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## hilosophy in Valencia during the early decades of Franco's rule

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### summary

With the arrival of Francoism to the University of Valencia, the academic world was mired in a decadent atmosphere unbearable to anyone with intellectual aspirations. It all began with a Falangist who, without receiving any orders, decided to assail the University; immediately the old professors were cast out. What followed was a period in which, in the Philosophy Department, ideology was more important than teaching preparation, and the ambition for power and prestige was the driving force in the professional careers of the new professors.

### key words

Philosophy of Education, Contemporary Pedagogy, Educational Theory.

Manuel BatlleVázquez was a professor of law at the University of Murcia, who was cold-blooded enough to attack the University of Valencia and turn it from Republican to Francoist in a matter of hours. He was part of a group of Fifth Columnists<sup>1</sup> who, on the morning of March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1939, occupied the University, just a day before the Francoist troops burst into Valencia. He led all the maneuvers quickly, efficiently and organized in a sequence worth reproducing here.

The first step was to show up at the University on the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup> with the rest of the Fifth Columnists, some of them professors who had been eliminated during the Republican era. He decided that someone would

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1 The “Fifth Column” was an association devoted to the organization of clandestine Falangist groups that served as contingents to help the Francoist troops enter the Republican area. Among its functions were to come to the aid of abandoned prisoners and offer food and other necessities for the survival of the families of dead “martyrs.”

have to take care of the rectorship and he himself assumed that responsibility until the pertinent entities could intervene and impose their wishes. As a result of this decision, he now had the task of selecting the new professors, at least for the time being. He chose the professors who had been persecuted and expelled from the Republican educational system. By four in the afternoon he had already chosen all the deans and professors, not only for the institutions of higher learning, but also for the institutes and secondary schools. So, at that same time, he drew up the joint document declaring his assumption of the rectorship and the naming of the new professors.

This entire occupation had been decided and carried out without the approval of the Francoist authorities. Not even the troops that were advancing toward Valencia were aware of Batlle's movements, but the surprise was well received. The leadership of the National Higher and Secondary Education Service of the Ministry of Education had designated two delegates to carry out the university occupation in Valencia: Josep Gascó Olivares, professor of Science and former vice-rector ousted by the Republican authorities, and Antoni Ipiens Lacasa, also a professor of Science. Both delegates showed up at the rector's office on March 31<sup>st</sup> and encountered the new situation: a restructuring perfectly led and organized by a new rector who had acted completely on his own orders, even in his own naming as rector. One imagines that the initial shock soon turned into satisfaction at finding someone who had done, and very "correctly," the work that they had been charged with doing. They deemed Batlle's efforts praiseworthy and encouraged him to continue as interim rector until the Ministry assigned the post to someone else.

And so that was how the Fifth Columnist continued as the head of the University of Valencia until April 24<sup>th</sup>, when Josep Maria de Zumalacárregui i Prat was named to replace him. Batlle then returned to Murcia, where he was named dean of the Law Department. Yet his rise in the ranks continued, and in 1944 he was given the rectorship of the University of Murcia, which he used to keep that university mired in the mediocrity that, according to him, the provinces deserved. A mediocrity that guaranteed tranquility and eliminated all possibility of altercations and revolts within his domain. He had two opportunities to take up the post of Supreme Court Judge, in Madrid, but he turned them down for the following reason, which he expressed at the opening ceremony of the 1957-58 school year: "*God's plan is for me to speak from an electoral seat.*"<sup>2</sup>

In 1975, when he was nearing retirement, Manuel Batlle was dismissed for friction with the Ministry. Some months later, he died.

2 M. Batlle Vázquez, *Consideraciones sobre pedagogía jurídica*. Murcia. 1957 (quoted by M. E. Nicolás Marín in «Murcia durante la dictadura de Franco» a *100 años en la región de Murcia*, Murcia: La Verdad, 2002, p. 177).

