers. It is not surprising that their time "in the sticks" played an important role in the formation of their character. Camus wrote, "*Lo que más sé, a la larga, acerca de moral y de las obligaciones de los hombres, se lo debo al fútbol*" (in Galeano *Su majestad el fútbol*, 12-13). While the previous citation demonstrates that Camus was grateful for the role that *fútbol* played in molding him into an adult, the following quote demonstrates just how close to his heart he held the responsibility of defending his team's dignity. He wrote, "*Era por eso que quería tanto a*

mi equipo, no sólo por la alegría de la victoria cuando estaba combinada con la fatiga que sigue al esfuerzo, sino también por el estúpido deseo de llorar en las noches luego de cada derrota" (11-12). Both Delibes and Camus went on to become “kick-lit” contributors and defenders of the genre’s legitimacy.

One of Spain’s Nobel Prize winning authors, José Camilo Cela also spent a large part of his formative years on the *fútbol* field¹⁰. The role that *fútbol* played in Cela’s life was also reflected in the literature he produced as an adult. Cela is one of the most prominent Spanish authors to pursue “kick-lit” during Franco’s dictatorship with his *Once cuentos de fútbol* (1963). Cela’s *Once cuentos de fútbol* is comparable to the distinguished work of another Nobel Prize winning Spanish author: Juan Ramón Jiménez, who received the award in 1956. Jiménez’ distinguished work was *Platero y yo* (1917). I find Cela’s *Once cuentos de fútbol* to parallel Jimenez’s *Platero y yo* in that they were both presented under the guise of children’s stories but more careful review reveals that they were actually dealing with profound social issues. Years passed before the hidden meanings and symbolism in *Platero y yo* was discovered and I believe that Cela’s *Once cuentos de fútbol* may also one day have the same belated recognition. *Once cuentos de fútbol* has been overlooked for years simply because it appears to be a children’s story about *fútbol*. Not only does Cela’s work address the role of *fútbol* as a social phenomenon, through his eloquent use of the language and advanced writing styles, he also offers his readers a number of life lessons that can be connected to the sport of *fútbol* and reflected upon.

¹⁰ Cela was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1989. His distinguishing work was *La Colmena* (1951).

One particularly interesting aspect of Cela's *Once cuentos de fútbol* is the narrative technique that he uses. The approach Cela uses has a Quijote-*esque* verisimilar quality, and in his language he evokes a sarcastic, ironic and humoristic tone. A single narrator, that seems to be Cela, tells each of the eleven stories. His implied audience is a child that sporadically interrupts him to ask questions typical of those of a child listening to a story. The relationship is one of mutual respect. In the book's dedication, Cela alludes to whom this implied audience might be when he writes:

A mi colaborador don José Sáinz González, alias Pepe, que pintó las pinturas que ilustran este libro. En el 1962, fecha de los cuadros, don José Sáinz González, alias, Pepe, tenía ocho años, En el 1963, tiempo en que escriben estas páginas, uno anda ya por sus cuarenta y siete. Tampoco son tantos (13).

The relationship between Pepe and Cela throughout the stories adds to the book's verisimilar quality and creates a story within the stories making the text that much richer. This relationship also demonstrates that literature and *fútbol* serve to bridge what would otherwise be a wide generation gap. Each story is accompanied by a color illustration, drawn by Cela's young friend that he affectionately refers to as, *don José Sainz González, alias Pepe*.

Cela's humor emerges in a number of ways throughout the text, but one humoristic aspect that he seems to use frequently is found in the names he gives his characters. As is the case with "don José Sainz González, alias Pepe", almost every character throughout the text has not only an extremely long, often abnormal name,

(containing a mouthful of syllables that somehow manage to flow from the tongue, in an odd but enjoyable way) but also has either a nickname, a descriptive secondary title, or an alias – like Pepe. Cela continually refers to these characters using their full name – alias and secondary description included, well after all names have been clearly established. His avoidance of pronouns adds drama to the story and prestige to the character for a youngster, but it is blatantly comical to an adult. Some names that he repeats are: *don Teopempo Luarca Novillejo, alias Pichón*; and *don Leufrido de Escondidas y Oprí, conde de Casa Lahorra*. Other names include: *Exuperancio Exposito* who is a *fútbol* hero; and *Estanislao*, a *fútbol* playing golden ram.

In *Once cuentos de fútbol* Cela was one of the first “kick-lit” authors to structure his book to represent the sport of *fútbol*. The book consists of eleven parables to represent the number of players that a *fútbol* team puts on the field. The first story serves as the introduction to the book and is titled, “*El pie con la bola o parabola de la juventud de por vida*”. The book is then divided into four sections that he calls *mamotretos* (notebooks). Each *mamotreto* consists of three stories, with the exception of the fourth *mamotreto*, which only has two tales. He closes the book with a story titled, “*Colofón envuelto en “la hoja del lunes”*” in which he addresses the sport as a social phenomenon in Spain. The first *mamotretos* is titled *La lonja* and contains three parables: “*Aplicaciones de la teoría del librecambio*”, “*El tratillo*” and “*Fábula del carnero de oro*”. Each parable is in some way related to the economic market and is connected to the sport of *fútbol* in a fantastical way. For example, “*El tratillo*” tells the story of Teopespo Luarca Novillejo, who is an agent dedicated to making his living by embalming *fútbol*

players and selling them on the black market. The other three *mamotretos* deal with various subjects and each story is as fantastical as that of “*El tratillo*”. Many other “kick-lit” authors have also designed the structure of their books to resemble the structure of the sport of *fútbol*. One example is the aforementioned *De puntín*, which is also a compilation of eleven stories about *fútbol*.

Through *Once cuentos de fútbol* it is clear that Cela considers the sport of *fútbol* to be a source of enjoyment: that in its purist form it is a place where an individual can find innocence and revert to that innocence as an active participant – no matter what their age. Cela’s introductory story, “*El pie con bola o parábola de la juventud de por vida*”, defends this very idea. Cela opens his story with a quote from Pablo Picasso in which the painter proclaimed, “*Cuando se es joven de verdad, se es joven para toda la vida*”(17). Cela tells the story of a girl named Gildarada, who lived as if she were a widow from the day she was born. He describes her by saying, “*Gildarda nació viuda, lleva ya tres años de viudez [...] a lo mejor un día se descubre que el calendario no sirve para medir la edad*” (17). Cela then interjects himself into the story when telling of the hypothetical event where Gildarada searches for her childhood friend that (unlike her) never seemed to grow old. Cela says that Gildarada could find him at the unappealing deserted field where people gather to play *fútbol*. She finds him in the same condition as when he was a child, still full of life and passion shouting, “*¡Chútale, Camilo, que vamos empatados a dieciocho!*” (18).

Like a number of other Spanish “kick-lit” authors, Cela uses the sport of bullfighting (a cultural aspect that is deeply rooted in Spain) as a metaphor to explain

Spain's approach toward *fútbol*. In “*Fábula del carnero de oro*”, Cela (the narrator) tells, Pepe, (the implied reader),

Lo que en los toros se llama casta, en los futbolistas es clase. Hay toros con casta, mucha casta, y futbolista con clase, mucha clase. Otros, en cambio, son ganado morucho, carne de matadero, reses de saldo y liquidación por fin de temporada. La casta, en los toros, no es bravura o, al menos, no es sólo la bravura. Con la clase de los futbolistas pasa igual. Hay futbolistas mansurrones y con mucha clase que suplen el arrojito con ciencia (Igual que madame Curie). Estanislao [el protagonista – futbolista/carnero de oro], es muy completo. Estanislao, además de clase, tiene valor personal y sacude estopa con entusiasmo y sin discriminar. Estanislao es lo que se llama un deportista completo: duro, incansable, peleón, oportuno y que además discurre (34).

The moral of “*Fabula del carnero de oro*” conveys to Pepe that intuition, obedience, order and pride are keys to success in both *fútbol* and life. Through this story, Cela, like many other “kick-lit” authors, recognizes and defends the sport of *fútbol* as a metaphor for life, claiming that both the positive and negative qualities in one can be found in the other.

In the final story of Cela's *Once cuentos de fútbol*, he addresses another popular “kick-lit” topic – that of the sport being a social phenomenon in Spain. Cela describes this phenomenon by telling Pepe:

Varios cientos de miles de españoles, a lo mejor varios millares de miles,

aplican sus energías de los lunes, los martes y los miércoles a glosar los lances del partido de fútbol que ya pasó, y sus arrestos de los jueves, los viernes y los sábados a predecir los aconteceres del partido de que está al caer. Los domingos, descansan y van al fútbol: a sufrir o a solazarse, honestamente, viendo sufrir a los demás (81).

Cela contributed more than just *Once cuentos de fútbol* to the “kick-lit” genre. He also wrote a poem called “*Viaje a USA*” in which he uses one of his favorite clubs, *Celta de Vigo* to convey that patriotism builds when traveling abroad. Cela has a number of other short “kick-lit” stories, such as “*Viaje al otro mundo*” (1949), which tells the story of the journey two Basque men have when traveling to Madrid on a donkey to attend the Cup final between *Athlétic de Bilbao* and *Valencia*. Another approach to the “kick-lit” genre by Cela was written in 1991 and titled “*Maradona*”. This “kick-lit” offering chronicles the events leading to the descent from greatness of the Argentinean super-star, Diego Armando Maradona. However, *Once cuentos de fútbol* is clearly special in that it combines the key elements that make up a work of Spanish “kick-lit”. First, as a work of literature Cela makes a connection between *Once cuentos de fútbol* and the work of other famous Spanish writers – Cervantes, Juan Ramón Jiménez and even Valle-Inclán. When referring to the book, Julián García Candau states that Cela’s *Once Cuentos de fútbol* at times “*tiene una una mirada irónica y a veces esperpéntica*” (García Candau *Épica y lírica*, 309). Second, he makes comparisons between the sport of *fútbol* and an aspect of culture that is deeply rooted in Spain – bullfighting. Third, he shows the sport of *fútbol* in Spain as a social phenomenon. Fourth, he shows how the sport is used as an escape

mechanism, which in turn reinforces the popular Spanish theory of “*pan y fútbol*”. Fifth, like many others, he presents the sport of *fútbol* as a metaphor for life. Interestingly, some Spanish “kick-lit” writers refer to the *fútbol* arena as “*la cancha de la vida*” after the popular concept of “the tree of life” which communicates the idea that all aspects of life on earth are symbolized through the metaphor of a multi-branched tree.

3.2: Analysis of David Trueba's *Saber Perder*

Saber perder is a Spanish “kick-lit” novel by David Trueba that was published in 2008 and has received quite a bit of attention. The story, *Saber perder* is grounded in contemporary Spanish society. Throughout the novel, Trueba touches on many of Spain’s current polemic social topics such as: the economic recession, poor working conditions, black market labor, racism, immigration, the rupture of the nuclear family, the educational system, the disillusionment with religion and the growing power of the *fútbol* industry. The story line of *Saber perder* intertwines the lives and families of a multitude of characters, making the novel rich and complex. The number of characters that Trueba introduces to us and develops is reminiscent of Cela’s *La colmena*. Trueba’s characters appear to be ordinary people with normal goals, desires, complexities and problems but through an omniscient narrator, Trueba offers a special insight into not only his characters’ lives, inner thoughts and voices of reason, but he offers a front row seat to their most intimate secrets, insecurities, fears and failures. The novel’s rhythm is very well balanced and is written in a simple, straightforward language. Throughout the novel Trueba exposes a wide range of foreign languages, in which he demonstrates a certain level of sensitivity toward the accents and colloquialisms of these immigrants from countries such as Argentina, Ecuador, Nigeria and Brazil.

The central figure of the novel is Sylvia, a girl disillusioned with high school and ready to move on to a more mature existence. Sylvia is about to turn sixteen when she learns that her mother is leaving the family since she has fallen desperately in love with her boss. Sylvia is forced to become independent more quickly than she ever imagined.

Sylvia's father, Lorenzo, has trouble coping with the loss of his wife and blames her departure on his current economic situation – Lorenzo had been a very successful businessman until Paco, his well-to-do business partner, swindled him into bankruptcy. Unable to control himself, Lorenzo commits a crime he never imagined himself capable of and murders his ex-partner. This leaves Lorenzo in a state of constant paranoia for the rest of the story. Sylvia's grandmother, Aurora, falls while getting out of the shower and is hospitalized for the remainder of the novel. She fluctuates from being on the brink of death to stable a number of times. Sylvia's grandfather, Leandro, is a man who has lead a respectable life as a classical pianist, but now faces the difficulties of growing old. The only way he feels he can sedate this fear is by secretly visiting a nineteen-year-old Nigerian prostitute named Osembe. While his wife lies dying in the hospital, Leandro spends over 60,000 Euros of his retirement money on Osembe. In the end, Osembe has Leandro set up to be beaten and robbed by her pimp. This results in his secret life being discovered by Lorenzo, who is extremely disappointed in his father, but he recognizes that as a murderer he is no one to pass judgment.

After celebrating her sixteenth birthday, Sylvia is struck by a drunk driver while crossing the street. The driver of the car turns out to be Madrid's newest phenomenal *fútbol*er from Argentina – twenty-year-old Ariel Burano. After hitting Sylvia, who is rendered unconscious, Ariel calls the club's administrators who quickly clean up the mess and save him from a tarnished reputation. Against the club administrators' wishes, Ariel puts himself in contact with Sylvia so he can apologize for the harm he has caused her. She soon discovers he is a star *fútbol*er, but since she is completely unimpressed by

the world of *fútbol* in Spain, she treats him like an ordinary person. Ariel later returns to the hospital with a check for 25,000 Euros as compensation, but Sylvia rips it up – something she probably would not have done if she had been fully aware of her father's current economic crisis. Sylvia keeps Ariel's identity secret and their relationship eventually develops into a love affair. The affair must be kept secret because although Sylvia is very independent and mature, she is only sixteen years old and Ariel is twenty years old. If discovered, this would put more in jeopardy than just his reputation as a professional *fútbol*er.

There are a number of secondary characters that Trueba develops with the same care and precision that he does the primary characters. Dani and Mai are Sylvia's friends from school. Dani is a typical adolescent, insecure and looking for love and acceptance among his peers. Mai is Sylvia's closest confidant and because Mai has experienced a variety of sexual escapades, she serves as Sylvia's sex mentor. Mai's identity is largely determined by whoever her current boyfriend is. Daniela and Wilson are Ecuadorian immigrants that Sylvia's father, Lorenzo, befriends. Lorenzo becomes involved in numerous black market operations with Wilson who is eventually murdered. Lorenzo also reignites his desire for love and develops a relationship with Daniela who is deported just as the love affair begins to turn serious. Although Osembe makes a living as a cold and calculating prostitute, her sad existence in Spain is a paradise when compared to the life she was subjected to as a child in Nigeria. Charlie is Ariel's brother, and accompanies Ariel on his journey to Spain. Charlie is quickly sent home after being accused of sexually assaulting a girl in a hotel room while traveling with the club. Pujalte is the

club's director and is the hand that exploits and extorts Ariel whenever it suits his needs. He threatens to expose Ariel's drunk driving accident with Sylvia, his brother's sexual assault accusations, and his statutory love affair with Sylvia – for which Pujalte provides photographs. Dragón is Ariel's ex-coach and continues to serve as his mentor from across the Atlantic. Dragón's son becomes involved in drugs and eventually dies from an overdose. Dragón is devastated and says, "*Toda la vida tratando de formar chicos y resulta que con el peor lo hice fue con el mío*" (Trueba, 290). Amilcar is a Brazilian veteran of the club that serves as a friendly mentor to Ariel. One night after dining together, Amilcar leaves on an errand and his ex-supermodel wife seduces Ariel, inviting him to join her for a *siesta*. Ariel falls into the trap and soon discovers it was a trick designed to prove he has a tendency toward sin. Through this scheme she attempts to convince Ariel to join their religious cult. Trueba develops a variety of other characters, with backgrounds of similar profundity throughout the novel. It is sufficient to say that he gives almost all of them a dark secret.

The common thread of the story is that the central characters are all going through life changing episodes that they do not know how to deal with. Their attempt to sooth the anxiety caused by their inability to cope with these situations results in them reacting in immoral and illogical ways. Trueba expresses these transitional phases as the essence of life – the moments when we find ourselves most emotionally vulnerable that expose the purest aspects of human nature.¹¹ The book's four part structure reinforces these uncertainties and are presented as the questions that the characters might be asking

¹¹ This is a reoccurring theme in work of the Trueba brothers –Fernando and David. *Bienvenido a casa, El año de las luces, Belle époque.*

themselves throughout these awkward transitional stages: 1.)¿*Es esto deseo?* 2.)¿*Es esto amor?* 3.)¿*Éste soy yo?* 4.)¿*Es esto el final?*

The characters in *Saber perder* are depicted as sincere people who want to be good and kind to one another. They are simply struggling with life and the difficulties of modern society. Their reactions to these situations are instinctive and although these characters recognize them to be immoral and harmful, they seem to think there is no other way to sedate the pain, struggle and fear that they are dealing with. When analyzed from this perspective, Trueba's novel is a critique of modern society.

The novel has a very pessimistic vision of the world. Each of our anti-heroes is either overwhelmed with life's harsh realities or with the injustices of today's society. The anti-heroes recognize that it is only a matter of time before their biggest fears are realized. Sylvia and Ariel know their love affair will only last until *fútbol* takes Ariel elsewhere, which turns out to be after just one season. Nearing the end of his life, Leandro knows it won't be long until he and his wife are overcome by death. In the story Lorenzo is never convicted of his crime, but it is implied that he will spend the rest of his life feeling guilty and looking over his shoulder fearing his eventual capture and conviction. Through his book, Trueba communicates that people in today's society need to accept the world's injustices and loss. *Saber perder* is a text that adds to the body of Spanish work that depicts the sense of chronic-*fatalismo* within Spanish society.

After Lorenzo murders Paco he attends a home *fútbol* match to take his mind off the torment he is experiencing. The match happens to be Ariel's debut with the club. Trueba's description of the scene highlights a number of interesting polemic social topics

that can be observed while attending a *fútbol* match in Spain. The narrator describes the scene putting the majority of the focus on Lorenzo.

Convertido en un asesino mira el fútbol. [...] El entrenador ordena un cambio rápido y sustituye al extremo izquierdo. Un argentino recién fichado que recibe la pitada del público. Lorenzo también se levanta a silbarlos. Vuélvete a casa, indio, vuélvete a casa, le canta un grupo de chavales. El jugador no corre hacia la banda, y eso enfada aún más a la grada. Corre, sudaca de mierda, le grita alguien. Y Lalo y Óscar ríen. Pero será chulo, ¿por qué no corre? Que vamos perdiendo. A Lorenzo le relaja la protesta, le reconcilia consigo mismo. Participar de la indignación general es una forma de evasión. Y esos cinco minutos en que el estadio empuja al equipo local para lograr el empate que nollega son los únicos cinco minutos que disfruta en los últimos días (64).

Through this paragraph, Trueba addresses the fact that racism runs rampant in modern society and that for many, the *fútbol* arena serves as a platform from which to express their pent up racism. Trueba also alludes to the idea that *fútbol* serves as “*el ópio del pueblo*” because while Lorenzo cheers for his team, he is temporarily relieved of worrying about his problems.

After losing the match, Ariel is distraught by the less than warm welcome he received during his first performance with the club. He goes to dinner, gets drunk and reflects on his arrival in Spain. This leads him to contemplate the complexities of the economic situation involved with the sport. Ariel thinks about when the club’s

administrator, Solórzano, tried to sum up the business side of things to him, saying:

Si el público aprieta pones al presidente contra las cuerdas y paga lo que sea, siempre que les dejes ganar un poquito, desviar un pellizco de dinero a su cuenta en las Caimán y todos felices. Lo importante es que todos sean felices, ¿no? ¿Acaso el fútbol no tiene como única misión hacer feliz a la gente? (69).

This citation communicates that Spanish *fútbol* administrators still rely on the theory of “*pan y toros*” to control the fans. Although, Trueba suggests that now administrators approach this idea from a different angle: keep the masses happy and the industry will continue to function – allow them to believe they have the upper hand every so often and the money will continue to pour in.

After the dinner, Ariel is intoxicated and speeds home in an attempt to relieve his frustrations resulting from the loss of the match and his less than adequate play, the racial jeers he received from his own fans and the controlling economic powers of the sport. He pushes the pedal even harder and decides to play Russian roulette with the traffic lights and eventually loses, and hits Sylvia. His real problems are now about to begin.

Later in the story, Trueba again deals with the problem of racism in *fútbol*. This problem is currently an issue that many advocates of the sport are addressing. The French captain, Thierry Henry, is one of the most outspoken activists against racism as it affects both *fútbol* and life. Trueba’s narrator tells the sub-story about how every time Matuoko, one of Ariel’s teammates from Gahanna, touches the ball a group of young fans make ape-like movements and monkey noises to insult the player. These same youngsters, from

an ultra-right winged fascist group called *Honor Joven*, also greeted Ariel with racist jeers during his debut. Groups like *Honor Joven* see the *fútbol* arena as an outlet where they can express their political and racist beliefs. The narrator describes the club's connection to *Honor Joven* in the following excerpt.

La directiva los mima porque son fieles y entusiastas, acompañan al equipo en los viajes por precios irrisorios y disfrutan de un despacho para su organización en el estadio. En la temporada anterior habían tomado al asalto el autobús del equipo durante el viaje de vuelta de un partido que terminó en derrota. Amenazaron a los jugadores y los insultaron con gritos de mercenarios y vagos (179).

Before Ariel was aware of the *Honor Joven*'s fundamentals, he was scheduled to give an interview and do a photo-shoot with the group. But the morning before meeting *Honor Joven* in their stadium office, Ronco, one of Ariel's teammates approaches him to fill him in. Ronco explains their background by showing Ariel their website that is filled with Nazi symbols. He describes it as, "*el habitual tono matón y amenazador amparado en los colores del equipo. La mayoría de los jugadores de la plantilla posaban fotografiados con las bufandas e insignias de la peña en un ejercicio de sumisión*" (179). Ariel finds an excuse not to attend the photo-shoot with the help of one of the club's employees. The narrator describes that from that point on when Ariel hears the racist shouts of "*indio*" and "*sudaca*" from the stands it doesn't bother him as much. The narrator sheds light on the sad fact that "*El ambiente que rodea al fútbol es igual en todas partes. Matuoko, por ejemplo, pelea contra un hecho asumido: nunca un jugador*

negro había triunfado en ese equipo” (179).

By addressing this problem in his book, Trueba is taking a step to raise awareness that throughout Spain and Europe, clubs turn a blind eye toward fascist groups like *Honor Joven*. The tolerance of this behavior nourishes racism. This is the ugliest aspect of the sport and is directly connected to hooliganism. Racism and hooliganism have plagued *fútbol* and have caused many civilized people to avoid being associated with it in any way. The fault does not lie with the sport or the players, it is a problem that exists in life and therefore it cannot be expected to be absent from *fútbol*. When it is extinguished in one, it will be extinguished in the other. Clubs, such as Ariel's, that nourish racism are unacceptable. When they nurture a hostile environment, the players suffer because a beautiful game turns ugly. The irony lies in the fact that when the players have finally reached the highest level of the sport, they become the target and recipients of society's harshest insults.

También los aficionados tienen un cierto sentido de pertenencia cuando alientan a su equipo, porque el fútbol tiene una gran capacidad para servir como referente colectivo de identidad entre lo que podemos llamar cultura urbana popular. Todo esto es cierto pero siempre que algo compromete la pasión del hombre resulta fácil caer en excesos, y la capacidad integradora empieza a pervertirse cuando el fanatismo (el derivado más peligroso de la intolerancia) hace del partido una cuestión de honor y termina por creer que una camiseta es una patria. Mal. Desde hace mucho tiempo el fútbol está siguiendo hasta lo peligroso una

tendencia social preocupante. El racismo que esta ganando la calle tiene una prolongación festiva en los campos de fútbol que ofende la inteligencia y la esencia de todo deporte. Y es una costumbre ver en los periódicos estadios pintados con leyendas en donde se acusa a jugadores de indios, sudacas o negros, o escuchar el grito tribal de las gradas cada vez que un jugador de color entra en contacto con el balón. Es repugnante desprecio hacia lo distinto llevado al mundo del espectáculo con intención de humillar es, sencillamente, un acto fascista (Valdano Miedo escénico, 279).

Another issue that Trueba addresses is the notion that Spanish society is largely disillusioned with the Catholic Church and all that is religious. This is expressed through Lorenzo who notes how profoundly religious many Latin Americans are, such as, Daniela, his new Ecuadorian girlfriend. Lorenzo ridicules her for her beliefs, considering them behind the times. This is ironic since it was Spain that subjected Latin America to Catholicism in the first place. A number of writers have made the analogy that *fútbol* is the new religion in Spain. For example, in José Luis Sampedro's "*Aquel santo día en Madrid*", the observation is made that Spaniards flock to *fútbol* stadiums and are mesmerized by the game as if they were in a cathedral, overcome by religion. *Fútbol*'s enormous fan base is considered by many to have proportions comparable only to that of religion. In *Saber perder*, when Ariel returns home for Christmas he has a conversation with Dragón in which Dragón advises him saying,

Marca goles, los Gallegos solo quieren goles. [...] Los negocios más

importantes se dedican a las cosas que no se pueden tocar, que son intangibles. Mirá, la empresa más rentable del mundo es la Iglesia y luego está el equipo de fútbol. Los dos viven de la gente con fe, nada más. ¿No es de locos? (291).

Though the character of Ariel has made a number of very poor decisions, Trueba still manages to offer the reader a sympathetic view of the struggles that a star *fútbol*er is faced with. Not only does Ariel have to deal with threatening racist groups that are supported by his own club, he is manipulated as a piece of the club's property. When he is offered the opportunity to play for Argentina's under-twenty National Team in a competition in Colombia, Pujalte calls him into his office and says,

Me estás hablando de un campeonato juvenil, para muchachos, de un pasatiempo [...] ahora no podemos perderte en cuatro partidos fundamentales para nosotros. Y mandarte a una eliminatoria a Colombia para que destagues entre los promesas. [...] Aquí hay que decidir entre profesionalidad o placer [...] Tienes que olvidarte de tu país. [...] Es hora de crecer, has venido a España a crecer, joder, a hacerte mayor, no jugar a los juveniles. Piensa en las lesiones [...] Una lesión ahora sería una catástrofe (145).

When Ariel reminds him that the Federation has the right to obligate the clubs to turn their players over for international competitions, Pulate says, "*Pues claro que obliga, de esto estamos hablando, tu renuncia tiene que ser voluntaria*" (145). Pujalte then reminds Ariel of the jeers that he receives from his home crowd and says, "*La grada*

apreciará tu gesto, tu sacrificio. Podría ser la forma de que te ganaras a los aficionados, que vencieras las reticencias” (145).

The narrator tells us that Ariel does not even respond since he knows that the battle is lost. “*Sabe que no es más que poder, si se encontrara en la cima del triunfo, reconocido por todos, podría exigir. Ahora no, es otro su lugar. Hay que aceptarlo”* (146). Already, Ariel is learning to *saber perder*.

Throughout the novel, Trueba reinforces the notion that the sport of *fútbol* at the professional level is an industrial juggernaut that is much bigger than any individual. The perspective that Trueba gives the reader into all these social issues that find their home in the *fútbol* arena, essentially presents the world of *fútbol* as the true embodiment of modern day society.

In many ways it could be said that the character of Ariel is modeled after the life of Jorge Valdano – both came to Spain from Argentina at a very young age: Valdano at 19 and Ariel at 20; both were selected to play for their youth national teams and both are enthusiasts of art and literature. Ariel goes to Madrid’s famous museum, *El museo del Prado* and is spotted by a group of teenagers on a class tour. He quickly gains the reputation as a *fútbolero* who breaks the stereotype because he appreciates high culture. In another scene, Ariel attends a birthday party of one of his Argentinean friends that was also playing in Spain. When the man celebrating his birthday opens his presents, he receives a book and the entire party is shocked to find someone giving a book to a *fútbolero*. Soon they realize the gift came from Ariel. Throughout the novel, although Ariel makes many typical mistakes of a twenty-year-old, Trueba portrays him as a very

levelheaded, contemplative and sincere *fútbol*er – much like the reputation Valdano has gained in real life.

When Ariel goes to Dragón for advice about the difficulties he is experiencing as a professional *fútbol*er, Dragón's advice almost exactly parallels a passage from Jorge Valdano's *El miedo escénico y otras hierbas* (2002) in which Valdano addresses a distraught professional footballer directly. Valdano writes:

Futbolista: ¿Te acuerdas cuando soñabas? Tenías doce años y por tu cabeza ilusa pasaban regates, goles y aplausos. Qué triste volver de una idea tan linda, tan lejana, tan imposible...

¿Y te acuerdas cuando fuiste a ver a tú ídolo? Se te hizo un hueco en el estómago y tu admiración era limítrofe con envidia. Que feo salir de la cancha y descubrirte humano; creer que no, que nunca, que a quién se le ocurre...

¿Y te acuerdas del primer día que entrenaste con los grandes? Se te veía en el entusiasmo las ganas de parecer igual, de que no se notara la diferencia.

Qué miedo no llegar, no poder, no alcanzarlos...

Y firmaste tu primer contrato profesional. Debía de ser por un malentendido: ¿a quien se le podía ocurrir subvencionarte la alegría? Miraste para los lados, dejaste para la intimidad cierta conciencia de malversador de fondos, pusiste cara de merecerlo y entraste de lleno en el profesionalismo sin saber muy bien con que derecho. Qué recuerdos

¿verdad?, qué nuevo era todo.

...Ahora, sin embargo, te sientes funcionario. La rutina se te cayó encima y te venció con sus pacientes obligaciones. Te cansas, te aburres, te quejas. El fútbol es tu trabajo. ¡Trabajo!

Escucha bien. Si te aburres o si te cansas, acuérdate de cuando soñabas, de cuando eras hincha, de cuando empezaste. Pero, sobre todo, acuérdate de no quejarte. Acuérdate, en fin, de los que de verdad trabajan y renuncian a algo, a lo que sea, para poder pagar la entrada del partido del domingo. Todo por verte (280).

When Valdano's advice is compared directly with the advice Dragón gives Ariel, the similarities are very noticeable. Dragón tells Ariel:

Vos jugá, no te cargues de responsabilidad. No hay que olvidar el placer del juego nunca. El tuyo es un oficio absurdo, si no lo hacés disfrutando no tiene sentido. No te podés poner a pensar, te paralizás. En esto lo inteligente es saber gestionar la propia angustia. Mirá lo que pasa en el mundo, si te parás, si te paras a pensar, te pegás un tiro, como para ponerte a gambetear y acordarte de esos chabones del boliche Cromañón (Trueba, 291).

In an interview about the book, Trueba mentions that his friendship with the current manager of *FC Barcelona*, Josep Guardiola, helped him better understand the game and see it in a different light so that he could more precisely and profoundly convey the world of professional *fútbol* in Spain. This demonstrates Trueba as an intellectual who

felt he needed to delve even further into the game to better understand and uncover its truths. In the novel, Trueba addresses the popular clash between the intellectual classes and the *fútbol* community. Trueba's depiction of this clash demonstrates a newfound friendship between the two, and uses his characters in the book to represent the different sides of the dispute to show how each are presently becoming more interested in and accepting of the other. For example, Sylvia represents a young bright intellectual who initially adheres to the notion that *fútbol* and intellectualism are not compatible. Being the intellectual that she is, when presented with the opportunity, she puts all stereotypes aside and attempts to experience the game for herself. In doing so, she overcomes the negative stereotype, to an extent, and finds aspects of the sport that she enjoys. Although she finds that like life, *fútbol* has its positive and negative attributes.

Ariel, on the other hand, forms part of the *fútbol* community and his character therefore represents the anti-intellectual. However, Ariel proves to be one of the members of the *fútbol* community that does not reject intellectualism, rather he is drawn to certain aspects of it. For example, Ariel gains the stereotype among his *fútboling* peers to be the one that actually chooses to read books, go to museums, and pays attention to the profound lyrics of his favorite artists. Ariel is an intellectual simply for that fact that he sees things with a very open mind, as does his girlfriend, Sylvia.

One tie that links all the characters of *Saber perder* together is that they are going through a transitional stage in their lives. It is possible that through this Trueba is trying to express, that in life, change is always occurring and that as soon as an individual enters into a comfort zone, he will soon be forced to move on. This is demonstrated by the fact

that Ariel is learning about what he appreciates most in life, Sylvia is coming of age as a woman, Lorenzo is coping with having been cheated by his business partner and subsequently losing of his wife, the grandmother is in the hospital and near death, Leandro is having trouble accepting the notion of growing old and blows his money on a prostitute. At one point in the story, Leandro expresses his concern to his son Lorenzo and proclaims that his problem lies in the fact that we are never taught how to grow old. These characters do not cope well when dealing with the new situations that life presents, and neither do real people. David Trueba's *Saber perder* is a contemporary novel that is very closely linked with Spanish society of today, and is a very important contribution to the field of literature for this reason.

3.3: Introduction and General Summary of *Cuentos de Fútbol*

In 1995, Jorge Valdano, the world's leading "kick-lit" advocate, compiled twenty-four short stories about *fútbol* written by some of the Spanish speaking world's most reputable authors. This compilation of "kick-lit" stories is titled *Cuentos de Fútbol* and offers the reader a glimpse into the infinite possibilities from which the sport of *fútbol* can be approached through literature. In the book's prologue, Valdano addresses the ongoing conflict between intellectuals and the sport of *fútbol* by telling a fictional anecdote about an intellectual named "Alcides Antuña Cavallero" who goes to great lengths in an attempt to discover exactly what makes *fútbol* so special and why this game captures the hearts of so many people around the world. Alcides conducts an investigation that takes him to all corners of the planet. Through his travels he arrives at a number of conclusions about *fútbol* – it is a universal phenomenon; it connects people from different generations; it is blind to social status; it is a cultural expression like any other; it is a vehicle for communication; it is an escape mechanism and means for distraction. After his travels did not produce a satisfactory answer for Alcides, he goes to the library and finds that philosophers and writers such as Karl Marx, Sartre, Camus and Borges had all addressed the topic of *fútbol* in their work, but the complexity of their writings confused Alcides even further. Eventually, Valdano relays that Alcides began turning every *fútbol* conversation he had into a philosophical discussion. Soon, Alcides came to annoy even himself. His frustrations grew to insomnia, which then turned into complete madness. In *Cuentos de Fútbol*, a number of the stories address the philosophical conclusions that Alcides had arrived at about the sport, but they were almost

always grounded in cherishing the ineffable pleasures of these two cultural phenomena.

Valdano explains the purpose of his fictional anecdote stating that:

La historia de Alcides sirve al tono de este prólogo y la escribo por simpática antes que por buena, sin otra pretensión que la de abrir el apetito de los lectores y advertir a los intelectuales sobre los riesgos de ponerse serio con un juego. La ciencia se ha ocupado de demostrar que la inteligencia tiene muchas maneras de expresarse pero cada día falta mayor número de pruebas para romper un prejuicio. Este libro serviría a la causa (16-17).

Valdano describes his compilation as serving as common ground for where both muscle and thought can merge and hopefully overcome their differences. He writes that *Cuentos de Fútbol* is, “*Un juego, el del fútbol, metido dentro de otro juego, el de la literatura. El hombre escapando de la realidad con el afán de buscar sus aspiraciones más auténticas*” (13).

Cuentos de Fútbol is a unique and important contribution to the “kick-lit” genre because through it Jorge Valdano commanded recognition and respect for literature containing a central theme of *fútbol*. He compiled twenty-four pre-existing works of “kick-lit” written by twenty-three of the Spanish-speaking world’s most recognized and celebrated authors – along with one fun-loving tale written by himself. In this section, I will give a brief summary of the stories written by Spaniards that appear in *Cuentos de Fútbol* before offering a more in-depth analysis of four stories that I have selected that were also written by Spaniards. Each story that will be analyzed in depth will be under its

own sub-section. These sub-sections serve to separate these stories from the rest, offer an more in-depth analysis and further demonstrate the possibilities and dynamism of the genre. But first, Valdano's contribution to *Cuentos de Fútbol* titled "*Creo, vieja, que tu hijo la cagó*", is a story of a goalkeeper named Juan Antonio Felpa who finds himself having to defend his club's honor and save a penalty kick in order to win the championship for his hometown club. As the kick is about to be taken, the narrator flashes back to how Felpa had arrived at this point and describes some of the struggles and adversity that Felpa overcame to become the goalkeeper for his hometown club. Felpa was determined to save this penalty kick and prove everyone wrong that told him he was not good enough to be the goalkeeper. As the shot came, the crowd chanted "Fel-pa! Fel-pa! Fel-pa!" (343) and he jumped so far to the left that the hat he was wearing, to block the sun, flew off his head and into the goal. Miraculously, Felpa caught the ball with both hands and his dream of being the hometown hero had seemingly come true. Overcome with joy, and not knowing exactly how to react, Juan Antonio Felpa proudly stood up with the ball under his arm and as the crowd cheered for him, he walked into the goal to retrieve his hat. At this point, one of Felpa's family members turns to the goalkeeper's mother and says, "*Creo, vieja, que tu hijo la cagó*".

