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# BRAIS PINTO: A SHORT HISTORY OF THE GALICIAN “BEAT” GENERATION

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**Abstract** || The poets of the Brais Pinto group were forerunners in the modernization of Galician literature and politics during Francoist Spain. The significance of the poets does not only lie in the five books of poetry brought out by the eponymous underground publishing house, but rather in the changes they triggered, and the subsequent quasi-mythical status of the members. It is precisely for this reason that the group remains relevant today. Consequently, it is interesting to look into Xosé Luis Méndez Ferrín's suggestion in the sense that the group supposes a sort of Galician Beat Generation, as certain affinities between the two groups shed light on how they were and are perceived in the Galician literary system.

**Keywords** || Comparative Literature | Poetics | Periphery Literature | Galician Literature | Poetry | Beat Generation

## 0. Introduction

The exhibition *Brais Pinto, o afiador revolucionario* (Brais Pinto, The Revolutionary Knife Grinder) took place in early 2010.<sup>1</sup> The idea behind the exhibition was to demonstrate the continuous importance of the poetry group Brais Pinto, from the seed they had planted to the effect they had on subsequent generations of Galician writers and poets, as well as literary and political movements. The Brais Pinto authors aimed at modernizing Galician literature and connect it to the larger system of European letters. They continue to be relevant today as forerunners in the process of bringing the avant-garde to Galician art and culture, and in exploring how this related to politics.

As the Grupo Brais Pinto has not been the object of many studies, in this essay I will first provide a general outline including authors, works, and historical and critical context. Secondly I will explore Xosé Luís Méndez Ferrín's claim that Brais Pinto was similar to the Beat Generation.

## 1. Grupo Brais Pinto

Brais Pinto was a group of young Galician poets living in Madrid during the late 1950s who published poetry, became involved in politics (to varying degrees), and organized cultural activities related to Galician language, culture, and literature. The author who published under the name of Brais Pinto were Bernardino Graña, Ramón Lourenzo, Xosé Alexandre Criebeiro and Xosé Fernández Ferreiro. Méndez Ferrín had already published in 1957, before the group came together, and Reimundo Patiño's work written during that time was not published until 1994. They were all workers or students under the age of thirty and met at the Centro Galego (Galician Center) and two restaurants, La Región Gallega and Café Los Mariscos. Hermino Barreiro, Bautista Álvarez, and César Arias were also members, while other writers and Galician intellectuals were indirectly involved with the group.

The name of the group originates in a story by Xosé Fernández Ferreiro about a man from a small town in the province of Ourense called Brais Pinto, who travels the world and dies when he is run over in Madrid, on his way back home. Brais is "[...] a knife grinder, a restless man and a dreamer, solitary and free, friend of paths and new fields, who had in his heart a great love and a garden of red carnations"<sup>2</sup> (Ferreiro, 2012: 165). In the newspaper *La Noche*, under the pseudonym Crespon Azul, Fernández Ferreiro further explored the figure of Brais: he was from the village of Cortecadela in Nogueira de Ramuín, Ourense. In 1900, at the age of twenty he left his village

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## NOTES

1 | All translations by the author unless otherwise indicated.

2 | "[...] un afiador, un home inqueda e soñador, solitario e libre, amigo dos camiños e dos novos eidos, que levaba no peito un grande amor e un xardín de caraveis vermellos."

with his grinding stone to travel around the world. He spent time in different European countries, as far as Russia, and in America. He wanted to go back home as an old man to die in the mountains where he was born, but he was killed by a bus in Plaza Cibeles (Madrid) running after his grinding stone, which had come loose and was rolling away. He was buried in the Almudena Cemetery, where the members of Brais Pinto group brought *toxo* flowers (gorse) and read poems from *Bocarribeira* (Ferreiro, 2012: 163-4).

