MEMORY, TEMPORALITY, AND IDEAS OF PROGRESS IN THE SHORT FICTION OF LEOPOLDO ALAS “CLARÍN”

by

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A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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May 2024

Abstract

This thesis studies the way that memory and temporality in selected short stories by Leopoldo Alas “Clarín” (1852-1901) illustrate ideas of progress in the latter half of the nineteenth century. During a period when ideas of progress were varied and, at times, ill-defined, these stories reveal the complexities at the root of formulating and articulating progress and regeneration. The thesis analyses a corpus of twenty short stories taken from six published collections and constitutes the first major study of several of these stories. By examining the function of memory and temporality in particular, this thesis addresses a dearth in the study of Clarín’s fiction, demonstrating that Clarín’s experimentation with time and memory allows for the relationship between the past and the present, and the remembering or forgetting of the past, to be placed at the centre of Clarín’s vision of progress.

Chapter One explores Clarín’s use of the rural and provincial spaces to highlight his critique of myopic visions of capitalist progress, emphasising these settings as spaces of resistance, but also ones in which failures of modernity are particularly acute. In Chapter Two, the tropes of death and disease are explored in relation to memory and oblivion, revealing a questioning of degenerationist discourses. In Chapter Three, I explore the creation of national historical myths, revealing these histories and mythologies as blockages to the development of progressive collective remembering. The final chapter builds on the previous chapters by examining the idea of historical myth in relation to the notion of origin. I argue that the return to ancient and biblical origin is questioned and satirised by Clarín as narratives of regeneration based upon a restoration of origin ultimately fail to materialise.

The findings of this research demonstrate the complexity surrounding what constitutes a progressive society and what factors are at play in constructing it. This also contributes to wider conceptions of the nineteenth century, as imaginings of alternative modernities at a time when Spain was experiencing systemic political failures and corruption, civil conflict, military defeat, ‘decadence’, and ‘degeneration’, offer readings of memory as challenging established ideas surrounding progress. This thesis offers a way of approaching the study of memory in the context of the nineteenth century, a concept which has hitherto been applied primarily to the twentieth-century context, and thus traces a treatment of history and the past in the literary, political, and social life of the nineteenth century.

Acknowledgements

I owe enormous thanks to my supervisors, Profs. Mónica Jato and Alison Ribeiro de Menezes. They have been invaluable to the completion of this thesis, providing thoughtful guidance that has helped shape my writing, thinking, and researching beyond measure. Without their input, my PhD experience wouldn't have had half the joy that it did. Above everything else, I am so grateful that they supported me and invested their time in me so generously. I will always remember their kindness.

I also owe thanks to Dr Rhian Davies at the University of Sheffield, who first inspired me to continue to PhD study whilst I was a student there, and thereafter supported my research proposals and applications. The time and effort this required cannot be underestimated, and for that I am so grateful.

To the Midlands4Cities consortium of the AHRC for funding my research project, without which it would not have been possible. This scholarship also provided funding for research trips, conference attendance, and many other opportunities that have enriched my PhD experience enormously. I am particularly indebted to Rachel Soron who was continually patient with me when applying for these extra grants. The opportunities to travel, meet other researchers and interested members of the public, and pursue funded research have made the PhD a great privilege of my life.

I owe my thanks to the Biblioteca de Asturias in Oviedo, and particularly to Juan Miguel Menéndez Llana who allowed me to work with him to create the 'Clarín, un cuentista fantástico' exhibition. I am also thankful to Ana Cristina Tolivar Alas and María Martínez Cachero Rojo for their contribution to the exhibition and to my research. I am deeply grateful for the generosity and enthusiasm that was shown to me.

Thanks must go to my friends, old and new, and housemates, past and present. The Westmere office group provided much support and inspiration; I have been so fortunate to be surrounded by such interesting and warm people. Thanks to my family, who have been there the whole time, and to Ben, for his good humour and even better spirit.

Above all, I owe my greatest thanks to my parents. They were the first people to inspire me and the people who continue to encourage me in every respect. To Mum and Dad, for everything.

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Note on the texts

The citations from Clarín's stories have all been taken from Carolyn Richmond's edition of Clarín's short fiction *Cuentos completos.* In all chapters the citations of the stories come from this edition (Alfaguara, 2000) with the volume specified. When referencing the primary texts, a full reference to Richmond's edition is given at the initial reference in each chapter. Thereafter, an abbreviated version is given for each new story, including the title of the story, the volume number, and the page number in which the citation appears in Richmond's edition. An abbreviated version composed of only the story title and page number is used after repeated references to the same story.

Introduction

The short story, Clarín, and ideas of progress

Writing in *Madrid Cómico* in May 1900, Clarín expresses his frustration at the result of the *Juegos Florales* in Seville that year, a poetry competition whose tradition in France and Spain dates back to mediaeval times as a celebration of unpublished poetry. The winning poem of this particular year, written by university teacher Miguel Gutiérrez, was not, according to Clarín, a worthy winner. He identifies a section of the poem to which he is particularly adverse, as follows: '*De la materia cósmica* | *Desgarra ya los velos* | Mostrando los orígenes | *Del ser y del no ser'.*[1] Clarín continues:

> ¿Los orígenes del no ser? El no ser… no tiene orígenes; no tiene nada. Puede que el *ser* tampoco tenga origen; pero, en fin, esto ya es más metafísico. Pero el *no ser,* ¿cómo ha de tener eso… ni nada? Y si no, a ver: díganos el señor Gutiérrez cómo, dónde y cuándo empezó el *no ser* y de dónde salió.[2]

Clarín's frustration stems from a lifetime of contemplating the nature of the metaphysical and its 'knowability', retorting here that the 'no ser', because it refers to non-being or non-existence, is neither knowable nor its origins traceable. The philosophical definitions of 'el ser' and 'el no ser', despite not being directly broached in this thesis, serve as a starting point for understanding the foundations of a reading of progress in Clarín's short fiction. Clarín's ideas of progress explored in the following chapters do not derive from mastering or rationalising ontological questions, but by appreciating 'being' as complex and, at times, intangible, metaphysical, and 'unknowable'. As a result, Clarín's thoughts around progress and regeneration are idiosyncratic, reflecting a concern about reductive ideas of origin, degeneration, regeneration, history, and progress. In this thesis, I demonstrate that these concerns are often imagined in Clarín's short fiction through temporality and memory, and

[1] Antonio Ramos-Gascón, *Clarín Obra Olvidada* (Madrid: Ediciones Júcar, 1973), p. 261 (original publication in *Madrid Cómico*, 12th May 1900). [Original italics].
[2] Antonio Ramos-Gascón, *Clarín Obra Olvidada* (Madrid: Ediciones Júcar, 1973), pp. 261-262. [Original italics].

each chapter explores a new dimension of why and how the appearance of memory is central to Clarín's thought. I argue that exploring Clarín's ideas of progress in his short fiction reveals that progress is considered by Clarín as not teleological or positivist, but as deriving from the unknowable and what might be conceptualised as peripheral to hegemonic ideas of modernity.

This thesis explores, as previously mentioned, how Clarín's stories reveal an idiosyncratic and complex vision of regeneration and progressive movement towards the future. In so doing, the reading of this corpus of short narratives complicates dichotomous or linear relationships between degeneration and regeneration, myth and history, centre and periphery, and origin and destiny. I also aim to build on existing work on the nineteenth-century Spanish short story by highlighting how this narrative form acted as an experimental space that afforded writers the freedom that other literary conventions did not. In the case of Clarín, I suggest that he used his short fiction to critique hegemonic modernity not only for its mechanisms and operations in a pragmatic sense, but these boundary-pushing works allow for myopic visions of progress to be revealed and challenged to their full extent. This thesis contributes readings of certain works that have not, to my knowledge, hitherto been the subject of extensive study. Finally, I aim to examine the role of memory and the act of remembering in order to enrich understandings of these stories in relation to the debates that informed them. The concept of memory in particular allows for a greater appreciation of the relationship between the past, present, and future that was key to formulating ideas of progress and regeneration in nineteenth-century Spain.

Crisis has been associated within the *fin de siglo* imagination as Spain's military defeat against the United States in 1898, as a culmination of decades of political corruption and degeneration, and, in relation to Clarín, as a spiritual and literary crisis. This crisis experienced by Clarín is approached by Stephen Miller as one that progressively increased in gravity following the publication of *La Regenta*:

> vemos en Clarín a un escritor lleno de dudas y en crisis. La dimensión literaria de esta condición [...] empieza al terminar La Regenta. Tres años más tarde la crisis es más aguda por sobrepasar lo puramente literario, llegando a lo vital.[3]

This thesis points out that a principal aspect of crisis that Clarín considered as integral to the (in)ability to conceptualise progress and regeneration is that of memory. The remembering of the past integrates, as this thesis shows, a range of concepts that preoccupied Clarín: spirituality, modernity, inheritance, origin, and historical myth. Clarín asks, in many of the stories explored in this discussion, how times characterised by 'modernity' and regeneration can use memory as a catalyst for progress.

Modernity and regeneration

Modernity can be characterised as a particular temporality that is defined by its difference from the past, marking itself as a present moment that transcends predictable and traditional experiences of time. Temporal experience is thus accelerated and the idea of futurity is the motor that drives it, creating a new temporality in which previous experience becomes distanced from expectations for the future. This chasm between anteriority and anticipation which defines modernity is also an agent of disruption as modern temporality imposes itself on the present. The question, then, of how to treat the past in times of transformative modernity, is a significant and complex one. Carlos Barriuso argues that modernity 'se ofrece como una oportunidad para fundar un nuevo orden social. En efecto, la herencia del pasado no sólo plantea un cambio substancial, sino qué hacer con la tradición recibida ante la transformación de los tiempos modernos'.[4] Along with the questions posed by modernity, the nineteenth century was a time in which a particular awareness of history meant that time was conceived of as a linear construction. The historicization of time lead to its conceptualisation as continuous and teleological; in the words of Michel Foucault, 'a profound historicity

[3] Stephen Miller, *Del naturalismo al modernismo: Galdós, Zola, Revilla y Clarín (1870-1901)* (Las Palmas: Abildo Insular de Gran Canaria, 1993), p. 165.
[4] Carlos Barriuso, *Los discursos de la modernidad*, *Nación, imperio y estética en el fin de siglo español (1895-1924)* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2009), p. 16.

penetrates into the heart of things, isolates and defines them in their own coherence, imposes upon them the forms of order implied by the continuity of time'.[5] Therein lies one of modernity's contradictions: time as continuous infers a stability that belies the fractious nature of modern temporality.

In his work on Antonio Flores' 'Ayer, Hoy y Mañana', Andrew Ginger describes how Flores creates a world which is fractured by temporal gulfs created in the name of progress:

> Each era is radically separated from the next, and especially from the past, in a way that precludes any kind of settlement based on the good in each. After all, how can the values of today and yesterday be combined if they belong to utterly discrete historical worlds?[6]

In questioning the moral and epistemological transmission that can, or cannot, occur between vastly separated epochs, memory gains a new importance. The disintegration of temporal order in modernity positions the past as its opposite, as fragmentation becomes 'implicit in the discourse of modernity'.[7] Fragmented and fractured time, I argue in this thesis, leads to blockages in memory and the process of remembering; this occurs not only as a result of the past seeming distanced from the present and thus more difficult to conjure, but because modernity as a project itself distorts the past. Clarín was writing at a time that saw epochal shift, geopolitical upheaval, and movements towards regeneration, thus contributing to the feeling that modernisation was fragmenting time and bringing about a rupture with the past in an attempt to regenerate the present.

Reinhart Koselleck assesses the concept of history in Novalis' rewriting of the mediaeval poem *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* as one that is born out of memory:

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[5] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1994), p. xxii.
[6] Andrew Ginger, 'Modernity, Representation and Personality in Antonio Flores's *Ayer, Hoy y Mañana* (1863-64)', *Hispanic Research Journal,* 6.3 (2005), pp. 209-222 (p. 216).
[7] Richard J. Walker, *Labyrinths of Deceit: Culture, Modernity and Identity in the Nineteenth Century* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), p. 13.

> *Geschichte* did not then primarily mean the past […] rather it indicated that covert connection of the bygone with the future whose relationship can be perceived only when one has learned to construct history from the modalities of memory and hope.[8]

History, therefore, can be viewed as being composed of temporal oscillations and connections between the past and the future, cementing the catalysing role of memory in the development of historical consciousness. The capacity of memory as a tool to construct understandings of history is underpinned by its multitemporal functionality, cultivating not a linear historical teleology, but a historical consciousness formed by its transcendence of time. John Lukacs affirms this: 'we do not enter into the past through causality alone but through sudden mental "jumps" of recognitions […] The functions of remembering, therefore, transcend space and time and mechanical causality'.[9] Historical consciousness, working symbiotically with the act of human remembering, becomes politicised. Historical consciousness is outlined by Jeffrey K. Olick in his chapter in Astrid Erll's *Cultural Memory Studies* as '"the politics of history" (*Geschichtspolitik*)'.[10] This indicates the role of history as political, and the act of remembering as a project of meaning-making through imagining and reconstructing the past. In this thesis, I use the term historical consciousness to specifically indicate the role of history and its appropriation in the present through the act of remembering to make a political point. This, in Clarín's stories, is portrayed in a variety of ways, however, the inability of Spain to enact authentic regeneration is a principal vehicle for Clarín's treatment of history and memory.

Regeneration as a political project defined itself as adjacent to modernity in the sense that time was understood in relation to the parameters of modernity: innovation and acceleration. Joaquín Costa, a figure associated with *regeneracionismo* in Spain, was outspoken about his

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[8] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York; Chichester: Colombia University Press, 2004), p. 258. [Original italics].
[9] John Lukacs, *Historical Consciousness or the Remembered Past* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 247.
[10] Jeffrey K. Olick, 'From Collective Memory to the Sociology of Mnemonic Practices and Products', in *Cultural Memory Studies: an International and Interdisciplinary Handbook,* ed. by Astrid Erll (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), pp. 151-163 (p. 151). [Original italics].

ideas regarding change in the country based upon these modern principles, as Parker Lawson notes: 'the wholesale changes that Costa promoted were grounded within his understanding of time and even his philosophy of history, both of which reflected broader conceptions of modernization'.[11] *Regeneracionismo* has been historicised as characterising the aftermath of the Spanish American war and the 'Desastre' of 1898.[12] However, throughout the years preceding 1898, as the failure of the Restoration government wore on and political corruption became ever more salient, the call to regenerate the failing nation was increasingly apparent. Indeed, José Álvarez Junco highlights that regeneration had, in fact, featured in the conceptualisation of Spanish nationhood much earlier in the century:

> tan temprano como en 1860, Fernando Garrido había escrito ya un libro titulado *La regeneración de España.* Lucas Mallada publicó su célebre *Los males de la Patria,* expresión que se convertirá en una frase hecha, en 1890, es decir, ocho años antes del "Desastre" cubano. El ambiente que luego se llamaría "del 98" venía preparándose desde mucho antes de esa fecha.[13]

It is therefore productive to look beyond the *crisis de fin de siglo* in order to examine the wide-ranging nature of crisis, and particularly for this thesis, to assess degeneration and regeneration not in their historical, or linear, terms, but as revealing complex mnemonic and temporal phenomena.

Degeneration theory, which I explore in Chapter Two, articulated the moral and physical state of the nation using vocabulary of pathology, decline and decay. So too did regeneration begin to be expressed using this language of decay, extracting corrupt and rotten elements of Spanish society. This meant that, in practical terms, *regeneracionistas* called for a regeneration of the nation by stamping out oligarchical and *cacique* culture to reform and

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[11] Parker Lawson, '"La resurrección de un cadáver putrefacto": Colonialism, Biopolitics, and Regeneration in Joaquín Costa', *MLN*, 138.2 (2023), pp. 297-322 (p. 318).
[12] See for example, Sebastian Balfour, 'Riot, Regeneration and Reaction: Spain in the Aftermath of the 1898 Disaster, *The Historical Journal,* 38 (1995), pp. 405-423.
[13] José Álvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX* (Madrid: Taurus, 2019), p. 587.

modernise the political system which had been hampered by the corruption at the centre of political life. Another strand to this progressive and regenerative movement was investment in the education system. Widely considered to be a principal means to propel sociopolitical change in the country, education needed to be removed somewhat from the dogmatic Catholic Church. The *Institución Libre de Enseñanza,* established in 1876, was a cornerstone of this principle. Both the political and pedagogical were at the forefront of transformative change on either side of 1898, demonstrating the parallels that occurred between generations as to not only the political and economic amelioration of society, but moral and spiritual advancement. However, the context of the defeat in 1898 compounded feelings of national inferiority as well as the need for a multidimensional regeneration, as the work of thinkers such as Rafael Altamira demonstrates:

> Altamira's program for Spain's recovery after the ignominious defeat at the hands of the robust North Americans was predicated on two developments: technical and economic growth on the one hand, and political and moral regeneration on the other. [...] This, he believed, could best be done by extolling that which was positive in Spain's historical experience.[14]

The importance of national history, which I discuss further in Chapter Three, in this drive to regenerate Spain's place in the world, establishes the remembering of the past as a decisive factor in how successful the regeneration project would be.

The reductive term 'Generation of 1898' attempts to categorise certain writers and artists as characteristic of this moment in Spanish history. The *Manifiesto de Valladolid*, 'Contra el 98', which was composed in 1996, argues against the use of this term to describe an arbitrary group of writers and intellectuals. The manifesto states that the term 'plantea un problema de fondo, todavía no resuelto satisfactoriamente en la historiografía de la literatura española del

[14] George L. Vásquez, 'Altamira, the Generation of 1898, and the Regeneration of Spain', *Mediterranean Studies,* 5, (1995), pp. 85-100 (p. 98).

siglo XX: el de su conveniente periodización'.[15] Writers were indeed working across so-called generations, as evidenced by my analysis of Clarín's collegial relationship with José Enrique Rodó (Montevideo, 1871), who was almost twenty years his junior, in Chapter Four. Jo Labanyi and Luisa Elena Delgado reveal in their book, *Modern Literatures in Spain,* that the '1898 Generation' were less concerned with the military defeat than the wide-ranging failure of Spanish modernity. The continual questioning of existing political systems, according to Labanyi and Delgado, led to the rise of extreme political parties and dictatorships in the twentieth century:

> the writers labeled as the '1898 Generation' wrote little about 'the Disaster'. What concerned them was the broader issue of the moral bankruptcy of the Restoration regime instituted in 1875. The critique of the Restoration was, in turn, part of a Europe-wide questioning of liberal democracy that would become acute after World War I, when various non-democratic political options, of right and left, emerged.[16]

Solutions to the problems of modernity, as the centuries advanced, became more radical and developed into grave social unrest and, ultimately, civil and global conflict. This thesis, although not attempting to grapple with the emerging political extremism of the twentieth century, does examine how Clarín's short fiction also reflects a growing discontent towards the political impotence of the Restoration period and the moral bankruptcy of emerging modernising forces, as well as critiquing a regeneration project that Clarín laments as not going far enough, or ultimately being unable, to authenticate a true moral progress.

During the nineteenth century, literature, and particularly, the novel, was used as a tool of nation-formation. As Labanyi's *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel* highlights in its introduction, the realist novel of the second half of the nineteenth century was a force for regeneration and the formulation of the modern citizen. The book examines 'the

[15] 'Contra el 98 (Manifiesto de Valladolid)', in *En el 98 (Los Nuevos Escritores),* ed. by José-Carlos Mainer and Jordi Gracia (Madrid: Visor, 1997), pp. 177-178 (p. 177).
[16] Jo Labanyi and Luisa Elena Delgado with Helena Buffery, Kirsty Hooper, and Mari Jose Olaziregi, *Modern Literatures in Spain* (Cambridge: Polity, 2023), pp. 143-144.

ways in which the canonical texts of those writers considered by Restoration critics to be the major exponents of the "national novel" contribute to contemporary debates on the nation's transition to modernity'.[17] As the wider project of nation-building gathered pace on a political and philosophical level, so did the concerted effort to create a literature to reflect and disseminate it; Labanyi states that the legislation that sought to homogenise national life catalysed the creation of such a literature:

> it is however the period after the 1868 revolution, particularly after the Restoration of 1875, that is decisive, for it was then that a series of legal codes standardizing all areas of national life were drawn up [...], and that a serious attempt was made to create a 'national novel'.[18]

These novels, as Labanyi argues, could act as a 'forum for critical debate'[19] to expose what might be wrong or dysfunctional about modern Spanish society. Due to the generic freedom offered by the short form which will be examined subsequently, I suggest that the short story, and particularly those by Clarín analysed here, offered an opportunity not only to reflect or depict contemporary society, but to radically reimagine and reconfigure it.

Clarín's and the shifting short story form

Clarín began his career as a journalist at the Madrid newspaper *El Solfeo* and as a literary critic. It is therefore unsurprising that the majority of his earlier work, before he became a well-established writer of fiction himself, was largely made up of articles, think pieces or 'paliques', literary criticism, as well as initial experimentations with short fiction. Clarín went on to publish at least one hundred and thirteen stories, not all of which were subsequently published in collections. Clarín published eight anthologies in his lifetime, and two were published posthumously. Ninety-six of his stories are published in these collections, and six of these collections are composed solely of short stories. Between the ages of sixteen and seventeen,

[17] Jo Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 2.
[18] Jo Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel,* p. 2.
[19] Jo Labany, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel*, p. 4.

Clarín founded and edited a journal, *Juan Ruiz,* which combines criticism and essays with original work. Carolyn Richmond describes it as an 'ambicioso proyecto' in which the complexities and stylistic experimentations of Clarín's later work are already palpable:

> En *Juan Ruiz* [...] van borrándose constantemente las fronteras entre los diversos géneros [...]. Muchos de los problemas, dudas o dificultades que han surgido en el estudio de la cuentística clariniana parecen tener sus orígenes en una concepción, por parte del autor, de la literatura como algo esencialmente complejo, problemático y personal.[20]

After publishing various unfinished works such as 'La vocación. Vidas y obras de un registrador de la propiedad' and 'Speraindeo' in 1876 and 1880 respectively, Clarín published his first short story collection *Solos de Clarín* in 1881. There follows critical work such as *La literatura en 1881,* which was the result of a collaboration with Palacio Valdés. Following this, *La Regenta* was published in two volumes, the first in 1884 and the second in 1885. That year, *…Sermón perdido* was also published, blending critical articles with short stories. The following years were occupied with work on the stories that would be featured in *Pipá* (1886) ('Amor' è Furbo', 'Mi entierro', 'Un documento', 'Avecilla', 'El hombre de los estrenos', 'Las dos cajas', 'Bustamante', and 'Zurita'), along with works of criticism and other articles that would appear in newspapers and then be compiled in *Folletos Literarios (1886-7)* and *Nueva campaña (1887).* Another work of criticism and satire would follow in 1889 with the publication of *Mezclilla, Crítica y sátira.* The same year, *Una mediania* was published in fragments in the review *La España Moderna.*[21] This novel was intended as a sequel to *Su único hijo,* but it was never finished and in August 1889, *Sinfonía de dos novelas. Su único hijo – Una mediania,* which was an introduction to both novels, was published.[22]

[20] Carolyn Richmond, *Cuentos completos Clarín,* 2 vols (Madrid: Alfaguara, 2000), I, p. 13.
[21] Noël Valis, 'A Spanish Decadent Hero: Clarín's Antonio Reyes of "Una mediania"', *Modern Language Studies,* 9.2 (1979), pp. 53-60 (p. 59).
[22] Carolyn Richmond, *Cuentos completos Clarín,* I, p. 39.

The following year *Su único hijo* was published as well as *Palique*, a collection of essays that had appeared in various newspapers (for example, *Madrid Cómico, El Imparcial, El Imparcial de Los Lunes*). Between 15 March 1890 and 25 July 1891, another incomplete novel, *Cuesta abajo,* was published in sections in *La Ilustración Ibérica*. In 1892 another collection of essays appeared, entitled *Ensayos y revistas,* and a third collection of short stories, containing three stories that gave it its title: *Doña Berta, Cuervo, Superchería.* This marks a point when his output and attention turn almost solely to the short story stressing the seminal role of stories for Clarín. *El señor y lo demás, son cuentos* was published the year afterwards, in 1893, and *Cuentos morales* followed in 1896. Clarín continued to write stories for publication in newspapers before the release of the collection *El gallo de Sócrates* in 1901*,* which is made up of fifteen stories. Then fifteen years after Clarín's death, the collection *Doctor Sutilis* was published which collated another fifteen stories that had, until that point, yet to appear in a short story collection.

The publication of anthologies composed of solely short stories, such as *Cuentos morales*, was, according to Jean-François Botrel, a means to collate disparate texts under one cohesive title:

> Como muchos autores en la época, algo quiere expresar Clarín con sus libros: en el caso de *Cuentos Morales*, además de la línea tipográfica, se ve muy a las claras las consecuencias de un proyecto de unificación [...] y de cohesión: con el título claramente unificador y homogeneizador (*Cuentos morales*), atribuido a una obra ya unitaria y cerrada, se reapropia los cuentos enviados a los cuatro vientos y pretende darles un sentido global.[23]

Anthologising diverse stories with a broad title is perhaps why Clarín's stories are viewed by critics as displaying such stylistic variety; as they were not necessarily written with the intention

[23] Jean-François Botrel, 'De la idea al libro: los avatares del cuento periodístico', in *La morfología de la prensa y del impreso: la función expresiva de las formas. Homenaje a Jean-Michel Desvois,* ed. by N. Ludec, A. Sarría Buil (Pessac, PILAR/Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2010), pp. 27-45 (p. 38).

of being published together. The stories in each collection, despite exploring common themes or commenting on the same or adjacent philosophical debates, are themselves evidence of the means of their production. Mariano Baquero Goyanes described Clarín's spiritual ideology as evading categorisation, reflecting 'temas distintos' which are likened to 'luces cambiantes'.[24] This oscillating and dynamic thought is reflected in the style and narrative technique of Clarín's stories, as well as being evidenced by the complexity of the themes that Clarín examines in his work. This varied nature of Clarín's stories has supported my thematic analysis as it has allowed for concepts such as memory to be approached and understood from a multitude of perspectives. The variety and diversity of Clarín's short story writing stems from the creation of the short story form. The origins and influences on the short story form explain not only the written style of Clarín's stories, but the richness of their exploration of society, ideology, and philosophy.

The *costumbrista* tradition will be explored in further detail in Chapter One where I examine its connections with regional literature. The present discussion, therefore, aims to broadly outline the influence of *costumbrismo* in Clarín's short fiction, particularly in the cultivation of his satirical and humoristic pieces. Baquero Goyanes, cognizant of the coalescence of the short story and the *costumbrista* article, distinguishes them as follows:

> en el artículo de costumbres prevalece la descripción detallista de ambientes y la pintura satírica de tipos, en el cuento importan más otros componentes: la vibración emocional, la tensión narrativa dada por la índole del argumento o de la situación, el trasfondo poético que a veces se da en sus pocas páginas.[25]

The emphasis on the short story as a richer and more complex form which privileges a more refined technique *vis-à-vis* the plot and character development as well as stylistic lyricism, characterises the short story as a literary form that adheres to conventions of character and

[24] Mariano Baquero Goyanes, 'Clarín, creador del cuento español', *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes,* 1949 <https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/clarn-creador-del-cuento-espaol-0/html/0035fa50-82b2-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_4.html#I_0_> [accessed 17/04/2023].
[25] Mariano Baquero Goyanes, *Qué es el cuento* (Buenos Aires: Columba, 1967), p. 38.

plot development, whereas *costumbrismo* possesses less established narrative parameters. The objective of an *artículo de costumbres,* however, was not to create a detailed fictional world, rather to describe or satirise a local scene or figure. The distinctions between the two modes are, at times, ill-defined. According to Baquero Goyanes, the employment of satire and descriptive passages are features that witness a crossover between the two styles: 'Cuando el cuento se carga de elementos descriptivos, de notas satíricas, suele acercarse a la forma propia del artículo de costumbres'.[26] Some of Clarín's stories are inflected with *costumbrista* tendencies as they are less lyrical, poetic, or even fictional *cuentos* than humorous and satirical *cuadros*.

It is apparent that Clarín would blend the philosophical, poetic, or mythical with satire and humour, in works such as 'El centauro' and 'El doctor Pértinax' that are explored in this thesis. This melange of satire, *costumbrismo*, and the short story is also expressed through the publication of both short stories and articles in the same collection, as in *Solos de Clarín*, in which 'El doctor Pértinax' was published. Clarín's appropriation of the *costumbrista* style meant that the regional or rural setting and characters could transcend their immediate environs to incisively comment on society. Clarín's use of *costumbriso* to generate a profound reflection on broad intellectual debates, renders what may be considered peripheral or local visible on a macro scale. The coalescence of styles and movements establish Clarín's short fiction as a site in which the *costumbrista* tradition is enriched and appropriated to cultivate not only a unique literary style that would directly employ satire and humour in a literary context, but writing that would aim, first and foremost, to be subversive and provocative.

Baquero Goyanes also cites the folktale as a mode that Clarín understood and was drawn to: 'Clarín parece ver y entender bastante bien el caso del *folk-tale*, del cuento popular o

[26] Mariano Baquero Goyanes, *Qué es el cuento,* p. 39.

tradicional'.[27] The folktale is a collective means of storytelling, since it is often difficult to trace the authorship of these tales, and the concern of the folktale is less an attribution of characters and plotlines to individual creators than a means to tell stories collectively and communally. Paul March-Russell observes that as a result of the folktale being cohered around the community, the effectiveness of the mode waned as these communities began to change. He writes: 'the capacity for the folktale to communicate diminishes as individuals, by the forces of capital and the organisation of urban life, are estranged from themselves and from each other'.[28] Many of Clarín's short stories, particularly those studied in Chapter One, appear to be cautionary tales that attest to the importance of community amidst fragmentary modernising forces.

Lou Charnon-Deutsch also highlights the role of the folktale in the formation of the short story in Spain. In her book, *The Nineteenth-Century Spanish Short Story*, she details a tale 'designated type 332 in Aarne'[29] whose central character's name translates as 'Godfather Death'.[30] The tale 'tells of a poor man who seeks out Death (or is sought out by Death) to be a godfather for his children or to relieve his poverty by some other means'.[31] It is almost impossible to state with certainty that Clarín used this folktale to inspire his short story, 'Cuervo' (1892), as writers would not usually reference the anonymous oral tales that they adapted for modern audiences, however the initial similarities are striking. Cuervo, like 'Godfather Death', is poor and uses death as a means of profit and social protection. Clarín uses the folk figure of the vagabond profiting from death as a means to critique the Spain in which he and his

[27] Mariano Baquero Goyanes, *El cuento español: del Romanticismo al Realismo* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1992), p. 247.
[28] Paul March-Russell, *The Short Story: an Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 26.
[29] Lou Charnon-Deutsch, *The Nineteenth-Century Spanish Short Story* (London: Tamesis, 1985), p. 38.
[30] The Aarne–Thompson–Uther Index (ATU Index) is a catalogue of folktale types. The index was originally composed in German by Finnish folklorist Antti Aarne (1910), the index was translated into English, revised, and expanded by Stith Thompson (1928, 1961). It is presently known as the ATU index as it was further revised and expanded by German folklorist Hans-Jörg Uthe in 2004.
[31] Lou Charnon-Deutsch, *The Nineteenth-Century Spanish Short Story,* p. 39.

readers lived, as Cuervo represents the pathological failures of Spain's regeneration. The folktale, if this indeed was the inspiration for 'Cuervo', is transformed by Clarín for a contemporary audience, transcending its original form, and becoming a narrative that can comment on current intellectual debates.

The time in which Clarín was writing was an epoch when the press grew in importance, particularly due to its role in the construction of an engaged and regular readership for writers. The expansion of the press and the short story form that was growing in its ubiquity, popularity, and refinement coincided and they even became mutually dependent. Ángeles Ezama Gil situates thus the diffusion of Clarín's writing and the development of the press within overlapping timeframes:

> esta dispersión en la edición de la obra periodística clariniana coincide con el desarrollo de la prensa de provincias a finales del siglo XIX, sobre todo en sus dos últimas décadas, debido sobre todo al aumento de periódicos no políticos, a la libertad de prensa después de 1883 y a la instauración del sufragio universal en 1890.[32]

The growth of the press was not only dependent on the evolution and popularity of the short story and 'paliques' by writers such as Clarín in order to fill the pages of the newspapers, but also the social and political conditions had to be optimal. The evolution of the democratic process politically also rippled into the democratisation of other areas of life, including literature. The amount of people who could read and what they could read both expanded during the nineteenth century; growing literacy rates coalesced with a legislative movement towards the freedom of the press, as Rhian Davies explains:

> In 1883, the liberals, led by Sagasta, passed a new *Ley de policía de imprenta* (Law on the policy of the press), which introduced greater freedom. Thereafter, the number

[32] Ángeles Ezama Gil, 'Literatura periodística y dispersión: algunas colaboraciones olvidadas de Clarín en la prensa de provincias', *Revista de literatura,* 77.153 (2015), pp. 211-247 (p. 214).

> of 'periódicos científicos y literarios' (journals of scientific and literary interest), particularly those which appeared monthly, increased.[33]

The role of the press became more significant as a cultural tool and, as a result, offered readers access to a wider range of materials. The materials themselves also increased in quality as writers were afforded more freedom. This freedom translated into stylistic and generic liberation for writers such as Clarín. According to Davies, publishing for the press gave writers 'the opportunity to practise and to experiment, serving, at the same time, as a valuable source of stimulation and an opportunity to publicize their works'.[34] The regular income that came from prolific output, along with a space to experiment with new ideas, contributed to a rich periodical press, and in turn, Clarín could hone the craft of short story writing that was varied in style and influence.

The periodical press and the short story form therefore cannot be dissociated from one another as a mutually beneficial relationship was established; the periodicals depended on the short story writer to attract readers to certain publications, as short stories and long articles, and, indeed, novels, would be published in instalments and would thus encourage consistent and continual purchase. The short story writer also relied on the press as the sole tool by which material could be disseminated to a wider audience outside of publishing a collection. The short story, evidently, is a literary form whose unique place in the literary landscape derives primarily from its brevity. It is the 'shortness' of the short story that affords it its digestibility by the reader and its ability to be included regularly in the periodical, often in several instalments. Davies asserts that the review facilitated the rise in popularity of the short form over the novel as it would be easily integrated into the daily intake of the reading public, since the general appetite was for 'a product which, unlike the book, reflected contemporary events and appeared regularly'. The periodical possessed 'advantages of variety and brevity, combining

[33] Rhian Davies 'How to be a writer for the press– and how to write about it', in *Spain in the Nineteenth Century,* ed. by Geraldine Lawless and Andrew Ginger (Manchester University Press, 2018), pp. 174-190 (p. 174).
[34] Rhian Davies, 'How to be a writer for the press– and how to write about it', p. 175.

subjects and genres ranging from short stories, poetry, and excerpts from novels to essays on philosophy, art, and history in short articles which demanded less concentration and less time and effort than a book'.[35]

The appearance of the short story alongside other forms of writing such as the essay, the *costumbrista* article, and poetry not only gave the short story inflections of a variety of genres which manifest themselves through the stylistic development of the *cuento*, but also bestowed the narrative form with a pertinence to current affairs as it would often share the page with news reports. According to Baquero Goyanes the marriage of the short story and the periodical press was a harmonious one, largely 'por la actualidad de su temática, tan viva y cálida como cualquier noticia o comentario de los publicados en el periódico en que aparece'.[36] This interdependence of the press and the evolution of the short story form is equally important on a literary level as it is on a pragmatic level. The integration of the explicitly literary with the newspaper article and current affairs, as well as the traditions from which the short story developed, such as *costumbrismo*, shaped the short story genre immeasurably. As rich cultural and literary traditions and phenomena merge, the short story became a form worthy of prestige and capable of social impact among the reading classes.

Selection of stories and their place in Clarín's writing

This thesis contains analyses of twenty short stories by Clarín, five in each chapter, written and published over thirty years from the 1880s to 1916. Eight of these stories are part of the *Cuentos morales* collection; this is the largest collection of stories, containing twenty-eight stories, which is considerably more than the second largest collections, *El gallo de Sócrates* and *Doctor Sutilis,* which each comprise fifteen stories. Only under half of the texts that this thesis explores, however, are *Cuentos morales* stories. This is partially intentional, as it was

[35] Rhian Davies, *La España Moderna and Regeneración: A Cultural Review in Restoration Spain 1889-1914* (Manchester: Manchester Spanish and Portuguese Studies, 2000), p. 18.
[36] Mariano Baquero Goyanes, *El cuento español en el siglo XIX* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1949), p. 165.

important for this analysis to move beyond *Cuentos morales* in order to examine, as much as possible, the variety of styles that Clarín adopted. It was also necessary to obtain a picture of Clarín's output throughout his career since the stories in *Cuentos morales,* which was itself published in 1896, all appeared in newspapers between 1893 and 1895. This is a relatively small window of time for an author who, despite his short life, was writing and publishing from the late 1870s and early 1880s, until his death in 1901.

The first two chapters of the thesis contain a greater proportion of stories from *Cuentos morales.* The final chapter in particular contains stories from *El Señor y lo demás, son cuentos*, which is the collection with the most spiritual writing, and since this chapter looks at utopia and the myth of origin, its theme aligns with the spiritual and religious questions explored by these narratives. The final chapter also explores two stories from Clarín's final collection, *El gallo de Sócrates,* which both contain a mixture of satire and the fantastic or 'inverosímil'. This style also complements the chapter theme as the use of the fantastic is explored in the chapter as expressing a challenge to a belief system constructed on positivist notions of reality and epistemology. The third chapter contains two stories published posthumously in 1916 in the collection *Doctor Sutilis.* These are both stories that deal with national crisis and the concept of patriotism at the end of the century in the run up to, and in the aftermath of, the 1898 'Desastre': 'Un repatriado' was originally published in 1899, and 'El Rana' in 1896. It was important, in this chapter, to include stories that were written in the latter part of Clarín's career, as these were the only years of his life to come after the events of 1898. Therefore, this chapter, by exploring national historical myth, also offers an insight into how patriotism and national belonging were experienced during the immediate aftermath of the Spanish American War. Overall, the collection that the stories belong to often maps onto and corresponds with the chapter themes.

The first chapter features a story, 'El oso mayor', that was not published in any collection, but only appeared in print in the newspaper *La Correspondencia* in 1898 and has since been published in collections such as Carolyn Richmond's *Cuentos completos*. The thesis also

features stories from collections other than those that I have already mentioned; I analyse 'Cuervo' and 'Doña Berta' from the collection *Doña Berta, Cuervo, Superhería* published in 1892, along with 'El doctor Pértinax' which appeared in Clarín's first short story collection, *Solos de Clarín,* published in 1881. This story adopts a satirical style typical of his early work that is inflected with *costumbrismo* and influenced heavily by his journalistic vocation. This is, by a number of years, the first story that Clarín wrote that appears in this thesis; it was important to include an example of earlier work because, although the vast majority of Clarín's short stories were written in the 1890s, it is advantageous to explore this earlier production to acknowledge an evolving style. Although this satirical tone is not unique to 'El doctor Pértinax', for example, 'El centauro' was written later, in 1893, and is highly sarcastic in tone, yet the former displays a more explicit philosophical irony. Individual philosophers are named, and the satire and caricaturing of the intellectual as a figure or 'type' is more akin to Clarín's journalistic work and *costumbrismo* than many of his other short stories. This is one of the defining features of *Solos de Clarín,* and so the analysis of this text serves to enrich and diversify the corpus. Although the chapters of this thesis do not refer to the chronology of the stories as part of the textual analysis, making the chronology of the stories salient is useful insofar as the identification of the styles and themes that appear at different stages of Clarín's life and career.

Mapping Clarín as a thinker and a writer

Although Clarín is considered a canonical writer and an important thinker in Spanish cultural studies, his work, particularly the short stories, have recently suffered a dearth of critical attention. However, this body of work remains significant for understanding the development of Spain as a nation, and Spanish modernity in particular. I argue throughout this thesis that Clarín's assessment of progress and modernity in his short works reveals a varied and complex picture of the role of spirituality and metaphysics in the construction of progress, and a problematisation of telescoped ideas of progress in a modern age. Overall, I consider Clarín

an important critical voice in relation to national projects of regeneration and modernisation, whilst advocating for the place of history and memory in visions of future progress.

Throughout the previous century, much work has been done in order that scholars have access to Clarín's short fiction. Baquero Goyanes's *El cuento español en el siglo XIX*,[37] which was adapted from his doctoral thesis and published in 1949, puts the work of nineteenth-century short story writers in their context and provides comprehensive coverage of the short form and its various thematic qualities. His *Qué es el cuento,*[38] published in 1967, brought Clarín together with his contemporaries to offer an assessment and theorisation of what constituted the short form. His book *El cuento español. Del romanticismo al realismo* is an extensive work.[39] The focus on *costumbrismo* and Romanticism and their relationship with the short story form incorporates writers such as Fernán Caballero, Antonio Ros de Olano, and Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, as well as those commonly associated with literary realism such as Emilia Pardo Bazán. Baquero Goyanes also makes reference to the various ways Clarín's short works have been classified; Andrés González Blanco's classification method separates the short stories into three categories: *cuadros de costumbres, cuentos morales* and *cuentos líricos*. From this, Baquero Goyanes makes salient the thematic and stylistic variety of Clarín's short works, introducing the reader to a range of influences and movements that have proved useful as a starting point in my exploration of spirituality, the fantastic, the rural, and satire. José María Cachero and Laura de los Ríos are also important scholars of Clarín. These contributions include De los Ríos' *Los cuentos de Clarín, La proyección de una vida,* published in 1965, which is a comprehensive study of the parallels between Clarín's life and works.[40]

[37] Mariano Baquero Goyanes, *El cuento español en el siglo XIX* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1949).
[38] Mariano Baquero Goyanes, *Qué es el cuento,* (Buenos Aires: Columba, 1967).
[39] Mariano Baquero Goyanes, *El cuento español. Del romanticismo al realismo* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1992).
[40] Laura De los Ríos, *Los cuentos de Clarín, La proyección de una vida* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1965).

Collating Clarín's short stories into complete collections has been a seminal part of Clarín studies in the twenty-first century. In this regard, the work of Carolyn Richmond on Clarín's short stories must be acknowledged. The complete short stories that were published in two volumes by Alfaguara in 2000 comprises a comprehensive introduction which provides context and analysis for each short story anthology, as well as collating stories that were not originally published in a collection. Richmond also makes links, in these introductory pages, between Clarín's short fiction and his other output, notably his novels. To cite an example, she notes that 'Pipá' anticipates *La Regenta,*[41] which suggests that some of the ideas for the novel, which would become his 'masterpiece' and one of the most celebrated Spanish literary works of the nineteenth century, were experimented with initially in the short form. The collection in which 'Pipá' appears, also entitled *Pipá,* was published the year after the second volume of *La Regenta,* but dates back to 1879. Richmond makes further intertextual links; for example, she connects the story 'Cuento futuro', which was written and first published in 1886 but was not published in a collection until 1893, with the novel *Su único hijo,* which was published in 1890. The references to Paradise, temptation, and the original sin are the aspects that Richmond identifies in the story that foreshadow the novel and which I explore in Chapter Four.

Leopoldo Alas **«***Clarín***»** *Cuentos completos* edited and introduced by Francisco Caudet, was published by Cátedra in 2013.[42] Caudet provides a full chronology of Clarín's life and work and an index which includes the original publication details of all stories. Caudet, in this collection, has made use of the transcription of Clarín's journal, *Juan Ruiz,* [43] as this edition contains many stories that appeared in this newspaper, showcasing Clarín's earliest work and building upon Richmond's edition. Clarín's *Obras completas,*[44] which collated all novels, short

[41] Carolyn Richmond, *Cuentos completos*, volume 1 (Madrid: Alfaguara, 2000), p. 31.
[42] Leopoldo Alas "Clarín"*, Cuentos completos,* ed. by Francisco Caudet (Madrid: Cátedra, 2013).
[43] A transcription and critical introduction to Juan Ruiz was completed by Sofía Martín-Gamero in 1985.
[44] Leopoldo Alas "Clarín", *Obras Completas,* 12 vols (Oviedo: Ediciones Nobel, 2005).

stories, articles, and letters, was published between 2002 and 2009 by Ediciones Nobel and was a significant enhancement of the accessibility of his works. Yvan Lissourges and Jean-François Botrel edited the six volumes of the articles that form part of this edition of the *Obras Completas*. Lissourges has also done important work on Clarín's intellectual background, focussing on his religious and philosophical thought in his 1983 book *La pensée philosophique et religieuse de Leopoldo Alas (Clarín),* translated into Spanish in 1996.[45] Additionally, he has published *Clarín, en sus palabras,*[46] which charts Clarín's life through various periodical publications and private correspondence. Noël Valis published an annotated bibliography, *Leopoldo Alas Clarín: An Annotated Bibliography,*[47] of both primary and secondary material in 1986. Lou Charnon-Deutch contributed to the field of short story criticism, publishing *The Nineteenth-Century Spanish Short Story* in 1985.[48] Charnon-Deutsch's book builds on work done by Baquero Goyanes, adopting a structure based less on a classification of stories, than one that allows for the exploration of the role that short fiction played in the context of literary trends and its role as a tool for social commentary. It also assesses the technical and structural characteristics of the short narrative. Both of these strands allow for the examination of the lasting impact of the short story in literary history. The first chapter discusses the *costumbrismo* tradition and in the second chapter, Charnon-Deutsch moves to how the story was used as an ideological tool, marking a significant advancement in the field. The three subsections explore biblical origin in 'Cuento futuro' by Clarín, 'Cuento primitivo' by Emilia Pardo Bazán, and 'El establo de Eva' and 'Los cuatro hijos de Eva' by Vicente Blasco Ibáñez.

'Cuento futuro' is explored by Charnon-Deutsch as a story that perpetuates the origin myth that places men as superior to women due to the lack of attention received by Evelina and the manner in which her refusal to bear children sees her banished and isolated. I would question whether this, in fact, constitutes a statement on the rigid gender roles and expectations of

[45] Yvan Lissourges, *El pensamiento filosófico y religioso de Leopoldo Alas Clarín* (Oviedo: Grupo Editorial Asturiano, 1996).
[46] Yvan Lissourges, *Clarín, en sus palabras* (Oviedo: Ediciones Nobel, 2007).
[47] Noël Valis, *Leopoldo Alas Clarín: An Annotated Bibliography* (London: Grant and Cutler, 1986).
[48] Lou Charnon-Deutsch, *The Nineteenth-Century Spanish Short Story* (London: Tamesis, 1985).

women. Given that Clarín's story makes a general commentary on the lack of progress in the world, the unchanged position of women, through the harsh treatment of Evelina, might be read as another flaw in a vision of the future of progress that does not work towards the emancipation of humanity. In this book, Charnon-Deutsch also highlights the experimentation with naturalism and the use of irony, concluding with the examination of form and technique, including studies on space, structure, time and tempo. I build on Charnon-Deutsch's analysis of time, moving the discussion from time deployed as a narrative strategy, to time as manipulated to reveal ideological, philosophical, and social commentaries. In the conclusion to her book, Charnon-Deutsch highlights what she deems to be the most salient feature of the short fiction written during the late nineteenth century in Spain. She writes: 'The insistence is less and less on the character's innate goodness or evilness, and more on the process that leads a character from innocence to corruption, or from ignorance to knowledge'.[49] This gives the characters 'more appeal for the reader' due to their 'psychological complexity'.[50] This, I think, also summarises the overall contribution of Charnon-Deutsch's book, as it not only traces the origins of the short story, but it delves into the complexity and artistic achievement of the short story form.

The work of publishing short stories in new collections, literary histories of the short story in Spain, and biographical works continues to be important to Clarín studies. However, relatively recent critical work on Clarín has focussed thematically and conceptually on his work in relation to philosophies and theoretical frameworks that elucidate how Clarín's stories held an ideological, political and social meaning that can help us understand their place in nineteenth-century Spanish society. Additionally, nineteenth-century writers are being studied in interdisciplinary contexts and in multidisciplinary fields such as the medical humanities,[51] their

[49] Lou Charnon-Deutsch, *The Nineteenth-Century Spanish Short Story* (London: Tamesis, 1985), p. 166.
[50] Lou Charnon-Deutsch, *The Nineteenth-Century Spanish Short Story* (London: Tamesis, 1985), p. 166.
[51] Katharine Murphy's book, *Bodies of Disorder: Gender and Degeneration in Baroja and Blasco Ibáñez* (Oxford: Legenda, 2017) and Akiko Tsuchiya's, *Marginal Subjects,* (Toronto: Toronto

work being used as primary material to shape scholarly thought about how issues that permeated a multitude of aspects of society were being represented in literature. Clarín's writing lends itself particularly to interdisciplinary analysis as it is generically and stylistically multidimensional. Its roots in journalism and *costumbrismo,* as I have explored, mean that his work can be approached in myriad ways. The crossover between 'palique' and short story, the integration of fictional characters with politicians and philosophers, and the use of satire means that interdisciplinary studies of Clarín could provide rich understandings of these interactions in Clarín's work and these relationships beyond literary boundaries. I will return to this principle in the conclusion of the thesis as a potential route to advance the study of Clarín in particular and nineteenth-century fiction in general.

Geraldine Lawless's *Modernity's Metonyms: Figuring Time in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Stories,*[52] published in 2011, analyses Clarín's short fiction, namely 'Doña Berta', 'Cuervo', and 'Cuento futuro'. In this book, Lawless explores the use of time and temporality in these works in relation to literary modernity, analysing the role of metonymy in this depiction of time and modernity. She argues that analyses of literary modernity have relied disproportionately on modernism and nineteenth-century realism, and therefore the book introduces the possibility of moving beyond this narrow scope. This is explored through the reformulation of the perception of time. In this work, Lawless explores literary modernity and the reconfiguration of time through the examination of metonyms, which include the railway, food, and suicide, in the nineteenth-century short story. The connections between depictions of temporality and literary modernity that are developed by Lawless introduces the interrelation between temporality and progress that I explore in this thesis. The metonymic aspect of these literary works is revelatory and useful to understanding their alignment with philosophies of time and

University Press, 2011) are key examples of this reading of the nineteenth century in relation to the medical humanities. They are not extensive readings of Clarín, but insightful works as to how literature from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century can contribute to research in the medical humanities.

[52] Geraldine Lawless, *Modernity's Metonyms: Figuring Time in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Stories* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2011).

how they interact with modernity. ‘Doña Berta’ is analysed through the metonym of the railway; Lawless argues that the railway is deployed by Clarín to show the halt of time, as linear historical time is seen to descend into chaos and disorientation with Berta’s arrival in Madrid, made possible by the railway. ‘Cuervo’ is analysed through the metonym of food, whereby Lawless suggests that the story directly examines the *polémica de la ciencia española*, and that true authentic knowledge is shown to be non-existent. ‘Cuento futuro’ is explored through suicide, as the collective self-destruction depicted in the story is considered symbolic of anxieties linked to technology and (over)civilization, the impossibility of infinite progress, and a lack of faith in the future.

In this thesis, I build on the idea that literary modernity should be conceptualised beyond the realist canon as my literary analysis focuses on neither the novel nor realism. However, I refer less explicitly to literary modernity; rather, I discuss modernity in a societal sense as a means to understand ideas of progress and regeneration. I approach modernity in relation to Clarín’s texts as less an artistic quality embodied by the literary text, than a sociocultural phenomenon that is deployed in Clarín’s narratives as a tool to reveal a critique of progress and regeneration. I also build on the conceptual ideas that Lawless uses to underpin her analysis of the metonym– for example, dissonances between past and present, ‘whether the present can be connected to a timeless reality’,[53] and the lack of faith in the future. If, as Lawless states, a major part of the exploration of modernity in the nineteenth century is the present’s relationship with the past,[54] then the study of memory together with time contributes to an understanding of nineteenth-century visions of progress and modernity. My exploration of memory allows this relationship to be examined further, as the (in)ability to remember the past might be seen as indicative of a society that is (un)able to construct a vision of future progress.

[53] Geraldine Lawless, *Modernity’s Metonyms: Figuring Time in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Stories* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2011), p. xix.
[54] Geraldine Lawless, *Modernity’s Metonyms,* p. xv.

Locating Clarín's writing within nineteenth-century literary culture as well as social and philosophical debates has informed my analysis of the corpus. Cecilio Alonso's *Historia de la literatura española, vol. 5: Hacia una literatura nacional 1800-1900* provides a literary history of the nineteenth century, tracing Spanish literature over the entire century. It explores the practical dimensions of literary creation, such as the role of literature in education, printing and distribution, and journalism. In addition, the role of historical events such as the *Trienio Liberal* and artistic movements such as Romanticism are analysed, as well as the mid-century crisis of the novel, *costumbrismo*, *fin de siglo* realism, spirituality, and national crisis and regeneration. The novel is identified by Alonso as a tool for nation-formation, corroborating Labanyi's arguments in *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel.* Literary and aesthetic trends are thus mapped onto demographic and social change; for example, the drive to regenerate the novel and the emergence of literary realism was caused by a shift from the local and regional, served by *costumbrismo* and the regional tale, to a growing urban middle class and a realist novel that was its target audience.[55] I conceptualise Clarín's stories as imbricated in this move towards a literature that addressed issues of national significance, however I view Clarín's short works as an alternative to the formation of the modern citizen or of a bourgeois consciousness that was apparent in the realist novel. Clarín's short stories respond to a growing feeling of 'crisis' by intersecting a critique of moral decadence and a representation of a malfunctioning society as seen in *La Regenta*, with experimental representations of 'progress'. Alonso, in a chapter of his *Historia de la literatura española,* entitled 'Crisis y regeneración', describes the link between Benito Pérez Galdós' use of myth and utopia in a commentary on the state of nationhood:

> el ideal nacional parece constantemente al alcance de la mano pero escurriéndose entre los dedos, como ejemplifica el carácter mítico y utópico de la obra final de Pérez

[55] Cecilio Alonso, *Historia de la literatura española: Hacia una literatura nacional 1800-1900* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 2010), p. 494.

> Galdós – tan representativa de este proceso – y el frecuente cariz de altruismo romántico que en la España del XIX tuvo el hecho de escribir.[56]

I suggest in this thesis that Clarín's stories reveal a complex relationship between ideas of progress and themes such as utopia and myth, bringing Clarín's short fiction into dialogue with broader discourses surrounding progress, regeneration, and nationhood that are richly portrayed in the experimental narratives of this time period.

The chapters of this thesis have been ordered to reflect the interrelation of concepts in Clarín's writing, reflecting repeated concerns and debates using a variety of themes and tropes to represent those issues. The first chapter is designed to introduce the critique of progress and modernity as myopic, which remains pertinent throughout the thesis. The subsequent chapters build on this idea, introducing new, related, concepts and movements such as degeneration and nationhood. This is intended to gradually enrich the argument and discuss progress from new perspectives with each chapter. The first chapter foregrounds the idea of modernity and the system that underpins it as ultimately narrow and restrictive, which I argue is particularly linked to the temporal and mnemonic restrictions that modernity exercises. This chapter explores Clarín's use of the rural and provincial spaces to highlight his critique of modernity, emphasising the rural and provincial as spaces of resistance, but also ones in which failures of modernity are particularly acute. In this chapter, the more-than-human is revealed as a peripheral temporal state existing outside of human-centred modernity, offering alternative temporalities and models of progress. The rural is also a site where notions of providence and provenance become metaphors for spiritual and moral anxieties.