Cuentos de Fútbol covers a wide range of "kick-lit" topics. Valdano's contribution is clearly a fun-loving tale that demonstrates the lessons of humility that an individual can learn through *fútbol*. At the same time, his story embraces the sport at the amateur level and gives the reader a glimpse into the intensity of the *fútboling* rivalries between neighboring towns in Latin America. The other stories from *Cuentos de Fútbol*

tackle the “kick-lit” genre from a variety of different angles. The well-known Galician writer, Manuel Rivas’, “*El míster & Iron Maiden*”, is a story that depicts the sport of *fútbol* as a mechanism that can connect people from different generations.

“*El míster & Iron Maiden*” is a tale that is divided into two parts. When the story begins, the reader is immediately thrown into the first scene where a teenager, that the narrator calls “*el joven*”, is reacting hysterically to a goal given up by his favorite team, *Deportivo de la Coruña*. *El joven* wears a black t-shirt from the heavy metal rock band *Iron Maiden*. This t-shirt not only symbolizes the hostile temper that is typical of a teenager’s demeanor, but it also demonstrates the large generation gap between he and his father with whom he is watching the match. Throughout the story, the father (whom the narrator refers to as “*el hombre de pelo cano*”) and *el joven* argue vehemently about the *fútbol* match. *El joven* blames the late goal his team gave up on the coach’s decision to substitute an attacker for a defender late in the game calling the coach a donkey, saying “*¡Mira que es burro! [...] Estábamos ganando y va y cambia a un delantero por un defensa. Siempre recula. ¿No te das cuenta de que siempre se acojona y recula?*” (281-82). *El hombre del pelo cano* stands up for the coach and says, “*¡No sabes ni de qué hablas! [...] ¿No hay once tipos que juegan? ¿Por qué siempre echas la culpa a él?*” (281-82). The teenager claims that the coach deserves the blame and yells, “*¡Jubiláate, hombre, jubiláate!*” (283). This comment clearly affects the *hombre del pelo cano*, who identifies with the team’s coach. *El joven* storms off and yells “*¡Ya está, se jodió todo! ¡A tomar por culo!*” (283). The mother shouts to the teenager from the kitchen, “*¡No hables así en casa!*” (283). *El joven* yells “*¡Hablo como me sale del carajo!*” (283).

In the second scene, *el joven* and *el hombre del pelo cano* are driving a boat through the sea near the Galician Costa da Morte. *El joven* is trying to return home before the tide is at its lowest. *El hombre del pelo cano* is the passenger on the boat. It is an eerie evening, and both *el hombre del pelo cano* and *el joven* are having dark existential thoughts when the boat bottoms out.

El golpe cogió de costado la barca y la lanzó como un palo de billarda contra las Cercadas. Pero el joven, cuando recordaba, no sentía dolor. Corría, corría y braceaba por la banda del campo, electrizado como el espectro de Iron Maiden. Había regateado a todos los contrarios, una tras otro, metió el tercer gol en el último minuto, y ahora corre por la banda a cámara lenta, la melena flotante, mientras los Raizor Blues ondean y ondean banderas blanquiazules. Corre y corre por la banda con los brazos abiertos para abrazar al míster de pelo cano (286).

With the final scene of the story, it is clear that Rivas was depicting what heaven might be like for someone as passionate about *fútbol* as *el joven*. It is through the sport of *fútbol* where many people's dreams in their purest forms lie. It is for this reason that Rivas depicts heaven as the euphoric celebration that one would feel upon scoring the goal of his dreams – because it is as close to nirvana, euphoria, or heaven that some earthly beings can fathom. “*El míster & Iron Maiden*” depicts the sport of *fútbol* as an unburnable bridge between generations and the euphoric sensation of victory as the closest that humankind can come to experiencing heaven on earth. Clearly, “*El míster & Iron Maiden*” defends *el fútbol* as a social phenomenon.

Other short stories by Spaniards that appear in *Cuentos de Fútbol* are Agustín Cerezales' "*Fuera de juego*", Miguel Delibes' "*El campeonato*", Fernando Fernán Gómez' "*El directivo*", Julio Llamazares' "*Tanta passion para nada*", Javier Marías' "*El tiempo indeciso*", Justo Navarro's "*El alma al diablo*", Rosa Regàs' "*Ganas de quejarse de verdad*" and Manuel Vicente's "*Fondo Sur*". With "*Fuera de juego*" Agustín Cerezales tells the tale of a man fed up with life who, early in the story, has an argument with the clerk at the *panadería* over the fact that he did not receive the correct change. After this argument, which seems insignificant, the protagonist is so overwhelmed that he decides he has had enough of this life. Because of this encounter he plans to commit suicide when he arrives home from work that night. The fact that the story is narrated in the first person by the protagonist offers the reader the ability to identify with the protagonist, although it is easy to see that his voice of reason is completely distorted. Just before heading home, the protagonist is invited to attend a *fútbol* match between *Atlético de Madrid* (whom he has supported for years) and *Real Madrid*. The protagonist decides to attend one last "derby"¹² with his colleague from work. While at the match, the protagonist is less than interested in anything taking place until he spots a young woman walking the stands selling concessions. The protagonist describes her as the following:

Era una niña ya mujer, morena, delgada, con unos ojos enormes y negros, y una trenza espesa que le caía por la espalda. Llevaba el cubo de las cervezas y los refrescos sin encorvarse, sin perder la sonrisa. A nadie podía haberle sentado tan bien aquella chaquetilla blanca con el logotipo rojo de la cocacola. Bajo los vaqueros se dibujaban unas piernas fuertes y

¹² A "derby" is a match between two teams from the same city –normally an intense rivalry.

largas, un trasero conmovedor. Y si alzaba los brazos para alcanzar un refresco a un cliente situado más arriba, se le veía el ombligo. El ombligo... No voy a describirlo. Diré tan sólo que en aquella mujer no sólo no reñían, sino, que iban de la mano, se completaban e iluminaban mutuamente el más erótico de los encantos y la belleza más espiritual (126-27).

It is from this encounter that our protagonist regains his desire to live. He pursues the woman over the next few months. As he gets to know her, he informs the reader that her name is Marí Carmen and that she was working as the concession girl to fill in for her sick father, whom she regularly took care of at night and made lunch for on a daily basis. During the day she worked in a beauty salon and in the evenings she studied computer science. The protagonist adores her and states, “*¡Oh mujer fuerte, alegre, limpia, valiente! Y lo mejor de todo: no era seguidora del Real ni del Atlético, sino del Rayo Vallecano*” (131). Clearly, the fact that she supports *Rayo Vallecano* over *Real Madrid* or *Atlético de Madrid* is symbolic of her modesty and demonstrates that in Spain, an individual’s morals and personality, in many ways, can be determined by the team he or she supports.

Miguel Delibes’ *El campeonato* is a short story about the conversation that three individuals have in a bar while watching Spain vs. Uruguay in the World Cup. Delibes’ tone, insight into his characters and anti-climactic storyline is reminiscent of the work of Ernest Hemmingway. The characters are: Juan, who smokes cigarette after cigarette hoping that Spain can pull off a win to advance to the next round; *la muchacha rubia y*

pintarrajeada, who accompanies Juan; and Simón, the bartender. After Spain gives up the tying goal late in the game, Juan is obviously distraught because a tie will cause Uruguay and England to advance over Spain. Minutes before the goal, while Spain was winning, just imagining putting England out of the tournament gave Juan goose bumps. He said, “*Habrá que oír a los ingleses, ahora. Y esos zánganos de uruguayos, ¿qué se creían? ¿Qué éramos como Bolivia?*” (136). When the game ends and Spain is officially out, Juan asks Simón for two glasses of white wine. Simón says, “*¡Que loco está el mundo! En todas partes no se habla más que de fútbol. ¿Y qué nos da el fútbol?*” (138). Simón reinforces his point by saying, “*Y para eso veinticinco millones de españoles escuchando la radio toda la tarde como embobados. Cincuenta millones de horas desperdiciadas. ¿Sabe usted lo que puede hacerse con cincuenta millones de horas de trabajo?*” (138). Juan responds by saying, “*muchas cosas*” (138). “*Eso. Muchas cosas. Por ejemplo, plantar cien millones de árboles. ¿Le parece poco?*” (138) asks Simón. Juan responds by asking, “*¿Ha plantado usted un árbol?*” (138). Juan does not receive a response from the bartender, and asks for two more glasses of white wine. Once they finish their drinks they leave the bar and *La muchacha rubia y pintarrajeada*, who supports Juan throughout the entire story says, “*Ese hombre es un maleducado*” (139). Juan responds by saying, “*Estoy pensando en lo que dirán los ingleses a estas horas*” (139). The story ends as the narrator tells us that “*La muchacha rubia y pintarrajeada se puso a pensar que veinticinco millones de españoles eran muchos españoles, y cincuenta millones de horas eran muchas horas, y que cien millones de árboles eran una barbaridad de árboles. Y luego pensó que el vino blanco de Simón se le estaba subiendo*

a la cabeza” (139).

This anti-climactic short story by Miguel Delibes reveals a different side of *fútbol*. “*El campeonato*” clearly reinforces the fact that *fútbol* is a social phenomenon in Spain, but at the same time it demonstrates the sport as a point of departure for contemplative social thought and discussion. Although, Delibes argues that people in general are filled with hot air, and in the end they will only act on what they are truly interested in.

Fernando Fernán Gómez’ “*El directivo*” is a story about a young boy who grows up with an intense passion for *fútbol*. His only problem is that when the kids from the neighborhood gather to play *fútbol*, he is the worst of the bunch. After he comes to the realization that his skill as a player is not his greatest asset, he manages to monopolize the only ball in town, and begins to charge the other kids to play. This approach eventually leads him to become a very powerful *fútbol* administrator. This story serves to demonstrate that *fútbol* is a social phenomenon with many dimensions and many opportunities for an individual to become involved. As the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano wrote, “*Este hermoso espectáculo, esta fiesta de los ojos, también es un cochino negocio*” (“*El Fútbol Hecho Espectáculo.*”).

Julio Llamazares’ “*Tanta pasión para nada*” tells the story of a player for *Deportivo de La Coruña* named Djukic who prepares for his team’s biggest game of the season against *Valencia CF*. The story describes Djukic’s pre-game routine and the reader is invited to enter into his inner thoughts. Djukic’s thoughts and preparations are centered around the fact that his club needs a win over *Valencia CF* to be crowned outright champions of *La Liga Española*. Llamazares takes the reader through a number

of pages dealing with Djukic's pre-game nerves, the different angles through which he assesses certain aspects of the game and his voice of reason. Eventually, Djukic finds himself at the end of the game, and the referee has called a penalty kick for *Deportivo de La Coruña*. The narrator relates to the reader that

Djukic ya estaba decidido a tirar aquel penalty. No tenía, además, otra elección. Podía, ciertamente, todavía echarse (otro en su situación, quizá lo hubiera pensado) y pasarle la responsabilidad a otro compañero, a Beбето, por ejemplo, que para algo era la estrella del equipo y el que más dinero cobraba, pero Djukic no era de los que se arrugaban. Desde que jugaba en Savac con apenas quince años, era de los que siempre daban la cara. Y, además, sus compañeros nunca se lo hubiesen perdonado. Como tampoco –pensó– le perdonarían en el caso de que fallase (224).

As the tension grows, the narrator takes the reader through each of Djukic's thoughts leading up to the moment of the penalty kick,

Djukic comenzó a correr sin saber todavía cómo tirar el penalty. Ya no podía pensar; ya era tarde para todo. Le dio al balón sin mirarlo, como si le pegara al aire, y durante unos segundos, que a él le parecieron eternos, larguísimos, interminables, miró cómo se alejaba en dirección a la portería donde la mancha azul del portero comenzaba lentamente a desplazarse (227).

As it turns out, the Valencian goalkeeper saves Djukic's shot and the Valencian team runs to their goalkeeper to celebrate with him. Djukic is left at the penalty kick spot alone

and stupefied as the narrator finishes the story.

Los compañeros de Djukic tardaron más en hacer lo mismo con él, pero él ni llegó a enterarse. Arrodillado en el césped, como un boxeador caído, solo pensaba en huir de allí mientras se repetía a sí mismo, como cuando se mató su hermano, lo que su padre solía decir de la vida cuando la vida le golpeaba: tanta pasión para nada (228).

With “*Tanta pasión para nada*”, Julio Llamazares reinforces the fact that *fútbol* is a social phenomenon that brings out many emotions in its players and followers, but he also argues that in *fútbol*, as in life, one should not become overly excited about success, or overly disheartened by a failure. This is also a central theme in David Trueba’s *Saber Perder*. In an interview conducted by Nuria Azancot, the topic of success came up, and Azancot asked Trueba what success meant to him. Due in part to the success of his book and because the struggle for success in the face of failure is a central theme in his book, Trueba responded by saying, “*Ni el éxito es una cosa tan enorme como lo pintan ni el fracaso es tan deprimente*” (Azancot).

In “*En el tiempo indeciso*”, Javier Marías describes the amicable relationship he had with the Hungarian goal scorer, Miklós Szentkuthy, from *Real Madrid*. Whether the numerous encounters with Szentkuthy that Marías relates to the reader actually took place, we may never know, but we have no reason to believe that they did not. Marías begins his account saying, “*Lo vi dos veces en persona y la primera fue la más alegre y la más desdichada*” (in Valdano *Cuentos de Fútbol*, 231). Marías describes his first encounter with Szentkuthy at Joy, a popular discotheque in Madrid. Marías tells the

reader that he did not want to annoy the *fútbol* star with typical questions about his profession. Marías writes, “*Pareció gustarle que no le hablara en seguida del equipo ni del entrenador ni del campeonato y quizá por eso contestó sin pudor y con una sonrisa casi infantil*” (235). The two men have a conversation about the women accompanying Szentkuthy (Szentkuthy claims he has been with three of the four women). Szentkuthy boasts that he collects goals and women, saying, “*Cada gol, una mujer distinta, es mi forma de celebrarlos*” (236) Szentkuthy tells Marías he is currently dealing with a problem with one of the girls. She mistakenly believes that she will be with him forever and wants him to proclaim his eternal love for her. Szentkuthy describes how his perception of love is similar to his perception of *fútbol*. He tells Marías that he prefers not to talk about love or *fútbol*, rather he simply prefers to perform, “*ellas siempre quieren que se les hable, después sobre todo, yo preferiría no decir nada después ni antes, como en el fútbol, metes un gol y gritas, no hace falta decir ni prometer ninguna cosa, se sabe que meterás más goles, eso es todo*” (237).

Marías’ next encounter with Szentkuthy comes when he was invited to watch a *Real Madrid* match in the *palco presidencial*. Szentkuthy was also watching from the box because he had been injured. Szentkuthy did not recognize Marías. Szentkuthy was with a young girl, who seemed to be a very serious girlfriend. Marías states that it appeared Szentkuthy had outgrown his stage of “collecting girls” and due to his injury, he clearly was no longer “collecting goals”. Shortly after Marías’ second encounter with Szentkuthy the *fútbol*er was dropped from *Real Madrid* then spent a season or two in France before eventually falling out of the spotlight. Eight years after his last encounter Marías assumed

Szentkuthy was finishing his career in Hungary (playing for one of the lesser known teams) when Mariás learned of his death. Mariás finishes his account by writing:

Un hombre de treinta y tres años a la hora de su muerte, un hombre joven sin goles nuevos y con sus vídeos demasiado vistos, sólo podría coleccionar mujeres en su Budapest natal, allí seguiría siendo un ídolo, el niño que se marchó y triunfó lejos y vivirá ya siempre del recuerdo orgulloso de sus hazañas remotas cada vez más difuminadas. Ya no vive porque le han disparado en el pecho, y quizá hubo un segundo en que su mujer convencida y tímida flaqueó en su voluntad afirmativa y dudó si apretar el gatillo con sus dos dedos frágiles aunque a la vez supiera que lo apretaría. Quizá hubo un segundo en que se negó la inminencia y el tiempo fue marcado y se volvió indeciso, y en el que Szentkuthy vio claros la línea divisoria y el muro normalmente invisible que separan vida y muerte, el único 'Aún no' y el único 'Ya está' que cuentan (244).

Mariás' first person account of his encounters with the star *fútbol*er and the subsequent events that took place in the *fútbol*er's life is another approach to the "kick-lit" genre. Mariás' tale tackles the "kick-lit" genre from the same angle that Carlos Casares did with his anecdote about his encounter with Alfredo di Stéfano, "*Qué Viejo estás y qué gordo*". I find these autobiographical anecdotes very interesting because they offer the reader a view of the author's insight into his actual encounter with a star *fútbol*er. At the same time the reader is afforded a glimpse into the star *fútbol*ers' attitudes, comportment, activities and the conversations that they have. This image tends

to be very different from the *fútbolers'* public image that we witness on the *fútbol* field and in the media.

Justo Navarro's "*El alma al diablo*" is very different from Javier Marías' and Carlos Casares' autobiographical anecdotes. It tells the tale of a player that sells his soul to the devil in order to be in the spotlight again. Navarro recounts his tale in the third person through an omniscient narrator who tells the story of a young *fútbol*er in Spain who is brought to *Real Madrid* after scoring many goals during the league's previous season. Navarro never offers the reader the name of the protagonist or the name of his previous club, but he does tell us that after the young player was brought to *Real Madrid* and did not score a single goal in five and a half games, the club disregarded him completely. Two depressing years go by for the frustrated *fútbol*er who comes to see himself, as does everyone else, as an embarrassment and a failure.

The night before one of *Real Madrid's* games, against the team rules, he went to an out-of-the-way bar, on the side of the highway, where no one would recognize him. He went there to drown his sorrows because he was not asked to dress for the game the next day. While drinking alone at the bar he is approached by a large and scary man who tells him to stop drinking because he has to play the next day. Our protagonist attempts to avoid the situation and heads for the parking lot, where the man approaches him again. The man tells the frustrated *fútbol*er that if he sells his soul to the stranger, he will see to it that the *fútbol*er plays and scores the next day, and that he will also continue to do so in many games thereafter. The *fútbol*er signs the pact in blood and heads for home.

The next morning the *fútbol*er receives a call from one of his coaches telling him that the team's starting striker fell in the shower and that he will need to fill his place. The protagonist can hardly believe his ears. In the game he scores a goal, has an assist and plays an integral part in one of the games monumental strategic attacks. Through the season, he scores many goals, bringing *Real Madrid* back to the top of the league and into the Champions League final against Milan. Recognized as one of Europe's leading goal scorers, the protagonist had seemingly redeemed himself. Although, before heading to England's Wembley Stadium to play the Champions League final match, he is drawn to the hotel's receptionist. The receptionist passes him a note telling him he must miss the penalty kick that he will take in the final minute of the game. Perplexed and distraught, the *fútbol*er goes through the motions of the match, and exactly as the receptionist had written on the note, he is fouled in the box in the final minute of the match and is left to take the most important kick of his life. He is left with a terrible decision to make. On the one hand he may comply with what the devil demands of him and miss the kick, which will cause him to be remembered forever as the failure that missed the penalty kick in the Champions League final. On the other hand, he may take advantage of this once in a lifetime opportunity and make the kick and be remembered forever as the player who, after being disgraced, rose back to the top of the Spanish League and scored the winning goal in the Champions League final. Navarro describes the scene of the penalty and what takes place immediately after:

Miró al portero y le pareció batible, empequeñecido. Oyó el silbato del árbitro. Lanzó. El portero se tiró a la derecha y el balón entró raso, no

muy fuerte, por la izquierda de la portería. Entonces estalló el estadio:

- Gol.

Corrió hacia la grada donde se amontonaban enloquecidos miles de hinchas del Real Madrid. Sus compañeros lo abrazaban ya, lo derribaban sobre el césped, lo ahogaban, lo ahogaban el griterío de los hinchas. Nunca había sentido tanto júbilo en la sangre, el júbilo le latía en las venas, lo traspasaba, vibraba de júbilo: era un júbilo que se oía, si respiraba, se tocaba, pesaba sobre su espalda. Con la cara aplastada contra la hierba de Wembley, mordía y olía la hierba de Wembley. Entonces le faltó el aire, boqueó, se oscureció el mundo silenciosamente, se levantaban los compañeros, lo dejaban solo, mordía la hierba, y la hierba se volvía tierna sucia. Le dolía el pecho. No había cumplido su pacto con el diablo. Se tocó el pecho, se miró la mano, vio la sangre. Todo se oscurecía. Estaba en un descampado, en la noche de un viernes de noviembre miserable, veía neumáticos de coches viejos. Trató de ponerse de pie apoyándose en el coche, un Volkswagen alquilado. Resbaló, manchó con sangre la carrocería. Pidió auxilio. Vio las piernas del hombre. El hombre volvió la cabeza: llevaba una camiseta del Real Madrid bajo un esmoquin verde, tenía una ceja dividida en dos, sonreía. El hombre dijo algo, pero el futbolista no lo oyó, porque se estaba muriendo (257-58).

This fictional tale by Justo Navarro is an eerie approach to the “kick-lit” genre because it takes the reader into another dimension where all the protagonist’s dreams come true, until the devil returns to collect his due. When the protagonist does not honor his part of the contract, he slips back in time to when he initially sold his soul to the devil. At this point he dies, leaving the reader to wonder if all the dreams he thought had come true, were simply figments of his imagination. When presented with the option of death and honor or life and disgrace, like any self-respecting Spaniard in the world of literature, our protagonist chose the romantic ending to his life – death and honor. The devil, however, tricked the protagonist and brought him back in time to when he first signed his soul over, thereby erasing all the glory he had experienced throughout the season. As in Calderón’s Golden Age play, *La vida es sueño*, Navarro causes the reader to question his perception of reality and ponder whether thought can overpower “reality”.

“*Ganas de quejarse, la verdad*” by Rosa Regàs could be considered another autobiographical anecdote pertaining to *fútbol*. In the story Regàs recounts, in the first person, when she invited a male friend to her home to watch Spain vs. Bolivia in the 1994 World Cup being held in the United States. The game was very important because a win assured that Spain would advance to the next round. Regàs invited her friend to watch the match and have dinner so that he could explain some of the intricacies of the sport to her. She wanted to better understand this sport that has so many people captivated.

One of Regàs’ first observations about the *fútbol* experience is the continuous flow of beer commercials. She says that, “*Lo de las cervezas confunde porque ante tanto*

clamor del público una nunca sabe si ha comenzado el partido o lo que está viendo es un mero anuncio” (261). Throughout the match, Regàs maintains that the simple fact she is a woman has nothing to do with her ability, or inability to grasp both the magnitude and the subtleties of the sport. However, whenever she asks a question that her friend is incapable of answering or explaining, he snaps at her saying, “*Tú qué sabes, el fútbol es mucho mas complejo de lo que te imaginas [...] Que no te metas, que tú no sabes de qué va*” (262-63). Clearly, this chauvinistic attitude frustrates her, but she is able to let it slide since she is well aware of the *machista* attitudes that traditionally accompany sports in Spain, especially the sport of *fútbol*.

Overcome with nerves for Spain to perform well and win, and in an attempt to avoid her friend’s chauvinistic insults, which are no doubt provoked by his nerves, Regàs heads to the kitchen to occupy herself with something else and distance herself and her mind from the game. In the kitchen, (a place where she obviously feels more comfortable since it is traditionally an area of the house designated for the woman) she listens to the game as she prepares their supper. When she returns, Spain has won the match 3-1, and she discovers that Spain has locked a place in the next round of the World Cup. She brings a high spirit to her friend, who is disgruntled with Spain claiming that *la selección* is not playing well and that everyone knows it, even the announcers are commenting on Spain’s poor performance. Regàs, completely frustrated, says, “*Pero bueno, ¿no querían que ganara aun a costa de que fallaran las estrategias del señor Azcargorta?* [Bolivia’s coach] *¿Qué querían, pues, treinta goles?*” (265). Her friend responds by reiterating, “*Que no es eso, mujer, que no es eso*” (265). Regàs ends the story by writing, “*¡Ganas de*

quejarse! La verdad' (265).

This story by Rosa Regàs reveals that she understands the game (on two levels) more profoundly than her friend. First, she sees that her friend demonstrates a less than modern vision of the game, in that he feels women are incapable of understanding its intricacies and that *fútbol* is a space designated only for men. The second is that her friend suffers from the Spanish plague of *victimismo* – even when Spain wins they lose. It is widely held that many Spaniards see the game in a different light than the rest of the world in that there are two competitions taking place. In the one competition, the game must be played well, (which is an opinion) and provide *espectáculo* to the spectators. The other competition is whether or not the game is actually won. If either of these goals is not accomplished, the game is essentially a failure. Many other schools of thought on *fútbol* adhere to the fact that it is important to play well, not necessarily provide *espectáculo*, but above all else, win. This stereotypically Spanish approach to the game is ideologically wonderful, but in actuality is very difficult to achieve on a daily basis. I believe this notion is rooted in the bullfighting culture of Spain. They seek a perfect bullfight, which claims that only a perfect kill can be celebrated. This is unreasonable, because even an extremely talented bullfighter is probably only capable of a perfect kill a few times in his life. Ernest Hemmingway sheds light on this notion in his book dedicated to analyzing and describing the intricacies of bull fighting in *Death in the Afternoon*.

You may never see it because the *volapié*, dangerous enough when properly executed is so much less dangerous than the *suerte de recibir* that only very rarely does a fighter receive a bull in our times. I have seen in it

properly completed only four times in over 1,500 bulls I have seen killed. You will see it attempted, but unless the man really waits out the encounter and gets rid of the bull with an arm-and-wrist movement rather than by tricking with a side stepping at the end it is no receiving. Maera did it, Nino de la Palma did it once in Madrid, and faked it several times, and Luis Freg did it (Hemmingway, 238).

With regard to *fútbol*, many recognize that it is wonderful to play beautifully in the streets, in practice and in the game, but at the level of World Cup competition, only one thing matters – winning. How this win is achieved is secondary, the only requirement is to play within the rules of the game. One of *fútbol*'s phenomenal elements is that the game is open for each individual's interpretation. Whether a group or culture prefers to play well, on their terms, or win by any means, is up to them. Jorge Valdano addresses this polemic issue throughout his work as a writer on the philosophy of *fútbol*. In the prologue of *Cuentos de Fútbol 2* he addresses the sport's complexities and explains that “*El largo viaje del fútbol a través del siglo está lleno de paradojas de este tipo*” (11). After witnessing Spain dominate and win, Rosa Regàs is frustrated from listening to her friend complain because he felt Spain did not play well. This, coupled with her being disrespected for being a female, who doesn't see the game in the same light as her friend and considers the final result the most important statistic, Regàs is in the right to have “*ganas de quejarse*”. Regàs experiences (possibly for the first time) the contradictory, complex, paradoxical and frustrating world of *fútbol* – which is essentially why so many people are passionately captivated by it around the world.

Manuel Vicente's *Fondo Sur* is a unique story in that it offers the reader the rare opportunity at a glimpse into *Real Madrid*'s extremist group, *Ultra Sur*. Vicente communicates an insider's knowledge of the group's social hierarchy and what many would consider a misguided voice of reason and logic that these *ultra* groups maintain. Whether his account into this mysterious subculture is accurate or not is difficult to determine, but the reader is left to assume Vicente has either been involved with one of these groups, knows someone in one of these groups, or has done extensive research to understand the infrastructure of the group. This is similar to Miguel de Cervantes' short story *La Gitanilla*, which offers the reader a unique vision into the mysterious subculture of the gypsies in Spain during the sixteenth century.

Manuel Vicente relates his tale through an omniscient narrator that recounts the story in the third person. This narrator explains to the reader that the members of this group come from all areas of the city and have no other form of friendship or contact than through the group. The narrator states a number of times how this group has no desire to befriend the other members of the group, but that they simply exist to heckle and terrorize people according to "their laws" throughout the game, which has no real connection to the game itself. The two elements that these individuals have in common and connect them are their young age (under 19) and their desire to live on the periphery of society (being drawn to criminal behavior and trouble).

The story is centered around the group's abnormal social structure, which is led by a teenager that earned his position through unwarranted violence. This individual makes the members of the group draw the letter "B" with a blue marker on their

foreheads. This will differentiate them from the rest of the fans not only as they enter the stadium, but while the game takes place. The “B” that the members of the group write on their foreheads stands for “Berberecho”, the leader’s nickname. The narrator describes that, during a match played earlier in the season, after *Real Madrid* scored a goal, one of the members of the group kissed Berberecho on the lips in celebration. Unbeknownst to this redheaded member of the group, Berberecho vehemently despises/punishes anyone that demonstrates any sign of love or sexual behavior toward another member of the group. After kissing Berberecho, the redhead received a vicious beating and was kicked out of the group. Despite being shunned, the redhead continued to still hang around the group, watching them from a nearby section. At the end of the present game that Vicente invites us to witness, a goal is scored by *Real Madrid*. Vicente’s narrator describes what happened in the *Fondo Sur* section of the stadium as the following:

La pelota entró por el ángulo y mientras sus camaradas se fundían en un abrazo dentro del júbilo, Berberecho sintió que algo parecido a una lengua de fuego le entraba también entre dos costillas. Cayó con la camiseta ensangrentada y los gritos de horror se confundieron por un momento con los alaridos que el gol había creado. Junto al cuerpo exangüe permanecía el tipo del peluquín rojo sonriendo. Berberecho falleció de este navajazo ya que la hoja del cuchillo no era de la misma sustancia inmortal que el grito engendrado por la victoria. Cuando el fiambre de Berberecho fue bajado por los camilleros el tipo del peluquín mandó detener la camilla y le estampó un prolongado beso en los labios

(355-56).

This contribution to the “kick-lit” genre shows a different aspect of the sport, and reveals what is widely considered the most negative side of *fútbol*. In his story, Vicente makes no attempt to justify the behavior of these teenagers; rather he uncovers the error in logic through which these groups operate. If anything, Vicente argues that these groups are simply adolescents who use the football arena as a social space where they can wreak havoc. Vicente’s story demonstrates the thoughtless actions of these groups as being similar to adolescents that vandalize and commit senseless crimes. It is possible that Vicente’s account is inaccurate, and that there is actually more structured thought to the actions, the violence and the crimes that these groups commit. Regardless, the important fact is that a work of “kick-lit” does not have to defend the sport of *fútbol*, and all that goes along with it, as legitimate, or respectful. Rather, a work of “kick-lit” can simply highlight the most negative aspects of the sport if that is the author’s desire.

This summary of the stories written by Spaniards in *Cuentos de Fútbol* demonstrates the variety of ways the genre can be approached, which defends the genre’s legitimacy as being as respectable, as profound, and as enjoyable as any other thematic approach to literature. *Cuentos de Fútbol* offers the reader fictional stories, verisimilar stories, non-fictional stories, and what could be considered autobiographical anecdotes. Some are directly related to *fútbol* and in others the sport of *fútbol* is a more distant aspect in the development of the narrative. *Cuentos de Fútbol* also contains a variety of extremely rich stories written by some of Latin America’s most respected writers: Mario Benedetti’s “*El césped*”, Alfredo Bryce Echenique’s “*Pasalacqua y la libertad*”, Roberto

Fontanarrosa's "19 de diciembre de 1971", Eduardo Galeano's "El árbitro", Julio Ramón Ribeyro's "Antiguibas", Agosto Roa Bastos' "El crack", Juan Villoro's "El extremo fantasma" and Osvaldo Soriano's "El penal más largo del mundo". "El penal más largo del mundo" is important for this study in that it was adapted into a feature length film by the Spanish production company, Ensueño Films, and directed by the Spanish Film director, Roberto Santiago. Another story that appears in *Cuentos de Fútbol*, "La pelota del trapo", was also adapted to the big screen. The film *La pelota del trapo* (1948) was directed by the famous Argentinean director, Leopoldo Torres Ríos, who made another film dealing with *fútbol*, *El hijo del crack* (1953).

The story "El penal más largo del mundo" was written by the famous Argentinean journalist and author, Osvaldo Soriano. Many of Soriano's works have been adapted to film and he contributed to the production of the cinematic adaptation of this "kick-lit" story, which has a number of variations from the original tale that will be analyzed in the following chapter covering *fútbol* and Spanish cinema. The literary version of the story is a fictional anecdote told by Soriano's narrative voice as an adult looking back on his childhood. Soriano's opening sentence is reminiscent of the famous opening line of Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quijote de la Mancha* which reads, "En un lugar de la Mancha cuyo nombre no quiero acordarme" (29). Soriano's omnipresent, nostalgic, and unreliable narrator begins his tale by proclaiming that, "El penal más fantástico del que yo tengo noticia se tiró en 1958 en un lugar perdido del valle de Río Negro, en Argentina, un domingo por la tarde en un estadio vacío" (in Valdano *Cuentos de Fútbol*, 323). The narrator goes on to recount the comical tale of a pathetic group of

over-aged *fútbol*ers in this small town of Argentina, that year-in and year-out were the laughing stock of their men's league. These anti-heros play for the club *Estrella Polar* and during this particular year they miraculously find themselves winning more matches than they lose. Eventually they make it to the final match of the league against *Deportivo Belgrano*, who earlier in the season had humiliated *Estrella Polar*, defeating them by seven goals. In the final match, which was played in *Deportivo Belgrano's* home stadium, *Estrella Polar* held strong and late in the match scored the go-ahead goal which would give them the league championship for the first time ever. However, *Deportivo Belgrano* only needed a tie to capture the title, since they had a better goal differential throughout the season. After *Estrella Polar* took the lead, the epileptic referee, who was hired by *Deportivo Belgrano* and also lived in the town of *Deportivo Belgrano*, felt pressure to see to it that the club from his home town not be embarrassed by a club as pathetic as *Estrella Polar*. He therefore called what those from *Estrella Polar* considered a completely unjust penalty kick in the last minute of the game. Overcome with frustration, one of *Estrella Polar's* defenders socked the epileptic referee, Herminio Silva, in the nose and knocked him unconscious. Not surprisingly, a brawl ensued and officials declared the match suspended until the following Sunday. This suspescion was due to the fact that tempers were high, the referee was unconscious and by this point there was a lack of sunlight.

Throughout the following week, the upcoming penalty kick was all the people of these two rival towns seemed to talk about. The goalkeeper for *Estrella Polar*, Gato Díaz, began to enjoy being in the spotlight and took advantage of his new found fame by

declaring his love for his town's beautiful blond girl, who was known as "*la rubia Ferreyra*". She succumbs to his sweet, yet pathetic effort to live the life of a true *fútbol* star and consents to accompany him to the movies during the week prior to the kick.

The warped vision that the broken men in this *Estrella Polar* have of themselves is clearly meant to be comical. One hysterical scene that communicates a slapstick approach to humor is reminiscent of Abbot and Costello's famous "Who's on first?" baseball skit. This scene of "*El penal más largo del mundo*" takes place half way through the week leading up to the final penalty kick and underlines how serious, yet pathetic the members of the club are. The team is playing cards together in the club after a training session in which they focused solely on practicing penalty kicks with Gato Díaz. Soriano communicates the scene as the following:

Díaz se quedo toda la noche sin hablar, tirándose para atrás el pelo blanco y duro hasta que después de comer se puse en escarbadientes en la boca y dijo:

–Constante los tira a la derecha.

–Siempre –dijo el presidente del club.

–Pero él sabe que yo sé.

–Entonces estamos jodidos.

–Sí, pero yo sé que él sabe –dijo el Gato.

–Entonces tirate a la izquierda y listo –dijo uno de los que estaban en la mesa.

–No. Él sabe que yo sé que él sabe –dijo el Gato Díaz y se levantó

para ir a dormir.

*–El Gato está cada vez más raro –dijo el presidente del club
cuando lo vio salir pensativo, caminando despacio (372).*

The night before the match Gato invites *la rubia Ferreyra*, to go on a bike ride by the river. When they stop for a break, he attempts to steal a kiss from her and she says she might allow him to kiss her at the dance on Sunday night, provided he saves the shot. Upon hearing this, Gato changes the subject of the conversation, which Soriano describes as the following,

–¿Y yo cómo sé? –dijo él.

–¿Cómo sabés qué?

–Si me tengo que triar para ese lado.

*La rubia de Ferreyra lo tomó de la mano y lo llevó hasta donde
habían dejado las bicicletas.*

–En esta vida nunca se sabe quien engaña a quién –dijo ella.

–¿Y si no la atajo? –preguntó él.

–Entonces quiere decir que no me querés

–respondió la rubia, y volvieron al pueblo (328).