Coming from a small rural mountain village and exercising a traditional profession—knife-grinding—Brais Pinto is a fictional character symbolic of Galicia. He would have had a bicycle or a cart with a grindstone, and would have gone down the street playing scales on a whistle to let people know he was in town and available. As many Galicians, he is a migrant, and after living life to the full, dies an absurd death in a large metropolis. What is the significance of this character for a group of poets? The members of Brais Pinto were looking to forge a new identity, a broader Galician identity connected to the past but which, simultaneously looked towards the future. A life lived to the full translated into traveling and opening up towards Europe. All this elements were packaged in the figure of Brais Pinto, who had a distinct Galician heritage, profession and birthplace. He could be taken as a representation of Galicia in that his craft was dying out in modern times, he had emigrated but eventually wanted to return, and had led a rich cultural life.

Fernández Ferreiro described the philosophy of the group, with its members being “[...] anti-establishment, rebellious, visionaries, existentialists, surrealists, transgressors, romantics, sentimental, rustic, villagers, skeptics [...] (2012: 111).<sup>3</sup> The definition situates the members of the group within 20<sup>th</sup> avant-garde movements, while working in the system of periphery literature in heavily-censored Spain. This is an irony that the group was aware of, and it is at the root of the politics in their literature.

A more concise definition and explanation of objectives was included in the flap of each book, which I would argue could be read as a manifesto of the group. It reads as follows:

BRAIS PINTO is a collection of poetry founded by a group of young Galician men living in Madrid. It is the only exclusively poetic collection that exists in the Galician cultural sphere. It intends to incorporate in its volumes young voices and the latest attitudes of the modern creator, without forgetting the maestros of the past nor representative figures at the current time in Europe, carefully translated and annotated.<sup>4</sup>

The fragment highlights three aspects: 1) the importance of poetry; 2) the modernization of literature; and 3) translations of great works. As for poetry, the members of the group wanted to renew Galician

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3 | “[...] autodefinition: contestatorios, rebeldes, visionarios, existentialistas, surrealistas, transgresores, románticos, sentimentais, provincianos, aldeáns, escépticos[...].”

4 | “BRAIS PINTO é unha colección de poesía fundada por un fato de mozos galegos residentes en Madrid. É a única colección escrusivamente poética que subsiste no ámbito cultural galego. Pretende incorporar aos seus números as voces xóvenes e as derradeiras actitudes da modernidade creadora, sen esquecer aos mestres de sempre nin ás figures representativas do intre actual en Europa, coidadosamente traducidas e anotadas.”

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poetry and make it an important part of Galician literature. In order to achieve this, they started a publishing house, albeit clandestine (unofficial and not subject to the rules of censorship), and held poetry readings and other events. They wanted to modernize literature, turning towards Europe and the avant-garde movements which seemed the opposite of Spain and its backwards culture and politics. Translations would have helped to accomplish these aims, but during the short-lived activity of the group they did not publish any.

Brais Pinto published five books of poetry in Galician. Although *Bandeiras nevoentas* (1992) and *Voce na néboa* (1957) were not expressly published under this name, I have added them to the list due to their literary character, the authors, and the context in which they were written. This would make for a total of seven volumes of poetry that can be ascribed to Brais Pinto:

1. *Bocarribeira* (1958) by Ramón Otero Pedrayo
2. *Poema do home que quixo vivir* (1959) by Bernardino Graña
3. *O que se foi perdendo* (1959) by Ramón Lourenzo
4. *Acoitelado na espera* (1959) by Xosé Alexandre Cribeiro
5. *A Noite* (1960) by Xosé Fernández Ferreiro.
6. *Bandeiras nevoentas* (1992) by Reimundo Patiño (written in 1959)
7. *Voce na néboa* (1957) by Xosé Luís Méndez Ferrín (published by Alba)

All these authors were members of the group except the intellectual Ramón Otero Pedrayo, who was more of a mentor. Out of the five original books, only two were re-published: *Acoitelado na espera*, in a volume together with *Indo pra mais perto* and *Doente esperanza*, by Akal in 1979, and *Bocarribeira*, published by Galaxia in 2005.

