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# Journalists at the Front: Ramiro de Maeztu, *Inglaterra en armas* and Spanish Intellectuals during the First World War

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Published in 1916, Ramiro de Maeztu's short book *Inglaterra en armas* is, of its author's works, the one that has received the least critical attention.<sup>1</sup> It has only been dealt with by scholars very briefly (if at all), and there has been no attempt to introduce it within the grander narrative of Maeztu's intellectual evolution. It is my aim in this paper to shed some light on this work, outlining both its principal features and the interpretative difficulties it poses for Maeztu scholars. I will also attempt to resolve these difficulties by inserting the text within a genre that has received scant critical attention: the *crónicas del frente* written by Spanish authors during the First World War. I will argue that the more striking features of *Inglaterra en armas* recur in similar texts written by Maeztu's contemporaries, and that this can be explained by the rigidity of the pro-Allied propaganda discourse in which he and his peers were engaging.

*Inglaterra en armas* is a compilation of articles Maeztu originally published in the conservative Spanish newspaper *La Correspondencia de España* and in the Argentinian one *La Prensa*, following a two-week visit to the Western front in July–August 1916.<sup>2</sup> They were also published in English in the socialist weekly *The New Age*, in a ten-part series titled 'A Visit to the Front'.<sup>3</sup> In these chronicles, Maeztu retells his experiences in

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1 Ramiro de Maeztu, *Inglaterra en armas* (London: Darling & Son, 1916). Further references are to this edition and are given in parentheses in the text.

2 *La Correspondencia de España*, 1 September 1916 to 19 September 1916, at irregular intervals. I have not been able to establish original publication dates in *La Prensa*.

3 *The New Age*, 21 September 1916 to 23 November 1916. These articles do not correspond exactly to the text published in *Inglaterra en armas*: the last two, particularly, seem to be a condensed version of pp. 118–44 of the Spanish text, with much material being left out.

France and Flanders, where he had been attached to the British army as a foreign correspondent and taken to see field hospitals, command posts, training camps and the trenches. The reader is presented with a positive vision of the war and of the British military effort, one which at points reaches the level of a panegyric. British soldiers are presented as joyous, generous, humble, individualistic and scrupulously clean *sportsmen* who do not drink and who exhibit a child-like innocence (*Inglaterra*, 68–73, 79, 93–99, 108). In fact, the soldiers are quoted as loving the life they lead at the front, and experiencing immense pleasure from going into battle; their officers, who are to them but older brothers, also cannot wait to get out of the trenches and lead the charge against the enemy (*Inglaterra*, 125–26, 95, 45). War itself is portrayed in a positive light, as an act of creation rather than destruction:

La guerra no puede ser tan insoportable como nos la habían pintado los novelistas humanitarios [...] horrible sí que debe de serlo [...] pero, en cambio, se siente todo el tiempo la sensación de que nuestra voluntad se está realizando [...] Se recupera el sentido de la aventura. Las historias cesan de ser historias. Se es uno mismo la historia. (*Inglaterra*, 61–64)

Maeztu also claims that the soldiers he meets feel immensely optimistic about a future Allied victory, and he agrees with them: ‘Alemania ha perdido la guerra. Ello podemos afirmar con intuición cierta, con evidencia indiscutible’ (*Inglaterra*, 86, 118). Victory will be obtained, he argues, because of Britain’s growing commitment to the war effort and because of its soldiers’ characteristic individualism and innocence: ‘todas las guerras grandes las han ganado pueblos niños, pueblos que han conservado la frescura’ (*Inglaterra*, 97).

This enthusiastic portrayal of the war and of the British war effort constitutes the main difficulty in approaching *Inglaterra en armas*. Its tone and contents differ radically from the conception we have nowadays of what trench life and warfare was like, as exhibited in works like Robert Graves’ memoir of his time in the trenches *Goodbye to All That* (1929). Maeztu’s attitude is particularly surprising when we consider that his visit coincided with the middle stages of the Battle of the Somme, in which the British army endured almost 60,000 casualties in the first day (1 July) and over 350,000 in total. Maeztu, however, makes no mention of the death toll, and his early declaration that ‘esta es la guerra más terrible de la historia’ is the only indication that he is aware of the cost of the conflict in human lives (*Inglaterra*, 11). His later panegyric even borders on the farcical at times, as when he retells a supposed anecdote from the first day of the Somme. A regiment would have kicked a football over the top of their trench as a way of starting their attack, and then followed it all the way into the German trench, passing it back and forth among themselves:

En vano disparaban contra ellos las ametralladoras y los cañones enemigos. Los jugadores siguieron avanzando, dando de puntapiés a la pelota, y hasta ponían más cuidado en que avanzase la pelota que en avanzar ellos [...] Y fue un mozo de facciones aniñadas el que dio la última patada, que hizo caer la pelota en la trinchera enemiga. (*Inglaterra*, 122)

Considering what we now know about the first day of the Somme (the 60,000 casualties sustained by the British), this story of football players ungrazed by bullets seems the product of staggering fantasy.<sup>4</sup> It is a good example of why Milburn has called Maeztu's articles 'blinkered' and 'highly coloured',<sup>5</sup> and why Fernando Díaz-Plaja has said that 'sólo la obligación de hacer propaganda aliadófila puede hacer perdonar' some of Maeztu's remarks.<sup>6</sup>

There is a further major difficulty in approaching *Inglaterra en armas*, which is that its positive and descriptive tone contrasts with the negative and abstract one of *Authority, Liberty and Function in the Light of the War*, a book Maeztu had published earlier that same year.<sup>7</sup> This work, Maeztu's only one to be originally published in English, consisted of dense theoretical reflections on the causes and effects of the First World War. Briefly summed up, Maeztu argues in *Authority, Liberty and Function* that the present cataclysm calls for all of Western society to be re-built following the principle of Function. He argues that the organizing principles of Authority and Liberty (embodied by Germany and by the Allies, respectively) have led the world to a catastrophic war, and that they must be abandoned if the world is to avoid a future conflict like the present one. The implication is clear: this war is terrible and everyone must do all they can to avoid it happening again.

On examination, *Authority, Liberty and Function* and *Inglaterra en armas* hardly seem penned by the same person, much less by someone writing within the space of about a year. This incongruity, coupled with the earlier work's more analytic and conceptually rich nature, has led most studies of Maeztu during this period to centre on *Authority, Liberty and Function* and neglect *Inglaterra en armas*. Such is the case of both González

4 The practice of kicking a football as a signal for 'going over' was not uncommon in the Somme; what was uncommon was the bucolic development of Maeztu's story. Indeed, Maeztu appears to be talking about the 8<sup>th</sup> battalion East Surrey regiment, although, in reality, the captain who kicked the football to signal the start of the attack died during it. See Martin Gilbert, *The Somme: Heroism and Horror in the First World War* (London: John Murray, 2006), Chap. 3.

