MOVING THROUGH MODERN SPAIN (1888-1923): REVELATORY DARKNESS AS CRITICAL MEDIUM

A Dissertation in
Spanish
by
Stacey E. Mitchell

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

August 2019
The dissertation of Stacey E. Mitchell was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Nicolás Fernández-Medina  
Associate Professor of Spanish and Philosophy  
Dissertation Adviser  
Chair of Committee

Maria Truglio  
Associate Professor of Italian and Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies

Mary Barnard  
Associate Professor of Spanish

Leslie Harkema  
Associate Professor of Spanish  
Yale University

William R. Blue  
Professor Emeritus of Spanish  
Special Member

Nancy Locke  
Associate Professor of Art History  
Special Member

Giuli Dussias  
Professor of Spanish, Linguistics, and Psychology  
Head of the Department of Department of Spanish, Italian & Portuguese

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School
ABSTRACT

Moving through Modern Spain (1888-1923): Revelatory Darkness as Critical Medium

offers an interdisciplinary account of modernist literature and art of Spain that demonstrates how movement, when rendered on page or canvas, reflects an intensely critical vision of modern Spanish society. I consider a variety of materials (novels, travel narratives, articles, essays, and paintings) by authors Pío Baroja and José Martínez Ruiz (Azorín), and painter-authors Darío de Regoyos and José Gutiérrez Solana that prominently feature movement and space as key thematic and structural elements. In channeling the image of mobile subjects in their work, Baroja, Azorín, Regoyos, and Solana created a vehicle, so to speak, for shaping and disseminating critical social commentary about their complex and unpredictable milieu. Ultimately, this dissertation shows how aesthetic representations of movement through space embodied the unsettled and shifting essence of Spanish modernity and, in the process, revealed the darkness existing beneath or within official narratives of progress and prosperity.

In this dissertation, darkness is defined as corruption of the ideal or natural state of things (society, morals, religion, etc.), which manifested as fraudulent politics, intense class struggle, rampant poverty, and a muddled sense of national consciousness in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Spain. Through what I call revelatory darkness – a process in shedding light on society’s defects in literature and art via direct and unabashed engagement with it – I suggest that the modernists studied here construct a modern Black Spain where corruption undergirds all socioeconomic reality. This new, national auto-criticism presents the country as a product of the uneven effects of modernization across Europe, a nation in need of regeneration, but lacking the awareness and resources to combat it. I discuss this and related content in three chapters, each focusing on a distinct category of movement: (1) travel narrative and landscape expression; (2) urban walking in cityscapes; and (3) religious pilgrimage and procession. Though
the chapters are unique, each deciphers the presence and appearance of movement in literary and artistic expression of the time, ultimately showing how physical or geographic mobility served Spanish modernists as a means to mobilize social observations and critique.

My methodological approach draws on classic theories of space by Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau as well as contemporary studies on modern Spain, which facilitates my socio-spatial analysis of fin-de-siglo and modernist literature and art. In a departure from extant studies on the topic of space in modern Spain, I focus on the physical and geographic movement that occurs within and between spaces. As people or objects progress through space, I suggest, the narrative or image that portrays movement also changes or intensifies over time. This record of spatial development and progress sheds light on the realities of social and economic disparity across Spain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, both within cities and between the deepening city-campo divide. At stake in this dissertation is the opportunity to position an understudied but crucial phenomenon (movement in modernist writing and painting) as the cornerstone of the contradictory Spanish modernity that we recognize today.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures ............................................................................................................................................... vi

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................................................ vii

Introduction. MOVEMENT, DARKNESS, AND MODERNITY IN SPAIN ................................................. 1

Chapter 1. REGIONAL TRAVEL THROUGH NATIONAL LANDSCAPES ................................................. 27
   Regoyos’s España negra: Stating a Critical Voice ...................................................................................... 32
   Azorín in Andalucía: Defense of the labriego ......................................................................................... 56
   Solana’s Human Landscape: Transformation and Expression ............................................................... 71
   Final Thoughts ........................................................................................................................................ 91

Chapter 2. URBAN WALKING IN THE MADRID CITYSCAPE ............................................................... 92
   Pursuing an Ideal: Azorín and the Monstrous Capital ........................................................................... 97
   Walking for What? Baroja’s La lucha por la vida .................................................................................. 115
   Acérquense, señores: Detour in Solana’s Madrid .................................................................................. 135
   Final Thoughts ........................................................................................................................................ 152

Chapter 3. PROCESSION AND PILGRIMAGE IN THE SPANISH RELIGIOSCAPE ............................. 153
   Regoyos: España negra, España religiosa .............................................................................................. 161
   Solana: España negra, España (cuasi)religiosa ..................................................................................... 183
   Final Thoughts ........................................................................................................................................ 205

Conclusion. MOVEMENT, DARKNESS, AND MODERNITY: END OF THE ROAD ........................... 207

Bibliography ................................................................................................................................................ 210
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1-1: Darío de Regoyos, *Víctimas de la fiesta*, (1894, left) in *España negra* (1899); Darío de Regoyos, *Víctimas de la fiesta* (1894, right). ................................................................. 37

Figure 1-2: Darío de Regoyos, *Diligencia vascongada* (1888), from *España negra* (*Luz*) ... 43

Figure 1-3: Darío de Regoyos, *Paisaje en el Escorial* (1888), in *España negra* (1899) ....... 53

Figure 1-4: El Greco, *Vista de Toledo* (1599-1600) ............................................................................ 62

Figure 1-5: José Gutiérrez-Solana, *El fin del mundo* (1932) ......................................................... 78

Figure 3-1: Darío de Regoyos. *La procesión de Capuchinos en Fuenterrabía* (1902, left), and *Madrugada del Viernes Santo en Orduña* (1903, right) ............................................ 170

Figure 3-2: Darío de Regoyos. *La procesión de San Vicente. (Boj.)* (c. 1897) included in *España negra* (1899)........................................................................................................... 177

Figure 3-3: Darío de Regoyos, from *España negra* (*Luz*). .............................................................. 182

Figure 3-4: José Gutiérrez Solana. *Procesión de Semana Santa (La España negra)* (c. 1917) ............................................................................................................................................ 190
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During my time at Penn State in the Department of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese, I have found myself immersed in an inspirational and challenging atmosphere, surrounded by people I greatly respect and have come to cherish as colleagues and friends. I am thankful to all those individuals and entities with whom I have shared this journey to the Ph.D.; whether large or small, I thank you for the impact you have had on my development as a scholar and an educator.

Of all those at Penn State, I would like to thank first and foremost my adviser Dr. Nicolás Fernández-Medina, whose unyielding support of my work and belief in me has been a major source of motivation and inspiration that I cannot adequately describe in words. Nicolás, I promise to share all that you have taught me about research, pedagogy, and professionalism with my own students in the future, to pay forward the fierce dedication and care you have always shown me. Thank you for guiding me through this dissertation process over the years and for helping me come to know myself better than I ever have before.

I feel great pride and gratitude for having been part of the Department of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese at Penn State, whose professors, graduate students, and staff are nothing short of first-rate. To my professors in the department – especially Dr. Blue, Dr. Truglio, and Dr. Barnard – thank you for your constant support and honest critique. I truly could not have asked for better, more knowledgeable and gracious mentors than all of you. I would also like to express my deep thanks to Susana and Miguel, who have believed in me from day one, and who have gone above and beyond to help me improve and thrive as an educator at Penn State, abroad, and beyond.

Thank you to my fellow graduate students with whom I occasionally celebrated and often commiserated over the years; know that if I can do this, so can you! I hope that in some way I have had a positive impact on your graduate school experience as many of you have had on mine. A very, very special thanks to Anna, my foxhole friend, for your unwavering support and love.
over these past five years. Regardless of where we may end up when all is said and done, I will forever be there for you as you have been for me. We are meant for great things, you and I!

Finally, thank you to my family for their undying faith in me and in my dreams even when none of us knew for sure where they would lead me in the end. My road in life to this point has had its twists and turns, it has been bumpy at times and nearly always under construction, but your support and pride have always motivated me to stick to my course and grow from resistance. To my Mom and Dad especially, I am so thankful to have had you both by my side, at my defense and always in life, and look forward to sharing with you the joys and trials of my future journeys as well. Last but certainly not least, thank you Jeremy for your steadfast belief in me and your determination to always make me recognize my worth. More than anyone else, you have seen me at my best and my worst through this process, and have always stood by my side. I am eternally grateful for your love and loyalty; I could not have done this without you.
Introduction

Movement, Darkness, and Modernity in Spain

Movement is the mundane yet multifaceted part of life that conditions how we navigate and interpret our surroundings on a daily basis. To walk, meander, travel, march, ride, migrate, pilgrimage, sail; whatever its form, movement allows us to advance from place to place, it propels us through space, and it mobilizes us within a given area. Be it out of necessity or for leisure purposes, movement activates and constitutes the spaces we inhabit. At the same time, people and objects in motion generate the social and conceptual structures that undergird those lived-in spaces. As such, the notion of movement naturally signifies progress and production. In Spain as in all nations, the form and function of movement in the social context has changed considerably throughout history. In late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Spain, mobility manifested in both manual and mechanized form as technologies of the industrial revolution and modernization in general became increasingly commonplace. The modern locomotive, for one, offered an ease of movement and opportunities for exploration that far exceeded the limitations of travel by foot or horse-drawn stagecoach, which nevertheless continued to be primary means of transportation across the country. The overlap of old and new embodied in this example epitomizes the notion of Spanish modernity that I examine below, which grew out of a complex and paradoxical tension between tradition and innovation in art, ideology, politics, and religion.

Moving through Modern Spain: Revelatory Darkness as Critical Medium (1888-1923) is a study of how Spanish modernists captured the intricacies and contradictions of modernity via the literary and artistic portrayal of movement through space. The prevalence of regional travel, urban walking, and religious procession in literature and art of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Spain provides ample evidence of the creative impetus that movement implied
for authors and artists at the time. In support of this claim, I offer a detailed analysis of works by Darío de Regoyos (1857-1913), Pío Baroja (1872-1956), José Martínez Ruiz (Azorín) (1873-1967), and José Gutiérrez Solana (1886-1945) prepared or published in Spain between 1888 and 1923. Using movement as an aesthetic motif and a creative tool, these figures produced travel narratives, novels, newspaper articles, and paintings that critically engaged with modern life and its defects. Following an interdisciplinary approach to this unique pairing of authors Baroja and Azorín with painter-authors Regoyos and Solana, my study aims to show how movement, when translated into literature and art, operated as a vehicle for social critique and self-reflection.

The intersections of darkness, movement, and modernity evinced throughout the oeuvres of Regoyos, Baroja, Azorín, and Solana are of particular interest here given the advent of an aesthetic trend known as “España negra,” Black Spain in English, during the late nineteenth century. This phrase entered the Spanish vocabulary officially with Darío de Regoyos’s 1899 travel book España negra, the illustrated account of a trip around Spain he had taken with

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1 Some would argue that the authors and painter-authors I study here fall into the so-called Generación del 98 or Generation of 98. This designation is fraught with difficulty, which critics like Michael Ugarte (Madrid 1990, 1996), John Macklin (“Religion and Modernity in Spain: Camino de perfección and La voluntad”), C. Christopher Soufas (The Subject in Question, 2007), and others have criticized over the years. Spain’s generational model categorizes literary and artistic groups in an artificial and exclusionary manner that impedes dialogue with artistic traditions outside of Spain. Instead, they argue for a more holistic approach to seeing turn-of-the-century Spain in the context of modernism and “literatura finisecular’ as a cultural-historical phenomenon” (Ugarte 52). As such, I employ the term modernist to describe the authors and painter-authors I study in this project.

2 While many critics have studied Azorín and Baroja, never before have they been put into direct or extended dialogue with Regoyos and Solana. Scholars like Gayana Jurkevich (In Pursuit of the Natural Sign, 1999), José Luis Bernal Muñoz (Tiempo, forma y color: El arte en la literatura de Azorín, 2001, especially Ch. 3 “Pintores y escultores” pp. 97-171), Weston Flint (Solana, escritor, 1967 especially Ch. 3 “Conclusión: Solana y la generación del 98” pp. 185-223), and María del Carmen Pena (Pintura de paisaje e ideología, 1983) explore the links between these writers and artists of the time, but my particular choice of authors/painters and themes are entirely unique. I also consider Regoyos and Solana as autonomous literary figures; while scholarship on Regoyos and Solana as painters is substantial, much less exists about their literary work making this dissertation a meaningful addition to extant literary and artistic criticism of this time. Juan San Nicolás and Weston Flint are the foremost experts on Regoyos and Solana respectively, but much is left to do in terms of situating them alongside other writers of their time and analyzing their written work as stand-alone literature. Estelle Frizarry’s Writer-Painters of Contemporary Spain (1984) deserves recognition for featuring painter-authors like Regoyos and Solana as well as Ricardo Baroja, Santiago Rusiñol, Luis Seoane, and others in her study, though it is more an index than an analysis of their literature.
Belgian poet Émile Verhaeren in 1888. This brief, yet complex work – the intricacies of which I discuss in Chapter 1 – proposed an unrelentingly somber and pessimistic vision of fin-de-siglo Spain that was admittedly unusual for Regoyos, an impressionist painter of vibrant and colorful landscapes. True to its title, this book, a compilation of Verhaeren’s observations and Regoyos’s commentary on them, constructed the image and concept of “una España moralmente negra” (31). While Verhaeren found this moral darkness an inherent quality of Spanishness, as did other proponents of the infamous Leyenda negra, or Black Legend, Regoyos saw it as a symptom of the fin-de-siglo modern condition.3

España Negra, Regoyos’s first and only real incursion into literature, is without a doubt a foundational work of Spanish modernism, though it is rarely if ever categorized as such. The book had very little commercial success, but it projected an image of Spain as intricately somber and decadent that intersected the critical ideologies and attitudes of many Spanish modernists like Azorín, Baroja, Unamuno, Maeztu, and Zuloaga among others. Especially following España negra’s publication, Regoyos became a known and respected figure within Spain’s prominent literary and artistic circles of the day. Azorín deemed Regoyos the painter of his generation, and Baroja wrote at length of his admiration for the artist. In fact, Baroja considered Regoyos “el más original paisajista español de su tiempo” (Desde la última vuelta 23). He also noted Regoyos’s talent for writing – “tenía gracia, y es lástima que no escribiera más, porque hubiera valido la pena” and praised his unique form of criticism – “criticaba las ideas del tiempo con cierta saña, más bien por deporte que por otra cosa” – with fondness and nostalgia (Desde la última vuelta 22, 20).4 In 1920, Solana, the Goya-esque expressionist painter of modern Spanish life and people,

3 I discuss the Black Legend and its role in conditioning pejorative perceptions of the nation dating back centuries in Chapter 3.
4 That Regoyos’s social critique was “más bien por deporte que por otra cosa” is, I believe, up for debate. As Gayana Jurkevich notes, after returning to Spain from Belgium where he lived and worked for years, Regoyos “became as vociferous a critic of the aesthetic and intellectual vulgarity and mediocrity rampant in Spanish artistic circles as were his friends Unamuno, Baroja, and Azorín; he was frequently a signatory to collective writer-painter manifestoes that appeared in the press” (In Pursuit 36). As I show in chapter one,
published a travel narrative in the image of Regoyos’s, which intensified and modernized his predecessor’s extremely innovative work. From the beginning, Black Spain’s inception in literature, art, and culture was the product of movement, travel specifically, which enabled and encouraged critical exploration and examination.

Regoyos, Baroja, Azorín and Solana among others produced and sustained this “España negra” aesthetic, so much so that it motivated a notably critical and pessimistic vein of Spanish modernism. Black Spain was a re-imagined interpretation of the nation that disproportionately featured the negative consequences of modernity – including poverty, death, cruelty, hypocrisy, injustice – leaving little room to contemplate much else. Admittedly, the problems I mention accompanied all types of modernity. What makes these unique to the time and place studied here is Spain’s history of intense but uneven modernization throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which produced severe social inequities and devastating rural poverty across the country. One of the main reasons for this uneven development was the fact that Spain remained a largely agrarian society for much longer than other European countries, which eventually turned the deepening conceptual gap between Spain and Europe from an intellectual problem to an economic reality (R. Carr 389). Spain’s status as Western yet extra-European nation evolved into the identity crisis of the turn of the century and beyond.

The period running from 1888 to 1923 produced truly revolutionary developments in the arts and sciences in Spain, yet it also provoked various sociopolitical setbacks. The Bourbon Restoration (1874-1931) provided a relatively stable governmental leading up to the turn of the century, including proposed plans for large-scale social, educational, and agricultural reform. The progressive Institución Libre de Enseñanza (ILE) was also founded during this time (1876-1936), which initiated one of Spain’s most influential educational endeavors of the nineteenth and

Regoyos was a serious critic of modern Spain and especially its strict artistic institutions, perhaps not as loud as others around him, but serious nonetheless.
twentieth centuries. Despite considerable initial success, the Restoration achieved little long-lasting change due to the political strong-arming and electoral fraud (caciquismo, turnismo) that prevented the government from functioning honestly and appeasing both majority and minority groups at once. Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anticlericalism, inspired by the collapse of the First Spanish Republic (1873-1874), exacerbated tensions between radical liberals and the Church and continued to intensify throughout the turn of the century. Spain’s defeat in the Spanish-American War of 1898 resulted in the loss of Cuba and its remaining American colonies, which since that time has been considered a defining moment in the nation’s modern history. Many blamed the so-called Desastre del 98 on the Restoration for various reasons, among them the government’s lack of fiscal backing for the navy. The Desastre ushered in a period of intense moral and identity crisis due not to the economic or psychological scars of war, but rather to the destruction of Spain’s public image as a great world power.5

Regeneracionismo, or Regenerationism, emerged in response to the consequences of the war, and was a reformist movement dedicated to the examination and healing of Spain’s sociopolitical “illnesses” throughout the early 1900s. The Desastre del 98 was a catalyst for intense socioeconomic and ideological change that emphasized already existing inconsistencies in the Spanish government. However, many of the roots Spain’s “illness” were local, born out of long-standing inequitable practices, like sustained protections for wealthy landowners, which perpetually ostracized peripheral groups from the benefits of modernization or urbanization. The question of regeneration – a notion inseparable from its opposite, degeneration – was also a

5 Raymond Carr describes the effects of the Disaster in Spain: 1808-1975 (1982), “The Restoration and the Disaster, 1874-98,” pp. 347-388. Speaking of the causes of the war, he claims that, “the pursuit of domestic stability had denied Spain the means to defend her status as a great power” (379). To be sure, protectionism and isolationism for the benefit of Spain’s economy and legacy is largely responsible for its imperialist downfall. I would also suggest that Spain’s isolationism, dating back centuries, had complicated its ability to assimilate innovation and progress in a globalizing world in terms of culture, art, politics, and intellectualism. The Desastre along with the ensuing period of regeneracionismo proved to be a crucial time of careful and productive reflection on these points.
question of national identity. Intellectuals, politicians, Church leaders, and ordinary citizens alike agreed that the nation was in need of a cure, and they were compelled to find it; ideas on what Spain’s “illness” truly was, how it was contracted, and how it could be healed, however, varied drastically. For some, progressive social and educational reform ensuring inclusive access to knowledge, liberty, and human rights was the answer; for others, it meant doubling down on Spanish traditionalism, conservativism, and Catholicism and re-inserting them into society to preserve the nation and the ideals with which it had always aligned.

This dissertation concerns creative response to this period, which E. Inman Fox, for one, has discussed at length. The Desastre del 98, he explains, “brought forth an extraordinary group of intellectuals devoted to defining the ‘problem of Spain’ in the context of an historical national identity and to national regeneration through modernization, always, however, in the spirit of national unity” (“Spain as Castille” 21). While I do not consider these authors or artists regenerationists per se, I suggest that their works, which pinpoint and expose modernity’s paradox to shed light on those issues in need of resolution, are regenerationist in spirit. The responses of these intellectuals – Regoyos, Baroja, Azorín, and Solana included – to the progress and corruption defining their day frequently manifested in potently negative or pessimistic terms, which rendered the nation, as mentioned above, as Black Spain.

The above are but a few of the many events that drew the attention and critique of Spanish modernists at this time. Various scholars have studied modernity, or the condition of being modern, in Spain during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. “Modernization

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6 See, for example, La crisis intellectual del 98 (1979) or “Spain as Castille: Nationalism and National Identity” in The Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture (edited by David T. Gies, 1999).
7 Inman Fox also suggests that the age of enlightenment, the dawn of liberalism, and progressive endeavors like the establishment of the ILE, constituted a series of liberal projects for auto-revaluation that were key to the establishment of Spain’s modern national identity.
8 These scholars include but are not limited to: Lily Litvak (A Dream of Arcadia: Anti-Industrialism in Spanish Literature (1895-1905), 1975); Transformación industrial y literature en España (1895-1905), 1980), E. Inman Fox (La crisis intellectual del 98, 1976), Michael Ugarte (Madrid 1900: The Capital as Cradle of Literature and Culture, 1996), Deborah Parsons (Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City,
arrived late and fitfully in Spain,” says Roberta Johnson, agreeing with Susan Larson and Eva Woods that the liberal Revolution in 1868 galvanized modernity in Spain as urbanization, democracy, social reform for women and working classes, along with other technological and social advents decisively changed the nation’s cultural panorama (“Narrative in Culture” 123).

Larson and Woods claim that Spain’s modern experience was “varied, discontinuous, inescapably plural and consisting of mixed speeds and spaces,” which emphasizes the fact that Spanish modernity, like any reality, accommodates various interpretations and perspectives (1). Always on the move through city streets or travelling the countryside, the modern intellectual subject learned to navigate new ways of life through original ways of thinking about the constantly shifting dynamics of modern culture.

Late, uneven, and intense, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century modernization defined and divided Spain, splitting the eighteenth-century duality commonly known as “Las dos Españas,” the two Spains, into an even more fragmented society (José Álvarez Junco 77). The notion of a modern but fragmentary Spain is useful when looking at modernity in terms of movement, which comes to light in at least three discernable yet overlapping categories that feature throughout my chapters: city and country, urban and anti-urban, secular and clerical. To be sure, these categories should not be thought of as strictly binary since, much like the actual manifestation of clashing ideologies in modern Spain, their constitutive terms encode multiple meanings and a far more complicated dynamic than theory suggests. In other words, “real life” was much more untidy than any set of terms could allow.

Consider modern factories. These imposing structures transformed the Madrid cityscape in actual and conceptual terms starting in the nineteenth century. Though Madrid was never a hub

*and Modernity, 2000; A Cultural History of Madrid: Modernism and the Urban Spectacle, 2003), Bradd Epps and Luis Fernández Cifuentes (editors Spain Beyond Spain: Modernity, Literary History, and National Identity, 2005), C. Christopher Soufas (The Subject in Question, 2007), and Susan Larson (Constructing and Resisting Modernity: Madrid 1900-1936, 2011).*
of production like Barcelona or Bilbao, it was the administrative and symbolic center of the nation. The jobs and productivity that factories and modern industrialization promised for the city drew large numbers of workers from nearby rural areas throughout the second half of the century, where a long history of protectionism and subsequent socioeconomic inequity between laborers and landowners had led to stagnation. Madrid’s expanding infrastructure and social works programs, however, could not yet support the population boom that ensued, resulting in unintended social segregation, overcrowding, illness, and poverty within the city limits. To be sure, as much as modernization meant progress it also meant problems in Spain.

Without a doubt, part of what motivated Regoyos, Baroja, Azorín, and Solana to explore and then emulate life during this intense period of flux was the distinctive sense of paradox underpinning Spanish modernity. This paradox was obvious not only across rural versus urban spheres, but within the city itself. Poet and scholar Pedro José Vizoso describes Madrid as a city of contradiction, “pobre pero festivo, alegre y derrochador a pesar de los desastres de la guerra y la bancarrota económica de la nación” (162). Baroja engages a similar notion in El árbol de la ciencia (1911). Disillusioned protagonist Andrés scoffs at his fellow Madrilenians as their hyper nationalistic pride abruptly dissipates after the Spanish-American War: “después del desastre de las dos pequeñas escuadras españolas en Cuba y en Filipinas, todo el mundo iba al teatro y a los toros tan tranquilo; aquellas manifestaciones y gritos habían sido espuma, humo de paja, nada” (196-197). The crowd’s indifference at the realization that Spain was entering the new century with a depleted navy, no American colonies, and a shaken sense of national identity, infuriates Andrés. Madrid, an objectively modernizing metropolis, unfolds before the protagonist as a morally decadent site of broken education systems and painfully aloof citizens. After travelling to Valencia and rural Alcolea del Campo, Andrés finds himself back in the city where he takes his life in the face of overwhelming loss and despondency. As Baroja is wont to do, he inverts any evidence of Spain’s progress or positivity in this novel to expose its degeneration.
To be clear, my discussions of modern Spain and Spanish modernity refer to the events associated with the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. While I use modernity in an historical sense to denote the paradoxical experience of inequity and identity crisis that ran parallel to growth and urbanization, this concept inherently dialogues with the notion of aesthetic modernity, which Baudelaire described in 1863 as “the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable” (13). The modern artist, claimed Baudelaire, had a responsibility to capture the fleeting beauty of the present moment, “to distil the eternal from the transitory” in art, which we see constantly in Regoyos, Baroja, Azorín, and Solana in their intense focus on the anxieties of their milieu and their attraction to everyday acts or scenes as creative fodder (12). Movement propelled and inspired these modernists as they traversed cities, villages, or the countryside in search of self and national consciousness as they captured fleeting impressions of modern Spain along the way.

Talk of modernity and the modern inevitably leads us to modernism, a notoriously difficult term to define. Scholars and academics have dedicated years to establishing Spanish modernism as a unique artistic and intellectual movement within the diverse global realities of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In *Encounters Across Borders: The Changing Visions of Spanish Modernism, 1890-1930* (2001), Mary Lee Bretz explores the relationships between Spanish and European modernisms, where Spain’s alterity or “otherness” functions as a site of intercultural communication (21). C. Christopher Soufas, in *The Subject in Question: Early Contemporary Spanish Literature and Modernism* (2007), criticizes Spain’s generational model in favor of considering Spanish modernism as an exercise in defining modern subjectivity, creating its own version of the “new man,” so to speak, within a larger international paradigm.

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9 While I recognize the literary and aesthetic contribution of Rubén Darío’s *modernismo*, the late nineteenth century movement inspired in French techniques like symbolism and parnassianism, to Hispanic literature in general, my understanding of Spanish modernism stands alone from this separate tradition.

Though unique in their own ways and representative of only a fraction of the scholarship on Spanish modernism, these studies emphasize some of the key theoretical threads of this dissertation. These include the notions of subjectivity (self-perception) and cosmopolitanism, which helped Regoyos, Baroja, Azorín, Solana, and the like to critically engage with modern life’s complexities and contradictions. Movement through space allows these modernists (modern subjects) the time and space to reflect on their personal experience of modernity, while at the same time comment on the state of the nation in a collective sense. As such, mobility and subjectivity go hand-in-hand, and the self-perception stirred up through traveling or walking is necessarily a comparative act. For writers and painters of Black Spain, this means considering the exterior world (landscape, cities, nature, etc.) both in itself and in relation to the one’s interior self. These concepts of exterior and interior often extend to national proportions, where the exterior world is an outside(er’s) perception or preconception of Spanish culture or history, and the interior world is Spain itself. Furthermore, figures like Regoyos who spend extended periods of time living and working abroad, in Belgium in his case, bring a cosmopolitan perspective to Black Spain, which, ironically, is an incredibly local construction in the grand scheme of things.

The formal elements of Spanish modernism, like other modernisms of the time, include fragmented narrative or vision, philosophical and existential thought, a heightened sense of subjectivity in relation to the historical moment, intercultural awareness, as well as evocation of multiplicity and simultaneity. We see these techniques in Azorín’s *Diario de un enfermo*, which supplants novelistic form with a fragmented diary format full of temporal and conceptual lacunae; in Baroja’s *La lucha por la vida*, which trades traditional plot for plot-less philosophical meditation on life and living in its vagabond protagonist; in Regoyos’s *España negra*, which tells
of Black Spain from his and Verhaeren’s foreign perspective simultaneously; and Solana’s *Madrid: Escenas y costumbres* series, which comprises multiple interchangeable vignettes that are unnervingly contingent in their portrayal of everyday life in the city.

What is unique about Spanish modernism is its engagement with and awareness of the paradox that shaped the nation’s progress and setbacks in its post-imperial era. Tension dominated nearly all facets of modern life and society, as the aforementioned social and political fragmentation ensuing after the Spanish-American War suggests. Consistent conflict – whether apparent, ingrained into tradition, uneven across geographies, or otherwise – threw Spain’s identity politics into a repetitive chaos. At this time, Spain was a nation oscillating artificially between liberal and conservative parties in its relatively new constitutional monarchy; dealing with radical factions of progressivist and traditionalist groups; experiencing great yet uneven modernization; and managing the demand and/or fear of religious, intellectual, and social liberties. The dynamics of this sociopolitical matrix were, to say the least, complicated. Parallel to the constant shifts and overlaps of modernity were the displacements and divergences that spatial movement and its various forms represented at the time. Travel, walking, and procession function upon a base of indeterminate cyclicality or repetitiveness that at the same time remains prone to unpredictability. The tendency for Spanish modernists to document and react to their mutable milieu via the aesthetic rendition of movement is, thus, logical. Ultimately, travel, walking, and procession become metaphors for Spain’s shifting and contradictory modernity.

One iteration of Spanish modernism is the aforementioned modernist “España negra,” or Black Spain. But what *is* Black Spain exactly? Servando Gotor, editor of the 2015 edition of *España negra*, asks the same question: “qué es la ‘España negra’? ¿Es real? ¿Existió realmente? ¿Existe?... ¿Seguirá siempre existiendo y, por tanto, habrá siempre una ‘España negra’? La respuesta a todos estos interrogantes forzosamente ha de ser positiva” (12). First, I should note, for this particular study, Black Spain does not have a racial connotation. I recognize that the
*Leyenda negra* has racial overtones and that the modernists I study do reflect on race ("raza") from time to time, but my intention here is to examine more conceptual understandings of *lo negro*, or darkness, than to interrogate questions of race. More than anything, Black Spain represents a way of seeing and expressing the observable through a decidedly critical, creative lens. Black Spain is a sensibility and an aesthetic, a prismatic vision of Spain that homes in on all that remains marginal, disregarded, displaced, and abandoned to reveal the contradictions embedded in uneven and inequitable modernization.

Admittedly, the nation’s history, at least since the early modern period, can be considered a series of Black Spains. To give a few examples, we can consider Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1644) who criticized the social and religious life in grotesque or humoristic styles that deformed reality. In his interpretation of “España negra,” intellect and wit did not obscure his cynicism nor his consciousness of impending collapse during the otherwise prosperous Spanish Golden Age.10 Romantic painter Francisco de Goya (1748-1828) composed his “España negra” of absurd *caprichos*, disastrous *guerras*, and *pinturas negras* that have long unsettled and inspired others.11 His unique social critique reverberates in José Mariano de Larra’s (1809-1837) satirical journalism, which protests political corruption, ideological stagnation, and moral decline. For Benito Pérez Galdós (1843-1920), España was “negra” for the sociopolitical turmoil of turn-of-the-century Spain, which he evoked in a realist style with a grittiness verging on naturalism at times. Muralist and *dibujante* Luis Quintanilla’s (1893-1978) “España negra” is that of war,

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10 In *Understanding Spain* (1990), Julián Marías outlines some of Spain’s “errors” leading up to the detrimental loss of Portugal and its territories in 1640 including Spain’s intensified Catholicism following the 1517 Protestant Reformation, and its withdrawal from the rest of Europe and the Americas (i.e. Phillip II’s ban on students studying in foreign countries) (1559).
11 As Andrew Schulz details in *Goya’s Caprichos: Aesthetics, Perception and the Body* (2007), some of the main themes that Goya elaborated throughout his artistic career include: the effects of poor education, the abuses of the Inquisition, the foolishness of superstitious beliefs, the problems of arranged marriages, prostitution, and the idleness of nobility (5). While the artist aligned with Enlightenment ideals, it is reasonable to conclude that he also recognized their limits, pitfalls, or dangers.
violence, and fascism of the Franco era. Black Spain is an historical shadow, a repeating and tangled set of traditions and sensibilities inscribed in social spaces and rendered intelligible through artistic and literary expression. Space, even during periods of marked socioeconomic development, preserves the darkness of previous generations.

Darkness is a deeply complex idea with multiple possible interpretations. Throughout history, darkness has always equated negativity and nothingness, as the familiar opening of the Book of Genesis demonstrates:

In the beginning [...] the Earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep waters, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. (1:1-1:4)

In contexts within and beyond the biblical, light is good and darkness is bad; light illuminates and darkness obscures; light implies hope and darkness implies fear; light is pure and darkness is corrupt. As Noam M. Elcott asserts, these distinctions have been continuous over time and translate into aesthetics where light became a tool to create and demystify obscured realities:

Ancients and early moderns alike knew darkness as chaos and absence, night and shadow, evil gods and melancholic thoughts, the color or noncolor black. They knew darkness principally as negation. Moderns mobilized artificial light to conquer the dark, disenchant the night, and create new media and art. The dark corners untouched by artificial light retained the qualities of ancient darkness, whatever its modern labels: gothic, sublime, unconscious, uncanny. (4)

While we may adhere to the distinctions that I have proposed above and that these quotes allude to as agreed upon cultural knowledge, strictly binary consideration of any critical category is insufficient when it comes to truly understanding an interplay of complex terms. When it comes to darkness, we must first acknowledge that it exists in literature and art in both chromatic and

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12 This self-taught artist combined artistic creation and civic duty in his sustained defense of the Second Republic as we see in *La España negra de Franco* (1946), a commented collection of drawings that denounces the Spanish Civil War and the dictatorship.

13 Elcott goes on to develop a theory of “artificial darkness,” which describes the development of controlled and created darkness used for cinematic technologies and similar technological innovations in modern art.
conceptual forms. For example, the modernists I study perpetuate – but do not champion – the negative stereotypes attributed to Madrid’s slums (as dingy, corrupt) or Spain’s provincial towns (as backwater, melancholy) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in part through a Black Spain rhetoric and/or palette that relies heavily on the expression of blackness, by which I mean the color black and its chromatic derivatives. *Negro, negrura, negruzco, ennegrecido, obscuro, sombra,* and *sombrío,* are some of the common chromatically inspired descriptors that run throughout Black Spain narratives, most often used to describe objects, people, or places.

However, these words are sometimes attributed to concepts rather than things, the obvious case being “España negra” itself, a term used not to describe the colors of Spain in a literal manner, but rather to insinuate the darkness, as it were, embedded in the image and reality of modern Spain along with the institutions and systems that give society its shape. In *Moving through Modern Spain,* I take an encompassing approach to the exploration and analysis of darkness, positing it as a critical category and practice that unveils what I conceive of as various forms of corruption that manifest throughout society. By engaging the concept of corruption in my interpretation of darkness, I allow for a malleable yet precise use of this multi-meaning term, which establishes a logical dialogue with the regenerationist drive to heal the ill, or corrupted, body of the modern Spanish nation. For my purposes, “corrupted” refers to the sullied, tainted, or degraded state of a situation or object no longer in its idealized or “original” state. “Corruption” is a force that sullies, taints, or degrades. In this dissertation, darkness translates concretely into social inequity and ideological dissonance (corrupted states), as well as institutional indifference and toxic politics (corrupting forces) all resulting from a paradoxical and uneven modernity.

The darkness I subscribe to in this study is not absolutely negative or void. In true regenerationist spirit, imperfect though the movement may have been, the works by Regoyos, Baroja, Azorín, and Solana examined here engage with the darkness of their time in their own ways to examine issues like rural poverty or urban segregation that Spain’s institutions – the
State, Church, etc. – could not properly mediate. Black Spain are revelatory in the sense that they shed light on the very darkness they draw forth, given the fact that the themes and *tipos* of this aesthetic were often ignored or overlooked at the time. This process of revealing corruption and contradiction through direct and unabashed aesthetic representation of it is what I refer to as revelatory darkness, both a product and a process of careful yet critical observation of the modern world. Ironically, the narrow viewpoints that Regoyos, Baroja, Azorín, and Solana are wont to give us, always derived from their first-hand experiences, can corrupt our own historical and cultural readings of the matters at hand and so, one must always be conscious of perspective.

Methodologically speaking, *Moving through Modern Spain* is an interdisciplinary project drawing from historical and aesthetic traditions, and borrowing from theories of space to get to the root of movement’s role in the modernity-darkness-modernism matrix described above. At stake in taking a spatial approach to questions of “España negra” is the opportunity to examine the fascinating conversations among literature, art, history, and aesthetics in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Spain, and in the process, to identify movement as a key trope in Spanish modernism. Expanding on the work of Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau, I conceive of space as a system of interpersonal and multidirectional relations that comprises an extensive network through which people, things, and ideas constantly pass and circulate. Thus, space is fluid and continually in flux, never static. Simply put, space is alive with movement. In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre examines an intangible yet reproducible capitalist space, while Certeau (re)builds his walking-as-enunciation metaphor throughout *The Practice of Everyday Life*. What I aim to contribute to the discussions is a reinterpretation of space that directs the critical spotlight away from spatial forms and onto manifestations of movement through it.

Lefebvre suggests that the base function of space is its reproducibility, its tendency, that is, to reproduce itself. Space is a “product” and a means of (re)production that manifests through
work relations and social interactions among members of a given community. Social space, which for Lefebvre is also the abstract space of modern capitalism, is a system so perfected that it habitually dissolves potential threats to its reproducibility – protests or dissent, for example – by reabsorbing them into its regular spatial structure. To overcome the system of control that is space, says Lefebvre, we must first become aware of it. What prevents awareness of spatial reproduction is the ordinary citizen’s inclination “to be content to see a space without conceiving of it, without concentrating discrete perceptions by means of a mental act, without assembling details into a whole ‘reality,’ without apprehending contents in terms of their interrelationships within the containing forms” (Lefebvre 94). As a proposed solution to this figurative blindness, Lefebvre offers his unitary theory known as the spatial triad, which examines space in terms of spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space. According to this paradigm, in order to comprehend space and its social implications, we must not only see it, but also conceive of, perceive, and live it.

Drawing on Lefebvre’s ideas about the reproduction of social space and the spatial triad, I consider movement, not just space, as part of the product of observed, interpreted, and rendered realities. This perspective allows for the fruitful consideration of the forms and function of travel in Spain, specifically the roles it played in nation building and the emergence of critical travel writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As I detail in chapter one, modernist travel writers animate the critical content of their destinations upon arrival. As they walk through villages or explore cities, these traveler-authors, together with the local citizens they encounter, actuate a fixed place through spatial practice. In this sense, two distinct spaces, the intellectual-social space of the displaced traveler and the inhabited-physical space of the visited locale,

14 This is a conclusion that shapes Lefebvre’s conceptualization of social space. “Space is at once a precondition and a result of social superstructures,” he says, and “though a product to be used, to be consumed, [social space] is also a means of production; networks of exchange and flows of raw materials and energy fashion space and are determined by it” (85).
converge and overlap to form a unique and fluid space of travel. When rendered in literature or art, this space of travel transforms into a critical site of discourse, poised for the portrayal of “España negra.”

Travel encompasses exploration, expedition, and exile, among other categories of spatial displacement, making vision and observation a crucial tool for acknowledging and portraying space. Lefebvre criticizes the increasingly pronounced visual character of modern societies as a deception that masks the repetitive nature of certain spaces and undermines the uniqueness and spontaneity of the individuals inhabiting them (76). The modernists studied in this dissertation were avid observers of the spaces they traversed – both rural and urban – but they were anything but passive seers. In fact, they actively apprehended and depicted realities with a critical eye, searching below the surface to reveal the sinister truth of the largely inequitable experience of modernity in Spain. In Madrid, urbanization segregated the city so that the poor remained marginalized and isolated from the benefits of modernization (public works systems, electricity, etc.) enjoyed by middle and upper classes. The deficit between day-laborers and landowners in many rural areas (especially in Andalucía) incited discontent and even anarchy amongst laboring classes that were financially excluded from the benefits of the modern capitalist state. While modernization improved city life in many respects, rural pueblos were left underdeveloped and thus stagnated economically and intellectually. Moving through Spain and observing its fragmented modernity invoked critical awareness of one’s place and potential in society.

The benefits and detriments of modernization in the urban setting was a cause for concern and consideration. Certeau argues that walking throughout the city is analogous to the speech act in that it gives shape to the text of urban life: the city. He suggests that a dialectic between tactics and strategies conditions the urban sphere, where place and space form society. For him, place (lieu) signifies the order of elements distributed in relationships of existence; these elements are strategies, apparatuses of power put in place to maintain order and dominion over a given
community such as laws, norms, and rules. Space (espace), in contrast, involves intersections of mobile entities like people or objects where variations of direction, velocity, and time factor significantly. Tactics challenge or resist the homogenizing potential of strategies in space through defiant acts (that is, law violation, non-normative behavior, rule manipulation) that work to preserve urban walkers’ individuality.

Certeau’s city-text metaphor informs urban design specialist Filipa Matos Wunderlich in her tripartite model of purposive, discursive, and conceptual walking (132-133). Each mode of city walking, in her estimation, achieves a distinct effect. Purposive walking is movement to, or toward, some destination measured in terms of necessity or directionality (heading to work, for example). Discursive walking, on the other hand, is spontaneous movement throughout the urban sphere, which corresponds to the non-directional strolling of Baudelaire’s flâneur or similar types. Conceptual walking is a reflective state and response to features of the urban locale that are overlooked in everyday life. In this wandering mode, argues Certeau, walkers can deviate from the strategies inherent in the urban space to individualize existence in the face of homogenizing systems like civic order, mass culture, or exchange relations.

Documenting the struggles of discursive urban walkers in Spain like literatos, golfos, charlatanes, prostitutes, street vendors, beggars, and a host of other pedestrian figures, modernists reveal the darkness of city life in its many forms as I demonstrate at length in Chapter 2. For those who carefully narrate and reflect on this commonplace action, walking is key to making sense of one’s surroundings. As Deborah Parsons states, “the urban writer is not only a figure within a city, he/she is also the producer of a city, one that is related to but distinct from the

15 While critics have commented on city-as-text or text-as-city concepts at length (Deborah Parsons claims that they are “so common as to be almost a cliché,”), canonical models of space like Certeau’s help to inform the theory of urban walking I propose in this chapter (Streetwalking the Metropolis 1). In addition to her Certeau-inspired “discursive walking,” Wunderlich also proposes the concept of “purposive” walking, which refers simply to movement to or toward some destination measured in terms of necessity or directionality.
city of asphalt, brick, and stone, one that results from the interconnection of body, mind, and space, one that reveals the interplay of self/city identity” (Streetwalking 1). Azorín, Baroja, and Solana, avid recorders of the urban experience in modern Madrid, portray a society and a city of which they are simultaneously a constitutive part. Rendering this observed-lived reality naturally results in self-reflection, just as urban walking always entails a dialogue of sorts between walker and environment. When they describe their own or their characters’ movement in a text, observer and observed overlap in a way that transforms the ambulatory act into a practice of self-reflection, definition, and critique.

The maintenance and (re)construction of identities was a great concern for Spanish modernists. Amidst the rapidly progressing and changeable modernity of the fin de siglo, individuality was seen to be at the mercy of homogenizing work relationships, depersonalized social interaction, and diminishing logic of temporality and nature. Walking became modernists’ neoromantic response to modernity, a means of moving through the city or its outskirts that allowed for concentrated reflection on self and circumstance. Movement and careful observation come through in unique documentary-fictional accounts, snapshot-like renderings of everyday life, and relatable, often struggling protagonists. This struggle often dogs characters or narrators whose movements through lived and observed spaces are erratic or unplanned. For example, “El enfermo” from Azorín’s Diario de un enfermo (1901), and Manuel the golfo from Baroja’s La busca (1905), are two very different characters whose frantic pacing and meandering transience throughout Madrid hampered their ability to carve out a suitable place in society for themselves. Planned movement, like plotted journeys or processional routes, did not necessarily represent stability or reliability either. Clearly, the perspective of the observer is key to interpretation.

One of the unfortunate characteristics of Certeau’s Wandersmänner – walkers, “the ordinary practitioners of the city” – is that if untrained or unenlightened, they cannot read the very text that they create as they walk the city (93). Figuratively blind to their surroundings,
practitioners of everyday life can lose sight of themselves as well as the memories and meanings encoded in their city if their vision melds with the crowds’ or is too narrowly focused on their own path to acknowledge the larger physical, social, and conceptual picture. Like Lefebvre’s ordinary, uncritical citizens, the Wandermänner see the spaces they occupy without truly detecting the mechanisms that reproduce and control them. Aesthetic expression, however, allows for critical examination of the workings of space and the identity (de)construction that ensues as subjects move throughout it. Traveling the countryside, for example, allows for observation of pueblo life, as well as symbolic interpretation of identity- and morality-signifying landscapes. Walking through Madrid presents opportunities for documentation of street-life, as well as the exploration of sociopolitical issues couched in modern, urban centers. Likewise, marching alongside a procession or pilgrimage fulfills religious duty and the critical scrutiny of Church-State conflict. Movement intersects modernist literature and art, therefore, to produce not only descriptive, but also critical accounts of modern life.

Religious excursion has been significant in the formation and preservation of national and religious identities throughout history. As such, the critical study and aesthetic representation of procession or pilgrimage represents an interrogation into an identity as much as a tradition. Ethnographer and scholar Peter Jan Margy suggests that one of the principle themes to concern pilgrimage studies over the last several decades is the dispute over whether it is the journey (movement) or the destination (place) that should matter most. He states, “in principle the core or rationale of the Christian pilgrimage lay within the physical boundaries of the shrine,” that is the religious chapel or memorial space serving as the pilgrims’ destination (24). Over time,

16 Many contemporary accounts of the Camino de Santiago focus on the experience of present-day pilgrims who more and more frequently are foreigners or tourists following disparate agendas as they traverse the age-old path. The aura of religious devotion, penance, and or supplication that once guided Spanish Catholics to Santiago de Compostela, where the relics of St. James are said to lie, or to any pilgrimage destination for that matter, has evolved over time, often yielding to individualistic want for salvation, reflection, or thrill. See Buetta Warkentin and Keith Egan for more on contemporary experiences and analyses of the Camino de Santiago.
however, an increase in “transit pilgrimage,” which refers to the allure of “seeing the journey as a pilgrimage in itself,” has transformed this once destination-oriented practice (24). Ultimately, neither destination nor journey should be entirely erased from comprehensive studies on the topic. As such, I analyze religious acts like procession and pilgrimage as mobile phenomena that reproduce the space of religion through repeated and planned routes, while writing the story of religion as they bring symbolic items and people throughout the geographies and lived spaces of a given territory. As I show in Chapter 3, these religious acts combine travel (a spiritual journey) and walking (religious excursion) that, when rendered in modernist literature and art, trace physical and conceptual progressions of identity, culture, and belonging.

While I theorize movement and space, I never lose sight of the fact that Regoyos, Baroja, Azorín, and Solana did in fact make the journeys they describe, walk the streets they document, and march in the processions or pilgrimages they portray. Regardless, their documentary- or diary-like representations are also stories, in the end, that convey a particular vision of space. In other words, objective methods (actual travel, exploration, reporting) and subjective expression come together in these works, where movement surfaces as a key component of creative production. The analyses of visual art that I propose in this dissertation are most often in comparison to a literary counterpart in order to first, draw out the fascinating dialogues between authors and painters at the time; and second, to emphasize the influence movement exerted on modernists across genres and mediums. Evaluating movement in static images requires a creative approach. For instance, I argue that the travel sketches in Regoyos’s España negra are inspired by movement, so that his own displacement is a critical impetus. I recognize and study Regoyos and Solana as much for their art as for their literature. Unlike previous scholars, I foreground these painter-authors as occupying the same critical plane as prominent writers like Baroja and Azorín in an effort to explore their authorial voices as well as their artistic prowess.
At the time, modernists and other intellectuals perceived the land as holding the keys to understanding “Spanishness” and to (re)defining Spain’s identity. Francisco Giner de los Ríos, revolutionary social reformer and founder of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, made the ILE’s mission to restore Spain’s national identity through holistic and non-doctrinal pedagogy grounded largely in the study of the land. In his essay “Paisaje” (1885), Giner calls landscape painting, “el más sintético, cabal y comprensivo de todos los géneros de la pintura,” for its ethical and ideological implications (792). In his view, from the “contacto purificador de la Naturaleza” springs forth “la expansión de la fantasía, el ennoblecimiento de las emociones, la dilatación del horizonte intelectual, la dignidad de nuestros gustos y el amor a las cosas morales” (799). Giner famously advocated much in the romantic spirit for excursionismo (the direct experience and exploration of nature during invigorating hikes) as one of the ILE’s most iconic pedagogical tools, and worked to legitimize landscape painting as a serious academic discipline.

The various authors and artists who portrayed Spanish landscape and society in their work furthered the ILE’s nation-building endeavor well into the twentieth century. For these authors and artists, landscape possessed a heuristic function whereby only in rendering its many properties and nuances on page or canvas could reader or viewer access its deepest meanings. Evocation of the land, whether visual, like Dario de Regoyos’ impressionist landscape paintings, or literary, like Azorín’s Castilla, provided insight into Spain’s history and its current paradoxical modernity. Azorín, a fervent supporter of the ILE and frequent contributor to its boletín, admired...
Giner’s dedication to using nature as creative inspiration and pedagogical tool. In a posthumous homage to the renowned professor, philosopher, and reformer, Azorín writes:

El espíritu de la Institución Libre – es decir, el espíritu de Giner – ha determinado al grupo de escritores de 1898; ese espíritu ha suscitado el amor a la naturaleza y, consecuentemente, al paisaje y a las cosas españolas, castellanas, amor que ha renovado nuestra pintura (Bernite, Zuloaga, etc.); ese espíritu ha hecho que se vuelva la lista a los valores literarios tradicionales, y que los viejos poetas sean vueltos a la vida, y que se hagan ediciones de los clásicos como antes no se habían hecho, y que surja una nueva escuela de filósofos y de críticos con un espíritu que antes no existía. (qtd. by Robles 492)

Regoyos, Baroja, Azorín, and Solana all journeyed through Spain in search for an authentic sense of personal and national consciousness, convinced that the way to this consciousness was through direct examination of the spaces in which life unfolded.

I conceive of landscape and its significance in interrogating identities during this time as a model for critical examination that extends to other similar configurations. Just as landscape encodes cultural meaning, I suggest that the cityscape – the collection of buildings, streets, and urban channels that make up a city – and religioscape – the imaginary spatial network connecting religious communities across geographies via traditions, holy sites, and faith – function comparably. Urban walking in the cityscape of Madrid allowed modernists the opportunity to slow or even halt the fast pace of metropolitan life, which, as Georg Simmel suggested in his well-known essay on urban life, threatened to dissolve individual personalities and ideologies into a homogenizing crowd. In the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth, processions and pilgrimage surged across many parts of the nation in order to increase the visibility of religion in culture at a time when secular resurgence in favor of all types of social freedoms often challenged the role and power of the Church. These mobile religious acts brought embodied faith – in statues, relics, processional floats, etc. – into and throughout secular areas of towns or cities, combining elements of both travel and walking to emphasize the importance of Catholicism in Spanish national identity and at the same time provoke on-lookers to question that importance. As
such, movement through the various spaces and “scapes” of modern Spain was fundamental to performing critical analysis of self and nation, as well as translating that critique into literary or artistic accounts.

Spanish modernity was effectively rendered and critiqued in narrative and visual accounts of movement through space and through revelatory darkness. I explore these topics in three main body chapters that study one form of movement as it manifests in literature and art. In Chapter 1, I look at modernist travel writing as part of a broader project in exploring and studying the Spanish landscape to (re)define a sense of national identity. As modern traveler-authors traversed and observed the diverse geographies and peoples of Spain, I argue, they also embarked on an interior journey, which translated into an artistic expression of the self and a collective sense of Spanishness. The texts that I consider include Regoyos’s *España negra* (1899), Azorín’s *La Andalucía trágica* (1905), and Solana’s *La España negra* (1920). Each of these works are documentary fiction in the sense that they draw on first-hand observation and real journeys, but portray the realities of modern Spanish *pueblos* through a subjective and creative lens. The experience and aesthetic rendition of landscapes was an act of deep contemplation for turn-of-the-century intellectuals and played a key role in their attempts at identity (re)formation in a rapidly changing world. Travel was thus a major piece of modern Spain’s nation building efforts as well as its modernist tradition. Ultimately, movement, observation, and creativity – the spatial, visual, and aesthetic – combined to produce highly critical and reflective travel documents.