Here it must be mentioned that the first volume published by Brais Pinto, *Bocarribeira*, was published when Otero Pedrayo was seventy-years old. In the prologue to the reprint, Anxo Angueira contextualized Otero Pedrayo's links with the group, explaining that some of the members met him in Santiago de Compostela when, as students, they participate in a tribute to him (2011: 7, 8). His collaboration clearly suggests a nationalist slant in the project, and for this reason serves as a fitting book to open the collection.

The original Brais Pinto group fell apart due to artistic and/or political differences, along with the fact that most of the members moved away from Madrid. However, there is a second part to the Brais Pinto publishing story, when the publishing house was reborn in the 1970s as a proper legal entity. In 1974, they published *Fins do Mundo* by

Bernardino Graña, and *O Naranxo* by Ramón de Valenzuela; in 1975, *Duas Viaxes* by Patiño and Xaquín Marín, considered to be the first comic in Galician language. They also published four issues of a collection entitled *Cuadernos da Gadaña* (1978-1980), which included Luís Seoane's *Textos encol da arte galega* (1979) and Uxío Novoneyra's *Poemas caligráficos* (1979). Likewise, there are continuities with the *Rompente* poetic group, led by Antón Reixa and Alfonso Pexeguiero and aiming at stimulating Galician poetry and culture, which published Méndez Ferrín's *Con pólvora e magnolias* (1979).

There is much of what could be considered auto-bibliography in the literary and political activities of Brais Pinto, written by members or by people associated with the group. These are anecdotal in nature and recount how people in or near the group perceived what they were doing. The general conclusion is that the principal merit of Brais Pinto's work is the groundwork they laid for future endeavors. I have chosen to use two of the latest publications which, in essence, serve as anthologies of auto-bibliographies. In *De Xente Nova a Brais Pinto: Memorias dun afiador rebelde* (2012), Xosé Fernández Ferreiro recounts life in Brais Pinto. Ana Acuña (2014) includes various quotes from members and people associated with the group in her study: *Conciencia política e literatura galega en Madrid (1950-2000)*. She affirms the idea that the group has become more important due to a "mythification" (2014: 67), and goes on to say that they are "[...] more recognized in the Galician literary system due to the importance of the members and their activities involving the evolution of Galician culture (respected poets, storytellers, journalists, painters, philologists)" (2014: 80).<sup>5</sup> More specifically, some members later became full professors or politicians. Three became members of the Real Academia Galega, six were poets, two were novelists, one a painter, and one a director (Ferreiro, 2012: 160). These are the two reasons why they hold a place in Galician literary history: the groundwork laid down by their first endeavors, and their subsequent prominence.

Xosé M. Salgado (2005) alludes to three points regarding politics and the members of Brais Pinto: the importance of political commitment, the concern for the future of Galicia, and the faith in a nationalistic ethics. While the later can be debated, given the split in political affinities, the first elements are essential to understand the group. For César Arias, Brais Pinto was "politics and poetry" (Perez Mondelo, 2003: 120). Lourenzo suggested that the three major objectives of Brais Pinto were political, cultural, and literary, and describes the group as anti-Francoist while defending Galician language (Ferreiro, 2012: 74-5). Herminio Barreiro also refers to Brais Pinto as anti-Francoist and anti-fascist, and notes that the group discussed the national status of Galicia, its political autonomy, Lenin's writings, and

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5 | "[...] máis recoñecido no sistema literario galego pola significación dos seus membros e das súas actividades para o devir da cultura galega (recoñecidos poetas, narradores, xornalistas, pintores, filólogos)."

ways to coordinate politics and culture. Some members were more center left than leftist, while he describes Ferreiro as apolitical (2011: 222).