Chapter Two builds on the idea of provenance to examine the use of discourses around heredity and pathology in relation to degeneracy and decadence. In this chapter, I propose that Clarín deconstructs the ideas of degeneration and regeneration as opposites, since

[56] Cecilio Alonso, *Historia de la literatura española: Hacia una literatura nacional 1800-1900,* pp. 612-613.

processes of regeneration are revealed to be sterile, corrupt, and diseased. I also argue that Clarín uses disease as an allegory for the exploration of the metaphysical, denoting health and illness as sites of conformity and nonconformity respectively to hegemonic ideas of progress. Clarín's subversion of the pathologising language of degeneration theory exposes Spain's inability to construct progressive and regenerative futures. Chapter Three develops the idea of pathologising the nation in degeneration theory by examining the influence of historical myth in the construction of national sensibilities in a project of regeneration. The creation of national historical myths is revealed to prevent the development of progressive collective memory as it blocks the process of active remembering. This chapter examines the mythification of the nation that creates reductive national narratives, aiming to homogenise and sterilise the past. This, as Clarín explores and I argue, promotes a collective 'misremembering'.

The final chapter examines the idea of historical myth in relation to the notion of origin. I argue that the return to ancient and biblical origin is questioned and satirised by Clarín as, in the stories analysed in this chapter, narratives of regeneration based upon a restoration of origin, ultimately fail and create more problems than they solve. I propose, therefore, that in nuancing the position of origin in discourses of progress and regeneration, Clarín questions origin stories in narratives of *regeneracionismo* and modernity as unproblematic and linear. This chapter also reveals that the root of the stunted relationship between the modern present, the distant past, and spiritual regeneration is a dogmatic and dichotomous intellectual life. What all these chapters aim to do is reveal the myriad ways in which Clarín perceived social and cultural progress, and in particular how memory and temporality allow for a richer understanding of the nature of progress in the nineteenth century. Each chapter explores how Clarín used a variety of themes and tropes to reconceptualise what progress signified in an age of regeneration, crisis, and modernity. The stories examined in each chapter are distinct in style, argumentative complexity, and length; to take an example, the final chapter includes analysis of 'Cuento futuro', a story that experiments with science-fiction and features several layers of

plotline, alongside ‘El centauro’ which is a short satirical tale which, aside from some character development, displays a *costumbrista* style. However, what all selected stories have in common is their ability to be interpreted as evidential of Clarín’s willingness to broaden definitions of modernity, nuance ideas of regeneration, and subvert dogmatic visions of progress.

Chapter One

Examining rural and provincial spaces through inheritance, the rural return, and the more-than-human

'Mañana es como hoy, *sin finalidad'*[1]

('El oso mayor')

A deserted rural chapel. A smallholding. A provincial town. A childhood home. These are some of the settings that Clarín chose for his stories. What these particular examples have in common is their local flavour, their positioning as small places, places of little obvious socio-political significance. Yet in these stories they are also places that not only witness but play an active role in tales of capitalist expansion, transatlantic migration, and spiritual regeneration. In these narratives, rural and provincial spaces are embedded in tales that reflect a nation negotiating how to define the past and what lies ahead in its future. These are spaces that reveal events and concepts that Clarín identifies as representative of these debates. The discussion in this chapter will, therefore, be constructed upon the notion that spaces, landscapes, and environments embody a temporal and mnemonic significance. For example, a childhood home that is revisited after years of absence, harbours memories from the past that relate to wider histories of migration and changing communities. Or a smallholding that is on the brink of banishment reveals a memory and a temporality that are linked intimately with the rural spaces and are threatened with destruction, on the cusp of being taken over by the turbulent forces of capitalism.

Rural and provincial spaces are often theorised as representing the past, owing to their typically slow pace of life and their curation of traditions or the 'traditional'. Rural spaces are often sanctified as representing the true essence of the 'nation', and can be used as a tool by nationalist discourses to represent purity or authenticity with respect to the religious, spiritual,

[1] 'El oso mayor', in *Cuentos completos,* ed. by Carolyn Richmond, 2 vols (Madrid: Alfaguara, 2000), II, pp. 550-556 (p. 552). [Original italics].

and ideological identity of the nation. This can be seen in relation to the Reconquest whereby Covadonga and the Asturian landscape were used to signify Christian Spain and the historicity of the nation, which Patricia E. Grieve argues still pertains in contemporary Spain through 'the continuing popular belief that the areas of Asturias and Galicia constitute a more "pure strain" of Spaniard than any other region'.[2] In this chapter, however, I aim to reveal how Clarín interprets and appropriates this coupling of rurality and tradition. The unique temporal location of Clarín's rural and provincial spaces offers a distinctive way of considering them as not solely the traditional antitheses of metropolitan futurities, but complex mnemonic agents in themselves.

This chapter discusses the role of rural and provincial settings in providing a unique commentary on the place of memory in times of transformation. In the first part of the discussion, the role of silence and noise is explored in ''¡Adiós Cordera!' and 'El oso mayor'. In these two contrasting stories, the more-than-human is destroyed in the former and privileged in the latter, as the power structures that underpin modernity and capitalism are decentred by a unique illustration of provincial ontology. In '¡Adiós Cordera!' rural time and space is effaced, whereas in 'El oso mayor' human timescales are rendered insignificant and the provincial becomes synonymous with the universal. In the second part of the chapter, 'Boroña', 'El Quin' and 'Viaje redondo' are explored as stories that use the rural space to examine the significance of provenance and origin and its connections with nationhood and spirituality. In 'Boroña', the migrant experience is the lens through which memories of the past are distorted, revealing a community and family that are hostile to a nostalgia for the rural home. In 'El Quin' and 'Viaje redondo', absent parentage maps on to anxieties around spiritual regeneration and temporal disorientation. I argue that these narratives foreground the role of memory in their contribution to debates about heredity and national integrity. Overall, this chapter argues that Clarín draws attention to alternative forms of modernity that privilege,

[2] Patricia E. Grieve, *The Eve of Spain: Myths of Origins in the History of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Conflict* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), p. 238.

instead of effacing, the subjectivities that are important to the rural and provincial space. Beyond this, however, these narratives expose rural and provincial spaces, and the memories they harbour, as central to the formation of ideas of progress. Before examining how these narratives shape understandings of the mnemonic value of Clarín's rural and provincial settings, it is worth preceding the analysis with examination of the regional novel, to assess Clarín's work alongside, although distinct from, this tradition.

The concept of the nineteenth-century Spanish regional novel has been defined by Alison Sinclair as something that 'primarily refers to literature of the North (both Cantabria and Galicia) and of Andalucía' with origins 'derived from a mixture of foreigners' travel writings [...] and locally produced Romantic *costumbrista* vignettes'.[3] Although this discussion does not attempt to offer a comprehensive cultural history of regional literature, in order to understand the regional novel, and thereby situate Clarín's work in relation to the tradition, it is necessary to delineate its origins in the *costumbrista* movement. *Costumbrismo* defined itself as a mode that highlighted regional traditions and illuminated local scenes and characters, to the extent that it transcended form to become a style or spirit as opposed to a formalised convention, as observed by Charnon-Deutsch:

> so widespread was the urge to communicate existing or vanishing customs or denounce those which were gradually establishing themselves throughout the nineteenth century that the depiction of manners, commonly associated with the sketch or article, invaded all other forms of narrative.[4]

Costumbrista writing would, in practice, lack any narrative thread or coherent plot, as it represented a 'tapestry of poses and states'[5] associated with the condition of everyday

[3] Alison Sinclair, 'The regional novel: evolution and consolation', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Spanish Novel*, ed. by Harriet Turner and Adelaida López de Martínez (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 49-64 (p. 49-50).
[4] Lou Charnon-Deutsch, *The Nineteenth-Century Spanish Short Story* (London: Tamesis, 1985), p. 19.
[5] Lou Charnon-Deutsch, *The Nineteenth-Century Spanish Short Story,* p. 20.

existence. However, the style, with its focus on local customs and characters, often created typified figures instead of subjective beings that are able to transcend their immediate environment.

The inflections of the *costumbrista* tradition are clear in Clarín's stories; the focus on providing snapshots of everyday life, the use of short narratives in which the plot is of little consequence, and the deployment of the short form as a think piece or article, all illustrate the *costumbrista* origins of Clarín's short story writing. Clarín, however, manipulates *costumbrismo* to his own ends: to explore issues that transcend the regional, and that comment on pertinent socio-political questions of national importance through psychologically complex characters. 'El oso mayor', which will be explored further in the discussion that follows, may be read as an appropriation of *costumbrismo*, with its depictions of provincial scenes and its adoption of a satirical tone, yet the narrative has a coherent plot and, importantly, it is thematically experimental and avoids the typification of the regional character; indeed, the provincial subjectivity is enhanced and enriched. In the stories I examine in this chapter, the hardship of rural life is exposed; Enrique Miralles García details below how the emergence and development of the realist style during the latter half of the nineteenth century coalesced with the focus of *costumbrismo* on the provincial, in order to expose the social reality of rural existence:

> Frente a la literatura costumbrista, que se esforzaba por preservar lo caduco, sin renegar por ello del presente, esta narrativa regional que fiscaliza los lugares más recónditos, buscando en ellos la médula territorial, no procede con esa nostalgia romántica, ni fantasea sobre las excelencias espirituales y artísticas de una comunidad, sino que procura retratarla tal cual es, con sus grandezas y sus miserias.[6]

[6] Enrique Miralles García, 'De las leyendas regionalistas al cuento regional', in *Estudios sobre el cuento español del siglo XIX*, ed. by Monserrat Amores and Rebeca Martín (Vigo: Academia del Hispanismo, 2008), pp. 129-151 (p. 146).

The connections that Clarín makes between rural and provincial spaces and memory and temporality derive from the theorisation of the regional as a microcosmic space. This quality leads to its deployment as a narrative tool to illuminate issues of national concern. This is identified, for instance, by Labanyi as a feature of José María de Pereda's writing: 'Pereda's work is concerned with combatting a centralizing modernity by creating national awareness of the local'.[7] Her work on the regional novel, in *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel*, explores the role of the regional in depicting one of the culture wars of nineteenth-century Spain, in which latent political divides compounded by modernisation were playing out in debates around centralisation and regionalism. Labanyi states that Pereda's 'repudiation of the modern system of economic and parliamentary representation, based on a fluctuating, abstract relationship' caused him 'to propose an alternative system of representation based on stable, inherent value'.[8] The legitimacy of using regional space as a stable bulwark against a chaotic centralising modernity is questioned by Sinclair, who considers the reductive nature of the regional novel, describing it as 'a type of cultural myopia that restricts the concept of viable life to regional boundaries'.[9] The sole attribution, according to Sinclair, of stability and morality to the regional causes the local to clash with the national and universal, establishing the regional novel as a medium that depicts fraying relationships with the world beyond its borders. The regional novel, therefore, acts as 'a site of a tension, either explicit or implied: that of the contrast with other regions or with the world of any territory beyond the region'.[10] Sinclair's theorisation of a regional literature that illustrates the fissures between the local and national, demonstrates how the political landscape is reflected by a literary movement motivated by difference and conflict. However, I argue that Clarín's stories distance themselves from the use of the region to perpetuate myopic visions or narrow ideologies as,

[7] Jo Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 313.
[8] Jo Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel*, p. 300.
[9] Alison Sinclair, 'The regional novel: evolution and consolation', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Spanish Novel*, ed. by Harriet Turner and Adelaida López de Martínez (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 49-64 (p. 53).
[10] Alison Sinclair, 'The regional novel: evolution and consolation', p. 53.

although the regional space is indeed a locus of tension, the regional is not seen as a restrictive space but one which is at the frontier of transcendental and transformative experiences.

Sinclair identifies common tropes of the regional novel, namely, 'the return to the pueblo and the scrutiny of rural life to see whether it signals sickness or holds out hope of recovery to good health',[11] leading to questions about how there may be regional responses to national projects of regeneration. In other words, the return to the rural home and the association of the rural or regional with notions of home and health, have been conceptualised as the cure to the ills of urban decadence, and a means to regenerate a nation. The trope of the rural idyll illustrates it as a sanctified and sanitised mythical space in which there is hope of regenerating the 'sick' nation. The rural setting framed as an antidote to decadence and degeneration establishes it at the nexus of ideological rhetoric, whereby political agendas as to what does and does not constitute or belong to the nation are delineated.

Beyond the romantic imagery of rural life as an Arcadia, it is also related to the deep past, or the 'origins' of the nation; rural culture was not only purified, it was seen as intimately connected with heredity that must be preserved. To describe the rural as a romanticised idyll is, perhaps, to moderate the biological and ideological subtext that underpins these perceptions. The rural space as the site of heredity, roots, childhood, and myth all contribute to its eternal and timeless status. Sinclair makes an important connection with respect to this notion: 'the regions serve as a *patria chica,* a graspable experience of the "national". They are places of value, the repository of what is enduring'.[12] If the region is a *patria chica* representative of the national whole, then the nation itself is represented as permanent and fixed by undeniable inherited bonds. The mythification of the rural and regional is a mnemonic process founded by the construction of collective memories tied to a timeless nation.

[11] Alison Sinclair, 'The regional novel: evolution and consolation', p. 50.
[12] Alison Sinclair, The regional novel: evolution and consolation', p. 58.

The narrativised, and mythified, rural regional space diverges from conventional spatiotemporal boundaries. In her chapter in the *Handbook of Rural Studies,* E. Melanie DuPuis identifies rurality as that which, whilst existing alongside modernity, mitigates the effects of the latter: 'nature becomes entangled in the dreams of modernity, a repository of everything civilization is not: pure, uninhabited, unconscious'.[13] The rural as an escape from 'civilisation' equates 'wild' or 'untamed' space with an innocence that slips into unconsciousness, or even, passivity. In relation to the twentieth-century English novel, Dominic Head argues that 'the rural tradition is seen as an anachronism, fancifully disconnected from actual social change in a period of intensified industrialization and urbanization'. However, he continues by stating that the significance of this lies in 'viewing the apparent disconnection as, in itself, a response to modernity rather than a refusal to engage with it'.[14] Considering the regional as a probing tool reveals the ability of these spaces to subvert the notion of the rural and regional as monolithic and mythic, but active in the process of revealing national truths and modern transgressions.

One of the principal ways that the rural and regional spaces achieve this is through temporal and mnemonic means. New relationships between time and space were generated as a result of modernisation, as new technologies transformed the systems that governed human existence, creating new perceptions of the world and the position of the human within it. Mechanised transportation, for example, created new geographies that transformed the way space was negotiated, and thus the human relationship with nature. New temporal experiences were established, since modernisation was accelerating time so that lived experience of temporality shifted to align with a distinctly modern way of being. The proliferation of accelerated time through modern technologies meant that rural communities were no less witness to this shift in temporality than urban areas. Stephen Kern observes that

[13] E. Melanie DuPuis, 'Landscapes of desires?', in *The Handbook of Rural Studies,* ed. by Paul Cloke, Terry Marsden and Patrick Mooney (London: SAGE Publications, 2006), pp. 124-133 (p. 125).
[14] Dominic Head, *Modernity and the English Rural Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 1.

as ‘modernity’ developed during the late nineteenth century, how time was experienced became more profound and dichotomised with the evolution of mechanised transport: ‘as human consciousness expanded across space people could not help noticing that in different places there were vastly different customs, even different ways of keeping time’.[15] From a sense that the past and present have become disconnected in an epochal rupture, there ensues a loss of continuous temporal flow caused by a present existing on the precipice of decisive transformation.

These changes in temporal experience have to do with the treatment of the past and the way it is remembered. Memories linked to rural space become nostalgic recollections as rural pasts are converted into relics rather than lived experiences. Therefore, memories of the rural are curated and manipulated, as opposed to forming part of fluid and organic processes of remembering. Therein lies a contradiction in the approach to the ‘rural past’ and attempts to eternalise it: it becomes transient as it takes the form not of memory but rather a series of images and associations. Koselleck argues that temporal dissonance creates a chasm between experience and expectation: ‘not only did the gap between the past and future become greater, but also the difference between experience and expectation had to be constantly and ever more rapidly bridged to enable one to live and act’.[16] In order to bridge this gap and alleviate temporal fissure, experience becomes expectation; in other words, remembering becomes a vessel for hopes for the future, so nostalgia is converted into a reflection of utopian dreams. Both nostalgia and utopia become associated with the rural space through a longing for bygone rural tradition and the trope of a rural idyll and Arcadia. I suggest in this chapter that Clarín appropriates nostalgic and Arcadian visions of rural and provincial spaces in order to comment on mnemonic concerns brought about by new and

[15] Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983), p. 34.
[16] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge; Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2018), p. 271.

emerging experiences, namely, spiritual decline, capitalist economics, and transnational migration.

The more-than-human and modernity in '¡Adiós Cordera!' and 'El oso mayor'

Greg Garrard opens his study of ecocriticism with an examination of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) as a means to frame ecocriticism's cultural reading of ecological issues. Garrard explores how Carson depicts a world that is destroyed by the use of pesticides, which Garrard explains is based upon 'concentrating on images of natural beauty and emphasising the "harmony" of humanity and nature that "once" existed, the fable at first presents us with a picture of essential changelessness, which human activity scarcely disturbs'.[17] *Silent Spring* converts tranquillity into a chaotic reality where silence can come to mean both the harmonious quietude that has been lost, and the deadly silence that replaces the organic life that has been destroyed. This multifaceted use of the term silence will be explored in this chapter; Clarín's short stories will be examined as examples in which silence becomes an element that oscillates between a preserver of memory and an indicator of oblivion. In Clarín's complex rural and provincial spaces, memory and access to the past are negotiated through the connection with the silent landscape and communication with those who inhabit the same physical surroundings. These texts demonstrate how different incarnations of language and silence uncover the rural and provincial spaces as arenas where memories are fragile and temporalities are unstable, and yet are able to be continually renegotiated and sustained through unique systems of communication and temporal reimagining.

Another aspect of Garrard's summary of the effect of *Silent Spring* is relevant to this discussion, namely, the notion of 'changelessness'. In this chapter, the temporal dimension of

[17] Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism* (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 1.

‘changelessness’ will be explored as ‘timelessness’. It will be highlighted that, at certain points, rural and provincial spaces are imbued with a sense of timelessness, as they are presented as belonging to alternative spatiotemporal dimensions that do not conform to conventional space-time parameters. The temporal fluidity that is fostered in these spaces creates little to distinguish between the past, present, and future. This, however, will be revealed as a state that proves fallible, since timelessness becomes transience and that which exists outside of conventional time and space is ultimately occluded by hegemonic modernity. In this respect, silence is present both as a communicative system that represents a belonging outside of established codes of existence in ‘El oso mayor’, and a marker of difference that will ultimately signal the destruction of memory in ‘¡Adiós Cordera!’. What is achieved in the former is lost in the latter: silence as a form of communication through which to cultivate an empowerment that exists outside of the imposed conventions of the modern present.

Noise, injustice, and transience in ‘¡Adiós Cordera!’

‘¡Adiós Cordera!’ was published as part of the *El Señor y lo demás, son cuentos* collection in 1893 and is one of the most well-known of Clarín’s short stories. It has been translated several times and has been adapted for a comic book edition by Asturian comic artist Isaac del Rivero, published in 2006. Its popularity arguably derives from its universal and timeless quality– a story about family, displacement, loss, and exploitation which transcends time and space. It is also a highly readable story. The narrative begins slowly, introducing the reader to the characters and the bond that they share. Their existence is, appropriately, described simply, adopting a style akin to that of a children’s tale. This simplicity on the surface allows the reader to notice some of the narrative devices Clarín deploys, for example, the repeated scenes of departure; the goodbye that gives the story its title signifies more than a departure, but forms part of the story’s circular narrative form. The two goodbyes mirror each other, with Cordera and Pinín’s departures depicting two corresponding instances of exploitation. Mariano Baquero Goyanes describes this narrative technique thus: ‘lo intenso de un efecto repetitivo [...] reside, precisamente, en el acercamiento de los dos adioses, aunque entre uno y otro

medien muchos años, concentrados en los pocos segundos de la lectura que los mismos suponen en el cuento'.[18]

The title character is a cow who resides on a farm with the two other main characters Rosa and Pinín, who are twin children. Cordera's relationship with the family, particularly the twins, is not one of ownership and mastery, but one of reciprocal love and respect. Cordera is presented as a mother figure to the twins, whose biological mother has passed away; she nurtures them, teaches them, and loves them. She is described as a 'vaca abuela [...] cuyo testuz parecía una cuna'.[19] The idyllic existence of the three characters begins to be interrupted by the passing railway that cuts through their immediate environs, until eventually they are destroyed altogether. Cordera is sold to be slaughtered, as the family face eviction and homelessness, and then after many years Pinín is conscripted to fight in the Carlist War. With the family disintegrated and displaced, the story ends with Rosa, the last surviving character, looking out onto her destroyed home and listening to the unfamiliar sounds of the telegraph poles and railway, which signals the beginning of new ownership of the land, and the end of Rosa's belonging to it. Rosa's solitude is particularly pertinent as the story begins with the words '¡Eran tres: siempre los tres!',[20] the endurance of their attachment to each other has been weakened and broken by forces beyond their control, rendering Rosa's solitude unjustly imposed.

The arrival of the railway that cuts through the meadows of Somonte is described as a capricious presence in the overwhelming silence of the meadows. The vast landscape remains constant amongst the transient sounds of the passing railway:

[18] Mariano Baquero Goyanes, *El cuento español del Romanticismo al Realismo* (Madrid: CISC, 1992), p. 285.
[19] '¡Adiós Cordera!' in *Cuentos completos,* ed. by Carolyn Richmond, 2 vols (Madrid: Alfaguara, 2000), I, pp. 438-446 (p. 440).
[20] '¡Adiós Cordera!', p. 438.

> pero telégrafo, ferrocarril, todo eso, era lo de menos: un accidente pasajero que se ahogaba en el mar de soledad que rodeaba el *prao* Somonte. Desde allí no se veía vivienda humana; allí no llegaban ruidos del mundo más que al pasar el tren.[21]

Nature is depicted as eternal in comparison with the train. The train is that which passes, it is transient in its purpose of transporting people and objects through time and space, it moves through, passes over, and speeds past. The passing train is the only means by which the children and Cordera are conscious of 'human' time as their existence is otherwise unaffected by the schedules and timetables that regiment and constrict human experience to certain established parameters. The train is therefore seen as an intermittent interruption to the otherwise timeless environment in which the three characters live, described as 'mañanas sin fin' and 'tardes eternas'.[22] Instead of their existences being without time, lacking or void of temporal orientation, I suggest that considering their existence as adhering to alternative temporal codes, as part of a more-than-human time that will eventually be destroyed, is a productive lens through which to analyse this story.

The opposition between the eternal and transient is represented through the relationship between silence and noise. Silence, a symbol of existing within a timeless eternity which is continuous, safe, and nurturing, is contrasted with the unintelligible noise of the transient and ephemeral. If the railway represents the interruption of nature's time with the rigid timescales of mechanised transportation, then it also signals a discontinuous temporality. Geraldine Lawless theorises nineteenth-century literary modernity through expanding timescales due to modern communication systems such as the railway increasing 'the number of individual and simultaneous present moments'.[23] Harold James also affirms that 'the railroad opened up interiors of continents' creating an 'integrated world'.[24] The expansion of time and space due

[21] '¡Adiós Cordera!', p. 439.
[22] '¡Adiós Cordera!', p. 439.
[23] Geraldine Lawless, *Modernity's Metonyms: Figuring Time in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Stories* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2011), p. xv.
[24] Harold James, *The End of Globalisation: Lessons from the Great Depression* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 10-11.

to the railways increased the scope of human experience. However, Lawless also argues that there is another dimension, indeed an inversion, of this phenomenon, since timescales contracted as 'the present's relationship to the past, with knowledge-outside-time, and with the future was becoming increasingly problematic'.[25] In '¡Adiós Cordera!', the sounds of the railway are described as transformative phenomena, where the expansion of time and space that leads to the contraction or restriction of Rosa's experience of temporality is expressed through sound and communication.

The train carriages and the people that ride in them are faceless objects: 'la gran culebra de hierro, que llevaba dentro de sí tanto ruido y tantas castas de gentes desconocidas, extrañas'.[26] Rosa tries to assimilate this new technology with her existing world of reference, as an animal is used as a metaphor to describe the train, the gap between the human and non-human worlds temporarily closes before opening again. Rosa's assimilation of the train reflects the effect that existing knowledge, perspectives, and backgrounds have on the way that environments are deciphered. Denis E. Cosgrove explains the notion of environment as representation: 'the way people see their world is a vital clue to the way they understand that world and their relationships with it'.[27] Noise, however, features in more violent and oppressive events: the sale of Cordera and Pinín's conscription to war. When Cordera is initially taken to market to be sold, though this attempt fails as the price is deemed to be too high, the way back through the market is described as follows:

> Y, por fin, suspirando, si no satisfecho, con cierto consuelo, volvió a emprender el camino por la carretera de Candás adelante, entre la confusión y el ruido de cerdos y novillos, bueyes y vacas, que los aldeanos de muchas parroquias del contorno

[25] Geraldine Lawless, *Modernity's Metonyms,* p. xv.
[26] '¡Adiós Cordera!', p. 439.
[27] Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), p. 9.

> conducían con mayor o menor trabajo, según eran de antiguo las relaciones entre dueños y bestias.[28]

The confusion of the market signals a place of disharmony between the human and non-human, contrasting with the earlier scenes of silent egalitarianism between Cordera and the twins. The mastery of nature, the superiority of man over beast, and the violent exploitation of such a relationship is depicted through the cries of the animals and the chaos of their sale. The purchase of Cordera marks an extraction of nurture from nature and the patriarchal mastery of the natural or non-human by man-made structures and hierarchies.

This scene of noisy exploitation is repeated when Pinín suffers a similar fate to Cordera: he is conscripted to fight in the Carlist War and, like Cordera, he is a lamb to the slaughter since he will die as a sacrifice for ideas and objectives that he does not understand and in the name of a world to which he does not belong. Power and politics are not arenas in which the three characters could ever hold weight, and yet their existence and the landscape they inhabit is deeply intertwined with relationships between power and injustice. When Pinín is thrust into the train, the reader witnesses the scene through Rosa's eyes:

> pudo ver un instante en un coche de tercera multitud de cabezas de pobres quintos que gritaban, gesticulaban, saludando a los árboles, al suelo, a los campos, a toda la patria familiar, a la pequeña, que dejaban para ir a morir en las luchas fratricidas de la patria grande, al servicio de un rey y de unas ideas que no conocían.[29]

The shouts and cries of the conscripts and those that they are leaving behind mirror the animal market, and foreshadow the cries of war, suffering, and grief. Somonte is on the frontline between the rural, the familiar and familial, and the violent national entity. The civil war, between the Carlists and the Liberals, testifies to a nation in turmoil, a failed state, and an ideological battle. Described as a fraternal struggle, the *patria grande* has failed and retreated

[28] '¡Adiós Cordera!', p. 442.
[29] '¡Adiós Cordera!', p. 445.

into violent conflict; however, the love that Rosa and Pinín have for each other is all too apparent at the moment that Pinín is called to fight. The rural and regional are scenes of familial love and unbreakable bonds, whereas the nation is embroiled in bitter feuding, ultimately telling a tale of corrupted innocence. Crucially it is proof of what the nation, the *patria grande*, can learn from the healing power of the rural and regional.

The silence of Somonte has been overwhelmed by the noises of forces that extract, uproot, and ultimately destroy the lives and livelihoods of those that call this rural landscape home. Those that harmonise with the natural environment, those that emancipate and embrace the more-than-human instead of oppressing and exploiting it, are themselves exploited, becoming victims of the power, politics, and economics of a modernising nation. This final sacrifice made by all three characters is foreshadowed by the telegraph poles. In the first instance, the telegraph poles are conceived of not as particular sounds to be deciphered and translated, but as a sonic experience in its own right. When Rosa first hears the noise coming from inside the telegraph pole, she considers it a sound that she will never comprehend and does not desire to understand:

> Aquellas vibraciones, a veces intensas como las del diapasón, que, aplicado al oído, parece que quema con su vertiginoso latir, eran para Rosa los *papeles* que pasaban, las *cartas* que se escribían por los *hilos*, el lenguaje incomprensible que lo ignorado hablaba con lo ignorado; ella no tenía curiosidad por entender lo que los de allá, tan lejos, decían a los del otro extremo del mundo. ¿Qué le importaba? Su interés estaba en el ruido por el ruido mismo, por su timbre y su misterio.[30]

Rosa's initial reaction to the telegraph poles is one of a searching curiosity about the sounds themselves; her interest lies in their musicality or melody, as opposed to what they signify in practical terms. Rosa's fixation on the beauty of the mysterious sounds as opposed to their rational explanation or application, suggests that she is aligned with the metaphysical, that is,

[30] '¡Adiós Cordera!', p. 438.

that which lies beyond the boundaries of the 'knowable'. It demonstrates Rosa's existence as removed from the encroaching networks of communication, predicting her exclusion from a world established on a language of logic as opposed to beauty, and information as opposed to intimacy.

The telegraph pole on the hillside is erected 'como pendón de conquista',[31] establishing a power dialectic between the conquerors and the conquered. Raymond Williams argues that there is an alignment of the country-city duality and colonisation: 'one of the past models of 'city and country' is the system we now know as imperialism'.[32] The natural landscape is invaded by the signs and symbols of a new hegemonic power that will permanently change the landscape and its human and non-human residents. The conquest of the Somonte, therefore, equates to a fragmentation of rural communities as a result of the ecological destruction inherent in modernity's mechanisms. The hegemony of capital and modernity over the natural world is mirrored by the exploitation of Cordera by those that buy and sell her: '¿Que daba la res tantos y tantos xarros de leche? ¿Que era noble en el yugo, fuerte con la carga? ¿Y qué, si dentro de pocos días había de estar reducida a chuletas y otros bocados suculentos?'.[33] The planned slaughter of Cordera, whose role as de facto mother to the children renders her indispensable for the family, illuminates concerns at how present society is on course to destroy and consume its own life support system in an unsustainable trajectory that will efface entire homes and communities, and those that belong to them.

The hegemonic modern present renders things, images, and people transient and expendable, and therefore the eternal whole, that is represented by rural space, fragments into transitory elements. The destruction and fragmentation of the modern present is twofold: it becomes detached from the past and future which are rendered ephemeral, and it also

[31] '¡Adiós Cordera!', p. 438.
[32] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 279.
[33] '¡Adiós Cordera!', p. 443.

detaches from itself and separates into transitory moments. David Frisby illuminates Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin's theorisations of modernity as follows:

> their central concern was the discontinuous experience of time, space and causality as transitory [...] an experience located in the immediacy of social relations, including our relations with the social and physical environment of the metropolis and our relations with the past.[34]

These transitory moments belong to an interminable cycle of absolute presentness in which the past cannot exist, as the notion of remembering the past is an impossible action. Time rendered transient signifies an inability to remember, since part of remembering is to bring the past into the present; if the present is composed of transient, proliferating moments, then the act of remembering is also rendered fugacious. The fractured rural space becomes a sphere in which the lack of cohering structure prevents not only the ability of the space to be called home, but also the ability of the past to be remembered. At the end of '¡Adiós Cordera!', Rosa's home is destroyed and the sound of the telegraph poles has become less musical and harmonious, than metallic and deathly. Only having experienced the destruction of her home can Rosa begin to comprehend the sounds:

> Aquello era el mundo, lo desconocido, que se lo llevaba todo. Y sin pensarlo, Rosa apoyó la cabeza sobre el palo clavado como un pendón en la punta del Somonte. El viento cantaba en las entrañas del pino seco su canción metálica. Ahora ya lo comprendía Rosa. Era canción de lágrimas, de abandono, de soledad, de muerte.[35]

As Elías García Domínguez affirms, silence has been converted from a symbol of peaceful nature to signifiying death and destruction: 'el silencio, antes paz, ahora es muerte; la quietud, desolación'.[36] What this death also alludes to is the destruction of Rosa's past and future as

[34] David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 4.
[35] '¡Adiós Cordera!', p. 445.
[36] Elías García Domínguez, 'Los cuentos rurales de Clarín', *Archivum,* 19 (1969), pp. 221-242 (p. 231).

Clarín illustrates the narratives of rupture, transience, injustice, and oblivion becoming embedded into a society whose insistence on transformation leads to an inability to reify inclusive and emancipatory futures.

The universal *provinciano* in 'El oso mayor'

The title of Juan Antonio Cabezas' 1936 book is *Clarín, el provinciano universal* and there is perhaps no other story that so explicitly merges the universal and provincial than 'El oso mayor'. It was published in 1898 in *La correspondencia de España,* and takes place in a provincial town, where the reader is introduced to its protagonist, Servando Guardiola. A philosopher and a thinker, Servando expresses discontent with the homogenising effect of urbanity and a debased literary culture that, in his view, celebrates banality and rejects innovation. The narrative thread lies in Servando's pursuit of *amor eterno* and his subsequent romance with a fellow provincial dweller, *la Marquesita.* The provincial space is represented as both terrestrial and celestial, as the provincial identity itself is preserved in the Ursa major constellation: 'Y la marquesita y Servando Guardiola pasaron a ser entre estrellas telescópicas, dos muy juntas enfrente de otras dos muy juntas, formando entre todas un grupo, una constelación que, cuando se descubra, se llamará... *el oso mayor'.*[37] The provincial *oso* is an identity that transcends terrestrial time-space parameters. The *oso*, therefore, represents a certain distinctiveness from the urban collective, reconfiguring spatiotemporal boundaries through what is framed as a uniquely provincial process. Ezama Gil describes the story as representing love through the following tropes: 'la distancia, el silencio, el juego de la mirada, y el afán de eternidad';[38] I argue that this association of the provincial subjectivity with

[37] 'El oso mayor', II, p. 555.
[38] Ángeles Ezama Gil, 'En torno a un cuento olvidado de Clarín: El oso mayor', *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes*, 2002 <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/en-torno-a-un-cuento-olvidado-de-clarn---el-oso-mayor-0/html/ff87e58c-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_4.html#I_0_> [accessed 27/11/2020].

eternity has implications for the role of the marginal and more-than-human in the construction of decentred ideas of temporality and identity.

In 'El oso mayor', provincial space is less a physical entity than a subjectivity. The provincial city in which Servando resides is presented as a space of transit between urban cityscapes and rural landscapes: '¡Provinciano! Él se sentía profundamente provinciano. Ni corte, ni cortijo; quería su ciudad adormecida, con yerba en algunas calles, con resonancias en los atrios solitarios, con paseos por las largas carreteras, orladas de álamos... sin gente'.[39] The liminality of the provincial is revealed through the topographical organisation of the city; it is described as somnambulant, with grass growing in the streets as nature permeates through an attempt at urbanity; infrastructures that beckon towards the metropolitan are deserted as trees and fauna appear more prolific than people. The oscillation between nature and urban infrastructure suggests a temporal liminality; the infrastructure in relation to the lack of people to occupy and use these built environments hints at a society on the cusp of demographic and industrial transformation. Their unoccupied and silent nature points to an explosive change that is still yet to arrive, balancing precariously on the edge of rupture with a tranquil past.

Distanced glances form part of the non-verbal linguistic system by which the two provincial dwellers exchange meaning: 'Los ojos, los ojos a distancia. No había más'.[40]. The *miradas* are described as rich in significance and the depth of understanding that they share is achieved only through the eyes: 'las miradas se buscaban con afán, se aprovechaban del bullicio, de la multitud que pasaba por delante, entre ojos y ojos, para hablar más claros, más insinuantes….'[41] The direct correlation between absences of sound and temporal continuity is repeated throughout the narrative, as provincial subjectivity is presented as an eternal reality: '¡Los *osos*, sin palabras y que duraban años y años!'.[42] The provincial transcends both time

[39] 'El oso mayor', p. 551.
[40] 'El oso mayor', p. 551.
[41] 'El oso mayor', p. 554.
[42] 'El oso mayor', p. 553.

and space to become eternal and continuous as opposed to existing in fragmenting, transient temporal staccatos.

The provincial home is a place in which conventional temporal structures are decentred, since existing in these spaces is compared to living 'sin mañana, porque mañana es como hoy, *sin finalidad*'.[43] Hegelian ideas about infinity are presented here as integral to provincial identity, evading a state of finitude that is imposed by terrestrial time. Hegel's *Science of Logic* delineates the limitation of finitude and the essential nature of the infinite:

> finitude, namely, is limitation posited as limitation; determinate being is posited with the *determination* to pass over into its *in itself* to *become* infinite. Infinity is the nothing of the finite, it is what the latter is *in itself,* what it *ought to be.*[44]

The provincial *oso* reaches the pinnacle of existence as an infinite being. The timelessness of provincial life and its incarnation in the celestial space renders eternity and infinity distinctly provincial characteristics, whereby there is no dissonance between the past, present, and future. Their coexistence signifies a continuity that allows for the active presence of the past in the present, preventing its oblivion or occlusion. Clarín makes consistent references to the continuity of the provincial being as '*oso eterno*';[45] the provincial becomes a byword for transcendent temporalities, and the collapsing of terrestrial time and space to forge new (temporal) relationships between the cosmic and the regional.

Time as an inexorable and linear concept was claimed by nationalist rhetoric to perpetuate the idea of the nation as an eternal and permanent entity. The nation as an eternal entity is thus translated into an immutable permanence: 'nineteenth-century national histories dealt with the origins and vicissitudes of a *permanent community,* the nation, whose unity and

[43] 'El oso mayor', p. 552. [Original italics].
[44] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Science of Logic,* trans. by A.V Miller (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969), p. 139.
[45] 'El oso mayor', p. 553. [Original italics].

permanence they sought to demonstrate'.[46] This eternal quality of the nation meant that the legitimacy of Spain as a national entity could be indisputable: it was and always had been a unified whole. Timelessness applied to the nation and national identity is the means by which a collective national consciousness is formed, as Timothy Brennan elucidates in his theorisation of nationalisms: 'the evocation of deep, sacred origins [...] becomes a contemporary, practical means of *creating* a people'.[47] This notion will be explored in further depth in Chapter Three, however the reimagination of this idea in 'El oso mayor' is important to the present discussion. In the story, Clarín reinterprets the role of eternity not by bestowing the national with an eternal quality, but by presenting the provincial as a timeless identity. The provincial *osos* 'se disponían a pasar la eternidad haciéndose el oso. Y se lo hicieron, siglos de siglos…'.[48] Clarín thus manipulates the nationalist notion of the eternal nation by decentring ideas of nationalism and the sacred origins of the nation, and reinterpreting the eternal and the cosmic as provincial and peripheral. Essentialist ideas about the immutability of the nation are displaced from the centre, contributing a new significance to the provincial and marginal that transcends hegemonic discourses about a centralised and 'essentialised' national identity.

The provincial 'oso', described as eternal, expands the timescales that are associated with the terrestrial. The fluidity, and imperceptibility, of the move between the terrestrial and celestial equates the provincial space with the vast timeframes of the universal or cosmic:

> Al principio (muchos millones de millones de años) no se atrevieron a mirarse... pero... al cabo de ese pedazo de eternidad, la marquesita clavó los ojos en el cielo del cielo... y los dejó caer, como solía en su pueblo, sobre el buen Guardiola.[49]

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[46] José Álvarez Junco, *Spanish Identity in an Age of Nations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 128. [Original italics].
[47] Timothy Brennan, 'The national longing for form', in *Nation and Narration*, ed. by Homi Bhabha (London; New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 44-70 (p. 50).
[48] 'El oso mayor', p. 555.
[49] 'El oso mayor', p. 555.

Years are described in their millions as provincial timescales are expanded beyond the parameters of the humanly perceptible. This cements provincial time in which the *osos* exist as related to deep time, a temporality that is akin to geological time. Time as conceptualised in relation to geological ages reduces the significance of human timescales and expands them beyond human history. This reduces human experience to a fleeting moment, as explained by Stephen Gould:

> What could be more comforting, what more convenient for human domination than the traditional concept of a young earth, ruled by human will within days of its origin? How threatening, by contrast, the notion of an almost incomprehensible immensity, with human habitation restricted to a millimicrosecond at the very end![50]

Hegemonic human-centric conceptions of time and space are thus undermined by the more-than-human deep time. This alludes to the transcendence of the provincial beyond the comprehensible timescales created and experienced by human life. The human-centred nature of time and space is thus challenged through provincial subjectivity; as time and space are decentred from the urban and human to the provincial and more-than-human, agency and subjectivity can be reclaimed by the marginal. This highlights how this story identifies cosmic totality not with the knowable or concrete or human, but beyond it. What this demonstrates is the mobility of the provincial, and its part in the creation of new, fluid, and transcendent spatiotemporal parameters. In a similar way to '¡Adiós Cordera!', 'El oso mayor' challenges the hegemonic order of human dominance over time and space. '¡Adiós Cordera!' highlights the exploitation of the peripheral by those at the centre of the power dialectics at play in a modernising society and economy. Yet it is 'El oso mayor' that asks what it would mean to truly decentre these power dialectics to create a time and space that is distinctly provincial, marginal, and peripheral; that is, beyond the human-made world and at the centre of cosmic totality and authentic meaning-making.

[50] Stephen Gould, *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 2.

The return to provenance in 'Boroña', 'El Quin', and 'Viaje redondo'

The plots of the three narratives that are explored in this section are disparate; one is about a returning migrant's nostalgia for his childhood home, the other is about a dog whose master abandons him and leaves him stranded in the countryside, and the third narrates a spiritual awakening that takes place in a rural chapel. However, all three stories are linked through their exploration of how the remembering of the past maps on to genealogical questions of inheritance and origin. 'Boroña' at first appears to be the most 'pragmatic' of the three stories, dealing with a tangible phenomenon occurring in Spain's northern regions of the returning migrant, or *indiano,* as they were erstwhile known. However, in order to appreciate the significance and complexity of the story, it is worth approaching it from the perspective of provenance, which is where 'El Quin' and 'Viaje redondo' intersect with this story. The trope of absent parents is present in all of the stories, establishing the motif of obscured origin at the centre of the quest to recuperate the past in all three of the narratives. In 'El Quin' and 'Viaje redondo', this is linked to spirituality and the search for providence; in 'Boroña' the migrant experience is used to reveal temporal disconnect and nostalgia at the centre of returning to and recuperating a provenance whose meaning has been obscured.

Displacement and return in 'Boroña'

In 'Boroña', the rural home is the site of broken dreams and fractured memories. It was published as part of the *Cuentos morales* collection in 1896, but first appeared three years previously in the newspaper *El Liberal*. The protagonist, Pepe Francisca, returns to his childhood home in Asturias after many years overseas. He is an *indiano*, an economic migrant who left his home in rural Spain. The emigration of *indianos* most commonly occurred from northern regions, such as Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria, and the Basque Country. The legacy of the *indianos* can be seen in these regions in the form of the mansions and villas that were

built by returned *indianos* which showcased not only their wealth, but also their cultural impact. The style of the mansions mimicked French, English and American colonial architecture, and bore witness to the status of the *indianos* as a transformative force, importing new aesthetics, and new ideas, to their homeland.

The title of the story gives its name to the bread that Pepe craves upon his arrival to his childhood village; however, it is also a marker of a failed journey. His is not a story of heroic return that will regenerate his childhood village, but one that sees his return depicted as a death. His physical death from poor health can also be read as a symbolic death: a destruction of memory, nostalgia, and a failed recuperation of lost memories. I propose that in this story, Clarín exposes the fractious relationship between those who stayed and those who leave in tales of migration. The rural landscape bears witness to profound changes due to waves of emigration and subsequent returns; however, 'Boroña' highlights the complex dynamics at play when the *indiano's* return is not a linear success story. Pepe's paralysing nostalgia and his relative's hostile reception exposes temporal and mnemonic fractures that are at the centre of examining the legacy of *indianos*, and the scarring endured by a landscape that has witnessed successive departures and returns. I argue that Clarín questions how 'progress' can be defined in a conflict between nostalgia and regeneration.

The first description of Pepe is of a figure 'cargado de dinero y con el hígado hecho trizas'.[51] The contrast between his financial prosperity and his physical degradation establishes the dichotomous relationships in the story between health and wealth, recuperation and loss, and will ultimately reveal the illusory restorative powers of the rural space. The scene is set for a reciprocal regeneration between the *indiano* and his community: he would invest his money into the development of the public services of the neglected and disconnected rural village to which he has returned, and in turn he would benefit from a new social status and a restored

[51] 'Boroña', II, pp. 44-49 (p. 44).

sense of belonging to the patrimonial home. Pepe's ill health yet burgeoning wallet reflects the experience of many returning *indianos*, as observed by Francisco Erice:

> aquéllos que vuelven en primera clase, lo hacen con cadena y reloj de oro y exhibiendo casi siempre un escogido veguero, además de regresar con el bolsillo lleno y, frecuentemente, con el lastre de una enfermedad en el corazón, el hígado o los riñones.[52]

Will Pepe be cured of his diseased liver, the return to childhood memories and his ancestral home bringing him back to health? His romantic vision of the 'aire natal' which was 'la pasión de su vida, su eterno anhelo' is located concretely in the rural home, the 'rincón de verdura en que había nacido'.[53]

The landscape of northern Spain has been altered significantly as a result of its *indiano* past. The construction of mansions and villas brought not only a new aesthetic to small villages, but they also signalled the arrival of a new social class. This would change not only the life chances of those living in rural communities, but also signalled the meeting of the old and the new, the humble past and the opulent present. This is described by Erice thus:

> la llamada *arquitectura de indianos* asturiana ofrece un conjunto de obras impresionante, caracterizadas no por un estilo común o por la influencia de elementos constructivos supuestamente procedentes de América, sino por la amplia capacidad de demanda de este sector social y por la dispersión en el medio rural de gran parte de estas construcciones.[54]

Lisa Surwillo also notes the correspondence between the *indiano* house and the emigration success story: 'the standard narrative of the successful *indiano* culminates in the construction of the *casona* built in the emigrant's hometown'.[55] The liminality of the houses is also explored

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[52] Francisco Erice, 'Retorno y retornados de la emigración a América: el caso de Asturias', in *Retornos (De exilios y migraciones)*, ed. by Josefina Cuesta Bustillo (Madrid: Fundación Francisco Largo Caballero, 1999), pp. 39-75 (p. 41).
[53] 'Boroña', p. 45.
[54] Francisco Erice, 'Retorno y retornados de la emigración a América: el caso de Asturias', p. 61.
[55] Lisa Surwillo, *Monsters by Trade* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), p. 133.

by Surwillo, who describes them as ‘an architectural monument to a personal itinerary’ which embodies ‘the founder’s fundamental uprootedness’.[56] In addition to colourful mansions, returning *indianos* were often engaged in building for social purposes, such as hospitals, schools, and theatres, in a veritable regeneration project the likes of which these, often forgotten, villages had not experienced before. *Indianos* were also involved in the construction of train stations and roads to alleviate the physical isolation of these settlements.

Upon Pepe’s arrival, there is evidence that his village is already in the process of transformation, perhaps by *indianos* who had already returned; Pepe observes a road that now cuts through the meadow where his father’s cows once grazed: ‘la carretera cortaba ahora el Suqueru, el prado donde él, a los ocho años, apacentaba las cuatro vacas de Francisquín de Pola, su padre’.[57] The *indiano* might be considered a philanthropic figure, returning to his humble village to benevolently invest his own personal funds into the development of public services which would, in turn, increase the standard of living in many rural villages that had suffered and continued to suffer from widespread poverty due to a lack of education and public services. However, the colonial overtones of the methods by which some *indianos* made their fortune establishes the transcendence of the power dynamic that was at play during their time in the Americas to their actions upon their return to Spain. Their new social status and financial resources made them highly influential local figures and rendered their return, in some cases, a reconquest. Surwillo identifies how the trajectory of the *indianos* is related to narratives of conquest and hegemony, with their houses representing ‘the *indiano’s* departure from the modest family home, his ‘conquest’ of the Americas, and his later return and ‘conquest’ of his native village’.[58]

[56] Lisa Surwillo, *Monsters by Trade,* pp. 133-4.
[57] ‘Boroña’, pp. 44-45.
[58] Lisa Surwillo, *Monsters by Trade,* pp. 133-4.

In ‘Boroña’, however, the trajectory of a ‘successful’ *indiano* is subverted through nostalgia and memory. To his eventual demise, Pepe has little interest in ‘conquering’ his home village, and the capital that he has earned in the Americas is of no use to him in his mission to recuperate his childhood home. The sole impetus that Pepe has to return to his childhood home directly opposes what has since become the most distinctive and visible legacy of the *indiano*, the new opulent homes that they had built. Yet Pepe feels no inclination to create a new home, such is the intensity of his desire to return to his old one. The idealisation of the past that sees a return to the homeland conceptualised as a recuperation of this past, is epitomised by the narrative’s title, *boroña*. This is a type of cornbread that, much like the Proustian madeleine, is symbolic of memory and returning to a remembered past through the senses:

> «¡Comer *boroña* otra vez! ¡Comer *boroña* en Prendes, junto al llar, en la cocina de casa!» ¡Qué dicha representaba aquellos bocados ideales que se prometía! Significaba el poder comer boroña la salud recuperada, las fuerzas devueltas al miserable cuerpo, el estómago restaurado, el hígado en su sitio, la alegría de vivir, de respirar las brisas de su colina amada y de su bosque de la Voz.[59]

The bread holds promises of not only nourishment for the body, restoring Pepe back to his original physical state before his departure, but also the recuperation of a psychological stability, facilitating his reattachment to the space around him. Memories serve as not only the vivid images of experiences that have gone before, but also an idealisation of a desired future; the boroña can be considered, therefore, as an object that represents the establishment of a future that will be a continuation of his life prior to his departure. The idea of the continuity of time and space in line with one’s experiences and world of reference is explored by Lorraine Ryan: ‘maintaining continuity with one’s spatial vision is a primary anchor of individual memory

[59] ‘Boroña’, p. 46. [Original italics].

and identity'.[60] Pepe's past identity and, crucially, the recuperation and recovery of this identity which has been obscured by his life overseas, becomes entrenched in the rural home.

However, the temporal disconnection between Pepe's memories of the past and the present that confronts him is represented by the nausea and disorientation brought about by the boroña bread he longed for. The reader learns that his mother has passed away and his sister, Rita, has changed with the advancing years:

> Rita, como había temido su hermano, era otra cosa. El cariño de la niñez había muerto; quedaba una matrona de aldea, fiel a su esposo, hasta seguirle en sus pecados; y era ya como él avarienta, por vicio y por amor de los cinco retoños.[61]

This dissonance between the remembered past and the present causes Pepe to become ill– 'hasta náuseas le producía aquella pasta grosera, aquella masa viscosa, amarillenta y pesada, que simbolizaba para él la salud aldeana, la vida alegre en su tierra, en su hogar querido'[62]– as hope for the recuperation of the memory, health and his childhood home distorts into loss. The bread that symbolised a return to the past crumbles: 'tropezaban con pedazos de «borona» y los deshacían, los desmigajaban'.[63] The disintegration of the bread, together with Pepe's increasing nausea when consuming it, highlights nostalgia as a disruptive agent.

Pepe's nostalgia is one that attempts to reestablish the conditions of his past home in the present, in a way that reflects Svetlana Boym's theorisation of restorative nostalgia, which, as she observes, 'attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home'.[64] The failure to recuperate the past in a project of mnemonic reconstruction proves unproductive for both Pepe and his relatives; while he remembers and idealises the rural home, those that have stayed have suffered hardship. For his relatives, rural life does not constitute freedom and comfort, it

[60] Lorraine Ryan, *Memory and Spatiality in Post-Millennial Spanish Narrative* (New York, London: Routledge, 2016), p. 29.
[61] 'Boroña', p. 47.
[62] 'Boroña', p. 47.
[63] 'Boroña', p. 48.
[64] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. xviii.

represents oppressive poverty and a servitude to the land. Pepe's brother-in-law is also a returned *indiano*; he is described as 'un indiano frustrado',[65] having returned without the fortune of his prominent and successful counterparts. He is considered one of 'los que van y vuelven a poco sin dinero, medio aldeanos y medio señoritos',[66] whose financial difficulties force him to 'sumirse de nuevo en la servidumbre natural del terruño y en tomar la pátina del trabajo que suda sobre la gleba'.[67] The *indiano* figure has been conceptualised as a liminal figure,[68] caught between the *nouveau riche* and the peasant worker, their transnational experience and subsequent wealth separates them from those who have never left the region, but their new-found wealth and humble beginnings distance them from an aristocratic elite. However, Clarín resists positioning Rita's husband as part of a new social class or a force to disrupt entrenched authority, as his return signals a return to poverty, reminding the reader of the harsh reality of rural subsistence and problematising the linear trajectories of these migrants.

At the crux of this reversed trajectory of the 'successful' *indiano* for Pepe is his nostalgia. His search for the past is one that alienates him from those around him as he becomes a lone figure in his childhood home that once signalled familial connection– 'Pepe comprendía que, en rigor, estaba solo en el hogar de sus padres'.[69] His longing for the comfort of his childhood home is a solitary journey as opposed to a shared experience. Despite her work focussing on the twentieth-century context, Ryan's assessment of the solitude inherent in returning to an imagined past is relevant here: 'this memory work is a solitary endeavour, embarked upon by individuals who are alienated temporally'.[70] This solitary existence is emphasised explicitly in spatial terms: 'le placía aquella soledad de su humilde valle estrecho, que le recibía apacible,

[65] 'Boroña', p. 45.
[66] 'Boroña', p. 45.
[67] 'Boroña', p. 45.
[68] This is evident in *Retornados de exilios y migraciones,* ed. by Josefina Cuesta Bustillo (Madrid: Fundación Largo Caballero, 1999).
[69] 'Boroña', p. 47.
[70] Lorraine Ryan, *Memory and Spatiality in Post-Millennial Spanish Narrative,* p. 9.

silencioso, pero amigo; y temía que los hombres le recibiesen peor'.[71] It becomes apparent that with the death of Pepe's mother, Pepe's physical experience of the landscape is altered, as he craves 'terreno sólido, seguro, constante'.[72] Instead the inherited home becomes a site of ruptured memory, as described in the following lines:

> Después de una noche de fiebre, llena de recuerdos y del extraño malestar que produce el desencanto de encontrar frío, mudo, el hogar con que se soñó de lejos, Pepe Francisca se sintió atado al lecho, sujeto por el dolor y la fatiga.[73]

As Pepe is physically uprooted, his memories have become deracinated and removed from their original state, mirroring his own physical displacement. If Pepe is no longer connected to his inheritance, then time and memory as filial constructions are disrupted. This is a landscape in transition, where the innocence of childhood no longer exists and in its place is either the hardship of rural life, or the formation of a new *indiano* elite in which Pepe is too jaded to participate. The temporal disorientation of an illusory past and an alienating future cements Pepe's 'unbelonging' in the land of his youth: 'sentenciado a muerte, procuraba asomar el rostro a la huerta, con esfuerzos inútiles, y arrancar migajas de cariño del corazón de su hermana, de aquella Rita que tanto le había querido'.[74]

It is possible that Pepe's reluctance to fulfil this new role of revitalising and regenerating his rural community is at the root of his family's rejection of him. Instead, Pepe represents failing health and a paralysing nostalgia, which are hardly the ingredients required to lift the family and the village out of abject poverty and into progressive 'modernity'. The successful *indiano*, as mentioned previously, was expected to reinvest their profits into the community from which they set sail years before: 'El *buen indiano* había de ser aquél que retornaba a tiempo de poder disfrutar del bienestar adquirido en ultramar e igualmente poder invertirlo de algún

[71] 'Boroña', p. 46.
[72] 'Boroña', p. 45.
[73] 'Boroña', p. 46.
[74] 'Boroña', p. 47.

modo en la mejora de la situación de su familia y de su tierra'.[75] The contrast between Pepe's wishes and his family's desires is represented by Pepe's nostalgic urge to collect objects from his childhood whilst his family wish to seize the possessions that he has brought from America:

> Mientras él, casi arrastrando, rebuscaba los rincones queridos de la casa para olfatear memorias dulcísimas, reliquias invisibles de la infancia junto a su madre, su cuñado y los sobrinos iban y venían alrededor de los baúles, insinuando a cada instante el deseo de entrar a saco la presa. Pepe, al fin, entregó las llaves; la codicia metió las manos hasta el codo; se llenó la casa de objetos preciosos y raros, cuyo uso no conocían con toda precisión aquellos salvajes avarientos.[76]

The house in which Pepe is desperately searching for childhood memories is the same house which contains objects that represent Pepe's time spent overseas; there is a disconnect presented here between the world from which Pepe came and the one he returns to. It is this dissonance that renders his experience of memory and temporality discontinuous and incoherent. The gathering of the family round the trunks of objects reveals a society that not only harbours a new taste for 'exotic' relics, but also the importance of the promise of wealth and regeneration in the transitory rural space.