In Chapter 2, I consider the ways in which walking through urban centers, Madrid specifically, influenced modernists’ efforts to articulate and analyze the unique experience of urban modernity. I focus on Azorín’s novel *Diario de un enfermo* (1901), Baroja’s trilogy *La lucha por la vida* (1904), and Solana’s Madrid series, *Madrid: Escenas y costumbres* (vol. 1 1913, vol. 2 1918) and *Madrid callejero* (1923), to show that walking is a practice not only in movement, but also in expression and communication. I argue that the rendition and practice of
city walking facilitates characters and authors as they negotiate between interior self and world, mapping their experiences of social and ideological binaries like city versus country, rich vs. poor, or law-abiding citizen versus behavior deviant, on an imagined or literary geography. Aside from broad understandings of urban walking, I analyze particular forms or derivatives of walking in each author: in Azorín, the foot pursuit; in Baroja the search; and in Solana the detour.

Departing slightly from city walking studies that focus principally on the flâneur figure of the mid nineteenth-century, I consider other archetypes like the restless journalist, the golfo, or the street-performer as fundamental components in Madrid’s system of urban walking.

Chapter 3 synthesizes elements of Chapter 1 (travel) and Chapter 2 (walking), forming a final analysis on movement through space that addresses modernity in relation to religion in Spain. In 1907, the widely promulgated *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* condemned modernism for it threatened Catholic dogma and clamored for its eradication among members of the clergy. In the context of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century (anti)secularism and (anti)clericalism, I examine the representations of procession and pilgrimage mainly in literary and artistic works by Regoyos and Solana. Processions and pilgrimages bring spiritual practice from inside clerical spaces like churches and shrines into public spaces, which requires movement through Spain’s Catholic religioscape. A religioscape is the geographical and spatial network of the items (temples, relics, sacred cities, monuments, etc.) that connect and define religious communities over time based on shared beliefs and practices. Ultimately, I study how and to what extent Regoyos and Solana interpret religious practice as unmodern, or comment on religious practices to critique modernity.

Marshall Berman argues that modernism marks the struggle to find one’s place amidst a constantly changing environment. In my mind, this evokes an image of a modern subject that continuously slips or trips on an uneven, shifting platform. The individual’s attempts to find stability and solid ground are futile, as his/her space and the items that compose it remain in
constant flux. This is an apt metaphor with which to embark on the journey before us. Movement is paramount to the literary and artistic work of Azorín, Baroja, Regoyos, and Solana between 1888 and 1923, and naturally so. The movements they portray – travel, walking, procession – progress unflinchingly, but also with a degree of indeterminacy and uncertainty that mimics modern Spain’s shifting cultural panorama. In the end, spatial movement is a medium, a method, and a product of modernist and Black Spain literature and art, which takes form through revelatory darkness, the cultural practice in shedding light on the corrupted objects and corrupting agents resulting from an uneven and inequitable modernity.
Chapter 1

Regional Travel through National Landscapes

The act of travel denotes an incursion into unfamiliar or unvisited realities, and traveler-authors, entering this world of uncertainty, relay their experience in books, letters, articles, or logs where objective observation and personal reflection continuously overlap. Indeed, as Helen Carr notes, “[a]ll travel writing is a form of autobiography” in which the authorial “I” inevitably inscribes itself along with its imagination, bias, and conviction in the aesthetic rendering of the seen (79). Servando Gotor, in his introduction to the 2015 edition of Darío de Regoyos’s travel narrative España negra (1899), likens modern art to a voyage into the hidden depths of the self, “las más recónditas entrañas del yo” (15).18 Drawing on these two metaphors – travel writing as autobiography and modern art as journey – this chapter seeks to ascertain the roles of travel and travel writing in the spatial and intellectual exploration of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Spain. To this end, I examine modernist travel narratives that channel movement and landscape to capture the life and culture of the Spanish pueblo at and around the turn of the century as a means to evaluate national identity on a larger scale. Expedition to these pueblos, usually provincial or rural areas on the periphery of modernization and industrialization, drew one’s attentions to the cultural ciaroscuros of Spanish modernity, the complex reality, that is, of uneven development across the nation.

As they progressed through diverse regions and towns across Spain, traveler-authors also embarked on an introspective and critical examination of personal and national identities, which prompted the modernist evaluation and creation of Black Spain. This chapter examines three such

18 Gotor likens travel (el camino, la apasionante búsqueda, el itinerario de todo el siglo XIX, un intenso viaje) to modern artistic processes and calls the nineteenth-century aesthetic attraction to “lo negro” a modernist trend: “no es lo negro lo que atrae […] sino el camino, la apasionante búsqueda que comporta hacia las más recónditas entrañas del yo. Y eso es el arte moderno, y ese el itinerario de todo el siglo XIX: un intenso viaje del arte al interior, en palabras de Herich Helle” (15).
authors, Darío de Regoyos, José Martinez Ruiz (Azorín), and José Gutiérrez Solana, for whom travel narrative combines objective knowledge, subjective vision, and creative outlook. Thus, travel narratives are fictional-documentary works in terms of accuracy and authenticity that describe as much as they interpret observed realities. I consider three works in this chapter: Regoyos’s *España negra* (1899), an illustrated travel account that presents and corrects Belgian poet Émile Verhaeren’s macabre impressions of Spain; Azorín’s *La Andalucía trágica* (1905), a journalistic critique of socioeconomic hardship in rural Andalucía; and Solana’s *La España negra* (1920), a bold account of misery and corruption across early twentieth-century Spain. To be clear, Regoyos’s *España negra* and Solana’s *La España negra* are two separate works, though it is certain that the former inspired the latter. These books and Azorín’s articles epitomize Black Spain, the modernist aesthetic that portrays Spain and its people through negatively rendered types (“tipos”) and scenes for the purposes of social critique. While Solana is a slight temporal outlier, his engagement with broad questions of darkness – social inequity, religious fanaticism, and institutional corruption – in the early 1900s is certainly akin to his fin-de-siglo predecessors.

In each case, the traveler-author goes, sees, and documents life in Spain’s *pueblos* in the Basque Country, Navarre, Andalucía, and throughout Castile, which come across as decadent or underdeveloped sites nestled in the tragic landscape of modernist Black Spain. Landscape is a broad and complicated concept that adopted unique meaning among Spain’s modernist writers and artists. In this chapter, landscape is a set of natural and aesthetic forms that encompasses fields, mountains, bodies of water, and other topographies as well as outdoor spaces generated or touched by human activity like a ship harbor, a garden, or a park. Landscape also comprises environmental or atmospheric phenomena produced by changes in weather (clouds, rain, wind) or time (sunlight, darkness). When invoked and restructured in(to) art, these natural and semi-

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19 Included in *Los pueblos.*
natural forms communicate historical, social, and cultural narratives, making aesthetic landscape a “medium of cultural expression” (Mitchell 14). For W. J. T. Mitchell, landscape’s importance lies not only in “what [it] ‘is’ or ‘means’ but what it does, how it works as a cultural practice” (1). He claims further that an artistic or literary landscape is not “an object to be seen or a text to be read but [a] process by which social and subjective identities are formed” (1). Thus, the landscape and references to it in the travel books studied below are actually cultural readings of people and traditions as much as, if not more than, evocations of the land itself.

As stated in my introduction, Spain’s fin-de-siglo intellectual interest in the study and representation of landscape produced a means of generating cultural and historical knowledge during this era of agitated liberalism, imperial collapse, and socioeconomic regeneration. In 1876, Francisco Giner de los Ríos and a group of recently unseated liberal professors founded the revolutionary Institución Libre de Enseñanza (ILE), an institution dedicated to promoting intellectual and moral reformation following K.C.F. Krause’s harmonic rationalism as well as positivist ideology. Giner, an admirer of landscape painters like Carlos de Haes, Aureliano de Beruete and Regoyos, championed nature and landscape specifically as the objects of study best equipped to decipher the creative, emotional, intellectual, and moral panoramas of the Spanish people (In Pursuit, Jurkevich 28). He established excursionismo (direct contact with nature via invigorating hikes, drawing on romantic ideals) as the ILE’s main pedagogical tool, which coincided with the institute’s dedication to exploring touchpoints between aesthetics, nature, and science through a non-doctrinal and open curriculum. Importantly, one of the ILE’s primary goals was to reform the moral and academic agendas in Spain, with the hopes of establishing a true and modern sense of Spanishness for the late nineteenth century.
The literary and artistic rendition of the land during this time implied deep contemplation and creativity linked to interrogating the past, present, and future of Spain.\(^{20}\) Nearing the turn of the century, Azorín and other modernists espoused Giner’s zeal for reflective *excursionismo* and set to exploring all reaches of Spain and its landscapes in search of identity and rootedness.\(^{21}\)

Travel – the mode that enabled the exploration of and contact with signifying geographies – was therefore a crucial component of modern Spain’s identity- and nation-building endeavors as it guided travelers to and through its landscapes. The notion of the unfamiliar, related to travel as noted above, is relative in the cases studied below since each author is a Spaniard travelling and writing about his own country. Regoyos is familiar with the northern regions he visits, but for his travel companion Verhaeren, the Spanish familiarity with death and religious fanaticism was an entirely new reality. Azorín leaves Madrid, his then home and workplace, to travel south to Lebrija where he had never been before. Solana knew the locations he visited, but his integration into the lower echelon of life, among rag pickers, vagabonds, prostitutes, and other riff-raff, so to speak, was a new and revealing journey for the painter-author and his would-be audience.

Travel and writing have always gone hand-in-hand, and one of the primary results of all travel narrative is the establishment of boundaries between self and other, here and there, or inside and outside. Tim Youngs suggests that travel writing has great social and literary value since it is a genre that,

records our temporal and spatial progress. It throws light on how we define ourselves and on how we identify others. Its construction of our sense of ‘me’ and ‘you’, ‘us’ and ‘them’, operates on individual and national levels and in the

\(^{20}\) Along these lines, Pedro Lain Entralgo says of Spain’s turn-of-the-century authors and artists, “entre el ojo y la tierra, creado por el alma contemplativa, vive y tiembla un ensueño de vida humana; una idea de la historia que fué, un proyecto de la historia que podría ser” (27).

\(^{21}\) Gayana Jurkevich studies the major figures of the Spanish landscape pantheon (Beruete, Carlos de Haes, Giner, other ILE figureheads, Azorín, Regoyos, Zuloaga, Unamuno, Baroja, etx.) in *In Pursuit of the Natural Sign*, specifically Part I Chapter one. Other notable studies on Spain’s modernist landscape tradition also include María del Carmen Pena’s book *Pintura de paisaje e ideología: La generación del 98*, and Nicolás Ortega Cantero’s article “Landscape and Identity: The vision of Castile as a National Landscape (1876-1936).”
realms of psychology, society and economics. The processes of affiliation and differentiation at play within it can work to forge alliances, precipitate crises and provoke wars. […] We all have stories of travel and they are more than personal consequence. (1)

Travel writing’s social dimension is key, therefore, and when dealing with travel, the social is naturally bound up in our understanding of space. Drawing on Lefebvre as a model, I suggest that if a determined individual can understand, represent, and live the social spaces in which they reside and work, then a conscious or critical traveler must have the ability to do the same in the places they visit. As social interaction produces and reproduces social space, the displacement and interpersonal activity that constitute travel to and through some destination generate a space of its own; namely, the space of travel. 22 This space of travel manifests when what we will call inhabited space (an already existing, lived-in destination) and visited space (the inhabited space as experienced by a traveler) converge as a result of a traveler’s progressions. The traveler-writer produces this abstract space of encounter as he/she practices it, and transforms it into a site of discourse the moment that the travel experience translates into writing. This reinterpretation of the spatial triad relies on the actualizing potential of movement via travel, the power, that is, of traveling subjects to observe, alter, and recreated visited locales while moving throughout them.

Regoyos, Azorín, and Solana were no mere spectators of the world that unfolded before them as they traveled. Rather, they intentionally elicited the tensions of Spain’s modernity in their perceptive renditions of the Spanish landscape and culture. In the end, each in his own way had recourse to landscape, something deeply natural and rooted to the earth they traversed, to critique the various institutions responsible for the darkness they observed across Spain. Instead of attributing this darkness to a negatively inherent condition of the Spanish people, as the *Leyenda*

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22 According to Lefebvre’s spatial triad, space is composed of a multitude of intersections that occupy particular locations in society and (re)produce that space through social practice. Spatial practice refers to the perception of activities in physical or natural space like daily routines and routes. Representations of space denote the mental or abstract conception of space, typically by city planners, scientists, or governments. Representational spaces are the social spaces that people live and artists represent.
negra had done for centuries, the tragic landscapes of Black Spain portray it as symptomatic of modern paradox and institutional malfunction. In this chapter, darkness takes the form of imposed negative stereotypes (Regoyos/Verhaeren), rural inequity (Azorín), and ill-managed modernization (Solana), which represent corruption of the experience of modernity as perceived from within and beyond the nation’s borders.

Regoyos’s España negra: Stating a Critical Voice

In the late nineteenth century, Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío travelled around Spain and wrote a series of articles known collectively as España contemporánea (1900). One of these articles, dated March 1899, was entitled “La España negra” and discussed the negative impact of antiquated religious traditions and political structures in modern Spain. As a point of departure, he cites three books that share a peculiar tendency: “en todos la observación, la sugestión, la imposición, de la nota obscura, que en este país contrasta con el lujo del sol, con la perpetua fiesta de la luz. Por singular efecto espectral, tanto color, tanto brillo policromo, dan por suma en el giro de la rueda de la vida, lo negro” (96).23 One of the books that imposes darkness on its readers as Darío suggests is España negra, the illustrated travel narrative by Asturian painter Darío de Regoyos. Published just one month before Darío’s article, this work records the journey that Regoyos made through northern and central Spain in 1888 with Belgian symbolist poet Émile Verhaeren whom he had befriended while living in Brussels intermittently between 1878 and 1890.24 When Verhaeren’s father suddenly passed away in 1888, Regoyos, in an effort to mitigate

23 These three books include España negra (1899), “el libro reciente de Emile Verhaeren y Darío de Regoyos,” “la novela española de Barrés” Un amateur d’âmes, and “el volumen positivo sobre la evolución política y social de España, por Yves Goyot” (96).
24 Regoyos met Verhaeren in March of 1881 in Brussels through Edmund Picard, founder of L’Art Moderne. They frequented the intellectual gatherings at Picard’s home and became fast friends. Verhaeren wrote articles for L’Art Moderne, often in support of artists from the avant-garde art circle Les XX. As a member of this group beginning in 1883, Regoyos solidified his place in Brussels’s avant-garde art scene
his friend’s deep sorrow, invited him to go and visit Spain. Verhaeren obliged and, in the wake of
his painful loss, set off with Regoyos “en busca de lo negro” in various cemeteries, churches,
bullrings, and decaying pueblos across Spain (Benet 43). Given this melancholy premise and
somber setting, it is no surprise that along their way, the travelers repeatedly intuited a darkness
and sense of looming death that seemed to eclipse all light and life.

_España negra_ is a unique travel book for many reasons, one being its narrative structure.
In this brief yet complex work, two distinct voices simultaneously unfold and collide with one
another throughout: on one hand, Verhaeren’s impressions of Spain as macabre yet enthralling,
and on the other, Regoyos’s revisionary response to the poet’s observations. Verhaeren recorded
his thoughts on and interpretations of the journey in a series of articles entitled “Impressions
d’Artiste,” written and published in 1888, which contain the first textual reference to _l’Espagne
noire_ – “España negra” or Black Spain – as it would come to be understood in the modern
context.25 Starting in 1896, Regoyos translated fragments of these articles and together with his
own written content and travel sketches, composed and published _España negra_. The first three
chapters of the illustrated travel narrative appeared in the Catalan art magazine _Luz_ during the
final months of 1898, but was not published in full until 1899 through the Barcelona based printer
Pedro Ortega. With this book, the concept of “España negra” officially entered Spain’s national
vocabulary and imagination, coinciding with a time when, anxious over the events of the _Disastre
del 98_ and the unsteady Restoration, modernist intellectuals found inspiration in the dark and
pessimistic self-portrait of the country that it represented.

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25 The articles of “Impressions d’Artiste” were published in 1888 in _L’Art Moderne_ dedicated in their
entirety to Regoyos. They are reproduced in the original French in _Dario de Regoyos-I_, San Nicolás, pp.
146-152. In _España negra_ Regoyos confirms that Verhaeren was also finishing _Les Débacles_, the second
work in his “trilogy of sorrow,” at the same time (Verbeke 169).
While Regoyos references Verhaeren throughout, there is no evidence that painter and poet ever collaborated on the project directly. Thus, as art historian Juan San Nicolás once assured me via email, *España negra* “es un proyecto exclusivo de Regoyos […] el único motor era Regoyos.” This crucial detail is often overlooked or underdeveloped in existing criticism that presents *España negra* as a work in translation or that positions Regoyos strictly as Verhaeren’s translator.26 This oversimplification deflects attention away from Regoyos as author and also elides the fact that translation is never a one-to-one endeavor itself; rather, it is necessarily an exercise in reflection and interpretation. My purpose in this chapter is to explore the extent to which Regoyos’s evocation of landscape and movement in *España negra* adheres to or diverges from the solidification of a modernist Black Spain tradition that corrects and redirects outside perspectives of the nation as a whole. I also work to trace the travelers’ progressions through Spain as unfolding parallel to the evolutions of Regoyos’s unique authorial voice, which critically intersects Verhaeren’s over the course of the book. Ultimately, *España negra*’s dual narratives reimagine modern Spain as a country and a time cloaked in darkness with a peculiar familiarity with death.

Guiding Verhaeren through the landscapes and pueblos of northern and central Spain – whether on foot, by diligencia, or via train – inspired Regoyos to perceive his country and its inhabitants according to an outsider’s view, and travel writing after the fact allowed him a means

26 Though a prominent feature of the book, no comprehensive study on the translation element of *España negra* exists to my knowledge. Over the last several decades, critics have failed to agree on how to address Regoyos’s and Verhaeren’s narrative voices in the book. Rafael Benet cites a passage originally written by Verhaeren that he claims “todo el mundo acepta como inspirado por Darío,” without offering further evidence (46). Antonio Garcia Miñor compresses Regoyos and Verhaeren into a collective “they” (“dicen los viajeros”) regardless of whether he cites Verhaeren’s translated words or Regoyos’s original writing (92). Estelle Irizarry attributed some of Verhaeren’s narration to Regoyos, claiming: “He [Regoyos] concedes that the Spanish holy images found in Tolosa are badly proportioned, poorly modeled, and of unskilled workmanship, yet he finds them intensely penetrating” (4). She is referring to a portion of *España negra*’s second chapter, which is, in fact, Verhaeren’s translated observation (49). Ángeles Ezama Gil occasionally confuses Regoyos’s and Verhaeren’s words in her otherwise excellent article on the book. This is a topic that demands further critical attention.
to modulate his own vision and voice alongside those of the poet. As such, *España negra* comprises what we can call parallel trajectories, the trip that Regoyos and Verhaeren took around Spain for one, and the metaphorical excursion into the self that textual expression allowed for another. Travelling throughout Spain and subsequently articulating their observations in written form, Regoyos and Verhaeren create a space of travel best qualified by its sequence of narrative conflicts and (ir)resolutions, evocative of the contrasting notes of light and darkness in Spanish landscapes and culture that Rubén Darío and others pointed out around this time. España negra, therefore, becomes a site of discourse or dialogue that exposes a pronounced tension between painters’ and poets’ perceived realities, manifesting in Regoyos’s translation, discussion, and correction of “Impressions d’Artiste.”

For Regoyos, *España negra* was a retroactive project that served as an opportunity for him to present and at the same time reflect upon his friend’s impressions of fin-de-siglo Spain. Verhaeren took Spain for a country “amigo de la muerte” where a relentless *memento mori* contaminated all facets of daily life (Regoyos 54, Irizarry 4). In response, Regoyos categorized the visibility of post-mortem rituals, storefront coffin displays, funeral processions, and other death-related phenomena that had so perturbed (yet allured) Verhaeren, as a familiarity with death and mortality that was particular to late nineteenth-century Spain. Toward the end of the book, for example, Regoyos muses about his travel companion, “tiene que extrañarse de cierta familiaridad nuestra con la muerte y de la gente que con gran indiferencia va a comer [en el cementerio] castañas como si fuera un paseo cualquiera” (97). The proximity of/to death that supposedly shocked Verhaeren resurfaces throughout. On one occasion, the travelers observe a group of children playing in a *patio de caballos* where piled-up carcasses of dead horses are amassed after

27 Ramón Gómez de la Serna, for one, states, “el asturiano ladino y sagaz [Regoyos] oye las sorpresas del flamenco extranjero [Verhaeren] y encuentra así la clave de muchos claroscuros de España” (“Darío de Regoyos” 67). The “claroscuros,” or chiaroscuros, that Ramón mentions mirror Rubén Darío’s conflicting terms, “nota obscura” and “lujo del sol,” quoted above.
a bullfight. The boys kick the beasts, pull on their tails to see if any still cling to life, and squeeze their wounds to draw blood. Observing from a distance, Regoyos muses, “cosas de chicos”; “cosas de España,” responds Verhaeren, disturbed yet enthralled by their behavior and the gory scene before him (73). While Regoyos generalizes the situation (child’s play), Verhaeren particularizes and exacerbates it (Spanish brutality), which exposes a conflict in viewpoints.

Perspective is of utmost importance when it comes to analyzing Regoyos’s or anyones’ visions of Black Spain. His drive to revise or rewrite the history that Verhaeren had created is obvious. On some instances, for example, he laments Verhaeren’s inability or refusal to see anything but the darkness that he became so enamored with:

Decididamente, era difícil hacerle ver España a través de las niñas bonitas ni de la alegría del cielo; detrás de aquella luz fuerte siempre encontraba un alma negra de todas las cosas, algo de triste o navrant, siendo esta palabra la que él repetía a continuación de cualquiera de sus impresiones. (70)

This aside encapsulates one of the greatest critiques attributed to this book and the Black Spain tradition as a whole: the premeditated and/or deliberate pursuit of darkness, which produced its narrow interpretive perspective. Though some critics blame this defective subjectivity on both authors, claims like the one Regoyos makes here show his awareness of Verhaeren’s inflexibly dark and exclusionary viewpoint. In this sense, unlike his Belgian travel partner, Regoyos insists that the “niñas bonitas,” the “alegría del cielo,” and the “luz fuerte” of the nation were real, in fact, obscured though they may be in the darkness of familiar death or other morbidities.

However, Regoyos constantly oscillates between accepting and correcting Verhaeren’s cultural reading of Spain. For example, his visual renditions of the previously noted patio de caballos scene, definitively capture the violence of the spectacle and the unease that Verhaeren expressed while observing it. In his own words, Regoyos mused that if Delacroix had observed the same scene, he would have created something along the lines of Víctimas de la fiesta, the title of the print included in España negra and the painting Regoyos completed in 1894 (Figure 1-1).
Though the mischievous children of España negra do not factor into either image, the disturbing
toll of death for the sake of Spain’s iconic bullfighting tradition is front and center in both.

Any nuance that Regoyos introduced in his textual rendition is lost in these images that concretize the
potentially damaging or demeaning perspectives of foreign observers (Verhaeren’s actual shock and
Delacroix’s imagined interpretation). In conserving and presenting the Black Spain that
Verhaeren imagined mainly intact, Regoyos takes ownership of this morose and macabre portrait
of Spain as much as he corrects it, in a way. Perhaps, as he is wont to remind his reader, this is
because any aestheticized account of Black Spain was grounded in reality.

The constant push and pull of critique, near-critique, defense, correction, and dismissal
that Regoyos performs throughout the book, neither fully condemning nor supporting Verhaeren
in his portrayal or perception of Spain, exemplifies one of the defining characteristics of the
painter’s narrative: its ambiguity. Ambivalence courses through España negra in Regoyos’s

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28 Víctimas de la fiesta (left) from first edition España Negra, private collection of Juan San Nicolás. Víctimas de la fiesta (right), © image courtesy of the Fundació Municipal Joan Abelló (MUSEU ABELLÓ. MOLLET DEL VALLÈS).
29 San Nicolás claims that as a young artist, Pablo Picasso had likely seen and taken inspiration from Regoyos’s “España negra” paintings, drawings, and prints when he saw them at the 1898 exposition of Els Quatre Gats. “Estas imágenes,” including the grattage print Víctimas de la fiesta (1894) says San Nicolás, “llamaron la atención del joven Picasso, quien más tarde, en su periodo azul, concebiría obras que recordaban éstas de Regoyos […] lo mismo puede aplicarse a las expresiones de los caballos muertos víctimas de la fiesta, similares a las del famoso Guernica” (Darío de Regoyos-I 127).
original commentary, which occasionally proposes glimpses of light of beauty where the poet found only darkness. The status of Black Spain in this book therefore, – as Verhaeren’s, Regoyos’s, and both of theirs at once – is itself ambiguous. This ambivalence, I suggest, is not contradictory, but rather constitutive of the España negra that Regoyos creates, making it entirely modern in its contingency. With this book, a product of and reflection on movement through space, Regoyos reveals the negative impact of the pejorative Leyenda negra on modern Spain, despite claims by Julián Juderías and others that it only perpetuated them. Instead, España negra performs a critical reading of fin-de-siglo Spain that communicates a serious cultural critique despite Regoyos’s ambiguity.

The broad themes and imagery of Black Spain formed a prominent part of Regoyos’s artistic repertoire starting in the 1880s during which time he was living and working in Brussels alongside other prominent modernist artists like Théo van Rysselberghe, James Ensor, and of course, Verhaeren. At this time, explains Rafael Benet, Spain appealed to Belgian artists for its perceived decadence and foreignness. While in Belgium, Regoyos composed works like Visita de pésame and Noche de difuntos for exhibitions with the avant-garde art circle Les XX that epitomize some of the core elements of the Black Spain aesthetic, including a perceived Spanish culture that is decadent, melancholy, and outmoded. Like other aesthetic trends of the time including the symbolist “dead city,” modernist anti-industrialism, and decadentist obsession with death and decay, Black Spain was a symptom of the artistic wanderlust of modern European

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30 The Legend portrays Spain as ignorant, violent, inquisitorial, and overzealous. Ángeles Ezama Gil claims, “la imagen que nos presentan Verhaeren y Regoyos proyecta una visión negativa de España, que forma parte de esa Leyenda negra que pesa sobre nuestro país desde el siglo XVI hasta bien entrado el XX” (322). Chapter three discusses the Black Legend at length.

31 This is, admittedly, a quiet critique despite its seriousness, especially in comparison with other figures discussed in this dissertation. Rodrigo Soriano captures the essence of this quiet critique in Regoyos: “a pesar de su humildad, tuvo, sin embargo, motivos de amarga queja contra la sociedad de su tiempo” (10).

32 These paintings, representing a mourning and a cemetery scene, were part of a series of canvases Regoyos began in 1886, completed mainly in 1891, and exhibited in 1892 in the ninth exhibition of Les XX. Regoyos did not expressly create these for his book, but some of their preparatory sketches and drawings featured in the 1898/1899 publications of España negra.
intellectuals of the late 1880s (169). Benet explains the genesis of this Belgian Black Spain as derivative of Regoyos’s aesthetic influence:

> Algunos de aquellos espíritus, poetas y artistas, que rodearon a Regoyos en [Bélgica], al oír hablar al berebere de su España triste y grande, sintieron ardientes deseos de conocerla […] ¡Magnífico país!, debieron de pensar aquellos poetas devotos de la muerte y de lo patético, aquellos pintores amantes de lo exótico y de su misterio. (43)

Perhaps embellishing the Spaniard’s accounts of his country, the poets and artists from Belgium and France that Regoyos met while living and working abroad felt an intense urge to travel to the fascinating and unknown Spain. In fact, the trip that Regoyos and Verhaeren took around Spain in 1888 was not the first of its kind. In 1882, Regoyos led a group of artists including Théo van Rysselbergh, Maximilien Luce, Octave Maus, Franz Charlet, and Constantin Meunier, “en busca de lo negro” (Benet 43). Spain was the destination par excellence for those seeking an aesthetic escape from the monstrous newness of modernity (“En Bélgica, en general, todo parece demasiado nuevo”), the country that the centuries-old Leyenda negra had portrayed as backward and extra-European throughout history (Benet 43). España negra is definitively Regoyos’s attempt to reclaim Black Spain, term and concept, to make it his own.

Regoyos’s desire to render his own version of Black Spain in España negra, explains Juan San Nicolás, “fue motivado, sobre todo, por el rechazo de su autor a la imagen que se tenía del país en el exterior y por el deseo de mostrar la tradición familiar y religiosa, el silencio o el sufrimiento de las gentes como contrapartida a la España de castañuelas, panderetas, manolas y toreros” (La aventura impresionista 235). We see evidence of Regoyos’s revisionary and critical

33 The symbolist “dead city” refers to the symbolist attraction to run-down, aged, or demolished cities as cites that resist modernization and the horrors it brings by way of their backwardness. For more information on the subject, see Donald Planell Friedman’s The Symbolist Dead City: A Landscape of Poesis. The idea of modernist anti-industrialism deals with the perception of the city as monstrous in its mechanization, anonymous crowds, and polluting factories during the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries. For more information on the subject, see Lily Litvak’s Transformación industrial y literatura en España (1895-1905). Finally, the well-studied cultural movement of decadentism refers broadly to the fin-de-siglo attraction (curious or sensual) to deathly figures, sickly bodies, and decaying forms. For more information on the subject, see David Weir’s Decadence and the Making of Modernism.
eye throughout the travel narrative, demonstrated, for instance, in his continuous interruptions of Verhaeren’s translated narrative (see prior and upcoming examples in this chapter). Nonetheless, his participation in non-Spanish art circles like Les XX and his connection to Verhaeren and other foreign purveyors of the *l’Espagne noire* myth abroad, complicated the reception of his “España negra” – book and concept – from within Spain. Pío Baroja, an avid admirer of Regoyos and his work, recalls meeting the painter in 1901 or 1902:

[…] me enseñó sus cuadros. había algunos impresionistas, muy bonitos, y otros, que me parecieron sombríos y poco agradables. Según él, éstos eran de su época de neurasténico, y no los quería enseñar a la gente. A mí me mostró varios de estos cuadros: uno de ellos era una visita de duelo; el otro, el cadáver de un militar con su uniforme dentro de un ataúd, en medio de la estación de un tren en donde pasaban mozos con maletas y baúles al hombro y con carretillas. También me mostró un lienzo, un patio con mulas y caballos muertos. Estos cuadros eran todos curiosos y muy tétricos. Al mostrarlos, Regoyos se reía como un loco. (Desde la última vuelta 19)

In Baroja’s words, Regoyos distances himself from his “sombria” paintings, attributing them to a period of undefined emotional or mental disturbance. On a separate occasion, the painter mused, “[s]i volviera a comenzar mi vida, volvería a utilizar la paleta clara, sin tierras, sin negros, y sólo haría paisaje, entregándome por completo a las impresiones que recibiera de la naturaleza” (“Si volviera” 9). Regoyos engaged darkness around the turn of the century for a number of reasons, the influence of foreign aesthetic sensibilities and Verhaeren’s mourning at the time of their journey around Spain included. For him, chromatic and conceptual darkness come across as a communicative tool that reflected a complex and changing fin-de-siglo reality, which for Spain meant grappling with uneven modernization and managing the causes and aftereffects of the *Desastre del 98*. Modernists like Azorín, Baroja, Unamuno, and others found inspiration in the pessimistic tone of Regoyos’s *España negra*. Questioning national and personal identities in line with broader notions of modern subjectivity like autonomy, agency, and liberty, modernists saw in Regoyos’s travel narrative revealing in its critique of modern society.
From 1886-1911, Regoyos experimented with impressionism and pointillism, all overlapping his Black Spain production. This seamless alternation between aesthetics proves, contrary to what others may suggest, that Regoyos’s dark period was neither short-lived nor spontaneous. San Nicolás, speaking about the painter’s “España negra” paintings, confirms this statement: “Regoyos no trabajó exclusivamente en esta serie durante un periodo de su vida, como se ha pretendido […] Al contrario, alternó estas obras con óleos de gran colorido y luz de influencia impresionista” (La aventura impresionista 235). Moreover, we should remember that in Regoyos, darkness is not strictly chromatic. Rather, it depends on theme (cemeteries, death), emotion (sadness, sorrow), and tone (melancholic, somber), which must be interpreted alongside the visual to decipher its significance. In the paintings reproduced above, for example, darkness comes through not only in the black mourning garb of the women in Visita de pésame, but also in the eerie solitude embodied in the ochre-yellow cemetery scene in Noche de difuntos.

Regoyos’s recourse to darkness on canvas and on page is a significant deviation from what most would consider his norm. He had a passion for nature and sunlight that materialized in colorful impressionistic landscapes, the simplest scenes of everyday life seeming vibrant and beautiful.34 For Regoyos and other artists of the time, the experience of nature and the rendition of landscape represented an act of deep contemplation that helped them assess the past and present state of the nation. Francisco Calvo Serraller praises Regoyos for incorporating an “ideological interpretation of the landscape” in his artwork that communicates “innuendos of patriotic regeneration characteristic of the moral and psychological crisis lived by the writers and painters of finisecular Spain” (qtd. in Jurkevich 35). As landscapes like Paisaje de Hernani (c. 1900) present a luminous, uplifting rendition of the country – vibrant, thriving, and in harmony

34 Rodrigo Soriano, his friend and biographer, for instance, tells of how Regoyos “salía fugitivo a correr el campo” as a young artist, and how together they both “corrían los campos en fiebre de novedades…Cada efecto de luz, cada tipo que observaban, llevaba a [sus] lápices materia de comentario” (57).
with the human life and society coexisting alongside it – *España negra*’s landscape descriptions, admittedly more lugubrious than their visual counterparts, also produced a commentary that extends beyond the pictorial or textual frame. Regeneration necessarily implies degeneration, so the portrayal of regenerationism is inseparable from the previously or current degenerate state of the entity in question. In this case, that entity is Spain and landscape veritably stands in for the nation in the modernist imagination. Regoyos provides a glimpse into both sides of regenerationism, often via a regional division that manifests in vibrant and beautiful landscapes of northern Spain, and desolate oppressive ones of the center.

The land and its aesthetic allure features prominently in *España negra* from start to finish, both in the excerpts Regoyos chooses to translate and include from Verhaeren, as well as in his original writing. The opening lines of chapter one, Verhaeren speaking via Regoyos’s translation, prove as much, situating the travelers as ready to embark on their grand journey:

*Buscábamos una diligencia a todo trance con mulas viciadas, dispuestas a rodar por los precipicios, a romper los arreos y matar al mayoral. Los paisajes hacían desearlos; con furia de artistas íbamos preparados a lo que nos reservase la casualidad […] Buscábamos algo nuevo y distinto de lo que ambicionan los ingleses que en sus viajes no buscan más que el confort, comodidades, una mesa servida a hora fija por manos de groom estirado con frac y pechera tiesa […] Buscábamos una diligencia – decía – la más desvencijada, la más semejante a una caja de contrabajo, la más rechinante que hubiese. Esto tenía que encontrarse en un país con aldeas construidas como a bofetadas contra las laderas de la costa Cantábrica, país salvaje con caminos a propósito para equilibrista de cuerda floja. Se realizó nuestro deseo. No era la diligencia de Gautier con su zagal y postillón que quizás fue bonita pero decididamente profanada por la ópera cómica. Era otra cosa: Un armario amarillo y negro tirado por caballos, mulas, y en las cuestas por bueyes, que aparejados juntos sudaban obedeciendo a los latigazos entre sapos y culebras lanzados por la boca del mayoral. (36-37)*

The repetition of “buscábamos” (we looked for, we were looking for) frames *España negra* as a search, first and foremost, to which the travelers commit from the beginning. The objective of this

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35 This is one of myriad possible choices to elucidate the above point. See Juan San Nicolás, *Diario de Regoyos: 1857-1913 La aventura impresionista* for a representative collection of Regoyos’s signature artistic periods. This painting pertains to his Impressionistic period.
search is a *diligencia*, a horse or mule-drawn stagecoach or carriage, specifically the most dilapidated and poorly equipped one possible. The narrator qualifies this decadent vehicle as something new, something other than the *confort* sought out by English and French travelers. These lines typify Verhaeren’s patronizing adoration of what he considers Spain’s primitivism and decadence. Regoyos offers his version of the *diligencia* in one of the book’s first images, a grattage print depicting the passenger’s perspective of the draft animals and coachman leading the carriage into a dark, nondescript background. The tight cropping draws attention to the figures in the foreground, a team of mules with visibly protruding bones and a coachman with whip in hand, all with backs turned to the would-be viewer. Comparing Regoyos’s *diligencia* in *España negra* (Figure 1-2) with an illustration of the same subject in Théophile Gautier’s *Voyage en Espagne* (1843) reveals wildly differing perspectives in two travel books about Spain.

Figure 1-2: Darío de Regoyos, *Diligencia vascongada* (1888), from *España negra* (Luz)

Ángeles Ezama Gil divides the book’s 34 images into four categories: *costumbrista* scenes, types, cities, and allegories. Most images correspond to the text around them and include 27 lithographic reproductions of drawings, sketches, and grattage prints, along with seven original xylograph stamp prints. Many of the images were rendered at least preliminarily during the 1888 journey.

A popular romantic travel narrative documenting the French poet’s voyage to and throughout Spain in the mid nineteenth-century, that exaggerates and stereotypes reality as Kathleen Mather Bulgin asserts: “Gautier’s ignorance and his often avowed prejudices and preconceptions prevented him from conveying a more just impression of Spain and her art” (172).

Public domain image courtesy of “Biblioteca de Catalunya.”
Gautier’s romantic *diligencia,* “bonita pero decididamente profanada” in Verhaeren’s words (via Regoyos’s translation) and captured in the above illustration, evokes adventure and energy from the perspective of an imagined and detached onlooker. The lavish coach, drawn by ten uniform horses under the direction of multiple robust coachmen, races up a cliff with a mountain peak, lush plants, and Moorish ruins completing the exotic landscape. Regoyos’s *diligencia,* though it is static, suggests the potential and probability of movement, the beginning of both a journey and its narration. This carriage, like Regoyos, is a literal translator, of people and meaning, that sets *España negra* in motion.

As if to dampen Verhaeren’s enthusiasm over the decadence of the carriage and the savage yet alluring landscape that produced it, Regoyos presents his readers with a realistic view of a poetic narrative that we could conceivably read as exploiting or colonizing modern Spanish culture and its image from the outside and for artistic purposes. Once settled in their *diligencia,* the travelers begin their trek through Spain. Verhaeren conjures up images of landscape paintings by Gustave Courbet, Claude Monet, Henri Rousseau, and Camille Corot, and also imagines, “algo que no se ha pintado nunca […] el cuadro que cada uno lleva grabado en sí” (38). Once again, the prospect of travelling through Spain inspires in Verhaeren a desire to discover and articulate the unknown. Periodically throughout *España negra,* Regoyos explains the lengths to which he and his companion went to find the newness that Verhaeren so craved, and in doing so, reminds the reader that their journey was in part an aesthetic one: “¿Cómo no meter la pata en la literatura?” ponders Regoyos before describing their time in San Sebastián (57). “Pamplona nos había procurado sensaciones muy artísticas” he recalls, claiming that the crumbling town of Sigüenza is made “para un poeta o un pintor” (77, 89). Reflecting on their travel from town to town, which happened to occur almost always during the evening’s twilight hours, he admits, “era, en fin, un
viaje para poetas o soñadores de la penumbra” (81). Landscape, darkness, and travel intersect in 
*España negra* in critical and expressive artistic form.

To grasp fully the cultural significance encoded in Regoyos’s treatment of the land in 
*España negra* requires consideration of how concepts like landscape and travel factored into 
modern paradigms of national identity. The concept of landscape-as-nation in late nineteenth- and 
early twentieth-century Spain is a well-worn topic of critical interest.39 Broadly speaking, authors 
and artists used landscape to portray the nation, but they also appropriated, crafted, personalized, 
and infused it with symbolic meaning to signify other panoramas of interiority or ideology. For 
Regoyos, the land represented the soul of the people that inhabited it, and in *España negra*, 
landscape narration channels the geographic and atmospheric features of historical Castile to 
evoke the darkness – the suffering caused by poverty, hunger, and pain – that befell its 
inhabitants.40 Given the complexity of this topic and the extant work on it, some brief examples 
of modernist land-nation expression will suffice to prepare the terrain for my study of Regoyos’s 
landscape in *España negra*.

As Spain’s large central region, Castile is traditionally considered the geographical and 
historical hub of political, economic, and social power. Despite its literal and metaphorical 
centrality, in his groundbreaking philosophical reflection on Spanish identity, rootedness, and 
tradition *En torno al Casticismo* (1902), Unamuno presents Castile’s landscape as arid, barren, 
and sun-scortched, a place “en que se siente en medio de la sequía de los campos sequedades del

39 Scholars like María Carmen del Pena, Gayana Jurkevich, Nicolás Ortega Cantero, and Inman Fox have 
discussed this phenomenon at length, agreeing that landscape is one of the most iconic and definitive 
modernist tropes in Spanish literature and art.

40 By “Historical Castile” I mean the area of Spain that covers modern day Cantabira, Rioja, Castile-Leon, 
La Mancha, and Madrid. For some time, the critical contemplation of landscape disproportionately favored 
the regions of central Spain, Castile to be precise, for its historical, social, and political importance as the 
seat of government as well as its geographical centrality. A look at a short list of travel narratives from this 
era confirms this fact: *En torno al Casticismo* (Unamuno, 1902), *Campos de Castilla* (Antonio Machado, 
1912), *Castilla* (Azorín, 1912). This is not to say that travel accounts to other parts of Spain did not exist, 
but clearly in Spain’s turn-of-the-century landscape-national identity debate, Castille factored as the most 
important point of reference.
From his perception of this cruel climate and terrain, he drew a parallel between the region’s seemingly fruitless landscape and the nation’s intellectual and cultural stagnation (67). In a similar vein, in “A orillas del Duero” (XCVIII) from Campos de Castilla (1912), Antonio Machado describes a sad and noble landscape that resists all life:

¡Oh tierra triste y noble,
la de los altos llanos y yermos y roquedas,
de campos sin arados, regatos ni arboledas;
decrépitas ciudades, caminos sin mesones,
y atónitos palurdos sin danzas ni canciones
que aun van, abandonando el mortecino hogar,
como tus largos ríos, Castilla, hacia la mar! (3)

As boorish residents march away from rocky, untilled fields and decaying towns, they begin a journey under Castile’s brutal sun toward the refreshing sea. This journey is long and arduous as Azorín declares repeatedly in Castilla (1912):

No puede ver el mar la solitaria y melancólica Castilla. Está muy lejos el mar de estas campiñas llanas, rasas, yermas, polvorientas […] No puede ver el mar la vieja Castilla; […] Por la ventanita de este sobrado columbramos la llanura árida, polvorienta; el aire seco, caliginoso […] Castilla no puede ver el mar. (83, 84, 89)

Azorín’s repeated personification of the sea that the interior lands of Castile cannot see and vice versa suggests a seemingly insurmountable degree of separation between Spain’s melancholic center and its lively coast. These literary evocations, spanning 1895 to 1912, boast unique symbolisms and interpretations, but strive collectively to find or define Spain in the arid yet expressive Castilian landscape. For Nicolás Ortega Cantero, the aesthetic representation of the land, which he called “la interpretación gineriana” after Francisco Giner de los Ríos of the ILE, is a dual process in interiorization of the exterior world, and, at the same time, exteriorization of

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41 From “La casta histórica Castilla,” one of the lesser known articles included in Unamuno’s groundbreaking En torno al Casticismo. The book was published in 1902, but written in 1895. In “Unamuno’s En torno al casticismo as Nation-Making,” Ibon Izurieta discusses Unamuno’s pivotal role in the “invention of Spain as an imaginary community” through Casticismo, the “essence of Spain” or the “essence of Spanishness” (941-92).
one’s inner self (36). This national landscape is what allowed a dialogue amongst Regoyos, Unamuno, Machado, Azorín, and others who found themselves compelled to reflect on the state of the nation while travelling and experiencing the land.

Both Regoyos and Verhaeren describe Spain’s landscapes as they observe and pass through them. Verhaeren compares distant plateaus to catafalques, stones to burial mounds, and dusky skies to spilled blood, externalizing his melancholy disposition and decadent aesthetic onto landforms and atmospheric effects. Travelling from San Sebastián southbound to Pamplona, Regoyos recalls looking out the window of his and Verhaeren’s third-class train car at the passing scenery; “empieza la tragedia del paisaje,” he says, initiating the first of his many reflections on the Castilian landscape in España negra (65). Beginning in this northern part of historical Castile, claims Regoyos, the landscape changes from the “color verde y [las] frescuras del paisaje” in the Basque Country to “el desierto” heading down toward Madrid (64). Verhaeren is oblivious to the difference in landscapes and spends his journey to Pamplona entertained by a travelling gypsy. His companion’s disinterest prompts Regoyos’s first narrative landscape:

Para pintar aquellos campos parece que hace falta […] una luz de tinta muy marcada que haga cantar el conjunto entonando aquellos pardos incoloros y muertos. No siendo así Castilla es antipictórica, sin sol, porque no dice nada; todo es de coloración neutra y con sol elevado porque la paleta es impotente para reproducir aquellas vibraciones de luz tan brutal y tan blanca. (64)

He assesses the Castilian land principally as a non-picturesque and chromatically neutral setting, impossible to reproduce via palette and paint. Part of its resistance to pictorial reproducibility lies in problems of light and the sun, which Regoyos, being an impressionist, scrutinizes carefully. For him, the Castilian sun is ferociously bright (“luz brutal y tan blanca”) yet absent (“sin sol”) at once. This harsh light/lack of light paradox casts a conceptual darkness over the landscape that rejects painterly expression but inspires authorial reflection, making Castile, rather ironically, a
fruitful narrative theme for Regoyos. Importantly, it is movement through space, his train ride south through distinct geographies and cultural mores, that stimulates Regoyos’s reflections on landscape. What is unique about the landscapes that Regoyos produces throughout the travel book is his painterly focus on the necessity of elements like color and light. His preoccupation over proper light shows his thoroughly artistic mindset as well as his desire for authentic documentation of his surroundings during the trip. Faced with the reality of imposing darkness, blinding sunlight, and lack of studio he asks, “¿cómo ha de trabajar sino escribiendo notas de aquel efecto que se va?” (59). In incorporating notes on the quality of light that the painter has to capture landscapes before him, Regoyos discloses the expressive function that travel writing offers him at that moment that other art forms cannot.

If Castile is Spain’s “paisaje nacional” as Ortega Cantero suggests, Regoyos’s landscape descriptions represent a serious critique of the region and culture they evoked (36). Evidently, Regoyos felt and expressed a degree of regionalist pride for northern Spain; being from Asturias, this comes as little surprise. Like other modernists, he was something of a local outsider as he evaluated Castile, and his regional, rooted bias comes through in his narrative landscapes and his Black Spain generally speaking. Throughout his commentary on their travels in San Sebastián, Pamplona, Santander, Guipúzcoa and other northern locales, Regoyos deliberately points out Verhaeren’s narrow field of vision. Similar intervention is scarce in accounts of the Castilian landscape, in which Regoyos provocatively draws out emotional and physiognomic links between

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42 To be sure, Castile truly was not a primary source of inspiration for Regoyos’s painted landscape. The vast majority of his work is inspired by the lands of the north and some in the south.
43 Regoyos was born in Asturias, Baroja in San Sebastián (Basque Country), Azorín in Monóver (Valencia), and Solana in Madrid. Of the figures in this dissertation, therefore, Solana is the only one who does not technically fall into the category of local outsider. Interestingly enough, Solana’s evaluations of Madrid and Castile in general are just as if not more pessimistic and negative that the others.
44 For instance, Regoyos notes that in Verhaeren’s Les Debâcles, “hay algunos trozos inspirados en nuestro país, trozos tristes, por supuesto” (53); amidst the festivity of a pilgrimage in Guipúzcoa he states of Verhaeren, “en medio de tanta diversión había cosas que entraban en el orden de ideas negras de nuestro artista” (55).
land and its people. Anyone could spot the difference between “la distinguida raza vasca y la castellana” just by appearance, he claims, and gives an example of an old Castilian woman the travelers had seen en route to Pamplona (65):

Una vieja vimos en la que se reflejaban las miserias del país seco, de cerros pelados; en su cara pajiza y descompuesta se veían los colores de aquellos desiertos y las huellas de la vida de sufrimientos en tan duro clima. Sus arrugas conservaban la misma contracción sin duda de muchos años como sujeta por un resorte de tanto guiñar los ojos, luchando contra la luz fuerte; ese visaje que queda fijo en la gente que vive al sol envejeciéndola antes de tiempo. (65)

What is unique in this particular excerpt is that the landscape – the Castilian aridness, barren hills, desert-like climate, and blinding sunlight – adopts human characteristics and vice versa; the old woman appears in and as landscape at once. Her dry, decomposing skin is a reflection of the barren land around her; her wrinkles evidence a constant struggle against a hostile environment; her face mirrors the debilitative march of time accelerated by harsh climate. This anthropomorphic landscape discloses the connection between the land and its inhabitants, which translates into a broader commentary on lack of (re)generation and progress in both.

In the conclusion to España negra, which was written entirely by Regoyos, our painter reflects on the Castilian landscape and the pueblos scattered throughout it at length, wondering pessimistically, “si es posible que agrade tanta desolación” (104). As Ángeles Ezama Gil notes, Regoyos makes unusual use of color in his landscape descriptions, substituting an object or idea for color itself. In the conclusion, he describes Toledo and its surroundings as “cadavérico[s]” in hue, the tones of surrounding fields as “huesosos” and its vegetation as a “melancólico verde gris” (104). This technique also lends itself to drawing a sinister connection between Castilian landscape and expiration. In articulating natural forms or phenomena as bone-like, cadaveric, or melancholic, and borrowing from Verhaeren’s rhetoric death and decay, Regoyos portrays the landscape as a corporeal entity, nearly a corpse. Extending Verhaeren’s obsessive reflections on death, Regoyos portrays the land itself as death, an embodiment, as it were, of unproductivity and
stagnation. In conclusion he states, “si se quiere pensar en la muerte, nada más a propósito que esos pueblos castellanos” (104). This final chapter contains no translations of Verhaeren, which may explain why landscape is so prevalent, given that it was, after all, essentially a national topic of study and reflection at the time. Landscape provided Regoyos and other modernists a medium to explore their roots, the nature of Spanishness in these modern times. As such, his critique or lament of the Castilian landscape points to the insufficiencies of the inconsistencies housed in the historical center of the nation. Travel through Spain’s lands and landscapes allows Regoyos the time and space to explore his roots and national identity. Throughout the book, his (self)exploration manifests with increasing frequency not only through landscape narration, but also via linguistic intervention more broadly defined. Regoyos is the poet’s companion, sure enough, but also his translator, interlocutor, and occasional opponent. Through processes of differentiation (from Verhaeren) and affiliation (with the Spanish national collective), both of which are typical of travel writing according to Youngs’ definition, Regoyos distinguishes his versus poet’s interpretations of Black Spain. Early on in in their journey, the travelers stumble upon a funeral in a run-down Basque pueblo. After attending services and following the burial procession to the cemetery, Verhaeren (via Regoyos’s translation) remarks:

Los muertos en aquel pueblo no los tratan de una manera envidiable y la pala del sepulturero que se apercibía sobre unos terrones no estaría mucho en reposo. Me dijeron que cuando después de dos o tres años de enterrar a un pobre nadie paga por él, su cuerpo aún en estado de descomposición es allí donde viene a parar. (41-42)

Regoyos, recognizing the importance of this momento for the rest of their journey, interjects:

“Aquí el poeta empieza a exaltarse; dice que quiere ver los cementerios en todos los pueblos que visitemos y es curioso seguirle en su manera de ver nuestro país hasta llegar a crearse él una
ESPAÑA NEGRA” (42). This is the first of many instances in which Regoyos closes the quotation marks around his translation and responds directly to the poet, speaking for himself. Here, Regoyos stunts Verhaeren’s reflection on the ubiquity of death in this town and shifts attention to his own revisionary perspective. He reminds the reader that his companion’s vision of Spain is a creation, his own creation, which is dark and mournful because he, Verhaeren, made it so; it is full of death because he sought death out; is tragic because he rejected any joy he found along the way. Finally, the pronouns that Regoyos uses distinguish him formally from Verhaeren (his way of seeing) and establish him as part of a Spanish collective (our country). These textual interventions occur over the course of the book, intensifying Regoyos’s autonomy as authorial voice as he narrates the progressions of his journey through Spain.