Politics were explicit and fundamental for Méndez Ferrín, Patiño, and Álvarez, who reacted against the purely cultural Galician nationalism, denominated *piñeirismo*, and intended to surpass the subsequent political inactivity (Carbajo, 2012: 133). Méndez Ferrín went so far as to call it McCarthyism, and accused Piñeiro of silencing anyone who did not share his ideas (Ferreiro, 2012: 36). In fact, in 1964 they founded the Marxist-nationalist political party *Unión do Povo Galego* (UPG, Union of Galician People) along with Luís González Blasco, who published an article entitled *Algo sobre Brais Pinto e as minhas relacións com o fato* (2000), where he concluded that he was effectively written out of the history of the group (he even includes photographs to prove his membership) due to his linguistic education, being accused of being *reintegracionista* and a member of AGAL (Associação Galega da Língua). The anecdote serves to illustrate the political tensions present in the group. Galician literature was censored and peripheral, and the members of the group tried to revive and rejuvenate it, opening up to Europe and the world. For this reason, and regardless of the specific political tendencies of the members of the group, politics played both an implicit and explicit role in Brais Pinto.

Patricia Amil, one of the organizers of the exhibition *Brais Pinto, o afiador revolucionario*, said that the group “sent out a beacon of hope for Galician culture”,<sup>6</sup> this being the main reason for their continued importance (Pereiro, 2010). Six of the surviving members of the group attended the inauguration. In his speech, Ferreiro concluded that Brais Pinto was especially important for its loyalty to Galicia. Bautista Álvarez spoke at length about how Brais Pinto was a cultural organization which acted as a base and gave a push to organize political action as well as Galician political, cultural, and economic nationalism. He also spoke about what it meant for current Galician nationalism. Méndez Ferrín noted the political renewal brought about by cultural organization. He brought up the metaphor of Brais Pinto as an “egg”<sup>7</sup> and noted that without it, Galicia would not have had a nationalist party, labor unions, or agrarianism (Terra e Tempo, 2010). From these speeches, it becomes clear that for the members of Brais Pinto its present importance laid in its precedents rather than in its literary merit. The exhibition was divided into three sections. The first included antecedents and general context about what was happening in Galicia, Spain, and the world before and at the time Brais Pinto was being formed. The second section presented the group, and the third considered what happened afterwards: the second wave of publishing beginning in 1974, the literary school of *Nova narrativa*, the artistic movement *A gadaña*, and the political party UPG.

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6 | “erguían un canto de esperanza para a cultura galeguista.”

7 | “[...] foi como un ovo con múltiples xemas no que se sentía a insatisfacción con respecto á situación do país.”

Having discussed the politics of Brais Pinto and the second wave of publishing, let us examine three elements that are considered as branches stemming from the group's work: the literary schools *Nova narrativa*, *Escola de tebra*, and the artistic movement *A gadaña*, movements with which members of Brais Pinto were involved at one time or another. *A gadaña* was a painting movement founded by Reimundo Patiño, which Méndez Ferrín describes in detail in the article *A Gadaña no mundo* (1993). For its part, *Escola de Tebra* (School of Darkness) is an existentialist school of poetry. Méndez Ferrín was actively involved with *Nova narrativa*, inspired by *nouveau roman* and interested in innovative narrative techniques. Manuel Forcadela mentions that with the exception of two of the seven books I have earlier ascribed to Brais Pinto (*Bocarribeira* and *A noite*), all their works belong to the *Escola de Tebra*. He goes on to suggest that both this school and *Nova narrativa* started out being existentialist, then became experimental, and finally became political, before losing identity as a specific school (2011).