Francesc Alcayde Vilar benefited greatly from Batlle's fleeting rectorship in the University of Valencia. This Valencian professor knew how to be in the right place at the right time. He was born on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1889 at house number 9 on the street Pasqual i Genís, the first son of a doctor who later had two more sons: Manolo and Antonio. His childhood –at least in the memories he himself wrote– was that of a typical son of a well-to-do family in the city of València at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century including summers in Cabanyal and stays at his maternal grandmother's country estate, located between Gillet and Sant Esperit. He attended secondary school at the Institut Lluís Vives, where he graduated with honors, and he considered following in his father's footsteps and studying medicine, but it was his progenitor himself who got that idea out of his head. Finally, he chose to study Exact Sciences.

The family moved to Madrid for work and that was where a friend who studied philosophy took him to a lecture by the professor Adolfo Bonilla Sanmartín, who was continuing the studies of philosophical history that Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo had begun. We know that this experience was a decisive one in his academic life. Impressed, Alcayde Vilar felt he had discovered his true vocation and decided to quit mathematics and start studying philosophy. In this new field he studied under Ortega y Gasset, in Metaphysics, and the previously mentioned Bonilla Sanmartín, in History of Philosophy and Psychology. Once he finished his degree course, he earned a doctorate with Ortega y Gasset, with a thesis entitled *Passions as the link between body and soul* and, immediately afterwards, he began to prepare for his competitive exams. After four and a half years he finally obtained a university professorship.

His first post was in Santiago de Compostela, where he was professor of Fundamental Logic. He remained in that city for three years, during which he wrote a play and married Carmen Miranda, the daughter of the former Captain General of Cartagena, who he had begun to court during his stay in Madrid. Then he moved to Zaragoza, where he lived with his wife for three years in a hotel (knowing he wouldn't settle in that city either). Remember that, during the Franco regime, professors came and went often through the "universities in the provinces." Basically, most of them were desperately trying to end up in Madrid. But Francesc Alcayde's fate was another, and it seems that he did nothing to change it: he didn't have the centralist aspirations so common among his contemporaries. The next city in his particular, hectic itinerary was Salamanca, where the rector was Miguel de Unamuno, who Alcayde was bursting with pride at having met. He described him as a man of imposing character and physique who was always surrounded by students from other universities and travellers who sought him out to ask for his autograph. After Salamanca he went to Granada, right before arriving at his final destination: Valencia. It was in 1931, at 42 years old, that he was able to return to his hometown. The Valencian university had always been his goal. There he came, in 1932, to hold the Lluís Vives Chair,

about which he would later say the following: “It was not a very egotistical task, since it was done by sacrificing the vanity of individual renown in the interests of universal diffusion of the name of Lluís Vives and his doctrine. So we have only followed the teachings of the master when he tells us that the professor should not seek out personal glory and renown in his chair, but the glory and renown of the person who formulated the doctrines he explains. And that is what I have done from the Chair of Lluís Vives, which I hold. It hasn’t brought me personal fame or glory: but I have brought glory and fame to Lluís Vives.”

What I have not yet mentioned about Alcayde is that he had joined the ideological current of Valencianism (the Valencianism from prior to the Spanish Civil War). I should explain this position: Alcayde’s Valencianism was regionalism, not nationalism. At that time there was no pro-Catalanism or anti-Catalanism in that school of thought because separation from Spain wasn’t a possibility. The current typical characteristics, both of pro-Catalan Valencian trends and Catalanophobe trends, have nothing to do with the regionalism that was timidly spreading in 1930s Valencia. Independence was nowhere near the fate that Alcayde Vilar, nor any other Valencianist at that time, would have imagined for their homeland. They merely strove to reform the Spanish State so it would abandon its centralist stance and give more recognition to the Valencian culture, but while continuing to give merit and tribute to Spain from the fruits of that Valencia culture. The problem with Valencianism was understood as a culturalism. Its goal, among others, was to support and propagate Valencian culture. Now what they understood as “Valencian culture” didn’t usually go much beyond speeches and overwritten poems about the bucolic landscape, or pedantic sentimentality having to do with the friendly and tranquil psychological makeup of the inhabitants of Valencia. Basically, poetic evasiveness over breakfasts of traditional sausages in the shade of the orange tree...

Beyond questions of right and left-wing, the question of Valencianness took on a fundamental role in Alcayde’s political ideology, and that was made manifest in articles such as “Valencianism and Dignity” (May, 1933) and “The Customs Wall” (also May, 1933).