When Pepe dies, the children delve into the contents of the trunks, all the while ensuring to remain quiet in case the commotion resurrects Pepe: 'los hijos revolvían en la salucha contigua el fondo de los baúles y se disputaban los últimos despojos, injuriándose en voz baja para no resucitar al muerto'.[77] Instead of considering the provenance of these objects, tracing their past and the experiences contained within them, the relatives, those who stayed, are anxious to objectify this past. The memory of emigration from this village now promises to be curated and fetishised, yet not remembered. The authentic, personal stories that are behind

[75] Xosé M. Nuñez Seixas, 'Una aproximación a la imagen social del emigrante retornado de América en la Península Ibérica (siglos XVI-XX)', in *Retornados (de exilios y migraciones),* ed. by Josefina Cuesta Bustillo (Madrid: Fundación Largo Caballero, 1999), pp. 3-39 (p. 32).
[76] 'Boroña', p. 47.
[77] 'Boroña', p. 48.

the objects are lost as 'modern' society longs for the luxurious façades of the *indiano* mansions, or the new infrastructure constructed by this new wealth, without acknowledging individual and collective experiences of economic migration. The family's failure to effectively remember the past as a collective experience is deemed of equal detriment as Pepe's nostalgic rural return. The failure of Pepe's reintegration into his old life suggests that Clarín, as I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, privileges the role of the rural in representing issues that exist on a national scale, namely, the forces of capital and migration that will both, as Clarín's story demonstrates, pose problems for the way the past is remembered and its effect on the 'health' of the nation.

Provenance and providence in 'El Quin' and 'Viaje redondo'

'El Quin' and 'Viaje redondo', both published in the *Cuentos morales* collection in 1896 and both written the previous year, will be discussed here as stories that explore the role of provenance and providence in the loss and recuperation of memory and faith. In 'El Quin', a dog suffers the loss of his 'owner' and 'master' when he abandons him. This loss induces a mnemonic crisis whereby the absence of the providence of his protector and master leaves him with little memory of the past. Read as an allegory for the absence of providence from God, this story, along with 'Viaje redondo', reveals that a crisis of lineage and a rupture of memory can be mapped onto spiritual and religious questions. In 'Viaje redondo', the death of the protagonist's father coincides with his religious scepticism and spiritual crisis whereby the ancient past is invoked as an anchoring force.

I argue in this discussion that these narratives can be read in light of the nineteenth-century tropes of heredity, genealogy, and lineage which appeared in several of the century's novels and short stories. I propose specifically that the concepts of provenance and providence play a central role in these two stories to reveal anxieties around temporal continuity and national coherence through questions of origin, destiny, faith, and lineage. These texts narrate the

degeneration, in ‘El Quin’, and regeneration, in ‘Viaje redondo’, of the individual, based on their alignment with providence and provenance. In these two narratives, the role of rural and provincial space is more subtle than the aforementioned texts, as I argue that these settings are treated as ideological battlegrounds. They are also spaces with which ‘genesis’ and ‘origin’ are most intertwined, as they contain within them the promise of organic unity and familial connection. The relationship between nature and family is approached in Labanyi’s analysis of Pereda’s *Peñas arriba,* which identifies the novel’s depiction of this connection in the establishment of power structures that are inherited. Pereda ‘constructs a world held together by family ties– which, being natural, “just are”’;[78] in a similar way to land being inherited in rural codes of ownership, so too is a metaphysical connection to provenance or origin.

The dog in ‘El Quin’ travels from a suffocating life in a palace, to an army barracks where he encounters a fellow lost soul, Sindulfo, who arrives at the barracks in an attempt to uncover details of his deceased father’s military service to obtain a pension for his widowed mother. After failing to be granted the pension, they seek a new life together in the provinces, before travelling to the countryside where Sindulfo eventually leaves Quin and returns to the city. Quin is bereft, plagued by a fading memory of Sindulfo, a state which is compounded when he subsequently returns with a new dog. The plot of ‘Viaje redondo’ is not complicated: a widowed mother and her son enter a Church in a small, rural hamlet; the plot does not move from this location, nor does the story involve other characters. In the Church, Clarín traces the thoughts of the mother and son; the mother fears for her son’s fate as a non-believer, and the son contemplates his spiritual crisis underpinned by a struggle between notions of tradition, providence, philosophy, and religious belief. The tale concludes with the spiritual enlightenment of the son; content with the regenerated spirit of her offspring, the mother chooses a coffin in which she would like to be buried, as she predicts her death the following day.

[78] Jo Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 335.

There have been numerous studies that have highlighted the important and complex role of heredity and genealogy in the nineteenth-century imagination. In the case of Spain, Collin McKinney's book, *Mapping the Social Body,* explores Galdós' novels and emphasises *Fortunata y Jacinta* for its illustration of a genealogical concern that pervades the novel: 'family pedigrees are discussed, paternity is a constant concern, and the shadow of degeneration surfaces time and again'.[79] In *Genealogical Fictions: Cultural Periphery and Historical Change in the Modern Novel,* Jobst Welge observes the connections between familial and filial crises and the concept of the nation in nineteenth-century Spanish realist fiction and the regional novel. However, as Welge demonstrates in his book that examines fiction from, amongst other nations, Italy, Brazil, and Portugal, the use of heredity as an allegory for the nation is not unique to Spanish literature. Welge, in his analysis of Machado de Assis' novel *Esaú e Jaco*, foregrounds how 'the factual and existential sterility of the characters in Esaú e Jacó signifies the aborted genealogy of the nation, the lack of historical continuity and national coherence'.[80] Anxieties about the legitimacy of the nation, and particularly how to trace and define it in times of fragmentation and social dissolution, concerns about decadence and regeneration, and a failing political system and corruption, are all reflected through the trope of family, and in the case of Clarín's fiction, a crisis of paternity.

In the most salient example of paternal crisis, *Su único hijo,* Clarín presents the mystery of Antonio Reyes' paternity and the battle for fatherhood. This paternal question is observed by Bryan Cameron as reflective of Clarín's frustration at the (re)generative sterility of Spanish letters. The inability of the Spanish narrative to find an alternative to naturalism and positivism is represented through fractured and frustrated (re)production: 'the broken paternal chain hovers menacingly alongside the fin-de-siècle novelists' inability to generate an innovative

[79] Collin McKinney, *Mapping the Social Body: Urbanisation, the Gaze, and the Novels of Galdós* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), p. 112.
[80] Jobst Welge, *Genealogical Fictions: Cultural Periphery and Historical Change in the Modern Novel* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), p. 157.

form of narrative'.[81] Crises of cultural and political regeneration are at the crux of genealogical problems and literary representations of ruptured lineage and fractious families that have been explored widely in a range of national contexts. I will argue that these two, relatively overlooked, narratives both participate in and contribute to this trend, particularly in terms of their emphasis on memory as a means to explore the interplay between provenance and providence. That is, roots, origins, and lineage are central, in these texts, to notions of legitimacy, faith, and destiny.

The loss of any trace of the military records of Sindulfo's father establishes the absent patriarch as not only physically non-existent, or deceased, but a figure that has been entirely erased from the present. The subsequent death of Sindulfo's mother for whom these records were intended to provide financial security, cements Sindulfo's loss of provenance, his parents' death signalling an absence of origin or legacy from which to continue. El Quin is also detached from his parentage after fleeing the palace in which he grew up, his exact paternity remaining a mystery. He is treated as a source of entertainment by his wealthy owner, and so his self-exile is motivated not by a lust for freedom but a desire to be valued as an equal: 'Quiero amo, decía, pero que me quiera por perro, no por prodigio. Que me deje crecer cuanto sea natural que crezca, y que no me enseñe como un portento, poniéndome en ridículo'.[82] Without an owner, however, El Quin is physically lost upon his arrival in the metropolis and he is soon adopted by the army barracks. Sindulfo is also lost in the barracks, his quest for his father's military file a futile attempt to access his past. Linear time, the continuum between past and future, which is represented here by the procurement of the army pension to secure the family's financial future, is fundamentally questioned. Sindulfo 'nunca podía pasar adelante'[83] as he becomes trapped in a present that denies him access to the past in order to

[81] Bryan Cameron, 'Stillborn Texts and Barren Imaginaries', *Revista Hispánica Moderna,* 67.2 (2014), pp. 143-161 (p. 149).
[82] 'El Quin', II, pp. 116-130 (p. 118).
[83] 'El Quin', p. 119.

secure a future for himself and his mother; in other words, he finds himself unable to transcend the present and advance into the past.

The passage from life in a palace, to the provincial city, to the countryside represents a development of identity: 'Con delicia de artista contemplaba ahora el *Quin* los pasos de su vida: de la corte a la ciudad *provinciana*, de la ciudad a la aldea... Y cada paso en el retiro le parecía un paso *más cerca* de su alma'.[84] The retreat to the countryside is akin to a regaining of selfhood; a gradual uncovering of an authentic identity. Instead, rurality initially offers an authenticity that allows not only for a repossession of territory but also a recuperation of identity. El Quin edges closer to his soul, to an essence that unites the present with eternity, associating the rural space with genesis, origin, and the deep past.

However, this same space transforms from a seemingly watertight embodiment of home to a space that becomes synonymous with entrapment: 'toda la extensión del ancho valle le pareció un calabozo, una insoportable esclavitud'.[85] The cause of this is Sindulfo's departure, which results in the adoption of El Quin by *los campesinos*. As El Quin becomes more restricted by his life in the countryside, memories of the past begin to fade into oblivion: 'Y ¡horror de los horrores! empezó a perder la memoria de la vida pasada, y con ella su ideal: el cariño al amo'.[86] The companionship and sense of meaning that Sindulfo brought to El Quin's existence has vanished, and so too do the memories of that past. The onset of forgetting transcends the insignificant and mundane, as whole images begin to fall away from El Quin's consciousness, his past with Sindulfo is almost entirely obliterated:

> en su cerebro fueron cayendo cendales de olvido; pero olvidaba... las imágenes, las ideas; desapareció la figura de Sindulfo, el concepto de *amo*, el de *ciudad*, el

[84] 'El Quin', p. 122.
[85] 'El Quin', p. 125.
[86] 'El Quin', p. 126.

> de *aquellos tiempos*. […] su cerebro no tenía fuerza para mantener en actualidad constante las imágenes y las ideas.[87]

Sindulfo acts as El Quin's providence, he gives his existence purpose and guidance. This providential presence is then lost, signalling a historical and temporal crisis as the teleological formation of time and memory appears to dissipate without a 'master', guiding force, or spiritual Creator.

El Quin's existence then descends into immorality. Left to his own devices, he witnesses the transgressive polygamous practices of the other dogs in the countryside:

> Sí; los hombres, como los perros, hacían del valle poético, en la noche del sábado, campo de batalla, disputándose en la soledad la presa del amor. La diferencia estaba en que las aventuras perrunas llegaban siempre al matrimonio consumado, aunque deleznable y en una repugnante poligamia, mientras los deslices graves eran menos frecuentes entre mozos y mozas.[88]

El Quin's mysterious paternity, loss of master, and potential involvement in 'transgressive' reproduction all suggest a crisis of legitimacy whereby an obscured provenance and lack of providence leads to illegitimate and corrupted futures. Welge describes how in Galdós' *Fortunata y Jacinta* 'the genealogical crisis [...] motivates the plot of adultery (as a "breaking away" from sterility)' and thus 'illustrates the diagnosis of a social and national decadence'.[89] Transgressive modes of reproduction such as promiscuity fulfil a similar role to tropes of infertility or absent parents in the illustration of society as corrupted by the loss of a legitimate origin or inheritance.

The calm silence of the rural chapel in 'Viaje redondo' begins to unravel as it becomes clear that the son doubts his faith, and the natural environment is equated to a cosmos of disorder.

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[87] 'El Quin', p. 126.
[88] 'El Quin' p. 124.
[89] Jobst Welge, *Genealogical Fictions: Cultural Periphery and Historical Change in the Modern Novel,* p. 73.

The son's spiritual crisis is caused and compounded by the rationality of the external world, rendering the spiritual inner world a site of opacity and confusion: 'pasaba la vida, y como en una miopía racional, el espíritu iba sintiéndose separado por nieblas'.[90] The rural Church is established as a contact zone between conflicting ideologies, as spirituality meets religious scepticism. This is congruent with Yvan Lissourges' assessment of Clarín's own spiritual crisis, which is depicted in many of his short works as a conflict, battle, or struggle: 'la espiritualidad religiosa de Clarín es algo así como el campo de batalla, la zona de fricción en que riñen las tendencias enemigas'.[91]

The references to nature in the story are imbued with the concepts of parentage and lineage. As I have argued in relation to 'El Quin', rurality is often depicted as aligned with genesis and thus with purity. However, the linear origin or traceability of nature's lineage is obscured in 'Viaje redondo', as it is described as existing without a father, that is, without origin, provenance, or providence. Nature without either the clarity of origin, provenance, or the guiding force of a protector, providence, seems erratic, unpredictable, and disorienting: 'la naturaleza llegó a figurársela como una infinita orfandad; el universo sin padre, daba espanto por lo azaroso de su suerte'.[92] The natural world without a significant creator, origin, or curator causes an epistemological and spiritual gulf. This is illustrated by Derek Flitter, albeit in relation to the Romantic historical imagination: 'Providence provided a rationale, a degree of accountability, one of those "ideales" without which nineteenth-century society would appear spiritually destitute'.[93] The 'orphaned' universe is one void of logic and structure, but it is also lacking in a morality generated by spirituality; Clarín thus expresses his concern regarding spiritual degradation that is induced as a result of obscured origin.

[90] 'Viaje redondo', II, pp. 143-149 (p. 146).
[91] Yvan Lissourges, *El pensamiento filosófico y religioso de Leopoldo Alas Clarín* (Oviedo: Grupo Editorial Asturiano, 1996), p. 31.
[92] 'Viaje redondo', p. 146.
[93] Derek Flitter, *Spanish Romanticism and the Uses of History: Ideology and the Historical Imagination* (Oxford: Legenda, 2006), p. 125.

If the present, that is, the son and the environment around him, is defined by its 'fatherless' nature, its origin or roots are concealed in a transgression of legitimacy and purity. If paternal authority is absent, this reflects a crisis of filial memory whereby the notions of origin and lineage are lost. 'Viaje redondo', then, explores not only how the protagonist can recuperate his faith, but also how this correlates to the restoration, and active remembering, of the distant past. Cameron, as mentioned previously, establishes a connection between the *fin de siglo* literary crisis and the tropes of paternity, reproduction, and sterility to represent the stunted development and innovative impotence of Spanish letters. In the following lines, the metaphor of the writer as a patriarchal figure is considered a means to understand the struggle to regain authorial voice:

> author and protagonist, suspended precariously on the precipice of a new era in Spanish narrative, are forced to contend with the dizzying circulation of various literary modes as they struggle to create a legitimizing work able to retrieve some vestige of the authority that has been lost.[94]

Such anxieties surrounding the ability of the author to create works that will codify a new 'legitimate' literature, observed by Cameron, are relevant to the crisis depicted in 'Viaje redondo'. If the patriarchal 'author' is represented in this story as a spiritual Creator, then genealogical crisis and a sterile process of creation and regeneration are mapped onto the search for God and the ensuing ideological battle. Questions over the legitimacy of the future rest on the present as an inheritor of faith.

The son's spiritual crisis is imagined as a violent experience, whereby religion is described in relation to concepts of war, patriotism and martyrdom:

> Para el hijo, el argumento poético de la fe se iba alejando como una música guerrera que pasa, que habla, cuando está cerca, de entusiasmo patriótico, de abnegación

[94] Bryan Cameron, 'Stillborn Texts and Barren Imaginaries', p. 155.

> feliz, y después al desvanecerse en el silencio lejano deja puesto a la idea de la muerte solitaria.[95]

Elsewhere in the text, the son is likened to Shakespeare's Coriolanus, forced to face battle alone without the protection and providence of his mother:

> sólo con la guerra austera, como la pinta Coriolano el de Shakespeare, así aquel pensador sincero se quedaba solo en el desierto de sus dudas, donde era ridículo pedir amparo a una madre, a la infancia pura, como lo hubiera sido en un duelo, en una batalla.[96]

In the Shakespearean tragedy, Coriolanus' mother laments her son's entries into battle, praying for her son and the nation. In the following passage from Act V, scene III, Volumnia expresses her concerns for the future for which she is unable to pray:

> Making the mother, wife, and child to see
> The son, the husband, and the father tearing
> His country's bowels out. And to poor we
> Thine enmity's most capital. Thou barr'st us
> Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort
> That all but we enjoy. For how can we – Alas!
> How can we for our country pray,
> Whereto we are bound, together with thy victory,
> Whereto we are bound?[97]

This is mirrored by the mother's stream of consciousness in 'Viaje redondo' as she feels she is losing her son as a result of his ideological and spiritual struggle:

> El pensamiento de la madre, en tanto, volaba a su manera por regiones muy diferentes, pero también siniestras, obscuras. El hijo se le perdía. Se apartaba de ella,

[95] 'Viaje redondo', p. 145.
[96] 'Viaje redondo', p. 146.
[97] William Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, ed. by Lee Bliss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), V. 3. 101-109.

> y se perdía. Muy lejos, ella lo sentía, vivía blasfemando, olvidado del amor de Dios, enemigo de su gloria.[98]

This metaphysical separation of mother and son also marks the disconnect between the past and the present as he finds himself compelled to contemplate his present crisis without the intervention or influence of the past: 'El no pensar en los grandes problemas de la realidad con el acompañamiento sentimental de los recuerdos amados, de la tradición sagrada, llegó a parecerle un deber, una austera ley del pensamiento mismo'.[99] This establishes the son's lack of faith as not only a theological or philosophical condition, but also one of temporal and mnemonic significance; spiritual belief is intrinsically linked to tradition and memory, inscribing religion into not only a sanctified past but as a means to invoke an inherited collective vision of the present.

Christian 'roots' of the nation are called upon to legitimise the protagonist's place as a worthy descendent of his biological and spiritual parentage. Religion is used as a means to construct origin stories that formulate temporal continuity which Brennan summarises as 'religion's concern with death, continuity, and the desire for origins'.[100] The connection established in 'Viaje redondo' between faith and temporal filiality is underpinned by notions of inheritance; religion, as well as signifying the providence of the patriarchal figure, also elucidates the genealogical element of the protagonist's spiritual regeneration. In the following passage, he considers himself as a descendent of Christians, invoking once again the triad of conflict, inheritance, and faith:

> su alma de poeta seguía siendo cristiana; los olores del templo aldeano, su frescura, su sencillez, el silencio místico, aquella atmósfera de reminiscencias voluptuosas de la niñez creyente y soñadora le embriagaban suavemente; y, sin hipocresía, se humillaba, oraba, sentía a Jesús, y repasaba con las ideas las grandezas de

[98] 'Viaje redondo', p. 147.
[99] 'Viaje redondo', p. 146.
[100] Timothy Brennan, 'The national longing for form', p. 50.

> diecinueve siglos de victorias cristianas. Él era carne de aquella carne, descendiente de aquellos mártires.[101]

This recognition of the role of lineage and filiation in spiritual regeneration suggests a 'legitimacy' that derives from providence and provenance: his parentage is identified as the ancient Christian past and thus the presence of religious belief remains faithful to not only historical legacy, but also his inherent and inherited ontology.

The act of memory in this sense is less a direct remembering than a deployment of the past to establish a clear 'bloodline' and teleological relationship between the ancient past and the present. The honouring of inheritance, therefore, is presented in the story as an act of memory that is able to generate a spiritual regeneration based on the conceptualisation of the past as a genealogical phenomenon. To eliminate this spiritual inheritance would constitute an act of oblivion; according to Lissourges, this represented a *progresista* treatment of history:

> Cada español, lo quiera o no, es tributario de este pasado, y Clarín no puede concebir que algunos puedan rechazarlo, hacer tabla rasa de la *existencia* histórica que los procede. Esto es lo que hacen los partidarios de la *historia progresista* (como se llama en la época), los cuales, según la caracterización de Clarín, quieren olvidar la historia.[102]

Clarín's vision of history described by Lissourges is depicted in 'Viaje redondo' through a spiritual and religious inheritance. Thus, the intertwining nature of religion and history contributes to the symbiosis of spiritual crisis and a crisis of inheritance. The generational transmission of faith, such as that described by Joan Oleza who describes Clarín's protagonist's (re)conversion to 'una religión que lo encadenaba a generaciones de hombres',[103] suggests a linearity of memory which evokes regeneration as being launched

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[101] 'Viaje redondo', p. 145.
[102] Yvan Lissourges, *El pensamiento filosófico y religioso de Leopoldo Alas Clarín,* p. 115.
[103] Joan Oleza, 'Clarín: las contradicciones de un realismo límite', *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes,* 1976 <https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/clarn---las-contradicciones-de-un-realismo-lmite-0/html/ff8389b0-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_13.html> [accessed 15.04.2021].

from the past. I thus propose, in these two narratives, that Clarín presents the two protagonists as experiencing crises of remembering that are framed through paternity and inheritance. Both characters become distanced from the past when they experience the absence of belonging to a clearly defined provenance or lineage. The absence of a providential master and authority figure in 'El Quin' establishes the stray dog as an allegory for a directionless existence caused by a loss of memory. This missing past, due to an absent providential figure, signals a distancing and deviation from 'origin'. 'Viaje redondo' examines how spiritual regeneration might occur if the deep past is invoked in the present; in other words, spirituality and a spiritual regeneration, must not only be experienced, but remembered. In both narratives, Clarín exploits the connections between rurality and tradition, and nature and the family, to imagine crisis as a spiritual and providential gulf and explore how inheritance might be deployed as a regenerative tool.

Conclusion: a critique of myopic regionalism?

In his analysis of Emilia Pardo Bazán's novels *Los Pazos de Ulloa* and *La madre naturaleza*, Welge describes how these novels display a *'critical* regionalism'[104] whereby the provincial and rural spaces are no longer associated with innocence and purity. I suggest throughout this chapter that Clarín's stories also critique this vision of the regional, complicating the perception of these spaces by nuancing their position as either as enclaves of purity or as removed from the nation's entry into modern capitalist progress. This regionalism is expressed principally through the use of time and memory to elucidate how these spaces attest to particular notions of progress. The rural home is a site of destruction in '¡Adiós Cordera!' and 'Boroña'; in both narratives, capitalism and 'modernity' absorbs the meaning of these rural homes and deprives them of their inherent mnemonic qualities. Instead of signalling the onset of modernity as a catalyst for change, the way these spaces are transformed raises questions

[104] Jobst Welge, *Genealogical Fictions,* p. 89. [Original italics].

as to the injustices of modern capitalist expansion. As communities change as a result of repeated departures, the fractured memories in sites of migration result in unproductive nostalgia and failed collective remembering.

In 'El oso mayor', the provincial space witnesses transcendental experiences, the privileging of more-than-human timescales proposing a decentred modernity whereby the provincial is rendered universal. Hegemonic urban centres, and thus the timescales that they impose, are questioned through Clarín's experimentation with the cosmic and celestial to illustrate the provincial as a metaphysical state as opposed to a physical and terrestrial entity. As Welge notes, 'the peripheral space continues to resist, adapt, and distort the influence of modernity',[105] allowing for broader definitions of what constitutes the nation and introducing heterogeneous ideas of progress.

In 'Viaje redondo' and 'El Quin', the rural space is both a site where providence is regained, in the former, and lost, in the latter. These texts align the rural with ancient roots to counteract forces of materialism and religious scepticism, and thus serve to reveal how Clarín thoughts regarding the rural as eternal and providential leads to diverse readings of 'progress'. Analysing 'Viaje redondo' alongside another eternalised vision of the peripheral space in 'El oso mayor', demonstrates how Clarín manipulated temporality and memory so that the rural and provincial were sites, in the former, of perpetuating the concept of an eternal Christian nation, and in the latter, decentring dominant forces of 'modernity'. These are, therefore, transitory narratives about the multidirectional resistance of the rural space to ideas of progress as unspiritual and urban.

The stories discussed in this chapter introduce concepts that will be the focus of subsequent chapters. 'Boroña', in this chapter, has been explored as a story whose significance centres as much on the nostalgic dreams of a returning *indiano* as on his reception by his remaining relatives, as it is in the latter that fears of a failing collective memory in the rural areas of Spain

[105] Jobst Welge, *Genealogical Fictions,* p. 89.

are expressed. This story, therefore, anticipates the discussion in Chapter Three of the mythification and objectification of the collective national past. Following from the analysis of 'El Quin' and 'Viaje redondo' as using the concepts of lineage and inheritance to express a mnemonic and spiritual crisis, I discuss, in Chapter Two, how the crisis of filiation is connected to nineteenth-century debates around pathology and degeneration.

Chapter Two

(Re)imagining crisis and degeneration through oblivion and pathology

'Perdidos allá en lontananzas de desgracias y errores'[1]
('El dúo de la tos')

'¡Dios mío, Dios mío! ¿Qué hemos hecho para que así nos castigues?', exclaims Doña Nieves as the curtains go up, '¡Qué desconsuelo, Dios mío!'[2] She continues to cry out in pain, anger, and shame at her family's misfortune. Described as 'algo rubia' with 'ojos oscuros de mirada viva y penetrante', Doña Nieves is the opening voice in a play written by Dr Bernabé Malo de Poveda in 1913 entitled *Amor y conciencia*. Doña Nieves's opening monologue expresses her devastation at the illness and impending death of her grandchild, whose ailing health due to tuberculosis is at the epicentre of a doomed union between her daughter, Rosa, and Rosa's husband Mario, which has produced several sick offspring. We listen too to her persistent questioning, tears spilling out of her eyes: '¿Quién podría pensar y menos temer desdicha tanta?', she questions the audience. Her approach to the situation is as much motivated by love and heartbreak as it is a level of consciousness (as the title of the play, *Amor y conciencia,* might suggest) that although devastating, her grandchild's illness is a consequence that must have a cause, in other words, there must be an explanation for all of this. Enter the Doctor. An athletic build, a warm countenance, a sanguine complexion. Upon hearing his footsteps, Doña Nieves shouts, '¡El doctor lo sabía; el doctor lo anunció; el doctor se opuso con toda su autoridad de médico y de amigo, á lo que él llamaba "perpetración" del matrimonio, ya que, de consumarse, sólo traería desgracias y catástrofes!'.[3] The audience might be shocked to hear that the union had progressed despite the warnings of a medical professional against the marriage in order to prevent and contain the disease that raged throughout the nineteenth and

[1] 'El dúo de la tos', in *Cuentos completos,* ed. by Carolyn Richmond, 2 vols (Madrid: Alfaguara, 2000), II, pp. 66-71 (p. 68).
[2] Bernabé Malo de Poveda, *Amor y conciencia* (Madrid: Librería Nicolás de Moya, 1913), I. (p. 33).
[3] Bernabé Malo de Poveda, *Amor y conciencia,* p. 34.

early twentieth century: tuberculosis. Now Doña Nieves's family are at the mercy of medicine, a punishment for having transgressed the laws of heredity and pathology.

What Doña Nieves's reaction tells us is that the fear of illness, the pathologisation of human relationships, and the repetition of catastrophe inherited from the past that is doomed to persist into the future, were all at play in the aesthetic and public consciousness at the turn of the twentieth century. In particular, her submission to the Doctor reveals the power of rationality at a time of self-styled 'regeneration', when the symbols of 'degeneration' were all too apparent; illness, decay, death, contagion. It is this binary consideration of disease and health, death and life, the rational and the emotional, progress and decline, all underpinned by the duality of degeneration and regeneration, that I will discuss in this chapter. I am interested in how these binary oppositions that characterised illness, death, and more broadly, nationhood and temporality are deconstructed and cancelled out. I therefore explore how degeneration and regeneration are problematized through the connections established in Clarín's stories between death, pathology, and memory. The subjugation of emotion by rationalising forces that is so present in these opening lines of Malo de Poveda's play, informs the following reading of this selection of Clarín's stories, as this power dialectic is central to the role that degeneration theory played in nineteenth-century society. The pathologisation of human behaviour curated responses to disease and death that, in these stories, occluded the human need to remember the past and envisage the future. Although not all the stories included in this chapter deal directly with disease, they all highlight a problematization of degeneration and regeneration as dichotomous. Ideas of progress are, therefore, confused, erroneous, and infirm.

To this end, the chapter makes three principal arguments, all of which are influenced by the late nineteenth-century zeitgeist of crisis. I propose, however, that crisis might not be most productively seen as a monolinear construction of the *crisis de fin de siglo* framed through imperial 'disaster', but as crises of memory, temporality, and (re)generation. In doing so, I

firstly propose that Clarín, through his representation of death, uncovers a crisis of remembering. Specifically, I will argue that Clarín reveals the limitations and even the dangers of the totalising rationalisation and pathologisation that aimed to cleanse or sterilise society, annihilating a past that is deemed 'abject'. Therefore, the roots of a stalling and ineffective regeneration project are revealed to derive from the silencing of memory and historical disorientation. The second part of the chapter argues that another facet of 'crisis' is a crisis of filiation. I propose that Clarín questions theories of heredity and evolution as a means to explain the degeneration and to propel the regeneration of Spain. Regeneration and reproduction are depicted as impotent and infertile processes which, it will be argued, inverts the regenerationist discourse of linear progress as a socio-cultural panacea. The final section of the chapter introduces a third avenue of 'crisis': a crisis of spirituality. This section examines the role of the metaphysical in challenging the authority of positivism and rationality in regenerationist projects. Specifically, this section will explore the subversion of the abject, diseased body and positivist notions of time and space in order to erode the rational-progressive symbiosis. The conclusion to this chapter aims to reveal Clarín's deconstruction of the binary separation between degeneration and regeneration, presenting them instead as cyclical and reciprocal concepts that do not adhere to linear ideologies or frameworks of disease versus cure.

This challenge to the binary presentation of regeneration and degeneration presents us with broader questions surrounding the nature of progress. What do we mean by degeneration and regeneration? How do perceptions of temporal and historical movement relate to degeneration and regeneration? What does the diseased and the deceased body or object say about progress, degeneration, and temporality? This chapter reveals some implosions of these binary oppositions, which in turn might suggest the deconstruction of any kind of meaning degeneration and regeneration might have. For example, without working in opposition to decay and degeneration, how might regeneration be defined? This chapter addresses this question in the context of late nineteenth-century Spain, challenging the legitimacy and

efficacy of a regeneration project that pathologised a nation and turned the idea of progress from a panacea to an indefinable, unlocatable abstraction. In posing these questions, the chapter, above all, aims to make explicit the connection between the concrete and the abstract in considering what death, a tangible, physical, ubiquitous and inevitable process has to say about the conceptual – progress, temporality, and memory.

Before exploring these questions further, it is worth examining how the concepts of degeneration and regeneration that underpin this chapter have been historically framed. *Degeneration* by Max Nordau was published in 1892 and outlined a theory that had been spreading throughout Europe during the nineteenth century and was being debated amongst intellectuals, politicians, and medical professionals as a means to explain and, as I suggest, pathologise social 'ills'. According to Mary Hotz, Nordau's work demonstrated the 'menacing and dangerous presence of degeneration in Western society in which bodily decay became synonymous with an intensifying social and urban crisis'.[4] This intersection between disease and social decline became semantically intertwined with degeneration as well as informing solutions to regenerate Spain, as Balfour explains:

> many of those who sought to diagnose the causes of Spain's decadence resorted to a sort of pathology of the nation. The crudest diagnoses tended to confuse biological states with historical and social processes [...] writers and politicians mobilized the language of medicine to describe the symptoms and remedies: germs, disease, and degeneration on one hand and therapeutic treatments on the other.[5]

The connection between the social body and the biological body meant that diseased or disordered anatomy was mapped onto society, at times reflecting the transformations that were witnessed during processes of industrialisation and urbanisation and suggesting that a

[4] Mary Hotz, *Literary remains: Representations of Death and Burial in Victorian England* (Albany: State of New York Press, 2009), p. 150.
[5] Sebastian Balfour, *The End of the Spanish Empire 1898-1923* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 66-67.

rising urban population led to a decline in physical and emotional health. Catherine Jagoe, in her analysis of Galdós' *Ángel Guerra*, makes salient this connection between degeneration theory and modernity, stating that Nordau's work highlighted the pathological consequences of progress: 'the price of the nineteenth century's much-vaunted progress was inevitable wear and tear on the brain and nervous system, which explained, according to Nordau, the social pathology which he saw as endemic'.[6] The assimilation of the social and biological also meant the conflation of the interior and exterior state, or in other words, the spiritual-moral and the corporeal. This caused social phenomena such as criminality to be framed around the physicality of the body. Fae Bauer explains that Morel and Lombroso, pioneers of the biological theory of crime who were publishing from the 1870s, made criminality and morality physical and external: 'following the Western concept of the transparent body in which its exterior was presumed to be a reflection of its interior state, both Morel and Lombroso searched for marks of this devolution upon the outer body'.[7]

The translocation of 'degenerate' bodies and physical illness onto the social fabric was part of not only a public health movement but a broader project of national and racial identity, as Campos Marín and Huertas confirm: 'in opposition to the individual focus of the psychiatrists, hygienists gave degeneration a social spin that put the whole of the Spanish 'race' in permanent danger'.[8] Theories of inheritance and evolution then began to engulf intellectual discourse, as positivism and Darwinism became the 'products of late nineteenth-century political defeat and inquiry into the sources of national decline'.[9] A search for historical

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[6] Catherine Jagoe, 'Monstrous Inversions: Decadence and Degeneration in Galdós' *Ángel Guerra',* in *Culture and Gender in Nineteenth-Century Spain*, ed. by Lou Charnon-Deutsch and Jo Labanyi (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 161-181 (p. 163).
[7] Fae Bauer, 'Introduction', in *Picturing Evolution and Extinction: Regeneration and Degeneration in Modern Visual Culture*, ed. by Fae Brauer and Serena Keshavjee (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), pp. xv-1 (p. xviii).
[8] Ricardo Campos Marín and Rafael Huertas, 'The Theory of Degeneration in Spain (1886-1920)', in *The Reception of Darwinism in the Iberian World*, ed. by Thomas F. Glick, Miguel Angel Puig-Samper and Rosaura Ruiz (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2001), pp. 171-187 (pp. 178-179).
[9] Joshua Goode, *Impurity of Blood: Defining Race in Spain 1870-1930* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009), p. 80.

explanations for the decline of the nation thus required a rational and pathological presentation of Spain's 'ills' as 'matters of inheritance, the quality of transmitted traits, and the strength of historical development began to underpin discussions of Spain's social problems'.[10] The interplay between inheritance, biology, and the 'nation' was symptomatic of the rise of Naturalism[11] across Europe, and contributed to the destruction of the boundaries that separated private from public, pathology from history, biology from culture. Jobst Welge argues that the interconnectivity of these categories should be considered within 'the larger context of European naturalism, where the unity of the family becomes the privileged site for the interference of the biological with the social, nature with nurture, inheritance with environment'.[12] Genealogy and the literal and figurative production of the future, that is, reproduction, was conceptualised as not only a biological event related to the private sphere, but as part of a wider process of heredity bound up in discourse around the health of the nation. To cite Katharine Murphy, 'in the course of the nineteenth century, reproduction was conceived of, not in relation to the individual, but as the means of transmission of biological characteristics'.[13] If reproduction was deployed as a socio-cultural and historical metaphor to depict the creation of healthy futures, then Spain's degeneration was conceptualised as the result of a hereditary defect that must be identified, erased, and forgotten.

With such widespread repercussions in intellectual thought, the idea of degeneration influenced all corners of Spanish public life, thus it is necessary to examine what was seen to be at the root of this 'degeneracy'. It is possible to consider Spain as a case that is both integrated with and separate from the European 'norm' in its appropriation of ideas of degeneration to pathologise the nation and its history. As I have demonstrated, Spain's

[10] Joshua Goode, *Impurity of Blood: Defining Race in Spain 1870-1930,* p. 77.
[11] For further insight on naturalism in Spain, see Emilia Pardo Bazán, *La cuestión palpitante* (Editorial Anthropos: Barcelona, 1989). First edition published 1883.
[12] Jobst Welge, *Genealogical Fictions: Cultural Periphery and Historical Change in the Modern Novel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), p. 72.
[13] Katharine Murphy, *Bodies of Disorder: Gender and Degeneration in Baroja and Blasco Ibáñez* (Oxford: Legenda, 2017), p. 8.

treatment of the body and its systems and components, such as reproduction and the family, and disease and its vectors, was common to a European-wide movement towards Naturalism. This meant putting a microscope up to societies to assess their fitness to function as social bodies, searching for an explanation for decadence and decline through the medium of both mental and physical health.

What has been considered as Spain's unique place within this discourse of decline was the *Desastre* of 1898. The loss of Spain's last colonies has been identified as a pivotal moment in which calls to regenerate the nation increased in urgency. Yvan Lissourges emphasises the importance of this historical event in providing a reference point for the causes and effects of the sense of national crisis, and specifically its impact on the perception of a national consciousness. He writes:

> es verdad, sin embargo, que la conmoción que resulta del «desastre» del 98 es el punto culminante del malestar de la conciencia nacional, un momento patético, en el que se plantea como nunca y en toda la nación, el problema de lo que es España, con respecto a lo que fue y en relación con los demás países.[14]

This temporal demarcation of crisis and degeneration is also supported by Sebastian Balfour: 'the Disaster of 1898 signified the end of [Spain's] Empire and the beginning of her internal fragmentation'. It is worth, however, acknowledging that this crisis, seen to be present in dialogues in a vast array of fields such as medicine, politics, religion and philosophy, cannot be solely confined to the demise of the Spanish empire, and not least to the arbitrary date of 1898. Lissourges, in his writing on Clarín and the 'crisis de fin de siglo', states that discourses of degeneration and crisis 'no puede considerarse únicamente como consecuencia de la guerra de Cuba y de la pérdida de las últimas colonias'.[15] I consider Clarín's stories not within

[14] Yvan Lissourges, 'Leopoldo Alas, Clarín, frente a la crisis de fin de siglo', *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes*, 1998 <https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/leopoldo-alas-clarn-frente-a-la-crisis-de-fin-de-siglo-0/html/01fa2cee-82b2-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_2.html> [accessed 07.04.2022].
[15] Yvan Lissourges, 'Leopoldo Alas, Clarín, frente a la crisis de fin de siglo', *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes*, 1998 <https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/leopoldo-alas-clarn-frente-a-la-crisis-de-fin-de-siglo-0/html/01fa2cee-82b2-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_2.html> [accessed 07.04.2022].

the frame of *Desastre*, but as a broader questioning of how to enact regeneration, and ultimately, Spain's inability to distinguish the regressive from the progressive.

With the idea of a nation in crisis in mind, contagion and containment often associated with infection control were deployed in order to regulate emotional responses to 'crisis' and 'disaster'. Hygienic discourses thus became methods of social management which, according to Rebecca Haidt, aimed at 'combining the physical and the moral in the governance and regulation of the mind, will, and body',[16] in turn proposing that the triad of psychological, spiritual and corporeal authority over the population would regenerate Spain and drive out decay. These discourses of crisis and socio-historical upheaval meant that deviance from the norm, or 'disorderly' elements of the social body, needed to be purged, as Akiko Tsuchiya explains: 'The disorder and the erosion of familiar boundaries [...] led logically to the attempt to control and contain disorder through the heightening of disciplinary measures, which had been proliferating since the end of the eighteenth century'.[17] The hysteric, chaotic, and emotional response displayed by Doña Nieves in *Amor y conciencia* provides a clear example of what Haidt terms 'emotional contagion', a domino effect whereby the physical experiences of disease and death translate directly onto a mental or moral state. The composed and authoritative presence of the doctor is considered as the antidote to Doña Nieves's feverish monologue, as hygiene poses as a commanding body that could shape the family's reaction to the present crisis of disease, decay, and heredity. Haidt identifies the rationality of hygienic discourses as the 'theorized control of the passions as one essential prophylactic against illness'.[18] This chapter, therefore, will explore the repressive control of hygiene and rationality over the dead and dying body, and in turn, the national 'crisis' of degeneration.

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[16] Rebecca Haidt, 'Emotional Contagion in a Time of Cholera: Sympathy, Humanity, and Hygiene in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Spain', in *Engaging the emotions in Spanish culture and history,* ed. by Luisa Elena Delgado, Jo Labanyi, Pura Fernández (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 2016), pp. 77-94 (p. 77).

[17] Akiko Tsuchiya, *Marginal Subjects: Gender and Deviance in Fin de siècle Spain* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2011), p. 11.

[18] Rebecca Haidt, 'Emotional Contagion in a Time of Cholera: Sympathy, Humanity, and Hygiene in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Spain', p. 81.

The ‘punto culminante’, to use Lissourges’ term, of the *fin de siglo* crisis, the loss of the empire, was only that: a trigger point, but not the totalising cause of the ensuing soul-searching, nor representative of the extent of its effects in discourses around temporality and nationhood. Faced with a crisis and the perceived failure of the Spanish state, and even the malfunction of the Hispanic ‘race’ that was perceived to have contributed to the growing crisis at the twilight of the nineteenth century, medical discourses around disease, contagion and heredity were mapped onto society at large, as this discussion has already delineated. This was, according to Michael Aronna, part of a ‘drive to isolate and classify the organically and socially ill as part of a greater project to rationalize, modernize and industrialize the nation’.[19] If degeneration discourses aimed to locate aspects of society deemed in some way ‘ill’ or ‘degenerate’ in order to transform society through the prism of modernity and progress, then this project was as much about temporality as it was about medicine, psychology and society. This is highlighted by Noël Valis in her chapter ‘Decadence and innovation in *fin de siglo* Spain’ as she states that,

> decadence suggests, etymologically and historically, a falling away; and temporally points backward to the past. The relation between the past and the present becomes fraught with dissonance and disjunction. Preoccupation with decadence is only partially about the past, and has more to do with the present, with dissatisfaction over present realities, which are viewed through the prism of pastness.[20]

The presence of the past in the present, or the pastness of the present, is therefore linked to a degenerate society and was seen as being at the root of Spain’s decadence.

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[19] Michael Aronna, *Pueblos Enfermos: The Discourse of Illness in the Turn-of-the-Century Spanish and Latin American Essay* (North Carolina: North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literature, 1999), p. 14.

[20] Noël Valis, ‘Decadence and innovation in *fin de siglo* Spain’, in *The Cambridge Companion to the Spanish Novel,* ed. by Harriet Turner and Adelaida López de Martínez (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 138-152 (p. 140).

Often used interchangeably, it is worth exploring the distinctions between decadence and degeneration. Oscar Vázquez provides a helpful way of considering the two concepts as overlapping and interweaving, but also potentially erroneously conflated:

> degeneration is based on a linear notion of regression to, or the reappearance of, an earlier, more primitive condition, while decadence is based on perceptions of social or cultural movement away from or beyond a superior state, not necessarily invoking atavism, but rather as a refinement of that superiority through nuance.[21]

The two concepts intersect, as far as this present exploration takes us, at the point of a perceived regression into a past deemed inferior or less advanced than the recent past, thus considered to constitute a distancing from a preferable state. This coincidence of degeneration and decadent discourses introduced the idea that Spain was experiencing a moment of regression not only materially, artistically and socially (as well as the economic implications of the loss of empire) that affected its 'health', but also that this regression related to time and history as Spain was seen to regress temporally. This temporal receding invokes a co-dependent relationship between the past and the present. In other words, they are both visible at the same time and require the presence of one another to curate a sense of decadence, that is, a sense of going backwards in time to remain in the past-present, or a sense of receding spiritually and culturally as a result of this backwards temporal motion.

Therefore, the discourse around degeneration cannot exist without regeneration, the antidote to degeneracy, as Hambrook states of Nordau's work; 'the Theory of Degeneration articulated the belief that individuals, groups, and even whole societies could not only progress up the evolutionary scale, but also regress or remain static, leaving their evolutionary potential unfulfilled or thwarted'.[22] The realisation that societies could be perceived to reverse processes of modernisation, industrialisation, and, in Darwinian terms, evolution, produced a

[21] Oscar Vázquez, *The End Again: Degeneration and Visual Culture in Modern Spain* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017), p. 6.
[22] Glyn Hambrook, 'Baudelaire, Degeneration Theory and Literary Criticism in *Fin-de-Siècle* Spain', *Modern Languages Review,* 101.4 (2006), pp. 1005-1024 (p. 1006).

'shift of emphasis in fin de siècle Spain from a preoccupation with decadence and decline to a striving for regeneration'.[23] However, the search for regeneration, I argue in this chapter, cannot be considered a linear process triggered by 'backwardness' that would alleviate all signs of decadence, as the crisis depicted in the following section is not one of degeneration versus regeneration, but one of cyclical, shifting formulations of advancement and return, remembering and forgetting.

Forgetting as annihilation in 'Cuervo' and 'Vario'

Both of Clarín's stories 'Cuervo' and 'Vario' depict a crisis of remembering whereby memory is lost and progressions of time are not necessarily associated with positive change, thus inversing the linear relationship between time and progress. 'Cuervo' was published in 1892, the same year as Nordau's *Degeneration*. The title of the story is also the name of its central character, who could be described as a village shaman, who arrives in the fictional town of Laguna. There ensues a power struggle between Cuervo and the village doctor, Resma. Resma's role is defined in medicalising terms:

> Torcuato Resma, en opinión de muchos, había traído al pueblo todas las plantas de Egipto con su dichosa higiene y sus estadísticas demográficas y observaciones en el cementerio y en el hospital, y en la malatería y en las viviendas pobres.[24]

However, after garnering the support of the public and the press, Cuervo successfully drives out Resma and his rationalising, hygienic discourse. Cuervo's role, however, is starkly different to that of Resma. He is depicted as a death doctor, not a medical doctor, as his role is defined not by healing or curing, but by aiding the process of dying:

> No visitaba a los enfermos mientras ofrecían esperanzas de vida. No era su vocación. Él entraba en la casa cuando el portal olía a cera y en las escaleras había dos filas de

[23] Glyn Hambrook, 'Baudelaire, Degeneration Theory and Literary Criticism in Fin-de-Siècle Spain' p. 1020.
[24] Leopoldo Alas "Clarín", 'Cuervo', in *Cuentos completos,* ed. by Carolyn Richmond, 2 vols (Madrid: Alfaguara, 2000), I, pp. 363-383 (p. 364).

> gotas amarillentas, lágrimas de los cirios. Entraba cuando salía el Señor. Llegaba siempre como sofocado.[25]

A clear separation is established, therefore, between Cuervo and Resma, pseudo-science and medical science, affect and rationality.

Cuervo encourages the families of the deceased to forget the past, and with it their deceased relatives, and move forward into the future. In his approach to death, Cuervo imposes a regime of cleansing and disinfecting within a project of mass forgetting, establishing a system in which he gains authoritative control of the corporeal and the mnemonic. By exploring this aspect of Clarín's depiction of death and attitudes towards it, I argue that the narrative distorts established conceptions of 'backwardness' and 'progress', instead revealing them to be inextricable and coalescent concepts. Two phenomena are considered in this part of the discussion: the cleansing and sterilising of death, and the elimination of historical time.

'Vario', the second story I discuss in this section, was published in 1896 as part of the *Cuentos morales* collection. It was previously published in *Los Lunes de El Imparcial* in March 1894 and, as Richmond has highlighted,[26] there were some changes between the two versions, suggesting Clarín revised the text for its publication in *Cuentos morales.* The story is set in Ancient Rome and the protagonist, Vario, is a poet who fears that his work will be forgotten after his death. He travels to Greece where he encounters sirens who warn him that his work will indeed be forgotten and that he should cease his production to avoid the fruitless activity that writing for inevitable oblivion would entail. Vario eventually recognises the truth in the siren's words, and yet believes that his life would be meaningless if he lived by the notion that his achievements will ultimately be obliterated. By exploring Clarín's imagining of the future of a past world, particularly the vision of the future as an imitation or reproduction of the past, I

[25] 'Cuervo', p. 371.
[26] Carolyn Richmond, *Leopoldo Alas Clarín, Vario… y Varia: Clarín a través de cinco cuentos suyos* (Madrid: Orígenes, 1990), p. 17.

argue that Clarín questions narratives of progress whereby the future becomes a byword for forgetting. Discussing these stories together will ultimately show that a failure to remember the past reveals a deficiency in transmissions of knowledge, ideas, ultimately distorting ideas of progress and regeneration.

Manipulating memory at the funeral: 'Cuervo'

Thomas Lacquer describes thus the significance of the dead in culture:

> they remain part of culture; base as they are, they do not revert back into nature easily. To the contrary, they bear witness to the historical continuity of humanity. We as a species care for the dead; we live among them; we make of them ciphers of memory. They are the guarantors of land and power and authority. They are the temporal foundation of human communities.[27]

From this, we can extract three important functions of death in life, according to Lacquer. Firstly, the presence of death reminds us that we are part of a continual temporal and historical process. Secondly, the dead become harbingers of memory as they represent what is past and has passed, their gravestones serving as reminders of past lives, loves, families, conflicts as well as broader histories of national and global significance. Finally, due to its temporal and mnemonic functions, death anchors present society in time and, in so doing, provides a basis by which temporality can be understood.

Death, and its visibility in culture and society, is therefore vital for the temporal orientation of the present and the effective memorialisation of the past. Cuervo, however, works to eliminate traces of death from the realm of the living, obliterating the memory of the deceased and encouraging a swift transition to the 'future', to life beyond and without memory of the dead. Considering this totalising abandonment of the importance of the dead in wider society, we can begin to question the legitimacy of Cuervo's regime that, whilst insisting on the immediate

[27] Thomas Lacquer, 'The Deep Time of the Dead', *Social Research,* 78.3 (2011), pp. 799-820 (p. 800).

oblivion of death, simultaneously makes death and participating in funereal processes its means of survival. Cuervo represents individual and material gain from death as opposed to promoting a productive remembering of the dead. The imposition of forgetting becomes an addictive force that allows Cuervo to tighten his grip on the *lagunenses* by eliminating their memories of the dead and thereby manipulating their relationship with the past. In other words, the obliteration of the dead from amongst the living and the subsequent eradication of the past in the present, comes to represent a regime of forced forgetting and a form of temporal and historical disorientation that distorts any move towards genuine progress.

Clarín's use of clinical imagery such as sterilisation and disinfection illustrates this eradication of memory and, specifically, how this elimination of memory through hygienic practice leads to obscured progress. We read in the following lines that Cuervo's approach to eliminating traces of the deceased is compared to cleaning:

> Y seguía su inspección por la casa adelante, vertiendo vida por todas partes, borrando vestigios del *otro*, del difunto, como desinfectando el aire con el ácido fénico de su espíritu incorruptible, al que no podía atacar la acción corrosiva de la idea de la muerte.[28]

The presence of death is considered destructive, and the dead body becomes something abhorrent and abject as it comes to represent the 'other', the 'other' version of being, the 'other' realm of experience that, in order to participate in the world of the living, the productive, the progressive, must be ignored, as Kristeva elucidates: 'corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live'.[29] The physical separation of the dead from the living in 'Cuervo' ('¡todo en su sitio!'[30]) reflects this othering through imagery of quarantine as space becomes an agent of contagion and containment. This invites an important dimension of this response

[28] 'Cuervo', p. 376.
[29] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1982), p. 3.
[30] 'Cuervo', p. 376.

to death: the embrace of the 'other', the 'abject', and the 'decayed' becomes an act associated with repulsion.

Lacquer explains the connection between hygiene and the cultural reception of the dead body at the beginning of the nineteenth century: 'as the decaying dead body became an object of scientific attention it became also a source of acute anxiety and distaste',[31] signalling that the dead body becomes 'abjectified', losing its cultural significance and instead representing uncleanliness and ultimately waste material that has no function in present society. The regime that Cuervo follows of compulsive tidying implies that there is something disorderly and transgressive about death, illuminated in the following lines: 'la limpieza consistía en la ausencia de todo signo de muerte, de toda idea o sensación de descomposición, podredumbre o aniquilamiento'.[32] It might be useful here to consider Mary Douglas's delineation of the relationship between uncleanliness and marginality as dirt is seen as 'matter out of place'.[33] In relation to death, Cuervo's discourse is one which equates the corpse with the disorderly. The cleaning, then, that surrounds the attitudes towards death in 'Cuervo' points to a wider discourse of social cleansing. Cuervo attempts to 'clean up' Laguna by expelling 'decaying' or 'disorderly' agents in order to establish his regime of forgetting; in other words, that which belongs to the past, the deceased, is deemed threatening to the desire for social hygiene, social order, and, as will be ultimately revealed, a 'social forgetting'.

However, Cuervo's actions are also associated with extreme kindness; he handles the dead body with care and adeptness: 'las manos de Cuervo, blandas y grandes, movían el cuerpo de plomo con habilidad de enfermera, sin lastimarle y con la eficacia precisa'.[34] He is able to

[31] Thomas Lacquer, 'The Places of the Dead in Modernity', in *The Age of Cultural Revolutions Britain and France 1750-1820,* ed. by Colin Jones and Dror Wahrman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 17-33 (p. 19).
[32] 'Cuervo', p. 370.
[33] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966), p. 35.
[34] 'Cuervo', p. 371.

connect with the moribund subject on a spiritual level, understanding profoundly the dreamlike language of the dying: 'los disparates de la imaginación que se despedía de la vida con una orgía de ensueños, los comprendía Cuervo a medias palabras; por una seña, por un gesto; casi los adivinaba'.[35] There is a clear disconnect between Cuervo's actions that reject a hygienic and statistical approach to death, and yet also insist on the sterilisation of the spaces of the dead in order to forget, to move on, to order the 'mess' that may ensue, both physically and emotionally, from death. It is the very nature of this contradiction that allows Cuervo to manipulate reactions to the potential disastrous or tragic connotations of death, or death as a 'crisis' of mortality; an impatience to cleanse, and forget, underlies even his most empathetic actions: 'Ni el ojo avizor de la más refinada malicia podría notar en aquel trato de don Ángel con los moribundos un asomo de impaciencia contenida. Había, sin embargo, esa impaciencia; pero ¡qué recóndita, o, mejor, qué bien disimulada!'.[36]

Cuervo expels the dead yet depends on their presence to fulfil his purpose of manipulating perceptions of time and controlling memory. In order to engineer temporality and memory, Cuervo has to conquer Laguna both bacteriologically and mnemonically. In the following lines, we read that Cuervo is described as a collaborator of time, as time is reduced to nothingness by forces of oblivion:

> Además, no era un adulador. Era un corruptor, pero sin echarlo de ver él, ni los que experimentaban su disolvente influencia. Ayudaba a olvidar; era un colaborador del tiempo. Como el tiempo por sí no es nada, como es sólo la forma de los sucesos, un hilo, Cuervo era para el olvido de eficacia más inmediata, pues presentaba de una vez, como un acumulador, la fuerza olvidadiza que los años van destilando gota a gota.[37]

[35] 'Cuervo', p. 372.
[36] 'Cuervo', p. 372.
[37] 'Cuervo', p. 375.