On the day of the shot that was delayed by a week, our protagonist, Gato Díaz is successful and saves the shot. However, just before the kick was taken, the epileptic referee had a seizure from blowing the whistle too hard in the hot sun. The line judge disqualified the shot and another shot had to be taken. Soriano describes the final and official penalty kick that took place as the following:

El pelotazo salió a la izquierda y el Gato Díaz fue para el mismo lado con una elegancia y una seguridad que nunca más volvió a tener. Constante Guana miró al cielo y después se echó a llorar. Nosotros saltamos del paredón y fuimos a mirar de cerca de Díaz, el viejo, el grandote, que miraba la pelota que tenía entre las manos como si hubiera sacado la sortija de la calesita (332).

Soriano concludes the tale by telling of his encounter with Gato a few years after the epic save in which he found himself facing an even older and more broken-down Gato Díaz in a similar penalty kick situation. Soriano describes how after he scores the shot the goalkeeper convinced of his grandeur says, “*Bien, pibe. Algún día, cuando seas Viejo, vas a andar contando por ahí que le hiciste un gol al Gato Díaz, pero para entonces ya nadie se va a acordar de mí*” (332). The warped sense of stardom that Gato Díaz and the others in this men’s soccer league feel, is reminiscent of Cervantes’ most famous character, Don Quijote de la Mancha, who sees himself as an errant knight. Another aspect of “*El penal más largo del mundo*” very similar to Cervantes’ “*El Quijote*” is Gato Díaz’ courtship of the blond girl from the neighboring town, *la rubia Ferreyra*. In Cervantes’ masterpiece, Don Quijote decides that if he is to be a knight-errant he must have a beautiful blond to call his own. This seems to be what Gato Díaz also felt was a necessary element of being a star *fútbol*er. The entire scene of the adult *fútbol* league has a Quijote-*esque* feel to it, in that the players are as passionate, yet pathetic about being *fútbol* stars as Don Quijote was about being a knight-errant. Both sets of characters become overwhelmed with their passion to the point of seeing

themselves, and their approach to their passion, through a much distorted lens. The literary version of “*El penal más largo del mundo*” varies in a number of ways that will be uncovered in the film’s analysis in the following chapter covering the presence of *fútbol* in Spanish cinema. The following four sub-sections of this chapter are dedicated to providing an in-depth analysis of four of the stories written by Spaniards that appear in *Cuentos de Fútbol*: Fulgenico Argüelles’ “*Cuando los Balones se volvieron invisibles*”, Bernardo Atxaga’s “*Sobre el tiempo (mesa redonda con hooligan)*”, Carlos Casares’ “*Qué viejo estás y qué gordo*”, and José Luis Sampedro’s “*Aquel santo día en Madrid*”.

3.3.1: “*Cuando los Balones se volvieron invisibles*”

Cuentos de Fútbol opens with a story written by Fulgenico Argüelles, a recognized psychologist and author from Asturias, Spain. Argüelles’ story is titled “*Cuando los balones se volvieron invisibles*” and brings the polemic issue between intellectuals and advocates of *fútbol* to the foreground through a fictional tale that poses the question, “What if the sport of *fútbol* ceased to exist?” The protagonist of the story is Héctor Guerrero, an ex-*fútbol* player turned coach who is dealing with the loss of his passion and reflecting on the current state of society at large. Prior to the disappearance of *fútbol*, his country’s political parties, government, educational system, religion, press, health care system, entertainment industry and entire economic infrastructure was focused on the people’s passion for the sport of *fútbol*.¹³ One day, for no logical reason, all the balls used for *fútbol* simply vanished into thin air. More balls were imported but as soon as they crossed the boarder, they immediately evaporated. This caused mass hysteria. The market plummeted, there were mass suicides, the factories closed and there were various attempts to overthrow the government which had fallen into the hands of intellectuals that considered *fútbol* the plague of mankind. When the sport of *fútbol* disappeared, these intellectuals quickly formed a group called *Gobierno de Salvación Nacional*. Their first order of business was to outlaw all activities dealing with *fútbol*. Eventually they established the death penalty for any demonstration of support for the sport of *fútbol*. This caused the value of all *fútbol* memorabilia on the black market to skyrocket.

¹³ Clearly, the world that Hector lived in is meant as a parallel to the modern-day society of Spain.

Hector, having been a famous *fútbol* player and coach does not know what to do with himself. Throughout the story he attempts to accept this new world that surrounds him. He takes his last remaining *fútbol* album to the black market where he will make a respectable profit that his family can live on for quite some time. This process is very difficult because both parties need to assure their safety and anonymity, however he eventually finds a suitable buyer and negotiations are underway. Although since, so much time has elapsed his children have died from lack of nourishment. As a result of this, his wife leaves him and finds refuge with members of the terrorist group *Trece de Mayo* who had elevated the importance of *fútbol* to that of a religion. This group consists largely of members from the political party previously in office: *Fútbol al Poder*. Earlier, she had attempted to convince Héctor to join the terrorist group because their beliefs coincided with his, but he declined. Essentially, the world around Héctor was crumbling. War had been declared against *Trece de Mayo* and the country was in ruin, “*fue como una desmesurada y larga pesadilla que acabó convirtiendo aquella nación a la deriva en el reino de la pesadumbre*” (26).

“*Cuando los balones se volvieron invisibles*” was clearly written to provide the reader with an enjoyable text, but it can also be analyzed from a more profound perspective. Although these extreme beliefs and devastating repercussions from the loss of the sport of *fútbol* are presented as impossibilities meant to simply amuse the reader, it gives the reader the opportunity to truly grasp the role that the sport of *fútbol* plays in many countries around the world, as well as Spain. The way the country’s pastime is presented in the story as turning into an obsession seems absolutely ridiculous, but one

quickly comes to recognize how much the fictitious country that Argüelles creates actually resembles his country of Spain.

Argüelles also takes these two contrasting schools of thought, those who support *fútbol* and those who do not, and pits them against each other, and the final result is the outbreak of Civil War. This is obviously meant to be ridiculous and therefore humorous, but it also forces the reader to step back and realize just how ridiculous the root to many of the world's wars actually are. Many begin with a difference of opinion, then sides form and before anyone knows what happened, what was once a slight variation in opinion becomes 'good' versus 'evil'. In this sense, the way in which sides were drawn and the quickness with which the war escalated in "*Cuando los balones se volvieron invisibles*" is representative of the Spanish Civil War. Although the presentation of the war was meant to be humorous on the surface, Argüelles' representation of the radicalism of war expresses a more profound vision: the fanatical tendencies of man.

By the end of the story, Héctor is very distraught because although he has tried to accept the world without *fútbol*, there is nothing that excites him, nothing that moves him, nothing to ease his mind or distract him from the atrocities that are taking place all around him. This causes the reader to step back and imagine what the world might be like without sport, *fútbol* or leisure activities. The narrator describes Hector's emotions as the following:

Héctor Guerrero sintió lástima de aquel desastrado predicador, y de sí mismo, y del mundo entero, y pensó que también la esperanza es una especie de religión que no trae a los corazones más que dolor y que es

algo así como la antesala del infierno, y deseó con todas sus fuerzas convertirse en balón para volverse invisible (34).

3.3.2: “*Sobre el tiempo (mesa redonda con hooligan)*”

The second story of Valdano’s compilation is titled “*Sobre el tiempo (mesa redonda con hooligan)*” and was written by the Basque philosopher and writer, Bernardo Atxaga. “*Sobre el tiempo*” again pits intellectuals against *fútbol* fans. The story begins with the narrator making preparations for an intellectual round-table discussion that he plans to host. He wants the discussion to be centered around a general, yet difficult subject. He ponders a few possible topics for the round-table, such as: the depression caused from the dismemberment of the nuclear family; the problems with violence in *fútbol*; the relationship between adolescent violence and violence on the television. Although, he determined that none of these topics would suffice. Eventually, he decides to hold the round-table on what he calls “the topic of all topics” – time. He then invites all the letters of the alphabet (who are personified in the story) to attend his round-table discussion about time. Every letter makes sure to attend this round-table because they are sure that the topic of time will surely produce a very stimulating discussion. During the discussion they touch on theories of time from some of the world’s most renowned philosophers. The letter “K” supports the theories of Kant, while the “B” argues for Bergson. The “P” then tells a tale of how he came to the conclusion that time has a way of tricking people and that time simply passes without being noticed. After the “P’s” monologue the “H” stands up and says,

Pues yo quiero decir tres cosas. Lo primero, que soy un hincha, o para decirlo de una forma más moderna, un hooligan. Lo segundo, que yo no entiendo del tema que se está tratando hoy, pero que en mi opinión solo

hay dos clases de tiempo, Primer Tiempo y Segundo Tiempo (40).

The “D” interjects, “Y Descanso ¿no?”(40). The “H”, upset by the “D’s” interruption, shouts, “*Dejadme hablar ¡hostia!*”(40). and goes on to make his third statement. Which is to inform the round-table that *Paris St.-Germain* and *Milan* are playing in the European Cup Final at the same time that their round-table discussion is taking place. Upon hearing this, a vast majority of the alphabet finds an excuse to join “H” and watch the game at a bar. The few remaining letters continue the round-table discussion contemplating a variety of theories of time until the rest of the letters return from the game intoxicated with beer and passion. They continue to celebrate for a few hours and when almost all the letters have headed home to sooth their hangovers; the narrator offers the few remaining letters the opportunity to add any final comments to the round-table discussion. The “H” raises his hand and says there is an aspect regarding time that has him perplexed. The narrator asks him from what perspective and “H” says, “from the perspective of a hooligan I suppose”. “H” then proceeds to tell his story,

Pues me pasa que cuando mi equipo va por uno a cero cada minuto se me hace largísimo. Es como si el reloj se parara y como si el equipo contrario tuviera todo el tiempo para empatar. Cuando al revés, en cambio, cuando somos nosotros los que vamos perdiendo por uno a cero, mi impresión es la de que el tiempo vuela y de que nos va a resultar imposible remontar el resultado. No sé, me gustaría que alguien me explicara este misterio (52).

When no one is able to offer a logical response to this phenomenon, “E” recommends

that “H” write a letter to Einstein because he is the only intellect that “E” considers capable of tackling “H’s” question. Clearly, “*Sobre el tiempo*” is meant to be humorous, but within this interesting tale Atxaga offers an overview of many of the philosophical theories of time. In the end, the unassuming hooligan, of all people, brings a new aspect of dealing with the perception of time to the round-table discussion. In “*Sobre el tiempo*” Atxaga demonstrates the phenomenon that while consumed by the sport of *fútbol*, an individual can experience the strange sensation that the properties of time have changed. This notion coincides with the quote from Albert Camus, which proclaims, “*Toda la filosofía de la vida puede aprenderse dentro de un campo de fútbol*” (in González, 11).

3.3.3: “*Qué viejo estás y qué gordo*”

“*Qué viejo estás y qué gordo*” by the recognized Galician intellectual, Carlos Casares, is another story that made Valdano’s selection. Casares studied as a philosopher and was an editor and writer who formed part of the *Real Academia Gallega*. One of his contributions to the “kick-lit” genre is an autobiographical anecdote about his efforts to meet the mythical *Real Madrid* star of the sixties, Alfredo di Stéfano. The story is written in the form of a hate letter directed at di Stéfano. Casares makes his impression of the ex-*fútbol* star clear from the opening sentences, in which he writes,

Qué gordo estás, viejo. Y qué calvo. Bueno pelo nunca tuviste mucho, pero ahora mismo estás casi pelado por arriba, o descapotado, si quieres, mondo y lirondo como el culo de un niño. Tiene gracia que algún día te hayan comparado con una saeta rubia (103).

Casares ridicules all physical aspects of di Stéfano in a manner reminiscent of the famous poem Francisco de Quevedo dedicated to his Golden Age rival, Luis de Góngora’s nose. Casares clearly found the opening line of Quevedo’s poem, “*Érase un hombre a una nariz pegado*” (Quevedo, 63), as a point of departure for his story dedicated to ridiculing everything from di Stéfano’s lack of teeth to his pock-marked-frog-face.

In his letter, Casares reminds di Stéfano of the time they came face-to-face after a game that Casares attended with his friend and *Real Madrid* fanatic, Manolito Romero. Casares tells how the two rode a motorbike through the cold rain to attend his match and waited around for an hour after the game to secure di Stéfano’s autograph for their friends in their *Peña*. This adventure turned out to be disastrous because Casares saw his

idol in an entirely different light than he had hoped, and in the process, Casares also caught a terrible cold.

Casares explains that his inspiration to write di Stéfano came to him spontaneously as he was watching a match that the ex-*fútbol*er was arrogantly commentating for on the television. Casares brings out every flaw about di Stéfano that he possibly can. Regarding his eyes and mouth, Casares tells di Stéfano that, “*unos te saltan hacía a fuera y la otra se alarga excesivamente, igual que una raja que te atravesase la cara de oreja a oreja*” (in Valdano *Cuentos de Fútbol*, 103). He describes his Argentinean accent as:

Ese acento porteño cabrón que parece inventado para joder. Un acento que no se te ha borrado con el paso del tiempo, después de tantos años. [...] No niego que a veces tienes gracia, porque el mismo acento que parece inventado para joder, a veces parece también inventado para hacer reír (111).

Casares ridicules di Stéfano’s complexion by saying:

La desgracia de arrugas en la que se ha ido convirtiendo con los años. [...] El color de tu piel [...] era de la clase que posee esa gente a quien en mi tierra llamamos los rubiales, es decir sonrosada. O sea, como si acabase de ser lavada o fregada fuertemente con estropajo y con jabón. Debo decir que estos que llamamos rubiales, gente que está a medio camino entre los rubios y los pelirrojos, son considerados de la raza de estos últimos, lo cual significa que son parientes de Judas, que era pecoso

con tú y color zanahoria (110).

Casares comically explains that he is well aware of the character that people of this complexion possess because in his town there are two, “*ninguno bueno, como establece la norma, más bien cabrones ambos, incluso hijos de puta*” (110).

Casares describes his frustration with di Stéfano’s excessive use of *fútbol* anglicisms while announcing the game as a “*mamarrachada*” (112). According to Casares, di Stéfano refuses to conform to the proper Spanish terms that have been designated to describe the game. For example, while announcing the game, di Stéfano says “*córner*” instead of “*saque de esquina*”, “*dribling*” in rather than, “*regate*” and “*referee*” in place of “*árbitro*”. Casares mocks di Stéfano’s Argentinean accent saying, “*Eso, unido a la falta de dientes, hace que no resulte fácil entenderte cuando hablas, además de la cosa tonta esa del referee y del dribling, como la costumbre fea que tenéis en tu tierra de contar en dólares, otra idiotez*” (111).

In describing di Stéfano’s physique he begins by saying “*no me importa reconocer que estás hecho una birria, una pura cagada de hombre*” (113). He then describes in detail di Stéfano’s belly to the ex-superstar. Casares claims that di Stéfano not only has a sizable belly, but bellies on top of bellies.

La primera hace un arco que va desde el arranque del esternón hasta la línea que marca el cinto, es decir, aproximadamente hasta la altura del ombligo. La segunda queda ya debajo del pantalón. No ha que ser demasiado imaginativo para suponer que después viene otra, por lo menos (114).

Casares further describes di Stéfano's poor choice of clothes by saying,

A veces vas vestido de pura lástima. Como en el programa de esta noche, que pareces una mezcla de deportista y de señor. Para empezar, el polo que llevas puesto, no te va, ni por el color ni por el estilo de prenda que es. A los gordos como tú les sientan mejor los colores claros, y no ese bermellón trágico que vistes hoy, que te infla (114).

Although Casares seems continuously sidetracked by his need to point out di Stefano's personal and physical flaws throughout the anecdote, he eventually reaches the climax of the tale. He tells di Stéfano how regal he and his friends thought the *fútbol*er was and of the difficulties they went through to finally be afforded the face-to-face opportunity to obtain his autograph for their *Peña*. Casares describes the scene as a vivid memory that has stuck with him for years, but as something that di Stéfano probably does not even recollect in the slightest. Casares remembers di Stéfano leaving the stadium and signing a few autographs for those who put a pen in his hand. Casares tells di Stéfano about their efforts to get an autograph, saying,

Así llegaste a Manolito Romero, que te dijo a gritos que era para la Peña. A él no le tocó, por que en aquel instante habías conseguido llegar a empujones hasta el coche y ya te habías metido dentro. Entonces yo me acerqué a la ventanilla, introduje las manos y los codos para que no pudiera cerrar y te supliqué, por favor, que nos firmaras, que era para la Peña. Me miraste con cara de mala leche y dijiste: “Oye, pibe, déjame arrancar que te pego una hostia”. Fue en aquel instante, tan de cerca,

cuando por primera vez en me di cuenta de que tenías cara de rana (116).

Carlos Casares' "*Qué viejo estás y qué gordo*" tells the author's own account of how he came to realize that his childhood idol was human after all. Casares tells an interesting anecdote of how he once perceived his hero, and how upon meeting his idol, all that he once felt for him was lost forever. "*Qué viejo estás y qué gordo*" also tells the tale of the fallen hero and reminds the reader that although many of our idols seem superhuman when in front of a camera, many times they are not so majestic in everyday life. This story demonstrates Casares' evolution from youth to young manhood because it is during this time that he came to the realization that the glorified world that he was presented with was not as wonderful as it seemed. He no longer considered his childhood hero the embodiment of all that is good and therefore chose to leave the obsession for his hero behind to seek and embrace his own path through life.

3.3.4: “*Aquel santo día en Madrid*”

“*Aquel santo día en Madrid*” is an interesting science fiction “kick-lit” story written by the famous Spanish novelist, economist and member of the Real Academia Española, José Luis Sampedro. The tale is narrated in the first person by an alien that is on an expedition throughout the universe. The alien tells the reader that he has convinced the captain of his expedition to allow him to make a quick stop at Planet Earth so that he can be brought up to speed with the present-day religious practices of the dwellers from the planet’s most advanced areas. He states that, some years back, during his previous investigative expedition to Planet Earth he witnessed the Catholic Church attempting to modernize itself in the face of a massive reform. This new expedition was to provide him with new findings to log before heading back to his planet.

The alien/narrator decides to conduct his investigation in the country of Spain for two reasons. The first is because during his last visit, Spain was the maximum incarnation of Catholicism in the world. The Spanish government (which was directly tied to the Church) disallowed all religious freedom except for Catholicism and considered all Spaniards to be Catholic by birth. The second reason he decides to conduct his investigation in Spain is because he overheard that Spain had recently begun a political transition. The alien/narrator considered this transition’s religious repercussions to be very important to the aliens because if the people’s religious faith was strong enough, the aliens could stage the appearance of a messiah in order to control the earth dwellers.¹⁴

¹⁴ The alien/narrator tells his findings to a third party. It seems as though this third party is not from the planet earth, but interestingly, ironically and for obvious reasons, he communicates his ideas through the Castilian Spanish language as opposed to his native alien language. This story is reminiscent of Eduardo

The alien/narrator begins his investigation in high spirits because he recognizes that by pure coincidence he has arrived in Spain on a Sunday, the country's day of worship. This leads him to believe that his findings, with regard to religion, will be very accurate. Although, the alien/narrator's entire account is inaccurate because what he perceives as Spain's "new religious practice", is actually nothing more than a *fútbol* match. Many writers and intellectuals have claimed that the sport of *fútbol* is followed with religious proportions in modern day society, not only in Spain but also in other areas of the world. Carl Marx claimed that religion was the "opiate of the masses" and many now claim that religion has been surpassed by *fútbol* in this regard. Some recent studies that shed light on this notion are Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's, *Fútbol. Una religión en busca de un Dios* (2005) and Juan Villoro's, *Dios es redondo* (2006). Clearly, Sampedro's *Aquel santo día en Madrid* demonstrates *fútbol*'s present day fanatical following in Spain to be of similar, if not greater proportions to what the practice of Catholicism once was. At the same time the story offers the reader a glimpse into the modern day *fútboling* society from the outside looking in.

The alien/narrator is first led off course in his investigation when he incorrectly assumes that the masses of people flocking to the *fútbol* stadium are heading to church for mass. Sampedro sheds light on modern man's worship of *fútbol*. The alien claims that "*el mero comportamiento de las masas populares acudiendo a los templos y practicando el culto permitiría por sí solo actualizar el índice de religiosidad*" (312). The alien says that while flying over the capital city, he was able to detect an intense collective religious

Mendoza's science fiction novel, *Sin noticias de Gurb* that also relates alien observations of planet earth. Although, the observations in Mendoza's novel are satirical, Sampedro's are misconstrued.

following with his psycho-social sensors which detected strong waves converging toward a concrete point in the city – the temple/*fútbol* stadium (clearly *Real Madrid*'s Santiago Bernabéu Stadium). When the alien realizes that as the moment of worship draws near the influx of people, coming in busses, cars, trains and on the subway, have seemingly no other preoccupations during their day of worship, he states that there is no room for doubt that he is witnessing “*la celebración del culto nacional*” (313).

The alien joins the masses and enters the stadium/temple and is immediately taken aback. He claims that the architecture of the temple is very different from that with which he had previously been in contact, claiming that nothing reminded him of the structure of before – “*ni naves, ni retablos, ni altares*” (313) but only an enormous open-air grandstand that circled around a large rectangular space covered with grass. The alien makes note of the fact that this new architectural system is more similar to that of a *circo romano* than to that of the traditional catholic churches he had previously encountered. This observation is correct, and it strengthens the readers recognition of the evolution from “*panem et circenses*” to “*pan y toros*” to “*pan y fútbol*” and the opiate of the masses.

The alien decides the only religious symbols are the goals at each end of the field, which he describes as:

Tres maderos ensamblados entre sí y situados en cada uno de los lados menores del rectángulo. Dos postes verticales, algo más altos que un hombre, y un travesaño más largo colocado horizontalmente sobre ellos. Curiosamente, una red sujeta a los maderos parecía cerrar por detrás

aquella especie de puertas (313).

The only connection the alien is able to make between this “new religion” and the old is that the nets behind the goals might have some reference to Saint Peter’s occupation as a fisherman. This causes the alien to hypothesize that the new, prevailing religious practice in Madrid might simply be a surviving ancient local cult.

Nevertheless this new “religion” has left the alien stupefied. On the one hand, the alien was sure that he was witnessing a religious ceremony because “*no podía tener otro objeto semejante reunión del pueblo en el día santo de la ciudad tan fervorosamente católica*” (313-14). On the other hand, the alien questions whether or not it was possible for the cult to have experienced such a radical transformation over the relatively short period of time since his last visit. This observation by Sampedro of a rapidly evolving social climate in Spain forces the reader to recognize how drastically Spanish society has changed over the past 100 years – with the sport of *fútbol* now one of its central elements.

The alien continues to misconstrue basically every aspect of the game as a new religious practice. For example when the players come out of the tunnel, the alien assumes they are a new form of priest. The age of these youthful “priests” surprises him. He was logically expecting some long bearded fellows to control the ceremony. The alien further mistakes the game for a religious ceremony, which he hypothesizes as a struggle between good and evil. The alien comes to realize that the “good priests” wear white (the home team), and the “evil priests” wear dark red (the away team). The alien recognizes these colors as being historically symbolic on planet earth, and states that white symbolizes purity and red symbolizes evil.

As the match (or religious procession) took place, the alien came to a number of conclusions from his observations. He concluded that this struggle between good and evil was being dominated by the good because the amount of followers at the procession supporting the priests in white largely out-numbered the defiant supporters of the priests in red. The alien recognized that the fundamental object, the sphere with which the procession was carried out, was placed in the mathematical center of the sacred ground and that the struggle between good and evil was to begin.

The alien considers the “sacred sphere” (the ball) as representative of the world and the two sets of “priests” struggle to place the “sacred sphere” into Saint Peter’s fishing net representing the earthly struggle between good and evil. The alien concludes that the beliefs of this telluric religion are clearly represented through the worshipping ceremony, stating that:

por eso los sacerdotes emergen desde una cavidad subterránea y; por eso se ofician con el pie, que es la parte del cuerpo en contacto permanente con la Tierra. En cambio tocar la esfera con la mano constituye un pecado castigado en el acto, previo un toque del silbato ritual; instrumento, por cierto, con muchos precedentes míticos, desde la siringa del dios del Pan y el ney de los derviches danzantes hasta el flautista de Hammelin (316).

Throughout his investigation, the alien is taken aback and not exactly sure what to make of Spain’s “new religion”, stating that, “*Ciertamente, los españoles podrían haber cambiado de religión, pero no del apasionamiento con que la profesan*” (315). At the end

of the alien's investigative expedition, he is left with one overwhelming problem for which he cannot find the answer, "*cómo ha sido posible tan extremado cambio de la fe religiosa durante una transición de solamente pocos años*" (317).

This short science fiction story is very entertaining and through it José Luis Sampedro addresses the notion that the Spanish society's obsession, passion and opiate has shifted from Catholicism to *fútbol*. Through the story, Sampedro reminds the reader of the enormous changes that have occurred in Spanish society over the past 100 years since the introduction of formalized *fútbol*. "*Aquel santo día en Madrid*" compares the proportions of the present day fanatical following of *fútbol* in Spain to be similar to the previous following of religion. More importantly, it forces the reader to recognize the sport of *fútbol* as one of the most powerful social phenomena of the 20th Century.

3.4: Introduction and General Summary of *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*

After *Cuentos de Fútbol* was so well received in 1995, Jorge Valdano decided to take the project a step further and three years later compiled another group of “kick-lit” stories for publication – *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*. With *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*, Valdano decided to use stories of authors that had not contributed to *Cuentos de Fútbol*, with the exception of Uruguay’s famed writer, Mario Benedetti. All together *Cuentos de Fútbol* and *Cuentos de Fútbol 2* consist of forty-seven “kick-lit” tales from some of the Spanish-speaking world’s most reputable authors. With all of these stories placed in two volumes it becomes impossible to deny the “kick-lit” genre’s legitimacy. Through *Cuentos de Fútbol* and *Cuentos de Fútbol 2* the reader can easily see the wide range of viewpoints from which the genre can be tackled: fiction, non-fiction, science fiction, personal accounts and verisimilar anecdotes. In the prologue, Valdano states that in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*,

El fútbol es observado desde inquietudes tan diversas que estos cuentos parecen querer abarcar una órbita entera alrededor de la pelota, esa tierra en miniatura que bota agitando alegrías, tristezas, incertidumbres, amores, odios, ilusiones, rebeldías extraviadas, nacionalismos, en busca de identidades... Nuestros escritores metieron el pie (aquí sí somos reglamentarios) y sacaron una historia para que el fútbol juegue por otros métodos (13).

Cuentos de Fútbol 2 consists of twenty-four “kick-lit” tales written by Spanish-speaking authors. Fifteen of the twenty-four tales selected by Valdano were written by

Spaniards, the other nine were written by Latin American writers: Mexico's Luis Miguel Aguilar, who wrote "*El gran toque*"; Uruguay's Mario Benedetti, who wrote "*Puntero izquierdo*"; Colombia's Álvaro Cepeda Samudio, who wrote "*Desde que compró la cerbatana ya Juana no se aburre los domingos*"; Argentina's Humberto Costantini, who wrote "*Insai derecho*"; Uruguay's Javier García Sánchez who wrote "*El Uruguayo*", Argentina's Daniel Moyano, who wrote "*Tía Lila*", Chile's Antonio Skármeta, who wrote one of my favorite "kick-lit" stories titled, "*La composición*"; and Colombia's Pedro Sorela, who wrote "*Cespedología. Curso acelerado para inflabalcones primerizos*". Each of these stories are interesting, enjoyable and valuable contributions to the "kick-lit" genre but for the purpose of this study, which focuses on the "kick-lit" phenomena in Spain, I will be leaving them aside for future investigation and focusing on the Spanish authors whose "kick-lit" stories appear in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*. Along with Rafael Azcona's "*Gol*", Martín Casariego's "*El fútbol y la vida*", Ana María Moix's "*Un día, de repente, sucede*" and Juan Manuel de Prada's "*Vidas paralelas*", *Cuentos de Fútbol 2* consists of eleven "kick-lit" stories written by Spaniards. In the following pages, I will give a brief summary of each of these tales to demonstrate the diverse manner in which the genre of "kick-lit" has been approached by Spanish authors. The next four sub-sections will be dedicated to giving an in-depth analysis of four of the stories written by Spaniards in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2* to further demonstrate the diverse manner in which the genre has been approached by Spanish authors – men and women alike. As I did in the previous section, each story analyzed in-depth will have its own sub-section to separate it from the other stories in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2* and draw specific attention to the

approach and contribution these authors made to the genre. The stories that I have selected to analyze in-depth are Rafeal Azcona's "Gol", Martin Casariego's, "El fútbol y la vida", Ana María Moix's "Un día, de repente, sucede", and Juan Manuel de Prada's "Vidas paralelas".

The first tale to appear in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2* written by a Spaniard is Josephina R. Aldecoa's "El mejor". Aldecoa is a famous Spanish writer and pedagogue that is also recognized as having been a director of Madrid's reputable *Colegio Estilo*.

Colegio madrileño que se fundó en 1959, en plena dictadura franquista. Nacido de la necesidad de una escuela libre, moderna y europeísta, acogió desde el primer momento a hijos de intelectuales, escritores, artistas y, en general, a todos los que deseaban una educación diferente a lo que entonces era habitual en España ("Colegio Estilo.").

Aldecoa's "El mejor" is a "kick-lit" tale told from the perspective of a grandmother recounting to an implied sports journalist the story of her grandson's rise to *fútbol* stardom in Spain. The grandmother, named María, tells the interviewer about her *fútbol* playing grandson, Baldo; her husband, Juan (who had been a player for *Real Madrid*); and her son and her daughter-in-law (whose names are never revealed). From the very beginning of the grandmother's account of Baldo's ascent to *fútbol* stardom, we learn that she did not see eye to eye with her daughter-in-law, who adamantly opposed the notion that her son should chase his dream of becoming a *fútbol* star in Spain. Instead, María's daughter-in-law preferred that Baldo become a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer, or an architect. But María, whose husband had been a player for *Real Madrid* with "la saeta

rubia”, supported her grandson’s dream at every opportunity. She told the interviewer that she would defend him by saying to her daughter-in-law, “*Pero hija, médicos y arquitectos buenos hay muchos, pero un deportista como Baldo, de esos hay poquísimos...*” (60). She then justified this statement by telling the interviewer, “*Que no, que no lo digo sólo por lo que ganan, aunque eso también es importante. Lo digo porque mientras son jóvenes, son como reyes, como los reyes de ese mundo de ellos*” (61). María then tells the interviewer that her son, Baldo’s father, was easier to convince than her daughter-in-law in this regard. “*El padre, mi hijo, ése es más fácil de convencer. Le dijo a Baldo: Tú entrenas pero sigues estudiando ¿eh? Que la vida del deporte es corta ¿y luego, qué?*” (61).

María, (like many Spanish grandmothers) felt that she was the main force driving her grandson to be a *fútbol*er and that she was the first to influence him to chose this path because she bought him his first ball. She begins the interview by saying,

¿Y qué quiere usted que le cuente? Qué le va a contar una abuela. Yo de fútbol sé poco. Ahora eso sí, del chico lo sé todo... El primer balón se lo regalé yo. ¡Qué ilusión tenía! Era un balón de verdad. Pesaba... Que yo no sé cómo aquel chiquillo podía con él. Su madre torció el gesto porque ella no quería ni oír hablar del fútbol (59).

Although, María expresses that there had been a time when she questioned whether her role in influencing Baldo to become a *fútbol*er was the correct decision. This was when Baldo was hospitalized after the opposing team brutally fouled him in the box. María describe the situation to the journalist by saying,

Acababa de pasarle él la pelota al compañero que metió el gol cuando le entró el defensa enemigo y le dio tal golpe en la pierna derecha –porque hay que ver cómo juegan, a lo bruto– que me lo dejó tendido en el suelo... Yo que vi la camilla y el locutor que decía: ha sido importante, ha sido importante... y la cara de dolor que tenía mi niño... Yo creí que me moría. Sólo pensaba: ¿qué sentirán las pobres abuelas de los toreros, Dios mío...? Porque peor que la patada es la cornada del toro... Mi hijo me llamó en seguida para tranquilizarme. Lo dejaron aquella noche en la clínica. Su madre, como además de madre es enfermera, no se separó de él... Yo no podía dormir. Pensaba: La culpa es mía por haberle regalado aquel balón de reglamento... Pero qué alegría le dio aquel balón (65).

At times like these, when María questions herself, she remembers what her husband Juan once told her. He said, “*María, mujer, no ves, no te das cuenta que ese rato del partido, mientras lo ves si tienes la suerte de ir o mientras lo oyes por la radio, se te olvidan todos los problemas...*” (61). This phrase clearly shows that Aldecoa regards the notion of *fútbol* as an “escape valve” as a positive attribute. María tells the reporter that she cannot predict Baldo’s future, neither as a *fútbolero* or in any other regard. She says, “*si se tuerce la cosa podrá seguir con los estudios aunque sea de noche y trabajando de día, que no será el primero que lo hace. Y siempre tendrá el recuerdo de lo que fue...*” (65).

At times during the interview, looking back nostalgically on Baldo’s rise to stardom through commitment and struggle, María shows signs of emotion for the pride she holds for her grandson. At one point she says, “*Que no, hombre, que no, que no son*

lágrimas, que no lloro. Es esa luz de los focos que tienen ustedes para los fotos...” (65).

The final paragraph of Aldecoa’s story is the most climactic and demonstrates the author’s grasp of the passion that both men and women hold for the sport. Aldecoa ends her tale by writing that in the interview the grandmother María said:

Mire, yo también le pregunté una vez lo que usted me pregunta a mí, que por qué quería ser profesional en el fútbol. Y él me contestó: Porque quiero ser el mejor en algo y en esto lo voy a poder ser, estoy seguro... Allí sí que me escaparon las lágrimas. Porque me acordé de lo que contaba mi marido del Coppi, ese ciclista italiano, que decía: todos los hombres son iguales pero hay algunos más iguales... Y mi niño quería ser de los que no son iguales... Si yo creyera en algo, que no creo. Si creyera que el abuelo le puede ver mi Baldo desde allá arriba por un agujerito. Que puede ver mi nieto matándose por ser el mejor... (66).

Josefina Aldecoa’s “*El mejor*” is an important contribution to the “kick-lit” genre not only for the literary technique used by the author, whose narrator tells the story through an interview in which the reader is only offered that which is spoken by the interviewee, but also because it reveals a female perspective of the sport. Through “*El mejor*”, Aldecoa demonstrates her grasp of the value that many individuals place on the game and at the same time shows that the sport can be appreciated on a number of levels. Though the grandmother’s testimony, the reader can see the passion she has for the sport, which she claims to actually know nothing about. She does, however, know that through the sport she can watch her grandson chase his dreams, and witness the commitment and

dedication he exhibits. “*El mejor*” is a well-rounded “kick-lit” tale because through it Aldecoa reveals a female perspective of the sport – that of a grandmother distanced from the actual sport itself. The tale also embraces and captures the passion that many of us have for the game and depicts the notion of the sport as an escape valve in a positive light. Aldecoa highlights the struggle between intellectualism and the world of *fútbol* through the struggle she depicts between the *fútbol* player’s grandmother and the grandmother’s daughter-in-law. Aldecoa offers her romantic vision, which defends the idea that chasing one’s passion should be embraced when an individual is presented with the opportunity. Through “*El mejor*”, Aldecoa covers many “kick-lit” themes, which is why it is such a beautiful tale.

The next story written by a Spaniard in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2* is Juan José Armas Marcelo’s “*Como un mariscal de campo*”. Juan José Armas Marcelo is a Spanish journalist, biographer and novelist who received his degree in *Filología y Literatura Clásica* in 1968 from Madrid’s *Universidad Complutense*. Through “*Como un mariscal de campo*”, Armas Marcelo tells the sad story of, Rafael Mujica, an actual ex-professional *fútbol*er in Spain, who, when his career ended, earned his living as a concierge. During this stage of his life, Armas Marcelo describes that Mujica spent the majority of his time reflecting on his days as a *fútbol* star.

“*Como un mariscal de campo*” tells the tale of the fallen *fútbol* hero who is forced to live in pain because he is left to live a mundane life. His pain is the result of the fact that he once lived a very different lifestyle that has now vanished and only exists in a handful of peoples’ memories – the story’s narrator being one. His current situation

would not be so painful if he had never lived the life of a *fútbol* superstar because he would not be so in touch with the extreme differences of the two contrasting lifestyles. As a professional *fútbolero* in Spain he was well respected, because he dominated “*como un mariscal de campo*”. But now he is looked down on by many of his peers for his fall from grace. The narrator depicts him as an honorable man who maintains the morals and values while living the life as an ex-*fútbolero*. This is summarized in Armas Marcelo’s opening sentence, in which the narrator says, “*Nunca perdió el estilo de mariscal de campo, ni dentro ni fuera de los terrenos de juego*” (69). This statement is followed by an extremely long sentence describing the ex-*fútbolero* in more specific detail.