5 Diane Milburn, *The Deutschlandbild of A. R. Orage and the New Age circle* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996), 125–26.

6 Fernando Díaz-Plaja, *Francofilos y germanófilos. Los españoles en la guerra europea* (Barcelona: Dopesa, 1973), 277.

7 Ramiro de Maeztu, *Authority, Liberty and Function in the Light of the War* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1916).

Cuevas, Maeztu's biographer, and Villacañas, who has devoted a book to analysing Maeztu's intellectual evolution.<sup>8</sup> Rafael Santervás, for his part, sees *Inglaterra en armas* as an intellectual back step, where Maeztu would be revealing his true, fanatical colours: 'el corresponsal se despoja, en campaña, de la pesada máscara teórica, presentándonos rasgos más familiares'.<sup>9</sup>

The contradictions between *Inglaterra en armas* and Maeztu's other published material of this period do not end there. The tone and arguments of *Inglaterra en armas* are recognizable in his articles for *Nuevo Mundo* and the other Spanish newspapers he was collaborating with at the time (*Heraldo de Madrid* until 1916, then *La Correspondencia de España*). But there are some particularly surprising contradictions when viewed alongside the arguments Maeztu was developing in his articles in *The New Age*. Maeztu's denunciation that capitalist 'profiteering' was being allowed to continue during the war is thoroughly contradicted in *Inglaterra en armas*, where he states that a 'revolución espiritual' has put an end to this type of behaviour (*Inglaterra*, 141). He also declares in this text that industrial relations in the UK have never been more harmonious than in the present moment, and that the British Parliament's authority has been bolstered due to the war (*Inglaterra*, 10, 102). This is somewhat shocking considering how much *The New Age*, and particularly its editor A. R. Orage (one of Maeztu's closest friends in London), criticized industrial relations in the UK and denounced the wartime curtailing of parliamentary power.<sup>10</sup>

How can we tackle, then, the various interpretative problems which *Inglaterra en armas* poses? It is my contention that the two main difficulties outlined above (the text's positive outlook on the war and its apparent incompatibility with Maeztu's previous intellectual production) are resolved by contextualizing *Inglaterra en armas* within a genre that appeared in Spain in the 1914–1918 period: the compilations of *crónicas del frente*. On closer examination, some of the more striking features of Maeztu's text also occur in many works produced at this time by other leading Spanish intellectuals. In order to effect this contextualization I will draw on works from five other authors: *Hermann encadenado* by Pérez de Ayala,<sup>11</sup> *La media noche* by Valle-Inclán,<sup>12</sup> 'Reims y Verdún' and 'Nuestra misión en Francia' by

8 See Pedro Carlos González Cuevas, *Maeztu. Biografía de un nacionalista español* (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2003); and José Luis Villacañas Berlanga, *Ramiro de Maeztu y el ideal de la burguesía española* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 2000).

9 Rafael Santervás, 'La etapa inglesa de Ramiro de Maeztu', 3 vols (unpublished PhD dissertation, Universidad Complutense, Madrid, 1987), I, 314.

10 See 'Notes of the Week', *The New Age*, 20 May 1915, pp. 1–3, and 'Notes of the Week', *The New Age*, 30 September 1915, pp. 1–3.

11 Ramón Pérez de Ayala, *Hermann, encadenado* (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1924). From here on, '*Hermann*'.

12 Ramón María del Valle-Inclán, *Flor de santidad. La media noche*, ed. Arcadio López Casanova (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 2007). From here on, '*Media noche*'.

Manuel Azaña,<sup>13</sup> *Los norteamericanos* by Azorín,<sup>14</sup> and *Junto al volcán* by Álvaro Alcalá Galiano.<sup>15</sup>

### Warring Opinions: Spain and the Great War

Fernando Díaz-Plaja's *Francófilos y germanófilos*, which remains the canonical work on Spanish involvement in the First World War, starts with the following statements:

Cuando, en los manuales de historia de España, se escribe que en la Primera Guerra Mundial nuestro país fue neutral, se dice una verdad a medias. Fue neutral el Estado, el gobierno, pero el pueblo, la nación, tomó apasionadamente partido por uno u otro de los bandos contendientes.<sup>16</sup>

This interest in the war was both reflected in and stimulated by the Spanish press, which covered the conflict extensively. The major newspapers sent correspondents to the main European capitals, either permanently or on sporadic visits, to report on the progress of the war. Among these correspondents were many of the leading writers and intellectuals of the period, like Maeztu, Pérez de Ayala, Salvador de Madariaga, Luis Araquistáin and Andrés García de Barga. Furthermore, the intellectuals who remained in Spain also wrote abundantly on war-related topics in their newspaper columns, contributing to the controversy between *aliadófilos* and *germanófilos*. This has prompted Stephen Roberts to state that the First World War 'constituyó un suceso crucial [...] para todos los intelectuales españoles'.<sup>17</sup> And indeed, the taking of positions and the writing of

13 Manuel Azaña, *Obras completas*, ed. Santos Juliá, 7 vols (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2007), I, 268–88. Azaña wrote two pieces narrating his visit to the front, one ('Reims y Verdún') read in the Ateneo de Madrid on 25 January 1917 and the other ('Nuestra misión en Francia') published in the *Bulletin Hispanique*, 19:1 (1917). Because of their structural similarity and their having been prompted by the same visit, I will refer to them indistinctively. From here on, *Obras completas*.

14 José Martínez Ruiz 'Azorín', *Los norteamericanos*, ed. Laureano Robles (Alicante: Diputación Provincial de Alicante, 1999). From here on, '*Norteamericanos*'. Azorín originally re-published most of this material in *París, bombardeado* (Madrid: Ramona Velasco, 1919), but I will make references to this more recent edition as it compiles all of Azorín's original articles and includes important editorial explanations.

15 Álvaro Alcalá Galiano, *Junto al volcán: impresiones del frente occidental* (Madrid: Impresora Fortanet, 1917). From here on, '*Volcán*'.