Time is manipulated as the act of forgetting, which might have occurred organically, is imposed as a means to move on, advance, and regenerate. However, this means of regenerating, whereby health and life are conflated with forgetting– 'al amor de la vida y al olvido de la muerte'[38] – becomes synonymous with a project of pseudo progress whereby the dead become abject, concealed from the eyes of society, depriving the living of the temporal orientation offered by the dead and their memory. This is a separation of the dead and the living, and the 'abject' from the 'active', that is based on an ideology and a system of forced forgetting pursued by Cuervo. Murphy delineates degeneration as an ideological concept in the following lines: 'a sick society in the process of degeneration was therefore in need of cure and regeneration. Theories about biological degeneration in Spain became a metaphor for history and its ideological interpretation'.[39] Portraying a society as 'sick' creates a 'need' for regeneration, thus forcing a chasm or binary separation between degeneration and regeneration. This binary, then, is revealed by Clarín to be established by the authoritarian consideration of society as an organ or organic matter, whereby a policy of extracting or eliminating 'rotten' or 'diseased' elements becomes the modus operandi of Cuervo's 'regeneration' of Laguna. As a result of the 'social cleansing' in 'Cuervo', the living exist in a sterile present shrouded in oblivion, the past (the deceased) having been silenced and eliminated. What this might suggest about attempts at 'regeneration' is twofold; firstly, the objective to control and manipulate responses to signs of decadence or decay is ultimately founded on a baseless ideology, obscuring meaningful progress and creating a series of false categories and oppositions. Secondly, the pathologisation of society and attempts to drive out memory of the past, confining it to irrelevance, encourages a forgetting that risks, what might be called, a temporal and historical unconsciousness.

Cuervo's impatience to eliminate elements of decay suggests that he pathologises Lagunense society, adopting discourses of pathology and contagion that meant that disease was the

[38] 'Cuervo', p. 377.
[39] Katharine Murphy, *Bodies of Disorder*, p. 12.

prism through which problems were seen to be caused and therefore solved. Disease becomes a metaphor for perceived social, moral, or epistemological deficiencies, yet this also exposes deep-seated anxieties around time and history. Susan Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor* discusses the imposed symbolic quality of diseases such as tuberculosis and cancer. In one passage, we read that the tendency to associate disease with wider socio-cultural issues occurs as a product of profound temporal uneasiness bound up with a difficulty in locating the 'modern' present within wider histories:

> Our views about cancer, and the metaphors we have imposed on it, are so much a vehicle for the large insufficiencies of this culture, for our shallow attitude to death, for our anxieties about feeling, for our reckless improvident responses to our real "problems of growth", for our inability to construct an advanced industrial society which properly regulates consumption, and for our justified fears of the increasingly violent course of history.[40]

The idea that obsession with disease stems from the uneasiness of temporal disorientation and the construction of the future, reveals the compulsion that Cuervo demonstrates to drive out symbols of inefficiency or disorder as a placebo for progress against a backdrop of deep fissures in temporal orientation. Yet this approach, in a stroke of irony, only serves to reveal the nebulosity of progress and the insufficiency of his 'regeneration' of Laguna. Cuervo's conflicting practices around hygiene and death drive a collective forgetting to conceal truth and make annihilation the aim and consequence in a project of supposed reconstruction.

The ritual of the funeral is a culmination of Cuervo's tyrannical practices surrounding death and points towards a wider, and more explicitly violent, oblivion. The annihilation inherent in the act of forgetting is underlined by the feast, presented as an act of consumption, that sustains and nourishes Cuervo's methods to smother death with a blanket of oblivion. The funeral feast is portrayed in graphic terms, an act of violent gorging; the meat consumed for

[40] Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor* (London: Penguin, 2002), p. 87.

the feast is described in pseudo-religious terms as the food is framed as martyred. The meat is skewered and severed by implements that are akin to torture devices:

> en su silencio de muerte, atravesados por instrumentos que recuerdan la tiranía romana y la Inquisición; supinos sobre aparatos de hierro que son símbolos del martirio, capones y perdices más tostados que otra cosa, que parecen testigos de una fe que los hombres somos incapaces de explicarnos.[41]

What is striking about this intersection of history and consumption in the funeral feast, is that the references to violent and destructive pasts, and the inability to progressively remember the resistance to agents of tyranny, suggests a destruction of historical consciousness. The act of eating is performed by agents of tyranny, the martyring of the animals signifying an act of oblivion, forgetting the past of tyrannical religion, the Inquisition, violence, and oppression. This act of erasing the past is therefore an act of purging, it is a repetition of the tyranny and intolerance of the past: it is an act, not of progress, but of regression.

The significance of the funeral feast in 'Cuervo' has been addressed by Geraldine Lawless. In her book, *Modernity's Metonyms: Figuring Time in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Stories,* she identifies the parallels between the opposing discourses of Cuervo and Resma and the *polémica de la ciencia española*, an intellectual debate surrounding the role and nature of science in Spain that took place during the 1870s. This binary presentation that Lawless attributes to the two central characters, Cuervo and Resma, is summarised in the following lines; 'the *criticistas* [...] argued that the Inquisition had prevented Spain from maintaining its role as intellectual leader in Europe [...] the *tradicionalistas,* for their part, refuted this, accusing the *criticistas* of supporting atheism and materialism'.[42] Cuervo, who for Lawless represents the *tradicionalista* faction, encourages the consumption of the funeral feast through a rejection of science and the perpetuation of ignorance, as she states that 'the protests of liberty are

[41] 'Cuervo', p. 380.
[42] Geraldine Lawless, *Modernity's Metonyms: Figuring Time in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Stories,* p. 86.

here quite literally consumed by intolerance and ignorance, silenced by inquisitorial cooking implements'.[43] If the funeral feast can be read as a practice of tyranny and intolerance reminiscent of the Inquisitorial past, and Cuervo is an agent of forgetting, then the 'protests of liberty' here represent a freedom that has been cast into oblivion. The concept of forgetting is an important contribution to this mapping of scientific debate on to Clarín's representation of this ideological tension in his story, since the catalyst of this tension, and indeed the dominance of the *tradicionalista* imagination, is the resurgence of the autocracy of the past and the present's inability to remember and learn from it.

Cuervo's obliteration of the past suggests that his regeneration of Laguna is merely a return to absolutism and terror, the resistance to which is unable to remain live in public consciousness, hence the words, 'los hombres somos incapaces de explicarnos'. As memory is subject to tyranny, the citizens of Laguna exist within a temporal stasis whereby access to the now martyred past prevents any discourse of historical change, liberty, and progress. As Lissourges observes, Clarín was relatively outspoken in rejecting total obliteration of the past in order to construct the future:

> Es que Leopoldo Alas no puede aceptar que se pretenda construir el porvenir haciendo tabla rasa del pasado. «No se puede olvidar el pasado y crear un mundo nuevo todos los días», exclama en 1891. Para él progresar es conservar todo lo que puede mejorarse.[44]

This is supported by Ana González Manso who considers the century's intellectual and social understanding of progress and temporality as shaped by 'understanding the continual flow between past, present, and future' and thus, 'a better idea can be gained of the search for

[43] Geraldine Lawless, *Modernity's Metonyms: Figuring Time in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Stories,* p. 90.
[44] Yvan Lissourges, 'Leopoldo Alas, Clarín, frente a la crisis de fin de siglo', *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes*, 1998 <https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/leopoldo-alas-clarn-frente-a-la-crisis-de-fin-de-siglo-0/html/01fa2cee-82b2-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_2.html> [accessed 07.04.2022].

regeneration, for restoration by actors of history'.[45] The effacement of historical consciousness, then, leads to a questioning of Cuervo's regeneration of Laguna as a pathologising project in which the past is eclipsed. Intellectual progress is shown to stall as the dead become vehicles for the dissolution of time and history, a process in which they are the victims of a repressive oblivion.

'Cuervo' highlights disease as a vector for the interaction between pathology and spirituality. Cuervo's ethereal, supernatural identity is incarnated as a reaction to disease and death rates in Laguna caused by pathogens. These categories collapse when Cuervo uses hygienic methods of infection control; the pathogen, however, is not disease, but memory, as it is remembering that is pathologised. What this might suggest is that memory becomes a means by which categories of rationality and spirituality are fractured, as they both work symbiotically to control the minds and memories of the local population. Although the narrative might be considered as a depiction of the *ciencia española* debate, it may also be proposed that the narrative disrupts this binary debate around science and spiritualism to comment on wider issues of memory, regeneration, and the interplay between remembering and forgetting in the battle for the future.

By revealing the destruction in Cuervo's actions (the imposition of collective oblivion, the pathologising and sterilising of death, and the consumption of historical time), Clarín challenges approaches to progress that foreground forgetting. The conflation of 'backwardness', illuminated by Cuervo's opposition to medical science and spiritual connection with the moribund subject, and 'progress', demonstrated by Cuervo's insistence upon hygiene and a control of emotional reactions to death, reveals the merging of antithetical concepts that only serve to highlight the disingenuity and inefficacy of both concepts to the

[45] Ana González Manso, 'The Perception of Time and the Meaning of History Amongst Spanish Intellectuals of the Nineteenth Century', *Contributions to the History of Concepts,* 11.2 (2016), pp. 64-84 (p. 72).

point of cancelling one another out. The depiction of historical time being consumed by forces of forgetting reveals that challenges to progress lie in the temporal disorientation represented by an erasure of history and forced forgetting. Clarín further questions where progress lies if both factions are merely disguised as the other. This culminates in a challenge to the existence of a binary separation of 'backwardness' 'degeneration' and 'decline' on one hand and 'regeneration' 'science' and 'progress' on the other.

Questioning futurity and progress: 'Vario'

So far, in the context of 'Cuervo', in this chapter I have explored how a crisis of remembering is caused by a manipulation of time and memory. Cuervo's engineering of time considers the means to regenerate Lagunense society to be a disposal of the past. What I will now argue in relation to 'Vario' is that the 'disposed-of' past serves to disrupt the linear construction of the relationship between time and progress. The desire to be remembered after death renders Vario an anxious and frantic protagonist; his roaming in Ancient Rome sees him pondering the forgotten works of his friend, Virgil, and imagining his own future as a forgotten poet. In the following lines we read how when remembering Virgil's works, Vario fears for the oblivion of his own creations:

> entre la multitud de rollos, brillando a los últimos rayos del sol poniente, *cornua y umbilici* de lujosos volúmenes, vio los rótulos de las obras del amigo muerto. *«Bucólicas», «Geórgicas», «Eneida»;* y vio a los propios hijos, los de su ingenio, entre ellos, el *«Panegírico de Augusto»* y su famosa tragedia *«Thyestes»...* Pero estaban en los estantes, en los nidi, como enterrados en vida.[46]

The reader is, therefore, introduced to Vario's prophecy for future remembering, and paradoxically, forgetting, of his work. This, in Vario's view, renders his life meaningless and the immortality of his works, whose memory he expected would transcend his own existence, ultimately an illusion.

[46] 'Vario', II, pp. 71-77 (p. 72).

Vario travels from Ancient Rome to Greece, where he encounters the sirens that confirm his anxieties surrounding death and forgetting, affirming that his literary works will succumb to the violence of time and will be forgotten. In the following lines it becomes clear that Vario's works will lose their relevance and importance to future readers:

> trabajas para la muerte, trabajas para el olvido. Deja el arte, deja la vida, muere. Oye tu destino, el de tu alma, el de tus versos... Serás olvidado, se perderán tus libros. Tu suerte será la de tantos otros genios sublimes de esto que llamará pronto la antigüedad, el mundo.[47]

Vario is instructed by the sirens to accept his fate of oblivion and that by ceasing the creation of his work, he is anticipating death and embodying the oblivion that can neither be avoided nor rejected:

> un poco de polvo del desierto que se detiene un punto a engañar a la vanidad y a la curiosidad humana en forma caprichosa; seguirá soplando el viento del olvido, y el polvo volverá a cruzar el desierto... Vario, adelántate a la muerte, sé tú el olvido.[48]

Ceasing his work, disappearing from not only the public realm, but from the private realm of selfhood as his identity would be morphed artificially to conform to oblivion, would be to accept the phenomenon of forgetting, to anticipate it, prepare for it, and even embrace it. We are introduced, then, to the complex role that forgetting has in the present; it is considered permanent and destructive, and so attempts are made to counteract this permanence by curating a sense of temporal continuity through commemoration.

Temporal continuity represented by preservation is illuminated by Susan Stewart in her book, *The Ruins Lesson: Meaning and Material in Western Culture* in which she addresses the contradictory nature of historical sites and ruins. She outlines how a key feature of the

[47] 'Vario', p. 75.
[48] 'Vario', p. 76.

conservation of ruins is the 'illusion of their permanence'.[49] Like historical monuments, literature possesses an eternal value, its life is expected to transcend that of its author or maker, or commissioner, and the context in which it was created. The work done by the object, and in this context, literature, is one of temporal transcendence. The object is believed to have a presence that at once belongs to its original time and place, and to a myriad of other, more distant and distanced times and places of which nothing was known at the point of its conception. This, to use Stewart's terminology, is the 'illusion' that the past and present have of being preserved for time immemorial, proving steadfast in the face of temporal shifts. If the immortality of Vario's work is considered impossible, what this might reflect is the failure of historical continuity in the society in which Vario exists, where a crisis of remembering means that the past cannot be anchored to wider conceptions of temporality that protect its legacy.

This perception of the present as disconnected from the past destabilises memory, as commemorative institutions are represented as fronts for oblivion, a facade used to pay lip service to the immortality of works by poets, thinkers and philosophers. These works, once introduced to the archives of the Tabularium, are lost to oblivion; they die a death at the hands of the constructs that pretend to prolong their lives: 'era el Tabulario depósito de archivos, precaución inútil de la soberbia romana para inmortalizar lo pasajero, lo deleznable. ¡Archivar! ¡guardar! ¿Para qué? ¿Dónde estaba el archivo de las almas?'.[50] The failure of the archival system to act as a buffer against forgetting confirms Vario's fears that his works are destined for, physical and metaphorical, burial. Katherine Haldane Grenier has traced the rise of memory work during the nineteenth century as an attempt to counteract the effects of modernity on the memorialisation of the past. The century saw a 'period of introducing countless memorial rituals, designed to bridge the breakdown of traditional forms of solidarity

[49] Susan Stewart, *The Ruins Lesson: Meaning and Material in Western Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), p. 1.
[50] 'Vario', p. 71.

in consequence of the modernization and nationalization of rural societies'.[51] Clarín, however, depicts a society that is struggling to remember, symbolising present failures to create sustainable mnemonic systems. The Tabularium, then, serves not as a device for memory, but a graveyard for the past where works of historical and cultural importance are laid to rest having been forgotten; the Tabularium is equated to a Pantheon: 'el Tabularium ¿qué era más que un panteón?'.[52] It is necessary to return here briefly to Lacquer's exploration of the commemorative significance of the cemetery: 'the cemetery made possible an undreamed of elaboration of personal commemoration and contemplation'.[53] The linear relationship between commemoration and memory that is suggested here by Lacquer is disrupted in 'Vario' as archives and other commemorative institutions do not serve to generate personal or collective memory, instead they are only a reminder of all things forgotten.

These examples demonstrate that the imagining of a future forgetting and a future of forgetting points to the destabilisation of memory, and the impossibility of historical continuity and temporal orientation. What these concepts all point to, and what is ultimately at stake, is the destabilisation of the linear relationship between time and progress. In other words, this means the loss of the notion of linear historical time whereby time and progress are co-dependent, part of a process that Terdiman articulates as 'the loss of a sense of time's continuous flow and our unproblematic place within it'.[54] An important part of the problematization of the time-progress duality, is the repetition of the past in future time. The destiny of Vario's work is not that it will be remembered, as we have already established, but that it will be repeated, rewritten, and reproduced in the future. It becomes clear that the progression of time does not translate into intellectual progress: 'sobre las mismas páginas que contengan las lecciones de vuestra sabiduría, vuestros ideales, vuestros sueños, vendrán otros hombres a escribir otra

[51] Katherine Haldane, *Cultures of Memory in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), p. xi.
[52] 'Vario', p. 72.
[53] Thomas Lacquer, 'The Places of the Dead in Modernity', p. 30.
[54] Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 5.

ciencia y otros errores, otros sueños, otras supersticiones, otras esperanzas, otros lamentos'.[55] As the words in Vario's manuscript are overwritten, posterity is unable to form new ideas but continuously, and unwittingly, recycles old ones, creating an eternal, inescapable and decadent present.

Ultimately, the cyclic relationship between memory and forgetting is demonstrated by, firstly, the creation of memorialising structures for objects and knowledge to be remembered only for them to be condemned to oblivion. Secondly, the simultaneous entry of objects to the Tabularium and their exit from public memory. Finally, the simultaneous creation and destruction of the same ideas, challenging the linear conception of degeneration as a regression to an inferior past that is present in Vázquez's illustration of degeneration and decadence: 'degeneration is based on a linear notion of regression to, or the reappearance of, an earlier, more primitive condition'.[56] What 'Vario' suggests, then, is that it is the future that is deemed inferior, less original, less advanced, as it is in the future that the past is forgotten, and along with it historical continuity. What will be explored in the next section will build on this idea that if the future is seen as a reproduction of the past, or a repetition of the same ideas and processes, the essential concepts of regeneration and degeneration begin to implode.

Deceased pasts and futures in 'La noche-mala del Diablo' and 'Vario'

This section will now discuss a *crisis of filiation* whereby the idea of a crisis of the future explored in the previous section is expanded to incorporate ideas around inheritance, linear time and degenerate futures. In both short stories this section will analyse, 'Vario' and 'La noche-mala del Diablo', the act of regeneration is fundamentally questioned; instead of a concept that embodies futurity, it is represented in terms of backward temporal motion, entirely

[55] 'Vario', p. 75.
[56] Oscar Vázquez, *The End Again: Degeneration and Visual Culture in Modern Spain,* p. 2.

reshaping perception of what regeneration might signify. The term ‘generation’ meaning production or creation, preceded by the prefixes re- and de-, would signal opposing directions of travel in relation to progress. ‘Re-’ would signify anew, something that has been done again, usually with changes as an improvement or advancement on the version that came before. ‘De-’ would therefore imply the reverse of this forward momentum, signifying an undoing of any advancements or positive transformations. What I question in this section is this ‘newness’ associated with regeneration; in both ‘Vario’ and ‘La noche-mala del Diablo’, the association of regeneration with the future begins to be deconstructed as degeneracy and regression become associated with the act of regeneration, in turn depriving both of any legitimacy.

‘La noche-mala del Diablo’ was published in 1896 as part of the *Cuentos morales* collection. The story traces the Devil and his wish for offspring to secure his immortality; the narrative begins with the birth of Christ and the Devil’s consequent envy of the ability of his adversary, God, to ensure that his future on Earth is secured. The Devil’s repeated attempts at producing a child end in tragedy as each child is portrayed as ‘degenerate’, ‘deformed’ and ultimately, predestined to die. This discussion will argue that these repeated deaths embody failures in projects of regeneration, as temporal continuity and historical consciousness are ruptured and the future implodes in a crisis of filiation. Within this crisis of filiation, I argue that Clarín offers an alternative exploration of discourses around heredity and evolution that were circulating in Spain. These biological and socio-cultural theories offered a means by which to explain ‘degeneration’ and to effectively regenerate and ‘strengthen’ the Spanish nation, yet Clarín explores the concept of inheritance through the prism of a disintegration of linear time. By revealing the Devil’s project, which distorts the act of regeneration into an impotent, infertile, and unproductive process, discourses of both degeneration and regeneration are turned in on themselves. In ‘Vario’, the crisis of filiation is represented by a vision of posterity that exists in a temporal vacuum, the ties between it and antiquity having been entirely severed. I argue specifically that these stories both depict an inability to imagine progressive futures which finds its roots in the death of the past.

Failed paternity and the collapse of historical time: 'La noche-mala del Diablo'

> Yo no tengo Verbo, yo no tengo Hijo... Yo me inutilizaré, me haré despreciable, llegaré a verme paralítico, en un rincón del infierno, sin poder mostrarme al mundo... y mi Hijo no ocupará mi puesto. ¡El gran rey de los Abismos no tiene heredero!...[57]

These lines express the Devil's fertility crisis as he struggles to generate progeny that will future proof his influence and legacy on Earth. He fears the oblivion that may ensue if he does not possess offspring that live amongst mortal beings on Earth: 'seré después algo menos que eso: una abstracción, un fantasma metafísico, un lugar común de la retórica; bueno para metáforas…'.[58] The reduction of the Devil to an intangible or abstract figure augments his fears that he will be easily forgotten, compounding his decision to produce an heir in order to avoid falling into obsolescence. The concepts of heredity and reproduction, therefore, are presented by Clarín in this narrative as both temporal and mnemonic tools; for the Devil, the process of reproduction is as much about securing his own future legacy as it is about the regeneration and rejuvenation of the future, and of the future appearing 'new', productive, and progressive.

The question of inheritance and parentage was a pertinent one for the debate around regeneration and progress, as scientific discourses that surrounded criminality, alcoholism, and mental and physical illness were being connected to theories of inheritance. Oscar Vázquez explains that Morel and Lombroso[59] foregrounded heredity in their approach to

[57] 'La noche-mala del Diablo', II, pp. 130-136 (p. 133).
[58] 'La noche-mala del Diablo', p. 133.
[59] Bénédict Morel and Cesare Lombroso were amongst the most prominent degeneration theorists in Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century. Morel (1809-1873) was a psychiatrist born in Vienna. He published *Traité des dégénérences physiques, intellectuelles et morales de l'espèce humaine* in 1857 which explained the cause of certain physical traits with a moral degenerative constitution. Cesare Lombroso was a criminologist whose theory of criminal atavism attributed physical traits to criminal tendencies, and argued that criminality could be a result of heredity. Both Morel and Lombroso's work on degeneration theory spanned psychiatry, anthropology, criminology, and medicine. It also intersected with evolution theory as it attributed 'degenerate' characteristics to physical and moral development. For more on degeneration theory in Spain and the work of Morel and Lombroso, see Katharine Murphy, *Bodies of Disorder: Gender and Degeneration in Baroja and Blasco Ibáñez,* (Legenda: Cambridge, 2017) and Richard Cleminson & Teresa Fuentes Peris '"La Mala Vida": Source and Focus of Degeneration, Degeneracy and Decline', *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 10 (2009), pp. 385-397.

criminology and social degeneration: 'between Morel and Lombroso were laid the basic notions of degeneration as a largely medical pathology continued by family heredity'.[60] Both physical and mental illness, then, were considered as traits that had been inherited by the patient, as Campos Marín explains:

> los viejos esfuerzos del alienismo por demostrar ante los tribunales la enajenación del criminal y su irresponsabilidad jurídica, encuentran en el degeneracionismo un apoyo científico que se manifiesta en la constatación de estigmas físicos y psíquicos como signos de la locura y en la herencia biológica como vehículo de la enfermedad mental.[61]

The idea that theories of heredity could explain diseases, disorders, and even 'social pathologies' such as criminality, inevitably expanded to permeate conceptions of nationhood; in other words, through theories of heredity, the individual body became the collective social body: 'la enfermedad, vehiculada por la herencia, cristalizaba en la degeneración adquiriendo un carácter inquietante al manifestarse más allá del individuo'.[62] This meant that biological crisis was converted into a socio-cultural and historical crisis that 'se extendió a otros terrenos como la política, la sociología o la literatura como forma de expresar "científicamente" la percepción de una crisis cultural, histórica y biológica'.[63]

Mapped on to ideas of nationhood, the degeneration of the present would be found in the inherited past; if the transmission of biological characteristics was conceived of as a means to ensure the health of the nation, then the process of inheriting the past, and the productiveness of this past, would be how decline and degeneration would be understood. The pervasion of pathological frameworks in discourses around nationhood and history is reframed by Clarín in

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[60] Oscar Vázquez, *The End Again: Degeneration and Visual Culture in Modern Spain*, p. 63.
[61] Ricardo Campos Martín, 'La teoría de la degeneración y la profesionalización de la psiquiatría en España (1876-1920)', *Asclepio,* 51.1 (1999), pp. 185-203 (p. 197).
[62] Campos Marín, Ricardo, Martínez Pérez, José, Huertas García-Alejo, Rafael, *Los ilegales de la naturaleza, medicina y degeneracionismo en la España de la Restauración (1876-1923),* p. 162.
[63] Ricardo Campos Marín, *La teoría de la degeneración y la profesionalización de la psiquiatría en España (1876-1920)*, p. 199.

'La noche-mala del Diablo', as the connections between heredity and degeneration are subverted in order to question whether it is in fact the process of regeneration, the act by which the children are created, that induces their deaths and thus the malformation of the future. Clarín therefore deploys genealogy and parental collapse to express what Welge, in his analysis of Galdós' *Fortunata y Jacinta,* describes as 'social-reproductive decadence or crisis (sterility)'.[64] Crucially for this discussion, the socio-historical 'crisis' that led to debates around the role of history, precedence, and heredity in matters of degeneration is, I argue, reconfigured by Clarín to reveal the dislocated position of history and memory within a project of future regeneration.

The repeated deaths of the Devil's offspring represent the repeated failure of future visions to materialise. This sees past events continually duplicating themselves in the present, meaning that the past has never authentically passed and thus casting doubt over whether the idea of the past and futurity, and therefore progress, can truly exist within the conditions generated by this repeated present. The death of a concept of the 'future', represented by the death of a child, reflects the future of a past that is already destroyed before it has been able to materialise, as the following lines illustrate:

> mas, infeliz en todo, su imaginación profética le hizo ver por adelantado el cuadro de sus inútiles esfuerzos, el constante fracaso de sus pruritos de amor diabólico, el aborto sin fin de sus conatos de paternidad maldita. ¡Terrible suerte! Antes de emprender las hazañas de su imposible triunfo, ver y saber los desengaños infalibles. ¡Ver muertos los hijos primero de engendrarlos![65]

The deaths of the children preceding their birth suggests an inevitability, but also a temporal disorientation, surrounding both their absence and presence. Noël Valis identifies the appearance of the dead child in Clarín's novel, *Su único hijo* (1890), as signifying the memory

[64] Jobst Welge, *Genealogical Fictions: Cultural Periphery and Historical Change in the Modern Novel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), p. 79.
[65] 'La noche-mala del Diablo', p. 134.

of a past that is non-existent, as an act that 'reveals shades of memorializing something absent, of vivifying something that has already died'.[66]

The 'degeneracy' inherent in the process of regeneration undermines the binary separation between illness and cure, progress and decline. The Devil's children are described as 'malformed' and 'weak': 'tuvo hijos bastardos que le vivían poco; todos flacos, débiles, contrahechos'.[67] The disfigured bodies are presented as abject, epitomising degradation and futility: 'vivían poco',[68] their short lives are rendered meaningless, as if they were never alive at all. Their disfigured bodies are abject, and their short lives are rendered meaningless, as if they were never alive at all. Julia Kristeva observes the connection between the abject and the 'violence of mourning for an "object" that has always already been lost'.[69] The abject bodies of the children thus stand for the abject and disorderly nature of regeneration itself as future children, future progress, and future memory are already destroyed by the repetitious cycle in which they are created. This signifies that the Devil's regeneration project is thwarted from the beginning as the same process will only yield the same results; repetition does not mean perfection, regeneration or rebirth does not mean progress. The 'abject' nature of the future lies in the repeated attempts to revive pasts and regenerate futures that have already been stifled by temporal and historical disorientation.

The intentions of the Devil in Clarín's story echo those of Satan in John Milton's *Paradise Lost,* who cannot produce viable offspring since he enters into an incestuous union with his own daughter and produces Death. Satan's actions are described as being intended to spite God; similarly, in 'La noche-mala del Diablo', the Devil's wish to reproduce derives from a jealousy of God and his Son. In Book II of Milton's epic poem, we read the following: But from the author

[66] Noël Valis, 'Death and the Child in Su único hijo', *Hispanic Review,* 2002 (70), pp. 243-263 (p. 260).
[67] 'La noche-mala del Diablo', p. 134.
[68] 'La noche-mala del Diablo', p. 134.
[69] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 15.

of all ill, could spring | So deep a malice, to confound the race | Of mankind in one root, and Earth with Hell | To mingle and involve, done all to spite | The great Creator?[70] Clarín's Devil espouses malevolent and dark forces in society and fails to produce viable children: 'tuvo por concubinas la Duda, la Locura, la Tiranía, la Hipocresía, la Intolerancia, la Vanidad'.[71] Milton's Devil also allies himself with dark forces that attempt to ruin earthly peace and harmony. We read in the following lines how the Devil asks for directions to Earth from Chaos, Night, Chance, Discord and Confusion, amongst other evil entities:

> Bordering on light; when straight behold the throne
> Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread
> Wide on the wasteful Deep! With him enthroned
> Sat sable-vested Night, eldest of things,
> The consort of his reign; and by them stood
> Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name
> Of Demogorgon; Rumour next, and Chance,
> And Tumult, and Confusion, all embroiled,
> And Discord with a thousand various mouths.[72]

In both texts, the disorderly and destructive nature of the Devil's children is presented as a product of their parentage and the process in which they are conceived. Therefore, the espousal of sinister and malignant powers establishes Clarín's prose as a Miltonian moral allegory of the impossibility of cultivating progress through tyranny and transgression. The Devil's lovers embody vices, and the incarnation of these evils suggests that the deformities of the future, the children, appear to be bound up in the transgressions of their inherited past. Clarín, however, writing at a time when discourses of degeneration and decline were ubiquitous, subverts the degenerationist idea of inheritance as a pathological agent. It is, in 'La noche-mala del Diablo', during the act of regeneration and reproduction itself that

[70] John Milton, *Paradise Lost,* (Auckland: The Floating Press, 1984), II. (p. 48).
[71] 'La noche-mala del Diablo', p. 134.
[72] John Milton, *Paradise Lost,* II. (p. 69).

espouses these ‘degenerate’ or immoral values. If the future-oriented project of regeneration is ‘degenerate’, this indicates that an inability to imagine a progressive future may lie not in heredity but in a regeneration project that disguises as progressive and repeats these pasts. Clarín suggests here that inherent selfishness, and potential for darkness and even tyranny, of humankind are at the root of its regenerative sterility.

Emilia Pardo Bazán displayed an interest in epic poetry, making it possible that Clarín’s story could also reflect a wider renewal of interest in epic poetry, and with the social and religious themes that are present in this piece of writing. Pardo Bazán includes a chapter on Milton in her 1894 book *Los poetas épicos cristianos* and, given the similarities between Clarín’s story with Milton’s poem, it is possible that this revived interest in the epic tradition in Christian poetry is also tangible in Clarín’s work.[73] In her book, *Los poetas épicos cristianos,* Pardo Bazán reads Milton’s poem as one written out of despair for his nation:

> El que ha escrito *El Paraíso perdido* había apurado la copa de todos los desengaños y ver caer en ruinas la obra a que consagrara sus mejores energías: la libertad de la patria. Lloraba la noche de su destino, y lloraba también la de sus pobres ojos ciegos.[74]

Milton’s poem, for Pardo Bazán, is one that reflects a coming to terms with humanity’s sins and the perennial striving to reach an ideal that Pardo Bazán associates with the Catholic faith, she writes: ‘Milton, protestante y puritano, afianza en nuestro corazón y en nuestra fantasía de latinos el sentido católico; Milton, intérprete de un ideal que no es el nuestro, nos lleva con ímpetu redoblado hacia nuestro constante ideal’.[75] Pardo Bazán, who was part of the Third Order of the Franciscans, is the object of Denise PuPont’s study, *Whole Faith, The Catholic Ideal of Emilia Pardo Bazán,* in which the Franciscan beliefs of the writer are explored.

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[73] Clarín’s personal library, preserved by the Biblioteca de Asturias in Oviedo, does not contain a copy of Pardo Bazán’s *Los poetas épicos cristianos,* and the copy of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* is from 1944 and therefore possibly belonged to Clarín’s son, Adolfo Alas. The comparison between Milton’s poem and Clarín’s story is, however, productive for the reading of this text as a complex vision of progress that pertains to a tradition of moral assessments of humankind.

[74] Emilia Pardo Bazán, *Los poetas épicos cristianos* (Madrid: Administración Calle de San Bernardo, 1894), p. 326.

[75] Emilia Pardo Bazán, *Los poetas épicos cristianos,* p. 330.

DuPont paraphrases, in the following lines, how Pardo Bazán's Franciscan principles regarding wealth distribution and charity were conceptualised by her alongside debates around socialism:

> When we lament the progress of socialism, she [Emilia Pardo Bazán] implores, or we decry the Vandalic communism that threatens our old societies, could we not agree that a large part of the responsibility for these developments lies with the selfish and soulless individualism ("individualismo egoísta y desalmado") of the advantaged classes ("clases pudientes")? Pardo Bazán does not shy away from the idea of a community sharing wealth in order to carry out significant social work according to Franciscan charitable guidelines.[76]

Clarín's story is one that also laments the tyrannical conduct of the powerful and their destructive means to create futures that are the fruits of their own imagining and benefit, as in 'La noche-mala del Diablo', the Catholic Church's flirtations with autocracy and intolerance are perpetuated by successive political and religious orders. The Miltonian alignment of the Devil with evil and, as a result, the destruction of the future, comments on the regenerative impotency of the present system, whereby the pasts are repeated, history becomes the future, and the filiative nature of time and memory are fractured.

The Devil's espousal of degenerate forces results in a fragmented and disoriented consciousness of history; the children are all named after various guises of political, philosophical, and religious dogma that fail to bear the fruit of progress:

> todos vivían hambrientos, devorando el bien del mundo que trituraban en sus fauces, que eran los estragos; pero en vano, porque poco a poco se iban muriendo... Hasta hizo tálamo el demonio del pórtico de la Iglesia; pero ni la Inquisición, ni la Ignorancia,

[76] Denise DuPont, *Whole Faith: The Catholic Ideal of Emilia Pardo Bazán* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018), p. 83.

> ni la Monarquía absoluta, ni la Pseudo-Escolástica, le dieron el Hijo que buscaba, el inmortal, porque todos perecían.[77]

The deaths of the Devil's children not only represent a crisis of regeneration, but also a historical disjuncture in which the future is pathologized by its malformed realisation. Repeated historical processes of regeneration have therefore failed to realise their objective to produce viable futures. In this temporal cycle drawn by Clarín, the past is not simply being remembered, it is being repeated: the same methods are being recycled. The Devil's crisis of regeneration, or reproduction, is not found in the past itself, but in the way the past functions in the present, and precisely, its regurgitation. The past and future therefore both collapse in a disorderly present, as a disruption of the filiation of memory means that the notions of 'precedence' and 'history' become non-existent. This problematic regeneration process is thus reflected in the temporal and mnemonic rupture that underpins it.

In this story, I argue that degeneration discourses that used pathologizing language to imagine the nation and society work only to prevent progress as they fail to propose new routes to establish the 'future'. In other words, by focussing on the 'abject' nature of the children, the Devil forgets the means by which these malformed futures were created. Reading the text through the treatment of the past and memory is thus key to understanding the complexities surrounding the vision of progress that this story presents. At once a moral tale of religious intolerance and authoritarianism, the narrative also makes use of the *fin de siglo* obsession with disease, decay, and degeneration to dissect the processes by which the social body is formed, as opposed to pathologizing the 'abjectified' body itself. The question that this story poses, then, to the debates that surrounded degeneration, regeneration, and inheritance, is how to define notions of memory, precedence and 'newness' in times of temporal turbulence.

[77] 'La noche-mala del Diablo', p. 134.

Notions of progress within temporal rupture: 'Vario'

'Vario' provides another exploration of this question of the place of the past in the present and where this might leave the idea of futurity. On this occasion the desire to be remembered is on the part of a poet, Lucio Vario, whose journey also equates the future with reproduction and repetition. The survival of the past is, as in 'La noche-mala del Diablo', made impossible by its repetition as the reproduction of ideas in 'Vario' means that both temporality and memory are distorted, thus exploring the position of memory in a world where the idea of the future is no longer 'new'. This section will argue that 'Vario' displays a crisis of filiation that is composed of three principal parts; the first is temporal discontinuity which I demonstrate leads to a loss of memory; the second is a blockage in epistemological transmission which distorts the origin of knowledge; the third ponders the nature of progress by considering: how can progress be defined when futurity and backwardness are indistinguishable?

This crisis of filiation, which specifically addresses the future of memory, derives intrinsically from the tension that surges between antiquity and posterity. The thread that might have connected the past with its future, that is, antiquity and posterity, has been entirely severed and Vario's work, just like the Devil's offspring, is condemned to death. Posterity, therefore, is presented as a temporal vacuum, since the past is no longer relevant or even recognised. The future death of Vario's work signals a rupture in temporal continuity, a concept explored by Frederick Pike, whose book considers regeneration in Latin America and Spain from a psychological perspective: 'symbolic immortality means connecting the individual, through some form of vital participation, to a collective life-continuity'.[78] This kind of temporal connectedness disintegrates when Vario comes into contact with the sirens, they confirm that his work will be lost in the future, as the passage of time directly correlates to the pace of forgetting:

[78] Frederick B. Pike, 'The Psychology of Regeneration: Spain and America at the Turn of the Century', *The Review of Politics,* 43.2 (1981), pp. 218-241 (p. 229).

> tú no serás grande para la posteridad porque se perderán tus obras; los ratones, la humedad, la barbarie de los siglos, y otros cien elementos semejantes, serán tus críticos, tus Zoilos, acabarán contigo, y la pereza del mundo tendrá un gran pretexto para no admirarte: no conocerte.[79]

The passage of time thus becomes equated with violence, as classic works are destroyed at the hands of centuries passing by without consciousness of the past, an act of temporal consumption described as 'la barbarie de los siglos'.[80] Hence, temporal advancement is equated to the destruction of memory.

Temporal and also historical, since Clarín is referring here to antiquity and the Ancient worlds, consciousness falls victim to this oblivion, as future civilization will exist within a temporal vacuum where ideas of the past are unable to translate into knowledge in the future: 'la posteridad no creerá en ti, no sabrá de ti'.[81] This blockage in epistemological transmission forms the basis of the crisis of filiation as the idea of 'precedence' collapses in the present. The process of regeneration and the creation of new ideas is only equated to reproduction, as we have encountered in the previous discussion about a crisis of remembering. In Vario, this is depicted through the repetition of Vario's works: 'sobre las mismas páginas que contengan las lecciones de vuestra sabiduría'.[82] What is pertinent to this particular discussion, however, is that the parentage of ideas and knowledge is lost through the continual process of recycling the same concepts. As the origin of knowledge and the essence of progress become distorted, the possibility for any knowledge and progress at all is eliminated. Vario's work does not completely die, it is undead, a revenant, as it returns to the realm of the living, but it is not perceived as itself existing within the present. Vario's work has an afterlife that Randolph Pope, in his analysis of 'Vario', describes thus: 'El libro viejo no es la momia del libro; es un

[79] 'Vario', II, p. 75.
[80] 'Vario', p. 75.
[81] 'Vario', p. 75.
[82] 'Vario', p. 75.

aparecido, un resucitado'.[83] Past knowledge infiltrates into the present, but is not digested as the past. It is (re)created as though it is new knowledge belonging solely to the present. This configures epistemological crisis as a temporal crisis, as filial temporal order is disrupted; the past is not actively remembered, but buried and then revived, not as a memory of the past, but written over and undermined by the present.

The temporal intricacies of this story are apparent: the ancient past is imagined as the present, and thus the forgetting that Vario sees as part of his future occurs in the narrative present. According to Richmond, this allows the text to create 'la sensación de un pasado lejano tan vivo como el momento actual' which, she argues, gives the protagonist 'la seguridad de formar parte de aquella larga tradición humana'.[84] It is precisely this idea of a 'human tradition' that Vario sees disappearing. This allows Clarín to question whether the modern present treats the past as an undead or ghostly presence to be erased. If the classical works that feature in 'Vario' are the inheritance of modern Spanish letters, then this story serves as a warning against the oblivion of this inheritance and what this means not only for the literary ontology of Spain, but for what future conceptualisations of progress are and what they will be (un)able to achieve. This culminates most strikingly in the description of the ancient Forums as spaces of death, destruction and decay.

Upon entering the Forum of the city, Vario notes the lifelessness of those who are supposed to represent the central hub of intellectual and political life: 'los Rostros, desiertos, parecían restos de un naufragio en el mar de las pasiones curialescas y políticas…'.[85] Intellectual thought has become liquidised by a failure of originality; the marketplace of ideas is compared to a shipwreck, and those that participate in this insipid exchange in the Forum are hollow

[83] Randolph Pope, 'Las sirenas de Vario y la visión de Clarín', *Revista Hispánica Moderna,* 48.1 (1995), pp. 106-113 (p. 107).
[84] Carolyn Richmond, *Leopoldo Alas Clarín, Vario… y Varia: Clarín a través de cinco cuentos suyos* (Madrid: Orígenes, 1990), p. 50.
[85] 'Vario', p. 72.

imitations of what would have been a thriving centre of discussion, innovation and progress. As future time is associated with backwardness and decay, the following question arises: if there is degeneration and disorder inherent in imaginings of intellectual arenas of progress that embody the supposedly enlightened values of regeneration, then how can progress be defined, and can the concept of 'regeneration' as the adversary of 'degeneration' really exist in this context? In 'Vario', the possibility of regenerative progress becomes blocked by oblivion and a destruction of the filial order of memory and epistemology as containing images and ideas that are passed down in time.

Counteracting pathology in 'El dúo de la tos' and 'El doctor Pértinax'

This section will now focus on the formulation of a spiritual consciousness[86] with the aim of examining how Clarín questions the pathologisation of the diseased and dying body and deploys the mysticism of death as a tool to challenge a positivist approach to regeneration and progress. What will be suggested is that Clarín instead proposes that progress cannot and should not be entirely rationalised in order to cultivate authentic moral regeneration. This section will explore two texts, 'El dúo de la tos' and 'El doctor Pértinax'; I argue that both provide a challenge to scientific and positivist discourses that were circulating during the course of the nineteenth century and were seen as a means to regenerate and transform Spanish society. Clarín does this in two ways: firstly, 'El dúo de la tos' counteracts the pathologization and 'othering' of the diseased body, instead using illness as a way to transcend the 'knowable'. Secondly, 'El doctor Pértinax' inverts logic and reasoning along with

[86] This notion stems from Clarín's spiritual humanism as his moral and intellectual guide. His defence of humanism is evident in his privileging of the spiritual, morally, and socially just in the face of utilitarianism and mercantilism. Clarín was a well-known believer in Krausism and thus fought for an education system based on humanist principles. His short story, 'Ordalías', sees a wealthy father search for a tutor for his children, revealing his mistrust for the public schools that have been established on humanist and Krausist principles (through the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza)*. This provides the pretext for a critique of the wealthy's ignorance of spiritual morality and humanistic education.

positivist notions of time and space to challenge the regeneration of society through dogmatic belief systems.

'El dúo de la tos', published in 1896 as part of the *Cuentos morales* collection, is a quirky tale that is set in a hotel that houses tuberculosis patients. The patients in the hotel remain nameless and faceless; they are referred to throughout the narrative by their patient numbers, yet they are ultimately able to gain agency and subjectivity through their communication with one another. As the patients await their deaths, the two protagonists begin to exchange dialogue through their coughs, with each individual cough enough to distinguish the patients from one another. The two protagonists then fall in love, the reader only learning of their fate when the narrative shifts in time to the very end of their lives after they have left the hotel. This mysterious and original tale makes a significant statement that serves as a rejection of a model that uses disease and death to pathologise society. Instead of being deployed to explain social defects, death and disease expand human experience. 'El doctor Pértinax', first published in 1881 as part of the *Solos de Clarín* collection, sees a dying philosopher confront his misgivings about the nature of death and the universe beyond tangible, lived experience. His conviction that beyond death the universe is merely a representation, a result of humankind's 'egoism', is rebuked. He then experiences what death, and entry to heaven, is like, as other deceased philosophers show him the limits of time and space and reveal the tangibility of the celestial. As it becomes apparent that his positivist theory that rejects the metaphysical has been debunked, death becomes a prism through which theories that might signify progress and regeneration are questioned. This leads to the reconsideration of the correlation between the rational and the progressive, begging the question: can epistemological and ontological progress always be defined by its scientific objectivity?

It is necessary to examine how positivism might be defined in order to then explore how both texts, 'El doctor Pértinax' more explicitly, might challenge its principles. According to Peter

Halfpenny in *Positivism and Sociology,* positivism's features include a preference for linear historical time and rational conceptions of epistemological progress:

> positivism is a theory of historical development in which improvements in knowledge are both the motor of historical progress and the source of social stability. Positivism is a theory of knowledge, according to which the only kind of sound knowledge available to humankind is that of science, grounded in observation.[87]

Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who is directly referenced in 'El doctor Pértinax', formulated the theory of positivism during the first half of the nineteenth century. Halfpenny highlights a significant aspect and consequence of the rise of Comtean positivism: his theory rejected the metaphysical. He writes, 'his philosophy marked the end of philosophy in the traditional sense of metaphysics, of analysis that goes beyond physics, beyond the science of observable reality'.[88] This demise of the spiritual and metaphysical in the search for progress, and in times of 'regeneration' and 'degeneration', will become an important aspect in this discussion.

Positivism, thanks to its rationalisation of human behaviour, society, and intellectual thought, became a foundation on which to build ideas of regeneration. Richard Cleminson, in his work on eugenics and Dr Enrique Diego Madrazo,[89] observes the connections between the regenerationist project in Spain and rationality: 'regenerationists, often invoking the power of rational and scientific thought as a means of countering underdevelopment and the primacy of the Catholic Church, were characterized by their «top-down» ideas on the reform of Spanish society'.[90] The pathologisation and medicalisation of society has already been explored in the

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[87] Peter Halfpenny, *Positivism and Sociology* (Oxford; New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 15.
[88] Peter Halfpenny, *Positivism and Sociology,* p. 16.
[89] Enrique Diego Madrazo was born in Santander in 1850. He was a medical doctor who contributed to late nineteenth and twentieth-century thought around eugenics and positivism. He established a sanatorium in Vega de Pas, Santander. His work integrated eugenics with ideas around the 'decadence' and decline of the Spanish nation and race. Eugenics and regeneration, for Madrazo, involved social reform as well as the incorporation of biological or racial discourse. His work aimed to not only regenerate Spain, but also involved a bold vision for a future (eugenic) utopia. For further information, see Richard Cleminson, '«A century of civilization under the influence of eugenics»: Dr. Enrique Diego Madrazo, socialism and scientific progress', *Dynamis,* 26 (2006), pp. 221-251.
[90] Richard Cleminson, '«A century of civilization under the influence of eugenics»: Dr. Enrique Diego Madrazo, socialism and scientific progress', *Dynamis,* 26 (2006), pp. 221-251 (p. 230).

course of this chapter as a proposed means to regenerate Spain. It has been shown that Clarín blurs the distinctions between the backward or 'degenerate' and the 'progressive'. This section will now probe the conceptual connection between rationality and progress, suggesting that positivist theories may not tell the whole story of how progress can be defined.

The metaphysics of contagion: 'El dúo de la tos'

Descriptions of the accommodation where the tuberculosis patients are housed in this story are deliberately obscure and elusive to emphasise the physical and psychological distance between the patients and their surroundings, and thus signifying their retreat from an outside world that denies them agency. We read that prior to her admission to the hotel, patient 32 led the life of a vagabond, moving between towns in the hope of finding hospitality: 'No hacía más que eso, cambiar de pueblo y toser. Esperaba locamente encontrar alguna ciudad o aldea en que la gente amase a los desconocidos enfermos'.[91] The descriptions of the hotel infer that it is by the coast, as many places of recuperation, sanatoriums or hospices were during the nineteenth century, as Susan Sontag explains:

> when travel to a better climate was invented as a treatment for TB in the early nineteenth century, the most contradictory destinations were proposed. The south, mountains, deserts, islands– their very diversity suggests what they have in common: the rejection of the city.[92]

This rejection of the urban landscape suggests that the causes of illness were deemed to stem from the modern city, reflecting the sense that an uneasiness around illness can be traced to 'modern' anxieties of urbanisation and growth. This can be summarised as a generalised pathologisation of human behaviour: where there are people, there is illness; where there is a physical body to be infected, there is a social body to be degenerated. This is outlined by Michel Foucault in his work on the origin of the clinic: 'nineteenth-century medicine was haunted by that absolute eye that cadaverises life and rediscovers in the corpse the frail,

[91] 'El dúo de la tos', II, pp. 66-71 (p. 69).
[92] Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor*, p. 74.

broken nervure of life'.[93] The medical, as we have seen, bleeds into the social, cultural and historical, and it is this approach that Clarín disputes in 'El dúo de la tos'.

In a state of despair at his impending death, patient number 36 experiences a sense of loss when he realises that existence in the present consists of only distant memories of the past:

> "Era el reloj de la muerte", pensaba la víctima, el número 36, un hombre de treinta años, familiarizado con la desesperación, solo en el mundo, sin más compañía que los recuerdos del hogar paterno, perdidos allá en lontananzas de desgracias y errores, y una sentencia de muerte pegada al pecho, como una factura de viaje a *un bulto* en un ferrocarril.[94]

The comparison here of the dying figure with a lump of luggage on a railway suggests that patient number 36, and his memories, are abject, they have no place in public life. In her work on the abject, Kristeva refers to the 'jettisoned object, one which is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses'.[95] It is not only 'meaning' that implodes in the othering of the diseased and dying body here, but also present time. For the dying subject, the present (that is, the present dominated by ideas of progress as a rejection of the subjectivity of the diseased) is destroyed as memories of the past become the only means by which agency can be afforded. The exclusion of the diseased body and its mnemonic subjectivity from the present, as a result of the conviction that the dying body serves no purpose and can add no value to the functional, logical world, will ultimately be revealed as an approach that generates a wider deterioration of meaning, understanding, and ontology.

In defiance of their ostracised position, the patients learn to recognise one another's coughs and forge their own communication system based around this pathological event. Their coughs are described as poetic, even beautiful: 'la del 32 tosía, en efecto; pero su tos era...

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[93] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic,* trans. by A. M. Sheridan (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 204.
[94] 'El dúo de la tos', p. 68.
[95] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 2.

¿cómo se diría? más poética, más dulce, más resignada'.[96] An action that would signify a bodily expression of disease, an expulsion of infection, and a means of contagion, comes to facilitate a significant aspect of being alive: connection with other human beings. The objective of this connection through tropes of illness is to provide comfort in the midst of the loneliness of impending mortality and isolation. Yet this also bears significance for the inversion of pathological perceptions of illness and death, as the narrative shifts from descriptions of the corporeal, the physical and the tangible, to the spiritual. This elevates the diseased subject beyond the everyday image of the *bulto*, the diseased subject that is quarantined and dehumanised, inverting this image of the patient by taking the diseased subject out of their body and introducing the spiritual value of death. This represents a significant challenge to the pathologisation of the ill subject and the positivist rationalisation of disease and death. As contagion becomes connection and infection becomes companionship, what can be suggested is that disease and death are represented not as betrayals of rationality, but reminders of our humanity as well as liberators from the present. The spiritual body is therefore seen to expand spatiotemporal boundaries beyond physical and terrestrial present.

The bond between patients 32 and 36 is played out not within the realms of the hotel, but in celestial space:

> «Sola del todo», pensó la mujer, que, aún tosiendo, seguía allí, mientras hubiera aquella compañía... compañía semejante a la que se hacen dos estrellas que nosotros vemos, desde aquí, juntas, gemelas, y que allá en lo infinito, ni se ven ni se entienden.[97]

The 'unreality' of the metaphysical allows for a kind of liberation from worlds of reference, understanding, and mortality; instead, the two bodies are rendered infinite beyond the bounds of logic and rationality. Disease, and particularly tuberculosis, was employed by Romantic writers as a means to expand human experience, according to Sontag: 'The Romantics

[96] 'El dúo de la tos', p. 68.
[97] 'El dúo de la tos', p. 67.

moralized death in a new way with the TB death, which dissolved the gross body, etherealized the personality, expanded consciousness'.[98] Without ignoring his temporal separation from Romanticism, this suggests that Clarín uses metaphysical space to elevate the diseased subject beyond territorial boundaries. The hygienic control of the diseased body is thus undermined by the expansion of the 'dúo de la tos' beyond the spatial boundaries that dictate the ostracisation of the protagonists from the society which deems them deviant and disorderly. Tsuchiya highlights this in her work on the subject of deviance and gender in *fin-de-siècle* Spain:

> The subject, then, defines him or herself through spatial practices, through the narrative trajectory she or he traces against restrictive norms, often traversing limits and boundaries. In actualizing his or her spatial trajectory, the deviant subject marks out new frontiers, opening up the potential for the disruption and resignification of these norms.[99]

The rendering of new meaning to the diseased body elucidates a new signification of reality and social normativity; if disease and disorder are symbolic of an increase in the spatiotemporal experience of the protagonists, then the parameters of conventional reality are also expanded. Yvan Lissourges observes this in his work on Clarín's thoughts on positivism:

> la realidad, para Clarín, no se limita al espacio y al tiempo que el hombre ve y vive durante su existencia; el misterio existente en el corazón del complejo existencial es también una realidad, igual que la aspiración de lo absoluto que resulta de ello.[100]

Clarín's interest in the metaphysical at the time of the publication of the *Cuentos morales* collection can be considered in line with an increasing problematization of positivism, as Balfour elucidates: 'the ideological and aesthetic crisis of fin de siècle Europe was encouraged by new perceptions about the complexity of the natural world and human nature that

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[98] Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor*, p. 20.
[99] Akiko Tsuchiya, *Marginal Subjects: Gender and Deviance in Fin de siècle Spain,* p. 9.
[100] Yvan Lissourges, *El pensamiento filosófico y religioso de Leopoldo Alas Clarín* (Oviedo: Grupo Editorial Asturiano, 1996), p. 200.

challenged the certainties of positivism'.[101] Thus 'crisis' is less concerned here with (imperial) disaster, than with a questioning of reality, and a shaky faith in the ability of 'certainty' and 'fact' to fully explain the present and construct future progress.

In creating a world whereby human connection is established beyond the realms of tangible reality, Clarín creates what Lily Litvak refers to as 'un mundo formado por todo aquello que el positivismo había descartado como nocivo: espiritualismo, esteticismo, subjetivismo'.[102] The depiction of disease and death, signalled by the cough of tuberculosis patients, not only serves to highlight how the rational state jettisons the diseased object, but also how the diseased body represents a defiance of rationality: in the place of order comes disorder, in the place of containment comes contagion. This is illuminated by Kristeva as she sees the abject as 'what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules'.[103] It is this rule-breaking ability that gives patients 32 and 36 their agency, and it is also what allows for the exploration of the intangible, and of a spatiotemporality that is beyond human experience. If disease and ultimately death are considered as vessels for the exploration of experience beyond the 'knowable', contemplating the full complexity of the universe, then can 'progress' always be associated with the certainty of scientific understanding?