Mientras fue uno de los más celebrados y aplaudidos en el césped, todo el mundo le reconoció la casta, la finura y la distinción, y después también, cuando retirado del fútbol tuvo que emplearse como conserje de tarde en las dependencias municipales del Puente de los Franceses para sobrevivir, y se volvió musito, solo y casi mudo; mientras fue joven su figura atlética contoneaba su esbeltez masculina y sus atractivos poderes por todos los locales de moda de Madrid, y más tarde, tras la decisión de esconder el cansancio de sus recuerdos y la gravedad de los años bajo la vieja gabardina inglesa con la que se enmascaraba cada vez que aparecía en público, enrumbando lentamente su ritmo de paseo por Gaztambide arriba hasta alcanzar los umbrales del bar de Vallehermoso donde recalaba todos los días durante varias horas: cuando miraba de frente, atento, claro, serio como un comodoro que dirige la flota desde su puente

de mando, sin una copa de alcohol ni en el alma ni en el cuerpo, y cuando por el contrario soslayaba sus ojos a lo largo y a lo ancho con una mirada errática, huidiza, visajeando al veloz adversario al que había que cortar el paso antes de que pisara el área, el mismo tal vez que ahora se le escapaba entre las miasmas del aguardiente y la melancolía agridulce de las glorias viejas (69-70).

The narrator describes certain adverse situations that Mujica was forced to overcome during his life both as a *fútbol*er and later as an ex-*fútbol*er. The narrator related that Mujica would often eat lunch in a bar that had an old picture of him on the wall. This picture was taken during his triumphant years as a *fútbol*er. The narrator witnessed Mujica looking at the picture of himself in the *bar de Vallehermosa* and after Mujica's death, at the end of the story, the narrator reflects on this encounter stating, "*Y me acordé de la última vez que vi a Rafael Mujica mirándose en aquella fotografía, desde el otro lado del bar, como si mirara a un espejo en el que quería volver a encontrarse para siempre*" (84).

"*A veces es peligroso marcar un número de teléfono*" by Juan Bonilla is the next short story by a Spaniard (after Rafael Azcona's "*Gol*") to appear in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*. Juan Bonilla is a Spanish author who has written a number of novels and short stories. Two of his works have been successful enough to be adapted to film – his short story "*Nadie conoce a nadie*" and his novel *La Noche del Skylab*. Although Bonilla is considered a very talented novelist, he has received the majority of his recognition as a short story writer. His first publication of short stories, titled *El que apaga la luz* (1994),

was selected through a survey of critics, academics and authors in the magazine *Quimera* as “*uno de los mejores libros de relatos del siglo XX*” (“Juan Bonilla.”). In the year 2000, the Spanish newspaper, *El País*, included *El que apaga la luz* among the most distinguished works of Spanish literature of the past twenty-five years.

Bonilla demonstrates his talent for short story writing through his tale “*A veces es más peligroso marcar un número de teléfono*”, which appears in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*. “*A veces es más peligroso marcar un número de teléfono*” is a fictional “kick-lit” tale recounted in the first person by the narrator, whose name is never revealed to the reader but is implied to be Bonilla. Bonilla begins his tale by telling the reader that he had heard that 666 is Devil’s telephone number. He continues by saying, “*lo marqué, porque siempre he confiado en que la verdad prefiera refugiarse en alguna habitación de la literatura antes que someterse al aire libre de la realidad, un lugar obsoleto por el que circulan demasiados zombis*” (107). After dialing the number 666, he realized the rumor was true because the Devil’s secretary answered the phone. Bonilla admits that upon realizing this, he quickly hung up the phone because he hadn’t properly planned anything to propose to the Devil. Bonilla says that, “*Al menos ya sabía que, en efecto, el 666 era el número del diablo*” (107).

The following paragraphs consist of Bonilla contemplating what sort of a deal he could make with the devil. He addresses the reader directly as he describes his thought process, saying,

Hice una lista de las cosas que me hacían mucha más falta que mi alma para ser feliz. Eran las cosas que deseamos todos para ser favorecidos

por la felicidad, ya que yo soy un hombre muy corriente, o sea, estoy abonado al canal Deportivo, como la mayoría de ustedes, tengo que ahorrar para ser pobre, como la mayoría de ustedes, me emocioné con el último capítulo de Peter Pan, como la mayoría de ustedes, he votado a los conservadores como la mayoría de ustedes y he estado saliendo un par de meses con Marta Perramón como la mayoría de ustedes (107).

Bonilla's list of earthly desires initially consisted of having a house on the coast, an inexhaustible bank account, and enough sex appeal to seduce whomever he saw fit. After thinking it over a bit more, he thought, "*tal vez fuese más acertado solicitar sencillamente ser feliz, o sea, dirigirme directamente al fin perseguido eliminando los medios para acceder a él*" (108). After thinking this over, Bonilla abandons the plan saying,

En cualquier caso me desasosegaba la posibilidad de que el diablo pudiera convertirme en un monje tibetano, en un lector de prensa rosa, o en un forofó del equipo de fútbol de mi pueblo, gente que se las arregla para aparentar perpetua felicidad por no disponer de cosas mejores en las que ir gastándose la existencia. No me apetecía ninguno de esos porvenires (108-09).

When Bonilla contacts the Devil, he realizes the Devil is unwavering in his negotiation and only offers Bonilla the opportunity to change a single detail of his past. After just a short time of contemplating what he would like to change, an apparition appears to Bonilla of his childhood rival, Tono. Bonilla describes to the reader that Tono

was his rival “*en todos los aspectos, en todas y cada una de las disciplinas*” (113).

Bonilla says that the two competed in everything from mathematics to the one hundred meter dash. While Tono was the best goalkeeper in school, Bonilla was the school’s most talented goal scorer. Both youngsters were also in love with the same girl, Aurora Longobardo. Bonilla claims that Aurora chose to date Tono, not because he was nicer, more attractive, and more presumptuous than Bonilla, but because Tono heroically saved the final penalty kick (shot by Bonilla) of the school’s *fútbol* championship. Bonilla says, “*Yo lo recordaba así, y ya se sabe que la memoria es el lugar en el que de veras acontecen los hechos. De variar, pues, el recuerdo que yo tenía de aquel instante era en definitiva de lo que se trataba*” (114).

Bonilla states that after seeing the apparition of Tono, he realized the deal he was being offered by the Devil was the opportunity to correct that missed penalty shot from his childhood, in exchange for his soul. Since the Devil told Bonilla his soul was worth about as much as “*un sofá de segundo mano, una linterna, un botiquín repleto de fármacos caducos, una gastada edición de los “Cuentos de Navidad” de Dickens*” (111), Bonilla felt the Devil was offering him a wonderful opportunity. Prior to making the deal, Bonilla said, “*Si me ofrecía una pegatina de Sharon Stone para mi coche a cambio de mi alma con sus abdominales recién fortalecidos, aceptaría*” (113).

Once Bonilla realized that he could be afforded the opportunity to return to that moment in his life and vindicate himself, he jumped at the opportunity, saying, “*Eso es lo que pedí y eso me concedieron. Volver de nuevo a entonces*” (114). The Devil then drew up the papers, writing, “*Su alma me pertenece a partir de este instante. Yo a cambio le*

devuelvo a aquella tarde” (114). Almost immediately after signing the document, Bonilla found himself at the exact moment when the referee called a penalty kick for his team with only a few minutes left in the game. Bonilla says that as soon as the penalty was called he insisted to his teammates that he take the shot because he was sure his attempt would be successful. Bonilla describes the situation as the following:

Me dirijo al punto de castigo. Una seguridad me fortalece: alguien me está protegiendo, sé que no puedo fallarlo. Siento que la mirada de Aurora se adhiere a mi nuca. Achico mi nerviosismo exhalando todo el aire de mis pulmones. Cojo carrerilla. Me acerco al balón con convicción. Dirijo la mirada hacia un lado, y disparo hacia el otro. Tono se lanza sobre la pelota. Todo sucede a cámara lenta. Veo como se estira y albergo la seguridad de que no podrá alcanzarla, pero logra despejarla primero y recuperarla luego. Y en ese momento me acuerdo de mi pacto con el diablo, y grito que no puede ser, que hay que invalidar la jugada, y le protesto al árbitro (118).

Unfortunately, Bonilla did not realize that the Devil had simply afforded him the opportunity to return to that moment in his life. Nowhere in the pact did it say that Bonilla would score the goal and therefore change his life. In this moment, Bonilla realizes that he had been tricked by the Devil and understands that *a veces es más peligroso marcar un número de teléfono*. Bonilla’s duality as a real-life author and the narrator of this fictional tale is exposed in the final paragraph of the story. He describes the locker room setting and his frustration from having missed the kick and being tricked

by the Devil. He then emphasizes the dimensions a “kick-lit” novelist can enter through his craft. In this case, he does so to redeem a missed penalty kick that has haunted him for years. The final paragraph of the story reads as the following:

Y me tiendo sobre el suelo del vestuario, mientras arriba ya claman a los vencedores. Y cierro los ojos y me pongo a esperar que pasen todos los años que faltan hasta ese día en que vi, en una greguería de Pedro Jesús Luque, que el número del diablo es el 666, y lo marqué porque los años me engañaron haciéndome confiar en que la Literatura es ese refugio en el que uno puede transformar por fin en gol un penalti fallado mucho tiempo atrás (119).

The next story by a Spaniard to appear in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2* is “*Tréboles y margaritas*” by Jorge Cela Trulock. With “*Tréboles y margaritas*”, it is clear that Jorge Cela Trulock followed in his Nobel Prize winning father, Camilo José Cela’s footsteps. By writing “*Tréboles y margaritas*”, Jorge Cela Trulock continued the family “kick-lit” legacy. “*Tréboles y margaritas*” is a tale that embraces the beauty of the sport of *fútbol* as seen through the eyes of someone who finds inner peace by escaping reality and entering into the *fútboling* utopia. Throughout the tale, Cela Trulock’s narrator shifts between recounting memories and events in the first person to recounting them in the third person. This technique of narration gives the tale a dream-like quality. This is fitting because through the tale it is clear that Cela Trulock is making a parallel between the peacefulness of a dream and what the goalkeeping protagonist considers the peacefulness of the sport of *fútbol*. This is specifically the case during the warm-up before the referee’s

“*despertador*” (141) sounds, and the chaos of “real life”/“the game” begins. Trulock makes this comparison obvious when his protagonist tells himself,

Ahora, a cuidar bien este huerto entre los tres palos. Y sobre todo no me dejes despertar de este sueño de juego y aventura entre la hierba y la vegetación. Es la mejor forma de ir pasando la vida. Sin grandes cosas malas, tampoco buenas, claro.

Dentro de una hora, cuando comience a tumbarse el sol y la luz se empieza a querer difuminar lentamente, o cuando el sol vaya escalando poco a poco las alturas del mediodía, ahí, entre esos tres palos y la hierba, entre esos cuatro costados templados al amanecer, el portero se estira mientras espera que suene el despertador del árbitro, el timbre del reloj, las señales que anuncian el cambio de actividad, el paso del descanso al trabajo (143).

Cela Trulock’s protagonist is a goalkeeper who cherishes the hour during warm-up because he describes it as the only pocket of time when he is able to appreciate and reflect on his job as a goalkeeper. But as soon as the game begins, he is no longer able to reflect and relax because all of his attention is focused on the game. During the match his nerves and the task at hand overcome him. However, it is the hour during warm-up that Cela Trulock’s goalie truly cherishes because it is during this hour of pre-game that the six-yard box – a danger-zone that he must defend during the game – is simply a relaxing utopia filled with “*tréboles y margaritas*”.

“*Muchas ocasiones*” by Manuel Hidalgo is the next story to appear in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*, Valdano’s compilation of “kick-lit” tales. Manuel Hidalgo is a Spanish journalist who has worked for the magazines *Cambio 16* and *Fotogramas* as well as the newspapers *Diario 16* and *El Mundo*. Much of his journalistic work is dedicated to critiquing and analyzing film. In 1988 he was the director and host of the Spanish television program *Tal Cual*, which consisted of interviews and reports pertaining to Spanish culture. Hidalgo has written a number of novels including *El pecador impecable* (1986), *Azucena, que juega al tenis* (1988), *Olé* (1991), *Todos vosotros* (1995), *La infanta baila* (1997), *Días de Agosto* (2000) and *Cuentos pendientes* (2003). He has written screenplays and participated in the making of a number of films such as *Una mujer bajo la lluvia* (1992), *Grandes ocasiones* (1998), *Nubes de verano* (2004) and *Mujeres en el parque* (2006). For this study, Hidalgo’s most important work is his “kick-lit” tale appearing in his short story collection, *Cuentos pendientes*, titled *El portero*. *El portero* was adapted to the big screen by Gonzalo Suárez in 2000. Hidalgo has also written a number of notable film studies, *Carlos Saura* (1981), *Fernando Fernán Gómez* (1981), *Conversaciones con Berlanga* (1982), *Francisco Rabal* (1985) y *Pablo G. del Amo, montador de sueños* (1987). Clearly, Manuel Hidalgo possesses a passion for the sport of *fútbol*, literature and film and he does not hesitate to overlap them when he has the opportunity.

Through “*Muchas ocasiones*”, Manuel Hidalgo tells the tale of a man from Madrid named Antonio who uses the *fútbol* match between *Real Madrid* and *FC Barcelona* as an excuse to escape his family for a few hours so he can dedicate some

“quality time” to his mistress, Teresa. Antonio had initially planned to watch the match with his twelve-year-old son, Toño, his wife, Julia, and his mother-in-law, doña Julia. But since he had been having a lunch break affair with Teresa, an auditor who arrived at his office three months ago, Teresa was now asking him to spend quality time with her during the weekend. The narrator of the tale describes Teresa by saying,

Teresa era una chica resultona, con buen cuerpo, aunque algo pasada de kilos. Teñido de platino, vestía un poco hortera, con botas altas y así, y las uñas pintadas de morado sin venir a cuento. Muy pálida de piel. [...] Antonio le sacaba veinte años, pero qué importaba (186).

When Teresa complained to Antonio that their relationship did not extend beyond their lunch break, he responded, “*ya verás, un sábado, vamos a quedar tú y yo. Deja que me organice*” (186).

Antonio plotted with his friend, Jesús, to get him out of the house on Saturday so he could spend time with Teresa. He had Jesús call his house and claim to have an extra ticket to the *fútbol* match between *Real Madrid* and *Barça*. Initially, he would pretend to be a good father, refuse Jesús’ offer, and opt to watch the game with his family, knowing full well his wife would recognize the opportunity he was being offered and insist that he accept Jesús’ ticket. Surely, she would console their son, Toño. The scheme went exactly as planned and seemed to completely fool everyone in his home, except of course his mother-in-law, who after overseeing the entire situation, said to Antonio, “*Tú, a lo tuyo*” (185).

When Antonio arrives at Teresa's apartment, she brings him a beer and a piece of *empanada gallega* that she made for the occasion. Almost immediately, Antonio says, "Oye, Tere, vamos a ver un poco el partido, ¿eh?, porque, claro, se supone que yo estoy en el campo, ¿comprendes? Algo tendré que decir cuando vuelva, ¿no?" (187). Teresa understands and accepts, and Antonio turns all of his focus to the match. Eventually, Teresa becomes annoyed with the lack of attention Antonio is giving her and when he realizes he says, "Oye, Teresa, perdona, pero es que esto está al rojo vivo. Si te parece, hacemos una cosa. Mira, vemos la primera parte tranquilamente y, luego, en el descanso, nos lo montamos, ¿vale?" (189). To this, Teresa responds, "¿Quieres decir que echaremos un polvo en diez minutos?" (189). Antonio realized Teresa's frustration and consoled her while watching the rest of the first half of the match.

During halftime, Antonio put the game aside and focused his attention on Teresa. As the two finally were paying attention to each other and began to kiss, the doorbell rang. Teresa quietly went the door to see who it was and Antonio reinstalled himself in the living room in front of the television. Teresa looked through the peephole of the door and saw that it was her mother. Shocked, Teresa said, "Antonio, mi madre. Mi madre, Antonio, un compañero del banco" (191). Teresa quickly opens the door, as if she were casually watching the game with a friend from work. The narrator describes the scene by saying, "En el salón, junto a Teresa, había aparecido una mujer de unos sesenta años, con un traje tipo Chanel, de imitación, de color calabaza, y una bolsa de El Corte Inglés en las manos" (191). She had come to give Teresa two skirts that she had tailored for her daughter since Teresa had recently put on some weight. As she entered the room, Teresa

introduced Antonio as a friend from work who had come over to watch the match with her. Antonio courteously greeted the *señora*, going as far as to kiss her on the hand. The narrator describes that Teresa's mother then took a quick glance down toward Antonio's hands and found what she was hoping not to find: "*el anillo de casado. Antonio se dio cuenta*" (191).

Teresa tried the skirts on, to appease her mother, and hopefully send her on her way so that she could spend the rest of the match alone with Antonio. But her mother, who was also a fan of *Real Madrid* and especially of the club's center-forward, *Raul*, didn't hesitate to plant herself on the couch and watch the entire second half with Antonio and Teresa; talking the whole time. The narrator described her as, "*Una madridista fanática, aunque, según ella, el fútbol no le interesaba*" (193). The second half of the match was uneventful, and the game ended in a tie. All parties were disappointed with the afternoon's outcome. The group said their goodbyes and Antonio headed for home.

Antonio arrived back home and was greeted by his wife at the door who instantly laid into him by saying, "*¿Se puede saber qué cabeza tienes? ¿Se puede saber cómo me haces estas cosas?*" (193). Unable to know exactly how to respond, Antonio simply asked, "*¿Yo?*" (193) Julia went on to say, "*Tú, sí, tú, que te me vas al fútbol, en pleno enero, a cuerpo, sin coger una trenca in nada. Te habrás pillado una pulmonía*" (193). Relieved, Antonio agrees with her and says that he was very cold throughout the entire match and he thinks he caught a sniffle. Julia sits him down at the table, brings him some soup and consoles him for having witnessed such a boring game. She says, "*Que mala*

pata tienes, pobrecito. Para una vez que vas al campo, ni meten goles, ni ganan, ni nada. Los madridistas, es que no os coméis una rosca” (194). His son, Toño, chimes in by saying, “*Vaya porquería de partido, papá*” (194). Antonio then looked to doña Julia, to get an impression of her take on the situation. She was reading the magazine, *¡Hola!* in silence until Julia and Toño began questioning Antonio’s abnormal lack of appetite for his wife’s *empanadas*. Julia says, “*Chico, con lo que te gustan las empanadillas, Si por ir al campo, se te va a quitar el apetito, no te sale a cuenta. Te digo yo que no te sale a cuenta*” (195). Toño then chimes in, “*¡Con lo bueno que hubiéramos visto el partido en casa!*” (195) and Antonio responds by shamefully holding his head and saying “*Desde luego hijo, desde luego*” (195). To this doña Julia finally puts down her magazine and in an all-knowing manner ends the tale by saying, “*Dejadle, dejadle. Cada uno sabe muy bien cuál es su conveniencia*” (195).

Through this analysis it appears that Manuel Hidalgo simply used the pretense of an important *fútbol* match as an escape mechanism for Antonio to sneak away from his wife and family and participate in his extra-marital affair. By the conclusion of the story, it is implied that Antonio shamefully recognizes the error of his ways and realizes that he is blessed with a loving family from which he should not stray. Although this is the central theme of the story, Hidalgo is also true to his goal of attempting to write a veritable “kick-lit” tale and gives a variety of in depth *fútbol* coverage of the match. As Antonio watches the match he speaks aloud in an effort to help Teresa gain an appreciation of the game by explaining certain tactics that he feels would lead the team to success. After Raúl launched the ball over the crossbar with only the goalkeeper to beat,

Antonio exclaimed, “*Tenéis que aprovechar las ocasiones, coño. Al Barça no se le puede perdonar. Si tienen un coladero en la derecha, entrad por la derecha y no os empeñéis en bombear balones al centro. Que Nadal es mucho Nadal, joder*” (188). On a number of occasions Hidalgo reverts to giving in-depth *fútbol* coverage of the match, through which he also demonstrates his ability and craftiness as a journalist.

The next story in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2* written by a Spaniard, is Ramón Irigoyen’s “*El ahorro es de abejorros*”. Irigoyen is a philosopher, poet, author, and a recognized Greek translator from Pamplona. The language he uses in his poetry is vulgar, aggressive and at times full of rage, while other times his language is quite tender. This abnormal use of language has caused him to gain the reputation as being one of the counter figures to the school of Spanish poets called, “*los novísimos*”. The “*novísimo*” poets are characterized as maintaining formalized freedom: rejecting traditional Spanish literature while using traditional literary techniques. Irigoyen’s tendency to use language that borders on the brink of being offensive can be seen in “*El ahorro es de abejorros*” when he mixes poetry with vulgarity and tenderness to describe the sensation that a *fútbol* fan has when his favorite team scores. He writes:

Nuestra pasión de hinchas alcanzó los límites normales que alcanzan las pasiones, y que sólo se pueden describir en términos sexuales. Por ejemplo, sólo el infinito placer que puede deparar un polvazo sublime, en el que has tenido en tu imaginación la sensación de haberte tirado a la vez a todos los tíos y tías buenas de Europa, Asia, África y Oceanía, puede equipararse a lo que siente un hincha cuando su equipo logra colar el

balón en la delicada vagina de la red, que abraza los tres palo, mientras estalla una tormenta de mariposas locas que aúllan y aplauden frenéticamente en las braguetas (203).

Through “*El ahorro es de abejorros*”, Irigoyen tells the story of how his protagonist, who seems to be Irigoyen himself, learned to properly manage his money. He begins his tale by explaining how, throughout his childhood he despised his father for his extreme stinginess. As an adult, Irigoyen describes that he had trouble managing his money. That is, until one day when the new president of his beloved club, *Osasuna*, stated in an interview how he managed a feat that no other president in the league had been able to accomplish: “*acabar la temporada con superávit*” (205). Irigoyen recounts that the *Osasuna* president described the key to his success by saying, “*Es muy sencillo: hay que administrar el club igual que la economía doméstica, o sea, siempre gastando menos de lo que se ingresa*” (205). The rest of the story Irigoyen describes the affect that statement had on his life. At one point, Irigoyen describes the statement as being, “*digna de Epicuro, de Buda, o de esa media docena de genios cuyos doctrinas han cambiado la vida de las naciones*” (206).

In addition to the multitude of ways in which Irigoyen describes how this statement changed his economic situation, this “kick-lit” tale is relevant for the depiction Irigoyen gives of the state of Spanish *fútbol*, and his depiction of the club rivalries as they pertain to the country’s historic political rivalries. Irigoyen’s description not surprisingly reveals how these club rivalries are also prevalent in households that sit on the border of regions. He describes his family’s situation by saying,

Mi madre era hincha total del Zaragoza y yo, en cambio, era hincha furibundo del Osasuna y sólo hincha, en segunda instancia, del Zaragoza. Mi madre, como tanta gente de Tudela, no dejaba de sentir una secreta aversión por Pamplona y por todo lo que la capital de la provincia Navarra representa. A ella, que es extremadamente orgullosa, le habría encantado que la capital de la provincia fuera Tudela. Y la frustración de que no lo fuera, junto con la proximidad geográfica, la había llevado a identificarse plenamente con Aragón y, en consecuencia, como aficionada al fútbol, sentía pasión por el Zaragoza (202).

Irigoyen also gives some insight and his opinion on the polemic issue regarding the state of Basque Nationalism, when he addresses the situation by saying, “*no estará de más recordar que Navarra es una provincia tan privilegiada por sus paisajes como por esos cachondos fueros, heredados del Antiguo Régimen, y que la derecha más reaccionaria de esta región se los ha sacado un poco de las pelotas*” (201). Irigoyen also sheds light on the Spanish National Team’s lack of success in international competition when he hypothetically contemplates his death and what thereafter should be the economic well-being of his children by saying “*si un día sufro un infarto de emoción, por ejemplo, ante la prácticamente imposible victoria final de la Selección Española en una Copa del Mundo – pueden llegar a necesitar este dinero ahorrado*” (208).

Although “*El ahorro es de abejorros*” consists of both memories and insight into the state of Spanish *fútbol*, the tale is centered around Irigoyen’s description of his youthful attitude of resenting his father for being so “*tacaño*” and respecting his mother

for mocking her husband's frugality by saying, "*el ahorro es de abejorros*". Irigoyen describes how, after being enlightened by the Osasuna president's statement, he gained a newfound respect for the penny-pinching ways of his father throughout his childhood. As the story concludes, Irigoyen states that,

Este cambio de vida también afectó radicalmente a la valoración del carácter de mi padre. Hasta entonces siempre lo había visto como un maldito tacaño. Pero desde que saneé mi cuenta corriente, para mí ya mi padre empezó a ser un inteligente y hacendoso ciudadano, que para bien suyo y de su familia administraba ejemplarmente sus ingresos (208-09).

The next story written by a Spaniard to appear in Valdano's *Cuentos de Fútbol 2* is Joaquín Leguina's "*El gol del triunfo*". Joaquín Leguina is a Spanish politician and socialist intellectual, who aside from his political activities, has written over ten novels and a variety of essays. With "*El gol del triunfo*" as one of his works of literature, Leguina serves as yet another example of the Spanish intellectual classes that has broken the taboo and openly demonstrated his passion for the sport of *fútbol* through the medium of literature.

"*El gol del triunfo*" is one of my favorite "kick-lit" tales in that it offers the reader a story filled with intrigue, passion, love, mystery, deception and jealousy. Leguina's tale is a detective story, recounted in the first person by the protagonist whose name is never revealed. The story begins with the narrator describing the build-up to the up-coming match between *Real Madrid* and *Barcelona*. He was invited to attend by his childhood friend, José, who was a player for *Real Madrid*. The narrator describes that

José had been going through a rough spell with the club. He was thirty-one years old and many of the fans were recently expressing their disapproval of his play. Leguina demonstrates his knowledge of *fútbol* and his skill for writing “kick-lit” through his narrator who describes the relationship he has with José and José’s abilities as a *fútbol*er.

The narrator says:

Como cualquiera, yo conocía a José, un futbolista internacional, desde muy joven, cuando aún jugaba en Oviedo. Fue un fichaje sonado, el media-punta que buscaba el Madrid. Tenía, y tiene, dotes que nadie niega. Una inteligencia superior para manejar los espacios, lo que le permite pasar la pelota al hueco por donde aparecerá un compañero, o estar en el sitio por el cual transitará inexorable el balón. A ello une una gran potencia de tiro y un manejo excepcional de la pelota en los desplazamientos largos. Pero la práctica del fútbol, cuando se está en la cumbre, exige una concentración que tan sólo se puede mantener con la suerte de cara, en el campo y en la vida, y la suerte se le había torcido a José unos meses atrás (213-14).

This story, which is focused on the life of José, begins with José entering his long-time friend’s office (our narrator). José approaches our narrator, who is a lawyer in Madrid, because the *fútbol*er is afraid his beautiful young wife, Etelvina, might be cheating on him and he wants to find out the truth. The narrator responds to this by saying, “*Está bien, encargaré una investigación. No es caro pero puede resultar, ¿cómo decirlo?, desagradable*” (215). Immediately after the meeting, the narrating lawyer calls

Mendiondo, his friend from law school and asks him to work for them as a private investigator. A week later, Mendiondo returns to the lawyer's office and confirms that Etelvina is having an affair with an older engineer named, Fransesc Dexeus i Cerdá. Mendiondo says that, besides dining in fine restaurants and dancing the night away, the two often attend *Acuarela*, a swingers club.

The next day, the lawyer calls his long-time friend into his office to give him the bad news. After looking at Mendiondo's paperwork and photos, José says he wants a divorce. Upon hearing this, the lawyer tells him not to act too hastily and calmly explains that, "*las personas solemos ser más complicadas de lo que aparentamos. Sobre todo en lo tocante a sentimientos. Es un golpe, soy consciente de ello, pero si rebajas el orgullo, el amor propio y también la ira, te sentirás mejor. Probablemente, ella no es más miserable que tú y que yo*" (220). To this José responds, "*Pero bueno, me traiciona desde no se sabe cuándo... y me sales con ésas. ¿Eres abogado o eres cura... o psicólogo...?*" (220).

The next day Etelvina arrives at the lawyer's office and he presents her with Mendiondo's findings. After perusing the paperwork she tosses them aside and exclaims, "*Saberse espiada no es agradable*" (221). The lawyer cuts to the chase and asks Etelvina if she loves José, or if she wants a divorce. To this she proclaims that she loves her husband and explains,

No he querido hacerle daño a él, ni hacerme daño a mí. El sexo es muchas cosas. Es posesión, expresión del amor, de la pasión, del cariño, de la ternura... pero también es un jugo esgarrado. Es el cielo y es el infierno.

Yo debo a mi marido lealtad, pero de ello no se deduce que él sea propietario de mi cuerpo, de mi alma, de mi libertad. Lo que he hecho tiene trascendencia para mí, pero no era mi intención que la tuviera para él (221).

At the end of their conversation, Etelvina tells the lawyer that she will speak with her husband and explain the reason for her actions. She says that she hopes that her husband will be understanding and willing to work with her because she loves him and is not ready to lose him.

One week after the lawyer's meeting with Etelvina, José calls his old friend and says, "*Hemos decidido darnos un tiempo. Quizá tenías razón, siempre hay que ponerse en el lugar del otro*" (223). A month later, the narrator explains that he saw the couple and that they seemed very happy, "*como sólo lo están los enamorados recientes.*" They tell him that they are happy and are even considering having a child. This drastic change in attitudes in the face of such a difficult situation causes the narrator to question how they were able to overcome their differences, so he again hires Mendiondo, this time to spy on the two of them. A week later, Mendiondo returns and says that Dexeus is out of the picture, but that José and Etelvina now frequent *Acuarela*. But since José is a famous *fútbol* player, they are careful to protect his identity. José waits in the car as Etelvina enters the club where she invites a couple to join them back at their house. Mendiondo then concludes the description of his findings saying, "*Detalles de la orgía no te puedo dar, a no ser que... pero eso es peligroso, ilegal, ya sabes*" (224).

While recounting this investigation, the narrator jumps back-and-forth between the details of the investigation and the details of José's match against *FC Barcelona*. José entered the match as a substitute fifteen minutes into the second half and although he had been through a very rough month and a half, both on and off the field, his luck was changing. The narrator describes that after entering the game and getting involved in a few plays, "*José amagó un regate y, rodeado de tres jugadores contrarios, soltó un pase de seda entre un bosque de piernas. Amavisca sólo tuvo que empujarla. El Bernabéu respiró. Etel se abrazó a mí, y apoyando la cabeza en mi hombro susurró: Es el mejor... en todo*" (223).

After the game, in the car ride to meet with José, Etelvina asks the lawyer what he thought of the match's outcome and José's performance. The lawyer responds, "*Un fenómeno. Espero que con las chicas del Acuarela también lo sea*" (225). To this, Etelvina broke into laughter and much to our narrators surprise responds by saying, "*Ya veo que has tomado muy en serio tu oficio de espía. Te vendría bien pasar de mirón a coprotagonista, del patio de butacas al escenario. Creo que te puedo ayudar en ese trance. Esta noche de celebración puede ser muy larga*" (225). Leguina ends his tale happily as the narrator describes how upon hearing Etelvina's proposal, the hair stood up on his arms and neck and his heart began to pump with excitement, "*La vida, tan avara, de tarde en tarde da sorpresas agradables*" (225).

The next tale by a Spaniard in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2* (after Ana María Moix's "*Un día, de repente, sucede*" and Juan Manuel de Prada's "*Vidas Paralelas*") is Soledad Puértolas' "*De Zaragoza a Madrid*". Soledad Puértolas is a well-respected Spanish

novelist and essayist who has published a great number of works throughout her literary career. Her contribution to the “kick-lit” genre, “*De Zaragoza a Madrid*” is a verisimilar tale told in the first person and the reader has no reason to believe these are not the real-life memories of Puértolas herself. Through this story, Puértolas recounts her memory of falling in love for the first time. The love story is intertwined with the description of her life while growing up in Spain, which, as she divulges, was greatly influence by the sport of *fútbol*.

Puértolas explains that when she was fourteen her family moved “*de Zaragoza a Madrid*”. This move was difficult for her because the world as she knew it had been changed in more ways than she had ever imagined possible. In Zaragoza, she spent her free time on the school’s large playground, getting dirty as she explored the garden or played ball with the other children. The playground of her new school in Madrid was much less conducive to a youngster seeking adventure. It consisted of a single basketball court, which was controlled by the school’s dictatorial leaders and overrun by the masses of students. Puértolas describes, “*Así que me aburría en los recreos de mi nuevo colegio, me sentía de lo más sola y desasistida, y no hacía otra cosa que desear que el tiempo corriera y se precipitara y sonara cuanto antes la campana anunciando ya su término*” (269).

Puértolas explains that her lack of participation during recess was actually what helped with her acceptance into a small clique of girls. This group did not consist of the type of girls she wanted to befriend, but since Puértolas was left with no other option, she accepted their friendship. Puértolas describes the girls that she calls “*las vagas*” as:

Estas niñas, que también existían en mi viejo colegio, no querían ensuciarse ni estropear su peinado, se pintaban las uñas a escondidas, al menos, las cubrían con esmalte transparente, llevaban frasquitos de perfume en sus faltriqueras, y hablaban en susurros de chicos y citas secretas (269).

Puértolas admits that normally she would not have chosen to be associated with this group of girls, but since she was desperate to be a part of something, she joined their clique.

Puértolas describes how it was through this group of “*vagas*” that the sport of *fútbol* became a part of her life. She says that, much to her surprise, her new group of girlfriends in Madrid often talked about *fútbol*, and especially about *fútbol* players. Many of the girls in the group had brothers who played the sport and the girls, therefore followed their brothers and their brothers’ friends’ closely. Puértolas remembers that, “*Lo que cambiaba aquí era que las chicas eran admitidas en ese círculo sagrado. Admitidas de determinada manera, ésa era la verdad, pero ellas parecían encantadas, se creían imprescindibles, casi protagonistas*” (271). According to Puértolas, the girls simply attended the games and sang songs in an effort to animate their team and show support of the players they so admired.

After attending a number of these Sunday morning *fútbol* matches, Puértolas admits that she secretly fell in love, for the first time in her life, with one of the players. Puértolas’ problem was that she had hopelessly fallen in love with Nacho, the best player on the *fútbol* team and the most popular boy in school. Two of the girls in her group were

also seriously (and openly) in love with Nacho. The other girls in the group were at least partially in love with him. When he scored a goal, all the girls would jump up and down, hug each other and scream in unison. Puértolas explains that Nacho's success on the *fútbol* field, resulted in this boy, whose image never left her mind for an instant, becoming more and more distanced from her with each goal he scored because according to the author,

Era el chico más solicitado y admirado y yo era una simple advenediza. Sólo si finalmente fracasaba y se derrumbaba, sólo si las dos pertinaces enamoradas y el resto de sus admiradoras le dejaban de considerar el mejor de los hombres, yo tendría mi oportunidad (272).

Although Puértolas promised herself that she would wait for him for eternity, one day she found that Nacho had mysteriously vanished from her thought. The main reason for Puértolas' loss of interest in Nacho was that his parents had sent him to another country in an effort to force him to focus on his studies and leave his childish dreams of being a *fútbol*er behind. Eventually, Puértolas also became distanced from the group of "vagas" and before she knew it she was in the University where she was happy once again. Her nightmares from high school seemed a thing of the very distant past.

While in the university, Puértolas recounts that she was gaining confidence and becoming more and more independent, while putting all her focus into her studies. One day, while studying in the cafeteria of her department, she saw Nacho leaning up against the counter. She was shocked to see him there and although she claims that at that time she was not attracted to boys as clean cut as he was, she couldn't take the chance of

losing touch with Nacho, so she invited him to have a cup of coffee. Puértolas remembers that Nacho seemed out of place in the university. He told her that he had spent a few years in the United States where he studied law, but that he was not interested in what he studied or the political excitement that surrounded the universities in the United States at the time.

The two began to see each other quite frequently, and they would often sit in the cafeteria of her department and have a drink together. According to Nacho, he preferred the cafeteria of her department to that of his because there were more girls there. They often talked about the past that they shared in common, which had been a glorious time for him. Nacho was shocked to hear that it was such a difficult era for her. Puértolas never revealed that she had been madly in love with him during that period. Those feelings for him seemed very distant to her and now she simply saw him as a friend. Regardless, as they would sit and talk in the cafeteria, Puértolas often noticed girls gazing at her jealously for being in Nacho's company.

Frustrated with his current situation, Nacho asks Puértolas if she thought he was a good *fútbol* player and if she thought he should have dedicated himself entirely to the sport. She said that "*nunca había visto jugar nadie como jugaba él*" (276). Puértolas recounts that eventually the two no longer crossed paths, but that she learned he had returned to playing *fútbol*. Shortly thereafter, she remembers hearing his name on the radio broadcast of a game and then she saw him playing on the television. "*Pensé en llamarle porque merecía felicitaciones; pero no lo hice*" (276).