Brais Pinto is important in the *Escola de Tebra*, *Nova narrativa*, and *A gadaña*, as well as in the Marxist-nationalist political party UPG. To these, we should add seven other essential events in light of the fact that they established, and were a result of, the identity and objectives of the group:

1. Members and people close to the group produced poetry (published and non-published), which remains the main artifact of their work.
2. They organized two poetry tributes (*homenaxes*), one for Ramón Cabanillas in 1959, and another for Luís Pimentel in 1960, the latter published by the University of Santiago.<sup>8</sup>
3. They celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of Rosalía de Castro, the major canonical figure of Galician poetry, with Manuel Murguía.
4. Ramón Lourenzo taught a course of Galician language.
5. They collaborated in recitals at the Centro Galego, and wrote in its journal.
6. Reimundo Patiño founded the painting movement *A gadaña*.
7. They organized a poetry contest, won by Alfonso Gallego Vila with *A cidade tesa nas ondas do mar* (Acuña, 2014: 102).<sup>9</sup>

All these activities contributed to the identity of the Brais Pinto group and their position regarding Galician language and culture. The trajectory and cultural importance of the members gives the group a legendary quality and cemented its place in the history, and literary history, of Galicia. Let us now examine Méndez Ferrín's contention that they were a sort of Galician Beat Generation, an underground

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8 | This was published under the title *Homenaxe a Luís Pimentel de Brais Pinto*.

9 | In addition to Acuña, these elements also appear in other sources.

literary group that worked against the establishment and that opted to move in the direction of progress and modernism.

## 2. Brais Pinto and the Beat Generation

The similarities between the Beat Generation<sup>10</sup> (writers and cultural figures who challenged the socio-literary establishment and became symbols of a movement), and the Brais Pinto group (a group of Galician poets promoting Galician culture in the Madrid in the 1960s) are ostensibly small. It is then interesting to look into the declarations of Xosé Luís Méndez Ferrín and his suggestion that the two share some characteristics.

Méndez Ferrín first compares the general social characteristics of both groups. In his history of Galician poetry, *De Pondal a Novoneyra* (1984), he sets Brais Pinto in the context of existentialism, and mentions that drug use was nonexistent (1984: 258-9). He goes on to propose that Brais Pinto “[...] had an anarchic character, parallel and concomitant to the North-American ‘beatnik’ movement” (1984: 261).<sup>11</sup> He mentions that the “subversive” and “individual” tone and style of the authors was “strongly beatnik”, going on to add that they displayed an attitude towards life and literature similar to the one of Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Jack Kerouac, and Gregory Corso (1984: 272-273). In the same study, Méndez Ferrín insists that some members of Brais Pinto resembled the Beat Generation’s in their rejection of traditional literary forms, as well as for non-literary characteristics such as their traveling around Europe, hitchhiking, listening to jazz and rock, wearing a beard, and sexual liberation (1984: 258).

Méndez Ferrín compares the poetics of the two groups in the article “A Gadaña no mundo” (1993). He specifically mentions a poem by Brais Pinto poet Bernardino Graña entitled “Oda mariña ás forzas de Patiño e Jackson Pollock” and discusses the impact of the beatniks on it (1993: 419), but he does not go into detail as to the specifics of such impact. Reimundo Patiño, whose work connects painting and poetry, is described by Méndez Ferrín as having a “pathos and a shout” that links with the “[...] existential and formal radicalism of the North-American Beat Generation” (2010: 104).<sup>12</sup> Méndez Ferrín suggests that the formal innovations of both Graña and Patiño gives their writings a Beat characteristic.

Apart from Méndez Ferrín, there are other academics who mention the Beat Generation in relation to Brais Pinto. Iris Cochón emphasizes Méndez Ferrín’s views, adding that he led Brais Pinto to take certain assertions of the Beat Generation for their own (1997: 18). Carmen Blanco and Claudio R. Fer, in the introduction of Méndez Ferrín’s

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10 | There are several Spanish editions of the main Beat authors available, as well a variety of studies including the seminal *The Beat Generation* by Bruce Cook, first published in 1971 and translated in 1974, or the more recently published collection of Kerouac articles *La filosofía de la generación beat* (Cajanegra 2015). There is a Galician edition of Ginsberg’s *Howl and Other Poems* published in 2007 by Edicions Positivas.

11 | “[...] tivo un carácter anarcoide, paralelo e concomitante co movemento ‘beatnik’ norteamericano.”