España negra’s Chapter VI is crucial for analyzing Regoyos’s self-differentiation and authorial development over the course of the book. In this chapter, he presents and constantly interrupts what he claims, perhaps with some irony, is the greatest article Verhaeren wrote about Spain. The crux of this article is Verhaeren’s distress over death’s supposed ubiquity in Spanish life and the ineffable force that attracted him to its cemeteries, gravesites, funerals, and in one memorable case an “almacén de ataúdes” (93). Even the joyful Spanish jota, notes Verhaeren, made him think of death. Here, Regoyos closes the quotation marks around his translation and first explains what Verhaeren is alluding to, namely the three coplas that link romantic love to death and bodily decay. Second, he adds three additional coplas to Verhaeren’s examples, these narrating the lasting love of mother and child after death. “Citemos estas tres coplas, entre las mil que conocemos,” suggests Regoyos, referring to a “nosotros” representative of the Spanish collective to which only he, and not Verhaeren, belongs (95-96). Regoyos asserts his cultural

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45 Emphasis in the original. Often when Regoyos mentions “España negra,” “lo negro” of Spain, or similar variations, he writes in capital letters or italics for emphasis.
knowledge and heritage into the situation, setting himself apart from Verhaeren and emphasizing the poet’s non-Spanishness and demonstrating that not all coplas, as it were, are about death.

Having established some distance between himself and the poet, Regoyos hands the narrative baton back to Verhaeren allowing the rest of his article to unfold (via translation). It records Verhaeren’s visit to the Museo del Prado, where death reigns, he observes, citing a number of fifteenth- to seventeenth-century Spanish artists to bolster his claim. Regoyos comments on the poet’s list in a footnote: “Aquí olvidó al Greco y á Valdés Leal, dos de los pintores más tétricos de la escuela española” (98). Again, Regoyos expands upon Verhaeren’s observations, this time utilizing the editorial mechanism of the footnote to assert his expert knowledge. The narrative continues as Verhaeren notes the landscape surrounding El Escorial using typically somber and expressive expressions to describe the ambiance from afar: “aquel crepúsculo de sangre,” “aquella noche estrellada de hierro,” “aquel siniestro sitio” (99). He also mentions piles of stones that resemble prehistoric burial mounds; tombs without epitaphs, he calls them, emulating immense and anonymous death. Here, Regoyos inserts a second footnote reading: “también vimos en nuestro paseo algunas figuras humanas formadas con los cantos de granito. En uno de estos montones de piedras un francés hubiera visto la silueta de Napoleón sentado, mirando al monasterio, la cabeza cubierta con su conocido tricornio. (N, del T.)” (100). He includes an illustration of the scene as he had seen it (Figure 1-3), which visualizes the potential tricks of perspective that Regoyos alludes to in his note.

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46 The artists that Verhaeren mentions include Diego Velázquez (1599-1660), Juan Correa de Vivar (1510-1566), Fernando Gallego (1440-1507), Alonso Berruguete (1450-1504), Luis de Morales (1509-1586), Vicente Juan Masip (1507-1579), Francisco de Zurbarán (1598-1664), Alonso Sánchez-Coello (1532-1588), and Juan Pantoja de la Cruz (1553-1608).
Deferring to his official capacity as translator and writer of notes, Regoyos veritably re-inserts life back into Verhaeren’s dark, deadly, and sinister landscape. Again, painter expands upon poet’s vision, accounting for distinct perspectives and evocative of culturally specific historical reference. Regoyos’s narrative interventions, especially in chapter VI, challenge Verhaeren’s vision of Spain, not to disprove it, but to insist that there is more to this portrait than the poet may have presented; perhaps more than he was able or willing to comprehend.

Regoyos’s authorial voice, though more and more autonomous from beginning to end of journey and text, is still ambiguous as he draws his original conclusion to an end. Travelling throughout Spain in 1888 inspired Verhaeren to write about his journey through Spain; editing and publishing España negra between 1896 and 1899 allowed Regoyos to reflect not only on the journey, but to assess the darkness Verhaeren attributed to his nation in terms of its exaggeration and its validity. For Regoyos, the so-called ubiquity of death in Spanish culture that his friend noted translated into larger questions of intellectual and ideological stagnation in fin-de-siglo Spain, the death or near death, that is, of the idea and of creativity. Travel and travel writing encourage Regoyos to explore these concepts and reveal what he saw as a real darkness being cast over the picturesque and energetic Spain of his landscape paintings.

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While considered a successful painter and writer abroad and within Spain’s modernist circles, Regoyos was rather unpopular with the Spanish Academy of Fine Arts. His passion for the then radical tenets of impressionism, as many of his biographers and personal letters show, repeatedly compromised his arrival, so to speak, on the larger artistic stage in his home country. José Gutiérrez Solana laments Regoyos’s frequent rejection and mistreatment during Madrid’s prominent art exhibitions in the epilogue to *La España negra* (1920), accusing their judges of being inept and unable to comprehend the emotion and significance of his paintings (197). In fact, Regoyos often found his art condemned to the notorious “Sala del crimen” alongside the likes of Solana, Ricardo Baroja, Pablo Picasso, and other modernist painters during the capital’s National Exhibitions running from 1856-1968. 48 In *Historia de una rebeldía* (1921), Soriano plants a fervent defense of his friend Regoyos, portraying him as a martyr unjustly condemned for his practice of Impressionism. The painter resented his lack of recognition and respect, but his passion for modern art remained undaunted throughout his life and career. He expressed his frustrations in a letter to friend and fellow artist Manuel Losada in 1897:

[…]

While considering the larger artistic stage in his home country. José Gutiérrez Solana laments Regoyos’s frequent rejection and mistreatment during Madrid’s prominent art exhibitions in the epilogue to *La España negra* (1920), accusing their judges of being inept and unable to comprehend the emotion and significance of his paintings (197). In fact, Regoyos often found his art condemned to the notorious “Sala del crimen” alongside the likes of Solana, Ricardo Baroja, Pablo Picasso, and other modernist painters during the capital’s National Exhibitions running from 1856-1968. 48 In *Historia de una rebeldía* (1921), Soriano plants a fervent defense of his friend Regoyos, portraying him as a martyr unjustly condemned for his practice of Impressionism. The painter resented his lack of recognition and respect, but his passion for modern art remained undaunted throughout his life and career. He expressed his frustrations in a letter to friend and fellow artist Manuel Losada in 1897:

[...] mientras viva seguiré haciendo manchas aunque no se vendan. 49 Tengo muy mala sombra para vender cuadros en España y me río de las ilusiones que se hacen los que creen poder inculcar modernismo en un país [sic] donde reina la miseria y el atraso en todo y donde el abrir un camino que no sea la rutina sabida significa para ellos un delito o un crimen. Salirse de la academia es para ellos locura o caso de chifladura. Vale mas [sic] hacer zapatos que sentir ese arte en España. (Tellechea Idígoras 37 my emphasis)

Though he could not have realized it at the time, Regoyos’s “mala sombra” would follow him for the rest of his life. 50 His cynical outlook on the rigidity of Spain’s academic art world alludes to a

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48 The “Sala del crimen” was the room or area dedicated to holding those paintings deemed controversial or inappropriate for most of the public. The sala was difficult to reach and housed paintings by some of the most famous modernist painters of the day. See Jurkevich, *The Pursuit* pg. 37.
49 “Haciendo manchas”: A reference to the Impressionist painting technique of applying pigment in loose, layered brushstrokes and partial (if any) blending of colors on the canvas.
50 In a letter to Miguel de Unamuno from 1912 Regoyos laments his failed exhibition in Buenos Aires and admits, “me han dicho y con razón que soy artista para los artistas y no para aquel público” (Bastons y Montserrat Escatir 80). Of his failure to sell a successful number of paintings at this exhibition he also claims, “…de esto me tengo yo la culpa porque habiendo sido muchas [sic] veces huesped en la Sala del
disquieting picture of a nation resistant to progress and innovation. Much like the barren and volatile Castilian landscape he portrays in *España negra*, Regoyos saw institutionalized art in Spain as uninspired and hostile to creativity and invention. For modernism or modernization to truly take root in this land and this country, he claims, a regenerated appreciation for artistic innovation and experimentation was in order, but supposedly unlikely. This disillusion with the Spanish Academy as expressed in 1897 is key to interpreting *España negra*’s disheartening conclusion, which he wrote the following year. The book’s final lines are worth quoting in full:

Sin duda tuvo razón Verhaeren en ver hace diez años nuestra patria como un país amigo de la muerte. Hizo bien en estudiar la Funeraria y el toque de agonía. ¿No se consuela á las madres españolas con la misma idea de la muerte cuando pierden un niño, diciendo: «no llore V., ¿no ve V. que los angelitos están mejor en el cielo?»

Si este artista viniera ahora a España nos encontraría a todos más muertos que en su último viaje. Sus notas parecen escritas en este año 98 de tristes recuerdos.

Y si para completarlo viniera a pasar un Viernes Santo en Rioja entonces sí que vería al natural y de una pieza toda su ESPAÑA NEGRA tal como él la desea y la canta con su alma de gran poeta. (109-110) 

It is significant that Regoyos admits that Verhaeren was essentially right in the end. In effect, he verifies the poet’s Spain-as-friend-to-death metaphor while in the process intensifying his own death-as-familiar-to-Spain idea. In doing so, he suggests that the living were more dead than alive in 1898, a year, as he puts it, of wretched memories. Regoyos’s portrait of Spain presents its cultural claroscuros in a way that is ultimately more critical than Verhaeren’s, whose farewell reads simply, “por lo mismo que es triste, España es hermosa” (105). The dark, dramatic tone of this textual-visual travel narrative prompted Regoyos’s melancholy introspection over what he

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51 This is a reference to the procession of San Vicente in Rioja, famous for its violent flagellation of disciplinants, which Regoyos describes in detail in his conclusion and which I discuss in Chapter 3.
perceived as the peculiar *vanitas* of his homeland, which would inspire other for years to come. Indeed, because of this book, the pessimistic and macabre Black Spain of the modernist era emerged for others like Azorín, Baroja, Solana to adapt and evolve for their specific needs.

**Azorín in Andalucía: Defense of the labriego**

The rhetoric of ubiquitous death in Spanish life and culture was by no means confined to the narrations the pages or imagery of *España negra*. The “mujer enlutada,” or mourning woman,– a silent and morose laywoman, usually of older age and clad in black – is one of the many popular types that in Spain’s art and literature leading up to the turn-of-the-century as seen, for instance, in *Visita de pésame* by Regoyos. She was an icon of the indissoluble bond linking life, death, and misery, as well as a reminder of the relationship that these conditions had with religious tradition. Not only death itself, but also the threat and inevitability of it, constituted what Azorín would term “la tristeza española,” Spanish sadness, in his semi-autobiographical novel *Antonio Azorín* (1903):

> ¿Para qué pintar diversas gradaciones de este proceso doloroso? En todos los pueblos, en todos estos pueblos españoles, tan opacos, tan sedentarios, tan melancólicos, ocurre lo mismo. Se habla de la tristeza española, y se habla con razón. Es preciso vivir en provincias, observar el caso concreto de estas casas, para capacitarse de lo hondo que está en nuestra raza esta melancolía. (259)

For Azorín, this Spanish sadness is specifically a provincial sadness, found in sedentary and melancholy *pueblos* across the country. Contrastingly, in the city, “los dolores son fugitivos,” given the activity and stimuli of the urban setting, which can distract individuals or communities from the pain associated with death and mourning (*Antonio Azorín* 258). For Azorín, the only way to understand this melancholy of the Spanish *pueblo* is to seek it out, witness it, and live it for oneself, a reflection of Giner’s previous call for direct contact and examination of signifying landscapes. Regoyos and Verhaeren reported the same kind of somber *pueblo* life in 1888 that
Azorín would detail 15 years later in 1903, a parallel that adds credence to Regoyos’s readings of Spanish darkness and emphasizes the problematic reality of late and uneven development across modern Spain.

One pueblo infused with Azorín’s “tristeza” and a sense of ironic tragedy is Andalusian town Lebrija, which is the focal point of his 1905 travel articles, *La Andalucía trágica.* In this section, I analyze *La Andalucía trágica* identifying Azorín’s rendered landscapes as the critical frame for his defense of the Lebrijan campesino. The land, we know, was an object of intense contemplation for modernists who strove to (re)define national identity, convinced that through direct exploration of Spain’s terrain one could come to understand the nation and its people, as well as its past and present. I suggest that Azorín, “one of the greatest verbal landscapists in Spanish literary history” according to Gayana Jurkevich, conducts a critical reading of the Andalusian landscape that foregrounds the tensions defining and dividing Spain in the early 1900s. His primary critique is aimed at the ideological and cultural dissonance existing between the Spanish pueblo and the nation’s capital, which was a result of decades-long neglect and indifference, and specifically, the uneven modernization of Madrid versus rural areas following the turn of the century. This unmediated divide, producing an indifferent capital and agitated periphery, is what makes the Lebrijan landscape so tragic in Azorín’s eyes.

In December 1901, Ramiro de Maeztu, Pío Baroja, and José Martínez Ruiz, collectively wrote a manifesto, the “Manifiesto de los tres,” outlining their desire to “mejorar la vida de los miserables” and advocate for social reform like accessible education for all and reliable credit systems for farming communities (qtd. by Gómez de la Serna, *Biografías* 1273). Still grappling

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Azorín’s “paisajismo” centered primarily on the Castillian landscape, but he did begin exploring and studying other regional landscapes as demonstrated in *El paisaje de España visto por los españoles* (1917). This play on the costumbrista self-portrait genre – *Los españoles pintados por ellos mismos* (1843-1844), for example, inspired by *Les français peint par eux-mêmes* (1840-1842) – presents a genealogy of modern narrative and artistic landscape expression across Spain (i.e. Rosalía de Castro in Galicia and Regoyos in the Basque country).
with the aftermath of the *desastre del 98* and the post-imperial identity crisis that ensued, Spain was in the throes of its complex and contradictory experience of modernity, where sociopolitical decline and cultural progress went hand-in-hand. In the regenerationist spirit of the time, “los tres” promised to expose and resolve the misery of Spain’s indigent populations, not through dogma or sentimentalism, but by applying scientific principles like empirical observation and experimentation in their writing to heal the nation’s “llagas sociales” (qtd. by Gómez de la Serna, *Biografías* 1273). They promised to use art and literature to

> poner al descubierto las miserias de la gente del campo, las dificultades y tristezas de la vida de millares de hambrientos, los horrores de la prostitución y del alcoholismo; señalar la necesidad de la enseñanza obligatoria, de la función de las cajas de crédito agrícola, la de la implantación del divorcio, como consecuencia de la ley del matrimonio civil. (qtd. by Gómez de la Serna, *Biografías* 1274)

Much in the spirit of “Los tres” is Azorín’s *La Andalucía trágica*, a series of five newspaper articles chronicling Azorín’s journey to the Andalusian town of Lebrija while on assignment for *El Imparcial* in 1905. Azorín compiles anecdotal and statistical data to document the effects of severe drought in this rural *pueblo* that was already suffering chronic unemployment, lack of basic resources, and a tuberculosis epidemic. In his opinion, much of the town’s hardship stemmed from decades of ineffective, state-sponsored reform and modernization that failed to reach or take root effectively in the Lebrijan farming community. Azorín shed light on the dire economic situation in Lebrija, a place whose calls for justice and regeneration went continuously unanswered. Azorín’s exposé was ultimately unsuccessful in neutralizing the tragedy he saw and lamented in Lebrija, which mirrors the fate of his regenerationist trio. “Los tres” failed to engineer a viable plan to make their noble mission of documenting and critiquing Spain’s serious socioeconomic problems (“poner al descubierto las miserias”) realize any actual reform. Instead, they assumed that a solution to these problems would manifest naturally once brought to the attention of a broader audience or society at large. “Los tres” and the young generation of
ideologically and aesthetically disparate artists that joined forces with them, saw their regenerationist project, though well-intentioned, promptly dissolve.

España negra and La Andalucía trágica share some key features. Despite their common ground, major differences remain. As we know, this chapter defines travel broadly as an incursion into the unknown, and travel writing as a dual process in documenting experience or movement and interrogating one’s inner-self. Azorín’s journey to Andalucía fits this model as it displaces him from his known, lived space in Madrid, while Regoyos’s journey leads him through regions with which he is familiar. The unknown for these travelers is distinct: Azorín encounters a place he has never visited, and Regoyos discovers another side of a known reality through an outsider’s (Verhaeren’s) perception of it. España negra details life in northern and central regions of Spain, while La Andalucía trágica documents one southern town, Lebrija, and its outskirts. Regoyos and Verhaeren embark on their journey on their own accord, whereas Azorín sets off under mandate from El Imparcial. Azorín’s articles uncover the social ills and injustices of one population, while Regoyos’s book engages with the irony and paradox of long-standing and far-reaching cultural issues and stereotypes across multiple groups. Regardless, in both works, travel writing served Regoyos and Azorín a means to assess Spain’s intellectual and economic stagnation using landscape as a tool of revelatory darkness.

In 1895 or 1896, Azorín moved to Madrid from Monóver (Valencia) to further his career as a journalist and author. In the capital, he wrote for prominent newspapers like El País, El Progreso, El Globo, España, La Federación, Blanco y Negro, El Imparcial, and ABC until 1965 becoming one of Spain’s most prolific journalistic writers and modernist novelists along the way. During his first years in the city, a period Francisco L. Otero calls “la lucha de Madrid,” Azorín’s radical ideas complicated his relationships with newspaper editors, and the highly competitive journalistic market made “la subsistencia casi milagrosa” (107-108). Between 1900 and 1905, in addition to collections of short fiction (i.e. Charivari and Bohemia from 1897), and his earliest
novels (i.e. *Diario de un enfermo* (1901), *La voluntad* (1902), *Antonio Azorín* (1903)), Azorín wrote a number of incendiary newspaper articles that divulged his anti-urbanist attitudes, harsh critique of the Restoration government, and calls for sociopolitical regeneration across Spain. In 1905, Azorín briefly collaborated with the liberal newspaper *El Imparcial* whose director, José Ortega y Munilla (father of philosopher José Ortega y Gasset), sent him on two important journeys. The first, to trace Don Quijote’s famous itinerary through Spain for the novel’s 300th anniversary (*La ruta de Don Quijote*) and the second journey, to investigate the drought-ravaged town of Lebrija in Andalucía. *La Andalucía trágica* was the fruit of this second trip, which has received considerably less critical attention than *La ruta*.

Interestingly, *La Andalucía trágica* is often overlooked or omitted in Azorín’s extensive travel narrative oeuvre. In his 2015 dissertation on Azorín’s journalistic travel literature, for instance, Abel Bri Agulló omits *La Andalucía trágica* from his study, “debido a que no se tratan de artículos de viajes sino, sobre todo, textos obtenidos de entrevistas con el objetivo de pulsar la situación del campo andaluz” (37). While it is true that this series is largely composed of redacted interviews that Azorín conducted in Lebrija, *La Andalucía trágica* undeniably possesses the core elements of literary travel narrative as defined in this chapter. The author explores an unknown territory accrues valuable information, and records it, incorporating picturesque landscape descriptions and literarily mapped social critique alongside his objective findings. To be sure, travel is crucial to the series, not only for making it possible in a practical sense, but also considering the importance that Azorín placed on the act of travel at the time. Ramón F. Llorens García finds that for Azorín, “el viaje es el elemento que vertebrá la denuncia social,” making travel not just a spatial and reflective practice, but also the tool that legitimized and mobilized his critique (231).

Para satisfacer ese interés, el director envía a Martínez Ruiz a una región que le es enteramente desconocida” (111). Azorín’s objective was straightforward and practical: go, see, and report on a topic of shared interest in order to inform a concerned public. While the information he puts forth – a combination of first-hand accounts, personal anecdotes, and statistical data – should have fit the bill for educating and satisfying a curious readership, the articles instead surfaced as a political threat, unearthing deep-rooted fears shared by El Imparcial’s audience and allies. Determined to enlighten his readers about the misery of Lebrija’s agrarian community as the Manifiesto de Los Tres had promised, he revealed the negative impact of systematized poverty, preservation of property rights for wealthy land-owners, and chronic governmental neglect on rural peasants, farmers, and day laborers. In doing so, Azorín offered a bold defense of these citizens that destabilized what the urban public likely understood of the status quo, insisting that the misery of this far-off region was perhaps closer than it seemed.

La Andalucía trágica opens with a narration in medias res. Azorín, traveling toward Lebrija, records the scene that unfolds before him through the passenger window of his third-class train car. The approaching Andalusian landscape is pleasant at first; “el paisaje es suave,” he says, “claro, plácido, confortador, de una dulzura imponderable” (195). A dark and ominous sky then rolls in, distorting and encroaching on the lands’ features and colors: “Y en el fondo, limitando el paisaje, haciendo resaltar toda la gama de los verdes, desde el obscuro hasta el presado, un amplio telón de un azul sombrío, grisáceo, plomizo, negruzco, se levanta” (197). This description may conjure up images of El Greco’s Vista de Toledo in one’s mind (Figure 1-4), an appropriate reference given the admiration of many modernists for the Renaissance painter.54

53 The reference to Spain’s interior reflects his recent travels through La Mancha retracing Don Quijote’s itinerary for La ruta de Don Quijote. His descriptions also recall the dry, barren, and antagonistic landscapes that he would create for Castilla in 1912 that was mentioned briefly above.
54 Jurkevich identifies a “general enthusiasm for El Greco and Toledo shared by members of the Generation of 1898,” (In Pursuit 75). Like many others, Azorín found inspiration in El Greco, not only his specific paintings but also his distinctive style. In Azorín’s Diario de un enfermo, for example, “the impact of El Greco is not so much through allusion to specific paintings, but in the evocation of the painter’s style to
Azorín mimics El Greco’s sharp land-sky divide in his own landscape, where an idyllic, tranquil ground meets an imposingly dark sky at the horizon. The writer’s bifurcated landscape, as I call it, communicates a sense of divide or rupture between distinct yet connected realms. As if channeling El Greco’s split yet harmonious landscape, Azorín sets the stage for his repeated exposure of the socioeconomic and ideological divides between Spain’s social classes and regional consciousness as he observes Lebrijan life and reflects on his time there. This rift manifests in various forms – distrust of poor jornaleros toward wealthy landowners, or conceptual disconnect between peasant farmers and state officials, for example – but ultimately reflects Azorín’s anxiety over uneven modernization in rural versus urban regions, which drove an even deeper wedge between the rural working class and the urban elite. Later, he refers to this tension as the problem of “las dos Españas.”

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inform the protagonist’s psychic and emotional states of mind” (Jurkevich, *In Pursuit* 76-77). This horizontal division is a common motif in El Greco’s paintings, famously in *El entierro del Conde de Orgaz* (1586).  
55 Public domain image, housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Azorín stops in Seville before continuing on to Lebrija; he records his impressions of both. In Seville he sees “sevillanas que caminan aironas por las callejas con la flor escarlata en sus cabellos de ébano,” while in Lebrija, “quince, treinta labriegos [...] con gestos de tedio, de estupor [...] inmóviles, cabizbajos, con sus sombreros sobre la frente” (204, 206-207, 209). In the city, “todas las casas están abiertas; todos los balcones se hallan de par en par,” but in the pueblo, “las puertas y los balcones aparecen cerrados” (203, 205). In Seville, “gorjean los canarios; tocan los organillos [...] se grita con largas voces melodiosas,” but in Lebrija, “no se oye en todo el pueblo ni un grito, ni un ruido, ni una canción” (203, 206). These realities — a picturesque, open, and lively Seville versus a stagnant, closed-up, and mute Lebrija — are in total opposition. While this dichotomy is admittedly stereotypical, it is crucial to observe how Azorín, pitting a costumbrista Seville against a decadent Lebrija, mirrors the tense and dissonant landscape he conjured at the start of La Andalucía trágica. Throughout his five articles, Azorín builds upon this split landscape foundation, an image so fundamentally fractured in terms of tone and color that the motif of irresolute divide permeates the series, intensifying along the way. This sense of tension weighing on his mind from the start, Azorín explores Spain’s strained sense of modern national identity through the communicative medium of landscape and his interactions with Lebrija’s people, places, and politics.

Azorín feels called to Lebrija to portray the darkness of “la Andalucía trágica que ha venido por lo pronto a buscar el cronista” far removed from folkloric artifice (203-204). Though he does not explicitly align himself with the designation, as a chronicler Azorín would be the mouthpiece of El Imparcial, relaying facts chronologically to its readership precisely as they occurred. However, as the first lines of the second article of La Andalucía trágica show, Azorín adopts a more unassuming role: “Ya estoy en Lebrija. Yo no quiero engañar al lector; yo no soy un sociólogo, ni un periodista ilustre; yo soy un hombre vulgar a quien no le acontece nada” (204). Sidestepping any definitive title, Azorín positions himself as an
honest and everyday traveler (he does not “engañar,” he is “vulgar”) beginning his journey in Lebrija. The reality is that Azorín was no humble traveler – he quotes Montaigne immediately following the quote I mention, to give an idea – but presenting himself as such gives him more creative license in a way. Azorín, in contrast, saw the journalist as an artist: “El arte del periodista es el de saber contar. El de saber narrar los hechos, y el de explicar las fases, los matices, los pormenores de un problema político o social. Y esa explicación – con su jerarquía de tonos y de valores – también es contar, relatar” (qtd. by Otero 103-104). “La noticia,” for Azorín, was the primary component of press writing, and creative recourse to landscape helps him reveal the darkness of a community in dire need of regeneration.

Even dodging the label of chronicler, historian, or diligent reporter, the fact of the matter is that he was, in fact, a journalist, and that despite the creative spin he put on his travel articles, they were consumed as information. During his time in Lebrija, Azorín interacts with locals and introduces them to his audience, not in great detail due to the limited time and space his articles allow, but sufficiently enough to craft a humanized portrait of the hard working, intelligent, and, above all else, dejected Lebrijan population. He constantly addresses an anonymous “vosotros” throughout La Andalucía trágica, asking them questions, directing them, and making them another character in his story, a participant in the reality he constructs via creative documentation. This frequent second person apostrophe naturally inclines a reader to feel included in the “vosotros,” which is especially impactful in the later articles, which become increasingly critical and cynical with time.

56 Many of the individuals Azorín describes are nameless, though he introduces a handful by name, occupation, and demeanor. These include Benito López Cano, the “lebrijanito, descalzo, tostado por el sol,” who guides Azorín to Lebrija’s only inn (205); Consolación, the innkeeper; Juan, the “mozo del casino” (209); a group of labriegos (Pedro, Juan, Pepe Luis, Manuel, Ginés, and Antonio); Don Luis, the town doctor; and Tío Joaquinito, nearby Arcos de la Frontera’s resident philosopher.
57 He does the same in Los pueblos, a series of articles published in España in 1904 documenting small town life in northern Spain. These are notably less “dark” than La Andalucía trágica, but it may be worth comparing these and Regyos’s España negra for similarities or differences on another occasion.
An early example comes in Azorín’s first article, “En Sevilla,” which evokes the spirit and energy of the eponymous city’s bustling crowds: “¿No veis aquí ya, en los andenes, yendo y viniendo, los tipos castizos, pintorescos de la tierra sevillana? ¿No observáis ya estos gestos, estos ademanes, estos movimientos tan peculiares, tan privativos de estos hombres?” (198-199). His rhetorical questioning goes on, prompting the “vosotros” to picture romanticized stock imagery of Sevillian types, drawing them into the narrative. This technique, I suggest, justifies Azorín’s stereotypical rhetoric (noted above) in some respect. These folkloric scenes in serve as a necessary point of entry for the rest of the harsh critique that would follow. La Andalucía trágica emerged in installments during April of 1905, which meant that Azorín had not only to attract but to keep the public’s attention while conveying the urgency of the situation south of the capital.

His costumbrista descriptions of Andalucía’s beautiful women, romantic gypsies, and leisurely señoritos constructs a relatable and non-threatening frame of reference that entertains readers and piques their curiosity, ideally inspiring them to read subsequent articles wherein lies much more of the tragedy of Lebrijan life.

One of the main causes of hardship in Lebrija and other pueblos in Andalusia at the time of Azorín’s travels was unemployment. Azorín learns this as he lives amongst the pueblo’s jobless farmers and day laborers who struggled fiercely to feed their families and stay afloat on a daily basis. “Todos están parados, inactivos,” he notes, explaining that nearly all of them had previously worked in the vineyards of Jerez, which had fallen into economic depression (212). Promptly, Azorín suggests, “hay, lector, un medio de conjurar, por lo pronto, el conflicto; pero es preciso no olvidar que estamos en España” (212). This cynical comment is prompted by the fact

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58 Some of Azorín’s continued rhetorical questions include: “¿No archiváis, para vuestros recuerdos, esta manera de comenzar a andar […]? ¿Y este modo, cuando se camina de prisa, de zarandear los brazos […]? ¿Y esta suerte de permanecer arrimados a una pared o a un árbol, con un aire de resignación suprema y mundana? ¿Y el desgare y gallardía con que un labriego o un obrero llevan la chaquetilla al hombro? ¿Y esta mirada de una profunda y súbita comprensión […]? ¿Y este encorvamiento de espaldas y de hombros que se hace después de haber apurado una copa?” (199).
that plans for the construction of a highway to neighboring Trebujena, which would provide much-needed jobs, were passed but stalled, inexplicably caught up in a sea of red tape. "He aquí las dos Españas," says Azorín, “no hagáis, vosotros, los que llenáis las Cámaras y los ministerios, que los que viven en las fábricas y en los campos vean en vosotros la causa de sus dolores" (213).

The two Spains that Azorín identifies here occupy either side of a class division, namely, the working classes versus the elite and administrative classes. He calls the latter to action, imploring them to change or intervene so as not to be part of the problems accosting Lebrija. This is a lofty request as he himself admits. Deeming the situation a “conflicto,” Azorín, as if anticipating the anarchy that would soon break out amongst workers in the south, signals the stalwart antagonism undergirding the strained relationship between pueblo and State.

The social critique that Azorín launches here and throughout La Andalucía trágica recalls the pessimistic disillusionment that romantic-costumbrista journalist Mariano José de Larra expressed during the early nineteenth-century in his extensive oeuvre of satirical essays and articles. Though tremendously inspirational for Azorín and his generation, Larra endured devastating censorship from the Spanish press of his time for the caustic social commentary that steered much of his writing. Larra used the cuadro de costumbres – descriptive vignettes of everyday life and people that were popular throughout nineteenth-century Europe – as a means of critique and protest, a technique that Azorín borrows from in La Andalucía trágica as well. Over the course of his short life, Larra became more and more distraught over his futile efforts to express truthfully the disdain he felt for the corrupt and unjust politics that then shaped Spanish society, when in 1837 he committed suicide at just 27 years-of-age (Iarocci 389). Azorín’s admiration for Larra is clear in La Voluntad (1902) whose quasi-autobiographic narrator, Antonio

59 The irony of this fact is doubled given the fact that the previous year, when Lebrija was experiencing similar difficulties, workers made a salary through a nearly identical project, paving a road to nearby Montellano.
Azorín, along with a group of other intellectuals make a pilgrimage to Larra’s tomb on the 64th anniversary of his death. The narrator venerates Larra’s life and work in a speech honoring the figure he considers a teacher and friend to his generation; “¡Sí!” he exclaims, “es un hombre raro…y legendario!” (187).

While their lives and careers ultimately followed distinct paths, Larra’s satirical yet biting social critiques lived on in Azorín, especially in his earlier journalistic endeavors, which commented on the same types of flaws that his romantic predecessor had decried decades prior. In La Andalucía trágica’s third article, “Los obreros de Lebrija,” Azorín interviews a group of men – Pedro, Juan, Pepe, Luis, Manuel, Ginés, and Antonio – who explain the near impossible task of living as farmers in this time of crisis. After some encouragement from his interlocutor, Antonio gives a passionate account of his and his companions’ futile efforts to make ends meet when the only real option they have is to work fields owned by landowners who in turn exploit their labor. He claims that large-scale redistribution of wealth is the solution, where the State would expropriate parcels of uncultivated land around Lebrija from many of these propietarios and sell them directly to the labriegos. However, Antonio recognizes a fundamental problem in this idealistic conceptualization: without establishing credit and loan systems for day laborers and common farmers, this type of massive reform is little more than a utopic dream.

To add insult to injury, the labriegos then explain to Azorín that the State had repeatedly ignored their cries for help and demands for change in the past. Indignant, Azorín addresses his readers once again:

Yo quiero que temáis y respetéis a estos hombres, que a vosotros os parecen insignificantes y opacos, a estos hombres que pasan inadvertidos por la vida: ellos hacen las cosas grandes, ellos son tremendos, ellos guían e inspiran a las muchedumbres en las revoluciones (220).

The timing that Azorín suggests here places the action of the novel in 1901, one year before its publication. Among the group of intellectuals is Antonio Azorín’s friend Enrique Olaiz who José María Martínez Cachero identifies as a representation of Pío Baroja (69).
Staking a bold defense of the *labriegos*, Azorín insists at the same time on a very possible and serious harbored in this self-conscious working community. In Lebrija, a place where until that time regeneration had been absent, impossible it seemed, the potential for revolution was present indeed. The *labriegos* as Azorín presents them to the reader, embodied in Antonio and his striking monologue, are perceptive of the systems that impede their success and autonomy, and are fully capable of revolution.

On another occasion, Don Luis, Lebrija’s town doctor, discloses that the great illness of Andalusia (“el mal de Andalucía”) is that “no se come” (228). Without proper nutrition, cases of anemia and tuberculosis increased and/or worsened, another cause for the deep hatred (“odio”) existing between *obrero* and *patron* in Lebrija. Don Luis mentions the two main ideas that shape the modern psyche of the humble Andalusian farmer: “primera, ‘el amo es el enemigo’; segunda, ‘las leyes se hacen para los ricos’” (231). The irony is, of course, that at this time Spain was sill largely an agrarian society, and the *campesinos* providing resources for the rest of the country, the “sostenes de la patria,” were themselves suffering, starving, and dying (232). Having faced the tragedy of Lebrija first-hand, Azorín, in one of his more disillusioned moments, admits, “cuando tocan de cerca estas realidades, todas las esperanzas que pudiéramos alimentar sobre una reconstrucción próxima de España, desaparecen” (231). Jaques Maurice points out that Azorín’s own mistrust of politics and politicians, which contrasts with his concern for field and factory workers, is a sign of his lasting diminished anarchist sensibility (105). Quelling the *labriegos’* anger and resentment demanded bridging the gaps between rich and poor, powerful and weak, which he knew was a tall order.

As if bookending this accumulation of wretchedness, the first and final articles of the series shift focus to nature. While the first landscape of *La Andalucía trágica* anticipates Azorín’s constant indictment of Spain’s sociopolitical divides, his final one precipitates its provocative ending. The last article published, “Arcos y su filósofo,” opens with the journalist’s most
picturesque landscape of all, following his rhetorical inquiry, “¿qué es lo que más cautiva vuestra sensibilidad de artistas?” (233). From beginning to end of this article, Azorín engages his “vosotros,” imploring them to create and experience the natural beauty of Arcos de la Frontera, a nearby mountain town along with him. He instructs his readers, “imaginad la meseta plana […] ponid sobre ella casitas blancas y vetustos caserones negruzcos […] colócad al pie de esta muralla un río,” and guides them through winding streets – “pasáis […] proseguis […] a vuestra mano izquierda […] camináis” etc. – to awe-inspiring overlooks and breathtaking panoramas (233, 234-237).

Eventually, the “vosotros” arrives at the home of “gran filósofo” Tío Joaquinito, who, comparing modern Spanish existence to the Passion of Christ, offers an appraisal of Spanish life in his authentic Andalusian speech: “nosotros etamo aquí sufriendo a lo Gobierno que no asotan” (239). With this in mind, Azorín ventriloquizes the reader in a final conclusion, claiming that the words uttered by this “talabartero filósofo perdido en una serranía abrupta” reflect the thoughts of every one across the country (239). In effect, he expands the commentary made about a single, distressed town to apply to all regions and peoples, rural and urban, nation-wide. What once may have appeared a far-removed tragedy for the urban reader gains new proximity as his arguments extend beyond los labriegos de Lebrija to toda España. So ends La Andalucía trágica, with collective resignation and submission to governmental abuse.

When Ortega y Murillo assigned him this project, Azorín had a reason to embark on his journey and a public platform, El Imparcial, from which to pronounce his concerns and launch his commentary. The first-hand knowledge he gained while travelling was a reliable source of information insofar as it was news in the eyes of his intended audience. Travel, therefore, was a

61 The Passion, of course, refers to the final period in the life of Jesus Christ, including his arrival to Jerusalem, his last supper with the disciples, his trial before Pontius Pilot, his bearing the cross to Mount Calvary, and finally his crucifixion. In Christian doctrine, this represents the ultimate culmination of sacrifice and salvation on behalf of all-forgiving and benevolent God in Heaven.
tool that legitimized and disseminated his critique. However, the impact of Azorín’s articles was principally Azorín’s silencing. I return now to Francisco Otero’s comments on *La Andalucía trágica*, which reveals the fate of the articles:

¿Se publicaron todas? Azorín asegura que no […] quedaron disgustados el presidente del Consejo, el propietario y político don Rafael Gasset, un sector de la clientela de *El Imparcial*, la redacción ya estaba disgustada desde que Azorín pisó el periódico. Eran demasiadas presiones y Ortega y Munilla, muy a su pesar, tuvo que retirarle la colaboración. (111-112)

First censored and then silenced, following his dismissal from *El Imparcial*, Azorín began writing for the conservative newspaper *ABC*, which would become his so-called journalistic home from 1905-1930, and again from 1942-1965. With his move to *ABC*, Azorín’s political outlooks continued to shift away from the radical anarchism of his youth, turning increasingly disillusioned with failed attempts to enact real, lasting change over time. It is useful, I believe, to look at *La Andalucía trágica* as a catalyst of sorts for his ideological turn and development, as well as something of a final effort in the spirit of the short-lived “Los tres.”

Azorín wrote another set of travel articles before *La Andalucía trágica* entitled *Los pueblos*, and years later both series would be published together in book form. In the epilogue for *Los pueblos*, “Epílogo en 1960,” which in contemporary editions is also the epilogue for *La Andalucía trágica*, Azorín imagines a time in the future when, after his own death, his work and persona are completely unknown, forgotten by a world that carried on without heeding his painstakingly crafted writings. His apparent anxiety at the prospect of anonymity after death translates into a concern that the written word is ultimately futile, a sentiment that we detect in *La Andalucía trágica*’s abrupt end and truncated history. Azorín creates a space of travel in *La Andalucía trágica* that demands self-reflection and interpretation from its reader, a reader that the author knows well. He too belonged to the oft-frivolous intelligentsia of Madrid, wrote for the newly emerging bourgeoisie, and was no stranger to the bureaucratic operations that he criticized throughout. Change, he understands, must come primarily from those with the power and
resources necessary to implement reform and regeneration, but naturally, theory without practice rarely resolves such calamitous issues as the ones he points out.

**Solana’s Human Landscape: Transformation and Expression**

In a 1944 biographical study, Ramón Gómez de la Serna praised José Gutiérrez-Solana for his ability to capture Spain’s illusory and fantastical reality on both page and canvas. “Porque el realismo español es eso,” asserts Ramón, “la realidad velada y entrevista a través de un ensueño, quizá a través del ensueño más ensoñador, el ensueño adelantado de la muerte” (1400). For Solana, an avid observer of the world around him, death is perhaps the only certain reality that humankind can count on as a constant in life, which explains his unceasing fixation on mortality and the threat of devastation. Rather than witnessing life unfold before him through rose-colored glasses, Solana peers unflinchingly through darkened lenses that cast ominous shadows over much of what he observes, that corrupt his vision of Spain, as it were.\(^62\) While his critics may consider his negative and somber perspective as a hyperbolic obsession with the morbid and the morose, his allies, like Ramón, recognize authenticity and sincerity in the darkness that he channels. Solana’s somber vision dilutes the glimpses of conventional beauty he occasionally allows, and dismantles ideas of social hierarchy and order. Obscene prostitutes, immoral clergymen, violent pimps, pitiful beggars, and other unsavory figures are Solana’s preferred protagonists, whose painful and miserable lives fascinate yet deeply trouble him. His extensive travel throughout Spain in the early 1900s helped him to explore and expose his country’s societal defects and character.

\(^{62}\) Ana Rodríguez Fischer adopts this metaphor in the title of her article, “Sin gafas de vidrio color rosa en los ojos: La España negra de José Gutiérrez Solana,” which offers an analysis of Solana’s aesthetic sensibilities in *La España negra* and other short fragments of texts. The metaphor of looking through dark-colored glasses is commonly attributed to modernist authors and painters in Spain who examined questions related to “Black Spain” (Regoyos, Solana, Zuloaga, Azorín, Baroja, Valle-Inclán, etc.) due to their indebtedness to using observation and experience as a key element of their artistic or literary expression.
Indisputably one of Spain’s greatest expressionist painters, Solana was also an accomplished author in his own right, having published six books between 1913 and 1926. Still, as a writer he rarely receives equal attention when compared to other authors of his time. Camilo José Cela was one of the first authors to praise Solana’s literary skill separately from his artistic talent, when in 1957 he gave a posthumous dedication to the painter-author before the Real Academia Española. In addition to his celebratory words, Cela signaled the ekphrastic qualities of Solana’s oeuvre – that is, his tendency to write what he painted, or vice versa – which would captivate scholars like Weston Flint, José Luis Barrio-Garay, Elton Martín Anglada-Segarra, and few others for years to come.63 “Los cuadros de Solana tienen, como sus páginas, aventura; las páginas de Solana tienen, como sus cuadros, color,” says Cela, “todas las ideas y las figuraciones todas de Solana, tuvieron, al menos, dos versiones: una, plástica y, la otra, literaria” (68, 70).

My intention here is to go beyond an ekphrasistic study and suggest that Solana’s literary work critically portrays what he perceives a largely inequitable experience of modernity across Spain. Stepping out of his native Madrid, Solana travels all ends of the country, following in Regoyos’s footsteps but also lengthening his stride to scrutinize the darkest corners and most stigmatized populations of modern Spanish society. Solana’s reality is incredibly variable. The critical assessments he makes throughout La Espana negra show his apprehension over progress and its implications, while lamenting the dire impacts of economic and intellectual stagnation for many across the nation, which is no fault of their own. The aim of this section is to examine how,

63 Much of this work occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. Take the following examples. Flint: “El pintor [Solana] no puede ni siquiera expresar sus emociones de un modo directo, como hace el escritor, sino que tiene que sugerir lo que quiere decir, lo que siente, a través de los objetos que pinta. Cuando el pintor Solana se dedica al arte de la prosa descriptiva, lo vemos operando de la misma manera. A través de su descripción objetiva de las cosas, de las gentes y lugares, ha de deducirse su visión particular de la realidad” (Solana, escritor 17). Diez-Cañedo (in Barrio-Garay): “Solana is a painter twice; once with the brush, again with the pen. But he is always a painter. The case of a painter writing is neither new nor rare. Less frequent, however, is that the qualities which he shows in one of his arts reach intrinsic equivalence in the other” (108); Cela: “Solana - bien claro nos lo dice su labor - pinta, con el pincel o con la pluma, lo que ve delante de sus ojos, pero - cuidado - no exclusivamente lo que ve delante de sus ojos, sino tamizadamente, analíticamente, lo que ve con sus ojos,” (56).
through the conventions of travel narrative and his own brand of sociological study of modern types, Solana renders a human landscape in *La España negra* (1920) that interrogates Spain’s ability or willingness to adapt (or not) to intense change during the early twentieth century. By human landscape I mean a natural landscape, rendered on page or canvas, which incorporates the people living in or around it as constitutive and inseparable forms of the panorama. Solana offers a broader picture of Spain’s pained and suffering inhabitants than Regoyos or Azorín, expanding his view to include pimps, prostitutes, ragpickers, charlatans, and criminals.

“[T]oda su obra,” says Elton Martín Anglada-Segarra of Solana, “es una especie de búsqueda de lo castizo, de lo real español, de lo no pervertido por el sentido de lo pintoresco o lo teatral” (139). Like Regoyos, Solana’s aesthetic disposition was conditioned by a search for rootedness, “lo castizo…lo real español” (think Unamuno’s *En torno al casticismo*) undeniably evoking the importance of historical Castile and its noble landscapes when it comes to defining or redefining the nation. The painter-author’s 1920 travel narrative *La España negra* records this search for Spanishness in a collaged account of various trips made between 1913 and 1919, all compressed into one composite journey. Solana’s itinerary included Santander, Santoña, Medina del Campo, Valladolid, Segovia, Ávila, Oropesa, Tembleque, Placencia, Catalayud, Zamora, Madrid, and more. Similar, but not identical, was Regoyos’s and Verhaeren’s 1888 voyage through Santander, Guetaria la vieja, Guipuzcoa, San Sebastián, Pamplona, Zaragoza, Sigüenza, Madrid, and Ávila.

Rodríguez Fischer claims incorrectly that “Solana repitió el viaje de Regoyos y Verhaeren.” While Solana visits the places Regoyos and Verhaeren traversed in 1888, he goes to others, in a different order, and shares more details. Furthermore, contrary to what many contemporary editions of *La España negra* may suggest, Solana’s travel narrative was originally published with no illustrations. Editor decisions to insert his drawings into the text suggest, perhaps, an attempt to draw a parallel between his and Regoyos’s work or to mimic his personal notebooks (many housed in the archives at the Biblioteca Reina Sofía).
imperative. Using unsettling imagery and implicit criticism, Solana assesses Spain’s moral and spiritual identity, rendering a Black Spain that builds on many of the observations Regoyos had made before him.66

Solana’s *La España negra*, like Regoyos’s *España negra*, is first and foremost a product of travel throughout Spain, meaning that movement inspired and enabled his critiques and what critics like Barrio-Garay call his disquieting realism.67 Solana’s space of travel is one where modernity is sporadic and often fails or disappoints those who depend on it. Unlike Azorín, Solana does not blatantly attack political institutions or stake a clear ideological claim, and his words frequently leave the reader needing to extrapolate meaning from the text for themselves.68

Between 1904 and 1936, Solana participated in Madrid’s prominent modernist and avant-garde circles including the tertulias and the Café Nuevo Levante and famously the Café del Pombo. In this company, he became increasingly interested in examining and dissecting life in the capital’s barrios bajos and strove (unsuccessfully) to understand human existence.69 Despite common interests and concerns, Solana never fully aligned with any one particular artistic or intellectual group.70 To demonstrate, in the prologue to *Madrid Callejero* (1923), Solana distances himself from the so-called Generación del 98 for failing their regenerationist mission, and disparages new

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66 Barrio-Garay suggests that Solana’s concern over questions of death started with Regoyos’s *España negra*. In his discussion of Solana’s *Burning Town*, a 1907 painting that depicts a group of women witnessing or falling victim to the chaos of a burning building in the middle of a narrow street, he says: “The date indicates how early [Solana] used his own highly expressive imagery in portraying themes stimulated by Regoyos. This painting contains psychological overtones not found in Regoyos’s work” (51).

67 The material for *La España* derives from the travels Solana made throughout Spain during 1913 and 1919, as well as his knowledge of Regoyos’s *España negra* (1899).

68 Spanish writer and journalist Constantino Suárez el “Españolito,” vocally denounced writers who, like Solana, Regoyos, and Azorín, degraded their country through cynicism and negative representations of reality. He deemed this “antipatriotic behavior” (ese proceder antipatriótico) even if inspired by love for one’s country (101). Solana’s insistence in being, above all, a patriot is, therefore, quite interesting.

69 Solana was notably a regular contertulio of the Nuevo Café de Levante, Café de Pombo, and other prominent locales, alongside major literary and artistic figures like Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Pío and Ricardo Baroja, Ramón del Valle-Inclán, Ignacio Zuloaga, and many more.

70 This was likely at least in part due to his personal problems and his difficult character. “He drank excessively,” reports José Luis Barrio-Garay, “brooding and nostalgic, inarticulate, socially awkward, tortured by inner conflicts, religious doubts, and the chaotic spirit of his milieu, he was one of those men who hold to their convictions with controlled vehemence” (17).
groups of *cubistas, futuristas, and dadaístas* of the burgeoning avant-garde that “a [él le] huele [a] puchero de enfermo” (465). The period spanning 1913 to 1919 marks his era of travel, dedicated to exploring small towns and agrarian societies throughout Extremadura, Castile, Aragón, Cantabria, the Basque Provinces, and other parts of the country. As a traveler, he favored visiting poor neighborhoods or rural towns where he would find, as he saw it, the sincerest and most unveiled essence of humanity. Immersing himself in these places and among its people, Solana observed and revealed in art or text the dark, unknown, and unseen.

Sight is perhaps the most important of the senses for Solana, and ironically, his renditions of seeing or observing sometimes reveal moral or intellectual blindness. Solana carefully observes his surroundings and tells the continued story of uneven modernization and paradoxical modernity in Spain, which extended into the first decades of the twentieth century and beyond. While travelling Spain, recalls Manuel Sánchez-Camargo, Solana “se hace político […] habla mal, muy mal, de los Gobiernos ‘que no ven’ estas cosas,” (123). What Solana perceived as the State’s blindness was an ignorance, willful or otherwise, of the stagnation and decay of the *secanos*, the central and northern dry regions of Spain including Castile and Extremadura, where little had changed in terms of quotidian struggle over the previous decades: land redistribution had not undergone any reform, wealthy landowners continued to prosper, poor farmers scraped by, small town life remained static, and cities continued to modernize. Like his fellow modernist travel writers, Solana was dedicated to living the realities he portrayed in his literature and art, choosing, nonetheless, to render only portions of the world he witnessed over the years.

Like other Black Spain authors and artists, the portions of Spanish reality to which Solana was most attracted were the decidedly dark and somber ones, and for him the darker the

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71 Critics have studied the role of other senses in Solana as well. Weston Flint’s “Sounds in the *Obra Literaria* of José Gutiérrez Solana” and Maria T Pao’s “‘Dad vigor a mi lengua’: Orality and ‘Costumbrismo’ in Gutiérrez Solana’s Madrid” are two such examples.
reality the more emotive. Though his vision is unflinching and minutely descriptive, Solana often leaves loose ends and makes inconclusive judgements, lending his work, especially his narrative work, a modern brand of ambiguity. In contrast to Regoyos, whose ambiguousness lies in vacillating judgements of Verhaeren’s impressions of Spain, Solana is ambivalent in the sense that his textual and visual representations of objectively negative or disturbing subject matter is contingent and unresolved, often hinting at critique, but shying away from it at the same time. The result is an unspoken invitation to participate in the interpretive act as a reader or viewer, an unfinished and unrefined quality that earns Solana an undeniable place in Spanish modernism.

In Zamora Solana portrays a company of prostitutes who expose the bruises and scars covering their bodies for passersby to see, and in Ávila, he recalls a group of sickly women who show a visiting doctor the sores and lumps disfiguring their and their children’s skin (384, 442). In revealing the effects of cyclical abuse or chronic illness, these unfortunate subjects exhibit ailments that have no chance of healing without serious intervention. Seen from Solana’s perspective, the powers able to institute the regulations and resources necessary to deal with the exploitation, disease, and other social maladies in depressed communities like the ones to which these individuals pertain do not see, or perhaps do not care, how these issues devastate so many and so often across the nation. The regenerationist metaphor of Spain as a sickly body and in need of healing is embodied in these wretched figures, who Solana abandons, so to speak, in narrative shifts and breaks that tell us nothing of their actual fate. Frequently, the suspense and discomfort he builds through minutely detailing disturbing or disgusting realities falls off as he abruptly curtails one vignette to move on to another. In these cases, misery is plainly visible, yet nothing is resolved since vision in isolation – that is, without any critical mindset or ideas – is just as good

72 The above mentioned scene in Zamora ends with Solana’s description of one of the prostitutes decaying body and countenance, while the one in Ávila, ends as Solana finishes eating and leaves the inn without paying more thought to the ill women and children.
as blindness. As mentioned previously, Solana’s concern over the plight of the poor, hungry, and miserable runs parallel to his uncertainty or anxiety over the prospect of realizing effective and long-lasting change as a country under a continuously shifting and convulsing Restoration government. The overtly pessimistic conclusions that Solana seems to draw throughout his book, his abandonment of both the corrupted prostitutes and leprous women mentioned here included, pass harsh and negative judgement on the nature of the status quo.