Puértolas eloquently concludes her story by relating that now, years later, she often hears Nacho commentating a game on the television...

cuando eso sucede, durante un rato sigo atentamente el juego, tan atentamente como lo seguía cuando estaba enamorada de él sin ninguna esperanza, incluida en aquel grupo de amigas con las que no tenía nada que ver pero a las que me tenía que aferrar porque estaba sola en el mundo y no quería ni pensar en ello, y pienso, sobre todo, mientras escucho sus comentarios, en aquella mañana lenta en la que, envueltos en el humo del bar de mi facultad, frente a una sucesión de vasos de espantoso vino hablamos de Marcelino y de mi amiga del colegio, quizá la última vez en que nuestras vidas estuvieron frente a frente, quizá una influyendo en la otra, y la verdad es que me quedo un buen rato con la mirada fija en el televisor, oyendo su voz, por si aparece (276).

Through “*De Zaragoza a Madrid*” Puértolas offers the reader what seems to be a non-fictional anecdote of her past. She describes the connection she had to the sport of *fútbol* through Nacho: the boy who was her first love. Puértolas’ relationship with Nacho, although physically distant, stayed with her throughout her life and was an obvious link connecting her to the sport of *fútbol*. This “kick-lit” tale also offers the reader a glimpse into the relationship that many women in Spain have with the sport of *fútbol*. Although they may have little interest in the sport itself, they are at times connected to the game at the highest levels, through the men that they are involved with. This causes some men to be envious of these women because they have managed to become a part of the

professional *fútbol* environment without actually developing any expertise or knowledge, for that matter, of the game. Regardless, the women involved with *fútbolers* play a very important role in their lives, just as in any other profession. The most interesting aspect of “*De Zaragoza a Madrid*”, lies in Puértolas’ incorporating and questioning the existential elements of random chance and fate into her story. Had these elements not been a part of the anecdote, I doubt if Puértolas would have even bothered relating the tale. Through this tale, the reader and Puértolas are left to ponder whether the conversation she had with Nacho (in which she told him she had never seen anyone who played *fútbol* like him) played a role in influencing him to chase his dream and become a professional *fútbol*er.

“*El saque de Cela*”, written by the famous contemporary Spanish author, Francisco Umbral, is the next tale by a Spaniard to appear in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*. Through “*El saque de Cela*”, Umbral tells his account of the evening Camilo José Cela was recognized for receiving the Noble Prize for Literature at an *Atlético Madrid* match. This night, designated to honor Cela’s literary accomplishment, actually took place in *Atlético Madrid*’s Vicente Calderon Stadium and serves as another link between *fútbol* and literature in Spain. The fact that Umbral dedicated a short story to his experiences during the awards ceremony furthers that link.

Umbral’s non-fictional anecdote tells how he was invited, along with a number of other honorable members of the intellectual community, by the President of *Atlético Madrid*, Jesús Gil, to attend the match in the presidential box and honor their colleague’s achievement. The match was against *Real Valladolid*, the club that Umbral supported, and he relates that when he saw Jesús Gil, the *Atlético Madrid* president told him,

Vas a ver un partido estentóreo, Umbral, que ti te metes mucho conmigo, pero yo sé que me quieres y lo que me gustaría es que vinieras más por aquí, vas a ver hoy a tus chicos, los del Valladolid, que vienen a sufrir, y aves qué equipo tengo yo esta temporada, pucelanos a mí, leches (311).

Umbral describes that among those invited to the presidential box were “*otros vallisoletanos ilustres*” such as Miguel Delibes (another famous Spanish figure of “kicklit”), Joaquín Calvo-Sotelo, Marienma, Carril and Olano, along with many others.

According to Umbral, during a telephone conversation he asked Delibes if he would be attending the match, Delibes responded by saying, “*cómo vas a eso, Pacorris, pero si son unos mantas, los de aquí son unos mantas*” (311). After being recognized, Umbral states that Camilo (Cela) sat down next to him to watch the match. Umbral wrote that,

El partido era muy aburrido, como todos los partidos, con esa tristeza que tienen los deportes dominicales y los toros, porque la tristeza del domingo por la tarde no hay Copa ni Liga que la resuelva. Una tarde de domingo sólo la levanta la mujer de un torero, pero no era el caso. Es cuando la calle de Alcalá se pone cachonda de mujeres de pidaliana de picadores, que son como mesnaderos de Menéndez Pidal (312).

Shortly thereafter, Umbral began to notice that although he was in the Presidential Box, the cold was still bothering his throat so he went to the bar to have a cognac. At the bar he bumped into María Eugenia Yagüe and Natanael, who he describes as his “*ángel rubio y gideano, alta flaca, hermosa y cansada, displicente y como dejándose llegar*” (313). Umbral and Natanael carry on a conversation about how bored they are with the

fútbol match and the entire social gathering, while Umbral reflects on all the times he had kissed her. Eventually she asks, “¿Quieres que salgamos huyendo hacia otro sitio?” (314). He says, “Espera, que tengo que despedirme de todos esos” (315). Natanael responds, “No te despidas a nadie” (315). The two escape the social scene filled with “vallisoletanos ilustres” into Natanael’s black Alfa Romeo, “felices y urgentes, a escondernos el uno en el otro, no sé hacia dónde, o sí lo sé” (316). Umbral learns the next morning *Real Valladolid* had lost 3-1 saying, “Y me volvió la punzada morada y joven de aquellos viejos domingos sin novia ni equipo presentable” (317). Umbral ends his tale reflecting on what Miguel Delibes had told him on the telephone: “Si son unos mantas, Pacorris, son unos mantas” (317).

Patxo Unzueta’s “*La enfermera y el futbolista*” is the penultimate story by a Spaniard in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*. Patxo Unzueta is a journalist from Spain’s Basque Country, whose work is dedicated to defending Spanish nationalism, and opposing Basque separatism and terrorist groups such as *ETA*. With “*La enfermera y el futbolista*”, which was published in the Spanish newspaper *El País*, on August 28, 1986, Unzueta demonstrated his ability as an author of “kick-lit”. “*La enfermera y el futbolista*” is a strange tale divided into three parts, each told in the first person from the perspective of different narrators. “*La enfermera y el futbolista*” is an erotic, jaw-dropping tale that comes to a dark and yet pathetic climax. Through this tale, Unzueta demonstrates to the reader just how much freedom an author can have when creating a work of literature.

The first section of the tale relates the fictional action of a youth *fútbol* match that took place in Spain’s Basque Country in 1959. This part of the story is recounted by one

of the team's substitute players sitting on the bench. In this section, Unzueta demonstrates his talent as a journalist, his knowledge of *fútbol* and his skill for describing in detail the actions that take place during a match. This talent can be observed in the second paragraph, which Unzueta relates through the narrator on the bench:

Traspaso el Vacas la línea del centro y levantó la vista oteando el horizonte. Asúa, desmarcado, agitaba el brazo pidiendo la pelota. Justo detrás del número 11 de su camiseta, al otro lado de la valla, Mari Asun y las demás metían la bulla acostumbrada. El Vacas no tuvo dificultades para esquivar el número 8 de ellos, que le había salido al encuentro. Desplazó la pelota ligeramente hacia la derecha, como si dispusiera a seguir el avance en solitario, pero en lugar de hacerlo giró de improviso y envió un centro largo hacia la izquierda (321).

This entire first section is dedicated to recounting the events of the match that lead up to Goyo Asúa's injury. Asúa's injury occurs while attempting to avoid the opposing team's goalkeeper only to collide with the goal post. Unzueta's narrator relates the event as the following:

El hachazo de éste, propinado desde atrás, arrastrando la bota por la hierba como una guadaña, alcanzó su objetivo. Goyo, impulsado por su propia inercia, salió catapultado hacia delante y pudo ver, en pleno vuelo, junto a su cara, la asombrada del portero, que salía a su encuentro, antes de ir a estrellarse de lleno contra el poste derecho de la portería (322).

With this description, the first section of "*La enfermera y el futbolista*" abruptly ends.

Goya Asúa recounts the second section of the tale in the first person as he looks back on the time that he spent in the hospital. It begins with Asúa stating, “*Así es que, resumiendo, salí por los aires y fui a estrellarme contra el post de la portería. Conmoción cerebral y fractura del escafoides de la mano derecha. Debí caer en mala postura*” (323). Asúa recounts how, during his first day in the hospital, he came to and passed out a number of times as a result of the pain in his head. Asúa describes how when he fully gained consciousness, he was delighted to find himself in the care of Nurse Mari Luz L. Echevarría and for the first time in his life he falls in love. He was thirteen years old.

Asúa claims that later in the evening the team came by the hospital to check on him and informed him that the match ended in a draw, 2-2. Asúa remembers, “*Pero francamente, el fútbol había dejado de interesarme y, por otra parte, no tenía yo la cabeza para tanto bullicio como el que poco tiempo después comenzaron a armar*” (325). For this reason, Mari Luz asked the visitors to leave. As she fixed the blinds and served Asúa *café con leche*, she asked him about his family situation. Asúa explains that his father is a chauffeur and will be gone all week, alluding to the fact that the youngster will be left in her care. This is all he tells Mari Luz, keeping the rest to himself, “*(O sea, lo de mi madre en agosto y que por eso me habían mandando interno a los Escolapios de Bilbao.)*” (325). This side note implies to the reader that Asúa’s father was out of the picture and that his mother had recently died, leaving him an orphan.

As the days went on, Asúa secretly watched Mari Luz’s every move and became extremely attracted to the nurse. One night he is so infatuated with her that he cannot

sleep. He is anticipating her return in the morning when he will confess his love for her. But the next morning a Nun was working in her place. She gave him some painkillers that made him sleep. When he awoke again, Mari Luz greeted him. She noticed that the bandage around his head was falling off, so she sat down beside him and began re-wrapping it. Looking back on the situation, the narrator Asúa, recounts the day's events as the following,

Se acercó a la cama y, al igual que había hecho la víspera, se puso a arreglarle la almohada y a colocarme bien el vendaje de la cabeza, que se había aflojado un poco durante la noche. Otra vez los bultos subiendo y bajando, subiendo y bajando. Tenía un olor especial, como el de la ropa lavada y tendida en una campa. Volví a darle un beso en su pecho izquierdo. [...] Fue entonces cuando ella, en lugar de apartarse y decir “¡Qué haces, chaval!”, giró un poco y me acercó el otro pecho, y lo besé también (326).

Asúa explains that this happened again the next day and the day after. Each day their encounter became more and more erotic and the second section of the tale ends.

The third section of “*La enfermera y el futbolista*” is told in the first person, from nurse Mari Luz’s perspective. Her narration opens by stating, “*Es una tontería, pero la verdad es que me alegré cuando al entrar en la 202 vi que el futbolista no había tenido ninguna visita, y que le habían quitado el vendaje, y que sonreía al verme*” (330). Mari Luz reveals how, during every encounter with the adolescent, she was aware of him watching her. She also hoped to ease his pain in any way she could. In doing so, she

alludes to the fact that she is suffering from a lost love which caused her to become quite angry at times. She substitutes the anger she holds for the man she refers to as “*el ingrato Alberto*” by showing love to Asúa.

The story’s strange twist comes in the last paragraph, after Mari Luz describes the sad gaze on Asúa’s face as being comparable to that of “*Toy*”. Unable to help herself she sits next to Asúa on the bed and says, “*No te preocupes, que aunque no venga tu padre ni esa novia que tienes por ahí, yo me quedo contigo*” (331). After saying this Mari Luz describes the following:

Dicho lo cual noté que a él también le brillaban los ojos y que un poco después me miraba fijamente a los pechos. Razón por la que le atraje hacia mí y otra vez le dije que me diera besos, pero no uno ni dos, sino una docena o más, cosa que hizo mientras yo le agarraba suavemente por la parte de atrás de la cabeza, como solía hacer con Toy cuando dejaba que me mordisqueara en ese sitio. Y tanto me acordaba de él como del ingrato de Alberto cuando, en un arrebató raro que me dio, desabroché mi bata y yo misma le puse el pezón entre los labios, dejando que enterrase su cara en la carne mientras pensaba para mí que ojalá el futbolista supiera ser tan cariñoso como mi perrito Toy, al que y hacía casi tres meses que habíamos dado tierra, poco después de haber resultado atropellado por el tranvía de Santurce, y no tan bruto como el ingrato ingeniero industrial de San Sebastián (331).

Patxo Unzueta's, "*La enfermera y el futbolista*" is a strange tale that deals with a wide variety of cultural taboos: pedophilia, necrophilia, and bestiality: the harshest taboos that he alludes to in the tale. But by combining these extremely erotic situations and dividing the tale into three parts, each more strange than the previous, told by three different narrators, one could possibly assume that in his tale, Unzueta was attempting to portray the young Asúa having dream-like hallucinations while he lay in his hospital bed. In "*La enfermera y el futbolista*", Unzueta attempts to break many cultural and literary taboos, the most obvious (for the sake of this study) being that of combining literature with the sport of *fútbol*, as he does so descriptively in the first section of the tale.

The final tale by a Spaniard to appear in Jorge Valdano's *Cuentos de Fútbol 2* was written by one of Spain's most famous contemporary figures of literature, Vicente Verdú. Verdú was born in Elche in Spain's province of Valencia in 1942. Through his contribution to *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*, titled "*El Elche C. de F.*", Verdú proudly demonstrates the place he holds in his heart for his hometown club. Through "*El Elche C. de F.*", Verdú exposes himself as an intellectual who is not afraid to proclaim his passion for the sport of *fútbol* in Spain, the life-long connection he has with his hometown club, or how (like many people) he superstitiously looks to the sport of *fútbol* to predict outcomes for situations in his life that are out of his control.

Through "*El Elche C. de F.*", Verdú tells a verisimilar tale in which he watches his hometown club, *El Elche*, play the county's most powerful club, *Real Madrid*, in Madrid's *Estadio Bernabéu*. Realizing that *El Elche* was very much the underdog, Verdú, describes to the reader how he had superstitiously expected that, should his club pull off a

win or a draw, he would receive word that he had been hired for the job at Price Waterhouse for which he had recently applied. Connecting the outcome of one activity with the outcome of another (unrelated) activity, both out of the control of an individual, seems to be common activity among those who passionately follow the sport of *fútbol*. Verdú describes the deal he made with himself in the opening line of the tale, writing, “*Al ser ilicitano tuve una revelación: si el Elche conseguía vencer o, al menos, empatar con el Real Madrid en el Bernabéu, yo lograría aquel empleo para el que me solicitaba la Price Waterhouse*” (335).

Verdú describes the roller coaster of nervous emotions he experienced during the last thirty minutes of the match: from the moment *El Elche* went ahead 2-1 until the end of the match. During this time he conversed with his children who were attending the match with him. His children had been born in Madrid and Verdú believe them to be *Real Madrid* fans. But on this day, he thought that maybe they would be rooting for the underdog from their father’s hometown. With not even fifteen minutes remaining, Verdú tells the reader that his youngest son looked up at him and said, “*Me parece que van a ganar el partido, papá*” (336). To this Verdú responds, “*Van a ganar ¿quién? Somos nosotros los que les vamos a ganar a ellos*” (336). Verdú questions whether his son’s comment was a premonition. Anxiously questioning himself, and continually modifying whether the pact that he made with himself would be more effective should *El Elche* win or tie, Verdú watches the final ten minutes of the game in agony. With just minutes remaining, *Real Madrid* scores a goal, and then in the eighty-ninth minute, they score the game winner. All the confidence and self-esteem that Verdú was ready to take home with

him had vanished. After the goal was scored, he recounts, “*Algunos de los jugadores abatidos se acostaron en el césped y otros se agacharon llevándose una mano hasta la frente. Me fijé en su disgusto, y eso atenuó momentáneamente mi dolor. A la mañana siguiente debía recibir la respuesta de Price Waterhouse*” (337).

The following day, Verdu describes the hopeless feelings he experienced waiting by the telephone for the call from Price Waterhouse. He explains that his wife had been loosing confidence in him over the past few months. He wished he could somehow overcome the fate that he was destined to suffer from being an *Elche* supporter: like many superstitious *fútbol* fans, Verdú believes that his life will somehow magically resemble the success or failures of the *fútbol* club he supports. By the tales conclusion, Verdú never reveals whether he received the call from Price Waterhouse or not, but he portrays a peacefulness regarding his existence by describing a newfound beauty that he noticed in his wife.

Through this brief summary the works of “kick-lit” by Spanish authors that make up *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*, my goal was not only to demonstrate the distinguished literary figures that dedicated works to the genre, but also to demonstrate the enormous possibilities through which the genre can be tackled. The “kick-lit” tales by Spaniards in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2* demonstrate that the genre can be approached through a fiction and non-fiction tale, an anecdote, a detective story, an erotic tale, and can be told from the perspective of men as well as women. The possibilities within the “kick-lit” genre are endless. Before offering my in-depth analysis of the remaining four tales by Spaniards that appear in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*, I’d like to end this section with a quote by Jorge

Valdano that can be found in the book's prologue. The quote demonstrates what Valdano's overall intention was when he decided to compile these stories for *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*.

Cuentos de Fútbol 2 empezó como una travesura para intentar que el pensamiento dejara de desconfiar del músculo y esa contribución no hizo sentir orgullosos porque encontramos la complicidad de admirados autores dispuestos a romper el tabú. Pero los proyectos sólo triunfan cuando duran y los prejuicios sólo se vencen insistiendo (12).

3.4.1: “Gol”

“Gol” is the fourth story that appears in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*. It was written by Rafael Azcona and was initially published in *El País Semanal* on July 20, 1997. Rafael Azcona spent his career as a screenwriter who wrote scripts for a number of highly-recognized Spanish films including, *El cochecito* (1960) directed by Marco Ferreri, *El verdugo* (1963) directed by Luis Garcia Berlanga, *El año de las luces* (1986), *Belle époque* (1992) and *La niña de tus ojos* (1998) all directed by Fernando Trueba, *¡Ay, Carmela!* (1990) directed by Carlos Saura and *La lengua de las mariposas* (1999) directed by José Luís Cuerda. Azcona’s scripts often contained elements of *fútbol* and some even used the sport as a central theme. One particularly popular film for which he wrote the script dealing with *fútbol* is *El cochecito*, which tells the story of a man who takes a group of patients to a *fútbol* match in Spain. Azcona died in 2008 at the age of 81.

Azcona began as a novelist and eventually evolved into a screenwriter, claiming, “*escribo guiones porque me resulta más fácil que escribir novelas*” (“Rafael Azcona.”). Nevertheless, through “Gol”, a fictional short story about a scorned *fútbol*er determined to take revenge on all who had done him wrong throughout his career, Azcona made a reputable contribution to the “kick-lit” genre. The omniscient narrator of the story offers the reader a glimpse into the protagonist’s inner thoughts. “Gol” begins in the ninetieth minute of a *fútbol* match with the score tied 0-0. The narrator informs the reader of the importance of the game if it ends in a tie, the protagonist’s team will not advance to the *primera división* of the league for the upcoming season. Only if they win they will advance.

The story's protagonist is Panocha, a long time player for the club who had at one time been the team's most celebrated star. The past few seasons had been very different for Panocha, who now finds himself the oldest player on the team and subsequently the scapegoat for many of the club's problems. During the current season, Panocha's reputation as a goal-scoring star had completely dissolved. He was now regarded as a completely washed-up old player. The respect he once had among his teammates and the club's administrators had vanished. The honor he once had among the fans and the people in town was now forgotten. To compound his bad situation, his wife recently left him for a professional basketball player. Panocha reflects on his current social situation and hypothetically addresses his adversaries, saying,

Cabrones. Antes no me dejaban pagar en los bares, y ahora desvían la mirada para no hablarme. Fulanos que entonces me ofrecían a sus hermanas, a sus novias y hasta a sus mujeres, hoy levantan el índice y el meñique para llamarme carnudo a mis espaldas (93).

As the story begins, Panocha finds himself on the field as a recent substitute because the coach, who Panocha describes as a “*cantamañanas convencido de que no existía ninguna diferencia entre la pizarra y el césped*” (87), felt that his experience might be needed. Over the years, he had scored many goals by penalty kicks and for this reason the coach felt it would be advantageous to have him in the game should it end in a tie and go to a penalty shoot-out. Upon taking the field, Panocha is well aware that he is experiencing the last few minutes of his career. But instead of attempting to use these final minutes to regain his reputation, he decides he wants revenge on all those that had

wronged him over the years – he knows exactly how he will get his revenge.

After the opposition's corner kick is sent up the field to Panocha, who is sprinting through the mud on a counter-attack, he envisions how his plot for revenge will take place:

Todo lo que tengo que hacer es levantarlo del barro, llevarlo hasta la puerta contraria, esperar la salida del portero, dejarlo tirado con un regate, y cuando esos comemierdas de las gradas empiecen a cantar el gol, hacerles un corte de mangas, o mejor, enseñarles los huevos, y echar la pelota fuera con una patada de Charlot (88).

Panocha's plan miraculously begins to unfold exactly as he had foreseen. He pokes the ball ahead perfectly into the space between himself, the defenders and the goalkeeper in order to draw them out so he can slip in at the last second, beat them to the ball, push it beyond them, and leave himself facing an open goal. As Panocha is running down the field with the ball at his feet, he imagines how sweet his revenge will be and says to himself, "*vamos a ajustarle las cuentas al fútbol y a la vida, que así las ponían a fernandoséptimo*" (89). His revenge is near and he thinks how through this act no one will ever forget Panocha; not the club's directors, not the coaches, not the players, not the media, not the fans, not all the other miserable people who had used him as a means to their own ends, which he describes as follows:

Primero como promesa sin otra compensación que el placer de jugar, luego como figura esclavizada y mal pagada, al final como artrósico ejemplar de una especie a extinguir, estafado por los presidentes,

humillado por los místeres, ninguneado por los compañeros, despreciado por los críticos, ridiculizado por el público [y] puteado por [mi] propia mujer (89).

Panocha's revenge comes closer to becoming a reality. The crowd roars as he attacks down the field, he draws the goalkeeper out and gently pokes it beyond him (exactly as he had envisioned), and with the ball three yards from the open goal Panocha turns toward the presidential suite and the fans, extends his right arm, and with his left hand smacks his bicep and lifts his right forearm to the sky. Then, with all the poise of a natural goal-scorer, he lifts the ball up to his waist and just before the defenders come crashing in, he calmly pushes the ball just wide of the goal. Exactly as he had imagined, the crowd cheers “¡Gooooool!” (93), but instead of being disappointingly mistaken, the crowd was correct and continues to cheer. Panocha had accidentally put the ball in the net and scored the goal he so desperately wanted to miss. The narrator describes the final moments of the match as the following:

Ni si quiera pudo descargar su rabia en una blasfemia, porque sus compañeros le cayeron encima para abrazarlo y besuquearlo.

Qué malo eres, Panochita, se dijo, rompiendo a llorar. Pero mientras caía al suelo, aplastado por aquella masa de carne sudada y gozosa, en las gradas se alzó un himno:

—¡Panocha, Panocha, Panocha es cojonudo, como Panocha, no hay ninguno!

Y sin dejar de llorar, el viejo Panocha, Panochita, empezó a

derretirse en un delicioso deliquio y eyaculó como hacía siglos que no eyaculaba (94).

Through his “kick-lit” tale, “*Gol*”, Rafael Azcona offers the reader a vision of the game from the perspective of the fallen hero. This is a reoccurring theme in the “kick-lit” genre because the sport is perfect for encompassing all the aspects of a literary tragedy. The story that precedes “*Gol*” in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*, “*Como un mariscal de campo*” was written by Juan José Armos Marcelo and also approaches the “kick-lit” genre from the tragic perspective of the fallen hero. The massive attraction to the sport of *fútbol* lies in the fact that the game offers its spectators all the aspects and possibilities of a theatrical drama, but without the predetermined outcome. The sport’s connection to, yet separation from reality, is what has drawn so many people to it and established it as one of the most recognizable of the world’s cultural phenomena of the past century. Of *fútbol*’s ineffable ability to captivate, Jorge Valdano wrote,

Su capacidad de fascinación es, sobre todo, sentimental (fue definido como pasión de multitudes, como emoción con la que se juega, como sentimientos que gana o pierde) por eso, quizás, los intelectuales no lograban descifrar sus misterios desde la reflexión (11).

Azcona communicates the frustration that many players and fans have with the present state of the sport. This frustration is due to the sport’s transformation from being an innocent game to a formalized sport that is controlled by administrators, executives and the mass media. This reality is communicated in David Trueba’s *Saber Perder*, Manuel Vicente Gonzalez’ *Fuera de juego*, and many other works of “kick-lit” that

communicate the sport's loss of innocence and integrity. Eduardo Galeano, wrote, "*Este hermoso espectáculo, está fiesta de los ojos, también es un cochino negocio* ("El Fútbol Hecho Espectáculo.").

The climax of Azgona's "*Gol*" comes when he accidentally scores the goal at the end of the game that sends his team to the *primera división* the next season. The protagonist, Panocha, is initially devastated that his plan did not go as he had envisioned. His frustration quickly melts away when he is reminded how inexplicably sweet it feels to be overcome with euphoric pandemonium after scoring such an important goal for the system he had come to despise. This is indicative of sport and the phenomenal human ability to disregard the past when presented with a spectacular present.

3.4.2: “*El fútbol y la vida*”

“*El fútbol y la vida*” is a short “kick-lit” story written by Martin Casariego. Casariego is a very versatile writer. He has written novels, screenplays, childrens stories, essays and articles as a journalist. His contribution to the “kick-lit” genre helped strengthen his reputation for versatility as a writer. Through “*El fútbol y la vida*” it is appearant to his readers that he had spent a substantial amount of time as a *fútbol*er. Casariego offers the reader a glimpse into some of the actualities of the sport at the regional level in Spain. He demonstrates very clearly that he knows the pain of suffering through the sport’s injustices. He offers the reader the philosophy a player needs to possess to keep his or her sanity in these situations.

“*El fútbol y la vida*” is told through an omniscient narrator that seems to be the voice of Casariego. It is a fictional tale and the numerous comical aspects that Casariego adds give it more flavor. The reader is given the sense that the story is compiled of a variety of experiences that Casariego had lived during his life as a *fútbol*er in Spain, playing for a modest team in a modest league. Casariego communicates his love for the sport’s purity at this level, playing in regional competitions throughout Spain. Through the story, Casariego’s narrator communicates why he appreciates the game at this level. He claims it to be void of the corruption that comes with playing at higher levels when he says,

Ése era el fútbol de verdad, el de esas categorías, con modestísimos intereses económicos, pero con toda la pasión que producía el entusiasmo y el odio momentáneos, que desaparecían o al menos se mitigaban cada

domingo después del silbado final, para volver a crecer a lo largo de la semana hasta alcanzar su paroxismo en los noventa minutos de juego
(in Valdano *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*, 123-24).

Although, by the end of the story Casariego communicates a different opinion, and indicates that no matter how modest the league, when passions run high, there will always be people who attempt to manipulate the rules in order to achieve the outcome they so desperately desire. Unlike in most theatrical plays, in *fútbol* (and in life) good morals do not always prevail over bad morals, and the law of poetic justice does not exist.

The match that Casariego's narrator relates is very important for his team. It is the last game of the season and if our team of protagonists obtain a tie, they will ascend to a higher, more respected league in the up-coming season. The match is to take place at the opposing team's stadium, which has the reputation of being a very hostile environment for the visiting teams. The fans' hostility serves as the home team's greatest advantage since they have the reputation of not being the most tactical, technical or talented team in the league.

During the first half of the story, we are offered a bird's eye view of our team's arrival to the stadium on the bus and then of the locker room for the coach's pregame speech. The coach reminds his team of the difficulties they will have to overcome while playing in the opposing team's stadium. He addresses his team by saying,

*–Vamos a hacer el rombo, ¿Entendido? Tocarla, marearles, pim, pam,
pim pam, tuya, mía, sin prisas, que el empate nos vale, que corran ellos,
triangulando y rombeando, pim, pam, pim, pam, tuya, mía, y ellos ni*

rosca, echando el bofe, pero sin caños ni taconazos, ¿eh?, a lo práctico, nada para la galería, y menos cuando la galería son estos pueblerinos paletos. El árbitro, ya sabemos, es la mitad suyo y la otra mitad de la madre que lo parió, pero nosotros somos mejores. Este partido se gana echándole cojones, ¿visto?, porque ellos le van a echar unos cojonazos de toro, pero nosotros le vamos a echar más cojonazos todavía, si ellos echan dos cojonazos de toro, pues nosotros echamos tres cojonazos de toro (124).

Casariego's narrator reveals the hilarity of this pregame speech by pointing out that, "*se ayudaba con los dedos para explicar la complicada aritmética*" (124). Although this pregame speech is very comical, it also has a verisimilar quality. Many funny things take place behind the scenes of a game, in places like the locker room, on the team bus and on the bench. It could be argued that a team's strongest bonds are formed in these behind-the-scenes places, and not as much on the field where the standard set of rules by which we live are no longer at the foreground. These areas are essentially the spaces that exist between the game and our everyday reality. Jorge Valdano describes the role of the locker room as the following, "*El pero enemigo de un buen vestuario es el silencio. Hablar discutir o pelear es mejor que incubar el problema*"(Apuntes, 190). From another perspective he writes that, "*Un vestuario transparente, que muestra sus trapos sucios al mundo entero, incuba un cáncer más peligroso que un gol en contra*" (190). Clearly, the term "*vestuario*" is used as a metaphor to describe the teams camaraderie and bond. Simply because the locker room is a place designated to the team and where many issues

can be resolved behind closed doors, it does not mean that it is the only area where these things take place.

When the teams take the field and are ready for the game to commence, the referees come out and instantly the home crowd begins to whistle at them, curse at them and threaten them. As the referees pass the stands one of our protagonists overhears a man say, “*Árbitro, hijoputa, has traído un Opel Corsa rojo matrícula de Madrid, 1904-FF, y lo has aparcado enfrente de la perfumería Chony*” (in Valdano *Cuentos de Fútbol* 2, 128). This threat plays an integral role in the game’s outcome and is a very real and very negative aspect of the sport at this level in Spain, demonstrating that it is clearly not free of corruption.

Late in the second half, with the game still tied at zero, the visiting team (with whom we are associated) makes a play that the narrator describes as the following:

Julito robó un balón y se lo cedió a Navarro. Navarro tocó de tacon para desembarazarse de su marcador, que no se enteró de nada, se despegó de él, de un segundo contrario que le agarró la camiseta hasta romperla y del que se deshizo sacudiendo el brazo apresado, e hizo la pared con Juancho. Cuando Juancho le devolvió la pelota, Navarro, saliendo de su propio terreno, enfiló hacia la portería, con la camisa roto y ganando cada vez más velocidad. El portero salió como una bala hacia él, pero Navarro, que lo había visto, picó el balón, y con los brazos en alto, antes de que la pelota tocara las redes, se giró para celebrar el gol, y ver cómo los jugadores rivales acorralaban al juez de línea y al árbitro, les

achuchaban y acordaban. La decisión, entre empujones, recuerdos de la matrícula de su coche y alusiones a su madre, fue la de anular el tanto por fuera de juego. Navarro se encaró con el árbitro. Era imposible, había arrancado desde su campo. Fue expulsado (131-132).

Just ten minutes later, a forward from the home team finds himself in the box with the ball and rather than attempting to go to goal, he opts to take what the narrator describes as a blatant theatrical “dive”. The referee, who had been instructed during half-time to maintain the order of the hostile crowd, blew the whistle and awarded a penalty kick to the home team, which was successfully executed. The home team then spends the rest of the game executing every stalling technique imaginable and the game ends. Our team is forced to face the harsh reality that they will not ascend to the next level the following year.

The narrator describes the scene after the game saying that, “*En el vestuario, algunos lloraban, y todos se quejaban amargamente. Fueron ya sin hablar al autobús, según iban acabando de vestirse, como almas en pena*” (133). When they get on the bus they notice that the team’s newcomer, Navarro, who scored the goal that was disallowed, was missing. Juancho, the team’s veteran, got up from his seat and went to look for Navarro, and found him sitting on the curb with his head in his hands. Juancho, whose fifteen year career had come to an end with this loss, consoles the youngster. Juancho expresses his frustration with the match and the team’s current situation due to the elements of corruption that plague the game, but at the same time he cannot deny that he will desperately miss being a part of it all. He expresses that the beauty of playing for a

team like this involves so many things, “*Los entrenamientos, los partidos, las cañas después de los partidos, los comentarios, los piques, la amistad, las bromas, los hinchas, todo el mundillo que se formaba alrededor de los tres palos de cuero*” (133). As Navarro sits there disgusted with the result of the match, Juancho offers him a piece of advice regarding the game of *fútbol* – how to approach it, and how to deal with its injustices. He says:

Verás, hoy no has aprendido nada de fútbol, del fútbol que sale en el reglamento, ni del que te imaginas de pequeño, pero sí de la vida. Al final, o muy pronto, te darás cuenta de que el fútbol y la vida son la misma cosa. Si sólo jugáramos tú, yo, Germán y otros, sería estupendo, sería un mundo mejor. El problema es que juegan todos, y lo convierten en lo que es, en una mierda: el míster, el presi, los espectadores, los árbitros, los Toñetes y compañía... Tienes que seguir jugando. [...] Es a ti a quien envidian, no a los que han ganado esta mierda de partido. Y no merecen que juegues partidos así (134-25).

The story ends as the two players get on the bus feeling a bit better. One of the players stands up and gives the team hope again by saying, “*¡Ánimo! El año que viene subimos, chavales, me cago en Dios!*” (135) and the bus heads back home. With “*El fútbol y la vida*” Martín Casariego approaches the sport from a variety of archetypal “kick-lit” angles. The most obvious being his description of sport as being a metaphor for life, which can easily be found in the title and in the final conversation between Juancho and Navarro. Casariego also uncovers the negative, corrupt and unjust aspects that

accompany both the sport and life. Through this tale, it becomes clear that the sport of *fútbol* is an area where people chase their dreams and passions, and even at modest levels one will encounter the most frustrating aspects of life.

In the final conversation between Juancho and Navarro, Casariego addresses the ongoing debate within the *fútbol* community (especially in Spain) that questions whether it is better to win or play well. Jorge Valdano, “*El filósofo de fútbol*”, addresses this very question in the final page of his book, *Apuntes del fútbol* when he writes, “*Cansado de que me pregunten si prefiero jugar bien o ganar, terminaré con una pregunta igual de genial: ¿usted qué prefiere, jugar mal o perder?... Pues yo también*” (223). This quote from Valdano forces us to look at the question from another angle. At the end of “*El fútbol y la vida*”, we recognize that our integrity is what stands the strongest, not whether we win or lose. Although we always want to play well and win, Casariego communicates that the most important thing is that we continue to play, even in the face of injustice and corruption.

Jorge Valdano also considers the players’ burning desire to fulfill their dreams as one of the most important aspects of the sport of *fútbol*: to never stop dreaming and to always work toward a positive future. Casariego expresses this at the very end of the story when one of the members of the team stands up and says, “*¡Ánimo! El año que viene subimos, chavales, me cago en Dios!*” (135) reinstilling hope in the team for next year’s effort. Valdano addresses the importance of this idea by saying:

Soy partidario de los sueños y suelo recomendárselos a quienes quieren triunfar. En el fútbol todo se vuelve muy pronto menos las ilusiones, y el

verano es una época del año donde crecen. En cada jugador hay una sensación de promesa. De hecho, aquel que en la pretemporada que no se dice: “Este será mi año”, no es del todo futbolista (Apuntes, 18).

This mentality could be incorporated into any aspect of life, where the individual wishes to progress, achieve “success” and be recognized for doing so. To leave the past behind and look to the future could be considered a trait of the “man of action”.

In the end, Matin Casariego’s short story, “*El fútbol y la vida*” demonstrates the game as a phenomenon that encompasses our dreams, our fears and our frustrations with the world. It has a positive message that encourages us to act with integrity in our everyday lives. However, acting with integrity will not always guarantee the sought after final result. Essentially, this tale reminds the reader of the old adage, “It’s not whether you win or you lose its how you play the game.” This approach to the sport of *fútbol* can easily be adapted to the “game of life”. Jorge Valdano addresses this approach with a question:

¿Lo que importa es el resultado? Esa es una manera bastarda de ver el fútbol. Importa la ambición, la audacia, la aventura, la entrega generosa de todos en defensa de una idea grande. El lenguaje de algunos entrenadores se ha perfeccionado tanto que le llaman profesional y responsable al fútbol estéril y miserable que proponen. Yo aplaudo a Toshack, a Van Gaal, a Camacho, a Victor Fernández y a todos los que entienden que jugar es arriesgar (Apuntes 20-21).