At the end of the story, Clarín makes the distinction between a 'good death' and a 'bad death' on the basis of the act of remembering. Patient 36 later fled the hotel 'en la cual había padecido tanto', perhaps without memory of the profound connection with his fellow patient: 'No se sabe que jamás hubiera vuelto a acordarse de la tos del dúo'.[104] By contrast, his female counterpart enjoys a peaceful death, 'murió entre Hermanas de la Caridad, que algo la consolaron en la hora terrible' with clear memory of patient 35, 'echó de menos el dúo de la tos; pero no sería

[101] Sebastian Balfour, *The End of the Spanish Empire, 1898-1923*, p. 88.
[102] Lily Litvak, 'La idea de la decadencia en la crítica antimoderna en España (1800-1019)', *Hispanic Review,* 45.4 (1977), pp. 397-412 (p. 412).
[103] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror,* p. 4.
[104] 'El dúo de la tos', p. 70.

en los últimos momentos, que son tan solemnes. O acaso sí'.[105] The hopeful ending to the narrative highlights memory as the element that allows for a 'good death', for the embrace of death as an entrance into a new, unknowable realm. The abject body, the jettisoned object, becomes the symbol not of fear but the prospect of a new form of existence. Kristeva explains this phenomenon in the following lines: 'abjection […] is an alchemy that transforms death into a start of life, a new significance'.[106] The moment of death, in the case of patient 32, does not eliminate memory but catalyses it, liberating and expanding time and space, in turn experiencing the true mystery and complexity of the universe. Disease, and death from disease, are presented here as a regeneration of the self beyond the tangible present. Clarín, in doing this, explores the entwinement of degeneracy and regeneration, shedding light on what this subversion may contribute to spiritual and metaphysical epistemology.

Positivism, knowledge, and progress: 'El doctor Pértinax'

An explicit satire of positivist philosophy, 'El doctor Pértinax' is a narrative that explores death as a means to probe the limits of positivism and expose the intolerance at large in intellectual life. In the story, a philosopher is nearing the end of his life, and is accompanied by his housekeeper on his deathbed. In a dream, he experiences entry to heaven and existence beyond the terrestrial present. Pértinax finds his positivist beliefs questioned and convictions challenged when he encounters a group of saints, thinkers, and philosophers from different time periods, including Hegel and Thomas Aquinas who all criticise his core positivist beliefs. His profound belief in the rationale and logic that guide his philosophical views becomes clear in his rebuttal of the appearance of the saints and philosophers before him: 'sobre todas estas apariencias está mi razón, mi razón, que protesta con voz potente contra y sobre toda esta farándula'.[107] His voyage beyond terrestrial time and space leads him to discover the true nature of the Universe and cosmic infinity. He states with certainty, prior to his dream, that

[105] 'El dúo de la tos', p. 70.
[106] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror,* p. 15.
[107] 'El doctor Pértinax', I, pp. 105-115, (p. 107).

following death the 'appearance' of existence and reality will cease: 'después de la muerte no debo subsistir el engaño del aparecer, y es hora de que cese el concupiscente querer vivir, *Nolite vivere*, que es sólo cadena de sombras engarzada en deseos, etc., etc'.[108] There is therefore no space for the exploration of the mysterious or the metaphysical: if everything is a representation, there is nothing to be understood and everything can be rationalised as a representation that the individual has of 'reality'. Pértinax's philosophy is based on non-belief; he considers his own theory so evolved that it does not 'submit' to theology or spirituality, as he explains to Saint Thomas the Apostle:

> Caballero -replicó Pértinax-, usted vivía en tiempos muy diferentes; estaban ustedes entonces en la edad teológica, como dice Comte, y yo he pasado ya todas esas edades y he vivido del lado de acá de la *Crítica de la razón pura* y de la *Filosofía última*, de modo que no creo en nada.[109]

His convictions are such that he is prevented from being persuaded by or believing in anything, suggesting that dogmatic philosophy ends with a collapse of ontological understanding.

Clarín's opposition to positivism is well established; Lissourges proclaims that 'si hay una constante que revele el pensamiento profundo de Leopoldo Alas será su rechazo de la negación positivista de lo absoluto y del misterio'.[110] Pértinax's positivism is challenged when in the dream he experiences the limits of time and space, as a commission is appointed, composed of Saint Job, Diogenes, and Saint Thomas the Apostle, to show Pértinax the edge of the universe. His positivist convictions reject the existence of a nothingness that cannot be conceived of or understood by human perceptions of reality:

> Más le vale a usted bajar la cabeza para no tropezar con el techo, que hemos llegado a ese límite del espacio que no se concibe, y si usted da un paso más, se rompe la cabeza contra esa nada que niega.[111]

[108] 'El doctor Pértinax', I, p. 107.
[109] 'El doctor Pértinax', p. 110.
[110] Yvan Lissourges, *El pensamiento filosófico y religioso de Leopoldo Alas Clarín,* p. 200.
[111] 'El doctor Pértinax', p. 111.

He is therefore shocked to find that the celestial does indeed have tangible parameters, leading him to question whether reality is merely a representation: 'Pero, ¿cómo puede ser que el espacio tenga fin? Si hay límite, tiene que ser la nada; pero la nada, como no es, nada puede limitar, porque lo que limita es, y es algo distinto del ser limitado'.[112] Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason,* which is referenced directly in Clarín's story, epitomises Pértinax's philosophical belief. In Kant's work, understanding is aligned with experience, conflating epistemology and tangibility: 'The principles of pure understanding, whether constitutive *a priori*, like the mathematical principles or merely regulative, like the dynamical, contain nothing but what may be called the pure schema of possible experience'.[113] This means that transcendental experiences beyond that of tangible human experience, and that which cannot be conceptualised using these parameters, are not 'considered real'.

This is explained further by Michael Rohlf in his chapter on the Kant's philosophy in the *Cambridge Companion to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason:* 'human reason necessarily produces ideas of the soul, the world-whole, and God; yet these ideas are illusory, because they unavoidably seem to give us a priori knowledge of transcendent objects, though in fact they are only subjective ideas'.[114] Clarín, in rendering the intangible, tangible, by adding a concrete and material dimension to the cosmic, the subjective is rendered objective. In doing so, Clarín is arguing that not only is it possible that these entities exist beyond our understanding or pure reason, but also that the categories that uphold these ideas are themselves unstable.

Death thus reveals the shortcomings of the doctor's positivist understanding of existence. Lissourges explains that the appearance of death in Clarín's thought is used to expose the

[112] 'El doctor Pértinax', p. 111.
[113] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans by. Norman Kemp Smith, 1st edn (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1929), p. 258.
[114] Michael Rohlf, 'The Ideas of Pure Reason', in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason,* ed. by Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 190-209 (p. 191).

limitations of scientific rationalisation, since the mystery and metaphysics surrounding death are beyond the realms of objective understanding: 'la muerte y la idea de la muerte son realidades inamovibles que marcan el límite de la ciencia positiva y de la filosofía positivista'.[115] The outlook portrayed by Pértinax is one that, however, denounces a will to explore the metaphysical and the complex nature of space and time as he lacks a belief in the existence of anything:

> no creo más que en esto: en cuanto me sé de saberme, soy conscio, pero sin caer en el prejuicio de confundir la representación con la esencia, que es inasequible, esto es, fuera de, como conscio, quedando todo lo que de mí (y conmigo todo), sé, en saber que se representa todo (y yo como todo) en puro aparecer, cuya realidad sólo se inquieta el sujeto por conocer por nueva representación volitiva y afectiva, representación dañosa por irracional […] pues deshecha esta apariencia del deseo, nada queda por explorar, ya que ni la voluntad del saber queda.[116]

'El doctor Pertinax', as a direct critique of positivist philosophy, is also a warning about dogmatism in intellectual life. Clarín remonstrates against absolutist or dogmatic guises of philosophy that simultaneously occlude opposition, challenge, and debate from their worldview, whilst also denying themselves meaning. This is argued by Ramón Espejo-Saavedra, as he makes salient Clarín's satire of the intellectual, Serrano, in another of his short stories, 'Superchería' (1892). In this reading of 'Superchería', it is the nature of the conviction, and the means by which it is expressed by Serrano, as opposed to the conviction itself that is the root of the protagonist's erroneous ways:

> El error intelectual de Serrano no es haber creído en la razón, sino haberse dejado llevar por una especie de absolutismo positivista que no deja lugar al misterio en la vida, una postura contra la que luchó Clarín durante toda su vida.[117]

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[115] Yvan Lissourges, *El pensamiento filosófico y religioso de Leopoldo Alas Clarín*, p. 214.
[116] 'El doctor Pértinax', p. 110.
[117] Ramón Espejo-Saavedra, 'Lo fantástico y lo milagroso en cuatro relatos de Clarín', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies,* 99.8 (2022), pp. 1241-1265 (p. 1256).

Pértinax seeks to conquer the spiritual and the unknown to the extent that he is devoid of belief in anything, and what follows suggests that his theory may not offer a sufficient contribution to either understandings of human existence or conceptualisations of progress.

Epistemology itself collapses under the weight of an erroneous and reductive certainty. Clarín's satire of the nature of Pértinax's convictions and beliefs through the exploration of the metaphysical and the uncanny causes Pértinax's sense of reality to be uprooted when he transcends from his ordinary life, in his dreams, to heaven. This is a method that Clarín uses to disturb established parameters of belief systems in order to reveal the dangers of attaching inordinate importance to epistemological and intellectual categories that promote arbitrary truths. This notion is summarised by Espejo-Saavedra as follows:

> Sin embargo, como en el caso de los muchos intelectuales que aparecen a lo largo de la obra cuentística de Clarín, la crítica, incluso la parodia, de la hipertrofia intelectual no implica un rechazo ni de la razón científica ni de la dimensión espiritual de la realidad. Más bien sirven estas figuras como advertencia de la ceguera que produce una fe ingenua en cualquier sistema de creencias.[118]

In the case of 'El doctor Pértinax', the nature of Pértinax's conviction blocks epistemological and ontological progress. The focus of the intellectual satire in this story is positivist philosophy; however, it also contributes to Clarín's scepticism of absolute conviction in particular worldviews and ideas of progress, regardless of whether this relates to the fields of religion or science. The universal, celestial, and cosmic are not solely vehicles to denounce intellectual dogmatism, they allow for the narrative to be read in relation to conceptions of universal time and space and to the experience of death. In essence, the story comments on experiences beyond that which can be conceived of in relation to lived, terrestrial parameters. 'El doctor Pértinax', therefore, intersects with ideas around control and rationality at a time when society was being medicalised and rationalised; this points to an alternative

[118] Ramón Espejo-Saavedra, p. 1254.

consideration of progress, whereby intellectual life is not dogmatic, but accepting of mystery, of alternative understandings of reality and epistemology. The cosmic, and its challenge positivist philosophy, is deliberately selected to provide a commentary on the connections between the imagination of temporality, and ideas of decline and progress.

The belief and acceptance of the authentic and essential existence of nothingness beyond the limits of human experience can be thus mapped onto conceptions of degeneration and regeneration. As previously discussed, a key feature of degeneration theory in Spain is the clinical and medicalised view it took of explaining social problems. To cite Campos Marín, 'what can be said is that interest in degenerationism in the last two decades of the Nineteenth Century was eminently clinical'.[119] This rationalisation of human society that would lead to its 'regeneration' introduces the possibility of visions of progress being devised by a technocracy, or scientific elite, that would control human society in the same way they could master disease or machinery. This is underlined by Halfpenny in his examination of Comtean positivism and its social vision: 'Comte's science of society consisted of a millenarian cosmology, a universal history of humankind, culminating in predictions about the perfectibility of society if people were prepared to submit themselves to science'.[120] 'El doctor Pértinax', which directly refers to Comtean thought as a source of inspiration for Pértinax, satirises an intellectual elite that bestows itself the authority to decide on which worldviews denote progress, and which are considered backward or of little value. This, as Clarín demonstrates, would lead not only to erroneous or reductive beliefs, but also a society devoid of intellectual curiosity and an epistemological expansiveness.

The concept of perfectibility suggests that Pértinax's positivism ostracises that which does not reflect objective reality, and that which recalls human fallibility such as the metaphysical.

[119] Ricardo Campos Marín and Rafael Huertas, 'The Theory of Degeneration in Spain (1886-1920)' in *The Reception of Darwinism in the Iberian World*, pp. 171-187 (pp. 178-179).
[120] Peter Halfpenny, *Positivism and Sociology,* p. 19.

However, the key to understanding the reality of 'unreality', the mysteries and metaphysics of death, derives not from positivist dogmatism, but a belief in spirituality, as Pértinax discovers at the end of the narrative:

> Pértinax permaneció en los aires un buen rato triste y meditabundo. Se sentía mal. El edificio de la *Filosofía última* amenazaba ruina. Al ver que el Universo era tan distinto de como lo pedía la razón, empezaba a creer en el Universo. Aquella lección brusca de la realidad era el contacto áspero y frío de la materia que necesitaba su espíritu para creer.[121]

Despite this, Pértinax dies convinced his philosophy is correct: 'digo y repito que todo es pura representación, y que se ha jugado conmigo una farsa indigna'. When he dies, he is not afforded a religious burial in the 'sacred' part of the cemetery, 'no le enterraron en el sagrado',[122] ironically suggesting that religious dogmatism cannot abscond its own role in disseminating intolerance.

Both stories explored in this section show Clarín's depiction of a society constructed on binary oppositions and dogmatic worldviews is a source of stagnation and epistemological sterility. They also highlight, in turn, that knowledge and progress do not and cannot belong uniquely to science and rationality, as Lissourges illuminated in his work on Clarín's thought: 'el verdadero conocimiento [...] es también una forma de *vivir* esta espiritualidad'.[123] The process of regeneration as a movement of intellectual and social progress may not be the preserve of positivist science and philosophy. As Clarín argues through the exploration of the universal, celestial, and cosmic, progress can be defined as a spiritual and moral regeneration based on expansive conceptualisations of space and time beyond the material and terrestrial.

Conclusion: synchronous de/regeneration

[121] 'El doctor Pértinax', p. 113.
[122] 'El doctor Pértinax', p. 115.
[123] Yvan Lissourges, *El pensamiento filosófico y religioso de Leopoldo Alas Clarín,* p. 212. [Original italics].

In her book, *Contagious Metaphor,* Peta Mitchell outlines the portrayal of the airborne transmission of disease in Daniel Defoe's *Due Preparations for the Plague*. Here Mitchell describes semantic connections between a version of miasma theory that Defoe represents in *Due Preparations* of the body as a host of infection through the transmission of disease, and the body of host of ideas and information. In Defoe's book, airborne infection is equated to the act of communicating verbally through air vibrations, prompting Mitchell to explore this connection between pathological and epistemological contagion: 'we can see here the analogy between the communication of disease and the communication of ideas via the element of air'.[124] Contagion in this sense is as harmful as it is beneficial, the cure to the contagion of disease is paradoxically in the contagion of ideas. In an article published in *La Ilustración Ibérica* entitled 'Lectura, Proyecto'*,* Clarín uses the analogy of increasing air ventilation with the importation of ideas: 'venga el aire de todas partes, abrimos las ventanas á los cuatro vientos del espíritu, no temamos que ellos puedan traernos la peste, porque la descomposición está en casa'.[125] Disease, decomposition, decay and degeneration are all considered to be 'en casa' and so opening vectors of transmission for new, progressive and healing ideas to spread, is portrayed by Clarín in his 1886 article as a means to counteract domestic 'descomposición'. This is of course a highly provocative assessment of Spanish 'decadence' and 'degeneration', however what is of interest here is the opposition inherent in the same action– airborne transmission –which is at once the cause and cure of physiological or moral 'disease' regardless of whether this disease is presented literally or figuratively. Contagion itself has a dual meaning depending on the agent of infection. Decay and progress, decomposition and revival, degeneration and regeneration, can easily become conflated when pathology is deployed as a social actor.

[124] Peta Mitchell, *Contagious Metaphor* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), p. 47.
[125] Leopoldo Alas "Clarín", 'Lecturas, Proyecto', *La Ilustración Ibérica,* 3rd July 1886, <https://hemerotecadigital.bne.es/hd/viewer?oid=0001343665> [accessed 13/04/2022].

In ‘Cuervo’, Clarín uses the hygienic practice of air ventilation to reveal the conflation of perceived concepts of progress and degeneration to reveal nuances that the binary separation fails to illustrate, ultimately questioning whether genuine progress is at the heart of regenerationism. Despite rejecting science and his disdain for anything representative of modern medicine, as evidenced by the following lines: ‘La higiene..., la estadística, las tablas de la mortalidad..., Quetelet..., el término medio..., conversación. Los antiguos no sabían de términos medios, ni de Quetelet, ni de estadísticas, ni de higiene, y vivían más que los modernos’,[126] Cuervo employs principles of hygienist practice, namely ventilation. His insistence on opening vessels of air flow as part of his cleansing process is evidenced by the following lines ‘¡Abrir ventanas! Venga aire, fuera colchones’,[127] and ‘Al volver de un entierro a la casa *mortuoria*, por la puerta que a él se le abría parecía entrar el aire fresco de la vida’.[128] Cuervo appears to represent, in this respect, the free-flowing nature of a modern society that values motion over stagnation, advancement over stasis. He wishes to impose life over death, just as science and medicine aim to perpetuate life by prevention or cure, however Cuervo’s actions have as their central objective, a pathological oblivion.

Elsewhere in Clarín’s work, flow and systems of flow have been used to delineate decay and degeneration, as well as progress and regeneration, depending on the nature of ‘flow’. In her chapter on *La Regenta* in *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel*, Labanyi highlights how the city of Vetusta is pathologised through its sanitation system, as the stagnation and decay that is represented sociologically, is also reflected by the unhygienic conditions in which the residents live. She writes: ‘Vetusta’s lack of adequate sanitation constructs the city as suffering from the double problem of blockage and leakage, leakage being ‘bad flow’ caused by over-accumulation, as opposed to the ‘good flow’ permitted by free

[126] ‘Cuervo’, p. 369.
[127] ‘Cuervo’, p. 376.
[128] ‘Cuervo’, p. 375.

circulation'.[129] The circulation of 'good flow' would signify progress in a modern, transactional economy, and a healthy population that reflects a modern functional society; yet Vetusta's systems promote both an unwanted emanation of detritus, and a blockage in sanitation systems, thus indicating 'degeneracy'.

To return to 'Cuervo', it may be suggested that Clarín nuances the role of flow in relation to progress. The 'good flow' that Cuervo, the angel of death and the facilitator of forgetting, tries to promote and the hygienic practices that he adopts leads to a questioning of the parameters between *la peste* and its panacea. If there remains doubt as to where the source of decay is to be found, then doubt is cast over whether the objective binary that separates progress from degeneration can be sustained. Instead, progression, and indeed regression, are painted as more nebulous, complex concepts that coexist. These coalescent concepts of degeneration and regeneration in 'El dúo de la tos' are represented by the subversion of the pathologisation and 'abjectification' of the diseased body. The tuberculosis patients become a source of regeneration and the creation of a new existence beyond terrestrial time and space. This repositioning of death and disease signals a reconfiguration of regeneration from pathologising the nation to an exploration of a spiritual revival. The regeneration of the self beyond the grave is also explored in 'El doctor Pértinax' as the rejection of the metaphysical by positivist notions of time and space leads to an epistemological breakdown. Death, in these two narratives, is used as a means to challenge the authority of rationality in the construction of 'progress', thus highlighting how crisis might be read as a moral and spiritual deficiency.

Progress in 'Vario' is thwarted by a collective forgetting that deprives the future of epistemological advancement. As ideas of futurity become merely repetitions and revenants of past ideas, the concept of linear, continuous progress is considered an illusion in the context of forgetting. There is repetition inherent in the process of regeneration that the Devil pursues

[129] Jo Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 238.

to produce an heir in ‘La noche-mala del Diablo’. In this narrative, Clarín ironises discourses around heredity and inherited traits that were deployed to provide an explanation for the ‘degeneration’ of Spain. The repeated deformity of the Devil’s children marks a degeneration at the centre of the process of regeneration. What these narratives do, and what this chapter has aimed to reveal, is question the opposing positioning of degeneration and regeneration and their configuration as concepts that define themselves in relation to linear notions of progress and temporality. The framing of this chapter therefore deliberately attempts to read crisis not as an arbitrary arrangement of destruction followed by restoration, but as a complex mnemonic and temporal phenomenon.

Chapter Three

Reconfiguring the nation through myth, history, and modernity

'La cólera cristalizada en el silencio'[1]
('León Benavides')

If sleep is used as an allegory to describe the state of a nation, then 'nightmare' and 'insomnia' are two of the least favourable terms to describe this somnambulance. Consciousness is the parameter with which Philip Rahv describes the opposition between myth and history: 'to awake from history into myth is like escaping from a nightmare into a state of permanent insomnia'.[2] History is described as a terrible nightmare, whereas myth is depicted not as the opposite of a nightmare, a dream, but instead it induces a state of detachment from consciousness altogether. Neither history nor myth alone are preferable states; one is terrifying, the other is disorderly. What this might suggest, is that myth and history are two concepts that have the ability to coalesce and become inseparable. National identity is also inherently complex and contradictory. It can be experienced as both concrete and nebulous; it can be considered something that is experienced through affect, as well as through physical institutions and symbols. The contrast between the concrete basis upon which nationality is understood and represented, through tangible entities such as flags and languages, and how the nation is experienced as an agent of emotion, belonging, and attachment, is reflected by what might be considered the opposition between myth and history.

Consciousness is also used as a trope by Antonio Machado in his poem 'Á orillas del Duero' from the *Campos de Castilla* collection: ¿Espera, duerme o sueña? ¿La sangre derramada | recuerda, cuando tuvo la fiebre de la espada?'.[3] The image of Spain drawn as

[1] 'León Benavides', in *Cuentos completos,* ed. by Carolyn Richmond, 2 vols (Madrid: Alfaguara, 2000), II, pp. 112-116 (p. 115).
[2] Philip Rahv, 'The Myth and the Powerhouse', *Partisan review,* 20.6 (1953), pp. 635-649 (p. 637).
[3] Antonio Machado, 'Á orillas del Duero' in *Campos de Castilla* (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1912), pp. 13-17 (p. 15).

something that is dormant, dreaming, or stationary outlines the concerns that Machado had of Spain as lifeless and lacking in vigour or pragmatism to change the course of its rapid decline that he describes in the refrain: 'Castilla miserable, ayer dominadora, | envuelta en sus harapos desprecia cuanto ignora'.[4] In this chapter, I explore the interaction between myth, history and memory in the context of national decline. Jo Labanyi observes that myth can transcend 'a way of thinking' to become 'a way of remembering':[5] I unpack what this meant in relation to nineteenth-century Spain in the work of Clarín, as a mythified idea of the nation has to do with the mythifiying of national pasts, ultimately altering the way in which the nation is conceived with a backward gaze. The use of the past as a central vessel for myth-making highlights historical memory as a site of ideological struggle, whereby the remembering of the national past and the use of this memory in the present creates a narrative about the past and thus supports certain power structures in the present. This is explained by Carlos Barriuso as follows: 'cabe comprender que la proliferación de discursos sobre la nación en el fin de siglo español persigue un cierto uso de la memoria histórica, bien para legitimar una configuración del poder actual, bien para cuestionarla'.[6] I argue that Clarín challenges the mythification of the past, particularly when used to conceal historical truths or support oppressive political agendas. What makes Clarín's stories particularly revelatory, is that certain nationalistic narratives are proposed, only to be turned against themselves.

How does the nation relate to temporality? And how does this intersect with myth and history? Conceiving of the nation as a temporal, as opposed to a historically determined, entity, allows it to be imagined as a complex and incongruous concept that resists the linearity of historicism with determined origins and destiny. Homi Bhabha advocates this reading of the nation as a liberation from essentialist historical ideas of nationhood:

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[4] Antonio Machado, 'Á orillas del Duero' in *Campos de Castilla* (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1912), pp. 13-17 (p. 15).
[5] Jo Labanyi, *Myth and History in the Contemporary Spanish Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 22.
[6] Carlos Barriuso, *Los discursos de la modernidad: Nación, imperio y estética en el fin de siglo español (1895-1924)* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2009), p. 22.

> My emphasis on the temporal dimension in the inscription of these political entities – that are also potent symbolic and affective sources of cultural identity – serves to displace the historicism that has dominated discussions of the nation as a cultural force. The focus on temporality resists the transparent linear equivalence of event and idea that historicism proposes; it provides a perspective on the disjunctive forms of representation that signify a people, a nation, or a national culture.[7]

Therein lies a tension between the nation as temporal or historical, or in other words the nation imagined as malleable and shifting, or historically rooted and determined. If there is a disconnect in how the nation is imagined, then the synthesis of nation and state, in the compound term 'nation-state', imbues the national with the political, it concretises symbolic or affective imaginings of the nation into something political and pragmatic. The way the nation is experienced in relation to time, as temporal or historical or as disjunctive or linear, plays out in political terms as the nation becomes inseparable from the state; the nation as a theory, concept, or philosophy becomes embedded in ideology and governance as the mythical or abstract intertwines with the tangible. José Álvarez Junco refers to invented national tradition becoming a political tool, merging the nation and state to become one system of national storytelling or mythification: 'la invención de la tradición y la construcción de los símbolos nacionales culminan con la elevación de estos elementos a un cierto nivel de sacralidad, el escalón más alto en la preparación para la utilización política de aquel artefacto cultural'.[8]

During the first half of the nineteenth century, an era known as that of the 'nation-state' and empire was, as Álvarez Junco explains, a time of nationalist fervour in Spain stemming from a concerted effort of national history-making during the previous century:

> historias de la literatura española, ediciones de clásicos españoles, creación literaria sobre temas históricos nacionales, exhortaciones a jóvenes poetas para que excitasen

[7] Homi K. Bhabha, 'DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation', in *Nation and Narration*, ed. by Homi Bhabha (London; New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 291-322 (p. 292).
[8] José Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX* (Madrid: Taurus, 2019) p. 190.

> los sentimientos patrióticos, de todo ello hubo en el siglo ilustrado. Y no era sino una preparación de la gran explosión nacionalista de comienzos del XIX.[9]

What Clarín's stories suggest, and what will be argued in the ensuing discussion, is that the use of nationalist myths drive the way the past and national history is depicted in a period of national 'soul-searching'. I argue that this treatment of the past undermines historical consciousness, the formation of memory, and a progressive regeneration project. Before examining further how myth and history interacted in the nineteenth century, and in the particular case of *fin de siglo* Spain, it is worth exploring how the development of the nation-state reveals the manner in which temporality was envisioned in relation to the construction of national consciousness.

In his assessment of the term 'nation', Timothy Brennan observes that the nation entangles deep time, ancestry, and nebulosity, with understandings of the nation-state as a modern, political construct:

> as a term, it refers both to the modern nation-state and to something more ancient and nebulous – the *'natio'* – a local community, domicile, family, condition of belonging. The distinction is often obscured by nationalists who seek to place their own country in an 'immemorial past' where its arbitrariness cannot be questioned.[10]

Nationalism often aims to use the political state to perpetuate ideas of the nation as fixed, eternal, and homogeneous, thus erasing the boundaries between a live political state and the nation as imagined, abstract, and atemporal. The term 'nation-state', then, deliberately fuses the two concepts of a political state and the nation, infusing national fictions, imaginings, and desires, which will be later explored as myth, with a political significance and pragmatic outlet. Carolyn Boyd states how the political discourse of nineteenth-century Spain conflated concepts of national belonging and the political state:

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[9] José Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX* (Madrid: Taurus, 2019), p. 232.

[10] Timothy Brennan, 'The national longing for form', in *Nation and Narration*, ed. by Homi Bhabha (London; New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 44-70 (p. 45).

> the political elites who controlled the Restoration system of course denied the existence of a state/nation dichotomy; it was no coincidence that in its 1884 edition of the Dictionary of the Castilian Language, the Royal Academy officially conflated the two concepts for the first time.[11]

This indicates a politicised nation-formation process which aimed to define, in rigid and exclusionary terms, what was the Spanish nation and who was a Spanish citizen.

Nation and belonging to the nation were controlled and imposed by the state as part of a political process. This is delineated in Jo Labanyi and Luisa Elena Delgado's book *Modern Literatures in Spain:*

> it was in the eighteenth century that a particular political and cultural narrative was born: a narrative of Spanish identity whose starting point was the identification between nation and state, and the consideration of that state as politically and culturally homogenous and centred in Castile.[12]

What might be suggested by this, and illuminated by Boyd and Brennan's observations, is that there is a clear correlation between cultural modernity and nation-formation on one hand, and centralisation and homogenisation on the other. The role of Castile will be explored in due course, but what is worth noting beforehand is that the relationship between the nation and state implies a cooperation between nationhood in an affective sense, and the political system that underpins it, distorting boundaries between mythology and history, time and timelessness, ideas and imagery, poetics and pragmatism, sentiment and politics.

The question that arises, then, is why the nineteenth century in Spain became a period in which imaginings of the nation, particularly the national past, became so embedded in, and therefore indistinguishable from, the political state. As Spain began to lose its empire, a clear

[11] Carolyn Boyd, *Historia Patria: Politics, History and National Identity in Spain 1875-1975* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 65.
[12] Jo Labanyi and Luisa Elena Delgado with Helena Buffery, Kirsty Hooper, and Mari Jose Olaziregi, *Modern Literatures in Spain* (Cambridge: Polity, 2023), p. 13.

sense of national identity began to wane. What is important to this discussion, however, is less a detailed analysis of the historical importance of Spain's so-called national 'disaster' of 1898, the loss of the empire, national soul-searching and regeneration project, than an exploration of how nationhood informs myth-creation and memory in a period of national 'crisis' or 'defeat'. As Christopher Schmidt-Nowara elucidates, Spanish colonies became synonymous with Spain and Spanish national identity: 'in nineteenth-century parlance the colonies were 'la España ultramarina', integral parts of the Spanish nation-state',[13] and therefore the colonial project became integrated with a project of nation-building on the Peninsula. This is also illustrated by Henry Kamen in the following lines: 'the growth of the empire bestowed on "Spain" a significance, a role and an ethic which helped the peoples of the peninsula to realize that they now shared a common enterprise which gave them an unprecedented new identity'.[14] Empire, seen as the parameter by which the strength and legitimacy of European nation states were measured during the period, was considered central to Spanish nationhood and its survival. As Spain's colonies were gaining independence, the core concept of 'nation' was being questioned, as Sebastian Balfour explains:

> Spain's political system, its national character, and Spanish nationhood itself now began to be widely questioned. This crisis was all the more acute because it occurred at the highest point in the age of empire, when the possession of colonies was seen as the bench-mark of a nation's fitness to survive.[15]

Desires for what the future of Spain would look like were articulated by the national project of regeneration. The gradual loss of empire and, as a consequence, a crisis in negotiating nationhood in an era that saw the loss of a principal source of national identity, meant that the need to regenerate relied, to a large extent, on the re-establishment or redefining of what the

[13] Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, '"La España Ultramarina"': Colonialism and Nation-building in Nineteenth-Century Spain', *European History Quarterly,* 34.2 (2004), pp. 191-214 (p. 192).
[14] Henry Kamen, *Imagining Spain: Historical Myth and National Identity* (New Haven: Yale University University, 2008), p. 22.
[15] Sebastian Balfour, *The End of the Spanish Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), p. 49.

Spanish nation-state was. If the concepts of nationhood and statehood were welded together in a project of nation-building that saw national myths and imaginings of the nation take hold in the political arena, regenerationism was going to have to reimagine or reconfigure these national myths in order to ensure the survival of the Spanish state beyond empire. Indeed, the coalescence of two phenomena, the loss of a concept that underpinned the nation-state and a cohesive national identity that fed the national imagination, an empire, and the onset of 'modernity' and 'regeneration', leads to a renegotiation of the national past and future.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, nations deployed both myth and history in order to shore up and articulate a sense of national identity, formulating a dialogue between objectivity and chronology, and a mythological system that created a set of symbols and imagery to which a sense of shared experience was attached. Northrop Frye distinguishes the opposing functions of myth and history as follows: 'just as we are initially aware of the opposition between the historical and the mythical, so we are initially aware of an opposition between the scientific and the systematic'.[16] The national past, history, becomes embedded in a network of signs and symbols that devise their own system of meaning. As history becomes intertwined with mythology, so too do perceptions of the nation become integrated with the language of myth: timelessness, immutability, permanency. In reference to Spain, this is illustrated by Manuel García Morente in his *Idea de la Hispanidad* which, although published in 1938, reflects a sentiment towards the nation that drove the conservative myth-making of the previous century. In the following lines, the nation is described as atemporal and immaterial:

> la nación [...] es algo que comprende por igual el pasado, el presente y el futuro; está por encima del tiempo; está por encima de las cosas materiales, naturales; por encima de los hechos y de los actos que realizamos. La nación es el estilo común a la infinidad

[16] Northrop Frye, 'New Directions from the Old', in *Myth and Myth-making,* ed. by Henry A. Murray (New York: Braziller, 1960), pp. 115-132 (p. 122).

> de cosas materiales, a una infinidad de hechos y de actos, cuyo conjunto constituye la historia, la cultura, la producción de todo un pueblo.[17]

In Ramiro de Maeztu's essay *Defensa de la Hispanidad* (1934)[18], Spain, and specifically the formulation of its future, is imagined through the past. Although Morente considers the nation a sanctified, ethereal, and timeless entity, Maetzu notes the pragmatism that must derive from Spain's past. In the highly evocative, and somewhat hyperbolic, lines that follow, Maetzu outlines that Spain's future must be established through the past:

> No somos animales que se resignen a la mera vida fisiológica, ni ángeles que vivan la eternidad fuera del tiempo y del espacio. En nuestras almas de hombres habla la voz de nuestros padres, que nos llama al porvenir por que lucharon.[19]

What is important for the ensuing discussion, is the notion demonstrated here of Spanish national consciousness being forged from a merging of pragmatic, linear histories, and of the nation itself existing outside of time.[20] I will therefore explore this duality using Clarín's stories in relation to this articulation and dissemination of a national history which became part of a system operating subliminally whereby an unreality is digested as reality.

The mythic network of signs and symbols in which national history existed is explained by Álvarez Junco as a means to produce a coherent and cohesive national unit: 'the main aim of these national histories, similar to other European cases, was to build a symbolic and mythic framework within which political and cultural factors had produced the Spanish entity'.[21] The

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[17] Manuel García Morente, *Idea de la Hispanidad* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1961), p. 51.
[18] Ramiro de Maetzu was known for his anti-Republicanism and, although he was not a member of the Falange, a fascist party founded in 1934, his ideas on 'Hispanidad' were aligned with Falangist beliefs.
[19] Ramiro de Maetzu, *Defensa de la Hispanidad,* 4th edn (Madrid: Editorial Poblet, 1941), p. 29.
[20] Clarín's work is not without contradictions when attempting to align a liberal framework with a notion of 'hispanidad' and an eternal, essential nation. The ambiguities of this will be explored here in relation to the chosen texts. For further reading on Clarín and *fin de siglo* liberal nationalism, with particular reference to the Catalan question, see Mariano Saba's article: Mariano Saba, 'La hispanidad de los otros: en torno a Leopoldo Alas "Clarín" y la lengua catalana' in *Poligramas,* 47 (2018), pp. 117-136.
[21] José Álvarez Junco, 'Spanish National Identity in the Age of Nationalisms', in *State and Nation Making in Latin America and Spain,* ed. by Miguel A. Centeno and Agustin E. Ferraro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 307-328 (p. 310).

nation itself then becomes mythified; myths distort conceptions of history and temporality so that the nation cannot exist without its imagery and symbolism, as Anthony D. Smith observes:

> these artefacts have created an image of the nation for compatriots and outsiders alike, and in doing so have forged the nation itself. Signifier and signified have been fused. Image and reality have become identical; ultimately, the nation has no existence outside its imagery and its representations.[22]

The mythification of the nation means that, during its development, history is distorted and appropriated for consumption as a symbol of identity, a sign of belonging, or a metaphor for commonality.

The temporal and historical become atemporal and mythical, as history is digested as myth. Labanyi notes that the tension between myth and history has to do with how time is perceived, as mythical time is recurrent and cyclical, historical time is linear and inexorable. She writes: 'history may be 'myth' in the sense that it is a verbal construct, but myth affirms cyclical recurrence and supposes that history is dissociated from origins, which historical writing [...] affirms linear progress and continuity'.[23] Rahv had earlier expressed this dissonance in mythical and historical perceptions of time:

> [...] in merging past and present it releases us from the flux of temporality, arresting change in the timeless, the permanent, the ever-recurrent conceived as 'sacred repetition'. Hence the mythic is the polar opposite of what we mean by the historical, which stands for process, inexorable change, incessant permutation and innovation.[24]

It is pertinent to suggest that myth and history may not map onto two distinct perceptions of time, as the two concepts converge and contradiction becomes inherent in the myth-making process. Time conceptualised as both linear and progressive, and cyclical and recurrent,

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[22] Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 166.
[23] Jo Labanyi, *Myth and History in the Contemporary Spanish Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 33-34.
[24] Philip Rahv, 'The Myth and the Powerhouse', *Partisan review,* 20.6 (1953), pp. 635-649 (p. 637).

bolsters the idea of myth infiltrating historical understanding as linear notions of progress are perceived as adherence to myth, in the form of common origin, eternal truths, and a manifest destiny. Understandings of the nation are constructed on both a cyclical mythology and a historical continuity working symbiotically. Roland Barthes' work on the system of myths and myth-making, although not directly referring to historical myth and the Spanish nation, is relevant here. He describes the objective that myth has of disguising as fact: 'myth is a semiological system which has the pretension of transcending itself into a factual system',[25] and thus myth poses as historical truth.

Digesting myth as reality means that narratives of the past can be used as tools for the formulation of national consciousness, as Rumina Sethi observes: 'cultural nationalism derives its strength from the past [...] in order to demonstrate cultural uniqueness and thereby stimulate national consciousness'.[26] 'Cultural nationalism', the term that Sethi uses, is understood in the present context to mean the use of culture, language, and collective characteristics to define nationality. Therefore, a nation can be defined through the imagery it deploys, as Smith elucidates: 'constructing the nation is more a matter of disseminating symbolic representations [...] We grasp the meanings of the nation through the images it casts, the symbols it uses and the fictions it evokes'.[27] History and 'origin' are both deployed to perpetuate a national mythology, and in the case of Spain, the mythification of the national past cast an image of the country as cohesive and eternal, as Kamen explains: 'readings of national history [...] were of enormous influence in creating the conviction that Spain was a cohesive reality, eternal and unchanging'.[28] Thus, mythic and historical time coalesce as origin is given the mythological function of an eternal truth.

[25] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. by Annette Lavers (St Albans: Paladin, 1973), p. 134
[26] Rumina Sethi, *Myths of the Nation: National Identity and Literary Representation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), p. 5.
[27] Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, p. 167.
[28] Henry Kamen, *Imagining Spain*, p. 35.

The merging of myth and history in the construction of national identity and memory illuminates ideas around national crisis and progress towards the end of the nineteenth century. National 'crisis', I argue, might be productively considered as a crisis stemming from the role of myth in the act of remembering, since the infiltration of myth into the historical consciousness of the period is considered, in the following stories by Clarín, as an obstacle to progressive nation-building. I argue that a 'crisis' in nationhood has as much to do with historical events, particularly the *fin de siglo* 'disaster', as it does with a mythified past and how the nation chose to remember it. In the first part of the discussion, I argue specifically that a collective unconsciousness became synonymous with a political state that lacked any capacity to represent pragmatic or progressive routes towards nation-building. Both narratives explored in this section are responses to national 'crisis', commenting specifically on patriotism and empire, defeat and history, inheritance and determined pasts and futures. Mythified colonial pasts hamper definitions of the *patria* in 'El Rana', and an internalisation of crisis in 'Un repatriado' leads to a failure in regeneration and pragmatic nation-building. In the following section, the reconfiguration of national myths is explored in 'La trampa' and 'León Benavides' as imagery associated with Castile and the Reconquest are reimagined as symbols that disrupt national mythology. By reassessing the national 'originary' myths that served to conceal a fear of history, Clarín explores how they might be reconstructed as mnemonic tools whereby memory of the past may contribute to a progressive nation-building project. Finally, the role of modernity in remembering the national past is considered as the (re)creation of exclusionary myths that sterilise memories of the past. It will be argued that in 'Doña Berta' certain, and distinctly 'modern', ways of remembering the past in order to consolidate a modern nation-state and modern citizen serve only to perpetuate, rather than eliminate, exclusionary historical myths.

National unconsciousness and abstract nations in 'Un repatriado' and 'El Rana'

'El Rana' and 'Un repatriado', both published posthumously in the collection *Doctor Sutilis* (1916), narrate national crisis at the end of the nineteenth century and question how to formulate the future in a nation determined by a mythified colonial past and a mystified and inefficient political state. 'El Rana', which is both the title of the narrative and the name of the protagonist, tells the story of a war veteran who, after serving in Cuba, becomes a vagabond and notorious figure in his local community. His identity is essentially public rather than private; his appearance is described in terms of the colour of the streets and his days are spent reading newspapers outside public buildings: 'tenía cincuenta años que parecían setenta; una levita que no lo parecía, del color de la vía pública'; 'había aprendido a leer allá en Cuba, cuando la otra guerra, siendo voluntario en un batallón provincial; y ahora leía periódicos y más periódicos arrimado a los pilares en los porches del Ayuntamiento'.[29] It is possible to read El Rana as an allegory of nationhood itself due to his involvement in national colonial projects, along with his consumption of the national press and his association with public spaces and institutions. His role is to provide a commentary on the nation, demonstrated by the trajectory of his life from a soldier in a colonial war to a vagabond who disseminates, often crazed, patriotism founded on baseless and vague ideas of the *patria*. In this narrative, mystification and mythification are symbiotic in what might be deemed a 'national unconsciousness'. The mystified nation is intimately linked to the mythification of the nation-state that relies on unreality to forge national consciousness. 'Mystification', although separate from, can be considered imbricated in the 'mythification' of nationhood. In 'El Rana', national pasts become less historical, than part of a process in which *Cuba española* and the *patria* form a national mythology that obfuscates the meaning of those concepts.

'Un repatriado' was written in 1899 in direct response to the Spanish-American war the previous year. The narrative recounts the thoughts of intellectual Antonio Casero as he leaves Spain owing to his disenchantment with the nation. His alienation from Spain stems from what

[29] Leopoldo Alas "Clarín", 'El Rana', in *Cuentos completos,* ed. by Carolyn Richmond, 2 vols (Madrid: Alfaguara, 2000), II, pp. 361-366 (p. 361).

he deems a preference for representation over reality, that is, the foregrounding of mythified images of Spanish nationhood that hamper the ability of Spain to function as an effective nation state. What will be particularly explored in this narrative is Casero's critique of the historical determinism of the nation, and how the internalisation of historical events, namely Spain's recent defeat in the Spanish-American war, does not create the conditions for an effective regeneration of the nation. Instead of tragic or disastrous, this pivotal historical moment should be considered an opportunity to reformulate the nation and renegotiate the values that should guide its future (re)construction. I argue that reading these stories together shows that Clarín identifies Spain's colonial past as a symbol for Spanish nationhood, which, as a consequence, prevents imaginative, progressive and regenerative ideas from gaining traction.

Colonial pasts and patriotism in 'El Rana'

If, as previously stated, El Rana signifies the national psyche, then his unconscious patriotism in the face of a weak and invisible state, is revealing. His fierce patriotism is clear as his experiences of serving his country overseas have given him a deep belief in *Cuba española*: 'él era patriota ¡por vida de la Chilindraina! y había expuesto la vida en cien combates por la... *eso* de la patria: en fin, "¡Viva Cuba española!", gritaba El Rana'.[30] His firm regard for the idea of *Cuba española*, however, is coupled with hesitation when articulating for what exactly he sacrificed his life, demonstrated by the indeterminate '*eso'*. Notably, for El Rana the (political) aims of sending troops to Cuba are unknown, and the concept of nation, or *patria,* remains undefinable or mystified. The notion that empire fostered a sense of national identity in Spain, the idea that encountering the 'other' strengthened feelings of 'self', and that the colonies were viewed as building blocks for the nation, are widely accepted. Schmidt-Nowara notes that a spiritual attachment to empire supported articulations of political ideologies and nation-building: 'the colonial encounter played a defining role in shaping concepts at the heart of

[30] 'El Rana', p. 362.

European liberalism and republicanism, including citizenship, the nation and the family'.[31] Physical land becomes a historical entity that is imbricated in conceptions of nationhood to which attachments are formed. Anthony D. Smith, in *Myths and Memories of the Nation,* introduces the idea that in processes of nation-building 'a particular territory and specific landscapes are historicized. They become essential elements of the community's history, and the land becomes an historic homeland'.[32]

The stories that nations tell themselves, or the stories that make up a 'national identity' or a 'national past', are embodied in physical entities such as land in order to consolidate, or afford tangibility to, an imagined origin or destiny. We might, then, in the case of nineteenth-century Spain and its (former) colonies, be able to speak of land, in this case colonised land, as mythified as well as historicised. This territory is imbricated not only in the historical past, in events that make up Spanish national history, but also in imaginings and conceptualisations of the nation, of idealised pasts and hopes for the future. This explains El Rana's attachment to the colonial project as it is entangled with his own memories as a soldier in Cuba. However, Clarín explores the continuation of this sensibility at a time when empire was retreating into a symbol less of a hopeful nation than an idea that is at risk of fading into a vagueness and opacity that lacks any meaning. Here we might return to the contrast between El Rana's description of the *patria* as the indeterminate '... *eso* de la patria' to qualify the nation, and his vehement rallying cry, "¡Viva Cuba española!" resembling an attempt to attach to something that is ultimately slippery and distant.

Clarín illustrates a disconnect between the sense of attachment to a national concept of *Cuba española* and understandings of the state-driven colonial project. El Rana waits at the station to bid goodbye to the soldiers that are going to fight in Cuba: '—Toma, *Queso*; toma, *Viruela*..., toma tú, *Troncho*... ¡Viva Cuba española! —¡Viva el Rana! gritaron los voluntarios que ya se

[31] Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, '"La España Ultramarina"', p. 201.
[32] Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation,* p. 269.

alejaban... ¡Viva la integridad de la patria!'.[33] Sacrificing one's life for the country was seen not only as an act of patriotism but also an act of nation-building, which Kamen explains: 'cultivar el patriotismo a través de la guerra fue un paso adelante importante en la invención de España. Morir por España ayudó a crear España'.[34] In 'El Rana', however, the protagonist's patriotism is not accompanied by state actors, he is mostly alone: 'la verdad era que en la estación no había ni *elemento oficial*, ni muchos curiosos o patriotas. Casi ninguno'.[35] The formlessness of the *patria* can be seen to stem from the lack of visibility of the (nation)state: the supposed pillars of state authority and drivers of nation-building are nowhere to be seen.

Sacrifice for the homeland was integral to the overall idea of national identity and citizenship, internalised and enacted by the masses but forged by the political establishment. The result, in 'El Rana', is a dissonance between feelings of patriotism that he experiences, and the simultaneous alienation from the Spanish State, from those who represent power and implement and uphold a system which leaves him destitute. This is expressed by a song sung by El Rana, which is described thus:

> la letra de lo que quería decir no era muy clara, pero la música era ésta: pestes contra el frío, contra el hambre, contra el infame burgués y contra la falta de patriotismo del obispo, del alcalde, del gobernador y demás oscurantistas, digo burgueses.[36]

El Rana identifies the state's inability to provide for its citizens, and also identifies the pillars of the state, the Church and the political establishment, as weak. Yet he still supports the colonial project since, in El Rana's imagination, it is divorced from the political state. However, the war in Cuba is also the apotheosis of political and military failure, as delineated by Álvarez Junco:

> la Guerra de Cuba había demostrado el *desastre* en que se hallaba el país. La falta de apoyos internacionales había sido completa; las insuficiencias de dotación y las

[33] 'El Rana', p. 365.
[34] Henry Kamen, *La invención de España* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 2020), p. 356.
[35] 'El Rana', p. 364. [Original italics].
[36] 'El Rana', p. 362.

> pésimas condiciones de vida que habían tenido que soportar los reclutas revelaban el mal funcionamiento del Estado.[37]

Therefore, by highlighting El Rana's simultaneous patriotism in relation to the colonial project and alienation from state actors, Clarín emphasises the colonial imagination as one that denies truth and transparency about the state of the nation.

The notion of a functionally bankrupt state adds new weight to the idea of an empty patriotism with baseless evidence to support it; if *Cuba española* is a myth, then so is the nation that El Rana believes in. A 'national crisis' in the present, therefore, might be articulated through a weak, or invisible, state, and a mythified past leading to a mystified present. As a result, El Rana begins to question the reality that surrounds him. At the end of the narrative, he meditates on the meaning of the nation:

> ¿Qué era España? ¿Qué era la patria? No lo sabía. Música... El himno de Riego, la tropa que pasa, un discurso que se entendió á medias, jirones de frases patrióticas en los periódicos... Pelayo... El Cid... La francesada... El Dos de Mayo... El Rana, como otros camaradas, confundía los tiempos; no sabía si lo de Pelayo y lo de Covadonga había sido poco antes que lo de Daoiz o por el mismo tiempo... Pero, en fin, ello era que... ¡viva España! y lo que sale de dentro sale de dentro…[38]

The nation is mystified to the extent that it is mythified, it pertains to no reality or clear definition, and is thus experienced outside of historical time. Instead, it is conceived of in 'mythic time', since El Rana's perception of the nation is one that conflates the past with the present. The concepts *Cuba española* and the *patria,* derive from El Rana's memories and project themselves onto the present; colonial war becomes a recurrent, interminable, and

[37] José Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX,* p. 587.
[38] 'El Rana', p. 364.

indeterminate event in the mind of El Rana. This phenomenon corroborates Rahv's theorisation of myth:

> confounding past, present, and future in an undifferentiated unity, as against historical time which is unrepeatable and of an ineluctable progression. The historical event is that which occurs once only, unlike the timeless event of myth that, recurring again and again, is endlessly present.[39]

'El Rana' therefore elucidates the merging of history and myth whereby the historical event is not solely historical, it is extrapolated from its original pastness to become eternalised in the present and digested as current reality. Spain's empire becomes less a part of the national past, than part of a mythification process whereby El Rana's conviction in *Cuba española* and the *patria* force themselves into present reality. As the nation is conceived in mythic time, historical time is cancelled out to the point of obsolescence: the past does not appear to have passed.

In Javier Krauel's examination of the 1892 commemorations of Columbus and the 1492 'discovery' of the Americas in his book *Imperial Emotions: Cultural Responses to Myths of Empire in Fin-de-Siècle Spain,* the temporal and mnemonic continuity of coloniality is emphasised. The commemorations, according to Krauel, outline the relevance of imperial pasts by 'establishing a continuity between past and present colonialism, between what happened in the territories of the *Monarquía hispánica* and what was happening in its nineteenth-century colonial possessions in the Caribbean and the Pacific'.[40] In 'El Rana', Clarín exposes the falsehood of a continuity between colonial pasts and presents by emphasising the political establishment as a crumbling structure unable to support its citizens or an exploitative colonial project, which is destined to end in the failure to achieve what past

[39] Philip Rahv, 'The Myth and the Powerhouse', *Partisan review,* 20.6 (1953), pp. 635-649 (p. 642).
[40] Javier Krauel, *Imperial Emotions: Cultural Responses to Myths of Empire in Fin-de-Siècle Spain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), pp. 53-54.

interventions have been able to. The colonial imagination of the central character, affirming his attachment to the myth of Spanish imperial power, thus belies the inefficiency of the state. Clarín warns that the durability of a nation-state that relies solely on a sedated citizenry blindly attached to a mythified idea or a poetics of belonging, without a state that provides for its populous and crumbles from the centre, will last little more than the lives of those sent to fight in defence of an empty idea: '*eso* de la patria'.

Defeat and determinism in 'Un repatriado'

'Un repatriado' has been described by Mariano Baquero Goyanes as diverging from the conventions of the short story form; he comments, 'no es propiamente un cuento'.[41] The story is an essay-like piece that depicts the stream of consciousness of one central character, Antonio Casero. The lack of emphasis on plot imbues the story with *costumbrista* traits, allowing it to be read as less a work of fiction than a politico-philosophical essay or think piece on Spanish nationhood. I argue that, by treating this story as a commentary on the immediate aftermath of the Spanish-American war, Clarín invites alternative readings of national 'crisis' that challenge the myopia with which the nation is considered. Casero leaves Spain, before returning in an attempt to rebuild his life, symbolising the reconstruction of Spanish identity that focuses on a pragmatic approach to history and a spiritual reimagination of nation, as opposed to an alienating historical determinism. When the story was written, Spain was grappling with the growing influence of the United States, its victory over Spain in 1898 signalling a geopolitical shift of power in the West. With the United States becoming a hegemonic power, fears bound by degeneration, decadence, and decline came to a head and the nation became embroiled in what has been framed historically as *el Desastre*. What 'Un repatriado' critiques is not the military defeat as a disaster, but the historical determination that is bound up in the poetics of belonging to the nation, particularly one in self-conscious 'crisis'.

[41] Mariano Baquero Goyanes, *El cuento español en el siglo XIX* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1949), p. 289.

In ‘Un repatriado’, Antonio Casero, the protagonist, laments the nation as ‘represented’, producing a superficiality that renders it distanced from spiritual depth and social progress. According to Casero, the fixation on external image homogenises national ontology to the extent that he becomes disoriented:

> Este predominio, casi exclusivo, de la vida exterior, del color sobre la figura, que es la idea; de la fórmula cristalizada sobre el jugo espiritual de las cosas; este servilismo del pensamiento, esta ceguedad de la rutina, y tantas y tantas miserias atávicas contrarias a la natural índole del progreso social en los países de veras modernos, me desorientan.[42]

This is an image of decadence that defines the challenge that Casero mounts to the systemic failures that have led to this point, namely the impotence of political life. This reflects Labanyi and Delgado’s observation that ‘the 1898 disaster is the lynchpin that connects the concern with Spain’s decadence to the broader crisis of European liberal democracy’.[43]

The previous discussion outlined the idea that certain representations and symbols in relation to nationhood, leads to ill-defined, disorienting, and alienating experiences of the nation itself. In ‘Un repatriado’, I argue Clarín identifies that this represented nature also leads to the internalisation of determined and fixed ideas around national pasts and presents. In the context of the recent defeat against the United States in 1898, Clarín suggests that the pragmatic reimagining of Spain should derive from the spiritual and moral as opposed to historical and determined. This story can, therefore, be read as posing a challenge to the historical determination of defeat, to invite a more pragmatic approach to regeneration and *fin de siglo* nation-formation. The narrative traces Casero’s feelings towards his native country,

[42] ‘Un repatriado’, II, pp. 400-404 (p. 402).
[43] Jo Labanyi and Luisa Elena Delgado with Helena Buffery, Kirsty Hooper, and Mari Jose Olaziregi, *Modern Literatures in Spain* (Cambridge: Polity, 2023), p. 144.

alternating between lamenting the state of the nation, and a conviction that he will emigrate. Casero, as the end of the story reveals, is ultimately unable to live in another country:

> pero ¡fuera de España tampoco *sabía vivir*! ¡Tenía la patria más arraigada en las entrañas de lo que yo creía! El clima, el color del cielo, el del paisaje, su figura, el modo de comer, el modo de hablar, lo extraño de los intereses públicos.[44]

The nation as experienced as something determined and fixed comes in direct opposition to Casero's conviction that national consciousness should indeed be meditated, conscious, and deliberate. Herein lies the principal issue that is raised in this narrative; the nation considered as historically determined creates an inertia and passivity that render progress impossible in a time of national 'crisis'.