Throughout *La España negra* Solana notes condemned houses, veiled religious icons, boarded-up windows, and other similar images, creating a motif of observed concealment that insinuates the need, yet supposed impossibility, of critical and impactful reflection on life. This shifting dynamic between the necessity and futility of critical vision and reflection alludes to the essence of Solana’s revelatory darkness. He, the so-called “Black Knight of Spanish Painting,” constructed an overwhelmingly somber version of Spain, perhaps the darkest of the modernists in this dissertation, which, though enlightening in its no-nonsense depictions of darkness (Barrio Garay 19). His resolutely pessimistic aesthetic was fodder for attack and cause for intrigue among his critics. For example, in 1927, Juan Bereber writes an article for *La Voz* accusing Solana of self-serving and wicked (*endemoniado*) manipulation of reality as the basis for his macabre sensibility (“Semblanzas: La paleta de Solana”). Benito Dionisio describes Solana’s cheerless art as a reflection of his profound inner turmoil in a 1929 article for *El Orzán*:

> En las exposiciones de Solana hay siempre una nota sombría. Sentimos la sensación de que contemplamos el mundo exterior a través de unos cristales ennegrecidos y que este ennegrecimiento es el reflejo de una vida tumultuosa, horrorosa, sensual que expira en la inacción de seres que han quedado paralizados. (“Apuntes: El arte de José Solana”)73

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73 Dionisio’s language is reminiscent of Constantino Suarez “El Españolito’s” critique of turn-of-the-century Spanish writers’ tendency to degrade their country through pessimistic or nihilistic attitudes. He claims: “…hánse puesto ante los ojos unas inmóviles gafas negras, muy negras, y ni el agua es transparente ni lo blanco deja de ser plomizo ni el sol es luminoso…” (101-102).
Bereber and Dionisio, among others, signal the importance of perspective in Solana’s Black Spain, a reality that he and all other practitioners of this aesthetic do, perceives through an intentionally adjusted and darkened lens. One should therefore be suspicious of Solana’s imperative, “hay que pintar todo, sin engaños,” which has convinced many scholars of his insatiable quest for truth (Sánchez-Camargo 268). Solana’s narratives and paintings, frequently confuse reality and fantasy, the animate and the inanimate, or even life and death, not to mention the profound complexity underpinning notions of truth and falsity.

What is certain for Solana is that death is a primary concern that features front and center in much of his literary and artistic production. Exemplifying this claim is his striking work El fin del mundo (1932) (Figure 1-5), the final of a series of paintings that interrogate the prospect of humanity’s end, which seems to suggest that “the ultimate fate of the world will be succumbing to the dead,” (Barrio-Garay 119).

Figure 1-5: José Gutiérrez-Solana, *El fin del mundo* (1932)©

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74 The question of truth is fraught with difficulty in any rendition of reality since it always entails personal or subjective expression. It is contradictory to acknowledge Solana’s biased artistic eye and at the same time argue that his ultimate mission is to uncover the truth, especially without qualifying what precisely that truth is to begin with. Solana’s bleak vision of Spain is not false or invented, as art critic Fernando De’Lapi suggests, but neither is it true qua universal: “Solana ve esa España, que á buen seguro existe todavía – aunque coexista otra asimismo, pero menos interesante para él, menos pictórica ó pintoresca, si se quiere – y la pinta con la sinceridad de los grandes realistas” (“Madrid-Solana”).

75 *El fin del mundo*, © image courtesy of Colección Banco Santander.
Apart from the traditional eschatological themes and imagery that Solana conveys here, it is noteworthy that the chaotic world he renders is a modern one (Barrio-Garay 119). The sinking steamboats in the background allude to modernization, a case of failing or failed new technology, which, alongside the upturned carriages and common fishing boats, also confirms modernity’s progress in the sense that old and new vehicles occupy the same space. The figures in the foreground are clothed in then contemporary garb for a rural population, further confirming the scene’s in the moment modern-ness. While he undeniably considers aesthetic and philosophical traditions past, Solana situates his Black Spain, along with his anxieties over the end of the world as he and the nation know it, squarely in the twentieth-century.

The contact or conflation of life and death evident in El fin del mundo exists throughout Solana’s paintings and writings, La España negra included. Meditation on death is a constant in this book and begins, appropriately enough, with the “Prólogo de un muerto.” This prologue tells the surreal tale of Solana’s death and resurrection, which explores his personal anxieties about the limits of his life and abilities, as well as universal questions of mortality. First, he reflects on the writing process and the work that had gone into creating the book in our hands, admitting that when it came time to write the prologue he wondered, “¿Sería incapaz de hacerlo? ¿Tendría que recurrir a otro?” (295). His modernist stream-of-consciousness and metafictional reflections point to his anxieties over authorship and authorial legacy, caused notably by the “voz escalofriante” that for years had threatened him, “tú no verás publicado tu libro” (295). Despite the fact that the book was indeed published – we are reading it, after all – Solana’s despondency persists as he sets the prologue’s action in motion: “Yo me he muerto, lector, creo que me he muerto; este libro quedará sin prólogo” (296).76 The act of reading the very text that its author claims will never be

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76 It is worth noting that Solana wrote this prologue while “absorbed in the atmosphere of Pombo and Ultraitism,” and that, “the prologue reflects the power of suggestion, irrationality, and super-realism advocated by those two influences” (Barrio-Garay 103). The Pombo is the famous Madrid tertulia led by Ramón Gómez de la Serna, and ultraism was a short-lived but intense avant-garde movement that
written sets the stage, so to speak, for the unanticipated and contradictory readings of life and society that unfold throughout *La España negra*.

"Prólogo de un muerto," as mentioned previously, is a deep reflection on mortality and potentiality. In José de Espronceda-like fashion, the painter-author imagines himself dead, at his own funeral and at the same time witnessing it all:

Así ha sucedido; soy yo el que me veo entre cuatro velas, que proyectan fantásticas sombras en la habitación y que es lo único que me distrae en esta soledad; tengo los brazos rígidos a lo largo del cuerpo […] un pañuelo negro, que seguramente subió la portera, oprime fuertemente mi mandíbula […] seguramente lo puso para que no se desarticulara mi mandíbula y no me desfigurara; para mí es un tormento’ varias veces he intentado chillar, abrir la boca; pero este pañuelo parece de hierro, me oprime con tal fuerza que me impide hacer el menor movimiento […] los ojos los tengo cerrados, pero veo tan claramente la habitación como cuando tenía vida […] lo que más me inquietaba y me producía verdadero horror es el no oír pasos en toda la casa; parecía ésta desierta, nadie me velaba, se habían olvidado de mí; (296-297)

The narrator’s split consciousness – Solana as observer of a cadaver and Solana as cadaver at the same time – confuses reality with illusion and life with death. As such, from the very beginning, the blurred line between authenticity or reliability and artifice comes and remains at the fore of the narrative. Inside the coffin, immobile and mute, Solana recalls being lucidly aware of the restraints holding his arms and jaws, feeling desperately helpless at his inability to escape from the terrifying situation. His retelling of this terrifying ordeal is so disquieting because of the great detail he includes on one hand and the fact that he realizes in the end that he is alone in death, his legacy depleted in the face of all-crushing death.

Eventually, a man, “grotesco como un enano,” comes to Solana’s rescue (298). He tears the painter-author from the coffin and back to life, which, it turns out, is no more than a brash wakeup call that jolts him out of bed. As Solana gathers himself and his belongings to begin his aestheticized the capital’s modernity through abstract and experimental poetic form. Guillermo del Torre was one of the movement’s most successful poets who saw in Solana’s painting “las vetas de sobrerrealismo o ultrarrealismo” (Pao 568). These qualities are also noticeable in this prologue.
journey across Spain, something has changed. Upon embarking on his travels, he is a new man, resurrected so to speak, having escaped death (or the horrible prospect of being buried alive), if only in a dream. Perhaps this also suggests a broader correlation between death and sleep; that Spain, rather than friend-to-death (Verhaeren) or familiar with death (Regoyos), is just waiting for someone to wake it up as Solana’s friend did for him. Perhaps through recognizing one’s mortal fate through lucid experience of it, as Solana did in “Prólogo de un muerto,” one can achieve the necessary awakening to embark on their own journey. Regardless, Solana’s psychic alteration between observer (alive) and observed (dead) in this prologue, sets the tone for this travel narrative, which goes on to present death as an unrelenting threat and constant companion to the living. Importantly, the individuals and communities Solana records throughout La España negra are the poor, hungry, and otherwise indigent populations, overlooked or pushed aside in the shuffle of uneven modernization whether in rural or urban settings.

Weston Flint divides Solana’s subject matter into objects (people, animals, and things) and frames (settings and spaces). “El objeto más importante del mundo de Solana es la gente,” he says, concluding along with other critics that rendering people and their reactions to the surrounding world are his primary artistic objective (Solana, escritor 18). Most often, the human dominates his canvas while the background serves mainly to ground and contextualize the figures. As Barrio-Garray notes, Solana produced some landscape paintings between 1900 and 1909 that have “long been lost, perhaps destroyed” (77). Admittedly, many of his paintings lack developed landscapes in the usual understanding of the term. However, thinking back to Mitchell’s notion of landscape as a medium of cultural expression, it is prudent to keep in mind that landscape always implies some form of relationship, that it is “a medium of exchange between the human and the natural, the self and the other” (Mitchell 5). As such, I agree with Anglada-Segarra that Solana creates a “paisaje humano” in his written and painted work, a landscape “siempre definido en su concomitante humano […] a modo de explicación del hombre,
para mejor localizarle y definirle en su situación” (154, 94). In effect, the human figure, dominant in most cases, helps constitute and explain Solana’s landscape or background and vice versa.

While landscape in the traditional sense does not factor significantly into Solana’s oeuvre it transmits important meaning nonetheless, especially in relation to the objects (people) in it. Reconsider *El fin del mundo*, for example. The dead overcoming the living are the primary focus, certainly, but in the background rages an ominous and expressive black sea, fiercely tossing boats and people about. First, it is worth noting that this background is unique in that it features a natural setting; that is, a body of water meeting the shore. Second, the water is no mere backdrop, but rather represents an unbridled power, a reflection of the destructive force of death embodied in the marching skeletons, which plays a principle role in the imposing and violent scene at hand. In this sense, Solana presents a new perspective on landscape that portrays it as indivisible from other elements of everyday life.

Flint points to *La España negra* as unique in its portrayal of Spanish pueblos – not the capital, which is where most of his written work is centered – and the attention he pays to their setting in addition to its residents. He suggests that “el lugar y el fondo natural anulan la descripción de las personas” in *La España negra*; while I agree that landscape and background feature prominently in this book, to say that people are annulled is an overstatement (*Solana, escritor* 107). Like Regoyos and Azorín, Solana demonstrates profound anxiety over the quandaries of Spain’s indigent populations, which for him include peasants, beggars, ciegos, prostitutes, pimps, prisoners, mental patients, lepers, and more. Along with other traditional costumbrista figures like bullfighters, monks, or nuns, these degenerate types compose Solana’s “paisaje humano,” which he portrays according to varying degrees of sincerity, hypocrisy, corruption, or morality. For Manuel Sánchez-Camargo, Solana does not aim to negatively critique his human landscape and instead, “limitándose a exponer,” presents what he considers a sincere representation of reality that speaks for itself (130). The natural forms and phenomena comprising
Solana’s landscapes include bodies of water, atmospheric effects, and skies, which combine with his portrayal of modern types to evaluate his modern Black Spain.

The first chapter of *La España negra*, “Santander,” is uncharacteristically nostalgic for Solana, who typically writes in the present tense and as if narrating what he is observing in the moment. The city is a hub for Solana’s transformed landscapes in that he repeatedly references its old docks and picturesque homes whenever he encounters a geographic or social space along his journey that he knows has also changed with time.\(^77\) In this case, landscape is a powerful conductor of memory and emotion that Solana evokes as he contemplates his contemporary surroundings. He spent part of his childhood in Santander, and reminiscing about this time inspires a noticeably perceptive type of narration. As he traverses Santander’s streets, he documents how the Cantabrian fishing town had changed so drastically over only a few years’ time, citing the many buildings the city demolished to make way for new ones and accommodate continued growth. He describes the waterfront, now a bustling and modern venue for social and leisure activity, where lush gardens, paved walkways, and even a new bandstand replace what was once the angler’s wharf. Newly manicured and asphalted surfaces occupy what used to be water. He recalls observing beached fishing boats at low tide, glimpsing beautiful views of the bay from nearby balconies, and watching anglers’ wives clean the daily catch.\(^78\) “Nosotros sentimos más admiración por el viejo Santander de hace algunos años,” remarks Solana, his nostalgic admiration for the Santander of the past a moot point in modern times.

Solana’s documentation of Santander’s transformed and reformed landscape show at once how modernization had arrived to the peripheral city, yet divulge the reality of uneven

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\(^77\) Such is the case chapters later in Santoña: “Estos son los mismos veleros que iban a Méjico y que anclaban en Santander antes de las reformas, junto a los portales de las casas del muelle, hoy cegadas sus aguas y convertidas en unos jardines para paseo y esparcimiento de la gente de la población” (331).

\(^78\) This account differs from the docks of Guetaria la vieja, a town in the neighboring Basque Country, that Verhaeren describes in *España negra* (1899) as, “gloriosos de suciedad y de abandono,” about which “se piensa poco en demoler, menos en modernizar y jamás en restaurar” (39).
development in comparison to the other decadent locales he visits on his journey. Inspiring both nostalgia and critical contrast, Solana’s transformed landscapes also take on distinct meanings throughout *La España negra*. His “paisaje humano,” true to the name, is always a confluence of land and life. This means that landscape rarely attracts Solana’s attention, unless he is also commenting on the human activity in or around it. As a child, Solana contemplated the sky and the sea from his Santander home’s window, “era una cosa fantástica el cielo, cómo ocultaban a la luna los nubarrones y cómo corría ella hasta verse en medio del cielo; entonces el mar relucía como un espejo y los barcos se veían negros y recortados” (304). The dark sky, fleeing moon, and mirrored waves create an enchanting scene somewhere between impressionistic and surrealist in style. Distant fishing boats’ lights flicker (“parpdea[n]”) as the moon refracts light on the water, both natural and man-made light glittering in the immense darkness of the night. Amidst the beauty and tranquility that he evokes here, Solana details the drunken sailors who would occasionally drown in the same waters (302). Free from anguish, ridicule, emotion, or analysis, Solana melds these accounts of death and beauty, treachery and tranquility, into one narrative. In doing so, he reveals two distinct sides of the same reality, much like the paradox of modernity (simultaneous progress and degradation) or the ironies of life he observes elsewhere.

Considering the relatively broad understanding of landscape referenced throughout this section, we can regard Solana’s frequent descriptions of the sky and atmospheric phenomena as part of his literary landscape as well. Jurkevich, after all, details a long history of rendering clouds and climatic effects in landscape art, in Spain and across Europe, throughout the ages.79

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79 Solana’s descriptions of moonlight on the water’s rippling surface recalls Azorín’s accounts of a lighthouse’s moving lamp in the same Cantabrian waters in *Los Pueblos* (1904): “En el horizonte tenebroso, el faro del Cabo Mayor se enciende con un vivo reflejo, decrece, torna a encenderse; y el otro faro diminuto de la Magdalena, inmóvil, uniforme, aparece como un microscópico diamante en la negrura […] El faro del Cabo Mayor prosigue con su parpadeo lento […] La lucecilla imperceptible aparece, desaparece, va corriéndose poco a poco hacia la derecha” (101-102).

80 Chapter two of Jurkevich’s *In the Pursuit of the Natural Sign*, “Lessons in Landscape: Essays on Art History,” gives an extensive historical panorama of key landscape artists (Patinir, Bril, Constable, Turner,
Azorín, for one, was interested in clouds from a young age and, following the ILE’s interest in meteorological and atmospheric science as concomitant to its landscape studies, “made it a point to master cloud nomenclature,” (101). We see this in many of Azorín’s travel writings as well as in his early novels, and the same is true of Baroja. Anglada-Segarra considers Solana’s tendency to set the tone or anticipate particular events through descriptive manipulations of a scene’s weather or climate as a romantic tactic, “[una] intención general de ligar el tono de los fenómenos naturales a las actividades del hombre” (170-171). This occurs often throughout La España negra and other writings, completing the function that Anglada-Segarra points out and, I argue, facilitating the revelatory function of the painter-author’s transformed and expressive landscapes.

While still in Santander, Solana follows a funeral procession through the city, passing by balconies full of curious neighbors, the prostitution quarter, stores and offices, and the squalid residences of the poorest citizens. Accompanying the funeral march are a group of old men from the convento de las Hermanitas de los Pobres, – a sanctuary for the elderly poor – who, according to Solana, “son ancianos que ya no sirven ni para sostenerse los pantalones; pero que en estos casos tienen un aspecto decorativo y se hacen imprescindibles” (307). In the end, Solana speaks to one of these viejos de los entierros who speaks of his life in the asylum, where residents live relatively well but are often denied access to goods like tobacco, forcing them to search for discarded cigarette butts in the streets. Indignant toward this reality, the old man scoffs, “¡qué hará esa gente que tiene tanto dinero, que parece que no se entera de nada!” (313). His words embody issues of unequal and unfair distribution of wealth, as well as the ignorance and/or

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81 Spains’ de Haes, Bereute, and many more) and their main characteristics in comparison to and alongside the Spanish landscape tradition of the modernist era.

81 The vibrantly colored and imposing skies in Baroja’s La busca allow insight into his narrator’s psyche, which extends to possible national critique and reflection. This novel and the rest of the La lucha por la vida trilogy is discussed in detail in chapter two.
indifference of the rich toward the circumstance of the poor. The chapter that ends on this chastising note begins as follows:

Es una tarde desapacible del mes de noviembre; de vez en cuando cae un chubasco, que no tarda en ser barrido por el viento Sur, tan fuerte, que deja limpias las carreteras; un puñado de pequeñas piedrecitas vienen disparadas a nuestra cara; las ráfagas de aire nos quieren arrancar de cuajo el sombrero hongo que llevamos […] el cielo azulea durante algunos momentos de una manera vergonzosa y no tarda en oscurecerse, tomando un color amarillo y desagradable. (307)

Cold, dark, and violent, the winter winds whip at the mourners in wait and the somber-colored sky overcomes a momentary clearing of atmospheric darkness. The inclement weather is almost hostile in its disruption and disarray, which anticipates not only the sadness of the funeral, but also the angered yet resigned degradation of the viejo de entierro. Like Azorín had with the labriegos in La Andalucía trágica, Solana demonstrates the awareness and humanity of those often overlooked in society. As always, Solana’s observant eye is detail-oriented but his attention can be fleeting.

The funeral in Santander is only one of multiple instances in which Solana describes the atmosphere or the land itself as unpleasant, imposing, or hostile in order to anticipate events or observations that are equally as unpleasant, imposing, or hostile. While visiting Santoña, for instance, he follows neighboring townspeople up a nearby mountain toward a chapel for the Romería de la Aparecida. Treacherous cliffs and shifting grounds require those on foot to tread carefully to keep from slipping and falling, but regardless of the danger that the path poses and the imposing morning clouds above head, the pilgrims press on, determined to reach either salvation or festivity. In both Ávila and Oropesa stormy skies anticipate disquieting episodes

82 The tension between festivity and faith in religious functions is prevalent in all of the authors studied in this study and is discussed in further detail in chapter three. This particular pilgrimage, in fact, along with an analogous one that Regoyos portrays in España negra factors into the main discussion.
that deform Solana’s perception of reality. In each case, landscape serves as a means to anticipate and access the darkness that is to unfold before Solana’s eyes.

Solana’s first impressions of Ávila come as he approaches the city’s gates by train in the company of local laborers and mule drivers. Ironically, he notes, the spirit of Santa Teresa de Jesús had yet to appear to any of them. He goes on to describe the town’s rustic homes and its central plaza where merchants, workers, and farmers conduct their daily business. The narration is banal at first, but soon enough Solana turns to unusual topics like a pharmacist’s collection of tapeworms from prominent town figures, a Christ statue with human skin covering its abdomen, and a group of devout yet menacing women in the church. The townspeople’s meagre means is apparent throughout the chapter, as is the Church’s failure to provide spiritual guidance, heal the suffering, and ensure justice. After mass, Solana returns to the inn where he is staying and, as a storm moves in, sits down to dinner with a priest and two lay sisters:

Cuando entré en la fonda empezaban los estampidos de los truenos; uno fue tan imponente, con un ruido tan metálico como una lluvia de barras de hierro que chocasen contra la piedra de la Catedral; la luz eléctrica del comedor quedó apagada, y tuvieron que encender velas metidas en botellas, y nos pusimos a cenar en aquella luz lívida; veíamos en las paredes bambalearse nuestras siluetas; un cura que le brillaban mucho los cristales de sus gafas llegaba con su gorro al techo; el mantel tenía una luz como de luna, y el cristal de las copas y el mango de los cuchillos fulguraban.

También veía las siluetas imponentes de dos señoras que estaban sentadas enfrente, y me observaban con curiosidad; no viendo en mí la humildad que el caso requería, cada vez que sonaba un trueno las hacía persignarse y besar la cruz de los dedos; eran unas mujeres enlutadas y graves (386)\(^3\)

As the inn’s electric lights go out, the guests are left nearly in the dark as flickering candlelight distorts the features and shadows of those present. The violence of the storm and the blackout that

\(^3\) La España negra’s indebtedness to art and artistic expression extends beyond the inspiration it draws from past and contemporary artists (for instance, Goya, El Greco, Ricardo Baroja, Darío de Regoyos, Ignacio Zuloaga, etc.), to its structural and stylistic qualities. Solana uses choppy syntax, detailed descriptions, and a somber tone to communicate Spain’s darkness. These elements are “artistic” insofar as they parallel a number of the principle elements that Barrio-Garay identifies in Solana’s painterly aesthetic: a simplified or reduced formal structure, a dedication to rendering the main subjects of a painting tangible, and a predilection for black as communicative and expressive medium (18-19).
ensues discloses modernity’s fragility before the forces of nature. Solana’s excessive use of semicolons stands out in this passage, allowing him to string together a continuous chain of uninterrupted thoughts, pausing here and there without having to halt at a period. The effect is an accumulative one in which observations and details pile up upon one another until the whole picture comes into view, just as layered brushstrokes build up and form an image on canvas over time. Solana’s continued description of the mourning women adds contrast to his narrative. “Su cara descolorida destacaba del pelo muy negro;” he says of one of them, “tenía la boca dibujada con energía; un cuello blanco almidonado, de forma de hombre, concluía por darla más aire inquisitorial” (387). Solana’s fragmentation of the woman’s body and his evocation of her paleness recalls a number of literary traditions including the sensual decadentist attraction to sickly white skin, but woman’s masculine features and her “aire de dama de convento” projects feelings of suspicion and ambiguity more than pleasure or passion (387). The mujeres enlutadas superstitiously make the sign of the cross and kiss their rosaries each time thunder roars. All the while, their gaze remaining fixed on Solana; in a rare twist of fate, the observer becomes the object of observation. This sustained and reciprocal scrutiny recalls a tendency among artists, Solana included, to paint figures looking out and beyond the canvas’ frame as if establishing eye contact with the viewer. The effect intensifies when only one or few of the subjects in a painting look outward, the rest carrying on indifferently.84

84 This is a common artistic technique noted in other famous artists such as Francisco de Goya in El dos de mayo where a horse stares piercingly out at the viewer in the midst of a chaotic battle. Something similar can be said of Solana’s El entierro de la sardina (1912), for example, a group of raucous masqueraders celebrate the Burial of the Sardine, an Ash Wednesday tradition in which participants hold a parodic funeral to acknowledge Carnival’s end and inaugurate the Lenten season. In Solana’s rendition, masqueraders feign lameness, imitate animals, and commit lewd acts as the funeral occurs before a landscape of thick clouds streaked with columns of black smoke. In the center of the canvas, two oxen pull a cart of trumpeters dressed as skeletons through the crowd – one with a sardine painted on its side – and stare out of the frame with deep, black eyes. Their sights fixed firmly on the viewer, the only figures to do so directly and without masks covering their faces, the oxen function as an anchor to reality that implores the viewer to see the irony of this religious tradition turned chaotic debauchery.
Next, Solana travels to Oropresa, a medieval-era town in the province of Toledo that was once rich in oil, livestock, and other profitable goods, but had deteriorated over the years. Despite this grim reality, Solana desperately wants to explore the pueblo and its people: “Yo quise dar una vuelta para ver el pueblo; pero estaba muy distante y en medio de la carretera,” he says, “volví a la posada a dormir, con ánimo de levantarme muy temprano, pues ardía en ganas de ver el pueblo” (388). Before retreating to the nearby inn, Solana gazes out toward the town and discerns the black silhouettes of towers, steeples, and walls defined as if in relief before the dark night sky. He contemplates “un cielo muy alto, negro, como de tormenta,” whose dense clouds impede the moon’s attempts to shine through and illuminate the town below (388). “[La luna] apareció pálida,” he observes, “limpia y fulgurante cuando, desafiando a todos los nubarrones, se encontró en medio del cielo, que iluminó con su esplendor” (388). As in his description of the night sky over the sea in Santander, Solana captures the brilliance of the moon that defies the darkness of the night to illuminate the lands and structures below. His contemplation of the dark night sets the stage for the fantastical scene coming up next.

Lying in bed at the inn, Solana’s mind does not rest. Visions of the nocturnal landscape he had been observing, “una gran belleza y fantasia,” remain stamped in his imagination (388). Finally the weary traveler falls asleep, but soon has a nightmare, not a morbid funeral this time, but rather an artistic attack. An image, a reproduction of the landscape he had seen and envisioned just before, appears before him. It begins to approach, ominously, as if about to crush the painter where he lies. “El pueblo estaba como pegado, sin aire ni distancia, en una sábana,” Solana remembers, “parecía pintado y que se iba acercando cada vez más a mí, que descansaba todo en mi pecho” (389). Curiously, in other words, the image is two dimensional, as if a material painting on a flat plane rather than a convincing illusion. He goes on to describe hooded figures and grotesque penitents that he sees populating the streets and plazas of the still approaching landscape, until his focus gravitates toward two civil guards walking about, their features
developing one by one as if caught in the middle of an invisible artist’s creative process. The guards menacingly aim their guns at Solana, causing him to wake up in a cold sweat, shaken by the absurd dream.

Solana’s most conventionally picturesque landscape is the last of note in *La España negra*. Travelling by train from Placencia to Cáceres, Solana observes, passing by through the window, “un paisaje maravilloso”:

> vi las montañas limpias y el cielo luminoso y transparente todo inundado de sol; vi por campo unas enormes masas de corderos blancos y negros que ocupaban mucha llanura a lo lejos y que en su marcha levantaban un nubecillo de polvo. Pasábamos junto al río Tajo; éste tenía en sus bordes muchas piedras grandes y redondas […] interrumpí mi almuerzo para mirar bien lo que tan rápidamente iba a desfilar ante mi vista; pero como el tren iba muy despacio, pude ver bien unos caballos; los dueños estaban descansando sentados cerca del río y almorzando al lado de los palos de los abatanes, y los molinos, con sus larga aspa [sic] y una rueda de piedra apoyada en su muro. (418)

This landscape is an anomaly in its references to illuminating sunlight and tranquil repose, which contrasts with essentially all the rest of *La España negra*, a book saturated with darkness. This classic Arcadia inspires in Solana the desire to flee, to leave behind his own reality in favor of the lush panorama that passes by out the train window: “¡Qué ganas daba de abandonar el tren y quedarse allí […] a beber el agua cristalina de este río y a lavarnos las manos!” (418). Interestingly, this escapist attitude, which appears here for the first and only time, occurs during one of the few moments when Solana observes a landscape while in motion. He wants something more in this moment, something impossible like Santander’s old, scenic landscapes or Placencia’s fleeting perfection, but his desire is in vein. To be sure, travelling throughout Spain, Solana encounters death and the darkness it implies at nearly every turn. Perhaps it is the recognition of one’s mortal fate through lucid experience of it, as depicted in “Prólogo de un muerto” or the nightmare in Oropresa, that one is able to access the type of vision the author wields in his travel narrative and confront life’s darkest realities. Solana is a penetrating and
incisive observer who carefully scrutinizes the world around him, recounting his experiences with a mixture of seriousness, ironic humor, and ambiguity.

Final Thoughts

In España negra’s (1899) prologue, Regoyos claims that Verhaeren, “lejos de ver [España] de una manera alegre como la mayor parte de los extranjeros que nos ven al través del cielo azul y de la alegría aparente de las corridas de toros, sintió una España moralmente negra” (31). Perhaps the line of reasoning that best links his, Azorín’s, and Solana’s travel narratives to one another is this perception of Spain’s “moral darkness,” which surfaces as disdain for institutional indifference, political backwardness, and nationwide disparity. As distinct as their styles and approaches may be, Regoyos’s, Azorín’s, and Solana’s works use travel as a means to access and produce societal critiques that condemn Spain’s institutions and systems (i.e. the Academy of fine arts, the State, or the Church) for perpetuating overlooked, ignored, or unknown issues plaguing society through inaction and abuse. Furthermore, landscape was the cultural medium through which these authors were able to communicate their reflections on self as well as interrogate larger questions of national identities.
Chapter 2

Urban Walking in the Madrid Cityscape

Walking is a fundamental component of human life that shapes societies and cultures across the globe as its forms and functions change continuously over time. As authors describe accounts of walking or its various iterations (strolling, wandering, passing by, etc.) in literature, they textually map real or realistic trajectories that can shed light on the advancements and setbacks defining a milieu. For writers of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Spain, the practice and literary rendition of urban walking – that is, walking through the city – helped them articulate and analyze their experience of modernity, an experience that was quite complicated for such observant inhabitants of the nation’s capital. As modernization Allowed Madrid to advance in terms of population growth and industrialization, new levels of social segregation, rapid spread of disease, and continued issues of poverty corrupted the city’s advancement. As mentioned in the introduction, this was the “Madrid contradictorio” that poet and scholar Pedro José Vizoso described as “pobre pero festivo, alegre y derrochador a pesar de los desastres de la guerra y la bancarrota económica de la nación” (162). To be sure, turn-of-the-century Madrid, a place where progress and decline were in constant and ironic tension, strikingly embodies the sociopolitical paradox of Spanish modernity.

For Klaus Benesch and François Specq, walking exemplifies the paradox of all modern life, namely “the need to conjoin forms of being in-motion with a being-there, a being anchored in a particular place and time” (vii). They also identify walking as a form of mobility that lends itself (ironically) to rootedness, since the relatively slow-moving walker has more time to observe

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85 As a general matter of speaking, the discussions in this chapter assume the relative able-bodiedness of a given walker. While the urban experience for subjects who cannot ambulate is a topic of utmost interest, its intricacies exceed the bounds of this dissertation’s scope and purpose.
and experience the world around them. At the same time, pedestrian movement can defy the seemingly unstoppable and rapid progress of modernizing spaces. Laurie Lomask examined the interaction of these phenomena in the Spanish context in her 2014 dissertation, *Modernity in Stride: Walking in Modern Spanish Literature*. She argues that walking informed expressions of self and a sense of modernity in Iberian literature of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries. Common among modern writers in Spain and across the globe was the idea that walking served as a tool or strategy to resist modernity, a new force that threatened autonomy and creativity. This was especially true in the fast-moving and chaotic metropolitan centers of the time, which fueled a modernist ethos of anti-industrialism and apathy.

My main argument in this chapter is that urban walking, when rendered in modern Spanish literature, works not only to delimit the bounds and activities of social space, but also to create socio-literary “maps” that trace modernist intellectuals’ attempts to grapple with social and ideological binaries concerning rich vs. poor classes, deviant vs. orderly behavior, or city vs. country settings. Thus, urban walking facilitated authors’ or their characters’ negotiations between self and a corrupted/corrupting metropolitan environment as they observed and traversed Madrid. I draw on recent studies of walking as well as canonical theories on space as points of reference for my own methodology that construes urban walking as an expressive and critical process depending specifically on an author’s careful and creative observations of the Madrid cityscape. The term cityscape implies the physical attributes of urban space like streets and architecture, as well as the social activity – commerce, work, and, socialization – occurring within a city’s limits. This chapter begins with an analysis of the novels *Diario de un enfermo* (1901), *La voluntad* (1902), and *Antonio Azorín* (1903) by Azorín whose protagonists struggle in and against

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86 They claim that walking has come to signify a “counterspace, a mode of mobile existence that frees the mind from the limitations of history and tradition, thereby empowering the autonomous subject and providing moments of epiphanic insight” (vii).
the monstrous city to preserve their dissolving identities. Next, a look at Baroja’s trilogy *La lucha por la vida* (1904) sheds light on his perception of and concern for the residents of Madrid’s notorious *barrios bajos* using his personal knowledge and experience as a source of inspiration. Solana’s documentary narratives of city life and street culture in *Madrid: Escenas y costumbres* vol. 1 (1913), vol. 2 (1918), and *Madrid callejero* (1923) ends the chapter with considerations of his disquieting accounts of life for the capital’s lower classes.

If, as Henri Lefebvre suggests, space is a compendium of networks, channels, and routes through which lived experience occurs, it is fair to say that, for the individual, space exists for and because of movement. Accordingly, urban walkers “produce” the city in which they live, defining their lives and identities as they move throughout it. This makes walking a means for pedestrians not only to traverse, but also to perceive fluctuating and fluid urban space as they distinguish themselves from and/or encounter the structures (buildings, streets, statues) and people (locals, visitors, law enforcement) that shape that space. Urban design specialist Filipa Matos Wunderlich designates walking the city as “perception-in-motion,” a conceptual and social practice where, “by moving through space we learn and perform socially” (130). For Michel de Certeau, urban walking is analogous to the speech act, meaning that pedestrians, who he calls the practitioners of the city, shape the “text” of city life as they walk in the same way as enunciation appropriates, performs, and negotiates language. Certeau’s city-as-text concept informs Wunderlich’s notion of “discursive” walking, or spontaneous movement throughout the urban sphere, which corresponds to the non-directional strolling of the literary *flâneur*. Certeau believes that in this wandering mode, walkers can make choices and deviations that individualize urban existence in the face of

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87 While critics have commented on city-as-text or text-as-city concepts at length (Deborah Parsons claims that they are “so common as to be almost a cliché,”), canonical models of space like Certeau’s help to inform the theory of urban walking I propose in this chapter (*Streetwalking the Metropolis* 1). In addition to her Certeau-inspired “discursive walking,” Wunderlich also proposes the concept of “purposive” walking, which refers simply to movement to or toward some destination measured in terms of necessity or directionality.
homogenizing systems like civic order, mass culture, or exchange relations conceived to maintain order and normalcy.88

Wunderlich suggests another category, “conceptual” walking, which she describes as “a reflective mode […] a creative response to our interpretation of place, or simply a way of gathering information, or critically building awareness of urban environments […] it is used consciously as a way to get to know the city and uncovers features not usually noticed in our everyday life” (132). Both “discursive” and “conceptual” walking “promote encounter and discovery in urban places [and] as such, they are participative practices that help nurture places’ socio-spatial milieus” (133). It is helpful to reflect briefly on the differences between place and space, which I understand as two distinct categories in line with Certeau’s theorizations.

For Certeau, a place (lieu) is a delimited location, a static set of positions and structures situated in time and defined by its laws of order and institutional governance. A space (espace) exists when living entities (walkers, drivers, workers, etc.) put a place into practice, that is, by living, moving in, seeing, and/or experiencing a place (117). Azorín, Baroja, and Solana channel the fluctuating space(s) of Madrid through their representations of discursive walkers like literatos, golfos, prostitutes, charlatans, and other mobile types who attempt to come to terms with the cultural changes transforming their modern cityscape.

Both Certeau and Wunderlich suggest that the average urban walker creates their space and text “unknowingly” as they move about the city, largely unaware of the sensorial, biological, 

88 Urban walking implies a degree of shrewdness or intelligence in city-dwellers who struggle to find pleasure and stability in their lives without sacrificing their individuality. Certeau’s famous dialectic of tactics and strategies helps explain this phenomenon: “[tactics] show the extent to which intelligence is inseparable from the everyday struggles and pleasures that it articulates. Strategies, in contrast, conceal beneath objective calculations their connection with the power that sustains them from within the stronghold of its own ‘proper’ place or institution” (xx). Maintaining and/or constructing identity in the city setting is a concern for many of the authors and protagonists studied below, and while the principles of Certeau’s tactics and strategies apply, I approach these cases primarily from a historical perspective as demonstrated below.
and physical impacts that this routine activity can have on them and their environment. For those who carefully narrate and reflect on this quotidian act, however, walking is key to making sense of one’s surroundings. Spain’s modern strolling authors are perpetually on guard as they move about, and as such, not only create but interrogate urban life and space. Whether describing their own movement through the city or their characters’ in a text, observer (author, walker) and observed (city, other walkers) overlap in a way that transforms the ambulatory act into a practice in self-reflection and critique. As Certeau and Wunderlich demonstrate, the critical study of urban walking requires considering it both in isolation (the act and practice of walking) and in context (the specifically historical dimensions of walking at a given time). As such, I consider how the mechanics of walking – the step, stride, direction, velocity, etc. – influence readings of modern Madrid’s cityscape, including its urban spaces, structures, and inhabitants, in Spanish literature of the early twentieth century.

Urban walking through cityscapes, like regional travel through landscapes, is a kind of movement through space that serves as a viable means of achieving revelatory darkness, the rendering (revealing) of societal or institutional corruption (darkness) in literature as a means to enlighten readers and/or call for change. By darkness, in this context, I mean the poverty, hunger, violence, injustice, illness, and other issues that each author portrays in his own way as growing out of the uneven modernization of Madrid and throughout Spain leading up to and beyond the turn of the century and the Desastre del 98. In a broad sense, the darkness of modernity that Azorín, Baroja, and Solana uncover in the works I study below sheds light on a particularly pertinent issue for this chapter: the negative impact of segregation and class division within Madrid specifically, and, as already discussed in Chapter 1, between city and country.

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89 Certeau, for example, describes the walking subject as, “the ordinary practitioners of the city are walkers, Wandersmänner, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban ‘text’ they write without being able to read it” (93).
Pursuing an Ideal: Azorín and the Monstrous Capital

As demonstrated in Chapter 1, the study or portrayal of the land in fin-de-siglo Spain represented a nation-building endeavor that shaped the ideological and artistic panorama of a generation determined to establish their country’s core values and define its cultural identity. This was possible in large part due to new modes of transportation that facilitated travel through Spain’s expansive landscapes, but at the heart of this effort was the everyday act of walking. Even Francisco Giner de los Ríos’s excursionismo pedagogy, key to the ILE’s land-as-nation curricular paradigm, derived from a tradition of walking, specifically the romantic notion of strolling through nature as a means to escape the confines of society and define one’s personal and mental space. For the romantics, walking inspired poetic expression and activated the senses as Jean Jacques Rousseau states in his Confessions: “Walking animates and enlivens my spirits; I can hardly think when in a state of inactivity; my body must be exercised to make my judgement active” (242). This belief in the expressive power of walking is particularly salient in William Wordsworth, one of the foremost figures of romantic poetry, who captured his most emotive experiences while walking in nature. Wordsworth’s connection with the natural world allowed him to form an intense dialogue between himself and the world as Florence Gaillet-De Chezelles points out by citing this unpublished excerpt:

[...] in many a walk
at evening or by moonlight, or reclined
at midday upon beds of forest moss,
have we to Nature and her impulses
of our whole being made free gift, and when
our trance had left us, oft have we, by aid
of the impressions which it left behind
looked inward on ourselves, and learned, perhaps,
something of what we are. (24)

The inward turning and self-reflective experience that Wordsworth describes here, a near-mystical introspection initiated by his nature walks, is typical of the quintessential romantic poetry both in the English context, and across the globe. In the Spanish tradition, romantics like
José de Espronceda, Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, and Rosalía del Castro also found inspiration in the splendor of nature, as we can see in “Poema 59” of Castro’s *En las orillas del Sar* (1884):90

Dicen que no hablan las plantas, ni las fuentes, ni los pájaros,  
Ni el onda con sus rumores, ni con su brillo los astros,  
Lo dicen, pero no es cierto, pues siempre cuando yo paso,  
De mí murmuran y exclaman:  
Ahí va la loca soñando  
Con la eterna primavera de la vida y de los campos,  
Y ya bien pronto, bien pronto, tendrá los cabellos canos,  
Y ve temblando, aterida, que cubre la escarcha el prado.  
Hay canas en mi cabeza, hay en los prados escarcha,  
Mas yo prosigo soñando, pobre, incurable sonámbula,  
Con la eterna primavera de la vida que se apaga  
Y la perenne frescura de los campos y las almas,  
Aunque los unos se agostan y aunque las otras se abrasan.  
Astros y fuentes y flores, no murmuréis de mis sueños,  
Sin ellos, ¿cómo admiraros ni cómo vivir sin ellos?  

Castro’s most prominent themes in this collection – nature, dreams vs. reality, madness – run throughout the poem, which tracks her walk through a meadow where flora and fauna reproach her reluctance to accept the reality of time’s inexorable march. Her tone is more melancholic than Wordsworth’s, but the desire for eternal youth and rebellious spirit she expresses through imagined dialogue with personified nature construct an undeniably romantic subjectivity. While poets like Wordsworth and Castro, in their own historical contexts, evaluated their subjectivities and thoughts in the solitude of idyllic natural settings, Spanish modernists of twentieth-century Madrid did so in contrast or relation to their rapidly developing urban realities.

In his book *El paisaje de España visto por los españoles*, Azorín praises Castro as, “uno de los más delicados, de los más intensos, de los más originales poetas que ha producido España” whose emotion and tenderness set her apart from other poets of her time (31). Many now consider Castro as a precursor to modernism in Spain for her creative and progressive spirit, which Azorín recognized in her proclivity for nature and landscape writing. This leads our discussion back to

90 Del Castro reflects on the rural Galician landscape in *En las orillas del Sar*, but did undoubtedly experience urban modernization in Madrid.
the ILE, which encouraged a neo-romantic experiential and artistic study of the land and nature in an effort to rethink the nation and produce morally sound human subjects. Following Giner’s teachings, Azorín felt determined to answer the ILE’s calls to solve the “problema de España” and reestablish a sense of Spanish identity. Critics often define the “problema de España” as Dorde Cuvardic García does, that is, as the nation’s inability to resolve its sociopolitical problems (hunger, poverty, corruption, etc.) and negative tendencies (lethargy, immorality, inaction, etc.) at the turn of the century (24). For Azorín, Spain’s small, provincial towns represented the spirit of the nation, a pure Spanishness that was in danger of disintegrating in the wake of modernization. He perceived modern cities as absurd entities, and resented them for destroying the equilibrium that had previously existed between city and campo.

Azorín grappled mightily with the reality of uneven development across rural and urban spaces in Spain especially in his early works of fiction. In novels like *Diario de un enfermo* (1901), *La Voluntad* (1902), and *Antonio Azorín: Pequeño libro en que se habla de la vida de este peregrino señor* (1903), the literary trope of walking the city is a viable and effective means of articulating his anxiety over modern life in Madrid. In addition to extensive travel throughout Spain, Azorín’s life and work in Madrid actively informed his vision of the nation as a whole. This perspective would turn progressively more pessimistic and disillusioned over time, in part due to the “tendencia antindustrialista” that he shared with other Spanish modernists (Litvak, *Transformación* 107). In Lily Litvak’s estimation, “Azorín llega a odiar el progreso y la nueva civilización, que ha eliminado la belleza en favor del utilitarismo más craso,” which ultimately

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91 Azorín was born and raised in Monóvar, Alicante, but spent a great deal of his formative and adult years living and working in Madrid. He was, thus, a product of both country and city.
92 These books, as Michael Úgarte points out, are “more than a reflection of reality; they are the manifestations of a real man’s real attempts to cope with a real city” (169).
93 The radical anarchy of Azorín’s youth was already dissolving when he joined the conservative newspaper *ABC* in 1905, after *La Andalucía trágica* led to his dismissal from the liberal *El Imparcial*, a move that marked the beginnings of his political uprooting.
would also greatly dampen the ideological anarchy of his youth (*Transformación* 107). What follows is an examination of the similar spatial-mental parallel that Azorín creates in his urban walkers, whose inner equilibrium depends on or reacts to the chaotic exterior of the city as they walk. I focus particularly on *Diario de un enfermo*, whose anonymous protagonist – we will call him “el enfermo” – experiences some of his most expressive and emotional moments when following others through city streets. Over the course of the novel, I suggest, “el enfermo” pursues not only other people but also an abstract ideal that, in the end, is ultimately out of reach.

Ugarte identifies “a conventional ethical distinction between the genuine and redeeming traits of the rural enclaves of the provinces as opposed to the contaminating city” in Azorín’s writing (168). In a rudimentary sense, this ethical distinction invokes urban prosperity at the cost of rural decline, but it also entails the moral decay and behavioral deviance that modern city life supposedly nurtured. Cuvardic García, in his work on Azorín’s early novelistic social types, claims that the solitary stroll is a reflective process for the author’s intellectual protagonists who contemplate the “pueblo abúlico” and, I add, the modern city with nihilistic perspectives (26). The eponymous protagonist and “peregrine señor” of *Antonio Azorín* does so after visiting the stagnant Castilian town of Infantes, effectively channeling Azorín’s own frustration over uneven development in the city versus the *pueblo*: “los políticos y los periodistas – y esta es la raíz de nuestras desventuras – ven bárbaramente las cosas en abstracto. Y hay que considerarlas vivas,

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94 Litvak explains that this tendency comes from a common desire to flee the city and take refuge in nature, establishing deep ties with romantic traditions as detailed above.
95 To be sure, the city-country dichotomy is a centuries-old convention that took on new meaning in Azorín’s time as it does in any new era. Raymond Williams’s widely-cited monograph *The Country and the City* takes an extensive look at the changes in popular paradigms like the pastoral, town and country, the metropolis and more.
96 In “Abulia, Nineteenth-Century Psychology and the Generation of 1898,” Gayana Jurkevich defines *abulia* as a collective condition that “plagued” Spain throughout the nineteenth-century, a “disease” diagnosed by intellectuals of the time. An abulic Spain was a “Spain that yawns and prays,” whose people were marked by mental apathy, scant critical attention, and the inability to concentrate due to a failure of the will.
As he would for Lebrija two years later in *La Andalucía trágica*, here Azorín explains the underdeveloped state of Infantes in 1903 as a result of not only environmental challenges like drought and blight, but also unrealistic and idealist aspirations that the town was not equipped to support or implement. “En regiones como Castilla, como La Mancha, sin agua, sin caminos, sin árboles, sin libros, sin periódicos, sin casas confortables,” he continues, “¿cómo va a entrar el espíritu moderno? ¿Somos tan ingenuos que creamos que lo va a llevar un día u otro la *Gaceta oficial*?” (367). What Antonio Azorín implies is valid; without a practical approach to addressing the *pueblos*’ lack of basic amenities, the hope for a democratically modernized Spain is naïve and in vain.

The country and the city have been portrayed as at odds with one another in literature and in art in various different ways over time, a common-place trend that need not be explored in depth here. What is pertinent is Madrid’s rise as a metropolitan center around the turn-of-the-century. In the introduction to *A Cultural History of Madrid*, Parsons describes modernization in Madrid as an intense and rapid process that brought on a unique experience of modernity:

> The modernity of Madrid is ambiguous, characterized by a late but then urgent modernization that overlapped with the persistence of traditional cultural elements and ways of life. For much of the nineteenth century its appearance was that of a town rather than a metropolis, its official status as *Villa y Corte* [Town and Court] describing it perfectly: small, crudely designed and insular in attitude, while yet the seat of a flamboyant if fading empire. Created as an ‘artificial capital’ that would function primarily as a court rather than a city, it never really achieved the social and economic infrastructure of its major European counterparts until the 1900s. (5)

In this sense, Madrid was the administrative and symbolic head of the nation, but other cities (Barcelona, Bilbao, etc.) were the economic and productive centers. Using Marshall Berman’s “modernism of underdevelopment” to inform her claims, Parsons underscores the paradoxical (or, as she calls it, ambiguous) essence of Madrid’s modernity. It was not until the early twentieth

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97 Berman says, “at one pole we can see the modernism of advanced nations, building directly on the materials of economic and political modernization and drawing vision and energy from a modernized
century that modernization truly took hold in the city, which also marked a time of considerable personal, professional, and economic struggle for the young Martínez Ruiz. At first, he perceived Madrid as the only viable place to succeed as a serious writer, but soon came to resent the capital as he fought not only to survive but also to express himself fully in the press. Aside from scathing political critiques, Azorín produced sociological theorizations – in Sociología criminal (1899) and Evolución de la crítica (1899) for example – in his early years as a journalist, which interpret crime and deviance as natural outgrowths of cities and urban life. This, of course, contrasted with the (pseudo)scientific claims of Cesare Lombroso, Max Nordau, and others who argued that criminality and other forms of nonconformity derived from physical abnormality or biological degeneration. The aberration and immorality that Azorín saw as evolving from la mala vida – a topic of interest that I discuss in detail below – was a question of environment, not biology, which urban modernity promoted and sustained.

Azorín’s aversion to industrialized Madrid emulates Georg Simmel’s famous critique of the early twentieth-century metropolis. In his 1903 essay “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” Simmel juxtaposes the urban and the rural as two contrasting spheres of livable space. While the city generates constant change and rigorous intellectualism, the country fosters peaceful equilibrium and emotional activity. One of the principle challenges facing the modern metropole according to Simmel is the preservation of one’s identity in the face of money economies, workforces, crowds, and other homogenizing forces that depersonalize urban existence. Diario de reality […] even when it challenges that reality in radical ways. At an opposite pole we find a modernism that arises from backwardness and underdevelopment” (qtd in A Cultural History Parsons 6). This is a theory best used with care, of course, especially in the context of Spanish modernity and/or modernism. While in truth these phenomena “arrived late” in Spain, this is not to say that intellectual activity, creative production, and/or scientific/technological advancement were absent leading up to the turn of the century.  

Ugarte comments on these essays further in Madrid 1900: “In both works Martínez Ruiz presents himself as a radical social thinker and literary theorist who wishes to engage in the most heated debates of the day concerning biological evolution, determinism, heredity, all in relation to behavior and the development of art. Morality, correction, free will, are words and concepts that Martínez Ruiz employs often in these works, the marks of a somewhat naïve, albeit enthusiastic, young man who seems to gaze back at his own rural background as the source of his views of modernity” (Ugarte 160).
un enfermo’s narrator agrees, he, a young journalist in Madrid who persistently anguishes over his disintegrating individuality and will:

La personalidad, incapaz del esfuerzo grande y sostenido, se disuelve. Todo es rápido, fugaz, momentáneo: el éxito de un libro, la popularidad de un autor dramático, una amistad, un amor, una amargura. Nos falta el tiempo. Las emociones se atropellan […] Me ahogo, me ahogo en este ambiente inhumano de civilización humanitaria. Estoy fuera de mí; no soy yo. Mi voluntad se evapora. No siento las cosas, las presiento; trago sin paladar las sensaciones (16).

To mediate agony, Azorín’s protagonists often travel to the country and while such displacement may offer temporary relief and repose, it does not have any permanent effect. Indeed, the city conditions an urban mentality that, even when displaced to other settings, can persist in the modern subject. Like morality or behavior, mental state is not biological but environmental, and urban intellectualism, sensibility, and anxiety has the potential to transcend place. Nevertheless, especially in times of unrest or desperation, urban walking is a cathartic form of expression in that it disrupts the unrelenting forward trajectory of modernity by slowing or stopping the march of the metropolis if only provisionally.

“El enfermo” and Antonio Azorín, the protagonists of Diario de un enfermo and Antonio Azorín/La voluntad respectively, continuously meditate as they walk the streets of Madrid and observe the cityscape’s social and political panoramas. In Diario de un enfermo, “El enfermo” and his friend Enrique Oláiz (who Martínez Cachero identifies as Pío Baroja) take a leisurely stroll down the sun-soaked, “pintoresca calle” de Toledo one day, past the animated Mercado de la Cebada and southbound toward the capital’s notorious barrios bajos (11).99 They reach a dilapidated neighborhood “de hórridas viviendas mohosas” where the only sign of life is a group of old women mechanically knitting in silence (11). As they approach the city limits, the friends

99 Martínez Cachero in Las novelas de Azorín: “[…] Martínez Ruiz y su amigo Enrique Oláiz (Pío Baroja) pasean hasta los desolados campos que rodean la capital” (69). Also of note is Martinez Cachero’s identification of Diario de un enfermo’s protagonist as “Martínez Ruiz,” Azorín himself. While this character is likely based on Azorín, his name is never mentioned in the book and there do exist distinctions between the two. For these reasons, I refer to the protagonist simply as “el enfermo.”
look back upon the urban center. Reminiscent of the landscapes Azorín creates elsewhere, his cityscape paints the silhouette of the capital rising up in the distance in impressionistic style:

La gran ciudad aparece a lo lejos, arriba, empinada, en grande, inmenso, formidable montón de paredones grises y rojizos muros, tejados resaltantes, humosas chimeneas, torres agudas, panzudas cúpulas, moles disformes que rompen violentamente el conjunto de diminutos tejadillos y sobresalen salpicadas de los puntuíos negros de sus ventanas. El Observatorio, a la derecha, destaca su redondeada silueta [...] Lentamente va cambiando el cielo su añil intenso en sucio y triste gris. Enfóscanse las notas claras, piérdense las negras – vagas, inciertas, indecisas. La gran ciudad, en sus contornos, en sus ángulos, en sus distantes suburbios, se esfuma sombría y tétrica en la lejanía. (11-12)

Azorín’s descriptions of the massiveness (grand, immense, formidable) and verticality (towers, chimneys, domes) of the cityscape lends a sense of dominance and protrusion to the far-off city center, which intensifies with the scene’s sullen color scheme. The tone darkens as “el enfermo” and Oláiz walk further away from the city center toward the southern slums, the sky changing hue from vibrant indigo to somber grey. As they prepare to return to the city center, the friends glimpse the windows of funeral cars flickering in the evening darkness on their way home from a burial. Over the course of their stroll, then, contrasting yet simultaneous images of bustling life (market-goers), sedentary existence (knitting women), and death (funeral cars) unfold in the ominous shadow of the far-off metropolis. This composite view of life, unfolding parallel to the cityscape, resonates with Gayana Jurkevich’s analysis of Azorín’s and his generation’s literary impressionism in *In Pursuit of the Natural Sign: Azorín and the Poetics of Ekphrasis*. She notes, for example, how Baroja claimed that “Azorín was the principal stylist who invented for himself and for Spanish literature – much like the Impressionists had in painting – a new literary tradition [...] aside from Azorín’s adaptation of Impressionism’s formal procedures to literary stylistics, Impressionism’s concern with time appealed to him on thematic, aesthetic, and personal grounds” (109).