16 Díaz Plaja, *Francófilos y germanófilos*, 9.

17 Stephen Roberts, *Miguel de Unamuno o la creación del intelectual español moderno* (Salamanca: Ediciones Univ. de Salamanca, 2007), 166.

manifestos favourable to one side or the other contributed to a national debate on the definition, status and role of the intellectuals.<sup>18</sup>

As a consequence of this involvement on the part of the leading intellectual and journalistic figures of the time, an entire *literatura de la guerra* appeared in Spain during these years. The Spanish literary market became flooded with novels set in the war, extended essays analysing the causes of the conflict, and compilations of articles written apropos of the European struggle. Wenceslao Fernández Flórez complained in 1930 that novels and memoirs written by survivors of the conflict (such as Graves') had invaded the European literary market.<sup>19</sup> But we can say that it had been previously invaded by books written while the war was still raging, by intellectuals and journalists who were sitting on the margins of it. In Spain these works were sometimes of foreign origin, their publication funded by the propaganda apparatuses of the nations at war.<sup>20</sup> But their authors were also frequently Spaniards who wished to partake in the intellectual debate sparked by the conflict.<sup>21</sup>

A prolific sub-genre within this war literature was the *crónicas del frente*, or the chronicles of a correspondent's journey to the front lines. As part of their propaganda efforts, the nations at war organized periodic tours of the front for journalists from neutral countries.<sup>22</sup> These writers were usually taken on week-long visits of various places related to the war effort, in the company of officers from the army which had invited them. They then re-told their adventures in serialized articles in the press, and very frequently republished them in book form some months later. These 'instant history' books became a fixture of the literary markets, both of the nations at war and

18 See David Jiménez Torres, 'What is an intellectual? The Spanish Debate during the First World War', *Hispanic Research Journal* (forthcoming).

19 Wenceslao Fernández Flórez, *Los que no fuimos a la guerra: apuntes para la historia del pueblo español durante la guerra europea* (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1930), 9.

20 See Paul Aubert, 'La Propagande étrangère en Espagne dans le premier tiers du XX siècle', *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, 31:3 (1995), 103–76.

21 Some titles belonging to this genre not included in my study are: J. Maluquer, *En las filas alemanas: cuadros de la Gran Guerra* (1914); Juan Pujol, *De Londres a Flandes: con el ejército alemán en Bélgica* (1915); E. Gómez Carrillo, *Campos de batalla y campos de ruinas* (1915) and *En las trincheras* (1921); E. Zamacois, *La ola de plomo: episodios de la guerra europea* (1914); Alfonso de Sola, *La guerra actual* (1915); Agustí Calvet ('Gaziel'): *Narraciones de tierras heroicas (1914–1915)* (1915), *En las líneas de fuego* (1915), and *El año de Verdún* (1916). For an interesting analysis of this war literature written at the time, see Raymond Lantier, 'L'Espagne et le conflit européen: l'information et la littérature de guerre', *Mercure de France*, 16 July 1916, pp. 238–59.

22 See J. Lee Thompson, *Politicians, the Press and Propaganda: Lord Northcliffe and the Great War, 1914–1918* (Kent, OH/London: Kent State U. P., 1999), and Martin J. Farrar, *News from the Front: War Correspondents on the Western Front, 1914–1918* (Stroud: Sutton, 1998). Germany allowed correspondents from neutral countries to accompany its army from the start of the war; Britain and France did not do this until mid 1915.

the main neutral countries during the 1914–1918 period.<sup>23</sup> It is to this sub-genre that works by the six authors included in this study belong. All except Azaña published the chronicles of their visits in a newspaper first, and afterwards compiled and reissued them in book form.<sup>24</sup>

My reasons for this very partial sampling of works are various. The first is that the renown of these authors means that their texts are among the most readily available of the war literature of this time. The second is that the dating of these works, all penned during or after the major battles of Verdun and the Somme, allows us to appreciate better the incongruity between the reality of the war and the presentation of it made by these authors. The third is that this group of writers, though contemporaries, were hardly friends or even intellectual allies. The six split down the middle in terms of the so-called literary ‘generations’ they tend to be classed in, with Maeztu, Azorín and Valle-Inclán belonging to that of 1898, and Pérez de Ayala and Azaña belonging to that of 1914 (with Alcalá Galiano also falling in with them in terms of age). Even within the same generation there were stark differences between them: by 1914 Azorín, Maeztu and Valle-Inclán had followed divergent paths from the radical ideas and circles of their youth, with Azorín becoming ever closer to the conservative movement led by Maura and La Cierva, Maeztu exploring British formulations of socialist doctrine, and Valle-Inclán immersed in literary and linguistic experimentation. Other incompatibilities abound: Pérez de Ayala overtly lampooned Maeztu in his novel *Troteras y danzaderas*,<sup>25</sup> and Azaña repeatedly criticized the legacy of the 1898 generation.<sup>26</sup> These incompatibilities between the authors, then, only make the shared features of their *crónicas del frente* more striking when identified.

### Different Journalists, the Same War

The first common feature of the works at hand is their evident sympathy towards the Allies. Maeztu, Pérez de Ayala, Azorín, Valle-Inclán, Azaña and Alcalá Galiano had made their sympathies with the cause of the Entente explicit from well before their visits to the front. All except for Alcalá Galiano signed one or both of the Spanish pro-Allied manifestos of 1915 and 1917.<sup>27</sup>

23 Farrar, *News from the Front*, 141.

24 The dates of publication of these works in their original newspaper form are: Azorín: *ABC*, 20 May 1918 to 28 June 1918; Pérez de Ayala: *La Prensa*, August 1916 to October 1916 (approx.); Valle-Inclán: *El Imparcial*, 11 October 1916 to 18 December 1916. I have been unable to find the original newspaper and publication date of Alcalá Galiano’s work, although the proximity of the Somme and Verdun in the text indicates late 1916 as a probable time frame.

25 Ramón Pérez de Ayala, *Troteras y danzaderas* (Madrid: Editorial Pueyo, 1930), 301–04.

26 See Manuel Azaña, ‘¡Todavía el 98!’, *España*, 20 October 1923, pp. 1–2.

27 Díaz-Plaja, *Francófilos y germanófilos*, 24–25.



In fact, there seems to be a critical consensus that Pérez de Ayala was the author of the first of these manifestos, despite Valle-Inclán's claim that he had been the one who had penned it.<sup>28</sup>

These sympathies become apparent in the texts under discussion, as each author heaps praise on the country whose army he is visiting: Britain for Maeztu and Alcalá Galiano; Italy for Pérez de Ayala; France for Azaña and Valle-Inclán; France and the US for Azorín. These proclamations of appreciation occur early on in the texts, before the writer has had the chance to examine all or even most of the features of the war effort. Maeztu's work actually begins with four articles written prior to his visit to the front, in which the author declares that the British war effort will be successful and will have wonderful consequences for the rest of the world (*Inglaterra*, 12–13). His fellow correspondents are no less eager to declare their sympathies. Azorín writes after crossing into France: '¡Noble y dulce país de Francia!'; and Pérez de Ayala proclaims upon entering Italy that 'la emoción primordial que se recibe al penetrar en Italia [...] es el goce íntegro, aplaciente y perfecto de la belleza, goce como de eternidad, a manera de liberación' (*Norteamericanos*, 35; *Hermann*, 11). Azaña also speaks, as he is making his way towards Paris, of his 'entusiasmo al ver desplegadas por el pueblo francés las cualidades necesarias para afrontar y dominar esta crisis'; and Valle-Inclán commences his narrative by saying, 'El francés, hijo de la loba latina, y el bárbaro germano, espurio de toda tradición, están otra vez en guerra' (*Obras completas*, 268; *Media noche*, 160).