3.4.3: “*Un día, de repente, sucede*”

Ana María Moix is a woman writer from Barcelona who is a recognized contemporary Spanish poet and novelist. She has received a number of literary awards for her poetry and she currently works as a director for the Spanish editorial Plaza y Janés. Moix, along with Soledad Puértolas and Josefina Aldecoa, represent the women writers who have contributed to *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*. Their contributions to the “kick-lit” genre demonstrate the ever-growing presence and appreciation of women in the arena of *fútbol*, an arena that is no longer considered a social space designated solely for men. Through Ana María Moix’s tale, “*Un día, de repente, sucede*”, it is very easy to recognize the importance she feels the game has in our lives as a generator of passion that provides many with a reason for living.

Many *fútbol* enthusiasts consider the sport of *fútbol* an escape from reality. Some call it a social drug that numbs us to the realities of life, while others contend that the *fútbol* arena is the all-encompassing Petri dish of life. There are those that embrace both contradictory aspects of the sport and in doing so defend it as a true social phenomenon. Many critics of the sport claim that the people’s overzealous passion for the game distorts their vision of reality. Ana Moix is of the school of thought that defends the notion that it is through our passions that we truly experience life. She claims that our passions are what drive us and what give us purpose in this life, no matter how absurd either our passions or life itself may be. With “*Un día, de repente, sucede*” Ana Moix, offers the reader an existential approach to the sport of *fútbol* – a passion that offers a great number of people around the world the ability to feel like they can transcend the absurdities of the

natural world and enter into the world of *fútbol*. Through the inexplicable element of passion, these individuals find an outlet through which they can be occupied and escape life, which existentialists claim to be nothing more than an absurdity. The irony of this theory lies in the fact that since *fútbol* and life mirror one another, if life truly is an absurdity, then *fútbol* surely is too; and these fanatics are essentially alleviating one absurdity with another. The difference is that *fútbol* offers us a more condensed version of the elements of life with seemingly higher highs and lower lows. This theory is centered around the element of passion, thus making it a trait that is not simply unique to *fútbol*, although the sport of *fútbol* is one of the greatest generators of passion in the modern world.

In Ana María Moix's "*Un día, de repente, sucede*", an omniscient narrator relates the story of a man that has lost his passion for the *fútbol* club that he had supported his entire life. We are never offered the name of the protagonist, his wife, children, friends or the *fútbol* club in question. The narrator merely tells the reader about these anonymous subjects in the third person. The story begins with the narrator telling us that, whenever someone confronts our protagonist to question how it could be possible that he lost his passion for his *fútbol* club, he avoids going into detail by simply telling them that, "*un día, de repente, sucede*". The narrator then proceeds to describe the incidents that took place (that the protagonist prefers not to expose to his friends and family) that slowly resulted in him losing his passion for *fútbol*. The narrator describes it as the following:

Un día, de repente, sucede, sin más, *dice, ha dicho y ha repetido, se ha cansado de decir y de repetir cientos de veces, cuando ha intentado*

explicar la pérdida de su afición al fútbol. Pero, en realidad, ignora cómo ocurrió, si fue una pérdida repentina, como dice a quien se interesa por su estado, o, por el contrario, el resultado final de un proceso que fue desarrollándose poco a poco en su interior. Ha optado por esa breve respuesta, un día, de repente, sucede, a sabiendas de la posible falsedad que supone calificar de repentino el fenómeno que tan dolorosamente ha alterado su existencia (in Valdano Cuentos de Fútbol 2, 229).

The narrator recounts the numerous occasions that the protagonist believes might have led up to his lack of interest in the sport he once loved so much. He regrettably remembers the embarrassing outburst he had in front of his wife, friends and children. He uncontrollably blurted out an array of less than admirable profanities designed to insult the referee of a match. Using this language in such company surprised him, and all those present, that he was capable of being so vulgar and outlandish. It also embarrassed the entire party, especially his wife and him.

The protagonist also remembers the empty feeling he had the day he realized the striker he had once admired so much, was actually not as extraordinary as he had always perceived him to be. This is similar to the loss of admiration Carlos Casares expresses through the account of his encounter with Alfredo di Stéfano in his autobiographical “kick-lit” anecdote that appears in the first version of *Cuentos de fútbol* titled, “*Qué viejo estás y qué gordo*”. The protagonist of “*Un día, de repente, sucede*” also remembers the frustration he felt after witnessing a terribly boring match between his club and their bitter rivals. The narrator indicates that the match seemed like it would never end to our

protagonist. *“Miraba el reloj insistentemente, el vocerío del estadio lo abrumaba, el juego había acabado por reducirse a constantes saques de banda y fastidiosas faltas que interrumpían cualquier intento de coordinar jugadas vistosas”* (230).

The narrator reveals that the protagonist was ashamed of this loss of interest in the club he had supported so passionately for so many years of his life. He was afraid to tell his friends and his wife for quite a while because he thought they might think he was crazy. There was a period when he would tell his wife and family that he was going to watch the game, but secretly he would go to the movies. The narrator describes that the protagonist *“No quería levantar sospechas. ¿Cómo podía decir la verdad?, ¿qué esposa creería que su marido pasaba las tardes de domingo, solo, en un cine, por no atreverse a confesar la verdad a sus amigos, a sus hijos, y a sus compañeros de trabajo?”* (233).

The protagonist expresses a fear that if his friends and family discover his loss of interest in his *fútbol* club, it will lead them to not only question his masculinity but also his mental stability, morals and values because he feels that, *“Un hombre que dejaba de sentirse solido con el equipo de fútbol al que había llevado siempre en el corazón inspira desconfianza”* (235).

The protagonist's wife was the first to discover his “condition” when she overheard him say, *“Sí, lo juro, me da igual que pierda o gane”* (234). Upon hearing this, the narrator describes how the wife immediately covered her face with both hands in anguish, as if to deny that such a terrible statement could come out of her husband's mouth. She immediately recognized the reality and the severity of the situation and had him sent to a psychoanalyst in an effort to help her husband rediscover his passion and resolve the

situation. After twelve years of psychoanalysis, he still felt completely indifferent towards his once beloved *fútbol* club. His wife came to accept the situation and would often justify it by telling her friends, “*un día, de repente, sucede y cualquier hombre puede dejar de sentirse interesado por el fútbol*” (235).

Understanding that his condition was irreversible, people began to treat him differently, many made a point to avoid him completely for fear of contracting his illness and being forced into an existence of indifference. The narrator ends the story by telling us how this poor man’s life turned out by saying:

En realidad, se ha ido habituando a una existencia sosegada y carente de sobresaltos, una existencia monótona, apagada más bien, con un fondo de tristeza un tanto desvaída que sólo se acentúa muy de vez en cuando, en ocasiones festivas sobre todo. En noches en que, como la de hoy, su mujer y sus hijos se disponen a salir de casa para lanzarse a la calle a celebrar el título de Liga conquistado por el equipo del que son socios, un equipo cuyo nombre no recuerda, y entonces le miran desde la puerta, con una sonrisa melancólica, como si le estuvieran diciendo adiós (236).

The severity of the protagonist’s condition is obviously intended to be humorous, especially with the reference in the last sentence to the opening line of Miguel de Cervantes’ *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, which reads, “*En un lugar de la Mancha, de cuyo nombre no quiero acordarme...*”(29) Although Ana María Moix’s “*Un día, de repente, sucede*” is a very humorous tale, it also communicates a more serious side of life that questions the relevance of human existence without the element of passion to inspire us,

to make us tick, and to feel as if life is something worth living.

3.4.4: “*Vidas paralelas*”

“*Vidas paralelas*” is a short “kick-lit” story by one of Spain’s most recognized contemporary writers, Juan Manuel de Prada. From the title of his story, it is clear that de Prada’s tale is based on the ancient Greek historian, biographer, essayist, and Middle Platonist turned Roman Citizen, Lucius Mestrius Plutarchus. His literary masterpiece is titled *The lives of the noble Grecians and Romans*, which is also, more commonly known as either *Plutarch’s Lives* or *Parallel Lives*. *Parallel Lives*, or *Bioi parallèloi* (as it is written in Greek) is a series of biographies of famous Greek and Roman men, that Plutarch arranged in tandem to bring to light their common moral virtues or vices. Plutarch is considered one of the earliest moral philosophers and his work is recognized as having a heavy influence on English and French literature. For example, Shakespeare often made reference to *Parallel Lives* in his plays and often quoted from them directly. Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Transcendentalists are recognized as having been greatly influenced by Plutarch’s work, especially his, *Moralia*. The French writer, Michel Eyquem de Montaigne is said to have made more than 400 references to Plutarch’s works in his *Essays*. Others that either admired or were influenced by Plutarch’s work were James Boswell, John Milton, Francis Bacon, Ben Johnson, John Dryden, Alexander Hamilton, Cotton Mather, Robert Browning, and now, Spain’s Juan Manuel de Prada.

Juan Manuel de Prada is one of Spain’s most respected contemporary writers, not only for his talent and skill in the art of writing, but also for the strong connection to historical literary figures and texts that he references throughout his work. De Prada’s first publication in 1994, titled *Coños*, is a book of lyrical prose considered an homage to

Spain's 18th Century writer, Gomez de la Serna's *Senos*. De Prada's next publication, *El silencio del patinador* (1995), is a collection of twelve short stories that is unique for its barroque prosaic style that demonstrates a stronger connection to historical figures of Spanish literature than the work of his contemporaries. De Prada's 1996 novel, *Las máscaras del héroe*, is both a semi-fictional and semi-non-fictional recreation of Bohemian Spain from the beginning of the 20th Century to the Spanish Civil War. The two principle characters are the less-than-glamorous historical Spanish poet, Pedro Luis Gálvez, and the fictional character, Fernando Navales. Through *Las máscaras del héroe*, de Prada made reference to a number of obscure historical Spanish literary texts, like Rafael Cansinos Assens' *La novella de un literato* and Gómez de la Serna's *Automoribundia*. De Prada's next publication, *Las esquinas del aire* follows the accomplishments of the athlete and Spanish writer, Ana María Martínez Sagi, while his *Desgarrados y excéntricos* is a collection of biographies of obscure and excentric figures of Spanish literature like Armando Buscarini and Pedro Luis de Gálvez.

With "*Vidas paralelas*", de Prada again makes his profound connection to the figures of classical literature apparent, by bringing the multifaceted influence of Plutarch on literature to the foreground. Manuel de Prada's "*Vidas paralelas*" is a fictional tale narrated in the first person by a priest looking back on his early years after just finishing the seminary. This priest, whose name is never revealed, recounts his memory of extraordinary, yet tragic lives, which he encountered as a *curita*. After completing the seminary in a small town in northern Spain, the priest was assigned the task of mentoring a group of trouble-making adolescents. He describes the situation as the following:

Yo era por entonces lo que se dice un curita en ciernes, respetuoso de la sotana, con aficiones deportivas y cierta conciencia social. La orden salesiana, a la todavía hoy pertenezco, siquiera nominalmente, había instalado en la barriada de aquella ciudad del Norte un centro juvenil, con pistas de deporte, biblioteca y cinematógrafo, con el propósito más o menos benévolo de atraer a toda esa legión de muchachos desharrapados que seambulaban por las calles, muchos de mirada prematura y triste que, sacudidos por la pobreza o el desarraigo, ejercitaban un vandalismo unánime, aunque desorganizado. Mis superiores, informados de mis veleidades deportivas, me sugirieron que desviara las energías delictivas de aquellos adolescentes por el cauce disciplinado del fútbol (250).

Our priest describes his efforts as having a positive effect on these youngsters' lives by distancing them from their previous lifestyles that he describes as being filled with *picardía*, *desempleo*, and *brincas familiares*. These misfits also proved to be quite successful on the *fútbol* field and began garnering a more respectable reputation in a town that we only know as, "*la aldea del Norte*". On this team of misfits there was one individual, Julio Guerra, who stood out the most. According to the priest, Julio Guerra "*era un muchacho tímido, rubio sin ostentación, a veces díscolo, de rasgos que parecían desafiar las contingencias del tiempo*" (254). The priest then reinforces our suspicions of what seems to be a homo-erotic admiration for Julio Guerra when he compares the youngster's beauty and youthful nature to Dorian Gray; Oscar Wilde's famous protagonist who defies the ageing process. The priest describes Julio Guerra as coming

from a very poor household with less-than-sanitary living conditions, and that his ability to maintain his health in such conditions as one of the most amazing of his many qualities. As a *fútbol*er, the priest describes that “*con el balón en los pies, Julio exhibía esa dosis de habilidad y talento que cualquier entrenador desea incrustar en una sociedad compuesta por otros diez hombres, rudos y espartanos, cuya función no es otra que la de meros comparsas de genialidad*” (252).

After a successful season in the local *fútbol* league, the team, that called themselves *Sociedad Salesiana* after the ecclesiastical order of their founders, was preparing for the upcoming season in which they were to compete in the *Liga regional*. This was a more prestigious league comprised of teams that played at a higher, more competitive level than that of the local league. Just prior to the league’s commencement, our priest received word that he was to travel to Torino and complete his studies of theology. He describes his situation as follows:

Acababa yo de cumplir los veinticinco años, edad suficiente para ordenarme presbítero y estrechar mis vínculos con la Comunidad Salesiana (vínculos demasiado onerosos para alguien como yo, que vivía entre el clamor entusiasta de los goles y la nostalgia de una juventud malograda entre votos de pobreza, castidad y obediencia). Acepté la invitación del padre Ricaldone, sin otra contrariedad que la de abandonar a los muchachos cuando ya la Liga estaba a punto de comenzar (254).

Upon relating the news of his departure to the team, Julio Guerra reassures the priest by telling him not to worry. He says that they will continue to follow his advice and that they

will stay in contact while he is in Torino.

After a short time in Italy, the priest begins to follow the local *fútbol* team of Torino, that in many ways reminds him of the club he formed and coached in Spain stating that, “*el Torino utilizaba similares estrategias a las que yo había inculcado a los muchachos de la barriada, y que sus jugadores reunían las mismas condiciones que los míos*” (257). The priest quickly recognizes one of the *Torino* club’s standout players, Mazzola, as having similar attributes as Julio Guerra. He describes that this Italian *fútbol*er “*tenía un cierto parecido físico con Julio, además de actitudes casi idénticas en el campo (ambos celebraban igual los goles: enarbolando el puño y corriendo en contra del viento, para que su melena ondease)*” (257). The priest states that the similarities between these two caused him to believe in “*la existencia de los caprichos genéticos o, si se prefiere, en los milagros proganos*” (257). He makes note of the fact that Mazzola even had the same “nose for the goal”, mixing “*fialdad y picardía*” (257) to find the back of the net.

After watching a game in which Mazzola scored three goals, each reminiscent of Julio Guerra’s style, Mazzola was honored by the fans with “*pañuelos flameantes*” (257). The priest says that “*por despiste o negligencia no llevaba pañuelo, me incorporé al jolgorio agitado mi alzacuello de celuloide. Por fortuna, ningún superior advirtió esta reacción tan poco reverente*” (257). Two days later the priest receives word from Julio that he too had scored three goals, all of which mirrored the description of those that he had witnessed scored by Mazzola. The priest describes this abnormal experience by stating that:

Fue entonces cuando la figura de Julio Guerra se superpuso a la del italiano Mazzola, como la imagen de un espejo se superpone a su modelo. Recordé con un vago escalofrío que, entre las teorías de algunos heresiacas medievales, figuraba la de los “espíritus complementarios”, personas vinculadas por un indescifrable sistema de acciones y omisiones, de pecados y penitencias, como el anverso y el reverso de una misma moneda: a la muerte de una se sucedería, irremediamente, la extinción del otro, por ley de simetría o capricho divino (258).

The priest relates to the reader that Mazzola, after scoring two goals for his team, one in the last minute to defeat the cross-town superior club, Juventus, he was approached by the president of Juventus. The president offered Mazzola a place on his club for the upcoming year. He even told Mazzola that he could name his price. The priest continues to relate the experience of his new discovery by stating:

De vuelta al seminario, la intolerable lucidez de azar se abatió sobre mí. Esa superstición que hasta entonces me había acompañado, surgida por una semejanza de estrategias entre el Torino y mi equipo de la barriada, por una similitud casi exacta entre Mazzola y Julio, dejó de ser superstición para convertirse en certeza: comprendí, no sin horror, que modelar la materia incoherente y vertiginosa de la vida no es del todo imposible, que hay leyes subterráneas que, a modo de túneles o entramados, os ligan con otros seres, con personas que desconocen nuestra existencia, igual que nosotros desconocemos la suya, pero que,

con sus actos, determinan nuestro destino (261).

Convinced that Mazzola and Julio Guerra were, unbeknownst to one another, living parallel lives, our priest waited for the precise hour on Sunday to call Julio Guerra to catch him after the game and all the postgame activities, to learn the news of the match and hopefully confirm his hypothesis. Although there were difficulties, the priest's call finally goes through and he is able to speak with Julio. Julio tells the priest he has such great news that he was heading to write him a letter at the very moment the phone rang. Julio tells the priest that they played a wonderful game against *Athletic* and that they won in the last minute. Upon hearing this, the priest interrupted Julio and said, "*Si, ya sé [...] tú metiste los dos goles, hiciste un partidazo, y en los vestuarios el presidente del Athletic manifestó su deseo de ficharte*" (260). Completely taken aback by the priest's knowledge of what had so recently taken place in a different country from that of the priest, Julio says, "*Pero... Joder, ¿cómo te has enterado?*" (260). Immediately after expressing his surprise, the telephone line cut out and their conversation was over. From that point on, the priest knew he could watch Julio through Mazzola.

A few weeks later, the priest's superior, *el padre Ricaldone*, organized an excursion for future members of the seminary through the Alps to the side of the mountain Superga. While inside a cave, *el padre Ricaldone* was speaking to the young seminarians, when all of a sudden a loud explosion shook the mountain that ended the conversation. All those attending immediately ran outside of the cave for fear they could be trapped inside. Upon exiting the cave, they noticed that an airplane had crashed. The seminarians feared that the plane was carrying the Torino *fútbolers* who were scheduled

at precisely that time to be arriving home from Napoli. The narrating priest describes the scene as the following:

En la falda de la colina se agrupaba una multitud hermética, en torno a una chatarra humeante. El fuselaje del avión, desgarrado como un jirón de ropa, mostraba a retazos las fisonomías irreconocibles de sus pasajeros, gestos condensados por la sorpresa o el horror, barnizados de un fuego que había calcinado su carne como en una barbacoa caníbal. Hacía calor, pero por el cielo ya rodaba una tormenta lejana.

–No hay superviventes –dijo un enfermero que caminaba entre los hierros retorcidos, conteniendo a duras penas una náusea–. Murieron todos, incluido Mazzola (262).

Recognizing the severity of the tragedy, the priest rushed home to see if his greatest fear had become a reality. Although he wanted to deny the possibility that Julio Guerra had been subjected to the same fate, deep down he knew that Guerra and the other players were destined to the same tragic ending. The priest describes his memory of the tragedy as the following:

Imaginé minuciosamente un accidente similar, pero más modesto (los muchachos no viajaban en avión, les bastaba un autobús que jadeaba en los puertos como un enfermo de asma); imaginé su regreso, a través de carreteras secundarias, cuando volvían de disputar un partido que habría resultado decisivo para sus aspiraciones; imaginé al conductor del autobús, somnoliento o mareado, calculando mal la pendiente de una

curva; imaginé la caída lenta del autobús, despeñándose por un precipicio; imaginé la mirada huérfana de Julio Guerra en plena caída, dedicándome quizá (siempre pequé de soberbia o sentimentalismo) un último pensamiento; preferí no imaginar más, para rehuir el acoso de la locura. Días más tarde, me confirmaron aquella intuición, cuando ya no me quedaban lágrimas que derramar ni blasfemias que proferir; me contaron que los cuerpos exánimes de Julio Guerra y los demás muchachos habían esperado durante más de diez horas, disseminados en el fondo de un barranco como cadáveres que se refrescan a la intemperie y se ponen morenos de un sol difunto, como cadáveres simétricos de aquellos otros que habían quedado esparcidos en la ladera de la colina Superga (262-63).

There are a variety of similarities between Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* and Juan Manuel de Prada's "*Vidas paralelas*". However, one main difference is that Plutarch wrote biographies of famous figures from Greece and Rome to demonstrate parallel morals and values the two individuals possessed. Juan Manuel de Prada tells a fictional tale of two modest, handsome, *fútbol* stars-to-be, who's lives were tragically cut short. They were never afforded the opportunity to reach the level where they could have been famous. Plutarch often drew upon similarities in his subject's physical features and demonstrated how they represented the persons' morals, values and lifestyles. Manuel de Prada also did exactly that, describing both Julio Guerra and Mazzola as angelic figures, whose innocence was visible in their youthful faces and demeanor. At the end of the story

Manuel de Prada reinforces the importance of his characters' physical features. He reiterates his description of the *fútbolero* that he so adored as being demonstrative of his innocence and character by describing him as “*aquel muchacho tímido, rubio sin ostentación, a veces díscolo, de rasgos que parecían desafiar las contingencias del tiempo*” (263).

Chapter 4: The Phenomenon of Spanish “Kick-Flicks”

Siempre he pensado que el fútbol es un animal que se resiste al cine, sin saber muy bien las razones que repelen a los dos grandes elementos de ocio y cultura de nuestro tiempo. Es cierto que en los últimos años se ha producido un renovado intento por reconducir las difíciles relaciones entre los dos universos.

–Santiago Segurota

Two of the world’s most influential passions for the past 100 years, are the sport of *fútbol* and the art of cinema. These social phenomena have swept over the planet and have been embraced by the masses for their capacity to captivate the world’s ever-globalizing society. The influence of these two social phenomena can most clearly be seen in the planet’s more modern nations: mainly in the western world and definitely in Spain. During approximately the past 100 years, Spanish society has gone through a number of drastic social changes: the *desastre de 1898*, the Spanish Civil War, Francisco Franco’s dictatorship and the Transition to Democracy. These heated and complex socio-political changes have heavily influenced all sectors of Spanish life. The sport of *fútbol* and the art of cinema have accompanied the Spanish people through each of these phases, except for the *desastre de 1898*, which occurred almost precisely when these two social phenomena were taking shape in Spain. The presence and importance of the *desastre de*

1898 on Spanish society is, however, clearly recognizable in both Spanish *fútbol* and cinema.

If I had to select one aspect that stereotypically characterizes the people of Spain and Spanish culture (as multifaceted and complex as it is), it would have to be the element of passion. The Spanish ideology, from the *reconquista* to the crusades, to the conquering of the Americas, to the Spanish Civil War, has been driven by the Spanish people's passion for what they believe. The same is true when analyzing the Spanish people's approach to celebrating their culture; from the pride they have in their food and wine to their love for flamenco music and dancing; from the bulls to *fútbol* to the Arts. Living for one's passion is the single, unbreakable Spanish bond that transcends Spain's disputes over regional/national identities, political ideologies and cultural differences. The Spanish people's romantic and unwavering need to first and foremost, "follow their passion", no matter how conflicting they may be, is what I feel defines the Spanish people.

With the turn of the 20th Century, Spain (like many other countries around the world) was carried away by these two new cultural phenomena. Many of the people of Spain saw their passion shift from bulls and flamenco, to *fútbol* and cinema. Like *fútbol* (and every other aspect of Spanish life), Spanish cinema was heavily influenced by the political climate of the times: namely all that led up to the Spanish Civil War, the Civil War itself, Francoism and the Transition to Democracy. The work of some film directors supported the political climate and fascist ideology of Spain, while others were reactionary to it. Some of the filmmakers who opposed Spanish fascism managed to work

within the confines of the censors and were still able to get their message across. Those who chose to make films that more blatantly opposed the doctrine of fascist Spain's political and social ideologies were left with no option other than to leave the country and work in exile. However, no matter what side of the controversy the Spanish filmmakers (and Spanish people alike) were on, their actions were primarily dictated by following their passions, ideals and beliefs.

Similar to the distrust between the *fútbol* advocate and the intellectual, there is also a conflict when it comes to combining *fútbol* and film. However, as I defended in the previous chapter, the sport of *fútbol* and the world of literature are most definitely compatible. Presently, there is a “kick-lit” wave rushing over the Spanish-speaking world, and to further justify the genre's legitimacy some of the Spanish language's most reputable writers have produced brilliant works within the genre. However, it seems that *fútbol*, for one reason or another, has not been as successfully adapted to the big screen. Carlos Marañón tackles this problem and offers his readers an explanation as to why this might be the case. In his 2005 publication, *Fútbol y cine: el balompié en la gran pantalla*. Marañón describes the problem by writing, “*Las dos grandes pasiones de nuestro tiempo mantiene una extraña y difícil relación. Pese a compartir la esencia de los sueños y las emociones, Fútbol y Cine nunca se han llevado bien. O eso parece.*” (back cover) Marañón's defense of *fútbol* as a suitable topic for film lies in the fact that there have been countless films throughout the world based on other sports that have been highly successful in every regard. This provides him with some reassurance that the sport of *fútbol*, like any other sport, can be adapted to the big screen, when done so properly.

Santiago Segurola also addresses the issue from the same perspective by underlining the fact that there have been what he calls “marvelous” movies centered around the sports of baseball, boxing, race car driving, horse racing, golf, etc. In the book’s prologue, Segurola approaches the problem by asking, “*Entonces, ¿por qué esa sensación de rechazo, de fricción, de incomodidad entre los dos artes [fútbol and cinema]?*” (in Marañón, 11). Could the answer lie in the fact that many of the aforementioned sports are strongly embraced by the culture of the United States, which has the reputation of not embracing or understanding the sport of *fútbol*, and that the most powerful institution for reinforcing the culture of the United States is Hollywood? Segurola claims that:

La respuesta quizá se encuentra precisamente en películas como Días de fútbol o Quiero ser como Beckham. Son películas que se acercan al fútbol desde una posición lateral [...] El cine a conseguido acercarse al fútbol para retratar al hincha, los partidos de barrio, las chicas que se acercan a un juego que las había rechazado hasta ahora. Está bien que el fútbol sirva como metáfora de la vida y que sirva como coartada para explicar pasiones, inadaptaciones sociales, dramas o comedias. El problema, al menos en mi opinión, es el juego. La belleza del juego. Esa cima no ha sido conquistada en la pantalla (12).

Many experts and critics of film consider sport to be a less than adequate subject matter for film. However, as with the “kick-lit” genre, films that use sport as the point of departure are experiencing a newfound appreciation. The 2009 Tribeca Film Festival dedicated one section to sport films: the Tribeca/ESPN Sport Film Festival. It had

screenings of documentaries and fictional films dealing with people's passions in the arena of sport from around the globe. One of the films was a documentary about a high school basketball team on an Indian reservation in Wyoming titled, *Chiefs*. Another film was about "the greatest basketball player never to make the NBA" titled, *Hooked: the legend of Demetrius "Hook" Mitchell*. Other documentaries dealt with the lives and struggles of boxers, surfers, and an American baseball manager in the Japanese league. There were also a variety of films screened that I call "kick-flicks". Like "kick-lit", "kick-flicks" are films that use the sport of *fútbol* as either a central theme or a point of departure. One such "kick-flick" that screened at the Tribeca/ESPN Sport Film Festival of 2009 was, *Once in a lifetime: the extraordinary story of the New York Cosmos*, also known as *Once in a lifetime: the rise and fall of the team that brought Pelé to America*. This is a highly recommendable "kick-flick" showing actual footage of the world's greatest players of the 1970's and a view of real-life conflicting egos both on the field and in the locker room. At the same time, the film offers a behind the scenes view of the front office and their failures when attempting to market the sport for the first time in the United States. Another "kick-flick" that screened at the festival was the newly released Mexican film, *Rudo y Cursi*. This film tells the tale of two siblings, played by Gael García Bernal and Diego Luna, who rival one another in the world of Mexican professional *fútbol*. Another film screened at the festival worthy of mention was Spike Lee's *Kobe doin' work*. This film was inspired by Douglas Gordon and Phillip Parreno's "kick-flick" *Zidane, un portrait du 21e siècle*, which followed *Real Madrid* superstar Zinedine Zidane's every movement through an entire *fútbol* match against *Villareal*

utilizing over twenty different camera angles. The American film director, Spike Lee, was inspired by the film and decided to do a similar project with the L.A. Lakers and the NBA superstar, Kobe Bryant, in a game against the San Antonio Spurs. Another sport film that recently received considerable attention was *The Wrestler* by Darren Aronofsky, starring Micky Rourke and Marisa Tomei. *The Wrestler* told the melodramatic tale of a broken-down big time wrestler whose career in the arena became the only realm of reality in which he could bare living. *The Wrestler* was nominated for a number of Academy Awards and I feel that this is due to the fact that, as Santiago Segurola defends, it approaches the sport “*desde una posición lateral*” (11). The most successful sport films are not necessarily “sport films” in the traditional sense. They are designed to capture the drama that surrounds the game, and not necessarily the drama of the game itself or the complexities of the skills required to succeed in the sport.

Carlos Marañón and Santiago Segurola consider the greatest “kick-flick” ever made to be *Victory* by John Huston. This film is great for its depiction of the relevance politics plays on the sport of *fútbol* around the world and especially while fascism was rampant throughout Europe. Segurola points out that the only negative aspect of *Victory* lies in the fact that “*el juego está filmado en un tono grotesco, infantiloides, en una línea más cercana a un mal comic [con] Pelé haciendo piruetas circenses [y] Stallone desautorizándose como portero*” (12). Segurola states that this is not comparable to the work John Huston did as the director of one of the greatest boxing films of all time, *Fat City*. However, all of the films from the *Rocky* series are also grossly inaccurate in their depiction of the realities of the sport of boxing, but for some reason *Rocky* had no

problem being embraced by the world at large. Possibly, this is because the brutality of boxing is more easily digested by the masses than the beauty of *fútbol*. These are some of the problems that directors have faced when attempting to make a “kick-flick”.

In the history of Spanish cinema the “kick-flick” genre has been attempted on numerous occasions. Many Spanish directors have made reference to the sport of *fútbol* in their films simply because *fútbol* has such a presence in Spanish culture and plays such an important role in the Spanish lifestyle. One of the earliest, and most famous Spanish films to touch on the subject of *fútbol* is Marco Ferreri’s, *El cochecito*, which was written by Rafael Azcona. Azcona was also the writer of “*Gol*”, a “kick-lit” story that appeared in *Cuentos de Fútbol 2*. Azcona is considered one of Spain’s greatest scriptwriters and was clearly an advocate of including the sport of *fútbol* in his work. *El cochecito* tells the story of an elderly genius who, more than anything in the world, wants to be relegated to a wheelchair, like his friends, so he can do all the things they do and no longer be left out of their activities. At one point in the story, the group of senior citizens forms a sort of wheelchair gang and attends a professional soccer match. *Bienvenido Mister Marshall* is another famous Spanish film whose script was initially written with a scene dedicated to the sport of *fútbol*, but upon filming the scene was dropped. A great number of other films have touched on the importance of *fútbol* in Spanish culture, from *Torrente* (which has a cameo of *Real Madrid* stars; Iker Casillas, Guti, and Iván Huelguera), to David Trueba’s, *Bienvenido a casa* (which mocks a stereotypical idiotic goalkeeper during a photo shoot in *Real Madrid*’s Bernabeu Stadium).

Another figure of Spanish cinema and literature that has been a strong advocate of using *fútbol* in his work is one of the pillars of the Spanish Arts community – Fernando Fernán Gómez. Fernando Fernán Gómez is famous not only as an actor, but also as a writer and playwright. His most famous play is *Las bicicletas son para el verano*, which later became a feature film. Fernán Gómez also wrote the short “kick-lit” story that appeared in *Cuentos de Fútbol* titled, “*El directivo*”. In 1991, he wrote and directed the Spanish “kick-flick”, *Fuera de juego*. This film, like many other Spanish “kick-flicks” was quickly swept under the rug. I find it hard to believe that it could not have been a legitimate contribution to the world of cinema when looking at the incredible body of work that Fernán Gómez has been involved in over the years. But, like so many other *fútbol* related stories, this one is essentially unable to be found. One of the most interesting facts about Fernando Fernán Gómez (with regard to this study) is that, aside from all of this, he was also an actor in one of the very first Spanish “kick-flicks”, *El sistema pelgrín* (1951). The film was an adaptation of the early Spanish “kick-lit” novel, *El sistema pelgrín: Novela de un profesor de cultura física*, written in 1949 by Wenceslao Fernández Flórez. Fernando Fernán Gómez, is without a doubt not only one of the most important figures in the Spanish film industry, he is also regarded as one of the most important intellectuals in the Spanish Art world. Throughout his career he has always demonstrated an unrelenting desire to use the sport of *fútbol* as a central theme.

Another fun-loving Spanish film that used the sport of *fútbol* as a point of departure is *Las 3 de la Cruz Roja*. This film was directed by Fernando Palacios in 1961 and starred Tony Leblanc, José Luis López Vázquez and Manolo Gómez Bur who

portray three *Real Madrid* fanatics that decide to go through the hardships of becoming members of the *Cruz Roja* simply so they may enter the Bernabeu Stadium and watch *Real Madrid* play. This film offers many glimpses into Madrid's society of the 1960's and offers the viewer actual *fútbol* footage. It is the passion these men possess that is of most interest to the "kick-flick" advocate and as Santiago Segurola defended, this film too approaches the sport of *fútbol* "*desde una posición lateral*".

The aforementioned Spanish films are just a few of the many films that have addressed the sport of *fútbol*, some successfully, others not so successfully. The following sections of this chapter will be dedicated to analyzing a number of Spanish "kick-flicks". The first film to be analyzed, *La saeta rubia* starring Alfredo di Stéfano as himself, serves as an example of how the Franco Regime used the sport of *fútbol* to defend its legitimacy and as a way for youths to learn the necessary morals to become "good men". The second film, *El portero*, starring Carmelo Gómez and Maribel Verdú, provides insight into the corruption of *fútbol* on the part of the Franco Regime and on the part of the Historic Nationalities (that used the sport in an effort to rebel against the fascist regime). The third film, *Días de fútbol*, tells the hysterical tale of a group of middle-aged men frustrated with their lives that attempt to re-live their youth and solve their problems of adulthood. They form a *fútbol* team in order to bolster their own self-esteem and gain the respect of the members of their neighborhood. These films will provide a different perspective of the numerous possibilities of the "kick-flick" genre.

4.1: The early years – *Saeta rubia*

The early years of Spain's "kick-flick" phenomenon was modeled after Hollywood's successful star system. The star system was based on the premise of attracting people to the theater with no tactic other than the masses overwhelming desire to see their favorite movie stars on the big screen, time and again. Ironically, most of the stars in this system were creations of the star system itself. During the 1950's, Spain's "kick-flicks" were undoubtedly modeled after this approach, which was first presented by California's booming film industry. But rather than taking promising young actors and creating personas for them with the hope that they might become stars capable of garnering large audiences, the Spanish "kick-flicks" during this period, simply took already existing *fútbol* stars, put them on the big screen and watched the masses flock to the cinema. In one way, this may be considered an attempt by these Spanish filmmakers to exploit the people of Spain's obsession with *fútbol* and *La Liga Española's fútbol* stars. While from a different point of view, it can easily be defended that Spanish filmmakers of the time simply recognized and provided the Spanish people with what they wanted – the opportunity to feel closer to their favorite *fútbol* star.

The first, and probably most successful, Spanish *fútbol*er to double as a film star was the famous Catalan born goalkeeper Ricardo Zamora. Zamora played for a number of clubs throughout Spain during his career, including the Spanish *selección* and *Catalan XI* – Catalonia's *selección* that took an international tour to raise awareness during the Civil War. Zamora was, without a doubt, one of the earliest and most famous heroes of Spanish *fútbol*. His extreme popularity quickly brought him to the big screen – even

before feature-length films with sound had been invented. *¡Por fin se casa Zamora!* is a vaudeville-style silent movie that was directed by José Fernández Caireles and Pepín Fernández in 1926. In the film, Zamora plays himself, a goaltender of the Spanish league whose uncle persistently attempts to persuade him to marry one of his distant cousins in America. Zamora is initially uninterested because the only knowledge he has of this girl is through his uncle's descriptions and a photograph. But after certain manipulations on the part of his uncle that lead to a series of convenient coincidences, Zamora eventually falls in love with the girl he had once only known through a photograph.

Three years after *¡Por fin se casa Zamora!*, another Spanish film was released in an attempt to capture the same audience. This film, titled, *Fútbol, amor y toros* (1929), was a clear effort by the director, Florián Rey, to embrace/exploit the Spanish people's passions of the era. It told the story of a young Spanish goalkeeper who fell in love with a girl from a rival family. He was forced to prove his love for her through his goalkeeping and bullfighting abilities, which he did successfully. Although Rey used a professional actor for the role instead of casting Zamora, it was rather convenient that the actor he used, the character of the film, and Spain's most famous goalkeeper, were all named Ricardo.