Casero describes himself as 'el hijo pródigo [..] que no vuelve'.[45] The nation conceived of as something that is inherited, the nation as a family or a parental figure, were common tropes in the articulation of the nation in nineteenth-century Europe, as Boyd observes: 'children inherited their patria as they inherited their families, not out of choice, nor with an eye to their improvement, but out of sentiment and necessity'.[46] This view of the nation considers it as a body that binds its subjects within unconditional and unbreakable boundaries. Álvarez Junco's assessment of the Romantic vision of the citizen provides a framework for this version of nationhood that, despite its historical distance from Clarín's stories, forms connections with 'Un repatriado'. He writes: 'al romántico no le interesaba el Hombre esencial, apriorístico, abstracto, sujeto de los derechos revolucionarios liberales, sino el ser individual, inmerso en una realidad social dada e imposibilitado de realizar su destino fuera de ella'. And thus, 'lo mismo le ocurría al ciudadano, que sólo podía realizarse políticamente dentro de la realidad nacional y siendo fiel a esa forma de ser nacional definida por la historia'.[47] If, in 'Un

[44] 'Un repatriado', p. 403. [Original italics].
[45] 'Un repatriado', p. 403.
[46] Carolyn Boyd, *Historia Patria: Politics, History and National Identity in Spain 1875-1975,* p. 119.
[47] José Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX,* p. 239.

repatriado', the political reality of citizenship is only imagined in relation to an ill-defined collective destiny, no practical definition, nor diverse experience of, the nation, can be realised.

The nation framed as a family establishes it as a historically and congenitally determined concept, in addition to creating the conditions for history and myth to intersect since history is framed as a concept that can be appropriated by affect and notions of 'belonging' and 'family'. In other words, the historical past experienced as inherent and inheritable creates the conditions for the past to be mythified in order to be able to be digested as identity. Boyd illuminates this as follows:

> national history and identity were inseparable; to be familiar with one was to define and comprehend the other. Invasion, conquest, domination, resistance, the struggle for unity against foreign and domestic enemies– these had shaped the national character. National identity was both immutable and historically determined.[48]

Casero's illustration of the nation as a family continues throughout the text. However, this does not define his attachment to the nation as indelible, but highlights his lack of emotional response to recent political events:

> la patria es una madre o no es nada; es un *seno*, un *hogar*; se la debe amar no por *a* más *b*, no por efecto de teorías sociológicas, sino como se quiere a los padres, a los hijos, lo de casa. Yo no amo así a España; me he convencido de ello ahora al ver nuestras desgracias nacionales y lo poco que, en resumidas cuentas, las he sentido. [..] Sí, ya sé que los más, sin descontar aquellos que han impreso su dolor patriótico en multitud de ediciones, en rigor, han visto pasar las cosas como si la lucha de España y los Estados Unidos fuera *res inter alios acta.*[49]

[48] Carolyn Boyd, *Historia Patria: Politics, History and National Identity in Spain 1875-1975,* p. 81.
[49] 'Un repatriado', p. 401. [Original italics].

The indication here is that Casero has a more nuanced experience of the nation than the purely familial. If the Spanish-American war signalled a seismic shift of power, then Casero's statement gains new currency. What is expressed is a shift away from a national identity based on the internalisation of historical defeat, as Casero is able to observe historical events of national significance at an objective distance. If Spain embodies a sense of loss and national humiliation, then the nation becomes limited by its history, and bound to a self-fulfilling destiny of inferiority or 'servilismo'. What might be particularly called into question is the passivity and unconsciousness that this induces: if a determined history leads to a determined destiny, can there be any active process of engagement on the part of citizens in the formation of national consciousness?

The chasm established here between Casero and the nation reveals how not only does defeat leads to an alienated citizenry, but also permeates regenerative attempts and obscures conceptualisations of progress. Casero disparages the regeneration project in the following line: 'no se puede creer en regeneradores, porque faltan las primeras materias para toda regeneración'.[50] The regeneration project is deemed unable to fulfil its progressive purpose due to its mismanagement of history. Casero identifies Spain's rich history and culture that he deems pertinent to providing the impetus to galvanise regeneration projects and alleviate the looming sentiment of *desastre* and *tragedia*: 'en ciertos momentos de la historia pragmática, y más en los rasgos populares y en ciertas cosas de nuestros grandes santos, poetas y artistas, adivino un fondo, mal estudiado todavía, de grandeza espiritual, de originalidad fuerte'.[51] The emphasis on origin and spirituality, in this instance, is intended to invoke a remembering of the past that is less an act of fixing the future trajectory of a nation, than a tool that might be used to explore the values that might guide its future. The merging of pragmatism and spirituality, aesthetics, and culture might provide inspiration or navigation, as opposed to concretising a geopolitics of servitude and hegemony, the defeated and the victor. In other

[50] 'Un repatriado', p. 403.
[51] 'Un repatriado', p. 402.

words, invoking a sense of deep time, if deployed in the correct way, may be a means to defy hegemonic geopolitics and search for an authentic, generative, and progressive future.

Clarín suggests that defeat for Spain should provide a space for nationhood to be reimagined, instead of being bound by the deterministic and unquestioning absorption of defeat. In 'El Rana', colonial pasts also infiltrate the present and limit understandings of the nation. The persistence of the colonial imagination leads to El Rana's inability to define or conceptualise what it means to be Spanish in the present. Clarín thus questions the presence of a colonial past that no longer reflects the present nation and conceals the socio-political impotence of Spain to regenerate itself. Whilst El Rana is fraught with a blind patriotism that is detached from the social and political reality of sacrifice and inequality, the recent defeat of Spain as a colonial power in 'Un repatriado' is considered through the lens of undermining the efficacy of regeneration as it coalesces with and supports reductive and unproductive conceptualisations of nationhood. Dysfunctional understandings of nationhood are treated, in the following discussion, through Clarín's reconfiguration of historical myth as a means to examine the 'nation' and question the treatment of national pasts. In the subsequent analysis, national pasts and futures become not eternalised or determined concepts, but agents of mobility and fluidity.

(De)constructing historical myths: 'León Benavides' and 'La trampa'

'León Benavides' and 'La trampa', which were both published as part of the *Cuentos morales* collection in 1896, use animals as the central characters to represent, and then question, national mythology. In both narratives, pervasive myths of the eternal and homogenous nation are explored as representing a fear of history; I consider here how Clarín reconfigures these homogenising myths to recover historical memory. Both stories present history and memory as the key to future nation-building, a process which establishes historical consciousness as a central component in the process of healing internal divisions, extracting corruption, and exposing a failing nation-state.

The lion, a symbol deployed in 'León Benavides', is permeated with national significance. Balfour states that the image of the lion is 'the ancient symbol of the kingdom of León'[52] and possesses connotations that stem from the narrative of the Reconquest: 'the lion could be said to represent nobility, bravery, generosity and purity'.[53] Nobility and bravery, together with purity and religiosity, are characteristics associated with the establishment of a Christian Spain, and therefore become synonymous with constructions of nationhood, as Smith elucidates:

> an ancient or primordial past is essential to the enterprise of forming nations for a number of reasons. It lends dignity and authority to the community and bolsters self-esteem [...] Moreover, the past provides *exempla virtutis*, models of nobility and virtue for emulation.[54]

The horse, in 'La trampa', is also imbued with national significance. It is used as a metonym of nobility and bravery in war and exists as inextricably linked to the Castilian landscape, which captures the imagery of a traditional, homogeneous, and eternal Spain. The horse's central role in conflict strengthens its imbrication with nation-building, as its role as a force of defence, sacrifice, and sovereignty means that its use in Clarín's literary imagination cannot be regarded as insignificant. The purchase of a horse by a rural family in need of a form of transportation to negotiate the newly built roads in their village is the background narrative for Clarín's reappropriation of the myth of an eternal Castile and the return of a lost past. Reading these stories together emphasises Clarín's willingness to question the uses of nationalist myths that perpetuate essentialist visions of Spanish identity and history by using them as tools for reconfiguring nationhood.

Conquest and conflict in 'León Benavides'

[52] Sebastian Balfour, '"The Lion and the Pig": Nationalism and National Identity in *Fin-de-siècle* Spain', in *Nationalism and the Nation in the Iberian Peninsula,* ed. by Clare Mar-Molinero and Angel Smith (Oxford: Berg, 1996), pp. 107-119 (p. 111).
[53] Sebastian Balfour, '"The Lion and the Pig"', p. 111.
[54] Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, pp. 176-177.

María de la O Lejárraga's short story 'La batalla de Covadonga',[55] published in 1899, represents the patriotic fervour that surrounds the Reconquest. The story deploys pedagogy as a tool for the narration of Spain's 'origin'; the story begins with a teacher explaining the Reconquest to their pupils, putting religion at the centre of national identity and sacrifice:

> llenos de fe y amor por la religión y la patria, huyeron despavoridos, bajo el único nombre de cristianos, a las fragosidades de la sierra de Asturias. Nobles ciudadanos que formaban la fecunda y preciosa semilla del árbol grandioso de la nacionalidad española, que más tarde extendiera sus vigorosas y frescas ramas por toda la Península.[56]

A linear root of Spanish nationhood is portrayed here; the nation has a clear origin associated with a selection of inherent characteristics. This idea of a Christian Spain being at the centre of national myth-making, and particularly literary works, is summarised by Kamen in the following lines: 'the most intense period of myth-creation about a Christian Spain took place, therefore, in the middle of the nineteenth century, when the advancing forces of materialism and unbelief seemed to be threatening the moral convictions of Spaniards'.[57] A mythified narrative of shared history and sacred origins becomes a means by which the forces of history, defined by Kamen as materialism and unbelief, might be neutralised: myth becomes a buffer against historical reality. In 'León Benavides', Clarín uses the symbol of the lion to question the inanimate nature of national iconography.

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[55] María de la O Lejárraga was a dramatist, short story writer, novelist, translator and essayist, and was an essential figure in cultural and political life of the late-nineteenth, and early twentieth century. For most of her life, she wrote under the pseudonym of her husband's name, in order to prosper in a cultural realm that was dominated by men. She was a promoter of pioneering feminist projects such as *La Asociación Femenina para la Educación Cívica,* an activist for women's suffrage, deputy in the Congress of the Second Republic and leader of the National Committee of Women against War and Fascism. After the civil war, her political position forced her into exile in Argentina. Her short story is used here as a source that highlights what role national histories, and specifically the Reconquest, played in the literature of *fin de siglo* Spain. See Antonio Rodrigo, *María Lejárraga, una mujer en la sombra* (Madrid: Vosa, 1994).

[56] María Lejárraga, '"La batalla de Covadonga"' *Cuentos Breves,* 1899, <https://albalearning.com/audiolibros/lejarraga/labatalla.html> [accessed 17.05.2022].

[57] Henry Kamen, *La invención de España* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 2020), p. 82.

A foundational myth of Spanish nationhood was constructed around the Reconquest, which was considered the birth of the Spanish nation. Jesús Torrecilla states that during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the nation was configured around 'the Reconquest and a political project to "reestablish" the old kingdom of the Visigoths' which 'were its foundational myths'.[58] The creation of a founding moment of the nation also served a political purpose of giving legitimacy to a regime that would claim to have recovered or restored this national 'origin'. Patricia E. Grieve argues that this occurred during the Bourbon dynasty: 'Covadonga had served the Bourbon dynasty in the eighteenth century as a symbol of the national restoration they claimed to have promulgated',[59] revealing the emergence of the Reconquest as a political tool.

Myth, by the nature of its malleability, its focus on imagery over the idea and representation over reality, is created to be engineered, as Barthes illustrates: 'the fundamental character of the mythical concept is to be *appropriated'.*[60] If the purpose of myths is their appropriation, then the prominence of the myth of the Reconquest and an eternal Christian Spain can be seen as the result of a political project in response to a national consciousness in peril, as was the case in the nineteenth century. This is explained by Clare Mar-Molinero and Angel Smith:

> the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were viewed as a period of decline in which the country was infected by the foreign viruses of liberalism, socialism and communism. Only a reconstruction of the country's essential Catholic self, then, could provide the basis for Spain to reconquer her past glories.[61]

The 'return to origin' argument imbued the Reconquest with not only a historical, filial quality, but a mythological status that would aim to reconstruct Spanish nationhood. The imbrication

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[58] Jesús Torrecilla, 'Spanish Identity: Nation, Myth and History', *Studies in 20th and 21st-Century Literature,* 33.2 (2009), pp. 204-226 (p. 213).
[59] Patricia E. Grieve, *The Eve of Spain: Myths of Origins in the History of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Conflict* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), p. 231.
[60] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies,* p.119. [Original italics].
[61] Clare Mar-Molinero and Angel Smith, 'The Myths and Realities of Nation-Building in the Iberian Peninsula', in *Nationalism and the Nation in the Iberian Peninsula*, ed. by Clare Mar-Molinero and Angel Smith (Oxford: Berg, 1996), pp. 1-33 (p. 20).

of the nation-state and religion was encompassed by the idea of national Catholicism whose deployment was ideological as opposed to spiritual, as Yvan Lissourges explains:

> la expresión no incita a conocer el funcionamiento del espíritu de una institución que implícitamente quiere atraer a Dios al campo de la Nación en la que ella está implantada [...] Pensamos que este "espíritu" que anima la institución surge más de la ideología que de la religión propiamente dicha.[62]

The 'ideology' of nation-building was based on creating a cohesive national identity spawning from a deep historical tradition which defined a collective national destiny. A conscious effort to curate a national history led to the use of the Reconquest that based itself on a project of recuperating origins, symbolised by the 'recovery' of Spanish land from a foreign invader. Kamen illuminates this as follows:

> los historiadores liberales de finales del siglo XIX, ansiosos por hallar unas raíces históricas para la nación que esperaban construir, invocaban, mediante la palabra "Reconquista", un período histórico inmenso [...] durante el cual se veía a los españoles empeñados en recuperar "su" tierra.[63]

If Spain was considered as a nation capable of recuperating its land, then it would be seen as a nation able to recover its identity. This became a particularly pertinent issue in a wider, European context, where Spain was seen as a 'protean nation'[64] and faced the task of creating an image for itself; how Spain was perceived both internally and on the world stage was, to a large extent, approached as a project of optics and mythology.

The Reconquest constitutes an ancient past rather than a collective memory, revealing how remote pasts become so distant and distorted, they are mythology as opposed to memory. Remote pasts are reincarnated as mythology, entering 'el terreno de la tradición, que puede

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[62] Yvan Lissorgues, *El pensamiento filosófico y religioso de Leopoldo Alas, Clarín* (Oviedo: Grupo Editorial Asturiano, 1996), p. 85.
[63] Henry Kamen, *La invención de España*, p. 80.
[64] Wadda Ríos-Font, 'National Literature in the Protean Nation: The Question of Nineteenth-Century Spanish Literary History', in *Spain Beyond Spain,* ed. by Brad Epps and Luis Fernández Cifuentes (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2005), pp. 127-148 (p. 129).

consistir en versiones estereotipadas' which perpetuate 'una determinada versión del pasado'[65] and create cultural symbols. León Benavides, the protagonist of the narrative, is introduced as a symbol of *Reconquista* Spain, playing into essentialist narratives of Christian Spain: 'nací en las montañas de León, hace muchos siglos, en los más altos vericuetos que dividen, con agujas de nieve eterna, la tierra leonesa y la tierra asturiana'.[66]

The Reconquest as a mythified ancient past is represented in the story through the *desdoblamiento,* or splitting, of the Lion. During the narrative, León Benavides morphes from a lion carved from stone into a human: 'pasaron siglos y siglos, y de una en otra transformación llegué a verme hecho hombre, mas sin dejar mi naturaleza leonina'.[67] Following this transformation centuries after his birth during the Reconquest, the lion is then killed in conflict, returning to an inanimate state: 'me enterraron como un recluta rebelde, y resucité león de metal, para no volver más a la vida de la carne. Aquella bala me mató para siempre'.[68] His death is the result of a 'caso de canibalismo',[69] a civil conflict that most likely represents the Carlist wars, and is represented as the destruction of an idea, that is, the death of a nation that was being forged from these shared values of Christian Spain.

Following the death of the lion as an animate being, the lion is divided into two opposing ideas and entities, one is a symbol of a historical Spain, the other of a parliamentary lion that stands before the *Congreso de los Diputados*. The lion who is the protagonist of the story claims to be representative of the authentic Spain: '"Yo", concluyó Benavides, "soy el león de la guerra, el de la historia, el de la cicatriz. Soy noble, pero soy una fiera. Ese otro es el león... parlamentario; el de los simulacros"'.[70] The difference between the two lions is one bears a scar and the other does not:

[65] José Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX,* p. 196.
[66] 'León Benavides', II, pp. 112-116 (p. 113).
[67] 'León Benavides', p. 113.
[68] 'León Benavides', p. 115.
[69] 'León Benavides', p. 115.
[70] 'León Benavides', p. 115.

> Es una cicatriz, la diferencia que buscas entre mi compañero y yo no está más que en eso; en que yo tengo en la frente una cicatriz. La cicatriz te revela un alma, y por eso te intereso. Gracias. Ya que te has fijado en que yo tengo un espíritu y el otro no.[71]

This suggests that the scarred lion represents an 'authentic' national identity, as opposed to the replica lion:

> no se sabía cómo, pero allí había una idea que le faltaba al otro; y sólo por aquella diferencia el uno era simbólico, grande, artístico, casi casi religioso, y el otro vulgar, de pacotilla; el uno de la patria, el otro de la patriotería. El uno estaba ungido por la idea sagrada, el otro no.[72]

The present nation, therefore, is portrayed as an impotent, vulgar imitation of its glorious past. The 'self', the noble, sanctified Spain, is now defined in relation to the 'other', the lion of the present, a divided nation housed inside a weak state. This opposition between sacred origins and present dysfunction or 'crisis' was the objective of nationalist versions of Spanish history that aimed to create a national sacred origin. Álvarez Junco illustrates this as follows: 'es misión de la historia nacionalista encontrar hazañas y antepasados remotos, tan remotos que se remonten, a ser posible, al origen mismo de los tiempos'.[73] Lost origins were therefore foregrounded by nationalist histories as a means to establish the cause of a failing nation-building process as a deviation from these origins.

However, instead of deploying the linear argument of lost origins and the destruction of an inherent and sanctified idea to perpetuate a historically essentialist reading of the nation, Clarín uses this opposition between the spiritual essence of Spanish identity and its present 'vulgar' imitation to question how symbols of ancient and mythified pasts function in the present. This occurs through the idea of the parliamentary lion signifying a passive, inanimate state. This, in turn, redeploys the nationalist rhetoric of the Reconquest and sanctified versions

[71] 'León Benavides', p. 112.
[72] 'León Benavides', p. 112.
[73] José Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX,* p. 206.

of Spain to critique the inactive and passive nature of Spanish nationhood that deploys this symbol as a monolithic representative of the present nation. At the point of the lion's death during the Carlist war, his return to a stone lion is described as a loss of agency:

> ¿Era una herida? No. La sangre no era mía. Parece ser que entre los colmillos me encontraron carne. La cosa estaba clara: caso de canibalismo... ¡qué se diría! No había precedente... pero por analogía... El honor, la disciplina... *la causa de la civilización*... también estaban sangrando [...] Ya jamás dejaré esta figura de esfinge irritada, a quien el misterio del destino no da la calma, sino la cólera cristalizada en el silencio.[74]

The lion that is denoted a 'vulgar' imitation of the noble lion is described as an 'esfinge irritada':[75] a symbol of how origins deemed ancient and sacred have been, literally and symbolically, concretised. They have solidified and embedded themselves into the national psyche, and yet serve only as a symbol of a disengaged populace mourning the loss of a mythified past, an origin, that they are powerless to resuscitate. The present relies on symbolism of the past that does not effectively represent the nation and prevents dialogic and pragmatic approaches to nation-formation. In this narrative, the monolithic representation of Spain through the Reconquest stifles remembering of recent turbulent and divisive pasts.

The mythified historical past has led to a national symbol that houses silence and anger: 'la cólera cristalizada en el silencio'.[76] Civil conflict, the 'caso de canibalismo', represents a failed state, therefore by symbolising the nation through the 'esfinge irritada', a mythified distant past (the Reconquest) obscures dialogue or consciousness of a more recent, divisive, and violent, past (the Carlist wars). In order to create a transitional social reality whereby recent conflicts can be effectively remembered, national identity has to be reformulated around discursive and malleable ideas and symbols which defy the concretisation of national histories. The silent

[74] 'León Benavides', p. 115.
[75] 'León Benavides', p. 115.
[76] 'León Benavides', p. 115.

lion, the national symbol, lacks agency and represents a past that has been packaged in a sterile image; as dialogue and historical consciousness are repressed, the past is feared and therefore buried, but this silence continues to carry latent divisions. The persistent mythification of the Reconquest, particularly as the genesis of the nation, stunts present nation-formation at a time of division and transition.

The lion that bears a scar from the past is described thus: 'esta cicatriz tiene tanto de cicatriz como de idea fija'.[77] Clarín merges ideas of the nation as 'fixed' and the nation as transitory, which undermines essentialised and sterilised readings of the nation. If the scar represents the transient state between open wound and healed skin, then nationhood is defined as conceptually incomplete, inviting contribution and debate, moving away from the silence and artificial homogenisation of the 'vulgar' lion. If, as in the previous discussion, a crisis in nation-building is a failure to envision a tangible and pragmatic idea of nationhood by focusing instead on abstract representations, then the scarred lion proposes a solution to a national consciousness in peril as one which foregrounds memory and dialogue. If the basis for nation-formation can be built upon continual debate and a spirit of transience and change, and as Labanyi claims, 'effected through the inclusion of citizens in a nationwide debate about what the nation was and should be',[78] then it might be considered a malleable and evolving entity.

Castile and *caciquismo* in 'La trampa'

In 'La trampa', the foundational myth of Castile is equally disrupted. The horse, the central character, is originally from Castile and, following its purchase by a family in the north of Spain, it is transported to the mountains of the north in order to help the family navigate the changes modernity has brought to their locality, namely a new thoroughfare for which a horse and cart are required. The sale of the Castilian horse to a family in the north signals the entry of a

[77] 'León Benavides', p. 115.

[78] Jo Labanyi, 'Relocating difference: Cultural History and Modernity in Late Nineteenth-Century Spain', in *Spain Beyond Spain,* ed. by Brad Epps and Luis Fernández Cifuentes (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2005), pp. 168-189 (p. 173).

timeless entity into the temporal parameters of the present: 'venía de Castilla, de la tierra llana; tal vez la abrumaban las montañas. ¿Edad? En la edad estaba el misterio'.[79] Mythic time and historical time collide as the myth itself enters the present. Castile represents a strand of myth-creation that aimed to perpetuate images of the nation that would instil cohesion and harmony to a fragmented nation-state. There existed a concerted effort, therefore, to not only idealise Castile for its natural beauty or endless plains, but to imbricate all regions under one singular identity, one region, and one nation. This is described by Kamen, as he argues that the nineteenth-century myth of a cohesive nation centred on the idea that 'all the peripheral communities of the peninsula were inseparably linked to Castile and could not be separated from it'.[80]

Castile, as a region, is imbricated in imagery of a lost Spain, embodying a state of permanency that would conceal latent division and the forces of history that were changing the face of the nation, as Álvarez Junco explains: 'al hablarse de la nación española como un ente único y sólido se estaba, en parte, hablando de una ficción y olvidando las herencias históricas fragmentadas sobre las que se solapaba la cultura oficial'.[81] Castile was employed, according to Dolores Franco, as a tool in the search for national identity amidst 'crisis'. The idea of returning to an image of something perceived to have always been there, unchanging, contributes to a sense of national unity and temporal continuity. Dolores Franco, in the following lines, demonstrates the conflation of landscape and eternity: 'ese cuerpo de España es principalmente Castilla [...] Porque Castilla había estado siempre ahí, con sus llanuras inmensas, con su monotonía de trigales, con sus lomas moteadas de oscuras encinas, con su cielo eternamente azul'.[82] Castile becomes a key component of the production of national myth, as the landscape becomes synonymous with mythical constructions of national identity which Jon Juaristi elucidates in his writing on nationalism and territoriality: 'the national

[79] 'La trampa', II, pp. 149-156 (p. 151).
[80] Henry Kamen, *Imagining Spain,* p. 33.
[81] José Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX,* p. 194.
[82] Dolores Franco, *España como preocupación*, 1st edn (Barcelona: Argos Vergara, 1980), p. 223.

landscape does not belong to what is given to nature. It is a mytho-poetic creation'.[83] The eternal quality of Castile renders it emblematic of an originary wholeness. In order to bolster national consciousness, and assert its legitimacy on the European stage of nineteenth-century nation-states, myths had to consolidate the idea of Spain as an eternal entity. If the nation is constructed as something immutable and inherent that is based on a clear correlation between origin and destiny, then a narrative of regaining an 'origin' renders nation-formation a linear restorative process. Álvarez Junco writes that, 'according to every mythical archetype, the triumphs and failures of the collective identity are explained in terms of its loyalty to, or betrayal of, its origins',[84] suggesting that a mythical origin gives legitimacy to the idea that nation-formation is based on recuperation of or realignment to, an originary myth.

Following the horse's sale, a process of gradual demise begins, its nostalgia for Castile becoming increasingly apparent: 'la yegua castellana cada vez más triste. De tarde en tarde volvía la cabeza de repente, como si esperara ver algún paisaje de la llanura con que estaba soñando, medio dormida'.[85] The narrative here centres on the idea of an original wholeness that has been corrupted; the horse's separation from Castile manifests physically as an abscess that begins to form: 'empezó a adelgazar. Junto a un corvejón le salió un bulto duro'.[86] A diversion from the horse's original home, and thus a deviation from the nation as an original whole, is represented as an injury, a transgression, and pathologised through the imagery of infection. The desire to return to the eternal home is to recapture a spirit on which the nation is founded: '¡a sufrir, a aguantar, a soñar con Castilla! Hubo que volver a casa como se pudo'.[87] The family ask the priest to examine the horse, as he is too is imbued with a timeless

[83] Jon Juaristi, 'The Space of Intrahistory: The Construction and Dissolution of Nationalist Landscape', in *Spain Beyond Spain,* ed. by Brad Epps and Luis Fernández Cifuentes (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2005), pp. 318-331 (p. 318).
[84] José Álvarez Junco, *Spanish Identity in an Age of Nations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 266.
[85] 'La trampa', p. 152.
[86] 'La trampa', p. 152.
[87] 'La trampa', p. 152.

Castilian quality: 'era el cura, como la *Chula*, castellano, grave, noble, triste, cortés'.[88] It is difficult to imagine that the priest's Castilian origin was not a deliberate choice by Clarín to reinforce the integrity and interconnectivity of Catholicism and Castile, pointing towards the myth that religion and nationhood are symbiotic. As Castile and, by extension, the horse, become associated with the nation as a homogeneous, Christian entity, it becomes a pawn in a national political discourse that espoused Spain to Christianity. This was part of a national discourse that 'became useful to the Conservatives, whose concept of the nation emphasized, above all, the territorial unity of Spain and the consubstantiality of Spain and Catholicism'.[89]

The horse, having been transplanted from mythic time to historical time, from the *llanura* of a timeless Castile to the hills of northern Spain under the yoke of *caciquismo,* initially conforms to the belief that an eternal Spain has been injured, maimed or destroyed by the forces of history. However, the real enemy to national integrity and nation-building is the corrupt *cacique* system, and the horse comes to represent not a myth existing outside of time, but a bulwark against present corruption and a failing nation-state. This politicisation of the horse serves not as a reinforcement of Catholic, nationalist ideals of an eternal nation but becomes a tool with which Clarín argues against the use of myth as a means to conceal present injustice. Specifically, the horse reveals how recent national history, namely the Carlist wars, together with a *cacique* system and a dysfunctional political system, create conditions that are ripe for the infiltration of myth and mythic time into the present in order to conceal memories of war and legacies of division and factional conflict. While the horse's condition deteriorates, Manín, the head of the family, decides that they have been tricked, and demands that it be returned to Artillero, the horse's seller, along with the money they paid him. It becomes a matter to be settled by local rival *caciques* who represent each of the men. Manín wins and the horse is arranged to be collected and the money returned. When Artillero arrives, threatening violence against them at the next elections, the horse refuses to be taken: 'salió con ella a la *quintana*,

[88] 'La trampa', p. 154.
[89] Carsten Humblebæk, *Spain: Inventing the Nation* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 16.

le puso la cabezada, montó, a pelo, de un brinco y, sin despedirse, apretó los ijares de la bestia para emprender la marcha... Pero la *Chula* no se movía'. [90] This act of defiance against political violence reveals a nation entangled in corruption but with the capability to resist it, which is only made possible by the animation and resuscitation of a once silent symbol or mythified artefact.

Caciquismo played a significant role in the Spanish state's inability to create a durable and productive modern nation and, importantly, a symbol of an inherited socio-political inequality. Balfour argues that 'rather than an instrument that could be turned to any use, the Spanish state was the historical expression of the rule of the landed oligarchy. Caciquismo was the consequence, not the cause, of Spain's social structure'.[91] The view of a corrupt *cacique* system as a veritable obstacle to progressive nation-building in Spain and a continuation of historical injustices is supported by Álvarez Junco: 'la construcción de la nación era una parte esencial del programa regeneracionista, ya que el ideal nacional legitimaba para combatir los "egoísmos locales", y en especial el caciquismo, acusado unánimemente de ser fuente principal de los males del país'.[92] In 1876, Clarín wrote a poem in the newspaper he spent his early career writing for, *El Solfeo,* in which he denounces the *cacique* as an egotistical figure who establishes a political life based on personal whims, he writes: Y el cacique demostró | con sus hechos aquel dicho: | "no hay más ley que mi capricho | aquí el Estado soy yo."[93]

Clarín, in choosing the image of the Castilian horse, extracts nationalist symbolism and mythology from its original context and meaning, and redeploys it as a revelatory and critical tool to probe the present nation-state. Narratives of the national past are far from permanent

[90] 'La trampa', p. 154.
[91] Sebastian Balfour, *The End of the Spanish Empire,* p. 83.
[92] José Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX,* p. 591.
[93] Yvan Lissourges, *Clarín político I: Leopoldo Alas (Clarín), periodista, frente a la problemática y social de la España de su tiempo (1875-1901). Estudio y antología* (Toulouse: Université de Toulouse, 1980), p. 23.

or immutable, but are reinvented as agile tools for social commentary. What a mythified Castile and imagery of an unchanging eternal nation does, is give false stability to, and deny alternative experiences of, the nation. What the reconfiguration of this myth does, is consider the nation not as myth, but history, not as fiction, but reality. Rahv notes that 'in our time the movement of history has been so rapid that the mind longs for nothing so much as something permanent to steady it'.[94] A fear of history is a fear of acknowledging turbulent and divisive pasts, and a nation-formation that relies on mythology as opposed to historical process is one that condenses the nation to palatable imagery. Thus, in denying any transformation or deviation from a mythified past, the historical reality of the nation-state can be ignored. In revealing the corrupt and corrosive forces of *caciquismo* through myth, both are revealed as damaging.

The horse is reimagined as a tool for a productive national, collective remembering; this is particularly salient at the end of the narrative in relation to remembering the Carlist wars. The quality of historical myth is that it exists outside of history; Rahv highlights that its 'supra-temporality', provides 'the ideal refuge from history'.[95] If the myth of a homogenous Spain creates the illusion that the divisive past does not exist and the memory of civil conflict can be buried, then Clarín questions the use of historical myth as a tool to whitewash the past and centralise the national narrative. Falo, a member of the family who purchased the horse, recognises it as one which he left for dead on the battlefield during the second Carlist war: 'Falo, mucho tiempo después, comprendió por qué le había hecho tanta gracia; se parecía a un caballo que a él le habían matado los carlistas en una célebre carga'.[96] The emotional connection that grows between the horse and the owner, however, uncovers memories of a violent past, and makes the bond that forms between them all the more significant: 'Y Falo esperaba, silbando, pasando la mano por el lomo a la yegua torda, que se parecía al caballo

[94] Philip Rahv, 'The Myth and the Powerhouse', *Partisan review,* 20.6 (1953), pp. 635-649 (p. 637).
[95] Philip Rahv, 'The Myth and the Powerhouse' p. 639.
[96] 'La trampa', p. 151.

que él había dejado muerto en un campo de batalla'.[97] The horse no longer represents an eternal idea, but one that is a harbinger of historical memory, revealing the complexity and heterogeneity of the 'nation' and the nation-formation process. The symbols of the past are therefore represented not as a series of mythified images, but as tools with which to inform memory and national myth.

The narrative ends with the horse and the family forming a unit, a community, representing a productive remembering in which the divisions of the past can be healed:

> así se vivía, soportándose unos a otros; como se sufría a la vieja, que ya no trabajaba y gruñía; como todos tenían algo que tolerarse, algo que perdonarse mutuamente. Así es la vida entre los que se quieren y atraviesan este valle de lágrimas juntos, unidas las manos para que no los disperse el viento del infortunio.[98]

This may appear a simplistic, and perhaps naively optimistic, ending, yet Clarín reveals how trauma can coexist with reconciliation, and memory is the catalyst for the visibility of both elements. Clarín thus nuances the tension between dichotomous readings of the nation; by appropriating the myth of an ancient Castile as a mnemonic tool, the nation might not be dichotomised as either a glorified, timeless entity, or a wounded animal, but might be envisioned as part of a continual process of cooperation and healing.

Modernity and representing the past: 'Doña Berta'

'Doña Berta' presents a more pessimistic vision for the treatment of historical memory than 'La trampa', as the coexistence of diverse and, sometimes, opposing memories and subjectivities fails. Clarín thus laments the homogenising, reductive, and exclusive nature that is the undercurrent of modern nation-formation. The value of myth as a stabilising force has been explored in the previous discussion as manifesting a fear of history and an escape from

[97] 'La trampa', p. 155.
[98] 'La trampa', p. 155.

remembering a fragmented past. The phenomena of myth will now be explored as working alongside historical time to establish a 'modern' nation-state. 'Modernity', in 'Doña Berta', is represented as a force that appropriates the past for the purpose of creating the optimum conditions for a collective memory that will serve the conditions of modernity: futurity, democracy, and adherence to global markets. Rahv's statement that 'myth is reassuring in its stability, whereas history is that powerhouse of change'[99], will be explored through the lens of historical transformation towards modernity, which establishes the past as mythified and detached from history.

Modernity is not established in this story as a means to break away from historical myth-making, but instead marks a remoulding of myth around the modern imagination. Smith argues that 'the nation has become a cultural artefact of modernity, a system of collective imaginings and symbolic representations'.[100] The nation as a cultural artefact of modernity suggests that understandings of the nation become enshrined in modernity, the concept of the nation moulds to modernity as a system; the system in which cultural signs and symbols of the nation exist intertwines with the modern political system. In the same way tradition is invented and sacralised as a cultural and mythological artefact which aims to determine or fix understandings of the nation, modernity is an invented system which manufactures cultural understandings of nationhood. The historical flux caused by modernity, therefore, actually represents a continuity of myth-creation, as history finds itself neutralised by a modernity of invented or represented pasts.

The tale of 'Doña Berta', which was published in 1892 along with 'Cuervo' and 'Superchería', the three stories also forming the title of the collection, begins by situating Berta's ancestral home as, despite belonging to an ancient family, removed from history. We read of the

[99] Philip Rahv, 'The Myth and the Powerhouse', p. 637.
[100] Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation,* p. 168.

Rondaliego home as physically and historically isolated; it exists in an atemporal state that has remained the same since time immemorial:

> Hay un lugar en el Norte de España adonde no llegaron nunca ni los romanos ni los moros; y si doña Berta de Rondaliego, propietaria de este escondite verde y silencioso, supiera algo más de historia, juraría que jamás Agripa, ni Augusto, ni Muza, ni Tarick habían puesto la osada planta sobre el suelo.[101]

This removal from the outside world, from histories of upheaval, conquest, invasion and conflict, is described in reference to both the ancestral home and Berta, as a deafness: 'aquel rincón suyo, todo suyo, sordo, como ella, a los rumores del mundo'.[102] The effect of this is summarised by Marilyn Rugg: 'imbued with an eternal presence and completeness, it is the location of the pure signified, representative of languages in a state of originary wholeness and innocence undisturbed by and ignorant of the terrible upheavals of history'.[103] What this description of the Rondaliego estate's dissociation from (turbulent) history does, is present Berta's story as typical of the mythological view of an eternal, unchanging Spain, one that is untarnished by history and ripe for regeneration. This temporal transcendence of the ancestral home is elucidated by Smith:

> the ancestral land also links memory to destiny. For it is in the reborn land, the homeland which is renewed, that national regeneration takes place. The sacred land of our ancestors is also the promised land of our descendants and posterity.[104]

The significance of the Rondaliego home, therefore, transcends an aristocratic estate that is deemed unattached from wider notions of time and history, suggesting that Berta's story and inheritance appears to intersect with the myth of the eternal nation, becoming what Tom Nairn

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[101] 'Doña Berta', I, pp. 321-363 (p. 321).
[102] 'Doña Berta', p. 321.
[103] Marilyn D. Rugg, 'Doña Berta: Clarín's Allegory of Signification', *MLN*, 103 (1988), pp. 449-456 (p. 451).
[104] Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation,* p. 270.

terms ‘subjects of a national myth-system incorporating and forever reproducing the primary ingredients of rurality, blood and soil’.[105]

The idea of lineage, inheritance, and purity define the Rondaliego dynasty; the family is founded on a ‘purity’ of blood whereby biological ‘cleanliness’ has been upheld for centuries and the mixing of blood is seen as transgressive: ‘los Rondaliegos no querían nada con nadie; se casaban unos con otros, siempre con parientes, y no mezclaban la sangre ni la herencia; no se dejaban manchar el linaje ni los prados’.[106] The untouched land becomes a symbol for untainted heredity reminiscent of fifteenth-century blood purity laws which, according to Joshua Goode in his writing on the history of race in Spain, ‘became a mode of defining allegiance to the monarchy’.[107] The Rondaliegos’ support for the monarchy comes as little surprise given their support for the Carlists at the time of Berta’s affair with a liberal captain:

> ella recogió al desgraciado, le escondió en la capilla de la casa, abandonada, hasta pensar si haría bien en avisar a sus hermanos, que eran, como ella, carlistas, y acaso entregarían a los suyos al fugitivo, si los suyos pasaban por allí y le buscaban. Al fin era un liberal, un negro.[108]

A succession of events during the fifteenth century, explained by Kamen, put race and ethnicity at the forefront of Spanish nation-building: ‘[...] la caída de la Granada islámica, el descubrimiento de América y la expulsión de los judíos. Los tres impusieron una ideología étnica a la España moderna y durante un tiempo colocaron la palabra “raza” en el centro del discurso’.[109] The presence of the liberal captain on the sanctified land of the Rondaliegos signifies a challenge to long-standing ideas of traditionalism, and along with it, a challenge to blood purity and ideas of the eternal nation:

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[105] Tom Nairn, ‘The Curse of Rurality: Limits of Modernisation’, in *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism,* ed. by John A. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 107-134 (p. 119).
[106] ‘Doña Berta’, p. 323.
[107] Joshua Goode, *Impurity of Blood: Defining Race in Spain 1870-1930* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009), p. 24.
[108] ‘Doña Berta’, p. 326.
[109] Henry Kamen, *La invención de España* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 2020), pp. 192-3.

> los empecatados vecinos se empeñan en turbar tanta paz, en manchar aquellas alfombras con senderos que parecen la podre de aquella frescura, senderos en que dejan las huellas de los zapatones y de los pies desnudos y sucios, como grosero sello de una usurpación del dominio absoluto de los Rondaliegos.[110]

Berta's transgression of these blood purity laws of which her family are the architects, means that her fate, and that of her son born from her relationship with the liberal captain, is dictated by the strict honour codes at play. When Berta's brothers forcibly remove the child, Berta's future as a parent is erased, an outcome dictated as a result of her own parentage. Attempting to recuperate her past whilst her brothers were still alive would have been, as Fernando José Rosenberg states, an admission of transgressing their own familial code, and therefore a weakening of their dynasty and dominion:

> recuperar la memoria secuestrada tendría, entonces, un efecto destructivo sobre el mundo familiar de Berta: los Rondaliegos, todo su apoyo simbólico construido sobre el Nombre (del padre), pasarían a ser un bando de mentirosos; de dueños naturales, a usurpadores. Eso explica la sumisión de Berta, hasta el mismo momento en que la estirpe se extingue, en donde ya no hay nada, entonces, que sostener.[111]

A collapse of the Rondaliego dynasty would also signify a loss of legitimacy of a mythified, eternal, unsullied Spain, as the reality is the opposite: Berta's story, and blood, finds itself at the epicentre of national history, conflict, and complex inheritance. The recuperation of this memory, represented later by Berta's journey to Madrid to purchase a painting she believes to depict her lost son, itself imbued with a narrative of lineage, origin, and heredity, might be framed as a project of demythifying the past and revealing the truth. This means that viewing Berta's recuperation of her past as a recuperation of family honour, as Valis does, introduces complex interactions between modernity and memory. Valis states that 'el adquirir este cuadro

[110] 'Doña Berta', p. 323.
[111] Fernando José Rosenberg, 'Historia, pacto social y pacto familiar en *Doña Berta* de Clarín', *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, 53.2 (2000), pp. 352-365 (p. 358).

valioso constituye, en gran parte, como sabemos, su modo de recuperar la honra familiar, de limpiar la mancha moral mediante un gran sacrificio'.[112] If Berta dreams of cleansing her 'sins' and recuperating her honour, then the subsequent rejection of this wish, whereby she is denied possession of the painting, suggests that this atonement is obsolete. Berta's past and the honour codes she wishes to take ownership of belong to a past that the modern nation would rather forget. Racial and ethnic intolerance 'cuestiona todo el concepto del surgimiento de una nación unida'[113] and thus impedes cohesive nation-building. Seen as a relic of a past world, the product of myths of purity, Berta is denied her memory, constituting not a liberation from oppressive notions of nationhood and inheritance, but another persecution, another kidnapping that sees Berta's memory, her lived past, become part of another wave of myth-making. This time the myth system is not linked to codes of racial purity and heredity, but to modern codes of representing the national past. Berta's individual memory is externalised in a process that is illuminated by Álvarez Junco in the following lines: 'atribuir a la memoria individual un aspecto social o supraindividual, en la medida en que al evocar el pasado, como al establecer cualquier otra relación con la realidad, no se puede prescindir de prismas culturales creados socialmente'.[114] Berta's past becomes imbricated in codes of modernity, observed through the cultural prism of visual art to serve a wider purpose of modern nation-building.

According to Valis, 'es el arte el que funcionará de modo sintetizante y liberador en *Doña Berta*, sirviendo de mediador entre la historia y la intrahistoria para persuadirnos, última y paradójicamente, de la validez superior de la vida misma'.[115] It might be suggested, however, that the function of art and artistic representation in Berta's story is a more malevolent than liberating actor, distorting memory and time and becoming a force for the fetishisation of

[112] Noël Valis, 'La función del arte y la historia en Doña Berta, de Clarín', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 63.1 (1986), pp. 67-78 (p. 70).
[113] Henry Kamen, *La invención de España*, p. 194.
[114] José Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX,* p. 195-6.
[115] Noël Valis, 'La función del arte y la historia en Doña Berta, de Clarín', p. 67.

trauma. Valencia, the artist, describes his impetus for the creation of art depicting war, and, in particular, the 'heroic death', as follows:

> me convenía para mi bolsa y mis planes, la plaza de corresponsal que un periódico ilustrado extranjero me ofreció, para que le dibujase cuadros de actualidad, de costumbres españolas, y principalmente de la guerra. Con este encargo, y mi gran afición a las emociones fuertes, y mi deseo de recoger datos, dignos de crédito para un gran cuadro de heroísmo militar con que yo soñaba, me fui a la guerra del Norte, resuelto a ver muy de cerca todo lo más serio de los combates, de modo que el peligro de mi propia persona me facilitase esta proximidad apetecida.[116]

The function of art in the nineteenth-century processes of nation-formation, was one that, whilst focusing on historical events of 'national' significance, interweaved the past into the foundation for the modern nation-state. Historical painting, therefore, promoted a use of history that was explicitly oriented towards modernity, converting the past into an illusory space, 'revistiendo el ente ideal en que se basaba la legitimidad de ese Estado de una carga valorativa que se presentaba como generalmente aceptada'.[117] By detaching the subject of the painting from its past, it becomes less a product of its past than a representative or a precursor of a new modern nation-state: the role of Berta's past is more civic than personal. Oscar E. Vázquez's work on arts administration in nineteenth-century Spain provides useful context for the treatment of the artwork in Clarín's story and its role in the ostracisation of Berta. Vázquez explains that governmental control over the way that art was exhibited, traded, and owned meant that art itself became a political tool to curate citizenship. Vázquez argues that this 'far-reaching arts administrative system that homogenized national histories, protected foreign arts competition, and constantly made obliging [...] comparisons to other nations' systems, proves to have been key as a tool for forging national identity'.[118] This

[116] 'Doña Berta', p. 335.
[117] José Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX,* p. 254.
[118] Oscar E. Vázquez, '"Los que no pueden ser otra cosa": Nineteenth-century state arts administration and Spanish identity', in *The Routledge Hispanic Studies Companion to Nineteenth-Century Spain*, ed. by Elisa Martí-López (London, New York: Routledge, 2021), pp. 385-400 (p. 397).

reading of ‘Doña Berta’ highlights modern capitalism’s policing of what constitutes a progressive ‘nation’ and who is able to participate in this paradigm, emphasising the politics and ethics of remembering.

Ernest Gellner, in his analysis of the nation and modernity, asserts that modern society creates new systems of meaning: ‘when work is semantic it involves the manipulation of messages and contact with a large number of anonymous, frequently invisible, partners’.[119] With this in mind, the role of the painting in ‘Doña Berta’ might be read as engineering the meaning of the subject to communicate with an audience of modern observers and consumers of modern material that forms part of a globalised trade system. It might therefore be suggested that Berta’s son can be understood through Barthes’ terminology of ‘studium’ and ‘punctum’, which, although it pertains to photography and not historical painting, provides a framework that explains the site of tension Berta’s son represents. The figure of the soldier, Berta’s son, is both the ‘studium’ and ‘punctum’ of the painting; initially intended by the artist to represent the cultural and historical meaning of the work, but for Berta, he transcends this function to become the ‘punctum’. The ‘punctum’ denotes a part of a painting or photograph that is poignant or striking to the observer. What is particularly illustrative about conceptualising Berta’s son as both the ‘studium’ and ‘punctum’ of the work of art, is that the ‘punctum’ places itself outside the cultural or symbolic system within which the rest of the painting exists, in turn revealing the tension represented between public and private memory. What separates the two terms is described as follows: ‘the *studium* is ultimately always coded, the *punctum* is not’.[120] This gives Berta’s son a personal, as opposed to cultural, significance since, as the ‘punctum’, he is connected to Berta’s memories as something she thought was lost that can now be recuperated, as opposed to bearing the weight exerted by a cultural system that fixes

[119] Ernest Gellner, ‘Nationalism and Modernity’, in *Nations and Nationalism: A Reader,* ed. by Phillip Spencer and Howard Wollman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp. 40-48 (p. 46).
[120] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography,* trans. by Richard Howard (London: Vintage, 2000), p. 51.

the image. The cultural code of historical painting and 'representing' the past exists within, and as a result of, a project of modern nation-building.

The modern market of myth-making fosters a melange of credibility and reality with an obsession with fiction, perpetuated by the visual arts and its treatment of heroism, affect, and dreams, preparing the ground for the image to distort the idea, for art to distort memory, for history to be mythified. Labanyi provides a useful summary of the historical painting's dramatism and its effect on temporal readings of the nation: 'its emphasis on dramatic effect produces a disconcerting freezing of time, which disturbs any providentialist notion of history moving inexorably towards a present thereby constructed as the realization of a manifest destiny'.[121] This is supported by Hazel Gold's interpretation of Berta's subjectivity as her memory is appropriated: 'if Berta's identity has been splintered by temporal discontinuity, altered by social circumstances and the repeated reconfigurations engendered by memory (itself subject to change), her son's identity circulates as a cipher that is continually appropriated by others'.[122] In Berta's case, however, the painting does not freeze or rupture time, so much as distort it: 'el hijo, o había muerto en efecto, o se había perdido para siempre. No era posible ni soñar con su rastro. Ella misma había perdido en sus entrañas a la madre...; era ya una abuela'.[123] She is now the age of a grandmother, as her agency as a mother has been deprived and the world around her has moved inexorably towards a future destiny to which Berta does not belong. This would suggest that the myth of the nation as continuous and immutable is merely reproduced by the modern appropriation of memory, as 'Doña Berta' becomes a tale not of a regenerative modernity questioning the reductionist or providentialist myths of the national past, of a disruption of linear histories, of old versus new, of tradition

[121] Jo Labanyi, 'Horror, Spectacle, and Nation-Formation: Historical Painting in Late-Nineteenth-Century Spain', in *Visualizing Spanish Modernity*, ed. by Susan Larson and Eva Woods (Oxford: Berg, 2005), pp. 64-81 (p. 68).
[122] Hazel Gold, 'Painting and Representation in Two Nineteenth-Century Novels: Galdós's and Alas's Skeptical Appraisal of Realism', *Hispania*, 81.4 (1998), pp. 830-841 (p. 838).
[123] 'Doña Berta', p. 339.

versus modernity, but instead it represents the modern subject as a consumer of historical myth and a silenced memory.

When Berta is afforded access to the painting she believes depicts her son, it is a fleeting moment: '-¡Y mi hijo está ahí! ¡Es eso..., algo de eso gris, negro, blanco, rojo, azul, todo mezclado, que parece una costra!...'.[124] The lack of definition seen in the painting is in keeping with what Jonathan Crary explains as part of the politics of modern visionary experience: 'vision in the nineteenth century was inseparable from transience– that is, from new temporalities, speeds, experiences of flux and obsolescence, a new density and sedimentation of the structure of visual memory'.[125] Modern ways of seeing meant that the signifier was required to negotiate new, fleeting relationships with the signified. Berta, unable to recognise her son, goes to see the painting which is housed by a wealthy *americano*:

> el cuadro, metido en su marco dorado, fijo en la pared, en aquella estancia lujosa, entre muchas otras maravillas del arte, le parecía otro a doña Berta. Ahora le contemplaba a su placer; leía en las facciones y en la actitud del héroe que moría sobre aquel montón sangriento y glorioso de tierra y cadáveres, en una aureola de fuego y humo; leía todo lo que el pintor había querido expresar; pero... no siempre reconocía a su hijo.[126]

Her memory has, literally and figuratively, been reframed to be put on display as nothing more than another work of art depicting another scene of war. Brad Epps observes the reframing of Berta's past as a conversion of a private memory into a public memory to be part of a commercial, globalised marketplace:

> the painting appears an *other* painting, not only because it is now framed and fixed as another person's property, but because it is merely one property among many other

[124] 'Doña Berta', p. 353.
[125] Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1990), pp. 20-21.
[126] 'Doña Berta', p. 356.

such properties, a property whose marvelous qualities are not so much intrinsic as extrinsic, exchangeable.[127]

In the modern exchange economy whereby the past is a cog in a mechanised and engineered programme of 'progress', the personal, biological, and spiritual connection that Berta has to the painting is undermined by the painting's new function of mediating a relationship to the past that would form a distinctly 'modern' national consciousness. This meant separating the past from its origin and creating new narratives, or secularising memory, as articulated by Álvarez Junco: 'en el mundo moderno se ha producido, en términos generales, una disminución del lugar de lo sagrado en el beneficio de lo cívico y laico'.[128]

The dubious subject of the painting, and thus the general doubt over its authenticity, together with its placement within the modern exchange economy are not coincidental literary choices made by Clarín. The modern capitalist economy which places monetary value in artwork, and in this story, (historical) memory, is also an environment in which the authentic nature of art is distorted or rendered obsolete. Walter Benjamin, in the chapter in his book *Illuminations* entitled 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', ruminates on the changing value and position of artwork in an age in which it is reproduced and objectified by the capitalist system. His central argument outlines the process that sees art, which initially possesses a 'cult' value, perform an 'exhibition' value. Art, Benjamin argues, initially has a 'cult' value in which it possesses an 'aura', which is a sort of magic or ethereality linked to art. Benjamin argues that capitalist systems have converted the 'cult' value into an 'exhibition' value. This new significance is determined by its ability to function in the modern exchange economy, propelled by reproduction and the manufacturing process that converts art from a singular phenomenon to a product of mass consumption. During this process, the authenticity and history to which the original painting attests lose their importance:

[127] Brad Epps, 'Traces of the Flesh: Land, Body, and Art in Clarín's Doña Berta', *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, 48.1 (1995), pp. 69-91 (pp. 87-88). [Original italics].
[128] José Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX*, p. 190.

> the authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter.[129]

In Clarín's 'Doña Berta', the painting is not reproduced but, rather, reappropriated, in turn distorting the function of the painting as 'historical testimony'. Benjamin's theory about authenticity and the work of art in capitalism helps illuminate Valis's conceptualisation of *fin de siglo* decadence as lust for artificiality. She identifies that the themes of genealogy and lineage are prominent in decadent narratives, with particular attention on those by Ramón de Valle-Inclán. She argues that these narratives are less concerned with the generative force of family, than with its "frame" of art: 'these stories are not about the biological imperative to reproduce or generate a family (or text). They are framed by artifice. It is the "frame" of art that is really the focus of these texts'.[130] In 'Doña Berta', there is no possibility, or intention, of creating a family, or of completing Berta's family by reuniting her, albeit metaphysically, with her son. Instead, the representation of Berta's memory through art is only consumed as art, not historical memory. It can be suggested, therefore, that Clarín critiques the modern and decadent obsession with the artificial, or the replica, as opposed to the reality. Berta's reaction to the painting is indicative of her own assimilation of the modern observation system and consumption of myth. Her controlled reaction reads the painting as opposed to experiencing it; as she is separated from her memory, her past is sanitised, stripped of its original meaning (transgression, blood, death, love) and instead becomes a stake in the new honour codes of the modern subject: see, do not feel; observe, do not remember.

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[129] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 221.

[130] Noël Valis, 'Decadence and Innovation in *Fin de Siglo* Spain', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Spanish Novel from 1600 to the present*, ed. by Harriet Turner and Adelaida López de Martínez (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 138-152 (p. 144).

Berta's own death might be viewed as the death of the old in the face of the new, the demise of tradition and the onset of modernity. However, as I have argued, this tale is less about a dichotomisation of tradition and modernity, than the exclusion of individual memory of the past in a system of national myth-making. Michael Iarocci illustrates the discourse surrounding modernity and, in so doing, opposes the rhetoric of modernity with that of tradition: '"modern" and "modernity" carry within them a series of important tacit ideas. Among them are the notion of historical agency (as opposed to the passive reception of "History"), an intense awareness of historical change (as opposed to the affirmation of unwavering tradition), and a dynamic sense of historical flux (as opposed to historical stasis)'.[131] The opposition arranged here between historical stasis and historical flux is disrupted by Berta's story as her family name and inherited past denotes historical continuity, yet Berta's life, her lived past, is steeped in historical upheaval as she becomes directly involved in the Carlist war. Her final act of selling the family estate further exercises this agency, marking historical flux in a discontinuous present whereby an inherited past does not constitute a fixed or determined present or future. Modernity is, however, defined in this narrative by new parameters that merge historical change with a mythification of the past. This creates temporal distance between the past and the present and formulates exclusionary narratives around memory and citizenship. In 'Doña Berta', the emphasis on representing the past leads instead to the reconfiguration and mythification of memory.

Berta's death is the final symbolic blow to her subjectivity and memory which sees her, in a world of representation and imagery, converted from the signifier, or a physical entity, to the signified, or a cultural artefact. Of her death, Clarín provides the following description:

> un caballo la derribó, la pisó; una rueda le pasó por medio del cuerpo. El vehículo se detuvo antes de dejar atrás a su víctima. Hubo que sacarla con gran cuidado de entre las ruedas. Ya parecía muerta. No tardó diez minutos en estarlo de veras. No habló,

[131] Michael Iarocci, *Properties of Modernity* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2006), p. 42-43.