These early declarations of sympathy on the part of the author/narrator create an aprioristic structure within the text, a pre-established set of evaluations which is never afterwards disrupted by the events which are being retold. Rather, all the events which are presented to the reader are used to confirm these evaluations. In some cases the narrator might be surprised by what he sees, as is Azorín when observing the sheer scale of the American war effort (*Norteamericanos*, 76). But we do not encounter in any of these works something like a narrative crisis, where the writer's a priori evaluation of the conflict is challenged by what he sees. The entire trip appears in retrospect to be no more than an empirical confirmation of his pre-existing ideas. Thus, the authors' examinations of the British, French, Italian and American war efforts allow them to conclude that the Allies will indeed win the war. Perhaps Valle-Inclán was the most candid of his peers when he declared in an interview, made shortly after his trip to the front, that he had gone on the latter with a 'concepto anterior' on what the resulting book would be like.<sup>29</sup> But the texts are evidence that all six of these authors were

28 See Arturo Ramoneda Salas, 'Notas sobre Valle-Inclán y la primera guerra mundial', *Ínsula*, 427 (1982), 3–4.

29 See J. E. Lyon, 'La media noche. Valle-Inclán at the Crossroads', *BHS*, LII:2 (1975), 135–43 (p. 137).

working within a strongly prejudiced framework in terms of what they would 'see' during their visit.<sup>30</sup>

Complementary to this aprioristic over-determination, the texts at hand share two sets of features: the first is structural, the second discursive. The former are borne out by the simple fact that all tours of the front involved seeing more or less the same things. The journalist usually set out from Paris, he was always accompanied by a press officer who acted as chaperone, and he was always taken to a field hospital, to a training camp, to munitions and provisions warehouses, to various mess halls (where he usually sat at the officers' table), and to the second or third line of trenches.<sup>31</sup> These were fixtures of all correspondents' reporting from the front, not just those from neutral countries.<sup>32</sup> As for witnessing combat, the journalist was only really allowed to see the devastation of places where battles had taken place. It is thus that descriptions of destroyed fields and villages abound in the *crónicas del frente*, to the point that Fernández Flórez would lampoon them a few years later.<sup>33</sup>

These structural constraints are not just an extension of their itinerary: all journalists who were invited on these visits worked under a strict censorship system, both of what they were allowed to see and what they were allowed to write.<sup>34</sup> Correspondents from neutral nations, like Spain, were no exception: Maeztu writes early on in *Inglaterra en armas* that he has had to sign a consent form in which he agrees to submit his work to the British authorities before passing it on to his newspaper (*Inglaterra*, 44). In fact the censorship might have been even stricter when it came to writers from neutral countries. Neville Lytton, the officer in charge of co-ordinating the various press camps attached to the British army, explained after the conflict that neutral journalists were not given any access whatsoever to information that the Germans might profit from.<sup>35</sup> Lytton also explained that the restrictions placed on all correspondents during the early stages of the war (including the Somme) made it impossible for them to gather 'any idea of

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30 A fruitful comparison could here be established between the work produced by foreign war correspondents, and that of British 'middlebrow' writers in the postwar years. Both groups of authors seem to have shared an overt ideological pre-determination when writing their texts, a belief in the heroism of sacrifice, and a view of themselves as fulfilling a public and social function. See Rosa Maria Bracco, *Merchants of Hope: British Middlebrow Writers and the First World War 1919–1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1993).

31 Azorín is the exception here, as he was not taken to the trenches. As for Valle-Inclán, and due to the idiosyncrasy of his stylistic experiment in *La media noche*, we can only infer from the narrative the places that the author visited. They appear, however, to conform to the pattern outlined above.

32 Farrar, *News from the Front*, 74.

33 Fernández Flórez, *Los que no fuimos a la guerra*, 160–70.

34 See Farrar, *News from the Front*.

35 Neville Lytton, *The Press and the General Staff* (London: W. Collins Sons & Co., 1920), 115.

the true psychology of the fighting man'.<sup>36</sup> It is thus that the texts are lacking in anything like 'scoops' or negative remarks about the host army.

There are also similarities, however, in terms of how events are treated or represented; similarities which cannot be explained away by logistical or censorial constraints. Primary among them is the essentialist characterization of the soldiers of the different Allied armies. Alison Sinclair has written that the early twentieth century is a heyday for generalizations about the characteristics of specific nations; and this practice was definitely reflected in Spanish writing about the First World War, as Spaniards' opinions on who they wanted to win tended to be based on perceptions of the national essences of the countries involved.<sup>37</sup> In this context, and rather than using their contact with foreigners to offer a more nuanced view, the writers of *crónicas del frente* strove to shape perceptions of 'national character' in a way that was favourable to the country where their sympathies lay. We have already seen Maeztu's story about the football-playing charge during the Somme, which he claims to retell because 'no es sólo un suceso, es un símbolo' (*Inglaterra*, 122). What it symbolized was British love of sport and how it manifested itself during wartime. Writing at another point on British aerial superiority, Maeztu explains that 'todo el mundo quiere aprender a volar en Inglaterra [...] un pueblo de 'sportsmen' tiene que ser también un pueblo de aviadores' (*Inglaterra*, 108). He also writes that the new British night-raid tactic is in accordance with that country's individualism, and that it 'ha salido de los campos de "foot-ball" y de "cricket" y es hija del genio nacional, de las tradiciones de la raza' (*Inglaterra*, 72).<sup>38</sup>

The other texts under discussion are brimming with similar generalizations about the national character of Frenchmen, Britons and Italians, mostly as exemplified by their soldiers. Alcalá Galiano writes that 'estos ingleses [...] hacen la guerra como un pueblo cuyos soldados han sido siempre *sportsmen*' (*Volcán*, 13). He explains the British army's supposed tenacity thus:<sup>39</sup>

El inglés es lento, flemático, nada agresivo ni exaltado. Boxea o juega al *rugby* sin sentir odio alguno hacia el adversario que le golpea ... No es

36 Lytton, *The Press and the General Staff*, ix.

37 See Alison Sinclair, *Trafficking Knowledge in Early Twentieth-Century Spain: Centres of Exchange and Cultural Imaginaries* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2009), Chapter 2. Also see Díaz-Plaja, *Francófilos y germanófilos*, chapters 3–4, 8–11.

38 For the prevalence of 'British individualism' in Spaniards' view of Britons, see Sinclair, *Trafficking Knowledge*, chapter 5.