12 | “O seu pathos e o seu berro conectan, de lonxe e sen o saber, coa radicalidade formal e existencial da Beat Generation norteamericana.”

*Con pólvora e magnolias*, recognize certain Beat elements in the group, specifically existentialism (1989: 12), as well as verses with intermittent intonation, allusions to jazz or blues, and urban despair:

Beat poetry was received as another avant-garde movement, even though its influence already begins in Grupo Brais Pinto, encouraged by Ferrín in Madrid in the 50's. The use of verses with intermittent intonation, allusions to jazz or blues, and urban despair are some of the most frequent characteristics of Beat origin (1989: 34).<sup>13</sup>

Xosé Manuel Fernández Costas and Henrique Rabunhal mention that one can find “[...] phonic possibilities related to phonetic poetry and the Beat movement [...] in ‘Viet Nam Canto,’ a poem by Uxío Novoneyra [...]” (1993: 12).<sup>14</sup> Manuel Forcadela (2001) also connected Brais Pinto with the Beats: “[...] the poets of the fifties developed a process of opening up that let them to connect with existentialism and certain attitudes of the Beat Generation as well as surrealism”.<sup>15</sup> He mentions that Méndez Ferrín himself says that they were aware of Kerouac’s poetry and that they read Beat Generation journals.

It is interesting to look at the actual connections (one-way connections, as we know for a fact that there was no direct contact between the groups) between the Beats and Brais Pinto. The members of Brais Pinto knew of the Beat Generation, admired certain principles and ideas, and took them as a model which they attempted to adapt to their own context and reality. Méndez Ferrín mentions that they read specific authors: Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, Kerouac, and Corso. On the contrary, Ferreiro does not include the Beat authors when he discusses books that the members of Brais Pinto read (2012: 149). In Ana Acuña’s comprehensive study, the Beat Generation appears only once in the section on Brais Pinto as part of a quote by Méndez Ferrín (2014: 79).<sup>16</sup> Patricia Amil, at the opening of the exhibition *O afiador revolucionario*, stated that members of Brais Pinto read authors such as Borges, the Beat Generation, and Camus (Amil, 2010).

We can gather two important conclusions from these brief excerpts. The first is that thanks to Méndez Ferrín, the rest of Brais Pinto were at least aware of the Beat Generation. It can therefore be surmised that Méndez Ferrín was the motor behind the influence of the Beat Generation on Brais Pinto. He probably read Beat authors and gave the books to others, some of whom perhaps also read them. The Beat influence is strongest in the writings of Graña, Patiño, Novoneyra and Méndez Ferrín himself. The second conclusion is that Méndez Ferrín basically finds three parallels between the groups: existentialism, anarchy or rebelliousness, and a subversive individualistic attitude towards life and literature. I will first discuss the physical and sociological resemblance with the Beats, and then move on to poetic form and literary philosophy.

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13 | “A poesía *beat* foi recibida como un movemento de vangarda máis, pese a que o seu influxo arrinca xa do grupo Brais Pinto, animado en Madrid por Ferrín nos anos cincuenta. O uso do versículo da entonación entrecortada, as alusións ao jazz a ao blues ou a desesperación urbana son algúns dos rasgos de procedencia *beat* máis frecuentados.”

14 | “[...] unhas posibilidades fónicas relacionábeis coa poesía fonética e co movemento beat [...]”

15 | “[...] os poetas dos cincuenta desenvolven un proceso de apertura que os fai conectar co existencialismo e con certas actitudes do movemento beat e mesmo co surrealismo.”

16 | See note 12.

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Méndez Ferrín was perhaps most interested in the Beat Generation's way of life— a bohemian lifestyle engaging in jazz, drugs, sex, and poetry. He claims as much having been the norm for Brais Pinto, but provides few examples. Even if this was the case, the support of Galician tradition and customs would have been much more important than listening to jazz or hitchhiking. What I would like to establish is that, although there are a few sources documenting social affinities with the Beat Generation, I find them irrelevant in this context. The importance of what members of Brais Pinto did in their social life revolved around Galician culture, their stated goal and target of their legacy.