Azorín’s description of the capital, rising up in the distance before the two onlookers, shares a close affinity with cityscapes from other writers of his generation, especially Pío Baroja as seen in *La busca*: “Se veía Madrid en alto con su caserío alargado y plano, sobre la arboleda del Canal. A la luz roja del sol poniente brillaban las ventanas con resplandor de rasa; destacábamos muy cerca, debajo de San Francisco el Grande, los rojos depósitos de la fábrica del gas, con sus altos soportes, entre escombreras negruzcas; del centro de la ciudad brotaban torrecillas de poca altura y chimeneas que vomitaban, en borbotones negros, columnas de humo inmovilizadas en el aire tranquilo. A un lado se erguía el observatorio, sobre un cerrillo, centelleando el sol en sus ventanas; al otro, el Guadarrama, azul, con sus crestas blancas, se recortaba en el cielo limpio y transparente, surcido por nubes rojas” (384).

Though knitting is admittedly an active, and in fact creative act, Azorín describes these women as anything but productive: “un grupo de viejas, negras, silenciosas, automáticas, tricotea, sentado en una puerta, con las largas agujas” (11). Old, silent, and automatic, they evoke the cyclical and uncritical
the walkers’ route and the observations they make as they walk, informs and frames the experience of the urban milieu for “el enfermo.” In the end, his romantic conclusion, “la tarde muere,” brings to mind as much a picturesque, day-ending sunset as the imminent end of life (12).

“El enfermo’s” excursion to the barrios bajos anticipates a similar one in La voluntad, the middle section of which takes place entirely in Madrid. Anguished over the death of his lover Justina, Antonio Azorín leaves rural Yecla for the nation’s bustling capital where his already nihilistic outlook darkens. At every turn, it seems, he encounters intellectual flippancy that repulses him, “la frivolidad, la ligereza, la inconsistencia de los hombres de letras” in his own words (151). Toward the end of this middle section, he embarks on a walk down the calle de Toledo as “el enfermo” had, but this excursion leads to el Rastro, the expansive open-air flea market that captivated many great authors of the time and is now an iconic landmark of Madrid’s modern cityscape.103 As Antonio Azorín meanders through el Rastro, the din of vendors and the shuffling of customers distracts his pessimistic thoughts at first, but ultimately, he succumbs to deep sadness. El Rastro, he concludes, is a place of profound loss, an “inmenso y rumoroso cementerio de cosas,” a sharp contrast and ironic parallel with an earlier moment in La voluntad when the protagonist takes a walk toward an actual cemetery, el cementerio del este (179). Martínez Cachero calls this jaunt “una feliz estampa costumbrista” during which notes of splendor, beauty, and vitality dapple the narrative (85-86). Nevertheless, Antonio Azorín does periodically cite his intellectual weariness along the way, proving that in La voluntad, as in

compartment of a community or a people stuck in one spot and time. This notion does bring about another consideration, namely the role gender plays in the context of urban walking. The most autonomous and expressive walkers in the works studied in this chapter are male, though we do see prostitutes, golfas, and everyday consumers that are female.

103 Perhaps the most prevalent example is Ramón Gómez de la Serna’s novel of the same name, El Rastro, but the market came to be a veritable mainstay in portrayals of Madrid’s reality during the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century. In fact, Baroja and Solana, the other two authors featured in this chapter, frequently used el Rastro as settings for their books as well.
Diario de un enfermo, Azorín’s evocations of the city’s effects on urban walkers weave a complex textual web encompassing emotion, speculation, and experience.

In Antonio Azorín, the protagonist arrives in Madrid at the start of the novel’s third and final section. A series of letters from Antonio Azorín (in Madrid) to Pepita (in Petrel, Alicante), records the cynicism and depression that life in the capital city has provoked in him upon leaving his provincial home. While rural life may seem dull or monotonous to some, Azorín believed that in Spain’s pueblos people lived more passionately than in the city, a sentiment that he imbued in his protagonist who laments his separation from the countryside (Litvak, Transformación 87). While he discusses the mores and challenges of life in Madrid at length, Antonio Azorín spends little time narrating his walks throughout the capital itself. However, he does reflect on walking at length in part three when he travels to Infantes, the barren pueblo I mentioned previously, in order to gather information for an article he is writing. While this is far from an urban setting, the protagonists’ walk through what seems to be an endless network of streets, plazas, and alleyways informs his critique of the disparity between urban and rural perceptions of life and modernity.

Upon arriving at a meager fountain, Antonio Azorín pauses to converse with the locals collecting water as the peal of funeral bells sounds in the distance:

– Esto es la agonía – dice una vieja. Y el anciano torna a mover la cabeza y exclama: – La agonía de la muerte…—Y sus palabras, lentas, tristes, en este pueblo sin agua, sin árboles, con las puertas y las ventanas cerradas, ruinoso, vetusto, parecen una sentencia irremediable. (360)

104 Not all Spanish modernists shared Azorín’s sentiment. Antonio Machado, for example, rural Spain offered the scenery and backdrop for profound personal, historic, and philosophical revelations, but it also produced brute ignorance and violence. We see this in Campos de Castilla, which captures the underlying tensions of Spain’s beauty-ugliness, philosophy-ignorance, life-death, making this not only a modern work, but also an enduring one.

105 Antonio Azorín dedicates three pages to document this journey and constantly refers to the fact that he is walking as he observes the tranquil yet oppressive and decadent environment. “Camino por las blancas calles de altibajos solados con guijarros […] recorro la maraña de engarabitadas callejas […] desemboco en una plaza […] vuelvo a mi peregrinación a través de las calles […] salgo de la plaza […] andando, andando, doy con el campo […] camino por las afueras” (358-359).
In this case, walking helps shed light on a situation that for the visiting walker seems like a grave problem, and for local residents, a sad reality. As Antonio Azorín navigates the tired and ruinous town, his narrative describes increasingly depressing images, at first in evocative detail but in the end, as seen in the final sentence of the quote above, as a list. The impact of this accumulation of nouns and simplified syntax causes the word, standing in for broader concepts or interpretations, to imbue the scene with universal and on-going significance, rather than indicating one isolated occurrence. In this sense, pointing out the negative realities of exclusion, poverty, and decline that left Infantes unable to reap the benefits of modernization, Azorín draws out the darkness that inequitable modernity can render.

The darkness of uneven development is only one negative side effect of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century modernization in Spain, another being the intellectual angst that many modern subjects tended to conjure up in their attempts to navigate cityscape and city life without surrendering their sense of individuality. Much of Diario de un enfermo takes place in Madrid, telling the story of introspective protagonist, “el enfermo,” an avid albeit apathetic urban walker. Considered one of Azorín’s most aesthetically modernist works due to its disjointed style, highly subjective narrations, and existentialist content, Diario de un enfermo tracks the life of a young journalist in Madrid from November 1898 to April 1900 as he struggles to reconcile the demands of his professional and personal life in the city. The novel’s experimental form, a chronological set of diary entries varying in length and intervals, reflects the narrator’s fragmented and weakening sense of self as he contemplates inexplicable realities (passage of time) and inescapable fates (death) amidst the suffocating pace and immensity of the metropole. Leon Livingstone suggests that the unnamed sickness that ails the narrator results from a divided consciousness: “the artist must be a contemplator whose function it is to extract from external reality its value of sensibility; yet life contemplated, instead of being actually lived, ceases to be life” (248). From the beginning of the novel, this clash between existence and introspection, is at
the fore, and remains a constant conflict of whether he is at rest or at work.

“El enfermo” obsessively contemplates time’s slow yet incessant passage and death’s imminent arrival, making him melancholic, embittered, and sedentary. He isolates himself in his room and his thoughts, immerses himself in books and study. “Jadeante de melancolia,” he observes enviously from the solitude of his balcony as myriad passersby walk up and down the street in front of his apartment, living their lives in a way that he cannot seem to comprehend (8). As would any exasperated and despondent intellectual of the time, concerned with the lofty task of contemplating the meaning and future of self and his country, “el enfermo” asks: what is life? What does it mean to live? What is the purpose of life? And the most interesting of his existential questions, where is life? “¿Dónde está la vida?” he ponders, “¿En los libros o en la calle?” (9).

Beyond the metaphorical and philosophical interpretations this query invites, and aside from the ever-present problem of the divided self-consciousness that Livingstone describes, is a spatial question. His impassioned answer defies the kind of logic a reader may expect from this pensive figure, who confesses his desire to seek life out, beyond his work and his studies: “no más libros; no más hojas impresas, muertas hojas, desoladoras hojas. Seamos libres, espontáneos, sinceros. Vivamos” (11). 106 Confessing, in a way, the futility of a purely intellectual existence, “el enfermo” conceives of the street as life itself, and of walking as living. While his epiphany encourages him to initiate near-constant movement through the city, he soon finds out that his newfound enthusiasm for life and walking will not neutralize his pessimism and angst.

In the past, critics have construed “el enfermo’s” walking as romantic non-directionality, personal exploration, and/or tenacious subjectivization. I believe that it is productive to think of “el enfermo’s” movement through the city as reflective pursuit, since frequently, he is presented

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106 “El enfermo” claims that Cervantes, Quevedo, and Lope were great authors who “crearon porque vivieron” (11). This interest in the classics is perhaps a nod to Azorín’s own well-documented respect for and indebtedness to the foundational authors and traditions of generations past.
as chasing someone or something through the city streets or through life. The diary entry marked December 11, 1898, which comes after his decision to venture out and live the bustle of the city, is an important moment for “el enfermo.” On this day, he catches the first glimpse of his future wife as they cross paths in the Puerta del Sol, a woman who we, the readers, come to know only as “ella” over the course of the novel. “El enfermo” promptly begins to pine over the vision and idea of “ella,” a pale, beautiful woman always dressed in black, whom he sees several times more around the city. On November 3, 1899, almost a year later, “el enfermo” writes her a letter, and from this point, their relationship progresses (and digresses) at a dizzying pace. Nine days after sending the letter (November 12), “el enfermo” admits that he is in love; on November 25 we learn that she reciprocates his love; on January 29, 1900, they are married; and within two months, “ella” dies of tuberculosis. This truncated marriage a chase – for happiness, resolution, and constancy – that is ultimately futile (243).

In his May 8, 1899 entry, “el enfermo” is noticeably lethargic. The previous day, he spotted “ella” and another woman as he was walking past the Café de Fornos and decided to follow them: “Las seguí; corrimos dos o tres calles; atravesamos una plaza; entramos por fin en una calleja silenciosa, estrecha, desierta. Ya en la casa, un principal, una de ellas levantó los visillos, luego la otra levantó los visillos. He vuelto esta mañana; he vuelto esta tarde…” (17). The shift from first person singular to plural suggests “el enfermo’s” self-identification with the other characters, which dissolves into anxiety as they all retreat into their respective personal spaces (their homes). The same narrative switch occurs about a month later when “el enfermo” sees and follows “ella” for a second time: “La he seguido. Hemos recorrido calles, atravesado plazas, llegado a la Puerta del Sol. En la Puerta del Sol hemos tomado el tranvía del barrio de Argüelles. Frente a la calle de Quintana hemos bajado” (18). In both cases, the narrator orients his pursuit with recognizable spatial markers, which contribute verifiable geographic and cultural
context to his movement in the city, tethering his otherwise abstract musings to solid ground. As “el enfermo” arrives in la calle de Quintana and follows “ella” to her house, he notices another man, “el otro,” join her inside (18). Maddened at what he has witnessed, the narrator stays on the streets, but now walking aimlessly, “paseaba, paseaba exaltado, frenético, loco,” as a violent urge to attack the unknown man builds inside him (18). In the end, it appears that the two do cross paths and engage in fist fight, though the scene’s abrupt end and “el otro’s” conspicuous absence from the rest of the novel makes one wonder if “el enfermo” imagined or invented the scuffle after all. As this episode demonstrates, when “el enfermo” comes up empty-handed in his foot pursuits of “ella,” he loses his composure and loses sight of rational thought or action. This also recalls the day he followed “ella” to her home for the first time, after which he could not help but return, “pasar, y repasar como un romántico” as the neighbors watched out of curiosity and pity (17). Ambling frantically or compulsively through the city, with a destination (i.e. “ella’s” house) in mind or not, he exacerbates his already anxious mental state, and his measured assessment of the world him devolves into irrationality and/or emotional excess.

Therefore, “El enfermo” externalizes his mental and emotional states in the changing directionality and rhythm of his pedestrian movement. While following the footsteps of another, he is relatively calm and focused; while obsessively pacing or frantically circling after a futile chase, he is overwhelmed with inner chaos (anguish, desperation, jealousy, anger, etc.). This disjuncture between order and chaos is one that the protagonist cannot resolve on his own. For him to navigate the city streets and life successfully, he relies on a guide to lead him to his goal; when the guide or the goal is out of sight or unattainable, “el enfermo” flounders. The problem is

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107 The Café de Fornos, for example, was a café established in 1870 where the city’s young artists and authors – Azorín, Baroja, and Ramón del Valle-Inclán included – would gather for tertulias. Situating his search in front of and past this hub of intellectual exchange and innovation maps the changes in “el enfermo’s” life. As he progresses toward his desired goal “ella,” he turns from the spaces (the café) of potentially productive and creative thought.

108 At this point in the timeline, he had never even spoken with “ella” face-to-face.
that “ella” is not a guide in the traditional sense, since she leads “el enfermo” without knowing it; better put, she attracts him and he follows. He seems to ascribe to this unknown woman value that she may or may not have in reality, a romantic apparition that becomes “el enfermo’s” greatest pursuit and obsession.

“El enfermo’s” third and final pursuit occurs months later, when he follows not “ella,” but a man carrying a white casket on his back down the streets of Toledo. While the context is distinct, “el enfermo’s” rhetoric mirrors his earlier accounts where his first person narration changes from singular to plural as he follows the object of his pursuit:

Le he seguido, emocionado, ansioso, tembloroso, atraído por la fuerza ponderosa del misterio y de la muerte. Hemos recorrido callejones, cruzado recodos y encrucijadas, atravesado plazas, desfilado por angostos y lóbregos cobertizos…El macabro paseo se prolonga; la angustia crece en mí; quiero marcharme y no puedo. (27)

Morbid curiosity propels “el enfermo’s” chase, leading him to the home of the decease – a young woman who was about to be married – at which point he parts ways with his unknowing leader to wander the streets in solitude. “Angustiado, anhelante, divago a través de la vetusta ciudad silenciosa, inhabitada, muerta…” he writes, cutting the narrative short with an ellipsis that ends the diary entry (28). This abrupt semantic halt intensifies the weight of his final word, “muerta,” an evocation of death that carries various interpretations. Aside from the obvious reference to the casket and the corpse to which the word is linked, “muerta” in this context brings to mind elements of the symbolist dead city tradition, or the aesthetic attraction to run-down, aged, or demolished cities or towns seen as sentimentalized sites resisting modernization and its horrors.109

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109 Truthfully, the aesthetic attraction to ruins is part of a larger, mainly poetic literary traditions that takes on various forms throughout history. Azorín and Regoyos most reflect the tenets of the symbolist dead city, though they are unique in that they write prose and not poetry. Nevertheless inks to the romantic poetry of ruins as described in Gustavo Pérez Firmat’s “Antonio Machado and the Poetry of Ruins” (1988) or even the renaissance tradition as commented in Rodrigo Cacho Casal’s “The Memory of Ruins: Quevedo’s Silva to ‘Roma Antigua y moderna’” (2009) are appropriate given the common themes. In each case, the literary evocation of ruins corresponds to aestheticized response to some reality and often in terms of the speaker’s Spanishness.
As was the case in Infantes (described above), Azorín expresses this entry’s final thoughts in list form, an accumulation of adjectives, this time, that bookend the image of a distraught and rambling “enfermo” (angustiado, anhelante preceding; silenciosa, inhabitada, muerta following). As he walks the Toledan streets, upon which he externalizes his somber mood, a disquieting melancholy engulfs “el enfermo,” stopping his narrative in its tracks. As such, this account remains unresolved, much like the situation of the viejos in Infantes who must deal with their “sentencia irremediable,” as Antonio Azorín put it, on their own (360).

While “el enfermo’s” short stint in Toledo does offer temporary relief from metropolitan life in Madrid, both cities have similar effects on his emotional and psychic states. Regardless of the setting, he cannot shake his pessimistic and ultimately nihilistic outlook on life and tends to fall into non-directional, and unproductive walking when it comes time to confront what he feels and experiences. As mentioned previously, “el enfermo’s” mental state, his pessimistic nihilism specifically, is the product of his urban experience and maintains influence over his cognition or emotion regardless of his location.

Even in the fictional city of Lantigua where “el enfermo” and “ella” move in the end to be married and begin their life together, he fails to escape his anguished mindset. Though he details the wedding day and marriage, “el enfermo” struggles to express his love for “ella,” noting frequently the “extraña emoción,” “inexplicable indecisión,” and “extrañas sensaciones” she produces in him (35, 38, 40). Soon after the ceremony, she falls deathly ill and passes away, leaving him profoundly depressed and mentally exhausted. Outside of their house in Lantigua, visible from a grand balcony inside, is a garden, a recurring space of activity and reflection in the final diary entries. One day, the young couple walk slowly through the garden, frequently stopping due to “ella’s” deteriorating health; another, “el enfermo” helps “ella,” unable to walk of her own power, approach the balcony to view the garden from inside; after her death, he walks the garden once more, and walking the same path he had with her, meditates on life and death
(“he pensado, he pensado”) intensely melancholic over his loss and solitude (45). For both “el enfermo” and for “ella,” walking through this natural space inspires reflection – in the form of anxious contemplation of mortality – but this environment does not heal either body or mind. Just over two months after his wife’s death and one day following his final stroll through the garden, “el enfermo” succumbs to his nihilist outlook and commits suicide.110

The fact of the matter is, however, that there is more at work here than a typical story of love found and love lost. Obsession, chase, and voyeurism are the foundations upon which the scarcely drawn love between “el enfermo” and “ella” grows. Even in the novel’s intimate diary genre, details about their connection are sporadic and generic. “El enfermo” repeatedly expresses unease at the notion of “possessing” “ella” in marriage and finds the pageantry of the wedding ceremony humiliating. Though he records flashes of lust and adoration for “ella” throughout the novel, his attitude toward the relationship in general is more pensive than passionate. What is more, we learn almost nothing of substance about “ella.” We know that she is a paragon of decadent beauty in her sad and timid demeanor, ghost-white skin, and sickly countenance, a stock character inspiring no real feeling of romance or suspense. Not once do we hear her speak, nor do we know about her life, beliefs, or aspirations. In her anonymity, she is nobody and everybody at once, a beacon of silent (female) perfection that represents an ideal in romantic and decadentist paradigms. Once “el enfermo” possesses this ideal, after tirelessly pursuing and chasing it through the complexities of modern city life, it immediately begins to weaken, to deteriorate, and finally to disappear.

110 Pío Baroja’s *El árbol de la ciencia* (1911) ends in a similar manner. Protagonist Andrés Hurtado, an immensely disillusioned medical doctor, kills himself via lethal injection after his wife dies during childbirth. Given the tragedy resulting from his ill-advised attempt at procreating (he and his wife conceived a child despite both suffering physical and emotional defects) the suicide can be read as a social cleanse, a last ditch effort to leave the decaying world a more bearable place by erasing corrupted genetic stock from the pool.
Perhaps it is this concept of possession, which halts his pursuit, that dooms “el enfermo” I the end. After all, the concept of having something real or tangible to hold onto in times of modern flux seemed such an unlikely possibility. Indeed, life in three different cities, Madrid, Toledo, and Lantigua, offered “el enfermo” nothing to truly hold tight, nothing to believe, and nothing to hope. Graziella Fantini suggests that these locales represent possible solutions to deal with the problem and paradox of Spain’s modernization:

[Azorín] perceived Madrid as the modern city, a city of progress, industrialism, and capitalism, a new form of barbarism. Toledo represented the dead city, the city suspended in the past, closed to modern progress and industrialism, to noise, quietness and repose. […] The third possible solution is the invented city of Lantigua, a big village where the protagonist fell in love but also where he committed suicide, as there was no place in modernity for life in the crisis of nihilism. (165)

Azorín’s creation of Lantigua was pointless, perhaps deliberately so since in the end “el enfermo” bends to the crisis of nihilism that the author himself was so wary of in real life. His antagonism toward unbridled or unchecked progress and its negative impact on peoples and situations across rural and urban spheres is the crux of the depressing conclusion we draw here. Consider the following excerpts, the first from *Diario de un enfermo* and the second from *La Voluntad*. “El enfermo’s” reflection comes directly between entries that describe his pursuits of “ella,” and Antonio Azorín’s as he approaches el Rastro on his walk through the city. Both see progress as modernity pulsating throughout the Madrid that they live, contemplate, and walk:

Pienso en el esfuerzo doloroso y estéril. Luchar, penar, sufrir, ¿para qué? ¿Para las generaciones futuras? Iniquidad es el progreso. El progreso es el bienestar de las presentes generaciones a costa de las luchas y de los sufrimientos de las generaciones pasadas. ¿Cómo reparar la injusticia irreparable? […] El progreso es una explotación retroactiva” (18)

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111 It should be noted that Fantini claims that “el enfermo” “fell in love” in Lantigua, which is not entirely true. He did get married there, but as noted earlier, fell in love earlier. To be fair, we never actually see him “fall” in love, but rather be in love one moment when he was not previously. That “el enfermo” was in love, it should be noted, is undeniable; what love meant to him (infatuation, obsession, etc.), on the other hand, is up for debate, and as far as “ella” is concerned, there is not enough evidence of her or her sensibilities to truly judge if she truly loved him back.
¿Qué hacer?... ¿Qué hacer?... Yo siento que me falta la Fe; no la tengo tampoco ni en la gloria literaria ni en el Progreso... que creo dos solemnes estupideces... ¡El progreso! ¡Qué nos importan las generaciones futuras! Lo importante es nuestra vida, nuestra sensación momentánea y actual, nuestro yo, que es un relámpago fugaz. Además, el progreso es inmoral, es una colosal inmoralidad: porque consiste en el bienestar de unas generaciones a costa del trabajo y del sacrificio de las anteriores (176)

The sentiment in both passages is almost identical. On the backs of previous generations stand the present ones, reaping the fruits of their ancestors’ pain, suffering, work, and achievements, only to experience the same fate in the future. Why suffer, ask the protagonists, why fight, why invent, why create, why concern oneself with anything but maintaining and protecting oneself if future generations will only exploit their progress? This nihilistic interpretation of progress is broad and philosophical in essence, but it derives from the protagonists,’ and Azorín’s, shared experience of life in the capital. Ultimately, walking in these novels expresses protagonists’ inner thoughts and anxieties as a reflection of the real life processes of managing the challenges of urban life (segregation, spread of disease, poverty, etc.) that intensified following the economic and cultural shifts produced by the Desastre del 98. Furthermore, Azorín’s literary expression of urban walking enables a broader social critique of modernity and the inequity it implies that aligns with his modernist anti-industrialism as well as his regenerationist concern for Spain’s indigent populations.

Walking for What? Baroja’s La lucha por la vida

Despite incongruous aesthetics and ideologies, Azorín and Pío Baroja sustained a deep, mutually respectful friendship throughout the first half of the twentieth-century. Azorín first encountered Baroja’s work early on in his own career and found the Basque writer’s originality
and staunch anti-traditionalism particularly inspiring. In his novelistic oeuvre, Baroja emulates life at both its most ordinary and chaotic levels in an attempt to arrive at a sense of what it means to exist in an ever-changing and expansive modern world. He portrays life as analogous to struggle, as a fight for survival, where antagonism between individuals and their social or physical environment is constant. It is fitting, therefore, that many of Baroja’s novels feature restless or adventurous protagonists whose wandering through lived space enlivens and defines their existence. Baroja’s 1904 trilogy *La lucha por la vida* features one such character, Manuel Alcázar, who meanders indeterminately through Madrid’s *barrios bajos* and poor or working-class neighborhoods toward the city center until ultimately he succeeds in escaping a life of crime and deviancy.

In this section, I examine Baroja’s literary rendition of urban walking in *La lucha por la vida*, which mimics an existential search for self and place within turn-of-the-century Madrid. Here, I employ the term existential to refer to the anguished uncertainty that accompanies the contemplation of one’s life, mortality, and fate after death. In Baroja’s trilogy, existentialism links up with individualism – the ideology that emphasizes the worth of the individual over the collective – and surfaces throughout *La lucha por la vida* as a condition of forced mobility. In

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112 Azorín wrote of Baroja's novels, “lo que se expone en esos libros es vulgar, corriente, prosaico inconexo, sin plan ni método; los personajes hablan de cosas vulgares, cotidianas, van, vienen, desaparecen y no hacen nada de particular […] en estos libros todo responde a una filosofía que no es la filosofía de las otras novelas, a un sistema de ideas generales que no son las ideas generales de otros libros. Baroja es un innovador, y esas sus ideas innovadoras él las infiltra en los hechos y pormenores de la vida corriente. Es la vida corriente, sí, la que vemos en sus novelas; pero esa vida está reflejada, interpretada, valorada por un espíritu antritradicionalista. Y de ahí el que, pensemos o no como el autor, no podamos dejar de interesarnos en sus libros” (qtd in Fuster García 100).

113 Emilio González López points out Baroja’s existentialist sensibility as one of the defining and distinguishing characteristics of his novelistic writing. In *El arte narrativo de Pío Baroja: Las trilogías*, for example, González López details Baroja’s tendency to substitute “la fábula” of a life for “la existencia” of life itself in his novels (36). In *La lucha por la vida*, he claims that Baroja creates a heterogeneous environment where every character is an individual and where focus is more on questions of existence than a given plot line (151). Clearly, I draw on González López’s estimations throughout this chapter, but my focus remains also on the fact that this existential reflection on life and humanity is consistently linked to questions of movement and mobility throughout the trilogy.
other words, when moral or behavioral deviance displaces an individual from the “center” of a
given community (i.e. from Madrid’s city center to the *barrios bajos*), the marginalized, often
nomadic subject constantly engages with questions of existential individualism as they search for
a viable place in life and society that will assure their survival. By place – drawing loosely on
Certeau’s use of the term – I mean a conceptually delimited sense of acceptance among peers and
society, a “fitting-in” as it were that Manuel constantly struggles to attain. Ultimately, I argue that
the pedestrian trajectories that Baroja maps throughout the trilogy produce spatialized knowledge
about life in modern Madrid and the unfortunate souls who lived the worst of it. This was
especially true for Madrid’s *golfo* or vagabond population, which, in Baroja’s mind, was slated to
experience one of two fates: complete reform or total annihilation.

Madrid’s *barrios bajos* are the principle setting for many of Baroja’s novels, featuring
prominently in *La busca*, *Mala hierba*, and *Aurora roja*, which together make up the trilogy *La
lucha por la vida*.114 These neighborhoods – then Injurias, Cambreras, Peñuelas, and others in
what is present-day Embajadores, Lavapiés, and Arganzuela – were named for their geographic
location south of the city center and their social landscape, “ya que era el lugar tradicional de
residencia de las clases populares” (Díaz Simón 20). The lower classes that inhabited the *barrios
bajos* included *golfos*, prostitutes, pimps, beggars, rag pickers, and other practitioners of *la mala
vida* known tragically as “basura humana,” a collective for whom Baroja felt a mix of repugnance
and sympathy (*Mala hierba* 209). Like Azorín, Baroja blamed modern society for creating this
deviant class as well as the misery they endured. Baroja’s detailed and realistic accounts of urban
strife in Madrid foregrounded the experience of destitute populations, just as he himself had

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114 Between March 4 and May 29, 1903, Baroja published *La busca* in installments in the Madrid-based
newspaper *El Globo*, which contained, in reality, most of the material that would combine to become *La
busca* and *Mala hierba* in the 1904 trilogy edition of *La lucha por la vida* following extensive edits and
additions. Ricardo Senabre, for one, comments on Baroja’s editorial changes between these two formats at
length.
encountered them while living in and exploring the city at the turn-of-the-century. Determined to unveil the hypocrisy undergirding modern Madrid’s image and reality, Baroja portrays the city’s ugly and violent side with intense detail and ironic bluntness.

Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, the main author of Spain’s Constitution of 1876 and driving force behind the Bourbon Restoration, envisioned a constitutional monarchy that would implement far-reaching and effective socioeconomic improvements for all across the nation. By this time, urbanization and industrialization were well under way in larger cities, which began to situate Spain on the European map, so to speak, alongside cultural hubs like Paris and London. However, as much as modernization promised in terms of progress for Madrid, it ushered in various forms of socio-cultural decline, many due to the population boom of the nineteenth-century. \(^{115}\) By the mid-1800s, massive migrations of peasants from the countryside had shocked Madrid’s economy and infrastructure, and city planning became an increasingly political practice. In 1860, for example, with two principle goals in mind, city engineer Carlos María de Castro proposed the *Ensanche de Madrid*, which intended to triple the size of the urban center: to accommodate the city’s rapid demographic growth and to establish a more organized and sanitary metropolis. The unintended yet blatant result, however, was inimical social segregation.

As a result of the *Ensanche*, much of the city’s poverty, unsanitary conditions, and crime nested in what came to be the *barrios bajos*, located on Madrid’s southern outskirts, out of sight and out of mind for wealthy and aristocratic classes. This striking shift in Madrid’s social geography inspired Baroja, as Ugarte puts it, “to recreate [the city’s] limits, its lower depths, the filth – in all its forms – that had settled at the outer extremities of Madrid” (57). Importantly, walking is a key component of life in or in between city center and slums in the late nineteenth

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\(^{115}\) “In a comparison of demographic expansion over the nineteenth century […] during which time London almost doubled in size and Paris more than doubled, Madrid’s population tripled from 167,000 (in 1797) to 500,000 (in 1900), escalating to almost one million by 1930, much of the increase due to external migration from the provinces” (Parsons, *A Cultural History of Madrid* 5).
century when the trilogy takes place. “Siempre hay que andar buscando rincones,” says homeless vagabond Don Alonso in *La mala hierba*, exemplifying the indeterminate and contingent lifestyle he, Manuel, and many other characters experience while living on the streets or in the *barrios bajos* (300). In these characters, Baroja offers an unsettling look into individuals who, always on the lookout for a corner to lay their head and a place where they can belong, experience urban walking as the mode of the poor. As such, the darkness embedded in the negative effects of modernization in Spain and specifically Madrid’s paradoxical modernity remain at the fore of Baroja’s disturbing yet profoundly revealing trilogy.

In 1900, Baroja’s fractured narrative style, attention to the fleeting and flinch-worthy moments of everyday life, and existential-philosophical sensibilities made him a bona fide practitioner of modernism in the broad aesthetic sense. Indeed, Baroja’s heightened subjectivity and “impressionistic” style contrast with realism’s relatively objective expression. Focusing principally on the immediacy of a present moment rather than history or tradition, Baroja strove to capture the essence of life in its indiscernibility, transience, and chaos. Some may say that Baroja’s precise documentation of Manuel’s movement through Madrid in *La lucha por la vida* is on par with the city narratives of Benito Pérez Galdós, Spain’s quintessential realist author.

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116 Baroja published *La casa de Aizgorri*, the first novel of the trilogy *Tierra Vasca*, and the collection of stories *Vidas sombrías* in this year. These were the first books the author published after completing his formal training and short practice as a medical doctor.

117 Baroja was himself a self-proclaimed impressionist who considered “el ambiente” the most interesting aspect of painting, hence his deep admiration for landscape painters like Darío de Regoyos (*Desde la última vuelta* 25). Ebanks quotes Baroja’s response to an article by critic Augustí Calvet (Gaziel) in which he condemns the author as “excesivamente impresionista” (*Desde la última vuelta* 45). “Gaziel no comprende, sin duda, que yo soy un impresionista,” suggests Baroja, “y que para un impresionista lo transcendental es el ambiente y el paisaje […] [los impresionistas] no buscamos el delinear la figura, grande y destacada, con una línea fuerte que la separe del medio en que vive, sino que queremos hacerla vivir en su ambiente” (qtd. by Ebanks, 45; 46). Baroja’s tendency toward impressionistic characterization is found in *El árbol de la ciencia* (1911), an average-length novel in which the author introduces over sixty distinct characters, many of whom fail to reappear in or contribute to the plot following their abbreviated and often crude descriptions.

118 “La vida en su fluir será la materia novelesca,” says González López of Baroja, “las gentes y los ambientes, que van apareciendo en el relato, se asocian a él por la existencia, por el correr de la vida de esos personajes, y no porque tomen parte en una historia o en una fábula en particular” (35).
Admittedly, Manuel follows many “itinerarios absolutamente realistas,” but they are unique in comparison to his predecessor as seen in the following excerpts, the first from *Mala hierba* and the second from Galdós’s *Fortunata y Jacinta* (1887) (Martín Martínez, *La busca* 288n73):

Estuvo [Manuel] enseguida en disposición de acompañar a Mingote. Salieron los dos a la calle Ancha de San Bernardo, bajaron por la de los Reyes a la de la Princesa y siguieron después por esta calle hasta detenerse en un portal, en donde entraron” (178).

No tardó en recibir nuevo golpe, pues cuando soñaba con un ascenso le limpiaron otra vez el comedero. Y he aquí a mi hombre [Juan Pablo] paseándose por Madrid con las manos en los bolsillos, o viendo correr tontamente las horas en este y el otro café, hablando de la situación ¡siempre de la situación, de la guerra y de los infames, indecentes y mamarrachos que son los políticos españoles! (216)

Baroja focuses primarily on the essential information: the who (characters), what (walking), and where (street names, spatial markers). Galdós, on the other hand, adorns his narration with additional elements like emotion (hope, frustration) and historical context (the “situation,” politics) that readers would have understood as collective experience or consciousness. While Galdós set out to re-create a spatial, historical, and referential totality of Madrid, Baroja was concerned with capturing the essence of a particular moment and the immediacy of existence. Here, we also see the previously mentioned individualism at play, since Manuel’s experience with his companion does not communicate any universally relatable information (especially given the fact that his readership at the time would have been middle- to upper-class bourgeoisie and certainly not the illiterate, poverty-stricken golfos he writes about). All the issues, news, and concerns of the day certainly pulsate beneath the surface of Baroja’s novelistic action, but his emphasis remains on the individual.

Warren Hampton suggests that of Baroja’s literary oeuvre, *La lucha por la vida* most faithfully emulates Spanish literary conventions, citing picaresque, realist, naturalist, and costumbrista elements as its aesthetic inspirations (91). While scholars have continued to point out such connections, especially the idea of Manuel as a pícaro, one cannot deny the originality
and modern-ness of these works. Hampton agrees and quotes Salvador de Madariaga and Miguel Romera-Navarro on the trilogy. For Madariaga, he claims, this is because of Baroja’s concern over the ethical horror of modern humanity’s decadence (“what troubles him is not sin but suffering”), and for Romera-Navarro, the books’ dejected and serious overtones (“sin el buen humor de las [novelas picarescas] clásicas”) (97). La lucha por la vida does not fit within any one literary tradition despite approaching several, which has prompted critics to invent new categories for them over the years – “novelas sociológicas” (Hampton, 1988), “novela social” (Martínez Palacio, 2006), “novelas urbanas” (Hibbs, 2012) – none inspiring consensus. These constant shifts in critical opinion, discovery, and/or interpretation demonstrate La lucha por la vida’s resistance to classification, and thus, its author’s rightful place among Spanish and global modernisms.

Baroja’s novels, whose nontraditional plotlines frequently fall off or deviate, allow his depictions of life to outrun the bounds of the text, just as life cannot be contained or predicted within one space or time. His record of Manuel as he walks the city, for example, is a dizzying account of the protagonist’s tireless struggle for survival. The irony of all this, of course, is that Manuel searches for place and purpose in spaces (Madrid’s barrios bajos) where the illogical and the meaningless go hand in hand. For what should he survive, for what purpose should he continue walking if all there is to find in the streets is random violence, nonsensical hatred, or blatant injustice? This is precisely the predicament that dogs Manuel throughout the pages of these novels in which descriptions of squalid corralas, focus on physiognomic and moral deformity, and references to prostitution, poverty, filth, misery, and cruelty are constant. In the first novel of the trilogy, La busca, Manuel arrives in Madrid as a young adolescent and learns to

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119 As critics like Javier Martínez Palacio have rightly concluded, La lucha por la vida is more about the golfo than the pícaro (discussed in more detail below).

120 The corralas were tenement-like buildings that housed small, cheap apartments with shared bathrooms, balconies, and central patio.
navigate the city’s temptations and pitfalls, constantly straddling the line between hapless golfo and productive citizen.121 Baroja’s brother, Ricardo, illustrated an early edition of La busca with a series of sketches capturing recognizable settings and images from the book, like a woman in a corrala, a dilapidated shack, and a group of vagrants in the street.

Like Baroja’s narrative, these drawings, dark and crude in their execution, represent the modern paradox of Madrid and embody the darkness of inequitable modernity in the capital. Looking at these images, evidence of Madrid’s industrialization and urbanization is nearly absent, save the thin smokestack rising up behind a shack (the middle image above). Barely able to make out the smoke emitting from the tall chimney, this image evokes the irony behind the fact that progress, in the form of factories and other benefits of modern civilization, were inaccessible for residents of the barrios bajos or other poor areas of the city, even if glimpsed or felt from a distance. Unlike Azorín who examined the adverse impacts of modernity in the city and in the country, Baroja individualizes his critique on uneven modernization to Madrid specifically, showing that the inequity often attributed to urban versus rural populations also manifested as a serious issue within the city limits. Others, like Solana as we will see below, adopted Baroja’s determination to expose the contradictions of modern society through detailed and informed representation of deviant classes. This is, indeed, another iteration of the Black Spain aesthetic that Regoyos and others had engaged before him, which his bold documentation naturally perpetuates.

La busca ends with a hopeful rendition of Manuel, standing before Madrid as a new day dawns, vowing to begin living the straight-and-narrow. In Mala hierba, the second book of the

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121 Temporal references in the trilogy are scarce and contradictory, which means that various studies on its timeline exist. Juan María Marín Martínez’s introduction to La busca looks at a number of these accounts, and concludes that the action of La lucha por la vida from beginning to end encompasses 1885-1888 to 1902. The trilogy, therefore, spans the turn-of-the-century and a time of profound socioeconomic change with the onset of urbanization in the late nineteenth-century, the disaster of 98, as well as the beginnings of real modernization in the capital.
trilogy, Manuel finds employment at a printing house in the city center, but upon traversing the 
*barrios bajos* just one more time, he immediately falls back into a life of *golfería* and crime.

Memories of deviancy with his friends Vidal and el Bizco, who featured prominently in *La busca*,
activate the street’s palimpsestic power for Manuel who realizes that his past, whether he likes it
or not, continues to define his present.\(^{122}\) The final novel, *Aurora roja*, turns focus from Manuel
who, over the course of some 14-17 years, escapes the *barrios bajos* and *la mala vida* through the
redemptive actions of Salvadora, a tailor who facilitates his scaling of the social ladder.\(^{123}\) *Aurora roja* closes the trilogy with the story of Juan, Manuel’s brother, whose anarchist aspirations lead
to his martyrdom in the name of a rebel cause.

For the majority of *La busca* and *Mala hierba*, Manuel lives *la mala vida*, a term that emerged around the turn-of-the-century when crime and disease began to rise in the cities of
developing nations across the globe. Mention of *la mala vida* embodied the fear of moral, social,
and biological degeneration in the “lower orders” that threatened to dismantle order and normalcy
in modern civilization’s powerful and dominant classes (Cleminson and Fuentes Peris 385).
Interpretations of the causes and consequences of *la mala vida* derived from scientific and
philosophical debates of the time, which intellectuals like Baroja represented in their literature
with varying degrees of accuracy. Critics have noted the relationship between Baroja’s narratives
and the teachings of Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Darwin, Nordau, and other thinkers of the modern
era, but his own readings of them are often inconsistent if not contradictory (Ugarte 59).\(^{124}\) These

\(^{122}\) For Lefebvre, “in space, what came earlier continues to underpin what follows” (229). In this sense,
space is a palimpsest in that it encompasses not only a fixed present but also the cycles of everyday life,
including past lives, civilizations, or events.

\(^{123}\) While a deterministic tone is palpable, Baroja makes it clear by the end of the trilogy that it is possible
to chart one’s destiny. This overcoming, however, is not simple and demands, among other things,
supremely good health, which explains Baroja’s concern for the deteriorating and deformed body,
criminality, and hygiene. For the purposes of this study, focus falls primarily on the first two novels and
Manuel’s experience in particular as he, true to the Darwinian essence of the trilogy’s title, struggles to
survive Madrid’s urban center and its *barrios bajos*.

\(^{124}\) This is a topic that has been discussed by critics in the past such as Roberta Johnson in *Crossfire: 
Philosophy and the Novel in Spain 1900-1934* (specifically Ch. 3 “Baroja: A Solution to the Problem of
theories and related ideas (Galton’s eugenics or Lombroso’s criminality studies for example) help us to understand the view of social degradation in Baroja’s work, which relates ultimately to critical and provocative estimations of Spain as physically or morally degenerating in modern times, his own take on Black Spain.125

Many intellectuals, politicians, and ordinary citizens at the time shared an unease over deviance from the norm, be it behavioral (crime, prostitution, etc.), psychological (hysteria, insanity, etc.) or biological (disease, infertility, etc.), all of which were elements of la mala vida in modern Spain. Baroja’s concern over la mala vida, its victims (the poor, hungry, deviant, homeless, sick, exploited, etc.), and its consequences was obvious throughout his literary and sociological writing. For example, the Manifiesto de los tres – the co-authored manifesto by Baroja, Maeztu, and Azorín as discussed in Chapter 1 – indicated the need to feed the hungry, help the victims of alcoholism or prostitution, and educate the ignorant across Spain. Similarly, Baroja calls for similar attention to the urban poor in a 1903 article entitled “Crónica: Hampa”:

¿Quién se ocupa de ellos? Nadie, absolutamente nadie. Yo he paseado de noche por las Injurias y las Cambroneras, he alternado con la golfería de las tabernas de las Peñuelas y de los merenderos de los Cuatro Caminos y de la carretera de Andalucía. He visto mujeres amontonadas en las cuevas del Gobierno Civil y hombres echados desnudos al calabozo. He visto golfos andrajosos salir gateando de las cuevas del cerrillo de San Blas y les he contemplado cómo devoraban gatos muertos.

He visto asilos que son la parodia más terrible de la caridad; hospitales, en donde los enfermos mueren abandonados.

Y no he visto a nadie que se ocupara en serio de tanta tristeza, de tanta lacería. ¿Es egoísmo monstruoso o es olvido? No sé. Sólo sé que entre los

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125Baroja, given his formal training as a medical doctor, was well-versed in prominent scientific narratives of the time including degeneration and eugenics. “Nordau,” he once said, “en su obra Degeneración, nos lo dio a conocer a la mayoría. ¡Qué libro más extraño el de Max Nordau! Yo le calificaría entre los más insanos, entre los más perturadores que se han escrito” (Hambrook 1017). References to Lombroso’s L’uomo di genio (1888) in periodicals, translations of Nordau’s books between 1887 and 1915, evidence of a Spanish readership of Degeneration in French, and references to Nordau and Lombroso by Emilia Pardo Bazán, Clarín, Unamuno, and other modernist writers, suggesting their popularity, or infamy, in Spain at the time (Hambrook, 1009, 1013).
miserables y los poderosos hay una muralla tan alta que los unos no se enteran de lo que hacen los otros. (331-332)

Reading this excerpt feels like reading *La lucha por la vida* itself. The neighborhoods Baroja mentions, the jail cells, the caves of San Blas, the farcical asylums; these are all spaces that Manuel and his friends traverse as they descend into *golfería* or attempt to lead decent lives.

Baroja draws on his first-hand experience of Madrid’s *mala vida* in this and similar articles (“Yo he paseado […] he visto mujeres […] he visto golfos [he visto asilos”]) in order to document the city’s ugliness and cruelty here and in the trilogy with accuracy and legitimacy. Given his deep understanding of the subject matter, the language and rhetoric he uses in the trilogy seems at once literary and sociological. However, the urban excess that he portrays – the nearly excessive accumulation of names and descriptions for the streets, plazas, cemeteries, churches, bridges, and neighborhoods that intersect with the individual struggles and stories of his urban characters – does not lead him or his readers to sociological truth. Rather, it creates a scene, based on an observed and lived reality, rife with misery that is forever ensconced and unresolved in the pages of his books. Twice in the above passage, Baroja points out the fact that the needy have nobody caring for them or attempting to ease their pain; they are the unfortunate masses that the rich or powerful ignore and abandon. This repetition captures Baroja’s growing disillusionment with promised and failed attempts at regeneration, including those that he helped propose with “Los tres” two years earlier.

Throughout much of the trilogy (*La busca* and *Mala hierba* especially), Manuel leads a nomadic lifestyle, which underlines his tenuous sense of identity and stability. At times, Manuel works a steady job, at others, he hustles the streets; at times he sleeps in a bed, at others, he takes shelter in a cave; at times he strives to be a good person, at others, he resigns himself to be a derelict. He is always on the move, and often, does not know where his next step will lead him.

Manuel’s indeterminate status recalls Benjamin’s modern *flâneur;* who “stands on the threshold –
of the metropolis as of the middle class. Neither has him in its power yet. In neither is he at home. He seeks refuge in the crowd” (40). Benjamin draws from Baudelaire’s strolling flâneur who is the quintessential symbol of modernité, the ultimate figure of city walking, and the “passionate spectator [for whom] it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite” (9). As he walks indefinitely around the city, Manuel feels at home nowhere and everywhere, he is a threshold figure on the verge of everything and of nothing, whose tentative sense of self nearly dissolves in the homogeneous metropolitan crowd. So many literary archetypes like the flâneur are wandering or roaming figures including the epic hero, the pícaro, or the vagabond. More than any of these, however, Baroja’s protagonist emulates a unique and distinctly Spanish type, the golfo, whose pedestrian movement is just as real as it is literary.

One of la mala vida’s most recognizable and infamous figures was this golfo, a deviant capable of permeating any social class without ever establishing itself as definitively good or bad. He possessed a moral ambiguity and behavioral nonconformity that threatened to disrupt conventional bourgeois standards of order and decency, and like other divergences from the norm, golfería was often a target of contemporary scientific, philosophical, and intellectual debate. The golfo was dangerous because he had the potential to stray from the straight-and-narrow as well as the ability to remain on it; his deviancy was conditional, unpredictable, and thus a menace to decorum. The first written account of the golfo in Spain was a short article, “Golfos” (1897), by none other than Pío Baroja:

El golfo no es un vago; al revés, es trabajador, pero a cambio de sus trabajos y de sus esfuerzos, no quiere éste satisfacer solo sus necesidades, sino también sus pasiones y sus vicios. Comprende que en la vida social, la línea recta es la más larga que existe entre dos puntos, y anda, por caminos tortuosos, buscando siempre una posición que nunca encuentra. (266) Emphasizing their non-sedentary nature, Baroja introduces the golfo as an individual detached from the practical bounds of his social class (his “posición”), aspiring to live and to indulge his
sensual desires. The author’s observations continue three years later in “Patología del golfo,” another article that considers not only what golfos are, but also how they came to be and how to solve the issue they present for society. For Baroja, the fragile state of democracy during the Restoration is in large part to blame. He criticizes Spain’s unique democratic constitutional monarchy – functioning according to rigged elections and planned alteration of political power – as artificial and sterile, a system he perceived as more interested in appearances than realities.\(^{126}\)

The tendency toward superficiality and unrealistic aspirations, notes Baroja, had infiltrated the public’s outlook as well:

> Ha hecho que el hombre busque su progreso social, más que su perfeccionamiento moral; ha producido en todos la ambición de representar más que la de ser. De aquí un desequilibrio, una necesidad de aparentar lo que no se tiene, ni se es […] La democracia, al destruir las murallas que separaban las clases, ha producido la golfería. (226-227)

It is society, therefore, not the golfos themselves, which is to blame for the rise and permanence of golfería in Spain at the turn-of-the-century. As Javier Martínez Palacio notes, the author felt great antipathy toward golfería, and offered two possible treatments for this delinquent figure: “Una terapéutica: educarlo. Otra higiénica: ahorcarlo” (“Origen” 24, “Patología” 235). Entirely opposite ends of the spectrum, Baroja ultimately admits that either process would be difficult and/or problematic for a number of reasons, leaving the argument open for further suggestions. Revealing this darkness, he leaves it unresolved.

In *La lucha por la vida*, Manuel transitions in and out of golfería as he rambles about Madrid’s city streets. The street is a place of danger and desire, making it the perfect setting for lower-class golfos like hustlers, pimps, prostitutes, and thieves among others. As Rafael Huertas points out, golfería often began in childhood or adolescence, producing “una infancia ‘de la

\(^{126}\) Baroja is not denouncing democracy in a broad sense, but rather in terms of how it manifested in Spain over the previous decades. “yo no soy enemigo de [la democracia]” he says, “las conquistas revolucionarias me entusiasman tanto como a cualquier otro; pero la democracia nuestra, la que gastamos en España, me parece la institución más estéril, la más superficial y estúpida…” (“Patalogía” 226).
calle,” which included Manuel and his friends, especially Vidal and el Bizco especially (426). These young delinquents also embody Baroja’s definition of the poor, urban golfo: “Sus frases favoritas aluspiar, estar al file, andar a la busca, pintan al que acecha y espía, no al holgazán enamorado de la vida vagabunda” (“Patalogía” 230). In this sense, the golfo is an archetypal figure of urban walking who is more active and deliberate than, say, the leisurely strolling flâneur. He constantly walks the streets, ready to take advantage of opportunities as they arise and is always on the lookout for something more than what he has. As Solange Hibbs suggests, the farther that Manuel moves away from the city center and toward the barrios bajos, the more he tends to deviate socially and morally. The capital, specifically its streets, she claims, is a space of transgression and of identity dissolution. The life of the golfo, therefore, comes at a potentially steep cost of lost individuality and behavioral deviance, both of which complicate Manuel’s search for his place in modern Madrid.

Javier Martínez Palacio, Pablo Beltran de Heredia, and others suggest that the tangle of streets, avenues, and alleys that Baroja narrates in La lucha por la vida makes his Madrid a labyrinthine space, within which the trilogy’s characters constantly search for a way out. While Manuel does succeed in finding passage to a more favorable lifestyle in the end, such social mobility eludes most of the other characters. Martínez Palacio detects a perpetual “actitud de busca” among the characters, and Heredia suggests that la busca, the word itself, implies a need to find an exit from the labyrinth that is life in the barrios bajos (“La creación del espacio” 33, 49). I agree that Manuel does actively search for his way out at times, but at others, he seems to be searching without a clear objective. The protagonist spends a majority of La busca and Mala hierba walking, his steps often leading to a concrete destination like La blasa, the corralas, or la casa de huéspedes, but there are key moments when Manuel or other city-dwellers appear to be searching for something they cannot articulate or that we, the reader, do not see or understand. The idea of an unguided search seems paradoxical. How can Manuel possibly search for
something when he knows not for what he is searching? What could the indeterminate walking that this search implies accomplish for Manuel, his companions, or even Baroja himself?