At the University of Valencia, during the Republican period, his position was preeminent: in addition to heading the Lluís Vives Chair, he was named a member of the Cultural Council and director of the Pedagogical Seminary. He also was well received in the pro-Valencian cultural institutions: he was a member of the Valencian Cultural Center and the Rat Penat.

In philosophical questions he presented himself as a Catholic thinker, though not a scholastic. We should explain that scholasticism was traditionally the prevailing philosophical current in Spanish universities. It seems that Alcayde’s influences were others. Remember that he wrote his thesis with Ortega, which led him to study, at least superficially, the works of Kant and Husserl. Of course,

his true mentor when he began to study philosophy was Bonilla, who awakened his vocation and sent him on the path of studying speculative psychology; one of his main interests as a philosopher. Within speculative psychology, he focused on the issues of the psychology of peoples and of emotions, and passions. He wrote a few books on emotions and passions, most noteworthy among them *Las emociones*[*Emotions*].<sup>3</sup>

In *Las emociones*, where he gives Bonilla an important place in the acknowledgements in the prologue, he gathers the theories of emotions of Aristotle, the Stoics, Lluís Vives, Spinoza, James, Darwin and Camper. From the examination of these theories, he comes to the conclusion that there are two opposing general theories, but that all of them have some common factors. All of them accept three points: 1/ That there is a representation. 2/ That there is a state of mind called emotion. 3/ That there are organic changes, alterations to the body and other physical reactions.

The difference between the two opposing general theories lies in the fact that the first, maintained by James, establishes that the physical alterations are the cause of the emotions, while the theory upheld by Descartes, Darwin and others affirms that, quite the opposite, the emotions are the cause of the body's reactions.

Alcayde Vilar adopts James's theory claiming that our organic changes alter the sentimental tone of our representations. His argument is based on the observation of the fact that, when we don't feel well or we are feeling faint, even the most pleasurable things, like a nice smell or a song, can make us feel worse; while when we feel well we interpret as positive stimuli that could have easily been interpreted as negative.

The third chapter of this book –“Las emociones y la vida total psíquica” [“Emotions and overall psychic life”]— was reproduced word for word in *Las pasiones como enlace entre el alma y el cuerpo*. [*Passions as the link between body and soul*]. Then the book includes a section detailing experiments carried out on children and adults about the emotions they feel in certain circumstances and what physical reactions come into play in those moments. Lastly, the author makes a classification and detailed description of each of the emotions that he believes we can feel throughout our lives, and adds as a colophon a 17<sup>th</sup>-century Italian text entitled *Trattato di Fisionomia*, which relates anatomy with psychology and aspires to explain which physical characteristics reveal concrete personality traits. When he finishes the transcription, he says “Thus ends this unpublished manuscript. As you can see, it is rudimentary, arbitrary and more appropriate for the spiritual nourishment of a gypsy than as scientific element.\* Of course, in the period in which it was written we found no more serious treatise on this subject. The distinction must

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3 *Las emociones* (3rd ed.). Madrid: Suc. de Rivadeneyra.

be made between the art of discovering emotions through expression and the art of discovering character through physiognomy. The expression of an emotion is the emotion itself externalized, while physiognomy of an individual can, sometimes, completely and unconsciously falsify his character.” Another field within philosophy that Alcayde investigated was the study of the Valencian regional/national tradition, including his studies on Viviesism (the philosophical system of Lluís Vives). These studies, naturally, were intimately related to his Valencianism and served as a kind of “philosophical” letter of introduction among the regionalists.

But, a few years later, during the Civil War, Alcayde will see his academic position diminished. By the order of January 22, 1937, he was listed as “hostile” with many other professors. His declared political neutrality (based on the idea of giving priority to regionalism) awakened suspicions of the government authorities about his loyalty to the republican political regime. They declared him “at the government’s disposal,” which meant remaining temporarily isolated from the university and losing a third of his salary. He was lucky, because that sanction was among the least harsh. However it marked him, once the war was over, as someone “punished” by the Republic, which helped him to create a place for himself in the new university of the Francoist period.