39 The stereotype of British tenacity seems to have been proverbial in Spain for some time. Baroja wrote in a 1905 novel: 'Antoñito buscaba la mujer rica con una constancia de anglosajón'. See Pío Baroja, *El árbol de la ciencia*, ed. Pío Caro Baroja (Madrid: Caro Raggio/Cátedra, 2010 [1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1985]), 96.

fácil provocar su irritabilidad; pero una vez que estalla es un furor contenido, mil veces más peligroso que el latino, por ser más profundo, más arraigado, más firme. (*Volcán*, 74)

Azorín also uses the notion of an army of sportsmen, although in reference to the Americans: ‘no se tiene, viendo a este ejército, la impresión del soldado, sino la de un deportista, la de un ejército de deportistas, vigorosos y joviales, que va a jugar un juego peligroso ... y a ganarlo’ (*Norteamericanos*, 91). For his part, Azaña writes about how the discipline of wartime France has only been accomplished because of the freedom which the Third Republic’s radical programmes has fostered; and Valle-Inclán also picks up this notion when he states that ‘para los soldados franceses, el sentimiento de la dignidad humana se enraíza con el odio a las jerarquías’ (*Obras completas*, 283; *Media noche*, 194).

Not only is national character presented in these texts as an explanation for the actions of a certain nation and its citizens; it is also presented as one of the main factors (often *the* main factor) in determining the eventual outcome of the conflict. All these authors seem to have shared Azaña’s opinion that ‘en la guerra como en la paz, son las cualidades morales, las facultades del espíritu, las dotes de la mente las que fundan el buen éxito y permiten prepararlo y lograrlo’ (*Obras completas*, 288). As will have been noted, all the characterizations shown above serve to validate the idea that it will be the Allies who will achieve this ‘buen éxito’ in the end.

The counterweight of this positive stereotyping of the Allies is, of course, a negative one of the Germans. None of these authors visited the German front lines, and indeed one of the conditions of their being allowed to visit the Allied armies was that they agreed to never visit the German one (*Inglaterra*, 40). However, they still felt free to elaborate on the characteristics of ‘Teutonic character’, based on German behaviour during the war, or at least on their perception of it. Maeztu justified the German incapacity for organizing night-raids in the following fashion:

A ello se opone el genio histórico de su raza. De soldados hechos a una obediencia puramente pasiva y a no moverse más que a la voz de mando, no puede esperarse este espíritu de iniciativa que hace al soldado avanzar solo, en la oscuridad, sin otra guía que sus propias luces. (*Inglaterra*, 143)

More than on lack of individualism, however, claims about the German character hinge on the notion of barbarism.<sup>40</sup> Maeztu, Valle-Inclán and Pérez de Ayala all report the supposed finding in German trenches of whips used by the officers to keep soldiers at their posts, as well as torture devices employed against prisoners (*Inglaterra*, 31; *Media noche*, 190; *Hermann*,

40 On this notion in Spain, see Alison Sinclair, *Uncovering the Mind: Unamuno, the Unknown and the Vicissitudes of Self* (Manchester: Manchester U. P., 2001), chapters 3–4.

136). Further, as one of the few things the correspondents' vantage-point allowed them to see was the desolation of cities which had been either bombed or occupied by the Germans, many of them used this as evidence of an inherent Germanic destructiveness. Pérez de Ayala declared that 'el carácter teutónico no consiente que exista aquello que no le pertenece en privado dominio, o aquello que ha dejado de pertenecerle. Lo ejemplar germánico es la destrucción' (*Hermann*, 81–82). Valle-Inclán also harps on this theme by placing the following in the mouth of a French medic: 'Dicen que es la guerra ... ¡Mentira! Nunca el quemar y el violar ha sido una necesidad de la guerra. Es la barbarie atávica que se impone [...] Es su verdadera personalidad que la guerra ha determinado y puesto de relieve' (*Media noche*, 184).

Linked to this writing of national stereotypes, another recurring feature of these texts is a drawing of links between Spain and the country whose army the journalist is visiting. The authors attempt to establish bonds between Spain and Allied nations, implying to their readers the existence of a historical and spiritual kindred between them and the combatants of the Allied armies. The authors reach for predictable arguments, like Pérez de Ayala's generalizations about the bonds that link the Mediterranean countries, and Alcalá Galiano's references to the Spanish king's British connections; but they can also get fairly creative. Maeztu, for example, draws parallels between the new British raid tactics and those of the Spanish army in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (the *encamisadas* of the *tercios*) (*Inglaterra*, 67–69). Azorín also picks up on this somewhat baffling link between the modern armies of the Allies and the armies of Spain's imperial past:

He encontrado un parecido sorprendente entre el genio norteamericano y el español [...] creía hallarme entre españoles, pero entre españoles del siglo XVI [...] con el entusiasmo y las energías y la decisión de entonces, y además, con todo el aporte de la ciencia y de la cultura modernas. (*Norteamericanos*, 101)

Azaña, for his part, writes of how the people of Toulouse received his party very warmly, how they could understand the speeches he and his companions gave in Spanish, and how 'la concurrencia que llenaba la sala, no hacía, al aplaudirnos, más que exteriorizar sus simpatías hispanófilas' (*Obras completas*, 276). Sometimes the links between Spain and the country at hand are not even drawn from events, but from the journalist's historical or philosophical musings. Both Maeztu and Alcalá Galiano, for example, make pointed references to the help the Spaniards received from the British during the Peninsular War (*Inglaterra*, 98; *Volcán*, 110).

Another recurring trope in the *crónicas del frente* is the characterization of soldiers as children, with the carried implications of joyousness and vigour.

This, as we have seen, is one of the more striking features of Maeztu's description of the British in *Inglaterra en armas*, a claim he backs up with the following explanation:

Los campos de Inglaterra son tierras suaves y húmedas, donde se duerme mucho. La ciudad de Londres es, en todo el mundo, la que se acuesta más temprano y se levanta más tarde. Aquí se duerme bien. Se trabaja regularmente. Para defenderse de la humedad se hace ejercicio al aire libre. Se habla del tiempo o de los teatros. No se discute. No se riñe. Se vive, en suma, como en el Limbo. Y el resultado de esta infantilidad es que los hombres y las mujeres conservan su juventud veinte años más que en los otros pueblos. Llega la guerra. Y entonces resulta útil toda la vitalidad acumulada en largos años de descanso. (*Inglaterra*, 98–99)

Farcical as this statement might seem to us, we see this trope of childish vitality repeated across the board. Azorín writes that 'estos americanos me producen la impresión de niños grandes y fuertes' (*Norteamericanos*, 83); Valle-Inclán says of French soldiers that 'para la vida y para la muerte tienen una sonrisa llena de gracia inconsciente' (*Media noche*, 199); Pérez de Ayala refers to war as 'esa sublime niñada salvadora' (*Hermann*, 197); and Alcalá Galiano calls British soldiers 'niños grandes' (*Volcán*, 105). The theme of children-soldiers was repeated enough that Pío Baroja would mockingly assert: 'Según nuestros aliadófilos, los aliados hacen una guerra humana y sonriente. Cada soldado es una ninfa pálida y espiritual, o un niño lleno de inocencia y de candor'.<sup>41</sup>