Manuel’s urban walking is ultimately analogous to an existential search for self, for an understanding of what it means to exist and to survive as an individual amidst an anonymous crowd. As evidenced in Manuel’s constant meandering and non-directional walking, this search is not straightforward and is often obscure. To illustrate this point, it is worth noting an example of Manuel’s on-the-move lifestyle in detail. Toward the end of La busca, Manuel leaves his job at the Regeneración del calzado (on la calle del Aguilar) when Sr. Ignacio, the storeowner, falls ill, and returns to Doña Casiana’s pension (on la calle de Mesonero Romanos) where his mother Petra works as a maid. Given his past behavior, Manuel is no longer welcome there, so Petra brings him to a grocery vendor (in la plaza del Carmen) who provides him housing in exchange for work. Unhappy with this situation, Petra finds Manuel an apprenticeship at a bakery (on la calle del Horno de la Mata) until he falls ill and returns to Doña Casiana’s guesthouse to recuperate. Later, after he seduces her niece, Doña Casiana throws him to the streets and he embarks on a period of golfería in the barrios bajos near the Manzanares with his companions Vidal and el Bizco. Following the tragic death of Petra and without any set plan in mind, Manuel sets off into the city, bidding Doña Casiana a final farewell. “Después de callejar toda la mañana,” Manuel meets the orphan boy Expósito, with whom he partakes in more golfería (in Atocha and San Blas) until the chaos of searching for shelter in caves overwhelms him (389). Finally, he returns to the bakery, but only temporarily.

It is over the course of just two chapters and some four to five months that Manuel covers so much ground, a transiency representative of his constant spatial displacement and personal indeterminacy. Following his mother’s death, Manuel periodically reflects on the value and purpose of his life, a key change in his previously aloof and spontaneous demeanor. At this point, Manuel sets out definitively in search of something better in his life, “pero no sabía qué hacer, ni
qué camino seguir” (397). This rhetoric of not knowing what to do, where to go, or what to look for is the essence of the existential search that Manuel conducts throughout the remainder of *La busca* and *Mala hierba*. Just as life marches on erratic and inexorable, Manuel is often uncertain but rarely sedentary, inclined to keep searching for something better, something more than he has.

This is not to say that Manuel is unaware of what he wants in life; rather, the steps necessary to escape poverty, misery, and a life of crime, elude him or seem insurmountable. At the beginning of *Mala hierba*, Manuel seeks out his friend Roberto Hastings, an ambitious English student turned newspaper journalist who had also lived with Doña Casiana, hoping for advice to guide his newfound desire for change. Roberto balks at Manuel’s nebulous plan to “estar a lo que salga” when it comes to finding work, urging him instead to, “buscar, buscar y buscar. Luego, trabajar hasta echar el alma por la boca” (150, 157). Roberto tries in vain to convince his friend that he has the will to alter the trajectory of his life: “Manuel contempló a Roberto desanimado. Hablaban los dos en distinto idioma” (159). Manuel’s sense of will at this point is nearly non-existent, unlike Roberto’s go-getting attitude or “el enfermo’s”/Antonio Azorín’s slowly dissolving spirits. On his own, Manuel’s existential search is futile, leading him nowhere other than to the streets and his life of golfería, which is resolved only with the intervention of another person, Salvadora.127 In some ways, Manuel’s constant yet ultimately unproductive search parallels the political and ideological values of turn-of-the-century Spain. Although Baroja’s political views are largely ambiguous, and despite the fact that he did not participate in clearly defined literary or social movement, his writing often insinuates a certain frustration or critique that is undoubtedly grounded in politics.128

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127 While this study does not do into detail about Manuel’s social ascent by the end of the trilogy, it should be obvious that Salvadora’s name is symbolic for her role as savior. The same goes for Exposity, the orphan who was left abandoned, or exposed.

128 For Ugarte, “Baroja’s writing is not politically ambitious or even radical. As a matter of fact, Baroja’s real political convictions have always remained an enigma, since there is absolutely no hope of forcing his entire corpus of writing into a coherent ideology” (76). And, according to González López, “Quizá de todos
In 1901, for example, Baroja wrote an article for *El pais* praising Galdós’s *Electra*, which he saw as the author’s initial march toward a remedy for “el problema de España,” specifically the sicknesses of lethargy and stagnation. Evidently, Baroja considered this endeavor as a search that he and his generation were to continue:

Hay en la generación actual, entre nosotros, una [sic] ansia inconsciente, un ideal sin forma, algo vago, indeterminado que solicita nuestra voluntad sin rumbo fijo. Sabemos que hay una luz, pero no sabemos dónde; tenemos la aspiración de concretar nuestros ideales para encontrar el elemento común que nos une a todos los rebeldes y no lo encontramos. (105 my emphasis)

An intangible drive compels his generation to search, without any fixed direction, for a light hitherto out of sight, a light that represents the remedy to Spain’s sociopolitical issues; in other words, a light to brighten the nation’s darkness. Baroja’s sentiments reverberate later on in that same year when he joined “Los tres” who held fast to the idea that concrete solutions to Spain’s sociopolitical problems would arise naturally once they were systematically revealed to the public. This plan, undertaken by an ideologically diverse group of intellectuals with differing opinions on just how to “mejorar la vida de los miserables,” was a plan sin forma, vago, and indeterminado from the start, just like Galdós’s ideal (1273). However, as much as he denounces and laments the state of things across Spain, Baroja fails to put theory into practice. While in *La lucha por la vida* Manuel’s meandering about Madrid eventually does lead him out of his life of golfería and misery, the regenerationists’ and like-minded authors’ continued propositions of solutions and plans often led them in circles.

To be sure, while Baroja was dedicated to the idea of bettering the lives of the wretched in Spain, he was increasingly disillusioned with the relatively disparate and nebulous nature of regenerationism and its efforts. Manuel’s first place of employment as an adolescent is an oft-

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los escritores de la Generación del 98 sea Pío Baroja el que permaneció más al margen de ambas agitaciones, de la artística y de la social” (13).
cited example of this sentiment in *La busca*. A plaque outside of the shoe repair shop where Manuel’s mother has arranged a job for him reads, “A LA REGENERACIÓN DEL CALZADO,” a play on words that invites a rare suspension in Baroja’s descriptive narrative (281). The author addresses readers directly, bringing their attention squarely to the irony behind the shop name and the criticism it implies:

> El historiógrafo del porvenir seguramente encontrará en este letrero una prueba de lo extendida que estuvo en algunas épocas cierta idea de regeneración nacional, y no le asombrará que esa idea, que comenzó por querer reformar y regenerar la Constitución y la raza española, concluyera en la muestra de una tienda de un rincón de los barrios bajos, en donde lo único que se hacía era reformar y regenerar el calzado. (281)

From regeneration of national values to repair of worn out shoes is a long, steep decline. With this ridiculing metaphor, Baroja expresses his resentment and lament for an extended period of reformation attempts and failures. As Cleminson and Fuentes Peris rightly point out, in modern Spain, regeneration went hand-in-hand with degeneration (386). Later on in the novel, Manuel, Vidal, and el Bizco form “La Sociedad de los Tres,” a gang dedicated to living a life of crime and pleasure. The titular coincidence between “La Sociedad de los Tres” (Manuel, Vidal, el Bizco) and “Los tres” (Baroja, Azorín, Maeztu) may be inconsequential, but the timing of the trilogy’s publication along with Baroja’s disintegrating faith in regenerationism suggests that some connection could exist. “La Sociedad de los Tres” dissolves quickly when Manuel decides that he does not want to align himself with someone as brutal and immoral as el Bizco, realizing that, “tenía que resolverse a dar a su existencia un nuevo giro; pero ¿cuál? Eso es lo que no sabía” (385). Similarly, Baroja distanced himself from his “Los tres” early on, becoming skeptical of its lack of formal organization and objectives. Like the regenerationists, it seems, Manuel knew a change was in order, but did not know how to discover or enact it.

While Manuel is Baroja’s main protagonist, other urban walkers shape his experience of the capital as well, and propel or impede his search for existential meaning. In *Mala hierba,*
Manuel, along with Jesús and el hombre boa – two of his relatively consistent golfo/vagrant friends – observe a mass of residents from Las Injurias walking toward the city center:

[…] iban saliendo sus habitantes hacia Madrid, a la busca, por las callejuelas llenas de cieno; subían unos al paseo Imperial, otros marchaban por el arroyo de Embajadores […] Era gente astrosa: algunos, traperos; otros, mendigos; otros, muertos de hambre; casi todos de facha repulsiva. Peor aspecto que los hombres tenían las mujeres, sucias, desgreñadas, haraposas. Era una basura humana, envuelta en guiñapos, entumecida por el frío y la humedad, la que vomitaba aquel barrio infecto. Era la herpe, la lacra, el color amarillo de la terciana, el párpado retraído, todos los estigmas de la enfermedad y de la miseria. (290)

Baroja’s description of this ragged convoy as it approaches Madrid is disquieting and epitomizes the author’s concern for the unfortunate, his anxiety over the threat of disease, and his aversion to social deviance all at once. From shabby crowd, to human garbage, to embodied sickness, Baroja dehumanizes the men and women he portrays walking up the street. Like Manuel and his companions, they too set out, searching for work, food, business; everything and anything they need to survive. To be sure, they are all members of the very “basura humana” they observe. This scene sets up a short dialogue between el hombre boa and Jesús concerning the seemingly infinite divide between Madrid’s rich and poor:

– Si los ricos vieran esto, ¿eh? – dijo [el hombre boa]
– ¡Bah!, no harían nada – murmuró Jesús.
– ¿Por qué?
– Porque no. Si le quita usted al rico la satisfacción de saber que mientras él duerme otro se hiela y que mientras él come otro se muere de hambre, le quita usted la mitad de su dicha […] ¿qué nos importa lo que piensen? Ellos no se ocupan de nosotros; ahora dormirán en sus camas limpias y mullidas, tranquilamente, mientras nosotros…(290-291)

Jesús’s deeply pessimistic assumption, that the rich take pleasure in knowing how the poor suffer in the streets, is a damning critique of the elite’s supposedly willful disregard of the figurative and literal darkness beleaguering the city’s poor and hungry. This situation may prompt one to ask,

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129 This dialogue should remind us of Baroja’s repetitions in “Crónica: Hampa”: ¿Quién se ocupa de ellos? Nadie, absolutamente nadie […] Y no he visto a nadie que se ocupara en serio de tanta tristeza” (331-332). Baroja is clearly concerned about these people, but concern, he realizes, is not enough to solve a problem.
where or in whom does hope for the city and for its humanity reside if Baroja presents us only the
dehumanized poor and the demonized rich? Baroja sabotages his own revelatory darkness as he
undermines any possibility for meaningful dialogue, within and outside of the narrative, as the
conversation between Jesús and El hombre boa ends abruptly with no ground gained and no
solution in sight. Like other authors and artists of his generation, this socioeconomic rift deeply
troubled Baroja, and for Jesús, modern civilization had entirely abandoned the poor:

La civilización está hecha para el que tiene dinero, y el que no lo tiene que se
muería. Antes, el rico y el pobre se alumbraban con un candil parecido; hoy, el
pobre sigue con el candil, y el rico alumbra su casa con luz eléctrica; antes, si el
pobre iba a pie, el rico iba a caballo; hoy, el pobre sigue andando a pie, y el rico
va en automóvil (302).

These words are effectively Baroja’s own thoughts reiterated in the novel. Significantly,
walking is a major part of this paradigm, where pedestrian movement, in its vulgarity and
inconsistency, is the mode of the poor. Manuel’s existential search for place in modern Madrid
unfolds as he finds himself struggling to navigate within the divide that Jesús, Baroja, and so
many others lamented at the time. Baroja’s pessimistic renditions of reality and the inequalities
responsible for the suffering produced in la mala vida are deeply critical, but they do not propose
solutions to society’s defects or insinuate possibilities for a hopeful future. Instead, Baroja’s
revelatory darkness sheds light on sociopolitical issues that the individual struggles against and
often fails to deal with. For Manuel, existential individualism is a constant and contingent result
of urban walking, which undergirds his search for meaning in life within a modern Madrid that
constantly fights off his attempts at self-improvement.

130 This observation is echoed almost verbatim in Baroja’s “Crónica: Hampa”: “El dinero separa cada vez
más las clases; antes, el rico y el pobre se alumbraban con un candil igual o parecido; hoy, el pobre sigue
con el candil, y el rico alumbra su casa con luz eléctrica; antes, si el pobre iba a pie, el rico iba a caballo;
hoy, el pobre sigue andando a pie, y el rico va en automóvil” (332). Juan María Marín Martínez makes this
observation in his annotated edition of Mala hierba (303 n165).
Acérquense, señores: Detour in Solana’s Madrid

During the first decades of the twentieth-century, José Gutiérrez Solana closely recorded everyday struggle and strife among marginalized communities all throughout Madrid.\textsuperscript{131} The always-avid observer of life portrayed his vision of the world on canvas and on page just as he experienced it; head on and unobstructed. His friend and biographer, Manuel Sánchez-Camargo, attests that as an author, Solana did not concern himself with inventing stories. Rather, “es su propósito ‘ir contra la literatura, diciendo verdades y cómo son las cosas.’ Él se limita ‘a hablar claro.’ Su Madrid es la ciudad puesta al descubierto en sus vergüenzas” (131). His frankness comes through crystal clear in his various accounts of the capital – including Madrid. Escenas y costumbres (primera serie) (1913), Escenas y costumbres (segunda serie) (1919), Madrid callejero (1923) – in which he spares no detail, however grotesque, about Madrid’s dark underbelly.\textsuperscript{132} This thoroughness is due to the fact that Solana describes the city from his own vantage point and from within the darkness, so to speak, having inserted himself among the same golfos and basura humana that populate his books. While Solana wrote his 1920 Black Spain about Spain’s pueblos as Regoyos had decades earlier, his Madrid narratives feature much of the same poverty and pain, effectively extending the properties of “España negra” to the treacherous and underdeveloped corners of the modernizing capital. In the past, scholars have overlooked the importance of urban walking in Solana’s Madrid narratives, despite the prevalence of strolling and wandering figures who gather, stop, change directions, and interact with each other while moving through the city. In this section, I argue that in representing these latter types of actions,

\textsuperscript{131} According to María T. Pao, “Solana loved Madrid’s barrios bajos,” and while he was enamored with the grotesque scenes these infamous areas offered his painter’s eye, he “loved” nothing about the misery he witnessed there (557).

\textsuperscript{132} Henceforth, I refer to Madrid. Escenas y costumbres (primera serie) and Madrid. Escenas y costumbres (segunda serie as Madrid ECI and Madrid ECII respectively.
derivatives of the pedestrian act, Solana captures rifts in the flow of modern life in Madrid, which prompt self-reflection and critical contemplation.

At the heart of Solana’s Madrid writing is the street, the connective threads and channels of urban existence. While other modernist writers, like Baroja and Azorín, found the street crucial to representative analyses of modern Madrid, Solana, without plot arcs or character development, provides a unique perspective on urban street life. When asked about his thoughts on life—“¿La vida?”—Solana answered brusquely, “una [puta madre], y otras, raras veces, agradable. La vida es calle, estaría gracioso que fuera otra cosa,” (Sánchez-Camargo 268). According to this metaphor, humans live their lives just as they would experience a street. People progress through life, connecting with others and enduring the ordinary pressures of existence (jobs, money, family, etc.), and in the process emulate the very essence of what defines a street, namely elements of mobility, intersection, and exteriority. We often conceive of streets as pertaining to the urban context, the paved street, that is, which implies a necessary degree of modernity. Solana’s intense focus on street life, suggests that his Madrid writings also represent his thoughts on or reactions to modern as he experiences it.

Solana first began writing without the intention to publish, but later he allegedly felt compelled to share what he had witnessed and recorded throughout Spain with others. Much of the material comprising the painter’s six books is traceable to collections of notes and excerpted writings housed in the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid. The hand-written manuscripts in the museum’s Solana archive include hundreds of notebooks and loose pages of sentences, hastily scribbled and without regard for grammar or spelling, and often accompanied by sketches, pasted-in newspaper clippings, or ticket stubs. Wherever he went,

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133 Included in a collection of Solana’s opinions on various topics (love, women, painting, painters, politics, etc.) “recogidas literalmente” by Sánchez-Camargo (267).
134 One notable exception is his short novel Florencio Cornejo (1926), which is a fictional story based loosely on one of his deranged yet beloved uncles.
Solana documented the scenes he witnessed, which served as reminders and inspiration for his art or writing after the fact. Unsurprisingly, questions of genre and perspective are complicated ones in this case given the books’ genesis. Each one is a compilation of first-person\textsuperscript{135} vignettes that describe a gamut of city scenes like celebrations, processions, crimes, funerals, sideshows, fairs, and charlatan exhibitions, as well as descriptions of people, animals, food, sundries, work, living conditions, and the environment, which he witnessed while living in Madrid or traveling throughout Spain in the first decades of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{136} His books are plotless in the traditional sense in that, for the most part, each chapter can be read in isolation and/or in any order. For the sake of the current analysis, we will refer to these books, a combination of diary-like chronicle and creative nonfiction, as documentary narratives.

For many, Solana is a costumbrista author, though like Larra and other modern writers of customs, his cuadros de costumbres are more self-reflective and -critical than the genre would traditionally allow. Javier Huerto Calvo describes Solana’s style as “costumbrismo tremendista,” an evolution of the genre that honors the Spanishness of everyday scenes while recognizing that the authenticity of this Spanishness is slowly but surely dissipating in real life (20). María T. Pao claims that Solana’s costumbrismo verges on avant-garde expression due to his evocation of orality (speaking, yelling) as fundamental to his narratives (564). Some scholars agree that Solana is more of a realist, eliciting what they determine a “disquieting realism” that pushes beyond the bounds of nineteenth-century norms.\textsuperscript{137} Solana’s written accounts are intensely detailed, but as

\textsuperscript{135} Solana writes in the first person singular or plural, and although he typically does not identify who makes up the “nosotros” he intermittently invokes, we know from manuscripts in the Reina Sofia Solana archive and from other authors’ accounts that Solana was often in the company of his brother Manuel. For example, in his memoirs Baroja recalls how, “Solana casi siempre andaba con su hermano,” and Sánchez-Camargo remembers Manuel as a Lazarrillo-like sidekick to his brother. Solana himself wrote…

\textsuperscript{136} Weston Flint studies “el mundo simbólico de los objetos” in Solana, escritor, dividing his analysis between people (la gente), animals (los animales), things (las coasa), and setting (el escenario). This account of Solana’s preferred themes and images is expansive, but relies heavily on quotation, sacrificing critical analysis or interpretation.

\textsuperscript{137} José Barrio Garay refers to Solana’s “disquieting realism” in his discussion of the artist’s opinions on Spain’s artistic tradition (18). He claims that Solana makes connections between the words realism and...
Anglada-Segarra argues, his renditions of the world around him are not merely photographic: “Lo que nos sorprende es que el realismo para Solana no es ser fotógrafo, sino que indica que una actitud crítica queda, o debe quedar, implícita. Solana llama realismo al mirar debajo de las cosas, de la apariencia de la fotografía, y captar el núcleo de verdad que hay en ellas” (95). For me, Solana is an artist and writer that draws on various traditions including costumbrismo and realism but procures his own artistic and literary aesthetic that is difficult to label.

For Weston Flint, Solana deliberately frames the scenes that he writes (96). For example, he often portrays animated accounts of bustling crowds that conceal sinister realities lying beneath the surface. The first chapter of Madrid ECI, for example, the opening for Solana’s library of published documentary narratives on the city, describes a typical Sunday in Las Ventas. All of the bars and restaurants are full of contented patrons eating and drinking a variety of local products while the streets around them buzz with the energy of passing electric trams and lively crowds. With this festivity serving as frame, Solana closes in on the real object of his interest, the “baile chulo en las Ventas” (71). The most beautiful and characteristic baile chulo, he claims, occurs in the dark dancing hall of Tío Barriga, where “no hay soldados, ni señoritos, ni modistas, ni horteras de ningún ramo” (73). Instead, this is a space for the most “authentic” types like chulos (pimps), golfas, and working-class women who, Solana claims, truly “saben vivir” (73). Many of the characters he observes – the syphilitic pimp Andrés el Vinagre, the barbarous ruffian el Niño de Vallecas, and the “más chulona” golfa Rosa la Legañosa – hail from Vallecas, one of

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138 Similarly, Flint calls Solana “a tireless, even obsessive observer of mankind who seeks constantly the true meaning beneath the surface of things,” (“Wax Figures” 174). Like Anglada-Segarra and Flint, other critics have attempted to prove that Solana sought out or revealed the “truth” in his work, the pursuit of which we have already deemed futile in chapter one. My study is less concerned with rooting out the truth than with interpreting the topics that Solana was most interested in portraying on page and canvas in terms of urban walking and revelatory darkness.
the so-called barrios bajos that Solana notes can be seen from las Ventas, “allá, a lo lejos” (72). Behind the animated streets and the dance lie painful histories of violence and reminders of blatant segregation, which uncovers the reality of what it meant to live in Madrid, a view that was radically different depending on class, circumstance, and perspective.

The personalized details Solana imparts on this scene are unique when compared to his otherwise objective accounts of city life. In their most essential interpretation, these examples of la mala vida are walking figures whose existence unfolds mainly in the streets. This is, perhaps, why Solana was so attracted to them and invested in their histories. From a compositional point of view, Solana’s documentary narratives of Madrid are a direct product of urban walking, his own as he traverses streets, plazas, and alleyways recording his observations as he goes. When Solana or the people he examines interrupt their movement throughout to witness some spectacle or event, the diversion from their preconceived path disrupts the multidirectional urban crowd’s flow. The crowd depends on human interaction, whether direct (a salutary gesture, a verbal greeting) or indirect (an accidental bump, a passing glance). Sometimes, these acts require or cause what I call pedestrian detour, a spatial digression that suspends one’s trajectory. Himself a walker, one detached from the life unfolding before him yet immersed in what he observes, Solana’s pedestrian detour creates a rift in the flow of city life that elicits his reflection and reaction. The same occurs for the urban walkers he portrays who, upon stopping or interrupting their movement through Madrid, contemplate the undercurrents of animated crowds and chaotic city life around them.

Whether painting or writing, Solana is a master of contrasts. His is a craft of dual drives in which sharply juxtaposed images and ideas impart unstated meaning on his words as seen, for example, in a chapter entitled “Tetuán” in Madrid EC II. Tetuán or Tetuán de las Victorias, named after the Spanish military victory in 1860 at Téotuan, Morocco during the Spanish-Moroccan war (1859-1860), is a neighborhood that lies north of the city center and just west of
Chamartín. Solana arrives by tranvía and walks about the lively streets lined with diverse shops, bars and restaurants, beautiful houses, and, in preparation for el Día de los Difuntos the next day, rows of vendors selling colorful flowers. His narration is uncharacteristically pleasant and picturesque until, finding himself outside of a funeraria (funeral parlor), he shifts his attention to two women who walk down the street and toward the outskirts of Tetuán, one of them carrying a recently purchased coffin. As they make their way, Solana notes, their surroundings begin to change as modern streets give way to more open lands, slopes, embankments, and hills of the countryside just outside of the city. Historically, Tetuán was a site of uneven growth like other peripheral extensions of the Ensanche project. Low cost of living attracted migrant farmers and laborers from surrounding pueblos, and while its proximity to the center led to the construction of modern infrastructure (tranvías and eventually metros), Tetuán became a decidedly lower working-class neighborhood.¹³⁹

As the women begin walking through the underdeveloped outskirts of Tetuán, Solana notices trash and rubble littering the fields and embankments and notices an old man indelicately pulling up his trousers after defecating on the ground:

dice con filosofía, viendo algunas moscas que se posan y vuelan sobre lo que acaba de dejar: ‘Los pobres, dicen los ricos, que disfrutamos con el sol y los piojos, pero si vieran los poderosos cómo a estas moscas todavía les parece nuestro cuerpo cosa no despreciable, aprenderían a respetarnos y a ver que algo tenemos de bueno.’ (284)

The contrast we see in this episode is that which occurs when Solana’s description of the pleasant and stimulating streets of Tetuán abruptly changes to a narration of its gritty outskirts and crude provincial types. Likewise, the narrator’s paradoxical qualification of the old man’s utterance, “con filosofía,” strikes a dissonant cord given the circumstance of the scene. As stated above, the

¹³⁹ For more on the history of the region see Beatriz Calvo Peña’s Tetuán, which offers a chronological history from its origins in the mid nineteenth century up until the 1970s complete with period photographs and interviews with residents, workers, artists, and other inhabitants. She presents Tetuán as a neighborhood without many big-name monuments or attractions, but a community that lives passionately and festively.
contrasts that Solana draws out here have more than surface meaning. Solana’s old philosopher, like Azorín’s Lebrijan farmers, candidly and openly demand acknowledgement and respect from society’s upper classes. His so-called philosophical words come immediately after performing one of the most universal human acts, the emission of human waste. Reflecting on the value of his and other indigent peoples’ lives in terms of a fly’s attraction to excrement serves as a reminder that regardless of socioeconomic status, humanity is a common experience. All who are alive struggle for survival in their own right, and all who are alive deserve respect for their personhood, which in the end, is equal across classes, barrios, and borders. Importantly, the act of urban walking enables and generates this scene, a cause for meditation on the reality that such stark and dark inequities truly exist in the city, and in walking distance of one another at that.

Clearly, issues of Madrid’s uneven modernization and paradoxical modernity, critically examined in the works above (Azorín 1902-4; Baroja, 1904), persisted in Solana’s time, but to best understand the historical context of his Madrid writings (1913, 1919, 1923), we must consider the complex timelines of their composition and publication. As José Luis Barrio-Garay points out, “since [Madrid EC I] was completed about 1909 and published in 1913 and since La España Negra was the product of travels initiated after his stay in Madrid in 1913, the writing of [Madrid EC II] must have taken place between 1910 and 1914” (79 n74). In 1909, therefore, the year when Solana moved from Madrid to Santander with his brother Manuel and his mother, he had already completed writing Madrid ECI. From Santander, he returned to Madrid in 1912 and 1913 to gain inspiration and material for MECII, which he would finish by 1914. These dates are what we determined as Solana’s era of travel (1913 to 1919) in chapter one, the period that would

140 This is not to say that the residents of Tetuán, living closer to the city center, are upper class. As I already mentioned, Tetuán was always mainly a working-class neighborhood. However, it is an area where development has been notoriously uneven. So, even though it may not have been as modernized as the city center, the first part of Tetuán that Solana visits is, indeed, much more developed that its outskirts where the situation at hand was observed.
also inspire *La España Negra*, published in 1920. Before this, at the end of 1917, Solana moved back to Madrid permanently with his mother and brother where, beginning in early 1918, he started frequenting the *tertulia* at the Café de Pombo alongside his friend and inspiration Ramón Gómez de la Serna. It was his activity at the Pombo during this time, while learning about new artistic styles and aesthetics that clashed with his own, that motivated his walks about Madrid yet again, inspiring *Madrid Callejero*’s 1923 publication.

Not only does this timeline sort out Solana’s travels and transitions, but it also provides some insight into the historical and cultural contexts that informed his Madrid writings. While he was preparing and writing *Madrid ECI*, the capital was still the rapidly changing metropolis that Azorín and Baroja had captured in many of their novels years earlier. There is no clear evidence of a close personal relationship between these authors, but Solana was a friend and admirer of Baroja’s brother Ricardo, himself a painter, writer, and engraver. The two artists met at the Nuevo Café de Levante, which Solana frequented with Manuel (Gutiérrez-Solana) as early as 1903. According to two of Solana’s biographers, Gómez de la Serna and Barrio-Garay, he was occasionally spotted in the company of the Baroja brothers walking the streets of Madrid after the Nuevo Levante *tertulias*, channeling the same spirit as the urban walkers in their writings (1417, 45). The stylistic and thematic affinities between Solana and Baroja are undeniable. While Solana admitted to drawing inspiration from the novelist, especially early works like *La lucha por la vida*, however, Baroja vehemently disputed reciprocal claims.  

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141 Baroja writes in his memoirs, “Me han dicho que en una biografía de Solana, de Gómez de la Serna, asegura que yo he estado muy influido por la pintura y la literatura de este pintor. Él puede que haya estado influido por Solana; yo, nada. Lo mismo podía decir que estaba influido por el moro Muza […] Solana era un pintor basto y desagradable. No tenía más que un espíritu de malevolencia vulgar. Ahora, esta malevolencia grosera a mucha gente le parecía genialidad. Parece que Gómez de la Serna dice que Solana era un gran escritor. ¡Qué tontería! Era tan gran escritor como él, que es pesado e ilegible […] Yo, lo poco que he leído de él es aburridísimo” (51, 56). Here, Baroja refutes Gómez de la Serna’s assertion that Solana inspired Baroja’s work and disparages the artist in a way that, for Barrio-Garay, must have been a consequence of the author’s then-deteriorating physical and mental health. Baroja also denies the multiple accounts of his nocturnal strolls throughout Madrid with Solana as “puras fantasias inventadas,” though one wonders, along with Barrio-Garay’s cautious consideration, where the truth of the matter actually lies (51).
not, the same streets and walking trajectories through Madrid inspired Solana’s and Baroja’s inspired their modernist interpretations of the modern urban experience.

By the time Solana published his final book on Madrid, World War I had ended and along with it an era of relative prosperity for neutral Spain. Nevertheless, this was a period that produced rampant political corruption (turnismo and caciquismo), labor unrest, and widespread ideological apathy throughout the nation. Solana rarely engaged explicitly with political matters as he wrote, but he did allude to their varied impacts on the everyday citizen and modern life from time to time. In the final chapter of Madrid Callejero, Solana introduces the vagrant Garibaldi, whose legacy is that of boisterous drunk and indignant revolutionary. His shouts reverberate through the city, “¡Viva la República!” “¡Abajo los carcas!,” as he wanders the streets day by day in a perpetual drunken stupor (592). In wholly anticlimactic fashion, Garibaldi dies of alcoholism in the end, having achieved nothing to speak of despite making an obnoxious ruckus for so many years.

Obviously a caricature of the fiercely republican General Giuseppe Garibaldi, a major player in Italian Unification (completed 1871), Solana’s town drunk reflects the artist’s apathy toward the status of national regeneration in Spain. Like Italian Unification – which was problematic given northern Italy’s imperial attitude toward the South, the “wound or gangrene of the nation” that the Piedmontese north felt compelled to dominate and reform – the Restoration (1874-1930) had repeatedly failed to make good on promises for lasting social and economic reform across Spain during nearly three decades of inconsistent political rule (Moe 176). Solana

He reminds us that La lucha por la vida began appearing in El globo in 1902 and claims that he had the first two novels, La busca and La mala hierba, essentially completed in 1901. This would make Solana very young (around 15 years old) and admittedly unlikely to have had any influence in these novels, to Baroja’s point. However, Solana lived in Madrid his whole life and took interest in its working class neighborhoods and barrios bajos at a young age, and they continued to interest him through his time at the Nuevo Café de Levante (starting in 1903) and as he prepared for MECI (starting in 1909). This fact makes their experiences of the city at the very least similar.
published *Madrid Callejero* in 1923, the year Miguel Primo de Rivera led a military coup to end the constitutional monarchy’s corrupt *turnismo* system and abolish the Constitution of 1869. He was passionately devoted to unifying and regenerating Spain following his motto, “Patria, Religión, y Monarquía,” putting first the needs and interests of the nation as a whole at all costs (R. Carr 564). His ensuing dictatorship (1923-1930) oppressed all threats to the unified Spain he envisaged including political and social groups that posed a threat to his nationalistic project, notably those linked to regionalist movements like Catalanism. Solana’s invocation of Garibaldi, therefore, may be read as a dialogue with or critique of similar political events or figures in Spain at or around the time he was writing and publishing). Fittingly, Solana’s Madrid series comes to a close with his Garibaldi parody, ending on a cynical and deflated insinuation of the futile or paradoxical outcomes of revolutionary thought and action.

However, there is much more to say about Solana’s Madrid writings and especially their intersections with questions of urban walking and modern darkness. Solana narrates primarily in the present tense, as if documenting the world around him in real time, and when he does refer to the past, it is in order to contrast history with his immediate reality. The first chapters of *Madrid EC II* and *Madrid callejero*, entitled “La Puerta del Sol” and “La Gran Vía” respectively, pay homage to two of the city’s most important central locations and document how they changed over time especially with the onset of modern urbanization in the nineteenth century. His exposition on “La Puerta del Sol” dates back to the sixteenth-century, documenting its constant (re)construction: “[La Puerta es] el punto de Madrid más concurrido, más famoso y que más modificaciones ha sufrido; pues hoy, de su antiguo carácter, solo conserva el nombre, que proviene de la imagen del Sol, que había pintado en dicha puerta, que fue derribada en 1520” (179). Following this, *MEC II*’s first sentence, Solana offers a brief chronology of the plaza’s major reforms leading up to the present, his vocabulary conjuring up ideas of loss, suffering, and urban demolition throughout:
1850 – “por todas partes no se ven más que derribos, y las calles empiezan a urbanizarse y gana Madrid en comodidades, perdiendo y sacrificando la parte artística y monumental” (183, my emphasis)
1857 – “empiezan en la Puerta del Sol los nuevos derribos para la reforma que había de cambiar [la plaza] totalmente de aspecto,” (184-185, my emphasis)
1862 – “entre las reformas que ha sufrido la Puerta del Sol, las fuentes son las que han jugado un principal papel,” (187, my emphasis)

Solana juxtaposes development with decadence as he describes the plaza’s evolution and growth in terms of urban demolition (derribos) and changes that the space has undergone. However, his account of the Puerta del Sol is by no means one-sided. As often as he mentions demolished buildings or fountains he evokes evidence of built up infrastructure, sanitation systems, and electricity networks. In Solana’s rhetoric of dovetailed progress and decline, he imbues his descriptions of the plaza with a critique of its endless (re)construction, which, ironically, is a defining practice of thriving urban centers. Verging on the melodramatic, Solana, looking back at the previous century, laments the city’s diminished picturesque appeal, which exists only in “la belleza misma de la destrucción” (463).

This reflection leads into his account of La Gran Vía in Madrid Callejero, another centrally located and well-traversed space in the capital. The key distinction between the two locales is that La Gran Vía, unlike the centuries old Puerta del Sol, was still under construction while Solana was writing, though it had, he suggests, always existed in the imaginations and folklore of Madrid’s citizens and city planners. Modernized buildings, hotels, storefronts, and bars line the newly constructed portion of this grand avenue evoking the typical scene that comes to mind as one thinks of other early twentieth-century European metropolis like Benjamin’s Paris or Woolf’s London. Less than three pages into Solana’s begrudging description of the new avenue – he insists that it caters mainly to the city’s nouveau riche – the reader encounters a subsection entitled “Los derribos.” In contrast to the grandeur that Solana now witnesses, in this section he memorializes the annihilated streets and neighborhoods erased from the city’s
geography to make way for La Gran Vía. This eradication, aside from its aesthetic changes, affected the lives of long-term residents who were subsequently displaced from their homes. “Las víctimas de todos estos lujos y adelantos,” says Solana, “han sido los antiguos vecinos de estas Viejas calles, que han tenido que irse con los trastos a otra parte, a fuerza de sufrimientos y expoliaciones” (468-469). After abandoning their old houses, families peddled what belongings they could gather in the Rastro as they sought to start a new life with no assistance from those who demanded and executed the city’s urbanization. Framing the modernization of La Gran Vía as a forced exodus of detrimental consequences, Solana presents the exiled as a new class of modern, urban nomads.

Other mobile figures besides those marginalized by modernization traversed the Gran Vía and other central spaces in the Madrid cityscape. For centuries, Solana explains, food hawkers and street vendors filled the Puerta del Sol selling various goods – oil, lard, cheese, trinkets – to passersby, while deceitful characters like charlatans, toothpullers, and thieves lurked, waiting for an opportunity to cheat them. These buyers and sellers defined the plaza and similar spaces as major commercial and social hubs as they circled and policed the city streets. These are some of the most common subjects in Solana’s Madrid narratives, whose calls to come! see! and believe! what they peddle in the streets – be it food, a service, a rarity, or otherwise – are quite common.

Pao, one scholar who has worked directly on this topic in Solana, suggests that the writer’s interest in street charlatanism, public news barking, and sideshow fair stalls confirms his preference for scenes in which orality and the visual overlap (560). More importantly, I add, for these spectacles to function, all parties must be mobile. Vendors regularly drift from place to place.

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142 In fact, he mentions las calles Horno de la Mata and Mesonero Romanos – settings for Baroja’s historical Madrid in La lucha por la vida – along with others that would live on only in the memory of those who had once walked them (469).

143 Pao lists a number of examples: “An explicator narrating the episodes of a murder pictured on storyboards; the sideman pointing out features of the Spider Lady; the hermaphrodite introducing her-himself, ‘Acérquense, señores, que ni es hombre ni mujer’; a quick-talking charlatan extolling a cure-all for the maladies shown on posters” (560).
place within the city or even across the country, and consumers redirect and/or halt their paths to
gather around their object of intrigue. In this sense, not only walking, but also social interaction
delimits space as well as self in the city. To detour or stop was, for Solana and those he observed,
an invitation to contemplate the urban setting and in turn, a challenge to the objective onlooker to
reflect on the world around them.

Pao’s argument, which focuses on the function of language and speech in Solana’s
Madrid, alludes to the workings of his ambiguous sense of reality. For Weston Flint, Solana’s
depictions of mannequins, wax figures, and other life-like objects show that “things are seldom
what they seem [and] also that there is a surface reality and an underlying one which are often
hard to distinguish, which often interpenetrate” (“Wax Figures” 741). In the chapter “El
ventriloquio” of Madrid ECI, for example, Solana observes a ventriloquist’s show at the Feria del
Botánico in Atocha.\footnote{Initially, Solana describes the automatons on stage from their most subtle facial features to the color,
style, and material of their clothes, as if they were human beings. Consider the following descriptions, the
first of one of the ventriloquist’s automatons and the second, for comparison, a pimp from the chapter “Baile de chulos” in Madrid ECI: “Otro autómata es un señor de edad madura con su levita negra y un pantalón a
grandes y cómicos cuadros; tiene una pierna montada sobre la otra y enseña una tripita de hombre humorista y jovial; la nariz muy colorada y su calva brilla a la luz con un lobanillo muy grande que tiene a raíz del pelo” (254); “Allí baila también Andrés el Vinagre, que tiene rostro antipático, amarillo como la cera, muy estrecho de hombros, espesas cejas y ojos pequeños e insolentes; lleva la gorra, negra, echada hacia adelante hasta taparle un ojo; un pañuelo de seda rosa rodea su cuello, delgado y largo, en el que se marca la nuez violentamente” (73). Solana details each figures’ clothing, physical features, and personality traits in such a way that, without having explicitly confirmed that Don Hilario
is an automaton and that Andrés el Vinagre is a pimp, it would have been near impossible to tell which was human or just human-like. His tendency to blend the human and non-human unsettles even his outright declarations of what is true or false. “If mannequins and wax figures appear disquietingly animated to Solana,” states Barrio-Garay, “human beings appear, no less paradoxically, to have grotesque and inanimate qualities” (61). One case in point is Andrés el Vinagre whose face is a waxy yellow, a detail that dehumanizes him and renders
him inauthentic, disfigured, and harsh, an uncanny yet appropriate description of the syphilitic pimp.}
creates an air of ambiguity: “Al bajar el telón la gente no sabe si es un muñeco o un hombre disfrazado de autómata” (258). For the public, the “reality” that these types of sideshows offer (like a theater piece or film) is fabricated, but nevertheless, they come willingly and prepared to pay and be entertained. The very fact of a park or plaza sideshow in a city puts people on guard, but they stop anyway out of curiosity.

Whether a charlatan exhibit, a circus performance, or a sideshow, mobile spectacles interrupt the otherwise natural flow of urban walkers who in stopping, surrender to distraction. The question is, from what are they being distracted? Ultimately, I suggest, this is a question of distraction from social roles and expectations imposed by urban modernity. For example, an upper- or middle-class, leisurely fair-goer may stop at a sideshow stall to escape the reality of keeping up appearances; a golfo may stop to kill time or to seek relief from wandering aimlessly about the city (“buscando rincones,” as Baroja said); an individual running an errand may stop for coincidence’s sake or to prolong their excursion before returning home. The reasons for detour vary, but the common denominator is an interruption in movement, often expected or planned progressions through the city, to participate in public detour that has the potential to temporarily dismantle social hierarchies. Unique to these experiences, in contrast to Carnival or like event that Bakhtin would argue upend social and political norms, is their mobile character. In other words, charlatan exhibitions, sideshows, and other related types of temporary spectacles are themselves constantly in motion, moving from place to place throughout the city, or even from city to city, which walking entities stop to observe. These phenomena reveal the paradox and ambiguity undergirding modernity when that which is visible and true becomes willfully obscured in a customer’s desire to be transported away from personal and collective realities, if only a temporary stop on their usual urban trajectories.

Solana’s charlatans are a particularly interesting case of mobile performer-vendors who contribute significantly to Madrid’s complex system of urban walking, both in their own
movement and in their disruption of others’ trajectories. Featured mainly in *Madrid ECII*, the quacks populating the city’s streets and plazas position themselves on rented carriages or wooden platforms, using boisterous speech and illustrated signage to draw an audience. In almost every case, Solana records the crowds’ collective detour as they gather round: “Me encuentro entre la gente que acude alrededor de un coche parado en la plaza de Antón Martín,” “el sacamuelas está entretenido en colocar unas cajas […] para despertar la curiosidad y dar tiempo a que se aglomere más gente,” “en el centro de un círculo que ha dejado en claro un cordón de gente,” “cuando se ha hecho crecido el grupo de gente alrededor de este curandero,” for example (191, 208, 215, 549 my emphasis).145 Those who approach, congregate, line up, or crowd together do so in a spontaneous manner, which interrupts their everyday walking about the city.146 What this discloses is the realization that urban life is ultimately a life of change and entropy, series of events and interactions with one’s surroundings that constantly alter one’s physical position and mental state.

The only painting of Solana’s that portrays such a figure dates to around 1914, following the completion of *Madrid ECII*, making the charlatan-toothpuller a principally literary figure for him.147 In a chapter entitled “El Sacamuelas” in this book, Solana describes in gruesome detail the pitch and performance of a street toothpuller. As customary, he quotes the quack as he calls out to the public:

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145 The last example is from *Madrid Callejero*, the others from *Madrid ECII*.

146 Many charlatans were travelling salespersons hailing from other cities, towns, or even countries. Nevertheless, Solana noted their presence constantly. In fact, of *Madrid ECII*’s first eight chapters, five feature charlatanisms to some degree: “La Puerta del Sol,” “El Ortopédico,” “El Curandero,” “El sacamuelas,” and “La adivinadora.”

147 This painting is housed in a private collection, but Barrio-Garay offers some information about it. In the painting, a group of men and women listen to the sacamuelas, looming over his crowd as he mechanically displays a small bottle for sale. In his characteristically somber palette, Solana casts an ominous tone over the figures who occupy the majority of the canvas. Many of the onlookers carry jugs or basket suggesting that they were running an errand or heading to some destination before detouring and stopping at the charlatan’s station. The figures, even the sacamuelas himself are strangely ambiguous, their expressions distorted in the shadows and their features crudely defined.
Acérquense, señores, que no les va a costar nada el mirar y oírme; yo no soy uno de esos charlatanes de feria que con unos polvos todo lo curan; tienen un colirio para todos los males de la vista y que confunden las cataratas con las legañas; que lo mismo venden unas hierbas para matar lombrices como para curar la úlcera de un pie; hace que viajo por toda España con mi específico muchos años, vendiendo miles de frascos como éste que tengo en la mano, el poderoso reconstituyente del cuero cabelludo, que ni ensucia ni mancha la ropa. (208)

Following his plea for passersby to gather round, the sacamuelas introduces his amazing hair growth serum, attests to the millions of bottles sold, and denounces his opponents who cannot diagnose even the most common medical ailments or push phony cure-alls. In undermining the legitimacy of other charlatans, the sacamuelas diverts attention away from his own questionable intentions, setting himself apart as a trustworthy vendor and competent dentist. While his assistant mills about selling the hair growth formula, the sacamuelas transitions into the second part of his performance, a toothpulling for any interested audience member. Taking up his offer, an old woman, “de pueblo que va en chancas con un pañuelo negro atado a la quijada” steps out of the crowd and approaches the sacamuelas (210). Immense swelling of the gums disfigures her face and impedes her speech, but the sacamuelas enthusiastically assures a painless extraction. The scene that Solana describes, however, is a harrowing account of a botched procedure that leaves the poor woman far worse off than she had begun.

Solana paints the toothpuller as a brute, a “bárbaro” whose shameless vainglory drives his knowingly harmful treatment of the old, ailing woman (210). He expresses disdain for the charlatan indirectly while detailing his words: “—¿De qué lado es la muela dañada? […] ¡Ya la veo! ¡Ya la veo! — Y diciendo para sus adentros: «Menuda es; me parece que me vas a dejar en ridículo delante de estos papanatas» – Bueno, señores, con mi específico yo le adormeceré la encía, y esta señora no sentirá ningún dolor” (210). As an onlooker himself, Solana could not

148 That she is “de pueblo” suggests, perhaps, that this elderly woman was part of the massive peasant migration from smaller, rural towns to the capital throughout the latter half of the nineteenth-century as discussed above.
possibly have discerned the sacamuelas’ inner thoughts. He records them, however, extrapolating from his prior cultural knowledge and employing a sort of narrative ventriloquism that exposes the charlatan’s reckless arrogance. Situated in the conceptual aperture that his stationary position inserts into the surrounding network of walking paths, Solana offers a rare moral critique of this devious character, albeit in an indirect manner. The old woman, “con un oquete sangriento y sin poder cerrar la boca, como si la hubiesen arrancado media quijada,” descends the steps of the makeshift stage, slowly walking to rejoin the captive yet now frightened audience (211). Given the prevalence of the charlatan in Solana’s written work, Weston Flint claims that for this audience, “es de suponer que su necesidad de alivio, una panacea a su alcance, lo llevará una y otra vez al charlatán” despite the peril these figures pose to them (Solana, escritor 20).

Charlatanism, like other perils of city walking and street life, grows out of urban movement itself. Solana’s representations of it emphasize the desperation of Madrid’s indigent classes who, surely aware of the danger that these quacks, these veritable fixtures of city life posed to all, continue to seek out their services in the hopes that they may provide relief or answers to their problems; this hope was, of course, in vain. It is crucial to note that the mobile individuals Solana portrays in his documentary narratives are not ignorant of their unfortunate situations or the unfair divides that separate social groups. Instead they, like the old man outside of Tetuán had displayed, are fully aware that discrimination and inequity continue in this modern age. Solana, in his own contemplative pedestrian detour, exposes the capital’s modern paradox as he sees the city fostering progress as much as it does decline.
Final Thoughts

As shown above, urban walking is fundamental to producing and experiencing Madrid’s modern cityscape. In their own ways, Azorín, Baroja, and Solana draw on their own experiences to reveal the darkness undergirding Madrilenian society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in their fascinatingly gritty novels and documentary narratives of the period. “El enfermo’s” struggle for mental equilibrium while walking the monstrous metropolis; Manuel’s existential search for self and place amidst the slums or streets of the capital; Solana’s encounters with all types of mobile subjects longing to escape their personal realities; these cases represent the various possible negative consequences of intense industrialization and uneven development in modern Spain, a nation then coping with the complications of post imperial regeneration, sought to establish a true yet elusive sense of national identity. As in Chapter 1, the unsteady grounds that modernity offered Spain’s diverse populations was best accessed through Azorín’s, Baroja’s, and Solana’s expression and assessment of spatial movement.
Chapter 3

Procession and Pilgrimage in the Spanish Religioscape

Regional travel and urban walking are two variants of movement through space that helped shape modernity and modernist expression in Spain during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At this time, even the nation’s most ingrained cultural conventions were susceptible to intense and constant change, Spanish Catholicism being a salient case in point. Constitutionally recognized as the official religion of Restoration Spain, Catholicism permeated nearly all facets of everyday life. However, the rise of secularization during the second half of the nineteenth century prompted serious scrutiny of religion’s rightful place in society as well as a check on the privileges and powers that the State had allotted the Church, then and throughout history. Tensions flared between secular and clerical factions – a modern iteration of century’s old conflict, to be sure – which manifested as political dispute, social unrest, and even civil war by the turn of the century. This tumultuous set of circumstances serves as the backdrop for this chapter, which examines literary and artistic representations of procession and pilgrimage that mobilized critique of Catholicism as decidedly unmodern, as well as sympathy over a tradition degraded by modernity. These distinct yet overlapping messages, I argue, reveal the darkness at play in the decades of continuous and cyclical political dissent rooted religious versus secular matters before and after the turn of the century.

149 As Julio de la Cueva insists, it is prudent to study the simultaneous currents of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anticlericalism and clericalism concurrently, but requires treating the antithetical movements as reactions to perceived enemies, rather than efforts to defend a spiritual or social identity. “En el caso del clericalismo, que en la época viene a corresponderse con el impulso al movimiento católico, se trataba de contrarrestar un supuesto proceso de descristianización y de secularización, estrechamente ligado al triunfo de las revoluciones, primero liberal y luego socialista. En el caso del anticlericalismo, o movimiento secularizador, se trataba de reaccionar frente a una situación antigua de poder clerical, y, sobre todo, frente a una recuperación católica de posiciones con los nuevos instrumentos y métodos de la sociedad liberal” (101)
As demonstrated throughout this dissertation, Black Spain, or “España negra,” refers to the turn-of-the-century aesthetic that exposed the paradox underlying Spanish modernity via macabre and pessimistic visions of everyday life. Religion is one of the most prominent themes of Black Spain, and thus deserves close critical attention. This chapter examines mainly literature and art by Darío de Regoyos and José Gutiérrez, two prominent author-painters of Black Spain, who frequently appropriated and distorted Catholic symbolism in their portrayals of religion.\textsuperscript{150} Procession and pilgrimage are particularly useful categories for investigating the darkness of modern Spanish Catholicism – that is, a Catholic tradition that hampers progress or one debased by modernity – because they represent a synthesis of tradition and progress (religion in motion) that can be aesthetically construed as paradoxical itself. Moreover, devotional acts like these that require collective spatial displacement to function produce a complex web connecting people and places via faith as they move throughout towns, cities, or even the countryside. Borrowing from Robert M. Hayden’s definition, I call this spiritual network a religioscape, a geographical system of objects and sites (i.e. temples, relics, sacred cities, holy routes, shrines) that defines and produces religious communities in terms of shared beliefs and traditions over time (11-12).

The idea that procession and pilgrimage contribute to the production of their own space (or system of spaces) in the form of a religioscape recalls Kim Knott’s spatial theorizations on faith practice in The Location of Religion: A Spatial Practice (2005). Knott draws on Lefebvre’s notions of spatial (re)production and social space to frame her own analysis of religion and its “place” in Western modernity with respect to the social activity and communities that give shape to and ground spirituality (21). To do so she studies not only “relations between people, but also between people and things, people and places, people and symbols, and the imagined relations

\textsuperscript{150} Though I do not explore them fully here, several works by Baroja and Azorín (perhaps most recognizeably Camino de perfección (1902) and La voluntad (1902) respectively) also engage procession and pilgrimage as a means of examining and reflecting on the individual’s attempts to find self and place in modern Spain.
between these” (21). Expanding upon this idea, I treat religious practice as a fundamentally social act that defines the limits of its own religioscape, creating its own spatial and conceptual map, as it were, over time. Procession and pilgrimage contribute not only to the mapping of the religioscape, but also to the reproduction of the structural integrity of this space as they move through the sacred and secular spaces of modern society. In other words, in moving about as planned, they reinforce official systems of order – the liturgical calendar of sacred celebrations, processional routes and rituals, etc. – that dictate the frequency, directionality, and performance of collective spiritual activity. As symbolic reminders of the Church, its history, and its roles in modern society, these mobile displays of faith are also critical categories that encourage scrutiny of Spanish identity, a status that we should remember was in extreme flux at the time.

As with other historical realities, Spanish modernists reacted creatively and critically to the changing socio-religious realities of their time, principally to ruminate on what role the Church should rightly play in Restoration-era society. This was the overarching question for nineteenth- and twentieth-century secularization, which was, in essence, a movement dedicated to challenging Church influence in everyday matters from property rights, to civil marriage, to public education, to religious freedom. In Spain, as in other Western nations, secularization went hand-in-hand with profound ideological and social change, like a turn toward rationalism or a heightened desire for personal autonomy. Spain’s deep-rooted and rigid Catholicism, however, represented an obstacle for modern progress and innovation for many, both within and beyond the nation’s borders. Indeed, for some intellectuals, like Pompeyo Gener and Pío Baroja, there was

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151 Secularization can have various interpretations, but always signifies a transformation in the meaning or function of a community’s religious values (Revuelta González 321).