And this is where we return to the start of our story: once again beside Manuel Batlle. Alcayde took advantage of his disgraced situation to join up with the Fifth Columnists and take part in the coup of the republican university on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1939. With this action he immediately earned, the very day of the occupation, the post of dean in the Department of Philosophy and Letters. At the time there were only four departments at the University of Valencia and, therefore, only four deans were needed. Alcayde formed part of that select group along with Miquel Martí Pastor (Department of Medicine), Salvador Salom Antequera (Department of Law) and Francesc Beltran Bigorra (Department of Sciences). His deanship extended until 1946. Just a year before Sabino Alonso-Fueyo Suárez earned his doctorate, a student with whom Alcayde maintained a very special relationship.

Sabino Alonso was born in Lada, Asturias, on January 14, 1909. He was the son of a salaried employee of a mining exploitation who decided to send him to study for an ecclesiastical career. At nine years old he entered the Seminary of Oviedo, where he tried to prepare himself for religious studies and the life of a monk with courses in Humanities, Philosophy and Theology. But even after changing seminaries,<sup>4</sup> he didn’t last long and in 1927, when he was already eighteen, he abandoned his religious studies to attend secondary school in the city. In 1931

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4 It is also known that he spent some time in the Valdedios Seminary, right before abandoning his religious career.

he earned his law degree at the University of Oviedo, just a few years before having begun to write both poetry and prose. His first publications are in local magazines and newspapers such as *Alas*, *Covadonga*, *VeranoAstur*, *La Tribuna*, *El Lunes* and *Región*..., all under the pseudonyms *Sabañ* and *Florestán*.

The Asturian would publish journalism throughout his entire life, and from 1930 to 1936 he was part of the writing staff of *Región* and, in some periods, he even assumed the roles of editor-in-chief and director of that newspaper. He also taught and worked as a lawyer.

In Madrid he earned his doctorate in Philosophy in 1947, with the thesis *SaavedraFajardo's Political Thinking*, directed by YelaUtrilla, the Falangist<sup>6</sup> leader in Asturias since the end of the Civil War. He also earned a doctorate in Law that same year, but it is in journalism and philosophy where he will find success, although not without external help.

In the forties, after working in Valladolid for the newspaper *Libertad* for five years, we know that Sabino Alonso Fueyo moved to Valencia to accept a very appealing offer: the post of assistant director of the daily paper *Levante*. There is where he met Francesc Alcaide de Vilar, with whom he forged a long relationship both professional and personal; a relationship motivated by personal interests and the desire to achieve a good position in the academic and journalistic world they were both a part of. When the Asturian arrived in Valencia, he wasn't satisfied with the promotion in his journalistic career; he also wanted to continue teaching and he entered the Teacher's Training College as a professor of Logic and Psychology. Shortly afterward he manages to get work as an assistant professor to Alcaide in the Department of Philosophy and Letters and ends up, after a few years, an interim lecturer of the Chair of History of Philosophy at the University of Valencia.

In the journalism realm, Alonso Fueyo was a very influential figure who could help glorify someone or run their name through the mud. In the *Levante* newspaper he was promoted to management after ten years as assistant director. He stayed in that post for nine years, until 1962 when he was asked to come to Madrid to head the newspaper *Arriba*, which, like *Levante*, was part of the official

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5 We suppose that this pseudonym was the result of combining the first three letters of his given name (Sab-ino) with the first two of his last name (Al-onso-Fueyo), to create the name he signed his articles with: *Sabañ*.

6 Sabino Alonso Fueyo worked for the Asturian Falangist newspaper *La Nueva España*. We remind the reader that Yela Utrilla was a leader of the Falange in Asturias, positioning him as a popular, well-known figure in the AsturianFalangist circle, which leads us to believe that it is possible that the choice of thesis director was conditioned by the events of the Civil War, ten years before they met on the university campus in Madrid.



press for the National Movement. Making some calculations using the dates of his job change and knowing, from an interview in *Blanco y Negro*, how many years he spent at each post, we can conclude that he decided to move to Valencia in 1943, before finishing his doctorates in philosophy and law in Madrid. During the years he lived in Valencia, he won two of the three most important awards of his career: the José Antonio Primo de Rivera Prize (1947) and the Jaime Balmes Award (1962).