After the era of silent film had ended, one of the first Spanish filmmakers to bring the star approach in full force to Spanish "kick-flicks" was Ramón Torrado. Torrado directed the film titled *¡¡Campeones!!* in 1943, which Carlos Marañón describes as the "primera reunión de estrellas balompédicas hispanas en pantalla" (323). *¡¡Campeones!!* was comprised of a cast of the most famous Spanish speaking *fútbol* players of the era,

namely; Jacinto Quincoces, Guillermo Gorostiza, Igor Iturain, José María Rodríguez, Carlos Muñoz, Ramón Polo, Pedro Barreto, Jesús Abrego, and again, Ricardo Zamora. Aside from being a film designed to attract *fútbol* fans to the theater, *¡¡Campeones!!* is also regarded as a film that exploited these *fútbol* fans in an effort to promote fascist Spain's ideologies. *¡¡Campeones!!* tells the story of a group of modest laborers from the fields of Spain who compete in a *fútbol* tournament against other laborers of the region. Carlos Marañón describes the film as “*el falangismo aplicado al fútbol*” (322).

Another film, titled *Los ases buscan la paz* (1954), was designed to draw *fútbol* fans to the box office and at the same time to glorify the Franco Regime. The film was directed by Arturo Ruiz Castillo and told the story of the hardships that *FC Barcelona*'s Hungarian superstar, Ladislao Kubala, faced in escaping his socialist country of Hungary (that was under the control of the Soviets after World War II), before arriving in Spain – the promise land. Kubala played himself in the film, which portrayed Franco's Spain as a humble country where an individual could live freely and happily. In one of the lines of the film, Kubala proclaims, “*Entonces comprendí que en España había encontrado la paz.*” Carlos Marañón describes the film as:

Un triunfo propagandístico enorme para el Régimen de Franco. Por eso había que contarlo al pueblo español en una película que [...] ahonda en los detalles más políticos, como la escapada de Hungría hacia Viena, las penurias a las que someten por no declararse afecto al régimen comunista o el comisario político húngaro (86).

Once pares de botas, directed by Francisco Rovira Beleta in 1954, is another film whose major appeal was the nearly endless cast of *fútbol* stars from the Spanish league. The amount of players from *La Liga Española* to appear in the film is too long to list, but the film contains names such as Zarra, Venancio, Teruel and the *Real Madrid* superstar, Alfredo di Stéfano. Carlos Marañón describes *Once pares de botas* as “*La gran película sobre fútbol en España. Todos los estamentos, representados. Hasta el delantero torpón que llega a internacional*” (322). In 1952, three years prior to the release of *Once pares de botas*, Ignacio F. Iquino directed the film *El sistema pelegrín*. Although the film was not made up of a star-studded cast of professional *fútbol*ers, it is relevant to this study because the story, initially written as a novel by Wenceslao Fernández Flórez, was later turned into a screenplay by the author. Carlos Marañón describes the Spanish desire to consume “kick-flicks” during the 1950’s and 1960’s as:

La profusión de filmes como El sistema Pelegrín (1951), Los ases buscan la paz (1954), Once pares de botas (1954), Saeta Rubia (1956), El fenómeno (1956), El hincha (1957), El ángel está en la cumbre (1958), La quiniela (1959), Los económicamente débiles (1960), Tres de la Cruz Roja (1961) y La batalla del domingo (1963) no podían ser fruto de una mera casualidad. Y así el fútbol se convirtió en un de nuestros géneros cinematográficos patrios. Películas en las que el lado popular del balompié servía para distraer en comedias costumbristas, adoctrinar en los dramas deportivos o incluso para destapar lo mejor de las esencias patrias (163).

Spanish “kick-flicks”, of the early years, were extremely popular among the people of Spain because everything to do with the sport of *fútbol* was being marketed as “*un espectáculo*” which coincided with the influx of international superstars that were being signed to *La Liga Española*. In this sense, *La Liga Española* was nurturing its own star system and offering the Spanish consumer the opportunity to embrace his idols through the two fastest growing cultural phenomena of all time. The “kick-flicks” from the 1950’s and 1960’s are now characterized as black and white films centered around defending morals and values of “good men” during the Franco regime. In these films, Spain’s *fútbol* heroes were depicted as possessing and upholding an exemplary character for all to follow – always knowing the difference between right and wrong and always seeing to it that good prevailed. One of the most famous films of this era that encompassed the aforementioned aspects of Spanish “kick-flicks” is *Saeta rubia*. *Saeta rubia* starred Alfredo di Stéfano, *Real Madrid*’s poster-child and the club’s most famous and decorated player of all time.

While *FC Barcelona*’s imported *fútbol* star, Ladislao Kubala, seized the opportunity to win the hearts of Spaniards and promote the club by recounting the struggles he faced while escaping socialism as the star of *Los ases buscan la paz* in 1954, *Real Madrid* responded by making *Saeta rubia*. *Saeta rubia*, directed by Javier Setó, was dedicated to celebrating and promoting *Real Madrid*’s star player, Alfredo di Stéfano, and the club itself. Di Stéfano was known as “*la saeta rubia*” for his blond head of hair and his speed on the field. The film *Saeta rubia* was designed not only to promote di Stéfano and *Real Madrid*, but to depict di Stéfano as a man whose *fútbol* abilities serve as

the foundation of his exemplary moral character, which he utilized to be a leader in the community. *Saeta rubia* was an attempt to demonstrate that through the sport of *fútbol* an individual can learn all the skills necessary to become a responsible, morally sound and respectable citizen in Franco's Spain.

Saeta rubia tells the story of a group of poor, unsupervised youngsters who roam the streets of Madrid looking for any situation they can manipulate or take advantage of in order to obtain either money, valuables or food¹⁵. The story begins with the youngsters playing *fútbol* in the street. When a car comes that is forced to break abruptly to avoid an accident, one of the youngsters (out of the drivers vision) pretends to have been hit and puts himself under the front bumper of car. The driver gets out to assess the situation, and the youngsters quickly realize that it is the *Real Madrid* superstar, Alfredo di Stéfano. As di Stéfano speaks with the children to see if they are all right, the group of *golfitos* crowd around him, and one of them slyly steals his wallet. When the youngsters return to their clubhouse with their day's loot, they are visited by *el señor Justo*, an elderly man from the neighborhood. He brings Andrés, the oldest member the group of *golfitos*, pictures he had taken of Andrés' father during his years as a professional *fútbol*er in Spain. *El señor Justo* describes to the *golfitos* that Andrés' father was the greatest *fútbol*er he had ever witnessed during his fifty-year career as a sports photographer. Unfortunately his career came to an end when his camera was stolen. Touched by *el señor Justo*'s story and kindness, Andrés, as the leader of the group, decides that they will find a new camera for their elderly friend, and return the wallet they stole from di Stéfano. When the group protests Andrés stands up and says, "*Soy el jefe, ¿o no? Ese dinero es de di Stéfano, un*

¹⁵ Youngsters of this character in Spain are known as *pícaros* or *golfitos*.

futbolista... como lo fue mi padre.”

Later that night, some of the *golfitos* set out to find a new camera for *el señor Justo*. They find a cab driver parked on the street listening to an interview with Alfredo di Stefano. They tell the cabby that they are *futbolers* and ask permission to listen in on the interview. Eventually the *golfitos* distract the cab driver, and one of the youngsters sneaks around through the passenger-side back door without making a sound and steals the camera that had been sitting in the back window. Shortly thereafter, the other *golfitos* end their conversation with the cab driver and head back to their clubhouse.

Meanwhile, other members of the group of *golfitos* wait outside di Stéfano's house for the opportunity to return his wallet. Di Stefano and his wife, María, are returning from an elegant dinner where the star *fútbolero's* ex-girlfriend and famous singer, Julia Rey, provided the entertainment. Although di Stefano insists that he was unaware that Julia was scheduled to sing at that particular restaurant, his wife is rather skeptical, and during the car ride home she expresses that her concern is not as much with him, as it is with Julia, by stating, “*Es que Julia fue novia tuya y su saludo puede decir muchas cosas.*” When the couple arrives home, the youngster (that initially had pretended to be struck by di Stéfano's car) approaches the *fútbolero*, returns his wallet and apologizes for having stolen it. Di Stéfano recognizes the child as being in need, and decides to offer him a reward for having chosen to do what was morally correct. Di Stéfano and his wife invite the youngster, called *Chispas* by his friends, into the house and offer him all the food he can eat. As *Chispas* fills his pockets with expensive cuts of ham to share with his friends, di Stéfano and María inquire about his living situation. *Chispas* explains that he

lives in a modest, close-knit community alongside the river. *Chispas* then informs di Stéfano that the leader of their group, Andrés, who is dating *Chispas*' sister, is an undiscovered *fútbol* talent.

Shortly thereafter, di Stéfano's wife María visits the small village next to the river. She is immediately overcome with desire to help the people of this village, especially the newborn babies (who seem to be outnumbering the adults). While María is in *Chispas*' house helping with the babies, the children are out front playing *fútbol*. *El señor Justo*, passes through their game and heads to church. As soon as *el señor Justo* is out of sight, the youngsters stop the game. Andrés hurries home, grabs the stolen camera, and the children follow *el señor Justo* to the church. While *el señor Justo* is on his knees at church praying to San Expedito, the *golfitos* slide the camera (marked, "*para el señor Justo*") next to the old man. He finds it, picks it up and believes it to be a miracle from San Expedito.

Meanwhile, di Stefano was on the road in Catalonia to compete against *FC Barcelona*. When he returns, he finds a man from *Chispas*' village working on the house. Di Stéfano asks his wife who this man is and she explains that he is from the poor town by the river that he was in need of work, so she offered him the opportunity to take care of some chores around their house in return for a modest wage. She says, "*No te puedes imaginar como vive esa pobre gente. [...] Yo les había prometido que harías algo por ellos.*" Although di Stéfano does not protest, the idea proposed by his wife seems to cause the *fútbol* star a slight discomfort.

The group of *golfitos* continues to rob and steal throughout the city, until one day they are caught and detained by the authorities who know they are responsible for the taxi driver's missing camera. Unable to provide the police with the missing camera, Andrés and some of the others are taken into custody. While this is taking place, María and di Stéfano are visiting the riverside village. María shows di Stéfano around, and introduces him to some of the members of the community. Andrés' father, who is played by the ex-*Real Madrid* star Jacinto Quincoces, introduces himself to di Stéfano and says, "*Usted perdone que interrumpa, pero quería conocerle. Ya no hay otro como usted con el balón en los pies. [...] Sólo hay otro que lo había hecho cómo usted – yo. Pregunte. Ignacio Sancho... y ahora...*" upon saying this Sancho sadly draws attention to his broken down state and tattered clothes before walking away. Although, di Stéfano expresses a desire to continue the conversation with the broken down ex-*fútbolero*, they are interrupted and informed by the *golfitos* (who were not detained) that Andrés and some of the others are in the custody of the authorities for stealing. Upon hearing this, Andrés' mother weeps. Di Stéfano's wife then proposes that he do something to help the youngsters. He replies, "*No sé. Tendré que ir a ver al juez.*"

When di Stéfano meets with *el juez*, he characterizes the youngsters as having good intentions, but that they come from a poor village, and are at the age when they have trouble distinguishing right from wrong. Upon hearing this *El juez* says, "*Ese es el peligro. ¿Cuándo van a saber lo que está bien, y lo que está mal?*" Di Stéfano continues to defend the dignity of the people of the village, stating that the youngster's parents are honorable people, and that the children simply need a little extra guidance. *El juez* agrees

and makes his judgment by telling di Stéfano,

Estos muchachos tienen una ilusión –el fútbol. Y usted es un ídolo para ellos. Ahora que se están haciendo tantos descubrimientos científicos, ¿por qué no lanzamos nosotros el fútbol como medicina? Vamos. Piensa usted de los muchachos y en esas familias que esperan fuera.

El juez then brings the delinquents into his office and tells them that even though the missing camera has not yet been returned, they will be allowed to go free because *el señor* di Stéfano has taken responsibility for the group and that he will serve as their mentor. The youngsters thank *el juez* and di Stéfano reassures him by saying “*Serán buenos chicos. Y esa maquina ya aparecerá.*” He asks the youngsters, “*¿Verdad?*” To which they all bow their heads in shame because they know that they couldn’t possibly take the camera away from *el señor Justo*. *El juez* responds by saying, “*Esperemos que así sea. Amigo di Stéfano, a ver si un día puede decirme que estos muchachos se han convertido en unos hombres de provecho.*” The youngsters then return to their families and tell them the good news. Di Stéfano then announces that he has decided to take on the responsibility of coaching them in *fútbol*. When they cannot believe their ears, di Stéfano says, “*Tengo que vigilarlos y saber lo que hacen. Para no aburrirnos, jugaremos al fútbol.*” This news is received with cheers of celebration, at which point Andrés turns to his father and says, “*¡¡La saeta rubia, mi maestro!!*” Di Stéfano then says, “*Puedo ser una figura como tu padre.*” To which Andrés’ father modestly responds, “*No. El ejemplo debe ser en todo... usted.*” At which point, all those in attendance begin to cheer “*¡¡Viva Don Alfredo di Stéfano!!*”

At the next *Real Madrid* training session, di Stéfano approaches his teammates and other members of the club to see if they can help the poor neighborhood in any way. As a result, a few of the people from the neighborhood secure jobs working for the members of the club. He also arranges for Andrés' father, Ignacio Sancho, to become a chauffeur for one of the players. Di Stéfano also asks one of the team's trainers if he can find the youngsters some second-hand equipment to use while playing. The trainer finds them shirts, shorts, shoes and a decent ball.

The training sessions conducted by di Stefano seem to be more focused on him demonstrating his own *fútbol* talents (to appease the audience) than to allowing the children the opportunity to play. However, one of the youngsters is featured demonstrating his superior skill in the art of juggling. At the end of the first training session, di Stefano and the group are approached by *el señor Justo*, who asks di Stefano for his permission to take their photograph with his new camera. Di Stefano quickly deduces that this is the missing camera. *El señor Justo* explains that his camera had unfortunately been stolen, but that since he was such a devout Catholic, he received a new camera through prayer to San Expedito – “*milagro*”.

Understanding why the youngsters stole the camera, di Stéfano decides to make the situation right without destroying *el señor Justo*'s belief that the apparition of the camera truly was a miracle. The next day, while *el señor Justo* is again praying to and thanking San Expedito, the group returns to the church (this time with di Stéfano) and *Chispas* sneaks up behind the old man and quietly replaces the camera by his side with a new camera that was purchased by di Stéfano. When *el señor Justo* finishes his prayer he

looks down and sees the package, then opens the note that reads, “*En recompensa de tu devoción, este nuevo modelo... –San Expedito*” The old man, overwhelmed with joy, begins to shout throughout the church, “*¡Milagro! ¡Milagro!*” The priest notices the commotion and approaches the scene but is quickly diverted by di Stefano, who says, “*Perdone, padre. No le diga nada.*” To which the priest says, “*¡Es una burla!* But di Stéfano justifies his actions by saying, “*No hay burla. Sólo queremos mantener la creencia, que se hace feliz al pobre viejo.*”

With the problem of the camera finally resolved, the team continues to train and the members of the poor village demonstrate that they are sincerely grateful for all the good deeds that di Stéfano has done for them. Time passes, and we see di Stefano and *Real Madrid* in actual game footage. At one point, while the team is reviewing film footage of *Real Madrid*'s games and di Stéfano's glories, Julia Rey calls his house and tells di Stefano that she has a movie deal for him. In an attempt to cut all ties with his ex-girlfriend, di Stéfano expresses that he has no interest in the project. Julia is persistent in approaching di Stéfano about the film, and although at the beginning he goes out of his way to avoid her, he eventually begins meeting with her, and although he tries to keep each encounter professional, she manages to get closer and closer to him. Andrés and the other youngsters are aware of Julia's advances, so they plot to push her away from di Stéfano in an attempt to maintain María's honor and happiness with her husband. The scheme consists of the group of *golfitos* posing as workers at Julia Rey's dinner concert (where di Stéfano will be in attendance). They will deliver a package to each table of guests as a gift from Julia herself. When the guests open the package and find that it is

filled with mice, the audience will be shocked and panic will set in. Julia will then be devastated by the crowd's reaction and look for someone's shoulder on which to cry. At which time she will find Andrés – who she knows as a strapping young delivery-boy. The youngsters hope di Stéfano will see her in the arms of Andrés and that he will in turn, no longer want to have anything to do with her. When the scheme goes exactly as planned and di Stéfano attempts to console Julia but finds her in the arms of Andrés, rather than being upset with Julia, he is very upset with Andrés and scolds him by slapping him across the face. Andrés leaves the scene thinking the entire plan backfired. The next day, Andrés' father goes to di Stefano's house and divulges that the youngsters' scheme was actually meant to create a permanent separation between di Stéfano and Julia in order to protect María's well being. Di Stéfano is quick to forgive Andrés and the others, and everyone is happy once again.

The youth *fútbol* team named *Saeta*, coached by di Stéfano and captained by Andrés, is now winning every match they play. In the end, *Saeta* wins the championship and Andrés thanks di Stéfano and his wife as he raises the cup. The *fútboling* success and expertise of di Stéfano has not only rubbed off on the youngsters of *Saeta*, but through coaching the youths in the sport of *fútbol*, his efforts as a mentor have also proved to be successful. The youngsters have seemingly learned the difference between right and wrong.

One of the defining scenes of the film is when di Stéfano and the members of *Saeta* visit a hospital and offer gifts to the sick children. One of the patients expresses that he is extremely grateful for all that di Stéfano has done for him. Then the *fútbol* star

promises that as soon as he is better he may come and play for team *Saeta*. The sick youngster, overcome with joy, informs di Stéfano that he and the other children from the hospital have written a song in his praise. The child then breaks into song and the others join in, singing in unison:

Argentino y madrileño en una pieza

Argentino como Fiero y San Martín

Madrileño de los pies a la cabeza

Bautizado en Chamartín

Y los detalles de sus piernas cuando juega

Demostrando valentía y corazón

Y se llama la saeta porque llega

Como una flecha de caracol

Hala Saeta Rubia

Que el árbitro deje acullá

Acecha tocando ese balón

Anima el clamor de la afición

Hala Saeta Rubia

El equipo seguro campeón

Por fin se canta nuestro barrio

¡Alirón! ¡Alirón! ¡Alirón!

Los muchachos siempre sueñan con ser famosos

Y estrellas en el fútbol español

En la meta de su estilo prodigioso

Que demuestra su ambición

Su admirable servicio en el Millonarios

Que le permitiera llegar al Real Madrid

Y la racha sin igual en el River Plate

Como un milagro, brillar en ti.

Hala Saeta Rubia

Que el árbitro deje acullá

Acecha tocando ese balón

Anima el clamor de la afición

Hala Saeta Rubia

El equipo seguro campeón

Por fin se canta nuestro barrio

¡Alirón! ¡Alirón! ¡Alirón!

Clearly, *Saeta rubia* was produced in an effort to demonstrate that the sport of *fútbol* is a positive activity for youngsters. If nothing else, playing *fútbol* would keep them off the streets and out of mischief. But *Saeta rubia* also depicted the players of *Real Madrid* not only as community leaders, but as charitable, modest and caring humanitarians. Alfredo di Stéfano, being the *fútboling* superstar of Madrid at the time, through the film assumed the responsibility of being a role model, who through *fútbol* was able to teach the children from this poor neighborhood not only to be respectable citizens, but that in doing good, they also became champions in their own right. Di Stéfano was obviously promoted by *Real Madrid*, which was supported by the Franco Regime, as being an exemplary *fútboler* and role model for all to follow. This image is in sharp contrast to the picture that Carlos Casares painted of di Stefano in his short “kick-lit” story, “*Qué viejo estás y qué gordo*”. Regardless of which is the “real” di Stéfano, certain individuals become idols through the sport of *fútbol*, which in turn will cause them to be loved, criticized, manipulated, or exploited in any number of ways. Becoming a superstar will require certain responsibilities of them, but it will also offer them a range of opportunities in other fields. This is the case with *fútbol* and players like Alfredo di Stefano, who in becoming a cultural icon in Spain through the sport of *fútbol* was given the opportunity/responsibility of acting in films designed to promote himself, his club, *La Liga Española* and the values and morals of good Spanish men.

4.2: Analysis of *El portero*

El portero is a contemporary Spanish “kick-flick” made in the year 2000 but set in a beautiful mountain village of Asturias, Spain, during the year 1948. The film was written and directed by Gonzalo Suárez, who adapted the story from a short “kick-lit” tale by Miguel Hidalgo. Suárez’ cinematographic adaptation relates the tale of a famous ex-*Real Madrid* goalkeeper (clearly modeled after the legendary Ricardo Zamora) named Ramiro Forteza. Forteza is famous for having saved nine consecutive penalty kicks during a season. Due to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath, Forteza (played by Carmelo Gómez) was forced to leave his profession as *Real Madrid*’s goalkeeper. He is now left to earn his living by traveling from town-to-town in an effort to rekindle the legend of his *fútboling* stardom, offering people he meets a chance to pay him for the opportunity to attempt penalty shots against him, “*el rey del penalti*”. He keeps the money they pay him if they miss, but if they score he pays them nearly double their wager. Although “*el rey del penalti*” suffers from an injured shoulder, “*Forteza es mucho Forteza*”, and he blocks many more shots than he concedes.

In the opening scene of the film, while traveling through the mountains of Asturias toward the town of Río Luna, a bleeding *maquí* warrior stops Forteza at gunpoint.¹⁶ We soon find out that this wounded *maquí* is named Nardo and that he is one of the region’s leaders of the anti-Francoist militant movement. Nardo is well-known and

¹⁶ *Los Maquís* were groups of people (mainly men) from the north of Spain, who after losing the civil war took to the mountains and fought as guerillas. They lived off the land and dedicated their lives to sabotaging anything that had to do with the Franco Regime’s progress. Ernest Hemmingway’s novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, offers a glimpse into the operations of a group of *maquís* working from the *sierras* just north of Madrid. Similarly, Guillermo de Toro’s film, *El laberinto del fauno*, also offers a glimpse into the firm and rebellious attitudes of *los maquís* who fought against the Franco Regime after losing the Civil War.

respected by all of the people of the region. Forteza stays calm at the sight of the gun and allows the bleeding *maquí* to quietly climb into the back of his truck and catch a ride with him to town. Not much farther down the road, Forteza is stopped again. This time by, officers of the *guardia civil*, who immediately demand he provide them with proper documentation. When the commanding officer, *Sargento Andrade*, discovers that he is face-to-face with the legendary Ramiro Forteza, “*el rey del penalti*”, his tone changes from interrogating a stranger, to celebrating the *ex-Real Madrid* star’s and arrival to town. Nardo, still hiding in the back of the truck, narrowly avoids being detained by Franco’s men of the *guardia civil*, and the two are back traveling the mountain road again. As Forteza comes closer to town, Nardo signals him to stop the truck. Nardo gets out and takes a bite of an apple. He tells Forteza that if he finds the inn called *El conejo cojo* and presents the owner with this partially eaten apple, he will be treated with hospitality and offered a hot meal.

At *El conejo cojo*, Forteza quickly befriends a worker named Manuela (played by Maribel Verdú). Manuela is Nardo’s sister and she is grateful for what Forteza had done for her brother. She protects her injured brother from the Franco Regime’s local authorities by hiding him in *El conejo cojo*’s attic, where they have a warm bed set up. From this position he can receive hot meals and medical attention from the local doctor/veterinarian who supports their cause. Manuela struggles as a single mother in Río Luna. Her inquisitive and enthusiastic son, Tito, seems to be the only positive thing in her life. Tito was conceived because she had been raped by a group of Moroccan mercenaries

fighting for Franco during the Civil War. Being a rape victim and the single mother of a dark-skinned child, Manuela has been ostracized by almost everyone in the town.

After stopping by *El conejo cojo*, Forteza goes to the beach and sets up camp and his goal. He then reflects on better times in Spain, prior to all the turmoil and atrocities that accompanied the Civil War and its aftermath – when he was a star goalkeeper playing in crowded stadiums. The next morning, Forteza heads into town to make his presence better known. In front of the church entrance, he sets up a display case comprised of pictures and newspaper articles pasted on cardboard to promote himself as the “*rey del penalti*” and hopefully entice some of the town’s people to place bets and attempt to score a penalty kick on him. His display draws the interest of the priest, *padre Constantino*, who approaches him and asks what his intentions in the town are. Forteza responds by saying, “*Lo que en todas – exhibiciones. Hago apuestas. La gente me tira penaltis y si alguno le entra el dinero es para ellos. Y si lo paro es para mi. Esta tarde estaré en la playa.*” Upon hearing this, the priest says that he would like to try. Forteza tells him to bring his money and come by the beach that evening to give it his best shot. *Padre Constantino* then decides to make a deal with the goaltender. He says that if Forteza helps him clean the vestry, he will announce Forteza’s penalty kick proposal after mass. Forteza gladly accepts and the two shake hands.

Forteza goes out to where he has set up his display and gives his self-promotional “dog-n-pony-show” to all those coming to attend mass. He tells them about some of the incredible penalties he saved over the years, and glorifies his image as a superstar who saved penalties with multiple broken fingers, etc. hoping that the word will spread and he

will have a large crowd of people to shoot against him in the afternoon. He ends his speech by saying, “*El que quiere aprobar puede venir esta tarde a la playa. Tres tiros, seis pesetas. Y dos duros de premio el que marque un gol.*”

While helping *padre Constantino* bury a man to “clean out the vestry”, the middle-aged men have an interesting conversation, and although Forteza experiences first-hand the priest’s manipulative ways, the two begin forging a friendship. They then head to the beach, where *padre Constantino* is the first to put his money down for a shot at scoring a goal against the “*rey del penalti*”. On the priest’s first attempt he kicks more of the ground than he does of the ball, and everyone in attendance laughs. The priest sets up again trying to redeem himself. He shoots and scores, but Forteza never moved, causing the priest to become embarrassed again because he feels that Forteza simply allowed the goal to pass. *Padre Constantino* storms off. Jacinto, one of the town’s aspiring *fútbolers*, is the next to attempt, but Forteza swiftly blocks his shot. Immediately after Jacinto’s shot, *Sargento Andrade* and other military men on horseback approach the group and put an end to the contest. *Sargento Andrade* tells Forteza that they are going to need him healthy because they have big plans for him. *Sargento Andrade* invites both Forteza and the Priest to their barracks where they will have a get-together to discuss the plan.

At the cocktail party, *Sargento Andrade* introduces Forteza to Lisardo, who is the mayor of the town and the town’s *fútbol* coach. With everyone present, *Sargento Andrade* explains his idea of having a penalty challenge. The penalty challenge he describes will consist of two teams: one made up of the townsmen, coached by Mayor Lisardo, and the other comprised of military men under the command of *Sargento*

Andrade. *Sargento Andrade* proposes that the two teams ante up two hundred *pesetas* and the winner will take all. *Forteza* will be the goalkeeper for both teams and has nothing to gain but the risk of injury. He therefore rejects *Sargento Andrade*'s proposal. *Sargento Andrade* claims he is attempting to strengthen the ties between the military and the townsmen, but clearly pitting these two enemies against one another on the *fútbol* field will simply nurture their mutual animosity. *Sargento Andrade* explains to *Forteza* that this will simply be another opportunity for the goalkeeper to serve his country through his *fútboling* abilities. *Forteza* asks what money he will receive in this penalty challenge. After a bit of negotiating, it is decided that he will receive ten percent of the pot before the challenge takes place and ten percent after. At this point, *padre Constantino* steps in and says, "Y otro diez por ciento para la iglesia..." *Sargento Andrade* then steps in and says, "Pero la iglesia no va a jugar, padre." To which *padre Constantino* responds, "La iglesia va arbitrar. Así tendremos la garantía de imparcialidad." With the meeting adjourned, *padre Constantino* accompanies *Forteza* to the doctor who will give *Forteza*'s injured shoulder a check-up. At this point, *Sargento Andrade* is approached by *López*, a lower-ranking and simple-minded officer, who had been listening in on the group's conversation. *López* says, "Este *Forteza* no es un patriota." Immediately *Sargento Andrade* scolds *López* for his comment by saying, "Vamos a ver *López*, todo hombre que ha jugado para el Real Madrid, aunque cobre como un profesional, es un patriota. ¿Estamos?"

In the days leading up to the penalty challenge, *Forteza* learns of *Manuela*'s disgust with *Franco*'s conservative military presence in the town and her plans to flee

with Tito to France. He learns that she has been working with the town doctor to get the necessary documents forged for the two of them to travel. Forteza, having quickly fallen in love with Manuela and Tito, convinces Manuela that they should escape with him in his truck. The doctor gets word back to Manuela that he will have their papers ready immediately after the penalty contest.

Ever since the announcement of the penalty contest, Forteza has been approached by a number of members of the *guardia civil* who attempt to persuade him to throw the competition and assure their victory. Upon hearing this, Manuela tells Forteza she would hate him if he threw the contest for either side. She says that she will wait to see the conclusion of the contest (in which she hopes, with all her heart, the townsmen are victorious over Franco's men, but above all, she adamantly communicates she simply hopes for a fair contest) and then the three will quickly convene with the doctor at the truck to get their papers before heading for France.

The day of the penalty contest, the entire town is present. On one side of the field are the townsmen and on the other side, the members of the *guardia civil*. The priest is between the two trying to keep the peace and maintain his good (and profitable) relationship with both sides. Forteza, the goalkeeper, (like many *fútbol*ers of the era) attempts to put all political ideologies aside and simply play his best. But since he is a *fútbol*er, he is caught in the crossfire. At every opportunity, *Sargento Andrade* makes a conscious effort to promote his side, from painting the ball with the red and yellow stripes of the Spanish Flag, to extorting the opposing team's coach, forcing him with no option other than to demand that his player purposely miss the kick. This is clearly an

attempt by Gonzalo Suárez to demonstrate the corrupt roll that politics played in manipulating *fútbol* in Spain, not only during Franco's Reign but for many years after.

At one point late in the penalty contest, the *maquís* come out of hiding and surround the members of the *guardia civil*. Instead of shooting and starting a battle, Nardo expresses that he is a citizen of *Río Luna* and that he also wants to represent his political beliefs by shooting in the penalty contest. As the penalty contest continues, no one truly knows the score. The lack of clarity in this regard, by Gonzalo Suárez, is frustrating to the viewer, but is very representative of the political climate during this era. *Sargento Andrade* disregarded the designated roles that people were to assume in the contest (as coaches, players and officials) and took advantage of his military rank and political power to control the proceedings. He did so because all present were aware that after the contest (and even during the contest) he would still be the highest-ranking official, backed by the dictator, and therefore capable of controlling their lives in any capacity that he saw fit. This was even the case with Lisardo, who was not only the opposing team's coach, but the Mayor of *Río Luna*. *Sargento Andrade* also consistently overruled the priest, who was supposed to play the role of the unbiased referee. However, it was easy to see that the priest was ready to side with whoever was willing to help him the most. The only people that were prepared to stand up to *Sargento Andrade* and his men, were *los maquís*, led by Nardo. At one point pistols are drawn, each group pointing at the other with the *fútbol* field and *Forteza* (representing the sport of *fútbol*), and the priest (representing the church), in the middle. This scene could be considered a cinematographic portrait painted by Gonzalo Suárez, depicting the social climate of

northern Spain, which defends the notion that *fútbol* is the all-encompassing Petri dish of life and society. For example, like the players for many teams throughout Spain, Forteza simply wanted to play the sport of *fútbol* and leave politics aside, but he could not dismiss the fact that no matter what result his actions caused, there would be political implications.

After many shots, the priest declares the match a tie but López insists that he still deserves one more shot. When he lines up to take the final shot all the townsmen, and the impartial spectators slowly walk toward the goal to form a blockade. They eventually pick the goal up and carry it away, preventing him the opportunity to even attempt a shot. While all this is taking place, *los maquis* flee the scene, causing the *guardia civil* to chase after them, in turn allowing Manuela, Tito and Forteza time to get to their truck, receive their forged documents and flee toward France. As they did, the impartial priest helped them and made sure Forteza received his cut of the money before they left. While on the road, Forteza told Tito to look in the box and count the money that the priest had given them. Tito finds that the priest left them with only two pesetas. Upon realizing this, Forteza ironically says, “*maldito cura*” and they all laugh as they drive away.

Gonzalo Suárez’ skill for symbolically representing Spain’s political and social climate of the era, putting it into such a small and nicely wrapped package, is without a doubt the film’s greatest attribute. The *fútbol* scenes are ridiculously childish, but as Suárez said, “*Es un western, no una película sobre fútbol*” (317). It was surely due to his ability to represent Spanish society during the post-Civil War (through a series of symbols and metaphors) that resulted in the film winning the Sant Jordi Best Spanish

Film of the Year in 2001. His depiction of the sport of *fútbol* could not have been what won him the award. Suárez' representation of Spain during this era, clearly shows that he supported the rebellious effort because throughout the film the rebels were depicted as the upholders of all that was good and just. They were continually oppressed by the Franco Regime and victimized by the Regime's actions. During the penalty shootout, Manuela and other members of the *maquís* adamantly expressed that they simply wanted a fair competition. Suárez revealed that the rebels of the time simply were fighting for a world that was free of manipulation and corruption. To them this was the first victory they needed to achieve, before even focusing on achieving a victory in the traditional sense. Above all, Gonzalo Suarez' *El portero* demonstrates, through a story-like depiction of society and the sport of *fútbol* as a social phenomena, that no matter how impartial it would like to be, *fútbol* has an uncanny knack of being emersed in the political and social disputes of Spain.

4.3: Analysis of *Días de fútbol*

Días de fútbol is considered one of the most successful “kick-flicks” not only in Spain but also throughout the world. The idea to make *Días de fútbol* was first conceived on the set of the 2002 Spanish comedy/drama/musical/romance titled, *El otro lado de la cama*. Tomás Cimadevilla, the producer of *El otro lado de la cama* and members of the film’s cast approached David Serrano, the writer of *El otro lado de la cama*, and asked him to write and direct *Días de fútbol*. Although Serrano is considered “the mastermind” behind the *Días de fútbol* project, he allowed his cast (which was largely made up of the cast from *El otro lado de la cama*) to express their creative voices and add ideas freely to the script. In this sense, *Días de fútbol* was a collaborative project. Some of the members of *El otro lado de la cama*’s cast that also worked on *Días de fútbol* are Ernesto Alterio, Natalia Verbeke, Alberto San Juan, María Esteve, Nathalie Poza, Secún de la Rosa, Cote Soler and Luis Bermejo.

Días de fútbol is a comedy that, first and foremost, offers its audience a hysterical view into contemporary Spanish society. This comical vision of Spain can in many ways be compared to the Spanish masterpiece, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, in that it too is a parody of the Spanish people’s obsession. In *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, the author, Miguel Cervantes, made a parody of the Spanish society’s obsession with *novelas de caballeria* during the late 16th Century. Through *Días de fútbol* David Serrano, follows Cervantes’ approach, and makes a parody of contemporary Spanish society’s obsession with the sport of *fútbol*. The influence of Cervantes’ *Quijote* on *Días de fútbol* can be found in many aspects of the film. This is much of the reason for the film’s success. This

approach is also what makes the film even more profoundly Spanish. However, one of the film's lead actors, Ernesto Alterio, attributes *Días de fútbol*'s success to the fact that the cast was comprised of Spanish comedic talents that enjoyed working together, and who, through working together on *El otro lado de la cama*, had come to understand each other's abilities and senses of humor. He claims this gave the film a cohesion and direction that otherwise would not have been possible. In making a parody of Spanish society and the people's obsession with the sport of *fútbol*, the cast and crew of *Días de fútbol* took on the daunting task of dealing with a film centered around the sport of *fútbol*—a task that over the course of film history has proven to be very difficult. It is my belief that *Días de fútbol*'s success as a “kick-fick” lies in the fact that the group approached Spain's present day obsession with *fútbol* in the same way that Cervantes had approached Spain's obsession with *libros de caballería*, and because (like Santiago Seguro pointed out in *Fútbol y cine*) the cast and crew of *Días de fútbol* tackled the theme of *fútbol* “*desde una posición lateral*”.

Días de fútbol is a story of a group of profoundly typical middle-aged men in Spain who grew up together in the same neighborhood. Each of these men is struggling, in one way or another, with finding happiness in Spain's modern society. Some of the individuals struggle with their life at work, others with romance, and others with money and success; these difficulties result in them struggling with their grasp of reality. They have been living in their neighborhood since childhood, and although they do not express a desire to leave the *barrio*, they do however express a desire for change. The story begins with Jorge (the film's central character) attempting to make a change in his life by

asking his girlfriend of eight years, Violeta, to marry him. She responds by scolding him, saying, “*¡Jorge! así, de repente no se puede...*” and tells him she needs time to think about it. Stuck in a job that seems more like “office torture” than office work, Jorge is a typical middle-aged Spaniard that is “*parado*” – unable to achieve what society asks of him, and unable to do what he wants. Jorge’s long-time friend from the *barrio*, Antonio, is a recently paroled felon. Antonio is convinced that his anger problem has been completely rehabilitated through his incarceration. It was also during his incarceration that he first began having delusions of becoming a psychologist. Even though Antonio is not fond of the university system, he realizes that earning his degree is the only way to become a certified psychologist. He follows his dream by studying the material the university requires while at the same time driving a taxi for income. While studying psychology, he provides his friends with what he considers sound advice and therapy, even when they don’t ask for it.