152 Spain’s modernization and democratization was unique for many reasons, one being its religious identity. Salvador Giner and Sebastián Sarasa discusses the role of Spanish Catholicism in the country’s underdeveloped modernization: “el firme progreso hacia la secularización, el pluralismo, el capitalismo, la industrialización y el desarrollo científico que tuvo lugar a continuación en Europa, fue, si no exactamente detenido, sí, como mínimo, muy obstaculizado en España […] España entró en el siglo XIX desgarrada por graves divisiones y enfrentamiento internos que casi siempre se manifestaron en términos religiosos o en referencias a la religión” (10-11).
no doubt that Catholicism stifled Spain’s modernity; and for others, like Oswald Spengler and Max Nordau, it excluded the country from modernity altogether.

Traditionally speaking, the Church was the bulwark of Spanish society, morals, and culture dating back to the Roman and Visigothic eras. The Church and the monarchy were nearly inseparable even in modern times, and Catholicism had long symbolized unity and fortitude in the eyes of Spanish kings. Religion’s influence in the lives of ordinary people was pervasive, even as enlightened thought and revolutionary liberalism gained traction in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Despite anticlerical sentiment, a fervent core of clerics, bishops, and lay Christians naturally remained steadfast in their loyalty to the Church and the Crown. Conflict between progressivists and traditionalists ensued, worsening the fragmentation of an already ideologically divided nation. During the nineteenth century, the Church lost substantial political and social ground as liberalism, rationalism, positivism, and anticlericalism were on the upswing. In 1874, however, the tide began to turn in favor of the Church with the

153 Huertas Vázquez quotes Gener’s Herejías: “Falta mucha ciencia en España y sobra religión…nos falta ciencia y nos sobra catolicismo” (285). For Baroja, Spain had not yet reached the state of laicism by the late nineteenth century since it had not entered modernity. To do so meant differentiating social and State institutions from religious control and emancipating the individual, which the nation, he believed, had not achieved (La Parra 26).

154 Along with the ~800-year-long Christian re-conquest of Spanish territories taken under Muslim rule (c.722-1492), the most idiosyncratic traits of Spanish Catholicism date to the fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries. The counter-reformation (c.1545-1648) and the Inquisition (1478-1834), for example, typified the tenacity of Church leaders and Christian monarchs to uphold pure and passionate Catholicism as the foremost unifying and moralizing element of Spanish identity.

155 As noted in my introduction, the divide between the so-called “dos Españas” is far more complex than a question of two conflicting sides. Truthfully, the dimensions of political or ideological identification in Spain were deeply intricate and overlapping. However, beyond 1898, the liberal conservative separation as we would understand it in terms of the sides of the Civil War of 1936, for example, became increasingly sharper as (anti)clerical tensions rose during the twentieth century.

156 In 1868, liberal rebellion and revolution dismantled the Catholic monarchy of Isabel II and much of the rapprochement between Church and State achieved by the Concordat of 1851. During the next six years, landed property of various religious orders was confiscated, the new democratic State ceased its support of seminaries, civil marriage was instituted for the first time (1870), cemeteries were secularized (1871), and the State funding for Church parishes and priests diminished significantly (early 1870s). In short, secularization was well under way and defenders of the Church and Crown saw this as a threat to Spain’s most defining national characteristic, its Catholicism. After three years of turbulent rule, Don Amadeo of Savoy abdicated in 1873, deeming Spain “impossible to govern” and begging papal forgiveness for “having sworn to uphold a non-Catholic constitution” (Payne 96). The First Republic emerged that year and would
fall of the First Spanish Republic, the rise of the Bourbon Restoration, and an enthusiastic Catholic revival.

Acknowledging the fact that the Church could be neither entirely ignored nor allowed an authoritative role in the government as in years past, the Restoration made a number of allowances aimed at appeasing moderate majorities. Notably, the government reinstated pre-1868 financing levels to the Church; purged Krausist and leftist professors from the university system, placing education back in the hands of the clergy; and tackled the nagging issue of religious freedom. Antonio Cánovas del Castillo – a conservative politician and practicing Catholic – was the architect of the Restoration constitution of 1876, which implemented a constitutional monarchy based on the infamous electoral *turnismo*, a strategic and necessarily fabricated alternation of power among political parties. He believed in earnest that this system would offer much needed peace and stability to the nation, but instead, it ushered in nearly half a century of political tumult. Perhaps the most telling sign that Cánovas’s *turnismo* would ultimately fail was his assassination in 1897. Even with the best interests of Spain in mind, he was unable to inspire liberals and conservatives to reach any lasting compromise. The Prime Ministers who followed him attempted sociopolitical accord as well and largely failed.

As I have mentioned previously, the *Desastre del 98* did not directly cause the sense of crisis that swept the nation after Spain’s military debacle in America, but it did shine a light on

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have succeeded in separating Church from State if it had lasted long enough. The First Republic was overthrown less than a year later, and in its stead rose the Bourbon Restoration in 1874, Spain’s governmental model for the next half-century.

The oft-quoted Article 11 of the 1876 constitution embodies Cánovas’s attempts at compromise between the Church and secularists. It reads: “the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman religion is that of the State. The nation assumes the obligation to maintain the cult and its ministers. No one shall be disturbed in Spanish territory for his religious beliefs nor for the exercise of his own religion except for the respect due to Christian morality. However, ceremonies or public manifestations other than those of the religion of the State will not be permitted” (qtd. in Callahan 25). This meant that under the new government, Catholicism was the only officially recognized and legitimate religion, but that anyone practicing another faith in the privacy of his/her own home would not face retribution. This failed to please everyone as he had hoped. For the Church, this slight move toward religious tolerance went too far, opening the way for anarchy and rebellion. For secularists, it was not enough and allowed the Church to continue dominating public life.
the nation’s internal sociopolitical contradictions. Secular and ecclesiastical regenerationists agreed that Spain’s leadership was to blame for its cultural “illness,” but their ideas about the causes and cures for national degeneracy diverged radically. Fractionalization between and within liberal, conservative, and religious groups worsened in the first decades of the twentieth century, and constant alternation between parties further complicated already existing ideological conflicts. The instability incurred under turnismo – that is, the constant doing and un-doing of disparate ministry efforts and ideas – definitively undermined any possibility of long-lasting reform, legislation, or ideological rapprochement.

By the end of the nineteenth century, leftists provoked intense and violent anticlericalism in the name of religious and intellectual freedoms and in opposition to Restoration era Catholic Revival. Part of the Church’s response was an attempt to bolster the visibility of Catholicism in social settings in order to encourage an increase in spiritual practice. Integral to this project was a call for an increase in public devotion; namely, acts like procession and pilgrimage. Catholic penitential processions have factored into Spain’s main liturgical solemnities like Holy Week and Corpus Cristi since the middle ages, but their meaning and function changed substantially over time. George C. Barker sees contemporary Spanish procession – vast demonstrations of religious brotherhoods carrying pasos (floats) of Biblical scenes through a town or city – as a fusion of devotional and theatrical elements deriving from two age-old traditions: the fanatical flagellant brotherhoods of medieval Europe, and the public mystery plays of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain (138). From a means of performing public blood atonement, processions evolved into “pageant[s] of the Passion” as dramatic and performative aspects came to the fore (Barker 138). The processional paso dates from medieval-era performances of Biblical scenes on

158 Antonio Moliner Prada points out that the Church took advantage of “todos los recursos tradicionales de movilización (procesiones, romerías y peregrinaciones)” to construct a social defense against liberal and anticlerical politics (163).
moveable platforms or carts during Holy Week, each representing a scene from Christ’s Passion (Barker 138). Every paso, therefore, was a step in the story of the Passion, drawing on the literal translation of the word. The idea of paso as step also reminds us that processions are mobile and that they require walking participants to function.

Like processions, Spanish pilgrimage mobilizes religion, but without the audience of static onlookers that the former typically implies. In Spanish, the words *peregrinación* and *romería* translate to “pilgrimage,” but each represent distinct realities. *Peregrinación* is a broad term for the collective or individual displacement of pilgrims to a sacred site to pay homage to a Saint, religious icon, or holy city. The *romería* is a particular form of pilgrimage that has its roots in religion but preserves a markedly festive atmosphere. During these “picnic-pilgrimages,” as Nina Epton calls them, groups of *romeros* (pilgrims) travel on foot or in decorated, ox-drawn carts to a sacred locale where celebrants perform their reverences. The destination – typically a church, chapel, or shrine – is usually located in an isolated area like a meadow or forest clearing where families and friends share meals outside or *en plein air* (hence Epton’s picnic analogy), play music, dance, and compete in regional games, while also performing religious devotion.

The mobile and communal elements of Catholic procession and pilgrimage seemed like effective tools to revive religious vigor among fin-de-siglo anti-secularists, but in the end, it was not enough to sway anticlerical thought or scrutiny in intellectual and artistic expression, nor in public opinion. As Stanley G. Payne reminds us, while these “formal spiritual exercises” restored traditional styles and symbols of Spanish worship, they failed to respond to modernity and the many changes it brought on (106). In reality as in aesthetic representation, neither procession nor pilgrimage was entirely ecclesiastical nor entirely secular. Painter-authors Regoyos and Solana

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159 Sara H. Dunn, an English travel writer, visited Loyola in 1894 where she witnessed the *romería* in honor of St. Ignatius the Jesuit, noting, “the *romeros* spend a week of mildly hilarious enjoyment […] though, perhaps, the observance resembles more a Welsh Eisteddfod than anything else” (168). Dunn reminds her readers, however, that the “worldly element,” of this festivity did not detract from its religious meaning.
emphasized this in-between, almost dialectical character in their narrative and painterly accounts of procession and pilgrimage, offering fragmented and even contradictory versions of a subject traditionally closed off to interpretation. Furthermore, they situated Catholicism alongside death, decadence, violence, and perversity in the modern Black Spain they created, and thus disrupted the moralizing and redeeming traits of religion that the Church had defended for centuries. Corrupting the sanctity of religion in this way, Solana especially was able to shine a light on the fanaticism, or uncritical zeal in faith, which persisted in select Catholic communities.

Any interpretation of religion or Catholicism other than an orthodox one made Church authorities, including the papacy, anxious. In 1907, the widely promulgated *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* condemned Catholic modernism – secularism, rational approaches to the Bible, modern philosophy (i.e. neo-Kantianism) – as threatening to dogma and clamored for its eradication among members of the clergy.\(^{160}\) Pope Pius X condemned those “enemies of the cross of Christ […] who [were] striving, by arts, entirely new and full of subtlety, to destroy the vital energy of the Church, and, if they [could], to overthrow utterly Christ’s kingdom itself” (1). While the modernists targeted by this encyclical were those using philological or historicist methodologies in their interpretations of sacred texts, Regoyos and Solana would undoubtedly have been under fire for their often pejorative qua nontraditional portrayal of religion.

In previous chapters, revelatory darkness signaled the rendition of social and political corruption leading to class divides, uneven experiences of modernity, and urban squalor to shed light on the defects of the modern day. The word “revelatory” must now include a nuanced, distinctively religious meaning in the present chapter. Aside from its literal meaning, revelation also refers to a supernatural confession about the truths of human existence to earthly beings by divine entities, as seen in the final book of the New Testament, the Book of Revelations. In their

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\(^{160}\) Here, modernism refers to the Catholic movement, not the intellectual/artistic one.
aesthetic representations of procession and pilgrimage, Regoyos and Solana reveal Catholicism’s underlying darkness, which in the modern context refers to religion’s perceived hindrance to modernity, or to modernity’s perceived corruption of religion. In this sense, darkness captures the essence of decay and inequality due to toxic politics and impossible ideological compromise.

Regoyos: España negra, España religiosa

In an 1899 travel article titled “La España negra,” Nicaraguan poet Ruben Darío writes:

Y en España, en donde el catolicismo forma parte, o está unido tan íntimamente al alma general, a tal extremo que España ha de ser siempre católica o no será; quizá en el tiempo venidero, en el resurgimiento que ha de cumplirse, reverdezca el árbol nuevo, ya que no con las pompas escarlata de la hoguera y del auto de fe, en la luz de la vida nueva, en la gloria de la intelectualidad, libre de las manchas grises, de las taras vergonzosas que ahora contribuyen al descrédito de la alta doctrina; la «locura de la cruz no es la insensatez de la cruz.» (93)

In this passage, Darío imagines an approaching resurgence or renewal in Spain, the light of a new life of intellectual glory. This enlightenment will mean a new and vibrant existence for Spain, free of the grey stains and embarrassing blemishes, he says, then sullying the image of its Catholic tradition. Darío acknowledges Catholicism as the cornerstone of Spain’s existence and clarifies that the religion itself is not the cause of the darkness (religion’s sullied image) he notes here. Rather, making recourse to the incendiary Inquisitorial autos de fe of prior centuries, he identifies the religious fanaticism of Spain’s past as an obstacle to its intellectual and cultural modernization. As he notes elsewhere in the article, this fanaticism lingers in modern iterations of faith in many respects. Indeed, for much of the nineteenth century, Spain was “intellectually liberal but still not by any means fully secularized culturally,” and ultra-traditionalist religiosity was part of the reason why (Payne 103). The nation could be on the verge of an awakening, Darío suggests, if only modern intellect can shake free of religious overzealousness.
In Chapter 1, we saw that Rubén Darío’s article dialogues with Spanish painter Darío de Regoyos’s multi-media travel narrative, which, published just a month earlier, was the origin of the pessimistic and macabre Black Spain aesthetic of the modernist era. Using Regoyos’s *España negra* as an exemplary text, this section argues that narrative and artistic depictions of procession and pilgrimage had the potential to unveil the decay of Catholicism in modern times and explore what this meant for turn-of-the-century Spain. Regoyos, it seems, is nostalgic for a pure form of religion, unadulterated by the contradictions of modernity or ossified displays of fanaticism. To be sure, the processions, pilgrimages, and religious festivals that he documents in *España negra* appear on one of two poles of the religious question; either blasphemously secularized or indelicately primitive. I begin my analysis with a discussion of the legacy and role of the Black Legend in shaping modernist Black Spain. Next, I comment on the changing relationship between Spanish pueblos and its Catholic roots at the turn of the century. Finally, I analyze representations of procession and pilgrimage in *España negra* and related paintings to show how Regoyos, despite his characteristic ambiguity, seemed to feel an underlying empathy for the faith and the faithful that he repeatedly depicted.

As mentioned previously in passing, the Black Legend comprises a set of pejorative stereotypes that portrays Spain and its people as innately backward, ignorant, and/or violent dating back to the fifteenth century.\(^{161}\) Julián Juderías, “[uno de] los más beligerantes en denunciar la leyenda negra,” explained the meaning of the Black Legend in 1914 and disparaged...
the defamation of Spain’s character that it had caused over centuries (Villaverde Rico and Castilla Urbano 12):

Por leyenda negra entendemos el ambiente creado por los fantásticos relatos que acerca de nuestra Patria han visto la luz pública en casi todos los países […] las acusaciones que en todo tiempo se han lanzado contra España fundándose para ello en hechos exagerados, mal interpretados ó falsos en su totalidad, y finalmente la afirmación […] de que nuestra Patria constituye, desde el punto de vista de la tolerancia, de la cultura y del progreso político, una excepción lamentable dentro del grupo de las naciones europeas. En una palabra, entendemos por leyenda negra, la leyenda de la España inquisitorial, ignorante, fanática, incapaz de figurar entre los pueblos cultos lo mismo ahora que antes, dispuesta siempre á las represiones violentas; enemiga del progreso y de las innovaciones. (14-15)

For Juderías, the Black Legend was treacherous propaganda created by Spain’s critics and used by its competitors to diminish the nation’s achievements and undermine its moral standing.162 Julián Marías reminds us that Spain was the first nation to establish itself as such in a modern sense, while other countries were barely unified or in the process of unifying during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (153). Spain’s neighbors and enemies alike spread the Black Legend throughout the West beginning in the sixteenth century, methodically dismantling the prestige and legitimacy of the Spanish nation, a process that would turn more intense and damaging over time. By the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, the Black Legend had slated Spain’s reputation as alien, extra-European, and backward across the globe, blatantly ignoring the country’s contributions to various fields of innovation into the twentieth century.163 The Black

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162 The Leyenda negra, say Villaverde Rico and Castilla Urbano, was an offensive on the Spanish nation and people that grew out of “los rencores que suscitó su poder militar, su expansión territorial, su influencia diplomática, su hegemonía monetaria y su dominio cultural” throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and beyond (24).

163 In his Encyclopédie Méthodique (1792), for example, French writer and philosophe Nicolas Masson de Morvilliers (in)famously asked, “what do we owe to Spain? […] in two centuries, in four, or even in six, what has she done for Europe?” (qtd in Navarro Brotóns and Eamon 27). He claimed that the source of Spain’s supposed deficiency was in the character of its people – ignorant, lazy, and superstitious in his eyes – as well as its futile government, bigoted clergy, and tyrannical Inquisition. These national traits, he argued, “conspired to condemn the country to remain hopelessly backward” (qtd. in Navarro Brotóns and Eamon, 27). In The Decline of the West (1918), Oswald Spengler posited that Spain was a previously great nation that had run the course of its lifetime as a productive and established civilization by the turn of the century. His condemnation of Spanish imperialism draws a “sutil línea de demarcación entre los países
Legend has resulted in what Marías calls the “blanket disqualification” of Spain from dominant histories of science, modernity, modernism, and enlightenment worldwide that, “extended to the entire country throughout all its history, including its future history” (208).

Recently, scholars like Víctor Navarro Brotóns, William Eamon, María José Villaverde Rico, Francisco Castilla Urbano and others have worked to correct the historiography that has overlooked Spain’s contributions to the arts and sciences because of the Leyenda negra and the propagandistic view of the nation it promulgated for centuries. In a similar vein, I propose that the work of Spanish modernists was in part to re-appropriate Black Legend stereotypes that corrupted the image of Spain as productive and creative in their fin-de-siglo Black Spain. While this aesthetic may have perpetuated the very darkness it set out to reveal, its authors and artists by no means defended it. This stereotype re-appropriation is the main thrust of Regoyos’s España negra, a project that allows him the space to share, respond to, and correct the Black Legend that Verhaeren portrayed in his articles about Spain in retrospect. Like Marías, the Spanish modernists saw the solution to the Black Legend as “above all, intellectual,” though that solution would not come in their lifetimes (218).

Part of the broader modernist Black Spain project was unveiling the overzealous and paradoxical features of modern Spanish Catholicism that posed an obstacle to fin-de-siglo progress and to battling the stigma of the Black Legend. For those attempting to explore the pejorative labels of backwardness or degenerate that the Legend had attributed to Spain, motion and movement, iterations of progress itself, were effective concepts through which to interrogate the status quo. After all, if travel inspired intense contemplation on self and nation, and if urban

portadores de cultura como Alemania, Inglaterra y Francia, por un lado, y España, la destructora, por otro” (Villaverde Rico and Castilla Urbano 16). The idea of Spain as destructive dates back to the conquest of the Americas, which resulted in the destruction of pre-Columbian cultures. It is interesting, however, that Spain is here inserted among other imperialist/colonizing nations, who committed the same types of monstrosities, yet feel none of the repercussions that Spain does.
walking bolstered city-goers’ efforts to articulate their modern subjectivity, then procession and pilgrimage – amalgams of (spiritual) voyage and (religious) walking – opened their participants and observers, I would add, to deep reflection on personal and collective experiences of modern Catholicism. Some creators of “España negra,” Regoyos for one, lamented the degradation that modernity incurred on the Catholic tradition (a pure, perhaps imagined Catholicism), which is a sentiment that Rubén Darío also seems to have shared.

The timing of España negra’s (Regoyos) and “La España negra’s” (Rubén Darío) publication is noteworthy. While the scenes comprising España negra pertain mainly to the journey that Regoyos made with Verhaeren in 1888, his commentary dates to the last years of the century. Thus, his thoughts on religion correspond to the context of mounting anticlericalism leading up to and beyond the Desastre del 98. Both Regoyos and Darío publish their pieces in early 1899, just months before serious anticlerical violence broke out across Spain in opposition to the Catholic revival of the Restoration and in defense of religious and intellectual freedoms. The events of the summer of 1899 – anti-Catholic riots, attacks on the clergy, destruction of Church property – concretized the escalating antagonism of radical leftist and progressivist groups, whose roots were in early nineteenth-century secularization, post-1868 liberalism, and proto-republicanism.

In a way, Darío was correct in 1899 to suggest that change was in the cards for Spain, and his intuition that anachronistic or fanatic religiosity had the potential to impede progress was also true, at least in the eyes of many liberal regenerationists and modernists. By fanatic I mean the condition of feeling uncritical zeal and obsessive passion for the ideals and figureheads of the Catholic Church, a passive and unthinking practice of religion that excluded the typical sense of reason. Despite the relative accuracy of Darío’s prediction, the attacks on the Church in 1899 and afterward were problematic for Spain, a nation that was already ideologically and spiritually at odds with itself at the time. The ensuing tension between ecclesiastical and secular factions was
not only political or intellectual in nature; it had social repercussions. As such, the darkness at
play in Regoyos’s religious Black Spain reflects a dual and sometimes contradictory critique on
the unmodern-ness of Catholicism in his day on one hand, and the other, the degrading effect that
modernity has had on Catholic ideals or beliefs.

At the turn of the century, religious practice corresponded to regional and class divisions
more explicitly than ever before. In this sense, the Catholic religioscape was fracturing and
losing shape for geographical and economic reasons, not because of changes in faith. Regoyos
examines intersections of ideology, spirituality, and religious mobility in his keen depictions of
the northern provinces of Spain. While travelling in 1888, he and Verhaeren spent much of their
time in Navarre and the Basque Country where the Catholic tradition seemed intact and thriving,
which was not the case other areas, especially larger cities. One explanation for this is the fact
that these particular regions of the north had been the primary base for the radical Catholic
movement known as Carlism throughout the nineteenth century, and a safe haven for clergy
fleeing persecution during the tumultuous secularization activity of the early 1800s. The
reasons for Carlism’s appeal in these provinces had nothing to do with exceptionally high or pure
levels of religiosity; in fact, that was hardly the case. For one thing, Navarre and the Basque
Country were geographically isolated from Spain’s progressive and increasingly anticlerical

164 “In general,” Stanley G. Payne reminds us, “the elite, the rural population of the north, and much of the
middle classes remained rather strongly Catholic; poor southern peasants, urban workers, and a good
portion of the lower middle classes were strongly anticlerical and becoming anti-Catholic” (110).
165 As outlined in chapter two, the period of rapid yet uneven modernization and urbanization that Spain
experienced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries caused a plethora of unintended negative
consequences. These included unsustainable peasant migration into city centers that could not
accommodate the boom in population; subsequent increase in urban unemployment, segregation, and
disease; increased poverty and hunger among rural farmers (especially in the south) lacking basic resources
and technologies.
166 For more on Carlism in Navarre and the Basque provinces see Payne, chapter 3 “The Challenge of
Liberalism” (80-82). Carlism was a traditionalist movement in Spain that originated following the death of
Fernando VII in 1833, before which time the Salic law of Succession in the Bourbon dynasty was
abrogated to allow a female to inherit the throne. As such, Fernando’s daughter Isabella, not his brother
Don Carlos, was next in line to rule. The ultratraditionalist supporters of Carlos demanded the throne on his
behalf and initiated a series of three liberal-traditionalist civil wars throughout the nineteenth century.
cities, which made them strategic locales for harboring runaway clergy or Carlist troops as previously noted. For another thing, these were the only parts of Spain where medieval-era land and property rights were still intact following eighteenth-century centralization. “Identifying their regional rights with those of true religion,” therefore, Navarrese and Basque communities banded together with the Church against their common enemies: mounting liberalism and secularization that threatened tradition and identity (Payne 81). Put simply, it was economically advantageous for these regions to align with the Church.

The overarching theme of España negra, says Barrio-Garay, is “overzealous religiosity interwoven with the ever-haunting presence of death” (51). This statement has truth to it, but the differing views of the nation that Verhaeren and Regoyos offer, in conjunction with Regoyos’s noticeable ambivalence, demand nuanced interpretations.167 For Verhaeren, the lively dances, processions, and celebrations of religious fiestas he witnessed in the Basque country “tienen un carácter tétrico por mucha alegría que se les quiera dar […] [un] carácter fúnebre” (51). Per usual, Verhaeren’s melancholy mindset bars him from finding beauty or happiness in Spain, and presents (via Regoyos’s translation) a skewed and macabre vision of the nation, which Regoyos then re-explains in his own terms. In this particular case, the painter recalls describing Holy Week in Guipúzcoa for his companion: “Sin exagerar le dije que entonces era la buena época para hacer articulos sobre este país carlista como él lo llamaba” (51). He describes the Holy Week processions of Azpeitia (a long, solemn procession with grotesque religious sculptures) and Oñate, (ironically, one of the most beautiful he had ever seen), claiming that these would satisfy Verhaeren’s search for lo negro in Spain.168

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167 I will not go into detail about these observations here since they are discussed at length in Chapter 1.
168 This particular example reiterates the fact that, for Regoyos, darkness is not necessarily chromatic or related to objective beauty. While he finds the Oñate procession beautiful, he admits that there is still a darkness to it. More details follow.
Here as in other moments throughout the book, Regoyos revises Verhaeren’s poetic reflections while granting them some degree of validity. Frequently, he proves Verhaeren’s observations incomplete or oversimplified, but not exactly unfounded. This ambiguous, almost noncommittal attitude transfers to Regoyos’s stance on the topic of religion. In the example given above, Regoyos’s mention of “este país carlista,” is a categorical statement that equates all of Spain with a Catholic and ultra-traditionalist Carlist minority designation. Applying this label to the nation as a whole, even to the Basque region alone, is dangerously essentialist. For this reason, Regoyos clarifies that these words belong to Verhaeren (“como él [Verhaeren] lo llamaba”) and not to him. However, while he pins the exaggerated correlation on Verhaeren, his decision to repeat and solidify these words in his text, without explicitly correcting or nuancing the declaration, is significant. In electing to remain silent in regards to whether or not he agrees with the affirmation or not, Regoyos perpetuates an absolutist idea that degrades its modern, “democratic” state.

A key ingredient for Black Spain’s religious darkness according to Regoyos is a peculiar Spanish sadness that continuously accompanies devotional acts and ideas in Spanish pueblos: “Le pinté [a Verhaeren] la tristeza que se respire en aquellos días [de la Semana Santa] en esos pueblos tan distintos a los de su país y la imposibilidad de divertirse para los que no son creyentes” (52). The tristeza of the modern Spanish pueblo is an observed-invented motif and connective thematic fiber among Regoyos and other modernists like Azorín and Baroja. Azorín repeatedly refers to this expressly Spanish sadness in his early, philosophical-modernist novels – “esta melancolía congénita” and “esta tristeza” mentions in Confesiones de un pequeño filósofo (1904), “la tristeza española” in Antonio Azorín (1903) – and claims that it is most potent in rural pueblos during Holy Week, arguably the most sacred of liturgical celebrations on the Catholic calendar (396, 259). Baroja, a vocal critic of the Church and religion in a near absolute sense, develops this concept of religious sadness further, noting within it a sinister character of control.
and oppression. In *Camino de perfección* (1902), a modern take on mystical-spiritual pilgrimage in a disillusioned young artist, protagonist Fernando Ossorio witnesses a Holy Thursday procession while studying in Yecla, a small town in Murcia where Azorín, not so coincidentally, had also spent considerable time in during his youth. Watching on as the procession, color-coordinated cofrades, and red-robed disciplinants approach him and the surrounding crowd from down the street, Fernando “se sentía la amenaza de una religión muerta, que al revivir un momento y al vestirse con sus galas, mostraba el puño a la vida” (193). Taking the image of the procession, a practice meant to reignite religious passion at the turn of the century, he conveys the threat and superficiality he perceives as the Catholic tradition. In their own ways, Regoyos, Baroja, Azorín, and Solana as we will see allied their own renditions of the Spanish pueblo’s supposedly innate sadness with their distinct yet critical representations of religion.

Regoyos often portrayed Catholic iconography and religious scenes in his artistic oeuvre, but few critics have written about his personal relationship with religion or faith. His preferred religious themes changed over the course of his literary and artistic development, but common subjects included cemeteries, funeral services, laywomen, processions, and pilgrimages. Most of his religious paintings pertain to his *España negra* period (1886-1904), which overlaps with his impressionistic one (c. 1890-1912) as discussed in chapter one. Typically, his processional

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169 Yecla was indeed a site of interest for both Baroja and Azorín. In his semi-autobiographical novel *Las confesiones de un pequeño filósofo* (1904), Azorín reflects at length on his time in Yecla where he attended a Piarist Catholic school (*el colegio de los Escolapios*) for eight years. Of the religious climate in the city he claims, “«Yecla – ha dicho un novelista – es un pueblo terrible” (396). This unnamed “novelista” is Pío Baroja, who used Yecla as a setting for one of the formative stops along Fernando Ossorio’s pilgrimage in *Camino de perfección* (1902) (396). For both authors, one cause of Yecla’s sadness is ossified Catholic tradition, which failed to account for the changes and developments of modernity. Baroja likens the *colegio de los Escolapios*, the school that Azorín and Baroja’s his character Fernando Ossorio attended, to “un lugar de tortura […] la gran prensa laminadora de cerebros” that sent students out into the world, “convenientemente idiotizados, fanatizados, embrutecidos” by their Catholic schooling (180). Religious education endangered intellectual liberty and free thought in his eyes, two sources from which crucial innovations, solutions, and progress were most likely to emerge.

170 Scholars have, however, likened his demeanor and artwork to Biblical standards. Juan de la Encina, for example, calls Regoyos “nuestro pintor franciscano” for his love of austerity, nature, and sunlight in landscape painting (49).
paintings, like La procesión de Capuchinos en Fuenterrabía (1902) and Madrugada del Viernes Santo en Orduña (1903) (Figure 3-1), employ iconography that is easily recognizable and mostly traditional.

In both of these paintings, representative of many in the same vein, Regoyos paints a procession of nazarenos (Nazarenes, processional penitents) carrying pasos into or out of a church (Fuenterrabía and Orduña respectively) from a slightly removed vantage point. In the Orduña painting, a number of kneeling figures clad in black, perhaps the hijas de María, revere an image of the Virgin Mary as the procession sets out on its prescribed route throughout the city. Though a static image, the lopsided cross emerging from the church on the right-hand side of this painting evokes a sense of movement as the icon’s tilt implicates the imperfect human hands and feet transporting it they move into the street.

Figure 3-1: Darío de Regoyos. La procesión de Capuchinos en Fuenterrabía (1902, left), and Madrugada del Viernes Santo en Orduña (1903, right).  

Las hijas de María are a Catholic sisterhood founded in the early 1800s dedicated to religious education of the youth and charitable work/missions for the poor and needy across Spain. Regoyos portrays the Hijas in many paintings, especially during his España negra period, like Las hijas de María (1891), which is reproduced in Juan San Nicolás, Darío de Regoyos 1857-1913: Tomo I (1857-1900) (275). Las hijas also feature throughout modernist literature.
According to Juan San Nicolás, this second painting belongs to Regoyos’s España negra era, while *La procesión de Capuchinos en Fuenterrabía* is an impressionistic work (*La aventura impresionista* 104, 163). Importantly, it is not what Regoyos painted that made it fit his Black Spain aesthetic, but rather how he painted. The technical and chromatic distinctions between the two paintings are obvious, even at first glance. Regoyos uses a far more restrained palette in *Orduña*, which makes his black-robed figures stand out crisply before a contrasting ochre-gray townscape, quite a contrast to the colorful landscape of *Fuenterrabía*. *Orduña*’s monochromatic townscape emphasizes the monumentality of the church, which takes up more than half of the canvas, in comparison to the tiny processional figures before it. The limited palette of *Orduña* suggests that the darkness of Regoyos’s España negra painting (and writing) implies through imagery and tone, rather than overtly lays bare, critique of the context presented. For instance, the scale of this painting – with the massively vertical church, bell tower extending upward and beyond the limits of the frame that dwarfs the faithful departing from it – alludes, perhaps, to the colossal importance (or dominance) of the Church and religion in Basque pueblo life.

Another processional painting from Regoyos’s España negra period is *Viernes Santo en Castilla*, a painting in which tradition and modernity conspicuously overlap. Here, Regoyos captures the sight of a train crossing over a bridge on the outskirts of Madrid while at the same time a procession passes underneath it on foot. He portrays the processional figures, carrying long liturgical candles and a Virgin Mary paso, with their backs to the viewer. 173 What is of greater interest, however, is Regoyos’s juxtaposition of the retreating procession below, with the arriving train above. 174 The train, racing forward as a plume of steam dissipates into the clear blue sky in

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173 This composition and perspective was then common in his depictions of religious subjects. Some examples include *Procesión en Navarra* (1887), *En Leire* (1895), and *Procesión Tolosa* (1897) – drawings reproduced in Juan San Nicolás, *Darío de Regoyos 1857-1913: La aventura impresionista* (108, 111, 114) – and *Procesión en Rentería* (1890) – reproduced in Juan San Nicolás, *Darío de Regoyos 1857-1913: Tomo I (1857-1900)* (269).

174 He did something similar in paintings like *Viaducto de Ormáiztegui* (1896), reproduced in Juan San Nicolás, *Darío de Regoyos 1857-1913: La aventura impresionista* (139), and *El tren de las 16 horas,*
its wake, has just begun to traverse the bridge while the procession below slowly comes to a close for the stationary on-looker. These images contrast sharply in terms of directionality, velocity, and symbolic content, and reflect the actual context of cultural divide in Spain around the turn of the century, which Regoyos evokes frequently in his œuvre.

Specifically, the composition of this painting mimics the simultaneity of prolonged tradition and rapid modernization in fin-de-siglo Spain that, when not at odds, created noticeable ideological friction amongst intellectuals, politicians, the clergy, and other groups. Both train (evocative modern progress) and procession (of Catholic tradition) fit the landscape that Regoyos creates, a countryside equipped for modern transport yet tranquil enough for a spiritual journey. These two symbolic forms, therefore, are conceptually opposed but compositionally indifferent, even oblivious to one another on canvas. The train moves forward, unimpeded, and so too does the religious tradition, neither entity paying attention to or interfering with the other. As such, the traditional and the modern, the sacred and the secular, the anticlerical and the Catholic are sets of divergent yet coexistent forces that remain caught in limbo on Regoyos’s canvas. Both entities move onward, headstrong and unobstructed as they overlap one another in shared space, an intersection of partial religioscape and landscape. In a way, this painting suggests the possibility for peaceful or intertwined existence among tradition and modernity, while in reality, political and social divisions form an unresolved dialectic of opposing yet synchronous forces.

Nevertheless, while a sense of tranquility or at least tolerance accompanies this image, the underlying tension between the two opposing entities is unresolved; that is, the train and the procession move at slightly different angles, which creates a sense of disjunction between the top and the bottom of the image. In addition to the disparity between tradition and modernity that Regoyos evokes in this painting, a number of other dissimilarities exist in the train-procession

noviembre (San Sebastián, 1900), reproduced in Juan San Nicolás, Darío de Regoyos 1857-1913: Tomo I (1857-1900) (368-369).
dichotomy. The train is an impersonal entity, the conductor and passengers implied rather than rendered, which contrasts with the robed figures below, unidentified yet individualized in form and action. Atop the bridge, the fast-moving machine races along mechanically while below, religious devotees amble along slowly and methodically. As much as these distinctions are physical, they are also temporal. The train passengers save their precious time, travelling at a speed that discloses their disinterest in watching the processional walkers. At the same time, the procession may derive greater meaning from its grueling pace and long duration; after all, the objective of the walking procession is to express penance, honor Christ’s ultimate sacrifice, and reflect during a celebration that should be as intense as it is lasting.

Regoyos commented on the forces of tradition and modernity some years earlier in the final chapter of *España negra*, which is uncharacteristically critical of religion. Most likely composed in 1898, Regoyos writes this conclusion independently, free of borrowed or translated portions from Verhaeren, and recounts his thoughts after the poet had already left Spain for his home in Belgium. This is important since the episode described below crosses the conceptual line between a sympathetic view of religion to a rather cynical denouncement of the procession he witnesses in San Vicente. Though the somber Verhaeren had gone, a deep sadness lingers in Regoyos, who recalls witnessing the procession of San Vicente de la Sonsierra in la Rioja one Good Friday afternoon. This an annual spectacle is (in)famous for its flagellant disciplinants. While many residents of San Vicente are passionate and enthusiastic about the town’s flagellant tradition, Regoyos’s observations communicate distress over the prospect. He writes:

[H]ay una cofradía de disciplinantes que se azota cruelmente, hasta correr la sangre, hiriéndose la piel con vidrios rotos. En pleno siglo XIX casi en el XX sucede esto delante de un Nazareno el Viernes Santo en San Vicente de la Sonsierra, cerca de Haro, donde se trasporta uno a la Edad Media aunque por otro lado tengan luz eléctrica y se vean desde allí los trenes modernos pasar diariamente por la estación de Briones a dos pasos de distancia. (105-106)
Amidst his description of the tradition and its setting lies a critical reflection on the peculiar, if not ironic simultaneity of medieval brutality and modernity in the small, northern pueblo. The critique I mention, whether indeed meant as one or not, is bound up in an aestheticized reflection on religious tradition a la Verhaeren, but it exposes an extreme case of anachronistic fanaticism, a corrupted version, in Regoyos’s eyes, of an otherwise pious belief system. In his concluding thoughts on this bloody display, Regoyos attests to the persistence of religious fanaticism in the modern era, even in a town located just steps away from a modern train station and illuminated in electric light.

Public penitential flagellation represents one exaggerated iteration of overzealous devotion that typifies religious fanaticism. While this violent practice had fallen out of favor with processional audiences by the eighteenth century, literary and artistic accounts of the nineteenth and twentieth century like España negra confirm that the practice was not extinct at that point.\textsuperscript{175} The Leyenda negra and its accusations of Spanish overzealousness echo throughout the passage quoted above and elsewhere in the chapter. Regoyos reports passing time with members of a Riojan cofradía that vie for the “alto honor de ser picao,” those that hope, in other words, to march as a processional flagellant on Good Friday (107).\textsuperscript{176} “Picar,” explains Regoyos, is the term used for the lashing performed during the procession. He finds this choice of words crude, yet strangely appropriate, likening it to another tradition deeply rooted in Spanish history and

\textsuperscript{175} Some of the Hermanos de sangre, the original Flagellant brotherhood from Sevilla, still exist and perform public atonement during important processions. As Antonio Cattoni, a writer for ABC’s “Pasión en Sevilla,” reported in 2015, the only place in Spain where this practice has not yet disappeared is in San Vicente, a town in Rioja, where being a “picao,” or a flagellent brother, “es un orgullo para la inmensa mayoría de los vecinos de San Vicente, aunque [el alcalde] Javier Luis reconoce que también en su pueblo tiene detractores” (18). Cattoni quotes Javier Luis speaking about the current status and reception of the flagellant tradition in his town: “Sería una catástrofe que desapareciera. El caso es que en los últimos años ha crecido el número de picaos. Se ha incrementado hasta llegar a los 50 en las cuatro procesiones, que incluyen las de mayo y septiembre” (19).

\textsuperscript{176} Regoyos suggests, a year prior the governor had attempted to put an end to the flagellations, but to no avail: “Cuentan que un gobernador mandó un año a la guardia civil para impedir que se castigaran [los confrades], pero perdieron el tiempo, porque toda la cofradía se zurró y picó de lo lindo, cada uno en su casa” (108).
identity: “lo mismo que en las plazas se pican toros, en aquel pueblo se pican hombres” (107). By equating the flagellation of religious brothers to the stabbing of bulls, Regoyos at once dehumanizes the penitents, dilutes the religious meaning of the tradition, and blasphemes what is perhaps the ultimate in religious devotion: penance via blood atonement. It is worth quoting Regoyos in full as he describes the procession itself:

Fue un día triste con un viento glacial; ya la silueta del pueblo no convidaba a ideas alegres. La iglesia del amarillento castellano de siempre dominaba todo, enclavada en una peña también pajiza, casi inaccesible sobre el Ebro y en medio de desiertos pelados y tristes, el tiempo con nubarrones negros, la procesión a la desbandada como obra de poseídos o de escapados locos, los chicos gritando, porque no rezaban ni cantaban; todas las notas eran discordantes. Las calles ruinosas y en fin todo el conjunto formaban una pesadilla macabra completándola con la sangre de los azotados. (109)

Regoyos’s artistic framing sets the stage as a dark, cold, and gloomy day where the surrounding landscape appears dull, shadowy, inaccessible, and sad. The way he sees things, the brutality of the devoted picaos and the public disorder that ensues sullies the religious sanctity of the tradition. The description comes directly before Regoyos’s final words, which state that should Verhaeren return to Spain now (in 1898) and witness a Good Friday procession in San Vicente, “entonces sí que vería al natural y de una pieza toda su ESPAÑA NEGRA tal como él la desea y la canta con su alma de gran poeta” (110). This Good Friday procession, in which medieval fanaticism literally marched on in modern times, best embodies Verhaeren’s construct of Black Spain in Regoyos’s imagination. While an isolated piece of an entire religious system, just one node on the Spanish religioscape, the irony that this flagellant procession reveals is constitutive of a larger picture. Regoyos situates his final reflections in a specific historical context, “este año 98 de tristes recuerdos” (110). Though fleeting, this temporal anchor – in an era of post-imperial identity crisis, political instability, and flawed modernization – aligns his conclusions with the contradictory realities of modernity. In doing so, Regoyos demystifies his aestheticized framing and perspective to engage real life issues like lingering fanaticism in rural pueblos.
Frederik Verbeke notes the stylistic and thematic connections between Regoyos’s and Verhaeren’s writing at the time of the journey as well as at the time of publication of the *España negra*. He shows that the theme of (self)flagellation runs throughout Verhaeren’s *Les Débâcles*, a book of poetry he completed while travelling with Regoyos in 1888, and suggests that what attracted them both to the medieval *pueblos* and “dead cities” of northern Spain was, “su gusto por lo cruel, lo sangriento, lo tétrico, lo decadente” (175). This is only partially true. *España negra* is more than a purely aesthetic project, more than a subjective representation of late nineteenth-century Spain. Regoyos points this out toward the end of the book: “la idea fúnebre del poeta podrá parecer chifladura, pero de ello tuvo la culpa la serie de cosas que vimos en nuestro viaje” (105). As the product of foreign influence, real events, and personal reactions to uneven turn-of-the-century modernization in Spain, *España negra* formed dialogues with social and critical currents of the time in protest of the stereotypes long placed on the nation by the Black Legend, romantic travelers, and other outside influences. In foregrounding sociopolitical inconsistency, religious overzealousness, and psychological melancholia, Regoyos and others revealed the darkness that shaped and shifted Spanish society, not to confirm the *Leyenda negra* or other pejorative perspectives, but to call for intellectual and social regeneration.

Nevertheless, Regoyos does seem to recognize the problem that artistic subjectivity could pose in representing shocking or dramatic phenomena like the San Vicente procession, which he calls, “una procesión puramente para artistas” (106). He suggests that the literary medium is best for capturing such an event, since the emotion and horror of the subject matter does not lend itself well to the canvas. He ponders, “¿Cómo trasladar a un lienzo unos cuantos fanáticos que se

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177 Regoyos mentions this book in *España negra* while describing Verhaeren’s reactions to Loyola and Azpeitia, home to many churches and the most beautiful procession Regoyos had ever seen (about which he barely goes into detail): “No dando importancia a sus artículos de impresiones de España para *l’Art Moderne*, periódico de Bruselas, se metió el poeta en su poesía; entonces estaba acabando su libro *Les Debâcles* donde hay algunos trozos inspirados en nuestro país, trozos tristes, por supuesto” (53).
azotan delante de los pasos en la procesión?” (107). We could ask the same of movement itself, naturally a part of any procession; how does one capture movement in a static image? I have proposed some ideas above, but Regoyos likely felt inspired to attempt his own graphic rendition of this “espectáculo goyesco” only after viewing Goya’s painting of a similar scene (107).

In Goya’s *Procesión de disciplinantes* (1812-1819), a crowd gathers around a group of hooded and bare-torsoed penitents as they whip themselves and one another as part of a penitential procession. Toward the right hand side of the canvas, a noticeably tilted standard held by a *cofrade* rises out of the crowd, much like the aforementioned cross in Regoyos’s *Madrugada del Viernes Santo en Orduña*. Again, the slant of the banner suggests movement, reminding the viewer that this procession, like all others, is a mobile spectacle. Furthermore, the figures, in particular the disciplinants in the fore, appear as if in motion due to their unsteady stances (front left and center) and/or their arms captured mid-flog (front right). Goya succeeds in translating energy and movement to canvas in his portrayal of the flagellant procession, which Regoyos also endeavored in his own rendition of the Procesión de San Vicente for *España negra* (Figure 3-2).

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Figure 3-2: Darío de Regoyos. *La procesión de San Vicente.* (Boj.) (c. 1897) included in *España negra* (1899).\(^{178}\)

\(^{178}\) *La procession de San Vicente*, from first edition *España Negra*, private collection of Juan San Nicolás.
As with the other xylograph (woodcut) prints in España negra, Regoyos created this image of the Procession of San Vicente around 1897, taking inspiration from his travels in 1888. Ángeles Ezama Gil suggests that, in Regoyos’s hands, the xylographic medium produces, “una notable fuerza expresiva, por la dureza y nitidez de los rasgos,” and best portrays those scenes, “dotadas de una violencia expresiva contenida, que el narrador no puede contemplar sin emoción” (342). While the engraving is rather crude, likely due to his underdeveloped skill in the medium, the primitive quality of the looming church in the background, the featureless silhouettes in the nondescript middle ground, and the cropped, ghost-like flagellants in the foreground create a strongly disquieting effect. Regoyos’s composite image captures what we can identify as three distinct moments or legs of the procession: the departure from the church, the march through town, and the public flogging. By presenting these moments simultaneously, Regoyos evokes the progressions of the procession throughout the dark and shadowy Riojan town without actually translating the mechanics of walking or processional marching to the print. In this sense, he succeeds in evoking processional movement in this print, and possibly more so than in his written account of it. The literal and metaphorical darkness of Regoyos’s woodcut and accompanying narrative respectively match the religious darkness inherent in the procession of San Vicente, the “pesadilla macabra” as he calls it (109).

Ezama Gil finds in España negra, especially in Regoyos’s woodcut prints and their corresponding narratives, a clear trace of expressionism, the twentieth-century artistic movement that has as its primordial quality the deformation or distortion of reality to elicit expressiveness and emotion in the subject matter. José Gutiérrez Solana is arguably the Spanish expressionist painter par excellence, and while his aesthetic is unlike any other artist of his time, he has two

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179 Ezama Gil groups Esculturas de Guipúzcoa. Regoyos’s exaggerated rendition of a pair of religious statues, together with La procesión de San Vicente as notably expressive and violent.
especially clear and influential precursors, none other than Goya and Regoyos.\textsuperscript{180} Solana’s *Disciplinantes* visualizes the stylistic and expressive triangulation among the three painters. This work bares a strong resemblance to Goya’s in terms of composition, and in fact, Solana borrows directly from his predecessor in his flagellant procession. Specifically, the figure on the left-hand side of Solana’s painting, with his back turned toward the audience, is modeled on a similar one from Goya’s *Procesión de disciplinantes*.\textsuperscript{181} Solana conveys an expressive, tortured emotion in this painting that is also on par with Regoyos’s rendition of the procession of San Vicente. Unlike their precursor, both Regoyos and Solana portray some of their disciplinants face-on. While distinct in appearance, their penitents wear *capirotes*, or processional hoods, that mask their faces and disfigure their humanity.

As demonstrated above, Regoyos’s interest in Catholic processions transcends text and image, both media effectively allowing him to present a distorted and disquieting version of disciplinants and devotional acts that contaminate the sanctity of religion. His treatment of pilgrimage, however, is more empathetic, more ambiguous, and more often captured in writing than in painting. In *España negra*, Regoyos and Verhaeren visit San Marcial de Vergara, a small town outside of Guipúzcoa in the Basque Country, in order to attend the festivities of the *día de San Pedro*, which includes a *romería* to the San Marcial chapel. They traverse heavily wooded paths alongside the local *romeros* before reaching the chapel, which is nestled in a tree-lined clearing. There, Regoyos documents groups of people eating *en plein air*, drinking, dancing, and playing joyful music. “En medio de tanta diversión,” he reflects, “había cosas que entraban en el

\textsuperscript{180} Ezama Gil claims that Regoyos, “constituye un hito insoslayable en el camino que media entre el precursor dieciochesco del expresionismo, Goya, y la obra del expresionista Gutiérrez Solana,” (346).

\textsuperscript{181} As Barrio-Garay notes, inspiration for the disciplinant figures in the image above derive both from this earlier work by Solana of the same name (*Disciplinantes*, c. 1910) and from Goya’s *Procesión de disciplinantes*. “Solana substitutes the penitents carrying crosses in his earlier painting,” he says, “with the hooded flagellant from the right of Goya’s work and places him to the left of his to create a simpler and more self-contained composition” (127). By, “to the left of his,” Barrio-Garay means the two kneeling and forward-facing disciplinants in the middle of the composition, one (left) brandishing a penitential whip and the other (right) with arms crossed over chest.
orden de ideas negras de nuestro artista [Verhaeren]” (55). Again, Verhaeren is incapable of enjoying the lightheartedness of a Basque religious tradition. Instead, he focuses on the impending conclusion of the celebration, which entails the sobering procession of romeros heading back to town at nightfall and ushers in the return to somber, silent normalcy.

“El fin de fiesta no podía ser más triste,” concludes Regoyos, admitting that of all the memories he has of this romería, the image that remained clearest in his mind was that of “los cuatro cirios ardiendo bajo el pórtico de la torre ocre” (56, 55). This is a reference to a grouping of candles placed at the entrance of the church in town before the romería began, “llamando a la gente a la salve” (54). Regoyos and Verhaeren had only glimpsed these cirios the night before in the midst of rowdy local festivities. Why the mental image of these candles elicits sadness in Regoyos (and Verhaeren) is not explicit, but the intrinsic relationship between religion, cirios (altar or Paschal candles), and the innate Spanish sadness of religious pueblos offers a clue. The “ideas negras” that Verhaeren conjures up during the romería relate directly to Regoyos’s commentary of what by traditional standards should be a religious celebration. Even though the romería that Regoyos documents entails no organized or mandated act of religious devotion, the image of nearly overlooked church cirios remains burned into Regoyos’s memory as if on a guilty conscience. As the scene concludes, religion is on his mind while the spiritual meaning of the romería dissolves into secular festivity.

The commentary on religious practice that Regoyos puts forth throughout España negra creates a spectrum of cautionary remarks on the role of faith and the Church in modern, fin-de-siglo society in Spain. His account of the procession in San Vicente warns against fanatical and anachronistic devotion in modern times while his retelling of the romería in Vergara suggest an unease about the degradation of religion. What is Regoyos suggesting, then: is Spain too religious, or not religious enough? For him, as in Spanish society and politics of his time, secular and ecclesiastical ideals were less dichotomous than they were fluid, meaning that while religion
held an indelible role in shaping everyday life; this life was also modernizing at an extraordinary rate of change, which at the same time could produce negative consequences. By the end of the nineteenth century, Spain had not struck a balance between its past and present, which made for an uncertain future. Regoyos emulates this discord in a fluctuating and ambiguous examination of the turn-of-the-century in España negra, which also discloses an imagined or constructed nostalgia for a lost, perhaps never existent, form of religion. Instead, he observes festivals that are either too secularized or too primitive.

These questions and hypotheses come together in a final analysis of Regoyos, which also draws out the function of movement and religioscape in his broader understanding of the procession and pilgrimage traditions. During their travels through the northern regions of San Sebastián and Vizcaya, Regoyos and Verhaeren witness a very curious fiesta on the island of Gaztelugache, southwest of Cabo de Machichaco. “En lo alto de la peña,” says Regoyos of this island, “hay una ermita donde todos los años hacen una peregrinación mezcla de religiosa y divertida” (61). The conflation of devotion and diversion that he notes in this pilgrimage harbors a deep sense of moral conflict for Regoyos. This first becomes evident as he begins describing the spectacle, “fun” part first:

La parte divertida está en el lado de Machichaco, viéndose de allí el peñón de los fieles en conjunto; una reunión de gente lo cubre formando un sendero de grandes revueltas que termina en la ermita. Si esta gente se moviera podría hacerse la comparación tan conocida de hormigueo y camino de hormigas; pero son puntos quietos y muy negros; son mujeres arrodilladas con mantillas y parece que rezan. (61-62)

While the trail of praying women winding up the far-off mountainside toward the chapel is an enjoyable sight to take in from afar, suggests Regoyos, “la parte religiosa y triste se encuentra en las mujeres que suben a la isla” (62). He captures the “parte divertida” as well as the “parte religiosa y triste” of the pilgrimage in a pair of sketches that he includes in España negra (Figure 3-3).
The first portrays a panoramic view of the pilgrimage much like the view he and Verhaeren would have glimpsed while watching from across the way in Cabo de Machichaco. The multitude marching their way up the mountainside like an army of ants is an impressive sight to see, with little evidence of the sadness that Regoyos reports sensing in the pilgrimaging women. A counterpart to this panoramic view, the second sketch is a close-up that captures the image of one devoted beata out of the many. From afar, the viewer cannot clearly discern how these pilgrim women climb the stone steps on their knees, enduring physical pain or discomfort in order to realize their spiritual obligation. The zoomed-in effect of this second sketch makes the physical toll of the trek more obvious, more concrete and definable. Through his dual-representation, Regoyos draws attention to a troubling reality: when viewed from afar, the dedication and pain endured during this grueling spiritual journey may be unintentionally but unfairly overlooked, lost on the non-critical observer.