Alonso Fueyo's position at *Levante* was of interest to Alcaide, who had lost all his drive after the war. Alcaide needed to increase his academic popularity without actually producing philosophical works, since he had gotten used to his venerable position and had lost all interest in research. Now he preferred to write articles of opinion and prologues that gave him prestige as an "acclaimed writer" among the academic philosophers of the Francoist period. He understood that being asked to write small reviews was a sign of his own "success," since the writers asking for his collaboration did so thinking they were promoting their books with his endorsement based on the "fame" he had acquired some time back as the dean of philosophy at the University of Valencia. And this was the procedure followed by Alonso Fueyo when publishing his book *Dios, otravez. El mensaje de los seres* [*God, again. The message of beings*]. On the title page stated, right beneath the title, that it had a prologue by "Dr. Alcaide."

The Valencian's position of power in the university realm obviously attracted the attention of the Asturian, who, even though he was successful as a journalist, was still unsatisfied with his teaching career and his philosophical vocation. Fueyo needed contacts at the university and Alcaide needed them in the newspapers in order to publish his articles. So they were forced by their mutual self-interest to find common ground. It is easy to understand the motives behind Alcaide and Fueyo establishing an intense relationship: they each had what the other wanted.

But ideologically there were some differences between them: Francesc Alcaide Vilar was much more politically and religiously moderate than Sabino Alonso Fueyo, who was a Falangist before the Civil War, a militant of Catholic Action and an active member in an anti-Marxist campaign in 1931, for which he was tried and imprisoned for a brief period. He was, without a doubt, a supporter of Franco, even though the Caudillo hadn't been terribly friendly to him the one time they spoke.

It seems that Franco once received Sabino Alonso Fueyo as the director of *Arriba*. The Asturian journalist complained about the pressures he was under from different sectors and families of the National Movement. Franco, in response to his words, gave him some advice: "*Fueyo* –he contends that Franco said– *you should do what I do, not get involved in politics...*"



So it is not surprising that in *El mensaje de los seres*—where, by the way, he constantly quotes his thesis director, Yela Utrilla—, he makes a hyperbolic defense of the qualities of Christianity and proposes the Catholic religion as a solution to the problems that, according to him, the Renaissance had brought to modern society, precisely because of the idea of man as the measure of all things, the exaltation of reason and the casting aside of faith. This excerpt I quote here perfectly illustrates what I have been saying up until this point:

“That idea of a cosmic order moving peacefully according to eternal laws no longer exists. God passes to a second plane; man lives with his back to this destiny, and that is why conflicts, wars and paganism emerge. The bankruptcy, in short, of a European culture, because if that culture is, according to Keyserling, “a life-form as immediate expression of the spirit,” it must be recognized that the entire life of our continent has been profoundly and emotionally religious, spiritual. The bankruptcy of a culture, if you will: but not of Christianity, which is universal, which is a series of principles placed above human realities and at the margin of any faltering. As the world grows further from God, disaster ensues. We are left with no other recourse besides returning to Him along the double path of faith and reason. In this wise conjunction of reason and faith resides all our natural and supernatural knowledge of the primary Cause that governs the Universe.”<sup>7</sup>

Other successes that will make Sabino Alonso Fueyo into a person of “renown” within society are the Francisco Franco Award, which he won in 1965, when he was the head of the newspaper *Arriba*, where he would only last another year, since after that they offered him the post of Minister of Information in the Spanish embassy in Lisbon, the post of National Press Minister and the vice-presidency of the Press Association of Madrid. He was also awarded the Civil Order of Alfonso X the Wise and the Cross of the Order of Naval, Aeronautical and Military Merit (this one, which he received from the hands of the Minister of the Army on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1966, was a decoration also given to civilians, despite the name).

He was a lecturer at the Spanish Institute of London, where he spoke on the philosophy of Lluís Vives (which, we'll remind the reader, had also been a subject of Alcay de Vilar's), and at the universities of Rio de Janeiro, Asunción and La Paz and the institutes of Hispanic Culture in São Salvador da Baía, Portoalegre, Sao Paulo, Córdoba and Mendoza. He was a member, in addition to the cultural institutions we have already mentioned, of the Institute of Political Studies, the Institute of Asturian Studies and, in Madrid, the Institute of Hispanic Culture and the Hispano-Arab House.

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7 Sabino Alonso Fueyo, *Dios, otra vez. El mensaje de los seres*. València: Guerri. 1946.

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