> ni suspiró, ni nada. Estuvo algunos minutos depositada sobre la acera, hasta que llegara la autoridad. La multitud, en corro, contemplaba el cadáver. [...] Un periodista, joven y risueño, vivaracho, se quedó triste de repente, recordando, y lo dijo al concurso, que aquella pobre anciana le había librado a él de una *cogida* por el estilo en la calle Mayor, junto a los Consejos. No repugnaba ni horrorizaba el cadáver.[132]

Both the objectification and sanitisation of Berta's corpse are suggestive of her exit from the world that is framed as another image, another representation to be observed, another relic to be displayed in what Crary determines 'the increasing rationalization and control of the human subject in terms of new institutional and economic requirements'.[133] The new requirements of the modern nation-state asserts that time is perceived as detached from history, that the past is dissociated from the present and future to the extent that active memory cannot exist, and the past, a history, becomes something intangible or mythified. Rahv states that in the process of myth-making, 'time is being detached from history and yielded back to nature'[134]; just as Berta's body is taken back by nature, so too does memory retreat into myth, as history becomes defined by modern values of observation. Both Berta's memory and her subjectivity cede to a new, and exclusionary, semiological and mythological system. What Clarín questions, however, is whether this is new at all.

Conclusion: Clarín as 'extranjero' and remembering the nation in a time of 'crisis'

Baquero Goyanes, in *'"Clarín" creador del cuento español',* describes Clarín as both an 'extranjero en su siglo' and 'extranjero en su patria',[135] implying that Clarín's writing reflects a certain malaise relative to his temporal environment, and that the concept of the nation or

[132] 'Doña Berta', p. 361.
[133] Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century,* p. 9.
[134] Philip Rahv, 'The Myth and the Powerhouse', p. 645.
[135] Mariano Baquero Goyanes, 'Clarín, creador del cuento español', *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes,* 1949 <https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/clarn-creador-del-cuento-espaol-0/html/0035fa50-82b2-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_4.html#I_0_> [accessed 17/04/2023].

'patria' is intimately linked with that of time, temporality, and chronology. This is explained further in his book *El cuento español en el siglo XIX*': 'sus cuentos [...] revelan cómo el siglo en que le tocó vivir le resultaba mezquino, estrecho'.[136] According to Goyanes, there is a clear disconnect between Clarín and the historical reality in which he lived. Antonio Casero, León Benavides, El Rana, the horse in 'La trampa' and Berta might all be considered as expressions of this unique temporality; they might be considered as anachronous objects that represent ideas that do not fit into the actuality in which they exist, forcing them to be rejected from or silenced by the present. This present, disjoined from the past, is one of national 'crisis', whereby the concept of the nation is being negotiated amongst writers, historians, and politicians. In this discussion, importantly, the language of national crisis is based less on the historiography of the gradual loss of Spain's overseas colonies, or the politico-historical reality of an embryonic modernity, than how the national historical past is remembered during a period of so-called 'crisis' and 'modernity'.

The question, then, centres around the status of memory during times of temporal rupture. In this selection of Clarín's short stories, this question leads us to the questioning of historical myth, such as the Reconquest, empire and Castille, as eternal truths. The reconfiguration of these national pasts whereby their eternal nature is questioned allows for history and memory to be activated in nation-building, at a time where the legacy of civil conflict looms large and the nation must reconcile the decline of empire. In 'Doña Berta', modernity's (re)framing of the national past induces a blockage whereby memory as the past is unable to be recuperated by those who experienced it, replaced by the mythified past that the modern present wishes to export. Clarín's existence within and contempt for, according to Baquero Goyanes, a 'mezquino' and 'estrecho' century may have to do with the role of myth in historical consciousness and (mis)remembering the past in 'modern' times.

[136] Mariano Baquero Goyanes, *El cuento español en el siglo XIX,* p. 296.

Chapter Four

Imagining regeneration through (anti-)utopia, origin, and aesthetics

'Llegó a cansarse del jardín amenísimo'[1]
('Cuento futuro')

The painting *Angelus Novus* by Paul Klee depicts an angel

> caught in the midst of a U-turn: his face turning from the past to the future, his wings being pushed backwards by the storm blowing this time from the imagined, anticipated and feared in advance of Hell of the future towards the Paradise of the past.[2]

This is how Zymunt Bauman describes Klees's painting in *Retrotopias*; the angel is visualised as caught between a current that flows between an imagined future and an Arcadian past. A storm coming from the Paradise of the past is a useful image for this chapter. Walter Benjamin, who purchased the painting in 1921, conceptualised the angel of history as aiming to unite a fragmented history, to 'awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed'.[3] Yet in Paradise there is a storm that 'propels him into the future to which his back is turned [...]. This storm is what we call progress'.[4] If progress is a storm that launches the angel of history away from Paradise as it hurtles towards the future, then progress is exposed as a force that is able to corrupt human history and distance it from its origin towards a feared and turbulent future. In this chapter, the concept of origin pertains particularly to how the future is depicted in Clarín's short fiction.

Andrew Ginger, in *Instead of Modernity,* states that the nineteenth century saw a fundamental shift in the conceptualisation of human life in the form of profound challenges to what had

[1] 'Cuento futuro', in *Cuentos completos,* ed. by Carolyn Richmond, 2 vols (Madrid: Alfaguara, 2000), I, pp. 488-509 (p. 504).
[2] Zygmunt Bauman, *Retrotopia* (Cambridge: Polity, 2017), p. 2.
[3] Shira Wolfe, 'Stories of iconic artworks: Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus'* <https://magazine.artland.com/stories-of-iconic-artworks-paul-klees-angelus-novus/> [accessed 02.10.2023].
[4] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations,* ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), p. 258.

been, or what was in the process of being, established as unshakable ontological and spiritual foundations of humanity's origins and destiny. Ginger specifically cites Nietzsche's repudiation of classical Greek philosophy and Christian tradition as ontological and epistemological sources, Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species,* and Karl Marx's *Capital* which all disrupt the systems and beliefs upon which human life had been conceptualised. Faced with these disturbances, human existence becomes an abstraction, detached from systems of meaning-making; he writes, 'if there were no foundation rooting humanity, no universal shared human nature– it might appear– all experiences of being human would be constructs of representations, accumulations of signs without any secure, fixed meaning'.[5] This chapter explores this notion in Clarín's work, specifically through the concept of origin and what this meant in the nineteenth century in Spain in relation to progress, and specifically, the function of memory as a means to avoid the alienation induced by impending abstraction from origin and ontology.

I argue that through the exploration of regeneration and the myth of origin, Clarín questions a linear recuperation of an 'original' state. This, in turn, highlights the fraught and fragile relationships between aesthetics and utilitarianism, and modernity and antiquity. I suggest that these tensions are revealed as a result of Clarín's examination of regeneration and the subsequent nuancing of how regeneration and progress can be conceptualised for the future. In the first section, 'Tirso de Molina' and 'Cambio de luz' will be explored as narratives that can be read as displaying Clarín's idiosyncratic views about the nature of progress, particularly regarding the position that aesthetics and spirituality take in this vision of progress. 'Tirso de Molina' is a story of time travel that merges cultural patrimony and classical aesthetics with a future world of utilitarian 'progress'. The idea of origin in this story is presented through culture and aesthetics that have been extracted from their original context, to be given new meaning in the present. This synthesis between aesthetics and utilitarianism as explored through the

[5] Andrew Ginger, *Instead of Modernity: The Western Canon and the Incorporation of the Hispanic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), p. 4.

medium of memory and patrimony means that progress is a reimagining the past, instead of recuperating or restoring it. In ‘Cambio de luz’, regeneration is considered as a spiritual revival, as the protagonist, a writer and philosopher, rediscovers his faith. This recuperation of faith and spirituality is framed as a reacquaintance with the ‘essence’ of human existence. In order for this to occur, he loses his sight and is therefore stripped of his ability to access the material world. In this narrative, there is not the synthesis of the aesthetic and utilitarian that we can observe in ‘Tirso de Molina’, indeed, the opposite occurs. Though Arial’s blindness can be read as an allegory for spiritual enlightenment, in turn representing the material world as blind to faith or the metaphysical, it may also be indicative of a commentary on regeneration whereby progress is imagined not as an aesthetic or cultural phenomenon, but as a moral and spiritual process. These two stories contrast in their assessment of progress: ‘Tirso de Molina’ reveals the place of cultural and aesthetic origin in the ‘future’, yet ‘Cambio de luz’ seemingly rejects the material and aesthetic world in favour of spiritual revival. Reading these two stories together suggests that Clarín’s vision of progress is one in which aesthetics combines with a spiritual and historical consciousness that can exist alongside notions of material and scientific progress.

In the following section, ‘El pecado original’, ‘Cuento futuro’, and ‘El centauro’ will be discussed in relation to the concepts of myth and genesis. These narratives reframe what origin means in the context of modernity and progress; in these stories, Clarín shows that mythified and imagined pasts or ‘points of origin’ cannot be ‘lost’ as they are illusory. Flawed ideas of progress lead to anti-utopia, whereby the idealised images of both past and future are distorted. The narratives studied in this chapter are placed in dialogue with Latin American regenerationist thought, specifically the work of José Enrique Rodó (Uruguay, 1871). This establishes them as texts that form part of, and interact with, a body of works and philosophical thought that were reconsidering progress and aesthetics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This chapter aims to elucidate the nuanced position that Clarín took regarding how to treat notions of origin, inheritance, and spirituality in a society being

transformed by material progress. Before exploring Clarín's narratives in further detail, it is necessary to set the analysis of the texts in the context of the theoretical frameworks of fantastic literature and utopia.

Cuentos fantásticos en la España del Realismo, an anthology of fantastic tales edited by Juan Molina Porras, was published by Cátedra in 2006. The chosen title immediately emphasises the dominance of the realist novel in nineteenth-century Spain, promising to approach the fantastic genre primarily in terms of its relationship with realism, and thus suggesting that the fantastic tale was overshadowed by the ubiquity, popularity, and perceived intellectual superiority of the realist novel. Throughout the introduction to these fantastic tales which appeared in Spain under the hegemony of realism, Molina Porras repeats the sentiment expressed in the title by stating that 'las sombras de Fortunata y Jacinta, La Regenta, Los pazos de Ulloa, El scandal o Pepita Jiménez han ocultado la producción cuentística de nuestros grandes autores y, en particular, su producción fantástica'.[6] The fantastic genre in Spain, as a result, has been somewhat undervalued and underexplored as a means through which writers would express latent concerns or important questions with a certain freedom that was not afforded by the realist style.

The fantastic genre allows for the exploration of the complex relationship between modernity and progress in nineteenth-century Spain. Spain has been considered as semi-peripheral to conceptualisations of modernity during the nineteenth century which placed Western Europe, namely France, Britain and Germany, at the heart of all that was associated with progress.[7]

[6] Juan Molina Porras, *Cuentos fantásticos en la España del Realismo* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2006), p. 15.
[7] See Andrew Ginger's article 'Spanish Modernity Revisited: Revisions of the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies,* 13 (2007), pp. 121-132. In this article, Ginger gives a comprehensive account of the revisions in Hispanic studies of Spanish modernity. In the introductory statement, Ginger states the following in relation to Spanish modernity: 'it has been assumed that Spain was backward or overwhelmingly conservative, that its revolutions were abortive and flawed, and that its modernity is thus characterized by a need to break with this key period, a failure to do so, or a combination of the two. Terms such as *fracaso, atraso, retraso* abound, and are applied to politics, economics, social change, literature, art, philosophy, indeed pretty much everything. Such a

Spain and the Spanish fantastic as existing both inside Europe cartographically but seen as outside the cultural parameters of modernity owing to its apparent 'backwardness' and slow adoption of 'modernity', reflects the complexity of how Spanish modernity has been viewed. As Juan Jesús Payán elucidates in his assessment of the Spanish fantastic, Spain was

> exiliada de los imaginarios cartográficos de progreso, la cultura española se descubre ahora, absorta, ante una disyuntiva inesperada: las vías de futuro son dictadas por otras naciones, mientras que los lauros propios apenas se traslucen como una reliquia del pasado, desconectados de la "nueva" modernidad.[8]

Spain's relationship with modernity cannot, therefore, be extrapolated from how modernity, progress, science, and futurity were represented in literature. This is particularly true of literature that employed fantasy or the fantastic in its depiction of technological progress, as Payán states, 'el corpus fantástico peninsular no puede ser comprendido sin una integración de su origen y cultivo en la consideración problemática de la modernidad en el contexto hispánico'.[9] The fantastic genre in Spain and Spanish modernity form part of the same picture that reflects the nature of progress and nationhood in the Spain of the nineteenth century, and thus Clarín's use of the uncanny and supernatural reveals this uneasy relationship with modernity and ideas of progress. I show that Clarín uses these modes to achieve two principal objectives; to introduce new temporal dimensions to the present which destabilise established codes of the present and the 'knowable', allowing for aesthetic and spiritual ideas of progress to be explored, and additionally, to comment on the trajectory of technological and scientific progress in future worlds.

The fantastic seems a particularly apt lens through which to explore the peripheral, or that which lies beyond established codes of belonging, as the fantastic exists on the fringes of the

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view helps maintain as examples of modernity the hegemony of the countries of North-west Europe (Britain, France, Germany and its predecessor states).' (p. 121).

[8] Juan Jesús Payán, *Los conjuros del asombro: expresión fantástica e identidad nacional en la España del siglo XIX* (Delaware: Juan de la Cuesta Hispanic Monographs, 2022), p. 13.

[9] Juan Jesús Payán, *Los conjuros del asombro: expresión fantástica e identidad nacional en la España del siglo XIX,* p. 60.

'knowable', and poses a challenge to the rational imagination upon which Western modernity and notions of 'civilization' have been constructed. As Tzvetan Todorov theorises, the fantastic exists at the point of uncertainty; the point of hesitation between what is real and what is not and the intersection of reality and fantasy, is what comprises the fantastic as a genre. In the following lines Todorov summarises this phenomenon:

> the fantastic occupies the duration of this uncertainty. Once we choose one answer or the other, we leave the fantastic for a neighbouring genre, the uncanny or the marvellous. The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event.[10]

The most salient connection between Todorov's theorisation of the fantastic and Spanish modernity is that the fantastic itself might be considered as a 'peripheral' genre or, a genre that takes as its primary interest that which exists outside of established parameters of verisimilitude.

The conceptualisation of both the Spanish nation and the fantastic as peripheral is useful as far as analysing the use of the genre to convey themes of 'otherness' or non-conformity, as that which finds its existence not in the concrete but in the intangibility brought about by hesitation, doubt, and nebulosity. However, Clarín appears to be less concerned with generating doubt or hesitation in his readers as to the verisimilitude of a text, than establishing uncanny elements of literary reality. This assimilation of the otherworldly with reality makes Clarín's texts shake the foundations of the belief system built on this conception of reality, thereby questioning a version of the 'real' that occludes or even ostracises non-conformity. This is confirmed by Ramón Espejo-Saavedra's analysis of the marvellous in Clarín's short fiction: 'la literatura maravillosa es aquella en la que los elementos fantásticos no producen ningún tipo de cuestionamiento epistemológico ni ontológico en el lector. Se asumen como

[10] Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans by Richard Howard (Cleveland; London: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973), p. 25.

un elemento natural e inherente a la realidad descrita en el texto'.[11] Returning to Molina Porras' assessment of the fantastic cast in the shadow of the realist novels of the late nineteenth century, this divorcing of the realist and the fantastic contributes to their generic dichotomisation. However, writers considered to be realists, such as Pérez Galdós and Clarín, produced works that contain elements of the fantastic, uncanny, or supernatural without compromising their mastery of the realist style nor the construction of literary reality in these 'fantastic' works. The result, in the stories explored in this chapter, is that Clarín establishes a world of fantastic realism, wherein either supernatural elements are intertwined with the familiarity of a literary world constructed around reality, or the world created by Clarín does not generate doubt as to the existence and legitimacy of these supernatural or uncanny elements.

Espejo-Saavedra observes that Clarín carefully configures his position with respect to the fantastic genre, and moulds generic convention to his original style: 'se aleja de cualquier concepto de lo fantástico como la literatura de la incertidumbre y del desasosiego'.[12] Clarín's narratives might thus be considered marvellous or uncanny; Todorov delineates the difference between the uncanny and the marvellous as resting on the decision that the reader makes regarding whether 'the laws of reality remain intact' or if 'new laws of nature must be entertained to account for the phenomena'.[13] The former, Todorov affirms, is known as the uncanny, the latter belongs to the marvellous. In Clarín's writing, texts such as 'Tirso de Molina' pertain to the marvellous as new codes of reality must be established in order that the time travel can take place within the literary reality Clarín creates. Clarín's uncanny tales that are explored in this analysis include 'El centuaro' and 'Cambio de luz' which are firmly entrenched in established parameters of reality and do not create the need for new laws of reality to take hold. Clarín's experimentation with and, often, transgression of, generic convention is, of

[11] Ramón Espejo-Saavedra, 'Lo fantástico y lo milagroso en cuatro relatos de Clarín', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 99.8 (2022), pp. 1241-1265 (p. 1243).
[12] Ramón Espejo-Saavedra, 'Lo fantástico y lo milagroso en cuatro relatos de Clarín', p.1243.
[13] Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre,* p. 41.

course, not unique to the uncanny or marvellous; however these elements of his work allow him to use the supernatural to mount a more substantial challenge to positivist conceptions of reality. The employment of tropes pertaining to the uncanny or marvellous, such as the mythical, celestial, and spiritual, exposes the faults of rigid notions of reality and, as I explore in this chapter, narrow visions of progress.

It is pertinent to this discussion to note the use of science fiction in Clarín's tales, namely 'Cuento futuro' and 'El pecado original', to explicitly explore the future beyond the confines imposed by present reality. The increasing visibility of science and technology in society meant that science-fiction was an essential arrival onto the literary scene in order to comment on new phenomena and trace the ways in which human experience was changing. Luis Núñez Ladevéze examines the temporal dimension of science-fiction narrative in Spain: 'la ciencia ficción describe más bien un itinerario futuro, y si accidentalmente se comba hacia el pasado no es tanto para resolver los problemas metafísicos heredados sino para corroer las situaciones y fijaciones contraídas por el presente'.[14] By exploring a future world, the science-fiction genre has the ability to transcend temporal boundaries, stepping into the past and present to try to decipher just how humanity reached these unrecognisable or dystopian worlds.

Although in this chapter I demonstrate the ways in which Clarín wrote about the problems of his time through futuristic narratives, a significant element of this is derived from themes of inheritance and origin, and constructed on the notion that the past is of equal importance as the future in these stories. Clarín consistently uses the trope of a future world returning to the past, probing the role of a 'past inheritance' or 'point of origin' in the formation of the future. In 'Cuento futuro', for example, a future dystopia turns to the genesis story for answers in the posthuman world created by unchecked 'progress'. In 'El centauro', which does not

[14] Luis Núñez Ladevéze, *Utopía y realidad: la ciencia ficción en España* (Madrid: Ediciones del Centro, 1976), p. 26.

experiment with science-fiction tropes, but instead explores Ancient Greek civilization and mythology, the protagonist explores the distant past as a site of hopes of an alternative vision of the present. This instigates a removal from a utilitarian existence and the espousal of a mythical, antiquarian aesthetic, ultimately questioning the incarnation of a distant past as a means to build towards the future. Clarín's exploration of inheritance and origin presents itself as a principal means by which to understand the modern condition and visions of progress.

Crucial to understandings of how ideas of future progress are expressed in literature is the concept of utopia and its adjacent forms. Utopia, deriving from the Greek words for 'not' and 'place', was associated with Ancient civilizations as synonymous with humanity's achievement of perfectibility, as Fátima Vieira explains:

> More's idea of utopia is, in fact, the product of the Renaissance, a period when the ancient world (namely Greece and Rome) was considered the peak of mankind's intellectual achievement, and taken as a model by Europeans; but it was also the result of a humanist logic, based on the discovery that the human being did not exist simply to accept his or her fate, but to use reason in order to build the future.[15]

More's theorisation of utopia or a utopian society, was founded not on an imagination of the future that was an extrapolation of the past, but a reestablishment of Ancient pasts in a perceived (perfected) future. Juan Pro states that utopia creates the conditions for humanity to exist in two states: 'el deseo utópico hace vivir a los seres humanos en dos realidades, la que conocen de primera mano —el presente vivido y el pasado recordado— más la que imaginan, temen, esperan o preparan'.[16] This simultaneous experience of a remembered past and an imagined future suggests that the future lies in something unknown, as opposed to deriving directly from remembered pasts and lived presents. In my selection of Clarín's short stories, the past is just as 'imagined' as the future. The pasts in these stories come to represent

[15] Fátima Vieira, 'The concept of utopia', in *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, ed. by Gregory Claeys (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 4.
[16] Juan Pro, 'Historia de la utopía: viajar en el tiempo', *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, 48 (2018), <http://journals.openedition.org/mcv/8425> [accessed 08.10.2023].

collective imaginings of origin and progress to the extent that they become integrated into Clarín's illustration of utopia, or perhaps more pertinently, anti-utopia.

Clarín's 'Cuento futuro' can be categorised as an anti-utopian narrative, as the utopia of an idealised past is distorted, representing the hopes for a return of an Arcadian paradise that are ultimately destroyed. Krishan Kumar describes anti-utopia as a distortion of the hopes of utopia: 'anti-utopia draws its material from utopia and reassembles it in a manner that denies the affirmation of utopia. It is the mirror-image of utopia – but a distorted image, seen in a cracked mirror'.[17] Science-fiction is often associated with dystopia as opposed to anti-utopia; as the following extract from Peter Fitting's chapter on utopia, dystopia and science fiction in the *Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature* demonstrates: 'the critique of contemporary society expressed in the dystopia implies (or asserts) the need for change; the anti-utopia is, on the other hand, explicitly or implicitly a defence of the status quo. Science fiction, accordingly, is more dystopian than anti-utopian'.[18] Geraldine Lawless has indeed described Clarín's 'Cuento futuro' as a 'dystopian science fiction',[19] also placing the science fiction genre alongside dystopia. 'Cuento futuro', however, might be productively considered to be an anti-utopian narrative, as although Clarín depicts a future world of destruction, the second half of the narrative is where dystopian and science fiction theorisations of 'Cuento futuro' begin to deteriorate. Lawless states:

> Stricter definitions of science fiction would exclude "Cuento futuro," as the second section, dealing with the Garden of Eden, makes few claims to verisimilitude; little attempt is made to uphold the internal consistency of the future world that the author proposes on the basis of new technological developments.[20]

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[17] Krishan Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), p. 100.
[18] Peter Fitting, 'Utopia, dystopia and science fiction', in *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, ed. by Gregory Claeys (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 135-153 (p. 141).
[19] Geraldine Lawless, *Modernity's Metonyms: Figuring Time in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Stories,* p. 146.
[20] Geraldine Lawless, *Modernity's Metonyms: Figuring Time in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Stories,* p. 198.

Therefore, anti-utopia may be a more productive lens through which to appreciate the value of this story, as it is in the second half of the narrative that the true destruction of humankind takes place, and the hope for the rebirth of humanity is definitively lost. Future utopia is distorted in two principal ways: the first is that progress is not seen as infinite, and the idea that scientific and utilitarian progress can bring humanity into a new age of perfectibility is subverted. Secondly, the promise of reestablishing a utopian past in a future world devastated by reaching the 'end of progress' remains an impossible hope. Kumar evaluates this mutuality between utopia and anti-utopia as follows:

> the anti-utopia was historically a response to utopia, and its significance and power always turned on the memory of that promise of a Golden Age. [...] It lives off the deep resonance of the idea of utopia in the collective consciousness of Western society.[21]

Clarín's depiction is one of not only a paradise lost but also a paradise that bears the deceptive hope of being regained. The theorisation of the fantastic and utopia thus allow for the consideration of origin as linked to utopian imaginings and *inverosímil* fictional worlds.

Origin as a concept that is extracted from, or exists separately to, conventional perceptions of time and space evidences its inherent utopianism, as it is positioned as something that progress might lead to. Joan Ramon Resina outlines how the Christian belief in apocalypse creates a sentiment that authentic human existence is found in the return to origin: 'the idea that contemporary society was a degraded semblance of a pristine original. Because Christianity, unlike Judaism, believes in a final and complete revelation that has already occurred, truth must be found at its origin'.[22] This meant that, in the nineteenth century, origin was used as a means to recuperate original meaning and 'authentic' culture:

> the dogma of the incarnation was foundational not only in a metaphysical but also in a historical sense. The divine logos, the matrix of all meaning, had become human flesh.

[21] Krishan Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times,* p. 126.
[22] Joan Ramon Resina, **'**Ruins of civilization', in *The Routledge Hispanic Studies Companion to Nineteenth-Century Spain,* ed. by Elisa Martí López (London, New York: Routledge, 2021), pp. 263-277 (p. 263).

> Everything that followed from this event was a gradual corruption of the original meaning.[23]

The nineteenth century saw a treatment of origin that was compounded by pervasive discourses of decline and degeneration. The return to origins was explored– and Clarín's narratives are no exception to this– through the Greco-Latin roots of Western civilization, and therefore origin was depicted through antiquity and Christianity. The stories in this chapter might, however, be productively read as counter-narratives, or disruptions, to the notion that a linear, historical recuperation of a foundational origin will signal regeneration and progress. Learning from the past and the idea of a distinct origin is, for Clarín, less a demand to recuperate a lost paradise or a call to reanimate a previous state or condition, than a use of a 'deep past', or collective spiritual origin, to examine the instability of the present.

Spiritual revival and the revival of the spirit in 'Tirso de Molina (Fantasía)' and 'Cambio de luz'

In his narrative 'Tirso de Molina (Fantasía)', which was written in 1898, Clarín uses time travel to explore the relationship between cultural inheritance and the future. Historical figures, including the baroque writer Tirso de Molina, are revived for a journey back to Earth to discover if anything remains of their life and works, whether their contribution to the world was fleeting or enduring, and whether humanity's belief in perpetual progress has affected the way in which figures from the past are imagined, if at all. The 'immortality', or perhaps more accurately, afterlives, of the historical figures that return to Earth, signals a probing into the presence of the past in the present. What Clarín does in 'Tirso de Molina' is transform the idea of memory and heredity from something that is absent in a future world, to an integral part of its identity and progress. When they lay their eyes upon a passing train, the group of past thinkers, writers, and philosophers are dumbstruck and repelled by what they perceive to be a barbaric symbol of human demise and its corruption of origin. The moment is described thus:

[23] Joan Ramon Resina, 'Ruins of civilization', p. 263.

> era un terrible unicornio, que por el cuerpo negro arrojaba chispas y una columna de humo. Montado sobre el lomo de hierro llevaba un diablo, cuya cara negra pudieron vislumbrar a la luz de un farolillo con que el tal demonio parecía estar mirándole las pulgas a su cabalgadura infernal…[24]

The contact between the machine and culture is clearcut; the train appears abhorrent and almost heretical to the figures that come to represent Spain's aesthetic patrimony.

Julio Ramos, in his book *Divergent Modernities*, discusses the role of the writer in relation to modernisation, particularly their interaction with technology and machinery: 'the machine had [...] become an emblem of rationalization [...] the place of writing– of literature– had changed considerably in the face of the modernizing discourses. [...] The resulting antithesis between the machine and literature thus emerged'.[25] This opposition between culture and the machine is explored by Clarín not as an opposition but as mutually dependent elements of 'modernity'. When the writers find that the train they were so horrified to see hurtling past them was in fact named after Tirso de Molina, their outlook shifts from despair to elation as they realise that even the most potent symbols of a new world remember and celebrate the past from which they sprang. We read of this in the following lines:

> -Señores -dijo D. Gaspar, -ya lo veis; el mundo no está perdido, ni vosotros olvidados. Ilustre poeta mercenario, ¿qué dice vuestra merced de esto? ¿Sábele tan mal que a este portento de la ciencia y de la industria le hayan puesto los hombres de este siglo el seudónimo glorioso de Tirso de Molina?[26]

Science and technology, symbols of utilitarian principles of progress, are not viewed as extrapolations of the past, but integrally linked to it, making this journey through time one of a

[24] Leopoldo Alas "Clarín", 'Tirso de Molina', in *Cuentos completos,* ed. by Carolyn Richmond, 2 vols (Madrid: Alfaguara, 2000), II, pp. 234-240 (p. 238).
[25] Julio Ramos, *Divergent Modernities: Culture and Politics in 19th Century Latin America* (London: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 165.
[26] 'Tirso de Molina', p. 239.

fulfilling cycle, as opposed to teleological 'progress' that ends with the implosion of humanity in a hellish 'future', such as that portrayed in Klee's painting.

The dialogue between opposing belief systems is also represented in Clarín's 'Cambio de luz' (1893) when an intellectual, possibly a fictionalised Clarín, suffers a crisis of faith, mirroring Clarín's own spiritual crisis which permeates the collection in which this story was published, *El Señor y lo demás, son cuentos*. Jorge Arial, the protagonist, is an intellectual who

> se fue transformando en un pensador y en amador del arte; y fue un sabio en estética, un crítico de pintura, un profesor insigne; y después un artista de la pluma, un historiador del arte con el arte de un novelista.[27]

He experiences internal battles between science and spirit: 'Don Jorge Arial despreciaba al pobre diablo *científico, positivista* [...] y discutía con él, y unas veces tenía algo que contestarle, aún en el terreno de la *fría lógica*, de la mera *intelectualidad*... y otras veces no'.[28] Arial begins to retreat from the world to which he no longer feels he belongs as he finds himself unable to answer to the torrent of the 'diablo científico', his spirit gradually eroding. His sight begins to fail, signalling not a removal from the world, but a spiritual awakening. Both 'Tirso de Molina' and 'Cambio de luz' appear initially to tell the story of the exile of culture and spirituality from a utilitarian world; however, both narratives are ultimately tales of their regeneration. By reading these stories together, it becomes evident that Clarín's writing argues for alternative visions of progress that deviate from utilitarian and material progress. In 'Cambio de luz', this arrives in the form of a spiritual enlightenment, whereas in 'Tirso de Molina', Clarín provides a nuanced imagination of the future world as one that values technological progress as well as leaving space for the appreciation of culture and aesthetics, and importantly, remembering the past.

[27] 'Cambio de luz', I, pp. 446-457 (p. 447).
[28] 'Cambio de luz', p. 449. [Original italics].

Cultural legacy and aesthetics in ‘Tirso de Molina’

The return of classical writers and thinkers to a future world, the world of the historic present, imagines a direct contact between the aesthetics of the past and the present world in the process of profound transformation. Putting Spain’s cultural and aesthetic past in dialogue with the present places them in direct comparison, allowing ‘Tirso de Molina’ to be read as an assessment of the nature of progress and the position of aesthetics and memory in a time of utilitarian and technological advancement. Jovellanos, one of the thinkers who has descended to Earth, observes the railway tracks: ‘Agachóse Jovellanos, y tras él los demás, y notaron que bajo la nieve se alargaban dos varas duras como el hierro, paralelas…’.[29] He deduces that these new structures must be a mechanism of transportation; he then suggests that perhaps these iron tracks would be capable of realising a vision he had of transport that would connect Madrid and Gijón:

> -Esto ha de ser un camino, -dijo D. Gaspar-; tal vez los modernos atraviesan estas montañas de modo que a nosotros nos parecería milagroso si lo viéramos… Yo tengo escrito un viaje que llamo de Madrid a Gijón, y en él expreso el deseo de que algún día…[30]

This highlights technological and utilitarian progress, not in opposition to, but in coexistence with, the visionary thought of Enlightenment philosophy. Part of Jovellanos’s imagination of human progress has come to fruition in the present he has returned to, as technology does not rail against culture, it does not come into opposition with creative imaginings of human existence. In fact, the modern present is seen as part of the same vein of human ingenuity as Enlightenment thought. It is therefore suggested here that the train, a mechanised method of transportation and a product of nineteenth-century innovation, is equated to a culmination, a progeny, or inheritance, of rational and aesthetic progress through the ages: a symbol of enlightenment and progress brought about not as an extrapolation of the past, but as a direct

[29] ‘Tirso de Molina’, p. 236.
[30] ‘Tirso de Molina’, p. 236.

result of it. Utilitarian forms of progress, symbolised by the train, may not be entirely disparate from cultural and aesthetic, namely philosophical and literary, patrimony.

The journey through time that is undertaken in Clarín's story is framed as a journey motivated by vanity and ego: 'En esta tierra obscura, sepultada en noche y en olvido, ¿qué me había quedado a mí? Si vivía en el alma región luciente, ¿a qué querer, como quise, saber algo de la mísera Tierra? Fue vanidad, sin duda'.[31] The return of the writers from the past to the 'future' is presented not as a humanitarian voyage to discover what they might contribute to the historical consciousness of a future society, but a quest to uncover the nature of their individual fame, to determine the extent of their own legacy or afterlife in the Spain of the future. Upon seeing the train, a feature of a life that they neither recognise nor appreciate, the writers assume they have been forgotten and exiled from the world that is no longer congruent with their memories of 'la Tierra'. The writers' self-exile from the world they see as having abandoned its spiritual, intellectual, and aesthetic inheritance signals a rupture between a society perceived as utilitarian and an aesthetic state. The ego at the centre of the return is blamed for their initial suffering in the hostile new world:

> Todos fueron confesando pecado semejante. A todos aquellos ilustres varones les había picado la mosca venenosa de la vanagloria cuando gozaban la gloria no vana, y habían deseado saber algo de su renombre en la Tierra. ¿Se acordarían de ellos aquí abajo? Y el castigo había sido dejarlos caer, juntos, en montón, de las divinas alturas, sobre aquella nieve, en aquellos picachos, rodeados de la noche, padeciendo hambre y frío.[32]

The egotistical and individualistic motivations at the centre of the terrestrial visit, together with the synthesis of technology and culture, suggests that Clarín reinterprets the place of aesthetics and culture in the context of future progress. He imagines the place of memory in

[31] 'Tirso de Molina', p. 235.
[32] 'Tirso de Molina', p. 236.

times of transformational change as distanced from linear aesthetic revivals that rely on a recuperation of the past.

The aesthetic and its function in human existence was perhaps most famously delineated by Friedrich Schiller. The aesthetic, in Schiller's view, would liberate the human spirit from subjugation to the monotony of work and labour, as Richard Adelman affirms: 'aesthetic contemplation [...] will deliver contemporary man from his deformed condition, emancipating him from his over-dependence on the monotonous sound of the wheel with which he works'.[33] The aesthetic equals freedom; an appreciation of culture, art, and beauty would placate the homogenising and monotonous effects of utilitarian progress. The principle of aesthetics and its place in regeneration was popular amongst *fin de siglo* thinkers in Spain and Latin America. José Enrique Rodó was one such figure, whose seminal essay *Ariel* (1900) is considered one of the most significant texts of *regeneracionismo*. Rodó envisioned an aesthetic regeneration as the only means of progress; Michela Coletta observes that Rodó's work stems from Schiller's concept of aesthetics, which positioned aesthetics as adjacent to morality: 'Schiller's aesthetics, later elaborated upon by Hegel and by French sociologist Jean-Marie Guyau, saw the intellectual and artist as carriers of moral principles'.[34] This rendered an aesthetic revival the means to realise the moral regeneration of Latin American nations. The encroachment of what Rodó saw as North American utilitarianism on the spiritual ontology of Latin America posed an existential threat to Latin American culture. This opposition between the Anglo-Saxon and the Latin American, incarnated by the opposition between Ariel and Caliban in *Ariel,* is what underpins the discussion of progress in this context, yet, as 'Tirso de Molina' suggests, they may not be entirely dichotomous.

Rodó and Clarín began exchanging letters in 1895 and records suggest that the two writers shared an epistolary relationship between Montevideo and Oviedo until at least 1897, four

[33] Richard Adelman, *Idleness, Contemplation and the Aesthetic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 59.
[34] Michela Coletta, *Decadent Modernity: Civilization and Latinidad in Spanish America 1880-1920* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018), p. 126.

years before Clarín's death and three years before the publication of Rodó's seminal *Ariel.* The ideas that appeared in *Ariel* were not new, having circulated in intellectual circles in Spain and Latin America for some time before, and these thinkers on both sides of the Atlantic inspired and influenced each other. The popularity, however, of *Ariel* in Spain made it central to the *regeneracionista* generation, as Coletta describes: 'the circulation of Rodó's Ariel in Spain immediately after its publication in 1900 is also a testimony to the Uruguayan's role in shaping the Spanish regeneracionistas' own ideas'.[35] Clarín also wrote a prologue to *Ariel* in 1900, in which he decrees that the regeneration of Spain and *Hispanoamérica* must be found in heredity; inheritance is a vessel of renovation and originality. Clarín observes that in order to construct cultural modernity in Latin America, therein lies a fundamental connection with Spain:

> es verdad y ventura que en el seno de esa misma juventud literaria americana aparecen síntomas de una favorable y justa reacción, en armonía con análogas corrientes en otros órdenes de la vida; reacción que vuelve los ojos a España, sin desdecirse del pasado [...]; pero comprendiendo que esa originalidad, que hay que buscar a toda costa, no puede ser de importación, sino que hay que sondarla en los misterios de la herencia, en el fondo de la raza.[36]

Notwithstanding the use of the thorny term, 'race', Clarín enters into the debates around how Spain might regenerate by looking towards its former colonies, and vice versa. Indeed, Rodó expressed the same viewpoint in a letter to Clarín four years earlier:

> Liberalizar a España, hacer que con originalidad y energía intervenga en el concierto de la cultura europea contemporánea, equivale a hacerla más nuestra. Y yo creo que

[35] Michela Coletta, *Decadent Modernity: Civilization and Latinidad in Spanish America 1880-1920,* p. 94.
[36] Leopoldo Alas "Clarín", 'Prólogo', in *Ariel* by José Enrique Rodó (Valencia: Editorial Prometeo, 1910), pp. vii-xiv (p. ix).

> en el arte, en la literatura, es donde más eficazmente se puede trabajar para estrechar los lazos de nuestra grande y definitiva reconciliación.[37]

Cross-continental ties, according to Clarín and Rodó, centred around the common aim of regenerating and reviving the nation through aesthetics, literature, and culture. The sentiments expressed here are in keeping with José Luis Venegas's observations in his work on epistolary writing and modernity in Spain and Spanish America:

> 'for most Spanish intellectuals [...] the solution to national decline [...] was not to be found in the sort of scientific and technological development dominant in materialistic Europe, but in the idealistic revitalization of Spain's imperial past and its civilizing mission'.[38]

Venegas further identifies the role of the letter in the fostering of transatlantic ties as a principal means of establishing ideas of regeneration that existed outside of materialism or utilitarianism. He writes, 'epistolarity and Hispanidad emerge as categories with the capacity to express the "eternal" or "natural" values sustaining a cohesive social body'.[39]

The same year that Clarín wrote a prologue to *Ariel,* the University of Oviedo published its 'Americanist manifesto'.[40] It can be suggested, then, that Clarín formed part of a group of intellectuals in Spain who were exploring transatlantic avenues of regeneration. This regeneration would bring about economic and epistemological exchange, but would also help constitute a sense of national identity in Spain, a sense of a collective past and a means to explore its cultural and historical roots. Miguel Somoza-Rodríguez affirms this:

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[37] José Enrique Rodó, *Obras completas* (Madrid: Ediciones Aguilar, 1967), p. 1326.
[38] José Luis Venegas, *Transatlantic Correspondence: Modernity, Epistolarity, and Literature in Spain and Spanish America 1898-1992* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2014), p. 51.
[39] José Luis Venegas, *Transatlantic Correspondence: Modernity, Epistolarity, and Literature in Spain and Spanish America 1898-1992,* p. 63.
[40] This manifesto argued in favour of the advantages of cultural exchange between Spain and the Spanish American republics. It made salient that the exchange would be equal and reciprocal, highlighting the mutual nature of transatlantic rapprochement. It also claimed that Spain did not aim to achieve a position of supremacy over its former colonies. For more, see Miguel Somoza-Rodríguez, 'Education, elite formation, and geopolitics: Americanism and the regeneration of Spain', *Pedagógica histórica,* 47.5 (2011), pp. 619-638.

> the existence of a Hispanic-American cultural space was a favourable opportunity for Spanish development and modernisation. It could open the door both to mutual trade relations and to the formation of a cultural and geopolitical space in which Spain would regain a prominent role as a major character in the international scene. Furthermore, the contact with its former colonies constituted an exercise of introspection on the historical construction of a national identity.[41]

During the twilight years of the nineteenth century, as the epistolary exchange between Clarín and Rodó demonstrates, the scene was set for Hispanic rapprochement as a bulwark against the influence of the United States. In a move that might be considered as equally about protecting the influence of Spain in its former colonies as it was a genuine sentiment of spiritual connection, this relationship between Spain and Spanish America signalled a reaction to a geopolitical shift in global dominance away from Europe. The 1898 'disaster' marked an 'epochal shift in the world system, with the United States' entry onto the world stage as an imperial power ending the period of Western European hegemony since 1492'.[42] This crisis of the legitimacy of the global supremacy of Europe, meant that the focus on the spiritual bonds between Spain and the Latin American republics might have also been as much about defying and mitigating the influence of the United States as it was a search for moral regeneration. 'Tirso de Molina', reflects the importance of Spanish aestheticism and cultural patrimony as vehicles to not only define and justify Spain's place in the world following seismic geopolitical shift, as it sought to reestablish its sphere of influence in its former colonies, but also to formulate visions of progress around Spanish culture and the tangibility of memory. The presence of Tirso de Molina on the train draws lines of connection between the historic present and the national cultural past of the preceding centuries. This emphasises Clarín's appropriation of *regeneracionista* discourses: forging progress around cultural symbols that

[41] Miguel Somoza-Rodríguez, 'Education, elite formation, and geopolitics: Americanism and the regeneration of Spain', *Pedagógica histórica,* 47.5 (2011), pp. 619-638 (p. 620).
[42] Jo Labanyi and Luisa Elena Delgado with Helena Buffery, Kirsty Hooper, and Mari Jose Olaziregi, *Modern Literatures in Spain* (Cambridge: Polity, 2023), p. 144.

point towards a regeneration based upon the reignition of identity and ideas that are deemed able to construct a specifically Spanish national consciousness whilst also writing them into the modernising present.

Clarín, I suggest, imagines not an aesthetic revival but instead nuances this notion through a remembering of the cultural and aesthetic past in line with new forms of progress and 'modernity'. This reimagination of the past and its visible integration with the present closes the chasm between mass culture and the individual intellectual, as cultural patrimony is democratised through its coalescence with public transportation. Modernisation, according to Ramos, generated a discourse amongst intellectuals about the 'death of culture, or the crisis of spiritual values, or the marginality and vulnerability of the aesthetic in absolute opposition to the masses and the market'.[43] Clarín, however, expands the significance and reach of culture and aesthetics, since in 'Tirso de Molina' they are found and revived through transformative technology and utilitarian progress. Clarín, writing in *La Publicidad* the year following the publication of 'Tirso de Molina', emphasises the mutual dependency on the material and the moral, the pragmatic and the ideal:

> 'en España necesitamos estudios de carácter práctico, de aplicación a la vida material, pero no a costa de los estudios desinteresados y liberales que son base de los primeros, si han de ser éstos útiles de veras, y que todavía están aquí más abandonados que esos nuevos ideales que muchos creen suficientes'.[44]

Given the context of geopolitical transformation, Clarín's story points towards the nature of culture and reflects the Hispanic rapprochement based on the essentialization of cultural ties that would continue into the succeeding century. However, the text also suggests that if cultural inheritance and Spanish identity is to survive and be remembered in the present,

[43] Julio Ramos, *Divergent Modernities: Culture and Politics in 19th century Latin America,* p. 227.
[44] Yvan Lissourges, *Clarín político I: Leopoldo Alas (Clarín), periodista, frente a la problemática y social de la España de su tiempo (1875-1901). Estudio y antología* (Toulouse: Université de Toulouse, 1980), p. 359.

particularly a present that is facing a geopolitical crisis, it must adopt a new meaning and function based on dynamism, movement, and transformation.

Spiritual regeneration in 'Cambio de luz'

'Cambio de luz' was published five years earlier than 'Tirso de Molina' and displays an alternative vision of progress, depicting a spiritual regeneration of the protagonist and a rejection of aesthetics. Jorge Arial's intellectual work is based around the visual and tangible, since he is described as an artist who then turned to scientific vocations: 'Había empezado por enamorarse de la belleza que entra por los ojos, y esta vocación, que le hizo pintor en un principio, le obligó después a ser naturalista, químico, fisiólogo'.[45] Ariel's transition from painter to scientist establishes a connection between aesthetics and science in their endeavour to create objective and observable judgements of the world. Clarín, throughout his life, lamented the power of science to, firstly, control the narrative of Spain as backward and peripheral to European modernity, and secondly, to disparage the spiritual ontology of Spain. This is expressed in *Solos de Clarín,* in which Clarín illustrates the hegemony and prestige of science, which defines the parameters of progress and instils a fear of being 'left behind':

> Esta juventud que hoy crece en España, ávida de ejercicio intelectual, casi avergonzada de nuestro retraso científico, busca, con más anhelo que discernimiento, las nuevas teorías, la última palabra de la ciencia, temerosa, más que del error, de quedarse atrás, de no recibir en sus pasmados ojos los más recientes destellos del pensamiento europeo.[46]

As Arial relies on the visual in order to make his living, his spiritual faith and understanding of the metaphysical begins to wane: 'la índole de sus investigaciones de naturalista y fisiólogo y crítico de artes plásticas le habían llevado a una predisposición reflexiva que pugnaba con los

[45] 'Cambio de luz', p. 447.
[46] Leopoldo Alas "Clarín", *Solos de Clarin*, 2nd edn (Madrid: Alfredo de Carlos Hierro, 1891), pp. 90-91.

anhelos más íntimos de su sensibilidad de creyente'.[47] His experience of the metaphysical and spiritual is directly hindered by his affiliation to the aesthetic as there is a conflict established between the exterior and objective world of aesthetics and the interior world of spirituality. If Arial's search for the spiritual is disturbed by the presence of aesthetics in his intellectual life, then the suggestion here is that aesthetics is configured in this narrative as a barrier to a moral and spiritual regeneration.

Arial's blindness occurs over the course of one night, on the eve of which he experiences a sudden burst of inspiration and spends the evening writing. After feeling restricted by the expectation on him to write about the '*verdad plástica*'[48] he suddenly renounces this in favour of exploring his spiritual and religious faith. In the passage below, the night of frenzy is described:

> Una noche, la pasión del trabajo, la exaltación de la fantasía creadora pudo en él más que la prudencia, y a hurtadillas de su mujer y de sus hijos escribió y escribió horas y horas a la luz de un quinqué. Era el asunto de invención poética, pero de fondo religioso, metafísico; el cerebro vibraba con impulso increíble; la máquina, a todo vapor, movía las cien mil ruedas y correas de aquella fábrica misteriosa, y ya no era empresa fácil apagar los hornos, contener el vértigo de las ideas.[49]

The language of machinery and manufacturing is used here in terms of spirituality and the metaphysical, replacing material production with spiritual and religious thought. Clarín inverts notions of blindness and enlightenment, since it is at the point of spiritual illumination that Ariel loses his vision:

> Miró hacia la ventana. Por las rendijas no entraba luz. Dio un salto, saliendo del lecho, abrió un postigo y... el sol había abandonado a la aurora, no la seguía; el alba era

[47] 'Cambio de luz', p. 448.
[48] 'Cambio de luz', p. 447. [Original italics].
[49] 'Cambio de luz', p. 453.

> noche. Ni sol ni estrellas. El reloj repitió la hora. El sol *debía* estar sobre el horizonte y no estaba. El cielo se había caído al abismo. "¡Estoy ciego!"[50]

He gains vision and clairvoyance in a metaphysical sense but loses his physical sight; metaphysical blindness is thus attributed to the aesthetic or visible world, which is presented as lacking in enlightenment or profundity. In other words, Arial's blindness, his exit from the visual world, is a symbol of his authentic, spiritual regeneration.

For Rodó, as previously discussed, aesthetics would be the key to overcoming the expanding hegemony of utilitarianism and regenerating Latin America through 'a reformulation of aesthetic principles'.[51] Rodó's idea of authentic progress and a means to bolster the defence against superficial mass culture, therefore, rests on an aesthetic regeneration, one that would regenerate the continent through an appreciation and mediation of art and culture in a direct contrast to utilitarian values. Authentic existence would be achieved not through repetitive labour, but leisure, beauty and art. The regenerationist thought of Rodó deployed Schiller's theorisation of the use of aesthetics in ideas of social and moral progress, as Coletta affirms: 'Schiller's notion of the "aesthetic state" was appropriated by Rodó to formulate a guiding theory for Latin America. As a political project, Schiller's theory of aesthetics would constitute a founding principle of *arielismo'*.[52] If Schiller, and later Rodó, proclaimed that aesthetics would operate as a regenerative force and moral code, then art and beauty would be converted into a political project that would regenerate society to privilege the development of the individual and moral freedom.

Although 'Cambio de luz' can be read as a recuperation of spirituality and a rejection of utilitarianism and positivism, I also suggest that this story questions the ability of present Spanish aesthetic and intellectual life to perform an authentic moral regeneration, since it is

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[50] 'Cambio de luz', p. 453.
[51] Michela Coletta, *Decadent Modernity: Civilization and Latinidad in Spanish America 1880-1920,* p. 142.
[52] Michela Coletta, *Decadent Modernity: Civilization and Latinidad in Spanish America 1880-1920,* p. 127.

the exploration of spirituality and metaphysics that equips Arial to realise his self-regeneration. Arial pursues investigation into the metaphysical and the spiritual and his regenerated spirit is earned not through aesthetics and visual beauty, but inner spirituality. Following his blindness, his works are described as focussing less on the visual and more on the profound and the spiritual: 'Los trabajos iban teniendo menos color y más alma'; 'Pero las obras del insigne crítico de estética pictórica, de historia artística fueron tomando otro rumbo: se referían a asuntos en que intervenían poco los testimonios de la vista'.[53]

The development of Ariel's individual spiritual faculties is deemed incompatible with his artistic pursuits as this work is centred around the external: art as a public good is displayed externally. This work is oriented externally as he is providing output, he is fulfilling a role that has been imposed on him by others, one that he describes as 'la vida que se le imponía'.[54] This development of aesthetics in an external sense only serves to perpetuate dogmatic philosophy and not the moral freedom proposed by Schiller and Rodó. This is evidenced in the following lines from the story:

> aquel enamoramiento de la belleza plástica, aparente, visible y palpable, le había llevado, sin sentirlo, a cierto materialismo intelectual, contra el que tenía que vivir prevenido. Su corazón necesitaba fe, y la clase de filosofía y de ciencia que había profundizado le llevaban al dogma materialista de *ver y creer*.[55]

The appropriation of aesthetics in 'Cambio de luz' reveals it to be another tool for the perpetuation of a dogmatism that might equally be attached to positivism and utilitarianism. The 'ver y creer' philosophy is based on a direct correlation between visibility and credibility; for Arial, the reliance on the visible world to construct a belief system founded on morality, freedom, and the spiritual depth of the individual, is impossible. This form of aesthetic regeneration, which for Rodó signifies a means to renounce the utilitarianism of North America

[53] 'Cambio de luz', p. 455.
[54] 'Cambio de luz', p. 448.
[55] 'Cambio de luz', p. 448.

that threatens to debase humankind to cogs in the labour market, risks a fixation on visual art and positivist science and philosophy that maintains an intellectual materialism as opposed to the moral and spiritual.

In Clarín's prologue to Rodó's seminal text, to which I have previously referred, he argues against importing identity, and instead locating it within heredity, using cultural patrimony as a means to regenerate. 'Tirso de Molina' might be read as a cultural artefact of this idea, as the protagonists return not to the past, but the future. The means by which a harmonious synthesis between regeneration and heredity is achieved by the writers and thinkers of the past returning to the future, as opposed to the future returning to the past in a linear process of recuperation or restoration. Cultural patrimony becomes part of a tangible social reality that integrates with mechanisation and scientific progress. As Carlos Martínez Durán states in relation to Rodó, the concepts of immortality or temporal durability become more salient when combined with both futurity and heredity: 'hay conciencia de la inmortalidad mientras más se mire al porvenir y más fecunda sea la herencia'.[56] Immortality in 'Tirso de Molina' is configured not as a reincarnation of the dead but a reimagination of the past, whereby cultural inheritance remains present through, and might even be sustained by, symbols of modernity and utilitarianism. Progress is considered here not as a singular, linear temporal movement, which involves either the recuperation of the past in the present, or the inexorable movement towards an unknowable future, but is configured as a perennial reimagination of heredity and futurity.

'Cambio de luz', however, disparages the association between aesthetics and science and the dogmatism of Spanish intellectual life, and explores a vision of progress through a spiritual regeneration instead of an aesthetic revival. As Arial becomes more ensconced in his exploration of the metaphysical, and the loss of his sight meaning his intellectual life can no longer centre around aestheticism and the visual, he becomes more enlightened by his inner spirituality. This power grows to be able to manage and even eliminate the 'diablo científico'

[56] Carlos Martínez Durán, *José Enrique Rodó en el espíritu de su tiempo y en la conciencia de América* (Caracas: Ediciones del Rectorado, Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1974), p. 132.

in his mind that worked to break his human spirit and religious belief. In this narrative, regeneration is not something you can touch and see as aesthetic regeneration might suggest, but a phenomenon that derives from a moral and spiritual reading of the metaphysical world and the inner self. This is where 'Tirso de Molina' offers a more nuanced version of progress than 'Cambio de luz', displaying a Spain that has been able to escape from intellectual dogmatism to be able to celebrate aesthetics in order to generate spiritual and historical consciousness. The tensions in these texts reveal regeneration and progress as unable to be realised through linear and simplified ideas of recuperation. Reading these stories as displaying Clarín's own evolving ruminations on progress that highlight a problematised vision of dogmatic intellectualism stunting authentic progress, allows for the consideration of origin and utopia in Clarín's work as additional sites of disruption.

The origin story and mythology in 'Cuento futuro', 'El pecado original', and 'El centauro'

'La humanidad de la tierra; se había cansado de dar vueltas mil y mil veces alrededor de las mismas ideas, de las mismas costumbres, de los mismos dolores y de los mismos placeres'.[57] This is how 'Cuento futuro' begins; seemingly having reached the end of progress, humanity finds itself condemned to an eternal present, whereby time continues to repeat itself as the notion of the 'new' ebbs away in a world of over-civilization and automation. In order to escape this interminable cycle, humanity is effaced and the genesis story recommences, but with a twist. In each of the narratives explored in this section, the return to origin is revealed as a destructive project that fails in its objectives. Instead, returning to origin in these narratives is a fragmentary, divisive, and ultimately destructive process. Thus 'the regenerative force of a

[57] 'Cuento futuro', I, pp. 488-509 (p. 488).

ritual return to origins' which is 'vitally necessary for collective consciousness',[58] is stripped both of its ability to regenerate society and its role as a central unifying point of shared understandings of progress.