After Antonio’s release from prison, he confronts Jorge about the poor state in which he has found each of his friends since his incarceration. While watching a *fútbol* match, Antonio tells Jorge that he feels Jorge needs therapy. Antonio proceeds to search for the root of Jorge’s problems. Jorge says he does not want or need therapy, but Antonio insists and approaches the problem through Jorge’s love for *fútbol*. Antonio says, “*Jorge, tu padre es calvo*”. Jorge replies by saying, “*Pues, sí... de toda la vida. Tú lo sabes.*” Antonio continues by asking, “*Y cuando ves el fútbol ¿que piensas?*” Jorge says, “*No pienso, veo el fútbol, Antonio – si me dejan.*” Antonio corrects Jorge and offers him his psychoanalytical hypothesis by telling Jorge, “*Tú, cuando ves el fútbol... piensas que*

la pelota es la cabeza de tu padre, que hay que patearla". Jorge is shocked by Antonio's misconstrued psychoanalysis and says "No. No. No. No me vengas con cosas raras, Antonio. Yo estoy muy bien. Lo único que me pasa es que me preocupo por ti."

Antonio's separation from reality and his persistence in uncovering his friends' psychological problems is reminiscent of Miguel de Cervantes's character, Don Quijote, and his separation from reality. Don Quijote's break from reality caused him to hysterically turn a normal 16th Century situation of Spanish society into a chivalrous battle over honor, love or the good of mankind. There are many characters in Spanish literature and film that, like Don Quijote, are frustrated or unhappy with their lives and opt to live inside their invented/fantastical realities. The irony (and genius) of this Spanish theme is that when an individual truly lives out his fantasy (no matter how far fetched or ridiculous it may be) the fantasy becomes a reality. This is the case with *Días de fútbol*. When Antonio discovers that Violeta has rejected Jorge's marriage proposal, he decides that if the group were to form a *fútbol* club to compete in the neighborhood tournament it would be therapeutic for Jorge. In Antonio's amateur opinion not only would this ease Jorge's pain from having lost Violeta, it would also help him with the angst Antonio claims Jorge feels toward his father. Like the characters that cross paths with Don Quijote, each of the men in crisis in *Días de fútbol*, without a better plan to ease the pain of their reality, follow Antonio's lead. They therefore enter, to an extent, into Antonio's harmless state of lunacy by forming a *fútbol* club like the one they had when they were teenagers.

The team will consist of: Antonio at the helm; Jorge; Gonzalo, the overweight goalkeeper who lives with his parents, is unemployed and subsequently without a girlfriend; Carlos, an infomercial actor who has delusions of “big screen” grandeur and stardom; Miguel, a police officer and frustrated musician who is mistreated by his wife and disrespected by his co-workers; Ramón, a school bus driver who is constantly ridiculed by the students for being bald; and Serafín, a friend of Antonio’s from prison who is always scheming and claiming to be a “man that knows how to get things”. The group enters the *Torneo siete de barrio* and at their first training session (that lasts four minutes due to their lack of physical fitness) they realize they need a team name. After the members of the group blurt out a few names off the top of their heads, Antonio presents the name he has been working on. He pulls a paper from his pocket and in a serious tone says, “*Un momento, un momento, por favor. Yo he pensao un nombre. Es que tiene que ser un nombre especial... un nombre de bonito... un nombre ganador...*” Antonio then looks to his sheet of paper and pauses before announcing it to them, “*Brasil*” he says. The name is received with rave reviews by his teammates, and like Don Quijote who named his broken-down horse *Rocinante*, this mid-life crisis *fútbol* team will compete in *Torneo siete de barrio* under the name of the most successful international *fútboling* nation of all time – *Brasil*.

When filming the *fútbol* scenes of the *Días de fútbol*, David Serrano, as director, made his best decision; rather than attempting to capture the beauty of the game while filming the *fútbol* scenes – which is where many other “kick-flicks” have failed – the *fútbol* scenes in *Días de fútbol* are hysterically ridiculous. Rather than fighting the uphill

battle of filming well-played *fútbol* – which Santiago Seguro describes as a task as difficult as conquering Mount Everest – Serrano and his cast succeeded by taking a different approach. Instead of attempting to make the plays seem beautiful and demonstrating the players' talent, *Días de fútbol* purposely highlighted the team's lack of skill and ability. Many of the *fútbol* scenes are filled with absurdities that have no place in any realistic *fútbol* match. Tomás Cimadevilla describes this as giving the film “*un toque esperpéntico... tan propio de nuestro país y nuestro cine*”. One example is that Serafín wears his mobile phone on the waistband of his shorts and at one point answers a call while dribbling through the midfield. In another scene, the goalkeeper, Gonzalo, is scored on because he had stepped off the field to urinate behind the goal. The players from *Brasil* smoke cigarettes throughout the game and in the locker room, as if smoking were completely acceptable in these *fútboling* situations. *Brasil's* lack of skill and *fútbol* experience leads them to resort to cheating in order to achieve a victory – their ultimate goal. Examples of *Brasil's* cheating tactics include: Serafín blowing chalk in his opponent's eyes; pricking their opponents with pins, as proposed by Antonio (but the pin pricking plan backfires and instead they give up a goal); and Antonio and Serafín paying the referee to give them every advantage (but when the opposing team's goalkeeper saves the penalty kick that *Brasil* was unjustly awarded, our group of pathetic anti-heroes quickly gives up a goal on a counter-attack, making clear that *Brasil* is not even capable of cheating successfully).

In the footage of extra scenes and interviews on the DVD, David Serrano describes that in his approach to making the *fútbol* scenes, he wanted to make them

enjoyable for the people who are not *fútbol* fans. He said that above all, he wanted the people to laugh through the *fútbol* scenes because, as he describes, “*no se ve un Madrid–Barça, ni mucho menos*”. Interestingly, most of the actors of *Días de fútbol* openly admit that prior to making the film they were “*anti-fútbol*” and that many of them even hated the sport. However, through their training sessions, that were designed to help them better grasp the game, they gained a newfound respect for the skill, discipline and physical fitness necessary to play the sport, even at the lowest levels. Ernesto Alterio even said that, “*todo ese mes de entrenamiento fue muy bueno para consolidar los personajes y las relaciones*” and that in the end he would really miss playing *fútbol* because he had such a great time doing so with the members of the cast and crew. Secún de la Rosa, who prior to filming claimed to detest the sport, said, “*he cogido un gusto al estar de portero y estar en equipo y aprender de disfrutar del balón y trabajar en equipo.*” On the other hand, after the filming, Fernando Tejero continues to dislike the sport and claims he will not miss playing it at all. The making of *Días de fútbol* served to open the minds of many of the film’s actors and offered them the opportunity to see the sport in a new light leaving them with a better understanding as to why so many people are so passionate about the sport of *fútbol* and its many dimensions, not only in Spain, but around the world.

The tale’s complex cast of characters offers the audience a very rich, and multifaceted storyline filled with one laugh after another. In the end, *Días de fútbol* offers the audience an anti-climactic resolution in its depiction of *Brasil* and the cast of characters who each achieve a personal victory in one way or another. In *Brasil*’s final

match of the season, after manipulating the referee, they were again awarded an unjust penalty kick. Jorge, who after being abandoned by his ex-girlfriend has been struggling to find something positive in his life, and possibly for this reason, insists on taking the penalty kick. Throughout the season, things seemed to be looking up for Jorge; he was forging a very happy and healthy relationship with Bárbara, a neighborhood girl for whom he had always had a crush. She was helping him look beyond the realm of his terrible office job and seek out the beauty of life and living. When Jorge demands to take the final penalty kick of the season, (that will provide *Brasil* with not only their first victory, but a sense of having achieved something positive) it seems that Jorge is confronting his fears of failure head on. Antonio approaches Jorge and says, “*Este es un momento de la hostia de importante en tu vida, en la mía, y en la de todos. Mira el balón y piensa en la cabeza de tu padre.*” Upon hearing this, Jorge explodes and shouts, “*¡Antonio! ¡Deja mi padre en paz! ¡Dájalo! ¡Deja mi padre!*” Jorge approaches the ball, kicks it and scores, and then immediately enters into what seems to be a state of serenity and peacefulness as his teammates celebrate around him.

At the end of the film, the other members of *Brasil* also find some form of resolution to the problems that have been confronting them. Although Antonio’s notion of entering the *Torneo siete de barrio* for therapy seemed absurd, the strengthened bond formed among the teammates and a single win, was all the positive reinforcement they needed to consider themselves something more than perpetual losers. In this regard, Antonio was correct – forming *Brasil* and entering the *Torneo siete de barrio* not only offered them the opportunity to return to their childhood and re-live their dreams, it was

also an opportunity to prove to themselves that they were capable of being successful at something, no matter how pathetic it may have been. The film ends with the team celebrating at Antonio's wedding reception, (since he had reconciled with his former girlfriend) and Miguel going up on stage to play the song he had written for the wedding. The song's chorus repeats, "*¿y ahora qué?, ¿y ahora qué?, ¿y ahora qué?, ¿y ahora qué..?*" reinforcing the anti-resolution theme that has become common in many works of contemporary Spanish literature and film. This theme is based on the theory that life consists of a series of small struggles and that winning or losing is not always the most important factor, but that experiencing and embracing the set-backs as well as the victories is where we can find the essence of life. The final shot of the film shows Antonio at his wedding reception staring off into the distance with a crazed look in his eye, he then murmurs, "*estoy viendo la luz*". This final scene draws light not only to his Quijote-*esque* lunacy, but also to the notion that the difference between success and failure lies in the eyes of the beholder. In this sense, like Don Quijote, the members of *Brasil* were convinced that they had finally achieved at least some level of success in their lives – thanks to Antonio's idea of forming a *fútbol* team with the purpose of providing his friends with social and psychological therapy.

4.4: Analysis of *El penalti más largo del mundo*

El penalti más largo del mundo is Spain's most recent kick-flick. The director, Roberto Santiago, has proven to be a promising new Spanish filmmaker due to the ability he has for achieving commercial success. He has been successful not only with *El penalti más largo del mundo*, but also with his previous film, *Hombres felices* (2001). *El penalti más largo del mundo* was one of Spain's most successful box office hits in 2005, grossing over \$6.5 million. (Fionnuala Halligan article) The film's success is largely due to the success of its recent Spanish "kick-flick" predecessors: *El portero* (2000), and *Días de fútbol* (2003), which paved the way for *El penalti más largo del mundo* and proved to Santiago and his cast and crew that films using the sport of *fútbol* as a central theme are capable of capturing a large-scale market in Spain. These three films, and their commercial success demonstrate a resurgence of the popularity of "kick-flicks" in Spain since the earlier era of their popularity during the mid 20th Century.

Rather than casting superstars of *fútbol* as the protagonists in today's era of Spanish "kick-flicks", the popular approach has been to embrace the struggles of fictional situations that take place in the lowest-level leagues, known as "*fútbol regional*" in Spain. For these films directors use actors who are able to identify with, and portray everyday people from typical neighborhoods that have the stereotypical small town/big dreams. For this reason, Roberto Santiago wisely cast Fernando Tejero as *El penalti más largo del mundo*'s protagonist. Tejero received the Goya Award for "Best New Actor" for his role in *Días de fútbol*, and now seems to be typecast as the pathetic Spanish "kick-flick" anti-hero. *El penalti más largo del mundo* is also proof of the power of "kick-lit" because, like

El portero, *El penalti más largo del mundo* was first written as a short story before being adapted to the big screen. At the end of the second chapter of this study, I gave a brief summary of the Argentinean author, Osvaldo Soriano's, short story, "*El penal más largo del mundo*", to provide a foundation for the analysis of the cinematographic version of the film.

The film version of *El penalti más largo del mundo*, is different from the original tale in a number of ways. The most obvious difference is that, rather than being set in "*un lugar perdido del valle de Rio Negro, en Argentina*", Roberto Santiago's film is set in Spain's working class neighborhood of Carabanchel, Madrid. The protagonist of Soriano's tale is known as Gato Diaz, the starting goalkeeper of the small-town club, *Estrella Polar*. But in the cinematographic version, the protagonist is known simply as Fernando. Rather than being the club's starting goalkeeper, Fernando is *Estrella Polar*'s bench warming back-up goalie and the neighborhood's consummate "loser". Fernando (played by Tejero) spends most of his time on the bench drinking beer, smoking cigarettes and badmouthing his team's starting goalkeeper, Román. Román seems to have everything. He is good looking, and is the manager of the supermarket, *Estrella Polar*, which sponsors the club. Román is dating the coach's beautiful blonde daughter, Cecilia, he rides a motorcycle and is the envy of everyone in town for his goalkeeping skills. In the film's opening scene Santiago shows Fernando sitting on the bench next to one of the club's overweight benchwarmers, Bilbao. Together, with the rest of the crowd, they watch Román make a diving save and then blow a kiss to Cecilia as she works the concession stand. Fernando, disgusted with his personal situation says, "*Pero ¿has visto*

cómo Román mira a Cecilia? Podría cortarse un poco ¿no?” To which Bilbao responds, “*Tranquilo joder Fernando. ¿Yo qué sé? La vida es así. Unos son titulares y otros chupando banquillo.*” Unable to accept this role in life, Fernando says, “*¿La vida? La vida una mierda. Me cago en Román. Me cago en su gomina. Me cago en todo.*” Shortly thereafter Fernando is afforded his first opportunity of the season to play for *Estrella Polar*, because Román is injured in the last play of the season. The injury takes place when the opposing team’s captain commits a vicious foul against Román. Rather than calling the foul on the opposing team, *Deportivo Belgrano*, the referee calls the foul on Román and awards an unjust penalty kick to *Deportivo Belgrano*. The fans are outraged. With no other option, *Estrella Polar*’s coach, Santos, substitutes Fernando in the goal to defend the team’s 1-0 lead. If Fernando can manage to block the kick, *Estrella Polar* will win the 3rd Division Championship and advance to the 2nd Division the following year. This will enable the club many more opportunities to make money, give them the ability to buy better players and be more successful in the future. This will in turn afford everyone involved a better lifestyle, more money, success and respect. Although Fernando spends most of his time “in the clouds”, he is well aware of the importance that his performance will have on the future of his club. As Fernando lines up to block the kick, he is so nervous that he has to ask the referee for a moment. He then steps to the side of the goal and vomits. Meanwhile, the local fans frustration is mounting due to the referee’s terrible call and before the shot can be taken, the town’s people rise up and take control of the situation themselves (in manner reminiscent of Lope de Vega’s Golden

Age play *Fuenteovejuna*) and storm the field. This forces the referees to flee to the safety of their dressing room where they lock themselves inside.

This uprising resulted in the game being stopped before the shot could be taken and a committee of the league's officials is left to decide what actions to take in order to determine the final match's outcome. The next day the members of *Estrella Polar* meet at a local bar and discover from the coach that the committee has decided the final penalty kick will be taken the following Sunday in the same *Estrella Polar* stadium, but without any of the turbulent fans in attendance. Since *Estrella Polar*'s star goalkeeper, Román, was subbed out for Fernando at the end of the game, he is ineligible to return to the match – the club's future lies in the hands of the neighborhood loser, Fernando.

As soon as Fernando finds himself in the spotlight, he immediately begins to notice that the people around town are now not only paying attention to him, but they are treating him with respect and offering him their every support. *Estrella Polar*'s coach, Santos, and owner, Adrián, (who are also the co-owners of the grocery store, *Estrella Polar*, where most of the team's players work) begin offering Fernando special favors in an effort to keep him sound of mind and body during the week leading up to the penalty kick. Santos and Adrián, offer Fernando all he can eat and drink at restaurants and insist he refrain from straining himself at the grocery store, where Fernando works as a stock boy. Fernando quickly realizes that no request is beyond his reach and he asks Santos if he may take Cecilia, his daughter, and the neighborhood's most beautiful blonde, out on a date. Wanting to keep Fernando's spirit and self-confidence as high as possible, Santos bribes his daughter Cecilia to betray her actual boyfriend, the club's injured goalie,

Román, and humor the pathetic Fernando with a few dinner dates during the week leading up to the penalty shot.

It's evident that some of the aspects of the film follow the theme of Soriano's short story, while other aspects have been either molded, modified, or changed completely to better fit the characteristics of a feature-length film. Fernando's desire to date the town's beautiful blonde girl coincides with Soriano's short story, but the way Fernando secures the date is very different from the way Gato Diaz secures his date. The desired female in Soriano's tale is not the daughter of *Estrella Polar's* coach, and *Estrella Polar* is not a grocery store that serves as the place of employment for most of the team's members, as it does in the film. It is, however, the name of the club in both the story and the film. *Deportivo Belgrano* is also the name of the rival team in both the story and the film. However, the film is very different from Soriano's story in that there are a multitude of characters and side stories in Santiago's film, making it more applicable to the big screen. The characters in the film all have secrets to hide from one another, which causes them to plot and scheme throughout the week leading up to the penalty shot. For example, Fernando takes Cecilia out on two dates, and both times they come in contact with Román. Fernando has to hide Cecilia and make up a story to avert Román's suspicions. Bilbao recently lost his job as a gas station attendant and is waiting for "*el momento adecuado*" to tell his wife. In order to keep his situation a secret, he pretends to go to work everyday. When his wife goes to the grocery store, *Estrella Polar*, he secretly waits around the corner and takes the money she spends back from Adrián who marks the debt on his ever-growing tab. Fernando's sister, Ana, also begins forming a secret

relationship with the team's coach and grocery store co-owner, Santos, behind the back of Khaled, her Moroccan boyfriend with whom she has a child. Khaled is also on the *Estrella Polar fútbol* team and works at the grocery store as a butcher. His *laze-faire* attitude toward his relationship with Ana leads her to look elsewhere for companionship. All of the secrets that the characters keep from one another are made evident to the audience and lead to a variety of comical situations. From this perspective, *El penalti más largo del mundo* approaches the sport “*desde una posición lateral*” and could be considered a situation comedy that uses this fictional circumstance of the 3rd Division of Spanish *fútbol* as the point of departure.

The central theme of the story is Fernando's change in social status. He uses the sport of *fútbol* to help him become the person that he wants to be in society, and what he wants more than anything is for Cecilia to fall in love with him. At first, this seems like an unattainable goal, but since his first date with the girl of his dreams was disastrous, he asks his sister Ana what it is that women want. Ana tells him that more than anything women want to laugh and that he should simply try to make Cecilia laugh. From this moment on, Fernando's confidence begins to soar because he is confident in his ability to make people laugh. The next time he sees Cecilia it is the night before the penalty kick and he asks her to give him a kiss for good luck. But she refuses his request. He then proposes that if he can't have a real kiss, he should be allowed to show her a magic trick. Cecilia shows an interest and he says, “*consiste en que, yo te doy un beso en la boca, pero sin tocarte los labios.*” Annoyed Cecilia responds, “*Que no te voy a dar ningún beso.*” Fernando reminds her, “*¡Pero sin tocarte los labios!*” She says, “*Pero esto es*

imposible.” Fernando says, “*Por esto es un truco.*” He tells her that she needs to close her eyes and he will give her “*un especie de... beso mágico*”. She finally agrees although she is skeptical. As it turns out, Fernando gives her a long kiss directly on the lips and when it is over she says, “*Pero me has tocado los labios.*” To which Fernando responds, “*Ya, porque ha salido mal.*” Cecilia, in good spirits, bursts out laughing. Fernando then asks if he may try the trick again to see if he can do it properly this time, but she laughingly responds “*¡Que no!*”

The next day, Fernando is approached by Rodríguez, *Deportivo Belgrano*’s owner, who offers Fernando a ride to the stadium before the penalty shot. In the car, Rodríguez offers Fernando a bribe. He gives Fernando a sizeable check and says, “*Lo único que tienes que hacer es no hacer nada.*” Fernando says, “*Hombre, pues el no hacer nada, es mi especialidad*”. Fernando then takes the check and slides it into his shirt pocket. The conversation continues under the pretense that Fernando will allow the kick to go in, but as soon as he steps out of the car he leans to the window and says, “*Oye, Rodríguez, una cosita más... Toda mi vida... desde que pequeñito ¿eh? Toda mi vida he querido hacer esto.*” He pulls the check from his pocket, rips it up and tosses it on the street. To which Rodríguez says, “*Estás metiendo la pata.*” Fernando responds, “*Buenos días señores.*” As Fernando walks toward the stadium, the camera pans down to the torn-up check on the ground and we discover that instead of having ripped up the check, Fernando actually ripped up a 6 Euro coupon for the *Estrella Polar* supermarket, which looked like the check. Therefore, Fernando still has the check from Rodríguez safe in his pocket, but he is not obligated to allow the shot to pass.

In the end, Fernando blocks the penalty kick, and just as in Soriano's literary version, the referee (although not epileptic in the film) passes out before the shot is taken due to the stress of the situation and from blowing the whistle with too much force in the hot sun. When the two teams' argument over the decision the referee should make turns into a shoving match, Fernando (like Gato Diaz in the short story) breaks up the fight and displays his self-confidence and courage to all those attending. He announces that he would prefer to simply have the kick taken so that he can block it again because he has a date to attend that evening. Fernando says, "*Si tenemos que tirar otro penalti, vamos a hacerlo cuanto antes porque yo tengo un poco de prisa. Si os parece, no perdamos más del tiempo porque luego tengo una cita.*" Fernando then turns his attention to the referee and asks the official if he needs anything, "*¿agua... o alguna otra cosa?*" The referee responds, by saying "*No, no, no... Muchas gracias ¿eh?*" Fernando says, "*Bueno, pues vamos a tirar el penalti de una vez. Y no te vuelvas a caer.*" The referee responds, "*Pues tira.*" Fernando then approaches the shooter, *Deportivo Belgrano's* captain, and offers him the ball. The shooter whispers to Fernando, "*Esta vez, ¿por dónde te la voy a tirar?*" With all the confidence in the world, Fernando responds, "*Tíramelo por donde te saca los cojones. Que te la voy a parar de todas formas.*" *Deportivo Belgrano's* captain finally takes the shot, which hits the cross bar and Fernando catches on the rebound. *Estrella Polar's* victory is finally official and the fiesta begins.

The film ends happily and almost everyone's problematic side story is resolved. Khaled demonstrates that he is ready to make a more stable commitment to his relationship with Ana by arranging to build a house with her. Although Santos is upset,

he recognizes their happiness together. Bilbao and his wife come to terms; she forgives him for his mistake and he promises to find work and lose weight. Adrián offers to take the entire *Estrella Polar* team and friends to stay at his brother-in-law's hotel in La Manga for a week. But most importantly, instead of being a loser, Fernando is now the neighborhood hero, and Román, the goalkeeper who had been everyone's favorite, is now shoved aside. At the team's victory party, Cecilia leaves early, telling her father, Santos, that she has a date with Fernando. Santos is shocked that she has actually fallen for him, but supports her choice and as she walks out the door, Santos distracts the depressed Román from following her. Back at Fernando's house, the neighborhood's "man of the hour" offers Cecilia an envelope containing two plane tickets to Paris. He bought the tickets with the money he kept from the bribe *Deportivo Belgrano's* owner, Rodríguez, had offered him. He says, "*Bueno, pues yo había pensado, mientras esta gente se va a La Manga, y que a mi la playa no me gusta mucho. Pues, a lo mejor tu y yo, podríamos irnos a Paris.*" Cecilia responds by saying, "*Oh, la, la. Paris!*" She then comes back to reality and says, "*Pero tú y yo ¿qué vamos a hacer en la ciudad de amor?*" Fernando says, "*Pues mucho. Porque entre tú y yo hay una conexión muy especial y nos reímos mucho juntos. Y en Paris vamos a partirnos el culo al reírnos.*" Cecilia interrupts him and says, "*Yo, contigo no me río.*" He says "*Si te ríes.*" She repeats, "*Que no.*" Fernando then makes her a deal that if he can make her laugh, she has to come to Paris with him, and if he can't he will leave her alone forever. He then says, "*¿Que hay que hacerle a una chica, para que se ríe el domingo? –¿Qué?*" "*Pues contarle un chiste el viernes.*" Cecilia doesn't find the joke funny at all. Fernando says, "*Pues, ¿que es largo y duro*

para una chica?” “¿Qué?” “El tercer grado.” Cecilia still will not laugh, but Fernando says, “*Claro que estás riendo a dentro.*” Upon hearing this Cecilia actually laughs aloud and Fernando says, “*¡Eh! ¡Ahora sí! ¡Ahora sí!*” She says, “*Esto no vale. No estaba preparada.*” He says, “*Has perdido. Nos vamos a Paris, la Torre Eiffel, los Campos Elíseos, El museo este con la Mona Lisa...*” as the camera backs away from their conversation and floats out of the window to end the story.

El penalti más largo del mundo is a fun-loving movie that was designed to be enjoyable for *fútbol* fans and non-*fútbol* fans alike. Roberto Santiago was wise to use Osvaldo Soriano’s short “kick-lit” story as a basis for the film. The extremely rare situation of having a week for a team to prepare for one penalty kick leaves plenty of room for stories to develop that are not directly linked with the sport of *fútbol*. In this sense, Santiago tackled the sport “*desde una posición lateral*” and Santiago turned it into a situation comedy “kick-flick”. There are very few scenes in which Santiago had to portray people realistically playing *fútbol*. In Soriano’s tale, *Estrella Polar* was a group of pathetic players in a men’s league that (in a Quijote-*esque* manner) acted as if they were truly living the life of professional *fútbol*ers in Argentina. In Santiago’s film, the players of *Estrella Polar* also possessed this distorted vision of themselves, even though they were 3rd Division professionals. However, Santiago’s depiction of the ability of the *Estrella Polar* players in the film in no way corresponds to the level of ability that real players from the Spanish 3rd Division possess. With *El penalti más largo del mundo* we witness how our anti-heroic protagonist achieves what he desires in life by taking advantage of the opportunity he is presented with through the sport of *fútbol*. Because

fútbol is like life, and as the cover of the film reads, “*no siempre hay una segunda oportunidad en el juego de la vida.*”

Chapter 5: Conclusions

My goal with this study was to make apparent the myriad of levels in which the sport of *fútbol* has infiltrated and has been embraced by Spanish society. *Fútbol* is one of contemporary Spanish society's greatest passions. *Fútbol*'s capacity for having so many aspects of culture infused into its very state of being is what makes the sport a cultural phenomenon, that as Ezequiel Martínez Estrada states, encompasses "...*todas las fuerzas integras de la personalidad: religión, nacionalidad, sangre, enconos, política, represalias, anhelos de éxito, frustrados amores, odios, todo en los límites del delirio en fundida más ardiente*" (Estrada in Valdano *El miedo escénico*, 274). Through this study, the connection that Spanish *fútbol* has with the historical socio-political struggles of Spain and the infiltration of politics into the sport should become clear.

Through this study I have proven that the sport of *fútbol* is in fact compatible with intellectualism, literature, and film. Since its inception, *fútbol* has had a very close and public relationship with the politics of Spain. Similarly, *fútbol* in Spain has had a very close relationship with literature that stems back to the earliest form of the sport, which began to take shape during the same time the art of literature began developing in the Iberian Peninsula. The difference lies in the fact that the relationship between *fútbol* and literature has not been as public as that of politics and *fútbol*, until now. Recently there

has been a growing appreciation for literature on the topic of *fútbol* and many great authors of Spanish literature have contributed to the genre. Also, many lesser-known writers have contributed to the genre and even a number of *fútbolers* have contributed. Finally, it is preposterous that this vast body of literature (that stems back to the very earliest age of literature in Spain and has sustained itself ever since) does not have a formal name. For this reason I have proposed the term “kick-lit”.

The “kick-lit” genre can be tackled from a wide variety of creative angles. It is refreshing to have something so new, which can be approached from so many different angles, coming of age in the world of literature. Javier Marías brought a fun and creative approach to this genre by making a fantasy *fútbol* line-up of authors from the 20th Century. Marías compiled their “kick-lit” texts in his book, *Salvajes y sentimentales*. Marías’ line-up appeared in Winston Manrique’s 2006 article published in the Spanish newspaper, *El País*, which covered the 65^a *Feria del Libro de Madrid*. The article was titled, “*El libro da cancha al fútbol: Los escritores desentrañan el misterio de la pasión por el deporte más global y popular del planeta*.” Marías’ fantasy *fútbol* team, as it appeared in the article, is listed below:

Portería. Dos que jugaron en su vida en esa posición: Vladímir Nabokov y Albert Camus.

Defensas. Lateral derecho Henry James por ser de largo recorrido. En el centro Dashiell Hammet que parecía un tipo duro. Y defensa izquierdo Malcolm Lowry que al ser bebedor sería uno de esos defensas duros que no dejan pasar a nadie.

Lateral izquierdo. Valle-Inclán, un autor muy vivo con malas pulgas a ratos.

Centro del campo. Tres de largo recorrido: Como trabajador Thomas Mann; como 10 y cerebro del equipo y mente clara y organizadora del juego Marcel Proust; y W. Faulkner que tiene mucho aliento.

Delantera. Jugaríamos con extremos: extremo derecho como siete Joseph Conrad, capaz en pocos metros de crear gran desconcierto y admiración; delantero centro Thomas Bernhard porque era muy agresivo; y con el 11, extremo izquierdo, uno de esos jugadores finos y creativos como Lampedusa.

Banquillo. En la portería Camus o Nabokov que se alternarían la titularidad con igual solvencia. Para momentos de crisis no estaría mal Conan Doyle que tendría gran capacidad de juego para el medio campo. Defensa, Raymond Chandler. Y delantera un poeta: W. Yeats.

Like Javier Marías, the famous Mexican writer, Juan Villoro, who is also a “kick-lit” enthusiast, advocate and author made a similar *fútbol* line-up of famous literary figures. Villoro’s line-up appears as the following in Jesús Castañón Rodríguez’ article titled, “*El realismo fantástico: cuarenta años de antologías literarias de fútbol con enfoque iberoamericano (1967-2007)*”

Camus de portero, Dostoevsky y Tolstoi como centrales, Hemingway y Faulkner en el puesto de carrileros, Borges para recuperar balones e

ideas ajenas, Cervantes en funciones de organizador, Nabokov como enlace ofensivo versátil, Kafka y Calvino de extremos y Chéjov como delantero artífice de brevedades.

Villoro was so entertained while making his fantasy *fútbol* line-up of famous authors that he took the fantasy a step further and wrote a short “kick-lit” story in which these authors compete on the *fútbol* field together. The story is titled “*Yo soy Fontanarrosa*” and it appears in Jorge Valdano’s latest compilation of “kick-lit” stories titled, *La hinchada te saluda jubilosa* (2007), which was created to celebrate the life and passion of Roberto Fontanarrosa, the reputable “kick-lit” author from Argentina. Fontanarrosa passed away in 2007. Figure 16 shows an illustration of Villoro’s tale.

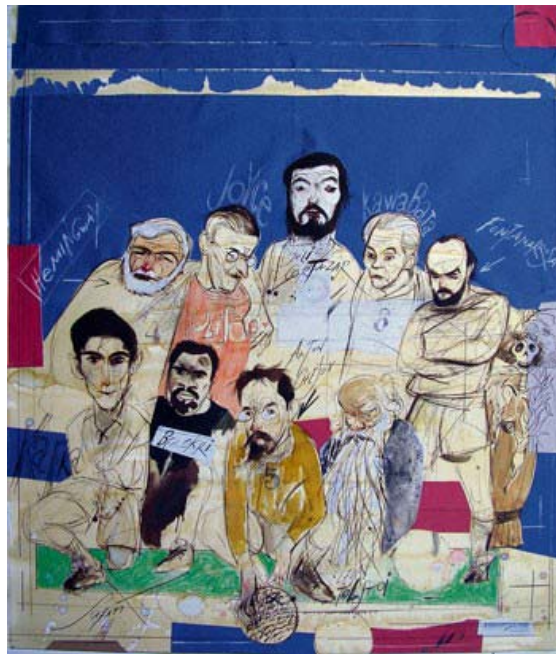


Figure 16. “*Yo soy Fontanarrosa*” image

These fantasy *fútbol* teams, which combine famous literary figures with the sport of *fútbol* demonstrate yet another fun and creative approach through which the genre of “kick-lit” can be tackled.¹⁷ Marías’ and Villoro’s fantasy teams shed light on the fact that there are endless possibilities through which authors of the future can be creative and imaginative with this genre that combines our passions.

Much like the genre of “kick-lit”, films connected to the sport of *fútbol* stem back to the very introduction of the Artistic media in Spain. These films dealing with the sport of *fútbol* are also lacking a proper name, so I have proposed the term “kick-flicks”. In the early “kick-flick” years, Spanish directors cast *fútbol* stars in their “kick-flicks” to attract

¹⁷After being inspired by Marías’ and Villoro’s fantasy *fútbol* teams made up of literary figures, I decided to create my own fantasy *fútbol* team. However, for the sake of this study, I have decided to only select Spanish “kick-lit” authors. The authors/players that I have selected earned their place on my team for their varying combination of literary abilities, their literary contributions, their demonstrated *fútbol* knowledge and/or skill, their youthful nature as writers/players/people, their versatility as writers/players/people, their creativity as writers/players/people, and their varying degrees of courage as writers/players/people. My Spanish “kick-lit” squad of eighteen players and two coaches is the following:

Jorge Valdano David Trueba

Juan Manuel de Prada

Javier Marías

Camilo José Cela

Rafeal Alberti

Manuel Vázquez Montalbán

Miguel Delibes

Fernando Fernán Gómez

Miguel Hernández

Juan Ruiz el Arcipreste de Hita

Substitutes:

Juan Ruiz de Alarcón
 Martín Casariego
 Francisco Umbral
 Vicente Verdú
 Rafeal Azcona –GK
 Manuel Hidalgo
 Carlos Casares

Head Coach

Lucio Anneo Séneca

Assistant Coach

José María Pemán

an audience comparable to that of the sport. Spanish “kick-flicks” of today, for the most part, abandoned this approach and instead focus on the passion of fictional characters in low-level leagues. Although there is much room for improvement, mainly in relation to filming the sport in a manner that justifies the beauty of the game, the “kick-flick” genre’s future looks bright. Through this study, I have proven that when approaching the sport “*desde una posición lateral*” the possibilities are endless, and the two greatest passions of the past 100 years are compatible.

Although for years it seemed that the sport of *fútbol* was not a suitable topic for the intellectual classes, the enormous body of work dealing with *fútbol* in both literature and film that I have brought to the foreground, proves that the taboo has been lifted. As Jorge Valdano puts it “*El fútbol es inagotable [...] y la literatura es el vehículo perfecto para elevarlo sobre la estupidez, la mezquindad y la violencia de todos los días*” (Valdano in Fontanarrosa *De Puntín*, 10). Although this study focuses on the sport of *fútbol*’s connection to politics, literature and film in Spain, there is much room to study *fútbol*’s relationship to these aspects of culture in many different countries and cultures throughout the world. This is especially true in Latin America, where the sport’s connection to politics, culture, literature and film is enormous. “*El fútbol es un generador de ficciones para toda Iberoamérica*” (Castañón Rodríguez “*La pasión del fútbol infinito.*”).

Many have written that the sport of *fútbol* has not yet found its Hemingway, (Valdano *Miedo escénico*, 274) but the body of “kick-lit” is much larger than the few books that Hemingway wrote on bullfighting. As long as the people of the world are

passionate about *fútbol*, literature and film, we will always find these passions, pastimes, and escape valves overlapping one another in new and creative ways. The sport of *fútbol* captivates us because it encompasses all three of these aspects, and can be approached in countless ways. The enigma of the sport is difficult to pin point. I believe that its multifaceted ability to connect with so many aspects of our culture is a key element, as well as the sport's capacity to serve as a metaphor for life, and encompass all of life's positive and negative attributes. I feel the magic of *fútbol* was best captured by one of the sport's most successful players and advocates, Jorge Valdano, who wrote that, in the end we love *fútbol* because through it we somehow feel as though we are able to “*volver a la infancia*” (291). From a different perspective, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán summed up the social climate of the last century in Spain in the following poem:

Fútbol, fútbol, fútbol.

Es el deporte

que apasiona la nación.

Fútbol, fútbol, fútbol,

en los estadios ruge

enardecida la afición.

Fútbol, fútbol, fútbol

hoy todo el mundo

está pendiente del balón.

–Manuel Vázquez Montalbán (in García Candau *Épica y lírica*, 251).

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