Another similarity in these texts is the way in which they demonstrate a keen awareness of the existence of a discourse that runs contrary to the one they wish to elaborate. Indeed, the *crónicas* are in a constant dialogue (whether implicit or explicit) with a polemic outside of their own pages, and are willing to interrupt their narration at any point in order to address it. Pérez de Ayala, for example, goes to great lengths to dispel the notion that the scant advance made by the Italian army over a year of fighting means they are unfit for war; and Azorín repeatedly denies the stereotype of the United States as a nation of businessmen, not soldiers (*Norteamericanos*, 76). Nowhere, however, do we see this operation more clearly than in Maeztu: as has been mentioned, the first articles included in *Inglaterra en armas* are devoted to defending the British against several accusations, and are justified thus:

Todavía se sigue diciendo en el mundo neutral que Inglaterra está contemplando la pelea sin realizar grandes sacrificios, ni tomarla enteramente en serio. Se habla de embriaguez, de huelgas, de dificultades en el reclutamiento, de no haber podido salvar a tiempo ni

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41 Pío Baroja, *Momentum catastrophicum* (Madrid: R. Caro Raggio, 1919), 79.

Bélgica, ni Serbia, ni Montenegro, del lujo de los ricos y de los pobres, del derroche y la incompetencia de la administración militar. (*Inglaterra*, 4)

This consciousness of what ‘se habla’ in pro-German quarters dictates much of what is said and presented by Maeztu. He devotes entire articles to refuting statements made by Valle-Inclán and Pío Baroja in which they had criticized the British commitment to the war effort (*Inglaterra*, 29, 134). He even begs Valle-Inclán to believe him when he says, ‘sombbrero en mano’, that the British are doing all they can in the present struggle (*Inglaterra*, 29).

Finally, all six of these texts evidence a positive attitude towards the war. The authors show themselves to be aware of the horrors of the conflict: Maeztu describes seeing jars full of soldiers’ eye-balls in a field hospital, and upon meeting maimed combatants he ponders ‘los horrores innecesarios de esta guerra’ (*Inglaterra*, 52–53). Alcalá Galiano similarly describes finding a human leg half-buried in a battlefield, and Valle-Inclán also spares little detail in narrating some of the more gruesome aspects of the war. Yet this awareness of the horror is always qualified by an effort to infuse the reality at hand with transcendent meaning. In this vein, particular emphasis is placed on the notions of redemption and resurrection. Valle-Inclán writes: ‘en medio del horror y de la muerte, una vena profunda de alegría recorre los ejércitos de Francia. Es la conciencia de la resurrección’ (*Media noche*, 189). Azaña, when faced with the sight of Verdun, proclaims: ‘¡Qué extraordinaria impresión de fuerza, de tenacidad feroz se recibe delante de estas ruinas! [...] Un alma indomable alienta en ellas’ (*Obras completas*, 275). And for Pérez de Ayala, the battlefields of the north of Italy are an ‘¡Enorme ara funeraria, propiciatorio sacrificio, sacro osario, monumento a la itálica braveza! La muerte ha vuelto a dar vida a las antiguas glorias patrias’ (*Hermann*, 240).

These texts therefore engage in what Bracco describes as ‘the derivation of the rational and the moral out of the irrational’.<sup>42</sup> The authors operate from the beginning on a plane larger than the life and death of individuals: their subject is collective (nations, cultures and races), and thus lends itself to an abstraction from the individual and physical to the general and symbolic. Death and suffering are equated with sacrifice and resurrection, setting the stage for the exaltation of collective valor, adventure and glory. Azaña calls the battle of Verdun ‘la más espléndida diadema de gloria que puede ceñirse un pueblo’, and Alcalá Galiano calls the same battle an ‘epopeya sublime’ (*Obras completas*, 288; *Volcán*, 181). Maeztu, for his part, writes that at the Battle of Loos the English ‘murieron por docenas de miles. Fue magnífico, inmortal’ (*Inglaterra*, 26). He clearly shared with his fellow correspondents the notion that

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42 Bracco, *Merchants of Hope*, 3.

[m]orir, en un avance, de un balazo en el pecho, con la cabeza alta y los ojos clavados en la trinchera que se va a asaltar, esto no puede ser odioso para un hombre de corazón. (*Inglaterra*, 45)

### The Thin Line: Sympathy and Propaganda

It will have become obvious by this point that a common propaganda intent underlies most of the similarities across the various *crónicas del frente* identified in the previous section. The rationalization of the death of hundreds of thousands of soldiers, the countering of pro-German discourse, the presentation of positive national stereotypes for the Allied countries, the characterization of their soldiers as vigorous children; all this would appear to go beyond both pre-existing sympathy and constraints imposed by wartime censorship. It is not within the scope of this essay to examine whether these discursive strategies were exclusive to writing about the Great War, or whether they were part of a much older repertoire of propaganda writing about wars in general; nor would I be able to establish whether these strategies were exclusive to Spain, or whether they extended to other pro-Allied writing throughout Europe and the Americas. What is clear from the evidence outlined above is that these authors are engaging in the elaboration and dissemination of a pro-Allied discourse in their country of origin. This intent is what dictates the rigidity of said discourse, and also explains the various coincidences found between texts which belong to such different authors.

This aspect is clarified when we consider some of the external factors involved in these writers' visits to the front. We now know that many journalists and newspapers from neutral countries were bribed by the propaganda apparatuses of the nations at war, so as to put forward either a pro-German or pro-Allied line in their reporting.<sup>43</sup> This practice was so prevalent in Spain during the First World War that few journalists escaped the suspicion of being in the pay of one of the sides of the conflict. And indeed, the authors of the *crónicas del frente* were in one way or another collaborating with Allied propaganda efforts. We now know that Valle-Inclán's and Azaña's visits to France were organized as part of the French propaganda strategy;<sup>44</sup> and that Azorín's trip took place shortly after the US embassy in Madrid considered inviting a few journalists 'dignos de confianza' to visit the American troops in France.<sup>45</sup> We also have evidence that Pérez de

43 See Aubert, 'La Propagande étrangère en Espagne'.

44 See Antonio Niño Rodríguez, *Cultura y diplomacia: los hispanistas franceses y España: de 1875 a 1931* (Madrid: CSIC/Casa de Velázquez, 1988).

45 José Antonio Montero Jiménez, 'Imágenes, ideología y propaganda. La labor del Comité de Información Pública en España (1917–1918)', *Hispania* (Spain), 68:228 (2008), 211–34 (p. 218).