The conflict of perspectives that Regoyos uncovers in his account of the pilgrimage on Gaztelugache affirms his correlation between the Spanish sadness we have been referencing and

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182 Public domain images courtesy of “Biblioteca de Catalunya.”
religion: “el martirio de esta ascensión no se comprende hasta verlo de cerca […] el que va allí como curioso ve el contraste de aquellos tristes que se martirizan con los que se emborrachan en la romería” (62). Regoyos also points out the difference between romería and pilgrimage in this affirmation, where the former implies drunkenness and celebration, and the latter is more traditionally devotional. The “parte triste y religiosa” of the pilgrimage is the painful movement up the mountainside while the “parte divertida” occurs apart from that journey, literally and figuratively separated from the devotional aspect of the fiesta. The antithesis of meaning and function that Regoyos identifies in this pilgrimage works to draw out the contradictions and paradoxes of religious practice in these northern, supposedly strongholds of Catholicism in Spain. The religioscape that we see take shape in Regoyos’s documentation of processions, pilgrimages, and romerías shapes the communities he visits, but the network it forms is at best erratically devotional. In effect, Regoyos shows that the religious tradition in Spain was perhaps as inconsistent and shifting as its political underpinnings. For Regoyos, “esta fiesta [en Gaztelugache] era bastante para dar la visión de una España Negra en la que la alegría va mezclada con la penitencia […] estaba de Dios que sin querer nosotros la escena de nuestro país se había de arreglar a cada paso de una manera trágica y a favor de Verhaeren” (63). With each step that the travelers take, it seems, Spain appears more tragic. Likewise, with each step that a processional or pilgrimage walkers take down a road, through a town, along a path, or up a mountain, the corruption of or in these mobile Catholic traditions become clearer.

**Solana: España negra, España (cuasi)religiosa**

Expressionist painter and meticulous cultural observer José Gutiérrez Solana self-admittedly had “less religiosity than a dog!” (qtd. Barrio-Garay 102). Despite his personal rejection of religion and his anticlerical leanings, references to Catholic imagery and tradition are
almost constant components of his artistic and written oeuvre of the twentieth century. Religious statues, priests, nuns, lay Catholics, churches, crucifixes, pilgrimages, and processions constitute an extensive portion of Solana’s thematic library, almost always appearing on page or canvas in distorted form and/or cast in darkness (metaphorical or chromatic). Solana’s processions and pilgrimage expand the religioscape that Regoyos offered in España negra, extending Black Spain’s limits to include Madrid, Santander, and other cities varying in size. Around the turn of the century, larger cities like Madrid became hotspots for anticlerical and eventually anarchist opposition to Church influence in government and society. Solana captures this reality by focusing on the superficiality and theatricality of collective religious practices, which reveals the darkness of a Catholic tradition that is both fanatical and nonsensical in its modern setting.

In this section, I first contextualize Solana’s early- to mid-career works within the early twentieth-century sociopolitical turbulence of the increasingly unstable Bourbon Restoration government. I then consider Solana’s perception and treatment of religion in relation to other modernists like Regoyos. Finally, I analyze a number of Solana’s works, including La España negra (1920) and selections from his Madrid documentaries, that portray processions and pilgrimage, independently and in comparison to others’ works. Solana’s modernist take on Catholicism drastically undermines religious norms and traditions without attacking the Church, its practices, or its ideals explicitly. He portrays Catholicism in a way that would have been inexcusable by Church standards, a way that is subjective and objective at once. He humanizes the clergy, brings spirituality into tangible focus, pulls Biblical revelation down to solid ground; in other words, I argue, Solana desacralizes the devotional acts and icons that were fundamental to fin-de-siglo Catholic revival in Spain. As a result, Solana’s ideological and aesthetic anticlericalism merge in dialogue with the ever-more agitated secularist tendencies of his time.

In his first full-length book, Madrid. Escenas y costumbres (primera serie) (1913), Solana documents the romería of San Antonio de la Florida, which takes place just outside the
city center of Madrid. Rows of potted flowers, decorative pitchers, and children’s toys are for sale in fair stalls. Strolling vendors sell soft drinks, jerky, and peanuts. Swings, a horse-powered merry-go-round, and fair games entertain the crowds. Solana observes the festive scene before him and notes that through the dense smoke rising up from large vats of frying churros he can just make out the silhouette of the chapel of San Antonio de la Florida nearby. As in other depictions of romería studied here, the religious component of the celebration is literally shrouded in a veil of popular festivity. Just as churro smoke and nearby chapel merge into one multilayered image, so too do secular fun and spiritual practice converge in the romería tradition.

In this chapter, Solana focuses most of his attention on a group of ragged golfos at the shooting galleries who aim and fire toy guns at stuffed dolls or tin cutouts, many of which are in effigy of real people. “Algunos tiran con saña a los personajes que tienen más rabia” he writes, “hay gran predilección por tirar los monigotes de Maura, La Cierva, Romanones, Weyler, etc.” (106). The golfos raucously shoot down their targets, reveling in the chance to symbolically kill military, religious, or political leaders they may resent or disagree with. While the “pimpampúm” is a mere game, Solana draws out the illusion of power and subversion it inspires in the romero-golfos, which in turn mirrors the tenuousness of the sociopolitical environment in early twentieth-century Spain. “Esto es lo que hacía falta en España: barrer y renovar,” cries one golfo after shooting a series of moving targets that a revolving wire mechanism automatically replaces with new ones (106). His outburst, ridiculed and then ignored by on-lookers, reflects the myriad calls for nation-wide regeneration and reform that surfaced following the Desastre de 98. The problem, as much in the romería shooting gallery as in civic society, lies in the fact that there was

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183 This, it can be argued, is the essence of Carnival in the Bakhtinian sense. Like the marketplace, the fairground areas of the romería are something of a release valve for pent-up frustrations of all kinds. A space where it is permitted and perhaps encouraged by authorities to upturn and interchange prescribed social roles as a means of control. In this sense, allowing the boisterous golfo to shout and knock down dolls resembling the most controversial or hated public figures of the day without any repercussion has the potential to quell his demeanor and discontent outside of the shooting galleries.
always another golfo, politician, interest group, or political party looking to “barrer y renovar” existing targets and systems themselves.

Without being explicit, Solana points to the deeply flawed state of Spain’s Restoration government in his narration of the shooting galleries. In conclusion he states, “la gente sigue tirando a los muñecos; los golfos tiran con las bolas, cagándose en todos ellos; y ahora cae uno, ahora cae otro, y vuelven a levantarse y vuelven a caer” (107). It is nearly impossible to ignore in his words a metaphor for the workings and failings of turnismo, the Restoration’s electoral system that produced and reproduced a constant state of change and instability in regime politics. Alternation between liberal and conservative parties was frequent, and the compromises they met were tenuous at best. To illustrate this point, it is worth noting that between 1902 and 1907 Spain had fourteen separate governments; between 1918 and 1919, it had six. During his “long government” of 1907-1909, Antonio Maura – the ardent Catholic and five-time Prime Minister mentioned among Solana’s preferred shooting gallery targets – did manage a number of social and economic reforms despite liberal and republican skepticism. His hardline position against cultural change and in favor of religious preservation would have a significant hand in developing the Spanish right between 1913 and 1923, leading up Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship.

The figures that Solana refers to by name in MEC I were mainly conservative Church sympathizers like Maura, with the exception of the Count of Romanones. Three times the Prime Minister of Spain between 1912 and 1919, Romanones shared the liberal party ideals of Práxedes Mateo Sagasta who had alternated power with Cánovas at the beginning of the Restoration. The catechism controversy of 1913, the same year Solana published MEC I, confirmed the declining will that Romanones and many liberals had in staving off an increasingly entitled and defensive Catholic core. Antisecular protests broke out in 1913 as erroneous rumors circulated through Spain claiming that Romanones planned to end obligatory teaching of the catechism in public
elementary schools. William J. Callahan sees the catechism controversy as a key moment for early twentieth-century Spain:

The era of flamboyant battles between Liberal governments and the Church ended with the catechism controversy. The 1913 protest showed that the Church was unwilling to admit either a reduction in its legal privileges or any concession, however limited, in the direction of religious toleration […] The conflict revealed again that the Church and its supporters, if unable to thwart all challenges to ecclesiastical privilege, possessed enough influence to block significant change. (88)

The publication of Solana’s first full-length book, therefore, corresponded with a culminating moment in the clash between secular and ecclesiastical factions. Most of this book was written earlier, in 1909, however, which means that his remarks fit somewhere between the circulation of the *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907) and the catechism controversy (1913). Solana wrote his final book, *Madrid Callejero*, between 1918 and 1923, the date of its publication being the first year of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship. Recounting all the specific events and intricate shifts in power leading up to this point extends far beyond the scope and purpose of this project. It is sufficient, instead, to recognize that Solana, as a modernist painter and painter-author, lived through and reacted to an era of intensifying anticlerical and antisecularist movements that affected the functioning and perception of modern Spanish society.

The thematic similarities between Regoyos’s *España negra* (1899) and Solana’s *La España negra* (1920) are undeniable despite the decades separating them. As explained previously, both travel narratives follow comparable itineraries and highlight much of the same darkness, religious and otherwise. Many have criticized these Black Spain narratives for representing Spain in a derogatory manner that perpetuated the Black Legend. In their defense, Elton Martín Anglada-Segarra suggests that authors like Regoyos or Solana who repeatedly treat one out of many possible subjects – modernity’s darkness – do so in an attempt to reveal “una verdad esencial” in a civilization, a people, a tradition, or a culture (141). Like Regoyos’s travel partner Verhaeren, Solana found this essential truth in death on one hand, and in the theatricality
of life on the other. He realized while travelling through Spain between 1913 and 1919, “que la vida del pueblo español, su gran sentido del teatro, podía verse no solo en los toros, sino asimismo en las procesiones; es así,” claims Anglada-Segarra, “que parte del paisaje de las España negras de ambos artistas, es procesional” (141). This explains, in part, Solana’s frequent portrayal of processions and pilgrimages that seem to confuse reality and imagination or attempt to undermine the mysteries of faith.

Solana’s perception of Catholicism and religious practice was negative and personal, deriving from both subjective and objective points of view. Inspired by his predecessors, “[Solana] nota en [las procesiones] precisamente lo mismo que Verhaeren y Regoyos: su barbarismo” (Anglada-Segarra 142). Ramón Gómez de la Serna, leader of the Spanish avant-garde and one of Solana’s few close friends, wrote of the painter and his inclination toward so-called barbarous religious subjects, “los que más le impresionaban eran los disciplinantes, y por eso abundan en sus cuadros procesionales,” adding in reflection, “es muy seria esa devoción sangrienta” (Biografías 1452). As was the case in Regoyos’s España negra, Solana was attracted to the fanatical elements of modern Catholicism, finding paradox, ironically, as one of few truths in a time of constant uncertainty and instability. His obsession with theatricality and the blurring of realities also fueled his attraction to processions and processional figures as detailed below.

While there are presently no studies that deal with his religious sensibilities, we do have insight into Solana’s spiritual conscience thanks to his biographers, especially Ramón, Barrio-Garay, and Manuel Sánchez-Camargo. Solana’s sustained criticism of Catholicism, specifically of fanatical religiosity, has been traced to his mother’s unwavering spiritual devotion. As a child, Solana noted how his mother, Manuela Josefa Gutiérrez-Solana, would become calmer after participating in processions and, following the death of his father in 1898, found solace only in prayer (Gómez de la Serna 1452, Barrio-Garay 55). Over time, Manuela Josefa’s health and mental stability began to waver, and in 1909 the Solana family moved from Madrid to Santander,
her birthplace, hoping that a more familiar and tranquil setting would help her heal. By that time, the young Solana began to connect his mother’s deteriorating reason with her religiosity, as Ramón suggests in 1918: “[Solana] hates zealously because he thinks rightly that perhaps his poor mother has been a victim of the homicidal mysticism which kills sensibility and reason” (qtd. Barrio-Garay 55-56). Three years earlier, what had marked the “derangement” of Manuel Josefa’s son Luis, which was essentially the last straw for the troubled widow; “By 1918,” says Barrio-Garay, “she too became insane” (31). The onset and progression his mother’s madness, along with a litany of other familial and personal issues, would go on to be Solana’s “burden and motivation for emotional expression” in painting and writing (Barrio-Garay 56).

For Solana, the distorted and at times disturbing turn that he attributes to his literary and pictorial portrayal of religion derives from subjective expression (his personal disdain for fanatical religiosity) and real-life observation; not, however, from his own religious beliefs or interpretations of religion as an abstract construction in itself. Notably, his representations of procession and pilgrimage often have concrete referents as Ramón testifies: “el pintor [ha esperado las procesiones] y las ha visto pasar lenta e interminablemente apostado en un recodo de su trayecto, dibujando su zigzag sáurico, de anillado dragón oscuro con pintas de fuego” (1451). The “interminables procesiones” of Santander and Castilla that he witnessed often and with great interest throughout his life were one of his most preferred religious subjects on canvas and page (Gómez de la Serna 1451). “Excepcionales” and “serias” in Ramón’s opinion, Solana’s procession paintings are numerous as shown in Barrio-Garay’s meticulous biography-catalogue.

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184 1909, it is worth remembering, is the year in which Solana wrote most of *MECI.*
185 Solana was born in Madrid, 1886, to consanguineous parents, a taboo that weighed heavily on the artist and his family both psychologically and biologically. Aside from his parents’ consanguinity, Solana’s life was constantly punctuated with reminders of hereditary madness and tragic death. The death of his one-year-old sister, the eye-witness account of his cousin’s fatal asphyxiation, the traumatizing invasion of a masked Carnival-goer while home alone as a child, the loss of his father, the institutionalization of his brother, and the mental breakdown and death of his mother are some examples. These events forever troubled the artist and perceptively shaped his demented and dark aesthetic. For more on Solana’s biography see Barrio-Garay, Gómez de la Serna, and Sánchez-Camargo.
from 1978 (1451-1452). We will consider only two of Solana’s processional paintings here, both from an earlier period (1916-1917). In the first, *Procesión de Semana Santa*, also known as *La España negra*, a procession makes its way through a narrow street as on-lookers watch from the balconies or the sidewalk lining its path (Figure 3-4).

![Figure 3-4: José Gutiérrez Solana. Procesión de Semana Santa (La España negra) (c. 1917)](image)

Maria José Salazar’s description of this painting conveys well its intense darkness: “Everything is somber and dismal: the streets, the houses, and even the first rays of dawn convey the sadness of the moment (par 38).” The “sadness” Solana captures in this painting, as Salazar puts it, is not

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186 There are many other examples with which we can compare and contrast these. Barrio-Garay provides an excellent chronology of Solana’s thematic evolution in his 1976 biography of the artist. He delineates Solana’s religious painting as follows. 1910-1915, early religious painting: a “most personal portrayal of the world in terms of ritual and festival,” which includes, *Procesión en Castilla (Procesión del santo entierro), Procesión suplicatoria en Castilla,* and *Procesión de escapularios* (66). 1916-1917, processional scenes more focused on processional statues and objects, reflecting the spirit of *La España negra*, which include *Procesión de la semana santa (La España negra), Procesión en Cuenca, Procesión de noche, Procesión en semana santa,* and *procesión en Toro*. 1928-1936, renewed interest in religious processions in paintings that interrogate the distinctions and similarities between the animéte and inanimate, which include *El beso de Judas, La última cena, Disciplinantes,* and three more titled *Procesión.*

187 *Procesión de Semana Santa (La España negra), © image courtesy of Colección Banco Santander.*
only an externalized portrait of the artist’s emotional reaction to the scene. Rather, Solana’s sadness continues the trend that Regoyos, Azorín, and Baroja had begun years previously of attributing a latent “tristeza” to the communal religious acts in Spanish pueblos and to the pueblos themselves. As was the case of his predecessors, Solana draws on mobile Catholic traditions like procession or pilgrimage in order to juxtapose the nuances of the Black Legend and modernist Black Spain on one hand, and tradition and modernity on the other.

Procesión de Semana Santa (La España negra) is realistic insofar as its perspective is logical. Solana composes the scene as if he were an onlooker positioned on the street beyond the frame, watching as the processional objects and participants move toward him from a vanishing point and ultimately pass him by. Solana completed this painting and the one reproduced below, Procesión de noche, between 1916 and 1917, which corresponds to his era of travel (1913-1919) and preparation for La España negra (1920). These works, as Barrio-Garay notes, “portray different processional motifs in various settings and comment on man’s religious practices and circumstances” (Barrio-Garay 73). What this suggests is that for Solana, processional painting was a medium and genre that allowed him to formulate social commentary, and that judging by the difference in style and composition of these paintings, this commentary was evolving. Even at first glance, an adjustment in perspective is obvious in his painting entitled Procesión de noche. The scene – a representation of a Holy Week procession – is flattened so that, instead of the procession marching toward the viewer from a vanishing point, all participants, onlookers, and pasos occupy the same plane. The result, in part, is a compression and shuffling of the Passion of Christ narrative, where distinct moments like the flagellation of Christ and Christ’s first fall beneath the cross appear in atemporal juxtaposition. This spatial and conceptual democratization of painterly planes emphasizes, among other formal and symbolic elements, the procession’s artificiality and theatrical impact. This single-ground, contemporaneous presentation of the scenes
of the Passion destabilizes any sense of simulacrum or logical temporality that this procession or its artistic representation could have hoped to imitate for its public and/or participants.

Furthermore, the pictured penitents and audience introduce an ambiguity to the painting, which complicates a viewer’s ability to discern reality from artifice. While the faces of the nazarenos are covered in their capirotes as usual, the figures in the foreground, facing front or looking outward over their shoulders, have abstruse (and undeniably Goyesque) countenances. Some resemble masks more so than human faces (second and fourth from the left, for example), which confirms Solana’s lifelong obsession with inanimate objects that appear animate and vice versa as detailed at length by Weston Flint.188 The religious underpinning of the scene, that is, the processional re-enactment or re-representation of Biblical scenes, together with the liminality of this grotesque public (at once human, yet nonhuman), epitomizes Solana’s characteristically bold engagement with confusing or disturbing realities. The fact that Solana dehumanizes not only the nazarenos or the penitentes, but also the onlookers in the crowd, suggests that all parties are equally involved in this religious act or, in a more sinister interpretation, that all present are equally corrupted by the anti-moderness of Catholicism. Given Solana’s vocal anti-religious attitudes, I tend to lean toward the second reading.

In one of La España negra’s earlier chapters, entitled “Santander,” Solana reminisces about the Procession of the Sacred Heart in the Cantabrian city, “su lóbrego Santander fanático,” as Ramón called it (1451). Before analyzing the procession that Solana describes here, it is worth noting the symbolic transformation that the holy image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus underwent throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Beginning in the early 1800s, the cult of the Sacred Heart became a symbol of opposition against liberalism. Carlist troops wore insignia on their uniforms brandishing the Sacred Heart into battle in the 1830s and 1870. In 1899, plaques

188 See, for example, Solana, escritor and “Wax Figures and Mannequins in Solana.”
engraved with the Sacred Heart were systematically hung outside residences and businesses, which were identified with the antiliberal tradition into the twentieth century (Callahan 53). At this time, Santander was robustly Catholic, and thus fervent devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus seems logical. What may seem illogical, however, is Solana’s meticulous and ultimately negative representation of this procession and the cult it represents. In the end, Solana uses categorically antiliberal symbolism (the Sacred Heart) to mobilize his secularist attitudes, a subversive act that undercuts the political and social meaning of a recognizable Catholic image.

Having spent years in Santander as an adolescent with his family and ailing mother, Solana recalls the procedures and theatrics related to the yearly Sacred Heart festivities. Following mass, he recalls in *La España negra*, everyone would return to their homes for supper and a change of clothes before the procession began. He and his family preferred to watch from the entrance of a side street next to the church. As if observing from this vantage point, standing street level with a clear view of the church, Solana documents the advancement of the procession as it passes him by moving through the streets of Santander. He describes processional groups as they appear at the threshold of the church and embark on their journey through the city. First come the cofrades carrying religious standards and an image of la Purísima; then young girls

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189 For example: “La gente, que ha comulgado y oído esta interminable misa, empieza a retirarse; es necesario comer, cambiar de traje y prepararse para la procesión de la tarde […] Primero aparecen unos cuantos estandartes y pendones, detrás de los cuales caminan los cofrades y luises de ambos sexos; todos llevan del cuello medallas de plata, sujetas con unas anchas cintas de colores y en las manos velas encendidas; algunas las llevan rizadas, muy caprichosas, y que parecen banderillas; otras las llevan rodeadas de un papel que sirve de palomilla para no quemarse la punta de los dedos […] Detrás viene una imagen de la Purísima, de cartón piedra, vestida de azul y blanco y cubierta materialmente la peana de flores naturales; ésta la llevan en hombros los cofrades jóvenes y fuertes del Sagrado Corazón; de la peana parten una porción de cintas blancas, que tienen de la mano unas niñas muy pequeñas con trajes blancos y medias de color rosa, vestidas de angelito; de sus cuellos penden unos pequeños cestos llenos de flores; en sus espaldas, unas alas de papel dorado. Detrás van otras de más edad, que han hecho la primera Comunión que llevan velas rizadas y encendidas en la mano; todas van vestidas de blanco, con velo de gasa y corona de azahar, parecen pequeñas novias; algunas, con el traje del día y de tanto madrugar, van muy descoloridas; parecen muerta o figuras de cera. Después vienen las personas serias y mayores: el obispo, ya viejo y achacoso, anda muy despacio, viste de seda morada; en la mano, enguantada, fulgura una sortija de amatista rodeada de brillantes, y lleva una pequeña vela apagada. A su lado, el gobernador civil, con frac y bastón de borlas, y el militar, vestiendo el uniforme de general” (327-328).
dressed like angels and older ones celebrating their first communion; next a group of canons and the bishop followed by the elderly hijas de María; and finally, the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus escorted by priests and congregants. Solana captures the mobility of the procession as he describes the various processional segments, frequently using action verbs like aparecer, andar, caminar, venir, and tranquear to document its progressions from his fixed viewpoint. The constant reference to processional movement accompanies his observations on the physical condition of its participants, ranging from the vibrancy of “cofrades jóvenes y fuertes” or “niñas muy pequeñas” to the decadence of “el Obispo, ya viejo y achacoso” or “señoras de edad [y] acachosas” (328). From the youngest to the oldest, the whole town gathers to participate in or watch this spectacle, a procession that is as much a religious celebration as a social event.

The minute details that Solana records of the procession undermine the sacred illusion that such religious manifestations meant to create. Referencing the materiality of processional items (the image of la Purísima “de cartón piedra,” the angles’ “alas de papel dorado”) or the imperfections of processional participants (singing cofrades “desfinan mucho,” the hijas de María “trabucan la letra” of sacred hymns), Solana emphasizes the human, non-divine, and/or artificial qualities of the spectacle (327-328). Ultimately, he points out how religiosity dissolves almost entirely into theatrics as the procession parades down the city streets. Instead of eliciting a spiritual or emotional reaction in the on-looking and reflective Solana, the procession of the Sacred Heart provokes his detailed and critical documentation of a scene in which appearances and drama overcome the intended emphasis on religious meaning. The tone changes abruptly in the chapter’s final paragraph, where Solana records an incident in which a disgruntled priest breaks rank with the procession and attacks a group of foreign sailors:

[u]nos marineros holandeses presenciaban la procesión sin descubrirse al paso de la Virgen; esto produjo tal indignación en un padre carmelita, que se abalanzó sobre uno de ellos, le pistó de el sombrero y le dio tan fuerte bofetada que le descoyuntó una mandíbula, haciéndole guardar unos días cama. Los marineros hicieron una enérgica reclamación ante el cónsul de su país, y se les dio una
Provoked by the foreigners who failed to remove their hats out of respect for the Virgin Mary statue, perhaps out of ignorance more than malice, the Carmelite priest severely beats one of the processional onlookers. This excessively forceful reaction embodies the extradiegetic tension between Church leadership and the privileged faithful on one hand, secularist sympathizers and working class or “othered” individuals on the other. While he is mainly descriptive in his account of this incident, Solana embeds his disdain for religious overzealousness and hypocrisy in his words as he relates the crowd’s apparent indifference to the incident. Fortunately, he reflects in the chapter’s final sentence, this type of unsavory occurrence happens only from time to time. Solana presents the crowd as used to and even amenable to such outbreaks. Leaving the door more or less open to interpretation (these are the final words of the chapter), his cool and direct narration of the priest’s attack nevertheless possesses critical overtones.

Perhaps one reason why this account stands out as unique among other processional renditions of the time is that the priest’s break with procedure is also a break in the fourth wall, so to speak, of the religious theater that the procession is meant to perform. As mentioned above, Solana’s life-long obsession with ambiguous perceptions of reality and artificiality translate into his repeated focus on representing and dismantling the theatricality of things meant to influence the public’s perception of religious tradition. For this reason, his literary and artistic renditions of religious practice continuously pick away at the pageantry of processional statues, sacred stories, and costumes to reveal the explainable and tangible mechanisms at work beneath the surface.

The underlying concerns that Solana holds regarding the hypocritical and superficial aspects of religious practice come to the fore in a later chapter of *La España negra*, “Calatayud,” which describes a procession of the Passion of Christ in this northeastern Aragonese town. As he did in the previous example, Solana makes note of the different processional groups and pasos as
they leave the church and walk throughout Calatayud toward the Plaza de la Constitución where a
series of liturgical demonstrations take place. Solana weaves awareness of social stratification
into his account of the processional scene, contrasting “los vecinos” who watch comfortably from
the balconies of their homes or from within cafés with the “buenos baturros” who reminisce over
how, “desde que eran chicos viene celebrándose [esta procesión] sin perder su aparato de
tradición” (430). Staging the procession as an apparatus of tradition, Solana emphasizes the
repeatability of not only this, but all recurring Catholic rituals and identifies their practitioners as
mechanical as well, automatons so to speak that act and obey unthinkingly.

While the communal aspects of this procession are obvious – there is a sense of equality
regarding who gets to observe and participate in the festivities – Solana also notes the class
divisions that contradict the idea of a common ground or democratized experience of faith. As
mentioned above, heading into the twentieth century, social and economic standing conditioned
religious identity in Spain more than ever before. Here, Solana notes the distinctions between the
familied rich, the illegitimate poor, and the working classes. He notices, for example, finely
dressed girls on one balcony, “las niñas ricas de Calatayud que se educan en los conventos,
acompañadas de las monjas,” next to another balcony where he sees, “la mancha gris y humilde
de las niñas hospicianas” (430-431). Despite the procession’s public appeal (all have the right to
watch), the disparity between wealth and poverty is clear. In contrast to the “buenos baturros” or
“niñas hospicianas,” marginalized for lack of resources or social standing, the “niñas ricas” of
Calatayud are those for whom Catholicism and formal relations with the Church were most often
reserved. As if a recapitulation of the shooting gallery golfo whose cries for regeneration were in
vain, Solana sees the poor and non-elite masses of Calatayud as a veritably voiceless yet
permanent fixture in the pueblo’s mechanism of religious and secular life.

The procession culminates in the Plaza de la Constitución where all of the processional
pasos, participants, and public gather for a reenactment of the burial of Christ. Solana narrates the
pageantry of the scene, from the construction and disassembly of the stage to the main performance. Local residents assume Biblical personas, including the three Marys and Longinus who execute their roles with a dramatic solemnity that captivates the audience.\textsuperscript{190} The three Marys, Solana notes, used to be chosen from the “clase de pueblo,” but due to the intense sobs and cries that the pueblo women would let loose at the sight of Christ’s tomb, the city began enlisting more discrete “damas principales” (432). These “damas” are best for the ceremony, Solana explains, because “no la afean” as they silently circle the wooden coffin where a fake Jesus lays (432). Class division resurfaces in this account of the Mary’s; the stoicism of elite women is more aesthetically pleasant than the overzealous grief of lower-class women.

Longinus, “que viene con su escudo de cartón al brazo,” dramatically pounds nails into Jesus’s coffin, a representation of his being laid to rest after the crucifixion (432). For Catholics, the story of Christ’s death on Good Friday and resurrection on Easter Sunday is common knowledge. Per usual, Jesus does not rise from the tomb in the Good Friday performance that Solana describes here; anything else would be blasphemous. But as Longinus stands, staring at the coffin in silence, “en la cara de todos hay como una defraudación, una perdida esperanza al ver que Cristo no se ha levantado cuando parecía éste el momento más propicio” (432). Whether born of naiveté or ignorance, the deceit (“defraudación”) that Solana senses in Longinus and the public at this moment indicates a rift in religious understanding that destabilizes the constancy of one true Catholic narrative. What happens when the flock strays, when the faithful cease to be automatons, when people hope for or demand an outcome other than what religious mythology offers? He leaves it up to the reader to decide as he abruptly ends the chapter.

\textsuperscript{190} The three Marys is a reference to the women who were present at Jesus’s tomb at the time of his burial. While many variations on the story exist, according to the Gospel of Mark (16:1), the only Gospel to mention all women by name, the Mary’s included Mary Magdalene, Mary of James, and Salome. Longinus is the name given to the Roman soldier who pierced Jesus’s side while still crucified. This is identified as the last of the five holy wounds of Christ. Solana provides no context for these characters, but they are easily recognizable figures of the Catholic tradition.
The Calatayud procession more than uncovers the darkness of social inequity or brutal histories of religious devotion. As Solana hones in on the materiality of the spectacle and the workings of its theatrical mechanisms, he secularizes the processional tradition in its physical manifestation and its symbolic meaning. For instance, after the procession and ceremonies have ended, Solana observes how participants, still clad in their liturgical costumes, celebrate with friends in local bars and cafes, a familiar yet absurd confluence of the seriousness and solemnity of Catholic tradition and the lightheartedness of human, social life. His literary dismantling of the theatrical illusion in religious processional figures and practices speaks to Solana’s anxiety over the ability or inability of everyday people to discern artifice from reality in life. For Barrio-Garay, although not an exact counterpart of the paintings, these descriptions offer significant analogies that illuminate the meaning of the religious processional not only as one more aspect of life that is deceptive in its appearance, but also as one in which man’s tradition, faith, or superstition can make accepted differences between appearance and reality totally irrelevant. (73)

For Solana, therefore, exploring the mechanisms of communal religious practice is more than about announcing to his readers or viewers that processional *pasos* and penitents are mere simulacra of religion. At stake for the painter-author is his own practice in maintaining a grip on what is real and what is not while challenging the absolutist view that Catholicism is the one and only standard for life, morality, or existence.

Solana explores similar notions in the pilgrimage tradition as well, including the famous *romería* of San Isidro in Madrid. Long before the turn of the century, secular behavior and thought had altered the pilgrimage’s once purely sacred mission to venerate the compassion and generosity of San Isidro, the patron saint of Madrid. In an 1864 satirical article for the *Museo universal*, politician and writer Antonio Ribot y Fonseré summarizes the the pilgrimage and its cultural importance for the capital as follows: “sin la romería de San Isidro, Madrid no se concibe, no tiene siquiera razón [sic] de ser; Madrid se ha poblado exclusivamente para asistir á la romería de San Isidro” (158). Accordingly, the people saw this *romería* as a cornerstone of their
Madrilenian identity – their “reason to be” – but perhaps more than on San Isidro or his miracles, their enthusiasm rested in the secular festivity it entailed (158). “La gente vá donde vá la gente,” concludes Ribot y Fonseré, “sin mas motivo que porque vá la gente” (159).

Goya and Baroja also rendered the procession and/or meadow of San Isidro in art and literature respectfully, a subject matter serving both as a vehicle for communicating profound social darkness pertinent to their distinct times. During his period of decadence at the Quinta del sordo, during which time he produced his famous Pinturas Negras (1819-1823), Goya finished his second San Isidro painting, La romería de San Isidro. The darkness that Goya brings to the fore in this excessively somber scene represents a distressed reaction to the world around him. As is the case with his other Pinturas negras, this is a macabre interpretation of a reality, in this case a pleasant one (the pilgrimate), that demonstrates Goya’s disillusioned vision of the state of Spain at the time, a country seemingly full of enlightened individuals like himself that was nonetheless buckling under the power and pressure of invading French forces. A grotesque mass of pilgrims whose dark clothing, distorted facial expressions, and physical irregularities exude a disquieting yet ambiguous mood – are they inebriated or in agony? – are the focal point. The motley crew comprises representatives from various social classes including beggars (the archetypical guitar-

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191 In 1788 Goya painted Pradera de San Isidro (1788). This painting has a very similar composition and perspective in comparison to La Romería de San Isidro, but the tone is as different as can be. In it, a group of finely-dressed romeros occupies the elevated foreground, and a mass of carriages and people in miniature appears down below at the near-bank of the Manzanares river in the background.

192 In his study on Goya’s Caprichos, Andrew Schulz documents the meanings and appearance of open and distorted mouths in relation to Enlightenment thought. Perhaps a similar conclusion can be drawn with some of the figures in La Romería de San Isidro for obvious reasons. Some of Schulz’s conclusions are as follows: “in contrast to the frequent portrayal of closed or dysfunctional eyes, mouths operate conspicuously in many of the plates, with images and captions containing allusions to swallowing, blowing, vomiting, sucking, yawning, shouting, snoring, and most commonly, eating and drinking” (140); “Whereas eighteenth-century theorists associated vision (and to a lesser extent hearing) with cognitive faculties, the senses of taste and smell were linked repeatedly with the needs and desires of the body” (141); “Inversion of the senses implied in the final print by the closed eyes and open mouths (as well as by the textual connection between eating and arousal) had been coupled in the drawing with a somatic inversion that literally overturns the Enlightenment architecture of the body” (144); “the distortion of facial features, which are at the same time sense organs, transforms the head from the seat of mental operations into the site of corporeal functioning” (144).
playing *ciego* and crippled *cojo* at front), peasant farmers (the men in wide-brimmed hats), bourgeois gentlemen (those in top hats), and the clergy (the robed figure to the left and the habited women at right). Goya proposes a sprawling critique, therefore, not merely of religion, Catholicism, or the *romería* tradition itself, but rather of overzealous believers that represent irrational religious fanaticism, dismantled enlightenment thought, and threatened national sovereignty.

The deformed reality that Goya portrays in *La Romería de San Isidro* has noticeable affinities with Baroja’s tormented and critical view of Madrid and its social mores throughout his *oeuvre*, including the *Lucha por la vida* trilogy. In *La busca* (1904), for example, Baroja does not offer an account of the pilgrimage of San Isidro, but he does include a scene that unfolds just outside the San Isidro meadow in the Doctrina, a small building with fenced in patio that Baroja describes as a “conclave de mendigos, un conciliábulo de Corte de los Milagros” (306). Manuel accompanies his friend Roberto down the Camino alto de San Isidro to a clearing across from the Doctrina, and watches on as groups of needy and miserable citizens from neighboring *barrios bajos* gathered in the hopes of receiving handouts in return for reciting religious doctrine. Baroja describes these individuals as they approach the Doctrina, a “procesión del harapo” in his words, as a dehumanized and disturbing mass (306):

> Por el Puente de Toledo pasaba una procesión de mendigos y mendigas, a cual más desastrados y sucios. Salió gente, para formar aquella procesión del harapo, de las Cambroneras y de las Injurias; llegaban del Paseo Imperial y de los Ocho Hilos; y ya, en filas apretadas, entraban por el puente de Toledo y seguían por el camino alto de San Isidro a detenerse ante [la Doctrina] […] no se veían más que caras hinchadas, de estúpida apariencia; narices inflamadas y bocas torcidas; viejas gordas y pesadas como ballenas melancólicas; viejezuelas esqueléticas, de boca hundida y nariz de ave rapaz; mendigas vergonzantes con la barba

193 “Corte de los Milagros” is a term originating in thirteenth-century Paris following a period of considerable urban development. As occurred in Madrid during its nineteenth-century urbanization, the development of París in the 1200s caused major changes in the spatial and social organization of the city, resulting in severe segregation. On the north end of the city (the area now called *les Halles*) were slums where prostitutes, pickpockets, beggars, and thieves lived, earning the region the nickname “Corte de los Milagros” (“Cour des miracles,” “Court of Miracles”) (Rubén García and Enrique Ros 5). The Spanish “Corte de los Milagros,” therefore, would be the *barrios bajos* themselves.
For Lily Litvak (in Transformación), Baroja’s description of these individuals, many of whom hail from the margins of the city center, demonstrates his critical consciousness of the spatial politicization and segregation of the growing capital city. For Baroja, “el standard de vida en los alrededores ha desarrollado una subcultura donde solo puede existir una raza deshumanizada, degradada a un estado animal,” which comes through in his animalistic sketches of the Doctrina faithful (94). The ragged group goes to the Doctrina, recites some prayers, and in return receives their alms for the day. As soon as the service ends, the mendicants rush out of the patio packs, including a group of “viejas” who “vociferaban y sentían la necesidad de insultar a las señoras de la Doctrina, como si instintivamente adivinasen lo inútil de un simulacro de caridad que no remediaba nada” (310). The conclusion of this scene emulates Baroja’s disillusionment with religion and the Church itself, an institution that he perceived as having failed to serve the needs and attitudes of Madrid’s most needy citizens, who as a result feign faith in order to receive, exploit, and/or curse what they recognize is a mere simulation of charity.

Baroja’s “procesión de mendigos y mendigas” and their pilgrimage to the Doctrina is one instance of a continuous network of walking individuals that find no sustainable relief from the poverty, illness, or crime of the urban setting in spiritual teachers or religious institutions, even when these pose as charitable, caring entities (306). Here, Baroja maps and constructs his own religioscape, not a religioscape of faith or piety, but one of unfulfillment, where the marginalized poor (including golfos, mujeres de la mala vida, jobless migrants, criminals, etc.) circulate alongside other city-goers, repeatedly failing free themselves of their corrupted economic, social,

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194 Roberto adds to the animalistic commentary: “¡Qué pocas caras humanas hay entre los hombres! […] Es curioso, ¿verdad? Todos los gatos tienen cara de gatos, todos los bueyes tienen cara de bueyes; en cambio, la mayoría de los hombres no tienen cara de hombres” (307).
or moral states. While Baroja’s Doctrina scene does not portray a romería as such, given its pilgrimage-like qualities (collective spatial movement, sacred site, repeatability) as well as the religious overtones therein implied (prayer recitation, alms), his narration and critique of the beggar procession exemplifies his well-documented anti-Catholic and anticlerical attitudes.

This brief detour from Solana lays a path for his modernized take on the romería, which, as shown below, bears some similarities to the San Isidro genealogy laid out above. For Solana, romerías made particularly hearty fodder for societal critique. In comparison to others like Regoyos, Solana focuses intently on recording pilgrims and their actions as much as he does the physical, spatial displacement that mobilizes the tradition itself. In most cases, he documents walking the romería route alongside other pilgrims, notes the different classes of romeros, analyzes the beatas and beggars inside the chapel/sacred destination site, and criticizes the festivity (debauchery) that inevitably ensues. In Madrid: Escenas y costumbres I, Solana begins his own account of the San Isidro pilgrimage with a brief commentary on the tradition’s cultural-historical origins: “El pueblo de Madrid […] desde época remota empezó a ir en romería el día de la festividad del santo, siendo en un principio devota y para cumplir promesas hechas durante el año, se dirige en alegres masas por el puente de Segovia a la ribera del Manzanares” (139). Like Ribot y Fonseré, Solana goes on to document the romería pointing out the intrinsic ironies or divergences from its historical function that he observes in his time.

Solana and the San Isidro romeros – a diverse group of Madrilenians as well as farmers, beautiful mozás, and gypsies hailing from other cities – leave the city center heading southwest, “como una peregrinación, bajan en hormigueros,” toward the fields outside of the chapel and cemetery dedicated to the Patron Saint (140). Along the way, he notices the various food vendors lining the pilgrimage route as well as the circus-like spectacles (dancing bears and monkeys) and carnival rides that entertain the crowd at the pradera. Amidst the festivity, Solana stops to document a line of beggars forming outside the chapel of San Isidro in the surrounding meadow:
Los pobres forman fila en los cerros de la ermita. Uno con una pata de palo vendada, imitando ser de verdad, calzada con un zapato; con una venda en la cabeza y la sangre y las llagas pintadas. Un manco, que con los dedos de los pies sujeta la pluma, moja en un tintero y escribe cómo se llama, y dónde nació y la fecha. Otro, con un brazo que es un hueso pintado y pelado, mientras el sano lo esconde. Otro, metido en un cajón, figura no tener piernas ni brazos. Se valen de estas tretas para inspirar caridad. (141)

For Solana, these mendicant pilgrims symbolize, at least in part, the religious element – the and-old alms-giving for the poor – of the romería tradition that was entirely anti-modern. The group participates in the romería in the hopes that the Church and/or its faithful patrons will in some way help alleviate the difficulty that their disabilities or poverty entail. He describes a similar scene in La España negra in his account of the Romería de la Aparecida (outside of Santoña, Cantabria):

el postigo estaba lleno de pobres implorando caridad. Había mancos llenos de vendas con sangre y pus que nos alargaban sus muñones, y también había cojos apoyados en las muletas; uno tenía una pierna que colgaba en forma de arco, envuelta en vendas, tan encanijada y sin el menor movimiento, que se veía que era postiza y que la sangre de las vendas era pintura (345)

In both cases, Solana’s objective and accumulative description of the physical deformities that the “pobres” suffer is both lamentable and angering. On one hand, the author’s attention to detail concretizes the negative consequences that social marginalization and urban segregation (poverty, inadequate shelter, hunger) have on these mendicants and their non-normative bodies. On the other hand, the “pobres” recognize that in these times of quasi-religious celebration, when spiritual sensibilities may well be heightened, they are in a position to benefit from the charitable nature of the Church faithful, and believe that simulating a greater degree of misery may in turn inspire a greater feeling of generosity in others. Solana’s “pobres” manipulate their truly regrettable physical, social, and economic circumstances with tricks of the eye and rehearsed blessings that undermine the benevolence of religious charity for their practical benefit. In effect, these indigent masses are performers in yet another iteration of the theater of religion.
Solana concludes his account of the San Isidro romería describing how the beggars end their day of festivities: “se reúnen todos y cuentan las perras que han recogido; y los mudos de nacimiento, cojos y mancos y tintos beben y comen; hablan y se despabilan, bailando alrededor de una bota y una gran torta, con buenas tajadas que se jaman” (141). In the absence of pious gratitude or devotional sacrifice, raucous feasting, drinking, and dancing among all the romeros define the romería tradition. The discord between Catholic roots and secular festivity that Solana recounts prompts his final observation: “entonces parece cumplirse el refrán español de que ‘Romería vista de cerca, mucho vino y poca cera.’” (141). Like Regoyos’s sketches of the pilgrimage in Gaztelugache, the romería tradition that Solana describes looks entirely different depending on the distance from which one observes it.

In his account of the Romería de la Aparecida in La España negra, Solana recounts the arduous walk up a Cantabrian mountainside to the chapel where romeros from neighboring cities trek in order to celebrate “esta milagrosa imagen” (341). The pilgrims range in age from infants in swaddling clothes to elderly individuals barely able to walk. First, Solana describes the sick and ragged pilgrims who climb on foot, seemingly full of hope that through devotion they will be spiritually healed. Next, in stark contrast, he documents a group of joyful and boisterous celebrants, mostly young men and women, riding in beautifully decorated ox-drawn carts up to the chapel. Solana and the other walkers must step aside and give way to the carts, full of “romeros que piensan divertirse, con sus cestas llenas de comida y buenas botas de vino,” and “alegres romeros armando una gran algarabía” (344). These pilgrims represent the enjoyable part of the romería tradition, which harkens back to the “diversión” of the San Marcial romería that

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195 Solana records, “viejas amarillentas con el pañuelo anudado al estilo de la Montana, llevando cirios para ofrecérselos a la santa imagen; otras llevan en brazos niños enfermos y tullidos, con la cara de cera y con ojos que parecen de vidrio; vemos también subir en un carrito de mano a uno que hace esfuerzos imposibles para subir la cuesta; van también cojos y tísicos apoyados en un bastón, que van dejando las pocas fuerzas que les quedan en esta cuesta, que parece nunca acabar […] en todos parece que se ve la esperanza, un deseo más de vivir” (341).
Regoyos notes in *España negra*. However, Solana swiftly dismantles his portrait of beautiful decor, jovial hymns, and abundant food, as the beautifully adorned carts leave the on-looking pedestrians the dust.

After walking, riding, crawling, and climbing up the mountainside, Solana and the others finally reach the church of the Virgen de la Aparecida. At the entrance, mendicant pilgrims plead for charity while one final group of *romeros* meander about inside:

> había muchas beatas con velas y algunas que venían de los pueblos vecinos, subiendo la cuesta de rodillas para cumplir una promesa. Entraban de esta manera en la iglesia. Se veía un largo cordón de estas mujeres enlutadas, con las rodillas desolladas y sangrándoles los pies descalzos, por los riscos de las montañas, con cirios en las manos, y después de dar varias vueltas por la iglesia [...] colocaban sus velas en un enorme hachero, y las que no cabían quedaban en montón y ardiendo, tiradas sobre las baldosas de piedra del templo. (345)

With their skinned knees and bloodied feet, these devout women bear visible, physical evidence of their arduous journey like Regoyos’s pilgrims on Gaztelugache had as well. Similarly, the journey they make is clearly a painful, faith-driven one that contrasts sharply with the “parte divertida” of the pilgrimage tradition that both painter-authors repeatedly analyze. Solana provides no other details about the *beatas* as his narration of the pilgrimage concludes. They do not spill into the surrounding field to celebrate with the rest of the *romeros* but are left behind in the chapel as Solana himself moves on. Inside, the religious melancholia of the Spanish Catholic tradition resides while outside and in transit, its diversion, pageantry, and hypocrisy run free.

**Final Thoughts**

The alternative qua unorthodox versions of religion that painter-authors Regoyos and Solana produced were necessarily anti-Catholic in essence. When filtered through a modernist lens or conditioned by secularized thought, representations of turn-of-the-century procession, pilgrimage, and the respective religioscape they generate offer insight into the complex processes
of modernization as well as the internal sociopolitical conflicts that Spain faced at the time. To be sure, the Catholic religioscape of fin-de-siglo Spain existed in complex and constantly shifting terms, a space encompassing secular and religious activity that modernist Black Spain helped to produce and reproduce aesthetically through repeated depictions of mobile religious acts. In this sense, literary and artistic representations of processions and pilgrimage mobilized a poignant social and spiritual critique of Spanish Catholicism that revealed it as being somewhere between too religious and not religious enough for the day and age.
Conclusion

Movement, Darkness, and Modernity: End of the Road

In *Moving through Modern Spain*, the simultaneous study of Regoyos, Baroja, Azorín, and Solana has sought to illuminate common trends in their engagement with darkness in modern Spain, drawing on the concept of movement through space as a methodological approach and a conceptual thread throughout. As they progressed spatially through the landscapes, cityscapes, and religioscapes of Spain’s diverse regions, these cultural critics observed and documented the realities surrounding them, which ultimately translated into the decadent and corrupted content of Black Spain. What I have endeavored here is to show that, as authors or artists moved through the spaces of modern Spain, their thoughts, reflections, and critiques underwent a parallel progression that spatial mobility encouraged and enabled. Movement mobilized self-reflection and auto-constitution, even, upon the unsteady and shifting grounds of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century modern Spain.

That I perceive Spain’s modernity as paradoxical is surely, by now, an understoone reality. However, given that the conclusion I am writing is a space for reflection, it is productive to recall how I arrived at this designation. For me, the modernity born out of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century urbanization and modernization is paradoxical mainly in the inequity that it embodied and fostered. That is, the extreme divides between rich and poor, city and country, and city center and city periphery, and the other sociocultural and political conflicts discussed above, which rendered the experience of modernity inaccessible for some, readily available for others, and dangerous for others still. The fact of the matter is that the very concept of modernity boils down to, often if not always, a question of means. What good are new technologies for those lacking the economic, intellectual, or physical abilities to take advantage of them? Who has access to the benefits of modern civilization, and who is excluded from them? What happens
when the experience of modernization becomes hierarchized according to social norms? Who, then, moves throughout modern Spain, how, and to what end? The authors, artists, and characters analyzed here are, in fact, the agents that moved through modern Spain uncovering these inequities, the darkness that led to blatant and constant social discrepancies for communities across the nation. A more detailed sociological approach to these questions in the future could make for a fruitful examination of the demographics and differing reactions of figures beyond the intellectual modernist author or artist.

Movement was, for the modernists in question, a crucial component of their efforts at producing and performing revelatory darkness. Darkness, or various forms of corruption, was everywhere in Black Spain, suggesting the truly monolithic dimensions of the institutional inconsistencies or indifference that led to the degraded status of the nation as a whole. While it is obvious that each of the authors and artists analyzed in this dissertation used the aesthetic and lens of Black Spain to produce renditions of the nation that are deeply pessimistic, disquieting, and critical, I maintain that there is a productive and positive side to these texts and images as well. Perhaps most obviously, these types of auto-critical works offer insight into the themes, places, or events that authors found to be the most defining of their time. The pilgrimage of San Isidro, Yecla, the Desastre del 98, Madrid, anticlerical unrest, landscape; these are some of places and events discussed not only by but among the modernists studied above, suggesting their broader, communal importance for modern Spain. Though Black Spain has been accused in the past for being superficial, for perpetuating negative stereotypes, for proposing a false image of the nation, etc., there is still much to learn from these works. Indeed, the pedagogical potential of Black Spain is high. The intense, at times hyperbolic and focused darkness of Black Spain works communicates a clear (yet intricate) narrative, the likes of which can be understood on a preliminary level with relative ease.
As much as this is a study of movement, space, literature, and art, it is an interrogation into the complex history of Spain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Regoyos, Baroja, Azorín, and Solana were all avid observers of the world around them and drew constantly on reality to inform their creative and critical accounts of the status quo. Thinking thusly brings to mind a quote by Solange Hibbs: “[C]ualquier aspecto de la realidad,” she says, “es fuente de material literaria. La puesta en escena de las realidades más sombrías de la sociedad contemporánea refleja cierto propósito tremendista dictado, quizá, por una preocupación didáctica” (298). For this reason, I have considered the literature and art of these figures via close readings as well as in context. In some sense, their attempts to capture the darkness of corrupted political morals, ideological dissonance, clerical intolerance, and a number of other historically relevant topics were mimetic attempts at translating life in literature or art.

After travelling through northern and central Spain, going south on assignment for El Imparcial, wandering through all the nooks and crannies of Madrid’s barrios bajos, gathering around sideshows and charlatans, marching with processions, and walking processionally in romerías, our road has come to an end; for now. My hope is that the analyses and examples I have detailed above demonstrate the close and expansive bonds existing between darkness, movement, and modernity in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Spanish literature and art, which may inspire further scholarship within and beyond the topics I offer here.
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VITA

STACEY E. MITCHELL
staceyemitchell1@gmail.com

EDUCATION

2019 Ph.D. Spanish Literature, Pennsylvania State University
2016 M.A., Spanish Literature, Pennsylvania State University
2013 M.A., Spanish, Middlebury College
2010 B.A., Spanish and Adolescent Education, Saint John Fisher College

PUBLICATIONS


SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“‘Yo quiero que temáis y respetéis a estos hombres’: Azorín’s Defense of the Andalusian Farmer and of the pueblo in La Andalucía trágica (1905).” SAMLA, 2018.


SELECTED GRANTS

2018-19 Center for Humanities and Information Digital Humanities Grants ($3800)
2018 LeClaire B. Watts Endowed Graduate Scholarship ($1000)
2017 Lyday/Peavler Graduate Student Enhancement Award ($539)
2016 University of Virginia Valencia Campus Summer Research Grant ($3000)

SELECTED TEACHING EXPERIENCE

SPAN 497: La historia española a través del arte (Summer 2019 in Ronda, Spain)
SPAN 253W: Introduction to Hispanic Literature (Fall 2017)
SPAN 253W: Introduction to Hispanic Literature (Summer 2017 in Ronda, Spain)
SPAN 003: Intermediate Spanish (Spring 2017, Spring 2016, Spring 2015)
SPAN 002: Elementary Spanish (Fall 2016)
Spanish I-V High School and Middle School Spanish in Pittsburgh, PA (2011-2013)