Paradise lost in 'Cuento futuro' and 'El pecado original'

Adambis is the protagonist of 'Cuento futuro' and the scientist who invents a means for humanity to commit collective suicide in order to terminate current human civilization and restart or regenerate humanity. Adambis and his wife, Evelina Apple, who become immortal, remain the only two people on Earth. They return to the Garden of Eden in an attempt to rewrite the genesis story. However, Evelina exiles herself from Eden and Adambis, plagued by his own interminable boredom, tries and fails to commit suicide. The story is a highly experimental consideration of the self-destructive nature of humankind and a rumination on unchecked progress. Molina Porras explains that this is a text that delves into the ethics of progress, ultimately depicting a future world in which progress has become unsustainable; he states that, 'lo que busca es provocar una reflexión ética sobre el sentido de la vida del hombre en la Tierra'.[59]

Lawless, in her work on early examples of Spanish science fiction, illuminates how experimenting with science-fiction examines 'in a way sometimes thought exclusive to the twentieth century, with its world wars and weapons of mass destruction– the causal association between the advancement of the human race towards a better future and the creations of science and technology'.[60] Even the twenty-first century, with its digital and Artificial Intelligence revolutions, has its complex questions reflected in nineteenth-century fictions, albeit without the explicit mention, in the case of Clarín, of computers and other digital

[58] Jurgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, Twelve Lectures,* trans. by Frederick Lawrence (Oxford: Polity, 1998), p. 56.
[59] Juan Molina Porras, *Cuentos fantásticos en la España del Realismo,* p. 37.
[60] Geraldine Lawless, 'Unknown Futures: Nineteenth-Century Science Fiction in Spain', *Science-fiction studies,* 38.2 (2011), pp. 253-269 (p. 262).

technologies. As Bauman explains, ideas of progress have and continue to be placed in the realm of expanding human experience: 'the first thing to leap to mind whenever 'progress' is mentioned is, for many of us, the prospect of more jobs for humans'.[61] Yet in 'Cuento futuro' the human condition, that of being able to remember the past and conceptualise the future, shrinks as humankind is reduced to a prey-like state, existing only in the present, unable to conceive of a means to escape it and create a progressive future. Science, instead of enriching humanity, constricts it, and, instead of upending oppressive power structures, strengthens them.

Clarín wrote another story whose protagonist was a scientist. It is lesser known than 'Cuento futuro', but echoes many of the ideas that appeared, in more developed form, in the latter. This story is 'El Pecado Original', and, curiously, it was published after 'Cuento futuro', in 1894. In only a few pages it describes how a scientist tries to avoid the death penalty by drawing public attention to his recent invention that will ensure immortality for one individual. The scientist claims that a painful operation performed on one person will extract a substance that will render another person immortal. After a vote, the scientist is executed and his immortality invention rejected, owing to humanity's original sin, selfishness: '[...] un bien tan grande, tan impensado, tan incalculable como la inmortalidad nadie lo quiere para otro, nadie quiere sacrificarse, sufrir esa terrible operación, gastar su hacienda... para conseguir el tormento de morir sabiendo que pudo ser inmortal'.[62] Although I discuss 'Cuento futuro' in more detail, I argue that both narratives problematise the function of origin in the conception of regeneration and progress. As the scientists in both stories try to claim that they are the 'new Adam', asserting that a return to the origin of humanity will solve the problems of the present, they are presented as flawed individuals. Invoking an imagined past to create a future is revealed as more complex and problematic than a linear reinstatement of 'origins', utopia, or Arcadia.

[61] Zygmunt Bauman, *Retrotopia* (Malden: Polity, 2017), p. 58.
[62] 'El pecado original', II, pp. 259-264 (p. 262).

By reading ‘El pecado original’ and ‘Cuento futuro’ as symbiotic texts, the dynamic relationship between science and society becomes apparent, as Clarín places the scientist at the centre of the narrative. Nevertheless, the scientists’ relationship to the rest of society is tense. In ‘El pecado original’, the scientist is cast as a marginal figure who eventually ends up being neutralised. His quest to make humankind immortal through his physiological innovation is framed as rediscovering what was lost with the Fall: ‘—¡Pues nada, hijo; he descubierto la inmortalidad del hombre! Pero no la inmortalidad del alma, no; la del cuerpo y el alma juntos; vamos, que he encontrado lo que perdió Adán’.[63] This makes the first immortal human the New Adam: ‘¿Quién iba á ser el único inmortal entre los vivos, el Nuevo Adán, fundador de la raza de los inmortales?’.[64] The scientist’s death, following a public vote, signals a destruction of immortality by a democratic process. In ‘Cuento futuro’, the democratic system fails to protect humanity from destruction. Coinciding with the collapse of democracy as a bulwark against society’s auto-destruction, the figure of the scientist transcends marginality to become the New Adam: the scientist becomes the omnipotent character that failed to come to fruition in ‘El pecado original’.

The scientist's powers are described in the following lines:

> él, Adambis, dictador del exterminio, gracias al gran plebiscito que le había hecho verdugo del mundo, tirano de la agonía, iba a destruir a todos los hombres, a hacerlos reventar en un solo segundo, sin más que colocar un dedo sobre un botón.[65]

The growth of the power held by the scientist reflects anxieties as to how far humanity will be shaped, and perhaps ultimately destroyed, by scientific endeavour. Adambis, unlike his counterpart in ‘El pecado original’, plays the role of attempting to save humanity, not merely advance it; Lawless argues that the society depicted in ‘Cuento futuro’ is one ‘where science

[63] ‘El pecado original’, p. 260.
[64] ‘El pecado original’, p. 261.
[65] ‘Cuento futuro’, p. 493.

and technology create both the desire and the means for humanity's self-destruction'.[66] Adambis' positioning as the savior of humanity by the rest of society, reveals a troubling intersection between science, ideology and power, with collective suicide exposing the failure to galvanise effective resistance to tyranny. In both stories, the bid to regenerate humanity by returning to its origin story fails, despite the intervention of science. The suggestion here is that, particularly in 'Cuento futuro', science is framed not as a force for progress, but a force of flawed ambition and a source of anti-utopian thought. Reason and rationality are drowned by individual ambition, becoming what Kumar, in his theorisation of the anti-utopia, calls 'the victory or tyranny of the *idea'.*[67] As the ideal is taken over by the idea, humanity's return to an imagined past in an act of supposed progress and regeneration is not only a tale of a far-off future, but an incisive approach to the role that origin played in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century thought about regeneration.

In 'El pecado original', the scientist presents his invention of immortality as one that reflects humanity's natural or innate process of continual self-renewal. If humanity did not accept the idea that they could establish a new immortal 'race', recovering what was lost at the Fall, then it would also constitute a rejection of the principles of continual renewal. In this oration, he cites the philosopher Jean-Marie Guyau, establishing the key to invention as reinvention:

> La idea se le había ocurrido a don Atanasio por la sugestión de ciertas teorías del malogrado filósofo Guyau, que, medio en serio, medio en broma, había hablado de la posibilidad de llegar a tal progreso, que hubiera medios de mantener el equilibrio de los elementos vitales en el organismo en constante renovación.[68]

To renew means that something is old or obsolete, to regenerate means that something that had been generated has since been lost or deactivated. The scenario presented in 'El pecado original' points towards the idea that regeneration is a condition of modernity, a component of

[66] Geraldine Lawless, 'Unknown Futures: Nineteenth-Century Science Fiction in Spain', *Science fiction studies,* 38.2 (2011), pp. 253-269 (p. 262).
[67] Krishan Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times,* p. 125.
[68] 'El pecado original', p. 261.

the zeitgeist of change and advancement presented as perpetual renewal and a perennial movement into the future. Jürgen Habermas observes this in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity:* 'a present that understands itself from the horizon of the modern age as the actuality of the most recent period has to recapitulate the break brought about with the past as a *continuous renewal*'.[69]

However, the principle of continuous renewal dissipates in a society trapped in temporal stasis. The democratic system in 'El pecado original' is, as in 'Cuento futuro', one that (re)condemns humanity to its original sin. In the former, the refusal to sacrifice the masses to preserve the individual is the reason for the vote against the scientist's invention: 'dieron garrote al inventor de la inmortalidad. Y los hombres siguieron siendo mortales por la misma causa que la otra vez: por el pecado original'.[70] In the latter, the opposite is true as humanity, unknowingly, votes to sacrifice the entire population and grant immortality to two people. In both narratives, humanity votes to condemn itself and the original sin cannot be banished by invoking democracy; in a stroke of irony, humankind has invented its own means to destroy itself.

In 'El pecado original', progress is rendered impossible as the society presented in the narrative does not exist within a state of continual renewal, but temporal stasis. The temporal stasis experienced in 'El pecado original' derives from an aversion to the capabilities of science and innovation; whereas, in 'Cuento futuro', stasis is brought about by the exhaustion of the power of science, as knowledge becomes abstract and innovation unattainable. Both suggest that the course of humanity is ultimately powerless to deviate from its original sin, and that origin, the lost Paradise that vanished with the Fall, will never be recovered by humanity. Here Clarín reveals anxieties about not only the power of regeneration to enact true progress that will lead to continual renewal instead of temporal stasis, but also anxieties around the reliance on the rhetoric of origin to justify tyranny or define 'progress'.

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[69] Jurgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, Twelve Lectures,* trans. by Frederick Lawrence (Oxford: Polity, 1998), p. 15. [Original italics].
[70] 'El pecado original', p. 263.

Reading ‘El pecado original’ in this way prepares the ground for the consideration of ‘Cuento futuro’ as a narrative that exemplifies a lack of belief in continual progress, as in this fictional world the prospect of infinite regeneration has become impossible. Clarín illustrates, in the lines that follow, how a future world experiences perpetual repetition, whereby historical processes are constantly recurring. The continuity of history is based not on a constant regeneration of ideas, but a process that subdues all hopes for genuine progress as historical cyclicity means that renewal is neither regeneration nor progress, but a regurgitation and repetition which blocks ‘progress’ beyond a determined point:

> La ignorancia de tales épocas hacía creer a los pensadores que los adelantos que podían notar en la vida humana, refiriéndose a los ciclos históricos a que su escasa ciencia les permitía remontarse, eran buena prueba de que el progreso era constante. Hoy nuestro conocimiento de la historia del planeta no nos consiente formarnos semejantes ilusiones [...] hoy sabemos que el hombre vuelve siempre a las andadas, que nuestra descendencia está condenada a ser salvaje, y sus descendientes remotos a ser, como nosotros, hombres aburridos de puro civilizados. Este es el volteo insoportable, aquí está la broma pesada, lo que nos iguala al mísero histrión del circo ecuestre…[71]

The implosion of a belief in perpetual progress and the suspension of humanity in temporal and historical stasis, is imagined through a universal lens. The planetary system is depicted as condemning humanity to this ‘volteo insoportable’, acting as a repressive force and one that keeps humanity in a constant loop of periodization. Since history becomes a predictable process of progress followed by decline, the concepts of past and future are destroyed as what is past will eventually become future, and vice versa. The past, therefore, does not serve to inform the present, but is a reminder of how genuine progress cannot be achieved. In the

[71] ‘Cuento futuro’, p. 491.

universal utopia of José Vasconcelos's *La raza Cósmica*, the past is a projective force that is meaningfully connected to the present, as Andrew Ginger elucidates:

> time proceeds through a series of ages, one after the other [...] each led by a given 'race' until the Cosmic Race arises in the Universopolis. That progression, however, calls for the invocation of and connection to 'usable pasts', and indeed usable presents.[72]

Although race is not a concept I will discuss in this chapter, the treatment of temporality, utopia, and the universal are relevant to reading 'Cuento futuro'. The proposed separation of Earth from its position in the cosmos, as subservient to the Sun, is framed as the solution to humanity's boredom in the face of the impossibility of progress: 'La ciencia discutió en Academias, Congresos y *sección de variedades* en los periódicos: 1.º, si la vida sería posible separando la Tierra del Sol y dejándola correr libre por el vacío hasta engancharse con otro sistema'.[73] Deeming the past 'unusable' for genuine progress and the future undead, the temporal cycle on Earth is to be severed by Adambis' proposal to 'romper las cadenas que la sujetan a este sistema planetario, miserable y mezquino para los vuelos de la ambición del hombre'.[74] The nature of human progress has led to an alienation from the planetary system, and the means to liberate humankind to allow it to fulfil its ambitions is to cut ties with the Sun.

Clarín envisions the trajectory of human progress as leading to repression and alienation; in 'Cuento futuro' the scientists believe this repression derives from the planetary system of which the Earth forms part, the 'gran cocina económica' that demands material progress within the capitalist system. Hannah Arendt, in her theorisation of world alienation, highlights how capitalism exerts that 'an enormous, strictly mundane activity is possible without any care for

[72] Andrew Ginger, 'Universopolis: The Universal in a Place and Time', in *Utopias in Latin America Past and Present,* ed. by Juan Pro (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2018), pp. 215-234 (p. 215).
[73] 'Cuento futuro', p. 489. [Original italics].
[74] 'Cuento futuro' p. 490.

or enjoyment of the world'. Capitalist economic activity creates a society 'whose deepest motivation, on the contrary, is worry and care about the self. World alienation, and not self-alienation as Marx thought, has been the hallmark of the modern age'.[75] The alienation from the planetary system deemed to repress humanity under the yoke of capitalism suggests that, despite the difference in historical context between Clarín and Arendt's writing, Clarín predicts that society will tire of, and become subservient to, capitalist and materialist progress. The outcome in 'Cuento futuro', however, is not a true liberation from planetary or cosmic alienation, but the ultimate act of self-alienation as humanity votes to enact mass suicide. Clarín's story is one where humanity is forced to look inwards to realise that alienation, from the self, the world or outer space, derives from its own insistence on material progress and its inability to liberate itself from nefarious forces.

How the society in 'Cuento futuro' copes with notions of change and progress also brings to light an important aspect of regeneration. In Rodó's *Ariel*, the nature of regeneration is described as a continual striving to reach an *ideal*:

> La humanidad, renovando de generación en generación su activa esperanza y su ansiosa fe en un ideal, al través de la dura experiencia de los siglos, hacía pensar a Guyau en la obsesión de aquella pobre enajenada cuya extraña y conmovedora locura consistía en creer llegado, constantemente, el día de sus bodas. [...] Con una dulce sonrisa, disponíase luego a recibir al prometido ilusorio, hasta que las sombras de la tarde, tras el vano esperar, traían la decepción a su alma [...] Pero su ingenua confianza reaparecía con la aurora siguiente; y ya sin el recuerdo del desencanto pasado, murmurando: *Es hoy cuando vendrá.*[76]

Rodó expresses the concept of regeneration as a spirit, a feeling that tomorrow the ideal might be achieved, or that a new future might arrive. There follows an explanation of how

[75] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd edn (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2018), p. 96.
[76] José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel* (Montevideo: Colombino, 1947) pp. 47-48.

regeneration functions: it is the continual belief that the ideal will be achieved in the future. A cornerstone of *arielista* thought is that this belief is usually possessed and acted on by youth:

> Es así como, no bien la eficacia de un ideal ha muerto, la humanidad viste otra vez sus galas nupciales para esperar la realidad del ideal soñado con nueva fe, con tenaz y conmovedora locura. Provocar esa renovación, inalterable como un ritmo de la Naturaleza, es en todos los tiempos la función y la obra de la juventud.[77]

Clarín's 'Cuento futuro' can therefore be read as a text that is deeply connected to the spirit of regeneration: if humanity loses the ability to renew or revive itself, then it will lose all sense of faith that the future will improve on the present. If, as in 'Cuento futuro', humanity is condemned, through its perception that it has reached the limits of progress, to self-destruct and return to distant 'origins', it will never succeed in authentically 'regenerating' itself. The idea of progress here is depicted as fundamentally flawed; in 'Cuento futuro' humanity is unable to exist once faith in future progress is gone.

The renewal of humanity appears in 'Cuento futuro' as the return to biblical Paradise, the possibility of rebirth and regeneration derives from reinstalling a collective utopia. Adambis, having realised that the mass destruction he now witnesses originated from his desire for power and immortality, vows to his wife, at her request, that he will seek out Paradise to reset the human race: '-Ea, Evelina, voy a darte gusto. Voy a buscar eso que pides: una región no habitada que produce espontáneos frutos y frutas de lo más delicado'.[78] His optimism in returning to the Genesis story and regenerating humanity for the better, becoming the founder of a new immortal human race liberated from its original sin, is reflected by his belief in his pioneering spirit. The cynical, or at least satirical, tone of this part of the story becomes apparent in Adambis' blind faith in Paradise that has replaced his blind faith in science:

[77] José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel* (Montevideo: Colombino, 1947) p. 48.
[78] 'Cuento futuro', p. 500.

> Lo que es indudable, si la Biblia dice bien, es que allí no ha vuelto a poner su planta ser humano. Esos mismos sabios que han discutido dónde estaba el Paraíso no han tenido la ocurrencia de precisar el lugar, de ir allá, buscarlo, como yo voy a hacer.[79]

In the process of imagining a return to Paradise, Adambis asks an important question: 'dado que el Paraíso exista y que yo dé con él, ¿será lo que fue?'.[80] Would Paradise actually perform the restorative function that he expected? Would Paradise indeed be an arcadia of hope? In asking these questions, Adambis' return to the origin of humankind is not the linear process he had aspired to, instead it becomes symbolic of a regeneration process that establishes itself on a return to origin, a reinstatement of an imagined past, and a reenactment of foundational mythology. The merging of beginnings and endings, represented by genesis following mass suicide, creation following destruction, suggests that Adambis has (re)produced the very conditions for repetition that had caused the self-imposed apocalypse of humanity. Enslaving humanity in a doctrine of warped progress contributes to humanity's end in 'Cuento futuro'. The revisiting of origins, however, proves equally damaging. Returning to Eden does not bring about utopia, and it does not alter the outcome of Adambis' actions or the course of human destiny, instead it only serves to distort humankind's collective belonging to an imagined past.

Foundational mythology in 'El centauro'

Imagined pasts will now be examined through the use of antiquity and classicism; the notion of classicism and particularly the use of Ancient Greek civilization as a foundational ideal for humanity grew in popularity and importance during the late nineteenth century. In the throes of transformative modernity, the need to anchor a disorienting present to an immutable past became a means by which to understand the present. Paul Bishop argues that the growth of classicism correlates with establishing the 'modern' present in a temporal and historical context, as a descendent of Greek civilization: 'historiography, like science and the modern

[79] 'Cuento futuro', p. 501.
[80] 'Cuento futuro', p. 501.

faith in reason, functions as myth; it reassures us about our honored place in history as the heirs of the Greeks, and confirms that existence is meaningful'.[81] Historicizing the present became a necessity of the condition of being modern, as upheavals in historical time would require mythification to add coherence, form, and continuity to the new temporality of modernity, as Dirk t. D. Held delineates: 'Europe's need for a revised foundation-myth became imperative when it began to be reshaped by the forces of modernity'.[82] The function of historical myth, and the use of Greek civilization as a foundational, or 'original', point from which the present descends, is such that it gives modernity a temporal and historical continuum to which to belong.

Terry Eagleton affirms that myth, or indeed an imagined or mythified pasts reestablishes the significance of humankind, in a universal continuum, as part of a cosmic totality. Eagleton's explanation is as follows:

> myth would then figure as a return of the Romantic symbol, a reinvention of the Hegelian 'concrete universal' in which every phenomenon is secretly inscribed by a universal law, and any time, place or identity pregnant with the burden of the cosmic whole. If this can be achieved, then a history in crisis might once more be rendered stable and significant.[83]

Rodó envisioned the regeneration of Latin America through the model of Ancient Greek civilization. The idea that spiritual and cultural renewal, according to Rodó and his contemporaries, would be found in Greek antiquity, will be explored further in relation to Clarín's 'El centauro'. The Greek ideal would be a bulwark against positivism and utilitarianism, as Camilla Fojas explains: '[Rodó] warns against the blind demands of labor in the relentless course of modernity and offers a different path to being modern. The answer to the disjunctions

[81] Neville Morley, '"Unhistorical Greeks": Myth, History and the Uses of Antiquity', in *Nietzsche and Antiquity* ed. by Paul Bishop (Rochester, N.Y; Woodbridge: Camden House, 2004), pp. 27-39 (p. 35).
[82] Dirk t. D. Held, 'Conflict and Repose: Dialectics of the Greek Ideal in Nietzsche and Winckelmann', in *Nietzsche and Antiquity,* ed. by Paul Bishop (Rochester, N.Y; Woodbridge: Camden House, 2004), pp. 411-424 (p. 411).
[83] Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), p. 319.

and disembodying forces of modernization is found in revisiting the Greek polis'.[84] Greek antiquity was envisioned as a spirit that can be reincarnated in the present; if society was to regenerate it would be through a recuperation of origins and more specifically, a recuperation of antiquity, as Luciana Mellado confirms: 'En el caso de *Ariel*, Grecia– y particularmente Atenas– representa, junto con el primer cristianismo, ese pasado idealizado que debe recuperarse, actualizarse'.[85]

In *Ariel*, Rodó associates Greece with youth, the Greek ideal appears in the essay as perpetual youth and an immunity to ageing. The following lines are taken from *Ariel*:

> Cuando Grecia nació, los dioses le regalaron el secreto de su juventud inextinguible. Grecia es el alma joven. «Aquel que en Delfos contempla la apiñada muchedumbre de los jonios -dice uno de los himnos homéricos- se imagina que ellos no han de envejecer jamás». Grecia hizo grandes cosas porque tuvo, de la juventud, la alegría, que es el ambiente de la acción, y el entusiasmo, que es la palanca omnipotente.[86]

The direct relationship, in *Ariel,* between antiquity and youth presents an interesting temporal dimension of regenerationist thought. If the ancient or distant past signifies perpetual youth, then the past and future combine, so that what is associated with past tradition, inheritance, or origin becomes associated with progressive movement, futurity, and optimism. Ancient Greece becomes a utopia, a potential future waiting to be (re)awoken. Carlos Martínez Durán, in his book *José Enrique Rodó en el espíritu de su tiempo y en la conciencia de América* highlights that Rodó's recourse to Greek antiquity and eternal youth is evocative of knowing how to age: 'Cada una de las metáforas e imágenes con las que Rodó evoca la juventud de Grecia pasan rozando la frente helena y rozan la nuestra para devolverle serenidad y alegría.

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[84] Camilla Fojas, 'Literary Cosmotopia and Nationalism in *Ariel*', *Comparative Literature and Culture,* 6.4 (2005), (p. 6) DOI:10.7771/1481-4374.1249.
[85] Luciana Mellado, 'El modernismo y el positivismo en el Ariel de José Rodó', *Alpha,* 22.22 (2006), pp. 75-88 (p. 80).
[86] José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel* (Montevideo: Colombino, 1947) p. 49.

No envejecer: elixir inmortal. Saber envejecer: sabiduría antigua renovada'.[87] The 'saber envejecer' being attributed to a renewal of an ancient past suggests that the process of ageing, and antiquity, are not attributed qualities of decay or degradation, but of renewal.

Origins and the past are therefore not understood as fixed concepts, they are rejuvenated whilst still representing an organic or authentic truth. However, what will be explored in Clarín's 'El centauro' is the problematic renewal of antiquity as a means to reincorporate myth into historical reality. Greek antiquity as intertwined with utopia and regeneration in Rodó's essay raises the issue of deploying myth and imagined pasts to underpin ideas of progress in times of transformation. Juan Manuel Sánchez Meroño summarises the use of the foundational myth of ancient civilization to define human experience and delineate human futures in the following lines:

> Al igual que los dogmas religiosos orientan su función a la necesidad del hombre de dilatar su certidumbre en un movimiento centrífugo desde su existencia hacia sus márgenes incógnitos: el principio y el fin de la humanidad, actúan los textos que pretenden fundar la identidad de una civilización reconstruyendo su espacio mítico.[88]

Clarín's 'El centauro' is a satirical tale that, whilst humorous and stylistically simple, elucidates the complex relationship between regeneration and antiquity. The story centres around Violeta, whose dreams of the future rest on a creature from Greek mythology, the centaur. The story is narrated from the outside perspective of a friend in whom she has confided about her dream. She longs for an existence that embodies classicism and sees the figure of the centaur as a vehicle for pursuing a life removed from her current reality. She is introduced as the daughter of a Catalan industrialist who 'se educó, si aquello fue educarse, hasta los quince

[87] Carlos Martínez Durán, *José Enrique Rodó en el espíritu de su tiempo y en la conciencia de América,* p. 97.
[88] Juan Manuel Sánchez Meroño, 'El esclavo cósmico: la epifanía americana y la libertad', *Cartaphilus,* 1 (2007), pp.104-109 (p. 105).

años, como el diablo quiso'.[89] From Violeta's utilitarian education stems a fascination with classical civilization: 'A fuerza de creerse pagana y leer libros de esta clase de caballerías, llegó Violeta a sentir, y, sobre todo, a imaginar con cierta sinceridad y fuerza, su manía seudoclásica'.[90] She begins to embody the classical, her physical appearance mapping, in a somewhat satirical fashion, onto the hellenic: 'Violeta parecía una pintura mural clásica, recogida en alguna excavación de las que nos descubrieron la elegancia antigua. En el Manual de arqueología de Guhl y Koner, por ejemplo, podréis ver grabados que parecen retratos de Violeta componiendo su tocado'.[91] Likening of Violeta to a classical mural painting characterises her as a rather anachronous figure, removed from the society that she exists in, a relic from another age that does not actively participate in the present.

By so closely aligning herself with the classical world, Violeta becomes distanced from the historical present. This principle is reflected by Belén Castro Morales in relation to *Ariel,* as the distancing from mass culture perpetuated by Rodó risks being seen as a uchronic or anachronous entity: 'El desagrado que provoca ese "rebaño humano" no sólo nos habla de la condición utópica de Ariel, sino que también explica sus "ucronías" y las dificultades de adaptación de su mensaje ideal al tiempo histórico americano'.[92] The construction of the ancient past both perpetuates the mythification of this past as well as creating an irreparable fissure between the ideal of aesthetic regeneration and the historical context in which it is enacted. Violeta's hopes that are encapsulated by the centaur can be considered as a form of escape, with repeated references to using the centaur as a means to travel beyond her immediate environment:

> ¡Cuántos viajes de novios hizo así mi fantasía! ¡La de tierras desconocidas que yo crucé, tendida sobre la espalda de mi Centauro volador!... ¡Qué delicia respirar el aire

[89] 'El centauro', I, pp. 457-461 (p. 457).
[90] 'El centauro', p. 457.
[91] 'El centauro', p. 457.
[92] Belén Castro Morales, 'Utopía y naufragio del intelectual arielista: representaciones espaciales en José Enrique Rodó', in *José Enrique Rodó y su tiempo: cien años de Ariel*, ed. by Ottmar Ette and Titus Heydenreich (Madrid: Iberoamericana Editorial Vervuert, 2000), pp. 96-105 (p. 99).

> que corta la piel en el vertiginoso escape!... ¡Qué delicia amar entre el torbellino de las cosas que pasan y se desvanecen mientras la caricia dura!... El mundo escapa, desaparece, y el beso queda, persiste...[93]

Mythology is not seen as a means to explore Violeta's place in the world which she inhabits, but a means to escape and disregard it.

If mythified pasts provide alternative temporal existences to the present, then looking to the ancient worlds imagined as perfect utopias may not help tackle the problems of the present. As well as a means of escape, the centaur is also described in heroic terms: 'Soñaba con carreras locas por breñales y precipicios, saltando colinas y rompiendo vallas, tendida, como las amazonas de circo, sobre la reluciente espalda de mis héroes fogosos, fuertes y sin conciencia, como yo los quería [...]'.[94] The centaur, a symbol of Greek mythology, is a hero who represents the positioning of myth as a panacea. Depicting Violeta as a figure who has been seduced, and then saved, by an obsession with the ancient world allows her to be read as an allegory for a society that has been formed by utilitarian principles and will then be rescued by a return to classical utopia. The suggestion here is that Clarín problematizes what he would have seen as a significant aspect of regenerationist thought. By depicting the 'rescuing' of society through an escape to fantasy and myth, Clarín poses the question of whether idealising ancient Greek civilization to the extent that Rodó does, creates a chasm between society and the proposed means to regenerate it. Clarín also meditates on whether this ends up having the desired effect, or whether the 'rescuing' of society perpetuates a linear narratives and false binaries of disease and cure, corruption and purity, history and utopia.

The use of antiquity as a tangible force in the creation of historical identity was based on the consideration of Ancient Greek and Rome as genuine ancestors and genealogical guarantors. Ramon Resina states that 'if the classic filiation seemed, for a while, the opposite of a myth,

[93] 'El centauro', p. 459.
[94] 'El centauro', p. 458.

this was because it was grounded on a concrete foundation of ruins'.[95] Building upon the foundations and ruins of ancient civilization was therefore the mission of historical progress. The melange of the spiritual and the historical uses of antiquity becomes apparent here; if ancient civilizations became the unquestioned roots of Western European nations, then the (constructed) identity of these nationalisms rested upon the historical continuity that classicism would bring. This is elucidated by Christian J Emden who argues that the creation of a classical canon of artefacts serves to create an identity surrounding classical civilization, one that in turn provides a foundational inheritance:

> this ideal of classicality is composed of an artificial, albeit not completely arbitrary, selection of texts, authors, styles, artists, and cultural artifacts which, taken as a whole, represent the construction of a canon of cultural identity and historical continuity. [...] Historical identity, as questionable as it might be, inevitably needs to rely on collective imaginations of particular historical periods.[96]

In 'El centauro', Greek mythology is used intentionally to make the point that a linear reincarnation of myth, a misuse of classical aesthetics, is to undermine and ultimately destroy any historical identity and legitimacy antiquity might offer.

This collectively imagined past is a product of historical myth; a selection of artefacts that form part of the Hellenic ideal, becoming not an entirely falsified, but certainly imagined and constructed, historical consciousness to be recreated or resurrected in the present. The concept, therefore, of a fixed origin that brings stability, order, and continuity to the present is entangled with the principle of continual renewal or regeneration, becoming part of a particular system of remembering or use of the past. The classical past is associated in Rodó's thought with immortality and eternal youth, which corroborates Bauman's theorisation of 'retrotopias': the awakening of the past to inform the conceptualisation of the future. He initially makes the

[95] Joan Ramon Resina, 'Ruins of Civilization', p. 275.
[96] Christian J. Emden, 'The Invention of Antiquity: Nietzsche on Classicism, Classicality, and the Classical Tradition', in *Nietszche and Antiquity,* ed. by Paul Bishop (Martlesham: Boydell and Brewer, 2004), pp. 372-390 (p. 378).

theoretical separation between the past as fixed and the future as malleable: 'in *theory*, future is the realm of freedom [...] future is in principle pliable– the past is solid, sturdy and fixed'.[97] However, the act of remembering means that the past is easily altered, managed, and regenerated in different contexts:

> in the *practice* of the politics of memory, future and past had their attitudes exchanged [...] Pliability and manageability of the past, its susceptibility to moulding and remoulding, are simultaneously the *sine qua non* condition of the *politics* of memory, its well-nigh axiomatic presumption of legitimacy, and its acquiescence to perpetually re-enacted creation.[98]

If the continual renewal of 'origin' or 'inherited past' in the present is the result of a politics of memory, then the Greek ideal is configured to collectivise consciousness of the ancient past. The use of this past can therefore be managed or moulded around an image of regeneration as a carefully controlled reincarnation of origin to distract from the discontinuous present. The question of what constitutes the origin or essence of humanity is one that assumes that there is such a thing as an origin or essence from which subsequent 'ages' can evolve. It assumes that human progress revolves around an origin point and its authenticity depends on how close it comes to recuperating it. The pivoting of human progress around a supposed allegiance to origins is an idea that Clarín questions in 'El centauro'.

At the end of the story, it becomes clear that Violeta's fantasy cannot materialise in present reality. The narrator tells of how she had introduced her new husband to them; in a stroke of irony, he is a cavalryman. His affiliation with horses is a relationship founded on violence, as he refers to them in terms of weaponry:

> Hace días me presentó a su marido, el Conde de La Pita, capitán de caballería, hombrachón como un roble, hirsuto, de inteligencia de cerrojo, brutal, grosero, jinete

[97] Zygmunt Bauman, *Retrotopia,* p. 62.
[98] Zygmunt Bauman, *Retrotopia,* p. 62.

> insigne, enamorado exclusivamente del *arma*, como él dice, pero equivocándose, porque al decir el *arma*, alude a su caballo.[99]

Hellenism is shattered, and thus the Greek ideal that champions the recuperation of classical Greek civilization has collapsed into insignificance, being corrupted and weaponised by the rhetoric of war, the epitome of historical turbulence. The direct collision between myth and history is evident; Violeta uses the mythological figure of the centaur as a vehicle to escape the upheaval of the present, and yet the same tool, the horse, morphs into the catalyst for Violeta's (re-)entry into the present. Historical time is characterised as that which weaponises mythic time. Mythic time spanned the ages, it allowed Violeta to envision a traversal of time and space propelled by myth, travelling on the back of the centaur, a utopia from the past. Historical time then intervenes, it takes the centaur, the utopia and the myth, and converts it into a tool for war, for entry into, as opposed to escape from, the upheaval of historical time. Origin has been distorted, the Greek civilization that constitutes an inherited past and a utopian arcadia to be recuperated in the future has been corrupted and rendered a tool for the opposite, for a future of turbulence and chaos.

Violeta ends up espousing another elite: not classicism, but the Count, her new husband. He represents a nobility that exudes its power to destructive ends, disseminating instability and injustice; an elitism in mythic terms is represented by Violeta's espousal of classical antiquity that distances itself from mass culture and 'vulgarity'. An aesthetics elitism is replaced by a socio-historical elitism. In *Ariel,* Rodó references English aristocracy as representative of a nobility that protects itself against mass culture, superficiality, and vulgar utilitarianism:

> El pueblo inglés tiene, en la institución de su aristocracia por anacrónica e injusta que ella sea bajo el aspecto del derecho político, un alto e inexpugnable baluarte que oponer al mercantilismo ambiente y a la prosa invasora; tan alto e inexpugnable baluarte que es el mismo Taine quien asegura que desde los

[99] 'El centauro', p. 460.

> tiempos de las ciudades griegas no presentaba la historia ejemplo de una condición de vida más propia para formar y enaltecer el sentimiento de la nobleza humana.[100]

It is possible to consider Clarín's 'El centauro' as suggestive of the blatant elitism of privileging the denigration of democratising forces such as mass culture by the upper classes. This is perhaps why the satirical tone of the story is so effective, as Clarín mimics public reaction to classicism and regeneration through antiquity, as out of touch and intellectually exclusive. It is also possible that this story points towards Clarín's own hesitations *vis-à-vis* regenerationism and *arielismo*, despite Rodó's work being published seven years after Clarín's. As 'El centauro' shows the ease with which myth is appropriated by malign forces, Clarín warns that antiquity may not harbour the spiritually noble effects that would be hoped for.

The final dialogue between Violeta and the narrator sees her exclaiming that the corruption of her dream was inevitable:

> Violeta, al preguntarle si era feliz con su marido, me contestaba ayer, disimulando un suspiro: "Sí, soy feliz... en lo que cabe... Me quiere... le quiero... Pero... el ideal no se realiza jamás en este mundo. Basta con soñarlo y acercarse a él en lo posible. Entre el Conde y su tordo... ¡Ah! Pero el ideal jamás se cumple en la tierra".[101]

This is the opposite sentiment to that which is expressed throughout *Ariel*, as Rodó expresses the inheritance from the ancient Greeks as a sense of continuity and filial order: 'de la herencia de las civilizaciones clásicas nacen el sentido del orden' that the future would synthesise 'en una fórmula inmortal'.[102] The immortality of classical Greek inheritance would form the basis of the regeneration of humanity, and yet in 'El centauro', the opposite occurs, the Greek ideal is distorted and used as ammunition for upheaval and disharmony.

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[100] José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel* (Montevideo: Colombino, 1947), p. 126.
[101] 'El centauro', p. 460.
[102] José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel* (Montevideo: Colombino, 1947), p. 109.

However, what I suggest here is that 'El centauro' serves as a warning not directly against the idealisation of Greek antiquity, but the use of an inherited past that has become mythologised as foundational for the regeneration of modern societies. The creation of a mythified past as the point of 'origin' and 'heredity' of the present creates unstable foundations for regenerative thought; as exemplified by 'El centauro', this fantasised past can be elusive, it has the potential to separate itself from reality, and risks being overwhelmed or weaponized by malign forces. The overall message in 'El centauro' is therefore not one of the death of an ideal when faced with hash reality, but rather the ideal as ineffective and ultimately destructive. The failure of the mythical centaur to materialise in present reality and Violeta's subsequent espousal of opposing values of violence and disruption, may not indicate 'lost origins' or 'lost paradise', but a lack of faith that reality can present a future as bright or idealistic as a fantasy or myth, and crucially, a doubt as to whether such an 'origin' existed in the first place.

Conclusion: the place of (anti-)utopia in ideas of progress

In 'Cuento futuro', after centuries spent in the Garden of Eden, Adambis reflects on his decision to become immortal. This is described in the citation that formed part of the title of this chapter, 'llegó a cansarse del jardín amenísimo',[103] indicating that the Paradise sought by humankind, propelled by the 'tyranny of the *idea*', becomes a source of unfulfillment. Further to this, it eventually becomes the impetus for Adambis' continual attempts at suicide. The garden that appeared to signal a new beginning is only a reminder of the false promise of origin and humanity's erroneous ideas of progress and its failure to act in order to save itself. The narratives discussed in this chapter expose the dangers of materialist, utilitarian, and even capitalist 'progress' that Clarín illustrates as nefarious, or at the least, impossible vehicles of progress on their own. Therefore, this chapter has shown that Clarín's imagining of various visions of progress, from the capitalist state in 'Cuento futuro', to the Greek utopia in 'El

[103] 'Cuento futuro', p. 504.

centauro', to the spiritual enlightenment in 'Cambio de luz', reveals a detailed image of how Clarín distinguished between authentic progress and forces that would ultimately combine to regress humanity.

Regeneration imagined as an aesthetic or materialist progress without either the reconfiguration of, or the integration with, moral, spiritual, and historical consciousness is questioned by Clarín. Additionally, the repeated failure to return to an Arcadian origin in some of the stories in this chapter reveals Clarín's preoccupation with the place of inheritance, particularly of classical culture, in the modern present. Clarín also equates the espousal of materialist principles to a mass alienation which humanity currently lacks the tools or imagination to alleviate. The narratives discussed here reveal that inherited pasts and mythified antiquity have a more complex role to play in the construction of a collective consciousness of progress than pristine utopias that will guide humankind's regeneration. They reveal temporal questions at the centre of visions of progress; if time and progress repeat themselves, this renders the regenerationism of nineteenth-century Spain no more than another epoch in history whereby progress and self-renewal is considered to be possible and urgent. This regeneration, however, is hoped to be one that is equipped to preserve human futures within the transformative force of modernity.

Conclusions: Memory and Clarín

The analysis of these stories has shown that the preservation of human futures means expanding the definitions and conceptualisations of reality, what it means to be a human, and a Spaniard, in the nineteenth century, and what progressive societies look like. This refers back to the sentiment with which this thesis started; when Clarín, writing in *Madrid Cómico,* decrees the 'orígenes del ser y del no ser' an erroneous statement, I suggested that he laments the human necessity to rationalise even the most metaphysical of concepts through teleological theorisations such as origin. This is a recurrent thought that underpins this reading of Clarín's short fiction and shapes the way in which he approaches ideas of progress and regeneration, as expansive visions of these concepts are consistently represented. This is primarily illustrated through Clarín's subversive writing; extensive visions of time, space, and memory are reflected in the use of diverse literary styles such as science-fiction and satire.

The experimental nature of Clarín's short fiction is fertile ground for the exploration of alternative notions of modernity and progress. This thesis has aimed to provide a re-examination, or in the analysis of some of the texts, the first substantial investigation, of Clarín's short fiction and the role it played in expressing the author's views on philosophies that demarcated progress and the means by which Spain should regenerate. The findings of this research demonstrate the variety of perspectives that Clarín's stories illuminate about what constitutes a progressive society and what factors are at play in constructing it. This also contributes to wider conceptions of the nineteenth century, as imaginings of alternative modernities at a time when Spain was experiencing systemic political failures and corruption, civil conflict, military defeat, 'decadence', and 'degeneration', offer readings of memory as challenging restrictive ideas around progress. I highlight degeneration and regeneration as less linear or parallel concepts than coalescing and, often, indistinguishable ideas. I show that in Clarín's short fiction mythified pasts are challenged, modern exchange economies as

agents of progress are questioned, and ideas of inheritance are analysed as a means to conceptualise the relationship between memory, the past, and regeneration.

One of the aims of this thesis was to tease out the connections that reveal Clarín's illustration of Spain as grappling with ideas of progress; this includes, notably, the emphasis that Clarín places on the importance of memory as a principal cornerstone of progress. The way the past is treated and the presence or absence of memory have been identified in these stories as a means for Clarín's fictional societies to progress or regress. The themes I chose to analyse in Clarín's short fiction reflect the consistency of this across a variety of styles and modes, yet this reading of his work also reveals the idiosyncrasy and complexity with which progress is approached, ultimately signalling Clarín as a writer who railed against reductive readings of Spanish modernity and ideas of progress. The analysis of this particular corpus of stories allows for a multifaceted view of how progress was conceived in the nineteenth century. The relationship between these stories is inherently complex, after all, they represent a broad range of themes, theories, and narrative styles. There are, however, three main ideas around which they coalesce. Firstly, the existence of emancipation and memory in peripheral locations; secondly, the identification of memory as catalyst for progress, but also a principal means by which Clarín highlights the impotency of regenerative efforts; and finally, the reconsideration of regeneration and progress as cyclic and, often, the authors of their own demise. These commonalities establish the basis of my concluding observations, which will be followed with the suggestion of further avenues of research that stem from this thesis that would contribute to future understandings of the nineteenth century in general, and in particular, Clarín's fiction.

It is clear that Clarín rails against the centralisation that modernisation imposes, and as he observed this process, his writing reflects a disparagement of the homogenisation of modern parameters of progress. The existence, therefore, of emancipation in peripheral settings from what Clarín considered the servitude of modernisation constitutes a defiance of centralised

modernity, in addition to a championing of that which lies beyond these modern parameters. These markers of progress are configured in various ways in different stories, but they might include positivist science; utilitarian, material, or mercantilist approaches to the modern economy and to social organisation; capitalism and its various forms of social and economic administration; and notions of decadence and degeneration that aimed to identify and eradicate 'decaying' elements of society. This reconsideration of ideas of progress in peripheral spaces is, principally, achieved, in these stories, through reconfigurations of time that occur in these spaces, which enlarge human experiences of reality and broaden the conception of what is possible if time is not imagined as a solely human construct. This focus on the peripheral does not address notions of centralisation in a political or economic sense, but rather, takes the notion of centralised modernisation that aimed to homogenise what constituted national citizenry and established codes of belonging, and unbelonging, to 'modernity'. There are several stories that I show explicitly deal with this principle; 'El oso mayor' and 'El dúo de la tos' are the most salient examples, however 'Viaje redondo', 'Tirso de Molina' and 'La trampa' are also useful texts for considering this phenomenon.

Clarín's reconceptualisation of time, and thus of visions of progress, is addressed through his repeated references to the metaphysical and that which lies beyond the parameters of human knowledge and experience. A principal example of this is in 'El oso mayor' which I explored in Chapter One in relation to the use of the provincial characters and setting, in a somewhat *costumbrista* fashion, as figures that, unlike traditional *costumbrista* 'types', serve to expand provincial subjectivities. The provincial sensibility is considered infinite, 'una finalidad sin fin', which is able to transcend human notions of time and space. As I argue, this suggests that, firstly, the provincial *oso,* as it is known in the story as a reference to the celestial formation 'Ursa major', exists to expose human conceptions of time and space as narrow and reductive. By introducing universal and 'deep' time, into the experience of provincial subjectivity, the connection is made between the peripheral in terms of the regional or provincial, and the expansive, supranatural visions of time and space.

‘El dúo de la tos’, which I analyse in Chapter Two, is another example of this use of the peripheral to transcend human conceptions of time and space. The emancipation of the two patients brings their existence into the ‘infinite’, their subjectivities defy the temporal boundaries that demarcate human life, and they are able to live beyond the finitude that terrestrial time offers. The placement of this temporal transcendence in a convalescing home for the sick and dying is particularly pertinent, and I have identified this as a deliberate choice by Clarín to comment upon theories of degeneration and disease. Contagion and disease, which were used as a means to conceptualise degeneration and decline, were pathological concepts that were mapped onto socio-historical discourses. The idea of ostracising the sick and dying, that is present in ‘El dúo de la tos’, as well as in ‘Cuervo’, is one that coalesces with degeneration theory which denoted disease as a transgressive social actor that has contributed to national decline and crisis. The subversion of ‘diseased’ spaces, and the emancipation that arrives from the act of contagion– the *tos* of the patients as a means of communication and companionship– reflects Clarín’s questioning of the pathologization of that which is deemed peripheral to codes of modernity and ‘progress’.

I have shown that the concepts of utilitarian, positivist, and material progress are established to align with a human-centric worldview whereby progress is measured on human constructs such as material consumption, exchange economies, and the positivist notion that the knowable only resides in what the human eye can see and the human skin can touch. However, Clarín questions the legitimacy of these conceptions of progress, instead the provincial *oso* is depicted as a transcendental being that is capable of moving beyond the human-made geographical, spatial, and physical boundaries and borders that denote and categorise human existence. This is also pertinent as modern subjectivity and temporality are both considered as fragmentary and discontinuous as the experience of modernity is fleeting, transient, and ultimately disorienting. This makes the illustration of the transcendental *oso* and the ‘dúo de la tos’ that exist beyond human temporal parameters as powerful tools to grant

agency to the peripheral and decentre hegemonies of 'progress'. This broad and metaphysical understanding of time and space in order to critique centralising and pathologizing discourses of modernity allows for the exploration of memory; as time is conceptualised as infinite, this suggests that the past is not jettisoned, but forms part of a coherent temporal continuum.

This introduces the second common point that I have identified in this thesis: the presence of memory as a marker of progress. I have shown that Clarín repeatedly uses memory as a means to determine and represent that which constitutes progress and, inversely, regression. In Chapter One, I discussed that in 'Boroña', Clarín illustrates the nostalgia of a returned *indiano* who craves his childhood home. Here I address the social influence that *indianos* had and what issues arose when they returned back to their villages. In relation to Clarín's story, I argued that the rural home becomes a site of ruptured memory in which Pepe is unable to play a constructive part; additionally, the attitude of Pepe's relatives upon his return indicates a society that locates 'progress' in his material wealth and the curation of his *indiano* experience through objects as opposed to personal subjectivity and memory.

In Chapter Three, I argued that material and mercantile means of approaching nation-building were at the root of Berta's demise in 'Doña Berta'. This story questions the legitimacy of a modern exchange economy propelled by capitalism and consumption and the way in which the administration and management of art interacts with and benefits from these modern capitalist principles. The result is the death of Berta following her failure to recuperate the painting she believes depicts her stolen son. I argue that the story is less a dichotomisation of tradition and modernity, although the physical movement from the timeless Asturian home to a bustling Madrid might point towards this analysis, than an examination of the ethics of a centralising and homogenising modernity. In particular, this is drawn through the mythification of national histories which amounts to the mythification of Berta's own personal and painful memory. By introducing the theme of historical myth, I aimed to reveal how Clarín uses

memory and the way national histories are framed to critique notions of 'progress' that sterilise and homogenise turbulent pasts.

In 'La trampa', Clarín subverts the centralising narrative of Castile and its associations with Spain as an eternal truth, negating turbulent, violent, and often divisive, pasts. The horse that symbolises Castile and the mythification of Spanish national identity, ultimately subverts the narrative about a timeless Spain to reveal two aspects of the past and present that Clarín identifies as forces of violence and barriers to social progress. The first is *caciquismo,* since the horse becomes a symbol of defiance against political corruption before it becomes clear that it resembled, and may be, one that the protagonist left for dead on the battlefield when fighting in the Carlist war. The horse as a participant in civil conflict makes it a witness to a nation in crisis whose present is marked by the division of the past, allowing for political corruption to take root. The second is historical myth and sterilised narratives about the nation, which are unravelled as the nation as an eternal whole is questioned by Clarín who asks whether facing the realities of the national past will indeed create a more harmonious and cohesive future.

In 'Vario', which I explore in Chapter Two, the protagonist anticipates the forgetting of his work, his poems are declared dead and forgotten before the fact, much like in 'La noche-mala del Diablo' in which the Devil's children are deformed and dying before they have been created. This suggests that Clarín was consistently concerned about the construction of the future in a time of temporal discontinuity and failed projects of regeneration. In both stories the cycle of repetition causes a blockage in progress; in 'Vario' the recycling of ideas prevents epistemological transmission and literary and philosophical progress, as Vario's poems will be written over and repeated; in 'La noche-mala del Diablo', the Devil's espousal of malign forces mean that the death of his children is recurrent. They are the products of a failed project of regeneration, whereby the conditions for regression and tyranny persist. Clarín appropriates degenerationist theories that deployed inheritance to locate and explain social and

pathological ‘disorders’, since inheritance and paternity are used to identify faults of the regeneration project and its inability to learn from the past. It is described how the Devil returns to distinct historical periods, all of which pertain to the Catholic Church’s missteps with authoritarianism and tyranny, which all produce the same catastrophic results. The recurrence of these pasts in the present is a prism through which to view the place of memory illustrated by Clarín; the past is not remembered and deployed to foment historical consciousness, but it is repeated and used to reproduce malevolent forces. The notion of paternity and its role in memory is also explored in Chapter One in the analysis of ‘El Quin’. Inheritance, in this text, serves to establish an association between a disrupted spiritual heredity and degeneration. As El Quin loses his master, the notion of a legitimate origin is also lost, along with his ability to remember the past. A crisis of the future is thus a spiritual crisis of obscured heredity.

The texts discussed in this thesis also share the common thread of addressing ideas of regeneration as not entirely separate from degeneration and they are, often, the architects of their own demise. I have explored the idea of regeneration throughout the thesis and shown how it is portrayed in a variety of ways in Clarín’s narratives: as reproduction, as spiritual rebirths, reinventions of myth, or, as the recuperation of a lost past. These forms of regeneration are often painted in Clarín’s work as destructive processes. In ‘Doña Berta’, Berta’s memory is silenced by both the patriarchal and traditional ideology of her brothers and the capitalist forces of modernity, meaning that her ‘regenerative’ journey to recuperate her past and rebuild her family is impossible. Modern nation-building and national projects of regeneration that formulate and curate collective pasts are at the root of their generative impotence. Modernising forces in ‘¡Adiós Cordera!’, which I explored in Chapter One, destroy the home of the protagonists; forces that aimed to regenerate the country through mercantile capitalism and urbanisation end up being agents of destruction as opposed to production.

In Chapter Four, I explore ‘Cuento futuro’, which can be considered the culmination of the processes that are beginning in ‘¡Adiós Cordera!’: the ‘cocina económica’ of capitalism, the

commodification of human existence, and the fixation on material progress. I approach this story as an anti-utopian tale that foregrounds the construction and, simultaneously, the deconstruction of the utopias that humanity has been promised by capitalism and utilitarianism. In my analysis of the story, I focus on the destruction of these promises as Clarín's warning that the capitalist and utilitarian system will not lead to progressive societies as the materialisation of infinite progress is impossible. In 'Cuento futuro' this vision of progress has led to the oppression and alienation of humankind. The paradise of Eden is also distorted as the return to the genesis of humanity proves impotent to change the course of humanity and to act as a legitimate foundation of human society. Analysing these anti-utopian aspects of the story is a prism through which to explore Clarín's thought on the pledges of modernity and what he saw as its potential for irreversible harm not only to social and economic systems but to the existence of humankind.

These stories are all suggestive of Clarín's privileging of spiritual and moral paths towards regeneration and, ultimately, progress. What I have aimed to show in this thesis is that this philosophy was underpinned by a specific treatment of memory. The stories that formed the corpus for this research demonstrate that progress can only be found where there is a consciousness of the past and an active remembering of it. Learning from the past and using often painful pasts as tools for the construction of more positive futures are moral codes that Clarín establishes in his writing. Importantly, Clarín warns against 'misrememberings' of the past, in all their guises, to perpetuate reductive or even authoritarian narratives of progress and how to achieve it. Clarín's stories are testament to diverging ideas about how to define progress, particularly relating to the treatment of the past and tradition. In some stories, regeneration is aligned with spirituality and tradition; in others, however, Clarín emphasises the need to mobilise national histories and symbols in order to tackle present problems. What I argue reconciles these visions is the treatment of memory and the past, and specifically, the preservation of both in the construction of progress. This use of memory and the substantial

analysis of how it functions in Clarín's short fiction is, therefore, the main contribution of this thesis.

Moving beyond these conclusions, it is necessary to highlight possible avenues for future investigation. This thesis, through its tracing of the concept of memory and its implications for the ideas of progress in Clarín's short fiction, has revealed that there is scope for further work to be done on memory in the nineteenth-century context. The use of memory studies frameworks developed in the twentieth century have not been used as frameworks for this literary analysis, as the dissonance in historical context would, possibly, render this approach incongruous. Instead, aspects of memory studies have provided a language with which to discuss the literary representation of memory and temporality in the nineteenth century through frameworks that are pertinent to the context in which the works are placed; for example, I discuss notions of collective memory through myth and nation-building. Additionally, this thesis has deployed terms used in memory studies research to conceptualise the various roles that memory plays in Clarín's work, such as 'historical consciousness'. This aim to introduce discussions of modernity and regeneration with memory and acts of remembering, provides a productive way to view these texts, as well as establishing a means by which to discuss memory in a Spanish context that is theoretically and historically removed from the responses to memory and silence in the twentieth-century context, yet with which it shares commonalities insofar as the function of memory in healthy societies.

Following this method of analysing memory in relation to nineteenth-century Spain as pertaining to modernity, regeneration, political discontent, and increasingly dogmatic notions of what constitutes progress, a productive means by which to explore the literary depictions of these concepts would be through international, interdisciplinary, and intertextual means. In relation to the former, a transnational approach would be useful to trace a literary and cultural history of memory and historical consciousness. Andrew Ginger's *Instead of Modernity* is an example of recent work that has been done to broaden the scope and significance of modernity

in the mid-nineteenth century, precisely by developing the notion that modernity itself implodes when drawing comparisons across time and space between cultural works and emphasising their commonality. This reveals the interconnectedness of aesthetics and culture that emerge across borders to foster transnational understandings of, as well as challenges to, the restrictive foundations upon which modernity has been constructed. Further research in this cross-cultural vein is possible through the analysis of memory to ascertain how cultural production across national borders used the concept of memory to (re)define what progress meant during this period.

This transnational approach lends itself to the reconsideration of nineteenth-century fiction as not only part of global movements but also as contributing to scholarly thought across disciplinary boundaries. The most salient example of this in my approach to Clarín's short fiction is the analysis of the stories in Chapter Two in relation to disease and degeneration. The medical humanities is a burgeoning field that brings together scholars and practitioners in the investigation of the intersections between medicine and culture, questioning how, as a society and throughout history, we respond to illness and contagion, and what this means in physiological, psychological, social, and cultural terms. Building on the hypothesis with which I began Chapter Two, that Clarín's approach to death and disease indicates a pathologisation of society to the extent that memory is eschewed, progress is obscured, and notions of regeneration become agents of destruction, the medical humanities presents new avenues of research which could be particularly fruitful approaches to short fiction of the fantastic and Gothic genres.

This exploration of the interdisciplinarity of nineteenth-century fiction also suggests an intertextual approach as the medium through which writers communicated and exchanged these ideas was as varied as the material itself. Establishing thematic links between Clarín's novels, short stories, paliques, letters, and criticism would create a genealogy of ideas that would illuminate how themes and concepts that I have explored in this thesis, such as

degeneration, regeneration, memory, and inheritance, can frame the discussion beyond literary boundaries. This work was beyond the remit of this thesis, however, through demonstrating the recurrence of these themes and tropes in a selection of Clarín's short fiction, I hope to have provided a basis from which to begin this work. Above all, I have demonstrated the important contribution of Clarín's short fiction to the conceptualisation of memory in the nineteenth century. I have illustrated that analysing the trope of memory in these texts can augment our understanding of interrelated concepts such as modernity, regeneration, and temporality to allow us to trace, through literature and other cultural artefacts, how progress was perceived in times of intellectual dogmatism and social transformation.

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