Ayala was actually paid by the British Foreign Office in exchange for writing pro-Allied articles.<sup>46</sup>

As for Maeztu, and although (to my knowledge) it has not been documented whether or not he was in the pay of the Allies, we have seen that Fernando Díaz-Plaja suspects ‘la obligación de hacer propaganda aliadófila’ to be at work in *Inglaterra en armas*. And there would appear in fact to be strong evidence that Maeztu was collaborating with the British propaganda apparatus. We now know, for example, that his return to *La Correspondencia de España* in 1916 coincided with this newspaper’s beginning to be subsidized by the French and British embassies.<sup>47</sup> Maeztu had very publicly left the paper in 1911 because he considered its conservative editorial line to be incompatible with his socialist ideas.<sup>48</sup> But five years later, Maeztu was no less of a socialist, nor the paper any less conservative. The only thing that had changed was the implicit requirement of the Allied-embassies’ patronage, that is, that the newspaper run a pro-Allied line. And it is possible that, as part of the same operation, Maeztu was instructed to adopt an aggressively pro-Entente line in his reporting.

This year (1916) is also the one in which Maeztu went in his articles from attacking to defending Lord Northcliffe, Fleet Street’s most powerful press baron and a key figure in British wartime propaganda abroad.<sup>49</sup> There are, in fact, enough leads to suggest the existence of a ‘Northcliffe connection’ in Maeztu’s possible participation in British propaganda in Spain. An anonymous letter to the editor published in *The New Age* around this time testifies to Northcliffe having known Maeztu’s name and, more importantly, his status as one of the most prominent pro-Allied Spanish journalists.<sup>50</sup> This is particularly relevant given that the press baron was worried about public opinion in Spain being too pro-German. Not only did he send a member of his staff (*The Times* correspondent John Walter) to head the British propaganda apparatus in that country; he also made a visit there himself in August–September of 1916 in order to sound out public opinion towards the war.<sup>51</sup> His impression from this trip, which he conveyed to Douglas Haig (commander of the British army in France), was that Spain ‘is full of Germans and the whole Press is anti-British’.<sup>52</sup> We could construe Maeztu’s

46 María Cruz Seoane and María Dolores Saiz, *Historia del periodismo en España*, 3 vols (Madrid: Alianza, 1983), III, 226.

47 Seoane and Saiz, *Historia del periodismo en España*, III, 219.

48 González Cuevas, *Maeztu*, 141–42.

49 Santervás, *La etapa inglesa de Ramiro de Maeztu*, I, 306. For Northcliffe in the Great War, see Thompson, *Politicians, the Press and Propaganda*.

50 ‘X’, ‘Lord Northcliffe’s Mission’, *The New Age*, 13 January 1916, pp. 21–22.

51 Thompson, *Politicians, the Press and Propaganda*, 105.

52 Sir Douglas Haig, *The Private Papers of Douglas Haig, 1914–1919*, ed. Robert Blake (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1952), 164.

becoming permanently attached to the British army as a consequence of Northcliffe's preoccupation over Spanish opinion, where the press baron would have arranged for Maeztu's attachment in order to have a steady stream of pro-Allied reporting from the front in the Spanish press. We have evidence that Northcliffe gave frequent recommendations to the British army headquarters concerning which journalists were to be awarded special treatment.<sup>53</sup>

A final indication of this possible 'Northcliffe connection' is a note which appeared in the Northcliffe-owned *The Times* in October of the same year, praising Maeztu's journalistic production as 'the most brilliant and, at the same time, most profound interpretation of English thought and conduct under the stress of war that has been seen in any neutral country'.<sup>54</sup> The note was published shortly after Maeztu had come out with the articles included in *Inglaterra en armas*, and can be construed as reacting to them, or even rewarding him for them. Maeztu had, after all, declared around this time that 'if it be true that every man has his price, then my own—poor me!—does not greatly exceed that of the courtesy and recognition of a respected name'.<sup>55</sup> A laudatory mention in one of the UK's most prestigious newspapers might have fitted the bill, then, as part of the 'price' for his services.

There are a few other indications of Maeztu's collaboration with British propaganda efforts. Paul Aubert has interpreted the abundance of Gallicisms in the pro-Allied Spanish manifesto of 1915 as evidence that its authorship did not belong to Pérez de Ayala or Valle-Inclán, but rather to the French propaganda services, which would have tried to pass it off as having been penned by 'impartial' Spaniards.<sup>56</sup> Following a comparable line of reasoning, it is worth taking note of the fact that *Inglaterra en armas* contains a high number of anglicized expressions that make some sections read like translations from a British source.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, we now know that Darling & Son, the publishing house that printed *Inglaterra en armas*, was

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53 Thompson, *Politicians, the Press and Propaganda*, 107.

54 'Press cuttings', *The New Age*, 19 October 1916, p. 24.

55 Ramiro de Maeztu, 'Mr. Shaw and the German Republic', *The New Age*, 27 July 1916, p. 6.

56 Aubert, 'La Propagande étrangère en Espagne', 139–40.

57 Some examples: 'P.S.' (instead of the Spanish 'P.D.') (38); 'De una cosa estoy cierto' (63); 'protección contra los shrapnel' (instead of the Spanish 'metralla') (71); 'hogazas de dos libras y media' (instead of the grams/kilograms measurement) (81); 'más del 14 per 100' (instead of 'por') (112); 'Francia sola recibe la tercera parte de ...' (instead of 'Sólo Francia ...') (119); 'La guerra envolvía el fin de la vida acompasada' (123); and 'para desayuno' (instead of 'para desayunar') (125). It is also worth noting that there are no opening question or exclamation marks in the text, though this might be due to it having been printed by a British publishing house.

one of the many commercial publishing houses used during the war by the British government as a front for the distribution of propaganda.<sup>58</sup> I would not question Maeztu's basic authorship of *Inglaterra en armas*, but certain sections of this text do seem quite pre-scripted, like the following:

Este artículo tiene que terminar con cifras que nos muestren que lo que se ha hecho en Birmingham se ha hecho también en el resto del país. Estas cifras nos las va a dar mister Montagu, del ministerio de Municiones.  
(*Inglaterra*, 118)

Rather than ghost-writing his text altogether, it is most likely that Maeztu's British hosts provided him with facts and figures which they wished him to convey to his readers, or even with narrative material like the anecdotes relating to British soldiers that make up the final sections of *Inglaterra en armas*.

There are, therefore, strong indications that Maeztu was in one way or another collaborating with Allied propaganda efforts; just like most of his peers. Ultimately, however, the extent of the involvement of these writers with foreign propaganda efforts cannot be central to an analysis of their *crónicas del frente*. That is, we cannot attribute the propaganda intent of their texts purely to pecuniary motivations. This is because it is impossible to know whether their being paid or not would have made a significant difference to their reporting. One of the British war correspondents, Philip Gibbs, declared the following after the war:

We identified ourselves absolutely with the armies on the fields, and we wiped out of our minds all thought of personal 'scoops', and all temptation to write one word which would make the task of officers and men more difficult or dangerous. There was no need for censorship of our dispatches. We were our own censors.<sup>59</sup>

In other words, we must consider that in many ways these authors believed in the general discourse they were peddling, or they believed in its effectiveness in furthering a cause which they agreed with.