One thing Méndez Ferrín and Brais Pinto poets saw in the Beats was a way to break away with previous literary forms. They made it clear that they wanted to renovate Galician poetry and, at the same time, push their nationalist agenda. They wanted to restart culture by renewing literature, while not abandoning the past. They strove to be a part of the European movements while staying rooted in the Galician tradition. This was accomplished by some authors through formal experimentation. The Beats could have been a partial inspiration, but it seems that the avant-garde movements in Europe would have been more familiar to the group.

The last aspect to be considered is literary philosophy. Brais Pinto members intended to be as avant-garde as possible; they wanted to engage in subversive literature, like the Beats, but within a completely different literary system and context. In some ways this is what Méndez Ferrín notes he was trying to do: transfer a Beat ethics into Galician poetry. Brais Pinto was indeed subversive (their publishing house was not legalized) and in setting a solid base for modern Galician literary movements.

These three aspects demonstrate that Méndez Ferrín wanted Brais Pinto to resemble Beat authors, as writers and in everyday life, while retaining a strong Galician identity. They took the idea of emulation and integrated it into the situation of Galician literature. Consequently, the idea of integrated emulation, rather than influence or parallels, seems much more appropriate in this case.

### 3. Conclusions

Some time ago, I set to study the Beat Generation and Brais Pinto in a comparative analysis, taking into account the cultural, social, and poetic framework of each literary system. The original study was to examine not only poetics but also cultural factors such as music, art, drugs, and travel. This also included elements such as emission,

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reception, literary generations, nationalism and periphery literatures, publication and socio-historical factors in order to establish a historical-literary context for both groups and explore the similarities, differences, and possible parallels between the two. I started from the idea that the role of poetry in the Galician literary system is fundamental. Through this role, or because of it, there is a constant lyrical and collective “I”, as well as a “we”. The reader and the writer of Galician literature form part of a periphery literature, stifled for years during the Franco dictatorship. This is very different from the context of the Beat Generation, where the role of the poet, for Ginsberg and Kerouac, was that of a prophet or an angel, inciting the reader to participate in the event: “[...] a seer, a prophet who tumbles forth words to inspire the multitude to direct action” (Cook: 1992, 118). Anxo Tarrío noted a “soedade cósmica” (cosmic loneliness) (1994, 399-400) in Brais Pinto. In Ginsberg and Kerouac’s works, there is clearly an angst as well as an existential search. This relationship between reader and writer is something that serves to differentiate the two groups, while there are resemblances in broad terms of existentialism. Even though Méndez Ferrín mentions weak parallelisms around jazz, drugs, trips, and painting, there are others, such as the existentialism of a social poetry, keeping in mind that they were responses to different social, political, and cultural elements.

That initial research concluded that a serious comparative study was not possible, as the similar attitudes between the groups (formal renovation, existentialism) occurred in different contexts, had different cultural and literary goals, as well as different ideas concerning literary creation and their intended reader. Other fundamental characteristics, such as identity, minority language, and periphery literature, further differentiate the two groups. The most interesting aspect bounding them was the subversive existentialism and social poetry underlying the literary production representative of the authors in a national and cultural framework.

In this essay, I have given a brief outline of the Brais Pinto group, and considered Méndez Ferrín’s comments regarding the Beat Generation. In my opinion, the most important comparative aspect has to do with their posterior perception. Brais Pinto are currently perceived similarly to the Beat Generation, as an object of veneration and mythification. Therein lies their importance, more so than in their actual writing. Brais Pinto worked on the margins of a periphery literature and had a specific relation to the literary system. When the system opened up and officially included Galician literature, the members of the began to be publicly embraced as an important underground movement which helped to set up the base for modern Galician literature and politics.

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