The self-censorship of the war correspondent brought on by his loyalty to the army he was visiting appears to have been a general phenomenon.<sup>60</sup> Once again, journalists from neutral countries were no different; Lytton declared that 'most [...] were very grateful for the confidence that was placed in them', and he actually cites Maeztu's name

58 Peter Buitenhuis, *The Great War of Words: Literature As Propaganda 1914–18 and After* (London: Batsford, 1989), 16.

59 Quoted in Farrar, *News from the Front*, 75.

60 Farrar, *News from the Front*, 177.

in this context.<sup>61</sup> The same mechanism of gratitude and self-censorship appears to have been at work in his fellow correspondents: Azorín declared in his first article on the US army that ‘he sido invitado por el Estado Mayor norteamericano para visitar al ejército de la gran República. Agradezco vivamente el honor; procuraré corresponder a la excepcional confianza que se ha depositado en mí’ (*Norteamericanos*, 75). And Valle-Inclán wrote to a friend that ‘quieren que escriba un libro de la guerra. Que el gobierno francés me haya encomendado esta misión, te confieso que me llena de orgullo’ (*Media noche*, 45–46). As Seoane and Saiz have pointed out, many of these writers simply ‘cobraban por realizar un trabajo que estaba de acuerdo con sus convicciones.’<sup>62</sup>

There is a final dimension to take into account when explaining the propaganda intent (and its discursive consequences) of the *crónicas del frente*. Each of the authors under consideration operated to a greater or lesser extent as a public intellectual, enrolling his positions on different issues as part of grander intellectual projects. Their attitudes towards the First World War, crystallized in their *crónicas del frente*, fell into this pattern. In other words, not only did they believe in the official ‘causes’ given by the Allies for the conflict, but they also saw they could push their own intellectual programme through it. This too helps explain how such different authors could pen such similar texts: though the pro-Allied discourse they were elaborating was rigid enough, it also allowed wriggle room for each author to invest much of his own personality and programme into his reporting. Valle-Inclán, for example, organized the material of his visit so as to carry out an experiment in form and narration.<sup>63</sup> In a more political vein, Pérez de Ayala praised Italian wartime mobilization and national unity as an example of what Spain needs to do in order to regenerate itself (*Hermann*, 81). Azaña similarly glorified the French Republican model, and dropped hints about its exportability to Spain (*Obras completas*, 283). And on the completely opposite side of the spectrum, Azorín attributed much of the French resilience against the Germans to Charles Maurras and the *Action française* circle, whom he admired, and to their defence of the values of religiosity, order and hierarchy (*Norteamericanos*, 47). That Azaña and Azorín could attribute the French

61 Lytton, *The Press and the General Staff*, 115. Besides Maeztu, Lytton also lists ‘Belaustegregoitia’, ‘Bolin’ and ‘Calvet’. My assumption is that the first is a slight misspelling of Ramón Belausteguigoitia Landaluce, London correspondent for *El Sol* who published under the pen name ‘Ramón de Goyenuri’. As for ‘Bolin’, it is reasonable to assume that he is referring to Luis Antonio Bolin Bidwell, correspondent for *ABC* in London and who would play an important role in the Spanish Civil War and in the postwar years. Finally, it seems safe to say that ‘Calvet’ is Agustí Calvet, journalist with *La Vanguardia* who published under the pen name ‘Gaziel’. Lytton does not mention Alcalá Galiano, even though it is evident from his articles that he was attached to the British army during his tour of the front.

62 Seoane and Saiz, *Historia del periodismo español*, III, 226.

63 On *La media noche* in Valle-Inclán’s stylistic evolution, see Lyon, ‘*La media noche*. Valle-Inclán at the Crossroads’.

success to entirely different causes (one to the triumph of the left, the other to the resurrection of the right) is the best example that these authors did have some freedom in terms of how they portrayed the Allies—just as long as the portrayal was positive.

As for Maeztu, who at this point was a strong advocate of guild socialism, his reporting celebrates the forsaking of individual interests in the war for ‘la obra común’, and he presents the British army as an example of the functional organization of society which he had been advocating for the last few years (*Inglaterra*, 82, 47). The greater role undertaken by the British state in organizing the national war effort is, to him, an example of the benefits that might come from adopting the same ideas he and the guild socialists of *The New Age* were pushing. Such an attitude has led Rafael Santervás to assert that Maeztu during the war was ‘un observador poco objetivo, que casi siempre utiliza los hechos para demostrar sus propias teorías, elogiar sus valores o atacar a los contrarios’.<sup>64</sup> This remark, however, appears to miss the point: not only could every author included in this study fall under Santervás’ indictment, but falling under it was actually integral to who they were as intellectuals.

From this it should become apparent that, when we study the behaviour of these intellectuals during the First World War, it is as important to be aware of what their individual projects were as it is to know how they were influenced and utilized by the propaganda apparatuses of the nations at war. Understanding this allows us to move beyond sterile and anachronistic prejudices about intellectual integrity, and to better carry out the task of explaining the *crónicas del frente*.

## Conclusions

I have argued throughout this study that Ramiro de Maeztu’s *Inglaterra en armas* shares many of its features with other *crónicas del frente* written by his contemporaries, even though important differences separate his work from theirs, and even though their work contained considerable diversity. I have also argued that, beyond any constraints imposed by pre-existing sympathies or wartime censorship, the coincidences between these texts are best explained when we consider that they all partook of the same pro-Allied propaganda discourse. Thus, it is my contention that the strikingly positive evaluation of the war which we find in *Inglaterra en armas*, as well as its incompatibility with Maeztu’s other intellectual production of this time, are best explained as reflective of the discursive milieu Maeztu was operating within when he wrote his *crónicas del frente*. Indeed, the text is only comprehensible when we see it as a product of a specific discourse which was widely prevalent in the 1914–1918 period in Spain. As has just been

64 Santervás, *La etapa inglesa de Ramiro de Maeztu*, I, 306.

argued, this discourse was flexible enough to attract various authors and causes to it; but it was also rigid enough to impose constraints on what could be formulated. Maeztu himself made the operations involved in writing *crónicas del frente* explicit when he wrote, in the final sentences of the English version of his chronicles, that 'had these articles been written for an English public, I would have laid stress on some faults'.<sup>65</sup>

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65 Ramiro de Maeztu, 'A Visit to the Front. X', *The New Age*, 23 November 1916, p. 6.